

RO 1.41 billion-projects to be opened

THE SECRETARIAT-GENERAL of National Celebrations (SGNC) has finalised the programme for the inauguration of development projects, coinciding with the National Day celebrations. This reflects the progress and development witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The projects span sectors including infrastructure, health services, economy and food security with a total cost of RO 1.41 billion. The projects to be inaugurated and their events scheduled were determined in coordination with the relevant government entities to ensure their readiness. The projects include the polysilicon factory project in Sohar Port and Freezone at a cost of RO 615 million; the Al Ghaith Chemical Industries project at a cost of RO 25



The projects span sectors infrastructure, health services, economy and food security.

million; the sugar refinery project at Sohar Port at a cost of RO 141.5 million; the industrial bakery project in Khazaen Economic City in Al Batinah South Governorate at a cost of RO 25 million; the Dibba fishing port development project at a cost of RO 39 million; the animal and fish feed production plant project in Khazaen City at a cost of

RO 36 million. In addition, several projects executed by OQ Group in various governorates of Oman, totalling RO 38.5 million, will be inaugurated. These include infrastructure and comprehensive development projects such as the Southern National Highway in Al Wusta Governorate at a cost of RO 23.5 million, the National Highway 23 project towards Ras Markaz in Al Wusta Governorate at a cost of RO 59.3 million. This is in addition to vital projects of Nama Water Services Company across various governorates at a total cost of RO 408 million. **WATER PROJECTS** These include the second phase of the water transmission line reinforcement project in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate at a cost of RO 128.1 million; water transmission line reinforcement project in Al

Batinah North and Al Batinah South governorates at a cost of RO 86 million; the first phase of the water network construction project in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate at a cost of RO 65.5 million and the water transmission line reinforcement project in Al Sharqiyah South and Al Sharqiyah North governorates at a cost of RO 128.4 million. These projects aim to improve the efficiency of the water transmission system, enhance service quality and expand water network coverage across the governorates. This is in addition to health and community development projects focused on improving the healthcare system which include referral hospitals and integrated laboratories that enhance the quality of health services. The project to be inaugurated are the Al Suwaiq Referral Hospital in Al Batinah North Governorate, at a cost of RO 78.5 million. — ONA

Israeli strikes kill 20 in Gaza

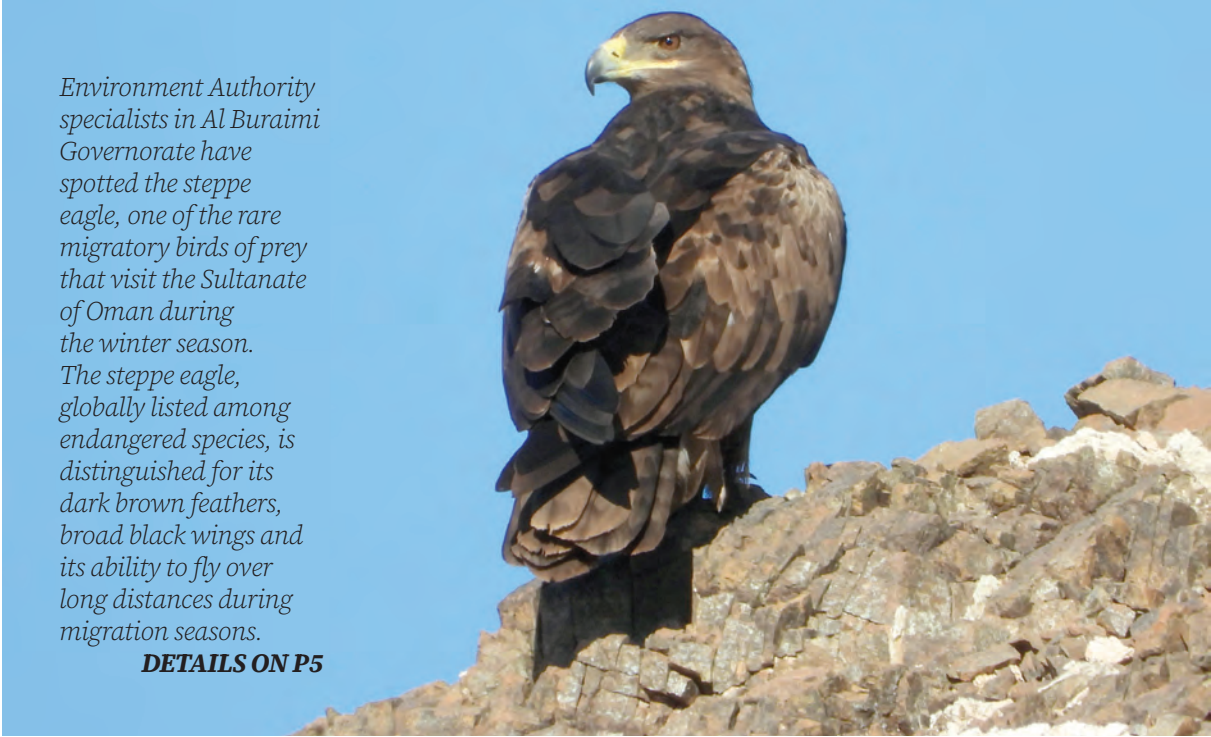
GAZA: Israeli air strikes in Gaza killed at least 20 people and wounded more than 80, local health authorities said on Saturday, in a further test of a fragile ceasefire between the Palestinian group Hamas and Israel. Witnesses and medics said the first attack hit a car in the densely populated Rimal neighbourhood, setting it ablaze. It was not immediately clear whether the five dead were passengers of the car or included passersby. Dozens of people rushed to extinguish the fire and rescue the victims. Shortly after the attack on the car, the Israeli air force carried out two separate air strikes on two houses in Deir Al Balah city and Nuseirat camp, in the central Gaza Strip, killing at least 10 people and wounding several others, medics said. Later on Saturday, a new Israeli air strike on a house in western Gaza City killed at least five Palestinians and wounded others, medics said, taking Saturday’s death toll to at least 20. The Israeli military said a gunman had crossed into Israeli-held territory in Gaza and exploited “the humanitarian road in the area through which humanitarian aid enters southern Gaza”, calling it a “blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement”. A Hamas official in Gaza rejected the Israeli military’s allegations as baseless and an “excuse to kill”, saying the group was



Palestinian children receive medical attention at Al Awda Hospital, following an Israeli air strike, in Gaza City on Saturday. — Reuters

committed to the ceasefire agreement. Hamas said in a statement earlier in the day that Israel’s “escalating violations” put a responsibility on mediators and the US to confront it and preserve the ceasefire. The October 10 ceasefire in the two-year Gaza war has eased the conflict, enabling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to Gaza’s ruins. Israel has pulled troops back from city positions, and aid flows have increased. But violence has not completely halted. — Reuters

STEPPE EAGLE SIGHTED IN AL BURAIMI



Environment Authority specialists in Al Buraimi Governorate have spotted the steppe eagle, one of the rare migratory birds of prey that visit the Sultanate of Oman during the winter season. The steppe eagle, globally listed among endangered species, is distinguished for its dark brown feathers, broad black wings and its ability to fly over long distances during migration seasons.

DETAILS ON P5

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OMAN

SHORT TAKES



RO 137M INFRASTRUCTURE
PUSH TRANSFORMS
SERVICES IN DHOFAR

SALALAH: Dhofar Governorate is currently witnessing the implementation of a major package of strategic water, electricity and sanitation projects, with total investment exceeding RO 137 million. These initiatives, comprising both completed and ongoing works, form part of broader efforts to strengthen infrastructure and enhance service quality across the governorate.

Namaa Services Dhofar confirmed that its 2025 projects include the inauguration of the first phase of the sewage network in Sahalnūt, Salalah, at a cost of RO 45 million, alongside the rehabilitation of the Ashour pumping station and upgrades to water networks in Salalah, Taqah and Mirbat, valued at RO 27 million. The expansion of the sewage treatment plant, costing RO 35 million, is also progressing as part of the comprehensive development plan.

Eng Ali bin Issa Shamas, CEO of Namaa Services Dhofar, told ONA that the completion rate of the water sector development project in Salalah, Taqah and Mirbat has reached 53 per cent, with investments exceeding RO 4.5 million. These efforts aim to strengthen water security and expand distribution networks to meet peak demand through 2045.

He explained that the projects include upgrading the Ashour pumping station and improving supply networks across the three wilayats.

The company has also completed the construction of new water networks in Awqad and Atin extensions in Salalah, with pipe diameters ranging from 110 mm to 560 mm, covering residential areas such as Blocks A, C and Al Muruj. A new 800 mm transmission line from the Atin reservoir has also been constructed to serve Al Muruj and future developments.

In Taqah, key works include connecting the wilayat’s wells to a new reservoir through a 300 mm pipeline and establishing support pipelines west of the town centre with diameters between 500 mm and 800 mm.

— ONA

OMAN HIGHLIGHTS
INVESTMENT
OPTIONS IN TÜRKİYE



The OIC Halal Exhibition highlighted the strong Oman-Türkiye economic ties

MUSCAT: Oman is participating in the OIC Halal Exhibition 2025 in Istanbul to promote trade, investment, and exports in the growing global halal economy. Led by Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Faroojiyah, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, the delegation will showcase Oman’s competitive advantages, including its strategic location, stable economy, and business-friendly incentives.

The visit includes the ‘Advantage Oman-Türkiye’ business dialogue with senior Turkish investors and institutions to explore partnership opportunities in halal food, pharmaceuticals, food technology, and logistics sectors.

Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Faroojiyah highlighted the strong Oman-Türkiye economic ties and urged investors to tap into Oman’s promising halal sector, supporting the goals of Oman Vision 2040 to diversify income sources and enhance national competitiveness. — ONA

‘OMANI NIGHTS’ EXPO SHOWCASES OMAN’S HERITAGE, COMMERCE

MANAMA: The Embassy of Oman in Bahrain, in collaboration with the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Al Baraha Market, organised the ‘Omani Nights’ exhibition to highlight Oman’s rich cultural and commercial heritage and introduce it to the Bahraini public.

The event was attended by Dr Ramzan bin Abdullah al Nuaimi, Bahrain’s Minister of Information, alongside Bahraini officials, businessmen and cultural

representatives. Visitors explored a variety of traditional and modern Omani products, including handicrafts, perfumes, food items, jewellery, as well as artistic and musical performances reflecting Omani heritage in innovative ways.

Faisal bin Harib al Busaidy, Ambassador of Oman to Bahrain, noted that the exhibition coincides with the Omani National Day and provides a platform for Omani entrepreneurs to showcase their products, expand commercial



The expo provided a platform for Omani entrepreneurs to showcase their products.

networks, and strengthen public-private partnerships between the two countries.

The ambassador emphasised

that events like this, supported by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, strengthen cultural and social ties, promote tourism and economic exchange and reflect Oman’s unique heritage alongside its progress and development.

‘Omani Nights’ is part of a series of initiatives to foster cultural and economic cooperation between Oman and Bahrain, reinforce shared values, and celebrate the historical and social ties of the two nations. — ONA

UTAS Salalah highlights
creativity, future media

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
SALALAH, NOV 22

A vibrant display of creativity and innovation took centre stage at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) Salalah, as budding media professionals presented their projects during the annual ‘Mass Communication Day.’

The event featured a series of eye-catching student-produced visual projects, ranging from digital media content to journalistic works. Several success-story videos were also screened, highlighting award-winning projects at local and national levels, reflecting the students’ growing expertise in media production and digital content creation.

Organised under the auspices of Dr Mohammed bin Said al Shaashai, Director-General of Information in Dhofar Governorate, the open day drew participation from students, faculty, and representatives of media and community institutions.

Dr Ahmed bin Ali al Shahri, Assistant Vice-Chancellor, and Dr Majdi bin Mohammed Bait Ali Sulaiman, Deputy Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, were among the dignitaries present, alongside media professionals Salim bin Awadh al Najjar and communication academic Dr Ahmed bin Ali al Mashikhi.

Mehmet Tunc Mustecaplioglu, Area General Manager of Orascom Hotels Management, representing Salalah Beach Hotels, expressed readiness to offer training and



UTAS Salalah recently organised the annual ‘Mass Communication Day’

employment opportunities to students. “As part of community engagement, I see opportunities for both parties. How it evolves depends on the capabilities and initiative of students and institutions,” he said.

Dr Majdi highlighted that ‘Mass Communication Day’ underscores the university’s commitment to fostering student creativity and translating academic learning into practical media projects. “Today’s presentations reflect our students’ academic and professional growth, and the cooperation agreement with Salalah Beach Hotels expands training and employment opportunities,” he added.

Opening the event, Dr Arafat bin Awadh al Jamil, Head of the Mass Communication Department, stressed the importance of integrating academic knowledge

The event emphasised the importance of combining academic knowledge with practical training to equip students for success in the media industry

with practical training to prepare students for the media industry. “Mass Communication Day celebrates our students’ achievements and their innovative contributions to the sector,” he said.

A key highlight of the event was a panel discussion on the evolving media landscape in Oman, featuring insights from Salim bin Awadh al Najjar and Dr Ahmed bin Ali al Mashikhi. The discussion focused on sector transformations, required skills for media professionals, and career opportunities, with students actively engaging and posing questions about industry challenges and professional growth. The event successfully spotlighted the vision, voice and future of Omani media, reinforcing the university’s role in nurturing the next generation of media professionals.

Youths’ brand of sandals blends tradition and utility

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, NOV 22

Three youths have reimaged the traditional Omani footwear with a touch of modernity.

Meet Yousuf bin Abdullah al Sinani, Ghassan bin Said al Athali and Hilal bin Saif al Yaarabi, who are driven by their passion to relive Oman’s footwear culture.

Today, inside the Madayn industrial area in Samayil these three have launched their brand JELD, which has a huge fan following today.

“It has been a journey...a journey we walked with a strong belief in the Almighty and in ourselves, putting all our savings and efforts to reach where we wanted to be,” said Al Sinani, the CEO of the company

“It is our mutual understanding and respect for each other that paved the way for us to reach where we are today. In



GHASSAN BIN SAID AL ATHALI



HILAL BIN SAIF AL YAARABI



YOUSUF BIN ABDULLAH AL SINANI

partnerships, it is all about ‘first among equals’ policy where everyone’s a winner,” said Al Yaarabi, head of marketing.

According to the trio, the key aspects of Omani traditional sandal making vary from the materials to the craftsmanship to the climate and the designs and so on and so forth.

While most of the materials, including the leather, are imported from different countries like China, Italy and the US. Camel and cow leather are also in use, as they are durable and have a unique character.

The art of making traditional Omani leather sandals, often made from camel or cow leather, is a treasured craft that blends cultural heritage with modern, practical designs

According to the elders, the art of making traditional Omani leather sandals, often made from camel or cow leather, is a treasured craft that blends cultural heritage with modern, practical designs.

The most important factor of production, the manpower, are mostly from India who employ their traditional techniques, hand-cutting, stitching, and shaping the leather to create unique sandals suiting the current needs of the society.

They choose trending shades that are reminiscent of Omani fortresses or patterns inspired by the ‘bisht’, a cloak worn by Omani men.

“Our sandals are first worn by us before it is pushed to the market and that is when we check its comfort and if they are suitable for various occasions, from casual outings to more formal events required by men on the move,” said Al Athali, the finance director.



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Embassies celebrate National Day

EMBASSIES of the Sultanate of Oman in several countries marked Oman's Glorious National Day with receptions highlighting Oman's proud heritage, diplomatic vision and strengthening relations with sisterly nations.

In Cairo, Abdullah bin Nasser al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt and Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States, hosted a reception to commemorate the occasion. In his address, he noted that the celebration of National Day on November 20 reflects pride in Oman's rich history since the establishment of the Al Busaid State in 1744, while commending the renewed renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

He highlighted the steady development of Omani-Egyptian relations and key milestones witnessed in 2025, including the participation of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, in the opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum, and Oman's role as guest of honour at the Cairo International Book Fair. He also pointed to enhanced Arab coordination that led to Dr



Oman's National Day celebrations were organised in Egypt, Bahrain and Thailand.



Khaled El Enany's election as Director-General of Unesco.

In Bahrain, the Omani Embassy celebrated the National Day under the auspices of Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain, and in the presence of Ambassador Faisal bin Harib bin Hamad al Busaidy, Ambassador of Oman to Bahrain. The event drew Bahraini officials and members of the diplomatic corps, reflecting the strong bonds between the two brotherly nations.

Meanwhile, in Al Riyadh, the Embassy of Oman organised a reception under the auspices of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman al Saud,

Deputy Governor of the Riyadh Region. In his speech, Najib bin Hilal al Busaidy, Oman's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, highlighted the deep-rooted fraternal relations between Oman and Saudi Arabia and the expanding cooperation across various sectors.

He reaffirmed Oman's balanced and principled foreign policy based on positive neutrality, constructive dialogue, respect for international law and peaceful resolution of disputes, while upholding the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

The Embassy of Oman in Thailand also celebrated the glorious National Day.

Speaking at the event, Issa bin Abdullah al Alawi, Head of Mission, reviewed the

Sultanate of Oman's rich history and its renewed renaissance, highlighting the achievements made under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

He said that the Sultanate of Oman's diplomacy is based on positive neutrality and support for just causes, praising the tangible development in relations with the Kingdom of Thailand across all fields.

Wan Muhamad Noor Matha, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Thailand, chief guest, delivered a speech congratulating the Sultanate of Oman, its leadership, and its people, commending its pivotal role as a bridge of friendship and peace in the Middle East region. — ONA



اليوم الوطني العُماني

Today, we join the nation in celebrating Oman's proud legacy and the enduring spirit of its people.
Guided by the vision of

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
May Allah protect and preserve him

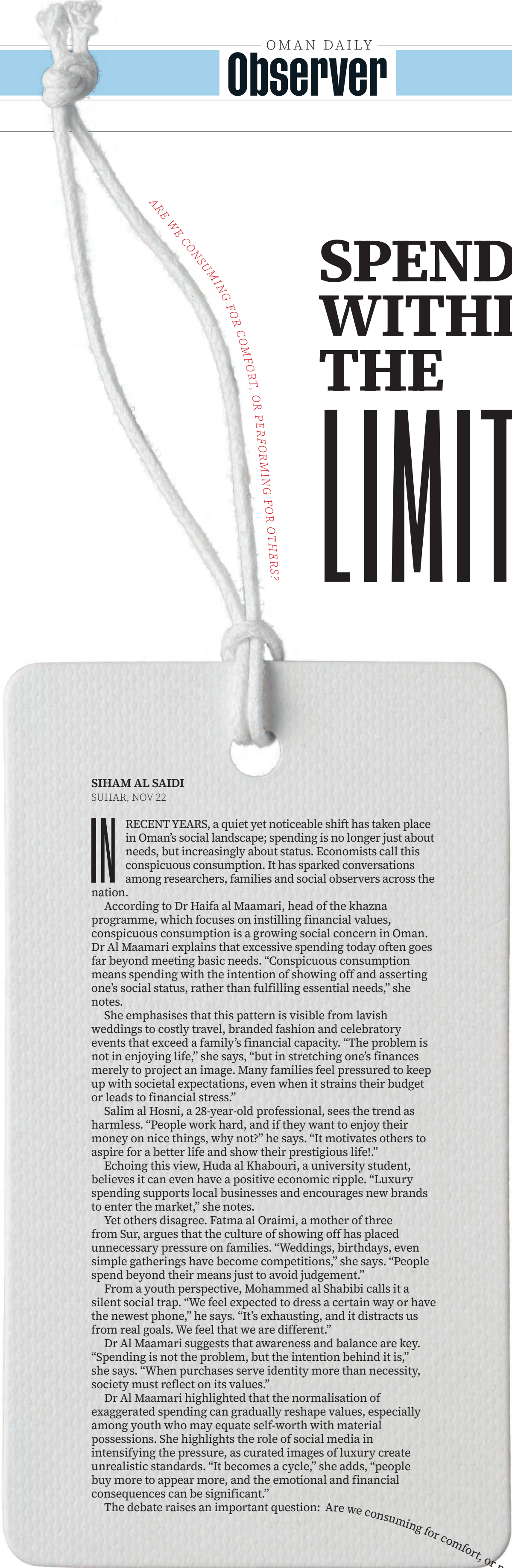
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SPOTLIGHT



SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, NOV 22

IN RECENT YEARS, a quiet yet noticeable shift has taken place in Oman's social landscape; spending is no longer just about needs, but increasingly about status. Economists call this conspicuous consumption. It has sparked conversations among researchers, families and social observers across the nation.

According to Dr Haifa al Maamari, head of the khazna programme, which focuses on instilling financial values, conspicuous consumption is a growing social concern in Oman. Dr Al Maamari explains that excessive spending today often goes far beyond meeting basic needs. "Conspicuous consumption means spending with the intention of showing off and asserting one's social status, rather than fulfilling essential needs," she notes.

She emphasises that this pattern is visible from lavish weddings to costly travel, branded fashion and celebratory events that exceed a family's financial capacity. "The problem is not in enjoying life," she says, "but in stretching one's finances merely to project an image. Many families feel pressured to keep up with societal expectations, even when it strains their budget or leads to financial stress."

Salim al Hosni, a 28-year-old professional, sees the trend as harmless. "People work hard, and if they want to enjoy their money on nice things, why not?" he says. "It motivates others to aspire for a better life and show their prestigious life!"

Echoing this view, Huda al Khabouri, a university student, believes it can even have a positive economic ripple. "Luxury spending supports local businesses and encourages new brands to enter the market," she notes.

Yet others disagree. Fatma al Orami, a mother of three from Sur, argues that the culture of showing off has placed unnecessary pressure on families. "Weddings, birthdays, even simple gatherings have become competitions," she says. "People spend beyond their means just to avoid judgement."

From a youth perspective, Mohammed al Shabibi calls it a silent social trap. "We feel expected to dress a certain way or have the newest phone," he says. "It's exhausting, and it distracts us from real goals. We feel that we are different."

Dr Al Maamari suggests that awareness and balance are key. "Spending is not the problem, but the intention behind it is," she says. "When purchases serve identity more than necessity, society must reflect on its values."

Dr Al Maamari highlighted that the normalisation of exaggerated spending can gradually reshape values, especially among youth who may equate self-worth with material possessions. She highlights the role of social media in intensifying the pressure, as curated images of luxury create unrealistic standards. "It becomes a cycle," she adds, "people buy more to appear more, and the emotional and financial consequences can be significant."

The debate raises an important question: Are we consuming for comfort, or performing for others?

SPEND... WITHIN THE LIMITS

ARE WE CONSUMING FOR COMFORT, OR PERFORMING FOR OTHERS?



The problem is not in enjoying life... but in stretching one's finances merely to project an image. Many families feel pressured to keep up with societal expectations, even when it strains their budget or leads to financial stress.

DR HAIFA AL MAAMARI,
Head of the khazna programme

The answer may shape not only personal finances, but also the social fabric of the future that we should decide on!

SHORT TAKES



The sighting of a steppe eagle proves that the bird has found a natural habitat that caters to its needs in the desert

STEPPE EAGLE SIGHTED IN AL BURAIMI

AL BURAIMI: Environment Authority specialists in Al Buraimi Governorate have spotted the steppe eagle, one of the rare migratory birds of prey that visit Oman during the winter season. The steppe eagle, globally listed among endangered species, is distinguished for its dark brown feathers, broad black wings and its ability to fly over long distances during migration seasons.

The specialists pointed out that the steppe eagle’s sighting was part of monitoring programmes that are implemented by the EA in different natural environments in the Governorate of Al Buraimi with the aim of preserving biodiversity and documenting migratory species.

Mohammed al Balushi, an environment systems specialist at the Environment Authority’s department in Al Buraimi, said that the existence of the steppe eagle constitutes an important indicator of healthy ecosystems in the governorate — since this type of birds depends on open deserts that abound with their natural prey.

He added that the sighting of the steppe eagle proves that this bird of prey has found a natural habitat that caters to its needs in the governorate’s open desert.

For his part, Eng Salim al Maskari, Director of the Environment Department in Al Buraimi Governorate, said that the Environment Authority lays emphasis on monitoring wildlife.

He added that the Environment Department in Al Buraimi Governorate is implementing systematic plans to monitor biodiversity, in cooperation with research institutions

Documenting endangered species, like a steppe eagle, reflects the attention accorded to enriching the national wildlife database and supporting Oman’s drive to safeguard biodiversity, Al Maskari said. – ONA

BIDIYAH CARNIVAL 2025 KICKS OFF WITH SPORTS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM EVENTS

BIDIYAH: The Bidiyah Carnival 2025 officially began today in the Al Sharqiyah North Governorate, as part of the winter tourism season in the Wilayat of Bidiyah.

The festival will run until November 29, offering a mix of sports, heritage, adventure and entertainment.

The opening ceremony was sponsored by Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, and attended by Mahmoud bin Yahya al Thuhli,

Governor of Al Sharqiyah North.

Sayyid Majid bin Saif al Busaidy, Wali of Bidiyah, said the carnival aims to showcase the natural and tourist attractions of the Eastern Sands while encouraging Omani youth to engage in desert sports in a well-organised and professional environment.

The carnival features exhibitions and activities including the Agriculture and Water Resources corner, the Environment Authority corner, the Ministry of Heritage

and Tourism promotional corner, a Small and Medium Enterprises Village, a consumer exhibition, chanting evenings and special segments of Omani arts.

The Bidiyah Carnival 2025 is organised by the club and the Oman Automobile Association, under the supervision of the Governor of Al Sharqiyah North, in partnership with public and private institutions, civil society organisations, and features more than 14 diverse events. — ONA

Oman Vision 2040 boosts women’s job opportunities

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, NOV 22

THE Department of Social Development in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar organised a dialogue session entitled “National Gains and Empowerments for Women” at Higher Judicial Institute in Nizwa last week.

The event was held under the auspices of Maani bint Abdullah al Busaidiyah, Director-General of Family Development at the Ministry of Social Development. The dialogue session aims to enhance the role of Omani women in the sustainable development process and support their national gains.

The session opened with a speech by Ahmed bin Sulaiman al Toubi, Director of the Social Development Department. “Empowering women and enhancing their participation in various fields is an integral part of the state’s aspirations for a prosperous society and a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

Oman Vision 2040 emphasises providing an enabling environment for women that strengthens their presence in the labour market, supports their contribution to decision-making, and ensures they benefit from the opportunities the



Participants at the dialogue session at Higher Judicial Institute in Nizwa last week

This session aimed to highlight the national achievements of Omani women and raise awareness of the resources and services provided by the state to support their role in line with the goals of sustainable social development and the vision of Oman’s future

future offers,” he said.

He added: “The Ministry of Social Development’s efforts continue to improve services for women and provide high-quality programmes that contribute to their economic and social empowerment, in addition to supporting initiatives that enhance their role in building the family and society.”

The session included three main themes. The first, presented by Thuraya bint Khalifa al Rahbiyah, Assistant Public Prosecutor in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, addressed legislation and policies supporting women. She reviewed legal developments and national

initiatives that have strengthened women’s rights and their participation in development.

The second theme, presented by Farida bint Sulaiman al Haimliyah from the Job Applications and Employment Opportunities Analysis Department of the General Directorate of Labor in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. She focused on women’s participation in the labour market.

She highlighted the role of women in the national economy, the challenges they may face, and opportunities to support them through available initiatives and programmes.

The third theme was entitled “Women and Decision-Making” and was presented by Dr Noora bint Salim al Khaliliyah, from the Higher Judicial Institute in Nizwa. She addressed the representation of women in leadership positions in various sectors.

The session also featured an inspiring success story for Dr Sabra bint Hamad al Aufiyah, a member of the Municipal Council of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

She is one of the women role models who overcame difficulties and challenges to achieve outstanding accomplishments in her academic and leadership work.

Future UK–Oman leaders gather for BOS Programme

LONDON: The British Omani Society (BOS) will host its 12th Annual New Generation Delegation (NGG) in London from November 26-27, welcoming 24 early-career British and Omani professionals committed to advancing the longstanding UK-Oman partnership. The 2025 programme is sponsored by bp.

The flagship initiative creates a vibrant platform for rising leaders to engage on the evolving dimensions of bilateral cooperation — including diplomacy, trade, renewable energy, technology, innovation, sustainability, and regional strategic

affairs. Hosted at BOS headquarters in Mayfair, the two-day programme will feature lectures, panel discussions, and networking sessions led by prominent figures from the government, academia, and industry.

Confirmed speakers include Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan KCMG, former UK Foreign Minister, Prof Tim Evans, Middlesex University, Andrew Williamson, Cambridge Innovation Capital, Andrew Roughan, CEO, Plexal, Henning Gloystein, Eurasia Group and senior experts from bp.

The key focus areas are the Future of UK–Oman strategic diplomacy, renewable energy and energy transition partnerships, Omani, British and global trade dynamics, technology and innovation collaboration, regional geopolitical shifts in the Gulf and sustainability and the green transition.

Delegates will also visit bp’s London headquarters and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), gaining insights into international energy strategy and government-level cooperation. The programme

will conclude with a networking reception attended by business leaders, senior officials, and participants from Oman’s Royal Academy of Management Startup Leadership Programme.

Shaikh Maan bin Hamed al Rawahi, Trustee of the British Omani Society and Co-Chair of the New Generation Group, said: “Preparing the next generation of Omani and British leaders is essential to sustaining the strength of our nations’ partnership. “The NGG provides a platform for future leaders to exchange ideas, develop

skills, and build meaningful connections that will shape UK–Oman relations for years to come.”

Oliver Blake, Trustee and Co-Chair of the New Generation Group, added: “With UK investment in Oman exceeding \$35 billion and bilateral trade surpassing \$2.3 billion, this delegation builds on a foundation of deep trust and cooperation across energy, logistics, and education. Today, our partnership extends to frontier sectors such as AI, deep tech, and space — areas where the next generation will play a pivotal role.”

BEACH CLEAN UP HELD AS PART OF NATIONAL DAY

MUSCAT: On the occasion of Oman’s National Day, the Non-Resident Nepali Social Club (NRNSC) Oman, in collaboration with the Embassy of Nepal and members of the Nepali community, organised a beach-cleaning campaign at Al Athaiba Beach, Muscat.

Ambassador Aryal, along with members of the Embassy, actively participated in the initiative, underscoring the shared commitment to environmental stewardship and community service.

Following the clean up, the Ambassador delivered brief remarks expressing his sincere appreciation to the NRNSC and all volunteers for their enthusiastic participation. He noted that such initiatives, held in conjunction with National Day celebrations, further strengthen the cordial and longstanding relations between the two friendly nations. He also encouraged the continued organisation of similar community-driven activities in the future. A blood donation event was also organised and 80 Nepali nationals including four staff of the Embassy donated blood.



A beach-cleaning campaign at Al Athaiba Beach was held as part of Oman’s National Day

Tender Notice for the sale of used materials

Tender No. AW/T/PH1/01/2025

Al Watanyiah United Engineering and Contracting Co. LLC hereby announce a Tender for the sale of used materials, as described in the table below, **on an “as is, where is” basis**. Those wishing to submit a Bid must obtain the Tender documents from the Company’s Head Office (HO) in Ghala Industrial Area after paying the specified Tender Fee in the Company’s Bank Dhofar account 01040605344006 (IBAN NO: OM080250001040605344006).

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2	Aluminum Profiles (Random Lengths)	Ghala				

- The last date for submission of offers is on Wednesday, 5 PM, detailed date on the above table, accompanied by an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 10%) of the total offered value.
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WORLD

PURSuingPEACE



Relatives of Ukrainian Prisoners of war (POW) burn flares during a rally at Independence Square in Kyiv. — AFP

UKRAINE, US TO START TALKS ON PLAN TO END THE WAR

KYIV: Ukraine and the US will soon meet in Switzerland to discuss Washington's plan for ending the war with Russia, which currently heeds to some of Russia's hardline demands, Kyiv said Saturday. US President Donald Trump gave Ukraine less than a week to approve the 28-point plan to end the nearly four-year conflict, which would see the invaded country ceding territory, cutting its army, and pledging to never join Nato.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's European allies, who were not included in drafting the agreement, were scrambling at the G20 summit in South Africa to come up with a counter-offer to Trump's plan to beef up Kyiv's positions. The unilateral US plan to end the war in Ukraine "is a basis which will require additional work", Western leaders gathered in South Africa for a G20 summit said on Saturday.

"We are clear on the principle that borders must not be changed by force. We are also concerned by the proposed limitations on Ukraine's armed forces, which would leave Ukraine vulnerable to future attack," they said in a joint statement. The text was signed by the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland, Finland, Norway, and of the European Union, as well as the prime ministers of Canada and Japan.

The leaders said they "welcome the continued US efforts to bring peace to Ukraine" and believed the 28-point US plan "includes important elements" towards that goal. "We believe therefore that the draft is a basis which will require additional work," the statement said. It stressed that "the implementation of elements relating to the European Union and relating to Nato would need the consent of EU and Nato members respectively". They added: "We are ready to engage in order to ensure that a future peace is sustainable."

"In the coming days in Switzerland we are launching consultations between senior officials of Ukraine and the United States on the possible parameters of a future peace agreement," Rustem Umerov, who is on Ukraine's negotiating team, wrote on social media. "This is another stage of the dialogue that has been ongoing in recent days and is primarily aimed at aligning our vision for the next steps," added Umerov, a former defence minister, who is now the Secretary of the Security Council.

He previously led a few rounds of negotiations with Russia in Türkiye, which yielded no breakthrough. This time, Zelensky appointed his top aide, Andriy Yermak, to lead the team, according to a presidential decree. The decree said the talks will also include "representatives of the Russian Federation." There was no immediate confirmation from Russia whether it would join the talks.

France's Emmanuel Macron sent a sombre message to the gathering, saying "the G20 may be coming to the end of a cycle," adding that the grouping was struggling to resolve major crises around the world. He referred specifically to a new unilateral US plan to end the war in Ukraine that accepts some of Russia's hardline demands. — AFP

GUNMEN SEIZE 315 IN LATEST NIGERIAN MASS SCHOOL KIDNAPPING

LAGOS: Gunmen have kidnapped more than 300 students and teachers in one of the largest mass kidnappings in Nigeria, a group said, as security fears mounted in Africa's most populous nation. The early raid on St Mary's co-education school in Niger state in central Nigeria came after gunmen stormed a secondary school in neighbouring Kebbi state, abducting 25 girls. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) had earlier reported 227 people seized, but the new number

came "after a verification exercise" following the early Friday mass kidnapping, and added that "The total number of victims abducted ... is now 303 students and 12 teachers".

The number of boys and girls kidnapped from St Mary's is almost half of the school's student population of 629.

The Nigerian government has not commented on the number of students and teachers abducted. Niger state governor Mohammed

Umar Bago told reporters on Saturday said the intelligence department and police were "doing the head count" and the figure would be released by the end of the day.

Bago also ordered the closure of all schools in his state, a day after authorities in the nearby states of Katsina and Plateau shuttered all theirs as a precautionary measure. President Bola Tinubu has cancelled international engagements, to handle the crisis. — AFP

G20 summit declaration addresses global issues

A Group of 20 leaders' summit in South Africa adopted a declaration addressing the climate crisis and other global challenges on Saturday after it was drafted without US input in a move a White House official called "shameful". The declaration, using language to which Washington has been opposed, "can't be renegotiated," South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's spokesperson told reporters, reflecting strains between Pretoria and the Trump administration over the event. "We had the entire year of working towards this adoption and the past week has been quite intense," the spokesperson said. Ramaphosa, host of this weekend's gathering of Group of 20 leaders in Johannesburg, had earlier said there was "overwhelming consensus" for a summit declaration.

Envoys from the G20 - which brings together the world's major economies - drew up a draft leaders' declaration on Friday without US involvement, four sources familiar with the matter said. The declaration used the kind of language long disliked by the Trump administration: stressing the seriousness of climate change and the need to better adapt to it, praising ambitious targets to boost renewable energy and noting the punishing levels of debt service suffered by poor countries.

The mention of climate change was a snub to US President Donald Trump, who doubts the scientific consensus that global warming is caused by human activities. US officials had indicated they would



G20 Leaders pose for a family picture at the Nasrec Expo Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. — Reuters

oppose any reference to it in the declaration.

In opening remarks to the summit, Ramaphosa said: "There's been overwhelming consensus and agreement that one of the other tasks we should undertake right at the beginning is to ... adopt our declaration." "We should not allow anything to diminish the value, the stature and the impact of the first African G20 presidency," he said. His bold tone was a striking contrast to his subdued decorum during his visit to the White House in August, in which he endured Trump repeating a false claim that there was a genocide of white farmers in South Africa, brushing aside Ramaphosa's efforts to correct his facts.

Trump said US officials would not attend the summit because of allegations, widely discredited, that

the host country's Black majority government persecutes its white minority.

The US president has also rejected the host nation's agenda of promoting solidarity and helping developing nations adapt to weather disasters, transition to clean energy and cut their excessive debt costs. "The multilateral platform cannot be paralysed on the basis of the absence of someone who was invited," South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola told public broadcaster SABC. "This G20 is not about the US It's about all the 21 members of the G20. We are all equal members of the G20. What it means is that we need to take a decision. The South African presidency on Saturday reiterated its rejection of a US offer to send the US charge d'affaires for the G20 handover. — Reuters

The declaration stressed the seriousness of climate change and the need to better adapt to it, praising ambitious targets to boost renewable energy and noting the punishing levels of debt service suffered by poor countries

ENDANGERED HERITAGE

Iran seeks help with fire threatening forests



TEHRAN: Iran has requested foreign assistance in extinguishing a large fire that has ravaged Unesco World Heritage-listed forests in the north of the country for several days. The Hyrcanian forests stretch for about 1,000 kilometres along the Iranian coast of the Caspian Sea. Mohammad Jafar Ghaempanah, deputy to Iranian President Massoud Pezeshkian, wrote that "faced with the impossibility of containing the fire", Iran had "requested urgent assistance from friendly countries". — AFP

CEASEFIRE VIOLATION

Lebanon faces fresh Israeli strike on south



An Israeli strike in southern Lebanon killed one person, Lebanon's health ministry said, in the latest attack despite a nearly year-long ceasefire between Israel and Lebanese group Hezbollah. The ministry attributed the death to "an Israeli enemy strike" on a vehicle in Zawtar Al Sharqiyah. The ministry also reported that a grenade dropped in the southern town of Shaqra wounded five people. Several more strikes were reported in the south and east. — AFP

NATURAL DISASTER

Vietnam flooding death toll rises to 55



Rescuers raced to find more than a dozen people still missing after a week of heavy flooding in Vietnam, where authorities said at least 55 people have died. Relentless rain has lashed south-central Vietnam since late October and popular holiday destinations have been hit by several rounds of flooding. Multiple highways remained impassable Saturday and 300,000 people were without power, after a blackout that initially affected more than a million. — AFP

The New York Times

Jamaica announces bacterial outbreak after hurricane



FRANCES ROBLES

The author is an international correspondent covering Latin America and the Caribbean

In the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, six people have died in Jamaica of leptospirosis, a bacterial illness often spread by rat urine and found in contaminated waters after storms, public health authorities said. An outbreak has sickened 37 people who are believed to have contracted the disease since the storm pummelled the island October 28, health officials said.

Just nine of those cases were confirmed through laboratory testing, but with power and phone service still down in affected areas, and hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans still exposed to high waters and unsafe conditions, far more people are likely to have contracted the disease, Christopher Tufton, the health minister, said. Melissa passed through western Jamaica as a powerful Category 5 storm, killing at least 45 people and seriously damaging 146,000 structures. Authorities said Jamaica was now also beginning to see consequences for public health.

Leptospirosis is a bacterial illness spread in the urine of infected animals, often rodents, that causes flu-like symptoms in mild cases or kidney and liver failure in serious cases. Symptoms, which can be similar to flu or dengue, include fever, muscle pain, chills, vomiting and jaundice. The symptoms generally appear after recent exposure to contaminated water. The bacterium, *Leptospira*, can survive in moist soil for months. Although considered rare in developed nations, rat infestations in New



A flooded and damaged home in Westmoreland, the western parish in Jamaica.

York City have led to a recent rise in cases there.

After Hurricane Maria swept through Puerto Rico in 2017, at least 26 people died of the disease. The risk of its spread increases when people come in contact with floodwaters or even muddy soil, Tufton said. Farmers, emergency responders and people doing cleanup work are at particular risk, he said. “Dead animals would carry the bacteria,” Lufton said. “It’s very easy to pick up the bacteria while you are doing your regular — or unusual — work of cleanup.” Rodents displaced from their normal habitat because of flooding or storm damage can further spread the illness, officials said.

Before the storm, about two to 21 people per month would typically test positive for the disease, said Karen Webster Kerr, Jamaica’s chief epidemiologist. With nine days left in the month, November had

Just nine of those cases were confirmed through laboratory testing, but with power and phone service still down in affected areas, and hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans still exposed to high waters and unsafe conditions, far more people are likely to have contracted the disease

already seen about 35 cases, she said. A vast majority of people who fell ill were men, and many were concentrated in the Montego Bay area, Webster Kerr said. “Prior to Hurricane Melissa, you would have occupational exposure, meaning persons that work in farms, et cetera,” Webster Kerr said. “Now everybody has the likelihood of being exposed, because everybody is cleaning up, and a lot of persons are in those waters.”

Public health authorities started early detection and awareness campaigns, a challenge in communities that are still without power and cellphone service. In addition to delivering food to affected areas, the health minister urged volunteers to also bring rubber boots, latex gloves and cleaning supplies. “There are more cases out there than actually detected,” Lufton said. “It’s like Covid: For every one that’s detected, there may be five or six others in the environment. We can’t treat it lightly.”

Ian Stein, the Pan American Health Organisation’s representative in Jamaica, commended the swift action and transparency of the country’s health authorities, adding that information flow in affected areas would be crucial for epidemiological teams to spot patterns. “We often focus on a hurricane’s immediate path, and rightly so, as its impact can be devastating,” he said. “Yet in public health, we know that the aftermath can pose equally serious risks, particularly the threat of emerging diseases that tend to follow major storms.”

Trump and Mamdani vow future optimism, sidestepping critiques

PRESIDENT Donald Trump and Zohran Mamdani, the mayor-elect of New York City, put on a remarkable display of bonhomie in the Oval Office, with Trump showering praise on the democratic socialist and promising to help him succeed. Just weeks ago, Trump was warning New York voters that electing Mamdani would amount to an existential threat to the nation’s largest city. “I expect to be helping him, not hurting him — a big help,” Trump said, adding, “I think this mayor can do some things that are going to be really great.”

For his part, Mamdani, who had vowed on the campaign trail to stand up to the president, called their meeting “productive” and said that he looked forward to working with Trump to improve life in New York. Trump and Mamdani, who had lobbed labels like “communist” and “despot” at each other during a mayoral campaign filled with vitriol, nodded approvingly as each spoke and struck an optimistic tone with reporters. But they also sidestepped questions that might have highlighted their most polarising positions. “What I really appreciate about the president is the meeting that we had focused not on places of disagreement, which there are many, and also focused on the shared purpose that we have in serving New Yorkers,” Mamdani said.

For Trump, the public rapprochement was an opportunity to align himself with a charismatic young politician who has tapped into many of the same economic concerns that have animated the president’s base. It also comes after Democrats seized on the issue of affordability, which powered them to electoral victories this month. Since then, Trump and his allies have sought to frame the GOP as the party addressing high



President Donald Trump and New York Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani speak to reporters in the Oval Office.

costs.

For Mamdani, the high-stakes trip to the White House, which has bedevilled multiple foreign leaders, could be hugely consequential for the nation’s largest city, as could his relationship with the president in the coming months. Many New Yorkers have worried that Trump would send the National Guard into the city shortly after Mamdani takes office on Jan. 1 or that the president would try to punish the city in other ways. Mamdani seemed to have defused that threat — for now. “The better he does, the happier I am,” Trump said on Friday.

The two leaders met for roughly 45 minutes, and Mamdani also received a tour of the West Wing. It included a visit to the Cabinet Room, where he and Trump posed in front of a portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and to

The president took steps to ensure the meeting was successful. Unlike his sessions with foreign leaders, some of which have turned contentious, Trump did not invite the media into the Oval Office until after the meeting concluded

the newly installed “Presidential Walk of Fame” on the West Colonnade. Aides to the president said Trump was committed to having a successful meeting with Mamdani, speaking approvingly of him in private over the past two days, according to people who spoke with him.

The president took steps to ensure the meeting was successful. Unlike his sessions with foreign leaders, some of which have turned contentious, Trump did not invite the media into the Oval Office until after the meeting concluded. Earlier on Friday, he praised Mamdani during an interview with Fox News Radio. Mamdani’s allies on the left were cautiously optimistic about the meeting, hoping that he might have prevented some attacks on the city.

Trump’s Republican allies were less positive. Some of them

said they disagreed with the president’s approach and wished he had been more confrontational about Mamdani’s criticism of Israel.

Mamdani, who was born in Uganda and moved to New York City as a boy, has been a forceful critic of Trump’s immigration policies. In March, Mamdani confronted Tom Homan, Trump’s border czar, in a video that went viral, shouting at him while being held back by state troopers. Mamdani told reporters on Friday that he had expressed concerns to Trump about immigration raids, including a recent one involving a mother and her children.

Elle Bisgaard-Church, Mamdani’s closest adviser, said on NY1 as she left the White House that “we were very heartened” by the meeting and having an opportunity to discuss the city’s affordability crisis. At the same time, she said they were “clear about our disagreements in the room,” including expressing concerns about immigration raids. Although his public posture was quite a change for the president, Trump has privately complimented Mamdani in recent weeks. Still, the president’s genial tone was an especially stark contrast with Trump’s comments on Thursday, when he attacked a group of Democratic lawmakers and said their behavior was “punishable by death.” “We agree on a lot more than I would have thought,” Trump said about Mamdani. Trump also praised Mamdani’s campaign — after endorsing his opponent — and marveled at the immense media interest in their meeting.

At multiple points during the meeting, Trump jumped in to defend Mamdani from pointed questions from reporters. The president patted Mamdani on the arm when he was asked by a reporter if Trump was a fascist. Mamdani smiled awkwardly, and the president advised him to just say yes.



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OPINION

Before the coffee gets cold and the memory fades



DR HAMED
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SINCE my mother passed away last January, I find myself driving to her favourite spot on the beach, parking my car, getting out my folding chair, and facing the ocean just the way my late mother liked to sit.

I remember how she used to tell me stories from my early childhood, stories that I barely recalled until she lovingly reminded me.

One of her favourites was about how I would pretend to give my older brothers ‘injections’ using matchsticks, proudly announcing that I would become a doctor when I grew up.

We will then have popcorn and head home just before sunset so we don’t miss the prayers. On her last day, my mum suggested that we go to the beach, but I apologised, as I had a clinic that afternoon, promising we would go the next day. I did not know then that the promise I made so casually would become a quiet sorrow.

I would carry long after she was gone. The following morning she wouldn’t wake up

from her sleep. My attempts to resuscitate her failed, and by the time the ambulance arrived, she was long gone.

These memories surfaced as I read the Japanese novel ‘Before the Coffee Gets Cold’ by Toshikazu Kawaguchi.

The book revolves around a small Tokyo café where customers are given a chance to travel back to a precise moment in their past, under strict rules: they cannot change the present, they must sit in a specific chair and they must return before the coffee gets cold.

Despite these limitations, each person who travels back discovers something meaningful, such as closure, forgiveness, or a final chance to say what they wished they had said.

As I read through its pages, I kept thinking of my mother. What would I do if I could sit across from her one more time? I wouldn’t try to change fate. I wouldn’t ask for explanations or miracles. I would simply sit beside her, listen to her stories again, and keep the promise of that last visit to the beach.

Psychology tells us that, although we

Psychology tells us that, although we know that death is inevitable, nothing can prepare us for the overwhelming impact of our parents’ death

know that death is inevitable, nothing can prepare us for the overwhelming impact of our parents’ death. We experience several thoughts and feelings, and the body reacts with physical symptoms.

Emotional and spiritual issues arise as you ponder the meaning of life without your parents. There were so many things you did together or had hoped to do with them, and now we have to accept a new way of perceiving the world.

Whether you were close to your parents or not, their death shakes up your family structure and affects your perception of yourself as a member of the family. No matter what your age or how long you have been independent of them, you may find yourself longing to be someone’s little girl/little boy again. Or you catch yourself thinking, ‘No one will ever love me or take care of me like my parent did.’

At a personal level, I learned that grief has no expiry date and that we grieve differently, so we should accept it and cherish the memories before they fade.

UK COVID PROBE: INACTION COST THOUSANDS OF LIVES

AKSHATA KAPOOR

About 23,000 deaths could have been prevented in England if the first Covid-19 lockdown had been introduced sooner at the start of the pandemic, a UK public inquiry found, also slamming a ‘toxic’ and misogynistic culture at the top of government.

The second report from an inquiry into the UK response to the Covid-19 pandemic criticised the government led by Boris Johnson for a ‘lack of urgency’ in the early days of the pandemic in 2020, adding the lockdown was ‘too little, too late’.

Inquiry chair Heather Hallett said there was a “serious failure” by the government to “appreciate the level of risk and the calamity that the UK faced and the need to inject urgency into the response”.

Modelling shows that if the first lockdown had been imposed earlier, it could have prevented 23,000 deaths in England alone in the first wave, according to the 800-page report.

“Had the lockdown been imposed one week earlier than March 23, the evidence suggests that the number of deaths in England alone in the first wave up until July 1, 2020 would have been reduced by 48 per cent,” Hallett, a retired senior judge, said.

The inquiry chair called February 2020 a “lost month”, adding that if restrictions had been introduced sooner, the mandatory lockdown could have been shorter, or “might not have been necessary at all”.

The report also criticised “repeated” failures and delays in introducing sufficient restrictions to control subsequent Covid-19 waves.

However, the report - the second in a series from the independent inquiry - rejected claims that the government was wrong to implement the March 2020 lockdown.

“Without it, the growth in transmission would have led to an unacceptable loss of life,” the report said. The UK suffered one of the worst Covid-19 death tolls in Europe, recording more than 128,500 fatalities by mid-July 2021.

More than 226,000 people have died from Covid in Britain since the start of the global pandemic in early 2020.

Johnson, who was prime minister from 2019 to 2022, has been criticised on various fronts for the pandemic response, including a lack of preparedness and failing to have enough protective equipment for frontline staff. The report found a “lack of trust” between Johnson and leaders of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which have devolved public healthcare systems, as well as a “toxic” culture in government.

“At the centre of the UK government there was a toxic and chaotic culture,” the report stated, adding the cabinet was “often sidelined in decision-making” and women’s voices “often went ignored”. — AFP

Reflecting on death can teach us about living

ATHEISM, though not a religion, rests on conviction — the belief that science will one day answer all questions about human existence. Yet the atheist cannot prove the non-existence of God any more than the believer can prove to the atheist’s satisfaction his presence.

Science, for all its precision, is a discipline of revision. What one age holds as fact, another disproves. Ptolemy’s Earth-centred universe gave way to Copernicus’s Sun-centred model. Hippocrates’ theory of the four humours being responsible for matters regarding our health yielded to Pasteur’s discovery that disease is caused by bacteria. Einstein refined Newton’s understanding of gravity. Even the theory of an expanding universe has been challenged.

Science depends on revision, not certainty. Both religion and science, to some extent, rest on faith. The former in divine revelation, the latter in reason. Death is inevitable and unites us all, yet most prefer not to contemplate it and distract themselves through work or amusements. Those with faith find solace in the promises of their religion; those without may draw strength from the courage of thinkers who faced death without belief in a deity or an afterlife.

Across all these views, a common theme emerges. We are urged to face death with serenity, to recognise it as natural, perhaps even as a continuation rather than an end. Yet even some of the most devout believers cling instinctively to life. In religion, death can mark the beginning of judgement — a moment of both comfort and apprehension, the promise of paradise balanced by the fear of punishment.

No single perspective, whether grounded in science or religion, appears to satisfy everyone. However, no matter what anyone believes, we should try to face



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it directly, without flinching. Whether any philosophy or creed can ever truly explain, to everyone’s satisfaction, something that for most lies beyond human comprehension, is uncertain. Philosophy distinguishes between knowledge and belief: scientific knowledge depends largely on empirical evidence, belief on intuitive conviction.

Perhaps the aim should not be to solve the unsolvable but to acknowledge the inevitable and to look at death without denial and, by doing so, to live more fully in the time that remains to us. Having examined diverse views of death and the afterlife, I have come to see that both belief and disbelief sometimes contain contradictions. Humans are perhaps the only creatures aware of their mortality, a knowledge that can be both a curse and a blessing. It drives us to create, to strive, to distract ourselves from the inevitable. Yet when death approaches, worldly success fades.

The ruins of empires and the

mummified pharaohs remind us that all achievements, no matter how impressive during their time, crumble to dust.

Those without a religious belief sometimes question why we spend so many years chasing those glittering prizes of worldly success, seeking the admiration of others, while all the time being aware of the shortness of life and our own mortality. The fear of death is common, filling so many with dread. When asked why, many say that death robs them of the good things they might still experience given more time. But if death is feared because it deprives us of future joys, why do we not equally lament the countless millennia before our birth, when we were deprived of so much more?

Perhaps, in accepting our impermanence, there lies a quieter wisdom: to live simply, without illusion, in the fleeting moment of existence. Life is long enough, provided the time we have is not used frivolously.

A dystopian future is only a footstep, or a stumble, away



RAY PETERSEN

The writer is a media consultant

ARTIFICIAL Intelligence, otherwise known as AI, has unlimited potential; however, if you think about it, unlimited doesn't hold a candle to the potential that exists for the manipulation of the knowledge base that feeds AI, thus manipulating its outcomes.

This became very clear to me in my early days of marking and assessing student assignments in the earliest days of AI, when I found a clearly discernible feature of AI-produced texts was a reference to the benefits of AI, along the lines of... "greater use of artificial intelligence can significantly minimise spelling and grammar mistakes, and produce coherently structured sentences." It was so obvious.

The danger is that the AI moguls could influence the output by adding or deleting names, titles, vocabulary, in fact, anything. Can you imagine if, in UK politics, all references to the Conservative Party were deleted by accident from an AI platform used by a major media organisation? Their polls would 'fall off a cliff,' wouldn't they? Now, I'm not suggesting anything so blatant would happen; it would be just too obvious, but it's a scary thought!

AI is being exhaustively used within the service industries, where intangible goods and services offer an amazing diversity of

opportunities for AI, that, despite all the positivity surrounding the 'genre,' if we can call it that, the potential for negativity is even greater. Just consider for a moment the vacuous nature of so many social media posts, the influence of 'influencers' on youth, and the growth of anti-social behaviours in society, as much of it is interpreted by the younger set as 'harmless.'

AI has human traits and qualities that are so well-developed they are often referred to in the social sciences as anthropomorphist. Belanche et al (2024) identify that the human aesthetics and communicative qualities of AI are so far developed that they significantly exceed the intrusive capabilities of humanity. They also point to the misuse of information, the erosion of emotion, empathy and morality, all of which relate to an absence of purpose. The manipulation of AI even extends, in many settings, to the use of female features, such as their name, voice, and physical qualities that produce more favourable consumer willingness to interact, responses, and satisfaction (Seo, 2022). That's an understandable perspective to emphasise, but so discriminatory it beggars belief to ponder the potential for cybersecurity intrusion, financial ruin, and the manipulation of justice and politics. It's a scary scenario, isn't it?

Another area of research is that associated

AI is being exhaustively used within the service industries, where intangible goods and services offer an amazing diversity of opportunities for AI, that despite all the positivity surrounding the 'genre,' if we can call it that, the potential for negativity is even greater

with the potential for employees to find out that decisions made on their jobs, livelihoods and futures may potentially be made by AI. It's bad enough when employees consider that those decisions are made and implemented by men and women, who have never 'walked in their shoes,' but to find out they had been made redundant on the whim of a 'calculation,' would be for many, the ultimate indignity, wouldn't it?

Rasha Waheeb (2023) of the University of Baghdad and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology acknowledges the fragilities of the human experience as compared to computer-generated entities, identifying that for many, the trade-off, or the decision to be made, is of moral and ethical responsibility, versus the 'dark reality,' of a breathtaking depth of knowledge.

The problem is, though, that whether we have a faith that encourages us to believe all discovery and progress is a good thing, or not, it is difficult to hand over the 'keys to the kingdom,' so to speak, in terms of accepting that those with the power of AI will use it wisely, with societal and humanitarian imperatives.

With no sugar coating and no tolerance for it, it saddens me that such short-cutting is on the edge of becoming 'acceptable.' I never thought I would see the day, but then... dystopia is only one more footstep away.

TRUMP FACES SAME REALITY AS BIDEN... ON INFLATION

ANDREA SHALAL AND HOWARD SCHNEIDER

President Donald Trump campaigned on a pledge to lower consumer prices that skyrocketed during Joe Biden's term, but he is now facing the same hard reality that dogged his predecessor: Once prices rise, they seldom fall, and Americans hate higher prices.

Trump may now be making some of the same mistakes as Biden, including downplaying the impact of higher prices on households and looking to corporate investments to boost jobs and wages, a strategy that takes years to pan out.

Repeatedly in recent days, including at the start of a state visit by Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Trump has touted what he says are trillions of dollars in new investments that will create jobs, while saying inflation is under control, leaning on relatively low gasoline prices as his primary evidence.

"It's eerily similar," said Michael Strain, head of economic policy studies at the conservative American Enterprise Institute. "The mistake that they're both making is not accepting the fact of life, the fact of politics — that the American people really care about prices going up rapidly." Inflation is down, running around 3 per cent annually versus more than 9 per cent at its peak under Biden. But goods — those subject to Trump's tariffs in particular — cost more than before, and wage gains for many have been largely offset by higher prices. Food prices are creeping higher, led by items Americans love to consume, such as nearly 15 per cent increases for beef, 7 per cent for bananas and more than 20 per cent for coffee, according to the latest Consumer Price Index data. Prices for tools and hardware — largely imported — are 6.2 per cent higher than a year ago, while cleaning supplies like paper towels are 5.5 per cent pricier, up the most since December 2023. Mounting frustration over Trump's handling of the economy is driving down his approval rating, a fact Trump acknowledged this week. At just 38 per cent, they're the lowest since his return to power, a poll found.

Other measures of consumer satisfaction are also low, largely because of prices. The University of Michigan's Consumer Sentiment Index sank to its second-lowest ever in November, with drops measured across party lines. For independents - a constituency critical to either party's hopes for national election wins - November marked a record low. Even Republicans were unhappy, registering the biggest drop in sentiment in a year and a half. Thanksgiving dinner illustrates the problem.

The American Farm Bureau Federation estimates it will cost 5 per cent less this year than 2024, thanks to steep discounts for turkeys, but that tally is still 13 per cent more than in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic. Half the meal's other foods, including sweet potatoes, frozen peas and a fresh vegetable tray appetiser, cost more than in 2024. Disaffection about the economy powered Trump's victory last year, but that support isn't guaranteed, as seen in Republican losses in state and local elections this month. — Reuters

How progressives can win on immigration

In A long-awaited white paper, Britain's Labour Party government has just proposed the most sweeping rethink of the country's asylum system in a generation. In doing so, it joins the German Christian Democrats and the European Union more broadly in embracing a new, stricter position.

Typically, attempts to deal with migration have moved through three distinct phases: denying the problem; mimicking far-right language and policies; and finally, adapting and finding ways to fight far-right forces on their own turf.

When the Labour Party elected Keir Starmer as its leader in 2020, it was stuck in the first phase. It entered the second phase this summer, when Starmer warned that Britain risked becoming an "island of strangers." By mimicking the populist Reform UK party's language, however, Starmer was effectively saying: "Reform is right, but vote for us."

Perhaps having recognised the error, Labour may be moving into the third phase. For example, it has begun to attack Reform's idea of abolishing migrants' indefinite leave to remain (permanent residence) as a measure that would rip apart communities by deporting people who have lived in the country for decades, raised children, and played an integral part in society and the economy. While the Labour white paper does still have a foot in phase-two thinking, the party can move fully into phase three by emulating other centre-left parties that have successfully redefined the debate on migration. Consider Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's approach in Denmark. The media have focused on the shock value of immigration authorities ripping jewellery away from refugees as they enter the country. But the real lesson is how Frederiksen has shifted the terms of the debate: from a contest over who can be the cruellest to migrants to a competition over who can best maintain the Danish welfare state.

Frederiksen's genius lay in decoupling the debate on migration from the debate about race. She accepted that many of the refugees fleeing to Denmark have genuine



When the Labour Party elected Keir Starmer as its leader in 2020, it was stuck in the first phase.



MARK LEONARD

The writer is Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, is the author of The Age of Unpeace: How Connectivity Causes Conflict

asylum claims, and that the country has a duty to help them. But she also acknowledged that Denmark's contributory welfare state could not sustain an uncontrolled influx of people who would be unable to contribute to its upkeep for many years. Thus, her response included tightening the country's borders, providing financial aid to help refugees outside of Denmark, and doing more to integrate those already in the country.

Similarly, under Magdalena Andersson's leadership, the Swedish Social Democrats have focused on integration. Because Sweden took in the greatest number of asylum-seekers per capita during the 2015 refugee crisis, its demographic makeup has changed more than that of any other European country (with the number of people with a foreign background increasing from 13 per cent to 28 per cent over the past 30 years). Following a surge in support for the far-right Sweden Democrats in the 2022 elections, the centre-right government has acted firmly to close the country's borders, making Sweden one of the only developed countries to experience negative net migration.

But it is the Social Democrats, now in the opposition, who have done the most to reframe the country's immigration debate.

Their spokesperson on the issue, Lawen Redar, sees border control and integration as two sides of the same coin. Every country has a right to decide who it allows in, she acknowledges; but the government also has a duty to ensure that everyone who is already in the country becomes a valued member of the community. Thus, the party's strategy amounts to "secure borders, active integration and no racism."

As a second-generation immigrant herself (with an Iranian-Kurdish mother and an Iraqi-Kurdish father), Redar has launched a movement to end the problem of "parallel societies," ghettos of migrants who are excluded from the labour market and thus susceptible to criminality and poverty. Her solution is to make the Swedish language compulsory, to empower the state to decide where new immigrants live, and to reorient the education system towards making people feel Swedish "in their hearts" rather than just on paper. It is clear in her language how much Redar loves Sweden. By developing an inclusive patriotism, she has been able to reclaim the flag from the Sweden Democrats, who, like many far-right parties (and US Vice-President JD Vance), define national identity strictly in blood-and-soil terms. ©Project Syndicate, 2025

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



This year’s 23rd edition promises fierce competition as BDO Oman, the defending champions, prepare to fend off a strong lineup of challengers.

AUDITORS CUP TO KICK OFF ON DECEMBER 1

The Oman Auditor’s Cup 2025 will unfold on December 1-3, 2025, at the scenic and a marvel of Al Amerat at Oman Cricket Academy, Al Amerat Cricket Grounds, bringing together top audit firms for three days of intense, high-octane cricket action. This year’s 23rd edition promises fierce competition as BDO Oman, the defending champions, prepare to fend off a strong lineup of challengers, including EY Oman, Deloitte Oman, KPMG Oman, PwC Oman, Moore Oman, BAF Oman and Crowe Oman.

TO ELEVATE THE FAN EXPERIENCE, THE OMAN AUDITOR’S CUP 2025 WILL FEATURE:

LIVE ELECTRONIC MEGA SCORE BOARD EXPERIENCE

LIVE MATCH COMMENTARY AND EXPERT ANALYSIS

ENGAGING FAN ZONES AND INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

FAMILY FOCUSED INITIATIVES

FUN SPOT PRIZES THROUGHOUT THE EVENT

is already generating the buzz, expected to set a fiery tone for the tournament ahead and the individuals battling it out along with the teams for a range of individual and team honours up for grabs, which include: Player of the Match, Best Wicketkeeper, Best Batter, Best Bowler, Best Fielder, Maximum Sixes, Best Dressed Team, Man of the Tournament, Second Runners-Up, Runners Up all leading up to the ultimate reward to the Champions Trophy.

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 22

The second day of the 2025 World Cup of Snooker (Team Event), hosted by the Sultanate of Oman at “Active Oman” at the Oman Automobile Association, marked the end of the group stage and brought a clear picture of the quarterfinal lineup after a day filled with intense matchups and high-level performances. The day was highlighted by the progression of several top title contenders, while major teams exited the tournament after failing to break through the competition barrier. The tournament concludes its action today as the awards ceremony takes place at 7:00 pm, under the auspices of Basil bin Ahmed al Rawas, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth. The ceremony will

bring together Abdulwahab bin Mohammed al Marshoudi, CEO of Sohar International Bank, Khalid al Subhi, Chairman of the Oman Billiards and Snooker Committee, senior ministry officials, and delegations from all participating teams. Hong Kong China 1 topped Group A with a strong finish (3 matches – 9 frames won), after a decisive 3–1 victory over France. France finished second with 7 frames won and 4 lost, while India 2 came third with a single win. Oman 3 ended their campaign without points. Group B brought great excitement on the second day with tightly contested results, before Qatar secured first place with two wins and a total of 8 frames. Iraq 2 followed in second place with 7 frames won and 7 lost. Poland placed third, while Bangladesh finished



At the end of the group stage, all group winners advanced directly to the quarterfinals, while the second-placed teams played the Round of 16 to determine the remaining qualifiers.

at the bottom despite winning their previous match. Pakistan continued its impressive run, topping Group C with 9 frames won and 4 lost, following an important 3–2 victory over Malaysia in the final group match. Malaysia advanced in second place after a strong performance (8–5), while

Ukraine claimed a single win, and Oman 2 ended without points. Group D delivered the biggest surprise of the day as Egypt advanced as group leader after earning two wins and 6 frames. Iraq 1 followed in second place, Iran in third, and Australia ended its campaign in last place. Hong Kong China

2 delivered outstanding performances with three straight wins (9–1) in Group E, including a valuable 3–1 victory over China. Indonesia finished second after defeating Bahrain 3–1 in their final match to secure two wins in the group. China placed third with one win, while Bahrain finished without points. In Group F, India 1 completed the group stage undefeated (9–1) after a strong 3–1 win over the UAE. Afghanistan secured second place with two victories, while the UAE finished with one win, and Oman 1 ended without points. At the end of the group stage, all group winners advanced directly to the quarterfinals, while the second-placed teams played the Round of 16 to determine the remaining qualifiers.

THE ROUND OF 16 OPENED WITH THRILLING, DECISIVE MATCHES: France defeated Indonesia 3–2 to secure a quarterfinal clash against India 1 in the first matchup of the next round. In another match, Qatar continued its excellent form, overcoming Iraq 1 with a 3–2 victory to book a place in the quarterfinals against Pakistan. Winners of these two quarterfinal matches will advance to the semifinals. Egypt also claimed an important 3–1 win over India 2, setting up a strong quarterfinal meeting with Hong Kong China 1. Meanwhile, Malaysia delivered a standout performance with a 3–0 win over Afghanistan to advance and face Hong Kong China 2 in the last quarterfinal matchup. The winners of these matches will meet in the semifinals.

Bausher crowned champions of Oman Open Water Swimming

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 22

BAUSHER Club secured the overall title of the 16th edition of Oman Open Water Swimming Championship after the swimmers delivered an impressive performance at the event which took place on Saturday at Qurum Beach in Muscat. In last October, Bausher Club also had claimed top honours at the Oman Aquatics Association (OAA) Annual Swimming Cup. This is the second straight title for the club in this season. As many as 65 swimmers representing 12 clubs including Al Shabab, Al Amerat, Al Orouba, Al Bashayer, Bausher , Al Ittifaq, Sohar, Saham, Majees, Bidiyah, Masirah and Muscat took part in the event which was organised by Oman Aquatics Association (OAA).

In the individual race for ages 14–17, Maximos Helinas from Bausher claimed first place and followed by his team-mate Ali bin Adil al Hosni in second. Hamad al Hosni from Muscat Club finished third. In the team standings for the same age group, Bausher Club took first place while Al Amerat Club secured second, and Muscat Club placing third. In the 18 and above individual category, Nidhal bin Sulaiman al Harrasi of Al Amerat Club won gold, while Ayman bin Talib al Qasmi of Bausher earned silver. Nasser bin Saif al Kindi, also from Al Amerat, completed the podium in third place. For the team event in this category, Al Amerat Club emerged champions, followed by Bausher in second place, and Muscat Club in third. At the conclusion of the 16th edition, Bausher Club was crowned overall champion as they reinforced by their strong results in both youth and senior categories. Al Amerat Club claimed the runner-up position, while Muscat Club secured third place, completing the podium of this year’s national open water swimming showcase. The championship once again highlighted the growing depth of talent in Oman’s open water swimming community, with clubs demonstrating strong preparation, sportsmanship, and competitive spirit throughout the event. After the completion of all the swimming events, the chief guest Taha bin Sulaiman al Kishry, Board Member



Taha bin Sulaiman al Kishry, Board Member of the Oman Olympic Committee, in the presence of Dr Awadh bin Salim al Ojaili, Chairman of the Oman Aquatics Association, delivered the awards and medals to the top winners at the end of the event.



Swimmers celebrate after crossing the finish line.

of the Oman Olympic Committee, in the presence of Dr Awadh bin Salim al Ojaili, Chairman of the Oman Aquatics Association, delivered the awards and medals to the top winners. The closing ceremony attended also by federation members, club representatives, and a large crowd of spectators who gathered to support the swimmers. Dr Awadh al Ojaili, Chairman of

the Oman Aquatics Association (OAA), congratulated Bausher Club for their outstanding performance and for emerging as champions of the event. “We extend our appreciation to all the clubs that participated in this edition of the championship. The Oman Open Water Swimming Championship is a vital domestic event, bringing together swimmers from across the nation. It also serves as an important platform for the national team’s coaching staff to identify top talents. I would like to thank all OAA board members and the technical team for their tremendous efforts in ensuring the smooth organisation of the event and maintaining a high level of competition.” Al Ojaili said The OAA chief also praised the dedication and commitment displayed by the swimmers. “We witnessed strong competition among all the participating clubs, and the determination shown by the swimmers reflects the significant work being done at the club level,” he said. He concluded his remarks by emphasising the importance of continued support and development to further elevate aquatic sports in Oman.

All eyes on Muscat as Snooker World Cup concludes today

SHORT TAKES



Utah Jazz guard Walter Clayton Jr (13) moves the ball against Oklahoma City Thunder guard Ajay Mitchell (25) during the second half at Delta Center. — Reuters

THUNDER ERASE EARLY DEFICIT, TROUNCE JAZZ IN NBA CUP

SALT LAKE CITY: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points to lead the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 144-112 win over the Utah Jazz on Friday in NBA Cup play at Salt Lake City. The Thunder extended their winning streak to eight and have won 16 of their first 17. The Jazz led big early but couldn't withstand Oklahoma City's defence as the game wore on to drop their second consecutive game and fall to 0-3 in West Group A, getting eliminated from NBA Cup contention.

The Thunder improved to 2-0 in the West Group A. Oklahoma City trailed by 18 early but virtually erased that deficit by halftime, and then took over in the third to run away.

Utah turned the ball over 10 times in the third, including four by Isaiah Collier, and the Thunder turned those turnovers into 20 points. Oklahoma City outscored the Jazz 43-20 in the quarter.

While the Thunder's defence set the tone, the offence also came through in a big way. Oklahoma City shot a season-best 61.4 per cent from the floor and hit a season-high 23 3-pointers.

Gilgeous-Alexander, who started the season struggling from 3-point range, hit all three of his shots from beyond the arc. He added eight assists.

Seven other Thunder players scored in double figures, including 16 off the bench for Isaiah Joe and 15 from Jaylin Williams.

The Jazz were led by 20 points from Keyonte George and a season-high 18 from Kyle Filipowski. Lauri Markkanen, who came into the game averaging more than 30 points per game, finished with 19 — his second-lowest scoring game of the season.

Utah was dominant early, jumping out to a 39-21 lead just more than nine minutes into the game.

The Jazz hit 13 of their first 18 shots, including three 3-pointers from Kevin Love in less than two minutes.

But Oklahoma City steadily climbed back, tying it on Cason Wallace's 3-pointer with just more than a minute remaining in the half. Utah led 68-67 at the break.

But for the second consecutive game, Luguentz Dort got hot offensively in the second half to help the Thunder recover with the game in question.

Dort hit a pair of 3-pointers on back-to-back possessions to give Oklahoma City its first lead just more than two minutes into the third.

Oklahoma City has won five games this season after trailing by 10 or more points. — Reuters



Oman women's national 3x3 basketball team poses with the bronze medals.

Women secure third spot at Gulf basketball meet

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 22

THE Oman women's national 3x3 basketball team achieved an impressive milestone by clinching third place at the Gulf Championship, following a well-deserved 9-7 victory over Kuwait. The match was intense from the outset, with Omani players showing strong focus and disciplined defensive organisation that enabled them to maintain their lead despite Kuwait's attempts to come back. The performance reflected the team's growing technical level and determination on the court.

The team was led by coach Wafa Zaghdood throughout the Bahrain training camp and the championship.

The squad included: Shams Al Duha bint Khalil al Khanjiyah, Fatma bint Said al Numaniyah, Nareen bint Mohammed al Maamariyah, Ruba bint Saleem al Kalbaniyah, Reema bint Majid al Mughairiyah, Zainab bint Khalifa al Busaidiyah, Malak bint Sulaiman al Salimiyah, Sayyidah Lamar bint Mohammed al Busaidiyah, Reem bint Sulaiman al Shirawiyah, and Aisha bint Hossam al Yafeiyah.



Oman youth national 3x3 basketball team finished fourth after a hard-fought match against Bahrain A, losing narrowly 14-16.

YOUTH TEAM SHOWS STRONG PERFORMANCE, FINISHES FOURTH

Meanwhile, the Oman youth national 3x3 basketball team finished fourth after a hard-fought match against Bahrain A, losing narrowly 14-16. The game was highly competitive with rapid point exchanges, but Bahrain capitalised on small details in the final seconds to secure the win. Despite the result, Oman's players delivered a commendable performance that reflected significant effort and promising development.

The youth team was coached by Mohammed bin Mubarak al Owaisi, and the roster included:

Mishal bin Abdulmunim Qafqaf, Muhab bin Ramadan al Humaysim, Mazin bin Mohammed al Owaisi, Ibrahim bin Ismail al Balushi, Azd bin Al Munthir al Bahlani, Azzan bin Talal al Ajmi, Adam bin Sulaiman al Hinai, and Akram bin Hamad al Rashdi.

The administrative staff included team manager Ghassan al Busaidy and physiotherapist Sulaiman bin Salmeen al Musallami. The Bahrain camp served as a key preparation stage for both youth and women's teams ahead of their upcoming participation in the Arab 3x3 Basketball Championship, hosted at Al Mouj Muscat. **FIRST MEN'S TEAM CONCLUDES BAHRAIN CAMP AHEAD OF ARAB CHAMPIONSHIP**

The Oman First men's national 3x3 basketball team also wrapped up its external training camp in Bahrain, held as part of preparations for the Arab Championship to be hosted in Muscat. The men's squad featured eight players: Ahmed bin Rashid al Hilali, Hadeed bin Abdulhakim Beit Bakhit, Osama bin Rashid al Riyami, Abdulrahman bin Hamood al Maamari, Ahmed bin Khalid al Sinani, Rashid bin Mohammed al Zuhailmi, Ahmed bin Hamood al Maamari, and Abdulrahman bin Mohammed al Shuaibi.

Exciting finishes mark Union Endurance Cup in Barka

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
BARKA, NOV 22

The Union Endurance Championship was held on Friday at the Al Mahamid Endurance Village in Barka, organised by the Oman Equestrian Federation as part of its annual season, the event drew significant international presence, including foreign veterinarians and officials and featured a total of 61 horses across its various categories 36 horses in the 100 km Union Cup 'CEN' and 25 horses in the international qualifying rides over 100 km 'CEI1' and 120 km 'CEI2'.

Veterinary inspections were followed by the start of the races early on Friday, the competition witnessed strong performances and precise oversight from technical committees in accordance with FEI regulations. Among the distinguished attendees were

international veterinary expert Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al Yahyan, who headed the treatment committee and international judge Haider al Zoubi,

who led the ground jury, in addition to several supervisors from UAE, their presence contributed significantly to enhancing the technical rigor and organisational standards.

In the Union Cup 100 km race, N G Aswan Arabi ridden by Ilaf bin Qabeel al Zadjali and trained by Mohannad bin Ibrahim al Balushi secured first place, Second place went to R Chi Bald Traklin ridden by Moayed bin Said al Balushi and trained by Saleh bin Salim al Balushi, while third place was claimed by Fai Jab ridden by Abdulrahman bin Khalid al Zadjali, also trained by Mohannad bin Ibrahim al Balushi, AT Dial Venus, ridden by Azzam bin Said al Balushi



The races featured a total of 61 horses across its various categories

and trained by Mohammed bin Hammoud al Balushi, completed the podium in fourth place.

Dr Khalid al Yahyan emphasised the central role of veterinary supervision in endurance racing, noting that a horses ability to pass veterinary checks hinges on strict criteria chief among them maintaining a heart rate within the internationally approved threshold, alongside sound movement and overall physical integrity, having qualified veterinary teams ensures the safety of the horses and preserves the fairness of competition".

International judge Haider al Zoubi highlighted the importance of the judges oversight throughout the competition, explained that the jury is responsible for monitoring compliance with course rules, regulating speed and ensuring that all FEI guidelines are properly

applied during each phase of the ride. Winning trainer Mohannad bin Ibrahim al Balushi expressed pride in his team's results, taking both first and third places.

Trainer Saleh bin Salim al Balushi, who secured second place, praised the consistency of R Chi Bald Traklin's performance, "the horse maintained a strong rhythm from start to finish, Our strategy focuses on balancing speed with endurance to guarantee a safe completion, participating in an event of this calibre motivates us to aim even higher".

Similarly, rider Moyed bin Khalid al Balushi expressed satisfaction with his second place finish, noting the intensity of the competition. "The pace was demanding from the beginning, but the horse was in great condition, allowing us to maintain competitive speed without overexertion."

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Italy's Flavio Cobolli in action during his singles match against Belgium's Zizou Bergs. — Reuters

COBOLLI SENDS HOLDERS ITALY INTO DAVIS CUP FINAL

BOLOGNA: Hosts Italy closed in on a third successive Davis Cup title as Flavio Cobolli saved seven match points to beat Belgium's Zizou Bergs in a thriller and seal a 2-0 semifinal victory on Friday.

The 23-year old Cobolli, roared on by frenzied home support inside the SuperTennis Arena, clawed his way to a 6-3 6-7(5) 7-6(15) victory with the third-set tiebreak one of the best ever seen in the competition's rich history.

Both players produced some spellbinding tennis in a series of punishing rallies in the 32-point breaker with the aggressive ball striking of Bergs looking as though it would send the tie to the deciding doubles.

But Cobolli, who also failed to convert his first six match points, would not be denied and eventually fired down an unreturnable serve to spark wild celebrations in the stands.

"In the five years I've been captain, I've never seen anything like it," said Italy captain Filippo Volandri. "This match was incredible; in the end, it was 5 per cent tactics and 95 per cent heart."

Earlier, Matteo Berrettini powered past Raphael Collignon 6-3 6-4 to put Italy in front. It was Berrettini's eighth successive match win in the competition after he won all six he played last year, including doubles, as Italy retained the title by beating the Netherlands in the final.

Italy will try to complete the three-peat in Sunday's final against either Germany or Spain who face off on Saturday.

Should they prevail, they would become the first nation to win three successive titles since the Challenge Round was abolished after the 1971 event.

Cobolli, who was a regular in the 2023 title-winning side, is playing as Italy's number one in the absence of world number two Jannik Sinner and Lorenzo Musetti and has risen to the challenge in magnificent fashion.

After thrashing Filip Misolic on Wednesday to seal Italy's comfortable quarter-final win over Austria he was pushed much harder by the 43rd-ranked Bergs who battled back from a slow start to stretch Cobolli to the limit.

"It's really tough to say something about this match," Cobolli said. "I played for all of my team, my family, and it's one of the best days of my life."

Italy, who are on a 12-tie winning streak, are the first nation to reach three successive Davis Cup finals since Australia in 2001, although Australia lost two of those. — Reuters



Chelsea's Pedro Neto in action with Burnley's Maxime Esteve. — Reuters

Chelsea sink Burnley to close gap on Arsenal

CHELSEA STEPPED up their Premier League title challenge with a gritty 2-0 win against struggling Burnley on Saturday. Pedro Neto put the Blues ahead just before the interval at Turf Moor and Enzo Fernandez netted in the closing stages.

Enzo Maresca's side climb to second place and sit three points behind leaders Arsenal, who host Tottenham on Sunday.

The Blues have won eight of their last 10 matches in all competitions, making it a memorable 50th Premier League game in charge for Maresca.

It was the ideal warm-up for Chelsea ahead of a crucial week featuring home games against Barcelona in the Champions League on Tuesday and Arsenal in the Premier League on November 30.

The west Londoners would drop back down to third place if Manchester City avoid defeat against Newcastle later on Saturday, but regardless of that result, their hard-fought victory in freezing Lancashire added to their title momentum.

"It's tough after the international break, 12:30, Burnley away, it's always a hard game. But the way we competed I'm very happy," Maresca said.

"To come here and not concede is very difficult but overall they only had one real chance.

"It was very important to keep the momentum from before the international break. Now we'll recover our energy and on to Tuesday."

Fourth-bottom Burnley have now lost five of their last seven league matches.

Chelsea were without Cole Palmer after the England forward extended his prolonged injury absence by fracturing his toe after stubbing it into a door.

Palmer had been set to resume training this week after two months out with a groin problem. Adding to Maresca's issues, fatigued Ecuador midfielder Moises Caicedo was left on the bench after arriving back from international duty on Thursday.

Maresca had complained about Chelsea being given the early Saturday kick-off again.

His mood wasn't improved in the fifth minute when Blues goalkeeper Robert Sanchez accidentally booted the ball into Fernandez's head, a miscue that left the Argentine midfielder needing a brief concussion check.

Fernandez was able to play on and despite that painful interlude, Chelsea eventually took control.

CLINICAL FERNANDEZ

Neto's effort from the edge of the area deflected wide before Jamie Gittens lashed over from a tight angle.

Kyle Walker bailed out Burnley on his 400th Premier League appearance with a last-ditch block to stop Gittens tapping in Neto's cross.

Chelsea's Trevoh Chalobah was fortunate not to concede a farcical penalty when the defender used his hand to stop Sanchez's pass inside his own area before returning the ball to the 'keeper.

Sanchez appeared not to have restarted play, instead letting Chalobah take the goal-kick so Burnley's hopes of a penalty were dashed.

Maresca's men made the most of that let-off to take the lead with a well-crafted goal in the 37th minute.

Marc Cucurella showed a deft touch to control a high ball into the Burnley area before passing back to Gittens.

Lofting a pin-point cross to the far post, Gittens picked out Neto and he delivered with a superb diving header into the far corner.

Neto's fourth goal this season was almost followed by another for Chelsea as Liam Delap's drive forced a save from Martin Dubravka.

Gittens' deflected strike flashed just wide early in the second half.

Neto, picked out by Fernandez's pass, was inches away from doubling Chelsea's lead as his fierce blast cannonned into the near post.

Unmarked inside the Chelsea area, Zian Flemming wasted Burnley's best opportunity to snatch an equaliser with a wild shot that cleared the bar.

But Fernandez put the result beyond doubt in the 88th minute, capping a flowing move with a clinical close-range finish from Marc Guiu's pass. — AFP

Norris on pole in wet Las Vegas with Piastri fifth

LAS VEGAS: Formula One championship leader Lando Norris swept to a stunning pole position for the Las Vegas Grand Prix in a wet and slippery qualifying on Friday with McLaren teammate and closest title rival Oscar Piastri only fifth.

Red Bull's reigning world champion Max Verstappen, third in the standings after 21 of 24 races and 49 points off the lead, joined the Briton on the front row but was 0.323 slower.

Norris, who can take another huge stride towards the title in Saturday night's race, leads Australian Piastri by 24 points and will be chasing a third win in a row at a street circuit where McLaren had expected to struggle.

The pole was his seventh of the

season, equalling Verstappen's tally, and the 16th of his career, with the last seven races all won from that position.

"Boy, that was stressful. Stressful as hell," said Norris after a cold night session that started in steady rain with the Aston Martins on full wets and the rest on intermediates.

"It's so slippery out there. As soon as you hit the kerb a bit wrong, like I did, you snap one way, lose the car the other way. Close to hitting the wall.

"No one has driven around here in the rain before, so it was difficult to know what to expect."

MORE PERFORMANCE IN THE CAR

Piastri felt there was more



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris gestures after winning the pole position during the qualifying session for the Las Vegas Formula One Grand Prix at the Las Vegas Strip Circuit. — AFP

performance in the car and hoped to make up places.

"We've got a good car underneath us that seems to be working well in all conditions so we can have a strong race tomorrow," he said.

Spaniard Carlos Sainz qualified an impressive third for Williams with George Russell, last year's winner on the famed floodlit Strip and fastest in final practice and the first two phases, fourth for Mercedes.

Russell said he had an issue with his car's power steering at the end, while Sainz faced a stewards' enquiry for allegedly rejoining the track unsafely.

New Zealander Liam Lawson was sixth for Racing Bulls, boosting his hopes of staying with the team next year, with Fernando Alonso seventh

for Aston Martin and Isack Hadjar eighth in the other Racing Bulls.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc qualified ninth and Pierre Gasly completed the top 10 for Alpine, who are last in the standings.

Lewis Hamilton, who normally excels in wet conditions, charted a new low at Ferrari with last place at a street circuit his team had hoped would favour them.

It was the first time in his career he had been last on pace in qualifying, and the first time a Ferrari had qualified slowest since Giancarlo Fisichella in Abu Dhabi in 2009. Norris made it through Q1 in 13th, with Piastri a safer sixth, while Russell set the pace ahead of Verstappen on the treacherous surface. — Reuters

BUSINESS



SHORT TAKES

OMAN UNIFIES INVESTMENT SYSTEM TO DRIVE QUALITY PROJECTS



IBTISAM BINT AHMED AL FAROOJIYAH
Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is undergoing a major overhaul of its investment attraction and management system through the unified national model, “Invest in Oman”.

This new identity brings together all government and private-sector efforts under one umbrella to streamline services and accelerate high-quality investment

inflows. Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Faroojiyah, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, said the shift marks a strategic leap from fragmented procedures to a coordinated national system.

More than 22 entities now operate through a single channel, significantly simplifying processes and improving service delivery for investors.

Al Farooji explained that Invest in Oman functions as a fully integrated platform.

It includes a unified investor reception centre, a specialised investor relations team that accompanies projects from inception to operation and a national negotiation team responsible for securing high-quality contracts that protect national interests.

The system also features an advanced digital investment map and a unified government network designed to fast-track priority projects. She noted that the transformation has boosted Oman’s global investment profile and helped create a more competitive business environment.

Over the past two years, foreign direct investment (FDI) surpassed \$78 billion, reflecting growth of more than 12%. Oman has also climbed to fourth place globally among the top destinations for FDI — an indicator of strong international confidence in the country’s economic stability and regulatory reforms. — **ONA**

Strengthening framework to attract investments

THE Sultanate of Oman is accelerating reforms to modernise its financing system, enhance economic competitiveness, and attract high-quality foreign investment, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. These efforts are supported by strong banking performance, upgraded credit ratings, and an expanding legislative and regulatory framework.

Oman’s banking sector continues to demonstrate solid growth, with total credit rising 8 per cent to RO 34.5 billion by the end of September 2025. Credit to the private sector increased to RO 28.2 billion, reflecting rising demand across non-oil sectors.

Total deposits grew 4.7 per cent to RO 33.1 billion, supported by increasing private sector confidence. Individuals hold roughly half of all private-sector deposits, while corporates and financial institutions account for the remainder.

Islamic finance has also expanded significantly, offering diversified instruments in trade, asset and SME financing. The share of SME lending has reached 3.7 per cent, with a national strategy underway to raise it to 5 per cent by streamlining credit assessments, easing collateral requirements, and developing specialised financing units within banks.

International confidence in Oman’s fiscal and financial stability continues to strengthen. Standard & Poor’s affirmed Oman’s credit rating at BBB– with a stable



International confidence in Oman’s fiscal and financial stability continues to strengthen.



ABDULLAH BIN SALIM AL SALMI
Executive President
Financial Services Authority

outlook, while Moody’s upgraded the rating to Baa3, supported by fiscal consolidation and a declining public debt-to-GDP ratio. These improvements enhance Oman’s appeal to long-term foreign investors.

Legislative reforms are also reshaping the financial landscape. The new Banking Law strengthens governance, regulates digital banking, and prohibits shell banks. Meanwhile, the establishment of the Financial Services Authority (FSA) has unified oversight of non-banking financial activities, including the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), insurance, accounting and auditing sectors.

The FSA has launched an incentive programme to encourage family-owned firms, private companies and high-growth SMEs to list on the MSX or convert to joint-stock entities.

Abdullah bin Salim al Salmi,

Executive President of the Financial Services Authority, said the programme aims to promote stronger governance, broaden financing options, and deepen the capital market’s role in sustainable economic development.

He noted that capital markets offer flexible medium- and long-term financing tools such as equities, bonds and sukuk, complementing bank lending and helping spread risk. Oman is also expanding modern financing channels.

Crowdfunding platforms have raised RO 14.9 million since 2022, providing alternative capital sources for SMEs and startups. Digital payment adoption has surged, with annual mobile payment transactions rising from fewer than 5 million to around 40 million in three years, supported by advanced national payment systems including RTGS, ECS and mobile platforms. — **ONA**

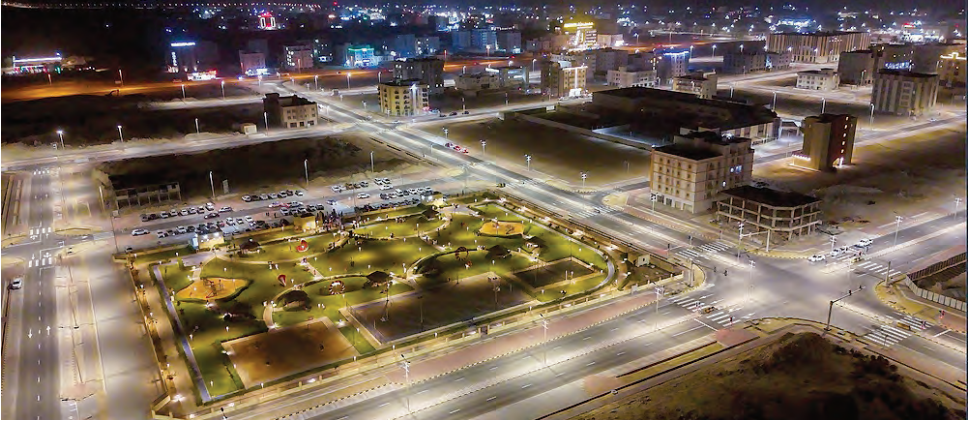
Duqm SEZ rolls out strategy as investment projects accelerate

AL DUQM: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) has begun implementing its 2025–2030 strategy, centred on attracting new investments, enhancing operational efficiency, developing quality lifestyles, promoting tourism and achieving institutional excellence.

Engineer Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of SEZAD, said the strategy focuses on expanding investment across key sectors and advancing the development and marketing of sub-zones, particularly in tourism and renewable energy.

The implementation phase has already involved a series of workshops to align management teams with strategic goals, supported by an institutional transformation programme and refreshed brand identity aimed at improving investor services and strengthening Al Duqm’s global positioning.

SEZAD continues to see strong investment growth, with committed investments rising to RO 6.323 billion by the end of June



SEZAD continues to see strong investment growth, with committed investments rising to RO 6.323 billion by the end of June 2025.

2025 — a 5.3% increase from RO 6.004 billion the year before.

Akaak said this reflects rising investor confidence and the competitive incentives offered, as well as the robust infrastructure developed in recent years.

Major projects are moving steadily across various sectors. In real estate, the Maysan Square Duqm integrated business complex has reached 80%

completion.

In green industries, Jindal Steel’s green steel plant is 26% complete, while ACME’s green ammonia project — designed for 100,000 tonnes of annual production — has reached 17% progress, with the first phase slated for completion in July 2027.

The zone is also expanding its industrial and logistics base.

The first phase of the Mawarid

Turbine factory, valued at over RO 70 million, was launched this year.

The plant, expected to be operational in 2026, will manufacture wind turbines of up to 9.6 MW capacity and create more than 1,000 jobs.

Infrastructure development remains a priority. Key road projects are nearing completion, including the 51-km dual carriageway between Duqm Airport and Ras Markaz storage tanks, the 94%-complete Sultan Said bin Taimur (South) road and National Highway 32, whose two phases have reached 83% and 58% completion.

A new 16-km dual carriageway has also been awarded to support tourism development by linking coastal areas to the fishing port and food processing complex.

To enhance liveability, SEZAD has completed the 13,000 sqm Business District Park, internal road networks; and modern sewage and irrigation systems.

A multi-purpose community

complex overlooking the beach — now 95% complete — will soon offer new leisure and social facilities for residents and employees.

Business activity in the zone is rising sharply. In the first half of 2025, SEZAD signed new usufruct agreements worth RO 22.6 million and recorded 19 new investment applications, up from 7 last year.

Commercial registrations increased from 68 to 225, alongside 181 economic activity licences, 262 public service licences and 599 work permits.

Employment in the zone has also grown, with total workers exceeding 12,400 and Omani employees rising to 3,245 — more than double the number recorded last year. Omanisation has increased to over 26%, compared to 20% in mid-2024.

SEZAD continues to support small and medium enterprises, which now total 541 active firms. These include 463 micro-enterprises, 59 small firms and 19 medium-sized businesses. — **ONA**

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The Maal card is designed to operate through the national payment network OmanNet.

Sohar International launches “Maal” national payment card

MUSCAT: In alignment with the national direction towards strengthening financial infrastructure and accelerating digital transformation, Sohar International has announced the launch of the national payment card “Maal”, a strategic initiative led by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) to advance the Sultanate of Oman’s national card system. The initiative represents a major step in promoting the digital economy, enhancing financial inclusion and supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 for a more innovative and less cash-dependent society.

The Maal card is designed to operate through the national payment network OmanNet, ensuring that all domestic transactions — whether through point-of-sale (POS) terminals, ATMs, or e-commerce channels — are processed securely withi

n Oman. The project is part of a broader national effort to strengthen payment system infrastructure, enhance data security and localisation; and support innovation in modern financial technologies. It is also expected to reduce transaction-related costs for banks, merchants, government entities and cardholders, while expanding access to financial services across society.

In this regard, Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, stated: “At Sohar International, we believe that true progress lies in building systems that strengthen national resilience and empower future generations.

This approach is fully aligned with the path of national development, fostering a secure, inclusive and innovation-driven economy.

Beyond enhancing the way people transact, it symbolises the collective commitment of the public and private sectors to shaping a stronger, more sustainable future for the nation. In support of this national vision, we are proud to contribute by launching our ‘Maal’ Card, reinforcing Oman’s journey towards financial independence and digital advancement”.

The card supports a wide range of domestic transactions such as POS payments (contact and contactless), ATM withdrawals, e-commerce purchases and government service payments.

NBO issues \$450 million tier 1 capital securities

THE National Bank of Oman (NBO) has completed the issuance of its Additional Tier 1 (AT1) capital securities in Regulation S (REGS) format, securing a strategic transaction that attracted strong interest from investors across local, regional and international markets.

The strong belief in Oman Vision 2040 and the success of Oman’s fiscal reform agenda, along with key measures taken by the Omani government — such as economic expansion, non-oil sector development, and increased investment in hydrocarbon sectors — has strengthened investor confidence in Omani institutions and the broader investment landscape.

Driven by strong demand, the well-diversified order book peaked at \$1.5 billion, resulting in an oversubscription of 5 times of typical benchmark size. Based on this demand, the Bank decided to upsize the issuance to \$450 million. The AT1 capital securities were priced at par with a coupon of 6.625% pa and has been listed on Euronext, Dublin.

Speaking on the transaction, Abdullah bin Zahran al Hinai, Chief Executive Officer of NBO, said: “We extend our appreciation to the Omani government for its strong fiscal reforms and decisive policy measures, which continue to enhance confidence in the Omani economy and local institutions by the wider investment community. NBO remains well positioned to deliver value and pursue



The AT1 capital securities were priced at par with a coupon of 6.625% pa and has been listed on Euronext, Dublin.

sustainable growth for our stakeholders.

This milestone AT1 issuance, coming after a gap of 10 years in the global capital markets since earlier AT1 issuance of \$300 million in 2015 is clear testimony to the trust placed in NBO’s financial strength and long-term strategic direction. It strengthens our capital base and broadens our access to diverse funding channels, allowing us to accelerate growth and advance our priorities in support of Oman Vision 2040”.

The successful completion of this

transaction, the largest ever \$AT1 issuance by an Omani bank in the international market, underlines NBO’s commitment to prudent capital planning and sustainable performance and enhances its contribution to Oman’s economic development and the advancement of the financial sector

NBO extends its sincere appreciation and gratitude to all teams and stakeholders whose dedication, expertise and collaboration made this achievement possible.

Grand Millennium Muscat launchES ‘Bahriyat’ experience

MUSCAT: Grand Millennium Muscat has unveiled an impressive new dining concept that is set to redefine seafood dining in the city. ‘Bahriyat — From Sea to Plate, Unforgettable Tastes’ introduces a sensorial ‘Seafood Night’ experience, blending the freshest ocean flavours with creative culinary artistry.

As part of this new promotion, Bahriyat is highlighting its commitment to support local Omani catch and encourage sustainable practices in seafood sourcing. This experience also serves as an opportunity to engage with and educate local suppliers on the long-term importance of sustainability, helping preserve Oman’s rich marine ecosystem while ensuring the highest-quality ingredients for guests.

Nestled in the heart of Muscat, Bahriyat has long



Every dish is designed to honour authentic flavours while showcasing modern gastronomic techniques.

been celebrated for its elegant fusion of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine.

With the launch of the ‘Seafood Night’, the restaurant elevates its offerings even further, presenting guests with a vibrant and diverse buffet crafted from the day’s finest catches.

From succulently prepared seafood and sushi to crisp salads, comforting soups, flavourful main courses and indulgent desserts, every dish is designed to honour authentic flavours while showcasing modern gastronomic techniques.

The sensory journey extends beyond the plate. Guests are welcomed into Bahriyat’s ocean-inspired interiors, where shades of deep blue and contemporary décor mirror the serenity of the sea.

The vibrant ambience is enhanced with live music, creating the perfect setting for a memorable evening with family, friends or colleagues.

Bahriyat invites diners to enjoy this exquisite buffet experience every Tuesday and Friday from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm.

Commenting on this seafood extravaganza, Abhay Chauhan,

Director of Food and beverage at Grand Millennium Muscat, said: “We are delighted to introduce this magnificent new buffet at Bahriyat, which has been conceptualised and crafted to create an experience that pampers all the senses.

The concept — ‘From Sea to Plate’ — is a direct reflection of our commitment to freshness and exceptional quality. We have curated a spread that truly captures the spirit of the sea — from the vibrant blue-shaded décor to the incredible selection of dishes. It’s the perfect setting to enjoy high-quality dining and live music in the heart of Muscat, during the most pleasant climate of the year”.

With its fresh flavours, ocean-inspired ambience and live music, Bahriyat — From Sea to Plate, Unforgettable Tastes promises an evening that delights all the senses.

Bank Muscat reaffirms its contribution to economic development

MUSCAT: Coinciding with the Sultanate of Oman’s National Day celebrations, Bank Muscat, the leading financial institution, organised an event at its head office in Airport Heights.

The celebrations were attended by the Bank executive management, employees and a number of customers, in a patriotic atmosphere that reflected deep national pride and a strong sense of belonging.

The event featured a range of activities that showcased Omani identity and heritage, including Omani traditional musical performances, a section dedicated to Omani cuisine and other cultural showcases that reflected a sentiment of joy and loyalty to the nation.

These activities created an engaging and interactive environment among employees, management and valued customers. To mark the occasion, the Bank released a new patriotic song titled “Ihsasi Al-Madhool” meaning



The event featured a range of activities that showcased Omani identity and heritage.

“My Astonished Feeling”, which embodies noble national sentiments and celebrates pride in the achievements fulfilled under the Sultanate of Oman’s trajectory of renaissance.

The song received public engagement across social media platforms. Amidst the celebrations

of this glorious occasion, the Bank’s Head Office was illuminated with a dazzling display of coloured lights, forming a radiant artistic scene that reflects national pride and commemorates the rich legacy of the nation.

The spaces of the Bank’s branches distributed all over the Sultanate

of Oman were adorned with the vibrant colours of the Omani flag. These visual expressions offer visitors a deeply moving experience filled with a sense of patriotism and heartfelt loyalty.

Bank Muscat takes great pride in its pioneering roles in actively contributing to the nation’s economic and social development and supporting key sectors that drive sustainable national growth.

The Bank’s role goes beyond providing banking services to include tangible and effective contributions to promote financial inclusion, social responsibility and the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

In addition, the Bank provides financing for major national projects across a wide range of sectors. Reinforcing its leadership in the industry, Bank Muscat continues to expand strategically, operating more than 190 branches and service centres, including Meethaq Islamic

Banking branches, across the Sultanate of Oman.

The Bank also operates around 900 digital banking service devices, including ATMs, cash deposit machines and self-service kiosks, while continuously expanding in its digital solutions.

Amidst the national celebrations of this glorious occasion, Bank Muscat proudly reaffirms its role in the field of human capital development.

The Bank remains committed to providing an ideal work environment that empowers Omani talents and equips them for a promising future in modern banking, as anchored in its strategy to invest in national human resources.

Bank Muscat prioritises Omani human resources for recruitment and offers diverse training and professional development opportunities across all areas of banking.

SHORTTAKES



The company continues to strengthen Omani trade performance by offering a wide suite of insurance solutions.

CREDIT OMAN
INSURED SALES
TOP RO 296 MILLION

MUSCAT: Credit Oman reported total insured sales of more than RO 296.5 million by the end of the third quarter of 2025, up from RO 272.8 million during the same period last year. Export-related insured sales amounted to RO 159.96 million, while domestic insured sales reached RO 136.63 million.

The company said it continues to strengthen Omani trade performance by offering a wide suite of insurance solutions designed to support manufacturers and exporters. Acting CEO Haitham bin Abdullah al Yaqoubi stated that Credit Oman aims to protect businesses against commercial and non-commercial risks, enabling them to expand more confidently into global markets.

Al Yaqoubi highlighted that Omani products — especially building materials, petrochemicals and plastics — have gained strong traction in markets such as the United States and Europe due to their quality and adherence to international standards.

He encouraged local businesses to take advantage of Credit Oman’s insurance and advisory services to enhance sales and safeguard their operations.

This year, Credit Oman has conducted over 12 workshops across the Sultanate of Oman to raise awareness of credit insurance and reinforce the company’s role in supporting exporters and industrial firms nationwide. — **ONA**

Tourism, heritage drive
Oman’s non-oil growth

OMAN’S heritage and tourism sectors posted strong results in the first nine months of 2025, underscoring their growing role in economic diversification and reinforcing the country’s reputation as a sustainable cultural and tourism destination that blends tradition with modern development.

According to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the tourism sector’s direct added value reached RO 873 million, while total tourism output climbed to RO 1.99 billion.

The sector now contributes 2.7 per cent to Oman’s GDP, highlighting its rising importance within the non-oil economy. Government revenues from the Ministry’s activities reached RO 13.55 million by the end of September, signalling improved financial performance and stronger demand for tourism services.

Hotel revenues rose 6.1 per cent to RO 293.4 million, supported by higher occupancy rates and a wider range of tourism programmes. By the end of the third quarter, Oman welcomed 2.83 million international visitors — slightly lower than last year — while domestic tourism surged to 13.6 million visits, driven by festivals, events and seasonal activities.

Hotel guest numbers also grew 4.6 per cent to 4.6 million, reflecting continued confidence in the country’s tourism



The tourism sector’s direct added value reached RO 873 million, while total tourism output climbed to RO 1.99 billion.

offerings.

As part of its global marketing efforts, the Ministry expanded its network of international representative offices, opening new ones in China, Russia and Spain, with upcoming offices planned in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. These 11 offices conduct campaigns in 25 countries and have generated more than RO 30 million in direct returns.

Oman also participated in over 20 international exhibitions, earning awards for its pavilion designs, which blend heritage with modern digital displays. A promotional campaign with CNN further strengthened global visibility. In the cruise and charter

tourism segment, the Ministry advanced initiatives from its sectoral study aimed at enhancing port infrastructure and regulatory frameworks. Charter flights for the 2024–2025 season increased to 588 from 466 a year earlier, attracting 93,000 tourists and generating an estimated \$80 million in economic returns.

Additionally, 30 local tourism events, held in partnership with various entities, contributed RO 4 million to the economy. Hotel infrastructure continued to expand, with establishments rising to 1,309 and hotel rooms increasing to 38,000 — a 7.9 per cent growth.

Occupancy rates remained stable overall, while reaching 52.6 per cent in three- to five-

star hotels. The Ministry issued 383 preliminary approvals for new accommodation projects, with 114 currently under development and expected to open between 2025 and 2027.

Investments in integrated tourism complexes have now surpassed RO 11.5 billion. From January to September, the Ministry signed 36 concession agreements worth RO 100 million for new tourism projects. Employment in the tourism sector reached 169,800, with Omanisation rising to 10.9 per cent.

Meanwhile, Oman continues to safeguard its cultural assets, now counting 3,655 registered historical and archaeological sites, 1,328 of which have been restored. — **ONA**

Oman weighs silica-based industrial cluster at Duqm SEZ

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 22

Plans are afoot for the establishment of a silica-based industrial cluster at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), in line with the Omani government’s ambition to ignite the growth of glass, ferrosilicon and solar-panel manufacturing industries that support the Sultanate of Oman’s clean energy transition.

Leveraging Oman’s abundance of high-purity silica, the proposed cluster will also support national goals of industrial diversification and economic value-addition.

Glass and ferrosilicon production, for example, help convert raw minerals into higher-value industrial materials that feed construction, automotive and metallurgical sectors, while solar-panel manufacturing directly supports Oman’s rapid expansion of renewable energy projects and positions the country within global clean-tech supply chains.

Together, these industries can stimulate downstream manufacturing clusters, attract foreign investment, create skilled jobs, boost non-oil exports and reinforce Oman’s ambition to become a regional hub for low-carbon, mineral-based industries.

To help ensure adequate supplies of high-



Top officials of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals at silica-rich mineral sites in Al Wusta Governorate.

purity silica for the cluster, senior officials of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals conducted a field visit to mineral-rich sites across Al Wusta Governorate

The team included Eng Salim bin Nasser Al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals; Eng Mohsin bin Hamad al Hadhrami, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals; and Shaikh Ahmed bin Musallam al Kathiri, Governor of Al Wusta.

Among the sites covered was the F-51 concession in the Wilayat of Mahout, home to some of Oman’s largest silica deposits.

“During our field visit to the silica ore sites in Al Wusta Governorate, I was pleased to witness the richness of Oman’s mineral resources and the promising opportunities they offer to support the national economy and future industries”, said Under-Secretary Mohsin al Hadhrami in a post.

“This visit comes as part of Oman’s ambition to establish an integrated industrial complex for silica-based industries in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm — a pivotal step towards enhancing local added value and developing advanced industries such as glass, ferrosilicon and solar panels”, he added.

The Ministry, Al Hadhrami further noted, is working in collaboration with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) — which oversees SEZAD, among other hubs — in the sustainable management of national resources.

“With this spirit of partnership, we continue to transform our natural resources into promising development opportunities that contribute to the realisation of Oman Vision 2040, strengthening the Sultanate of Oman’s position as a regional hub for advanced industries built on sustainable natural wealth”, the Under-Secretary stated.

The field visit also included a silica production site located within the F-51

concession awarded to Minerals Development Oman (MDO), the state-owned mining and minerals processing investment arm of the Omani government represented by Oman Investment Authority (OIA).

A small 5 km² site within the sprawling 2,156 km² concession in Mahout was brought into operation recently, with an initial target of 100,000 tonnes of high-purity silica ore annually.

Omani geo-consultancy firm Earth Sciences Consultancy Centre, led by Dr Mohammed al Kindi as CEO, is partnering with MDO in the development of silica reserves in this concession.

In future phases, this partnership plans to develop a primary silica processing facility to enhance product quality and attract high-tech industries such as semiconductors, glass manufacturing, chemical processing and metallurgical applications. These initiatives will contribute to the development of sustainable local value chains and advanced industrial growth in Oman.

The Earth Sciences Consultancy Centre is overseeing the operational and developmental aspects of the project, including investment and production management, while MDO serves as the resource owner and overall project overseer.

FACTORY SLOWDOWN

US manufacturing cools in November



US manufacturing slowed to a four-month low in November as tariffs pushed prices higher and dampened demand, resulting in a buildup of unsold inventories.

With consumers increasingly unwilling to buy durable goods, relief for producers appears unlikely soon. Their is a sharp decline in purchasing conditions with widespread frustration over persistent price pressures. — **Reuters**

CLIMATE STALEMATE

COP30 summit talks deadlocked



Brazil’s COP30 summit entered overtime after the EU rejected a draft agreement it said failed to meaningfully advance global climate goals.

The conference extended negotiations as countries remained divided on fossil fuels and long-term emission cuts. Brazil has framed COP30 as a decisive moment, urging nations to overcome differences and reaffirm commitment to coordinated climate action. — **Reuters**

TARIFF IMPACT

Brazil exports still hit by US



Brazil said 22% of its exports to the United States remain subject to a combined 50% tariff despite Washington expanding exemptions to include products like coffee, meat and fruit. The Ministry of Development noted these items still face both the 40% surcharge and a 10% base tariff.

Vice President Geraldo Alckmin said the share affected was previously 36 per cent. — **Reuters**

OPINION

ESG in Oman: Driving sustainable growth and responsible business



DR HILAL
AL SAWAI

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert.

OVER the last few years, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) principles have become global benchmarks for responsible and predictive businesses, identifying key strategic focus areas.

With Oman being one of the strategically located countries in the world, having a diversification of its economic interests and long term focus on national development seeks to have ESG principles embedded as a key element of the sustainability Omani business aims to pursue.

As Oman moves towards Oman Vision 2040, the integration of ESG principles is seen not just as a responsibility, but a competitive advantage to businesses in Oman, whether in the public or private sector.

Environmentally, Oman's commitment to sustainability is reflected in the national initiatives that have been launched aimed at the reduction of carbon and the other greenhouse gases and the mitigation of the impacts on the country's ecosystems while promoting the use of clean energy.

The country is blessed with the highest solar and wind potential in the region; and is in a better position to spearhead the development of renewable energy in the region.

The large scale solar parks in Al Dhahirah Governorate and the interest in some green hydrogen projects are a major step towards a low carbon future. Such initiatives are aligned with the interests of global investors as they not only decrease the dependence

on hydrocarbons but also demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability.

Finally, Oman's ESG expectations are only expected to continue to grow in the future considering the commitment to protecting the marine and desert ecosystems. Oman keeps fostering human capital, community transformation and inclusive progress. The sultanate of Oman enhanced level of education and health care services and the total health workforce.

The country's education, health sector and workforce nationalisation improvements government provided conditions for talent to bear. The country's programmes on the promotion of small and medium enterprises, businesswomen and youth entrepreneurship demonstrate the country's empowering and social resilient.

Companies adopting ESG standards acknowledge that social responsibility goes beyond philanthropy to include the wellness and equity of employees, the active participation of the community and the protection of social/cultural heritage. These social concerns ensure organisational sustainability and enhance public trust.

Oman's progress in the corporate domain has also been significant in regard to transparency, accountability and regulatory oversight. The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has contributed to improvements in the corporate governance framework, encouraging and facilitating sustainability reporting by listed companies and adoption of reporting standards.

New governance frameworks encourage

With Oman being one of the strategically located countries in the world, having a diversification of its economic interests and long term focus on national development seeks to have ESG principles embedded as a key element of the sustainability Omani business aims to pursue.

ethical and responsible risk management (and a focus on the protection of) for investors and the safe use of the organisation's complex operational environment. Increasingly, strong governance is seen to provide the necessary conditions for the social and environmental pillars to be met.

Oman's acceptance of ESG principles mirrors the global change in the acceptance of business principles and practices. Ethical, transparent practices and sustainability become more critical with each passing day and investors, customers, and regulators expect them.

For most Omani businesses, the adoption of ESG practices and principles is no longer an optional endeavour, but instead, an overwhelming necessity to remain competitive in the international marketplace, attract cross-border investments and build sustainable enterprise that are adaptable to the inevitable climate, economic and social challenges of the future.

The future integration of ESG principles into the public policy formulation, corporate change management and investment frameworks will be an indispensable asset for the sustainability of Oman.

ESG will assist the Sultanate of Oman in fostering partnerships among public sector institutions, businesses and the non-profit sector to become the most sustainable, responsible and protective of their people in the region. In doing so, Oman will uphold the values of Oman Vision 2040 by protecting the culture of the people and future aligning the economy of the people to the global economy.

FROM FUEL TO FUTURE: OMAN'S ROAD TOWARDS CLEAN TRANSPORT



NAJAH
AL RIYAMI

The writer is a Media and Communication Master's graduate.

OMAN is beginning to carve its path towards cleaner mobility as electric vehicles (EVs) shift from curiosity to reality on the nation's roads.

Driven by Oman Vision 2040, falling technology costs and rising environmental awareness, EV adoption is slowly but steadily gaining traction. Market forecasts show strong potential.

MarkNtel Advisors estimates Oman's EV market will expand from roughly \$200 million in 2024 to \$831 million by 2030, while Mordor Intelligence suggests it could reach \$2.42 billion as vehicles and batteries become more affordable.

A 2024 study in the World Electric Vehicle Journal found that performance, trust in EV technology and social influence are among the leading factors shaping consumer interest in Oman.

Yet familiar barriers persist, including limited charging points, high upfront costs and low public awareness. These are challenges seen across early-stage EV markets worldwide. Still, momentum is building. Charging stations are emerging in Muscat, Suhar and Salalah through private-sector pilots, supported by MoTCIT standards for equipment and safety.

Research published in Frontiers in Sustainable Cities shows that visible charging access directly boosts purchase intention and policy incentives such as reduced fees or priority parking could accelerate early uptake. Oman stands to benefit through shared standards, lower technology costs and improved model availability. Electrification also aligns with Oman's broader clean-energy goals. The government aims for 30 per cent renewable electricity by 2030, with major solar and wind projects underway. This clean power will support an expanding EV fleet. Hydrogen is also on the horizon. Oman's National Hydrogen Strategy positions green hydrogen as a future fuel for heavy transport, echoing trends in Germany and Japan.

Economic prospects are significant. With rising regional demand, Oman could attract investment in EV assembly, battery storage and component manufacturing, especially in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. A local EV ecosystem spanning import, maintenance, charging operations and battery recycling could boost jobs and support In-Country Value priorities.

The quiet strength behind Oman's global ambitions

EVERY country has a story it tells the world. Some highlight their natural resources, others their technology and many lean on their geography. But in the global economy we live in today, none of these stories matter unless the world believes one thing: that the country can be trusted.

Trust has become an economic asset. It determines whether a shipment is waved through or held back for retesting. It shapes the confidence of investors before they sign contracts.

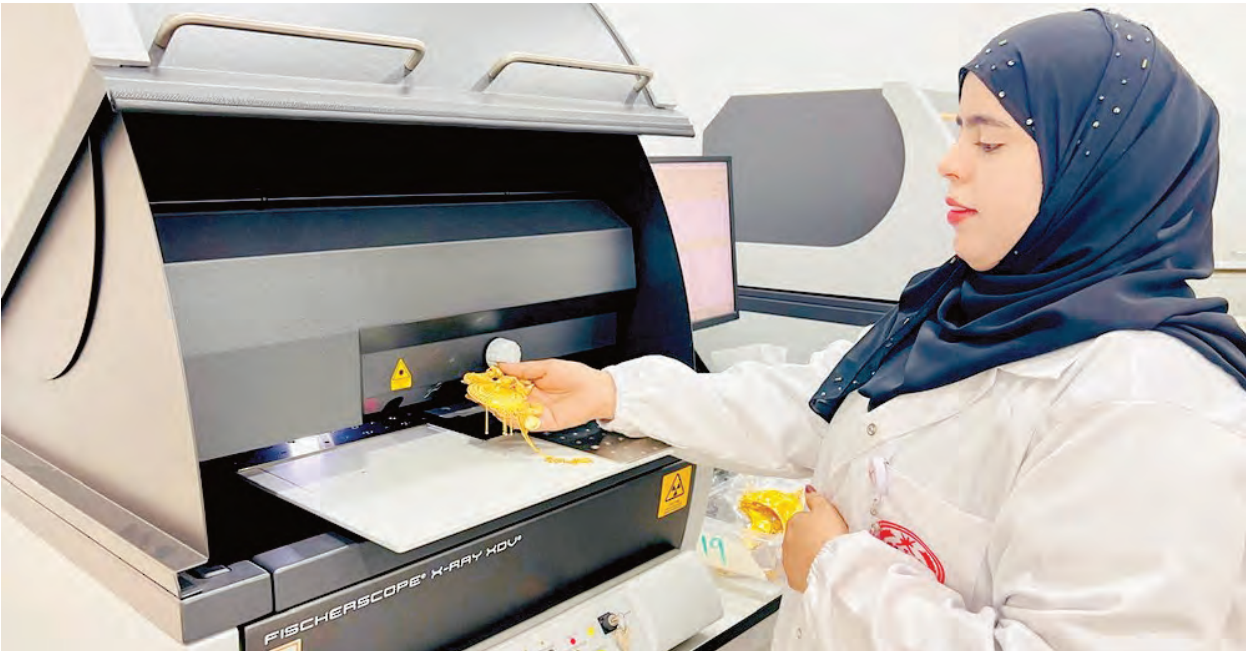
And increasingly, it influences whether a product made in one corner of the world can reach a supermarket shelf in another. In this sense, Oman's growing work on national accreditation is not a technical side project — it is one of the quiet strengths that will define how far the Sultanate of Oman can go in global markets.

Accreditation rarely makes headlines and perhaps that is why its value is underestimated. But ask any company trying to enter the EU, the UK, East Africa or Southeast Asia: without recognised testing, inspection and certification systems, even the best-made product may struggle to cross a border. Global markets simply do not gamble on unknown compliance systems.

This is why the progress Oman has made in recent years matters. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has been building a national ecosystem where standards, testing, inspection and accreditation speak the same language as international regulators.

The presence of the GCC Accreditation Centre (GAC) in Muscat, combined with the rise of accredited laboratories across the country, is slowly stitching Oman into the global network that underpins trade and quality.

These developments may not feel dramatic, but they change real



By investing in trust — through standards, transparency and internationally aligned accreditation — Oman is shaping an economic future that is more open to opportunity.



QASIM
AL MAASHANI

The author is the head of the Business and Politics department at Oman Observer.

things.

They reduce the risk for Omani exporters when dealing with strict markets. They send a reassuring signal to foreign investors who want regulatory clarity. And they help prevent the kind of costly retesting that has frustrated exporters in many developing markets.

Countries like Singapore understood this decades ago. Their reputation for reliability did not come from marketing campaigns — it came from building quality systems that foreign regulators trusted instantly. Oman is now taking the same path, but on its own terms and at its own pace.

The benefits are not limited to exports. A credible accreditation framework also protects the Omani consumer. When imported products must meet recognised standards, the chances of unsafe goods entering the domestic market shrink.

This helps local industries compete fairly and it reinforces the public's confidence in what they buy — whether food, medicine or electrical goods.

Oman Vision 2040 sets a high bar: a globally competitive, innovative

and quality-driven economy. Ambitions like these require more than economic zones and investment incentives.

They require a backbone of institutions that can stand behind every Omani product, wherever it travels. Accreditation is one of those institutions — quiet, technical, perhaps even invisible at first glance, but indispensable once understood.

The truth is simple: the next stage of global competition will be fought not only in factories but also in the systems that verify what comes out of them. Nations that build strong accreditation systems will advance confidently in global supply chains. Those that neglect them will remain spectators.

Oman has already chosen its direction. By investing in trust — through standards, transparency and internationally aligned accreditation — it is shaping an economic future that is steadier, more open to opportunity and more connected to the world.

And in a global economy crowded with voices, trust remains the most persuasive story a country can tell.

Green hydrogen showcased in Sydney

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Energy and Minerals has reinforced Oman's growing role in the global hydrogen economy through its participation in the Asian Hydrogen Summit and Exhibition in Sydney. Mohsin bin Hamad al Hadhrami, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, led the delegation, reaffirming Oman's commitment to clean energy transition and its ambition to emerge as a leading

international hub for green hydrogen. During the conference, Al Hadhrami delivered the keynote address, outlining Oman's national strategy to advance a large-scale hydrogen industry. He highlighted the country's expanding portfolio of green hydrogen projects, supported by agreements with major local and international developers. His remarks also detailed the regulatory and investment



During the conference, Al Hadhrami delivered the keynote address.

reforms underway, including streamlined permitting, robust infrastructure planning and targeted incentives designed to attract global investors. The keynote stressed the importance of international collaboration, alignment of global standards and the development of hydrogen trade corridors to stimulate demand and accelerate the sector's growth. Al Hadhrami underscored that these elements are essential for

ensuring a sustainable, competitive hydrogen economy. On the sidelines of the summit, the Omani delegation held several high-level meetings with global institutions and companies to explore potential cooperation in project development, financing and technical exchange. Discussions with the Australian government and the Australian Trade and Investment Commission provided insights into Australia's plans to build

green hydrogen capacity of up to one gigawatt over the next three years, supported by funding programmes from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA). The delegation also met Dr Fiona Simon, Chair of the Australian Hydrogen Council, to exchange views on decarbonisation pathways, regulatory frameworks and opportunities to scale hydrogen applications across key industries.

CLASSIFIEDS

SIT. WANTED

ACCOUNTS/
Finance: Indian male (MBA Fin) having more than 19 years of experience in Oman accounts & finance looking for suitable placement, NOC available and can join immediately. Contact: 92076716

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

ACCOUNTS/ SALES
Indian male (b com) having 2+ years of experience in India accounts sales looking for suitable placement, join immediately. Contact: 76324360

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ART/LIFE



TINY GARDENS IN GLASS > 20

FASHION

OMANI HERITAGE ON DISPLAY IN WASHINGTON



The Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre in Washington hosted its first fashion show featuring traditional Omani clothing, titled 'Omani Fashion Night', in an elegant evening that celebrated Omani heritage and marked a distinctive step in cultural diplomacy.

Dr Majid bin Hilal al Khalili, Executive Director of the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre in Washington, said the event was exceptional in both concept and organisation. He noted that what truly distinguished the occasion was not only the richness of the display, but the fact that it represented the centre's first fashion show, reflecting its vision to expand cultural platforms and present Omani heritage to a wider audience in the US.

Omani designer Alaa al Siyabi travelled from the Sultanate of Oman to present a captivating collection inspired by the traditional attire of Omani women. Featuring luxurious fabrics and intricate hand embroidery, the designs combined authenticity with contemporary innovation, offering a modern interpretation of Omani dress while preserving its historic essence.

The evening was organised in partnership with Omani businesswoman Rasha al Madani, a member of the Businesswomen's Committee at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, whose efforts played a prominent role in the event's refined presentation. She affirmed that the show marks the beginning of a new pathway in promoting Omani identity on the global stage.

The fashion show served not only as an artistic celebration but also as a cultural platform highlighting Oman's rich heritage and humanitarian presence, conveying a message of the Sultanate of Oman's ability to present its traditions to the world with elegance and authenticity.

The event was attended by Talal bin Sulaiman al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States, along with diplomats, US government officials; and prominent media and cultural figures. — **ONA**



QUICK FEATURES

FESTIVE COLOURS

Photograph shows the Champs Elysees Avenue with Christmas illuminations and the Arc de Triomphe in the background in Paris. — **AFP**



TRADITIONAL

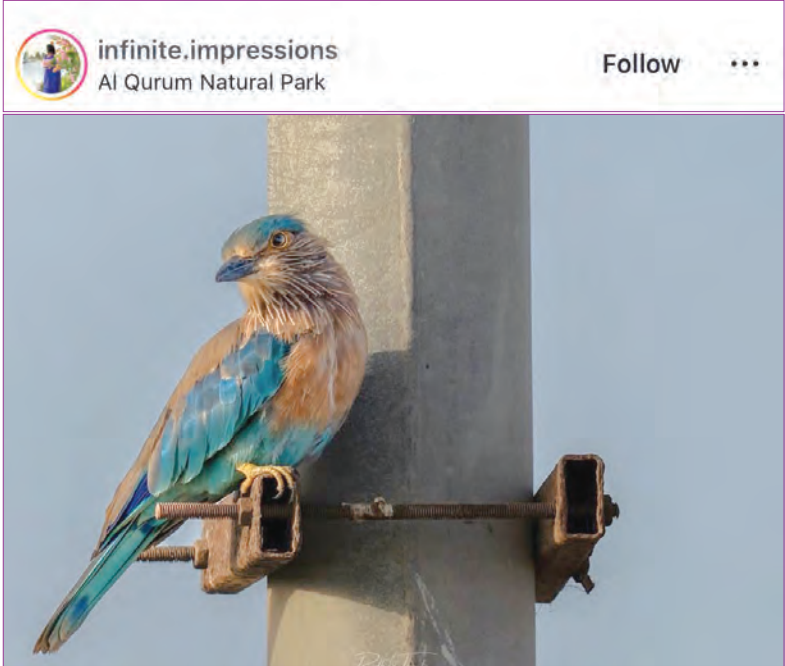
A hunter holds tamed hawks during a traditional hunting contest near the village of Tole Bi in the Almaty Region, Kazakhstan. — **Reuters**



SURFING

A surfer takes part in the Kommetjie festival's fancy dress surf competition, a unique community event celebrating the festive atmosphere of Kommetjie, a seaside village on the west coast of Cape Town, South Africa. — **Reuters**

INSTA PICKS



Perched and alert



Camel chronicles

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Italian singer Ornella Vanoni dies at 91



Italian singer Ornella Vanoni

Ornella Vanoni, one of Italy's most prolific singers whose career spanned six decades, died on Friday at the age of 91, Italian media said.

The singer died at home in Milan following a cardiac arrest, the Corriere della Sera daily and Agi news agency reported.

Vanoni was one of the most accomplished and beloved singers of 'musica leggera', popular music from the 1960s onwards.

She was instantly recognisable for her red curls and voice that shifted effortlessly from a smoky alto to clear, penetrating heights.

With over 50 million records sold, Vanoni frequently collaborated with other high-profile artists from George Benson and Herbie Hancock to Franco Califano and Gino

Paoli, with whom she had a long artistic collaboration and romantic affair.

Vanoni enjoyed some of her biggest commercial successes in the late 1960s and 1970s with hits such as 'The Music is Over', 'Eternity', 'The Date' and 'One More Reason'.

Born September 22, 1934, in Milan, Vanoni started her career on the stage but began singing songs about the Milanese underworld in her 20s under the tutelage of Giorgio Strehler, the renowned theatre director who became her lover and mentor.

In 1964, she won the Festival di Napoli, a now-defunct song competition in Naples and went on to participate eight times at the Sanremo Festival, coming second in 1968 with 'White House'.

She was the first singer in the history of the prestigious annual song festival to receive a career award, in 1999.

Italian Culture Minister Alessandro Giuli said in a statement that the nation had lost "one of its most original and refined artists".

"Thanks to her unique voice and unparalleled talent as a performer, she has left her mark on the history of Italian song, theatre and entertainment", he said.

In later years, the outspoken Vanoni was frequently featured in gossip magazines, revealing secrets of her former affairs and she continued to perform and record, with the studio album 'Unparalleled' released in 2021. — AFP



THE HEARTBEAT OF THE COAST

A tribute to Oman's fishing industry

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

ALONG OMAN'S vast coastline, stretching from the cliffs of Musandam to the wide open shores of Dhofar, the fishing industry stands as one of the country's oldest and most enduring pillars. It is a profession, a culture and a way of life that shaped Oman long before modern development transformed the nation. Even today, as the country strides confidently into a diversified future, fishing remains a heartbeat of coastal identity and a symbol of the deep connection between Omanis and the sea.

For generations, Omani fishermen have risen before sunrise, guided by little more than starlight and inherited wisdom. They read the colour of the water, the pull of the wind and the silence between waves. In places like Muttrah, Sur, Seeb, Quriyat, Mahout and Masirah, which are among Oman's key fisheries hubs, these rhythms are still alive. They reflect a coastal culture that stretches across the entire shoreline. Markets ease into their morning bustle as crates are opened and fresh catch is arranged with practiced ease, buyers moving between stalls in a familiar, unhurried flow.

But Oman's fishing industry is more than boats and markets. It is a living social ecosystem shaped by the people who depend on the sea and the traditions that have grown around it. Fishing is woven into daily routines, into shared memories and into the stories passed down between generations. It is a quiet discipline that forms a cultural landscape. Along the coast, fishermen continue practices that connect modern life to ancestral knowledge, keeping alive values of patience, respect and resilience that have defined Oman's maritime heritage for centuries.

This heritage stands alongside a sector that continues to evolve. By September 2022, Oman's total fish landings reached 920,097 tonnes, reflecting both the productivity of the Arabian Sea and the enduring importance of the fisheries sector to local and national markets (Oman Data Portal). Industrial fishing has also played a growing role in recent years, with locally operated longline vessels producing 76,480 tonnes of large pelagic fish in 2023, according to sector reporting. At the same time, new aquaculture projects are emerging across the country, marking a shift toward



sustainable, high-value production. These include the pilot marine fish-farming initiative in Al Musannah using recirculating aquaculture systems, a planned floating-cage project in Quriyat and a new shrimp aquaculture project under development in Awrab in South Al Sharqiyah. Together, such projects reflect the rising momentum of Oman's aquaculture sector as it complements traditional fisheries and supports long-term food security.

Oman's tribute to its fishing industry is also a tribute to its foresight. The country's Fisheries and Aquaculture Vision 2040 builds on earlier national development strategies and commits to a future shaped by sustainable, profitable and well-managed fisheries. In 2025, Oman strengthened this commitment on the global stage by joining the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries

Subsidies, a milestone that aligns with international efforts to curb harmful fishing practices and protect marine resources (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Regulations on fishing seasons and gear, investment in scientific monitoring and the continued designation of marine protected areas complement these measures and reflect a country choosing stewardship instead of short-term gain.

To honour Oman's fishing industry is to honour the stories of its people. These moments are threads of a national tapestry shaped by saltwater, skill and continuity.

As Oman looks ahead, the fishing industry remains not only an economic asset but also a cultural treasure. It embodies resilience, patience, knowledge and respect, qualities that echo across Omani history. The Arabian Sea is more than a resource. It is inheritance. It is memory. It is possibility.

FEATURES

GARDENS IN GLASS



IDRIS AL BLAUSHI

IN A WORLD that’s growing faster and louder every day, people are searching for small pockets of calm, a breath of nature they can keep close. In Muscat, that serenity often comes in the form of delicate ecosystems crafted by Rama al Habas, who tends to worlds no larger than a lantern. Inside each glass vessel she creates, a terrarium, tiny landscapes breathe, grow and reshape the idea of greenery for a new generation of nature lovers in Oman.

Rama, a young woman from Damascus who made Oman her home, begins each morning the same way she began her journey four years ago, by listening to her plants. “It all started with my passion for understanding every plant’s needs”, she recalls. “I loved caring for them, studying them and designing small green spaces wherever I could.” What began as a personal hobby soon grew into a creative partnership with her sister, Rawan. Together, they discovered terrariums, miniature ecosystems that blend art, science and imagination. What started as gifts to family and friends quickly evolved into something larger, admiration turned into demand, and demand into a brand that quietly celebrates serenity, beauty and sustainability.

Rama understood something many people in Oman feel but rarely articulate, in modern life, we often lose our connection to nature. “Many people miss that small green touch in their homes, especially with life moving so fast”, she says. So she chose indoor plants that thrive with minimal effort, plants that don’t just fill a corner, but brighten energy in a room. In a country where summers

Rama al Habas crafts terrariums, tiny landscapes breathe, grow and reshape the idea of greenery for a new generation of nature lovers in Oman

can be harsh and time can be limited, Rama’s vision makes perfect sense. Her terrariums offer an accessible, low-maintenance piece of nature, something that cools the eyes, calms the atmosphere and brings a gentle reminder of the outdoors into even the smallest apartment. For Rama, beauty is never complete without responsibility. Sustainability guides every choice she makes, not as a trend but as a promise. She uses eco-friendly materials, selects plants that conserve water and designs terrariums that can thrive for years without exhausting resources. In a region increasingly aware of climate change and environmental stewardship, her project resonates deeply. Her closed terrariums, with their self-sustaining humidity cycles, are almost a metaphor for the balance she hopes to promote in Oman, beautiful, functional and conscious.

Rama does not see her pieces as décor, she sees them as living art. Every terrarium is crafted with deliberate detail, from the shape of the glass to the colour of the stones, the curve of a branch, or the placement of soft moss. She mixes natural elements like wood, resin, coloured pebbles and miniature landscapes to build scenes that feel almost story-like. Her philosophy is simple, a balance between beauty and simplicity, the same gentle harmony you feel when walking through the wadis of Qurayat or the gardens of Al Qurum. Customisation has become a signature of her work. Clients come with requests for personal gifts, home accents, or pieces that fit a special celebration. “I love creating pieces that express the client’s personality”, she says. She studies their taste, the style of their space

and chooses each element with intention. From minimal modern terrariums suited for Muscat apartments to rustic woodland designs perfect for a farmhouse in Nizwa, she ensures each creation belongs to its environment, artistically and ecologically. The biggest challenge in her journey wasn’t creating the terrariums, it was explaining what they are. Many people in Oman had never seen a terrarium before. Rama’s solution was simple, she showed them. She participated in bazaars, shared behind-the-scenes videos online, demonstrated the life cycle of her plants and gradually built trust. Social media became her first platform and strongest ally, helping her cultivate a community, not just customers, who appreciate plants, sustainability and mindful design.

