

OMAN, BELARUS TO DEEPEN BILATERAL RELATIONS

H M R E T U R N S H O M E F R O M 2 - D A Y S T A T E V I S I T T O B E L A R U S



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has returned home, following a two-day state visit to the Republic of Belarus. The visit was made in response to an invitation by President Alexander Lukashenko of the Republic of Belarus. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan and grant him success for the good of his homeland and people.

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK concluded the two-day state visit to the Republic of Belarus on Tuesday. President Alexander Lukashenko of the Republic of Belarus led the farewell party for His Majesty the Sultan at Minsk International Airport. His Majesty the Sultan was also seen off by Viktor Karankevich, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, Maxim Ryzhenkov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, and some senior Belarusian officials.

Earlier, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Alexander Lukashenko have emphasised the importance of developing cooperation in the fields of education and culture to deepen bilateral relations and bring the peoples of the two countries closer. They noted that the joint industrial cooperation projects currently under development will positively impact the growth of bilateral economic relations.

This was stated in a joint communiqué issued on the occasion of the state visit made by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Republic of Belarus on October 6-7. The full text of the communiqué reads as follows: “At the invitation of President Alexander Lukashenko of the Republic of Belarus, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik paid a state visit to the Republic of Belarus. In an atmosphere of trust, friendship and mutual understanding, the two leaders expressed their determination to work together to enhance and develop cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic

of Belarus, and discussed some international and regional issues of common interest.

The two leaders discussed the progress made in implementing the agreements reached during the high-level mutual visits in 2024 and 2025 in the fields of food security, agriculture, industry, logistics, healthcare, tourism and culture.

BILATERAL TRADE
Both sides appreciated the efforts of all relevant entities to increase bilateral trade and expand the scope of supplying Belarusian food products, industrial machinery, pharmaceuticals, veterinary medicines, and other goods to Oman, as well as Omani products of interest to Belarus. The two leaders welcomed the bilateral efforts to implement joint projects in the field of infant formula and dairy products, as well as the assembly of machinery in the Sultanate of Oman. His Majesty the Sultan and the President of Belarus agreed that the joint industrial cooperation projects currently under development will positively impact the growth of bilateral economic relations, given the logistical potential of Oman and the benefits the country gains from infrastructure modernisation.

INVESTMENTS
They affirmed their readiness to expand investment cooperation between the two countries in agriculture, the information technology sector, furniture, and pulp and paper production.

TURN TO P4

Omani citizen from global flotilla freed

MUSCAT: Within the context of efforts undertaken by the Foreign Ministry in cooperation with its regional partners, the Omani citizen who participated in the Global Sumud Flotilla and was detained by the Israeli occupation authorities has been released, in preparation for her repatriation.

The ministry expressed its gratitude to the Kingdom of Jordan and other nations that contributed to the success of this humanitarian effort.

Meanwhile, Hamas said on Tuesday it wants to reach a deal to end the war in Gaza based on US President



A freed member of the European Parliament and others who were sailing aboard vessels from the Gaza-bound aid flotilla at the arrivals area of Orly airport, on the outskirts of Paris. — AFP

Trump’s plan but still has a set of demands, a statement signalling that indirect talks with Israel in Egypt could

be difficult and lengthy. Senior Hamas official Fawzi Barhoum set out the group’s position one day after the indirect negotiations began in Sharm el Sheikh.

The talks appear the most promising yet for ending a war that has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and devastated Gaza since the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

But officials on all sides urged caution over the prospects for a rapid agreement.

“The movement’s delegation participating in the current negotiations in Egypt is working to overcome all obstacles to reaching an agreement that meets the aspirations of our people in Gaza,” Barhoum said in a televised statement.

— Agencies



RO 22M PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN SULTAN HAITHAM CITY

A development agreement was signed on Tuesday for the establishment of a private hospital in the Al Wafa Neighbourhood of Sultan Haitham City. The agreement, inked with Al Siyabi Global Group as the developer, was formalised during the Home and Building Expo, focusing on urban development and architecture, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The RO 22 million healthcare project will be developed on a 33,000-square-metre site, with construction expected to take three to four years to complete.

OMAN AND BELARUS ENTER NEW



HIS Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik left the Republic of Belarus on Tuesday, following a two-day state visit.

President Alexander Lukashenko of the Republic of Belarus led the farewell party for His Majesty the Sultan at Minsk International Airport.

His Majesty the Sultan was also seen off by Viktor Karankevich,

Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, Maxim Ryzhenkov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, and some senior Belarusian officials.

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

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

His Majesty lauded the outcomes of his meeting with the Belarusian President, as it was an opportunity to enhance areas of cooperation, promote the advanced relations and opening new vistas for partnership and investment in a manner that serves the joint interests. His Majesty the Sultan wished President Lukashenko success to achieve further aspirations of progress and prosperity for the Belarusian people.

His Majesty the Sultan was accompanied during the visit by a high-ranking official delegation that comprised HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Dr Hamed bin Said al

Aufi, Head of Private Office of His Majesty the Sultan, Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Hamoud bin Salim al Tuwaih, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation and Non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus. — ONA



CHAPTER TO BOOST RELATIONS

HM visits military history museum in Minsk



MINSK: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik visited the State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on Tuesday. His Majesty the Sultan was received upon arrival by a number of Belarusian officials. His Majesty toured the museum's sections, artefacts and exhibits, and received a comprehensive briefing on the historical events that the Republic of Belarus has experienced. The State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War is considered one of the prominent military museums in Europe, housing numerous artefacts, documents, weapons and interactive exhibits. At the conclusion of the visit, His Majesty the Sultan signed the Senior Visitors Book. — ONA



HIS MAJESTY VISITS VICTORY SQUARE



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday visited Victory Square in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, as part of his state visit to the Republic of Belarus. His Majesty the Sultan was received upon arrival by Vladimir Kucharev, Mayor of Minsk. During the visit, His Majesty placed a wreath of flowers. The Victory Square in Minsk is considered one of the most prominent historical and cultural landmarks in the Republic of Belarus. — ONA



OMAN

SHORT TAKES

OMAN, BELARUS TO DEEPEN BILATERAL RELATIONS

FROM P1
The two sides lauded the signing of an agreement to establish a Joint Committee for Cooperation and Investment in May 2025 and expressed their interest in launching it in the near future to coordinate joint work between Omani and Belarusian entities in implementing bilateral agreements. The two leaders emphasised the importance of the direct flight programme on the Minsk-Salalah-Minsk route, launched in February 2025, and expressed the determination of both countries to work together to increase mutual tourist flows.

They also underlined the importance of developing cooperation in education and culture to deepen bilateral relations and bring the peoples of the two countries closer.

Furthermore, they emphasised the importance of developing direct communication between business sectors, mutual participation in exhibitions and markets, organising national exhibitions in Oman and Belarus, and cultural exchange. In this regard, they welcomed the signing of the mutual visa waiver agreement.

The two leaders noted the importance of establishing a solid legal foundation to continue developing Omani-Belarusian relations in all fields and welcomed the signing of bilateral documents on the sidelines of the visit.

GLOBAL ISSUES
They agreed that the governments of the two countries, along with relevant ministries and organisations, would develop and implement the necessary practical programmes and action plans in accordance with the objectives and principles of this joint communiqué.

The two sides affirmed their shared stances on major global and regional issues, stressed the necessity of compliance with the United Nations Charter and international law, and expressed their readiness for close cooperation within international organisations and to make joint efforts to promote a multipolar, just, and equitable international political and economic system. They also condemned the use of coercive measures and unilateral sanctions.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and invited the President of the Republic of Belarus to visit the Sultanate of Oman.” — ONA

Sayyid Shihab, Belarusian Deputy PM discuss ties

MINSK: HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, held a bilateral meeting on Tuesday with Viktor Karankevich, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, at the Belarusian Council of Ministers.

The meeting was attended by a number of officials from both sides, and took place within the framework of the state visit paid by



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Republic of Belarus. During the meeting, the two sides discussed further opportunities for cooperation and investment. Both emphasised the commitment of their countries’ leaderships to advancing partnerships and investments in several areas, in a manner that serves the aspirations of the two nations. — ONA

Oman, Belarus strengthen investment cooperation

SEVERAL OMANI and Belarusian officials reviewed prospects for developing bilateral relations and enhancing economic and investment cooperation between the two friendly countries during a meeting held on Tuesday.

The meeting took place within the context of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik’s state visit to the Republic of Belarus.

The Omani side at the meeting was headed by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

During the meeting, the two sides explored potential areas of economic cooperation and discussed ways to develop trade exchange and stimulate joint investments in a number of priority sectors, particularly in manufacturing, technology, marketing and food security, in a manner that reflects the approaches of both countries towards a strategic partnership based on common interests and economic integration.

Al Yousef emphasised during the meeting Oman’s keenness, under the leadership of His Majesty the Sultan, to strengthen its economic relations with friendly countries. He explained that Oman continues its efforts to enhance the business environment and provide flexible investment incentives to achieve economic diversification and attract qualitative



Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef led the Omani side at the meeting. — ONA

investments. On their turn, the Belarusian ministers affirmed the interest of the Belarusian government and private sector in advancing cooperation with Oman to higher levels through the exchange of delegations, organising joint economic events and activating institutional communication mechanisms between the relevant authorities in both countries. Mikalai Barysevich, Director-General of the National Centre for Marketing in Belarus, stated: “During the meeting, we discussed means of expanding Omani investments and touched upon several areas, including the industrial sector, the timber sector, automotive parts assembly and various other fields of mutual interest. Necessary steps were agreed upon by both sides to support these

investments.” He indicated that the National Centre for Marketing will exert all efforts to continue strengthening trade cooperation relations between the two countries. Dr Abdullah bin Masoud al Harthy, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Belarus to Oman, affirmed that the visit of His Majesty the Sultan to Belarus constitutes a historic milestone in the path of bilateral relations between the two countries. He stated: “The meeting that brought together the leadership of the two friendly countries has laid the foundation for a new phase of cooperation based on mutual trust and common interests in economic, investment and cultural aspects.” He pointed out that relations between Oman and Belarus have witnessed significant developments over the past two years, most notably President Lukashenko’s visit to the Omani capital, Muscat, in December 2024, the launch of direct flights between Minsk and Salalah in February 2025, the signing of an agreement to establish the Joint Committee for Cooperation and Investment in May 2025, alongside the mutual visa waiver agreement which contributes to revitalising tourism, cultural and medical exchange. Furthermore, the two sides are working to enhance cooperation through business forums and exchange of trade delegations in the fields of agriculture, industry, healthcare and information technology. — ONA



وزارة الإعلام
Ministry of Information



TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at Ministry of Information announces its Tender for the following works:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Class & Grade	Last Date For Collection	Submission Date	Purchase Fees (R.O.)
5/2025 (356/2025) at E-Tendering	Security Operations Project (SecOps)	Excellent	20/10/2025	16/11/2025	30/-
6/2025 (357/2025) at E-Tendering	Construction of a New FM Transmitting Station in Duqum (Civil Works)	Second Third	21/10/2025	16/11/2025	60/-

1. All specialized companies in the field of the tender shown above and are registered with the Tender Board to the degree indicated above, may obtain tender documents, against non-refundable fees, from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

2. Companies and institutions are exempted from providing a temporary insurance of 1% when submitting their bid, provided that they sign a document committing themselves to the submitted bid for a period determined when the bidding strategy is approved in accordance with the document attached to the Isnad platform. As for international companies that do not have a headquarters in the Sultanate of Oman, they are required to provide temporary insurance of 1%.

(For more information, please see the original circular issued by the Tender Board on the Isnaad platform.)

Note that the last date for accepting bids as mentioned above is before 10:00 am. Any bid received after the time and date mentioned in the submission date will be rejected automatically.

You are requested to provide 2 hard copies for your offer after the submission in Projects Department at Ministry of Information.

3. The Ministry has the right to:

1) Add or Cancell some works in the tender if necessary.

2) Cancellation of the tender without giving reasons.

For clarifications you may contact via:
Telephone: 24943785, 24943177, Email: (Moi.Tenders@omaninfo.om)

Over RO 100 million agreements signed for housing projects



The ceremony was presided over by Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals. — ONA

MUSCAT: Al Bandar Development Company has secured strategic partnerships exceeding RO 100 million in investment value through agreements signed with various local institutions and banks. The signings took place during the Home and Building Expo at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The ceremony was presided over by Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, with attendance from senior officials and stakeholders in real

estate development and investment sectors. Among the executed agreements, the company partnered with Oman Broadband Company to implement fibre optic infrastructure worth RO 3 million for its “Al Bandar” project in Al Mawaleh, the Wilayat of Al Seeb. The developer finalised financing agreements with multiple banking institutions - including Sohar International Bank, National Bank of Oman, Alizz Islamic Bank, Bank Muscat and

Bank Nizwa - to provide investment solutions for its “Al Masharef Villas” residential project in Al Qurum. The combined financing value surpasses RO 50 million, with project management and marketing assigned to Al Ufuq United Development. Further agreements include a RO 20-million partnership with eBinaa Professional Services to establish a dedicated sales and leasing platform, while Al Osool Group will handle residential unit management and

maintenance. A separate RO 3-million agreement with Artex Company will enhance the company’s digital marketing presence and platform management. The event also featured the launch of the company’s new visual identity, reflecting its commitment to creating secure, authentic and inspiring living environments that enhance quality of life while expanding investment opportunities. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister

Foreign Minister holds phone call with Egyptian counterpart

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, held a phone call with Dr Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration, and Egyptian Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Sayyid Badr expressed the sincere congratulations of the Sultanate of Oman to the election of Dr Khaled El Enany as Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the first Arab to assume this high international position.

He affirmed that this success reflects the distinguished scientific and cultural standing of Egypt and its pioneering role in supporting dialogue, peace, and promoting the values of tolerance and understanding among nations.

For his part, the Egyptian Minister expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for its support of the Egyptian candidate. He commended Oman's honourable stances and constant backing for Egypt in various regional and international forums, emphasising the ancient and strong fraternal relations that bind the two countries. — ONA

OAAA LISTS FIRST ARABIC LAW QUALIFICATION

MUSCAT: The Oman Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (OAAA) has officially listed the first qualification in law offered in the Arabic language — a pioneering step aimed at enhancing the outcomes of legal education in Oman.

The initiative comes in response to the directives of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and aligns with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. It marks a key milestone in implementing the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in Oman.

The Authority has completed the inclusion of the Bachelor of Law qualification awarded by Al Buraimi University College in the NQF.



Conducted in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework Guide issued in September 2023, the qualification has been placed at Level 8 of the

framework, with a total of 129 credit hours. All qualifications that successfully complete the listing or alignment process are registered in the National Qualifications Register — an official electronic database published on the Authority's website. The register includes all nationally recognised qualifications listed in or aligned with the framework. — ONA

Eco-road safety drive takes off in Al Batinah North

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, OCT 7

A series of national initiatives has been launched across Al Batinah North to promote environmental consciousness and foster a culture of responsible, eco-friendly driving.

The programmes aim to engage citizens of all ages in protecting both lives and natural resources while cultivating a sense of environmental responsibility.

Hajer al Ajmi, Chairperson of the Oman Road Safety Association, explained that the initiatives build on ongoing road safety programmes, sharing a unified vision of linking environmental protection with responsible driving. "Our initiatives show how environmental awareness can strengthen the culture of safety

'Green and Safe Road,' is a prime initiative which focuses on planting trees along roadsides and around schools to enhance air quality and reduce visual pollution

on the road," she said.

Among the standout initiatives is 'Green and Safe Road,' which focuses on planting trees along roadsides and around schools to enhance air quality and reduce visual pollution. This project operates within the 'Road Safety Heroes' programme, encouraging students to take part in environmental stewardship.

Meanwhile, 'Your Bike, Your Planet' promotes the use of bicycles and electric scooters as sustainable alternatives to cars. It is complemented by 'Your Safety' awareness sessions that educate riders on safe commuting practices.

Another key initiative, 'My Road, Clean Air,' introduces hands-on workshops on eco-driving techniques aimed at reducing fuel consumption and harmful

emissions. This forms part of the national campaign for women's preventive driving.

The 'Remove Harm from the Road' campaign focuses on collecting and recycling roadside waste, instilling civic responsibility and respect for public spaces under the broader 'Stop' programme.

Looking ahead, 'The Journey to the Future Begins Now' initiative raises awareness about child car seat safety through the 'A Seat for Every Child' campaign, while also promoting the benefits of electric and hybrid vehicles as sustainable transport options.

Furthermore, 'Smart Transport for a Clean Environment' features intelligent signboards that alert drivers to environmental risks such as flash floods and hazardous emissions.

OMAN, SAUDI BORDER AUTHORITIES HOLD MEETING



MUSCAT: The 17th meeting of First-Tier Border Authorities between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) was held on Tuesday in Muscat.

The meeting discussed topics of mutual interest and ways to enhance the existing cooperation in the field of border authorities between the two countries.

Representing the Sultanate of Oman at the meeting was Major General Abdullah bin Ali al Harthy, Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs for Operations. Representing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was Major General Shaya bin Salim al Wadaani, Director-General of Border Guards. — ONA



مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع
Muscat Clearing & Depository

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

NOTICE

With reference to **Tender Announcement No. CSD/2025/C002**, we would like to inform you that the bid submission period has been extended until **15 October 2025**.



غرفة تجارة وصناعة عُمان
OMAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
فرع محافظة الظاهرة

Announcement of Tender

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Al Dhahirah Governorate Branch would like to announce the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (non-Refundable)	Specialized Companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender Submission
01/2025	Organizing the promising opportunities forum	25 OMR	Companies specializing in managing & organizing conferences & exhibitions	15 OCT 2025	20 OCT 2025

Specialized companies can obtain the tender documents from the Administrative and Financial Affairs Department located on the Chamber's branch building in Al Dhahirah, Ibri, during official working hours after paying the tender fee.

Tender Terms:

- Submission of a commercial registration, Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry membership certificate and tax certificate. All required documents must be valid.
- Financial and technical bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to the Chairman of the Main Tender Committee at Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry - Al Dhahirah Branch, clearly stating the tender number and subject. The envelope must not display the name of the bidder or any indication thereof.
- A temporary guarantee must be included with the bid in the form of a bank guarantee or certified check amounting to 1% of the bid value, certified by one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, and valid for 90 days from the last submission date. The guarantee must be addressed to the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Please note that any bid that does not meet the temporary guarantee requirement will not be considered.
- Bids must be placed in the tender box located at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry branch building in Al Dhahirah, Ibri, Administrative and Financial Affairs Department.
- The Chamber is not obligated to accept the lowest bid and reserves the right to accept or reject bids without providing reasons.

The final date for submitting bids is before 12 PM on 20 OCT 2025.

For inquiries, please contact the following numbers: **99236048 / 91370662** or via email at **khadija.musalhi@omanchamber.om**

omanchamber

VVM-Sastra Pratibha Contest on Nov 8

MUSCAT: Science India Forum (SIF) Oman announced the launch of the VVM-Sastra Pratibha Contest (SPC) 2025-2026, a premier science talent search examination for Indian students in Oman.

This year, in association with NCERT, Ministry of Education, Government of India, and National Council for Science Museums (NCSM), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the contest has been revamped with new GCC Zonal and National levels in India, unlocking a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students to explore, experience, and excel in science and technology.

The Sastra Pratibha Contest is open to Indian students from classes 6 to 11. Participants will be tested through a two-tiered process: an online examination on November 8, 2025, followed by a Science Camp on January 23, 2026, for selected students.



محافظة مسقط
Muscat Governorate

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (38/2025)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to participate in the following Bids:

Sr.	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document Fee	Deadline for Purchase	Deadline for Inquires	Deadline for submission
1	5/2025 ReCall	Construction, implementation and operation of a Cafe on Plot No. (1542), Block (M/1) in Sur Al-Hadeed, Wilayat Al-Seeb.	25/- OMR	27/10/2025	03/11/2025	17/11/2025
2	6/2025 ReCall	Investment of Plot No. (590), Block (M/1), in the Al-Khoud area, Wilayat Al-Seeb, with an area of (16,279 m²).	35/- OMR	27/10/2025	03/11/2025	17/11/2025
3	7/2025 ReCall	Investment of Plot No. (787), Block (M/4), in the Al-Khoud area, Wilayat Al-Seeb, with an area of (80,000 m²).	90/- OMR	27/10/2025	03/11/2025	17/11/2025
4	8/2025 ReCall	Investment of Plot No. (2137) in the Bimmah area, Wilayat Quriyat, with an area of (3,373 m²).	25/- OMR	27/10/2025	03/11/2025	17/11/2025
5	13/2025	Investment of Plot No. (1022) located in Al Qurum area, Wilayat of Bousher	87/- OMR	27/10/2025	03/11/2025	17/11/2025
6	14/2025	Investment of the Cafe located at Al Ghubrah Lake Park	25/- OMR	27/10/2025	03/11/2025	17/11/2025
7	15/2025	Development of the Friday Market in Al Wadi Al Kabir area, Wilayat of Muttrah	40/- OMR	27/10/2025	03/11/2025	17/11/2025

Registered companies with Muscat Municipality which are Specialized in above bids are invited to participate as per the following procedures:

- Company registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid to obtain the bid document.
- Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:

Bank Muscat

0423010702710024
- A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (**SQ.QS@mm.gov.om**), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name,office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
- 2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.
- Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without any company information) and place in the box located in bulding (A) in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait.

NOTES:

- Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the municipality's website (**www.mm.gov.om**).
- For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (**crm@mm.gov.om**).
- If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to sent their inquiries through the following e-mail (**mais.h.alnofli@mm.gov.om**).
- 10:00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
- Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om

OMAN

SHORT TAKES

HM RECEIVES
THANKS CABLE FROM
CUSTODIAN OF TWO
HOLY MOSQUES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in response to His Majesty's cable of greetings to him on the occasion of the Kingdom's National Day. In the cable, King Salman expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to His Majesty. He also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity. — ONA



The unit provides a specialised environment for preparing sensitive intravenous medications.

NEW CENTRAL
INTRAVENOUS
ADMIXTURE UNIT

MUSCAT: The University Medical City inaugurated the Central Intravenous Admixture Unit (CIVA) at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital. This step reflects its commitment to raising the standards of pharmaceutical care and patient safety in line with best global practices, and its ability to turn strategic projects into practical reality that enhances the efficiency of the healthcare system. The unit represents a qualitative leap in pharmaceutical services and is an addition to developing the pharmacy service. Its requirements and outfitting were completed according to the highest international standards during a year of continuous work and effort, allowing it to begin providing its vital services to patients today. The unit provides a specialised environment for preparing sensitive intravenous medications such as chemotherapy, antibiotics, intravenous nutrition, and other critical solutions that require high precision in preparation. This is done under the direct supervision of specialised pharmacists and technicians in a sterile preparation environment that ensures the highest levels of safety and quality. The unit aims to enhance patient safety, ensure dosage accuracy, improve the efficiency of treatment outcomes, alleviate burdens on the nursing staff, and support the hospital in achieving and sustaining international accreditations like the Canadian Healthcare Accreditation. In addition to its direct role in boosting patient safety and treatment efficiency, the unit represents added investment value by rationalising the consumption of medications and resources and raising the efficiency of health spending, which positively impacts service sustainability. — ONA

230 govt staff undergo Tajawob training programme

MUSCAT: The first phase of the training programme, 'Enhancing Skills in Dealing with Beneficiaries', was launched in Muscat, bringing together more than 230 employees from government institutions linked to the National Platform for Suggestions, Complaints and Reports (Tajawob). The programme aims to strengthen employees' ability to deliver accurate and timely services, reduce follow-up requests, and improve communication skills when addressing comments and reports submitted through the



Tajawob platform. This initiative is expected to boost beneficiary confidence, elevate satisfaction and enhance the overall quality of government services. Implemented as part of a six-month integrated training plan covering all governorates,

the programme will extend to employees in administrative divisions across Oman. In cooperation with the National Bank of Oman, the programme fosters knowledge exchange between public and private sectors, leveraging banking expertise in customer service to enrich the beneficiary experience. This partnership exemplifies national integration, improving government systems and service quality while reflecting collective responsibility towards achieving Oman's development goals. The Tajawob platform is a

pioneering national initiative that enables beneficiaries to submit suggestions, complaints and reports through a unified digital channel, improving response efficiency and service delivery. Currently involving 54 government entities, the platform has handled over 86,000 transactions since its launch. Recent enhancements include a mobile application for easier access, advanced technical updates to improve analysis and monitoring, and enriched indicators for measuring performance and satisfaction.

Agreement for hospital
in Sultan Haitham City

A DEVELOPMENT agreement was signed on Tuesday for the establishment of a private hospital in the Al Wafa Neighbourhood of Sultan Haitham City. The agreement, inked with Al Siyabi Global Group as the developer, was formalised during the Home and Building Expo, focusing on urban development and architecture, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The RO 22 million healthcare project will be developed on a 33,000-square-metre site, with construction expected to take three to four years to complete. The new facility aims to create an integrated healthcare centre meeting modern medical standards while enhancing quality of life and community services within Sultan Haitham City. This initiative aligns with the strategic direction to equip the city with comprehensive service, educational and healthcare facilities, representing another step towards developing modern, sustainable urban communities that provide dignified living conditions and integrated services for citizens and residents. The signing ceremony was attended by Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health. - ONA



The signing ceremony was attended by Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health. - ONA



INDIAN DELEGATION VISITS JCSC

MUSCAT: A delegation from the College of Defence Management (CDM) of the Republic of India, led by Air Commodore Vivek Gupta, visited the Joint Command and Staff College (JCSC) at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies on Monday. The delegation was received upon arrival at the college headquarters by Brigadier General Mohammed bin Ahmed al Mashaikhi, Commandant of the JCSC. During the visit, the delegation watched a visual presentation about the Joint Command and Staff College, its curriculum, and its diverse educational and training programmes. — ONA

Oman hosts regional forum on media literacy and AI

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 7

THE THREE-DAY Regional Forum on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) opened in Muscat under the theme 'Empowering Minds in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.' Organised by the Ministry of Education, represented by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, and the Unesco Regional Office for the Gulf States and Yemen in Doha, the forum is being held in cooperation with the Ministry of Information and in partnership with ISESCO



The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information

and ALECSO. The event aims to introduce the concept of media and information literacy, enhance users' awareness of their digital rights and promote ethical behaviour online. It also focuses on equipping participants with skills to identify misinformation and navigate the challenges posed by artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. The opening ceremony was held

under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information. The forum brings together teachers, supervisors, curriculum developers, media academics, journalists, and communication professionals from public, private, and civil sectors. Dr Mahmoud bin Abdullah al Abri, Chairman of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, emphasised that the forum reflects Oman's commitment to harnessing artificial intelligence as a development tool supporting national progress and the knowledge economy in line with Oman Vision 2040. He also noted the country's

strides in establishing regulatory frameworks for data protection, privacy and balanced access to information. Najih Makni, Communication and Information Programme Specialist at Unesco, highlighted the growing challenges of misinformation and the importance of empowering youth to engage responsibly in the digital environment. The forum's first day featured dialogue sessions and working papers on regional cooperation, policy frameworks, and legislation supporting media literacy, moderated by Ahmed bin Salem al Kalbani, Director of the Electronic Publishing Department at the Ministry of Information.

REMARKABLESUCCESS



John Clarke, Michel H Devoret and John M Martinis are announced this year's Nobel Prize winners in Physics, in Stockholm. — Reuters

TRIO WIN NOBEL PRIZE FOR REVEALING QUANTUM PHYSICS

STOCKHOLM: US-based scientists John Clarke, Michel Devoret and John Martinis won the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics for “experiments that revealed quantum physics in action”, paving the way for the development of the next generation of digital technologies. “My feelings are that I’m completely stunned. Of course it had never occurred to me in any way that this might be the basis of a Nobel Prize,” Clarke told the Nobel press conference by telephone on Tuesday. “I’m speaking on my cell phone and I suspect that you are too, and one of the underlying reasons that the cell phone works is because of all this work.”

Quantum mechanical behaviours are well studied at the level of the incredibly small but are often seen as bizarre and unintuitive compared with classical physics and its far larger scale. The Nobel winners carried out experiments in the mid-1980s with an electronic circuit built of superconductors and demonstrated that quantum mechanics could also influence everyday objects under certain conditions. “It is wonderful to be able to celebrate the way that century-old quantum mechanics continually offers new surprises. It is also enormously useful, as quantum mechanics is the foundation of all digital technology,” Olle Eriksson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics, said.

Quantum technology is already ubiquitous, with transistors in computer microchips an everyday example. “This year’s Nobel Prize in Physics has provided opportunities for developing the next generation of quantum technology, including quantum cryptography, quantum computers, and quantum sensors,” the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which awards the prize, said in a statement. Quantum computers use principles of quantum mechanics to make complex calculations, predict outcomes and perform analysis that in some cases could take traditional computers millions of years.

The field is considered to have the potential to help solve some of humanity’s most pressing concerns, such as tackling climate change. But it also faces challenges, including improving the accuracy of its chips, and timelines for commercially viable quantum computing remain disputed.

The Nobel physics prize is awarded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and includes a prize sum totalling 11 million Swedish crowns (\$1.2 million) that is shared among the winners if there are several, as is often the case. — Reuters



ISRAELI FORCES SHELL GAZA ON WAR ANNIVERSARY

SHARM EL-SHEIKH: Israeli tanks, boats and jets pounded parts of Gaza on Tuesday, giving Palestinians no respite on the anniversary of the two years of war and underlining the challenges at talks on Donald Trump’s plan to halt the conflict. With no ceasefire in place, residents said Israel pressed on with its offensive, after Hamas and Israel began indirect negotiations in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt on key issues such as Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza and Hamas’ disarmament.

Residents in Khan Younis in southern Gaza and Gaza City in the north reported heavy bombing from tanks and planes in the early hours on Tuesday. Israeli forces pounded several districts from the air, sea and ground, they said.

Israel and Hamas have endorsed the overall principles behind Trump’s plan, under which fighting would cease, hostages would go free and aid would pour into Gaza. It also has backing from Arab and Western states.

Trump has called for negotiations to take place swiftly towards a final agreement. Even if a deal is clinched during talks in Egypt, questions will linger over who will rule Gaza and rebuild it. Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have ruled out any role for Hamas. — Reuters

France’s Macron pressed to end worst political ‘mess’

FRANCE’S President Emmanuel Macron faced growing pressure on Tuesday to resign or hold a snap parliamentary election to end political chaos that has forced the resignation of five prime ministers in less than two years. The 47-year old centrist president has repeatedly said he will see out his second term, which ends in 2027. But resignation calls, long confined to the fringes, have entered the mainstream during one of the worst political crises since the 1958 creation of the Fifth Republic, France’s current system of government.

On Tuesday, as Macron’s outgoing Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu held last-ditch talks to form a new government, his first premier in 2017, Edouard Philippe, said it was time for a new president to break the deadlock. Speaking to RTL radio, Philippe said Macron should be “leaving in an orderly manner” to allow a way out of the crisis.

Political turmoil in the euro zone’s second largest economy was front page news across Europe at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump is demanding the continent do more to shore up its own defences and aid Ukraine. Markets have taken fright, with investors keeping a close eye on France’s ability to cut a yawning budget deficit. French stocks fell 1.4 per cent on Monday and the risk premium on French government bond yields rose to a nine-month high on the crisis.

“It’s a mess. It makes you sad,” said Brigitte Gries, a 70-year old pensioner in Paris, summing up public consternation. “We’re becoming a bit of a laughing stock around the world right now,” added taxi driver Soufiane Mansour in the southern city of Montpellier. “We’re a bit of a clown around



Outgoing French PM Lecornu visits a memorial tent at Place des Vosges, in Paris. — Reuters

the world and in Europe, unfortunately.” Philippe, whom polls show to be the best-placed candidate to lead the political centre in a succession battle, was the second of Macron’s former prime ministers to distance themselves from him in as many days. Gabriel Attal, another erstwhile Macron loyalist, was blunt in his criticism. He was prime minister for a few months last year before Macron called a snap vote that delivered a hung parliament with three ideologically opposed blocs. “Like many French people, I no longer understand the president’s decisions,” he said on TF1 TV, after Macron asked Lecornu, who had just tendered his resignation, to go back to opponents for last-gasp talks. Lecornu, whose 14-hour-old administration was the shortest in modern French history, was given two days to find consensus. Attal, however, ruled out calling for Macron to resign, someone who took part in a meeting

of his parliamentary group said. Meanwhile, Lecornu held talks with leaders of Macron’s centrist alliance and conservatives, in which they agreed that finding a deal on next year’s budget was a priority. He will need others, including the Socialists, on board to have the numbers needed to form a majority in the National Assembly — not least to pass a budget for next year. Lecornu now plans to talk with the opposition in the afternoon and on Wednesday morning, but the far-right National Rally said they saw no point in those talks and would skip them. Party chiefs Jordan Bardella and Marine Le Pen instead “reiterate their call for the dissolution of the National Assembly,” the RN said. The RN tops opinion polls, but those surveys show a repeat election would likely produce another divided parliament, with no group holding a majority. — Reuters

Ukraine strike on Russia-held part of Kherson region kills four

MOSCOW: A Ukrainian strike on the Russia-held part of Ukraine’s Kherson region killed four people, the Moscow-installed governor said on Tuesday, as Kyiv stepped up retaliatory strikes against Russia. Moscow said it had intercepted 209 drones overnight and in the morning from Ukraine’s second large barrage in a row.

Four civilians were killed in a “targeted drone attack on civilian vehicles” on a highway, Vladimir Saldo, governor of the Russian-occupied part of Kherson region, wrote on Telegram. He added another person was wounded in a separate Ukrainian strike in the region. Kyiv did not immediately comment but denies targeting civilians in Russian-occupied areas of the country.

Ukraine’s local authorities meanwhile accused Russia of killing a man in the city of Kherson, which is controlled by Kyiv. “A 65-year-

old resident of Kherson came under enemy fire. He sustained fatal injuries,” the Kherson region governor, Oleksandr Prokudin, said on Telegram on Tuesday. Kyiv is ramping up strikes on Russia’s energy and oil infrastructure, in what it sees as a legitimate response to Moscow’s daily attacks on Ukrainian cities, which have at times left millions without heating and power.

Ukraine said Russia had launched 154 drones and missiles overnight on Monday-Tuesday, around half of which were intercepted. An unmanned aircraft hit railway and energy infrastructure in Ukraine’s Poltava and Sumy regions, leaving more than 1,000 people without electricity. On Monday, Ukraine launched 251 drones towards Russia, and two people died in a rocket strike on the city of Belgorod around 30 kilometres from the Ukrainian border.



Ukrainian rescuers work among the rubble at an energy infrastructure facility, in Kharkiv. — AFP

“One thousand people in four settlements remain without electricity,” according to Belgorod’s governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, adding that repair works were ongoing after the barrage. The Russian army controls around one-fifth of Ukraine’s territory, including

the Crimean peninsula annexed in 2014, and has been grinding forward on the battlefield, with both militaries suffering immense losses. Ukraine launched a major drone attack on Russia for the second day in a row, Moscow said on Tuesday, reporting that it had intercepted

209 drones overnight and in the morning. The attack is Kyiv’s second consecutive barrage on Russia as it steps up retaliatory strikes. Most of the drones were shot down over the regions of Kursk, Nizhny Novgorod and Belgorod, Russia’s defence ministry said in a statement. The strikes hit an unidentified industry enterprise in the Nizhny Novgorod region, Governor Gleb Nikitin said. Russian authorities did not report any injuries or deaths on Tuesday.

Ukraine found tens of thousands of foreign parts, some Western-made, in Russian drones and missiles fired on Ukraine over the weekend, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Monday.

“During the massive combined strike on Ukraine on the night of October 5, Russia used 549 weapon systems containing 102,785 foreign-made components,” Zelensky said on social media. — AFP

OPINION

You can't be a polished gem without a good rub



HYESHA BARRETT

The writer is a Master Life Coach and Parent Coach

EVERYONE wants to shine. Few want the polishing. We love the end result: the confidence, the poise, the wisdom, but not the process that creates it. Gems don't sparkle straight from the earth. They're rough, uneven, and ordinary-looking until they're cut and rubbed over and over again for their brilliance to appear. People aren't much different.

Life has a way of giving us our own version of a "good rub." It might arrive as criticism, rejection, failure, or an unexpected challenge that throws us off balance. In those moments, it's tempting to take it personally: to feel offended, hurt, or defeated. Yet, those very moments are often the ones shaping us into something finer.

Imagine a gem complaining mid-polish: "This is too harsh. I liked being left alone in the dirt." It sounds absurd, however, that's often what we do when life dares to refine us. Growth feels uncomfortable. It scrapes away our rough edges, exposes our insecurities and

demands that we show up differently. It isn't pleasant, but it is necessary.

Unfortunately, no one develops strength, patience, or grace by coasting through easy days. The polish comes from friction. The rub comes from moments that challenge our pride, our assumptions, or our comfort zones. A difficult conversation, a disappointing outcome, or an honest piece of feedback can sting, and they also reveal who we're becoming.

Every person you admire has been through their share of polishing. The poised speaker once stumbled over words. The confident leader once second-guessed every decision. The calm parent once lost their temper. We only ever see the finished gem, not the grit it took to get there.

Taking a good rub doesn't mean tolerating mistreatment or unnecessary hardship. It means allowing experience to teach you instead of breaking you. It's knowing that discomfort is often a sign that something inside you is evolving. Growth rarely feels graceful in the moment, but it leaves behind

Every rub has a purpose. Every challenge carries the potential to bring out more depth, clarity and character.

a shine that can't be faked. Think of the times you've been challenged. Maybe someone questioned your choices, or life didn't go the way you planned. You probably didn't see it as polishing then. Yet, when you look back, those moments often reveal themselves as turning points. They gave perspective, resilience and a new kind of strength.

True brilliance comes from patience with the process. You can't rush refinement. Every setback, every criticism, every uncomfortable truth is part of the shaping. The more you resist, the duller you remain - the more you trust the process, the brighter you become. Growth isn't instant: it's a slow, steady art form.

So, the next time life gives you a "rub", take a deep breath. Instead of asking, "Why is this happening to me?" try asking, "What is this shaping in me?" Every rub has a purpose. Every challenge carries the potential to bring out more depth, clarity and character.

After all, no gem ever gleamed by staying buried in the ground. The polish is what brings the sparkle.

From Donbas to the desert: Tuaregs borrow Ukraine's war tactics

From explosive drones to inflatable decoy vehicles, Tuareg rebels in Mali have increasingly turned to tactics learnt from Ukrainian intelligence to strike the west African country's army and its Russian allies.

The tactics are reshaping the balance in the conflict between Mali's junta government and the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA), a pro-independence armed coalition of predominantly Tuareg groups fighting over the Azawad territory in the country's north.

While the Tuaregs have ties to Kyiv, Mali has increasingly relied on Russian mercenaries for help in fighting both the rebels and the terrorists affiliated with Al Qaeda and the IS group roaming the wider Sahel region. "Perhaps what binds us most to Ukraine is that, like us, it is suffering Russian barbarism and imperialism," Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane, spokesman for the rebels, said. In July 2024, a Ukrainian military intelligence official, Andriy Yusov, implied that Kyiv had provided information to the rebels so they could carry out an attack.

The rebels killed dozens of Russian mercenaries and Malian soldiers during fighting in the town of Tinzaouaten in Mali's northeast. The FLA separatists have joined forces at times with Al Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM). "Ukraine wanted to impress its Western partners by claiming that it was helping the rebels attack Russia in Africa as well," Ulf Laessing, director of the Sahel programme at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Mali, said.

"But it underestimated public opinion since the rebels are considered terrorists in the Sahel capitals," he said. Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, all ruled by military juntas that have turned their backs on the West to move closer to Russia, have severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine, accusing it of supplying weapons to the FLA.

"As distant as it may seem, the war in Ukraine and terrorism in the Sahel are connected," Malian Prime Minister General Abdoulaye Maiga said at the United Nations in late September.

"The Ukrainian regime has become one of the main suppliers of kamikaze drones to terrorist groups around the world," he said. Ukraine and the FLA, formed from several rebel movements seeking to seize territory in Tuareg-majority northeast Mali, have repeatedly denied these accusations. "Back on the ground, they significantly strengthened their operational skills and, in turn, trained other fighters in this strategic area. Today, this technological mastery is fully integrated into our combat capabilities," he added.

Equipped with explosives, the drones are piloted from afar in real-time via a virtual reality headset. They allow the separatists to regularly carry out attacks against Malian army convoys or bases housing Russian mercenaries. — AFP

There are two economies: AI and everything else

SINCE President Trump took office, the economy has followed a pattern. The administration does something outlandish — tariff rates at levels not seen in a century, trying to fire a Federal Reserve governor — and economists, including me, warn of the deep risks.

So far, though, the economy has kept chugging along. The market plummeted in April over the "Liberation Day" tariffs, but it has since rebounded many times over, rising to new highs 30 times this year. Risky policies that alarm mainstream economists don't appear to be having much of an effect on the economic indicators we follow. That's because something positive is happening in Trump's economy. It's just happening in spite of his policies, not because of them.

The economy is being bolstered by a remarkable investment boom in artificial intelligence. A credible estimate suggests that AI capital expenditures may reach 2 per cent of the gross domestic product in 2025, up from most likely less than 0.1 per cent in 2022. To provide some sense of scale, that means the equivalent of about \$1,800 per person in America will be invested this year on AI. Without these investments, economic growth this year might have clocked in at around 1 per cent. Instead, it is likely to land at almost twice that. Just seven large technology companies are responsible for nearly 60 per cent of the gains in the S&P 500 this year.

The coat of AI gloss is giving the administration runway to double down on bad ideas: America's effective overall tariff rate is nearly back to the levels announced in April, the vice-president has called for the administration to be involved in the Federal Reserve's interest rate decisions, and Trump fired the head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics after a disappointing jobs report.

It's closer to putting all of your eggs in one basket and stomping on all the other baskets. There are signs that the non-AI economy is under duress.



NATASHA SARIN

The author, a contributing NYT Opinion writer, is a professor at Yale Law School

Markets often have a way of disciplining policymakers. The AI boom, by contrast, is masking real problems. To navigate this moment smoothly requires creating a policy that will expand our economy and make it more resilient

As economists predicted, tariffs are pushing up inflation and dragging down growth. Hiring has stalled. Jobs are particularly hard to come by for young people entering the labour market; youth unemployment is at 10.5 per cent, a level not seen in nearly a decade, absent the pandemic.

These are problems the AI boom is likely to worsen, not ease. The president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Neel Kashkari, recently pointed out that while it takes a lot of money to build AI data centres, it does not take that many workers to operate them.

It is somewhat illogical to reckon with these two parts of the economy separately. If there were no data centres to build, dollars would flow into other types of investment. It's possible that other parts of the economy are being held back by AI's dominance. That's what happened in the 1990s internet boom. Smaller manufacturing companies had a hard time getting access to capital that flooded instead into every dot-com company on offer (some more successful than others).

But it seems clear that there are two powerful economic forces pulling in opposite directions. The Trump administration's trade war and attack on institutions like the Fed serve to make investors wary, businesses uncertain and the economy weaker. Slowing immigration also has a significant impact. Last year, the economy was projected to be 3 per cent larger by 2034 because of now outdated assumptions about an influx of immigrants. The boon from AI has the potential to outweigh that policy-induced drag. Looking back to the last tech boom is informative. In the early 1990s, labour productivity growth was sluggish, averaging less than 1 per cent. It rose to 3 per cent by the end of the decade, powered by computerisation and the internet revolution. That helped the economy soar and the federal government balance its budget for the first time in recent history. Something similar may be afoot. Presidents do not control business cycles, nor can they

do much to change demographic trends or bring down the cost of groceries. In good times, politicians often get too much credit for their economic wizardry; in bad times, too much blame. Right now, though, policy choices are getting too little blame. Estimates suggest that tariffs alone will cause the economy to be persistently 0.4 per cent smaller than it would have been, primarily through reduced productivity and investment.

If history is any guide, this revolutionary technology will change the world but not without causing economic chaos. That is the story of the dot-com bubble bursting and of railway mania in Britain in the 1800s. In both cases, investors flooded into ultimately unprofitable ventures. Pets.com was able to attract funding. So, too, were multiple competing railway lines between Liverpool and Leeds. Bubbles burst, financial markets collapse, investors count their losses, and people lose their livelihoods.

Large-scale labour force displacement may be upon us. Automation could widen global inequality. A financial crisis could be looming. Private-equity-backed insurance companies are funnelling policyholders' premiums into the energy and infrastructure investments required to power the AI boom, much as banks before the financial crisis funded a mortgage boom they didn't fully understand.

Or more banally, AI may take time to reach its transformational potential. In 1987, the economist Robert Solow quipped, "You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics." Those gains came, but they took years to materialise.

Markets often have a way of disciplining policymakers. The AI boom, by contrast, is masking real problems. To navigate this moment smoothly requires creating a policy that will expand our economy and make it more resilient. At the very least, we should avoid the misguided Trump administration policies that are weakening it.

Remembering an era of postal mail and its tales



SAMUEL KUTTY

The writer is a freelance journalist and author who worked in Oman and India

Have always enjoyed both writing and getting letters. During a recent review of my personal documents, I noticed how often I corresponded with friends and acquaintances. The letters I discovered reflected the way my family and I bonded whenever we found ourselves in separate locations.

Letters embody a concurrent nature of being delicate, sincere and personal. I remember that seeing the familiar script of my family and friends always made me feel more at home, a cure that ensured I would never feel isolated.

I recall the queue where I stood at the post office in central Ruwi, in Muscat, the capital of Oman, years ago, to send a registered letter containing the bank demand draft to my family in India. It was a reminder of the times we expressed our feelings through ink on paper; when an envelope held numerous unspoken words, long waits and myriad emotions.

When a letter, be it from a relative or an official document, was more than mere paper but a representation of trust – that it would surely arrive, in the correct hands, at the correct time. Remembering postal letters evokes memories of the smell of ink and adhesive, the sounds of pens scratching, the sharp thud of a rubber stamp and blurred figures queuing.

But now, the time has passed when letters were appreciated for their emotional importance and the care involved in writing them.

Currently, with various electronic communication methods, such as emails, cell phones and social media, letters have clearly become a scarce item.

You won't have to wait hours to connect a trunk call anymore, nor will you endure waits for messages from a family member or friend about their arrival or departure from work far from home.

Certainly, it's undeniable that emails offer incredible convenience — they arrive in just seconds, eliminating the need to pay for postage or the time spent making phone calls and engaging in polite conversation.

The mail market in the 21st century, nonetheless, is experiencing a tremendous degree of transformation. The reality is that the mail market is experiencing a structural decline due to the increasing amount of business conducted via email and the Internet.

Yet, even with the risk of desiring inefficiency, there is a lack of something. A crucial emotion tied to communication has vanished.

People recall the joy of receiving them, the postman as a trustworthy carrier, and the lasting importance of handwritten letters as

I recall the queue where I stood at the post office in central Ruwi years ago to send a registered letter containing the bank demand draft to my family in India

a personal and official connection — a sharp difference from the fast but often impersonal character of digital communication.

On World Postal Day on October 9, we reflect on the past, the enchanting charm of letters, the postman and a collection of tales anticipated with eager excitement. It recognises the role of postal services in linking people, companies and governments while enabling the transfer of letters, packages and documents.

“Postal employees create a network that provides more than just mail. It provides vital services, chances and confidence, accessing distant regions, linking towns and cities, narrowing the rural-urban gap and establishing a world that is accessible to all,” reads a message from the UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

Future generations might consider the hassle instead of the feelings found in letters from the past, when their forebears needed to purchase an envelope, write on paper, visit the post office, place stamps and send it. Once more, it would require several days to get into the other individual's possession.

However, I consider myself lucky to have been born in a time when we avoided the invasion of technology.

The red mailboxes that are imprinted in my mind fail to attract a second look from today's youth.

‘VEGGIE BURGERS’ FACE GRILLING IN EU PARLIAMENT

BOUCHRA BERKANE

Championed by green advocates as much as mindful eaters, the days of plant-based “steaks” and “veggie burgers” may be numbered under plans up for a vote in the European Parliament on Wednesday.

Concerns over the greenhouse gas emissions from livestock farms have in recent years driven more Europeans to adopt vegetarian, vegan or plant-based diets, seen by advocates as a healthier alternative to regular meat consumption.

But many European livestock farmers - and the politicians who represent them - see plant-based foods that mimic meat as a threat, and one more challenge facing a troubled sector.

“It’s not sausage, and it’s not steak, plain and simple. Let’s call a spade a spade,” said Celine Imart, a right-wing EU lawmaker pushing for such terms to be banned for non-animal-based products. “It’s everyone’s right to eat alternative proteins - made from plants, laboratories, tofu or insect flour,” said Imart. “But calling it ‘meat’ is misleading for the consumer,” she said.

If the proposal, up for debate on Tuesday in Strasbourg, followed by a vote on Wednesday, becomes law, a long list of labels, including “sausage” and “burger”, would be reserved for foods containing meat.

That prospect is still some way off. Even if parliament backs the proposal, it still needs to be negotiated with the EU’s 27 member states. France’s livestock and meat industry body, Interbev, strongly backs the push.

“We refuse to let plant proteins appropriate meat names for marketing purposes,” the group’s head, Jean-Francois Guihard, said, saying such terms “weaken recognition for raw, 100 per cent natural products”.

“Without clear safeguards, consumers risk being misled by products that are disguised as meat - but are not meat.”

Green EU lawmaker Anna Strolenberg rejects that argument. “A ‘veggie burger’ ban won’t change anything for farmers,” said the Dutch politician, who opposes the plan on the grounds that it would deprive consumers of useful information about what they are buying.

Her fellow Green lawmaker David Cormand called the debate a “publicity stunt” and an unwelcome “distraction” for parliament.

“In the meantime, we are not dealing with the major issues facing the farm sector,” he said.

It is not the first time veggie burgers have found themselves in the crosshairs of European lawmakers. A similar call to ban such terms was rejected in 2020. But the balance of power has shifted since the 2024 European elections saw big gains by right-wing parties that cultivate close ties to the farm sector.

Imart says the new proposal is “in line with European rules”, which already restrict the use of traditional dairy terms from “milk” to “yogurt” and “cheese”. — AFP

Can ethical supply chains survive the tariff storm?

RECENT Geopolitical developments have underscored the fragility of global supply chains, reminding businesses in constantly evolving sectors like consumer goods and fashion that the strength of supplier relationships is one of the few persistent sources of resilience. Maintaining such relationships through responsible purchasing (based on environmental and social considerations, not just cost and quality) is not only ethical, but strategically necessary.

The fashion industry is one of many that is feeling the weight of tariffs – disruptions that come at a time when it is struggling to make progress towards previously stated climate and sustainability goals. According to a 2025 benchmarking survey by the US Fashion Industry Association, 100 per cent of 25 leading apparel brands and retailers identified the current administration's protectionist stance and volatile trade relationships as a top challenge, and more than half flagged policy uncertainty, especially retaliatory tariffs, as their primary concern.

Rather than responding with short-term cost-cutting, though, major consumer-goods companies are making strategic investments to build resilience. For example, retailers like Walmart and Target have front-loaded inventory to absorb tariff shocks ahead of the holiday season, and Apple chartered cargo flights to transport 1.5 million iPhones from India, an option made possible by increasing production with a key supplier.

These are not just logistical moves; they are evidence of why trust-based, responsive supply-chain relationships matter. Responsible purchasing practices are the glue that holds supply chains together in uncertain times. Gartner reports that nearly half of large enterprises have renegotiated supplier contracts or shifted sourcing strategies to manage risks associated with the tariffs. Tools like supply-chain finance are increasingly being used not just for liquidity, but as buffers against volatility. Such trends reflect



The fashion industry is one of many that is feeling the weight of US tariffs.



JOLEEN ONG

The writer is Senior Director of Brand and Retailer Membership at Cascale

As trade-related costs persist, fashion and apparel industry leaders must shift their mindset. Their businesses’ resilience will not come from diplomacy or presidential handshakes, but from trust-based relationships built on fair purchasing practices

a growing consensus: resilient, transparent, and values-aligned supply chains are key to avoiding major disruptions and maintaining competitiveness.

Unfortunately, the fashion sector is a laggard in this regard, scoring just 66 out of 100 in Cascale's Better Buying 2025 Garment Industry Scorecard, with year-on-year declines in key areas of responsible purchasing, including cost negotiation, payment terms and product development. This is concerning, given that upstream effects can spread when tariffs or other external shocks hit. Production costs often need to be renegotiated, and without strong supplier relationships, shifts in production can increase delays, labour risks and reputational exposure.

The trend is also concerning for its climate implications. The fashion industry, with its complex global supply chains, is particularly vulnerable to such ripple effects. The US tariffs that went into effect on August 7 directly affect sourcing hubs with an outsize influence on the industry's carbon footprint. Cascale finds that just 1,800 factories in nine countries account for over 80 per cent of measured carbon emissions from the apparel, textile and footwear industries. Of these, six countries – China,

Bangladesh, Vietnam, India, Türkiye and Pakistan – have been directly affected by the new tariffs.

Shifting sourcing away from these hubs might avoid short-term tariff costs. But it could also disrupt ongoing efforts to reduce emissions from these major sources. We saw this in 2018, when tariffs against China drove a production surge in Vietnam. Since it typically takes an average of 14 months for brands to add new suppliers, such rapid shifts cause a ripple effect: labour violations, longer lead times and quality issues. Without coordinated planning, they risk undermining climate goals and working conditions alike.

Though fashion is a \$3 trillion industry, it is expected to have only a minimal formal presence at this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30). As in previous years, travel budgets are being cut, and many teams are being downsized, as the industry slims down in the face of market volatility. Unlike climate-focused gatherings like Climate Week NYC or London Climate Action Week, COP30 will focus more on adaptation finance, carbon pricing and nature-based strategies than on redrawing trade or sourcing lines.

Nonetheless, those in the industry should pay close attention to get a sense of the global appetite for sustainable finance and investment. Brazil is using its COP30 presidency to promote major initiatives like the \$125 billion Tropical Forests Forever Facility, a blended-finance tool designed to help close the \$1.3 trillion annual climate-finance gap by 2035. Moreover, the discussions about carbon pricing could have a greater impact on international trade and value chains than any industry-specific trade reform.

In short, COP30 will not offer any direct relief on tariffs, but it could shape the long-term rules of the game, linking sustainability targets, sourcing practices, and competitiveness factors through policy levers that lie beyond the fashion industry's immediate control.

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SPORTS

BALICHAMPIONSHIP



Hamza al Awaidi earned his place at the world championship through the official ranking pathway.

HAMZA TO REPRESENT OMAN AT WORLD 8-BALL BILLIARDS

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 7

The Oman national billiards team player Hamza al Awaidi departed for the Indonesian island of Bali on Tuesday, representing the Oman Billiards and Snooker Committee in the World Men’s 8-Ball Championship 2025 one of the most prestigious global tournaments on the Predator Pro Billiard Series calendar.

The event is organised under the supervision of the World Pool-Billiard Association (WPA), in cooperation with the Indonesian Billiards Federation (POBSI) and supported by the official sponsor Yalin.

The championship will take place from October 9 to 13 at the Nusantara Hall of the Bali International Convention Centre, featuring elite players from over 40 countries competing for a total prize pool of \$250,000.

Al Awaidi earned his place at this world championship following an outstanding season in which he delivered strong performances across both local and regional tournaments, securing his qualification through the official ranking pathway.

He is regarded as one of the most promising players of the new generation in Oman billiards, having consistently demonstrated high technical skill and the ability to represent the Sultanate of Oman with distinction, leaving a clear mark in both domestic and international competitions.

The Bali 2025 championship stands out as a major stop in the Predator Pro Billiard Series, bringing together renowned players from Asia, Europe and beyond. It is staged at a world-class professional level in line with WPA standards, granting it a prominent status on the global billiards calendar.

Competitors will play under the 8-Ball system one of the most technically demanding and strategic forms of billiards where the player must pocket his designated group of balls first and then legally sink the eight ball to win. The format requires exceptional focus, careful planning and precise cue-ball control.

Speaking before his departure, Hamza al Awaidi expressed pride and determination in representing Oman. “I feel honoured to represent my country in a world-class championship of this scale. It’s a priceless opportunity to compete with top global players and gain valuable experience. I’ll give my utmost effort to deliver a performance worthy of Oman’s name and raise our flag high in this major event.”

In a statement, the Oman Billiards and Snooker Committee emphasised that Al Awaidi’s participation represents an important step within the national strategy to develop billiards and snooker in the Sultanate of Oman.

The goal, is to provide players with international exposure, enhance their skills through competition with world champions, and strengthen Oman’s presence on the global stage. The committee added that the player had shown great dedication in his preparations, training intensively to enter the championship with confidence and ambition.

Oman chase victory in crunch Qatar clash

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 7

OMAN national football team will eye for a strong start in their opening match against Qatar on Wednesday in the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 Playoffs Group A clash. The decisive encounter will start at 7 pm (Oman time) at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium.

Red Warriors are fully aware that securing an opening victory against hosts Qatar will boost confidence and morale high ahead of their second match against the United Arab Emirates on Saturday and raise the chances of snatching the only one automatic qualification spot in the group to advance into next year’s global showpiece.

Oman head coach Carlos Queiroz voiced confident in his team’s readiness and spirit during the official pre-match press conference. “We are fully prepared, highly motivated, and in the best shape to achieve a positive result and move closer to qualification,” said the Portuguese tactician. “The players are committed to showcase their best, playing with high spirit and one goal in mind, no matter the challenges ahead. I know the Qatar team very well and we will focus on the small details to achieve the desired result.”

The vastly experienced coach, who took charge of Oman in July 2024, emphasised that focus and unity would be decisive. “Our players are strong and fully aware of the importance of this stage. Every team has its strengths and weaknesses. Our job is to remain focused and avoid mistakes. Pressure is part of football but this group knows how to turn pressure into power,” he said. Queiroz, who previously led several national teams at World Cups, described coaching Oman as an honour. “It is a privilege to coach this team. My message to our fans is simple to trust your players. They do not only play football as they play with their hearts and the soul of true Omanis. We fight for one country, one flag, and for the people of Oman,” he concluded.

READY FOR CHALLENGE

Oman’s campaign for a maiden Fifa World Cup qualification will rely on a group of players with experience and youthful energy. Among the key players expected to



The decisive encounter will start at 7 pm (Oman time) at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium.



Oman will rely on a group of players with experience and youthful energy.

make an impact including Essam al Subhi, who has scored three goals in his last four appearances, Ali al Busaidy, Mohsin al Ghassani, Khalid al Buraiki and Jameel al Yahmadi, alongside rising talents Musab al Shaqsi, Abdulrahman al Mushaifri, Ghanim al Habshi and Ahed al Mashakehi.

Team captain Ali al Busaidy echoed his coach’s determination. “Our goal since the

start of the qualifiers has been to reach the World Cup. We are entering a decisive stage, and we are ready for the challenge. The pressure is natural, but we’re confident, focused and united for Oman.”

On the other side, Qatar head coach Julen Lopetegui praised Oman’s recent progress and tactical organisation. “We are facing a strong opponent with talented players who beat us in the Gulf Cup,” the Spaniard said.

“Our preparation has been intense and disciplined. We understand the responsibility we carry and will fight collectively to make our fans proud.”

Since taking charge in May, Lopetegui’s side has shown mixed form with one win in four matches including defeats to Lebanon (1-0) and Russia (4-1) and a 2-2 draw against Bahrain. Despite this, Qatar will rely on star striker Almoez Ali and playmaker Akram Afif to spark their attacking abilities.

Al Nahda, Seeb top group tables in Jetour Cup

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 7

The fourth round of the Jetour Cup (2025–26) concluded with competitive matches that saw Al Nahda continue at the top of Group 2 after a deserved victory over Al Shabab, while Seeb maintained the lead in Group 1 despite a draw with Bahla. Ibri claimed a key win over Al Khabourah, securing their first three points of the tournament.

Al Nahda extended their fine form with a 2–0 win over Al Shabab in a Group 2 match at Al Buraimi Sports Complex.

The match started with high intensity as both teams exchanged early attacks amid solid defensive organisation.

Al Nahda managed to convert their field dominance into a goal in the 42nd minute when Azzan al Tamtami struck a beautiful shot from inside the box that beat goalkeeper Islam al Hinai, ending the first half with Al Nahda ahead 1–0.



Al Nahda extended their fine form with a 2–0 win over Al Shabab.

In the second half, Al Shabab tried to get back into the match through Mohammed al Ghafri and Badr al Alawi, but Al Nahda’s defence stayed firm and well-organised, closing all gaps and relying on counterattacks that posed real danger.

Al Nahda doubled their lead in the 74th minute through professional striker Aboubakar Diarra, who calmly

finished a precise cross into the back of the net, confirming his team’s superiority in both performance and result.

With this win, Al Nahda raised their tally to 7 points, keeping the top spot in Group 2, while Al Shabab remained on 6 points in third place.

IBRI EARN SECOND WIN

In another Group 2 encounter, Ibri secured a well-earned 2–0

victory over Al Khabourah at Al Rustaq Sports Complex.

Goals from Abdulrahman al Yaqoubi and Ali al Balushi sealed the win for Ibri, who displayed a disciplined and organised performance, controlling possession and dictating the tempo for most of the game.

With this result, Ibri climbed to 6 points, advancing to fourth place, while Al Khabourah remained bottom of the table with just one point.

SEEB DRAW WITH BAHLA

In the closing match of Group 1’s fourth round, Seeb played to a 1–1 draw with Bahla at Seeb Stadium.

Seeb took the lead through Mohammed al Musallami, but Faisal al Balushi equalised for Bahla in the second half with a powerful strike inside the box.

With the draw, Seeb moved to 7 points, maintaining the top position in Group 1, while Bahla reached 4 points, sitting in fifth place.

KUWAITEVENT



Nabeel al Balushi was appointed as head coach and Ahmed Ambusaidi as assistant coach.

OHA SIGNS NATIONAL COACHES AHEAD OF ASIAN TOURNEY

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 7

The Oman Handball Association (OHA) announced on Monday the signing of contracts with the technical staff who will lead the national men’s indoor team in the 22nd Asian Handball Championship, to be hosted by Kuwait from January 15 to 26, 2026. The event serves as a qualifier for the 2027 IHF World Championship in Germany.

The contracts were signed by Musa al Balushi, OHA Chairman, with Nabeel al Balushi appointed as head coach and Ahmed Ambusaidi as assistant coach. The signing ceremony was attended by Saeed al Hosani, Acting Secretary-General and Zuhair Samha, refereeing expert and acting technical adviser.

Musa al Balushi emphasised that the OHA’s confidence in national expertise, saying “We have great faith in our Omani coaches to lead the team with pride and determination. The OHA will provide all necessary support to ensure full readiness for the Asian Championship.”

The team’s first training camp begins on October 28, focusing on physical and technical preparation, player selection from the domestic league and a series of local and international friendlies to strengthen team cohesion ahead of the continental competition.

The championship presents a valuable opportunity for Oman to showcase its growing handball potential against strong regional teams such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Japan and Iran.

Kuwait will host the Asian Championship for the fourth time, following the 1995, 2000 and 2010 editions. Matches will take place at the Shaikh Saa’d Al Abdullah Sports Complex, with 16 teams divided into four groups. The top four teams will advance to the 2027 World Championship in Germany.



A warm-up game at the Oman Cricket Academy grounds in Al Amerat.

Oman all set for T20 World Cup Asia & EAP Qualifier

OMAN is ready to take centre stage once again as the Sultanate prepares to host the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup Asia and East Asia-Pacific (EAP) Qualifier at the world-class Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) grounds in Al Amerat from October 8 to 17.

Over 10 action-packed days, nine nations – Oman, Nepal, the UAE, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Kuwait, Qatar, Malaysia, and Japan – will battle for three coveted places at the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026, to be held in India and Sri Lanka.

The event begins on Wednesday, October 8, with hosts Oman taking on Samoa at 10:00 am, followed by UAE meeting Qatar at 2:30 pm and Nepal facing Kuwait under lights at 7:00 pm, in a daily triple-header format across the two OCA grounds.

The competition will unfold in two stages – a Group Stage (October 8-10) followed by a Super Six Stage (October 12-17).

The top two teams from each group will advance to the Super Six, and the top three at the end will secure their spots in next year’s World Cup.

Hosting the combined Asia and EAP qualifier is another milestone in Oman’s growing cricketing journey. The country

has already earned global recognition for its facilities and hospitality, having co-hosted ICC T20 World Cup and other ACC events.

Alkesh Joshi, Oman Cricket Treasurer, said the tournament is a celebration of the sport’s growth and inclusivity. “As a board, we want this tournament to be a celebration for fans, which is why entry to all matches at Al Amerat will be free. We invite everyone to come and cheer for their teams,” said Joshi.

“We sincerely thank the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for their unwavering support in Oman’s cricketing journey. Hosting major ICC events elevates Oman’s status in the global sporting arena. This tournament is not just about competition – it’s a celebration of Associate cricket, proving that Oman is not just a participant but a contributor to the growth of the global game.”

Cricket fans can look forward to a tournament filled with unpredictability and passion – hallmarks of the T20 format where, as history shows, no team can be taken lightly.

Led by captain Jatinder Singh, Oman arrives on the back of valuable top-level exposure and home advantage.

Oman’s spirited performance against

India in the recent Asia Cup – a chase that won plaudits despite defeat – has added belief to the hosts as they eye consecutive qualifications.

Nepal arrives fresh from a historic T20I series win over West Indies in Sharjah, while UAE showed flashes of promise during their own Asia Cup campaign.

Samoa, meanwhile, have been bolstered by the inclusion of former New Zealand star Ross Taylor, who comes out of retirement to represent his mother’s homeland, bringing invaluable experience and international pedigree to the island nation’s side.

Among the other challengers, Papua New Guinea (PNG) bring invaluable qualifier experience, having qualified for the World Cup twice earlier, while Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar and Japan each offer a mix of seasoned performers and emerging talent; all arriving determined to make an impact. Oman, Nepal, UAE and PNG are the only nations to have featured earlier in the T20 World Cup.

As teams eye the three spots for grabs, Oman stands ready to deliver another world-class cricketing spectacle – one that reflects not only the spirit of the game but also the Sultanate’s growing reputation as a proud and capable global host.

TASTE OF SHANGRI-LA RETURNS TO MUSCAT FOR ITS THIRD EDITION

This year’s culinary festival celebrates Mid-Autumn and introduces new dining experiences across four signature restaurants

Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn announce the return of Taste of Shangri-La, now in its third edition – a month-long celebration of culinary craftsmanship, culture, and sustainability. Running from 1 to 31 October, the event invites guests to savour specially curated 6-course tasting menus at Bait Al Bahr, Capri Court, Chow Mee, and Sultanah, priced at OMR 21 net per person.

This year’s edition holds special significance as it coincides with the Mid-Autumn Festival, one of the most cherished celebrations in Chinese culture and a key moment in the Shangri-La calendar. To mark the occasion, Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah welcomes Wok Master Chef Lui Zhenggou from Shang Palace, Shangri-La Istanbul, who will lead an exclusive dining experience at Chow Mee from 1 to 14 October, showcasing authentic Shang Palace recipes and festive flavours inspired by this traditional celebration of reunion and gratitude.

Culinary Highlights in Muscat

Taste of Shangri-La brings together the creativity of chefs across four specialty restaurants at both Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn, each presenting a distinct culinary identity inspired by culture, sustainability, and artistry.

“Each of our venues celebrates a different facet of the Shangri-La story – from our Chinese heritage and Italian passion to our love for the sea and Mediterranean flavours,” said Philippe Kronberg, Resort General Manager of Shangri-La Muscat

hotels. “This year, we are especially proud to feature our Mid-Autumn Festival in collaboration with Chef Lui Zhenggou as well as with the award-winning Tea Master Xian Zhan, also from Shangri-La Istanbul and who will demonstrate the captivating show of live tea ceremony at both Chow Mee and Sultanah exceptionally from 6 – 11 October.” concluded Philippe.

Signature Dining Experiences

Mid-Autumn Celebrations at Chow Mee – A Shang Palace Collaboration

From 1 to 14 October, Chef Lui Zhenggou, Wok Master from Shang Palace, Shangri-La Istanbul, takes over Chow Mee to present an 8-course menu inspired by the Mid-Autumn Festival. The dining experience highlights hallmark dishes such as shrimp wontons, shredded duck salad, hot and sour seafood soup, gong bao prawns, and beef tenderloin with black pepper sauce, culminating in a Kataifi-wrapped custard with vanilla ice cream.

This special collaboration embodies Shangri-La’s signature warmth and culinary excellence, bridging Istanbul and Muscat through the shared spirit of celebration.

Rooted in Nature at Bait Al Bahr

This year, Bait Al Bahr unveils a revamped set menu that embraces Shangri-La’s global Rooted in Nature philosophy – celebrating ingredients that are locally and sustainably sourced from Oman’s land and sea. Guests can enjoy char-grilled baby squid, Omani Seabream, and grilled tiger prawns, concluding with a Frankincense tart – all served against the stunning backdrop of the Gulf of Oman.



Timeless Italian Flavours at Capri Court

Capri Court continues to charm diners with its timeless Italian dishes that pay homage to the essence of *la dolce vita*. The tasting menu features spaghetti Nero with squid ink and lemon zest, parmesan and ricotta ravioli, and beef Ribeye, ending with a pistachio Genovese biscuit – a journey through Italy’s regional favourites.

Sail Through the Mediterranean at Sultanah

Inspired by Oman’s first cruise liner to sail to New York in 1840, Sultanah offers a refined Mediterranean tasting menu featuring foie gras delight, Omani oyster Rockefeller, risotto Nero,



and Black Angus medallion, closing with a fresh fig Kataifi dessert.

Event Details

Throughout October, each restaurant will offer vegetarian and non-vegetarian tasting menus, available daily at dinnertime from 1st to 31st of October. The 6+ course tasting menus are priced at OMR 21 net per person, per restaurant. The operating days of each dining venue may vary, and advanced reservations are highly recommended. For reservations, please call +968 24776565 or email fbreservation.slm@shangri-la.com

For more information on the Taste of Shangri-La event and to view the full collection of tasting menus, please visit the Shangri-La Experiences site



SPORTS

WINNINGDEBUT



Poland's Iga Swiatek hits a return to Czech Republic's Marie Bouzkova at Wuhan Open. — AFP

SWIATEK ADVANCES AT WUHAN OPEN

WUHAN: World number two Iga Swiatek enjoyed a victorious debut at the Wuhan Open on a scorching on Tuesday that saw Emma Raducanu and Jelena Ostapenko both retire from their matches. Swiatek, who had an opening-round bye, eased past the Czech Republic's Marie Bouzkova 6-1, 6-1 to book a third-round clash with Belinda Bencic or Elise Mertens.

After her win, Swiatek called on organisers to take player safety into account when scheduling matches on the outside courts, where there is no roof that can be closed to control the temperature.

"I feel like it's getting hotter in different places over the years," she said. "I'm just trying to use my experience, recover well between the points, and just spend all my energy on having the best quality possible. But for sure it's a challenge."

Earlier, Raducanu had her blood pressure and other vitals checked before retiring with dizziness from her first-round match when down 6-1, 4-1 to American Ann Li. The British world number 30 appeared to be struggling with the conditions as the temperature soared. — AFP

Djokovic pushes through Shanghai quarterfinals

NOVAK DJOKOVIC banished exhaustion and played through an ankle injury scare to make it to the quarterfinals of the Shanghai Masters on Tuesday, beating Spain's Jaume Munar 6-3, 5-7, 6-2.

The victory keeps Djokovic on track as the favourite to take a record-extending fifth title in the Chinese financial hub, with other top seeds already withdrawn or knocked out.

The 38-year-old almost looked like he might not be able to continue when the match went to a decider, but conjured up the energy to break his decade-younger opponent twice in the third set.

"Thank you, thank you everyone, I love you!" he shouted in Chinese to the adoring crowd before leaving court almost immediately after play finished.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion had a good start, breaking in the fourth game, but shortly afterwards had to take a medical break when his left ankle slid out behind him as he rushed towards the net.

He grimaced in pain as he



Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return to Spain's Jaume Munar at the Shanghai Masters tournament in Shanghai, China. — AFP

was attended to by an on-court physio, but managed to resume to hold the fifth game.

Djokovic received treatment briefly again during a break in play in the second set, and looked increasingly fatigued, crouching over frequently in between rallies.

Serbian-flag-waving Chinese fans roared in support, but 41st-ranked Munar ultimately

broke in the 12th game after an unforced error from his opponent.

An agonised Djokovic dropped to the floor and remained splayed out on court with his chest heaving, as his team rushed over.

But he picked himself up and in the third set had an incredible revival, breaking in the first and seventh games and sending the

stadium into a frenzy.

Djokovic is the highest-ranking player left in the competition.

World number one Carlos Alcaraz withdrew from the tournament to rest, and second, third and fourth-ranked Jannik Sinner, Alexander Zverev and Taylor Fritz have all been eliminated.

The event in Shanghai has been beset by injuries, as players have battled temperatures of over 30 Celsius and humidity levels peaking at over 80 per cent.

Sinner was forced to retire on Sunday after being seized with extreme cramps.

World number 11 Holger Rune, who has also struggled with the conditions, called on Tuesday for tennis authorities to bring in a heat policy for events like Shanghai.

The Dane is through to the last eight after he took out France's Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard 6-4, 6-7 (7/9), 6-3.

Zizou Bergs and Gabriel Diallo took it down to the wire in their match, with the Belgian eventually prevailing in a prolonged third set tiebreak 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (10/8). — AFP

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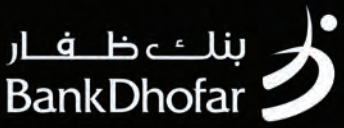


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GROWING MARKET



The listing reinforces EDO’s role as one of the largest state-owned energy companies and supports Oman’s growing Islamic capital market.

ENERGY DEVELOPMENT
OMAN’S RO 50 MILLION SUKUK LISTED ON MSX

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 7

THE Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has approved the listing of Energy Development Oman’s (EDO) inaugural sukuk issuance, worth RO 50 million, on the Bonds and Sukuk Market, effective October 8, 2025.

The listing follows a decision by the MSX Chief Executive Officer Haitham bin Salim al Salmi, in line with approvals granted by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) under Decision No 37/2025, issued on September 15.

The sukuk programme is structured under Al Ijarah and Al Wakalah certificates and will remain listed until maturity on October 7, 2028. A total of 50,000 sukuk units were issued, each with a nominal value of RO 1,000 and carrying an annual profit rate of 4.40 per cent.

The decision cites the Royal Decrees governing Oman’s securities law, public debt framework and the MSX’s Articles of Association. The listing reinforces EDO’s role as one of the largest state-owned energy companies and supports Oman’s growing Islamic capital market.

Market analysts say the sukuk issuance adds depth to Oman’s fixed-income market and provides investors with a new Sharia-compliant investment avenue. It also signals EDO’s broader funding strategy to support its operations and Oman’s energy sector transformation under Oman Vision 2040.

Oman’s production quota ticks up to 808,000 bpd

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 7

THE latest decision by the Opec+ alliance to ease voluntary production cuts will raise Oman’s output by 4,000 barrels per day (bpd) beginning in November 2025, according to prominent Omani energy analyst Ali al Riyami.

With this adjustment, Oman’s production quota for November is set at 808,000 bpd, reflecting an additional 3,000 bpd gained from a similar revision approved at the alliance’s previous meeting in September.

In a recent post, Al Riyami described the latest rollback of production cuts — amounting to a total adjustment of 137,000 bpd — as a “move laden with strategic nuance”. While modest in scale, he said, the timing and tone of the decision point to a measured shift in market management — one that carefully anticipates a more balanced global oil landscape.

“The decision, endorsed by eight participating countries including Oman, reflects a growing confidence in market fundamentals. Declining global inventories and stable demand



“A planned increase of 4,000 barrels per day may seem modest, but in a stable price environment, it contributes meaningfully to fiscal resilience.

ALI AL RIYAMI
Energy analyst

projections have prompted the alliance to test the waters of increased supply”, Al Riyami, who previously served as Director General at the Omani Ministry of Energy and Minerals, stated.

The participating countries — Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman — are gradually rolling back production cuts totalling nearly 3.85 million bpd, which have been in place since 2023.

According to Al Riyami, the latest production boost presents an opportunity for Oman and others to strengthen export revenues.

“A planned increase of 4,000 barrels per day may seem modest, but in a stable price environment, it contributes meaningfully to fiscal resilience. Moreover, the move allows participating countries to accelerate compensation for past overproduction, reinforcing their credibility within the alliance”, he explained.

The analyst also highlighted Opec+’s monthly assessments and flexible policy framework as evidence of the alliance’s pragmatic approach to balancing market stability with member interests.

“Ultimately, Opec+ continues to walk a fine line — balancing supply discipline with adaptive responsiveness. Whether this signals the start of a broader production recalibration will depend on how global demand evolves in the months ahead”, he concluded.

The 137,000 bpd adjustment will be distributed among the participating nations as follows: Russia and Saudi Arabia (+41,000 bpd each), Iraq (+18,000 bpd), UAE (+12,000 bpd), Kuwait (+10,000 bpd), Kazakhstan (+7,000 bpd), Oman (+4,000 bpd) and Algeria (+4,000 bpd).

Since early 2024, the eight countries have voluntarily curbed production by a combined 2.2 million bpd. Beginning in April 2025, they started gradually restoring supply to the global market — with output rising by 138,000 bpd in April, followed by 411,000 bpd monthly increases from May through July. Production expanded by 548,000 bpd in August and 547,000 bpd in September. In October, the group initiated the phase-out of their 1.65 million bpd voluntary cuts, approving the latest 137,000 bpd increase. The next Opec+ meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2025.

DOMESTIC LIQUIDITY RISES 5.2 PER CENT BY JULY 2025

MUSCAT: Preliminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed continued growth in Oman’s monetary indicators by the end of July 2025.

Domestic liquidity rose by 5.2% to RO 25.45 billion, compared with RO 24.20 billion in the same period last year. Narrow money supply increased by 10.2%, reaching RO 7.19 billion, up from RO 6.53 billion in July 2024.

Meanwhile, issued currency declined by 6.1% to RO 1.51 billion, compared to RO 1.61 billion last



Narrow money supply increased by 10.2%, reaching RO 7.19 billion.

year.

On the credit side, total loans and financing provided by commercial banks and Islamic windows grew by 8.9% to RO 34.1 billion, compared to RO 31.3 billion a year earlier. Private sector deposits also increased by 5.8% to RO 21.89 billion, up from RO 20.69 billion in July 2024.

The average interest rate on total loans fell slightly by 1.4% to 5.51%, down from 5.59%. Net foreign assets rose by 9.5% to RO 7.41 billion, compared with RO 6.77 billion last year. — ONA

Pact signed to boost renewable resource data in Oman

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 7

HYDROM, the orchestrator of Oman’s green hydrogen strategy, has signed a strategic agreement with Ankaa Space & Technologies LLC to operate and manage wind measurement stations across the Sultanate of Oman.

The partnership aims to improve the accuracy and continuity of renewable resource assessments, generating high-quality data essential for planning and accelerating large-scale green hydrogen projects.

Eng Abdulaziz bin Said al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom, said: “This agreement represents a key step in engaging Omani enterprises and talent in delivering green hydrogen projects.

Hydrom will provide technical guidance,



The partnership aims to improve the accuracy and continuity of renewable resource assessments.

work plans and training programmes to equip Omani professionals with expertise in wind and solar resource measurement, station operations and data management”.

Mohammed al Riyami, CEO of Ankaa Space & Technologies, added: “We are committed to implementing this agreement to the highest standards and building national capabilities in renewable resource measurement.

This collaboration sets a model for effective public-private partnership and supports Oman’s goal of localising value chains”. The initiative strengthens Oman’s renewable energy sector by enhancing data reliability, expanding local participation and deepening technical capabilities. It reinforces the Sultanate of Oman’s position as a structured, investment-ready ecosystem and a trusted regional hub for green hydrogen production and export.

ADVERTORIALS

ENCHANTING EXPERIENCE



Meaning “Welcome” in Swahili, Karibu embodies the vibrant traditions that bridge Zanzibar and India, with Oman at the heart of this timeless trade route.

A SPICE ROUTE CELEBRATION AT KARIBU WITHIN THE ST REGIS AL MOUJ MUSCAT RESORT

MUSCAT: The St Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort reintroduces Karibu, its homegrown restaurant, that celebrates the charm and vibrancy of the historic Spice Route through a refreshed and enchanting dining experience.

Meaning “Welcome” in Swahili, Karibu embodies the vibrant traditions that bridge Zanzibar and India, with Oman at the heart of this timeless trade route, offering an exquisite celebration of cultural tapestry, flavour and heartfelt hospitality.

Within an elegant and colourful setting, Karibu’s thoughtfully refreshed menu honours the legacy of the Spice Route, where each dish is a harmonious blend of treasured spices and time-honoured recipes. Guests are invited to savour a spectrum of bold and delicate flavours that evoke the rich markets, seas and kitchens of distant lands.

Throughout the week, Karibu reveals unique themed nights filled with sensory delights. Guests can also indulge in Curry Nights, every Tuesday an immersive experience offering a variety of rich, hearty curries served with freshly baked breads and fresh salads, embracing the comforting flavours of the region.

On Wednesdays, “Meat Me at Karibu” invites guests to enjoy perfectly grilled meats marinated with signature spices, served alongside artisanal breads and desserts in an evening dedicated to culinary mastery.

Omani Grill Seafood night, every Thursday, showcases the freshest local seafood, expertly charcoal grilled and infused with authentic Omani spices, capturing the essence of the Gulf’s maritime heritage.

Fridays bring the vibrancy of Zanzibari Nights, where fragrant barbecues mingle with live Zanzibari music, transporting diners to the lively coastlines of East Africa.

Karibu invites guests to immerse themselves into a world of flavour and tradition, where each bite tells a story and every visit is a celebration of cultures woven together by the Spice Route.

NOOR ARABIAN TEA RISES TO SECOND SPOT IN OMANI MARKET

MUSCAT: Noor Arabian Tea, recently introduced by Gulf Foods International, has made a strong impact in the Omani market. Within a short span of time, the brand has expanded its presence to over 1,200 retail outlets, achieving 100 per cent consumer satisfaction.

Remarkably, Noor Arabian has already become the second fastest-moving tea powder in the country – a success attributed to its quality, competitive pricing and effective market strategies. Known for its



rich taste, premium quality and distinctive aroma, Noor Arabian is now preparing to launch five new tea varieties to further strengthen its market presence. In addition to tea, the company plans to introduce a range of other food products in the near future.

Gulf Foods International has reiterated its commitment to strict quality assurance for every product it brings to the market, staying true to its tagline: “Better Food, Better Life”.

MGD opens second showroom in Australia



Gold & Diamonds (MGD), the 5th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 410 showrooms across 14 countries has strengthened their presence in Australia with the launch of their second showroom in the country at Melbourne.

The new showroom was inaugurated by acclaimed Bollywood actor and brand ambassador of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Anil Kapoor in the presence of Abdul Salam K P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group; Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mayankutty C, Senior Director of Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Nishad A K, Malabar Group Executive Director; K P Veerankutty, Malabar Group Executive Director; Faisal A K, Head of Manufacturing at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Ameer CMC, Director of Finance & Admin at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Shaji Kakkodi, Malabar Group Chief Digital Officer; other senior management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers and well-wishers.



The new showroom was inaugurated by acclaimed Bollywood actor and brand ambassador of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Anil Kapoor.

“The expansion of our Australia operations with the launch of our second showroom in Melbourne is indeed a historic milestone for Malabar Gold & Diamonds. By strengthening our presence in the country, we are reiterating our commitment to becoming the most preferred jewellery shopping destination in Australia.

As the first Indian international jewellery retailer in Melbourne, our presence is sure to transform the city’s jewellery and retail landscape. Our first showroom in Sydney,

which was launched in 2023, was an immense success and we are confident that jewellery lovers in Melbourne will also welcome us with open arms. With the Melbourne showroom being our 409th global outlet, we are one step closer to our goal of being the world’s number 1 jewellery retailer”, commented Malabar Group Chairman M P Ahammad.

Located at Westfield Fountain gate, the new showroom has been designed to be a complete luxury destinations, offering jewellery lovers an unmatched selection of over 20,000 designs

in gold, diamonds and precious gem jewellery. Customers can explore more than 25 exclusive collections from Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ vast design portfolio, alongside specialised services such as bespoke jewellery design and exclusive bridal creations tailored to individual preferences.

“The launch of Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ 2nd showroom in Australia is a proud moment for the brand. The response to our showroom and the inauguration has been phenomenal, where thousands gathered to celebrate with Bollywood legend Anil Kapoor.

His presence turned the evening into a truly entertaining spectacle and his words of endorsement, reflecting his long-standing association with Malabar, added immense pride to the occasion.

The overwhelming reception of both our showrooms reaffirms the universal appeal of our design portfolio, service excellence and responsible operations, reinforcing our confidence in the long-term potential of this region”, commented Abdul Salam K P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group.

BANKDHOFAR SHOWCASES HOME FINANCE SOLUTIONS

MUSCAT: BankDhofar is proud to announce its participation in Urban October 2025, a landmark national event co-located with the Home & Building Expo, taking place from October 6-9, 2025 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

Organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, Urban October is a flagship initiative that celebrates sustainable, people-centred urban development.

The platform brings together government entities, investors, developers and financial partners to accelerate Oman’s progress towards



BankDhofar’s participation reaffirms its position as a key financial partner in supporting the housing and urban development sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

sustainable cities in line with Oman Vision 2040. At this year’s

event, BankDhofar will be present to welcome visitors at it’s booth to explore the Bank’s comprehensive range of home finance products, while experienced relationship managers will be on hand to guide guests through tailored financing options designed to turn their housing aspirations into reality.

BankDhofar’s participation reaffirms its position as a key financial partner in supporting the housing and urban development sector in the Sultanate of Oman, by offering flexible and tailored financing solutions that meet the needs of both individuals and investor.

BankDhofar’s Home Finance products are distinguished by competitive interest rates starting from 4.75 per cent, fast processing times with minimal documentation, flexible tenures of up to 25 years and financing amounts of up to RO 350,000 or 90 per cent of the property’s value.

The Bank also extends the option of joint applications. Whether purchasing a home or land, constructing a new property, renovating, or transferring an existing mortgage, BankDhofar offers customisable loan solutions designed for convenience, flexibility and affordability.

Wassan Dental Centre opens expanded state-of-the-art facility in Muscat

MUSCAT: Wassan Specialty Dental Centre, one of Oman’s most trusted names in dental and orthodontic care, celebrated the grand opening of its expanded facility in Al Khuwair, marking a new milestone in its 22-year journey of excellence and innovation.

The inauguration was attended by Dr Muhanna bin Nasser bin Rashid al Musalhi, Director General of Private Health Institutions – Ministry of Health; G V Srinivas, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman; and Angelo Maura, General Manager for the Middle East and Africa at Align Technology,



Dr Muhanna bin Nasser bin Rashid al Musalhi, Director General of Private Health Institutions – Ministry of Health and G V Srinivas, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, led the ribbon cutting ceremony.

among other distinguished guests and members of the Omani and Indian healthcare community.

A NEW CHAPTER IN PATIENT CARE

The new facility introduces 15 advanced treatment suites equipped with cutting-edge dental technology and designed to enhance comfort, safety and accessibility. Special emphasis has been placed on inclusive design, ensuring easy access for patients with disabilities, wider corridors and dedicated treatment areas that allow every patient to receive care with dignity and ease. “This is a proud moment

for all of us”, said Dr Siju George, Specialist Orthodontist and Founding Doctor of Wassan Dental Centre. “What defines Wassan is not the walls or the equipment, but the people operating the facility. Our vision is to create a place where every patient feels cared for, respected and understood – where human connection matters as much as clinical excellence”.

He added, “Our dream is to build a world-leading dental centre – a place recognised not only for the care we provide but also as a centre where people can come to learn from us”.

REMOVINGBARRIERS



Bilateral trade hit RO 1.575 billion — a 20% increase compared with the same period in 2024.

OMAN–SAUDI
PACT REDEFINES
GULF INDUSTRIAL
INTEGRATION

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 7

THE Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have taken a decisive step in reshaping Gulf economic integration with the mutual recognition of certificates of origin. This breakthrough removes barriers to the smooth movement of goods across borders, giving Omani exports easier access to Saudi Arabia’s vast market and cementing Riyadh and Muscat as central players in the region’s industrial transformation.

Trade figures underscore the impact. Omani industrial exports surged 39% by July 2025, reaching RO 733 million, while Saudi exports to Oman climbed 10% to RO 762 million. Bilateral trade hit RO 1.575 billion — a 20% increase compared with the same period in 2024.

The agreement goes beyond customs simplification. It lays the foundation for joint supply chains, equal treatment in government tenders and streamlined registration of products with regulators. A fast-track conformity system is being introduced to cut costs and time for exporters, enabling Omani companies to embed themselves more deeply in Saudi supply chains.

Officials on both sides view this as a milestone in aligning Oman Vision 2040 and Vision 2030. Qais bin Mohammed al Youssef of Oman’s Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) stressed that partnerships will focus on technology transfer and joint projects that deliver in-country value and create jobs.

The Omani Industrialists Association hailed the agreement as a “strategic turning point” in Gulf industrial cooperation. Shaikh Dr Hilal bin Abdullah al Hinai, Chairman of Oman Manufacturers Association, noted that the deal will stimulate local industries and encourage joint investments in high-value supply chain projects.

From heavy industries to food manufacturing, Omani companies are moving to capitalise. Sohar Aluminium is partnering with Saudi counterparts on low-emission technologies and recycling, while Areej Vegetable Oils sees expanded access to the Saudi market as a driver for regional growth.

RO 200 million wellness
village at Al Jabal Al Aali

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 7

MUSSTIR the real estate development arm of Mohammed Al Barwani Group, has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to develop the “Wellness Village” project at Al Jabal Al Aali in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

The agreement, signed during the Urban October Conference organised by the Ministry, involves an investment of up to RO 200 million. Dr Mohammed al Barwani, Chairman of the Group, signed on behalf of Musstir.

Dr Al Barwani said:“This project is unique within the Al Jabal Al Aali development portfolio. We are proud to be one of the chosen developers, a recognition of Musstir’s technical expertise and innovative approach.



The Wellness Village will reflect Oman’s cultural identity and the natural beauty of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar

The Wellness Village will reflect Oman’s cultural identity and the natural beauty of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, in collaboration with local partners and SMEs”.

Covering more than 600,000 square metres, the project will feature a modern resort dedicated to wellness and relaxation, complemented

by more than 360 premium residential units designed to offer sustainable, healthy living away from the bustle of urban life.

The development will include walking and fitness trails with panoramic views of the surrounding landscapes, as well as indoor and outdoor pools to promote a healthy lifestyle in

harmony with nature. Musstir is showcasing the project at the Ministry’s pavilion during the exhibition from October 6–9.

Construction is expected to commence soon. The Al Jabal Al Aali development marks a major milestone in Oman’s real estate and tourism investment landscape, in line with national development goals.

OMAN–BAHRAIN FORUM BOOSTS ECONOMIC TIES

MUSCAT: The Omani-Bahraini Economic Forum, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), highlighted new opportunities to strengthen joint investment and economic cooperation across key sectors such as construction, real estate, finance, energy, food, technology, healthcare, retail, logistics and strategic investments.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), underscored the deep historical ties between Oman and Bahrain, noting that the forum reflects the shared commitment to align Oman Vision 2040 with Bahrain Economic Vision 2030.

He stressed the pivotal role of the private sector in driving economic development and regional integration, aiming to expand trade, exchange expertise and foster impactful partnerships.

Dr Juma al Kaabi, Bahrain’s Ambassador to Oman, described the forum as a key platform



The forum served as a key platform to deepen cooperation and activate existing agreements between the two countries.

to deepen cooperation and activate existing agreements between the two countries.

He expressed optimism that the discussions would lead to tangible outcomes that strengthen business partnerships and benefit both national

economies.

Khalid Najibi, First Vice Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, highlighted Bahrain’s economic transformation towards a diversified, innovation-driven model. He reaffirmed the strong bilateral relations and the leaders’ shared vision to advance integration and development.

Saud bin Ahmed al Nahari, Chairman of the Omani Bahrain Investment Company, revealed plans to invest in tourism, mining, food security, manufacturing, IT and artificial intelligence, with operations set to begin early next year.

The forum also featured a dialogue session on the prospects of economic integration and cooperation, with contributions from leading private sector representatives.

Bilateral meetings on the sidelines allowed Omani and Bahraini business owners to explore joint ventures, exchange expertise and identify opportunities for SME collaboration. — ONA

be’ah showcases circular economy gains from construction waste

SAEED AL MASHARFI
MUSCAT, OCT 7

Oman Environmental Services Holding Company “be’ah” is participating in the Home & Building Expo 2025, highlighting its key projects and achievements in construction and demolition (C&D) waste management. The company’s efforts reflect its leadership in environmental sustainability and its ability to transform challenges into economic opportunities that support the circular economy in the Sultanate of Oman.

Since commencing operations in this sector in 2015, be’ah has received more than 21 million tonnes of C&D waste. Treatment operations began in 2019, during which over 16 million tonnes were successfully processed



Since commencing operations in this sector in 2015, be’ah has received more than 21 million tonnes of C&D waste.

between 2019 and 2025. These initiatives have enabled the company to recycle waste into usable products.

Currently, be’ah manages 32 sites across the Sultanate of Oman dedicated to receiving C&D waste, including 10 specialised facilities equipped with advanced machinery to produce high-quality materials such as sand and aggregates.

These recycled products are reintroduced into the local market, reducing pressure on natural resources while also creating economic value through locally managed contracts.

Shadiya bint Saleh al Hashmiyah, Senior Manager of Special Waste Streams at be’ah, stated that the company’s participation in the exhibition provides an opportunity to showcase its achievements in transforming construction and demolition waste into value-added resources, while strengthening partnerships with stakeholders to promote

the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.

Beyond its environmental role, be’ah emphasises that its overall strategic direction across all projects is also investment-driven.

The company aims to generate economic opportunities by turning waste into valuable products, encouraging private sector involvement and driving innovative sustainability-focused ventures that contribute to national growth.

be’ah reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with public and private entities to foster a culture of sustainable construction and to develop innovative solutions that keep pace with the Sultanate of Oman’s urban expansion, in line with its vision: “Together, we preserve our beautiful Oman”.

MARKET REACTION

Oil holds after modest output hike



Oil prices remained steady on Tuesday after OPEC+ announced a smaller-than-expected output increase. Brent crude slipped 9 cents to \$65.38 a barrel, while US WTI fell 10 cents to \$61.59.

Both benchmarks had risen over 1% the previous day. OPEC+ agreed to boost production by 137,000 barrels per day from November, easing supply concerns but leaving investors cautious amidst oversupply expectations. — Reuters

GOVERNMENT STANDOFF

White House denies shutdown layoffs



The White House clarified on Monday that no government layoffs had yet occurred due to the ongoing shutdown, countering President Trump’s earlier remarks. Officials warned, however, that job losses could follow if the standoff continues.

The Senate again rejected rival funding measures — one from Republicans to fund agencies through 21 November and a Democratic version that included healthcare subsidy extensions. — Reuters

DEBT STRATEGY

US may sell student loan assets



The Trump administration is considering selling portions of its \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio, Politico reported. Senior officials from the Departments of Education and Treasury have discussed selling high-performing loans to private investors.

The portfolio represents debt held by around 45 million Americans and the move could shift parts of the massive programme to the private sector. — Reuters

OPINION

Blue energy: Charting a course for a sustainable future



MARYAM AHMED YOUSEF AL NOFLI

The writer is a researcher, academic faculty and Head of the Continuous Education and Community Service Department at UTAS Musandam.

WITH its expansive seas and powerful waves, Oman stands at the threshold of a new era in renewable energy: the harnessing of wave power. As the Sultanate of Oman strives to diversify its energy mix and meet the ambitious goals of Oman Vision 2040, blue energy offers both opportunity and challenge in equal measure.

OMAN’S UNTAPPED COASTAL ADVANTAGE
Oman’s geography confers a unique advantage. The nation’s coastline, stretching 2,092 km along the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea, is one of its most valuable natural assets. Studies place the mean wave power at around 7.5 kW per metre, with a theoretical potential of nearly 138 terawatt hour (TWh) per year.
More conservatively, the applicable potential is about 7 TWh annually — enough to cover roughly 24% of Oman’s 2016 electricity consumption (28.92 TWh) if harnessed fully. These figures underline the scale of Oman’s blue energy potential, transforming what was once seen as an untapped resource into a pillar of future sustainability.

FROM POLICY TO PILOT PROJECTS
Wave energy is no longer just an academic interest. Oman is already transitioning from research to practical applications. Utilities Middle East has reported that government-

linked logistics groups, in partnership with international wave-energy firms, are laying the groundwork for pilot projects.
This transition from planning to deployment marks a critical step in demonstrating the viability of wave energy technologies in Oman’s waters.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND FUTURE GROWTH
One of the common concerns around renewable energy is its long-term reliability under climate change. Encouragingly, high-resolution climate modelling for the Sea of Oman indicates that wave power potential may increase by 21–45% by the late 21st century under a high-emission scenario.
Moreover, the research highlights the importance of temporal stability in wave energy resources: locations with slightly lower average power but higher stability may ultimately deliver more dependable energy.
This insight will be crucial for Oman as it selects sites for its first pilot projects.

SYNERGIES WITH GREEN HYDROGEN
Wave energy is not just about supplying electricity directly to the grid. It can also be a vital enabler of Oman’s green hydrogen ambitions.
For example, if the 7 TWh/year applicable resource were directed into electrolysis at a conversion requirement of roughly 50 kWh per kilogramme of hydrogen, Oman could

Wave energy is no longer just an academic interest. Oman is already transitioning from research to practical applications. Utilities Middle East has reported that government-linked logistics groups, in partnership with international wave-energy firms, are laying the groundwork for pilot projects.

theoretically produce around 140,000 tonnes of hydrogen per year.
While only illustrative, such calculations underscore wave energy’s role in positioning Oman as a competitive player in the emerging global hydrogen economy.

CHALLENGES ON THE HORIZON
Despite the promise, significant challenges remain. Wave energy technologies are still emerging, with issues of durability, cost and maintenance in harsh marine environments requiring further innovation. Integration into Oman’s existing energy infrastructure will also demand strategic planning and investment.
However, with supportive policy, targeted research and public-private collaboration, these challenges can be transformed into opportunities.

CHARTING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
Oman’s commitment to renewable energy is clear and wave power is now firmly on the national agenda. By leveraging its natural coastal advantage, fostering partnerships and aligning blue energy with broader green hydrogen and sustainability goals, the Sultanate of Oman is poised to turn waves into watts.
In doing so, Oman not only advances its own Oman Vision 2040 targets but also sets an example of innovation and resilience for the wider region.

CHINA ACCELERATES OIL RESERVE SITE BUILD AMIDST STOCKPILING DRIVE

China is building oil reserve sites at a rapid clip as part of a campaign to boost crude stockpiles that increased in urgency after Russia’s Ukraine war upended global energy flows and has accelerated this year, according to public data, traders and industry experts.

State oil companies including Sinopec and CNOOC will add at least 169 million barrels of storage across 11 sites during 2025 and 2026. Of that, 37 million barrels of capacity has been built, the sources show.

Once completed, the new sites will be able to store two weeks of China’s net crude imports, a significant volume as China is by far the world’s biggest oil importer. Beijing’s reserve-building —

OPEC+ producers group winds down production cuts. Traders and consultancies say they expect the stockpiling, fuelled by prices recently below \$70 per barrel, to continue at least through the first quarter of 2026.

S&P Global Commodity Insight last month estimated China had stockpiled an average of 530,000 barrels per day thus far in 2025 — is soaking up surplus global supply and supporting prices under pressure as the OPEC+ producers group winds down production cuts. Traders and consultancies say they expect the stockpiling, fuelled by prices recently

below \$70 per barrel, to continue at least through the first quarter of 2026.

China’s heavy dependence on foreign oil, carried mainly by tankers, is a strategic vulnerability that Beijing is seeking to mitigate through storage, diversification of import sources and maintaining domestic production. China is also rapidly developing renewable energy and electrifying its vehicle fleet, with both gasoline and diesel demand declining and overall oil consumption likely to peak in 2027.

Its reserve site construction is accelerating. The new additions planned for this year and next, nearly match the 180-190 million barrels of capacity that analytics firms Vortexa and Kpler, respectively, estimate were added in the previous five years. China’s secrecy about its reserves means the list may not be comprehensive and the status of projects could change.

Beijing built its first strategic reserve site in 2006, but its recent push stems from the aftermath of Russia’s 2022 war in Ukraine, which triggered a wave of disruptive sanctions on Moscow and highlighted the vulnerability of Beijing’s oil imports, traders and analysts said.

From the outlook on the US dollar to a global surplus of oil, these are the stories to watch in business and finance in the coming week.

Since late 2023, Beijing has quietly issued mandates to state-owned companies to stockpile oil, traders and analysts say. — Reuters

Dhofar and ASEAN: From courtesy call to deal flow

LAST week’s visit by ambassadors of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to Dhofar

Governorate was more than a photo-op. Hosted by His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, the engagement signalled a practical opening: pairing Dhofar’s strengths with ASEAN capital, know-how and appetite for new markets.

Why does this matter? Because ASEAN is not just another bloc. Its ten member states represent a combined market of hundreds of millions and a multi-trillion-dollar economy.

The region attracts substantial foreign direct investment each year and its companies — large and mid-cap—are constantly scanning for stable, well-located platforms that connect Asia with Africa and the Gulf. Dhofar fits that brief.

Start with the basics. Dhofar combines natural assets and modern infrastructure in a way few places do. The Khareef Dhofar Season (monsoon season) draws visitors in the tens of thousands.

The governorate sits on the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, with blue-water access to East Africa and South Asia.

It is plugged into national reforms under Oman Vision 2040: tax incentives, simplified company setup and a growing network of special economic and logistics zones. These are not abstract selling points; they are the nuts and bolts investors look for when deciding where to commit long-term capital.

Tourism is the obvious first mover.

ASEAN hospitality brands know how to build destinations that are both high-quality and commercially sound. Names such as Banyan Tree, Dusit and Centara are examples — not endorsements — of the calibre that could develop eco-resorts, family-friendly properties and wellness retreats aligned with Dhofar’s landscape and culture.

Real-estate investment groups from the region, like Singapore’s CapitaLand, could add integrated projects that bring together hotels, retail and residential components



Dhofar combines natural assets and modern infrastructure in a way few places do.



ADEL RAMADHAN adel.ramadhan@outlook.com

The author is an Omani journalist and media editor based in Salalah, covering cultural and economic affairs.

Policy tools exist to make this real. Oman’s Golden Residency options for investors and entrepreneurs offer long-term visibility. Streamlined licensing and clear land-use pathways reduce friction.

to extend the season and diversify revenue. Air connectivity is the force multiplier. Direct services from major ASEAN carriers — think Singapore Airlines, AirAsia or Garuda Indonesia — would do more than carry holidaymakers.

They would knit together business travel, cargo flows and medical-tourism routes. Even seasonal or codeshare links can shift the equation by cutting journey times and signalling market confidence.

Healthcare is another near-term play. Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore have built global reputations in specialised care.

Partnerships with institutions such as Bangkok Dusit Medical Services, IHH Healthcare or Siloam Hospitals could help establish centres of excellence in Dhofar — orthopaedics, cardiology, rehabilitation or wellness — serving patients from the wider region.

The result is twofold: better local services and higher-value jobs for Omani clinicians and graduates.

Logistics and industry complete the picture. Site visits to Salalah Free Zone, the Port of Salalah and industrial estates managed by Madayn show a platform that

already moves scale volumes and can host export-oriented manufacturing.

The proposed Salalah Future City concept — properly defined and phased — could anchor mixed-use districts and advanced services that complement port and airport growth.

Policy tools exist to make this real. Oman’s Golden Residency options for investors and entrepreneurs offer long-term visibility. Streamlined licensing and clear land-use pathways reduce friction. What matters now is packaging these elements into investor-ready propositions with timelines, approvals and aftercare spelled out.

A practical next step would be to convene an ASEAN-Salalah Investment Forum. Keep it focused: two days of sector-specific panels (tourism, healthcare, logistics, food processing), one day of curated site tours and pre-scheduled B2B meetings with project sponsors.

Publish a concise investment prospectus in advance, with unit economics, incentive schedules and contact points.

The goal is simple — convert interest into term sheets.

The strategic upside is larger than any single project. For ASEAN investors, Dhofar offers a stable base to reach Gulf and African demand.

For Oman, it accelerates economic diversification, builds export capacity and creates pathways for youth employment in high-value services.

Diplomacy has opened the door; execution will determine whether this becomes a pipeline of bankable deals.

The message from Dhofar is straightforward: the welcome mat is out, the infrastructure is in place and the policy framework is aligned with long-term partners. It is now about matching credible ASEAN operators and financiers with projects that respect local identity, protect the environment and deliver sustainable returns.

If both sides move with discipline, last week’s courtesy call could mark the start of a genuinely transformative chapter.

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INDIAN electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in “MEP” construction field in Oman seeks suitable job. Contact: 92919281

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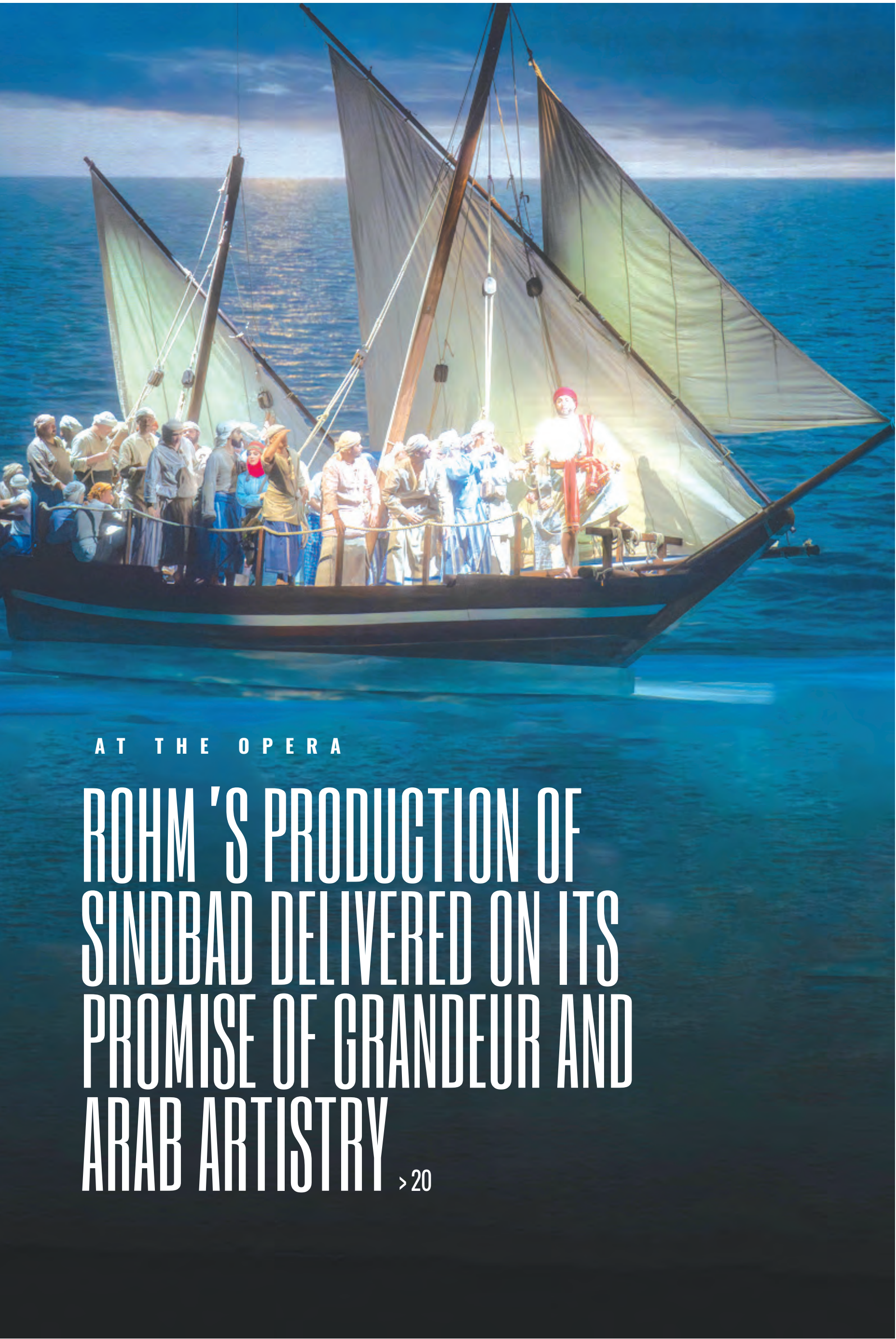
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ART/LIFE



ENTERTAINMENT

Afropop icon Adekunle Gold embraces Nigerian roots with new album



Nigerian singer Adekunle Gold returns to his roots on Friday with the release of his sixth album, “Fuji”, which he described as a tribute to the ancestral sounds of his home country.

“That sound is the soundtrack of Lagos. It’s everywhere. That sound gave birth to Afrobeats and all the things that we hear right now”, Gold said in Paris.

A descendant of the Kosoko royal family, the Afropop icon draws inspiration from the Indigenous Yoruba community, one of the largest ethnic groups in west Africa.

It is “one of the oldest sounds of Nigeria”, the 38-year-old singer said.

Fuji music, a popular genre that evolved from Yoruba Muslim culture, is known for its fast beats, large ensemble of percussion instruments and lyrics based on key sociopolitical themes.

The genre took off in Nigeria in the 1960s, shortly after the country declared independence.

Late singer-songwriter Ayinde Barrister, widely regarded as the pioneer of Fuji music, named the style after the famous Japanese mountain.

Gold blends traditional elements from Nigeria’s rich musical heritage with the catchy melodies of contemporary R&B.

Like Burna Boy or Davido, he represents this generation of Nigerian artists who have bridged divides between past and present for an international audience.

“You listen to it and it makes your body move. It’s magical”, the singer said.

“Fuji, Highlife (another traditional genre), every sound from Nigeria makes you feel alive. I feel like that’s why it does well”, he added.

Full of colourful outfits, lively dancing and flower-covered boats, his “Party No Dey Stop” music video — a viral duet with fellow Nigerian Zinoleesky — has amassed 29 million views on YouTube.

The song is his first major hit in the United States.

Gold, also known as AG Baby, gained fame in Nigeria in 2014 after he covered a song by popular boy band One Direction.

Since then, he has signed with American label Def Jam Recordings and has collaborated on the track “Falling Up” with funk legend Nile Rodgers and musician Pharrell Williams. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



CULTURE

A woman buys earthen lamps during an exhibition ahead of the Diwali festival in Amritsar. — AFP



FASHION

A model presents a creation by Lacoste for the Women Ready-to-wear Spring-Summer 2026 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week. — AFP



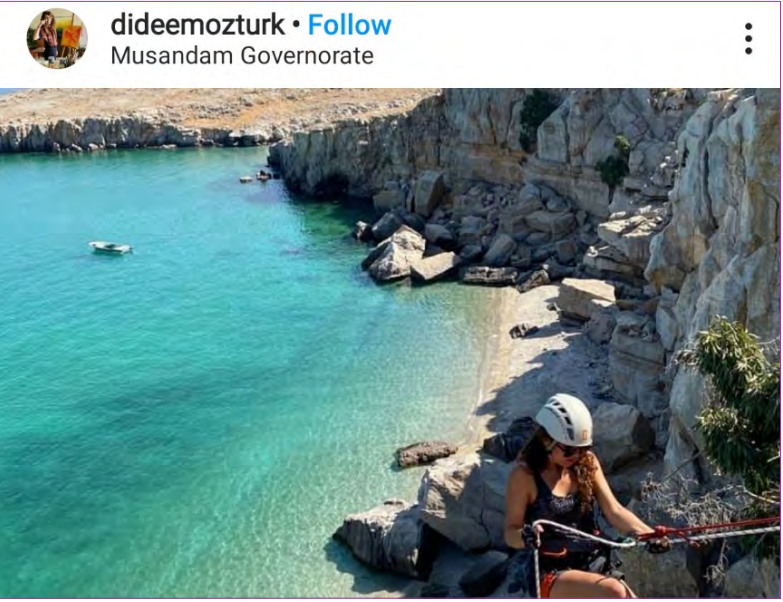
LIFESTYLE

A person visits the National Gallery of Art on the fourth day of a partial government shutdown in Washington, DC. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



The Fishy Affair



Beauty of Remote Places

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Researchers make yoghurt with ants according to traditional recipe



RESEARCHERS from the University of Copenhagen and the Technical University of Denmark studied a traditional fermentation method involving wood ants and warm milk, originating from Türkiye and the Balkans. They strongly advise against trying this at home. The team visited Bulgaria, where anthropologist Sevgi Mutlu Sirakova's relatives explained the tradition. According to a report in the journal iScience, Veronica Sinotte from the University of Copenhagen described how four whole ants were added to a glass of warm milk, following instructions from Sevgi's uncle. The glass was then left overnight in an anthill to create ideal fermentation conditions. The next day, the milk thickened and soured, resembling early-stage yoghurt.

Study leader Leonie Jahn from the Technical University of Denmark noted that although ants can be eaten, they are not meant to be consumed directly. Instead, they are used to initiate

fermentation because they carry beneficial bacteria like lactic and acetic acid bacteria, which help coagulate the milk. The chemical defenses of the ants acidify the milk, encouraging the growth of acid-loving microbes, resulting in a slightly tangy yoghurt. Jahn explained that traditional yoghurts often have richer microbial diversity compared to commercial types, influencing flavor and texture. Sinotte emphasized that this practice should be recognized as part of biocultural heritage.

Experiments proved that live ants produce the best results, as frozen or dried ants do not harbor the same bacteria. However, the team warned against trying this at home due to the potential risk of parasites. Chefs from Copenhagen's Michelin-starred Alchemist restaurant created dishes using the ant-yoghurt, including a mascarpone-like cheese, a cocktail, and a yoghurt ice-cream sandwich, demonstrating innovative culinary possibilities.

— dpa



Egypt opens one of Valley of the Kings' largest tombs to public



THE TOMB of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, one of the largest in southern Egypt's Valley of the Kings and Queens, was officially opened to the public on Saturday, after years of restoration.

Egypt's tourism and antiquities minister, Sherif Fathy, unveiled to reporters the newly refurbished tomb, which dates back more than 3,000 years.

It was first documented in 1799 during the brief Napoleonic conquest of Egypt. After a long history of excavation, looting and heavy damage, it was restored with support from the Japanese government and Unesco.

Carved into the hillside on the west bank of the Nile River opposite the city of Luxor, the tomb is "decorated with wall paintings that are among the most exquisite of those surviving in the royal tombs of the Eighteenth Dynasty", according to Japan's Unesco mission.

Decades of deterioration had left the structure at risk of collapse.

Amenhotep III ascended the throne as a teenager and ruled for around four decades of prosperity, stability and artistic grandeur before dying in 1349 BC at the age

of 50. He was buried in the famed Theban Necropolis, where Ancient Egyptian kings, queens, priests and royal scribes were buried between the 16th and 11th centuries BC.

Following French and British excavations in 1799 and 1915, most of the tomb's contents were carted away to the Louvre Museum in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum in New York and Highclere Castle in the United Kingdom, according to Waseda University in Japan.

His mummy and sarcophagus are housed in Cairo's National Museum of Egyptian Civilisations, while the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir and the capital's new Grand Egyptian Museum house colossal statues of the pharaoh seated next to his wife.

Near his tomb, Amenhotep's massive mortuary temple known as Kom Al Hetan has suffered extensive damage from annual Nile flooding, but two giant granite statues known as the Colossi of Memnon survive, greeting visitors into the ancient valley.

REMARKABLE PROGRESS

The discovery of Amenhotep's tomb marks a significant milestone in Egyptology, reflecting decades of archaeological efforts and advances in research technologies. Historically, the tomb was

hypothesized to exist based on ancient texts and earlier excavations in the Valley of the Kings. However, it was only recently that its location was confirmed through a combination of ground-penetrating radar, satellite imagery, and meticulous excavation work by a team of archaeologists.

The recent display of Amenhotep's tomb has garnered massive interest for several reasons. Firstly, Amenhotep was a notable pharaoh whose reign marked a pivotal period in Egyptian history, and his tomb is believed to contain invaluable artifacts and hieroglyphic inscriptions that offer insights into his life and era. Secondly, the tomb's exceptional preservation state provides a rich source for understanding ancient Egyptian burial practices, art, and religious beliefs. Lastly, the discovery has captivated the public imagination, bringing increased attention to Egypt's archaeological heritage and inspiring future research.

This groundbreaking find not only enhances our understanding of ancient Egypt but also highlights the remarkable progress in archaeological techniques, promising further exciting discoveries in the future.— AFP

FEATURES



ROHM 'S PRODUCTION OF SINDBAD DELIVERED ON ITS PROMISE OF GRANDEUR AND ARAB ARTISTRY

BY YERU EBUEN
PHOTOS BY KHALID AL BUSAIDY

THE ROYAL OPERA

House Muscat opened its 2025–26 season with Sindbad: The Omani Sailor, a work of unprecedented scale and ambition — the first grand Arabic-language opera conceived through an Omani lens.

Composed and conducted by the Egyptian maestro Hisham Gabr, with a libretto by Nader Salah El Din, the production marks a cultural milestone, merging Arabic narrative traditions with the architecture of Western opera.

I attended the premiere on Friday, October 3. Barely 20 minutes into the performance, it was briefly halted due to some technical glitches. Taking an unscheduled 20 minute break, the audience’s goodwill never wavered. Such is the weight of anticipation surrounding this homegrown triumph; few seemed to mind a reset when the scale of the work was so immense.

In this version of Sindbad, when the governor’s youngest daughter mysteriously vanished, the sailor Sindbad was commanded to search for her before he could wed his beloved, Fairouz. Secretly joined by Fairouz and betrayed by a scheming minister allied with a sorceress, Sindbad’s ship is destroyed in a supernatural storm. Stranded on a cursed island, he joins forces with a pirate whose magical flute can dispel evil. Together, they defeat the sorceress, rescue Fairouz and recover the mystical “fragrance of life”, a cure that restores the lost princess. Sindbad returns home triumphant, his journey becoming one of courage, love and rediscovered faith.

If Sindbad is remembered for anything, it will be for its visual bravura. The creative team led by director Csaba Káel, set designer Éva Szendrényi, lighting designer Vilmos Schön and costume designer Rita Velich has delivered a production of rare spectacle. The stage becomes a living painting — a place where sea, sand and spirit converge.

Velich’s costumes deserve particular praise. They evoke Oman’s

regional tapestries — from Dhofari embroidery to the chromatic vibrancy of the Suri — with an authenticity that elevates rather than romanticises. The palette alone tells its own story: burnished golds, sea-greens and desert reds reflecting both myth and memory.

Szendrényi’s set design achieves moments of genuine astonishment, none more so than the storm sequence that strands Sindbad and his crew on a deserted island. Through a masterful combination of projection, mist and physical mechanics, the sea itself seems to rise and collapse in rhythm with the orchestra — a testament to her architectural precision and to Schön’s intuitive lighting, which gives each scene a sculptural depth. It is a triumph of design intelligence that transforms



the Royal Opera House stage into something vast, cinematic and deeply Omani.

Gabr’s score, performed by the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with the Oriental Ensemble, oscillates between late-Romantic lushness and the tonal modes of Arabic maqam. The music, while steeped in symphonic grandeur, never loses the contour of its linguistic rhythm. The Arabic libretto, shaped with care by Salah El Din, rides the orchestration with clarity and warmth — a feat given opera’s usual challenge of rendering Arabic both lyrical and intelligible in sung form.

The integration of Omani motifs — rhythmic echoes of the sea, the pulse of the oud, the sway of folk cadence — brings a sense of rooted identity to the score. The oud interludes, performed by Nibras al Mullahi, received thunderous applause on both his appearances and rightly so. His playing lent the work its most immediate emotional register, bridging the world of folklore and the operatic stage.

As the titular sailor, Ragaa Eldin shoulders the opera’s emotional and vocal burden. His tenor, bright yet weighty, gives Sindbad both heroic stature and human fragility. There are moments when his presence commands the stage entirely, though at times the libretto affords him too little agency. The hero, curiously, often reacts more than he leads — a structural flaw rather than a fault of performance.

Opposite him, Dima Bawab’s Fairouz sang with luminous clarity and emotional restraint, her phrasing delicate and assured. Yet it was Gala El Hadidi, as the Sorceress, who seized the evening’s dramatic heart. Her mezzo-soprano, dark and burnished, filled the hall with authority. Whether the villain simply had the better music or whether El Hadidi is just that magnetically persuasive is open to debate, but her scenes left the deepest impression — she made darkness irresistible.

Supporting performances were uniformly strong. Ashraf Sewailam lent Samaan a menacing gravitas, while Hany El Shafei’s Pirate injected warmth and vitality into a role that, musically, eclipses Sindbad’s own climax. If this imbalance points to a dramaturgical issue — the opera’s emotional resolution belonging to someone other than its hero — it nonetheless made for

arresting theatre.

For all its visual splendour and musical coherence, Sindbad occasionally struggles to sustain narrative momentum. The opera sets in motion a constellation of compelling threads — the vanished sister, the treacherous minister, the disguised lover — yet their resolution does not fully circle back to Sindbad himself. At times, the sailor feels more like a witness to events than their driving force. The moral and emotional centre briefly shifts towards the pirate and his enchanted flute, whose triumph over evil restores harmony. It is musically captivating, though dramatically diffused — one leaves entranced, if not entirely moved.



This gentle imbalance forms the work’s central paradox: Sindbad is an opera of great ambition and heart, yet its hero’s inner journey feels understated. The storytelling excels in atmosphere and allegory rather than transformation. The recurring “fragrance of life” motif — subtly diffused into the auditorium through Amouage’s scent collaboration — lends the production a poetic unity, evoking renewal and hope, even if the emotion it inspires remains more contemplative than cathartic.

Despite these narrative shortcomings, Sindbad: The Omani Sailor remains a monumental artistic gesture — an opera that dares to imagine the Arabic language as the vessel for a form long dominated by European tradition. It proves that Arabic lyricism can sing, that Omani heritage can occupy a stage of global stature without translation or compromise.

It’s also worth noting that a particularly inspired touch came through Amouage’s collaboration, which introduced a bespoke fragrance diffused at key moments during the performance. Far from a gimmick, the scent — created exclusively for Sindbad: The Omani Sailor — deepened the sensory experience, allowing the audience to quite literally breathe in the emotion of the scene. It was a reminder that when collaboration is executed with thought and restraint, it can heighten an artwork’s impact. This union of music and perfumery transcended novelty; it became one of those rare instances where two worlds fused so seamlessly that it formed a lasting memory for everyone present.

The opening-night hiccups, if anything, humanised the grandeur: an audience eager to witness history was also willing to forgive its imperfections. For in the shimmer of its costumes, the surge of its music and the unmistakable pride that rippled through the hall, one sensed something profound — the beginning of an operatic tradition born from Omani soil, still finding its compass, but already sailing towards greatness.