

OMAN

عُضَائِد

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20

A SECRET GARDEN FOR POMEGRANATE SEASON



IN BRIEF

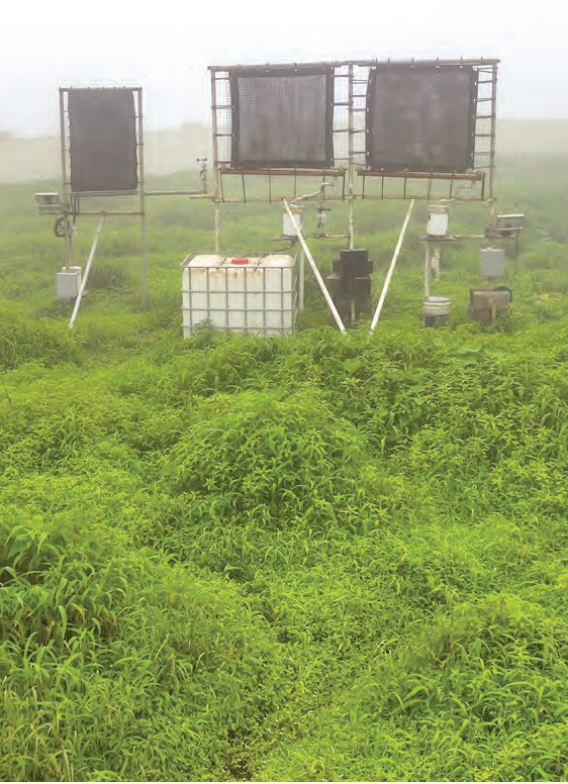
HM CONGRATULATES KING OF NORWAY

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to King Haakon VIII on the occasion of him taking the constitutional oath as King of the Kingdom of Norway. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere congratulations and best wishes to the King as he undertakes his duties. His Majesty also wished the relations of friendship and cooperation between Oman and Norway further progress and growth.

HM GREET'S REGENT OF SAN MARINO

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to the Captains Regent of the Republic of San Marino, Alice Mina and Vladimiro Silva, on the occasion of the Republic's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments to the Captains Regent and the people of their country.

HARVESTING THE FOG



The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources continues to implement a fog harvesting project in the mountains of Dhofar Governorate, aiming to study the possibility of utilising fog accompanying the Khareef Dhofar Season as a non-conventional water source. The project also aims to enhance scientific knowledge regarding water quantities that can be harvested from this natural phenomenon, and identify the most suitable locations for future application of the technology.

DETAILS ON P2

OMAN CALLS FOR NUCLEAR WEAPON-FREE MIDDLE EAST

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday chaired the proceedings of the third meeting of the Working Committee of the Seventh Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting concludes on

Thursday. The session is presided over by Ambassador Omar bin Said al Kathiri, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations and President of the Seventh Session of the Conference. In its statement delivered before the meeting, the Sultanate of Oman emphasised the

importance of continuing to work in a spirit of cooperation and consensus among Member States, noting that the meetings held throughout the current year have contributed to deepening shared understanding of a number of issues pertaining to the future treaty, and to benefiting from relevant international experiences and expertise. — ONA

Iran threatens tougher strategy after US strikes

Tehran says 19 dead, 108 injured in American attacks

IRAN threatened to take a tougher line in its war with the United States on Wednesday after the heaviest exchanges in weeks left at least 19 Iranians dead and 108 injured, including four at a wedding - an incident slammed as a “war crime” by Tehran.

A wave of Iranian attacks earlier targeted US bases in the region, after extensive US bombardment hit sites across Iran.

The flare-up deepens the ongoing impasse in the war, as Iran maintains a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz oil export route and the US presses its counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

Iran reacted with fury after the Iranian Red Crescent said four people, including a child, were killed and more than 50 people wounded by a US attack that hit a wedding in Iran's south.

“The truth of this unlawful war of choice — and the true face of the war crime — is in Sirik, where a wedding ceremony was brutally bombed as part of America's desperate struggle to conceal its failure,” foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei posted on X. The US military did not address the incident directly.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) spokesman Tim Hawkins said “the US military never targets civilians, unlike the IRGC”, referring to Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Iran's security chief warned the United States would face a “new strategy” from Tehran in the six-month war.

“You will soon see that Iran's new strategy on the battlefield, in diplomacy and in confronting the



A child lies on a hospital bed receiving treatment following injuries from an overnight strike in Kuhestak, Sirik County, in Iran's southern Hormozgan province on Wednesday. — AFP

The flare-up deepens the ongoing impasse in the war, as Iran maintains a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz oil export route and the US presses its counter-blockade of Iranian ports

economic blockade will shatter your foundations,” Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei wrote on X.

Iran's top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf lashed out at Washington over the wedding attack. The latest round of fighting began when Washington hit Iranian targets on Sunday, the first known strikes in several weeks.

Tehran's forces then targeted US troops in Jordan, and projectiles struck two oil tankers in unclaimed attacks, one of which killed two Filipino sailors, according to a Saudi shipping company.

Trump said the US strikes were “in retaliation for the Iranians' failed attempt at adding sea mines to the

Strait” and for firing missiles at the base in Jordan.

More US strikes came on Tuesday, with Iranian state TV reporting explosions along the Hormuz and on an island in the Gulf, as well as an attack on an airport in the southern province of Kerman.

Seven people were killed and eight others wounded in a missile attack in the southern Khuzestan province, IRNA reported.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said four personnel were killed in a US strike in Kermanshah province, and three paramilitaries died on Lavan island in the Gulf. Another paramilitary was killed in the southern province of Fars, Iranian media said. — AFP

‘Sky Bridge’ initiative uses drone for medical deliveries

SALALAH: The second phase of the ‘Sky Bridge’ initiative, which utilises unmanned aerial vehicles to transport medical supplies and equipment to the Al Halaniyat Islands, was launched on Wednesday from Dhofar Governorate.

The event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and was attended by a number of officials and representatives of government entities and private sector institutions in the governorate.

The initiative forms part of the

activities of the Gulf Green Mobility Forum, organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, under the supervision and follow-up of the Civil Aviation Authority, and in coordination with the Air Navigation Department of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in the Governorate and the Aviation Safety Department of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Regulation.

The mission is being executed using the ‘Sahm’ (Arrow) drone, capable of carrying approximately 150 kg of medical supplies and



The mission is being executed using the ‘Sahm’ drone, capable of carrying approximately 150 kg of medical supplies and equipment.

equipment, covering the distance from Salalah to the Al Halaniyat Islands at a speed exceeding 120 km per hour and at an altitude of up to 2,000 metres.

The initiative aims to test and apply drone-based air cargo technologies and to explore their potential in transporting supplies to remote areas, thereby contributing to enhancing the efficiency of transport and logistics systems and addressing challenges associated with distance and geographical terrain.

The initiative aligns with the

strategic approaches of Oman Vision 2040 in supporting innovation, localising modern technologies, and developing national capacities in knowledge- and technology-based sectors.

The mission is being executed entirely by the Ibn Firas Center for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, with an Omani team overseeing all stages of the operational process, from planning, preparation, and load handling, through to drone operation, flight monitoring, safety procedures, and operations management. — ONA

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



Oman's participation in the conference reflects its commitment to engaging in events that deal with religious and intellectual issues. — ONA

OMAN PARTICIPATES IN FATWA CONFERENCE

CAIRO: Represented by the Office of the Grand Mufti, the Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday participated in the 11th World Conference on Fatwa, held in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt. The conference brought together an elite group of thinkers, academics, researchers and experts, along with muftis from different parts of the world.

Oman's delegation was led by Shaikh Ahmed bin Saud al Siyabi, Secretary-General of the Office of the Sultanate of Oman's Grand Mufti. This year's conference was titled "Family challenges amid major transformations: A Fatwa approach to protecting the family and preserving its Islamic identity." In a speech at the conference, Al Siyabi spoke about key challenges facing the Muslim family amid the current rapid social, economic and technological developments. He stressed the importance of raising awareness about the rulings of jurisprudence and the consolidation of Islamic values in a manner that contributes to protecting the family, preserving its identity and ensuring its stability.

The Sultanate of Oman's participation in the conference reflects its commitment to engaging in events that deal with religious and intellectual issues, seek to promote dialogue and exchange experiences and perspectives on matters related to the stability of Arab and Islamic societies and families. — ONA

‘ROUWAJ’ PROGRAMME SEEKS TO DEVELOP YOUTH PROJECTS



The programme dealt with key topics related to the needs of business owners. — ONA

SUHAR: A programme codenamed ‘Rouwaj’, organised by the Youth Centre in partnership with Sohar Port and Free Zone, concluded in the Wilayat of Suhar on Wednesday. The programme included a training course on empowering owners of small business projects and youth products and enhancing the projects’ and products’ readiness to compete and grow in the market.

The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North.

‘Rouwaj’ programme benefited 100 young men and women, aged between 20 and 34 years, from Al Batinah North Governorate. It focused on helping participants convert their ideas and products into tangible projects that are capable of growing in a sustainable manner and competing in the market.

The programme dealt with key topics related to the needs of business owners, including initiating and developing products, market analysis, marketing, pricing strategies, and skills of persuasion and negotiation.

It also included designing brand identity, visual marketing, managing stores through social media platforms and the fundamentals of financial management of small businesses. — ONA

OMAN UNDERSCORES ENDURING COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman has affirmed its commitment to sustaining cooperation with the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) and international partners, in support of the organisation’s endeavours to build a more just, sustainable, and equitable future for every child.

This came in a statement delivered by Ambassador Omar bin Said al Kathiri, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations,



Oman expressed its pride in the confidence bestowed upon it by member states. — ONA

before the second regular session of the Unicef Executive Board for 2026, convened at United Nations

Headquarters in New York.

The Sultanate of Oman expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Estonia for its stewardship of the Unicef Executive Board for 2026, and likewise conveyed its gratitude to the Executive Director of Unicef. Oman also valued the dedication of the organisation’s personnel in safeguarding children’s rights and advancing their well-being, particularly amid escalating humanitarian and developmental challenges. — ONA

Project to harvest fog implemented in Dhofar

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources continues to implement a fog harvesting project in the mountains of Dhofar Governorate, aiming to study the possibility of utilising fog accompanying the Khareef Dhofar Season as a non-conventional water source.

The project also aims to enhance scientific knowledge regarding water quantities that can be harvested from this natural phenomenon, and identify the most suitable locations for future application of the technology.

Eng Khalid bin Salim al Hooti, Director of the Cloud Seeding Center at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said that the project comes within the framework of the ministry’s orientation towards studying non-conventional water sources and utilising modern technologies and available natural resources, enhancing water resource sustainability and supporting efforts to diversify water sources in the Sultanate of Oman.

He explained that fog harvesting technology is considered among the promising technologies for utilising atmospheric moisture, as it is based on capturing water droplets present in fog and converting them into usable water. He pointed out that this technology is characterised by low energy requirements, making it worthy of study in areas where the fog phenomenon recurs, including the mountains of Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef season.

He added that the project includes establishing a specialised network for monitoring and observing fog in the mountains of Dhofar Governorate, where 12 fog trapping stations have been installed across 9 locations, with the aim of collecting



The project aims to enhance scientific knowledge regarding water quantities. — ONA

The project aims to enhance scientific knowledge regarding water quantities that can be harvested from this natural phenomenon, and identify the most suitable locations for future application of the technology

field data during the Khareef season and measuring fog condensation rates and the quantities of water that can be collected at different sites.

He clarified that the stations are not limited to collecting water, but also work to monitor a set of climatic and topographic data associated with the fog phenomenon, allowing the study of the relationship between fog characteristics and the natural and climatic factors affecting the water quantities that can be harvested.

He indicated that the stations are currently undergoing operation and monitoring during the Khareef Dhofar Season to build an integrated and accurate scientific database that can be relied upon to assess the technical feasibility of fog harvesting technology and identify sites with the highest potential for establishing future water harvesting stations from fog.

Al Hooti affirmed that in analysing data, the project relies on spatial modelling techniques and statistical analysis, leading to

the development of a predictive model that helps identify locations with the highest potential for harvesting water from fog, thereby contributing to elevating the efficiency of future projects and achieving the best possible benefit from the collected water.

He noted that the importance of the project is not limited to the quantity of water that can be harvested, but extends to building the necessary scientific knowledge to understand this phenomenon and determine its water potential, helping make future decisions based on accurate field data.

The fog harvesting project comes within the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources to explore and develop non-conventional water sources, and to employ innovation and modern technologies in water resource management, in line with the Sultanate of Oman’s directions towards enhancing water use efficiency, sustaining its resources, and diversifying its sources. — ONA

Moscow book fair showcases Omani identity

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman participates with an official pavilion in the Moscow International Book Fair, which kicked off on Wednesday at the Gostiny Dvor Center in Moscow, with the People’s Republic of China participating as the guest of honour for this year’s edition.

This participation is the first for the Sultanate of Oman at the fair, coming within the framework of enhancing the Omani cultural presence abroad and utilising international exhibitions as effective platforms to introduce Omani intellectual and cultural production, as well as opening new horizons for cooperation with cultural and academic institutions, publishing houses, and researchers.

The pavilion reflects the richness of Omani intellectual,



The pavilion reflects the richness of Omani intellectual, cultural, and cognitive production. - ONA

cultural, and cognitive production, presenting an image of Omani identity and its contributions in the fields of thought, literature, history, knowledge, and tourism, thus contributing to strengthening bridges of communication

with Russian and international cultural circles.

Participating in the pavilion are the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and Sultan Qaboos University through a

diverse collection of publications and content reflecting aspects of the cultural, scientific, and heritage movement in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth presents a group of literary, intellectual, and cultural publications that embody the diversity of the Omani cultural scene, alongside books documenting literature, creativity, history, and national identity.

Sultan Qaboos University also participates with publications, studies, and scientific research produced by Omani researchers, reflecting the scientific and cognitive movement in the Sultanate of Oman and highlighting the university’s role in knowledge production and scientific research across various specialities. — ONA

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SHORT TAKES



Oman was represented by Dr Yahya bin Nasser al Khusaibi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs. — ONA

OMAN AT GCC JUSTICE UNDER-SECRETARIES MEETING

MUSCAT: Represented by the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, the Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday took part in the 28th meeting of under-secretaries of ministries of justice in GCC states.

At the meeting, held via video conferencing, Oman was represented by Dr Yahya bin Nasser al Khusaibi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs.

The meeting discussed an initiative to establish an electronic platform for exchanging judicial notices and notifications among ministries of justice in the GCC (as proposed by the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments in the Kingdom of Bahrain).

It also studied draft unified rules for combating crimes of information technology in GCC states.

In addition, the meeting reviewed three main topics: The outcome of the meeting of the Committee of Directors and Heads of Judicial and Legal Training Centres and Institutes in GCC states; The 2026 report of the committee of officials tasked with international cooperation and international relations departments in GCC ministries of justice; and The draft agenda of the 36th meeting of ministers of justice in GCC states. — ONA

UNIFIED ADDRESS SYSTEM ENTERS IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

MUSCAT: Muscat Governorate is implementing the National Addressing Project, an initiative spanning street naming, field data verification, and the physical installation of street and building signage. The project aims to establish a unified national address system supported by an accurate spatial database.

The project facilitates seamless



The project has entered the sign manufacturing and physical installation phase.

location access, enhances public and private service delivery, drives digital transformation, and supports urban planning. Beyond replacing local landmarks with standardised numbers and names, the system creates a unified spatial reference point that improves decision-making across infrastructure development, civic planning, and city management.

The project has entered the sign manufacturing and physical installation phase. Field survey teams began operations in a pilot area in Qurayat to inspect proposed sign locations and ensure technical standards were met before manufacturing began.

This phase follows the completion of street naming and unit data verification across targeted areas.

OCA unveils schedule of 22nd annual walkathon

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

OMAN Cancer Association (OCA) on Wednesday held a press conference during which it outlined details of the 22nd annual walkathon aimed at supporting cancer patients.

The walkathon, which takes the slogan ‘Walk with Hope’, is scheduled to be held on October 29 and 30 at Al Qurum Natural Park, as part of the programme of ‘October Breast Cancer Awareness Month’.

The walkathon constitutes one of the most prominent annual community events to raise public awareness about cancer. It lends support to patients and their families in a manner that alleviates the burdens associated with the disease, in addition to underlining the importance of early detection of the disease and means of protection against its development.

Dr Waheed al Kharousi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Cancer Association, said in a statement during the press conference that “the cancer

The walkathon, which takes the slogan ‘Walk with Hope’, is scheduled to be held on October 29 and 30 at Al Qurum Natural Park, as part of the programme of ‘October Breast Cancer Awareness Month’



The walkathon constitutes one of the most prominent annual community events to raise public awareness about cancer. — ONA

walkathon gains significance due to the fact that it represents a stand by cancer patients, survivors and their families”.

The walk also stresses the importance of the prevention of cancer, the early detection of the disease and the need to adopt healthy lifestyles, he explained.

Dr Waheed pointed out that the cancer walk’s programme will begin with an open day that includes educational events, early detection services offered to breast cancer patients, measuring blood pressure and checking blood sugar levels.

The second day includes a symbolic walk of less than two kilometres, he added.

For his part, Dr Talal bin Mohammed al Balushi, member of the Board of Directors of Oman Cancer Association, said that the previous edition of the cancer walkathon saw participation of more than 8,000 people. He pointed out that public engagement in the event, in different parts of the Sultanate of Oman, reflects the community’s growing interest in cancer awareness and initiatives for the prevention of the disease.

OMAN INTENSIFIES EFFORTS FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN COP31

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority convened the first workshop for national implementation teams and participants in the thirty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), with the participation of teams responsible for the various tracks of Oman’s engagement in the conference.

The workshop forms part of the early preparations for national participation, aimed at assessing the readiness of the teams, reviewing action plans, tasks, and responsibilities, and enhancing coordination among them, so as to contribute to achieving an integrated and effective Omani presence at this international climate forum.

The Oversight and Governance Team presented the overarching framework for supervising national participation, as well as the coordination and follow-up mechanisms among the various teams, to ensure the integration of



efforts and the execution of plans and tasks in line with the defined objectives for participation.

The Negotiation Team also delivered a presentation on its preparations for engagement in the climate negotiation tracks, the efforts undertaken to coordinate national positions and monitor priority files for the Sultanate of Oman, and the enhancement of its presence in international discussions and dialogues related to climate action.

The Media Team reviewed its plan to accompany Oman’s participation in the conference, highlighting

Oman’s efforts, initiatives, and projects in the fields of climate change and sustainability, while reinforcing the media presence of the national participation and conveying its messages to local, regional, and international audiences.

The workshop also featured a presentation by the Pavilion Team on the preparations for the Omani pavilion and its role as a platform to showcase the national experience and present initiatives, projects, and solutions related to climate action and sustainability. — ONA

MUC

Majan University College

INVITATION FOR SUPPLIER REGISTRATION

Majan College invited qualified and reputable suppliers and services providers to register in the college's approved supplier database. Registered suppliers may be considered for future tenders, purchases and service agreements issued by the college.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Valid Commercial Registration (CR) Certificate and Licensed activities.

2. Valid Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) membership certificate.

3. Valid Tax Registration Certificate and VAT Certificate, where applicable.

4. Valid municipal and/or professional licenses relevant to the services offered.

5. Company profile and details of relevant experience & List of previous clients/project.

6. Bank details or bank reference letter.

7. **Completed Majan College Supplier Registration Form**, available online or upon request from the College.

Registration Deadline : 30 September 2026

Submission Method : Via email or hand-delivery to the Campus Procurement Department.

ENQUIRIES & CONTACT

For further information or to request the Supplier Registration Form, please contact: 24730431/24730415.
Email: facilitieshelpdesk@majancollege.edu.om
finance@majancollege.edu.om

Note: Registration does not guarantee the award of any contract. Majan College reserves the right to accept or reject any registration application in accordance with its procedures and requirements.



خريف
ظفار
KHAREEF
DHO FAR



BEYOND THE MIST



SIHAM AL SAIDI

FOR decades, Dhofar's tourism story has been closely associated with one spectacular phenomenon: Khareef. Each summer, mist descends over the mountains, rain transforms the landscape into shades of green, and visitors arrive in search of cool weather, waterfalls and a temporary escape from the heat of the Arabian Peninsula.

But a new tourism story is emerging in southern Oman, one that is less about simply seeing Dhofar and more about experiencing it. Adventure tourism is increasingly adding a new dimension to the governorate's appeal, taking visitors beyond traditional sightseeing and into mountains, valleys, deserts, beaches and rural communities.

Dhofar's geographical diversity, from mountain ranges and green valleys to vast deserts and the Arabian Sea, gives it an unusual advantage as a year-round destination. During Khareef, hiking through mist-covered mountains, exploring valleys and waterfalls and discovering remote viewpoints become part of the attraction. Beyond the season, clearer skies open the door to desert excursions, camping, coastal exploration, diving, horse riding and cycling. Official tourism platforms now promote experiences ranging from mountain adventures and hiking to e-bike tours and horse riding.

What is changing is not only the number of activities available, but the expectations of the visitor. Increasingly, travellers want to go beyond photographing a destination.

They want to understand it, interact with its people and experience something they cannot easily reproduce elsewhere.

That is particularly evident among international visitors exploring Dhofar outside the peak Khareef period. While Omanis and Gulf visitors remain a major presence during the monsoon season, travellers from countries including Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France and Eastern Europe are increasingly drawn to Dhofar's cooler winter climate and its combination of mountains, coastline and desert.

For young visitors, the appeal is often the freedom to move between completely different landscapes within the same journey. Faisal al Salami, a young Emirati visitor who experienced Dhofar through adventure activities, described the experience as different from a conventional holiday. What stood out, he said, was the opportunity to combine outdoor exploration with discovering local culture rather than spending the entire trip moving between familiar tourist attractions.

For him, the mountains and coastline were not simply scenery. They became part of an active journey full of activities and joy, one that offered a stronger sense of discovery, excitement and a closer connection to the destination.

Adel bin Salim, an Omani young visitor, shared a similar perspective, noting that adventure tourism is changing the way even local travellers look at Dhofar. Instead of returning only to the familiar Khareef sites, young Omanis are increasingly interested in discovering lesser-known areas, trying

outdoor activities and experiencing the governorate from a more adventurous perspective. Their experiences reflect a broader shift: Dhofar is becoming a destination where the journey itself is part of the attraction.

This emerging approach is being reflected by local tourism entrepreneurs such as Dhofar SAS Trips, founded by Abdulaziz bin Said al Awaid.

The company brings together adventure specialists, local experience providers and tour organisers, creating programmes that combine outdoor exploration with cultural and rural life. "We want to present Dhofar in its finest form, reflecting authentic Omani culture through a modern approach, while giving visitors an exceptional experience throughout the year," Al Awaid says.

Its experiences can take visitors into mountain homes, traditional dress, folk songs and dances, traditional cooking and local customs. The aim is to turn heritage from something visitors simply observe into something they participate in.

The company also works with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and local individuals providing tourism experiences, reinforcing the role of communities in the development of adventure and experiential tourism.

For Al Awaid, the most meaningful outcome is not measured only by visitor numbers.

Some guests have returned repeatedly, formed lasting friendships with local residents and even developed such a strong connection with Dhofar that they chose to purchase homes there. That may ultimately be the most powerful side of Dhofar's emerging adventure tourism story.

Dhofar's adventure tourism scene is also expanding with activities that bring visitors closer to its diverse landscapes. Alongside hiking and horse riding, tourists can now enjoy ziplining, quad biking, motorcycle trips, kayaking, diving and rafting. These activities offer more than sightseeing, allowing visitors to explore mountains, valleys, deserts and the coastline in an active and exciting way. For young travellers especially, the mix of nature and adrenaline is becoming a major attraction.

Together, these experiences are giving Dhofar a new tourism identity and creating more reasons to visit beyond the Khareef season. And beyond the famous Khareef mist, that may be the new adventure waiting to be discovered.

Adventure tourism is increasingly adding a new dimension to Dhofar's appeal, taking visitors beyond traditional sightseeing and into mountains, valleys, deserts, beaches and rural communities





Mujan
University
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INVITATION TO TENDER
Investment Lease Opportunity

Mujan University College invites qualified investors to submit proposals for the lease of Al Sahwa Block, a 900 sqm two-floor commercial building on its campus in Darsait, Muscat, fronting the main road to Qurum and Darsait Bridge.

Key Dates

RFP document purchase deadline	10 September 2026
Submission Deadline	20 September 2026

Property Snapshot

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SHORT TAKES



The event is part of Oman's ongoing efforts to strengthen the national halal ecosystem. — ONA

TOURISM WORKSHOP SEEKS TO DIVERSIFY PRODUCTS, SERVICES

SALALAH: A specialised workshop titled “Halal Tourism” commenced in the Wilayat of Salalah. The three-day event is organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, in collaboration with the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and Omran Group.

The workshop was inaugurated under the auspices of Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism.

The event is part of the Sultanate of Oman’s ongoing efforts to strengthen the national halal ecosystem, build technical and knowledge-based capacities in related sectors, and capitalise on the growing opportunities presented by the global Islamic economy. It further supports the approaches towards diversifying tourism products and services while enhancing their competitiveness in accordance with regional and international standards and specifications.

The opening programme featured a visual presentation on the national halal ecosystem and an overview of the national standardisation system.

The first day’s agenda encompassed several themes, including an examination of the halal tourism market within Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states, the full range of opportunities in halal certification for restaurants, and the general requirements for halal food products as per approved specifications.

Over the course of the workshop, participants will address a number of specialised topics pertaining to the halal ecosystem and halal tourism, including an introduction to the standards of the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, the national halal system, the national standardisation framework, as well as the concept of halal, the halal market, and halal certification procedures.

The programme will also provide an overview of the global quality infrastructure for halal under the auspices of the OIC.

The workshop targets government entities and private-sector stakeholders involved in tourism, food, inspection services, the restaurant industry, and logistics. It aims to raise awareness of the requirements and specifications governing halal tourism services and to enhance the capabilities of institutions operating within these sectors. — ONA

OMAN CHAIRS FASRC MEETING



The meeting looked into joint strategic initiatives and projects. — ONA

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday chaired the semi-annual meeting of the board of the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils (FASRC) for the year 2026.

Represented by the Research and Innovation Authority (RIA), Oman headed the meeting in its capacity as chair of the 47th session of the FASRC.

The meeting, held via videoconferencing, reviewed

the Secretariat-General’s report that included the launch of research awards, the expansion of research and innovation networks (comprising 8,000 Arab researchers) and a review of financial indicators, which saw the allocation of more than one million US dollars to support scientific activities and programmes.

The meeting looked into joint strategic initiatives and projects that focused on

Interpreter shortage a challenge for the deaf

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, SEPT 2

FOR MANY deaf people in Dhofar, access to a conference, public service or essential information can still depend on whether a sign-language interpreter is available.

Volunteers working with the community say requests for interpretation arrive every week, while many events and some public-facing services are not routinely equipped to communicate with deaf users.

Hanaa al Shidad, a board member of the Salalah Volunteer Team, said 2025 figures available to the team put the number of deaf people in Dhofar at close to 1,000.

Yet access to sign-language support has not developed evenly alongside the needs of the community, she said.

“Many conferences and events in Dhofar do not have a sign-language interpreter, despite the presence of people specialised in sign-language interpretation who are ready to provide the service,” Al Shidad said.

She also pointed to uneven accessibility across public facilities, where services are not always set up to allow deaf users to communicate independently.

The challenge, according to volunteers, is therefore not simply whether people with sign-language skills are available in Dhofar, but whether interpretation is provided at the place and time it is needed.

Hani bin Juma al Malkhi, founder of the “Bil Ishara Naltaqi” — or “We Meet Through Sign Language” — team, identified the shortage of interpreters as one of the main difficulties facing deaf people in the governorate.

Al Malkhi, who established the initiative out of an interest in sign language and supporting the deaf community, said the gap becomes particularly apparent when interpretation is required at short notice or across different services and activities.

The team provides voluntary interpretation to government, private and community organisations when requested.

Al Shidad said requests are received on a weekly basis. When an



Essential information can still depend on whether a sign language interpreter is available.

Volunteer interpreters receive requests every week as advocates call for routine sign-language access across public events, healthcare and higher education

interpreter cannot reach a location in person, the group sometimes switches to video calls, providing remote interpretation between the deaf person and the organisation concerned.

The arrangement offers an immediate solution, but it also illustrates the extent to which access can still depend on the availability of volunteers.

Al Shidad identified the Omani Association for Persons with Disabilities in Dhofar and the Salalah Volunteer Team as the main community-based organisations providing dedicated support to people with hearing disabilities in the governorate.

The “Bil Ishara Naltaqi” initiative also conducts workshops across different sectors to improve awareness of how to communicate with deaf people.

Healthcare is considered a particularly important area.

Communication barriers in a hospital or health centre can have more serious consequences than at an ordinary event, particularly when a patient needs to describe symptoms, understand medical advice or communicate information

to healthcare staff.

The group therefore sees training and greater sign-language awareness in the health sector as an important area for further development.

Higher education presents another constraint.

Dhofar University currently offers a two-year Diploma in Computer Science for students with hearing impairment, providing a dedicated higher-education pathway for this group.

Al Shidad said, however, that the limited range of specialised higher-education options available locally restricts the choices open to deaf students who may want to pursue fields outside computer science.

The issue has gained greater significance following the introduction of Oman’s Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law under Royal Decree No 92/2025.

The law requires relevant entities to provide qualified sign-language interpreters in accordance with its implementing regulations. It also establishes broader rights to accessible services, information, education and participation for persons with disabilities.

TENDER NOTICE

وزارة الزراعة والسمكية وموارد المياه
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender:-

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
581/2026/MAFWR/HQ-41	Maintenance Contract of Biological Safety Cabinet Class II Instruments for the Central Lab of Animal Health for 2026-2027	Tuesday 25/8/2026	Monday 14/9/2026	Sunday 4/10/2026	Specialized companies registered with, Excellent, First, Second, Third, and Fourth grades	(10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

- Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.

- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies.

- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.

- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: **+968 24402244** or etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Spain's National police officers stand as migrants wait during a food distribution at the El Tajaral industrial site of Ceuta. — AFP

SPAIN DENIES REPORT
BLAMED MOROCCO
FOR CEUTA CRISIS

MADRID: Spain's interior ministry denied the existence of a police report that allegedly concluded Morocco orchestrated July's migrant rush into Ceuta, as the government maintains delicate relations with Rabat. More than 70,000 migrants crossed into the Spanish North African territory from Morocco on July 30 and 31 in an unprecedented and deadly surge that unleashed a crisis for the government. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez ruled out Moroccan responsibility, which has since taken back most of the migrants.

Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska wrote to police chief Francisco Pardo to check the claim, which CENIF reportedly sent to a judge investigating the incident, a source from his ministry said. "Any such information should have immediately been made available to the National Security Council... and to other bodies with powers in this field," the minister said in his letter, according to the source.

Pardo told Marlaska that "there exists no police report whatsoever that attributes to the Moroccan security forces the planning or execution of what happened" in Ceuta, it said. Ceuta and Spain's other North African enclave, Melilla, have the European Union's only land borders with Africa. — AFP

US SAILORS DESCEND
ON THAI TOWN AFTER
MONTHS AT SEA



US aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln heads towards Laem Chabang Port, near the city of Pattaya. — AFP

PATTAYA: Hundreds of US sailors disembarked in Thailand on Wednesday, visiting a resort town with a seedy reputation after a lengthy Middle East deployment that sparked concerns over conditions on board. The 5,000-strong crew of the USS Abraham Lincoln docked just north of Pattaya, near Bangkok, for their first port call in 286 days at sea. As the sun set in Pattaya, dozens of Thai police and security forces gathered on a beach walkway, just across from the Hard Rock Hotel where sailors were staying.

The huge nuclear-powered carrier arrived at the port of Laem Chabang, with dozens of warplanes lined up on its flight deck. The carrier left California in November for duty in the South China Sea.

Reports of deteriorating living conditions and poor mental health on board made headlines in the United States and provoked criticism of the ongoing conflict. Democratic lawmakers have called for an investigation into conditions on the vessel following reports of food shortages, broken plumbing and mental health crises. — AFP

OVERTURNED VEHICLE

Deadly bus crash in Egypt's Sinai kills 22



A passenger bus overturned on a desert highway in Egypt's eastern Sinai Peninsula on Wednesday, killing 22 people and injuring 28 others, authorities said. The crash occurred on the road connecting the Red Sea resort towns of Dahab and Nuweiba in South Sinai. Ten Jordanian nationals were among those killed, the kingdom's state-run Al Mamlaka television reported. It said the bus had been carrying 43 people, including 22 Jordanians. — AFP

FATAL SHIPWRECK

Cargo ship sinks after collision off Istanbul



A Turkish cargo ship sank in the Marmara Sea near Istanbul after colliding with a second vessel, and rescuers were searching for its 10 crew members, officials said. The ALSU, an empty oil tanker, collided before dawn with the Tugberk Imamoglu, a cargo ship carrying rolled steel which sank shortly afterwards, the transport ministry's maritime directorate said. The collision occurred 18 nautical miles off Silivri district on the western edge of Istanbul province. — AFP

INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS

Lebanon reports more Israeli strikes



An Israeli strike on south Lebanon killed one person on Wednesday, Lebanese official media said. "One person was killed and another wounded in a strike launched by an enemy drone" in the city of Nabatieh, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) said, also reporting other Israeli strikes on the area. Israel has recently increased its attacks on south Lebanon, particularly in the Nabatieh area where the strategic Ali Al Taher ridge is located. — AFP

Nepal rescuers hope dims
for finding tunnel survivors

RESCUE TEAMS raced on Wednesday to reach dozens of workers believed to be trapped inside hydropower tunnels in Nepal's mountains, offering one of the last hopes of finding survivors a week after a Himalayan flood killed more than 1,100 people. The flood, triggered by the collapse of a glacier near Nepal's border with China, devastated towns and valleys across the mountainous region. At least 1,114 people have been confirmed dead and nearly 4,000 remain missing.

Rescue efforts have increasingly centred on hydroelectric project tunnels where authorities believe workers may have survived after being cut off by floodwaters and debris. Some tunnels contain chambers with air supplies, and rescuers were trying to reach more than 600 missing workers.

"We are very confident that there is life in there because ... there is food and water in the building, that was likely built for communication purposes and as a resting place," Amshu Kiran Shahi, a board member of the Nepal Electricity Authority, said.

The chance of finding survivors elsewhere was fading, authorities said, but there was no let up in rescue operations as teams scoured the mountainside along the border with China where floods tore through towns and valleys. "The hope of finding survivors is decreasing," said Phanindra Paudel, a senior official at Nepal's National Emergency Operation Center. "We pray and are hopeful. Hope is hope!" Prime Minister Balendra Shah told parliament the search would continue. "Our priority remains clear: To continue our search and rescue operations, find those who are still missing and continue supporting everyone affected," he said.

Major rescue operations were under way or planned at four hydropower projects. Two sites,



Chinese rescue personnel carrying supplies and equipment enter the core disaster area in Tibet. — AFP

Rescue efforts have increasingly centred on hydroelectric project tunnels where authorities believe workers may have survived after being cut off by floodwaters and debris. Some tunnels contain chambers with air supplies, and rescuers were trying to reach more than 600 missing workers

where about 90 people are missing, offered the strongest prospect of finding survivors because of the presence of air inside the tunnels, Shahi said. At Trishuli-3A, officials believe there was a dry chamber inside and expected oxygen to be flowing through the tunnel, with pipes also being used to push oxygen inside, Shahi said.

Specialised rescue teams from India, China and the United States were involved in the tunnel rescue attempts. Across the border in Tibet, China raised its death toll to 21, with 541 others still listed as missing. The update came after Beijing fully reopened the road leading to the Gyirong border crossing into Nepal on Wednesday, allowing heavy machinery to reach the core disaster zone for the first time.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV showed excavators, rescue teams, search dogs and life-detection equipment being deployed in a narrow mountain gorge where rain,

unstable cliffs and a fast-flowing river have hampered operations. China's official toll of those missing includes 104 Indians, 49 Nepali citizens as well as 33 Latvians who are believed to be part of two tourist groups. Most Indians were part of groups visiting Lake Mansarovar and Mount Kailash in Tibet, holy pilgrimage sites for Hindus. Beijing will send more DNA identification experts and emergency supplies including Bailey bridges, mortuary refrigerators and communications equipment to Nepal to help with the relief efforts, the foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

In Nepal, residents walked around the remains of what were once bustling villages and towns, trying to salvage whatever they could of their belongings. Children in Nuwakot and Rasuwa areas are increasingly showing signs of psychological distress after witnessing the torrent last week, Save the Children said in a statement. — Reuters

ISRAEL AWAITS TO REMOVE GAZA POPULATION

GAZA: Israel has plans ready to remove Palestinians from the Gaza Strip but is waiting for the United States to figure out where to take them, the defence minister said. "There is no real solution for Gaza in the end without this migration," Defence Minister Israel Katz told a conference hosted by Israeli news site Ynet and newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth. The Israeli government "is organised and prepared to get them out — by sea, by air, by every way possible", he said.

The proposal was condemned by Palestinians, for whom any effort to force them off their land would recall the "Nakba", or catastrophe - their mass displacement during Israel's creation in 1948. Announcing a Gaza war ceasefire in October, US President Trump laid out 20 points for the territory that included no forced displacement.

The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Katz's predecessor Yoav Gallant over alleged war crimes, which both Israel and the United States deny. Israeli attacks have already internally displaced the vast majority of Gaza's people. — AFP

SHORT TAKES



Relatives view a helicopter flying outside Kyrenia port, after a passenger boat capsized. — Reuters

RESCUE SHIPS REACH SUNKEN CYPRUS FERRY

ISTANBUL: Two Turkish vessels equipped with deep-diving drones reached a passenger ferry that capsized off Cyprus, officials said on Wednesday, continuing efforts to find 20 people still missing from the accident. “They reached the (sunk) vessel,” Tufan Erhurman, president of the breakaway republic, said. “Survey and search operations are continuing on a 24-hour basis and will continue without interruption,” he added, confirming that a second specialist vessel, the Alemdar, had joined the underwater search operation.

Northern Cyprus prime minister Unal Ustel said all of the missing were believed to be on the Filojet ferry, which is lying at a depth of 550 metres. “Search operations continue for the 20 missing individuals who we believe are on the ship,” he told reporters at Kyrenia port, known in Turkish as Girne, saying he hoped they would have clearer information by the evening.

His words came as two more of the dead were reportedly buried in the Turkish port city of Mersin as northern Cyprus observed a third day of national mourning. Police detained the ferry’s captain and 15 others, nine of whom appeared in court in Kyrenia on Monday charged with negligent homicide. — AFP

HEAT STRESSES US ELECTRIC GRIDS



The risk of power outages is expected to escalate across a broad swath of the United States as intense heat will test the capacity of electricity supplies serving millions of homes and businesses from the Midwest through the Mid-Atlantic. The US Department of Energy warned of the potential for heightened blackout risks in the PJM Interconnection, the largest US electric grid, which serves 67 million people. DOE Secretary Chris Wright authorized PJM to direct backup generation resources to operate as a last resort before declaring a level 3 energy emergency alert, which can be one of the last steps before rotating blackouts are ordered. — Reuters

SLOVAKIA TO CHALLENGE EU’S NEW GENE-EDITED CROP RULES

BRATISLAVA: Slovakia will challenge in court the European Union’s new rules that allow growing some plants using new gene-editing techniques, Prime Minister Robert Fico said on Wednesday, citing health concerns. New regulations that came into force in July allow use of plants obtained by so-called new genomic techniques (NGTs). Unlike traditional genetically modified organisms created by introducing genes from other organisms, NGT plants are made when a small part of their own DNA is added, removed or altered

using genetic editing tools. Farming unions have hailed the new approach for opening up the possibility of developing crops that are more resistant to the effects of climate change or require less fertiliser and pesticide. But environmental groups and the organic farming sector have opposed the new regulation. Fico said the EU had insisted “everything is fine, that we have nothing to worry about” but “there is no evidence for this — we don’t know what it can do to people”. Fico, the last EU leader fostering

ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin despite Moscow’s attack of Ukraine, is seen as a troublemaker within the 27-nation bloc. He has opposed the EU’s aid to Ukraine several times, and his nationalist government in office since 2023 has refused to provide military aid to the war-ravaged country. Fico said that Slovakia was “concerned about what modified foodstuffs or products coming from special plants could mean for health”. “It’s all about business again, just like it is with that unfortunate war in Ukraine,” he added. — AFP

EU summons Russian envoy after Germany drone ‘attack’

THE EU on Wednesday said that it had summoned Russia’s top diplomat as it eyed sanctions after a drone incident in Germany that the bloc’s foreign policy chief said bore the marks of “state-sponsored terrorism”. The incident involving an explosive-laden drone at Leipzig airport has heightened fears over a sabotage campaign that the EU and Nato says is a Russian attempt to destabilise Ukraine’s backers.

“We are discussing the Leipzig attacks, and also it is clear that it has all the hallmarks of state-sponsored terrorism,” EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said at the start of a meeting of the bloc’s foreign ministers in Ireland. “The question is, what do we do about this?” Kallas said that the EU had summoned the Russian envoy, and member states were doing the same.

“We will not let an act of such gravity go unpunished,” French foreign minister Jean-Noel Barrot said, adding he had summoned Russia’s envoy in Paris. Kallas said that EU foreign ministers would discuss ongoing work to impose sanctions on 1,600 individuals and entities linked to Russia’s military industry. “Seeing these hybrid attacks across Europe, I think these are also wake-up calls for the countries who have not been so strong, maybe on this,” she said. “If we want to end this war, we all have to focus our efforts. Take it to a new level.”

Lithuania’s foreign minister Kestutis Budrys called for Europe to do more to counter the threat from Moscow. “We have to consider what options we have in our hands and respond, because it is obvious Russia does not see the political cost of the hybrid activities against us,” he said.



A police officer in protective clothing walks next to an explosive-disarming robot (EOD) at Leipzig/Halle Airport in Schkeuditz, Germany. — Reuters file photo



“We are discussing the Leipzig attacks, and also it is clear that it has all the hallmarks of state-sponsored terrorism. The question is, what do we do about this?”

KAJA KALLAS
EU FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF

“They will neither prevent us from supporting Ukraine nor maintaining our pressure on Russia. On the contrary, we have to increase this pressure.”

Germany blamed Moscow for the Leipzig incident and said it was shutting a Russian consulate and ending the contract for a cultural centre in Berlin. Russia’s President Vladimir Putin in televised comments later branded the sanctions move “another mistake, a serious one”, saying it “clearly runs counter to the interests of the German people”.

Russia said later on Wednesday it was summoning Germany’s charge d’affaires to protest what it called “anti-Russian actions”, after Berlin announced sanctions on Moscow over an attempted drone attack on Leipzig airport. Russia has described Germany’s allegations as unsubstantiated and “absurd”. “On September 2, Germany’s charge d’affaires in Moscow... was summoned to the Russian foreign ministry amid yesterday’s anti-

Russian actions and statements by the German authorities,” said Russia’s foreign ministry.

Meanwhile, German authorities were on Wednesday investigating two attacks on electricity substations in different parts of the country, the latest suspected sabotage targeting critical infrastructure. Police launched a terrorism probe over the first incident, which saw improvised explosives fired early on Tuesday at a site in eastern Brandenburg state, damaging power cables. In the second sabotage attack, unknown perpetrators allegedly deliberately caused a short-circuit by targeting overhead power lines at a substation in Berghem in North Rhine-Westphalia state.

North Rhine-Westphalia Interior Minister Herbert Reul said officials were probing whether the attack was directed by a “foreign state” or left-wing extremism. Neither attack caused widespread power outages, although operations at nearby coal-fired power stations were affected.

Germany has faced repeated attacks on electricity infrastructure, with far-left militants claiming responsibility in some cases. Berlin, a key supporter of Ukraine in its fight against Russia, is also on alert for Moscow-backed sabotage plots. “More sabotage, more hybrid attacks – interference like this is not happening far away, it’s happening right on our doorstep,” Reul told a press conference. “And anyone who acts this way is not just trying to hit cables; they’re trying to hit our country.”

The attacks came the same day that Germany formally blamed Russia for an attempted “hybrid attack” involving an explosive-laden drone at a strategic airport in Leipzig last month and announced diplomatic counter-measures. — AFP

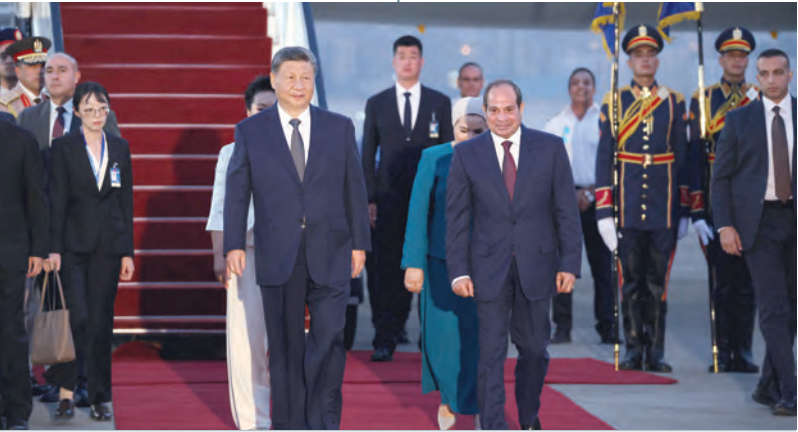
China’s Xi urges new Mideast security framework during Egypt visit

CAIRO: Chinese President Xi Jinping called on Middle Eastern nations to oppose external interference and consider reshaping the region’s security order during a visit to Egypt on Wednesday, as Beijing seeks to expand its influence amid the US war against Iran. Xi’s first trip to the Middle East in four years comes as US partners in the region reassess their strategic relationships after months of conflict that have disrupted trade, shaken economies and raised questions about Washington’s long-term role. Egypt has been steadily increasing economic and military cooperation with China in recent years.

Welcomed by President Abdel Fattah el Sisi with a military ceremony in Cairo, Xi said countries in the region

should be “masters of their own destiny” and explore a new regional “security architecture”, according to China’s state news agency Xinhua. Xi also said China was ready to work with regional countries to safeguard shipping routes, an issue that has taken on greater importance after conflict disrupted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb.

The leaders agreed to deepen security cooperation and counterterrorism coordination, Xinhua said. The two sides also agreed to expand cooperation in data centers, semiconductors and critical metals supply chains and strengthen the use of each other’s currencies in trade and investment, according to a joint statement.



Chinese President Xi Jinping is welcomed by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el Sisi upon his arrival at Cairo International Airport. — Reuters

For Egypt, stronger ties with China fit a broader effort to diversify international partnerships. In an article published ahead of the visit, Sisi said Egypt pursued a policy of “strategic balance” at a time of growing global

rivalry. “Egypt wants to widen the circle of its relations with major world powers, including China,” former Egyptian diplomat Ayman Zaineldine said. “So the visions converge.”

For China, Egypt’s

regional influence and strategic location make it an important partner as Beijing seeks a broader economic role and tries to chip away at US influence. “Egypt represents something quite valuable to Beijing - a large domestic market for investment opportunities, and a lot of diplomatic weight in the region, including the Palestine question, as well as connectivity to Africa,” said H. A. Hellyer, a scholar at the Royal United Services Institute think tank.

Growing military ties were on display last month during Egypt’s “Eagles of Civilisation” exercises with China, which included a rare air combat drill involving Chinese-made J-16 jets and French-made Rafale aircraft. Enthusiasm for the Chinese president’s

visit has been evident for days in Egypt’s capital, where streets have been decked out in Chinese flags and images of iconic sites including Egypt’s Sphinx and China’s Great Wall.

Home to the Suez Canal and a population of more than 110 million, Egypt is an important market for China, importing some \$10 billion of Chinese goods in the first half of this year alone. Chinese investment has risen rapidly since Sisi visited China and signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2014, with Chinese companies pouring billions into container ports, green hydrogen projects and facilities to make iron pipes, car tyres, and satellites. Egypt’s cabinet says the Suez Canal Economic Zone has attracted about \$4 billion in Chinese investment. — Reuters

OPINION

A feeling with no address



RUMAITHA AL BUSAIDI

LinkedIn

@rumaithaalbusaidi

The writer is environmental strategist and advocate for sustainable development

LAST WEEK’S footage from Nepal asks the eye to accept something it doesn’t understand. One moment, the valley is green and legible, its river contained between fields, roads and houses; the next, a brown front of ice, rock, mud and uprooted trees is carrying those boundaries away. The camera records what the person behind it has barely enough time to realise.

One caption beneath the footage declared that there is no adapting to climate collapse. Grief makes the sentence understandable, and the week’s own evidence makes it incomplete, since the warning that reached hundreds of thousands of people downstream began with one official picking up a telephone, and a school principal moved 1,643 students uphill because he understood what the message meant for the ground he was standing on. Nothing available could stop the mountain, and a great deal available could move those children in the minutes remaining.

This brings into picture what we have been going through since seeing the footage hour after hour for the past week: climate anxiety. Two studies I helped lead for the Arab Youth Council for Climate Change surveyed young

people across the 22 Arab League states, and found climate anxiety had nearly tripled between them, with roughly 70 per cent reporting they felt anxious about the future of the environment.

Young women carried it disproportionately, reporting severe anxiety at 34 per cent against 26 per cent of young men.

The same work found something I did not sit with long enough at the time. Some 98 per cent of those young people reported having made environmentally conscious choices in their own lives over the previous year.

Near-universal personal action was already stacked on top of anxiety that personal action was never built to relieve, since nothing in a young person’s household habits reaches the systems their helplessness was actually about.

Research published this year across participants in Egypt and Saudi Arabia complicates it further.

Anxiety measured at the outset predicted environmental action 6 weeks later, while the reverse did not hold. The strange result concerned confidence, because participants scoring highest on general belief in their own capability reported the fewest environmental actions of all, and the link between anxiety

The anxiety keeps climbing anyway, and the young people carrying it are already doing everything we told them to do, which leaves them holding a feeling with no address while the decisions that would give it one are taken somewhere they have never been invited.

and action ran strongest among those who felt least capable in general terms. The authors decline to choose among the explanations available to them.

Whatever the mechanism turns out to be, the distinction they draw is between a person who believes they can handle life and a person who believes one named thing they do changes one named outcome.

General confidence spreads evenly across a life and settles nowhere in particular; the second kind has an address, which is why the principal walked toward the hill and not toward the river.

We have built a decade of environmental communication on the first kind. Awareness weeks, pledges, the steady encouragement to feel equal to the century. The anxiety keeps climbing anyway, and the young people carrying it are already doing everything we told them to do, which leaves them holding a feeling with no address while the decisions that would give it one are taken somewhere they have never been invited.

So maybe after you read this, ask the young person in your circle what it would take to get them into one of those rooms, and then ask yourself who you would have to call.

UN: WORLD MUST NAVIGATE ‘REALITY’ OF 1.5C OVERSHOOT

NICK PERRY

The United Nations said on Wednesday the 1.5C target would be missed and outlined how global temperatures might be brought back down in a first-of-its-kind assessment met with dismay in climate-vulnerable nations.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres last year acknowledged the inevitability of overshooting 1.5C in the next few years, but this assessment is the first by a UN agency to unambiguously state the target would be breached.

Scientists agree that warming above 1.5C relative to pre-industrial times poses grave risks and nearly 200 nations committed a decade ago to try and keep global temperature rises to this safer threshold. But in a much-anticipated report, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said the best remaining option had shifted “from avoiding overshoot to navigating it”.

“It’s a reality check. We have to live with this warmer world... but there’s still a lot we can do to limit warming,” said report co-author Richard Betts from the University of Exeter.

The report “was about responses rather than just sort of saying it is happening”, he told journalists. Fellow author Debra Roberts said it was important for policymakers “to realise the rules of the game are now changing”.

“I think for me that’s the clarion call... we now have to reconfigure our climate governance around dealing with an overshoot pathway. None of our plans are prepared for that,” said Roberts from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

As heat-trapping emissions have climbed, UNEP had warned that meeting the 1.5C target was becoming increasingly unlikely. But this latest report marks a departure, stating in no uncertain terms that “global action to cut greenhouse gas emissions has not been fast enough to avoid global warming crossing 1.5C”. The blunt message “really struck those who live in low-lying atolls”, said Maina Talia, the climate minister of Tuvalu, a Pacific nation among the most threatened by rising sea levels. “We know for sure that climate change falls disproportionately on the Pacific countries. The costs that we have to bear in Tuvalu are incomparable to other countries,” he said.

Marshall Islands climate envoy Tina Stege said, “With the overshoot that is now certain ahead of us, we are fighting against a very strong current that’s sweeping us into very dangerous waters”.

Climate activists have rallied around 1.5C since it was affirmed as the more ambitious goal of the Paris Agreement a decade ago, and the UNEP report was met with frustration and disappointment. — AFP

Meloni longest-serving prime minister of Italy

GIORGIA MELONI’S hard-right government on Friday becomes the longest-lasting in Italy’s postwar history — a notable record that belies considerable challenges ahead of elections next year.

In a country once a byword for political instability, Italy’s first woman leader will have been in charge of the same administration for 1,413 days, one more than the late Silvio Berlusconi managed during one of his four stints in office.

“It is certainly a point of pride,” Marco Osnato, a prominent lawmaker with Meloni’s far-right Brothers of Italy (FdI) party, said.

The record is likely to boost the prime minister’s image as Italy, which has had almost 70 governments over the past 80 years, gears up for a national vote in 2027, analysts say.

With FdI constantly topping opinion polls, it might seem Meloni is on track for a repeat of her 2022 win. But recent events have complicated the path to re-election, said Lorenzo Pregliasco, of the YouTrend polling institute.

This year Meloni was undermined by a justice reform referendum defeat that showed voters there “may be an alternative majority” to the coalition currently in power, Pregliasco said.

The drubbing also raised questions about the government’s record. With plans to strengthen the powers of the prime minister and increase regional autonomy, the reform was one of three flagship coalition pledges that the government has so far failed to deliver. And critics say results have fallen well short of expectations in other areas too. The government, which enjoys an ample parliamentary majority, has failed to tackle the structural issues that many believe hold Italy back, they say.

“This stability was not capitalised upon,” said Chiara Braga, the leader of the centre-left opposition Democratic Party’s parliamentary



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UMBERTO BACCHI

The writer is AFP’s correspondent in Brussels

Surveys show that the cost of living, a deteriorating public health system, security and immigration are among Italians’ top concerns.

group. “It did not lead to any significant improvement in people’s living standards or business competitiveness”. Italy’s economy is forecast to grow a lacklustre 0.6 per cent in 2026, while real wages have been virtually stagnant since the early 1990s. Unemployment has fallen from above 7 per cent to around 5 per cent over the past four years, but the number of economically inactive people — those who could work but are not looking for a job — remains high. “This government has primarily sought to survive” by “doing as little as possible”, said Tito Boeri, an economist at Milan’s Bocconi University.

Supporters counter that the administration has cut taxes and increased tax revenues, brought fiscal discipline to the highly indebted nation, and won Italy a more prominent role on the global stage at a fraught geopolitical time.

“When it comes to foreign policy, Italy has never been so central, particularly in Europe,” Osnato said, noting that from a hardening of migration rules to energy policy

Rome was now considered a driving force in Brussels. Politically, Meloni’s coalition risks bleeding voters to Roberto Vannacci, a former general who regularly bashes migrants. His newly-created Futuro Nazionale party polls at around 7 per cent and could emerge as a kingmaker next year.

But support for the ruling alliance, which includes the far-right League of Matteo Salvini and conservative Forza Italia, is buoyed by perennial infighting within the left-leaning opposition and increasing abstentionism, analysts say.

Voter turnout in 2022 was about 64 per cent, a record low, and fell below 50 per cent for European elections in 2024. “A sizable share of voters is really disappointed and angry,” said Giovanni Orsina, a political scientist at Rome’s Luiss University.

Italy’s chronic issues have led many to believe that “no one can solve their problems,” he added.

In August, Meloni was loudly booed at a sporting event in Taranto, a southern city home to a giant steel plant plagued by economic and environmental challenges that the government is struggling to keep afloat.

Surveys show that the cost of living, a deteriorating public health system, security and immigration are among Italians’ top concerns.

Such trends were in plain sight in Tor Bella Monaca, a working-class eastern suburb of Rome dotted by rundown apartment blocks, cash-for-gold shops and discount stores.

Governed by Meloni’s party, the district regularly ranks among those with the lowest voter turnout.

“Nothing has changed in Italy over the 45 years I’ve been on this planet and nothing will,” said Maurizio, a sandal-wearing IT worker who preferred to give only his first name.

He is tempted by Vannacci but will not vote next year, he said, lamenting the lack of a long-term vision for the country. — AFP

Melting glaciers an ‘immediate’ climate risk



ALI BEKHTAOUI

The writer is based in Paris and is currently an Environment and Climate Reporter at AFP

CLIMATE CHANGE is accelerating the loss of glaciers and increasing the risk of devastating events like the Himalaya floods, said one author of a major UN scientific assessment published on Wednesday.

More than 1,100 bodies have been recovered since a glacial collapse sent a gigantic wave of freezing water, rocks and debris roaring down the China-Nepal border on August 26.

In a new report, the UN Environment Programme said the goal of holding global warming to below 1.5C is certain to be breached, and would have severe consequences even if global temperatures are reversed in the future.

Report co-author Carl-Friedrich Schleussner, a climate scientist from the IIASA research institute in Austria, said that humanity must respond to a rising tempo of extreme events by reining in global warming.

Could an event similar to the devastating floods in the Himalayas happen again?

“We need to understand in detail what has happened and the exact drivers. But what we can say with confidence is that climate change is driving and accelerating the loss of glaciers around the world. Of all global glacier mass loss since the 1970s, more than 40 per cent occurred in the last decade alone. So we’ll see more and more glacier melt. And

with this accelerating glacier loss, we are also increasing the risks of such events, because we are destabilising these glaciers.”

What are the triggering factors?

“If glaciers are melting at an accelerating rate, you’re seeing an increase in basically adjacent lakes because water melts, and then depending on the topography, lakes can form closer to the bottom of glaciers.

“These can grow in size - and we are seeing this around the world - that glacial lakes are growing quite considerably. Then there is a real risk through destabilisation - either of the glacier itself or of the surrounding mountain areas - because we are talking about very high altitudes... We can also see permafrost melt and other things that may lead to a sudden event where a big chunk of debris or glacier falls into the lake and creates a flood wave. And these types of events can be devastating in their consequences.”

ARE WE PREPARED FOR THIS?

“There’s an immediate risk that’s coming from glaciers... that requires an immediate response to the imminent exceedance of 1.5C. Not just with the Nepalese flood, but also with the extreme events we’ve been seeing around the world in the last couple of months. We know we are not prepared for what is coming.

“We’ll need to really step up our game in adapting to it and we’ll need to reduce

In a new report, the UN says the goal of holding global warming to below 1.5C is certain to be breached, and would have severe consequences even if global temperatures are reversed in the future

emissions as much as possible as soon as possible because that’s the only way to slow down climate change and buy us time, because we are warming the planet at a record rate and so we are really pushing our luck.”

WHICH AREAS ARE AT RISK OF FLOODING SIMILAR TO THAT IN THE HIMALAYAS?

“It’s a very consequential and potentially devastating type of event, but also something that is unfortunately still not understood to the level that we really can estimate and understand the risks.

“At the same time, it’s important to say that obviously these risks persist everywhere where we have rapidly melting glaciers, which is in particular the case in South America, but also particularly in the “third pole” - the Himalayan-Karakoram-Pamir region. Because this is where we have huge glaciers, this is where these dynamics are quick. We are seeing rapid changes in those regions. It’s densely populated further downstream, so the risks for humans are quite substantial.

“These Himalayan water towers are really essential for providing fresh water to billions of people. Any significant changes to this freshwater supply will have enormous consequences and this is really where the glaciers are central and require a particular focus, including also when we look into the prospect of a 1.5C or warmer world.”

AS LE PEN EYES POWER, FRANCE’S DIVIDED MODERATES STRUGGLE TO UNITE

TIPHAINE LE LIBOUX AND ANNA SMOLCHENKO

The stakes for France’s 2027 election could hardly be higher. For the first time since World War II, a far-right party has a serious chance of taking power in France, the European Union’s second-largest economy and its only nuclear power.

Polls project far-right leader Marine Le Pen has her best shot of winning the Élysée Palace on her fourth attempt, as she benefits from one of the most fractured political landscapes in modern French history, with a multitude of candidates vying for support and traditional political forces weaker than ever.

More than 30 declared or potential candidates from the left, centre and right are competing for voters outside the far-right and hard-left camps, eight months ahead of the polls.

Meanwhile, President Emmanuel Macron cannot run again after a decade in office. France’s two-round system for presidential elections means that moderate candidates risk splitting the vote in the first round if they are too numerous, putting Le Pen in a run-off, likely against hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon which polls predict she would easily defeat.

“Everyone hopes to claim a piece of the pie, although that will prove very difficult,” said Emilie Zapalski, an expert in political communication.

Political scientist Remi Lefebvre chalked up the proliferation of candidates to what he called a “Macron effect”, with former President Francois Hollande’s economic minister getting elected in 2017 without the backing of a major political party.

“That fuels ambitions,” said Lefebvre. “People think they too can get elected against the odds.”

Over the past decade, Macron has reshuffled the political landscape, blurring the traditional left-right divide that has long been a defining feature of French politics.

Polls, which could shift significantly before the election, currently place Le Pen ahead in the first round with about 35 per cent of the vote and forecast a runoff victory against any opponent.

The 58-year-old has never appeared closer to power, despite her conviction on appeal for misappropriation of European Parliament funds. She has lodged an appeal with France’s highest court. Edouard Philippe, Macron’s first prime minister, is seen as the candidate best placed to unite the centre and right and take on the far right.

Some polls, however, suggest that Melenchon, the polarising leader of hard-left France Unbowed (LFI), may be better positioned to reach a run-off against Le Pen.

An increasingly bitter battle for the centrist mantle between Philippe and 37-year-old Gabriel Attal, France’s once youngest prime minister, has raised eyebrows.

At the weekend, Attal took a swipe at his 55-year-old rival, saying he was campaigning “with ideas from 20 years ago.” — AFP

The courage to say no

ORDERED

BY Emperor Hadrian in AD 122, Hadrian’s Wall marked the north-western frontier of an empire whose armies had crossed continents. It was not an impregnable barrier, nor was it meant to be. Its gates regulated movement, its forts economised on soldiers, and its stone line imposed order on an exposed frontier. It was, above all, an admission rendered in masonry: even Rome had limits.

The most revealing walls in history are not always those erected by the weak against the strong. Sometimes they are the boundaries that power is eventually compelled to draw around itself.

Vietnam taught the United States a related lesson. At the height of the war, more than half a million American troops were deployed there. The United States possessed overwhelming advantages in aircraft, firepower, communications and logistics. Yet material superiority could not convert an ill-defined political purpose into a sustainable victory.

Vietnam did not destroy American power. It exposed the distance between the capacity to destroy and the capacity to decide political outcomes. An adversary did not need to match the United States weapon for weapon. It needed to endure, deny Washington a decisive conclusion and make the price of continuation exceed the value Americans attached to the objective.

That distinction matters again today.

American power is immense, but it is not self-executing. A carrier group requires fuel, maintenance, munitions and replenishment. Aircraft require overflight rights, tankers, runways and spare parts. Distant forces require ports, communications, intelligence, pre-positioned supplies and politically dependable hosts. The United States itself acknowledges this. Its defence strategy speaks of building infrastructure, logistics, access, dispersal and mobilisation with allies. Before it can fight abroad, it must first get to the fight and remain supplied there.

This is not evidence of weakness. Every great power relies on networks. It is evidence that American primacy is partly a coalition achievement, sustained



Personnel and aircraft on the deck of the US Navy Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln as it sails towards Laem Chabang Port before docking for a rest stop following a long deployment in the Middle East, in Chonburi province, Thailand, on Wednesday. — Reuters



AHMED AL MUKHAINI

The author is a policy analyst

The most revealing walls in history are not always those erected by the weak against the strong. Sometimes they are the boundaries that power is eventually compelled to draw around itself

by thousands of permissions that are usually mistaken for permanent facts.

The same is true of financial power. The Federal Reserve reports that the dollar still represented 56.42 per cent of disclosed official reserves in Q4-2025, about half of international payments and majorities of international banking claims and liabilities. No rival currency currently combines, at the dollar’s scale, full convertibility, deep funding and payment networks, and a single vast pool of liquid government securities. But the legal and political confidence sustaining those advantages can no longer be taken for granted.

Dominance, on the other hand, is not invulnerability. A reserve currency is a network of confidence before it is an instrument of coercion. Its strength depends on other states choosing to hold it, banks choosing to clear through it, and traders choosing to invoice in it. A coalition need not overthrow the dollar to limit the reach of financial coercion. It can diversify reserves, widen local-currency settlement, build supplementary payment channels and reduce dependence at the margin. Each step may be modest. Taken together, they create an exit option — and every credible exit option changes the balance of a relationship.

This is where a simple act of bravery becomes politically consequential. One ally may decline automatic access. A court may insist that emergency power is still subject to law. A central bank may diversify prudently. None of these acts can

defeat a superpower. Together, they can remind it that consent is not obedience and partnership is not subordination.

The language of authoritarianism also needs greater precision. American institutions have often applied the term to Arab states. But authoritarianism should not be treated as a geography, still less as an Arab cultural condition. Arab governments, whatever their constitutional form, are rarely unconstrained. They negotiate among ruling families, militaries, tribes, commercial interests, religious authorities, fiscal realities, public expectations and external pressures.

The United States has the opposite problem: an elaborate constitutional architecture of Congress, courts, federalism, elections and a free press, but safeguards on paper operate only when people are willing to use them. In 2026, V-Dem recorded the largest annual decline in American liberal democracy in its historical series, attributing much of it to diminished media freedom, weakened congressional accountability and pressure on institutional independence.

America’s greatest danger, then, is not a coalition strong enough to conquer it. It is the belief that no coalition could inconvenience it, no ally would withhold cooperation, no institution would resist, and no alternative network could emerge. That belief turns advantage into overreach and partnership into resentment. It also invites the very balancing behaviour it seeks to prevent.

SPORTS

TOP SIX



ICC Chairman Jay Shah

India to host inaugural ICC Women’s Champions Trophy

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday announced that the inaugural ICC Women’s Champions Trophy 2027 will be staged in the Indian cities of Mumbai and Vadodara from February 14 to 28, 2027.

The Cricket Club of India (CCI) in Mumbai and the Vadodara International Cricket Stadium will be the venues for the landmark tournament that will bring together six of the world’s leading women’s cricket teams — Australia, England, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

Those six teams, who qualified as per their positions in the ICC Women’s T20I Team Rankings on the July 6 qualification cut-off date, will compete in a round-robin league, with the top two sides advancing to the final on February 28.

The tournament was originally scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka but will now be staged in India as Sri Lanka Cricket continues to make the requisite reforms outlined at the ICC’s Annual Conference in July.

The ICC assessed three candidates — Bangladesh, India and South Africa — against its established host evaluation criteria before recommending India as the replacement host, a decision ratified by the ICC Board on September 2.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah, said: “The ICC Women’s Champions Trophy 2027 marks an exciting new chapter for women’s cricket. As the inaugural edition of the tournament, it will bring together the best teams in the world in an intense, high-quality competition, while creating even greater incentive for teams to continue rising through the rankings and competing for a place on the global stage.

“With a marquee ICC women’s event now taking place every year, we have a significant opportunity to build greater momentum, provide more consistency and create a stronger rhythm for the women’s game, its players and its fans around the world.” — ICC

Oman weightlifters set for Asian Games challenge in Japan

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

Oman’s national weightlifting team is stepping up preparations for the Asian Games in Japan, scheduled to take place from September 20 to 30, with the team aiming to gain valuable experience while testing its level against some of Asia’s strongest lifters.

Oman will be represented by two lifters at the continental multi-sport event, with Elias al Busaidi competing in the 65 kg category and Murshid bin Mohammed al Ajmi entering the 95 kg category. The delegation also includes a coach and an administrator.

Yusuf al Hasani, administrator of Oman’s weightlifting delegation, said preparations are continuing at the sports complex and described the team’s readiness as positive despite the absence of an overseas training camp. “We are currently preparing at the sports complex. We were unable to hold an overseas training camp due to technical circumstances, but preparations have been going well,” Al Hasani



Oman will be represented by Elias al Busaidi competing in the 65 kg category and Murshid bin Mohammed al Ajmi entering the 95 kg category.

said. He added that one of the team’s athletes suffered an injury during the preparation period, but expressed hope that the remaining lifters would make the most of the opportunity and deliver a strong performance.

Al Hasani stressed the importance of Oman’s participation in the Asian Games, noting that weightlifting has been developing in the country for more

than two decades. “This participation is very important for us because it gives our athletes the opportunity to gain experience through competing against strong lifters from across Asia,” he said. “Many of the Asian lifters are also world-class competitors, so we hope our athletes will benefit greatly from this experience.”

Regarding the selection of Al

Holder Al Nahda to meet qualifier in HM Cup last 16

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

THE draw for the 2026-27 His Majesty the Sultan’s Cup football championship was held on Tuesday evening at Zain Hall in the Omantel building, setting out the pathways to one of Oman’s most prestigious football trophies and giving clubs a first look at the challenges that await them in the knockout competition.

The draw ceremony was held under the auspices of Mohsin bin Hamad al Hadhrami, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, with participating clubs looking ahead to a new campaign in which ambitions will range from surviving the preliminary stage to reaching the final and lifting the coveted trophy.

The competition will follow a format in which a preliminary round precedes the Round of 16. Clubs entering the opening stage must win their respective knockout ties to secure a place among the teams advancing to the last 16, while a number of clubs have already earned direct qualification based on the competition regulations and their performances in the previous season.

SOHAR VS MUSCAT

Defending champions Al Nahda will begin their title defence in the Round of 16 against the winner of the preliminary-round tie between Samayil and Bidiyah. Al Nahda enter the new campaign with confidence after securing the Sultan’s Cup for the second time in their history last season.

The club defeated Oman Club 2-0 in last season’s final at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher in February, adding another major achievement to their record. Their latest triumph will raise expectations as they seek to retain the trophy against a field of clubs determined to end their reign.

Elsewhere in the draw, Seeb will face the winner of the preliminary-round encounter between Sohar and Muscat. Another pathway features Saham against the winner of the tie between Al Taliya and Al Khabourah, while Oman Club and Sur also feature in one of the Round of 16 paths.

Dhofar have been drawn against the



A view of the draw ceremony for His Majesty the Sultan’s Football Cup for the 2026–2027 season.



A view of the draw ceremony for His Majesty the Sultan’s Football Cup for the 2026–2027 season.

winner of the Nizwa-Fanja tie, while Al Bahla will meet the winner of the Al Wahda-Majees encounter. Al Nasr will face the winner of another preliminary tie, while Al Shabab will take on the winner of the Al Suwaiq-Ibri match.

The preliminary round is expected to provide an early test of the competing clubs, with every match carrying the pressure of immediate elimination. For the teams entering at this stage, there will be little margin for error as they pursue the limited number of places available in the Round of 16.

For the directly qualified clubs, meanwhile, the draw offers additional

time to prepare while they wait to discover their opponents. The contrasting routes are expected to add another layer of intrigue to a competition traditionally known for producing closely fought knockout encounters.

Al Nahda will carry the responsibility of defending their crown, while the rest of the field will be looking to seize their opportunity and challenge for the trophy.

With the draw now complete, attention turns to the opening fixtures and the beginning of another journey towards the HM Cup final, where one club will ultimately emerge as Oman’s champion for the 2026-27 season.

GRANDFINALE



The beach volleyball final will see Al Batinah North Education take on Muscat Education.
— Yousuf al Siyabi

Fifth School Beach Games to conclude in Dhofar today

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

The fifth edition of the School Beach Games Championship will conclude on Thursday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Cultural and Sports Complex in Dhofar, bringing together the leading school teams competing in beach volleyball and beach handball.

The closing ceremony will be held under the auspices of Sayyid Sulaiman bin Hamoud bin Ali al Busaidi, Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers. The ceremony will also be attended by Dr Intisar bint Abdullah Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Educational Support Programmes, along with a number of advisers and director-generals from the Ministries of Education and Culture, Sports and Youth.

Organised by the Oman School Sports Association, the championship has provided a competitive platform for school teams from various governorates, with the final day bringing the two sports competitions to their decisive stages.

In beach handball, the final will feature Al Dakhiliyah Education against Muscat Education after both teams secured convincing victories in their respective semifinals. Al Dakhiliyah advanced to the title match after defeating Dhofar Education 2-0, while Muscat Education secured its place in the final with a 2-0 victory over Al Batinah South Education.

Before the championship match, Dhofar Education will face Al Batinah South Education in the third-place play-off, with both teams aiming to finish their campaign on the podium.

AL BATINAH NORTH VS MUSCAT
The beach volleyball final will see Al Batinah North Education take on Muscat Education. Al Batinah North booked its place in the final after overcoming Al Dakhiliyah Education 2-1 in a closely contested semifinal. Muscat Education, meanwhile, earned a 2-0 victory over Al Batinah South Education to complete the final line-up.

Al Batinah South Education and Al Dakhiliyah Education will meet in the third-place play-off ahead of the championship final.

Following the conclusion of the final matches, the official closing ceremony will feature the recognition of the championship's supporting companies and referees, before the top three teams in both beach volleyball and beach handball are presented with their medals and trophies.

The final day is expected to provide a fitting conclusion to the fifth edition of the School Beach Games Championship.



Omani skateboarder Firas al Hinai in action.

Firas al Hinai marks Oman debut at Brics Skate Cup

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

OMAN MADE its debut at the Brics Skate Cup, with skateboarder Firas al Hinai representing the Sultanate of Oman at the 2026 edition in Ryazan, Russia, from August 27 to 31.

The event attracted 987 male and female athletes from 27 countries, alongside participants from 20 Russian regions. Oman's delegation was headed by Eng Saud bin Nasser al Aufi, Chairman of the Oman Skating Sports Committee, while Al Hinai competed in the skateboarding events.

The participation marked the beginning of Oman's presence at the international event. It formed part of the committee's efforts to provide Omani athletes with opportunities to compete abroad and gain valuable technical experience.

Organised by the Russian Skateboarding and Roller Sports Federation, the event brought together athletes from Brics member states and several other countries, including Oman, Argentina, Bahrain, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Madagascar, Türkiye and Yemen. The programme featured competitions in skateboarding, roller sports and scootering.

Oman's participation comes as skating sports continue to gain wider international recognition. Skateboarding's inclusion in the Olympic programme has added further importance to international competitions, particularly for athletes seeking to develop their abilities and compete against different schools and styles.



The event attracted 987 male and female athletes from 27 countries.

Al Aufi said the event represented an important milestone for the committee as Oman's first official participation in the Brics Skate Cup. He also praised the warm reception, high standard of organisation and cooperation among the parties involved.

"We are delighted to participate in this sporting festival, which reflects the growing profile of skating sports in their various forms and provides an important opportunity for athletes and administrators from different countries to exchange experience," he said.

OLYMPIC SPORT
"Skateboarding is also an Olympic sport, and international competitions of this kind contribute to raising athletes' standards and strengthening their competitive abilities."

Al Aufi said Al Hinai's participation would provide him with valuable international experience and open up broader opportunities for his development over the coming years. He added that the committee would prepare more extensively for future editions and seek to participate with a larger

delegation comprising several athletes.

He noted that developing skating disciplines into organised sports with an international presence could help harness young people's abilities and guide them towards achievement.

The committee, he added, is working to develop skating sports in a manner consistent with Oman's identity, culture and environment, while creating opportunities for young talent to gain competitive experience abroad.

Al Hinai said, competing at the Brics Skate Cup was a special and important experience for me, especially as I took part alongside skateboarders from different countries who possess considerable skill and experience.

"The event allowed me to learn about new training and competition methods and helped me gain greater experience in dealing with the atmosphere of international championships."

Al Hinai thanked the Oman Skating Sports Committee for giving him the opportunity to represent Oman, adding that he was determined to build on the experience and continue developing his performance.

"My goal is to continue training, participate in more competitions and raise my performance level so that I can achieve better results and represent Oman with distinction in future events," he said.

The Oman Skating Sports Committee will continue its efforts to promote and develop skating sports, attract more young people and prepare athletes for regional and international competitions, to build a broader base of participants capable of representing Oman abroad.

Sonavale, Mirza power Oman to five-wicket win over Qatar

MUSCAT: Karan Sonavale and Hammad Mirza struck commanding half-centuries as Oman produced another authoritative performance in the ACC Men's Premier Cup, chasing down Qatar's 272 with five wickets to spare at the YSD-UKM Cricket Oval in Bangi, Malaysia, on Wednesday.

The emphatic victory, Oman's second successive win in Group B, further strengthened their push for a place in the semifinals and underlined the growing confidence in Sulakshan Kulkarni's side.

Set 273 for victory, Oman raced to 276 for five in just 40.3 overs, with Mirza remaining unbeaten on a composed 84 off 96 balls and captain Vinayak Shukla finishing unbeaten on run-a-ball 46. Sonavale provided the explosive impetus with a superb 83 from 55 balls, including five fours and seven sixes, with a strike rate of 150.

The chase was not without early setbacks. Oman slipped to 54 for two inside 10 overs, but Sonavale and Mirza responded with a decisive 100-run third-wicket stand off 69 balls that changed the complexion of the contest. Sonavale attacked with freedom, while Mirza provided stability at the other end as the pair rapidly took Oman towards the target. Sonavale eventually fell at 166, having done much of the damage, but the foundation had been firmly laid for another convincing Oman victory.

Mirza then took complete control of the chase. After reaching his half-century, he continued to bat with authority and composure, ensuring Qatar were never able to force their way back into the contest.

Following the dismissal of Jiten Ramanandi at 182, Mirza and Shukla added an unbeaten



Karan Sonavale and Hammad Mirza put up a decisive 100-run third-wicket stand.

92-run partnership to take Oman comfortably over the line. Shukla's assured 46 complemented Mirza's measured innings that included six boundaries and two maximums as

Oman completed the chase with 9.3 overs remaining.

Mirza was later named the player of the match.

Earlier, Oman's bowlers had done an excellent job of restricting Qatar to 272 despite useful contributions throughout the innings.

Qatar's opener Zubair Ali top-scored with 77 off 101 balls, while Imal Liyanage made 45 and captain Mirza Mohammed Baig provided late acceleration with 59 from just 38 balls. Daniel Louis also struck a brisk 34 off 25 balls as Qatar moved beyond 250.

The key to Oman's effort, however, was Hassnain Shah, who claimed an impressive four wickets for 58 runs from his 10 overs. Jiten Ramanandi supported him with two wickets, while Jay Odedra returned the excellent figures of one for 32 from his 10 overs.

Shah struck repeatedly when Qatar threatened to build momentum, dismissing Zubair, Muhammad Asim, Baig and Shahzeb Afridi to ensure Qatar could not turn several promising starts into a match-defining total.

With two wins from two Group B matches, Oman have made an ideal start to their campaign and will carry significant momentum into their remaining league fixtures. Oman next take on Kuwait on September 5 before concluding their group fixtures with the UAE on September 8.

BRIEF SCORES: Qatar 272 all out in 50 overs (Zubair Ali 77, Mirza Mohammed Baig 59, Imal Liyanage 45; Hassnain Shah 4/58, Jiten Ramanandi 2/60) lost to Oman 276/5in 40.3 overs (Karan Sonavale 83, Hammad Mirza 84*, Vinayak Shukla 46*; Mirza Mohammed Baig 2/45).

SPORTS

Zverev wins wild 5-setter in US Open, Rybakina and Gauff ease through

"I'm just happy I won, that's it. Incredible battle," said Zverev, who was two points from

Rybakina, eyeing a third Grand Slam title

Kazakhstan's Rybakina showed little sign of

Andreieva, seeded fifth, has had a lackluster run on North American hard courts since her scintillating run to a first Grand Slam title in Paris.

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But she was dialed in as she produced her second win over Tien in less than two weeks. After a tough win against the Indonesian in Cincinnati, Andreeva said, "I was just trying to be very aggressive."

That included a near four-hour delay to the start of play and more delays in the evening. Five late matches were postponed altogether and a handful of others suspended to resume on Wednesday. — **AFP**

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
7,607.037

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$101.56
BRENT \$93.62
LIGHT \$89.14



SHORT TAKES



The investment adds to FFO's growing footprint in healthcare.

FFO BACKS MUSCAT'S FIRST WOMEN'S HEALTH HOSPITAL

BALARAB AL TAMIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

MUSCAT: Future Fund Oman (FFO) is backing the development of Muscat's first hospital dedicated to women's health, in what Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has described as a significant addition to the Sultanate of Oman's healthcare sector.

The Maternal and Fetal Care Center project, one of FFO's portfolio investments, will combine specialised care with advanced medical technologies and innovations to enhance the quality of healthcare services for mothers and fetuses, OIA said in a post on its official social-media channels.

The investment adds to FFO's growing footprint in healthcare, which the fund has identified as a priority sector alongside renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, tourism, medical technologies, innovation and food industries.

In June, FFO unveiled a portfolio of 105 projects and investments worth RO 583 million, comprising RO 225 million in commitments from the fund, around RO 176 million in local investment and approximately RO 182 million in foreign direct investment. The projects are expected to generate 2,302 jobs.

Healthcare featured prominently in that package. FFO announced a RO 50 million Healthcare Investment Fund targeting opportunities in healthcare services, pharmaceuticals, medical technologies, digital health, diagnostics, insurance and medical research, with the stated aims of improving healthcare quality and localising medical industries. The fund also committed RO 77 million to Vivo Capital Fund, a global life-sciences investment platform.

FFO was launched in early 2024 as OIA's vehicle for directing capital into national priority sectors, attracting foreign partners and widening private-sector participation in economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040.

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) recently concluded its Summer Internship Programme, reaffirming its commitment to investing in promising national talent and empowering young people to gain practical experience and professional skills. The programme also provided participants with an opportunity to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and its practical application in a real-world work environment.

Held over a period of two months, from June through August, the programme brought together 23 students, serving as a platform for them to gain first-hand exposure to OETC's work environment and develop a deeper understanding of the nature of the Company's operations and professional practices across various fields.

Participants also engaged in

a range of tasks and activities that contributed to developing their skills and strengthening their practical knowledge and experience, in line with their academic disciplines and areas of interest. The programme featured a range of training and interactive activities, as well as field visits aimed at developing students' technical and interpersonal skills besides enhancing their capabilities in communication and teamwork. It also emphasized commitment, compliance and adherence to best practices.

As part of the programme, a dialogue session was held bringing together the trainees and specialists from various fields. The session provided an opportunity to reflect on their training experiences, discuss the key knowledge and skills they gained, and share the challenges they encountered. The trainees also presented the work and projects they contributed to across various technical and administrative departments, while sharing their



Participants also engaged in a range of tasks and activities that contributed to developing their skills and strengthening their practical knowledge and experience, in line with their academic disciplines and areas of interest.

ideas and recommendations for further development. Ishaq al Harrasi, Acting General Manager of Human Resources at OETC, reaffirmed the Company's commitment to investing in young people, developing their capabilities, building national competencies and enhancing their readiness for the job market. He

also highlighted OETC's focus on providing high-quality training experience that enables students to explore the workplace and gain a better understanding of its requirements, contributing to their preparation for their future professional careers.

Al Harrasi added: "The Summer Internship Program represents an

OMIFCO, IGC to finalise gas deal for expansion

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 2

OMAN India Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO) is engaged in intensive discussions with Integrated Gas Company (IGC), the state-run exclusive aggregator and supplier of natural gas, over its application for additional natural gas feedstock, a key prerequisite for a long-proposed expansion of its ammonia and urea production capacity.

OMIFCO's senior management said the talks were progressing positively, although a final investment decision on the expansion had yet to be taken.

The update came during the company's earnings call covering its first-half 2026 performance. Participants included Dr Ahmed al Marhoubi, Chief Executive Officer; Abdullah al Hashami, Chief Financial Officer; Zaki al Maawali, General Manager – Technical Services; and Khalid Sulaiman al Farsi, General Manager – Corporate Support.

Management said OMIFCO had submitted a formal gas-allocation request to IGC and was seeing "positive signs" regarding the availability of the volumes required for the proposed expansion.

Once the allocation is secured, the project will move through detailed technical and commercial evaluations before being presented to OMIFCO's board for approval. The financing structure, including the mix of equity and other funding sources, will be determined as part of the final investment decision.

Officials said the publicly traded company has also completed the revalidation of a 2018 feasibility study for a potential third production train, underlining its readiness to advance the project once feedstock availability is



OMIFCO says it has completed the revalidation of a 2018 feasibility study for a potential third production train.

confirmed.

The expansion forms the medium-term component of a three-horizon growth strategy. In the short term, OMIFCO is concentrating on operational efficiency, equipment and process upgrades, renewable-energy deployment, and initiatives designed to reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Completed and ongoing improvements include the replacement of the Urea-2 reactor and Ammonia-2 reformer tubes, as well as upgrades involving compressor systems and the hydrogen recovery unit. The company has also completed four phases of solar-panel installations, providing around 1 megawatt-peak of clean electricity, and converted process-plant lighting to energy-efficient LED systems.

Over the longer term, OMIFCO plans to pursue innovation and product diversification through a clean-energy and decarbonisation programme aligned with Oman's national targets. Opportunities being explored include hydrogen, carbon capture and the diversification of ammonia-based products.

Operationally, OMIFCO

produced one million tonnes of urea during the first half of 2026, up 6.2 per cent year on year, at an average utilisation rate of 119 per cent. Urea sales rose 6.9 per cent to 989,000 tonnes, while revenue surged 46.9 per cent to more than RO 178 million, supported by an average realised price of \$477 per tonne.

Ammonia production increased 1.3 per cent to 659,000 tonnes at an average utilisation rate of 107 per cent. Most output was retained as feedstock for urea production, reducing external ammonia sales to 53,000 tonnes from 93,000 tonnes a year earlier. Nevertheless, ammonia revenue climbed 21.4 per cent to RO12.7 million as the average realised price rose to \$622 per tonne.

OMIFCO's existing gas-supply agreement with IGC runs until July 2035. Management said it intends to begin extension discussions well before expiry, recognising natural gas as critical to the company's long-term operations.

A joint venture between Oman and India, OMIFCO operates an integrated complex in Sur with annual nameplate capacities of 1.65 million tonnes of urea and 1.15 million tonnes of ammonia.

OETC concludes 2026 summer internship programme

investment in people before it is an investment in skills. By providing students with the opportunity to gain practical experience in the real world, we give them the space to learn, discover their capabilities and transform knowledge into tangible experience. We believe that every experience students gain today will lay the foundation for greater ambitions tomorrow. Through such programmes, we seek to contribute to developing a generation of national talent capable of advancing Oman's development journey and shaping an ambitious future in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040."

OETC is responsible for the transmission network and load dispatch across the national grid, covering all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. The company also manages interconnections with the GCC Interconnection Grid at 220 kV and operates under the Nama Group framework to support Oman's vision of building a secure, reliable, and sustainable electricity ecosystem.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Etienne Els appointed General Manager of Aloft Muscat.

ETIENNE ELS NAMED GENERAL MANAGER OF ALOFT MUSCAT

MUSCAT: Aloft by Marriott Muscat is pleased to announce the appointment of Etienne Els as General Manager, marking an exciting new chapter for the lifestyle hotel as it continues to strengthen its position within Muscat’s dynamic hospitality landscape.

Etienne brings extensive hospitality leadership experience across Marriott International and other leading hospitality brands in the Middle East. His appointment marks his first role as General Manager, following a distinguished career spanning hotel operations, food and beverage, commercial performance, guest experience and talent development.

Prior to joining Aloft by Marriott Muscat, Etienne served as Hotel Manager at Le Royal Méridien Beach Resort & Spa Dubai, where he played a key role in leading one of the brand’s top-performing resorts globally. During his tenure, he delivered strong results across guest satisfaction, associate engagement, operational excellence and revenue performance.

Etienne has also held senior leadership positions at JW Marriott Marquis Dubai, Grosvenor House Dubai, Jumeirah Beach Hotel and Emaar Hospitality Group, building a strong track record of driving operational excellence while developing high-performing teams and delivering memorable guest experiences.

Known for his passion for people, guest experience and innovation, Etienne brings a collaborative and performance-driven leadership approach to Aloft by Marriott Muscat. His experience across both operational and commercial functions will support the hotel’s continued growth while further strengthening its distinctive lifestyle positioning in Muscat.

As General Manager, Etienne will oversee the overall operations and performance of Aloft Muscat, working closely with the hotel’s leadership team to further enhance guest experiences, strengthen associate engagement and drive the property’s continued success.

“I am excited to join Aloft Muscat and take on this new chapter in my career. Aloft’s energetic personality, focus on experiences and strong connection with its guests and associates provide an exciting platform for growth. I look forward to working alongside the team to build on the hotel’s achievements and create even more memorable experiences for our guests,” said Etienne Els, General Manager, Aloft Muscat.

Sohar International & NBO lead phoenix power deal

REINFORCING their commitment to supporting Oman’s strategic infrastructure and economic development priorities, Sohar International and National Bank of Oman (NBO), signed the financing documents for the \$720 million syndicated refinancing facility for Phoenix Power Company SAOG (PPC), following the 15-year extension of its Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP).

The financing documents were signed by Abdulwahid bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, Abdullah bin Zahran al Hinai, Chief Executive Officer of NBO, and Ahmed al Abri, Chief Financial Officer of PPC, establishing a framework for collaboration towards financing the company’s continued operations and supporting the reliability and resilience of Oman’s power infrastructure.

Commenting on the signing, Abdulwahid bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said, “At Sohar International, we see our role extending beyond providing financial solutions to actively enabling the projects and partnerships that contribute to Oman’s long-term economic resilience. Financing of Phoenix Power reflects our commitment to mobilising capital towards strategic assets that are integral to Oman’s development. By supporting the continued operation of a major power generation facility, we are contributing to the strength of Oman’s energy ecosystem while advancing our broader commitment to the ambitions of Oman Vision 2040.”

From his end, Pullattu Radhakrishnan Anil Kumar, General Manager & Chief Corporate Banking Officer at NBO, said: “Transactions of this scale demonstrate the important role Oman’s banking sector can play in financing the infrastructure that underpins the country’s growth. The \$720 million refinancing of Phoenix Power reflects the capabilities



Sohar International and NBO strengthen Oman’s energy sector with a \$720 million refinancing facility for Phoenix Power.

of local banks to structure and deliver significant financing for strategic assets. Together with Sohar International, we are pleased Press Release Classified as Public Use Only Classified as: Internal - Confidential to support an asset that strengthens energy security and contributes to long-term economic value for Oman.”

Ahmed al Abri, Chief Financial Officer of Phoenix Power Company SAOG, said: “The successful refinancing represents an important milestone for Phoenix Power. We value the support and expertise of both National Bank of Oman and Sohar International throughout the transaction.

The refinancing provides a strong financial foundation as we continue to operate a critical power generation asset and contribute to the reliable supply of electricity across Oman.”

Phoenix Power operates one of Oman’s largest power generation facilities, making its continued operations an important contributor to Oman’s electricity infrastructure.

The 15-year PPA extension provides a long-term framework for the facility’s operations, while the proposed syndicated financing will support the company’s financial requirements following the extension. Through its role as joint lead

alongside NBO, Sohar International is further strengthening its engagement with strategic players across Oman’s economy and demonstrating its corporate and institutional banking capabilities in facilitating financing solutions for projects with long-term national significance.

The partnership also highlights the value of collaboration between financial institutions and key industry stakeholders in advancing Oman’s economic priorities. By facilitating access to capital for strategically important projects, Sohar International continues to support the development of a resilient economic ecosystem while creating sustainable value for businesses and the wider community.

The agreement forms part of Sohar International’s and the National Bank of Oman’s broader commitment to supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 through strategic partnerships, responsible capital mobilisation and solutions tailored to the evolving needs of Oman’s key sectors. As Oman continues to strengthen the foundations of a diversified and resilient economy, both banks remain committed to enabling opportunities that contribute to sustainable growth and Oman’s long-term prosperity.

PDO extends Toyota fleet partnership

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) and Saud Bahwan Automotive (SBA) have signed a major six-year contract for the Supply and Maintenance of Toyota Light Vehicles across PDO’s operational network. The agreement was executed by Eng Moosa al Sheriyani, Director of Logistics at PDO and Mr Abdullah bin Mohamed Bahwan, CEO of Saud Bahwan Group.

This contract marks another milestone in a proud 35-year partnership that began in 1991. It once again entrusts Toyota with PDO’s fleet operations for the next six years. At the core of this enduring relationship is the unmatched durability, safety and field-tested reliability of Toyota vehicles, which continue to prove their worth in



Eng Moosa al Sheriyani, Director of Logistics at PDO and Mr Abdullah bin Mohamed Bahwan, Chief Executive Officer of Saud Bahwan Group, after signing the landmark contract for the Supply and Maintenance of Toyota Light Vehicles across PDO’s operational network.

Oman’s most demanding desert terrains and tough operating conditions. The SBA team sustains PDO’s long-standing confidence by complementing Toyota’s performance with comprehensive, high-standard operational and maintenance support, keeping PDO’s field operations moving seamlessly day in and day out.

Beyond operational excellence, both organisations remain deeply aligned on shared values and national priorities. Together, they are committed to empowering Omani talent in line with Oman Vision 2040, upholding non-negotiable “Goal Zero” safety standards and advancing PDO’s decarbonisation journey through the induction of electric vehicles into the fleet.

Amouage unveils Decision 42 & Overture 41

MUSCAT: The Exceptional Extraits collection from the Omani High Perfumery House of Amouage provides opportunities to present a familiar story from a different angle, or in a manner that is more profound or expansive.

All the compositions in the range remain true to their original perfumes, but they cast the ideas within them in an unexpected light. Now, two perfumes join the Exceptional Extraits collection Decision 42 and Overture 41 both of which raise the drama at the core of their originals to even more heart-stopping levels.

“Although they’re quite different from each other,” says Renaud Salmon, Amouage’s Chief Creative Officer, “the original eaux de parfum



Decision 42 and Overture 41 can be purchased at Amouage’s boutiques and online at [www.amouage.com](#) from 1st September 2026, and from distributors worldwide from 1st October 2026.

of both Decision and Overture Woman share a very particular charge a sense of emotions being played out at their extremes. Overture Woman concerns a debutante singer who suddenly and unexpectedly has to replace the Grand Diva and take to the stage, while Decision is about a living tree taken to the brink of death by a bolt of lightning.

I thought it would be fascinating to explore whether these heightened sentiments could be extended even further, to an emotional altitude that would make them worthy candidates for our Exceptional Extraits.”

DECISION 42 – A QUESTION MADE MORE PRESSING

“The original Decision eau de parfum had a very clear focus,” says Salmon. “It presented the story of a juniper tree struck by lightning, and then asked a seemingly simple question: would the tree survive the attack or would it perish?”

For this new piece of work, Salmon and perfumer Quentin Bisch have injected the crisis at the heart of the composition with a greater sense of urgency.

Now, the lightning strike is even more intense, increasing the existential immediacy of the response, while lending the tree’s ultimate determination to live more gravity.

In Decision 42, the lightning element of the composition has been sharpened by the freshness

of Neroli and Cardamom, as well as the diffusiveness of Cinnamon. The Juniper representing the tree has been combined with Javanol, Patchouli and Rectified Pine Tar to make it darker and more far reaching a stark contrast with the whiteness of the lightning.

Finally, the base has been rendered warmly life affirming with the addition of Vanilla and Labdanum unctuous materials that never fail to project a sense of enduring humanity.

These grandiose elements combine to make the perfume’s life-or-death exploration especially piercing and insightful. Uncompromising, fierce and dazzling, Decision 42 cuts to the heart of the most vital of questions.

SELECTIVEGROWTH



The initiative aims to engage young talent in developing a distinctive environmental and urban project that combines the expansion of green spaces with the creation of attractive public areas.

DUQM LAUNCHES DESIGN COMPETITION FOR TREES PARK

BUSINESS REPORTER
DUQM, SEPT 2

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and Tatweer Duqm have launched a design competition for the “10,000 Trees Park”, inviting students from engineering colleges to submit innovative concepts for a sustainable tourism and recreational destination serving families, children and visitors to the zone.

Organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and OQ8’s Duqm Refinery, the competition seeks to harness students’ engineering knowledge and skills to develop designs for an integrated park spanning approximately 400,000 square metres within SEZAD.

The initiative aims to engage young talent in developing a distinctive environmental and urban project that combines the expansion of green spaces with the creation of attractive public areas. It also seeks to strengthen links between academic institutions and the development projects under way in Al Duqm.

Abdullah bin Ali al Alawi, Head of the Afforestation Section at SEZAD, said the competition represents a practical step towards harnessing the creativity and innovative ideas of young people to develop a project that adds environmental and social value to Duqm’s urban landscape.

He added that the project would contribute to creating a sustainable public destination that brings together recreation, tourism and quality of life.

Al Alawi explained that inviting engineering students to participate is intended to translate academic knowledge into design concepts with the potential for further development and implementation.

Musandam roads: Connecting a region, unlocking investment

BUSINESS REPORTER
KHASAB, SEPT 2

Musandam Governorate continues to implement and develop several road projects that form a key pillar in strengthening connectivity between the governorate’s wilayats and various areas, improving infrastructure efficiency, facilitating the movement of people and goods, and supporting economic and tourism sectors amid a distinctive geography characterised by mountainous terrain, coastal areas and wadis.

These projects form part of ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency of the road network, improve road safety and traffic flow, and provide infrastructure capable of keeping pace with development needs and urban and population



Investment in road projects is an investment in sustainable development, as it enhances the governorate’s attractiveness to investors

growth, while opening new opportunities for investment and tourism across the governorate.

Shaikh Abdullah bin Salim al Farsi, Wali of Khasab, affirmed

that road network development projects represent a key pillar of the comprehensive development taking place across the governorate, given their vital role in strengthening connectivity between the wilayats, niyabats and various areas, facilitating the movement of people and goods, and enhancing infrastructure efficiency in line with the requirements of economic and social growth. He noted that the Sultan Faisal bin Turki Road (Dibba-Lima-Khasab) is one of the governorate’s most prominent strategic projects, representing a significant advancement in the transport and connectivity network and creating broader opportunities to capitalise on Musandam’s economic, tourism and development potential.

Eng Badr bin Ahmed al Shehhi,

Director of the Roads Department in Musandam Governorate, said the Sultan Faisal bin Turki Road (Dibba-Lima-Khasab) is one of the governorate’s most prominent strategic and vital projects, providing direct connectivity between its wilayats and areas and representing a major step forward in mobility as well as logistical and social connectivity.

He explained that the road extends for approximately 70 kilometres and will significantly reduce travel times.

The journey between Dibba and Khasab will be reduced from around three hours to approximately 55 to 60 minutes, while travel between the Niyabat of Lima and the Wilayat of Khasab will fall from two and a half hours to around 20 minutes. The project will strengthen logistical

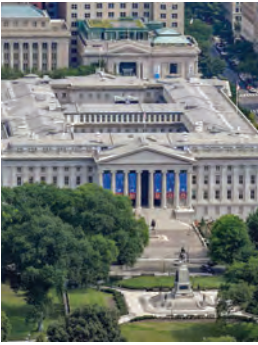
and social connectivity and help overcome the geographical isolation of a number of remote coastal areas, particularly the Niyabat of Lima, where access previously depended largely on sea or air transport.

The road will provide safer and easier travel for citizens and residents and facilitate the transportation of goods and essential services under different weather conditions.

Al Shehhi noted that new road projects, along with rehabilitation and maintenance works, have directly contributed to enhancing road safety, improving the efficiency of the road network and keeping pace with population growth, while also supporting the sustainability of infrastructure in the face of the natural and geographical challenges that characterise Musandam Governorate.

VANISHING BUYERS

Plenty of culprits behind long-yield panic



Higher long-end Treasury yields are unlikely to retreat anytime soon, and a host of intertwined supply and demand factors will likely hamstring U.S. policymakers seeking to cap borrowing costs. Alongside longer-term questions centring on how the market will absorb a flood of bonds sold by governments and high-quality corporate issuers, as well as a shift in the makeup of buyers to groups more likely to demand higher rates. — Reuters

STRIKES IMPACT

Oil holds steady amid supply risks



Oil prices were little changed on Wednesday after climbing to more than one-month highs earlier in the session as traders weighed the risk of supply disruptions following overnight US and Iranian strikes against signs that crude supplies continue to reach the market. Brent crude futures rose 9 cents, or 0.1%, to \$94.74 a barrel by 0805 GMT and US West Texas Intermediate crude futures lost 19 cents, or 0.21%, to \$90.03. — Reuters

HOT WHEELS

Honda’s \$9 bn push to counter China



Japan’s Honda aims to cut more than \$9 billion in costs over the next four years and has instructed suppliers to drastically reduce their prices, according to internal documents and one person familiar with the matter. The plan, reported here for the first time, is one of the most striking examples yet of how Japanese automakers are scrambling to deal with intensifying competition from China. — Reuters

OPINION

Combating fraud practices in tourist visa issuance



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

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

SOME Arab and foreign embassies in the Sultanate of Oman occasionally advise their nationals to comply fully with local laws, and legislation governing employment in the private sector. Recently, the Egyptian Embassy in Muscat issued an urgent warning to Egyptian nationals residing in Oman, urging them to exercise caution against scams and fraudulent schemes involving tourist visas. A number of Egyptian nationals have reportedly fallen victim to fraud perpetrated by individuals and tourism companies in Egypt that claim to arrange travel to Oman for employment purposes using tourist visas. In return, prospective workers are asked to pay substantial sums of money to intermediaries or tourism companies, who promise to secure jobs for them after their arrival in Oman. In many cases, these promises fail to materialize. The victims are left with shattered expectations, having been deceived by people from their own communities, and subsequently face financial and legal difficulties related to their residency status. Visa-related fraud involving tourist visas to Oman and other countries occurs as a result of violations committed by certain individuals, intermediaries or companies. Tourist visas are sometimes used as a cover for unauthorized employment, even

though they are specifically intended for visits and tourism. Unlike a tourist visa, an employment visa requires prior approval and a legitimate employment relationship with an employer in the destination country. Because of the desire of some individuals to seek employment in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, including Oman, certain intermediaries exploit this demand by selling what they describe as “tourist visas” at inflated prices, while making false promises that employment or job opportunities will be provided after the applicants arrive. In some cases, fraudulent documents and misleading online advertisements are used. Scammers may create social media pages or accounts bearing the names of government authorities or tourism companies in order to appear legitimate. They then obtain victims’ passports and money. Some people seeking employment may also mistakenly believe that entering a country on a tourist visa allows them to work temporarily. This is incorrect, as immigration systems clearly distinguish between tourism and employment purposes. This situation requires tighter oversight of tourism companies and intermediaries. It needs awareness campaigns to be launched in multiple languages to emphasize that a tourist visa is not a work permit. Tourist visas are generally valid for 30 days

A number of Egyptian nationals have reportedly fallen victim to fraud perpetrated by individuals and tourism companies in Egypt that claim to arrange travel to Oman for employment purposes using tourist visas

and may be extendable for a similar period, subject to the applicable regulations. Thus, some intermediaries exploit these visas to bring job seekers to Oman in exchange for money, misleading them into believing that they will easily secure employment after arriving in the country. As a result of the misuse of tourist visas for employment and commercial activities, the Royal Oman Police decided to permanently suspend the conversion of tourist visas into employment visas. Violators may face substantial fines of RO 500 (approximately \$1,300), and in some cases imprisonment. They may also be required to leave the country and could be placed on a list of individuals who have violated immigration regulations. Travellers should also ensure that they have a confirmed round-trip airline ticket and suitable accommodation arrangements before entering the country. Ultimately, combating visa-related fraud requires greater public awareness, personal caution and stronger monitoring by the relevant authorities, both in Oman and in the countries from which foreign workers travel. Greater cooperation between governments, embassies, tourism companies and recruitment agencies is also essential to prevent vulnerable job seekers from falling victims.

THE QUIET REVOLUTION IN SERVICES

In 2023, the University of Chicago economists Chang-Tai Hsieh and Esteban Rossi-Hansberg published a study showing that services in the United States were undergoing a radical transformation. Digital technologies and organisational innovations in retail, hospitality, personal services, and medical services, they argued, had enabled some firms to become much more productive and expand their presence in local markets previously served by smaller, less efficient establishments. It was an “industrial revolution in services.”

Although Hsieh and Rossi-Hansberg suggested that much of the productivity gain from this trend did not show up in official statistics, even the measured upsurge in services productivity has been impressive. Between 2000 and 2024, labour productivity in the US grew at an annual average rate of 3% in food-service establishments, 2.1% in accommodation services, 2.9% in retail trade, and 4.4% in wholesale trade. Compared to manufacturing, where labour productivity growth has essentially stagnated at an annual rate of 0.2%, the record in services is nothing short of extraordinary.

This performance is as unexpected as it is welcome. It is unexpected because the traditional view holds that services are a drag on the economy’s productivity (what economists call Baumol’s cost disease); and it is welcome because services now dominate economic activity and provide the bulk of jobs.

Higher productivity is a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for turning precarious jobs in services into the good jobs that inclusive prosperity requires.

Even better, the services revolution appears to be a global phenomenon that has already spread to developing countries.

While economists and policymakers debate whether industrialisation can still play its traditional growth-promoting role in the current global and technological context, services have quietly turned into an engine of economic development around the world.

When services are discussed in the context of economic growth in developing countries, the focus tends to be on tradable, skill-intensive activities such as information technology, business processing, or financial services. But by their very nature, these services are not well suited to low-income contexts. They can absorb only a small share of the labour force—the same disadvantage (from a development standpoint) as manufacturing today. © Project Syndicate, 2026



DANI RODRIK, Dani Rodrik, Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School

Buyers probing wealth firms on organic growth

PRIVATE equity money has poured into UK wealth management in recent years, but buyers now want firms to show organic growth after a raft of deals, dealmakers in the sector say. Potential buyers are placing more emphasis on the growth that target companies can generate off their own backs, rather than from striking more bolt-ons, advisers working on deals have said. Wealth managers have raced for scale through M&A, but investors are now looking more favourably on businesses with burgeoning net inflows outside deal activity. “The industry has been obsessed with size, but not (on) actually realising that the way you create value going forward is having an underlying growth engine that can perpetuate itself, which is not predicated on additional bolt-on acquisitions all the time, because that consumes capital,” said one dealmaker.

Raymond James managing director Edward Griffin, who advised Oaktree on its deal for Close Brothers’ asset management arm, said: “Organic growth is the oxygen of future profits for years to come. That’s really why everyone cares about organic growth, it really fundamentally speaks to the long-term sustainability of the business.” Buyout shops have flooded into wealth management in recent years. An ageing population in ever-greater need of financial advice, and willing to pay reliable fees to get it, has drawn attention from private equity firms betting they can roll up smaller players together into lucrative businesses.

Managing Director of Gunner & Co, Louise Jeffreys said many firms acquired over the past decade have ageing client bases, with assets naturally falling as people retire, putting pressure on sustainability of revenues and returns on investment. “At the same time, the pool of high-quality acquisition targets is shrinking following prolonged market consolidation, reducing the



Metrics such as net inflows, referral pipelines and client engagement are coming under increasing scrutiny



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK.

reliability of inorganic growth,” she added. Roughly 45 private equity-backed wealth firms have sprung up to consolidate the sector’s long tail of bolt-on targets, many of whom are older financial advisers looking to sell their business or smaller firms with dated technology. Buyout shops that were early entrants into the space, such as Cabot Square Capital and Flexpoint Ford, which backs MKC Wealth and AFH respectively, are now gearing up for exits. Metrics such as net inflows, referral pipelines and client engagement are coming under increasing scrutiny, dealmakers say, with buyers looking beyond just assets under management. The head of financial services, Andrea Bertolini, at private equity firm Inflexion, which invested £100m in new consolidator Absolute Financial Group in 2025, said earlier this year that greater visibility on a company’s organic growth was gaining prominence. “What we don’t want to build is another ‘me too’ consolidator where you bring a lot of things together, just to add Ebitda” (Earning before

Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization) ,” Bertolini, added. However, finding “stellar” organic growth in wealth businesses has been harder to come by, according to KPMG’s head of wealth and asset management Neil Connor. “The lower hanging fruit is always around the 3,000-plus independent financial advisory firms that are looking to get bought out. That’s an easier immediate journey,” Connor said. Large financial institutions evaluating wealth deals are among those most interested in organic growth, said the dealmaker quoted previously. UK banks, once major players in wealth, are eyeing up deals in the sector again, in search of income streams that are mostly insulated from market fluctuations and clients they can cross sell their existing products to. “They need to be convinced that it will create additional earnings for them, and that they can grow in line with their own growth ambitions,” the dealmaker said. Listed firms tend to have a “strong” correlation between new money flows and their price-to-earnings ratio, Griffin said.

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ART/LIFE



FASHION SCOOP

GALLIANO PULLS MET GALA EXHIBIT



Top fashion designer John Galliano announced on Monday he was cancelling an exhibition of his work that was to kick off New York's Met Gala next spring, following criticism from donors and political leaders over his past antisemitic remarks.

"After much reflection and discussion with all those involved, I have decided, with great sadness, that it is best for the exhibition not to take place at this time", Galliano wrote on Instagram.

"I remain fully accountable for the pain caused by my words in the past, particularly the hurt I caused to the Jewish and Asian communities, and I remain deeply sorry", he added.

A French court convicted Galliano in 2011 of making racist and antisemitic comments after he hurled Jewish and Asian slurs at a Paris bar.

The Briton, famed for his flamboyant personality and daring designs, was also fired from his job as creative director of Dior after the incident surfaced.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art had planned a nine-month exhibition of his work starting with the star-studded Met Gala next May but high-profile Jewish figures, including renowned art dealer Arne Glimcher and city council speaker Julie Menin, voiced opposition this month.

"I do not want the debate surrounding me to place the Met in a difficult position or to distract from the remarkable work of the Costume Institute", Galliano said on Monday, referencing the museum's department dedicated to fashion.

"I also recognise and respect that an exhibition honouring my work would be painful for some", he said.

Galliano also referenced the rehabilitation that followed his conviction, noting his "deepest gratitude to all those who have guided, supported and accompanied me throughout these fifteen years of sobriety and recovery from alcoholism and addiction".

The Met confirmed that the "John Galliano: Horizons" show would not proceed as planned and that a new exhibition would be announced at a later date.

Andrew Bolton, curator in charge of the Met's Costume Institute, said he supported the decision.

"I believe deeply in the responsibility of museums to examine difficult histories with rigour, candor and care. I also recognise the pain and concern this exhibition has caused", he said in a statement.

Anna Wintour, the fashion icon and ex-Vogue editor who is a trustee of the Met, expressed her "full support" for Galliano and the museum.

"John's decision that the exhibition devoted to his work should not take place at this time is very courageous and a measure of the man he is", she said. After Dior, Galliano took the reins as creative director at Maison Margiela. He stepped down in 2024 after 10 years at the French label which helped recover his scandal-tainted image.

In March, he signed a two-year creative contract with Spanish retailer Zara. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



CULTURE

Shaolin students train for Dragon Dance at a Shaolin Temple outside Lusaka, Zambia. — AFP



FESTIVAL

Fans watch as Olivia Rodrigo performs during the Daisy Chain Fields Music Festival at Great Park in Irvine, California, US. — Reuters



SHOPPING

Customer browses a clothing item at Showcase DXB, a community-driven, second-hand items marketplace in the UAE. — Reuters

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AFTER 30 YEARS, TUPAC SHAKUR’S KILLER FOUND GUILTY



US rapper Tupac Shakur in 1993. — AFP

Former Los Angeles gang member Duane “Keffe D” Davis was found guilty on Monday of the 1996 murder of rapper Tupac Shakur, closing one of America’s most notorious cold cases nearly three decades after the shooting.

A Las Vegas jury convicted Davis, 63, of first-degree murder with the use of a deadly weapon after a few hours of deliberation. He faces possible life imprisonment without parole and told the judge he intended to appeal.

Prosecutors said Davis, once a leader of the South Side Compton Crips, ordered Shakur’s killing after his nephew was beaten by members of Shakur’s entourage at a Las Vegas casino. “Duane Davis, in the culture of gangs, could not let that stand”, prosecutor Binu Palal said.

Shakur, in town for a Mike Tyson fight, was shot two hours

later. A white Cadillac pulled alongside the BMW carrying him at a red light and a gunman opened fire. Shakur died six days later, aged 25. Death Row Records co-founder Marion “Suge” Knight, the driver, was wounded.

Prosecutors alleged Davis supplied the gun and ordered someone in the Cadillac’s back seat to shoot. He is the only person who was inside the vehicle that night who is still alive.

Momentum returned after Davis’s 2019 memoir, “Compton Street Legend” and interviews describing his involvement. Prosecutors played clips of the alleged confessions, but defence lawyer Michael Sanft called them fiction intended to sell the book.

He said no evidence implicated Davis beyond his own statements. Sentencing is scheduled for October 13. — AFP



A LASTING DOLLY PARTON LEGACY: CHILDHOOD LITERACY

To nine-year-old Zenaida, it was not Dolly Parton’s storied country music career that made her so remarkable.

It was the entertainment icon’s beloved Imagination Library book donation programme that had the greatest impact on the young girl’s life.

“These are the first books I learned how to read”, Zenaida said, flipping through Parton’s children’s book “Coat of Many Colours” at a makeshift memorial in the singer-songwriter’s hometown, at the foot of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Parton’s extraordinarily successful book project was born from personal anguish: her father grew up unable to read in rural Tennessee.

Through the Imagination Library, millions of children like Zenaida in the United States and around the world have received free books by mail every month, from birth until the age of five.

For Kendal Manning’s two young boys, the programme has been a godsend.

“We’ve been receiving their books since they were born. We have them all”, the 41-year-old theatre performer said at the memorial, where several Imagination Library books had been placed among the flowers.

When Manning’s boys were born, “immediately we were sent something in the mail to sign up”, she said.

“It says mountains about the person that she is, the heart that she had for people”, Manning added.

Parton, who died this week at 80, was renowned globally for her music. But locals remembered her just as much for her charitable work and care for younger generations in the blue-collar communities of her native East Tennessee.

Her non-profit foundation has pledged to keep the popular programme going.

What began in 1995 as Parton’s modest giveaway of 6,000 books to children in need has grown into an operation involving hundreds of local organisations and multiple publishers.

“Now we give away 3.4 million books a month to kids” up to the age of five, Dollywood Foundation treasurer Eugene Naughton said.

The programme is funded by the



foundation alongside several other donors.

Literacy was a central focus for Parton, who said she established the Imagination Library because her father’s inability to read “probably kept him from seeing all his dreams come true”.

“I’m the Book Lady to lots of kids and I take great pride in that”, she once said in an interview with NBC’s Boston affiliate.

The books have reached countless families across East Tennessee, where hospitals often invite new parents to enrol their children in the programme.

“I signed up all five of my grandchildren on the day they were born”, Susan Williams recalled in Sevierville.

“My children had the books too, and now their children have them. Two generations”, she said, holding back tears.

The Imagination Library says it has gifted 300 million books since its inception. The programme has also expanded to Australia, Britain, Canada and Ireland.

In the United States, Parton’s books have reached as far as Bethel, Alaska, a small town accessible only by plane or boat that serves as a hub for Indigenous villages.

Zenaida’s mother, Katy Allis, brought her four children to Parton’s memorial to honour the woman who changed their lives.

Her 11-year-old son Victor settled onto the pavement to read



Parton’s extraordinarily successful book project was born from personal anguish: her father grew up unable to read in rural Tennessee. — AFP

his Imagination Library edition of “Llama Llama Red Pajama”, a family favourite.

“I see her programme as a part of our collective culture”, Allis said.

“I don’t know that there are even words to express how important that is”.

Local teacher Tabitha Thomas, 34, was also at the memorial with her three children, who are growing up with the books. Her seven-month-old has already received several in the mail.

Children from low-income families in the region “often don’t have the money to buy those books, so it helps a lot of the community”, she said of Parton’s generosity.

“She’s touched so many lives”.

— AFP

FEATURES



A SECRET GARDEN FOR
POMEGRANATE
SEASON

YERU EBUEN

HIDDEN

between two cliffs on Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, it is not a place one simply finds on Google Maps. From the road above, patches of green can be seen far below, divided into plots belonging to different families. Yet the wadi hides an agricultural world of roses, grapes, mulberries, onions, garlic and, during autumn, some of the finest pomegranates we have tasted.

We found it through Malik al Amri. We have known Malik for years. Over time, he became a friend and our go-to guide whenever we wanted to understand Al Jabal Al Akhdhar beyond its familiar viewpoints. As founder of Cady Tours, he has a talent for making things happen. More importantly, he knows the mountain through family and memory.

We made the two-hour drive from Muscat and met him at a petrol station near the cliff opposite a wadi. Thick clouds covered the mountain as Malik led us towards a pathway used mainly by farmers.

The hike took about 15 minutes. We descended towards the wadi dividing the cliffs, with Malik pointing to a dam that helps supply water to the farms. To enter the gardens, we climbed a concrete wall using protruding

steps. Beyond it, wooden posts and mesh fences marked the boundaries between properties.

Then the pomegranate trees appeared.

Their branches bent beneath red-and-yellow fruit, some hanging at eye level, others tucked behind leaves. It was less a polished tourist farm than a living family garden. Beautiful precisely because it had not been arranged for visitors.

Malik's cousin explained that the family once came here together. This was where he and Malik spent their childhood, when harvest meant parents, siblings, cousins and children gathering among the trees. They remembered pomegranates so large that, as children, they compared them to their heads.

Those memories tied the farm to the family's DNA. Yet the gatherings have changed. The elders grew older. Younger members moved away or found modern jobs. Today, only a few cousins remain involved in farming. Others return occasionally, although the harvest is still divided according to each family member's share. No one takes more because another relative is absent.

Under the canopy, we watched farmhands work through the trees. Some of those trees, the cousins told us, were older than they were.

There are around 20 gardens spread

along the wadi. During pomegranate and rose seasons, farmers negotiate the difficult path to tend and collect their crops. At other times, the terraces produce vegetables or grass for goats. Every patch seems to have a purpose.

But memory can become a measure of change. Malik and his cousins have noticed that the fruit is not always as large as it once was. Water availability varies, while aphids, fruit moths and diseases can damage or crack the crop. Pomegranate trees require regular irrigation during the hottest growing months, precisely when water is most valuable. Farming on steep terraces also means pruning, clearing, watering, protecting and harvesting involve manual labour.

The problem extends beyond the wadi. Across Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, an ageing generation of farmers and the movement of young people towards other professions are changing how orchards are managed. Researchers have also warned that rising temperatures, declining rainfall and the erosion of traditional knowledge are placing pressure on the mountain's agricultural system.

Some owners therefore auction the crop while it remains on the tree. Buyers taste the fruit and bid for trees, taking responsibility for collecting and marketing the harvest. Previous auctions have priced a tree at roughly

Malik's cousin explained that the family once came here together. This was where he and Malik spent their childhood, when harvest meant parents, siblings, cousins and children gathering among the trees.



RO 50 to RO 70, although bids change with weather, quality and demand.

Consumers sometimes complain that Al Jabal Al Akhdhar pomegranates cost more than imported varieties. Malik's answer was practical: the price is not merely for a piece of fruit. It carries months of work, uncertain water, pest control, difficult access and the risk that part of the crop will never reach the market. For many small farmers, the objective is not extravagant profit but recovering what they spent keeping the trees productive.

By noon, we were ready to climb back. We ended with cups of kahwa beneath the trees. The wadi remained cool under the cliffs, while goats bleated beyond the fences. On the trail, donkey hoofprints remained undisturbed.

Before leaving, Malik showed us petroglyphs etched into the rock: figures of animals and people made by inhabitants long before us. There are several such sites nearby.

They offered a final reminder that the wadi has been more than a secret place to pick pomegranates. It is a landscape of work and inheritance. Every tree survives because someone walks down, tends it and returns for the harvest.

The question is whether the next generation will continue making that journey.