

OMAN

دولة عمان

DAILY

Observer

27TH

ARABIAN GULF CUP



RED WARRIORS
RISE THROUGH
THE YEARS

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IN BRIEF

RO 2.2M ALLOCATED FOR 467 RESEARCHES

The Research and Innovation Authority said that funding for researches submitted under the 2026 research cycle of the Competency-Based Institutional Funding Programme, amounted to RO 2.2 million covering 467 research proposals. The research cycle for the current year witnessed broad participation from 28 higher education and research institutions. The allocations approved cover 127 research proposals for the PhD level, 162 for the graduate level as well as 178 research proposals for the undergraduate level.

OMAN GETS RO 97.4M IN FOOD PROJECTS



Invest Oman and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources have facilitated 12 projects with a combined investment value of RO 97.413 million and prepared a further 13 investment opportunities worth RO 122.849 million. The projects cover food manufacturing, agriculture, aquaculture and related industries across several governorates. The additional opportunities are being presented to investors through the Invest Oman platform. The cooperation brings together the ministry's sector expertise and Invest Oman's work on preparing projects for investment and connecting them with potential investors. **DETAILS ON P13**

CALL FOR TAPPING AFRICA'S CAPITAL

African leaders argued for unlocking the continent's capital at a business summit in Egypt on Saturday, saying Africa can "do much better" in financing its growth and reducing reliance on external funding. The three-day gathering in Egypt's Mediterranean city of El-Alamein brought together more than 20 heads of state and government representatives alongside business leaders, bankers and development institutions. Speaking at the inaugural Alamein Africa Forum, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi said Africa's private sector remained the continent's main economic engine, accounting for more than 70 per cent of gross domestic product.

Visit to explore various aspects of cooperation

HM TO PAY STATE VISIT TO KAZAKHSTAN

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK will pay a state-visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan, starting from Monday.

This was stated in a statement issued on Saturday by the Diwan of Royal Court, reading as follows: "In consolidation of the bonds of friendship between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Kazakhstan, and in response to the gracious invitation extended to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan, His Majesty the Sultan will pay a state-visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan, during October 5-6.

"The visit will explore all aspects of cooperation that would elevate bilateral relations to the levels that fulfil the desired objectives across all fields, culminating in outcomes that serve the common interests of both countries.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan during his visit will be a high-level official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court; Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister; Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance; Dr Hamed bin Said al Aufi,



Head of the Private Office; Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, President of Oman Investment Authority; Anwar bin Hilal al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Shaikh Dr Salah bin Salim Jaaboub, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

May Allah the Almighty safeguard His Majesty the Sultan in his residence and in his travels and grant him abundant health and complete well-being".

Stemming from an approach based on extending bridges of communication and cooperation and expanding areas of partnership in service of national interests, the Sultanate of Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, is building its relations with countries around the world and strengthening its presence at the regional and international levels. It is moving from diplomatic communication frameworks to broader areas of economic, investment, cultural and scientific cooperation.

From the Sea of Oman to the heart of Asia, the partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Kazakhstan is being strengthened as His Majesty the Sultan arrives in Astana on Monday on a state visit. During the visit, His Majesty will discuss with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan new areas of cooperation between the two friendly countries.

SEE ALSO P3

ISRAELI STRIKE KILLS FIVE IN GAZA, INCLUDING 4 WOMEN

GAZA: An Israeli air strike killed at least five Palestinians, including four women, in an apartment building in Gaza City early on Saturday, health and civil defence service officials said. Among the dead were a mother, Maisa Abu Dawoud, and her daughter Mary, medics and the church said. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. The strike destroyed the apartment building and started a fire.

"We were asleep and suddenly heard continuous strikes and heavy explosions. The children woke up startled and started running and screaming," said a witness.

"We ran out and found that our neighbour's house was struck and there were dismembered martyrs, women, men and children. We started to pull them out, they were scattered under the rubble," he said.

Friends and relatives gathered at the Saint Porphyrius Church in Gaza City to pay their respects during the funeral of the mother and daughter. — Reuters

World food prices near 4-year high in September: UN

PARIS: World food prices rose in September to their highest in nearly four years as logistics disruptions and weather concerns affected crop markets, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation said.

Fears about a severe El Nino weather pattern have pushed international sugar prices to an 18-month high, while a war-related collapse in Black Sea trade pushed wheat futures to a three-year peak early last month.

The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in international prices for a basket of food commodities, averaged 136.0 points, up from a revised 134.0 for August and the highest reading since November 2022.

"We are seeing a persistent and increasingly broad-based build up in global commodity prices, as disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and the Black Sea combine with climate shocks, putting pressure on energy, transport and key food commodities," FAO Chief Economist



Cereal price benchmark rose 5.1 per cent in September. — Reuters file photo

Maximo Torero said.

"If sustained, these pressures will soon pass through to consumer food prices, especially in food and energy import-dependent countries," he said in a statement.

FAO's sugar price index jumped 6.1 per cent from August in a third consecutive monthly increase, as adverse weather threatened to curb supply in major production zones.

The agency's cereal price benchmark rose 5.1 per cent on the month, with reduced yield prospects for US corn adding to pressure from disruptions to Black Sea grain trade.

Vegetable oil prices edged up 0.9 per cent, driven by palm oil on the back of strong demand and concerns over El Nino-related production risks in Southeast Asia.

In a separate report, FAO kept its forecast for global cereal production in 2026 almost unchanged at 2.979 billion metric tonnes, 2.1 per cent below the previous year's peak but still the second-largest harvest on record. — Reuters

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



26 liver transplants and 55 kidney transplants done between January 2025 and August 2026.

ROYAL HOSPITAL CONDUCTS 81 ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

MUSCAT: The Royal Hospital performed 81 organ transplant surgeries including 26 liver transplants and 55 kidney transplants between January 2025 and August 2026. In addition, the hospital conducted 1,116 donor and recipient assessment and follow-up procedures and received 3,413 visits and consultations.

Dr Al Warith bin Ahmed al Hashmi, Head of the Organ Transplantation Department and Consultant in Liver and Pancreas Transplantation and Surgery at the Royal Hospital, said that the department conducted over 8,236 laboratory tests, including more than 3,467 blood and urine analyses, 1,163 ultrasound and mammograms, 917 CT and angiography scans, 491 bone density scans, 244 MRI scans, 389 X-rays, 715 human leukocyte antigen (HLA) tests, 347 cardiac and circulatory assessments, 207 treadmill stress tests, 123 renal function tests, 43 PET scans, an 40 liver biopsies. The Royal Hospital performed four heart transplant surgeries in an achievement that reflects the competence of national staff and the integrated efforts of various medical specialties to develop organ transplantation services in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr Al Warith said that organ donation is divided into two main types: living donation, where a medically eligible individual donates one of their kidneys or part of their liver after a comprehensive medical evaluation to ensure their safety and the safety of the recipient.

The second type is post-brain death donation, which allows for the use of organs from a brain-dead donor. This includes the donation of heart, liver, kidneys, and lungs to save the lives of other patients, in accordance with approved medical, legal, and religious regulations, he said.

Dr Al Hashmi pointed out that the Royal Hospital plays a vital role in the organ transplantation system in the Sultanate of Oman through its liver, kidney, and heart transplant services, in coordination with the Oman Centre for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation, the Medical City for Military and Security Services and the University Medical City.

OCTOBER BRINGS COOLER WEATHER, RAIN AND ALERTS ACROSS OMAN

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, OCT 3

October has brought a noticeable shift in Oman’s weather, with temperatures easing from the peak summer heat and maximum temperatures across the Sultanate falling below 40°C.

Al Buraimi recorded the highest temperature at 38.8°C, while Jabal Shams registered the lowest at 11.2°C. The cooler conditions have been accompanied by early autumn rainfall across several governorates.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water

Resources, Dima W’attayeen recorded the highest rainfall on October 1 at 27 mm, followed by Al Jabal Al Akhdhar with 20 mm, Al Mudhaibi with 11 mm and Ibra with 10 mm. Light scattered showers were also reported in Al Rustaq, Al Hamra, Al Awabi and Suhar. The Oman Met Office forecasts continued development of convective clouds over the Al Hajar Mountains, with chances of isolated thunderstorms during the afternoon.

Coastal areas of Al Sharqiyah South, Al Wusta and Dhofar — including Al Duqm, Salalah,

Rakhyout, Sadah and Taqah — are expected to experience partly cloudy conditions, with chances of thundershowers and light rain associated with low cloud formations and morning fog.

Authorities have urged residents in desert and open areas to exercise caution due to gusty downdraft winds and blowing dust. Strong winds are expected in Al Mazyouna, Thamrait, Jaalan Bani Bu Ali and southern coastal towns.

Motorists have also been advised to exercise caution as widespread morning fog and rainfall may reduce horizontal visibility.

Rising screen time risks demand parental control

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 3

EXCESSIVE screen time and unstructured digital exposure have emerged as critical public health challenges affecting young children and adolescents in Oman, according to a leading health professional. Experts are calling for balanced family lifestyles and stronger parental oversight to safeguard children from growing physical, psychological, and online safety risks.

Dr Waleed al Ruzaiqi, a consultant paediatrician, highlighted that paediatric clinics are witnessing an unprecedented rise in cases linked to heavy smartphone and tablet usage. Symptoms frequently reported by parents include persistent headaches, sudden academic decline, sleep disturbances, mood swings, and increasing social isolation.

“These cases are no longer exceptional; they have become a daily reality in our clinics,” Dr Al Ruzaiqi said. He pointed out that many children under the age of ten now own personal connected devices, keeping them in constant



Parental supervision should never mean spying or outright confiscation... It is about creating an environment where parents remain actively involved, ensuring that children feel safe approaching them when encountering digital distress: Dr Waleed al Ruzaiqi, a consultant paediatrician

DR WALEED AL RUZAIQI
a consultant paediatrician



Persistent headaches, sudden academic decline, sleep disturbances, mood swings, and increasing social isolation are rising among children

proximity to digital screens — from morning routines and dining tables to late-night bedtime hours.

While digital devices offer immense potential for learning and creativity, unguided exposure opens the door to significant hazards. Beyond physical health issues like sedentary behaviour and poor sleep quality, specialists express deep concern over psychological impacts, including anxiety and lowered self-esteem driven by social media comparisons and short-form content consumption. Furthermore, digital exposure poses severe safety threats, such as cyberbullying and online grooming, where predatory individuals exploit young users

Harvesting water from air for sustainable agriculture in Oman

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 3

A research project has explored the potential of harvesting water from the air and combining it with solar-powered greenhouse and hydroponic systems to support sustainable agricultural production in the Sultanate of Oman.

Funded by the Strategic Research Program of the Research and Innovation Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the project, titled “Feasibility Study to Extract Water from Air and Utilize it in Salt-Affected Lands,” was led by Dr Ahmed al Busaidi, a researcher at the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences at SQU.

The study identified several areas with favourable conditions, including parts of southern Oman near the borders with Yemen and Saudi Arabia, the northern coastline, and selected locations in the central regions. The most appropriate use of the harvested water



Depending on weather conditions and machine capacity, the systems were able to produce up to 40 or 100 litres of water per day.



DR AHMED AL BUSAIDI

would depend on the characteristics of each location.

Depending on weather conditions and machine capacity, the systems were able to produce up to 40 or 100 litres of water per day. The project subsequently integrated atmospheric water generators with solar

energy and a hydroponic farming system, and a new greenhouse was constructed to test crop production using renewable energy and water harvested from the air.

Greenhouse-grown tomato plants recorded an average chlorophyll content of 25.5 and reached an average height of 186 centimetres, compared with a chlorophyll content of 8.23 and a height of 76.5 centimetres among outdoor plants.

Lettuce also recorded higher chlorophyll levels and larger leaves, demonstrating the potential benefits of optimised growing conditions.



هيئة الخدمات المالية
FINANCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY



وزارة المالية
Ministry of Finance



وزارة الصحة
Ministry of Health



وزارة التعليم
Ministry of Education

Tender Announcement

Financial Services Authority announces the following tender :-

Tender name	Tender Number	Release the RFP	Last date for Purchase of RFP	Last date of Submitting the proposal	Tender fees in OMR
Redesigning the user experience and user interface (UX/UI) and replacing the content management system.	FSA 013 / 2026	04 October 2026	08 October 2026 03:00 PM	29 October 2026 02:00 PM	45,000 Non Refundable

Specialized companies interested in participating in the above tender must deposit the tender fee into bank account, and submit payment receipt of the tender along with a copy of the commercial registration certificate and the contact details of the authorized person to the Services & Public Relations Department e-mail : tenders@fsa.gov.om . hence, we shall provide you with Tender document by e-mail.

All participating companies must provide a bank guarantee, issued by locally registered bank not less than 2 % of the tender value addressed to FSA , the bond shall be valid for 90 days from the submission of the proposal.

All bids shall be submitted in tender box at the headquarters of the Financial Services Authority, located in Airport Heights.

FSA is not obliged to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without any justifiable reasons.



To view

Bank account information :-

Name of beneficiary : Financial Services Authority

Account no : 0423019706330018

Bank : Bank Muscat- Corporate Branch- CBD

SWIFT code : BMUSOMRXXXX

Please attach a copy of the deposit receipt

For inquiries, please contact :-

E-mail : tenders@fsa.gov.om

Telephone Number : 24823299, 24823133

Timing : 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

Workdays : Sunday to Thursday.



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OMAN-KAZAKHSTAN RELATIONS

OMAN-KAZAKHSTAN TIES GAIN MOMENTUM

MUSCAT: Stemming from an approach based on extending bridges of communication and cooperation and expanding areas of partnership in service of national interests, Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, is building its relations with countries around the world and strengthening its presence at the regional and international levels. It is moving from diplomatic communication frameworks to broader areas of economic, investment, cultural and scientific cooperation.

From the Sea of Oman to the heart of Asia, the partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Kazakhstan is being strengthened as His Majesty the Sultan arrives in Astana from Monday on a state visit. During the visit, His Majesty will discuss with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan new areas of cooperation between the two friendly countries.

Omani-Kazakh relations have witnessed gradual development across various fields, given the two countries' important geographic locations that connect multiple regions and markets and their potential and opportunities that can be utilised to serve mutual interests.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicate that the volume of trade exchange between Oman and Kazakhstan in 2025 reached RO 421,500, before surging during the first six months of 2026 to RO 22,883,700. The centre stated that total Omani exports to Kazakhstan by the end of June 2026 reached RO 22,864,200, while the volume of Omani imports from Kazakhstan reached RO 19,400.

The number of visitors of Kazakh nationality in 2025 reached approximately 22,000, while their number by the end of August reached 10,965 visitors.

Shaikh Dr Salah bin Salim Jaaboub, Ambassador of Oman to Kazakhstan, told ONA that the state visit by His Majesty to Kazakhstan carries historical significance, as it is the first visit by an Omani Sultan to Kazakhstan and to the Central Asian region. This represents the culmination of a path of friendship and mutual trust extending over more than three decades.

He explained that Oman was among the first countries to recognise the independence of Kazakhstan, following which diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. He noted that these relations were not limited to the political dimension but extended to the economic aspect, as Oman was among the first Arab countries to invest in Kazakhstan through participation in the consortium that transports oil from the Tengiz field, one of the largest oil fields in the world.

He added that investments continued during the era of the renewed renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty through Oman Investment Authority in the oil and mining sectors.

The Ambassador affirmed that this Royal visit by His Majesty the Sultan will elevate relations between the two countries to a broader stage, as a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding are expected to be signed in various fields, including air transport, the promotion

OVER
30
YEARS OF
DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS

22,000
KAZAKH
VISITORS TO
OMAN IN 2025

15,800

PASSENGERS ON
MUSCAT-ALMATY
ROUTE DURING
SUMMER

10,965
KAZAKH
VISITORS TO
OMAN BY
END-AUGUST
2026

Bilateral trade reached RO 22.88 million in the first six months of 2026, compared with just RO 421,500 in 2025.

Omani exports accounted for RO 22.86 million, while imports from Kazakhstan stood at RO 19,400



HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, with Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.



*Aidarbek Toumatov, Ambassador of
Kazakhstan to Oman.*

and protection of investments, information technology, artificial intelligence, health, agriculture, and cooperation between the chambers of commerce and industry in both countries.

He pointed to the issuance of a Royal decree that ratifies the establishment of the Omani-Kazakh Joint Committee for Economic, Trade, Investment, and Tourism Cooperation, to serve as an institutional framework that follows up on the implementation of these agreements and transforms them into tangible projects. He explained that among the most promising prospects for cooperation between the two countries is the logistics field, as the transport of Kazakh exports, including wheat, through Oman is being discussed. This would enhance Oman's role as a logistics outlet for Kazakhstan in the region.

On the tourism side, the Ambassador explained that mutual visa exemption between the two countries, along with the launch of direct flights, has contributed to the growth of tourism movement between the two countries.



Shaikh Dr Salah bin Salim Jaaboub

More than 15,000 Omani citizens visited Kazakhstan over the past two years, while Oman received more than 21,000 visitors from Kazakhstan.

He noted that this Royal visit comes in harmony with Oman's approach to building balanced partnerships based on mutual interests. He expressed his aspiration for the visit to open broader horizons for cooperation in the interest of the two countries and peoples.

Aidarbek Toumatov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Oman, affirmed that relations between Kazakhstan and Oman have witnessed steady development and continuous progress for more than three decades. These relations are based on mutual respect, trust, and shared visions on many international issues.

He added that during this period, a solid legal and contractual framework has been established, and areas of bilateral cooperation have expanded to include political, commercial, economic, investment, cultural, and humanitarian aspects, as well as various other fields.

He noted that in recent years,

bilateral relations between the two countries have acquired an increasingly practical dimension, with priority given to expanding trade exchange, attracting investments, strengthening trade links, consolidating cooperation in the transport and logistics sectors, and coordinating efforts between public and private sector institutions. He indicated that the promising potential of these relations will enable the elevation of the bilateral partnership to broader horizons.

Regarding the contribution of mutual visits and official meetings to elevating bilateral relations between the two countries, the Kazakh Ambassador stated that mutual visits at the highest levels and regular official communications have played a prominent role in enhancing political trust and have given additional momentum to relations between the two friendly countries.

He added that recent years have witnessed continuous communication through high-level political contacts between Kazakhstan and Oman through official visits by officials from both countries, which have contributed to giving additional momentum to the development of bilateral cooperation in various fields.

He noted that the official visit by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, to Kazakhstan in April 2026 acquired particular importance in strengthening relations and gave new momentum to economic and investment partnership. This was followed by a visit to Muscat in May 2026 by Roman Sklyar, Head of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, during which the two sides discussed expanding investment, trade, and economic cooperation.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), affirmed that the Royal visit by His Majesty the Sultan to Kazakhstan represents an important milestone in the path of relations between the two friendly countries. It reflects the keenness to elevate them toward broader horizons of partnership and cooperation. He noted that the discussions and understandings at the level of the two countries' leadership will give economic relations new momentum and open broader paths for trade, investment, and cooperation between the business communities.

He noted that the strategic location of the two countries offers opportunities to enhance connectivity between Central Asian markets, the Gulf region, and surrounding markets, while leveraging the ports and economic and logistical zones in the Sultanate of Oman alongside Kazakhstan's economic reach in Central Asia. This strengthens prospects for trade and investment integration and facilitates the flow of goods and services.

Al Rawas added that the Royal visit represents an important opportunity to build on the solid foundations of relations between the two countries and to drive economic cooperation toward broader areas, creating further opportunities for the Omani and Kazakh private sectors to establish trade and investment partnerships with added value. — ONA

SPOTLIGHT

HEAD OUT
FOR PICNICS,
CAMPING,
EXPLORATION,
AND
PHOTOGRAPHY AS
THE SUN SHINES
BRIGHTER
AND THE THICK
FOG CLEARS
WHILE THE
MOUNTAINS AND
PLAINS RETAIN
THEIR VIBRANT
GREENERY

STAFF REPORTER
SALALAH, OCT 3

THE natural sites across the mountains and plains of Dhofar Governorate are currently attracting numbers of camping and excursion enthusiasts to enjoy Sarb season, as the dense vegetation blanketed during the Khareef season continues to thrive. Destinations such as Wadi Nahiz and Jabjat stand out among the top locations visited by tourists to enjoy nature and outdoor activities.

The post-Khareef period bestows a distinct charm upon Dhofar Governorate, as the sun shines brighter and the thick fog clears while the mountains and plains retain their vibrant greenery. This creates an ideal setting for family picnics, camping, exploration, and photography.

Located approximately 12 kilometres from the city of Salalah in the Niyabat of Hajif, Wadi Nahiz stands out as a prominent natural attraction. It is characterised by dense tree coverage, lush seasonal grasslands, and varied geological formations that lend the area rich ecological and aesthetic diversity.

The valley houses the “Sahoor” Cave, famous for its limestone formations including stalactites and stalagmites, overlooking the valley and surrounding countryside. It also features a freshwater spring and serves as a habitat for various resident and migratory birds, adding to its ecological and environmental importance.

During the Sarb season, Wadi Nahiz takes on a uniquely captivating atmosphere as the surrounding mountains and plains remain green under clear skies, making it a favourite destination for explorers, photographers, and outdoor enthusiasts.

In the Wilayat of Taqah, the area of Jabjat emerges as another popular spot during this time, renowned for its flat plains, acacia trees, and expansive green pastures nourished by the rain and drizzle of the Khareef season.

Jabjat draws visitors for family outings and camping in designated areas, supported by local services and environmental preservation efforts, alongside contributions from productive families and mobile cafes.

Jabjat, Wadi Nahiz, and other natural landscapes across Dhofar Governorate serve as seasonal destinations for nature lovers.

The post-Khareef season delivers clearer weather and lower humidity levels while preserving the green cover across the mountains and plains.

During this time, visitors head out for camping, picnicking, photography, and taking in the panoramic views blending mountains, plains, and valleys—celebrating a season that highlights another facet of Dhofar’s year-round natural

Wadi Nahiz & Jabjat: Top Sarb destinations for nature lovers

diversity. Among the striking scenes of the Sarb season is the movement of camels — their migration between grazing areas in search of grasses and plants — as the camels benefit from the vegetation cover left behind by the Khareef rains, spreading across pastures and mountainous and rural areas. This scene is not merely a natural phenomenon; it reflects the continuity of traditional grazing patterns and the local community’s enduring bond with the seasons of nature.

The movement of camels amid the meadows and mountains also lends a heritage dimension to the touristic experience, particularly in areas that combine natural scenery with rural life.

The touristic significance of the Sarb lies in its offering an experience distinct from the Khareef season. Whereas the Khareef is associated with fog, drizzle and monsoon rains, the Sarb is marked by clearer, more settled weather, allowing the visitor to engage in a variety of activities, such as excursions and exploration in mountainous areas, visiting plains and pastures, photography, observing wildflowers and plants, enjoying coastal vistas, and becoming acquainted with rural life and local heritage.

The Sarb can thus constitute a tourism season in its own right, rather than a mere transitional period between the Khareef and winter. Its significance extends beyond tourism to economic activities tied to the local environment: the vegetation cover provides natural pastures for livestock, while agricultural activity continues in a number of

mountainous and rural areas. Local producers can likewise benefit from marketing fruits and vegetables, dairy products, honey, local agricultural produce and products linked to heritage and rural life.

Herein lies the potential to link tourism with the local economy, such that the season’s benefits are not confined to hotels and tourism establishments but extend to farmers, livestock breeders, beekeepers, owners of small enterprises and crafts and local products.

Among the most important economic implications of the Sarb season is that it helps address the seasonality of tourism in Dhofar. If the Khareef represents a well-known tourism peak, the continuation of activity through the Sarb can help distribute tourism activity over a longer period of the year and make use of the governorate’s natural endowments at different times. This means additional opportunities for hotel establishments, restaurants, cafés, tour organisers and activity and adventure companies.



Al Dakhiliyah students receive literary awards



The award provides students to express their ideas and develop literary abilities.

THE OMANI Society for Writers and Authors, in cooperation with the Directorate-General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, honoured the winners of its Literary Creativity Award for school students for the 2025-2026 academic year. The ceremony was held at the Nizwa Cultural Centre under the auspices of Shaikh Mahmoud bin Rashid al Saadi, Wali of Nizwa.

A total of 442 students participated in poetry recitation, speaking in classical Arabic, short-story writing, literary analysis and classical Arabic poetry. Ahmed al Busaidi, head of

the Omani Society for Writers and Authors' branch in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, said the award provides students with an opportunity to express their ideas and develop their literary abilities.

In poetry recitation for grades 1-5, Mohammed bin Yousef al Hinaï of Al TumooH School won first place, followed by Zahra bint Said al Maharbi of Al Shamaïl School in second and Aseel bint Said al Saadi of SeiH Al Barakat School in third. For grades 6-9, Osama bin Salim al Gharibi of Shaikh Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Kindi School for Boys

won first place in poetry recitation, with Zuwaina bint Abdulhakim al Rahbi of Surur School for Girls second and Wad bint Salem al Toubi of Umm Ayman School for Girls third. In the classical Arabic speaking category for the same age group, Adnan bin Saif al Fahdi of Shaikh Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Kindi School for Boys won first place, followed by Shatha bint Said al Hinaï of Wadi Qaryat School and Fatima bint Saddam al Sharqi of Tanouf School.

In the short-story category for grades 6-9, Mira bint Bader al Rahbi of Surur School for Girls won first place. Naseeba bint Nasser bin Zaher al Abri of Fatima bint Al Khattab School for Girls came second, while Maher bin Ahmed al Hajji of Shaikh Mohammed bin Masoud Al Busaidi School for Boys took third. In literary analysis of poetry for grades 10-12, Walaa bint Abdullah al Busaidi of Shaikha Nadhira Al Riyami School won first place, followed by Tasneem bint Mohammed al Shueili and Sarah bint Ali al Shueili.

In the classical Arabic poetry writing category for grades 10-12, Abrar bint Mubarak al Abdali of Shaikha Nadhira Al Riyami School won first place. Abdulaziz bin Saud al Busaidi of Malik bin Fahm School for Boys came second, while Al Jalanda bin Abdulaziz al Busaidi of the same school took third. — ONA

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS AI IN EDUCATION, FETES EXCELLENCE



MUSCAT: The Omani Association for the Care of the Holy Quran held the Quranic Centres Forum and honouring ceremony, bringing together nearly 200 administrators, teachers and staff from Quranic centres affiliated with the association across several governorates of Oman.

The forum featured working papers and discussions on Quranic education, Quranic competitions, the devotional aspects of Quranic education, and guidance for Quran teachers. It also explored the use of artificial intelligence in educational and practical fields, while highlighting successful experiences from various Quranic centres.

It also announced the results of the 'Excellence Standards' competition, which seeks to encourage Quranic centres, recognise their efforts and motivate them to enhance their performance in educational, administrative, supervisory and other areas. — ONA

Film-maker Mohammed al Kindi wins jury prize at Georgia festival

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, OCT 3

Acclaimed Omani film-maker Mohammed al Kindi, who represented the Sultanate of Oman at the second edition of the Art & Travel International Film Festival (ATIFF 2026) in Georgia, has won the Special Prize of the Jury in the Short Film Category for his film Roofs.

The award was presented by the festival's International Jury during the five-day event, which concluded on September 29 in Tbilisi.

Al Kindi said the recognition was dedicated to Oman and its continued support for the film industry and emerging film-makers.

"This award is for my country, the Sultanate of Oman, for its constant support to the film industry and in moulding future film-makers. I'm immensely glad that Oman was recognised at a festival attended by key



Mohammed al Kindi with his Special Prize of the Jury.

figures from world cinema," Al Kindi told Observer.

According to the organisers, ATIFF 2026 brought together film-makers, media professionals, cultural figures and international delegates for screenings, industry workshops, masterclasses and cultural programmes. The festival was held primarily at the Georgian Museum of Fine Arts, with academic events at the Apollon Kutateladze Tbilisi State Academy of Arts and cultural excursions to historic

Mtskheta and the Kakheti region.

Festival President and Founder Irina Khangoshvili said Al Kindi's award recognised the film's portrayal of Oman's cultural tolerance and hospitality.

"This award goes to the Sultanate of Oman, represented by Mohammed al Kindi, for his poignant cinematic work that depicts the cultural tolerance of the country and the inexplicable hospitality of Oman," she said.

The festival evaluated more than 130 competitive entries from over 30 countries. Its International Jury included Can Saraçoğlu, President of CINETOURL; Oscar-winning Polish animation producer Zbigniew Żmudzki; Italian cinematographer Alberto Rocco; Greek festival leader Irene Giannakopoulos; Portuguese cultural figure Prince Alfredo Côrte-Real; and prominent Georgian cultural personalities.

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
482/2026	Specifications of the subdivision works in the Down Syndrome Center building (formerly the day care center building) Al-Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of urban contracting and maintenance and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority at the fourth degree	Tuesday 13/10/2026 02:00 PM	Thursday 22/10/2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
483/2026	Business specifications for supplying and installing shock-resistant floors for the Directorate of Care and Rehabilitation Centers for People with Disabilities - Al-Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of urban contracting and maintenance and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority at the fourth degree	Thursday 15/10/2026 02:00 PM	Thursday 29/10/2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
487/2026	Ministry's electronic portal development project	Companies specialized in the field of design, installation and maintenance of information programs and systems] Equipping information data centers registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Friday 23/10/2026 02:00 PM	Thursday 12/11/2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On **Sunday 04/10/2026**.

❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (**24402200**).

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry"

www.mosd.gov.om

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Neha Bora, National President of the All India Students' Association (AISA), is detained by police in New Delhi. — Reuters

INDIAN GEN Z-LED PROTESTS FLARE FOR THE SECOND DAY

NEW DELHI: Indian police detained several people in the capital New Delhi on Saturday, disrupting a second day of protests backed by the Gen Z-led Cockroach Janta Party and other opposition groups against changes to voter rolls. The protesters say the changes benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governing party and are demanding the resignation of India's election chief. About 100 demonstrators removed security barricades on Saturday and chanted "vote thief, leave the post" and "Gyanesh Kumar, step down" before police forcibly detained some of them. Independent Member of Parliament Kapil Sibal, left-wing All India Students' Association President Neha Bora and political activists Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav were among the protesters, according to a witness. The police declined to comment on the number and identity of those detained. "First they removed people from the voters list and now they are not letting us raise our voice against this. This is not acceptable," Bora said. The chief of the Election Commission, Kumar, has not commented on the protests and the demands to step down. On Friday, police stopped a group of protesters from gathering, bundling them into buses. Several nearby metro stations remained shut amid tight security. — Reuters

LOUD EXPLOSIONS HEARD IN YEMEN CAPITAL SANAA

SANAA: Loud explosions were heard in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa on Saturday, as Ansar Allah reported air strikes in the area by Saudi forces. One correspondent heard at least five blasts in different areas, while another saw two warplanes firing missiles on the city. Al Masirah TV reported "Saudi aggression" against the capital, without providing details on the targets or casualties. The channel had also earlier on Saturday reported missile strikes on the telecommunications network in the northwestern governorate of Saada, a group stronghold. After several years of calm, Yemen was plunged back into civil war in July, pitting Ansar Allah, who control most of northwest Yemen including Sanaa, against Yemen's internationally recognised government, which is backed by neighbouring Saudi Arabia. The government, based in the city of Aden, controls much of the country's south and east — a region that is larger but less populated. Hostilities were reignited after four years of a fragile truce when Iran sent a plane to Sanaa carrying an Ansar Allah delegation. The flight did not seek authorisation from Saudi Arabia, contravening a practice in place for a decade. Riyadh retaliated with strikes on Sanaa airport, and in response the group attacked Saudi territory for the first time since 2022. Since then, fighting has intensified, with Ansar Allah launching a lightning offensive that saw them seize control of coastal regions along the strategic Bab Al Mandab Strait. — AFP

PHILIPPINES VOICES CONCERN OVER MYANMAR AIRSTRIKE DEATHS, INJURIES

MANILA: The Philippines, chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), expressed concern over an air strike in Myanmar's Rakhine state that caused deaths, injuries and destruction, and stood ready to facilitate discussions within the regional bloc on how best to assist Myanmar. "The Philippines is closely monitoring developments and expresses concern over the attacks which resulted in destruction, loss of lives and injuries to those affected,"

Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary for Asean Affairs Ana Marie Hernando said. As Asean chair, Manila said it remained mindful of the views of all member states and would continue to be guided by the regional bloc's consensus-based approach. The Philippines said it stood ready to facilitate discussions within Asean on ways to assist Myanmar, in line with the common aspiration of finding a solution that is "Myanmar-owned and led."

Monday's Kyauktaw air strike, Rakhine's deadliest such attack since a December hospital bombing, killed 50 people and wounded dozens more. Meanwhile, nearly 1,500 Myanmar nationals sent back from Malaysia aboard navy ships are expected to reach the war-torn country's commercial hub of Yangon within days despite warnings from the UN that the returnees could be at risk amid a raging civil war. — Reuters

Ethiopia's Tigray rebels abandon regional capital

TIGRAY

REBELS were abandoning their regional capital in northern Ethiopia on Saturday, a local journalist and residents said, as pro-government forces advanced on the city. Fighting erupted on September 23 in northern Ethiopia as the rebel Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) launched attacks into neighbouring states, raising fears of a return to the devastating 2020-2022 civil war.

But federal forces and pro-government groups have pushed them back in recent days and were heading north towards the regional capital, Mekelle. "TPLF militants and leaders are leaving Mekelle," the journalist said, adding that federal forces had not yet been seen inside the city. He said government offices and police stations had been left without security personnel. "I am concerned that government and public property could be exposed to looting because there are no security forces in the city," a local resident said. "Lawlessness could spread in the city, and I am also afraid for my life. I want us to quickly return to law and order," added another resident. The TPLF has long been the dominant force in Tigray, and kicked out a government-appointed administration earlier this year. In a video message on Thursday, its leader Debretsion Gebremichael



Tuk-tuk drivers transport residents' belongings amid fears of looting as residents and fighters leave the city of Mekelle. — AFP

Federal forces and pro-government groups have pushed them back in recent days and were heading north towards the regional capital, Mekelle. "TPLF militants and leaders are leaving Mekelle," the journalist said, adding that federal forces had not yet been seen inside the city

implied the TPLF would continue guerrilla-style attacks as they did when Mekelle fell to government forces in 2020 during the early stages of the last war. Their insurgent campaign ultimately led to the TPLF retaking the city in mid-2021. "We operate under a strategy to strike the enemy wherever we choose," Debretsion said. The conflict has triggered a breakdown in Ethiopia's relations with Eritrea and Egypt. Ethiopia expelled 10 Eritrean diplomats and shut its embassy in Asmara on Thursday, while Eritrea responded that it would "sever all diplomatic ties". Eritrea accuses landlocked Ethiopia of planning to invade and seize access to its coastline. The TPLF's Debretsion said in his video message that "the war is regional and it is a war to control the Red Sea". Ethiopia also expelled

an Egyptian diplomat without explanation, prompting a reciprocal move by Cairo. The rebels initially made advances in neighbouring Afar and Amhara states, working alongside local groups. But they were pushed back this week, and the government launched a counter-offensive into Tigrayan territory along three axes towards Mekelle, according to the Critical Threats Project, part of the American Enterprise Institute think tank. There were reports that Mekelle's airport, on the southern approach to the city, had fallen to pro-government groups on Friday. But social media accounts are difficult to verify. Media access is heavily restricted and there have been significant communications blackouts. Earlier, a humanitarian source said on condition of anonymity that the TPLF had been entirely pushed out of Afar. The TPLF ruled all of Ethiopia from 1991 to 2018, when they were marginalised with the rise of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who hails from the Oromia region. The tensions led to a civil war from 2020 to 2022 — one of the deadliest in the world in recent times — that left more than 600,000 dead, according to the African Union. The Pretoria Peace Agreement of 2022, brokered by African institutions and Washington, maintained an uneasy calm until last year, but was never fully implemented. — Reuters



GAZA HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY ISRAELI STRIKE KILLS 5

GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defence agency and a hospital said on Saturday that an overnight Israeli air strike on an apartment in Gaza City killed five Palestinians, including four women. Israeli media reported that the military was targeting Ali al Amoudi, a senior Hamas official. Gaza City's Al Shifa Hospital said that it had "received at dawn five martyrs and a number of injured... following the Israeli air strike on an apartment" in the Rimal neighbourhood. It said the dead were two women and their daughters, as well as a young man. Mahmoud Bassal, the spokesperson for the civil defence which operates as a rescue force under Hamas authority, said that his team took "five bodies and several wounded" to the hospital after the strike. He said two missiles directly hit the apartment, causing a fire and damaging the building. The director of Al Shifa later said that two of the five victims were Christians and that their funerals were held in the small Greek Orthodox church of Saint Porphyrius in Gaza City. Around 1,000 Christians live in the Palestinian territory, most of whom are Orthodox. — AFP

HIGHWAY TRAGEDY

20 die in Nigerian road accident: officials



A multiple-vehicle road crash on a highway has killed 20 people in north-central Nigeria's Plateau State, authorities said in a statement. The accident on the Hawan Kibo-Jos road involved four vehicles — a truck, car, bus and motorcycle, Nigeria's Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) said. "The crash involved 25 people; 23 males and 2 females with five persons, comprising three males and two females, sustaining injuries, while 20 males sadly lost their lives." — AFP

VOLCANO EXPANSION

Indonesia detects new land formations



Indonesia's Anak Krakatau volcano expanded by 32.8 hectares after eruptions produced lava flows, while satellite imagery detected two new land formations nearby. The increase was identified by comparing Sentinel satellite images from August 8 and September 15. The Geology agency posted on social media that Sentinel imagery from September 23 showed a new formation about 760 metres northwest of Anak Krakatau's coastline and another about 495 metres southeast. — Reuters

SUPPORTING EFFORTS

France to step up Ebola funding in Congo



France will step up its support for efforts to eradicate Ebola in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Saturday during a visit to a region hit by the virus, warning that it could quickly resurge if vigilance waned. France allocated €13.4 million to the fight against Ebola between January and July. Barrot said he would propose additional humanitarian funding for Ebola during upcoming French budget discussions. — Reuters

MILITARYTECHNOLOGY



News coverage showing file footage of a North Korean missile launch is seen on a screen at Seoul Station in Seoul. — AFP

North Korea says test of intermediate-range missile included AI

SEOUL: North Korea said it tested an intermediate-range strategic missile on Saturday that involved the use of AI, hours after Seoul said Pyongyang had launched a ballistic missile. The launch took place days after Seoul’s military demanded an apology from Pyongyang for a blast that wounded three South Korean soldiers in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) that it blamed on the North. Pyongyang has denied responsibility for last month’s explosion and called South Korea “despicable” on Friday, undercutting overtures by Seoul’s civilian leadership seeking a return to dialogue.

Early on Saturday, “our military detected a ballistic missile launched from the Wonsan area of North Korea toward the East Sea,” Seoul’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan. “South Korea, the US, and Japan are maintaining a robust defence posture through close information sharing regarding North Korean ballistic missiles,” it said, adding the missile flew more than 700 kilometres.

Hours later, Kim Yo Jong, the sister of Pyongyang’s leader Kim Jong Un, said the missile fired in the morning was an “intermediate-range strategic missile”. She said the projectile is “capable of changing its flight orbit at a low altitude and AI was introduced into it”, without elaborating further on the use of artificial intelligence.

She said it meant “there is no way to avoid” the missile’s attack, and claimed Kim Jong Un believed “any country in the world could not have access to such technology for at least several years”. Her latest statement followed Kim Jong Un’s remarks last month stressing the need to raise “the level of artificial intelligence” in the country’s weapons systems. — AFP

Russia warns diplomats to leave Kyiv over strikes

RUSSIA ON Saturday issued a new call for diplomats and foreigners to leave Kyiv, warning the Ukrainian capital of new “massive” air attacks hours after striking another major bridge in the city.

Moscow has ramped up its pummelling of Kyiv, launching waves of drones at the city, targeting key infrastructure and putting the capital on a near-constant state of alert against attacks.

The strike on the Northern Bridge on Saturday morning wounded two people and damaged road surface and trolleybus overhead wires restricting traffic, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Reporters saw traces of an explosion on a pedestrian walkway and technicians repairing power lines on the bridge. Hours after the attack, the Russian authorities warned of more strikes, issuing a fresh call for diplomats and foreigners to leave the city and refrain from visiting Ukraine.

“We note with concern that not everyone has heeded these warnings, and that individuals are knowingly exposing themselves to mortal danger,” the Russian foreign ministry said in a statement.

The Russian ministry also stated that “responsibility for any potential negative consequences rests entirely with those who ignore this warning.”

Moscow issued a similar warning in May but heads of state and governments from countries backing Ukraine have defied it by travelling to the war-torn country and the capital in show of support. On Friday, Klitschko said the city was in a “very dramatic situation” and should now be on a war footing as the enemy was “tearing Kyiv apart” with strikes on bridges and



A Ukrainian soldier looks at the Wall of Remembrance of the Fallen for Ukraine in central Kyiv. — AFP

The Russian ministry stated that “we note with concern that not everyone has heeded these warnings, and that individuals are knowingly exposing themselves to mortal danger. Responsibility for any potential negative consequences rests entirely with those who ignore this warning”

energy infrastructure. President Volodymyr Zelensky accused his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, of ripping up the rulebook of armed conflict by sanctioning massive attacks on civilian areas, an accusation the Kremlin has rejected.

Kyiv has been increasingly under aerial bombardment in recent months, with the attacks and alerts disrupting daily life and sowing traffic chaos.

Long lines of stationary cars and buses clogged major roads on Friday as commuters sought alternate routes, with some forced to continue their journeys on foot.

Air raid sirens warning of approaching threats sound almost round the clock, urging the city’s estimated three million people to seek shelter.

Strikes across the country in recent days have also caused power outages in several regions in the east, north and centre, with

grid operator Ukrenergo urging consumers to limit usage even as demand increases with colder weather.

Ukraine braces for another difficult winter. Last year, heating and power were cut for days on end as temperatures plunged to -20°C. The grinding war, which began with Russia’s full-scale attack in February 2022, has turned into Europe’s bloodiest conflict since World War II.

Ukraine has appeared to stabilise the front in recent months, but depleted air-defence stocks since the start of the US-Israeli war in Iran have left its cities exposed to Russian barrages.

The US-brokered peace efforts are effectively frozen as Moscow has shown no signs of dropping its maximalist conditions to end the war, including a demand that Ukraine cede territory in the east that Russia’s troops have not captured. — AFP

Thousands protest in Spain over housing crisis



Protesters demonstrate demanding political action to alleviate the housing crisis, in Madrid. — Reuters

MADRID: Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Madrid and other Spanish cities as they stepped up demands for action to tackle a mounting housing crisis after government measures were struck down by the opposition.

Some demonstrators waved posters calling for a general strike after the measures drawn up to address mass anger over the eviction of an 87-year-old woman in Madrid, and other housing issues, were rejected in parliament on Friday.

“It’s a shame,” said Nando de Anguilo, 26, who joined Saturday’s protest in Madrid. “It only proves that it is us the people who have to adapt to the political parties, and not the politicians to what the people want,

and this can’t go on like that.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez might call a snap election for November after the legislation failed to pass, Spanish media reported on Friday, and would be watching the strength of protests before making a decision. Sanchez’s office refused to comment on the reports.

In the southeastern city of Valencia, demonstrators clashed on Saturday with police who fired rubber bullets and tear gas to break up protests.

About 30 protesters managed to get inside the City of Arts and Sciences, a landmark cultural building in the city, before they were ousted by police.

Other demonstrations in 50 Spanish cities were peaceful. About 70,000 protesters took part in the

demonstration in Madrid, the Spanish government said on Saturday.

The opposition People’s Party also voted against the measures. “Housing doesn’t become more affordable through decrees; it becomes more affordable by building more homes. We’re not going to lie to you - it’s not going to be easy, and it’s not going to happen quickly,” said PP lawmaker Juan Bravo.

Sanchez, who in recent months has faced pressure over the government’s handling of a migrant crisis in Ceuta and accusations of corruption in his party, could decide that calling an election would be a good way to change the narrative, said Alejandro Quiroga, a political scientist at the Complutense University of Madrid. — Reuters

TENDER NOTICE No. 009 - 2026 - OETI

Oman Education & Training Investment Co. S.A.O.G is inviting a sealed tender for the **Access control system work** for Innovation centre building **Sohar University at Sohar** from contractors & Supplier having sufficient experience in relevant field with excellent or first grade.

Tender	Description	Fees OMR	Submission Date
OETI 09- 2026	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Configuration and Handover of the ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM for Innovation Centre Project at SOHAR UNIVERSITY MAIN CAMPUS.	10/-	01/11/2026

Description	Deadline
Tender Release Date	04/10/2026
Last Date for collection of tenders after paying tender fee	06/10/2026
Site Visit (If required)	08/10/2026
Receiving clarifications, if any, from bidders	13/10/2026
Respond to bidder clarifications	20/10/2026
Receiving bids	01/11/2026

The tender document will be ready for collection by the company after paying non-refundable amount of **RO. 10.00/-** via depositing the money in bank or by cash on or before **06/10/2026**. Cash will be collected by **Mr. Saud Al Jarwani**, OETI, Building 20, Sohar University, Sohar. Provide the email id to be sent along with the copy of the receipt. For Bank Transfers our account details as below:

Beneficiary : **Oman Education & Training Investment Company SAOG**
Account No : **00202000442**
Bank : **Bank Sohar**
Branch : **Sohar Branch, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman**
Swift Code : **BSHROMRU**

Please send the transfer receipt to sjarwani@oeti.om to receive the tender documents in CD or USB.

Tenders offers must be submitted online (softcopy with password protected) or in closed envelopes sealed, delivered at the OETI premises, tender number shall be written only on the envelope, no indication shall be made, and deadline for submission of offers is **01/11/2026 @ 14:00 hours**.

Tender should be addressed to CEO, OETI Office submitted to **Mr. Saud Al Jarwani** as given below during office hours **08:00 to 15:30 Sunday to Thursday**.

CEO OETI Office
Building 20, Sohar University Campus
P.O Box 44, P.C. 311, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman.
Telephone: 26850100 Ext.: 450 / 612

OPINION

Faithful to someone who no longer knows you



DR HAMED
AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

In 2010, I walked back into the Department of Behavioural Medicine at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, where I had first started as a junior doctor after graduating from the College of Medicine in 1994.

I was returning from the UK, having completed my training in old age psychiatry, with a clear mission: to establish a memory clinic where people with memory problems and their families would be treated with dignity. I wanted a clinic where care would not stop at a diagnosis and a prescription, but would also give caregivers a safe space to express their feelings without being judged or labelled.

Since then, I have learned how much of dementia happens outside the clinic, in the long years at home that doctors rarely see. That is why I was drawn to ‘Faithful As She Fades’, a memoir by Robert Fischbach, who describes his wife’s journey following her diagnosis with frontotemporal dementia at the age of sixty. Over almost nine years, Robert cared for his wife as the illness took her speech, her personality and, gradually, the woman he had married.

Frontotemporal dementia is less familiar to

the public than Alzheimer’s disease. It often begins in middle age, and the person shows changes in behaviour, judgement, empathy or language, while forgetfulness may not be present.

A kind person may become blunt or careless, making reckless decisions. Families sometimes attribute the symptoms to stress, depression or marital trouble, so the formal diagnosis arrives late.

As with other forms of dementia, caregivers experience what psychologists call ‘ambiguous loss’: mourning someone who is still physically present. As the disease progresses, the patient loses the ability to speak or fails to recognise close family members, and may even mistake them for intruders and try to force them out of the house.

The book’s title raises a hard question. What does faithfulness mean when the person you promised it to no longer knows you? The author cared for his wife until the end, and later found love again and remarried.

Some readers have judged him for this. I have sat with many husbands and wives who felt ashamed of their loneliness, or of the relief they felt when a long illness finally

Our strong family bonds are a true blessing, and people with dementia are cared for at home

ended. With dementia, faithfulness means protecting a person’s dignity, keeping them safe and comfortable, and staying present.

The author had resources, such as paid caregivers and the ability to take breaks. These are not available to every family.

This matters especially here in Oman and across the Gulf. Our strong family bonds are a true blessing, and people with dementia are cared for at home. But the burden often falls on one person, usually a wife or daughter, who is unpaid, exhausted and rarely asked about her own health.

Many families are still reluctant to accept outside help, as if it were a failure of duty. It is not. Seeking respite, joining a support group or arranging professional care is part of caring well, not a betrayal.

‘Faithful As She Fades’ is a husband’s account of watching the woman he loved slowly disappear, and of finding the strength to go on. Behind every patient I see is a story like this one: a marriage, a family, and years of quiet devotion.

This is why we need to support families caring for a person with dementia as they navigate their emotions through the long journey.

NEPAL’S DNA PUZZLE TO IDENTIFY FLOOD DEAD

PAAVAN MATHEMA & ANUP OJHA

Clutching a photograph of his missing son, Rajesh Ram is pinning his hopes on DNA testing - like thousands of others desperately seeking relatives swept away by Nepal’s catastrophic Himalayan floods.

“I searched for him everywhere, but I could not find his body,” 53-year-old Ram said, still waiting for answers about his son Suroj Kumar, a garage mechanic in Betrawati, which was swamped by the floods. Nepal was overwhelmed by the sheer scale of destruction from the tsunami-like wall of freezing water and debris triggered by a glacial and rock collapse on the Nepal-China border on August 26.

The scale of the identification task is immense. With thousands of DNA profiles to process, fragmented remains and limited technical capacity and manpower, experts warn matching bodies to families could take weeks.

Nepali disaster authorities have recovered 1,454 bodies - but around a third of those are only partial remains. Just 112 bodies have been identified and returned to their families. A further 5,285 people are missing in Nepal, including hundreds of foreigners. In China, the toll is 43 dead and 519 missing, according to state media - taking the combined toll to nearly 1,500 dead and 5,800 missing. At Nepal’s two forensic laboratories, both in Kathmandu, experts are working to profile samples and build a database on a scale they have never handled before. “In a year we would analyse 1,000-1,500 samples, often in cases of paternity or crime scenes,” said Mukul Pradhan, chief scientific officer at the National Forensic Science Laboratory. Nepal has buried more than 1,200 bodies, carefully numbering and tagging them so they can be retrieved if a DNA match is found.

“A large number of people are missing, and the bodies that have been found are difficult to identify,” said Nepali police spokesman Abi Narayan Kafle. “We understand the pain people are in, and our teams are working diligently.”

Some bodies were carried far downstream by the floodwaters, further complicating the task, said Nirajan Thapa, Chief of Biology section at the National Forensic Science Laboratory. “In an earthquake or an accident, people are recovered in a specific area, so we work in a closed scenario - the body’s DNA has to be compared to a limited number of samples,” Thapa said. “But that scale has now become very large.”

DNA alone cannot identify a body without a reference sample from a relative. “Just extracting a DNA profile is not enough to identify someone,” Thapa said. “We have to extract a DNA profile from their relatives and then compare.” — **AFP**

When ‘where are you from?’ becomes ‘Who are you?’



KARIM
EASTERBROOK

The writer is a Former Cambridge School Principal and Author



We may feel happier in the country where we live while still remaining attached to the place we left. That attachment may have little to do with approval of a government

In the morning, from my bedroom window in Oman, I can see the mountains. Their familiar outline has become part of the beginning of my day. I look across at them and feel that I belong here. This is where my life unfolds and where my Omani wife and her family are the people I spend most time with.

Occasionally someone in Oman asks, “Where are you from?” It sounds like a simple question, but I find I cannot give a simple answer. Do they mean where was I born, where I spent much of my earlier life, or where I live now? Britain is part of my history, but Oman is part of my everyday life.

I am no longer sure which answer best describes me. Perhaps that uncertainty is not unusual for people who settle overseas.

We may feel happier in the country where we live while still remaining attached to the place we left. That attachment may have little to do with approval of a government.

I can feel little allegiance to the British government and still feel connected to Britain. A government is not a country’s whole story, just as a passport cannot explain the whole of a person’s belonging.

A passport gives us a legal relationship with a country. It may also stand for identity, security and inheritance. But attachment can reach further back and deeper in: to family, language, childhood memories, familiar streets and the habits we acquired without noticing. We may carry these things with us even when our lives have moved elsewhere.

At the same time, a new country can become much more than the place where we happen to live. We learn its rhythms, build routines and form relationships. We share meals, celebrations and ordinary days.

Over time, what once felt

When we live far away from our birthplace, we may miss the customs and culture we once took for granted. Memory can also soften the past, making us recall its familiar comforts more readily than its frustrations

unfamiliar can become intimate. When I spend time with my Omani wife and her family, I feel that they are my family too. Looking at the mountains, I do not feel like a visitor passing through.

I feel at home. Why, then, can the question of where I am from still unsettle me? Perhaps because it asks for a single origin, while a life lived across two countries does not always have one clear answer. “Where are you from?” can mean where were you born, where did you grow up, what nationality are you, or where do you consider home? Each question invites a different answer.

Our homeland may be several things at once: the country of our memories, the place where our closest relationships were, the landscape that feels familiar or the community in which we took part.

When we live far away from our birthplace, we may miss the customs and culture we once took for granted. Memory can also soften the past, making us recall its familiar comforts more readily than

its frustrations

We can miss a place without wishing to live there again. Feeling at home in Oman doesn’t stop me feeling connected to England. The two attachments are different, but neither has to cancel the other.

I am rooted in the life I am living now while connected to the life that helped shape me. My political allegiance is to the Omani government, but that is a separate matter from my feelings for England and its people. The difficulty in answering is not evidence that I have failed to settle or that I have forgotten where I came from.

It may mean that the question assumes a simplicity my life no longer has. I am English by birth and history, while simultaneously feeling that Oman is home. I can belong here without erasing what came before.

So when someone asks where I am from, perhaps the honest answer is not a country name. It is that I have roots in England and a life in Oman and I am often unsure which country they want me to name.

Shakespeare’s sleep... ‘Nature’s soft nurse’



RAY PETERSEN

The writer is a media consultant

STAYING YOUNG is never going to happen! Staying healthy and living well for a little longer? Maybe! With me having a vested interest, you might say, let’s look at what literature, academia, public health authorities, and the men in white coats say about keeping ourselves healthier, more youthful, and stretching longevity!

Back in the day, “Sleep,” wrote William Shakespeare incredibly accurately in ‘Macbeth,’ “knits the ravelled sleeve of care, the death of each day’s life, bathes sore labour, is the balm of hurt minds, nature’s second course, and the chief nourishment in life’s feast,” emphasising that we must stay active, mentally and physically, for as long as we can, to ensure the rejuvenation of our bodies, to enjoy life to the fullest.

He also refers to sleep as “innocent” elsewhere in ‘Macbeth’; in ‘Henry IV’ as “Nature’s soft nurse”; in ‘The Tempest,’ to “life being rounded with sleep”; and in ‘Hamlet,’ he immaculately compares death to sleep, pondering what dreams that may come in death. Obsessed? Maybe. Intrigued? Clearly. Passionate? Poetically. Incontrovertible? No, and yet immensely provocative.

Historically, novelist John Steinbeck wrote, “It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it.” While contemporarily, Jeffrey Kluger, in Time Magazine, wrote of the phenomenon of

‘sleeping on it,’ saying, “Your brain is hard at work all day long — and it doesn’t quit when you’re asleep; it also goes right on solving the problems that plagued you during the day, often coming up with solutions by the time you wake up.”

Prof Luis de Lecea, from the Department of Psychiatry at Stanford University, is more scientifically authoritative, being pre-eminent in the field of sleep science, which regulates, or ‘switches on and off,’ appetite, wakefulness, arousal, and our energetic state. His focus is on the brain’s ability to regulate sleep and its loss of muscular control, both being prior anecdotal signs of aging.

These, narcolepsy and cataplexy, in the refined context of aging, point to the accumulation of DNA damage, creating stress at cellular, molecular, and protein levels, which proves scientifically that sleep is essential to ‘repair’ us daily, affirming that if we don’t sleep, we age... quicker! Is this sound thinking, supported by research? In 2026 alone, 18,600 scientific and academic publications feature on the topic on Google Scholar. So yes!

Cardiovascular fitness, or how well your body uses oxygen, is apparently the most accurate indicator of how long we will live and how well our bodies will function as we get older, with even modest exercise regimes having significant later-life health benefits. The NHS in the UK places so much emphasis on cardio wellness that anyone between 40

Your brain is hard at work all day long — and it doesn’t quit when you’re asleep; it also goes right on solving the problems that plagued you during the day, often coming up with solutions by the time you wake up

and 75 is eligible for a free ‘mid-life check-up,’ which always concludes with imperatives: sleep, eating, and exercise.

I guess that explains the current fad of chair-based exercise regimes. ‘Abs and obliques,’ they scream, ‘for beginners and seniors!’ However, it is true that from the age of 30, we can lose as much as 0.8 per cent of our muscle mass per year, causing instability, so the more active we remain, the better. This doesn’t offer any guarantee of longevity, however.

Perhaps embracing a Mediterranean, fruit and vegetable style diet, with olive oil, nuts, and fish, is the most appropriate healthy diet for today? It will provide the diversity of nutrients essential to health, with a range of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, phytochemicals, and high-water content that sustain your immune system and metabolism, protecting against heart and vision problems.

In addition, their fibre content promotes healthy digestion, regular bowel activity, prevents constipation, and, from the perspective of having ‘eaten enough,’ or ‘feeling full,’ contributes significantly to the ‘feel-good,’ positive psychological factor of successful weight management.

I do like my steaks, chips, chocolate, and ‘lemonade’, but maybe, of all the aforesaid advice and opinions, I should listen to Michael Greger, who warns, “We should all be eating fruit and vegetables as if our lives depend on it – because they do!”

G7 AGREES DEAL TO EASE GLOBAL ENERGY SUPPLY CONCERNS

VALERIE LEROUX WITH UMBERTO BACCHI

G7 countries agreed to release 100 million barrels of diesel and crude oil to ease global energy supply concerns, as President Donald Trump hailed the decision and said the US would not impose a threatened diesel export ban.

The announcement came following a video conference of G7 leaders chaired by French President Emmanuel Macron after Washington stepped up pressure on Europe to release strategic reserves and threatened a diesel export ban.

The talks, convened by Macron after a conversation with Trump, focused on coordinating a response to soaring fuel prices among the other G7 economies of Britain, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

The US-Israeli war with Iran has sent energy prices skyrocketing, coming back to bite Trump at home with high fuel costs that have become a key issue ahead of midterm congressional elections in a month. Trump had floated the possibility of banning US exports of diesel, which is used in trucks and other hauling vehicles, an alarming prospect for the EU, which relies heavily on fossil fuel imports. The seven countries agreed to a coordinated release through the International Energy Agency (IEA) of 100 million barrels “to begin immediately over four months, including a front-loaded substantial diesel release within the first 20 days,” the leaders said in a statement released by Macron’s office.

They also said there would be no ban on diesel exports between them.

“We reaffirm our commitment to refrain from export restrictions on energy and energy products between G7 countries and call on all producers to refrain from imposing bans that could exacerbate market tensions,” the leaders said.

“Our citizens’ concerns about energy prices remain a top priority.”

Trump said European countries had agreed to release a “massive amount” of diesel from their reserves.

“The process will begin immediately,” he posted on his Truth Social network.

“Europe has a lot of diesel and they’re going to be making a major world contribution - and so are we,” Trump said later, adding “Europe did a great thing”.

“And we’re not going to be doing the export ban,” he said.

Earlier, the EU pushed back hard against US threats to impose a diesel export ban, something Macron also warned against during his conversation with Trump.

The flurry of diplomatic activity came a day after US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent cranked up the pressure on European nations.

“American farmers, truckers, and businesses should not be left carrying the burden of a global diesel shortage,” he said. — AFP

Conserving a connected ocean in African nation

EVERY YEAR, sea turtles return to the beaches of northern KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa, where they began life. Once they leave the shore, some travel north through the Mozambique Channel, using waters and coastal habitats off Mozambique and Madagascar, while others journey into the wider Indian Ocean. South Africa can protect their nesting beaches, but no country alone can protect its entire journey.

The turtle embodies the central challenge of ocean conservation. Strong national action is indispensable, but protecting migratory species, interconnected habitats, and shared ecosystems requires countries to work together. And to do that, the finance supporting such cooperation must be capable of making the same journey as the turtle.

For the approximately 60 million people living within 100 km of the Western Indian Ocean coastline, the stakes of conservation are immediate. Healthy marine ecosystems support food security, livelihoods, trade, and tourism, as well as providing bulwarks against storms. They are the natural foundation of the sustainable blue economies our countries are working to build. But their value also reaches far beyond the region. Our mangroves and seagrasses store carbon. Our reefs sustain biodiversity. And our waters support migratory species whose journeys connect coastlines and the wider ocean. Protecting them may be a regional responsibility, but it is also in the rest of the world’s interest.

Regional leaders do not lack ambition, nor are we waiting for others to define what ocean conservation should look like. In my country, Seychelles, we have seen what can happen when ambitious goals are backed by strong political commitments and innovative finance. Our marine spatial planning and conservation-finance experience demonstrates that protecting the ocean can be integrated into national development. Now, other countries across the Western Indian Ocean are pursuing similar strategies



The turtle embodies the central challenge of ocean conservation.



MARIE-MAY JEREMIE

The writer is Minister of Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Seychelles

Our responsibilities will extend far beyond any single project or grant. Reefs do not recover according to project deadlines, just as fisheries won’t be replenished in sync with funding cycles. Conservation requires continuity

shaped by their own priorities and circumstances.

Through the Nairobi Convention, governments have committed to stronger cooperation in developing sustainable blue economies and more effective, inclusive forms of ocean governance. The Regional Ocean Governance Strategy has established the mandate, and we are all now tasked with creating the financing mechanisms capable of delivering it.

It is a tall order. Achieving the common objective of protecting 30 per cent of marine and coastal areas by 2030 requires more than drawing boundaries on a map. Protected areas must be supported by science, effective management, enforcement, community participation, and investments in sustainable livelihoods.

With the landmark Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction now in force, new possibilities are opening for conservation beyond national waters. The Western Indian Ocean region must be ready to influence how the agreement is implemented. Our responsibilities will extend far beyond any single project or grant. Reefs do not recover according to project deadlines, just as fisheries won’t be replenished in sync with funding cycles. Conservation requires continuity.

That is why women from three coastal villages in Anjouan, Comoros, formed an association after learning from fishing communities in Madagascar and Zanzibar. They

temporarily closed part of their reef to octopus fishing, helped enforce the closure, and then waited. When the fishing ground reopened, the average octopus caught was twice its previous weight. The idea crossed borders because like-minded communities were open to learning from one another. In these and other ways, Western Indian Ocean communities are already taking the lead on conservation. But sustaining and extending their progress requires finance that supports local leadership, knowledge-sharing, and long-term ecosystem management. National institutions and project investments remain essential, but some responsibilities are regional by nature. Fisheries can move and species can migrate between interconnected habitats.

No single fund can finance every item on the conservation agenda. Pollution controls, greener ports, and other maritime priorities require different instruments. Nonetheless, governments are working towards a Western Indian Ocean Regional Conservation Trust Fund (RCTF) that can fill critical gaps, mobilising and deploying sustained finance for priorities that cross borders and are best addressed regionally. Designed to complement and not compete with national funds, development banks, and project finance, the RCTF will focus only where cross-border cooperation adds clear value.

The region is not starting from scratch on this issue. Consultations with governments, conservation organisations, and financial partners are already ongoing, informed by lessons from near and far. But the next phase must be government-led to determine the RCTF’s priorities, safeguards, governance structure, and relationship with existing institutions.

International partners can help accelerate that work. They are not being asked to create a new agenda or finance another isolated project. They can help build one component of a regionally owned financing architecture, directed toward conservation needs that conventional funding struggles to sustain. © Project Syndicate, 2026



SAUDI ARABIA EDGE QATAR ON PENALTIES TO REACH FINAL



Qatar’s Meshaal Ibrahim Abunada and Edmilson Junior in action with Saudi Arabia’s Mohammed Hamad al Qahtani. — Reuters

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

SAUDI ARABIA reached the Gulf Cup 27 final after beating Qatar 3-2 on penalties following a goalless draw after extra time at King Abdullah Sports City in Jeddah on Saturday night.

The Saudi team will face the winner of Oman and UAE in the final on October 6.

The first semifinal saw an attendance of 51,342 fans.

Saudi Arabia created the first clear chance in the 20th minute when Saleh Abu Al Shamat fired from outside the box, but Qatar goalkeeper Mahmoud Abu Nada made the save.

The Green Falcons threatened again in the 38th minute as Sultan Mandash finished a move from the left with a powerful shot that Abu Nada kept out.

Two minutes later, Mohammed Mahzari sent a dangerous cross into the box, but Qatar’s defence cleared.

Qatar relied on counterattacks through Akram Afif and Almoez Ali, but Saudi Arabia’s defence contained their threat, with Mohammed al Owais largely untested. Saudi Arabia came closest in the 81st minute when Firas Al Buraikan broke into the box and fired a powerful effort, only for Abu Nada to make another excellent save. Qatar responded in

the 88th minute through substitute Edmilson Junior, who tested Al Owais with two shots from outside the box.

Saudi Arabia launched a quick counter in the 90+2nd minute, but Qatar’s defence stopped the move.

In the extra time, the biggest moment came in the 103rd minute when Saudi Arabia appealed for a penalty after a player went down inside the box. Referee Joao Pinheiro consulted VAR before allowing play to continue.

Both sides showed signs of fatigue in the second period of extra time, with Qatar relying on long balls towards Almoez Ali and Saudi Arabia attacking through the flanks. Neither could find a breakthrough, sending the match to penalties.

Saudi Arabia dominated the match with 62 per cent possession and 20 shots, including six on target, compared with just two shots and none on target for Qatar.

The hosts also won 12 corners to Qatar’s two and completed 659 accurate passes, while Qatar managed 381.

Saudi Arabia recorded 175 attacks to Qatar’s 65.

The semifinal was officiated by a Portuguese refereeing team led by João Pinheiro, with Pedro Ribeiro and Luciano Maia as assistants.

Bahrain’s Ammar Mahfouz was the fourth official, while Fu Ming of China was the VAR and Abdullah Arab of Kuwait served as the VAR.



Red Warriors rise through the years

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

The Red Warriors journey in the Arabian Gulf Cup has been one of gradual progress, from early struggles to becoming two-time champions and regular contenders.

Since making their debut at the third edition in Kuwait in 1974, Oman have featured in 25 editions, playing 120 matches up to the end of the group stage at Gulf Cup 27 in Jeddah.

They have recorded

26 wins, 31 draws and 63 defeats, scoring 103 goals and conceding 197.

Oman waited until the ninth edition in Saudi Arabia in 1988 to register their first victory, a 2-1 win over Qatar.

As culminated in a first final appearance at Gulf Cup 17 in Qatar in 2004, where they finished runners-up.

Then returned to the final in the UAE in 2007, but again settled for second place.

The breakthrough came



Oman players train during the Gulf Cup 27 in Jeddah.

at home at Gulf Cup 19 in 2009.

Under French coach Claude Le Roy, Oman lifted their first title by defeating

Saudi Arabia on penalties. Oman claimed their second crown at Gulf Cup 23 in Kuwait in 2017.

Under Pim Verbeek, they

beat the UAE on penalties after another goalless final. They reached the final again in Basra in 2023, losing 3-2 to Iraq after extra time, before finishing runners-up in Kuwait in 2024 following a 2-1 defeat to Bahrain.

BEST PLAYERS

Omani players also made their mark.

Ghulam Khamis was named best player at Gulf Cup 7 in 1984, while Hani al Dhahbi was top scorer at Gulf Cup 15 in 2002 with five goals.

Ali al Habsi won the best goalkeeper award five consecutive times between 2003 and 2009, and Imad al Hosni was top scorer at Gulf Cup 17 in 2004.

Ahmed Kano was named best player at Gulf Cup 23 in 2017, while Ibrahim al Mukhaini received the best goalkeeper award at Gulf Cup 25 in 2023.

At Gulf Cup 27, Oman reached the semifinals after finishing level with Iraq on points, goal difference and goals scored, with a draw deciding their progression.

GROWING ECONOMIC VALUE OF GULF CUP

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

THE Arabian Gulf Cup is considered as one of the Gulf region's most significant sporting events as it carries considerable sporting, commercial and financial value. The major Gulf football event goes beyond the green field as it has developed a lot in five decades. For instance, the latest edition, the 27th Gulf Cup which is underway in Jeddah, underlines that evolution. The tournament offers \$1.5 million in official cash prizes to the champions and runners-up alone as the winners are set to receive \$1 million and the second-placed team will get \$500,000. The best player will also receive an apartment as an additional prize through the sponsor company of the tournament.

The financial value of the Gulf Cup cannot be measured by the champion's cheque alone. The tournament managed to bring together eight national teams whose combined estimated player market value is now around €131.77 million, according to Transfermarkt-based figures published ahead of Gulf Cup 27. Saudi Arabia leads the list by €40.68 million, followed by the United Arab Emirates with €29.05 million, Iraq at €21.20 million and Qatar at €19.93 million. Oman is valued at €8.33 million, followed by Bahrain at €6.15 million, Kuwait at €4.23 million and Yemen at €2.20 million. These figures place the Gulf Cup in a different economic category zone from a tournament whose value is determined simply by its trophy and prize money.

\$1 MILLION PRIZE BENCHMARK
The \$1 million prize for the Gulf Cup champions in Jeddah is not a new record for the competition. Instead, it has become the standard headline prize in several recent editions, reflecting the financial status the tournament has developed. The progression can be traced through the editions from Gulf Cup 20 onwards. At the 20th Gulf Cup in Yemen in 2010, the champions' prize was raised to SAR 2 million, compared with SAR 1 million previously. The runners-up received SAR 1.5 million, while an allocation of SAR 1 million was also approved for each participating team. Three years later, Gulf Cup 21 in Bahrain increased the champions' reward to SAR 2.5 million, while the runners-up received SAR 1.5 million. Third place was awarded SAR 500,000 and fourth place SAR 250,000. The same top-four structure was maintained at the 22nd Gulf Cup in Saudi Arabia in 2014, with the

champions again receiving SAR 2.5 million and the runners-up SAR 1.5 million. The edition also allocated SAR 100,000 each to the top scorer, best player and best goalkeeper, alongside a SAR 200,000 fair-play award. Gulf Cup 23, staged in Kuwait in 2017 and 2018 sporting season, marked another change in the financial structure, with the headline prizes shifting to US dollars. The champions received \$1 million, while the runners-up was awarded \$500,000. Individual awards included QAR 40,000 for the top scorer and QAR 30,000 each for the best player and best goalkeeper.

FINANCIAL PEAK
The most striking financial package came at Gulf Cup 24 in Qatar in 2019 as the champions had received a reported \$2 million title prize, in addition to a \$1 million participation allocation, taking the champions' total package to \$3 million. The runners-up got \$1 million. This made Gulf Cup 24 an exceptional edition from a financial perspective. It should not, however, be interpreted as a permanent rise in the champions' prize. Subsequent editions returned to the \$1 million headline prize. Gulf Cup 25 in Iraq in 2023 again offered \$1 million to the champions and \$500,000 to the runners-up, while individual awards included BHD 4,000 for the top scorer and BHD 3,000 each for the best player and goalkeeper. Gulf Cup 26 in Kuwait in 2024 had maintained the same headline structure with \$1 million for the champions and \$500,000 for the runners-up. The third-placed teams (Kuwait and Saudi Arabia)

received \$137,000 each, while the top scorer, best player and best goalkeeper received \$27,000 each. The pattern has continued into Gulf Cup 27 in Jeddah with \$1.5 million provided for the top two. The Gulf Cup Football Federation confirmed that the total official cash prize for the champions and runners-up in Jeddah is \$1.5 million. The champions will receive \$1 million, while the runner-up will receive \$500,000. In addition, the tournament's best player will receive an apartment, making the overall rewards broader than the headline cash figures suggest. The financial structure is significant because Gulf Cup 27 features only eight teams. With a group stage followed by semifinals and a final, the competition is compact but carries a substantial financial reward for the teams reaching the decisive stages.

€131.77 M AS PLAYING VALUE
Beyond the official tournament rewards, the most revealing indication of the Gulf Cup's sporting and economic weight comes from the market value of its players. The eight squads participating in Gulf Cup 27 combined an estimated

market value of approximately €131.77 million, according to Transfermarkt-based figures published before the tournament. Saudi Arabia accounts for €40.68 million, representing around 31% of the combined value while the UAE followed by €29.05 million. Iraq and Qatar are valued at €21.20 million and €19.93 million respectively. Together, those four teams account for approximately €110.86 million, or more than 84% of the total estimated market value of the eight participating squads. Oman's squad has an estimated market value of €8.33 million, placing it fifth among the eight teams. Bahrain followed by €6.15 million while Kuwait and Yemen are valued at €4.23 million and €2.20 million respectively. The figures also underline the individual star power within the tournament. Qatar's Akram Afif is valued at around €8 million, while other leading players from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iraq also command multi-million-euro valuations. Recent Transfermarkt-based reporting has placed Saudi Arabia's Saud Abdulhamid at €9 million and Musab al Juwayr at €6 million, illustrating the presence of high-value players within the tournament's eight squads.

MORE THAN PRIZE MONEY
The economic importance of the Gulf Cup extends beyond the amounts distributed to the top teams. Hosting the competition involved stadium operations, accommodation, transportation, broadcasting, security, ticketing, hospitality, media operations, commercial activity and other hosting relevant items. The tournament also brings supporters from across the Gulf, creating wider economic activity for the host city. For the Gulf countries, the competition also provides a platform for players who may not regularly receive the same international exposure as those competing in major continental tournaments. The combination of prize money, player market value, commercial activity, media rights, sponsorship and fan engagement has consequently strengthened the Gulf Cup's position within the region's sporting economy.



Oman and Iraq players in action during the Gulf Cup 27 in Jeddah.



market value at around €131.77 million

Tournament brings together eight national teams with combined estimated player market value at around €131.77 million

SPORTS

INDIA BEAT
PAKISTAN AS
GOLFER KIM WINS
' CRAZY ' GOLD



India players celebrate their victory in the men's cricket final against Pakistan during the 2026 Asian Games at the Korogi Athletic Park in Nisshin. — AFP



Men's golf winner South Korea's Joohyung Kim with Japan's Kazuki Higa (silver) and Thailand's Sadom Kaewkanjana (bronze). — Reuters



South Korea players celebrate after winning the men's football gold medal. South Korea beat hosts Japan 1-0 in the final. — Reuters



India's Hardik Singh celebrates scoring their third goal with teammates in the men's hockey final against Malaysia. India won 5-1. — Reuters



Women's golf champion India's Pranavi Urs celebrates along with China's Yin Ruoning (silver) and Singapore's Shannon Xuan Yin Tan (bronze).

INDIA BEAT arch-rivals Pakistan to win Asian Games gold on Saturday in a blockbuster cricket final as South Korea's Tom Kim clinched the men's golf crown — and will avoid military service.

On the final full day of action in Aichi-Nagoya, gold medals were up for grabs in sports including cricket, golf, tennis, football, hockey and rugby sevens.

All eyes were on a converted baseball field hosting world-class cricket and a bitter rivalry that goes beyond sport where India won by 19 runs following a pulsating clash in front of a small but raucous crowd.

World T20 champions India posted 211-6 in their 20 overs with Abhishek Sharma scoring 61 and Tilak Varma 51 not out, before Hasan Nawaz's valiant 96 saw Pakistan come up just short at 192-6.

Afterwards, the jubilant India players paraded their national flag around the modest 2,500-capacity Korogi Athletic Park Stadium.

"Obviously it was a lovely game of cricket," said India's Washington Sundar after helping his country retain their crown.

"It's fabulous to actually win gold."

After India recorded the highest score of the tournament, Pakistan were always facing an uphill battle.

Hasan fought to the death as they went in search of their record chase, the batsman falling off the last ball attempting one more big shot.

INDIA CLINCH HOCKEY GOLD

India also clinched gold in men's hockey, thrashing Malaysia 5-1.

India successfully defended their title at the final at Gifu Prefectural Green Stadium to secure their fifth Asian Games gold medal in men's hockey. The victory also earned India an automatic qualification place for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Captain Harmanpreet Singh led the scoring with two goals, in the 11th and 57th minutes. Jugraj Singh (23rd), Hardik Singh (42nd) and Shilanand Lakra (54th) scored India's other goals, while Shello Silverius equalised for Malaysia in the 14th minute.

MORE THAN GOLD FOR KIM

Kim shot a sparkling final-round six-under 64 to win golf gold.

He let out a roar of "Come on!" as he tapped in for par at the last and celebrated a three-stroke victory after a superb round containing five birdies and an eagle.

He was mobbed by his teammates as they draped him in the South Korean flag and doused him in water.

"It's a crazy feeling," said the world number 32, who dashed across 14 time zones to play in the Asian Games after the Presidents Cup.

"I'm just glad it's over. This day was the longest day I think I've ever had in my life."

Kim knew there was more at stake than just a gold medal.

Able-bodied South Korean men are usually required to perform between 18 months and two years of military service before the age of 28.

But the Seoul government rewards Asian Games gold medals and Olympic medals of any colour with an exemption, meaning they will

carry out just four weeks of light basic training instead.

It enables the 24-year-old Kim to keep his blossoming career on track, having already claimed an Asian Tour order of merit crown and four PGA Tour titles.

Also gaining exemption will be South Korea's footballers after they beat the hosts Japan 1-0 in the men's final.

'GLAD TO BE ALIVE'

Coleman Wong was eagerly checking his phone for a message from Rafael Nadal after the Hong Kong player won tennis gold, and with it a place at the Olympics.

Wong beat China's Wu Yibing 6-2, 6-4 in the men's singles final.

Now 22, Wong trained as a youngster at the Rafa Nadal Academy, and the Spanish great keeps abreast of how Wong is progressing.

Asked whether he had heard from Nadal following his golden triumph, Wong said: "I haven't checked my messages. I don't know. Let's see."

Hong Kong's men's rugby sevens team romped to a third consecutive gold with a dominant display in a 26-0 victory over China.

Japan cycling queen Yumi Kajihara broke down after her latest gold as she dedicated victory to her brother who died of cancer this year, saying: "He's here with me."

Kajihara claimed her third consecutive omnium gold and dissolved into tears as she talked about how her younger brother Hyogo had helped her cope with some dark moments.

"It made me realise I needed to be grateful simply to be alive," she said.

CHINA ON TOP, INDIA RISE TO FOURTH

China topped the medal standings with 168 gold, 89 silver and 83 bronze for a total of 340 medals, followed by Japan (83, 93, 91 — 267). The home athletes will finish with a national record haul, smashing their previous best (218) at Hiroshima 1994.

South Korea (38, 43, 68 — 149) came third while India who were eighth two days before rose to fourth spot with 85 medals — 21 gold, 27 silver and 37 bronze. Uzbekistan (21, 25, 24 — 70) also finished with 21 gold, but India were placed ahead by virtue of having more silver medals.

India enjoyed a strong finish on the final day, adding gold medals in wrestling, men's cricket and men's hockey, while also collecting medals in archery, golf and wrestling.

India's 85-medal haul was its second-highest total at an Asian Games, behind the 106 medals won at Hangzhou in 2023.

The gold rush began with Kumkum Anil Mohod winning the women's individual recurve archery title.

Pranavi Urs then claimed gold in the women's individual golf event, becoming the first Indian woman to win an individual Asian Games golf gold.

In wrestling, Aman Sehrawat won the men's 57kg gold, while Antim Panghal took silver and Deepak Punia secured bronze.

The other medals on the final day came in archery and golf, with Neeraj Chauhan winning bronze in men's individual recurve, while Pranavi Urs, Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar earned silver in the women's team golf event. — Agencies

Bahla hit four as Oman Club, Al Shabab and Al Nahda triumph

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

Bahla strengthened their position at the top of Group One with a commanding 4-0 victory over Fanja, while Oman Club, Al Shabab and Al Nahda also collected maximum points in a goal-filled fifth round of the Sohar International Cup.

The six matches produced 21 goals, with four victories and two draws.

Bahla recorded the biggest win of the round, while Al Nasr and Samayil shared six goals in a 3-3 draw and Al Musannah drew 2-2 with Ibri.

Bahla's four-goal victory over Fanja took them to 10 points from four matches, three clear of Oman

Club, Dhofar and Sur. Jackson Bisan scored twice in the win, while Bahla maintained their unbeaten record and improved their goal difference to plus 12.

Oman Club moved into second place after substitute Abdullah al Balushi scored an 88th-minute winner against Dhofar at Al Saada Sports Complex.

The match appeared destined to end goalless after both sides struggled to convert their opportunities.

Dhofar went close through Ahmed al Matroushi, Abu Kamara and substitute Marwan Hilal Bait Arafah, but Oman Club goalkeeper Faris al Ghaithi kept them out before Al Balushi struck late to secure a 1-0 victory.



Al Nahda and Sohar players in action.

AL NASR, SAMAYIL IN 3-3 DRAW

Al Nasr and Samayil produced one of the most entertaining matches of the round, drawing 3-3. Afnan Said scored twice for Al Nasr, while Mutasim al Hakmani struck twice for Samayil. The result left both teams on two points near the bottom of Group One.

In Group Two, Al Shabab edged Saham 2-1 to climb to eight points and remain in contention for a semifinal place.

Dutch professional Pepijn gave Al Shabab the lead in the sixth minute, before Tosin Omila equalised for Saham shortly before half-time. Al Shabab regained the advantage in the 80th minute when Mohammed al Ghafri's header took a deflection off a Saham defender and found

the net. Saham pressed for another equaliser, but Al Shabab held on for the three points.

Al Nahda moved to within one point of leaders Seeb after recording a 2-1 victory over Sohar.

The result lifted Al Nahda to nine points from five matches, while Sohar remained fourth with six points.

Meanwhile, Sheikhna Simjia scored twice for Ibri in their 2-2 draw with Al Musannah. Both clubs moved onto two points, with Al Musannah sitting fifth on goal difference.

Seeb, who did not play in the round, continue to lead Group Two with 10 points from four matches, followed by Al Nahda on nine and Al Shabab on eight.

BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES



The cumulative investment exceeded RO 521 million at the end of June 2026.

RAYSUT ATTRACTS 6.5 MILLION IN NEW PROJECTS

MUSCAT: Raysut Industrial City secured nine new projects worth RO 6.5 million in the first half of 2026, as occupancy of its developed areas reached about 98 per cent.

The industrial city, operated by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), received about 27 investment applications during the period. The new projects cover food processing, iron manufacturing, mining and services, among other activities, and occupy more than 32,700 square metres.

Management also addressed five stalled projects by replacing them with projects in targeted sectors. Hamid bin Ali Bait Saeed, Acting Director of Raysut Industrial City, said cumulative investment exceeded RO 521 million at the end of June.

The city employed 3,681 people, including 1,582 Omanis, equivalent to about 43 per cent of its workforce.

Raysut covers more than 3.99 million square metres, with planned future expansions spanning about 10.05 million square metres.

Bait Saeed said Madayn was developing water and sewerage services for the city's second and third phases, alongside studies and master planning for further expansion.

Approved projects expected to begin soon include infrastructure for new areas, construction of the Madayn Entrepreneurial Complex and an upgrade of the security system. The work is intended to accommodate further investment applications and improve services for businesses.

Raysut is about four kilometres from the Port of Salalah and 15 kilometres from Salalah Airport, giving manufacturers access to transport links serving markets in the Horn of Africa and Asia, as well as proximity to Yemen.

Management is seeking to build on Dhofar Governorate's location and resources to attract food and pharmaceutical businesses. It is also working with partners to explore investment opportunities in medical supply chains and develop a food industry cluster. — ONA

Oman re-exports rise 13.6% in first half of 2026

MUSCAT: Oman's re-exports rose 13.6 per cent to about RO 1.14 billion in the first half of 2026, while wholesale and retail trade output increased 5 per cent, according to National Centre for Statistics and Information data.

The wholesale and retail trade sector's contribution to gross domestic product at current prices reached about RO 1.735 billion, compared with the same period of 2025.

Foreign investment in the trade sector increased 9.7 per cent to about RO 305.3 million, the data showed

Nasra bint Sultan al Habsi, Director General of Commerce at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), said the figures reflected continued expansion in commercial activity.



The wholesale and retail trade sector's contribution to gross domestic product at current prices reached about RO 1.735 billion, compared with the same period of 2025.

She said improving the business environment and making commercial services more efficient would support investment and trade flows and strengthen Oman's links with regional and international markets. The growth in re-exports showed greater use

of the country's commercial and logistics infrastructure, including ports, airports and land crossings, she said.

The MoCIIP is coordinating with relevant entities to facilitate trade through these entry points, simplify import, export and re-export procedures, and improve the integration of government services provided to businesses. It is also developing regulations governing commercial activity and digitising services through the Oman Business platform.

The ministry said these measures were intended to reduce the time and effort required to complete transactions, improve services for investors and traders, and support e-commerce and competition. It described the increase in foreign investment as an indication of

the trade sector's attractiveness and said it was working to connect investors with available opportunities.

These efforts include drawing on the facilities offered by economic, free and industrial zones, together with Oman's transport and logistics infrastructure.

The MoCIIP is also coordinating with government and private sector entities to address challenges faced by traders and exporters and improve the movement of exports and re-exports.

It said the first-half indicators showed closer links between commercial activity, investment and foreign trade, with re-exports supporting economic diversification and Oman's development as a centre for trade and logistics. — ONA

Oman secures 97.4m in food investments

INVEST Oman and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR) have facilitated 12 projects with a combined investment value of RO 97.413 million and prepared a further 13 investment opportunities worth RO 122.849 million.

The projects cover food manufacturing, agriculture, aquaculture and related industries across several governorates. The additional opportunities are being presented to investors through the Invest Oman platform.

The cooperation brings together the ministry's sector expertise and Invest Oman's work on preparing projects for investment and connecting them with potential investors. Officials said the approach aims to strengthen food security, expand domestic production and increase local value addition.

Among the projects secured are a RO 27 million Meat City development in Salalah, a RO 14 million food manufacturing facility in Khazaen Economic City and a RO 16 million Green Charcoal project on land allocated through MoAFWR.

Other projects include a RO 7.7 million Sohar food and beverages manufacturing facility in Khazaen Economic City, a RO 3.465 million pet food plant in Salalah Free Zone and the RO 1.7 million Taj Al Bahr aquaculture project in Qurayat.

The portfolio also includes date palm cultivation valued at RO 1.342 million, wheat cultivation worth RO 1.205 million, a RO 1.2 million honey production facility in Barka, Al Batinah South Governorate, and a RO 1 million agricultural gypsum manufacturing facility in Al Khabourah, Al Batinah North Governorate. Dr Masoud bin Sulaiman al Azri, Director General of Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing at the MoAFWR, said coordination with Invest Oman had helped turn sector requirements and available resources into investment projects.

He said the cooperation



The projects cover food manufacturing, agriculture, aquaculture and related industries across several governorates.

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allowed both entities to apply their expertise at different stages of project development and should be extended to further opportunities in agriculture, fisheries and food production.

Invest Oman Chief Executive Officer Eng Nasser bin Khalifa al Kindi said the results demonstrated the value of combining sector knowledge with investment expertise to develop projects that reflect economic priorities and market needs.

Invest Oman would continue working with government entities to improve project readiness, develop investment opportunities and facilitate access to suitable investors, he said.

Dr Hamdan bin Salim al Wahibi, Director General of Agricultural Development at the MoAFWR, said the agricultural projects would support domestic production and the development of local value chains. He said turning available agricultural resources into productive businesses could diversify output, increase local value addition and attract further investment.

Of the 13 opportunities available through Invest Oman, six are in the Najd Agricultural Area in Al Mazayouna, Dhofar Governorate. These comprise a livestock fattening and dairy production project valued at RO 4.449 million, melon cultivation worth

RO 2.1 million and greenhouse production of leafy vegetables valued at RO 1.6 million.

The remaining Najd opportunities are onion cultivation and processing worth RO 4.8 million, garlic cultivation valued at RO 2.3 million and potato cultivation and processing worth RO 5.5 million. A RO 17 million Smart Agricultural Complex in Qurayat, Muscat Governorate, is also available for investment.

The fisheries opportunities include a RO 6.2 million marine aquaculture equipment manufacturing facility in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and a RO 7.2 million integrated fishing equipment manufacturing complex at Duqm Port.

Other opportunities comprise a RO 4.7 million tuna fattening project using floating cages in Qurayat and a RO 10 million Omani abalone aquaculture project in Shaleem and Al Hallaniyat Islands, Dhofar Governorate.

Two shrimp projects account for the largest individual investment values among the opportunities: a RO 32 million giant shrimp aquaculture project in Ras Madrakah, Al Wusta Governorate, and a RO 25 million white-leg shrimp aquaculture project in Ras Sarq, Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Al Sharqiyah South Governorate.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



At the heart of the G700 Top Fire is a 2.0TD turbocharged engine paired with dual electric motors.

MHD AUTOMOBILES INTRODUCES THE ALL-NEW JETOUR G700 TOPFIRE IN OMAN

MUSCAT: MHD Automobiles LLC, the official distributor of Jetour vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman, has introduced the Jetour G700 TopFire, an imposing, Factory-customised Trailblazing SUV engineered for drivers who seek exceptional capability, commanding performance and uncompromising comfort.

Developed for demanding landscapes and adventurous journeys, the G700 TopFire brings together intelligent plug-in hybrid technology and purpose-built off-road engineering. Its bold proportions, wider stance and rugged exterior treatment give it a powerful road presence, while its enhanced chassis and expedition-ready equipment prepare it to take on challenging terrain with confidence.

At the heart of the G700 Top Fire is a 2.0TD turbocharged engine paired with dual electric motors. The high-output hybrid configuration delivers up to 1,135 Nm of combined torque and can accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h in approximately 5.4 seconds, combining the immediate response of electrified power with the sustained capability required for demanding journeys.

Commenting on the new edition, Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, said: “Oman’s extraordinary landscapes inspire a deep passion for exploration, and the Jetour G700 TopFire has been created for customers who want to experience those landscapes without compromise. Its combination of powerful hybrid performance, specialised off-road engineering and premium comfort represents an exciting new proposition for the Sultanate of Oman.

The introduction of the G700 TopFire also reflects MHD ACERE’s commitment to bringing distinctive, technologically advanced vehicles to Oman and providing our customers with the confidence and support to pursue every journey.”

The G700 TopFire’s enhanced off-road configuration includes a dedicated chassis, increased ground clearance, a wider wheel track and broad 305 mm tyres for greater stability and traction across uneven surfaces. K-MAN 3.0 nitrogen shock-absorbing suspension technology is designed to provide enhanced control, impact resistance and ride comfort when travelling over demanding terrain.

Its expedition-focused exterior incorporates distinctive fender flares, rugged front and rear bumpers, forged alloy wheels and alloy side steps.

Lulu inaugurates new hypermarket in Al Hail

LULU has expanded its retail footprint in Oman with the opening of a new hypermarket in Al Hail, bringing its shopping experience closer to residents of one of Muscat’s rapidly growing communities.

The hypermarket was inaugurated by Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Farooji, Under-Secretary for Investment Promotion at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, in the presence of Yusuff Ali M A, Chairman of Lulu Group, senior government officials and other dignitaries.

The Under-Secretary said “The opening of a new branch of the global LuLu Group represents a valuable addition to the Sultanate of Oman’s retail sector and reflects investors’ confidence in the attractiveness of the Omani market and the opportunities it offers for growth and expansion.

At the Ministry, we remain committed to supporting high-value investments that contribute to economic diversification, strengthen supply chains, and generate added value for the national economy, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.”

“The opening of our new hypermarket in Al Hail reflects our continued commitment to being closer to our customers and serving the evolving needs of communities across Oman. We remain focused on expanding our presence in the Sultanate of Oman, with more projects in the pipeline,” said Yusuff Ali



The hypermarket was inaugurated by Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Farooji, Under-Secretary for Investment Promotion at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

M A, Chairman of LuLu Group.

Strategically located in Al Hail, the new 76,973 sq ft hypermarket offers a comprehensive shopping experience with groceries and everyday essentials, fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and seafood, bakery products and freshly prepared food.

The store also features dedicated sections for electronics, home appliances, mobile phones, smart TVs, laptops and household products, bringing a broad selection of food

and non-food categories under one roof.

Designed for convenient shopping, the hypermarket features modern retail facilities along with ample parking, providing easy access for residents of Al Hail and surrounding communities.

The latest opening forms part of Lulu’s ongoing expansion in Oman as the retailer continues to strengthen its network and bring its shopping experience closer to customers across the Sultanate of Oman.

Vodafone Oman highlights digital strengths in London

MUSCAT: Oman’s next phase of digital development is strengthening the country’s proposition as a place to live, work and invest, Vodafone Oman’s Chief Executive Officer Eng Bader al Zidi said during the official opening of Live Oman in London.

Addressing government and business leaders during the Partners’ Perspectives segment, Eng Al Zidi highlighted Oman’s progress from establishing strong digital foundations towards applying them across economic sectors, public services and business activity.

In Oman, the National Digital Economy Programme is building on the progress already made in government digital transformation, with its next phase focused on digitising promising economic sectors, expanding digital services and increasing their contribution to national growth.

Eng Al Zidi said: “Oman has built strong digital foundations for its next phase of growth.

The opportunity now lies in what those foundations enable: better services, stronger businesses and new possibilities across the economy.



Vodafone Oman’s CEO Eng Bader al Zidi at the official opening of Live Oman in London.

Connectivity delivers its greatest value when people and organisations can use it to move their ambitions forward.

People and businesses considering their future in Oman are looking at the complete

proposition: the opportunities available, the services around them and the environment in which they can operate and grow. Oman’s digital progress is an increasingly important part of that proposition.”

Eng Al Zidi went on to add, “At Vodafone Oman, we connect for a better future. Our role goes beyond bringing people onto a network. It is about combining connectivity and technology in ways that help individuals, businesses and communities achieve more.”

Led by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, Live Oman brings together national partners to present the Sultanate of Oman as a place to live, work, build and invest. Vodafone Oman’s role combines the sector perspective set out by Eng Al Zidi with practical support for the campaign within the Sultanate of Oman.

Through its communications channels, connectivity capabilities, marketing experience and relationships, the company has brought the campaign to its customers and partners in Oman, while providing connectivity support to members of the Live Oman team travelling to London.

BYD Atto 3: Drive electric with special pricing, charger & more

MUSCAT: As part of BYD’s “Electric Today. Endless Possibilities.” campaign, the all-electric BYD Atto 3 is available across Oman with a package of ownership benefits designed to make the move to electric driving simpler and more rewarding. The campaign runs from August 17 to October 17, 2026, placing the Atto 3 at the centre of BYD Oman’s electric SUV offering.

From August 17 to October 17, 2026, eligible retail customers purchasing the BYD Atto 3 can benefit from special pricing, one year of free insurance through Liva Insurance, a complimentary scheduled service package and a complimentary 2 kW 3-pin EV charger, subject to eligibility and applicable terms and conditions.

Customers financing an eligible vehicle through Oman Arab Bank may also receive two months of complimentary instalments, subject to the bank’s approval. This will



The campaign runs from August 17 to October 17, 2026, placing the Atto 3 at the centre of BYD Oman’s electric SUV offering.

be for a loan of 6 years and above with a loan to value of 80 per cent of vehicle purchase price. Terms and conditions apply.

Beyond the campaign benefits, the Atto 3 continues to make a

strong case for going electric in the Sultanate of Oman.

It combines sharp styling, a distinctive interior and real everyday practicality, giving drivers an SUV that feels modern and exciting without asking them to give up efficiency for fun.

Inspired by the form of the Chinese dragon, the Atto 3 wears a bold, angular silhouette highlighted by wing-shaped headlamps and 18-inch “Wing of Wind” alloy wheels. Its electric motor delivers 201 hp and 310 Nm of torque, taking the SUV from 0 to 100 km/h in 7.3 seconds.

A WLTP-rated range of 410 km gives the Atto 3 the confidence to handle daily city traffic as well as longer drives along the coast.

Inside, the Atto 3 breaks from convention with a cabin concept inspired by the gym. Premium trim and playful design details run throughout, while a 12.8-inch touchscreen supports Android

Auto and Apple CarPlay for smooth navigation and entertainment integration on the move.

Intelligent driver-assistance systems work alongside BYD’s Blade Battery to support confidence and peace of mind on every journey.

The vehicle remains backed by BYD’s protection package: a 6-year or 150,000 km vehicle warranty and an 8-year or 200,000 km battery warranty, whichever comes first in each case, subject to applicable terms and conditions.

Visit a BYD showroom in Oman today to experience the Atto 3 in person, arrange a test drive and take advantage of the current campaign benefits before they end on 17 October 2026.

In Oman, BYD vehicles are distributed by World Auto Business LLC. For more details, to check stock availability, or to schedule a test drive, please call 72225925. You can also visit [www.bydoman.com](#)

SHORTTAKES



The policy covers upfront payments for raw materials, intermediate goods and capital equipment used to manufacture products.

Credit Oman insures manufacturers’ advance payments

MUSCAT: Credit Oman has launched an insurance policy to protect Omani manufacturers against losses on advance payments to domestic and overseas suppliers, extending its coverage to the pre-shipment stage of production.

The Advance Payment Insurance Policy covers upfront payments for raw materials, intermediate goods and capital equipment used to manufacture products for domestic and export markets.

Such payments are often required when suppliers need time to manufacture or assemble machinery, prepare equipment or secure raw materials before delivery. Contracts can run for several months, exposing manufacturers to losses if suppliers become insolvent or fail to fulfil their obligations.

Credit Oman said the policy would indemnify insured manufacturers when a supplier failed to deliver contracted goods and subsequently failed to refund the advance payment because of insolvency, non-payment following non-delivery or specified political risks in the supplier’s country.

Where a bank finances the advance payment, coverage may be extended through a loss-payee endorsement in favour of the lender. This allows the financing institution to receive an insurance payment under the agreed policy terms and could support manufacturers’ access to funding.

Haitham bin Abdullah al Yaqoobi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Credit Oman, said the product was intended to protect manufacturers against commercial risks that could disrupt production and expansion.

He said the policy had been developed around the requirements of businesses in Oman and could give companies greater confidence when making procurement and contracting decisions.

Protection against supplier insolvency or default could reduce financial losses, support business continuity and help manufacturers enter new contracts and projects, he said. — ONA

Oman’s Hydrom joins global Hydrogen Council

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 3

HYDROGEN

Oman (Hydrom), the central master-planner of Oman’s green hydrogen industry, has joined the Hydrogen Council, marking an important step in integrating the Sultanate of Oman more closely with global efforts to build commercially viable hydrogen markets, trade corridors and common industry standards.

The Brussels-based Hydrogen Council announced Hydrom among six new members on September 29, alongside Acwa, EcoLog, Mitsui OSK Lines, TANAKA and 2JCP.

The additions extend the CEO-led alliance’s footprint to nearly 30 countries, with Hydrom becoming its first member from Oman.

For Hydrom, the membership comes as Oman shifts the emphasis of its green hydrogen strategy from allocating large development blocks towards implementation, infrastructure, industrial integration and, crucially, securing markets for future production.

“Joining the Hydrogen Council is a strategic milestone for Hydrom and Oman’s



ENG ABDULAZIZ AL SHIDHANI
Managing Director, Hydrom

clean energy trajectory,” said Eng Abdulaziz al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom.

“As we pivot from framework design to large-scale execution, participating in this CEO-led global initiative embeds Oman directly into international decision-making.”

Al Shidhani said participation would help Oman secure offtake demand, promote harmonised trade standards needed to improve project bankability, and position the country’s infrastructure along emerging international energy corridors.

Those priorities are particularly relevant as the global hydrogen industry grapples with high costs, uncertain demand and delays to some projects.

The Council’s Global Hydrogen Compass 2026 nevertheless estimates that more than \$130 billion of investment has been committed across over 570 clean hydrogen projects, with 90 per cent of that committed capital associated with projects already operational or under construction.

The Hydrogen Council brings together around 140 companies spanning production,

infrastructure, transport and hydrogen-consuming industries, providing a platform for industry leaders to coordinate on policies, standards, investment and market development.

Its latest membership expansion reflects its argument that hydrogen markets must develop as integrated ecosystems rather than isolated projects.

Significantly, two fellow new members already have links to Oman’s hydrogen ambitions. Saudi-based Acwa has an established power and water investment presence in Oman.

EcoLog, meanwhile, is directly involved with Hydrom in developing an ambitious Oman-Europe liquid hydrogen corridor linking Duqm with Amsterdam and onward markets in Germany and Northwest Europe.

Its planned Amsterdam terminal is targeting initial hydrogen throughput of 200,000 tonnes annually, while purpose-built liquid-hydrogen carriers are being developed to connect production hubs with overseas customers.

Their presence alongside Hydrom within the same global alliance could therefore strengthen precisely the kind of producer-infrastructure-offtaker collaboration Oman needs as it seeks to translate its renewable resources and allocated hydrogen acreage into bankable projects connected to international markets.

Oman bank lending rises 12.2%

MUSCAT: Total loans and financing extended by commercial banks and Islamic windows in the Sultanate of Oman rose 12.2 per cent year on year to RO 38.2584 billion at the end of July 2026, preliminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed.

Private sector deposits increased 12.9 per cent to RO 24.7113 billion, compared with RO 21.8901 billion a year earlier. Total loans and financing stood at RO 34.1008 billion at the end of July 2025.

The figures showed growth in money supply and domestic liquidity alongside a decline in average lending rates.

Narrow money supply rose 28 per cent



Private sector deposits increased 12.9 per cent to RO 24.7113 billion, compared with RO 21.8901 billion a year earlier.

to RO 9.2094 billion from RO 7.1931 billion a year earlier. Domestic liquidity increased 14.9 per cent to RO 29.2521 billion, compared

with RO 25.4506 billion. Currency issued grew 4.9 per cent to RO 1.585 billion at the end of July, up from RO 1.5114 billion in the corresponding period of 2025.

Foreign assets, however, declined 1.7 per cent to RO 7.2835 billion from RO 7.4112 billion a year earlier. The average interest rate on total loans fell to 5.311 per cent from 5.510 per cent, a decline of 0.199 percentage points, equivalent to about 20 basis points. This represented a relative decrease of 3.6 per cent.

Meanwhile, the Omani rial’s effective exchange rate index increased 0.4 per cent to 116.8 points at the end of July 2026, compared with 116.3 points a year earlier. — ONA

Oman, Philippines conclude investment pact talks

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, OCT 3

The Sultanate of Oman and the Philippines have concluded negotiations on an investment protection agreement, with signing planned before the end of 2026, the Philippine Board of Investments (BOI) said.

The Philippines-Oman Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement is intended to strengthen investor safeguards and encourage investment flows between the two countries.

The proposed framework includes provisions on fair treatment, protection against discriminatory measures and greater transparency for investors, the BOI said. These



The pact is intended to strengthen investor safeguards and encourage investment flows.

measures are designed to provide businesses with greater certainty when investing in either market.

BOI Governor Marjorie O Ramos-Samaniego led the Philippine delegation, accompanied by Director

Elyjean DC Portoza and lawyer Kyla Mari F Samson.

The Philippines is seeking Omani investment in agribusiness, renewable energy, energy efficiency technologies, infrastructure and public-private partnership projects.

Other priority areas include innovation, information technology and business process management, oil and gas, processed and speciality foods, including halal products and tourism.

The BOI said the agreement could also provide a basis for further economic cooperation, including a possible preferential trade arrangement to improve market access for goods from both countries.

Philippine Ambassador to

Oman Noralyn Jubaira Baja said the conclusion of negotiations reflected closer bilateral ties and a shared commitment to promoting sustainable investment flows and creating opportunities for businesses.

Omani investment in the Philippines totalled \$140,000 between 2021 and 2025, before reaching \$800,000 in January 2026, according to figures cited by the BOI. The board expects the agreement to encourage further investment from the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman is home to about 47,000 Filipino workers, providing an established link between the two countries as they seek to expand their economic relationship beyond employment.

LABOUR MARKET

US job growth slows in September



US employment growth slowed more than expected in September, while payroll gains for the previous two months were revised sharply lower. Unemployment increased to 4.2% from 4.1% as labour-force participation rose.

Economists said the figures reinforced the market’s “low-hire, low-fire” pattern and reduced the likelihood of another Federal Reserve interest-rate increase in October. — Reuters

ENERGY SUPPLY

G7 agrees major emergency oil release



G7 countries agreed to release 100 million barrels of diesel and crude oil from emergency reserves and avoid export restrictions after US pressure.

President Donald Trump said US would not impose a diesel export ban, which could have severely affected Europe. The move follows a record 400-million-barrel emergency release coordinated by the IEA after the Iran conflict began in March. — Reuters

TRADE AGREEMENT

Trump claims \$8.4 bn Korea oil project



President Donald Trump said US trade agreement with South Korea included \$8.4 billion for an enhanced oil-recovery project intended to increase American crude and gas production.

However, South Korea’s Yonhap news agency cited an industry ministry official as saying the project was not part of the agreement, whose scope remained limited to a joint fact sheet issued in November 2025. — Reuters

OPINION

Local content development in the industrial sector



DR HILAL AL SAWAI

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert

THE use of local content in different sectors of the economy has expanded beyond the oil and gas industry, and is now used as a tool to transform industrial growth into a broader and sustainable economy.

At the industrial level, local content goes beyond procurement of goods and services within the country. Local content is a mechanism to develop a country’s capacity and capability to build local supply chains and create quality jobs, support the Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs), enhance innovation and retain more value within the country’s economy.

Local content development in the industry sector is directly associated with the goals of Oman Vision 2040, particularly on economic diversification, private sector and competitiveness, as well as the development of national capabilities.

While Oman is gradually developing its manufacturing and industrial sector, the challenge is not to attract more investments to establish more factories, but to ensure that those investments create and add more value to the economy.

INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT TO LOCAL VALUE

Each large scale industrial project can create many smaller scale projects and businesses.

A manufacturing plant requires many inputs, services and supplies. Raw materials, equipment, logistics and maintenance are some of the inputs that represent opportunities.

However, not all of these opportunities will be captured. The key challenge is to create an environment where local industries, based on their competitive level, can satisfy a company’s requirements.

This strategy would help Oman slowly reduce dependence on imports while creating new investment opportunities for Omani businesses.

STRENGTHENING SMES

The participation of SMEs in industrial supply chains is also important, but SMEs should be included based on their capability and competitiveness. Large industrial companies can help SMEs through supplier-development programmes, and other interventions like quality certification, long-term contracts, and procurement opportunities.

The effectiveness of a local content programme should therefore be assessed based on the extent to which local suppliers can export. Local content programmes should therefore evaluate the extent to which suppliers improve their productivity and technical capabilities, as well as create sustainable jobs and adopt international standards.

DEVELOPING LOCAL TALENT

The development of local talent is important. A range of new occupations are created by industrialisation, including engineers, technicians, operators, and researchers as well as supply-chain and data management specialists, and industrial managers.

To ensure that jobs are sustainable, the education system, the vocational training system, and industry should be aligned.

New industrial investments should target what will be needed in the future, and identify the skills the industry will require, and work with training and higher education institutions to fill the skills gaps. Local content strategies should therefore address the same issues as Omanisation.

Local content is a mechanism to develop a country’s capacity and capability to build local supply chains and create quality jobs, support the Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs), enhance innovation and retain more value within the country’s economy.

INCORPORATING INNOVATION

New ways of thinking and integrating innovation into local content are important to remain competitive. Industrial automation, digital supply chains and other trending technologies should be part of future local content strategies.

Local content programmes should foster collaboration between industry, universities, SMEs and startups, research, and development institutions. The focus should be on gradually moving from buying locally to designing, developing and manufacturing locally.

IMPACT, NOT SPENDING

Ultimately, the measurement of local content in the industrial sector should be the impact it has on the economy. Some of the indicators should be local procurement, local jobs, SME and supplier development, investment and import replacement, improvement of productivity, technology and innovative edge, as well as exports. This is a radical departure from asking, “How much did we spend locally?” to asking, “What economic value has this industrial investment created for the Sultanate of Oman?”

When local content is part and parcel of a strategic industrial policy to attract investments, develop and diversify the supply chain and create economic value, it touches on multiple areas including industry, entrepreneurship and employment.

For Oman, the opportunity is to build an industrial ecosystem in which international investment and national capability reinforce one another — creating competitive Omani industries that can not only serve the domestic market, but increasingly compete in regional and global markets.

From SOHAR, Oman enters solar’s upstream supply chain

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

A solar panel begins its journey long before it reaches a rooftop or power station. One of its essential ingredients is polysilicon, a highly purified form of silicon that is processed into the wafers used to make photovoltaic cells. Oman has started producing this material at a new facility in SOHAR Freezone.

United Solar Polysilicon began operations in January 2026, with a planned annual capacity of 100,000 tonnes. At full capacity, the company says, that output could support the manufacture of solar modules with a combined capacity of about 40 gigawatts.

The plant gives Oman a place further upstream in the solar industry. The country already generates electricity from large solar and wind projects.

Producing a material used to make solar panels adds an industrial dimension to that transition, while creating a potential supplier for manufacturers in international markets.

The opportunity comes as countries reassess where clean-energy equipment is made. Solar production involves several stages, from polysilicon through to finished modules.

The International Energy Agency has identified diversification as one way to reduce vulnerabilities in the global supply chain. Oman’s new plant is one part of that wider effort, though a polysilicon facility alone does not make a complete solar panel.

There is another measure of its contribution: the energy used to make the material. Polysilicon production requires intensive processing at high temperatures. The IEA has reported that electricity accounts for more than 80 per cent of the energy consumed in solar photovoltaic manufacturing, with much of it used in the upstream stages.

That means the environmental case for expanding solar manufacturing depends partly on how efficiently factories use energy and how their electricity is generated.

United Solar describes its SOHAR facility as designed for high energy efficiency. The International Finance Corporation, which helped finance the project, has also said it will support work on carbon reduction and resource efficiency.

These factors matter because making solar equipment is not emission-free. A factory can support the growth of renewable power while drawing heavily on energy itself.

Tracking the plant’s performance as production increases will help show how its industrial output and environmental aims align.

Pharma clusters power manufacturing strategy

THE Sultanate of Oman is taking an important step towards strengthening its pharmaceutical manufacturing capabilities through the development of specialised industrial clusters for pharmaceutical industries and medical devices in economic and free zones.

The initiative reflects a broader industrial policy direction: moving beyond conventional manufacturing towards knowledge-intensive industries that can generate higher value added, develop national capabilities and connect Oman with regional and global value chains. The Royal endorsement of the proposal to establish specialised clusters for pharmaceutical industries and medical devices provides an important foundation for developing an integrated pharmaceutical manufacturing base in Oman.

According to the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), the initiative aims to enhance national drug security, localise pharmaceutical and biomedical industries and attract qualitative investments to the sector.

The first phase includes the development of Salalah City for Pharmaceutical and Medical Industries, through cooperation between Salalah Free Zone and Raysut Industrial City, with a combined area exceeding one million square metres. A specialised zone for pharmaceutical and medical industries is also planned in Khzaen Economic City, covering more than 500,000 square metres.

The current structure of Oman’s health manufacturing sector highlights the scale of the opportunity. Oman has around 12 health-manufacturing factories, with local production currently meeting about 10% of domestic demand, while more than 90% continues to be covered through imports. This



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Director, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion

It is an opportunity to build a knowledge-intensive manufacturing capability around a strategic sector, strengthen national drug security, deepen local value creation and create new pathways into global value chains.

significant import dependence demonstrates both the importance of strengthening national drug security and the considerable potential for developing a more competitive domestic manufacturing base.

However, the objective should go beyond import substitution. The development of specialised pharmaceutical and medical-industry clusters provides an opportunity to build production capabilities that can progressively meet a larger share of domestic demand while developing the scale, quality, technology and competitiveness required to enter regional and international markets.

The significance of this initiative therefore extends beyond the establishment of pharmaceutical factories. A successful pharmaceutical cluster should be viewed as an integrated industrial value chain, beginning with pharmaceutical ingredients and inputs and extending through formulation, manufacturing, quality testing, packaging, warehousing, distribution and exports.

Over time, the cluster can develop capabilities in research and development, specialised medicines, biotechnology, diagnostics and other health-related technologies. This approach is particularly relevant to Oman’s Manufacturing Strategy 2040, where pharmaceuticals and medical equipment represent knowledge-driven activities with potential for higher domestic value creation.

The objective should therefore not be limited to replacing imported medicines. While increasing domestic production of essential medicines can strengthen supply security, the longer-term industrial objective should be to establish competitive manufacturing capabilities that can serve markets beyond Oman. Oman’s relatively small domestic market makes an export-oriented approach especially

important. Pharmaceutical manufacturing requires scale, specialised capabilities and continuous investment in technology and quality systems. Connecting Omani production to GCC, Middle Eastern, African and other international markets can help manufacturers achieve greater economies of scale and support the development of sustainable production capabilities.

Foreign direct investment can play a critical role during the early stages of cluster development. Global pharmaceutical companies can bring advanced technologies, international quality standards, managerial capabilities and access to established global distribution networks.

However, investment attraction should be increasingly targeted towards outcomes that strengthen the domestic industrial base. Incentives can therefore be linked to areas such as Omani employment and training, technology and knowledge transfer, local supplier development, research and development, and export performance.

The development of local suppliers is another important dimension. Pharmaceutical manufacturing can generate opportunities for Omani companies in packaging, printing and labelling, plastics, glass, chemicals, engineering and maintenance, laboratory testing, information technology, cold-chain logistics, warehousing, waste management and specialised professional services.

These linkages can help transform the pharmaceutical cluster from a group of factories into a wider industrial network involving large manufacturers, SMEs and service providers. The development of human capital will also determine the long-term competitiveness of the sector.

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ART/LIFE



THE FRAME SHE ALWAYS IMAGINED: DUNIA 'S JOURNEY BEHIND THE LENS

> 20

THE MASTER **BUILDER**

DOCUMENTARY TURNS CAMERA ON ARCHITECT PETER ZUMTHOR



After decades of shunning glittering skyscrapers and corporate towers in favour of museums and memorials, Swiss architect Peter Zumthor is finally getting his moment in the limelight.

Zumthor, 83, is the focus of a new documentary by acclaimed German director Wim Wenders, released after the architect completed the biggest project of his career, the much-delayed LACMA art museum in Los Angeles.

Filmed in 3D, “From Inside Out: The Architecture of Peter Zumthor” offers an immersive tour through the limited number of buildings created by the architect, known for his meticulous and minimalist work.

His best-known projects include a thermal bath in Vals, Switzerland, a monument to women burned as witches in the Norwegian Arctic, and the amoeba-shaped LACMA building, which finally opened its doors this year after two decades of reflection and controversy.

“I don’t like to be a star architect, I like to make these artistic buildings”, Zumthor said at the Venice Film Festival, where the film premiered. “I’m glad if the client has the patience”.

Zumthor belongs to the same generation as Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, as well as Jean Nouvel, Rem Koolhaas and Norman Foster. While his peers have built across the world and expanded their practices internationally, Zumthor has remained in his home village of Haldenstein, gradually expanding his practice without leaving his mountainous Swiss surroundings.

“I can only do what I can control. I can work with a team of 20, maybe 30, that’s the maximum”, the 2009 Pritzker Prize winner said.

That approach means he turns down far more work than he accepts. He only takes on projects with a clear social purpose, such as museums, chapels and memorials; and has never designed a high-rise or commercial office.

Each project is unique, with as much as 80 per cent of its elements custom-made, from furniture to lighting. His aim is to create a particular feeling inside a building rather than simply an aesthetic.

Zumthor is equally attentive to context, seeking designs that complement their surroundings and appear, in his words, as “the completion of a landscape that wasn’t finished before”.

The son of a cabinet maker, he is uncompromising over details, ordering numerous samples and commissioning artisans to achieve precisely the finishes he envisions.

“My work resembles an artistic process. It’s almost the same”, he said. — **AFP**

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



ART

A gallery assistant poses with the painting “Nature morte a la cruche bleue” by Maurice de Vlaminck during a preview of Sotheby’s forthcoming Blaquier-Arrieta Collection sale.

— Reuters



TRAVEL

Travel blogger “Foxpresso” wears a fox character costume as they depart for Portland aboard Amtrak Cascades train 503 during the first day of service for Amtrak’s new Airo trainsets.

— Reuters



ANIMAL KINGDOM

A European swallowtail butterfly rests delicately on a cluster of purple lilac flowers in the garden of Mareil-Marly, France. — Reuters

INSTA PICKS



A beautiful Ruppell's Weaver



The green cliffs of Dhofar

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‘EXCEPTIONAL’ TURNER PAINTING SHOWN IN ROME BEFORE SALE



The “exceptional” Turner painting is J M W Turner’s 1836 masterpiece, Rome, from Mount Aventine, which was highlighted by Sotheby’s experts for its extraordinary, museum-quality preservation.

A particularly well-preserved painting of Rome by British artist J M W Turner went on display in the city on Tuesday for the first time ahead of its auction in December.

“Rome, From Mount Aventine”, first exhibited in 1836, has been sold only twice and still carries the artist’s fingerprints and hairs from his brush. “The paint is as fresh and as three-dimensional and as rich as it was the day that he applied it to the canvas”, Julian Gascoigne, Sotheby’s senior specialist in British paintings, said, describing it as an “exceptional painting”.

Presented at Rome’s Palazzo Rondinini, the work has never been re-lined or cleaned and remains on Turner’s original stretcher. He used techniques associated with watercolour painting in oil, applying translucent layers to create its distinctive hazy effect. The technique later influenced artists including Claude Monet and the French Impressionists, as

well as Mark Rothko, Gascoigne said.

The painting will remain in Rome for three days before travelling to Hong Kong and New York ahead of its London sale. Sotheby’s expects it to fetch around £50 million, potentially breaking Turner’s auction record, which was set by the same painting when it sold in 2014 for £30.3 million.

Commissioned by Turner’s friend and patron Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro of Novar, the painting was acquired in 1878 by Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery, who later became British prime minister. It remained with the Rosebery family until 2014.

Mario Tavella, chairman of Sotheby’s Europe, said he hoped the work would eventually enter a public museum. Asked about security following recent art thefts across Europe, he said all necessary precautions had been taken to protect the painting.

— AFP

SAINT LAURENT GOES FOR GOLD IN PARIS SHOW THAT MAY BE VACCARELLO’S FINALE



SAINT

Laurent creative director Anthony Vaccarello

unveiled a head-to-toe gold collection of slinky dresses and textured tailoring at Paris Fashion Week, marking a decade since his first show for the French fashion house.

The spring/summer 2027 collection, presented outdoors at the Trocadero fountain, came amidst reports that Vaccarello could be preparing to step down from his role at the label, which is owned by luxury group Kering.

A raised runway sat beneath a giant gold chandelier as models walked past in shimmering looks that emphasised Vaccarello’s signature mix of glamour, sharp tailoring and sensual silhouettes.

Gold dresses featured raised embroidery, while brocade skirts and jackets were paired with sharp collars. Gold trench coats

Anthony Vaccarello marked a decade at Saint Laurent with a dazzling Paris Fashion Week show, unveiling a gold-drenched collection of shimmering dresses, sharp tailoring and dramatic black gowns beneath the Eiffel Tower.

added structure to the collection, reinforcing its metallic theme and giving the show a distinctly theatrical atmosphere.

Behind the models, the Eiffel Tower appeared to glitter in the distance, adding another layer of spectacle to the outdoor presentation.

The star-studded front row included Blackpink singer Rosé, model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley and Oscar-winning actors Eddie Redmayne and Rami Malek.

As the show progressed, the palette shifted dramatically. The final looks featured sweeping black gowns with billowing sleeves and long trains, providing a striking contrast to the predominantly golden collection.

The presentation also included a musical performance by actress and singer Charlotte Gainsbourg, who performed in a classic Saint Laurent black suit before Vaccarello appeared to applause from the crowd,

smiling and waving.

Vaccarello joined Saint Laurent in 2016, succeeding Hedi Slimane as creative director and has been credited with expanding the label’s reach while maintaining its distinctive identity.

His decade at the house has coincided with significant changes in the luxury fashion industry, with Saint Laurent becoming one of Kering’s key brands.

The collection arrives as the company navigates a challenging period. Saint Laurent’s revenues fell 6% last year, although Kering said in July that the brand had returned to growth during the first half of the year.

The latest collection offered a fittingly dramatic celebration of Vaccarello’s 10 years at the house, combining gold, black, glamour and architectural tailoring against one of Paris’s most recognisable landmarks. — Reuters



BUTHAINA AL RIYAMI

AT 16, Dunia Sulaiman Almanji began nurturing a deep connection with photography, starting with nothing more than an iPhone 6 and an eye for the details others often overlooked.

An ordinary afternoon, a candid gesture or a small detail could become something beautiful in her eyes. She rarely let a moment pass without reaching for her phone.

Her passion for learning extended beyond capturing images. If a photograph did not match the picture she had imagined, she would edit it through one application after another until it reflected her vision.

“It was never about having one perfect app,” she recalls. “It was about the result I wanted, and I just had to find my way to it.”

With her family’s encouragement, photography gradually became more

than a hobby. She began a small personal project photographing products, children and everyday details.

A teacher, Khalood Al Habsi, who ran her school’s activities programme, also played an important role. She encouraged Dunia to enter a photography competition through the regional education directorate. Dunia entered without much expectation and placed among the top three.

“It wasn’t the result I was expecting at all,” she says. “But it told me this was something worth continuing.”

After turning 18, Dunia saved enough to buy her first camera. For her, it represented the first tangible piece of a passion she had built herself. But financial circumstances later forced her to sell it.

“I didn’t sell my will and passion to continue,” she says. “I went back to photographing with my phone.”

A NEW CHAPTER

In January 2024, Dunia took her first serious step into wedding photography, joining a photography team. One of

THE FRAME SHE ALWAYS IMAGINED: DUNIA’S JOURNEY BEHIND THE LENS



the conditions was owning a camera, which she received as a gift, marking a turning point in her journey.

However, difficulties with shared equipment eventually led her to leave the team.

Under its membership terms, work she had delivered could not be published under her own name, leaving her without a portfolio to present to future clients.

“I kept asking myself: how do I build trust with clients from zero, with no portfolio behind me?” she recalls.

Then came the opportunity that changed everything.

After starting independently, Dunia received her first wedding booking almost by accident. The bride had originally booked the team Dunia had left, but less than 24 hours before the wedding, the team cancelled. A former colleague recommended Dunia.

With the help of her sister, who assisted with equipment, and a relative who lent her a car, Dunia managed to prepare for the wedding within hours.

“I kept asking myself if I was really capable of carrying that responsibility,” she says.

She delivered the wedding as the bride had hoped.

“I hope that whenever anyone asks her about her wedding, she remembers it fondly,” Dunia says. “And I hope she remembers me kindly too.”

That single booking opened the door to more. Brides began recommending her to their sisters, cousins and friends, allowing her business to grow one wedding at a time.

Looking back, Dunia says her progress was never defined by equipment or a team’s name, but by her willingness to continue.

“Real passion isn’t the good feeling that makes you start,” she reflects. “It’s the persistence that brings you back after every setback and makes you begin again even in the moments you’re sure you’re about to lose everything.”

Fear, she says, was always present, but she never allowed it to decide the future of her career.