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FAJR 04:38 AM

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BARCA HIT VALENCIA FOR SIX TO MOVE SECOND

SHORT TAKES

HM’S GREETINGS TO PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Dr Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo of the United Mexican States on his country’s Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to Mexico in achieving further progress and accomplishments. His Majesty also wished the bilateral relations of cooperation to further growth and expansion in various fields that serve mutual benefits.

SHABAB OMAN II DOCKS IN TANGIER ON RETURN



The Royal Navy of Oman’s (RNO) vessel Shabab Oman II arrived at the Port of Tangier, Morocco, as part of its return journey from the seventh international voyage, ‘Glories of the Seas’ 2025. Khalid bin Salem Bamkhalef, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Morocco, along with several ambassadors from friendly and sisterly countries and members of the diplomatic corps, visited the ship during its stopover.

AL MUDHAIBI CITY ATTRACTS 4 NEW PROJECTS THIS YEAR

Al Mudhaibi Industrial City — operated by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) — garnered five new projects during the first half of 2025. Of these, four projects — worth over RO 1 million in total investments — were prepped for development on a combined area of 14,000 sqm. This brings the total number of projects localised to date in Al Mudhaibi Industrial City to 12, with an aggregate investment value of RO 11.6 million. The focus of their activities include the oil and gas, foodstuff, construction, electrical materials and home furnishing. According to Eng Said bin Khalfan al Shabibi, Acting Director-General of Al Mudhaibi Industrial City, infrastructure work on the industrial hub is expected to start within two months. SEE P13

Hold Israel accountable for aggression on Qatar

Assigned by HM, Sayyid Shihab attends Summit

ON BEHALF of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, headed the Sultanate of Oman’s delegation participating in the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit in the Qatari capital, Doha. The summit was attended by Their Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses, the heads of the participating delegations. Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, led the welcoming party for HH Sayyid Shihab upon his arrival at the venue of convening the summit.

At the outset of the summit, HH Sayyid Shihab conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, along with his deep appreciation for the efforts of the State of Qatar in hosting the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit taking place in Doha at an exceptionally critical moment in world history.

The text of the HH Sayyid Shihab’s speech reads as follows: “It is my honour to begin by conveying the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, along with his deep appreciation for the efforts of our sisterly nation, the State of Qatar, in hosting this emergency summit at an exceptionally critical moment in world history. Your Majesties, Excellencies, Highnesses and distinguished attendees, the treacherous attack that targeted the sisterly State of Qatar has made clear the gravity of the phase we are experiencing and the expanding scope of the war being waged by Israel in our region – in disregard of international law, legitimacy, and the sanctity of innocent lives. The targeting of Qatar, one of the foremost nations working tirelessly towards de-escalation and the revival of the peace process in Palestine, only distances us further from the noble goal we all seek: a just and comprehensive peace that fulfils the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The Sultanate of Oman



HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, headed the Sultanate of Oman’s delegation at the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit in Doha.

Summit rejects Israeli actions

The final statement of the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit held in Doha affirmed the organisation’s absolute support for the sisterly State of Qatar, its security, stability, sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens, and its unified support for it in confronting the Israeli aggression.

The statement noted that the absence of international accountability and the international community’s silence regarding repeated Israeli violations have encouraged Israel to persist in its attacks and flagrant violations of international law and UN resolutions, perpetuating a policy of impunity and weakening the international justice system. This

aggression poses a direct threat to regional and international peace and security.

The statement stressed that the brutal Israeli aggression against the sisterly State of Qatar, and the continuation of aggressive practices, including crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, blockade, starvation, and expansionist and political settlement activities, pose a direct threat to security and peace in the region and undermine the chances of achieving peace and peaceful coexistence.

The statement condemned in the strongest terms the cowardly and illegal attack launched by Israel on a residential neighbourhood in the Qatari capital, Doha,... **TURN TO P2**

strongly condemns this reprehensible aggression and affirms its full solidarity with the State of Qatar – its leadership, government, and people. We emphasise here that the security of Qatar is an integral part of the security of the entire Gulf region, and indeed of the entire Arab and Islamic nation.

Yet our duty today extends beyond condemnation. It requires tangible and practical steps, particularly on the legal and diplomatic fronts. We must take action at the United Nations, the Security Council, and the General Assembly. We must employ the tools of international law to hold Israel accountable for its crimes and violations, and we must work together to halt this dangerous trajectory that threatens international peace as a whole.

TURN TO P2

Muttrah Cable Car project to be ready next year

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

Work on Muttrah Cable Car project has reached an implementation rate of 71 per cent. The installation of equipment has begun recently at the project which is expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2026.

The project constitutes a prominent addition that reflects the Sultanate of Oman’s identity and a new tourist icon that blends history with modernity, enhancing

Muttrah’s position as a prominent tourist destination. The project spans a 3-km route and consists of three main stations, each with its own unique features and advantages, making the journey an exceptional experience that combines natural beauty with the splendour of the urban landscape.

The Muttrah Port Station is the project’s first gateway, welcoming visitors from the wilayat’s entrance and tourists arriving by cruise ship. The Muttrah Port Station offers various services for visitors and



The Muttrah Port Station is the project’s first gateway.

quality rental spaces. The Mountain Top Station (Rayah Peak) is the largest in terms of space, services, and distinctive panoramic views. It will have an open-air concert stage, a giant swing, and a hydraulic winter slide, in addition to other facilities that include recreational activities, international restaurants and distinctive brands. The third station, Hay Al Ward, features sea views and spacious balconies overlooking international restaurants and a dancing fountain, adding a distinctive aesthetic dimension, as

well as multi-use rental spaces. The project is being implemented in accordance with the highest international safety and efficiency standards. It is expected to be a major catalyst for stimulating tourism and the economy in Muscat Governorate in general, by supporting the business environment and providing new investment opportunities, particularly for small and medium enterprises. The developer is preparing to offer rental spaces to investors soon.

OMAN

SUMMIT REJECTS ISRAELI AGGRESSION

FROM PAGE 1

...which housed the residences of negotiating delegations, a number of schools, nurseries and diplomatic missions. The attack resulted in the deaths of martyrs, including a Qatari citizen, and injured a number of civilians.

The statement affirmed support for the efforts made by Arab countries, primarily the State of Qatar, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United States of America, to stop the aggression on the Gaza Strip.

The statement expressed its categorical rejection of attempts to justify this aggression under any pretext, considering it a blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter, and a direct attempt to undermine international efforts to halt the aggression on the Gaza Strip and reach a just and comprehensive political solution that ends the occupation, ensures an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people, and safeguards their legitimate rights.

The statement affirmed its complete rejection of repeated Israeli threats to target Qatar or any Arab or Islamic country, considering them a dangerous provocation and escalation that threatens international peace and security.

It welcomed the decision of the Council of the League of Arab States at the ministerial level regarding the “Shared Vision for Security and Cooperation in the Region,” stressing the concept of collective security and a shared destiny for Arab and Islamic countries, and the need to unite to confront common challenges. The statement condemned any Israeli attempts to displace Palestinians from their lands occupied in 1967 under any pretext or name, considering this a crime against humanity and a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. — ONA

GCC members express solidarity with Qatar

ON behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, participated in the proceedings of the Extraordinary Session of the GCC Supreme Council regarding the Israeli attack on the State of Qatar. The summit was attended by Their Majesties and Highnesses, the GCC leaders, and was held in the Qatari capital, Doha.

The Extraordinary Session examined the latest developments, namely the Israeli attack on the State of Qatar and its serious repercussions on regional security and stability. The summit reaffirmed the unified GCC position in support of Qatar’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It emphasised the necessity of enhancing solidarity and joint action to safeguard the security and supreme interests of the GCC member states and to contribute to the protection of regional and international peace and security. The Extraordinary Session discussed political, economic, and security developments in the region, along with regional and international issues of common interest.

The Extraordinary Session was chaired by Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar. Representing the Omani side was Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister.

Earlier, HH Sayyid Shihab and his



accompanying delegation were welcomed upon their arrival at Hamad International Airport by Saoud bin Abdulrahman al

Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs of the State of Qatar. — ONA

Oman condemns Israeli attack



HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, participated in the proceedings of the Extraordinary Session of the GCC Supreme Council. — ONA

FROM PAGE 1

The Sultanate of Oman believes that the silence of the international community in the face of these violations fuels impunity and encourages further aggression. Therefore, we call on this gathering to mark the beginning of a serious and unified effort – one that translates Arab and Islamic solidarity into clear positions and tangible pressure to end the occupation, halt the assaults, and restore the authority of international legitimacy.

Your Majesties, Excellencies, Highnesses and distinguished attendees, our meeting today serves to affirm that our Arab and Islamic nation is capable of confronting challenges when it stands united. We are certain that unity is the optimal path to safeguarding the future of our peoples and protecting our nations.

Peace be upon you, and God’s mercy and blessings.”

Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, inaugurated the summit’s proceedings with a speech in which he emphasised that the Israeli aggression against Qatar had shocked the entire world and deliberately targeted its mediation efforts concerning the war in Gaza.

Shaikh Tamim noted

that Qatar is a nation of mediation and has been making strenuous efforts for two years to reach a ceasefire agreement in Gaza and end the deadly war being waged against the Palestinian people. He underscored that Israel not only rejects peace with its neighbours but also seeks to impose its will upon them. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), voiced in his address his strong condemnation of Israel’s blatant attack on the State of Qatar and endorsed any measures it takes to protect its security and sovereignty. He called on the United Nations Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and hold Israel accountable for its crimes.

Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the Arab League, affirmed that the Israeli aggression against Qatari sovereignty exceeded all bounds and violated every humanitarian principle. He stated that the absence of accountability and impunity only emboldens Israeli leaders to continue their crimes.

The summit examined measures to respond to the heinous Israeli strike that targeted high-ranking Hamas officials on Qatari soil, its grave consequences, and its flagrant breach

of sovereignty, which threatens regional stability. Delegates worked to develop a coordinated response to this act of aggression while also strengthening collective Arab and Islamic cooperation to address ongoing security and political challenges throughout the region.

The summit also discussed means to back efforts for a ceasefire in Gaza and the pivotal role played by Qatari mediation in this context, along with reaffirming the central importance of the Palestinian cause and the necessity of reaching a just and comprehensive solution in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Omani delegation accompanying the Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs included Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister; Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance; Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs; Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information; Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs; and Sayyid Ammar bin Abdullah al Busaidy, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Qatar. — ONA

إعلان مزاد إلكتروني

E-Auction Announcement

Announcement of an Online Auction for the Sale of Government Assets

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announces the organization of an online auction for the sale of government assets through the website of Safqa Auctions (www.safqauctions.om), in accordance with the following details:

ITEMS FOR SALE	INSPECTION LOCATION	INSPECTION DATE & TIME	AUCTION DATE
Fuel Tanks, Pumps, Generators, Furniture, Electronic Devices, Iron Poles and Pipes	Sultan Qaboos Port (Wilayat Muttrah)	25 September 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Opens: 29 September 2025, 8:00 a.m. Closes: 30 September 2025, 12:00 p.m.

Terms and Conditions:

- Registration through the website (www.safqauctions.om) is required.
- A refundable security deposit of OMR 5,000 (five thousand Omani Rials) must be paid electronically via the website (refundable in case of non-purchase). Site inspection will only be permitted after payment of the deposit.
- The buyer must settle the payment for the purchased assets via electronic transfer through the website within 48 working hours after the auction is awarded.
- A 5% Value Added Tax (VAT) and a 2% commission fee will be added to the final purchase price.
- The buyer must remove the purchased assets within two weeks (**extendable**) from the date of award. A penalty of 5% per day will be imposed for any delay. The Ministry shall not be held responsible for any loss or damage to the items after the award.
- All items are sold as is, and no returns, reductions, or appeals will be accepted.
- Neither the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology nor Safqa Auctions shall bear any responsibility in the event that the image or description of an item does not match the actual product. They also do not guarantee the functionality or technical condition of the items. Buyers must verify the items personally during the designated inspection period.
- The company is not obliged to award the auction to the highest bidder if the offered price is deemed unsuitable.
- The buyer is responsible for cleaning and clearing the site of any debris or waste, as well as leveling the ground. No requests for extensions or underground connections will be accepted.
- Buyers of fuel tanks must dismantle and remove them without conducting any underground excavation for electrical or fuel/water pipeline connections. Buyers must comply with the health and safety requirements of Marafiq Company. The Ministry and Safqa Auctions bear no responsibility for any penalties incurred in case of non-compliance.**
- Customs fees, if requested by the Royal Oman Police (Directorate General of Customs), must be paid by the buyer. The Ministry and Safqa Auctions bear no responsibility for this matter.**
- The security deposit will be forfeited in the following cases:
 - Failure to pay for the purchased assets within the specified period.
 - Failure to remove the purchased assets within the specified period.

Notes:

- All items are sold in their current condition.
- The company reserves the right to cancel the auction without providing reasons.

For more information, please visit the website (www.safqauctions.om) or contact the following numbers: **96916169 / 91798145 / 94443325**.

For inspection during official working hours, please contact: **91798145 / 94443325**.

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SHORTTAKES



OMAN, UAE INK MOU ON PUBLIC FUND OVERSIGHT

MUSCAT: The State Audit Institution and the UAE Accountability Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing and developing cooperation in the field of public fund oversight and anti-corruption.

This took place during the meeting of Shaikh Ghosn bin Hilal al Alawi, Chairman of the State Audit Institution (SAI), with Humaid Obaid Abushibs, Chairman of the UAE Accountability Authority, at the Authority’s headquarters in Abu Dhabi.

The MoU reflects the mutual commitment of both sides to uphold the principles of transparency, integrity and accountability, while strengthening their roles in protecting public funds and supporting the path of sustainable development in both brotherly countries.

The MoU focused on enhancing cooperation in the exchange of knowledge and expertise regarding best practices, standards and national technologies in use.

It also outlined organising joint discussion forums, conferences, lectures and relevant workshops, in addition to promoting the exchange of experiences related to audit manuals, methodologies and strategic plans adopted by both parties. — ONA

STATISTICS PANEL HOLDS FIRST MEETING OF 2025



The meeting laid emphasis on advancing national statistical work

MUSCAT: The Permanent Committee for Statistics convened its first meeting of 2025 on Monday under the chairmanship of Dr Khalifa bin Abdullah al Barwani, Chief Executive Officer of the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), with the participation of committee members representing various government entities involved in the statistical sector.

The committee discussed the agenda’s items, including follow-up on the implementation of decisions issued by the previous meeting held on September 30, 2024.

Members also deliberated on a proposal to introduce a new statistical indicator, the Unit Value Index of Exports and Imports, as well as a presentation on the Office for the Management of the National Statistics and Information Strategy 2025–2030. The meeting further addressed the results of the 2024 Arrivals and Departures Survey, the Oman Economic Performance Index as a tool for analysing and evaluating economic trends, and the use of open data as a driver of digital transformation and decision-making support. — ONA

FUTURE FUND OMAN BACKS STARTUPS, SMES

SALALAH: The Dhofar branch of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with Oman Investment Authority, on Monday organised the second awareness meeting for the Future Fund Oman.

The meeting aims to promote economic diversification, support innovation in the local market, and contribute to the growth of startups and innovative projects.

The meeting covered the mechanisms for registration and the requirements for targeted companies, which include submitting financial statements, five-year employment plans, and a feasibility study.

It was noted that 90 per cent of the fund is allocated to support large-scale projects, while 10 per cent is dedicated to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with the goal of enhancing their market value and ensuring their sustainability.

The meeting included a visual



The second awareness meeting for Future Fund Oman was held in Salalah

presentation that provided a general overview of the fund, covering its target sectors, the establishment and early growth phases, fund governance, and the project selection mechanism.

A discussion panel, featuring several specialists from the Future Fund Oman, addressed various topics. These included the differences between SMEs, startups, and venture capital; the challenges and obstacles to investing in startups and SMEs; and promising investment opportunities within the sector.

It is worth noting that the fund’s objectives are to boost the economy, empower the private sector, support SMEs, encourage venture capital, contribute to economic diversification, engage in investment partnerships, handle government financing projects, and attract foreign investment. — ONA

Oman backs UPU Congress resolutions on Palestine

THE Sultanate of Oman has welcomed the adoption of a series of resolutions by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress, held on Monday in Dubai, UAE.

These resolutions reinforce the rights of the Palestinian people to postal services. Oman emphasised that this step embodies the spirit of justice and fairness and reflects international solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The conference approved three main pillars, which were supported by Oman and a number of other member states. These included: Upgrading the membership of the State of Palestine in the Union, ensuring it has equal rights and obligations as other member states; Full implementation of previous UPU agreements and resolutions regarding Palestine’s right to postal exchange via the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; and providing technical and financial support to rebuild postal infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.



Sayyid Nasr bin Badr al Busaidy, Chief Postmaster General at Oman Post, at the conference

In Oman’s address to the conference, Sayyid Nasr bin Badr al Busaidy, Chief Postmaster General at Oman Post, affirmed that the UPU was founded on the principle of delivering mail to every person without

discrimination or exclusion. He pointed out that the Palestinian people are still deprived of this fundamental human right.

He stated, “The Palestinian postal service, which is supposed to be a bridge for communication, has become a scene of suffering: offices are demolished, workers are targeted, letters do not arrive, and families wait for news and medicine.”

He clarified that the strength of the Union lies in its justice and equality for all peoples, and he called on the international community and conference members to take a clear stance that restores the Palestinian postal service’s role as a bridge for communication and hope.

Oman commended the supportive positions shown by the participants, affirming that these historic resolutions not only secure the rights of the Palestinian postal service, but also strengthen the role of the UPU as a UN organisation that guarantees comprehensive postal services and humanitarian access. — ONA

Taqah launches Youth Development Forum

QASIM AL MAASHANI
TAQAH, SEPT 15

The 2nd Youth Development Forum opened in Taqah on Monday, September 15, under the theme ‘Empower Today... Lead Tomorrow.’

Organised by the office of the Wali of Taqah, the weeklong forum is also backed by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Dhofar Branch) and a number of public and private-sector partners.

Around 175 participants — jobseekers, entrepreneurs and employees — are enrolled in accredited training tracks that include ‘Artificial Intelligence: Boundless Opportunities’, led by Dr Noha al Daroudi; ‘Cybersecurity: Protecting Your Digital Self’, led by Dr Abdullah al Zawamri; and ‘Oman Vision 2040: Aligning Roles to Deliver the Vision’, led by Dr Ali Hubais.

The forum also features youth project showcases and policy dialogues bringing



The forum seeks to invest in young people’s potential. — Picture by Yumna al Maamari

together agencies responsible for youth affairs with leading entrepreneurs and initiatives from Taqah and the wider Dhofar Governorate, aimed at boosting economic participation and developing entrepreneurial capabilities.

Asmaa al Maashani, from the Planning and Wilayat Development Department at the Office of the Wali of Taqah,

said the forum “is a practical platform to invest in young people’s potential as Oman’s true wealth,’ noting that the theme encapsulates ‘a clear vision for a future built on innovation and knowledge.’

She added that the training and side sessions ‘build skills aligned with labour-market needs and help turn ideas into tangible outcomes that support

the growth of Taqah, Dhofar and Oman,’ in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The event is designed to align youth skills with future requirements through structured learning, mentoring and exposure to real-world projects, reinforcing the role of Taqah as a hub for community-driven development and opportunity creation.

SHORT TAKES



Annie Melinda led an AI workshop for ladies of the Indian community

ISC OMAN HOSTS AI WORKSHOP TO BOOST DIGITAL SKILLS

MUSCAT: The Indian Social Club (ISC) Oman successfully hosted a two-day workshop titled ‘Empowering Women Through AI’ on September 12 and 13, exclusively for the ladies of the Indian community.

The programme, led by corporate trainer and executive coach Annie Melinda from The Crossroads International, offered a comprehensive introduction to Artificial Intelligence, equipping participants with essential skills to thrive in today’s digital era.

Over the two days, participants progressed from foundational concepts on Day 1 to intermediate applications on Day 2. Key topics included ‘What is AI?’, ‘AI Tools That Make Life Easier’, ‘Branding and Marketing Mastery with AI’, ‘Creating Content like a Pro with AI’ and ‘The Future of Work and AI’.

With more than 17 years of experience in business management, training and organisational development, Annie brought her expertise and engaging teaching style to the sessions. Her interactive approach ensured that participants not only understood complex concepts, but also learned how to apply them in practical ways.

The workshop received an enthusiastic response, with attendees expressing gratitude for Annie’s ability to simplify AI and make the sessions both useful and enjoyable. The event’s coordinator praised Annie for delivering such a dynamic workshop and extended thanks to Babu Rajendran, Chairman of the Indian Social Club Oman, for his constant encouragement. Appreciation was also conveyed to Manjeet Kaur Parmar, ISC Manager, for her teamwork and dedication, along with the entire ISC support team.

RUSTAQ HOSTS CONFERENCE ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY



The conference brought together doctors, nurses, nutritionists and health educators

AL RUSTAQ: The First Al Batinah South Nutrition Conference opened at Al Rustaq Wali’s Office Hall under the theme ‘Obesity in Children: From Medical Interventions to Community Support.’

Organised by the Directorate-General of Health Services in Al Batinah South Governorate and accredited by the Oman Medical Specialty Board, the conference brought together around 100 doctors, nurses, nutritionists and health educators.

The event highlighted childhood obesity as a growing health concern, driven by lifestyle changes such as high-calorie diets, sugar-sweetened beverages and reduced physical activity.

Experts noted that addressing obesity early can significantly reduce future healthcare costs.

The conference aimed to deepen understanding of the biology and complications of childhood obesity, enhance healthcare professionals’ skills in treatment and prevention, and promote effective nutritional assessment methods. It also explored behavioural interventions, physical activity, medical treatments, and the psychological and social impacts of obesity.

Held under the auspices of Dr Yahya bin Sulaiman al Nadabi, Wali of Al Rustaq, the conference featured scientific lectures and working papers that examined obesity from multiple perspectives. — ONA

‘SOHAR RECOVERY CENTRE’ PROJECT WINS BEST QUALITY AWARD

DUBAI: The Sohar Recovery Centre project has won the ‘Best Quality Recovery Award’ for a standard project that offers advanced services in the treatment and rehabilitation of drug and psychotropic substance addicts.

The award was announced at the 5th Middle East and North Africa Public-Private Partnership Forum (5th PPP Forum 2025) held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Sohar Recovery Centre project, which forms part of a public-private partnership programme overseen by the Ministry of Finance, seeks to encourage the private sector to invest in infrastructure projects and public services by providing innovative



The award was announced at the 5th PPP Forum in Dubai

services and achieving sustainable growth.

In February 2025, the Ministry of Health signed an agreement with Salwa Healthcare company to operate, expand and run the new recovery centre in the Wilayat of Suhar.

The agreement was aimed to upgrade the facility into a centre of excellence that is capable of offering top quality treatment and rehabilitation services to drug and psychotropic substance addicts.

The agreement affirms the company’s commitment to operate the units of the centre which, in its first phase, provides 30 rehabilitation beds and a 25-bed detoxification unit. — ONA

SQU, Australia delegation eye academic partnership

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

SULTAN Qaboos University (SQU) reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening academic and cultural collaboration on Sunday as it welcomed a high-level delegation from the Council for Australian-Arab Relations (CAAR).

The delegation, led by Prof Hala Zreiqat, a renowned biomedical engineer, and Prof Ali Abbas, an expert in engineering and innovation, was received by HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of SQU.

Discussions focused on deepening cooperation in education, research and cultural exchange, underscoring the shared goal of advancing sustainable development and innovation.

Sayyid Dr Fahd stressed SQU’s role in Oman’s transition to a knowledge-based economy, in line with Oman Vision 2040, and praised the achievements of SQU graduates who are contributing to the nation’s progress across various sectors.

Prof Zreiqat highlighted the power of education and research in shaping future generations, while Prof Abbas



Talks focused on deepening cooperation in education, research and cultural exchange

SQU and Australian delegation stressed the value of universities in preparing youth for leadership roles in a rapidly changing world

emphasised Australia’s knowledge economy model, grounded in entrepreneurship, sustainability and cultural preservation.

Both underscored the value of universities in preparing youth for leadership roles in a rapidly changing world.

The meeting also explored opportunities for joint research, faculty exchanges and student mobility, reflecting optimism for stronger bilateral ties

between Omani and Australian institutions.

By fostering global partnerships, SQU continues to strengthen its role as a hub for knowledge creation and dissemination, positioning itself as a leader in higher education and research in the region. The visit with CAAR set the stage for deeper collaboration rooted in innovation, sustainability and cultural understanding.

Ibri Hospital sets benchmark for specialised care

IBRI: Ibri Reference Hospital has emerged as a model for specialised healthcare and institutional development in Al Dhahirah Governorate, recording a series of achievements in the first half of 2025.

Dr Dalal al Ghafri, Hospital Director, said key advancements included the introduction of an electronic radiology archiving system, expansion of day clinics and enhanced gastrointestinal endoscopy services.

These measures reduced patient waiting times, cut costs and minimised the need for external referrals.

The hospital also boosted rehabilitation services with new electrical stimulation devices and expanded cardiology facilities with additional Holter monitors, improving early diagnosis and treatment outcomes. Surgeries were conducted during weekends to shorten waiting lists, while new pain management procedures,



The hospital also engages the community through awareness campaigns

such as PRP injections, were introduced.

Assistant Director Dr Rashid bin Sultan al Muqbali highlighted ongoing expansion projects, including a private sector partnership to enhance

the emergency medicine unit, and medical simulation programmes to train staff for critical cases.

Beyond healthcare delivery, the hospital actively engages the community through awareness

campaigns and volunteer programmes. As the only referral hospital in Al Dhahirah, it serves three wilayats - Ibri, Yanqul and Dhank - providing specialised services across a wide spectrum of medical fields. — ONA

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



N Korean leader Kim Jong Un visits the country’s nuclear material base. — Reuters file photo

N KOREA DECLARES PERMANENT NUKE STATEHOOD

SEOUL: North Korea said its status as a nuclear-armed state is “permanently enshrined” in its law and “irreversible”, state media reported, condemning the United States for demanding its denuclearisation. “Recently, at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s Board of Governors, the US once again committed a grave political provocation by branding our possession of nuclear weapons as illegal and clamouring about denuclearisation,” the North’s UN mission said.

The status of North Korea “as a nuclear-armed state, enshrined permanently in the nation’s supreme and fundamental law, has become irreversible”, the statement said, noting the country has not had “official relations” with the nuclear watchdog for more than 30 years.

The IAEA has “neither the legal authority nor the moral justification to interfere in the internal affairs of a nuclear-armed state that exists outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty”, it said.

Pyongyang will “firmly oppose and reject any attempt to alter the current status of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and, as a responsible nuclear-armed state”. — AFP

TURKISH COURT ADJOURNS CASE AGAINST OPPOSITION



Journalists wait outside at the Türkiye’s main opposition party, Republican People’s Party (CHP), headquarters, in Ankara. — AFP

ANKARA: An Ankara court adjourned a key hearing into alleged vote buying that could upend the leadership of Türkiye’s main opposition CHP party, which has been battling a growing array of legal challenges. After more than an hour’s debate, the judge adjourned the case until October 24, a correspondent inside the court said of the hearing, which could have a big impact not only on the party but on Turkish democracy.

The CHP denies the charges and has accused the government of using the judiciary to carry out a “political coup”, hosting a rally late on Sunday that saw vast crowds of protesters packing into Ankara’s Tandoğan Square in a huge show of defiance. When the hearing opened, the room was packed with journalists and lawyers, while outside there was a heavy police deployment, with armed officers at the entrance. The case seeks to overturn the result of a CHP congress in November 2023 on grounds of vote rigging. — AFP

RECEIVING TREATMENT

Ex-PM Thaksin moved to hospital wing



Jailed former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra was moved on Monday to his prison’s medical wing due to his age and chronic health issues. A senior corrections department official said that Thaksin “has relocated to stay at the medical wing due to his age and his health condition with chronic disease”. The official did not say whether he was receiving treatment or had been moved to the wing as a precautionary measure. — AFP

CORRUPTION SCANDAL PROTESTS JUSTIFIED, SAYS PHILIPPINES PRESIDENT

MANILA: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos said he did not blame people for taking part in street protests “one bit” as anger mounts over a corruption scandal involving phony flood control projects. The infrastructure scandal has prompted a series of protests across the capital, Manila, in recent weeks, including one involving about 3,000 students at the University of the Philippines campus.

At a Monday press briefing where

he named a former Supreme Court justice head of an investigatory body, Marcos said the public’s anger was justified. “To show that you are enraged, to show that you are angry, to show that you are disappointed, to show that you want justice... What’s wrong with that?” Marcos said at a press briefing. “I don’t blame them. Not one bit”.

He also reiterated a pledge that friends and allies “would not be spared” when quizzed

about his cousin, House Speaker Martin Romualdez, whose name was brought up by witnesses at hearings into the scandal last week. Romualdez, who has denied any involvement, is one of numerous lawmakers placed in the spotlight by the widening scandal.

Last week, the owners of a construction firm accused nearly 30 House members and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) officials of taking cash payments. — AFP

Nepal interim ministers sworn in after protests

NEPAL’S new interim prime minister unveiled her first ministers on Monday, as the Himalayan nation seeks to restore order after deadly youth-led anti-corruption protests that ousted the previous government. Under an outdoor awning and against the backdrop of the fire-damaged presidential office, President Ram Chandra Paudel gave the oath of office to three key ministers in a ceremony broadcast on television.

Protests, sparked by a ban on social media and feeding into long-standing economic woes, began on September 8 and quickly escalated, with parliament and key government buildings set ablaze. It was the worst unrest since the end of a decade-long civil war and the abolition of the monarchy in 2008. At least 72 people were killed in two days of protests, with 191 still recovering in hospital, according to government figures.

Prime Minister Sushila Karki, the 73-year-old former chief justice, has been tasked with addressing protester demands for a corruption-free future ahead of elections in March. Om Prakash Aryal, an advocate known for his cases tackling corruption, governance and human rights, takes the critical home minister post, as well as law, justice and parliamentary affairs.

Kulman Ghising, the former director of the Nepal Electricity Authority — who is widely credited with ending the country’s long-standing load-shedding problem — has the energy, infrastructure, transport and urban development portfolios. Rameshwar Khanal, a former finance secretary and a respected economist, was handed the key finance post, a challenging task to tackle the unemployment woes that drove the uprising.

A fifth of people in Nepal aged 15-24 are unemployed, according to the World



Nepal’s newly-elected PM of interim government, Sushila Karki (3L), looks on as President Ram Chandra Paudel (L) administers the oath of office to the country’s newly appointed ministers, at the President House in Kathmandu. — AFP

Bank, with GDP per capita standing at just \$1,447. The appointment of Karki, known for her independence, came after intense negotiations by army chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel and Paudel, including with representatives of “Gen Z”, the loose umbrella title of the youth protest movement.

Thousands of young activists used the Discord app to name Karki as their choice of leader. Karki said on Sunday that she had “not wished” to take the post, but that her “name was brought from the streets”. She said her government would work “according to the thinking of the Gen Z generation”, saying that they wanted “the end of corruption, good governance and economic equality”.

Nepal’s new leader vowed on Sunday to follow protesters’ demands to “end corruption” as she began work as interim prime minister, after “Gen Z” youth demonstrations ousted her predecessor.

Sushila Karki, the 73-year-old former chief justice, has been tasked with restoring order and addressing protesters’ demands for a corruption-free future ahead of elections in six months.

President Paudel, who swore Karki into office, said late on Saturday that “a peaceful solution has been found through a difficult process”. Soldiers have scaled back their presence on the streets, where they had been deployed in large numbers after the protests. But more than 12,500 prisoners who escaped from jails during the chaos are on the run, and present a daunting security headache. Regional leaders have congratulated Karki, including Nepal’s two giant neighbours, India and China.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said New Delhi supported “peace, progress and prosperity” in Hindu-majority Nepal, while Beijing’s foreign ministry said it wanted to “push China-Nepal relations steadily forward”. — AFP



GAZA AID FLOTILLA DEPARTS TUNISIA

BIZERTE: A flotilla bound for Gaza carrying aid and pro-Palestinian activists set sail from Tunisia after repeated delays, aiming to break Israel’s blockade and establish a humanitarian corridor to the Palestinian territory. “We are also trying to send a message to the people of Gaza that the world has not forgotten about you,” Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg said before boarding in the northern port of Bizerte. “When our governments are failing to step up then we have no choice but to take matters into our own hands,” she said.

Around 20 boats that had sailed from Barcelona converged in Bizerte, with the last vessels leaving at dawn, a journalist reported. The vessels had transferred to Bizerte after a turbulent stay in Sidi Bou Said near Tunis. — AFP

FATAL CONFLICT

About 50 dead in attacks in Burkina Faso



Three attacks in northern Burkina Faso since May have killed around 50 people, Human Rights Watch said, urging the military regime to improve the protection of civilians . HRW has urged those in power to “investigate abuses, including those by the military and allied groups, and fairly prosecute those responsible”. “The authorities should provide better protection for all civilians at risk,” said senior Sahel researcher at HRW Ilaria Allegrozzi. — AFP

TRACKING SMUGGLERS

Lebanon busts international drug network



Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmad al Hajjar said that authorities dismantled a network that was preparing to smuggle hashish and the illicit stimulant captagon to Saudi Arabia. Hajjar said authorities dismantled the network, which mainly sought to smuggle captagon, and arrested its head and a number of other people. “This network had foreign links, with people in Türkiye, people in Australia” and was preparing to connect with operatives in Jordan, he said. — AFP

LANDMARK AGREEMENT



Australian PM Anthony Albanese reacts during a press conference in Sydney. — AFP

AUSTRALIA, PNG TO SIGN ‘HISTORIC’ DEFENCE DEAL

SYDNEY: A defence deal to be signed this week could see Papua New Guineans serve in the Australian military, Canberra said on Monday, the pact seen as an attempt to counter Beijing’s rising Pacific influence. The fresh defence agreement will be signed by Prime Ministers Anthony Albanese and James Marape on Wednesday in Port Moresby, part of celebrations to mark 50 years of Papua New Guinea’s independence from Australia.

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles described the deal as “historic”. He said Australia’s military had been open to foreign nationals from New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States since last year. “At the time we said we would have an eye to the Pacific,” he told national broadcaster ABC. “The agreement that we will sign with PNG contemplates this,” he said. “There’s more work to be done in terms of walking down that path, but we certainly are interested in how we can recruit Papua New Guineans directly into the ADF,” Marles added, referring to Australia’s military.

The agreement follows an overarching security agreement signed between the two countries in 2023. Australian media said the deal would enable Papua New Guinea nationals to serve in the Australian Defence Force with the same pay as other members and start a pathway to citizenship. Speaking in Port Moresby on Monday, Albanese said the deal was an “upgrade in the relationship and its increased interoperability, its increased engagement and security relationship”, according to ABC.

Asked about concerns the deal could violate Papua New Guinea’s sovereignty, he said “people will get to see the agreement, what Australia does is deal with countries with respect and respect for sovereignty is front and centre of that”. Papua New Guinea’s Defence Minister Billy Joseph said the deal “promotes regional security”. “A secure Papua New Guinea is a secure Australia, and a secure Australia is a secure Papua New Guinea,” he said. Less than 200 kilometres from Australia’s northernmost border, Papua New Guinea is the largest and most populous state in Melanesia.

Albanese was in Vanuatu last week to discuss a deal aimed at deepening Australia’s links to the Pacific nation. However, the deal was not signed, with Prime Minister Jotham Napat citing concerns that its wording would limit Vanuatu’s ability to access funds for “critical infrastructure” from other nations. — AFP

SEOUL TO REVIEW RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING US RAID

SEOUL: The South Korean government said that it would review whether there were any human rights violations when hundreds of its citizens were detained in a massive US immigration raid. Around 475 people, mostly South Korean nationals, were arrested at the construction site of an electric vehicle battery factory in the US state of Georgia on September 4. The raid was the largest single-site operation conducted since US

President Donald Trump launched a sweeping immigration crackdown. Images of the workers chained and handcuffed shocked South Korea, prompting a stern rebuke from Seoul.

Workers had appalling conditions during their arrest, including alleging they were held without being informed of their rights. When asked about the allegations, the presidential office in Seoul said it was conducting a “thorough review”. “Both our side and the

US are checking if there were any shortcomings in the measures taken and companies are also looking into it,” presidential spokeswoman Kang Yu-Jung told a press briefing. “Together with the company concerned, we are conducting a more thorough review into possible human-rights infringements.”

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung called the raid “bewildering” and noted it could have a chilling effect on future investment. — AFP

Cluster bombs kill, wound more than 1,200 in Ukraine

CLUSTER munitions have killed or injured more than 1,200 civilians in Ukraine since Russia’s full-scale attack began, a monitor said on Monday, decrying “troubling setbacks” in global efforts to eradicate the weapons. Since Russia expanded the attack of its western neighbour in February 2022, Ukraine has registered the highest number of recorded annual cluster munition casualties worldwide, the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) said in its annual report.

Russia has used the widely-banned weapons “extensively” since the first day of the war, it said, adding that Ukraine too had deployed them and faced accusations of using them in Russia. At least 193 cluster munition casualties were recorded in Ukraine in 2024, out of 314 globally, the report said. In total, more than 1,200 such casualties have been registered in Ukraine since the start of the war, most of them in 2022. But the report stressed that the figure was surely a dramatic underestimate, pointing out that last year alone, Ukraine suffered around 40 cluster munition attacks where casualty numbers were not given.

The reported casualty figures are “the tip of the iceberg”, Loren Persi, head of the Cluster Munition Monitor Impact Team, told reporters in Geneva. “All indications are that... there would be hundreds of casualties more at least, if not thousands.”

Cluster munitions can be dropped from planes or fired from artillery before exploding in mid-air and scattering bomblets over a wide area. They pose a lasting threat since many fail to explode on impact, effectively acting as landmines that can explode years later.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine are among the 112 states that are party to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, which prohibits the use, transfer, production and storage of cluster bombs. The only other two countries where cluster munition attacks were officially registered last year have not joined the convention either. In addition, the report highlighted suspected use by Thailand during a brief border conflict with



A woman carrying a bag walks near damaged buildings, in Kramatorsk. — AFP

Cambodia last July, while Israel alleged that Iran used the weapons in June.

The United States, also not a party to the treaty, sparked outcry with its 2023 decision to transfer cluster munitions to Kyiv. It has since transferred the weapons to Ukraine in at least seven separate shipments, CMC said, adding that it was unaware of any transfers since Donald Trump returned to the US presidency in January.

Submunitions with Korean language markings have meanwhile been found in Ukrainian-controlled territory this year, but the report said it remained unclear if they had been used by the North Korean forces fighting alongside Russians in the war, or if they had simply been acquired from North Korea by Russia for Russian use.

At a global level, CMC also warned of “troubling setbacks” threatening efforts to establish new international norms stigmatising the use of cluster munitions. Lithuania in March this year became the first ever country to withdraw from the treaty, six months after it announced it was leaving, citing regional security concerns.

Following that move, Lithuania, along with Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, also said they would quit a treaty banning

anti-personnel landmines amid concerns over “Russia’s aggression”.

Tamar Gabelnick, head of the Cluster Munition Coalition, decried Lithuania’s departure, warning that it “undermines the norm created by the convention, with catastrophic implications for the rule of international law protecting civilians”. “We have already seen the impact this decision has had on the Mine Ban Treaty, and states should be extremely wary of a wider domino effect.”

Separately, Romania on Sunday protested the entry of a Russian drone into its airspace during an attack on neighbouring Ukraine, summoning Moscow’s ambassador to the foreign ministry over the incident. The intrusion comes days after fellow Nato member Poland said it had shot down Russian drones that had violated its airspace as Moscow launched a barrage against Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused the Kremlin of “testing” Romania and wanting to “bring the war” to Poland and the Baltic with the intrusions. Earlier on Sunday, Nato member Romania had said that Moscow’s actions posed a “new challenge” to Black Sea security. — AFP

Rubio promises ‘unwavering support’ for Israel during visit

TEL AVIV: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Monday, during a visit to Israel, that Washington would remain steadfast in its support for its ally in the Gaza war and called for the eradication of Hamas. “The people of Gaza deserve a better future, but that better future cannot begin until Hamas is eliminated,” Rubio told reporters next to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. “You can count on our unwavering support.”

Netanyahu said Rubio’s visit was a “clear message” the United States stood with Israel and praised President Donald Trump for his backing, calling him the “greatest friend that Israel has ever had”. Rubio criticised plans by Western nations to recognise a Palestinian state, saying they “emboldened” Hamas. “They’re largely symbolic... the only impact they actually have is it makes Hamas feel more emboldened,” he said.

Rubio had said he would discuss with Netanyahu Israeli plans to seize Gaza City, the territory’s largest urban centre, as well as the government’s talk of annexing parts of the occupied West Bank in hopes of precluding a Palestinian state. The secretary of state had also said Trump wanted the Gaza war to be “finished with” — which would mean the release of hostages and ensuring Hamas is “no longer a threat”.

But talks were made more difficult last week when the Trump administration was caught off guard by an Israeli attack in Qatar against Hamas leaders who were meeting to discuss a new US ceasefire proposal for Gaza. “We sent a message to terrorists: you can run but you cannot hide,” Netanyahu said on Monday. The “raid didn’t fail. It had one central message.” Rubio said Washington would continue to tell Qatar to press on with its efforts as an intermediary



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio gestures at a press conference, in Israel. — Reuters

in the Gaza war. “We’re going to continue to encourage Qatar to play a constructive role in that regard,” Rubio said.

Israeli air strikes in Gaza killed another 25 people on Monday, all but one in Gaza City, said Mahmud Bassal, a spokesman for the Gaza

civil defence agency. The health ministry in Gaza said the Israelis were pushing more people into the already overcrowded Al Mawasi, which lacks basics such as food and water and where disease is spreading. Israel’s retaliatory campaign in Gaza has killed at least

64,905 people, also mostly civilians, according to figures from the health ministry that the United Nations considers reliable. Trump, for years a fervent defender of Netanyahu, has voiced support for Qatar, which is home to the largest US air base in the region and has assiduously courted the US president, including by gifting a luxury jet. “Qatar has been a very great ally. Israel and everyone else, we have to be careful. When we attack people we have to be careful,” he said on Sunday. Qatar has, along with Egypt and the United States, led mediation efforts between Israel and Hamas.

But the United States has not joined European powers in pressing Israel to end the offensive, who fear it will aggravate the already severe humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, where most of its 2.4 million people have been displaced at least once since the outbreak of the war. — AFP

OPINION

Targeting Qatar only distances peace in the Arab world



THE recent Israeli air strike in Doha, Qatar, targeting Hamas leaders, has sparked a significant diplomatic crisis with far-reaching implications for regional stability, mediation efforts and international relations.

The Israeli air strike on September 9, 2025, which resulted in the deaths of six individuals, has been labelled an unprecedented act against a Gulf state. The incident marked a significant escalation in the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

The attack, which Israel claimed was a ‘wholly independent’ operation, took place while Hamas negotiators were considering a US-proposed ceasefire deal, leading to immediate condemnation and a suspension of Qatar’s mediation role.

The Sultanate of Oman strongly condemned this reprehensible aggression and affirmed its full solidarity with the State of Qatar - its leadership, government and people. It emphasises that the security of Qatar is an integral part of the security of the entire Gulf region, and indeed of the entire Arab and Islamic nation.

An emergency Arab-Islamic summit held in Doha, Qatar, brought together heads of state and senior officials from Arab and Islamic countries to address the recent Israeli air strikes in Doha. The summit focused on the consequences of what has been described as unprecedented and dangerous Israeli

aggression.

The summit aimed to send a message of solidarity with Qatar and uphold international law and norms that protect mediators and negotiators from being targeted. Discussions covered the repercussions of the situation and the necessary steps to prevent further regional destabilisation due to Israeli aggression.

The treacherous attack that targeted the sisterly State of Qatar has made clear the gravity of the phase we are experiencing and the expanding scope of the war being waged by Israel in the region – in disregard of international law, legitimacy and the sanctity of innocent lives.

The targeting of Qatar, one of the foremost nations working tirelessly towards de-escalation and the revival of the peace process in Palestine, only distances the Arab world further from the noble goal that all seek: a just and comprehensive peace that fulfils the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Many believe that the timing of the strike, during ceasefire negotiations facilitated by Qatar, highlights Israel’s prioritisation of military objectives over diplomatic considerations, potentially straining vital alliances.

The attack has complicated Washington’s position in the Gulf, given Qatar’s role as a host for significant American military assets

The Israeli air strike on Qatar has not only halted critical mediation efforts in the Gaza conflict, but has also profoundly impacted regional security dynamics, challenged US alliances and raised serious questions about Israel’s long-term objectives and adherence to international law.

and as a neutral interlocutor with Hamas.

The long-term strategic implications include a potential recalibration of Qatar’s mediation approach and other Gulf states reconsidering security arrangements, diversifying alliances, or limiting intelligence-sharing.

The attack is another instance where Israel has violated the sovereignty of a nation, adding Qatar to a list that includes Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. This pattern of behaviour, described as Israel acting as a ‘rogue state’, raises serious questions about international law and the boundaries of military action.

The Sultanate of Oman believes that the silence of the international community in the face of these violations fuels impunity and encourages further aggression.

Therefore, we call on this gathering to mark the beginning of a serious and unified effort – one that translates Arab and Islamic solidarity into clear positions and tangible pressure to end the occupation, halt the assaults and restore the authority of international legitimacy.

In conclusion, the Israeli air strike on Qatar has not only halted critical mediation efforts in the Gaza conflict, but has also profoundly impacted regional security dynamics, challenged US alliances, and raised serious questions about Israel’s long-term objectives and adherence to international law.

WTO DEAL ON FISHING SUBSIDIES: THE NET RESULTS

AGNÈS PEDRERO

The World Trade Organization’s agreement on fisheries subsidies — its first environmentally focused accord — entered into force on Monday after years of thorny negotiations at a time of heightened international trade tensions.

Agreed by more than 100 WTO members, including the United States, the European Union and China, the agreement sets binding rules requiring governments to consider the legality and sustainability of the fishing activities they subsidise.

“This is the first sustainability agreement of the WTO... It’s a big day,” WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said.

Speaking to diplomats during Monday’s ceremony, she described the event as a “historic milestone”.

The discussions towards the deal began all the way back in 2001, with WTO members finally reaching an agreement by consensus in June 2022.

Below are the main points of the agreement, which was celebrated with a ceremony at the WTO’s Geneva headquarters on Monday after being ratified by two-thirds of the membership.

Broader rules regarding subsidies for activities that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing remain under negotiation.

“Each year, governments spend an estimated \$22 billion in harmful subsidies that contribute to overfishing and the depletion of marine resources,” Okonjo-Iweala said.

The deal bans subsidies to any vessel or operator engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, or the fishing of overexploited stocks.

However, a country can grant or maintain subsidies implemented “to rebuild the stock to a biologically sustainable level”.

According to the United Nations, IUU fishing is responsible for depleting between 11 million and 26 million tonnes of fish each year, which “represents 20 per cent of the global fish catch”, the WTO chief said.

The agreement also prohibits subsidies for unregulated fishing on the high seas, including areas outside the jurisdiction of coastal countries.

The agreement “is a significant step forward for the ocean and the coastal communities that depend on it,” said Megan Jungwiwattanaporn, with the Pew Charitable Trusts. — AFP

US ban on Palestinians: A new layer of injustice

THE US has taken yet another step in its long-standing complicity in the oppression of the Palestinian people.

Washington has suspended the issuance of visas to Palestinian passport holders seeking to enter the country for medical treatment, higher education and business opportunities. This policy comes on the heels of the revocation of visas for 80 Palestinian officials, including President Mahmoud Abbas, effectively barring them from attending this month’s United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session in New York.

At first glance, this might appear to be a bureaucratic decision, but the implications are far deeper and more troubling. The United States is not a neutral actor in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is Israel’s biggest benefactor, supplying it with billions of dollars in military aid every year and shielding it diplomatically from accountability.

American-made weapons, funded by US taxpayers, have been central to Israel’s devastating military campaign in Gaza, a campaign that has left entire neighbourhoods reduced to rubble and thousands of civilians dead or displaced. To deny Palestinians visas, particularly those seeking urgent medical care, is to wash America’s hands of a humanitarian catastrophe that it has helped to create. It is not simply callous; it is a form of dehumanisation. Palestinian children now make up the largest group of child amputees in the world, a grim statistic that speaks volumes about the scale of Israel’s assault on Gaza.

Many of these children require specialised medical treatment that is unavailable in Gaza due to the



OMAN AL YAHYAI

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Until Washington confronts its own role in perpetuating this cycle of violence and dispossession, no amount of rhetoric about democracy or human rights will ring true

ongoing blockade and destruction of hospitals. By closing its doors to these young victims, the US is condemning them to lives of unnecessary suffering and doing so with full knowledge that many of the bombs, missiles and artillery shells responsible for their injuries bear a “Made in USA” stamp.

This policy is not occurring in a vacuum. It reflects the immense influence of pro-Israel lobbying groups, most notably the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). In this context, the visa ban can be seen as yet another attempt to appease Israel, which has long sought to delegitimise Palestinian political representation on the global stage.

Indeed, Israel has perfected a tactic of labelling any recognition of Palestinian statehood as antisemitic, a rhetorical manoeuvre designed to silence critics and justify its own actions. When countries move to recognise Palestine or condemn Israeli policies, they are often met with fierce backlash and accusations of bias. The US, deeply enmeshed in this dynamic, appears to be pre-emptively silencing Palestinians before they can even speak. By revoking visas from Palestinian officials, Washington is effectively censoring them, denying them a platform at the world’s most prominent diplomatic gathering.

The symbolism of this act cannot be overstated. The UN General Assembly is one of the few arenas where Palestinians have been able to voice their aspirations for self-determination and to seek international support. To bar their representatives from attending is to send a clear message: their voices do not matter, their grievances will not be heard and their future will be decided without them. .

Moreover, the visa ban exposes a

glaring contradiction at the heart of US policy. While Washington refuses to recognise a Palestinian state, it simultaneously supports Israel’s expansionist policies and military aggression. It is funding a war that would not be possible without American weapons and dollars, yet it refuses to provide refuge or even temporary visas to those fleeing the very violence it sustains. This is not merely hypocrisy; it is cruelty codified into policy.

This decision also has domestic ramifications within the US. It reveals the extent to which American policymaking has been captured by narrow special interests rather than guided by principles of justice and human rights. Ordinary Americans, many of whom oppose endless wars and foreign entanglements, are effectively sidelined in favour of powerful lobbies that prioritise Israel’s agenda above all else.

The result is a foreign policy that perpetuates conflict abroad and corrodes democracy at home.

The suspension of visas for Palestinians should alarm anyone who believes in human dignity and international law. It represents a dangerous escalation in America’s already lopsided role in the conflict, moving from active enabler of Israeli aggression to direct suppressor of Palestinian voices. .

In the end, this policy lays bare the stark reality: Palestinians are not merely victims of Israeli occupation but also of American complicity. Until Washington confronts its own role in perpetuating this cycle of violence and dispossession, no amount of rhetoric about democracy or human rights will ring true. Denying visas to the wounded, the educated and the hopeful is not just bad policy; it is a moral failure of historic proportions.

The true essence of life...



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
The writer is senior editor of Observer

SEEING people venturing out into new fields is such an inspiration that it makes one feel brave.

When fresh graduates are waiting for their first break in life, there are people who have completed their first innings and have moved onto the next one and are flourishing.

If you are just beginning, let me share a secret - it helps to be on time. It is even better if you are early. Being early allows you to have the privilege of being prepared.

This is why these thoughts came to mind. I'm at a college campus for an event, and it has given me an opportunity to look at the young faces of enthusiasm and the matured faces of experience.

While the youth prepare for the future, the dynamic economies of the world continue to move. They are already discussing what the jobs will be in demand by 2030 are.

One thing is for sure - having the right attitude would be part of the qualifications.

Time management would be one of the prerequisites. And that is a tough one. The one who taught me the hard way was my

biology professor, who designed his course in such a way that he held a pop quiz in the first five minutes of his lecture. And his class was at 8 am. If you missed those five minutes, you lost points, and that could easily affect your grade. Soon, it became a race with time to reach his class on time to answer the five questions.

Until then, no matter what I tried, I used to end up being late. Time has a cultural element to it. In some places, it is more relaxed. In some countries, you can offend a person by arriving late for their appointment.

On the other hand, there are many benefits of reaching early. Take the time to collect your thoughts, or even better, just read through your textbook before the class begins. You will invite a pop quiz with open hands and excel too.

Of course, today's college students are different. There is information everywhere, but life has to be challenging to bring out the best in you. AI tools might make it easier with our projects; however, this is the time to exercise our minds and be creative. Being prepared means you have also been thinking of your goals. So many of us forget about the

There are many benefits of reaching early. Take the time to collect your thoughts, or even better, just read through your textbook before the class begins

importance of having goals and at times do not even know what it is that we want in life.

What is it that you really want in life?

If we can answer this question, then we can almost find our path. Then we have to answer other questions that we must dwell upon. Distractions would be many, so we must pick our fights wisely, although peace is what we strive for.

Then again, it is never too late to make the changes. We need not be stuck forever in any mode. But it takes courage to shift directions.

There are some people who may not ever be on a set path, and then there are some who sail across unhindered. Could it be that they know what they want? Maybe, but it could also mean having the right knowledge.

So no matter what, the way toward achieving your goals is a combination of talent, skills, knowledge, and most importantly, dedication with consistency.

And for those who smoothly transition to their second career, life is full of adventures and experiences. As one friend put it, "They can never retire. They will always find ways to be useful." In other words, the true essence is in finding the purpose in life.

IN NORWAY, YOUTH FUEL THE RISE OF POPULIST RIGHT

PIERRE-HENRY DESHAYES

Norway's populist right, which saw a historic rise in the country's general election, has managed to rally young men, who are drawn to its anti-tax, anti-elite, and anti-immigration message, largely through social media.

While the country's left-wing parties emerged victorious in Monday's election, allowing Labour Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store to remain in power, the Progress Party achieved its best performance since its founding in 1973.

It secured nearly a quarter of the votes (23.9 per cent), becoming the country's second-largest party and leading opposition force.

"Tonight, we will celebrate the best result of all time, and my goal is for this to be just the beginning," party leader Sylvi Listhaug told her jubilant supporters on election night.

Many of those supporters are young people.

According to a poll by public broadcaster NRK, the Progress Party is now the leading party among men under 30, reflecting a trend observed in a growing number of European countries.

Jonas Stein, a professor of political science at Tromso University, said there was "a combination of factors" at play.

"There's the economy - these are individuals who want to keep a higher share of what they earn and have the opportunity to become wealthier - and a form of protest against egalitarianism and some progressive forces," Stein said.

In a country where taxation is among the highest in Europe, the Progress Party is pushing for deep cuts. Its political manifesto is calling for the abolition of the wealth tax, which has prompted several dozen of the country's ultra-rich individuals to emigrate in recent years.

"We see that some Norwegians who are creating a lot of jobs and successful businessmen are moving to Switzerland or Sweden, and this is not sustainable for Norway," Listhaug said.

At the same time, the party wants to save money by reducing government red tape, development aid, green subsidies, and immigration.

A 19-year-old first-time voter, who wished to remain anonymous, said he voted for the Progress Party because "everyone should be able to keep more of their own money and choose the social benefits that suit them".

"For me, it's mainly an issue of the economy and taxes, but crime is also a concern," the man who runs his own investment company explained.

He added that the party's plans to increase police budgets and introduce stricter immigration policies were also important "because I feel integration isn't working very well right now".

The Progress Party's youth league and its leader, Simen Velle, were extremely active on social media, where younger people find information, during the campaign. On TikTok, the slogan "Vote Progress Party!" spread like wildfire.

As a result, the party overwhelmingly won the "skolevalg" (school election), where high schools simulate elections, gaining 26 per cent of the vote. The party has been difficult to classify.

Political scientist Johannes Bergh said it can be described as a "right-wing populist party" that is anti-elitist and anti-immigration. — AFP

Globalisation is dead, but planetarisation to come

IN November 1985, during their first summit in Geneva, US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev slipped away from the official proceedings to speak privately. Only years later did we learn what they discussed. Gorbachev told the broadcaster Charlie Rose that Reagan had asked him a startling question: "What would you do if the United States were suddenly attacked by someone from outer space? Would you help us?" Gorbachev replied, "No doubt about it," to which Reagan responded: "We, too." Although the two superpowers were locked in a nuclear arms race and staring each other down across Europe, they could still imagine uniting against a common existential threat.

Four decades later, humanity finds itself locked in another arms race. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reports that global defence spending reached a record \$2.7 trillion in 2024 – an inflation-adjusted increase of 9.4 per cent over the previous year. After nine consecutive years of such spending increases, this surge is unprecedented since the end of the Cold War, with little indication that it will slow. Dozens of countries are expanding their militaries, and more governments are making long-term commitments to boost their defence budgets.

The reasons are many, and some are understandable. In addition to Russia's war in Ukraine, there are rising tensions in East Asia and the Middle East, as well as vulnerabilities in cyberspace and space. But more fundamentally, this escalation reflects the collapse of globalisation as we knew it – meaning a rules-based order anchored in multilateralism, open trade, and international cooperation.

It is easy to forget how different the mood was just a decade ago. In 2015 – the high-water mark for the most recent wave of globalisation – world leaders delivered three landmark agreements: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on development financing, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris climate agreement. Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Barack Obama shook hands in Washington, signalling – at least to



Mikhail Gorbachev slipped away from the official proceedings to speak privately.



BERTRAND BADRÉ

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many observers – that a new era of sustainable, inclusive, and resilient globalisation was at hand.

But the resulting optimism proved short-lived. Within a few years, trade wars, nationalist and nativism politics, and geopolitical rivalries had undermined the previous consensus. Today, tariffs, subsidies, industrial policies, refugee crises, and the new arms race all attest to a world where cooperation has lost its lustre. As the French historian Arnaud Orain argues, the "end of history" thesis has given way to a world once again conceived as finite – as a pie to be divided, rather than expanded.

According to this mindset, what's mine is mine, and what's yours is negotiable.

But the existential threats that inspired Reagan's thought experiment are still here, and they are more pressing than ever. Climate change, ecosystem collapse, and widening social inequalities endanger us all. They have been thoroughly documented, their consequences are already visible, and strategies to confront them have been elaborated in countless policy documents and experts' reports. Yet they are perpetually treated as secondary to the immediate fear of aggression by one's neighbours or rivals. Future historians – if the profession still exists – will wonder why, in the mid-2020s, Homo sapiens poured unprecedented resources into preparing to fight each other, while

neglecting collective action against obvious planetary threats. The sums involved are staggering. The nearly \$3 trillion devoted annually to defence could cover a significant portion of the investments needed to decarbonise our economies, adapt to climate change, and preserve biodiversity.

Instead of extending the cooperative logic of globalisation to planetary survival, we are re-engineering it with walls, tariffs, and weapons. Call it "barbed-wire globalisation." Humanity will remain interdependent, but relations will be managed not with common institutions but through spheres of influence. Meanwhile, the planet will recede from political consciousness. As Sophocles warned, "Evil can sometimes seem good to the one whose mind the gods are leading to ruin." It is mad to obsess over relative geopolitical power while ignoring the absolute reality of planetary boundaries.

If there is to be any hope, we must invent something new: not globalisation, but "planetarisation" – the recognition that preserving our fragile world is the precondition for everything else. Upcoming gatherings, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil, offer opportunities to advance such a perspective, even after this year's disappointing negotiations to address plastics in our oceans. But the window is closing.

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SPORTS

FIRST DIVISION LEAGUE



Dhofar and Masirah players fight for the ball.

DHOFAR MEET SOHAR IN FINAL TODAY

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

The curtain falls on the 2025 First Division Hockey League on Tuesday with the final match between Dhofar and Sohar at 7 pm in a much-anticipated clash to decide the champion. Earlier, in the third-place playoff, Nizwa will face Masirah at 5 pm. Both matches will take place at the Hockey Oman Stadium in Al Amerat.

Dhofar entered the semifinal against Masirah with high attacking intensity and sealed the match 5-1, confirming their superiority and readiness to compete for the title.

The game started strongly, with Majid Bayt Rajboon opening the scoring in the fifth minute after a well-organised attack, ending the first quarter 1-0.

Masirah began the second quarter determined to equalise, and Khalid al Balushi managed to level the score in the 18th minute with a powerful strike. However, their joy was short-lived as Anas al Wahibi restored Dhofar's lead in the same minute. Dhofar continued pressing, and Akram Ashour made it 3-1 in the 28th minute, closing the second quarter with a commanding lead.

In the third quarter, Dhofar maintained their control, with Ashour netting his second and the team's fourth. With victory almost secured in the fourth quarter, Dhofar continued their dominance, and in the 45th minute, Saleh al Wahibi scored the fifth goal from a quick counterattack, booking Dhofar's place in the final.

In the second semifinal, Sohar showcased their strength with a confident 4-0 win over Nizwa.

Omar al Maamari scored in the 10th minute after a fine solo run. Wael Sanjoor doubled the lead in the 15th minute, capitalising on a defensive error, closing the first quarter 2-0.

In the second quarter, Sohar pressed on, and Ahmed al Shibli added the third in the 27th minute. Nizwa struggled to match the tempo, ending the half trailing 3-0. The fourth goal came in the 47th minute when Yaqoub al Amri converted a penalty corner with precision, sealing a 4-0 victory and sending Sohar into the final.

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

Oman national football team head coach, Carlos Querioz, picked a 26-player squad for the domestic preparatory camp, which will be held in Muscat from Tuesday and will run until Sunday. The short six-day camp comes at a crucial juncture in the Red Warriors' build-up to the decisive stage of the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 2026.

The Portuguese tactician opted to call up a fully local-based squad for this gathering, as the professional players remain committed to their respective clubs abroad. Querioz and his technical team are fully aware that the camp is an opportunity to utilise the short break in the ongoing Elite League season. The squad was confirmed following the conclusion of the league's second round, with domestic competition set to resume after the camp on September 25.

With just three weeks separating Oman from their high-stake fixtures against Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in Doha on October 8 and 11 respectively, this camp is designed to sharpen technical readiness and refine tactical cohesion. Oman team players will have busy schedule as they will conduct both morning and evening training sessions, combining physical drills with tactical

Bahla stay perfect with second straight win

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

ROUND two of the Oman Elite League concluded with thrilling encounters, with Bahla, Al Nasr, Seeb and Al Shabab all securing valuable wins, while Al Nahda and Ibri battled to a goalless draw.

Bahla maintained their flawless start to the season with a 2-0 win over Sur at the Nizwa Sports Complex.

Bahla dominated midfield early, and their pressure paid off in the 23rd minute when Nasser al Saqri opened the scoring with a brilliant solo effort past goalkeeper Yousef al Shiyadi. Al Saqri doubled the lead in the 55th minute after breaking through Sur's defence. Despite attempts from Yousef Nasser and foreign recruit Arseni Loko, Sur could not find a breakthrough, thanks to Bahla's solid defence and goalkeeper.

The match ended with Bahla claiming another three points to strengthen their place at the top with six points, while Sur remain in need of correcting their course in the upcoming rounds.

AL NASR EDGE AL RUSTAQ

Al Nasr snatched a valuable 2-1 victory over Al Rustaq at Al Saada Sports Complex.

After a goalless first half, Al Nasr's Abdullah al Musharafi broke the deadlock in the 53rd minute following a pass from Mulham al Sunaidi. Al Musharafi struck again in the 80th minute, this time assisted by Hussein al Shahri. Al Rustaq managed a consolation goal deep into stoppage time through Yousef al Maamari from the penalty spot, but Al Nasr held firm to collect maximum points. The win lifted Al Nasr to third place with six points, while Al Rustaq slipped to the relegation zone with no points.

SEEB OVERCOME OMAN CLUB

Seeb defeated Oman Club 2-0 at the Seeb Stadium.

The first half saw both sides perform at a high technical level, with several chances at both ends. However, it was Seeb who went ahead through Abdulaziz al Muqbali from the penalty spot in the 23rd minute, a score that held until half-time. In the second half, Seeb confirmed their superiority with a second goal by



Al Nasr beat Al Rustaq 2-1 as the second round of Oman Elite League concluded.

Hassan al Ajmi in the 67th minute. With this victory, Seeb moved up to four points, while Oman Club remained at three.

AL SHABAB POST LATE WIN

At Al Rustaq Sports Complex, Al Shabab left it late to beat Al Khabourah 1-0.

The match saw early pressure from Al Khabourah, with Darwish Hayel going close in the third minute. Al Shabab threatened on the counter through Ahmed al Riyami but failed to score before half-time.

The second half was evenly contested, with missed opportunities on both sides, until Khalifa al Jamahi's late red card left Al Khabourah a man down. In stoppage time, Mohammed al Ghafri struck the decisive goal to hand Al Shabab a priceless

victory. With the win, Al Shabab climbed to fourth place with six points, tied at the top but trailing on goal difference, while Al Khabourah dropped to eighth with one point.

STALEMATE IN BURAIMI

Meanwhile, Al Nahda and Ibri played out a 0-0 draw at Al Buraimi Sports Complex. Al Nahda created several promising chances but were denied by the brilliance of Ibri goalkeeper Omar al Abri. Ibri also came close through Imos Tadeo, Khalid and Abdulrahman al Yaqoubi, but poor finishing cost them dearly.

The draw saw Al Nahda move to four points in fifth place, while Ibri collected their first point of the season, sitting in ninth.

Querioz picks 26-player squad for domestic training camp

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 15



Oman will take on Qatar and the UAE in Doha on October 8 and 11.

exercises to enhance team chemistry, discipline, and overall balance in attack and defence.

The camp will also provide Querioz with another chance to evaluate his options across all positions, particularly with competition intensifying for starting roles.

The coaching staff will assess domestic talent, many of whom were part of the Red Warriors' recent campaign in the Cafa Nations Cup 2025 in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Oman showed promising performances during the regional tournament, including a hard-fought

penalty shoot-out loss to India in the third and fourth playoff fixture after a 1-1 draw in regulation time. That campaign not only boosted the team's international experience but also gave valuable exposure to several emerging players who are now part of this domestic camp roster.

The inclusion of experienced campaigners alongside young emerging talents reflects the coach's approach of blending stability with fresh energy in the squad. Oman are aiming to make history by securing a maiden qualification for the Fifa World Cup. The camp in Muscat will act as an important stepping stone for Querioz and his players as they will determine to fine-tune their strategies and strengthen their readiness for the decisive October showdowns in Doha.

OMAN SQUAD:

Ibrahim al Mukhaini, Fayez al Rushaidi, Bilal al Balushi, Ahmed al Rawahi, Ahmed al Kaabi, Ali al Busaidy, Juma al Habsi, Mahmood al Mushaifri, Ahmed al Khamisi, Musaab al Shaqsi, Naif Bait Subaih, Amjed al Harthy, Tani al Rushaidi, Ghanim al Habshi, Sultan al Marzooq, Ahed al Mashaykhi, Musaab al Maamari, Harib al Saadi, Arshad al Alawi, Abdullah Fawaz, Ahmed al Riyami, Zahir al Aghbari, Hatim al Rushdi, Nasser al Rawahi, Salah al Yahyaei and Mohammed al Ghafri.

THEHITMAN



British boxer Ricky Hatton takes part in a training session at a gym in Denton, near Manchester, north-west England on November 13, 2007, ahead of his fight against US boxer Floyd Mayweather. — AFP

FORMER BOXING
WORLD CHAMPION
HATTON DIES AT 46

MANCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM: Former boxing world champion Ricky Hatton has died aged 46, just weeks after announcing a comeback fight, sparking a flood of tributes to one of the sport’s “modern greats”.

Hatton was found dead at his home in Hyde, northwest England.

Greater Manchester Police said they were not treating the death as suspicious.

“Officers were called by a member of the public to attend Bowllacre Road, Hyde, Tameside, at 6:45 am (0545 GMT) today (Sunday) where they found the body of a 46-year-old man,” said a police spokesman.

“There are not currently believed to be any suspicious circumstances.”

Hatton, nicknamed ‘The Hitman’, won multiple world titles in the light-welterweight division and one at welterweight. His aggressive style made him one of the most popular British boxers of his generation, winning 45 of his 48 professional bouts after his debut in 1997.

Hatton earned notable world title wins over Kostya Tszyu and Jose Luis Castillo before defeats by Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao.

Filipino former eight-division Pacquiao paid tribute on Instagram to “a great fighter” and “a brave and kind man”.

Pacquiao, whose stunning second-round knockout of Hatton in Las Vegas in 2009 marked the start of the British boxer’s decline at elite level, said he had “shared unforgettable moments in boxing history” with his rival. “I will always honour the respect and sportsmanship he showed,” he said. “Ricky fought bravely, not just in the ring, but in his journey through life.”

Hatton’s former promoter Frank Warren said on X the boxer was a “superbly talented fighter who inspired a generation of young boxers and fans”.

“Ricky will rightly go down as one of the modern greats of this sport,” he said.

Former British world heavyweight champions Tyson Fury and Antony Joshua also spoke warmly about their late compatriot.

Another British former world champion, Amir Khan, described Hatton as a “mentor, warrior and one of Britain’s greatest boxers”.

Khan also referred to his friend’s struggles with mental health. “As fighters, we tell ourselves we’re strong — we train, we sweat, we take hits, we get up,” he said. “But sometimes the hardest fight happens in silence, in the mind.”

Hatton was a huge fan of Manchester City and the club said they were devastated by his death, calling him one of their “most loved and revered supporters”. — AFP



Tanzania’s Alphonse Felix Simbu and Germany’s Amanal Petros (centre) cross the finish line in the men’s marathon final during the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo on Monday. — AFP

First-ever Tanzanian gold
as Simbu dips past Petros

TANZANIA’S Alphonse Felix Simbu produced a savage dip at the line to snatch world marathon gold from Germany’s Amanal Petros in Tokyo on Monday.

Simbu and Eritrea-born Petros were both clocked at 2hr 09min 48sec in the most dramatic of endings for the longest event of the world championships in the Japanese capital, the Tanzanian adjudged to have finished three-hundredths ahead.

Italy’s Iliass Aouani claimed bronze in 2:09:53.

“I made history today — the first Tanzanian gold medal at a world championships,” said Simbu, who won bronze at the 2017 worlds in London.

There was a 88-strong field from 47 countries that took to the streets of Tokyo for the gruelling 26-mile (42km) race.

But many wilted in the hot, stifling morning conditions.

Twenty-two failed to finish, not least Ethiopia’s Tadesse Takele, who pulled out at the 33km mark, switching his watch off and climbing over a barrier from the road onto a pavement, seemingly grimacing in pain.

Takele had won the Tokyo Marathon in March in 2:03:23, making him the fastest entrant for the marathon at the world championships.

His Ethiopian teammate Deresa Geleta, second to Takele in the Tokyo Marathon, was the next high-profile casualty, pulling up at 35.5km.

Uganda’s Abel Chelangat had paced much



(L-R) Silver medallist Germany’s athlete Amanal Petros, gold medallist Tanzania’s Alphonse Felix Simbu and bronze medallist Italy’s athlete Iliass Aouani pose with their medals on the podium.

of the race, leading a definitive break-out at the 39.5km mark that split the lead pack to five, including all three medallists.

As they approached the stadium, Chelangat and Ethiopian-born Israeli Haimro Alame were suddenly dropped.

Petros led the podium trio onto the track for what proved to be a totally gripping final 300 metres.

The German opened up down the back straight, but was tracked by Simbu — second at this year’s Boston Marathon in 2:05:05 — with Aouani back in third. Petros looked like he had the win as he neared the finish line, but with Simbu fast advancing with a last-gasp spurt of energy, the German could do nothing bar glance nervously over his right shoulder as his legs tied up.

PERSISTENCE PAYS

Simbu’s persistence paid off as the 33-year-old broke the line just ahead of Petros, who tumbled to the floor.

“I have never seen something like this in the marathon — both the men and women’s races came down to a sprint finish. It’s like the 100m!” said Petros.

“Coming into the finish I was thinking about winning so a bit of me is feeling very sad. I’m sad I lost gold in the last three metres but I am very happy also for Simbu.”

Uganda’s defending champion Victor Kiplangat never landed a blow and finished in 11th place in 2:11:33.

In other action on the morning session of the third day of the championships, Femke Bol cruised through her heat of the 400m hurdles.

In the absence of American Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, who has opted to race the 400m flat here, Bol is odds-on favourite to defend her title, with semifinals scheduled for Wednesday and the final on Friday.

American Katie Moon, the two-time defending world champion and Olympic gold medallist in Tokyo in 2021, led 13 other athletes through to the final of the women’s pole vault.

All 14 had cleared 4.60m and Moon will be accompanied in Wednesday’s final by teammates Sandi Morris and Hana Moll.

One notable absentee, however, will be former world indoor champion Molly Caudery, the Briton sustaining an ankle injury in warm-up that saw her withdraw from the event. — AFP

Oman suffer 42-run defeat to UAE in Asia Cup clash

ABU DHABI: Oman’s wait for a maiden Asia Cup victory continued on Monday as they fell short by 42 runs against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in their Group A fixture at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi.

Chasing a stiff target of 173, the debutants were bundled out for 130 in 18.4 overs, undone by early wickets and UAE’s incisive bowling attack.

The chase began on a shaky note when openers Aamir Kaleem and Jatinder Singh (20) departed cheaply. The middle order could not steady the innings, with Oman reeling at 41 for 4

inside the powerplay.

Debutant Aryan Bisht showed glimpses of promise with a fighting 24, and Vinayak Shukla (20) offered brief resistance, but neither could convert their starts into a match-defining knock.

Partnerships never materialised, and once Bisht fell in the 13th over, Oman’s innings unraveled quickly.

Seamer Junaid Siddique proved unplayable, returning figures of 4 for 23, while support from Haider Ali (2/22) and Muhammad Jawadullah (2/18) kept the pressure relentless. Only tail-ender Shakeel Ahmed (14



Alishan Sharafu (51 off 38) gave the hosts a brisk start.

not out) stood his ground as Oman’s innings ended at 130, well short of the target.

Earlier, UAE had set up the contest with a disciplined batting display, reaching 172 for 5 in their 20 overs. Alishan Sharafu (51 off 38) gave the hosts a brisk start, and skipper Muhammad Waseem (69 off 54) anchored the innings with a calculated half-century.

Oman’s fielding lapses added to their woes, as two dropped catches allowed Waseem to consolidate and eventually punish the bowlers. Late contributions from Muhammad Zohaib (21

and Harit Kaushik (19 not out) pushed UAE past the 170 mark.

For Oman, Jiten Ramanandi was the pick of the bowlers with 2 for 24, but overall the attack lacked consistency. In the field, missed opportunities proved costly, leaving Oman with plenty to reflect upon before their concluding group game against India on September 19.

BRIEF SCORES: UAE 172 for 5 (Waseem 69, Sharafu 51; Ramanandi 2-24) beat Oman 130 in 18.4 overs (Bisht 24, Jatinder 20, Shukla 20; Siddique 4/23)

SPORTS

PREMIER LEAGUE



Manchester City's Erling Haaland scores their third goal past Manchester United's Altay Bayindir. — Reuters

HAALAND-INSPIRED
MAN CITY INFLICT
DERBY DEMOLITION
ON MAN UTD

MANCHESTER, United Kingdom: Erling Haaland struck twice as Manchester City inflicted another damaging defeat on Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim with a comprehensive 3-0 win on Sunday.

Phil Foden opened the scoring before Haaland took centre stage with a second-half double, either side of an incredible miss from the Norwegian, as City bounced back from two consecutive Premier League defeats.

United went into a derby ahead of City in the table for the first time in five years.

But that owed more to City's early season struggles than signs of progress for Amorim's men, who have taken just four points from their opening four games and been dumped out of the League Cup by fourth-tier Grimsby.

To cap a fine City display, goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma marked his debut with a stunning save from Bryan Mbeumo to deny United a foothold in the game at 2-0.

City remain six points adrift of leaders Liverpool, but victory is a huge confidence boost for Pep Guardiola's side ahead of facing Serie A champions Napoli and Premier League title rivals Arsenal next week.

Before kick-off, both sets of fans put rivalry aside to pay tribute to boxing legend Ricky Hatton, who died on Sunday at the age of 46.

A massive City fan, Hatton's face was displayed on big screens during a minute's applause.

Foden, a fellow boyhood City supporter, said before kick-off the news gave the home side extra motivation to win in Hatton's honour.

And the England international was central to a much-needed victory after a difficult start to the campaign for Foden and City.

The 25-year-old was the Premier League player of the season in the 2023/24 campaign, but his form dipped drastically last season.

Fitness issues meant he had not started a game this season until Sunday, but took just 18 minutes to make his mark.

United's defence allowed Jeremy Doku to bundle his way to the by-line and the Belgian's cross picked out Foden, completely unmarked, to head in the opening goal.

Both goalkeepers were under the spotlight as Ruben Amorim kept faith with Altay Bayindir over new signing Senne Lammens.

Tijjani Reijnders fired straight at Bayindir when presented with the chance to quickly double City's advantage.

Doku was the creator once more when City did double their lead on 53 minutes.

Haaland showed his power, pace and incredible precision to dink the ball over the onrushing Bayindir. — AFP



Barcelona's Polish forward #09 Robert Lewandowski celebrates scoring his team's sixth goal during the Spanish league match between FC Barcelona and Valencia CF at Johan Cruyff Stadium in Barcelona. — AFP

Barcelona hit Valencia for
six to move second

ROBERT

Lewandowski, Raphinha and Fermin Lopez struck twice each as Barcelona thumped Valencia 6-0 on Sunday in a La Liga match they were forced to play at their tiny training ground stadium because of delays in reopening the Spotify Camp Nou.

The rampant Spanish champions moved second, two points behind leaders Real Madrid, who boast a 100 percent record after their win at Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Hosting the game at the 6,000-capacity Johan Cruyff Stadium beside their training facilities west of the city, with the rebuilt Camp Nou not yet permitted to open, Barca's first home game of the season saw high-calibre football in a low-key setting.

Star forward Lamine Yamal's absence due to a groin issue was a further blow for Barca, with coach Hansi Flick criticising the Spanish national team for playing him twice despite the problem during World Cup qualifiers last week.

However Barcelona's display, above all in the second half, helped them forget his absence and their disappointing draw at Rayo Vallecano in their previous La Liga outing.

"I appreciate what I saw today a lot, and this is a start after the break," said Flick, who was upset with his players after the Rayo game a fortnight ago.

Lopez said last season's winners of a domestic treble were on the right track.

"The message is the same as last year, to play with intensity and humility, I think we're on a good path and we have to continue like this," said the midfielder.

Flick handed Roony Bardghji his debut on the right flank in Yamal's stead after his summer arrival from Copenhagen.

Barcelona dominated Valencia in the first half without creating many clear-cut chances.

Marcus Rashford and Ferran Torres fired narrowly over and wide, respectively, as Flick's side penned in the visitors.

Lopez, linked with a move to Chelsea during the summer, dug in to stay at Barca and proved his worth against Los Che.

Barca took the lead after 29 minutes when Torres flicked on a pass into the midfielder's path.

Lopez scampered into the box and flashed a strike across Julen Agirrezabala and into the net.

Carlos Corberan's Valencia, 15th, did not muster a shot in the first half to Barca's 11, playing conservatively after a 7-1 thrashing by the Blaugrana in January.

Flick brought on Raphinha for the quiet Bardghji at half-time as he sought to put the game to bed, and soon had the goals he wanted.

Rashford, on his brightest outing since joining from Manchester United on loan, whipped in a dangerous cross which

Raphinha slid home at the far post.

It was Rashford's first direct goal contribution since arriving at the club.

Three minutes later Lopez blasted in a third from long range, which goalkeeper Agirrezabala might have dealt with better.

'CAN STILL IMPROVE'

"Today is a great step for (Lopez) and this is what I want to see every match," said Flick.

"He has amazing quality... and when he has this confidence, he's really great, (but) I think he can still improve."

Raphinha smashed in Barca's fourth at the near post as the Catalans ran riot.

Flick shuffled his pack with Thursday's Champions League opener in mind, bringing on Polish veteran Lewandowski and Dani Olmo.

The 37-year-old striker grabbed his first goal of the season with a lethal finish after Olmo played him in behind the defence.

Flick was also able to bring on midfielder Marc Bernal following a long absence after a severe knee injury, and he set up Lewandowski to dink home the sixth.

"It seems like they've got the measure of us," said Valencia defender Jose Gaya.

"We weren't capable of diminishing their strengths once again, it was a big scoreline again... "We tried to stop them with our game plan but the second goal did us a lot of damage, we couldn't stop it and then came the third." — AFP

Ogier wins Rally Chile to seize world championship lead

CONCEPCION, Chile: Sebastien Ogier clinched his fifth win of the season at Rally Chile on Sunday to move to the top of the World Rally Championship standings, beating Toyota teammate and title rival Elfyn Evans to take a two-point lead with three rallies left.

The eight-time world champion, in his 200th WRC start, pulled clear on the final day's gravel stages to secure Toyota's 10th win of the season. Evans, from Wales, finished 11.0 seconds behind to limit the damage in the drivers' standings.

Much like his triumph in Paraguay last month, 41-year-old Ogier's weekend in Chile began with a difficult on Friday when he slipped to fifth. The momentum swung back his way on Saturday before a decisive final leg.

"It is like we wanted. It has been a more difficult weekend than Paraguay. We had to fight a bit more... but we can be pleased with the way we ended up," France's Ogier said

The result made Toyota the most successful manufacturer in WRC history with 103 wins. It also tightened the Japanese company's grip on a fifth



French driver Sebastien Ogier and co-driver Vincent Landais cross the finish line in their Toyota GR Yaris Rally1 to win the WRC Rally Chile Bio Bio in Concepcion, Chile. — AFP

successive manufacturers' crown, extending its lead over Hyundai to 125 points.

"Now we are number one, a record for Toyota (that is) more than deserved," Ogier added.

Hyundai's Adrien Fourmaux finished third, 46.5 seconds behind Ogier, for his third podium of the season.

The Frenchman's Belgian teammate and defending champion Thierry Neuville was fourth.

Toyota's Sami Pajari finished fifth and title contender Kalle Rovanpera sixth. Rovanpera, who

arrived in Chile second in the championship standings, dropped to third after his weekend was disrupted by a tyre debanding.

Ott Tanak's title hopes suffered a major blow when his Hyundai's engine failed during the Friday stages, putting the Estonian out of the top three, 43 points behind Ogier in the standings.

The next rally is in Central Europe from October 16-19, the 12th round of the season, run on asphalt roads through Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. — Reuters

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SHORTTAKES



Preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated that the electricity production in Oman rose by 8.7 per cent to reach 29,308.6 GWh by the end of last July,

ELECTRICITY OUTPUT CLIMBS 9% TO REACH 30,239 GWH

MUSCAT: Total electricity production in the Sultanate of Oman climbed a significant 9 per cent by the end of July 2025 to reach 30,239.3 gigawatt hours (GWh), compared to 27,746.9 GWh during the same period in 2024.

Preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated that the electricity production in the Sultanate of Oman — which includes power purchases by the Nama Power and Water Procurement Company; and purchases by the Rural Areas Electricity Company — rose by 8.7 per cent to reach 29,308.6 GWh by the end of last July, compared to 26,972.2 GWh during the same period of the previous year.

On the other hand, the total water production dipped 0.8 per cent to reaching 298.938 million m3, compared to 301.242 million m3 in the same period of 2024.

Muscat Governorate posted an 8.1 per cent drop in production, reaching 122.390 million m3 compared to 133.192 million m3 during the same period last year.

Dhofar Governorate reported a 3 per cent decline in output, reaching 43.927 million m3. Water production in the remaining governorates also increased by 5.8 per cent, recording 298.938 million m3, compared to 301.242 million m3 as of end-July 2025. — ONA

OMAN’S INFLATION RATE RISES BY 0.5%

MUSCAT: Oman’s consumer price index (CPI) increased by 0.5% in August 2025 compared to the same month in 2024, based on the 2018 reference year. The average inflation rate from January to August 2025 also rose by 0.8%, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The data showed that the miscellaneous goods and services category recorded the highest increase at 6.0%, followed by transport at 2.7%, and restaurants and hotels at 2.5%.

Health rose by 0.8%, clothing and footwear by 0.4%; and education by 0.1%.

In contrast, food and non-alcoholic beverages decreased by 1.8%, culture and recreation by 0.2%, and furniture, household equipment, and maintenance by 0.1%.

Prices for housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels, communications; and tobacco remained stable.

The average inflation rate for miscellaneous goods and services in Oman from January to August 2025 was around 6.2%.

Regarding food and non-alcoholic beverages in August 2025 compared to August 2024, some subcategories saw increases: other food products rose 3.7%, sugar, jams, honey, and confectionery increased 3.2%, and oils and fats went up 2.2%. Milk, cheese, and eggs rose 1.1%, meat 0.6%; and bread and cereals slightly increased by 0.3%.

— ONA

Al Mudhaibi City attracts 4 projects in H1 2025

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

AL MUDHAIBI Industrial City — operated by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) — garnered five new projects during the first half of 2025. Of these, four projects — worth over RO 1 million in total investments — were prepped for development on a combined area of 14,000 sqm.

This brings the total number of projects localised to date in Al Mudhaibi Industrial City to 12, with an aggregate investment value of RO 11.6 million.

The focus of their activities include the oil and gas, foodstuff, construction, electrical materials and home furnishing.

According to Eng Said bin Khalfan al Shabibi, Acting Director General of Al Mudhaibi Industrial City, infrastructure work on the industrial hub is expected to start within two months. “The tender has already been awarded and work is currently underway to complete the contract signing procedures”, he said.

“The project comprises the construction of internal roads, utility networks (electricity, water, internet and sewage), fencing and main gates, facility building, employee offices and Madayn’s Entrepreneurial and Agricultural Complexes”, he added.

Al Mudhaibi Industrial City, one of Madayn’s newest industrial cities, is coming up on an area of 9 million m2, with around 1.3



Construction underway of new projects at Al Mudhaibi Industrial City

This brings the total number of projects localised to date in Al Mudhaibi Industrial City to 12, with an aggregate investment value of RO 11.6 million.

million m2 earmarked for Phase 1. Strategically located near a highway that connects the Special Economic Zone at Duqm with the Sultanate of Oman’s key ports and border crossings, the city represents a national and strategic project in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate.

Competitive advantages for investors include: 100% rental exemption for two years, followed by a 50% reduction for the next three years.

Under a strategic partnership between Al Mudhaibi Industrial City’s management and the Al Sharqiyah North Governorate office, a joint committee of stakeholders has been constituted to boost investment opportunities and address challenges throughout the investment journey.

Oman’s natural gas output hits 32 bcm

MUSCAT: Oman’s natural gas production — covering both domestic output and imports — recorded a slight increase of 0.7%, reaching 32.8795 billion cubic metres (bcm) by the end of July 2025, compared to 32.6432 bcm during the same period in 2024.

Data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicated that associated gas production rose by 10.8% by the end of July 2025, reaching 7.3086 bcm compared to 6.5944 bcm during the same period in 2024.

In contrast, non-associated gas production (including imports) decreased by 1.8%, totalling 25.5709 bcm by the end of July 2025, compared to 26.0489 bcm last year.

On the consumption side, natural gas usage in industrial projects declined by 3.9%, amounting to 16.3732 bcm by the end of July 2025, compared to 17.0463 bcm last year. Gas



Data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicated that associated gas production rose by 10.8% by the end of July 2025

consumption by the power generation sector saw a slight increase of 0.5%, reaching 8.8048 bcm, down from 8.7575 bcm last year.

Data also showed that gas consumption in oil fields, including industrial zones and the companies, Oman Mining Company and Oman Cement Company, grew by 12.7% to reach 7.54 bcm by the end of July 2025, compared to 6.6931 bcm in the same period of 2024.

Finally, gas usage in industrial areas increased by 10.3%, reaching 161.4 million m3, compared to 146.3 million m3 during the same period in 2024. — ONA

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Both crude contracts gained more than 1% last week as Ukraine stepped up attacks on Russian oil infrastructure, including the largest oil exporting terminal, Primorsk. — Reuters

OIL EDGES UP AFTER ATTACKS ON RUSSIAN ENERGY FACILITIES

Oil prices edged higher on Monday as investors assessed the impact of Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian refineries, while US President Donald Trump said he was prepared to impose sanctions on Russia if Nato nations stop buying Russian oil. Brent crude futures rose 32 cents, or 0.5%, to \$67.31 a barrel by 08:00 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$63.01 a barrel, also up 32 cents, or 0.5%.

Ukraine launched a large attack with at least 361 drones targeting Russia overnight, sparking a brief fire at the vast Kirishi oil refinery in Russia’s northwest, Russian officials said on Sunday. Both crude contracts gained more than 1% last week as Ukraine stepped up attacks on Russian oil infrastructure, including the largest oil exporting terminal, Primorsk. “The attack suggests a

Investors are also watching US-China trade talks in Madrid that started on Sunday amidst Washington’s demands that its allies place tariffs on imports from China over its purchases of Russian oil

growing willingness to disrupt international oil markets, which has the potential to add upside pressure on oil prices”, JPMorgan analysts led by Natasha Kaneva said, referring to the attack on Primorsk.

Primorsk has a capacity to load about 1 million barrels per day of crude, while the Kirishi refinery processes about 355,000 barrels per day

of Russian crude, equal to 6.4% of the country’s total. “If we are seeing a strategic shift by Ukraine towards Russian oil exporting infrastructure — that brings upside risks to forecasts”, IG Markets analyst Tony Sycamore said, despite ongoing concerns around oversupply as OPEC+ plans to ramp up output.

Pressure is mounting on Russia as US President Trump said on Saturday that the US was prepared to impose fresh energy sanctions on Russia, but only if all Nato nations ceased purchasing Russian oil and implemented similar measures.

Investors are also watching US-China trade talks in Madrid that started on Sunday amidst Washington’s demands that its allies place tariffs on imports from China over its purchases of Russian oil.

Last week, softer job-creation data and rising inflation in the US raised concerns about economic growth in the world’s largest economy and oil consumer. — Reuters

UK AND US TO ANNOUNCE TECH, ENERGY DEALS DURING TRUMP VISIT

LONDON: The United States and Britain will announce agreements on technology and civil nuclear energy during US President Donald Trump’s unprecedented second state visit this week, as the UK hopes to finalise steel tariffs under a broader trade deal.

Trump and his wife, Melania, will be treated to a display of British royal pageantry during their visit on Wednesday, including a carriage tour, a state banquet, a flypast by military aircraft and a gun salute.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer will host Trump at his Chequers country residence on Thursday to discuss closer cooperation on issues like Ukraine and to finalise promised lower tariffs for steel and aluminium. A spokesperson for



Ahead of Trump’s arrival, Britain announced over £1.25 billion (\$1.69 billion) of US investment from PayPal, Bank of America and others, with Nvidia and OpenAI expected to announce technology investment deals. — Reuters

Starmer said the leaders would sign “a world-leading tech partnership”, while the two countries will also

sign multi-billion-dollar deals to develop small nuclear projects, which could help power new AI data centres.

Ahead of Trump’s arrival, Britain announced over £1.25 billion (\$1.69 billion) of US investment from PayPal, Bank of America and others, with Nvidia and OpenAI expected to announce technology investment deals.

CoreWeave, a US cloud computing provider, also plans to announce investments in Britain this week.

Despite their differences, Starmer and Trump have developed a good working relationship, overcoming political contrasts to advance economic and security ties between the two countries. — Reuters

Al Mouj Muscat wins two Arabian Property Awards

AL MOUJ Muscat, Oman’s premier lifestyle destination, has further cemented its leadership in luxury property development by securing two distinguished accolades at the Arabian Property Awards 2025–2026.

At an exclusive ceremony held at the Habtoor Grand Resort Hotel in Dubai, Al Mouj Muscat received the ‘Best Development Marketing’ award for Golf Links Residences and ‘Best Mixed-Use Development’ for its upcoming marina front development, underscoring its ongoing legacy of excellence and innovation in the region.

Golf Links Residences was recognised for the strength of its marketing approach, which successfully communicated the project’s elevated lifestyle offering. Set within Al Mouj Muscat’s 18-hole PGA-standard championship golf course — the first of its kind in Oman — Golf Links Residences offers residences with panoramic views of the golf course, ocean, mountains and fairways.

The marketing campaign captured the essence of refined, resort-style living, positioning the community as a premier destination for those seeking privacy, beauty and convenience in one integrated location.

By combining sophisticated visuals, immersive storytelling and targeted engagement, the campaign effectively conveyed the unique lifestyle experience the development offers, setting a benchmark in property marketing.

Al Mouj Muscat also received recognition for its upcoming marina front development, named Best Mixed-Use Development.



This year’s awards follow previous accolades at the Arabian Property Awards, including recognition for Business Park and Jinan Island in 2023–2024, as well as multiple awards in 2022 for Golf Beach Residences and the innovative “Beyond Dreams” marketing campaign.

These awards reflect the strength of our long-term vision and our ability to create integrated communities that resonate with how people aspire to live, work and play today

SAID NASSER AL SHEIBANI CEO of Al Mouj Muscat.

The project sets a new standard in waterfront urban design, blending luxurious residences, thoughtfully designed offices; and vibrant retail and leisure spaces into a cohesive, pedestrian-friendly environment.

Advanced sustainability features, green spaces and well-planned streetscapes create a dynamic lifestyle ecosystem that seamlessly connects residents, businesses and visitors. The development exemplifies modern urban living, where design, functionality and environmental responsibility intersect to deliver an exceptional community experience.

“These awards reflect more than just design and delivery; they recognise the strength of our long-term vision and our ability to create integrated communities that

resonate with how people aspire to live, work and play today”, said Nasser al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat. “Golf Links Residences and our new marina front development demonstrate the breadth and depth of our portfolio, from targeted lifestyle offerings to future-ready, mixed-use urban design.

As we continue enhancing the real estate landscape in Oman, we remain focused on delivering value, meaningful experiences and opportunities for our residents, partners and the wider economy”.

The Arabian Property Awards, part of the globally recognised International Property Awards, celebrate the highest achievements in real estate across design, quality, service, innovation and sustainability.

The Sustainable City — Yiti launches ‘Sustainability Ambassadors’ initiative

MUSCAT: The ‘Sustainability Ambassadors’ initiative was launched at Safana Bint Hatim al Tai School in Yiti, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group), The Sustainable City — Yiti and Carbon 6, with support from the Marriott Business Council.

The programme engages 111 female students from Grades 7 to 9, equipping them with knowledge and skills to adopt sustainable practices and inspire change in their schools and communities.

Through interactive workshops and hands-on activities, students will explore renewable energy, waste recycling transformed into awareness-driven artwork and



The programme engages 111 female students from Grades 7 to 9, equipping them with knowledge and skills to adopt sustainable practices and inspire change in their schools and communities.

clean mobility, all aligned with The Sustainable City — Yiti model and Oman Vision 2040 goals.

This initiative is the first in a series aimed at extending sustainability education and impact across the community.

Khalisa al Balushi, Representative of the General Directorate of Education for the Muscat Governorate, said: “Education is a powerful tool for change.

By instilling sustainability values at an early age, we are preparing future leaders to shape a greener and more responsible Oman”. Mohammed bin Hamad al Rasbi, Social Investment Lead at OMRAN Group, added: “This initiative empowers students to turn sustainability from a concept

into daily practice, creating a lasting impact on society and the environment”. Mahmoud Shehada, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer of The Sustainable City — Yiti, said: “Investing in youth awareness ensures long-term impact, reinforcing sustainability as a way of life”. Abeer bint Ali al Mukhainiyah, Founder of Carbon 6, noted: “By engaging students in hands-on activities, we help turn awareness into action, creating young ambassadors who inspire their communities in line with Oman Vision 2040”.

Participants will graduate as official Yiti Sustainability Ambassadors, ready to promote green practices and drive grassroots change within their communities.

SHORTTAKES



Representatives of Oman Logistics Academy and WingsWay at the MoU signing

OMAN LOGISTICS ACADEMY, WINGSWAY INK PACT TO BOOST LOGISTICS TRAINING

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

In a major step towards strengthening Oman’s position as a regional logistics hub, the Oman Logistics Academy (OLA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with WingsWay Training Institute, a leading Dubai-based provider of logistics and supply chain related training services.

The agreement was signed by Dr Mansoor bin Mahfoodh al Qasimi, CEO of Oman Logistics Academy, with Naveen Kumar Jakkapalli, Co-founder and CEO of WingsWay Training Institute. The collaboration is set to deliver a portfolio of internationally accredited certification programmes in logistics, supply chain management, procurement and contract management.

These programmes are aligned with Oman Vision 2040, supporting the Sultanate of Oman’s goal of becoming a world-class logistics hub and diversifying its economy through knowledge and skills development.

Dr Al Qasimi described the agreement as a milestone in Oman’s human capital development: “This MoU represents a transformative step in Oman’s logistics education journey. By partnering with WingsWay, we are equipping young Omanis with the skills, knowledge and global exposure needed to compete and excel in this vital sector”.

For WingsWay, the partnership reflects its commitment to supporting regional talent. Naveen Kumar Jakkapalli said: “We are honoured to collaborate with Oman Logistics Academy. Our expertise across the GCC and beyond, combined with the Academy’s strong knowledge about industry’s specific requirements for the corporate, government organisations and individual learners, will ensure that Oman produces future-ready logistics professionals with globally benchmarked capabilities”.

The agreement also includes a training-for-employment model, aimed at bridging the gap between education and real job opportunities.

This model will prepare job seekers with both technical qualifications and career pathways in Oman’s expanding logistics industry. Courses will be delivered in Arabic and English, making them accessible to a wide audience of professionals and students.

Beyond logistics and supply chain disciplines, the collaboration will extend to training in aviation, IT, project management, finance, human resources, leadership and soft skills.

Participants will also have the chance to earn certifications from globally respected institutions such as CILT (UK), CIPS (UK), IFPSM (Finland), CPD (UK), CompTIA (US), IATA (Canada) and APS (US).

APP WAR

US may ban TikTok if divest deal fails



The US is prepared to enforce a ban on TikTok if Chinese owner Bytedance cannot complete a divestiture, a government official said.

While most technical terms have been agreed, Chinese negotiators tied any deal to unrelated US tariff and technology demands, complicating negotiations ahead of trade talks in Madrid scheduled this week. — Reuters

VOWS EXTRA PROBE

China says Nvidia ‘violated’ antitrust law



China said Monday that an investigation found Nvidia had run afoul of the country’s antitrust rules, and vowed an additional probe just after trade talks between Beijing and Washington entered a second day.

Beijing is currently engaged in an intense contest with the United States for supremacy in the critical field of semiconductors. — AFP

TRADE TALKS

India, US to hold trade talks in New Delhi



India and the US will hold trade talks in New Delhi on Tuesday following US tariffs that slowed Indian exports to a nine-month low in August.

Officials said technical details are being discussed, though Chinese-linked tariffs and technology issues complicate matters. Exports to the US fell to \$6.86 billion, down from \$8.01 billion in July. — Reuters

Oman boosts tourism with heritage sites

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 15

OMAN is capitalising on its sizable portfolio of Unesco World Heritage Sites, alongside other historical attractions, to attract both domestic and international visitors, according to Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism.

The official emphasised that the combination of history and heritage will be leveraged to support the development of a diverse and sustainable tourism industry that fuels investment, job creation and business opportunities for Omani entrepreneurs.

“Heritage site development is fundamental for fostering interest, encouraging investment and boosting economic vitality”, Al Mahrouqi said. “For instance, Misfat Al Abriyeen and Nizwa have become sustainable destinations, developed by traditional communities and recognised by UN Tourism. These areas allow visitors to engage with culture through local accommodations, art and folklore”, he added in an interview featured in the latest edition of The Report: Oman 2025, published by Oxford Business Group (OBG).

Al Mahrouqi stressed the importance of sustainability in Oman’s long-term strategy for tourism development. “There is a commitment to aligning the sector with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Oman’s ambition to reach net-zero by 2050. The aim is to create a tourism ecosystem that prioritises environmental



Heritage site development is fundamental for fostering interest, encouraging investment and boosting economic vitality.

protection and supports local communities, raising awareness of sustainability, decarbonisation and necessary corrective measures”.

A key example in this regard is the \$1 billion Sustainable City — Yiti project, featuring energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy, water conservation systems and green spaces — elements that will position it to become Oman’s first net-zero community by 2040, he said.

“Tourism is at a critical juncture, as modern travellers increasingly prefer destinations that reflect their values. Furthermore, institutional investors are prioritising sustainability, highlighting the need for promoting eco-conscious investment opportunities”, the minister noted.

At the same time, the Ministry is implementing strategies to

strengthen the resilience of Oman’s tourism sector, notably by diversifying its offerings and limiting the impacts of external shocks, such as those experienced in the post-Covid period. Central to this goal is a drive to boost domestic tourism, which accounted for around 70 per cent of the estimated 1 million tourists recorded in 2024.

“To bolster this resilience, we are promoting Oman’s diverse landscapes and heritage sites by developing new attractions like the Oman Botanic Garden, the Oman Across Ages Museum and the world’s longest zipline over water in Khasab. Additionally, we collaborate with the local hospitality and retail sectors to enhance domestic tourism through various campaigns”, he said. Sustaining the sector’s growth in order to achieve targets set out in Oman Vision



Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi.

2040 will necessitate significant investment and further diversification of Oman’s tourism product, the minister stressed.

“The national goal is to attract 11 million visitors annually by 2040, focusing on adventure, luxury, eco-tourism, cruises, meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions; and sports tourism. Achieving this target will require the development of specialised infrastructure, supported by more than \$5.4 billion in investment aimed at fostering economic growth and benefitting local communities”, he stated.

In this context, Al Mahrouqi commended the role of public-private partnerships in developing the industry, as demonstrated by the Al Mouj Muscat and Jebel Sifah integrated tourism complexes. Likewise, state-owned Omran Group — the tourism investment arm of the Omani government — has also built an extensive portfolio that includes five master developments, 29 hospitality assets and five nature and heritage attractions, he added.

OPAZ taps GOIC for industrial advisory services

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting (GOIC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of industrial and economic consultancy.

The signatories were Shaikh Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and Ahmed bin Mohammed al Mohammed, GOIC CEO.



The heads of OPAZ and GOIC signing the MoU on Monday.

The MoU outlines cooperation and the provision of consultancy services to enterprises operating within economic zones, free zones and industrial cities.

It places particular emphasis on advising the establishment of specialised industrial

clusters in areas supervised by OPAZ, as well as leveraging GOIC’s expertise in supporting the transition to modern manufacturing technologies, upgrading production lines, assisting existing industrial

enterprises in free zones and industrial cities; and training and qualifying their workforce.

The agreement also covers the exchange of industrial data, information and economic feasibility studies for new

projects. Through this MoU, both sides aim to promote the sustainability of projects within free zones and industrial cities, in addition to assessing potential investments.

The cooperation is also expected to maximise the benefits for small and medium-sized industrial enterprises, enhance their competitiveness and link them to large-scale projects.

OPAZ oversees 23 economic zones, free zones and industrial cities, of which 16 are operational and 7 are under development, covering various economic activities. Industrial activities represent the cornerstone, accounting for around 79% of total investments in these zones.

OPINION

Are you aware that you are selling your privacy for free?



TARIQ
AL BARWANI

The writer is
the founder of
Knowledge Oman

THREE days ago, Balqees called me in the morning to inform me that she decided to get serious about fitness and therefore planned to join one of the gym here in Muscat. As part of the preparation and of course the excitement, Balqees during the same day (at night) started to search online for new running shoes. However, she noticed something strange next day. Her social media feeds (instagram and Facebook) were flooded with sportswear advertisement and promotions, some were even from the same brand of sports shoes she was looking for. That was not just it. Balqees further informed me that she was bombarded with gym membership offers, discounts and more promotions of different sport items that include smartwatches and sport outfits. Was this coincidence? Not really. Was it normal? Oh yes, it is, no thanks to what technology can do today. Why? Because our privacy is up for sale. Let me shed light on this on my article this week by first explaining what happened to Balqees and what most of readers is most probably been encountering today. Balqees online search for running (sports) shoes did not go unnoticed. Every action via website or app

was quietly tracked behind the scene and sold (without her knowledge and/or awareness). Every site or page(s) visit, link clicks, social media network scrolls or searches, window swipes and also the infamous acceptance (or “agreement”) on terms and conditions that almost everybody accepts but never actually reads, is fed into millions (if not billions) of Rial Omani industry where privacy is traded. Balqees is not alone, but you, me and everyone else is unfortunately part of it. You don’t believe? Open your social media feed and see how much it knows about you from the content it delivers specially to you. No thanks to the intrusive algorithm that was built specifically to understand and deliver a personalised experience (based on your personal data). Most of people use Google to search, to go to places (via Google maps) and to also communicate (via Google Meet). Others use Facebook and/or Instagram (apart from Snapchat, TikTok, etc) to search and also communicate apart from continuously share personal data. Are you aware that Google and Meta (Facebook and instagram owners) control virtually over half of the world’s digital ad market? And are you aware that they are making billions by giving you almost free platform to join, search, post and

It is reported that the global data economy is estimated to be worth \$3 trillion a year and an entire shadow industry of organisations that search, collect, package and sell everything about you, be it likes, dislikes, home address, places you visit, shopping habits, friends, associates, workplace, etc is valued at approximately \$250 billion globally.

communicate with others? But how are they making money? Of course by selling your habits your search, your conversation and literally everything about you. As the saying goes, there is no such thing as free lunch. Is data the new oil? Yes and I am sure you have heard that phrase a number of times now. It is reported that the global data economy is estimated to be worth \$3 trillion a year and an entire shadow industry of organisations that search, collect, package and sell everything about you, be it likes, dislikes, home address, places you visit, shopping habits, friends, associates, workplace, etc is valued at approximately \$250 billion globally. These organisations are known as data brokers and yes they are making lot of money out of selling you (your personal data that you give for free). Over 10 years ago, I recall being part and delivering a cybersecurity session at BankMuscat in which I stated that there may no longer be “Privacy” in the future (or it would be difficult for one to guard in order to continue using free services online). This is a reality now and your privacy is up for sale. Let’s catch up again next week as we look into some actions that would help guard your privacy.

EUROPE MAY
ESCAPE BOND DOOM,
US UNLIKELY

JOACHIM KLEMENT

Long-term bond yields spiked globally last week, stoking fears about the ability of governments to finance their deficits. Sensible fiscal policies in Europe may stop this “doom loop” in 2026, but there is little reason to believe the US will be so lucky. Long-term government bond yields have been climbing steadily on both sides of the Atlantic in recent years. While this was initially driven by central bank rate hikes pushing real yields higher, bond yields have continued to rise in the last 12 months, even as central banks have started easing. Last week, 30-year US Treasuries peaked at 4.99%, while 30-year UK Gilts rose to 5.69%, the highest since 1998. The worry is that elevated long-term bond yields will make it harder for governments to service their expanding debt piles, which could eventually lead to a crisis. Interest expenses as a share of GDP are still well below the levels seen in the 1990s, but if the rise in bond yields isn’t halted, businesses and governments alike will be forced to cut investment as debt service eats up an increasing portion of revenues. That can create a doom loop where reduced investment lowers economic growth, reducing tax revenues, which, in turn, increases deficits even more.

European bond markets are already seeing the first leg of the dreaded bond yield loop, as higher government deficits have forced bond yields higher. This is especially true in France, where the government is facing a 5.8% deficit and has struggled to pass a budget. Calming European bond markets will mean clamping down on deficits, which will likely require higher taxes, since cutting expenses is almost impossible when Europe is trying to rearm and improve its infrastructure. Yet there is reason to believe this loop will be broken in 2026, even if tax increases are necessary. European investments in infrastructure and defence are set to accelerate in 2026 and both usually have a large fiscal multiplier. Since tax revenues are mostly driven by GDP growth, deficits could shrink if economic activity picks up. Unlike Europe, the US appears to have no interest in decreasing its deficits. The US remains on track for persistent deficits of 6.5% of GDP or higher, apt to create an oversupply of Treasuries, leading to rising yields. If long-term yields continue to rise, it will make it more expensive for businesses to finance capital expenditures, including the huge projected investments in artificial intelligence. — Reuters

How multinationals raise
Omani productivity

FROM the legacy of Port Sultan Qaboos in Muscat, once the beating heart of Oman’s maritime trade, to the emergence of SOHAR Port and Freezone, Al Duqm’s energy and hydrogen ambitions and Salalah’s logistics gateway, Oman’s economic geography has steadily evolved — always open to the world, always learning and always adapting. This openness has been central to Oman’s story: not just in attracting capital, but in translating global partnerships into local advantage. In this spirit, Oman’s recent surge in high-quality foreign direct investment (FDI) — with inflows jumping from \$4.7 billion in 2023 to \$8.7 billion in 2024 — marks more than just balance sheet growth. It represents a strategic shift in capability-building, where investment brings with it know-how, standards and access to global markets. These benefits often unfold quietly — not in GDP charts, but in upgraded workshops, better supplier routines and the CVs of skilled Omani engineers.

International research is conclusive: the most effective channel for raising local firm productivity is through “backward linkages” — when multinational firms procure inputs or services from local suppliers. This interaction forces upgrades. To win and retain MNC contracts, Omani firms must meet global benchmarks in quality, cost and delivery; and in doing so, they grow more competitive and climb higher in the value chain. Oman already has the building blocks. In energy, the country’s In-Country Value (ICV) programmes have deliberately pushed deeper local sourcing, skills and SME participation. Petroleum Development Oman reports that in 2023 it retained roughly \$2.5 billion in-country (around 40% of its supply-chain spend), including close to \$900 million channelled to SMEs — practical proof



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transformation
mentor

that structured local linkages can scale. The national ICV approach, set out by PDO, is explicit: maximise local procurement, develop Omani suppliers; and upgrade people and firms for long-term competitiveness. Linkages are not abstract. Consider Vale Oman in Suhar: beyond large-scale investment and exports, the company emphasises long-term relationships with local suppliers in engineering, HR, maintenance and services — steady channels for process, quality and HSE standards to diffuse into the domestic ecosystem. And at the ecosystem level, SOHAR Port and Freezone’s “green alliance” brings OQ, Vale, Sohar Aluminium, Jindal Shadeed and others under shared sustainability and efficiency commitments — a living laboratory where Omani firms can see global practices up close and adapt them. A second engine of productivity is labour mobility — people trained inside multinationals who move on to local firms or launch new ventures. Workers exposed to multinational standards transfer those skills when they switch employers or start firms, multiplying the initial

investment’s impact. Oman’s Omanisation and skills policies can turn this into a flywheel: as more Omanis train inside foreign ventures, the domestic talent base deepens and circulates across sectors. The key is to make mobility easy and valuable — through professional certification pathways, recognition of prior learning and incentives for SMEs to hire MNC-trained staff. The third channel is demonstration (and competition) effects — learning by observing. When a multinational introduces stricter quality protocols, digitised maintenance, or end-to-end traceability, nearby firms see the bar rise and follow suit. Demonstration effects routinely expose local companies to new management techniques and export opportunities, nudging imitation and upgrade without a formal contract. This is especially potent in Oman’s industrial zones and free zones where co-location compresses learning cycles. Policy architecture matters. Oman’s Foreign Capital Investment Law (Royal Decree 50/2019) modernised the regime, enabling (with limited exceptions) 100% foreign ownership, clearer procedures and faster entry — important reasons the pipeline has strengthened. But the law is the start, not the finish. The quality of projects now arriving — particularly in renewables and green molecules — creates unusually rich spillover potential if we organise around it. Take green hydrogen. Through Hydrom’s structured land auctions, Oman has awarded blocks to integrated wind/solar-to-hydrogen/ ammonia developers and is preparing further rounds — an intentional way to anchor global technology and oft-take relationships in Al Duqm and Dhofar. Recent outreach has highlighted opportunities for leading Korean and other international firms to participate in Round 3 — opening supplier and talent

pathways that local firms can plug into. The point is not just megawatts or export cargoes; it is the codified standards, training modules and vendor requirements that, if localised, lift dozens of Omani SMEs. What should we do next to convert FDI into measurable productivity gains? 1. Institutionalise supplier development where FDI lands. Make supplier-readiness a standard clause in large approvals: shared audit tools, vendor bootcamps and co-funded upgrades (QA/QC labs, ISO certification, digitised planning). Supplier linkages are the most direct route to spillovers; Oman can hard-wire that into project MOUs. 2. Turn labour mobility into an asset. Create an “MNC Skills Passport” that documents competencies gained inside foreign ventures (maintenance, process control, EHS, lean). Offer hiring incentives for SMEs that recruit passport holders; carve fast-track visas for short expert secondments that mentor Omani teams on site. 3. Use ICV as a precision tool, not a quota. Keep rewarding real local value — tooling, design-for-manufacture, after-sales engineering — rather than mere headcount. PDO’s results show what is possible when ICV focuses on capability as much as content. 4. Publish demonstration playbooks. Each strategic FDI (hydrogen, metals, logistics tech) should yield an open “standards pack” for local firms: required certifications, inspection routines, data templates and case studies of process improvements that met a multinational’s bar. This makes the demonstration effect visible and repeatable. If Oman pursues these firm-level levers with the same steadiness that has guided its diversification to date, the payoff will be cumulative: denser supply chains, better jobs for nationals and Omani SMEs that sell confidently into export markets.

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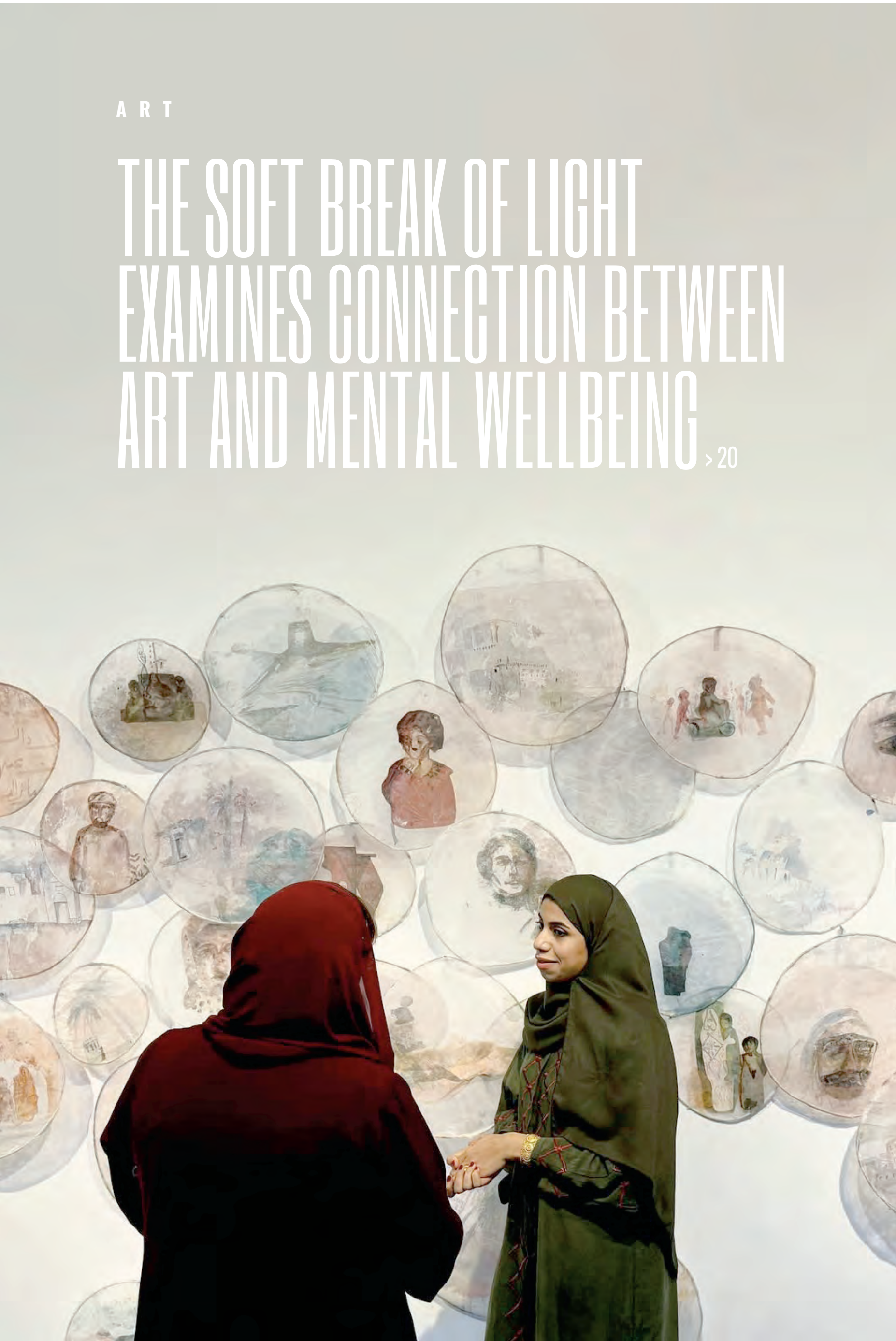
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ART/LIFE



A R T

THE SOFT BREAK OF LIGHT EXAMINES CONNECTION BETWEEN ART AND MENTAL WELLBEING > 20

LIFESTYLE

Nigerian chef aims for rice hotpot record



WITH MORE than five tonnes of rice, tomato concentrate, cooking oil and onions, Nigerian chef Hilda Baci attempted on Friday to conjure up the biggest rice jollof ever made.

The popular west African dish features rice simmered in a tomato sauce, accompanied by meat or fish.

Thousands of people gathered to watch the latest record attempt by the 28-year-old chef and restaurateur, who once held the world record for the longest cooking marathon — more than four days.

Baci said she poured 4,000 kilogrammes (8,800 pounds) of basmati rice, 500 cartons of tomato concentrate, 750 kilos of oil and 600 kilos of onions into a giant steel cauldron to produce the mammoth dish.

“It’s six metres wide and six metres deep”, she proudly said of the cooking pot.

To validate her achievement with Guinness World Records, Baci and her team must now produce evidence of their concoction, including photos and videos.

It took several hours to make her record-seeking version of the dish. All of it was to be given away after the attempt.

Baci was aided by 10 assistants in red uniforms wielding huge wooden spoons to sift in and stir the ingredients as the crowd hailed the dish’s popularity.

“Nigerians eat it all the time — at home, at restaurants, even parties — there’s always a jollof rice”, beauty retailer Bello Fatima Temitope, 31, said as she helped her restaurateur friend with the outsize endeavour.

“It’s easy to eat, people like the taste and its texture. Personally, I like the taste of the tomatoes”, she added.

On a stage near the large pot, Baci’s friends, including influencer Eniolaoluwa Adeoluwa and actress Tomike Adeoye, kept the crowd entertained with music and dance.

While jollof has a common recipe base, different countries — often even each house — have their own signature flavour.

In Nigeria, it is generally spicy and often accompanies grilled meat. In Ghana, it is less spicy and can contain carrots and peppers, hence its version has a more reddish hue.

Liberians often add shrimps and other seafood, whereas in Mali some communities add banana for a unique sweet-sour mix.

Jollof rice has its roots in the ancient Wolof empire, which stretched from what is today Senegal to Mauritania and Gambia. — AFP

Q U I C K F E A T U R E S



ENTERTAINMENT

Argentine band La Mosca Tse-Tse performs onstage during the Cordillera music festival at Simon Bolivar park in Bogota. — AFP



FILM

Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan attends the trailer launch of his upcoming Indian Hindi-language romantic comedy film 'Sunny Sanskari' in Mumbai. — AFP



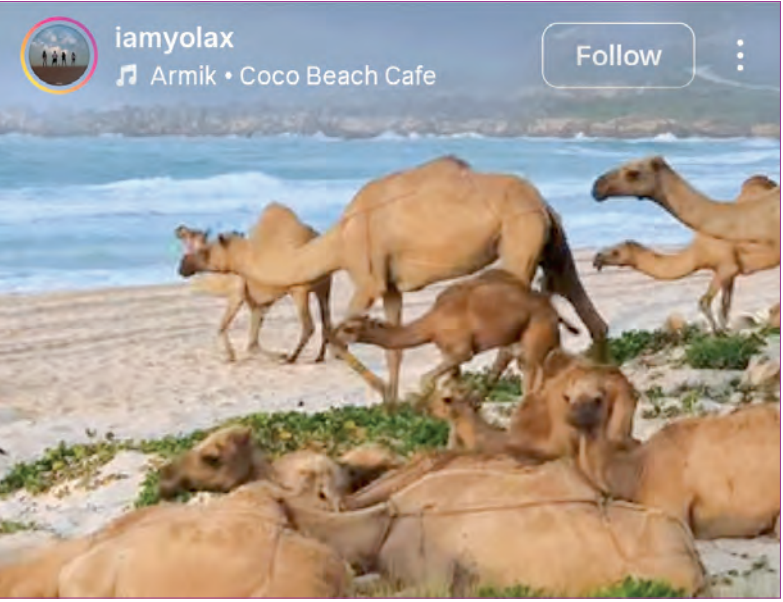
FASHION

A model displays a creation by Gong Xin during the China Fashion week in Beijing. — AFP

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Pharrell Williams, Andrea Bocelli at free Vatican concert



AMERICAN songwriter Pharrell Williams and Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli will co-direct a free concert and light show for tens of thousands of people at the Vatican on Saturday.

“Grace for the World” will be held in St Peter’s Square and feature US singer-songwriter John Legend, French-Beninese singer Angelique Kidjo and Thai rapper BamBam.

The show will also include an aerial and light show featuring around 3,500 drones.

Pope Leo XIV is a music lover — he plays classical piano — but will not attend the concert, according to his official schedule.

The event marks the end of the third “World Meeting on Human Fraternity”, a series of encounters launched after the 2020 publication of the “All Brothers” encyclical by the late pope Francis.

“The world is marked by conflicts and divisions; and you are united in a strong and courageous ‘no’ to war and ‘yes’ to peace and fraternity”, Leo XIV said in a speech to the meeting’s participants on Friday.

“I would like to thank the artists who, through their creativity, will spread this message to the whole world from Bernini’s magnificent colonnade”, he said in a reference to the 17th-century Italian architect and sculptor who designed the piazza’s famous colonnades.

St Peter’s Square can accommodate tens of thousands of people and the event will be broadcast live on several American and Italian channels.

“Together, let’s reflect through music to spread the message of unity and grace for all humanity”, Williams wrote on Instagram ahead of the concert. — AFP



‘Adolescence’, ‘The Studio’ dominate Emmy Awards

SEARING teen murder saga “Adolescence” was the big winner at Sunday’s Emmy Awards, claiming eight prizes including best limited series, while “The Pitt” prevailed in a tight race for best drama at television’s equivalent of the Oscars.

Seth Rogen’s Hollywood satire “The Studio” dominated the comedy categories, earning best series honours and an overall total of 13 Emmys — a record for comedies.

“Adolescence” was arguably 2025’s most talked-about TV hit. The British series for Netflix is the grim cautionary tale of a fictional 13-year-old schoolboy arrested on suspicion of murdering a female classmate with a knife. Its examination of toxic masculinity among young boys and the horrific messages they are exposed to via smartphones and social media, prompted debate around the world.

“We never expected our little programme to have such a big impact”, said co-creator Stephen Graham, who plays the teen suspect’s father. The series earned a whopping 140 million views in its first three months on Netflix. Each of its four episodes is shot in a single take.

“Adolescence” won a total of eight Emmys including best limited series — awarded to shows that end after one season — as well as prizes for writing, directing, lead actor, supporting actress and supporting actor.

The latter went to 15-year-old Owen Cooper (*inline photo*), who became the youngest male actor to win an Emmy.

“Honestly, when I started these drama classes a couple years back, I didn’t expect to be even in the United States, never mind here”, he said.

‘THE PITT’ TRIUMPHS

“The Pitt” won best drama series — the night’s final prize and arguably its most surprising moment.

It is a medical drama reminiscent of “ER”, with the twist that all 15 episodes are set consecutively during the same unbearably stressful shift at an inner-city Pittsburgh hospital.

Tackling everything from abortion rights to mass shootings, “The Pitt”



received little fanfare on its initial release but became a word-of-mouth sensation.

“ER” veteran Noah Wyle won best drama actor for his performance as the emergency room’s haunted leader.

“Anybody who is going on shift tonight or coming off shift tonight, thank you for being in that job — this is for you”, he said.

Katherine LaNasa also won best supporting actress.

Pundits had considered the race too close to call, with sci-fi office thriller “Severance” considered difficult to beat.

A psychological drama set largely in the near-future offices of a shadowy corporation, it had the most nominations of any show this year with 27.

The premise: the “innie” employees of Lumon Industries quite literally leave their outside lives, memories and personalities at the door, thanks to a dystopian new mind-splitting technology.

Its star Britt Lower won best actress and Tramell Tillman won for best supporting actor.

‘I AM PAYING’

“The Studio” — both a love letter to

the industry and a searing send-up of its many hypocrisies, insecurities and moral failings — was named best comedy series.

Rogen, its co-creator, won best actor for his role as a floundering movie executive. The show also claimed writing and directing prizes on Sunday.

It had earned nine statuettes last weekend at a separate ceremony for the more technical Emmy categories.

The best comedy actress Emmy again went to Jean Smart — her fourth for “Hacks”. Hannah Einbinder finally won best supporting actress as the long-suffering assistant to Smart’s late-night comedian.

Einbinder used her speech to describe the agency behind most of US President Donald Trump’s recent immigration raids with an expletive — muted by broadcasting network CBS — before adding “Free Palestine”. Television’s equivalent of the Oscars had promised to steer clear of politics.

In one of the night’s loudest moments, “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” finally won best variety talk series. A staple of late-night US television, the show will end in 2026.

CBS has denied the cancellation is related to parent company Paramount’s \$16 million settlement with Trump. Colbert — a regular critic of the US president — had dubbed the payment “a big fat bribe”. Emmys host Nate Bargatze spent much of the evening focused on his novel initiative to keep winners’ speeches short.

The comedian pledged to donate \$100,000 of his own money to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

The catch? He deducted \$1,000 for every second that a winner’s acceptance speech exceeded the allotted 45 seconds — and added money back on for speeches that ran short.

“Don’t go crazy, because I am paying for this”, quipped Bargatze.

A money counter ran on-screen for much of the gala, but was quietly removed as the evening wore on. The show ended with Bargatze and others pledging large donations that more than covered any deductions. — AFP

FEATURES



THE SOFT BREAK
OF LIGHT EXAMINES
CONNECTION
BETWEEN ART AND
MENTAL WELLBEING

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

MUSCAT 'S artistic landscape has recently been illuminated by the opening of LUMEN 2025: The Soft Break of Light, an evocative exhibition that explores the multifaceted nature of light through a diverse array of contemporary artworks. This exhibition thoughtfully integrates contemporary trends in art, especially those reflecting the growing awareness of mental health and emotional well-being, themes particularly resonant in Oman and across the wider world. Held at the Matti Sirvio Art Galleria in collaboration with H1 Gallery, the exhibition runs until 9th October and features works from prominent local and international artists whose creative explorations delve into light as both a physical and emotional phenomenon.

The opening ceremony was graced by HH Al Sayyida Basma Al Said, a revered mental health expert, PTSD trainer, and founder of the Whispers of Serenity Clinic. Her presence underscored the profound connection between art, awareness, and emotional wellbeing—an underlying theme that resonates throughout the exhibition. As the curators emphasise, The Soft Break of Light is less about spectacle and more about fostering an intimate understanding of how light shapes perception, mood, and space, reflecting contemporary conversations about mental health and emotional resilience. The exhibition showcases an impressive array of media, from abstract and figurative paintings to

capturing light's pulsating energy. Meanwhile, Saleem Sakhi's striking use of deep shadows and sudden highlights reminds viewers of light's power to reveal and obscure, creating intense visual dynamics. Adding a distinctive dimension to the exhibition, Cheryl Ann presents two ceramic wall pieces featuring equine motifs. One showcases a glossy, pale surface with simple reddish-brown line drawings reminiscent of cave paintings; the other employs a matte black glaze with rust-ochre silhouettes, evoking scenes at twilight. These works exemplify how ceramics, traditionally utilitarian objects, can now serve as expressive mediums that evoke memory, rhythm, and narrative. Together, these artworks articulate a nuanced



delicate mixed media works and ceramics. Ibrahim Al Balushi's abstract canvases employ gentle hues of grey, blue, and white, capturing the delicate motion of light passing through mist, evoking spaces of contemplation and serenity. Conversely, Ibrahim Al Shabibi's geometric compositions utilise sharp contrasts and precise lines, echoing the clarity of architectural illumination, while Bashair Al Balushi's finely detailed paper works, akin to fragments of poetry, express light's fragile and transient nature. Dreamlike and evocative, Sara Khan's paintings evoke half-remembered moments suspended in an ephemeral glow. Mohamed Al Lawati's textured surfaces seem to emanate inner luminescence, reminiscent of geological layers revealing bursts of light beneath the surface. Salim Al Salami employs rhythmic, shifting tones to suggest movement under fluctuating illumination—

dialogue on light's role—not only as a physical phenomenon but as a symbol of emotional clarity, introspection, and cultural identity. The exhibition's overarching narrative invites viewers to reflect on how illumination influences perception and societal wellbeing, echoing themes of mental health highlighted through the presence of HH Al Sayyida Basma. In the context of contemporary Omani art, The Soft Break of Light reflects a broader cultural engagement with themes of illumination, perception, and emotional depth. It underscores the significance of light not just as a natural phenomenon but as a symbolic and transformative force within both the natural and emotional worlds. The exhibition offers an intimate exploration of how light influences space, material, and mood, highlighting its quiet, yet profound, power to inspire reflection and understanding. Overall, this exhibition presents a compelling narrative on the subtle yet transformative power of light, resonating with contemporary artistic trends and societal conversations about mental well-being, cultural identity, and emotional expression.