

HM OPENS MEDICAL CITY HOSPITAL

VISITS MEDICAL CITY FOR MILITARY AND SECURITY SERVICES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, on Monday paid a Royal visit to the Medical City for Military and Security Services and presided over the official opening of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services — Muscat.

Upon His Majesty’s arrival at the Medical City, he was received by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Board Chairman of the Medical City for Military and Security Services, and Eng Odai bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of the Medical City for Military and Security Units. His Majesty was also greeted by some ministers and commanders, board members of the Medical City.

In the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services — Muscat, the Head of the City was honoured to deliver a speech before His Majesty the Sultan.

Then, His Majesty watched a visual presentation on the progress of the medical sector and the contributions of Omani doctors throughout the ages, as well as the stages of development of the medical field in the Sultanate of Oman, up to this day while His Majesty, the Supreme Commander, inaugurates this towering medical edifice, as it represents another national achievement for the renewed renaissance of the Sultanate of Oman.

After that, His Majesty the Supreme Commander gave his Royal blessing, marking the official opening of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Forces — Muscat.

Then, a detailed film was screened before His Majesty about the medical facilities, specialised departments, and levels of healthcare at the Medical City Hospital, as well as the added value it represents for the health sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

His Majesty also went on a tour of the hospital’s departments and wings where he was briefed on the design, as it was built according to the highest technical standards to meet the needs of medical services and integrated healthcare that it provides as per the vision of the Medical City for Military and Security Services and its national goals, in a manner that comes in line with Oman Vision 2040.

SEE ALSO P2 & 3



HM WATCHES
VISUAL
PRESENTATION
ON MEDICAL
SECTOR

THE
ROLE OF
OMANI
DOCTORS
HIGHLIGHTED

ANOTHER
ACHIEVEMENT
FOR RENEWED
RENAISSANCE

ADDS VALUE TO
THE HEALTH
SECTOR IN
OMAN

BUILT
ACCORDING
TO HIGHEST
TECHNICAL
STANDARDS

MEDICAL CITY
IN LINE
WITH OMAN
VISION 2040

Situation in Palestine and Lebanon tragic

RIYADH: Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, headed the Sultanate of Oman’s delegation at the extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic summit held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on Monday, in the presence of monarchs, country leaders and heads of delegations.

During the summit, Sayyid Badr conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the monarchs, country leaders and heads of delegations, along with His Majesty the Sultan’s sincere wishes for the summit’s success.

Sayyid Badr in his speech said that the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon is getting worse due to the



persistent Israeli aggression that left a large number of people dead or deprived of the most basic rights to life.

Sayyid Badr added that the scenes of bombardment, destruction and genocide that target residential neighbourhoods, health and

educational facilities and infrastructure go beyond all standards of humanity. These scenes call for joint action to open up unrestricted corridors to ease the delivery of highly needed relief aid.

Stressing that the Sultanate of Oman is strongly committed to its position calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and for the termination of Israel’s hostile operations in Lebanon, he underlined the need to conduct an independent international investigation into these repeated violations because, he noted, “justice is the basis of peace and accountability is the only way to end this ongoing suffering”.

Sayyid Badr said that the tragic situation in Palestine and

in Lebanon expanded into a dangerous escalation in other areas in the Middle East, noting that this situation threatens regional stability as a whole.

The minister pointed out that the only way to achieve stability in the region is to develop a comprehensive vision based on truth and justice.

Sayyid Badr also voiced the Sultanate of Oman’s steadfast support to the initiative launched by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia about the formation of an international coalition to achieve the Two-State Solution. He stressed the importance of taking practical steps to achieve this goal, adding that the first step is to realise the international community’s recognition of the Palestinian State. — **ONA**



OMAN LAUNCHES
FIRST SATELLITE

Represented by Oman Lens company, the Sultanate of Oman has launched its first full-fledged Omani satellite registered under its name at the International Telecommunication Organisation (ITU). Enhanced with artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, the satellite specialises in remote sensing and earth observation technologies. **DETAILS ON P13**

A HEALTHY MILESTONE IN



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, on Monday paid a Royal visit to the Medical City for Military and Security Services and presided over the official opening of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services — Muscat. — **ONA**



RENEWED RENAISSANCE

HIS Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, on Monday paid a Royal visit to the Medical City for Military and Security Services and presided over the official opening of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services - Muscat.

Upon His Majesty's arrival at the Medical City, he was received by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Board Chairman of the Medical City for Military and Security Services, and Eng Odai bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of the Medical City for Military and Security Units. His Majesty was also greeted by some ministers and commanders, board members of the Medical City.

In the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services - Muscat, the Head of the City was honoured to deliver a speech before His Majesty the Sultan.

Then, His Majesty watched a visual presentation on the progress of the medical sector and the contributions of Omani doctors throughout the ages, as well as the stages of development of the medical field in the Sultanate of Oman, up to this day while His Majesty, the Supreme Commander, inaugurates this towering medical edifice, as it represents another national achievement for the renewed renaissance of the Sultanate of Oman.

After that, His Majesty the Supreme Commander gave his Royal blessing, marking the official opening of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Forces - Muscat.

Then, a detailed film was screened before His Majesty about the medical facilities, specialised departments, and levels of healthcare at the Medical City Hospital, as well as the added value it represents for the health sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

His Majesty also went on a tour of the hospital's departments and wings where he was briefed on the design, as it was built according to the highest technical standards to meet the needs of medical services and integrated healthcare that it provides as per the vision of the Medical City for Military and Security Services and its national goals, in a manner that comes in line with Oman Vision 2040.

After that, His Majesty, the Supreme Commander, wrote a Royal speech to commemorate this Royal visit and the official opening of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services - Muscat.

His Majesty then shook hands with assistant heads of the Medical City for Military and Security Services, directors general of the Medical City's hospitals, and engineers of the Medical City Hospital project for Military and Security Services - Muscat.

After that, His Majesty left the Medical City for Military and Security Services.

Alongside His Majesty, the official inauguration was attended by some ministers, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces and military and security units, as well as some senior officials. — **ONA**



BEYOND FOOD SECURITY

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 11

AS Oman prepares to celebrate 54th National Day, it is time to take stock of the state of food security. Oman no doubt made rapid strides in scaling up agriculture and fisheries output. The aim is now is to export more by scaling up produce and fish landing.

Towards this end, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR) is launching many projects and beefing up supply in the Sultanate of Oman. This includes the development of infrastructure and services for agricultural and fisheries markets, as well as the establishment of an integrated management system to ensure operational efficiency. The ministry is also working on drafting the necessary regulations and legislation to organise marketing operations while maintaining the safety and quality of products.

The ministry has announced significant progress in fisheries marketing activities in Oman, with the number of existing fish processing factories reaching 119, reflecting steady growth in this vital sector. Additionally, the ministry recorded 62 operational fish markets, while the number of fish retail shops in Oman reached 1,009 by the end of last year.

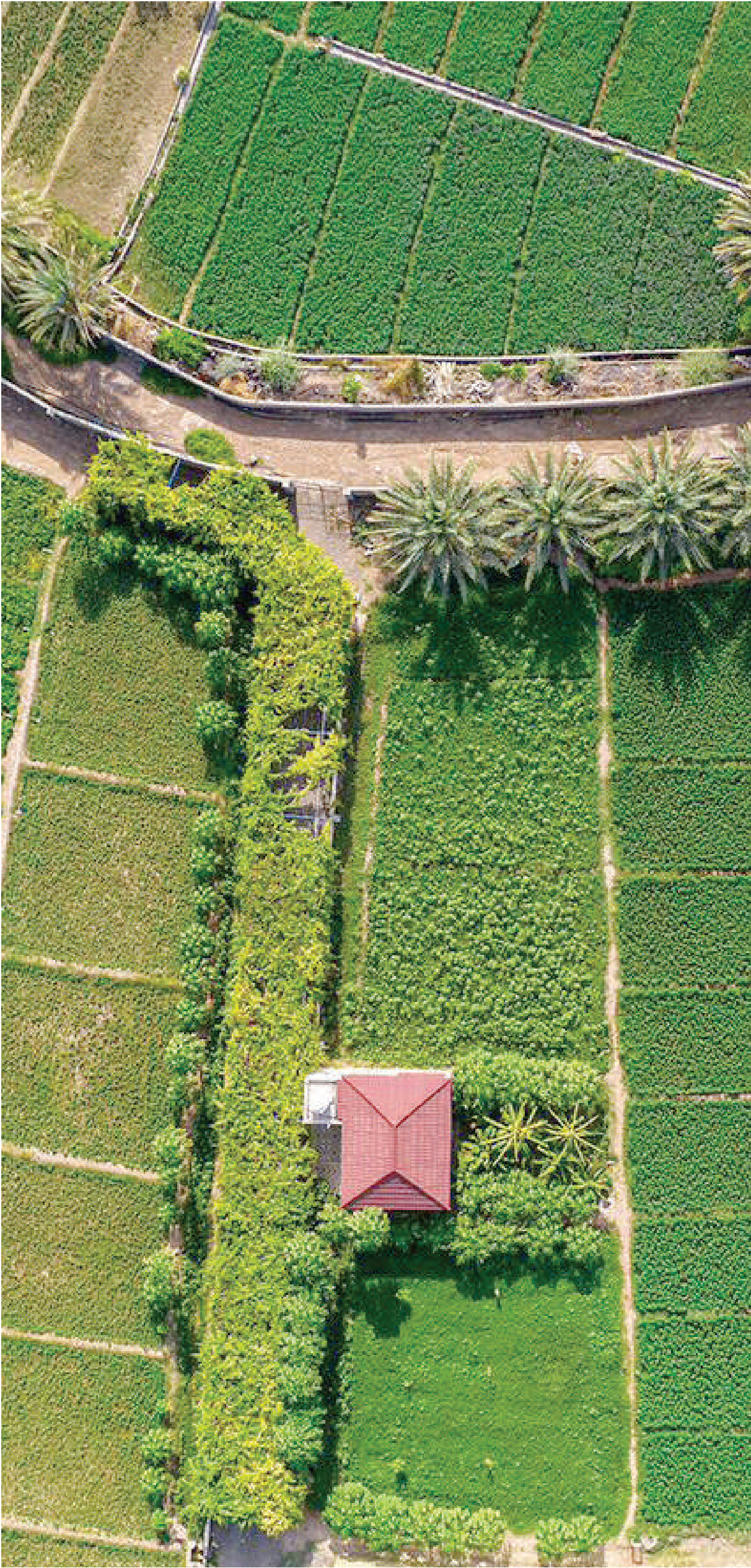
As part of efforts to enhance market efficiency, the number of permits for fish carrier entry to the central wholesale fish market increased to 489. Furthermore, the total number of licenses for trading live aquatic resources in the central wholesale market rose to 915, reflecting an increase in commercial activity in this field. The total number of fish seller licenses also grew to 905, compared to 753 licenses in the previous year.

To enhance the fish processing sector and provide high-quality products that meet both local and international market demands, there has been growth in fish processing activities through the end of October 2024. The total number of fish processing and freezing factories reached 94, in addition to 8 floating fish processing and freezing factories.

New projects in the field of fish canning have been introduced, bringing the total number of canning factories to 3. Additionally, a factory for preparing ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products such as fish burgers, pickled fish, and salted fish has been established. A factory for drying and smoking fish using modern methods, as well as a factory for refining fish oil for human consumption, has also been set up.

The ministry has reported significant progress in the construction of new and qualified fish markets across Oman's governorates, with a total of 16 markets. These projects aim to enhance the marketing of fish products and provide a suitable environment for buying and

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR) is launching many projects to beef up marketing of farm produce and create jobs



The Agro Oman exhibition, scheduled from December 4 to 6 will showcase the latest food products, agricultural and marine equipment, as well as greenhouse technologies, hydroponics, and modern irrigation systems.

selling, as well as strengthening the local market's ability to meet consumer demands. The Ministry's goal is to create integrated work environments that facilitate the movement of fish products and help producers market their goods, thereby contributing to the local economy and increasing job opportunities in the sector.

The Ministry has stated that it is working to achieve a balance between supply and demand in local and international markets. The focus is on opening new markets and registering Omani companies to export fish and

agricultural products to regional and international markets. In 2024, the Ministry organised several local exhibitions and marketing programmes. These activities included the fisheries marketing programme, developed annually in collaboration with fish marketing companies, aimed at providing fish during the summer when supply may be limited due to climate conditions. This is achieved by implementing a marketing plan for fish markets across all governorates of Oman. Among the key exhibitions is the Agro Oman exhibition, scheduled from December 4 to 6, which will showcase the latest food products, agricultural and marine equipment, as well as greenhouse technologies, hydroponics, and modern irrigation systems. The Ministry also organised a date exhibition before the holy month of Ramadhan, from March 8-10, 2024.

SHORTTAKES



OMAN AT MOROCCO
INT’L CHILDREN’S
THEATRE FESTIVAL

RABAT: Represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), the Sultanate of Oman is taking part in the 23rd edition of the International Children’s Theatre Festival being held in the city of Taza, Kingdom of Morocco, from November 12-15.

Al Den Theatre Troupe represents the Ministry at the festival with a children’s drama titled ‘Kingdom of Colours’, adding impetus to children’s theatrical performances from Arab and foreign countries.

The festival brings together famous troupes from Oman, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Germany and Spain.

Oman’s participation in the event reflects the Ministry’s keenness to enhance knowledge and exchange experiences. — ONA



WHO OFFICE, AL MUDHAIBI HEALTHY CITY SIGN MOU

AL MUDHAIBI: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on Monday between the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Office in Oman and Al Mudhaibi Healthy City.

The MoU was signed by Shaikh Saud bin Mohammed al Hinai, Wali of Al Mudhaibi, Supervisor

General of the Healthy City and Dr Jean Yaacoub Jabbour, representative of the WHO Office in Oman.

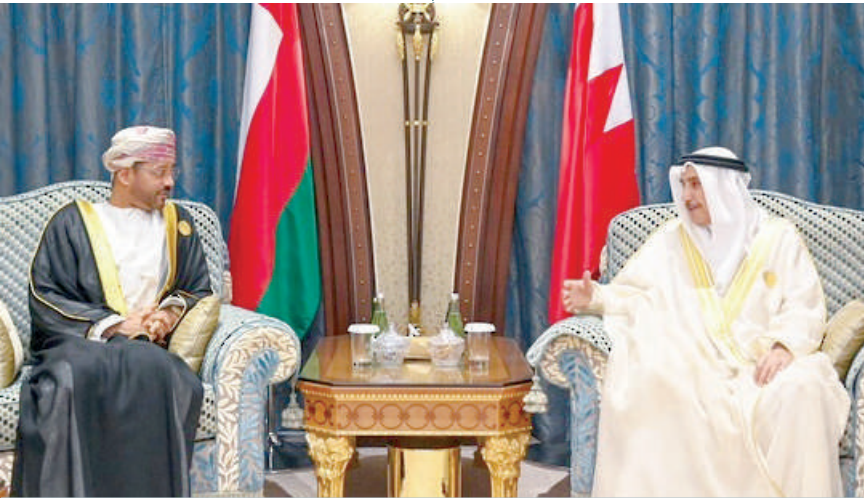
The WHO’s Healthy Cities programme is being implemented in the Sultanate of Oman under the supervision of the Ministry of Health (MoH). — ONA

Oman, Bahrain boost
ties at Riyadh summit

SAYYID BADR bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, met here on Monday with Shaikh Khalid Abdullah al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the Extraordinary Joint Arab-Islamic Summit that will be held in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The meeting touched on bilateral relations between Oman and Bahrain and means of enhancing cooperation in different fields. It also underscored the importance of boosting strategic partnerships in a manner that serves joint interests and integration



Sayyid Badr holds talks with Shaikh Khalid Abdullah al Khalifa

between the two countries.

Moreover, the two sides discussed several regional and international topics. They

underlined the importance of continuing to exert efforts to enhance Arab-Islamic cooperation in a bid to tackle rising

challenges. The two sides also affirmed their support of efforts necessary to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Faisal bin Turki al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Oman’s permanent representative to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Abdullah bin Nasser al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt and Oman’s permanent representative to the Arab League and Shaikh Faisal bin Omar al Marhoon, Head of the Arab Department at the Foreign Ministry and several officials from both sides. — ONA

ظفار للأغذية والاستثمار (ش م ع ع) DHOFAr FOODS & INVESTMENT (SAOG)	
CHAIRMAN’S REPORT	
Dear Shareholders, On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the unaudited results on the company’s performance for the nine-month period ended on 30th September 2024.	
Financial Performance	
Parent Company The revenue for the period stood at RO 27.8 million, reflecting a notable increase of 7.9% compared to RO 25.8 million compared to corresponding period of last year 2023. Similarly, our gross profit margin significantly improved, reaching 20.5% compared to 13% in 2023. This substantial increase in gross profit can be attributed to an increase in volume.	
The company’s net loss after tax reported RO 2,909 compared to a profit of RO 1.091 million for the same period last year.	
Group Company The revenue for the period stood at RO 62.9 million, reflecting a notable increase of 72% compared to RO 36.6 million compared to corresponding period of last year 2023. Similarly, our gross profit margin improved, reaching 13% compared to 12% in 2023. Omani Gulf Food Co contributed to this substantial increase in revenue.	
The group’s net loss is reported to be RO 3.06 million compared to a loss of RO 1.25 million for the same period last year.	
Corporate Governance & Internal Control The Company and its Board of Directors believe that to succeed on a sustainable basis, it must maintain high standards of corporate governance towards its shareholders, employees, consumers, and community. To this end, the Board has constituted the Audit Committee and the Executive, Nomination and Remuneration Committee. The Company has always and will remain focused on good corporate governance.	
Your company has adhered to all the regulations covering corporate governance in Oman and your Board is fully committed to ensure compliance of all the applicable rules and regulations. The Board has taken all possible measures to ensure full compliance with the rules and regulations. To improve the internal audit process, the board has outsourced the internal audit functions to an external audit firm.	
Human Resources Your company is supporting the national recruitment policy of the government. In line with this, local nationals are currently working at various levels of management and constitute 42% of the work force. Graduate trainees’ programs are in place to train the qualified young candidates. We continue to develop our staff to lay a solid foundation for our future growth with great emphasis being invited to develop national talent.	
Future Outlook “Oman vision 2040” strategy emphasis on diversification into non-oil segment, logistics and services and increase importance on food security initiatives. Your company is well placed in this segment and will be able to grow in line with government initiatives. The domestic market is highly price sensitive and controlled by government price control authorities.	
Acknowledgements I would like to thank my fellow board members and our shareholders, customers, lender, suppliers and employees for their continued support and commitment. I would also like to thank the CMA & MSX for their support and cooperation.	
We wish further development, stability, progress, and prosperity for our beloved country under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tank, and we wish him good health and longevity.	
Said Ahmed Safrar Chairman	
Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.	
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION PERIOD END 30 SEPT 2024	
Balance Sheet	Group 30.09.24 30.09.23 Parent 30.09.24 30.09.23 Group FY 2023 Parent FY 2023
Assets Employed	
Cash in hand & Bank	1,389,142 1,421,404 427,786 413,490 5,001,975 344,421
Debtors	12,850,590 14,281,806 9,050,682 5,856,023 14,017,034 7,132,873
Inventories and biological assets	15,408,971 15,237,984 9,284,277 8,575,908 15,686,006 8,248,827
[A] Current Assets	29,649,703 30,941,194 18,762,745 14,845,421 34,705,016 15,726,121
Accrued expenses and other payables	5,040,187 16,006,859 6,556,631 12,586,639 17,370,704 10,610,870
Current portion of lease liabilities	328,811 380,935 308,651 369,010 372,396 345,000
Current portion of term loans	1,432,000 988,556 2,180,000 403,445 924,108 1,235,944
Bank borrowings	18,878,905 17,409,374 9,239,806 8,605,992 19,349,749 10,042,373
Income Tax Payables	- 164,351 - 186,063 - -
[B] Current Liabilities	25,679,904 34,950,075 18,285,088 21,965,086 38,203,017 22,234,187
[C] Net Current Assets [A-B]	3,969,799 (4,008,881) 477,657 (7,119,665) (3,498,001) (6,508,066)
Property, plant and equipment	34,204,508 20,247,660 17,305,311 6,720,775 36,403,106 18,677,918
Right-of-use assets	1,390,248 1,397,966 723,245 738,104 1,402,489 684,637
Intangible assets	45,905 75,594 4,216 16,608 68,320 13,510
Investments in subsidiaries	- - 17,581,709 15,491,527 - 15,540,645
Investments in associates	880,608 906,732 812,212 812,212 872,832 812,212
Fair value through OCI	10,244,000 11,529,663 10,244,000 11,529,663 10,888,176 10,888,176
Investment properties	2,090,000 2,090,000 2,090,000 2,090,000 2,090,000 2,090,000
Biological assets	4,216,513 4,005,152 4,216,513 4,005,152 4,155,607 4,155,607
Deferred tax asset	99,010 96,891 96,891 101,891 - 96,891
Other Non-current assets	81,337 68,678 - - 68,139 -
[D] Non-current Assets	53,252,219 40,418,336 53,074,188 41,500,933 56,050,560 52,959,596
[E] Capital Employed [C+D]	57,222,018 36,409,455 53,551,845 34,381,268 52,552,559 46,451,530
Deferred Tax Liability	2,720,878 426,419 1,731,818 - 2,850,475 1,817,700
Employees’ end of service benefit	1,466,243 1,337,137 779,480 648,268 1,346,165 639,162
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	617,676 1,152,966 455,889 411,336 1,163,866 380,226
Non-current portion of term loans	14,411,053 5,836,318 10,500,000 4,007,591 5,607,858 2,968,650
[F] Total Non-Current Liability	19,215,850 5,552,840 13,467,166 5,067,194 10,968,364 5,805,738
[G] Net Worth [E-F]	38,006,168 27,856,615 40,084,679 29,314,074 41,584,195 40,645,792
Equity	Group 30.09.24 30.09.23 Parent 30.09.24 30.09.23 Group FY 2023 Parent FY 2023
Represented By	
Share capital	17,431,154 17,431,154 17,431,154 17,431,154 17,431,154 17,431,154
Legal reserve	2,875,422 2,598,720 2,875,422 2,598,720 2,875,422 2,875,422
Voluntary reserve	3,711,420 3,711,420 3,711,420 3,711,420 3,711,420 3,711,420
Revaluation reserve	13,002,388 525,000 9,813,320 - 14,380,000 10,299,965
Fair value reserve	2,269,197 3,491,686 2,269,197 3,491,686 2,850,199 2,850,199
Retained earnings	(1,753,642) 184,052 3,984,167 2,081,095 413,000 3,477,612
Net Worth	38,135,938 27,942,032 40,084,679 29,314,074 41,581,195 40,645,792
Non-controlling interest	(129,770) (85,416) - - (77,000) -
Total equity and non-controlling interest	38,006,168 27,856,615 40,084,679 29,314,074 41,584,195 40,645,792
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE QUARTERLY PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2024	
Statement of Comprehensive Income	Group 30.09.24 30.09.23 Parent 30.09.24 30.09.23 Group FY 2023 Parent FY 2023
Net Sales	62,947,352 36,629,350 27,856,965 25,816,962
Less:- Cost of Sales	54,683,630 32,212,659 22,156,712 22,440,443
Gross Profit	8,263,722 4,416,692 5,700,253 3,356,519
GP Ratio %	13% 12% 20% 13%
Administrative Expense	3,852,648 1,899,895 1,684,185 1,030,670
Selling & Marketing Expenses	6,359,999 4,565,396 3,663,676 3,298,149
Director’s remuneration	149,933 113,400 109,733 81,000
Total operating expenses	10,362,580 6,578,691 5,457,595 4,409,819
Profit / (loss) from operations	(2,098,858) (2,161,999) 242,658 (1,053,301)
Dividend income	106,737 216,620 106,737 216,620
Other Operating Income / (loss)	859,025 1,854,088 796,525 2,884,110
Share of results of the associate - OGF	- 194,240 - -
Share of results of the associate - DBFC	7,776 21,000 - -
Finance cost	1,954,866 1,361,603 1,148,829 956,306
Net Profit before taxation (PBT)	(3,080,186) (1,237,654) (2,908) 1,091,123
Taxation	(16,650) 16,105 - -
Net profit / (loss) for the year	(3,063,537) (1,253,759) (2,908) 1,091,123
Movement in Fair value reserve	(644,087) (266,471) (644,087) (266,471)
Total comprehensive loss for the year	(3,707,624) (1,520,230) (646,995) 824,652
Shareholders of parent company	(3,010,767) (1,138,759) - -
Non - controlling interest	(52,770) (115,000) - -
Net profit or loss attributable to :	(3,063,537) (1,253,759) - -
Shareholders of parent company	(3,654,854) (1,405,229) - -
Non - controlling interest	(52,770) (115,000) - -
Total comprehensive income attributable to:	(3,707,624) (1,520,229) (646,995) 824,652
Earning Per Share	(0.015) (0.007) - 0.006

						
Tender Announcement						
The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-						
Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
472/2024	Purchase two FortiNet firewall devices	Companies specialized in the field of designing, installing and maintaining information programs and systems / equipping information data centers and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with excellent or first class.	Sunday 01-12-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 19-12-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
re-announces 353/2024	Implementing an awareness campaign on family issues	Companies specialized in the field of television, film and radio production services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Thursday 21-11-2024 02:00 PM	Monday 02-12-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
476/2024	Managing, designing and making content for the Platform against Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances	Companies specialized in the field of television, film and radio production services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Thursday 21-11-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 01-12-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om). On Tuesday 12/11/2024. ❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200). “ The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry”						
www.mosd.gov.om						

OMAN

SHORT TAKES

SAUDI MILITARY
DELEGATION
VISITS CSC



MUSCAT: A delegation from the Command and Staff College of the National Defense University of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Monday visited the Joint Command and Staff College (CSC). Upon their arrival, the guests were received by the CSC Acting Commandant. The guests were briefed on the CSC, its curricula and training and educational programmes. They also toured the college’s facilities and departments. — ONA

SOHAR STUDENTS
CREATE SMART
SHOPPING CART



Powered by the Internet of Things, female Sohar students innovate retail experience

SOHAR: Female students from Sohar University have pioneered a smart shopping cart powered by the Internet of Things (IoT), aiming to transform the retail experience in Oman.

The innovative cart is designed with a touch screen and barcode scanner, allowing shoppers to view product information, manage shopping lists, and make electronic payments — eliminating the need to wait in checkout lines.

The project, developed under the supervision of Sohar University’s Technology Transfer Centre and funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, was led by students Hiba al Maamari, Adhari al Mahrouqi and Rawan al Maamari.

“This smart cart reduces congestion in major retail spaces, making shopping faster and easier,” explained team member Hiba al Maamari. The team hopes that this technology, if commercially adopted, will benefit Oman’s retail sector and provide job opportunities for new graduates.

— ONA

Oman’s pavilion draws crowds at Algiers Intl Book Fair

ALGERIA: The Sultanate of Oman’s pavilion at the 27th Algiers International Book Fair, running until November 16, has captivated a diverse audience eager to explore Omani books, history, and cultural heritage.

Saeed bin Salim al Riyami, Director of the Department of Introduction to Islam and Cultural Exchange at the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs (MoARA), shared that Oman is showcasing nearly 80 titles, divided into books for sale and those displayed exclusively.

Among them are 43 titles for purchase and 41 notable works by His Eminence Shaikh Ahmed



Oman’s pavilion at the 27th Algiers International Book Fair

bin Hamed al Khalili, Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman. Highlighted works include comprehensive collections such as Maqasid al Sharia (4 volumes), Ibadi Jurisprudential Principles

(4 volumes), and Encyclopedia of Light (23 volumes).

Other notable titles cover subjects from Ibadi jurisprudence to Islamic philosophy, alongside publications that celebrate Oman’s architectural heritage, such as Oman’s Mosques and Ancient Shrines.

Reflecting on the turnout, Al Riyami expressed surprise and enthusiasm at the fair’s vibrant atmosphere, noting the interest of students and families alike. A storytelling segment, ‘The Storyteller,’ was particularly popular, engaging young attendees with tales that convey Omani values. — ONA

Oman Science Festival
ends with large turnout

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 11

AFTER eight days, the Oman Science Festival concluded its diverse scientific activities in its fourth edition under the slogan ‘Our Sustainable Resources’, with a large public turnout.

The festival, through its diverse activities, contributed to developing students’ knowledge, and aimed to deliver science to students and members of society through easy means and interactive methods that stimulate creative thinking, and provide positive trends towards science, innovation and scientific research.

It witnessed a large turnout of visitors from different segments of society and those interested in various scientific fields, as the festival presented more than 500 diverse scientific activities that displayed a number of scientific concepts, competitions and scientific courses, and technological devices and applications in an attractive and enjoyable way for students, teachers and members of society alike.

As has been mentioned through Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, that the festival is an exceptional scientific event that reflects the directions and priorities of Oman Vision 2040, which calls for the importance of creating comprehensive education and sustainable learning that contribute to developing innovation and building a knowledge economy.

The festival is a mechanism to encourage students to realise the importance of science in life and urge them to innovate and continue learning in scientific specialisations, to keep pace with global trends based on spreading science and technology and expected future changes and developments, and to



enhance their skills to integrate into the knowledge-based economy.

The organisers and participants praised the festival, stressing that it opened up broad horizons for visitors and those interested in scientific fields. The festival provided visitors with a unique opportunity to explore the latest developments in the fields of science, technology and artificial intelligence, and

included many events that demonstrated the great progress achieved by the Sultanate of Oman in the scientific and technical fields.

The festival reflected the opportunity to increase scientific knowledge and learn about the latest modern technologies in resource sustainability, and the large turnout of visitors to the festival demonstrated the great interest in science in its various fields. With this interest, the festival achieved its goals by spreading knowledge, science, educational programs and modern technology and conveying the concept of sustainable resources and their importance.

The fourth edition of the festival complements the successes of previous editions organised by the Ministry of Education (MoE), with the aim of delivering science to students and community members follow up with global trends for enhancing skills to integrate into the knowledge-based economy.

Neurological disorders in elders a concern in Oman, say experts

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, NOV 11

The prevalence of neurological disorders, particularly among the aging population has become a concern for neurologists in Oman.

The fourth Oman Neurology Conference, held over the weekend at the Maani Hotel, was organised by the Oman Neurology Society, Oman League against Epilepsy, and Oman Epilepsy Society in collaboration with Oman’s Ministry of Health (MoH), Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), and Medical City.



The conference brought together leading neurologists, researchers and healthcare professionals.

Dr Wafa al Shehhi, consultant at the Royal Hospital, said, “One of the primary concerns regarding neurological health in Oman is the rising prevalence of neurological disorders, particularly among the aging population. There is an increasing need for specialised care and resources to manage conditions effectively.

“Additionally, there is a growing concern about inadequate awareness of neurological issues among the public, which often leads to late diagnoses and treatment.”

Dr Wafa, speaking to the Observer, said the conference

yielded several important recommendations aimed at improving neurological care in Oman such as enhancing public awareness where the experts felt there is a need for a concerted effort to increase public awareness about neurological disorders through educational campaigns.

“There remains a significant gap in public understanding of neurological disorders, which affects early detection and treatment outcomes,” Dr Wafa said, adding that the conference highlighted critical issues and strategies to enhance neurological care in Oman.



JAPAN PM ISHIBA SURVIVES VOTE

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba reacts as he receives applause after being reelected as prime minister, at the Lower House of Parliament in Tokyo. Ishiba eventually prevailed as expected, garnering 221 votes, well clear of his nearest challenger, ex-PM Yoshihiko Noda. — Reuters

Kremlin denies call between Putin and Trump

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday denied a reported call between President Vladimir Putin and US president-elect Donald Trump on the Ukraine conflict and said it saw no signs the West was ready for talks. The Washington Post said on Sunday that Trump had spoken by phone on Thursday with Putin, telling him not to inflame the conflict. Trump's election to the White House has the potential to upend the almost three-year conflict and has thrown into question Washington's multi-billion-dollar support for Kyiv, crucial to its defence.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the report, telling journalists it was "false". Steven Cheung, Trump's communications director, said in a written statement: "We do not comment on private calls between President Trump and other world leaders."

A senior Ukrainian presidency official also said Kyiv was "not informed" of any



This combination of pictures shows former US president Donald Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin. — AFP

call between Putin and Trump.

The Republican said on the campaign trail that he could end the fighting within hours and has indicated he would talk directly with Putin. Trump has not said how he intends to strike a peace deal on Ukraine

or what terms he is proposing. He spoke by phone with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Sunday, and the pair "agreed to work together towards a return to peace in Europe," according to Scholz's spokesman.

But Peskov said "there are no preparations" for Putin to hold talks with Scholz and it was too early to say whether Europe's position on Ukraine had changed.

"We see a certain nervousness, various fears among Europeans over the election of Mr Trump as US president," the Kremlin spokesman said. Putin last week "repeated that he is open to all talks," Peskov said, but "no preparation is being carried out now. We have not received any signals." "If they say that some signals will come out, then we have to wait." So far, "European leaders are continuing... to try to achieve a strategic defeat of Russia," Peskov said, while Moscow is "continuing our special operation until we achieve all our aims". — AFP

Israeli tanks roll into central Gaza camp

ISRAELI forces sent tanks into the western side of Gaza's Nuseirat camp on Monday in a new incursion into the enclave's central area, and Palestinian medics said Israeli military strikes had killed at least 11 people since Sunday night. Residents said Israeli tanks opened fire as they rolled into that sector of the camp, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee sites, causing panic among the population and displaced families.

One resident, Zaik Mohammad, said the tanks' advance was a complete surprise. "Some people couldn't leave and remained trapped inside their homes, appealing to be allowed out, while others rushed out with whatever they could carry as they fled," Mohammad said, 25, who lives one kilometre away from the targeted area.

Tens of thousands of Palestinian residents have been told to evacuate the areas, fuelling fears that they may never be allowed to return. In attacks overnight and into Monday, medics said seven people were killed in Nuseirat in two separate Israeli airstrikes, one that hit a tent encampment.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, where Israeli forces have operated since October 5, medics said four people were killed in an Israeli airstrike.

At Kamal Adwan Hospital near



Displaced Palestinians gather to receive meals cooked by a charity kitchen, in central Gaza. — Reuters

Beit Lahiya, medics said Israeli fire from a drone wounded three medical workers in the facility.

Israeli forces have besieged the three hospitals in and around Jabalia for several weeks and hospital officials have refused orders to evacuate the facilities or leave their patients unattended despite the lack of food, medical, and fuel supplies.

The Israeli military accuses Hamas of exploiting Gaza's civilian population for military purposes, a charge the Palestinian group denies.

On Monday, the Israeli military said it had expanded the "humanitarian zone" in the enclave. It also said it would allow more tents, shelter materials, food, water, and medical supplies to enter. — Reuters

COP29 talks stall from start over agenda

BAKU: The COP29 talks opened on Monday with calls for global cooperation and fresh warnings about climate disasters — but proceedings quickly ground to a halt in a fight over the agenda. Donald Trump's re-election is already hanging over the talks in Baku where negotiators are meant to agree new funding for climate action in poorer countries.

As they opened, UN climate chief Simon Stiell told countries: "Now is the time to show that global cooperation is not down for the count." And he warned rich countries

Negotiators must increase a \$100 billion-a-year target to help developing nations prepare for worsening climate impacts and wean their economies off fossil fuels

struggling to agree on a new funding target to "dispense with any idea that climate finance is charity." "An ambitious new climate finance goal is entirely in the self-interest of every nation, including the largest and wealthiest."

But the official proceedings in the capital of oil- and gas-rich Azerbaijan stalled almost immediately.

Negotiators must increase a \$100 billion-a-year target to help developing nations prepare for worsening climate impacts and wean their economies off fossil fuels.

How much will be on offer, who will pay, and who

can access the funds are some of the major points of contention.

Developing countries are pushing for trillions of dollars and insist money should be mostly grants rather than loans, but negotiators are tight-lipped over what final figure might emerge. COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev acknowledged the need was "in the trillions" but said a more "realistic goal" was somewhere in the hundreds of billions.

"These negotiations are complex and difficult," the former executive of Azerbaijan's national oil company said at the opening of the summit. — AFP

Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Defence
ENGINEERING SERVICES

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Ministry of Defence invites Contractors specialized in the under mentioned works and registered with the Govt. Tender Board and Ministry of Defence to participate in the following tender.

Tender No.	Tender Name	Contractors Grade	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Submission Date	Tender Price (RO)
19/2024	HVAC System Works - SHAFA	First & Above - Specialized in HVAC system	26 November 2024	23 December 2024	65/- R.O
28/2024	MEP and Building Work - MAM	Excellent - Specialized in Building & MEP Works	26 November 2024	6 January 2025	315/- R.O
29/2024	MEP Works - IBRA (WATER NETWORK)	First & Above - Specialized in MEP Works	26 November 2024	23 December 2024	100/- R.O
30/2024	MEP Works - SHAFA (WATER NETWORK)	First & Above - Specialized in MEP Works	26 November 2024	30 December 2024	200/- R.O
31/2024	Building Works - MAM	Excellent	26 November 2024	6 January 2025	388/- R.O
32/2024	HVAC System Works - Salalah	Excellent - Specialized in HVAC System	26 November 2024	6 January 2025	353/- R.O
35/2024	Electrical Works - GHALA	First & Above - Specialized in Supply and Installation of Lighting System	26 November 2024	23 December 2024	125/- R.O
36/2024	HVAC System Works - KHASSAB	First & Above - Specialized in HVAC System	26 November 2024	23 December 2024	65/- R.O
38/2024	Building Works - MASIRAH	Excellent	26 November 2024	6 January 2025	1,500/- R.O
39/2024	MEP Works - SALALAH (WATER NETWORK)	First & Above - Specialized in MEP works	26 November 2024	6 January 2025	250/- R.O
40/2024	MEP Works - GHALA (WATER NETWORK)	First & Above - Specialized in MEP works	26 November 2024	30 December 2024	203/- R.O
42/2024	MEP Works - IBRI (WATER NETWORK)	First & Above - Specialized in MEP Works	26 November 2024	30 December 2024	150/- R.O

*For more information about the above Tenders please visit gate number (14)

- Tender Documents (Electronic Tender Document) can be obtained from the Tender office, Gate No: 14, Muaskar Al Murtafa'a after payment of the tender fee indicated above.
- The Payment should be made electronically by using SMART CARD, VISA CARD and VISA ELECTRON. Sunday to Thursday (0900 - 1300 Hours).
- The Bid to be accompanied by Tender Bond in the value of (1%) of the bid value in the form of a Bank Guarantee or Certified Cheque issued by a local bank and addressed to HE the Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Bids are to be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to HE the Chairman of Tender Committee and marked with Tender Number and Name. Name of Bidder or any other marks should not be printed on the envelopes.
- Bids to be deposited in the Tender office at Gate No: 14 Muaskar Al Murtafa'a before 1300 hours on the assigned day for submission of the Tender.
- We would like to draw your attention to the importance of adherence to the submission date, request and any queries related should not be submitted to MODES fourteen days prior to submission of offer & that queries must be on electronic (Microsoft word).
- You are requested to submit the following items within your tender submission, failure to submit the required information may result a disqualification of your offer without any further notification.
 - Percentage of Omanisation within the company supported by an authenticated certificate from the Ministry of Labour (Updated Copy).
 - Detailed priced breakdown to be specified as per scope of works and drawings.
 - Tender Form and Tender Bonds to be submitted as hard copy and others documentation shall be as **SOFT COPY** (USB) in two separate files:
 - Financial (**bill 1&2 separated file from bill 3**)
 - Technical files.
 - Confirmation of site visit.
 - All addendums and circulars.
 - List of sub-contractors/suppliers and their acceptance letter to this project.
 - List of current and executed projects for the last Five years.
 - Valid Registration Certificates from Tender Board.
 - Financial Statement for the last Three years.

OPINION

A law in tune with changing mediascape



THE new Media Law that was issued by the Royal Decree 58/2024 was certainly a need of the hour, especially in today’s era of unfiltered information from myriad sources. The law has considered the evolution of journalism over the past two decades by repealing the Publications and Publishing Law, the Law on the Censorship of Artistic Works, and the Law on Private Radio and Television Establishments, which were limited to regulate the media platforms prevalent at the time. While making it clear that the Ministry of Information (MoI) may not grant a license to carry out any media activity based on religion, sect, denomination, ethnic or class discrimination, or an activity hostile to the principles and values upon which Omani society, it also lays focus on the freedom of the media by guaranteeing the right of natural and legal persons to practice media activities and prohibiting prior censorship on the practice of media activities. As stated by Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, the new law has been rightly aligned with

Oman Vision 2040 by responding to changes and advancements in media and the impact of modern digital technologies. He also mentioned that the law reinforces the mission of Oman’s media by upholding principles of objectivity, accuracy, full neutrality, and freedom of opinion and expression, in accordance with the country’s foundational laws and with a strong emphasis on the values of citizenship and national pride. Various articles in the law have candidly assured that journalists’ professional rights are protected, especially if they are subject to assaults or pressured to reveal their sources. It ensures a safe environment for media work and prevents restrictions on the press and media while at the same time it seeks to prevent the spread of misinformation and rumours that could harm the country’s reputation and cause harm to the society with inappropriate content that can be an incitement to hatred and violence. The law seeks to promote transparency as a tool to combat rumours by pro-

The law seeks to promote transparency as a tool to combat rumors by providing information to the public and by developing an informed media culture

viding information to the public and by developing an informed media culture. To restrict of flow of misinformation from authorised sources, the law requires a media person would require a licence to practice the following activities, which include advertising and publicity, consultations, rebroadcasting or recirculation of any activity, new agencies (including visual), media websites and news accounts, and media activity inside the country. The minister in his statement affirmed that the law reflects His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik’s commitment to empowering Oman’s media and journalists to fulfil their essential and constructive role in the Sultanate of Oman. The law has a clear legal framework for all media platforms such as print, visual, audio, or electronic and ensures raising the level of quality of media production by encouraging media professionals to adhere to professional ethical standards. The focus is also rightly on promoting sustainable development and raising community awareness of important issues.

JAPAN’S RECORD NUMBER OF WOMEN MPs STILL MINORITY

KYOKO HASEGAWA

New lawmaker Saria Hino takes her seat as one of a record number of women in Japan’s parliament, but while campaigning ahead of the recent election, a voter asked her: “Who’s looking after your children?” The mother-of-four was among 73 women elected to the 465-seat house of representatives in October’s vote -- the most ever, but still a small minority at 16 per cent. Having won in central Japan’s Aichi region, the 36-year-old is on a mission to “deliver a message from the front lines” of those raising children or caring for the elderly. “The responsibility for children’s growth should not lie solely on their parents’ shoulders,” said Hino, who was elected to the opposition Democratic Party for the People. “I want to develop policies based on the overwhelming amount of information I have — personally — of what’s going on” at preschools and nursing homes, she said. Japan has the world’s second-oldest population after Monaco and its birth rate has been stubbornly low for decades. There are a range of factors why women are choosing to have fewer children, including rising living costs and expectations that working mothers should still shoulder the domestic burden, child raising and caring for relatives. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who won a parliamentary vote on Monday to keep his job, has called the dearth of new babies a “quiet emergency” and has pledged to promote measures such as flexible working hours. His predecessor Fumio Kishida also sounded the alarm on the looming demographic crisis, expanding parental leave policies and financial aid for families. While the number of preschools is rising in Japan, workforce shortages mean difficult working conditions for nursery teachers, Hino said. “Similarly, a recent government decision to lower funding for elderly care facilities is worsening caregivers’ already tough work environments” she said, warning that they risk closure. Women leaders are rare in politics but also in business in Japan, which ranked 118th of 146 in the 2024 World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap report. Veteran female lawmakers, such as former ministers Seiko Noda and Seiko Hashimoto, have highlighted the difficulties of being a mother and an MP in a parliament where debates often run on until nearly midnight. Women made up just a quarter of candidates in the election and can still openly face sexist jibes. — AFP

Mind, cognitive drivers in the digital age

THE quest to understand the mind, its complexities, and its directives is a continuous journey. Throughout history, prominent philosophers have sought to grasp the enigmatic nature of the mind, which has carved out its own philosophical realm. Interpretations of the mind’s essence have varied, with ancient philosophical schools often framing it within a metaphysical context, while modern materialist philosophies have tended to ground it in physical existence, subject to scientific experimentation. Notably, physicist Michio Kaku views the mind as an evolutionary by-product of human development, a mere offshoot of the evolving human brain. For some, the mind is equated with consciousness, blurring distinctions between mind, consciousness, and brain.

However, advanced scientific approaches, such as quantum physics, have acknowledged a dimension of mind and consciousness beyond pure biological analysis, suggesting an intangible aspect. Contemporary physicist Roger Penrose, for example, posits a quantum dimension to consciousness, hinting at a cosmic mind that transcends space-time constraints, tying it to a universal existence beyond material limitations. This article is not meant to exhaustively dissect the philosophical and scientific dimensions of the mind but to touch on the rationale for employing the mind within a digital knowledge framework that has recently gained philosophical and scientific traction. Numerous theories have emerged from this, exploring the mechanisms and development of knowledge creation.



Japanese physicist Michio Kaku views the mind as an evolutionary by-product of human development



DR MUAMAR BIN ALI AL TOBI

The writer is an academic and researcher

Reforming educational systems does not entail sidelining human intellect but rather fostering collaboration between human cognitive abilities and digital systems

plistic and lacking solid scientific and logical foundations. Nevertheless, rapid advances in AI, such as the recent release of a new generative AI model outperforming its predecessors, highlight the accelerating pace of digital knowledge. This underscores the potential to reimagine rationality and logic within a digital context, bridging human cognition with digital capabilities. In light of these rapid technological shifts, we must re-evaluate educational frameworks, incorporating advanced digital tools capable of thinking and analysing like the human brain but through intelligent simulations. A personal anecdote illustrates this: about seven years ago, I faced challenges developing a complex mathematical algorithm for an AI-driven system, requiring extensive reliance on books, expert consultations, and digital resources over several months. Today, such an endeavour could be expedited through conversational interaction with generative AI models capable of applying mathematical and programming expertise in real-time. This newfound efficiency raises questions about the interaction between human and digital cognition, and whether a balanced partnership is achievable without undermining human creativity and thought. Reforming educational systems does not entail sidelining human intellect but rather fostering collaboration between human cognitive abilities and digital systems. My experience demonstrates the potential for such collaboration, despite traditional education’s concerns about moral and ethical boundaries. Ultimately, maintaining ethical knowledge standards while embracing digital rationality can accelerate knowledge creation and elevate its impact.

Time to indulge in nostalgia...



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of National Day holidays has sparked excitement about how we will spend this time. It has also stirred memories of past holidays and get-togethers.

This year marks the 54th anniversary of Oman's National Day, and many who celebrated the occasion as young children in 1970 are now in their 50s. There is nostalgia in the air.

Nostalgia, a sentimental longing for the past, plays a significant role in our lives, and according to experts, it offers various psychological and emotional benefits. When we understand its positive impact, we may see nostalgia as an important feeling. One might wonder whether nostalgia is an emotion; however, it undeniably contributes to emotional well-being. Nostalgia is something one can tap into anytime. A single image, or even a familiar fragrance, can evoke feelings of comfort and joy.

Nostalgia often brings warm memories and positive emotions, providing comfort in challenging times. This is something worth exploring. In difficult moments, nostalgia can remind us of past happiness, offering a sense of companionship and a renewed sense of purpose. Remembering the good times is essential.

Interestingly, nostalgia may also act as a stress reliever by reducing anxiety, serving as an emotional coping mechanism.

So, why do some people discourage “living in the past”? It could be because nostalgia, while comforting, might sometimes prevent us from moving forward. For some, old photographs serve as reminders of special times. Although today's selfies and filters offer a different approach, the concept of capturing memories remains timeless.

Nostalgic memories support our sense of identity and connection, helping us understand ourselves. As life demands rapid adaptation in the information age, knowing our roots becomes crucial.

Socially, sharing nostalgic memories strengthens relationships and creates a sense of belonging, which is nurturing within families, schools, workplaces, and communities. Organisations that foster a sense of belonging also benefit from increased loyalty. Nostalgia can inspire and motivate us, offering positive reflections on past achievements and joyful moments. This reflection can boost confidence and help individuals embrace future goals.

During times of change, nostalgia can serve as a stable anchor, reminding us that life goes on and that we have the resilience to adapt. Collectively, nostalgia brings cultural and historical awareness. National holidays allow us to connect with our cultural roots, enhancing community bonds and continuity.

Reflecting on the past teaches valuable lessons and insights for personal and

Nostalgia could be a stable anchor during times of transition. It could help individuals navigate change by reminding them of what remains constant

societal growth. This is why history remains a source of fascination, as we seek lessons from explorers and thinkers of old.

Nostalgia is also a tool for creativity. Ancient poems that continue to evoke emotion show how nostalgia connects us with memory and can inspire artistic expression. This connection may even benefit those affected by memory loss, such as dementia patients.

Nostalgia can combat loneliness, a growing issue today, especially among those who relocate for work. Such individuals may find themselves clinging to their cultural celebrations, creating new memories that might become nostalgic in the future. Those who return to their home countries might look back fondly on Oman's November 18 celebrations.

For those with happy memories, nostalgic reminiscing can lead to increased happiness and life satisfaction. So this holiday, embrace nostalgia by sharing stories or photos of cherished moments. If you haven't yet, now is the time to start collecting them.

In essence, nostalgia is a powerful emotional tool that enhances well-being, strengthens relationships, motivates us, and deepens cultural awareness. While it may sometimes bring a sense of longing, its overall effect is often profoundly positive, reminding us of treasured moments that we can begin collecting today for the future. After all, these memories are connections that shape our lives.

BHUTAN TO BUILD ‘MINDFULNESS CITY’ TO WOO INVESTMENT

GOPAL SHARMA AND Y P RAJESH

Bhutan, the Himalayan kingdom that brought the world the concept of gross national happiness, is set to build a “mindfulness city” and began raising funds on Monday to help start the ambitious project.

The “Gelephu Mindfulness City” (GMC) will lie in a special administrative region with separate rules and laws that will aim to be an economic corridor linking South Asia to Southeast Asia, officials said.

The city will promote walking and cycling to reduce emissions, green spaces for meditation and relaxation, mindfulness-based education, public community activities, healthcare and wellness centres, and eco-tourism. GMC will be spread over an area of more than 2,500 sq km on the border with giant neighbour India and offer space to businesses in finance, tourism, green energy, technology, healthcare, agriculture, aviation, logistics, education and spirituality. A Bhutanese sovereign development body announced on Monday the launch of a fixed-term deposit programme to raise funds from non-resident Bhutanese to help build an international airport and other foundational infrastructure in GMC.

“This is more than a financial opportunity; it is a call to contribute to and actively shape our shared vision for a thriving, mindful, and resilient Bhutan,” Ujjwal Dahal, CEO of sovereign body Gelephu Investment and Development Corporation, said in a statement.

The GMC website last week said it was launching a 10-year “Nation Building Bond” to raise \$100 million. But GMC officials said on Monday that there was no bond issuance to private individuals nor was there a set fund-raising target for the entire exercise, without elaborating.

GMC's goal is to attract investment, develop skills and create jobs in the Buddhist-majority country known for its Gross National Happiness (GNH) index — an economic gauge that counts factors ignored by gross domestic product measures, such as recreation, emotional well-being and the environment. A country of less than 800,000 people wedged between Asian giants India and China, Bhutan has been struggling to boost its \$3 billion economy, which is heavily reliant on aid, hydropower and tourism, and was badly hit by Covid-19 restrictions.

Employment woes, with youth unemployment touching nearly 30 per cent in 2022, triggered an exodus of young people seeking opportunities abroad, with thousands moving to Australia alone. — Reuters

There is no alternative to multilateral action

OUR WORLD is at a critical juncture. The devastating effects of global warming are increasingly evident, and the crisis is deepening. To mitigate it, we must urgently reduce global greenhouse-gas emissions. Failing to act now will only increase the human and economic toll.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, presents a unique opportunity for effective collective action. Amid heightened geopolitical tensions and global uncertainty, COP29 will serve as a test of the multilateral system on which humanity's ability to respond to this existential threat depends.

The groundwork for coordinated action was laid in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 with the creation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which established the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to promote consensus-based solutions. The philosophy was simple: given that climate change is a global issue, addressing it requires a collaborative approach.

The UNFCCC fosters cooperation between smaller countries and superpowers, enables civil-society organisations to engage directly with governments, and facilitates cross-border technology transfers. Perhaps most importantly, it provides a framework for collective action in which each country's efforts encourage others to step up their own.

While the 1997 Kyoto Protocol set binding emission-reduction targets for developed economies, it quickly became clear that more was needed. In response, developed countries pledged in 2009 to mobilise \$100 billion annually by 2020 to support developing countries' climate policies.

The 2015 Paris climate agreement marked a turning point, setting the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above



COP29 will serve as a test of the multilateral system on which humanity's ability to respond to this existential threat depends.



MUKHTAR BABAYEV

The writer is President-Designate of COP29, is Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan

pre-industrial levels and ensuring that the increase stays well below 2°C. To monitor progress, the agreement established a system of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) through which each country outlines its emission-reduction plans. Periodic global audits assess whether countries are on track to fulfil their climate commitments.

Regrettably, the first global audit, released ahead of last year's COP28 in Dubai, showed that we are far from meeting these climate targets. It also offered a comprehensive road map, calling on all countries to commit to NDCs aligned with the 1.5°C goal and establishing clear steps and timelines – including transitioning away from fossil fuels – that could bring the Paris agreement's objectives within reach.

COP29 represents the next step for the multilateral approach, with leaders expected to agree on a significant boost to the \$100 billion climate finance target – the so-called New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG). Moreover, each country must submit its updated NDCs by February 2025.

Transparency is essential to this process. If the Paris agreement's targets are the destination, and the NDCs are the road map, the NCQG provides the fuel needed to get there. Building trust in countries'

commitment to bold climate action and willingness to provide the necessary financing is key.

As COP29 President, Azerbaijan is urging all countries to submit NDCs aligned with the 1.5°C target as soon as possible. We are also doing everything we can to secure a fair and ambitious new climate-finance goal that addresses developing countries' needs and matches the scale and urgency of the crisis.

Falling short would force us to confront tough questions: Are we willing to accept the failure of the Paris agreement? And what are the alternatives? One thing is clear: without a viable backup plan, we must do all we can to meet the 1.5°C goal. Sleepwalking into climate catastrophe is not an option. To be sure, the multilateral system has its flaws. But it remains the best framework to tackle this daunting challenge. Over three decades, it has fostered lasting international cooperation, shared understanding of the science, and a strong consensus concerning global climate goals.

The alternative to multilateralism is a fragmented response, with governments pursuing their own agendas without coordination or cooperation. This approach would mean slower progress, higher costs, and less equitable outcomes.

©Project Syndicate, 2024

SPORTS

MASSIVE WIN



A Seeb player dribbles past a Dhofar player.
— Ammar al Musafir

SEEB SWEEP DHOFAR IN OBL ROUT

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 11

Seeb Club secured a massive victory over Dhofar with a score of 125-41 in the 2024-2025 Oman Basketball League season, in a game that displayed Seeb's clear dominance throughout all quarters at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Sunday.

Seeb demonstrated superior performance, winning every quarter thanks to standout players such as Wilfred Romeo, Abdulrahman al Shaibi, Noah al Amri, Zakaria al Wahaibi, Islam al Ajmi and Marwan al Hadidi.

Seeb began the game with high offensive energy, opening with an 8-point lead against Dhofar's 2 points, led by an early three-pointer from Noah al Amri. Seeb continued their aggressive attacks, with Marwan al Hadidi scoring four consecutive points to quickly widen the gap.

Although Dhofar attempted a response with two points from Abdulrahman al Shibli, Seeb maintained their lead, ending the first quarter 30-9.

In the second quarter, Seeb continued their form thanks to the brilliance of Zakaria al Wahaibi and Abdulrahman al Shuaibi. Seeb doubled the score to 40-11 by scoring consecutive points. Dhofar tried to reduce the gap through several attacks, but they were unable to keep up with Seeb, who ended the first half with a large margin of 66-21, after the team scored 26 additional points compared to only 10 points for Dhofar.

In the third quarter, Seeb increased pressure and continued to dominate the field thanks to successive shots from Noah al Amri, Islam al Ajmi and Marwan al Hadidi, who took turns in scoring points, including successful three-point shots. The gap widened to 86-21 by the middle of the quarter, and the attacks continued regularly as Seeb added more points to end the third quarter with a crushing lead of 101-26.

In the fourth and final quarter, Seeb continued to dominate the match. Mazen al Hadid netted a three-pointer, followed by a two-point basket by Wilfred Romeo, making the score 106-26. Despite Dhofar's attempts to reduce the gap, Seeb managed to add 19 additional points, compared to 15 points for Dhofar in this quarter. The match ended with a crushing victory for Seeb with a score of 125-41.

Oman earn one-run win over Dutch in thriller

SPINNERS DOMINATE AS HOSTS POST FOURTH SUCCESSIVE WIN

OMAN'S spinners dazzled once again, leading the hosts to a thrilling one-run victory over the Netherlands in a low-scoring battle at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Monday.

The win marked Oman's fourth consecutive triumph in the Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series, ending their campaign on a high note.

Defending a modest total of 155, Oman's bowlers, particularly the spinners, were relentless. Shakeel Ahmed, Aamir Kaleem, Samay Shrivastav, and Siddharth Bukkapatnam combined efforts to trap the Dutch batters, making it incredibly challenging to chase down the target.

The moment of the match, however, came from captain Jatinder Singh's bold decision to introduce off-spinner Karan Sonavale in the 46th over.

With the Netherlands needing just three runs from 30 balls and Oman desperately needing a wicket, Sonavale's first over of the game saw him dismiss Aryan Dutt, who skied a catch to Muzahir Raza, igniting jubilation in the Oman camp.

The Dutch side's chase began with setbacks as Ahmed, Oman's prolific wicket-taker throughout the series with 13 dismissals in four matches, removed both openers to leave the Netherlands at 33/2 after 12 overs.

Kaleem, Oman's wily spinner, then tore through the middle order, and Shrivastav's economical bowling kept the pressure on, leaving the Netherlands floundering at 70/6 in 24 overs.

Dutch hopes were revived briefly by a resilient 52-run stand between Teja Nidamanuru (34) and Timm van der Gugten (17) for the seventh wicket. However, Kaleem once again swung the game in Oman's favour by breaking the partnership in a match where momentum see-sawed dramatically. Bukkapatnam, making his debut, delivered a crucial over, removing Roelof van der Merwe and Nidamanuru in the span of five balls to bring the hosts within touching distance of victory.

The last-wicket pair of Kyle Klein and Aryan Dutt pushed Oman's nerves to the edge, forging a gritty 24-run stand that almost clinched the match for the Netherlands. But it was Sonavale's surprise entry into the bowling attack that turned the tide, sealing a dramatic one-run victory for Oman.

The spin quartet shone brightly, with



Oman players celebrate after their win against the Netherlands.



Aamir Kaleem receives player of the match award from Kiran Asher, Oman Cricket board member.



Oman skipper Jatinder Singh raises his bat on reaching his half-century against the Netherlands at the Oman Cricket Academy on Monday.

Kaleem finishing with impressive figures of 4/24, Ahmed taking 2/15, Bukkapatnam chipping in with 2/23, and Shrivastav and Sonavale contributing one wicket each. This consistent spin assault left the Dutch batters struggling throughout their innings.

Earlier, Oman's innings was built on a solid foundation laid by openers Ashish Odedara and Jatinder Singh, who shared a 94-run stand in 24 overs. Odedara scored 41 off 70 balls, including five boundaries, while Jatinder completed a measured half-century, scoring 59 off 89 balls with six boundaries.

However, Odedara's dismissal triggered a collapse as Oman fell from 94/1 to 113/7 within 10 overs. The Dutch spinners, led by Colin Ackermann (4/22) and Roelof van der Merwe (3/30), exploited the conditions skilfully, reducing Oman to 125/8.

A late surge from Jay Odedra, who struck a quick 22 off 22 balls with three sixes, and a record 30-run last-wicket stand with Raza, who scored 10, helped Oman reach 155 in 44.2 overs. This resilience at the end proved crucial in what turned out to be a nail-biting contest.

With Monday's win, Oman, coached by Duleep Mendis, improved their points tally to 14 from 12 games, staying at fifth place in the eight-nation League 2 standings.

The Netherlands and Scotland have also accrued 14 points but maintain a superior net run rate (NRR), with Scotland having played one less game. The United States top the table with 16 points, followed by Canada. Namibia (10 points), Nepal (6), and the UAE (4) complete the standings.

OCRf concludes third race with 89 rounds in Barka, Adam

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, NOV 11

The third race of the 22nd edition of the annual camel races for the 2024-2025 season was concluded on Sunday, which was held over three days with 89 rounds in Barka and Adam fields.

The event was supported by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY) and organised by the Oman Camel Racing Federation (OCRf) in cooperation with the Royal Camel Corps (RCC).

The race included 46 rounds at the RCC field in Al Felaj in the Wilayat of Barka and 43 rounds at the Al Bashayer race track in the Wilayat of Adam.

The first day on Friday witnessed 36 rounds dedicated to the 'Hagayeg' category (for two-year-old camels over a distance of 3 km).

On the second day of competition, 27 rounds were held on Saturday, with 12 rounds in Adam and 12 rounds in Barka for the 'Laqaya' category (three-year-old camels over a distance of 4 km). Additionally, three rounds for human riders were held over 2 km.

The third day on Sunday witnessed 26 rounds, equally divided between Barka and Adam, with 12 rounds for the 'Al Ythaa' category (four-year-old camels over 5 km), six rounds for the 'Al Thanaya' category (five-year-old camels over 6 km), and eight rounds for the 'Al Hawl' category (camels above six years of age over 6 km).

SECOND DAY RESULTS
(Read as round, camel, name, owner, time)

'Jabaliya', Hamad bin Mohammed al Wahibi, 6m:23s

'Al Noud', Shteit bin Salim bin



Shteit al Maliki, 6:25

'Al Hurr', Hamad bin Ali bin Hamad al Wahibi, 6:19

'Munhaf', Ali bin Rashid bin Muslim al Amri, 6:27

'Al Saylah', Said bin Amer bin Salim al Mughairi, 6:30

'Mouj', Ali bin Amer bin Said al Ghafili, 6:24

'Mansourah', Ali bin Jameel bin Sabah al Wahibi, 6:28

'Jameela', Ali bin Mohammed bin Hamad al Wahibi, 6:32

'Haddaj', Salim bin Mubarak bin Hdeib al Hishami, 6:30

'Al Dana', Hamad bin Mohammed bin Salim al Wahibi, 6:31

'Intisar', Al Saghir bin Fayil bin Said al Zarai, 6:32

'Marouh', Salim bin Suleiman al Wahibi, 6:32

'Zafaranah', Amer bin Salim bin Said al Zarai, 3:17

'Shuroot', Amer bin Salim bin Said al Zarai, 3:17

'Thameen', Amer bin Salim bin Said al Zarai, 3:19

THIRD DAY RESULTS
(Read as round, camel, name, owner, time)

'Al Shaibah', Saif bin Salim bin

Hamood al Shibi, 8:06

'Tahdheer', Hamad bin Salim bin Mohammed al Madhoushi, 8:12

'Nasi', Badr bin Ali bin Khalfan al Shamsi, 8:13

'Al Aasifah', Saad bin Hamad bin Ali al Janibi, 8:15

'Raha', Said bin Mohammed bin Salim al Wahibi, 8:15

'Nasi', Waleed bin Sulaiman bin Nasser al Rashidi, 8:19

'Nahb', Royal Camel Corps, trainer: Rashid bin Salim bin Ali al Ghailani, 10:06

'Mihnah', Salih bin Al Ghafeeq bin Al Saghir al Maliki, 10:04

'Al Rawy', Jumaa bin Said bin Ali al Zarai, 10:01

'Zahia', Ali bin Mohammed bin Hamad al Wahibi, 10:14

'Awaid', Shtait bin Salim bin Shtait al Maliki, 10:04

'Al Muheet', Saad bin Ali bin Hamad al Janibi, 10:24

16TEAMS



FOURTH EDITION OF SEA CHAMPIONSHIP BEGINS IN MUSCAT

KABEER YOUSUF @kabiyousef

The fourth edition of the Sea Championship 2024 began under the auspices of Shaikh Khalil bin Khalfan al Wahaibi, member of the Majlis Ash'shura representing the Wilayat of Muscat at the Ittifaq Yiti Sports Stadium on November 7.

The event was also attended by Ibrahim bin Ahmed al Maimani, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sea Sports Team, Engineer Saeed al Hadi, Shaikh Majid al Kiyumi and Sameh bin Salem al Wahaibi, and a number of members of the Municipal Council in the Wilayat and supporters of the championship, in addition to the heads of the sports teams in the Wilayat of Muscat.

As many as 16 teams are participating in the championship, namely, Al Bahr, Shabab Al Murtafaat, Bandar Al Khairan, Shabab Qantab, Tunis, Ittihad Al Amerat, Husn Al Sifah, Muscat, Amjad Yiti, Al Salam, Al Hilal, Al Wehda, Shabab Yankat, Sahel Oman, Saih Al Dhabi and Qantab.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Shaikh Khalil bin Khalfan al Wahaibi expressed his thanks to the organisers, stressing that this championship enhances relations and communication between young people and supports brotherhood ties between teams, hoping that the tournament will achieve its goals in supporting sports.

“The Sea Championship, which is Oman’s very own test of the best team, aims to enhance consistency and familiarity between the participating sports teams, and highlight the sporting and artistic aspects of these teams,” Al Wahaibi said.

The tournament is played in a group system, as it consists of four groups: Group ‘A’ includes the teams of Al Bahr, Shabab Al Murtafaat, Bandar Al Khairan, and Tunis, and Group ‘B’ includes the teams of Shabab Qantab, Ittihad Al Amerat, Husn Al Sifah, and Muscat. Group ‘C’ includes the teams of Amjad Yiti, Al Salam, Al Hilal, and Al Wehda, while Group ‘D’ includes the teams of Shabab Yankat, Sahil Oman, Saih Al Dhabi, and Qantab.

The opening day witnessed two matches in Group ‘A’, where Al Bahr Sports Team met the Shabab Al Murtafaat Sports Team in a competitive match that ended with the victory of the Shabab Al Murtafaat Team with a score of 2-1. The second match brought together the Bandar Al Khairan Team and the Tunis Team, where Bandar Al Khairan managed to win with a score of 2-1 as well.



Grand conclusion to Oman International Para Athletics

AHMED AL KAABI MUSCAT, NOV 11

THE SEVENTH edition of the Oman Para Athletics Championship concluded at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher, with the participation of over 150 athletes from the GCC and several European nations, including the Czech Republic and Greece. Organised by the Oman Paralympic Committee (OPC) in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), and under the supervision of the International Paralympic Athletics Federation, the meet showcased outstanding athletic competition over the past days.

On the final day, numerous athletes delivered remarkable performances across various events. Omani athlete Iman Taisir won the gold medal in shot put (classes 34 and 32), while Bahraini Zahra al Jabouri took the silver and Oman’s Maryam al Shidi claimed the bronze. In the girls’ discus throw (classes 34 and 33), Iman Taisir again won gold, with Bahrain’s Zahra Jabouri securing silver, and Czech athlete Veronika Kapatoch taking bronze.

In the men’s javelin throw (classes 62, 46, and 41), Raed al Harafi from Saudi Arabia’s Al Madinah Club clinched the gold, Czech athlete Jakub Chalupa took silver, and Oman’s Mazin Abdullah earned the bronze.

In the 400m sprint, Bahraini athlete Ahmed Noah won the gold medal, with fellow Bahraini Nasser al Waqaz securing silver.

In the men’s discus throw (classes 57 and 56), Islam Haider al Yahyai from Saudi Arabia’s Jazan Club won the gold, Bahrain’s Youssef al Jalasi claimed silver and Oman’s Talib al Balushi took bronze. Islam Haider al Yahyai also won the gold in the men’s shot put (class 57), followed by Abdullah al Dahnani from UAE’s Khor Fakkan Club with silver and Oman’s Khalifa al Yahyai with bronze.

In the girls’ discus throw (classes 56, 55, and 54), Bahrain’s Rouba al Omari won gold, Czech athlete Miroslava Berova took silver and fellow Czech Eva Kacanu earned the bronze.

In the men’s 200m sprint, Oman’s Saif al Maqbali took gold, while Fadi al Hisawi from Saudi Arabia’s Al Madina Club won the silver and Rayan Mohamedi from Saudi Arabia’s Jazan Club earned the bronze.

In the long-jump (class 12), Omani athletes swept the podium, with Othman al Khamisi winning the gold, Faisal al Balushi taking the silver and Saqr al Qasimi claiming the bronze.

In the men’s javelin throw (class 57), UAE’s Khor Fakkan athlete took the gold, Oman’s Ali al Habsi secured the silver, and Oman’s Saeed al Shidi took the bronze.

In the men’s 100m sprint (classes 54 and 53), Bahrain dominated with Nasser al Waqaz winning the gold and Ahmed Noah taking the silver.



In the men’s 100m sprint (classes 47, 35, and 36), Oman’s Taha al Harrasi won gold, followed by Oman’s Saif al Maqbali with silver and Saudi athlete Fadi al Huthawi with bronze.

In the men’s shot put (classes 46 and 41), Bahraini Saeed Khamis Ahmed took gold, Raed Al Awadhi from Saudi Arabia’s Al Madina Club won silver and Omani Mazin Abdullah earned bronze.

In the men’s javelin throw (classes 33 and 34), UAE’s Khor Fakkan athletes took the top three positions, with Mubarak al Fahani winning gold, Abdulaziz al Kindi silver, and Ahmed al Naqbi bronze.

KEEN CONTEST

In the men’s discus throw (classes 52, 54, and 55), Abdullah al Musbahi from UAE’s Khor Fakkan Club won gold, Czech Dusan Smbara took silver, and fellow Czech Lukas Lernet earned bronze.

In the men’s javelin throw (classes 52, 54, and 57), Oman’s Maktoum al Maqbali won gold, UAE’s Abdullah Musbah took silver and Czech athlete Lukas Krenota earned bronze.

In men’s shot put, UAE’s Abdullah al Musbahi took gold, Omani Maktoum al Maqbali silver, and Czech Lukas Krenota bronze.

In the men’s discus throw (classes 33 and 34), Czech athlete Mark Duda won gold, while UAE’s Khor Fakkan athletes took silver and bronze, with Abdulaziz al Kindi and Ahmed al Naqbi, respectively.

In the men’s shot put (class 37), Saudi athlete Hamza al Hussawi won gold, UAE’s Majid Al Lohaini took silver, and Omani Amer al Shibli earned bronze.

In the men’s javelin throw (class 37), Oman’s Amer al Shibli took gold, Saudi’s Hamza al Hussawi took silver and UAE’s Ubaidah al Mulla claimed the bronze.



In men’s shot put (classes 32 and 33), Oman’s Mohammed al Mashaikhi won gold, Bahrain’s Saad al Saad took silver and UAE’s Ahmed al Naqbi claimed bronze.

In the girls’ javelin throw (classes 54 and 55), Bahraini Rouba al Omari won gold, Oman’s Rawan al Hasani took silver and Czech Eva Kacanu claimed bronze.

In the men’s 200m sprint (class 20), Omani athletes swept the podium with Mutasim al Hamadani winning gold, Yazan al Nabhani silver and Khalifa Awlad Thani bronze.

In the girls’ javelin throw (classes 56 and 57), Czech athlete Miroslava won gold, Oman’s Ghalia al Jabri took silver and Oman’s Fatima al Kaabi getting the bronze.

In the men’s shot put (classes 11 and 12), Omani athletes took the top three positions, with Rashid al Siyabi winning gold, Ammar al Kalbani silver and Naif al Qasimi bronze.

In men’s shot put (class 34), Czech athlete Mark Dauda took gold, Omani Abdullah al Shidi took silver, and Czech Lukas Herka earned the bronze.

In the men’s 100m sprint (classes 12 and 13), Omani athletes dominated, with Saqr al Qasimi winning gold, Faisal al Balushi taking silver and Awab Mubarak earning bronze.

In the girls’ 100m sprint (class 20), Oman’s Sajaa al Harthy took gold, while her fellow Omani Shahd al Ajmi got silver and Gina al Musalihi took bronze.

In the girls’ 200m sprint (class 20), Omani athletes claimed the top three positions, with Aisha al Harbi winning gold, Hawraa al Alawi taking silver and Sajaa al Harthiy earning bronze.

In the 800m race, Bahraini athletes dominated the top two positions, with Nasser al Waqaz winning gold and Ahmed Noah securing silver.

Buttler blast powers England over West Indies in T20 series

BRIDGETOWN: Jos Buttler’s rampaging 83 powered England to an emphatic seven-wicket victory over the West Indies in the second match of their T20 International series at Kensington Oval in Barbados on Sunday.

Responding to the home side’s total of 158 for eight, the visiting captain took the match by the scruff of the neck in belting eight fours and six sixes off only 45 balls to turn a potentially challenging target into a romp.

The tourists reached 161 for three off just 14.4 overs to take a 2-0 lead heading into the final three matches of the duel in St Lucia

starting next Thursday.

Coming to the crease off just the second ball of the innings after Phil Salt, the century-making match-winner of Saturday’s first match, had fallen first ball to spinner Akeal Hosein, Buttler wasted little time in setting about a West Indies bowling attack missing suspended pacer Alzarri Joseph, injured fast-bowling all-rounder Andre Russell and fielding debutant seamer Terrance Hinds who endured a baptism of fire against a rampant Buttler.

A second T20 International hundred looked his for the taking but after being badly dropped



Jos Buttler (R) of England hits 6 to bring up his 50 and Nicholas Pooran (L) of West Indies watches during the second T20I match. — AFP

by Sherfane Rutherford at extra-cover off Romario Shepherd in the 13th over, the England skipper fell next ball as another attempted heave over the

top found his West Indies counterpart, Rovman Powell at long-off.

Buttler inevitably dominated a second-wicket stand of 129 with Will Jacks,

who contributed 38 off 29 balls with five fours and one six.

“It was scratchy for the first couple of balls but when I got going I really enjoyed it. It was great to be back out there,” said Buttler on receiving the “Man of the Match” award

Jacks was the first of two wickets for Shepherd, taken at second attempt at long-off by Matthew Forde, who had earlier played his part together with the rest of the West Indies lower-order to give the innings useful late impetus after they were put in to bat on a surface freshened by steady rain throughout the early morning.

Powell top-scored with 43 off 41 balls (two fours, two sixes) but his demise in the 16th over left the innings in trouble at 102 for six. Shepherd’s 22 off 12 balls breathed some late life into the home side’s effort with the support of the tail.

Liam Livingstone was the best of the bowlers with two for 16 and was there at the end to seal victory with an unbeaten 23 off 11 balls.

However nothing could take the shine off Buttler’s assault which leaves the tourists well-poised to avenge a 2-1 loss to the West Indies in the preceding One-Day International series. — AFP

SPORTS

PREMIER LEAGUE



Arsenal's William Saliba in action with Chelsea's Wesley Fofana. — Reuters

ARSENAL FALLING BEHIND IN RACE FOR EPL TITLE

ANDY JALIL
LONDON, NOV 11

The drawn game at Chelsea, with a goal for each side in the second half, did little for Arsenal's hopes for the Premier League title which has eluded them since 2003-04 when they ended the season undefeated with a team that was famously known as the 'Invincibles'.

Arsenal, along with Chelsea are now nine points behind the leaders Liverpool and even though it's early days in the season, Liverpool are steaming too far ahead of other contenders.

Arsenal manager, Mikel Arteta, said: "I'm disappointed with the result because we deserved more. And at the same time I'm very proud of the team for the way we played against this opponent in this stadium. They have battered everyone here and it wasn't the case today.

"What I'm praying for is that after the international break we have the team fully physically equipped. That they are available and that they are fit because it's been a nightmare for eight weeks. Doubt after doubt, issue after issue, not only with the ones that are not able to play, but with the one's who are able to play only for certain moments."

He added: "So I'm just asking that, because the desire the team has and how much we want it there's no question. It's going to come. We just need on our side to be more consistent.

Arsenal's joy was short lived as within ten minutes Chelsea drew level. Enzo Fernandez had come on as substitute and he located Neto who from 22 yards drove in a low, left-footed shot into the bottom corner.

"After scoring the first goal I'm very disappointed with how we conceded their goal. That's nowhere near the standards of our defensive habits. The moment you give space and time to any of their players with the quality that they have you're going to get punished, so that's not bad luck."

The goalless first half was finely balanced

but there were missed chances by both sides. For Chelsea Noni Madueke headed wide from a cross by Cole Palmer and Malo Gusto wasted a better chance when he headed over from a beautiful curling cross from Pedro Neto.

Arsenal thought they had scored in the 32nd minute when, from a quickly taken free kick by Declan Rice, Kai Havertz slotted in a shot but it was ruled off-side.

Arsenal took the lead on the hour when an excellent cross from Martin Odegaard, having received a pass from Thomas Partey, found the unmarked Gabriel Martinelli who controlled the ball well before slamming in a shot inside the near post from a tight angle.

But Arsenal's joy was short lived as within ten minutes Chelsea drew level. Enzo Fernandez had come on as substitute and he located Neto who from 22 yards drove in a low, left-footed shot into the bottom corner.

The most glaring miss of all came in the last second from what would have been the last kick of the match and would have brought Arsenal's winner. William Saliba's cross from the left went across the six-yard box right in front of the goal and Leandro Trossard, at full stretch, could only reach to put the ball further across instead of tapping it in.

Chelsea manager, Enzo Maresca, said: "Very soon we are going to win these type of games. We at least 100 per cent deserved a point."



Norway's Casper Ruud serves to Spain's Carlos Alcaraz during their match at the ATP Finals tournament in Turin on Monday. — AFP

ALCARAZ GETS RUUD AWAKENING IN ATP FINALS OPENER

CARLOS ALCARAZ suffered a shock 6-1, 7-5 defeat against Norway's Casper Ruud in his opening match at the ATP Finals as the Spaniard's hopes of winning the year-end title for the first time suffered a big blow on Monday.

The round-robin format of the eight-man event means he could still crown a standout year in style, but the third seed has left himself with little margin for error in his remaining group matches and will need to find a higher level.

World number seven Ruud, who had lost all four of his previous meetings against Alcaraz, saved break points in the opening game but dominated the first set from then on as surprising errors flowed from the Spaniard's racket.

Alcaraz responded positively to move 5-2 ahead in the second set, breaking serve with a deft volley, and was two points from levelling the match only to capitulate.

Ruud failed to convert his first two match points but closed it out at the third attempt to put himself in a strong position in the John Newcombe group

He dropped serve at 5-3 and looked forlorn as Norwegian Ruud roared to victory, winning the last five games.

Alcaraz, who won the French Open and Wimbledon titles this year, is hoping to become the first Spaniard to win the prestigious year-ending title since Alex Corretja in 1998.

Ruud failed to convert his first two match points but closed it out at the third attempt to put himself in a strong position in the John Newcombe group which continues later on Monday when Germany's Alexander Zverev takes on Russian Andrey Rublev.

"This is one of the best wins of the season for me," Ruud said in a court-side interview.

"I feel happy of course. I've seen Carlos play better tennis than he played today but I still had to take my chances."

The Ilie Nastase group began on Sunday with world number one Jannik Sinner beating debutant Alex De Minaur and American Taylor Fritz overcoming

Russian Daniil Medvedev.

While Alcaraz did claim the Beijing title in September his form since winning Wimbledon has been patchy including a second round exit at the US Open.

The 21-year-old made 34 unforced errors against Ruud with his usually destructive forehand misfiring and most of the drop shots he attempted either finding the net or being dispatched easily by the grateful Norwegian.

Ruud, who reached the final in 2022 when he lost to Novak Djokovic, said Alcaraz had been suffering with a cold in Turin.

"I knew he was maybe dealing with a cold, I've seen him snuffling around in the player area with tissues so that's a sign maybe he's not 100 per cent physically," he said.

"That's sad for him but it's also part of the game and I knew it coming and wanted to make him play rallies. I was able to turn around the second set with some good tennis at the end."

— Reuters



MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
4,683.020

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$73.50
BRENT \$72.93
LIGHT \$ 69.34





بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

All the best and everything you need

Benefit from the Wage Protection Scheme with SME Business Banking

Dedicated Call Center for SME Customers

[www.bankdhofar.com](#) 2477 5773

Please Scan to know more





SHORT TAKES



Treasury bills play a significant role in setting a benchmark for short-term interest rates in Oman's financial market.

GOVERNMENT TREASURY BILLS TOTAL RO 48 MILLION

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced that the total value of government treasury bills issued this week reached RO 48 million.

These bills were divided into two maturity periods: RO 15 million allocated for 28 days with an average price of RO 99.685 per RO 100, a discount rate of 4.11%, and a return rate of 4.12%. Meanwhile, RO 33 million was allocated for 91 days, priced at RO 98.866, with a discount rate of 4.55% and a return rate of 4.60%. The CBO specified the interest rate on repurchase operations for these bills at 5.25%, while the discount rate on treasury bill facilities is set at 5.75%. Treasury bills serve as a short-term, secured investment tool issued by the Ministry of Finance, providing an investment outlet for licensed banks.

Treasury bills serve as a short-term, secured investment tool issued by the Ministry of Finance, providing an investment outlet for licensed banks. These bills offer quick liquidity as they can be discounted or used in repo transactions with the Central Bank of Oman.

Additionally, treasury bills play a significant role in setting a benchmark for short-term interest rates in Oman's financial market, and provide a flexible option for the government to meet financing needs efficiently. — ONA

Oman launches first locally developed satellite ‘OL-1’

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, NOV 11

OMAN

SPACE-TECH start-up Oman Lens announced that it launched the first locally developed satellite yesterday, November 11, 2024, from a launch facility in Jiuquan in China.

The AI enhanced remote sensing satellite ‘OL-1’ was launched on board Chinese commercial carrier rocket Lijian-1 Y5 with 14 other satellites onboard, from the Dongfeng Commercial Aerospace Innovation Test Zone, according to the Chinese news agency, Xinhua.

Oman Lens said the satellite is a result of a collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Chinese space company Star.

A spokesperson from Oman Lens underscored the significance of the event, saying: “The launch of OL-1 is an historic moment for the Sultanate of Oman, as it not only boosts our observation capacity, but also leverages AI to provide high-speed analysis directly from space.”

The satellite is enhanced with artificial intelligence technologies, and specialises in remote sensing and earth monitoring.

According to the company, the satellite’s AI enhanced qualities allows it to “detect changes, classify land cover and monitor environmental conditions with a higher degree of accuracy” in comparison to traditional satellites, at faster rates.

Data from the satellite will be used to monitor the country’s landscapes, infrastructure and natural resources.

Furthermore, the company revealed that the satellite is the first of a planned constellation of 20 satellites.

“As we look to the future, we are excited about our ambitious plans under Oman Vision 2040. Our goal is to launch a constellation of twenty satellites



Oman's first domestically developed satellite OL-1 was successfully launched on Monday.

The AI enhanced remote sensing satellite ‘OL-1’ was launched on board Chinese commercial carrier rocket Lijian-1 Y5.

with opportunities for growth, and we are committed to continuous improvement and adaptation to emerging technologies in alignment with the Sultanate of Oman's national objectives,” the spokesperson added.

The launch of the satellite represents a significant milestone in Oman's growing space industry. It is the second private-sector Omani satellite to be launched, following ETCO-Oman's nanosatellite Aman-1 last year. Similarly, government officials unveiled that the Sultanate of Oman is in the process of acquiring its first national satellite.

Oman launches study on green and circular economy

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 11

The Ministry of Economy has embarked on a strategic national study aimed at strengthening the development of a ‘Green and Circular Economy’ in the Sultanate of Oman.

The comprehensive, currently well underway, seeks to assess the economic costs, benefits, and investment opportunities associated with reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

“This study is expected to provide a comprehensive economic framework that supports sustainable economic growth, with a focus on investments in green industries, job creation and skills development.

“It aims to facilitate partnerships across various sectors to achieve integration and strengthen the green economy,

Illustration of an integrated green steel complex under development at Duqm.

enabling Oman to fulfil its international commitments to mitigate climate change,” said the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation

Follow-Up Unit in its latest report. Also as part of the study, a roadmap will be chalked out to support a comprehensive

transition to a green economy.

Opportunities for investment in priority sectors will be identified, while other prospective green economic sectors will be developed as well. It will assess the competitive market value of investment and financing mechanisms.

Another key objective of the study is to promote collaboration among stakeholders to enhance the green economy, while also supporting sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Following the groundbreaking announcement in October 2022 of a national pledge to become carbon neutral by 2050, Oman has evolved into a leading hub for green investments.

In particular, the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) has attracted an expanding array of mega-scale green molecule projects, as well as industries that

will capitalise on the availability of low-carbon fuel in the zone.

At least three large-scale projects will focus on the production of green hydrogen and its derivatives, capitalising on the abundance of solar and wind resources in Al Wusta Governorate.

Separately, a number of international players have pledged to invest in, among other decarbonised industries, the production of green steel and low-carbon feedstock for metals industries.

“The efforts undertaken aim to support sustainable economic growth in Oman and enhance its global reputation as a hub for green investments. This will contribute to achieving carbon neutrality and bolstering the competitiveness of the Omani economy on the international stage,” added Oman Vision 2040 in its report.

ADVERTORIALS



BNY recognised Bank Muscat for its advanced digital infrastructure and adherence to global standards in the SWIFT system.

BANK MUSCAT WINS BNY’S STP AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has been honoured with the prestigious ‘The Bank of New York Mellon Corporation (BNY) STP Award’ for excellence in US dollar-denominated fund transfers for commercial and financial payments. BNY, America’s oldest bank and the first company listed on the New York Stock Exchange, recognised Bank Muscat for its advanced digital infrastructure and adherence to global standards in the SWIFT system, which facilitates seamless, efficient payment processing.

Commenting on the achievement, Talal bin Abdul Hameed al Zadjali, Deputy General Manager – Operations, Bank Muscat, said: “This award, which the bank consistently receives, demonstrates its exceptional ability to process payments promptly and securely with minimal risk or delay.

“Achieving this standard of quality in banking services, especially in remittances and foreign payments, is a priority for the bank. The repeated recognition from various international institutions highlights the quality standards the bank maintains in its electronic payment services, affirming its leadership in the banking sector and strengthening its position in adopting modern technologies for efficient transaction processing.”

Bank Muscat continues to strengthen its leadership position by offering superior banking services and solutions, with a focus on product innovation and the expansion of electronic payment and online services. Its ongoing efforts to meet the needs of diverse sectors through new products and enhanced channels have been widely recognised.

In recognition of its excellence in payments and banking services, Bank Muscat has received numerous awards this year from international banks, including Citibank, Wells Fargo and JP Morgan. It has also been honoured by esteemed institutions such as Global Finance, Euromoney, The Banker and EMEA Finance for its exceptional service to both individual and corporate customers.

For 240 years, BNY has partnered alongside customers, putting its expertise and platforms to work to help them achieve their ambitions. BNY supports governments in funding local projects and works with over 90% of the top 100 pension plans to safeguard investments for millions of individuals, and so much more.

As of September 30, 2024, BNY oversees over \$52 trillion in assets under custody and administration and \$2.1 trillion in assets under management.

Drive away a JAC with unbeatable price offer

MUSCAT: As Oman’s automotive market continues to expand, JAC Motors presents a remarkable opportunity for drivers to experience high-quality vehicles at unbeatable prices with its latest campaign, “Drive Away a JAC with an Unbeatable Price”. This limited-time offer allows motorists to own a stylish, reliable and feature-packed vehicle at prices that are hard to ignore.

Whether you’re in the market for a family-friendly SUV, a sleek sedan, or a rugged pickup truck, JAC Motors offers a wide range of models tailored to meet the diverse driving needs and preferences of Oman’s motorists.

The compact JAC S3, starting from just RO 4,299, offers a seamless blend of economy, practicality and style. With its efficient fuel consumption and



This limited-time offer allows motorists to own a stylish, reliable and feature-packed vehicle at prices that are hard to ignore.

Ominvest, OIA successfully hosted 16th IFSWF meeting

LEADERS from over 40 sovereign wealth funds, representing trillions of dollars in assets, convened in Muscat last week for the 16th Annual Meeting of the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds (IFSWF). The event, organised by the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) with Ominvest as the Event Hosting Partner, focused on navigating disruption and building resilient investment strategies for sustainable growth. Themed ‘Embracing Disruption and Searching for Resilient Futures,’ the exclusive event featured insightful keynote speeches, dynamic panel discussions and engaging networking opportunities.

Attendees included global financial leaders managing over \$8 trillion in assets, along with influential figures such as Elon Musk, who emphasised the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in finance, urging investors to embrace innovation while managing associated risks.

Abdulaziz al Balushi, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ominvest, commented, “Partnering with OIA to host the IFSWF Annual Meeting in Oman has been a remarkable opportunity for us to connect with global investors.

“This engagement directly supports Oman Vision 2040 by attracting foreign direct investment, promoting economic diversification and strengthening Oman’s presence on the international financial stage. The themes explored at the event resonate deeply with our strategic priorities as we are committed to create sustainable value and positive impact on our community as we grow



The event featured keynote speeches, dynamic panel discussions and engaging networking opportunities.

Attendees included global financial leaders managing over \$8 trillion in assets, along with influential figures such as Elon Musk, who emphasised the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in finance, urging investors to embrace innovation while managing associated risks.

our business. We believe this initiative will shape the future of investment in Oman and beyond.”

As part of the event’s activities, Ominvest’s Chief Investment Officer, Wadhah al Adawi, participated in a key panel discussion titled ‘Is Traditional Asset Allocation Broken?’. The panel addressed some of the most pressing challenges faced by institutional investors today, including geopolitical tensions, inflation and rising interest rates.

Al Adawi emphasised the need for investors to diversify into alternative assets, adopt a long-term perspective. It also explored how investors

must rethink traditional asset allocation strategies and adopt new approaches, including leveraging advanced technologies to optimise portfolios for sustainable growth.

The event served as a platform for Oman to highlight its unique investment advantages, attracting global attention to the country’s efforts towards economic diversification. Moreover, the discussions held and partnerships formed at the event have laid a strong foundation for future collaboration among sovereign wealth funds, paving the way for long-term value creation across regions.

NBO INTRODUCES CONTACTLESS PAYMENTS GARMIN PAY

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) announces the launch of Garmin Pay, a seamless payment solution that empowers customers to make secure, contactless payments directly from their Garmin smartwatches.

As the first bank in Oman to offer Garmin Pay, NBO continues to lead digital banking innovation, providing customers with seamless and convenient ways to manage their finances.

Garmin Pay allows NBO customers to store their NBO Credit, Debit and Badeel



NBO continues to lead digital banking innovation.

Prepaid Cards information securely on their Garmin devices, enabling transactions by simply tapping their

smartwatch. This secure, hassle-free payment method aligns with NBO’s commitment to enhancing customer experiences through advanced digital solutions, making everyday transactions faster and easier.

Setting up Garmin Pay is straightforward. Customers can link their NBO Credit, Debit and Badeel Prepaid Cards through the Garmin Connect app, ensuring secure card information storage directly on their smartwatch. Once set up, transactions can be made at any contactless

payment terminal by holding the device near the reader. This makes it ideal for various purchasing scenarios – from quick coffee runs to retail shopping.

NBO’s introduction of Garmin Pay is part of its broader digital strategy to offer innovative financial solutions that align with its customers’ evolving needs. This new feature strengthens the bank’s position as a digital leader and supports Oman’s vision of fostering a tech-savvy, digitally empowered society.

SHORT TAKES



The workshop aimed to equip leaders with effective tools to support OQ's growth.

OQ WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON “LEADERSHIP WITH CONTROL”

MUSCAT: OQ Group’s Internal Audit Department recently held a workshop titled “Leadership with Control,” emphasising the importance of control, governance and compliance within the workplace.

The workshop, attended by 220 officials from regulatory authorities and OQ companies, aimed to equip leaders with effective tools to support OQ’s growth while enhancing transparency and accountability.

Abdulrahman al Harthy, CEO of Internal Audit at OQ, highlighted that the workshop underscored the importance of robust internal controls and adapting to technical advancements in control and governance.

OQ Group CEO Ashraf al Maamari reinforced this, noting that a strong focus on compliance and control not only benefits OQ, but also strengthens relationships with external stakeholders.

The workshop centred on three main areas: compliance-related controls, operational controls and technical oversight.

OIL FALLS AS CHINA STIMULUS FAILS TO BOOST SENTIMENT

MUSCAT: The official price of Oman crude oil for January delivery reached \$73.05. Oman crude oil price on Monday witnessed a decrease of 76 cents compared to last Friday’s price of \$73.81.

The monthly average price of Oman crude oil for November delivery reached \$73.49 per barrel, down by \$4.05 compared to October delivery.

Meanwhile, international oil prices fell on Monday, after China’s stimulus plan disappointed investors seeking fuel demand growth in the world’s No 2 oil consumer and as the US dollar edged higher.

Brent crude futures fell \$1.10, or 1.5% to \$72.93 a barrel by 1101 GMT while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were at \$69.94 a barrel, down \$1.21, or 1.7%.

The dollar firmed 0.40%, as traders prepared for a key reading of US consumer inflation this week, as well as Federal Reserve speakers, including Chair Jerome Powell on Thursday.

A stronger dollar makes greenback-denominated commodities such as oil more expensive for holders of other currencies and tends to weigh on prices. — Agencies

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, NOV 11

OMAN OILFIELD services company, Hema Energy, in a move set to strengthen Oman’s energy manufacturing capabilities, has entered into a significant agreement with China’s Shengji Group to construct and operate a wellheads manufacturing facility in Oman. Aimed at advancing local content and supporting Oman Vision 2040 goals for industrialisation, this partnership represents a crucial step towards a self-sustained supply chain for Oman’s energy sector.

Azzan Moghrob Asmi, Acting Group Managing Director of Hema Energy, shared insights on the collaboration in an exclusive interview with the Observer, highlighting the strategic motivations and potential impact of this factory on Oman’s economy.

“Hema and Shengji Group have a strong partnership that goes back more than seven years,” Asmi explained.

“For the past year, we’ve been exploring options to establish a facility that aligns with our local content objectives, concentrating on essential, in-demand products for the Omani market.”

FULFILLING LOCAL DEMAND AND BEYOND

The planned factory will focus on producing low to mid-pressure wellheads, with capacities ranging from 2000 to 5000 psi (pound per square inch). Initial production is expected to start with 100 wellheads annually, with a target of reaching 500 wellheads per year over the next five to seven years.

The facility’s eventual goal is to meet Oman’s domestic demand and venture into exports. “Local content has become a priority across various sectors in Oman,” said Asmi.

“This initiative will enhance supply chain responsiveness, ensuring that wellhead components are readily



Azzan Moghrob Asmi, Acting Group Managing Director of Hema Energy (2nd, right), with the representatives of Shengji Group.



The facility’s eventual goal is to meet Oman’s domestic demand and venture into exports.

available within the country. Additionally, we’ll be able to stock critical spare parts locally, reducing downtime for end-users.”

The project is also expected to generate job opportunities for Omani citizens, which will contribute to workforce development within the energy sector.

“One of the most significant outcomes of this facility will be the openings created in the job market, particularly for Omanis,” Asmi added.

COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT AND ROLES

According to Asmi, Shengji Group will serve as the technical partner, providing its expertise in wellhead manufacturing, while Hema Energy will act as the local arm, facilitating market access and liaising with local stakeholders.

“We’re both investing in the facility based on our respective equity in the project,” he noted. “Shengji will bring the ‘know-how,’ while Hema Energy will play a crucial role in market penetration, helping to establish this facility as a key local supplier.”

The collaboration will bring economic benefits as well. By keeping production and cash flow within Oman, the facility aims to enhance cost efficiencies over time, allowing the locally made product to compete on price with imports.

SUPPORTING VISION 2040 AND FUTURE EXPANSION

Aligning with Oman Vision 2040 goals, the wellheads factory is poised to play a key role in the country’s industrialisation efforts.

“The energy sector is critical to Oman’s economy, and establishing local production capabilities is essential for sustainability,” Asmi emphasised. “While our primary focus is to serve Oman, we are also looking ahead to exporting our products in the future.”

Hema Energy is already taking steps to integrate environmentally friendly processes at the new facility. “Currently, we manufacture flanges in our Oman Flanges facility, which covers about 50% of the wellhead production process.

“We’re optimising efficiency and reducing environmental impact, aiming to move toward nearly zero waste,” Asmi explained. Future plans include expanding the facility to incorporate forging capabilities, which will further reduce waste and support sustainable manufacturing.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Asmi acknowledged that there are regulatory challenges involved in gaining approval for the locally made products.

“Registering our products with clients and achieving official approval could take an average of two years,” he pointed out. “The rest are administrative processes that we are prepared to handle.”

Looking to the future, Asmi envisions a strong reputation for Hema Energy within the industry.

“Our ultimate goal is to leverage Oman’s free trade agreements with the USA and Singapore for exporting,” he said. “We see this project significantly elevating our brand.”

Asmi also hinted at more developments in the pipeline, revealing that Hema Energy is close to finalizing two additional agreements.

“We’re working on bringing other long-standing products into the local market under the ‘Made in Oman’ label,” he shared, underscoring the company’s commitment to enhancing Oman’s industrial base.

Business delegation from India explores investment opportunities in Salalah

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
SALALAH, NOV 11

A business delegation from the Indian state of Goa recently visited Salalah to explore potential business collaborations and investment opportunities across various sectors.

The delegation included Ryan Vaz, Founder Director of Infynit3D Pvt Ltd; Kishor Sarsolkar, Founder of Mukta EyeCare; Hena Pandey, CSR and Sustainability Consultant; and Rahul Jain, Financial Consultant.

During their visit, the team met with members of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) at its Salalah chapter, where they discussed avenues for collaboration with local business leaders. The meeting was chaired by Naif bin Hamid Fadhil, Chairman of the OCCI for Dhofar Governorate.

Kishor Sarsolkar expressed interest in establishing an eyewear



The delegation explores potential business collaborations and investment opportunities.

manufacturing facility in Salalah, leveraging the city’s strategic location and proximity to key markets in the Middle East and Africa.

“Salalah is an attractive place

for business due to its transport infrastructure, the distinctiveness of our product, and our nearly 50 years of experience in the eyewear industry,” Sarsolkar remarked.

Ryan Vaz of Infynit3D Pvt Ltd

shared his expertise in business collaboration, skill development and training. He expressed interest in fostering educational partnerships between Goa and Oman, particularly in STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). “Our goal is to empower young minds through creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving, thereby driving innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth in the education sector,” he said.

Rahul Jain, a financial consultant, was particularly impressed by Oman’s rapid development and explored the possibility of establishing a financial consultancy firm in either Muscat or Salalah.

CSR and Sustainability Consultant Hena Pandey highlighted the potential for supporting entrepreneurship in Oman. In discussions with local stakeholders, she emphasised the importance

of a robust incubation ecosystem to help start-ups thrive. “A well-guided incubation process can drive start-up success and employment creation. Oman offers significant opportunities in this area,” Pandey noted.

Commenting on the visit, Rakesh Jha, a member of the OCCI Foreign Investment Committee, said, “This delegation from Goa exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and mutual growth. Salalah’s unique location and infrastructure make it an ideal destination for Indian businesses looking to expand into the Middle East and Africa.

“We are optimistic that this exchange will pave the way for impactful partnerships that benefit both countries.”

The delegation also held meetings with business leaders in Muscat and engaged in discussions with officials at the Indian Embassy, Muscat, to strengthen Indo-Omani business ties.

OPINION

Basic steps to speak to anyone easily - Part 2



TARIQ
AL BARWANI

The author
is the founder
of Knowledge
Oman

THE FIRST part of my article on the basic steps to speak to anyone was published last week. We have established the importance of having the “speaking skill” and agreed on the benefits that one can attain (at a personal and professional level) for knowing and utilising the same. Briefly, the article illustrated the groundwork that one needs to do and work on before commencing on the journey of speaking to any stranger (or a new person per se). This week, my focus is to list down the steps, something I personally did and continue to do, with my networking engagements.

First and foremost, as mentioned in last week’s article, be prepared. Know where you are going, who you are meeting, get the theme/agenda of the event beforehand, and then set your objectives and goals. This is an important basic step that many don’t do and, as a result, end up in a non-comfortable situation.

Next, once you’re in the event, and as I mentioned in my last article, scan the space/venue to see the people around, and then target the ones you see looking around (like what you are doing) and approach them with a positive smile and ensure you have direct eye contact with them as you shake hands (depending on the same gender and ensuring you follow cultural/religious norms). This step shows you being an open, jolly and positive person

that would obviously make others feel comfortable.

Now I know that some people say you need to start a conversation with open-ended questions. Don’t, because the goal really is to make the other person feel comfortable at first. Hence, start with close-ended questions. Ensure you ask them something that they don’t have to think a lot about before answering.

Try and ensure these close-ended questions make the other person feel you are interested in them. Once a person knows you are interested in them, they become comfortable. And depending on how the person is answering your close-ended questions, you will get an idea of whether the person is interested in talking to you. You can go ahead with the open-ended questions to carry on the conversation once you establish that the other person is comfortable with you.

When the conversation happens, you need to be listening actively. I had written a complete article in the past on the importance of listening. It’s a crucial skill in any field, and allows you to truly understand the needs, concerns and aspirations of the people you’re communicating with.

Last week, Donald Trump won significantly the support of the votes for winning the presidential election by focusing on topics people felt strongly

Be prepared.
Know where you
are going, who
you are meeting,
get the theme/
agenda of the
event beforehand,
and then set your
objectives and
goals.

about, like jobs, immigration and national security. He listened to voter concerns about issues they felt were overlooked and positioned his platform around those topics. In my opinion, he was an active listener, while the other contestant wasn’t, and hence the glory back to the White House.

Obviously, try and look for common interests while discussing and be mindful of your body language (as it sends a non-verbal message) of your feel and state. For example, be focused on the person and avoid looking away (or on your smartphone), as this can appear you’re disengaged.

Lastly, before you end the conversation, ensure that you show the person that you enjoyed talking with them, exchange contact information and move on to the next person to start the journey once again.

To conclude, I would like to emphasise that being able to speak to and having the confidence to do so opens up a world of opportunities. By following the steps mentioned in this article, you will not only be more confident yet also gain valuable returns from insights to potential collaborations that may not be possible otherwise.

If you want to stand out in the crowd, all you need to do is be positive. Now that you have the basics, keep practicing to be more comfortable and remain a winner in any gathering context. Until we catch up again next week, stay positive.

GERMANY’S
COALITION COLLAPSE
BRINGS MORE PAIN
TO ITS ECONOMY

THE collapse of Germany’s ruling coalition is set to bring more economic pain in the months ahead, offering only a glimmer of hope for Europe’s ailing economic giant if, and that is a big if, it can lead to a less fractious government and more coherent policies.

The break-up occurred at a critical juncture for Europe’s biggest economy, just hours after Donald Trump won the US presidential election, raising the spectre of a tit-for-tat trade war with Germany’s main trading partner.

On Wednesday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz dismissed his finance minister, paving the way for a snap election after months of internal conflict within his three-party coalition, further damaging confidence in an economy already struggling with high energy costs and declining competitiveness. Germany, the world’s third-largest economy, has lagged behind the European Union average since 2021 and is expected to shrink for the second consecutive year in 2024, making it the worst performer among the Group of Seven major economies.

The coalition collapse is likely to deal another blow to consumption and investment in the coming months, which are already poised to decline, with a third of German companies indicating in a recent survey that they plan to scale back.

“In combination with the Trump win, economic confidence is likely to drop significantly, making a contraction of the economy in the fourth quarter more likely,” said Carsten Brzeski, global head of macroeconomics at ING.

Brzeski added that the following quarter could bring further weakness, potentially more contraction, but also a much-needed fresh impulse.

“With elections scheduled for March, there is hope that a new government will end the economic paralysis, finally providing economic policy guidance and certainty,” he said.

Scholz plans to hold a parliamentary confidence vote in his government on January 15, which could lead to snap elections by the end of March. Until then, he is expected to lead a minority government with his Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens, relying on ad-hoc parliamentary majorities to pass legislation.

The Christian Democrats lead in the polls, but there is no polling majority for a purely centre-right or centre-left coalition. This suggests that finding policy compromises might remain challenging, according to JP Morgan analyst Greg Fuzesi. “In this sense, new elections are likely to result in a similar government,” Fuzesi noted.

Nonetheless, any new government might provide at least some economic momentum

“Once the dust settles, and a new government with a fresh agenda takes power after snap elections, the impact is likely to be positive,” said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg.

— Reuters

New green steel firms
could reap rewards

ON THAILAND’S eastern coast, plans are underway to build an electric arc furnace that will deliver green steel to Europe and benefit from contentious new rules that will force buyers to pay tariffs on high-carbon imports.

Governments and industry associations in Asia have lobbied ferociously against Europe’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and it could cast a shadow over COP29 climate talks in Baku, Azerbaijan, next week, with China and others calling for an end to green trade barriers.

CBAM was designed to stop European firms evading carbon compliance costs by sourcing commodities from regions with laxer environmental rules.

Formally launched in 2023 as part of the European Green Deal, it will force importers to buy credits to cover the emissions of the steel, aluminium, cement, electricity and chemicals they buy from outside the EU.

From 2026, CBAM will start imposing levies on steel production, a sector responsible for around 7% of global carbon dioxide emissions, and the levies will be fully phased in by 2034. But while CBAM might price some manufacturers out of Europe, it will make cleaner but costlier technologies more competitive and open up the market for firms like Meranti Green Steel, which is building the Thai plant.

“We see (CBAM) as an opportunity,” Meranti’s chief executive Sebastian Langendorf said. “We do believe that new, focused green steel players have an advantage: we have no CO2 legacy.”

The EU imported 16 million tonnes of finished steel products from Asia in 2023, with mills from South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, India and Turkiye competing in a highly price-sensitive market.

CBAM has helped turn low-carbon production into a “market differentiator”, said Antonio Della Pelle, senior operations manager at the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation, which is investing \$60 million in a green steel



Labourer works inside a steel factory in Kanpur, India. — Reuters



DAVID STANWAY

The writer reports
on climate and environmental topics,
including the state
of the oceans and
the long transition
to clean energy.

plant in Indonesia.

Singapore-headquartered Meranti is investing \$2 billion in a 2.5 million metric tonne-per-annum electric arc furnace in the Thai city of Rayong that will start producing greener steel in 2028.

Up to 70% of its products will be exported to Europe in the first phase, and it has already signed six EU-focused offtake agreements, Langendorf said.

Emissions at the plant are expected to stand at around 600 kg per tonne of steel, significantly lower than the 2,000 kg from coal-fired blast furnaces. Using current carbon prices, that could represent a 100 euro (\$107.80) difference per tonne of steel in the CBAM levy. Meranti expects to take advantage of a European green steel supply gap likely to exceed 20 million tonnes by 2030 — as well as a green premium as high as \$300 per tonne — with rising carbon costs forcing old European blast furnaces to close.

Established players are also ramping up their green steel capabilities, including Indian steelmaker JSW, which is planning a 4-million tonne per annum plant at Salav on the country’s western coast.

“Obviously the CBAM and

carbon tax regulations that are coming elsewhere are accelerating our decisions,” said Prabodha Acharya, JSW’s chief sustainability officer.

Once CBAM tariffs hit their maximum in 2034, JSW aims to produce all its exports to the EU in furnaces powered by renewables and using recycled scrap as feedstock, he said. But unlike Meranti, only a small proportion of JSW’s total output will be produced by lower-emission plants, and critics warn CBAM is creating a “two-tier market” allowing giant mills to produce green steel for Europe and dirty steel for everyone else.

Proponents of CBAM argued that as well as tackling carbon leakage, it would also help encourage the decarbonisation of industries abroad, but under a two-tier market, firms could game the system, building only a limited amount of green capacity merely to serve Europe.

The two-tier loophole would narrow once CBAM-type regimes are introduced elsewhere. Britain is already set to implement its own carbon tariff mechanism in 2027, and Australia, Canada and the United States are considering similar moves. — Reuters

Classifieds

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2024 | JUMADA AL ULA 10, 1446 AH

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

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



■ **FOR RENT**

16,000 sqm
(2 portions
of 8,000 sqm
each).
Open yard/
storage area
with compound
wall 24
hours CCTV
surveillance &
other amenities
for rent in
Jifnain close to
Muscat Nizwa
Highway.
Contact:
99105784.



PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocoraches),
Public Health chemicals, Agriculture
chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits
and other insect repellent from
UK & USA

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



Tel: 2787606, 2787503
Direct Line: 2786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

FOUR STAR TECHNICAL SUPPLIES LLC

(FORMERLY OMEIR NASSER AL FALAHY & PARTNERS TRAD. CO. LLC)

"Quality products defined by exceptional service"



Our Products:

ELECTRICAL, BUILDING MATERIAL,
HARDWARE, OILFIELD INDUSTRIAL
EQUIPMENT & TOOLS











































P.O. BOX 3897, P.C. 112, RUWI, MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN

Tel: +96824837874, Fax: +96824831341

Mobile: +96889354944

Email: onasser@omantel.net.om / nelson@onasser.com

FOR RENT

WAREHOUSE
/ workshop
2,600 sqm for
rent in Misfa
near Oman
Cement Factory
including
accommodation
contact: GSM
98286899, email:
sales@jetsoman.
com

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072



■ SIT. VACANT

Looking for a Local Sponsor cum Investor to start a new profitable industrial business in Oman. Email- pradeepdivakar69@gmail.com

SIT. WANTED

Indian male 14
years experience
light/ heavy
driver.
Looking for
suitable opening
currently in
Oman. Contact:
77050986/
91280205,
email:
kokkadmou@
gmail.com

Indian male
(Mechanical
Engineering)
with 3 years
experience in
Diesel engine
works (Gensets
/ Engines) 2
years in Machine
Maintenance
seeks job.

Contact:
78022420

Planning Engineer,
PMP, Indian male
11 years experience
in Construction
Projects.
Well versed with
Primavera P6
Software, strong
communication
skills, Interpersonal
skills, EDT Claims,
Recovery schedules,
project control.
Having Omani
Driving License.
Contact: 78002582,
email:
engineer4planning@
gmail.com

A Sudanese resident in Salalah, Bsc of administrative sciences with 21 years of experience in the fields of (sales/ management/ logistics and fleet).
Contact: +968 98510880.

Accountant
with overs
6 years of
experience
Detail-Oriented
Financial
Professional:
Expert in
Accounting,
Audit Prep,
and Expense
Management:
Contact: +968
78320801,
Ready to join
immediately.

B. COM. 35 years
of experience in
accounts, sales
coordinator,
admin, HR,
personal assistant,
document
controller with
Oman D/L,
looking for a job.
Contact: 92558734

Indian Female,
M-Tech in
Environmental
Engineering,
B-Tech in Civil
Engineering. 7
years of Teaching
experience as Asst.
Professor, 2 years
of professional
experience in civil
construction and
soil investigation.
Seeking suitable
job, now in
Muscat.
Contact:
95136664,
79620397
Email:
mayakrishn.1804@
gmail.com

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

I am a Business Analyst
seeking part-time
/ contract work.
Expertise in:

- Business Planning.
- Market Research.
- Financial Projections.
- Technical Writing.
- SOPs, Manuals.
- Workflows.
- Templates, Presentations.
- Event Planning.
- Digital Marketing Contact: vincyth8@gmail.com, 79823038

Indian female,
B tech,
Electronics and
Communication
graduate 2 years
experience,
looking for
suitable job, now
in Muscat.
Call: 94061884,
whatsapp:
+919946440893
email:
anjupg62@gmail.
com

INDIAN, 17 years
Oman experience
including project
coordination,
administration,
corporate
communication,
CEO office,
operations,
immediate
joining. Contact:
99283938.

10 YEARS Oman
experienced
draftsman
with valid D/L,
seeking for
suitable positions.
Contact:
94408342.

INDIAN,
excellent English,
Arabic speaker,
Oman experience
in airport
project, hospital
construction,
handling project
administration,
corporate
communication,
chain man's
office, operations.
Contact:
99283938.

FOR RENT

In Ruwi, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, hall, kitchen, with car parking. RO 150 monthly only. Tel: 94402003.

FOR SALE

Find your dream home in Muscat's finest residential neighbourhoods near a children's park and sports promenade, a 6 room villa in Al Ghubrah South opposite Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. For more details, contact: 91377029.

Mechanical Engineer
with 3 years experience
in Automotive and
Manufacturing industry
with good Knowledge
of AutoCAD and
CATIA seeking full time
employment in Oman.
Available immediately
for interviews.
Contact:
99467878 Email:
jamesmathew240@
gmail.com

29 years old Indian female, MBA holder with 2 years experience. Seeking a suitable position. Currently in Muscat on visit visa. Contact: 78641071, shazashakeel@gmail.com

■ LOST

TAMARA Mohamed has
lost Tanzanian Passport
No TAE299063.
Finder please handover
to ROP.

OMAN  DAILY

Observer

FREE*
CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

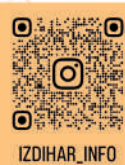
To advertise please contact:
Tel: 71455532/ 71455531/ 71455530
Email: adv@omaninfo.om

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels

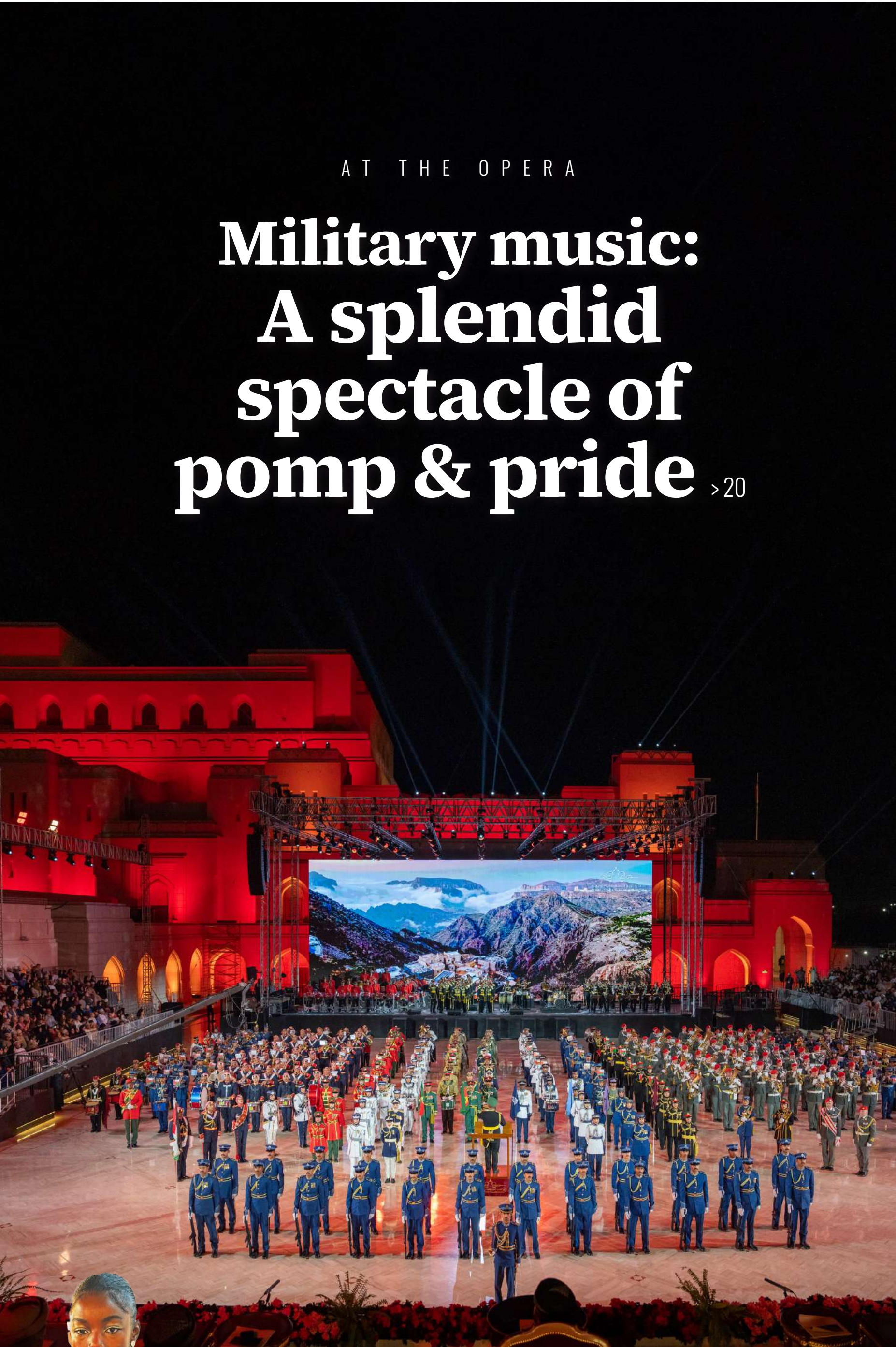


To advertise

71455532- 71455531- 71455530
adv@omaninfo.om
izdihar_info izdihar.info



ART/LIFE



AT THE OPERA

Military music: A splendid spectacle of pomp & pride >20

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Is it healthy to eat just once a day?



“One meal a day is not a good idea,” said Dr Caroline Apovian, an obesity specialist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

Apovian is a proponent of intermittent fasting in general, and she recommends it to many of her patients with obesity. Compared with eating plans or diets that require counting calories or cutting out many foods, intermittent fasting is a relatively simple way to control what you eat.

But for most people, the OMAD diet would be a disaster, she said. “If I tell my patients to eat one meal a day, they’re going to be starving all day,” she added. Then, they’re likely to overeat at dinner because they’ll rely on whatever happens to be in the house, she said.

It can also be challenging to get all of your daily calories in a single sitting, especially if you’re active. Mark P. Mattson, an adjunct professor of neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, said that people who say they follow the OMAD diet probably aren’t following it exactly: They’re most likely eating more than once a day and perhaps doing so within four hours rather than one.

Apovian’s advice is to try to eat only during the hours between sunrise and sunset (which technically is a form of intermittent fasting, she said). She suggests having a protein-rich breakfast and meals with plenty of protein, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Then, stop eating at 6 pm or 7 pm, she said — which may be after sunset, depending on where you live.

Mattson himself follows an intermittent fasting routine, eating exclusively between 12 pm and 6 pm every day.

In his view, the typical American diet — three meals a day, plus snacks, starting from shortly after waking to not long before bedtime — is discordant with how humans and other animals evolved to eat back when food wasn’t readily available, he said.

“Our genes and cellular systems are adapted to function very well in a food-deprived state,” he added.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SUGGEST?

Intermittent fasting research often has significant limitations, typically involving small groups of participants and conducted over short time frames, resulting in mixed findings.

While some studies suggest that intermittent fasting can aid in weight loss — like the OMAD diet, where participants lost weight by eating one meal per day — other research indicates that calorie reduction, rather than specific meal timings, plays a crucial role in weight loss.

Additionally, insights from Mattson’s research suggest that alternating eating and fasting may activate cellular processes that improve blood sugar regulation and reduce inflammation. — **NYT**

QUICK FEATURES

FASHION

A model presents a creation by designer Virginie Viard as part of the Chanel Cruise 2024/2025 collection show, in Hong Kong, China. — **AFP**



ART

A view shows an art installation by visual artist Jean Marie Appriou titled “Vessel of Time” during the fourth edition of “Forever is Now”, an international art exhibition provided by Art D’Egypte that reimagines Egypt’s ancient civilisation through contemporary art in Giza Pyramids. — **AFP**



ENTERTAINMENT

American actor and musician Jeff Goldblum attends Universal’s “Wicked” premiere at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. — **AFP**

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Visiting the Old Souq



Out of the City

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.

Brazilian fossil hints at older origin for all dinosaurs



A dog-size reptile slipped through fern-choked forests 237 million years ago in what is today Paraíso do Sul, Brazil. The animal had the body of a greyhound, a long neck and tail, and a small, nipping beak. The reptile looked remarkably like an early dinosaur. Yet it lived almost 10 million years before any other known dinosaurs. A new study argues that this animal, Gondwanax paraisensis, in fact is one of the oldest dinosaurs ever found. Further support for this finding could solve the mystery of how and where the largest family of plant-eating dinosaurs emerged. Since the 1800s, most palaeontologists have agreed that all dinosaurs share a common ancestor that emerged

about 200 million to 250 million years ago, said Steve Brusatte, a palaeontologist in England who was not involved in the study. They were reptiles called archosaurs, and some had shared anatomical traits. Those ancestral dinosaurs split into three major subgroups: predatory theropods, long-necked sauropods and the ornithischians. The last group included beaked herbivores such as triceratops, stegosaurus and iguanodon. The silesaurids had been considered either direct forerunners of dinosaurs, or extremely close relatives, said Rodrigo Temp Müller, who is a palaeontologist in Brazil and an author of the new study. — ASHER ELBEIN /NYT



Rome’s Trevi Fountain unveils tourist catwalk during cleaning

A SUSPENDED WALKWAY providing tourists an up-close view of Rome’s Trevi Fountain was unveiled last week, a temporary addition while the famous “La Dolce Vita” site undergoes a cleaning. The Baroque masterpiece constructed on the facade of a palace is one of the most popular sites in Rome for tourists, who strain over the crowds to throw their coins into its water. While the fountain is being cleaned to remove limestone deposits and grime, however, the walkway positioned over its basin will accommodate some 130 people at a time to take a closer look. That will give tourists “an experience not ruined by excessive crowding,” said Rome’s mayor, Roberto Gualtieri. “We wanted to give everybody the opportunity to admire the fountain and to do this from a unique perspective, because what you can see from the walkway, you will never be able to see normally,” he said. French tourist Franck Petretto, 50, was one of the first to walk across the passageway, calling the view “wonderful and very, very beautiful.” “Even without the water flowing inside the fountain, you can really see that the architecture is serious... and that’s really very pleasing,” he said. Micaela di Caterina, a 32-year-old visiting from Argentina, agreed, saying the up-close look at the intricate sculptures of Oceanus, father of the river gods, and his sea-horses was “incredible”. Still, she acknowledged, it was “kind of weird” to be walking over the fountain. - NO COIN TOSS - The fountain — where Anita Ekberg frolicked in Federico Fellini’s 1960



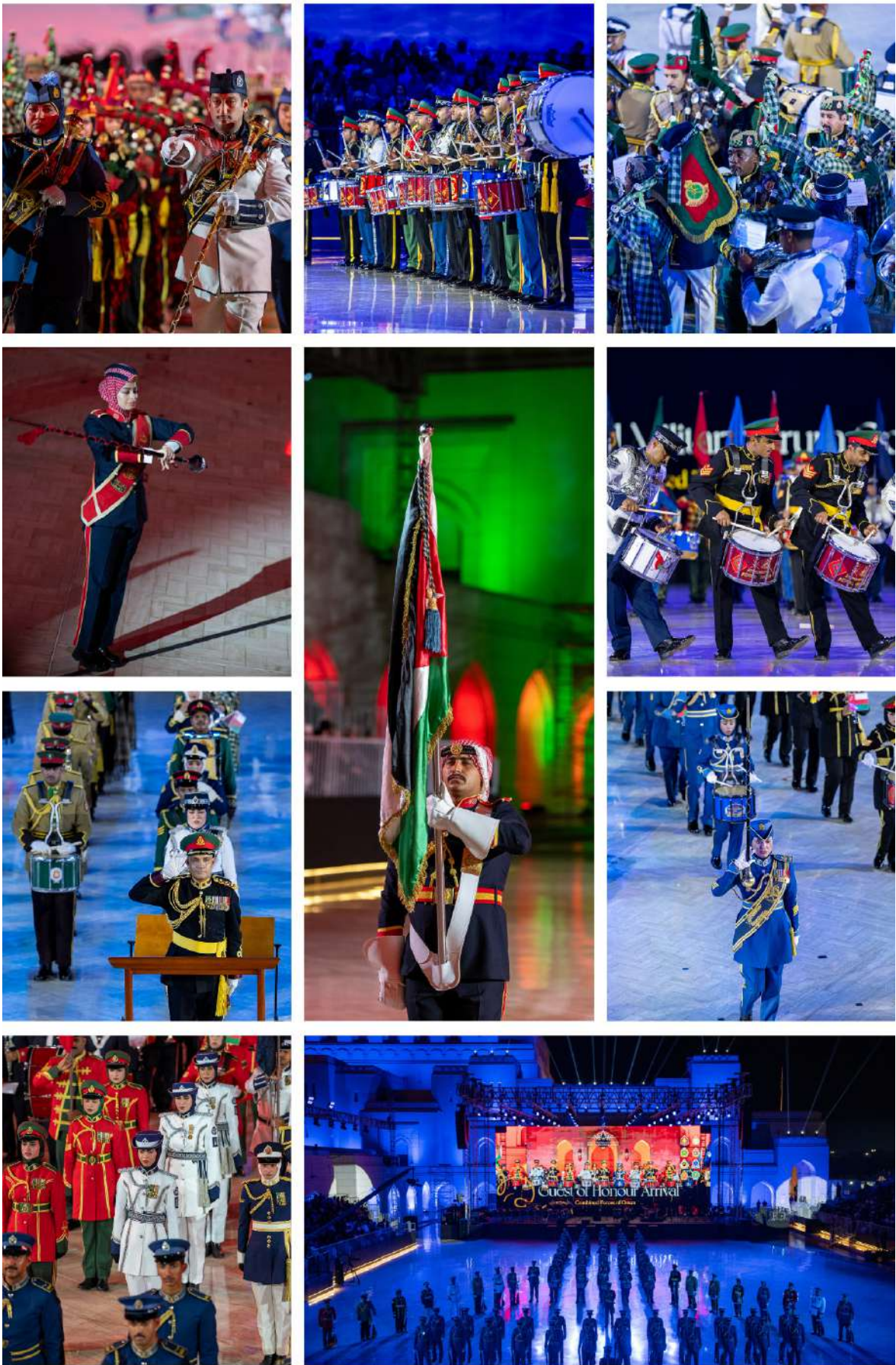
film “La Dolce Vita” — last got a thorough scrub a decade ago during an 18-month renovation sponsored by Fendi. Then, too, the Italian fashion house installed a plexiglass bridge above the basin allowing tourists to still admire the fountain. The current work involves removing limestone deposits on the fountain’s facade, which can turn black with time, while removing loose material between stones where vegetation grows. Tourists won’t be allowed to toss coins over their shoulders into the fountain’s basin — where tradition has it that visitors who do so will return to Rome. Instead, a small pool set up next to the walkway has been installed to receive spare change. That pool “allows us to avoid throwing coins, which, without water, would damage the fountain,”

Gualtieri said, adding that anyone doing so would be fined. It also allows the flow of donations to Rome’s needy to continue. Every week, authorities recuperated some 10,000 euros in coins from Trevi Fountain, which were donated to the Caritas charity to fund meals, said Gualtieri. “We are proud not to have interrupted such an important work for those in difficulty,” he said. The walkway will be up until the cleaning is complete, sometime in December. Gualtieri said city officials were still considering a possible ticketing system to control the crowds at Trevi Fountain once the cleaning is over. Visitor numbers are expected to surge next year for the Jubilee, a holy year held by the Catholic Church around once every 25 years, with some 30 million people expected in Rome and the Vatican. — AFP

The Military Music event at ROHM was a spectacular showcase of military bands and cultural performances, celebrating national pride through meticulous coordination, vibrant music, and dazzling displays of skill and unity.



Military music: A splendid spectacle of pomp and pride



BY GEORGINA BENISON
PHOTOS BY KHALID AL BUSAIDI

THE MILITARY Music: Oman and the World 2024 at the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) bore witness to the tremendously hard work and dedication of the Sultan's Armed Forces, in collaboration with the ROHM front-of-house staff. The logistics of marshalling eight branches of military bands, two guest troupes, plus the lighting, sound, film crews, and stewards needed for such an undertaking are nothing short of astounding. Added to this was the extra tight security required for the safety of audiences last Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, for which tiered seating had taken a week to erect. The result was truly impressive and must have filled the hearts of all attendees with a deep sense of pride and admiration. 6,600 tickets were sold out well in advance, and each evening saw the stands bursting to capacity.

As ever, the opening and closing ceremonies were awe-inspiring in their precise coordination of all the bands taking part. This year's visiting bands were from Jordan and Austria.

For a full 45 minutes before the show began, audiences were entertained by the Caribbean sounds of the Steel Band and Military Choir conducted by Lennox Jordan and the Jazz Big Band under Douglas Hill.

The Military Band of the Royal Air Force of Oman kicked off proceedings, entering the arena from two ends in their petrol-blue uniforms and matching tartan, to accompany the National Anthem.

The rousing opening fanfare was performed by the colourful Combined Bands in perfect, synchronised formation. 'The Resilient March', composed by former leader Darroll Barry — dearly remembered and much missed — opened the marching display, followed by a Traditional March, 'Chanting Pipes'. They marched off to 'Mistral' by contemporary British composer, Eric Whitacre, arranged by Barry.

The Scottish heritage of the Combined Pipes and Drums Display quickly became apparent: the men and women were delightfully colourful tartans as they performed two syncopated, traditional dances of Dhofar. The drum major twirled his mace during Traditional Dances of Scotland, including a March by composer, George Johnston, and drum sticks were whirling during a Highland Fling: Strathspey (dotted 4/4 rhythm) and Interlude Reel arranged by Alan Johnston.

The first guests of the night were the Jordanian Armed Forces Band, founded in 1921. In Arabic headscarves with a handful of women, they marched in formation, fairly dancing to the lively, rhythmic Jordanian folk songs arranged by Col. Al Akhras. It concluded with his original Bolero composition: a slow and lyrical, hymn-like tribute, "Oman, the Land of Glory", which received rapturous applause, marching off to the Jordanian National Song, "Ya Jaishana Arabi".

Men of the inter-service Military Drum Corps, Combined Band Display

was, as usual, a highlight of the Omani presentation. Dazzling in their seven contrasting uniforms, their footwork and stick dexterity are legendary. Exactly synchronised steps, and swinging colours (flags), their performance was captivating, enhanced by the inclusion of eight xylophones and metallophones, wheeled on by the percussionists who would add the melodic dimension to John Williams' 'Star Wars' arrangement.

The second guest, Gardemusik Military Band of Austria, brought a typically Viennese soundworld with them. Some especially good trumpet players featured in Dobes' Gieslingen 'Oompah' March. Their choreography was impeccable, with complex patterns and intricate footwork as they marched forward and backward, slowly then faster, in four-block formation to some Austrian classics. Next came Strauss's beloved, 'Blue Danube Waltz', which everyone adored with its slow introduction, in Anton Sollfelner's beautiful arrangement. The climax of their presentation was a breath-taking rendition of Adele's James Bond title-track for, "Skyfall", featuring a young Corporal Alexander Moser singing the solo with the velvet quality of Sinatra while projected onto the huge screen. He received enthusiastic applause, and the ensemble marched out to the well-known and popular 'Radetzky March'.

A perennial favourite is the Combined Female Military Marching Team. This year they excelled in three groups of six to Darroll Barry's almost Broadway score, "Ladies Hup" played by the Big Band on stage, with dance-like dressage steps, crossing feet, and impressive, glamorous, Hollywood slick.

The huge finale began with the inter-service Military Band marching into the arena to the syncopated sound of "Garak Allah", arranged by Said al Noobi. The colourful massed bands were led by four female drum majors to the Slow March, "Lantern of the Opera" by Darroll Barry, beautifully played and marched, and the Scottish Folksong, "Young Lass of Achfary", arranged by Leif Sundstrup. One should never underestimate the challenge of playing and marching at the same time!

The remaining groups, together with Austria and Jordan, joined the Combined Band Display to the lovely sad Irish tune, "The River Suir".

The Finale was a fine balance between choir, jazz band and massed bands in the National Song, "Omani and Proud", by Ahmed al Maamari. It was big and broad — an arrangement and execution to be proud of to complete the splendid spectacle of Pomp and Pride. It was followed by the Jazz Band accompanying a new arrangement of, "No Matter What" with the mellow voice of Muadh al Yahya. Gradually the brass and woodwind from the assembly joined in, with the bugles on the Galleria Terrace to complete the Finale, 2024. They marched off to, "Palace Gardens" as MC Douglas Robinson bade farewell to the Muscat community, who danced their way into the night with the strains of Lennox Jordan's Steel Band and Douglas Hill directing the Royal Guard Big Band.