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IS LEMON WATER
A HEALTHY DRINK
OR JUST A MYTH?

ISRAEL BOMBARDS GAZA CITY

H a m a s l e a d e r d u e i n C a i r o t o s a l v a g e t r u c e t a l k s

ISRAELI planes and tanks kept bombarding eastern areas of Gaza City overnight, killing at least 11 people, witnesses and medics said on Tuesday, with Hamas leader Khalil al Hayya due in Cairo for talks to revive a US-backed ceasefire plan.

The latest round of indirect talks in Qatar ended in deadlock in late July with Israel and Hamas trading blame over the lack of progress on a US proposal for a 60-day truce and a deal to release captives.

Israel has since said it will launch a new offensive and seize control of Gaza City, which it captured shortly after the war's outbreak in October 2023 before pulling out.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to expand military control over Gaza, expected to be launched in October, has increased

Foreign ministers of 24 countries including Britain, Canada, Australia, France and Japan, said on Tuesday the humanitarian crisis in Gaza had reached “unimaginable levels” and urged Israel to allow unrestricted aid into the enclave.



Mourners embrace one another as they attend the funeral of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes at Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City on Tuesday. — Reuters

a global outcry over the widespread devastation, displacement and hunger afflicting Gaza's 2.2 million people.

It has also stirred criticism in Israel, with the military chief of staff warning it could endanger surviving captives and prove a death trap for Israeli soldiers. It has also raised fears of further displacement and hardship among the estimated one million Palestinians in the Gaza City region.

Foreign ministers of 24 countries including Britain, Canada, Australia, France and Japan, said on Tuesday the humanitarian crisis in Gaza had reached “unimaginable levels” and urged Israel to allow unrestricted aid into the enclave.

A Palestinian official with knowledge of the mediated ceasefire talks said Hamas was prepared to return to the negotiating table and the leaders who were visiting Cairo on Tuesday would reaffirm that stance. — Reuters

MUSCAT TOPS GULF CITIES IN TRAFFIC FLOW

BALQIS AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, AUG 12

Muscat has been ranked the top Gulf city for traffic flow in 2025, according to the latest global index by Numbeo, a leading database on living conditions and quality of life worldwide. The Omani capital outperformed major regional cities, reflecting significant progress in its urban transport system and road infrastructure.

This achievement is not a coincidence but the result of years of strategic planning, heavy investment in road projects and policies aimed at creating a safe and comfortable commuting environment, in line with the ambitions of Oman Vision 2040. Over the past decade, Muscat has undergone a remarkable transformation in its

road infrastructure. Dual carriageways have been expanded, modern bridges and tunnels have been built to connect various districts; and major entry and exit points have been redesigned to improve traffic flow.

Authorities have also placed great emphasis on regular road maintenance and implemented innovative solutions to address traditional congestion points. These include smart traffic diversions and electronically programmed traffic light systems.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology ensured that Muscat's success in achieving this top ranking is the result of integrated efforts — from careful planning and well-executed projects to continuous monitoring of road performance. **TURN TO P2**

The number of Omani visitors increased by

75.6%

to 334,399

Khareef Dhofar sees 7% increase in visitors

SALALAH: The number of visitors to the Khareef Dhofar Season from June 21 to July 31, reached approximately 442,100, a 7 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2024 when the number was 413,122. These are according to preliminary estimates from the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The preliminary statistics showed that the number of Omani visitors increased by 75.6 per cent to 334,399. The number of visitors from GCC countries was 69,801, while visitors of other nationalities totalled 37,900.

A total of 334,846 visitors arrived in Dhofar Governorate by land through the end of July 2025, while 107,254 visitors arrived via flights, an increase of 10.9 per cent compared to those who arrived by air at the end of July 2024.

It is worth noting that 95.3 per cent of the visitors to Khareef Dhofar Season through the end of July came between July 1 and July 31, while 4.7 per cent arrived between June 21 and June 30.

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SHORT TAKES



OJA stressed that targeting journalists constitutes a blatant violation of international laws.

OJA CONDEMNS ISRAELI CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS

MUSCAT: Oman Journalists Association (OJA) has strongly condemned what it described as the heinous crime committed by Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip, resulting in the killing of five Palestinian journalists and photographers. The association said the latest attack raises the number of journalists killed since the start of the aggression to 242, describing it as a deliberate escalation aimed at silencing the truth and concealing the crimes of the occupation. OJA stressed that targeting journalists constitutes a blatant violation of international laws and conventions. It called on the international community, media organisations and rights bodies to act swiftly to halt such crimes and ensure full protection for journalists in conflict zones. The association affirmed that the blood of journalists will not be in vain, and that attempts by the occupation to erase the truth will fail in the face of the steadfastness of Palestinian journalists and their commitment to their professional and humanitarian duty.

CPA RECOVERS RO 3,200 IN JEWELLERY DISPUTE



MUSCAT: The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has recovered RO 3,200 for a consumer following a dispute with a gold and jewellery store in Muscat Governorate over discrepancies in agreed-upon specifications for custom-made pieces. According to the CPA, the consumer had agreed with the store — specialising in gold, silver and gemstones — to craft bespoke jewellery valued at RO 6,615, paying an advance of RO 3,200. However, upon inspection, the consumer found that the gold carat and engravings did not match the specifications agreed upon with the seller. The matter was reported to the CPA, which conducted an investigation and confirmed the validity of the consumer's claims. The Authority then contacted the supplier and took the necessary legal measures under the applicable laws and regulations, leading to a full refund of the advance payment.

MOL SETS NEW WAGE TRANSFER COMPLIANCE DEADLINES

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 12

The Ministry of Labour has reiterated the importance of complying with wage transfer regulations under Ministerial Resolution No 729/2024 regarding the Wage Protection System, published in the Official Gazette on December 15, 2024. The measure aims to regulate the labour market and help establishments avoid financial



Employers must ensure that workforce receive wages through the Wage Protection System, starting with salaries for September 2025 (payable in October).

penalties. According to the ministry's announcement, employers must ensure that at least 75 per cent of their workforce receive wages through the Wage Protection System, starting with salaries for September 2025 (payable in October). Furthermore, compliance levels must rise to 90 per cent of employees, starting with salaries for November 2025 (payable in December).

Oman to produce medical diagnostic machines locally

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

A strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Dr Mohammad Mahmoodi, CEO of Carbon Technologies, and Dr Frank Vitzthum, Board Member and CTO of R-Biopharm, Germany, in the presence of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, on Tuesday. Under the MoU, advanced diagnostic manufacturing will be localised in Oman, supporting technology transfer and enhancing the country's health innovation ecosystem. The partnership will enable integration of state-of-the-art assay technologies into its local production lines, supporting both national and regional healthcare priorities. "It is a milestone MoU in Oman's journey towards eliminating tuberculosis and other diseases from the country, and both communicable diseases and NCDs," said Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. "I'm optimistic and this will pave the way for various scientific advancements in the country, especially when it is located near SQU and within the Innovation Park Muscat. We have begun, and we look forward to having an international consortium to eradicate both communicable and non-communicable diseases. We look forward



The collaboration reflects confidence in Oman's capabilities to delivering high-quality, accessible diagnostics.

to collaborating with regional, national and international partners so that we can cooperate with the leading players," she added. Speaking to the Observer, Dr Mohammad Mahmoudi, Chief Executive Officer of Carbon Technologies, said that this collaboration is a testament to Oman's growing capacity in innovation-driven industries and its strategic openness to global partnerships. "Together with R-Biopharm, we aim to elevate diagnostic standards, nurture Omani talent and contribute to national healthcare resilience," Dr Mohammad added. Aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, the MoU supports national goals in biotechnology, scientific research and industrial innovation.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Eng Said bin Nasser al Salmi, Board Member of Carbon Technologies, said that the MoU would open up more opportunities to leverage Carbon Technologies as a leading Omani company and expand local R&D capabilities to serve both domestic and international markets in the healthcare industry and position Oman among the leading innovation hubs in such sectors. Dr Dirk Dressler, Head of Business Development at R-Biopharm AG, said, "We are honoured to partner with Oman's Carbon Technologies. This collaboration reflects our confidence in Oman's capabilities and our shared commitment to delivering high-quality, accessible diagnostics across the region."

Muscat tops Gulf cities in traffic flow for 2025

FROM PAGE 1

Future plans will focus on strengthening public transport and adopting smart city technologies for traffic management. One of Muscat's key strengths lies in its growing culture of responsible driving and adherence to traffic laws. This has reduced accidents and improved overall road efficiency. Awareness campaigns by the Royal Oman Police, the Ministry of Education

and local media have helped instil safe driving habits across all segments of society. Local resident Ahmed Abdullah noted: "Even during peak hours, commuting in Muscat has become much smoother compared to the past. There's more discipline among drivers and a well-planned road network that prevents bottlenecks". Being ranked first in the Gulf for traffic flow has benefits that extend beyond shorter travel times. Smooth traffic reduces fuel

consumption, lowers emissions and improves air quality. It also creates a more comfortable environment for residents and visitors, while boosting investment potential in tourism, trade and services. While this ranking is a proud achievement, Oman recognises the challenges ahead — especially with population growth and ongoing urban expansion. Authorities are moving forward with sustainable mobility initiatives, including modern

bus networks, dedicated cycling lanes, promotion of electric vehicles and the integration of smart traffic management systems. Muscat's number-one ranking for traffic flow in 2025 stands as a testament to Oman's success in urban planning and its balance between modern infrastructure and road safety culture. It is also a motivation to push further towards a smarter, greener and more connected future — serving citizens and residents.

History exhibition highlights Dhofar's unique biodiversity

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUG 12

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has launched the temporary exhibition 'Dhofar: Wonder of Natural History', showcasing the governorate's rich mountain and marine environments and their rare biodiversity. The exhibition aims to highlight Dhofar's environmental and tourism significance to both local and international audiences. Hosted at the Land of Frankincense Museum, the exhibition offers an interactive scientific and educational platform that attracts visitors of all ages. It presents extensive knowledge reflecting Dhofar's unique natural wealth, while raising awareness about the importance of preserving natural resources and addressing

environmental challenges. "This exhibition highlights Dhofar's environmental, geological and marine diversity, reinforcing Omani identity and documenting our natural heritage. It also fosters opportunities for scientific research and collaboration with academic and community institutions," Abdullah al Amri, Head of Temporary Exhibitions at the Ministry, told the Observer. The displays include rare specimens, archival photographs and educational models depicting Dhofar's wildlife — from lush mountain landscapes during the khareef season to the coastline's distinctive marine species. The exhibition combines visual and cultural elements designed to engage children, students, researchers and tourists alike. A dedicated children's corner



The expo fosters opportunities for scientific research and collaboration

offers activities such as drawing and colouring to inspire creativity and broaden young minds. Al Amri noted that the exhibition is part of the ministry's strategy to use temporary exhibits as a tool for community engagement and environmental education, while bolstering Dhofar's reputation as a world-class tourist destination rich in natural assets and biodiversity. He invited citizens, residents and visitors to experience this rich showcase of knowledge and natural beauty before the exhibition closes on August 31. Organisers hope the event will inspire the next generation to continue environmental protection efforts and position Dhofar as a global example of harmony between nature and people.

SHORTTAKES



This year, the peak coincides with a waning gibbous moon with about 84 per cent illumination.

PERSEID METEOR
SHOWER DAZZLES
ENTHUSIASTS

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, AUG 12

Oman's skies are putting on a celestial show this month, as the annual Perseid meteor shower dazzles observers across the country. Visible to the naked eye in most governorates, especially in dark, remote areas far from artificial lights, the phenomenon will continue until August 24.

Astronomers regard the Perseids as one of the most spectacular meteor showers of the year, thanks to the frequency and brightness of the meteors, which streak across the sky in captivating displays of light.

Oman Society of Astronomy and Space explained that meteor showers occur when the Earth, in its orbit around the Sun, passes through a trail of debris left behind by a comet.

The Perseids appear annually from around July 17 to August 24, reaching their peak between the night of August 12 and the morning of August 13. Under ideal conditions, between 80 and 100 meteors can be seen per hour. However, viewing rates are much lower in urban areas or when moonlight is present. This year, the peak coincides with a waning gibbous moon with about 84 per cent illumination, which may obscure many faint meteors.

British expatriate Maria Jones described the experience as 'a moment of pure wonder'. She recalled: "Last year, I joined friends in a remote location to watch the Perseids, and it was beyond words — hundreds of stars and meteors racing across the sky like a cosmic performance."

Majid al Ghailani recalled a particularly memorable sight: "While on the coast of Mirbat during the Perseids, I saw meteors blazing across the sky above the sea. It was a magical fusion of nature's beauty and the marvels of astronomy."

For many, the Perseids are more than a visual delight — they are a shared experience. Families and friends gather under starlit skies to witness the display, exchanging stories and enjoying the serenity of the moment. Psychologists note that such natural spectacles can reduce stress and foster a deeper sense of connection to the universe.

UTAS AL MUSANNAH
WINS BEST
RESEARCH AWARD



The paper outlined key factors influencing the success of business incubators. — ONA

AL MUSANNAH: The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Al Musannah, Al Batinah South Governorate, merited the Best Research Paper Award during the participation of a team from the university's College of Economics and Business Administration in the International Conference on Business and Technology (ICBT Cardiff 2025).

The conference, hosted by Cardiff University in the United Kingdom, was attended by a group of academics, researchers and experts from around the world.

The research team included Dr Nasser bin Salim al Bimani, Dr Mangai Raman, Dr Jaffer Ali Khan and Prof Muhammad Tasleem. The paper outlined key factors influencing the success of business incubators and their role in promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, eventually contributing to achieving sustainable economic diversification in the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA

Oman, Armenia review bilateral cooperation in various fields

YEREVAN: The 5th round of political consultations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Armenia was held on Tuesday in the Armenian capital, Yerevan.

The Omani side was headed by Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, while the Armenian side was headed by Vahan Kostanyan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

During the session, the two sides reviewed bilateral cooperation in



The two sides also discussed a range of regional and international issues of mutual interest. — ONA

various fields and discussed ways to further develop this cooperation.

Shaikh Khalifa welcomed Armenia's decision to open a resident embassy in Muscat and to exempt Omani citizens from tourist visas for entry to Armenia.

He also informed the Armenian side of Oman's decision to include Armenian citizens on its list of countries exempted from entry visas to the Sultanate of Oman. The two sides also discussed a range of regional and international issues of mutual interest. — ONA

Infrastructure development
boosts learning environment

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUG 12

RECENT years have seen the construction of numerous schools with modern, future-oriented specifications that align with the educational requirements of this era. This, along with a qualitative shift in the educational infrastructure, is part of the Ministry of Education's efforts to provide modern school buildings to create a comfortable and stimulating learning environment.

The Ministry of Education emphasises that building schools contributes to providing equal educational opportunities for all and strengthening the educational infrastructure in the governorates. The opening of the new schools aims to accommodate the growing student population and reduce the number of evening schools.

Recently, the Ministry of Education took over the January 11 School building for grades 1-4 in the Wilayat of Mahout, Al Wusta Governorate, at a total cost of more than RO 1.6 million. The school includes 36 fully equipped classrooms, equipped with modern facilities and advanced designs that align with educational developments and meet the needs of the new generation, supporting a pioneering educational process that achieves Oman's future aspirations.

Curriculum development is also a priority for the Ministry of Education, as it is a fundamental pillar for enhancing students' abilities to keep pace with global developments. The ministry also implemented a plan to develop vocational and technical education for grades eleven and twelve.



The new schools represent a step that reflects the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to promoting education and community development in various governorates.

The school buildings are implemented in partnership with the private sector to ensure quality construction, speedy completion and timely delivery. The project also transfers implementation risks to the private sector, designing school buildings in an innovative and modern manner that aligns with educational developments. This improves the learning environment within school buildings, increases the efficiency of electrical energy use in these buildings, obligates developers to maintain the buildings and preserve the assets in their modern condition for more than 25 years, and uses the available spaces to establish investment projects.

The new schools represent a step that reflects the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to promoting education

and community development in various governorates, and providing a stimulating and safe educational environment for students in this vital sector.

Meanwhile, a project to replace school transportation vehicles with 5,000 vehicles over a period of five years was implemented, including 1,000 buses that were replaced during the academic year 2024/2025. This project was implemented in coordination with the Development Bank and Karwa Motors to include modern security and safety systems, tracking devices and sensors.

Dr Khalid al Azri, General Manager of Human Resources and Administrative Affairs at Karwa Motors, stated that the new school buses contain two additional doors, cameras, sensors and an automatic fire extinguishing system to protect students.

A l B a r i y y a h b o o m

The tiny catch driving Oman’s coastal heritage

TEXT & PHOTO
BY YAHYA AL SALMANI

Have you ever seen a shimmering wave of tiny fish moving in perfect harmony beneath the water's surface - or tasted the salty, distinctive bite they add to pizza, salads, or traditional dishes?

Meet the anchovy, locally known as Al Bariyyah — a small fish with a big story in both global cuisine and Oman's coastal heritage.

Anchovies, a family of over 140 species, are found in temperate and tropical coastal waters worldwide. Recognised for their silvery sheen, high nutritional value and distinctive flavour, they thrive in shallow and mid-depth waters, forming massive schools of millions to protect themselves from predators and to feed and breed more efficiently.

Their history stretches back to the Cretaceous period, when



Collecting fish products after drying remains a staple in coastal communities

their ancestors evolved agile bodies and group behaviours that ensured survival. Today, Al Bariyyah remains a vital economic resource — harvested for fishmeal, fish oil and direct consumption in countless forms: fresh, canned, salted, dried, or as savoury pastes and sauces.

In Oman, Al Bariyyah fishing is still deeply rooted in tradition.

Using the Al Dhagyah method, fishermen cast nets from the shore, haul in their shimmering catch and dry it in coastal areas for a week or more, depending on the heat. Once dried, the fish — locally called Al Qash'a — is cleaned, ground and served in dishes like Suhnat Al Qash'a, a flavourful mix with salad and spices. The dish remains a

staple in coastal communities and is increasingly popular in restaurants due to its health benefits and nostalgic appeal.

Nutritionally, anchovies pack a powerful punch: protein, vitamin B3, vitamin B12, iron, calcium, selenium and omega-3 fatty acids — all known to support heart health, improve cholesterol and reduce inflammation. Despite their modest size (typically 10–20 cm), they play a significant role in sustaining both marine ecosystems and coastal livelihoods.

Beyond the dinner table, Al Bariyyah is also a living testament to the adaptability of small marine species — undertaking daily vertical migrations to feed at night and retreating to deeper waters by day. Their story is one of resilience, tradition and enduring value — a silvery treasure hidden in plain sight along Oman's shores.

SPOTLIGHT



IS LEMON WATER
A HEALTHY
DRINK
OR JUST A
MYTH?

From bustling city cafés to quiet village homes, the sight of a person holding a glass of lemon-infused water has become common. Recipes vary — warm water with half a freshly squeezed lemon, sometimes enhanced with mint leaves or ginger for added flavour and benefits.

Shamsa al Harthy, a private sector employee, said: “I started this habit two years ago after a friend recommended it and I feel much more refreshed in the mornings and catch fewer colds”.

However, not everyone who drinks lemon water is fully convinced. Some consider it more of a psychological boost than a tangible health benefit.

According to Dr Abdullah al Wahdi, a nutrition specialist, lemon water isn't a magic potion but does offer genuine benefits when consumed as part of a healthy lifestyle.

“Lemons are a good source of vitamin C, which supports the immune system and they contain antioxidants that help protect cells from damage. Drinking lemon water in the morning aids hydration after sleep, which is crucial for kickstarting vital bodily functions”, he said.

He also explains that the mild acidity of lemon stimulates gastric juices, facilitating digestion, especially when followed by a balanced meal.

Health experts stress that one of the key advantages of such a habit relates more to water than the lemon itself. The body becomes dehydrated overnight and drinking water immediately upon waking replenishes lost fluids, stimulates circulation and supports brain function.

Adding lemon may simply make the water more palatable, encouraging regular consumption.

Many diet trends claim that lemon water melts fat and speeds up metabolism. However, Dr Abdullah clarified: “There is no strong scientific evidence that lemon water directly burns fat. The benefit comes indirectly through better hydration, improved digestion and reducing cravings for sugary drinks, which over time can aid weight management”.

Despite its benefits, doctors warn against excessive consumption of lemon water, especially for individuals with stomach issues such as ulcers or acid reflux, as the acidity may worsen symptoms.

Dental health professionals also caution that frequent intake can erode tooth enamel. To prevent this, it is advisable to drink lemon water through a straw and rinse the mouth with plain water afterward.

Brushing teeth immediately after consumption should be avoided to protect enamel.

Interestingly, drinking lemon water is not a new practice. Traditional medicines worldwide have long recommended diluted lemon juice as a refreshing and cleansing beverage. What's new, however, is its widespread marketing via media and social networks, turning a simple home remedy into a global craze.

In summary, drinking lemon water in the morning offers real benefits — hydration, immune support and digestive stimulation — but it is not a cure-all or substitute for a balanced diet. The most important factor is integrating it into a healthy lifestyle that includes nutritious eating, adequate sleep and regular physical activity.

Moderation is key and protecting the teeth and stomach from potential side effects is crucial. Ultimately, the secret might lie in the simplicity of the habit: a glass of water, a splash of lemon and a dose of optimism to start the day.

BALQEES AL ORAIMI

In recent years, warm lemon water in the morning has transformed from a simple home remedy to a global health trend embraced by millions to kickstart their day.

Social media platforms are flooded with pictures of bright golden lemon slices in glasses, accompanied by phrases such as ‘elixir of life’ and ‘secret to lasting energy’.

Yet, amidst all the hype, an important question arises: Does lemon water really deserve such attention, or is it just another passing dietary fad?

From bustling city cafés to quiet village homes, the sight of a person holding a glass of lemon-infused water has become common. Recipes vary — warm water with half a freshly squeezed lemon, sometimes enhanced with mint leaves or ginger for added flavour and benefits.



Recall

KIA Sportage (NQ5C)

RECALL DATE: 13-08-2025

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production*	#Number of Affected Commodities
KIA Sportage (NQ5C)	Sep 20, 2024 - Dec 19, 2024	85

Recall consequence

On some Sportage (NQ5C) model produced within specific production date range, Fuel may leak from the T-GDI high-pressure fuel pipe due to poorly manufactured high pressure pipe. This may result in engine compartment fire or reduced power while driving. The estimated defect ratio is 6.79%. However, Kia is conducting this recall as preventive measure to avoid the risk.

Recall Action

Verify affected vehicles as per the VIN list given by KMC and replace T-GDI high pressure fuel pipe assembly as per KMC recommendation.



To check the serial number of the affected items, please visit the website and scan the QR code.



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خط المستهلك

الرمز: 03-093-SOP

التاريخ : 13-08-2025

الاصدار : 04

KHAREEF MIGRATION A TIME-HONOURED TRADITION OF SURVIVAL

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUG 12

A thin mist clings to the emerald slopes of Dhofar’s mountains, drifting slowly over pastures heavy with monsoon rain. The steady patter of drizzle softens the distant cowbells as a lone herder, wrapped in a weathered cloak, guides his



Entire families relocated with their herds, living in temporary shelters for months

flock toward higher ground. For him — and for generations before — this is the season of movement, when rain’s blessing can also be a burden. In the rugged highlands of Dhofar, herders continue a centuries-old tradition — relocating their animals to drier ground in a seasonal migration known locally as ‘escaping the rain.’

“For as long as we can remember, livestock — whether cattle, sheep, or camels — have been our lifeline,” says one herder, resting on a stone wall as his animals graze nearby. “They’re more than just income; they’re our security.” The khareef season, from June to September, brings steady drizzle and cool temperatures to Dhofar’s coastal and

mountain areas, transforming the landscape into lush green hills. While thousands of tourists are drawn to the governorate, the monsoon also presents challenges for livestock herders. Persistent rains saturate grazing lands, cause hoof diseases and hinder animals’ movement — especially camels and sheep.

Khareef Dhofar unveils heritage experiences

THE Dhofar Municipality is organising a variety of events for the Khareef Dhofar Season 2025, offering a comprehensive experience that blends culture, entertainment and innovation. The season features international shows, some of which are being presented for the first time in Oman and globally.

The various event locations are attracting a large number of visitors due to their diverse and engaging content.

Ammar bin Obaid Gawas, Director of Events and Awareness at Dhofar Municipality, stated that the Attin Square is a centrepiece of this season’s events.

It hosts one of the world’s largest inflatable play cities, a stage with the latest sound and lighting technology, eco-friendly fireworks, drone shows and folklore performances from 18 countries. It also features diverse markets for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and local products from Omani entrepreneurs.

He added that the Modern Waterfront provides a complete family entertainment destination, including a walkway, a children’s area, a princesses’ palace, and a variety of restaurants and food trucks.

It also hosts the ‘Awdah’ event, which simulates traditional Omani life with shows of traditional arts, heritage markets and handicrafts that preserve the national heritage.

Gawas explained that Awqad Park,



‘Children’s Time’ is dedicated to providing innovative recreational activities for children



AMMAR BIN OBAID GAWAS

Director of Events and Awareness, Dhofar Municipality

branded as ‘Children’s Time’, is dedicated to providing innovative educational and recreational activities for children in a safe environment. Meanwhile, Salalah Park,

or the ‘Healthy Park’, hosts sports paths and challenges suitable for all ages, encouraging an active and balanced lifestyle. Gawas also noted that the season includes multiple accompanying events such as

‘Awsara’, ‘Avicenna’ and ‘Al Gharf’, as well as the Frankincense Market and Al Haffa Beach Market.

Activities are also being held in the wilayats of Taqah, Mirbat and Sadah.

The season is also hosting major international sporting events, including the Salalah International Cycling Tour, the Dhofar International Sand Drag Race Championship, and a traditional weapons shooting competition.

He affirmed that Dhofar Municipality has been keen on highlighting Omani identity at all event locations, with more than a thousand national projects for productive families and entrepreneurs.

— ONA



MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (27/2025)

Muscat Municipality invites Companies specialized in the field and registered with Authority of Projects, Tenders & ICV, to participate and obtain tender documents from the website via the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below:

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date
PRF/25/019	Design, Build, Operation & Management of Kids World for Muscat Nights 2026	01/09/2025	21/09/2025
PRF/25/020	Marketing & Promotion for Muscat Nights 2026	01/09/2025	21/09/2025

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.

2. Clarification and Support:

- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@gstb.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).

TENDER NOTICE



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries
Wealth and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
894/2024/ MAFWR/ HQ - 64 - Recall-2	Project Of Rehabilitation and Improvement of AL-Mitha Falaj in AL-Sifala village at Wilayat AL-Bahla at AL-Dhakliyah Governorate	Sunday 10/8/2025	Wednesday 20/8/2025	Sunday 31/8/2025	Specialized companies registered with Second, Third grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
506/2025/ MAFWR/ HQ - 55	Room Booking Management and Electronic Access Control System	Wednesday 6/8/2025	Tuesday 26/8/2025	Monday 15/9/2025	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, Fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
507/2025/ MAFWR/ HQ - 56	Implementing Good Agricultural Practices Project to Obtain Global G.A.P Certificate and Qualification of a Number of Farms in Various Govenorates to Adopt Best Agricultural Practices Within the Agricultural Caravan Project	Wednesday 6/8/2025	Tuesday 26/8/2025	Monday 15/9/2025	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, Fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

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

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

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

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

- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@gstb.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources



سلطنة عُمان
وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tenders:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MT CIT/ 137/2025	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF UPS UNITS IN MINISTRY OFFICES & PURCHASE OF HUMIDITY REGULATOR FOR MAIN SERVER ROOM	12-08-2025	24-08-2025	14-09-2025	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE PROJECT, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT AUTHORITY (ALL CLASSES)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIALS (LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMPANIES) (10/-) TEN OMANI RIALS (SMEs) NON-REFUNDABLE
MT CIT/ 138/2025	ORGANIZING AND IMPLEMENTING OF THE SECOND EDITION OF "ENGINEER IT WITH AI" COMPETITION	12-08-2025	24-08-2025	14-09-2025	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE PROJECT, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT AUTHORITY (ALL CLASSES)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIALS (LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMPANIES) (10/-) TEN OMANI RIALS (SMEs) NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

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1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

2. E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200, e-mail : etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE



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WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al Shibani (L), US special envoy for Syria Thomas Barrack (R) and Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi meet in Amman. — Reuters

JORDAN HOSTS SYRIA, US DIPLOMATS FOR TALKS

AMMAN: Foreign ministers from Syria and Jordan and a US envoy met on Tuesday in Amman to discuss ways to support stability and security under the new authorities in Damascus, participants said. The Syrian foreign ministry said its top diplomat Asaad al Shaibani met with Jordan’s Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi and US envoy for Syria Tom Barrack to discuss “ways of strengthening cooperation and coordination between the three sides” in order to serve Syria’s stability, “sovereignty and regional security”. Damascus said the sides had agreed to form a working group “to support the Syrian government’s efforts to consolidate the ceasefire in Sweida province and work to find a comprehensive solution to the crisis”. In Jordan on Tuesday, King Abdullah II separately met with Al Shaibani and Barrack, expressing his “support for Syria’s efforts to preserve its security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity”, a royal statement said. It noted “the importance of Washington’s role in supporting the reconstruction process in Syria in a manner that preserves the rights of all Syrians”. — AFP

THAI SOLDIER WOUNDED IN CAMBODIA BORDER



NATTAPHON NARKPHANT
Thai Deputy Defence Minister

BANGKOK: A landmine blast on Thailand’s border wounded a soldier on Tuesday, the military said, accusing Cambodia of planting new explosives in breach of a truce between the countries. The Royal Thai Army said another landmine detonated around 9:00 am, blasting off a soldier’s leg as they were on patrol near the

disputed Prasat Ta Muen Thom temple in Surin province. “Cambodia continues to covertly plant landmines as an ongoing threat”, said a statement from Thai army spokesman Winthai Suvaree. “This repeated incident shows bad intentions from the Cambodian side, which goes against the ceasefire agreement”, he added. “The Thai military may have to exercise our right to defend ourselves”. The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, a government body, has previously issued a statement denying that any new mines had been laid. The border area is still littered with such explosives from past decades. The blast followed a mine explosion on Saturday in neighbouring Sisaket province that the Thai army said had wounded three other troops. — AFP

TERRIFYING DISASTER

Toll of Himalayan flood likely to be 70



Indian officials say at least 68 people are unaccounted for a week after a deadly wall of icy water swept away a Himalayan town and buried it in mud. On top of four people reported to have been killed, it takes the likely overall toll of the disaster to over 70 dead. Officials said that they were searching for corpses in the wreckage of the tourist town of Dharali in Uttarakhand state. — AFP

MYANMAR REGION SEES ‘DRAMATIC’ HUNGER RISE AFTER AID CUTBACKS

YANGON: One of Myanmar’s most conflict-ravaged regions has witnessed a “dramatic rise in hunger” after US aid cuts pushed by President Donald Trump during a punishing civil war, the World Food Programme said on Tuesday. Western Rakhine state has seen some of the most intense fighting in Myanmar’s many-sided civil conflict, which was sparked by a 2021 military takeover that deposed the democratic government. Junta forces have blockaded the state as

they battle local ethnic fighters, throttling vital trade routes and squeezing agriculture in the coastal territory bordering Bangladesh. The situation was exacerbated in April when the World Food Programme (WFP) was forced to cut aid to one million people nationwide, after a global downturn in aid funding led by its largest donor Washington. In central Rakhine, 57 per cent of families are now unable to meet their basic food needs, a WFP

statement said — a rise of 24 per cent since December. “A deadly combination of conflict, blockades and funding cuts is driving a dramatic rise in hunger and malnutrition”, the statement added. The WFP said it is believed “the situation in northern Rakhine is much worse due to active conflict and access issues”. “People are trapped in a vicious cycle; cut off by conflict, stripped of livelihoods and left with no humanitarian safety net”. — AFP

WHO demands more aid in devastated Gaza

THE UN health agency on Tuesday said Israel should let it stock medical supplies to deal with a “catastrophic” health situation in Gaza before it seizes control of Gaza City. Israel has said its military would “take control” of Gaza City in a plan approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s security cabinet that sparked a wave of global criticism. “We want to stock up and we all hear about ‘more humanitarian supplies are allowed in’ — well it’s not happening yet, or it’s happening at a way too low a pace”, said Rik Peeperkorn, the World Health Organization’s representative in the Palestinian territories. Fifty-two per cent of medicines were running at zero stock, Peeperkorn said, speaking from Jerusalem. UN agencies warned last month that famine was unfolding in Gaza, with Israel severely restricting aid entry. Peeperkorn said the WHO was able to bring in fewer supplies than it wanted “due to the cumbersome procedures” and products “still denied” entry — a topic of constant negotiation with the Israeli authorities. “We want to as quickly stock up hospitals... following the news — the whole discussion about an incursion in Gaza”, he said. “We currently cannot do that... We need to be able to get all essential medicines and medical supplies in”. Peeperkorn said only 50 per cent of hospitals and 38 per cent of primary health care centres were functioning and that too partially. Bed occupancy has reached 240 per cent capacity in the Al Shifa hospital



Palestinians scramble to collect aid supplies from trucks, in Khan Yunis. — Reuters

and 300 per cent Al Ahli Hospital in northern Gaza. “The overall health situation remains catastrophic”, he said. “Hunger and malnutrition continue to ravage Gaza”. Peeperkorn said 148 people died from the effects of malnutrition this year, citing August 5 as the cut-off date. Nearly 12,000 children aged under five were identified to be suffering from acute malnutrition in July — the highest monthly figure recorded to date in Gaza, Peeperkorn said. These include 2,562 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, of whom 40 were hospitalised at stabilisation centres. Meanwhile, Gaza’s civil defence agency said Israeli air strikes on Gaza City have intensified in recent days, following Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s

security cabinet approving plans to expand the war there. The Israeli government has not provided an exact timetable on when its forces would enter the area, but according to the civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal, air strikes on Gaza City have been increasing for the past three days. Bassal said the residential neighbourhoods of Zeitoun and Sabra have been hit “with very heavy air strikes targeting civilian homes, possibly including high-rise buildings”. “For the third consecutive day, the Israeli occupation is intensifying its bombardment”, said the spokesman. “The Israeli occupation is using all types of weapons in that area — bombs, drones and also highly explosive munitions that cause massive destruction to civilian homes”, he added. — AFP

The WHO was able to bring in fewer supplies than it wanted “due to the cumbersome procedures” and products “still denied” entry — a topic of constant negotiation with the Israeli authorities

RIK PEEPERKORN



SUDAN REFUGEES FACE CHOLERA OUTBREAK

TAWILA: In the cholera-stricken refugee camps of western Sudan, every second is infected by fear. Faster than a person can boil water over an open flame, the flies descend and everything is contaminated once more. Cholera is ripping through the camps of Tawila in Darfur, where hundreds of thousands of people have been left with nothing but the water they can boil, to serve as both disinfectant and medicine. The first cholera cases in Tawila were detected in early June in the village of Tabit, about 25 kilometres south, said

Sylvain Penicaud, a project coordinator for French charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF). “After two weeks, we started identifying cases directly in Tawila, particularly in the town’s displacement camps”, he said. In the past month, more than 1,500 cases have been treated in Tawila alone, he said, while the UN’s children agency says around 300 of the town’s children have contracted the disease since April. Across North Darfur state, more than 640,000 children under the age of five are at risk, according to Unicef. — AFP

RECORD NUMBERS

Over 50,000 migrants cross English Channel



More than 50,000 people have made the perilous Channel crossing to the UK in small boats since last July, official figures showed. More than 27,000 migrants have made the Channel crossing in rudimentary vessels this year alone. London and Paris last month unveiled a “pilot” programme to return to France some of the migrants arriving in the UK on small boats, with the first detentions made last week. — AFP

POWER SHUTDOWN

Iraq electricity back after nationwide outage



Electricity supply returned to all Iraq’s provinces on Tuesday, expecting the grid’s full recovery within a day after a nationwide power outage. The electricity ministry said that “a record rise in temperatures” coupled with a surge in demand resulted in the shutdown of transmission lines, which then led to a total outage. A senior ministry official said that that “since midnight, all provinces have seen the return” of power supply. — AFP

COMPREHENSIVE TALKS



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung delivers a speech during a press conference, in Seoul. — Reuters

LEE, TRUMP TO HOLD SUMMIT ON SECURITY ALLIANCE, ECONOMY

SEOUL: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and US President Donald Trump will hold their first summit meeting on August 25 in Washington to discuss strengthening the countries’ alliance and economic security partnership, Lee’s office said on Tuesday. Lee, who was elected president in a snap election in June, has made it a top priority to help his export-dependent country navigate the dramatic changes in the global trading environment triggered by Trump’s tariff policies. “The two leaders will discuss ways to develop the US-South Korea alliance into a comprehensive strategic alliance of the future in response to the changing international security and economic environment,” presidential spokesperson Kang Yu-jung told a briefing. Based on the tariff deal reached last month, the two leaders will advance partnership in the manufacturing sector, including in semiconductors, batteries and shipbuilding, as well as critical minerals and technology, Kang said. A White House official also confirmed the meeting. Trump announced on July 30 that the countries had reached a trade deal that would subject South Korean goods to 15% import duties, lowering the tariff he had initially set against one of America’s top trading partners. In return, Trump has said that South Korea will announce investment plans at the upcoming summit and that Seoul had committed to making \$350 billion of investments to be “selected” by him. South Korean officials have offered differing details, however, and topics left unresolved by the deal — which has yet to be committed to writing - provide scope for more disputes between the allies. Trump may use the summit to seek more concessions on defence costs and corporate investments, left out of the deal, while non-tariff barriers and currency could prove thorny issues, experts said. Defence costs are expected to emerge as a key issue during the upcoming summit, with Trump having long said South Korea needed to pay more for the roughly 28,500 American troops based there as a legacy of the 1950-1953 Korean War. The Washington Post reported that the Trump administration wanted Seoul to boost defence spending to 3.8 per cent of GDP, up from 2.6 per cent last year, and to increase its \$1 billion-plus contribution toward the troops. — Reuters

OVER HALF OF MEDITERRANEAN BASIN HIT BY DROUGHT SINCE APRIL

PARIS: More than half of Europe and the Mediterranean basin was hit by drought in July for the fourth consecutive month, according to an AFP analysis of European Drought Observatory (EDO) data. Drought levels in the region are the highest on record for the month of July since data collection began in 2012, exceeding the 2012-2024 average by 21 per cent. Monthly records have been broken every month this year. The Drought Observatory Indicator determined by the EU’s

Copernicus Climate Change Service uses satellite imagery to measure three parameters: precipitation or rainfall, soil moisture and the state of vegetation. Findings are then categorised into one of three levels of drought: watch, warning and alert — the last level signalling that vegetation is developing abnormally. Eastern Europe and the Balkans are particularly affected, with a high amount of soil under alert in multiple countries. In Hungary,

the percentage of soil under alert increased from nine per cent in June to 56 per cent in July. In France, 68 per cent of soil was affected by drought in July, up from 44 per cent in June. France experienced one of its largest wildfires in history last week when flames tore through 13,000 hectares of the southern Aude department, killing one person and injuring several others. The country is now facing its second heatwave of the summer. — AFP

Russian forces rapidly pierce Ukraine’s lines

RUSSIAN forces have rapidly advanced in a narrow but important sector of the front line in eastern Ukraine, Kyiv and analysts said on Tuesday, before talks between the Russian and US presidents. Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky warned ahead of the Friday meeting in Alaska between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin that Moscow was laying the groundwork for further attacks, not peace. The Ukrainian army said there had been fighting around the village of Kucheriv Yar in the Donetsk region, acknowledging new and speedy Russian gains. The Ukrainian DeepState blog, which retains close connections with the military, showed Russian advances around 10 kilometres over around two days, punching deep into a narrow sliver of Ukraine on the front. The corridor, now apparently under Russian control, threatens the town of Dobropillia, a mining hub that civilians are fleeing and that has been coming under Russian drone attacks. It also further isolates the embattled and destroyed town of Kostiantynivka, which is one of the last large urban areas in the Donetsk region still held by Ukraine. The Institute for the Study of War, a US-based observatory, said Russia was dispatching small sabotage groups forwards. It said it was “premature” to call the Russian advances in the Dobropillia area “an operational-level breakthrough”. The Operational-Tactical Group Donetsk, which oversees parts of the front in the industrial region, also said Russia was probing Ukrainian lines with small sabotage groups, describing battles as “complex, unpleasant and dynamic”. Trump, who is scheduled to meet Putin on Friday, has described the summit as a “feel-out meeting” to gauge the Russian leader’s ideas for ending the war in Ukraine. European leaders, meanwhile, are rushing to ensure respect for Kyiv’s interests. “We see that the Russian army is not preparing to end the war. On the contrary, they are making movements that indicate preparations for new offensive operations,” Zelensky said in a



Ukrainian service members carry a coffin during a funeral ceremony in Chernihiv. — Reuters

statement on social media. Moscow’s army, which attacked Ukraine in 2022, has made costly but incremental gains across the sprawling front in recent months and claims to have annexed four Ukrainian regions while still fighting to control them. Ukrainian police, meanwhile, said on Tuesday that Russian attacks in the past hours had killed three people and wounded 12 others, including a child. Meanwhile, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Tuesday that he did not support an EU leaders’ statement on Ukraine’s right to “choose its own destiny” released ahead of a US-Russia summit this week. Orban said the “only sensible action” for EU leaders was “to initiate an EU-Russia summit, based on the example of the US-Russia meeting”. “Let’s give peace a chance!,” he said on X, describing the Trump-Putin summit as “historic”. The EU leaders’ “statement attempts to set conditions for a meeting to which leaders of the EU were not invited,” Orban said. “The fact that the EU was left on the sidelines is sad enough as it is. The only

thing that could make things worse is if we started providing instructions from the bench,” he added. Orban regularly breaks EU unity on Ukraine, to which he has refused to send arms. Orban is also a Trump ally, describing the Republican president as a “dear friend”. Trump, in a press conference on Monday, in turn, described Orban as “a very, very smart man”, saying he asked him whether he thinks Ukraine can defeat Russia. “He looked at me like what a stupid question. He said Russia is a massive country and they win their country, they win their lives through wars,” Trump added. Europe again increased its military aid to Ukraine in May and June, unlike the United States, and is depending increasingly on its defence industry rather than existing weapons stockpiles, the Kiel Institute for the World Economy said on Tuesday. Europe, the United Kingdom included, sent or earmarked a total of 80.5 billion euros (\$93.7 billion) in military aid between the start of the war and the end of June 2025, against 64.6 billion euros allocated by the United States. — AFP

Man killed in Spain wildfire as European heatwave intensifies

MADRID: A man died after suffering burns and thousands fled their homes in Spain on Tuesday as wildfires fuelled by a heatwave scorched southern Europe. Heat alerts were issued in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and the Balkans, with temperatures expected to soar above 40C. One child died of heatstroke in Italy on Monday. A man who suffered serious burns died in hospital as winds of up to 70 kilometres per hour whipped flames through Tres Cantos, a wealthy suburb north of the Spanish capital of Madrid, officials said. He was the first fatality from dozens of wildfires that have hit Spain since a heatwave began last week. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on X that rescue services “are working tirelessly to extinguish the fires” amd warned: “We are at extreme risk of forest fires. Please be very cautious.”

Hundreds of residents of Tres Cantos left their homes due to the risk from the blaze, which was contained on Tuesday morning. “In barely 40 minutes, the fire advanced six kilometres,” Carlos Novillo, Madrid’s regional environment chief, told reporters. Elsewhere, about 2,000 people were evacuated from hotels and homes near the popular beaches of Tarifa in the southern region of Andalusia. The wildfire broke out near where a similar blaze forced evacuations earlier this month. “We managed to save the residential area at the very last second,” said Antonio Sanz, the Andalusia region’s interior minister. A Civil Guard police officer was injured after being struck by a car while helping with the evacuation, he added. In the northwestern region of Castile and Leon, more than 30 blazes were reported, including



Firefighters cool off the ground close to a school, on the outskirts of Tres Cantos. — AFP

one threatening Las Médulas, a Unesco World Heritage site known for its ancient Roman gold mines. Meteorologists predicted that

Tuesday will be the hottest day yet of the heatwave, with all regions under weather alerts. Forecasters said temperatures would hit around

40C and overnight lows would remain above 25C. In neighbouring Portugal, firefighters battled three large wildfires, with the most serious near Trancoso in the centre of the country. More than 700 firefighters and four aircraft were deployed. Authorities warned that temperatures in southern Portugal could reach 44C. Morocco sent two Canadair planes to assist after two of Portugal’s own water-dropping aircraft broke down. Climate experts say global warming is driving longer, more intense and more frequent heatwaves around the world. Italy’s main farm lobby, Coldiretti association, said vegetable production in the southeastern Apulia region has dropped by 30 per cent. Meanwhile, officials said a wildfire near Mount Vesuvius has been brought under control after burning nearly 600 hectares over four days. — AFP

OPINION

Oman emerges as global hub for creative retreats



IMAD EDDINE OUBIRI

The writer is a specialist in public policy and international investment strategy

ACROSS the global landscape of travel and economic diversification, Oman is quietly forging a unique path — one that blends cultural depth with purposeful living. While many destinations compete through spectacle and scale, Oman is emerging as a haven for clarity, long-term creativity and meaningful reconnection.

This is more than just tourism; it marks the rise of a retreat economy — where nature, culture and intention attract not only visitors but thoughtful residents.

Wellness tourism and lifestyle-driven travel are booming worldwide. In 2024, the global wellness tourism market was valued at \$945 billion and is projected to reach \$1.4 trillion by 2032. Today’s travellers seek more than leisure — they seek regeneration, reflection and purpose.

In 2024, Oman welcomed approximately 3.8 million visitors, with tourism contributing

RO 2.7 billion to the GDP — steadily growing since 2018. The sector is forecast to reach RO 3.5 billion in 2025, supporting over 212,000 jobs and accounting for more than 8 per cent of GDP.

But Oman’s appeal goes beyond numbers. Its strength lies in restraint — offering experience over extravagance and space over saturation.

Oman’s opportunity is to attract those who choose to slow down, think deeply, create and grow. Writers, professionals, educators and innovators increasingly seek immersive environments for focused work. With investments like Knowledge Oasis Muscat and youth-led cultural initiatives, Oman is becoming a destination for purposeful innovation and creative retreat.

This trend aligns with Oman’s policy to nurture knowledge-based industries and creative economies. While regional neighbours invest heavily in short-term tourism, Oman distinguishes itself by

In a world craving peace, stability and cultural richness, Oman offers a rare and compelling proposition

fostering ecosystems that value depth, continuity and cultural dialogue. In a world craving peace, stability and cultural richness, Oman offers a rare and compelling proposition.

Growing interest in long-term living and investment, particularly in communities like Al Mouj Muscat and the upcoming Sultan Haitham City, reflects Oman’s quiet confidence as a destination for culture-conscious lifestyles and value-driven real estate. Projects like the Oman Botanic Garden, the largest in the Arabian Peninsula, symbolise heritage, biodiversity and ecological stewardship.

Oman’s cultural diplomacy — from traditional crafts to calligraphy and heritage conservation — strengthens this identity through sincere storytelling rooted in place rather than spectacle. In an age of overexposure and fleeting trends, Oman’s greatest strength is its coherence — the ability to remain deeply rooted amid global change.

RIGHT-WING ON CUSP OF POWER IN BOLIVIA

GONZALO TORRICO AND CLARE BYRNE

Bolivians are expected to bring the curtain down on two decades of left-wing rule in Sunday’s presidential elections, with two right-wing frontrunners promising radical changes to end a deep economic crisis.

Nearly 20 years after South America’s longest-serving president, Evo Morales, was elected on a promise of socialist revolution, the Andean country is running on empty. Widespread shortages of dollars, fuel and basic foodstuffs have left some Bolivians worse off than before Morales took over, from 2006 to 2019.

Polls predict electoral catastrophe for the ruling Movement towards Socialism (MAS), which survived the fall of many leaders in Latin America’s “Pink Tide” - a wave of left-wing governments across the region.

Summing up the mood of many, 70-year-old left-wing voter Carlos Tavera said he would back the leading opposition candidate, even if it meant voting for the right.

“Anyone else would be better than this,” he said. Across the country, in the opposition stronghold of Santa Cruz, Freddy Millan presented the election as a referendum on “socialism.”

“A vast majority wants change,” the 53-year-old engineer said, declaring Bolivia had hit “rock bottom.”

Centre-right business tycoon Samuel Doria Medina, one of Bolivia’s richest men, and conservative ex-president Jorge “Tuto” Quiroga, have stretched their lead over their six rivals in the final days of the campaign.

The two perennial presidential candidates are neck-and-neck in opinion polls, with around 20 per cent.

They have vowed to close loss-making public companies, stop subsidising fuel and open the country to foreign investment.

They have also promised to seek closer ties with the United States and give authoritarian leftist governments in Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, traditional Bolivian allies, a wide berth.

With no candidate on course to win an outright majority on Sunday, the election will likely go to a run-off between the two top candidates on October 19.

In a sign of the degree to which Bolivians have soured on the left, the candidate of the ruling MAS party and a rival leftist senator are both polling in the single digits.

After nearly 20 years in power, “the government simply has no one else to blame,” Pablo Calderon Martinez, a researcher at Northeastern University in London, argued.

During Morales’s heyday in the 2010s, the mood was very different.

Bolivia, which has Latin America’s second-biggest natural gas deposits, was flush with cash from a commodities boom. — AFP

Palestinian resistance is legally justified

ISRAEL’S decision to reoccupy Gaza after October 7 marks the most dramatic shift in Middle East policy since the Arab Spring. As someone who has observed this conflict for decades, I believe this decision represents not just a tactical response but a fundamental abandonment of containment strategy that creates new legal realities justifying the Palestinian resistance under international law.

The October 7 operation must be understood within 17 years of blockade that transformed Gaza into what UN Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk described as “an open-air prison.” The deliberate closure of political avenues for Palestinian liberation — from Oslo’s collapse to international acceptance of indefinite occupation — created conditions where violent resistance became, for many Palestinians, the only remaining option.

The legal framework is unambiguous. Under international law, specifically Article 1 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, peoples fighting colonial domination and foreign occupation have the right to self-determination, including through armed struggle when other means prove ineffective. While some states contest this interpretation, the principle remains embedded in international legal frameworks precisely because it reflects occupied peoples’ fundamental right to resist their oppressors.

Israel’s reoccupation represents a complete policy reversal. Previous operations — Cast Lead in 2008, Protective Edge in 2014, Guardian of the Walls in 2021 — aimed at degrading Hamas capabilities whilst maintaining blockade and limited engagement. Current reoccupation signals Israeli recognition that containment has fundamentally failed. Israeli officials now speak openly of “eliminating Hamas” and establishing long-term military control. These objectives require permanent occupation rather than



A Palestinian woman walks inside the damaged Islamic University of Gaza, where she shelters. — Reuters

periodic operations. This shift transforms the legal landscape, strengthening the case for legitimate resistance.

International humanitarian law’s principles of distinction and proportionality apply to all parties, including resistance movements. However, these same principles demand scrutiny of Israel’s reoccupation strategy, which has demonstrably failed both tests. By systematically targeting hospitals, schools and water treatment facilities, Israel violates Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention — acts constituting war crimes. The International Court of Justice’s recent advisory opinion confirms that prolonged occupation with settlement policies violates international law. This makes reoccupation a clear breach of Article 43 of the Hague Regulations.

From a moral perspective, when occupying powers systematically violate international law, resistance becomes not just legally permissible but morally imperative. The human consequences of these legal violations are devastating. According to UN agencies, 1.9 million Palestinians have been displaced, 70 per cent of hospitals are non-functional and 90 per cent face acute food insecurity. This represents what international legal scholars increasingly recognise as

weaponising basic necessities to facilitate reoccupation and long-term control.

The economic dimension reveals equally calculated destruction. Sara Roy’s seminal research on Gaza’s “de-development” demonstrates the systematic dismantling of Palestinian economic capacity to create dependency. Gaza’s fishing fleet was reduced from 15,000 to 4,000 workers through Israeli restrictions. Agricultural exports providing sustainable livelihoods have been banned or severely restricted. Reoccupation eliminates remaining economic independence to ensure Palestinian dependency on Israeli-controlled aid and governance. This constitutes collective punishment that international law explicitly prohibits, further justifying resistance.

Perhaps most troubling is international acquiescence to reoccupation. This undermines the very legal frameworks justifying the Palestinian resistance. Why is Ukrainian resistance to the Russian war celebrated as heroic while the Palestinian resistance to Israeli reoccupation condemned as terrorism? The United States provides Israel with \$3.8 billion annually in military assistance, funding reoccupation operations against Palestinian civilians. European Union trade agreements continue despite the bloc’s own determination that Israeli settlements violate international law. Such policies make Western governments complicit in legitimising reoccupation whilst undermining institutions that recognise resistance rights.

Despite overwhelming disadvantage, the Palestinian resistance demonstrates remarkable resilience, reflecting their cause’s legal legitimacy. Hamas and other factions have developed sophisticated defensive capabilities challenging reoccupation forces. Their tunnel networks represent ingenuity of people exercising internationally recognised rights to resist renewed subjugation.



BADR AL DHAFRI

The writer is head of proofreading and translation at Oman Daily Observer

Reimagining the future through green lens



SAMUEL KUTTY

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

In recent years, people have become increasingly aware of the dangers of climate change and global warming. As a result, they are prioritising the concept of sustainable living, which has led to a growing demand for eco-friendly homes.

Sustainable urban housing addresses these challenges by emphasising eco-friendly materials, energy efficiency and designs that promote community engagement.

From an ecological standpoint, sustainable building practices preserve natural resources and incorporate renewable energy options. Socially, they promote healthier living, reduce environmental impact and foster community well-being.

By improving indoor air quality, reducing exposure to harmful chemicals and fostering a connection with nature, these practices promote better physical and mental health. Additionally, they lower utility costs, increase property value and support a more sustainable lifestyle.

This shift in housing is more than just a trend; it signifies a move towards a sustainable future.

“Eco-friendly housing can enhance the health and well-being of residents by providing better indoor air quality, natural light and access to green spaces”, stresses the United Nations.

We know energy is a critical issue in the present era. Sadly, the current unplanned and uncontrolled growth of housing pays little attention to its conservation. At times,

local authorities struggle to provide even the minimum required energy to all households.

Studies reveal that approximately 18 per cent of total global energy consumption occurs in the housing sector. It is essential to consider energy conservation techniques before, during and after construction, as significant energy savings can be achieved at each stage. The Sultanate of Oman is one such country that is actively adopting sustainable housing practices, driven by factors such as population growth, the need for energy efficiency and the desire to reduce its carbon footprint.

In alignment with the sustainability goals of Oman Vision 2040, there is an increasing emphasis on implementing green building codes, utilising solar energy, optimising building orientation and incorporating thermal insulation in new constructions.

The country’s commitment to renewable energy, green building standards and the revitalisation of traditional architecture represents promising progress. Its eco-friendly housing projects are redefining urban living in Oman by creating communities that address the increasing demand for sustainable lifestyles.

“The focus is on developing integrated residential neighbourhoods that address the needs of society, support environmental sustainability and improve quality of life. These initiatives help create a balance between urban, environmental and social development, thus ensuring a sustainable, prosperous society and realising the

The Sultanate of Oman is one such country that is actively adopting sustainable housing practices, driven by factors such as population growth, the need for energy efficiency and the desire to reduce its carbon footprint

expectations of citizens and investors alike”, Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning said.

The government is setting structural plans in governorates and supervising implementation through real estate developer partners in this regard.

Sultan Haitham City, for example, represents the inaugural project in a broader initiative aimed at transforming urban development in the nation. Aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the nation’s long-term strategic framework, the initiative aims to host 100,000 people from Muscat’s expanding population, which includes citizens, expatriates and visitors.

Aiming for Oman’s 2050 objective of achieving net-zero carbon emissions, the new city is planned to reduce its environmental impact while improving residents’ quality of life. The Sustainable City — Yiti is another eco-friendly township emerging along the Sea of Oman coast close to Muscat that is set to be the largest functioning sustainable community in the area and Oman’s first net-zero emission community by 2040.

Covering almost one million square metres, this innovative project acts as a robust and adaptable blueprint for low-carbon lifestyles, effortlessly incorporating smart technologies to improve sustainability.

One thing is clear: Oman is on track to redefine urban living, thanks to a clear vision and unwavering commitment that not only transform urban life but also continue the legacy of progress and prosperity.

FRANCE ADOPTS LAW UPHOLDING BAN ON CONTROVERSIAL INSECTICIDE

ANNA SMOLCHENKO

French President Emmanuel Macron has signed into law a controversial bill that bars the reintroduction of a bee-killing pesticide following a groundswell of public opposition.

The legislation has been at the heart of a major debate in France and sparked a petition that was wildly successful, racking up an unprecedented 2.1 million signatures.

Critics of the bill, adopted in July in a fractured parliament, say it was rushed through without proper debate, ignored public opinion and was an example of elite overreach.

The law was published in the government’s official journal on Tuesday after the Constitutional Council, the country’s highest court, struck down the contested provision about the reintroduction of acetamiprid last week.

The court said a group of pesticides known as neonicotinoids posed “risks to human health” and the legislation was unconstitutional as it undermined the right to live in a balanced and healthy environment as guaranteed by the country’s environmental charter.

The legislation has been dubbed the Duplomb law, after its author, Laurent Duplomb, a senator for the right-wing Republicans party.

Banned in France since 2018, acetamiprid is legal in the European Union and proponents say beet and hazelnut growers need it to help them compete with their European counterparts.

The main farmers’ union, FNSEA, has rallied against the court ruling, calling it “unacceptable”.

Supporters of the petition said their frustration with the legislation went beyond environmental concerns. Commentators have said that the grassroots movement against the bill may be a sign of exasperation with deadlock in a hung parliament and a desire to have a greater say in political matters.

After the ruling, Macron had said he intended to quickly enact the law and rejected further parliamentary debate, to the dismay of critics.

The popular petition calls not only for the repeal of the legislation but also a review of the conditions under which it was adopted and public consultation with health, agriculture and environmental experts.

Antoine Leaument, a lawmaker with the hard left France Unbowed (LFI) party, said the opponents of the legislation had “won the battle”.

At the same time he expressed regret that Macron had enacted the legislation “rather than calling for a new vote” in parliament.

Speaking to broadcaster franceinfo, Leaument also called for “strong measures” to prevent food grown with the help of the pesticide from entering France. — AFP

Climate security is energy security

FOR all the uncertainties generated by Donald Trump’s administration over the past six months, one thing is clear: “climate” technologies are out and “energy” technologies are in. But while going along with this rhetorical shift may appease some, it should be recognised for what it is: a change in wording. The fundamental economic and technological forces that are pushing the world away from oil, coal and gas and towards low-carbon, high-efficiency technologies have not abated.

Over the past two decades, climate change has been a leading item on the global agenda, driving efforts to deploy technologies that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Those efforts are now facing headwinds and not just in the United States. Geopolitical developments elsewhere, like Russia’s war in Ukraine, have called attention to the importance of energy affordability and security over other considerations.

Policymakers in the US, Europe and elsewhere initially responded to the war by doubling down on the shift from fossil fuels and for good reason. Oil, coal and gas are commodities whose prices will always be linked to geopolitical vagaries (that goes for not only global oil markets but also regional gas markets, which are increasingly linked by trade in liquefied natural gas).

As a case in point, the summer of 2022 brought massive inflation, largely driven by fossil-fuel price spikes. Europe’s gas prices peaked at ten times their long-term average and US gas prices at around triple their long-term average. While the US Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 is widely considered a misnomer, history will judge the name kindly: The only permanent way to address such bouts with “fossilflation” is to stop using fossil fuels.

Though the blowback against climate policies has been particularly strong at the federal



The summer of 2022 brought massive inflation, largely driven by fossil-fuel price spikes.



GERNOT WAGNER

The writer is a climate economist at Columbia Business School

level in the US, Europe, too, has undergone a retrenchment. This is somewhat understandable, even if it is shortsighted. Germany, Europe’s largest economy, has been in a recession for more than two years, with high energy prices a chief culprit. Climate technologies that are already commercially viable could help, of course. But taking full advantage of the lower prices of solar, wind and (increasingly) batteries requires a willingness to reform power markets and pass these savings to households and industrial consumers. It also calls for more upfront public investment, an area where climate priorities compete with other priorities like national security that are often perceived to be more immediate.

In grappling with these tradeoffs, the European Union delivered the kinds of efficiency measures that Trump’s “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE) had promised but failed to achieve. For example, Europe dialed back its carbon border adjustment mechanism by requiring 90 per cent fewer companies to comply.

On the surface, this seems like a decisive blow to the goal

of establishing a carbon tariff for imports, commensurate with Trump’s DOGE hatchet. But unlike Trump and Elon Musk, the EU ensured that the remaining 10 per cent of importers still accounted for over 90 per cent of emissions. This outcome is far from ideal when viewed solely through a climate lens. But viewed from a broader climate-economic perspective, it is exactly the kind of surgical intervention that DOGE promised but never delivered.

Still, fiddling at the climate-policy margins ignores the bigger picture. While Europe and America are taking steps back, China is leaping forward. It alone accounted for over 40 per cent of the record \$2.1 trillion of global investment in the energy transition last year — more than the EU, the United Kingdom and the US combined. The balance is even more lopsided for specific clean-energy technologies. China produces around 75 per cent of the world’s solar panels and 80 per cent of its lithium-ion batteries. That dominance is the result of a concerted green industrial policy, in which innovation plays a key role.

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SPORTS

SAUDI EDITION



The camp is part of the team's preparations for the inaugural U20 Gulf Cup in Saudi Arabia from August 28 to September 10.

OMAN U20 TEAM RETURNS TO ACTION FOR GULF CUP

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUG 12

The Oman Under-20 team will be back in action after long absence on Wednesday for the first domestic training camp, under new coaching staff led by Hamed al Azani. The camp will run from Wednesday until August 23.

The scheduled local gathering is part of the team's preparations for the inaugural U20 Gulf Cup which is set to take place in Saudi Arabia from August 28 to September 10, 2025. Oman will play in Group B alongside Iraq, Bahrain and Egypt (as guest team in the event) while Group A comprises Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Yemen. Oman will meet Egypt on August 29 and then will take on Bahrain on September 1 and will conclude the group matches on September 4 against Iraq.

The new head coach, Hamed al Azani, opted for a 28-player squad for the domestic camp including most of the players, born in 2007 and 2008 and took part in the AFC U17 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia earlier this year under former coach Anwar al Habsi. Al Azani preferred to continue with this squad for better harmony as part of the team's future preparation for the upcoming U20 Asian Championship qualifiers in 2026.

This training phase will represent Oman's first appearance in youth competition since last September's U20 Asian Cup qualifiers led by former coach Ahmed al Alawi. The camp which will start on Wednesday will allow the coaching staff to thoroughly assess talent and prepare effectively for the Gulf Cup. Also, it will be vital to help the young players grow and develop experiences that will serve them in future continental challenges.

OMAN U20 SQUAD: Riyadh al Tarshi, Hussam al Naabi, Al Waleed al Abdulsalam, Firas al Saadi, Ahmed al Omrani, Osama al Maamari, Amed al Rawahi, Al Yazan al Balushi, Mohammed al Mashakheyi, Yazan al Khaldi, Abdulaziz al Balushi, Ibrahim al Tamimi, Ali al Owaini, Al Hassan al Qasmi, Fahad al Mashakehyi, Al Waleed al Buraidi, Ibrahim al Shamsi, Ziyad al Matani, Abdullah al Wahabi, Ali al Alawi, Mohammed Ghanim, Momen al Souli, Fahad Bait Rabee, AbdulRahman al Busaidy, Sulieman al Kharousi, Tamim al Buraii, Muzun al Hinai and Al Waleed al Rashdi.

Seeb take on FC Goa for AFC Champions League spot



Coached by Romanian Valeriu Tița, Seeb are aiming to become the first Omani club to reach the group stage of the newly formatted competition.

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUG 12

THE champions of 2022 AFC Cup, Seeb club, are all set to take another giant leap in their continental journey as they will face India's FC Goa on Wednesday in a decisive playoff for a historic place in the AFC Champions League Group Stage. The match will take place at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Wednesday and it will start at 6 pm (Oman Time).

Under the guidance of experienced Romanian tactician Valeriu Tița, Seeb are aiming to become the first Omani club to reach the group stage of the newly formatted competition. The Muscat-based team has been in Goa since Saturday, acclimatising to local conditions and fine-tuning tactical and technical preparations. Tița has placed strong emphasis on attacking efficiency, urging his forwards to convert chances decisively and avoid missed opportunities.

The head coach will depend in this match on many experienced players including Mohammed al Musallami, Ali al Busaidy, Salah al Yahyaei, Arshad al Alawi, Abdullah Fawaz, Abdulaziz Sesse and Azhar al Ghbari besides other players. The majority of Seeb players are



Seeb signed with Senegalese forward Abdulaziz Sesse, returning star Marwan Tuaib al Siyabi, Oman international Abdullah Fawaz and striker Musab al Shaqsi to boost the squad.

from the national team and this will give a high level of chemistry and on-field understanding.

For Seeb, the stakes are immense. Their continental reputation was cemented in 2022 when they lifted the AFC Cup in one of the most celebrated moments in Oman's sporting history. Following a fourth league title in the 2024/25 season, the Muscat-based side now aim to add a new chapter by competing among Asia's elite.

Seeb's pre-season were very competitive, starting with a narrow Super Cup loss to Al Shabab on penalties after a goalless draw. They then participated in a four-team friendly tournament in Salalah,

defeating Al Nasr 2-1, narrowly losing 1-0 to Oman's Olympic tea, and later securing a 3-1 victory over Dhofar. The team has since been training intensively at their home base.

The club strengthened its roster with key signings including the latest with Senegalese forward Abdulaziz Sesse, returning star Marwan Tuaib al Siyabi, Oman international Abdullah Fawaz and striker Musab al Shaqsi. Several core players, including Ahmed al Rawahi, Zaher al Aghbari, Tamim al Balushi and Motasim al Wahaibi, have had their contracts renewed to ensure a blend of experience and fresh energy.

On the other hand, India's FC Goa, runners-up in India's domestic league and winners of the domestic cup for the second time in 2025, are no strangers to continental football, having reached the AFC Champions League Group Stage in 2021. With passionate home support expected in full force, they will have a better advantage. However, Seeb players are well trained and used to play in these conditions specially the experienced players from national team.

The winner of Wednesday's showdown will book a coveted place in the AFC Champions League Two group stage, while the losing side will enter the AFC Challenge League.

Oman's young sailors head to Lake Geneva for Optimist team race

MUSCAT: A team of four Optimist sailors from Oman Sail will represent the nation at this year's International Optimist Team Race in Cologny, Switzerland, from August 14 to 17. Led by Hashim al Rashdi, Oman Sail's Head Coach — Performance and coached by Sultan al Zadjali, the team will join 12 teams from around the world on Lake Geneva for an unforgettable sailing experience.

The team comprises Khamis bin Nasser al Mashikhi, Mohammed bin Ziyad al Qasmi, Tarteel bint Zaid al Hasaniyah and Hadeel bint Yousuf al Mushaifriyah.

Racing will be in teams of four, beginning with a round-robin phase, to give all teams the opportunity to compete against each other. From there, the quarterfinals and semifinals will see competition intensify, before the coveted finals.

Hashim al Rashdi, Head Coach — Performance, said, "This is



HASHIM
AL RASHDI



KHAMIS
AL MASHIKHI



Action from the Optimist African Championship

another exciting opportunity for our young sailors to gain experience in a high-calibre competition. The waters of Lake Geneva have been home to elite sailing for decades and it is an honour to take part at the 2025 International Optimist Team Race. We will be aiming for a good performance and continue the progress we have made together this season".

Khamis bin Nasser al Mashikhi, member of the Optimist team, added, "It will be a great experience to test ourselves against other young sailors from around the world. We are all improving with each race and in training, so this gives us the chance to put those learnings into practice and see where we rank as a team. There are several competitions in the coming months, so every race is important in terms of our development".

The 2025 International Optimist

Team Race is organised by the Societe Nautique de Geneve (SNG). The team will arrive in Switzerland after competing in the African Optimist Championship from August 2 to 9 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, which featured 75 sailors from 14 nations. Khamis al Mashikhi finished 18th overall, followed by Tarteel al Hasani in 36th, Hadeel al Mushaifri in 45th, Mohammed al Qasmi in 47th and Khalid al Sarhi in 52nd.

Following the conclusion of the event, the team will head to the Wilayat of Sur, Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, for the Oman Sailing Championship from August 18 to 22, before beginning their preparations for 14th edition of Al Musannah Race Week from October 15–22 and the IODA Optimist Asian & Oceanian Championship, also held in the Wilayat of Al Musannah, Al Batinah South Governorate, from October 25 — November 1.

5-WICKET WIN



Roston Chase (L) of West Indies celebrates winning the second One Day International (ODI) match between West Indies and Pakistan at Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago. — AFP

WINDIES LEVEL ODI SERIES WITH PAKISTAN AS CHASE STARS

TAROUBA, Trinidad and Tobago: The West Indies beat Pakistan by five wickets on Sunday as Roston Chase and Justin Greaves led the charge with the bat to level the one-day series between the sides.

Chase had 49 runs and Greaves was not out for 26 with a thrilling selection of fours and sixes in a game shortened by rain delays in Tarouba.

Earlier, West Indies' poor start was steadied by Sherfane Rutherford's 33-ball 45 to put the home side back in the driving seat.

Chase sealed the deal by steering a delivery from Hasan Ali through cover for four and he punched the air in celebration.

"I'm happy with the win. We had to come in and level the series, so very pleased," Chase, who was named man of the match, said.

The decisive third match of the series takes place at the same venue on Tuesday.

FIFTH BOWLER DILEMMA

Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan acknowledged a dilemma over the fifth bowler and said they would take a late decision on their team combination for Tuesday's series decider.

Pakistan, who won the opening ODI by five wickets, posted a competitive 171-7 in 37 overs in a rain-truncated match but West Indies prevailed by five wickets to draw level in the three-match series.

Pakistan's part-time duo of Saim Ayub and Salman Agha conceded a combined 66 runs in seven wicketless overs as West Indies cruised home.

"You could say our fifth bowler gave away too many runs but in recent years, Salman Agha and Saim Ayub have both bowled well for us," Rizwan said after the match. "Saim didn't have the best day today, but he performed well in the T20Is. That's just part of the game."

Rizwan said they could not read the conditions and several rain delays did not help their cause.

"Honestly, the weather forecast has been completely different from expectations, and it's hard to read," he added. — Agencies

Brevis smashes record ton as S Africa level T20 series

DEWALD

BREVIS belted South Africa's highest Twenty20 individual score with a blistering 125 not out from 56 balls as the tourists stayed alive in the three-match series after a 53-run victory over Australia in Darwin on Tuesday.

Australia's decision to bowl backfired as South Africa powered to a massive 218-7 on the back of Brevis' maiden century in international cricket.

The 22-year-old rescued South Africa from a shaky 57-3 and dominated a 126-run partnership with Tristan Stubbs (31).

"I'm extremely grateful, just happy to be out here on the winning side," said Brevis, who surpassed Faf du Plessis' 119 against the West Indies in 2015.

Playing just his ninth T20 international, Brevis smashed eight sixes to leave Australia's powerful batting line-up with an uphill task.

Australia's daunting chase was made more difficult after the early wickets of opener Travis Head (five) and Cameron Green (nine). Australia's hopes rested with in-form Tim David, fresh off his match-winning 83 in their 17-run victory in the series opener at the same venue.

Promoted to number four, David started with a trio of boundaries and then bludgeoned several massive sixes, including one that landed on the roof.

But David's 24-ball assault ended on 50 when he hit spearhead Kagiso Rabada straight to cover.

Australia's chase ran out of steam, bowled out for 165 in the 18th over with quicks Corbin Bosch and Kwen Maphaka picking up three wickets each.

"Chasing that down was always going to be tough and we needed a few partnerships, which we couldn't do," Australia captain Mitchell Marsh said.

Without several key batsmen for this tour, South Africa had struggled to fire in the opening game. Captain Aiden Markram signalled his intent with a sublime boundary off the first ball of the innings, rattling quick Josh Hazlewood.

But Markram (18) fell tamely to a fired-up Glenn Maxwell, who celebrated another wicket when he had Lhuan-dre Pretorius (10) stumped to leave South Africa in trouble.

Likened to legendary South Africa batsman AB de Villiers, Brevis turned the innings on its head to power past his previous highest T20 international score of 41. Brevis received a life on 56 when substitute fielder Matthew Kuhnemann fumbled on the boundary off the bowling of an increasingly frustrated Maxwell.

Brevis made Australia pay and in a flash he was saluting the crowd after reaching his century with a boundary off his 41st delivery.

Maxwell and quick Ben Dwarshuis picked up two wickets apiece in an unusually ragged effort in the field for Australia, whose nine-match T20 win streak ended.

The series-decider will be played in the Queensland city of Cairns on Saturday.

— AFP



Palace mull legal steps after losing appeal over Europa demotion

LONDON: Crystal Palace said on Tuesday they are seeking legal advice on possible next steps after the Court of Arbitration for Sport dismissed the club's appeal against Uefa's decision to demote them from the Europa League to the Conference League.

European soccer's governing body made the decision over Palace's multi-club ownership rule breach because at the time of assessment on March 1, the John Textor-founded Eagle Football Group were the majority owners of fellow Europa League side Olympique Lyonnais and also held shares in Palace.

US businessman Textor's Eagle Football Holdings sold their stake in Palace last month. However, CAS upheld Uefa's ruling on Monday and



Crystal Palace players celebrate after winning the FA Community Shield. — Reuters

dismissed Palace's argument that the club received unfair treatment in comparison to Lyon and Nottingham Forest, with the latter replacing them

in the Europa League.

"The decision by Uefa and followed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport shows that sporting merit

is rendered meaningless," Palace, who had qualified for the Europa League as FA Cup winners, said in a statement.

"It appears that certain clubs, organisations and individuals have a unique privilege and power... while we respect the CAS tribunal members, the process is designed to severely restrict and, in our case, make it almost impossible to receive a fair hearing.

"Uefa's decision has wider implications for the governance of the sport. A combination of poorly conceived regulations and their unequal application means our brilliant fans will be deprived of the chance to watch this team compete in the Europa League for the first time in our history."

'NO OBJECTIONS'

CAS said none of the parties raised any concern about the running of the process when Palace's appeal was heard on Friday. "CAS rules are long-standing and designed to ensure fairness in the sporting world. In line with this practice, all parties on August 8, 2025 were given a formal opportunity to raise any concern about the running of the process," said a CAS statement. "No objections were raised to state that the right to a fair hearing was not respected."

Palace said the European Court of Justice's ruling earlier, which allows national courts to conduct in-depth reviews of arbitral awards by CAS to ensure they are compliant with EU law, will ensure greater scrutiny of sport's top court. — Reuters

SPORTS

SABALENKA EDGES
RADUCANU, SINNER
PASSES DIALLO TEST



Jannik Sinner (ITA) returns a shot against Gabriel Diallo (CAN) during the Cincinnati Open at the Lindner Family Tennis Center. — **Imagn Images**



Madison Keys (USA) returns a shot against Aoi Ito (JPN) during the Cincinnati Open at the Lindner Family Tennis Center. — **Imagn Images**

WORLD number one Aryna Sabalenka kept her Cincinnati Open title defence alive by claiming a 7-6(3), 4-6, 7-6(5) victory over Emma Raducanu in a marathon third-round clash on Monday, while men's top seed Jannik Sinner overcame Canadian Gabriel Diallo.

Fresh off their third-round clash at Wimbledon last month, Sabalenka and Raducanu produced another epic contest, featuring a 13-deuce game in the third set, before the 27-year-old Belarusian sealed victory in three hours and nine minutes. Sabalenka relied on her trademark powerful serve to hold firm in the key moments, winning two tie-breaks to take her tally to 18 for the season, the most by any women's singles player in the professional era.

Despite the defeat, Raducanu seems to be finding her best form just in time for this month's US Open at Flushing Meadows, where she triumphed in 2021. The 22-year-old Briton outscored Sabalenka in total points won, 125-123.

"I'm really happy to see her healthy. I can see she's improving," Sabalenka said of Raducanu.

Sabalenka next faces Spaniard Jessica Bouzas Maneiro in the last 16.

Men's defending champion Sinner reached the last 16 with a 6-2, 7-6(6) victory over Diallo, stretching his winning streak on hardcourts to 23 matches. The 23-year-old four-times Grand Slam champion, whose

clash with Diallo was delayed by a fire alarm before the players continued through the noise, next faces Frenchman Adrian Mannarino. "I feel like today was a very difficult day at the office," Sinner said. "He was serving very well, especially in the second set. Against big servers you always have to find the right balance at the back of the court."

POWER OUTAGE Earlier, fourth seed Taylor Fritz defeated Italian Lorenzo Sonego 7-6(4), 7-5 after a power outage caused a one-hour delay. The 27-year-old American did not face a break point and capitalised on his lone break opportunity before serving out the match, sealing the win in two hours and eight minutes.

Former champion Madison Keys booked her place in the last 16 with a 6-4, 6-0 win over Japan's Aoi Ito, edging a tight first set before storming through the second in just 20 minutes.

Next up for the Australian Open champion is Kazakh ninth seed Elena Rybakina, who recovered from a first-set wobble to battle to a 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 win over Belgian Elise Mertens.

Anna Kalinskaya stunned American fifth seed and Wimbledon runner-up Amanda Anisimova 7-5, 6-4. Kalinskaya will face fellow Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova in the next round. American 13th seed Tommy Paul was knocked out by 37-year-old Mannarino, who came back from a set down to win 5-7, 6-3, 6-4. — **Reuters**



Aryna Sabalenka (BLR) returns a shot against Emma Raducanu (GBR) during the Cincinnati Open at the Lindner Family Tennis Center. — **Imagn Images**

SABALENKA
SURVIVES
THREE-SET
BATTLE

SINNER
STRETCHES
HARDCOURT
WINNING
STREAK TO 23
MATCHES

AMERICANS
ANISIMOVA
AND PAUL SENT
PACKING

CHERY TIGGO 9

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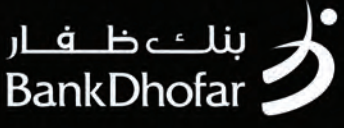


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SHORTTAKES



Total aircraft movements rose by 16 per cent to 1,849 flights, up from 1,592 in 2024.

SALALAH AIRPORT SEES STRONG GROWTH DURING KHAREEF SEASON

SALALAH: Salalah Airport recorded a marked increase in both aircraft movements and passenger numbers during the 2025 khareef season, from June 21 to August 3, compared with the same period last year.

Figures from Oman Airports show total aircraft movements rose by 16 per cent to 1,849 flights, up from 1,592 in 2024, while passenger numbers grew by 5 per cent to 288,110, compared with 274,030 last year.

Arrivals registered a 16-per cent rise in flights, increasing from 795 in 2024 to 925 in 2025, with arriving passenger numbers climbing 3 per cent to 158,301. Departures mirrored this growth, with flights up 16 per cent from 797 to 924, and departing passengers rising 8 per cent to 129,809.

To improve passenger experience, Oman Airports implemented new technologies, expanded lounge capacity, and enhanced hospitality and retail services. Its “Travel Easier” initiative allowed passengers to check in directly from their cars, reducing waiting times and improving convenience.

The surge in traffic reflects growing tourist interest in Dhofar Governorate’s khareef season, renowned for its cool climate, seasonal rains, and rich mix of cultural, heritage and recreational attractions.

With ongoing events and rising visitor numbers, tourism activity in the governorate is expected to remain strong in the coming weeks. — OMA

Oman signs mining deals worth RO 192 million

THE Ministry of Energy and Minerals has signed three new exploration and mining agreements with two specialised companies, marking a significant step in strengthening Oman’s mining sector, maximising the added value of mineral resources and attracting investment to priority geological areas.

The agreements are part of the government’s wider strategy to diversify the economy, boost local manufacturing and create sustainable job opportunities for Omanis.

The first agreement grants Gulf Mineral Materials Company exploration and mining rights in Concession Area 11-C, located in Al Buraimi Governorate.

Spanning 1,089 square kilometres, the concession is distinguished by its ophiolite rock series, with promising indicators of copper and chromium ore deposits.

The initial phase of the project, expected to last two to three years, will involve topographical mapping, geochemical and geophysical surveys, as well as drilling and exploratory trenching to determine the commercial viability of mining operations.

The second and third agreements, signed with Novel Muscat International Company, cover Concession Areas 51-G1 and 51-G2 in Al Wusta Governorate.

In Area 51-G2, covering 30



The agreements are part of the government’s wider strategy to diversify the economy, boost local manufacturing and create sustainable job opportunities.

km², the company will develop an integrated industrial project that includes a plant to produce salts and sodium carbonate (soda ash) using seawater transported to evaporation basins for drying and processing.

In Area 51-G1, which extends over 558 km², a hydrated lime production facility will be established.

Initial work will focus on identifying the location, quality and reserves of raw materials within geological formations rich in silica, limestone and various clays.

Combined, these projects represent a total investment of RO 192 million (\$500

million), including the cost of establishing industrial facilities, conducting feasibility studies and implementing mining plans in line with international standards.

Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, stressed that the mining sector is a key driver of Oman’s economic growth and diversification.

He noted that these agreements reflect the ministry’s commitment to attracting high-quality investments that can transform raw mineral resources into advanced manufacturing industries,

The Ministry views these agreements as part of its long-term vision to build an integrated, globally competitive mining industry that enhances Oman’s position as a regional hub for advanced mineral-based industries.

thereby supporting national value chains and opening new opportunities for local talent.

Abdullah bin Ahmed al Hadi, CEO of Gulf Mineral Materials, highlighted the company’s track record, including its successful development of the ferrochrome plant in Suhar in partnership with international strategic partners.

The facility’s production capacity is set to increase to 7,200 tonnes per month by 2026, with a focus on operational sustainability, technology localisation and SMEs participation.

Hamoud bin Said al Aufi, Managing Director of Novel Muscat International, emphasised that the projects will contribute to Oman’s manufacturing sector by producing high-value products locally, generating skilled employment and supporting sustainable development.

The ministry views these agreements as part of its long-term vision to build an integrated, globally competitive mining industry that enhances Oman’s position as a regional hub for advanced mineral-based industries.

Oman Fisheries secures 10,000 MT annual fishing licence

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, AUG 12

OMAN Fisheries Company (OFC), one of the Sultanate of Oman’s largest and oldest fish processing companies, has secured a new fishing licence from the Omani government with an annual quota of 10,000 metric tonnes (MT).

The new licence underscores the government’s confidence in the publicly traded company’s “operational capacity and strategic direction,” said Dr Shahid bin Mahmood al Balushi, Chairman of the Board of Directors at OFC.

He added that the company is currently negotiating terms with vessel operators to commence utilisation under this licence.

The move comes as OFC implements a Revised Operational Model aimed at bolstering business performance amid sustained financial losses.

“Following a comprehensive analysis of operational, market and historical performance data,



The Al Khair 1, fully owned by Oman Fisheries.

the company has adopted a data-driven operational model designed to maximise asset efficiency and enhance procurement sustainability,” the Chairman noted in the Directors’ Report for the six months ended on June 30, 2025.

“This model is intended to optimise profitability through evidence-based decisions and predictive performance indicators.”

The strategic shift focuses on

increasing the share of higher-margin demersal species based on market demand and yield analytics; prioritising fresh fish procurement and in-house processing to maximise value-added output while limiting frozen fish trading to seasonal gaps; and optimising asset use — particularly of the Al Khair vessel — through data-driven scheduling, cost-efficiency measures and output maximisation.

Notably, the company has entered into a partnership agreement for the operation of the Al Khair vessel under OFC’s fishing licence. The vessel is operationally ready and scheduled to commence activity by mid-August 2025.

Additionally, OFC has secured long-term commercial arrangements for the supply of Omani fish species, including a contract with a Chinese partner for the export of 160 containers of demersal fish annually — expected to generate RO 4–5 million in value — and a deal with J Marr, a well-

established player in the global seafood sector, for the supply of 360 containers of small pelagic fish per year.

During the first half of 2025, the company also capitalised on idle processing capacity by offering services to third parties, processing 117 MT of fish.

Meanwhile, OFC reported a further contraction in its financial metrics for H1 2025. Total assets fell by 21% to RO 7.58 million, driven by a 31% drop in total liabilities to RO 5.26 million.

Revenue plunged by 74% to RO 1.0 million, while the net loss widened slightly by 3% to RO 1.15 million. Accumulated losses stood at RO 20.686 million as of June 30, 2025, resulting in a complete erosion of the company’s share capital.

Oman Fisheries is a subsidiary of Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), the government’s fisheries investment arm operating under the umbrella of Oman Investment Authority.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The initiative plays a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial mindsets among young people.

NATIONAL FINANCE & INJAZ OMAN PARTNER TO SUPPORT YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL AMBITIONS

MUSCAT: Demonstrating its commitment to nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman’s leading finance company, has renewed its strategic partnership with Injaz Oman.

Through this collaboration, National Finance proudly takes on the role of main sponsor for the ‘University’ category in Injaz Oman’s 2025–2026 edition of ‘The Company’ programme & competition, a flagship initiative aimed at equipping aspiring youth with the essential skills to transform their innovative business ideas into real-world enterprises. The agreement was signed by Tariq bin Sulaiman al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer of National Finance and Khaula bint Hamoud al Harthyah, Chief Executive Officer of Injaz Oman.

Entering yet another impactful year, ‘The Company’ programme & competition has already empowered more than 200 student companies from universities, colleges and high schools across the Sultanate of Oman. The initiative plays a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial mindsets among young people, enhancing their preparedness for the dynamic business landscape and transforming innovative concepts into sustainable ventures.

Through hands-on experience, participants are guided through every stage of building a business — from ideation to execution — and are equipped with the essential skills needed to manage and scale their enterprises effectively. Beyond individual development, the programme also contributes meaningfully to the country’s economic diversification agenda by nurturing distinctive, youth-led business ventures that drive innovation, growth and contribute to inclusive economic and social development.

Commenting on the partnership, Tariq bin Sulaiman al Farsi, remarked, “At National Finance, we firmly believe in the boundless potential of Sultanate of Oman’s youth, not only in shaping the future with their original business ideas, but also in their resilience and commitment to turning those ideas into reality.

We are proud to once again strengthen our partnership with Injaz Oman, as part of our continued dedication to empowering young talent and fostering a solid generation of business leaders. Supporting ‘The Company’ programme & competition aligns seamlessly with our vision. It goes beyond cultivating entrepreneurial skills; it uplifts communities, fuels innovation and contributes to the broader socio-economic progress of the nation”.

GWM
HAVAL H7:
WHERE
PRACTICALITY
MEETS
POWER

MUSCAT: GWM Oman invites customers to experience the Haval H7, a refined five-seater SUV that blends space, safety and modern technology in one versatile package. Designed for long drives and everyday ease, the Haval H7 is perfect for families, professionals and long-distance drivers. It delivers strong performance, practical features and lasting comfort, setting a new standard for value-driven SUVs.

“The H7 has earned its place as a



dependable and capable SUV”, said a senior spokesperson at OTE Group. “It combines power, comfort and

utility, making it a smart choice for customers who want every day ease without compromising on quality”. Powered by a turbocharged engine with 228 hp and 385 Nm of torque, the Haval H7 offers confident performance alongside available 4WD and six airbags for enhanced safety. The premium cabin includes power-adjustable front seats, tri-zone climate control and an intuitive touchscreen interface, all tailored for both city drives and road trips.

Elevate your life with
Kia’s fast-charging EVs

ELECTRIC

vehicles are becoming increasingly popular, transforming both habits and mindsets. Preferred for zero fossil fuel dependability and lower carbon emissions, the EV trend has taken the world by storm. Marking a new era of automotive excellence, Kia is excited to embark on the futuristic journey with its innovative EV range for the customers in Oman.

As part of its e-mobility range, the all-new Kia EV6, an all-electric crossover and the SUV EV9 deliver an exceptional electric driving experience. Based on Kia’s advanced E-GMP platform, the Kia electric series offers ultra-fast charging capabilities that make long trips and everyday use easier than ever.

With its distinctive, bold and futuristic appearance, the electric series more than just looks — it provides the freedom to do more. Each vehicle has been crafted with a bold approach to sustainability without compromising on luxury and performance.



Kia is excited to embark on the futuristic journey with its innovative EV range for the customers in Oman.

The cabins feature vegan leather and recycled PET materials, reflecting Kia’s commitment to the environment. But it’s not just about sustainability — the interior is designed for comfort, with a spacious layout that makes every ride feel like a surreal experience with extra storage in the front trunk, ventilated relaxation seats with 2nd-row comfort seats and a Meridian premium sound

system, which delivers rich and clear sound, uplifting the inside mood.

Moreover, specific to Kia EV6, it features cutting-edge technology that keeps you connected, ensuring seamless journeys.

Integrated 12.3” Navigation + 12.3” Cluster LCD, 64-colour Ambient Mood lighting, for a more immersive experience, the integrated panoramic curved display, wireless charging and

USB ports on the seatbacks, make it easier than ever to stay connected on the go.

The smart power tailgate is another innovative feature, it can be programmed to open to a specific height, making loading and unloading more convenient.

Whereas for the SUV enthusiast, the EV9 provides an ideal solution for city driving while ensuring minimal environmental impact. It is a great family car that is perfect for a large family of 7 members.

Enjoy seamless connectivity with Apple, Android and Bluetooth voice recognition.

There’s also a cup holder tray with USB ports for third-row passengers, along with a wireless charging tray on the front centre console to keep your devices powered.

Kia’s EV series hosts a plethora of advanced safety features including Advanced Driver Assistance System technologies to help ensure the ultimate in occupant and pedestrian safety.

The Highway Driving Assist assists you when you’re driving on the highway and issues alerts during risky changes.

HOUSING LOANS SURPASS RO 190 MILLION IN AL BATINAH NORTH

MUSCAT: Under the auspices of Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North and in the presence of Moosa bin Masoud al Jadeedi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Housing Bank, along with several excellencies and dignitaries, Oman Housing Bank inaugurated its Suhar branch after a comprehensive restructuring and development to align with the latest advancements in the banking sector.

The branch will now deliver services using the most modern banking systems in place.



Oman Housing Bank inaugurated its Suhar branch after a comprehensive restructuring and development.

This inauguration marks a key step in the bank’s strategy to enhance the quality of its banking services and simplify procedures for citizens, building on its long-standing track record of providing housing finance across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Similar restructuring has also been carried out for the branches in the wilayats of Sur, Khasab, Al Rustaq and Nizwa. Moosa bin Masoud al Jadeedi, CEO of Oman Housing Bank, stated that since the establishment of the Suhar branch and up to the end of last year, the bank has provided

housing loans in Al Batinah North Governorate, with a total value exceeding RO 190 million, amounting to 6,788 housing loans.

He added that during the past year, the governorate recorded a 13% increase in the value of housing loans granted, reaching over RO 19 million compared to the previous year.

This reflects the growing demand for the financing solutions provided by the bank and their positive impact on supporting the housing sector and stimulating economic activity.

Bank Muscat awarded best investment bank in Oman award

MUSCAT: In affirmation of its leading roles in the banking sector and its excellence in delivering diversified investment solutions, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, was honoured with the Best Investment Bank in Oman Award by MEED during the distinguished MENA Banking Excellence Awards event held recently in Dubai.

These prestigious awards recognise the most innovative and customer-focused financial institutions across various sectors in the region.

The bank’s award was received by Salim bin Said al Shanfari, the representative of Bank Muscat’s



Bank Muscat was selected following a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process.

office in UAE, attended by prominent figures from across the Middle East and the world.

Bank Muscat was selected following a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process, including in-depth assessments and consultations with industry experts.

This accolade stands as a testament to the bespoke financial advisory and fundraising solutions offered by Bank Muscat to businesses in Oman.

The Bank, represented by its Investment Banking & Capital Markets Division, provides a wide range of advisory services encompassing corporate finance, project finance, debt capital

markets, debt refinancing, structured financings, quasi-equity financings, private placements, mergers and acquisitions as well as managing initial public offerings (IPOs) in multiple business sectors.

With a strong track record of pioneering achievements, Bank Muscat continues to deliver innovative and customised financial solutions that cater to the diverse needs of its customers.

On this occasion, Khalifa bin Abdullah al Hatmi, Deputy General Manager — Investment Banking & Capital Markets at Bank Muscat, expressed his pride in winning the Best Investment Bank in the Sultanate of Oman.

BUSINESS

WORKFORCEGROWTH

DUQM SUMMER
SERIES FOCUSES ON
KEEPING TALENT
SWITCHED ON

BUSINESS REPORTER
DUQM, AUG 12

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) continued its inaugural Duqm Summer Series on Tuesday with a one-hour session on workforce development – a subject increasingly at the heart of business strategy.

In a world of rapid change, finding, keeping and growing the right people has become as important as securing investment or winning new markets.



AUF AL AUFI
Talent
Management
Section Head at
Development Bank

Organised by Hanan al Siyabi, Section Head - Marketing & Business Development at SEZAD, the lunchtime session was led by Auf al Auqi, Talent Management Section Head at Development Bank.

His focus, how to build teams that are not only resilient, but able to adapt quickly, work with purpose and see opportunity in change.

“The most successful

organisations are those that understand talent is not a fixed asset, it’s a living, evolving capability,” said Al Auqi. “We spoke on Tuesday about developing leaders who are comfortable with ambiguity and teams that can adapt quickly without losing focus.

That means investing in skills, culture and the systems that allow people to work at their best.”

The case for such investment is clear.

Gallup’s State of the Global Workplace 2024 report found that only 21% of employees worldwide are actively engaged at work, with disengagement costing the global economy \$8.8 trillion a year - around 9% of GDP.

The Society for Human Resource Management estimates that replacing an employee can cost up to twice their annual salary when recruitment, training, lost productivity and cultural impact are factored in. And with Gallup reporting that more than half of the global workforce is actively seeking new opportunities, retention is no longer an HR side issue, it is a decisive factor in business performance.

Tuesday’s discussion moved beyond traditional HR fixes. It explored the full employee journey, from thoughtful onboarding that embeds organisational purpose, to career paths built on fairness, inclusion and wellbeing.

Participants examined how development opportunities can be made transparent and how to create workplaces people actively choose to stay in, contribute to and innovate from.

The conversation also drew a line back to last week’s session on AI and automation. As technology reshapes skills needs, the consensus was clear - successful AI strategies go hand in hand with equally ambitious people strategies – reskilling, continuous learning and leaders ready to guide teams through transformation.

For Al Siyabi, the link between talent and competitiveness is obvious. “Duqm has always been about building for the long-term,” she said. “These sessions give our tenants the tools and perspective to develop their people with the same care they put into developing their infrastructure.

Workforce resilience is not just an HR concern, it’s a competitiveness concern.”

The Duqm Summer Series began on August 5 with Saeed Abul Ghaffoor, CEO of Star Drones, leading a session on AI and automation. It continues through August with discussions on global supply chains and workplace culture, each a focused, one-hour exchange designed to give participants practical insights they can put to work immediately.

FORUM TO
PROMOTE
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT
IN SALALAH

SALALAH: The Gulf Green Mobility Forum is set to commence on August 31 in Salalah, bringing together specialists and experts from across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to advance environmental sustainability in the transport sector and encourage the adoption of clean and alternative modes of travel.

Organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the event will serve as a platform

for exchanging knowledge and expertise among GCC countries on sustainable transportation and eco-friendly technologies.

Discussions will spotlight leading policies and initiatives designed to achieve net-zero emissions targets and curb carbon output from transport activities.

Preparations for the forum began with a virtual Gulf workshop, jointly held by the ministry and the GCC General-Secretariat. Representatives from the United

Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait took part, focusing on practical outcomes and cooperative mechanisms to accelerate the shift towards sustainable mobility and strengthen both environmental and economic integration across the region.

In the lead-up to the main event, Dhofar Governorate will host community activities on August 15 and 16 aimed at promoting green mobility awareness among children.

— ONA

Labour Ministry unveils
first AI career adviser

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUG 12

ARTIFICIAL

intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept but a powerful force reshaping the way organisations operate, according to Abdulrahman bin Abdullah al Busaidy, Director of Smart Management at the Ministry of Labour.

Speaking at a recent event, Al Busaidy said the shift from traditional management models to AI-powered systems is enabling faster decisions, greater agility and a stronger competitive edge.

In his presentation, Al Busaidy outlined the differences between three key management approaches: traditional, digital and AI-driven smart management.

Traditional models, he explained, depend on manual, routine tasks and slow decision-making. Digital management improves efficiency through automation and electronic systems.

Smart management, however, takes the concept further, using



Part of the ministry’s Smart Management Project, Nadeem has already proven to be a valuable tool for understanding the needs, expectations, and concerns of both employees and job-seekers.

predictive analytics, automated recommendations and real-time data flows to give leaders instant insights and the ability to act decisively.

A highlight of his address was the Ministry of Labour’s flagship AI initiative, “Nadeem” – the first AI-powered virtual career adviser developed in Oman. Created using generative AI technologies, Nadeem is designed to guide and support job-seekers throughout their employment journey, offering personalised advice, identifying

challenges and suggesting solutions.

Part of the ministry’s Smart Management Project, Nadeem has already proven to be a valuable tool for understanding the needs, expectations, and concerns of both employees and job-seekers.

“It’s a treasure trove of information,” Al Busaidy said, noting how it has helped the ministry tailor programmes to improve workplace performance and job matching.

He also stressed that

Traditional models, he explained, depend on manual, routine tasks and slow decision-making. Digital management improves efficiency through automation and electronic systems.

the transition to smart management must consider all interconnected elements, especially at the national level.

“Cybersecurity is fundamental because national data is sovereign, and protecting it is essential,” he said.

Risk management, he added, is equally important, with pre-prepared scenarios and balanced, well-planned responses ensuring resilience in the face of emerging challenges.

Al Busaidy concluded by emphasising that the move towards AI-powered management requires more than just technology investment – it demands an organisational culture that embraces innovation.

“This is no longer optional,” he said. “It’s a strategic necessity if we are to keep pace with the rapid changes shaping today’s global business environment.”

SOHAR INTERNATIONAL EYES MAJORITY STAKE IN SAUDI’S NEO GROUP

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, AUG 12

SOHAR International Bank SAOG (SIB) has announced plans to acquire a controlling stake in Neo Group Limited, a financial services firm based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as part of its wider regional growth strategy.

In a filing with the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Tuesday, Aug 12, SIB said it has approached the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) seeking preliminary approval to sign a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the shareholders of Neo Group.

The MoU outlines the possibility of acquiring up to 55 per cent of the company’s share capital from an existing Saudi shareholder, who currently owns an 80 per cent equity stake. Neo Group is an established financial institution in Saudi Arabia, holding regulatory licences from the Capital Market Authority (CMA) to provide



The proposal aligns with the bank’s vision to expand its footprint in key regional markets.

asset management and financial advisory services.

According to SIB, the proposed acquisition aligns with its vision to expand its footprint in key regional markets and reinforce Oman’s presence in the Gulf’s fast-growing

financial services sector.

SIB noted that the transaction is still in its early stages and will be subject to a series of conditions before completion.

These include a satisfactory outcome from the due diligence process, successful negotiations, execution of definitive agreements, and obtaining all necessary regulatory, corporate, and other mandatory approvals from both Omani and Saudi authorities.

“This intended acquisition forms part of Sohar International’s regional expansion strategy and vision to strengthen Oman’s representation in regional financial markets,” the bank said in its disclosure.

The bank emphasised that it will make further announcements in accordance with regulatory requirements as and when material developments take place.

The disclosure was signed by Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International Bank.

SMALL BUSINESSES

US optimism rises amid uncertainty



US small-business confidence improved in July, with the National Federation of Independent Business index rising 1.7 points to 100.3.

Owners saw better conditions and expansion prospects, but uncertainty grew sharply, with the index climbing eight points to 97. The NFIB cited tariffs, inflation, and geopolitical tensions, as key factors clouding decisions on hiring, pricing, and investment. — Reuters

TRADE TRUCE

US, China extend tariff pause



The US and China agreed to extend their tariff suspension for 90 days, avoiding a hike hours before it was set to take effect. US President Donald Trump signed an order keeping the truce until November 10, while China matched the move from August 12, retaining a 10% duty.

The pause follows earlier escalations that saw tariffs reach triple-digit levels, disrupting global trade flows. — AFP

OIL MARKETS

Oil prices steady on tariff extension



Oil prices held steady on Tuesday after the US and China extended their tariff truce to November 10, easing fears of weakened demand from a trade war escalation.

Brent crude slipped 2 cents to \$66.77 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate eased 10 cents to \$64.03. The agreement helped calm markets as US retailers geared up for the year-end holiday season. — Reuters

OPINION

White hydrogen adds new dimension to Oman’s energy transition



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The author is an assistant professor in the Department of Petroleum and Chemical Engineering, Sultan Qaboos University

OMAN has established itself as a regional leader in green hydrogen, driven by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Hydrom’s successful launch of large-scale projects, competitive auctions and the securing of international investments. Building on this momentum, the country is now turning its focus to white hydrogen, also known as natural hydrogen, geologic hydrogen or gold hydrogen.

A recent agreement between Sohar Port and Freezone and the Swiss company Hynat marks a key step in evaluating and developing the full value chain of this resource.

This reflects Oman’s ongoing commitment to diversifying its hydrogen portfolio in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the National Strategy for an Orderly Transition to Net-Zero.

White hydrogen forms naturally through geological processes and is stored in subsurface reservoirs. It does not require carbon-intensive production, offering a low-emission alternative suitable for industrial use, mobility systems and export.

If discovered in viable quantities with high purity, white hydrogen could strengthen Oman’s energy sustainability, support export growth, and position the country as a frontrunner in a rapidly evolving global sector.

Developing white hydrogen comes with

several technical challenges. It is difficult to estimate how much hydrogen exists underground, where it is located, and how easily it can be recovered with the required purity.

Even in high concentrations, hydrogen is often mixed with gases like nitrogen or methane, which must be removed using efficient and affordable methods. Hydrogen’s small molecular size makes it prone to leakage through fractures in rocks or poorly sealed wells.

To manage this, Oman needs better tools for subsurface imaging, reservoir modelling and real-time monitoring. Long-term exposure to hydrogen can also weaken metals used in drilling and pipelines, requiring stronger materials and site-specific designs.

Large-scale production will depend on safe and cost-effective systems for extraction, compression, storage and handling. Innovations in drilling techniques, sealing materials, and surface infrastructure will be critical to achieving technical reliability and cost control.

To unlock investment, detailed pre-feasibility and feasibility studies are essential to evaluate geological potential, infrastructure needs, project economics and environmental impact.

Artificial intelligence can support these efforts by predicting gas composition

White hydrogen forms naturally through geological processes and is stored in subsurface reservoirs. It does not require carbon-intensive production, offering a low-emission alternative suitable for industrial use, mobility systems, and export.

profiles, refining subsurface models, and designing more effective separation processes. Combined with techno-economic modelling, life cycle assessment, and geospatial analysis, these tools will enhance decision-making and reduce investment risks.

Academic institutions such as Sultan Qaboos University can play a central role in advancing white hydrogen development through interdisciplinary research and curriculum innovation.

Research platforms like the Oil and Gas Research Centre and the Sustainable Energy Research Centre can foster collaboration across petroleum engineering, chemical engineering, earth sciences and environmental science.

Priority research areas in white hydrogen include techno-economic feasibility studies, sustainability assessment, advanced gas separation techniques, subsurface hydrogen migration, AI-assisted gas composition prediction and geospatial resource mapping.

These efforts can help shape regulatory frameworks, guide pilot project design and support evidence-based investment planning.

At the same time, modernising academic programmes through specialised elective courses in white hydrogen systems, energy geoscience and techno-economic analysis can help prepare a skilled workforce to meet the demands of this emerging sector.

How long-duration energy storage is powering a renewable future



NAJAH
AL RIYAMI

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

As the world races to install more renewable energy, one question lingers in the background: What happens when the sun isn’t shining or the wind isn’t blowing?

In 2024, global renewable capacity additions hit a record 740 gigawatts, with solar power leading the charge. But while generation is booming, energy systems are still grappling with how to store that power reliably — and at scale.

The answer, increasingly, lies in long-duration energy storage (LDES) technologies that go far beyond lithium-ion. From molten salt to compressed air to next-gen thermal systems, LDES is reshaping the way we think about renewable power.

These systems aren’t just topping up the grid for a few hours; they’re designed to store clean energy for 10, 20, or even 100 hours, stabilising supply through nights, storms, and seasonal changes.

One of the most promising examples is Exowatt’s P3 system — a compact modular unit that captures solar heat and stores it thermally for round-the-clock power delivery.

Designed with high-consumption clients like data centres and industrial zones in mind, P3 can deliver dispatchable renewable energy for up to 24 hours, with zero combustion and minimal land use.

Other solutions, like Quidnet’s Geomechanical Pumped Storage, store pressure underground and return it as electricity months later — acting like a natural battery embedded in rock. While still in early deployment, these technologies are beginning to show that the renewable future isn’t just about production — but predictable availability.

In Oman, where sunlight is abundant and energy demand peaks during hot evenings, long-duration storage is emerging as a natural extension of the country’s clean energy ambitions.

Alongside its expanding portfolio of solar and green hydrogen projects, Oman is preparing for its first utility-scale storage initiatives.

Local firms like ONEIC and Takhzeen are advancing innovative technologies, including CO2-based energy storage, to enhance grid flexibility and accelerate decarbonisation. These early moves suggest that Oman is beginning to align renewable generation with the systems needed to deliver it — reliably, efficiently, and around the clock.

Long-duration storage also offers strong potential synergy with Oman’s emerging hydrogen economy. Excess solar power can be stored — or diverted into hydrogen production — during low-demand periods, creating a feedback loop between power and fuel that supports both resilience and export potential.

The world needs a new economics of water

AS African leaders gather in Cape Town for the African Water Investment Summit, there can be no equivocation: the world faces an unprecedented water crisis that demands a paradigm shift in how we value and govern our most precious resource.

The scale of the challenge is staggering. Over half the world’s food production now comes from areas experiencing declining freshwater supplies. Two-thirds of the global population faces water scarcity at least one month per year. More than 1,000 children under five die every day, on average, from water-related diseases.

And if current trends continue, high-income countries could see their GDP shrink by 8% by 2050, while lower-income countries (many in Africa) face losses of 10-15%. Yet this crisis also presents an extraordinary opportunity.

As South Africa assumes the G20 presidency (for which I have been appointed special adviser to President Cyril Ramaphosa), it can champion a new economics of water that treats the hydrological cycle as a global common good, rather than as the source of a commodity to be hoarded or traded.

The economic case for action is compelling. The International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa shows that every \$1 invested in climate-resilient water and sanitation delivers a return of \$7.

With Africa requiring an additional \$30 billion annually to meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on water security and sustainable sanitation, the financing gap is significant; but it is surmountable with the right strategy.

The Global Commission on the Economics of Water (which I co-chaired with Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the director-general of the World Trade Organization, Johan Rockström, the director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Singaporean President Tharman Shanmugaratnam) recently called for such a strategy.



Over half the world’s food production now comes from areas experiencing declining freshwater supplies.



MARIANA
MAZZUCATO

The writer is Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, Co-Chair of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, and Co-Chair of the Group of Experts to the G20 Taskforce for a Global Mobilization Against Climate Change.

Treating water as a global common good and adopting mission-oriented approaches to transform the crisis into an opportunity requires that we recognise three critical facts.

First, water connects us all — not just through visible rivers and lakes, but through atmospheric moisture flows that travel across continents.

Second, the water crisis is inseparable from climate change and biodiversity loss, each of which accelerates the others in a vicious cycle. And, third, water runs through every SDG, from food security and health to economic growth.

Yet too often, water investments follow the failed playbook of climate and development finance.

There is a tendency to derisk private capital without ensuring public returns; to fund projects without strategic direction; and to treat water as a technical problem, rather than a systemic challenge.

Such approaches risk creating water infrastructure that serves investors more than communities, exacerbates existing inequalities, and fails to address the interconnected nature of the water, climate and biodiversity crises.

This interconnectedness demands a new economic framework that aims to shape markets proactively rather than simply fixing failures after the fact.

We need to move from short-term cost-benefit thinking to long-term value creation, and that calls for

mission-oriented investments that shape markets for the common good.

Missions require clear goals — like ensuring that no child dies from unsafe water by 2030. Once goals are established, all financing can be aligned with them through cross-sectoral approaches spanning agriculture, energy, manufacturing, and digital infrastructure.

Rather than picking sectors or technologies, the point is to find willing partners across all industries to tackle shared challenges.

Such mission-oriented investments can also lead to economic diversification, creating new export opportunities and development pathways.

Consider Bolivia’s approach to lithium extraction. Rather than simply exporting raw materials, the country is developing strategies to avoid the traditional “resource curse” by building domestic battery-production capabilities and participating directly in the energy transition.

In doing so, it is converting its resource wealth into innovation capacity, strengthening value chains, and creating new export markets for higher-value activities.

As matters stand, more than \$700 billion per year is channelled into water and agriculture subsidies that often incentivise overuse and pollution.

By redirecting these resources toward water-efficient agriculture and ecosystem restoration, with clear conditions attached, we could transform the economics of water overnight.

To that end, public development banks can provide patient capital for water infrastructure, while requiring private partners to reinvest profits in watershed protection. Africa is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation. Its vast supply of groundwater remains largely untapped, with 255 million urban inhabitants living above known supplies.

Combined with affordable solar power, these supplies present an opportunity to revolutionise agriculture. © Project Syndicate

BUSINESS

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUG 12

THE Government Transformation and Sustainable Leadership Conference, organised by the Ministry of Labour as part of Labour Forum 2025, concluded at Millennium Resort Salalah on Tuesday with a four-pillar road map to strengthen labour-market governance, build national skills and entrepreneurship, accelerate digital public services; and share outcomes via an interactive platform.

The forum urged tighter labour-market governance through broader partnerships with employers, sectoral committees and academia, alongside a review of legislation to enable flexible, inclusive employment policies that can adapt to change. It also called for

SALALAH FORUM ENDS WITH FOUR-PILLAR PLAN
FOR JOBS, SKILLS AND SMART GOVERNMENT



empowering employment-governance committees with clearer mandates and capacity-building to diagnose challenges and propose solutions.

On competencies and entrepreneurship, participants recommended specialised training for graduates and Omani talent focused on green and digital transformation, improving the start-up ecosystem, easing procedures

and finance for self-employment and creating platforms to showcase youth success stories linked to labour-market strategies.

For digital transformation, the road map prioritised investment in digital infrastructure, wider use of electronic authentication and e-signatures and upskilling leaders and staff in digital fields by embedding these skills in human-resources development. The forum further recommended widening insurance coverage to include optional categories in the informal sector to protect against occupational injuries and diseases.

To sustain impact, the outcomes — presentations, documents and recommendations — would be made accessible through an interactive electronic platform to support knowledge sharing and practical application.

CLASSIFIEDS

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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

URGENT HIRING
Project Manager
Requirements:
■ Bachelor in Eng./BSc. Eng/B tech. Eng. (4-year program).
■ 15 years of experience in the same role.
■ Experience in planning of pipe laying, road and infrastructure projects.
■ Building experience will be an added advantage.
■ Having PMP will be added advantage.
Underwater Inspector
Requirements:
■ Minimum Higher Secondary Education.
■ Shall have 10 years of experience in harbour construction.
■ Proficiency in English.
Send your CV to:
muscatproject4@gmail.com

WAREHOUSE FOR RENT
STORES for rent 18 Nov St, Ghubrah, 200m, 300m,400m suitable for all commercial use.
Contact: 92470065/92408308

SIT. WANTED
EXPERIENCED Indian Female dentist with strong clinical and administrative background. Actively seeking any suitable role in the medical, dental or healthcare field, including insurance coordination and medical scribing. Holding a valid Oman Resident Card. Available for immediate joining. Ph:79424264, Email: nancydas055@gmail.com

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

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

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 female BSC graduate and Internship Python. Presently in family visa. Seeks suitable placement as admin. Contact: 94942510

Planning Engineer, PMP. Indian male 11 years experience in Construction Projects. Well versed with Primavera P6 Software, strong communication skills, Interpersonal skills, EDT Claims, Recovery schedules, project control. Having Omani Driving Licence. Contact: 78002582. Email: engineer4planning@gmail.com

SALE
Sale of components of Al Maabaila camp and stores. The components of Al Maabaila labour camp are for sale, including:
1. Mobile Houses (caravans)
2. Toilets
3. Doors
4. Electric Wires
5. Acs
6. Other Tools
You may make a visit to the camp in Al Maabaila for inspection purpose on next Wednesday
Kindly call 99207728 (Issam)

ANNOUNCEMENT
Accountant Required - Real Estate Company (Muscat)
A leading real estate company in Muscat is looking to hire an experienced Accountant.
Requirements:
-Minimum 10 years of experience in accounting, preferably in the real estate sector.
-Proficient in English and Arabic (spoken and written).
-Strong knowledge of accounting principles, financial reporting and ERP systems.
-Ability to manage receivables, payables, reconciliations and statutory compliance.
Salary: Commensurate with experience
Apply to : hr.jobs174@hotmail.com

SIT. WANTED
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

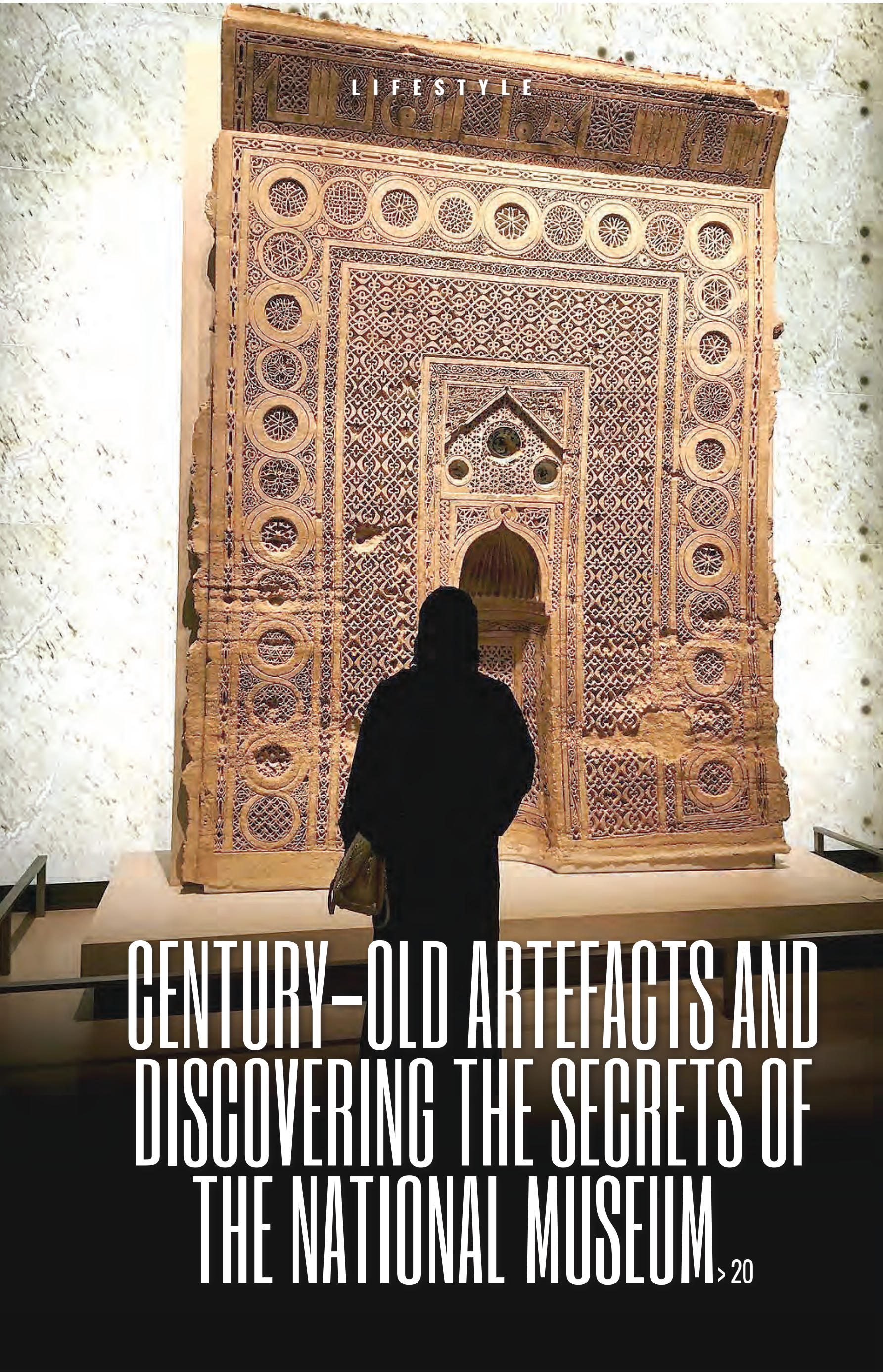
Chief accountant, MBA finance, 9+ years experience in financial statements, auditing, budgeting, VAT, tax, fixed assets, reconciliation, payroll. Seeking a full-time or part-time position in a senior role. Contact: akramhaniffa@yahoo.com / 93988825.

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

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

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

ART/LIFE



CENTURY-OLD ARTEFACTS AND DISCOVERING THE SECRETS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM₂₀

ENTERTAINMENT

Oasis gave most ‘ground-shaking’ show of last 20 years - seismic data



OASIS PROVIDED the most “ground-shaking” performance at Edinburgh’s Murrayfield Stadium when they last played there in 2009, according to analysis of seismic data.

The Gallagher brothers’ last Scottish gig has topped the chart for the most powerful seismic concert at the venue in the last 20 years, the British Geological Survey (BGS) said.

The June 2009 Oasis gig beat the Red Hot Chili Peppers in June 2004, Kings of Leon in June 2011, and Taylor Swift in June last year — when measuring the peak earth-shaking power of each event. The measurements were taken from a nearby seismic monitoring station, some 4 kilometres from the venue.

At peak power of 215.06 kW, the Oasis gig was more than twice as powerful as the next strongest one by the Red Hot Chili Peppers at 106.87 kW.

The rankings were revealed ahead of Oasis’s comeback tour arriving in the Scottish capital this weekend — meaning there could be another “shakemaker.”

The power output is not related to the volume of the band or the crowd; rather, it is the movement of fans jumping and dancing in time to the music, with the height of the jumping and the weight of the crowd also potential factors.

It suggests the current cohort of Oasis fans’ seismic output could perhaps be compared to that of previous years.

BGS seismologist Callum Harrison said: “In 2009, seismic signals generated by Oasis fans were consistent with a crowd energy of 215 kW at its peak — enough to power around 30 of the scooters featured on the iconic Be Here Now album cover.”

“Our network of sensors around the country is sensitive enough to pick up ground movement from a source miles away that may not be detectable to humans — and precise enough to register exact timestamps for when the events occur.”

“The peak energy reading was recorded around 8.30 pm on that June evening back in 2009, which correlates to the time the band first took the stage and performed Rock ‘N’ Roll Star, which couldn’t be more fitting in terms of topping our seismic music chart.”

The BGS maintains an archive of continuous ground motion recordings from seismic sensors around the country, dating back several decades.

Harrison added: “In this instance, we are only looking back over 20 years; however, geological processes occur over vast time scales that can be difficult for humans to comprehend.”

“Improving our understanding of historical earthquakes is an important part of BGS research in trying to understand and mitigate the seismic risk around the country.” — PA Media/dpa

QUICK FEATURES



LIFESTYLE

A Faberge Easter Egg honouring Tsarina Alexandra and her two daughters for their wartime efforts for the Red Cross is seen on display at the exhibition, *The Last Tsar: Blood and Revolution* at the Science Museum in London. —Reuters



ENTERTAINMENT

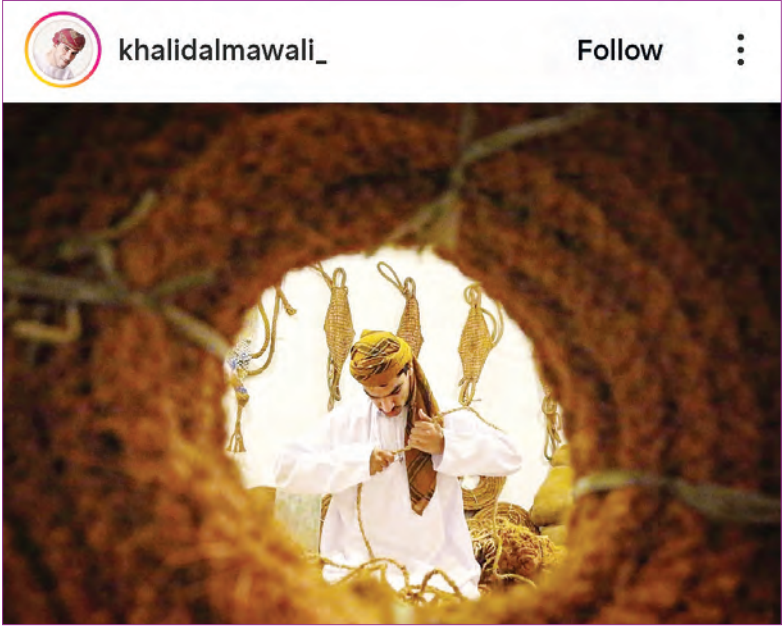
Pop singer Lady Gaga and her “Die with a Smile” collaborator Bruno Mars landed at the top of the list of nominees announced on Tuesday for this year’s MTV Video Music Awards. — Reuters



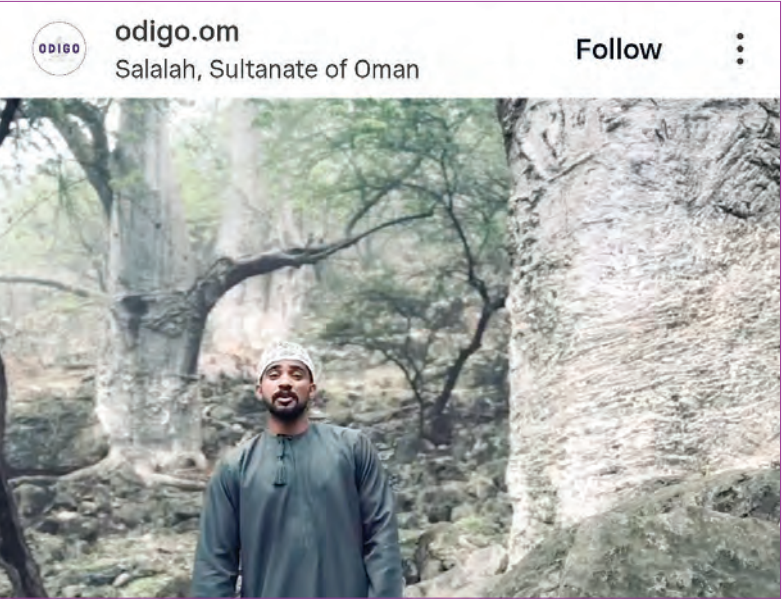
HERITAGE

A traditional dancer takes part in a festival to mark the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, in San Salvador, El Salvador. —AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



A Different Perspective



Visiting Salalah's Baobab Trees

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.

Prague zookeepers turn to puppets to parent baby vultures



ZOOKEEPERS feeding two baby vultures in Prague are using a hand puppet designed to look like the chicks' parents, a technique they hope will ensure the birds learn to identify with other vultures - not humans.

Staff at Prague Zoo had to start hand-feeding the lesser yellow-headed vultures when their parents stopped nesting. After using the approach with other birds, they quickly made a hand puppet that looks like an adult vulture's head.

"If we raised (the bird) in direct contact with humans, it would become imprinted on humans, and then it would be difficult to breed that individual within the species," said Antonin Vaidl, Prague Zoo's curator of bird breeding.

Human imprinting increases the risk of a chick struggling to build a relationship with a mate in adulthood. Hand puppets have previously been used with other bird species at the zoo including rhinoceros hornbills and Javan green magpies, with

their design reflecting distinctive features such as a large colourful beak. Prague is one of three European zoos to breed the lesser yellow-headed vulture, also known as the savannah vulture.

Vulture conservation is crucial for maintaining ecological balance. As natural scavengers, vultures efficiently consume carcasses, preventing the spread of diseases like rabies and anthrax. Their decline due to habitat loss, poisoning, and hunting has led to increased carcass decomposition times, encouraging disease transmission to humans and livestock. Protecting vultures helps sustain healthy ecosystems and supports public health by reducing zoonotic disease risks. Additionally, their role supports biodiversity and ecological stability. Conservation efforts ensure these vital birds continue to fulfil their ecological functions, highlighting their importance in natural waste management and disease control. — Reuters



Mexico City restaurant blends zero waste and ancient agriculture



NESTLED in a quiet corner in Mexico City's trendy Condesa neighbourhood sits the vine-strewn restaurant Baldío, or barren in English. It has become a draw for its zero-waste kitchen, which means that every scrap of food and leftovers is reused for other purposes.

The restaurant, which opened in 2024 and seats 52 people, is routinely packed since it was honoured in June with a Michelin Green Star for its innovative sustainability model. Baldío's owners say it is the first zero-waste restaurant in Mexico City.

Baldío offers Mexican food with a gourmet take, such as yellow corn tamal with fermented salsa and pickles, a Mexican sweet corn salad with smoked butter sauce and cured buffalo meat, and grilled sweet onions with grasshoppers and hibiscus dressing.

Pablo Usobiaga, one of Baldío's three co-founders, said the restaurant's name is a rejection of the idea that "control, efficiency and profitability" are the most important aspects of our lives. "It is a way of challenging the status quo of profitability and absolute control."

Fish remains are crafted into a

fermented fish sauce, fruit peels are fermented into a traditional Mexican fermented beverage, and onion scraps are fermented until they turn into a powder-like seasoning.

All of Baldío's ingredients are sourced within 125 miles (200 km) of the restaurant in an effort to reduce its carbon footprint. The majority come from an assortment of floating farms that sit atop an interweaving network of canals in southern Mexico City.

The floating farms, known as chinampas, were created a thousand years ago when Aztec farmers built fields on lakes so they could grow food year-round.

Usobiaga's brother, Lucio, started working with farmers in the area 15 years ago to help them preserve centuries-old agricultural practices, such as using special fermentation techniques and organic fertilisers.

As part of their weekly routine, Baldío's chefs travel to Xochimilco to meet with local farmers and explore the crops. Flowers are used in warm infusions and honey-based fermented drinks. The restaurant's menu changes every week, guided by the season and harvest.

Lucio said the restaurant requires a creative spirit to constantly adapt to the changing harvest. "What drives us in the end

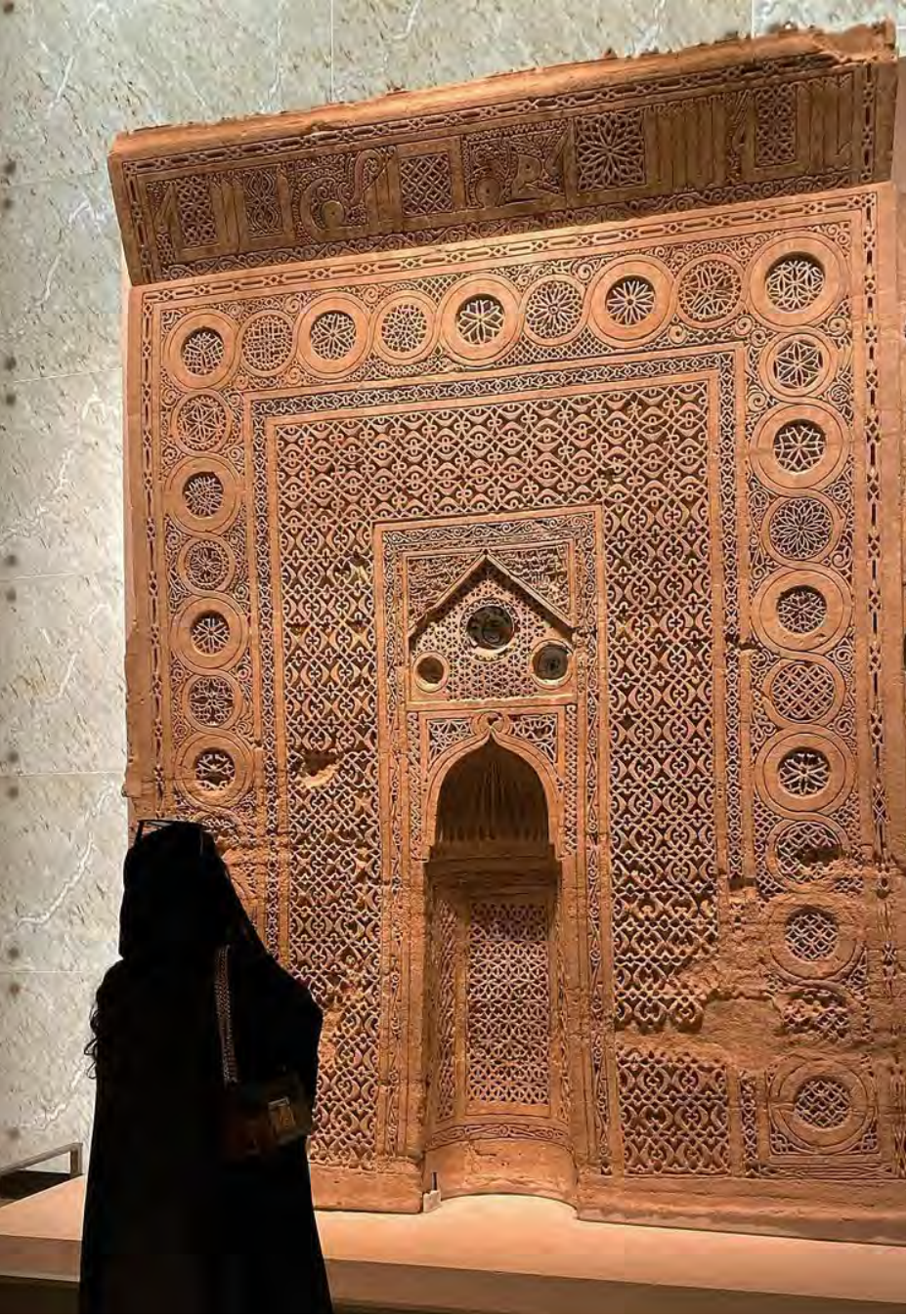
is this excitement about doing things this way," he said.

The zero waste concept is rapidly gaining popularity in the restaurant industry as consumers become more environmentally conscious. This trend focuses on minimising waste through sustainable practices like composting, recycling and sourcing ingredients responsibly.

Restaurants adopting zero waste principles aim to reduce their carbon footprint and promote eco-friendly operations, resonating with eco-aware diners. Additionally, rising awareness of climate change and resource depletion has heightened the demand for sustainable eating habits. Many establishments see zero waste as a competitive advantage, attracting customers who prioritise sustainability.

Innovative practices such as using food scraps creatively, eliminating single-use plastics, and partnering with local farms are becoming common. As consumers seek transparency and accountability from brands, zero waste in restaurants is not only an environmental imperative but also a strategic move towards social responsibility, making it an emerging trend shaping the future of food service. — Reuters

FEATURES



creating an environment that honours the country's historical roots while embracing the future. Inside, the exhibits are organised into thematic galleries, each offering an insight into Oman's geography, history and culture. From the first human settlements in the region to the flourishing trade routes that once linked Oman to Africa, Asia, and Europe, the museum narrates the story of Oman's evolution through well-curated collections.

One of the most memorable displays in the museum's extensive collection is the 'Sultan Qaboos Development Gallery' — a tribute to Oman's modernisation under the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. Here, visitors witness the transformational journey of Oman from a desert landscape to a flourishing nation, with exhibits detailing infrastructure, education and cultural reforms. This gallery exemplifies Oman's growth and

the Esmeralda Ship Bell from the Portuguese era, cast in copper alloy in 1498 CE, which provides insights into Oman's maritime prowess. Similarly, the array of Amulets, or At-Taswirah, dating from the 14th century AH (20th century CE), offers a captivating look at cultural practices linked to protection and spirituality, especially among Omani children.

Another highlight is the Sultan Qaboos bin Said Throne Chair, handcrafted from wood and velvet in 1970. With its intricate carvings and national emblem, it embodies the continuity of Oman's monarchy and governance traditions. Complementing the artefacts are beautifully crafted jewellery, such as intricate necklaces and amulets, which reveal the craftsmanship and symbolism woven into Oman's cultural fabric.

To enhance their visit, tourists can opt for various guided tours. The general tours — priced at RO 10



resilience, making it a must-see for those interested in contemporary history.

Among the museum's many artefacts, several exceptional pieces stand out and should feature on every visitor's checklist. For instance, the Lion of Sohar, originating from China's Yuan Dynasty and dating back to the 10th century CE, is a glazed porcelain piece that epitomises the historical trade links between Oman and Asia. The Lion's intricate craftsmanship reflects Oman's longstanding maritime history and its role as a trading hub.

Another remarkable artefact is the Greek-Style Incense Burner Holder from Samahram, Yemen, forged in the 1st century CE. Presented by the Office of the Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs, this bronze piece underscores the ancient trade networks that connected Oman to the wider world. Its significance lies not only in its craftsmanship but also in its testament to Oman's historical position as a crossroads of commerce and culture.

Oman's musical heritage is vividly represented by replicas of traditional instruments like the Qabbūs and Tambūra. The Qabbūs, a stringed instrument with roots in South Arabian civilisation, is typically made from a single piece of wood with strings made from animal intestines, played with a pick made of bull horn. Its sound resonates in the music and rituals of Dhofar, reflecting the region's cultural richness. Similarly, the Tambūra, believed to date back to ancient Mesopotamian civilisation, offers a glimpse into the musical traditions of Sur, with its characteristic six strings and bowl-shaped body.

For those intrigued by ancient craftsmanship, the museum displays a traditional wind instrument — the Al Bargam — made from the horn of an oryx or ibex. Though not melodic in the conventional sense, its use in poetry recitals and ceremonial contexts makes it a distinctive symbol of Oman's oral traditions.

Furthermore, the museum's collection includes



per group — offer 90-minute insights into the entire collection and are perfect for families or small groups. For a more bespoke experience, private customised tours after working hours at RO 100 per person, include authentic Omani hospitality and a chance to explore the museum's back-of-house facilities, providing a deeper understanding of Oman's cultural preservation efforts.

To fully immerse oneself in Oman's history, private tours can be arranged, providing tailored experiences that highlight specific interests and collections. These personalised excursions allow visitors to explore at their own pace, ensuring an intimate and comprehensive encounter with Oman's heritage. The museum's staff and guides are well-versed in Oman's history and artefacts, providing engaging narrations that bring each exhibit to life.

Planning a visit to the National Museum in Muscat is more than just a trip — it's an educational journey through Oman's intricate history, diverse cultures and enduring traditions. With expertly curated galleries, priceless artefacts and the opportunity for personalised tours, this institution stands out as the ultimate destination for anyone eager to understand Oman's identity beyond the surface.

In addition to viewing the treasures, visitors can be assured of a memorable experience by taking advantage of the private tour options. These guided visits, complete with traditional Omani hospitality, ensure that every guest leaves with a deeper appreciation of Oman's cultural fabric and a new perspective on its past. Whether your interest lies in ancient trade relics, musical instruments, or royal memorabilia, there's something in the National Museum for everyone.

CENTURY-OLD
ARTEFACTS AND
DISCOVERING
THE SECRETS OF
THE NATIONAL
MUSEUM

BY YERU EBUEN

THE BEST way to truly understand a country is through its historical and cultural artefacts, which serve as windows into its legacy, traditions and identity. Visiting museums offers an immersive experience that reveals the stories behind a nation's development, its art, and its people. In Muscat, one of the most compelling destinations to delve into Oman's rich history is the National Museum — a treasure trove that vividly brings the country's past to life.

Established in 2016, the Oman National Museum was comprehensively designed to serve as a centre for preserving and exhibiting Oman's diverse cultural heritage. The museum's primary purpose is to foster national pride and promote understanding of Oman's history and traditions on an international level. Strategically positioned to tell Oman's complete story, it is a place where visitors can explore thousands of artefacts, from ancient relics to contemporary displays.

The museum's architecture itself is a striking feature — an interplay of modern design and traditional Islamic motifs —