

OMAN
Observer
DAILY



VOL. 44, NO. 323
PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

SUNRISE 05:59 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR 04:41 AM
DHUHR 11:56 PM
ASR 03:19 PM
MAGHRIB 05:53 PM
ISHA 07:23 PM



12

SINNER THRASHES
TIEN TO WIN CHINA
OPEN FOR 21ST TITLE

INBRIEF

42 NEW SCHOOLS TO
COME UP IN OMAN

The Tender Board approved RO 279 million worth of tenders for new projects and additional works to development projects in various fields at its third meeting for this year, chaired by Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy and Chairman of the Tender Board, on Wednesday. The projects approved by the Tender Board included the design and construction of 42 integrated schools in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, at a cost of RO 89,720,93. Tenders were also awarded for the remaining work on the Adam-Thamrait Road dualisation project, among others.

10 NEW AIR QUALITY
STATIONS THIS YEAR

As many as 56 air quality monitoring stations distributed across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman are operational, tracking meteorological variables such as temperature, humidity, wind speed and rainfall. The Environment Authority aims to install 10 new stations by the end of 2025, forming an integrated network of ambient air quality monitoring stations. These stations operate around the clock using internationally certified advanced analytical devices to monitor key pollutants, including Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ground-level Ozone (O₃) and Non-Methane Hydrocarbons. **DETAILS ON P3**

STONE LAID FOR
INNOVATION CENTRE

Sohar University held a ceremony to lay the foundation stone for a building that will house its Innovation Centre on Wednesday. The ceremony also saw the signing of agreements in the fields of research, technology and innovation. The event was held under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in the presence of Dr Abdulrahman Ibrahim Almedaires, Director-General of the Unesco Regional Centre for Quality and Excellence in Education. Dr Hamdan al Fazari, Vice-Chancellor of Sohar University, said that the centre's construction, which will cost RO 4 million, is being carried out with support from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. **DETAILS ON P2**

Oman ranks high in combating human trafficking

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has maintained its position in international indicators for combating human trafficking, according to international reports, as a result of the government's continuous efforts in this field. In a qualitative step that reinforces this approach, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 78/2025 last September, promulgating

the Anti-Human Trafficking Law, which aligns with relevant international standards. The new law aims to protect victims by exempting them from fees and fines related to residency and work, ensuring they are not held accountable for actions associated with their status as victims, and providing care and support through the establishment of specialised protection shelters

that offer legal, psychological, and medical support, guarantee freedom of movement and safe housing, and impose stricter penalties, including imprisonment of up to 15 years and fines of up to RO 100,000 in aggravated cases. The law also aims to criminalise accompanying practices, such as withholding or destroying victims' passports for coercive purposes, and to enhance international

cooperation in mutual legal assistance, extradition, and the exchange of information and expertise. Additionally, it assigns national coordination to the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, under the Foreign Ministry, to unify efforts, develop national plans and build specialised databases. **TURN TO P5**

46 dead in Gaza as Israeli
army steps up offensive

TRUMP PLEDGES US WILL DEFEND QATAR IN EVENT OF ATTACK

GAZA'S civil defence agency said on Wednesday that Israeli forces had killed at least 46 people, including 36 in Gaza City, which Israel's defence minister has told residents to flee. Mahmud Bassal, a spokesman for the rescue agency, said several deaths resulted from attacks in the north of the territory, to the west of Gaza City. Drone strikes also killed two people in Al Zawayda and two people at a camp in Nuseirat, both in central Gaza, Bassal added. Two aid seekers were killed by Israeli gunfire southwest of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, he said. The Israeli army has pursued an offensive against Gaza City since September 16. The strikes come as Defence Minister Israel Katz warned the military was tightening its encirclement of Gaza City, telling residents to flee south, as Hamas weighs US President Donald Trump's plan to end nearly two years of war in the Palestinian territory. Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump has pledged to treat any armed attack on Qatar as a threat to the United States' own security, according to a document published on Wednesday that says US forces could step in to defend the Middle Eastern nation. The executive order — which appears to significantly deepen the US commitment to its Middle East ally — comes after Israel last month attempted to kill leaders of Hamas with an air strike on Doha. That strike, launched with little advance notice to the

A girl looks out of a car window while Palestinians carrying belongings arrive on a coastal path northwest of Nuseirat refugee camp on Wednesday. — AFP

In the event of any attack, the United States shall take all lawful and appropriate measures to defend the interests of the US and of the State of Qatar

Trump administration, caused consternation in Washington, given the close US relationship with Qatar. The document was dated on Monday, the day Trump hosted Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House and presented a proposal for ending the war in Gaza. Qatar has been a key mediator between the US and Israel and Hamas over the war. "The United States shall regard any armed attack on the territory, sovereignty, or critical infrastructure of the State of Qatar

as a threat to the peace and security of the United States," the order said. "In the event of such an attack, the United States shall take all lawful and appropriate measures — including diplomatic, economic and, if necessary, military - to defend the interests of the United States and of the State of Qatar and to restore peace and stability." The document said top US defence and intelligence officials will maintain contingency planning with Qatar to ensure a rapid response to any attacks. — AFP

Deal inked to establish Oman-Saudi company named 'G7'

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to establish an Omani-Saudi company in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the name 'G7', managed by the Serapis Entertainment Group. The company aims to promote tourism services, market brands and commercial franchises, and organise conferences, exhibitions, events and international festivals. The signing ceremony was held on the sidelines of the Omani-

Saudi Business Forum, held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, which reviewed the existing potentials and investment opportunities to enhance economic cooperation between the two countries. The forum is part of the activities of the Omani-Saudi Franchise Exhibition, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in cooperation with the Federation of Saudi Chambers.

Officials signing the agreement on Wednesday.

The forum featured several visual presentations from the Omani side, covering the services and programmes provided by the OCCI to support the business community, the key advantages and incentives offered by the 'Invest Oman' platform for investors, the most promising investment opportunities in vital sectors presented by Oman Investment Authority, in addition to highlighting the integrated infrastructure and support services

for attracting industrial investments in the industrial cities affiliated to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn). The forum included a dialogue session titled 'The Reality and Prospects of Economic Integration and Cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia', with the participation of some officials, business owners and specialists. — ONA



Experience Better

Their future starts today!

Change to AWASR, Fastest Internet In Oman



Get Ashel Educational Platform for free!



Unlimited data for all plans





SUBSCRIBE NOW!
WhatsApp
80001000
Website: [awasr.om](#)

SHORTTAKES

The session was aimed to ensure comprehensiveness and integration. — ONA

HEALTH MINISTRY
HOLDS SESSION ON
NCD CONTROL POLICY

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health on Wednesday organised a consultative session to update the National Policy for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases.

The session, which saw the participation of representatives of different sectors, was aimed to ensure comprehensiveness and integration, identify gaps and national priorities and exchange views about standard methods of governance, evaluation, and follow-up mechanisms.

Her Highness Sayyidah Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for International Cooperation at SQU (Chairperson of the National Committee for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases), outlined the progress made by the Sultanate of Oman in the field of non-communicable diseases. She stressed the need to consolidate cooperation and teamwork towards the realisation of the goals of the policy.

Dr Ahmed bin Salim al Mandhari, Under-Secretary of the MoH for Planning and Health Regulation, gave an overview of the National Policy for Non-Communicable Diseases. — ONA

ARCHITECTURAL
INNOVATION AWARDS
ANNOUNCED

'Reflection Project' won first place. — ONA

IBRA: The Al Sharqiyah North Governorate on Wednesday announced the results of the Architectural Innovation Award in its first edition during a forum dedicated to evaluating initiatives, which included development designs for the wilayats of Ibra, Al Mudhaibi, Bidiyah and Sinaw.

The design titled "Reflection Project" won first place in the award dedicated to the designs submitted to develop the entrance of the Wilayat of Ibra. For the designs submitted to develop the entrance of the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi, the "Smart Oasis" project design won first place.

In the category for developing the Wilayat of Bidiyah, the project design titled "Bidiyah Window" won first place. As for the Wilayat of Sinaw, the "Green Path" project design won first place.

It is worth noting that the Al Sharqiyah North Architectural Innovation Award aims to invest in the energies and creativity of youth, employ innovative architectural designs to develop the entrances of the wilayats, and create vibrant public spaces according to precise environmental, economic and social sustainability standards. — ONA

EMPLOY OFFICERS TO COMBAT MONEY LAUNDERING

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

In an effort to combat money laundering and terrorist financing in the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has issued a warning to all licensed establishments in the precious metals and precious stones trade sector. They are required to immediately employ a compliance officer responsible for ensuring adherence to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Law. This measure is

mandatory and aims to enhance oversight of the sector in line with international standards.

The ministry aims to activate an oversight system to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, supervising institutions based on a risk-based approach. This ensures more effective oversight and allocation of resources to high-risk institutions.

Abdul Hamid bin Mubarak al Shaidi, an anti-money laundering specialist at the ministry, emphasised the need for establishments in the sector to appoint an employee responsible

for compliance monitoring. This employee acts as a link between the ministry and the establishment, receiving training on suspicious transaction reporting indicators and utilising the reporting platform.

Establishments should provide employee details to aml@tejarah.gov.om or contact the Anti-Money Laundering Department for inquiries. Efforts continue to raise awareness of the risks of money laundering to the national economy, with cooperation from relevant authorities.

The National Committee for

Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing is responsible for developing and implementing a national strategy to combat these crimes, studying international treaties and making recommendations.

Employing a legal compliance officer is crucial for integrity and transparency in the precious metals and gemstones sector, safeguarding against suspicious transactions and violations of laws.

This measure also protects businesses, investors, and ensures smooth financial and commercial transactions.

Sohar University to get
RO 4m Innovation Centre

SOHAR University held a ceremony to lay the foundation stone for a building that will house its Innovation Centre on Wednesday. The ceremony also saw the signing of agreements in the fields of research, technology and innovation.

The event was held under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in the presence of Dr Abdulrahman Ibrahim Almedaires, Director-General of the Unesco Regional Centre for Quality and Excellence in Education.

Dr Hamdan al Fazari, Vice-Chancellor of Sohar University, said that the centre's construction, which will cost RO 4 million, is being carried out with support from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The building will occupy a total area of 17,457 square metres and will comprise specialised labs, a patent office and an international business accelerator, Al Fazari added.

He pointed out that the centre's construction reflects the university's efforts to support research and entrepreneurship, foster a culture of creativity and support researchers and students in their bids to convert their ideas into products and services of economic value.

Al Fazari explained that, by setting up the innovation centre, the university

The building will occupy a total area of 17,457 square metres and will comprise specialised labs, a patent office and an international business accelerator. — ONA

seeks to establish an environment that would facilitate the transfer of knowledge, technology and ideas from the academic domain to the industrial domain, with the prime objective of boosting the national economy and meeting the needs of society.

He added that the centre will provide advanced laboratories, business incubators and innovation spaces that will enable students and researchers to convert their ideas into projects with economic and societal value.

The innovation centre at Sohar University is considered a pioneering step in supporting research and innovation — the first of its kind in private higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

The ceremony saw the inauguration of a 'Research Chair in Emerging Renewable and Sustainable Energy Technologies', in addition to the signing of agreements with Ooredoo and the Unesco Regional Centre for Quality and Excellence in Education. — ONA

Oman, Saudi sign MoU on endowment tie-up

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Muscat aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation in the endowment sector.

The signing of the MoU comes within the framework of the strong fraternal relations between the two countries and their mutual commitment to exchanging expertise and improving endowment performance to serve shared interests.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the Sultanate of Oman by Ahmed bin Saleh al Rashdi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, and on behalf of the Saudi side by Emad bin Saleh al Kharashi, Governor of the General Authority of Awqaf of Saudi Arabia.

The MoU aims to activate cooperation

Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari with Emad bin Saleh al Kharashi in Muscat on Wednesday

between the two sides in the areas of exchanging scientific and practical expertise in endowment affairs, documentation, and enhancing the role of

endowments in community and economic development. It also covers the exchange of experiences related to endowment systems. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



The two sides exchanged views on joint GCC military cooperation. — ONA

GCC COMMANDER MEETS OFFICIALS

MUSCAT: Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF), received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Wednesday Major General Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al Balawi, Commander of the GCC Unified Military Command.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views and discussed a number of topics that enhance joint GCC military cooperation.

Air Vice Marshal Khamis bin Hammad al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), also received Major General Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al Balawi at his office in Muaskar Al Murtafaa. The two sides exchanged views and discussed several military topics of mutual interest.

Meanwhile, Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), received Major General Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al Balawi at his office in Muaskar Al Murtafaa. During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed a number of topics that will strengthen joint GCC military cooperation, particularly in the maritime fields. — ONA

OMAN NAMED CAC COORDINATOR



The unanimous vote reflects global appreciation for Oman’s central role in enhancing food safety. — ONA

MUSCAT: For the second year in a row, the Sultanate of Oman has been elected as Near East Regional Coordinator at the international food standards body Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

Oman was elected to the position during the 12th meeting of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The unanimous vote reflects global appreciation for Oman’s central role in enhancing food safety and quality systems. It affirms Oman’s dedicated efforts to support technical cooperation and unify regional positions within CAC. — ONA

Conference discusses empowering creators with AI tools

IDRIS AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

The Digital Content Conference with AI concluded on Tuesday at the Civil Aviation Authority Hall, featuring a massive list of experts and a wide audience of technology and AI enthusiasts.

The conference will be followed by a special two-day workshop at the Oman Across Ages Museum, offering students, designers and AI enthusiasts the opportunity to explore creative content production with artificial intelligence.

The event included panel discussions, workshops and knowledge-sharing sessions

aimed at keeping pace with global technological transformations.

On its second day, the conference announced the winners of two competitions launched on the opening day: the AI Content Creation Competition and the Best Arab Influencers in AI Content Creation Award. The programme featured specialised sessions, including a talk on AI-generated sound design and audio effects by Dr Taha Hussein, a session on AI in marketing by Fadia Nagah, a lecture on visual effects with AI by Mohammed Mamdouh, and a discussion on the ethics of AI-driven digital content creation presented by Mohammed el Daly.

At its core, the conference focused



The conference will be followed by a special two-day workshop at the Oman Across Ages Museum

on empowering creators with AI tools for video editing, image generation, character design, visual effects and automated scriptwriting, helping to accelerate creative production and to reduce time

and effort in editing and design. Attendees were also introduced to new horizons in innovation, enhanced audiovisual experiences through improved image and sound quality, and real-time translation.

The conference further highlighted opportunities for entrepreneurship through digital production projects and AI-driven creative agencies, while dedicating space to discuss ethical and legal dimensions, particularly intellectual property rights in the use of AI technologies.

Speaking to the Observer, Qasim al Ghafri, an undergraduate student studying robotic engineering, stated that the conference provided

invaluable insights into the use of artificial intelligence in digital content creation.

Ibtisam al Rawahi, a computer engineering graduate, noted that the conference provided a great wealth of practical knowledge in artificial intelligence which contributes largely to enable job-seekers and better their chances at landing jobs.

Similarly, Mohammed el Daly, director of advertisements and motion graphic designer, explained that the integration of artificial intelligence has become an essential requirement for all demographics, especially the youth who are tasked with the responsibility of keeping up with the latest technological trends.

TWO DIE FROM CONTAMINATED BOTTLED WATER

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 1

A male citizen and an expatriate woman died after they consumed bottled water of a particular brand. The Royal Oman Police confirmed that the citizen who was exposed to the poisoning incident passed away shortly before it released the first statement about the death of an expatriate woman.

Alerting the residents and citizens of the Al Batinah North

Governorate, the Royal Oman Police said that it dealt with an incident of poisoning involving an Omani family and an expatriate woman in the Wilayat of Al Suwaiq on September 29.

The incident occurred as a result of drinking bottled water originating from the Islamic Republic of Iran and bearing the ‘Uranus Star’ trademark. The incident led to the death of the expatriate woman and the transfer of the citizen to the



The incident occurred as a result of drinking bottled water originating from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

hospital in critical condition. Upon receiving the report, the Royal Oman Police coordinated with all relevant authorities, took samples of the water, and conducted the necessary tests. The results of these tests showed that the water was contaminated.

Accordingly, the authorities began withdrawing all bottles of the same brand from local markets.

The authorities have banned the import of all types of bottled water from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Domestic helpers to come under wage protection

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

THE Ministry of Labour has taken many steps to ensure that domestic workers are timely paid and enjoy basic human rights. Going forward, the ministry plans to integrate this group into the wage protection system to ensure transparency and reduce disputes. This will enhance the confidence of expat workers in Oman, its competitiveness in attracting skilled workers and strengthening its international reputation.

Maids, nannies, drivers and gardeners are an integral part of many Omani households. Hence, it is essential to ensure decent working conditions that respect dignity and shield them from all types of exploitation. Thus, fairness in contractual relations becomes a social investment that contributes to strengthening the national fabric. Household workers must be provided adequate housing, healthcare and food. Their passports must not be withheld to restrict freedom of movement.

Modernising legislation related to domestic workers also places Oman in an advanced position in terms of compliance with ILO standards and relevant



Maids, nannies, drivers and gardeners are an integral part of many Omani households.

international conventions. This compliance also opens the door to strengthening its bilateral relations with labour-exporting countries by guaranteeing the rights of their citizens working in Oman.

Nevertheless, challenges remain, most notably the need for oversight mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions and monitoring recruitment firms to stop illegal practices. Furthermore,

awareness programmes targeting families and employers are essential to instilling a culture of mutual rights and responsibilities.

The ministry is guided by the fact that social justice is not just a slogan. Caring for domestic workers is not merely regulating a limited employment relationship, but rather a reflection of a civilised vision that affirms that true development can only be achieved when justice extends to all groups.

EA to set up 10 air quality stations by year-end

MUSCAT: As many as 56 air quality monitoring stations distributed across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman are operational, tracking meteorological variables such as temperature, humidity, wind speed and rainfall.

The Environment Authority aims to install 10 new stations by the end of 2025, forming an integrated network of ambient air quality monitoring stations. These stations operate around the clock using internationally certified advanced analytical devices to monitor key pollutants, including Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ground-level Ozone (O₃) and Non-Methane Hydrocarbons (NMHC).

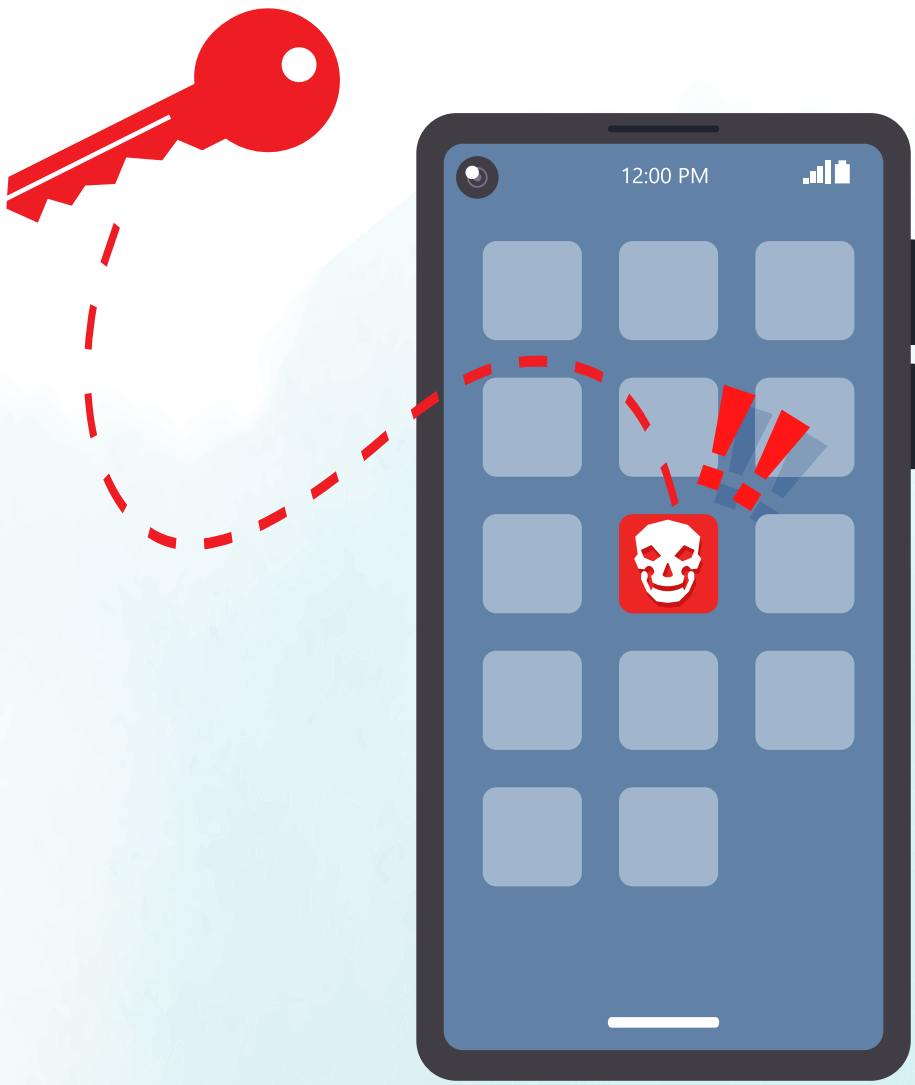


These stations provide accurate, real-time data that supports environmental and health decision-making. - ONA

These stations provide accurate, real-time data that supports environmental and health decision-making in collaboration with government and private entities. The data is published via the “Naqi” or “Pure” application, a digital platform that provides indicators of air pollutant concentrations through interactive maps and a colour-coded system illustrating pollution levels (from green for good to dark purple for hazardous).

The platform displays health recommendations and alerts about pollution levels, and integrates meteorological data such as temperature and wind direction. It is available in both Arabic and English to broaden its user base, serving as an effective tool for enhancing awareness and supporting research and planning. — ONA

SPOTLIGHT



BEWARE OF FAKE APPS

KABEER
YOUSUF
MUSCAT, OCT 1

BEWARE

of seemingly innocuous emails and messages to share the screen or to download mobile application for new services or entertainment or promises of quick money. The aim of these scamsters is either to steal your personal information to get into your bank account or directly steal money, warn experts. These tricks have an added sophistication with the emergence of artificial intelligence.

Unauthorised online games and mobile applications prey on the gullible public's aspirations, ultimately depriving them of their hard-earned money.

These platforms, often operating without any regulatory approval, present themselves as harmless games or "reward-based" apps. They entice users with promises of quick returns, virtual rewards, or cash prizes. In reality, their core objective is not to provide entertainment or genuine services but to orchestrate financial scams on a mass scale.

Some tricksters pose as company representative and asks you to download an app or allow a remote access or screen-sharing application.

As you download the app and start using it, the fraudster gets full control and access to your information.

"Always remember that the banker would never ask you to download any third-party remote access or screen sharing application and nor should you respond to any call or

DOWNLOADING UNVERIFIED APPS OR SHARING SCREEN TO UNAUTHORISED PERSONS MAY COST YOUR MONEY

SMS or e-mail asking you to download any app in order to assist you online or to update documents," warns an official with a leading bank.

"This screen sharing fraud is one of the newer tricks scammers are using to steal personal and financial information. What they do is that they usually convince people to download third-party apps that give them full control over the phone, tablet and/or your laptop/desktop, letting them access sensitive data and even banking accounts," said Tariq al Barwani, Knowledge Oman Founder and ICT Expert.

He shared a simple precaution. "Never share your screen or give remote access to anyone, especially if they claim to be from the bank. Only download apps from official app stores; and always be cautious if someone pressures you to act quickly. Banks will never ask for your PIN, passwords, or OTP, so if you get a suspicious request, hang up and contact your bank directly through official channels. Staying alert and a little sceptical can save you from big losses," Al Barwani adds.

Never share one's credit card details like expiry date, CVV, OTP, PIN with anyone. One should contact the bank to verify the message or calls and alert the bank in case of suspicion.

If an app or game asks for money with the promise of high returns, it is almost certainly a scam. Never download by clicking links or through scanning QR codes. The digital world harbours predators waiting to exploit trust and ignorance. Stay vigilant to escape from digital theft.

SHORT TAKES



Environment Authority continues to implement programmes and initiatives aimed at raising environmental awarenesses. — ONA

ARABIAN GAZELLE
SYMBOLISES
SUSTAINABILITY

IBRI: The Al Dhahirah Reserve stands out as one of the most prominent environmental sites in the Sultanate of Oman, rich in biodiversity that includes a number of rare creatures. Among them is the Arabian Gazelle, which embodies a symbol of environmental sustainability and the ability of living organisms to adapt to harsh desert environments.

The Arabian Gazelle is distinguished by its ability to coexist with water scarcity and high temperatures, making it an integral part of the Omani environment throughout the ages. However, this endangered animal faces several challenges, most notably illegal hunting and the shrinking of its natural habitats.

The Arabian Gazelle is distinguished by its ability to coexist with water scarcity and high temperatures, making it an integral part of the Omani environment throughout the ages. However, this endangered animal faces several challenges, most notably illegal hunting and the shrinking of its natural habitats.

In line with its commitment to sustainability, the Environment Authority continues to implement programmes and

initiatives aimed at raising environmental awareness among community members and enhancing their participation in protecting natural resources.

It is noteworthy that the presence of the Arabian Gazelle in the Al Dhahirah Reserve not only represents environmental value, but is also a national heritage that reflects the Omani people’s connection to their environment.

Preserving it today is an investment in a more balanced future, ensuring that future generations witness the harmony between humans and nature. — ONA

PILOT LAUNCH OF UNIFIED GCC TOURIST VISA THIS YEAR

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, OCT 1

The pilot launch of the Unified GCC Tourist Visa will be launched within the fourth quarter of 2025, according to reports quoting the UAE Minister of Economy and Tourism. Abdulla bin Touq al Marri, who is also chairman of the Emirates Tourism Council, said that

the Unified GCC Tourist Visa will be a strategic step towards enhancing tourism integration among the member countries and will constitute a qualitative shift in the tourism sector at the regional level. He said that while the pilot launch of this visa is expected to take place in the fourth quarter of 2025, the full implementation may be a bit later. The reports also

quoted him as saying that the UAE received 3.3 million GCC visitors in 2024, accounting for 11 per cent of the total hotel guests in the country, including 777,000 from Oman. The Sultanate of Oman received a total of 3.89 million visitors by the end of December 2024, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). According to NCSI’s report,

visitors from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) topped the list at 1,185,880 visitors, followed by 623,623 Indian visitors. The Unified GCC Tourist Visa or the GCC Grand Tours Visa will make it convenient for non-nationals living in Gulf countries to explore other countries in the region without needing to obtain separate visas.

Al Sharqiyah South lays
out 2026-30 digital plan

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

In a clear demonstration of its commitment to accelerating digital transformation, the Governorate of Al Sharqiyah South held a meeting of its Supervisory Team for Digital Transformation, chaired remotely by Dr Yahya bin Badr al Maawali, Governor of Al Sharqiyah South. The session reviewed the achievements of the governorate’s Digital Transformation Plan (2023–2025) and endorsed the framework for the next phase (2026–2030).

This strategic step aligns with the national priorities of Oman Vision 2040, which positions digital transformation at the heart of Oman’s future, aiming to build an agile digital government and a knowledge-based economy powered by technology and innovation.

During the meeting, Abdullah bin Saif al Orahimi, Head of the Digital Transformation Team at the Governorate, presented a comprehensive report highlighting key achievements across various domains. These included strengthening governance and information security, advancing initiatives in digitising the blue economy, and expanding work in infrastructure development and automation.

The presentation also underscored progress in enhancing



The session reviewed the achievements of the governorate’s Digital Transformation Plan (2023–2025).

The first phase of the plan marked a turning point in reshaping the way government services are delivered, both locally and nationally, while ensuring that initiatives are aligned with the broader national digital transformation agenda

digital platforms and raising user satisfaction levels with public services. According to Al Orahimi, the first phase of the plan marked a turning point in reshaping the way government services are delivered, both locally and nationally, while ensuring that initiatives are aligned with the broader national digital transformation agenda.

The discussions also paved the way for the next ambitious phase (2026–2030). Building on previous accomplishments, the upcoming plan will focus heavily on innovation and the adoption of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, and smart solutions across public services, mobility and community development.

Key proposed initiatives for this phase include further digitisation of critical economic sectors, particularly fisheries and tourism — two pillars of Al Sharqiyah South’s economy. Expanding the scope of e-government services to cater to all segments of society is also a top priority, with the goal of improving the overall quality of life for citizens and residents alike.

Participants reaffirmed that digital transformation is no longer a complementary option but a strategic imperative to realise Oman Vision 2040’s priorities. By promoting good governance, simplifying processes and leveraging technology to boost institutional performance, digital transformation is set to drive sustainable growth and modernise public administration.

Equally emphasised was the need for broad community engagement, as well as active participation from the private sector and academia in shaping and implementing digital programmes. With its rich economic, human and cultural resources, Al Sharqiyah South was described as well-positioned to serve as a national model for digital transformation, particularly in areas like the blue economy and sustainable tourism.

In his closing remarks, Al Maawali stressed that the governorate’s digital transformation journey is about shaping the future.

OMAN TOP IN COMBATING TRAFFICKING

FROM PAGE 1

Oman has continued to strengthen law enforcement through the investigation, prosecution and punishment of those involved in human trafficking crimes, including non-compliant employers and recruitment agencies, thereby reinforcing the principles of justice and accountability. Efforts have also expanded to proactively identify victims and provide them with necessary support without linking it to their participation in legal procedures, ensuring their care and human dignity. The National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking has enhanced the implementation of the national referral mechanism among various entities to ensure

a swift response to victims’ needs. Protection shelters have been established, operating on a victim-centred approach focused on trauma rehabilitation, while providing legal and psychological support and ensuring victims’ freedom of movement. Oman has intensified its efforts to combat illegal practices by

holding violators accountable and educating workers about their rights.

Oman is moving forward with the national campaign “Aman,” to raise awareness about the dangers of this crime and reporting mechanisms, ensuring that rights are preserved and protected. — ONA

Public Tender at
Buraimi Industrial City

مدائن
madayn

Buraimi Industrial City announces the launch of a public tender for the project titled: **"Rain Damage Maintenance in the Industrial City"**, Interested parties wishing to participate in this tender should take note of the following:

Tender No.	Project Name	Last Date to Purchase Tender Document	Submission Deadline	Tender Document Fee (OMR)
2/2025	Rain Damage Maintenance in the Industrial City	07/10/2025	16/10/2025	25

Tender Conditions:

1. Companies must be registered on the Masar platform and must hold a valid construction activity license in addition to having a supervising engineer.

2. Companies must hold a valid Riyada card.

3. Interested bidders may purchase the tender documents from the Support Department at Al Buraimi Industrial City during official working hours upon payment of the above-mentioned non-refundable fee. For inquiries, please contact: 25657768 / 25657764.

4. A site visit will be conducted to provide an overview of the project and its components at **10:00 AM on 09/10/2025**.

All bids must be submitted in full compliance with the tender document requirements and placed in the Tender Box at the Al Buraimi Industrial City Administration Office **no later than 12:00 PM on the submission deadline**.

@madaynoman

in

Twitter

Facebook

YouTube

Instagram

madayn.om

مَدَائِن

TENDER
NOTICE

وزارة الزراعة والسمكية وموارد المياه
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

وزارة الزراعة والسمكية وموارد المياه
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

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

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
321/2025/MAFWR/HQ-38 Recall - 1	PROVIDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF FISHERY HARBOURS	Thursday 25/9/2025	Thursday 9/10/2025	Wednesday 15/10/2025	Companies registered with First, Second	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
617/2025/MAFWR/HQ-69	SUPPLY OF SMART SCREENS AND 11 COMPUTERS	Monday 22/9/2025	Sunday 12/10/2025	Sunday 2/11/2025	SMEs companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, Fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
622/2025/MAFWR/HQ-70	PROVIDING CLEANING SERVICES FOR THE MINISTRY'S BUILDING AND ITS ANNEXED BUILDINGS FOR A PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS	Tuesday 23/9/2025	Sunday 5/10/2025	Monday 13/10/2025	Companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, Fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
633/2025/MAFWR/HQ-71	REHABILITATION OF THE SEEDS & PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES LABORATORY AT AL RUMAIS	Thursday 25/9/2025	Wednesday 15/10/2025	Monday 3/11/2025	SMEs companies registered with Third, Fourth grades	(10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

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

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

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

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

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

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

WORLD

WARSHIPSAPPROACH



A Palestinian girl sits amid debris at a United Nations school where displaced people were taking shelter, in Gaza City. — Reuters

ISRAELI VESSELS
INTIMIDATE GAZA
FLOTILLA BOATS

ROME: The international flotilla trying to deliver aid to Gaza said Israeli vessels approached some of its boats and engaged in “dangerous and intimidatory manoeuvres” on Wednesday as it neared the war-stricken strip. The mission’s organisers said two Israeli “warships” had approached fast and encircled two of the flotilla’s boats, Alma and Sirius. All navigation and communication devices went down in what one organiser on board, Thiago Ávila, described in a press conference as a “cyber attack”. The flotilla appeared to have recovered some communications. Israeli officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Global Sumud Flotilla consists of more than 40 civilian boats carrying about 500 people, among them parliamentarians, lawyers and activists including Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg. The mission is the latest sea-borne attempt to break Israel’s blockade of the Palestinian enclave to deliver food and medicine. It is currently within 120 nautical miles of Gaza’s coast, inside an area that Israel is policing to stop any boats approaching. It expects to arrive on Thursday morning if not intercepted. “These hostile actions placed unarmed civilians from over 40 countries in grave danger,” the flotilla said in a statement, adding that it will continue its course towards Gaza. It was not clear who operated the vessels that approached the flotilla. A video post on the flotilla’s Instagram page showed the silhouetted outline of what appeared to be a military vessel with a gun turret near the civilian boats. Reuters confirmed that the video was filmed from the vessel Sirius because its rigging and lines matched file imagery of the boat. Reuters could not confirm the identity of the other vessel in the video or when the video was taken. The flotilla has raised tensions in recent days since it was attacked by drones, which dropped stun grenades and itching powder on the vessels, causing damage but no injuries. Israel did not comment on that attack, but has said it will use any means to prevent the boats from reaching Gaza, arguing that its naval blockade is legal as it battles Hamas militants in the coastal enclave. Italy and Spain deployed naval ships to help with any rescue or humanitarian needs but have said they will not engage militarily. Turkish drones have also followed the boats. However, Italy and Spain said they would stop following the flotilla once it got within 150 nautical 278 km of Gaza for safety reasons. At the press conference held by organisers on Wednesday, Francesca Albanese, the top UN expert on Palestinian rights, said any interception of the flotilla “would be yet another violation of international law, the law of the sea” since Israel had no legal jurisdiction on waters off Gaza. Israel has imposed a naval blockade on Gaza since 2007 and there have been several previous attempts by activists to deliver aid to Gaza by sea. — Reuters

MADAGASCAR
ANTI-GOVT
PROTESTERS
CALL FOR
GENERAL
STRIKE

ANTANANARIVO: Anti-government protesters in Madagascar held fresh demonstrations on Wednesday and called for a general strike, seeking to force President Andry Rajoelina to step down, after nearly a week of action by the youth-led movement. Police shot tear gas at protesters in the centre of the capital Antananarivo, although life had mostly returned to normal in the rest of the city, according to journalists on the ground.

A crowd of several thousand people marched in the northern city of Antsiranana, calling for the president to resign, a local source said, while several hundred gathered in Toliara, in the south. Near-daily protests over misgovernance and water and power cuts began in Antananarivo on Thursday and spread to other cities across the Indian Ocean nation of almost 32 million people. Despite Rajoelina’s sacking of his government on Monday in a

bid to placate the unrest, anger was intensified by a heavy crackdown on protesters, which has left at least 22 dead and more than a hundred injured, according to the UN. The government has rejected the tally as unverified and “based on rumours or misinformation”. More than 10,000 people demonstrated and clashed with police in central Antananarivo on Tuesday, according to a security source, where protesters were once again called to convene. — AFP

Philippines hunts for more survivors after earthquake

RESCUE teams in the Philippines searched for survivors in mud and rubble

on Wednesday and authorities urged help for hospitals inundated with the injured after the deadliest earthquake in more than a decade killed at least 69 people. Authorities said they feared the eventual toll would be even higher from the shallow 6.9-magnitude earthquake, which struck in waters off the central holiday island of Cebu late on Tuesday. Buildings came crashing down, including a church that was more than 100 years old. Shops, homes and bridges were damaged across the island’s northern coast and power was cut. Aftershocks continued throughout Wednesday, as authorities set up mobile kitchens for hundreds of evacuees and raced to provide temporary power as night approached. Bodies covered in black sheets were carried on stretchers and placed side-by-side on the ground outside a hospital in Bogo, the worst-affected city, along the coast about 18 km from the epicentre. A man wept as he pulled back a plastic sheet and clutched the face of a dead relative. Civil defence teams were searching for signs of life beneath a landslide that had killed at least 14 people in the city. “As much as I would want to say there’s no more fatalities, the toll could still go up,” Cebu provincial information officer Ainjeliz Orong said of the landslide. Mark Ochea, a security guard, said he was working at a big fast food restaurant when one side of



A drone view shows rescue workers conducting a rescue operation in Bogo, Cebu, Philippines. — Reuters

Authorities said they feared the eventual toll would be even higher from the shallow 6.9-magnitude earthquake, which struck in waters off the central holiday island of Cebu. Buildings came crashing down, including a church that was more than 100 years old.

the building collapsed. “It’s a good thing that all of the people were all out front,” he said. “We’re still anxious ... we have even lost count of the number of aftershocks we’ve experienced and it’s been like that since last night.” Tricycle driver Sonny Cuse said the quake shook his home and he was relieved his family managed to flee in time. “We thought we could have died today, but we’re thankful that we are all safe. I’m thankful to the Lord,” he said. The quake was the country’s deadliest since at least 2013, when a 7.2-magnitude quake struck the neighbouring island of Bohol, killing 222 people. The Philippines sits on the Pacific “Ring of Fire” and experiences more than 800 quakes each year. There was no immediate figure on Wednesday for the number of people still missing. Authorities

said 186 people were injured and issued calls for medical volunteers to help hospitals. Heavy rain and the absence of power made the rescue more difficult. Earthquake monitoring agencies put the quake’s depth at around 10 km and recorded multiple aftershocks, the strongest with a magnitude of 6. There was no tsunami threat. Videos posted by local media showed people rushing out of their homes in Cebu, a 200 km-long island of 3.4 million people, as the ground shook and buildings collapsed. Huge cracks opened in roads and motorcyclists scrambled to safety on the rails of a bridge that shook rapidly from side to side. The coast guard deployed a vessel carrying doctors, nurses and other medical personnel bound for Bogo. The crew loaded boxes of medical supplies and sacks of equipment. — Reuters



TWO PULLED FROM INDONESIA SCHOOL COLLAPSE

SIDOARJO: Rescuers pulled two survivors from a collapsed school in Indonesia on Wednesday as frantic parents demanded that searchers speed up efforts to find dozens of children believed still trapped in the rubble two days on. Part of a multi-storey boarding school in Sidoarjo, Java, collapsed suddenly on Monday as students gathered for afternoon prayers. Four bodies have been retrieved and about 90 people are still missing. Rescuers retrieved two survivors on Wednesday, including a boy who was taken to the hospital with a head injury but was “in good condition”, said Emi Freezer of the National Search and Rescue Agency. Tearful parents milled near the ruins throughout Wednesday awaiting news. Based on school records, “91 people are suspected to be buried,” National Disaster and Mitigation Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement. — AFP

NETWORK SIGNALS RETURN

Afghanistan mobile and Internet restored



Mobile networks and the Internet were restored across Afghanistan on Wednesday, 48 hours after the Taliban authorities shut down telecommunications. Mobile phone signals and Wi-Fi had returned to provinces across the country, including Kandahar in the south, Khost in the east, central Ghazni and Herat in the west. On Wednesday night, hundreds of Afghans poured onto the streets in the capital Kabul, spreading the word that the Internet was back. — AFP

CONSTRUCTION ACCIDENT

Ethiopia church scaffold collapse kills 36



Makeshift scaffolding set up at a church in Ethiopia collapsed on Wednesday, killing at least 36 people and injuring more than 200. The incident occurred at around 7:45 am in the town of Arerti, roughly 70 kilometres east of the capital Addis Ababa. District police chief Ahmed Gebeyehu told state media Fana: “The number of dead has reached 36 and could increase more”, adding “more than 200 people have suffered injuries”. — AFP

COMBINED SUCCESS

US and allies reduce forces in Iraq



US and allied forces are reducing their presence in Iraq, the Pentagon said, winding down a more than decade-long mission there against the IS group as planned. “This reduction reflects our combined success in fighting IS and marks an effort to transition to a lasting US-Iraq security partnership,” Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said. “The US government will continue close coordination with the government of Iraq and coalition members to ensure a responsible transition”. — AFP

EXTENDED WORK



People march during a demonstration marking general strike, in Athens, Greece. — Reuters

THOUSANDS PROTEST IN GREECE OVER 13-HOUR WORKDAY

ATHENS: Thousands of Greek workers prompted large-scale disruption during a 24-hour general strike on Wednesday, protesting against the conservative government’s plans to introduce a 13-hour work day. The strike has disrupted transport in the capital Athens and the second-largest city Thessaloniki, trains and ferry services, while teachers, hospital staff and civil servants are also taking part. Police said over 8,000 people in Athens and Thessaloniki were protesting against reforms proposed by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis’s conservative government. Other major cities also saw demonstrations.

“With this law, workers will no longer have a private life and for what? To satisfy employers and increase their profits!” Notis Skouras, a member of the hairdressers’ union, said in the capital. The main private sector union GSEE, which is leading the walkout alongside public sector union ADEDY, has said the reform “endangers the health and safety of workers and destroys the balance between professional and personal life”.

Pro-communist union PAME has accused the government of seeking to introduce “modern slavery” for workers and force them to endure “inhumane hours and miserable wages”. “This law will not improve anything,” said Panagiotis Gakas, a member of the construction workers’ union. “Workplace accidents often occur during overtime hours when workers are exhausted,” the 59-year-old said, noting that the union has already recorded 20 fatal working accidents in its sector.

The bill, which has not yet been submitted to parliament, allows staff to work 13 hours a day for the same employer under exceptional circumstances, for extra pay.

In a country where the economy has recovered since the debt crisis but remains fragile, this possibility already exists, but only if an employee has two or more employers.

Mitsotakis, in power since 2019, has noted that many young people currently have two jobs and want to work more to earn more.

“We guarantee a freedom of choice for both the employer and the employee. Why would that be antisocial?” he said earlier this month. Labour Minister Niki Kerameus has stressed the measure is “exceptional” and will in no way be generalised. “It is a provision... valid for up to 37 days per year... only with the employee’s consent and with 40 per cent increased pay,” she said. — AFP

POLAND TO EXTEND GERMAN BORDER CHECKS UNTIL APRIL 2026

WARSAW: Poland on Wednesday said it would extend temporary checks along its borders with Germany and Lithuania by a further six months, until April 4 next year. Border checks had been reinstated in July, with the Polish government justifying the measure as a way to combat irregular migration. Warsaw had accused Berlin, which reintroduced checks along their shared border in 2023, of sending migrants back towards

Poland — an accusation Germany denies. “We are extending border controls with Germany and Lithuania to monitor the migration route originating from the Baltic states, passing through Poland, and leading to Western Europe,” Polish Interior Minister Marcin Kierwinski stated in a statement. “We are intercepting individuals attempting to illegally transport migrants to the West,” he said. The minister also referenced “persistent migratory pressure”

on the border with Belarus, a country Warsaw accuses of instrumentalising migration to destabilise the region. “During the first eight months of 2025, nearly 25,000 illegal crossing attempts were recorded at the Polish-Belarusian border,” according to the statement. Over the same period, Polish border guards detained 2,400 people attempting to cross the Polish-German border irregularly in both directions. — AFP

Denmark warns Europe over Russia ‘hybrid war’

DANISH premier Mette Frederiksen on Wednesday urged Europe to step up its response to Russia’s “hybrid war”, as she hosted EU leaders for defence talks held under tight security following mystery drone flights. Thousands of police were on alert, civilian drones banned and reinforcements deployed from Nato allies to help protect the summit at the grand Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen. “I hope that everybody recognises now that there is a hybrid war,” Frederiksen said. Denmark — which holds the EU’s rotating presidency — has been rattled in recent days as unidentified drones shut down airports and flew near military sites. Suspicions have pointed at Russia — but so far no culprit has been definitively named. Nonetheless the drone incidents have sharpened the focus on chinks in Europe’s defences, after high-profile air incursions by Moscow in Poland and Estonia. “We face the greatest security challenge since the end of the Second World War,” Frederiksen said.

EU leaders in the Danish capital were pressing to flesh out details for priority defence projects, including a “drone wall” aimed at countering Russia’s threat. “It’s a pattern, and this pattern is coming from Russia,” European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told reporters. “Russia tries to test us, but Russia also tries to sow division and anxiety in our societies. We will not let this happen.”

The EU says it wants to build a system of defences to detect, and ultimately take down, drones. The bloc is looking to tap the war-tested expertise of Ukraine, whose President Volodymyr Zelensky will join for a broader gathering of European leaders on Thursday.

Wednesday’s discussion was the latest step in the EU’s efforts to get ready for a potential conflict with Russia by 2030 — as warnings swirl Moscow could look to attack in the coming years. “We are in a confrontation with Russia,” French President Emmanuel Macron said, pointing at Moscow’s disinformation campaigns, cyber attacks and airspace violations.



Danish police officers patrol on a boat in an area near the Christiansborg Palace, in Copenhagen. — AFP

The 27-nation bloc has already come up with a 150-billion-euro loan scheme to help fund defence spending, with the lion’s share being snapped up by eastern countries. Brussels has proposed countries now club together on four “flagship” projects — the drone wall, securing the eastern flank, missile defences and a space “shield”. But while the EU looks to prepare for a possible future war, a crucial pressing issue is how to help finance Ukraine as it tackles Moscow’s ongoing attack. Leaders were picking over a proposal from Brussels to use frozen Russian central bank assets to fund a new 140-billion-euro loan for Kyiv. “Russia is causing tremendous damage in Ukraine right now, and it is not right that anybody else should pay for it other than Russia,” said EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas.

As US support for Ukraine has dried up under Trump, the plan last week won the backing of a key powerbroker,

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. But some countries remain sceptical, despite insistence from others that it is crucial to help Kyiv plug looming budget shortfalls. Luxembourg’s Prime Minister Luc Frieden said the plan raised a “whole series of questions, and I would like to have answers to those first.” “All proposals are welcome, but we must first ensure that they work in practice,” he said. Beyond the push to keep Ukraine going financially, officials are also trying to keep Kyiv’s bid to join the EU on track despite a block from Hungarian leader Viktor Orban. European Council chief Antonio Costa, who chairs the summit, has been canvassing support for a plan that would mean countries cannot veto each new step of talks. But Orban appeared to pour cold water on the project as he gave a firm “no” when asked if Ukraine had any prospects of joining the bloc. — AFP

US govt shutdown begins after Congress fails to reach deal

WASHINGTON: The US government began shutting down on Wednesday after lawmakers and President Donald Trump failed to break a budget impasse during acrimonious talks that hinged on Democratic demands for health care funding. Republicans and Democrats immediately blamed each other for the deadlock that will impact hundreds of thousands of government workers and the millions of Americans who use the services they provide. The shutdown, which will stop work at multiple federal departments and agencies, comes as deep partisan divisions in Washington have raised fears over the length and consequences of the halt. Trump threatened to punish Democrats and their voters by targeting progressive priorities and forcing mass public sector job cuts during the first stoppage since the one during his previous term. “So

we’d be laying off a lot of people that are going to be very affected. And they’re Democrats, they’re going to be Democrats,” Trump told reporters, adding a “lot of good can come down from shutdowns.” Multiple US embassies announced on X that their accounts would only be updated with “urgent safety and security information”, while Nasa said it was “CLOSED due to a lapse in Government funding.” Government operations began grinding to a halt at 12:01 am on Wednesday, after a frenetic but ultimately failed bid in the Senate to rubber-stamp a short-term funding resolution already approved by the House of Representatives. Democratic leaders Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries said in a statement that “Trump and Republicans have now shut down the federal government because they do not want to protect the health care of the American



Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Republican of South Dakota speaks at the US Capitol in Washington, DC. — AFP

people.” “Democrats remain ready to find a bipartisan path forward to reopen the government”, but will need a “credible partner,” said the statement published just after the deadline passed. The shutdown will not affect vital functions like the Postal Service, the

military and welfare programmes like Social Security and food stamps. But up to 750,000 workers could be sent home each day and would not be paid until the shutdown was over, according to the Congressional Budget Office. This is the first shutdown since the longest one in

US history — lasting 35 days — that began almost seven years ago during Trump’s previous term. Hopes of a compromise had been hanging by a thread since Monday, when a last-gasp meeting at the White House yielded no progress. The gridlocked Congress regularly runs into deadlines to agree on spending plans, and the negotiations are invariably fraught. But Congress usually avoids them ending in shutdowns. Democrats, in the minority in both chambers of Congress, have been seeking to flex their rare leverage over the federal government eight months into Trump’s second presidency that has seen entire government agencies dismantled. Trump’s threat of new job cuts added to anxieties in the federal workforce sparked by large-scale firings orchestrated by tycoon Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency earlier this year. — AFP

OPINION

Merits and pitfalls of the American peace plan



AWADH BIN
SAEED BAQWIR

The author is a
journalist and a
member of the State
Council

US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unveiled a twenty-one-point peace plan this week whose headline promise is an immediate halt to the war in the Gaza Strip. The blueprint would also create a “Board of Peace.” Supporters say this architecture could sustain momentum; detractors fear it recentres Washington and sidelines Palestinian agency.

Core provisions require the disarmament of Hamas and other Palestinian factions and the dismantling of military infrastructure, notably tunnels. The plan affirms there will be no displacement of Gaza’s population and that Israeli forces will withdraw in stages. The Palestinian Authority, however, is denied a role until it completes stipulated reforms. In parallel, a two-year programme is proposed for the reconstruction of the devastated Strip.

Measured narrowly, the positives are evident: stopping the war, ending mass casualties and closing off forced displacement. Yet two elements trigger particular unease: the potential deployment of Arab and international forces, and the central role of a Board chaired by Trump. For many, these are the plan’s most contentious provisions, raising questions about consent,

command, accountability and exit strategies. Above all, the requirement to disarm Palestinian resistance groups is a pivotal stumbling block.

Even on a generous reading, the initiative falls short of Palestinian aspirations. Trump’s remarks at launch tracked Netanyahu’s hard-line posture and that of his government — accused by many observers of grave violations during the war. Decision-making now rests with the Palestinian resistance, which received the document through Egyptian and Qatari mediation. Hamas has said it will study the proposal “professionally and objectively”.

Key assurances remain opaque. The text offers limited clarity on preventing a renewed Israeli military return to Gaza or on halting ongoing violations in the West Bank. Confidence-building would require enforceable commitments, verifiable timelines, independent monitoring and a credible arbitration mechanism capable of restraining spoilers and penalising breaches on all sides. Without such safeguards, the plan risks becoming a ceasefire wrapper rather than a workable political settlement.

Whether or not Hamas accepts the offer, the Arab–Israeli conflict will persist. It

The choice is stark: acceptance would likely mean stepping back from armed resistance in Gaza; rejection points to continued fighting amid open-ended American backing for Israel.

intersects with a wider Arab narrative of anti-colonial resistance and the pursuit of self-determination.

On that reading, the conflict is framed within Israeli discourse as existential rather than merely territorial or procedural. Even if the American plan, with all its advantages and liabilities, were implemented in full, the struggle would not end; at best, it would enter a new phase. Allegations of mass atrocities during the war deepen mistrust and amplify fears of expansionist intent, making any settlement fragile without justice and accountability.

Backed by several Arab capitals, the plan may, for now, appear the only available track. Yet the decisive word rests with Hamas and other Palestinian factions, who must weigh the document against Gaza’s bleak realities. The choice is stark: acceptance would likely mean stepping back from armed resistance in Gaza; rejection points to continued fighting amid open-ended American backing for Israel.

Either way, the region enters an uncertain chapter that will test whether stated principles can be translated into an enforceable, equitable peace.

Translated by Badr al Dhafari

Trump’s Pentagon chief outlines vision for the US military

WG DUNLOP

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth portrayed the US military on Tuesday as too fat, too focused on leftist “woke” ideas, and in need of a major shake-up with an emphasis on being tough “war fighters.”

The speech, to an auditorium of hundreds of generals and admirals hastily called to Virginia from around the world, touted a plan for ending what the former Fox News host claimed had been “decades of decay.” Striding across a stage in front of a giant American flag that mirrored his pocket square, Hegseth took aim at “stupid rules of engagement” on the battlefield and “fat troops” at home, calling for the military to look back to the standards of 1990 for inspiration.

He said he wanted a military focused on lethality, not racial or gender diversity, with an end to what he said were troops “walking on eggshells” over fear of complaints about behaviour. He called for the strict application of grooming standards — which includes a one-year cap on shaving waivers that are disproportionately used by Black troops — as well as for having the current highest male fitness standard apply to all combat forces.

Hegseth also said he would institute what he called the “no more walking on eggshells policy,” which entails “no more frivolous complaints, no more anonymous complaints, no more repeat complainants, no more smearing reputations.”

He specifically criticised the Pentagon inspector general — which launched an investigation into his use of civilian messaging app Signal for classified information this year — saying the office has been “weaponised” and will be overhauled. Hegseth said that strict rules for when force can be used — measures that are aimed at preventing civilians from being killed — are a thing of the past.

“We untie the hands of our war fighters to intimidate, demoralise, hunt and kill the enemies of our country. No more politically correct and overbearing rules of engagement, just common sense, maximum lethality and authority for war fighters,” he said.

“If the words I’m speaking today are making your heart sink, then you should do the honourable thing and resign,” he told the officers. Trump’s administration has already purged a number of top officers this year, including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Charles “CQ” Brown, who was fired without explanation in February, as well as the heads of the Navy and Coast Guard. — AFP

Recognition of Palestine: Restoring law and dignity

THE adoption of the New York Declaration by the United Nations General Assembly on September 12, 2025 signifies a pivotal moment in history. By advocating for timely steps towards a two-state solution, establishing a Palestinian administration free of Hamas, and implementing an international stabilisation mission for Gaza, the resolution refocuses global attention on essential principles often overlooked: legitimacy, accountability, and human dignity.

This vote was far from merely symbolic. It passed with an overwhelming majority — 142 in favour, 10 against, and 12 abstentions. Despite significant geopolitical divides, it demonstrates that a substantial majority of states uphold the principle that international law, rather than force, should govern peace.

Importantly, the declaration aligns with a surge in the recognition of Palestine.

In May 2024, Spain, Ireland, and Norway recognised Palestine, followed by Slovenia in June, with more European and G7 nations expected to do so during this General Assembly. The real question is not whether Palestine will be recognised, but whether this recognition will be harnessed to build enduring peace or wasted as a transient headline.

THE CASE FOR RECOGNITION

Critics argue that recognition rewards violence or undermines negotiations. The reality is the opposite. Withholding recognition for decades has neither fostered peace nor ensured security. It has entrenched asymmetry, emboldened extremists, and weakened moderates.

Recognition is not a reward for impunity; it is a prerequisite for accountability.

It grounds negotiations in equality before the law. Without recognition,



JULANDA
AL HASHMI

The author is a
public policy expert

Palestinians remain in a political and legal limbo, invisible and vulnerable.

It also aligns with international legal mandates. The International Court of Justice has mandated measures to prevent breaches of the Genocide Convention.

The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for leaders from both Hamas and Israel. Recognition fortifies — not weakens — this universal rule of law.

THREE PILLARS FOR A PATH FORWARD:

1. *Legitimacy:* Diplomacy cannot be based on denial. Recognition affirms Palestinians’ right to sovereignty and self-determination, reducing room for rejectionists on both sides, and establishing a legal identity that allows for credible compromises.

2. *Security:* Security should not be an afterthought. A multinational mission in Gaza is crucial, but it must be robust. Rules of engagement should prioritise civilian protection, and ceasefire verification must be transparent and credible. Security must be part of a broader framework for the release of hostages and prisoners.

3. *Governance* Recognition must come with a commitment to robust and sustainable governance. It is essential to ensure that Palestinian institutions effectively serve their people, maintain financial resilience, and uphold the rule of law. Preparing the ground for credible and inclusive elections is a vital milestone.

JUSTICE AS THE PATH TO STABILITY

For Oman and the broader Gulf region, the Palestinian issue is inextricably linked to justice and humanity. The Palestinian people are deeply rooted in their land, and their right to recognition and self-determination cannot be ignored.

Any international effort must prioritise the protection of civilians and the preservation of human dignity.

Oman Vision 2040, like the long-term strategies of its neighbours, relies on stability, connectivity, and trust — foundations that cannot be secured amid recurring conflicts.

WHAT THE UNGA MUST DO:

For this momentum to continue, the General Assembly and its member states must convert words into action:

- Link recognition with stabilisation — publish a joint plan for Gaza’s international mission, including troop contributions, civilian protection rules, and transition to the Palestinian Authority.
- Support accountability universally — endorse ICJ and ICC processes without exception. Justice cannot be selective.
- Deliver economic dividends — connect donor support to projects that generate jobs, enhance energy security, and foster regional integration.
- Protect civilians immediately — fund trauma care, education, and shelter. Reconstruction cannot be delayed for treaties.

THE CHOICE BEFORE US

Recognition is not the culmination of the process — it is the starting point. It sets the stage for equal negotiations, enforces accountability, and unlocks the regional benefits of peace.

The world is now at a crossroads. We can either seize this opportunity to restore law and dignity, or we can resign ourselves to yet another generation of crises, radicalisation, and instability that defy global order.

For Oman, and for all nations dedicated to stability and prosperity, the choice is clear.

Recognition today is not merely symbolic. It is the foundation of a peace that is just, sustainable and long overdue.

A journey into magical realism



SONIA AMBROSIO

The writer is journalist, academic and researcher in media studies

FOLKLORE tales and traditions are deeply ingrained in the culture of many countries. I have grown up with imaginative stories about headless horsemen, headless donkeys and Saci-Pererê. The latter has left me with a remarkable awareness of the importance of fables passed down through the generations.

The legend of Saci-Pererê describes a mischievous one-legged character from Brazilian folklore who wears a red cap and smokes a pipe, often appearing in whirlwinds. Like most mythical creatures, he is known for being mischievous and playing tricks on people, and he enjoys bothering travellers; similar to the sirens in myths that lure people into the water with their beautiful singing voices.

For thousands of years, people have been making up stories about creatures as part of their traditions. Tales of mystical beings offer insights into religious beliefs, social structures and values. Stories are rich, and details vary as they are recounted. They can relate to the supernatural or they can reflect the power of gods and devotion; or they can have historical accounts involving heroes and courageous fighters.

In Arabian folklore, the belief in jinn (supernatural beings) is rooted in pre-Islamic Arabian mythology. Early Arab tribes viewed

jinn as spirits that inhabited desolate places, such as deserts, ruins and caves. They were thought to have the power to influence human affairs — sometimes positively, often negatively.

I was happy to discover a copy of “Omani Folk Tales”, a book by Hatim al Taie and Joan Pickersgill, published in 2008, among my belongings. The tale about the beautiful woman and the snake, told by Asma al Kindi, from the foothills of the old town of Bausher, caught my attention, as did the story about the tracker and the thief by Mohammed bin Amer al Siyabi, from the Wilayat of Nakhal.

My readings of the tales happened after a visit to the Majlis Al Jinn (assembly of spirits), in Jabal Al Abyad (white mountain), and so, I came to see the meeting place of Arabian mythical creatures and the enigmatic landscape of human experience.

As a group of tourists, we visited only the aboveground area of one of the three small entrances to these vast subterranean caves measuring 310 m in length and 225 m in width and spanning 58,000 sqm, according to official accounts. Majlis Al Jinn in the Sultanate of Oman is recognised as one of the largest cave chambers in the world.

Majlis Al Jinn holds considerable cultural importance, acting as a narrative device to elucidate the unexplainable, especially in circumstances involving sudden misfortune, illness, etc. For whatever reason, the journey

The power of storytelling, combined with a tapestry of beliefs and mysteries, offers an opportunity to explore and understand ideas and experiences

back, descending the mountain at night, took an extraordinary amount of time and several back-and-forth drives. Perhaps a Jinn was playing a trick on us.

The portrayal of Jinn and the Majlis Al Jinn in literature and films has grown in popularity recently, often blending traditional and current themes.

These representations reflect contemporary societal topics, like the struggle for identity in multicultural societies and the tension between old beliefs and modern values.

The power of storytelling, combined with a tapestry of beliefs and mysteries, offers an opportunity to explore and understand ideas and experiences. Saci-Pererê, the Majlis Al Jinn, the Falak - part of Arabian cosmology - a terrifying mythological creature found beneath the mythical fish Bahmut, mentioned in the fairy tale One Thousand and One Nights, and the 'laughing snake' (mar-I qahqahe) that can kill with its gaze are just a few examples that highlight the power of creativity and imagination.

Myths originate from observed lives; they are part of our cultural heritage. Weaving the ordinary with the magical world is captivating, especially given our fascination with the morbid. Folktales about the unknown reveal that humans don't have sole control over their world, and they often come with a warning.

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO END THE US GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN?

ANDY SULLIVAN AND RICHARD COWAN

A deep impasse between Republican President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats has triggered the 15th US government shutdown since 1981. Here's a look at what it will take to reopen the government.

Trump's Republicans control both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and they have already scored big budget wins this year. The massive legislation called the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” passed in July, boosted spending for defence and immigration enforcement, rolled back spending on green energy and other Democratic priorities, while making major cuts in the Medicaid healthcare programme for low-income and disabled people to help pay for tax cuts focused mainly on the wealthy.

Republicans also have broadly supported the White House's efforts to claw back money that had already been approved by Congress for foreign aid and public broadcasting, even though that undermines lawmakers' constitutional authority over spending matters.

They have said they would vote for a continuing resolution that would extend funding at current levels through November 21 to allow more time to negotiate a full-year deal.

As the minority party, Democrats do not have much power. However, Republicans will need at least seven Democratic votes to pass any spending bill out of the Senate, where 60 votes are needed to advance most legislation in the 100-seat chamber.

This time, Democrats are using that leverage to push for renewing expanded healthcare subsidies for people who buy insurance through the Affordable Care Act. Their proposal would make permanent enhanced tax breaks that are otherwise due to expire at the end of the year and make them available to more middle-income households.

If those tax breaks are allowed to expire, health insurance costs will increase dramatically for many of the 24 million Americans who get their coverage through the ACA, according to the non-partisan Kaiser Family Foundation. The impact would be most acute in Republican-controlled states that have not expanded the Medicaid health plan for the poor.

Democrats also want language inserted into any funding bill that would prohibit Trump from unilaterally ignoring their ACA provisions or temporarily withholding funds.

Those changes would provide health coverage for seven million Americans by 2035, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, but also increase government healthcare spending by \$662 billion over 10 years.

Republicans say they are open to considering a fix for the expiring tax breaks, but say the issue should be handled separately and it was unclear whether their “fix” would differ substantially from the Democrats'— Reuters

Getting to greener steel

BURNING coal to generate power is so uneconomical that the Trump administration has resorted to issuing stay-open orders to prop up the dying industry. However, there is one area where coal is still king: in the production of primary iron to make steel.

This matters because iron and steel production account for over 10 per cent of annual global greenhouse-gas emissions. Most of these emissions come from blast furnaces, where coal is used to strip oxygen from iron ore, producing not only iron but carbon dioxide (the main byproduct).

Fortunately, there are better ways to do this. One is simply to avoid making new iron in the first place. Steel is 100 per cent recyclable, and over one-fifth of the global supply by is now derived from recycled scrap. Recycling requires only electricity, so one can envision a perfect circular economy in which wind turbines produce electricity to produce steel from recycled wind turbines. This is already largely economical in places where scrap steel is readily available, such as the United States and Europe, but less so for fast-growing Asian economies.

Another option is to use natural gas. Only around 7 per cent of steel globally is produced this way, because it does entail some additional costs and complications. Nonetheless, this option paves the way to one of the primary methods of cutting steel emissions to near-zero: replacing gas with green hydrogen. The Swedish startup Stegra does just that. It broke ground in 2022 on the world's first “deep green” steel plant – a major achievement and a big step in the right direction. The company's goal of producing five million tonnes of low-carbon steel annually by 2030 is both ambitious and achievable under the right policy conditions. Moreover, similar other projects are imminent, heralding a future of low-carbon steel. It will be a steep climb. Stegra's five million tonnes are dwarfed by the 1.5 billion tonnes produced today using coal. For every new green steel plant under discussion, more than two traditional plants are also being planned. Unlike coal power plants, coal-powered blast furnaces will



Steel is 100 per cent recyclable, and over one-fifth of the global supply by now is derived from recycled scrap.



GERNOT WAGNER

The writer is a climate economist at Columbia Business School



ROLAND KUPERS

The writer is an adviser on complexity, resilience, and energy transition, is the lead architect of the United Nations' International Methane Emissions Observatory

remain economical unless CO2 is priced appropriately. The European Union is starting to do that with its emissions-trading system, charging polluters around €80 (\$94) per tonne; but steel producers in China, India, and elsewhere face little to no carbon price.

Moreover, while direct or indirect carbon pricing must be part of the sector's climate-policy portfolio, it cannot be the only measure. Another big part of the picture is methane. While this greenhouse gas does inevitably leak when natural gas is used to produce steel, the main culprit is coalbed methane, which vents directly into the air when mining for metallurgical coal to use in blast furnaces.

Methane is a far more potent greenhouse gas than CO2. Over the first 20 years, it traps about 80 times more heat than CO2. While CO2 remains the most potent greenhouse gas in the long run, around half of the rate of warming experienced from the preindustrial period to the 2010s was due to methane emissions rather than CO2. This outsized effect makes coalbed methane an underappreciated problem of global steel production. It alone adds around 25 per cent to blast-furnace steel's climate footprint – or the equivalent of around one billion tonnes of CO2 per year. These emissions will continue for as long as blast furnaces dominate the industry.

Fortunately, while no industry-

wide change will happen on its own, preliminary calculations suggest that methane could be removed from the supply chain of coal-based blast furnaces relatively cheaply, at less than 1 per cent of steel's market price. Moreover, metallurgical coal is produced by a limited number of mining companies in a handful of countries. That means partnerships to measure and effectively mitigate these emissions are well within reach. These could include not only countries like Australia, an early focus of the United Nations Environment Programme's methane effort, but also China, which accounts for over half of global metallurgical coal and steel production.

With the US ceding the field on climate policy, the EU and China have been working more closely on key climate initiatives. Coalbed methane in the steel supply chain ought to be on their list of problems to tackle. Cutting methane emissions in the steel supply chain will not produce green steel overnight, but it could reduce the sector's emissions by the equivalent of a billion tonnes of CO2 annually, and at little cost.

Unlike some arguments for gas as a “bridge” fuel from coal to renewables, there is little danger that a focus on coalbed methane might detract from the need to move away from coal (and gas) towards greener methods.

©Project Syndicate, 2025

SPORTS

MUSANNAHEVENT



The dignitaries at the launching ceremony of the para sailing boats.

OMAN SAIL LAUNCHES 12 NEW PARA SAILING BOATS AHEAD OF WORLDS

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

Oman Sail has officially launched 12 new Hansa 303 para sailing boats on Wednesday as part of its flagship inclusive sailing programme ‘Sail Free’ supported by bp Oman.

The ceremony was held at the organisation’s headquarters under the auspices of Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism.

Dr Khamis bin Salem al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, highlighted that the internationally recognised Hansa 303 boats will significantly enhance Oman’s preparations for upcoming global competitions, most notably the inaugural Para Sailing World Championship, which will be hosted in Al Musannah this December in a first event of its kind worldwide.

Since its launch in 2019, the Sail Free programme has empowered more than 300 participants with disabilities, helping them build self confidence, refine their skills and open new opportunities, this initiative reflects Oman Sail’s commitment to making sport accessible to all, in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Al Jabri stated.

Representing bp Oman, Ibrahim bin Hamed al Hinai, Social Investment Manager, reaffirmed the company’s commitment to supporting community driven initiatives, describing the programme as “a successful platform that has enabled athletes with disabilities to showcase their talents at both national and international levels.”

Khamis al Anbouri, Commercial Director at Oman Sail, explained that the lightweight and highly stable Hansa 303 boats are easy to transport and safe to operate, making them ideal for upcoming international events.

Oman’s para sailors are set to compete in the Asian Para Sailing Championship in India this October, the ANOC World Beach Games in Turkiye, Musannah Race Week and the Para Sailing World Championship in Oman.

The event also featured inspiring testimonies from Omani para sailors, including Mohammed al Shukairi and Ghalia al Jabri who spoke about how sailing has transformed their lives by boosting confidence, independence and community integration.

Currently, Oman Sail in partnership with bp Oman operates a fleet of 18 boats dedicated to para sailing including 8 RS Venture and 12 Hansa 303 as part of its ongoing efforts to promote inclusivity and expand sporting opportunities for all.



Seeb post exciting victory over Yemen’s Al Mina

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

OMAN’S representatives, Seeb and Al Bashayer, continued their participation in the 37th edition of the Arab Men’s Basketball Clubs Championship hosted by Dubai. Seeb succeeded in overturning a deficit into an exciting victory over Yemen’s Al Mina with a score of 84–80, while Al Bashayer narrowly lost to Qatar’s Al Rayyan 79–88 in the third-round competitions.

With this victory, Seeb raised their tally to 4 points to occupy third place in Group C, while Al Bashayer reached 3 points and placed fourth in Group D.

In the first match between Seeb and Al Mina, the game was fluctuating in level, as Al Mina managed to lead in the first and second quarters, before Seeb rose in the second half, imposed a tie in the third quarter, and then settled the match in the fourth quarter with a 4-point margin.

Seeb’s standout player was professional Jawad Atkoya, scoring 28 points, along with teammate Joshu Tagano who scored 24 points, in addition to Mazen al Hadidi and Rashid al Zuhaibi who each added 9 points. On the side of Yemen’s Al Mina, player Mohamed Ezzat stood out with 26 points, professional Marco with 20 points and Nasser Hammoud with 17 points.

The first quarter ended with Al Mina leading 20–17, and they maintained their advantage in the second quarter to finish the first half ahead 40–38. However, Seeb became more active in the third quarter, scoring 23 points compared to Al Mina’s 21 to tie the score at 61–61. In the last quarter, Seeb imposed their offensive and defensive style, scoring 23 points compared to Al Mina’s 19, to end the match 84–80 in their favour.

AL BASHAYER LOSE DESPITE LATE SURGE

In the second match, Al Bashayer lost to Qatar’s Al Rayyan 79–88 despite a strong comeback in the second half.

The game began with obvious confusion



A Seeb player attempts a basket against Yemen’s Al Mina in Arab Basketball Clubs Championship in Dubai.

on Al Bashayer’s side, which Al Rayyan exploited to impose full control in the first and second quarters. The first quarter ended 25–10, and in the second, Al Rayyan added 18 points against only 8 for Al Bashayer, finishing the first half ahead 48–18 with a 30-point lead.

In the third quarter, Al Bashayer’s performance improved noticeably, managing to score 34 points against Al Rayyan’s 22, reducing the gap to 70–52. They

continued their resurgence in the fourth quarter, scoring 27 points to Al Rayyan’s 18, but the Qatari team’s experience ultimately gave them the edge to win by 9 points.

Leading Al Bashayer’s offence was professional Samja Hines with 22 points, followed by Said al Saadi with 21, Idris Mansour with 18 and Osama al Riyami with 11 points. On the Al Rayyan side, Karts Raven scored 18 points, Abdullah Yassin 15 and Romero Malik 13.

Red Warriors undergo intensive closed training sessions

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

The Oman national football team entered a new phase of its domestic preparatory camp on Thursday under the supervision of Portuguese head coach Carlos Queiroz, as the first stage of the gathering concluded on Wednesday.

The initial three-day phase was conducted behind closed doors, with no media access, as the coaching staff opted for privacy to keep tactical plans and playing strategies under wraps ahead of the decisive AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 2026 matches against Qatar and the United Arab Emirates on October 8 and 11 in Doha.

NEW SQUAD

Hussain al Zadjali, administrative member of the national team, confirmed to Oman Observer that Queiroz will announce a new 24-man squad on Thursday. “The first camp featured 18 players, excluding Al Nahda’s squad members and several professional players abroad. The Al Nahda players will join following their Gulf Club Championship fixture against Saudi Arabia’s Al Shabab, which concluded on Wednesday. Ahmed al Kaabi is currently under close medical supervision, and we hope he can be ready for the qualifiers,” he said.

The second phase of the camp will run until Sunday and in the following



Head coach Carlos Queiroz will announce a new 24-man squad on Thursday.

day the Red Warriors will travel to Doha. Midfield general Harib al Saadi will miss the opening clash against Qatar due to suspension, with Seeb’s Nasser al Rawahi expected to step into the role

after consistent performances for both club and country, including in the Cafa Nations Cup.

On the professional side, midfielder Jameel al Yahmadi has already joined from Iraq’s Al Karma FC, while the rest of the overseas contingent are due to link up with the team during this phase of preparations and will join the team in Doha. As per the technical plan, the squad will hold one official training session in Doha before their opener against the Asian champions at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), through the We Are All With You campaign, confirmed the allocation of 5,800 tickets for Oman supporters across the two fixtures in Doha. This includes 1,000 tickets for the October 8 clash against Qatar and 4,800 tickets for the encounter with the UAE on October 11. The tickets, available exclusively via the Visit Oman platform, have already been snapped up by fans eager to back the national side in their historic bid for Fifa World Cup qualification.

Oman Squad: Ibrahim al Mukhaini, Bilal al Balushi, Ahmed al Rawahi, Ali al Busaidy, Mahmood al Mushaifri, Ahmed al Khamisi, Musab al Shaqsi, Nayef Bait Subaih, Sultan al Marzooq, Musab al Maamari, Arshad al Alawi, Abdullah Fawaz, Ahmed al Riyami, Zaher al Aghbari, Jameel al Yahmadi, Hatim al Roushdi, Nasser al Rawahi and Salah al Yahyaei.

MARSHPOWER



Australia's Mitchell Marsh plays a shot as New Zealand's wicketkeeper Tim Seifert watches during the first Twenty20 at Bay Oval. — AFP

AUSTRALIA EASE TO SIX-WICKET WIN IN FIRST NZ T20

MOUNT MAUNGANUI, New Zealand: An unbeaten maiden century by New Zealand's Tim Robinson wasn't enough to deny Australia a comfortable six-wicket win in the opening Twenty20 at Bay Oval on Wednesday.

Captain Mitchell Marsh led Australia's chase with 85 off 43 balls as they raced to 185-4 off 16.3 overs in response to the home side's 181-6.

The powerful Marsh struck nine fours and five sixes in cold, windy conditions at Mount Maunganui.

He was caught in the deep in the 15th over to fall short of what would have been his first century in 74 T20 internationals.

Fellow-opener Travis Head scored 31 in an electric opening stand of 67 off just 5.3 overs that set up victory and a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Marsh said he and Head complemented each other as opening batsmen.

"We've got a great relationship off the field and I'm hoping that translates into good partnerships," he said.

"Tonight was a lot of fun."

Robinson plundered 106 not out off 66 balls after a dreadful New Zealand start when they were asked to bat first.

The hosts collapsed to 6-3, with seamer Ben Dwarshuis removing Devon Conway and Mark Chapman off successive balls in the second over.

The fightback was launched by Robinson and Daryl Mitchell (34), whose fourth-wicket stand of 92 came from just 55 deliveries.

Robinson, 23, became the second-youngest New Zealander to score a T20 century when he blasted a four and then a six from the last two balls of the innings from Dwarshuis.

"I got streaky through the middle there and got away with a few chances but that's cricket," Robinson said.

"Those Aussies bowled really well at the top and Daryl and I spoke about getting through that really tough period when the ball was nipping around."

Both teams had a key player ruled out of the series in training incidents on Tuesday.

New Zealand batsman Rachin Ravindra suffered facial cuts when he collided with a boundary fence during fielding practice.

Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell broke his arm when struck by a shot from team-mate Mitchell Owen while bowling in the nets.

The remaining two games are also day-night fixtures in Mount Maunganui on Friday and Saturday. — AFP



Chelsea's Jamie Gittens in action with Benfica's Amar Dedic during the Champions League group phase match at Stamford Bridge. — Reuters

Liverpool lose to Galatasaray in CL, Chelsea beat Benfica

A Victor Osimhen penalty gave Galatasaray victory over Liverpool in the Champions League on Tuesday, while Chelsea edged out Jose Mourinho's Benfica and Kylian Mbappe hit a hat-trick for Real Madrid in Kazakhstan.

Elsewhere in the second round of matches in the league phase of Europe's elite club competition, Tottenham battled back to draw with Bodo/Glimt as Bayern Munich, Atletico Madrid, Marseille and Inter Milan recorded big wins.

In Istanbul, Osimhen beat Alisson Becker from the spot in the 16th minute, giving Galatasaray a 1-0 win and condemning Liverpool to a second straight loss after their defeat by Crystal Palace in the Premier League. The English champions thought they had a chance to equalise late on when Ibrahima Konate went down and a penalty was given, but the referee overturned his decision on review.

Liverpool, who finished first in the league phase last season, also saw Alisson go off injured in the second half before the introductions off the bench of Mohamed Salah and Alexander Isak failed to have the desired impact. "The margins were very small last season but then we were a lot of times on the right side of the score," coach Arne Slot said. "Today again the margins were really small, but for the second time in a row on the wrong side."

Liverpool will now hope to bounce



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe scores their second goal against Kairat Almaty. — Reuters

back on Saturday away to Chelsea, who themselves got back to winning ways with a 1-0 success against Benfica as the Portuguese giants' new coach Mourinho came back to Stamford Bridge.

Richard Rios turned an Alejandro Garnacho cross into his own net for the only goal of the game in the 18th minute, with Benfica unable to recover as Mourinho returned to face the club he coached over two separate spells. Chelsea had substitute Joao Pedro sent off in stoppage time but Enzo Maresca's side were delighted to get the win after losing their opening European game of the campaign at Bayern. "A defeat is always a defeat but this one can be a start for us. It was a stable performance," Mourinho said of his team.

MBAPPE HAT-TRICK, KANE ON TARGET

Record 15-time European champions Real made the long trip east to face Kairat Almaty and ran out 5-0 winners.

Mbappe opened the scoring from a first-half penalty and made it 2-0 soon after the break before firing in from the edge of the area to complete his hat-trick on 73 minutes, making it 60 career Champions League goals.

The Frenchman has now scored 13 goals in nine games in all competitions this season for Real, who also saw Eduardo Camavinga and Brahim Diaz net towards the end.

Bayern also scored five, with Harry Kane netting twice in the first half in a 5-1 win away to Pafos in Cyprus. The England star now has 17 goals in nine games in all competitions this season for his club.

Raphael Guerreiro, Nicolas Jackson and Michael Olise also found the net for Bayern, while Mislav Orsic scored for the hosts. "I'm going into games with confidence, knowing I'll get my chances. Scored a couple more goals today, I'm happy with that," Kane said.

Spurs escaped Norway with a point in a 2-2 draw with Bodo/Glimt in a game played north of the Arctic Circle.

Atletico followed a 5-2 win over Real in the Madrid derby by thumping Eintracht Frankfurt 5-1. Giacomo Raspadori, Robin Le Normand, Antoine Griezmann and Giuliano Simeone netted for Atletico before Julian Alvarez scored a late penalty. Griezmann's goal was his 200th for the club. — AFP

India crush Sri Lanka in Women's World Cup opener

GUWAHATI, India: A splendid all-round display saw India launch their ICC Women's World Cup campaign on the front foot, brushing aside Sri Lanka by 59 runs in the curtain-raiser in Guwahati on Tuesday.

Half-centuries from Deepti Sharma and Amanjot Kaur steadied the ship as India posted a competitive 269 for eight in a contest reduced by rain to 47 overs a side.

Sri Lanka, chasing under lights, had a flying start at 82 for one in 15 overs, with skipper Chamari Athapaththu cutting and pulling anything loose in a rollicking 43 off 47 balls. But once the spinners were tossed the ball, the wheels came off spectacularly.

The big breakthrough arrived when Deepti, on song with ball in hand, sent down a full delivery that skidded straight on to castle Athapaththu, leaving Sri Lanka's

middle order exposed once more and underlining their heavy reliance on the talismanic skipper.

India had their own jitters. At 124 for six they were staring down the barrel as veteran Inoka Ranaweera turned the game on its head. The 39-year old left-arm spinner bowled an impeccable line prising out three wickets in an over.

Sri Lanka, however, let the initiative slip through butterfingers. Dropped catches proved costly as Deepti and Amanjot stitched together a game-changing stand of 103 off 99 balls for the seventh wicket, turning the tide India's way.

Ranaweera, who finished with four for 46, was denied a maiden five-for and the best ever World Cup figures by a Sri Lankan due to poor fielding. She was guilty herself of grassing a return catch off Amanjot.

Amanjot top scored with 57 off



All-round display by Deepti Sharma guided India to a 59-run win.

59 balls, striking five fours and a six with a strong bottom hand that sent the ball screaming down the ground. Deepti's run a ball 53, her 16th ODI

half-century, was included just three boundaries. The all-rounder capped a memorable outing by overtaking Neetu David to become India's

second highest wicket taker with 143 scalps, behind only the legendary Jhulan Goswami's towering 255.

"We lost back to back wickets and we needed to steady the innings," said Deepti was was named Player of the Match. "(I'm) Happy to have done that. I'm used to batting under pressure and enjoyed the challenge today."

Sri Lanka, who missed the previous edition of the World Cup in 2022, never quite looked convincing and their brittle batting remains their Achilles' heel.

The 13th Women's World Cup, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, features the world's top eight sides with the top four after the league stage set to contest the semifinals.

More than 23,000 fans thronged the stands for the opener, testimony to the growing pull of the women's game in the subcontinent. — AFP

SPORTS



Italy's Jannik Sinner celebrates with the trophy after winning the final against Learner Tien of the US.
— Reuters

SINNER THRASHES TIEN TO WIN CHINA OPEN FOR 21ST TITLE

JANNIK SINNER won the 21st title of his career by thrashing American teenager Learner Tien 6-2, 6-2 in the China Open final on Wednesday.

The Italian lifted the trophy for the second time on Beijing's hard courts, having done so on his tournament debut in 2023, and a return to world number one is within view.

Sinner's only ever loss on the centre Diamond Court has been to great rival and top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz, who won last year's final in three gripping sets.

"A very, very special place for me," said the victorious Sinner, who got past a couple three-set scares and a bout of diarrhoea to reach the final.

Alcaraz was not defending his title in the Chinese capital and on Tuesday won the Japan Open in Tokyo.

Sinner is the third man to win multiple China Open titles, matching Rafael Nadal's record at two but so far well short of Novak Djokovic's six.

"I always say comparing me to Novak, he's in a different league with everything he has achieved in his career," Sinner, a four-time Grand Slam champion, said.

"I'm just a normal 24-year-old who tries to play the best tennis possible."

But he added that his silverware collection has outgrown his home, telling reporters his trophies go "in my parents' place always".

"My apartment is quite small, so there's not a lot of space."

FAST START
Sinner broke immediately in the first set on the way to outclassing the 19-year old Tien, who was in his first ATP final.

The world no. 52 got a rare chance to break in the second game of the second set but Sinner quickly retook control, ending a one-sided match with 10 aces over the 1h 12min final.

"I thought he served well today. Just getting a lot of free points on



Italy's Jannik Sinner (R) holds his winner's trophy while posing with runner-up USA's Learner Tien following their final at the China Open tournament in Beijing on Wednesday. — AFP

his serve. I couldn't really get a great read," Tien said.

"I just think the pressure he puts on you point to point is really tough." Tien was bidding to become

Beijing's lowest-ranked champion in tournament history.

At 19 years and nine months, Tien would also have been the second-youngest American ATP Tour champion since Andy Roddick in 2002.

As it was, he was never really in it, despite some flashes of his rich potential.

"You are showing throughout the whole season what a talent you are," Sinner said in the aftermath.

Sinner's emphatic win was his third title this season, after victories at the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

He may now be able to snatch back the top ranking before the season ends after Alcaraz pulled out of the Shanghai Masters injured on Tuesday.

The Spaniard took the world number one ranking from Sinner when he defeated the Italian in the US Open final.

Sinner will be the top seed in Shanghai, which began this week and where he is defending champion. — AFP

Weekend GREAT SAVINGS

نهاية الأسبوع توفير كبير

Offer valid from : 2025 October 2nd to October 5th Only.
Available @Nesto Hypermarket :
Sohar,Falaj Al Qaba'il, Al Hail South (Al Khoud), Barka & Bilad Mall

0.390

رمان مصر بالكيلو

Anar Egypt Per Kg

0.545

برتقال انوسرة جنوب أفريقيا بالكيلو

Orange Navel South Africa Per Kg

1.490

بيض الوفاء الفلبيني الأبيض ٣٠ بيضة

Al Wafa Indian White Egg 30'S

2.170

مilk UHT Full Fat 4X1LT

Mazoon UHT Milk Full Fat 4X1LT

2.040

صابون بيرز لطيف 4X125Gm

Pears Soap Pure And Gentle 4X125Gm

50.083% SAVE

5.990

2.990

مكسرات مشكيلة بالكيلو

Mix Nut Per Kg

33.844% SAVE

5.880

3.890

كاجو سادة بالكيلو

Cashew Nut Plain W320 Per kg

27.569% SAVE

3.990

2.890

سكر أبيض 6x2kg

Al Ameen White Sugar 6x2kg

28.182% SAVE

1.100

0.790

بسكويت سبيل جلاش 2x10x40g

Al Wazir 1121 XXXL MilkHony 2x10x40g

41.593% SAVE

1.695

0.990

بودرة غسيل 2.4kg

Surf Powder Washing 2.4kg

Get Ready For The Unexpected Exclusive Deals Await Innaam Members! [How many stars/members benefit you?](#)

INNAAM app

Download Now

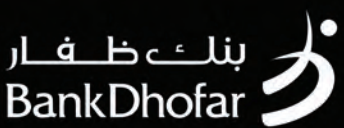


MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
5,188.673

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$66.69
BRENT \$66.31
LIGHT \$ 62.63





بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

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

CREDIT CARDS
=
AIRPORT PRIVILEGES



Oman marks 155 tourist drone zones

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 1

OMANI drone startup Serb, which operates the country's Uncrewed Traffic Management (UTM) platform on behalf of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), has announced that a total of 155 tourist locations around the Sultanate of Oman have been designated as 'green zones', making them safe for drone flying by visiting tourists and hobbyists.

The move is expected to enhance Oman's appeal among a growing number of international visitors who travel with drones to capture breathtaking aerial perspectives that go beyond what traditional cameras can offer. According to experts, a drone not only provides the freedom to create immersive travel content — from panoramic videos to cinematic reels ideal for sharing on social media or personal travel logs — but also helps travellers appreciate the geography and



Listed among the designated 155 green zones — and counting — are scenic spots in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Ras Al Hadd and Salalah, among other natural, historical and geological attractions.

scale of a location, plan routes and explore safely from above.

“Oman opens its skies to visitors”, the Muscat-based company, which is backed by the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) through Future Fund Oman (FFO), announced in a recent post.

“Tourists can now bring their drones legally into Oman. With Serb's AirPass, visitors can register, license and fly in designated Green Zones, safely and hassle-free. This step blends tourism

with technology, letting travellers capture Oman's beauty from above while staying compliant”.

According to Serb, tourists planning to travel to Oman with their drones can apply via its digital platform for an ‘AirPass’ that comes bundled with a drone licence, a letter authorising the import of the drone, flight zone access and safety training certification.

Both Muscat and Salalah International Airports have been prepared to receive drone enthusiasts equipped with an AirPass obtained through the Serb platform.

Significantly, listed among the 155 green zones — and counting — are scenic spots in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Ras Al Hadd and Salalah, among other natural, historical and geological attractions. Several hundred additional candidate sites are currently being vetted by the authorities before they are added to the list.

Launched earlier this year, the Serb platform aims to enhance air navigation safety, regulate drone usage and streamline the permitting process for drone operators. Aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the initiative also seeks to foster innovation in drone technology and support the wider use of drones across the economy.

In support of this initiative, Serb says it plans to onboard around 5,000 drone pilots initially to help build a comprehensive drone management ecosystem in the Sultanate of Oman.

To this end, the startup is collaborating with 13 government entities to develop the requisite regulatory framework underpinning the platform. Once fully operational, the platform will offer a range of services, including safe zone identification to help drone operators locate authorised areas for activities, a registration portal to simplify drone registration and permit acquisition, air traffic management capabilities to ensure safe integration into existing airspace and environmental protection compliance mechanisms to uphold safety standards for people, property and the natural environment.

Methanol and ammonia exports drive Oman’s industrial resilience

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 1

OQ Base Industries (OQBI) — a subsidiary of Omani-owned integrated energy group OQ — has emerged as a key player underpinning Oman's non-oil export growth, with methanol and ammonia products leading a strong first half of 2025.

The state-backed petrochemical producer reported revenue of RO 112.4 million for the six months to June, up 7.7% from the year earlier. Methanol sales surged by 46% to add RO 3.7 million, while ammonia grew by 38% to contribute RO 3.1 million. Together, the two commodities accounted for the bulk of OQBI's revenue gains.

Plant performance exceeded expectations, with utilisation running at 103% for methanol and 104% for ammonia, supported by average availability of 99.3%. This enabled total production of 780,460 metric tonnes, up 3.9% from last year and above internal business plan targets.

“These figures show that Oman's industrial exports are increasingly anchored in methanol and ammonia, reinforcing



Salalah-based OQBI reported revenue of RO 112.4 million for the six months to June, up 7.7% from the year earlier.

their importance to the national economy beyond oil and gas”, said an analyst reviewing the results.

While net profit rose sharply to RO 23.4 million, much of the financial upside was supported by operational efficiency and loan refinancing. Yet the underlying story, observers say, is the quiet role of these two products in strengthening Oman's balance of trade and non-oil diversification goals under Oman Vision 2040.

Publicly-listed OQBI, the only integrated producer of methanol, ammonia and LPG in the Sultanate of Oman, also reported a 16% rise in LPG revenue, aided by higher sales from carry-over inventory. With global demand for ammonia in fertilisers and methanol in clean fuels and chemicals continuing to grow, Oman's petrochemical exports are expected to sustain momentum into the second half of the year.



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C invites interested companies to participate in the following tender

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (OMR)
NESC/2025/030	Creative Design and Photography for Mobile App Marketing Campaign.	08/10/2025	13/10/2025	Specialist	Free cost

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -					
Participation	• Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may obtain Tender documents. • To obtain the tender document and payment procedure, please visit https://supply.nama.om , under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender				
Enquiries	• Any inquiry can be sent to procurement@supply.nama.om , using the inquiry form found in the tender document (05) Five working days before bid submission date. • Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.				
Tender Submission	• Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER and supplier guidelines available at NESC Website https://supply.nama.om , under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.				
Terms and Conditions	• The Tender shall be valid for a period of (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. • If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. • NESC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Tenderer. • Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Organization • NESC gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. • Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.				



Nama Electricity Supply Company SAOC
PO Box 1239, PC 131, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 24250800 | CR 1712357
[records@supply.nama.om](#) | [www.supply.nama.om](#)



ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Sterling ended September with a 0.4% loss against the dollar but remains up 7.7% this year, on track for its strongest annual performance since 2017’s 9.5% rally. — Reuters

STERLING EDGES UP, DOLLAR PRESSURED BY US SHUTDOWN

LONDON: The pound rose against the dollar on Wednesday as the US currency came under broad pressure following a government shutdown in Washington, which added to investor caution around US assets.

The shutdown carries the risk of delaying key economic reports that inform the Federal Reserve’s monetary policy decisions. With official data potentially unavailable, investors are turning to private sector measures such as the ADP monthly employment report due later on Wednesday.

Sterling ended September with a 0.4% loss against the dollar but remains up 7.7% this year, on track for its strongest annual performance since 2017’s 9.5% rally.

Against the euro, however, it has weakened, with the single currency gaining 0.8% last month and 5.6% so far in 2025.

UK data this week showed the economy virtually stagnated in the second quarter, while the current account deficit widened to its largest since the start of the year.

“Investors appeared willing to look past these figures, given the overriding US narrative. We, however, remain cautious”, analysts at Monex said.

“Sterling rallies are likely to be capped by domestic headwinds and a Bank of England that we think should be inching towards further easing, especially after the November budget”, they added.

The pound was last up 0.2% on the day at \$1.3475, while slipping against the euro, which rose 0.12% to 87.365 pence.

British house prices rose 0.5% in September after a 0.1% fall in August, according to Nationwide Building Society. The house-price-to-earnings ratio remains around 5.8, its worst level in a decade. Real wage growth has slowed to 1%, compared with 3.4% a year ago, as inflation stays sticky and earnings growth weakens.

British consumers continue to face pressure from persistent inflation, a high tax burden and a softening labour market. — Reuters

EUROZONE INFLATION ACCELERATES TO 2.2% IN SEPTEMBER

BRUSSELS: Eurozone inflation rose in September, driven by energy costs, official data showed on Wednesday, reinforcing expectations that the European Central Bank will hold interest rates steady for the rest of the year.

Inflation increased to 2.2% last month from 2.0% in August, exceeding the ECB’s 2% target. The figure was in line with Bloomberg analysts’ predictions, though

FactSet economists had expected a 2.3% rise.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile energy, food and tobacco prices, remained unchanged at 2.3%, matching forecasts from both Bloomberg and FactSet.

Services prices accelerated to 3.2% in September from 3.1% in August. Energy costs fell 0.4%, a smaller decline than August’s 2.0% drop, while food and tobacco prices rose

3.0%, down from 3.2% the previous month.

“The September data will cement the ECB’s plans for interest rates. Only a strong surprise in inflation could spur a cut this year”, said Riccardo Marcelli Fabiani, senior economist at Oxford Economics.

Inflation in Germany and France, the EU’s largest economies, also accelerated in September to 2.4% and 1.1%, respectively. — AFP

OAB hosts elite clients in celebratory evening

OMAN Arab Bank (OAB) hosted an exclusive evening in honour of its Elite Exclusive clients and strategic partners, underscoring the Bank’s commitment to innovation, excellence and leadership in the financial sector. The gathering brought together a select group of valued clients in a setting that reflected the prestige and tailored services of the Elite Exclusive segment.

The Elite Exclusive programme represents more than a banking service. It is positioned as a comprehensive lifestyle experience, offering clients unique financial solutions and privileges designed to support their ambitions and future aspirations. It reflects OAB’s vision of creating partnerships built on trust, distinction and a deep understanding of client needs.

In his remarks, Sulaiman al Harthy, CEO of OAB, stated: “The Elite Exclusive segment represents the pinnacle of our services — a partnership with our clients built on mutual respect and innovation. This evening expresses our profound gratitude to our clients, who remain central to our success and leadership in the sector”.

The event featured presentations highlighting the array of benefits offered under the Elite Exclusive programme, which include

The Elite Exclusive programme represents more than a banking service. It is positioned as a comprehensive lifestyle experience, offering clients unique financial solutions and privileges designed to support their ambitions and future aspirations.



The event featured presentations highlighting the array of benefits offered under the Elite Exclusive programme.

personalised wealth management advisory, bespoke banking solutions and access to a wide range of credit, savings and investment products. Clients also enjoy exclusive privileges such as preferential interest rates, fee waivers, priority 24/7 access and invitations to private events including financial seminars and lifestyle gatherings.

Additional lifestyle perks include airport lounge access and customised financing options with flexible repayment plans. The evening also highlighted OAB’s collaboration with its strategic partners, particularly Visa International, whose partnership enhances the value of services available to Elite Exclusive clients.

UK BUSINESS CONFIDENCE HITS RECORD LOW

LONDON: Business confidence in the UK fell to its lowest level on record in September amidst concerns over soaring costs, according to a survey from the Institute of Directors (IoD).

The IoD’s monthly economic confidence index dropped to minus 74, down from minus 61, marking the lowest reading



since the index launched over nine years ago. The previous record low of minus

72 was recorded in July. Cost expectations also hit a record high at plus 89, driven largely by rising labour costs, while supply chain inflation and energy prices were cited as additional factors. Around 83% of surveyed business leaders linked the worsening outlook to higher labour costs, which jumped

after increases to the national minimum wage and National Insurance Contributions in April. “Business confidence has plumbed new depths in September”, said IoD chief economist Anna Leach, noting falling investment expectations and ongoing volatility in headcount plans. — dpa

Oil pauses as markets assess OPEC+ plans, demand concerns

LONDON: Oil prices steadied on Wednesday after falling for two days as investors weighed OPEC+ plans for a larger output hike next month, while data from the US and Asia showed signs of weakening demand.

Brent crude futures for December delivery rose 6 cents to \$66.09 a barrel by 08:35 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude gained 4 cents to \$62.41 a barrel.

On Monday, Brent and WTI both settled more than 3% lower, their sharpest daily declines since August 1. On Tuesday, they each fell a further 1.5%.

“After two days of sell-off, triggered by reports of an OPEC+ hike and the resumption of Kurdish oil export, focus is shifting back to supply and export disruption in Russia due to continuous and successful Ukrainian assaults”, said



OPEC stated in a post on X that reports of a planned 500,000 bpd output increase were misleading. — Reuters

Tamas Varga, analyst at PVM Oil Associates.

The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, known as OPEC+, could agree to raise oil production by up to 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) in November, triple the increase made for October, as Saudi Arabia seeks to reclaim market share, three sources familiar with the talks said.

However, OPEC stated in a post on X that reports of a planned 500,000 bpd output increase were misleading.

In the latest update on Russia, the government has imposed a partial ban on diesel exports and extended an existing gasoline export ban until the end of the year.

Meanwhile, in the US, an industry report showed crude stockpiles fell while gasoline and distillate

inventories rose in the week ended September 26, according to American Petroleum Institute estimates.

“While US crude inventories have been on a declining trend, the pace of drawdowns has slowed, tempering bullish sentiment”, said Sugandha Sachdeva, founder of SS WealthStreet.

The US government shut down much of its operations on Wednesday after Congress failed to reach a funding deal, halting the release of key economic data including the September employment report.

In Asia, factory activity contracted across most major economies in September, adding to concerns about fuel demand in the world’s biggest oil-consuming region. — Reuters

SELECTIVEGROWTH



IAF accreditation gives Riyada global credibility in business support. — ONA

RIYADA OBTAINS ISO QUALITY MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

MUSCAT: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (Riyada) has been awarded the ISO 9001:2015 certification, one of the most recognised international standards for quality management. This certification is granted to institutions that implement comprehensive quality systems and standards in accordance with the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).

Obtaining this certification is an international acknowledgment of Riyada's efficiency in adopting the best administrative and technical practices focused on improving operational performance, reducing errors and developing work mechanisms to ensure the delivery of faster, higher-quality and more effective services to entrepreneurs. The certification's accreditation by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) gives this achievement global credibility, reflecting Riyada's status as a leading institution in supporting the business environment.

Halima bint Rashid al Zariyah, Chairperson of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), emphasised that receiving the ISO 9001:2015 certification in quality management systems marks a significant milestone in Riyada's journey towards institutional excellence. It affirms the Authority's firm commitment to applying the highest quality standards in delivering services to entrepreneurs. She added that this international recognition reflects Riyada's dedication to continuously improving its systems and procedures, contributing to enhanced performance and strengthened support for the SME sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

She also noted that this accreditation boosts entrepreneurs' confidence in Riyada's services, offering them greater opportunities for growth and sustainability. It also paves the way for further development and innovation, supporting the path of economic empowerment and contributing to the achievement of the goals set by Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

Jisr to develop national talent in financial sector

Jisr, a bridging programme designed to develop national talent in the financial sector — was launched at the College of Banking and Financial Studies, Muscat, on Wednesday, Oct 1, 2025. The programme seeks to qualify Omani professionals capable of leading institutional development for sustainable growth in the financial sector.

This programme is designed to align the outcomes of higher education with the needs of the labour market and to enhance the capabilities of Omani graduates through practical skills and specialised knowledge, enabling them to efficiently integrate into the financial sector, in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The launch of the programme was held under the auspices of Khalid bin Salim al Ghammari, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Labour and attended by several officials from the financial and banking sectors.



This programme is part of the initiatives of the National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Sector Development "Estidamah". — ONA

Mahmood bin Abdullah al Owainy, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance and General Supervisor of the National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development "Estidamah", explained that the bridging programme aims to offer a comprehensive training and qualification experience that enhances professional skills and empowers a generation of national talents to lead institutional development in the financial sector.

He emphasised the importance of this bridging programme as a qualitative step in preparing national talents and refining their skills to meet future demands, highlighting the crucial role of partnerships between government entities,

educational institutions and the private sector in promoting employment and capability development, contributing to national economic growth.

For his part, Dr Zahran bin Salim al Salti, Dean of the College of Banking and Financial Studies, stated that the collaboration between the College and the National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development "Estidamah" will enhance the implementation of this programme by combining academic education, applied qualification and practical training within financial institutions. It will also develop the professional and behavioural skills of participants and empower them to contribute effectively in the

workplace.

This programme is part of the initiatives of the National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Sector Development "Estidamah", in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, the Capital Market Authority and institutions from the banking and insurance sectors.

The programme targets graduates and job seekers in financial disciplines. Each cohort accommodates 40 trainees and the programme extends over 24 weeks, following a hands-on and applied training methodology within financial institutions.

Participants will receive advanced knowledge in areas such as sustainable lending, climate risk management, green financial product design,

sustainable underwriting practices and innovation in insurance products. The programme also includes specialised modules in microfinance and parametric insurance to strengthen capabilities in facing climate change.

The programme is divided into two main tracks: banking and insurance, each offering a specialised and practical experience in the field of sustainability. The aim is to prepare participants for direct employment, with participating institutions committing to hiring a significant portion of graduates as part of their operational plans. This programme will be followed by other specialised training courses serving the financial sector. — ONA

Rick Perry's data center REIT set for Nasdaq debut after \$683 m IPO

Fermi is set to debut on the Nasdaq on Wednesday after raising \$682.5 million in its IPO. This marks a key test of market appetite for a pre-revenue data centre real estate investment trust still in the early stage of its journey.

While development-stage firms have gone public before, it's unusual for a company under a year old with no revenue to pursue an IPO at a \$10 billion-plus valuation.

"It (Fermi's IPO) speaks to the gold rush happening in AI infrastructure right now. It's a cash geyser", said Matt Kennedy, senior strategist at Renaissance Capital, a provider of IPO-focused research and ETFs.



A successful listing could pave the way for other long-duration, capital-intensive AI infrastructure bets. — Reuters

Amarillo, Texas-based Fermi sold 32.5 million shares at \$21 each in an upsized IPO, after marketing them between \$18 and \$22.

Founded in January 2025, Fermi secured a \$12.5 billion valuation in the IPO, just months after issuing convertible bonds at a valuation of \$3 billion.

"Demand for AI-driven infrastructure — and Fermi's plan to pair it with its own modern power sources — has investors intrigued", said Troy Hooper, co-head of equity capital markets, Americas, at Mergermarket. "The company's political ties are seen as another tailwind".

Co-founded by former Texas

Governor and US Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Fermi has bold ambitions. The company is aiming to build the world's largest energy and data complex, powered by nuclear, natural gas and solar.

Project Matador, Fermi's flagship project, is expected to deliver 1.1 gigawatt of power by the end of 2026 and up to 11 GW at scale. A gigawatt of power is roughly half the Hoover Dam's full generating capacity, according to the US Department of Energy.

Last month, Fermi entered a non-binding letter of intent with its first tenant for a 20-year agreement. Still, it does not expect tenant revenue to commence until 2027.

"Any investor buying Fermi will need to have a mindset of 'if you build it, they will come'", Kennedy said.

Analysts said execution will be key to sustain market enthusiasm, with investors expected to closely scrutinise signed contracts and progress on its ambitious buildout.

A successful listing could pave the way for other long-duration, capital-intensive AI infrastructure bets, according to Hooper.

"History offers a cautionary note: many pre-revenue IPOs during the Dot-com era and the recent SPAC boom failed to live up to the hype and ended poorly", Hooper said. — Reuters

FIGHTING DISRUPTS OPERATION

Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant power crisis



External power must be restored to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, which is relying on emergency diesel generators after power lines were severed during ongoing fighting. Russian-installed management says radiation levels are stable, but the IAEA warns the situation is risky. Without power, cooling systems could fail, raising fears of a potential nuclear meltdown. — Reuters

MARKET UNCERTAINTY

US shutdown threatens IPO momentum



The US government shutdown threatens to stall the IPO market's recovery as the Securities and Exchange Commission halts processing IPO paperwork. This delays high-profile listings like Jennifer Garner's Once Upon a Farm and Beta Technologies. While temporary, a prolonged shutdown could disrupt the market, though strong investor demand and momentum may help the IPO rebound continue. — Reuters

STARGATE

Samsung, SK Hynix to supply OpenAI chips



Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix have signed letters of intent to supply memory chips for OpenAI's Stargate project.

OpenAI plans to build two data centres in South Korea through joint ventures with both companies. The deal strengthens South Korea's chip industry and supports the US-led AI initiative, which demands vast semiconductor resources. — Reuters

OPINION

Unlocking the full potential of medical tourism in Oman



HAIDER
AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

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

WORLD Tourism Day celebrated annually on September 27 is typically marked by numerous events and activities dedicated to the tourism sector. In the Sultanate of Oman, tourism institutions play a major role in promoting the country’s tourism vision and its manifestations.

The country is now firmly on the global tourism map, boasting a wealth of attractions that can attract tourists year-round. Relevant institutions are also working to document the concept of tourism in order to protect tourist sites and enhance infrastructure, particularly in locations with high potential for medical tourism. The tourism sector has economic and social strength, providing more jobs for citizens; and promoting training and educational projects for them to join this vital industry. Through Oman Vision 2040, the government is continuously focusing on diversifying the country’s tourism offerings, including medical tourism.

It is also working to establish new tourism investment projects to increase the capacity of hotels, tourist lodgings and venues; and to provide the services tourists need during their travels across Oman.

The goal of World Tourism Day is to raise awareness of the importance of tourism in

economic, social and cultural development. It also highlights the role of tourism in fostering understanding between peoples, focusing on issues such as sustainable tourism, innovation and digital transformation in this sector. In 2023, the Sultanate of Oman hosted the official celebration of World Tourism Day for the first time, which strengthened country’s global image as a safe and natural tourist destination, supporting Oman Vision 2040 to diversify the economy through tourism. It also promoted areas such as the mountains, desert, hot springs and marine environments; and opened doors to foreign investment in tourism projects.

Of late, Oman has begun to focus on medical tourism, combining leisure and wellness, with tourists traveling to specific locations to benefit from natural resources such as mineral springs, sulfurous waters, volcanic mud, a healthy climate and medical resorts for treatment, recreation, or rehabilitation.

The importance of medical tourism lies in providing health benefits to people for treating bone, rheumatic and skin diseases, in addition to improving psychological wellbeing and reducing stress and depression. It also provides rehabilitation for some patients after surgery or recovering from injuries. Wellness and medical tourism

The goal of World Tourism Day is to raise awareness of the importance of tourism in economic, social and cultural development. It also highlights the role of tourism in fostering understanding between peoples, focusing on issues such as sustainable tourism, innovation and digital transformation in this sector.

undoubtedly stimulate the local economy and increase income through medical tourists, in addition to providing job opportunities in the health, hotel, accommodation, transportation; and other sectors. This also helps exploit the country’s natural resources, such as hot sulfur springs, which provide patients with alternative and natural treatments at reasonable prices.

Oman needs more government investment to regulate hot spring sites and treatment facilities to support these important trends.

The prosperity of medical tourism requires good government organisation and high-quality health services. Oman possesses many promising components for medical tourism, relying on natural factors such as hot and sulfur springs, mountain caves and a healthy climate, in addition to mountainous and marine nature, as well as folk medicine and traditional treatments that are still used in some areas.

All of these sites require further investment to regulate access and provide parking spaces, in addition to providing other health services.

To date, medical tourism has not been fully exploited and relies more on local tourism and folk remedies. This requires changing this perception and making medical tourism an important tourism offering.

CHINA UNVEILS
TECH VISA AS US
RAISES FEES

EDUARDO BAPTISTA

China this week launches a new visa programme aimed at attracting foreign tech workers, a move analysts say could strengthen Beijing in its rivalry with Washington as the US imposes steep new costs on skilled migration.

The K visa, announced in August, targets young foreign graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It allows entry, residence and employment without the requirement of a job offer, potentially luring workers deterred by the rising barriers in the US.

Earlier this month, the Trump administration announced a \$100,000 annual fee for H-1B visas, widely used by technology companies to hire skilled foreign workers. “The US has definitely shot itself in the foot on H-1Bs and the timing is exquisite for China’s K visa”, said Michael Feller, chief strategist at Geopolitical Strategy.

China has rolled out measures to attract overseas talent and investment, including visa waivers for many European countries, Japan and South Korea. “The symbolism is powerful: while the US raises barriers, China is lowering them”, said Iowa-based immigration attorney Matt Mauntel-Medici. Immigration experts say the K visa’s biggest attraction is its lack of employer sponsorship requirements.

The H-1B system not only requires sponsorship but also limits entry to 85,000 applicants annually through a lottery. The steep new fee could further reduce demand.

For India, which accounts for over 70% of H-1B recipients, China’s new pathway could be attractive. “It’s an appealing alternative for Indian STEM professionals seeking flexible, streamlined visa options”, said Bikash Kali Das, an Indian student at Sichuan University.

Other countries, including South Korea, Germany and New Zealand, are also loosening rules to attract skilled migrants, intensifying competition for global talent.

Still, the K visa faces hurdles. Chinese guidelines vaguely reference “age, educational background and work experience” without clear thresholds. Details on permanent residency, family sponsorship, or financial incentives remain absent. Unlike the US, China rarely grants citizenship to foreigners.

Language is another obstacle: most Chinese tech firms operate in Mandarin, limiting opportunities for non-Chinese speakers. Political tensions could also shape access, particularly for Indian applicants.

“China will need to ensure Indian citizens feel welcome and can do meaningful work without Mandarin”, said Feller. — Reuters

Accountancy firms cull
1,100 graduate positions

In response to an ongoing decline in advisory work, the Big Four accounting firms have eliminated 1,100 entry-level roles in the UK over the past two years.

PwC, Deloitte, KPMG and EY are some of the biggest recruiters of graduates in the UK, bringing in thousands of entry-level accountants and consultants each year. But their combined intake of graduates and apprentices has fallen from 6,500 in 2023 to 5,400 this year.

However, the decline has slowed. Deloitte and EY have kept entry-level hires steady at 1,500 and 1,600 respectively, but recruited 400 fewer people than two years ago. KPMG is expected to bring in around 1,000 new hires this year, compared with nearly 1,400 in 2023.

Only PwC has cut entry-level hires this year: it took on 1,500 graduates and school-leavers in 2004 and 1,300 in 2025. The number of entry-level hires it has made has also fallen by 20 per cent over the past two years. According to PwC’s senior partner, Marco Amitrano, the biggest reason for its lower graduate intake this year was the UK’s economic backdrop — and the resulting slowdown in investment, hiring and dealmaking.

Competition for graduate roles in the financial and professional services sector is at a record level in the UK: there are now 140 applications for every job in the two sectors, according to the Institute of Student Employers; and while vacancies in entry-level roles in all sectors increased 4 per cent this year, there were 5 per cent fewer vacancies in financial and professional services.

Accountancy firms are scaling back graduate recruitment as part of a wider effort to trim headcount and protect profits. PwC was the first Big Four firm to release its financial results this year. These showed the average UK partner’s pay has edged up amidst a year of job cuts and cost control at the firm.

Partners took home an average of £865,000 for the year ended June 30, 2025, up from £862,000. During this year, headcount fell by more than 2,000 across its UK, Middle East and



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

Competition for graduate roles in the financial and professional services sector is at a record level in the UK: there are now 140 applications for every job in the two sectors, according to the Institute of Student Employers.



Accountancy firms are scaling back graduate recruitment as part of a wider effort to trim headcount and protect profits.

Channel Islands businesses, from 36,006 to 33,770. PwC said it “took the tough decision to reduce roles in some areas” but overall spending on pay and promotions was in line with last year. It attributed a 20 per cent growth in profits to £1.37 billion to “operational transformation and considered cost management”.

Deloitte, EY and KPMG are due to release their financial performance in the coming weeks.

Tough market conditions are not the only factor, however. In particular, AI has reduced the demand for entry-level roles, automating tasks that junior staff performed. In response, the bosses at the Big Four have stepped up AI training for their entry-level staff and shifted graduate schemes to focus on higher-value activities.

A KPMG spokesperson said the firm’s graduates and apprentices will “start to learn about the new

technology and AI tools available from the moment they start”. There is a growing emphasis on “skills including effective communication and critical thinking that unlock the potential of AI”, they added.

Managing partner for audit and assurance at Deloitte UK, Allee Bonnard, said AI can speed up learning for new trainees. That will enable them to take on more meaningful tasks earlier in their careers.

Chief executive of professional services research firm source, Fiona Czerniawska, said: “The value of the audit is what you bring around it in terms of business knowledge and being able to interpret the numbers, so that’s something firms can start training people in much earlier”.

But she also warned firms that they should make sure they did not “overshoot and take out too many people”.

CLASSIFIEDS

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC
The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Panchakarma, Yoga, Kalari, Massage Dhara etc.... Rehabilitation, Marma Therapy & Post Delivery Care
Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road, Near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King
Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com



PTC Rent A Car
Travel & Tours

Daily, Weekly, Monthly Car Rental Available
9345 3444

**UMP**
UNITED MAWA PROJECTS

Auditors & Accountants
• Audit & Accounting • CFO Services • Secondment
• VAT & Tax Return Filing • VAT Refund Assistance
Contact: 92182750 • Email: contact@umpauditors.com

PROJECT ASSISTANT
Female, well-versed in **Project Administration** with 13 years of proven experience in training, recruitment, administration, finance, and secretarial support.
As an **Executive MBA** holder, I can contribute effectively to your organizational goals and looking forward to an interview call and the opportunity.
Contact: 98260708 | meena.v24@gmail.com

FLAT FOR RENT

MABELA.

Contact: 99888390/
79939666

STORE FOR RENT

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

FOR RENT

Ware House at Misfa.
Contact: 99888390 / 79939666

SIT. WANTED

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

INDIAN female
Pharmacist with 2 years' experience in Oman. Passed Oman Prometric and licensed.
Seeking a suitable job opportunity.
mob:96126261 /95137665

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

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

Contact: 00968 78099493

**PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.**

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

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

**Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309**
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

SHOWROOM FOR SALE
ONE OF RENOWNED COMPANY SHOWROOM FOR SALE AT HONDA ROAD (PRIME LOCATION) WITH MATERIAL
NOTE: Showroom visit time 16:00 to 19:00 PM
INTERESTED PERSONAL/COMPANY CAN CONTACT ON **+968 9490 7861**

INDIAN electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in "MEP" construction field in Oman seeks suitable job.
Contact: 92919281

ACCOUNTS/ SALES Indian male (b com) having 2+ years of experience in India accounts sales looking for suitable placement, join immediately.
Contact: 76324360

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

INDIAN civil engineer, having more than 30 years experience in various ministries. Seeks suitable senior position. Available immediately.
Contact: 94158080

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

INDIAN electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in "MEP" construction field in Oman seeks suitable job.
Contact: 92919281

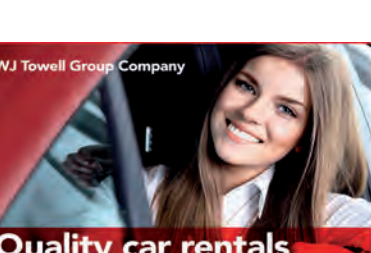
SRI LANKAN Male — (CGMA ACMA+ CPA+BBA) Asst. Finance Manager/ Chief Accountant, 12+ Experience in Oman & GCC, Expert in Finan. Reporting (MIS), VAT, Audit, Cashflow, Budget, AR AP Recon, IFRS, Payroll, Banking. Contact: 78773250. Email: ali.mohamedown@gmail.com

INDIAN Male Exp in Senior Accounting, Warehouse Management & Finance/Accounts across Trading, Shipping & Logistics and Real Estate sectors in Oman. Proficient in ERP: Orion, Odoo, E-Promise, Dolphin. Seeking suitable placement. Contact/WhatsApp: +968 95271876

ACCOUNTS/ Finance: Indian male (MBA Fin) having more than 19 years of experience in Oman accounts & finance looking for suitable placement, NOC available and can join immediately. Contact: 92076716

Driving School
Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)
Contact No: 99074072

We Are Hiring
A reputed Organization is looking for a **Property Manager & Real Estate Developer**
✔ Experience not less than 5 years
Apply Now
Send your C V to **recruitmentalf70@gmail.com**

**WJ Towell Group Company**

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.
Muscat: 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

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

Looking for reliable engineering solutions in Oman?
Ascend Engineering L.L.C offers expert contracting and consulting across civil, mechanical, and infrastructure projects.
With a proven track record in design, project management, supervision, and execution, we serve commercial, industrial, and government sectors with professionalism and integrity.
• **Civil & Structural Engineering**
• **MEP & Infrastructure Works**
• **Turnkey Project Execution**
• **Project management & Supervision Services**
• **Renovations & Fit-outs**
Contact us today for business enquiries or project discussions:
+968 9731 2026, sdmoshe98@gmail.com; startupoffice25@gmail.com
Build with confidence. Consult with Ascend.

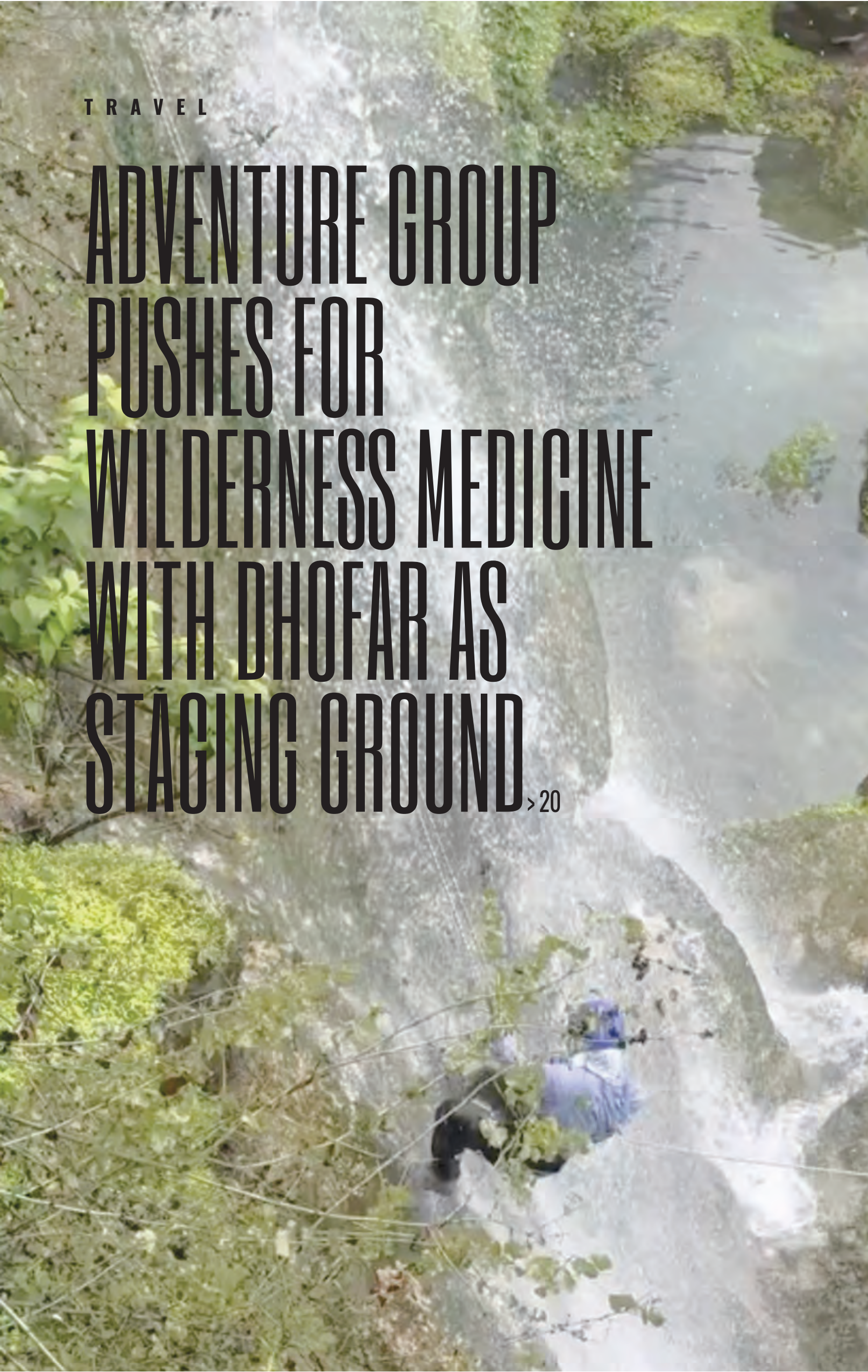
OMAN DAILY Observer

FREE* CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED
* NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY
Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.

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

ART/LIFE



T R A V E L

ADVENTURE GROUP PUSHES FOR WILDERNESS MEDICINE WITH DHOFAR AS STAGING GROUND

> 20

CHANGING WORLD

Has the change been for the better or for the worse?



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

NOT MANY decades ago, life felt less complicated. Neighbours knew one another, families enjoyed quality time together and sleep was greatly appreciated.

During that period, the pace of life was quite slow and our expectations were simple because the cost of living was not so high or burdensome.

Our beloved children would enjoy family gatherings or some playtime at the local playgrounds and that was enough to bring big smiles to their faces as they ran around the open fields.

Back then, a few coins were enough to meet the household's needs. Things like rent, school fees and fuel costs were affordable and people were quite content with less stress.

Many luxuries were rare, such as trendy mobile phones, PlayStations and all the games you can name, but thankfully, the essentials of daily life were within our reach and we could manage them financially. One salary at the end of the month was sufficient to cover bills, food, rent and basic needs, with some extra left over. Whatever we had, we shared with kindness.

Fast forward to today and it feels like a completely different story. There has been great development — many supermarkets, grocery stores and markets have sprung up. Every few metres, there is either a shop, butcher, leisure facility, or a quality mall. Technology has truly kept us connected, but this too comes at a cost.

As we progress, more demands continually emerge. A month's grocery shopping now costs three to four times what it used to. The families we once knew who gathered happily are still finding time to meet but are busier than ever, each person glued to their phone.

The happy children we once saw running around in playgrounds are now often absorbed in their TV or phone screens. Education, which was once the ladder to success, has become so costly that many parents find themselves with no choice but to struggle to balance their salary with necessities.

It's not just about good roads, buildings, facilities, hospitals and technology; the cost of survival has soared so high for the average person that many are struggling to keep up. Many have forgotten the true meaning of a good life.

The past was cheaper and simpler, while the present leaves us in awe. I wish life were manageable not only for the wealthy but for everyone. Until next time, let the change not change you.

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



ENTERTAINMENT

French-British actress Stacy Martin poses during a photocall ahead of the presentation of creations by Louis Vuitton for the Women Ready-to-wear Spring-Summer 2026 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week. — AFP



MUSIC

Brazilian singer and songwriter Liniker performs during the Doce Maravilha music festival in Rio de Janeiro. — AFP



LIFESTYLE

Visitors eat snacks near a 'KPop Demon Hunters' themed zone at the Everland Resort, South Korea's largest theme park, in Yongin, Gyeonggi Province. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



sree_landscapes
19 September

Follow



Where Camels Graze



rjs_treasury
20 September

Follow



Beauty of Remote Places

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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

UN opens virtual museum to spotlight artefact trafficking



THE UN’S cultural agency on Monday announced the launch of a virtual museum showcasing hundreds of looted artefacts in a bid to draw attention to the trafficking of cultural property. A Zambian ritual mask, a pendant from the ancient Syrian site of Palmyra and a painting by Swedish artist Anders Zorn are among nearly 250 stolen objects displayed on Unesco’s new interactive platform. But that is only a fraction of the some 57,000 items Interpol estimates are in circulation, part of a criminal trade for which the international police organisation’s database is the sole reference point. Unesco Director-General Audrey Azoulay said she hoped the museum would draw attention to the vast illegal trade network. The initiative will inform “as many people as possible” about “a trade that damages memories, breaks the chains

of generations and hinders science”, Azoulay said, describing the virtual museum as “unique”. The online space, designed by renowned Burkina Faso-born architect Diebedo Francis Kere, allows visitors to explore the lost objects and trace their origins and purpose through accompanying stories, testimonies and photos. “Each stolen object takes with it a part of the identity, memory and know-how of its communities of origin”, said Sunna Altnoder, head of Unesco’s unit for combating illicit trafficking. The initial collection will grow as more stolen artefacts are 3D modelled. But the goal, Altnoder said, is for it to one day close, as Unesco hopes the pieces will instead move to a “Returns and Restitutions” section showcasing items recovered or sent back to their countries or communities of origin.—AFP



‘New chapter’: Paris Fashion Week showcases makeover



SHOWS by Saint Laurent and Weinsanto will kick off a hotly anticipated Paris Fashion Week on Monday, with a dozen brands set to showcase new creative directors following a major industry shakeup. The Spring-Summer 2026 season will underline the recent renewal of the top ranks of the global luxury clothing industry. The first Chanel show by Matthieu Blazy is expected to be the biggest highlight. But VIPs and fashionistas jostling for the highly coveted invitations for his debut show will have to wait until the penultimate day on October 6 to glimpse the work of the 41-year-old Franco-Belgian. Monday will see collections from Saint Laurent, France’s Weinsanto and Belgian Julie Kegels, a newcomer, with the first day of Paris Fashion Week typically packed with VIP and celebrity sightings. The sector as a whole, facing a slowdown in spending from the world’s elite, is banking on the changes at major labels to infuse fresh excitement and hopefully boost sales. “We’re opening a new chapter, not so much for Fashion Week itself, but for what fashion will be over the next 10 years”, said Pierre Groppe, fashion editor-in-chief of Vanity Fair magazine in France. Blazy was poached from Kering-owned Bottega Veneta to take over at Chanel and he faces the daunting task of turning the page

on Karl Lagerfeld’s decades-long dominance. The “Kaiser” defined the hugely profitable brand up to his death in 2019 and was succeeded by his longtime co-worker Virginie Viard, who was seen as a successful continuity candidate. Blazy, who first caught the eye as a designer at Maison Margiela, took one of the most sought-after spots in the fashion business in December and has given almost nothing away about his intentions. — NEW ERA — Another hotly awaited moment in Paris will be Jonathan Anderson’s first women’s collection for LVMH-owned Dior, on October 1, after the Northern Irish designer presented a well-received debut men’s line in June. Attention will also turn to Pierpaolo Piccioli at Balenciaga, who is succeeding the provocative streetwear-loving Demna, who has switched to struggling Gucci. The Georgian, who uses one name, went big on the red-carpet glamour with his first collection for Gucci during Milan Fashion Week which wrapped up on Sunday. Duran Lantink is also set to make his debut during Paris Fashion Week at Jean Paul Gaultier, the brand’s first permanent artistic director since its founder retired in 2020. For Claire Thomson-Jonville, editorial director of Vogue France, “the massive arrival of new creative directors is the sign of a new era:

they bring a more global, inclusive and responsible vision, while reinventing the heritage of the houses”. The week will also see the debut of Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez at Loewe, Miguel Castro Freitas at Mugler and Mark Thomas at Carven. “We can call this a historic Fashion Week”, added Thomson-Jonville. — NO ‘DOWNTIME’ — Some major designers will be showing only their second collections — often considered by industry insiders as more meaningful than the debuts. They include Sarah Burton for Givenchy, Glenn Martens for Maison Margiela and Haider Ackermann for Tom Ford. Alongside the newcomers will be collections from Louis Vuitton and Hermes; and the return of long-absent labels such as Celine and Thom Browne, promising a Fashion Week “without downtime”, said Elvire von Bardeleben, fashion editor at French newspaper Le Monde. Victoria Beckham will unveil her latest designs on October 3, just days before the airing of a new three-part Netflix documentary about the former Spice Girl. The Paris event comes at a turbulent time for the luxury industry, facing slowing demand in China, US tariffs on exports and uncertainty over the global economy. — AFP

FEATURES



Courses and certifications in wilderness medicine are now offered across key regions — Australia’s rugged Darwin region, renowned for its remote wilderness training, leads the way with courses such as Wilderness Advanced Life Support (WALS) and Wilderness First Responder (WFR). Similarly, in North America, the University of Utah’s Wilderness Medicine Programme has set the standard for comprehensive, research-driven training. These programmes focus on practical skills, decision-making under pressure and improvisation — all essential in challenging environments where quick medical responses can mean the difference between life and death.

Now, Oman is poised to join this growing global

He said, “The programme also included rappelling, proper first aid for injured persons and safe extraction through trails. We extend our sincere gratitude and support to everyone who contributed to the success of this course, with all love and dedication”.

Their partnership aims to introduce this innovative curriculum into Oman, creating a new standard for wilderness preparedness.

Managed under the expert guidance of Ziad Ahmad, KWM’s Director of Planning, the course offered an immersive experience designed to prepare explorers for real-world emergencies in remote environments. In their Dhofar trip, participants learned how to manage trauma, treat environmental injuries, perform



ADVENTURE GROUP PUSHES FOR WILDERNESS MEDICINE WITH DHOFAR AS STAGING GROUND

YERU EBUEN

OMAN WITH its verdant scenery and vibrant array of wildlife, a different kind of expedition took shape — one that combined daring exploration with vital medical knowledge. Picture a team of adventurers venturing into the lush wilderness of Dhofar Governorate during the peak of Khareef Dhofar Season. The thick undergrowth, the shimmering green leaves of trees and the chorus of animals awakening to the bounty of the season create an ideal backdrop for a pioneering initiative in wilderness medicine.

This is not merely about thrill-seeking; it is about fostering a deeper understanding of outdoor safety, resilience and responsibly managed adventure. This emerging movement is more than a passing trend; it reflects a global shift towards safer, more sustainable outdoor pursuits. Wilderness medicine, a specialised field dedicated to providing healthcare in remote environments, has gained significant international traction in recent years.

As outdoor activities such as hiking, climbing and camping become more popular worldwide, the demand for trained professionals capable of managing emergencies far from conventional medical facilities has surged.



movement. With its stunning, varied landscapes — from mountainous terrains and stark deserts to unspoiled coastlines — the Sultanate of Oman offers a natural playground for outdoor enthusiasts.

This is where Change Your Routine (CYR), a distinguished adventure outfit, is stepping in. Known for pioneering responsible adventure experiences, CYR has recently partnered with Kuwait Wilderness Medicine (KWM), a trailblazing organisation launched in Kuwait in 2022 to foster outdoor safety and emergency readiness.

Led by Dr Nawaf Dehrab, KWM, quickly earned recognition for its advanced courses, which blend outdoor survival skills with medical response training. Their flagship initiative, the Responder Adventures Wilderness Course (AWC), combines practical medical skills with the spirit of adventure — training participants to handle emergencies confidently and fostering a culture of safety and resilience.

As Chief Adventure Officer Haitham al Hasani reflects on the importance of hands-on training in wilderness settings, he states, “There were different activities in this several day training event. The second day was a special day of training on rope ties, how to do a rope ambulance and the experience of going down the ropes to reach the injured and then training to evacuate the injured to a safety location and deal with him in difficult conditions”.

He added, “The last day before the theoretical exam and it was filled with practical training and applications. We learned how to start a fire in natural settings, first aid techniques for the injured, how to make a stretcher and immediate response handling for emergencies”.



evacuations and improvise medical solutions in situations where waiting for professional help could take hours or even days.

By doing so, they hope to foster a future generation of outdoor enthusiasts and rescue teams who are as responsible as they are adventurous. The partnership between Change Your Routine and Kuwait Wilderness Medicine signals a broader cultural shift. It champions a responsible approach to adventure — one where exploration is paired with preparedness, education and respect for the environment.

Despite Oman’s growing reputation as an adventure destination, the country has not yet fully embraced the need for specialised wilderness medical training on a regional scale. This gap presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Through this programme, Oman stands on the cusp of embracing significant momentum in wilderness medicine. The partnership between Change Your Routine and Kuwait Wilderness Medicine exemplifies a progressive step towards informed exploration — turning adventure into a vehicle for learning and safety.

As this trend gains traction, it heralds a new era of outdoor pursuits in Oman: one where curiosity is met with preparation and awe-inspiring landscapes are explored with confidence and care.