

HIS MAJESTY BEGINS FOUR-DAY STATE VISIT TO UK

K I N G C H A R L E S I I I , Q U E E N C A M I L L A T O H O L D O F F I C I A L R E C E P T I O N T O D A Y

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK arrived in London on Monday afternoon on a four-day state visit to the friendly United Kingdom. Upon His Majesty's arrival at Stansted Airport, he was received by Lord Henry Hood, Personal Representative of His Majesty the King (Head of the Mission of Honour), who welcomed His Majesty and his accompanying delegation as honoured guests of the United Kingdom. Also present to receive His Majesty the Sultan were a number of British officials, Badr bin Mohammed al Manthari, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Kingdom, and a number of members of the Omani Embassy in London. His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom and Her Majesty Queen Camilla will hold an official reception ceremony for His Majesty the Sultan on Tuesday at Windsor Castle, in welcome of His Majesty the Sultan's gracious visit.

FOUR-DAY STATE VISIT
Earlier, His Majesty left for the friendly United Kingdom (UK) on a four-day state visit, during which he will meet His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth. The visit comes in response to the gracious invitation received by His Majesty the Sultan from His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom. The visit reflects the keenness of the leaderships of the two countries to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two friendly nations and to extend new bridges of cooperation and investment across various levels, achieving growth and prosperity for both countries.

SEE ALSO P2, 3, 4 & 5



Upon arrival at Stansted Airport, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik was received by Lord Henry Hood, Personal Representative of His Majesty the King (Head of the Mission of Honour).

IN BRIEF HM'S GREETINGS CONVEYED



King Sultan Ibrahim of Malaysia received the credentials of Eng Hatim bin Hilal al Yaqoubi as Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Malaysia. This took place when the King of Malaysia received the ambassador at the Istana Negara National Palace in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur. During the audience, the ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the King of Malaysia, along with His Majesty's wishes of continued prosperity for the Malaysian people. For his part, the King of Malaysia asked the ambassador to convey his greetings and best wishes to His Majesty the Sultan, along with his wishes of further progress and prosperity for the Omani people.

OPINION



Royal ties and shared history shape relations...
by Dr Najma al Zidjaly. — P8

Visit to UK strengthens a historic partnership... by Karim Easterbrook. — P9

Oman-UK relations... deep, historic and firmly established over 2 centuries

THE POLITICAL and diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom are among the most deeply rooted bilateral relations in the region, their foundations extending over more than two centuries. This relationship is described as “deep, historic and firmly established,” and the friendship between the two countries rests upon the ‘Treaty of 1800,’ which laid the foundations of their strategic partnership. Diplomatic relations between the two countries continue through high-level visits and regular mechanisms, with His Majesty the Sultan's Royal visit to the United Kingdom representing the first state visit since 1982. Regular mechanisms have likewise been an important factor in the evolution of diplomatic relations, foremost among them the Oman-UK Joint Working Group, which held its 18th round in Muscat in September 2025. The two countries also signed the Comprehensive Agreement on Enduring Friendship and Bilateral Cooperation in 2019, described as a strong indicator of the mutual commitment to



The Royal visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik reflects the level of the firmly established historical relations between the two friendly countries.

elevating bilateral relations, extending back centuries, into a new era of cooperation. The relationship between

the two countries transcends the bilateral dimension to encompass coordination on issues of regional security and

stability. All these indicators affirm that the Omani-British relationship is not merely a historical legacy, but an effective and continuing political and diplomatic partnership, renewed through high-level visits, institutional mechanisms and continuous coordination on regional and international challenges.

HISTORICAL RELATIONS
In statements to Oman News Agency (ONA), a number of researchers and specialists affirmed that the Royal visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom reflects the level of the firmly established historical relations between the two friendly countries across numerous fields, particularly diplomatic and political, noting that the dimensions of this visit will be reflected positively in the future of bilateral cooperation between the two sides during the coming phase. The state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom received widespread attention across international media, including global news agencies and newspapers. — ONA

HM 'S UK VISIT TO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TWO NATIONS



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq departed on Monday morning for the friendly United Kingdom (UK) on a four-day state visit, during which he will meet His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth.

The visit comes in response to the gracious invitation received by His Majesty the Sultan from His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom. The visit reflects the keenness of the leaderships of the two countries to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two friendly nations and to extend new bridges of cooperation and investment across various levels, achieving growth and prosperity for both countries.

His Majesty the Sultan was seen off at the Royal Airport by Their Highnesses, Their Excellencies and military commanders.

Accompanying His Majesty the Sultan during the visit is a high-level official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs; HH Sayyid Loay bin Ghalib al Said, Secretary-General of the Diwan of Royal Court; Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court; Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office; Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister; Dr Hamed bin Said al Aufi, Head of the Private Office; Dr Madeha bint Ahmed al Shaibani, Minister of Education; Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Chairman of the Tax Authority; Hussain bin Ali bin Abdullatif, Adviser at the Private Office; Anwar bin Hilal al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Badr bin Mohammed al Manthari, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Kingdom. — ONA



HM ARRIVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq arrived in London on Monday on a four-day state visit to the friendly United Kingdom. Upon His Majesty's arrival at Stansted Airport, he was received by Lord Henry Hood, Personal Representative of His Majesty the King (Head of the Mission of Honour), who welcomed His Majesty and his accompanying delegation as honoured guests of the United Kingdom. — ONA





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HM 'S STATE VISIT OPENS NEW HORIZONS FOR OMAN-BRITAIN PARTNERSHIP



WINDSOR: The state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom (UK), which began on Monday, received widespread attention across international media outlets, including global news agencies and newspapers.

The media highlighted its political significance and historical dimensions within the context of the deep-rooted ties of friendship and partnership uniting the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, along with the extraordinary importance it acquires as the first visit of its kind in more than four decades. This Royal visit by His Majesty is not merely a protocol event, but rather a new chapter in the narrative of a historical relationship and an established friendship described as 'unshook' since the treaty of 1800.

From the halls of Oxford University to the corridors of the British-Omani Society, which was founded fifty years ago, the bridges of this friendship extend to encompass youth, scientific research, and manufacturing, confirming that the rich history serves as the foundation upon which the future partnership is

constructed.

Richard Stanford, Chairman of the British-Omani Society, affirmed that the state visit paid by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the UK constitutes an extraordinary tribute to the historical bilateral relations between the two friendly countries. He highlighted the importance of this event in consolidating and strengthening relations between the two nations, as well as celebrating the historical bonds of friendship between the two countries and their friendly peoples, whose roots extend back hundreds of years.

He pointed out that this visit represents a prominent milestone in the course of relations between the two countries, carrying with it confirmation of the ongoing reinforcement of their ties and building upon their firm foundations while looking towards the future. He noted that promising opportunities in Oman and the UK allow both countries to intensify cooperation in several fields, including economic sectors, scientific research, and manufacturing, as well as opportunities available to youth in both nations.

He explained that the long history between the two countries constitutes a solid foundation, and that His Majesty the Sultan's Royal visit comes to consolidate this relationship and seek to develop and strengthen it in the future; while history is important, ensuring that the two countries continue together and remain close in the future is no less vital.

For his part, Prof Eugene Rogan, Director of the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, Oxford University, affirmed that the Royal visit of His Majesty the Sultan constitutes an important opportunity to renew the bonds of friendship and historical ties between Oman and the UK. He noted that holding the official reception ceremonies at Windsor Castle carries historical and symbolic significance, reflecting the ancient roots of Omani-British relations spanning several centuries.

He pointed out that bilateral relations enjoy the care and attention of His Majesty the Sultan and His Majesty King Charles III, an interest that serves as an extension of the support these relations received during the era of the late



**RICHARD
STANFORD**
*Chairman,
British-Omani Society*



**DR FARHAN
AHMAD NIZAMI**
*Director of the
Oxford Centre for Islamic
Studies*

State visit marks the first of its kind in more than four decades, reaffirming centuries-old friendship

Joint research, technology transfer and manufacturing offer new avenues for cooperation

*Academic institutions and
the British-Omani Society
strengthen cultural ties and
youth development*

*Cooperation in diplomacy,
security, investment and
energy supports long-term
bilateral relations and
Oman Vision 2040*



PROF EUGENE ROGAN
*Director of the
Middle East Centre at
St Antony's College*



**DR FOUAD
ABDEL-RAZEK**
*An expert in British and
international affairs*

Sultan Qaboos bin Said and the late Queen Elizabeth II.

He explained that water forms the essential link between Oman and the UK, as both are maritime nations with a long-standing history in seafaring navigation.

He explained that what connects the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom is mutual respect for the rule of law and shared support for international law. In this regard, he stated that the initial relations between the two countries were governed by treaties respected by both sides for their mutual benefit; despite the age of those treaties, examining the dynamic relationship between the two countries in the twenty-first century reveals that Oman and the UK represent models of two states upholding a global order based on international law at a time when this system is under immense pressure.

Dr Farhan Ahmad Nizami, Director of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, pointed out that the Royal visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik reflects the level of bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, which date back more than two centuries.

He explained that Oman occupies a unique position regarding the nature of its relationship with the United Kingdom, combining ties at the leadership level, government-to-government relations, and a third level connecting the two countries on a cultural and civilisational scale.

Dr Farhan Ahmad Nizami, Director of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, considered the relationship between Oman and the UK a fine example of this, as its bonds are consolidated through continuous interaction between peoples, whether in commerce, security, education, or culture.

He pointed out that deploying British academic and research expertise in developing Omani competencies and enhancing scientific and academic cooperation between the two countries constitutes an essential pillar for building a sustainable relationship that yields mutual benefit, affirming that joint work opens horizons for exchanging knowledge and

expertise, contributing to solidifying human relations and building firm friendships between the two sides.

Dr Fouad Abdel-Razek, an expert in British and international affairs, affirmed that the state visit paid by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom is not merely a protocol visit, but an expression of the depth of historical relations extending for more than two centuries that have succeeded in navigating political, regional, and international transformations.

He added that Omani-British relations trace their roots back to the early nineteenth century and have witnessed multiple stages of political, commercial, and security cooperation, but have acquired broader dimensions in the modern era, extending into the era of the renewed renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty the Sultan.

Dr Fouad Abdel-Razek pointed out that this relationship today rests on partnership and mutual interests while respecting political decision-making and the distinct foreign policy of both nations. He explained that there is added significance in light of current tensions in the Middle East, where the Sultanate of Oman represents a voice for dialogue and de-escalation, while Britain remains an influential nation enjoying broad political, security, and economic relations in the region.

He explained that the continuity of Omani-British relations rests on three main pillars: the first being political trust accumulated over decades, which helped both countries maintain channels of communication even during periods of regional and international turmoil.

He mentioned that the third pillar comprises economic and commercial interests, which evolved from historical maritime and trade relations into partnerships encompassing investment, energy, education, and technology, noting a highly important factor represented by mutual understanding between the two leaderships and respect for the Omani approach based on balance and non-alignment with bloc politics.

— ONA



Recall

LEXUS

GS-F, RC-F, IS

RECALL DATE: 20/10/2026

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production*	#Number of Affected Commodities
Lexus GS-F, RC-F, IS	2014-2020	92

*Not all vehicles in this production period, are affected.
 #Subject to revision, based on the information received from the manufacturer, from time to time.

Recall consequence

The subject vehicles are equipped with a low-pressure fuel pump, located in the fuel tank, that supplies fuel to the fuel injection system through use of an impeller. The material in this impeller may swell sufficiently to interfere with surrounding components, potentially causing the fuel pump to become inoperative, when it is exposed to high fuel temperatures and high concentration of aromatic fuel components during operation. An inoperative fuel pump under these conditions may result in illumination of check engine and master warning indicators, engine no start, and/or vehicle stall. If a vehicle stall occurs while driving at higher speeds, there is an increased risk of a crash.

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Muscat-London ties: Diplomacy and cooperation for regional security

THE POLITICAL and diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom are among the most deeply rooted bilateral relations in the region, their foundations extending over more than two centuries.

This relationship is described as 'deep, historic and firmly established,' and the friendship between the two countries rests upon the 'Treaty of 1800,' which laid the foundations of their strategic partnership.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries continue through high-level visits and regular mechanisms, with His Majesty the Sultan's Royal visit to the United Kingdom representing the first state visit since 1982. Regular mechanisms have likewise been an important factor in the evolution of diplomatic relations, foremost among them the Oman-UK Joint Working Group, which held its 18th round in Muscat in September 2025.

The two countries also signed the Comprehensive Agreement on Enduring Friendship and Bilateral Cooperation in 2019, described as a strong indicator of the mutual commitment to elevating bilateral relations, extending back centuries, into a new era of cooperation.

The relationship between the two countries transcends the bilateral dimension to encompass coordination on issues of regional security and stability. All these indicators affirm that the Omani-British relationship is not merely a historical legacy, but an effective and continuing political and diplomatic partnership, renewed through high-level visits, institutional mechanisms and continuous coordination on regional and international challenges.

In statements to ONA, a number of researchers and specialists in political affairs and international relations affirmed that the Royal visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom reflects the level of the firmly established historical relations between the two friendly countries across numerous fields, particularly diplomatic and political, noting that the dimensions of this visit will be reflected positively in the future of bilateral cooperation between the two sides during the coming phase.

Awadh bin Said Baqwair, a member of the State Council, said that Oman and Britain enjoy firmly established historical ties extending over more than two centuries, as the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom are bound by relations of friendship through the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of 1798 in the era of the Sultan Sultan bin Ahmed al Busaidi. He explained that Muscat and London have maintained those close relations in terms of political consultation and coordination, and through reciprocal visits between senior officials of the two countries.

He noted that the strategic maritime location of the two countries contributed pivotally to commercial communication, particularly over the past decades, especially since the dawn of the Omani Renaissance in 1970, as well as during the era of the Renewed Renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

He noted that the Omani-British Friendship Association plays a prominent role in continuing cooperation, and that the continuous visits between officials of the two countries, and in support of the fields of defence, economic and educational cooperation and in the field of technology transfer, have made the relations of cooperation and friendship a distinguished model in the relations of the two countries.

He said: "The course of historical relations between the two countries has contributed to creating stability and peace in the region for long decades, and there is no doubt that the international order has witnessed



AWADH
BAQWAIR
State Council member



DR ABDULLAH
BAABOUD
academic specialising in international relations



DR OMRAN
AL ABRI
Head of the Department of Political Science, SQU



major changes. Hence, the two friendly countries contribute to the matter of de-escalation and finding political solutions to all conflicts, particularly the Palestinian cause and also the situation in the Arabian Gulf region."

Dr Abdullah bin Saleh Baaboud, an academic specialising in international relations and Gulf and Middle East affairs, noted that the Royal visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom is a clear expression of the depth and importance of the historical relationship between the two friendly countries. The visit, he added, represents an ideal and timely opportunity to deepen and develop the strategic relations and develop their instruments.

He explained that the Omani-British relationship is unique in the fabric of regional alliances, for it is neither a traditional alliance nor a simple historical connection, but a deeply rooted historical partnership reflecting an evolved understanding of how to protect national sovereignty amid

mounting regional pressures.

He added that relations between the two friendly countries encompass cooperation in numerous political, diplomatic, economic, commercial and military fields, crowned in 2019 by the two countries signing the Joint Defence Agreement, and that these bilateral relations possess a legal depth extending over more than two centuries.

He explained that the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom agree on numerous files and current regional issues, as Muscat and London support UN efforts towards a political and diplomatic solution to these issues.

He said in this regard: "On the Palestinian file, the Sultanate of Oman welcomed Britain's decision to recognise the State of Palestine as a step towards justice, and in the current regional crisis, Britain has commended Omani efforts to find diplomatic solutions."

Dr Omran bin Mohammed al Abri, Head of the Department of Political Science at the College of Economics

and Political Science, Sultan Qaboos University, said that the Omani-British relationship is one of the oldest continuous relationships in the region, but it was not a single relationship so much as successive relationships whose content changed with the shifting balance of power.

He noted that the relationship between the two friendly countries was a mirror of the international order: in the era of British hegemony, London was the near-sole partner; with the Cold War, it turned into a security partnership; then the British withdrawal from east of Suez during the period between 1968 and 1971 came as a true turning point in the course of bilateral relations.

He explained that the Omani approach with Britain is a clear example of what he termed positive neutrality and compound hedging. The features of this approach centre on three matters: the separation of files, so that disagreement on one issue does not obstruct cooperation on another; strategic silence, that is, managing differences away from the media; and transforming the relationship into a mediation asset, as happened in the files of British detainees. Thus, the Sultanate of Oman has become, for Britain, a strategic partner. He said that he looks to the future with realistic optimism, for Britain today, in his view, is a power seeking reliable partners, and Oman is a state seeking economic diversification within the Oman Vision 2040, which contributes to finding genuine points of convergence. — ONA



P.O. Box: 147, Jawharat A' Shatti, PC 134, Sultanate of Oman, Fax: 24698496, E-mail: admin@soharpower.com, Website: www.soharpower.com

Unaudited condensed financial statement for the period 30 September 2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Sohar Power Company SAOG ("Sohar Power" or the "Company"), I am pleased to present the Directors' Report of the Company for the period ended 30 September 2026.

On 10 March 2026, the shareholders of Sohar Power Company held their Annual Ordinary General Meeting ("AOGM").

Health & Safety

The Company maintained an excellent health and safety record during the period. As at the end of Q3 2026, Plant Operations recorded 4,992 LTA-free days on a cumulative basis since the previous PWPA.

The dismantling project for the MSF units, undertaken by the MSF Buyer, recorded 243,040 man-hours project to date with no Lost Time Accidents ("LTA").

The health and safety of employees, contractors, and visitors remain a top priority for the Company. The Company remains committed to maintaining the highest safety standards and ensuring that activities are completed without any LTAs.

Operations

During the period, the Plant generated 1,196,955 MWh of electricity. The three gas turbine units were cycled, as is typical for an open-cycle plant, and recorded an aggregate of 593 starts during the period.

Annual maintenance works were completed during the winter period.

On 29 March 2026, the Company conducted the Annual Performance Test to demonstrate the Plant's capacity for the forthcoming Contract Year commencing on 1st April 2026. The Company demonstrated power capacity in excess of the guaranteed figures on both Natural Gas and Fuel Oil.

Financial Performance

The Company ended the period with a net profit of $\text{OMR } 2.7$ million, compared with a net profit of $\text{OMR } 18.1$ million for the corresponding period in 2025. The variance is mainly attributable to other income arising from a debt write-off in 2025.

Revenue and other income for the period amounted to $\text{OMR } 34.0$ million, compared with

$\text{OMR } 32.4$ million for the corresponding period in 2025. The variance is mainly due higher load factor during 2026 compared to 2025.

Operating costs and taxes for the period amounted to $\text{OMR } 31.3$ million, compared with $\text{OMR } 14.3$ million for the corresponding period in 2025. The variance is mainly due to higher load factor in 2025 and the fact that the PPA in 2025 commencing only in Q2.

The Company's shares trading was transferred from the Monitoring Market to the Parallel Market with effect from 10 May 2026.

Corporate Governance

Consistent with its efforts in previous years, the Company continued to ensure that its organisation, systems, policies, and procedures reflect high standards of governance and comply with the Code of Corporate Governance promulgated by the FSA, including the requirements of the new Code effective since July 2016.

Outlook for 2026

The Company continues to actively pursue plant improvement projects, with particular focus on addressing component obsolescence, equipment deficiencies, and opportunities to enhance plant efficiency and reliability.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to our valued stakeholders, including our shareholders, lenders, APSR, Nama PWP, FSA, and business partners, for their continued support, trust, and confidence throughout the year. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all personnel involved in the operation and maintenance of the Sohar plant, as well as to the Company's employees, for their loyalty, dedication, and continued commitment to the Company's objectives.

Finally, I would like to convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and to His Government, for their continued guidance, support, and encouragement of the private sector and its contribution to the Sultanate of Oman's economic development.

Miklos Almasy
Chairman of the Board

Statement of financial position as at 30 September 2026

	30 Sept 2026 OMR '000	31 Dec 2025 OMR '000	30 Sept 2026 USD '000	31 Dec 2025 USD '000
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	17,519	19,192	45,505	49,849
Right-of-use asset	1,043	1,142	2,708	2,965
	<u>18,562</u>	<u>20,334</u>	<u>48,213</u>	<u>52,814</u>
Current assets				
Inventories	764	834	1,985	2,167
Trade and other receivable	5,281	2,075	13,716	5,381
bank balances	8,047	3,514	20,901	9,129
	<u>14,092</u>	<u>6,423</u>	<u>36,602</u>	<u>16,677</u>
Total current assets	<u>32,654</u>	<u>26,757</u>	<u>84,815</u>	<u>69,491</u>
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Share capital	2,000	2,000	5,195	5,195
Legal reserve	667	667	1,732	1,732
accumulated losses	3,292	560	8,532	1,440
	<u>5,959</u>	<u>3,227</u>	<u>15,459</u>	<u>8,367</u>
Total capital and reserves	<u>5,959</u>	<u>3,227</u>	<u>15,459</u>	<u>8,367</u>
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	12,474	11,907	32,402	30,929
Lease liabilities	966	1,049	2,510	2,725
Provision for decommissioning costs	3,195	3,124	8,299	8,116
Employee benefit liabilities	36	33	94	85
Deferred tax liability	1,725	1,725	4,481	4,479
	<u>18,396</u>	<u>17,838</u>	<u>47,786</u>	<u>46,334</u>
Total liabilities	<u>18,396</u>	<u>17,838</u>	<u>47,786</u>	<u>46,334</u>
Current liabilities				
Term loans	1,117	1,117	2,900	2,900
Lease liabilities	199	199	517	517
Accruals and other payables	6,245	974	16,235	2,537
Amounts due to related parties	255	1,455	663	3,779
Income tax payable	483	1,947	1,255	5,057
	<u>8,299</u>	<u>5,692</u>	<u>21,570</u>	<u>14,790</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>8,299</u>	<u>5,692</u>	<u>21,570</u>	<u>14,790</u>
Total liabilities	<u>26,695</u>	<u>23,530</u>	<u>69,356</u>	<u>61,124</u>
Total equity and liabilities	<u>32,654</u>	<u>26,757</u>	<u>84,815</u>	<u>69,491</u>
Net assets/(deficit) per share	<u>0.298</u>	<u>0.161</u>	<u>0.774</u>	<u>0.418</u>

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the period ended 30 September 2026

	Year ended 30 Sept 2026 OMR '000	Year ended 30 Sept 2025 OMR '000	Year ended 30 Sept 2026 USD '000	Year ended 30 Sept 2025 USD '000
Revenue	32,356	10,039	84,042	26,075
Cost of revenue	(29,538)	(9,359)	(76,726)	(24,306)
Gross profit	2,818	680	7,316	1,769
Other income	1,624	1,876	4,219	4,872
	<u>4,442</u>	<u>2,556</u>	<u>11,535</u>	<u>6,641</u>
Expenses				
General and administrative expenses	(381)	(381)	(990)	(990)
Gain on extinguishment of financial	-	20,531	-	53,327
Liabilities	(847)	(1,412)	(2,200)	(3,670)
Finance costs	(1,228)	18,738	(3,190)	48,667
	<u>(3,456)</u>	<u>27,476</u>	<u>(6,380)</u>	<u>100,034</u>
Profit/(loss) before tax for the period	<u>3,214</u>	<u>21,294</u>	<u>8,345</u>	<u>55,308</u>
Income tax expense	(482)	(3,197)	(1,252)	(5,304)
Net profit/(loss) after Tax for the period	<u>2,732</u>	<u>18,097</u>	<u>7,093</u>	<u>47,004</u>
Basic and diluted earnings share	<u>0.137</u>	<u>0.905</u>	<u>0.356</u>	<u>2.351</u>

Note: The complete accounts either in English or Arabic will be sent to any shareholder by mail within 7 days of receipt.

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



Traditional date farmers, producers, local businesses, and regional/international companies are showcasing agricultural heritage.

EXHIBITION
FEATURES 4,000
VARIETIES OF DATES

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, OCT 19

The fourth edition of the International Dates and Honey Exhibition, organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, was inaugurated by Dr Said bin Hamad al Sagri, Economic Adviser at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, in the presence of Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

More than 4,000 varieties of dates and related products, including premium Omani dates, date derivatives such as molasses, sweets and biscuits, as well as a wide range of honey varieties from different countries, are on display at the expo.

Traditional date farmers, producers, local businesses, and regional/international companies are showcasing agricultural heritage.

The expo includes events and activities that contribute to supporting and developing the dates and honey sectors, enhancing investment and marketing opportunities, and introducing Omani products, according to the organisers.

The exhibition has become Oman's flagship event for two of its most iconic agricultural products. The current edition is the largest yet, bringing together SMEs, family businesses, factories and traders from across Oman and from 13 countries that participated in earlier editions.

ATTORNEY GENERAL
LEADS OMAN
DELEGATION AT UN
CRIME CONFERENCE



Nasr bin Khamis al Sawa'ee, Attorney General, addresses the 13th session of the Conference of the Parties in Vienna. — ONA

VIENNA: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the 13th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which began on Monday in Vienna and continues until October 23.

Oman's delegation is headed by Nasr bin Khamis al Sawa'ee, Attorney General and Head of the Governmental Experts Team. The conference discusses the implementation of the Convention and its protocols, alongside enhancing international cooperation in combating organised crime, including the extradition of wanted persons, mutual legal assistance, combating human trafficking, migrant smuggling and the illicit trafficking in firearms.

In his speech, the Attorney General emphasised the importance of intensifying international efforts to address evolving patterns of transnational organised crime and enhancing proactive action through evidence sharing, developing legislation and raising the efficiency of national capacities.

He reviewed Oman's efforts in updating its legislative system in line with the Convention, pointing to the Penal Law, the Anti-Human Trafficking Law and the Anti-Information Technology Crimes Law.

Oman acceded to the Convention pursuant to Royal Decree 37/2005. — ONA

NIBRAS
ENDOWMENT
FOUNDATION
TO SUPPORT
EDUCATION

MUSCAT: The College of Banking and Financial Studies announced on Monday the official launch of the “Nibras Private Endowment Foundation.” The new entity is an educational endowment institution dedicated to preserving, developing, and managing endowment assets according to the highest governance standards, and directing their returns toward sustainable educational opportunities that

contribute to building a knowledge-based economy serving future generations.

The foundation will direct its yields toward supporting eligible students, funding scientific research, empowering innovation and entrepreneurship, and supporting the fields of financial technology and artificial intelligence, in addition to strengthening community partnerships to develop human

capital and achieve the national priorities of Oman Vision 2040. Hisham Abdulmalik al Hinai, CEO of Nibras Private Endowment Foundation, explained that the foundation's official launch represents an important milestone in consolidating the culture of educational endowments as one of the most vital tools for sustainable investment in people and knowledge. — ONA

Researchers examine
social protection system

SAUD AL ANSARI
MUSCAT, OCT 19

A SEMINAR on developing a comprehensive and unified social protection system in Oman opened on Monday, bringing together officials, academics, researchers and specialists to examine the legislative, institutional and financial dimensions of the system, review comparative experiences and develop recommendations to strengthen its integration and sustainability.

The two-day seminar, organised by the Social Protection Fund in collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) at Mandarin Oriental, Muscat, was held under the auspices of Dr Abdullah al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, in the presence of HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of SQU.

In his opening address, Dr Faisal bin Abdullah al Farsi, CEO of the Social Protection Fund, said the establishment of the fund and the enactment of the Social Protection Law marked a significant step towards unifying the institutional and legislative framework for social protection. The framework brings together state-funded social benefits, social insurance schemes, savings programmes and supplementary programmes based on contributions.

“The true value of the social protection system is reflected in its direct impact on citizens' lives,” Al Farsi said, highlighting its role in supporting children, older people, persons with disabilities and families in need, as well as protecting workers against risks associated with employment and different stages of life. He added that Oman's experience had received international recognition, including the International Social Security Association's (ISSA) Good Practice



The two-day seminar on developing Oman's social protection system opened in Muscat on Monday, organised by the Social Protection Fund in collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University.

“The true value of the social protection system is reflected in its direct impact on citizens' lives.”

**DR FAISAL
AL FARSI**
CEO OF SOCIAL
PROTECTION
FUND

Award for the Asia-Pacific region in 2024. The fund has also collaborated with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to document Oman's experience in redesigning its social protection system.

Al Farsi stressed that further development requires moving beyond legislative and institutional frameworks towards continuous performance evaluation, impact assessment and service improvement. He underlined the importance of scientific research and comparative studies in developing practical recommendations that support financial sustainability and improve benefits, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Khalifa bin Salim al Ghafil, Director of the Legal Affairs Department at the Social Protection Fund and head of the seminar's main organising committee, emphasised the importance of clear and precise legislation in achieving policy objectives. He said the implementation of laws should become an institutional and societal approach grounded in protecting rights and safeguarding national achievements.

Al Ghafil noted that the establishment of the Social Protection

Fund and the replacement of the previous pension funds represented a major transition towards unifying pension systems, their obligations and entitlements. He called for an in-depth academic assessment of the experience to identify opportunities for further development and ensure its sustainability.

The seminar features six peer-reviewed research papers. The first, presented by Sayyid Shabib bin Abdullah al Busaidi, Vice-President of the Social Protection Fund for Insurance Protection Affairs, examines Oman's social protection system and its development. The remaining papers address the legal implications of the fund succeeding the previous pension funds, financing mechanisms and the relationship between social benefit schemes and social insurance systems, alongside comparative studies of the Omani, Moroccan and Saudi experiences and an examination of legislative integration under Social Protection Law No 52/2023. The seminar also seeks to strengthen cooperation between government institutions and academia and encourage knowledge exchange, with its discussions expected to inform future policy decisions.

75,432 Omanis with disabilities recorded in 2025

MUSCAT: The total number of Omani persons with disabilities reached 75,432 in 2025, accounting for 2.5 per cent of the total Omani population, an increase of about 9 per cent compared to 2024, according to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCI). Males constituted 60 per cent of the total, numbering 44,916, compared to 30,516 females, who made up 40 per cent.

The data showed that 59 per cent of Omanis with disabilities are under the age of 40, while Al Batinah North Governorate recorded the highest number, with 16,199 in 2025.

Some 56 per cent of total disability cases among Omanis resulted from non-congenital causes, numbering 42,210 cases, while 15 per cent of disabilities occurred during birth, 20 per cent were due to diseases, and 7 per cent resulted from accidents. Physical disabilities accounted for nearly 28 per cent of total cases.

On educational indicators, the proportion of Omanis with disabilities aged 10 and older whose educational level was below the General Education Diploma reached 42 per cent in 2025. The number of Omanis with disabilities enrolled in school education aged 6 and older reached 483 during the 2025/2026 academic year, including 276 males and 207 females.



Rehabilitation services covered 9,226 individuals across 128 centres in Oman in 2025. — ONA

The proportion of married Omanis with disabilities aged 15 and older reached about 35 per cent in 2025, totalling 26,511, including 17,842 males and 8,669 females.

In the labour market, the economic participation rate of Omanis with disabilities aged 15 and older reached about 38 per cent in 2025, while the number of employed individuals among them grew by 10 per cent compared to the previous year, reaching 18,437, of whom 47 per cent work in the private sector. The largest share of

employed individuals was concentrated in the agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry farming and fishing occupational group, at 18 per cent.

The number of Omanis with disabilities owning one or more plots of land increased by 9.3 per cent in 2025 compared to the previous year, and the number of owners of one or more residential units rose by 10 per cent. Those owning one or more vehicles reached 18,499, an increase of 9.5 per cent compared to 2024.

In social protection, the number of Omani beneficiaries of the disability benefit reached 51,252 in 2025, with males accounting for 61 per cent, while the total amounts disbursed to benefit recipients reached approximately RO 74 million. The number of beneficiaries of prosthetic devices and support services reached 10,074 in 2025, with parking permits for persons with disabilities accounting for nearly 22 per cent of the total services recorded under this indicator.

The number of individuals enrolled in government and private rehabilitation centres at the ministry's expense reached 9,226 in 2025, while the total number of these centres stood at 128. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi meets with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Tehran, Iran. — Reuters

Russian FM arrives in Iran as Moscow looks to mediate in war

TEHRAN: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived in Iran on Monday, Russian media said, in his first visit since the outbreak of the Middle East war as Moscow seeks to play a mediating role. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said that the trip would focus on “regional and international developments”. Lavrov was scheduled to meet Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and hold talks with his counterpart Abbas Araghchi. The veteran diplomat has said Moscow’s efforts are “aimed at preventing the return of a large-scale war”, with talks stalled between Tehran and Washington. His visit comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin told Pezeshkian in early October that Moscow was prepared to contribute to mediation efforts. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said regional issues should be resolved through diplomacy and blamed the United States for insecurity and tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. The Russian foreign ministry said discussions during Lavrov’s visit were expected to focus on “ways to resolve the acute international crisis triggered by the unlawful aggression of the US and Israel against Iran”. The ministry said the war had been a blow to stability and security “not only in the near and Middle East, but also on a global scale”. — AFP

N Korea warns ‘grave situation’ prevailing along border

SEOUL: The powerful sister of North Korea’s leader said that “a grave situation is prevailing” along the Southern border, according to state media, and Pyongyang was considering deploying “more tactical strike means” to the area. The announcement comes amid heightened tensions between the two Koreas, with the nuclear-armed North stepping up weapons tests in recent days, including a “new-type” precision-guided torpedo system that uses artificial intelligence to detect and track targets. “Now the situation of the southern border is very unstable,” Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said in a statement. “A grave situation is prevailing along the southern border due to the reckless behaviour of the ROK military gangsters,” she said. Citing South Korea’s firing of warning shots, broadcasts from propaganda loudspeakers and what she called a “mine explosion farce”, Kim said the incidents had “gone beyond the red line”. North Korea has rejected claims it was behind an explosion that injured three soldiers last month inside the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). “Our military leadership is examining the issues of deploying more tactical strike means along the southern border as a preemptive and suppressive measure to deal with contingency,” said Kim, but did not specify the details of the tactical strike. Kim also added that the North is reviewing “resuming the loudspeaker broadcasting against the ROK and considering other necessary and appropriate measures”. She warned that if the actions were to continue, “Seoul will surely regret and face uncontrollably terrible danger”. — AFP

COURT GIVES META 24 HRS TO PROVE LULA, BOLSONARO EQUAL TREATMENT

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil’s top electoral court on Monday gave US social media giant Meta 24 hours to prove it is treating President Luiz Inacia Lula da Silva and his right-wing opponent Flavio Bolsonaro equally. The order came after Lula’s campaign alleged that Meta, which owns Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, is suppressing his online content in order to boost Bolsonaro ahead of Sunday’s decisive runoff election. Meta has denied taking any actions to favour one side in the

election, but previously said that some of Lula’s campaign ads had been mistakenly deactivated due to technical errors not isolated to Brazil. Lula’s campaign has also alleged inconsistencies on WhatsApp’s artificial intelligence tool, saying Lula-related election content had been limited but not for Bolsonaro. On Thursday, a judge from the Superior Electoral Court ordered Meta to ensure the same rules were applied to both candidates through

the runoff election, among other directives, with a potential daily fine of 500,000 Reals (\$100,000) for noncompliance. The ruling on Monday said that Meta had failed to demonstrate compliance with the order and increased the penalty to one million Reals (\$200,000) per day, according to a court document. “The continued noncompliance, just a few days before the runoff election, demonstrates that the fine imposed was insufficient,” it said. — AFP

France could declare state of emergency over unrest

FRENCH

Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said on Monday that a state of emergency could be imposed “if needed”, while adding that curfews were a better solution to the crisis over violent protests. With six months to go before France elects a successor to President Emmanuel Macron, the country was rocked over the weekend by some of its worst street violence in years. The unrest came after weeks of student demonstrations demanding better conditions in schools.

“I am absolutely determined to restore order,” Lecornu said after a crisis meeting, adding he did not rule out imposing a state of emergency. “If needed, I will do it,” he said. “As things stand, however, the issue of curfews, and the implementation of those curfews, seems better suited to the situation we may be facing.” The prime minister called for localised curfews on Monday, as protesters blocked the entrance to the Louvre in Paris and authorities scrambled to stem public discontent that over the weekend saw mass cost-of-living demonstrations spill over into some of the worst street violence in recent years. He huddled with ministers in a crisis meeting after the interior minister said the police “had lost control” during the weekend’s unrest.



Protesters block the entrance to the Louvre Museum in Paris. — AFP

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SEBASTIEN LECORNU
FRENCH PRIME MINISTER

With the Yellow Vests movement, which organised the weekend’s rallies, calling for a new round of protests next Saturday, Lecornu called for regional authorities to impose “partial” and “localised” curfews to protect businesses after hundreds of shops were damaged and looted. Other European countries, where anger over rising prices has also led to protests, were keeping a nervous eye on the developments, with smaller clashes breaking out in Milan and Belgium over the weekend and protests simmering in Spain and Portugal. Some half a million people turned out across France on Saturday to denounce the surging cost of living, a culmination of four weeks of protests that began with high school students demanding better conditions at their schools.

What started as peaceful demonstrations morphed into violence in some places, as masked groups on the sidelines of the protests attacked law enforcement, broke into town halls and other public buildings, setting many of them ablaze, looted shops, and set fire to cars, bicycles and scooters on the streets. Interior Minister Laurent Nunez offered to resign on Monday after more than 2,500 people were arrested and nearly 1,000 members of the security forces injured. Protesters were also hurt, with one demonstrator’s hand blown off by a police crowd-control grenade. “On Saturday, in some major cities, you couldn’t look shopkeepers in the eye after hundreds of shops had been looted and tell them we hadn’t lost control,” Nunez said. French President Emmanuel Macron refused Nunez’s resignation, even as he acknowledged security and intelligence failures in the government response, despite the deployment of some 60,000 law enforcement personnel across the country on Saturday. In an address to the nation, Macron slammed the “unbridled” violence and said local authorities would be able to ban some rallies, but stopped short of imposing more drastic measures. City authorities in Marseille said on Monday they had banned public gatherings from noon to 08:00 pm. — AFP



WFP CUTS AID TO 500,000 PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

GAZA: The UN World Food Programme has said funding shortages are forcing major cuts to its aid programme in Gaza, leaving about 500,000 people without monthly food support in a territory where two-thirds of the population struggle to get enough to eat. The WFP said it was reducing the number of recipients of its monthly assistance to 1.1 million people from 1.6 million. In addition, food rations have been halved, cash assistance has been cut for 75,000 families, and the number of daily hot meals for those unable to cook has fallen to 150,000 from 250,000, with some families in hard-to-reach areas now receiving a hot meal only every other day. The WFP said about 1.4 million people, or two-thirds of Gaza’s population, face crisis levels of food insecurity or worse, including roughly 200,000 people in emergency conditions. “It’s a year into the agreement of this ceasefire. Well, life is still brutal here. There is no proper shelter... There is no basic service. There is no safety, no security,” acting Executive Director of the WFP Carl Skau said. “These cuts are happening just as we are facing the fourth winter. You know, I’ve been through the winters here, absolutely brutal,” he added. — Reuters

ADVERSE WEATHER

Residents trapped as rain floods Spain



Helicopters rescued people stranded on their rooftops as torrential rains swept across eastern Spain on Monday, causing floods that have killed at least two people and prompted authorities to issue shelter-in-place orders for more than 800,000 residents. The downpour from Storm Adam cut off several towns along the Mediterranean coast as rivers burst their banks and streets turned into torrents. National weather agency AEMET said conditions were “extremely adverse”. — Reuters

FIGHTING ESCALATION

Attack on Yemen govt camp kills over 50



More than 50 people were killed and over 200 wounded when Ansar Allah hit a military camp in energy-rich Shabwa province with ballistic missiles, officials and military sources said. It marked the deadliest attack in weeks as fighting escalates after the collapse of a years-long truce. Three ballistic missiles struck Al Alam camp in Shabwa. Majed al Nuzaili, spokesperson for the Yemeni armed forces, described it as a training centre for security and police recruits. — AFP

MASSIVE BLAZES

Indonesia fires have burned 1.9m hectares



Indonesian wildfires that have caused a regional haze crisis burned more than 1.9 million hectares in the first nine months of 2026, a monitor analysing satellite data said. The report came as Indonesian officials said they had accepted help from neighbours Malaysia and Singapore to combat the blazes. President Prabowo Subianto ordered on Monday a “massive deployment” of resources to tackle the blazes, according to the government. — AFP

OPINION

His Majesty’s state visit to boost trade and strategic ties



WHEN HIS Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik left Muscat on Monday for a four-day state visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of His Majesty King Charles III, it was more than diplomatic protocol.

It was a reaffirmation of one of the oldest and most stable friendships in the modern world – a relationship that has endured for over two centuries and is now poised for its most ambitious chapter. Today, that historic trust is being converted into economic opportunity. And the timing could not be more significant.

Oman and the United Kingdom do not need to build trust. They already have it. What they are now building is scale. Rooted in mutual respect and forged by history, it has been sustained by shared interests in peace, stability and trade.

From 19th century treaties of friendship to defence cooperation, education exchanges and close people-to-people links, the UK has been a consistent partner in Oman’s journey. That continuity matters in a world where alliances shift quickly.

Oman is in the midst of a profound transformation under Oman Vision 2040. British firms are present across Oman’s economy – from energy and logistics in Al

Duqm and Suhar, to engineering, education, healthcare and financial services.

The new generation of cooperation is aligned with the future. Oman is investing in green hydrogen, developing economic and industrial zones under OPAZ, expanding world-class ports – with Salalah ranked second globally in efficiency – and building new cities such as Sultan Haitham City. In all these areas, British expertise in renewable energy, engineering, finance and logistics is a natural partner.

Similarly, the UK is seeking reliable, long-term partners for energy security and resilient supply chains. Oman, with its strategic location overlooking the Strait of Hormuz, its investment-grade rating of BBB- Stable, its stable currency, and its network of free trade agreements including the unique Oman-US FTA, offers exactly that – a stable gateway to the GCC, Asia and Africa.

The high-level delegation accompanying His Majesty underscores this breadth. The visit covers the full spectrum – from defence to trade, investment, education and culture.

Oman offers 100 per cent foreign ownership, tax exemptions up to 30 years, and the 10-year Golden Residency. The UK is seeking to deepen trade post-Brexit. There is scope for a significant leap, and negotiations

Oman-UK ties are not looking back at history – they are looking forward to shared growth. From a friendship forged in history to a partnership built for the future, this state visit marks the beginning of a new chapter that promises prosperity for both peoples

for a GCC-UK Free Trade Agreement, in which Oman plays a key role, will benefit from this visit’s momentum.

BP, Shell and other British energy majors have been part of Oman’s story for decades. Now they are partners in its transition – in hydrogen, carbon capture, wind and solar. The UK’s leadership in offshore wind and climate finance complements Oman’s immense solar and wind resources.

Thousands of Omani graduates from British universities form a living bridge between the two nations.

With the Minister of Education part of the delegation, cooperation in higher education, research and vocational training is expected to grow.

What makes this partnership unique is that it is strategic, not transactional. Both are maritime nations, advocates of dialogue and moderation, and believers in stability as a prerequisite for prosperity.

As His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik meets His Majesty King Charles III, the message is clear: Oman-UK ties are not looking back at history – they are looking forward to shared growth.

From a friendship forged in history to a partnership built for the future, this state visit marks the beginning of a new chapter that promises prosperity for both peoples.

UN TALKS SEEK RESET AS NATURE GOALS LAG

Nearly 200 nations are gathering in Armenia for critical negotiations as governments come under pressure to salvage a landmark nature pact whose goals are slipping out of reach.

Most countries joined a historic call four years ago to halt and reverse the destruction of nature by 2030 but governments have been slow to act on these pledges.

Many goals of the so-called ‘Paris Agreement for Nature’ are falling behind, including a centrepiece commitment to protect 30 per cent of Earth’s land and oceans.

Some of the toughest objectives of the pact, such as cutting subsidies for fossil fuels and other powerful industries, have made little progress.

“We must honestly admit that collectively, we are not yet on track as needed,” Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said ahead of the formal UN negotiations known as COP17.

The summit comes at a difficult time, with public finances under strain and political attention fixed on conflicts, geopolitical tensions and a global energy crisis.

Only a handful of world leaders, including UN chief Antonio Guterres but mostly heads of state from nearby Central Asian nations, turned up for a high-level session ahead of the formal negotiations.

But the stakes could not be higher, Guterres said at the event, describing an unrelenting “war on nature” that threatened the very livability of the planet for future generations.

“We need more action, more speed and more will,” he said. “Halfway to 2030, Yerevan is our moment of accountability. It is time to ask ourselves — are we doing enough?”

A United Nations scorecard issued ahead of COP17 reported that progress toward the 23 biodiversity targets was being made -- but unevenly, and not at pace to meet the 2030 deadline.

A major tension at the summit will be money, with the report finding that the effort to close a yawning gap in necessary finance “falls far short” of what is needed.

European and other wealthy nations obligated to provide biodiversity finance have been pushing for large emerging economies like China to also contribute.

But attention is likely to focus more on how private capital, not public finances, might help plug the shortfall.

A key priority will be encouraging corporations to donate a share of profits to a near-empty UN fund to support conservation in developing countries. — AFP

Royal ties, shared history shape Oman-UK relations

HIS MAJESTY Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has begun his state visit to the United Kingdom, hosted by Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla at Windsor Castle from October 19 to 22. The visit aims to strengthen historic ties between Oman and Britain, expand economic cooperation and investment, and encourage dialogue on regional and international developments.

Yet beyond these important objectives lies another dimension: the relationship between two royal houses and the human connections that can give diplomacy lasting meaning.

The historical significance of this occasion is unmistakable. This is the first state visit to Britain by a reigning Sultan of Oman since the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, visited in March 1982. More than four decades later, His Majesty Sultan Haitham’s visit brings this long-standing relationship into a new era, combining the continuity of historic ties with opportunities for future cooperation.

As an Omani, I take immense pride in our Royal Family and in His Majesty the Sultan of Oman. I am also an admirer of the British Royal Family and a believer in monarchy as an institution that connects generations, preserves traditions and embodies continuity. For me, these interests meet naturally in an occasion that brings together two royal traditions with a long-standing relationship.

Dedicated royal accounts on X will report on the visit and state banquet, discussing everything from the royal guests to the gowns, jewels and tiaras. The excitement will extend across borders, with photographs, commentary and conversations



DR NAJMA AL ZIDJALY

The writer is an Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University

His Majesty’s state visit brings a long-standing relationship into a new era, combining the continuity of historic ties with opportunities for future cooperation

unfolding almost continuously.

Some may see this as a fascination with spectacle. I see a community brought together by an interest in history, tradition and the people behind royal titles.

Through X, an event at Windsor becomes an international experience shared by people who may never enter the castle itself.

There is also a deeper reason to follow these encounters. In November 2024, His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said and His Royal Highness Prince William, the Prince of Wales, served as joint patrons of the ‘Oman: Jewel of Arabia’ expedition, launched at London’s Royal Geographical Society. Inspired by British explorer Bertram Thomas’s 1928 journey through Oman, the project celebrated Omani heritage and environmental sustainability. It thus demonstrated how shared history can inspire practical cooperation and create opportunities for future generations.

Most importantly, His Majesty’s

visit is one of many important steps towards strengthening Oman’s international partnerships. The high-level delegation accompanying him reflects the breadth of these ambitions, from investment and economic development to education and diplomacy. These efforts are part of the wider responsibility of securing Oman’s economic future, safeguarding its stability and improving opportunities and quality of life for its people. They also continue Oman’s historic role in regional dialogue, where engagement and trusted relationships remain essential to peace and understanding.

I also hope this visit may inspire future connections between royal initiatives. I would particularly welcome a meeting one day between Her Highness The Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, and Catherine, Princess of Wales. Given the Princess’s commitment to early childhood development and children’s wellbeing, such a meeting could open opportunities to explore projects supporting children and families in both countries.

As the royal community on X turns its attention to Windsor, I will be watching with enthusiasm. The ceremony, banquet and jewels will naturally capture attention, but their significance lies in what they represent.

This visit brings together history and possibility, tradition and progress, national priorities and human relationships.

The photographs will preserve the occasion; the partnerships and connections it inspires may shape what comes next. That, ultimately, is what makes this state visit worth watching.

From historical legacy to future partnership...



WEDAD AHMED
AL MAAMAI

The writer is a member of the Omani Historical Society

OMANI-BRITISH RELATIONS transcend conventional agreements and short-term interests. Rooted in a long history of enduring dialogue and close cooperation, they continue to open new horizons for a strategic partnership that serves the aspirations of both countries and their peoples in an era of rapid global transformation.

Today, these relations continue to evolve through sustained political, economic, and intellectual engagement, reflecting the depth of their historical ties and both sides' commitment to building a future founded on mutual benefit and promising opportunities. The roots of relations between Oman and the United Kingdom stretch back centuries, shaped by Oman's strategic geographical position and its historic role as a maritime trading hub in the Indian Ocean. In 1800, the two countries signed a historic treaty that reinforced the principles of friendship and bilateral cooperation, marking an important milestone in their diplomatic relationship. Despite the political and economic changes the world has witnessed, Muscat and London have maintained open channels of communication. Omani diplomacy,

grounded in dialogue, positive neutrality, and a commitment to regional stability, remains a key pillar of this partnership, helping bridge differences, build consensus, and support regional and international stability. The strength of bilateral relations is reflected not only in political ties but also in their ability to deliver tangible outcomes in economics, education, and innovation. The Comprehensive Agreement on Enduring Friendship and Bilateral Cooperation, signed in May 2019, established a practical framework for expanding cooperation in technology, science, and sustainable economic growth. These areas align closely with Oman Vision 2040, the Sultanate of Oman's national framework for economic and social planning and sustainable development, particularly in renewable energy, green hydrogen, sustainable tourism, and technological investment. The partnership with the United Kingdom offers opportunities to attract high-value investment, including in the energy sector, facilitate the exchange of technical expertise, and foster entrepreneurship. People remain the deepest and most enduring bridge between the two countries. Decades of academic and cultural exchange have helped develop generations of Omani

The roots of relations between Oman and the United Kingdom stretch back centuries, shaped by Oman's strategic geographical position and its historic role as a maritime trading hub in the Indian Ocean

professionals who have studied and trained at leading British educational institutions. Amid rapid changes in the global labour market, equipping young people with skills in innovation, artificial intelligence, and analytical thinking has become increasingly important. Strengthening partnerships between universities and research centres in both countries would create greater opportunities for Omani talent to contribute actively to the global knowledge economy. Sustaining this historic relationship requires translating agreements and policy frameworks into measurable programmes and projects that deliver tangible value. This calls for effective institutional governance and strategic planning to ensure meaningful and lasting economic and social impact. "Nations that understand the value of their history do not merely revisit it; they make it a starting point for building the future." Omani-British relations demonstrate that historical ties remain vibrant and relevant when adapted to the demands of the present and the opportunities of the future. This enduring friendship provides a solid foundation for an ambitious partnership that serves future generations and contributes to a more prosperous and stable world.

RUBIO SEEKS TO EXPAND CENTRAL ASIA TIES

GRAM SLATTERY

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with counterparts from five Central Asian nations in Uzbekistan on Monday, a trip that has resulted in few public deliverables, but which US officials have presented as a key opportunity to expand American soft power. Rubio, who arrived in the historic Silk Road city of Samarkand on Sunday night, met in the morning with the foreign ministers of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. In the evening, he dined with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and participated in a US-Uzbekistan business council event. The Trump administration has portrayed resource-rich Central Asia - wedged between Russia, Iran and China - as a major geopolitical battleground that deserves more attention than it has received under previous administrations. US officials have placed a particular emphasis on trying to secure greater access to the area's rare earth mineral supplies. Rubio came to Samarkand with more than 200 US business leaders in tow, the State Department said. "I mean, look, it's competition," Rubio told journalists on Monday morning after strolling through Registan Square, a complex of three imposing, azure-tiled madrassas that date to the Timurid Empire. "We have products, we have companies, they make things, and we just want fair competition and an opportunity." Upon arriving at Registan Square, Rubio's Uzbek hosts released hundreds of pigeons into the sky and filled the vast space with local pop music. Upon landing in Samarkand on Sunday night, Rubio was warmly embraced by Uzbekistan's foreign minister, Bakhtiyor Saidov, while two women clad in elaborate gold-and-black traditional dresses known as chopons presented him with a bouquet. Rubio's trip comes at a fraught time in international affairs, and the secretary has faced questions from reporters about whether travelling to Uzbekistan is the best current use of his time. US-Ukraine relations are at a low point after Washington urged Kyiv earlier in the month to stop striking Russian refineries and agreed to buy Russian diesel in a bid to lower domestic fuel prices ahead of the US midterm elections. The war with Iran shows little sign of resolution. Asked upon departure from Washington on Saturday why he was going to Uzbekistan now, Rubio said foreign trips were too often designed to resolve immediate issues, rather than build long-term relationships. There are indications some of the Central Asian nations present, all of which are post-Soviet states, are deepening diplomatic and economic links with Washington. On Monday, Uzbekistan signed the Artemis Accords, a US-led multilateral agreement that sets non-binding principles and legal guidelines for peaceful space exploration and resource management. "Uzbekistan's been clear: they want to be friends to everybody." — Reuters

HM’s UK visit strengthens a historic partnership

AT THE invitation of King Charles III, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik is making an official State Visit to the United Kingdom. The occasion celebrates a relationship more than two centuries old and one whose strength comes from what each country brings to the other. Both His Majesty and King Charles have a shared interest in ecological conservation and the preservation of their country's heritage. Oman's strategic location and regional diplomatic influence are valuable to Britain. UK, in turn, offers Oman a longstanding defence partnership, investment, expertise and economic connections that support Oman's development. The relationship's foundations date back to 1798, when Sultan bin Ahmad al Busaidi concluded an agreement with the British East India Company. A further agreement in 1800, known as the 'Unshook Treaty', established a British representative in Muscat. Oman was then a maritime power, linking the Arabian Peninsula with India and the wider Indian Ocean. Its ports and trading networks made Oman strategically important, while Britain sought commercial access and security for routes across the region. The relationship was shaped by the unequal power of the era, but Omani rulers continued to pursue their own interests and preserve the country's distinct identity. Trade and the sea established enduring connections. Omani merchants linked ports across the Indian Ocean, and the two countries developed practical interests in commerce, navigation and maritime security. As Oman moved towards modern statehood, the relationship changed too. The Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation was signed between the United Kingdom and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman on December 20, 1951. In 1970, Oman entered a period of national development and wider international engagement. Britain became a close partner in defence, training and professional exchange. The personal dimension of these ties is reflected at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said,



Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, graduated from Sandhurst in 2022. Two generations of Oman's leadership have thus shared and gained a formative connection with this esteemed British military institution while 3,000 Omani students now attend colleges and universities in Britain. The Joint Defence Agreement signed in 2019, alongside the Comprehensive Agreement on Enduring Friendship, provides a further framework for cooperation. Joint exercises, including Saif Sareea 3 in 2018, have strengthened military coordination. Collaboration around Duqm also reflects shared interests in logistics and the security of maritime routes. For Britain, Oman's position near the Strait of Hormuz and along key Indian Ocean routes makes it a valuable partner in a region central to global commerce and energy security. The mutual benefits are not confined to defence. Oman's independent foreign policy and diplomatic expertise offer Britain a trusted channel of communication in a region where relationships can be complex and tensions acute. Muscat has maintained dialogue with parties across political divides and has helped facilitate contacts and negotiations. That role gives Oman influence beyond its size and geography. It also offers Britain a partner with regional knowledge and credibility, particularly when conflict threatens stability. Oman's neutrality is not disengagement. It is an active policy that allows the Sultanate of Oman to engage with different sides. The economic relationship is similarly reciprocal. British investment brings capital, expertise and business



KARIM
EASTERBROOK

The writer is a Former Cambridge School Principal and Author

Oman and Britain have remained friends because the relationship has continually delivered practical value to both and each recognises the contribution the other can make to security, prosperity and peace

connections to Oman, supporting development and economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040. British companies and institutions contribute experience in areas including clean energy, logistics, education and professional services. Oman, meanwhile, offers British businesses access to a strategically located, stable market and a gateway to wider regional opportunities. British direct investment in Oman rose from RO 14.9 billion in 2024 to RO 16.1 billion in the last quarter of 2026. The UK accounts for more than half of Oman's cumulative foreign direct investment. However, this is not a one-sided partnership, nor one sustained by history alone. Britain benefits from Oman's strategic location, diplomatic access and role in regional stability while Oman benefits from British investment, economic expertise and a close defence relationship. Both countries gain from trade, education, professional exchange and the confidence built through regular cooperation. His Majesty's state visit honours that inheritance while looking to the future. Oman and Britain have remained friends because the relationship has continually delivered practical value to both and because each recognises the contribution the other can make to security, prosperity and peace. Across two centuries, Oman and Britain have shown that a lasting friendship is not simply inherited. It is renewed through trust, mutual benefit and a shared commitment to peace and prosperity. His Majesty's state visit today is important in cementing this mutually beneficial friendship.

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Oman B players in action during their victory over France.

OMAN B RALLY TO BEAT FRANCE AT BEACH VOLLEYBALL

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 19

Oman B delivered the hosts' first victory at the World Military Beach Volleyball Championship 'Muscat 2026' after recovering from a set down to defeat France 2-1 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. France took control of the opening set and won 21-15, but Oman B responded with a far more assured display in the second. The hosts levelled the match with a 21-14 win before dominating the deciding set 15-6 to complete the comeback. The victory marked an immediate response from Oman B following their straight-sets defeat against Germany on the opening day.

Elsewhere, Qatar emerged as one of the strongest teams of the second day, recording two convincing victories. They defeated France 21-14, 21-10 before overcoming the Netherlands 21-11, 21-8. Combined with their opening win over Germany, the results extended Qatar's unbeaten start to three matches. Brazil also maintained their perfect record with a 2-0 victory over Sri Lanka. The Brazilian pair secured the match 21-12, 21-16, adding to their opening-day success against Oman A.

Oman A came close to joining Oman B in the winners' column but were edged out 2-1 by Algeria. The Omani pair took a tight opening set 25-23 before Algeria responded by winning the second 23-21. Algeria then claimed the decider 15-11, handing Oman A their second narrow three-set defeat of the tournament.

In the women's competition, Oman were beaten 2-0 by Germany, who controlled the match to win 21-4, 21-9. It was the hosts' second defeat following their opening loss to Algeria.

France completed the day's programme with a straight-sets victory over Sri Lanka, winning 21-10, 21-9.

Al Hubaishi reaches Para Games shot put final

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 19

FAWZI al Hubaishi gave Oman an encouraging start to the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games on Monday by qualifying for the men's F54/55 shot put final, scheduled for October 22.

The F54 athlete secured his place in Thursday's medal contest as Oman's delegation prepared for a busy programme involving seven athletes across track and field events on Tuesday.

Al Hubaishi's qualification provides an early boost for the national squad, whose athletes are seeking to turn their preparations into strong performances against leading competitors from across Asia.

Tuesday's programme begins with Muhanna Awlad Thani in the F33 shot put at 9.05 am, followed by Mutasim al Saadi in the F53 javelin at 9.10 am. Qusay al Rawahi contests the T13 100 metres at 9.25 am, while Othman al Habsi takes part in the T12 100 metres at 11.14 am.

The evening programme features Taha al Harrasi in the T36 100 metres at 5.40 pm, Saif al Muqbali in the T46 100 metres at 6.08 pm and Talib al Balushi in the F56 shot put at 7.05 pm. All times are local to Japan.

Oman's participation continues on Wednesday, October 21, with Al Rawahi competing in the T13 long jump final and Rawan al Hasani contesting the wheelchair 100 metres.

Iman al Shamsi will compete in the F34 shot put, Al Saadi in the F53 shot put, and Mohammed al Qasmi and Mohammed al Mashaykhi in the F32 shot put.

Handcyclist Sami al Sulaimi will also begin his campaign on Wednesday in the individual time trial, before returning for the men's H4-5 road race on Thursday.

Al Sulaimi's preparations included specialist work on climbing, descending, endurance and physical conditioning, aimed at meeting the demands of international road competition.

Thursday's athletics programme will be led by Al Hubaishi's appearance in the shot put final. Iman Al Shamsi will contest the F34 javelin, while Al Balushi competes in the discus and javelin.



Fawzi al Hubaishi gave Oman an encouraging start to the Aichi-Nagoya.



Oman's para athletes training for the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan.

Al Harrasi will take part in the T36 long jump, Awlad Thani in the F33 javelin, and Al Habsi in the T12 long jump and 400 metres. Al Muqbali will also contest the T46 400 metres.

Al Qasmi and Al Mashaykhi return on Friday, October 23, for the F32 club throw, completing Oman's scheduled athletics appearances.

The squad's participation follows a preparation programme organised by the Oman Paralympic Committee in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth through its

promising athletes programme.

Training camps in Poland and Thailand, alongside sessions at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher, helped the athletics squad develop its physical and technical readiness. Al Sulaimi completed a separate camp at Jabal Haat in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. With an opening finalist already secured, Oman's athletes will now look to build on that start and earn further opportunities to compete for medals before the Games conclude on October 24.

Al Nasr maintain perfect start as Dhofar and Bahla win

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 19

Al Nasr extended their winning streak in the 2026/27 Jindal League with a 1-0 victory over Seeb, while Dhofar edged Ibri 3-2 and Bahla defeated Oman Club 1-0 in the fifth round of the competition.

The results kept Al Nasr firmly at the top of the standings with 12 points from four matches, maintaining their perfect record, while Seeb remained third with seven points.

At Al Saada Sports Complex, foreign professional Afan Saeed scored the decisive goal in the 38th minute to secure Al Nasr's fourth consecutive victory. The goal was confirmed following a VAR review after a closely contested opening period in which both sides struggled to create clear opportunities.

Seeb stepped up their

attacking efforts after the interval, but Al Nasr remained organised defensively while looking to exploit spaces on the counterattack.

Nemouri Keita came close to extending the lead with a header in the 54th minute before goalkeeper Mutasim al Wuhaibi denied him again in the 78th minute. Seeb nearly equalised two minutes before full-time when substitute Abdulaziz al Muqbali directed a header towards goal, but Ibrahim al Rajhi produced a crucial save.

Hamad al Habsi missed a late opportunity to double the advantage, although Al Nasr had already done enough to collect another three points and strengthen their position at the summit.

Meanwhile, Dhofar survived a spirited second-half comeback from Ibri to claim a 3-2 victory at the Ibri Sports Complex, inspired



Al Nasr Fans during their team 1-0 victory over Seeb at Al Saada Sports Complex.



Bahla claimed a narrow 1-0 victory over Oman Club at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

by a first-half hat-trick from Abdullah bin Zahir al Mughanni.

Al Mughanni opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 17th minute after a foul inside the area before adding his second just four minutes later. He completed his hat-trick in the 43rd minute, sending Dhofar into the break with a commanding three-goal advantage.

Ibri responded strongly after the restart, with Omar Bala Mohammed converting a penalty in the 53rd minute and Sheikhna Simiga reducing the deficit to one goal seven minutes later.

The hosts continued to push forward, creating several opportunities, but Dhofar held firm under pressure to secure a valuable away victory. The result lifted Dhofar to five points, level with Ibri.

Elsewhere, Bahla claimed their second win of the

campaign with a narrow 1-0 victory over Oman Club at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

Yazid bin Sami al Rawahi struck the winner in the 22nd minute, rewarding Bahla's disciplined approach despite Oman Club enjoying periods of attacking superiority.

Goalkeeper Ahmed al Rawahi played a key role in protecting the advantage, producing important saves to deny Amir Alaa, Ammar al Shiyadi and Hindhenjo.

Oman Club attempted to change the course of the contest through second-half substitutions, but Bahla maintained their defensive shape and threatened occasionally on the counterattack. Oman national team head coach Tarik Sektioui and his technical staff attended the encounter, which ended with Bahla moving to six points, level with Oman Club.

SHORTTAKES



Schoolgirls take part in the Sports Ambassadors programme workshops.

Oman’s Sports Ambassadors Empower Schoolgirls

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 19

Girls’ participation in school sports is increasingly extending beyond physical activity to include leadership, peer engagement and the development of initiatives that encourage healthier lifestyles. This approach underpins the Sports Ambassadors programme, delivered by the Oman School Sports Association in partnership with the British Embassy in Oman, which has completed its first phase and is preparing to move towards the practical implementation of student-led initiatives.

The programme aims to equip schoolgirls with the confidence and skills to motivate their peers, promote physical activity and increase participation in school sports. Leadership, teamwork and initiative are central to its approach, positioning students not only as participants in sporting activities but also as contributors to the development of their schools’ sporting culture.

REACHING SCHOOLS ACROSS OMAN
The first phase covered 11 schools across Oman’s educational governorates, with practical workshops focusing on sports leadership and the development of student-led ideas. Teachers also played an important role in supporting participants and helping them translate the skills they acquired into activities within their schools.

Mohammed bin Said al Niyadi, chairman of the Care and Rehabilitation Committee at the Oman School Sports Association, said the first phase had achieved its objectives, highlighting the enthusiasm and positive engagement shown by students and teachers.

He also praised school administrations and educational directorates for their cooperation and for providing the necessary conditions to ensure the programme’s successful delivery.

Building a safer sporting environment
Leadership development was accompanied by efforts to strengthen awareness of safeguarding in sport.

Workshops were organised for teachers, employees and parents to highlight the shared responsibility of schools, families and educational staff in creating safe and supportive environments for sporting participation.

More than 170 female students and 22 teachers from educational governorates participated in the programme’s activities. Their involvement provides opportunities to share knowledge and experience more widely, helping extend the benefits of the initiative to additional students and schools across Oman.



Oman’s ice hockey teams claimed three titles at the 2026 Union Classic tournament in Abu Dhabi.

OMANI TEAMS CLAIM UNION CLASSIC TREBLE

MUSCAT WOMEN, KHANJAR AND MAJAN CROWNED CHAMPIONS IN ABU DHABI

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 19

MUSCAT WOMEN, Khanjar and Majan secured three titles for Oman at the 2026 Union Classic ice hockey tournament in Abu Dhabi, capping a successful campaign with victories in the women’s, open and Arab divisions respectively.

Held from October 10 to 17, the tournament featured 11 teams, with five contesting the women’s competition and six competing in the men’s categories. The winners were honoured at a closing ceremony attended by Shaikh Ahmed bin Nahyan bin Zayed al Nahyan.

Muscat clinched the women’s crown by defeating Abu Dhabi Storms in the final. Their campaign began with victory over Al Ain Theebs, and they recorded three wins from four group matches before securing the title.

Muscat player Khulood Ambusaidi said the triumph rewarded the players’ collective efforts throughout a demanding competition and demonstrated Omani women’s ability to succeed at international tournaments.

She added that the victory would encourage the squad to keep training and pursuing further success, expressing hope that it would inspire more girls to take up ice hockey and support the formation of additional women’s teams.

Khanjar added the open division trophy after overcoming Bedouins in the final. Player Ibrahim al Ajmi attributed the result



Goalkeeper Zuhair al Habsi played a decisive role in the final shootout and received the Arab division’s Best Goalkeeper award

to teamwork, concentration and disciplined execution of the game plan.

He said the players entered the final determined to win and remained committed to their individual responsibilities throughout a closely contested encounter. The achievement, he added, provided fresh motivation to continue training and prepare for upcoming competitions.

Majan completed Oman’s treble with a shootout victory over Egypt’s Cairo Nomads in the Arab division final. Their title run followed an opening defeat, with a 4-3 group-stage win over fellow Omani side Khanjar helping them regain momentum. Goalkeeper Zuhair al Habsi played a

decisive role in the final shootout and received the Arab division’s Best Goalkeeper award. Khanjar’s Salim al Shahibi was named Best Forward in the open division.

Majan player Muhannad al Jamali described the title-winning moment as unforgettable, particularly after the team’s difficult start. He said their subsequent victories rebuilt confidence ahead of a final that tested their composure under pressure.

Al Jamali singled out Al Habsi’s contribution, describing him as the hero of the final, while crediting the squad’s cooperation and collective commitment for the turnaround.

Eng Saud al Aufi, Chairman of the Oman Skating Sports Committee, congratulated the players and dedicated the achievement to Oman. He said securing three titles during the country’s fourth consecutive appearance reflected the progress of Omani ice hockey and the work being undertaken to strengthen its teams.

Al Aufi also highlighted the significance of the results for the young men and women involved, saying the success was a source of pride for the committee.

He thanked the Directorate of Culture, Sports and Youth in Al Buraimi Governorate and Ruboo Haima for their support, while acknowledging Snow Oman’s provision of additional ice training sessions to help prepare the teams. Attention now turns to the Oman Women’s Ice Hockey Championship, scheduled for December. Al Aufi said the event would provide another opportunity to develop the sport and expand opportunities for Omani women to compete.

Oman step up Asian Cup preparations after Belarus camp

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 19

Oman’s national beach soccer team will resume preparations for next month’s Asian Cup with a domestic camp on October 25, following two demanding encounters against Belarus and Iran at the Friendship Cup in Minsk.

The overseas camp, which ran from October 13 to 18, gave head coach Talib bin Hilal al Thanawi an opportunity to assess his 14 players against strong opposition and test different tactical approaches ahead of a busy international schedule.

Oman finished third in the three-team tournament after losing 8-5 to Belarus on Friday and 8-2 to Iran on Saturday. Iran secured the trophy by

defeating the hosts 5-1 in Sunday’s concluding fixture, finishing with six points ahead of Belarus on three. The competition followed a round-robin format.

Despite the opening defeat at the Peschanaya Dyuna Beach Sports Centre, Oman twice threatened to overturn Belarus’s advantage. Trailing 5-2 after the first period, they reduced the deficit to 5-4 in the second and later pulled within one goal again at 6-5 before the hosts scored twice to settle the contest.

Abdullah al Sawti struck twice for Oman, while Nooh al Zadjali, Abdulrahman al Fazari and goalkeeper Younis al Owaisi also found the net. Oleg Gapon scored a hat-trick for Belarus, with Anatoly Ryabko contributing two goals.



Oman’s national beach soccer players during a training session at their preparation camp in Minsk, Belarus.

Against Iran, Fahad al Mishikhi brought Oman level at 1-1 late in the opening period, but the Iranians regained the lead before the break and took control with three unanswered goals in the second period. Muslim al Araiimi scored Oman’s second from the penalty spot shortly before the final whistle.

The match also brought injury concerns, with captain Khalid al Araiimi leaving the field after sustaining a head injury, while Salim al Araiimi suffered a muscle injury. Al Thanawi used all available players during the tournament as he reviewed individual readiness and applied the tactical work undertaken in training.

Following a short break, the squad will regroup for a domestic

camp from October 25 to November 1. Oman are then scheduled to compete in the Arab Championship in Egypt from November 4 to 11, followed by a final preparation camp in Thailand from November 13 to 17.

The AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2026 will run from November 18 to 28, according to the Asian Football Confederation’s published schedule.

Oman have been drawn in Group C alongside the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan. The tournament also offers a route to the 2027 Fifa Beach Soccer World Cup, with three Asian places available, giving the remaining preparation stages added importance as Oman seek another appearance on the global stage.

SPORTS



SPORT REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCTOBER 19

CLOSE competition and strong performances marked the opening day of racing at the 15th Mussanah Race Week and the 3rd Arab Women's Sailing Championship at Barceló Mussanah Resort, where sailors completed four races across the Optimist, ILCA 4, ILCA 6, ILCA 7 and Para Inclusive classes.

Oman's Khalid al Sarihi made an impressive start in the Optimist class, recording two victories and a second-place finish to lead the standings. India's Krishna Vekitachalam was second, while Omani sailor Mohammed al Gasim climbed to third after winning the second and third races. Mohammed al Balushi placed fourth overall and led the junior standings.

Egypt's Laila Mohamed topped the Optimist competition in the women's championship after securing three wins and a second-place finish. Oman's Abeer al Zakwani was second, just two points behind, while Bahrain's Dana Abdullah finished third.

In ILCA 4, Egypt's Karma Waleed recovered from two lower finishes to win the final two races and take the overall lead. The UAE's Abdulrahman Al Bahri was second, followed by Oman's Hood al Nofli, two points behind. In the women's standings, Oman's Tarteel al Hasani was second, with compatriot Hadeel bint Yousef al Mushairfi third.

Tunisia's Ines Nabeel Gmati led ILCA 6 with three victories from four races. The UAE's Simeon Hristov was second, while Egypt's Kholoud Mostafa was third, just one point behind. Oman's Ibtisam al Salmi finished fifth, and compatriot Elyas bin Badar al Fadhaili placed eighth.

Al Salmi said: "Competing in the 3rd Arab Women's Sailing Championship is an empowering experience and part of an inspiring journey for all the women here.

Oman's Al Mutasem al Farsi shared the ILCA 7 lead with Bahrain's Dawood Abdullah. The UAE's Hamza Al Ali was third, followed by Oman's Al Salim bin Ali al Hamdani in fourth, two points off third place.

In the Para Inclusive Hansa 303 class, Oman's Anwar al Balushi and Adil al Siyabi shared the lead with Buthaina al Balushi and



Highlights from day 1 races

Malik al Qartoobi.

Anas al Hashmi and Ahmed al Araimi were third.

Nawaf bin Yaqoob al Ghadani, from the event's race management team, said Mussanah Sailing School continued to establish itself as a leading venue after receiving Category A High Performance Training Centre recognition from the Asian Sailing Federation.

Both championships support Oman Sail's efforts to develop national talent, empower young people and women, and expand community participation in sport. They also contribute to Oman Vision 2040 and strengthen the Sultanate's position as a destination for international sporting events.

The 2026 edition is presented by Renaissance Services as title partner, alongside the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Barceló Mussanah Resort, and supporting partners including Tanuf, the Arab Sailing Association, the Oman Maritime Sports Committee, and the Royal Navy of Oman's Directorate of Medical Services at the Medical City for Military and Security Services.

Semenyo out for up to eight weeks, Haaland may be fit to face AEK

Manchester CITY forward Antoine Semenyo has been sidelined for up to eight weeks after suffering a knee injury at the weekend but striker Erling Haaland could be fit for Tuesday's Champions League clash at home to AEK Athens, manager Enzo Maresca said.

Ghana international Semenyo limped to the tunnel following Saturday's 3-2 home win over Ipswich Town, shortly after Haaland took a knock on his foot and ankle in stoppage time.

Maresca said Semenyo's injury was not as bad as first feared but the 26-year-old, who has two goals and three assists in the Premier League this season, needed time to recover.

"It could be eight weeks. Now the most important thing is recovery.

When he is back in December it will be like a new player. Collateral. It's not muscle," he told a press conference on Monday ahead of the AEK game. Semenyo was among the substitutes against Ipswich but came off the bench in the 77th minute at the Etihad Stadium.

"We tried to save him, we tried to keep him fresh, just give him some minutes, he didn't play a lot but sometimes things happen, we cannot control," added Maresca.



Manchester City's Antoine Semenyo in action with Ipswich Town's Azor Matusiwa. — REUTERS



Manchester City's Erling Haaland reacts. — REUTERS

The manager said there were also some doubts about Norwegian Haaland's fitness for Tuesday, but he remained hopeful.

"He can be available, we will see, we have a session now. We have some doubts after Saturday's game.

He was quite good yesterday, better. So we will see today," Maresca added. Haaland's double against Ipswich helped City remain perfect in the top flight with seven straight wins. The 26-year-old has netted in his last eight appearances for City, scoring 12 times.

"For sure, to replace Erling it is always difficult but we have some different options," Maresca said.

"Phil (Foden) can be one of the solutions, not the only one... but now, at the moment the number nine is Erling."

Maresca is eyeing the AEK match as a chance for City to bounce back from last week's 4-2 loss at home to European champions Paris St Germain, which left City 17th in the table with three points from two matches.

"I think the response after the PSG game was quite good ... It's a Champions League game, a different competition, but the ambition has to be the same, try to win games," he added. — Reuters

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
7,634.863

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$106.83
BRENT \$108.38
LIGHT \$98.14



SHORT TAKES



The monthly average price for October delivery stood at \$87.84 a barrel.

OMAN CRUDE RISES TO \$106.83/BARREL

MUSCAT: Oman's official oil price for December delivery rose \$1.07 to \$106.83 a barrel on Monday, even as international benchmarks fell on profit-taking after reaching multi-month highs.

The Oman contract increased from Friday's \$105.76 a barrel. Separately, the monthly average price for October delivery stood at \$87.84 a barrel, up \$11.48 from September delivery.

Brent crude futures fell \$1.34, or 1.22 per cent, to \$108.38 a barrel by 10:02 GMT, after settling on Friday at their highest since May 19. US West Texas Intermediate crude slipped 13 cents, or 0.13 per cent, to \$98.14, following its strongest close since September 17.

Investors remained focused on supply disruptions in the Middle East and developments affecting Russian exports.

"Ongoing strikes on vessels crossing the Strait of Hormuz and flows remaining below pre-conflict levels continue to provide support", UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo said.

An oil tanker caught fire and exploded after striking a naval mine in the southern Strait of Hormuz on Sunday, Iranian media reported, citing Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Gulf crude flows fell to a seven-day average of about 8.5 million barrels per day last week, from more than 20 million bpd the previous week, analytics firm Kpler said in a note on Friday. It reported at least 10 confirmed incidents involving commercial vessels during the week.

SEB analyst Bjarne Schieldrop warned that recent increases in exports through the strait might not be sustained, citing the risk of further attacks ahead of the November 3 US midterm elections.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday waiving some sanctions and tariffs related to Russian exports.

The move followed an agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin to supply diesel to the United States and other countries, starting at about 2.3 million barrels this month and rising to about 7.6 million barrels a month.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Trump would take up to 60 days to assess the effects of the sanctions and tariffs on the global economy.

Priyanka Sachdeva, head of market insight at Phillip Nova, said the waiver could help contain prices but would do little to resolve physical supply disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. — **Agencies**

Oman strengthens women's role in trade union

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 19

The General Federation of Oman Workers (GFOW) launched a three-day leadership programme for women trade unionists on Monday, alongside the signing of four cooperation agreements aimed at strengthening women's participation in the workplace and union activities.

Organised with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the programme runs until October 21 and covers leadership, worker organising, communication and campaigning.

The initiative comes as women expand their representation in Oman's trade union structures. According to GFOW figures, women held four seats on its board and 71 positions on the governing bodies of trade unions and sectoral unions at the end of December



The initiative comes as women expand their representation in trade union structures.

2025.

A further 32 women trade unionists had participated in collective bargaining, while 20 women's committees had been established within trade unions, with a combined membership of 195.

The training brings together members of union women's committees, women trade unionists, female federation staff and members of GFOW's Committee for Non-Omani Workers, alongside representatives of relevant organisations.

MSX transfers six funds to new market segment

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 19

THE Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has announced the transfer of six listed collective investment funds from its Parallel Market to a dedicated Collective Investment Funds Market, marking a further step towards strengthening the organisation, visibility and accessibility of investment products in Oman's capital market.

The transfer, effective October 18, 2026, follows Administrative Decision No 129/2026, issued on October 15 and signed by Bader bin Hamood al Hinai, Chief Operating Officer of MSX.

The decision covers AMAN Real Estate Fund, Oman Real Estate Fund, The Pearl Real Estate Fund, Jabal Real Estate Fund, Epicure Vision GCC Fund and Oman Gateway Fund, all of which were previously listed on the Parallel Market.

The move establishes a distinct trading classification for collective investment funds, separating them from conventional corporate securities and providing investors with a more clearly identifiable segment for accessing pooled investment vehicles.

While the decision does not itself introduce new investment products, the dedicated market classification is expected to improve the visibility of existing funds, facilitate comparisons between investment opportunities and support the broader



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development of Oman's asset management industry.

The initiative also comes against the backdrop of significant regulatory reforms introduced by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) through the Executive Regulation of the Securities Law, issued under Decision No E/11/2026 in July.

The Regulation provides a comprehensive legislative framework for the establishment, management, governance and supervision of collective investment schemes.

Chapter V specifically addresses these investment vehicles,

including their governance arrangements and service providers.

These provisions form part of wider efforts to diversify financing and investment opportunities, strengthen investor protection and enhance the competitiveness of Oman's capital market.

Ahmed bin Ali al Mamari, Vice Executive President of the FSA, has described the new regulatory framework as a structural transformation intended to position the capital market as a major source of financing in support of Oman Vision 2040.

The reforms also introduce investment banking as a regulated activity, allowing licensed institutions to undertake investment management, product structuring, portfolio management and advisory services, among other activities.

By providing collective investment funds with a dedicated market segment, MSX is taking a complementary step towards developing a more diversified securities market. The initiative could also encourage the establishment and eventual listing of additional investment funds, subject to regulatory approvals and investor demand.

The move also coincides with Oman's recent inclusion on the FTSE Russell Watch List for potential reclassification from Frontier to Secondary Emerging Market status, underscoring the wider importance of market development and regulatory reform.

MUSCAT: Nominations for the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry's board and branch boards close on Tuesday, October 20, with no extension, the committee overseeing elections for the 2026–2030 term said.

Candidates must submit their applications electronically and meet all requirements before the deadline. Voting is scheduled for November 23. Ghalib bin Said al Maamari, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for

Commerce and Industry; and chairman of the election committee, said the committee would adhere to the approved timetable and apply the requirements equally to all candidates.

Keeping to the schedule would ensure an orderly process and equal opportunities, while allowing subsequent election stages to proceed as planned, he said.

Applications must comply with the conditions and procedures set out in Announcement No 2, issued on October 14.

The committee urged applicants to review the announcement and ensure they submit all required documents.

The nomination deadline does not apply to voter registration or updates to members' details, which remain open until Sunday, October 25. Al Maamari said the elections would enable members to choose representatives responsible for advancing private sector interests and supporting improvements to Oman's business environment.

— **ONA**

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 19

The General Federation of Oman Workers (GFOW) launched a three-day leadership programme for women trade unionists on Monday, alongside the signing of four cooperation agreements aimed at strengthening women's participation in the workplace and union activities.

Organised with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the programme runs until October 21 and covers leadership, worker organising, communication and campaigning.

The initiative comes as women expand their representation in Oman's trade union structures. According to GFOW figures, women held four seats on its board and 71 positions on the governing bodies of trade unions and sectoral unions at the end of December



The initiative comes as women expand their representation in trade union structures.

2025.

A further 32 women trade unionists had participated in collective bargaining, while 20 women's committees had been established within trade unions, with a combined membership of 195.

The training brings together members of union women's committees, women trade unionists, female federation staff and members of GFOW's Committee for Non-Omani Workers, alongside representatives of relevant organisations.

Participants will learn how to identify workplace and organisational concerns and turn them into practical initiatives and campaigns.

Sessions also cover relationship-building, constructive dialogue and the use of social media to recruit members and raise awareness of women workers' concerns.

Suad al Sulaimi, chairperson of GFOW's Women's Committee, said the programme provided an opportunity to exchange experience, strengthen professional networks and learn from international approaches to union leadership and women's participation.

The four cooperation memoranda were signed between GFOW and Omantel; GFOW and the Oman Human Resources Management Association; the General Union of the Industrial

Sector and Oman India Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO); and the Trade Union of OMIFCO Workers and the company's management.

The agreements aim to support women workers and broaden their participation in workplace and union activities.

The opening day included an introduction to the ITUC's Migrant Workers Programme and its Recruitment Adviser platform, delivered by ITUC trainer and consultant Zainab Abu Deeb.

GFOW visual production specialist Imad al Raqadi led a session on using visual content to support women workers.

Tuesday's sessions will examine leadership challenges, communication with workers and organising skills. The programme concludes on Wednesday with training on planning and implementing trade union campaigns.

OMAN’S POWER GRID FACES A COST RECOVERY TEST

QASIM AL MAASHANI

OMAN’S

ELECTRICITY REGULATOR approved a 10-year recovery period for planned battery storage assets, against about 35

years for conventional transmission equipment, Fitch Ratings said, bringing the timing of investment returns into focus as the grid prepares for a major expansion.

In its April 2026 assessment, Fitch said the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) had approved the shorter asset recovery period for Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC).

The company’s planned 2026–2030 capital programme totals RO 1.285 billion, including RO 376 million for battery energy storage systems.

Fitch forecast OETC revenue growth averaging 24 per cent annually in 2026–2027, driven mainly by batteries.

Regulatory cost recovery concerns the company’s allowed revenue framework; it does not establish whether household electricity tariffs will change. That depends on wider system costs, regulation and subsidy decisions.

Battery storage accounts for about 29 per cent of the planned programme. The equipment can store electricity when supply is plentiful and release it when demand rises, helping the system accommodate variable solar and wind generation. Its financial case nevertheless depends on how often it is used, the costs it displaces and its useful operating life.

OETC’s 2026–2030 transmission capability statement sets out a wider programme of network reinforcement, new connections and system integration. The scale of that programme reflects the challenge of serving new demand while accommodating renewable projects, but a forecast need for capacity is not the same as a measured return on each investment.

Preliminary figures from the National Centre for Statistics and Information show Oman generated 37,481.8 gigawatt hours of electricity during January–August 2026, up 4.3 per cent year on year. Production growth underlines the sector’s expansion, although it cannot on its own determine how much new transmission or storage is required.

Financing creates a second test. Fitch forecast

Such techniques can reduce some operational constraints, but they cannot replace every new line or substation. Nor did the presentations establish monetary savings for OETC’s national network. The economic comparison must be made project by project, weighing reliability, capital costs, operating savings and the alternatives available. For investors and policymakers, the distinction is especially important because an asset may strengthen security of supply without producing an immediate cash saving. The case for it should make that trade-off explicit. Oman’s 2026 state budget allocates RO 509 million to electricity-sector support. That is a sector-wide provision, not OETC’s capital budget, and it does not show that the battery recovery period will increase consumer bills. It does, however, underline the public interest in understanding how electricity infrastructure costs and benefits flow through the system.

For the next phase of investment, the figures worth following are not just megawatts and kilometres commissioned. They are actual battery utilisation, fuel displaced, reliability achieved, electricity costs avoided and regulated revenue recovered against the original investment case.

negative free cash flow averaging RO 271 million annually over 2026–2028 as capital spending accelerates. It also upgraded OETC to investment grade, citing stronger expectations of support. Negative free cash flow reflects financing requirements and should not be confused with an operating loss.

In Dhofar, the returns can be expressed in physical terms. The company expects the connections to displace about 30.5 million litres of diesel annually and avoid roughly 82,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Those estimates were attributed by the Oman News Agency to OETC’s acting general manager of projects, Khalid bin Marhoon al Harmali. They offer a benchmark against which actual fuel use and operating costs can be measured after commissioning. The connections serve Dhofar and should not be confused with the separate 400-kilovolt Rabt interconnection programme.

Rabt offers a larger test of the same principle. OETC’s 2023 sustainability report projected annual system savings exceeding RO 65 million, alongside reductions of more than 175 million litres of diesel and 474,000 tonnes of emissions, once both phases were complete.

The first phase entered service in the fourth quarter of 2023. The report’s figures describe projected benefits for the completed scheme, not independently audited savings already delivered.

At IEEE PowerTalks in Muscat on October 12, technical presentations also explored ways to extract more value from existing infrastructure. Oman Cables Industry discussed adjusting overhead-line ratings to actual weather conditions, while Petroleum Development Oman described remote analysis of protection-system faults using existing communications links.

SHORT TAKES



FSA approved a rights issue for Ubar hotels.

UBAR HOTELS WINS RIGHTS ISSUE APPROVAL

BALARAB AL TAMIMI
MUSCAT, OCT 19

Ubar Hotels & Resorts SAOG has secured Financial Services Authority approval for a rights issue that will add RO 2.5 million to its share capital.

The hospitality company will offer 25 million new shares at 102 baisa each, comprising a nominal value of 100 baisa and 2 baisa to cover

issue expenses. Total subscriptions would amount to RO 2.55 million if the issue is fully taken up.

The approval follows a board resolution announced on August 17 to raise capital through a rights issue. The prospectus will be published on the Muscat Stock Exchange website.

Muscat Stock Exchange website.

Shareholders registered with Muscat Clearing and Depository on October 26 will be entitled to participate. Investors who acquire rights on the exchange during the trading period will also be eligible to subscribe.

Shareholders can take up their entitlements or sell all or part of their rights. Any rights neither exercised nor sold within the prescribed periods will lapse.

Under the indicative timetable, rights trading will take place on November 3 and 4, while subscriptions will remain open from November 3 to 8. Allotment is scheduled for November 10, followed by refunds of excess subscription money on November 15.

The new shares are expected to begin trading on November 19. The company said the timetable could change depending on regulatory approvals and market conditions.

Ibra spotlights sustainable and green urban solutions

SUSTAINABLE

construction, innovative housing and smart city planning took centre stage at an Urban October event that opened in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate on Monday, bringing together government bodies, property developers, investors and academics.

Organised by the governorate's Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in cooperation with A'Sharqiyah University, the event aims to strengthen coordination between institutions and the community and explore approaches to sustainable urban development.

Mahmoud bin Yahya al Thuhli, Governor of Al Sharqiyah North, presided over the opening.

Discussions focused on policies and strategies for developing smart, sustainable cities in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the global urban development agenda.

The programme also examined innovative housing



The event aims to strengthen coordination between institutions and the community and explore approaches to sustainable urban development.

solutions designed to meet the needs of different sections of society and improve quality of life. The event showcased construction technologies, engineering innovations and

environmentally friendly building materials, alongside green and smart architecture that can improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions. It also provided a platform

for government agencies, property developers, investment companies and specialists to exchange expertise and explore partnerships.

Another focus was raising public awareness of the role of sound urban planning in addressing future challenges, improving the urban environment and enhancing living standards.

Young people and academics were encouraged to contribute ideas and proposals for the future development of the governorate.

The event forms part of the Urban October initiatives promoting sustainable urban development and planning solutions that respond to community needs. The initiatives also emphasise preserving historical and architectural heritage and incorporating it into development.

Al Thuhli also opened an accompanying exhibition featuring public and private sector organisations, alongside student projects from higher education institutions in the governorate. — ONA

OMAN ALLOCATES 48.6 MILLION IN TREASURY BILLS

MUSCAT: Oman allocated RO 48.6 million in government treasury bills this week, with 91-day instruments accounting for the larger share, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) said on Monday.

The allocation comprised RO 20 million in 28-day bills and RO 28.6 million in 91-day bills.

The 28-day bills had an average accepted price of RO 99.705 per RO 100 of face value, matching the minimum accepted price. The average discount rate stood at 3.84554 per cent, while the average

yield was 3.85691 per cent. For the 91-day bills, the average and minimum accepted prices were both RO 98.965 per RO 100 of face value. The average discount rate was 4.15137 per cent, with an average yield of 4.19479 per cent.

The CBO said the repurchase agreement rate applicable to the bills was 4.50 per cent, while the rate for its treasury bill discounting facility was 5.00 per cent.

Issued by the Ministry of Finance and managed by the central bank, treasury bills provide licensed

commercial banks with a short-term investment instrument and offer the government a flexible means of financing expenditure.

Banks can obtain liquidity against the bills through central bank discounting or repurchase agreements. They can also use the instruments in repo transactions with other banks in the interbank market.

Treasury bills also serve as a benchmark for short-term interest rates in the Sultanate of Oman's financial market. — ONA

Oman readies green investment pitch for COP31

MUSCAT: Oman is preparing to showcase clean energy, recycling and conservation initiatives at next month's COP31 climate conference in Türkiye, as it seeks to strengthen international partnerships supporting its environmental and economic goals.

The conference will take place in Antalya from November 9 to 20, with discussions focused on implementing climate commitments, expanding climate finance and strengthening resilience to climate change.

The Environment Authority is coordinating Oman's preparations through teams responsible for negotiations, the national pavilion, youth engagement, innovation and other activities.

Oman's participation will highlight progress in developing



The conference will take place in Antalya from November 9 to 20.

a circular economy, protecting biodiversity and attracting investment in natural assets,

alongside its goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Investments linked to nature

reserves have exceeded RO 44 million through nine contracts covering seven reserves, according to figures outlined in the announcement. Oman had 32 nature reserves in 2025, spanning approximately 187,276 square kilometres.

The country is also pursuing blue carbon projects targeting the planting of 100 million mangrove trees across 20,000 hectares. These initiatives are expected to absorb about 14 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, although the announcement did not specify a timeframe.

In waste management, the volume of recycled municipal solid waste reached 1.77 million tonnes, supported by 85 recycling facilities. The announcement reported nationwide coverage of waste collection and transport services

and a 100 per cent rate of safe solid waste management. Marine protected areas now account for 16.19 per cent of Oman's exclusive economic zone, compared with a baseline of 0.33 per cent, exceeding the country's target for 2030.

Oman also rose six places to 49th in the 2026 Environmental Performance Index, from 55th in 2024. It ranked first in six sub-indicators, including wastewater treatment, species habitat protection and progress in reducing sulphur dioxide emissions, the announcement said.

The delegation will use the conference to present Oman's sustainability initiatives and explore cooperation in finance, technology and expertise to support national climate priorities and Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

PRECIOUS METALS

Gold rises as oil prices fall



Gold prices climbed as a drop in oil prices provided support, with spot gold reaching \$4,175.60 per ounce. Oil fell following US President Donald Trump's decision to exempt Russia from select sanctions.

Meanwhile, rising US import prices signaled ongoing inflationary pressures, leaving traders heavily anticipating a Federal Reserve interest rate hike by December. — Reuters

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

China industrial output and sales accelerate



China's industrial output grew 5.5% year-on-year in September, accelerating from August's 5.2% pace and matching economic forecasts.

Retail sales rose 1.1%, exceeding market expectations of 0.6% and improving on August's weak expansion. Fixed-asset investment dropped 7.2% through the first nine months, slightly beating analyst predictions of a steeper decline. — Reuters

FOOD SECURITY

Global food inflation expected to intensify



Global food inflation is set to accelerate through 2027 as conflict-driven shipping disruptions and El Niño droughts constrain major cereal supplies.

Rising prices for rice, bread, and sugar are hitting vulnerable low- and middle-income households across Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East hardest, where food expenses represent a major share of living costs. — Reuters

OPINION

Learn to speak AI



TARIQ AL BARWANI

The writer is a strategic adviser, businessman and motivational speaker

If you ask me today, as an experienced individual living in an AI era, what is an important skill that every person, be it a student or a professional, should have in order to be employable or even should have in order to be productive (personally and professionally)? I would confidently answer, “Learn to speak AI”. Precisely, know how to use, ask and engage with AI tools via “prompt engineering”.

Simply put, prompt engineering is the ability to give (or in other words ask) artificial intelligence clear instructions, relevant information and sufficient context to produce a useful result.

A prompt is the question or instruction you give an AI tool/app such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini and Claude. Engineering that prompt means refining how you ask so the response better meets your needs. If you ask/give wrong input, it will not produce an ideal solution/output – garbage in, garbage out!

Think of AI as a capable colleague who has enormous knowledge but does not automatically understand your objectives, expectations or working environment. If you ask a vague question, you may receive a generic answer. If you explain what you need, why you need it, who the audience is and what the final output should look like, the results can be considerably more useful.

Let us take a simple example. Instead of asking AI to “write a promotional email”, try this: “Act as an experienced marketing professional working for a technology company. Write a friendly email introducing our cybersecurity services to small businesses in Oman. Highlight three business benefits, avoid technical jargon and finish with an invitation for a meeting. Keep it under 150 words”.

The difference is clear. You have given AI a role, a target audience, a purpose, specific requirements and a word limit. You can then ask it to improve the result, suggest alternatives or make the message more persuasive. That conversation is where the real value begins.

Prompt engineering’s beauty lies in its accessibility to individuals beyond just technology professionals. A salesperson can analyse customer feedback, prepare proposals and practise negotiations.

A human resources professional can develop interview questions and improve job descriptions. A teacher can create lesson plans for different learning abilities, while a student can turn a complicated topic into a simple explanation with practical examples.

In healthcare, authorised professionals can use AI tools to assist with administrative documentation and summarise information. Accountants can use them to explain

A prompt is the question or instruction you give an AI tool/app such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini and Claude. Engineering that prompt means refining how you ask so the response better meets your needs. If you ask/give wrong input, it will not produce an ideal solution/output – garbage in, garbage out!

financial concepts and organise reports. Entrepreneurs can explore business ideas, identify potential customer segments and develop initial business plans. Programmers can use AI to explain code, identify possible errors and generate test cases.

The possibilities are enormous, but there is an important catch. AI can hallucinate and also produce inaccurate information, overlook context and sound confident even when it is wrong.

Never treat its response as unquestionable truth. Verify important facts and always check sources. Furthermore, judgement and appropriate human oversight remains essential, something that I see many users today neglect to do/follow.

So how do you become good at it? First, start using an AI tool regularly for genuine tasks in your work or studies. Second, be specific: explain your objective, provide relevant context and describe the format you want.

Third, experiment. If the answer is poor, explain what is missing and ask for improvements. Finally, learn to break complex tasks into manageable steps, compare different answers (even using different AI tools/apps), and verify the results.

You do not need to become an AI engineer to benefit from artificial intelligence. But you do need to understand how to work with it.

ASIAN REFINERS’ PAIN IS MIDDLE EAST OIL PRODUCERS’ PROBLEM

RON BOUSSO

Shipping costs near record highs are crushing Asian refining margins even as global fuel markets run short of supply.

To keep Asian refiners buying, Middle Eastern exporters may have to absorb more of those costs themselves, squeezing the revenue they desperately need after months of war.

In yet another sign of the extraordinary distortions rippling through global energy markets as the US and Iran vie for control of the Strait of Hormuz, oil is increasingly flowing out of the Middle East, but actually getting it to customers has become so expensive that it threatens to undermine the recovery.

The energy crisis has shifted decidedly from a shortage of crude to a shortage of refined fuels. Global refining throughput is set to fall by 2.3 million barrels per day this year to 81.7 million bpd, according to the International Energy Agency.

Many refineries have been damaged during the Middle East conflict, already in its eighth month, and Ukrainian strikes on Russian refineries have compounded the squeeze.

Diesel has felt the impact most acutely, with prices hitting all-time highs last month.

Asia has borne much of the pain from the Hormuz disruption. The region has historically relied on the Middle East for around 60% of its oil supplies. After the war began, many Asian refiners were forced to reduce operating rates and scramble for alternative crude from as far away as the United States and South America, at enormous cost.

Refiners elsewhere, particularly in the US and Europe, reaped the benefit as they ran at record levels while profit margins soared to record highs last month.

In theory, the recovery in Middle East oil exports in recent weeks should offer Asian refiners some much-needed relief. In practice, shipping economics are making that almost impossible.

Crude shipments from the Middle East have risen significantly over the past six weeks.

Total Middle Eastern crude exports, including volumes shipped through routes bypassing Hormuz, rose to 15.4 million bpd in September, nearly 90% of pre-war levels, according to Kpler data.

Much of that recovery came from transit through the strait itself. Flows through Hormuz climbed to 10.7 million bpd in September, around three-quarters of pre-war levels, as Gulf producers stepped up tanker transits under US Navy supervision.

Asian crude imports are also recovering and are set to reach 23.5 million bpd in October, their highest level since February and slightly above the 2025 average. Middle Eastern barrels account for about 10 million bpd of that total, according to Kpler. — Reuters

Oman gives business a seat at the table

FOR as long as most of us have been in business, the pattern was familiar. A new fee, a new licence condition or a new quota would appear, and we would learn about it the same day as everyone else. We adjusted, we complied, and we moved on.

That pattern is now changing, and I believe the change deserves more attention than it has received.

In June, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik directed the creation of an Economic Coordination Council, chaired by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs. For the first time, business holds most of the seats at the table where economic policy is shaped.

The design is simple. The council has twelve members: five from government, five from the private sector and two representing small and medium enterprises, with business members serving fixed three-year terms. Its job is to align government policy with what the private sector needs, to look ahead at global economic trends, and to expand the private sector’s role in growth.

A council of the same name existed in 1999, but every one of its ten members was a government official. The difference tells you how far Oman’s thinking has travelled.

Oman Vision 2040 and the Eleventh Five-Year Development Plan (2026–2030) set targets that depend heavily on business to deliver: a private-sector contribution of 56 per cent of GDP at current prices, private investment equivalent to 21 per cent of GDP, and 50,000 private-sector job opportunities a year. You cannot ask business to carry that load and keep it outside the room.

Why does this matter so much? Because investment follows predictability. The 2026 IMD World Competitiveness Ranking placed Oman 25th of 70 economies and 15th in the world for government efficiency, while the IMD’s CEO survey found that government policy stability was the leading factor attracting investment to Oman, cited by 50.7 per cent of



DR YOUSUF HAMED AL BALUSHI
youseufh@omaninvestgateway.com

The writer is founder and CEO, Smart Investment Gateway, economist, board adviser & business transformation mentor

The new Economic Coordination Council puts private firms and SMEs inside the room where economic policy is shaped. What it means for investors, entrepreneurs and jobs, and how to make the most of it.

respondents.

That reputation is Oman’s real asset. The council protects it by changing when business is consulted. Picture a proposed fee or a new Omanisation requirement under the old pattern, firms might discover the change only after it took effect and have to absorb the cost.

Ideally, the proposal would reach the council before implementation, allowing businesses to explain the implications for payroll and prices and giving policymakers an opportunity to refine or phase in the measure.

Ministries have already tested this approach; the tourism law’s executive regulation was put to public consultation before issue.

The council could help make such early consultation the norm. Fewer surprises mean lower risk, and lower risk means more capital committed for longer.

For foreign investors, the benefit is a clear channel and a clearer signal. Oman’s stock of foreign direct investment reached RO 31.4 billion at the end of 2025, but 81 per cent of it sits in oil and gas. The next wave must come in manufacturing, logistics, tourism, food and finance, where investors live with everyday rules on land, labour, customs and licensing.

Imagine a German manufacturer weighing Suhar against a rival Gulf site, or an Indian food processor looking at Al Duqm: each now has an institution whose purpose is to make those rules workable.

The same logic is being applied to finance. The new International Financial Centre of Oman, also chaired by HH Sayyid Theyazin, opens company registration this year and full licensing in 2027 under a common-law framework.

Financial and insurance services were already the fastest-growing non-oil sector in the first half of 2026, up 9.5 per cent.

A centre built with the same consultative habit will attract banks, asset managers and fintechs that want stability as much as incentives.

For Omani investors and entrepreneurs, the gains are closer to home. At the end of June 2026, the private sector employed 441,737

Omanis, up 8.6 per cent year on year, compared with 392,962 in government employment. Oman has roughly 267,500 small and medium enterprises contributing about 21.8 per cent of GDP.

Two SME seats on the council mean their everyday concerns, from prompt payment of government dues to realistic Omanisation timelines for new firms, now reach decision-makers directly.

When rules are stable, banks lend more readily, projects reach break-even sooner, and returns improve for everyone who has put capital at risk.

Jobs follow, because firms hire when they can see two years ahead.

How can people make the most of it? My advice to business owners is to organise and prepare. Work through the OCCI and your sector committees so that the five private-sector members speak with the weight of hundreds of firms behind them.

Bring numbers rather than grievances: a quantified cost of a proposed measure, with a workable alternative, is far harder to set aside than a complaint.

Take part in every consultation window a ministry opens. For investors at home and abroad, three signs will show the system working: more draft rules published for comment before they take effect, non-oil growth moving back towards the Plan’s 4 per cent annual target from around 1.5 per cent in the first half of 2026, and the financial centre welcoming its first registrations on schedule.

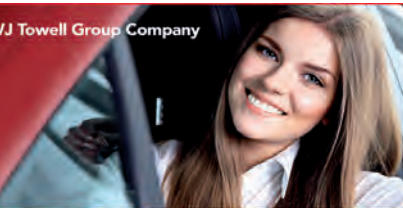
For young Omanis, the sectors the Plan is backing, from manufacturing to tourism to digital services, are where the new private-sector jobs will appear.

In my view, this is the most practical pro-business step Oman has taken since Oman Vision 2040 was launched, and it is timely. It does not promise miracles; it changes who is in the room, and that is how good economies are built, decision by decision.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has opened the door. The Omani private sector, and those abroad who want to grow with it, should walk through it prepared.

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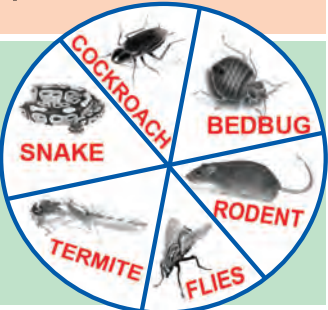
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ART/LIFE



A VOICE FOR OMAN'S VULNERABLE ANIMALS

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BOX OFFICE

TOM CRUISE'S 'DIGGER' FACES \$245 MILLION LOSS



Tom Cruise has promoted 'Digger' heavily all over the world. — AFP

The Tom Cruise eco-satire “Digger”, a movie supposed to herald the action hero’s return to serious acting, has bombed at the box office, with industry insiders predicting losses approaching a quarter of a billion dollars.

The Alejandro Inarritu comedy, featuring Cruise as an eccentric oil baron who must fix a problem he helped create, was panned by critics and has left audiences cold.

It leaves Warner Bros. with a major financial hole as a merger with Paramount Skydance closes.

After two weeks in cinemas, the film has grossed just \$14.4 million in North America and \$35.3 million globally, pointing to cumulative losses of around \$245 million.

“Financially it has to be considered a disaster”, Christopher Rosen of Hollywood trade publication The Ankler said.

“It cost anywhere from \$160 million to \$180 million, that’s even before marketing, and it’s made relatively nothing at the box office”.

Marketing for a movie like “Digger” can cost up to \$100 million.

Daniel Loria of Boxoffice Pro noted that the film was greenlit under outgoing Warner Bros. executives Pam Abdy and Michael De Luca, known for giving filmmakers substantial budgets to create original movies.

“Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn’t”, he said. As an art-house film satirising American culture through the eyes of a non-American filmmaker, “Digger” was perhaps always a difficult proposition.

“This movie was never going to get a general audience to get behind it, right?” Loria also said.

“The film takes every opportunity to push the audience in uncomfortable directions”, Loria said.

“American audiences don’t have the easiest time accepting films that criticize American culture, especially when they’re made by foreigners”.

Cruise’s presence, following his role in reviving cinema attendance after the pandemic with “Top Gun: Maverick”, ensured intense attention.

“You’ve got arguably the biggest movie star in the world (who) was literally everywhere for this movie”, said Paul Dergarabedian, a market analyst at Rentrak.

“He was so excited about this movie and working with Alejandro Inarritu”.

“By virtue of Tom Cruise’s star power, there was a spotlight on this movie. Anything he does is going to be under a microscope”.

That fame makes comparisons less flattering: “Digger” was never going to match the multibillion-dollar “Mission: Impossible” franchise.

But its earnings align with the kind of films Inarritu makes, Loria said. His movies “aren’t really too worried about their box office total; they’re worried about having an artistic endeavor behind” them. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



TOURISM

Elephant caretaker prepares his tamed elephant, Chuti Manike, for a bath in Sigiriya, Sri Lanka.

— Reuters



CELEBRITY

Sabrina Carpenter attends the Sixth Annual Academy Museum Gala at in Los Angeles, US.

— Reuters



ART

Artists perform “Danse des Chrysalides de Mer” by Cie Gwam at City Park in Skopje, North Macedonia.

— Reuters

INSTA PICKS



Bruce's green pigeon



Going forward

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BAYEUX TAPESTRY WILL NOT BE HUNG AGAIN



The Bayeux Tapestry dates from around 1077. — AFP

The 1,000-year-old Bayeux Tapestry will no longer hang when it returns to France from an exhibition in Britain, with the masterpiece to be displayed on an inclined table instead.

France’s Culture Minister Catherine Pegard said the change would help preserve the 68-metre tapestry and improve the visitor experience.

The tapestry went on display horizontally at London’s British Museum in September after being transported from its home museum in Normandy, where it had hung since the 1980s.

The Bayeux Museum is undergoing renovations during the London exhibition, which has attracted around 100,000 visitors.

Writing on X, Pegard said the tapestry “will be displayed along its entire length on an inclined table” when it returns next year.

She said the London trip had not altered the work and that changing its display had been

under consideration for about a decade.

Lawmaker Jean-Philippe Tanguy called the decision a “scandal”, alleging without evidence that the tapestry had been damaged during transportation.

Some conservation experts had raised concerns about moving the fragile work. Two broken threads were observed after the journey, but Pegard said in September that it remained “in the same state”.

The tapestry depicts the 1066 Battle of Hastings, marking the start of William the Conqueror’s invasion of England with his Norman army.

Its origins remain uncertain, although it is widely believed to have been made in England before being transferred to Bayeux.

“We will see the Tapestry again in a new museum, with a new presentation”, Pegard wrote. — AFP



The third European Union Film Festival brought 19 movies and nine short films to audiences in Muscat.

OMAN CELEBRATES THE SHARED LANGUAGE OF CINEMA



Films from nine European countries offered audiences a glimpse into diverse cultures and traditions. Nine shortlisted short films showcased local filmmaking talent as part of the festival’s competition.

KABEER YOUSUF

THE lights dimmed at Cinépolis, Oman Avenues Mall, last week, and for eight days, Muscat spoke in nine different languages — yet with one universal accent: cinema.

As many as 19 movies and nine short films from different corners of the world enthralled audiences in Muscat as the Delegation of the European Union and its Member States’ embassies in Muscat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Oman Film Society and the International Film Foundation of Oman, joined hands to present the third edition of the European Union Film Festival (EUFF), from October 11 to 18.

This year’s festival brought together Austria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and Spain, offering a vibrant, carefully curated selection that reflected the diversity, creativity and cultural richness of contemporary European cinema.

Speaking to the Observer, Anwar bin Khamis al Ruzaiqi, Chairman of the Oman Film Society (OFS), warmly welcomed the European Union Film Festival and highlighted it as a vital developmental milestone for local cinema.

“This year, the programme was a true celluloid season — stories

that transcend borders, connect cultures, and celebrate our shared human experience.

Through the universal language of film, EUFF has become more than a screening schedule. It is a space where European embassies, Omani institutions, filmmakers, students, media professionals, and cinema enthusiasts meet, dialogue, and discover new perspectives — strengthening the longstanding ties between Europe and Oman”, Al Ruzaiqi said.

Austria presented three movies, ‘A Whole Life’, ‘Downhill Skies’ and ‘Woodwalkers’, while Cyprus made its presence felt with ‘Maricel’.

France presented three movies, ‘En Corps/Rise’, ‘Mars Express’ and ‘Chicken for Linda’, catering to a diverse audience over the week.

Germany had two movies, ‘Wochenend Rebellen’ (Weekend Rebels) and ‘No Hit Wonder’, presented in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut Gulf Region, while Hungary presented ‘The Game’ and ‘Simmelweis’.

Three Italian movies featured in the programme: ‘La Vita da Grandi’ (Siblings), ‘Come Ti Muovi Sbagli’ (Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don’t) and ‘Gioia Mia’ (Sweetheart).

Meanwhile, ‘Superkrachten Voor Je Hoofd’ (Superpowers for Your Head) represented the Netherlands.

Romania presented ‘Warboy’, while Spain brought two movies, ‘El Olivo’ (The Olive Tree) and ‘Iberia’,

offering glimpses into different aspects of life in the two countries.

At the heart of this year’s festival, however, were local stories. A dedicated short film competition was held as part of the third EUFF, providing a platform for emerging and established filmmakers in the Sultanate of Oman.

Nine short films made it to the finals, and the shortlisted films were screened for the public during the festival.

“The event directly aligns with the OFS’ ongoing commitment to strengthening international cultural partnerships, and collaborating on the festival plays a key role in developing and advancing Oman’s local film sector”, Al Ruzaiqi added.

Three awards — Best Picture, Best Storyline and Best Director — recognised outstanding talent, with each winner receiving RO 500. Through this initiative, the festival sought to encourage local filmmaking talent and strengthen creative exchange between Oman and Europe. Viewers were able to vote for their favourite short film, and the winners were honoured at the closing ceremony at Cinépolis, Oman Avenues Mall.

“Besides the international films being screened, the Short Film Competition is a premier platform designed to showcase and uplift young Omani talent, as we have a group of rich and ever-prosperous young filmmakers”, he noted.

FEATURES



Sayyidah Salsabeel turns compassion into action.

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

ANIMAL welfare efforts in Oman have gained a new platform with the establishment of the Oman Animal Welfare Association (OAWA).

Leading the initiative alongside a team of volunteers is its chairperson, Sayyidah Salsabeel bint Badr al Busaidi, who says compassion has always been part of who she is.

“I have always felt deeply for the vulnerable, both people and animals, but I never imagined I would one day establish an animal welfare organisation”.

“My beloved dog was stolen and never found. It was heartbreaking, and the pain of not knowing what happened to him has never really left me”.

“Then came Jupiter, a stray Omani Mau cat I rescued. I often wondered, what if I hadn’t found him? Where would he be today? Hungry, injured, frightened, or perhaps lying dead somewhere, with nobody even knowing he had existed?”

“That thought stayed with me. Because for every Jupiter who is rescued, how many others are still out there, waiting for someone to notice them? Every living being deserves food, shelter, care and, above all, a little kindness”.

Her desire to care for animals became a determination to protect them when she heard about stray dogs being shot.

“Something inside me could no longer remain silent. One morning, I simply woke up and said, ‘I will save animals’. I had no idea how I would do it”.

She began by reaching out to animal welfare advocates, learning about their work and understanding the government approvals needed to establish an organisation.

“There were moments when the journey seemed endless; it took years. But I never gave up, because I believed in this cause with all my heart. I could not save the dog I lost, but perhaps I could help save the lives of others. And that became my purpose”.

Asked about the challenges she faces as a woman, she said she has never believed that challenges belong to women alone.

“Life challenges us all. The real question is, how much does something matter to you, and how far are you prepared to go for it?”

“For me, when I see a frightened stray dog, a helpless kitten or a feral donkey struggling to survive, I cannot simply turn away. Animals have feelings, needs and a voice. They speak through their

Driven by personal loss and a deep compassion for animals, Sayyidah Salsabeel al Busaidi established the Oman Animal Welfare Association to turn individual acts of kindness into a shared mission of care and protection.

A VOICE FOR OMAN’S VULNERABLE ANIMALS



Working alongside volunteers, Sayyidah Salsabeel al Busaidi leads efforts to care for and protect animals in Oman.

eyes, their movements, their fear and their trust.

Perhaps it is not that they cannot speak to us, but that we have yet to learn how to truly listen and understand their needs”.

There are difficult days, she acknowledged.

“Doors do not always open, and things rarely happen as quickly as we hope. But I remind myself why I began”.

For her, changing the fate of even one animal makes every obstacle worthwhile.

“I believe patience is a quiet kind of

strength. And when something truly matters, you find a way, even when the road seems impossible”.

So what does women’s empowerment mean to her?

“To me, empowerment is having the courage to listen to that little voice inside you that says, ‘You can make a difference’, even when the world tells you otherwise”.

She said it is about believing in something so deeply that one is willing to begin without knowing exactly how the journey will unfold.

“I do not believe strength means never

being afraid or never facing difficulties. Sometimes strength is simply waking up the next morning and trying again.

And I have always believed that compassion and mercy are not weaknesses. They are among the greatest strengths we possess and, indeed, among the greatest attributes of the Almighty”, she explained.

For Sayyidah Salsabeel, a truly empowered woman is one who believes in herself, follows her heart and has the courage to turn that belief into something that brings positive change.