

HM greets King of Cambodia

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a cable of greetings to His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni of the Kingdom of Cambodia on the occasion of his country's National Day. His Majesty expressed his sincere greetings wishing His Majesty the King and his country's government success in leading the friendly Cambodian people and fostering the relations of cooperation between the two countries towards broader horizons in various fields. — ONA

SUNRISE - 06:18 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR - 05:00 AM

DHUHR - 11:56 PM

ASR - 03:06 PM

MAGHRIB - 05:29 PM

ISHA - 06:41 PM



P10

OMAN PARA ATHLETICS MEETING BEGINS WITH INTENSE COMPETITION



P13

INVESTMENT IN SUR INDUSTRIAL CITY NEARS RO 2.3 BILLION



P20

BAIT AL OUD IS A SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL LANDMARK IN AL AMERAT



MUSCAT

STATE COUNCIL AND MAJLIS ASH'SHURA FIRST SESSIONS TODAY

Based on the orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the State Council today begins the second annual session of the eighth term whereas Majlis Ash'shura begins the tenth term (2023-2027). During its first session, the State Council will discuss proposals and studies submitted by the standing committees. The session will also review a number of responses from the Council of Ministers regarding the topics and studies referred to it in addition to a number of reports submitted by the council members regarding their participation in various regional and international forums. The Majlis Ash'shura will discuss and approve the draft law on special economic zones and free zones referred by the government.

KHOULA HOSPITAL REGULATES VISITING HOURS

The Khoula Hospital in Muscat has temporarily suspended visits to intensive care units by family members of patients until further notice. The consultation period will continue during which only two relatives will be allowed. Consultation time for inquiring about the patient's condition will be 12 noon and 1 pm. The medical staff will remain in constant contact according to the patient's condition.



HM to visit Medical City for Military and Security Services on Monday

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, will pay a Royal visit on Monday to the Medical City for Military and Security Services.

During the visit, His Majesty will preside over the official opening of the Hospital of the Medical City for Military and Security Services - Muscat.

The Medical City for Military and Security Services provides integrated medical and healthcare services to personnel of the military and security units.

Meanwhile, the Hospital of the Medical City for Military and Security Services - Muscat was built according to the highest standards and modern architectural models, inspired by the masterpieces of historical Omani architecture and with the latest advanced international specifications.

It is equipped with the latest technologies in medical devices and equipment in various specialties. — ONA

Famine looming in north Gaza

ROME: Famine is looming in the northern Gaza Strip amid increased hostilities and a near-halt in food aid, a UN-backed assessment said on Saturday.

The alert from the Famine Review Committee warned of “an imminent and substantial likelihood of famine occurring, due to the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip.”

“Famine thresholds may have already been crossed or else will be in the near future,” said the alert. On October 17, the body projected that the number of people in Gaza facing “catastrophic” food insecurity between November and April 2025 would reach 345,000, or 16 per cent of the population.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report classified that as IPC Phase 5 — a situation when “starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident.” Since that report, conditions have worsened in the north of Gaza, with a collapse of food systems, a drop in

Qatar bows out

Qatar has withdrawn as a key mediator for a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal after concluding that Hamas and Israel were unwilling to negotiate “in good faith”, a diplomatic source said on Saturday. Qatar, which has hosted Hamas's political leadership since 2012, has been involved in months of protracted diplomacy aimed at ending the war triggered by the Palestinian group's October 7 attack on Israel last year.

“The Qataris informed both the Israelis and Hamas that as long as there is a refusal to negotiate a deal in good faith, they cannot continue to mediate,” said the diplomatic source, speaking on condition of anonymity. — AFP

humanitarian aid and critical water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, the committee said. “It can therefore be assumed that starvation, malnutrition, and excess mortality due to malnutrition and disease, are rapidly increasing in these areas,” it read. — AFP

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SHORT TAKES

IQRAA COMPETITION FOR YOUTH WRAPS UP



1,759 participants took part in the Iqraa Competition for Youth this year

SALALAH: The 13th Iqraa Competition for Youth concluded its final qualifiers in Dhofar Governorate. Organised by the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, the competition also takes place in Musandam and Al Sharqiyah North and will expand to other governorates according to schedule.

With 1,759 participants this year, the competition encourages reading, connecting youth to libraries and building literacy skills. Contestants were divided into two levels:

Level 1 (Grades 5-7): Reading six books covering Omani culture, tourism, geography, and more.

Level 2 (Grades 8-10): Reading seven books, covering topics like Oman Vision 2040, entrepreneurship, renewable energy and environmental sustainability. Participants were assessed on summaries of the books, with criteria like grammar, style and handwriting quality. Winners will receive cash prizes and incentives at the closing ceremony. — ONA



OSARA, MODON PARTNER TO SET UP INDUSTRIAL PARK

RIYADH: Osara Corporation, through its subsidiary Osara Real Estate Development, has signed an agreement with the Saudi Authority for Industrial Cities and Technology Zones (MODON) to develop an industrial park in the Second Industrial City of Jeddah. This strategic partnership marks the start of an exciting new development, which will deliver the state-of-the-art ready-built factories, fostering business growth and supporting the Kingdom's industrial expansion.

This project underscores Osara Corporation's commitment to investing over SAR 1 billion in Saudi Arabia over the next five years. With a focus on developing cutting-edge logistics and industrial facilities, the company aims to contribute to the diversification of the economy, boost local manufacturing, and attract both regional and global businesses to establish and expand operations in Saudi Arabia. The development will play a vital role in driving industrial innovation, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth as the region accelerates its journey to becoming a global industrial leader.

Eng Kalat al Balushi, CEO of Osara Corporation, stated at the signing ceremony: "This project is a cornerstone of our commitment to the National Industrial Development and Logistics Programme (NDLIP). The impressive growth in the number of factories from 7,206 in 2016 to 11,549 in 2023, with an ambitious goal of reaching 36,000 by 2035, reinforces our confidence in the Kingdom's industrial future. Our industrial park will serve as a key platform to attract businesses, both local and international, aligning with Saudi Vision 2030's objectives to diversify the economy and generate employment opportunities. We are grateful for the support provided by MODON, which has facilitated our investment process, and we look forward to their continued partnership in achieving the vision of this project." The new facilities will support a diverse range of industries, with a focus on manufacturing, and will play a crucial role in enhancing Saudi Arabia's industrial infrastructure. This development will contribute significantly to the Kingdom's self-reliance and economic diversification, offering an attractive entry point for both small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large corporations. It is set to be a key driver of sustainable industrial growth in the region.

Tech, exploration thrill at Oman Science Festival 2024

THE OMAN Science Festival 2024 has been an energetic hub of technology, innovation and discovery, captivating visitors of all ages with its dynamic activities and interactive exhibits. The festival serves as a premier platform for people to explore the latest advancements in fields like physics, medicine, engineering and space science, positioning Oman as a growing centre of scientific engagement in the region.

At Ibn Omaira Theatre, the Ministry of Health's Directorate-General of Medical Supplies hosted a special presentation on managing medications during Ramadhan, offering vital guidance for balancing treatment with fasting practices. Another talk by the Central Public Health Laboratories highlighted the global challenge of antibiotic resistance, addressing the need for responsible antibiotic use to combat this issue. These sessions emphasised public health awareness and received enthusiastic responses from the audience.

An awe-inspiring cosmic presentation by the Oman Astronomical Society attracted a crowd with visual displays that made complex astronomical phenomena accessible and engaging. The programme, featuring live discussions, allowed visitors to delve into topics like cosmic



Children delighted in workshops on smart cities, AI and robotics at the Buds Corner, promoting learning through play.

rays and celestial wonders, blending science with inspiration.

A notable highlight for young innovators was the session by OQ, aimed at equipping students with the skills to pitch their ideas effectively. The event covered essential presentation techniques for communicating ideas to potential investors, adding a professional edge to the festival's lineup.

Technology enthusiasts enjoyed a Metaverse presentation by the Arab Center for Engineering Equipment and Services, which illustrated

how augmented and virtual reality could reshape education. The session demonstrated virtual learning environments, enhancing inter-activity in classrooms and enriching students' understanding of complex subjects.

In the Science Park, visitors explored a range of outdoor activities, from observing the night sky with advanced telescopes to learning about hydroponics and even witnessing the launch of a weather balloon by the Civil Aviation Authority. The interactive "Wonders of the Universe" corner connected attendees virtually to CERN laboratories, where they glimpsed cutting-edge research in particle physics.

Children delighted in workshops on smart cities, AI and robotics at the Buds Corner, promoting learning through play. Nama Supply Company introduced a VR-based activity on energy conservation, educating visitors about electricity-saving techniques and demonstrating technology's role in sustainability.

The Oman Science Festival 2024 has fostered an engaging environment, inspiring a new generation's curiosity in scientific fields. Through a blend of interactive presentations, workshops and exhibitions, the festival stands as a testament to Oman's commitment to fostering a tech-savvy and scientifically minded society.

شركة عمان للاستثمارات والتمويل ش.م.ع						خدم ق					
OMAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE Co. SAOG						khedmah					
Report of the Board of Directors						Consolidated Unaudited Statement of Income for the period ended 30 th Sept 2024					
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I have the pleasure to present the un-audited financial results for the nine months period ended 30th September 2024.						Group	Group	Parent	Parent		
						30-Sep-24	30-Sep-23	30-Sep-24	30-Sep-23		
Operating & Financial Performance						RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000		
The Group made a net profit after tax of RO. 6.429 million for the nine months period ended 30th September 2024, compared to RO. 3.549 million during the corresponding period of the previous year. The net profit after tax of the Parent Company was RO. 6.481 million for the nine months period ended 30th September 2024, compared to RO. 3.818 million during the corresponding period of the previous year.						11,199	13,506	7,901	9,134		
						(10,176)	(11,415)	(7,306)	(8,095)		
The Group made a profit before investment income & finance cost for the nine months period ended 30th September 2024 of RO 0.527 million compared to a profit of RO 1.097 million in the corresponding period of the previous year. This decrease is primarily due to a writeback of provision amounting to RO 0.460 million.						61	(433)	61	127		
						(501)	(582)	(286)	(373)		
Investments						462	273	478	273		
						96	35	58	47		
The Parent company holds the following Investments in associates:						8	456	15	456		
						(622)	(743)	(460)	(442)		
The shares in profits or losses from associates are accounted as per the standards laid down by the International Financial Reporting Standards.						527	1,097	461	1,127		
						9,934	6,245	9,934	6,245		
The Parent Company holds the following Investment in subsidiaries						(4,032)	(3,770)	(3,914)	(3,554)		
						6,429	3,572	6,481	3,818		
ASSETS							(23)	-	-		
							6,429	3,549	6,481	3,818	
Non-Current Assets						Consolidated Unaudited Statement of Financial Position at 30 th September 2024					
						Attributable to:					
Property and equipment and intangible						Equity holders of the Parent company	6,442	3,563	6,481	3,818	
						Investments at fair value through profit & loss	(13)	(14)	-	-	
Investment properties						Profit for the period / year	6,429	3,549	6,481	3,818	
						Deposits		0.014	0.026	0.015	
Deferred Tax asset						Basic Earnings per share (RO)	0.026				
Investment in associates and subsidiary											
Financial Asset at FVOCI											
Deposits											
Current Assets											
Inventories											
Trade and other receivables											
Investments at fair value through profit & loss											
Cash and bank balances											
Total Assets											
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES											
Shareholders Funds											
Share Capital											
Legal Reserve											
Change in fair value through OCI											
Associate reserves											
Properties revaluation reserve											
Retained earnings											
Shareholder's equity											
Non-controlling interest											
Total equity											
Non-current liabilities											
Non-current portion of term loan											
Other non current liabilities											
End of service benefits											
Deferred tax liability											
Current liabilities											
Bank borrowings											
Trade and other payables											
Current portion of term loan											
Taxation											
Total Liabilities											
Total Equity and Liabilities											
Net Assets											
Net assets per share (RO)											
Khalid Said Al Wahaibi											
Chairman – Board of Directors											
www.oifcoman.com											



CELEBRATING UNITY, PEACE AND PROGRESS

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

OMAN'S NATIONAL DAY, celebrated each November 18, brings the country together in a powerful display of unity and national pride, honouring both its past achievements and future aspirations. This year, National Day holds special significance as Oman reflects on its journey of transformation, spanning decades from the visionary reign of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to the ongoing leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

In 2024, the nation is set to unveil a landmark project symbolising its pride: a 126-metre flagpole in Al Khuwair, adorned with an 18 x 31.5-metre national flag, one of the tallest and largest flag displays in the region.

Sponsored by Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel, this monumental project near the Ministries District has captured the public's anticipation and admiration, reflecting the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to showcasing its heritage with grandeur.

The celebratory atmosphere sweeps through Oman's major cities, which are adorned in the colours of the national flag, setting the stage for grand parades, traditional music performances, and folk dances that display the richness of Omani culture.

A highlight of the celebrations is the Military Music event organised by the Royal Opera House Muscat, which brings together musical groups from Oman, Jordan and Austria. These talented ensembles join Omani military and police bands for three nights of open-air performances, featuring marching, dancing and music that highlight the diversity of Oman's musical heritage.

Cultural exhibitions across museums and galleries add another dimension to the festivities, presenting a look back at Oman's history, achievements, and key milestones in fields such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. These exhibitions

showcase Oman's steady progress, from the establishment of educational institutions and healthcare facilities to advancements in green energy and digital innovation.

At Muttrah Souq and other markets, community gatherings and activities engage families and tourists alike, creating a festive spirit that strengthens the sense of national pride.

For vehicle enthusiasts, National Day also brings unique opportunities for self-expression, with the Royal Oman Police issuing updated guidelines for tasteful and safe vehicle decorations, ensuring that celebrations remain joyful and orderly.

Oman's National Day 2024 is not only a time for festivities but also a moment of reflection on the nation's progress and aspirations under Oman Vision 2040. With a focus on economic diversification, the country has made remarkable strides in areas such as tourism, fisheries, logistics, and green energy, aiming to reduce its dependence on oil while fostering sustainable growth. Education and innovation continue to be prioritised,

with expansions in higher education and an emphasis on research, entrepreneurship, and alignment with market needs.

Efforts to preserve Oman's rich cultural heritage remain central, with initiatives to protect traditional crafts and heritage sites, making culture both a pillar of national identity and a significant draw for tourism. Oman's advancements in healthcare, meanwhile, reflect a commitment to quality treatment and accessible services for all citizens.

Environmental conservation, too, plays an important role, with policies in place to protect the nation's unique biodiversity and promote eco-friendly practices.

As Oman celebrates National Day, the country looks ahead with pride and hope, embodying the spirit of resilience, unity, and progress that defines its people. This momentous day serves as a tribute to the nation's accomplishments and a promise of prosperity for future generations, honouring the journey that Oman has undertaken and the vision it continues to pursue.



QURANCOMPETITION



Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran Competition concludes in the Wilayat of Bausher

1,790 COMPETE IN SULTAN QABOOS HOLY QURAN CONTEST

MUSCAT: The preliminary qualifiers for the 32nd Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran Competition concluded in the Wilayat of Bausher (Al Khuwair Centre) with 136 participants over three days. Dr Saeed bin Hamid al Dhuwiani, Vice-President of the competition’s committees, explained that participants competed across seven levels of Quran memorisation, tailored for different age groups: Level 1 was for memorising the entire Quran, level 2 was for 24 consecutive parts, and level 3 had 18 consecutive parts. The fourth level had 12 parts for ages 25 and under, level 5 had 6 parts for ages 14 and under, level 6 had 4 parts for ages 10 and under, and finally, level 7 had 2 parts for ages 7 and under.

This year, 1,790 participants registered through the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, surpassing previous records and reflecting wide national engagement. — ONA

Oman and Algeria discuss ties in religious affairs

MUSCAT: Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, met with Shaikh Dr Mohammed Al Maamoun Al Qasimi Al Hassani, Minister of State and Dean of the Great Mosque of Algiers in the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, in Muscat Governorate to discuss strengthening bilateral relations.

Their conversation focused on enhancing cooperation between the two countries in the fields of endowments and religious affairs, with an emphasis on the role of mosques in fostering intellectual and spiritual growth within societies.

The two leaders highlighted the significance of exchanging expertise, experiences and research in these areas, particularly in developing the mosque as a cultural centre that promotes tolerance, coexistence and community cooperation, while reinforcing a moderate Islamic identity that advocates for unity and peace.

Shaikh Dr Al Qasimi expressed his admiration for the Omani experience in managing endow-



Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari meets Shaikh Dr Mohammed Al Maamoun Al Qasimi Al Hassani

ments and religious affairs, particularly the development of systems that support this process. He praised the role of mosques in Oman, not only as places of worship but also as centres of

education and awareness, contributing to the formation of generations rooted in their values and heritage. He noted the efforts of Omani mosques in fostering a culture of peace and understand-

ing across different cultures. He further emphasised Algeria’s commitment to strengthening bilateral ties by learning from Oman’s experience and enhancing the role of mosques in promoting social cohesion and stability.

Both sides agreed on the importance of continued meetings and fruitful cooperation in the fields of endowments, with a shared goal of developing the mosque as an institution that serves as a pillar of civilisation. They expressed their hopes for establishing strategic partnerships that will benefit both countries, strengthen fraternal relations and lay the foundation for a rich exchange of cultural and civilisational ideas. — ONA

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TENDER NOTICE

إعلان مناقصات

Sohar University announces the issuance of the following tenders and invites specialized and certified companies with sufficient experience in the relevant field within government or private institutions to provide the services and perform the tasks outlined below:

تعلن جامعة صُحار عن طرح المناقصات التالية وتدعو الشركات المتخصصة والمعتمدة التي لديها خبرة كافية في المجال ذي الصلة لدى المؤسسات الحكومية أو الخاصة لتقديم الخدمات والأعمال الموضحة أدناه:

رقم المناقصة Tender No.	عنوان المناقصة Tender Description	رسوم المناقصة (ريال عماني) Tender Fee (OMR)	تاريخ بدء الحصول على وثائق المناقصة Tender Collection Start Date	آخر موعد للحصول على وثائق المناقصة Tender Collection Last Date	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاء Bid Submission Last Date
005/2024	توريد وتوصيل وتركيب أنواع مختلفة من الأثاث والتجهيزات Supply, Delivery and Installation of Different Types of Furniture and Fixtures	100	10.11.2024	18.11.2024	31.12.2024
006/2024	أعمال صيانة وتأهيل مباني جامعة صُحار (المرحلة الثانية) SU Building Renovation and Rehabilitation Works (Stage-2)	100	10.11.2024	18.11.2024	31.12.2024
007/2024	استئجار مواقع مختلفة داخل الحرم الجامعي لتقديم خدمات التغذية للطلبة والموظفين في المطعم والمقاهي Renting Different Locations at SU Campus to Provide Catering Services to Students and Staff in the Restaurant and Coffee Shops	50	10.11.2024	18.11.2024	31.12.2024
008/2024	نقل مياه المجاري Removing Water from SU Campus	50	10.11.2024	18.11.2024	31.12.2024

The tender document can be obtained from the Procurement and Contracts Department from 08:00 am to 03:00 pm at Sohar University campus in Sohar after payment of tender fees (non-refundable) at the cashier counter in the Al Khauboora Building/ Ground floor, or via bank transfer to account number 002020004411 at Sohar International Bank, Sohar Branch. The receipt of payment has to be provided to the Procurement and Contracts Department to collect the Tender Document.

Tender offers must be submitted in closed sealed envelopes. The tender number should only be written on the envelope, no other indication shall be written. The deadline to submit offers is 3:00 pm on 31/12/2024.

Site visits will be on 20 & 21 November 2024 from 9:00 am to 12:00 Noon.

Offers should be addressed to the office of Pro. Vice Chancellor for Administration & Finance and deposited in the tender Box at PVCAF Office as details below during office hours 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, Sunday to Thursday.

يمكن الحصول على مستندات المناقصات من دائرة المشتريات والعقود من الساعة ٨:٠٠ صباحاً إلى ٣:٠٠ مساءً من الحرم الجامعي في صُحار بعد دفع رسوم المناقصات (المبالغ غير قابلة للاسترجاع). يمكن الدفع مباشرة لدى المحاسين في الدور الأرضي في مبنى الخابورة بالحرم الجامعي، أو عن طريق التحويل البنكي على حساب رقم ٠٠٢٠٢٠٠٠٤٤١١. يتك صُحار الدولي - فرع صُحار، يجب تسليم إيصال الدفع إلى دائرة المشتريات والعقود لاستلام مستندات المناقصات.

يجب تقديم العروض في مظاريف مغلقة ومختومة. يجب كتابة رقم المناقصات فقط على الطرف الخارجي للعطاء، ويجب عدم كتابة اسم صاحب العطاء أو ما يشير إليه. الموعد النهائي لتقديم العطاءات هو تمام الساعة ٣ مساءً من يوم ٢١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٤م.

يمكن للراغبين القيام بزيارة ميدانية في تاريخ ٢٠ و ٢١ من نوفمبر ٢٠٢٤م، من الساعة ٠٨:٠٠ صباحاً إلى الساعة ١٢:٠٠ ظهرًا.

يجب تقديم العطاءات باسم مساعد رئيس الجامعة للشؤون الإدارية والمالية وتوضع العطاءات في صندوق العطاءات بـمكتب مساعد رئيس الجامعة للشؤون الإدارية والمالية خلال ساعات العمل من الساعة ٨:٠٠ إلى الساعة ٣:٠٠ مساءً من الأحد إلى الخميس.

مكتب مساعد رئيس الجامعة للشؤون الإدارية والمالية
جامعة صُحار
صندوق بريد ٤٤٤، الرمز البريدي ٣١١، صُحار. سلطنة عُمان.
هاتف: ٢٦٨٥٠١٠٠ محول: ٤٢١ و ٢٨٩ (دائرة المشتريات والعقود)
Pro-Vice-Chancellor – Administration and Finance Office
Sohar University
P.O Box 44, P.C. 311, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman.
Telephone: 26850100 Ext.: 421 & 289 (Procurement and Contracts Department)

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Announcement of the tender TND GSI G3 0002/11/2024 for the supply of Earthing Material

GS INIMA (AL GHUBRA) LLC has been awarded with the Engineering, Procurement and Construction of AL GHUBRAH III IWP in Oman, for CAPITAL DESALINATION COMPANY S.A.O.C.

Omani companies are invited to quote their most competitive price for the supply of **Earthing Material**.

To participate in the bidding please send copy of CR, copy of VAT certificate and copy of SME card (if any), via e-mail: **ghubrah.3.site@inima.com**, **subject: TND GSI G3 0002/11/2024 by 12th November 2024 1:00 PM**.

A reply with bid documents will be sent to candidates on the same day.

Bid closing date: **18th November 2024 1:00PM**



غرفة تجارة وصناعة عُمان
OMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Tender

Oman chamber of commerce and industry branch in Batinah South Governorate would like to announce the following public tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (irrevocable)	Specialized companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender submission
1/2024	Renewal of waterproofing of the roof of the building in South Al Batinah Governorate Branch	25 /- R.O	Companies specialized in the work and installation of waterproofing	21 Nov 2024	Before 12 pm 5 Dec 2024
2/2024	Establishing and building multi-purpose hall in the Chamber building in South Al Batinah Governorate Branch	25 /- R.O	Companies and institutions specialized in the contracting, building, landscaping and construction sector	21 Nov 2024	Before 12 pm 5 Dec 2024

Companies may obtain the tender documents from the OCCI Branch in Batinah South Governorate, during the official working hours against the payment of tender fees.

Tender Terms:

- Provide valued CR, OCCI membership, Tender Board membership and taxation certificate.
- Interested companies should enclose their bids a 1% Bank guarantee/ certified cheque of proposal value issued by one of the banks operating in Oman valid for 90 days from the deadline of submitting the bids addressed in the name of **Oman chamber of commerce and industry branch in Batinah South Governorate**. The bids without this temporary guarantee will not be considered.
- The bids should be submitted in red waxed envelopes addressed to - Head of main tendering Committee in OCCI Branch in Batinah South Governorate- Rustaq, written outside the Number and title of the Tender. No indication about the bidder is allowed on the envelope.
- Offers should be deposited in the tender box kept in Oman chamber of commerce and industry branch in Batinah South Governorate.
- OCCI is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bids. It has the right to accept or reject any bids without showing reasons or cancel the tender.
- Interested companies should submit the Tenders before 12 pm 5 December 2024

For any inquiries please call: **26875118 - 91734025**
Email: **rustaq@omanchamber.om**



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WORLD

SHORT TAKES



People walk amid the debris after a bomb blast at a railway station in Quetta, Pakistan. — Reuters

AT LEAST 24 KILLED IN PAKISTAN STATION BOMB BLAST

QUETTA, OCT 9: At least 24 people were killed and more than 40 injured in a bomb blast on Saturday at a railway station in the city of Quetta in southwestern Pakistan, police and other officials said. Inspector-General of Police for Balochistan, Mouzzam Jah Ansari, said 24 people have died so far from the blast at the railway station, which is usually busy early in the day when the explosion took place. “The target was army personnel from the Infantry School,” he said, with many of the injured in critical condition.

Quetta Commissioner Hamza Shafqat said 16 soldiers were among the dead. “So far, 44 injured people have been brought to Civil Hospital,” Wasim Baig said, a hospital spokesperson.

Senior Superintendent of Police Operations, Muhammad Baloch, said the blast seemed to be a suicide bomb and that investigations were underway for more information. “The blast took place inside the railway station when the Peshawar-bound express was about to leave for its destination,” Baloch said. — Reuters



Rescuers gather at the site of overnight Israeli air strikes that targeted the city of Tyre. — AFP

LEBANON SAYS 2 CHILDREN AMONG 7 DEAD

BEIRUT: Lebanon’s health ministry said on Saturday that seven people, including two children, were killed in Israeli strikes on the southern city of Tyre a day earlier, with rescuers still searching for missing people under the rubble. “Israeli enemy strikes on the city of Tyre killed seven people, including two girls, and injured 46 others,” the ministry said, adding that body parts had been found and would be “identified with DNA testing”. It added that rubble was being cleared following the strikes as part of ongoing efforts to locate missing persons. The ministry had reported a toll of three killed and 30 injured in the strikes. Photos showed rescuers carrying bodies on stretchers amid the wreckage.

Earlier on Saturday, Lebanon’s official National News Agency had said the deadly strikes targeted three buildings in the coastal city, causing “massive damage to dozens of homes”. More than 3,110 people have been killed in Lebanon since the cross-border exchanges began, according to the Lebanese health ministry. — AFP

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

South Sudan floods affect 1.4 million people



Devastating flooding in South Sudan is affecting around 1.4 million people, with more than 379,000 displaced, according to a United Nations update that warned about an upsurge in malaria. Aid agencies have said that the world’s youngest country is in the grip of its worst flooding in decades. A surge in malaria has been reported in several states, it said, “overwhelming the health system and exacerbating the situation and impact in flood-hit areas.” — AFP

EU’S BORRELL IN KYIV TO REASSURE UKRAINE AFTER TRUMP WIN

KYIV: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell arrived on Saturday in Kyiv to reassure Ukraine of Europe’s backing in the first visit by a top Brussels official after Donald Trump’s poll win. The Republican’s victory in the United States election has set nerves jangling in Ukraine and Europe that Trump could end Washington’s support for Kyiv’s fight against Russia’s attack.

“The message is a clear one – the Europeans will continue to support

Ukraine,” Borrell, who is set to leave office next month, told journalists accompanying him. “We have been supporting Ukraine since the beginning, and on this my last visit to Ukraine, I convey the same message, we will support you as much as we can.”

“Nobody knows exactly what the new administration is going to do,” Borrell said, pointing out that incumbent Joe Biden still has two months in power to make decisions.

“But we Europeans have to use this opportunity in order to build a stronger and united Europe, and one of the manifestations of being united and being stronger and able to act is our role in supporting Ukraine.”

Europe together has spent around \$125 billion on supporting Ukraine since Russia’s 2022 attack, while the United States alone has coughed up more than \$90 billion.

— AFP

China’s Xi hails ‘new chapter’ with Indonesia

CHINESE

President Xi Jinping told his Indonesian counterpart that Beijing hopes for a “new chapter”

in bilateral relations, as the two leaders met on Saturday. Xi held talks with President Prabowo Subianto in Beijing, the first stop of the Indonesian leader’s inaugural foreign tour since he took office in October. China is keen to work with Indonesia to “write a new chapter of joint self-reliance, solidarity and cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win results as major developing countries”, Xi told Prabowo in front of journalists. Beijing and Jakarta are key economic allies, with Chinese companies ploughing money into extracting Indonesian natural resources in recent years, particularly the nickel sector.

Prabowo said that the relationship between the two countries was “getting stronger and stronger”.

“I would like to reiterate our commitment... to work together for the mutual benefit of our two peoples and for the prosperity, peace and stability of all of Asia,” he added. Xi held a welcome ceremony for Prabowo at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People on Saturday.

After their talks, officials from the two countries signed a series of documents including memorandums of understanding on maritime safety and water resources cooperation. Prabowo, who landed in China on Friday, is also meeting Premier Li Qiang and number three official Zhao Leji during his trip. He will travel onwards to Washington, at the invitation of US President Joe Biden, as part of a world tour which will also include Peru, Brazil and



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto shake hands during a signing ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. — AFP

Britain. Prabowo Subianto, a 73-year-old ex-general inaugurated last month, has pledged to position Jakarta more prominently on the world stage while sticking to its traditional non-aligned foreign policy.

Before departing, Prabowo said he would first visit Beijing, where he is expected to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, then travel to Washington at the invitation of US President Joe Biden. The trip will include visits to Peru for the APEC summit and Brazil for the G20 sum-

mit of major economies, before ending in Britain, where he will meet Prime Minister Keir Starmer, he said.

“I believe this demonstrates the high regard in which Indonesia is held and the importance of inviting Indonesia to participate in bilateral and multilateral meetings,” Prabowo said, according to broadcaster Kompas TV.

“This is an honour for us, and we will maintain good relations with all parties.”

— AFP



Palestinian children stand at the site of an Israeli strike on a tent housing displaced people in Khan Yunis. — Reuters

GAZA RESCUERS SAY 14 KILLED IN ISRAELI STRIKES

GAZA: Gaza’s civil defence agency said on Saturday that Israeli air strikes killed at least 14 Palestinians overnight, including women and children, while the Israeli military said it had eliminated dozens of militants in the territory’s north. An air strike hit tents housing displaced Palestinians in the southern area of Khan Yunis, killing at least nine people, including children and women, civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said. The Palestinian Red Crescent also confirmed the toll, saying 11 others were wounded in the

strike and were taken to Nasser Hospital.

A second air strike killed five people, including children, and injured about 22 when “Israeli warplanes hit Fahad Al-Sabah school”, which had been turned into a shelter for “thousands of displaced people” in the Al Tuffah district of Gaza City, Bassal said. The dead and injured were taken to Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, he added. In recent months, the military has struck several schools-turned-shelters where Israel has said Palestinian militants are operating. — AFP

SEVERE BLACKOUTS

Cuba restores power following Rafael



Cuba had restored power to nearly 20 per cent of the capital Havana, the government said, two days after hurricane Rafael struck the island and collapsed the country’s electrical grid, leaving millions in the dark. Rafael knocked out hundreds of power lines and poles across the western half of the country, downing trees, cutting communications and complicating recovery efforts. — Reuters

NAVIGATION DISRUPTION

North Korea launches GPS interference



North Korea staged GPS interference, affecting the operations of ships and private aircraft, South Korea’s military said. South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) advised ships and aircraft operating in the West Sea area to be cautious of signal jamming. The JCS urged North Korea to immediately halt the latest provocation and warned it would be held accountable for its actions. The emergence of GPS “spoofing” has increased risks in airspace. — Reuters

The New York Times

Democrats eye major push to confirm Biden judges



CARL HULSE

The author is the chief Washington correspondent and primarily covers US Congress

SENATE DEMOCRATS are considering a significant effort in the coming weeks to confirm as many of President Joe Biden’s judicial nominees as possible in the lame-duck session of Congress. This is prompted by the impending Republican takeover of the White House and Senate in January, which will limit Democrats’ influence over reshaping the federal courts. Although Democrats had aimed to retain control of the Senate and the White House to continue countering the 234 conservative judges, including three Supreme Court justices, appointed during former president Donald Trump’s first administration, these aspirations have been dashed by Trump’s reelection and the Republicans’ Senate victory.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., the majority leader who prioritises judicial confirmations, expressed on Friday a willingness to allocate substantial Senate floor time for judicial appointments in the postelection session starting next week. Approximately 30 nominees are already in the confirmation pipeline, with Biden announcing two more on Friday night. “We are going to get as many done as we can,” Schumer said in a statement. Progressive groups have also intensified their pressure on Democrats to act. Maggie Jo Buchanan, managing director

of the progressive group Demand Justice, stated this week, “The reality is that we now have a rapidly closing window to confirm well-qualified, fair-minded judges who will protect our rights and serve as one of the last guardrails in upholding our nation’s laws and the Constitution.”

In a bid to secure judicial appointments, some liberal activists are even encouraging Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the senior Democratic-nominated Supreme Court member at age 70, to retire, enabling Democrats to rush through her replacement. This would echo the Republican response in 2020 when Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s passing led to a swift confirmation of Trump’s nominee, Amy Coney Barrett. However, there is no indication that Sotomayor intends to leave, nor any assurance that Democrats could promptly secure a replacement if she did.

Before senators left for this year’s election, they confirmed Biden’s 213th judge. Democrats, however, face logistical challenges if they attempt to confirm dozens more swiftly. They are set to meet next week to discuss strategies for the final weeks of the current Congress, including whether they can successfully appoint a substantial number of judges. Republican opposition is anticipated, as

Democrats had hoped to hold onto the Senate and the White House, allowing them to continue their drive to counterbalance the 234 conservative-leaning judges — including three Supreme Court justices — who were confirmed during the first Trump administration

they aim to keep as many vacancies open as possible for Trump’s future appointments. This could compel Democrats to secure every vote within their ranks, possibly including Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona. Although Manchin has generally supported judicial nominees, he has indicated reluctance to back candidates lacking Republican support, with some recent exceptions.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the minority leader, acknowledged this week that if Democrats choose to focus on judicial appointments, they have the power to do so. However, he noted that the confirmation process is time-consuming, which could limit other legislative activities. “The advantage of being the majority leader is you can decide what to bring up,” McConnell said. “If that’s what the majority leader wants to do, that’s what we will do, and each one will be voted on.”

When Democrats assumed control in 2021, they sought to counter the influence of Trump-era conservatives, as courts had been central to deciding critical cultural, economic and environmental issues. Biden’s nominees were notable for their diverse backgrounds, with nearly two-thirds being women.

IN A RECORD, ALL BUT TWO STATES ARE IN A DROUGHT

AUSTYN GAFFNEY AND MIRA ROJANASAKUL

Almost the entire United States faced drought conditions during the last week of October. Only Alaska and Kentucky did not have at least moderate drought conditions, according to the US Drought Monitor, a record in the monitor’s history. The past four months were consistently warmer than normal over a wide swath of the country, said Rich Tinker, a drought specialist with the National Weather Service. But in June, while roughly a quarter of the country was dry to some degree, he said, now 87% of the nation is. “Drought in many parts of the country and the world is becoming more frequent, longer and more severe,” said Erica Fleishman, director of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute and a professor at Oregon State University. Dry conditions over the past few months led New York City on Saturday to urge residents to start conserving “every drop possible.”

Last month was the driest October since record keeping began in 1869, according to the city, which issued a drought watch for the 9.8 million people who rely on the city’s water supply. A watch

encourages voluntary water conservation and ensures city agencies are ready with water conservation plans. The last time a watch was issued was in 2001. Rohit Aggarwala, the city’s chief climate officer and commissioner of the Department of

Environmental Protection, noted that the problem is one of quantity, not quality. The city’s upstate reservoirs are below two-thirds full, and they are normally more than three-quarters full in the fall. But, he said, the water is completely safe to drink.

Even after Hurricane Helene dropped huge amounts of destructive rain across the Southeast, that region is experiencing drought. Not much rain has fallen since the storm and warmer temperatures mean higher evaporation rates and drier soils. Drought doesn’t just come from a lack of precipitation like rain or snow. Drought conditions are driven by abnormally high temperatures that can quickly suck moisture from the atmosphere and the ground.

While scientists don’t yet know the exact role climate change played in the current drought, it is notable for how widespread it is, said Benjamin Cook, a climate scientist at NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Things could change if La Nina conditions, climate variability originating in the tropical Pacific, begin as predicted this fall or winter. This natural transition could worsen drought conditions across the southern half of the country. But in the Northeast, Cook said, it’s a toss-up whether the coming months will continue to be warm and dry, or if a lot of rain and snow will fall.

Europe’s right sees Trump a fellow believer

FOR months, Hungary’s media apparatus has pumped out stories lionising Donald Trump and deriding Kamala Harris, described in one headline as “extremely unpleasant.” In October, the country’s leader vowed to “open celebrations if Trump is back.” Then, as US voters went to the polls, scores of his supporters gathered for a celebratory party in Budapest even before the results were called. No foreign leader bet as heavily or publicly on a Trump victory as Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary. A fervent fan of the US president-elect, Orban greeted the election results with unrestrained glee.

Speaking at a news conference, Orban said he had “only partly delivered on his promise” about Champagne: He was in Kyrgyzstan when the result came through, and mostly drank vodka to “share our joy at this fantastic result.” He told his followers on the social platform X that he had already spoken with the president-elect, adding: “We have big plans.” For Orban and like-minded populist European politicians in Germany, the Netherlands, Serbia and elsewhere, this week’s election not only returned a fellow believer in tough immigration policies to the White House, but also sent a message to their own constituencies that history is moving in their direction and that political rivals they revile as woke, out-of-touch elitists are on the run. “Politically, this is a big win for Mr Orban: He gambled and he won,” said Zsombor Zeold, a former Hungarian diplomat. More broadly, he said, Trump’s election “definitely puts wind in the sails of Europe’s populist right.”

Among those likely to benefit, he said, are European parties affiliated with the Conservative Political Action Conference, an American pro-Trump organisation that holds an annual gathering in Budapest. The group has cultivated close ties with European politicians like Geert Wilders, a Dutch far-right leader who won the most



ANDREW HIGGINS

The writer is the East and Central Europe bureau chief for The New York Times



Donald Trump walks off stage with Melania Trump during an election night event in West Palm Beach, Florida.

votes in an election last year but was shunned by establishment parties whose support he needed to form a government.

“Trump’s success is an encouragement and a boost for populist forces in the world,” said Csaba Lukacs, the managing director of Magyar Hang, a conservative media outlet critical of Hungary’s governing Fidesz party, which Lukacs supported for many years but turned against because of what he considers Orban’s intolerance of criticism and tolerance of rampant corruption. Orban, hungry for success after a series of domestic and foreign setbacks, needed a Trump victory, Lukacs said. “He can and will exploit this in the short term.”

Trump has described Orban, whom critics accuse of muzzling the media and overseeing a broad system of patronage politics that has enriched his associates and family, as a “very great leader, a very strong man,” whom some dislike only “because he’s too strong.” Many hard-right parties in Europe have a complicated relationship with the United States, which some see as an arrogant hegemon that promotes values at odds with their own. Deep currents of anti-Americanism run through the

National Rally party of Marine Le Pen in France and Alternative for Germany, or AfD, for instance. But they have cheered at the prospect of Trump returning to power. The AfD leader, Alice Weidel, swiftly claimed common cause with Trump on Wednesday, saying, “He is, of course, a model for us.” His slogan of “Make America Great Again,” she told Deutschlandfunk radio, was no different from her party’s programme of “making Germany great,” because “we as the AfD stand up for the national interests and for the people” of Germany.

In Italy, right-wing Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has long cultivated ties to Trump’s camp and has praised him. Her party, which traces its roots to postwar fascist groups, has advocated controversial measures to control immigration, including a plan—stalled by Italian courts—to send would-be asylum-seekers to detention camps in Albania. Meloni said she had spoken to Trump by telephone and congratulated him. The next day, she posted a message on X saying she had also congratulated Elon Musk, the billionaire supporter of Trump whom she referred to as a “friend.”

OPINION

The psychology of obedience



DR HAMED
AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

ON NOVEMBER 18, 1978, more than 900 Americans, members of the Peoples Temple religious group, died in a secluded South American jungle settlement after ingesting poison at the urging of their leader, Reverend Jim Jones.

Jones, a white minister, preached unconventional socialist and progressive ideas to a predominantly African American congregation who joined his group in the thousands. Reports about the incident reveal Jones's psychopathic tendencies from early childhood, including a fascination with Adolf Hitler and violent acts toward animals.

After establishing the Peoples Temple, Jones maintained power through manipulation, threats, and violence. He was known to physically abuse those who questioned him, beating them publicly and forcing parents to beat their children while others watched. He isolated his followers financially and socially, severing their family connections and leaving them with no clear path to escape.

Reflecting on this story raises several questions: what compelled these individ-

uals to believe Jones and follow his horrific final orders? Why didn't they leave when the abuse became evident? How could they be driven to take innocent lives and ultimately their own?

From a psychological perspective, Jones's control over his followers can be attributed to a gradual process of persuasion, propaganda, and manipulation that fostered compliance, conformity, and obedience.

Obedience is a type of social influence where an individual acts in response to direct instructions from an authority figure. Although obedience and its counterpart, conformity (behaviour aligned with the majority view), are often seen negatively, society relies on them for order and adherence to both laws and social norms.

The impact of authority on obedience has been studied extensively, most notably in Stanley Milgram's experiments in the early 1960s. Milgram aimed to understand how far people would obey orders even when they knew it would harm another person. Participants were told they were part of a 'learning experiment' and were instructed by the experimenter

Obedience can be defined as a type of social influence in which somebody acts in response to direct instructions from an authority figure

to administer electric shocks to a 'learner' (an actor) whenever they answered questions incorrectly.

With each incorrect answer, the shock level increased. Despite the learner's simulated cries of pain, many participants continued administering shocks up to dangerously high levels simply because they were instructed to do so. Milgram concluded that people tend to obey authority figures even against their morals, demonstrating the powerful influence of authority on behaviour.

This raises questions about why ordinary people sometimes participate in atrocities. The common assumption is that 'evil' people commit evil acts but Milgram proposed that the power of the situation can influence ordinary people to commit harm when ordered to do so.

In my opinion, the lesson for modern societies is that obedience can be a dangerous tool when used to harm others. Society must protect the public from cult leaders with destructive agendas who may exploit religion and specific beliefs to manipulate others for malicious purposes.

TOP ART COLLECTOR
DISPLAYS RARE
TREASURES

MARIE GIFFARD

After visiting Europe 60 years ago as a penniless art aficionado, Juan Antonio Perez Simon overcame hardship to amass a remarkable collection, which is on display for the first time in Madrid.

"I have always wanted to share my works with the public," the Spanish-born millionaire businessman, 83, said in a written exchange. "It makes me profoundly happy."

Perez Simon's lifelong passion for art has led to a collection boasting 4,000 paintings, drawings, sculptures and decorative objects.

The new exhibition at Madrid's grandiose Cibeles Palace – "70 great masters of the Perez Simon collection" – runs to mid-January and is crammed with art treasures, ranging from the 16th century to today.

They include works by masters like Van Gogh, Sisley, Picasso, Rubens, Goya, Monet, Renoir, Magritte and Rothko.

Perez Simon, who has spent most of his life in Mexico where he now lives, has never previously lent his collection to a museum in this way, even if some items have been loaned around the world. After this show, a new site dedicated to 200 pieces of his collection is due to open in Madrid. It will be an addition to the Spanish capital's established art institutions – the Prado, Reina Sofia and Thyssen museums – to which millions of visitors flock every year.

Perez Simon said the loan would be long-term, although details are still being finalised.

Madrid city hall has said he has already agreed to take care of securing, storing and transporting the works.

Born in a rural family in Spain's north-western Asturias region, Perez Simon moved to Mexico at the age of five before making a fortune in telecommunications.

He then became a trader and crossed paths with Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim, one of the world's richest men, describing him as his "best friend" and "brother" in a 2020 interview with Paris Match magazine.

When he returned to Europe in 1964 as a 23-year-old, his daily budget of \$8 went towards museum tickets to admire the artworks that had "dazzled" him as a teenager, he said.

"Art is not a luxury," Perez Simon insisted. "Art is within everyone's reach."

"When I had no money, I would buy reproductions in museums. When my economic situation improved, I started my collection."

But money was never the motivation, he added, highlighting the "beauty" of the art and the feelings it inspired in him. – AFP

Oman's social security
and elderly care system

IT'S essential to understand a country's society before assessing the quality of its social security system—there's no one-size-fits-all approach. That said, Oman's social security service is impressive by any standard. Compared to the UK, Oman enjoys some key advantages in caring for its most vulnerable citizens. These strengths stem not only from government support but also from the country's smaller population and the close-knit relationships within extended families.

As people live longer, the elderly, especially, need strong social support. Sometimes, I feel that you can gauge a society by the number of care and nursing homes it has. The UK has over 17,000 care homes. While some offer excellent facilities, the best ones are expensive and out of reach for most.

I've visited a few of the more affordable UK care homes and was shocked at the poor facilities and the treatment of elderly residents. Many of these places seem more like "dumping grounds" for families who don't want the responsibility of caring for their ageing relatives.

In Oman, things are very different. While there may be a few care homes for the elderly, they are almost unheard of. Why? Because it is unthinkable for most Omanis to leave their elderly loved ones in the care of strangers, many of whom in the UK show little respect for the elderly. Omani families support their elderly relatives at home and treat them with respect. Additionally, the government of the Sultanate of Oman provides extra support for the elderly.

Dr Ahmed al Wahibi from the Ministry of Health has developed an elderly care programme that operates through primary health



The respect Omanis show for their elderly stands in stark contrast to what happens too often in the UK.



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centres across the country. He has urged families to encourage older people to visit their doctors, stay active in the community and share their wisdom and experience.

The respect Omanis show for their elderly stands in stark contrast to what happens too often in the UK, where elderly patients in hospitals are frequently described in the media as "bed blockers," and the increased lifespan of the elderly is often regarded as an "economic burden" rather than something to be celebrated.

Owing to the excellent family support for the elderly and the foresight of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Oman is leading the GCC with a social insurance scheme covering maternity, paternity and sickness benefits.

New laws have introduced significant changes, including universal government-funded benefits: cash support for children under 18, pensions for seniors over 60, and disability allowances. All these benefits will be streamlined under the newly established Social Protection Fund.

Migrant workers, who make up over 75 per cent of Oman's workforce, are also covered. They will receive benefits for work injuries, maternity, and sickness under the same terms as nationals. In a regional first, a national provident fund will provide end-of-service benefits for migrant workers.

Under His Majesty's vision, Oman is developing an international reputation as a country that cares for all its people, both nationals and expatriates.

SPORTS

OMAN TRI-SERIES



Vikramjeet Singh from the Netherlands

OMAN TRI-SERIES OF CRICKET WORLD CUP CONCLUDES TOMORROW

MUSCAT: The Netherlands secured their first victory in the Oman tri-series, part of the Cricket World Cup League 2, with a commanding 67-run win over UAE at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Saturday.

After a string of defeats to UAE and Oman, the Dutch finally found their form with an impressive batting performance.

Opting to bat first, the Netherlands posted a competitive total of 241/8, thanks to solid partnerships at the top of the order.

Openers Max O'Dowd (66) and Vikramjeet Singh (69) provided a strong foundation, adding 140 runs in the first 30 overs. Colin Ackermann (21), Bas de Leede (18) and Noah Croes (24) contributed valuable runs to the total.

Junaid Siddiqui was the standout bowler for UAE, taking 3/31, while Ali Naseer (2/49) and Dhruv Parashar (1/36) also made key breakthroughs.

In response, UAE struggled to build momentum and were bowled out for just 174 in 45.2 overs.

The chase got off to a disastrous start with opener Muhammad Waseem dismissed for a duck. Tanish Suri (26) followed soon after, and by the 20th over, UAE found themselves at a precarious 61/4. Despite modest contributions from Vritya Araving (16) and Vishnu Sikumaran (13), the middle order could not recover. Skipper Rahul Chopra fought back with 43 runs, but the damage had been done as UAE were left reeling at 136/8.

Ali Naseer's late cameo of 45 off 39 balls, including four sixes, offered brief hope, but the Netherlands' bowlers sealed the win with a clinical performance.

Kyle Klien, Aryan Dutt and Roelof van der Merwe each claimed three wickets, with Klien's dismissal of Naseer marking the final blow for UAE.

The Netherlands' total of 241/8 is the highest score in the tri-series so far, surpassing UAE's 240/8 against the Netherlands in their November 3 match.

OPA meeting begins with intense competition

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 9

THE first day of the 7th Oman Para Athletics (OPA) meeting saw high technical standards and fierce competition on the fields of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

The event brought together 150 male and female athletes from various clubs and teams, including Khor Fakkan Club from the UAE, Al Madina Club from Saudi Arabia, the Bahrain Team, and teams from the Czech Republic and Greece, as well as four teams from Oman. The forum was organised by the Omani Paralympic Committee under the supervision of the International Athletics Federation for Athletes with Disabilities and is being held on November 8-9.

The results from the first day saw several athletes excel across various competitions. In the men's discus throw 41F, Bahraini player Sayed Hussein won the gold medal with a distance of 32.77 metres, while national team player Mazen Abdullah secured silver with a throw of 17.83 metres, and Al Madina Saudi Club's Riyadh al Wafi won bronze with a distance of 16.60 metres.

In the women's shot put, category 13F, Bahraini player Seham al Moula claimed gold with a distance of 5.74 metres. SQU athlete Sajaa al Rawahi, category 12F, earned silver with a throw of 5.18 metres, while her team-mate, Hawra al Hamdi, category 11F, took bronze with a throw of 3.55 metres.

In the men's discus throw, category 37F, Saudi Arabia's Al Madina Club athlete Hamza al Hawas won gold with a throw of 25.92 metres, while UAE's Khor Fakkan player took silver with a distance of 24.30 metres, and Khor Fakkan's Majed al Bai-raq claimed bronze with a throw of 22.98 metres.

In the women's shot put, category 40F, Maryam al Zayoudi from Khor Fakkan claimed gold with a throw of 7.40 metres, followed by Oman's national player Sara al Anbouri with a silver-winning throw of 4.65 metres, and Bahrain's Fatima Ahmed, category 37F, who earned bronze with a throw of 3.40 metres.

In the women's discus throw, Maryam al Zayoudi from Khor Fakkan took gold with a throw of 19.76 metres, Bahrain's Shamma al Moula won silver with a



distance of 14.26 metres, and Bahrain's Fatima Ahmed took bronze with a distance of 9.40 metres.

In the men's javelin throw, Czech player Dusan Skompara won gold with a distance of 20.56 metres, Bahrain's Youssef al Jab-bas earned silver with a throw of 21.86 metres, and Oman's Amjad al Wahaibi from Al Tadamun team took third place with a throw of 18.32 metres.

Athletes are competing in the forum in various track events for different disability categories, covering distances of 100 metres, 200 metres, 400 metres, 800

metres and 1,500 metres, as well as in long jump events and javelin, discus and shot put throws.

Following the conclusion of the first day, Dr Mansour al Touqi, chairman of the organising committee, praised the high technical level of the competitions. He noted that Oman's consistent organisation of the forum's seventh edition has strengthened its credibility with the international federation, spectators and participating athletes.

He emphasised that the organisation was well-matched to the event's scale, leading the international federation to adopt the forum as a trial for hosting the 2026 West Asian Games. He also mentioned that over 70 volunteers participated, with technical staff, including referees and coaches, receiving specialised training.

Meanwhile, Tarek al Suwiei, the technical delegate of the International Paralympic Committee and CEO of the Asian Paralympic Committee, highlighted the forum's importance on the international stage, describing it as a significant sports event following the Paris Olympics, especially as athletes prepare for the new season.

He added that Muscat has successfully strengthened its position on the global sports agenda through this event, which attracted athletes from Europe and the Gulf region, adding significant value to the forum. Al Suwiei expressed his hope that Oman would host even higher-level championships with larger attendance in the future.

Oman Club

Est. 1942

Muscat

Bidding Announcement

Investment of part of Oman Club's land lot

Oman Club is floating the following biddings:

Bidding No.	Area	Subject	Document Price (Non-refundable)	Category of Tendering Companies & Establishments	Date for Tender Purchase	Last Date for Tender Submission
1	Western area overlooking the Grand Mall	To construct a commercial building in accordance to construction's specifications for sports clubs	RO 150/-	Grade 1 & above	Between 11/11/2024 & 20/11/2024	20/11/2024
2	The club's land (Ghala Industrial)	To construct a residential-commercial building	RO 100/-	Grade 1 & above	Between 11/11/2024 & 20/11/2024	20/11/2024

Note: Each project requires their respective bidding to be purchased separately in accordance with the prices stated in the table.

Requirements:

- Collection of biddings:** A tendering investor/ company should have a minimum 3 year-experience and a valid commercial register. Tenderers who have met the requirements can obtain the biddings' documents from the club's administration provided that the bidding's price is debited to the club's account (01041571485001) Bank Dhofar before receiving the documents.
- Tender's submission:** The tender should be submitted in a red-wax-envelop, addressed to the Chairman of the Tender Board and written from outside the Tender name, with no reference to tender's identity shall be written or made on the envelop.
- Place where tender is submitted:** a tender is submitted to the Secretary of the club at the headquarter in Al Khuwair before 1 pm on the submission's date.
- Post-date or non-compliant tenders should not be accepted.
- Tenders are signed and stamped by authorized persons only.
- Oman club reserves the right to accept or deny any tender as well cancel the bidding without stating justifications.
- Oman club reserves the right to determine the type and shape in the bidding if necessary.
- Oman Club reserves the right to withhold any non-binding justifications for acceptance or cancelations of the lowest prices or any other tender.
- For further details, please those who are interested in the investment shall communicate through (omansportclub@gmail.com) or over the phone on (99206060).

Vinicius treble helps Real Madrid crush Osasuna

MADRID: Vinicius Junior scored a hat-trick to help Real Madrid bounce back from two consecutive home defeats with a 4-0 win over Osasuna in La Liga on Saturday.

Hammered by Barcelona in a league Clasico and then outplayed by AC Milan in the Champions League, Carlo Ancelotti's side badly needed this confidence-boosting victory.

The Spanish and European champions thrashed Osasuna thanks to Vinicius' treble, while Jude Bellingham scored his first goal of the season for Los Blancos.

However, Madrid's superstar striker Kylian Mbappe failed to find the net again and has scored one goal in his last seven matches, while Brazilian duo Eder Militao and Rodrygo were taken off injured along with Lucas Vazquez.

Second-placed Madrid reigned in Barcelona's lead at the top of La Liga to six points before the Catalans visit Real Sociedad on Sunday.



Vinicius celebrates scoring their fourth goal. — Reuters

Ancelotti brought Rodrygo into the line-up after the Milan defeat, reverting to a 4-3-3 formation.

The Brazilian winger drew a save from Sergio Herrera but was forced off with a knee problem during an intense start to the match.

Militao was taken off on a stretcher before the half-hour mark holding the back of his right knee, after going to ground in Osasuna's area.

The defender missed most of last season with a severe knee injury and with David Alaba, Aurelien Tchouameni and Dani Carvajal out hurt already, his departure was particularly bad news for Madrid.

Ancelotti replaced Militao with 21-year-old defender Raul Asencio, making his debut after progressing through the youth academy.

Despite the setbacks, Madrid took the lead in the 34th minute when Bellingham teed up Vinicius, who whipped home at the near post. — AFP

END OF CAREER



Astana Qazaqstan Team's Mark Cavendish addressing the media. — Reuters

CYCLING GREAT
CAVENDISH
ANNOUNCES
RETIREMENT

PARIS: Cycling great Mark Cavendish announced his retirement from the sport on Saturday, writing on social media that his final race will be Sunday's Tour de France Singapore Criterium.

"Sunday will be the final race of my professional cycling career," wrote the 39-year-old British sprint legend, the record stage winner on the Tour de France with 35, in a post on Instagram.

"Cycling has given me so much and I love the sport. I've always wanted to make a difference in it, and now I am ready to see what the next chapter has in store for me."

Cavendish made Tour de France history last July when he eclipsed Eddy Merckx's record, which had stood since 1975, having matched the Belgian's mark in 2021.

"I am lucky enough to have done what I love for almost 20 years and I can now say that I have achieved everything that I can on the bike," the rider from the Isle of Man said.

"I love this sport. I always have loved this sport. I want to make a difference on the bike. I always have wanted to make a difference in it. That will not change whether I'm on the bike or not."

Cavendish made his Tour de France debut in 2008 before becoming world road race champion three years later. He won an omnium silver medal at the 2016 Olympics.

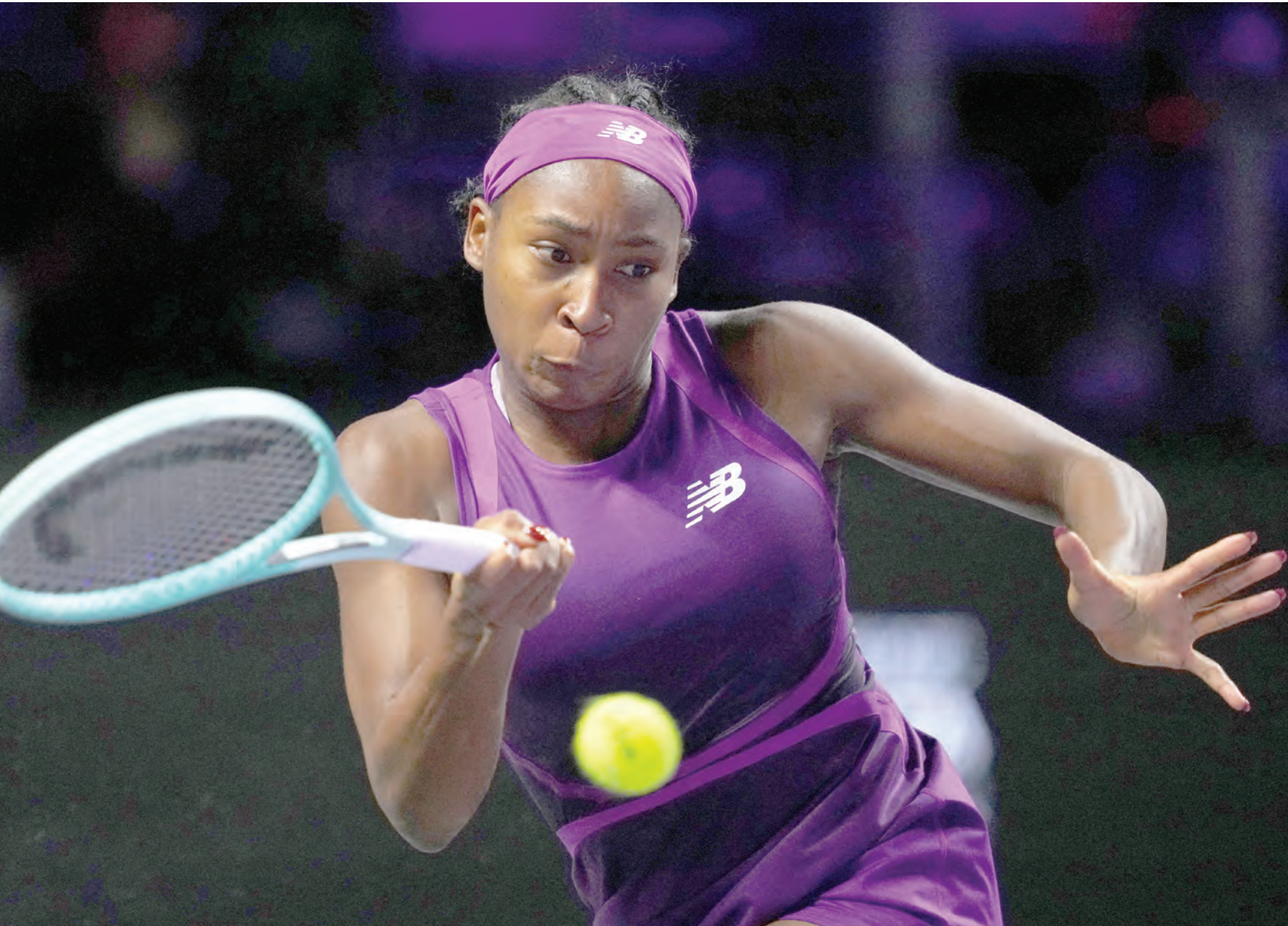
Since turning professional in 2005, he had won 165 races, including 17 stages in the Giro d'Italia and three in the Vuelta a Espana.

Last month, he had said that he "will see" about racing in next year's Tour de France, explaining that he "saw things a bit differently" despite previously vowing not to compete in it again.

He refused to discuss his retirement after finishing third at the Saitama Criterium in Japan last weekend.

"I'd rather not talk about my future," he told reporters, shortly after defending Singapore Criterium race champion Jasper Philipsen suggested that the Manxman would be calling it quits after the race. — AFP

Gauff sets up decider with Zheng at WTA Finals



Coco Gauff of the US in action at the WTA finals in Riyadh. — Reuters

WORLD number three Coco Gauff and number seven Zheng Qinwen will square off in the championship match of the WTA Finals in Riyadh after claiming impressive victories in the semis on Friday.

The 20-year-old Gauff knocked out world number one Aryna Sabalenka 7-6(7/4), 6-3 to become the youngest player to reach the final at the season-ending championships since Caroline Wozniacki in 2010.

Zheng, a gold medallist in singles at the Olympic Games this year, reached the final on her debut appearance at the season-ending showpiece with a 6-3, 7-5 victory over Wimbledon champion Barbora Krejčíková. Gauff improved to 5-4 head-to-head against Sabalenka, and was the more stable player in their semi-final, as she saved nine of 13 break points throughout the match.

"I'm happy with the way I played. I know against Aryna, she's always going to be a tough match. She's world number one for a reason," the 2023 US Open champion said.

Gauff beat Zheng in their sole previous

meeting, on clay in Rome earlier this season, and the American used to be coached by Pere Riba, who currently works with the Chinese player.

"She's playing great tennis," Gauff said of Zheng.

"Just playing confident tennis will help me and give me the best shot at winning. I'm not really nervous. Year-end to me has always been a bonus and being here is already a privilege."

Gauff improved to 5-4 head-to-head against Sabalenka, and was the more stable player in their semi-final, as she saved nine of 13 break points throughout the match

With a combined age of 42 years and 271 days, the match-up between Zheng and Gauff on Saturday will feature the youngest combined age for the two finalists at the event since Maria Sharapova and Serena Williams in 2004.

In front of a buoyant crowd at King Saud University Indoor Arena, Sabalenka was under pressure in her first service game, needing eight-and-a-half minutes to hold

for 1-all, after saving two break points.

Four forehand errors from Gauff cost her the next game as Sabalenka broke for a 2-1 advantage, but the Belarusian's lead was short-lived, as she immediately got broken at love. The American raced to a 6-1 lead in the breaker and finally clinched the 59-minute set on her fourth opportunity.

The second set was a different story, with Gauff taking the helm and breaking twice to build a 4-1 gap.

In a marathon sixth game, Sabalenka needed eight break points to get one of the breaks back, but her effort was nullified by Gauff, who took four points in a row on her opponent's serve to surge ahead 5-2.

The Floridian couldn't serve out the win but kept up the pressure on Sabalenka's serve to reach the final after one hour and 49 minutes of sheer battle.

Earlier in the day, 22-year-old Zheng needed one hour and 40 minutes to overcome Krejčíková in their semi-final encounter, firing nine aces along the way.

Zheng led 6-3, 3-0 before the eighth-seeded Krejčíková launched a comeback attempt, but the Chinese star regained control of the match to make it two wins from two clashes with the Czech. — AFP

Samson earns crushing T20 win against South Africa

DURBAN: Sanju Samson slammed a second successive Twenty20 international century to set up a 61-run win for India in the first of four matches against South Africa at Kingsmead in Durban on Friday.

Opening batter Samson hit 10 sixes and seven fours in a spectacular innings of 107 off 50 balls in an Indian total of 202-8.

It proved more than enough. Leg-spinners Varun Chakravathy and Ravi Bishnoi bowled in tandem and took three wickets apiece as South Africa crumbled to 141 all out.

Samson vowed to "keep my feet on the ground" after "10 long years of international cricket" during which he has been unable to nail down a regular place in Indian white-ball teams.



India's Sanju Samson celebrates after reaching his century. — Reuters

His only two previous international centuries have come in the past 12 months – 108 in a one-day international against South Africa last December and 111 in a T20 against Bangladesh in Hyderabad last month.

"I was in a zone, I just wanted to go with the flow," he told SuperSport television after his innings, which ended with a leaping catch by Tristan Stubbs on the deep midwicket boundary as he tried to hit another six off leg-spinner Ngaba Peter.

Indian opening bowlers Arshdeep Singh and Avesh Khan both took early wickets in South Africa's reply before Chakravathy and Bishnoi bowled immaculately in unbroken four-over spells.

They tied down South African stars Heinrich Klaasen (25) and

David Miller (18) before both were dismissed in the space of three balls by Chakravathy going for big hits.

Suryakumar Yadav, captaining an India team, praised his team for their attacking approach.

He said he was not concerned by the only blemish in the Indian performance – losing six wickets and scoring only 35 runs in the last 5.2 overs of their innings after Tilak Varma (33) and Samson fell in quick succession.

South African captain Aiden Markram admitted that Samson had put a largely inexperienced bowling attack under pressure but said he was disappointed with his team's batting effort. "It was a really good wicket. We would have loved to have made a much better start," said Markram. s— AFP

SPORTS

BIG ROLE



FIH CONGRESS
RE-ELECTS TAYYAB
IKRAM AS PRESIDENT
UNTIL 2032

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 9

The 49th International Hockey Federation (FIH) Statutory Congress, which concluded in Muscat on Saturday, re-elected Tayyab Ikram, the sole candidate, as the FIH President by acclamation for two terms until 2032. Nine executive board members were also elected by the assembly general members, including Seif Ahmed, Alberto ‘Coco’ Budeisky, Marcos Hofmann, Cameron Vale, Danae Andrada, Hiroya Anzai, Erik Cornelissen, Maureen Craig-Rousseau, Elizabeth Safoa King, Piotr Wilkonski, Camila Caram, and Katrin Kauschke.

During the first FIH Executive Board meeting, two vice-presidents will be elected among the members.

“I am deeply grateful for the tremendous support you have shown for my candidacy to lead global hockey for another two terms until 2032. It is a true honour to embrace this responsibility. Together, we have accomplished many milestones, and yet there is still much more ahead for us to achieve in the near future. Our progress reflects the stability and unity of our beloved and historic sport. As we look to the future, I want to reassure you that FIH will keep the growth and development in all the national associations, besides the continental federations, at the forefront of our mission,” Ikram said.

Hockey leaders representing 118 different countries attended the FIH Congress in Muscat. The congress began with welcoming remarks from FIH President Ikram, followed by welcoming note from Dr Marwan bin Juma al Juma, Chairman of the Oman Hockey Association (OHA).

“It is a great honour to welcome each one of you to Oman as we host the FIH Congress this year, marking a significant milestone aligned with the 100th anniversary of our hockey journey. We extend our warmest greetings to the President of the FIH and express our sincere gratitude for choosing Oman to host this esteemed gathering,” he said.

“We deeply appreciate the continuous efforts and commitment of the FIH toward the development and growth of hockey worldwide. Your vision and initiatives have been instrumental in driving this beloved sport forward, inspiring players, coaches, and fans alike to reach new heights,” he added.

“Our heartfelt thanks also go to all the national associations present here today. Your innovative ideas, contributions, and initiatives have significantly enriched the hockey community and have been vital in pushing the boundaries of the sport. Oman Hockey is proud to stand with you in our shared mission and remains fully committed to supporting the development of hockey to reach the levels we aspire to achieve,” Dr Marwan said.

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, congratulated FIH on the 100-year anniversary. He praised the FIH’s efforts and achievements, highlighting the significant contributions of President Ikram in advancing the sport. He commended the active participation of hockey athletes in the recent Olympic Games held in Paris and wished continued success for hockey in upcoming international events.

The FIH President delivered special awards to different representatives, including Shakir Munir from the OHA for his outstanding contribution in arranging the FIH Congress.

Kyrgyzstan Hockey Association Chairman Omorkanov said, “We are delighted with the approval of our FIH membership which is a historic moment in our country. We are gearing up to host many events in the following year, including the Asian Central Hockey Championship. This event will host 16 countries and will take place next year,” he added.

Harmanpreet, Yibbi claim
FIH best player awards

SREEJESH BEST GOALKEEPER, SUFYAN AND DIAZ EMERGE ‘RISING STARS’



Group pic of the Star Award winners

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
@anuroop_ath

PARIS OLYMPICS bronze-winning Indian team captain Harmanpreet Singh and women’s gold winner Yibbi Jansen of the Netherlands won the FIH Player of the Year 2024 awards at the FIH Hockey Stars Awards gala in Muscat on Friday night.

The winners in various categories were selected following a vote by an expert panel, national associations—represented by their respective national teams’ captains and coaches—fans, and media.

The gala night was held during the 49th FIH Statutory Congress in Muscat as the global hockey body celebrated 100 years of its formation.

Indian goalkeeping great PR Sreejesh and Ye Jiao of China won the FIH Goalkeepers of the Year awards, while the awards for FIH Rising Stars were claimed by Sufyan Khan of Pakistan and Zoe Diaz of Argentina in male and female categories respectively.

China women’s head coach Alyson Annan (Australia) has been awarded the FIH Coach of the Year award in the women’s category for a second consecutive year, while Paris Olympics gold winner Jeroen Delmee (Netherlands) won the FIH Coach of the Year award in the men’s category.

Sarah Wilson of Scotland and Steve Rogers of Australia won the FIH Umpire of the Year award in the women’s and men’s categories respectively.

DESERVING WINNERS

Yibbi Jansen shined at the Paris 2024 Olympics, where she led the Netherlands to yet another gold medal, scoring 9 goals along the way, including the leveller in the gold medal match.

The 24-year-old Dutch drag flicker also leads the list of all-time top goal scorers in the FIH Hockey Pro League.

Jansen said: “First off, thank you for having me here and for this award. It has been great to meet everyone who works behind the scenes to make all the hockey events possible worldwide. The Olympic gold was always the biggest dream of my life, and this summer that dream came true. Thank you to my teammates who all worked so hard for us to make this dream a reality.”

Collecting his third FIH Player of the Year award, Harmanpreet was the stand-out player amongst the men’s nominees, receiving the most votes across all categories of voters. Harmanpreet led the scoring charts at the Paris 2024 Olympics with 10 goals, including goals in the quar-



Best male goalkeeper PR Sreejesh



Best male player Harmanpreet Singh

terfinal, semifinal, and both goals in the bronze medal match against Spain, which India won 2-1 to secure their second consecutive podium finish at the Olympics.

He has previously won the FIH Player of the Year award on two occasions, in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Speaking about the celebrations back home after he captained his side to a second consecutive medal at the Olympics, Harmanpreet Singh said: “After the Olympics, it was so great to go back home

and have such huge crowds there to greet us and welcome us. It was a very special feeling. I would like to mention my teammates—none of this would have been possible without you all. Special thanks to Hockey India as well for always giving us every opportunity to succeed at all levels.”

Best women’s goalkeeper Ye Jiao has been a brick wall for China, earning a remarkable silver medal in Paris.

Jiao said: “This is the centennial year of the FIH, and to receive this award in this year is extra special. I would also like to thank those who support me, especially those back in China, my teammates, coaches, and everyone who is present here today, joining me in this most special moment of my life.”

Best male goalkeeper PR Sreejesh brought an end to his stellar career at the Paris 2024 Olympics, by adding a second Olympic medal to his trophy cabinet and now he gets to add a third FIH Goalkeeper of the Year award as well, having previously won the award in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Much like his compatriot Harmanpreet, Sreejesh received the most votes across all categories of voters.

PR Sreejesh said: “I am so happy today. Thank you for this last playing honour of my playing career. This award completely belongs to my team, the defence who made sure most attacks never got to me, and the midfielders and forwards who covered up my mistakes by scoring more goals than I conceded.”

RISING PLAYERS

Women’s rising star Zoe Diaz was instrumental in Argentina’s bronze medal victory at the Paris 2024 Olympics, beating Germany.

Diaz said: “I am really happy to have won this award. It was tough to play at the highest level during the past year, especially the Olympics, and I am very emotional about all that we achieved. I would like to dedicate this award to my family, especially my mother who is here in Oman to support me. So congratulations to her as well!”

Men’s ‘rising star’ Sufyan Khan has rapidly emerged as one of Pakistan’s most exciting young hockey talents, with an impressive goalscoring record of 24 goals in just 48 games.

Sufyan said: “Pakistan has a great history in the world of hockey, having achieved so many medals at the World Cups and Olympics. I would like to say to the fans back home that we will always aim to take us back to those glory days, and I am sure those days are coming soon. I would also like to thank my teammates who have always supported me in my young career.”

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SHORT TAKES

This project will focus on producing copper concentrates.

MAZOOON COPPER PROJECT LAYS FOUNDATION STONE IN YANQUL

YANQUL: The Mazoon Mining Company, part of Oman Minerals Development Company, will mark a significant milestone with the foundation-laying ceremony for the Mazoon Copper Project in Yanqul, Al Dhahirah Governorate, on November 10. Spanning 20 square kilometres, this project will focus on producing copper concentrates and includes five mines and a processing plant designed to handle 2.5 million tonnes of copper ore annually.

This project, featuring comprehensive residential and administrative facilities, represents a major advancement for Oman's mining sector. It positions the Sultanate of Oman as a key player in copper concentrate production, bolstering the local economy and extending value chains within the industry. The project is also expected to bring economic benefits to Al Dhahirah Governorate, particularly to the Wilayat of Yanqul. — ONA

RO 2.3 bn total investment in Sur Industrial City

SUR INDUSTRIAL CITY, under the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has shown remarkable growth by attracting five new projects in the first half of 2024. With this addition, the city now hosts 113 projects, encompassing industrial, commercial, service, residential and academic sectors. The total cumulative investment in Sur Industrial City has reached nearly RO 2.3 billion, with a workforce of 2,737 employees, maintaining an Omanisation rate of over 55%. The industrial zone spans a vast area of 36 million square metres.

Eng Nasser bin Hamoud al Mabsali, Director-General of Sur Industrial City, highlighted key ongoing developments in the city, particularly the construction of a sewage treatment plant with a daily capacity of 500 cubic metres.

Currently 82% complete, the plant is expected to undergo inspection and begin operations early next year. Another significant project is the Omifco Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre, which has completed its design phase and is preparing for contractor bids.

Al Mabsali also noted the near completion of the city's security fence and green belt projects, both expected to conclude by the end of 2024. Furthermore, Madayn is focusing on upgrading

The industrial zone spans a vast area of 36 million square metres.

Eng Nasser bin Hamoud al Mabsali, Director-General of Sur Industrial City.

infrastructure to support ship docking, having issued tenders for consulting services to design this initiative. The consultancy work is anticipated to be awarded early next year.

As part of its mission to support local businesses, Sur Industrial City has been organising subcontracting sessions to facilitate contracts between large companies and SMEs in Oman.

This effort aims to create a dynamic, interconnected business ecosystem that fosters collaboration and economic growth within the Sultanate of Oman.

— ONA

Oman Investment Authority to purchase outstanding shares of Majan Glass

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 9

MAJAN GLASS, the country's leading glass container manufacturer, has announced that its principal shareholder – Oman Investment Authority (OIA) – will purchase outstanding shares from the market following a decision to convert the publicly traded company (SAOG) into a closed joint stock company (SAOC).

The move, according to market experts, is in line with OIA's strategy to divest from some of its subsidiaries through privatisation or partial divestments via Initial Public Offerings (IPO) on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). OIA owns a 75.26% stake in Suhar-based Majan Glass, a major producer and exporter of glass containers and jars for soft drinks, food and beverages.

In a filing to the Financial Services Authority last week, Majan Glass said it had received preliminary approval from the Authority for the conversion of the company's legal structure. It also authorised the purchase by OIA of company shares from registered shareholders "that intend to sell any portion of their shareholding".

It added that shares will be purchased at the rate of RO 0.004 per share – a value determined on the basis of the company's assets and possessions. The share

Majan Glass is 75.26% owned by Oman Investment Authority.

buyback will span a weeklong period from November 21 to 27, 2024, it stated.

During fiscal 2023, the company recorded a 6-per cent dip in total revenue to RO 12.26 million, down from RO 13.02 million in 2022, along with a post-tax loss of RO 748,000, which was however lower than the previous year's net loss of RO 985,000.

It attributed the downtrend to a combination of factors, notably disruptions in markets in the Levant region due to geopolitical tensions, inflationary trends that have depressed demand in European markets, higher interest rates and higher raw material

prices. Also weighing on sales were the ongoing boycott of some international carbonated beverage brands in some markets, and higher shipping costs due to disruptions in the Red Sea.

However, boding well for its goals to switch to locally produced, cost-competitive raw materials is a recent agreement signed by Minerals Development Oman (MDO) – a subsidiary of OIA – for the commercial development of glass production grade silica sand deposits in Block F 51 in Al Wusta Governorate, said Mohammed bin Abdullah al Farsi, Chairman – Majan Glass, in a recent financial report for Q3 2024.

TENDER NOTICE



Mazoon Mining LLC, a subsidiary of Minerals Development Oman (MDO), is developing the Yanqul Copper Project in Al Dhahirah Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman. The project comprises five open-pit mines that will feed copper ore to a new processing plant to produce copper concentrate.

Mazoon Mining would like to invite qualified Experienced Local Companies to participate in the following tender:

Tender No.	5185-0200
Tender Title	Prime Contractor
Closing Date of Selling	21 November 2024
Eligibility (Mandatory)	Bidders must have proven experience in executing similar multi-disciplinary projects as a Prime Contractor on major process plants or similar major infrastructure project. Bidders must demonstrate a minimum contract value more than, OMR 30m on each two (2) projects. At least one (1) of the projects must have been undertaken on a major industrial process plant.
Tender Fee	OMR 1,500 (Non-Refundable)

- Tender fees shall only be accepted through bank deposit in the following bank account:

Account Name:

Bank Name:

Branch:

Account:

IBAN:

Mazoon Mining LLC.

Sohar International Bank SAOG

Gurum Branch

005020042486

OM720300000005020042486
- Copy of the original bank deposit receipt confirming the deposit and identifying the bidders name and the tender number must be forwarded via email, to tenders@mazoonmining.om to request the release of the tender documents. Payments received after the closing date of selling will not be refunded. MMC retains the right to correspond solely with companies satisfying the mandatory tender requirements before the release of the tender documents. Responses received that do not comply with the eligibility (mandatory) requirements will be removed from evaluation and will not be eligible for shortlisting.
- For any inquiries, clarifications, or submissions, please email: tenders@mazoonmining.om

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CEO HIGHLIGHTS
IMPACT INVESTMENT
AT ADFIAP FORUM

MUSCAT: With sustainable infrastructure key to combating climate change and driving economic growth, Hussain al Lawati, CEO, Development Bank, discussed how impact investment can accelerate progress towards Oman Vision 2040 and the country's 2050 Net Zero strategy at the ADFIAP International CEO Forum in Bali, held during November 6 – 8, 2024. Al Lawati participated in a panel titled Sustainable Futures: The Role of Impact Investment in Building Resilient Infrastructure, alongside top financial leaders from Asia and the Middle East.

“Today, sustainable infrastructure is not just an environmental necessity, it is an economic imperative,” said Al Lawati.



HUSSAIN AL
LAWATI
CEO of
Development Bank

“The ADFIAP forum provided an ideal opportunity for development finance professionals to exchange ideas and insights that can help turn challenges into investment opportunities.”

At the Bali forum, the Development Bank CEO highlighted major Omani infrastructure projects, including Sultan Haitham City, a 14.8 km² development integrating smart technologies, solar power and 2.9 million square metres of green space to serve 100,000 residents. He also discussed Oman's ambitious \$1.2 billion investment in wind-based Independent Power Projects which will collectively generate 1 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity by 2027, contributing to the country's Net-Zero goals. “Oman's work in this space demonstrates how investment in sustainable infrastructure can help enhance economic growth, support climate action, protect biodiversity, reduce pollution as well as enhance resilience to risks from climate change.”

The Development Bank CEO emphasised that resilient infrastructure is not just about roads, housing, ports and wind farms it is about people, businesses and communities for whom resilient infrastructure is a lifeline to better health, education and jobs.

According to the World Bank, the net-benefit of investing in more resilient infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries would save \$4.2 trillion, with \$4 in benefit for every \$1 invested. However, simply adding capacity is not enough. To be durable and future-proof, tomorrow's infrastructure must cope with and adapt to a complex, extensive and evolving mix of hazards, risks and threats. As a result, resilience needs to be an essential component of every infrastructure project, integrated from the planning and design phase rather than added as a last-minute feature.

In this regard, technology plays an important role. From digital twin cities that create real-time, data-driven simulations to optimise resource use to 3D house printing that cuts construction time in half and reduces material waste by 30% per cent, advancements are reshaping the future of infrastructure.

“These technologies are not just innovative but essential in making public and private sector infrastructure investment more efficient and impactful,” commented Al Lawati.

Go places and enjoy the experience in the Ford Explorer

MUSCAT: The Ford Explorer is a standout among SUVs, blending spacious design, cutting-edge technology, advanced safety features and remarkable power for an unmatched driving experience. Whether tackling rugged terrain or city streets, the Explorer's advanced systems and features ensure comfort, control and peace of mind, making it the ideal companion for families and adventure-seekers alike.

The Ford Explorer is equipped with a powerful 2.3-litre turbocharged EcoBoost engine that produces 300 horsepower and 420 Nm of torque. The engine is paired to an all-new 10-speed transmission and Intelligent All-Wheel-Drive system. With its quick-shifting 10-speed automatic transmission, Intelligent Four-

Wheel Drive plus a Terrain Management System featuring seven selectable drive modes, the Explorer is built to tackle virtually any adventure. Sand mode comes standard on all models.

The Ford Explorer has improved off-road capability due to an intelligent four-wheel drive system and an available new Terrain Management System that features seven easy-to-engage drive modes. Standard features include a power liftgate, 8-inch digital touch screen with SYNC 3, and a comprehensive package of driver assist and safety technologies.

When it comes to safety, the Explorer is equipped with some of the finest features including the standard Ford Co-Pilot360, a



The Ford Explorer has improved off-road capability.

suite of driver-assist technologies that includes Pre-Collision Assist with Automatic Emergency Braking, Pedestrian Detection, Forward Collision Warning and

Dynamic Brake Support; Blind Spot Information System with Cross-Traffic Alert; Lane-Keeping System; 360 degree camera and Auto headlamps with auto high-beams.

Other available Ford Co-Pilot360 Assist+ technologies include Evasive Steering Assist, which provides steering support to help avoid a collision; and Post-Impact Braking provides braking after a collision to lessen injury and damage caused by a secondary crash event. Explorer also is available with Ford's all-new Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control which automatically slows the vehicle down when traffic ahead slows. It also helps keep the vehicle centred in its lane.

The Explorer's 8-inch touch

screen mounted in the centre of the dash with navigation maps fills the entire screen for easy viewing, or split the space with audio information. The screen provides a quicker, more responsive interaction with the updated SYNC 3 system. Standard SYNC 3's more intuitive layout gives drivers compatibility with available Apple CarPlay feature.

A wireless charging pad is available that allows customers to recharge compatible mobile devices, and up to four USB ports, including new type-C outlets, charge next-generation mobile devices. Up to five 12-volt outlets and a 230-volt outlet are also available. For music lovers, Explorer offers an available 980-watt, 12-speaker B&O premium audio system.

Bank Muscat’s ‘Sayyarati’
returns with new features

IN celebration of the Sultanate of Oman's 54th National Day, Bank Muscat, Oman's leading financial services provider, has launched its new auto financing offer “Sayyarati” for individuals aspiring to own their dream car. The offer features an attractive interest rate starting from 4.25% per annum on both new and pre-owned cars, with added benefits including repaying the instalments after two months and an extended repayment period of up to 120 months (10 years), instead of 96 months (8 years). This offer is designed to enhance the banking experience for customers looking to benefit from Bank Muscat's auto financing solutions.

The offer is available to customers working in government, quasi-government entities, and Tier 1 & Tier 2 companies. As part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, Bank Muscat is also offering an additional discounted rate by 0.25% for eco-friendly, hybrid and electric vehicles. The offer also includes free third-party insurance for pre-owned car financing, a free credit card for the first year, and several other distinctive benefits.

Customers can apply at any of the Bank's branches across Oman or visit the specialised Sayyarati centres in Al Wattayah, Muscat Governorate, and Salalah, Dhofar Governorate.

Commenting on the occasion, Abdullah bin Tamman al Maashani, General Manager – Products, Bank Muscat, said: “We are always keen to engage with our valued customers during national celebrations, such as the Sultanate of Oman's National Day, by offering special benefits on our products. Our Sayyarati offer is a direct response to the evolving needs of our customers, providing them with the opportunity to own their desired vehicle with a repayment period of up to 10 years. We are committed to

Sayyarati

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This offer is designed to enhance the banking experience for customers looking to benefit from Bank Muscat's auto financing solutions.

As part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, Bank Muscat is also offering an additional discounted rate by 0.25% for eco-friendly, hybrid, and electric vehicles.

delivering excellent service and helping our customers achieve their goals. I extend my sincere appreciation to all our customers for their continued trust in the Bank.”

To apply for financing, customers are required to submit essential documents,

including their ID card (for Omanis), passport (for expatriates), salary assignment letter, car valuation/quotation from an approved evaluator, driving license, Mulkiya (for pre-owned cars), and the seller's ID (for pre-owned cars).

SOHAR wins Environmental Protection Award

MUSCAT: SOHAR Port and Freezone is proud to announce that it has been awarded the prestigious Environmental Protection Award at The Maritime Standard Awards 2024. This accolade recognises their unwavering commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship within the maritime industry.

In 2024 alone, SOHAR has launched several significant sustainability initiatives including the establishment of the Marsa LNG bunkering hub, which positions SOHAR as a leader in providing cleaner energy solutions for maritime operations.



In 2024 alone, SOHAR has launched several significant sustainability initiatives.

Additionally, the launch of the SOHAR Net-Zero Alliance (SNZA) aims to accelerate Oman's transition toward carbon neutrality by 2050 through collaboration with various industrial partners.

Other noteworthy projects include biofuel bunkering in tugboat operations, the Polysilicon Factory by United Solar Holding, the Sunstar Lead Acid Battery Plant, and the Gemini Recycling Plant. Together, these projects exemplify SOHAR's dedication to reducing environmental impact and fostering sustainable practices for a greener future.

SHORTTAKES



Oman fish production reached 793K tonnes in 2023.

OMANI FISH PRODUCTS NOW DIRECTLY EXPORTED TO CHINA

MUSCAT: Several Omani companies in the fish sales and marketing sector have recently begun direct exports of fish products to China, marking a significant milestone for Oman's fisheries industry. This expansion supports Oman Vision 2040's aim to grow the fisheries sector into a profitable, sustainable contributor to the economy. By increasing fish exports and tapping

into new markets, this move aligns with Oman's broader strategy to enhance the sector's economic impact.

Dr Masoud bin Sulaiman al Azri, Director General of Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR), highlighted the strategic importance of this achievement. This new trade channel

stems from a "protocol" signed between the governments of Oman and China, establishing health and safety standards for marine products exported from Oman to China. The protocol ensures that Omani fish products meet rigorous inspection, quarantine, and veterinary health requirements, fostering trust and quality assurance in the Chinese market.

Following the agreement, 23 Omani companies have been accredited to export fish products to China. Each company underwent stringent evaluations to obtain fish quality control certificates that align with Chinese health and safety standards. The MoAFWR, working alongside Chinese authorities, supports ongoing certification processes to meet all compliance measures, reinforcing Oman's reputation as a supplier of high-quality fish products.

Dr Al Azri emphasised that this new export pathway enhances economic ties between Oman and China while opening further opportunities for trade. By directly exporting to China, Oman strengthens its position as a reliable supplier in global seafood markets, promoting food security cooperation and adding value to the fisheries sector.

Omani fish production reached 793,000 tonnes in 2023, an increase of 6 per cent from 2022, with export volumes totalling 324,000 tonnes valued at RO 189 million. This direct export initiative is expected to boost these figures and contribute to Oman's economic diversification. — ONA

OMAN'S NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION REACHES 42.2 BCM



MUSCAT: Oman's total production and import of natural gas reached 42.222 billion cubic metres (bcm) by the end of September 2024, marking a 4 per cent increase from 40.88 billion cubic metres during the same period in 2023. According to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), industrial projects were the main consumers, accounting for 61.4 per cent of gas usage, or 25.922 billion cubic metres.

The gas usage for oil fields reached 8.88 billion cubic metres, while power generation stations used 7.231 billion cubic metres. Industrial areas consumed 187.8 million cubic metres by the end of September 2024.

Non-associated gas production, including imports, accounted for 33.626 billion cubic metres, while associated production contributed 8.596 billion cubic metres.

New investment fund to boost Oman's waqf sector

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, NOV 9

THE MINISTRY OF AWQAF AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS (MoARA), the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, and Bank Nizwa has launched the Ishraq Waqf Investment Fund last week, a move to enhance the waqf (endowment) sector in Oman. This new investment initiative aims to promote sustainable development by channelling Islamic finance into projects aligned with charitable and social welfare goals, marking an advancement for Oman's financial landscape.

In an interview with Observer, Khalid al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa, outlined the fund's objectives and its potential to enrich Oman's Islamic finance ecosystem. "This is a unique partnership with the main players in the Islamic finance industry in Oman," he shared. "With the support of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs(MoARA), the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, and Bank Nizwa, we are launching the Ishraq Endowment Fund to create meaningful, sustainable impact."

The fund is structured to cater to a range of investors by offering



We are introducing an innovative structure, not seen in other markets, by combining permanent, temporary, and transitional endowment models.

KHALID AL KAYED
CEO of Bank Nizwa

three distinct Shariah-compliant models. These include a perpetual endowment for those wishing to contribute funds permanently for charitable purposes, a temporary endowment allowing specific time-based contributions, and a revenue-focused investment model.

"We are introducing an innovative structure, not seen in other markets, by combining permanent, temporary, and transitional endowment models," Al Kayed noted. "This approach allows flexibility, making the fund accessible to a broader audience."

With an initial capital of RO 10 million, the Ishraq Waqf Investment Fund is managed by the Oman National Investments Development Company (Tanmia).

It invites individuals, companies, and waqf institutions to invest in a way that aligns with Islamic values, making it possible for participants to contribute directly to projects that support community welfare and social development.

The Ishraq Endowment Fund is one part of Bank Nizwa's broader strategic vision, which aims to strengthen the Islamic finance sector in Oman.

Al Kayed explained that the bank's goal extends beyond traditional banking services. "Our strategy

extends beyond just banking. It's about creating sustainable synergy across various sectors in Oman, including partnerships with public and private entities," he emphasised, adding that this collaborative approach enables the bank to play a key role in building the Islamic finance ecosystem in the Sultanate of Oman.

In addition to advancing waqf investments, the bank is also focusing on expanding its client base in corporate and retail markets, with a particular emphasis on digitalisation and sustainability. Al Kayed also expressed a vision for regional expansion.

"It's time to cross the borders of Oman and start doing business outside," he noted, suggesting that the bank's future may include new international ventures.

The Ishraq Waqf Investment Fund represents a substantial milestone for Islamic finance in Oman, supporting both the national development goals of Oman's Vision 2040 and the growth of the waqf sector.

Through this initiative, Bank Nizwa and its partners are leading a shift in the landscape of Islamic finance, offering innovative tools that blend investment with community impact.

OMAN'S ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION DECLINES

MUSCAT: Oman's electricity production totalled 29,127.6 gigawatt-hours by the end of August 2024, a 3.9 per cent decline from 30,298.3 gigawatt-hours during the same period in 2023, as reported by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The governorates of Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, and Al Dhahirah recorded a combined output of 16,811.7 gigawatt-hours, down by 11.9 per cent. However, Muscat



Electricity production totaled 29,127.6 gigawatt-hours by end of August 2024.

Governorate and Dhofar Governorate saw growth, with production rising by 6.7 per cent to 368.1 gigawatt-hours and by 15.5 per cent to 3,943.2 gigawatt-hours, respectively. In contrast, Al Wusta Governorate experienced a 25.8 per cent decrease, producing 113.5 gigawatt-hours.

Meanwhile, total water production reached 346.569 million cubic meters by August, showing a slight dip from the same period last year. — ONA

Oman's manufacturing sector sees strong growth

MUSCAT: Oman's manufacturing sector posted robust growth in the first half of 2024, with output at constant prices rising by 10.1 per cent year-on-year to reach RO 1.868 billion, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The oil refining segment led the increase, soaring 63.8 per cent to RO 138.2 million, or 7 per cent of the sector's output. Basic chemical industries followed with a 17.8 per cent rise to RO 659 million, contributing 35 per cent to the sector. Demand for other products—including minerals, food, and pharmaceuticals—grew by 4.7 per cent, totalling RO 1.071 billion, or 57 per cent of the sector's output.

Mazin bin Humaid al Siyabi, Assistant Director General at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), highlighted that manufacturing now accounts for 10 per cent of Oman's GDP, achieving a growth rate of 7.5 per cent within the current five-year plan (2021-2025). Oman's 2040 Industrial Strategy targets a 7 per cent annual growth rate, aiming to enhance local production, create jobs, improve trade balance, and diversify income sources beyond oil.

Al Siyabi noted that manufacturing sector growth is stimulating other areas by increasing demand for raw



Manufacturing now accounts for 10 per cent of Oman's GDP.

materials, logistics, and technical services, along with infrastructure development and investment in R&D.

Technical Director Eng Jassim bin Saif al Jadidi added that several industrial firms listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) reported higher revenues by the end of Q3 2024. Food companies, particularly in milling and poultry, improved due to lower raw material costs. Meanwhile, metals such as iron and aluminium saw gains from stronger global prices, while demand slowed for building materials and ceramics.

Globally, UNIDO data showed marginal growth of 0.1 per cent in manufacturing until July 2024, reflecting declines in key economies. While high-tech manufacturing contracted, pharmaceuticals and computer production rose by 0.2 per cent, as automotive and electrical equipment saw slight declines.

Oman's manufacturing sector growth underscores its role as a key driver of the national economy, supporting diversification goals and reinforcing the sultanate of Oman's economic resilience. — ONA

Globally, UNIDO data showed marginal growth of 0.1 per cent in manufacturing until July 2024, reflecting declines in key economies

OPINION

New impetus for relations between Oman and South Korea



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The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for CBO and OCCI

POLITICAL AND economic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Korea are witnessing significant growth at all levels, as these relations have expanded over the past fifty years and have witnessed many positive developments in terms of the number of visits by officials in government institutions, the private sector and civil society. This was evident during the annual celebration of the Korean Embassy in Muscat recently on the occasion of the National Day and the Korean Armed Forces Day.

From this standpoint, Ambassador Kiejoo Kim, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Sultanate of Oman, stressed in his speech the importance of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, explaining that this anniversary represents a turning point in the long-standing partnership that has flourished over the past five decades on three strong pillars.

The first pillar is the extended partnership in political, defence and security cooperation, which helps to strengthen the commitment to peace and prosperity between the two countries, resulting in strengthening exchanges and high-level official visits as well as diplomatic relations that have been strengthened in international forums and

United Nations institutions.

Everyone is aware that the two countries work closely to contribute to regional and international peace and stability. This is represented in maintaining maritime security, given that the two countries are located on the sea, while Korea appreciates the steadfast support provided by the Omani government to the Korean naval unit in maintaining maritime security in this region.

The second pillar is related to the economic and trade relations between the two countries, which have witnessed significant development and growth, so that Korea has become today one of the largest major trading partners of the Sultanate of Oman.

The figures presented by the Korean ambassador indicate that the volume of bilateral trade between the two countries is large and reached \$5.8 billion in 2023, which means the depth of vibrant trade and economic relations between the two countries, while Korean companies are working to increase their cooperation with Omani partners and provide them with the advanced technologies they need in the fields of automobiles, electrical, electronics and other sectors.

Today, this economic partnership between Oman and Korea is directed

The first pillar is the extended partnership in political, defence and security cooperation, which helps to strengthen the commitment to peace and prosperity between the two countries, resulting in strengthening exchanges and high-level official visits as well as diplomatic relations that have been strengthened in international forums and United Nations institutions.

towards pushing future-oriented initiatives, including the green hydrogen industry and renewable energy, in close line with Oman Vision 2040.

As for the third pillar, it aims to deepen the cultural, educational and social fields by enhancing mutual understanding between the two peoples, increasing educational exchanges and providing global scholarships, in addition to enhancing cultural and sports exchanges within the friendship between the two peoples.

These existing relations between the two countries are expected to deepen further in the coming years within the framework of the directions drawn by the governments of the two countries, whether in the field of official relations with government institutions or the private sector, which enhances exchanges at the level of officials and representatives of the private sector and civil society in the coming years.

We have to benefit from South Korea in many economic and social sectors, as Bloomberg data places this country as the 12th largest economy in the world, surpassing both Australia and Mexico. This progress is based on a 2023 GDP equivalent to \$1.84 trillion based on last year's exchange rate, which highlights South Korea's important role in the global economic scene.

EUROPE LACKS SCOPE FOR FIERY TRUMP TRADE RIPOSTE

Europe has few easy ways to tame Donald Trump. The return of a self-styled tariff man in the White House makes the prospect of blanket levies on transatlantic trade a real scenario. The European Union's vast trade surplus with the United States, and its reliance on it for key goods like gas, limit the scope for a tit-for-tat response.

Trump's next assault on Europe is still unclear, but he has talked of a 10 per cent blanket levy, as well as more targeted measures against cars. While China is a bigger concern, Trump seethes at the sight of Europe's \$534 billion of exports to the US in 2023, some of which lie in areas that could easily be replaced by American companies. Vehicles other than trains accounted for over a tenth of total EU exports to the US last year, and the bloc had sizable surpluses in beverages and leather goods.

Europe could hit back, targeting the \$370 billion of goods the US exported to Europe in 2023. It could respond in kind: despite Trump's fury at Mercedes-Benz imports, the United States still exported some \$20 billion of cars and other vehicles to the bloc that year. And it could target areas where the US enjoys a trade surplus, such as fruit, nuts, art or even precious stones. Yet Europe also imports a lot of critical goods that are hard to replace, or would simply be more expensive with tariffs: drugs, aircraft and fuel account for over a third of goods sourced from the US in 2023. Moreover, fighting back will be made harder by the unbalanced nature of Europe's trade. Nearly a third of EU exports to the US are German, thanks to the biggest EU economy's strengths in luxury cars and industrial goods. As a result, Germany could face a hit worth 0.23 per cent of GDP, London School of Economics researchers reckon, whereas the bloc as a whole will suffer less than half that.

Berlin's efforts to coordinate a trade war will also be hampered by political turmoil, and the fact that while Porsche exports most of its cars to the United States the likes of BMW are less vulnerable. Some countries like Italy may even benefit from tariffs if they can replace Chinese exports to the US. One alternative riposte is to offer to import more US goods as a carrot to avoid tariffs. The bloc this year only relied on the United States for 19 per cent of its total gas needs. Nato countries could pledge to boost military spending – another Trump bugbear – via buying American. At less than \$2 billion of goods in 2023, the bloc has ample capacity to ramp up imports of guns, ammunition and explosives. Giving Trump an easy win sounds easier than squaring up to him. — Reuters

Bitcoin ETFs surpass gold

DIGITAL ASSETS and traditional markets reached significant milestones this week, marking a historic shift in investment preferences. The S&P 500 crossed the 6,000 mark for the first time, while Bitcoin surpassed \$77,000, setting a new all-time high amid unprecedented institutional demand.

A remarkable transformation in investment trends emerged as BlackRock's Bitcoin ETF (IBIT) surpassed \$33 billion in assets under management, exceeding the firm's long-established gold ETF. This achievement is particularly noteworthy given that IBIT launched just ten months ago, while the gold fund has been trading since 2005.

The success of Bitcoin ETFs extends beyond BlackRock, with these products accounting for six of the top ten most successful fund launches in 2024.

The institutional appetite for digital assets continues to grow. BlackRock's spot Ethereum ETF recorded its highest daily inflows in three months, attracting \$60.3 million in a single day. This surge coincides with Ethereum's price approaching \$3,000, its highest level since August. The broader institutional participation is evident across the sector, with Fidelity's Ethereum Fund attracting \$18.4 million in daily inflows, while VanEck and Bitwise's Ethereum funds saw inflows of \$4.3 million and \$3.4 million respectively.

The regulatory landscape for digital assets is showing signs of maturation. The Securities and Exchange Commission is reviewing requests to list the first options tied to spot Ethereum ETFs on NYSE American's securities exchange. This development follows the SEC's earlier approval of options trading for Bitcoin ETFs, suggesting a broader acceptance of regulated crypto investment products.

Significant developments in financial technology infrastructure are also shaping the future of global markets. Singapore and France's monetary authorities have completed groundbreaking experiments with post-quantum computing security, addressing critical vulnerabilities in payment networks. This innovation is particularly relevant for Gulf nations, which are increasingly positioning themselves as global fintech hubs.

The Federal Reserve's recent rate decision, combined with the US electoral outcomes, has created a



This achievement is particularly noteworthy given that IBIT launched just ten months ago, while the gold fund has been trading since 2005.



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favourable environment for both traditional and digital assets. IBIT's recent performance, including a record \$1.1 billion single-day inflow, demonstrates the growing mainstream acceptance of digital assets as a legitimate investment class.

For Gulf economies, these developments present strategic opportunities. The region's financial centres, particularly in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, are already attracting significant digital asset activity. The Dubai International Financial Centre and Abu Dhabi Global Market have established comprehensive frameworks for digital asset regulation, positioning themselves at the forefront of this financial evolution.

The emergence of quantum-resistant security measures also aligns with the region's technological ambitions. Gulf nations' investments in advanced technology infrastructure and their push toward digital transformation make them well-positioned to adopt these security innovations.

The collaboration between monetary authorities on post-quantum computing could serve as a model for regional financial institutions looking to future-proof

their systems.

Market indicators suggest this rally may have staying power. Funding rates for perpetual swaps on crypto exchanges remain near neutral levels, significantly lower than during previous market peaks. This relatively muted speculation suggests that the current price appreciation is driven by genuine demand rather than excessive leverage.

As Middle Eastern financial hubs continue to develop their digital asset frameworks, the convergence of traditional finance, cryptocurrency markets, and quantum-secure infrastructure presents new opportunities for regional leadership in the global financial system. The success of regulated investment products and the growing institutional adoption of digital assets align perfectly with the Gulf's vision of becoming a leading force in the future of finance.

****Disclaimer:**** The information provided in this article should not be considered financial advice. The cryptocurrency market remains dynamic and carries risks. It's essential to conduct your own thorough research and consult with qualified professionals before making any investment decisions.

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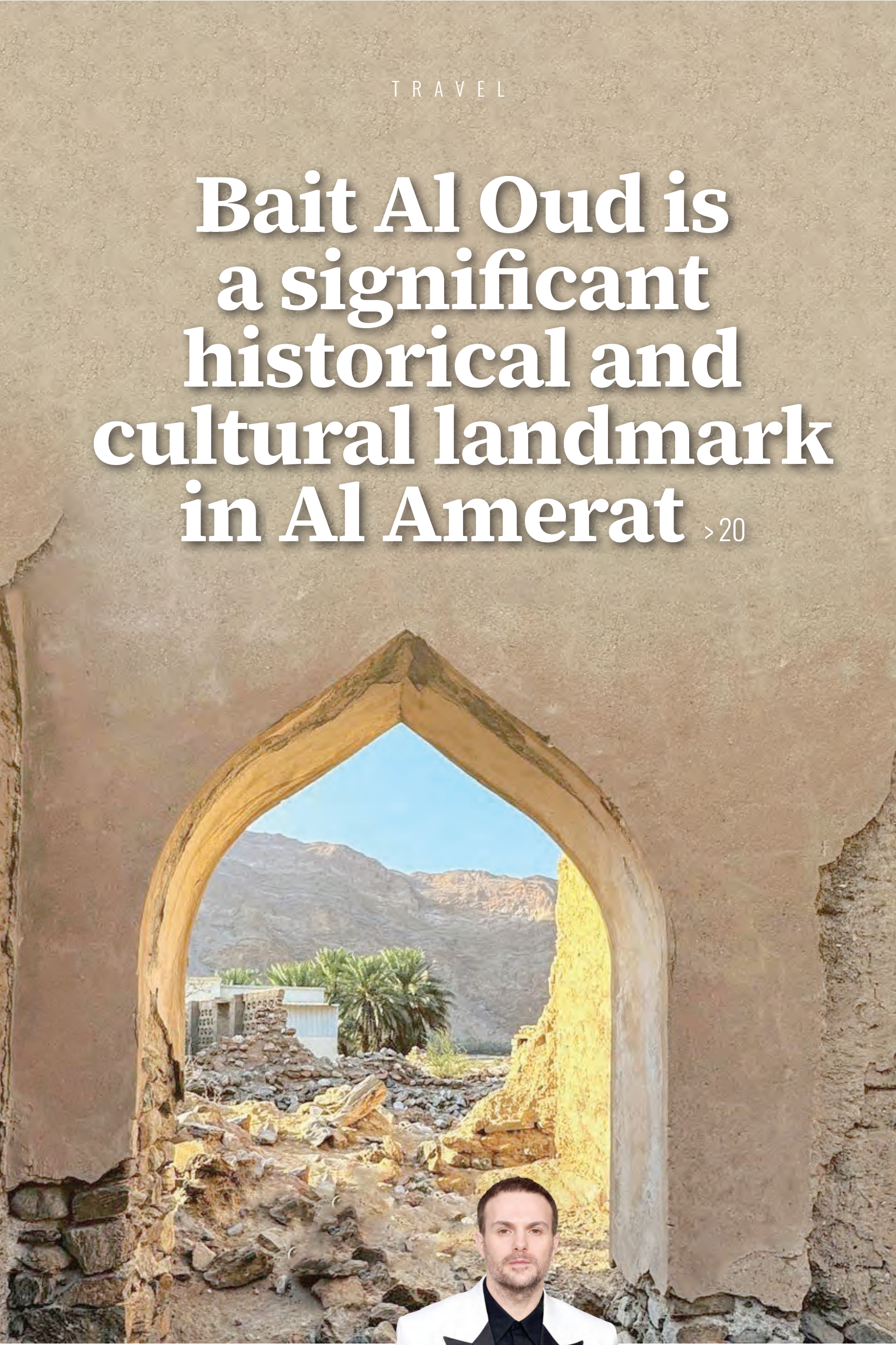
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ENTERTAINMENT

Ed Sheeran Prevails in Copyright Appeal Over ‘Let’s Get It On’



A federal appeals court ruled that Ed Sheeran’s 2014 song “Thinking Out Loud” did not infringe on the copyright of Marvin Gaye’s classic “Let’s Get It On,” tying up one loose end after Sheeran’s victory in court last year.

In a 28-page decision, a three-judge panel from the US Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit in New York affirmed a lower court’s ruling that the songwriting copyright in “Let’s Get It On” (1973) was limited to the skeletal sheet music that the song’s publishers had deposited with the US Copyright Office. Additional musical elements in the song’s recording — including guitar and drum parts, and its distinctive bass line — were therefore not protected by copyright, the judges found.

They also rejected arguments from Structured Asset Sales, a music investment company that owns an 11.11 per cent interest in “Let’s Get It On,” that the song’s four-chord pattern was original enough to have a copyright. Not only is it commonplace in many songs, the judges said, but the chords’ “selection and arrangement” in a syncopated pattern was also not original.

“Basic musical building blocks like notes, rhythms, and chords are generally not copyrightable,” the judges wrote.

The appeal was being watched by many copyright scholars, who have complained that the “deposit copy” rule, which limits protection for older works to what was written down, rather than what was recorded in a studio, had become out of step with how music has been made in the modern era. The rule was established by the 1909 Copyright Act.

“It is completely divorced from actual music-making practice,” Joseph P Fishman, a professor at Vanderbilt Law School, said in an interview with The New York Times earlier this year.

The case that went to trial last year had been brought by descendants of Ed Townsend, Gaye’s co-writer. A key dispute throughout that case had been whether the “scope” of the copyright in “Let’s Get It On” — exactly which parts of the song were protected by law and which were not — was defined by its written deposit copy or whether jurors could also consider additional elements from Gaye’s famous recording.

The district judge, citing a similar case in California involving Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven,” ruled that only the written notes on the deposit copy were part of the copyright. A revision to copyright law that took effect in 1978 allowed composers to submit a recording for registration, but that did not apply to “Let’s Get It On.” Lawyers for Sheeran also argued at trial that the syncopated chord pattern of “Thinking Out Loud” predated “Let’s Get It On” and was generic enough not to be protected by copyright. —NYT

Q U I C K

LIFESTYLE

A farmer harvests marigold flowers ahead of Tihar, the Nepali-Hindu festival of lights, at a field in Ichangu Narayan village on the outskirts of Kathmandu. —AFP

F E A T U R E S

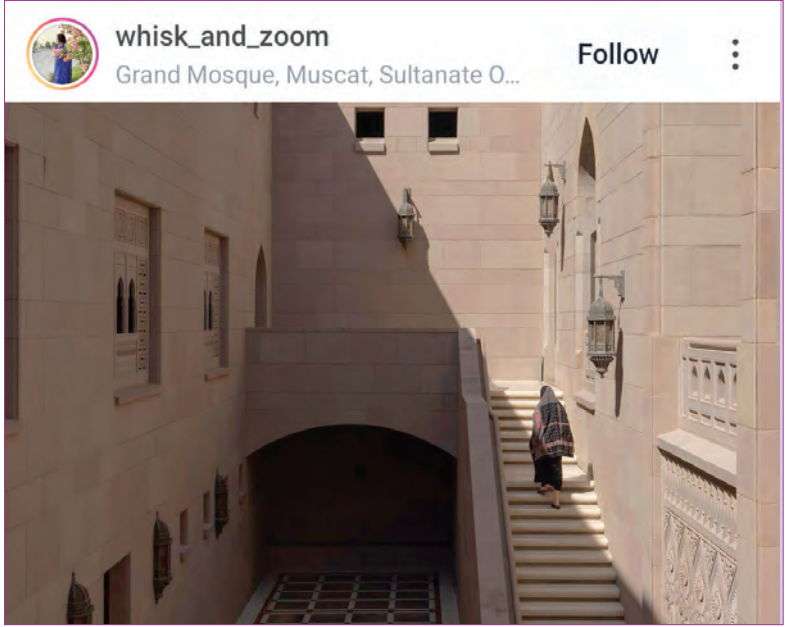
ENTERTAINMENT

Creative director of Gucci Sabato De Sarno attends the LACMA Art+Film Gala at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

CELEBRATIONS

Women smile at the Independence Monument during a ceremony marking Cambodia’s 71st Independence Day celebrations in Phnom Penh. —AFP

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Scientists discover similar dinosaur footprints on opposite sides of the Atlantic



They may be an ocean apart, but dinosaur footprints found in South America and Africa are so similar that their discovery suggests dinosaurs may have roamed a narrow corridor that connected the two continents before they split.

Researchers found more than 260 footprints more than 3,700 miles apart in Brazil and Cameroon that were preserved in mud and silt where ancient rivers and lakes once stood, according to a study published by the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. The tracks were made 120 million years ago when Africa and South America were still connected as part of a super-continent called Gondwana.

The Borborema Plateau in northeastern Brazil and the Koum Basin in northern Cameroon contain similar geological structures that preserved dinosaur prints. The footprints discovered in those areas were similar in age, shape and geo-

logical context, said Dr. Louis L Jacobs, a paleontologist at Southern Methodist University in Texas and the study's lead author. It is not surprising to make similar discoveries in regions that were once connected, Jacobs said, but the dinosaur tracks help us understand the geologic history of a region that broke apart millions of years ago.

The paper shows a "specific place at a specific time with specific climatic conditions and environmental conditions" that can help show how animals may have moved across the stretch of land between Cameroon and Brazil before Gondwana broke apart.

Jacobs worked with an international team to determine the age of footprints he had previously found in Cameroon by studying the rocks in which they were preserved. They then looked at records of dinosaur tracks in Brazil, where the continents were once joined. — ALEXANDRA E. PETRI / NYT



Who won the Oscars of American fashion

THE 2024 Council of Fashion Designers of America awards, otherwise known as the Oscars of American fashion, were held in the Museum of Natural History, in the atrium under the great blue whale, but the coming election was the elephant in the room. How could it not be?

It's easy for awards shows to get insular and self-congratulatory, and fashion can seem very much like its own echo chamber, but the industry is increasingly wearing its politics on its well-dressed sleeves. The last New York Fashion Week began with a get-out-the-vote march attended by many of the people in the room on Monday, including positive change award winner Michael Kors, who managed to get presenter Blake Lively out of floral prints and into a very chic sequined white gown and tuxedo (of his own design, natch).

As if in acknowledgment, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, in a black lace dress, opened the evening with a plea to "please tap into your drive, tap into your inspiration, tap into your ability to bring other people along."

Thom Browne, the chair of the CFDA, seconded the idea, reminding the crowd that "fashion, like democracy, is about choices and individual decisions that have the power to create culture and communities and define the future we want, we need and we deserve."

In a way, that's what these awards do: define the future of the industry, or its power structure. And by that measure, there is no question that, as may be true in the election itself, a generational shift is occurring —

one that elevates the melting pot of America and the allure of diverse points of view, putting them right at the beating centre of how we dress.

So while the nominees for the three big awards of the evening included familiar names from past CFDA ceremonies — Marc Jacobs, Proenza Schouler, Tory Burch, Thom Browne — the actual winners represented a change in the system.

Raul Lopez of Luar, a Dominican American who talks openly about sneaking into the library at the Fashion Institute of Technology to learn his craft, took home the accessories designer of the year award for the second time.

Willy Chavarria, whose most recent show, "América," paid homage to itinerant labourers and service workers (and included merch made for the American Civil Liberties Union), was named menswear designer of the year, also for the second time.

And Rachel Scott of Diotima, a Jamaican American who began her line, which melds the crafts and traditions of the Caribbean with a haute urban sensibility, only three years ago, won womenswear designer of the year, after winning the emerging designer of the year award in 2023. (This year, Henry Zankov of Zankov won that one.)

All three designers make clothes that grapple with the current evolution in culture, and that reshape what "American style" means, in the most exciting way. All three are independent, at a time when forging an independent fashion business is increasingly hard.

All talked about communities — the ones they came from and the

one they found in fashion. The shift was capped off by the renaming of the CFDA board of director's tribute award in honor of Isabel Toledo, the resolutely independent Cuban-American designer who died in 2019 and who became famous for creating Michelle Obama's 2009 inauguration outfit.

There were moments of levity at the ceremony. Cynthia Erivo, as the host of the evening, swapped her thematic "Wicked" green gowns for a corseted black Gap fishtail number with a hood made from ... well, hoodie material, but kept her famously long-nails emerald coloured. Then she challenged Jacobs, there to present editor Hamish Bowles with the founder's award, to a "nail off."

André 3000 arrived onstage toting a traffic cone, the better to present Erykah Badu, resplendent in Thom Browne and looking like a high fashion priestess, with the style icon award — an honour she had been trying to win, she said after removing her mouth-shielding nose ring, "since I was 6."

Donna Karan arrived with Todd Oldham to give Stephen Burrows a lifetime achievement award and then went off script to note that Burrows shared a first name with her late husband, so who knows what could happen? (Answer: He made a very short speech.) And there were stars: a newly blond Angel Reese in strapless Simkhai, Da'vine Joy Randolph in corseted bronze Wiederhoeft, Katie Holmes in pink and red Carolina Herrera, Yseult (who also performed) in witchy Rick Owens, Charles Melton in Coach. But in the end, the larger context was the ubiquitous trend of the evening. The belief, as Lopez said on receiving his award, that even more than making beauty, it was possible to "make the change."

That, as Chavarria said, while "many people in this room are very concerned about their roots and very concerned about our existence as a people, as women, as immigrants of colour, as queer people, trans people, we need to talk to the people who may not be concerned about their own rights. People that don't have as much on the line."

"It's not just for us to worry about, it's for everyone to worry about," he continued. "And not just in fashion, which is what we're all here for, but our lives and our communities and our country." — NYT

The home features three distinct Majlis — one for women, one for men, and a shared hall — along with various additional rooms, with the largest connecting to a central courtyard



Bait Al Oud is a significant historical and cultural landmark in Al Amerat



BY ARWA AL HASHIMI
PHOTOS BY MOHAMMED AL MAASHARI

It is essential to recognise that historical remnants often hold invaluable insights into the legacies of those who shaped our world. The Bait Al Oud in the Wilayat of Al Amerat serves as a poignant reminder of the past, inviting visitors to experience its rich history. Originally constructed as a rural residence surrounded by verdant farms, Bait Al Oud was a vibrant hub of activity during the fruitful “qaidh” harvest season. Renowned as a remarkable palace within Al Amerat, this house is a significant landmark, symbolic of the Wilayat’s tangible heritage.

The term “Bait Al Oud” frequently refers to homes of esteemed village elders and leaders, where individuals gather to seek counsel. For many, it also symbolises the familial heart, reminiscent of grandparents’ homes and communal gatherings.

Nestled among lush farms near the Sea of Oman, Bait Al Oud adjoins the flowing waters of Falaj Al Raja’ and is enclosed by a protective wall, featuring an adjoining mosque. Built in the 19th century by Shaikh Said bin Salim bin Zuwaiher al Maashari, the residence exemplifies meticulous craftsmanship, utilising local clay and intricate designs that preserve the distinctive Omani architectural style characterised by elegant arches, traditional wooden windows and doors, and robust columns.

Shaikh Said, revered for his wisdom and knowledge, left a legacy of historical writings chronicling significant events of his era, including an extraordinary flood that affected his estate in Wadi Hatat. As a fortified residence, Bait Al Oud showcases exquisite decor, grand staircases, and columns that highlight the extraordinary architectural prowess of the Omani people.

Despite the limited availability of building materials, the ingenuity of that era resulted in enduring masterpieces that still resonate today.

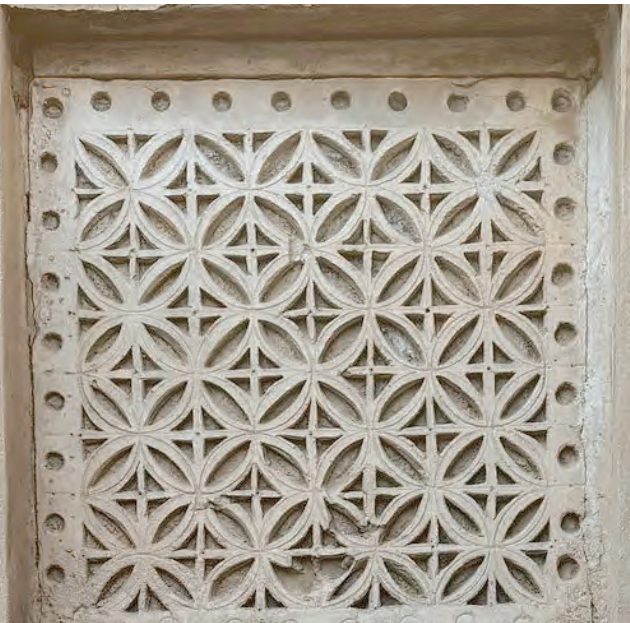
The home features three distinct Majlis — one for women, one for men, and a shared hall — along with various additional rooms, with the largest connecting to a central courtyard. It comprises four primary bedrooms and supplementary spaces for storage and purpose-driven use.

A substantial perimeter wall envelops the property, allowing access through a main entrance and two side entrances. Within this boundary, the falaj not only irrigates the surrounding fields but also provides serene bathing spots for family members.

A BOOST TO TOURISM

Old houses in Oman are undergoing renovations to preserve the nation’s rich cultural heritage while boosting tourism. These historical structures embody traditional designs and local craftsmanship, making them invaluable to Oman’s identity. Renovated houses not only serve as tourist attractions, offering visitors a glimpse into the past, but also create economic opportunities by transforming these sites into museums, artisan workshops, or boutique hotels.

To maximise their potential, stakeholders are encouraged to promote cultural programming, including traditional crafts workshops and music performances, which engage both tourists and locals. Interactive experiences such as guided tours that highlight the history of these



homes can deepen visitor appreciation.

Additionally, leveraging technology through augmented reality or virtual tours can enhance educational content. Collaboration with local artisans is essential, providing a platform for their crafts and further enriching the visitor experience. Sustainable practices in renovation and maintenance can attract environmentally conscious travellers. By partnering with travel agencies to include visits to these historic homes in their itineraries, Oman can significantly enhance the visibility of its cultural treasures and foster local community growth, ultimately driving both tourism and heritage preservation.

Beyond its role as a cultural landmark, Bait Al Oud exemplifies architectural brilliance. Its design adheres to sustainable principles, emphasising natural ventilation, thermal performance, humidity regulation, and optimal light utilisation. This focus on sustainability aligns with the broader goal of preserving traditional styles and promoting sustainable development.

When considering the renovation and modernisation of historic residences throughout Oman, it becomes evident that Bait Al Oud must follow a similar path. Such initiatives can yield significant economic advantages and enhance tourism, particularly as modern travellers increasingly prioritise immersive experiences. Engaging with historical sites like Bait Al Oud allows visitors to delve deeper into Omani culture and history, enriching their travel experience.

Bait Al Oud stands not merely as a structure, but as a gateway to the past, a testimony to Oman’s rich heritage, and a destination deserving of exploration.

