

OMAN

دولة عمان

DAILY

Observer

FROM ARCHIVES

GLIMPSE OF PILGRIMAGE MISSION

Observer

THE

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IN BRIEF

MoL URGES
EARLY PAYMENT OF
MAY SALARIES

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour has called on all private sector establishments subject to the Labour Law to advance the payment of workers' salaries for May 2026 prior to Eid Al Adha 1447 AH. In a circular issued on Wednesday, the ministry urged employers to ensure that salaries are paid on or before Monday, May 25. This is part of efforts aimed to enable workers to meet their needs ahead of the blessed Eid Al Adha holiday.

UN CONDEMNS
ISRAELI ABUSE
OF PALESTINIAN
DETAINEES



The brutality shows Israeli authorities' utter contempt for their humanitarian and legal obligations.

GENEVA: A UN human rights expert has condemned what she described as systematic torture and grave violations committed by Israeli occupation authorities against Palestinian detainees in their prisons. Alice Jill Edwards, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, said in a statement that arbitrary and emergency measures imposed by Israel since October 2023 have exposed Palestinian detainees to various forms of torture, degrading treatment and incommunicado detention. The volume and brutality of recurring testimonies show the Israeli authorities' utter contempt for their humanitarian and legal obligations, she said. Autopsies in many cases revealed fractured ribs, skin haemorrhages, severe internal injuries and stomach ruptures resulting from brutal torture, she said. Edwards said she had documented dozens of cases of brutal torture and physical and psychological abuse, including severe beatings, electric shocks, sleep deprivation, systematic starvation and acute malnutrition.

Iran says US wants
to 'start new war'

TRUMP SAYS NOT IN HURRY TO END IRAN CONFLICT, MISSION GOALS COME FIRST

IRAN'S CHIEF negotiator said on Wednesday the United States wanted to restart the Middle East war after President Donald Trump said he would attack again unless Tehran agreed to a peace deal.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who warned of a "forceful response", was speaking after Iran's Revolutionary Guards said any renewed war would spread far beyond the Middle East. "The enemy's movements, both overt and clandestine, show that despite economic and political pressure, it has not abandoned its military objectives and is seeking to start a new war," Ghalibaf said in an audio message carried by Iranian media.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened Tehran with renewed military action, while Iranian officials have hit back with their own warnings of devastating action.

Nevertheless, despite sporadic outbursts of violence, the two countries have continued to take part in diplomatic exchanges mediated by Pakistan, aimed at bringing a formal end to the war.

On Tuesday, US Vice-President JD Vance told reporters that "a lot of good progress is being made" and "we're just going to keep working at it", even as he told Iran the US military



A woman holds an image of Mojtaba Khamenei, the new supreme leader, at a march in Tehran. File photo — NYT

was "locked and loaded". The Revolutionary Guards issued their own threat on Wednesday, saying, "if the aggression against Iran is repeated, the promised regional war will this time spread far beyond the region, and our devastating blows will crush you".

The future of the waterway is a key sticking point in negotiations, but without a deal, fears are growing for the global economy as pre-war stockpiles of

oil are used up. Rising fuel prices have caused widespread pain, with protests erupting in Kenya, which like many African countries is dependent on imports from the Gulf and where the public transport system has ground to a halt. President Donald Trump told reporters on Wednesday that he was in no hurry to bring the conflict with Iran to an end, saying achieving the mission's

objectives was more important than setting a timeline for its conclusion. Saudi Arabia appreciated US President Donald Trump's decision to give negotiations with Iran additional time to reach an agreement, Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said on Wednesday. Trump said earlier this week that Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar had asked him to postpone a planned US strike on Iran to allow more time for negotiations. Meanwhile, the US Senate has approved a symbolic resolution restricting US President Donald Trump's authority to continue military action against Iran, amid growing concerns over the war's soaring costs and uncertain trajectory. The procedural vote passed 50 to 47, with four Republicans joining all but one Democrat in favour. Three Republicans abstained. A final vote is still required, and the resolution faces significant hurdles before taking effect. It must also pass the Republican-controlled House and secure a two-thirds majority in both chambers to override an expected presidential veto. The vote underscores rising unease within the Republican Party as the war enters its third month, straining US weapons stockpiles, raising questions about military readiness, and driving official cost estimates above \$30 billion so far. — Agencies



The attack targeted the Islamic Center in San Diego, USA.

OMAN DENOUNCES US ISLAMIC CENTER ATTACK

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the attack that targeted the Islamic Center in San Diego, the United States of America. It also expressed its sincere condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and its heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery to the injured. In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday, the Sultanate of Oman affirmed its firm stance in rejecting all forms of violence and terrorism, regardless of their motives and causes. Furthermore, Oman reiterated its call for consolidating the values of coexistence, tolerance, and respect among different societies and cultures. — ONA

Oman honours Dr Thoms for role in building healthcare system

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, MAY 20

The Sultanate of Oman paid tribute to American physician Dr William Wells Thoms, widely regarded as a key figure in the development of the country's early healthcare system, through a special screening of the documentary 'Dr Thoms (Al Dakhtar Thoms)' at the Ministry of Information Theatre on Wednesday. The screening, attended by media professionals, historians, intellectuals and cultural content creators, highlighted the doctor's life and decades-long service in Oman and the United States.

Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, told the media that the documentary 'Dr Thoms' is part of the ministry's programme aimed at documenting Omani history and showcasing the humanitarian and cultural aspects of Omani society through the production of media and documentary works presented with a contemporary vision and modern production standards. He added, "Over the past years, the ministry has produced a number of prominent documentaries and programmes, most notably the trilogy 'House of Wonders' series and the 'We Have a Legacy' show, in addition to other works that preserve cultural



heritage and national memory, and present them to new generations and Arab and international audiences in a contemporary visual style." The film documents Dr Thoms' work with

the American mission in Oman from 1939 to 1970 and his contribution to the evolution of healthcare in Oman. It blends historical narrative with dramatised sequences and archival footage. Abbas bin Ghulam al Zadjali, former Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) editor and designer of the bilingual magazine PDO News, described Dr Thoms as a dedicated physician who served Oman for more than three decades. "The legacy of Dr Thoms stands today as a remarkable testament to the nobility of medicine. Despite working under a Christian missionary institution, he earned deep respect

within Omani society for his understanding of Islamic values and local traditions. He remained committed to the ethics of healing and compassion rather than any attempt at religious conversion," Al Zadjali said, noting his earlier role as a television director at the Ministry of Information. Dr William Wells Thoms and his wife, Beth Scudder Thoms, served in the Middle East through the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in America from 1931 until their retirement in 1970. Both were born into missionary families with long-standing ties to the region.

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



The exercise focused on developing the skills of the participating teams in using modern technologies.

Observation Exercise held at Al Saleel Natural Park

AL KAMIL W’AL WAFI: The Al Sharqiyah South Governorate’s Environment Monitoring Office organised the fourth edition of an environmental observation exercise at Al Saleel Natural Park in the Wilayat of Al Kamil W’al Wafi, in cooperation with the Environment Department in the governorate. The exercise aimed to enhance the efficiency of national cadres operating in the field of environmental conservation.

The exercise focused on developing the skills of the participating teams in using modern technologies that support monitoring, GPS devices, trap cameras and drones. It sought to enable the participants to be familiar with proper legal procedures in issuing violation reports and statements. It also aimed to enhance the participants’ operational planning skills, teamwork and the exchange of expertise among their counterparts from different governorates. — ONA

30 GRADUATE FROM ARABIC PROGRAMME



MANAH: The Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in the Wilayat of Manah celebrated the conclusion of its 61st session on Wednesday, marking the successful completion of an intensive eight-week Arabic language programme for international students. The course combined intensive Arabic language instruction with a complementary cultural programme featuring lectures and Arabic calligraphy lessons.

Oman honours Dr Thoms for role in building healthcare system

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Their extensive four-decade contribution is also documented in ‘Faith, Hope and Love: The Hakeem’s Journey’ – The Adventures of Pioneer Missionary Physician Dr Wells Thoms, FACS, in Arabia Before Oil, published by the A C Van Raalte Institute of Hope College.

Written by Dr David G Dickason, the book forms part of the Missionary Memoirs Series published by Van Raalte Press, which chronicles the experiences of Christian missionaries and their interactions with communities during periods of significant transformation.

According to Van Raalte Press, Dr Thoms was among the first eye surgeons in the Gulf, treating patients ranging from rulers to nomads. During World War II, he served as Oman’s only surgeon, while his wife contributed by training laboratory technicians and managing hospital operations within the Arabian Mission’s healthcare system.

David Bosch, son of the late Dr Donald Bosch, who worked in Oman between 1955 and 1970, also highlighted Dr Thoms’ human approach to medicine.

“What makes Dr Thoms stand out is that he made people feel comfortable and gave them hope. He interacted with patients in a positive and empathetic manner, which made them feel safe and cared for,” he said.

A number of specialists in cultural



A documentary film is capable of reflecting societal cultural diversity in a highly profound manner because it deals with culture as a living practice, not a theoretical slogan. — **Photo by Khalfan al Ruzaiqi**

and artistic affairs in the Sultanate of Oman confirmed that the Ministry of Information’s cinematic documentation of Dr Thoms’s journey within a visual context constitutes a knowledge asset and a mirror reflecting institutional efforts in monitoring social and cultural transformations and reviewing visual archives. This enables current generations to learn about the important experiences achieved on the land of the Sultanate of Oman.

Omani film director Mohamed Ali Al Kindi said that the film “Dakhtar Thoms” can be viewed as a model for the concept of a documentary that does not merely narrate a story, but rather reshapes awareness toward it. When a documentary film deals

with a character or a social issue, it grants it a deep human space that transcends direct classification, revealing the details of daily life, anxieties, relationships, and cultural transformations that traditional media may not capture. Here lies the power of the documentary, as it makes the viewer live the experience rather than just hear about it.

He pointed out that a documentary film is capable of reflecting societal cultural diversity in a highly profound manner because it deals with culture as a living practice, not a theoretical slogan. It documents customs, dialects, clothing, patterns of thinking, and even the details of the place as living elements in building identity. Through

these elements, the film’s vision and objectives are formed, as the documentary becomes a space for preserving cultural specificity and, at the same time, a window for dialogue with other cultures. Therefore, some documentary films turn into a humanitarian bridge linking societies, because they allow the other to see a human being who is different in terms of circumstances, yet shares the same dreams and common fears.

He emphasised that the role of documentary films in preserving community memory has become more important than ever, especially in light of the rapid transformations the world is witnessing. It resembles a living visual archive, but it does

not only preserve facts; it also preserves emotions—namely, the way people lived those moments. Documentary films also contribute to enhancing cultural and historical communication between different generations, because they transmit human experience from one generation to another through the language of the image. New generations may not live through the major events that societies experienced, but through the documentary, they can get closer to their psychological and social details, and understand their impact on shaping collective identity.

He pointed out the importance of the Ministry of Information producing a dramatic documentary film about “Dakhtar Thoms” as a project that transcends the traditional artistic or documentary dimension to become a cultural, national, and humanitarian act that re-reads an important part of modern Omani memory.

This type of work does not merely present a historical figure, but also documents a social and health phase experienced by Omani society during a time of major transitions before and after the modern Renaissance. Through the character of “Dakhtar Thoms,” one can evoke the image of the Omani person, the nature of daily life, health challenges, and the human relationships that were formed during that stage.

— With inputs from ONA

Oman at Brussels GCC-EU Political Committee meeting

BRUSSELS: Oman participated in the 26th meeting of the Political Committee between the GCC and the EU, held in the Belgian capital, Brussels.

The Sultanate of Oman’s delegation to the meeting was headed by Shaikh Ahmed bin Hashel al Maskari, Head of the



GCC and Regional Neighbourhood Department at the Foreign Ministry.

During the meeting, discussions were held on ways to enhance cooperation and consultation regarding regional and international issues of mutual interest. — ONA

Oman leads dialogue on future of AI in health

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN on Wednesday hosted a high-level side event on the sidelines of the 79th session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, with the participation of several countries, international organisations, ministers, decision-makers and health experts.

The event was dedicated to exploring ways to accelerate trusted digital transformation in the health sector, amid an accelerating rise in the use of artificial intelligence in healthcare systems around the world.

In his speech, Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, emphasised that trusted digital transformation is no longer an option but a governance necessity that cannot be delayed. He based this on the World Health Organization’s 14th General Programme of Work (2025-2028), which recognises that digital health and artificial intelligence are fundamental, transformative pillars for achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals.

He touched upon the pioneering experience of the Sultanate of Oman, stressing that the success of digital transformation requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond a mere technical project, to be built upon wise leadership, realistic planning, sustainable

Dr Al Sabti was of the view that digital transformation is no longer an option but a governance necessity that cannot be delayed



Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti led Oman’s delegation at the 79th session of the World Health Assembly.

investment and the continuous development of human capabilities.

Concluding his speech, he emphasised that equity must be the foundation upon which this digital ecosystem is built, calling for ensuring the right of all countries to equal access to support, knowledge and partnership, regardless of their level of digital development.

This initiative comes in the context of rapid transformations witnessed by health systems globally, where artificial intelligence tools and data-driven technologies are being

widely used in clinical care, disease surveillance, health financing management and health systems planning, alongside the escalation of cyber threats targeting hospitals and public health institutions.

It is noteworthy that this event represents an extension of the pioneering role undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in promoting international health cooperation, and an embodiment of its commitment to the journey of digital transformation based on governance and responsibility. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



The new service minimises response times for emergency calls.

CDAA INTRODUCES AMBULANCE SERVICE IN DUQM

AL DUQM: The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has launched an ambulance service in the Wilayat of Al Duqm. This initiative comes as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the emergency response system and elevate the readiness of ambulance services, keeping pace with the developmental and economic growth currently witnessed by the wilayat.

The introduction of this service aligns with the steady urban, industrial and investment expansion in the Wilayat of Al Duqm, highlighting its strategic economic and logistical significance within the Sultanate of Oman.

This rapid growth necessitates the reinforcement of safety and emergency services to support the community and workforce operating in vital and economic zones. The Authority affirmed that the new service will bolster the field response system and minimise response times for emergency calls and incidents. This will enhance the overall efficiency of handling various accidents and medical emergencies in accordance with the highest standards of readiness and swift response. — ONA

SFZ RECORDS GROWTH IN DEMAND FOR WAREHOUSES



The initiative helps to ensure a smooth flow of goods and logistics services.

SALALAH: Salalah Free Zone recorded a remarkable increase in demand for warehouses and ready-built industrial units, driven by regional developments and challenges related to supply chains and global trade movement.

This growth is supported by the zone's operational stability, efficient infrastructure and strategic location linked directly to the Port of Salalah. Within the framework of supporting the continuity of supply chains during the regional crisis, Salalah Free Zone — in cooperation with the Port of Salalah and Royal Oman Police, represented by the Directorate-General of Customs — established a temporary container storage yard covering an area of 20,000 square metres.

The initiative aims to enhance storage capacity and ensure the smooth flow of goods and logistics services. Furthermore, Salalah Free Zone recently signed agreements for four new projects within the warehouses and ready-built industrial units sector.

These include a project for packaging and trading vegetable oils, another for logistics services and general trade. — ONA

Khoula Hospital conducts transthoracic surgery

MUSCAT: A specialised medical team at Khoula Hospital succeeded in replacing damaged vertebrae through the thorax of a patient who was suffering from hemiplegia. The team used a keyhole incision technique and implanted an expandable cage (support device).

Through this precise intervention, the medical team was able to relieve pressure on the spinal cord and restore spinal stability. This contributed to a remarkable improvement in the patient's condition, enabling him to stand and walk again. The operation reflects the efficiency of the medical staff and the significance of using modern technologies at the hospital. The 47-year-old patient had arrived



The medical team was able to relieve pressure on the spinal cord and restore spinal stability.

at the emergency department two months before the operation. He reported suffering from severe back pain, coupled with sudden hemiplegia. Tests and X-rays revealed acute inflammation of the 9th and 10th thoracic vertebrae, in addition to an abscess within the spinal canal that exerted pressure on the spinal cord. Dr Sultan bin Salem al Barhi, Consultant Orthopaedic and Spine Surgeon at Khoula Hospital, said that the keyhole incision technique helped minimise surgical intervention and potential complications, in addition to accelerating the recovery period and improving the patient's treatment outcomes. — ONA

Oman launches AI-driven road paving technology

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, MAY 20

IN A FIRST for the Sultanate, Oman has launched advanced artificial intelligence-powered autonomous asphalt paving technology as part of the Sultan Said bin Taimur Road Dualisation Project – Package Four, marking a significant milestone in the country's road infrastructure development and the adoption of smart construction solutions.

The launch ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Saeed bin Mohammed Al Saqri, in the presence of senior officials from the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and representatives of Galfar Engineering and Contracting, the company executing the project. The initiative marks the first implementation of AI-



The launch represents the development of roads and automation of construction projects.

powered autonomous paving technology in Oman's roads and infrastructure sector, aligning with the ministry's strategy to adopt advanced technologies aimed at improving operational efficiency, enhancing quality and accelerating project delivery.

The smart paving equipment operates through advanced control systems supported by artificial intelligence and

data analytics, enabling higher execution efficiency, improved paving quality and faster completion rates compared with conventional methods.

The technology also enhances precision in asphalt layer thickness and level measurements while improving the durability and sustainability of road surfaces. Officials said the self-

operating paving technology offers multiple operational and technical advantages, including increased productivity, reduced execution defects, lower dependence on direct human intervention and improved occupational safety standards.

It also supports the integration of advanced digital solutions into the construction sector, helping attract national talent.

Speaking at the event, Saeed bin Mohammed Al Saqri described the launch as an important step in advancing Oman's road sector and construction automation, reflecting the Sultanate's broader commitment to innovation in infrastructure development to support economic growth.

He said integrating such technological solutions would improve project quality and efficiency while enhancing workplace safety, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

MISSION TAKES PART IN HAJ SYMPOSIUM



JEDDAH: The Oman Haj Mission participated on Wednesday in the 50th edition of the Grand Haj Symposium, held in the city of Jeddah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The symposium discussed the most prominent issues and themes related to developing the Haj system and upgrading the services provided to pilgrims.

The participation of the Oman Haj Mission in the symposium confirms the Sultanate of Oman's keenness to enhance cooperation and exchange expertise in everything that serves pilgrims and develops the Haj work system.

The symposium addressed a number of working papers and specialised sessions in the fields of crowd management, the deployment of modern technologies, and humanitarian and

organisational services. This is in addition to reviewing successful initiatives and experiences that contribute to providing a safe and facilitated spiritual journey for pilgrims.

The Oman Haj Mission was represented at the symposium by Ahmed bin Saleh al Rashdi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and Head of the Mission. He delivered a speech during which he praised the advanced level witnessed by the Haj system year after year, as well as the facilities and qualitative services provided by the competent authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which have contributed to enhancing the comfort and tranquillity of pilgrims. He also valued the level of existing cooperation and coordination between the Oman Haj Mission and the relevant Saudi authorities. — ONA

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TENDER

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR LEGAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW GAS FIRED IPP(S)

Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP) is responsible for procuring new capacity for power and water in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the requirements of the law for the regulation and privatization of the electricity and related water sector promulgated by Royal Decree 78/2004 as amended and the PWP license.

Tender Description	Nama Power and Water Procurement seeks proposals to appoint a qualified and experienced Consultant as a legal advisor for the development of new gas fired IPP(s) (Project). The Consultant will be required to support the development of the Project. The anticipated technology of the Project is to be CCGT with a capacity up to 2,800 MW.
Tender Number	OPWP/2026/15
Tender Purchase Period	From 19 May 2026 to 26 May 2026
Tender Fee	100 / Free of charges for (SME) with a valid Riyada card
Submission date	23 June 2026 at 12:00 PM Oman Time Zone
Collection & Payment Methods	The tender documents are available for purchase in an electronic format through PWP website (https://omanpwp.om/tenders). The payment is done electronically through PWP website. In case of any queries, please send an email to: procurement.officer@Omanpwp.nama.om & Prj.newipp31@omanpwp.com
Bank Guarantee	A Tender Bond (in the form set out in the tender documents) or a bank certified cheque of not less than 1% of the tender value, to be valid for a period of 120 days from the submission deadline date referred to above. The tender bond or certified cheque shall be enclosed as part of the bid.

OMAN

SHORTTAKES



The government has dedicated subsidy programmes for the development of beekeeping in Oman.

OMAN JOINS WORLD IN MARKING BEE DAY

MUSCAT: Represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday joined the global community in observing World Bee Day, which falls on May 20 every year. The event seeks to raise public awareness about the importance of pollinators and the threats posed to them. It also underlines the significance of pollinators' contribution to sustainable development.

The ministry has dedicated subsidy programmes for the development of beekeeping in the Sultanate of Oman, including the 'Omani Breed Distribution Programme', which focuses on distributing Omani honeybee colonies to breeders. The Omani breed of honey bees boasts a set of distinctive and desirable qualities, like adaptability to environmental conditions and the calmness of the colony members.

Through this programme, the ministry distributes two beehives to each target beneficiary. The ministry covers 50 per cent of the hive's value and each beneficiary pays the other 50 per cent. It purchases the hives from breeders and distributes them to the beneficiaries. The ministry extends special support to the Social Security Category of Omani breeders and beneficiaries. The support rate for this segment stands at 75 per cent of the value of the prime material, while a target beneficiary pays 25 per cent of the value. — ONA

Sustainability Week draws praise for innovation

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, MAY 20

VISITORS TO Oman Sustainability Week and the Oman Oil & Gas Exhibition have praised this year's edition as a major step forward, highlighting the scale of innovation, strong international participation and the wide range of advanced technologies showcased.

The event attracted large crowds of industry professionals, students, entrepreneurs and members of the public, all eager to explore the latest developments in sustainability, renewable energy, digital transformation and smart industrial solutions. Many attendees said the exhibition reflected Oman's growing role in the global energy and sustainability landscape.

Abdulla bin Saeed described the exhibition as an eye-opening experience, saying, "I discovered companies at the exhibition that I had never heard of before," highlighting the broad international participation and the opportunity to learn about emerging businesses and future-focused technologies. He added that the event has evolved beyond a traditional showcase into an important platform for exploring the future of the energy sector.

The visitors explored the latest developments in sustainability, renewable energy, digital transformation and smart industrial solutions



Visitors left with an optimistic view of Oman's energy and sustainability sectors.

Zamzam al Balushi expressed excitement about the technologies on display, saying: "I saw so many technologies for the first time." She noted that several smart solutions and innovative applications reflected the rapid pace of global technological transformation while demonstrating Oman's efforts to stay aligned with international developments.

Many visitors also voiced pride in Oman's achievements in sustainability and energy innovation. One attendee remarked: "Oman has reached places we never expected, and hopefully we will continue to see world-

class developments,” describing the exhibition as evidence of the Sultanate of Oman’s ambition to strengthen its role in sustainable development and green energy initiatives.

As the exhibition concluded, many visitors left with an optimistic view of Oman's future in the energy and sustainability sectors. They emphasised that they witnessed a new era of ambition, innovation and global competitiveness, reinforcing confidence in Oman's ability to position itself among leading countries in the fields of sustainability and advanced energy technologies.

OMAN AT GLOBAL RESEARCH COUNCIL MEETING IN BANGKOK

BANGKOK: *The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Research and Innovation Authority, participated in the 14th Annual Meeting of the Global Research Council (GRC), hosted by the Thai capital, Bangkok, which will continue until May 22.*

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation to the meeting was headed by Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, Chairman of the Research and Innovation Authority (RIA).

Al Haddabi participated as



Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, Chairman of the Research and Innovation Authority, represented Oman at the meeting.

a keynote speaker in a working session on Open Science applications, during which he highlighted the Sultanate of Oman's efforts in empowering

young researchers and building a sustainable research ecosystem that integrates local knowledge into the production of scientific knowledge. — ONA

Royal Hospital organises Ethics Day

MUSCAT: The Royal Hospital marked May 20 as the Medical Ethics Scientific Day. The event was held under the auspices of Dr Said bin Harib al Lamki, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs.

The event was organised as part of the Ministry of Health's direction toward strengthening evidence-based governance and integrating ethical and legal dimensions into daily medical practice, contributing to improved quality of care and enhanced patient safety.

In her opening remarks, Dr Rukaya al Dhahri, Chair of the Medical Ethics Committee at the Royal Hospital, emphasised that medical ethics is no longer a purely theoretical framework confined to committees, but has become an active practice that supports clinical decision-making in critical moments, and a key indicator of institutional performance quality.

Al Dhahri explained that the challenge in modern medicine no longer lies in limited resources, but rather in the increasing breadth



The event was held under the auspices of Dr Said bin Harib al Lamki.

and complexity of available options, which calls for stronger ethical frameworks to ensure balanced decision-making that combines scientific accuracy with humanitarian considerations.

The Scientific Day aimed to explore the critical intersections between clinical decision-making and the legal framework. The sessions addressed several key themes, including the foundations of clinical ethics, medical decision-making in the Sultanate of Oman covering capacity, surrogate decision-making, and Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders, as well as ethical lessons drawn from judicial rulings in medical cases and confidentiality in

adolescent medicine.

The programme also included real-life case studies and ethical insights in organ transplantation, along with end-of-life decision-making in palliative care.

The event featured speakers from the Medical Ethics Committee at the Royal Hospital, alongside experts and members of the National Bioethics Committee, who presented advanced scientific analyses of real clinical cases.

These cases were examined from medical, ethical, and legal perspectives, reflecting a shift from theoretical discussion to practical application in managing ethical complexity within the healthcare environment. — ONA

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2.200

Dairy Milk Minis (Milk/Hazelnut/Oreo) 2x145gm

1.980

1.490

Al Mudhish (Full Fat/Low Fat) UHT Milk 4x1Ltr

3.250

2.600

Indian Harvest Everyday Basmati Rice 5kg

1.750

1.090

Al Zain Frozen Chicken Thighs 1kg

2.690

1.690

Freshly Foods Gourmet Chicken Tempura Nuggets Polybag 750gm

1.490

Milk Peda 500gm

1.650

Coconut Barfi 500gm

1.990

1.490

Dove Beauty Bar Soap 4x125gm

3.490

2.490

Glow & Lovely Face Cream 2x100ml Assorted

1.490

1.100

Home Mate Facial Tissue 150's 4+2

3.000

1.850

Eternal Love EDP 50ml Assorted

أنفق
SPEND
10

أحصل
GET
5

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11 - 31 May 2026

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FROM ARCHIVES



BALQEES AL ORAIMI AND SAUD AL ANSARI

THE OMANI HAJ MISSION stands as one of the Sultanate of Oman's longstanding seasonal institutions, reflecting decades of organised efforts dedicated to serving Omani pilgrims during the annual Haj season. The mission traces its origins back to 1972, when the first official delegation was formed under

Royal directives, marking the beginning of a structured journey that has continued to evolve in line with the growing needs of pilgrims and the expanding scale of services provided each year. Formed annually by a decision of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, the mission includes the appointment of a head of delegation alongside administrative personnel and religious guides responsible for overseeing pilgrims' affairs and providing religious guidance throughout the pilgrimage. Over the years, the mission

has grown into a comprehensive operational framework comprising several specialised delegations, including representatives from Royal Oman Police, media teams, scout groups, and a large medical delegation that effectively operates as a mission within the mission itself due to its extensive staffing and medical equipment. The medical delegation was supported by a dedicated facility housing the mission's clinic and healthcare services, ensuring that pilgrims received medical care and emergency support throughout

the Haj season. The Omani Haj Mission is also recognised for being among the first delegations to arrive in the Holy Lands and among the last to depart, owing to the extensive organisational responsibilities entrusted to it. Alongside the civilian mission, a separate military Haj delegation is organised annually, enabling members of the armed forces and security agencies to perform Haj as part of the Sultanate's continued commitment to supporting various segments of society in fulfilling the pilgrimage.

H A J T H A T W A S
GLIMPSE OF
PILGRIMAGE
MISSION



FACTFILE

- August 18, 1984 - 90-member Haj mission leaves for Saudi Arabia by special aircraft
- The mission was headed by Shaikh Suleiman al Salimi, the Director-General at the General Diwan of the Ministry of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs
- Shaikh Saleh bin Ahmed al Sawafi was the deputy leader, and the Mufti of the mission is Shaikh Khalid bin Hamed al Battashi
- The mission consists of a 24-member administration and finance delegation, a six-member information delegation, a 25-member medical delegation, a 28-member scouts team, and a three-member ROP delegation
- 207 Ministry of Defence personnel were seen off on their way to perform the Haj at the expense of the Ministry under the directives of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos

M I D D L E E A S T L A T E S T D E V E L O P M E N T S

US ‘SEEKS TO START NEW WAR’

Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the United States was seeking to restart the war and still hoped Iran would surrender.

PAKISTAN MINISTER IN TEHRAN

Pakistan's interior minister Mohsin Naqvi headed to Iran for the second time this week amid an impasse between Tehran and Washington.

SOUTH KOREA TANKER THROUGH HORMUZ

A South Korean oil tanker was passing through the Strait of Hormuz, marking the first transit by one of its vessels through the waterway.

‘GOOD PROGRESS’ IN IRAN TALKS

US Vice-President JD Vance said that Iran talks are making “good progress” but Washington was “locked and loaded” to restart military operations.

STRIKE ON PLANT CONDEMNED

UN Security Council members condemn the drone strike on the UAE's Barakah nuclear power plant, which Abu Dhabi said originated from Iraq.

IRAN GUARDS WARNING

Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned that the Middle East war will extend beyond the region if the United States and Israel resume attacks.

INDONESIA RATE HIKE

Indonesia's central bank hiked its key interest rate by 0.5 points, citing “heightened global volatility caused by the war in the Middle East”.

JORDAN SHOOTS DRONE

The Jordanian military announced it had shot down a drone of unknown origin in its airspace. No casualties were reported.

MORE WAR ‘INADVISABLE’

Chinese President Xi Jinping said further hostilities in the Middle East is “inadvisable”, calling for a “comprehensive” ceasefire.

19 KILLED IN LEBANON

Israeli strikes on south Lebanon killed 19 people as Hezbollah reported clashes with Israeli troops despite a truce in the war.

US, IRAN TRADE WAR THREATS



Two women watch their phones next to banner showing destroyed building, in Tehran. — NYT file photo

IRAN threatened on Wednesday to spread war beyond the Middle East if the United States attacks again, after President Donald Trump said he had come within an hour of restarting the military campaign. Six weeks since Trump paused Operation Epic Fury for a ceasefire, talks to end the war have largely stalled. Iran submitted a new offer to the United States this week, but its public accounts of it repeat terms previously rejected by Trump, including demands for control of the Strait of Hormuz, compensation for war damage, lifting of sanctions, release of frozen assets and the withdrawal of US troops from the area. Trump said on Monday, and again on Tuesday, that he had come close to ordering a new bombing campaign but had put it off at the last minute to give more time for diplomacy. “I was an hour away from making the decision to go today,” Trump told reporters at the White House. Iran has repeatedly threatened to retaliate for any new attacks by striking countries in the Middle East that house US bases. On Wednesday it suggested it would also hit targets further afield. “If aggression against Iran is repeated, the promised regional war will extend beyond the region this time,” the Revolutionary Guards said in a statement carried on state media. In the latest diplomacy, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported that Pakistan's

Trump said that he had come close to ordering a new bombing campaign but had put it off at the last minute to give more time for diplomacy. “I was an hour away from making the decision to go today,” Trump told reporters at the White House. Iran has repeatedly threatened to retaliate for any new attacks by striking countries in the Middle East that house US bases.



People gather in front of a billboard during a rally in support of the new supreme leader in Enghelab Square in Tehran. — NYT file photo

interior minister had arrived in Tehran. Pakistan hosted the only round of peace talks last month and has been conveying messages between the sides.

GLOBAL ENERGY Iran has largely shut the Strait of Hormuz to all ships apart from its own since the US-Israeli campaign began in February, causing the biggest disruption to global energy supplies in history. The United States responded last month with

its own blockade of Iran's ports. Iran says its aim is to reopen the strait to friendly countries that abide by its terms to use it. That could potentially include fees for access, which Washington says would be unacceptable. Two giant Chinese tankers laden with a total of around 4 million barrels of oil exited the strait on Wednesday. Iran had announced last week, while Trump was in Beijing for a summit, that it had reached

agreement to ease rules for Chinese ships. South Korea's foreign minister said on Wednesday a Korean tanker was crossing the strait in cooperation with Iran. Shipping monitor Lloyd's List said at least 54 ships had transited the strait last week, around double the number from the week before. But that is still only a tiny fraction of the 140 or so each day that typically crossed before the war. Bloomberg reported that India was preparing to send empty tankers through the strait into the Gulf to load up on oil for the first time since the war began. Three Indian government sources told Reuters this was more of a hope for the future, with efforts still focused mainly on securing transit in the opposite direction: a way out for ships trapped in the Gulf.

PRESSURE TO END WAR Trump is under pressure to end the war, with soaring energy prices hurting his Republican Party ahead of congressional elections in November. Since the ceasefire, his public comments have veered from threats to restart bombing to declarations that a peace deal was at hand. Despite saying he had come close to restarting the war on Tuesday he also said negotiations were going well and it would be over “very quickly”. Vice President JD Vance, who led the US delegation at last month's sole around of peace talks, also talked up progress, saying “We're in a pretty good spot here.” — Reuters

IRAN GUARDS SAY ALLOWED 26 SHIPS TO TRANSIT HORMUZ



A drone view shows the tanker Agios Fanourios I that sailed through the Strait of Hormuz, arriving in Iraq's territorial waters off Basra. — Reuters file photo

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards navy on Wednesday said they allowed over 25 vessels including oil tankers to transit the Strait of Hormuz over the past 24 hours. Iran has largely blocked shipping through the strait, a vital global energy conduit, since the outbreak of war with the United States and Israel on February 28. Iran, which has been under a US naval blockade since April 13 despite a ceasefire, has insisted that ships transiting through the waterway must obtain permissions from the Iranian armed forces.

“Over the past 24 hours, 26 vessels — including oil tankers, container ships and other commercial vessels — transited the Strait of Hormuz,” said the Guards’ navy in a post on X. It added that the ships passed after “coordination and security provided by the IRGC navy”. A South Korean oil tanker safely transited the Strait of Hormuz, the country's foreign ministry said on Wednesday, marking the first passage by a South Korean vessel through the waterway since the Iran war began. One South Korean oil tanker “transited the Strait of

Hormuz on Wednesday, May 20, and is continuing its voyage,” the foreign ministry said in a statement. “Approximately 10 South Korean crew members are on board the vessel.” The announcement followed earlier comments by Foreign Minister Cho Hyun, who told the National Assembly that the tanker was “passing through” the strategic waterway at the time of his remarks. “It is the first South Korea-flagged ship to pass through the Strait of Hormuz since the Iran war began,” a foreign ministry official said earlier. — AFP

SHORT TAKE



Russia's President Vladimir Putin and China's President Xi Jinping shake hands in Beijing. — AFP

XI AND PUTIN CONDEMN US-ISRAEL STRIKES ON IRAN

BEIJING: Russia and China called for a lasting settlement to Moscow's war on Ukraine in a joint statement issued after talks on Wednesday between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing. Criticism of attacks on Iran was in the same joint statement, Moscow and Beijing also called for negotiations to resolve the conflict in the Middle East and criticised US and Israeli strikes on Iran. “US and Israeli military strikes on Iran violate international law and the basic norms of international relations, significantly undermining stability in the Middle East,” the statement said.

The two sides said it was necessary to prevent the conflict from expanding further and called on the international community to support de-escalation efforts. They also called for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza and unrestricted humanitarian access for civilians there. Condemnation of foreign intervention was in a separate statement that also outlined their broader view of the global order, Putin and Xi condemned what they described as the “law of the jungle” in international politics. — dpa

DIPLOMATIC MEDIATION

Pakistan minister in Tehran amid impasse



Pakistan's interior minister headed to Iran on Wednesday for the second time this week amid an impasse between Tehran and Washington over a proposal to end the war. “Mohsin Naqvi travelled to Tehran to meet officials from the Islamic republic,” Iran's official IRNA news agency reported, citing diplomatic sources in Islamabad. Pakistan has been mediating between Iran and the United States, with Naqvi previously in Tehran on Saturday to “facilitate” the process between Tehran and Washington. — AFP

Israel kills 19 in Lebanon, Hezbollah reports clashes

BEIRUT: Israeli strikes on south Lebanon killed 19 people, the health ministry said, as Hezbollah reported clashes with Israeli troops despite a truce in the war. “An Israeli air strike on the town of Deir Qanun al Nahr in the Tyre district resulted in an initial toll of 10 martyrs, including three children and three women, in addition to three wounded,” the ministry said in a statement, calling it a “massacre”. It said a woman was among nine killed in other strikes across the south, which wounded 29, including six women and a child.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency and photographers also reported a series of strikes that targeted several areas in the Tyre district and Nabatieh province in the south. The top two floors of a building in Maashuq in the Tyre district collapsed after an air strike, according to AFP images. It also damaged neighbouring buildings and parked cars.

The health ministry said a strike on the town destroyed a primary healthcare centre managed by the Hezbollah-linked Islamic Health Committee. An air strike on Tuesday on the Saray neighbourhood in Nabatieh, which includes shops, an old mosque, and traditional residential buildings, destroyed a large part of the area. Images showed a plume of smoke rising from the site. The Israeli military had previously issued evacuation warnings for 12 Lebanese towns, 11 of them in the south and one in the eastern Bekaa area. It later repeated the same warning. Deir Qanun al Nahr, where the 10 people were killed, was not included in the



Ghida Krisht, who lost her mother and father when their house in Beirut's Tallet el Khayat, stands on the rubble of the building. — AFP

The health ministry said a strike on the town destroyed a primary healthcare centre managed by Hezbollah. An air strike on the Saray neighbourhood in Nabatieh, which includes shops, an old mosque, and traditional residential buildings, destroyed a large part of the area

warning.

In a separate statement, the Israeli army said it intercepted a drone from Lebanon. Hezbollah meanwhile said its fighters “clashed.. with a force of the Israeli enemy army that tried to advance towards the vicinity of the town square of Haddatha,” adding that “the clashes are still ongoing”. It claimed its fighters destroyed an Israeli tank.

Hezbollah also said it carried out several attacks against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon and targeted Iron Dome air defence platforms in different parts of northern Israel near the border. The Lebanese civil defence said it had lost contact with seven citizens after an Israeli incursion in the southern town of Rashaya al Fukhar. It said that

Israeli forces later released four of them, while the other three remain “in Israeli captivity”. Since the start of the ceasefire on April 17, Israel has continued to launch strikes, carry out demolitions and issue evacuation orders in south Lebanon, saying it is targeting Hezbollah. It has also repeatedly issued evacuation warnings for dozens of towns, reaching places far from the border that were housing displaced people. Israeli strikes on Lebanon have killed more than 3,000 people since March 2, according to Lebanese authorities.

The Israeli military on Tuesday said the deputy company commander in the reservist 551st Brigade “fell in combat” in southern Lebanon, bringing to 21 the number killed since the start of the war. One civilian contractor has also been killed in the conflict.

Acil Tabbara Standing before their devastated building in central Beirut, childhood neighbours Wael Sabbagh and Ghida Krisht vow to fight for justice after an Israeli strike killed their family members. On April 8, hours after a ceasefire was announced between the United States and Iran, Israel launched a massive wave of air strikes across Lebanon including the heart of the capital, killing more than 350 people.

Sabbagh's mother and brother, and Krisht's parents and another relative, were killed in a strike on a building in central Beirut's well-off Tallet al Khayat district, on what Lebanese now refer to as Black Wednesday. — AFP

HANDLING SHORTAGES

UK eases sanctions on fuel, diesel imports



The UK government said on Wednesday that it had eased sanctions on imports of Russian jet fuel and diesel refined in third countries on Wednesday, amid spiralling fuel prices caused by the Middle East war. The trade licence that came into effect on Wednesday is of “indefinite duration” according to the Department of Business and Trade website, and will be periodically reviewed. It will allow the UK to import Russian crude oil refined in third countries such as India. — AFP

OPINION

Oman’s growing climate challenge



RUMAITHA AL BUSAIDI

The writer is environmental strategist and advocate for sustainable development

BY May, the heat has settled in, and with it the part of the year when Oman draws more electricity than at any other time. Across the country air conditioners come on together and stay on, and the grid climbs toward the peak it now reaches every summer, higher than the summer before. We have built our modern life on the assumption that the power will be there to meet that climb, the way an older Oman built its life on the assumption that the falaj would run. Both assumptions are coming under strain in the same season, for reasons that turn out to be connected. Half a world away, the Pacific is warming again in the rhythm the forecasters call El Niño, and this time the language around it has sharpened. The major centres expect it to emerge within weeks with a growing chance it becomes one of the most intense events ever recorded, rivalling the benchmarks of 2015 and even 1877. The warming does not stay where it begins. It moves rainfall, presses on food production, and lands eventually on places already carrying the least slack. For an arid country, the warning is less

about a storm on a given day than about the tightening of a system already close to its limits. Consider what summer already asks of us. The heat that drives every household to cool itself at once is the same heat that weakens the gas plants generating most of our power, because a turbine produces less as the air feeding it grows hotter. Demand rises in the very conditions that pull supply down. The same pressure reaches our water, since we draw it now from two sources, and the heat squeezes both. Much of our water is desalinated, and desalination runs on the same stressed grid, so a hard summer for electricity is also a hard summer for water. The older source is the falaj, which carried this civilisation for five thousand years on gravity and patience, and it is failing too, a third of these channels are in decline and a quarter stopped entirely as deep pumps draw the aquifers down faster than the rare rains refill them. When both the modern system and the ancient one fail in the same season, there is nothing older to fall back on. An El Niño that disturbs those rains deepens

Much of our water is desalinated, and desalination runs on the same stressed grid, so a hard summer for electricity is also a hard summer for water

a difficulty we have long managed by drawing on reserves that are running thin. This is the part of arid life that rarely reaches the climate conversation, which prefers the drama of the flood to the slow arithmetic of the dry year. We are good at responding to the cyclone that arrives and announces itself. We are far less practised at planning for the season that simply behaves a little worse than the last, year upon year, until the margin we assumed was there is gone. Resilience here looks less like emergency response and more like honest accounting, the patient work of building the likelihood of a difficult El Niño into the plans we make long before the season turns. The old separation between protecting the environment and protecting the economy has worn through. In a country like ours, they were always the same task wearing two names. So the test ahead is not really the warming that may reach us by year’s end. It is whether we can plan for a climate that has stopped holding still, while the falaj runs lower and the grid climbs higher and the two of them, old and new, keep telling us the same thing in different centuries.

FRANCE, RUSSIA
JOSTLE FOR
INFLUENCE IN TOGO

EMILE KOUTON & BOUBACAR DIALLO

Togo has maintained cordial ties with France since its independence in 1960. It is now also opening up to a Russia keen to expand its influence from the Sahel into the Gulf of Guinea. So, when France sent its foreign minister to Togo in April — the first such visit in 24 years — one of the main aims was to counter Russia’s rapprochement with the west African coastal country. France’s position is not helped by the fact that Togo continues to cultivate good relations with regional neighbours Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. All are former French colonies now ruled by military juntas who have severed ties with Paris and forged closer links with Russia instead. “The issue for France is not so much a return to Togo as an attempt to stem the ongoing erosion of its regional influence,” Togolese political scientist and essayist Madi Djabakate said. In 2025, Moscow signed an agreement with Lome under which it sends army instructors, ships and military aircraft to Togo, ostensibly to help tackle attacks in the north. The deal potentially allows the Russian paramilitary Africa Corps — the successor to the Wagner mercenary group — to expand within mineral-rich Togo. Moscow’s ambassador to Togo and Benin said in March that Russia hoped to use Lome port as a logistics hub to import its goods into Togo and the landlocked countries of the Sahel. As part of this strategy, it wants to build a railway linking from the port to the Togolese interior and up to the Burkina border, and an oil pipeline following the same route, the ambassador said. The plans have not gone unnoticed in Paris, which continues to see west Africa as its sphere of influence, nor have Moscow’s efforts to secure a foothold in Togo via soft power. “Russia is clearly expanding its cooperation and presence,” an adviser to French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said during his visit to Lome on April 23-24. Russia’s soft power overtures include the forthcoming appointment of a resident ambassador, an increase in the number of scholarships on offer, a planned Russian language teaching centre and concerts in Lome by musicians from the Moscow Conservatory. Russia relies on an effective psychological strategy to win over target countries, commented Djabakate — ‘anti-Western rhetoric, defending state sovereignty, rejecting democratic principles and offering rapid security cooperation’. — AFP

Takatuf is Oman’s new
house of wisdom

THERE are few moments in life more inspiring than listening to brilliant young minds discuss ambitious ideas with confidence, humility and purpose. Such moments remind me of one of history’s greatest human achievements: the flourishing intellectual movement of the Islamic Golden Age under the Abbasid Caliphate, especially during the reign of Caliph Al Mamun in the ninth century. At the heart of that civilisational rise stood Bayt al Hikma, the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, founded more than 1,200 years ago. It was not merely a library. It was a research institution, translation centre, innovation hub and intellectual meeting place where scholars from Arabia, Persia, India, Central Asia, Africa and beyond collaborated to expand humanity’s understanding of science, medicine, mathematics, engineering, astronomy and philosophy.

The House of Wisdom helped produce ideas that still shape modern civilisation today. Without Alhasan Ibn al Haytham and his pioneering work in optics and experimentation during the 11th century, the foundations of the modern scientific method may not have emerged as early as they did. Without Ismail al Jazari in the 12th century, modern robotics and mechanical engineering would look very different. Without Al Biruni, humanity’s understanding of geology, geography and Earth sciences would have been delayed by centuries. Without Ibn Sina and Al Razi, medicine and clinical practice would not have advanced at the pace they did. Even modern sociology and economic thought owe much to Ibn Khaldun and his groundbreaking ‘Muqaddimah’ in



KHALID AL HURAIBI

The writer is an innovator and an insights storyteller

In an era where nations compete fiercely for talent, intellectual property, and technological leadership, programmes like Takatuf are becoming strategic necessities rather than optional luxuries

the 14th century. Along with Omani scholars such as the linguist Al Khalil Ibn Ahmad al Farahidi and physician and pharmacist Rashid Ibn Umairah al Rustaqi. These scholars were united by a simple but revolutionary idea: Investing in knowledge creates long-term civilisational prosperity. Today, Oman is building its own modern version of that philosophy through the Takatuf Oman programme under the umbrella of the Oman Investment Authority. Takatuf, which empowers distinguished young Omanis studying at some of the world’s leading universities, represents far more than a scholarship initiative. The programme also reflects the timeless wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH: “Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China.” In today’s interconnected world, this principle is more relevant than ever. Nations that empower their brightest minds to learn globally and contribute locally are the nation’s best positioned to thrive in the age of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, renewable energy, and digital transformation. The global evidence supporting this approach is overwhelming. According to the World Economic Forum and OECD, countries that invest heavily in education, research, and advanced skills consistently achieve higher productivity, stronger innovation ecosystems, and more resilient economies. The world’s most competitive economies, from Singapore to South Korea, transformed themselves not primarily through natural resources, but through sustained investment in talent and knowledge. Oman increasingly understands this reality. Today, many Takatuf scholars are

already contributing across critical sectors inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman. I recently had the honour of speaking with Hamad al Dere’i from Hamra Al Duru, who overcame significant challenges to become a trusted energy trader in a major international energy company. His journey reflects the resilience and global competitiveness of Omani talent when given the right opportunities. My former colleague, Sulaiman al Mani, has distinguished himself as a published material scientist working on carbon economy research, an area that is becoming increasingly critical as the world races toward net-zero targets and sustainable industrial systems. Dr Rashid al Abri is contributing to the rapidly advancing field of computational biology in collaboration with researchers associated with Columbia University. Another brilliant young Omani woman scholar is conducting advanced research exploring neurological connections between human intelligence and machine intelligence alongside researchers connected to Princeton University. These are not isolated stories. They are signals of a broader transformation quietly taking shape. In an era where nations compete fiercely for talent, intellectual property, and technological leadership, programmes like Takatuf are becoming necessities rather than optional luxuries. According to recent global estimates, intangible assets such as knowledge, innovation, research capability, and human capital now account for the majority of value creation in advanced economies. The future wealth of nations will increasingly depend not on what lies beneath the ground, but on what exists inside the minds of their people.

Where are the Republicans who put America first?



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

The author is reporter, and NYT columnist

AS PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP and his administration head toward the midterm elections, it’s now clear that the Republican Party has split into three factions: the ‘Never Trump’ Republicans, who refuse to ever vote for this unethical man; the ‘America First’ Republicans, who favour Trump’s policies but won’t countenance his destroying American norms and laws; and “Trump First” Republicans — those who think Trump’s dictates come first and the Constitution and traditional norms come second.

The most alarming thing happening in America today is that the Trump First Republicans, on Trump’s orders, are purging the few America First Republicans.

So, should the GOP hold the House and the Senate in the midterms, there will be no brakes whatsoever on this party and this president. I would not at all rule out their pushing for a third Trump term. We are going to a very bad place.

Just look at the trend line: The Never Trump Republicans, who included traditional conservatives such as Liz Cheney, John McCain and Mitt Romney, did not believe in Trump the man or many of his ideas. They thought that he both dishonoured the Constitution and true conservative principles.

The America First Republicans were ready to sign on to many Trump ideas — lowering taxes or limiting immigration or deflating the woke left — but when it came down to a choice between advancing those ideas and undermining democracy, this faction drew a

red line. They put America first, not Trump first. I am talking about people like former Vice-President Mike Pence, Sen Bill Cassidy, R-La, and the Indiana and South Carolina state legislators who refused to go along with Trump’s shameful out-of-cycle gerrymandering of electoral districts just to increase the GOP’s odds of holding the House. But now they, too, are being driven from the party.

Cassidy, the two-term Republican who voted to convict Trump in his 2021 impeachment trial, was just defeated by a Trump First Republican in his primary.

The back and forth between Cassidy and Trump was revealing. While he did not mention Trump by name in his concession speech, there was no doubt about whom Cassidy was talking about.

“Let me just set the record straight,” Cassidy said. “Our country is not about one individual. It is about the welfare of all Americans, and it is about our Constitution. And if someone doesn’t understand that and attempts to control others through using the levers of power, they’re about serving themselves. They’re not about serving us. And that person is not qualified to be a leader.”

Trump’s response was more direct — and incredibly revealing. He wrote on social media of Cassidy, “His disloyalty to the man who got him elected is now a part of legend, and it’s nice to see that his political career is Over!”

Read those words carefully: “His disloyalty to the man” — not to the Constitution — is what got him defeated. Trump first.

Sen Lindsey Graham, who seems willing

The most alarming thing happening in America today is that the Trump First Republicans, on Trump’s orders, are purging the few America First Republicans

to abandon any principle he ever held to stay on Trump’s good side and remain his golfing buddy, expressed the essence of the Trump First Republicans after Cassidy lost:

“You can disagree with President Trump,” Graham said, “but if you try to destroy him, you’re going to lose, because this is the party of Donald Trump.”

For Graham, upholding the Constitution apparently equals trying to “destroy” a man, even when that man was attempting to destroy the most sacred principle of our Constitution: the peaceful transfer of power by elections.

At least Cassidy is not alone in the America First GOP wing. My colleague David French wrote eloquently about the Republican majority leader of the South Carolina Senate, Shane Massey, who last week gave a speech explaining why he would not go along with Trump’s personal request that he support a midterm gerrymander to eliminate the state’s only Democratic-held congressional district.

Like a true America First Republican, Massey described himself as a “rabid partisan” and Washington Democrats as “crazy,” but he drew the line at cheating.

Massey said he rued the day when “maybe we become convinced that the only way to preserve the Republic is to implement policies that are contrary to the founding ideas of the Republic.”

A similar sentiment was expressed by the America First Republican state legislators in Indiana who refused to obey Trump’s demand to wipe out Democratic-leaning districts.

— The New York Times

MID-RANGE STRIKES BY UKRAINE HIT RUSSIA HARD

DAN PELESCHUK AND TOM BALMFORTH

From burning oil refineries to a stalling ground offensive, Russia is suffering problems in its war against Ukraine that partly stem from a growing Ukrainian military strength: the use of medium-range drone attacks.

By targeting Russian air defences and logistics dozens of kilometres behind front lines, Ukraine is disrupting Russia’s battlefield advances and opening the way for long-range strikes on Russian oil and military facilities, said two Ukrainian commanders, two drone specialists and three military analysts.

Ukrainian officials say more resources have in recent months been poured into “middle strikes”, typically ranging between 30 km and 180 km behind front lines.

This has enabled Ukraine to strike Russian radars, short- and medium-range air defences, communications infrastructure, logistics and large military vehicles at ‘operational depth’, the sources said.

Long-range attack drones can now slip through defences more easily to hit Russian oil facilities far behind front lines, said Robert Brovdi, commander of Ukraine’s Unmanned Systems Forces.

Defence analysts say such attacks alone cannot turn the tide against Russia but that they are having an important impact and the dynamics of the war may be shifting.

In the last few months, Ukrainian long-range drone attacks have caused the most extensive damage to Russian oil infrastructure since Moscow’s 2022 attack.

Last month, Russia reduced oil output because of drone attacks on ports and refineries, and crude oil supplies via Russia’s only remaining oil pipeline to Europe were halted, Reuters reported.

The attacks have lifted morale in Ukraine after a winter of Russian attacks on its power network and Russia’s rate of battlefield advances is at its slowest since 2023.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said this month the number of Ukrainian “middle strikes” had doubled compared to March, and quadrupled since February.

“We have scaled up, increased the number of crews, and expanded the number of systems in use. There is also greater diversity in the available platforms,” he said in written remarks.

Kusto said his unit focused mainly on targets up to 100 km from the line of contact.

He said Russian radar installations and air-defence systems such as the Buk, Tor and Pantsir were the highest-value targets. Other primary targets were large vehicles and logistics.

“The aircraft (drone) itself typically flies about 150 kilometres from the launch point and then begins searching for targets in the designated area,” he said. — Reuters

Why sustainability disclosure matters



Sustainability disclosure is being positioned as part of the broader architecture of market transparency.



AHMED AL MUKHAINI

The author is a policy analyst

SUSTAINABILITY disclosure is no longer a matter of corporate image or public relations. It is increasingly becoming part of the infrastructure of modern capital markets. Investors today are not merely asking whether companies are profitable; they are asking whether they are resilient, governable, transition-ready, and capable of sustaining value under conditions of environmental, regulatory, technological and geopolitical change.

Climate exposure, emissions profiles, governance quality, supply-chain resilience, and transition planning are now being treated as financially material considerations rather than ethical add-ons.

The scale of this shift is significant. Global sustainable investment assets have reached approximately \$16.7 trillion, while carbon pricing mechanisms now cover nearly 28 per cent of global emissions and generated more than \$100 billion in public revenues in 2024 alone. Sustainability has therefore moved decisively into the realm of economic policy, financial risk, and strategic competitiveness.

This is precisely where IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 become important. Their significance lies not in adding another layer of reporting, but in transforming sustainability from a broad narrative exercise into a structured financial disclosure framework.

IFRS S1 requires organisations to disclose sustainability-related risks and opportunities that could reasonably affect enterprise value, access to finance, cash flows, or cost of capital. IFRS S2 applies this same discipline specifically to climate-related risks and opportunities, including both physical and transition-related exposures.

For Oman, the timing is strategically important. The Financial Services Authority has already initiated a phased national road map involving listed companies and financial institutions. The road map targets full implementation from January 2029, with Scope 3 emissions

disclosures following in 2030.

More importantly, the direction of travel has already been established: sustainability disclosure is being positioned as part of the broader architecture of market transparency, investor confidence, and financial-sector modernisation.

This also aligns with Oman’s wider economic and environmental trajectory. The Sultanate’s updated net-zero and carbon-market framework seeks not only to reduce emissions, but to convert climate transition itself into an investable economic opportunity.

The ambition to achieve a 33 per cent emissions reduction by 2035 is increasingly linked to the development of credible carbon-credit markets, transition finance, green investment flows, and internationally verifiable sustainability frameworks.

The question, therefore, is no longer whether Oman should adopt sustainability disclosure standards, but how intelligently and strategically it can deploy them.

If implemented credibly, IFRS S1 and S2 could serve Oman in several important ways. They could reduce information asymmetry and investment uncertainty by making sustainability-related risks measurable, comparable, and auditable.

They could improve access to

international capital by aligning Omani institutions with the disclosure expectations of global investors, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, and development finance institutions.

They could strengthen the credibility of green bonds, sukuk, and carbon-credit initiatives by grounding sustainability claims in measurable and reviewable data rather than marketing language.

They could also reinforce Oman’s position as a transparent, rules-based, and institutionally reliable market at a time when investors are increasingly pricing governance quality and long-term resilience into their decisions.

Equally important, they could help Oman attract a growing category of socially responsible and sustainability-oriented investors who no longer assess markets solely on short-term return, but increasingly on governance quality, transition preparedness, institutional credibility, and long-term stability.

The real challenge, however, lies not in announcing standards, but in operationalising them.

Effective implementation will require substantial investment in institutional capability. Boards, auditors, CFOs, regulators, and sustainability officers will require technical capacity in emissions accounting, scenario analysis, governance oversight, assurance readiness, and sustainability risk management. Companies will need internal systems capable of generating decision-useful data.

Without this, sustainability disclosure risks degenerating into a cosmetic compliance exercise detached from actual governance and strategy.

Handled seriously, however, IFRS S1 and S2 could become more than accounting standards. They could become part of Oman’s broader investment diplomacy and economic positioning. In an increasingly fragmented and risk-sensitive global economy, capital is no longer attracted by profitability alone.

SPORTS

HOME**GROWN**TALENT



Oman captain Sufyan Mehmood hopes his young side will make the mark at the Asian Games Qualifier in Singapore.

ALL-OMANI SQUAD WILL RISE TO THE CHALLENGE AT ASIAN GAMES QUALIFIER, SAYS SUFYAN

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
@anuroop_ath

The first continental appearance of the all-Omani squad in the Asian Games Men's Qualifier in Singapore will be a testing ground of Oman Cricket's development strategy giving focus to the homegrown talent.

The T20I qualifiers, featuring 13 nations, will be held from May 31 to June 9.

Oman captain Sufyan Mehmood is confident that his 14-member squad will rise to the occasion to clinch an Asian Games berth.

"Except me, Shoaib al Balushi and Issa al Balushi most of the others are new to the international level. The key for the team will be our adaptability to the pressure of the international level. I'm confident our young squad will tackle the pressure to get us the results," Sufyan told Oman Observer.

The Oman all-rounder, who had featured in three T20 World Cups (India 2016, Oman 2021 and India-Sri Lanka 2026), said the Sultanate of Oman have very good chances of clinching the qualification spot for the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

"The players are working hard in the nets to achieve the qualification berth. The youngsters are talented and fearless and we are confident to make the mark," Sufyan, who bowls medium pace, said.

Talking about Oman's chances in their group, the Oman skipper said they are not taking any team lightly but fully focused on their job.

"We want to focus on our strengths and we are confident to get through from Group B, which consists of hosts Singapore and Maldives as our challengers."

Sufyan thanked Oman Cricket for his overall development as a cricketer along with his personal sponsors New Height Real Estate and Amtur Gold.

Oman begin their Group B campaign against Maldives on June 1 before facing hosts Singapore on June 3. Under the tournament format, the top two teams from each of the four groups will advance to the quarterfinals, with the four winners progressing to the semifinals and securing qualification for the Asian Games.

FOUR SPOTS
Apart from Oman, Maldives and Singapore in Group B, the other teams competing for four qualification spots at the Asian Games 2026 are Nepal, Thailand and Indonesia (Group A); Hong Kong, Bahrain and South Korea (Group C); and Malaysia, Qatar, China and Uzbekistan (Group D).

The top four teams from the qualifiers will join defending champions India, along with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and hosts Japan at the Asian Games, scheduled from September 17 to October 3.

The team, coached by former Oman skipper Sultan Ahmed, will depart in the final week of May and are expected to play preparatory matches ahead of the tournament. The team has been prepared through Oman Cricket's all-Omani team project launched in March 2025.

OMAN SQUAD: Sufyan Mehmood (captain), Muzaffar Shiralkar (vice-captain), Mohammed Al Balushi, Shoaib Al Balushi, Zubair Al Balushi, Abdul Jalil, Issa Al Balushi, Samir Yousuf, Naveed Al Balushi, Ahmed Al Zadjali, Wasim Al Balushi, Faris Al Balushi, Rashad Al Balushi, Munthir Al Balushi; **SUPPORT STAFF:** Coach Sultan Ahmed, assistant coach Parviz Al Balushi, manager Said Haider Al Balushi, physiotherapist Saravanan.

Oman medal tally rises to 28 at GCC Games

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 20

OMAN'S NATIONAL teams raised the Sultanate of Oman's medal tally to 28 at the fourth GCC Games Doha 2026 after adding four new bronze medals through shooting, snooker and volleyball as the regional multi-sport event heads towards its conclusion on Friday.

The national shooting team continued its strong presence in Doha by winning two bronze medals in the men's 10m air pistol event. Shooter Salim bin Talib al Hinai claimed bronze in the individual competition, before joining Sulaiman bin Abdullah al Rahbi and Salim bin Fasil al Shidi to secure another bronze in the men's team event.

Al Hinai expressed his delight with the result, saying the achievement came through teamwork and the support of all members of the national delegation. He added that the level of competition was high among the GCC teams, which gave the athletes greater motivation to improve and deliver stronger performances.

"The competition was tough and very competitive, but it was an important experience for us. This participation represents a valuable step in our preparations for the coming championships," he said.

In snooker, Oman's national team also added a bronze medal in the team event through the trio of Ahmed bin Bashir al Khasibi, Sami bin Salim al Hamrashdi and Qasim bin Rashid al Balushi. The UAE won the gold medal after defeating Qatar 3-0 in the final. The UAE team featured Mohammed Shehab, Khalid Kamali and Abdulrahman Shamsi, while



Oman volleyball players pose after winning the bronze medal.



Abdullah bin Mohammed Bamakhalef

Qatar were represented by Ali al Obaidli, Ahmed Saif and Bashar Hussein. The team snooker competition featured 18 players from six GCC teams, with three players representing each nation.

Oman's volleyball team concluded its campaign on a positive note by winning the bronze medal after a deserved 3-1 victory over the UAE. The national team took the first set 25-17 before the UAE levelled the match by winning the second set 25-22. Oman then regained control and sealed the third and fourth sets 25-20 and 25-17 to secure third place.

The result marked Oman's



Shooter Salim bin Talib al Hinai claimed bronze.

first win in the volleyball competition after earlier defeats against Bahrain and Qatar. Bahrain claimed the gold medal after beating hosts Qatar 3-0 in the final, while Qatar settled for silver. Gulf Times also reported Oman's bronze-medal win over the UAE in the third-place playoff.

Abdullah bin Mohammed Bamakhalef, Secretary-General of the Oman Olympic Committee, said the GCC Games came at an ideal time and helped strengthen sporting ties among GCC nations.

"We thank Qatar for hosting and organising this edition. The competition was strong, and the organisation was outstanding," he said.

Bamakhalef added that Oman's results were satisfactory, especially given the high level of competition, noting that the Oman Olympic Committee will continue focusing on individual sports while conducting a full technical evaluation of all national teams through the High Performance Committee ahead of future regional and continental events.

Al Azri leads May Bowling Championship qualifying

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MAY 20

The Oman Bowling Committee's May Bowling Championship is gathering momentum at Seeb Bowling Centre, with strong competition marking the opening qualifying rounds of the event, which began on May 17 and will continue until May 25. The championship, organised as part of the committee's efforts to activate the domestic calendar and raise the competitive level of bowlers in the Sultanate of Oman, has attracted a solid field of players competing across several rounds before the final stage next week.

The qualifying stage is being held from May 17 to 20 over three games, followed by the second round on May 24 at 7:30 pm, consisting of four games. The championship will conclude on May 25 at 7 pm with the final round, also played over four games, to determine the top finishers.

According to the qualifying standings up to 10 pm on May 19, Hassan al Azri topped the overall table with a total of 1,290 points and an average of 215.00. Musab al Adawi followed in second place with 1,242 points and an average of 207.00, while Aisha al Sibani stood



Participants compete during the Oman Bowling Committee's May Bowling Championship at Seeb Bowling Centre. — **Abdulwahid al Hamadani**

third with 1,229 points and an average of 204.83.

Marwan al Zadjali also recorded 1,229 points to place fourth, while Mahmood al Hadidi came fifth with 1,207 points and an average of 201.17. Ahmed al Shukri remained among the leading contenders with 1,202 points, followed by Muadh al Amri with 1,187 points and Ammar al Balushi with 1,167 points. The standings reflect a competitive opening phase, with several bowlers still in contention to improve their positions before the decisive rounds on May 24 and 25.

BOOSTING THE GAME
Ayman bin Salim al Jahdhami, Secretary of the Oman Bowling Committee, said the championship forms part of the committee's ongoing plan to provide regular competitive platforms for players and strengthen the game's presence in Oman.

"The Oman Bowling Committee is keen to organise such championships regularly because they play an important role in raising players' skill levels and identifying promising talent. The May Championship has shown good technical levels since its launch, and we expect the competition to become even stronger in the final rounds as the results remain close among several players," he said.

Al Jahdhami added that the committee appreciates the cooperation of Seeb Bowling Centre and the commitment of all participants, noting that regular competitions help maintain players' readiness for upcoming local and international events.

The championship will now move towards its decisive stages, with the second and final rounds expected to deliver further excitement as players look to secure podium places and strengthen their overall rankings.

38-BALL KNOCK



Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi in action against Lucknow Super Giants in Jaipur. — Reuters

SOORYAVANSHI SLAMS 93 TO EDGE RR CLOSER TO IPL PLAYOFFS

JAIPUR, India: Fifteen-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi struck a blistering 93 to power Rajasthan Royals to a seven-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday to boost their play-off hopes in the IPL.

T20 sensation Sooryavanshi, who was playing as an impact substitute, struck his third fifty of the season as he hammered seven fours and 10 sixes in his 38-ball knock to guide Rajasthan's chase of 221 at their home in Jaipur.

Left-handed Sooryavanshi missed out on a century before Dhruv Jurel made an unbeaten 53 as Rajasthan achieved their target with five balls to spare for their seventh win in 13 matches and move into the top four of the 10-team table. A win in their last league match against Mumbai Indians on Sunday will book the last playoff spot.

Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad have already made the play-offs of the tournament that will conclude on May 31 in Ahmedabad.

Sooryavanshi's batting blitz trumped Lucknow opener Mitchell Marsh's 96, a knock that steered his team to an imposing 220-5.

The T20 sensation has been in red-hot form in the 2026 IPL, and passed March's tally of Marsh 563 runs to climb to the top of the batting chart with 579 runs in 13 matches.

The prodigy said he has cut out the noise surrounding his career.

"I don't really see too much, I don't read newspapers and all, so I don't think too much about it," said Sooryavanshi. "I just think that this is only the start. If my career becomes long and I play for a long time, people will say many more things. My focus should just remain on the game and I should complete my journey."

He has hit one ton and has compiled his runs at a punishing strike-rate of 237.29. — AFP



Arsenal fans celebrate their team winning the English Premier League, outside the Emirates Stadium in London. — AFP

Arsenal crowned EPL champs after City draw

ARSENAL CELEBRATED their first Premier League title for 22 years on Tuesday after Manchester City were held to a 1-1 draw by Bournemouth, sparking wild scenes of joy around the Emirates Stadium. City had to win to take the fight to the final day but fell short and can no longer catch their rivals, who have ended a six-year trophy drought.

After finishing second for the past three seasons, Mikel Arteta's side have finally made it over the line to win the London club's first English title since Arsene Wenger's 'Invincibles' in 2004.

Arsenal edged to the brink of a 14th English top-flight title with an unconvincing 1-0 win over already relegated Burnley on Monday, which took them five points clear

of City. The Gunners, who have set the pace for most of the season, have bounced back impressively since losing to City last month, winning four straight league matches without conceding a goal. "Congratulations to Arsenal, Mikel, the staff, all the players, fans for this Premier League," said City boss Pep Guardiola. "You deserve it!"

On Monday, just 48 hours after completing a domestic cup double with victory over Chelsea in the FA Cup final, City were rocked by widespread reports that Guardiola will depart after a decade in charge at the end of the season. Victory at Wembley on Saturday secured a 20th trophy of Guardiola's glorious reign. But he cannot add to his six Premier League titles when Aston Villa visit the Etihad on Sunday for what is expected to be his final match in charge.

"The first person I have to talk to is my

chairman," said Guardiola, referring to his future. "We decide when we finish the season, we'll sit down and we'll talk. It's as simple as that and after we'll take the decision."

Red smoke from flares billowed around the Emirates in north London as fans sang 'Campeones' and chanted Arteta's name.

"22 long years for the Arsenal," British Prime Minister and Arsenal fan Keir Starmer posted on X. "But finally, we're back where we belong. Champions!"

At the club's training ground, there were scenes of celebration from the Arsenal players who had gathered to watch the action at the Vitality Stadium. "You did it! Champions go on when others stop. This is your time. Now, go on and enjoy every moment," Wenger said in a video on the club's social media channels. — AFP



TENDER

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW GAS FIRED IPP(S)

Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP) is responsible for procuring new capacity for power and water in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the requirements of the law for the regulation and privatization of the electricity and related water sector promulgated by Royal Decree 78/2004 as amended and the PWP license.

Tender Description	Nama Power and Water Procurement seeks proposals to appoint a qualified and experienced Consultant as a financial and commercial advisor for the development of new gas fired IPP(s) (Project). The Consultant will be required to support the development of the Project. The anticipated technology of the Project is to be CCGT with a capacity up to 2,800 MW.
Tender Number	OPWP/2026/16
Tender Purchase Period	From 17 May 2026 to 24 May 2026
Tender Fee	﷮ 100 / Free of charges for (SME) with a valid Riyada card
Submission date	21 June 2026 at 12:00 PM Oman Time Zone
Collection & Payment Methods	The tender documents are available for purchase in an electronic format through PWP website (https://omanpwp.om/tenders). The payment is done electronically through PWP website. In case of any queries, please send an email to: procurement.officer@Omanpwp.nama.om & Prj.newipp31@omanpwp.com
Bank Guarantee	A Tender Bond (in the form set out in the tender documents) or a bank certified cheque of not less than 1% of the tender value, to be valid for a period of 120 days from the submission deadline date referred to above. The tender bond or certified cheque shall be enclosed as part of the bid.



الشركة العامة لشراء الطاقة والمياه، ش.م.ع. - عمان - عمان
Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC, PO Box 1388, Ruwi PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman | Tel: +968 24806820 | C.R.No. 1772214 | Tax Number: 5063511

Taijul takes six to lead Bangladesh to Pakistan Test series sweep

SYLHET, Bangladesh: Spinner Taijul Islam took six wickets to lead Bangladesh to a 78-run win over Pakistan in the second Test and clinch a famous 2-0 series win on Wednesday.

Pakistan, who started the fifth day on 316-7 chasing a record 437, were bowled out for 328 in the first session in Sylhet after Mohammad Rizwan hit a valiant 94.

It was Bangladesh's first Test series win at home against Pakistan and a second successive sweep after their 2-0 triumph on Pakistani soil in 2024. The win marked another major milestone for Bangladesh, who secured four successive Test series victories for the first time in their history.

"It's difficult to explain the emotions of that final hour because Pakistan were batting really well and we were under pressure," Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said. "But compared to previous matches, we controlled our emotions better and avoided panic. Every player and member of the support staff contributed, and as captain I feel very proud of the team's work ethic."

Wicketkeeper Rizwan kept Pakistan in the hunt with a 166-ball stay after the visitors had slumped to 162-5 on day four. Rizwan put on an eighth-wicket partnership of 54 with overnight partner Sajid Khan, who made 28. — AFP



TENDER

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR TECHNICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW GAS FIRED IPP(S)

Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP) is responsible for procuring new capacity for power and water in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the requirements of the law for the regulation and privatization of the electricity and related water sector promulgated by Royal Decree 78/2004 as amended and the PWP license.

Tender Description	Nama Power and Water Procurement seeks proposals to appoint a qualified and experienced Consultant as a technical advisor for the development of new gas fired IPP(s) (Project). The Consultant will be required to support the development of the Project. The anticipated technology of the Project is to be CCGT with a capacity up to 2,800 MW.
Tender Number	OPWP/2026/17
Tender Purchase Period	From 13 May 2026 to 20 May 2026
Tender Fee	﷮ 100 / Free of charges for (SME) with a valid Riyada card
Submission date	17 June 2026 at 12:00 PM Oman Time Zone
Collection & Payment Methods	The tender documents are available for purchase in an electronic format through PWP website (https://omanpwp.om/tenders). The payment is done electronically through PWP website. In case of any queries, please send an email to: procurement.officer@Omanpwp.nama.om & Prj.newipp31@omanpwp.com
Bank Guarantee	A Tender Bond (in the form set out in the tender documents) or a bank certified cheque of not less than 1% of the tender value, to be valid for a period of 120 days from the submission deadline date referred to above. The tender bond or certified cheque shall be enclosed as part of the bid.



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OMAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY S.A.O.G

Chairman's Report and Unaudited Condensed Consolidated Financial Results for the Period Ended 31 Mar 2026

Respected Shareholders,

We are pleased to present to you a summary of the results of the operations for the Three-month period ended 31st March 2026

The Group delivered broad-based Revenue growth of 6.1%, reaching **﷼**856.7 million, with increases across all operating markets.

Group net profit after tax rose 52.2% to **﷼**107.9 million. The increase is primarily due to positive EBITDA performance and higher investment income from Zain Group.

Net profit attributable to shareholders of the Company for the period stands at **﷼**20.9 million compared to **﷼**17 million in 2025, an increase of 22.9%. This increase was primarily due to Zain Group's stronger contribution to consolidated results.

Earnings per share also improved to **﷼**0.028 for the first three months of 2026, compared to **﷼**0.023 in the same period last year, further reflecting the robustness of our financial performance.

At the domestic level revenues reached RO 178.0 Mn in the first three months ended March 2026 compared to RO 164.1 Mn for the corresponding period in 2025, an increase of 8.5%.

This growth was underpinned by strong performance across the core telecom business, with telco revenues delivering strong growth, adding **﷼**13 Mn, supported by broad-based momentum across mobile, fixed, devices, and wholesale services. Growth was further complemented by increased demand for ICT and Emerging Tech of **﷼**1 Mn, reflecting steady progress in executing our TechCo strategy to diversify revenues.

EBITDA remained broadly stable year over year across Core Telecom, ICT, and Emerging Technology, increasing slightly to **﷼**41.7 million for the first quarter ended in March 2026 compared to **﷼**41.6 million in the same period last year.

Normalized net profit attributable to shareholders of the Company for the first quarter ended 31 March 2026 stood at 30.6 million, compared to 33.5 million in the same period last year.

The decline is primarily related to an increase in depreciation and amortization which reflects our robust capital investments across both the core telecom business and emerging technologies. These investments are strategic in nature and are aimed at supporting long-term growth, enhancing customer experience, strengthening operational resilience, and driving sustainable value creation.

The quarter was shaped by two dynamics: the enduring strength of our core telecom business, which continues to anchor Group performance, and a meaningful step forward in our long-term digital transformation through the formation of Otech. Otech — the provider of next-generation technologies and enabler of digital transformation — brings together Oman Data Park, Tadoom and the Group's wider technology assets across data centers, sovereign cloud, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, IoT and systems integration. This consolidation is intended to build scale and lay the foundations for sustainable growth.

Innovation continues to underpin this journey. During the quarter, Oman Data Park — now part of the Otech ecosystem — entered into a strategic partnership with ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, expanding the Group's cybersecurity capabilities. The collaboration brings together Otech's in country, sovereignty compliant infrastructure with ZainTECH's regional expertise and market reach, strengthening the Group's position in a fast growing and strategically important segment.

Thanks and Appreciation.

We take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to our shareholders and loyal customers for their continued support, which enabled us to achieve these excellent results. We also wholeheartedly appreciate the sincere contribution of executive management and employees to the company's performance in the market's challenging situation. With your support, we are confident that Omantel will continue its good performance and will be able to reach new heights of excellence.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff, we are honored to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for his visionary leadership. We pray to Almighty Allah to grant him long life, health, and welfare so that Oman and its people can achieve more progress, prosperity, and welfare.

On behalf of the Board of Directors

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2026

	Unaudited	Audited
	31 March 2026	31 December 2025
	﷼'000	﷼'000
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	410,940	409,498
Bank balances held in customers' account	53,943	52,014
Trade and other receivables	1,696,792	1,609,144
Contract assets	168,340	160,863
Inventories	82,998	87,498
Investment securities at amortised cost	200	200
Investment securities at FVTPL	156,393	111,541
	2,569,606	2,430,758
Assets classified as held for sale	436,144	402,429
	3,005,750	2,833,187
Non-current assets		
Contract assets	108,338	113,266
Investment securities at FVTPL	17,165	17,114
Investment securities at FVOCI	16,268	15,990
Investment securities at amortised cost	800	800
Investments in associates and joint ventures	188,007	190,553
Other non-current assets	110,303	125,055
Deferred tax asset	33,122	32,167
Right of use of assets	361,380	369,671
Property and equipment	2,109,042	2,182,555
Intangible assets and goodwill	3,016,770	3,051,917
	5,961,195	6,099,088
Total Assets	8,966,945	8,932,275
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	1,983,973	1,879,856
Contract liabilities	111,273	109,657
Income tax payables	46,773	42,893
Bank borrowings	384,400	363,517
Lease liabilities	65,489	60,817
	2,591,908	2,556,740
Liabilities classified as held for sale	119,183	100,780
	2,711,091	2,657,520
Non-current liabilities		
Bank borrowings	2,498,241	2,489,230
Lease liabilities	372,543	396,808
Contract liabilities	25,641	37,270
Other non-current liabilities	353,836	365,748
	3,250,261	3,289,056
Equity		
Attributable to owners of the Company		
Share capital	75,000	75,000
Own shares held by liquidity provider	(98)	(72)
Reserve on trading in liquidity shares	(1,262)	(909)
Reserves	613,308	643,388
	686,948	717,407
Non-controlling interests	2,318,645	2,268,292
Total equity	3,005,593	2,985,699
Total Liabilities and Equity	8,966,945	8,932,275

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss - 31 March 2026 (Unaudited)

	Three months ended 31 March	
	2026	2025 (Restated)
	﷼'000	﷼'000
Revenue	856,655	807,440
Cost of operations	(310,674)	(287,286)
Operating and administrative expenses	(259,974)	(252,941)
Depreciation and amortization	(151,091)	(144,583)
Expected credit loss (ECL) on financial assets	(17,499)	(11,183)
Interest income	4,252	2,190
Investment income	47,298	19,355
Share of results of associates and joint ventures	689	2,196
Other income / (expenses)	8,892	(13,703)
Finance costs	(47,869)	(49,252)
(Loss) / gain from currency revaluation	(10,255)	1,034
Net monetary gain	2,307	8,518
Profit before taxation	122,731	81,785
Taxation	(14,776)	(10,895)
Profit for the period	107,955	70,890
Attributable to:		
Owners of the Company	20,881	16,980
Non-controlling interests	87,074	53,910
	107,955	70,890
Earnings per share (EPS)		
Basic and diluted	0.028	0.023

Note:

- The consolidated financial statements are available in Muscat Stock Exchange and the Company's website.
- The consolidated financial statement will be delivered to any shareholders or other interested party who requests them within 5 days of the written request. The request must indicate preference for Arabic or English.
- Request may be addressed to Secretary, Board of Directors, Omantel P.O. Box 789, P.C. 112, Ruwi Sultanate of Oman. Fax: 242 40 586.

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
7,243.417

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$105.96
BRENT \$108.23
LIGHT \$101.34



SHORT TAKES



OPES 2026 witnessed wide participation from major international companies, investment institutions and energy and technology firms.

OMAN ADVANCES SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY INVESTMENT AT OPES 2026

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, MAY 20

The Sultanate of Oman is emerging as a leading investment hub in the energy and sustainability sectors in which OPES 2026 solidified the Sultanate of Oman's position as one of the most prominent emerging investment destinations in the energy and sustainability sectors in the region.

Economic indicators suggest that Oman is moving towards implementing a package of strategic projects in the clean energy sector, with expected investments exceeding \$140 billion by 2050.

This is part of long-term plans aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of the national economy, reducing dependence on conventional oil and transforming energy into one of the most important drivers of future growth.

The Sultanate of Oman also aims to produce between 7.5 and 8 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2050, positioning it among the world's leading countries qualified to export hydrogen to European and Asian markets.

This will be supported by major projects in the Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates that rely on solar and wind energy sources.

In the electricity and renewable energy sector, national plans aim to increase the contribution of renewable energy to approximately 30% of the electricity mix by 2030.

This will be achieved through the development of projects with a capacity exceeding 16 gigawatts of solar and wind power in the coming years, thereby enhancing energy security, reducing carbon emissions and supporting the move towards net-neutrality.

MSX pullback tests market depth after strong rally

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MAY 20

A sharp pullback on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has put market depth, liquidity and investor confidence back under scrutiny, even as Oman's broader fiscal and economic indicators continue to improve.

The benchmark MSX index has fallen from levels above 8,300 points to around 7,500 points in recent sessions, with losses extending across several sectors and many listed companies.

The correction follows a strong rally that pushed the market to record levels earlier this year, supported by stronger liquidity, improving corporate earnings and rising investment activity.

The retreat has highlighted a widening gap between the Sultanate of Oman's improving macroeconomic story and short-term equity-market sentiment, raising questions over liquidity depth and institutional participation in the local market.

Market observers say the decline appears to reflect a mix of profit-taking, liquidity pressure and weaker investor sentiment, rather than a deterioration in Oman's underlying economic fundamentals.

Several leading stocks also remain above levels seen before the market's rally accelerated last year, suggesting that part of the current decline reflects valuation adjustments after strong gains in recent months.

The sell-off has revived discussion over the vulnerability of smaller regional exchanges to shifts in liquidity flows and market sentiment, particularly during periods of heightened



The benchmark MSX index has fallen from levels above 8,300 points to around 7,500 points in recent sessions.

MSX STRENGTHENS PUSH FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCE



The partnership aims to improve market readiness to attract investments.

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has signed a cooperation agreement with Carbon Neutrality Era Company to support the development of sustainable finance and carbon markets in Oman.

The agreement was signed during Oman Sustainability Week 2026 as part of efforts to strengthen the role of the capital market in supporting the green economy and advancing sustainability-focused investment initiatives.

Under the agreement, the two sides will collaborate on developing sustainable financial instruments, enhancing

knowledge and data exchange; and expanding cooperation in sustainability and carbon market initiatives.

The partnership also aims to improve market readiness to attract investments linked to the transition towards a low-carbon economy.

The cooperation aligns with Muscat Stock Exchange's broader strategy to integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles and climate finance practices into the capital market ecosystem, in line with international standards and global sustainability trends.

— ONA

volatility.

Market corrections are a normal part of financial-market cycles.

But when declines become broad and prolonged, they can weigh on confidence if volatility rises and liquidity weakens.

Some analysts say lower valuations may also create opportunities for long-term investors seeking new entry points after the market's strong performance earlier this year.

The debate has also drawn attention to the role institutional mechanisms could play in supporting market stability during periods of sharp correction.

Market observers argue that emergency investment tools or long-term stabilisation funds could help ease market stress through measured liquidity injections during severe downturns, while complementing the role of existing market makers and liquidity providers.

The discussion comes as Oman continues efforts to deepen its capital markets under Oman Vision 2040 through regulatory reforms, new investment instruments, ESG frameworks and broader foreign investor engagement.

Omani green ammonia exports to Europe to begin next year: Al Aufi

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MAY 20

Oman's first shipment of green ammonia to Europe is expected around this time next year, Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, announced on Tuesday, May 19, 2026.

Addressing the World Hydrogen Summit 2026, which opened in Rotterdam, Al Aufi said the landmark shipment would mark a significant milestone in Oman's accelerating transition into the green hydrogen economy.

However, he cautioned industry leaders that the sector must scale up more rapidly to achieve global commercial viability.

The planned cargo, which signals the commercialisation of Oman's nascent green hydrogen industry, will be the first shipment of green ammonia from ACME Group's project currently under advanced development in Al Duqm.

In its first phase, the local subsidiary of India-based ACME



Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, addressing the World Hydrogen Summit 2026 in Rotterdam.

is targeting production of around 100,000 tonnes per year of green ammonia for export. The off-taker is Yara International, a leading global fertiliser and industrial solutions provider based in Norway.

Speaking on the theme "Why Oman Is Ready to Scale Hydrogen & Why Speed Now Matters

Globally", Al Aufi warned that current project sizes across the sector remain insufficient to materially reduce costs or establish a globally competitive hydrogen market. He called for stronger international collaboration and faster scaling of projects, stressing that the industry must move decisively

from pilot-scale initiatives to full industrial-scale deployment.

Al Aufi also highlighted Oman's strategic advantages in the emerging hydrogen economy, including abundant renewable energy resources, a strategic geographic position linking Asia and Europe, established energy infrastructure and a supportive regulatory framework aimed at attracting international investment.

He reiterated that green hydrogen remains a central pillar of Oman's long-term economic diversification and decarbonisation strategy.

He further reaffirmed Oman's ambition to achieve a levelised cost of around \$3/kg for green hydrogen, noting that the ACME project in Al Duqm could ultimately scale up to around 1.2 million tonnes per year in its later phases. However, he stressed that achieving this scale will depend on clear, stable and long-term offtake commitments from European buyers, which are currently being impacted

by uncertainty surrounding the RFNBO framework.

He also delivered a direct message to EU policymakers, urging them to finalise the RFNBO definition and maintain regulatory stability over a multi-year period, in order to provide the certainty required for projects to reach final investment decisions.

Energy portals further quoted the minister as highlighting the growing potential of liquid hydrogen as a future global energy carrier, suggesting it could eventually emerge as a preferred option for international hydrogen transport.

The minister stressed that the hydrogen sector is entering a more mature phase, shifting from announcements and early-stage ambitions to the practical realities of global trade, infrastructure development and logistics.

He noted that the focus is increasingly on transport, storage and end-use applications, underscoring the importance of fully integrated supply chains linking producers with end-users.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Shoppers had the opportunity to win exciting prizes.

FOSTER CLARK
ENDS “30 DAYS OF
SWEETNESS” DRAW

MUSCAT: Foster Clark’s successfully concluded its lucky draw, “30 Days of Sweetness”, with a grand prize distribution ceremony held at Lulu Hypermarket Bausher (Oman Avenues Mall).

The lucky draw was launched during the holy month of Ramadhan to reward shoppers across Oman and create greater awareness around Foster Clark’s dessert and baking product range.

Customers who purchased any Foster Clark’s product (distributed in Oman by the P&G Division of Khimji Ramdas Group) during the promotional period were entered into daily prize draws, making every day of Ramadhan a celebration of sweetness and rewards.

The prize distribution ceremony was attended by Chief Guest Hatim al Zadjali, Government Relations Manager, KR Group; Jatin Khanna, Head of Sales and Trade Marketing, KR Group; Swapnil Shah, Marketing Manager, Lulu Group, Ismail Madathum Thazhe, General Manager, Lulu Bausher — alongside other representatives from Foster Clark’s, Khimji Ramdas Group and Lulu Group.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of the Hyundai Accent grand prize to the lucky winner.

As part of the “30 Days of Sweetness” draw, shoppers had the opportunity to win exciting prizes, including: 1 Hyundai Accent, 6 Televisions, 8 Philips Waffle Makers, 8 Braun Cake Mixers, 3000 Talabat Coupons.

A representative from Foster Clark’s added: “Ramadhan is a season of sharing, togetherness and joy; and through our ‘30 Days of Sweetness’ prize draw, we wanted to give back to our loyal customers across Oman.

We are extremely pleased with the overwhelming response received during the campaign and thank our partners at Lulu Hypermarket and Khimji Ramdas Group for making this initiative a success”.

Commenting on the successful campaign, Ismail Madathum Thazhe, General Manager, Lulu Bausher said: “We were pleased to partner with Foster Clark’s for this successful Ramadhan draw.

Shopper engagement initiatives such as ‘30 Days of Sweetness’ create excitement among customers and strengthen the shopping experience at Lulu Bausher. We congratulate all the winners and especially Abdulaziz al Farsi on winning the Hyundai Accent”.

The prize draw received enthusiastic participation from shoppers across the Sultanate of Oman and reinforced Foster Clark’s reputation as a trusted household brand in the dessert and baking category.

Omran adopts
‘Meezan’ to
enhance
tourism
sustainability

MUSCAT: Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) announced its registration and onboarding onto the ‘Meezan’ platform, operated by the Oman Net Zero Centre under the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

The platform is dedicated to greenhouse gas inventory and emissions accounting.

The announcement was made on the sidelines of Oman Sustainability Week, marking a strategic step towards reinforcing Environmental,



Social and Governance practices across the Group’s projects and operations, while driving the transition towards a sustainable and responsible tourism model.

The ‘Meezan’ digital platform enables the deployment of advanced solutions and data-driven methodologies to accurately measure carbon emissions generated from the Group’s operations, while supporting efforts to reduce and mitigate them in accordance with international best practices.

Service your Toyota and
win a Yaris 1.5 deluxe



owners across the Sultanate of Oman now have an incredible reason to visit their nearest service centre.

In an exciting move to reward its loyal customers, Toyota Oman has launched a grand raffle campaign that turns a routine vehicle maintenance visit into a chance for a life-changing prize.

Valid until May 22nd, this promotion offers customers the opportunity to drive away in a brand-new Toyota Yaris 1.5 Deluxe.

The entry process is simple and accessible for all Toyota owners. By spending just RO 10 or more on any service or mechanical repair, customers earn one entry into the grand raffle.

Whether it is a quick check-up or a necessary mechanical repair, a single invoice of RO 10 is all it takes to participate in the draw. This offer is available exclusively for Toyota vehicles, ensuring that the brand’s community receives the highest level of appreciation for their continued trust.

Choosing Toyota Service means choosing the highest standard of automotive care in Oman. Backed by the extensive network of Saud Bahwan Automotive, Toyota Service facilities reach even the farthest regions of the Sultanate of Oman, ensuring that prompt and personalised care is always nearby.



The entry process is simple and accessible for all Toyota owners.

This commitment to excellence is built on the “3S Spirit” — Precision, Kindness and Reliability — ensuring that every customer receives service that matches the quality of their vehicle. Every vehicle serviced at an authorised centre benefits from the expertise of trained, certified technicians who use the latest diagnostic computers and guaranteed genuine parts.

With a network that has earned over 12,000 five-star ratings, Toyota Oman

remains the most trusted distributor and service provider in the nation, providing after-sales support that customers can rely on.

To make vehicle maintenance as convenient as possible, Toyota Service offers a variety of modern programmes. For those looking for great value, the Toyota Moushaq prepaid service packages protect owners from future price hikes while providing a customised maintenance schedule.

Muzn launches special Haj season credit card offer

MUSCAT: To support customers travelling to perform Haj, the National Bank of Oman’s (NBO) Muzn Islamic Banking has launched a special haj season credit card offer, combining practical financial support with rewarding travel benefits tailored to customers’ needs during the pilgrimage season.

Customers can apply for Muzn Islamic Banking Credit Cards with annual fee waivers, fast processing and the flexibility to apply with or without salary transfer. They can also enjoy 50% cashback on eligible transactions made in Makkah, Jeddah and Madinah during the offer period, helping them manage their travel-



related expenses more easily.

Commenting on the offer, Salima bint Obaid bin Issa al Marzoqi, Assistant General Manager and Chief Islamic

Banking Officer at NBO, said: “Haj is a deeply meaningful journey and we understand the importance of convenient, reliable and Sharia-compliant financial solutions during this time.

Through this offer, we aim to provide added value and peace of mind to customers as they prepare for their pilgrimage; while ensuring they have access to reliable card benefits that support their travel needs”.

Adding further value to the travel experience, Muzn Islamic Banking Credit Cards offer a range of privileges that support customers before and during their journey.

Platinum and Signature

cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access, giving them a more comfortable start to their travels.

Signature cardholders can also benefit from chauffeur service to and from Muscat International Airport, offering added convenience from the moment their journey begins. Additional benefits include multi-trip travel insurance, medical and travel assistance, merchant offers and discounts.

By combining cashback, travel privileges and everyday card convenience, Muzn Islamic Banking continues to offer customers a trusted financial companion for their pilgrimage and beyond.

Bank Muscat fosters entrepreneurship through skills development

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its leading role in contributing to the Sultanate of Oman’s sustainable development goals, Bank Muscat celebrated the graduation of a new cohort from the specialised entrepreneurial training under the Bank’s “Al Wathba Academy” programme, currently in its 12th edition.

The programme forms part of the bank’s ongoing efforts in social responsibility and its commitment to empowering entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by enhancing their capabilities in managing and developing their businesses, thereby contributing to the growth



The first cohort of the programme targeted 15 owners of established businesses.

of this vital sector. The graduation ceremony was recently held at the Grand Hormuz Hotel in Airport Heights with the presence of Ahmed bin Faqir al Bulushi, Deputy Chief Executive Officer — Banking at Bank Muscat and Ali bin Ahmed Muqaibal, Chief Executive Officer of Sharakah, the training provider.

The first cohort of the programme targeted 15 owners of established businesses, who underwent six months of intensive training delivered by a select group of entrepreneurship experts and specialists.

The programme was designed within a comprehensive framework

aimed at transferring practical knowledge and equipping participants with the strategic decision-making skills required to ensure business sustainability and support future expansion.

Since its launch in November last year, the programme has witnessed strong engagement from participants. It featured a series of specialised training workshops and consultancy sessions focusing on business development, strategic planning, marketing, leadership development and digital transformation, in line with the evolving requirements of both local and regional markets.

SHORTTAKES



The two companies will study the potential use of solar power solutions and assess the feasibility of deploying EV charging infrastructure.

Pact signed to explore cleaner fuel, EV and solar solutions

MUSCAT: OQ Base Industries (OQBI) and Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly explore alternative and sustainable energy solutions aimed at supporting the transformation of Oman’s energy sector.

The agreement focuses on evaluating and developing opportunities in solar energy, electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, biofuels and cleaner fuel alternatives, in line with Oman’s sustainability goals and Vision 2040 objectives.

Under the MoU, the two companies will study the potential use of solar power solutions and assess the feasibility of deploying EV charging infrastructure. The collaboration will also examine the use of biofuels for OQBIs’ vehicle fleet as well as the possibility of blending methanol with vehicle fuel as a future energy option.

The partnership further provides a framework for discussions, evaluations, information exchange and joint feasibility studies. It also opens the door for pilot projects and future initiatives related to alternative energy and sustainability.

The collaboration brings together OQBIs’ industrial expertise in the production of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), methanol and ammonia with OOMCO’s capabilities in fuel distribution, lubricant products and direct fuel sales.

Tareq bin Mohammed al Junaidi, CEO of OOMCO, said the MoU marks an important step in the company’s efforts to support future energy solutions and adapt to rapid developments in the energy and mobility sectors.

He noted that the partnership would help explore practical opportunities in alternative energy, EV charging and cleaner fuel solutions while supporting innovation and improving operational efficiency.

Flare gas projects gain momentum in Oman

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, MAY 20

THE Sultanate of Oman is emerging as a strategic testing ground for new flare-gas monetisation technologies as a partnership unveiled at the Oman Petroleum & Energy Show (OPES) 2026 seeks to convert stranded and flared gas into power for industrial and high-density computing applications. Czech technology firm InoWatti and Aggreko Middle East signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during the event to jointly advance modular flare-gas-to-power projects in Oman, targeting remote and smaller oilfield operations where permanent infrastructure is often uneconomical.

The agreement comes as Oman accelerates efforts to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency under Oman Vision 2040, while maintaining the competitiveness of its oil and gas sector.

Under the arrangement, Aggreko will provide gas-to-power generation systems and engineered energy solutions, while InoWatti will lead commercial development, including identifying suitable sites, engaging operators and integrating mobile high-performance computing (HPC) infrastructure.

The partners said the initiative is designed for flare-gas environments where pipeline connections or processing facilities are not commercially viable, particularly in early-stage production sites, remote oilfields and locations with



Flare-gas utilisation remains one of the key operational and environmental challenges facing oil producers globally.

intermittent gas streams. In an interview with the Observer, Alex Pilar, Chairman of the Board of InoWatti, said the Sultanate of Oman has become a key focus market for the company because of its mature energy industry and long-term sustainability ambitions.

“Oman combines several factors that make it highly relevant for our business: a mature oil and gas sector, a clear commitment to environmental progress and a business culture built on long-term relationships”, Pilar said.

He noted that InoWatti has spent nearly two years building local relationships and establishing a fully owned subsidiary in Oman as part of its long-term strategy in the country.

Industry experts say flare-gas utilisation remains one of the key operational and environmental challenges

facing oil producers globally. Associated gas produced alongside oil is often burned off in remote fields due to the high cost of transportation and processing infrastructure.

Jakub Hlavenka, CEO of InoWatti, said the company’s model focuses on mobility and flexibility rather than large fixed infrastructure.

“The problem is routine flaring of associated gas. In many oil fields, especially smaller or remote locations, gas is produced together with oil, but there is no economically viable infrastructure to use it”, Hlavenka said.

“Our approach is different because we combine modular gas-to-power systems, mobile HPC data centres and modular power distribution infrastructure that can be deployed directly at the field and relocated later if conditions change”, he added.

According to Hlavenka, the approach creates an additional revenue layer by converting previously wasted gas into productive energy, improving the economics of flare reduction projects in areas where conventional infrastructure would not normally be justified.

Pilar argued that the success of flare reduction initiatives depends on creating commercially viable business models rather than relying solely on regulation or penalties.

“Our view is simple: flare elimination must create value. When operators can generate economic returns from gas that was previously wasted, adoption becomes scalable and commercially rational”, he said.

The MoU also reflects increasing interest in modular and deployable energy solutions within Oman’s upstream sector, particularly as operators seek to balance decarbonisation targets with cost efficiency.

James Smith, Business Development Manager for Projects & Gas at Aggreko Middle East, said the collaboration would support operators looking for practical flare-reduction solutions.

“By pairing Aggreko’s gas-to-power capabilities with InoWatti’s commercial and flexible computing infrastructure, we see a clear opportunity to turn previously wasted gas into productive power”, Smith said.

Hlavenka said Oman is particularly suited for mobile flare-gas utilisation projects because of the presence of smaller and evolving production sites that may not justify large permanent infrastructure in their early stages.

Five years on, MSX reshapes market growth in Oman

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 20

At a time when global financial centres are redefining their roles and reshaping market structures, Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has emerged as one of the most notable transformation stories within Oman’s capital market sector in recent years, following its transition in 2021 into a company owned by the Oman Investment Authority (OIA).

That transition reflected a broader strategic direction aimed at positioning MSX to play a more influential role in supporting economic growth, attracting investment and advancing Oman’s diversification agenda.

It also marked the Exchange’s evolution from a conventional trading platform into a more agile, efficient and market-driven financial institution.



Officials attending MSX’s celebration of five years since its transition from a conventional trading platform into a market-driven financial institution.

Marking five years since the transformation, MSX hosted a special ceremony highlighting the key milestones and achievements that have shaped its evolution under the new corporate model and the role this transition has

played in strengthening operational efficiency, enhancing market attractiveness and reinforcing MSX’s regional and international standing as a more competitive and globally connected marketplace. Mohammed bin Mahfoudh al

Ardhi, Chairman of MSX, stated, “The transformation into a company owned by the OIA granted MSX greater flexibility in developing the market and accelerating the implementation of strategic initiatives, while contributing to building a more efficient investment environment capable of adapting to rapid economic and investment changes.

“The progress achieved in recent years was reflected not only in stronger market performance and higher market capitalisation, but also in building a deeper and more sustainable market ecosystem based on enhancing confidence, improving market efficiency and expanding investment opportunities in a way that strengthens the role of the capital market in supporting economic development and diversification”.

Over the past five years,

MSX has gradually expanded its role beyond the traditional function of managing trading activity, adopting a broader market development approach focused on enhancing liquidity, deepening investor participation, expanding investment products and strengthening the competitiveness of the Omani market within the regional financial landscape.

Financial indicators underscore the scale of this transformation. Market capitalisation increased from approximately RO 22 billion at the end of 2021 to more than RO 32 billion in 2025, representing growth of over 45%.

The increase reflects a combination of factors, including stronger performance among listed companies, rising investor confidence and significant improvements in Oman’s economic and investment environment.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Samsung strike looms large



Around 48,000 workers at Samsung Electronics are expected to begin an 18-day strike on Thursday after negotiations over bonus payments failed to produce a final agreement.

The walkout could disrupt production and affect global chip supplies. Talks resumed under mediation, with union leaders saying efforts to reach a settlement would continue despite plans for industrial action. — Reuters

MONETARY POLICY

China keeps rates steady



China left its benchmark loan prime rates unchanged, maintaining the one-year rate at 3 per cent and the five-year rate at 3.5 per cent.

The People’s Bank of China said lending costs remain low, with average corporate and housing loan rates declining. Authorities signalled support through proactive fiscal measures and a moderately accommodative monetary policy in 2026. — ONA

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

UNCTAD warns on global risks



UNCTAD warned that geopolitical tensions are becoming the main source of instability for the global economy, forecasting world growth to slow to 2.6 per cent in 2026. The agency cited rising energy costs, trade disruptions and market volatility as major concerns, particularly for developing economies facing inflation, tighter financing conditions and increasing pressure on food systems. — ONA

OPINION

Domestic pharma capacity can help keep drug prices competitive



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MANY comments and social media posts have highlighted the high prices of medicines in the country compared to neighbouring states, as this represents a significant financial burden for many patients and low-income families.

At the same time, some people direct their concerns to government officials, while others raise the issue on social media, encouraging people, whenever possible, to purchase medicines from certain countries in the region through travellers or tourists. In some cases, prices abroad may be only 20% of those in the local market.

For example, some medicines sold locally for RO 30 may reportedly be available in Türkiye for around RO 2.5. Such examples are frequently cited in public discussions, with calls for the relevant authorities to give greater attention to this issue, given that medicine is an essential humanitarian necessity for patients.

People are also urging the concerned authorities to review medicine pricing policies and monitor pharmacies to ensure that prices are not increased excessively.

They further stress the importance of sourcing medicines from countries that produce equivalent pharmaceutical products, such as India, Türkiye and Iran, where lower-cost alternatives are available, enabling patients to access treatment at more

affordable prices.

Drug prices in the Sultanate of Oman are relatively high because most medicines are imported from abroad. This is also the case across the Gulf region, where the majority of medicines are sourced from Europe, the United States, Japan and other countries.

Whenever global prices rise due to inflation, higher energy costs, shipping expenses, or increases in raw material prices, these increases are directly reflected in local markets. It is important to note that many of the active pharmaceutical ingredients used in medicine manufacturing originate from countries such as China and India. As a result, any disruption in supply chains, fluctuations in oil prices, or increases in maritime transportation costs can contribute to higher global medicine prices.

Another factor contributing to higher medicine prices is the relatively small size of the Omani market compared to larger importing countries, which affects economies of scale and increases the unit cost of medicines.

In addition, some patients require original patented medicines protected under international intellectual property rights for many years due to the extensive scientific research, clinical trials and development costs incurred by pharmaceutical companies.

This results in significant price differences between branded medicines and generic

It is important to note that many of the active pharmaceutical ingredients used in medicine manufacturing originate from countries such as China and India. As a result, any disruption in supply chains, fluctuations in oil prices, or increases in maritime transportation costs can contribute to higher global medicine prices.

alternatives produced in other countries.

In general, global pharmaceutical markets are influenced by several factors, including exchange rates, oil prices, shipping costs, raw material prices and global inflation, all of which affect importing countries.

Some people believe that medicines imported from countries such as India, Türkiye and Iran offer equivalent therapeutic effectiveness and are not necessarily of lower quality than those produced in European countries. These medicines are officially registered, subject to regulatory oversight and manufactured in approved facilities.

In fact, pharmaceutical manufacturers in some of these countries have advanced considerably and their products now offer high quality at competitive prices compared to medicines produced in Europe and the US.

Their lower prices are often attributed to lower labour costs, large-scale production, government support, sizeable domestic markets and lower taxation.

More broadly, the Omani and Gulf markets need to strengthen local pharmaceutical production by expanding domestic manufacturing capabilities and supporting scientific research in the pharmaceutical and medical industries. Such efforts could help transform the region into a hub for pharmaceutical production while promoting greater regional integration in these strategic sectors.

CHINA’S OUTBOUND
M&A SPREE HAS
STAYING POWER

KA SING CHAN

Chinese acquirers are staying under the radar. Buyers led by the \$50 billion miner, Zijin Gold, have pushed outbound M&A deals to a five-year high. That’s well below values seen in 2016, when a raft of high-profile takeovers prompted a backlash by Beijing.

Even so, today’s less flashy deals, many tied to the government’s strategic priorities in energy and supply chain security, look more sustainable.

Overseas purchases by Chinese firms hit \$9.6 billion in the first quarter of 2026, according to research group Rhodium, the highest since early 2021 and up for a fifth straight quarter. Mining and energy led the surge: Zijin’s \$4 billion takeover of Canada’s Allied Gold in January is the largest so far this year.

The current boom is a far cry from a decade ago, when the likes of Anbang, HNA and Dalian Wanda splashed out more than \$200 billion for mostly trophy assets, from New York’s iconic Waldorf Astoria hotel to Italy’s Inter Milan football club.

At the time, those companies were hoping to extend their global reach to match the country’s rising

economic clout. But regulators soon cracked down amidst concerns over debt and capital flight.

Both Anbang and HNA have since undergone massive bankruptcy and restructuring. Zijin and peers are on firmer footing today.

They are helping Beijing channel capital towards strategic sectors aligned with national priorities in supply chain and energy security.

It echoes attempts by state-backed giants such as the Aluminium Corporation of China, in the 2000s to acquire natural-resource assets, including high-profile bids for companies like Rio Tinto.

Geopolitics, though, will make it tricky to hunt for large targets in developed markets, with Washington and other Western governments stepping up scrutiny of capital from the People’s Republic. The bulk of China’s first-quarter transactions were in Asia and Africa, per Rhodium.

That may not matter too much. Momentum is building thanks to China’s flagship overseas infrastructure and trade programme known as the Belt and Road Initiative. Non-financial investment in those mostly developing countries, which includes outbound M&A, has more than doubled since 2020 to nearly \$40 billion last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Deals such as Geo-Jade Petroleum’s \$3.9 billion investment in Kazakhstan’s Sozak gas project and CHN Energy’s \$1.1 billion partnership to develop wind and solar farms in the same country underscore the shift. — Reuters

Groups warn against
axing red tape watchdog

SOME of UK’s largest business groups have urged the business secretary not to scrap a body responsible for scrutinising business regulation, saying it plays a “fundamental” role evaluating the impact of red tape on British firms.

The intervention comes as the Department for Business confirmed that ministers are “considering the role” of the watchdog.

In a rare joint intervention, a group of eight industry bodies, including all of the so-called ‘Big Five’, wrote to Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade and President of the Board of Trade, to warn against any move to abolish the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) after reports emerged that it may be axed as part of the government’s deregulation drive.

“We view the RPC as a vital component of the UK’s legislative architecture, providing independent security of the impact assessments which should accompany most government legislation”, the industry chiefs wrote.

“Whilst the findings are not always comfortable reading for the governments of all colours, the RPC’s role as an objective arbitrator is fundamental to the government’s regulation framework”.

The RPC was established in 2009 to scrutinise government regulation, providing an independent view on the feasibility of the so-called regulatory impact assessments compiled by civil servants alongside any new regulation.

It evaluates the quality of analysis underpinning the assessments, giving each document a ‘red’ or ‘green’ rating, as well as a set of quality indicators ranging from ‘good’ to ‘very weak’.

But ministers are mulling whether to axe the arms-length body as they examine ways to realise Keir Starmer’s ambition for a “complete rewiring of the British state”, amidst concerns the Prime Minister is struggling to push through his policy agenda.

He used a speech recently to rail against a “cottage industry of



A drone view of London’s Canary Wharf financial district, in London, Britain. — Reuters



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But in a robust defence of the RPC, the group of industry chiefs warned the government against making the RPC a casualty of the drive, saying it “performs its role at minimal cost and on an advisory only basis”.

checkers and blockers” who were using taxpayer money to stop ministers delivering on taxpayer priorities.

“People join civil service because they want to serve their country by delivering change”, he told staff at the consumer giant Rickett. “Yet somehow — we take that energy, that pride, that patriotism and we misdirect it into blocking. Well, that’s got to end”.

But in a robust defence of the RPC, the group of industry chiefs warned the government against making the RPC a casualty of the drive, saying it “performs its role at minimal cost and on an advisory only basis”.

The business groups’ letter also urged minister to clarify their intentions amidst concerns departments would be able to mark their own homework on the ramifications of a new policy.

Their concerns were echoed by shadow business secretary Andrew Griffith, who equated any move to abolish the RPC as akin to “the Chancellor scrapping the Office for Budget Responsibility”.

He said that red tape was strangling British business. A survey from the Federation of Small

Businesses has found small firms and entrepreneurs collectively spend 379 million hours a year complying with regulations. And there has been no shortage of effort from the government to increase that burden.

But now, ministers are turning their sights towards the watchdog whose job is to ask of all new regulation, “At what cost?”

Reports that the department for business and trade is considering scrapping the Regulatory Policy Committee are deeply concerning, he said.

“The RPC is the independent group tasked with calculating the true cost of regulation to the UK economy and assessing whether the government impact assessments — their own scorecards — are up to scratch”.

Griffith further said that the RPC is a lean body that works hard to ensure the costs and administrative burdens imposed on businesses are accurately measured and transparently reported to Parliament before they become law. Without RPC there will be no independent body to hold lawmakers to account if they decide to introduce new red tape.

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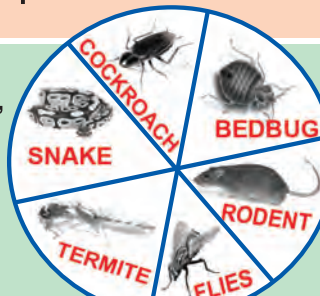
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> 20

CHANGING WORLD

SAFE JOURNEY TO ALL HAJ PILGRIMS!



SHADDAD AL MUSALMY
The writer is a Senior Editor at Oman Daily Observer

As the summer heat beats down on us, there are many individuals who are preparing to embark on a journey of a lifetime — the Haj pilgrimage.

This year, amidst the scorching temperatures, these pilgrims are gearing up for a spiritual experience like no other. For those who are not familiar, Haj is the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, which all Muslims who are physically and financially able are required to undertake at least once in their lifetime.

It is a time of reflection, prayer and unity with fellow believers from around the world. The summer heat can be relentless, but for those going

for Haj, it is seen as a test of their faith and endurance.

The days of Haj are filled with prayer, reflection and acts of devotion. Pilgrims perform the Tawaf, circling the Kaaba seven times and the Sa'i, running between the hills of Safa and Marwa.

Despite the physical discomfort, there is a sense of excitement and anticipation among the pilgrims. The atmosphere is charged with emotion as they prepare to leave their homes and loved ones behind, knowing that they are about to embark on a journey that will bring them closer to their Creator.

The journey itself is not an easy one.

Pilgrims must endure long hours of travel, crowded accommodations and the physical demands of performing the rituals of Haj. But through it all, they are sustained by their faith and the knowledge that they are fulfilling one of the five pillars of Islam. As they make their way to Mecca, the pilgrims are filled with a sense of awe and wonder at the sight of the Kaaba, the sacred black cube at the centre of the Grand Mosque.

It is a moment of spiritual significance, as they stand before the symbol of unity and submission to God. The days of Haj are filled with prayer, reflection and acts of devotion.

Pilgrims perform the Tawaf, circling the Kaaba seven times and the Sa'i, running between the hills of Safa and Marwa.

They also spend a day in prayer on the plains of Arafat, seeking forgiveness and guidance from Allah.

Despite the challenges and hardships, the pilgrims find solace in the knowledge that they are part of a larger community of believers, all united in their faith and their commitment to fulfilling the rites of Haj. And as they return home, they carry with them a sense of peace and fulfilment, knowing that they have completed a journey that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

So as we go about our daily lives, let us take a moment to remember those who are on their way to Mecca, braving the summer heat in pursuit of spiritual fulfilment.

Let us pray for their safe travels and for their success in completing this sacred journey.

And let us be inspired by their dedication and faith, knowing that their example serves as a reminder of the power of belief and the strength that comes from unity in worship.

QUICK FEATURES



ARCHITECTURE

An old car drives past the University of Havana. Today, practical degrees such as architecture and design are surviving amidst blackouts, shortages and slashed programmes. — **AFP**



CINEMA

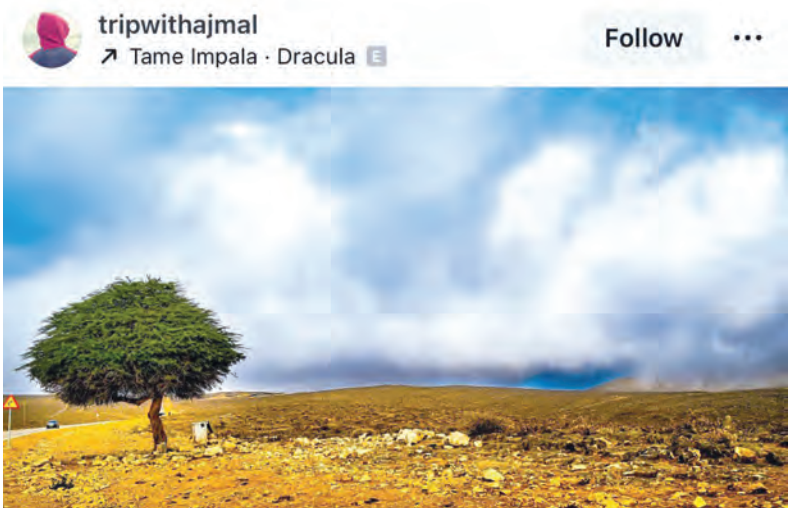
French director Yvo Muller poses during a photocall of the film "L'Affaire Marie-Claire" at the 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes. — **AFP**



PET FASHION

Chanel, a Maltese dressed as Australian-US actress Nicole Kidman, poses during the 2026 Pet Gala at CINEPLAY in New York. — **AFP**

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JACKSON POLLOCK WORK SELLS FOR \$181M



A Jackson Pollock painting sold for a record \$181.2 million on Monday at Christie's in New York, leading a blockbuster day at the auction house.

With its black drips of paint accented by touches of red on a huge canvas spanning over three meters (nine feet), Pollock's "Number 7A, 1948" sold for \$181.2 million, including fees.

According to ARTnews, the sale makes it the fourth most expensive work ever sold at auction.

The previous auction record for the abstract expressionist painter was \$61.2 million, set in 2021. Other works by him have been sold privately for up to \$200 million.

"It is with this work that Pollock finally frees himself from the shackles of conventional easel painting and produces one of the first truly abstract paintings in the history of art", Christie's said in a statement.

"Danaide", a bronze head sculpted around 1913 by Romanian-born artist Constantin Brancusi, sold for \$107.6 million, topping its previous record of \$71.2 million set in 2018.

"No 15 (Two Greens and Red Stripe)" by American painter Mark Rothko sold for \$98.4 million, while Catalan artist Joan Miro's "Portrait of Madame K" was bought for \$53.5 million.

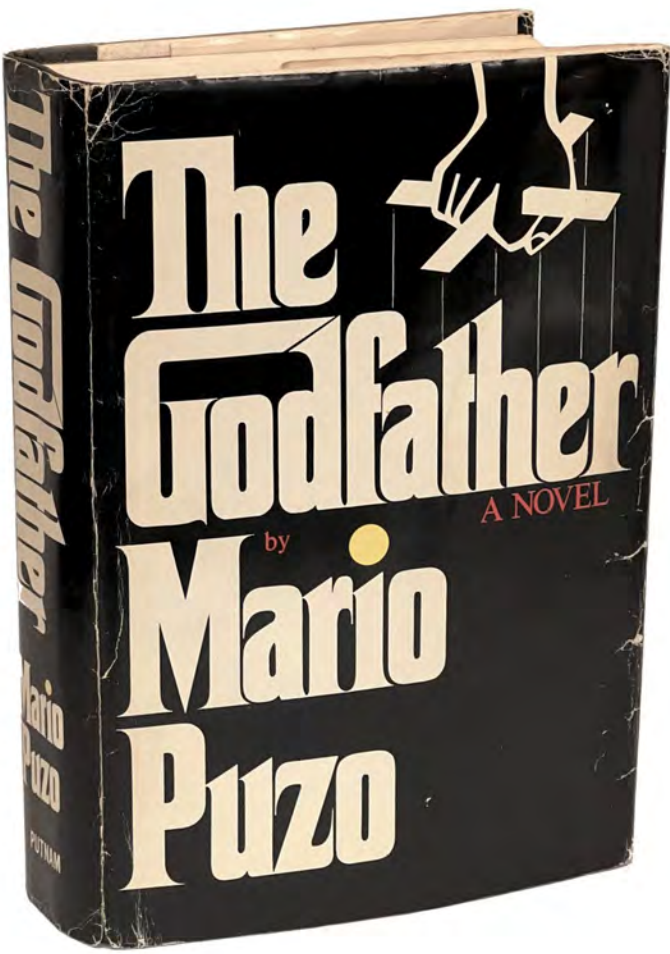
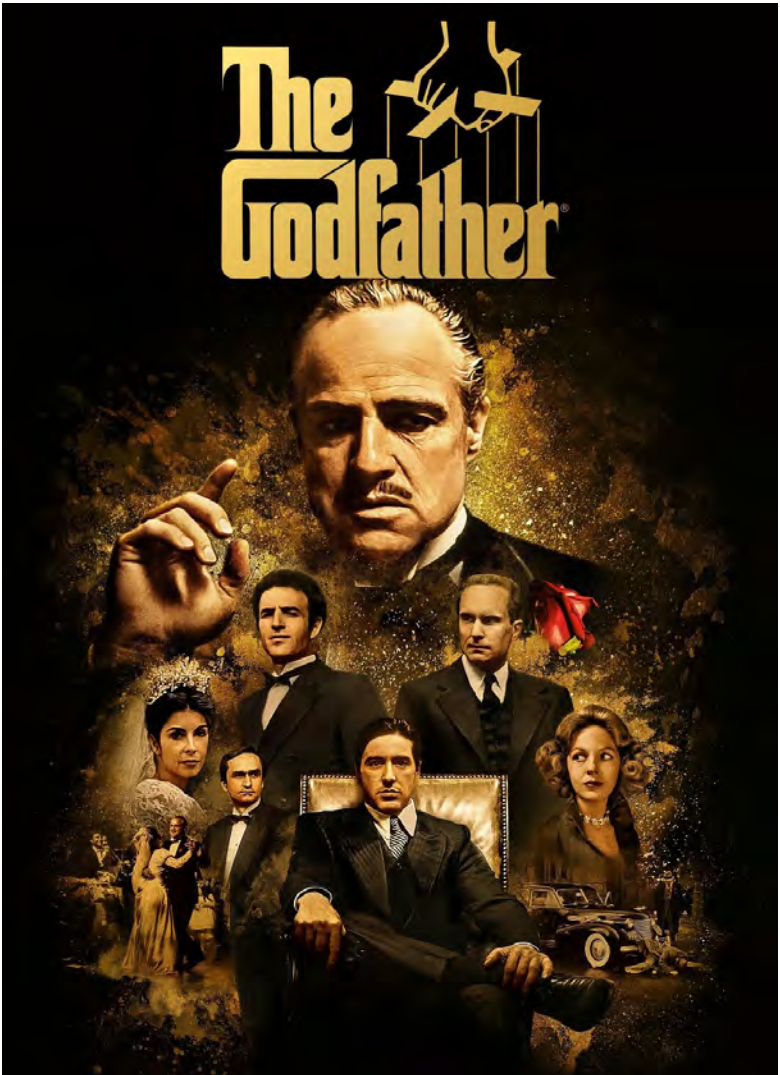
The sales smashed previous records for Rothko (\$86.9 million) and Miro (\$37 million) set in 2012.

Monday's eye-watering auction follows a string of records set at Sotheby's in November last year.

Austrian master Gustav Klimt's "Portrait of Elisabeth Lederer", which he painted between 1914 and 1916, sold for \$236.4 million, becoming the second most expensive work ever sold at auction.

"The Dream (The Bed)" (1940), a self-portrait by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, sold for \$54.7 million, setting a record for the price of a painting by a woman.

The most expensive painting ever sold at auction remains the "Salvator Mundi", (Savior of the World), a Renaissance work attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, which was bought for \$450 million in 2017. — AFP



‘GODFATHER’ RETOLD THROUGH WOMEN’S EYES

A new novel in “The Godfather” literary saga is set for publication in the fall of 2027, the first written by a woman, who will tell the story of the Corleone mafia family from the perspective of its women.

Publisher Random House has acquired the rights to the book, titled “Connie”, written by bestselling author Adriana Trigiani, she announced in a post on Facebook on Wednesday.

Connie is the only daughter of Vito Corleone, the fictional mafia patriarch and father of his eventual successor, Michael Corleone.

The new book will be the fourth authorised by the family of Mario Puzo, the author of the original novel, since his death in 1999.

Earlier additions to the saga included “The Godfather Returns” (2004) and “The Godfather’s Revenge” (2006), which continued the chronology of the original books.

The series also includes “The Family Corleone” (2012), a standalone prequel set during the Great Depression, years before the events of “The Godfather”.

“I enter Mario’s world and we’re telling it through the women of The Godfather”, Trigiani, who has Italian roots, said on Facebook.

Random House did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment, but the publisher has confirmed the book deal to several US media outlets.

“The Godfather is a page turner”, Trigiani wrote, “but when I searched for the matriarch, she was sorely missing”.



Best-selling author Adriana Trigiani is writing a new Godfather book titled Connie. Authorised by the Mario Puzo estate, the novel will be told from the perspective of Don Vito Corleone’s daughter.

“The Godfather is a page turner”, Trigiani maintains, “but when I searched for the matriarch, she was sorely missing”.

Anthony Puzo, Mario Puzo’s son, told Publishers Weekly: “We had been looking for someone to retell the story from a new perspective”.

Anthony Puzo, who oversees his father’s literary estate, said Trigiani was astonished to learn that the character of Vito, the formidable Corleone family patriarch, was inspired by his grandmother.

Foreign rights have already been sold in eight countries, including France and Germany.

Published in 1969, the first novel in the saga, “The Godfather”, sold 21 million copies.

It was adapted into two films by Francis Ford Coppola — “The Godfather” (1972) and “The



Godfather Part II” (1974), which together won nine Oscars.

A third film, “The Godfather Part III” (1990), was based on an original screenplay.

In 1984, Mario Puzo published “The Sicilian”, which is not a sequel to “The Godfather”, but a standalone narrative about the Sicilian hero Salvatore Giuliano. — AFP

SPRING JOURNEY: A CULTURAL PATH THROUGH MUSCAT’S LIVING HERITAGE



IDRIS AL BALUSHI

WHERE salt-laden air from the Gulf slips through stone corridors and the old forts still hold the warmth of centuries in their walls, “Spring Journey” unfolded as a four-day cultural experience that reimagined the city’s ancient forts as living spaces of art, storytelling and sensory discovery. From May 6 to 9, 2026, between 4 pm and 9 pm, three heritage sites across the capital were transformed into interconnected stations of reflection, each interpreting spring not just as a season, but as a metaphor for renewal, imagination and collective memory.

At the centre of the experience stood a curated dialogue between nature, creativity and place, where exhibitions, workshops and performances invited visitors to move through Muscat’s history with fresh eyes.

AT AL BAIT AL SHARQI, the exhibition “Bloom” became a living garden of scent and texture. It guided visitors through Oman’s botanical heritage and its deep ties to traditional perfumery. Works by floral artist Suhaila al Harthy of Robinia Flowers traced the journey of mountain roses from Al Jabal Al Akhdhar into contemporary artistic expression. The space felt intimate and immersive, layered with fragrance, memory and craft.

Alongside the exhibition, workshops curated by Mezrad encouraged hands-on engagement, while Mesa introduced a seasonal ice cream tasting experience inspired by Omani spring landscapes, blending taste with narrative in unexpected ways.

AT MUTTRAH FORT, “Open Air” took off with stone ramparts overlooking the sea and posing a stage for cultural encounter. The fort hosted live demonstrations of traditional Omani falconry, reconnecting audiences with one of the region’s oldest ecological and hunting traditions. Against the wide horizon of Muttrah’s coastline, the birds moved with precision and silence, echoing a heritage shaped by patience, balance and deep reading of nature.



AT AL MIRANI FORT, the experience of “Observe” shifted into a collective archive of visual storytelling. Three parallel exhibitions turned the fortress into a hub of contemporary expression, a photography competition showcasing winning works and shortlisted entries, a digital art exhibition featuring emerging visual voices and a community project titled “Spring as We Imagined It”, created in collaboration with Al Zahra’a School in Old Muscat. More than 40 paintings by young students filled the fort’s interior with bold, unfiltered interpretations of spring, turning childhood imagination into a public visual narrative.

For Omani artist Hussain al Ghamlasi, who worked closely behind the scenes, the experience carried both artistic and personal weight. He described “Spring Journey” as a surreal and extraordinary experience, where flowers became emotional language and artistic collaboration formed the true heartbeat of the event. He emphasised the importance of the creative community supporting one another, noting that the initiative aimed to become a long-term cultural platform hosting regular workshops and exhibitions. For him, the most striking aspect was not only the quality of the artworks, but the shared commitment among artists to shape something larger than individual practice.

For visitor Fatma al Zadjali, the experience at Bait Al Sharqi lingered like a memory painted in colour and light. She described the exhibition as surpassing expectations, where floral installations and artistic works blended seamlessly with the fort’s calm blue and white tones. Walking through the space, she felt as though the architecture itself had softened into the artwork, walls reflecting petals, light dissolving into scent. The atmosphere, she noted, carried a quiet enchantment, where every corner seemed designed not just to be seen, but to be felt.

“Spring Journey” ultimately stitched together three historical landmarks, multiple artistic languages and countless personal encounters into one continuous narrative, where Muscat itself became both gallery and storyteller.