

OMAN AND UK LOOKING FOR £1.7 BILLION TRADE

HM, UK Prime Minister hold bilateral meeting, expanded talks



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Andy Burnham, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, held a bilateral meeting at 10 Downing Street in London on Wednesday.

just wanted to say one further thing. Obviously, everyone can see how difficult the situation has been and is in the Middle East. And everyone can see the extent to which you, Your Majesty, your government, and the people of Oman are working to find solutions, build partnerships, and work to ensure the Strait of Hormuz is reopened to trade.

“On this occasion of the state visit, I wanted to reiterate the UK’s appreciation of this country to all of the efforts that you’ve done in what has been a really difficult situation. I want you to know that you can rely on our continued support and collaboration.”

His Majesty the Sultan delivered a speech, expressing his utmost thanks to the UK Prime Minister. The text of the speech reads as follows: “Thank you very much Prime Minister. I’m really delighted to be with you again in Downing Street. And I’m really very happy also to be on this beautiful state visit.

“This visit we are undertaking in the context of relations with Britain. Our relations go back very deep. We have so many things that work perfectly between Oman and Britain.

“Today, my presence here is to continue that relation. We have so many things that we started from a long time back. Together, we will have great success in the coming years.

“As you have mentioned, the situation unfortunately right now is a bit rough, as it has been in the past probably two years. Oman has played a great role in whatever we have been able to attain and whatever we can have. I think we always hope that the situation will go back to normal, and we are working on it.

“We have great relations with Britain; we interact all the time coordinating our moves and also help each other out. So I am very thankful again to be in this historical gathering.”

His Majesty the Sultan and the British Prime Minister then chaired an expanded session of talks. **TURN TO P2**

HM, UK PRIME MINISTER REVIEW BILATERAL RELATIONS

OMAN, UK OLDEST FRIENDS COLLABORATING FOR CENTURIES

TOGETHER, WE WILL HAVE GREAT SUCCESS IN COMING YEARS

OMAN WORKING TO ENSURE HORMUZ IS REOPENED FOR TRADE

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK and Andy Burnham, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) held a bilateral meeting at 10 Downing Street in London on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the course of bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom and the means of enhancing them in service of mutual interests.

The UK Prime Minister delivered a speech, the text of which reads as follows: “Your Majesty, you are very welcome indeed to Downing Street for our first face-to-face meeting. I am extremely pleased to be with you on this historic occasion of the state visit of Oman.

“I so much enjoyed your

speech and His Majesty the King’s speech at Windsor Castle last night at the state banquet. What comes over is the extent of the historic ties between us. We are two of the oldest friends collaborating for centuries, and that is such a deep tradition for us to draw on.

“In the modern world as we look forward, we’re cooperating on technology, on defence and security, but also on cultural collaboration. There are so many ties on so many levels. On trade, I think we are looking at a £1.7-billion trade relationship. I’m sure we would both think that we can build that out.

“Hopefully, that will be one of the outcomes of this state visit of yours to the United Kingdom. Before handing over to you, I

TWO SIDES ADDRESSED REGIONAL AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

SUPPORT FOR ESTABLISHING REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

DEALS INKED IN THE FIELDS OF SPACE AND AI IN EDUCATION

BRITISH OMANI SOCIETY MARKS GOLDEN JUBILEE OF FOUNDING

In honour of HM, Lord Mayor of London hosts banquet



In honour of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, a banquet was hosted at the Guildhall of the Lord Mayor of the City of London on Wednesday evening, within the framework of the state visit undertaken by His Majesty the Sultan to the United Kingdom (UK).

Upon the arrival of the Royal motorcade of His Majesty the Sultan, he was received by Susan Langley, Lady Mayor of the City of London; Gary Langley, husband of the Lady Mayor; His Royal Highness Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester and officials, who welcomed His Majesty the Sultan, expressing their profound delight and great honour at this visit.

The Lady Mayor then presented a number of senior officials of the City of London to His Majesty the Sultan, after

which His Majesty ascended the dais of honour, where the Guard of Honour rendered the royal salute and the Royal Anthem of Oman was played. His Majesty then graciously inspected the Guard of Honour, drawn up in salute to His Majesty, and a commemorative photograph was taken on the dais to mark the occasion.

His Majesty the Sultan then proceeded to the Art Gallery Hall, accompanied by the Lady Mayor, members of the British Royal Family and the official delegation accompanying His Majesty, where a reception was held to mark the occasion, and the High Commissioners and Ambassadors resident in London came forward to shake hands with His Majesty the Sultan. **TURN TO P2**

OMAN, UK REVIEW COURSE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS



LONDON: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Andy Burnham, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK), held a bilateral meeting at 10 Downing Street in London. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the course of bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom and the means of enhancing them in service of mutual interests. — **ONA**

OMAN AND UK LOOKING FOR £1.7 BILLION TRADE

FROM PAGE 1

The two sides reviewed the fields of cooperation and the existing partnership between the two countries and the pathways for advancing and developing them across all sectors, in fulfilment of the two countries' aspirations for greater progress and stability.

The two sides also addressed developments in the regional and international arenas in light of current events and their repercussions for the security of the region, affirming the importance of intensifying coordination and uniting international efforts to contain crises and support endeavours aimed at establishing peace and reinforcing security and stability.

The session of talks was attended on the Omani side by the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, while senior officials attended on the British side.

Following the conclusion of the session, His Majesty the Sultan inscribed a message in the visitors' book, in which he expressed his delight at this visit, wishing the relations between the two countries continued progress and growth in fulfilment of shared objectives. — **ONA**



In honour of HM, Lord Mayor of London hosts banquet

FROM PAGE 1
His Majesty the Sultan also graciously signed the visitors' book.

At the outset of the dinner, the Recorder of the City of London delivered a welcoming address on the occasion of the gracious visit of His Majesty the Sultan, in which he expressed his pride in the occasion.

Following the conclusion of the banquet, the Lady Mayor of the City of London delivered an address in which she renewed her welcome to His Majesty the Sultan. The text of the address reads as follows: "Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your

Excellencies, My Lords, Aldermen, Sheriffs, Chief Commoner, Honoured Guests...

Your Majesty,
On behalf of the entire City of London Corporation, it is my enormous pleasure to welcome you, and members of the Omani Royal Family and other distinguished delegates to the City of London tonight.

We are so delighted to present you with an Address of Welcome, contained here in this case, which I hope you will accept as a sincere expression of the deep and enduring friendship between our nations.
This magnificent Guildhall, where we sit tonight, has been at the very heart of the City for more than 600 years. Within these ancient stone walls, history has been made, friendships forged, and momentous occasions celebrated. Including, of course, the banquet held here in honour of His late Majesty Sultan Qaboos. And so it is a very special privilege to add another chapter to that remarkable history tonight.
At first glance, the United Kingdom and Oman might seem worlds apart. One, a land of green meadows, ancient forests, and mist-covered mountains. The other, a land of sweeping golden deserts, dramatic

cliffs, and breathtaking coastlines.

And yet, look beyond the geography, and something extraordinary emerges. Two nations, yes, separated by distance, but united by history and by a friendship that has endured for centuries. We are both outward-looking.

We understand that the freedom of the seas, the security of trade routes, and global stability are the very foundations upon which prosperity and peace are built. But our connections extend well beyond this - through education, culture, science, and the countless friendships formed between us, we have built something far more powerful than any agreement. Trust.

For ultimately, it is not treaties alone that sustain great friendships. It is people. Shared experiences. And the understanding that we have more that unites us than divides us.
Our diplomatic relationship stretches back to 1646. Lord Nelson himself travelled to Muscat as a young midshipman. And the name of his ship, HMS Seahorse, was visible on the cliffs around Muscat Harbour for many years.

It's fitting, then, that we should sit here tonight, on Trafalgar Day, in the shadow of a monument to Nelson. A wonderful reminder that the threads

connecting our people run deep. But the threads of our shared history must also weave the future we build together. Because nations, like cities, never thrive by standing still. They thrive by adapting, innovating, and having the courage to look forward. And this is reflected in this year's landmark free trade agreement between the UK and the Gulf, opening doors to new markets and partnerships.

The remarkable number of British and Omani businesses represented here tonight is itself a testament to the strength of our economic ties. The United Kingdom accounts for more than half of foreign direct investment into Oman. And the opportunities ahead are greater still. The UK-Oman Sovereign Investment Partnership is helping channel investment in both directions.

And I am particularly delighted that the Oman Investment Authority has recognised the extraordinary potential of British innovation, investing in university spinouts at the frontiers of artificial intelligence and robotics through Cambridge Innovation Capital and Oxford Science Enterprises - both here tonight. It's turning ideas into industries. Research into discovery. And the ambitions of one generation



KING CHARLES III BIDS FAREWELL TO HIS MAJESTY

WINDSOR: His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom, bade farewell to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at Windsor Castle today at the conclusion of the royal reception ceremony, within the state visit undertaken by His Majesty the Sultan to the United Kingdom. His Majesty the Sultan expressed his profound thanks to His Majesty the King for the warmth of the reception and the generosity of his hospitality. His Majesty the King expressed his thanks and appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan for this gracious visit, wishing that the good relations between the two friendly countries may prosper and flourish across all fields. — **ONA**



into opportunities for the next.

So here in the City of London, Your Majesty, we stand ready to play our part. To bring together expertise and investment, connect innovators with opportunity, and ensure that the prosperity we create is shared by both our nations...more important now than ever.

Not simply a place to do business, but a partner you can depend on. A friendship sustained not only by governments and institutions, but by the thousands of Omanis who live, work, and study here.

People who enrich our communities, strengthen our institutions, and whom we are so proud to call part of our City of London family.
Your Majesty, more than two centuries ago a treaty between our nations expressed the extraordinary hope that: "The friendship of our two States may remain till the sun and moon have finished their revolving career." Remarkable words. Written in another century, by people who could scarcely have imagined the changes that lay ahead.

And tonight, within the walls of this ancient hall, we celebrate not simply what has been, but what is still to come. Because the greatest

friendships are not those that never face adversity. They are those that hold true through it, grow stronger because of it, and step forward ready to face the future hand-in-hand."

The text of the address was then presented to His Majesty the Sultan within an ornate casket, offered as a commemorative gift in accordance with the traditions of the City of London.

The Royal Anthem of Oman was then played, after which His Majesty the Sultan graciously delivered an address on this occasion, the text of which follows: "Lady Mayor, Excellencies, Dear friends,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Lady Mayor for this gracious invitation, which reflects the esteem in which my country is held, and the openness of the City of London to the wider world, and its commitment to strengthening the bridges of communication and trust among nations of the world.

Each time I visit London, I am reminded of why it attracts bright minds and innovators. As one famous predecessor of the Lady Mayor put it, it really does feel that the streets are paved with gold.

London is not merely a political capital, nor is it simply a global

financial centre. It is a vibrant hub where ideas are exchanged and innovation flourishes across many fields of human achievements, above all, trade and investment, where expertise, cultures and human aspirations come together. A city's true value lies in the ideas it inspires, the strategies it shapes, and the relationships it fosters, all of which can leave a lasting mark on the world.

Our gathering today has provided us with a new opportunity to develop further, our shared vision for British Omani friendship, both in terms of political engagement and private sector cooperation.

We can see that bilateral investment and trade are moving in a positive direction, with concrete efforts being made to encourage investment and build stronger partnerships in sectors such as sustainability, financial services, and technology.

Markets can prosper only in a stable environment; businesses can grow only when supported by transparent and flexible legislation; and investment opportunities can flourish only when underpinned by clear, well-defined and promising plans and projects. In light of these important considerations, Oman

stands ready to welcome all those who wish to join us on this journey.

Looking back, much attention is rightly paid to the historic treaties of 1798 and 1800, which marked an important stage in government to government relations between Oman and Britain. But the roots of this relationship stretch back even further, to an agreement concluded as early as 1647, long before formal agreements were signed between the two governments. This early agreement was not with the British government but with the merchants of this City of London, namely the British East India Company. It granted the British East India Company a favourable trading privileges and access to Omani governed ports. Not for the last time, the private sector got there first.

These historic agreements reflect a much deeper connection rooted in the shared heritage as seafarers and traders, a legacy that has brought lasting benefits to the peoples of Oman and Britain and continues to do so today, as thriving trade ties and the strength of private enterprise testify to the enduring value of this relationship.

Building on this longstanding relationship, the UK GCC Free

Trade Agreement will unlock new opportunities for trade and investment, as the exchange of goods is expected to increase, creating further opportunities for economic growth in the years ahead.

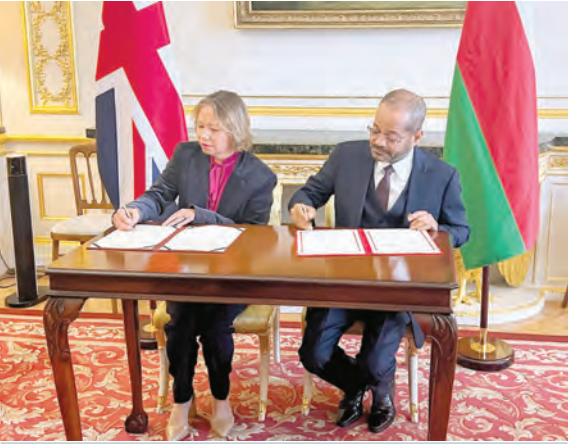
Lady Mayor,
From the East India Company's first treaty, to Oman investments in London real estate, to British consultancy in smart cities and economic zones, our ancestors have long collaborated to bring together enterprise, expertise, and ambition.
And, as I join you here today, I have no doubt that our collaboration will continue to blossom for many more generations to come.

Lady Mayor, dear friends, thank you for your hospitality."
The ceremonies of the dinner concluded with an address of thanks delivered by the Lady Mayor of the City of London, in which she expressed her profound gratitude for the honour of His Majesty's visit to the City of London.

The dinner was attended by their highnesses, their excellencies and their honours, members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, together with senior officials and prominent British figures and the ambassadors resident in London. — **ONA**



ENHANCING COOPERATION



The signing of the two letters of intent took place within the framework of the state visit paid by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom. — ONA

OMAN, UK SIGN TWO LETTERS OF INTENT IN SPACE, AI IN EDUCATION

LONDON: The Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom (UK) signed two letters of intent on Wednesday in the British capital, London, in the fields of space and artificial intelligence in education.

The signing of the two letters of intent took place within the framework of the state visit paid by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom.

The two letters of intent were signed on the Omani side by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibani, Minister of Education. On the British side, they were signed by Dr Alice Bunn, Co-Director of the UK Space Agency, and Scott McDonald, Chief Executive of the British Council.

The first letter of intent pertains to enhancing cooperation in the space sector and exchanging expertise in space policies, scientific research, and innovation between the UK Space Agency and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. Meanwhile, the second letter relates to the responsible utilisation of artificial intelligence in education, supporting English language learning, and assisting teachers in using artificial intelligence safely and effectively in classrooms.

Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibani, Minister of Education, affirmed that the signing of the letter of intent between the Ministry of Education and the British Council marks an important step toward strengthening educational cooperation and exploring the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence technologies to develop teaching and learning methods and build students' skills, in line with technological transformation and future requirements, and consistent with the targets of Oman Vision 2040.

She explained that this cooperation focuses on the joint design and implementation of a pilot project in a selected group of secondary schools in the Sultanate of Oman to develop students' English communication skills, particularly speaking and writing skills, enhance their labour market readiness skills, and raise their level of preparedness to enrol in higher education institutions whose programmes are taught in English.

The Minister pointed out that the project includes building teachers' capacities to use learning tools supported by artificial intelligence and aligning educational activities with Omani curricula and the needs of participating schools, while adhering to the principles of safe and responsible use of modern technologies and the protection of students and data.

Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibani, Minister of Education, indicated that the pilot project will be evaluated according to indicators agreed upon by both parties, so that its results contribute to developing educational practices and identifying opportunities for potential future expansion, thereby supporting evidence-based decision-making.

The Minister of Education concluded by emphasising that this partnership looks forward to benefiting from shared expertise in developing innovative learning environments and empowering students to acquire linguistic capabilities and future skills. — ONA



The two ministers reviewed the dimension of Omani-British relations and the historical legacy and mutual interests on which they rest. — ONA

Sayyid Shihab meets British Secretary of State for Defence

LONDON: HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, met on Wednesday in the British capital, London, with Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom. This meeting took place within the framework of the state visit undertaken by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom.



The two sides reviewed bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the friendly United Kingdom. — ONA

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the friendly United Kingdom, as well as ways to enhance and develop them across various fields, particularly the existing military cooperation between the two countries' defence ministries. They also discussed a number of topics of mutual interest. — ONA

BRITISH OMANI SOCIETY HOSTS RECEPTION

THE British Omani Society hosted a reception on Wednesday to mark the fiftieth anniversary of its founding—its Golden Jubilee—at Lancaster House in London, in the presence of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan. The event was held within the framework of the state visit undertaken by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the friendly United Kingdom.

Upon his arrival at Lancaster House, HH Sayyid Theyazin was received by Stephen Doughty, Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa; Major General (Retd) Richard Stanford, Chairman of the Society's Board of Directors and British officials. A commemorative photograph was taken of the friends of the British Omani Society, after which HH Sayyid Theyazin shook hands with the members of the Society's Board of Directors.

HH Sayyid the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs delivered an address during the ceremony, in which he expressed



HH Sayyid Theyazin delivered an address during the ceremony, in which he expressed his delight at being present to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Society's founding, lauding the considerable efforts it undertakes.

his delight at being present to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Society's founding, lauding the considerable efforts it undertakes in support of bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

HH Sayyid Theyazin added that the British Omani Society supported last year the launch of the Smart Industries Initiative, a platform for the two-way transfer of technology founded on the venerable British-Omani partnership, which helps Omani industry benefit from British

research-driven technologies.

HH Sayyid Theyazin affirmed that youth receive great support from the New Generation Group and Outward Bound Oman, noting that the Society implements numerous programmes, among them the teaching of Arabic at the Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in the Wilayat of Manah and the Student Volunteers Oman Scheme. He added that support has been extended to Omani students in the United Kingdom,

giving rise to initiatives and opportunities for practical training, all of which encourage coming generations to nurture the close bonds between the two countries.

On the sidelines of the reception, bilateral meetings were held between officials from the Omani and British sides.

Present during the ceremony alongside HH Sayyid Theyazin were HH Sayyid Loay bin Ghalib al Said, Secretary-General of the Diwan of Royal Court; Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister; Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibani, Minister of Education; Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Chairman of the Tax Authority; Hussain bin Ali bin Abdul Latif, Adviser at the Private Office; Anwar bin Hilal al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; Badr bin Mohammed al Manthari, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Kingdom; Dr Liane Saunders, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Sultanate of Oman and members of the Omani Embassy in London. — ONA



Oman and UK review regional developments

LONDON: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, met in the British capital, London, with Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, within the framework of the state visit undertaken by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom.

The two ministers reviewed the strategic dimension of Omani-British relations and the historical legacy and mutual interests on which they rest.



The two ministers reviewed the dimension of Omani-British relations. — ONA

They discussed ways to elevate the existing partnership and broaden its pathways in keeping with the aspirations of the two friendly countries.

The meeting also addressed the changes unfolding in the region, and the two sides affirmed the importance of continuing constructive dialogue and intensifying diplomatic endeavours in support of understanding, in creating the conditions to address challenges, and in reinforcing the foundations of security and stability. — ONA

REFLECTIONS FROM THE WINDSOR CASTLE STATE BANQUET

AT Windsor Castle on Tuesday evening, I found myself speaking to King Charles III about protecting marine life. Of all the conversations I imagined having at a State Banquet, this was perhaps the one that felt most familiar. For a few moments, the grandeur of our surroundings gave way to a subject that has occupied much of my professional life: what becomes of the sea when we fail to protect it?

Only weeks earlier, when the Royal Household first contacted me about attending the banquet in honour of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik as the King's guest, I had wondered whether someone was playing an elaborate joke. It took a few exchanges before the invitation felt real. By the time I walked into Windsor, the disbelief had given way to gratitude, and some nervousness. I arrived knowing very few people, and unfamiliar rooms can leave even experienced people briefly uncertain of where they belong. The warmth of those who introduced themselves, and then introduced me to others, eased that feeling. When His Majesty the Sultan greeted me by name, an already extraordinary evening became profoundly personal.

In his speech, King Charles spoke of Oman's maritime history, of seafarers crossing the Indian Ocean centuries before our countries formalised their relationship. He recognised the place of young people in Oman's development and warned that climate change would alter the lands and seas they inherit.

His Majesty the Sultan brought another dimension to the same responsibility. He spoke of young Omanis studying in Britain and building relationships that endure beyond treaties. He also acknowledged the King's longstanding commitment to young people and environmental protection.



RUMAITHA AL BUSAIDI
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Shared marine research and exchanges for young scientists would be welcome, but the deeper test is whether those partnerships last long enough to inform decisions, and whether the scientists themselves are trusted to help make them.



Listening to both, I heard two responsibilities being described. One concerns the condition of the sea the next generation receives; the other concerns what we equip them with before they receive it. We are often more comfortable accounting for the second. Scholarships can be counted, and programmes can report their achievements at year's end. The condition of the sea demands a different kind of accounting, sustained across decades rather than funding cycles. A healthy ecosystem cannot be declared into existence by the end of a

reporting period. Along our coast, the sea carries livelihoods and generations of accumulated knowledge about how to read it. Protecting it asks for unglamorous commitments: surveys repeated in the same stretch of water long enough to establish what is changing, or a permit refused when refusal is economically inconvenient. I think of the coastal communities I encountered through my research in Al Batinah North and Al Batinah South, where questions about water and land were questions about the future

of a home. For those families, an environmental decision was never simply a line in a report. The next phase of Omani-British cooperation has an opportunity to make this kind of patience possible. Shared marine research and exchanges for young scientists would be welcome, but the deeper test is whether those partnerships last long enough to inform decisions, and whether the scientists themselves are trusted to help make them. Everyone in that hall would say yes to protecting the seas the next generation

inherits, which makes it an easy question. The harder one is whether any authority over those seas comes with the inheritance. I recognise myself in the young people those speeches described: educated abroad, encouraged to return, equipped with knowledge and introductions. I have spent years trying to turn those opportunities into decisions that hold. What I cannot tell you is whether I have done enough to make that authority available to anyone younger, or whether I have handed them the same invitation to wait.

HM's visit to UK boosts momentum of strategic partnership

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, affirmed that the state visit undertaken by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom (UK) reflects the specificity of the historical relations and special ties between the two friendly countries. It gives the strategic partnership between them renewed momentum that responds to the national priorities and the aspirations of future generations in both countries. Sayyid Badr stated that the strength of Omani-British relations lies in their capacity for renewal, as they are based on a solid friendship spanning over three centuries and derive their vitality from partnerships that respond to the changes of the era. His Majesty's visit comes to affirm the keenness of both countries to make this legacy a foundation for joint action that develops capabilities, expands investment and innovation

opportunities, and deepens the ties between the two peoples. He added that the generous care these relations receive from His Majesty the Sultan and His Majesty King Charles III consolidates the friendship and mutual respect that unite the two countries. The Foreign Minister pointed out that the visit carries within it, alongside its historical significance, strategic importance for the future and towards enhancing long-term cooperation between various institutions in the public and private sectors. It aims to develop mutual interests and benefits, and to continue consultation and the exchange of viewpoints regarding regional and international issues and global concerns, which helps in dealing effectively with all challenges. Sayyid Badr added, "We view the strategic dimension of this relationship

as a joint ability to connect expertise with opportunity, and knowledge with application, and to employ the capabilities possessed by both countries in building sustainable partnerships. What we look forward to is that the development of our relations reflects in tangible opportunities for education, employment, and investment, and that the new generation finds within them a space to contribute, innovate, and shape the future." On the economic front, he pointed to the importance of developing mutual investments and enhancing cooperation in the fields of clean energy, advanced technologies, research, and innovation. This includes encouraging partnerships between business institutions and academic and research entities, thereby supporting the exchange and development of knowledge, and the development of future skills, industries, and their applications. This aligns

with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the growth priorities in both countries. The Foreign Minister affirmed that educational, cultural, and human ties constitute one of the most important components of the sustainability of this relationship, given the mutual understanding and communication between generations they facilitate. He clarified that expanding cooperation between universities and cultural institutions, and developing opportunities for research, training, and knowledge exchange, grants youth, researchers, and innovators an increasing role in shaping the upcoming phase of the Omani-British partnership. On the political front, Sayyid Badr clarified that mutual trust allows for a frank and constructive dialogue with the United Kingdom, and an exchange of visions regarding regional

and international challenges. He affirmed the Sultanate of Oman's keenness to continue consultation and diplomatic action aimed at containing crises and tensions, and seeking the settlement of issues and disputes through constructive dialogue and the use of peaceful means, while respecting international law and the sovereignty of states, in order to consolidate and enhance security, stability, and peace. The Foreign Minister concluded his statement by saying: "What gives our friendship its value is not merely its historical reach, but what we provide through it for the future. We look forward to the new generation being a partner in renewing this relationship and creating its opportunities, and for the cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom to remain a tributary for shared prosperity." — ONA

OMAN



المعانة للاستثمارات التعليمية والتدريبية
oman education & training investments

TENDER NOTICE No. OETI-RFP-INSURANCE-POLICY-CONSULTANCY SERVICE#001/2026-2027

OETI Group (Sohar University, TAHJEEZ) invites sealed tenders from specialized, professional, and experienced Insurance companies for providing various insurance policies.

The tender details are as follows:

Tender	Description	Fees OMR	Submission Date
OETI-RFP-INSURANCE-POLICY-CONSULTANCY SERVICE#001/2026-2027	INSURANCE POLICY CONSULTANCY SERVICE	50/-	29/10/2026

Description	Deadline
Tender Release Date	22/10/2026
Last Date for collection of tenders after paying tender fee	26/10/2026
Receiving clarifications, if any, from bidders	26/10/2026
Respond to bidder clarifications	27/10/2026
Receiving bids	29/10/2026

The tender document will be mailed to you / your company after paying non-refundable amount of **RO. 50,000/-** via depositing the money in bank or by cash on or before **26/10/2026**. Cash will be collected by **Mr. Saud Al Jarwani**, OETI, Building 20, Sohar University, Sohar.

Provide the email id to be sent along with the copy of the receipt. For Bank Transfers our account details as below:

Beneficiary : **Oman Education & Training Investment Company SAOG**

Account No.: **00202000442**

Bank : **Bank Sohar**

Branch : **Sohar Branch, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman**

Swift Code : **BSHROMRU**

Please send the transfer receipt to sjarwani@oeti.om & insurance@su.edu.om to receive the tender documents via email / link.

Tenders offers must be submitted online (softcopy with password protected) or in closed envelopes sealed, delivered at the OETI premises, tender number shall be written only on the envelope, no indication shall be made, and deadline for submission of offers is **29/10/2026 12:00 hours**.

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

CEO OETI Office
Building 20, Sohar University Campus
P.O Box 44, P.C. 311, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman.
Telephone: 26850100 Ext.: 611 / 613

NEW PACT STRENGTHENS PROTECTION OF WORKERS' RIGHTS

THE Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and the General Federation of Oman Workers (GFWO) signed a memorandum of cooperation on Wednesday at the commission's headquarters, establishing an institutional framework for coordination between the two sides to protect and enhance human rights, upgrade the work environment and safeguard workers' rights in the Sultanate of Oman.

The memorandum was signed by Dr Rashid bin Hamad al Balushi, Chairman of the Oman Human Rights Commission, and Nabhan bin Ahmed al Battashi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the General Federation of Oman Workers.

It sets out broad areas of cooperation, including joint coordination in human rights awareness and education, and proposing plans, programmes and mechanisms to spread a culture of human rights in general and workers' rights in particular. It also covers the exchange of publications, studies, research, information, data and statistics, alongside



Officials of the Oman Human Rights Commission and the General Federation of Oman Workers during the signing of the memorandum of cooperation in Muscat on Wednesday. — ONA

The agreement establishes an institutional framework for coordination between the two sides, covering human rights awareness, joint studies, reviews of labour legislation and field monitoring of complaints related to workers' rights in the private sector.

exchange visits, dialogue sessions, advisory support and joint conferences, symposia, workshops and training programmes aimed at building capacities in areas of mutual interest.

The two sides will also cooperate in preparing specialised reports and studies, reviewing national legislation related to the labour sector and proposing recommendations to develop it in line with the Basic Statute of the State, international human rights standards and international labour standards.

The memorandum further provides for enhanced field coordination and information exchange on the monitoring of observations and complaints related to

workers' rights in the private sector, with the necessary action taken within the legal tasks and jurisdictions of each party.

The memorandum stems from the national role of the commission in protecting the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Basic Statute of the State and the international charters and conventions to which Oman has acceded, under its system issued by Royal Decree No 47/2026.

It also aligns with the federation's objectives of looking after workers' interests, improving working conditions, defending their rights and representing them in local, regional and international forums. — ONA



شركة ظفار لتوليد الكهرباء
Dhofar Generating Company SAOG

PO Box: 1571, PC: 211, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman.
www.dgcoman.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Board of Directors is pleased to present the performance of your company, Dhofar Generating Company SAOG (DGC or 'Company') for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2026.

At the core of our Company lies an unwavering commitment to safety. The Company, for over a decade, has a legacy of an impeccable safety track record with Zero Lost Time Incidents (LTIs). Our team remains ever vigilant, never granting safety a day off, consistently upholding safety principles and keeping safety at the heart of everything they do.

This dedication to safety directly drives our operational performance. Our assets boast an extraordinary reliability factor of over 99.6%. This excellence ensures not only smooth operations but also enables us to meet our financial obligations.

Overview

The business achieved excellent commercial availability factors of 99.77% and 99.57% during the nine-month period for the 273MW and 445MW power plants respectively. From a financial perspective, the Company's revenue is contractual, having seasonal variability, with higher revenue in the summer period compared to the winter period. Summer months include April, May, June, September and October. The financial results are reflective of the business's contractual arrangement and are in line with expectations.

Plant performance during the period

	273MW		445MW	
	2026	2025	2026	2025
Reliability Factor	99.77%	99.59%	99.57%	99.20%
Load Factor	49.38%	33.53%	59.46%	63.75%
Energy Exported (GWh)	883	600	1,722	1,849

273MW OCGT Power Plant.

The OCGT plant demonstrated exceptional performance. The forced outage factor was impressively low at 0.23%. Additionally, the load factor exceeded the corresponding period in 2025, aligning with grid demand.

445MW CCGT Power Plant

The CCGT plant achieved a remarkable reliability factor of 99.57%. The load factor for this plant is closely tied to grid demand and follows instructions from the load dispatch centre.

Plant performance is a direct result of the operator's proficient approach towards operations, maintenance and HSE principles.

Maintenance activities during the period

The third quarter of the year includes two winter months (Jul & Aug) and one summer month (Sep). GT3s and GT46 Major Inspection was carried out during this quarter. In addition, the team kept its focus on preventive and predictive activities during the quarter to ensure high availability of equipment. The operator has ensured that all required permits were valid during the period.

Financial highlights

	Nine-month period ended	
	30-Sep-26	30-Sep-25
Income Statement in OMR '000		
Total revenues	55,440	49,604
Operating costs	(50,200)	(42,425)
Gross profit	5,239	7,178
Other costs	(5,134)	(5,641)
Profit after tax	105	1,538
Earnings per share - Bz/share	0*	7

* Amount is rounded to nearest Bz/share.

Revenues

The revenue for the nine months has increased by OMR 5.8 m due to higher fuel revenue on account of higher load compared to the corresponding period in 2025 and fixed O&M charge due to induction change in line with the PPA.

Operating Costs

Operating cost has increased by OMR 7.8 m mainly due to higher fuel cost on higher load and higher maintenance costs compared to the corresponding period in 2025.

Other Costs

Other costs are lower by OMR 0.5 m mainly due to lower G&A and finance cost.

Net profit after Tax

Net profit is reflective of the variances noted above.

	Nine-month period ended 30-Sep-2026	Year ended 31-Dec-2025
Balance Sheet in OMR 'm		
Total assets	178.7	183.9
Net shareholder's equity	54.6	54.0
Paid up capital	22.2	22.2
Cash	2.4	4.3
Current ratio	1.04	1.14
Gearing ratio	169.1%	182.20%
Net assets per share - OMR	0.246	0.243

Cash flows and Dividends

The Company has met its obligations to the lenders by the timely debt service of OMR 121 m during the period. Interest payments are monthly while principal payments are due in January and July of each year.

The Cash Sweep Mechanism under the financing agreements commenced from 31 July 2021 impacted the ability of the Company to make any future dividend distributions.

The Cash Sweep Mechanism will remain effective until the balloon amount is fully prepaid, which is expected to continue for the remaining term of Power Purchase Agreement (i.e. expiring on 1 January 2033).

The above restricts the Company to make any dividend distributions unless the Cash Sweep Mechanism is reversed, which is subject to (1) arrangement of acceptable Backstop DSRA LC, and (2) unanimous approval of project lenders.

Strategic Positioning and Outlook

DGC is one of two independent power plants owners in the Dhofar region, with a 62% share in the southern power grid of the Sultanate of Oman. It owns and operates two power plants: a 273MW Open Cycle Gas Turbine (OCGT) Power Plant (Existing Plant) and a 445MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant ('New Plant').

Dhofar Grid is experiencing a continuous increase in power demand due to emerging industries in the Dhofar region since 2025. The increase in demand is expected to continue in the future. The Company and operator will continue their proactive approach towards plant operations to ensure a high reliability factor which is of paramount importance for all stakeholders.

Acknowledgement

The Board would like to thank the entire team for its diligent efforts which has resulted in the excellent performance. Finally, the Board of Directors would like to conclude by expressing their immense gratitude for the privilege of the vision, guidance, wisdom and crucial support of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and His Government.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As at 30 September 2026

	30-Sep-26	31-Dec-25
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	127,140,983	130,074,295
Right of use assets	1,543,603	1,380,649
Finance lease receivable	25,348,832	28,144,372
Trade and other receivables	2,617,332	2,550,088
Prepayments	1,049,705	984,600
Derivative financial instruments	259,029	361,583
Total non-current assets	157,959,484	163,695,597
Current assets		
Inventories	4,821,550	5,447,338
Finance lease receivable	3,691,620	3,467,758
Trade and other receivables	8,747,790	6,648,806
Advances and prepayments	369,384	379,302
Derivative financial instruments	752,019	101,985
Cash and cash equivalents	2,420,369	4,336,619
Total current assets	20,802,742	20,202,008
TOTAL ASSETS	178,762,226	183,897,605
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
EQUITY		
Share capital	22,224,000	22,224,000
Legal reserve	1,269,353	1,269,353
Retained earnings	30,237,535	30,132,493
Equity before hedging reserve	53,730,888	53,625,846
Hedging reserve	859,391	394,035
Total equity	54,590,279	54,019,879
LIABILITIES		
Non-current liabilities		
Term loan	84,096,288	92,432,051
Lease liabilities	1,867,748	1,919,003
Deferred tax liabilities	12,730,850	12,525,621
Provision for decommissioning costs	5,496,475	5,259,786
End of service benefits	65,716	81,643
Total non-current liabilities	104,257,077	112,218,104
Current liabilities		
Term loan	8,733,984	8,385,896
Lease liabilities	23,539	22,259
Trade and other payables	11,157,347	9,251,467
Total current liabilities	19,914,870	17,659,622
Total liabilities	124,171,947	129,877,726
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	178,762,226	183,897,605
Net assets per share (OMR)	0.246	0.243

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the period ended 30 September 2026

	Nine-month period ended		Quarter ended	
	30-Sep-26	30-Sep-25	30-Sep-26	30-Sep-25
Revenue	55,439,624	49,603,690	18,388,257	17,052,873
Operating costs	(50,200,203)	(42,425,306)	(17,342,735)	(15,357,463)
Gross profit	5,239,421	7,178,384	1,045,522	1,695,410
General and administrative expenses	(832,609)	(847,891)	(261,875)	(209,793)
Profit before interest and tax	4,406,812	6,330,493	783,647	1,485,617
Finance income	205,594	216,515	67,399	75,415
Finance cost	(4,384,257)	(4,680,790)	(1,430,137)	(1,522,083)
Profit / (loss) before tax	228,149	1,866,218	(579,091)	98,949
Income tax expense	(123,107)	(328,704)	(33,611)	(95,885)
Profit / (loss) for the period	105,042	1,537,514	(612,701)	(56,936)
Other comprehensive income:				
Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Fair value of cash flow hedge adjustments - gross	812,852	(509,966)	301,440	56,895
Reclassification to profit or loss - gross	(265,372)	(595,435)	(93,318)	(217,180)
Deferred tax on change in fair value of cash flow hedge	(82,122)	165,810	(31,218)	24,042
Other comprehensive income / (loss) for the period - net of tax	465,358	(939,591)	176,904	(136,243)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the period	570,400	597,923	(435,797)	(193,179)
Basic and Diluted Earnings / (Loss) per share (OMR)	0.000	0.007	(0.003)	(0.000)

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issuance in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors on 20 October 2026

Muscat Book Fair set for March 24

The Main Committee of the Muscat International Book Fair held a preparatory meeting to discuss arrangements for the 30th edition of the fair, which is scheduled to be held from March 24 to April 3, 2027.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information and Chairman of the Committee. The meeting reviewed the most prominent aspects of organising the upcoming edition, alongside initial concepts for its associated programmes, in line with the fair's standing as a cultural and knowledge platform that brings together writers, intellectuals, publishers and those interested in cultural affairs.

The committee discussed the details of Al Wusta Governorate's participation as the Guest of Honour of the 30th edition. It addressed the



Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, chairs the preparatory meeting of the Muscat International Book Fair. — ONA

proposed topics and themes to highlight the governorate's historical, civilisational, cultural and economic components, and to introduce its heritage, natural resources and investment capabilities.

The meeting also addressed the theme of the upcoming edition, "Creative Industries", and its cultural, knowledge and economic dimensions, along with its role in shedding light on the fields of creativity and innovation and enhancing the presence of cultural and creative

industries as a tributary of cultural and economic development.

The meeting affirmed the importance of continuing preparatory work and coordination among the relevant authorities, contributing to the preparation of the upcoming edition and the achievement of its cultural and knowledge objectives, thereby enhancing the position of the Muscat International Book Fair as one of the most prominent cultural events. — ONA

Forum explores art's role

MUSCAT: The "Sub-Regional Forum on Intangible Heritage and Art: Reality and Challenges" began in Muscat on Tuesday, aiming to enhance the role of fine art in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and to explore ways and measures that can contribute to preserving its elements.

The forum opened under the auspices of Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture.

The two-day forum targets academics, researchers and specialists in the fields of intangible cultural heritage and the arts. It is organised by the Ministry of Culture,

Sports and Youth, alongside the Ministry of Education, represented by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech), represented by the Unesco Chair on World Heritage Management and Sustainable Tourism in the Arab Region.

Dr Mahmoud bin Abdullah al Abri, Secretary-General of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, delivered a speech pointing to the launch by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) on April 18, 2025, of the theme

"Emergency Response for Living Heritage in the Context of Crises and Disasters", emphasising the importance of protecting tangible and intangible heritage from the impacts of crises and disasters. He stressed that art represents a creative medium for documenting historical landmarks, customs, traditions, knowledge and cultural practices, as well as transmitting them to future generations; he highlighted the challenges facing this type of heritage, and noted the presence of cultural elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding under Unesco's 2003 Convention. — ONA

MEDIA EXCELLENCE AWARDS CEREMONY ON OCT 26

THE Ministry of Information (MoI) will organise the 2026 Media Excellence Competition awards ceremony at the Ministry's theatre on October 26 to honour the winners across the various fields of the competition.

The competition aims to motivate national media cadres toward creativity and innovation, highlight their achievements, and consolidate positive competition among media institutions and individuals. This is alongside supporting digital media and electronic content creation, and documenting the winning works.

The competition is divided into four main fields: press, radio, television, and electronic media. It targets media institutions, individual practitioners and those interested in the media, as well as media students in academic institutions.

The press categories include the press article, press interview, investigative journalism, and photojournalism. The radio categories include talk shows, family programmes, radio dramas, and cultural programmes. Meanwhile, the television categories encompass talk and sports shows, variety



Winner in each category will get a cash prize of RO 1,500.

programmes, documentary programmes and films, children's programmes, and governorate reports.

As for the electronic media field, it comprises electronic broadcasting channel programmes, podcasts, digital media campaigns, institutional electronic newspapers, news accounts and social media content creation for

individuals, in addition to electronic content for media students in higher education institutions.

The prize is awarded to the first-place winner in each category of the competition, with a value of RO 1,500.

The competition is held biennially to provide the opportunity to present distinguished works and expand the competitive options for participation, alongside providing the necessary time for preparation and readiness.

The awards ceremony will be preceded by a number of accompanying events. These include a lecture titled "Future Media: Creativity and Innovation in the Era of Artificial Intelligence," presented by Abdulwahed al Qahtani from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on October 25. Additionally, a workshop on "Writing Television Drama Scripts" will be presented by writer and trainer Hassan Dahshan from the Arab Republic of Egypt on October 25 and 26.

The Media Excellence Competition, which launched its first edition in 2004, is a national initiative aimed at supporting media creativity and consolidating the role of the media as an active partner in achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

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وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
544/2026	Equipping the sensory rooms at the early intervention center at Al-Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of supplying office and educational tools, materials and supplies, registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Tuesday 10-11-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 30-11-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	—
546/2026	Implementing the Denver Model Program for Early Intervention for Autism Spectrum Workers	Companies specialized in the field of Human resources training and development registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Tuesday 10-11-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 30-11-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	—
547/2026	Supply of tools for leather crafts workshops to the Vocational Rehabilitation Center at Al-Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of supplying office and educational tools, materials and supplies, registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Tuesday 10-11-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 30-11-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	—

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On **Thursday 22/10/2026**.

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

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

www.mosd.gov.om

وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مزاد إلكتروني E-Auction Announcement

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC AUCTION FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT MOVABLE ASSETS

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announces an electronic auction for the sale of government movable assets through Safqa Auctions website (www.safqauctions.om), as detailed below:

MOVABLE ASSETS FOR SALE	INSPECTION LOCATION	INSPECTION DATE AND TIME	AUCTION DATE
Iron tanks + water pumps + iron pipes	Al Wadi Al Kabir (Muscat Governorate)	20 – 22 October 2026 8:00 am – 1:00 pm	Starts: Sunday, 25 October 2026 at 8:00 a.m. Closes: Monday, 26 October 2026 at 12:00 noon
Scrap iron barriers and posts + signboards	Al Ghalil Workshop, Wilayat of Al Suwaiq		
9 vehicles and heavy equipment	Sohar Industrial Port (North Al Batinah Governorate)		
Scrap iron posts and barriers + signboards	Roads Department, Ibri (A'Dhahirah Governorate)		
Scrap iron posts and barriers + signboards	Suhul Al Dakhiliyah Company Site, Wilayat of Nizwa (A'Dakhiliyah Governorate)		
Scrap iron posts and barriers + signboards	Al Buraimi Governorate		

Those wishing to participate in the electronic auction must comply with the following terms and conditions:

- Register on the website (www.safqauctions.om).
- Pay a security deposit of OMR 5,000 electronically through the website. The deposit will be refunded in the event that no purchase is made.
- The buyer shall pay the value of the movable assets by electronic transfer through the website within 48 working hours after the auction is awarded to the buyer.
- 5% Value Added Tax (VAT) and a 3% auction commission fee shall be added to the purchase value of the movable assets.
- The buyer shall remove the movable assets within one week from the date the auction is awarded. If the assets are not removed within the specified period, a ground rent charge of 5% for each day of delay shall be imposed. The Ministry shall not be responsible for any loss of or damage to the assets.
- Sold movable assets are non-returnable and their value shall not be reduced. No requests or appeals in this regard will be accepted.
- The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and Safqa Auctions shall bear no liability in respect of the movable assets in the event that the image or description of any item offered for sale does not correspond with the actual item. Neither party guarantees the fitness of the items offered for sale or their technical or mechanical condition. The buyer shall personally verify their condition through visual inspection on the designated inspection day. The items are sold as is, in their current condition, and neither party shall bear any liability for any defects discovered after the sale.
- No warranties of any kind shall be provided for the movable assets, including the mechanical condition of vehicles, their roadworthiness, or whether they can be registered with the Royal Oman Police. The Ministry shall not be liable for any defects in the movable assets sold.
- The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and Safqa Auctions shall not be responsible if the competent authorities do not register the vehicles in the buyer's name due to their non-compliance with the required specifications.
- The buyer shall be responsible for paying any fees, where applicable, whether payable to government or private entities (within Sohar Industrial Port).
- The company shall not be obliged to award the auction to the highest bidder, without stating any reasons, if the highest bid does not reach an acceptable price.
- The security deposit shall be forfeited in either of the following cases:
 - If the buyer fails to pay the value of the movable assets within the specified payment period.
 - If the buyer fails to remove the purchased movable assets within the specified removal period.

Notes

- All movable assets are sold as is, in their current condition.
- The company reserves the right to cancel the auction without stating any reasons.

For further details, please visit Safqa Auctions website (www.safqauctions.om) or contact: 96916169 - 91798145 - 94443325
For inspection during official working hours, please contact: 91798145 - 94443325 - 99695246

QR Code Labels:

Safqa Auctions Link	Iron Tanks + Water Pumps + Iron Pipes	Roads Department - Al Buraimi Governorate, Al Bursaimi	Roads Department - A'Dhahirah Governorate, Ibri	Al Ghalil Workshop - Wilayat of Al Suwaiq	Suhul Al Dakhiliyah Company Site - Wilayat of Nizwa	Vehicles and Equipment Site - Sohar Port

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OPINION

COP31: Another summit or a turning point for global action?



OMAN
AL YAHYAI

The writer is a media professional based in Paris. She specialises in human rights and immigration.

WHEN WORLD leaders gather in Antalya, Türkiye, this November for COP31, they will confront a familiar contradiction: governments continue promising climate action while the world struggles to deliver the changes necessary to prevent further environmental destruction.

Scheduled for 9–20 November 2026, the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference will bring together representatives from nearly every country to negotiate the global response to climate change. But beyond diplomatic speeches and ambitious declarations, COP31 represents a test of whether international cooperation can produce meaningful results.

The summit will gather heads of state, government ministers, climate negotiators, scientists, environmental organisations, Indigenous representatives, youth activists and business leaders. A World Leaders Summit is scheduled for 11–12 November. Türkiye will host the conference, with Environment Minister Murat Kurum nominated as COP31 president and Australia’s Climate Change Minister Chris Bowen will lead negotiations.

This partnership carries political significance. Australia has worked alongside Pacific island nations, whose communities face some of the most immediate consequences of rising sea levels and extreme

weather. Their participation should ensure that climate negotiations address not only emissions targets but also the survival and security of vulnerable populations.

WHAT IS COP31 TRYING TO ACHIEVE? Unlike earlier climate conferences focused heavily on negotiating commitments, COP31 is being presented as a summit of implementation. Its agenda includes accelerating renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening climate adaptation, improving food security and mobilising financial support for developing countries.

Türkiye has announced priorities including clean energy, sustainable cities, circular economies and climate-resilient agriculture. The presidency has also proposed increasing electricity’s share of global final energy consumption to 35% by 2035. Yet the central challenge remains financing. Developing countries need substantial resources to adapt to climate disasters and transition towards cleaner economies, while wealthier nations face growing pressure to honour their financial responsibilities.

Without credible funding, even ambitious climate agreements risk becoming political statements rather than practical solutions. COP31 arrives amid growing frustration over the gap between climate commitments and government action.

After three decades of climate negotiations, the world does not lack scientific evidence or political declarations. It lacks consistent implementation, adequate financing and accountability.

WHAT DOES COP31 REPRESENT? For countries already experiencing devastating floods, droughts, rising temperatures and food insecurity, COP31 is not simply another international gathering. Its decisions could influence access to adaptation funding, infrastructure investment and technologies essential for survival. It also represents a broader question of climate justice: who caused the crisis, who suffers its consequences and who should pay for the solutions?

The presence of vulnerable communities and civil society organisations is essential, but participation must translate into influence over decisions. After three decades of climate negotiations, the world does not lack scientific evidence or political declarations. It lacks consistent implementation, adequate financing and accountability.

COP31 should therefore be judged not by the number of leaders attending or promises announced, but by whether governments agree on measurable actions, credible financial mechanisms and transparent ways to track progress.

If Antalya produces another collection of ambitious statements without enforceable follow-through, it will reinforce public scepticism towards international climate diplomacy. The real measure of success will be whether commitments made inside conference halls deliver meaningful changes for people living with the climate crisis outside them.

WILD WEST WING?
TURMOIL REVIVES
MEMORIES OF TRUMP 1.0

DANNY KEMP

After a relatively disciplined start to Donald Trump’s second term, the White House is grappling with signs of turmoil that have revived memories of his first chaotic presidency.

From the extraordinary departure of his new press secretary after five days to questions about the future of his chief of staff, there have been a series of upheavals in recent weeks.

The ructions come at the worst possible time for Trump, with many Republicans fearing that the president’s dismal polling will drag on their chances in next month’s midterm elections.

The White House strongly denies there is infighting in what US media called the “Wild Wild West Wing” — with the fiercest pushback reserved for reports that Trump was looking to replace Susie Wiles, his ultra-loyal chief of staff.

“No one is distracted by FAKE NEWS. This team is strong, united, and focused on President Donald J. Trump, delivering his America First agenda, and winning the midterms,” White House Spokesperson Danielle Alvarez said in a statement to AFP.

“The anonymous ‘sources’ peddling this nonsense are self-serving opportunists focused on themselves. We’re focused on the President and the American people.”

The president himself denied the reports on Wiles last week. On Monday, he doubled down by giving Wiles a new job as head of a women’s health initiative launched by First Lady Melania Trump, praising Wiles as a “tremendous fighter” for her battle against breast cancer.

Trump calls Wiles the “ice maiden” after the Florida political operative masterminded his 2024 election win, and until recently the first-ever female chief had maintained steely discipline at the White House.

Gone were the incessant leaks from disgruntled officials, the infighting between Trump family members and cabinet secretaries, and the personnel merry-go-round that marred Trump’s first term. But then came a series of controversies in the past two weeks.

First was Trump’s hiring of the inexperienced Katie Zacharia as his press secretary, in a process that administration officials said had largely bypassed Wiles.

Five days after starting the job, Zacharia was fired after one haltering 14-minute briefing in which she answered three questions and called her husband “my president.” — AFP

Oman-UK: A special and deep rooted relationship

HIS MAJESTY Sultan Haitham bin Tarik’s State visit to the United Kingdom, highlights the bonds of friendship and the relationship that the Sultanate of Oman has long held with a very powerful Western nation.

The sincere affection and kindness with which His Majesty the Sultan was warmly and hospitably welcomed by the British monarchy show the deep and genuine respect the UK holds for a great leader. The peoples of Oman and the UK place confidence in their leaderships to set the conditions for being successful and thriving nations.

The State Visit of His Majesty the Sultan crowns a centuries-old relationship between Oman and the UK. It is one of the oldest relationships an Arab country has with a most influential Western power. What makes it unique is the fact that the world is witnessing one of the most enduring international relationships, in which the way the two countries have dealt with each other has remained firm despite the successive hereditary monarchies that have survived over such a long period of time. This distinguished relationship has never been disturbed by the changing tides of time or differences of opinion. On the contrary, all the events and circumstances it has weathered have made it stronger and more solid than ever before.

While it has been able to maintain close ties with the UK, Oman has throughout this long-lasting relationship remained independent, not subject to external control, and has maintained its notable and



DR MUSALLAM
AL MAANI

The writer is Dean of Al Zahra College for Women

This distinguished relationship has never been disturbed by the changing tides of time or differences of opinion. On the contrary, all the events and circumstances it has weathered have made it stronger and more solid than ever before

distinctive foreign policy. This is in part due to the fact that Oman was a major naval power in the 17th and 18th centuries and was able to establish commercial networks overseas covering crucial maritime areas across the Indian Ocean, East Africa, Persia, and India. Through the English East India Company, UK interests in trade and commerce became more active in the region, for which the primary relationship between Oman and the UK grew to become an exemplary one in recent history.

Without doubt, the UK enjoys a high level of cultural and technological development. It is widely perceived that the UK is one of the most developed nations in the world. The UK possesses an advanced social and technological structure that positively influences the countries with which it has a close relationship. The strategic status the UK occupies on the international stage makes it one of the most important countries in the world. Unsurprisingly, the British are leaders of modern world civilisation with accumulated scientific and philosophical knowledge, and are well-known for their ability to discern inner qualities and relationships. The British, as the whole of the world testifies, are indeed in possession of a rich knowledge and social legacy, marked by a noble and kindly spirit.

The unique relationship between the two countries has centred around many areas, ranging from maritime trade to political cooperation, and from defence and military agreements to diplomatic and educational cooperation. Such wide-ranging fields have undoubtedly benefited

both countries. The renaissance in Oman, which started back in the early 1970s under the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, witnessed significant UK assistance in the building of modern Oman and the capacity building of Omanis. Thanks to British assistance, Oman now has very modern and well-organised armed forces and has made significant strides in various areas, including oil exploration, education, and the administrative organisation of the Omani government apparatus. Omanis consider the UK as a country worthy of high regard and place a high value on the strategic partnership their country has with the UK.

Oman is blessed with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik’s wise leadership, who has continuously shown good judgement and acute discernment of matters, while putting the interests of the Omani people at the top of his priorities. Under the reign of His Majesty the Sultan, development in Oman is taking place across various disciplines, including education, military technology, agriculture, and more.

There is no doubt that His Majesty the Sultan highly values the significant role that the UK plays on the world stage, as well as the close and longstanding ties that bind the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom.

This visit shall, without doubt, have a profound and positive impact on further strengthening this enduring relationship, which stretches back over centuries. May Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan and grant him success in all that serves the best interests of our beloved country!

The digital inferno as modern frustration



SONIA AMBROSIO

The writer is a journalist, academic and researcher in media studies

AS I examine the absurdities unfolding around the world, I recognise we are living out the deepest irony of Dante Alighieri’s The Divine Comedy. This work has developed from a medieval theological epic into a reflection of contemporary secular, political, and digital crises.

While Dante wrote his poem as a politically embittered exile in the 14th Century, framing it as a path to spiritual salvation and cosmic justice, contemporary society has reversed his ideas. We now use his framework to reflect our current global and cultural realities. The poem is structured around three realms: Inferno (Hell), Purgatorio (Purgatory), and Paradiso (Heaven/Paradise); we choose Hell.

The irony appears in multiple modern aspects. Amid today’s extreme polarisation, individuals scroll through political content on social media, perceiving political leaders as either saviours or complete evils.

The paradox lies in our engagement with the very ‘political idolatry’ Dante condemned as we peruse the Inferno from a safe distance and see its characters as mere medieval caricatures. We fail to recognise that we have constructed our digital circles of factional wrath.

We celebrate the Internet as the ultimate tool for global connection, yet its algorithms divide us into echo chambers that are sealed off from differing viewpoints. We find

ourselves inside the ideological ‘tombs’ we have built.

We have created our own living contrapasso (punishment) through social media algorithms. Angry online mobs are caught in endless cycles of outrage, continually exposed to the very content that fuels their anger.

We are no longer condemned to Hell for our flaws; rather, our vices create personalised digital hells that we willingly enter each day. Deep fakes and hyper-isolated echo chambers have facilitated the rejection of objective reality in favour of curated, alternative facts.

Ironically, despite living in the 2020s, a time of hyper-connectivity, we face an unprecedented level of social isolation and echo-chamber tribalism. Today’s people tend to shout at one another from their algorithm-driven bubbles, confident that they have the final truth.

Dante lived in a world where the highest moral authorities were corrupt and pursued political power. In today’s climate of disillusionment with institutions, corporate fraud, and politicians misusing public trust for profit, Dante’s anger resonates as entirely contemporary. We face the same structural betrayal when leaders, who should safeguard the sacred (like democracy, truth, or public health), instead sacrifice it for profit.

We face surveillance capitalism, in which tech conglomerates exploit user trust to gather and trade private data, directing attention

The paradox lies in our engagement with the very ‘political idolatry’ Dante condemned as we peruse the Inferno from a safe distance and see its characters as mere medieval caricatures. We fail to recognise that we have constructed our digital circles of factional wrath

towards specific commercial and political outcomes. Digital media is being employed as a diplomatic tool to undermine confidence in democratic institutions.

Dante built Inferno as a rigid hierarchy where sins of passion, such as lust, are punished lightly, while sins of betrayal and fraud are relegated to the lowest depths. Dante reserved the coldest zone for the worst betrayers, trapping them in ice for their treachery against benefactors and homeland.

The irony is that poor judgements today face public disapproval. Meanwhile, institutional fraud and structural betrayals often go unpunished or are rewarded with corporate golden parachutes.

In politics, we see a corporate lobbying culture that consumes public resources, the exploitation of tax loopholes, and dark money in elections. This corruption includes insurrection, treason, and politicians who trade national security for foreign bribes. It signifies a profound betrayal of the social contract and democratic institutions by the very people sworn to protect them.

Dante called his work a comedy because it begins in misery (Inferno) and ends in joy and cosmic order (Paradiso). We have abandoned Dante’s vision of universal harmony and salvation. Rather, we interpret his portrayals of suffering as dark satire or pop culture.

We should realise that we are part of a comedy, in that we are all, ultimately, foolish.

FRANCE’S TOURISM SECTOR WORRIED ABOUT RIOTS IMPACT

MARIE-MORGANE LE MOEL

The images of France’s riots posted and broadcast around the world have cast a pall on the country’s important tourism sector, with many fearing worse consequences if violence returns.

“The surge of violence in the centres of Nice, Paris, Lyon - it’s catastrophic,” said Christelle Cassagne, head of the ADN Tourisme body covering the country’s tourism institutions.

“When you book a hotel for a week, it’s not so you stay stuck in the hotel,” she said.

The scenes of clashes with police, public buildings on fire, shops being looted and masked young men roaming the streets have, since last weekend, shocked and fascinated news audiences internationally. The violence has usurped the usual curated footage of genteel cafes favoured by influencers, who have suddenly taken to asking “Is Paris safe?” — many using AI on thumbnails or even in their videos to boost click-through rates.

The closure of the Louvre in Paris on Monday because of a small group of student protesters at the entrance also frustrated many visitors who had the museum on their list of highlights.

The uncertainty has made some hesitant about visiting the City of Light.

“Honestly, we were not certain that we’d keep our stay,” an Indian businessman in a pricey Paris hotel said, declining to give his name.

Already, hotel reservations are weakening in major cities such as Paris, Lyon and Marseille, according to Didier Arino, head of the consulting and research firm Protourisme.

For a country used to welcoming 100 million visitors a year - and the more than 70 billion euros (\$80 billion) they spend - it’s a concern.

Arino and other observers questioned by AFP said the overall picture for France’s tourism industry would depend on whether new violence broke out in the coming weeks.

“The impact of a day of rioting and urban violence in the heart of Paris caused around a one-per cent cancellation rate for the monthly count in the days following, and the same for the following weeks,” Arino said.

“For the 42 million hotel nights forecast for 2026, that’s not major. But watch out you don’t underestimate the effects from repeated incidents.”

“The further away the clients are, the more sensitive they are to safety risks, and the stronger the impact,” said Arino.

Visitors from farther-away countries, particularly the United States and some Asian ones, often spend more than Europeans during their stay. The downward pressure on reservations comes as several countries, including the United States, China and Germany issued travel advisories for their citizens in France.

Laurent Abitbol, head of the executive board of travel agency group Selectour, said: “If this lasts two weeks, that’s not so serious. However, if this continues for several months it will be catastrophic.” — AFP

Oman’s future needs anticipatory governance



AHMED AL MUKHAINI

The author is a policy analyst

reshape opportunities before projects mature.

These forces also interact. A promising industrial investment might depend simultaneously on affordable electricity, export demand, shipping access and specialised workers. Examining each assumption separately may conceal the consequences of several changing together. Anticipatory governance makes those connections part of the decision.

Consider education. Planning university places around current vacancies provides useful information. It leaves a further question: what capabilities will graduates need when they enter employment several years later? Institutions should explore different possibilities, engage employers and students, and design programmes that can evolve as evidence develops.

Consider digital government. A service may become faster while becoming harder for some citizens to access. Anticipation means examining exclusion, data quality and dependence on technology suppliers before expansion makes correction expensive. A limited trial can reveal weaknesses while there is still room to change the design.

The same approach can uncover opportunities. An emerging technology might enable an Omani enterprise to serve a new market. Changing consumer preferences might create demand for local products. Foresight should help institutions invest and innovate, as well as prepare for disruption.

None of this requires pretending that the future can be predicted precisely. Scenarios explore plausible conditions and test choices against them. Their value lies in revealing vulnerabilities, opportunities and options. Some decisions remain sensible across several futures. Others depend heavily on one favourable assumption. Leaders should know the difference before committing public money or shareholders’ capital.

Information alone, however, cannot provide this capability.

An institution may commission excellent studies and still

continue unchanged. Someone in management must be responsible for reading their findings, explaining their implications and proposing action. The governing authority must then decide, allocate resources and require follow-up.

The same discipline applies to audit findings, complaints and operational warnings. Repeated errors reveal a failure to turn available knowledge into better decisions. An institution that cannot learn from an existing weakness will struggle to anticipate an emerging one.

Oman can begin through its existing structures.

Each ministry, major public enterprise and company board could select one consequential decision and examine its critical assumptions. What could change? Who would be affected? Which alternatives preserve room to manoeuvre? What evidence would justify reconsideration?

The decision should identify an implementation owner, a review date and conditions requiring earlier escalation. Where lawful and appropriate, institutions should test alternatives on a manageable scale before wider adoption.

Participation matters throughout. Employees closest to delivery, businesses, researchers and service users can reveal consequences that senior decision-makers overlook. Their contribution should influence the choice. Leadership culture is equally important. Staff must be able to question an assumption without appearing disloyal. Managers should receive credit for identifying a problem early and correcting it responsibly.

Anticipatory governance gives practical expression to an ambition Oman has already articulated: institutions capable of shaping the future. Its success will be visible when an early signal changes a budget, a trial improves a service, or a timely review prevents an avoidable failure.

Oman’s future is already being shaped by today’s decisions. Those decisions deserve institutions equipped to think ahead — and obliged to act on what they learn.

SPORTS

NOVEMBERTOURNEY



The event was attended by Hajer al Muzaini, OFA Board Member and Chairperson of the Women's Football Committee, and Youssef Ezzikhe, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Refco.

OFA ANNOUNCES SECOND OMAN REFCO GIRLS' ACADEMIES CHAMPIONSHIP

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 21

The Oman Football Association (OFA), represented by its Women's Football Committee, has announced the second edition of the Oman Refco Girls' Academies Championship as part of celebrations marking Omani Women's Day, observed annually on October 17.

The championship, exclusively sponsored by Oman Refreshment Company SAOG (Oman Refco), was announced during a ceremony held at the company's headquarters in Muscat. The event was attended by Hajer al Muzaini, OFA Board Member and Chairperson of the Women's Football Committee, and Youssef Ezzikhe, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Refco.

Scheduled to take place in November, the tournament will feature girls aged between 11 and 16. It forms part of the OFA's efforts to expand girls' participation in football, identify and develop emerging talent and strengthen the role of sports academies in advancing women's football in Oman.

The staging of the championship for a second successive edition reflects the continuing partnership between the OFA's Women's Football Committee and Oman Refco. It also highlights the important contribution of the private sector in supporting sports initiatives that empower girls and strengthen their presence in Oman's sporting landscape.

Al Muzaini said the development of women's football begins with providing girls with genuine opportunities to play the game.

"Building a strong base of female players requires competitions to be organised consistently, alongside an environment that encourages girls to participate and develop," she said.

"This is what makes the Oman Refco Girls' Academies Championship so important. We do not see it simply as a sporting competition, but as an opportunity for girls to gain experience and confidence and develop a lasting connection with football from an early age."

She added that the committee's ambitions extend beyond identifying talent to increasing the number of girls playing football and encouraging academies to invest in their training and development.

"Every girl given the opportunity to step onto the pitch today represents a valuable addition to the future of women's football in Oman. Every championship we organise is another step towards building a broader and more sustainable sporting structure," she said.

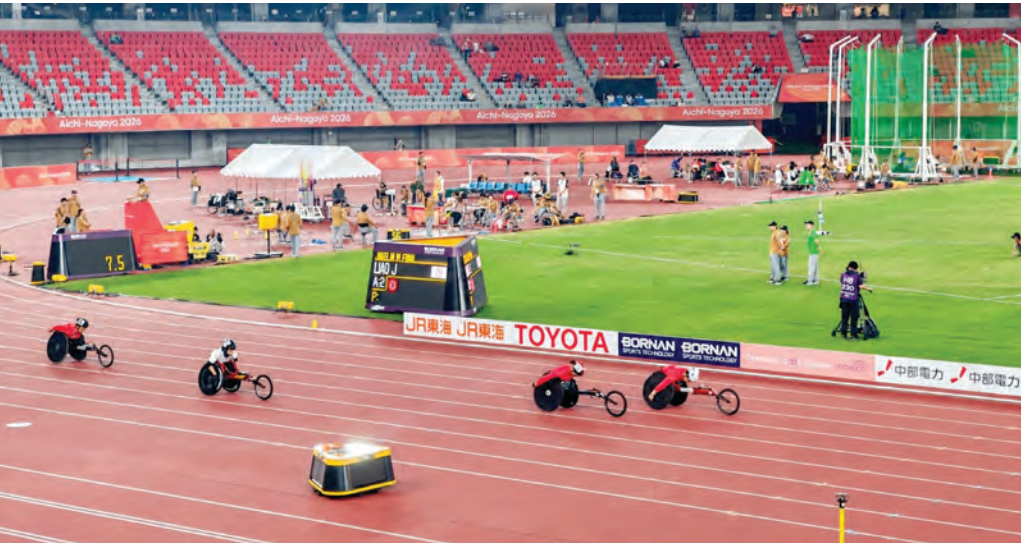
Al Muzaini also praised the continuing partnership with Oman Refco, noting that cooperation between sports organisations and the private sector is essential to creating further opportunities for girls.

"We hope the championship will encourage more academies and young players to join the development journey of women's football in Oman," she concluded.

Rawan's bronze opens Oman medal account



Handcycling competition in progress.



Rawan al Hasani won bronze in the women's T53 wheelchair 100 metres in 22.49 seconds.



Handcycling competition in progress.

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 21

RAWAN

AL HASANI secured Oman's first medal at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games on Wednesday, winning bronze in the women's T53 wheelchair 100 metres in 22.49 seconds.

Her podium finish marked a successful Asian Para Games debut and put Oman on the medal table, while Mutasim al Saadi produced a personal best in the men's F53 shot put.

Al Saadi finished fourth with a throw of 6.04 metres, improving his own mark as Oman's athletes continued their track and field programme in Nagoya.

Elsewhere, Iman al Shamsi placed sixth in the women's F34 shot put with 5.62 metres, while Qusai al Rawahi finished seventh in the men's T13 long



DR MANSOUR AL TOOQI
Chairman of Oman Paralympic Committee

jump with an effort of 5.36 metres.

Al Hasani's bronze provided the highlight of the day for the Omani delegation, rewarding the young athlete with a medal at her first appearance in the continental competition.

Dr Mansour bin Sultan al Tooqi, Chairman of the Oman Paralympic Committee, expressed pride in her achievement, describing it as an important result for Omani women and the country's para sport programme.

He said the medal

demonstrated Al Hasani's potential at an early stage of her sporting career and underlined the importance of giving promising athletes sustained opportunities to develop.

Al Tooqi stressed that long-term preparation, regular training and international competition remained central to improving performances and helping athletes compete consistently at continental level.

He added that the committee's assessment of Oman's participation would consider the technical performances delivered by the athletes and the reasons behind variations in results, with other members of the squad still to complete their events.

For Al Hasani, the bronze medal offers fresh motivation to continue training and improve her performances.

She said competing in Nagoya had given her valuable experience against leading Asian athletes and a clearer understanding of the demands of competition at this level.

Al Hasani expressed her determination to build on the result, pursue further progress and raise Oman's flag at future international events.

Attention now turns to the remaining programme as the Omani delegation seeks to add to its medal tally. Further athletics events, including the club throw, and handcycling competitions offer more opportunities before the Games conclude on October 24.

Al Saadi's personal best also gave the squad an encouraging individual performance alongside Al Hasani's podium finish, as Oman's athletes continue to test themselves against the continent's strongest competitors.

Oman U15s land in Baku for World Cup campaign

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 21

Oman's under-15 national football team arrived in Azerbaijan on Wednesday ahead of its historic participation in the inaugural Fifa U15 World Cup and Festival 2026, marking an important milestone in the Sultanate of Oman's youth football development programme.

The delegation travelled to Baku following an intensive domestic camp in Muscat, during which the technical staff focused on raising the players' physical readiness, sharpening tactical discipline and helping the youngsters adapt to the demands of international competition.

Led by national head coach Nasser al Mayahi, Oman have been drawn in Group B alongside Argentina, Algeria, Malawi, Chinese Taipei and Suriname. The Young Reds will begin their campaign against Suriname on October 24 before facing Malawi and Argentina on October 25. They will conclude the qualification stage with matches against Chinese Taipei and Algeria on October 26.

The tournament brings together teams from almost every corner of the footballing



The Oman U15s will begin their campaign against Suriname on October 24 before facing Malawi and Argentina on October 25.

world and will be played under a development-focused format. Matches will be contested eight-a-side over two 20-minute halves on reduced-size pitches, with every participating side guaranteed a substantial number of fixtures.

The group-stage results will determine each team's placement in one of six competitive tiers during the tournament phase. The competition will run until October 30, with most matches staged at the Hovsan Competition Complex, while the tier finals will be held at Baku Crystal Hall.

Oman's preparations began with a wider group of 22 players selected following an extensive talent-identification

process. Team manager Khalid al Wahaibi said the technical staff monitored players in the Youth League before organising additional trials for youngsters representing clubs that did not participate in the competition. The group was subsequently reduced to the final 14-player squad.

BUILDING IDENTITY

Al Mayahi said the tournament represents more than an opportunity to pursue results, stressing that the coaching staff's principal objective is to establish a clear footballing identity and develop a generation capable of progressing through Oman's national-team pathway.

"Our main objective is to

build an identity for the team and establish the foundations for continuous work," he said during the Muscat camp.

"Achieving positive results is important, but our wider aim is to develop talent and build a generation that can become the nucleus of the national under-17 team."

The final squad comprises Sulaiman bin Khalifa al Mufarji, Mohammed bin Ahmed al Araimi, Muadh bin Moosa al Muharrami, Firas bin Yousef al Farsi, Moayad bin Younis al Ghassani, Yaqoob bin Yousef al Harrasi, Osama bin Nabil Bait Faraj Allah, Osama bin Salim al Dhamri, Ahmed bin Juma al Sarhi, Al Yazan bin Talal al Rashdi, Ayman bin Ali al Afari, Al Ayham bin Ibrahim al Raqadi, Rashid bin Khalid al Buraidi and Ali bin Qasim al Habsi. Oman's participation provides the young players with valuable exposure to contrasting footballing styles and a demanding international environment. It will also allow the technical staff to assess their development under competitive pressure as the Oman Football Association continues its efforts to build a stronger foundation for the Sultanate's age-group national teams.

SIXSTAR



Pakistan's Arafat Minhas runs between the wickets during the second ODI in Rawalpindi. — Reuters

All-rounder Minhas stars as Pakistan crush England in tri-series

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan: All-rounder Arafat Minhas struck a maiden ODI half-century and grabbed a career-best six wickets to anchor Pakistan's convincing 87-run win over England in the tri-series in Rawalpindi on Tuesday.

Minhas hit 59 off 58 balls and was ably assisted by Hasan Nawaz, whose 74-ball 79 lifted Pakistan to a solid 302-9.

The versatile Minhas then took 6-40 with his beguiling left-arm spin as England were reduced to 215 all out in 38.4 overs. He also ran out the last England batter to cap a superb showing.

England lost their last nine wickets for 95 runs after being well set at 120-1, with Tom Banton (57) and Ben Duckett (45) giving them a confident start.

Minhas grabbed three crucial wickets, getting Banton caught off a miscued pull, bowling Harry Brook for five with a sharp turner, and then trapping Jordan Cox for 18.

Minhas completed his second five-wicket haul when he dismissed Will Jacks for 19 and then had Jamie Overton for one.

Banton smashed five fours and two sixes in his 53-ball knock.

Naseem Shah snared the prized wicket of Joe Root for 33, and Haris Rauf removed a dangerous Sam Curran for 27 as England's run chase faltered.

Pakistan had also beaten Sri Lanka by 37 runs in the first game, with skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi pleased by the team's progress.

"As a team we have shown progress as we are looking to build towards next year's World Cup," said Shaheen. "The form of Arafat and the fast bowlers are good signs for us."

England captain Brook rued a lack of partnerships with the bat.

"We were quite happy by limiting them under 300 and then the openers set the tone beautifully, but we could not put on partnerships and ended up on the wrong side," said Brook.

Nawaz and Minhas earlier lifted Pakistan from a precarious 133-5.

Nawaz, who hit four sixes and five fours, added 78 for the sixth wicket with Minhas as England struggled to break their stand, dropping three catches. Minhas then added an invaluable 72 for the seventh wicket with Faheem Ashraf (39) as Pakistan added 91 runs in the last 10 overs.

Minhas hit nine fours, while Ashraf's knock included a six and five fours.

England's Gus Atkinson jolted Pakistan with the very first ball of the match to dismiss Fakhar Zaman, caught by Root at short mid-wicket.

Sonny Baker made it 31-2 with the wicket of Saim Ayub for eight before Babar Azam (34) and Saad Baig (35) steadied the innings.

England's Baker took 3-65, while Atkinson finished with 2-35.

England meet Sri Lanka in the third match on Thursday, also in Rawalpindi. — AFP



Oman fencers are gearing up to take part in the Asian U23 Fencing Championships 2026 and the FIE Épée World Cup in Manama, Bahrain.

Oman fencers to compete at FIE Épée World Cup

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 21

THE OMAN national fencing team will take part in two regional and international challenge as the national fencers are gearing up to vie in the Asian U23 Fencing Championships 2026 and the FIE Épée World Cup in Manama, Bahrain. The competitions will bring together fencers from across Asia and beyond at the Isa bin Rashid Arenas in Manama city, providing Oman's emerging athletes with another opportunity to gain international experience and test their skills against established opponents.

Three Omani fencers including: Salma al Dughaishi, Jana al Sharji and Israa al Siyabi — are listed for the women's team épée competition scheduled for November 8. Al Dughaishi and Al Sharji are also entered in the women's individual épée event on November 7, where they will face a field of international competitors.

Beside that, other Omani new young fencers including: Mohab al Harthi, Othman al Sharji, Ali al Nabhani and Marwan al Hajri will take part in the event as well.

The individual event is expected to feature around 82 fencers representing 14 countries, while the Asian U23 Championships are expected to attract approximately 135 fencers from 12 countries. The events will provide a valuable platform for Oman's fencers to



Oman fencing team at the Asian Games in Japan.

strengthen their competitive experience and continue their development on the international stage.

The Bahrain competitions come as Oman's fencing programme continues to build momentum following the national team's historic debut at the Asian Games in Nagoya last September.

The landmark appearance marked an important step for Omani fencing, with athletes competing in both individual foil and épée events.

Ahmed Kaskas and Said al Shueibi represented Oman in the men's foil, while Jana al Sharji and Salma al Dughaishi competed in the women's épée.

KASKAS SHINES AT ASIAN GAMES

Kaskas had produced one of Oman's notable performances, progressing to the Round of 16 after overcoming Pakistan's Mohammed Yasin Khan. His campaign ended at that stage against China's Ji Xiu, following a challenging series of bouts against strong international opposition.

In the women's competition, Al Sharji secured victories against opponents from Uzbekistan and Indonesia to advance to the Round of 16, where she was defeated by South Korea's Lim Tae-hee. Al Dighaishi also gained valuable experience against competitors from Singapore, Japan, Kuwait, Hong Kong and Thailand. Al Shueibi faced a demanding group-stage campaign in the men's foil, competing against opponents from Macau, the Philippines, Singapore, Japan and India. Oman's international programme also had included participation in the Senior World Fencing Championships 2026 in Hong Kong in July, where promising young foil fencer Ahmed Anwar Kaskas represented the Sultanate of Oman.

Despite facing experienced international competitors, Kaskas had demonstrated determination throughout the men's individual foil event. He secured a 5-2 victory over Mexico's Maximo Murray and narrowly missed another positive result against Venezuela's Janderson Briceno, losing 5-4. The experience provided an important opportunity to measure his progress against the world's leading fencing nations.

Three Omani teams to compete at Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is preparing to participate in the fourth edition of the Youth Olympic Games, Dakar 2026, which will be hosted by Senegal from October 31 to November 13, with three national teams competing in fencing, aquatics and taekwondo.

As part of the preparations for the Games, Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) held a meeting on Wednesday to discuss the technical, administrative and organisational aspects of the participation. The meeting was attended by members of the official delegation, representatives of the national teams and technical staff.

Discussions covered competition schedules, timings and venues, as well as logistical arrangements related to travel, accommodation and transportation, medical services for athletes, anti-doping procedures and regulations governing the Games, in addition to media responsibilities accompanying the participation.

In aquatics, swimmer Hamad al Hasani will compete in the men's 400m and 800m freestyle events, scheduled for November 1 and 3 respectively, in the capital Dakar. Taekwondo athlete Ziyad al Balushi will compete in the men's under-48 kg category on November 8 in Dakar. In fencing, Janna al Sharji will take



The Omani delegation will be headed by Eng Khalfan bin Saleh al Naabi, Member of OOC Board of Directors.

part in the women's individual épée event, scheduled for November 10 in Diamniadio.

The Omani delegation will be

headed by Eng Khalfan bin Saleh al Naabi, Member of OOC Board of Directors.

The delegation also includes Saheem bin Khalaf al Subhi as administrator, Nada bint Mohammed al Zadjali as physiotherapist, Adil bin Ibrahim al Balushi as journalist, and Marwan bin Nabil al Yaqoubi as photographer.

The national teams will also be accompanied by Hicham Karchoud as fencing coach, Mohammed Bouguerra as swimming coach, and Adil al Wahibi as taekwondo coach.

OLYMPIC MILESTONE
The Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic

Games hold exceptional significance as the first-ever Olympic event to be held on the African continent. The Games are expected to bring together approximately 2,700 athletes representing 206 National Olympic Committees, competing in 25 sports across 151 events, with the support of around 6,000 volunteers.

Competitions will take place across eight sports venues in three host cities, making Dakar 2026 a global sporting event that aims to showcase emerging young talent, promote the values of the Olympic Movement, and strengthen bonds of friendship and communication among young people from around the world.

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SECOND TEST



JANSEN, RABADA PUT S AFRICA IN SIGHT OF WIN OVER AUSTRALIA

GQEBERHA, South Africa: Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada bowled South Africa to within sight of a series-levelling victory on the fourth day of the second Test at St George’s Park on Wednesday.

Australia were 156 for four in their follow on innings after being shot out for 99 earlier in the day. They were still 170 runs short of making South Africa bat again.

Travis Head survived an early chance and was unbeaten on 87. Steve Smith did not come out to bat in the second innings after appearing to be struggling with a neck injury while making top score of 28 in Australia’s first innings.

Jansen took five for 33 as Australia crashed to their fourth-lowest total against South Africa and Rabada made two crucial breakthroughs in the

second innings.

Rabada dismissed Australian opening batsman Nic Maddinson cheaply for the second time in the match and later bowled Matt Renshaw, who was man of the match in Australia’s 214-run win in the first Test.

With a first innings lead of 326 runs, South Africa enforced the follow-on despite fast bowler Anrich Nortje being out of action with a groin injury. Nortje dismissed Marnus Labuschagne in the first innings but bowled only 3.3 overs before pulling up injured.

In Nortje’s absence, South African captain Temba Bavuma used Rabada, Jansen and fellow seamer Wiaan Mulder in short spells and made extensive use of off-spinner Simon Harmer, who bowled 18 overs and took two wickets. — AFP

FROM OMAN’S GREEN MOUNTAIN TO 200 NEIGHBOURHOODS AROUND THE WORLD: HOTEL INDIGO CELEBRATES A GLOBAL MILESTONE

Hotel Indigo Jabal Akhdar Resort & Spa joins the celebration as IHG’s neighbourhood-inspired Luxury & Lifestyle brand opens its 200th hotel worldwide.



Jabal Akhdar, Oman – October 2026: Every neighbourhood has a story to tell. Now, Hotel Indigo is telling those stories in 200 hotels around the world. IHG Hotels & Resorts’ distinctive Luxury & Lifestyle brand has reached a defining moment in its global journey, bringing curious travellers closer to the places, people and ideas that make each destination one of a kind.

Since 2004, Hotel Indigo has looked beyond the guidebook, drawing on the character of each neighbourhood to shape its design, dining, stories and experiences. The brand has doubled its global footprint since 2019, with another 134 hotels in the development pipeline—each ready to share a fresh local story.

In Oman, that story unfolds 2,000 meters above sea level at Hotel Indigo Jabal Akhdar Resort & Spa. Set high on the Sultanate’s iconic Green Mountain, the resort takes its cues from Jabal Akhdar’s dramatic landscapes, rich heritage, local people and ever-changing natural rhythms.

Here, the Green Mountain is woven into every detail. Rose terraces, pomegranate and olive orchards, seasonal ingredients and traditional craftsmanship inspire spaces and experiences with a strong sense of place. From locally rooted dining and restorative wellness to adventures across the mountain, guests are invited to discover Jabal Akhdar from the inside out.

James Reeves, General Manager, Hotel Indigo Jabal Akhdar Resort & Spa, said:

“Two hundred hotels means 200 neighbourhood stories, and we are proud that Jabal Akhdar is one of them. Over the past two years, we have brought the Green Mountain’s character to life through our people, design, flavours, experiences and connection to the local community. Our ‘Reimagining of Life on the Green Mountain’ gives guests the chance to discover this remarkable place in a way that feels personal, surprising and unmistakably local.”

Today, Hotel Indigo can be found in more than 30 countries, from lively city streets and emerging creative districts to resort destinations shaped by nature. Wherever the setting, each hotel starts with the same idea: no two neighbourhoods and no two Hotel Indigo properties should ever feel the same.

At Hotel Indigo Jabal Akhdar Resort & Spa, this neighbourhood-first spirit comes to life across 165 rooms, suites and chalets, locally inspired dining, Jala Spa & Wellness, and a collection of experiences that bring guests closer to the landscape and culture of Jabal Akhdar.

As Hotel Indigo marks its 200th opening, the Green Mountain adds its own chapter to the brand’s growing world of stories inviting travellers to follow the scent of roses, taste the season and see Oman from a different perspective.

PSG LATE SHOW DOWNS BARCA IN CL, LIVERPOOL FIGHT BACK



Manchester City’s Phil Foden scores their fourth goal against AEK Athens in Manchester. City won 5-1. — Reuters



Liverpool’s Alexis Mac Allister celebrates scoring their third goal with teammates against Villarreal at Anfield, Liverpool. — Reuters



Paris St Germain’s Vitorinha celebrates scoring their third goal against FC Barcelona during the Uefa Champions League match in Paris. — Reuters

HOLDERS PARIS Saint-Germain made it three wins from three in this season’s Champions League, beating Barcelona 4-2 thanks to late goals from Vitorinha and Fabian Ruiz on Tuesday, while Liverpool clinched a dramatic comeback victory over Villarreal. Phil Foden scored a hat-trick as Manchester City thrashed AEK Athens 5-1, while there were also much-needed wins for Roma and Napoli.

PSG kept their place at the top of the league-phase table, but could yet count the cost of injuries suffered by Ousmane Dembele, Marquinhos and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia at the Parc des Princes. “We don’t feel superior to any team but we trust in ourselves, in everyone who starts and who comes off the bench,” Paris midfielder Ruiz told Movistar. “There’s still a long way to go.”

Barcelona twice levelled against the two-time defending champions, but were ultimately well beaten as they slipped to their first defeat of the season. “We tried to play how we want to play, we pressed them very high. There were a lot of fantastic things on show today,” said Flick, whose team had won their previous 11 games in all competitions this term. Kvaratskhelia hit the post, Dembele hobbled off and Ferran Torres was denied by Barca goalkeeper Joan Garcia in a fast-paced opening. PSG took a deserved lead in the 38th minute as Desire Doue collected the ball outside the area and thumped a shot into the bottom corner.

Garcia made another excellent save shortly after the break from Achraf Hakimi, before Xavi Espot burst through to level for Barca against the run of play. Kvaratskhelia and Marquinhos both pulled up injured within seconds of each other and had to leave the field. The home team continued to press, though, and Lucas Hernandez restored their advantage 18 minutes from time with a brilliant header.

Lamine Yamal powered past Warren Zaire-Emery to equalise

again seven minutes later.

But Vitorinha hammered home from outside the box in the 81st minute and Ruiz’s tap-in gave Luis Enrique’s team a second straight 4-2 Champions League win after seeing off Man City by the same scoreline last week.

LIVERPOOL EDGE VILLARREAL Liverpool battled back from two goals down to also maintain their 100-per cent record by edging out Villarreal 4-3 at Anfield. Liverpool fell behind in the fourth minute when Georges Mikautadze pounced on a terrible error from Virgil van Dijk, before Villarreal defender Sergi Cardona strolled through their defence to make it two.

Alexis Mac Allister pulled one back for the hosts nine minutes before half-time by heading in Kostas Tsimikas’s corner. Andoni Iraola’s men were level in first-half added time through Ronald Araujo’s back-post header after Cardona inexplicably left Rio Ngumoha’s cross. Mac Allister completed the turnaround by firing in from Ngumoha’s square pass, and half-time substitute Florian Wirtz’s first goal of the season gave the Reds some breathing space.

Tani Oluwaseyi set up a nervy finish for Iraola, but Liverpool held on. “We are facing very good teams. It’s good to come back but we’ve started losing too many goals this season,” Iraola told Amazon Prime.

At the Etihad, Elliot Anderson put Manchester City in front with his first goal for the club, before Phil Foden made it two goals in as many games after scoring against Ipswich at the weekend.

AEK halved the deficit early in the second half through Stavros Piliros, only for Rayan Cherki to sweep in City’s third in the 57th minute.

Foden later fired in his second and third goals in a comprehensive victory, despite Erling Haaland being rested after picking up a knock at the weekend.

“Slowly, but surely. Still got a long way to go, but I am going in the right direction,” Foden told TNT Sports of his gradual return to form.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS ON TUESDAY:
<i>In Istanbul, Turkey:</i> Fenerbahce (TUR) 2 (Aydin 4, Greenwood 11) Slavia Prague (CZE) 2 (Provd 15, Kacor 90)
<i>In Baku:</i> Sabah (AZE) 1 (McCarthy 39) Borussia Dortmund (GER) 2 (Guirassy 10, 53)
<i>In Paris:</i> PSG (FRA) 4 (Doue 38, Hernandez 72, Vitorinha 81, Ruiz 86) Barcelona (ESP) 2 (Espot 55, Yamal 79)
<i>In Liverpool, England:</i> Liverpool (ENG) 4 (Mac Allister 36, 65, Araujo 45+2, Wirtz 69) Villarreal (ESP) 3 (Mikautadze 4, Cardona 29, Oluwaseyi 87)
<i>In Manchester, England:</i> Manchester City (ENG) 5 (Anderson 12, Foden 34, 65, 76, Cherki 57) AEK Athens (GRE) 1 (Piliros 52)
<i>In Rome:</i> Roma (ITA) 4 (Hermoso 21, Molina 39, Pisilli 52, Malen 58-pen)
<i>In Bratislava, Slovakia:</i> Slovan Bratislava (SVK) 0
<i>In Porto, Portugal:</i> Porto (POR) 0 PSV Eindhoven (NED) 1 (Til 57)
<i>In Naples, Italy:</i> Napoli (ITA) 4 (Politano 1, McTominay 41, 75, Bjortuft 88-og) Bodo/Glimt (NOR) 3 (Hauge 27, Helmersen 62, Brunstad Fet 90+4)
<i>In Stuttgart, Germany:</i> Stuttgart (GER) 1 (Leweling 36) Atletico Madrid (ESP) 1 (Alvarez 47)

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
7,438.159

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$110.18
BRENT \$110.44
LIGHT \$99.60



SHORT TAKES



The exercise aimed to examine the forces shaping the future, analyse the potential effects of emerging shifts and signals, and identify the key milestones needed to reach the desired future.

WORKSHOP EXPLORES BUILDING OMAN’S TECH FORESIGHT SYSTEM

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, represented by the Oman Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, organised a workshop titled “Technology Foresight” in cooperation with the World Economic Forum.

The workshop brought together a number of national entities and institutions involved in the digital economy, foresight and future planning, and was held as part of the events accompanying the launch of the second phase of the National Digital Economy Programme.

The workshop aims to strengthen integration among national entities, exchange expertise and knowledge in foresight of technological transformations, and explore future opportunities in support of national efforts towards a sustainable digital economy.

It sought to develop and activate a technology foresight system in the Sultanate of Oman by introducing foresight concepts and methodologies, exploring emerging technological signals and trends, and identifying opportunities and challenges at an early stage.

This is intended to support planning and decision-making in policy, investment and innovation, in line with the targets of Oman Vision 2040 and its drive to build a diversified, sustainable economy based on knowledge and innovation.

The workshop included practical activities on applying foresight tools and methodologies, and on preparing and testing a roadmap extending from the current situation to 2040.

The exercise aimed to examine the forces shaping the future, analyse the potential effects of emerging shifts and signals, and identify the key milestones needed to reach the desired future. — ONA

Food drives half of Oman’s inflation, says economist

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 21

FOOD and beverages accounted for roughly half of Oman’s annual rise in consumer prices in September, a Sultan Qaboos University economist has estimated, as higher freight charges and longer shipping times added pressure on fresh-food supply chains.

Dr Osman Gulseven, Associate Professor of Economics and WTO Chair at Sultan Qaboos University, said in an exclusive Q&A interview that the growing cost of transporting food was an important factor behind the pressure facing importers and consumers.

Official figures from the National Centre for Statistics and Information show that food and non-alcoholic beverage prices rose 8.0 per cent in September compared with a year earlier, against headline inflation of 3.2 per cent.

Vegetable prices increased by 20.1 per cent year on year, fruit by 16.3 per cent and meat by 10.3 per cent. The monthly increase in vegetable prices was considerably smaller, at 2.0 per cent.

Although food and beverages account for approximately 20.6 per cent of the consumer price basket, Dr Gulseven said their contribution to overall inflation was disproportionately large.

Using the published figures, he estimated that food accounted for approximately half of the annual increase in the overall consumer price index. He cautioned that a precise calculation requires the underlying index levels.

Dr Gulseven said freight charges, insurance, storage, refrigeration and domestic distribution costs could increase retail prices even without a corresponding rise in the prices charged by overseas suppliers.

He cited figures from an Omani fresh-produce importer reported by local media on October 7, showing container shipping



Dr Osman Gulseven, Associate Professor of Economics and WTO Chair at SQU.

Higher shipping costs add pressure on food prices, but available data cannot show whether traders’ profit margins have increased.

charges from India rising from \$1,800 to \$8,400. The importer also reported charges from China reaching as much as \$15,000 per container, compared with \$3,800 previously, while European freight charges increased from approximately \$4,000 to \$10,000.

These figures describe the experience of one importer on particular trade routes rather than average shipping costs across Oman’s food imports.

Some produce shipments from Africa were also reported to be taking more than 40 days, compared with approximately 28 days previously.

Gulseven said longer journeys raise refrigeration expenses and increase the risk of deterioration, making each kilogramme of saleable produce more expensive to deliver. The higher costs do not, however, establish that food importers or retailers are earning larger profits.

“CPI figures identify price changes but cannot establish whether commercial profit margins increased”, he said.

He explained that determining changes in profitability would require comparable purchase and selling prices for identical products, alongside information on transport, storage, labour, financing and spoilage costs.

“Higher costs may even reduce importers’ margins if they cannot

pass these increases fully to consumers”, he said.

Dr Gulseven’s assessment builds on research he co-authored in 2025, Food price resilience in Oman: A data-driven approach, which examined the relationship between international and domestic food prices using monthly observations from January 2013 to January 2024.

The study identified strong links between global and Omani food prices, particularly in recent years, with cereals showing the strongest relationship.

However, the research covered cereals, dairy, meat, sugar and vegetable oils rather than fresh fruit and vegetables. Dr Gulseven acknowledged that it could not directly explain the sharp increase in fresh-produce prices recorded this September.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation’s international Food Price Index reached 136.0 points in September, up 5.8 per cent from a year earlier. That measure tracks internationally traded food commodities and does not include fresh fruit and vegetables.

For households, the impact of higher food prices extends beyond the headline inflation figure.

Dr Gulseven said lower-income families, households with fixed incomes and those with limited savings are particularly exposed because essential food purchases absorb a larger proportion of their budgets.

“Maintaining expenditure by purchasing less food can conceal a substantial deterioration in living standards”, he said.

He cautioned that even if shipping costs and delivery times return to normal, relief at retail outlets may take time.

Improving cold storage, diversifying suppliers and transport routes, reducing clearance delays and publishing comparable wholesale and retail prices would help strengthen the food supply chain, he added.

He also called for commercially feasible and resource-efficient domestic production to improve Oman’s resilience to future supply disruptions.

New project to pilot biodiesel use in Oman’s construction sector

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 21

International construction group STRABAG has embarked on a pioneering biodiesel pilot project in Oman in cooperation with Wakud, marking a potentially significant step towards reducing the carbon footprint of construction activities and encouraging the wider adoption of alternative fuels across the Sultanate of Oman’s industrial and contracting sectors.

The initiative will assess the technical and operational feasibility of using B7 biodiesel in heavy construction machinery under actual site conditions. The project supports Oman’s energy transition ambitions and its national commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

According to STRABAG Oman, the pilot is planned to run for approximately three months

under two-shift operating conditions, consuming an estimated 27,400 litres of B7 fuel. Initial trials will involve a Caterpillar 966GC wheel loader, with its performance closely monitored before any decision on extending the programme to additional equipment.

B7 contains up to 7 per cent biodiesel blended with conventional diesel. STRABAG selected this blend as a practical starting point because it falls within the permitted biodiesel content under the EN 590 diesel standard, subject to applicable fuel quality specifications and equipment manufacturer requirements.

The company will evaluate fuel consumption, engine performance, operational reliability, maintenance requirements and day-to-day equipment performance. Findings will help determine whether



The initiative will assess the technical and operational feasibility of using B7 biodiesel in heavy construction machinery under actual site conditions.

biodiesel can be integrated into construction operations without compromising productivity or equipment reliability.

Significantly, STRABAG estimates that approximately 50 per cent of its construction equipment fleet in Oman could potentially be suitable for B7,

although any wider deployment will depend on the pilot results, machinery compatibility and reliable fuel supplies.

The initiative is among the pioneering efforts to test biodiesel in construction machinery under operating site conditions in Oman, according to the company. Its significance extends beyond STRABAG’s operations, potentially establishing a practical reference for other contractors, industrial operators and equipment-intensive businesses considering lower-carbon alternatives to conventional diesel.

The environmental implications are considerable. Buildings and construction account for approximately 38 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions, according to figures cited by STRABAG, underscoring the sector’s importance in international decarbonisation efforts. The pilot also forms part

of STRABAG Group’s longer-term sustainability strategy, which encompasses more than 200 innovation projects and 450 sustainability projects internationally.

Under its science-based emissions reduction targets, STRABAG aims to reduce absolute Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 42 per cent and Scope 3 emissions by 25 per cent by 2030, following its 2023–2030 reduction pathway.

The group is pursuing alternative propulsion technologies, renewable fuels and low-carbon construction materials. Its European operations already have experience with B7 and hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), providing a foundation for evaluating similar technologies in Oman.

Looking ahead, STRABAG says it may consider higher biodiesel blends and other low-carbon fuels if the pilot proves successful.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Retail customers to avail themselves of housing loans to purchase under-development properties in these projects.

BANKDHOFAR SIGNS THREE STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE AGREEMENTS

MUSCAT: BankDhofar has signed three strategic agreements with prominent real estate developers during the Urban Development, Home and Construction Exhibition and Conference 2026, reaffirming its commitment to supporting residential development, facilitating investment and advancing sustainable urban growth across the Sultanate of Oman.

BankDhofar has signed three agreements, which enable its retail customers to avail themselves of housing loans to purchase under-development properties in these projects.

The agreements underscore the Bank’s growing role as a trusted financial partner to the real estate sector, supporting the development of modern residential communities while helping expand access to housing and property investment opportunities.

The first agreement, valued at RO 10 million, was signed with Al Ahly Sabbour Developments, a prominent real estate developer, to provide financing for its property development activities and financing for retail customers on housing loans. The arrangement is expected to support the company’s investment plans, facilitate project implementation and create new opportunities for growth in Oman’s expanding real estate market.

BankDhofar also signed an agreement with Adanté Realty, the specialised real estate development arm of Al Adrak Group. The partnership is linked to the developer’s Yenaier Residences project in Sultan Haitham City, one of Oman’s flagship urban developments.

The project forms part of the wider vision to create integrated residential neighbourhoods that combine contemporary housing, community amenities and sustainable infrastructure.

The third agreement was concluded with Sarooj Development Company to support Sarooj Oasis, an integrated residential development within Sultan Haitham City.

Envisioned as a distinctive destination for modern urban living, the project aims to create an attractive residential environment that combines contemporary design, sustainability and quality of life, contributing to the emergence of Sultan Haitham City as a vibrant and inclusive urban community.

Representing BankDhofar at the signing ceremonies was Ahmed bin Said al Ibrahim, Chief Retail Banking & Government Business Officer, who highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships in advancing the Bank’s commitment to supporting high-quality real estate developments and contributing to Oman’s broader economic and urban development objectives.

OMAN ARAB BANK BOOSTS JORDAN INVESTMENT TIES

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) is strengthening its cooperation with the Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Oman, reaffirming its commitment to meeting the Embassy’s banking needs and supporting Jordanian investors in the Sultanate of Oman.

The cooperation follows a meeting held on October 12, 2026 with, Zeid Abdelkarim AbuHassan, Ambassador of Jordan to Oman, during which the Embassy recognised



OAB strengthens Jordan ties and supports investment.

OAB’s assistance in facilitating its financial transactions. Mr Sulaiman al Hinai, Chief Wholesale Banking Officer at Oman Arab Bank, said: “Our relationship with the Jordanian Embassy reflects our belief that meaningful partnerships are built through trust, continuity and a clear understanding of shared priorities. OAB remains committed to building lasting partnerships, delivering reliable financial services and supporting economic development through stronger institutional relationships“.

Lexus IS 350 combines luxury and performance

THE Lexus IS 350 redefines the luxury sports sedan experience in Oman pairing a front-engine, rear-wheel-drive layout and sharp handling with the refinement expected from Lexus. Designed around the driver, the sedan delivers precise, responsive performance in both city and highway driving.

Precision is central to the IS 350’s character. Its Electric Power Steering system with a variable gear rack provides accurate, confident control through corners and intersections, while keeping the car stable on the highway. The Adaptive Variable Suspension system complements the steering by smoothing out road imperfections without losing the connected feel of the drive.

For added confidence, the IS 350 is equipped with Lexus Safety System + for everyday



Precision meets performance in the Lexus IS 350, featuring sporty styling, intelligent safety systems and a driver-focused cabin.

and long-distance driving, while Lexus Teammate Advanced Drive provides enhanced

assistance on highway journeys. The sedan’s low, wide stance gives it an unmistakably sporty

look. The F SPORT variant adds a rear spoiler for improved aerodynamics and 19-inch lightweight alloy wheels and customers can choose from eight exterior colours including Neutrino Gray, a metallic-infused light grey with a dynamic finish.

The cockpit is built around the driver. A 12.3-inch centre display and a matching 12.3-inch TFT LCD instrument cluster keep key information clear and easy to read at a glance. “Forged Bamboo” trim on the console and start switch bezel adds a distinctive shading effect, while the Prominence interior colour option adds a bold, energetic accent to the cabin.

With its combination of precise engineering, advanced safety technology and a driver-first cabin, the IS 350 offers an engaging drive for customers who value performance as much as comfort.

National Finance CEO honoured for leadership

MUSCAT: In recognition of the distinguished leadership and strategic vision that have contributed to cementing National Finance’s position as the leading finance and leasing company in the Sultanate of Oman, the company’s Chief Executive Officer, Tariq bin Sulaiman al Farsi, has been honoured with the prestigious ‘CEO of the Year’ award under the Business Leader of the Year programme, organised by the World HRD Congress.

The programme recognises exemplary leadership and business excellence, with a focus on strategic foresight, innovation, sustainable



Tariq bin Sulaiman al Farsi, CEO, National Finance.

growth, corporate social responsibility and enduring impact on business and society. The award was received by

Younis al Nasri, Head of Retail at National Finance.

The recognition reflects Al Farsi’s transformative leadership and his instrumental role in advancing National Finance’s position as a trusted and progressive financial institution.

Under his stewardship, the company has sustained its growth momentum, strengthened its market leadership and continued to evolve its proposition in response to the changing needs of individuals, businesses and the wider economy. His leadership is characterised by a strong emphasis on customer-

centric innovation, operational excellence, responsible finance and sustainable value creation, alongside a people-focused culture that empowers talent and enables the organisation to respond with agility to an evolving financial landscape.

Commenting on the recognition, Al Farsi stated, “I am deeply honoured to receive this distinguished recognition, which I regard not as an individual achievement, but as a reflection of the collective ambition, commitment and excellence of the National Finance team, and the enduring trust placed in us by our customers and stakeholders“.

Meethaq Islamic Banking wins three awards at IFN Awards

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking, from Bank Muscat, has won three prestigious awards at the Islamic Finance News (IFN) Awards, recognising its contributions to Oman’s Islamic banking sector.

Meethaq received the titles of “Best Islamic Investment Bank in Oman”, “Best Islamic Corporate Bank in Oman”, and “Best Islamic Retail Bank in Oman”.

The awards recognise its range of Sharia-compliant financial solutions and services for individual, corporate and investment banking customers.

The awards were received on behalf of Meethaq by Salim bin Said al Shanfari, Chief Representative Officer of the Dubai Representative Office in the United Arab Emirates.

Commenting on the achievement,



Meethaq Islamic Banking wins three prestigious IFN Awards, recognising its excellence in Islamic investment, corporate and retail banking in Oman.

Sami Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager of Meethaq Personal Banking, said: “These recognitions represent an international testament to Meethaq’s continuous efforts to provide innovative and comprehensive Islamic banking solutions. Being recognised across three major categories demonstrates the success of our business model, which serves customers across different segments while expanding our capabilities in Sharia-compliant investment services.

This achievement reflects the trust of our customers, the dedication of our people, and Meethaq’s continued focus on delivering meaningful value to the national economy, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040”.

The Best Islamic Investment Bank in

Oman award highlights Meethaq’s investment solutions, including the Meethaq Equity Fund, an open-ended investment fund registered with Oman’s Financial Services Authority.

The fund aims to achieve capital appreciation and long-term dividend distributions through investments primarily in Sharia-compliant equities listed in regional markets.

The corporate and retail banking awards recognise Meethaq’s comprehensive range of products and services for individuals, businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Its offerings include savings and current accounts, deposits, personal finance, auto finance, home finance and other financing solutions.

SELECTIVEGROWTH



(Left to Right) Ambassador Dr. Eichtinger, Ali Sultan Sheikhan, Aziza al Mughairy, and EU Commissioner Magnus Brunner.

FIRST OMANI ENROLS AT WORLD’S OLDEST DIPLOMATIC ACADEMY

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 21

A fresh new chapter has officially unfolded in Gulf-European academic and diplomatic engagement, underscored by landmark representations from the Sultanate of Oman at the world’s oldest professional school of international affairs.

Nestled in the heart of Vienna, the *Diplomatische Akademie Wien*, also known as the *Vienna School of International Studies*, stands as a premier institution with deep historical roots.

Originally founded in 1754 by Empress Maria Theresa as the *Imperial and Royal Oriental Academy*, it holds the distinction of being the oldest institution of its kind in the world.

For nearly three centuries, the academy has trained countless generations of diplomats, ambassadors, statesmen, ministers and global leaders, adapting its curriculum to meet the shifting demands of international relations.

Under the auspices of Ambassador Dr. Eichtinger, Director of the *Vienna School of International Studies*, the ceremonial inauguration of the academic year brought together prominent international figures.

The highlight was a keynote address delivered by the EU Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, Magnus Brunner.

This year’s cohort is distinguished by historic milestones for both Oman and Qatar. Aziza al Mughairy has made history as the first Gulf national in its near 300-year history to join the academy’s flagship *Diploma Programme (DLG)*, and the first Omani to enrol in the *Vienna School of International Studies*.

Oman energy push needs broader funding

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, OCT 21

OMAN’S expanding renewable energy and electricity infrastructure plans will require broader funding sources and stronger project structures to attract investment, a senior Sohar International executive said, urging banks to support the supply chains behind major developments.

Hisham Mousa, Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Government Banking and Strategic Alliance at Sohar International, said developers should combine domestic lending with international capital, equity and debt market instruments to meet financing needs across generation, transmission and distribution.

“It’s not only about how you can get the money, it’s about how you can get the right capital for these projects”, Mousa said in a presentation on financing energy infrastructure.

He pointed to solar, wind and battery storage as areas requiring substantial investment as Oman pursues its energy transition under Oman Vision 2040. Securing funding, however, would depend on putting credible commercial and technical arrangements in place before approaching lenders.

Clear power purchase agreements, agreed tariffs, strong sponsors, permits and experienced technical partners were central to making projects bankable, he said. These elements would underpin business plans and help financiers assess repayment prospects and allocate risk.

Mousa said funding options



Solar, wind and battery storage require substantial investment as Oman pursues its energy transition under Oman Vision 2040.

included long-term bank loans, bonds, sukuk and financing from development institutions, alongside shareholders’ equity. The appropriate combination would depend on the project’s structure and the risks assumed by its participants.

He urged developers to look beyond borrowing solely from banks in Oman, highlighting the role of international expertise and financing partnerships in bringing complex energy investments to market.

Banks, in turn, should take a broader role than simply providing loans, helping originate transactions, structure financing, arrange syndication and develop ways to reduce investment risks, he said.

Such an approach would allow lenders to work more closely with investors and project sponsors, while distributing financing commitments across participating institutions.

Mousa also called for financing to cover the wider project ecosystem, including international contractors, subcontractors and smaller businesses supplying equipment and services. Supporting these companies would help extend access to funding throughout the value chain.

He cited the development of a solar manufacturing ecosystem in Suhar, beginning with polysilicon production and extending into subsequent manufacturing stages, as an example of how technical expertise, investors and financial institutions could support linked industrial activities. The investment case also extended beyond individual power plants, he said, with electricity networks and storage forming part of the infrastructure needed to support additional renewable generation. Mousa said Sohar International had participated

in financing GCC electricity interconnection infrastructure, highlighting regional grid links as another area requiring sustained capital investment.

He stressed that new capacity should be delivered in line with demand, as population growth, industrial development and new factories increase electricity requirements.

Oman’s wind resources and coastal location provided opportunities for further projects, he said, while storage investment could help manage available power more effectively.

For developers and financiers, the priority was to align project preparation, commercial agreements and funding so that investments could proceed when needed, he said. That required coordination among government entities, oftakers, technical partners, sponsors and lenders throughout the development process.

Oman highlights food manufacturing capabilities at SIAL Paris 2026

The Sultanate of Oman continues its successful participation at SIAL Paris 2026 in France through a national pavilion highlighting the diversity of Omani food products and the ability of local companies to compete in international markets and expand their global reach.

The products on display reflect the breadth of the Sultanate of Oman’s food production base, ranging from vegetable oils and their derivatives to canned seafood, dates and date-based products, and tahini, among others.

Khalid al Salehi, Director General of Marketing and Commercial Affairs and Official Spokesperson for Madayn, said Oman’s participation in SIAL Paris 2026 provides a key opportunity to strengthen the



The products on display reflect the breadth of the Sultanate’s food production base, ranging from vegetable oils and their derivatives to canned seafood, dates and date-based products, and tahini, among others.

presence of Omani food products in international markets, while highlighting their quality, diversity and ability to meet international market standards.

He noted that the national pavilion enables participating companies to engage directly with buyers, distributors and food industry specialists, explore export and trade opportunities, and build partnerships to support their expansion into European and other international markets.

“The Sultanate of Oman’s first participation in the exhibition brings together seven food manufacturing sector companies and four government bodies under a national pavilion overseen by the OPEX team, which reflects

coordinated efforts to promote Omani products and attract new investments into the sector”, Al Salehi pointed out.

Al Salehi added that the range of products on display highlights the potential of Oman’s food industry, while participation in the exhibition provides an opportunity to learn about the latest market trends and developments in food processing, manufacturing and packaging.

Oman’s participation in SIAL Paris 2026 reflects cooperation between the public and private sectors to support food exports and showcase the production capacity, manufacturing expertise and competitiveness of national companies.

WEBSITE SECURITY

PHP fix may take websites offline



The developers of the widely used PHP programming language said on Wednesday they would release patches for two critical vulnerabilities, as EU cybersecurity officials warned organisations unable to apply the fixes should take affected websites offline.

PHP is used across large parts of the internet, and speculation has circulated over the past day that websites running the software could be exposed to serious cyber intrusions. — Reuters

ENERGY SUPPLY

Indian Oil to trim Middle East oil imports

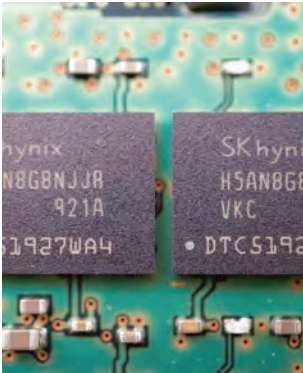


Indian Oil Corp (IOC) plans to cut its Middle Eastern oil purchases under annual deals in 2027/28 as the Iran war has created uncertainty for supplies from the region, a source familiar with the matter said.

Indian refiners traditionally relied on the Middle East for more than half of their annual crude supplies, particularly heavier, high-sulphur grades, because of the region’s proximity. — Reuters

CHIP UPGRADES

Samsung, SK Hynix boost china chip



Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix are upgrading their China factories to produce more advanced memory chips, four people familiar with the plans said, aiming to fend off competition from a fast-growing Chinese rival and meet huge AI demand.

Companies must obtain annual US licences to install American chip-making equipment in China, while Washington has restricted technology upgrades. — Reuters

OPINION

What has OCCI achieved over the past four years?



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

THE Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has repeatedly stated in its periodic media releases that it has carried out numerous activities and initiatives during the past four years of the current Board of Directors. However, many small business owners and entrepreneurs continue to believe that the Chamber has not delivered enough of what they aspire to achieve in the world of commerce and industry.

This is particularly relevant given that they pay annual Chamber membership fees just like large businesses, yet they do not always have sufficient opportunities to participate in the trade delegations and other activities organised by the Chamber from time to time.

Today, there are various views regarding the composition of the Chamber's next Board of Directors.

Some believe that its members should be experienced businesspeople with long-standing records in commercial activity, rather than individuals who might seek to use the Chamber primarily for travel and international visits at the expense of others.

Nevertheless, modern technologies have provided many channels through which businesspeople can communicate the Chamber's online platform regarding its various activities and events and to participate. In its latest statement marking

the completion of four years of the current Board of Directors' term (2022–2026), Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), emphasised that the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik seek to empower the private sector and strengthen its role in the country's economic development and diversification efforts, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

These objectives can only be achieved by enhancing the competitiveness of the private sector, expanding opportunities for businesses, and enabling the sector to perform its role as a key partner in economic development.

The Chamber is also planning to establish a new headquarters in Madinat Al Irfan, in a strategic location that will enable it to keep pace with commercial developments and strengthen its activities and programmes in support of private-sector institutions.

Particular attention should be given to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as Omani entrepreneurs and professionals who are establishing their own businesses. The new headquarters is also expected to provide facilities for hosting trade delegations and numerous economic events.

In this regard, the Chamber could allocate part of its facilities to organise additional free training programmes and provide Omanis with the skills required to work in

Many small business owners and entrepreneurs continue to believe that the Chamber has not delivered enough of what they aspire to achieve in the world of commerce and industry.

private-sector institutions. Alongside these developments, the Chamber is also seeking to establish essential governance principles by introducing internal regulations, enhancing institutional performance, and strengthening transparency and oversight.

The Chamber is also pursuing a strategy aimed at supporting the economic development of Oman's governorates by activating its branches, responding to members' needs, connecting them with government institutions and investors, and enhancing investment opportunities in projects being established across the governorates.

These activities will undoubtedly help open wider channels for Omani businesses, create employment and investment opportunities for Omanis, facilitate access to international markets, and connect Omani business owners — both men and women — with their counterparts around the world.

Furthermore, the Chamber seeks to facilitate Omani entrepreneurs' access to overseas markets, provide them with consultations related to their businesses and activities, and enable them to participate in international trade exhibitions.

All these efforts are ultimately aimed at empowering the private sector and strengthening its role as an active partner in economic development, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

FED SNEEZES, BUT EMERGING MARKETS AREN'T CATCHING A COLD YET

JAMIE MCGEEVER

Emerging markets (EMs) are showing greater resilience to US monetary tightening, supported by stronger economic growth, improved fiscal fundamentals, and relatively high interest rates. Unlike in the past, many emerging economies may not need to raise rates in response to Federal Reserve tightening.

Historically, Fed rate hikes have pressured emerging economies to follow suit to protect their currencies and manage debt risks. However, elevated policy rates and bond yields have given many EM central banks greater flexibility to maintain or even cut interest rates.

According to State Street, the weighted average 10-year EM bond yield reached nearly 6.45% at the end of September, its highest level in around five years. Average inflation-adjusted yields were close to 3%, providing a buffer against inflation and currency pressures.

Meanwhile, fiscal concerns in the US, Japan, the Eurozone, and the UK have pushed developed-market bond yields to their highest levels in decades. Investors are increasingly favouring emerging-market assets. A JPMorgan survey found that 33% of investors preferred EM equities, compared with 26% favouring developed-market stocks. Bank of America's latest survey also showed that a net 34% of fund managers were overweight in EM equities.

However, the growing popularity of emerging-market stocks raises the risk of profit-taking, as the trade has become increasingly crowded. Emerging-market debt also remains risky, particularly for countries with substantial dollar-denominated liabilities.

The International Monetary Fund projects the average EM debt-to-GDP ratio to reach 77.2% this year and rise to 86.2% within five years. By comparison, advanced economies' debt ratio is forecast to increase from 108.2% to 114.8% over the same period.

Monetary policy conditions also vary considerably across emerging economies. Brazil and Mexico have been cutting rates amid relatively low core inflation, while South Africa and South Korea have raised rates to address currency weakness or inflationary pressures. Indonesia remains an example of the challenges individual economies can face.

Although higher US interest rates and market volatility continue to affect emerging economies, stronger fundamentals and elevated real yields have reduced their dependence on Federal Reserve policy.

Overall, emerging markets appear better positioned to withstand global financial tightening than in previous cycles. However, their resilience will depend on inflation trends, debt management, currency stability, and differences in domestic economic conditions. — Reuters

Business groups begin pre-Budget lobbying

THE bosses of Britain's largest industry groups have urged Chancellor John Healey to reduce the cost of business in order to boost growth across the UK economy. Several business chiefs had sent letters to the Treasury with demands for the government to relieve pressures on employers.

Correspondence landing on Whitehall desks came ahead of a deadline for businesses and lobby groups to engage with the Chancellor on the budget.

Most of the industry bodies in the so-called 'B5', which are five of the largest business groups in the country, have centred their proposals on reducing costs for firms, echoing Healey's promise to offer "breathing space" to businesses.

But in an unusual step, some representatives have asked the government to be clearer about the costs of some fiscal policy decisions. Industry chiefs and economists have tended to avoid commenting on costs when presenting proposals.

The British Chamber of Commerce became the most notable body to call for the replacement of the triple-lock pension, which has aggrieved top economists over its cost to public finances due to how spending on the state pension is projected to rise as a share of GDP. Burnham has committed to keep the triple lock pension, in line with the Labour Party manifesto in 2024.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is not in the B5, urged the government to be clearer about its fiscal rules amid fears that Healey was searching for "flexibility" within the stability rule, which states that day-to-day spending should match tax receipts by 2030.

Top accountants said that a clearer definition of the rule would reduce market surprises amid fears that further borrowing could lead to a jump in debt interest costs, which are already set to total about £137 billion in 2030.

One industry chief said that cutting welfare was the main way that the government could deliver on cost reduction for businesses and



ANDY JALIL
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The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

Most of the industry bodies in the so-called 'B5', which are five of the largest business groups in the country, have centred their proposals on reducing costs for firms echoing Healey's promise to offer "breathing space" to businesses.



Cutting welfare was the main way that the government could deliver on cost reduction for businesses and boost growth prospects.

boost growth prospects. The Office for Budget Responsibility currently believes the UK economy will expand by 1.1 per cent this year and 1.6 per cent in 2027, though more recent analysis from economists in London's financial district is more pessimistic.

Business campaigners at the Institute of Directors, one of Britain's oldest industry bodies, meanwhile said the government should consider long-term effects to government revenue when considering changes to taxes on investment and capital.

The warning has come against wide expectations that the chancellor could target capital gains tax in order to raise revenue.

Meanwhile, the chief executive of audit giant Baker Tilly has warned the upcoming Budget will likely carry a heavy "pain cost" for UK businesses bracing for tax changes.

"It's going to be a ride, isn't it", Francesca Lagerberg, Baker Tilly International's chief executive said.

"The mood music is that it won't

be a fun day out. I think that is probably where everybody is sitting at the moment".

Rumoured tax changes for businesses in the upcoming Budget next week include business rates reform, sector-specific levies, and the reduction to the tax gap.

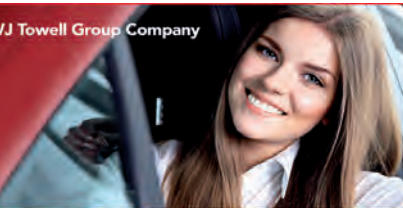
Lagerberg said there were "plenty of businesses who would say that their business would be massively hampered by tax changes". She added: "Fundamentally, you come back to the fact there are some big-ticket things that probably need to change to enable us to do the things which everybody would like to have happen, but they all come with a pain cost".

According to the firm's own survey earlier this year, UK businesses are the "most likely" to move operations to other markets.

"Everybody hates uncertainty, and you do have people who just stop doing stuff and wait until they know what the rules are going to be and that's never very good for business".

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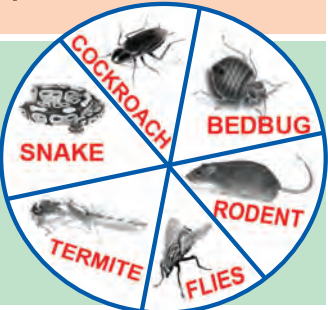
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ART/LIFE



Omani women, the jewels of the canvas

> 20

BOX OFFICE



US actor Noah Centineo and his dad movie producer Greg Centineo attend the premiere of Paramount Pictures' "Street Fighter". — AFP

Paramount's action film "Street Fighter" topped the North American box office with a \$31 million debut this weekend, while a documentary about tech fraudster Elizabeth Holmes stunned Hollywood with a \$15 million opening, industry estimates showed on Sunday.

Based on the Capcom video game, "Street Fighter" follows super-powered martial artists competing in a global tournament who uncover a sinister conspiracy.

Andrew Koji, Noah Centineo and Callina Liang star in the third feature-length adaptation of the game, with Jason Momoa and rapper Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson also appearing.

The film is the first adaptation since production company Legendary acquired the movie rights in 2023. Its opening contrasted with the documentary's strong showing on fewer than 1,000 screens across the United States and Canada.

Analyst David A Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research called the debut a "good opening" but said "critics' reviews are weak and the audience score is soft".

He said the film should recover its costs through ancillary markets while adding value to the franchise across film, television and games.

In second place, A24's three-hour documentary "You Can See Everything", co-directed by comedian Nathan Fielder and Lance Oppenheim, earned \$15 million on just 855 screens, according to Exhibitor Relations.

The film follows Holmes at home in 2023 during the month before she began an 11-year prison sentence for defrauding investors in her medical testing company Theranos.

The scandal previously inspired a book, podcasts and the miniseries "The Dropout", starring Amanda Seyfried.

Fielder places himself inside the action, continuing his approach of blurring documentary, social experiment and prank show.

A trailer showing Holmes asking Fielder, "Why would I deceive you?" sparked online memes, while a surprise Telluride Film Festival debut drew rave reviews. Deadline described its opening as the second-best documentary debut ever, behind 2004's "Fahrenheit 9/11".

Universal and Blumhouse's "Other Mommy" placed third with \$8.4 million after leading last weekend with a \$27.8 million debut. Jessica Chastain plays a sinister entity resembling the mother of the child it terrorises.

Fourth was 20th Century's "Whalefall", which opened with \$8 million. The survival thriller follows a scuba diver swallowed by a whale, with an hour of oxygen to escape.

"At a cost of \$60 million, the film won't break even, even with relatively good business overseas", Gross said.

Focus Features' adaptation of Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility", directed by Georgia Oakley and starring Daisy Edgar-Jones and George MacKay, placed fifth with \$7.5 million. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



CULTURE

Matryoshka dolls representing different countries hang as decorations at the All-Russian "Native Toy" toy competition in Moscow, Russia. — Reuters



HARVEST

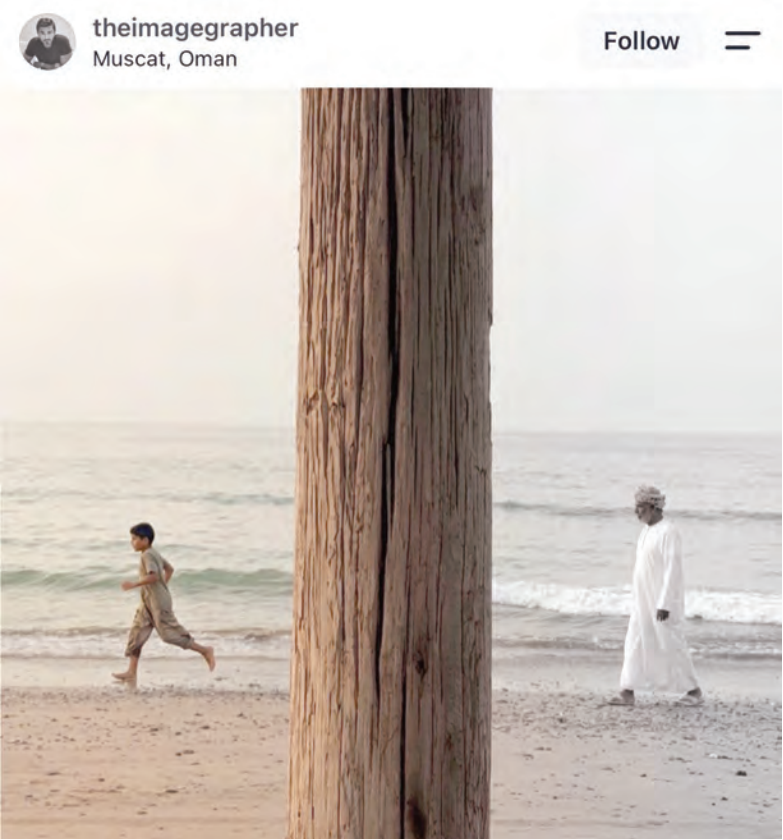
A worker inspects freshly harvested cherries in a farm near Rustenburg, South Africa. — Reuters



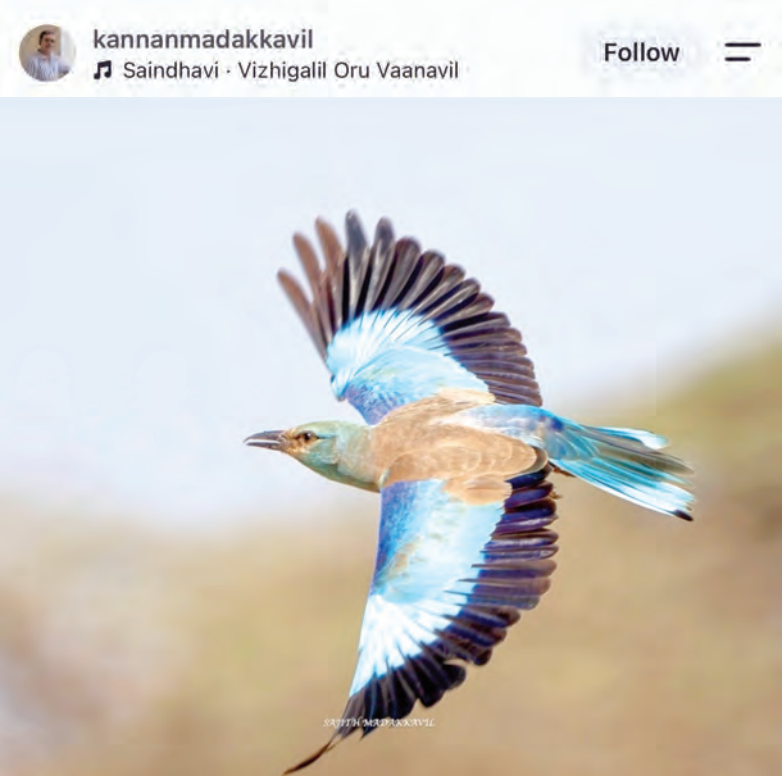
ART

Children run through a sculpture titled 'Ex-Halo' by artist James Tapscott during the 'Sculpture by the Sea' outdoor exhibition in Bondi, Sydney, Australia. — Reuters

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Stages of life



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CHRISTINA APPLGATE SAYS SHE WAS MISDIAGNOSED WITH MS



Christina Applegate, seen in 2019, said she was 'back to square one' after being misdiagnosed with MS. — AFP

Actor Christina Applegate said on Tuesday she had been misdiagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which doctors had attributed her symptoms to since 2021. The actor, who gained fame in the sitcom “Married... with Children”, said she continues to suffer debilitating symptoms and that learning of her misdiagnosis has left her “back at square one”. Applegate discussed the ordeal on her podcast, “MeSsy”, with co-host Jamie-Lynn Sigler, who has lived with MS for more than two decades. “You don’t get misdiagnosed

and then all of a sudden I’m better”, she said. Sigler had hosted the podcast solo for months while Applegate dealt with health issues, including a lengthy hospital stay. Applegate previously described difficulty walking, balance problems, a lack of coordination and numbness in her extremities. She said the diagnosis had provided clarity and a path forward, whereas having no explanation for her symptoms left her searching again. “It’s hard to say, but she came into my room and she said, ‘Congratulations, you don’t have MS’”, Applegate said. “I was like, not happy at all. Everybody else was so happy”. “I still have to use wheelchairs when I go to the doctor’s office. I can’t walk from the car to the room. I’m still in this”. MS is an autoimmune neurodegenerative disease affecting nearly three million people worldwide. It can be difficult to diagnose, leading to misdiagnoses in a fifth of cases, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Applegate said the diagnosis had brought no relief from the symptoms that affect her. — AFP



Oman supports field research and efforts to strengthen the response to whale entanglements and strandings.

REGIONAL PROMISE TO PROTECT ARABIAN SEA’S HUMPBCKS

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

A plan to coordinate protection of the endangered Arabian Sea humpback whale has been adopted at the 70th meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in Hobart, Australia. For a population that moves through the waters of several countries, the plan marks a step towards managing its future as a shared regional responsibility. The Arabian Sea population is believed to number fewer than 100 whales. Unlike other humpback populations, these whales live year-round in the same waters rather than migrating between tropical breeding grounds and polar or temperate feeding grounds. Their small population size and isolation leave them especially vulnerable to changes in their marine environment. The IWC meeting, held from September 27 to October 2, 2026, marked the final stage in adopting the regional plan, which was endorsed earlier this year by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). Called a Conservation Management Plan, the joint IWC-CMS framework is intended to help range states coordinate research, monitoring and conservation. This regional approach matters because the whales move between countries’ national waters, while many of the pressures they face, including shipping activity and entanglement in fishing gear, cross maritime borders. The plan identifies four priorities: research and monitoring; reducing threats such as vessel strikes, fisheries entanglement and habitat degradation; regional coordination; and awareness and capacity building through training, public engagement and citizen science. “The Arabian Sea subpopulation of humpback whales has been assessed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species since 2008”, said Gianna Minton of the Arabian Sea Whale Network. “The adoption of the Conservation Management Plan marks a milestone that fulfils repeated recommendations by the IUCN, CMS and IWC since that time. The Plan should facilitate much-needed collaboration between government, industry, research and



Arabian Sea humpback whales remain in the region year-round, unlike other humpback populations that migrate between breeding and feeding grounds.

conservation stakeholders to protect this population”. The IWC has identified potential threats from coastal development, offshore hydrocarbon exploration, fishing gear and increased shipping traffic in known whale habitat. A coordinated plan can help countries and other stakeholders share information and align their responses. Oman has a direct connection to this work. The IWC identifies Oman among the countries that have consistently supported research and action for the population. Muscat hosted a regional workshop in 2025 to advance the plan’s development. The Environment Authority works with government agencies, shipping companies and civil society groups, including the Environment Society of Oman, on issues such as reducing ship-strike risks and addressing abandoned fishing gear. It also supports field research and efforts to build national capacity to respond to whale entanglements and strandings. “Oman has long recognised its responsibility towards the Arabian Sea humpback whale, a population that depends on our waters throughout the year”, said Ahmed al Shukaili, Director of the Marine Environment Department at the Environment Authority. “The adoption of this plan gives us a clear framework to strengthen research, reduce risks such as ship strikes and abandoned fishing gear,

and work hand in hand with our regional partners”. “What began over 20 years ago as an initiative led by a voluntary group has grown into a comprehensive research programme, gathering the scientific data and evidence that have underpinned our advocacy over many years”, said Suaad Al Harthi of the Environment Society of Oman. “To see that work recognised through formal adoption of the plan is a moment of real significance. We now look forward to the next phase, working closely with local and regional stakeholders to turn the plan into effective conservation action”. Formed in 2015 to exchange information and raise awareness across the whales’ range, the Arabian Sea Whale Network’s members will continue working together to support implementation. One of the plan’s first tasks will be to secure the funding and support needed to begin its recommended actions. The plan provides a framework for cooperation, but its impact will depend on putting it into practice. Sustained research can help identify where whales are most exposed to risk, while regional coordination can turn that knowledge into measures suited to shared waters. For a population that occupies this connected marine region, lasting protection will depend on countries maintaining their cooperation.

FEATURES

Seventy works by 65 Omani women artists fill “Jawahir Fanniya”, an exhibition marking Omani Women’s Day at the Omani Society for Fine Arts. Through painting, digital design, photography and more, the artists present the Omani woman herself as the true jewel of her heritage



The exhibition spans painting, photography, sculpture, ceramics and digital design.



‘Jawahir Fanniya’ brings together 70 works by 65 Omani women artists.



OMANI WOMEN, THE JEWELS OF THE CANVAS



Generations of Omani women artists share their interpretations of a common heritage.

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI

TWO Omani women stand side by side, adorned in gold jewellery, with a fort, mountains and palm trees behind them. Yet for artist Mai al Wahaibi, the real treasure in her painting is not the gold. “The jewels in the painting are not the gold ornaments alone, but the Omani woman herself”, she said. Her painting is one of 70 works by 65 Omani women artists at “Jawahir Fanniya” (Artistic Jewels), which, according to Awatif al Fazari, Director of the Studio Section at the Omani Society for Fine Arts, all speak about Omani women through silver and traditional Omani jewellery, by artists ranging from pioneers of fine art to newer names.

Organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by the society, to mark Omani Women’s Day, the exhibition opened on Tuesday at the society’s premises in Ghala under the auspices of Halima al Zarai, Chairperson of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, and runs until October 29.

WOMEN ON CANVAS
At the heart of the exhibition is the idea of Omani jewels as a symbol that goes beyond jewellery and adornment, expressing the beauty of Omani women, their pride in

their identity and a strength rooted in history. For Mai al Wahaibi, that idea is personal. “She is a jewel in her worth, her authenticity and her identity”, she said of the Omani woman.

Through her painting, she wanted to show how Omani women carry their heritage with them in a modern spirit, describing the Omani woman as “a jewel whose shine grows brighter whenever she expresses her identity”.

Eng Noora al Balushi, a fine artist and member of the Omani Society for Fine Arts, is one of the exhibition’s guests of honour this year, chosen in recognition of their earlier achievements.

Her realistic painting focuses on the dress that sets Omani women apart, its colours and patterns captured as they are.

“For me, Omani dress is not just clothing, but an identity women carry from one generation to the next”, she said.

An incense burner also appears in her painting, as a symbol of the Omani home, its hospitality and the warmth women create in their homes and communities. “Our authenticity is the most beautiful thing we have”, she said.

JEWELS IN MOTION
For some artists, the jewels are not only painted but designed. Loura al Siyabi,

artist, fine jewellery designer and 3D CAD specialist, Ultramarine Jewellery, is taking part with a 3D digital design of a bracelet, displayed on screen, inspired by traditional Omani jewellery and reworked with a contemporary vision.

At its centre is a rotating ring that adds movement and interaction, making the piece more than an ornament.

“Its shape is inspired by heritage, while its movement symbolises the progress of Omani women and their ability to keep pace with the times while staying proud of their roots”, she said.

MANY FORMS, ONE STORY
Beyond painting and digital design, the exhibition brings together photography, calligraphic compositions, sculpture and ceramics. Photography captures features of identity and beauty, while calligraphic compositions blend modernity and authenticity in innovative visual forms.

Sculpture and ceramics, meanwhile, reflect the range of materials Omani women artists work with.

The exhibition aims to showcase young female talent alongside experienced Omani artists, and to strengthen women’s presence in the creative industries.

“A woman’s story is not limited to an exhibition or a single day”, Al Fazari said. “She is the Omani woman, and she is half of society”.