

OMAN

دولة عمان

DAILY

Observer

ALZHEIMER'S MAKES FAMILIES LOOK FOR ANSWERS

THE

SUNRISE 05:51 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 04:33 AM

DHUHR 12:04 PM

ASR 03:31 PM

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ISHA 07:46 PM

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Decrees ratify amendments to conventions

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

Royal Decree No 73/2025 on ratifying amendments to the convention establishing the International Maritime Organization.

Article (1) ratifies the aforementioned Convention's amendments in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) says that the competent departments shall deposit the endorsement document as per the aforesaid Convention's amendments in accordance with its provisions.

Article (3) states that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 74/2025 on ratifying the agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations signed on June 28, 2025 at the FAO headquarters in Rome on establishing a Representation Office.

Article (1) ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — ONA

INBRIEF

Sayyid Badr discusses regional issues with Iran, Egypt FMs

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, held a phone call with Abbas Araghchi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on Tuesday. The two ministers exchanged views on the latest regional developments and consulted on ways to address and handle them. Both ministers underscored the importance of continuing consultation, coordination and intensifying diplomatic efforts to resume constructive cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency. On Monday, Sayyid Badr held a phone call with Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The call aimed to consult on current developments in the region and coordinate the efforts of the two nations to help de-escalate regional tensions. The ministers also sought to advance constructive dialogue aimed at achieving justice, peace, understanding and harmony on both regional and global scales.

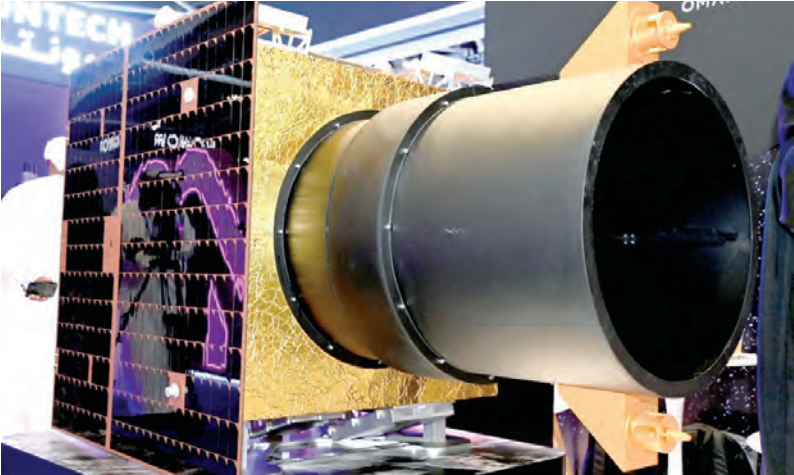
— ONA

Oman set to launch AI-equipped satellite, platform in 2026

MUSCAT: Represented by Oman Lens company, the Sultanate of Oman announced that it will launch an efficient Omani satellite during the first half of next year.

The satellite will be equipped with top-capacity resolution imaging technology at a resolution of 50 cm, panchromatic and multi-spectral imaging capabilities (RGB and NIR), in addition to an onboard artificial intelligence platform that will have a computing capacity exceeding 400 trillion operations per second.

The satellite will perform high-



The satellite will be equipped with top-capacity resolution imaging technology.

resolution Earth observation and remote sensing operations. Its uses also include the prediction and location of floods, street planning in cities and the reporting of vegetations, both beneficial and harmful.

The announcement was made during the signing ceremony of cooperation agreements inked by Oman Lens company with a number of parties, including Oman Chromite Company (OCC), Phoenix Space and Technology Company and other agents authorised to

resell the company's products and services, like Mustafa Sultan Enterprises, GIS HUB and Bedrock Mineral Resources Consulting Company (BMRC).

The signing of the agreements was in pursuance of efforts made by Oman Lens company to reshape the future of Earth observation by integrating artificial intelligence technologies with high-resolution satellite imaging, following the company's successful launch of OL1 a one-metre capacity satellite.

— ONA

World condemns Israel's heinous attack on Qatar

O m a n e x p r e s s e s f u l l s o l i d a r i t y w i t h Q a t a r

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN expresses its full solidarity with the State of Qatar, its leadership, government and people — and strongly denounces the heinous attack launched by Israel on Qatari territory.

The Sultanate of Oman further condemns Israel's acts of political assassination and perfidy, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, a grave breach of state sovereignty, and a dangerous escalation that threatens regional security and stability and undermines the prospects for peace.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Tuesday, the Sultanate of Oman affirms its support for all measures taken by the State of Qatar in confronting this provocative aggression. It calls on the international community to uphold its moral and political responsibilities and to employ its legal authority to deter Israel and curb its violations of the foundations of security and peace in the region.

Israel on Tuesday launched an attack on the leadership of Hamas in Qatar.

Qatar, which has been a key mediator in efforts to broker a truce in Gaza, said Israeli strikes targeted the homes of several members of Hamas's political bureau residing in the Gulf country, where the group's senior leadership is based.

The strikes were carried out jointly by the military and the Shin Bet security agency, the two bodies said in a statement.

Neither Israeli officials nor domestic media have confirmed whether the strikes hit their intended targets. Hamas has also not commented on the fate of its leaders.



A damaged building following an Israeli attack on Doha, Qatar, on Tuesday. — Reuters

“Qatar strongly condemns the cowardly Israeli attack that targeted residential buildings housing several members of the Political Bureau of Hamas in the Qatari capital, Doha. This criminal assault constitutes a blatant violation of all international laws and norms, and poses a serious threat to the security and safety of Qataris and residents in Qatar.”

“While the State of Qatar strongly condemns this assault, it confirms that

it will not tolerate this reckless Israeli behaviour and the ongoing disruption of regional security, nor any act that targets its security and sovereignty,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al Ansari said on X.

“The Israeli strikes are a flagrant violation of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Qatar. All parties must work towards achieving a permanent ceasefire, not destroying it,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters. — Agencies

Nepal protesters set parliament ablaze as PM quits

KATHMANDU: Nepali youth protesters set parliament ablaze on Tuesday as the veteran prime minister obeyed furious crowds to quit, after one of the deadliest crackdowns in years, in which at least 19 people were killed.

Protesters flooded the streets of Kathmandu, some jubilant and celebrating, others setting fire to government buildings and brandishing automatic rifles.

The rapid descent into chaos shocked many, and Nepal's military warned against “activities that could lead the country into unrest and instability” in the Himalayan nation of 30 million people.

Protests began on Monday with

demands that the government lift a ban on social media and tackle corruption, with police trying to crush the rallies - including using live ammunition, according to Amnesty International.

On Tuesday, despite the government rolling back its order and the apps returning online, protests reignited, spreading from the capital to multiple cities nationwide. “The Nepal government has fallen, the youth have won the protest,” said key protest figure Sudan Gurung, in a post on newly-restored Instagram. “The future is ours.”

Protesters on Tuesday attacked and set fire to K P Sharma Oli's



K P Sharma Oli

house, four-time prime minister and leader of the Communist Party. His whereabouts are not known.

President Ramchandra Paudel, whose offices were also set on fire by mobs, pleaded for calm.

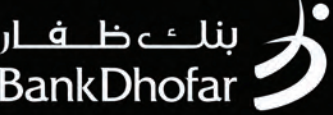
“I appeal to all parties to exercise restraint, to not allow further damage,” Paudel said in a statement.

It did not seem to be heeded.

Protesters, mostly young men, were seen waving the country's national flag as they dodged water cannons.

The International Crisis Group called it a “major inflection point in the country's uneasy experience with democratic rule”. SEE ALSO P7

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SHORT TAKES



The Omani delegation was headed by Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Chairman of the Tax Authority. — ONA

GCC MEETING LOOKS AT UNIFYING TAX POLICIES

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the 15th meeting of the Committee of Heads and Directors of Tax Administrations in the GCC, which was held in Kuwait. The Omani delegation was headed by Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Chairman of the Tax Authority.

This meeting comes within the framework of strengthening cooperation between Tax Authorities and administrations, as well as improving the efficiency of tax systems in the GCC. It also aims to unify tax policies and procedures in line with global economic developments and to support the path of Gulf economic integration.

The heads and directors also discussed mechanisms for exchanging information and expertise to combat tax evasion and avoid double taxation among the member states, which helps them build a Gulf tax system characterised by fairness and transparency.

Al Jashmi emphasised the importance of this meeting in strengthening joint Gulf cooperation and coordinating positions to address global tax challenges. He noted the Sultanate of Oman's keenness to support all efforts aimed at achieving the shared economic goals of the GCC countries. — ONA



The campaign is part of the ministry's efforts to strengthen preventive healthcare.

MOH LAUNCHES HPV VACCINATION FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health has begun administering the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to Grade 6 students aged 12 years in public and private schools, following its inclusion in the national school immunisation programme.

The campaign is part of the ministry's efforts to strengthen preventive healthcare and promote early intervention to safeguard students' health and combat non-communicable diseases.

The decision comes as part of the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations based on scientific evidence, which confirms the effectiveness of the vaccine in preventing several types of cancer, particularly cervical cancer, as well as other cancers of the reproductive system in both males and females, in addition to other HPV-related diseases.

Health officials described the launch of the campaign as a strategic step to reinforce public health and protect future generations from the burden of disease. The HPV vaccine is considered safe and effective, offering up to 90 per cent protection against cancers linked to the virus. HPV is one of the most common viruses worldwide and can remain in the body for years without symptoms, potentially leading to various forms of cancer, including cervical, oral and pharyngeal cancers, as well as warts.

SCATTERED RAINS EXPECTED ACROSS GOVERNORATES

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

The Oman Meteorology Office has forecast cloudy to partly cloudy weather conditions across most governorates of the Sultanate of Oman from September 9 to 13.

According to Oman Met, the cloud cover is expected to bring scattered rainfall in some areas. The weather bulletin highlights that the unsettled weather is likely to affect the majority of

governorates, with occasional rain showers anticipated as cloud masses intensify.

The general weather forecast suggests that the flow and formation of clouds of varying heights are the underlying causes of this weather pattern.

This forecast indicates an increase in cloudiness and a chance of intermittent rainfall across Oman. There will be partly cloudy to cloudy conditions over the coastal strip of Dhofar Governorate



The weather forecast suggests that the formation of clouds of varying heights are the underlying causes of this weather pattern.

and its adjacent mountains with chances of intermittent drizzle.

Additionally, the formation of fog and low clouds is expected over the coasts of the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The rest of the Sultanate of Oman's governorates are expected to have generally clear skies with the influx of high and medium clouds.

The maximum temperature was recorded in Maqshin at 45.8 °C, while the lowest was recorded in Qairoon Hairitti at 19.2 °C.

Oman leads region in postal development index

THE Sultanate of Oman was awarded the Regional Champions Award by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) after achieving a significant leap in the 2025 Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD).

For the first time, Oman joins the category of countries with the world's most developed postal services, ranked at the eighth level globally and first in the Arab region by the UPU.

The award was presented during the 28th UPU Congress, hosted in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 8-19 September 2025.

This progress is an international recognition of Oman's readiness in digital transformation and its growing leadership in logistics and e-commerce. The 2IPD measures a country's performance across four main pillars: reliability, access, relevance and resilience, based on big data, official statistics, and extensive surveys.

This methodology gives the index solid international credibility, making it a reliable reference for postal planning and policymaking. The award reflects Oman's leading position in the region and its ability to turn operational and digital improvements into tangible achievements.

This accomplishment is the result of integrated efforts by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, which has formulated policies and implemented ambitious national programmes in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.



This progress is an international recognition of Oman's readiness in digital transformation and its growing leadership in logistics and e-commerce. — ONA

It also highlights the effective regulatory role of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) in fostering a fair and sustainable competitive environment and the operational role of Oman Post (the national operator) in developing services and expanding its network to meet the requirements of digital transformation and logistical trends.

This achievement solidifies Oman's growing position in the postal sector on both regional and global levels, affirming the success of national policies and strategies in enhancing the efficiency of postal and logistical services, strengthening the digital infrastructure, supporting the national economy and contributing to the growth of e-commerce. — ONA

Meeting addresses unwanted fishing activities

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

Tourists engaging in unwanted activities that damage nature at the fishing harbour have been a key focus of the second meeting of the Sea Traditions Committee.

The meeting was chaired by Ahmed bin Ali bin Hamdan al Shehhi, the Wali of Al Seeb, on Tuesday. Additionally, various issues and concerns of fishermen in the Wilayat of Al Seeb were addressed by the Wali of Al Seeb Office during the meeting.

“The focus of the second meeting was tourists engaging in such activities at the fishing harbour of Al Seeb, as this practice has been detrimental to the traditional fishermen,” said the wali after the meeting. The meeting was primarily convened to follow



The meeting was chaired by Ahmed bin Ali bin Hamdan al Shehhi, the Wali of Al Seeb.

up on fishermen's affairs and discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with artisanal fishing and fishery conservation.

During the meeting, several issues related to organising

artisanal fishing and managing maritime activities were reviewed, including the standards and requirements for replacing artisanal fishing boats. Additionally, feedback from fishermen regarding

tourists engaging in such activities at the fishing harbour in Al Seeb was discussed.

The Committee listened to representatives of the fishermen, who presented various requests and proposals to address the challenges they face during their fishing activities. This input aims to contribute to enhancing fishery sustainability.

This meeting highlighted the committee's role in organising fishermen's affairs and preserving maritime heritage. A statement issued after the meeting emphasised that the local committee examines challenges, submits proposals, and makes recommendations to develop the fisheries sector and increase resource profitability, ultimately supporting sustainable development efforts in Al Seeb.

SHORTTAKES



Both sides exchanged views on a number of topics of mutual interest, particularly in academic fields. — ONA

NDC Commandant receives Bangladeshi delegation

MUSCAT: Rear Admiral Ali bin Abdullah al Shidi, Commandant of the National Defence College (NDC) at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, received a delegation from the Defence Services Command and Staff College of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh today at Bait Al Falaj. The delegation was led by Brigadier Mohammed Mehdi Hasan, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on a number of topics of mutual interest, particularly in academic fields. The visiting delegation was also briefed on the NDC’s facilities and equipment and toured its various departments. — ONA



The event was held under the auspices of Dr Said bin Hamad al Rubaii, President of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences. — ONA

Conference focuses on risk management in education

MUSCAT: The Military Technological College (MTC) on Tuesday inaugurated a conference on risk management in education titled “Future Challenges and Solutions.”

The event, which saw the participation of numerous academics and education sector specialists, was held under the auspices of Dr Said bin Hamad al Rubaii, President of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences.

The conference features eight main themes, discussing a range of topics on risk and crisis management in educational institutions and the mechanisms for addressing them.

It also aims to find suitable solutions, present proposals for developing national policies on the subject, and encourage research and studies while engaging the community and enhancing its awareness of educational risks. — ONA

TOURISTS SPENDING INCREASES OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

The expenditure of inbound tourists in the country has been increasing over the last four years, from 2020 to 2024.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), tourist expenditure rose from RO 183,879 in 2020 to RO 989,107 in 2024. Out of this amount, RO 307,115 was spent on air transport services, RO 212,504 on accommodation services, and RO 132,701 on food and beverage (F&B) services.

Domestic tourist expenditure also saw an increase, from RO 555,077 in 2020 to RO 833,837 in 2024. Of this, RO 225,446 was spent on accommodation services, RO 323,078 on food and beverage-serving services, and RO 100,662 on shopping.

As of 2024, there are 1,031 hotels in the Sultanate of Oman with a total of 35,948 rooms, employing 23,873 people. Within the hospitality sector, 7,686 Omanis are employed compared to 16,187 expatriates.

Tourism-related activities generated revenues of RO 1,846,324



Tourism-related activities generated revenues of RO 1,846,324 in 2024.

in 2024. This revenue came from various sources including hotel activities (RO 367,391), real estate activities of leased property (RO 15,801), restaurants (RO 446,880), road transport (RO 155,254), air transport (RO 443,667), transport equipment rental (RO 22,777), travel agencies and other reservation services (RO 368,694), and cultural services (RO 25,860). In 2024, there are 29 five-star hotels, with 16 located in Muscat, two in Al Batinah North, one in Al Batinah South, two in Al Dakhiliyah and eight in Dhofar.

Symposium highlights the legacy of Al Lamki

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

IN a cultural gathering that bridges history and intellectual heritage, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by the Literary Forum, on Tuesday inaugurated a two-day scientific symposium titled ‘Readings in the Thought of Shaikh Sulaiman bin Nasser al Lamki’.

The event was held at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque Hall, under the auspices of Dr Shaikh Kahlan bin Nabhan al Kharousi, Assistant Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman. The symposium aims to shed light on the multifaceted life and intellectual contributions of Shaikh Al Lamki, one of Oman’s most prominent scholars of the early 20th century. A group of distinguished researchers is presenting papers that explore his upbringing, academic journey and the historical role he played in Omani society.

Commenting on the significance of the event, Nasser bin Salim al Sawafi, Assistant Director-General at the Literary Forum, said that the symposium comes within the framework of a comprehensive research and documentation project titled “Readings in the Thought of Scholars.” He added: “Shaikh Sulaiman al Lamki was a distinguished figure in early 20th-century Oman. Born in 1862 in the Village of Al Dhahir in Al Rustaq, he grew up in a family known for its knowledge and leadership. History has recorded many of his contributions and positions, and through this symposium, we aspire to highlight his legacy and compile it into a publication that preserves his heritage for future generations.”

He noted: “Reviving the legacies of Omani scholars and thinkers demonstrates the depth and richness of Omani civilisation. It also introduces the younger generations to their nation’s history, strengthening their sense of identity and belonging. This effort



The event was held under the auspices of Dr Shaikh Kahlan bin Nabhan al Kharousi, Assistant Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman.

aligns with the ministry’s cultural strategy, which is rooted in the values of citizenship and authentic identity, and resonates with the ambitious Oman Vision 2040, led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.”

Shaikh Sulaiman al Lamki is remembered as a man who combined scholarship with leadership, leaving a mark on both intellectual and social life.

The symposium highlights his role in shaping thought, guiding society, and enriching the cultural identity of Oman. Through the research presented, his contributions are revisited not only as a historical record but as a source of inspiration for the present and future.

In an emotional address on behalf

of the family, Mohamed bin Ahmed al Lamki expressed deep appreciation to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for its efforts to document and celebrate the life of his grandfather. He said: “We are honoured that Shaikh Sulaiman’s legacy is being remembered in such an esteemed scholarly setting. This initiative ensures that his contributions will remain alive in the memory of generations to come.”

The symposium reflects Oman’s commitment to highlighting the achievements of its scholars, not only as part of the nation’s historical memory but also as a vital resource in shaping identity and promoting cultural presence at the regional and international levels.

Programmes to enhance competitiveness in digital economy

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

During Comex 2025, the Ministry of Labour signed two cooperation programmes with the Oman Information Technology Society (OITS) and Thawani Company. The goal is to strengthen partnerships with community institutions and the technology sector, develop and qualify national competencies in the technology sector, and ultimately raise the competitiveness of Omani youth for future jobs while ensuring labour market stability.

The ministry and OITS, through the IT Sector Skills Unit, signed a joint cooperation programme to develop national professional standards in the IT sector, conduct analytical studies, and provide employee support for two years. This programme also focuses on professional accreditation through the implementation of professional

classification certificates and licences for IT sector workers, boosting confidence in national competencies and aligning with labour market requirements.

Additionally, the ministry signed a cooperation agreement with Thawani Company, a leading provider of innovative digital solutions, to explore implementing exclusive moral incentives for members of the Ejada system. This agreement, part of the Comex Global Technology Exhibition 2025, aligns with the national drive to adopt advanced digital solutions that support the economy, improve employee quality of life, and enhance the corporate work environment to boost competitiveness on the path to a digital economy.

Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development, emphasised the importance of this



The goal is to strengthen partnerships with community institutions and the technology sector.

cooperation in providing digital economic services that support entrepreneurship and expand the national economy. This partnership reflects Oman’s commitment to adopting technological solutions for economic and social development, supporting small and medium-sized

enterprises, self-employment and innovation.

Eng Majid bin Fayel al Amri, CEO of Thawani, highlighted that this collaboration strengthens Oman’s position in the digital economy and supports innovative solutions that benefit individuals and the national

economy. Transitioning to a digital economy is seen as a strategic path towards sustainable growth and enhancing competitiveness in regional and international markets.

Over 210,000 government employees and their families will benefit from exclusive offers across various sectors such as hospitality, travel and entertainment. Thawani will ensure a secure and user-friendly digital platform with real-time offer tracking and detailed reports to enhance transparency and service efficiency.

The agreement also allows government agencies to showcase their rewards and initiatives on the platform, giving employees the freedom to choose based on their interests and needs. The study of these incentives’ impact on job performance and satisfaction will contribute to improving the work environment and achieving corporate goals.

SPOTLIGHT

ALZHEIMER'S MAKES FAMILIES LOOK FOR ANSWERS

Caregivers say having doctors and nurses do a home visit to treat the patients would make life much easier.

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

THE shock of realising a family member is going through the onset of Alzheimer's is challenging in many ways. Purple Cafe, an initiative of Oman Alzheimer's Society (OAS) for the caregivers of Alzheimer's patients, held their annual event at Intercity Hotel, Bausher, marking World Alzheimer's Month.

At the yearly Alzheimer's caregivers support group event organised by the Oman Alzheimer's Society, participants reflected on how the journey of caring for a loved one with dementia can, despite its many challenges, bring families closer together.

During the discussions, many shared how difficult it is in the beginning to recognise the early signs of the illness, with denial often being the first response. This stage is frequently accompanied by feelings of guilt and a kind of early grief, as families begin to realise the changes that lie ahead.

Reflecting, Lubaina al Sulaimani explained, "A mother is the strongest pillar in a family, so it is difficult when Alzheimer's has its impact on her. We take each day as it comes. Living with it is not the same as hearing about it."

A central part of the discussion focused on where to turn for help. One participant shared a story of their grandmother, who was diagnosed with end-stage cancer, and she was unable to voice her pain, and doctors thought her agitation was due to Alzheimer's itself.

"Caregivers highlighted the importance of reaching out to healthcare providers, community resources and

support groups like Purple Cafe to avoid isolated in the process," said Dr Hamed al Sinawi, Chairman of Oman Alzheimer's Society, senior consultant in geriatric psychiatry, and head of the Department of Behavioural Medicine at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital.

The group also spoke about the later stages of the illness, when communication becomes limited and care needs become more demanding. Members reflected on how to continue showing love and affection in simple but powerful ways, such as touch, presence and small gestures of kindness.

Some of the caregivers shared their struggle with getting medical care for their loved ones, especially at the advanced stages when the person with Alzheimer's is bedridden and unable to communicate; therefore, transferring him or her to a hospital was a big challenge. Caregivers acknowledged that having doctors and nurses do a home visit to treat the patients would make life much easier for patients and caregivers.

Accepting the condition for what it is was described as a painful but liberating step, one that allows families to focus less on what is lost and more on the moments of connection that remain.

Sabah al Azri, a psychologist and a core facilitator of Purple Cafe, said that participants consistently express that the groups provide a safe, non-judgmental space where they can openly share their emotions and caregiving challenges. They appreciate the opportunity to connect with others facing similar situations, which alleviates feelings of isolation and stress.

"Caregivers also report feeling understood, validated and uplifted, as they gain both emotional support and practical advice," Sabah pointed out.

Nasser al Riyami shared his experience with his father: "He does not talk to us anymore, but we talk to him every day. Take them out for walks and visit beaches, and do not feel shy even if they talk to strangers. We must have handrails at home because falls

are dangerous, especially if they lead to surgery, because they will have to go through anaesthesia. We can only hope for a cure for Alzheimer's."

On a practical note, caregivers exchanged tips about feeding, sharing experiences and strategies that have worked for them in easing mealtime challenges. These small but meaningful pieces of advice offered reassurance and a reminder that no one is alone in facing the day-to-day realities of caregiving.

LUBAINA AL SULAIMANI

A mother is the strongest pillar in a family, so it is difficult when Alzheimer's has its impact on her. We take each day as it comes. Living with it is not the same as hearing about it.

SHORT TAKES



Milyausha Aituganova and Mohammed al Ajmi, after signing the agreement in Kazan

Oman Film Society signs pact with Kazan International Film Festival

KAZAN: The Oman Film Society has signed a cooperation agreement with the Kazan International Film Festival during its twenty-first edition, hosted in Kazan, the Russian Republic of Tatarstan. The agreement was signed by its KIFF Executive Director, Milyausha Aituganova, and OFS chairman, Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi. The agreement includes a number of provisions, most notably the exchange of film screenings between the two parties, the organisation of training workshops and the exchange of expertise in cinematic fields, in addition to opening avenues for future joint film production. Fahd bin Ramadan al Maimani, Director of Local and International Relations at the Society, emphasised that this agreement represents a qualitative leap for Omani cinema, as it opens the door for joint projects and cultural and artistic exchange with Russia. He indicated that through this agreement, the association seeks to enhance the presence of Omani cinema in international forums, develop the capabilities of national cadres, and build long-term strategic partnerships. — ONA

SAF BEGINS ADMISSION PROCEDURES



MUSCAT: The Staff Command of the Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF), in coordination with the Ministry of Labour, on Tuesday began the assessment and admission procedures for the recruitment of Omani citizens (holders of bachelor’s degrees) as university officer cadets. These diligent efforts by the Ministry of Defence and the Sultan’s Armed Forces are part of ongoing plans and programmes to employ citizens. — ONA

Promoting literacy in digital age

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, observed International Literacy Day, which falls on September 8, under the theme “Promoting literacy in the digital age.” The ceremony included a range of diverse events and programmes aimed at raising awareness of the importance of literacy, as it represents an obstacle to social, cultural and economic progress in many countries. The literacy rate among Omani citizens by 2024 has decreased to 0.54 per cent in the age group (15-44) years, reflecting the success of the Ministry of Education in implementing extensive strategic literacy programmes. 230 educational classes were opened for the 2024/2025 academic year, encompassing approximately 2,340 male and female students across various educational directorates in the governorates. Technology was incorporated as an effective tool for teaching reading and writing, with students participating in training sessions that utilised digital tools to simplify vocabulary and information, making the learning process more interactive and engaging. Educational materials, curricula and exercises were also sent to students’ phones in an electronic format, allowing them to review lessons and complete exercises in their free time, alongside the ability to search for additional information that enriches the educational content. Practical experiments were applied using artificial intelligence (AI) to support the educational process in literacy classes, and worksheets were presented by teachers and specialists in the lifelong learning departments of the educational



Literacy is a fundamental pillar for empowering people to contribute effectively to building their society and enhancing their capabilities

governorates. This contributed to expanding the learners’ knowledge and enhancing their ability to absorb information and transform it into useful educational content, in addition to providing a set of computerised programmes that align with the requirements of the modern era. This celebration confirms that literacy in its various forms — alphabetical, cultural, and digital — represents a fundamental pillar for empowering people to contribute effectively to building their society and enhancing their capabilities, in alignment with Unesco’s orientations, which have made this international day an annual occasion to remind us of the importance of spreading knowledge and entrenching a culture of continuous learning, based on the 1966 UN resolution adopting this international occasion to highlight the importance of literacy. — ONA

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning launched the “My Home Is Ready” (Maskani Jahez) service as part of its housing options. The launch took place during the ministry’s participation in the Comex 2025 exhibition. The service is designed to save time and effort for those eligible for the housing assistance programme. It allows them to view ready-to-move-in homes that meet social housing standards, which are offered by individuals, developers, and contractors. This provides more options and helps families find a home that suits their needs in terms of space and design. The new service is distinguished by its ability to provide integrated and ready homes to eligible

MOHUP LAUNCHES MY HOME IS READY SERVICE



The service is designed to save time and effort for those eligible for the housing assistance programme.

individuals, accelerating their access to suitable residential units. It also aims to encourage community participation from individuals, real estate developers, and contractors in supporting the social housing sector, while also revitalising the real estate market and stimulating the supply of housing units. Homes listed on the service are subject to engineering evaluations by a specialised ministry team to ensure they meet approved technical standards and requirements. This includes having municipality-approved blueprints, a building completion certificate, deeds and a cadastral map. — ONA

Riyada showcases digital initiatives at Comex 2025

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

RIYADA is participating in the 34th edition of Comex 2025, held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, with the participation of 20 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), along with startups specialising in different fields including artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and other modern technological fields. The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development confirmed that its participation in the exhibition this year includes a dedicated pavilion to showcase its diverse digital experiences and initiatives in several areas, most notably Riyada’s smart personal assistant, an AI-powered smart assistant available at all times to answer all inquiries and facilitate access to services by clarifying procedures and providing accurate, immediate responses around the clock.



Riyada, through its participation in the exhibition, affirms its ongoing commitment to supporting the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Riyada’s most prominent initiatives at the exhibition include the Investment Map, a planning and analysis tool that provides a comprehensive and updated database on available investment opportunities in various sectors and regions, and displays detailed information

on resources, comparative advantages, and infrastructure. and supporting systems, enabling investors and entrepreneurs to make investment decisions based on accurate data and direct investments toward sectors with high economic feasibility. This is in addition to 14 e-services offered by the Riyada smartphone application in the field of entrepreneurship, which aims to facilitate beneficiaries’ access to services and procedures electronically, ensuring easy and rapid access to a comprehensive range of services. In an initiative that supports the development of the business environment and enhances ease of access to information and services, Riyada, through its participation in the exhibition, affirms its ongoing commitment to supporting the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the Sultanate of Oman, contributing to accelerating the pace of digital transformation, and enabling entrepreneurs to benefit from advanced smart solutions.

INTERNATIONAL
TENDER
NOTICE



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

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources
Announces the following International Tender:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
575/2025/MAFWR/HQ-66	Consulting Services for Economic and Social Feasibility of Dam Exploitation in the Sultanate of Oman	Thursday 4/9/2025	Thursday 18/9/2025	Tuesday 14/10/2025	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First grades.	(300/-) Omani Riyals

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

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

- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies, and for International company that not have head quarters in the Sultanate of Oman should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender) and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources.

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

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

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

WORLD

REVIVING UNREST



Sudanese women sit in a tent at a displacement camp, in Al Dabba. — Reuters

PARAMILITARY LAUNCHES STRIKES ON SUDAN CAPITAL

PORT SUDAN: A wave of paramilitary drone strikes hit key infrastructure and military targets in and around Sudan's army-held capital on Tuesday, bringing to an abrupt end a period of relative calm in the area. The strikes hit a power station, a weapons factory and an oil refinery near Khartoum, witnesses at the sites said on condition of anonymity, while a military source said an air base had also been targeted.

The Rapid Support Forces' (RSF) Tasis administration later said the paramilitaries had launched "precise and successful air strikes" in Khartoum and other areas. The Tasis administration has declared itself the government in territory held by the RSF, at war with Sudan's regular army since April 2023. The assault came months after the military recaptured the capital in March, and as the army-backed government pressed a major reconstruction bid.

The attacks occurred at around 5:00 am (0300 GMT), with witnesses saying that they had seen strikes hit the Al Jaili oil refinery, the Al Markhiyat substation in Omdurman and the Yarmuk weapons factory. Four drones targeted the power station and sparked a fire, the witnesses said, with images posted on social media appearing to show the site in flames.

A source at the national electricity company said that the damage had been minor, but witnesses reported a blackout in some parts of the capital following the attack. The military source, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said a strike on Wadi Seidna air base had been intercepted. "Our air defence intercepted and shot down the drones that were targeting the base," the source said. Another drone strike hit an army building in Kafuri, wounding several troops, another military source said.

The RSF has in recent months been accused of widespread drone attacks in several army-controlled areas of Sudan, striking critical infrastructure and causing blackouts for millions. Efforts to mediate between Sudan's de facto leader, army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan, and his deputy-turned-rival, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, have failed to yield a sustained ceasefire, with the military vowing to fight until victory.

The army-backed government has launched a vast reconstruction programme in Khartoum, with around 600,000 people returning to their homes in recent months, according to the United Nations. The war has devastated the capital, forcing around half of its nine million residents to flee. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people and created the world's largest hunger and displacement crises.

Some 10 million people are currently displaced inside the country, with most facing dire hunger, while another four million have sought refuge beyond its borders. In recent months, Khartoum has seen a return of relative calm, with fighting concentrated in the country's southern Kordofan and western Darfur regions, where the warring sides have wrestled for territory. — AFP

TOP SRI LANKA COURT CLEARS WAY TO STRIP FORMER LEADERS OF PERKS

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Supreme Court cleared the final legal hurdle on Tuesday to evict former presidents from their stately mansions and strip them of their luxury cars, bodyguards and pensions. President Anura Kumara Disسانayake's leftist government has tabled a bill that would repeal a 1986 law granting lavish state housing and other entitlements to former presidents and their widows. The bill is part of Disسانayake's effort to impose more official

austerity after the country's worst-ever economic crisis. Speaker Jagath Wickramaratne told parliament on Tuesday that the highest court had rejected all six petitions challenging the bill. The court "has ruled that the bill can be passed with a simple majority in parliament," Wickramaratne told the assembly, where the government enjoys a comfortable two-thirds majority. The decision followed former leader Mahinda Rajapaksa's refusal to vacate a ritzy home in the

capital Colombo despite repeated requests. His party was one of the petitioners against the bill. Under the 1986 law, former presidents were also entitled to luxury cars with government-supplied fuel, secretarial services and security personnel. When Disسانayake took power a year ago, Rajapaksa had 243 bodyguards, including 63 elite army commandos and 23 drivers. The government cut his detail to 60 and limited his fleet to three vehicles. — AFP

ISRAEL STRIKES QATAR

ISRAEL'S

military said it conducted air strikes targeting senior

Hamas leaders in the Qatari capital on Tuesday, as Qatar condemned an attack on buildings housing members of the Palestinian movement.

Qatar, which has been a key mediator in efforts to broker a truce in Gaza, said Israeli strikes targeted the homes of several members of Hamas's political bureau residing in the Gulf country, where the group's senior leadership is based. A Hamas official in Gaza said the group's negotiators had been "targeted" in Doha, though it was not immediately clear whether the attack had caused any casualties. A video journalist working in Doha saw a plume of smoke rising from behind a low-rise building.

Qatar condemned the attack, saying it had targeted residential buildings housing Hamas political bureau members. "The State of Qatar strongly condemns the cowardly Israeli attack that targeted residential buildings housing several members of the political bureau of Hamas in the Qatari capital, Doha," foreign ministry spokesman Majed al Ansari said in a post on X.

Tuesday's strikes — Israel's first attack on the Western-backed Gulf state — come less than two weeks after Israel's armed forces chief vowed to target the group's leaders based abroad. "Most of Hamas's leadership is abroad, and we will reach them as well," Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said on August 31.

Along with the United States

UN chief Antonio Guterres condemned Israel's "flagrant violation" of Qatari sovereignty Iran condemned the attack as a "gross violation of all international rules and regulations, a violation of Qatar's national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and an attack on Palestinian negotiators"



Smoke rises after several blasts were heard in Doha. — Reuters

and Egypt, Qatar has led multiple attempts to end the Israel-Hamas war, which was sparked by the Palestinians' October 7, 2023, attack. Despite sealing two temporary truces, the successive rounds of talks have failed to bring a lasting end to the war.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Israel's targeting of Hamas leaders was a "wholly independent" operation. "Today's action against the top chieftains of Hamas was a wholly independent Israeli operation," a statement from Netanyahu's office said, adding that: "Israel initiated it, Israel conducted it and Israel takes full responsibility."

Washington urged nationals in Doha to shelter in place. "US citizens are advised to shelter-in-place and monitor @USEmbassyDoha social media for

updates," the US Embassy posted.

UN chief Antonio Guterres condemned Israel's "flagrant violation" of Qatari sovereignty.

UAE Foreign Minister Shaikh Abdullah bin Zayed wrote on X that his country stood "in full solidarity with dear Qatar".

The attack came as Israel stepped up a deadly assault on Gaza City, the Palestinian territory's largest urban centre.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Tuesday slammed Israel's attack on Hamas in Qatar, calling the strike a "criminal act" in a call with Qatari Emir Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani.

"His Royal Highness the Crown Prince affirmed the Kingdom's full solidarity with... Qatar and its condemnation of the blatant Israeli attack on the State of Qatar. — AFP

ETHIOPIA INAUGURATES AFRICA'S BIGGEST DAM

GUBA: Ethiopia inaugurated the continent's largest hydroelectric project on Tuesday in what Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called a "great achievement for all black people". The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), straddling a tributary of the River Nile, is a national project of historic scale and a rare unifying symbol in a country torn apart by ongoing internal conflicts.

Towering 170 metres and stretching nearly 2 kilometres across the Blue Nile near the Sudanese border, construction on the dam began in 2011. The \$4-billion dam is designed to hold 74 billion cubic metres of water and generate 5,150 megawatts of electricity — more than double Ethiopia's current capacity. That makes it the largest dam by power capacity in Africa, though still outside the top 10 globally. — AFP

NEW PAGE RELATIONS

Syria leader to visit Moscow next month



Syrian leader Ahmed al Sharaa is to visit Moscow next month, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak announced in Damascus, hailing a new page in ties. "We place great importance on the coming visit to Moscow of the Syrian president in October to participate in the Russian-Arab summit," Novak said, adding that the trip would "strengthen bilateral cooperation". State news agency SANA said talks would focus on "the economy, security, defence and politics". — AFP

SCHEDULED VOTE

Japan's LDP to pick new leader on Oct 4



Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will pick its new leader on October 4, the party's election committee said, replacing Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba who resigned after huge election setbacks. The head of the election committee, Ichiro Aisawa, said on Tuesday a notice would be issued on September 22 and counting of votes would take place following a 12-day campaign period. The schedule will be formally approved on Wednesday, he said. — AFP

PRISON ENFORCEMENT

Thai court orders Thaksin jailed for a year



Thailand's Supreme Court ordered the country's most powerful and polarising politician Thaksin Shinawatra to be jailed for one year, ruling that he improperly served a 2023 prison term in hospital. Tuesday's Supreme Court ruling dealt one of the most painful blows yet to Thailand's biggest political heavyweight. A corrections department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Tuesday afternoon that he had "entered the prison". — AFP

AGREEMENTREACHED



Rupert Murdoch (C) flanked by his sons Lachlan (L) and James (R) appear at St Bride's church on Fleet Street in central London. — AFP file photo

MURDOCH FAMILY
SETTLES DISPUTE
OVER SUCCESSION

NEW YORK: Rupert Murdoch's children have reached a settlement in their long-running legal dispute over control of the right-wing mogul's media empire, his companies announced on Monday, cementing eldest son Lachlan's leadership. The agreement resolves litigation after several siblings contested the elder Murdoch's effort to install as successor his son Lachlan, who shares his father's political orientation. A Nevada court had previously blocked the 94-year old's effort.

The new deal establishes a trust to replace the Murdoch Family Trust that had included Lachlan plus three other Murdoch siblings.

Under the agreement, Prudence MacLeod, Elisabeth Murdoch and James Murdoch will receive cash based on equity sales and cease to have holdings in either media company. US media reported the value of the settlement would be \$3.3 billion, to be split evenly among the three siblings.

The eldest daughter, Prudence, has had little involvement in the family business, but James and Elisabeth are known as more politically centrist. "New trusts will be established for the benefit of Lachlan Murdoch, Grace Murdoch and Chloe Murdoch," said a press release from Fox and News Corp.

Meanwhile "the departing beneficiaries" will "cease to be beneficiaries in any trust holding shares in News Corp or Fox Corporation."

Friction over the future of the holdings — a stable that includes Fox News, The Wall Street Journal and a host of British and Australian media — had been the inspiration for the hit TV series "Succession." The complicated structure of the trust reflects the colorful familial relationships that shaped Rupert Murdoch's life as he built the multibillion-dollar empire.

The original trust was reported to have been the result of a deal with his second wife — mother of Lachlan, Elisabeth and James — who wanted to ensure her offspring would not be disenfranchised by children Murdoch had with his third wife, Wendi Deng.

Murdoch's daughters with Deng — Grace and Chloe — will be beneficiaries of the new trusts, along with Lachlan.

The agreement establishes LGC Holdco, which will own all shares of News Corp and Fox Corp previously held by the original family trust. Voting control for these shares "will rest solely with Lachlan Murdoch through his appointed managing director," said the press release. — AFP

ICC STARTS
HEARING ON
CHARGES
AGAINST
UGANDA'S
JOSEPH KONY

THE HAGUE: International Criminal Court judges on Tuesday began hearings to finalise charges against fugitive Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony. Legal experts say the proceedings could act as a blueprint for other high-profile ICC suspects at large. Kony, the leader of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army, is the ICC's longest-standing fugitive. An arrest warrant was issued against him in 2005. Deputy prosecutor Mame Mandiaye Niang said ICC prosecutors want to charge him

with 39 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, using child soldiers, and slavery, between 2002 and 2005.

"All these crimes were committed by the LRA under the command of Joseph Kony," Niang told the court, adding that the children of northern Uganda lived in constant fear of attack and abductions during the LRA's "systemic violence".

At the hearings, court-appointed lawyers representing Kony's interests said having the

confirmation hearings without the LRA leader present hampered their work and violated his right to a fair trial. Founded in the late 1980s with the aim of overthrowing the government, the LRA brutalised Ugandans under Kony's leadership for nearly 20 years as it battled the military from bases in northern Uganda. Kony's victims were happy the ICC was moving forward with the case but lamented the lack of financial compensation for his alleged victims. — Reuters

Macron scrambles to find
new PM as Bayrou resigns

FRENCH

Prime Minister Francois Bayrou was on Tuesday to submit his resignation to President Emmanuel Macron after parliament ousted the government, with the French leader rushing to find a successor in a deepening political crisis. On Monday, Bayrou suffered a crushing loss in a confidence vote he had himself called, plunging France into fresh uncertainty and leaving Macron with the task of finding the seventh premier of his mandate.

The French president's office said in a statement that Macron "took note" of the outcome and would name a new premier "in the next days", ending any remaining speculation that the president could instead call snap elections. Macron was set to meet Bayrou "to accept the resignation of his government", it added. The formal submission of Bayrou's resignation was expected in the middle of the day.

The French president has in the past been notoriously slow in "casting" a new prime minister. But he is widely expected on this occasion not to procrastinate given the risk of financial and political stability. "Emmanuel Macron is now in the front line to find a solution to the political crisis," said the Liberation daily. France's borrowing costs, a measure of investor confidence in a country, on Tuesday surged slightly higher than those for Italy, long one of Europe's debt laggards.

Bayrou had blindsided even his allies by calling a confidence vote to end a lengthy standoff over his austerity budget, which foresaw almost 44 billion euros (\$52 billion) of cost savings to reduce France's debt pile. In the vote in the National Assembly, 364 deputies voted that they had no confidence in the government, while just 194 gave it their confidence. Bayrou was the sixth prime minister under Macron since his 2017 election, and the fifth since 2022.

His predecessor, Michel Barnier, was brought down by a no-confidence vote in December and the crisis dates back to summer 2024 legislative elections that resulted in a hung parliament. "Emmanuel Macron, a vulnerable president," said the Le



PM Francois Bayrou (C) delivers his general policy statement, at the National Assembly in Paris. — AFP

Monde daily, adding that he was now "under pressure" to find a new prime minister.

Macron, who has been leading diplomatic efforts internationally to end Russia's war on Ukraine, now faces one of the most critical domestic decisions of his presidency over who to appoint as premier. The Socialist Party (PS) has expressed readiness to lead a new government but it is far from clear whether such an administration led by a figure such as PS leader Olivier Faure could survive. "I think it's time for the left to govern this country again and make sure we can break with the policies of the last eight years," Faure told TF1 television.

Heavyweight right-wing cabinet ministers, such as Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin, are trusted by Macron but risk being voted out by the left. Lower-profile options who could find a centre-left consensus include Health Minister Catherine Vautrin or Finance Minister Eric Lombard. According to a poll by Odoxa-Backbone for Le Figaro newspaper, 64 per cent of the French want Macron to resign rather than name a new prime minister, a move he has ruled out. He is forbidden from standing for a third term in 2027.

Alongside political upheaval, France is also facing social tensions. A left-wing collective named "Block Everything" is calling for a day of action on Wednesday and trade unions have urged workers to strike on September 18. "We need a prime minister very rapidly" as there should not be a "power vacuum" ahead of the protests on Wednesday, said Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau, who is also leader of the main right-wing The Republicans Party.

The 2027 presidential election meanwhile remains wide open, with analysts predicting the French far-right will have its best-ever chance of winning.

The hopes of three-time presidential candidate for the far-right National Rally (RN), Marine Le Pen, depend on the outcome of an appeal hearing early next year over her conviction for a European Parliament fake jobs scam that disqualified her from standing for office.

RN leader Jordan Bardella, told broadcaster RTL on Tuesday the party would move to bring down any government that does not "break with the politics of the last eight years" under Macron and reaffirmed a call for early legislative elections. — AFP

Nepal PM resigns after protests sparked by social media ban

KATHMANDU: Nepali youth protesters set fire to parliament on Tuesday as the veteran prime minister obeyed furious crowds to quit, a day after one of the deadliest crackdowns in years in which at least 19 people were killed. The protests, which began on Monday with demands that the government lift a ban on social media and tackle corruption, reignited despite the apps going back online.

Nepal's president called for national unity on Tuesday after two days of violent protests. "I urge everyone, including the protesting citizens, to cooperate for a peaceful resolution of the country's difficult situation," President Ramchandra Paudel said in a statement, after protesters set fire to parliament as well as his office. "I appeal to all parties to exercise restraint, to not allow further damage to the country, and to come to talks."

Demonstrators on Tuesday

attacked and set fire to KP Sharma Oli's house, the 73-year-old, four-time prime minister and leader of the Communist Party. Shortly after, chanting protesters — some wielding assault rifles, according to a reporter at the site — gathered outside main government buildings.

Plumes of smoke also covered Nepal's parliament as demonstrators set the building ablaze. "Hundreds have breached the parliament area and torched the main building," Ekram Giri, spokesman for the Parliament Secretariat, said.

Protesters, mostly young men, were seen waving the country's national flag as they dodged water cannons deployed by the security forces. Other demonstrators targeted the properties of politicians and government buildings. Kathmandu's airport remains open, but some flights were cancelled after smoke from fires affected visibility, airport spokesman Rinji Sherpa said. "I have



Demonstrators clash with riot police outside the Parliament in Kathmandu. — AFP

resigned from the post of prime minister with effect from today... in order to take further steps towards a political solution and resolution of the problems," Oli said Tuesday in a statement. His political career stretched nearly six decades, a

period that saw a decade-long civil war, with Nepal abolishing its absolute monarchy in 2008 to become a republic.

Slogans demanding accountability from the authorities have been a feature at the protests.

"Nearly 20 people were murdered by the state — that shows the scale of police brutality," said 23-year-old student Yujan Rajbhandari. Several social media sites — including Facebook, YouTube and X — were blocked on Friday in the Himalayan nation of 30 million people, after the government cut access to 26 unregistered platforms. Amnesty International said live ammunition had been used against protesters on Monday, and the United Nations demanded a swift and transparent probe.

Since Friday, videos contrasting the struggles of ordinary Nepalis with the children of politicians flaunting luxury goods and expensive vacations have gone viral on TikTok, which was not blocked. Popular platforms such as Instagram have millions of users in Nepal who rely on them for entertainment, news and business. Others rely on the apps for messaging. — AFP

OPINION

How perfectionism, procrastination affect productivity



HYESHA BARRETT

The writer is a Master Life Coach and NLP Practitioner

PERFECTIONISM and procrastination seem like complete opposites. One pushes us to do more, to overdeliver, to make everything flawless. The other tempts us to wait, to delay, to put things off until later. Yet in reality, these two behaviours often go hand in hand, creating a frustrating cycle that quietly steals our time, energy and confidence. Perfectionism isn't simply about wanting to do a good job. At its heart, it's about fear: fear of failure, fear of judgement, fear of being seen as less than capable. For many of us, this fear is planted early, in moments where being "perfect" felt like the safest way to earn love, attention or approval. Over time, perfectionism becomes a kind of armour. Instead of motivating us, it often makes the work ahead feel overwhelming. When the bar feels impossibly high, even taking the first step becomes difficult. We worry about making mistakes, so we wait until we feel more ready, more certain, more capable. We tell ourselves we'll start when we have

the perfect idea, the perfect plan, or the perfect block of time. However, perfection never arrives, and so we delay. This is where procrastination slips in. Procrastination is not laziness; it is self-protection. When a task feels too intimidating, our brain looks for quick ways to soothe the stress we feel. We answer a few easy e-mails, tidy the kitchen, scroll through social media: small actions that give us a momentary sense of control and relief. Nonetheless, the work still waits, and with every passing hour, the weight of it grows heavier. This perfectionism-procrastination loop can be exhausting. The longer we delay, the more anxious we become. The more anxious we become, the harder it feels to begin. Eventually, we may end up working in a last-minute rush, sacrificing the very quality we were so determined to uphold. When it's done, instead of feeling accomplished, we often feel drained, guilty and even more determined to "get it right" next time, which only sets the cycle in

Instead of beating ourselves up for procrastinating, we can remind ourselves that we are human and that showing up, even imperfectly, is a victory.

motion again. The way out is gentler than we think. The first shift is to trade perfection for progress. Progress is approachable; it invites us to simply take the next step, no matter how small. Opening the document, writing a rough paragraph, or sketching a quick outline is enough to build momentum, and momentum is what quiets fear. It also helps to give ourselves permission to start imperfectly. A rough draft, a clumsy beginning, a work-in-progress: all of these are valid. They are how real work gets done. Most importantly, we need to practice self-compassion. Instead of beating ourselves up for procrastinating, we can remind ourselves that we are human and that showing up, even imperfectly, is a victory. When we loosen perfectionism's grip, productivity becomes lighter and more joyful. We reclaim not just our time, but our energy, creativity and peace of mind. Furthermore, we rediscover a truth that changes everything: the most powerful way forward is often the simplest one: just begin.

What next for Macron after Prime minister Bayrou ousted?

VALÉRIE LEROUX AND FRANCESCO FONTEMAGGI

French President Emmanuel Macron is set to appoint a new prime minister after parliament ousted Francois Bayrou, rather than opt for early elections, let alone resign himself. But with parliament voting by a large margin not to give its confidence to Bayrou and his government after just nine months in office, there is the risk that the next incumbent could face the same fate. A person close to Macron, asking not to be named, said the president's personal inclination was to name a long-serving cabinet minister who he trusted like Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin or Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu. "In the end, he will stay within his comfort zone," added an ex-minister. Both Darmanin and Lecornu may be seen as too right-wing to be palatable to the left, with a pact with the Socialist Party (PS) seen as a possible way out of the impasse. A more realistic option could be Health Minister Catherine Vautrin, who has been repeatedly cited as a possible candidate in the past. Another option could be a figure who is aligned with the left but not part of the Socialist Party and who could also be acceptable to Macron's centrist bloc. Such figures could include Raphael Glucksmann, who leads his own progressive left-wing movement, or Bernard Cazeneuve, a former prime minister and one-time member of the Socialist Party. But also seen as a viable contender is Finance Minister Eric Lombard, an ex-banking boss but also a former Socialist Party member. "The issue is no longer who he (Macron) wants to install in the Matignon (residence and office of the French premier) but who can maintain such a difficult balance," said a source close to Macron, asking not to be named. Macron could try his hand at "cohabitation", which in France is when a president tries to work with a prime minister from an opposing party. The most obvious such option would be Socialist leader Olivier Faure, who has made no secret of his interest in the position. But he may also find his government at the mercy of the right, with no faction able to muster a majority in what is a hung parliament. Analysts at the Eurasia Group risk analysis firm predicted Macron would appoint a new premier to seek a deal with the Socialists and enact a less ambitious budget. "There is a 60-per cent probability that the new PM will muddle through to a budget deal by the end of this year or by the early new year," they said. There had been speculation that Macron could call snap legislative elections after Bayrou's exit but the French presidency has already made clear he will appoint a new premier. — AFP

Al Farahidi corridor for global south connectivity

WALKING through the bustling streets, universities, coffee shops and museums of Baghdad leaves a lasting impression. The city breathes generosity, knowledge and civility, qualities accumulated over thousands of years of civilisation, from the Sumerians, Akkadians, Assyrians and Babylonians to the Abbasids and Ottomans, and now embodied in the modern Republic of Iraq. Oman and Iraq share a bond that stretches back more than three millennia. They are two of the oldest continuously standing political entities in the Arabian Gulf, bound by cultural and economic ties that enriched humanity with language, literature and resources such as copper. This shared heritage is not abstract, it lives in the warmth and dignity of the Iraqi people. I still recall getting lost on my way to the Iraq Museum until a gentle traffic officer stopped traffic to personally guide me. On many occasions, Iraqis I had just met refused to accept payment, whether for a taxi ride, a social gathering, or a meal of delicious masgouf fish, because, as they insisted, I was "their guest." Iraq has a way of making one feel at home. This hospitality echoes the legacy of Al Khalil ibn Ahmad al Farahidi, the Omani-Iraqi scholar who transformed Arabic grammar and pioneered the science of Al A'rudh, which codified Arabic poetry. His work helped diverse communities communicate during the golden age of Islamic civilisation. Today, his intellectual spirit lives on in Iraqi students, professors, and officials who continue the tradition of the Abbasid House of Wisdom, established nearly 1300 years ago as one of history's most influential centres of learning. That legacy is now meeting a modern opportunity. In my hometown of Salalah, under the patronage of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the Iraqi



KHALID AL HURAIBI

The writer is an innovator and an insights storyteller



Civilisations prosper not by isolating themselves, but by opening doors, exchanging ideas and safeguarding one another's futures.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al Sudani, who is one of the most visionary and pragmatic leaders I met, Oman and Iraq signed comprehensive agreements and Memorandums of Understanding. These agreements lay the foundation for a sustainable economic corridor, one that reaffirms Iraq's role as a cradle of civilisation and Oman's role as a bridge-builder of peace and prosperity. This vision is timely. Globally, two major trade initiatives dominate the geopolitical landscape: China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the US Zangezur Corridor. Both are ambitious, yet both reflect the competing priorities of superpowers. Oman and Iraq can offer something different: A sustainable, participatory corridor rooted in the values of the Global South and inspired by centuries of cultural and economic exchange. Such a vision could be aptly called the Al Farahidi Corridor, honouring the scholar who symbolises the intellectual and linguistic bridges between Oman and Iraq. Far from being a new invention, this would continue an ancient tradition. Interestingly, exactly one thousand years after the establishment of the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, 1775, Imam Ahmad bin Said al Busaidy, founder of Oman's ruling dynasty, answered the calls of officials in Iraq and dispatched a naval fleet led by the ship Al Rahmani to break the long siege of Basra imposed by Karim Khan Zand, ruler of Iran. That decisive act restored Basra's position as a major regional trading hub connected to the Shatt Al Arab and reaffirmed Oman's commitment to protecting shared prosperity. Today, the world is strained by trade wars, rivalries and protectionism that undermine global growth. In this environment, the voices of Oman and Iraq stand out for their wisdom and pragmatism. By leveraging their historical connectivity, cultural depth and mutual respect, the two nations can lead by example, demonstrating that corridors can be instruments not of conflict, but of peace, dignity and shared progress. The Al Farahidi Corridor is more than an economic project. It is a reminder that civilisations prosper not by isolating themselves, but by opening doors, exchanging ideas and safeguarding one another's futures. Oman and Iraq.

Investing in early childhood for a smart future



SAMUEL KUTTY

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

LIFE is a narrative where the start establishes the mood, aptly describes the formative years of childhood, which are the crucial phase in a child’s growth. To achieve their full potential, children need adequate healthcare and nutrition, safety from harm, a sense of security, opportunities for high-quality early education and attentive caregiving.

All these components are vital for nourishing developing minds and aiding growing bodies for academic success, social-emotional growth and long-term economic productivity. Consequently, investing in early childhood development is a smart choice that fosters healthier, more educated people.

United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) states that “the nature of a child’s early experiences significantly impacts their brain development, creating either robust or fragile bases for learning, health and behaviour over a lifetime.”

Significantly, an increasing number of nations have recognised the importance of giving children the best possible start in life by investing in early childhood development. The Sultanate of Oman exemplifies this growing trend, prioritising early childhood care and education in its national agenda.

The Omani government has been promoting awareness through a campaign on early childhood development aimed at parents, educators and decision-makers.

The nation’s childhood care plan

encompasses multiple sectors focused on child protection, health and early childhood development. This plan is underscored by the Omani Child Law of 2014 and has received Unicef’s approval for the period 2026–2030.

Oman’s new Country Programme Document (CPD) was presented to the Second Regular Session of Unicef’s Executive Board in New York, marking the conclusion of the current programme launched in 2022. The CPD strategy was approved unanimously.

Aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the Five-Year Development Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals and international conventions, the new multi-sectoral strategy focuses on key opportunities and fostering a supportive environment throughout a child’s life.

As reported by the state agency ONA, the programme focuses on two main life stages: early childhood and adolescence. The first stage aims to expand access to quality early learning and services, while the second emphasises strengthening opportunities for education, skills development and meaningful participation.

Social inclusion and child protection are cross-cutting themes that ensure equitable access to services and safety from harm for the most vulnerable children throughout their lives.

“Only through sustained investment in policies, programmes and peace can we create safe, supportive and nurturing environments for children,” said Dr Laila

Oman is a leading country in early childhood development, thriving in policies and services. It was one of the initial nations to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and took prompt measures to implement laws safeguarding children’s rights

bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, while virtually participating in the Unicef Board meeting.

Oman is a leading country in early childhood development, thriving in policies and services. It was one of the initial nations to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and took prompt measures to implement laws safeguarding children’s rights.

The implementation of the Child Law in 2014 clearly showcased this dedication. This was additionally strengthened by the 2023 School Education Law, which confirmed children’s entitlement to early education, and the 2023 Social Protection Law, which created a coordinated system of social benefits and insurance.

These regulations integrate global best practices in providing benefits, including for children and individuals with disabilities.

Oman has achieved high standings in indicators of child development, universal vaccination and inclusive education that include every child without exception. The nation persists in showcasing its dedication via innovative strategies, including labour regulations and family-oriented policies that offer parents sufficient time to tend to their children in their formative years.

It is undeniable that Oman serves as a significant advocate for children in the area, backing efforts that enhance health, education and child safety, particularly in times of humanitarian emergencies.

FALLING MIGRATION FAILS TO QUELL EU CLAMPDOWN CALLS

CAMILLE CAMDESSUS

Migration is down but the political pressure is not going away: despite a sharp decline in irregular arrivals and asylum requests, the EU is ploughing ahead with an unprecedented clampdown.

Asylum requests to the European Union fell by 23 per cent in the first six months of 2025, driven by a massive drop in Syrians seeking protection, new EU data showed on Monday.

Similarly, irregular border crossings detected into the 27-nation bloc were down 20 per cent in the same period, according to EU border agency Frontex, with arrivals via the Balkans sharply down. But regardless of the picture the data paints, with right and hard-right parties ascendant across the bloc, the pressure to get tough on migration has never been higher.

“At the political level, there’s this sense that we have to respond to citizens’ concerns on migration,” summed up Camille Le Coz, director of the Migration Policy Institute Europe think tank.

For parties pushing a hard line, a fall in migrant arrivals only deals with part of the problem.

“It cannot be the only parameter to take into account,” Fabrice Leggeri, the former head of Frontex, now a European lawmaker with France’s far-right National Rally party, said.

“An increase in returns” is also needed, he contended. Currently, fewer than 20 per cent of people ordered to leave the bloc are returned to their country of origin, according to EU data.

The European Union struck a landmark migration pact last year due to come into force in 2026, that hardens border procedures and envisages accelerated deportations. But many countries felt it did not go far enough.

In October last year, EU leaders called for new legislation to increase and speed up returns, and for the commission to assess “innovative” ways to counter irregular arrivals.

The EU’s executive has since laid the groundwork for states to set up migrant return centres outside the bloc and proposed an expansion of the conditions under which irregular migrants can be detained.

It also published a list of countries of “origin” it considers “safe”, which will make it harder for citizens of those nations to claim asylum.

Meanwhile, data from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUA) showed EU countries plus Switzerland and Norway (EU+) received 399,000 asylum applications in total in the first six months of 2025 - the lowest number since 2021.

EUA made it clear that the remarkable reduction was “hardly due to policy changes in the EU+” - but due to a massive drop in Syrians seeking protection following the ouster of longtime ruler Bashar al Assad. Syrians, who long accounted for the most applicants, were now the third largest group, behind Venezuelans and Afghans. — AFP

Who will model democracy?

AS a teenager growing up in Istanbul, I was lucky to be part of a generation that had democratic role models nearby. European countries such as Britain, France, Germany and Sweden fuelled our aspirations for prosperity and democracy, giving us hope for the future of our own imperfect polity. These countries’ experiences showed us that economic growth, social justice and political freedom were not only compatible but mutually reinforcing.

Where will today’s youth look to find a similarly hopeful message? Liberal democracy once seemed destined to be the wave of the future. But now, democratic backsliding is a global phenomenon, with Donald Trump’s America only the most visible and dramatic example. Since the early 2010s, “electoral autocracies” – regimes that hold periodic elections, but under conditions of pervasive repression – have become the dominant form of government around the world. Nearly 220 million fewer people live under liberal democracy today than in 2012.

Moreover, “electoral democracies” – a form of regime that can pave the way for liberal democracy – have also lost ground, governing 1.2 billion fewer people today than in 2012. These regimes have been replaced by electoral or outright autocracies, which now rule over 5.8 billion people (2.4 billion of whom have been added since 2012).

As a beacon of democracy, Europe no longer shines as brightly. The European Union played a major role in anchoring democracy during Eastern Europe’s transition from socialism, with Czechia and Estonia becoming some of the highest-ranked liberal democracies in the world. But many others – notably, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia – have regressed significantly, and the EU has been powerless to do anything about it.

Leading European countries can rightly claim that their democracies have not taken as big a hit as America’s. But Europe today projects neither economic strength nor political cohesion. Its self-confidence seems to have hit



Where will today’s youth look to find a similarly hopeful message?



DANI RODRIK

The writer is Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School, is Past President of the International Economic Association and the author of the forthcoming Shared Prosperity in a Fractured World: A New Economics for the Middle Class, the Global Poor, and Our Climate

rock bottom, as exemplified by how the EU has caved to Trump’s tariff threats.

European leaders long hoped that integration would enhance the region’s power and influence on the global stage. Instead, the EU seems to have turned into a permanent halfway house that fosters paralysis. Its institutions and processes discourage countries from acting boldly on their own, but lack the capacity to formulate and pursue a common vision.

While democratic Europe fails to project influence beyond its borders, those who do exercise power on the global stage are no longer role models. Few would have expected the United States to have taken such a sharp authoritarian turn, yet Trump has transformed the country into a rogue actor almost overnight. He has also made it easier for China to pose as the responsible adult in the room, and Xi has gladly donned the mantle of “sovereign equality,” “international rule of law,” and “multilateralism.”

To find democratic bright spots, we must look in unexpected places. For example, Brazil and South Africa, two middle-income countries, share the rare distinction

of having recently come to the brink of authoritarian collapse and then pulled back.

Jacob Zuma’s tenure as president of South Africa between 2009 and 2018 was characterised by authoritarian populism and extensive corruption, and former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro refused to accept electoral defeat and plotted a military coup (as well as his opponent’s murder) in 2022. Yet both were succeeded by leaders with solid democratic credentials – Cyril Ramaphosa in South Africa and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil. What makes these successes extraordinary is that they occurred under circumstances that political scientists consider particularly disadvantageous for democracy. Not only do South Africa and Brazil have deep ethnic divisions, but they are also among the most unequal countries in the world. Thinkers since Aristotle have argued that the absence of large gaps between rich and poor is a precondition for sustaining democracy, but the Brazilian and South African experiences paint a more subtle picture – one that is heartening for advocates of democracy.

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SPORTS

DRAW CEREMONY



The championship will take place from September 14 to 24 at the Fun Zone Hall in Qurum.

25 TEAMS TO COMPETE IN 17TH WOMEN’S BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

The Women’s Sports Department at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY) held the draw ceremony for the 17th Women’s Bowling Championship at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher, with the presence of team representatives from participating institutions and companies. The championship will take place from September 14 to 24 at the Fun Zone Hall in Qurum.

The draw resulted in dividing the 25 participating teams into two groups. Group A included 12 teams: Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company (3), Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company (1), Oman Electricity Transmission Company, Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Royal Air Force of Oman, Sharqiyah Aviation, Waterfront Company, Sohar International Bank, Occidental (1), Bank Nizwa, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, and Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company (2).

Group B included 13 teams: Mohammed al Barwani Company, Omantel, Rowley Company, Bank Muscat, Occidental (2), Muscat Municipality (2), Daleel Petroleum, Ministry of Social

Development (MoSD), Muscat Municipality (1), Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), Petrogas Company, Royal Court Affairs, and Asyad Group.

The overall ranking will be determined based on the total medals achieved by each institution across the competitions. Trophies and cash prizes will be awarded to the top three teams in the overall ranking, in addition to gold, silver, and bronze medals for winners in each event.

TECHNICAL REGULATIONS
The organising committee established several technical conditions for participation, most notably that all players must belong to the same institution and be officially registered by the concerned authority. Each team must consist of at least four main players and two substitutes. The regulations prohibit players from outside the institution, but each

institution is allowed to register one foreign player who works within the same organisation. The rules also state that 15 points will be deducted in each game for every participating player who is also registered with the Oman national bowling team, to promote equal opportunities among all teams and ensure fair competition with a strong sporting spirit.

Teams were divided into two groups, with each institution competing with at least four main players, along with two possible substitutes. In the singles competition, all registered players will play three rounds.

In the doubles competition, each pair will also play three rounds. The team competition will feature four players from each institution competing over three rounds. The ‘Masters’ event will qualify the top 30 players based on their accumulated scores in the earlier rounds to determine the final rankings for singles and teams.

The overall ranking will be determined based on the total medals achieved by each institution across the competitions. Trophies and cash prizes will be awarded to the top three teams in the overall ranking, in addition to gold, silver, and bronze medals for winners in each event, with incentive prizes allocated to the fifth and sixth places in some categories.

Oman ready to compete at big stage in Asia Cup

AS the Asia Cup 2025 kicks off in the UAE from Tuesday, all eyes are on the debutants — Oman. For this team, the tournament represents more than just participation; it is the culmination of years of dedication, passion, and growth.

Ahead of the tournament, captain Jatinder Singh sums up the squad’s mindset: “Being in Group A is a massive challenge but also a blessing. Playing against India and Pakistan is never easy, but it’s the kind of challenge that makes you grow as a cricketer.”

Facing cricketing powerhouses like India and Pakistan is indeed daunting, yet Oman views it as an invaluable opportunity to learn, adapt, and showcase their skills on a global stage.

PATHWAY TO ASIA CUP

Oman qualified for their first Asia Cup through the ACC Men’s Premier Cup in April last year.

The team topped their group with four wins out of four, finishing ahead of UAE, and defeated Hong Kong by five wickets in the semifinals. UAE got their revenge in the final, but both teams, along with Hong Kong, had already secured their spots at the Asia Cup.

Since then, Oman showed glimpses of promise despite mixed results — the team has gained invaluable international experience.

They hosted the Netherlands for a T20I series in November, losing 2-1, and played in the Gulf T20I Championship in December, recording wins over Bahrain and Qatar but narrowly missing out on the final. Most recently, they hosted the USA in February, suffering a 3-0 defeat.

Oman’s Asia Cup squad combines emerging talent with experienced heads. Four members of the squad are uncapped, reflecting the team’s depth and potential. Much of the batting responsibility will rest on Jatinder, who brings 125 international caps and 3,103 runs across formats. Among the bowlers, left-arm spinner Shakeel Ahmed, who debuted in T20Is in September 2023, has become a vital figure with his accuracy and controlled economy of 6.67.



Oman’s Asia Cup squad combines emerging talent with experienced heads.



Oman qualified for their first Asia Cup through the ACC Men’s Premier Cup in April last year.

The 20-year old Aryan Bisht is another promising talent — a middle-order batter who bowls handy off-spin. While yet to make his T20I debut, he impressed at junior level, finishing as the second-highest run-getter in the Under-19 World Cup Qualifier Asia Division Two in 2022 while also taking seven wickets in five games.

Guiding the squad are coach Duleep Mendis of Sri Lanka and recently-appointed deputy head coach Sulakshan Kulkarni of India, whose experience and insights have been pivotal in preparing the team for the challenges of Asia Cup cricket.

Oman have been drawn in Group A, alongside India, Pakistan, and the UAE. Their campaign opens on September 12 against Pakistan in Dubai, followed by matches against the UAE on September 15 and India on September 19 in Abu Dhabi.

‘PLAY FEARLESS CRICKET’
“We want to play fearless cricket and make Oman proud,” says Jatinder. “We may be debutants, but we’re here to compete with heart, not just participate.”

With determination, youthful energy, and experienced leadership both on the field and from the coaching staff, Oman enter their maiden Asia Cup with the ambition to make a mark and show that they can compete with the best.

Meanwhile, in a late development, Oman have made two changes in the squad with Wasim Ali and Jitenkumar Ramanandi called up to replace Karan Sonavale (injury) and Muhammed Imran (logistical issues).

OMAN SQUAD: Jatinder Singh (captain), Hammad Mirza, Vinayak Shukla, Sufyan Yousuf, Ashish Odedara, Aamir Kaleem, Mohammed Nadeem, Sufyan Mehmood, Aryan Bisht, Wasim Ali, Zikriya Islam, Hassnain Shah, Faisal Shah, Jitenkumar Ramanandi, Nadeem Khan, Shakeel Ahmed, Samay Shrivastava.

Oman roll ball tourney to feature 108 players

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

The Oman Roll Ball Tournament will kick off on Wednesday at the Bausher Sports Complex and continue until September 13. The tournament is organised by the Oman Committee for Skating Sports with the participation of 108 players representing eight teams from five countries.

The tournament will feature strong local representation, including teams from Ibri, Seeb, Salalah, and Yanqul, alongside four international teams from the UAE, Iran, India and Egypt. This international participation is expected to give the competition a significant boost in terms of technical level and competitive experience, as these countries were chosen for their extensive expertise and active federations in the sport.

Khalil Al Waili, head of the tournament’s media committee, explained that the tournament is part of the



The Oman Roll Ball Tournament will kick off on Wednesday at the Bausher Sports Complex and continue until September 13.

committee’s plan to spread the culture of skating sports among different age groups in the Sultanate, while giving local players the chance to compete with experienced international teams an opportunity that will raise their technical level and sharpen their practical skills. He added that the tournament also serves to enhance Oman’s position as both a sporting and tourism destination capable of

hosting and organising major events.

The tournament has officially revealed its group stage line-up. Group A features Salalah and Yangul from Oman, alongside Monsef from Iran and the Scorpions from the UAE. Meanwhile, Group B includes Ibri and Seeb representing Oman, with Smouha from Egypt and the federation team from India completing the pool.

BIG TARGET
Regarding future ambitions, Al Waili pointed out that the committee looks forward to hosting larger tournaments in the coming years, such as the Asian Cup and world championships, which would further boost Oman’s presence on the international sports map and give it a central role in the development of the sport in the region.

The tournament will begin with a group stage, where each team will play against the others to determine qualifiers for the knockout rounds, culminating in the final match to crown the champion. Al Waili confirmed that the tournament will strictly adhere to the regulations of the International Federation, with specialised technical committees overseeing discipline and match documentation to ensure fairness and integrity.

As for refereeing, Al Waili explained that the tournament will rely on referees from India and Iran, alongside qualified local referees.

ROOKIE STRIKER



Australia's Mohammed Toure (R) kicks the ball during the international friendly match between Australia and New Zealand in Auckland. — AFP

AUSTRALIA BEAT NEW ZEALAND TO WIN ‘SOCCER ASHES’

AUCKLAND: Rookie striker Mohamed Toure scored two goals in a new-look attack for Australia as the Socceroos beat New Zealand 3-1 in a friendly in Auckland on Tuesday to complete a 2-0 sweep of their “Soccer Ashes” series.

Starting up front with teenage dynamo Nestory Irankunda, 21-year-old Toure slotted his first international goal on a counter-attack in the 34th minute before adding his second on the hour mark with a crisp, left-foot finish.

Watford forward Irankunda also made the most of his recall for the series with a 54th-minute strike as the Socceroos flexed their muscles against their 82nd-ranked neighbours in front of a crowd of 18,213 at Mount Smart Stadium.

“In the second half, every attack we had we were pretty dangerous,” said 21-year-old defender Alessandro Circati, given the captain’s armband by coach Tony Popovic.

“They had a few gaps, a few holes, a few errors. So it’s just important to maybe take a little risk playing the ball in behind.”

Beaten 1-0 in the series-opener in Canberra, New Zealand broke a 15-year scoring drought against Australia when striker-captain Chris Wood found space and toed in a goal three minutes after Irankunda’s.

But Toure crushed the rally with his second goal, stepping around New Zealand centre back Finn Surman and slotting his left-foot shot inside the far post.

Two minutes later, Toure thought he had a hat-trick when he banged in a Lewis Miller cut-back pass but the goal was ruled out by VAR, with Miller offside.

With both teams having qualified early for the 2026 World Cup, the series gave the coaches a chance to experiment with youth.

Seventeen-year old Luke Brooke Smith became New Zealand’s second youngest international with a run off the bench and gave the hosts a spark in his late cameo.

New Zealand coach Darren Bazeley said the loss hurt, particularly after the All Whites dominated the first half-hour without scoring.

“Today they had those few moments and hurt us and we had some and didn’t take them,” he said.

“It’s disappointing to lose two games in a row especially when I feel we had two pretty strong performances.”

Inspired by the long-standing cricket series between Australia and England, the trans-Tasman Soccer Ashes was revived as a concept in 2023 when its 100-year-old trophy was recovered, having been missing for nearly 70 years. — Reuters



With the victory, Oman concluded their Group G campaign with four points, placing them behind Iraq.

Oman U23s beat Pakistan to end Asian qualifiers

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

THE Oman Under-23 Olympic football team ended its campaign in the AFC U23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers with a 1-0 victory over Pakistan on Tuesday at the National Sports Complex in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Despite the win, Oman were unable to advance to the Asian finals as they ended Group G with four points only.

Oman’s journey in the qualifiers began with a goalless draw against hosts Cambodia in a tough weather condition, followed by a narrow 1-0 defeat to Iraq in their second match. The Red Warriors entered the final fixture against Pakistan needing a strong win and favourable results elsewhere to keep their qualification hopes alive. While they delivered a composed performance and secured three points, the overall standings meant their campaign came to an end.

Against Pakistan, Oman started brightly, showing attacking intent from the outset. Nasser al Saqri was among the early threats, using his pace on the right flank to beat a defender and break into the box, only to be denied by a smart intervention from Pakistan goalkeeper Hassan Ali.

The breakthrough came in the 16th



Oman and Pakistan players in action during the U23 Asian Cup Qualifiers.

minute when forward Turki Abdullah timed his run perfectly to beat the offside trap and convert a well-measured cross from Said al Ghanboosi, giving Oman the early lead. The match continued at a lively pace with chances for both sides. Pakistan’s Syed Ali Raza struck the crossbar with a fierce effort, while Oman’s Sameer al Hatmi missed a golden opportunity, heading over from close range just before half time.

A heavy downpour during the interval created difficult conditions in the second half, as both sides took time to adjust to the slick surface. Pakistan came close to equalising in the 75th minute, but Mckean Aroon’s attempt was expertly saved by Oman goalkeeper Abdullah al Jabri. Oman responded almost immediately, with Osama Sameer’s effort rattling the post as they pressed for a second goal. Ultimately, the early strike from Turki Abdullah proved enough to secure the win.

With the victory, Oman concluded their Group G campaign with four points, placing them behind Iraq, who advanced to the finals as group winners with a match played later against Cambodia. Only the group winners and the four best second-placed teams progressed to the AFC U-23 Asian Cup 2026 in Saudi Arabia, leaving Oman narrowly missing out on qualification.

Nottingham Forest swoop for Postecoglou after sacking Nuno

LONDON: Nottingham Forest appointed Ange Postecoglou as manager on Tuesday to replace Nuno Espirito Santo, who was sacked following a dispute with club owner Evangelos Marinakis. Nuno led Forest to European qualification for the first time in 30 years last season by finishing seventh in the Premier League.

But he became the first Premier League manager to lose his job this season after publicly stating that his relationship with Greek billionaire Marinakis had deteriorated. Postecoglou himself was sacked by Tottenham in June just days after winning the Europa League.

Despite ending Spurs’ 17-year wait to win a trophy, the Australian was dismissed due to Tottenham’s worst

league season since 1976/77 as they finished 17th.

However, Marinakis backed the 60-year-old to continue his record of winning trophies at Tottenham, Celtic, Yokohama Marinos and during his spell in charge of Australia. “We are bringing a coach to the club who has a proven and consistent record of winning trophies,” said Marinakis.

“His experience of coaching teams at the highest level, along with his desire to build something special with us at Forest, makes him a fantastic person to help us on our journey and achieve consistently all our ambitions.”

Greek-born Postecoglou will take charge of Forest, who sit 10th in the Premier League on four points after



Ange Postecoglou celebrates with the Europa League trophy. — Reuters

three games, for the first time in Saturday’s daunting trip to Arsenal

Marinakis is hoping he can repeat his Europa League success, with Forest among the favourites to win the competition. But Postecoglou’s attacking style is vastly different to the cautious approach that reaped rewards for Nuno at the City Ground. “After gaining promotion to the Premier League, then building consistently season after season to secure European football, we now must take the right step to compete with the very best and challenge for trophies,” added Marinakis.

“Ange has the credentials and the track-record to do this, and we are excited he is joining us on our ambitious journey.”

Nuno took charge in December

2023 after Steve Cooper was sacked and went on to save the club from relegation. Forest surpassed all expectations last season, but cracks in the relationship between Nuno and Marinakis began to show after they let slip a promising opportunity to qualify for the Champions League. Marinakis appeared to confront Nuno on the pitch following a 2-2 draw against Leicester in May, although the club claimed that was due to the decision to let striker Taiwo Awoniyi play on following an 88th-minute injury that later required urgent abdominal surgery.

Nuno was then critical of Forest’s transfer activity before the season began, saying that he was “worried” about their prospects and his squad had been left “unbalanced”. — AFP

SPORTS

AFRICAN QUALIFIERS



Mohamed Ali Ben Romdhane

BEN ROMDHANE’S LATE GOAL SEALS TUNISIA BERTH IN 2026 WORLD CUP

JOHANNESBURG: Mohamed Ali Ben Romdhane scored in added time to give Tunisia a 1-0 win in Equatorial Guinea on Monday and qualification for the 2026 World Cup in North America.

Victory for Tunisia gave them an unassailable lead in Group H, and they became the second African nation to secure a place at the tournament after 2022 semifinalists Morocco.

Tunisia have 22 points from eight games, 10 more than second-placed Namibia, who have one match in hand but cannot match the total of the Carthage Eagles.

Substitute Ben Romdhane, a midfielder with Egyptian and African giants Al Ahly, struck in the 94th minute after being set up by Firas Chaouat.

He also scored the only goal, from a penalty, when Tunisia beat Equatorial Guinea in matchday 3 last year.

“When Firas Chaouat received the ball in the final moments, I knew he was going to get the better of the Equatorial Guinean player,” Ben Romdhane told Tunisian TV. “So I moved forward and put myself in a good position to score,” added the 26-year-old, who joined Ahly this year from Hungarian outfit Ferencvaros.

“It was the toughest match of the qualifiers, and we expected it given the conditions, the pitch, and the humidity,” said fellow midfielder Ferjani Sassi.

“We knew how to adapt to the circumstances. They had many chances, but we were ready. We believed in ourselves until the very end.”

Tunisia started the match in Malabo with players based in nine countries, including Hannibal Mejbri from

Premier League side Burnley. The Eagles are coached by former centre-back Sami Trabelsi, who captained Tunisia at the 1998 World Cup in France. Tunisia have now qualified seven times for the World Cup, and will hope to improve on a record of only three victories in 18 matches and never progressing beyond the first round.

MOROCCAN STRENGTH IN DEPTH

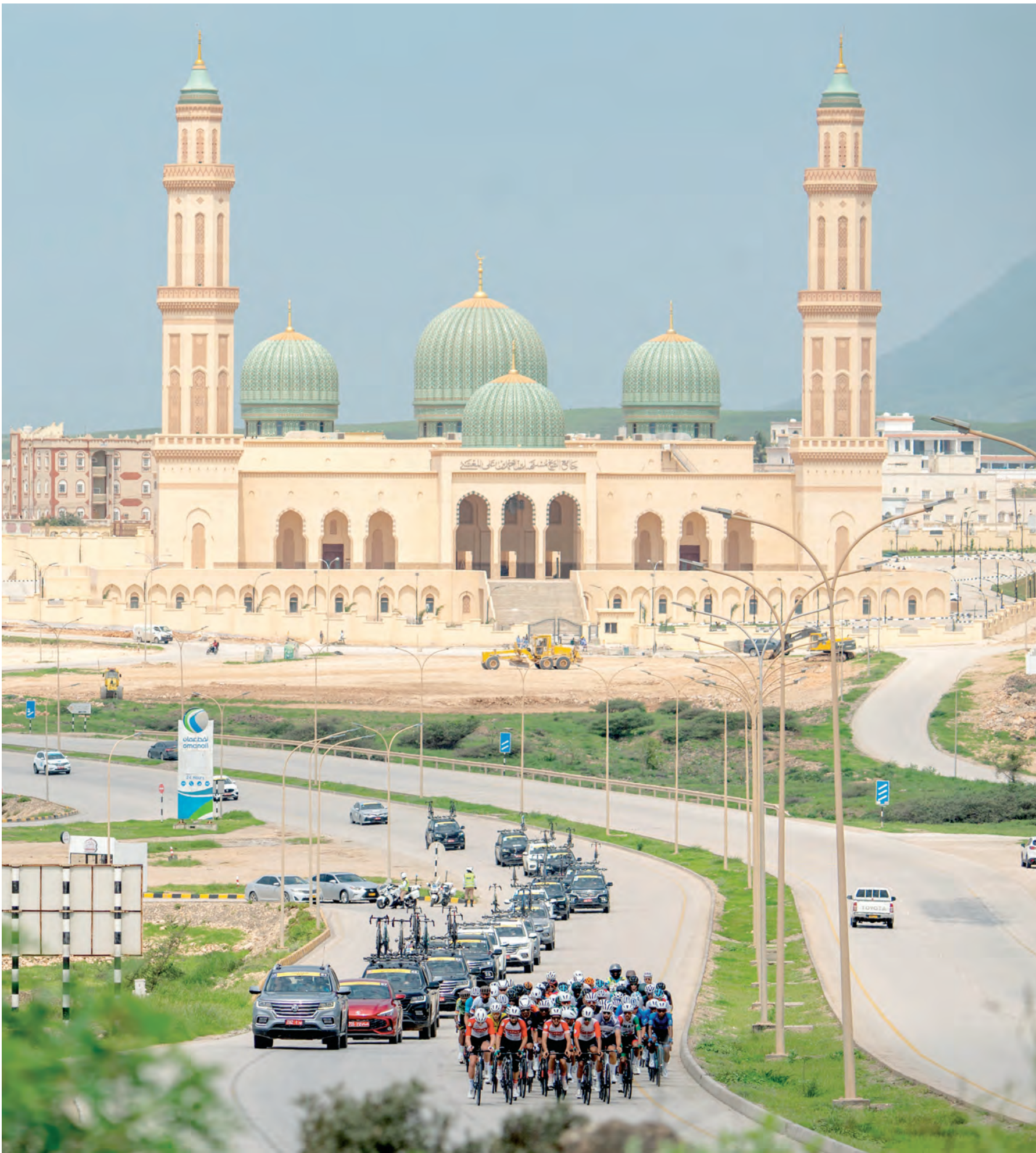
North Africa are likely to have four representatives at the 2026 World Cup with record seven-time African champions Egypt and Algeria set to join Morocco and Tunisia.

Egypt will qualify if they win a top-of-the-table Group A clash in Burkina Faso on Tuesday, while Algeria need three more points to win Group G after a 0-0 draw against Guinea.

Uganda and Mozambique narrowed the gap behind Algeria to four points with 2-0 victories over Somalia and Botswana respectively.

Algeria are away to bottom team Somalia and host Uganda in October and seem set to secure World Cup qualification for a fifth time.

Morocco demonstrated strength in depth by resting several stars, including Paris Saint-Germain full-back Achraf Hakimi, in a 2-0 Group E win over Zambia in Ndola. — AFP



The pack rides during the third stage of Tour of Salalah 2025.

Meijers takes third stage, Van Engelen leads

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH

@anuroop_ath

It was another Dutch cyclist on the top podium as Jeroen Meijers of Victoria Sports Pro Cycling – Philippines came home in three hours 40 minutes and 35 seconds to win the third stage of the Salalah International Tour 2025 on Tuesday.

Stage 2 winner Adne van Engelen (+2.41) of Terengganu Cycling Team (Malaysia) kept the overall leader’s golden jersey by finishing ninth in the stage.

Belgian rider Wesley van Dyck (Flanders Team – Belgium) came second in third stage (03:40:44) while Ratchanon Yaowarat (03:40:56) of Thailand National Team finished third.

UAE youngster Abdullah al Ali Jassim (+2:41) – who finished sixth – claimed the green jersey for points with 22 points while also taking the white jersey for best young rider classification (10:07:25).

Abdullah (+1.16) also came second in the race for Tour title with leader Adne van Engelen (10:06:09) ahead of the fourth and concluding stage from Dahariz Beach to Wadi Darbat for a distance of 120 km. Sarawut Sirironnachai (+1.28) of Thailand is third in the standings.

Amani Team (Slovenia) became the best team of the stage (11:06:43) in the 154 km stage from Al Haffa Souq to Ayn Ishat.

Algerian Yacine Hamza of Madar Pro Cycling Team – Algeria (+9.00) retained his grey jersey for the aggressive rider classification with 10 points.



The top three riders of third stage pose on the podium in Salalah.

Roojai Insurance – Thailand led the general team classification after third stage (30:24:50).

The third stage was flagged off at Al Haffa Souq, passing along Al Haffa Beach, Nasheeb roundabout, Al Mamoura, Tawi Attir Bridge, Ashoor Coast, Darbat waterfalls, Hamran coast, Al Mamoura roundabout, Arzat roundabout, Madayen roundabout, Raysut roundabout, the Frankincense Tree Farm, Adonb Souq, before reaching the finish line at Ayn Ishat.

The winners were crowned by Saif al Rashidi, Chairman of the Oman Cycling Association (OCA).

TOUR OBJECTIVES

According to Ishaq bin Abdullah al Balushi,

Tour Director and OCA Board Member, the Tour of Salalah has been promoting the culture of cycling and encourage its practice among society.

“The Omani riders are exposed to world-class competitors and the event has cemented Oman’s presence on the UCI International Cycling Calendar.”

“The Salalah Tour has also been showcasing Dhofar’s natural and cultural assets to the world. So we are using this international event as a tool for both sports development and tourism promotion,” Ishaq added.

Fifteen regional and international teams are taking part from Asia, Europe, and the Gulf. Among them are Oman National Team, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Thailand, and continental teams including Madar Pro (Algeria), Terengganu Cycling (Malaysia), Amani (Slovenia), Victoria Sports Pro (Philippines), Shimano Racing (Japan) and Flanders (Belgium).

TOUR OF SALALAH 2025 STAGE 3 RESULTS	
1 Jeroen Meijers	Victoria Sports Pro Cycling
3:40:35	
2 Wesley Van Dyck	Team Flanders
+0:09	
3 Ratchanon Yaowarat	Thailand
+0:21	
4 Lawrence Lorot	Team Amani
+0:38	
5 Charles Kagimu	Team Amani
+1:30	
6 Abdulla al Ali Jasim	United Arab Emirates
+2:41	
7 Tegsh-Bayar Batsaikhan	Roojai Insurance
+2:41	
8 Shoma Kazama	Shimano Racing
+2:41	
9 Adne van Engelen	Terengganu Cycling Team
+2:41	
10 Sarawut Sirironnachai	Thailand
+2:41	



MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
5,072.808

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$69.76
BRENT \$66.49
LIGHT \$62.98.



SHORTTAKES



Dr Aflah al Hadhrami, Managing Director, PDO and Hilal al Busaidy, Managing Director, SLB in Oman and Pakistan, at the agreement signing

PACT TO SET UP OMAN PERFORATION TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) and SLB have signed an agreement to establish the Oman Perforation Technology Centre, the first perforating charges manufacturing facility of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa for oil and gas activity.

The new centre marks an important step in localising advanced industries, strengthening supply chains and delivering long-term economic value, while supporting Oman Vision 2040 and PDO's In-Country Value (ICV) programme.

Equipped with advanced technologies such as robotic arms and precision conveyor systems, the facility will be designed to revamp the way perforating services are executed in the region.

By localising critical manufacturing, the centre will reduce reliance on imported materials, cut carbon emissions associated with overseas logistics and enhance the resilience of PDO's supply chain.

Commenting on the agreement, Dr Aflah al Hadhrami, Managing Director, PDO, said: "This project is another step forward in PDO's mission to create sustainable value for Oman and its people.

The Oman Perforation Technology Centre will not only deliver vital in-country capabilities but also build resilience in our operations and open new pathways for innovation in partnership with Omani universities and international experts.

It reflects our deep commitment to maximising ICV and ensuring that our investments translate into real opportunities for local businesses and Omani talent". Hilal al Busaidy, Managing Director, SLB in Oman and Pakistan, added: "We are proud to expand our long-standing partnership with PDO through this transformative project. The Oman Perforation Technology Centre is designed to deliver world-class manufacturing standards while advancing Oman's ambition to diversify its economy".

E-commerce strategy delivers major gains

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

THE 2nd edition of the Oman E-Commerce Forum 2025 kicked off on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event was hosted by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) and attended by Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, along with a number of officials. The forum saw wide participation from e-commerce experts and specialists from Oman and abroad, in addition to representatives from several government and private institutions.

Dr Masan affirmed in his opening address that the convening of the forum comes at a crucial stage, as the world is witnessing rapid economic transformations led by the e-commerce sector, which has now become the main driver of growth and a cornerstone for building the economy of the future.

He pointed out that the forum's alignment with the launch of Comex 2025, the leading technology event in the Sultanate of Oman, doubles its significance, as it forms an integrated platform that reflects Oman Vision 2040 for digital transformation and strengthens its global competitiveness.

He explained that data from the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) indicate that global e-commerce sales are estimated at around \$6.42 trillion in 2025 and are expected to exceed \$83 trillion by 2030, with an annual growth rate of nearly 18%.

This, he noted, underscores the importance of investing in digitalisation to enhance



The 2nd Oman E-Commerce Forum began under the auspices of Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry

The forum discussed the latest developments in the e-commerce sector and reviewed leading global practices and future trends in the digital economy, reinforcing the competitiveness of the national economy and aligning with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

competitiveness and create sustainable growth opportunities.

Dr Masan also noted that at the end of 2021, Oman adopted the National E-Commerce Strategy, implemented from 2022-2027 under the leadership of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

The strategy was based on eight main pillars in which tangible achievements have been made, with an overall completion rate of more than 73%. Out of 30 initiatives, 22 have been completed, surpassing the targets within the specified timeframe.

Significant progress has been achieved across various pillars: 75% in ICT infrastructure, 90% in transport and logistics, 100% in e-procurement through the unified electronic tendering system, 20% in e-payments with support from the Central Bank for fintech start-ups, 100% in the legal and regulatory framework with the issuance of more than 11,767 e-commerce licences and verification of 276 online stores through the Maroof Oman platform, 50% in skills and awareness; and 100% in business facilitation through Maroof Oman

TRA forum discusses legal obstacles to digital revolution

FAISAL AL AJMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) hosted a forum on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, highlighting the need for dynamic regulations to protect users, drive innovation and support Oman Vision 2040.

Titled, 'Electronic Applications and Legal Challenges in Muscat', various speakers underlined opportunities and legal issues in the digital ecosystem despite the achievement of 95 per cent internet penetration, mobile subscriptions outnumbering the national population and 61 per cent of Omanis on social media.

In opening remarks, Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, emphasised the country's drive to keep pace with the digital revolution.

He noted that electronic



Muscat forum discusses legal challenges of rapid digital expansion

applications have become "an inseparable part of everyday life", providing convenience and speed but also threatening imminent legal challenges.

Taher bin Awadh al Ibrahim, Executive Director of the Legal Affairs Unit, stated: "With the fast pace of change in the modern

world, electronic applications are now an integral part of life, creating more efficient services and propelling efficiency.

These chances are prospective, but they represent legal challenges and require the establishment of a balanced and open regulatory system safeguarding people,

developers and institutions while boosting innovation and investment". Latest national statistics underscore the significant levels of digitalisation across Oman. There are well over 6.7 million active mobile subscriptions corresponding to 124 per cent of the total population (early 2025 figures). Internet penetration is almost 95 per cent with 5.14 million users.

More than 3.29 million Omanis, representing 61 per cent of the population, are active on social media.

Connectivity has also increased significantly. Mobile broadband speeds averaged 92 Mbps and fixed broadband speeds averaged 78 Mbps, enabling the use of complex applications. As of May 2025, Oman had more than 5.4 million mobile broadband subscriptions and nearly 588,000 fixed internet subscriptions.

Among the emerging trends is the growth of the Internet of Things (IoT) with subscriptions growing by more than 1.3 million

since 2020 to 1.55 million.

Officials say this is an indication of the transformation of the country towards smart cities, digital logistics and new electronic applications supporting Oman's digital economy.

In Oman, Facebook is the most popular social media platform with 4.17 million subscribers, or 71.4 per cent of the population.

In second place is Instagram with 2.81 million (48.1 per cent) and Messenger and LinkedIn with 1.88 million and 1.11 million users respectively.

These figures also underline the importance of legal and regulatory accountability, officials noted. The TRA re-affirmed that, aside from regulation, it also aims to facilitate innovation while safeguarding user security and market integrity.

Adaptable instruments such as regulatory sandboxes, pilot schemes and compliance frameworks are being launched to facilitate start-ups and Omani developers to develop in a responsible manner.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Built on a legacy of craftsmanship, innovation and luxury, Lexus vehicles embody a commitment to performance, safety and comfort.

LEXUS OMAN
CELEBRATES 35
YEARS WITH
EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

MUSCAT: Lexus Oman is celebrating 35 years of delivering premium automotive experiences by introducing an exclusive campaign for its customers.

From September 1 to October 30, 2025, Lexus owners will enjoy up to 10 years/100,000 km service, free insurance and first-year registration — a package designed to enhance the ownership experience and mark this milestone with distinction.

Built on a legacy of craftsmanship, innovation and luxury, Lexus vehicles embody a commitment to performance, safety and comfort. Customers can explore the brand’s diverse line-up of SUVs and sedans at Saud Bahwan Automotive showrooms across the Sultanate of Oman, where each model reflects the Lexus ethos of elevating lifestyles through excellence.

Among the SUV range, the flagship Lexus LX600 offers a bold presence and superior capability. Powered by a 3.5L turbocharged 6-cylinder engine with a 10-speed automatic transmission, the LX delivers a refined yet rugged performance.

Advanced technologies such as Active Height Control with Adaptive Variable Suspension, Multi-Terrain Mode with 4 Cameras, Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) and a Panoramic View Monitor make every journey secure and effortless, whether on-road or off-road.

The Lexus RX series remains a customer favourite, combining style, power and versatility. Available in three trims — RX350, RX350h and RX500h F Sport — it provides a choice between traditional and hybrid powertrains.

The RX350, powered by a 2.4L turbocharged engine with 274 hp and 430 Nm of torque, ensures dynamic driving with an 8-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission.

The RX350h pairs a 2.5L petrol engine with an electric motor, delivering 246 hp and an impressive fuel economy of 20.7 km/L, while the RX500h F Sport emphasises a more dynamic, performance-driven character.

Adding to the SUV line-up, the Lexus NX and UXH bring together innovation and sustainability. The NX offers both a turbocharged 2.4L engine producing 275 hp and a hybrid-electric option, blending power with efficiency.

The UXH, with its 2.0L petrol engine and high-torque electric motor, underscores Lexus’ commitment to a carbon-neutral future while delivering agility, style and fuel efficiency.

For sedan enthusiasts, the Lexus ES range reflects elegance and performance. The ES250 features a 2.5L engine producing 203 hp, while the ES350 comes with a 3.5L V6 delivering 297 hp. Both models offer smooth driving dynamics with automatic transmissions.

NBO
LAUNCHES
YOUTH
ACCOUNT
FOR YOUNG
COSTUMERS

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has introduced the Youth Account, designed for customers aged 13 to 17, offering tailored financial solutions that equip young people with essential money management skills while fostering independent banking in a safe and supportive environment.

The Youth Account promotes accessibility and inclusivity, providing customised debit cards and no minimum balance requirements, allowing young

customers to focus on their financial growth.

Through the NBO App, account holders can enjoy instant local transfers, e-commerce and bill payments, as well as exclusive discounts and online shopping offers. Additional benefits include three free monthly cash withdrawals from non-NBO ATMs.

Customers also earn Reward Points upon opening an account and completing digital onboarding instantly. Parents can monitor and

manage their children’s accounts through the NBO App, ensuring transparency while giving young customers the opportunity to learn responsible financial management.

With these features, the Youth Account represents a valuable first step towards financial empowerment and independence for Oman’s younger generation.

For more information, visit www.nbo.om, call the NBO Call Centre at 24700000, or download the NBO App.

Tourism Minister leads
visit to Al Mouj Muscat



The visit highlighted the role of integrated tourism destinations in knowledge transfer and national talent development.



SALIM bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, accompanied by Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism, led an official delegation to Al Mouj Muscat to review the progress of the Sultanate of Oman’s flagship integrated tourism projects.

During the visit, the delegation toured key assets including the award-winning

18-hole championship golf course, the upcoming Okura — Oman’s first Japanese-branded hotel set to open in 2028 — and the enhanced Golf Club and Business Park.

The programme also included site visits to residential communities such as Golf Beach Residences, Jinan Island and Marooj Lanes, alongside updates on the next phases of Azura Beach Residences, Marina upgrades and the recently inaugurated St Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort. The visit is part

of the Ministry’s strategy to ensure alignment with Oman Vision 2040 objectives and evaluate projects that support tourism growth, inward investment and job creation.

Discussions emphasised governance, sustainability and community-focused strategies, highlighting the role of integrated tourism destinations in knowledge transfer and national talent development.

Commenting on the visit, Nasser bin Masoud al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said:

“We are honoured to welcome Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism and the delegation to Al Mouj Muscat.

Their visit reflects the strong spirit of collaboration between the Ministry and our team, providing valuable feedback as we ensure our projects remain aligned with national priorities.

With the Ministry’s guidance, our developments continue to enhance Oman’s tourism offering and deliver lasting economic value”.

CHANGAN LAUNCHES ALL-NEW CS75PLUS 4WD

MUSCAT: Changan Automobile has launched the All-New CS75PLUS 4WD in Oman, combining luxurious cabin space, passenger comfort, bold design and advanced driving performance.

The SUV marks a major milestone in Changan’s growth in the Middle East. Since entering Oman in 2020, Changan has expanded its presence with eight showrooms and 14 service centres, offering the widest network among Chinese automotive brands.

The CS75PLUS 4WD joins a lineup of nine models, including the Alsvin, EADO Plus, CS35 Plus, UNI-S, CS95, UNI-T, UNI-K and UNI-V.



The launch of the CS75PLUS 4WD adds a ninth model to its Oman lineup, joining favourites such as the Alsvin, EADO Plus, CS35 Plus, UNI-S, CS95, UNI-T, UNI-K and UNI-V.

and UNI-V. The CS75PLUS features a 2.0T engine with an 8-speed Aisin automatic transmission, producing 232 hp and 390 Nm of torque.

Its interior includes Nappa leather seats, zero-gravity co-driver seating, eight-mode massage, innovative storage solutions and a 14-speaker audio system.

Technology and safety features include a 14.6-inch infotainment screen, digital instrument cluster, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, six airbags, Autonomous Emergency Braking, Lane Keep Assist and a 540° panoramic view camera system.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds expands United Kingdom presence

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the world’s fifth-largest jewellery retailer with over 400 showrooms across 13 countries, has expanded its footprint in the United Kingdom with the opening of two flagship showrooms in Birmingham and Southall. The showrooms were inaugurated by acclaimed Bollywood actress and brand ambassador Kareena Kapoor Khan, marking an important milestone in the brand’s global expansion strategy. The launch events were attended by M P Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group; Abdul Salam K P, Vice Chairman; Shamlal



The showrooms were inaugurated by acclaimed Bollywood actress and brand ambassador Kareena Kapoor Khan, marking an important milestone in the brand’s global expansion strategy.

Ahamed, Managing Director — International Operations; A K Faisal, Group Executive Director; along with directors, senior management, community leaders and customers.

Commenting on the occasion, M P Ahammed said, “The UK is an integral part of our global growth journey and with the launch of our flagship showrooms in Birmingham and Southall, we are strengthening our presence in the region.

With four operational showrooms and more in the pipeline, these openings reinforce our mission of becoming one of the most preferred jewellery retailers worldwide.

We remain deeply grateful to our customers, shareholders and team members for their trust and support”.

The new showrooms have been designed as complete luxury destinations, offering more than 30,000 designs in gold, diamonds and precious gems, representing over 25 exclusive collections. Customers can also access bespoke jewellery design services and exclusive bridal collections. At 5,700 sq ft, the Birmingham showroom is Malabar’s largest in the UK, underscoring its commitment to bringing world-class experiences.

SHORTTAKES



The signing ceremony was attended on behalf of Muscat Stock Exchange by Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, CEO of MSX, along with senior officials from both SSE and SZSE.

MSX INKS PACTS WITH SHANGHAI AND SHENZHEN BOURSES

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has signed separate Memoranda of Cooperation with the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) and Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SZSE), as part of its efforts to strengthen international partnerships and develop capital markets. These agreements aim to enhance the position of Oman’s capital market at both the regional and global levels.

The two memoranda are designed to foster collaboration in several key areas, including the exchange of information, knowledge and expertise related to capital markets, the development of joint listing mechanisms, sharing experiences in financial technology (Fintech), as well as cooperation in investor education and awareness.

The cooperation also covers the exchange of studies and research of mutual interest, staff secondments and exploring opportunities in innovative financial products and services supporting Oman’s diversification strategies and the growth of its capital market.

The signing ceremony was attended on behalf of Muscat Stock Exchange by Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, CEO of MSX, along with senior officials from both SSE and SZSE. Attendees emphasised the importance of these partnerships in building strong bridges of cooperation between the capital markets of the Sultanate of Oman and the People’s Republic of China.

On this occasion, Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, CEO of MSX stated: “The signing of these cooperation memoranda with Shanghai and Shenzhen Stock Exchanges marks a strategic milestone in Muscat Stock Exchange’s journey towards greater integration with global capital markets.

These partnerships will enable the exchange of expertise, foster innovation and create new opportunities for investors positively contributing to the development of Oman’s capital market and reinforcing its position as a competitive financial hub at the regional and international levels.

He added: “This collaboration reflects the shared commitment of all parties to strengthen strategic cooperation and seize cross-border investment opportunities. The memorandum with Shenzhen Stock Exchange in particular represents a significant step forward in expanding our international relations and broadening access to global markets, enhancing Oman’s appeal to international investors.

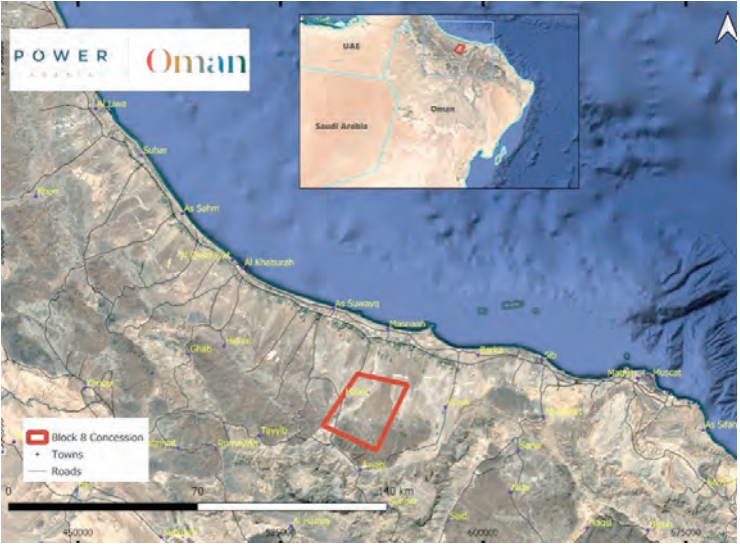
Copper exploration in Oman advances in Block 8

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

UK-BASED minerals exploration firm Power Metal Resources has announced that geophysical surveys of copper prospects in the Block 8 exploration concession in Al Batinah North Governorate have identified promising mineralisation in two locations — results that strengthen earlier indications of the block’s copper potential.

London-listed Power Metal Resources and its majority-owned subsidiary, Power Arabia Ltd, made the announcement ahead of a much-anticipated maiden drilling programme that will seek to validate these preliminary findings. The exercise, involving an initial nine drill holes, is scheduled to begin on September 15, 2025 and follows the Ministry of Energy and Minerals’ renewal of the Block 8 licence for one year. Block 8 is jointly held by Australia-listed Alara Resources and Oman-based Awtad Copper LLC.

Exploration work is being carried out by Power Arabia under a formal agreement signed last October. Under the terms, Power Metal is entitled to earn a 12.5% stake in the project once commerciality is achieved. Both locations fall within the Al Mansur Prospect, first identified in 2012 and later confirmed through trenching and



Block 8 is jointly held by Australia-listed Alara Resources and Oman-based Awtad Copper LLC.

Copper, a vital component in renewable energy, electric vehicles and modern infrastructure, represents a critical mineral that can unlock significant economic opportunities for the Sultanate of Oman.

mapping. Recent gravity survey work has pinpointed two strong underground targets, now named AM1 and AM2, extending over roughly 700 metres. Both exhibit unusually high readings that could indicate valuable sulphide mineral deposits beneath the surface. These zones may either be parts of the same mineralised body separated by faulting or two distinct but similar deposits.

Commenting on the development, Sean Wade, CEO of Power Metal Resources, said: “I am pleased to report further progress at Power Arabia’s flagship project.

The gravity survey results have

Oman’s first smart corporate payment card launched

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

In line with the national drive to embed innovative digital solutions in the payments sector, Thawani has unveiled the ‘Mujib for Business’ card, the Sultanate of Oman’s first fully integrated smart financial card designed to help companies manage their operations with greater efficiency and flexibility.

The launch, held during the Comex Global Technology Exhibition 2025 under the auspices of Shaikh Nasser bin Suleiman al Harthy, Deputy President of Operations at Oman Investment Authority, marks a milestone in the evolution of Oman’s fintech sector.

The card enables institutions to issue prepaid cards instantly through a secure digital



The ‘Mujib for Business’ card is designed to help companies manage their operations with greater efficiency and flexibility.

platform, allowing real-time monitoring and transparent management of expenses. It covers a wide spectrum of corporate outlays such as petty cash, purchases, fuel and government transactions, in addition to monthly subscriptions, staff travel allowances and work-related missions. Institutions can

easily request the card through Thawani’s business platform, issue multiple cards in a single application and have them delivered directly. The system allows full administrative control, assigning each card to a specific user, tracking payments via the app and offering replacement or top-up directly from the corporate wallet.

A key advantage is that the card operates independently of bank accounts, adding a layer of financial security.

Sensitive details are not printed on the card’s surface and can only be accessed by the assigned user through the app, strengthening privacy and reliability.

Shaikh Nasser bin Suleiman al Harthy said the initiative reflects Oman’s progress in digital financial services.

“Innovation in the financial sector enhances the digital services ecosystem in the Sultanate of Oman, reinforces institutional adoption of smart solutions and supports Oman Vision 2040’s digital transformation goals. We hope this initiative provides Omani enterprises with advanced tools to strengthen competitiveness in today’s modern economy”.

Eng Majid bin Fayil al Amri, CEO of Thawani, added that the launch represents a pivotal step for the country’s fintech journey: “We believe fintech is a true enabler for institutions.

By delivering practical and secure solutions, we help businesses manage resources efficiently while supporting Oman’s move towards a diversified and knowledge-based economy”.

Omani startup Balil showcases novel auto air filter at Comex

SAEED AL MASHARFI
MUSCAT, SEPT 9

Balil, an Omani startup at the forefront of sustainable air purification solutions, introduced its innovative Sporle Filter during the Comex Global Technology Exhibition 2025.

The Sporle Filter is the first patented portable device designed for car air purification that combines filtration, cooling and natural scenting in one compact solution. The product reflects Balil’s commitment to sustainability and innovation, addressing the growing need for healthier and more eco-friendly air solutions.

CEO Hajar al Amri shared her insights on the company’s participation, challenges, market



The Sporle Filter is the first patented portable device designed for car air purification.

response and future plans: “Our participation in the Comex Global Technology Exhibition 2025 has been an exceptional opportunity

to showcase our technology to a diverse audience of investors, businesses and the public from inside and outside Oman.

The exhibition enabled us to gain direct feedback on our product and opened discussions with potential partners in manufacturing and distribution. It also provided a platform to highlight the role of Omani youth in innovation and entrepreneurship.

According to Hajar, the transition from concept to commercial development was particularly challenging for want of adequate funding support and technical expertise. “Another challenge was raising awareness in society about the importance of air purification as a health priority rather than a luxury.

In addition, building a strong support network of manufacturers and distributors has been crucial to match the sustainable nature of our product”, she noted.

But interest in the product has been significant since its debut at Comex. “From the very first day of the exhibition, we witnessed strong interest from individuals eager to learn more about our innovation, many of whom expressed enthusiasm for eco-friendly purifiers that can be used in their daily lives.

We also saw positive engagement from investors seeking pioneering projects that combine sustainability and technology. This has already led to initial discussions that may develop into future investment opportunities.

Furthermore, several organisations and companies have shown readiness to collaborate and we are currently preparing the ground for memorandums of understanding to strengthen our manufacturing and marketing prospects”.

Looking ahead, Balil plans to focus on completing the final stages of product testing and obtaining the necessary official certifications to launch the Sporle Filter. At the same time, the start-up is working on attracting strategic investments to support its growth and expansion plans.

“Once these milestones are achieved, our primary goal will be to enter the regional market, followed by an ambitious plan for global expansion”, the CEO added.

OPINION

Boomerang recruitment: a win-win situation for all



DR RAJA
TUMATI

The writer is a senior lecturer and programme coordinator at Oman Tourism College

STAFFING is a critical HR function that includes hiring and retaining people, with recruiting and choosing employees being among the most important components. However, finding an ideal candidate for the right position is never straightforward, as employing individuals presents several obstacles to the employer. Therefore, what is the solution for finding employees who are suitable for an organisation? One solution is to bring back employees who left the organisation, either freely or accidentally. This is known as boomerang recruiting, which refers to the method of hiring past workers who left an organisation but were later attracted back, usually because they were excellent performers or departed on a positive note. According to Business Insider, boomerang recruiting is on the rise, as talented people return to their previous companies, potentially saving up to 50% over traditional hiring methods. Boomerang employees accounted for 35% of all newly recruited individuals in the United States of America in March 2025, an increase from 31% in March 2024. The rate of boomerang recruiting

continues to rise across various sectors, including information technology (68%), education (55%), accounting and finance (39%) and tourism and hospitality (35%), with an average of 35%. According to Harvard Business Review, a Fortune 500 business can save up to \$12 million by diligently hiring boomerang employees, recouping up to 213% of the pay of a high-skilled employee. Boomerang recruiting is critical for various stakeholders. First, consider the benefits to businesses: faster onboarding, proven employee performance, fresh ideas, new viewpoints and new experiences from employees, knowledge transfer, a stronger employer brand and lower costs than obtaining new personnel. It also helps organisations by reducing training time and costs, boosting innovation and improving their reputation. Next, the importance for employees: the realisation that ‘the grass is not greener on the other side’ leads many to appreciate their former employers. Returning to a familiar workplace can alleviate stress, encourage career advancement, revive respect for the company’s culture and enhance existing relationships, thereby increasing engagement

Boomerang recruitment is a systematic approach to people management that promotes long-term growth and competitive advantage.

and overall efficiency. Here are some of the key takeaways for employees and businesses: Employees: Leave the company with grace, clarity and on good terms so that doors are kept open for you in the future. ADP payroll data indicate that 94% of employers plan to rehire former employees who left on good terms, making re-entry a viable career path. In the corporate world, goodbyes are not forever; returning is no longer seen as backtracking. It is a smart and strategic move that signals self-awareness and adaptability. As economic uncertainty grows, many employees are returning to familiar workplaces where they find the necessary familiarity and comfort. Businesses: People leave occupations to pursue new opportunities, professional growth, education and further training in other organisations. After a period, if they signal a return, it is always better to rehire them, as they can contribute swiftly, rekindle their dedication and bring external experiences and new talents, all of which help fuel innovation. Furthermore, many people return because they are familiar with the system, are nostalgic and make accurate comparisons to new employers.

GOLDEN RESIDENCY: A CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT



DR DAVIS
KALLUKARAN

The author is the Managing Partner at Crowe Oman

The Golden Residency Programme launched recently for investors aims to consolidate Oman’s position as a most attractive destination for long-term investment. The programme is also aimed at welcoming skilled professionals to the Sultanate of Oman to accelerate private-sector growth, support job creation and deepen knowledge transfer in line with Oman Vision 2040. It offers renewable

ten-year residency for foreign investors and their families, providing stability and growth in a secure environment. The residency holders receive a ten-year residency that also covers first-degree family members without a cap on numbers or age. The move will enhance Oman’s business environment, give a boost to the real estate segment, create employment and strengthen the Oman economy. Emergence of AI and need for reskilling The post Covid-era has disrupted business models the world over. Many conventional style businesses have closed down. Machine Learning, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence have transformed the way businesses are working. Transport and logistics have taken centre-stage. The World Economic Forum predicts that, though 92 million jobs across industries may be eliminated, 170 million new roles are expected to emerge. According to McKinsey, the real challenge lies in closing the gap between jobs set to be made redundant by change and the emergent ones. Implementing AI is not just about technology; it is also about transforming people and rethinking how we approach talent, skills, roles and organisational culture. The true impact depends on how people understand, adopt and apply the new technology (AI). Implement AI as a talent enhancer and you will boost efficiency, speed and employee engagement. Re-skilling is essential to prepare for a rapidly changing world, requiring agility and a culture that supports continuous adaptation. This is where the vision of our leadership is to be appreciated at this juncture for embracing technology and attracting skilled professionals to the Sultanate of Oman, to accelerate private sector growth, enable the reskilling of our existing workforce and to boost efficiency, speed and employee engagement. This requires huge investments and import of highly skilled technocrats. The 10-year Golden Residency Programme, with its multiple benefits, is a crowning achievement in Oman’s efforts to attract global talent. It is designed to reshape Oman’s investment landscape and act as a catalyst to the economic growth.

Immersive tech enhances tourism accessibility

THE World Economic Report predicts that the Travel and Tourism industry will contribute \$16 trillion to global GDP by 2034. This growth is expected despite the risks of global disruptions and localised disenchantment of stakeholders against tourism. One of the main contributing factors to this is an increase in the use of immersive technology to enhance the travel experience. According to a report named “The State of Travel” published by McKinsey in 2024, 76% of Gen Z and 72% of millennials were showed an increased interest in travelling post-pandemic. These generations are techno-savvy and great supporters of sustainability and eco-tourism. Post-pandemic, they really want to experience life, especially through travel. University of Technology in Sydney and related academic research found that factors like virtual interactivity, social interaction, attitude perceived usefulness and trust significantly influenced tourists to use immersive technologies in tourism. It would not be wrong to say that immersive technology is fast changing the way tourist perceives travel and vice versa. “Project Gondwana Rainforest of Australia”, is one successful case where AR and VR technologies were used to create educational guided tours within the rainforest. This enables visitors to learn about the Aboriginal heritage, the forests biodiversity and the threats it faces without physically disturbing the environment. Another case worth mentioning is the “WasteApp” developed by EU. It is a gamified platform where tourists can earn points, badges and other rewards for properly disposing of the waste. This promoted responsible tourism and sustainability. Oman Vision 2040 has placed strong emphasis on the use of technology in tourism with a focus on immersive experiences and cultural heritage. Some excellent examples are Virtual Reality Heritage Tours by Muscat Municipality, Oman’s immersive virtual pavilion at Expo 2025 (Osaka, Japan) and the Hybrid Show experience at Muscat Nights festival



Oman Vision 2040 has placed strong emphasis on the use of technology in tourism with a focus on immersive experiences and cultural heritage.



JAYASHREE
KRISHNAMURTHY

The author is a senior lecturer at Oman Tourism College

This will place Oman in a niche position as a forward-thinking and inclusive destination that honours its cultural heritage while driving competitiveness and sustainability.

2024-2025.While the main benefit of using immersive technology in tourism is enhancing visitor engagement and satisfaction, the other exciting benefits are its ability to overcome physical, economic and accessibility barriers. This implementation of relevant Immersive technology will help the destination to align with ISO 21902 which aims at ensuring that tourism is accessible to people of all ages and abilities. As per the Accessible Tourism Organisation report 2024, 20% of tourists require special access during their travel. They reported that as many as 257 million tourists were looking for accessibility in many forms while travelling. It is to be noted that people with access requirements travelled with 1 to 2 companions leading to additional earnings for the said destination. Commercially, the market size is expected to grow from \$76 billion (2024) to \$135 billion by 2032. This market should be effectively tapped as Oman invests in immersive technology. It should explore ways to make tourism more accessible and immersive for travellers with special needs. This can be done in many ways based on their requirements. One suggestion is by making virtual access available in places like Jabel Shams or cave sites for the

physically challenged or elderly. Accessible audio guides and players for people with sensory disabilities. The government can also give funding support in form of grants and rebates to encourage private players to invest in immersive technology that is in line with ISO 21902. Additionally, areas that are ecologically sensitive or dangerous can be made accessible using VR without harming the ecosystem. Introducing Oman’s culture, heritage and role in Silk Routes through figures like Sindbad or history of Sultans of Oman through AR tours, audio guides, gamified trials and AI narrators. This can be done like the AR/VR exhibition on “Tbn Al Haytham: A Journey of Science from Darkness into Light” held at the Muscat Festival back in 2016. This concept could be introduced in Museums and Forts as well. To encourage sustainable behaviour among domestic and international tourists, a gaming app like the “Star App” and “Ol’au Palau” can be made, where both domestic and international tourists can earn rewards for using sustainable alternatives or adopting sustainable behaviour. There are several advantages immersive technology can offer to make tourism experience inclusive and innovative.

CLASSIFIEDS

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ART/LIFE

L I F E S T Y L E

THIS OCTOBER, RE-WITNESS DHOFAR 'S ANCIENT SARDINE FISHING TRADITIONS FOR AL DAWAGHI SEASON > 20



ENTERTAINMENT

David Bowie’s secret musical on 18th century London found



DAVID BOWIE was working on an “18th century” themed musical at the time of his death, which will feature in a new London centre dedicated to the seminal British artist, the BBC reported on Friday.

The V&A museum will open the free-to-access home for Bowie’s vast archive in Stratford, east London, on September 13.

One exhibit will be notes from a previously unknown project called “The Spectator”, which he described as an “18th Century musical”.

The work showcased Bowie’s fascination with art and satire in 18th Century London and drew inspiration from criminals of the time, including notorious thief “Honest” Jack Sheppard, according to notes shared with the BBC. The walls of a locked room in Bowie’s New York office were adorned with post-it notes for the project when he died in 2016 and were left unseen until his belongings were archived.

They will now be available to view at the centre, which will also host guest-curated displays, notably from disco pioneer and super-producer Nile Rodgers, who collaborated with Bowie on his “Let’s Dance” album. His selections include a suit, made by opera costume designer Peter Hall, worn during the “Serious Moonlight” tour. Rodgers also picked out rare photographs and personal correspondence reflecting their shared “love of the music that had both made and saved our lives”.

Brit Award-winning indie rockers “The Last Dinner Party” will also curate, showcasing objects primarily from the 1970s that highlight how Bowie inspired artists to “stand up for themselves and their music”.

The centre has over 90,000 items tracing Bowie’s career, with visitors able to explore a trove of 414 costumes and accessories, nearly 150 musical instruments, extensive notes, diaries, lyrics and unrealised projects.

“In the centre, we want you to get closer to Bowie and his creative process than ever before”, said Madeleine Haddon, the collection’s lead curator.

“For Bowie fans and those coming to him for the first time, we hope the centre can inspire the next generation of creatives”, she added.

Starting with “Space Oddity” in 1969, Bowie scored major hits over more than four decades, ranging from “The Jean Genie” and “Heroes” in the 1970s to “Let’s Dance” and “Modern Love” in the 1980s to more recent hits like 2013’s wistful “Where Are We Now?”

Many of them became era-defining songs around the world, establishing Bowie as a popular music legend. — AFP

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



TRENDING

The full moon, also known as “Blood Moon”, is visible during a lunar eclipse with a statue of the ancient Greek goddess Irene holding a child in the foreground, in central Athens. — AFP



FILM

Bollywood actress Rekha attends the Filmfare Glamour and Style Awards 2025 in Mumbai. — AFP



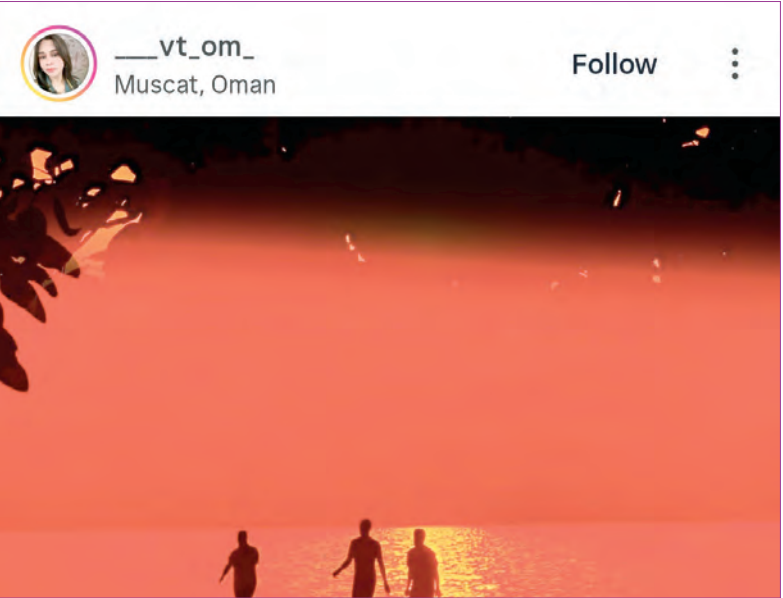
TV TRENDS

A model presents a creation by Hungarian fashion designer Peter Mero during a fashion show at the Millenaris cultural centre in Budapest. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



A Lesson with the Elders



The Fiery Sky

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Angelina Jolie reflects on family cancer history before ‘Couture’ premiere



ACADEMY Award winner Angelina Jolie had a strong message about hope and living her best life as she reflected on her family’s history of cancer before the world premiere of “Couture” on Sunday.

The “Salt” and “Mr & Mrs Smith” actor was at the Toronto International Film Festival promoting her film “Couture”, the story of an American film director navigating the Parisian fashion industry while she is given a serious medical diagnosis and is in the midst of a divorce.

“I’m 50 now. My mother and grandmother by this age were in chemo”, Jolie said, walking down the red carpet with her co-stars.

“We all have these things we worry about or people we love.

And it’s either going to make us slow down and almost feel we can’t move, take a step, or we’re going to make the most of this life before it’s over”. Jolie underwent a preventive double mastectomy in 2013 after learning she had inherited a high risk of breast cancer and said she hoped her story would inspire other women fighting the life-threatening disease.

She went through with the operation in part to reassure her six children that she would not die young from cancer, as her own mother did at age 56.

“She has a personal connection to the subject of illness and what that does to a body and being confronted to that. And I believe she talks the best about that”, co-star Ella Rumpf said. — Reuters



‘Last generation’: Greek island’s fading pistachio tradition



FOUR farmhands whacked a pistachio tree with sticks and ripe nuts rained down onto tarps. The bounty seemed plentiful but the crew was unimpressed.

“Few pistachios”, Albanian worker Daso Shpata, 47, said under a blazing sun on Greece’s Aegina island, among leafy trees bearing clusters of the red fruit and against a backdrop of chirping cicadas.

Climate change has slashed harvests. But there were other headaches too: children disinclined to continue the family business, trees replaced with holiday homes.

“The pistachio culture that we know is no longer viable”, said Eleni Kypreou, owner of the orchard on Aegina.

“If we want to save the trees, we need to decipher what they need... Otherwise it’ll be something for the museum”, she said.

Aegina is nowhere near the biggest pistachio producer, a distinction that goes to the United States and Iran, which produce several hundreds of thousands of tonnes each year.

But the tourist-heavy island — an hour by ferry from Athens, escorted by seagulls prowling for food — is said to have Greece’s tastiest pistachios. The “special flavour... comes from the ground, from the water. The water is a little salty”, said Kypreou. The 88-year-old treasures her 750 pistachio trees, known as roots (“riza”) in Greek. She sings and speaks to them, hoping for a good season.

“The last couple of years, we had almost nothing. Twenty

kilogrammes (44 pounds) last year, 100 in 2023. So we were expecting a good harvest this year. But it’s not”, she said.

In 2023, Greece produced nearly 22,000 tonnes of pistachios, up from 12,000 in 2015, according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority.

But Aegina’s share fell from over 2,600 tonnes to 2,300.

Its number of trees in productive age and hectares of utilised land also steadily dropped — unlike for Greek pistachio production overall.

- ‘PLANTING HOUSES’ -

“The last two years were bad mainly due to climate change”, said Kostas Peppas, president of Aegina’s cooperative of pistachio producers.

The trees need “certain hours of temperature below 10, 12 degrees Celsius. To sleep, to rest. So if the winter is mild, it’s not good”, he said. The cooperative buys pistachios from its producers and sells them to shops and supermarkets and from its own kiosk at the port buzzing with tourists.

Peppas said he believed most sellers at the port had “bought pistachios from other places” because there was not enough on the island.

He himself has 230 trees — mostly females, which make the pistachios, with two bigger males for pollination. His father swapped the family vineyard for pistachios 80 years ago.

“There is no room to plant more. But there is no room in Aegina... They’re cutting trees and planting houses”, the retired sea captain, 79,

said.

He was “sad, angry, surprised” when a childless acquaintance cut up his best pistachio to build.

With Greek tourism booming — the EU member breaks visitor records each year — short-term rentals have multiplied across the country, particularly in Athens but also on the islands.

- ‘NOTHING YOU CAN DO’ -

Thanasis Lakkos, 53, held up a branch of one of his 3,500 pistachio trees. It was laden with pristine fruit, which when peeled revealed the nut.

He decided that watering it with rain water collected in winter had helped it thrive.

Most of the producers “follow what their grandfather did... But that’s not how it works”, he said, saying he believes one must seek to improve.

Nearby, a machine stood ready to sort harvested pistachios. The fruit with empty shells float to the water’s surface while the good ones sink.

Lakkos vowed to “continue as long as I can”, even if others see it as a senseless sacrifice.

They say “better to sell my land and make a million euros and rest for the rest of my life”, he said.

Lakkos’s son left to become a dj. The young who farm are few and far between.

“You can count them on the fingers of one hand,” Lakkos said, adding that his cohort talk about being “the last generation”.

He said it was sad and getting worse but “there is nothing you can do”.

“The tradition will be lost.” — AFP

FEATURES



THIS OCTOBER,
RE-WITNESS
DHO FAR 'S ANCIENT
SARDINE FISHING
TRADITIONS FOR AL
DAWAGHI SEASON

YERU EBUEN

EVERY OCTOBER in Dhofar Governorate, the sands and waves come alive with a centuries-old maritime tradition — the start of the Al Dawaghi season, a celebrated period dedicated to sardine fishing. This annual event, rooted deep in local history, sees fishermen harnessing age-old techniques alongside modern innovations in pursuit of one of the region's most vital resources.

For generations, the Al Dawaghi season has been a communal endeavour, with fishermen working in tightly knit groups led by a seasoned captain. These crews, often comprising 20 to 30 men, embark on a physically demanding journey that requires unwavering skill, patience and calm precision.

It's a rhythm that has persisted since ancient times: locating

sardine shoals, casting specialised nets called Jarif, hauling in the bounteous catch and transporting it to drying sites where it's either sold as animal feed or exported for oil extraction.

Captain Madin Bashir al Barakah, in a local report, describes the process as both an art and a science. "Before the season begins, fishermen dedicate time to preparing their gear — mending nets, gathering tools and organising everything needed. When the day arrives, at dawn, everyone gathers on the beach, waiting for my signal. From our boat, I track the sardine shoals and direct the crew to guide the fish into carefully prepared traps, ensuring a successful catch", he explains.



While the essence remains traditional, the methods have evolved remarkably over the years. Once, primitive boats with no engines, hand-rows and simple ropes sufficed. Camels transported the freshly caught sardines ashore, showcasing labour-intensive methods that tested every ounce of strength. Today, sleek engine-powered boats and vehicles such as 4x4s have taken their place, making the process more efficient but still grounded in the community's collective expertise.

Fisherman Waleed al Balushi reflects on this transformation. "In the past, we used ropes called Saifiya to encircle the sardines — known as Awma — and boats called Sambuq, which we rowed ourselves. Nets were hauled ashore by camels. Now, cars and trucks pull the nets out of the water. Despite these changes, sardine yields can vary depending on the climate and environmental conditions", he notes. "Last year was better, but this season remains beautiful and rewarding thanks to the hard work of everyone involved". He emphasises that patience and perseverance are key, with hopes for richer catches in the seasons ahead.

For the people of Dhofar, sardines are more than

just a livelihood; they are a cornerstone of identity and community resilience. The season, stretching from October to April, is celebrated with pride, as fishermen's efforts translate into vital economic stability for many families. The sea forms an enduring bond, a shared heritage that sustains generations.

Abdullah Ghuwas, head of fisheries resources at Dhofar's Fisheries Department, highlights the importance of sustainable practices. "The fishing activities support not only local fishermen but also a host of related industries — transport, livestock feed and export markets. Dhofar's sardines are a key export commodity, strengthening the region's position as a major fishing hub", he explains.



Captain Madin al Barakah adds, "Sardines aren't just food — they're an economic pillar. Dried sardines provide protein for animal feed, act as natural fertilisers and are processed into oils at Raysut's industrial facilities. Our local factories rely on sardines for packaging and canning, which helps diversify the economy". Ensuring that this tradition endures sustainably is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. Through regulation and education, it aims to protect this precious resource for future generations. Sardine net licences, known locally as Al Dawaghi nets, are issued with careful oversight, respecting traditional norms and modern regulatory standards. By 2025, fishermen will be able to apply and renew their licences online via the Ministry's Tharwat platform.

Amidst the hard work and challenging conditions, the season is also a vibrant cultural festival. Fishermen gather in song, their chants echoing the faith and unity that have sustained this practice through the ages. Songs like "Allah Kareem, Allah" lift spirits and foster a sense of belonging, connecting the community's past to its present.

As the Al Dawaghi season unfolds each year, it becomes all the more clear — it's about much more than catching fish. It's a living symbol of heritage, resilience and community spirit — an unbreakable link between Dhofar's people and the sea that sustains them.

PHOTOS BY ADNAN DAHISH