

OMAN

دولة عمان

DAILY

Observer

VOL. 44, NO. 330
PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

SUNRISE 06:01 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR 04:44 AM
DHUHR 11:54 PM
ASR 03:15 PM
MAGHRIB 05:46 PM
ISHA 07:16 PM

2010000387405

10

OMAN, QATAR
PLAY OUT A
GOALLESS
DRAW

Decrees establish special economic zones in Ibri, Al Rawdhah

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday issued two Royal Decrees.

Royal Decree No 87/2025 establishes a Special Economic Zone in the Governorate of Al Dhahirah.

Article (1) states that a Special Economic Zone shall be established in the Wilayat of Ibri in the Governorate of Al Dhahirah. It shall be named “The Special Economic Zone in the Governorate of Al Dhahirah” in the designated land plot specified in the master plan attached to this decree.

Article (2) states that the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shall appoint the managing, operating and developing party for the Special Economic Zone in the Governorate of Al Dhahirah.

Article (3) states that the existing projects at the Special Economic Zone in the Governorate of Al Dhahirah shall be granted the incentives and advantages stipulated in the Law on Special Economic Zones and Free Zones promulgated under Royal Decree No 38/2025.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on the day following its date of publication.

Royal Decree No 88/2025 establishes a Special Economic Zone in Al Rawdhah.

Article (1) states that a Special Economic Zone shall be established in Al Rawdhah in the Wilayat of Mahadha in the Governorate of Al Buraimi. It shall be named “The Special Economic Zone in Al Rawdhah” in the designated land plot specified in the master plan attached to this decree.

Article (2) states that the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shall appoint the managing, operating and developing party for the Special Economic Zone in Al Rawdhah.

Article (3) states that the existing projects at the Special Economic Zone in Al Rawdhah shall be granted the incentives, advantages and exemptions stipulated in the Law on Special Economic Zones and Free Zones promulgated under Royal Decree No 38/2025.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on the day following its date of publication. — ONA

INBRIEF

HM SENDS CABLE TO UGANDA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Yoweri Museveni of the Republic of Uganda on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of success to President Yoweri and the people of Uganda. His Majesty also wished Uganda further growth and progress.

OMANI-SAUDI JOINT AIR EXERCISE

Activities of the Omani-Saudi joint exercise “Sky Swords 2025” concluded on Wednesday at King Abdulaziz Air Base in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The exercise saw the participation of aircraft from the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) and the Royal Saudi Air Force. The exercise was aimed at maintaining the combat readiness and to enhance operational capabilities during joint operations.

TRIO WINS NOBEL CHEMISTRY

Three scientists won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for developing a method of designing molecular structures whose multiple uses include tackling climate change by capturing carbon dioxide and harvesting water from desert air. Japan's Susumu Kitagawa, UK-born Richard Robson and American-Jordanian Omar Yaghi were honoured for their groundbreaking discoveries dating from the late 1980s to the early 2000s. SEE P7

GAZA TALKS HAVE MADE ‘A LOT OF HEADWAY’

US ENVOYS ARRIVE AT TALKS AS HAMAS VOICES ‘OPTIMISM’

TURKISH Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Wednesday that negotiations to stop the war in Gaza had made “a lot of headway” and that a ceasefire would be declared if they reached a positive outcome.

Fidan said the talks in Egypt, in which Ankara is taking part, are focused on securing a ceasefire, exchanging captives and prisoners, allowing more aid and coordinating a timetable for a withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Meanwhile, top US negotiators joined discussions on Wednesday aimed at bringing the Gaza war to an end, with the negotiations' Egyptian host saying he had received “encouraging” signs so far.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi hailed the support of US President Donald Trump, whose 20-point peace proposal forms the basis of the talks, while Hamas, too, expressed “optimism” over the indirect discussions with its foe Israel.

Both warring sides have responded positively to Trump's plan, which calls for a ceasefire, the release of all the captives, Hamas's disarmament and a gradual Israeli withdrawal from the territory.

Egyptian state-linked media aired footage of Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner pulling up to the talks in Sharm El Sheikh on Wednesday.

Sisi said the word he had received since their arrival in the city the night before was “very encouraging”, adding the US envoys came “with a strong will, a strong message, and a strong mandate from President Trump to end the war in this round of negotiations”.

Sisi also invited Trump himself to travel to Egypt for a signing ceremony if a deal were reached.

At the Oval Office on Tuesday, Trump told reporters, “there's a possibility that we could have peace in the Middle East” if Hamas and Israel did agree on a ceasefire.

Senior Hamas official Taher al Nunu said from Sharm El Sheikh that “mediators are making great efforts to remove any obstacles to the implementation of the ceasefire, and a spirit of optimism prevails”.

The group submitted a list of Palestinian prisoners it wants released from Israeli jails in the first phase of the truce “in accordance with the agreed-upon criteria and numbers”, Nunu added.

In exchange, Hamas is set to free 47 captives, both alive and dead, who were seized in its October 7, 2023, attack on Israel that sparked the war.

Qatari Prime Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani and Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin are also expected at the talks. SEE ALSO P6

Palestinian boy carries a bag with flour at Sabra neighbourhood, following Israeli operation, in Gaza City, on Wednesday. — Reuters

Excavation begins on tunnels for joint Omani-Emirati rail project

AL BURAIMI: Hafeet Rail, the developer and operator of the Joint Omani-Emirati Railway Network Project, on Wednesday announced the start of tunnel excavation work in the Al Hajar Mountains in the Al Buraimi Governorate. This marks a major qualitative launch for one of the most critical and transformative stages of the project.

The company added that it has achieved a series of key milestones in the execution of this strategic cross-border project, confirming that work is proceeding steadily and according to the scheduled timeline. Detailed design work has been completed.

Access roads leading to the tunnel entrances have been constructed to allow heavy equipment and construction materials to reach the sites. Drilling and blasting work is currently ongoing at the tunnel entrances in preparation for the full excavation phase.

Following the completion of the civil work for the tunnels, subsequent phases will involve forming the track structure, laying the rails, and implementing the rail systems inside them.

Access roads leading to the tunnel entrances have been constructed.

This work is being executed according to the highest standards of safety, sustainability, and environmental protection, utilising advanced engineering techniques and monitoring systems to ensure structural integrity, protect nearby residential areas, and mitigate the project's environmental impact.

Hafeet Rail has already received its first shipment of railway tracks via Sohar Port, a significant achievement reflecting continuous progress towards the rail-laying stage. In parallel, construction work is advancing in other areas, including excavation, backfilling and infrastructure construction, such as the implementation of 881 wadi drainage culverts and 57 bridges, some reaching a height of up to 34 metres.

With the progress in tunnel work, these achievements constitute a pivotal step that brings the Joint Omani-Emirati Rail Network Project closer to becoming one of the most prominent enablers of regional connectivity, boosting cross-border trade, and supporting the path towards sustainable economic growth. — ONA

OMAN



Experience Better

Their future starts today!

Change to AWASR, Fastest Internet In Oman

Get Ashel Educational Platform for free!

Unlimited data for all plans





SUBSCRIBE NOW!
WhatsApp
80001000
Website: awasr.om

SHORT TAKES

OMAN URGES ACTION ON GAZA HERITAGE DESTRUCTION



AMINA BINT SALIM AL BALUSHIYAH

Unesco Permanent Representative

PARIS: The Sultanate of Oman is participating in the 222nd session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), held at the organisation's headquarters in Paris from October 1 to 16. Delivering Oman's statement, Amina bint Salim al Balushiya, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to Unesco and Vice-Chair of the Executive Board for the Arab Group, commended the Organisation's continued efforts in advancing education, culture and science amid global challenges. She reaffirmed Oman's support for Unesco's pivotal role in promoting global peace and sustainable development.

Al Balushi emphasised the need for transparent and strategic discussions to address Unesco's financial situation, underscoring that its sustainability depends on bold, long-term measures that align with global transformations and the sustainable development goals of member states. — ONA

FORUM ADDRESSES CLIMATE CHANGE



MUSCAT: An event titled "City Resilience Forum for Climate Change and Major Incidents" kicked off in Muscat on Wednesday. Organised by the Ministry of Interior, the two-day forum came up with recommendations aimed at enhancing the preparedness of GCC cities to cope with climate change and major events, in addition to supporting integrated risk management among member states. The forum recommended the development of a national mechanism for exchanging data and information among basic service sectors. It dealt with the immediate implementation of the Omani Construction Requirements Manual, notably in low-lying areas and submerged zones, in addition to updating the Road Design Manual and making it mandatory for all projects. — ONA

Foreign Minister bids farewell to Tanzanian ambassador

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, received on Wednesday Fatma Mohammed Rajab, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, to bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty. During the meeting, Sayyid Badr expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by the ambassador, which contributed to strengthening the cooperation relations between the two countries and peoples. For her part, the ambassador



Sayyid Badr with Fatma Mohammed Rajab. — ONA

expressed her sincere thanks and gratitude for the constructive cooperation she received from the Foreign Ministry and all other entities in Oman, as well as the warm reception and welcome from the Omani people, which greatly facilitated her duties during her tenure. The meeting was attended by Najib bin Yahya al Balushi, Head of the Protocol Department at the Foreign Ministry, Dr Mohammed bin Ali al Balushi, Head of the Africa Department. — ONA

Sustainable food security key to achieving Vision 2040

KABEER YOUSUF @kabiyousef

SUSTAINABILITY IN food security projects stands as one of the core pillars of achieving Oman Vision 2040, with Oman striving to balance the conservation of natural resources and the growth of its economy. Delivering the keynote address at the Food Security Lab 2025, organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR), Zainab bint Waleed al Zadjalayah, Head of the Sustainability and Evaluation Center, emphasised that sustainability is not an option but a necessity driven by environmental and economic realities. "Sustainability in food resources is a national necessity and requires building an integrated system based on enabling initiatives that support value chains. Such a system should contribute to creating an effective food network that preserves natural resources while simultaneously enhancing economic returns," she said. On the fourth day of the Food Security Lab 2025, being held at the St Regis Hotel, experts from diverse sectors and international specialists came together to exchange insights, present research papers, and explore innovative solutions for sustainable food and water security. Al Zadjali explained that



Meetings of the Food Security Lab 2025 are in progress.

Achieving sustainability in food and water security requires coordinated efforts across production, financing and marketing

achieving sustainability in food and water security requires coordinated efforts across production, financing and marketing. She noted that it begins with ensuring access to renewable energy sources such as hydroelectric and solar power, particularly in regions like Najd, to make agricultural and fisheries projects more resilient. She further highlighted the importance of building effective partnerships between the banking and food security sectors to provide flexible and sustainable financing solutions that meet evolving project needs. Al Zadjali also underlined the significance of the value-added and marketing stages in enhancing the competitiveness of Omani food products locally and internationally. She concluded that this integrated approach represents a strategic road map for building a diversified and sustainable food economy that

reflects Oman's national vision and strengthens Oman's position as a regional hub for food security. Speaking to Observer on the sidelines of the event, Eng Abdulaziz bin Mohammed al Shukaili, Director of Investment at MoAFWR, emphasised that investment is one of the central pillars of the Food Security Lab 2025 and a key driver in achieving food security in line with Oman Vision 2040. "Investment discussions at the Lab include reviewing the strategic investment programme approved within the tenth five-year plan, which the ministry adopted to achieve sustainability and maximise returns in vital sectors," he said. Al Shukaili pointed out that the agricultural sector is engaging in extensive dialogue on the challenges and opportunities it faces, including creating new investment areas and managing agricultural cities and nurseries through the private sector. He also highlighted a key session of the Lab focused on regulating food exports and imports, and import substitution, which supports the localisation of food dependency — a strategic goal the ministry is pursuing. He noted that Oman's annual food bill amounts to approximately RO 3 billion, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). "The ministry has successfully localised the first billion and is working under the eleventh five-year plan," Al Shukaili added.

Literacy forum concludes with call for ethical technology use

MUSCAT: The Sub-Regional Forum on Media and Information Literacy, titled 'Empowering Minds in the Age of Artificial Intelligence', concluded with significant recommendations, including the development of a Media and Information Literacy guidebook and the establishment of a cross-sectoral task force. This working group will coordinate the implementation of the MIL road map through collaboration between government agencies, private sector entities, academic institutions and civil society

organisations. During the three-day event organised by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Information, in partnership with ICESCO and ALECSO, participants advocated for expanded capacity-building initiatives targeting educators, students, parents, media professionals and content creators, while emphasising ethical and responsible utilisation of digital technologies. The forum highlighted critical needs, including public awareness campaigns addressing misinformation



The forum showcased public awareness campaigns and misinformation.

and AI-generated content risks, strengthened partnerships with international organisations (Unesco, ICESCO, ALECSO) to develop joint training

and academic programmes, and enhanced support for scientific research at the intersection of media and artificial intelligence. The final day's proceedings

featured specialised working sessions focused on MIL enhancement strategies, addressing awareness measurement methodologies, practical guide development and future advancement road maps. The forum engaged diverse stakeholders, including school teachers, curriculum supervisors and designers, higher education faculty and media students, journalists and editors from various media organisations, plus communication professionals from government, private sector and civil society institutions.

Expert presentations were delivered by specialists from multiple institutions, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Sultan Qaboos University, Royal Oman Police, Cyber Defence Centre, Public Prosecution, and several higher education establishments. Primary forum objectives included establishing a foundational understanding of MIL concepts, highlighting Unesco's role in promoting digital citizenship and ethical online behaviour. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



The meeting serves as a preparatory session for the 29th Meeting of GCC Ministers of Culture. — ONA

OMAN TAKES PART IN GCC CULTURE OFFICIALS MEETING

KUWAIT: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the meeting of GCC culture under-secretaries, which was held in the State of Kuwait on Wednesday. This meeting serves as a preparatory session preceding the 29th Meeting of GCC Ministers of Culture. The Sultanate of Oman was represented by Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture. The meeting addressed several topics on the agenda, most notably: discussing the annual plan for joint Gulf events and activities, the Culture Statistics Platform which handles statistical data within the GCC Statistical Centre website, discussing the preparation of a Gulf Strategy for Cultural Creative Industries 2027-2030, and areas of joint work between the GCC states and a number of countries and international bodies and institutions concerned with cultural affairs. — ONA

OMANI-FRENCH COUNCIL LOOKS AT INVESTMENT



Jameel Ali Sultan, Head of the Omani Side of the Council, chaired the meeting

MUSCAT: The Omani-French Joint Business Council, during its meeting on Wednesday at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) headquarters, reviewed joint investment opportunities and the future work plan to enhance economic cooperation between the private sectors in the Sultanate of Oman and the French Republic. The meeting was attended by Nabil Hajlaoui, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Sultanate of Oman. The meeting was chaired by Jameel Ali Sultan, Head of the Omani Side of the Council. Discussions covered the Council’s strategic objectives, governance rules, resource requirements, and targeted events relevant to the Council’s activities. Nabil Hajlaoui, the French Ambassador, affirmed that the Omani-French Business Council meeting represents an important step in strengthening the economic relations between our two friendly countries and an opportunity to identify new areas for joint cooperation between private sector institutions. He added that the Embassy works to support French companies interested in investing in the Omani market, and “we also encourage Omani companies to expand into the French market and benefit from the advanced expertise and technologies that France possesses. Through this Council, we look forward to transforming economic relations into practical partnerships and tangible projects that benefit both friendly countries and peoples.” For his part, Jameel Ali Sultan, Head of the Omani Side of the Council, explained that the meeting is a continuation of the fruitful cooperation between the Omani and French sides and represents an important opportunity to set priorities for joint work during the next phase. He noted that the focus was on setting clear strategic goals for the Council, enhancing governance mechanisms, and developing investment relations. — ONA

Oman Air achieves CAA approval for ATO

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

Oman Air has successfully obtained its Approved Training Organisation (ATO) certification from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of Oman. The certificate was officially presented by Eng Naif al Abri, CAA President, during a ceremony held at Oman Air’s Flight Training Centre in Al Seeb. With ATO certification, Oman Air Flight Training Centre (OAFTC) is authorised to conduct full type rating flight training on Boeing 737 and 787 in accordance with the CAA regulatory framework, making the OAFTC the first facility in the country to offer such training. The airline has already begun training the first batch of cadets, who graduated from the Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL) programme, alongside its



With ATO certification, OAFTC is authorised to conduct full type rating flight training on Boeing 737 and 787.

existing pilots transitioning from the Airbus fleet to the Boeing 787 and 737 aircraft. Captain Nasser al Salmi, Chief Operating Officer at Oman Air said that achieving ATO certification represents a major step forward in Oman Airs

operational journey. “It enables us to continue delivering specialised, high-quality training that reflects our operational needs and safety standards, while strengthening Oman’s position as a centre of excellence in aviation training. We deeply appreciate the guidance and support of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) throughout the certification process and are proud of our exceptional team of pilots and instructors who continue to uphold the highest standards of operational excellence,” Al Salmi said. Eng Naif al Abri, CAA President, said: “By empowering Oman Air to deliver advanced training locally, we are supporting national capability-building and laying the groundwork for the sectors long-term growth.” Captain Khalid al Hashmi, Head of ATO said that such a recognition helps Oman Air Training Center to be at

par with other international centres and training standards including the IATA and ICAO standards. “The retention of skill set and the cadet development can be made within the country and the upscaling and expanding the capabilities of the local youth is ensured with the state-of-the-art training centre. In the past, airlines used other training centres and today, we are retaining them all within the Sultanate of Oman,” he said. Imad al Balushi, Second Officer said that such an accreditation would add value to his credential as the Center received CAA approval for B737 type rating. “Such a recognition is a huge step for the airline as it can provide excellent service to not just to the local cadets but also to the cadets from outside. This would add further value to the cadets who undergo training here at the Oman Air,” Al Balushi said.

Street signs: Pacts valued over R01.3 million inked

THE MINISTRY of Housing and Urban Planning on Tuesday signed 11 agreements worth over RO 1.3 million to install street and building signs across Oman as part of the National Addressing Project. The signing took place during the Urban Planning, Housing and Construction Exhibition and Conference. The agreements aim to establish a unified addressing system that enhances accessibility, facilitates site identification, and supports digital transformation and geographic information services (GIS) at the governorate level. The agreements were signed on behalf of the ministry by Dr Mohammed bin Ali al Muttawa, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for Urban Planning. Eng Haitham bin Said al Badi, Director of the National Addressing Project, said the initiative is part of the ministry’s efforts to unify the addressing system nationwide, ensuring greater integration between spatial infrastructure and the digital transformation of government services. He added that the project marks a strategic step toward implementing a comprehensive national framework for geographical names and addresses, improving access to locations and enhancing the efficiency of GIS-based



The agreements were signed by Dr Mohammed bin Ali al Muttawa

services across governorates. The unified addressing system, he noted, will be a key enabler for smart services and will contribute to improving the quality of life in cities and urban areas. It will also support civil defence, ambulance, postal, and delivery operations, while enriching national spatial platforms with updated and

accurate geographic data. Eng Al Badi further emphasised that the agreements reflect the ministry’s commitment to linking technical initiatives with national development platforms that engage both public and private sectors, describing the project as a ‘qualitative leap’ in spatial data management benefiting decision-makers, investors and citizens alike. — ONA

Mobile bazaar empowers Omani families

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, OCT 8

A wave of social innovation is sweeping through Al Batinah North as the Basmat Ata’a initiative — one of the flagship programmes under the Omani Volunteers Network “Taawon” — launched a mobile bazaar for productive families in partnership with Sohar Port and Freezone. The initiative transforms compassion into enterprise, helping families earn a sustainable living while celebrating the richness of Omani craftsmanship. The first stop of the mobile market took place at the Naval College at the beginning of October under the auspices of Shaikh Abdullah bin Yahya al Jabri, Vice-Chairman of the Al Batinah North Municipal Council. The second event followed at China Downtown



The initiative provides a vibrant platform to showcase handmade crafts, traditional delicacies and local products

Sohar, under the auspices of businessman Idris al Awadhi. Targeting non-sponsored productive families, the initiative provides a vibrant platform to showcase handmade crafts, traditional delicacies, and local products directly to the public. To ensure long-term visibility,

organisers are developing a dedicated website and social media platforms to promote these products year-round. “This is more than just a charity event — it’s a lifeline for many families who rely on their skills to support themselves,” said a representative from Basmat

Ata’a. “Through public-private partnerships, we’re building a model of sustainable empowerment that connects communities and businesses in meaningful ways.” Visitors also lauded the initiative. Fatma al Shibli, one of the attendees, shared her enthusiasm: “It’s inspiring to meet these families and see the passion behind every product. It makes you want to support local talent even more.” By linking economic empowerment with social connection, the Rolling Market of Hope transforms shopping into an act of solidarity — celebrating creativity, resilience, and the Omani spirit of giving. The market carries with it not just goods, but stories of determination and pride, reminding everyone that true development begins with empowering people.

SPOTLIGHT



BALANCING HOMEWORK AND HAPPINESS

AFRAH AL BALUSHI

HOMework

remains a cornerstone of education, yet its impact on students continues to spark debate. While it reinforces learning and enhances academic performance, excessive homework can lead to stress and burnout — making balance essential for a healthy educational journey.

Parents often struggle to get their children to complete homework, turning what should be a learning habit into a household battle. Traditionally, homework is meant to strengthen classroom learning, but the question remains — does it truly benefit students or burden them after a long school day?

On the positive side, homework provides students the chance to review and apply classroom lessons. Regular practice helps consolidate knowledge, especially in challenging subjects like math and science. This repetition not only deepens understanding, but also improves long-term retention.

Homework also teaches valuable life skills such as time management, responsibility and organisation. Balancing schoolwork, extracurricular and personal time encourages discipline that benefits students well beyond the classroom.

However, the key lies in moderation. Homework should be meaningful, not overwhelming. As teacher Shamsa al Quraini explains, “When homework is balanced and enjoyable, it becomes something students love rather than avoid. If there is no balance, stress builds up and affects performance.”

Recognising this, the Ministry of Education in Oman has introduced measures to regulate homework distribution. Many schools now allocate specific days for each subject and designate Thursdays as homework-free days, allowing students to relax over the weekend.

At Al Qayyim School, for instance, teacher Shaimaa noted, “We created ‘bag-free days’ and introduced platforms like Noor to reward students for completing homework. This helps reduce pressure while keeping them motivated.”

Research shows that short, consistent homework sessions are more effective than lengthy, infrequent ones. However, homework alone cannot solve learning difficulties. Building positive teacher-student relationships, celebrating small achievements and nurturing curiosity are far more impactful.

Ultimately, the goal of education is to create happy, confident learners. Homework should never feel like punishment. Every child learns differently, and both parents and teachers must recognise individual abilities. Instead of fixating on grades, the focus should be on cultivating a love for learning.

Encouragement goes a long way — praise efforts, avoid criticism and create a calm, supportive home environment for study. When children feel relaxed and motivated, homework becomes less of a chore and more of an opportunity to grow.

When homework is balanced and enjoyable, it becomes something students love rather than avoid. If there is no balance, stress builds up and affects performance.

SHAMSA AL QURAINI
Teacher



وزارة الإعلام
Ministry of Information



TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. The Ministry has the right to:

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

2) Cancellation of the tender without giving reasons.

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

SHORT TAKES



Dr Rahma holds talks with Prof Alia Abbas

OMAN AND IRAQ
DISCUSS RESEARCH,
ACADEMIC TIE-UPS

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Iraq discussed ways of enhancing cooperation in the academic field on Tuesday. They also explored opportunities for exchanging expertise in the fields of higher education, research and innovation, as part of efforts to further develop bilateral relations.

The discussion took place when Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, received Prof Alia Abbas Ali Al Attar, President of the Northern Technical University in the Republic of Iraq.

The two sides discussed prospects for enhancing cooperation in the field of twinning higher education institutions in both countries, activating joint training programmes, and benefiting from the expertise of Iraqi residents in evaluating academic programmes at higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

The drive seeks to upgrade the quality of education and keep pace with academic accreditation standards. The two sides also explored scopes for expanding cooperation in the fields of incubators, innovation centres and technology transfer. — ONA

FIRST POTTERS’ CAMP
BEGINS IN BAHLA



The camp brought together artists, potters and academics from across Oman

BAHLA: The first Potters’ Camp began on Tuesday at the Siya and Salut Visitors’ Centre in the Wilayat of Bahla, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, bringing together artists, potters and academics from across Oman to celebrate and advance the nation’s ceramic artistry. Dr Abdulaziz bin Mohammed al Hinai, Acting Supervisor of Fine Arts at the Ministry of Education in Al Dakhiliyah and Camp Supervisor, said that ceramic art in Oman has evolved from traditional and heritage-linked practices to contemporary, dialogue-driven forms. — ONA

MARINA IN KHOR AL
HAJAR, RAS AL HADD

SUR: A new fishermen’s marina project at Khor Al Hajar in the Wilayat of Sur was inaugurated under the auspices of Eng Yaqoub bin Khalfan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries.

The project was implemented with support from Oman LNG, at a total cost of RO 250,000.

Said bin Juma al Araiimi, Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Ras Al Hadd, said the project will facilitate boat movement, enhance marine tourism and encourage private investment. Bassem bin Nasser al Battashi, Director of Sustainable Development at Oman LNG, highlighted that the project includes breakwater construction, boat slipways and solar-powered lighting, reflecting eco-friendly development standards. — ONA



The project will enhance marine tourism and facilitate boat movement

Agreement inked to develop Al Saleel Natural Park

AL KAMIL W’AL WAFI: The Environment Authority signed an agreement to develop Al Saleel Natural Park in the Wilayat of Al Kamil W’al Wafi in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, on Tuesday.

The project is funded by Oman LNG and the Oman India Fertiliser Company (OIFC)

The agreement was signed by Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, and Dr Amer bin Nasser al Matani, CEO of Oman LNG Development Foundation. The signing was attended by Dr Yahya bin Badr al Maawali, Governor of Al Sharqiyah South Governorate.

Nizar bin Salem al Araiimi, Director of the Environment Department in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, said that the agreement aims to transform Al Saleel Natural Park into an ecotourism destination that embodies a balance between natural resource conservation and sustainable economic development. It focuses on investing in areas of the reserve in a thoughtful manner that preserves its environment and provides educational and tourism activities that enrich the visitor experience.

Al Araiimi said: “The project includes a package of facilities



The project is funded by Oman LNG and OIFC

and amenities, most notably: a main building, an integrated veterinary clinic, cages for birds and wild animals, special species, an isolation zone, in addition to various service and

information facilities.”

The project is expected to achieve several benefits, including the conservation of natural habitats, the protection of wildlife and vegetation, particularly endangered species.

It will also stimulate the tourism sector in the governorate, create job opportunities related to tourism and the environment, stimulate small projects, and raise environmental awareness by providing an educational and awareness space for all society segments, especially students and persons interested in environmental conservation.

— ONA

RAM to strengthen ethical
AI governance in Oman

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

THE MINISTRY of Education, represented by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, organised a two-day workshop on expanding the scope of inclusive, human rights-based ethical AI governance.

The event also marked the official launch of the Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) initiative, developed by Unesco to assess countries’ preparedness for responsible AI adoption.

Held under the auspices of Dr Jokha bint Abdullah al Shukailiyah, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), and attended by Salah Khalid, Director of the Unesco Regional Office for the Gulf States and Yemen, the workshop brought together specialists and practitioners from both public and private sectors, alongside members of the Oman Human Rights Commission.

The workshop discussed Unesco’s framework for assessing Member States’ readiness for AI ethics and highlighted Oman’s selection as a pilot country for the RAM initiative

The RAM initiative is developed by Unesco to assess countries’ preparedness for responsible AI adoption



The event was held under the auspices of Dr Jokha al Shukailiyah, CEO of OAAAQA

— a milestone within the framework of the Unesco Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, the first global standard for ethical AI development and use.

Hassan bin Fida al Lawati, Head of the National Programme for Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Technologies, said the initiative aligns with Oman’s comprehensive strategy to ensure the responsible, safe and human-centred application of AI technologies.

He noted that Oman’s National Policy for the Safe and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence, launched in early 2025, serves as a guiding framework for integrating AI across sectors while upholding privacy, justice and human dignity. Al Lawati added that the RAM tool enables countries to assess their current capabilities, identify strengths and opportunities and develop policies aligned with global best practices

while reflecting national contexts.

Oman has also advanced its digital landscape through the National Data Framework, the Personal Data Protection Law, and pioneering projects such as the ‘Ma’in’ Large Omani Language Model, the AI Studio and the National Open Data Portal — all aimed at promoting innovation, inclusivity and data transparency. Dr Ahmed bin Moosa al Balushi, Director of the Science Sector Department at the Commission, emphasised that while AI offers vast potential for sustainable development, it also presents ethical, legal and social challenges. He noted that Oman’s National Strategy for AI and Big Data ensures that innovation is pursued responsibly through strong legislation, capacity-building, and integration across key sectors, including education, health and governance.

BOS marks 225 years of UK–Oman friendship

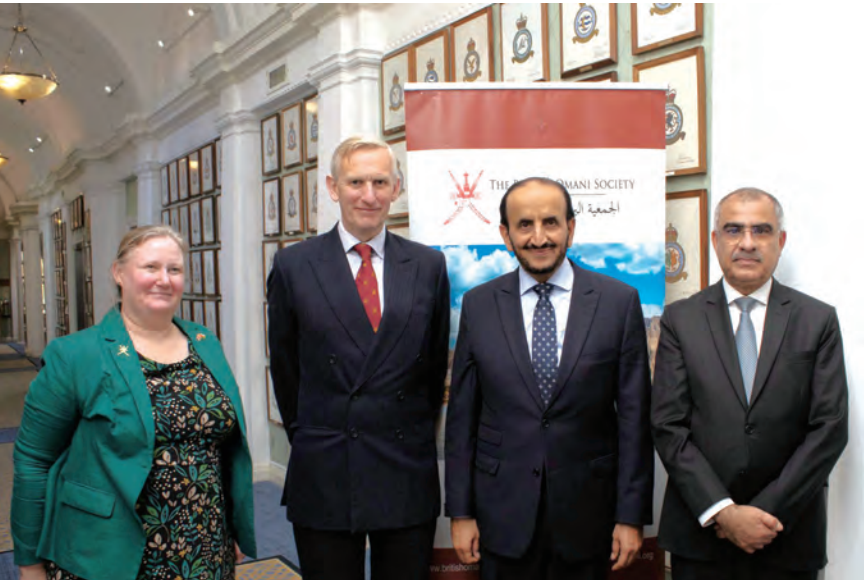
LONDON: The British Omani Society (BOS) hosted its 2025 Annual Lunch at the Royal Air Force Club in London.

This year’s gathering celebrated a historic milestone — 225 years since the signing of the ‘Unshook Agreement’ of 1800, a landmark treaty that laid the foundation for the enduring and dynamic partnership between the United Kingdom and the Sultanate of Oman.

Richard Stanford, Chair of the British Omani Society, welcomed distinguished guests and highlighted the Society’s mission to strengthen the long-standing bonds of friendship, shared values and mutual respect between the two nations.

He emphasised BOS’s ongoing commitment to fostering cross-cultural understanding and empowering the next generation to shape a vibrant shared future.

Guests of Honour, Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign



Shaikh Khalifa along with diplomats and BOS members at the Annual Lunch

Ministry for Political Affairs, and Hamish Falconer MP, UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, addressed the audience, reflecting on the historic depth and promising future of UK–Omani relations.

Shaikh Khalifa commended the United Kingdom’s recognition of the State of Palestine, describing it as a “meaningful step in global diplomacy,” while Hamish Falconer lauded the Society’s work in sustaining and advancing bilateral

collaboration through education, culture and youth engagement.

The event brought together senior officials, including Badr bin Mohammed al Mantheri, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the UK, and Liane Saunders, British Ambassador to Oman, alongside BOS members, dignitaries and alumni from youth exchange programmes.

The Annual Lunch served as a platform to reaffirm the strength of people-to-people ties and showcased the Society’s broad initiatives spanning youth empowerment, culture, business, education and sustainability.

Richard Stanford remarked, “We were delighted to again welcome a broad range of guests to this year’s Annual Lunch. This event underscores the importance of people-to-people ties, and we remain committed to deepening and expanding this vital relationship between our two countries.”

WORLD

SHORTTAKES



An official sticks a notice outside the Sresan Pharma factory whose Coldrif cough syrup has been linked to the deaths of 17 children. — Reuters

Check whether syrup linked to child deaths was exported: WHO

CHENNAI: Indian authorities advised the public to avoid two more brands of cough syrup on Wednesday following the deaths of 17 children aged under five linked to a toxic ingredient, and faced questions over whether any contaminated syrup was exported.

The children died in India over the past month after consuming cough medicine containing toxic diethylene glycol in quantities nearly 500 times the permissible limit, officials say. The deaths were all linked to the Coldrif medicine, banned after a test confirmed the presence of the chemical on October 2.

The Respifresh and RELIFE syrups also contain diethylene glycol, according to a public alert by Gujarat and other states on Wednesday that described it as “a toxic chemical that can cause serious poisoning, including kidney failure, neurological complications and even death, especially among children”.

The World Health Organization said it was seeking clarification from New Delhi on whether a cough syrup linked to the deaths has been exported to other countries. Coldrif, made by Sresan Pharmaceutical Manufacturer, was only sold locally, according to a government document seen by Reuters. Gujarat officials said the other two syrups were sold in other Indian states but did not refer to exports. — Reuters

GOLD TOPS \$4,000 ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC WORRIES

LONDON: Gold topped \$4,000 an ounce for the first time on Wednesday as investors flocked to the safe haven metal on worries over the US government shutdown, France’s political crisis and other global economic uncertainties.

US and European stock markets rose while Asian equities fell as investors also kept tabs on the AI investment boom and the prospect of further US interest rate cuts this year.

Gold, considered a safe investment in times of uncertainty, reached an all-time high above \$4,040 an ounce on Wednesday. Silver also rose close to a record high.

“Gold is continuing to glitter, and it is a gift that keeps on giving,” said Fawad Razaqzada, market analyst at City Index and Forex.com.

“Markets hate uncertainty, and right now, it’s in no short supply -- although stocks haven’t exactly sold off,” he added.

“Instead, it is gold that continues to benefit from haven flows while stock markets continue to find buyers on the dips too,” he added.

Parts of the US government began to close last week after Democrats and President Donald Trump failed to break a deadlock over spending.

The closure has added to the sense of unease among investors. The release of key economic data, including on jobs, has been postponed -- muddying the waters for the Federal Reserve as it relies on the figures to decide on its rate plans. — AFP

FRANCE LOGJAM

Le Pen vows to block any government



France’s far-right leader Marine Le Pen said on Wednesday she would thwart all action by any new government, throwing into doubt Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu’s ability to solve the country’s deepening political crisis with a coalition cabinet.

President Emmanuel Macron is facing the worst domestic crisis of his mandate, with the clock ticking down to a deadline on Wednesday evening for a working government to be formed. — AFP

EX-FBI CHIEF COMEY PLEADS NOT GUILTY IN CASE TRUMP PUSHED FOR

VIRGINIA: Former FBI Director James Comey pleaded not guilty on Wednesday to criminal charges, and his lawyer said he would file a barrage of legal challenges to the first prosecution by the Justice Department against one of President Donald Trump’s political enemies. The charges, accusing Comey of making false statements and obstructing a congressional investigation, were brought by Trump’s former personal attorney,

Lindsey Halligan. She was installed last month as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia after Trump forced out her predecessor over his reticence to prosecute Comey and New York Attorney General Letitia James.

The case is a test of Trump’s intent to use the legal system against people who have criticised him or resisted his agenda, despite concerns from career prosecutors about the strength of

the evidence.

US District Judge Michael Nachmanoff of the Eastern District of Virginia scheduled the trial to begin on January 5.

Comey’s lawyer, Patrick Fitzgerald, entered the plea on Comey’s behalf during a roughly 25-minute court hearing.

“Our view is that this prosecution was brought at the direction of President Trump,” Fitzgerald said in court. — AFP

Hamas hands over lists of names for swap deal

HAMAS handed over lists on Wednesday of hostages and Palestinian prisoners to be exchanged in a swap, and said it was optimistic about negotiations to end the war in Gaza, while US President Donald Trump’s son-in-law and envoy were due to join the talks.

Indirect negotiations are focused on the mechanisms to halt the conflict, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the swap deal, the Palestinian group added, in a seemingly upbeat assessment of the talks over a plan put forward by Trump, the closest diplomats have come to silencing the guns.

One of the big sticking points will be pressure on Hamas to disarm, an issue it has been unwilling to discuss at the talks which began on Monday in the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el Sheikh, a Palestinian source close to the negotiations said.

The timing of the implementation of the first phase of Trump’s 20-point initiative has not yet been agreed, the source said.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to attend a ministerial meeting on Thursday in Paris with European, Arab and other states to discuss Gaza’s post-war transition, three diplomatic sources said on Wednesday.

The meeting, which will be held in parallel with the negotiations in Egypt, is intended to discuss how to implement Trump’s plan and assess countries’ collective commitments.

Many Gazans have been displaced repeatedly as they face hunger and shortages of fuel, water



Palestinian walks amid rubble as he inspects the damage in the aftermath of Israeli operation at Sabra neighbourhood in Gaza City on Wednesday. — Reuters

Indirect negotiations are focused on the mechanisms to halt the conflict, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the swap deal, the Palestinian group added, in a seemingly upbeat assessment of the talks over a plan put forward by Trump

and medical supplies.

“Winter is coming ... the water is going through (my tent), the rats are coming after us, the mosquitoes and flies,” said displaced Gazan Raed Shahine.

Trump expressed optimism about progress toward a deal on Tuesday, the second anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel that triggered the Israeli military assault on Gaza.

He is sending a team that includes his special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law who served as Middle East envoy during the president’s first term.

But officials on all sides have

so far urged caution over the prospects for a rapid agreement.

Other senior figures were also expected to join the talks on Wednesday, including Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s close confidant - and Qatari Prime Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani, a longstanding mediator.

Another participant will be Turkish spymaster Ibrahim Kalin, pointing to a growing role for Turkey, a powerful Nato member which has close contacts with Hamas but which Israel has not previously viewed as a mediator. — Reuters

RECORD FLOODS HIT VIETNAM

Cars are submerged in flood waters after heavy rains caused by Typhoon Matmo in Thai Nguyen city on Wednesday. Record floods submerged streets in several communities in Vietnam, with at least eight people killed this week, the government said. Tens of thousands of people are stranded.

Floodwaters reached the tops of cars and rooftops in areas of Thai Nguyen city, about 80 km north of the capital Hanoi, with many left stuck at home and others forced to flee.

“I have never witnessed such a terrible flood since I was born 60 years ago,” Nguyen Van Nguyen said from his three-storey house in Thai Nguyen province. — AFP



GROUND TURBULENCE

Lanka battles wild jumbos to save airport



Colombo: Sri Lanka will deploy a special strike force to keep wild elephants away from a loss-making airport in a bid to encourage airlines to use it, the government said on Wednesday.

Media Minister Nalinda Jayatissa said the cabinet of ministers had approved the establishment of a wildlife unit with 18 guards to ensure elephants and other wild animals do not stray onto the runway at Mattala. — AFP

NO TALKS

Madagascar protesters call for strike



Antananarivo: The youth-led movement behind nearly two weeks of anti-government protests in Madagascar rejected dialogue on Wednesday with President Andry Rajoelina and instead called a strike and new demonstration.

Near-daily protests erupted in the impoverished Indian Ocean island on September 25, claiming at least 22 lives, according to a UN toll that is disputed by local authorities. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES



Kemi Badenoch delivers a speech on the final day of the annual Conservative Party conference in Manchester on Wednesday. — AFP

BRITAIN’S STORIED CONSERVATIVE PARTY FACES UNCERTAIN FUTURE

MANCHESTER: The leader of Britain’s Conservative Party, once an electoral powerhouse now facing an uncertain future, called for it to return to its roots at its annual meeting Wednesday, urging the creation of a “blueprint for Britain” based on conservative values.

Kemi Badenoch sought to turn around the woes of the party of such political titans Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher, which has slumped further in polls since its resounding defeat in the 2024 general elections.

In her first party conference speech as leader, she vowed to return the party to the “same timeless Conservative principles” which once made it an election-winning machine. The Tories were “the only party that can meet the test of our generation,” she said, highlighting Britain’s flagging economy and high immigration numbers.

Slamming Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer as “weak” and “useless”, Badenoch largely ignored the upstart hard-right Reform UK party that is eating into Conservative support and raising questions about its political future.

“It is existential,” political scientist Robert Ford said of the crisis gripping the United Kingdom’s oldest political party, which was founded in the 1830s. — AFP

CLICK AND THROW



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer takes a selfie with a disposable camera during an interaction with business leaders at the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, India, on Wednesday. — Reuters

EU’S PLAN TO PHASE OUT RUSSIAN ENERGY CLEARS FIRST POLITICAL HURDLE

BRUSSELS: European Union countries’ ambassadors on Wednesday agreed to move ahead with the bloc’s plan to end Russian oil and gas imports by 2028, EU diplomats said, clearing the law’s first political hurdle before governments vote on it later this month. The EU is negotiating legal proposals to phase out Russian oil and gas by January 2028, attempting to deprive the Kremlin of revenues to fund its war in Ukraine.

In a closed-door meeting on Wednesday, EU ambassadors agreed to forward the proposed law to their ministers for approval at a meeting on October 20, three diplomats told Reuters. The diplomats said nearly all EU countries had signalled support for the plans, suggesting it

will easily pass — despite criticism from Hungary and Slovakia, whose governments want to maintain close ties with Russia.

Negotiations are ongoing on technical changes ahead of the October 20 vote. One outstanding issue is whether liquefied natural gas exports to Europe must be both pre-authorised before delivery and have their origin checked by customs authorities when they arrive at EU ports, to ensure they are not Russian.

France and Italy have said they support the overall plan, but want shipments to either be pre-authorised —if authorities can enforce this fast enough - or instead checked by authorities upon arrival in the EU, to enforce the ban, EU diplomats said.

Italy’s EU representation and France’s energy ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. If approved, the law would end Europe’s decades-old reliance on Russian oil and gas - phasing out Russian gas imports under new contracts from January 2026, then existing short-term contracts from June 2026, and long-term contracts in January 2028.

Countries including Hungary, France and Belgium still import Russian gas — which accounts for 12 per cent of EU gas imports, down from 45 per cent before Russia’s 2022 full-scale attack of Ukraine. The law would oblige Hungary and Slovakia — the two countries still importing Russian oil — to set national plans to halt these imports by 2028. — Reuters

Afghan neighbours oppose US retaking Bagram base

AFGHANISTAN’S regional neighbours, including American allies, appeared to unite against US President Donald Trump’s stated aim of taking over the Bagram military base near Kabul, according to a statement released after they met in Moscow.

The “Moscow Format” meeting on Afghanistan — the seventh such event hosted by Russia but attended for the first time by the Taliban administration’s foreign minister —included US partners India and Pakistan. The 10 nations also included Russia, China and Iran as well as Central Asian countries.

In a joint statement released by Russia’s foreign ministry late on Tuesday, the 10 countries did not name the United States or Bagram itself, but seemed to take aim at Trump’s plan for the base, endorsing the Taliban’s position on the issue.

“They (the countries meeting) called unacceptable the attempts by countries to deploy their military infrastructure in Afghanistan and neighbouring states, since this does not serve the interests of regional peace and stability,” the joint statement read.

TALIBAN OPPOSITION TO FOREIGN FORCES

At a press conference on Tuesday in Moscow at the conclusion of the event, the Taliban’s Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi reiterated its position.

“Afghanistan is a free and independent country, and throughout history, it has never accepted the military presence of foreigners. Our decision and policy will remain the same to keep Afghanistan free and independent,” he said.

The US Department of State did not immediately respond to a request for



Parked vehicles are seen in Bagram US air base, after American troops vacated it, in Parwan province. — Reuters file photo

comment.

The Taliban’s first administration was ousted in 2001 by a US-led invasion of the country, triggering an insurgency by the group.

Bagram, just outside the capital Kabul, became the biggest and best-known US base in Afghanistan before the chaotic US withdrawal from the country in 2021 as the Taliban retook control.

Last month, Trump threatened “bad things” would happen to Afghanistan if it does not give back Bagram, and cited what he called its strategic location near China.

Current and former US officials have cast doubt on Trump’s goal, saying that re-occupying Bagram might end up looking like a re-invasion, requiring more than 10,000 troops as well as deployment of advanced air defenses. — Reuters

Trio wins chemistry Nobel for new form of molecular architecture

STOCKHOLM: Three scientists won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry on Wednesday for their work developing metal-organic frameworks (MOFs), whose multiple uses include capturing carbon dioxide and harvesting water from desert air.

Japan’s Susumu Kitagawa, UK-born Richard Robson and American-Jordanian Omar Yaghi were honoured for their groundbreaking discoveries dating from the late 1980s to the early 2000s.

The jury noted that thanks to the trio’s discoveries, chemists had been able to build tens of thousands of different MOFs.

“Some of these may contribute to solving some of humankind’s greatest challenges,” it added.

It listed applications such as “separating PFAS from water, breaking down traces of pharmaceuticals in the environment, capturing carbon

dioxide or harvesting water from desert air”.

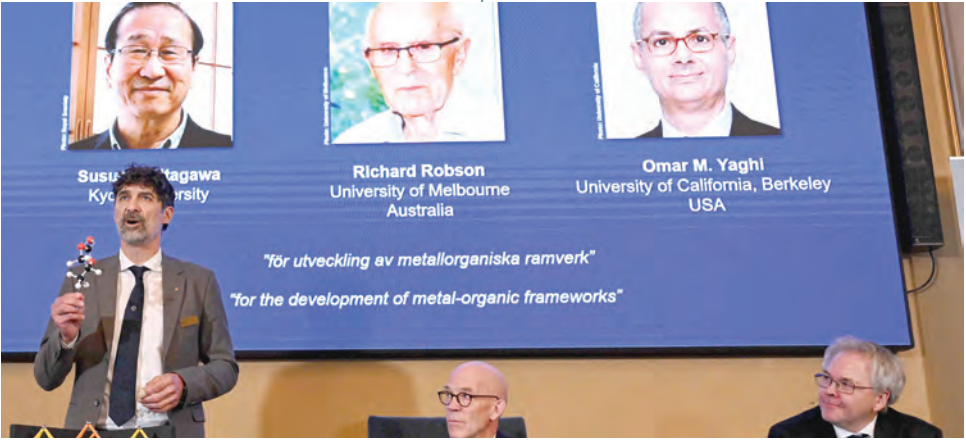
To explain the scale of their achievement, Hans Ellegren, secretary-general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, told reporters: “Imagine that the tools of chemistry could be used to create entirely new materials with unheard of properties.”

In 1989, Robson, 88, tested utilising the properties of atoms in a new way using copper ions.

“When they were combined, they bonded to form a well-ordered, spacious crystal,” the jury said. “It was like a diamond filled with innumerable cavities.”

Robson, a professor at the University of Melbourne, realised the potential of his discovery but the molecular construction was unstable.

It was Kitagawa, a professor at Kyoto University, and Yaghi, a professor at the University of



The Nobel Committee for Chemistry announces the winners of the 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm on Wednesday. — AFP

California, Berkeley, who provided a “firm foundation” for the building method.

Between 1992 and 2003, working separately, they made a series of revolutionary discoveries.

Kitagawa “showed that gases can flow in and out of the constructions

and predicted that MOFs could be made flexible,” said the jury.

Yaghi created “a very stable MOF” and showed that it could be modified using rational design, giving it new and desirable properties,” it added.

“I’m deeply honoured and

delighted that my long-standing research has been recognised,” Kitagawa said as he was interviewed by phone during the prize announcement news conference.

In an interview with the Nobel Foundation, Yaghi said he was “astonished, delighted, overwhelmed” at the news he had won the award.

He was in an airport switching flights when the Academy called him to announce the news.

Born into a family of refugees in Amman, Jordan, Yaghi did not start out in ideal conditions to pursue an academic career.

“I grew up in a very humble home. And, you know, we were a dozen of us in one small room, sharing it with the cattle that we used to raise,” he said.

He said he thought his father had only finished sixth grade and that his mother could neither read nor write. — AFP

OPINION

Stages, tables, and the map of inclusion



RUMAITHA
AL BUSAIDI

The writer is environmental strategist and advocate for sustainable development

MUSCAT felt like a harbour the night Sinbad the Omani Sailor opened. The hall lifted with strings and voices as an old voyage met a new century. Days earlier, I had stood at the Berkeley Forum, speaking about sustainability, storytelling and strategy. Between stage and sea, the week was filled with private dinners and one-on-one exchanges that pressed the same question. Who shapes access to the future? Atoms and algorithms carry promise, and they carry gates. Leadership will be measured by how those gates are built and how many are invited through. On a virtual call, an Australian friend invoked Chernobyl. She called it a lesson in leadership before engineering. Secrecy, hierarchy and fear accelerated the crisis. The insight was relevant to our other debates. If truth is rationed, systems fail in the seams we pretend are strong. The same instinct appears in the way the world treats strategic infrastructure today. Consider nuclear energy, which offers a clear path to deep decarbonisation for countries able to adopt it. Momentum is real, with many governments exploring new capacity and lenders beginning to test support. Yet access will not be universal, and that reality raises questions of inclusion, power and pace.

Standards and finance are still in institutions of the wealthy. Export controls and safeguards protect the world, yet they often sit beside rules written far from the grids that need power. A more inclusive approach would pair firm guardrails with capacity building, transparent finance and regional partnerships so willing newcomers can move safely rather than wait indefinitely. Meanwhile, the digital frontier poses its own inclusion test. Data centres and high-end AI clusters are now strategic infrastructure, and their geography is narrow. Only 32 countries host specialised AI facilities, with the United States and China dominating. Whole regions are nearly absent from the map. This is more than technical; it shapes who researches, builds companies and sets norms. The footprint also matters. Electricity demand from computing is rising, and in many regions, the water required for cooling is a binding constraint. Communities expect honest accounting of megawatts and megalitres and a say in how facilities grow. Africa offers a clear picture of the divide. The continent is home to about 18 per cent of the world’s people, yet holds under 1 per cent of global data centre capacity. Analysts see a need for roughly 700 new facilities, alongside reliable, clean power. Development finance is starting to move

Build systems that tell the truth, share access with care and measure success by how many we bring along.

with regional projects and multilateral backing for carrier-neutral hubs, but the scale is large. Planning for power and water together will decide which projects endure and whether benefits land locally through skills, research and jobs. Across those conversations, we spoke as much about narratives as about hardware, because stories decide where capital and courage go. But I kept coming back to design and how inclusion should start at the very beginning. In nuclear, it looks like safety cases, regulator training and finance to make first-of-a-kind projects viable for newcomers. In digital, this means putting servers near the people they serve, powering them with renewables, opening lawful pathways for regional data, and training operators and defenders in place. In storytelling, it means commissioning lived expertise and letting it lead, so coverage reflects frontline realities and invites better decisions. The week closed in Muscat beneath the chandeliers of the Royal Opera House Muscat for the world premiere of Sinbad the Omani Sailor, and his arc was discovery with responsibility. He returns with knowledge to share. The transition asks the same of us. Build systems that tell the truth, share access with care and measure success by how many we bring along.

SNAKEBITE SURGE AS BANGLADESH HIT BY RECORD RAINS

SHEIKH SABIHA ALAM

In the swamplands along Bangladesh’s mighty Padma River, snakes slithering through villages have become an unrelenting menace, leaving residents terrified and hospitals overwhelmed with bite victims. Doctors and experts warn snakebites are on the rise, driven by heavy rains, shrinking habitats and shifting farming practices. Bangladesh - among the nations most vulnerable to climate change - has seen nearly 15,000 snakebite admissions this year, with 84 deaths reported so far. Farmer Ananda Mondol broke down as he recalled how a snake bit his ankle while he was working in a rice field this year. “I couldn’t talk, I couldn’t move,” the 35-year-old from Nimtola, a village in the northern district of Rajshahi, said. “I vomited, lost control of my bowels, and saliva was coming out of my mouth.” He spent three days in intensive care, and is still plagued by sleepless nights and persistent muscle pain. The father of four has not returned to the fields since. His wife, Sunita Rani, a traditional healer, said the family cannot afford further treatment. Across the villages of northern Bangladesh, similar stories abound. “Sometimes, they even lie with us on the bed,” said Rezina Begum, as she washed clothes by the river. Another villager, Mohammad Bablu, said he dreads walking through the fields. “My heart races,” he said. “Only yesterday they killed seven snakes.” The swamplands have always been a sanctuary for snakes, but floodwaters brought on by this year’s extra-heavy monsoon rains have pushed more of them from their natural shelters into human settlements. And doctors say that has ramped up the deadly consequences. At least 25 people have died from snakebites at the Rajshahi Medical College hospital since January, said Professor of Medicine Abu Shahin Mohammed Mahbubur Rahman. The hospital treated more than 1,000 cases in nine months, including 206 bites from venomous species such as cobras, kraits and the feared Russell’s viper. “Many patients suffer acute kidney failure after snakebites,” Rahman said. Nationwide, authorities have recorded 84 snakebite deaths so far this year, alongside nearly 15,000 admissions. — AFP

What Gaza teaches us about moral distance, moral repair



AHMED
AL MUKHAINI

The author is a policy analyst

A breeze rustles through Muttrah Souq. The scent of frankincense and rosewater, pickled with the aroma of herbs and spices, drifts above waves. There is calm. A sense of continuity, of rootedness. But not far across the region, Gaza bleeds. The contrast is haunting. The quietness in Oman’s alleys becomes more than a sensory moment. This distance is not just geographic. It is ethical, emotional and political. It is the moral distance that allows unfolding atrocities to become background noise. It is the kind of silence that whispers complicity, not because people are cruel, but because they are overwhelmed, exhausted, unsure how to resist the machinery of impunity. Gaza is now the site of more than war. It is a spectacle of genocide, and a graveyard of dreams, of homes, of childhood. It is also a vault of memory — an unbroken thread of songs, stones and stories. It is this heritage, not just the people, that is under assault. The question now is not only how to end the violence, but how to heal from it — and whether the world has the moral stamina to begin again. This past week marked the Jewish New Year. Traditionally, a time of introspection, of ethical self-accounting, of the renewal of vows to justice and humility. But this year, the air is thick with contradiction. For generations, Jewish suffering has witnessed the importance of compassion, of never denying dignity, of recognising injustice even when veiled in legality. Those lessons were hard-won — from exodus to exile, pogrom to displacement. Zionism, however, has hijacked that memory. It has transformed generational pain into a tool of

The Palestinian cause has become the testing ground for whether humanity can survive political convenience. If heritage is allowed to burn, if memory is denied, if orphanhood becomes generational, then the world has lost far more than geopolitical standing. It has lost its ethical spine.

entitlement. It has wrapped policies of erasure in the language of national security. The memory of suffering has become institutionalised in a state whose military might now enforces the very dispossession its people once decried. The October 7 attack was a rupture; an explosion of fury, desperation and tragedy. For many, it signalled the need to double down on security and suffering. But Israel’s response, spearheaded by Prime Minister Netanyahu, has not been patriotic — it has been deeply egotistical. It has revealed a leader prioritising political survival over national healing, over proportionality, over the long arc of peace. The Palestinian story must not be framed solely in terms of resistance or retaliation. It must be seen as a struggle to preserve a culture, a homeland, a memory in the face of calculated disappearance. This is about continuity. Reconstruction cannot be just concrete and rebar. It must include schools that teach truth, museums that preserve memory, homes that feel safe and archives that tell the Palestinian story from the mouths of its own people. Oman has long been a voice of measured diplomacy, of balance between principle and pragmatism. But in moments of historic rupture, silence is not neutrality. It is abandonment. Oman, and others in the region, can lead not by choosing sides, but by championing the architecture of reconciliation. This includes hosting international summits focused on reconstruction, supporting Palestinian cultural preservation, launching regional orphan rehabilitation initiatives, and sponsoring independent truth commissions to document and

honour all loss — not just political grievances, but the loss of rhythm, of language, of childhood. In parallel with reconstruction, there is a political window — fragile, yet not closed. The growing international recognition of the Palestinian state has revived faint hope in the two-state solution, not as a perfect outcome, but as a dignified beginning. For decades, this vision has faltered under the weight of settlements, impunity and bad faith. Yet now, in the wake of such devastation, it re-emerges as a moral imperative rooted in justice and coexistence. Oman and like-minded nations can amplify this moment by urging a renewed commitment to a viable, sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel — grounded in rights, not domination. The Palestinian cause has become the testing ground for whether humanity can survive political convenience. If heritage is allowed to burn, if memory is denied, if orphanhood becomes generational, then the world has lost far more than geopolitical standing. It has lost its ethical spine. We must not only stop the war. We must begin the healing. This means recognising Palestinian suffering not as a footnote, but as a central moral compass, similar in many ways to apartheid and slavery. The age of selective memory must end. The reconstruction of Palestine at large and Gaza in particular must be cultural as much as material. And the quietness in the souq must turn into policy, into solidarity, into the patient work of justice. Let Palestine not become the place where our morality failed. Let it become the place where we choose, finally, to rebuild something sacred — together.

Small solar city emerges in South Africa’s coal heartland



KIM HARRISBERG

The writer is the Southern Africa correspondent for the Thomson Reuters Foundation based in Johannesburg

AS Dusk descends on South Africa’s coal belt, a stretch of land scarred by decades of mining now flickers to life as dozens of solar street lamps light up Nomzamo Agri-Village.

Despite this mini solar wave sweeping the settlement, coal still keeps many in work, warms their homes in winter and cooks the dinner. Now though, things are slowly changing.

As one of the world’s largest coal exporters, South Africa has embarked on a plan to wean off polluting coal and embrace green industries that create desperately needed jobs. Nearly every Nomzamo household has a solar brick - a stackable lithium-ion battery charged by the sun - to power their lights and cellphones. And despite numbering just 412 households, Nomzamo sees its initiative as the start of the country’s big, green shift.

“We have begun the transition,” said Nelly Nkosi, a 40-year-old resident and women’s officer with the Khuthala Environmental Care Group, the local charity behind the solar initiative.

“The coal will eventually run out and then more people will be forced to use solar, so the sooner people adapt, the better,” Nkosi said from her corrugated-iron home.

South Africa designed a Just Energy Transition Plan (JETP) - a road map to shift to cleaner energy while creating green jobs, with funding committed by wealthy international governments. International partners have pledged \$13.74 billion to Phase One of the transition, according to the Just

Energy Transition Project Management Unit (JET PMU) that oversees the plan.

Another \$71 billion - or thereabouts - is needed to realise the 2023-2027 strategy, the JET PMU said.

This feeds into South Africa’s commitment to cut emissions to between 350 million and 420 million tonnes by 2030, down from 442 million in 2020, on the way to Net-Zero.

But progress has been slow and development experts say many more community-run, renewable energy projects - projects like Nomzamo - are vital if decarbonisation is ever to work.

“You can call us a solar city, a small one, but we are growing,” said Zethu Hlatshwayo, Khuthala’s spokesperson.

But while the solar bricks have saved residents hundreds of rands per month that they would have spent on paraffin, candles and batteries, residents know the bricks are not enough to meet all of their energy needs.

“We say that half a loaf of bread is better than no loaf,” said Nkosi, referring to the solar energy supply.

“But we want government to empower more people to use more renewables,” she said as her old coal stove hummed to life.

Nomzamo Agri-village was founded out of urgency. In 2016, a vicious storm flooded the local river in Ermelo and left hundreds of residents homeless.

Philani Mngomezulu, head of Khuthala, knew of open land - an unrehabilitated open-pit coal mine spanning an estimated 60 hectares - and won signoff from the mayor to

As one of the world’s largest coal exporters, South Africa has embarked on a plan to wean off polluting coal and embrace green industries that create desperately needed jobs

relocate the newly homeless families.

Overnight, the Khuthala leaders became town planners, designing a blueprint for their future community and even setting aside small backyards for residents to grow food.

As the settlement slowly grew, Khuthala fenced off dangerous entrances to old mine cavities; Mngomezulu estimates that at least 15 people, mainly children, have fallen to their death.

Three years ago, Khuthala leaders were approached by a local charity, GreenCape, to launch a green energy project that would be funded by New Zealand, France and Denmark.

“We work in areas where the state or government is not likely to be able to provide services,” said Reshmi Wolvers, an expert on social impact with GreenCape.

She said their role is temporary after which the community will fully own the project. Their aim is not to compete with government but simply act as a stopgap.

“The reality is that there’s a backlog of 1.6 million households at the moment that don’t have access to the grid and there’s probably an eight- to 15-year waiting period,” said Wolvers.

GreenCape began working in Nomzamo in March 2023 - two years later and more than 400 homes now have solar bricks.

“It’s a marvel,” said Tebogo Mogakabe, the municipality’s environmental services manager. “Copying this model elsewhere in the country would maximise our constrained budget.”

FAR RIGHT HARVESTS VOTES AS CLIMATE RULES ROIL SPAIN

IMRAN MARASHLI

Standing by a barn brimming with hundreds of bleating sheep, Jesus del Socorro Cuevas leads the far right’s charge against “dictatorial” EU environmental regulation in his corner of rural Spain. “The enlightened gentlemen of Europe are always coming up with new things,” thundered Socorro Cuevas, 63, a long-time farmer who is the far-right Vox party’s agriculture councillor in the central municipality of Socuellamos.

“A farmer cannot dedicate himself to agriculture,” he said as tractors rumbled past and dogs snoozed on the ground at a party supporter’s farm. “You have to tell them what you do every day, what you prune, if you collect the vine shoots, if you plough, if you fertilise... freedom no longer exists.”

The third-largest party in Spain’s hung parliament, Vox has made the battle against “climate fanaticism” a rallying cry in a bid to harvest rural votes from mainstream parties.

Its climate-sceptic campaigning mirrors that of like-minded formations across Europe as the issue of climate change splits along right-left lines.

Spain sweltered through its hottest summer on record this year, an example of the extreme weather that scientists say human-driven climate change is exacerbating.

The European Union’s Green Deal, a flagship law legally binding the bloc to becoming carbon neutral by 2050, is the main target of Vox’s scorn.

“Globalist policies” such as the Green Deal and the 2015 Paris climate agreement “strangle our agricultural system”, said Ricardo Chamorro, a Vox MP who sits on the Spanish parliament’s agriculture committee.

Rodrigo Alonso, Vox’s national spokesman for work and agriculture, said the strict requirements of the Green Deal were causing European-grown goods to be displaced by ones made outside the bloc using cheaper labour and laxer environmental standards. “Principles of EU preference are not respected, the single market is not respected,” he added, denouncing “unfair competition”.

Mass protests by farmers shook Europe last year over environmental constraints and non-EU imports which producers say undercut them and flout the climate and animal welfare rules they must meet. Buoyed by the discontent, far-right parties like Vox made gains at subsequent European Parliament elections.

Clad in blue overalls, farmer Julio Torremocha Marchante said he used to back Spain’s main conservative Popular Party (PP) but switched to Vox around 10 years ago. He recounted how, faced with extra bureaucratic and financial burdens, he gave up on organic agriculture, saying activity “was going elsewhere” amid competition from larger farms. — AFP

Trump unlikely to win Nobel, but who will?

WHEN it comes to this year’s Nobel Peace Prize, one thing is almost certain: US President Donald Trump will not win, no matter how much he wants it. But who will?

The Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo will bring the suspense to an end when it announces the winner on Friday at 11:00 am (0900 GMT).

The backdrop is bleak: the number of armed conflicts worldwide involving at least one state has never been as high as in 2024, since Sweden’s Uppsala University started its global conflict database in 1946. Trump has repeatedly said he deserves the prestigious prize for resolving “eight conflicts”, but experts predict he will not be the committee’s choice - at least not this year.

“No, it will not be Trump this year,” Swedish professor Peter Wallensteen, an expert on international affairs, said.

“But perhaps next year? By then the dust will have settled around his various initiatives, including the Gaza crisis,” he added.

Numerous experts consider Trump’s “peacemaker” claims to be exaggerated and express concerns over the consequences of his “America First” policies.

“Beyond trying to broker peace for Gaza, we have seen policies that actually go against the intentions and what’s written in the will of (Alfred) Nobel, notably to promote international cooperation, the fraternity of nations and disarmament,” said Nina Graeger, who heads the Peace Research Institute of Oslo.

For Graeger, the list of Trump’s actions not aligned with the ideals of the Nobel Peace Prize is long. Trump has withdrawn the US from international organisations and multilateral treaties, launched trade wars against allies and enemies alike, threatened to take Greenland from Denmark by force, ordered the National Guard into US cities and attacked universities’ academic



US President Donald Trump gestures as he and Canada’s Prime Minister Mark Carney (not pictured) meet in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington on Tuesday. — Reuters



PIERRE-HENRY DESHAYES

The writer is AFP correspondent in Oslo

Numerous experts consider Trump’s ‘peacemaker’ claims to be exaggerated and express concerns over the consequences of his ‘America First’ policies

freedoms as well as freedom of expression.

“We take the complete picture into account,” explained Jorgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the five-member committee awarding the peace prize. “The whole organisation or the complete personality of that person matters, but what we first and foremost look at is what they have been actually achieving for the sake of peace,” he said. This year, 338 individuals and organisations have been nominated for the peace prize, with the list kept secret for 50 years.

Tens of thousands of people are eligible to propose candidates, including lawmakers and cabinet members of all countries, former laureates, certain university professors and Nobel committee members. In 2024, the award went to Japan’s atomic bomb survivors’ group Nihon Hidankyo for its efforts to ban nuclear weapons.

With no clear favourite this year, several names have been doing the rounds in Oslo ahead of Friday’s announcement. Sudan’s Emergency Response Rooms - a network of volunteers risking their lives to feed

and help people enduring war and famine - have been mentioned, as has Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights election watchdog.

The Nobel committee’s choices in recent years have demonstrated “a return to more micro things, somewhat closer to classical ideas of peace”, with a focus on “human rights, democracy, freedom of the press and women”, said Halvard Leira, the director of the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs.

“My hunch would probably just perhaps be for a not that controversial candidate this year,” he said. The Nobel committee could also choose to reaffirm its commitment to a world order currently being challenged by Trump by giving the prize to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, or a UN body like its refugee agency UNHCR or Palestinian relief agency UNRWA.

It could also give the nod to international tribunals such as the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court.

SPORTS

VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE



Sohar player gives an assist.

SOHAR TOP GROUP ONE AS MASIRAH EARN FIRST VICTORY

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

The second-round matches of Group One in the 2025–2026 First Division Volleyball League took place on Tuesday evening, witnessing clear superiority from Sohar and Masirah, who both achieved convincing straight-set wins over Majees and Saham, respectively, in two exciting and competitive encounters.

The Al Rustaq Sports Complex hosted the first match between Masirah and Saham, where Masirah imposed its dominance from the very first set, winning 25–22 after a balanced performance built on quick side attacks. In the second set, Masirah continued to maintain control with the same scoreline (25–22), capitalising on Saham’s errors in reception and serve. The third set was one-sided, as Masirah completely took charge through team cohesion and effective attacking play, closing it 25–14 to secure its first victory in the league and collect its first three points in the group.

SOHAR THUMP MAJEES 3–0

At the Sohar Sports Complex, Sohar recorded its second consecutive win by defeating Majees in straight sets (25–19, 25–23, 25–23).

The opening set was intense and closely contested, with both teams exchanging points until midway through, before Sohar pulled ahead thanks to the brilliance of Ibrahim al Hashmi, who led the offensive line effectively. In the second set, Majees improved its play and came close to equalising, but Sohar’s solid blocking led by Al Hashmi and his teammates denied them, ending 25–23. The third set followed a similar pattern, remaining neck and neck until the final points, before Sohar sealed the set once again 25–23 with another strong all-around performance.

MATCH STATS

Technical statistics showed Sohar’s superiority in all aspects, scoring 75 total points compared to Majees’ 64, dominating in blocking (7 to 2) and recording two direct service aces. Sohar’s Ibrahim al Hashmi was named Best Player of the Match, scoring 16 points with a 32 per cent attack success rate, while Waleed al Badi stood out for Majees with 15 points and a 44 per cent attack efficiency.

After the completion of Round Two, Sohar tops the group with 6 points from two wins, followed by Masirah in second with 3 points from one win and one loss. Saham also has 3 points (one win, one loss), while Al Shabab and Majees sit at the bottom of the table with no points.



Sohar and Majees players in action.



Oman’s Issam Al Subhi in action with Qatar’s Ayoub Al Oui during the Fifa World Cup 2026 AFC Qualifiers Group A playoff match at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha, Qatar, on Wednesday. — Reuters

Oman hold Qatar in tense WC Asian Qualifier playoff

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

OMAN national football team ended their opening match against the hosts Qatar on a goalless draw in their AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 Playoffs Group A clash on Wednesday night at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha. The draw gave one point for both teams.

Oman will face United Arab Emirates on Saturday while Qatar will take on UAE three days later. All the three teams will vie for the automatic qualification to the Fifa World Cup 2026 which will be co-hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Qatar began the opening half depending on the Akram Afif who made a lot of movements towards the goalie Ibrahim al Mukhaini.

The first attempt of the hosts Qatar was through Afif’s right-footed from distance in the sixth minute but was blocked and followed by Boualem Khoukhi’s long range strike that was deflected for a corner after. Oman’s feedback was through

Essam al Subhi who came close to break the deadlock when his efforts from the left side of the box forced by Qatar goalkeeper Mahmud Abu Nada into a fine save.

In the 29th minute, coach Carlos Quirioz made the first substitution after suffering an injury of Jameel al Yahmadi and replaced by Nasser al Rawahi. Qatar midfielder Mohammed al Mannai received a yellow card in the 22nd minute for a heavy interpret on Jameel al Yahmadi. Qatar players including Assim Madibo and Ahmed al Ganehi tried to send some strong shots from range but missed the target.

CLOSE CHANCES

In the closing minutes of the first half, Oman nearly found the breakthrough from a corner as Abdullah Fawaz created a cross and picked out by Nasser al Rawahi whose header from the center of the box just missed the top right corner.

Four minutes of added time was announced by the Japanese referee and despite Qatar winning a late free kick through Edmilson Junior but Oman’s defense managed to break the attempt as the first half ended in a goalless draw.

Akram Afif was very close to score the first goal for the hosts as he entered to the box in the 49th minute as he was faced the goalie but his ball went away from the net. Two minutes later,

Edmilson Junior sent a shot from long distance but saved by Ibrahim al Mukhaini. Abdullah Fawaz tried to take the advantage of the Qatar’s goalie who was away from his net but Fawaz’s shot went outside the box in the 68th minute. Both sides made several substitutions in the last 15 minutes as Oman introduced Salah al Yahyaei and Mohsin al Ghassani to freshen up the attack while Qatar brought in Mohammed Muntari and Tarik Salman to add energy up front.

Muntari came close to scoring twice as he first missed narrowly from close range in the 80th minute and then seeing his low strike saved by Ibrahim al Mukhaini deep into stoppage time.

The hosts, Qatar, pressed hard in the concluding minutes as they managed to focus in the attacking side but the pressure did not result any goal as Oman defending line broke all the attempts. Oman’s defender Thani al Rushaidi won the best man award in the match.

SHORTTAKES



OSSA LAUNCHES PLAN FOR NEW SEASON

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

The Oman School Sports Association (OSSA) on Tuesday celebrated the launch of its 2025–2026 season plan and programmes, under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, and Chairman of the OSSA.

The event was attended by senior executives, sports association heads and education officials. The new plan features around 20 diverse events, including competitions, festivals and training programmes to be implemented across educational directorates, with several centralised in Muscat Governorate. This comes within the framework of a long-term strategy extending to 2027, aiming to establish an integrated school sports system and nurture young talents.

Dr Abdullah affirmed that the OSSA’s 2025–26 plan builds on previous achievements and aims to expand programmes and activities, discover and develop young talents, with a focus on individual sports and strengthening partnerships to achieve a qualitative leap in school sports.

In her speech, Safaa bint Saif al Salmiyah, OSSA Board Member, emphasised that since its establishment in 2016, the association has worked to instill the concept of ‘Sports as a Lifestyle’ by organising initiatives that enhance the educational environment for both students and teachers. She highlighted the alignment of the OSSA’s goals with Oman Vision 2040, which seeks to build a globally competitive sports sector contributing to the national economy.

50 TEAMS IN FRAY FOR UNITY CUP 2025



AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

The conference hall at the Hormuz Grand Hotel in Muscat hosted a press conference on Wednesday announcing the details of the Muscat International Unity Cup 2025, which is considered the largest international football tournament for academies in the Sultanate of Oman. The event will feature 50 teams from six countries: Oman, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Morocco, and Lebanon.

The conference was attended by Chuck Martini — CEO, Director of Premier League Football Academy Group and the MIUC; , Yasser al Rawahi - Staff Member of the OFA and organiser at MIUC; and Mundhir al Shidhani - Head Technical Organiser of the MIUC.

The tournament will take place from October 16 to 18 across two venues, the Royal Guards of Oman Stadium and Royal Flight School with matches distributed across five age categories: under-10, under-12, under-14, under-16, and under-18, allowing broad participation from emerging and promising talents at various levels.

In his remarks, Chuck Martini described the upcoming edition as “the largest ever”, noting that it will feature more than 50 teams and 11 international academies. He said matches will be held across two venues over three days, from Thursday noon to Saturday noon. Martini also highlighted the historic significance of the tournament, saying many players who took part in past editions are now professionals, including Arsenal star Myles Lewis-Skelly.

Yasser al Rawahi welcomed the participating teams from within and outside Oman, confirming that the hosts are ready to host all delegations.

The draw and official app were released, with Mundhir al Shidhani announcing, “This year, we will be using Turneo as our official IT partner, providing us with real-time statistics for all matches, fixtures, schedules and more.



Oman cruised to a five-wicket victory over Samoa in the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 Asia/East Asia Pacific Qualifier at OCA grounds in Al Amerat.

Oman crush Samoa in T20 WC Qualifier opener

HOSTS Oman launched their campaign for the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 Asia/ East Asia Pacific Qualifier in emphatic fashion, brushing aside Samoa by five wickets at the Oman Cricket Academy grounds in Al Amerat on Wednesday. Duleep Mendis’ men delivered a clinical all-round performance under stand-in captain Aamir Kaleem, restricting Samoa for just 92/9 before cruising to victory with three overs to spare, reaching 96/5.

Put into the field after winning the toss, Oman’s bowlers wasted no time asserting control. Shah Faisal produced a devastating opening burst, removing both openers — Sean Solia and Darius Visser — inside the first three overs to leave Samoa reeling at 7 for 2. His tight spell of 2 for 12 from four overs, including a maiden, earned him the Player of the Match award.

The rest of the attack maintained relentless pressure. Mohammad Nadeem (2 for 15) and Aamir Kaleem (2 for 18) kept the wickets tumbling, while Nadeem Khan (1 for 11) and Hassnain Shah (1 for 12) chipped in effectively. Samoa’s innings never found momentum, collapsing to 22 for 5 inside eight overs.

Former New Zealand international Ross



Oman’s Faisal Shah receiving the man of the match award for his 2-12 in four overs.

Taylor, who has come out of retirement to play for the nation of his mother’s birth, top-scored with 22 off 28 balls, offered brief resistance, while Fereti Suluoto added a

spirited 22 from 16 balls late including the game’s only six. But their efforts could only lift Samoa to a modest 92 for 9 in their 20 overs — a total that always looked well short.

Oman’s chase was measured and composed. Opener Ashish Odedara (15 off 14) and Hammad Mirza (18 off 28) set the tone after Aamir Kaleem departed early before Mohammad Nadeem, capping an excellent all-round outing, guided the side home with an unbeaten 21 off 22 balls. Supported by Jiten Ramanandi (8 not out), Oman reached 96 for 5 in 17 overs, sealing a comfortable win. The result gives Oman two valuable points and a healthy net run rate boost at the start of their qualifying campaign. With the bowlers firing and the batting lineup showing depth, the home side looks well placed to push strongly for a spot in the 2026 ICC Men’s T20 World Cup. Oman now take on PNG on Friday to conclude their group engagement before the start of Super Six stage on Sunday.

Brief scores: Samoa 92/9 (Ross Taylor 22, Fereti Suluoto 22; Shah Faisal 2/12, Mohammad Nadeem 2/15, Aamir Kaleem 2/18) lost to Oman 96/5 in 17 overs (Mohammad Nadeem 21*, Hammad Mirza 18, Ashish Odedara 15; Saumani Tiai 2/13, Solomon Nash 1/9).

Egypt, Kuwait and Italy qualify for WC Fishing

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

The second edition of the Jebel Sifah International Fishing Championship concluded successfully, with 22 teams participating in the week-long series, and Egypt, Kuwait and Italy securing qualification for the World Cup.

The championship witnessed a historic first with the participation of an all-women’s team, further cementing its growing global significance and Jebel Sifah’s reputation as a world-class venue for international sporting events.

“The second edition of the Jebel Sifah International Fishing Championship successfully concluded establishing itself once again as the largest and most prestigious fishing event of its kind in the Gulf,” Engineer Wael al Lawati, CEO of Muriya, said. Hosted at the award-winning destination of Jebel Sifah by Orascom



development and Omran, and held under the supervision of the Oman Maritime Sports Committee in collaboration with the International Game Fishing Association (IGFA), the championship drew together 22 elite teams from 10 countries, united by their passion for competitive sportfishing in one of the world’s most spectacular marine settings.

Egypt emerged victorious with Team Brouq claiming the championship title after delivering a dominant performance. The triumph was further underlined by angler Ahmed Nabil, who landed a

magnificent Blue Marlin to secure the prestigious Top Angler Award, cementing Egypt’s place at the pinnacle of the tournament.

Italy’s Circolo Pesca Daltura Catania impressed with an exceptional showing that earned them the runner-up title. Italian angler Tonny Luppa also demonstrated outstanding skill, reeling in a powerful Black Marlin to claim second place in the Top Angler category. Meanwhile, Kuwait’s Reel Addict Team delivered a consistent and strong performance, taking third place overall and underscoring the high level of competition that

defined the championship.

The Biggest Fish Award brought additional drama and excitement, with Turkish angler Karim Sadiq of Team Stafu landing a spectacular 36.65 kg Yellowfin Tuna, the heaviest catch of the tournament.

Egypt’s Ahmed Metwally followed closely with an impressive 35.35 kg tuna, while Kuwait’s Reel Addict Team once again proved their consistency with a 34.75 kg catch that placed them third in the category.

Concluding the competition, Egypt, Italy and Kuwait have earned the honour of representing the region at the Fishing World Cup in Costa Rica.

“The accomplishment of the Jebel Sifah International Fishing Championship highlights the vast tourism potential of Oman and reinforces Jebel Sifah’s position as an exceptional destination that blends Oman’s natural beauty with diverse recreational and sporting activities,” Al Lawati said.

HIGHESTPAID



RONALDO BECOMES FOOTBALL’S ‘FIRST BILLIONAIRE’

RIYADH: Cristiano Ronaldo has become the first footballer to reach billionaire status, according to the latest Bloomberg Billionaires Index, which has valued the Portugal great’s net worth at an estimated \$1.4 billion.

The 40-year old striker’s financial ascent comes after he signed a new contract with Saudi side Al Nassr in June reportedly worth more than \$400 million.

Bloomberg said that Ronaldo earned more than \$550 million in salary between 2002 and 2023, supplemented by a decade-long Nike deal worth nearly \$18 million annually, and lucrative endorsements with Armani, Castrol and others that added more than \$175 million to his fortune.

Ronaldo’s move to Al Nassr from Manchester United in 2023 had already made him the highest-paid player in football history, with an annual salary of 177 million pounds (\$237.52 million), plus bonuses and a reported 15 per cent share in his Saudi Arabia club.

Argentina and Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi has earned more than \$600 million in pre-tax salary during his career.

Ronaldo’s billionaire status places him among a rare group of athletes that includes basketball greats Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and LeBron James, golfer Tiger Woods and tennis player Roger Federer.

Ronaldo suggested he is not considering retirement any time soon.

“I still have a passion for this,” he said at the Portugal Football Globes gala on Tuesday. “My family says it’s time to quit and they ask me why I want to score 1000 goals if I’ve already scored 900-something. But I don’t think that way inside.

“I’m still producing good things, I’m helping my club and the national team. Why not continue? I am sure that when I finish I will leave full because I gave everything of myself. I know I don’t have many years left to play, but the few I have left, I have to enjoy them to the fullest.” — Reuters

Deep Water Solo contest to thrill Oman coastline

NAJAH AL RIYAMI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

THE upcoming Deep Water Solo (DWS) Friendly Open is set to take place on October 25 at Bandar Al Rowdha and the cliffs of Barr Al Jissah, promising a spectacular day of climbing, community and adventure. Climbers from Oman, the wider GCC and Europe will gather to take part in this unique competition, which will showcase both athletic skill and the natural beauty of Oman’s coastline.

Deep Water Soloing, also known as Psicobloc, is climbing in its purest form. Athletes will attempt vertical sea cliffs without ropes or harnesses, relying solely on strength, technique and the deep water below for safety. Transported by traditional dhow, competitors will scale routes above turquoise waters, each attempt testing their courage and precision before plunging back into the sea.

The day will begin at Bandar Al Rowdha Marina with registration and boarding, before the dhow motors out to the cliffs for the qualification rounds. By 9 am, timed with high tide, the first climbers will take to the walls, competing across three rounds before the finals at midday. A prize ceremony and community lunch will follow, with the flotilla returning to the marina in the afternoon .

The event will continue a legacy that began in 2017, when the first Psicobloc competition in the Middle East was brought to Oman’s Musandam by Read Macadam and world-renowned climber Chris Sharma. That pioneering event inspired a new generation of climbers and highlighted Oman’s potential as a global adventure destination.

‘BLUE WATERS’
Issam al Busaidy of the Oman Deep Water Solo community has been at the forefront of building a grassroots platform for the sport. Under his vision, the initiative has created opportunities for climbers across Oman and the wider region to connect, compete, and grow within a discipline that has now achieved Olympic recognition. Speaking about Oman’s unique setting, Issam said, “blue waters, beautiful sunset, cliffs and



Climbers from Oman, the wider GCC and Europe will gather to take part in this unique competition.



The event will continue a legacy that began in 2017.

climbers who like to fall -that’s what DWS is about here in Oman. Muscat might be the only capital city in the world with high quality Deep Water Soloing within the city limits.”

Momentum is building year by year. The 2024 edition drew 40 participants, a mix of seasoned athletes and passionate newcomers, showing the depth of interest in the sport across Oman and beyond. Organisers expect an even larger and more diverse field in 2025, with climbers eager to test themselves against the dramatic cliffs of Barr Al Jissah.

For athletes and spectators alike, the day will offer more than competition. It will be a celebration of community, courage and Oman’s rugged seascapes. Climbers of all levels will share the stage, from professionals to enthusiastic amateurs, making the event both inclusive and inspiring.

As the date approaches, excitement is mounting within the climbing scene. The cliffs of Barr Al Jissah will provide a striking natural arena, the dhows will carry both athletes and supporters, and the Arabian Sea will be the final judge of every climb.

Registration was open through the main event page: @psicobloc-oman.



NESTO

All that you need.

مهرجان

للتسوق

OMAN SHOPPING FESTIVAL

NESTO OMAN'S BIGGEST SHOPPING CELEBRATION STARTS HERE!

Offer valid from : 2025 October 9th to October 12th Only.
Available@Nesto Hypermarket :
Al Wadi Al Kabir, Sohar,Falaj Al Gaba'il, Al Hail South (Al Khoud),Ruwi, Barka & Bilad Malla



0.545

برتقال أبو سرة استراليا باكيلو
Orange Navel Australia Per Kg



0.590

تفاح احمر ايران باكيلو
Apple Red Iran Per Kg



33.389%
SAVE
3.990

كاجو محمص راباكيلو
Cashew Nut Roasted W320 Per Kg



0.690

رمان اليمن باكيلو
Anar Yemen Per Kg



1.750

بيض الصفا ايران طراز متوسط ٣٠ بيضة
Al Safa Iran Fresh Egg Medium 30's



35.199%
SAVE
5.540

لوز خام كبير
Almond Raw Big Per Kg



16.102%
SAVE
0.990

تيفاني بركت وركر مغرملين
Tiffany Break Crunchy Wafer 4Finger 12x25gm



24.240%
SAVE
0.750

بسكويت لبيل ماري ٢٠٠ x ١٠٠ x ٢٠
Nabi Biscuit Marie 2x10x50gm



18%
SAVE
5.900

ارز ابيض متوسط باكيلو
Eagle Indian Parboiled Rice 18kg



24.590%
SAVE
0.915

صابون سينثول ١٧٥ x ٤٠
Cinthol Soap Asstd 4x175Gm



32.061%
SAVE
0.890

عطر جاكوار كلاسيك بلاك ١٠٠ مل
Jaguar Classic Black EDT 100ml



49.551%
SAVE
8.900

عطر جاكوار كلاسيك بلاك ١٠٠ مل
Jaguar Classic Black EDT 100ml

Get Ready For The Unexpected
Exclusive Deals Await Innaam Members! [Join Now](#)

INNAAM

Start here to download
Download Now

Sabalenka battles to keep Wuhan record alive, Pegula survives marathon

WUHAN, China: Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka battled hard on Wednesday to keep her unbeaten record in Wuhan intact, having to come from behind to beat Slovakia’s Rebecca Sramkova 4-6, 6-3, 6-1. The world number one started slowly in her first match since she clinched a fourth Grand Slam title at the US Open last month.

But the Belarusian found her power game in the final set to reach the Wuhan Open last 16, where she will face the 16th-seeded Russian Liudmila Samsonova.

Sabalenka is chasing a fourth consecutive crown in Wuhan where she has a perfect 18-0 win-loss record.

Sramkova quickly took a 3-1 lead and served out to take the opening set in 35 minutes.

Sabalenka shook off the rust in the second and then swept through the decider to win in just under two hours.

“She played incredible tennis, especially in the first set. There wasn’t much I could do against her,” said Sabalenka.

“I knew after that little break (after New York), it will be not that easy to get back in my rhythm.

“But I’m really glad that in the second set I found my game, I stepped in, and I think I played really great.”

The other four-time major champion in action on Wednesday,



Belarusia’s Aryna Sabalenka hits a return to Slovakia’s Rebecca Sramkova at the Wuhan Open. — AFP

Naomi Osaka, slumped to a 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 defeat to last week’s Beijing runner-up Linda Noskova.

“I tried to keep the rallies going as much as I could and staying in the aggressive mode as good as I could,” said the Czech, who is at a career-high 17 in the world rankings.

Japan’s Osaka, the 11th seed, dropped just three points behind her first serve but could not convert any of her four break point opportunities during the 90-minute showdown.

GAUFF CRUISE
Third seed Coco Gauff, a semi-finalist in Wuhan last year, booked her place in the last 16 with a smooth 6-1, 6-0 performance against Japanese qualifier Moyuka Uchijima.

Gauff was flawless throughout a 51-minute victory that was her 18th on Chinese soil since 2023, the most at WTA level by any player in China during that period.

Gauff will square off with Chinese wildcard Zhang Shuai for a place in the quarter-finals.

In contrast, world number six Jessica Pegula survived a “wild ride”, needing seven match points and almost three hours to overcome fellow American Hailey Baptiste 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (8/6). Pegula served for the match twice, at 5-2 and 5-4 in the third set, but Baptiste dug deep to save five match points and took four games in a row for a 6-5 advantage. Pegula steadied the ship to force a tie-break and she finally wrapped up the win on her seventh match point.

“It’s been brutal,” said Pegula, who will face Russian ninth seed Ekaterina Alexandrova in the third round. “Match points, then she started playing well, I think I just got a little tentative,” admitted Pegula.

Heat again played a factor as 12th-seeded Karolina Muchova joined the likes of Emma Raducanu, Jelena Ostapenko and Dayana Yastremska on the list of mid-match retirees in Wuhan. — AFP

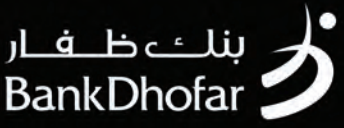


MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
5,195.646

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$66.21
BRENT \$66.26
LIGHT \$62.59





بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

*Terms & Conditions apply

[www.bankdhofar.com](#) 2479 1111

CREDIT CARDS
=
50% OFF*
AT VOX & CINEPOLIS CINEMAS





APPLY NOW

INTEGRATEDHOUSING



The signing ceremony took place on the first day of Urban October and the Home & Building Expo.

RO 71m Palm Hills Estate project set to transform Khasab’s urban landscape

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, OCT 8

A landmark Shareholders Agreement has been signed between Musandam Global Investment Co SAOC (MGIC) and Malaysia’s WCT International Sdn Bhd (WCT Holdings Berhad) for the joint development of Palm Hills Estate, an integrated housing project in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate.

In a post by Musandam Global Investment Co SAOC, the company highlighted that the project represents a strategic step in advancing sustainable urban development in line with Oman Vision 2040, combining international expertise with local innovation to create a smart, community-driven neighbourhood for Omani families.

Valued at RO 71 million, the Palm Hills Estate will cover an expansive land area of 635,000 square metres, comprising over 680 residential units, commercial and shopping zones, a central business district and a four-star hotel. Strategically located in Khasab, the development aims to position Musandam as a new hub for modern living, commerce and tourism.

The signing ceremony took place on the first day of Urban October and the Home & Building Expo, attended by senior government officials including Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning; Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said al Busaidy, Governor of Musandam; and Eng Hamad bin Ali al Nazwani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for Housing.

OIA sets up joint investment fund with Azerbaijan

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 8

AS part of its ongoing efforts to expand strategic partnerships with friendly and brotherly nations, aimed at reinforcing the Sultanate of Oman’s position as a trusted investment partner and attracting advanced technologies and investments to local sectors, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has signed a new strategic partnership with Azerbaijan Investment Holding (AIH), the entity responsible for managing and developing state-owned enterprises and investments in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

This milestone agreement was signed on the sidelines of a high-level Azerbaijani delegation visit to the Sultanate of Oman, led by the Minister of Economy, along with senior officials and business leaders.

The partnership entails the establishment of a joint investment fund with a capital of RO 77 million, equally contributed by both countries. The fund aims to invest in key sectors including food industries, manufacturing, renewable energy, logistics, healthcare and retail. It also seeks to launch projects with developmental impact in both countries that support income diversification and in-country value (ICV) creation, in line with the objectives of



The partnership entails the establishment of a joint investment fund with a capital of RO 77 million.

Oman Vision 2040 to build a diversified and sustainable economy.

Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), stated: “This strategic partnership with the Republic of Azerbaijan reflects OIA’s approach to expanding its global investment network by forming high-impact partnerships that support Oman’s economic diversification goals.

It also presents an opportunity to transfer advanced technologies to local sectors. This collaboration underscores the growing trust in Oman as a reliable investment partner.

Through this partnership, we will continue exploring promising opportunities with international partners to

enhance the developmental impact of our investments and deliver added value to the national economy”.

For his part, Ruslan Alikhanov, Chief Executive Officer, Azerbaijan Investment Holding, said: “The establishment of the Joint Investment Fund between Oman Investment Authority and Azerbaijan Investment Holding reflects our shared commitment to strengthening bilateral ties through sustainable and forward-looking investments that create long-term value for the economies of the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Azerbaijan”.

This partnership is the tenth of its kind established by OIA with peer institutions and reputable global entities, such as the Oman-Türkiye Joint

Investment Fund, in addition to other collaborations with Qatar, Brunei, Uzbekistan, India, Vietnam, Spain, Pakistan and China.

These partnerships reaffirm OIA’s commitment to expanding its international investment footprint and capturing high-value opportunities that align with Oman’s national agenda.

They also position Oman as a regional hub for strategic investment and a driver of sustainable economic growth.

Moreover, OIA’s efforts to build long-term alliances with prestigious global institutions contribute to knowledge transfer, technology localisation, economic diversification and job creation, while strengthening Oman’s competitiveness across various economic sectors.

Oman taps H2Global to accelerate clean hydrogen development

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 8

Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom) — the master planner of Oman’s green hydrogen industry — is partnering with the H2Global Foundation, a Europe-based nonprofit organisation, to leverage its innovative market-based solutions and accelerate the development of green hydrogen projects in the Sultanate of Oman.

To this end, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the two sides on the sidelines of European Hydrogen Week, which concluded last week in the Belgian capital, Brussels.

Signing the MoU were Abdulaziz al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom and Markus Exenberger, Executive Director of the H2Global Foundation.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Oman’s Minister of Energy and Minerals, along with members of the Omani delegation attending Hydrogen Week.

Germany-based H2Global is well known for its innovative intermediary mechanism that helps bridge gaps in early-stage clean hydrogen markets by providing demand



Representatives of Hydrom and H2Global Foundation pictured with Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, along with members of the Omani delegation, at the MoU signing in Brussels.

certainty, enabling production investments globally and coordinating stakeholders to ensure supply and demand scale sustainably.

The nonprofit is dedicated to advancing the global development of clean hydrogen and other low- and zero-emission fuel markets through its acclaimed mechanism.

Implemented via its wholly owned subsidiary Hintco, H2Global operates a market-based double-auction model: on the supply side, it offers long-term purchase agreements to producers of clean hydrogen

or its derivatives (such as ammonia and methanol), while on the demand side, it matches these with buyers under short-term contracts.

The difference between the higher production cost and the price buyers are willing to pay is subsidised through grants, primarily from the German government.

Through this partnership, Hydrom and H2Global will jointly assess how the H2Global mechanism can support Oman in developing competitive projects, stimulating

international trade in clean fuels and positioning the Sultanate of Oman as a global hub for clean hydrogen.

Commenting on the MoU, Abdulaziz al Shidhani said: “Oman’s approach to hydrogen is built on clear structures, a long-term vision and credible delivery. Exploring models like H2Global allows us to test and refine our own systems, ensuring that as global mechanisms evolve, they remain interoperable with what we are building”.

Markus Exenberger, Executive Director of the H2Global Foundation, added: “This MoU represents a milestone in our joint efforts to unlock the potential of clean hydrogen. Oman can combine its ambitious hydrogen road map with H2Global’s proven market model to create price signals and secure offtake”.

H2Global also undertakes research and capacity-building activities, particularly in partner countries, to support supply chain development and regulatory frameworks.

The nonprofit collaborates with governments, private sector stakeholders and international institutions to advance funding, policy alignment, knowledge sharing and the establishment of sustainability standards.

ADVERTORIALS

BANKCOMMITMENT



This partnership underscores the bank’s commitment to supporting initiatives that promote innovation, sustainability, and economic diversification.

SOHAR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC PARTNER FOR HOME & BUILDING EXPO 2025

MUSCAT: Driving innovation and advancing the nation’s sustainable development agenda, Sohar International proudly served as the Strategic Partner of the Home & Building Expo 2025, held from October 6 to 8 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre under the theme “Sustainable Cities for People”.

Aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, this partnership underscores the bank’s commitment to supporting initiatives that promote innovation, sustainability and economic diversification.

The Home & Building Expo 2025, organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in cooperation with Expo Muscat, was inaugurated under the auspices of Shaikh Al Fadhl bin Mohammed al Harthy, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers.

Representing Sohar International at the official launch, Khalil bin Salim al Hedaifi, Chief Government and Private Banking Officer, highlighted the bank’s steadfast commitment to supporting Oman’s national development agenda, stating: “The Home & Building Expo plays a pivotal role in advancing Oman’s urban development, fostering innovation in the real estate sector and creating opportunities for sustainable economic growth.

Our strategic partnership with the Expo exemplifies Sohar International’s commitment to supporting this national agenda.

By connecting industry leaders, investors and policymakers, we aim to accelerate the creation of resilient urban communities and innovative real estate projects that deliver long-term social and economic value.

Initiatives like this empower businesses, attract international investment and contribute meaningfully to the realisation of Oman Vision 2040”.

The Expo served as a vital platform bringing together industry leaders, developers, investors and policymakers to exchange insights and explore forward-looking solutions in the realms of real estate, architecture and infrastructure development.

As a comprehensive one-stop destination, the Expo enabled participants to source end-to-end solutions — from concept to completion — fostering collaboration and accelerating the development of smart, sustainable and people-centric urban environments across the Sultanate of Oman.

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing commitment to strengthening collaboration and partnerships with the media, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, held a media meet attended by a number of journalists and representatives from traditional and digital media institutions.

The event aimed to deepen the Bank’s strategic relationship with media and support all media representatives with the tools necessary to help them

communicate the latest advancements and trends across economic and social sectors. Bank Muscat places emphasis on the pivotal role which the media institutions have played in supporting the Bank’s journey over the years and reinforcing its leadership in corporate social responsibility.

They contribute great effort to promote the wide range of banking services and solutions offered to all the Bank’s customers.

The event featured a specialised workshop on the importance of artificial

NESTO HYPERMARKET LAUNCHES MONTH-LONG OMAN SHOPPING FESTIVAL

MUSCAT: Nesto Hypermarket has officially inaugurated its month-long “Oman Shopping Festival” across all their hypermarkets in the Sultanate of Oman. The grand launch event took place at Bilad Mall, Al Maabela and was simultaneously inaugurated across all other Nesto outlets in Oman, marking the start of a nationwide celebration filled with exclusive offers, entertainment and family excitement. The inauguration was carried out by differently-abled



children, creating an inspiring and emotional highlight of the event. The ceremony also featured a vibrant Omani traditional band

performance, adding a cultural and festive touch to the occasion.

To make the day more engaging, the event included fun activities and colouring sessions for kids, making it a joyful experience for visiting families.

This year’s Oman Shopping Festival focuses mainly on department stores, clothing, IT, home appliances and home furnishings, offering customers unmatched value and exciting deals across all categories.

6 win in Toyota’s 50th anniversary campaign

SAUD

Bahwan Automotive, the official distributor of Toyota vehicles in Oman, recently announced the first six winners of its never before 50th anniversary campaign, where 50 lucky customers will drive home a brand-new Toyota Yaris. The 6 winners were recently announced in a special raffle draw that marked another chapter in Toyota’s remarkable journey of spreading happiness across Oman.

The biggest ever campaign of its kind in Oman celebrates Saud Bahwan Automotive’s five decades of partnership with Toyota. It gives customers not only unmatched benefits on new purchases but also the extraordinary opportunity to win one of 50 Toyota Yaris cars through raffle draws.

Additionally customers purchasing their favourite Toyota during this campaign can benefit from 50% VAT on us, 5 Years / 50,000 Km Service, 50% Insurance on us and RO 50 worth Thiqah Loyalty Points.

This offer is a perfect opportunity for families and individuals to join in the celebrations and bring home a new Toyota, bring home

The unveiling of the first six winners created a wave of excitement, with each sharing heartfelt stories about their connection with Toyota and what this milestone means to them.



The unveiling of the first six winners created a wave of excitement, with each sharing heartfelt stories about their connection with Toyota and what this milestone means to them.

happiness.

The unveiling of the first six winners created a wave of excitement, with each sharing heartfelt stories about their connection with Toyota and what this milestone means to them.

The Toyota Yaris with its 1.5L Dual VVT-i engine delivering 104

HP, paired with a smooth CVT transmission, blends power-packed performance with impressive fuel efficiency. Its bold design, modern infotainment with 8-inch display, Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™ and thoughtful touches like rear AC vents make it ideal for both daily commutes and family trips.

100+ YEARS OF MG: LEGACY, CRAFTSMANSHIP & UNMATCHED CONFIDENCE

MUSCAT: Since 1924, MG has stood for more than just mobility. It has come to represent craftsmanship, innovation and a global promise of quality. MG’s heritage is not only about legacy, but also about the tangible build standards and service excellence that give drivers real confidence.

MG was founded in the early 1920s in Britain by Cecil Kimber, growing from a small tuning shop in Morris Garages to a name known worldwide.

Early sports models like the MG 14/28 and the classic M-series built MG’s reputation for performance, style and driving pleasure.

Over the decades one thing has remained consistent: MG’s commitment to design, engineering and a driving experience that inspires trust.

Today, MG is globally known for



MG was founded in the early 1920s in Britain by Cecil Kimber, growing from a small tuning shop in Morris Garages to a name known worldwide.

combining its British heritage with global engineering under SAIC Motor, to deliver cars that are stylish, safe and reliable.

Heritage is only part of the equation. The other is how MG ensures that every car built meets strict global standards, so that “confidence” isn’t just a promise, but something drivers feel every time they get behind the wheel.

MG’s global reputation rests on a foundation of design and engineering excellence, with models styled in world-class studios to balance elegance, durability and modern performance. Safety and reliability are equally central, with vehicles equipped with multiple airbags, stability control, anti-lock braking systems and increasingly advanced driver assistance features.

Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, CEO, MHD ACERE also remarked “MG’s century-long success is built on a legacy of engineering excellence, reliability and customer trust.”

Bank Muscat hosts specialised workshop on AI for media personnel



The event aimed to deepen the Bank’s strategic relationship with media and support all media representatives.

intelligence (AI) in enhancing the skills of journalists and media representatives.

The workshop was led by Abdullah al Saba’, a

content creator and expert in modern technology and digital innovation. Various subjects were highlighted during the event, including

the significance of harnessing AI in enriching, evolving and improving the quality of journalistic content.

Al Saba’ also addressed some of the challenges journalists and the broader public might encounter when using AI, along with strategies to mitigate these issues.

The media event served as an open platform for dialogue, allowing the audience to exchange ideas, ask questions, and explore current trends in digital transformation. Attendees discussed both challenges

and opportunities presented by emerging technologies, examined international experiences in digital media and AI, and explored future possibilities.

The event also provided an effective networking opportunity to foster stronger cooperation between the Bank and its media partners.

Sheikha bint Yousuf al Farsiyyah, Deputy Chief Executive Officer — Operations, at Bank Muscat, expressed her delight in hosting this event dedicated to the Bank’s partners from the media sector.

AI REVOLUTIONISING OMAN’S MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN LINE WITH OMAN VISION 2040

FAISAL AL AJMI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

The revolutionising impact of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming at lightning pace journalism and the general media landscape in Oman, in sync with the nation’s push for innovation and digital leadership in line with Oman Vision 2040.

At a recent event organised by Bank Muscat with its media partners, journalists and media professionals met to share their perspectives on how AI can help refine media practice, enable content creators and reaffirm the role of ethical journalism in an increasingly digital age.

In her opening remarks, Shaikha bint Yousuf al Farsiyah, Bank Muscat Deputy Chief Executive Officer — Operations, said she was delighted to host the event because it was a celebration of the strong and abiding synergy between the Bank and the media community.

“Artificial intelligence has an important role to play in building and developing the expertise of media professionals”, she went on. “We must discover how to harness this global technological revolution to our benefit and seize the promising opportunities it holds for the media and society”.

Shaikha Yousuf emphasised that AI has been viewed by the Bank as a pillar to inject strength into services, efficiency and innovation in line with a broader vision to address Oman’s national development agenda.

“At Bank Muscat, we believe that we should begin constructing the future by having a deep understanding of the latest technologies and making conscious preparation to utilise them in a way that benefits our community and national economy”, she added.

Her words had a profound impact on media professionals present. Oman Arabic correspondent Mai al Ghadani was impressed by the initiative for presenting the Bank’s commitment to nurturing local media and building capacity among growing sectors.

“I would like to thank Bank Muscat for this wonderful event, which reflects the Bank’s commitment to building local media and enhancing journalists’ skills in areas such as artificial intelligence”, she said. “This project not only increases collaboration between the Bank and the media but also provides tremendous opportunities for professional growth in the face of fast-paced technological developments”.

Nazdaher drives growth, secures major investments

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 8

THE National Programme for the Development of the Private Sector and Foreign Trade (Nazdaher) has outlined a sweeping set of reforms and projects designed to position the Sultanate of Oman as a more attractive destination for private investment and trade, reinforcing the private sector’s central role in delivering sustainable growth under Oman Vision 2040.

Speaking at a media briefing in Muscat, Nazdaher president Khalid bin Said al Shuaibi said the programme — an accelerated, short-term executive arm of the economy and development pillar — aims to develop an empowered private sector that can compete locally and internationally and integrate more effectively with global trade systems.

Phase one (2021–2023) concentrated on attracting local and foreign investment and improving the investor journey. Nazdaher developed and secured intellectual-property protection for a National Investment Matrix designed to measure investments’ economic impact against Oman Vision 2040 goals and carried out a comprehensive review of procedures, regulations and systems affecting investors. A package of tools and initiatives was handed to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) for delivery — including the National Negotiation Team, the National Investment Strategy, the Invest Oman platform, an Investment Incentives Guide, an Investment Map, a Fast-Track Path, an Investor



Nazdaher president Khalid bin Said al Shuaibi said the programme aims to develop an empowered private sector that can compete locally and internationally and integrate more effectively with global trade systems.

Residency Programme and an Investment Sector Performance Monitoring Framework aligned to investment targets of roughly RO 11 billion.

Among the programme’s flagship achievements is the development and marketing of the Ladayn Polymer Park — promoted jointly with OQ Group, MoCIIP and Madayn — intended to bolster domestic plastic product self-sufficiency and spawn higher-value downstream industries. The project has secured 19 investment agreements valued at more than \$160 million (about RO 61.5 million) and was formally adopted by OQ Group earlier this year to ensure operational continuity.

Nazdaher also reported success in investor targeting: a specialised national team helped secure investments exceeding RO 1.5 billion for projects in Al Duqm and Suhar, including the Jindal Shadede iron and steel complex in Al Duqm and the United Solar polysilicon plant in SOHAR

Port and Freezone. Investment promotion materials, databases and technical reports were transferred to MoCIIP’s Invest Oman Lounge to sustain attraction efforts. Separately, 37 investment opportunities worth RO 828 million across seven sectors are being marketed via Invest in Oman.

The programme has broadened its scope to emerging sectors such as culture and creative industries: a ten-year investment strategy produced three major projects, five promising opportunities (approximately RO 19 million) and 12 enabling initiatives centred on creative skills education, trade, infrastructure and financing/legislation.

Nazdaher is also part of Oman’s national team preparing for the World Bank’s new Business Readiness Index, having analysed roughly 750 key indicators and 1,370 sub-indicators to identify 24 immediate reform initiatives (mostly complete) and 17 further improvements slated

for 2025–26 in coordination with more than 22 government entities.

Phase two (2024–2025) shifts focus to integrated private-sector development and foreign trade through four main tracks — private sector development, foreign trade, local value chains and international competitiveness — and includes cluster planning (aluminium in Suhar, minerals, fisheries clusters, Al Duqm cold-chain cluster and Najd agricultural governance), standards strengthening, trade-support platforms and a governance framework for family businesses.

Nazdaher also led the creation and rollout of a Unified National Promotional Identity for Oman, launched under Royal Patronage on 8 January 2025 and unveiled internationally at the World Economic Forum in Davos; an office to manage the identity began operations in early 2025 alongside capacity-building workshops for public and private stakeholders.

Arab forum explores future of steel industry in the region

SAEED AL MASHARFI
MUSCAT, OCT 8

Under the auspices of Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the 18th Arab Steel Summit and the International Iron and Steel Exhibition commenced at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday, October 8, 2025. The two-day event brought together senior officials, decision-makers, experts, producers and innovators from various countries.

The strong turnout reflects the Summit’s status as the region’s premier steel industry event, attracting over 600 participants from 300 international companies representing 20 nationalities,



The two-day event brought together senior officials, decision-makers, experts, producers, and innovators from various countries.

along with 40 speakers comprising industry leaders and experts from the Arab world and beyond. This establishes the Summit as a pivotal platform for exchanging expertise and showcasing the latest developments in the steel sector.

In his speech, Qais al Yousef welcomed participants from across the globe, stressing that the steel sector holds a central position due to its vital role in enabling infrastructure, energy and logistics sectors, while also being closely linked to pressing global issues — foremost among them the transition to a low-carbon economy. He highlighted that the steel industry in Oman is among the most promising industrial sectors, contributing around 2% to the national GDP, attracting investments worth

billions of dollars and accounting for nearly 40% of the Sultanate of Oman’s total industrial exports.

The Summit addressed key themes including growth strategies, technological innovations and models of regional and international cooperation, all aimed at ensuring greater sustainability and competitiveness in the steel industry. The programme featured high-level conferences, strategic panel discussions, specialised workshops and an international exhibition presenting the latest technologies and services in the field.

For his part, Eng Ahmed Ezz, Chairman of the Arab Iron and Steel Union, underlined the importance of Arab cooperation and the exchange of expertise between

governments and decision-makers. He noted that the fast-evolving challenges related to energy, technology and environmental pressures call for unified visions and joint strategies to safeguard the industry’s competitiveness. He added that the Summit represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen ties between Arab governments and industry leaders and to build new partnerships that open wider horizons for investment and innovation.

The event stands out as a key platform to highlight the Arab world’s role in the global steel industry, by promoting regional cooperation, encouraging joint investments and supporting the shift towards sustainability and a greener, more efficient economy.

PRECIOUS METALS

Gold hits record high to over \$4,000



Gold surged past \$4,000 an ounce for the first time on Wednesday as investors sought protection against economic and geopolitical uncertainties and anticipated US interest rate cuts. Spot gold rose 1.3% to \$4,034.59 per ounce by 09:31 GMT, while US futures climbed 1.3% to \$4,056.80.

Silver joined the rally, advancing 2.2% to \$48.85 per ounce, edging closer to its all-time high of \$49.51. — Reuters

FINANCIAL WARNING

Bank of England flags market risks



The Bank of England warned on Wednesday that global markets could face a “sharp correction” if sentiment towards artificial intelligence or the independence of the US Federal Reserve deteriorates.

The BoE noted that US stock valuations resemble levels last seen near the dotcom bubble peak, while US government bonds are exposed to any decline in the Fed’s credibility, making markets vulnerable to sudden shocks. — Reuters

ENERGY MARKETS

Oil rises on Opec+ output hike



Oil prices climbed over 1% on Wednesday after Opec+ announced a smaller-than-expected output hike for next month, easing oversupply concerns. Brent crude rose 82 cents, or 1.3%, to \$66.26 a barrel by 09:45 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate gained 85 cents, or 1.4%, to \$62.59.

Prices were broadly flat in the previous session as investors weighed supply glut risks against reduced production increases.

— Reuters

OPINION

Why do gold prices continue to rise?



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

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

At the beginning of 2025, expectations were that gold prices would rise to \$3,000 per ounce and potentially soar above \$3,500 as well. However, as things stand, prices have currently exceeded this level to reach more than \$3,900 per ounce for the first time.

Consumers continue to demand this safe metal amidst the financial crisis plaguing the US government, along with increasing expectations of further interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve.

US gold futures contracts for December delivery have risen to \$3,926.80 per ounce, with an additional 25 basis point rate cut expected in the coming period.

This is compounded by economic uncertainty regarding the resolution of the US government financial crisis and the growing interest of individual investors in hedging amidst trade and geopolitical tensions. There is a high demand for gold in local and regional markets among citizens and expatriates.

This is driven by several factors related to economic, cultural and social motivations. Asian people consider gold a means of savings and a symbol of social status, as it is used on special occasions and paid as dowry

at weddings and religious celebrations, especially in India. In terms of long-term investment and savings, people view gold as a safe means of preserving value, especially in light of currency fluctuations or inflation in their home countries.

This motivates them, especially expatriates, to purchase gold at reasonable prices and keep it until their final return home. The region's countries are among those that offer gold at competitive prices, meaning they are exempt from taxes on gold compared to other countries.

The ease of reselling or converting this metal is also very easy in the Sultanate of Oman and the region, as anyone can liquidate it and sell it at almost any time at the market price. Expatriates can also convert gold into cash during difficult times, or convert it into jewellery and dowries upon returning home.

The daily monitoring of gold shops in the Omani market contributes to trust and transparency, as they are subject to official monitoring to ensure that this metal is free of fraud or deception, unlike some markets in their home countries.

This metal also holds great importance today among Omani citizens, especially during social occasions such as weddings

Consumers continue to demand this safe metal amidst the financial crisis plaguing the US government, along with increasing expectations of further interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve.

and banquets. However, large-scale gold purchases are made by expatriates from South Asia due to their cultural and economic connection to gold.

Overall, the sharp rise in gold prices in 2025 is attributed to several factors, most notably global economic and political uncertainty, people's tendency to hoard the metal and growing concerns about weak growth, sovereign debt, geopolitical tensions and even fears of a "sudden financial crisis", which could contribute to increased demand for gold. As is well known, gold does not provide returns like bank interest or bonds, so when "real" interest rates (after accounting for inflation) are low or negative, investors are increasingly drawn to gold as a means of preserving value.

There are expectations that the US Federal Reserve may cut interest rates in the coming period, which supports the demand for gold. High interest rates increase the cost of holding gold, so any decline in interest rates alleviates this burden.

Finally, many transactions in the gold market are conducted in dollars and if this currency weakens against other currencies, gold becomes cheaper for buyers with other currencies, increasing demand for it.

CHINA-BHP SPAT REINFORCES M&A APPEAL

BHP's shareholders seem exceptionally sanguine about a major threat to its biggest product from its largest customer.

Last week Bloomberg reported that state-run iron ore buyer China Mineral Resources Group has told major steelmakers and traders to pause purchases from the \$213 billion (\$140 billion) miner.

Yet the stock fell no more than 2.5% on the news and has since recovered almost half of that. Perhaps investors are right not to worry this time — the directive may just be a tactic for price negotiations.

The spat is a reminder, though, of one of the reasons why the mining industry is so keen on mergers: concentration risk.

Under CEO Mike Henry, BHP has started to tackle this. It's developing a potash business and its copper production has increased 28% over the past three years, thanks in part to its 2023 purchase of Oz Minerals.

The spat is a reminder, though, of one of the reasons why the mining industry is so keen on mergers: concentration risk.

That and a slight bump in the price of the red metal helped reduce iron ore's contribution to the company's underlying EBITDA in the 12 months to the end of June by 10 percentage points.

But the roughly one-quarter drop in the iron ore price had a bigger impact.

And the key ingredient in steelmaking still accounts for a whopping 55% of BHP's EBITDA; rival Rio Tinto notched up a similar percentage for the first six months of 2025, down from 73% a year earlier.

Moreover, it's a double concentration risk: Beijing buys the vast majority of the two miners' iron ore.

Reducing that dependence isn't the only motive to diversify: China's steelmaking needs may well have peaked; longer term, most Australian iron ore is not as suitable for making green steel as higher grades from Brazil, Guinea and elsewhere; and copper is a key way to play the energy transition.

The prospect of its top client routinely putting the squeeze on pricing, to the point of halting purchases, offers compelling grounds to go in search of new deals, too.

Granted, Henry is picky, wanting, as he outlined in August, only targets that are large, low on the cost curve, have expansion potential and offer synergies.

And though there has been a surge of M&A in the sector of late, including Anglo American's \$54 billion tie-up with Teck Resources, increased government involvement is complicating dealmaking, BHP's strategy chief told the Financial Times. But none of that dims the appeal.

— Reuters

Company bosses sound the alarm on taxes

The chiefs of two of UK's biggest businesses have sounded the alarm over rising costs, regulation and economic uncertainty amidst mounting concern the Chancellor will inflict further damage to the UK's competitiveness at the forthcoming Budget.

The boss of British Telecom (BT), Allison Kirkby warned the telecoms industry was "already at peak government inflicted costs" while the founder of AO World, John Roberts said he feared the UK was heading into a recession.

Speaking at the Connected Britain conference recently, Kirkby said: "We pay in business rates, energy levies and other costs associated with regulation and compliance ten times the amount our peers pay in countries like Germany and the Netherlands".

Kirkby said investors "need certainty that they're going to get a return on their investment and they get that certainty through stability on regulatory and fiscal policy. We are going into what could be a very difficult Budget for the Chancellor".

She added: "We've got to ensure that for these massive infrastructure bills that will accrue billions of value to the economy in the coming years, investors and citizens and companies get the return on investment".

Meanwhile, in an interview with the BBC, Roberts said businesses were "looking at how they can take people out. Costs walk into businesses on legs — those legs have got much more expensive. It is much more difficult to recruit people, it's much less flexible than it has ever been to recruit people", Roberts said. "We've lived through a few recessions in the last 25 years — I think we're heading into another one".

The remarks come as businesses brace for another painful round of tax hikes due to be unveiled at the Budget in the coming weeks.

Furthermore, the UK's largest retail business group has warned the Treasury that further tax hikes will keep shop prices "higher for longer" after data showed food inflation in September remained at its highest levels since the cost-of-living crisis kicked off.

British Retail Consortium (BRC)



A view of the Bank of England and the financial district, in London, Britain. — Reuters

The UK's largest retail business group has warned the Treasury that further tax hikes will keep shop prices "higher for longer" after data showed food inflation in September remained at its highest levels since the cost-of-living crisis kicked off.



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK.

chief executive Helen Dickenson said even if the Chancellor chooses to target businesses with another round of tax hikes at the upcoming Budget, it will be "British households who will bear the consequences of the Chancellor's decisions".

She added: "While retailers continue to absorb higher costs as much as possible and deliver value to customers, any further tax rises in the upcoming Budget would keep shop prices higher for longer".

Dickenson unleashed the warning alongside the BRC's monthly shop price monitor, which found annual food inflation stayed at an elevated 4.2 per cent in September. The finding extended a worrying run of price readings in the grocery category. An investment analyst at AJ Bell, Dan Coatsworth, branded the outlook a "retailer's worst nightmare".

The Chancellor has been told to introduce measures in the Budget which will encourage more people

in the UK to become retail investors. Clearscore CEO, Justin Basini said that more people needed to be persuaded to start investing as a key way to help boost Britain's growth.

When asked what he would ask Rachel Reeves if he could pick up the phone to her ahead of the Budget, Basini said: "I think there are a few things that I would ask for.

The first is to continue her efforts to unlock the huge amount of capital that is sitting on the sidelines. There is a lot of money sitting there waiting to be invested. I think it needs to come to the UK capital markets. I think it needs to come to UK companies".

He added: "So all of the Mansion House accords that she puts out encouraging pension funds to invest in great UK companies, listed UK companies — I would be really encouraging of that. Then I would also be encouraging of getting retail investors to start to see the long-term potential of backing UK businesses".

CLASSIFIEDS



Auditors & Accountants

- Audit & Accounting • CFO Services • Secondment
- VAT & Tax Return Filing • VAT Refund Assistance

Contact: 92182750 • Email: contact@umpauditors.com

PROJECT ASSISTANT

Female, well-versed in **Project Administration** with 13 years of proven experience in training, recruitment, administration, finance, and secretarial support.

As an **Executive MBA** holder, I can contribute effectively to your organizational goals and looking forward to an interview call and the opportunity.

Contact: 98260708 | meena.v24@gmail.com

SIT. VACANT

**SALES LEAD
- INTERIOR
FIT-OUT**

REQUIRED
with 3+ years'
experience in
interior fit-out
and valid Oman
Driving License.
Send CV
to: career.
ipdoman@gmail.
com

A REPUTED Building Material company in Oman requires a Purchase Manager with minimum 10 years of experience in domestic and overseas purchase, preferably in building material, industrial & hand tools. Valid Oman driving license is must. Send CV to omanpurchase2025@gmail.com.



PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (Cockroaches),
Public Health Chemicals, Agriculture
Chemicals, Snake Repellent, Rodent Baits
and other insect repellent from
UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in
Pest Control Service,
Bedbug Treatment,
Rodent Treatment,
Snake Treatment
and Termite
Treatment [Pre
& Post Construction]



Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in
(Aziba - Khwair
Qurum - Ruwi
Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

A close-up of a hand on a black steering wheel. In the background, a white car with red and black stripes is visible.

SIT. VACANT

Job Vacancy:

Operations Manager
(Lifting Inspection
Company)
Required
Qualifications:

- ASNT Level II (minimum requirement).
- LLEA or ASNT Foundation certification.
- Diploma in Lifting Accessories.
- Diplomas in the following equipment:
Mobile Crane
Overhead Crane
MEWP (Mobile Elevating Work Platforms)
Forklift
Gantry Crane

Additional Advantage:
ASNT Level III certification

Send all your CVs & certificates on below email:

pipe2566@yahoo.com



WJ Towell Group Company

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
 Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325

www.orbit-oman.com



**أوربت
ORBIT**

Car, Rental & Lease

■ SIT. VACANT

A REPUTED Building Material company in Oman requires a Marketing Manager with minimum 10 years of experience, preferably in building material, industrial & hand tools. Candidate should be able to handle big corporates. Valid Oman driving license is must. Send CV to omanpurchase2025@gmail.com.



المركز التجاري الكهربائي ش.م.م

CENTRAL

Electrical Trading LLC










OFFICIAL ADDRESS :

P.O. Box: 397, P.C.: 117

Tel : +968 24832308 / 24832053

Fax : +968 24832309

Mob.: +968 99252965 / 99491438

E-mail: sales@cetoman.com

Web: www.cetoman.com

Switchgear Division: Tel : +968 24830952

Equipment Division: Tel : +968 24830947

CET (SWITCHGEAR & CONTROLS)

Sohar Division: Tel : +968 22405243

E-mail: sohar@cetoman.com


















Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in
(Aziba - Khwair
Qurum - Ruwi
Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

A close-up of a hand on a black steering wheel. In the background, a white car with a red and white striped awning is visible.



We Are Hiring

A reputed Organization is looking for a
**Property Manager
 & Real Estate Developer**

☒ Experience not less than 5 years

[Apply Now](#)

Send your C V to
recruitmentalf70@gmail.com

■ **SIT. WANTED**

LOOKING for part time OR full
time Accounts/Finance job.
20yrs experience in Muscat.
Upto finalization & Audit.
Please contact: 92065499

INDIAN male (Mechanical Engineering) with 3 years experience in diesel engine works (Gensets/ Engines), 2 years in Machine Maintenance, seeks job.
Contact: 78022420

INDIAN male MBA, 20 years
experience in Oman & GCC in
Project sales/ Dealer market
in All construction materials
including Cables & Accessories
having D/L looking for the post
of Sales Manager/Assistant
Manager.

Contact: 00968 78099493

**SRI LANKAN Male — (CGMA
ACMA+ CPA+BBA) Asst. Finance
Manager/ Chief Accountant, 12+
Experience in Oman & GCC,
Expert in Finan. Reporting (MIS),
VAT, Audit, Cashflow, Budget, AR
AP Recon, IFRS, Payroll, Banking.
Contact: 78773250.
Email: ali.mohamedown@gmail.
com**

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

CHIEF accountant, MBA
finance, 9+ years experience in
financial statements, auditing,
budgeting, VAT, tax, fixed assets,
reconciliation, payroll.
Seeking a full-time or part-
time position in a senior role.
Contact: akramhaniffa@yahoo.
com / 93988825.

OMAN  DAILY

Observer

FREE*
CLASSIFIEDS

- **SITUATION WANTED**

* **NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY**

Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.



To advertise please contact:
 Tel: 71455532/ 71455531/ 71455530
 Email: adv@omaninfo.om

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels

To advertise

71455532- 71455531- 71455530

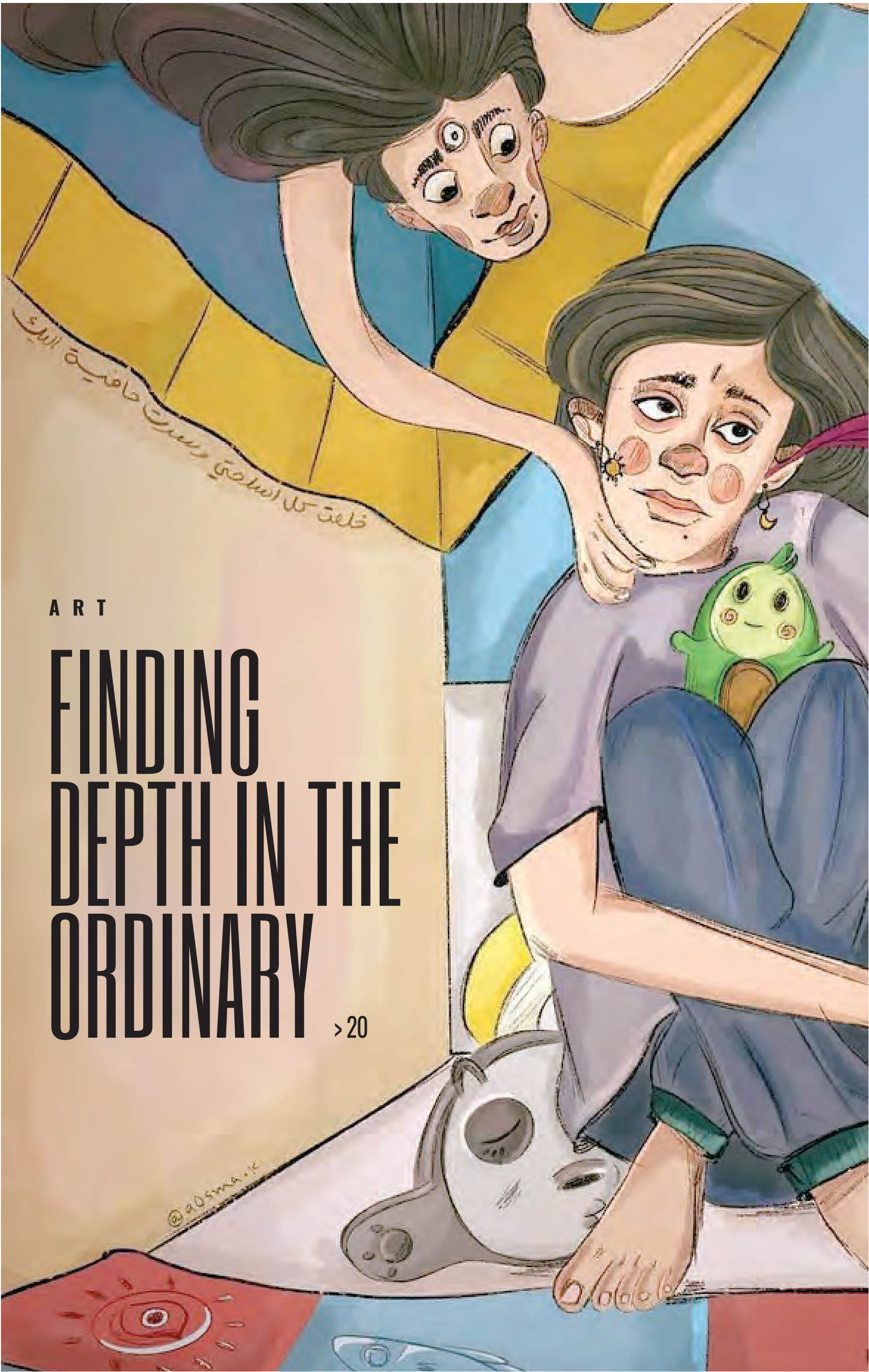
adv@omaninfo.om

izdihar_info izdihar.info

ازدهار
izdihar

IZDIHAR_INFO

ART/LIFE



A R T

FINDING DEPTH IN THE ORDINARY

> 20

CHANGING WORLD

Are you a moody person? Check your sleep patterns



SHADDAD AL MUSALMI
The writer is a Senior Editor at the Oman Daily Observer.

SLEEP IS A fundamental biological process essential for maintaining both physical and mental health, influencing everything from cognitive performance and emotional stability to immune function and metabolic balance. It is regarded as one of the three pillars of health, alongside nutrition and physical activity — all of which are closely interlinked.

Health experts continue to emphasise the importance of quality sleep to reduce the risk of developing conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and hormonal imbalances.

According to the experts I spoke with, sleep is vital to overall wellbeing and its absence can have serious consequences. One common disrupter of healthy sleep routines is late-night social media browsing, which can heighten the risk of sleep deprivation and related health issues.

Experts also warn that irregular sleep patterns can impair daytime performance, reducing alertness, disrupting mood and increasing the likelihood of fatigue-related accidents.

The other day, I experienced the effects of poor sleep myself. The following morning, I was in a foul mood — both at the office and on the road. While driving to work, everything appeared hazy despite the bright daylight. At my desk, I struggled to stay awake and complete my assignments. It was an awful experience.

The human body depends on good-quality sleep, as it responds to how well we care for it. Without sufficient rest, we are left feeling tired, irritable and emotionally drained.

Experts have informed me that lack of sleep can raise blood pressure, disrupt blood sugar control and upset hormone regulation. They recommend six to eight hours of sleep each night to help prevent these problems. Chronic sleep disorders, they add, may also contribute to memory loss.

Beyond quantity, the quality of sleep matters just as much. Creating a calm, undisturbed sleeping environment is key to achieving restorative rest.

It is also wise to avoid caffeine, as it can linger in the system for several hours and interfere with sleep quality. While some people believe it doesn't stop them from falling asleep, health experts note that it can still affect how deeply you rest. So perhaps think twice before that late-night cup of qahwa (Omani coffee).

Until next time, make sure you prioritise the sleep your body truly deserves.

QUICK FEATURES



GASTRONOMY

A worker prepares a dish at Café Hitom to raise awareness of meals that can be made under state of emergency conditions. — AFP



ENTERTAINMENT

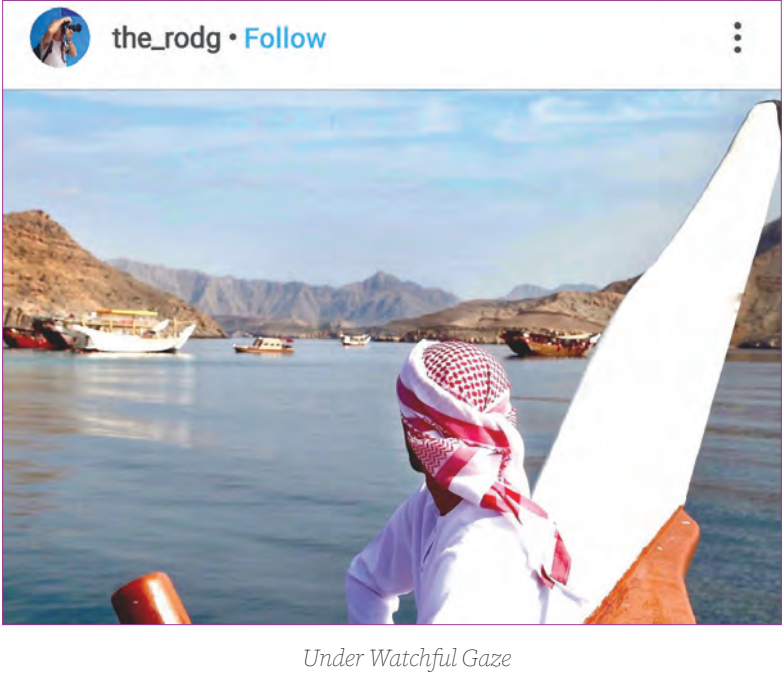
Australian actor Jacob Elordi attends the premiere of Netflix's "Frankenstein" at the Academy Museum in Los Angeles. — AFP



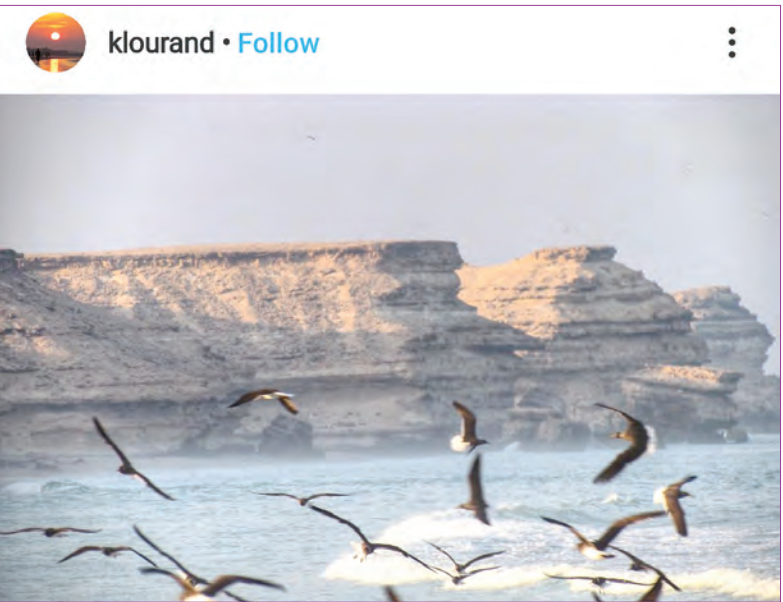
BOLLYWOOD

Ayushmann Khurrana, Bollywood actor and brand ambassador for FICCI Frames, attends the Indian film industry convention in Mumbai. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Under Watchful Gaze



Beauty of Remote Places

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. To be selected, follow us on Instagram and every time you upload or share your photos, make sure to tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

From Kerala to Oman:
The Divine Art of Large-Scale Cooking



KABEER YOUSUF

OVER NEARLY four decades, Ilayidam Devan Namboodiri has earned a rare distinction—cooking for tens of thousands across India and abroad. Recently, the master chef from Sreekrishnapuram in Palakkad visited Oman with his close aide, Vijayan, preparing meals for over 4,000 people as part of the Onam celebrations, delighting both expatriates and Omanis alike.

Devan’s journey began out of pure passion. Trained by his uncle, Thrivikraman Namboodiri—a former military man and renowned chef—from 1980 until his passing in 2015, Devan mastered the art of Valluvanadan Sadya, a distinct style of traditional Kerala cuisine. “Cooking for thousands is a science of calculations, proportions, and above all, divine grace,” he explains.

His impressive career includes preparing feasts for

10,000 to 11,000 students at Nehru College in a single sitting and countless temple and community celebrations. Among his most memorable experiences was a grand feast for 20,000 devotees at Kadambuzha Bhagavathi Temple during Karthika.

To date, Devan estimates he has cooked for more than 5,000 feasts worldwide—around 100 each month—and this marks his sixth visit to Oman. Through his venture, SK Catering, he continues to serve weddings, temples, and major events, with his precise blending of flavours earning admiration from diverse audiences.

Devan also mentors aspiring chefs globally, many of whom now carry on his legacy. A temple tantric himself, he views cooking as a sacred act: “Those who cook today may not be here tomorrow, but the tradition of feeding the hungry must live on. That’s why I train others freely—to keep this divine duty alive.”



Matthieu Blazy
reaches for the stars
in Chanel debut



NEW CHANEL designer Matthieu Blazy unveiled a first sumptuous collection on Monday in front of a crowd of admirers and stars sitting beneath giant glowing planets during Paris Fashion Week.

Ahead of the most-anticipated show of the Spring-Summer 2026 season, some had wondered how much the 41-year-old would dare change the classic designs of the French house.

Despite the galaxy-themed decoration in the spectacular Grand Palais exhibition space, Blazy eschewed a big bang design revolution, opting instead for modern yet bold tweaks to Chanel’s tweeds, blouses and suits.

Gently mixing in masculine looks in the boxy jackets and shirts, alongside statement jewels and stunning long eveningwear in white silk or vibrant red, Blazy harked back to founder Coco Chanel who took inspiration from her boyfriends’ wardrobes.

“What we asked him to do is to take us elsewhere, to move the brand on”, Chanel’s fashion business head, Bruno Pavlovsky, told reporters.

Lauding Blazy’s “discreet” personality and his willingness to listen to colleagues, Pavlovsky said the former Bottega Veneta and Calvin Klein designer had plunged into founder Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel’s story since joining.

“What’s great is that he

continued playing with the design principles, those principles that are so distinctive and important for the brand. But at the same time, he allowed himself freedom, the freedom we need”, Pavlovsky explained.

The front-row was a constellation of A-listers from Penelope Cruz, Kendall Jenner to Pedro Pascal, as well as freshly appointed Chanel brand ambassadors under Blazy, US-Australian star Nicole Kidman and “The Bear” actress Ayo Edebiri. “Babygirl” star Kidman, known for her glamorous red carpet outfits, wore an understated white button-up shirt and wide-leg jeans to the show.

Initial reaction was positive, with the head of fashion-buying at London luxury store Harrods, Simon Longland, saying Blazy had “delivered a debut that was nothing short of a masterclass”.

Privately owned Chanel is the world’s second biggest luxury fashion brand by sales.

— LINEAGE —

Blazy was appointed creative director last December and given the daunting task of moving Chanel beyond the era defined by its long-time supremo Karl Lagerfeld.

He is only the fourth creative director in Chanel’s history after Coco Chanel, Lagerfeld and Virginie Viard, Lagerfeld’s hand-picked successor who stepped down last year.

Before being appointed, Blazy

had won widespread praise for his work as chief creative at Bottega Veneta, where he modernised the look of the classic Italian leather-goods house and introduced new products.

He is one of flurry of appointments that has created a sense of generational renewal in the fashion industry, with some 10 different brands unveiling collections from debut chief designers over the last week in Paris.

Northern Irish star designer Jonathan Anderson, 41, is the other hot courturier challenging Blazy for the limelight in the French capital.

He made an impressive start at Dior women with his first show on Wednesday, having already released a men’s collection in June.

Italy’s Pierpaolo Piccioli also set a new tone at Balenciaga on Saturday, having moved to the Paris-based Spanish heritage label to replace Georgian maverick Demna, who has gone to Gucci.

“The questions of succession and creative renewal arise and it just so happens that it’s happening everywhere all at once” Pavlovsky said in an interview published on Monday.

The luxury industry is hoping the shake up will help boost flagging sales caused by a slowdown in China, US tariffs and a widespread sense of economic uncertainty.

Chanel reported a 30 per cent drop in operating profit in 2024 to \$4.48 billion, as revenue fell 4.3 per cent. — AFP

FEATURES



FINDING DEPTH IN THE ORDINARY

RUQAYA AL KINDI

AMIDST the incessant stream of artworks flooding social media, a different voice emerges — one that centres on recurring faces, wide-open eyes and colours that oscillate from sharp to serene. It is the voice of Asma al Saadi, a multimedia artist whose work refuses to be confined by fleeting trends or commercial imperatives. Her art is a deliberate pursuit of capturing the ephemerality of human experience and transforming it into profound visual narratives.

Al Saadi's creative vision revolves around weaving fleeting moments into lasting symbols — women bearing nature within them, faces entwined in a tapestry of identities, masks whispering of concealed worlds and her signature recurring eye representing sight, insight and insatiable curiosity. Her approach is both personal and universal: a desire to explore what it means to perceive, to feel and to confront the complexities of the human psyche. Her art transcends traditional boundaries, reaching beyond paper and screen into tangible items such as cups, books and fabrics.

This integration of art into everyday objects underscores her conviction that creativity should be embedded in life's minutiae, not reserved as a luxury or elite pursuit.

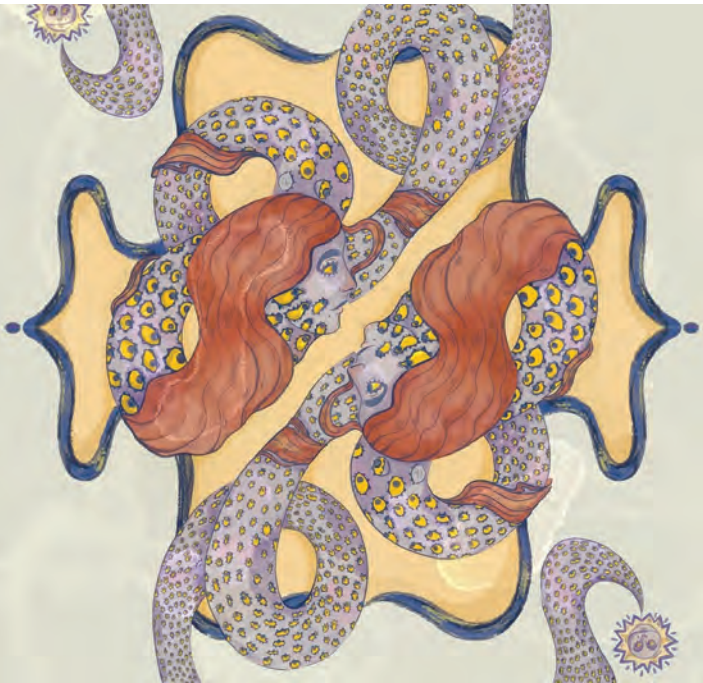
"I seek, through my art, to capture the details of ordinary life, recurring or unique feelings and to tell my stories and stories that touch me", she explains.

"I care about highlighting everything that affects the human conscience and daily existence, though I am especially drawn to psychological themes and women's issues. My work aims to reflect the layered realities of the human mind and our continuous efforts to live amidst challenges".

Al Saadi's journey into art was not immediate. Born into a world where drawing was not a natural-born skill, she discovered her artistic voice late in life. "I wasn't born with drawing skills", she admits. "I didn't practice childhood. Yet, from a young age, I had a broad imagination. I kept trying to express ideas through different mediums until I found drawing, which resonated most deeply with me". Her initial

Al Saadi's Omani roots are woven into her work, serving as a wellspring of inspiration and identity. Her paintings are filled with nostalgic details — the bright toy "Lulu", the hearty Ramadhan soups her grandmother prepared, the bustling market of Oman on a Ramadhan night and the calls to prayer that once echoed in her childhood. These reflections serve as a portal to her memory, capturing the essence of tradition and simplicity with heartfelt sincerity.

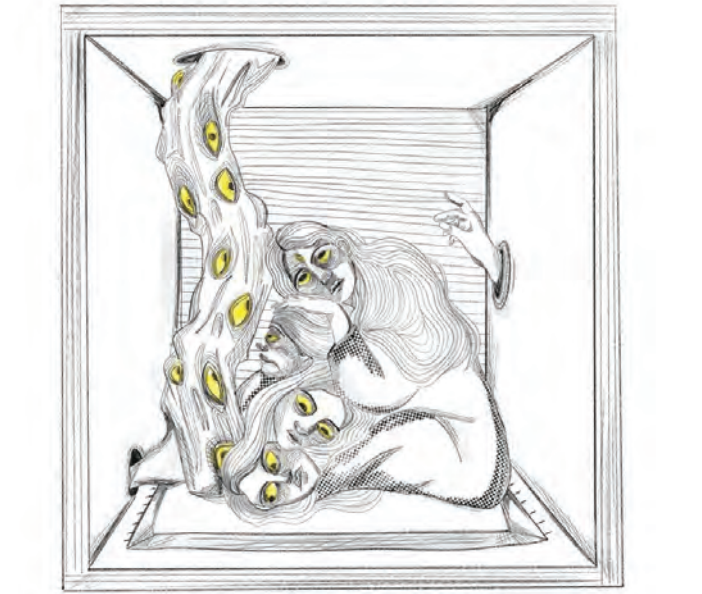
Her piece "I Will Grow" exemplifies her reverence for Arab heritage. It depicts a woman in traditional attire, wearing a "Mukhwar", with flowing hair symbolising continuity and resilience. Interwoven with imagery of bottles and plants, the painting's message is one of



forays into creation laid the groundwork for a profound exploration of personal and social narratives.

One of her most celebrated works, "Whatever I Like", is a potent reflection on women's agency and freedom. She paints three linked faces woven with braids — an emblem of female unity and resilience — each representing diverse backgrounds yet united through shared experience. "Braids are a symbol of unity", she notes. "All women, regardless of social or cultural differences, have tried their hand at braiding hair, as if it signifies our collective strength". This piece, displayed during a local celebration of Omani Women's Day, captures her commitment to empowering women through art.

Her engagement with cultural themes is equally deliberate. "I love the painting 'They Are Not Numbers'", she says, "which depicts Palestinian faces circulating in a circle, transforming into birds carrying watermelons — emblems of resistance and hope". She emphasises that Palestinians are not mere statistics but living stories, dreams and aspirations. Her portrayal underscores her belief in the enduring spirit of occupied peoples and her deep connection to her Arab heritage.



perseverance, asserting that no matter the difficulties faced, growth persists.

For Al Saadi, tranquillity is essential — an emotional state that fosters clarity in translating her inner visions into art. "I believe everyone has multiple facets", she states. "We shift between different masks depending on the situation. Colours — blue, green, yellow — are vital to expressing mood and emotion. My work reflects my psychological state; viewers can often understand my feelings through my use of colour and line".

While some may view contemporary digital tools as threats, Al Saadi perceives AI-generated art as an opportunity rather than competition. "Even if AI produces technically flawless works, Al Saadi's perspective is rooted in the belief that true artistry transcends mere technique. "Feelings and thoughts are what truly define an artwork", she asserts. "AI might mimic style, but it cannot replicate the human consciousness and emotional depth that I pour into my creations. I see digital advancements as tools that can complement my work, not replace the unique perspective I bring".

Her advice to aspiring artists and designers echoes a timeless truth: practice for the sake of expression. "Don't focus solely on the outcome", she counsels. "Enjoy the process of creation. Every stroke, colour choice and concept is part of your journey. Through patience and perseverance, your authentic voice will emerge".