

O M A N
عمان
D A I L Y

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PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

SUNRISE 05:56 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 04:40 AM

DHUHR 12:05 PM

ASR 03:31 PM

MAGHRIB 06:10 PM

ISHA 07:20 PM

SHORT TAKES

SAYYID BILARAB
RETURNS HOME
FROM JAPAN

HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said returned home on Sunday evening after heading the Sultanate of Oman’s delegation participating in the celebration of the National Day of the Sultanate of Oman’s pavilion at Expo 2025 – Osaka, Kansai, Japan. HH Sayyid Bilarab was accompanied during the visit by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Vice-Chairman of the Main Committee for the Sultanate of Oman’s participation in the exhibition, and a number of Their Excellencies, members of the Main Committee.

RO 4.5 MILLION
FOR RESTORATION
OF HERITAGE SITES



Al Dakhiliyah Governorate is currently executing a number of projects for the restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance of historical monuments and old neighbourhoods. This reflects the governorate’s keenness to preserving cultural heritage and enhancing Omani heritage as a significant economic and tourism contributor in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040. Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, said that the total value of projects being implemented within the framework of heritage revival and strengthening the local economy has crossed RO 4.5 million. This reflects the scale of efforts to preserve cultural and urban heritage which promotes tourism activity.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
WINS ARAB AWARD

The Ministry of Health, represented by the Quality Assurance Center, has achieved a new regional milestone by winning the Gold Award at the Golden Initiative Certificate Awards Ceremony “Star of Excellence in Patient Experience,” organised by the Arab Hospitals Federation (AHF) for patient-centred care. This award recognises the centre’s efforts in enhancing the quality of health services, patient safety, and improving the patient experience in the Sultanate of Oman. The centre’s recognition comes in appreciation of its continuous role in consolidating the principles of quality and patient safety, and implementing best international practices that place the patient at the heart of the healthcare process. **DETAILS ON P3**

Oman hails recognition
of State of Palestine

U K , A u s t r a l i a a n d C a n a d a r e c o g n i s e P a l e s t i n e

THE Sultanate of Oman has welcomed the announcements by the United Kingdom (UK), Canada and Australia in recognising the State of Palestine. Oman considers this step a very important development in the context of international efforts aimed at achieving a two-state solution and establishing the foundations of security and peace in the region.

In a statement issued on Sunday by the Foreign Ministry, Oman reiterated its call to other members of the international community that have not yet recognised the State of Palestine to take similar steps. This, the statement said, would guarantee the Palestinian people their legitimate right to establish their independent state on the June 4, 1967 borders, with Al Quds Al Sharqiya (East Jerusalem) as its capital.

Earlier, Britain, Australia and Canada recognised a Palestinian state in a coordinated, seismic shift from decades of Western foreign policy.

Portugal was also set to recognise Palestinian statehood, as Israel comes under huge international pressure over its war in Gaza and the dire humanitarian situation in the besieged territory.

“Today, to revive the hope of peace for the Palestinians and Israelis, and a two-state solution, the United Kingdom formally recognises the State of Palestine,” UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in a message on X. The three countries



Displaced Palestinians flee amid an Israeli military operation in Gaza City to evacuate to the south on Sunday. — Reuters

became the first members of the Group of Seven advanced economies to take the step, with France and other nations expected to follow at the annual UN General Assembly which opens on Monday in New York. “Canada recognises the State of Palestine and offers our partnership in building the promise of a peaceful future,” Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney wrote on X. Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Canberra’s move “recognises

the legitimate and long-held aspirations of the people of Palestine to a state of their own”. Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas hailed Sunday’s recognition as “an important and necessary step towards achieving a just and lasting peace in accordance with international legitimacy.” But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed the move as “absurd” and said it would “endanger” Israel’s existence. It is a watershed moment for Palestinians and their

ambitions for statehood, with the most powerful Western nations having long argued it should only come as part of a negotiated peace deal with Israel. Although a largely symbolic move, it puts those countries at odds with the United States and Israel. US President Donald Trump said last week, after talks with Starmer during a state visit to the UK, that “one of our few disagreements” was over Palestinian statehood. — Agencies

JOINT RESEARCH PROJECT WITH NASA TO STUDY AIR QUALITY

NIZWA: Nizwa University, in collaboration with Oman’s Environment Authority and in partnership with the US space agency Nasa and other international research centres, has launched a study titled “Initial Study of Column-Integrated Aerosol Optical Properties over Birkat Al Mouz, Sultanate of Oman.”

The study used precise optical measurements to analyse aerosols over Birkat Al Mouz, yielding important results in understanding the dynamics of dust and its regional sources. Professor Ahmed bin Suleiman al Harrasi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Nizwa University for Graduate Studies, Research and External

Relations, and the study’s supervisor, said the research was conducted in collaboration with Nasa’s Goddard Space Flight Centre, the US National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), the Indian Institute of Technology in Bhubaneswar, and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Dr Biju Daniel, an atmospheric science

researcher and project supervisor, noted that the team relied on data collected by a global AERONET network sun photometer located on the Nizwa University campus from December 2022 to November 2024. The analyses included aerosol optical depth (AOD), Angstrom exponent, single-scattering albedo (SSA), and radiative effects.

Dhofar welcomes ‘sarb’ as khareef season comes to an end

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, SEPT 21

Dhofar on Sunday officially rang in the spring-like ‘Sarb’ season - spanning the period from September 21 to December 21 - after a strong three-month monsoon (khareef) that welcomed 1,027,255 visitors between June 21 and August 31. August alone pulled in 585,155 visitors, with arrivals split 251,064 by air and 776,191 by land. The onset of Sarb marks a smooth handover from festival crowds to

milder weather, open views and steadier family travel across the coastal arc from Dhalkout to Mirbat. Astronomically comparable to spring, Sarb brings gentler sun, lower humidity and calmer seas as the monsoon fog lifts to reveal mountains, plains and valleys that hold their green. For visitors, the offer shifts to slow-time nature — valley walks, shaded picnics and quieter beaches — with easier day-trip logistics between city, mountain and coast



and weekend flows expected to remain resilient through late November. The economic texture of Sarb is also agricultural and maritime, with harvests reaching markets — maize, beans and cucumber after the rains — alongside rising honey output and traditional dairy such as Al Qutameem, while fisheries strengthen on species prized regionally including rock lobster (sharakha), kingfish (kanaad), sardines, safi and shaari, supporting food security and local trade.

For herders, flourishing natural pastures make this an optimal window, and late September brings Khatil al Ibl, when camel owners move herds back to rested grazing in a living tradition marked by chants and communal pride. Market voices point to a season that is evolving rather than ending. A Salalah holiday-rental owner said, “Khareef was good — we covered most of our expenses, and we’re planning service upgrades for next year while continuously updating our facilities to keep visitors happy.”

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SHORT TAKES



OPAZ organised a specialised workshop at the British-Omani Society headquarters

OPAZ DELEGATION
HOLDS MEETINGS IN
LONDON

LONDON: A delegation from the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), headed by Shaikh Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, held a series of meetings in London. The delegation included officials from various economic zones and free zones.

During the meetings, investment opportunities in various industrial clusters were presented, especially in the pharmaceutical, plastic, food and green industries, as well as in mining industries and real estate development in economic zones.

The visit also included meetings with investors to explore modern technologies related to renewable energy industries, as well as re-export activities, storage and supply chains.

The Authority organised a specialised workshop at the British-Omani Society headquarters, where the incentives and competitive advantages provided by the special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities in the Sultanate of Oman were discussed.

In the same context, the delegation met with experts and specialists in real estate development within the economic zones and housing solutions for workers in these areas.

Meetings were also held with officials from funding bodies related to supply chains for renewable energy industries, discussing ways to provide competitive financing for major strategic factories. — ONA

MEETING REVIEWS
INITIATIVES FOR THIS
YEAR’S HAJ SEASON

SALALAH: The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs on Sunday held an extensive meeting with owners of approved Haj and Umrah companies in the Dhofar Governorate.

During the meeting, the ministry reviewed key developments and initiatives for this year’s Haj season (1447 AH). They also discussed major observations and indicators from the previous season and other important topics related to organising this year’s Haj, including new updates and procedural mechanisms to ensure its success.

Ahmed bin Saleh al Rashdi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, affirmed that Haj and Umrah companies are a fundamental pillar and key partner in the success of the Haj season, through their collaboration and cooperation with the ministry and other relevant authorities in Oman and Saudi Arabia.

He also reviewed key improvements in the service facilities at the camps and the indicators from the previous Haj season (1446 AH), which showed a high satisfaction rate of 96.9 per cent, a notable increase from the 1445 AH season. — ONA

FIRST
LOCALLY
MADE
VESSEL
DELIVERED

KABEER YOUSUF
@KABIYUSEF

The Sultanate of Oman achieved a significant milestone by delivering its first locally made fishing vessel overseas, marking a momentous occasion in its maritime tradition and heritage.

The FV Sea King of Liberia in West Africa officially received the vessel, which was designed and constructed by SeaPride Marine Engineering LLC, a subsidiary of Sea Pride LLC in Sur.

The vessel, measuring 23 metres in length, boasts a versatile design suitable for various fishing methods. This achievement underscores the strength and progress of Omani industry, demonstrating its ability



The vessel, measuring 23 metres in length, boasts a versatile design suitable for various fishing methods.

to access international markets and compete proudly with products bearing the label ‘Made in Oman’, according to Mohammed Ameen, CEO

of Sea Pride Group of Companies. “This groundbreaking deal highlights Oman’s emerging shipbuilding capabilities in a sector traditionally dominated by international players,” he said, emphasising that Sea Pride Marine Engineering has become the first company in the Middle East to export a high-quality fibreglass vessel built to meet international specifications. Ameen further stated that Sea Pride Marine Engineering is recognised as one of the leading companies in the Sultanate of Oman in the field of marine industries with a strong reputation through the construction of advanced vessels that adhere to the highest international standards of technology and quality.

Autumn equinox marks
change of seasons

MIDHUN RAJ
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

OMAN

will witness the autumn equinox today, marking the official astronomical start of the fall season as the sun aligns directly over the equator, resulting in nearly equal day and night across much of the globe.

While the equinox signals the shift to cooler months in many regions, several parts of Oman — including the capital, Muscat — have been experiencing hotter-than-usual temperatures in recent days, highlighting the contrast between astronomical definitions of the seasons and actual weather conditions.

Astronomical calculations show that the equinox will occur in Oman at 10.19 pm local time. In Muscat, the sun is expected to rise at 5.55 am, reach its zenith at 11.59 am, and set at 6.03 pm, giving a day length of approximately 12 hours and 8 minutes.

The slight extension is due to atmospheric refraction, which makes the sun appear above the horizon before its actual rise and after its actual set. The autumn equinox is one of two equinoxes that occur each year, the other being in spring.

During these events, Earth’s axial tilt is such that the sun’s rays fall directly on



Astronomical calculations show that the equinox will occur in Oman at 10.19 pm local time.

the equator, creating nearly equal day and night across the planet. The phenomenon illustrates Earth’s tilt of 23.5 degrees and its orbit around the sun, which together produce the four distinct seasons.

Einas bint Saif al Mahrouqiyah, a member of the Oman Astronomical Society, explained that the precise equal day and night phenomenon, known as ‘Equilux’, will occur in Oman on Sunday, September 28. On that

day, sunrise and sunset will both be at 5:57, producing exactly 12 hours of daylight. She further clarified that during the autumn equinox, the sun appears to shift from the northern hemisphere — which includes Europe, Asia, North America, northern Africa and the Arctic — to the southern hemisphere, covering Australia, southern Africa and South America. This marks the start of autumn in the north and spring in the south.

As a result, temperatures in the northern hemisphere begin to gradually decline as the angle of the sun’s rays decreases, reducing the intensity of solar energy received. At the same time, the equinox has unique polar effects: the sun will set for the first time in six months at the North Pole, beginning a half-year-long night, while it rises at the South Pole, initiating six months of continuous daylight. Autumn in the northern hemisphere will last about 90 days, ending with the winter solstice on December 21.

Al Mahrouqi noted that the autumn equinox typically falls on September 22 or 23, when the sun rises due east and sets due west, providing a natural reference for orientation. On the equator, shadows disappear at noon in a phenomenon known as the “zero shadow day.”

‘Itqan’ seeks students’ readiness to join job market

MUSCAT: The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) on Sunday launched a professional student registry codenamed ‘Itqan’ (perfection), which seeks to provide a unified mechanism for documenting all professional practices of students and boost their readiness to join the labour market.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr



The ceremony to launch ‘Itqan’ was held under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah. — ONA

Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research

and Innovation. ‘Itqan’ offers an opportunity for self-assessment and helps students link

professional practices to academic learning objectives. It also ensures credibility in documenting the students’ acquired experiences and skills.

The registry covers various types of activities and practices. It includes on-the-job training programmes, field visits, workshops, competitions, hackathons, training camps, exhibitions, part-time work,

membership to professional associations, volunteering activities, entrepreneurship projects, the publication of scholarly papers and guidelines about intellectual property.

The certificates issued by the registry to students after their graduation provide them with added value that enhances their competitiveness in the job market. — ONA

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SHORTTAKES



267 healthcare institutions from 12 Arab countries took part

MOH BAGS GOLD AWARD AT ARAB HOSPITALS FEDERATION

ABU DHABI: The Ministry of Health, represented by the Quality Assurance Center, has achieved a new regional milestone by winning the Gold Award at the Golden Initiative Certificate Awards Ceremony ‘Star of Excellence in Patient Experience,’ organised by the Arab Hospitals Federation (AHF) for patient-centred care.

This award recognises the centre’s efforts in enhancing the quality of health services, patient safety and improving the patient experience in Oman. The centre’s recognition comes in appreciation of its continuous role in consolidating the principles of quality and patient safety, and implementing best international practices that place the patient at the heart of the healthcare process, aligning with the Ministry of Health’s directions to achieve safe, comprehensive and sustainable healthcare.

This achievement reflects the fruitful cooperation and integration between various healthcare institutions and strengthens Oman’s position as a pioneering country in quality fields at the Arab level.

The sixth edition of the Golden Initiative Certificate Awards ‘Star of Excellence in Patient Experience,’ organised by AHF, was held in the UAE’s capital, Abu Dhabi. The ceremony honoured healthcare institutions that prioritise the human experience as a strategic focus and present innovative and sustainable models that enhance patient satisfaction and improve health outcomes.

It witnessed the participation of 267 healthcare institutions from 12 Arab countries, presenting their innovative initiatives to redefine offering healthcare services and the patient experience.

— ONA

QURAN COMPETITION ROUNDS BEGIN IN BAUSHER



154 competitors are participating at the Bausher centre

MUSCAT: The preliminary rounds of the 33rd Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran Competition kicked off on Sunday in Muscat, held in the lecture hall of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Bausher.

Dr Said bin Humaid al Dhoyani, Vice-President of the Preliminary and Final Rounds Committees, stated that 154 competitors are participating at the Bausher centre across seven levels: Memorising the entire Holy Quran; Memorising 24 consecutive parts; Memorising 18 consecutive parts; Memorising 12 consecutive parts; Memorising 6 consecutive parts; Memorising 4 consecutive parts and Memorising 2 consecutive parts.

Organised by the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, the competition aims to instil spiritual values, develop Quranic skills, and encourage healthy competition among participants.

It also reflects the commitment to memorising the Holy Quran and nurturing gifted youth.

— ONA

DHOFAR SCIENTIFIC FORUM BEGINS IN SALALAH

SALALAH: The second edition of the Dhofar Scientific Forum began on Sunday at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Salalah.

Organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in collaboration with the university, the five-day event targets students, academics, researchers,

innovators, and job seekers between the ages of 18 and 35.

The forum features seven workshops aimed at developing research and innovation capabilities and strengthening partnerships between researchers and supporting organisations.

The workshops will cover various topics, including:



7 workshops aimed at developing research and innovation will be held

Research methodology and integrity; The use of artificial intelligence in scientific research and intellectual property

There will also be a visual presentation introducing the programmes and projects of the Research and Innovation Sector at the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. — ONA

OMSB advances training for Omani medical cadres

THE Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB) is making confident strides toward achieving its vision of developing advanced medical education in the Sultanate of Oman and consolidating its position as a leading reference institution in preparing and qualifying national cadres.

By adopting innovative training methods and employing the latest simulation technologies, OMSB is keeping pace with rapid scientific developments in medicine while raising the standard of specialised healthcare training in line with international benchmarks.

The Board provides an advanced academic environment that meets the highest global standards, contributing to improved healthcare quality in Oman. It has also expanded its international cooperation with prestigious medical universities and hospitals worldwide through scholarships, joint training agreements and knowledge exchange programmes.

Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Yaarubi, Assistant CEO for International Cooperation at OMSB, told ONA that scholarship programmes form a vital pillar for the health sector in Oman. These programmes, he explained, allow doctors to train at some of the best institutions abroad, thereby enriching local healthcare services with modern technologies and practices upon their return.

According to Dr Al Yaarubi, the total number of specialised medical missions since the establishment of OMSB has reached more than 1,054 across 32 medical specialities. The Board has signed more than 85 international cooperation agreements, ensuring that Omani doctors benefit from cutting-edge skills and advanced training.

Currently, around 222 male and female doctors are continuing their training in renowned medical countries such as Canada, France, the United States, the



OMSB keeps pace with rapid scientific developments in medicine

United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and Singapore. Their training spans fellowships and speciality programmes, enabling Oman to benefit from a new generation of highly skilled specialists in rare and critical fields.

These efforts directly contribute to the development of the healthcare system in Oman, particularly through expansion projects in hospitals and health centres. Training in sub-specialities such as cardiac surgery, oncology, organ transplantation and stroke treatment supports the operation of advanced medical departments and ensures that specialised services reach more governorates.

The scholarship programme is also part of the ‘Homeland Path’ initiative in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. It supports several strategic healthcare projects, including the Sultan Qaboos Integrated Cancer Care and Research Center and the establishment of stroke treatment units in Muscat, Suhar, Nizwa and Salalah.

Dr Al Yaarubi emphasised that these external missions embody the principle

of decentralisation by distributing qualified medical cadres across different governorates, ensuring justice in the delivery of advanced health services and enhancing their efficiency. This approach aligns with the core objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

He also highlighted that Omani doctors abroad have represented Oman proudly on the global medical stage through active participation in international conferences and research initiatives. Many have received international awards and recognition for their outstanding achievements in training and research at leading institutions.

The Oman Medical Specialty Board remains committed to supporting these competencies through initiatives such as publicising their accomplishments via official platforms and engaging with the wider community through media coverage. By doing so, OMSB continues to underscore the importance of human capital development as a foundation for Oman’s sustainable health sector advancement.

— ONA

‘Strides for Nature’ run inspires community action

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

The Environment Society of Oman’s (ESO) first-ever charity run, held in conjunction with World Cleanup Day, took place on Saturday, September 20, at Al Qurum Beach.

Aligned with ESO’s mission to protect Oman’s environment, the initiative also aimed to raise vital funds.

“The timing amplifies our message — every step our participants take is part of a worldwide effort toward sustainability. Funds raised will directly support ESO’s ongoing environmental projects, including wildlife protection, marine conservation, environmental education, and community engagement,” said Suad al Harthy, Executive Director of ESO.

The run was led by Guinness World Record holder Fahad al Abri, whose participation, ESO noted, sent a clear message: “sustainability is not just an obligation, it’s an empowering



ESO’s first-ever charity run took place at Al Qurum Beach

movement everyone can be part of.”

When asked how individuals and families could contribute beyond the event, Suad explained: “When individuals and families act together, their collective impact can transform communities and protect Oman’s natural heritage. People can participate even by visiting our website and joining us as a member, donating through our channels, or renewing their corporate memberships. Every contribution directly supports

our projects.”

Families, runners and children joined the 4 km route, designed not only for athletic participation but also as a child-friendly, hands-on cleanup drive. Around 40 volunteers ensured safety, organisation and participant support.

Sherifa bint Ibrahim al Maskariyah, Head of Brand at the National Bank of Oman, said: “Our partnership with the Environmental Society of Oman for ‘Strides for Nature’ underlines our belief in

collaboration as a driver of positive change.”

Silver sponsors included Al Ansari Trading and Enterprises and Al Mouj, with in-kind support from Artech, InterContinental Hotel, Mazoon Dairy, Mandarin Oriental, Purunity and Oasis Water.

Fahad al Abri — athlete, trainer, musician and wellness advocate — recently entered the Guinness World Records for completing the fastest 10 km run while playing the ukulele (47 minutes, 57 seconds, Muscat, February 2025).

Reflecting on the day, Suad said: “Stride for Nature was more than a run — it was a powerful show of community and commitment to our environment. The dedication of participants and volunteers, the generosity of sponsors, and the support of Fahad al Abri and fellow influencers gave incredible momentum to our cause.”

At its core, the charity run sought to raise funds for ESO’s expanding initiatives.

SPOTLIGHT



The souq is slowly shifting to meet the demands of cruise tourists, marginalising authentic Omani crafts.

SULAIMAN AL JARDANI
Tour guide

OMAN PORTS READY FOR SURGE IN CRUISE ARRIVALS

KABEER
YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

OMAN IS GEARING UP to welcome the first cruise liner of the season next month, marking the start of a period expected to inject fresh momentum into the economy. Each year, between October and early spring, over 150 cruise ships call at Omani ports, bringing in more than 100,000 foreign visitors.

25%
INCREASE IN
CRUISE PASSENGER
ARRIVALS IN THE
COMING YEARS

CRUISE TOURISM IN OMAN HAS SEEN IMPRESSIVE GROWTH, WITH ARRIVALS SURGING 43.6 PER CENT IN 2019 TO REACH 283,488 PASSENGERS

According to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultan Qaboos Port, Salalah Port and Khasab Port collectively hosted 77 vessels carrying over 85,000 passengers in a single year. With ongoing infrastructure upgrades and stronger global marketing campaigns, officials project at least a 25-per cent increase in cruise passenger arrivals in the coming years.

Cruise tourism in Oman has seen impressive growth, with arrivals surging 43.6 per cent in 2019 to reach 283,488 passengers. Authorities say the momentum reflects the government's efforts to showcase the country's culture, heritage, and natural attractions.

However, challenges remain. Experts caution against the 'tourist bubble' effect, where local vendors and traditional products risk being overshadowed by foreign businesses catering to international cruise passengers. "The souq is slowly shifting to meet the demands of cruise tourists, marginalising authentic Omani crafts," said tour guide Sulaiman al Jardani, who also raised concerns over aggressive selling practices by some vendors.

Others point to sustainability risks. Environmentalists warn that rapid growth in cruise tourism could put pressure on fragile marine ecosystems, with pollution and waste from vessels posing long-term threats. "Substantial safeguards must be in place to protect Oman's waters," one expert said.

Despite these concerns, the sector remains a major job creator and a driver of economic activity across retail, transport and hospitality. With Oman's growing popularity in European markets, more charters and liners are expected in the coming years.

For stakeholders, the challenge will be striking a balance between maximising economic gains and ensuring that local communities, culture and the environment remain at the heart of Oman's cruise tourism strategy.

OMAN HOSTED

77

VESSELS CARRYING OVER

85,000

PASSENGERS
IN A SINGLE YEAR



MUSCAT CLEARING & DEPOSITORY COMPANY (S.A.O.G)

NOTICE

With reference to **Tender Announcement No. CSD/2025/C001**, we would like to inform you that the tender documents sale period has been extended until **23/09/2025**.

SHORTTAKES



NAMA REVIEWS RO 123M WASTEWATER PROJECTS IN BAUSHER

MUSCAT: Nama Water Services held a meeting with Bausher Municipality to review ongoing wastewater network projects in the wilayat, with a total investment exceeding RO 123 million.

During the meeting, the company presented project implementation plans, stages of execution, and discussed challenges such as impacts on roads and public facilities.

The session also explored avenues of cooperation with the municipality to ensure smooth implementation, align with future development plans and strengthen service infrastructure through better coordination with relevant authorities.

The projects in Bausher include main and sub-lines stretching 311 kilometres, of which 34 kilometres are dedicated to potable water. Additional components include pumping stations in Bausher and Al Ansab. — **ONA**

National Museum, Oman Post unveil postal heritage expo

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

THE National Museum has inaugurated a special exhibition titled 'From Stamp to Envelope: Narrating the Nation through the Postmark', held in collaboration with Oman Post.

The opening ceremony, held under the auspices of Eng Ibrahim bin Said al Kharousi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Heritage, was attended by dignitaries, officials and cultural enthusiasts, including Eng Badar bin Mohammed al Nadabi, Chairman of Oman Post's Board of Directors.

Running until October 16, the exhibition takes visitors on a reflective journey through Oman's postal history, where stamps, envelopes and artefacts serve as vessels of memory — documenting events, milestones and connections while presenting a visual timeline of the nation's progress.

Highlights include the latest commemorative stamp marking the 280th anniversary of the Al Busaid Dynasty in



The exhibition opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng Ibrahim bin Said al Kharousi

2025, alongside historic issues such as the July 1967 stamp commemorating Oman's first oil export, which heralded a new era of economic development.

The exhibition also explores philatelic themes ranging from Islamic rituals and environmental awareness to Oman's ties with countries worldwide. A dedicated section on Zanzibar emphasises historic connections, while another features issues celebrating

Oman's accession to the United Nations and international friendships.

Cultural and heritage dimensions are equally prominent, with stamps showcasing traditional crafts, industries and landmark celebrations, such as Muscat's designation as the Capital of Arab Culture. A rare postal deposit box from 1975-1985 offers a tangible glimpse into the early days of modern postal services.

A special highlight is the commemorative issue launched jointly by the National Museum and Oman Post to mark the Museum's fifth anniversary.

The four-stamp collection features iconic artefacts, including the oldest incense burner from the civilisation of Majan, a Saidi khanjar, the throne chair of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and Letter No 1 of his will.

The First Day Cover was signed by the Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Chairman of the Museum's Board of Trustees.

From Oman Post's archives to the Museum's halls, the exhibition reflects a living national memory - celebrating heritage, identity and Oman's enduring legacy through the language of stamps.

Omani students set for Expo 2025 Osaka

KABEER YOUSUF
@KABIYOUSEF

MUSCAT: A 15-member delegation from Ahmad bin Majid International School (ABM) will represent Oman at Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, this October. The group includes 12 students and three board members and administrators.

The visit will combine innovation, leadership and cultural diplomacy, with students set to engage global industry leaders, explore cutting-edge technologies, and participate in hands-on learning experiences.

As part of the trip, the delegation will also present Omani heritage at the Embassy of Oman in Tokyo, showcasing the nation's traditions to dignitaries and world leaders.

"This programme aligns with Oman's national brand and Oman Vision 2040 objectives, while

The visit will combine innovation, leadership and cultural diplomacy, with students set to engage global industry leaders

promoting the country's rich heritage," said Hamad al Timami, ABM Board Member.

Board Member Waheeda Abdulaziz added, "Through initiatives like this, our students are not only learning and innovating, they are also serving as ambassadors of Oman's culture, values and leadership on the global stage."

Najim al Timami, Chairman of the Board of Directors, said the initiative aims to develop a new generation of leaders who embody cultural pride and global engagement.

Grade 9 student leader Mohammed al Jaradi expressed his excitement: "Japan has many creative innovations we can learn from and a rich cultural background."

Fellow student Omar al Azizi added, "I'm honoured to represent my country in Japan. I feel ready because my school has given me the chance to present to dignitaries and lead exhibitions in Oman."

وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tenders:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
168/2025/ MTCIT	CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR UPGRADING OF SINAW - MUHUT - AL DUQUM ROAD SECTIONS 3 & 4	21-9-2025	5-10-2025	26-10-2025	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE PROJECTS, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT AUTHORITY (FIRST CLASS)	(150/-) ONE HUNDRED FIFTY OMANI RIALS (LOCAL COMPANIES) (11/500) ELEVEN RIALS AND FIVE HUNDRED BAISA (SMEs) NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200, e-mail: etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE

[@mtcitoman](#) www.mtcit.gov.om

وزارة الصحة
Ministry of Health

Announcement

The Ministry of Health (Ibri Regional Hospital) invites specialized companies to participate in following Tender :-

Tender Ref:	Description	Last Date for Collection of Tender Document	Closing Time/ Day/Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non Refundable)
3648	SUPPLY, REPACEMENT AND TESTING OF MEDICAL GAS OUTLETS IN THE IBRI REGIONAL HOSPITAL	14/10/2025	Before 9.00 Am on Sunday 26/10/2025	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board	• SME: 10 R.O • LO: 25 R.O

Notes :-

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E.Tendering website : <http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Regional Ibri Hospital is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accept or reject any tender.

<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
Any Clarification you may contact via
Telephone : 24402200
Email id etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

جامعة الشرقية
A' SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender details:

Tender No.	Description	Targeted Companies	Document Collection Deadline	Site Visit	Bids Submission Deadline	Document Fees
(ASU/02/ 25/26)	Tender for Consultancy Services for design and Supervision of the ASU Botanic Garden	Consultants Specialized in the Design and Development of Landscape	25/09/2025	28/09/2025 At 10:00 AM	09/10/2025	OMR 100
(ASU/03/ 25/26)	Consultancy Services for the Design and Supervision of the Development of Student Centre Services Building	Consultants Specialized in Buildings and Infrastructures	25/09/2025	28/09/2025 At 11:30 AM	09/10/2025	OMR 100
(ASU/04/ 25/26)	Consultancy Services for Solar Power Station	Consultants Specialized in the field of renewable Energy	25/09/2025	29/09/2025 At 10:00 AM	09/10/2025	OMR 100

- Specialized companies interested in participating in the tenders should obtain the tender documents during official working days from Sunday to Thursday, between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM.
- Tender collection process:** The interested companies shall follow the following steps:
 - The payment should be made directly to ASU under the following bank account:

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

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Leader of Republican People’s Party (CHP), Ozgur Ozel, speaks on stage during the CHP’s extraordinary congress, in Ankara. — AFP

TÜRKIYE OPPN RE-ELECTS LEADER AT PARTY CONGRESS

ANKARA: Türkiye’s main opposition CHP re-elected its leader Ozgur Ozel at an extraordinary congress as the party fights off a barrage of what critics say are politically-motivated legal challenges. The move comes as the Republican People’s Party (CHP) seeks to shore up its leadership as opponents of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have faced a series of lawsuits and arrests. Among them is a potentially damaging lawsuit seeking to oust Ozel, which had its second hearing on Monday. It seeks to overturn the result of CHP’s November 2023 congress which elected Ozel, on grounds of alleged vote rigging.

At Sunday’s 22nd extraordinary congress in the capital Ankara, delegates overwhelmingly re-elected Ozel who won all 835 valid votes cast. Another 82 were ruled invalid. Ozel’s re-election is expected to invalidate the legal grounds for the lawsuit against the party. “The party is under attack, and they are trying every possible method,” he said after the vote, in remarks reported by Turkish media. “Our legal experts and administrators are taking the most appropriate measures against this. With the holding of this congress, all their (legal) arguments are eliminated.” As well as the vote, which Ozel has described as “an entirely technical and legal manoeuvre” to protect the party’s leadership, the CHP also met to forge a strategy going forward in the face of mounting obstacles. — AFP

SYRIAN PRESIDENT LEAVES FOR US ON LANDMARK VISIT



Syrian President Ahmed al Sharaa

DAMASCUS: Syrian President Ahmed al Sharaa has departed for the United States, state media reported. State television said Sharaa was en route “to the United States of America to participate in the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.”

He is set to speak at the UN General Assembly in New York, the first Syrian leader to do so since Nureddin al Atassi in 1967. His foreign minister, Asaad al Shaibani, is already in Washington for an official visit. Shaibani’s office said that he met with the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, as the international community presses Syria’s new authorities to protect minorities in the multi-confessional country. — AFP

RAPID PATIENTS RISE

Bangladesh sees worst dengue cases surge



Dengue infections are climbing rapidly across Bangladesh, with officials reporting the biggest single-day rise in both deaths and hospital admissions. Twelve people have died in the past 24 hours and 740 new patients have been hospitalised with the mosquito-borne disease, the Directorate-General of Health Services said. So far this year, dengue has killed at least 179 people and infected nearly 42,000. Children are increasingly crowding into hospital wards. — Reuters

ONGOING ATTACKS

Israeli strike kills five in southern Lebanon



At least five people were killed by an Israeli drone strike on southern Lebanon, including three children. The state-run National News Agency reported that the strike, near Bint Jbeil, had targeted a motorcycle. Israel launches frequent strikes inside Lebanon despite a November ceasefire meant to end more than a year of hostilities between them. Since November’s ceasefire, Israel has maintained troops in five areas of south Lebanon it deems strategic. — AFP

NEW LAWS DEMANDS

Ecuador suspends order on new constitution



Ecuador’s constitutional court suspended a decree by which the president sought to create a special body to toughen laws against drug trafficking and organised crime. The suspension remains in effect while the court evaluates five claims of unconstitutionality. “The Court is not the enemy of the people. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is the guardian of their rights,” said the court, which has faced massive protests. — AFP

S SUDAN OPPN MISIDENTIFIED PRISONER AS LEADER’S BODYGUARD

NAIROBI: South Sudan’s opposition said it had misidentified a prisoner in a photograph as a bodyguard of its leader, who died in custody amid widespread arrests of their supporters. In a statement, the opposition said the leader’s office had been given an old photo and wrongly believed it showed the death in custody of Luka Gathok Nyuon.

The opposition had previously identified Nyuon as a bodyguard to the opposition leader and ex-vice-president Riek Machar. “It has come to my attention that this photo was in fact taken few years back in Rumbek prison and does not... (show) our fallen comrade,” opposition SPLA-IO party spokesman Lam Paul Gabriel said in a statement, without giving

details on the bodyguard’s current circumstances. The statement on X said Nyuon “passed on in detention in Juba”.

The government of President Salva Kiir has locked up dozens of opposition members in recent months, accusing them of fomenting violence. The opposition says Kiir is seeking to consolidate power and has effectively destroyed

a 2018 power-sharing deal that ended a devastating five-year civil war in which some 400,000 people died.

Machar, Kiir’s long-time rival, has been stripped of his position as vice-president in the unity government and will appear in court from Monday on charges of treason and crimes against humanity. — AFP

Plaestinian FM hails the state formal recognitions

PALESTINIAN

Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin said countries recognising a Palestinian state were taking an irreversible step that preserved the two-state solution and brought Palestinian independence and sovereignty closer. Britain, Canada and Australia formally recognised a Palestinian state on Sunday, joining other nations in a move aimed at reviving momentum for a two-state solution but which has been criticised by Israel and the United States.

“Now is the time. Tomorrow is a historic date we need to build on. It’s not the end,” Shahin told reporters in Ramallah. “It is a move bringing us closer to sovereignty and independence. It might not end the war tomorrow, but it’s a move forward, which we need to build on and amplify,” she said, referring to Israel’s nearly two-year military campaign in Gaza.

Israel has sharply criticised the step, with some ministers dismissing it as irrelevant, saying it does not change the realities on the ground. Others have insisted that a Palestinian state can only be achieved through direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this month declared there would never be a Palestinian state.

Shahin said that Israel had no intention of negotiating, citing Netanyahu’s remarks at a ceremony this month to build a new settlement in the Israeli-occupied West Bank that would cut off northern



Displaced Palestinian children flee southward with belongings, in Gaza. — Reuters

“Now is the time. Tomorrow is a historic date we need to build on. It’s not the end. It is a move bringing us closer to sovereignty and independence. It might not end the war tomorrow, but it’s a move forward, which we need to build on and amplify

VARSEN AGHABEKIAN SHAHIN

Palestinian communities from those in the south. “This recognition is certainly not symbolic. It is a practical, tangible, irreversible step that countries must take if they are invested in preserving the two-state solution,” Shahin said. France and Saudi Arabia have led efforts to revive momentum for the two-state solution, with several countries to recognise a Palestinian state this week at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

US Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, has dismissed the efforts as a stunt and counterproductive. Israeli officials have hardened their positions on settlement construction and West Bank annexation as international momentum for Palestinian statehood has grown. Israel has faced growing diplomatic isolation this year, as many of its closest allies, with the exception of

the US, have condemned its assault on Gaza. Some have sanctioned Israeli ministers for inciting violence against Palestinians.

Shahin said political pressure on Israel must shift to economic measures “to hold Israel accountable and protect the Palestinian people.” “Today, Gaza burns. Today, Gaza is destroyed. Today in Gaza, people are systematically murdered,” Shahin said, accusing Israel of perpetrating genocide in Gaza, an allegation Israel denies.

A United Nations Commission of Inquiry last week said that it had concluded that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza, a finding also reached by a scholars’ association, Amnesty International, and two leading human rights groups in Israel. — Reuters

PHILIPPINES PROTESTS FLOOD CONTROL FRAUD

MANILA: Thousands of Filipinos marched in Manila to vent their anger over a ballooning scandal involving bogus flood-control projects believed to have cost taxpayers billions of dollars. But a day of largely peaceful mass protests erupted into violence as riot police deployed water cannon in clashes with scores of mostly young masked people who hurled rocks and shattered the glass of one police outpost.

Police arrested 72 people in two separate incidents that saw at least 39 officers injured and a trailer that was being used as a barricade set ablaze, according to a spokeswoman. Major Hazel Asilo said it was unclear if those arrested were “protesters or just people who are causing trouble”. Sunday in the capital began without violence with a demonstration at a park that drew nearly 50,000 people. — AFP

SHORT TAKES



A protester clashes with riot police during an anti-govt demonstration in Lima, Peru. — AFP

PERU ANTI-GOVT
PROTESTERS CLASH
WITH POLICE

LIMA: Hundreds of anti-government protesters clashed with police in the Peruvian capital Lima, throwing stones and sticks as officers fired tear gas on the demonstrators. The protest, organized by a youth collective called “Generation Z”, is part of growing social unrest in Peru against organized crime, corruption in public office, and a recent pension reform. “Today, there is less democracy than before. It’s getting worse... because of fear, because of extortion,” said 54-year old protester Gladys, who declined to give her last name. Around 500 people gathered in the city center, under heavy police presence. “Congress has no credibility, it doesn’t even have the approval of the people... It is wreaking havoc in this country,” said protester Celene Amasifuen. The clashes broke out as demonstrators tried to approach executive and congressional buildings in Lima. The radio station Exitosa said that its reporter and a cameraman were hit by pellets, commonly fired by law enforcement. Police said at least three officers were wounded.

Approval ratings for President Dina Boluarte, whose term ends next year, have plummeted amid rising extortion and organized crime cases. Several opinion polls show the government and conservative-majority Congress are seen by many as corrupt institutions. This week, the legislature passed a law requiring young adults to join a private pension fund, despite many facing a precarious working environment. — AFP

SPAIN RESCUES
11 FROM SINKING
FRENCH BOAT

MADRID: Spain’s coastguard rescued all 11 crew members of a French fishing vessel after it began taking on water off the country’s northwest coast, the body said. The Ray Primero sent a mayday early on Sunday, about 10 miles from the coast of Spain’s Galicia region, reporting uncontrollable flooding and that the crew was abandoning ship in a life raft, the coastguard said on X. A coastguard helicopter airlifted the crew to an airport near the Galician city of A Coruna for medical checks. The now unmanned vessel, which is based in Lorient in northwestern France, remains adrift under the watch of rescue ships, with authorities attempting to stabilise it for a possible tow to port. — AFP

US DEAL
ON BAGRAM
BASE ‘NOT
POSSIBLE’, SAYS
AFGHAN
OFFICIAL

KABUL: An Afghan government defence official said that a deal over Bagram air base was “not possible”, after US President Donald Trump said he wanted the former US base back. Bagram, the largest air base in Afghanistan located north of the capital Kabul, was the centre of US operations in their 20 year-war against the Taliban. Trump threatened unspecified punishment against Afghanistan if it was not returned — four years after it was abandoned by US

troops. “If Afghanistan doesn’t give Bagram Airbase back to those that built it, the United States of America, BAD THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN!!!” the 79-year-old leader wrote on his Truth Social platform. On Sunday, Fasihuddin Fitrat, chief of staff of Afghanistan’s ministry of defence, said “some people” want to take back the base through a “political deal”. “Recently, some people have said that they have entered negotiations

with Afghanistan for taking back Bagram air base”, he said in comments broadcast by local media. “A deal over even an inch of Afghanistan’s soil is not possible. We don’t need it”. Later in an official statement, the Afghan government said that “Afghanistan’s independence and territorial integrity are of the utmost importance”. Trump has repeatedly criticised the loss of the base, noting its proximity to China. — AFP

UN Security Council to meet
over Russian air incursion

ESTONIA’S foreign ministry said on Sunday that UN Security Council would hold an emergency meeting this week following the incursion of three Russian aircraft into its airspace. Three Russian MiG-31 fighters violated Estonian airspace over the Gulf of Finland on Friday, triggering complaints of a dangerous new provocation from the European Union and Nato but a denial from Moscow.

Italian F-35 fighters attached to Nato’s air defence support mission in the Baltic states, along with Swedish and Finnish aircraft, were scrambled to intercept the Russian jets and warn them off. “On September 22... the United Nations Security Council will convene an emergency meeting in response to Russia’s brazen violation of Estonian airspace last Friday,” a statement from the Estonian ministry said.

It marks the first time in 34 years of Estonia’s membership in the UN that the EU and Nato member nation — a staunch supporter of Ukraine — has officially requested an emergency Security Council meeting. Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said the violation is “part of a broader pattern of escalation by Russia, both regionally and globally”, following violations of Polish and Romanian airspace earlier this month. “This behavior requires an international response,” Tsahkna said.

In a Nato surveillance plane some 10,000 metres above eastern Poland, air force officers from a half dozen countries scanned screens for any sign of Russian aircraft breaching the alliance’s borders. The threat was laid bare on Friday when two Russian fighters violated Estonian airspace for 12 minutes, forcing Nato to scramble jets and sparking consternation across Europe. Now the skies appeared calmer — but the crew remained attentive.

“If there is any air threat to Nato we want to make sure we detect it as quickly as possible,” Lieutenant Colonel Mike Belizaire, a German officer, said. “Our mission is to provide an early warning so it gives more time to the authorised commanders to



A Nato crew boards an AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) air surveillance aircraft. — AFP

decide how they choose to respond.” The intrusion in Estonia was the latest in a spike of incidents that has ramped up fears that the war in Ukraine could spill over the alliance’s frontier. Days earlier Nato jets had shot down Russian drones over Poland in a watershed first for the Western military alliance. In response Nato’s top commander ordered a new mission, Eastern Sentry, to reinforce eastern flank defenses that have already been built up since the Kremlin’s 2022 attack of Ukraine. Fighter jets from countries including France and Germany were rushed to Poland. “We have been doing missions in Poland for a couple of years now to protect the Nato countries,” said the surveillance plane’s Belgian lead pilot, Captain-Commandant Joel, giving only his first name according to his homeland’s military regulations. “But what happened in Poland reminds everybody actually, that something can happen and that is why we are here again today to, have a look of what’s going on, to make sure that the Nato sky is protected.” The eight-hour flight from a base in Germany to circle over eastern Poland was the first made by one of Nato’s 14 centrally-owned AWACS airborne early warning and control aircraft under the umbrella of Eastern Sentry.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he would meet US counterpart Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly next week as Russia intensified deadly strikes across his country. Russia carried out one of its largest aerial attacks, firing 40 missiles and some 580 drones at Ukraine in a nighttime barrage that killed at least three people and wounded dozens, Zelensky said. A Ukrainian strike killed four people in Russia’s southwestern Samara region, the local governor said, in one of the deadliest Ukrainian strikes since Russia launched its attack in 2022. Zelensky said he would discuss security guarantees for Ukraine and sanctions on Russia during the talks with Trump in New York. Ukraine has insisted on Western-backed security guarantees to prevent future Russian attacks. Russian President Vladimir Putin has however warned that any Western troops in Ukraine would be unacceptable and legitimate targets. “We expect sanctions if there is no meeting between the leaders or, for example, no ceasefire,” Zelensky said in comments released by the Ukrainian presidency. “We are ready for a meeting with Putin. I have spoken about this. Both bilateral and trilateral.” Zelensky added. — AFP

Trump publicly urges US Justice Department to charge his enemies

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump publicly urged his Justice Department to take action against his enemies, the latest in a series of moves that critics say have shattered the agency’s traditional independence. In a social media post addressing “Pam” — apparently Attorney General Pam Bondi — Trump fumed over the lack of legal action against California Senator Adam Schiff and New York Attorney General Letitia James, both Democrats. Schiff and James are among a handful of people who have been accused by a close Trump ally, Federal Housing Finance Agency Director Bill Pulte, of falsifying documents on mortgage applications. “We can’t delay any longer, it’s killing our reputation and credibility”, Trump said. Trump fired the federal prosecutor who was overseeing the probe into James, after the

attorney reportedly insisted there was insufficient evidence to charge her with mortgage fraud. Erik Siebert, US attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, told staff of his resignation via an email on Friday, the New York Times and other US media outlets reported. “I fired him and there is a GREAT CASE; and many lawyers and legal pundits, say so”, Trump said on Saturday, apparently referencing the probe into James. Schiff and James have separately clashed with Trump in prior years, leading investigations that the Republican president alleges were political witch hunts. Late on Saturday, Trump said he had appointed White House aide Lindsey Halligan, who has been leading a review of the Smithsonian Institution’s content for “divisive or partisan narratives”, to fill Siebert’s position. The US president described Halligan as a “tough, smart and loyal



US President Donald Trump speaks to the press from the White House. — AFP

attorney”. During Trump’s first term in the White House, Schiff, then a member of the US House, led the prosecution at the president’s first impeachment trial, which was based on allegations he pressured Ukraine to interfere in the 2020 election. Trump was eventually acquitted by the Senate

then and again in 2021 when he was impeached a second time, this time for “incitement of insurrection” connected to the January 6, 2021 attack of Congress by his supporters. After Trump left the White House, James brought a major civil fraud case against him, alleging he and his company had unlawfully inflated his

wealth and manipulated the value of properties to obtain favourable bank loans or insurance terms. A state judge ordered Trump to pay \$464 million in that suit, but a higher court later removed the financial penalty while upholding the underlying judgment. “They impeached me twice and indicted me (5 times!), OVER NOTHING. JUSTICE MUST BE SERVED, NOW!!!” Trump wrote on Saturday. Trump has also been convicted of 34 felonies related to hush money payments to a movie star. Earlier this month, a US appeals court upheld a jury’s \$83.3 million penalty against Trump for defaming author E Jean Carroll, whom he was found to have assaulted. Investigations into Trump over alleged mishandling of classified material and attempts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election were abandoned when he was re-elected last year. — AFP

OPINION

Poetry as a conscience-keeper amid trauma



SANDHYA RAO MEHTA

The writer is Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University

WHEN Palestinian professor and poet Refaat Alareer was killed in an air strike in Gaza, his poem ‘If I must die’ echoed through the conscience of the world.

“If I must die/Let it bring hope/let it be a tale,” Alareer wrote, foreshadowing his own death, but also the absolute need to hope.

As Gazans undergo immeasurable suffering, one of the only sources of sustenance and hope is to share their trauma through writing, often in verse. As a result, Palestinian poetry, already historically rich, has now gained depth and urgency.

Unfortunately, there are other examples of poetry rising from the ashes of suffering.

In Afghanistan, girls share their experiences through whatever writing they are able to do.

Poetry is becoming a powerful tool to document and archive the lived experiences of those suffering in multiple ways. Young or old, everyone is using the power of words, spoken or written, to bear witness to the dehumanisation and tragedy of their lives.

In Afghanistan, reading or listening to poetry creates a space where women find a chance to reflect and process their trauma.

Using the limited technology to which they have access, Afghan girls document their lives through poetry. Nargis Payenda, an Afghan poet, speaks of the consequences of not writing “When the sorrows of my heart run out into my poems”.

Refugees worldwide have also turned to writing to bring attention to the everyday suffering of their lives which are lived on the margins of belonging and marginalisation. Somali-British poet Warsan Shire, speaking of why people leave their homeland, says: “no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark,” bringing attention to the trauma of leaving the place one calls home.

And yet, there is a thread of rebellion and resilience which cuts across this protest poetry.

Famous Palestinian poet Fadia Tuqan said she would be content to die “then sprout forth as a flower”. “I will carry the blood of martyrs around my neck,” said 16-year-old

Poetry is becoming a powerful tool to document and archive the lived experiences of those suffering in multiple ways

Amany El Regeb, who died in a bombing on her home.

Afghan-American writer Fowzia Karimi speaks of “Hope, That Small Flame in a Dark Room in Afghanistan” to explore the importance of always keeping hope alive, even in dire circumstances.

A refugee, fleeing a war-torn homeland, can only count on hope for a better tomorrow: “Hope – the dreams for my family, come true,” he wishes.

In a world full of trauma, pain and uncertainty, it certainly feels like writing would be the last thing on anybody’s mind. And yet, history proves us wrong. We know of our past because others have thought it worth their while to write about their trauma, as well as their victories.

Literature is not a diversion – it is a testament to events in the world. It holds a mirror to our life today. And for many, it is the only way to communicate about their circumstances, the major tragedies in their lives, and also the small joys in it. Poetry is our conscience-keeper.

GERMAN GENERAL CALLS FOR DRONE DEFENCES

CARSTEN HOFFMANN

Germany’s top general wants to quickly deploy new weapons systems in the German armed forces, or Bundeswehr, to counter drones.

“One thing is clear to me: in the end, it will probably come down to us having to use drones against drones,” General Carsten Breuer, the inspector general of the Bundeswehr, said in Berlin.

Given the volume of drones Russia is using against Ukraine, effective defence is “only possible through a mix of different capabilities,”he said.

Breuer expects progress within months. He pointed to the timeline for introducing so-called loitering munitions into the Bundeswehr. These are kamikaze drones equipped with warheads that can be directed at targets in large numbers or even seek them out autonomously with support from artificial intelligence. They “loiter” around a target until it is located and then crash into it.

“We made a decision on loitering munitions in March, and by the end of the year, the troops will fire them live for the first time,” he said.

“The battle of drone against drone is being pursued with the same urgency as the introduction of loitering munitions.”

However, Breuer warned that it would be a ‘mistake’ to lose sight of other threats. “We must not now say we are only focusing on drones. As central as the development of drones is for our defence capability, we still face threats from cruise missiles, rockets and aircraft.”

Among Nato allies, increased airspace violations by Russia in the past two weeks have caused concern. Last week, a large number of drones entered Polish airspace, and thus Nato territory, prompting Polish and allied forces to shoot down several Russian drones over their territory for the first time.

On Friday, Estonia reported that three Russian fighter jets had violated its airspace.

Nato had already launched an operation called Eastern Sentry to strengthen the eastern flank with air defence and reconnaissance after the Polish airspace violation.

Breuer described the incursion into Polish airspace as an unprecedented violation.

“Regardless of whether it was intentional or accidental, (Russian President Vladimir) Putin will be closely observing our reaction. With this airspace violation, he tested us as an alliance,” the top general said.

He expressed confidence that the alliance had passed this test with unity and a swift response. However, the fact that Nato fighter jets had to fire high-value guided missiles at comparatively cheap disposable drones has sparked public doubts and criticism about the alliance’s level of preparedness.

— dpa

H-1B visa explained amid Trump’s policy shifts

PRESIDENT Donald Trump continued his sweeping crackdown on immigration, turning his focus to a visa programme for skilled foreign workers. He signed a proclamation that adds a \$100,000 fee for new applicants for H-1B visas that allow foreign workers like software engineers a chance to be employed in the US.

The H-1B visa is designed to help companies fill openings for which American workers with similar abilities cannot be found. But immigration hard-liners and far-right activists have long argued that the visa allows companies to replace American workers with foreign ones. The issue has divided even Trump’s supporters, and the president’s stance on the programme has shifted over time.

Before the new proclamation’s signing in the Oval Office on Friday, Howard Lutnick, the Secretary of Commerce, laid out the rationale for the fee that the administration is attaching to what he called the “most abused visa.”

“The whole idea is, no more will these big tech companies or other companies train foreign workers,” Lutnick said. “They have to pay the government \$100,000, then they have to pay the employee — so it’s just not economic. If you’re going to train somebody, you’re going to train one of the recent graduates from one of the great universities across our land.”

The fee is likely to face legal challenges. It is slated to go into effect on Sunday and will only be required for new applicants, according to a memo from US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Congress passed legislation creating the H-1B programme in 1990, as a labour shortage loomed. When George Bush signed it into law, he said the programme would “encourage the immigration of exceptionally talented people, such as scientists, engineers and



White House scrambles to clear up H-1B visa confusion after panic throws corporate America into chaos



ADEEL HASSAN

The writer is a reporter at The New York Times



AISHVARYA KAVI

The writer is a reporter at The New York Times

educators.”

Employers have used the visas — which are valid for three years and can be extended — to hire foreign workers with specialised skills, mainly in science and technology, to fill openings for which American workers with similar abilities cannot be found.

Employers submit a petition to the government on behalf of a foreign worker they want to hire, describing the job and the qualifications of the person selected to fill it. The H-1B programme confers temporary status in the US, not residency. However, many employers eventually sponsor workers with H-1B visas for a green card, which puts the person on a path to US citizenship.

On Saturday, confusion remained about how the new fee would work. Lutnick said that it should be paid annually by the American company hiring the foreign worker. But a day later, the White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, wrote in a post on social media that the \$100,000 would be a one-time fee.

Congress makes 65,000 H-1B visas available each year for workers with a bachelor’s degree or the equivalent, and 20,000 more for those with a master’s degree or higher. Universities and research organisations are exempt from those caps.

Many of the workers who have received the visas are software engineers, computer programmers and others in the technology industry. Amazon, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Apple and IBM were among the companies that employed the most H-1B visa holders last year, according to US Citizenship and Immigration Services. But many do work in other professions, including education, health care and manufacturing.

There is no cap for each country, and a vast majority of recipients come from India.

India’s Ministry of External Affairs emphasised the ties between the two nations in a Facebook post and expressed concern that the abrupt changes could have ‘humanitarian consequences’ for families. Many H-1B visa holders bring their spouses and children with them to the US, where they can live together for decades on dependent visas.

— The New York Times

Burning the bridge while crossing it



ABDULAZIZ
AL JAHDHAMI

The writer is author,
translator and a
communications
professional

THERE are moments in history when a missile is more than just a missile. It doesn't only break walls — it breaks assumptions. The Israeli strike on Doha was one of those tragic moments. Because the missile did not just land on a compound, it landed on an idea that some places are too rich, too quiet, too neutral to bleed.

They say all wars eventually spill over. However, the Gaza conflict did not just cross a border; it jumped, spectacularly, into the heart of the Gulf's diplomatic capital, Doha. War has now knocked, uninvited, at Qatar's door, and once war is invited in, it rarely leaves politely.

Israel claims the strike targeted Hamas officials who had turned safe havens into war rooms. Qatar calls it a violation of power, dignity and diplomacy. Somewhere in between, a guard lies dead, others wounded, and the smoke of geopolitics rises from the shattered glass. The missile did not just destroy a building, but it also shattered trust.

This was not the first missile of the conflict. But it may be the first to strike directly at the heart of diplomacy's illusion: that we can talk about peace without paying the price of war ourselves. That we can host

both killers and peacekeepers in the same villa and still call it a balance.

Perhaps Israel was sending a message to the world that nowhere is safe. In doing so, it did not just violate Qatar's territorial integrity; it has damaged the actual diplomatic machinery holding the region together. It was, in effect, like firing a bullet into the middle of a peace negotiation. In many ways, that is exactly what has happened.

It was the equivalent of destroying a ceasefire proposal, while it is still being drafted, or bombing the room where it is being discussed. Hamas is a political movement with negotiators and diplomats. Israel knows this and it has, for years, worked indirectly through those same channels. So, what has changed now?

When you turn a neutral capital into a war zone, you don't just punish your enemy, instead, you dissatisfy the players who might help you end the fighting. Still, there is another truth that the power of diplomacy is not in its immunity. So let this missile be remembered not only as a weapon of destruction, but as a test of what diplomacy means in an age where no place is too far, and no city is truly safe.

The old rules of engagement don't survive

Perhaps Israel was sending a message to the world that nowhere is safe. In doing so, it did not just violate Qatar's territorial integrity; it has damaged the actual diplomatic machinery holding the region together. It was, in effect, like firing a bullet into the middle of a peace negotiation. In many ways, that is exactly what has happened

long in a world where national borders mean less. Israel is under extraordinary pressure. After more than a year of war with rockets still flying and captives still held, the urge to strike wherever Hamas breathes is understandable. But strategy is not only about what you can do. It is also about what happens next.

Can a city still be a sanctuary in a world where war ignores geography? Doha has spent decades crafting a careful role — not as a battlefield ground, but as a balancer in the war. A place where revolutionaries and diplomats walk the same corridors in different clothes. A place where conflicts are discussed, not lived.

For years, Doha has offered the world a stage; discreet, neutral and politically useful. Perhaps Israel, exhausted by indirect talks and endless cycles, has chosen to speak the only language it believes Hamas understands — even if it means destroying the room where that conversation was happening. But if you destroy the table, where will the talking happen next?

Let us not accept a world where force replaces dialogue, and where missiles have the final word. Because if war can cross oceans, so can hope. And if bombs can fly silently through the night, so can courage!

NEW VISA RULES SHATTER AMERICAN DREAM FOR INDIANS

AISHWARYA KUMAR AND ANUJ SRIVAS

Indian aerospace engineering student Sudhanva Kashyap thought he had mapped out everything it would take to get to the United States, only to have his plans upended by Washington's sudden and expensive change to its skilled worker visas.

Friday's changes to the prized H-1B visas, which included a new \$100,000 fee, rattled the tech industry and left US companies scrambling to figure out the implications.

Hasty clarifications from the White House that the new charge would be a one-off payment rather than the annual fee announced by US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick on Friday only added to the uncertainty.

The fee change rattled students like Kashyap, who hoped to get into an American university.

Kashyap, a 21-year-old from the southern Indian tech hub of Bengaluru, had pictured himself going to a top-tier American university, with Stanford his goal.

"Back when the fee was lower, it was still something that you could pin hopes on; it would be easier to convert the student visa to an H-1B," Kashyap said.

"I am very disappointed... my main dream is derailed as things stand now," he said.

H-1B visas allow companies to sponsor foreign workers with specialised skills - such as scientists, engineers and computer programmers - to work in the United States, initially for three years but extendable to six.

The United States awards 85,000 H-1B visas per year on a lottery system, with India accounting for around three-quarters of the recipients.

Lutnick detailed the new measure as he stood beside Donald Trump in the Oval Office, where the US president also introduced a \$1 million "gold card" residency programme he had previewed months earlier. Several leading companies quickly advised their employees holding H-1B visas not to leave the country while they figured out the implications. Some who had already boarded planes disembarked for fear they might not be allowed to re-enter.

Data released by the US Department of Homeland Security showed there were 422,335 Indian students in the United States in 2024, an increase of 11.8 per cent on the year before.

India's IT industry association Nasscom said soon after Friday's initial announcement that it was concerned by the new visa measures.

It said "business continuity" at technology companies would be disrupted, and was quick to point out how Indian IT firms contributed to the US economy and were "by no means" a security threat. Shashwath VS, a 20-year-old chemical engineering student in Bengaluru, said the new fee was too high for companies to think about sponsoring a foreign candidate.

"I will now explore other countries... going to the US was a priority for me, but not anymore," Shashwath said. He said many like him might try to find places elsewhere, such as Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. — AFP

What a China-EU climate deal could do for world

ONE typically hears two stories about China and climate change. The first is that China leads the world in greenhouse-gas emissions as it continues to build more coal-fired power stations. The second is that China leads the world in developing clean technologies that will allow all countries to decarbonise their economies at a far lower cost than seemed possible five or ten years ago.

Both stories are true, and policy in China and the rest of the world must reflect that reality. In 2022, China emitted 15.7 gigatonnes of greenhouse gases, far more than America's six gigatonnes or the European Union's 3.6 gigatonnes. While these absolute figures reflect China's much larger population, its per capita emissions, at 11 tonnes, greatly exceed the EU's 8.1 tonnes and the United Kingdom's 6.3 tonnes; moreover, the latter two are on track to fall below 2 tonnes by 2040.

China has committed to achieve peak emissions by 2030 and Net-Zero by 2060; but this still implies that its cumulative carbon dioxide emissions between now and 2060 could be around 250 gigatonnes. By contrast, current commitments from the UK and the EU imply about 4.5 and 45 additional gigatonnes, respectively. Those 250 gigatonnes alone would use up much of the world's remaining "carbon budget" that can be emitted while still limiting global warming to "well below 2°C", as agreed in the 2015 Paris climate agreement. That means average planetary temperatures in 2100 will be hugely influenced by what China does, and minimally by the EU or the UK.

Around 5.9 gigatonnes of China's annual emissions come from a power system that remains dominated by coal, and China plans to add 280 gigawatts of coal-power capacity by 2029. Moreover, emissions from its massive steel and cement sectors exceed 50 per cent of the global total, though they are beginning to fall as construction declines.

But China is also the global leader in five key "green" technologies: solar photovoltaics, wind turbines, batteries, electric vehicles and heat



Around 5.9 gigatonnes of China's annual emissions come from a power system that remains dominated by coal.



ADAIR
TURNER

The writer is Chair of the Energy Transitions Commission, was Chair of the UK Financial Services Authority from 2008 to 2012. He is the author of many books, including Between Debt and the Devil: Money, Credit, and Fixing Global Finance

pumps – whose deployment could replace three-quarters of global fossil-fuel use and related emissions. EVs now account for almost 50 per cent of all passenger car sales in China, versus 23 per cent in the EU and more than 10 per cent in the United States; and electricity meets 32 per cent of its final energy demand, versus 24 per cent in Europe and the US.

In 2024, China installed around 400 gigawatts of solar and wind power, over half the global total. While its coal capacity is still growing, these facilities are increasingly used as a flexible backup for renewables, with total power sector emissions falling 3 per cent in the first half of 2025.

China's massive clean-tech deployment has brought huge cost reductions and performance improvements.

Solar PV costs per watt have fallen 90 per cent in 15 years, while production yields have increased; battery costs per kilowatt-hour also have plummeted, while energy density and charging speeds continually improve. Such progress enables much faster emissions reductions, not only in China but around the world.

Already, solar-plus-battery systems are the cheapest way to provide round-the-clock electricity across most of the global sunbelt. Africa, in particular, can now

leapfrog past most of the fossil-fuel stage, rapidly expanding its cheap, clean electricity capacity to power economic growth.

In a world with no geopolitical tensions, China's clean-tech leadership would be welcomed as a boon for humanity. But given current political realities, it has instead fuelled fears about jobs and security. Worse, tariffs and other trade restrictions imposed in response to China's manufacturing dominance could increase the cost and delay the pace of the global energy transition.

Another source of tension is China's overcapacity in iron and steel. Since these crucial inputs are still produced in a carbon-intensive fashion, they threaten to undermine Europe's own commitment to decarbonise its heavy industry. While the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is a justified response to this threat, China initially saw it as protectionist.

Keeping global warming "well below 2°C" will therefore require coordinated action by all the countries attending this November's United Nations Climate Change Conference in Brazil (COP30). And with the US having abandoned global leadership – especially on climate change – Chinese-European cooperation has become even more important.

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SPORTS

SHORTTAKES



Sultanate of Oman enters the competition with five teams comprising 65 male and female players across different age categories

65 OMANI PLAYERS COMPETE IN UNION ICE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

The Oman Skating Sports Committee is participating in the Union Ice Hockey tournament, hosted in Al Ain, UAE, until the 27th of this month, with over 30 teams from around the world in attendance. Oman's participation this year is remarkable in scale, as the Sultanate of Oman enters the competition with five teams comprising 65 male and female players across different age categories, marking an unprecedented step that reflects a serious commitment to promoting and developing the sport within the country.

The UAE Ice Hockey Federation organises the tournament and brings together teams from several countries, including Oman, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, India and Russia, alongside the host nation. Oman's presence carries special significance, as it is the first time the Sultanate of Oman has entered the competition with teams from all age groups, both male and female, highlighting the Committee's dedication to expanding the sport among youth.

The Sultanate of Oman is represented by five teams in this edition: the Ice Hockey School team (ages 7–10), the school team (ages 11–15), the Muscat women's team, the Majan team, and the Khanjar team, which previously achieved a top ranking in the last edition. Together, these teams represent a complete picture of Omani diversity and the Committee's keenness to build a broad base for the sport that includes all age groups and both genders.

Khalil al Waeli, Head of the Media Committee at the Oman Skating Sports Committee, stated that this participation is the fruit of continuous efforts to develop ice hockey in the Sultanate of Oman. He pointed out that the inclusion of all teams and age categories in this championship represents a qualitative leap that reflects the sport's progress on the ground. He stressed that the goal is not only to compete for top positions but also to provide players with international experience by facing strong teams from different countries, which contributes to raising technical and skill levels and serves the sport's future in Oman in the long run.

Al Waeli added that the participation of the 7–10 years team is an investment in the future and the sport's first seed, while the 11–15 years team forms a solid foundation for building a generation capable of development and continuity, with a focus on preparing them to gain experience that will help them gradually advance to higher levels.

He also noted that the Oman Skating Sports Committee operates under a clear plan aimed at expanding the base of practitioners, making use of modern training techniques and international coaching expertise, alongside organising annual local tournaments to prepare players before any external competitions.

Al Waeli confirmed that the Committee's ambitions go beyond the current championship, as it seeks to establish Oman's permanent presence regionally and internationally, ultimately leading to the creation of a fully-fledged national ice hockey team capable of representing the Sultanate of Oman honorably.

2025–2026 camel racing season off to a flying start

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

THE Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), represented by the Oman Camel Racing Federation (OCRF), concluded the first camel race of the 2025–2026 season on Sunday with exciting competitions held simultaneously at Al Felaij track in the Wilayat of Barka and Al Bashayer track in the Wilayat of Adam, attracting a large turnout of spectators.

At Al Felaij, the highlight was 'Al Tayarah', owned by the Royal Camel Corps (RCC), which clinched first place in the opening round. RCC's camels 'Amjad' and 'Nojood' also secured top spots in the other feature rounds. Meanwhile, at Al Bashayer track, 'Asrar' owned by Mohsen bin Ali al Wahibi, 'Shawahen' owned by Abdullah bin Saeed al Ghafil, and 'Al Asimah' owned by Ali bin Mohammed al Jahafi dominated the main rounds, impressing fans with their strong performances.

The final day featured nearly 500 camels from across the Sultanate of Oman, competing in 24 rounds — including 12 for the Al Yetha category (four years old, 4 km), six for the Thanaya category (five years old, 5 km), and six for the Al Houll category (six years and above, 5 km). The wide participation reflected the growing popularity and competitiveness of camel racing in the Sultanate of Oman.

OCRF announced valuable prizes this season, including cash awards for the top 10 finishers in each race, along with cars, khanjars (traditional daggers), swords and trophies in select events — all aimed at motivating camel owners and trainers to participate on a larger scale.

RESULTS READ AS, ROUND, CAMEL, OWNER, TIME ADAM COMPETITIONS

- Asrar, Mohsen bin Ali al Wahibi, 6:32
- Dawlah, Yahya bin Said al Sunaidy, 6:29
- Manawar, Salim bin Ali al Maliki, 6:25



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- Aza'em, Said bin Ali al Maliki, 6:30
- Al Shahiniyah, Hamad bin Humaid al Habsi, 6:33
- Al Alami, Mayed bin Ali al Darai, 6:28
- Shawahen, Abdullah bin Said al Ghafil, 8:22
- Samhah, Saud bin Ali al Jabri, 8:18
- Al Hather, Ahmed bin Abdullah al Darai, 8:19
- Al Asimah, Ali bin Mohammed al

- Jahafi, 8:28
- Tahdheer, Salim bin Ali al Maliki, 8:34
 - Al Zaeem, Hatim bin Salem al Janibi, 8:32
- BARKA COMPETITIONS**
- Al Tayarah, Royal Camel Corps, 6:29:72
 - Najlaa, Abdullah bin Mohammed al Hajri, 6:29
 - Ajeeb, Rashid bin Obaid al Wahibi, 6:25:18
 - Al Azrah, Said bin Mubarak al Wahibi, 6:32:41
 - Mashael, Ghasi bin Salim al Mashaykhi, 6:29:59
 - Shaheen, Ali bin Abdullah al Maliki, 6:31:23
 - Amjad, Royal Camel Corps, 8:16:65
 - Al Wasmiyah, Nasser bin Sulaiman al Khalidi, 8:22:22
 - Mbalish, Hamad bin Mohammed al Wahibi, 8:20:34
 - Nojood, Royal Camel Corps, 8:41:71
 - Arsad, Hamad bin Mohammed al Wahibi, 8:31:93
 - Al Taghi, Nasser bin Said al Nusayri, 8:40:72

Al Shabab and Ibri start strong with key victories for Jetour Cup competition

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

Al Shabab Club managed to secure a valuable 2–0 victory over its guest Al Khabourah in the match held at the Seeb Sports Stadium. The game was a postponed fixture from the first round, within the second group of the Jetour Cup competition.

The first half was technically solid, with Al Shabab starting with early attacking pressure. However, the resilience of Al Khabourah's defense and the brilliance of goalkeeper Rabee al Qutaiti prevented the ball from finding the net.

In the 32nd minute, Al Khabourah almost snatched the lead through Nawaf al Hosni, who went one-on-one with the goalkeeper, but his shot went just wide of the right post. Al Shabab responded quickly in the 35th minute with a header from Geoulson Limado that struck the right post. Four minutes later, in the 39th minute, Mohammed al Ghafri finally put Al Shabab ahead with a precise header, ending the first half 1–0.

At the start of the second half, both coaches made several substitutions to give



Al Rustaq and Ibri player fight for the ball

opportunities to fresh players. Al Shabab benefited from the energy of their substitutes, as striker Badr al Alawi doubled the lead in the 82nd minute after receiving a perfect pass that exploited a defensive lapse by Al Khabourah.

In the closing minutes, Al Khabourah pushed forward in search of a comeback, applying offensive pressure

on goalkeeper Islam al Hinai, but the solid defensive line of Al Shabab stood firm. The referee's final whistle confirmed Al Shabab's 2–0 victory and their first three points of the tournament.

With this result, Al Shabab climbed to third place in the group with three points, while Al Khabourah dropped to second-to-last place with one

point from a draw.

Ibri Club achieved an exciting 3–2 win over Al Rustaq in their clash at the Buraimi Sports Complex, also within the second group of the Jetour Cup.

Ibri started strong, opening the scoring in the 6th minute through defender Ayman al Musallami, who rose high and converted a corner kick from Mutasim al Shalbi with a brilliant header.

Al Rustaq tried to get back into the game, creating several dangerous chances but without success, until the 41st minute when they equalised. A cross from Ayman al Buraiki deflected off defender Ayman al Musallami into his own net, registering an own goal for Al Rustaq. But Ibri responded quickly, as player Bisan scored their second goal in the first minute of stoppage time (45+1), finishing off a clever assist from Abdulrahman al Yaqoubi, sending his team into halftime with a 2–1 lead.

In the second half, Al Rustaq pushed forward aggressively seeking an equaliser, while Ibri retreated to defend. Al Rustaq's task grew harder when their player Hatim al Hamhami was sent off in the 46th minute.

SHORT TAKES



Poland’s Iga Swiatek celebrates with the trophy after winning her singles final against Russia’s Ekaterina Alexandrova. — Reuters

SWIATEK WINS KOREA OPEN TITLE

SEOUL: A tenacious Iga Swiatek battled back from the brink of defeat to capture the Korea Open title on Sunday, surviving a fright in the first set before taming Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova 1-6 7-6(3) 7-5.

Swiatek, who cruised through her first three matches in Seoul, looked out of sorts in the opening two sets, committing several double faults and sending many shots flying long and wide. However, the world number two ironed out the errors and got a handle on her opponent’s game, wrapping up victory after more than two and a half hours.

It was the Pole’s third trophy of the year, adding to her triumphs at Wimbledon and the Cincinnati Open.

“Honestly, I don’t know how I won it, because you were just playing great. I just tried to stay alive,” Swiatek said.

“Hopefully, we’re going to play more finals. It’s always tough against you, so it’s also entertaining.”

SWIATEK MAKES UP FOR FAMILY FAILURE

Swiatek also joked that her win had made up for her father Tomasz’s failure to win a medal with the Polish rowing team at the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul.

“I’m happy that I could win here because of the family history, and my dad couldn’t win the Olympics, but at least I won this tournament, so hopefully he’s going to come here next year to enjoy everything,” she added.

Alexandrova, who won the Korea Open in 2022, took advantage of her opponent’s early struggles and broke serve three times in the opening set to put herself in the driving seat. The pair traded breaks early in the second set and Alexandrova continued to pile the pressure on Swiatek, finding herself just a couple of points away from victory after taking a 30-15 lead at 6-5.

Despite having her opponent on the ropes, however, the Russian could not finish her off, and Swiatek took the set into a tiebreaker, where she raced to a 3-0 lead and held on to it to force a decider. There was another twist in a high-quality third set as Swiatek served three double faults in one game to gift Alexandrova a break, but she quickly brought the game back on serve and dialled up the intensity.

A deflated-looking Alexandrova could only watch as six-times Grand Slam champion Swiatek hit a pinpoint forehand winner to snatch victory and complete her comeback.

“She’s such a great player and it’s always super difficult to play against her, so I tried to do my best today. It wasn’t enough, so maybe next time I will be a little bit better,” Alexandrova said. — Reuters



Italy’s Jasmine Paolini, Lucia Bronzetti, Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Tyra Grant, Sara Errani and captain Tathiana Garbin celebrate with the trophy after winning the final. — Reuters

Italy outclass US to retain Billie Jean King Cup title

PAOLINI EARNS FIRST WIN OVER PEGULA TO SECURE TITLE

COCCIARETTO TOPPLES NAVARRO AS ITALY START STRONGLY

ITALY CAPTURE SIXTH TITLE IN ELITE TEAM COMPETITION

AN inspired Italy successfully defended their Billie Jean King Cup with a 2-0 victory over record 18-times champions the United States on Sunday, taking their own tally in the premier women’s team competition to six titles.

Elisabetta Cocciaretto and Jasmine Paolini both won their singles matches to help their country triumph in Shenzhen and prolonged the American wait for another title after their previous success in 2017.

“It’s been a really great week and it’s always amazing to play in this competition ... I just want to thank everybody, it was unbelievable,” a beaming Paolini said.

“It was so tough, this year we played amazing teams, they are very strong and today against the United States, we didn’t expect to win so we’re really happy about this win.

“I don’t know, it’s even more special this year than last year. It’s different, but honestly I didn’t expect it.”

World number eight Paolini’s 6-4 6-2 victory was her maiden win in her sixth clash with Jessica Pegula and helped Italy become the first team to capture back-to-back titles since the Czech Republic lifted three straight trophies from 2014-16.

ROARING APPLAUSE

The 29-year-old edged a tight first set by firing a backhand rocket that broke the seventh-ranked Pegula’s serve and she came



Italy’s Jasmine Paolini, Lucia Bronzetti, Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Tyra Grant, Sara Errani and captain Tathiana Garbin celebrate with the trophy after winning the final. — Reuters

from an early break down in the next set to quell the challenge of her American opponent after a late wobble.

She celebrated her win by raising her arms and joined her team in dancing in the centre of the blue court to roaring applause from largely Italian and Chinese fans.

Earlier, Cocciaretto ensured that Italy shot out of the blocks by swatting aside world number 18 Emma Navarro 6-4 6-4, with the 24-year-old finishing off in style by winning a breathtaking rally on matchpoint.

“It was an unbelievable match for me,” said world number 91 Cocciaretto, who battled from 2-4 down in the second set to get past her opponent in 89 minutes at a packed Shenzhen Bay Sports Centre Arena.

“I knew she’s a really great player and I had to play my best tennis ... I’m really happy about the performance and the point I gave to Italy.”

Italy’s sixth Billie Jean King Cup title comes amid a golden spell for the country, with the men’s team claiming the previous two Davis Cup trophies and their players enjoying success at the Grand Slam and Olympic level. — Reuters

Red Warriors conclude domestic camp for Road to World Cup

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

Oman’s national football team concluded its short domestic preparatory camp in Muscat on Sunday under the supervision of Portuguese head coach Carlos Queiroz. The six-day gathering, which brought together 26 players from the Oman Elite League, was held at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex and wrapped up with a morning training session under the direct sun at the venue’s greenfield.

The camp came at a decisive moment in Oman’s journey, just three weeks before the crucial AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 2026. The Red Warriors are set to face Qatar on October 8 and the UAE on October 11 at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium in Doha as the matches widely considered the most important in the team’s history as they chase a historic spot in the 2026 Fifa World Cup.

Coach Queiroz, assisted by Hamed al Azzani, oversaw intensive daily sessions that focused on tactical and technical improvements. The training programme included short-passing drills, ball control exercises, fitness routines, defensive-to-attack transitions, and organised attacking movements. The Portuguese coach also used the camp to evaluate emerging talents and strengthen squad depth, ensuring readiness across all positions.

Despite the absence of Oman’s professional players abroad due to club commitments, the all-domestic squad carried high energy and determination throughout the camp. Among the players unavailable were Mohsin al Ghassani (Bangkok United), Issam al Subhi (Al Quwa Al Jawiya), Jameel al Yahmadi (Al Kahraba, Iraq), Al Mundher al Alawi (Al Wehdat, Jordan), and Khalid al Buraiki alongside Abdulrahman al Mushaifri (SK Artis Brno, Czech Republic).

Oman, currently ranked 78th in the Fifa



The training programme included short-passing drills, ball control exercises, fitness routines, defensive-to-attack transitions, and organised attacking movements

Men’s World Ranking, will enter the final phase of preparations with growing optimism. The team will return back to the local gathering ahead of their travel to Doha. The forthcoming domestic camp and short gathering in Doha will serve as an important step in fine-tuning strategies and instilling discipline as the Red Warriors edge closer to the defining qualifiers.

SQUAD

Ibrahim al Mukhaini, Fayez al Rushaidi, Bilal al Balushi, Ahmed al Rawahi, Ahmed al Kaabi, Ali al Busaidy, Juma al Habsi, Mahmood al Mushaifri, Ahmed al Khamisi, Musaab al Shaqsi, Naif Bait Subaih, Amjed al Harthy, Tani al Rushaidi, Ghanim al Habshi, Sultan al Marzooq, Ahed al Mashaykhi, Musaab al Maamari, Harib al Saadi, Arshad al Alawi, Abdullah Fawaz, Ahmed al Riyami, Zahir al Aghbari, Hatim al Roushdi, Nasser al Rawahi, Salah al Yahyaei and Mohammed al Ghafri.

SPORTS



Bronze medallist, France's Jimmy Gressier celebrates on the podium. — Reuters



Gold medallist, Kenya's Beatrice Chebet celebrates on the podium. — Reuters



Sweden's Armand Duplantis celebrates on the podium with the prize money cheque for breaking the world record. — Reuters



Melissa Jefferson-Wooden of the US celebrates after winning gold. — Reuters



Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone of the US crosses the finish line to win the final ahead of Bahrain's Salwa Eid Naser and Dominican Republic's Marileidy Paulino. — Reuters



US' Noah Lyles crosses the finish line to win the men's 4x100m relay final during the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. — Reuters

Duplantis and Levrone lit up world championships

THE WORLD championships in Tokyo produced two standout performances from pole vaulter Armand Duplantis and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone. Other stars dazzled too in Japan's National Stadium as the USA and Kenya asserted their authority on the track.

ARMAND DUPLANTIS (Sweden, men's pole vault) Deep into the Tokyo night, Duplantis electrified a packed crowd by setting the 14th world record of his career in an event he has re-defined.

The US-born Swede, one of athletics' genuine superstars, seems to be able to summon up world records at will -- his latest is 6.30 metres.

"I felt the only way to leave Japan was to set the world record," Duplantis said. His ecstatic celebrations with his competitors, his parents and his girlfriend Desire Inglander, were also fun to watch.

SYDNEY MCLAUGHLIN-LEVRONE (USA, women's 400m)

She came, she saw and she duly conquered a new event, nearly breaking a 40-year-old world record in a remarkable women's 400m final.

McLaughlin-Levrone already dominates the one-lap hurdles event, so when the American fully turned her attention to the flat race, it was an exciting prospect.

She did not disappoint, blasting to a time of 47.78sec, the second fastest in history and just behind the 47.60sec set by Marita Koch of the former East Germany in 1985.

McLaughlin-Levrone was running on a wet Tokyo track. It is hoped that in different conditions, the American can one day erase a record that is widely viewed with suspicion because of East Germany's state-sponsored doping programme, although Koch never tested positive.

MELISSA JEFFERSON-WOODEN (USA, women's 100m and 200m, 4x100m relay)

The American became just the second woman to win a sprint treble at a world championships since Jamaican legend Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce in 2013.

Victory in the 4x100m relay with the USA quartet on Sunday added to a commanding 100m performance that left Olympic 100m champion Julien Alfred for dead. Jefferson-Wooden, 24, became the fourth fastest 100m performer in history with a time of 10.61sec.

She was even more comfortable in the longer sprint and will now have her eyes fixed on the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

OBLIQUE SEVILLE (Jamaica, men's 100m)

The 24-year-old Jamaican has long promised great things but in Tokyo he emphatically delivered, leaving teammate Kishane Thompson and Olympic champion Noah Lyles



New Zealand's Geordie Beamish celebrates with his medal after winning gold in the final. — Reuters

with the minor medals as he blasted to the men's 100m gold in 9.77sec.

In doing so, he ushered in a new era of men's Jamaican sprinting, following in the footsteps of his now-retired mentor Usain Bolt, a delighted spectator in Tokyo.

Guided by Bolt's old coach Glen Mills, Seville staked a claim as the coming man in the fiercely competitive sprint world. "Track and field is both mental and physical. But to be honest, I think I have mastered the mental part of it. Now, more gold medals!" he said.

JIMMY GRESSIER (France, men's 10,000m and 5,000m)

Gressier was an unlikely winner of the 10,000m, an event normally dominated by athletes from east Africa or of African origin.

In lively post-race interviews, the Frenchman thanked the anti-doping authorities for "creating a level playing field", and promised to buy his girlfriend a car with his prize money. He added a 5,000m bronze medal on the final night.

BEATRICE CHEBET (Kenya, women's 5,000m and 10,000m)

Chebet produced a blistering burst of speed to win the women's 5,000m and deny her fellow Kenyan Faith Kipyegon, the 1,500m winner, a double gold.

In the process, Chebet earned a memorable double herself, having also won the 10,000m.

The gold medals at these championships -- Kenya also took the men's and women's 800m titles, the women's marathon and the women's steeplechase -- were a much-needed tonic for the east African running powerhouse which is battling against a raft of doping cases, most notably one involving the women's marathon world record holder, Ruth Chepngetich.

GEORDIE BEAMISH (New Zealand, men's 3,000m steeplechase)

Beamish took a tumble in the heats of the steeplechase but jumped up and still qualified. Perhaps it was written in the stars that he would produce a last-gasp spurt to edge defending champion Soufiane El Bakkali for gold in the final.

His surprise win was followed a day later by Olympic champion Hamish Kerr's high jump victory, making it a rare two golds for New Zealand. — AFP

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
5,110.258

BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES



OPAZ ORGANISES TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SME ENTREPRENEURS

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), in cooperation with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (Riyada), organised a five-day training programme for a group of entrepreneurs entitled 'Local and International Expansion of Small and Medium Enterprises' in Muscat Governorate.

The programme was designed to support entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) holding a Riyada card, with the objective of equipping them with the strategic knowledge and practical skills required to formulate integrated expansion plans, both within Oman and across international markets.

It is also aimed at strengthening organisational readiness to navigate cultural and legal complexities in diverse business environments.

Key focus areas of the programme included evaluating institutional preparedness, developing targeted strategies for market expansion and designing sustainable growth frameworks. Participants were also given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of global market dynamics and explore adaptive mechanisms for responding to change.

This initiative forms part of a broader national effort to empower SME owners, enhance their competitiveness and reinforce their contribution to economic diversification and sustainable development.

Al Afi: Green hydrogen to drive Oman’s energy future

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

OMAN'S Minister of Energy and Minerals, Eng Salim bin Nasser al Afi, has underlined that green hydrogen will be the “cornerstone of the Sultanate of Oman's future energy landscape”, as the country balances the long-term use of oil and gas with the rapid development of renewables.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with Tawasul magazine, Al Afi said achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 will demand heavy and sustained investment in research and development (R&D), while closer collaboration with academia and industry will be critical in shaping the transition.

“We don't view renewables as direct replacements for oil and gas, but as strategic complements within a broader, multi-source energy ecosystem”, Al Afi said. “Our vision is not to abandon oil and gas, but to diversify energy sources”.

The minister emphasised that while fossil fuels remain central



Our vision is not to abandon oil and gas, but to diversify energy sources

ENG SALIM BIN NASSER AL AFI

to the global economy, Oman is pursuing a dual track: deploying advanced technologies to ensure efficiency and sustainability in hydrocarbons, while accelerating green hydrogen and renewable energy projects.

Oman has taken concrete steps to advance green hydrogen, establishing Hydrom as the national coordinating body and earmarking strategic land blocks for production and export. Multiple agreements have been signed with global companies and investors; and policy frameworks are being aligned with international market standards.

“Our focus now is on building the transport and export infrastructure, ensuring we have qualified national talent and adjusting regulations to meet global demands”, Al Afi said. “Naturally, projects of this scale face challenges, but we see them as opportunities”.

Al Afi stressed the role of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) as a strategic partner in advancing the sector. A joint committee between the ministry and SQU has been formed to explore research integration, support graduation

projects and establish specialised laboratories for energy transition and rare earth mineral studies.

“Reaching net-zero will require sustained R&D investment, particularly in hydrogen, clean gas technologies, carbon capture and storage; and industrial waste recycling”, he said.

This year, the ministry identified promising copper and chromium reserves in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate under new concession agreements, while Petroleum Development Oman continues to assess the commercial viability of fresh oil and gas finds in Block 6. In renewables, high-potential wind sites have been evaluated for development with local and international partners.

Al Afi urged stronger cooperation between academics and industry professionals, highlighting the complementary role of theory and practice.

“Knowledge that isn't applied stays trapped on paper; exploration that lacks scientific grounding risks wasting resources”, he said. “The greatest discoveries always start with an idea, followed by study — and end in achievement”.

FSA cancels licence of CFI Financial

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has issued an administrative decision effectively cancelling the licence of CFI Financial LLC from operating in the capital market sector and deregistering it.

The FSA cited the company's failure to comply with Article (34/A) of the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism Law. In addition, the company was engaging in



The Authority affirmed its commitment to protecting the integrity of financial markets

the marketing of non-Omani securities without obtaining the necessary authorisation, in violation of Article (139) of the Executive Regulations of the Capital Market Law read in conjunction with Article (3) of the Securities Law.

The Authority affirmed that this decision reflects its commitment to protecting the integrity of financial markets, ensuring that all licensed institutions operating in the capital market comply with the applicable legal and regulatory standards and safeguarding the public interest.

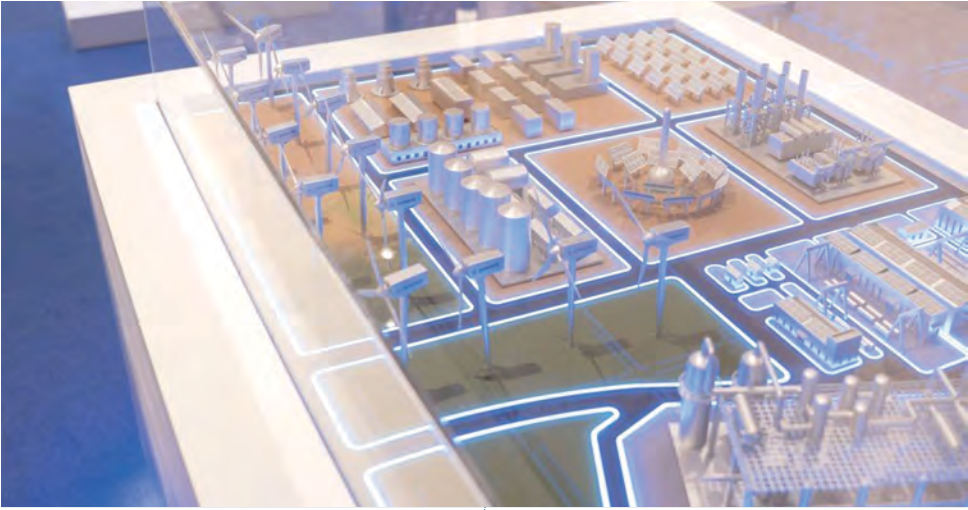
Design firm named for Oman’s first wind turbine plant project at Duqm SEZ

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

CID Gulf LLC, an Omani-Moroccan engineering consultancy firm, has announced that it has secured a prestigious contract to provide design consultancy services for the establishment of Oman's first wind turbine manufacturing project at Duqm SEZ. The client is Mawarid Turbines — a subsidiary of Oman's integrated energy powerhouse, OQ Group.

Muscat-based CID Gulf is a joint venture established by Khonji Engineering Consultancy, a member of Mohamed & Ahmed Alkhonji LLC (MAK), a leading Omani tech-based products and services holding company and Conseil, Ingénierie et Développement (CID), a Moroccan consultancy engineering firm operating across the African continent and the Middle East.

“This project represents a cornerstone in the Sultanate of Oman's move towards clean energy, local industrialisation



Phase 1 of the facility, to be developed on a sprawling 550,000 m² site in the SEZ, entails an investment of around RO 70 million.

and long-term sustainability. We are honoured to contribute to this national initiative alongside key government and private sector stakeholders”, CID Gulf noted in a post on Friday.

The award underscores a fast-track approach to the implementation of Mawarid

Turbines — a landmark bid to localise wind turbine manufacturing to cater to the large domestic market as well as regional demand. Oman's requirement for wind turbines to support the country's energy transition — spanning grid-connected clean energy generation and the

ambitious green hydrogen sector — is estimated in the thousands over the next couple of decades.

Phase 1 of the facility, to be developed on a sprawling 550,000 m² site in the SEZ, entails an investment of around RO 70 million.

The wind turbine manufacturing capacity of this phase is projected at around 1,100 MW per year, focusing on the production of two turbine models — the 6.25 MW and the 9.6 MW.

Technology for the project will be licensed from Shanghai Electric Group, a major player in China's clean energy equipment manufacturing sector. Among the first recipients of the turbines — covering not only nacelle hubs housing the generators but potentially other components as well — are grid —connected, wind-based Independent Power Projects planned in Al Duqm, Mahout and Sadah.

While these projects will be developed by international developers (supported by their

local consortium partners) selected through a competitive tender managed by Nama Power & Water Procurement (Nama PWP), OQ Alternative Energy (OQAE) — a wholly-owned subsidiary of OQ Group — has been assured a stake in them. This stake commitment, consistent with OQAE's mandate as the national champion for renewable energy, covers an equity share of up to 25 per cent in all future renewable energy projects procured by Nama PWP, starting with the Ibri III Solar PV project — a 500 MW scheme slated for implementation in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

In the case of the wind projects planned in Al Duqm, Mahout and Sadah, OQAE's investment — in the form of locally manufactured wind turbines and potentially other contributions — will correspond to an equivalent stake in the respective project companies, it is learnt.

Phase 1 of Mawarid Turbines is expected to come on stream by late 2026 or early 2027.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



BANKDHOFAR POWERS FUTURE LEADERS WITH INNOVATION

MUSCAT: BankDhofar, the second-largest bank in the Sultanate of Oman by branch network size, continues to affirm its leading role in human resources development within the Omani banking sector.

Through a series of pioneering initiatives, the bank is nurturing Omani talent, empowering women and preparing future leaders across all administrative levels to keep pace with sectoral and national developments.

As a result of these efforts, BankDhofar has achieved one of the highest Omanisation rates in the sector, with more than 94% of senior and middle management roles now held by Omanis.

This milestone reflects the bank’s alignment with Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises cultivating capable Omani leaders to drive the national economy.

The bank remains committed to building a highly qualified national workforce ready to meet the demands of leadership succession and to adapt to a fast-changing, competitive environment.

Dr Khalid bin Salem al Hamdani, Chief Human Resources Officer at BankDhofar, highlighted the bank’s focus on talent development: “At BankDhofar, we place our employees at the heart of our strategies.

We continuously provide advanced training and qualification programmes in line with international best practices, equipping our people with the skills and practical experience needed for long-term success”.

He noted that participation in the bank’s development programmes has grown significantly in recent years, positively impacting performance, productivity and customer service.

Earlier this year, BankDhofar launched a strategic leadership initiative delivered in partnership with a consortium of leading international business schools, including Wharton, Kellogg, London Business School and the Indian School of Business. The programme features intensive learning sessions, interactive workshops and practical training, helping participants address real-world challenges in a rapidly evolving global banking landscape.

The curriculum also emphasises digitalisation and innovation as drivers of performance and productivity.

One of the bank’s flagship initiatives is the “Ruwwad” programme, introduced eight years ago to prepare fresh graduates from diverse fields with essential skills in leadership, finance, communication and digital technologies. The programme has become a vital platform for developing the next generation of leaders.

BankDhofar’s achievements in human resources have been widely recognised.

OOREDOO WINS SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD AT JAWA’IZ BASMA 2025

MUSCAT: Ooredoo has been honoured with the prestigious Social Impact Award for educational initiatives at the Jawa’iz Basma 2025 ceremony, which took place at the St Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort.

The recognition celebrates the company’s flagship corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme, the Goodwill Journey, which has been a cornerstone of Ooredoo’s commitment to empowering communities for over two decades.

The Jawa’iz Basma is a social impact recognition initiative



that celebrates organisations and individuals who have made significant contributions to the

social, environmental and economic well-being of communities across the Sultanate of Oman.

The Goodwill Journey continues to deliver support and inspiration to towns and villages countrywide; from donating devices and supporting rehabilitation centres, to launching environmental awareness initiatives, women’s entrepreneurship programmes and empowering youth, often in conjunction with prominent associations and government organisations.

MHD Automobiles unveils jeep models for 2nd anniversary

MHD Automobiles LLC, the authorised distributor of Jeep, Dodge, RAM, Alfa Romeo and Mopar in Oman, marked a major milestone with a special event for media, valued customers and 4x4 club enthusiasts as part of its ongoing 2nd Anniversary Celebrations.

The highlight of the event was the reveal of two limited-edition Jeep models, designed exclusively for Oman – the Wrangler 2-Door Sport X and the Grand Cherokee Laredo X.

The Jeep Wrangler 2-Door Sport X, starting from RO 16,995, enhances the Wrangler Sport with a sporty decal, leather seats and a body-colour roof.

The Grand Cherokee Laredo X adds sophistication with leather seating, sleek black alloys and a black grille finish.

The 5-seater variant starts at RO 17,995, while the 7-seater Grand Cherokee L Laredo X is available from RO 18,995.

Reflecting on the occasion, Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles, said: “Our anniversary is not just



The Grand Cherokee Laredo X adds sophistication with leather seating, sleek black alloys and a black grille finish.

about looking back — it’s about creating unique experiences for our customers today. These limited-edition models reflect our passion for delivering more value and exclusivity to the Omani market”.

Customers continue to enjoy special anniversary prices across the Jeep, RAM and Alfa Romeo ranges, making this the

perfect time to own one of these iconic vehicles.

Two standout highlights include:

- The Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 392, starting from RO 35,995 — the last and best chance to own the legendary V8 Wrangler.
- The RAM 1500 RHO, starting from RO 37,995 —

bringing the High Output powerhouse within reach.

Earlier this week, MHD Automobiles also hosted an exclusive 3-day aftersales promotion, which delighted customers with discounts on Mopar merchandise and accessories, along with free Alloy Wheel Polish and Vehicle Health Check services.

Dollar Car Rental partners with Mitsubishi Motors

MUSCAT: Dollar Car Rental, one of Oman’s leading car rental providers, has strengthened its operations by purchasing 34 Mitsubishi Montero Sport SUVs from General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor of Mitsubishi Motors in Oman.

The handover ceremony was held at the Mitsubishi showroom in Al Athaiba, marking a significant step in Dollar’s commitment to offering reliable, high-quality vehicles for its customers across the



Sultanate of Oman.

A trusted name in Oman since 2007, Dollar Car Rental is part of A A Al Moosa Enterprises and has grown to become one of the country’s leading car rental companies.

With a fleet of over 3,500 vehicles across multiple categories and branches, including Muscat, Salalah, Suhar, Al Duqm and major airports. Dollar provides tailored mobility solutions ranging from short-term rentals to long-term corporate leasing.

Drive into celebrations with Ford’s exciting benefits

MUSCAT: Arabian Car Marketing Company is turning up the excitement for Ford enthusiasts across Oman with an exciting campaign designed to make owning a Ford more rewarding than ever.

Customers who purchase their favourite Ford this season can enjoy a comprehensive package of exclusive benefits, including a 5-year/100,000 km service package (whichever is earlier), a 5-year/100,000 km manufacturer’s warranty, complimentary registration and complimentary accessories, ensuring peace of mind and value on every journey.

Adding even more excitement, anyone who takes a test-drive of their favourite Ford model during this period will automatically enter a draw



for a chance to win one of four brand-new iPhone 17 Air devices.

The offer that began on September 4 will end on November 3, 2025, giving customers a perfect opportunity to experience the Ford difference first-hand while standing a chance to win.

Sharing his thoughts on the new campaign, a representative from Arabian Car Marketing Company commented, “Ford vehicles are renowned worldwide for their quality, strength, power and safety.

The joy of owning a Ford lies in the confidence and excitement you feel on every drive.

With this exclusive offer, customers can choose the Ford they love and enjoy benefits that make every journey truly rewarding”.

The Ford line-up available in Oman

caters to a wide variety of driving preferences and lifestyles. Customers seeking seamless connectivity and top-notch performance will find the Ford Taurus an ideal choice.

With its sleek, modern design and powerful 2.0-litre EcoBoost engine producing 232 horsepower and 388 Nm of torque, paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission and multiple driving modes, the Taurus balances performance and efficiency, delivering an impressive 15.3 km/l fuel economy as a flagship sedan.

For those looking for a stylish, versatile SUV, the Ford Territory combines striking design with modern technology and spacious interiors, making it a perfect fit for young professionals and busy families alike.

SHORT TAKES



MOTCIT LAUNCHES DIGITAL SKILLS DRIVE FOR NATIONALS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has announced the introduction of a programme codenamed ‘Irtiqa’ (ascension) to develop national competencies in government digital transition.

The programme was launched in partnership with the Royal Academy of Management (RAM), the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) and Omani Society for Human Resources Management (OSHRM).

‘Irtiqa’ programme seeks to groom a whole generation of leaders who are capable of spearheading transition and realising innovation in the government work system. It also aims to achieve excellence in rendering services, improving the experience of users of digital platforms and meeting the goals of ‘knowledge economy’, based on the view that digital knowledge represents a new capital and a fundamental driver of sustainable economic growth.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, a visual presentation featuring key pillars of government digital transition was held. The presentation highlighted the importance of building capacities and empowering them to achieve the requirements of government digital transition in the Sultanate of Oman. It also explored means of exchanging expertise in the sustainability of digital knowledge.

The ceremony also included a dialogue session that focused on the role of human beings in leading digital transition. — ONA

OMAN TO SHOWCASE STONE INDUSTRY STRENGTH IN ITALY

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will participate next Tuesday in the 59th edition of Marmomacc, the International Stone, Architectural Design and Stone Technology Exhibition, in Verona, Italy.

The four-day event is one of the largest international exhibitions for marble, stone technology, processing machinery and architectural applications.

Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Faroojiyah, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, said Oman’s participation under the Omani Products Promotion Supervisory Team (OPEX) highlights ongoing efforts to strengthen Oman’s global presence and promote competitive, high-quality stone industries.

“This participation represents an important opportunity to showcase Omani capabilities, explore partnerships and exchange expertise with leading international companies”, she said.

Eng Dawood bin Salim al Haddabi, CEO of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and Head of OPEX, noted that Marmomacc is a strategic platform to attract investments and highlight Oman’s commitment to quality, sustainability and innovation.

The OPEX plan for 2025 involves targeting vital industrial sectors, diversifying marketing channels and supporting SMEs in export promotion. This year’s Marmomacc is expected to feature over 1,400 exhibitors from 50+ countries and attract 50,000 visitors, including investors, architects and designers. Themes will focus on materials, technology and culture, reflecting global advances in marble and design industries. — ONA

EXTRA REVENUES

Iraq increases oil exports



Iraq has increased its oil exports after the gradual end of voluntary production cuts under the OPEC+ agreement, the country’s state oil marketer SOMO said on Sunday.

The increase in exports is expected to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in additional revenues for Iraq at current price levels, SOMO’s director general Ali Nizar al Shatari said. — Reuters

CEO TALKS

ICV, Masar, SMEs: shaping Oman’s industrial talent

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, SEPT 21

A senior Omani industry leader has unveiled a practical blueprint to accelerate workforce development and strengthen local supply chains, drawing on nearly three decades of experience that began in 1995 with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).

“In the 1990s we treated SME and Local Community Contractor development not just as an economic goal, but as a national duty”, said Sulaiman bin Hamed al Suleimani, Manager — Contracts, Arabian Industries Projects. “We helped emerging contractors understand compliance, quality and execution against international benchmarks — work that shaped my lifelong commitment to local content and value creation”.

Speaking to the Observer, Al Suleimani reflected on how his leadership philosophy has evolved from hands-on oversight to deliberate empowerment. “I lead with transparency and integrity. Today the priority is building leadership capacity in others — especially the younger generation”.

On job creation, he highlighted programmes that close the gap between classrooms and industrial sites: structured on-the-job training



Believe in your potential and take ownership of your path

SULAIMAN
BIN HAMED AL
SULEIMANI

Manager —
Contracts,
Arabian
Industries
Projects

(OJT), certification with national institutes and internships with clear paths to employment. Crucially, he noted, In-Country Value (ICV) clauses must translate into tangible careers. “ICV only matters if it creates real opportunities for Omanis — not just numbers on a page”.

Persistent challenges — skills mismatches, limited industrial exposure and employee retention — are being addressed through contract-level requirements, in-house practical modules and active mentorship. “We keep talking with youth to understand their aspirations and adapt our programmes accordingly”.

Al Suleimani singled out Masar as the flagship initiative unifying upskilling and reskilling efforts around national priorities. “Under Masar, hundreds of Omanis have trained in mechanical, electrical and HSE roles; and many are already working on key industrial projects under PDO contracts”, he said. The ICV track within Masar is also moving Omani talent into supervisory and managerial roles.

He pointed to procurement reform as another ICV success story. “We integrated Omani SMEs into multi-year agreements and paired them with training and technical support. It met ICV targets — but more importantly, it strengthened

the local supply chain and created sustainable jobs inside those SMEs”.

Looking ahead, he stressed that the private sector’s role is pivotal. “Complying with directives is not enough. Progressive companies are designing localisation strategies that focus on quality, career growth and innovation. Talent development must be treated as a business imperative”.

The economic impact, he added, is already visible: greater diversification, stronger resilience and a multiplier effect across households and local ecosystems. “By equipping Omanis and empowering SMEs, we reduce reliance on oil revenues and foreign expertise while lifting national pride”.

Al Suleimani envisions Oman emerging as a regional hub for sustainable energy and advanced manufacturing, anchored in green technologies, hydrogen and circular-economy practices. “That future only works if our youth are prepared to lead it — with future-ready skills and mindset”.

His advice to young Omanis is straightforward: “Believe in your potential and take ownership of your path. Be proactive, stay curious and keep learning. You are not only workers — you are the innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders of Oman’s next chapter”.

European airports race to fix check-in glitch after cyberattack

BERLIN: Some of Europe’s biggest airports, including the region’s busiest, London’s Heathrow, raced to restore normal operations on Sunday after hackers disrupted automatic check-in systems.

Hackers on Saturday targeted check-in and boarding systems provider Collins Aerospace, owned by RTX, disrupting operations at Heathrow, Berlin Airport and in Brussels, where passengers faced long queues, cancellations and delays.

Disruption had eased significantly by early on Sunday despite some continuing delays, according to airport officials and data, while regulators said they were investigating the source of the cyberattack.

Brussels Airport said that 45 out of 257 scheduled departing flights on Sunday were cancelled but operational adjustments had kept waiting times down.

“There are delays between 30 and 90 minutes”, a spokesperson for the airport said, adding it was not clear yet how much longer disruptions would last.



Some of Europe’s biggest airports, including the region’s busiest, London’s Heathrow, raced to restore normal operations on Sunday after hackers disrupted automatic check-in systems. — Reuters

A passenger flying from Brussels said disruption had been minimal.

“For me, it was business as usual. For those poor souls who didn’t do online check-in or

have bags to check, they may be waiting a bit”, he said.

The disruption is the latest in a string of hacks to hit sectors from healthcare to autos. A breach at carmaker Jaguar

Land Rover halted production, while another caused Marks & Spencer losses in the hundreds of millions of pounds.

RTX called the incident a “cyber-related disruption” and said it had impacted its MUSE software, which is used by several airlines. RTX was not immediately available for comment on Sunday.

Berlin Brandenburg Airport said on Sunday problems persisted but that it was working with the company to resolve the issue. A manual workaround was in place and there were currently no major delays or cancellations, it added.

Heathrow said early on Sunday work was continuing to recover from the check-in system outage. It added that “the vast majority of flights have continued to operate”.

An analysis by aviation data provider Cirium said delays at Heathrow were “low”, Berlin had “moderate” delays, while Brussels had “significant” delays, but were decreasing. — Reuters

POLESTAR DECISION

Cars recalled over rearview camera fault



Electric-vehicle maker Polestar is recalling 27,816 Polestar 2 cars in the United States because the rearview camera image may fail to display when the vehicle is shifted into reverse, increasing the risk of a crash, according to the US safety regulator. The recall covers certain model-year 2021–2025 Polestar 2 vehicles. — Reuters

POSITIVE DEAL

India’s Goyal to visit US for trade talks



India’s Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal will visit Washington on September 22 for trade talks aimed at accelerating a long-pending bilateral deal, the commerce ministry said. The trip follows “positive” discussions in New Delhi on September 16 between negotiating teams from both sides. — Reuters

Disruptions in the global happiness trend



DR MYTHILI KOLLURU

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

It is interesting to know that mental health is intricately linked with physical health. People with a high level of happiness live longer. It has been observed that anxiety and depression can slow down the rate at which individuals’ wounds heal. Happiness and satisfaction are becoming vital for national strategic initiatives, public health and policy matters, as well as for policymakers.

Traditionally, happiness peaks in young adults and then decreases as people age, bottoming out around the age of 50, before increasing again after retirement. A new study reveals that this trend has now reversed. Significant statistical evidence suggests that well-being declines with age until middle age, and then improves again later in life.

Researchers have now discovered that unhappiness is most important among individuals in the 18-25 age group. The mental health of young people has deteriorated over the years. It is also important to note that the influence of work on happiness has also decreased. Earlier, the young in employment were happier than those who were unemployed; however, that gap has also shrunk in recent years.

This is a U-shaped pattern that is visible across various well-being metrics, including life satisfaction and happiness. New research reveals that this traditional U-shape is the reverse mirror image of the U and is instead

referred to as the hump-shaped ill-being curve. The curve of ill-being is associated with worries, stress and depression. Research evidence shows a decline in the well-being of youth across Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US and 167 other countries.

The lack of happiness leads to mental health deterioration, absenteeism, learning disorders and reduced participation in the labour market, and increases the usage of substances.

According to the latest research, only one-quarter of workers worldwide are satisfied with their work. Improving well-being can help the economy grow by meeting societal expectations, addressing societal pressure and navigating more challenging labour market conditions. Perceptions of digital technology, social media influence and relationships with others contribute to greater dissatisfaction.

There is evidence to suggest that ill-being among young people is directly related to the use of the internet and smartphones. The increased use of social media leads to feelings of comparison and loneliness among individuals aged 12 to 25. Research has also proved that extensive use of social media is linked to depression.

In regions of North America, Europe, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, happiness has declined since 2006. Nowadays, happiness does not peak till 50 years of age. Generally, young adults who

The young in employment were happier than those who were unemployed; however, that gap has also shrunk in recent years

contribute to a country’s economic growth tend to report lower levels of life satisfaction, physical health, purpose and relationships. Ill-being and poor mental health also come with a cost of \$1 trillion annual loss of productivity.

According to the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) research report, improvements in workplace well-being could contribute to a \$11.7 trillion increase in the global economy. Over the years, well-being has taken a back seat to other priorities.

World stakeholders need to address the various factors that affect happiness, including work dynamics, mental health pressures, job market volatility, social isolation and the impact of social media. Now the world needs to take notice, and leaders must put people’s health and well-being at the core of their strategic direction, as it will improve innovation, resilience and business performance.

The generational shifts in happiness are clear indicators of societal shifts that need to be addressed to ensure happiness among people and restore a sense of purpose and belonging across humanity. Though the exact cause of unhappiness needs much research, leaders must take notice that 12 billion work days are lost each year due to depression and anxiety. It is time for the corporate world to invest in employee well-being initiatives to drive growth, enhance productivity and foster overall happiness.

TRIPLING RENEWABLES BY 2030: CAN OMAN KEEP PACE WITH THE WORLD?



NAJAH AL RIYAMI

The writer is a Media and Communication Master’s graduate

Globally, the energy transition has reached a turning point. According to the Global Energy Outlook 2025 (RFF, 2025), solar and wind now account for the majority of new power capacity, with renewables making up over 45 per cent of the world’s installed generation base (IRENA, 2025).

Yet despite record growth, the pace is still insufficient to meet international targets: tripling renewable power capacity to more than 11 terawatts by 2030 (REN21, 2025).

For Oman, this global race has direct resonance. Oman Vision 2040 calls for transforming the Sultanate of Oman into a sustainable, diversified economy, with a target of 30 per cent of electricity to come from renewables by 2030. The question is whether the speed and scale of deployment in the Sultanate of Oman can match global momentum — and whether Oman can carve out its own leadership role in the region’s clean energy landscape.

In 2024 alone, the world added more than 700 gigawatts of new renewable capacity, the bulk of it solar photovoltaics (IRENA, 2025). China, India and the United States led the charge, while emerging economies are increasingly recognised as critical to meeting global goals, holding around 70 per cent of untapped solar and wind potential.

Oman, though smaller in scale, has made significant strides. The Ibri II Solar Plant, operational since 2021, produces 500 MW of clean electricity (APSR, 2022). Projects now in development — including the Ibri III solar farm, Al Kamil solar IPP, and a series of wind farms in Al Duqm and Dhofar — could push capacity closer to the Oman Vision 2040 benchmarks (OPWP, 2024).

The path is not without obstacles. Global reports warn that financing remains the biggest barrier for emerging economies, where the cost of capital can be three times higher than in advanced markets (IEA, 2025). For Oman, securing affordable green finance and attracting private sector investment will be essential.

Grid integration is another hurdle. As renewables rise, so does the need for energy storage, smarter grids and regional interconnections. Oman is studying battery storage, waste-to-energy and even hydrogen-ready infrastructure, but these technologies will need to be scaled rapidly to keep the 2030 targets within reach.

Hybrid work remains top choice amid office pushback



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

HYBRID working continues to remain the popular choice of staff and an increasing number of firms feel the staff morale is down when ordered back to working in the office.

Among these firms is the US banking giant JP Morgan Chase where the leadership told staff that the results of the bank’s internal opinion survey showed fewer employees than last year say they view their health and well-being as a corporate priority. Executives linked the results to the in-office mandate they announced earlier this year.

“Health and well-being scores remain favourable, though they dipped slightly year on year”, chief executive officer Jamie Dimon and human resources chief Robin Leopold wrote in an office memo.

“We know return full-time to the office has been an adjustment and one that not everyone agrees with, but we continue to believe in-person is how we do our best work and how we foster connections and mobility opportunities”.

The largest US bank had first told employees way back at the start of the year that they would have to switch from working in the office three days a week to full-time from March.

The policy has been unpopular and prompted instant pushback from employees internally and online.

That sentiment was evident in later survey results. Opportunities for internal mobility, work-life balance; and health and well-being were the areas with the lowest survey scores, several people who viewed the results said.

“We remain committed to flexibility and connecting you with best-in-class benefits and resources that support your well-being to help you make your best self happen”, Dimon and Leopold wrote.

They added: “Career mobility and development opportunities remain a priority. We know there is more we can do to create greater transparency around mobility,

For banks and financial institutions the preference remains for staff to return to office for most days of the week as they crack down on hybrid working



Options for flexible working arrangements vary from bank to bank

including performance and promotions; and we’re building that future model now”.

Each year, JPMorgan circulates a survey across the firm to request feedback on company culture. This year, 90 per cent of its workforce — some 284,000 employees — participated, the executives said in the memo. This was roughly in line with recent years’ participation rates.

Options for flexible working arrangements vary from bank to bank. Goldman Sachs has required employees to work in the office five days a week since 2023.

Citigroup, where most employees have the option to work remotely two days a week, had told staff earlier that people in hybrid roles would have the opinion to work remotely for two weeks in August, Business Insider reported.

The firm’s in-office mandate has prompted consternation among employees across business lines and levels of seniority this year.

A drafted presentation way back in January showed that JPMorgan management anticipated ‘quiet quitting’ and attrition as a result of the new policy.

For banks and financial institutions the preference remains for staff to return to office for most days of the week as they crack down on hybrid working. Now staff at a leading UK investment bank, Peel Hunt have been required, since a couple of months, to be in the office four days a week. Peel Hunt made the change for all its employees earlier this year but the move had not been reported at the time. It has around 320 staff.

“Following a successful implementation of the majority of front office teams working in the office four days a week, this was extended to the wider business”, a spokesperson for the bank said. “This allows our teams to collaborate effectively, while still allowing individuals to retain some flexibility in their working week”.

In its 2024 annual report, Peel Hunt said that while many firms in the City were asking employees to work five days a week in the office, “we have kept a flexible approach, based on four principles: more in than out, clients first, right for the team and flexibility and fairness”.

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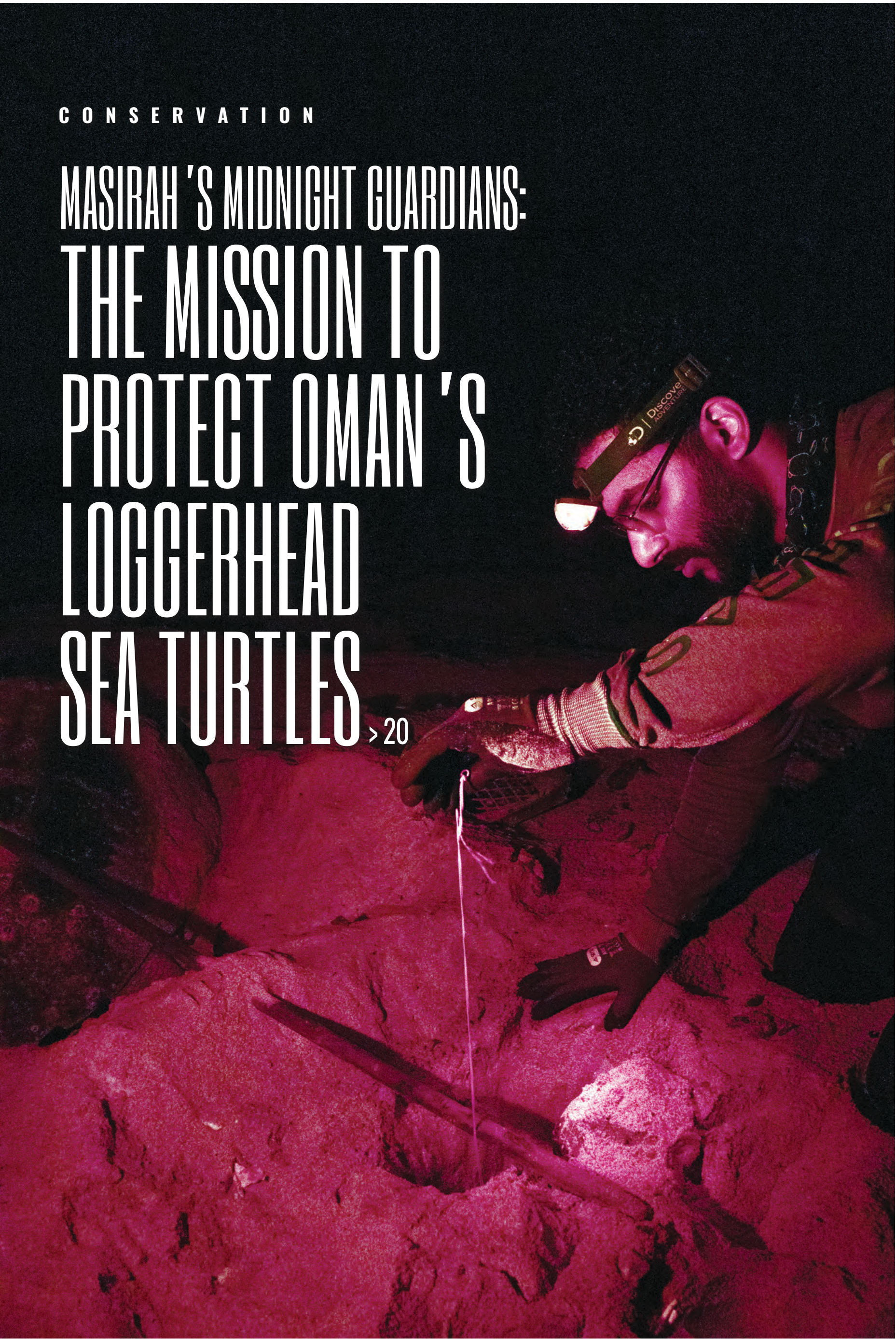
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ART/LIFE



FASHION

London Fashion Week hopes to usher in new era with leadership change



LONDON Fashion Week, which is under new leadership after 16 years, opens on Thursday with hopes of reinvigorating its runway schedule and easing the financial woes of its young designers.

“This season marks... the beginning of a new era for British fashion”, said Laura Weir, former creative director of luxury department store Selfridges, who replaced Caroline Rush as the head of the British Fashion Council (BFC) in April.

Weir faces an uphill battle to allay concerns about the relevance and international standing of the fashion week, with the departure in recent years of big fashion names to its star-studded counterparts in Milan, Paris and New York.

“My main objective is to ensure London Fashion Week remains the ultimate platform to showcase and celebrate the very best of British creativity while continuing to support designers who have built the foundations of British fashion and forged paths internationally”, Weir said ahead of LFW.

LFW’s June edition, initially launched to focus on menswear, was cancelled this year and replaced by a simple commercial showroom in Paris.

After a lacklustre schedule in February, marked by several absences as some designers opted to put on just one show a year due to the high costs, the BFC is hoping for a more exciting programme this time.

To ease the financial burden, “we have waived membership fees to make the platform more accessible to designers”, said Weir.

The former Vogue journalist said the BFC had also “curated a schedule that speaks to London’s cultural relevance” and “doubled our investment in our international guest programme to ensure heavyweight buyers, media and cultural voices are here in London”.

Since taking the helm, Weir has increased scholarship funding and secured a three-year funding commitment for the NewGen programme for emerging young designers, according to British Vogue. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



PERFORMANCES

Vietnam’s Duc Phuc performs during the Intervention Song Contest at the Live Arena in Moscow. — AFP



ENTERTAINMENT

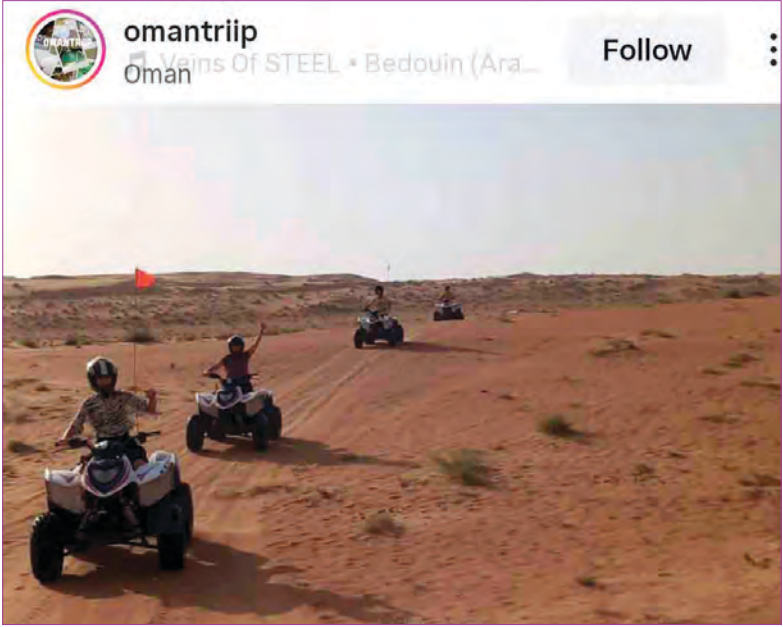
Mariah Carey performs during the second day of the iHeartRadio Music Festival at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP



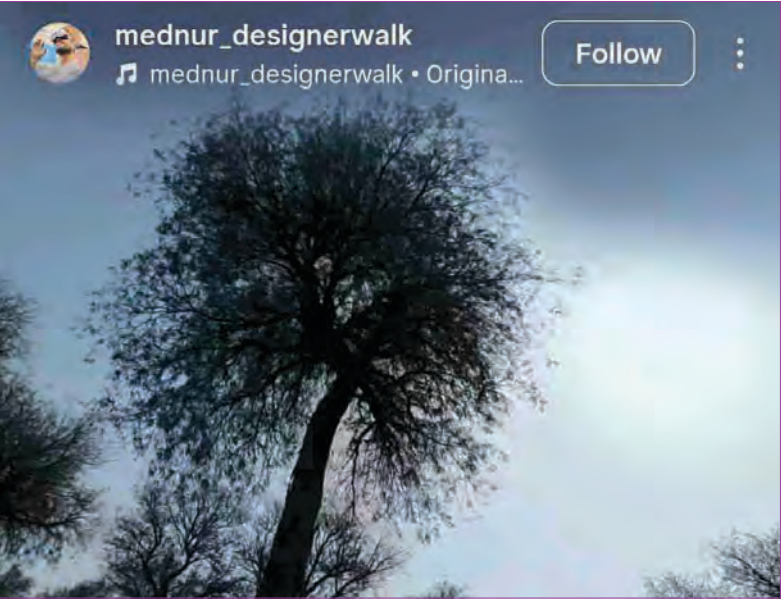
FILM

French actress Juliette Binoche poses during the photocall of the film “In-I In Motion” during the 73rd San Sebastian International Film Festival. — AFP

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Bayeux Tapestry leaves museum for first time since 1983 before UK loan



THE 11TH-CENTURY Bayeux Tapestry has been moved from its museum in northern France for the first time in more than 40 years, authorities said on Friday, before the artwork's loan to the United Kingdom.

The 68-metre-long (224-foot-long) tapestry, which depicts the Norman conquest of England in 1066, was taken to a secret storage location from its museum in the French town of Bayeux in Normandy, sources said.

The authorities in Calvados, northern France, which supervised the delicate manoeuvre with Normandy's regional cultural affairs body (DRAC), said more than 90 people were involved in the removal, which took seven hours and 15 minutes.

"The tapestry, packed in a crate, reached its storage location" late on Friday afternoon, the prefecture said in a statement, without providing further details about where it was being kept.

The operation had been planned for Thursday, prompting the French government to announce a

delay as a result of nationwide strikes and protests against French President Emmanuel Macron.

But because of the intricate planning involved, the removal — the first from the museum since 1983 — went ahead as planned under a shroud of secrecy, the sources with knowledge of the move said.

"The conditions and timing of the operation were kept secret to organise the transfer under optimal security conditions for the artwork and with minimal impact on the residents of Bayeux", the Calvados prefecture added.

France's loan of the artefact, which was added to Unesco's "Memory of the World" register in 2007, has sparked an outcry from heritage experts concerned over the fragile embroidery's already fragile state.

Since 2020, experts have meticulously documented 24,204 stains, 9,646 holes and 30 tears in the artwork.

In 2021, DRAC said that "it was not possible to transport the work before restoring it".

— AFP



New UK exhibition looks at 'the most fashionable queen' Marie Antoinette



FROM HER dazzling jewels and silk footwear to modern interpretations of her extravagant gowns, a new exhibition exploring the style of France's doomed 18th century queen Marie Antoinette opens in London this week.

Running at the V&A Museum, "Marie Antoinette Style" is the UK's first exhibition dedicated to the queen, a member of the Austrian royal family who wed French King Louis XVI. She became a fashionable and contentious figure, known for her opulent taste, before she and her husband were overthrown during the French Revolution and executed in 1793. Marie Antoinette was 37 years old. "(The exhibition is) about the style shaped by the most fashionable queen in history, Marie Antoinette", exhibition curator Sarah Grant said in an interview.

"We look at the style that she shaped from 1770 until her death and then the legacy of that style". Some 250 objects are on display in the exhibition, including Marie Antoinette's footwear, jewels and other personal belongings, including an eau de cologne bottle and porcelain dinner service.

Fashions from that period as well as portraits of the queen and her furniture are also on display,

including items on loan from the Palace of Versailles. Her chemise, or underwear, from when she was in prison and a final note written before her execution, are featured.

The contemporary section features an array of designer frocks and shoes looking at the influence Marie Antoinette has had in fashion and film. These include costumes made for Sofia Coppola's 2006 film "Marie Antoinette", starring Kirsten Dunst in the titular role.

"What's incredible is that her influence has been so continuous", Grant said. "It's continued... really ever since her death and continues now". "Marie Antoinette Style" opens on Saturday and runs until March.

A LEGENDARY FIGURE

Marie Antoinette, born Maria Antonia Josepha Johanna in 1755, remains an indelible figure of 18th-century history and the tumult of the French Revolution. As the last Queen of France before the fall of the monarchy, her life was marked by opulence, scandal and tragedy. Wife of King Louis XVI, she was often vilified by her contemporaries and history as a symbol of royal excess and detachment from the suffering of the common people.

Growing up in Austria, she was married into the French royal family at just 14, amidst great political

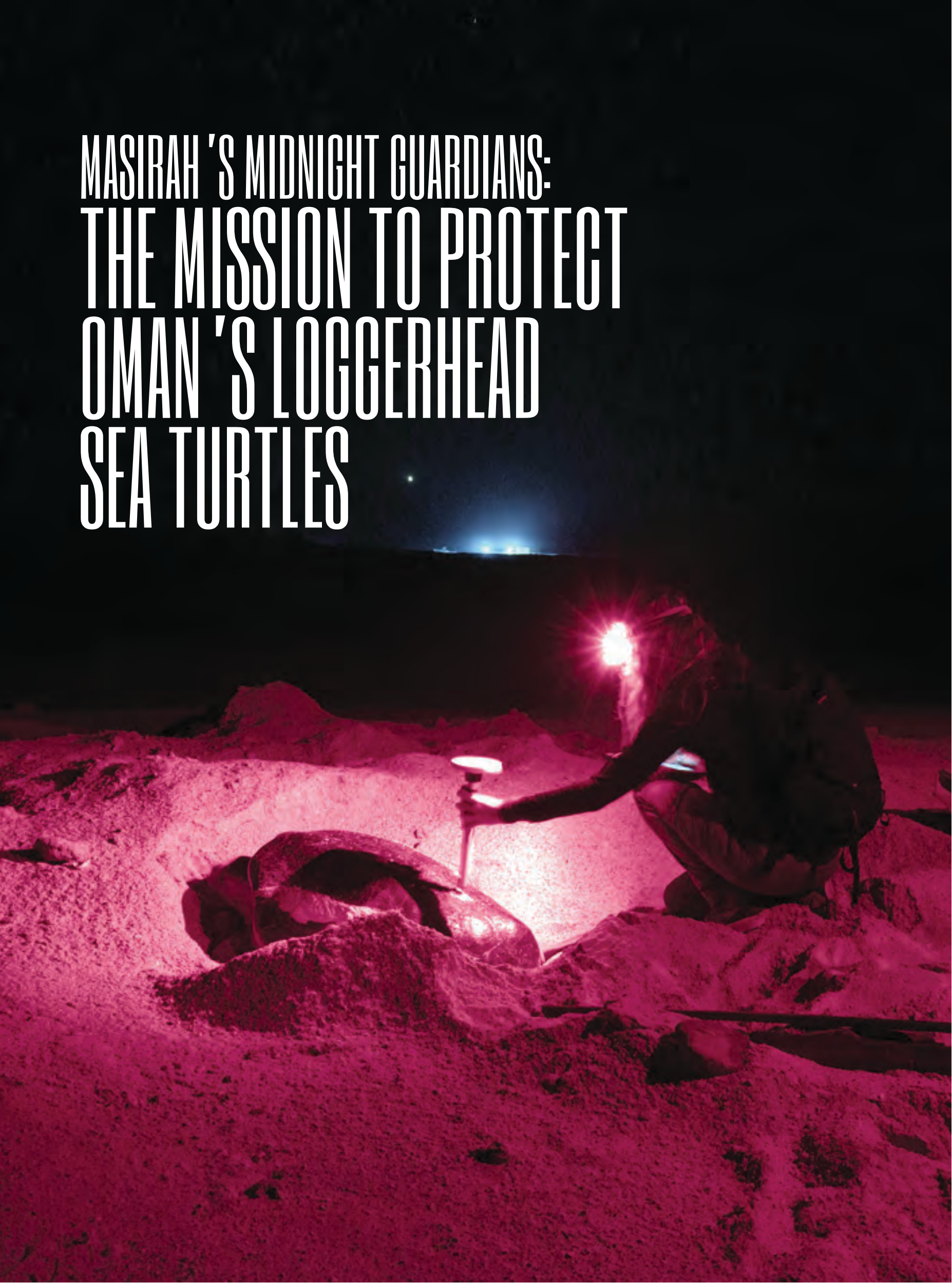
and social tension. Her early years at Versailles were defined by lavishness, but also by increasing unpopularity and political strife. The phrase "Let them eat cake" — though likely apocryphal — epitomises the public's perception of her indifference to the plight of the poor. Her lavish lifestyle, economic crisis and the rising tide of revolutionary fervour culminated in her arrest and eventual execution in 1793 during the Reign of Terror.

Despite her tragic end, Marie Antoinette's story continues to captivate. Her life epitomises themes of privilege, tragedy and the relentless march of history. She is often viewed through contrasting lenses: as a misunderstood victim of political propaganda or as a symbol of aristocratic decadence. Her compelling personal narrative, combined with the dramatic backdrop of revolutionary France, fuels ongoing fascination.

Today, her legacy endures in popular culture, from films to novels, highlighting her as a complex figure who embodied the fragility of monarchy amidst revolutionary change. Her story prompts us to reflect on themes of power, excess and the human cost of upheaval — factors that continue to resonate more than two centuries later.

— Reuters

FEATURES



MASIRAH 'S MIDNIGHT GUARDIANS:
THE MISSION TO PROTECT
OMAN 'S LOGGERHEAD
SEA TURTLES



BY NAJAH AL RIYAMI

UNDER THE moonlit skies of Masirah Island, Ammar and Antonia walk quietly along the shoreline, red torches in hand, scanning the sand for signs of life. To them, these long nights are not just fieldwork but a calling — to protect Oman’s loggerhead sea turtles, creatures that have been nesting on these beaches for millennia. Loggerheads once nested here in extraordinary numbers. “Back in 1977, Masirah accounted for 55% of the global nesting population”, Antonia recalls. “Now it’s down to around 30–35%. The decline is dramatic”. Both researchers know the challenges are immense — plastic pollution, entanglement in fishing nets, light pollution and coastal erosion — but they have chosen to face them one turtle at a time. For Ammar, he patrols the beaches, recording nests with high-resolution GPS. “Every nest tells a story”, he says. “Sometimes all eggs hatch, sometimes none. Other times, a few make it. Our job is to learn why and to give more hatchlings a chance to reach the sea”. His role combines

hands-on conservation and scientific research, a dual responsibility he fully embraces. Antonia has spent several seasons working on Masirah and finds herself deeply connected to its rhythms. “July and August are the busiest months”, she says. “We work through the night on the beach, then excavate nests at dawn. It’s exhausting, but when you see a hatchling make its way to the water under sunrise, every sleepless hour feels worth it”. Together, Ammar and Antonia divide Masirah’s 83-kilometre eastern coast into six key study sites, returning to each nest after 60–65 days to document success rates. They also measure nest temperatures, knowing that gender is determined by heat — warmer nests producing females, cooler ones males. “Climate change could skew this balance dangerously”, Antonia warns, highlighting the subtle but serious effects of rising global temperatures. But their work isn’t limited to turtles. Through Future Seas, a local company and with support from Ocean Ecology Network, they collaborate with Omani students, train ranger teams from the Environment Authority and engage with the local community. Ammar puts it simply: “Ultimately, this has to be a shared effort and responsibility”. Funding has come from international organisations like the National Geographic Society and Fondation Segré, but for Ammar and Antonia, success is measured less in grants and more in hatchlings. Still, outreach remains essential. “More people are hearing about Masirah’s turtles and visiting in greater numbers every year”, Antonia continues. “That human presence can disturb nesting females, compact sand with vehicles, or even disorient hatchlings with bright lights. We need better awareness — signs on beaches, education for visitors — so the turtles are not put at further risk”. Despite the challenges, hope endures. Crouching low in the sand behind a cluster of rocks, Ammar whispers as he describes watching a turtle crawl back to the sea after laying her eggs: “They don’t eat during nesting season. One female will nest three to five times, returning every two weeks. You see them grow thinner, but they keep going. It’s inspiring”. For Antonia, the lesson is simple but profound. “This isn’t just about turtles — it’s about coexistence. Finding ways for humans and wildlife to share this island”. And so, under the silver light of Masirah’s moon, Ammar and Antonia continue their vigil; guardians of an ancient ritual, ensuring the turtles’ journey continues for generations to come.

