

# MUSCAT DAILY

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2024  
OMAN  
AMANA  
MOST TRUSTED  
BRAND AWARDS

Special  
supplement  
with today's  
edition

13 to 16



Oman ranked the best  
sunny winter destination

## Oman welcomes Saudi role in Russia-US talks

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Oman has welcomed Saudi Arabia hosting talks in Riyadh between Russia and the United States on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, Oman affirmed its support for the efforts aimed to promote dialogue and diplomacy to reach political solutions that achieve peace, security and stability.

The US and Russia agreed in Riyadh on Tuesday to press ahead with efforts to end the war in Ukraine, a US official said, as Kyiv and its European allies watched anxiously from the sidelines.

The discussions are seen as a significant step towards preparing a potential meeting between the Russian and US presidents, though there have been concerns over the absence of Ukrainian and European Union representatives in the dialogue.

See also [Page 07](#)

# Oman ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in global entrepreneurship index

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The sultanate has secured eighth place in the 2024/2025 report of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) improving from 11th last year. Oman's score increased to 5.7 from 5.4 in 2023, reflecting steady progress in fostering a strong entrepreneurial environment.

Oman's entrepreneurial ranking has climbed rapidly in recent years, from 38 in 2022 to 11 in 2023, highlighting the impact of government policies and private sector partnerships in supporting startups and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The National Entrepreneurial Context Index score, which measures quality of the entrepreneurial environment, has steadily improved from 4.1 in 2021 to 5.7 in 2024.

For the first time, all 13 of Oman's framework conditions - which assess factors such as market access, infrastructure and education - are rated as sufficient or better.

Ten of these conditions improved over 2023, with the biggest increase in Ease of Entry: Market Dynamics, which rose from 5.8 to 6.8. However, Physical Infrastructure and Social and Cultural Norms received slightly lower ratings compared to last year.

Oman ranked fourth among 56 economies for Entrepreneurial Education in Schools, fifth for Market Dynamics and sixth for En-



## OMAN RANKINGS

4<sup>th</sup>

Entrepreneurial  
Education  
at School

5<sup>th</sup>

Ease of Entry:  
Market  
Dynamics

6<sup>th</sup>

Entrepreneurial  
Education  
Post-School

trepreneurial Education Post-School. However, it placed 32nd for Physical Infrastructure. Access to entrepreneurial resources for women, while still relatively low at 4.3, has improved from 2.8 last year. Meanwhile, sustainability initiatives among new businesses received a 6.1 rating, though slightly down from 6.6 in 2023.

Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Develop-

ment (ASMED) has played a key role in advancing Oman's entrepreneurial ecosystem. In collaboration with public and private sector partners, ASMED has implemented legislative reforms, investment incentives, and expanded financing options through Development Bank and Oman Future Fund, which have invested in emerging businesses.

Oman has also prioritised en-

trepreneurial education and skills development by including specialised training programmes in schools and universities. Business incubators, accelerators and enhanced digital infrastructure have further strengthened the ecosystem.

According to Halima bint Rashid al Zaria, Chairperson of ASMED, the ranking underscores Oman's commitment to creating a supportive environment for startups and SMEs. "This achievement is a result of strong collaboration between the public and private sectors and the effectiveness of policies designed to foster innovation," she said.

She added that entrepreneurship remains a key pillar of Oman's economic diversification strategy.

## India eyes Oman for oil storage option



Our Correspondent  
Muscat

India is considering Oman and other Middle Eastern countries as potential options for strategic oil storage while also expanding its reserves domestically. This move aims to accelerate India's storage capacity expansion amid geopolitical tensions, according to the chief executive officer of Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPR).

India's efforts to increase storage capacity both at home and abroad will bring the country closer to meeting the strategic oil storage requirements set by International Energy Agency (IEA) in the medium to long term, L R Jain, CEO of ISPR, said in an interview with *S&P Global Commodity Insights* during India Energy Week in New Delhi last week.

"Oman is one of the places we are considering. We could also look at other Middle Eastern destinations in the future to hold oil at SPRs (strategic petroleum reserves), although nothing concrete has been fi-

nished," Jain said.

According to *S&P Global Commodity Insights*, India's current strategic petroleum reserves cover approximately 9.5 days of total net oil imports. Additionally, state-run oil companies maintain storage facilities for crude oil and petroleum products equivalent to 64.5 days of total net imports. This brings the country's overall storage capacity for crude oil and petroleum products to 74 days of total net imports.

However, IEA member countries are required to maintain oil stock levels equivalent to at least 90 days of their net imports.

"Our expansion plans, both domestically and internationally, will help strengthen the SPR network. Our strategic vision is to significantly increase our SPR capacity beyond its current level," Jain told *S&P Global Commodity Insights*.

India aims to triple its strategic petroleum reserve capacity over the next decade, increasing it from the current level of under 5.5mn metric tonnes to more than 15mn metric tonnes within the next ten years, Jain added.

# 'GCC turns oil crisis into opportunity'

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

A sharp decline in oil prices in recent years led to budget deficits and impacted credit ratings of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. However, instead of seeing this as a setback, the region used the crisis as an opportunity to accelerate economic diversification efforts, according to H H Sayyid Dr Adham bin Turki al Said, Chairman of Economic Committee at Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

Speaking at a symposium titled 'Economic Diversification in the Gulf States: Measurement Indicators and the Role of the



Private Sector', H H Sayyid Dr Adham emphasised the importance of reducing dependence on oil revenues. "Oman Vision 2040 has identified key sectors - industry, logistics, food security and tourism - as the foundation

*Oman Vision 2040 has identified key sectors - industry, logistics, food security and tourism - as the foundation for economic diversification*

H H SAYYID DR ADHAM AL SAID

for economic diversification," he said.

He added that other sectors, such as healthcare, education and information technology, also hold potential for growth.

Organised by the Economic

Committee of OCCI in collaboration with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme Gulf States and Smart Portal for Investment and Consulting, the symposium focused on assessing economic diversification efforts across the region. Experts from Oman, Germany, the GCC and other countries participated in discussions to evaluate progress and identify challenges.

H H Dr Adham stressed that the private sector plays a critical role in driving diversification. "The sector finds many promising opportunities in market trends. This symposium aims to analyse the current landscape and challenges while introducing mechanisms to enhance eco-

nomic diversification efforts across the Gulf," he said.

He highlighted the role of the Economic Diversification Platform in raising awareness and assisting policymakers in formulating strategies to support long-term economic growth.

The second day of the symposium featured round-table discussions with specialists from the GCC, Germany, European countries and the United States. The sessions explored key economic variables influencing growth in the Gulf, methods for measuring economic diversification, and potential areas for improvement in the composite index used to track progress.

# Jan 20 to be celebrated as Gulf Tourism Day as part of regional strategy

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The ninth meeting of Ministers Responsible for Tourism in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, held on February 17 in Kuwait, resulted in several key decisions aimed at enhancing tourism cooperation within the region. Chief among these is designation of January 20 as Gulf Tourism Day to be celebrated annually.

Represented by Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman played an active role in the discussions with H E Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, highlight-

ing the importance of deeper integration between GCC nations to consolidate their position as prominent tourist and cultural destinations.

The Gulf Tourism Day initiative was proposed by Gulf Statistical Centre with the aim of raising awareness on the significance of tourism and its role in economic and social development across the region.

The meeting also saw the Gulf Tourism Strategy Committee being tasked with developing a framework for joint promotional packages and creating mechanisms to assess their effectiveness. Additionally, it was decided to hold promotional



seminars for Gulf tourism at key regional and international tourism exhibitions. The committee will also work on a promotional documentary film to

showcase the tourism potential of GCC countries.

Jasem al Budaiwi, Secretary-General of GCC, shared encouraging statistics showing the

number of international tourists visiting GCC countries reached 68.1mn in 2023, with tourism revenues amounting to US\$110.4bn for the same year.

These figures represent a growth of 42.8% in tourist arrivals and 28.2% increase in revenue compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019. The GCC now holds a 5.2% share of global tourism arrivals and 7.2% of international tourism revenues, confirming its status as a growing global tourism hub.

The tourism sector's contribution to the GCC's GDP reached US\$223.4bn, with a notable annual growth rate of 29.4% from 2022 to 2023. In terms of em-

ployment, the sector added 1.5mn jobs in 2023, representing a 17% growth compared to 2020.

In a move to enhance regional collaboration, the meeting also approved the creation of an annual training workshop for tourism statistics, organised by Gulf Statistical Centre, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise across GCC countries.

Human resource development in the tourism sector was another focal point of the discussions. A unified vision for a tourism guide licence was approved, with plans to develop standardised curricula for tourist guides to improve pro-

fessionalism in the region's tourism services.

The meeting also examined ways to strengthen external tourism partnerships, aiming to enhance the GCC's position as a global tourism leader. In line with this, a workshop titled 'A Unified Vision for Sustainable Tourism: The Role of Gulf Countries in Shaping the Future of Global Tourism' will be organised during World Economic Forum in Davos.

Additionally, a periodic tourism conference will be held in collaboration with the private sector across GCC countries to further boost tourism development in the region.

MUSCAT DAILY

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Oman ranked the best sunny  
winter destination for 2025

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The sultanate has been recognised as the first among 29 of the best sunny winter destinations for 2025 by the British newspaper *The Times*.

The top ranking is attributed to Oman's pleasant winter temperatures, averaging around 23°C, along with its diverse natural beauty, rich history and warm hospitality.

The newspaper described Oman as an ideal destination for enjoying the winter sun and highlighted a variety of tourist activities. Adventure seekers can explore Musandam, known for its dramatic fjords and crystal-clear waters, and enjoy diving excursions. Visitors can also experience camel rides across the rolling dunes of Sharqiyah Sands and stay in desert camps that offer an authentic glimpse into Omani culture.

Jabal Akhdar in Dakhliyah was also mentioned for its serene atmosphere, lush valleys and breathtaking mountain views. With its cool, refreshing air, the



*"The country's unique mix of Arabian Peninsula landscapes and ancient traditions makes it an unforgettable destination for travellers seeking both cultural immersion and natural beauty"*

mountainous region provides a striking contrast to the surrounding desert landscapes, making it a perfect retreat for relaxation.

In Muscat, tourists can immerse themselves in Oman's rich cultural heritage by visiting

grand mosques, bustling traditional markets filled with the scent of frankincense, and scenic coastlines dotted with luxury resorts at competitive prices.

The newspaper said Oman offers a well-rounded tourism ex-

perience, blending adventure, history and relaxation under the warm winter sun. 'The country's unique mix of Arabian Peninsula landscapes and ancient traditions makes it an unforgettable destination for travellers seeking both cultural immersion and natural beauty.'

This recognition further consolidates Oman's position on the global tourism map, reaffirming its appeal as a preferred winter destination for tourists worldwide.

Dakhliyah inks pacts for tourism,  
infrastructure worth RO7.7mn

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Dakhliyah Governor's Office signed several agreements on Tuesday for development and service projects of total investment exceeding RO7.7mn. The agreements include key infrastructure initiatives, tourism development and the use of artificial intelligence for project monitoring.

Sheikh Hilal bin Saeed al Hajri, Governor of Dakhliyah, said the projects reflect the governorate's vision to "improve the quality of life, strengthen the local economy and fulfill citizens' needs".

The agreements cover major road projects, including 13km of internal roads in Samail, the Al Najid-Wadi Andam road paving project, and additional roadworks in Izki (20.5km), Adam (16.6km) and Bahla (11km).

Tourism development projects include upgrades to Jabreen Castle's entrance in Bahla, which will increase parking space and restore the entrance to match the fort's architectural style. Improvements will also be made to the road leading to the Salut Archaeological Visitor Centre, enhancing access while preserving



its historical character.

In partnership with Petroleum Development Oman, a 1km long health track of 5m width will be developed in Izki featuring dedicated walking and cycling paths.

A memorandum of understanding was also signed to use artificial intelligence and drone technology to monitor project

completion rates and ensure adherence to timelines. This initiative aims to improve efficiency and accuracy in project tracking.

The agreements align with Dakhliyah's broader strategy to enhance infrastructure, promote tourism and integrate advanced technologies into development planning.



GCC Beach Games to kick  
off on April 5 in Muscat

Muscat - The sultanate is set to host the 3rd GCC Beach Games from April 5 to April 11.

Organised by Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, 'Muscat 2025' will bring together athletes from the six GCC nations - Oman, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain - to compete in eight beach sports.

Matches will be held at various venues across Muscat. Beach football and beach handball will take place on sand courts in Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex, while beach volleyball, open-water swimming and beach athletics will be hosted along Muscat's coastline. Sailing will be held offshore, tent pegging at Al Rahba Farm and paragliding at Al Hail Beach.

Taha bin Sulaiman al Kishry, Secretary-General of OOC, emphasised Oman's strategic location and extensive coastline as key factors in its ability to host major beach sports events. He highlighted the tournament's role

in strengthening regional sports collaboration and improving the level of beach sports in the Gulf.

Beyond sportsmanship, the event is expected to boost sports tourism, showcasing Oman's natural landscapes and modern facilities.

National teams are undergoing rigorous training, both domestically and internationally, to ensure strong performances.

The eight selected sports align with the region's growing interest in beach competitions. The organising committee has prioritised infrastructure readiness, ensuring that all venues meet international standards for an optimal competitive experience.

A dynamic promotional campaign is in place, featuring a newly unveiled tournament logo that embodies the spirit of competition and Omani heritage. Extensive media coverage is planned, including live broadcasts and interactive digital content, to engage audiences locally and internationally.

State Council  
reviews draft  
real estate law

Muscat - The Economic and Financial Committee of State Council discussed the draft Real Estate Regulation Law and Majlis A'Shura's views on it on Tuesday.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Dhafir bin Awadh al Shanfari, Chairman of the Economic and Financial Committee of State Council.

The proposed law aims to unify real estate sector legislation, ensuring legal coherence and clear provisions governing sector activities, relationships and rights. It also seeks to modernise the existing law to align with market developments, enhance investment attractiveness and streamline licensing mechanisms for real estate professionals.

In another session, the Education and Research Committee, led by Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Sarmi, hosted Dr Ahmed bin Khalfan al Rawahy, President of University of Nizwa, along with university specialists. The discussion focused on a proposed study titled 'Enhancing the Quality of Academic Achievement and Mastering Competencies and Skills in School Education in the Sultanate of Oman: An Analytical and Legislative Study'.

The committee examined the university's current strategies for improving teacher training programmes, integrating educational qualification frameworks and enhancing academic achievement in schools.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

| Tender Ref. | Description                                                                                                                                               | Last Date For Collection Of Tender Document | Closing Time/ Day/ Date                | Eligibility                                                                | Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)                                                                                          |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2025/576    | make maintenance for building 1 and 2 for administration in Ibra Hospital of the General Directorate of Health Services in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate | Before 10 am on Thursday 06 / March /2025   | Before 10 am on Sunday 30/ March /2025 | Specialized companies registered with the Tender Board with fourth grades. | 10 riyals for small and medium enterprises<br>25 riyals for local companies<br>25 riyals for international companies |

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

Any Clarification, you may contact via

Telephone: 24402200

Email id: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

MARKET WATCH

|        |           |
|--------|-----------|
| MSX30  | 4,468.58  |
| Sensex | 75,967.39 |

FOREX RATES  
(RO1 equals)

|             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| India       | 225.82 |
| Pakistan    | 727.35 |
| Bangladesh  | 315.75 |
| Philippines | 151.24 |
| Sri Lanka   | 769.64 |

\*Rates as on February 18

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

UAE's EDGE Group records \$5bn revenue in 2024

The UAE-based EDGE Group is expanding its global presence, backed by sustainable investment strategies, reinforcing its commitment to supporting the national economy and strengthening the UAE's position in the vital defence sector.

Hamad al Marar, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of EDGE Group, said EDGE has invested heavily in diversifying its product portfolio over the past five years and venturing into systems supply. The company recently announced several export deals, generating annual revenues of approximately \$5bn, with over 20% coming from exports.

Marar said EDGE operates in 91 countries, with a focus on expanding cooperation in Africa, followed by Latin America and Asia. He noted that military deals typically take one to three years to finalise and are progressing as planned.



# Oman LNG signs gas supply deal with Swiss energy firm

Our Correspondent

Muscat

Oman LNG has signed a long-term gas supply agreement with Mercuria Energy Group, a Switzerland-based global leader in independent energy and commodity trading.

The 10-year natural gas sale and purchase agreement will see the supply of 800,000 metric tonnes of LNG per year, with deliveries set to begin in April, according to a report from the Oman News Agency.

This agreement highlights

*Oman LNG's natural gas sale and purchase agreement with Mercuria Energy Group will see the supply of 800,000 metric tonnes of LNG per year, with deliveries set to begin in April*

Oman LNG's commitment to providing reliable and sustainable energy to global markets while ensuring the efficient and consistent supply of LNG.

Mercuria Energy Group is a global commodity trading com-

pany, involved in a range of energy markets, including crude oil, refined petroleum products, natural gas, bioenergy, base metals, and agricultural products.

Hamed bin Mohammed al Naamany, Chief Executive Officer of Oman LNG, explained that the agreement will help drive the company's expansion by fostering a partnership with Mercuria Energy Group and providing greater market access. He reaffirmed Oman LNG's dedication to offering energy solutions that bolster global energy security and promote sustainability.

Marco Dunand, Chief Executive Officer of Mercuria Energy Group, said, "This partnership aligns with Mercuria's strategy to expand its portfolio in the LNG sector and meet growing market demands."

# GCC GREs' ratings benefit from govt support, S&P says



Our Correspondent

Muscat

Global ratings agency S&P Global expects that GCC governments will maintain a controlling stake in most strategic government-related entities (GREs) and continue to provide extraordinary support if necessary.

GREs play a crucial role in the GCC sovereigns' diversification away from the hydrocarbon sector.

'We view GCC governments as generally supportive of their GREs in times of financial stress, based on their track records,' S&P Global Ratings said in a report released on Monday.

The ratings agency expects government and public investments to spur non-oil growth in the Gulf region to an average of more than 3% over the 2025-2028 period. To finance the required investments, S&P expects GCC GREs to raise more debt through domestic and regional banks, international capital markets, and listings on regional equity markets.

'We assess nationally strategic and monopolistic GREs as highly likely to receive extraordinary support from the government if they focus on critical infrastructure or public services, and if they are an extension of, or tightly controlled by, the government,' S&P said.

As of January 2025, S&P expects an almost certain likelihood of support for five of the 22 rated GREs in the GCC countries, leading to an equalisation of their ratings with the respective sovereign ratings.

'Due to GCC governments' economic diversification plans and investment needs, we expect GCC GREs to raise more debt through domestic and regional banks, international capital markets, and listings on regional equity markets,' the ratings agency said.

'Currently, we do not consider that GCC sovereigns' exposure to contingent liabilities is material for any GCC sovereign rating, given the size of their fiscal buffers (both total and as a proportion of GDP),' it added.

# OPEC+ mulls over delaying supply increase amid market fragility

London, UK - The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, collectively known as OPEC+, is contemplating a delay in its planned monthly supply increases, which were set to begin in April.

This decision is under consideration despite the request from US President Donald Trump for lower oil prices, Bloomberg News reported.

The global oil markets are currently too unstable to restart production, according to an anonymous delegate involved in the discussions. The group has yet to make a final decision and there is a lack of consensus on the way forward.

The final decision is expected to be reached in the upcoming weeks.

If the OPEC+ group decides



to delay the modest increase of 120,000 barrels per day, it will be the fourth time that the alliance, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, has postponed plans to resume production. The production has been on hold since 2022.

The group's current goal is to restore a total of 2.2mn barrels per day in monthly increments by the end of 2026.

Last week, OPEC's Vienna-based secretariat issued a report highlighting the risks posed by US trade tariffs.

The report stated that these measures have introduced more uncertainty into the markets. This uncertainty could potentially lead to supply-demand imbalances that do not reflect market fundamentals, resulting in increased market volatility.

(Source: Investing.com)

# Oman launches platform to track green hydrogen ecosystem readiness progress

Muscat - Oman's Green Hydrogen Ecosystem Readiness Steering Committee, chaired by H E Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Chairman of Hydrom, has launched a dedicated digital gH2 Ecosystem Readiness monitoring platform called 'gHad'.

The Hydrom-led initiative is designed to track sector-wide progress, enhance collaboration, and provide real-time data-driven insights on key initiatives supporting the development of Oman's green hydrogen strategy.

The platform builds on the outcomes of the Ecosystem Readiness Lab conducted in September 2024, which identified 26 key initiatives designed to deliver Oman's 2030 green hydrogen production targets. By digitalising sector-wide coordination, 'gHad' will move Oman's hydrogen strategy from planning to structured execution across five key focus areas including permits, contractors, workforce development, logistics, and local content.

Eng Abdulaziz Said al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom said, "Ensuring the



H E Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi launched the digital gH2 Ecosystem Readiness monitoring platform 'gHad'

readiness of all supporting sectors is critical to delivering Oman's green hydrogen ambitions. 'gHad' is an integral tool to our joint success, providing us with a one-stop-shop to align efforts, address challenges early, and create the right conditions for large-scale project execution. With clear visibility on sector progress, we can support decision-making, strengthen investor

confidence, and position Oman as a competitive player in the global hydrogen economy."

'gHad' will serve as a centralised system, integrating key public and private sector stakeholders across multiple sectors, including government entities, infrastructure providers, workforce development institutions, local industries, and regulatory bodies. As Oman progresses to-

wards becoming a global green hydrogen hub, the platform will play a pivotal role in enhancing governance, increasing transparency, and driving data-backed decision making.

Hydrom serves as the national orchestrator of Oman's Green Hydrogen Strategy execution and Green Hydrogen economy development. Hydrom is also responsible for the structuring of

*gHad platform is an integral tool to our joint success, providing us with a one-stop-shop to align efforts, address challenges early and create the right conditions for large-scale project execution*

ENG ABDULAZIZ AL SHIDHANI

large-scale green hydrogen projects, managing the allocation process to developers, and facilitating the development of shared infrastructure and connected ecosystem industries and hubs.

Through its role, Hydrom is advancing In-country Value by generating employment, expanding educational resources and developing localised supply chains and industry-adjacent opportunities across the value chain.

# Goldman raises gold price forecast amid surge in central bank demand

London, UK - Goldman Sachs hiked its gold price forecast to \$3,100 per troy ounce (toz) by the end of 2025, up from the previous \$2,890 per toz.

The upward revision comes amid expectations of continued robust demand from central banks, particularly in light of a strong December reading from Goldman's central bank nowcast, which showed a purchase of 108 tonnes of gold, far ex-

ceeding the pre-2022 average of 17 tonnes. China led these purchases with 45 tonnes added to its reserves.

In turn, the Wall Street bank has adjusted its monthly central bank demand assumption to 50 tonnes, an increase from the prior estimate of 41 tonnes. This anticipated structural rise in central bank gold acquisitions is projected to contribute a 9% increase to the gold price by De-



cember 2025.

"This, combined with a gradual boost to ETF holdings as our economists expect the Fed to cut twice this year, should outweigh the drag from normalizing positioning, assuming uncertainty diminishes," Goldman strategists Lina Thomas and Daan Struyven said in a note.

Goldman Sachs sees the overall risks to its gold price forecast as skewed to the upside.

Persistent policy uncertainty, including ongoing tariff concerns, could propel gold prices to as high as \$3,300 per troy ounce by the end of the year, the bank notes.

Moreover, should central bank demand exceed expectations, reaching an average of 70 tonnes per month, gold prices might climb to \$3,200 per toz by the end of 2025.

On the other hand, Goldman

would expect the gold price to reach \$3,060 by the end of 2025.

Goldman strategists maintain their 'Go for Gold' recommendation, highlighting gold's value as a hedge despite potential short-term downside risks. They see possible upside from rising trade tensions, financial risks, or concerns about US fiscal sustainability.

(Source: Investing.com)

# Oman Sail Winter Cup reveals new generation of future champions

The Oman Sail Winter Cup, held over four days from February 11-14 at Barceló Mussanah Resort, put 50 of the best young sailors from across Oman Sail's three sailing schools to the test in Optimist, ILCA 4, ILCA 6 and ILCA 7 classes.

Prizes were awarded for the top three in each category, with the best performing sailors in line to represent the nation in upcoming regattas.

Khamis al Mashaikhi won four out of five races to seal victory in the Optimist event ahead of Hood Saad al Nofli, who picked up a victory and three second placed finishes. Mohammed Ziyad al Qasimi finished third after finishing on the podium three times during the competition. All three sailors continued their fine form on the water after excellent performances at the recent Admiral's Cup in Pattaya, Thailand.

Mohammed Ziyad al Qasimi also finished as the top Junior, leading Khaled Yahya al Sarihi - fourth overall - and Mohammed Suleiman al Balushi, who also finished sixth overall.

The highest ranked female sailor was Tarteel Zaid al Hasani, fifth overall and a strong per-



*The skills shown by the highest performing sailors are a result of their dedication in training camps and commitment to becoming accomplished sailors*

HASHIM AL RASHDI

former throughout. Hadeel Yousuf al Mushaifri finished second in the Optimist Girls competition and 13th overall, and Abeer Kalil al Zakwani finished third - 19th overall. The top three in the ILCA 4 category were separated



by just four points after each notching a win in the opening three races. Hassan Nasser al Wahaibi finished first, just a single point ahead of Tamim Sulaiman al Balushi. Saoud Talib al Shaqsi finished third.

Al Moatsem Hamooud al Farsi swept to victory in the ILCA 6 competition with four consecutive wins to secure the win with one race to spare. Alsalam Ali al Hamdani finished second four times to secure second place,

just four points behind the winner. Hatem Mohsen al Araimi ended the event in third after two podium finishes and victory in the final race.

In the ILCA 7 category, Husain Said al Jabri won all five

races to win the event ahead of Ali Hussein al Saadi, himself finishing second in all five races. In addition, Mussanah Sailing School earned the Best Sailing School competition award following the impressive perfor-

mances of their young sailors across all events.

Hashim al Rashdi, Oman Sail's Head Coach of Performance, said, "We are very pleased with the outcomes of the Winter Cup and the level of performance from all sailors. The skills shown by the highest performing sailors are a result of their dedication in training camps and commitment to becoming accomplished sailors. We have a busy season ahead and the our squad will now start working towards building on these results so that we can proudly represent the nation and continue developing our young sailors."

The sailors will now begin preparations for the GCC Beach Games, to be held in Muscat from April 5-11, and the 2025 Optimist World Championships in Slovenia in July.

This will be followed by the Oman Sailing Championship in Sur in August, the Suleymanpasa Cup in Turkiye in September, and 14th edition of Mussanah Race Week in October.

Oman Sail will then welcome sailors from Asia and Oceania for the 2025 IODA Optimist Asian & Oceanian Championship from October 25 to November 1.

## Ministry holds introductory meeting on Chinese language

The Ministry of Education (MoE), represented by the Directorate-General of Curriculum Development - Foreign Languages Department - organised, over the past two days, an introductory meeting on the Chinese language - which will be applied optionally - in the presence of members of the administrative body and vocational guidance supervisors.

The meeting targeted students in Grade 10 and their parents in schools that will implement the teaching of the Chinese language for the academic year 2025-26, in the governorates of Muscat and Dakhliyah.

The meeting included two presentations, the first entitled



'Teaching Chinese Language: A New Window to the Future in the Schools of the Sultanate of Oman' presented by specialists from the Foreign Languages Curricula Department at the Ministry. The presentation included

an introduction to the Chinese language, and a cooperation plan with the International Exchange Center for Language Education of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China to teach Chinese language option-

ally in four schools in the Sultanate of Oman, namely: "Sayyid Sultan bin Ahmed School (11-12) for Boys, Juwayriya bint Abi Sufyan School (9-12) for Girls in Al Amerat, Hay Al Turath School (9-12) for Boys, and Al Shatha bint Jaber School for Basic Education (9-12) for Girls" in Nizwa. The presentation also addressed the inclusion of Chinese language in the 2025/2026 curriculum, and its introductory program targeting directors and vocational guidance specialists in the schools where it will be implemented, and a draft decision to form the main committee, and the working teams to select and harmonize Chinese language curricula and follow up on its teaching.



## Nesto Hypermarket Al Ansab all set to open on February 20

Nesto Hypermarket is all set to open its 17th outlet in Oman and 135th globally with the launch of its new Nesto store in Al Ansab, Muscat.

The grand opening ceremony will take place on Thursday, and will be inaugurated by Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Nasser al Nadabi, Secretary General of Majlis Ashura, at 10.30am. The store will open to the public at 12.00pm.

The new store, spread across three floors, promises a unique shopping experience with a wide

range of products, from fresh groceries to electronics and lifestyle collections. Ample parking facilities have been added to ensure convenience for shoppers.

A press conference was held on Tuesday, attended by key members of the Nesto management, including Mussavir Mustafa, Group Commercial Head; Shahal Shukath, Country Head; Kareem and Sameer, Finance Managers; Shaji, Regional Operations Manager; Noushad, FMCG Buying Head; Hamed

Khalfan Abdullah al Wahaibi, HR Director; Mohammed Harib Amur al Maskari, Operations Manager; and Al Sayyid Albaraa Albusaidi, HR Manager.

They shared details about the store's innovative features and community-focused initiatives.

"We are excited to bring a new shopping experience to Al Ansab," said Mussavir Mustafa.

"This store reflects our commitment to quality and customer satisfaction, and we are proud to expand our presence in Oman and globally."

## ODP, Fortinet bring 'Flag the Hack 2025'

Oman Data Park (ODP), a leading provider of managed IT and cybersecurity services in the Sultanate, acted as the exclusive sponsor of Oman's first-ever edition of the premier cybersecurity event, Flag the Hack 2025, held on Monday at the Mandarin Oriental, Muscat.

Conducted by Fortinet, this landmark event brought together eminent industry leaders and seasoned security professionals to address real-world cybersecurity challenges through innovative competitions, dynamic knowledge-sharing, and collaborative learning.

Flag the Hack has earned a distinguished reputation as a pivotal platform for fostering expert-led discussions, hands-on technical engagement, and the development of advanced competencies necessary to address the shifting cyber threat landscape. By championing such initiatives, ODP reinforces its position as a leader in driving technological innovation and



equipping businesses and individuals to navigate the challenges of an increasingly interconnected digital world.

Maqbool al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park, underscored the significance of the event, stating, "Cybersecurity is no longer a specialised concern; it is a universal imperative for governments, businesses, and

individuals. Flag the Hack serves as a vital conduit for promoting a culture of readiness and innovation in addressing emerging cyber threats.

By supporting transformative events like these, Wahaibi said, ODP aims to cultivate a society that is not only vigilant but also well-prepared to counter sophisticated security challenges.

"These initiatives bridge the divide between theoretical knowledge and practical application, providing participants with actionable insights and critical skills to tackle real-world scenarios," he underlined. The ODP chief reminded that in a digital age defined by rapid transformation, fostering resilience and maintaining a secure cyber environment are crucial.

The agenda also featured a series of compelling sessions, including Fortinet's SecOps strategy briefing and an in-depth presentation from FortiGuard Labs on navigating the ever-changing cyber threat landscape. These expert discussions delved into pressing topics such as current threats and vulnerabilities, the tactics of nation-state and non-state actors, emerging technologies, common attack vectors, and defensive strategies.

Participants gained insights into effective approaches to fortify organisational defences.

## Wali of Seeb holds meeting on SMEs

Ahmed bin Ali bin Hamdan al Shehhi, Wali of Seeb, chaired a coordinating meeting with the Small and Medium Enterprises Committee at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) to review and study the impact of governmental efforts by Muscat Governorate to enhance the local economy and provide job opportunities.

This meeting discussed promoting cooperation between both public and private sectors and creating new investment opportunities in small and medium enterprises in Seeb to employ productive families and solve the job seekers' issue.

The committee reviewed var-



ious national initiatives to support this group, including the partnership with major companies in Oman to provide financing, training and guidance.

The wali confirmed the role of the committee to achieve sustainable development, stressing

the implementation of effective initiatives that create an attractive investment environment. He encouraged the relevant entities to work as a team to cooperate and achieve common purposes that would support the community and productive families.

# Canada: Delta plane crash injures 18 people at Toronto airport

Toronto, Canada - A Delta regional jet overturned in Canada while landing on Monday at Toronto Pearson Airport after a blizzard, injuring 18 of the 80 people aboard, according to authorities.

Three people on the flight, which came from Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport in the US, were seriously injured, including one child, officials said.

According to the US carrier Delta, a 16-year-old CRJ900 aircraft operated by its Endeavor Air subsidiary was involved in an accident with 76 passengers and four crew members on board.

"Initial reports indicate there

are no fatalities and 18 customers with injuries have been transported to area hospitals. Our primary focus is taking care of those impacted," Delta said in a statement. "I'm relieved to learn that all passengers and crew are accounted for after today's plane crash at Toronto Pearson," Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow said on X. "Thank you to the first responders, crew and airport staff for their quick actions and commitment to keeping everyone safe."

IN a post on the social media platform X, the airport noted that all those on board had been accounted for.



16-year-old CRJ900 aircraft was involved in an accident with 76 passengers and four crew members on board

**Was weather to blame?**

Earlier Monday, Pearson Airport said it was dealing with high winds and frigid temperatures as airlines tried to catch up on missed flights after a weekend snowstorm dumped more than 22cm of snow at the airport.

Airport fire chief Todd Aitken said that the 'cause of the crash is still under investigation'. "What we can say is the runway was dry and there was no cross-wind conditions," he said.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) said it was sending a team of investigators, and the US National Transportation Safety Board said a team of investigators would assist the Canadian TSB.

The Toronto airport was closed for more than two hours before departures and arrivals resumed.

The Toronto crash followed other recent crashes in North America. A US Army helicopter collided with a CRJ-700 passenger jet in Washington, killing 67 people, while at least seven people died when a medical transport plane crashed in Philadelphia and 10 were killed in a passenger plane crash in Alaska.

DW

# Musk 'has no actual or formal authority', says White House

Washington, D.C., US - The White House stated in a court filing on Monday that Elon Musk serves as a senior adviser to US President Donald Trump, not as an employee of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), and holds no decision-making authority there.

In the filing signed by Joshua Fisher, director of the White House Office of Administration, it is stated that Elon Musk serves as a 'senior adviser to the president'. "Like other senior White House advisors, Musk has no actual or formal authority to make government decisions himself," it said.

Fisher stated that Musk is not an employee of the US DOGE Service or its Temporary Organization, and clarified: "Mr Musk is not the US DOGE Service Administrator." Fisher's filing was submitted to US District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who is considering a legal challenge by Democratic attorneys general to prevent Musk and his DOGE associates from influencing the federal government.

President Donald Trump appointed Musk, who has no experience in government service or administration, to lead DOGE, a task force aiming to streamline federal operations and reduce wasteful spending.

A pair of top Democratic senators penned a letter to the IRS on Monday, warning the American tax agency that Musk's government commission may be violating US law by accessing the agency's taxpayer record.



The White House stated in a court filing that Elon Musk serves as a senior adviser to US President Donald Trump

**US President Donald Trump had appointed Elon Musk to lead DOGE, a task force aiming to streamline federal operations and reduce wasteful spending**

Ron Wyden, the top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, and Elizabeth Warren, the top Democrat on the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, wrote to IRS

Acting Commissioner Douglas O'Donnell demanding copies of any memorandum granting agents of Musk's DOGE access to IRS systems.

"According to public reports, the White House is pressuring the IRS to agree to a memorandum of understanding which would give software engineers working for Elon Musk at DOGE broad access to IRS systems, property and datasets which include the private tax return information of hundreds of millions of American citizens and businesses," Wyden and Warren wrote.

"It appears the MOU proposes giving DOGE team mem-

bers access to the IRS Integrated Data Retrieval System (IDRS), raising serious concerns that Elon Musk and his associates are seeking to weaponise government databases containing private bank records and other confidential information to target American citizens and businesses as part of a political agenda," they added

The IDRS is a critical IRS system that holds sensitive information for all taxpayers, including individuals and businesses. Users can research account information and request returns, generate notices and enter transactions, according to information posted on the agency's website.

Meanwhile, US House Representative Claudia Tenney has introduced legislation to make President Donald Trump's birthday, June 14, a federal holiday.

"Just as George Washington's birthday is codified as a federal holiday, President Trump's birthday should also be celebrated to recognise him as the founder of America's Golden Age," Tenney said on Monday on X.

Washington, America's first president, was born on February 22, but Presidents Day, honouring his birthday, is celebrated on the third Monday of February.

Tenney said on Friday that no modern president has been 'more pivotal' for the US than Trump.

"Today, I introduced legislation to designate Trump's Birthday and Flag Day as a federal holiday, ensuring President Trump's contributions to American greatness are forever enshrined into law," she said.

In a separate development, Representative Addison McDowell introduced legislation last month to rename Washington Dulles International Airport after Trump.

Anadolu Agency



# Abu Dhabi all set to host 'Made in Russia' festival

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The UAE capital is set to welcome the 'Made in Russia' Festival & Fair, taking place from February 21 to 25 at Yas Bay Waterfront, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi.

Being organised in collaboration with the Russian Export Centre, this vibrant festival invites residents and visitors to embark on an immersive journey into Russia's rich cultural heritage, traditions, and cutting-edge industries, all in a lively and entertaining atmosphere.

With free entry, the festival promises a diverse programme filled with exciting showcases, live performances, and exclusive shopping experiences featuring authentic Russian products.

The festival brings together over 10 leading Russian beauty brands, featuring eco-friendly, natural skincare and cosmetic products known for their high quality and effectiveness.

One of the festival's cultural highlights is Mezen painting, a centuries-old artistic tradition from Russia's northern regions. This distinctive art form is characterised by its bold black and red patterns, reflecting the deep-rooted cultural heritage of the Mezen region in Arkhangelsk.

The festival will host captivating live performances by some of Russia's most renowned artists.

Families and children will enjoy exclusive screenings of Russia's most popular animated films, presented by leading studios. In the evenings, the festival transforms into an entertainment hub with a DJ KIDY music performance and a vibrant nightlife atmosphere.

Beyond culture and entertainment, the festival also serves as a strategic business platform to promote Russian exports and foster new commercial partnerships. A dedicated B2B networking programme will bring together industry professionals, paving the way for exciting trade and investment opportunities between Russia and the UAE.

WAM

## COLDEST WEEK IN ROMANIA



A person walks in a park during snowfall in Bucharest, Romania, on Monday. Romania is experiencing coldest week of the winter, with temperatures dropping as low as minus 20 degrees Celsius (Xinhua)

# South Korea deploys new bunker buster

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea's military said on Tuesday that it deployed a new home-grown bunker buster missile capable of striking underground enemy targets amid tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

The military has deployed the Korean Tactical Surface to Surface Missile (KTSSM), capable of conducting simultaneous precision strikes in a short span of time against North Korea's long-range artillery firepower, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the latest deployment equips the military with the 'overwhelming' capacity to destroy the enemy in the event of a contingency.

Seoul developed the tactical ballistic missile, also named Ure, which means 'thunder' in Korean, which has a range of 180km.

"Our military will closely monitor North Korea's various military activities under the robust South Korea-US combined defence posture and maintain the



overwhelming capacity and posture to counter any North Korean threat in an overwhelming manner," said the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

**North Korea to bolster nuclear force**

Meanwhile, North Korea vowed on Tuesday to bolster its nuclear force and condemned a statement on its 'complete denucleari-

sation'. North Korea's Foreign Ministry said the country's nuclear programme is for its self-defence, defending its peace and sovereignty.

"The DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) will as ever consistently adhere to the new line of bolstering up the nuclear force clarified by the head of state and thoroughly deter the US

and its vassal forces from the threat and blackmail of encroaching upon the sovereignty and security interests of the state by making use of all political and military tools in its hands and perfectly attain its strategic goal," it said in a statement published by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Pyongyang condemned a statement issued by Washington following a meeting of the top diplomats of the US, South Korea and Japan in Munich, Germany in which they reaffirmed their commitment to the 'complete denuclearisation' of North Korea as outlined by UN Security Council resolutions. "The US is not yet awakened from the failed old dream of the 'denuclearisation' that dims in the memory of the present time. It is the official stand of the DPRK government that it is not worth consideration to counter the stand of the US, the statement said.

Anadolu Agency

# Russia-US talks conclude; Moscow terms negotiations as ‘productive’

A date for meeting between Russian President Putin and his US counterpart Trump is yet to be decided

**Riyadh/Ankara** - Talks between Russia and the US on improving ties as well as the Ukraine war - the first such talks in years - concluded after a four-and-a-half hours session, Russian state media reported on Tuesday.

Speaking at a press briefing on the sidelines of the meeting in the Saudi capital Riyadh, which was broadcast live on Russian television, Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov said the negotiations were productive, with Moscow and Washington agreeing to consider each other's interests. However, the date for a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump is yet to be determined, and it is unlikely to take place next week, Ushakov said.

"The delegations of Russia and the United States held a serious discussion on all key issues," he stated.

The two sides also agreed to form working groups on the Ukraine issue. While the number of members and specific participants are yet to be decided, both parties aim to establish contacts quickly, he added.

Talks between Russia and the United States aimed at mending relations, addressing the conflict in Ukraine, and preparing a meeting between the Russian and US presidents marked the first meeting between diplomats



During the meeting held in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Tuesday, the two sides agreed to form working groups on the Ukraine issue

of the two countries since the Ukraine war began on February 24, 2022, nearly three years ago.

### Reshaping European security?

Meanwhile, Jana Puglierin, a Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), warned on Tuesday that the talks in Riyadh

might reshape European security. "Washington has begun negotiations with Russia over the heads of Ukraine and the other Europeans, and there are fears that these will not only be about ending the war, but also about the future European security architecture," she said.

Puglierin said US President Donald Trump could make con-

cessions previously deemed implausible, including on US and NATO troops stationed in Eastern Europe and further NATO enlargement.

"Europe risks standing powerless on the sidelines as the foundations of European security collapse."

She said the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2025 'de-

stroyed our faith in a collective security order with Russia'.

Puglierin said it also highlighted issues of dependence on Russia and China in critical areas.

Last week, US Vice President J D Vance and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, in a flurry of speeches, questioned both Europe's security commitments and its fundamental democratic

principles.

"February 2025 shows us that the Americans no longer feel responsible for European security - and that their interests are fundamentally different from ours," Puglierin said.

### Ukraine demands security guarantees

Besides, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, on Tuesday, underscored the importance of his country's territorial integrity and reiterated Ukraine's demand for security guarantees during an official visit to Turkey.

"As a country, we want peace; we want the war to end. However, we want the end of this war

antees, we would like to see Turkey involved in this process as well," he said.

He stressed that Ukraine will never compromise on its territorial integrity or sovereignty, asserting that he cannot act against the Ukrainian Constitution.

"We will never, under any circumstances, recognise our temporarily occupied territories as part of Russia. They are part of Ukraine," he declared.

Zelensky also reaffirmed Ukraine's commitment to reclaiming its occupied territories through diplomacy, stressing: "Because we do not want to lose our people - our people are our greatest treasure."

*Talks between Russia and the US, aimed at mending relations and addressing the conflict in Ukraine, marked the first meeting between diplomats of the two countries since the Ukraine war began 3 years ago*

## UN urges Lebanon, Israel to fulfil deal obligations

**Ankara, Turkey** - The United Nations urged Israel and Lebanon on Tuesday to fulfil their obligations under a ceasefire agreement following a partial Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

"Another delay in this process is not what we hoped would happen, not least because it continues a violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1701," reads a joint statement by UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and head of UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Aroldo Lázaro. The statement said 'tangible progress' has been made since the ceasefire agreement took effect in late November.

"Much of the hard work to realise the commitments made in the November Understanding, and in resolution 1701, is still ahead of us. We call on both parties to meet their obligations," the UN officials said.

"A sense of safety among communities of southern Lebanon, who are grappling with the wide-scale destruction of



their villages and towns, as well as residents of northern Israel who had to leave their homes, will not be built overnight and cannot come from a continuation of military operations. Rather, sustained political commitment is the only way forward."

Resolution 1701 mandates a ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel, and establishes a weapons-free zone between the Blue Line, a de facto border, and the Litani River, with exceptions for the Lebanese army and UNIFIL forces.

"Lebanon and Israel must make the solutions envisaged by

the November Understanding and resolution 1701 a reality, on both sides of the Blue Line," the statement said. "The United Nations in Lebanon stands ready to continue supporting all efforts in that direction."

The Israeli army withdrew from southern Lebanese towns early on Tuesday, but remained in five border outposts, in violation of the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz called the five outposts a 'buffer zone' to protect Israeli settlements against Hezbollah attacks.

Anadolu Agency

## Gaza meet postponed to March 4

**Cairo, Egypt** - Egypt confirmed on Tuesday that it will host an emergency Arab summit on March 4 to discuss plans to rebuild the Gaza Strip without displacing its Palestinian inhabitants. The summit was originally scheduled to be held on February 27, but was postponed to March 4 'to complete logistical preparations', the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said the new date was set in coordination

with Bahrain, the current chair of the Arab League, and in consultation with Arab countries.

The summit follows a proposal by US President Donald Trump to take over Gaza and resettle its Palestinian inhabitants to develop it into what he called 'the Riviera of the Middle East'.

On Sunday, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi confirmed that his country is preparing a 'comprehensive' plan to rebuild Gaza without

displacing Palestinians.

Trump's plan for Palestinian resettlement has been rejected by the Arab world and many other nations, who say it amounts to ethnic cleansing.

The controversial idea came amid the ceasefire agreement that took effect in Gaza on January 19, halting Israel's genocidal war, which has killed nearly 48,300 Palestinians, most of them women and children, and left the enclave in ruins.

Anadolu Agency



شركة مسندم للطاقة ش.م.ع

**Musandam Power Company SAOG**

ص ب ٢٢٨، الرمز البريدي ١٢٤، القرية، جوهرة الشاطئ، مسقط، سلطنة عمان.

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### INVITATION TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MUSANDAM POWER COMPANY SAOG

The Board of Directors of Musandam Power Company SAOG invites its respective shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting ("AGM") which shall be held at 3:00 pm, on 06-March-2025 on the e-portal for convening general meetings which may be accessed through the Muscat Clearing and Depository SAOC ("MCD") website (www.mcd.gov.om). The Agenda include the following:

Failing quorum of the AGM, a second AGM shall be convened at 3:00 pm, on 10-March-2025 on the e-portal for convening general meetings which may be accessed through the Muscat Clearing and Depository SAOC ("MCD") website (www.mcd.gov.om). The agenda include the following:

- To consider and approve the report of the Board of Directors for the financial year ended on 31 December 2024.
- To consider the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2024.
- To consider the Auditor's report and to approve the Financial Statements in respect of the Company for the year ended on 31 December 2024.
- To approve the proposal authorizing the Board of Directors to determine and distribute cash dividends to the Company's Shareholders who are registered with the MCD as of the dates to be decided by the Board of Directors in March 2025 and September 2025 out of the retained earnings as per the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024, provided that the amount shall not be more than 27.6 Baisas per share.
- To disclose the transactions that the Company entered into with related parties during the financial year ended on 31 December 2024 (Annexure 1).
- To consider and approve the proposed transactions to be entered by the Company with related parties during the financial year ending on 31 December 2025 (Annexure 2).
- To ratify the payment of sitting fees to the Board of Directors and Sub-Committees for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 and to determine the sitting fees of the Board of Directors and Sub-Committees for the next financial year ending on 31 December 2025 (Annexure 3).
- To ratify the payment of Directors' remuneration for an amount of RO 78,150 (Rials Omani Seventy-eight thousand one hundred fifty) for the financial year ended on 31 December 2024 (Annexure 4).
- To notify the General Assembly of donations disbursed to support community services during the financial year ended on 31 December 2024. (Annexure 5).
- To consider the Proposal the allocation of an amount of RO 20,000 to support community services during the financial year ending 31 December 2025.
- To approve the independent consultant report for the appraisal of the performance of the Board of Directors during the year ended 31 December 2024.
- To appoint the statutory auditors for the financial year ending on 31 December 2025 and approve its fees.
- To elect new Board of Directors from amongst the shareholders or non - shareholders.

Any person who wishes to nominate himself/herself to the Board of Directors should complete a nomination form available with the Company. The nomination form can be obtained from the Company's head office. The completed forms should be delivered to the Company minimum five days prior to the AGM date. Nomination forms received after 5pm on Thursday, 27th of February 2025 shall not be accepted.

According to the CCL promulgated vide the Royal Decree No. 18/2019 and the Regulation for Public Joint Stock Companies Decision No. 27/2021, the Shareholders shall have the right to nominate a proxy to attend and vote on their behalf on decisions/resolutions of the meeting, such proxy must be on the proxy form issued by Muscat Clearing and Depository Company, save the shareholders who owned shares in the Company after it has delivered the invitation of the general meeting, provided that such shareholders shall provide a proof to that effect. If the proxy is on behalf of more than one shareholder, it must not be on behalf of more than five percent (5%) of the shares of the Company, else the proxy shall be deemed null and void. The natural shareholder shall enclose a copy of the ID card, or the passport copy for minors who do not have an ID card, residence card or passport copy for non-Omanis along with the proxy form. The juristic shareholder's proxy must be signed by an authorized signatory and sealed with entity's stamp and should be submitted along with a commercial registration certificate and copy of the authorized signatory. The proxy will not be valid if a member of the board of directors represents a shareholder.

In accordance with the Rules for Convening General Meetings via Electronic Means, issued by the CMA we would like to call your attention to the following:

(a) only a corporate person may authorize a natural person to attend and vote on its behalf on decisions/resolutions of the AGM general meeting, through electronic means, provided such natural person must have an investor number at MCD;

(b) voting on any item of the agenda shall commence prior to the convention of the AGM general meeting at a maximum of three (3) days and ends on the day of the AGM. If a shareholder's balance is changed either by increase or decrease the voting process shall stand canceled and must revoke at the AGM.

Please attend at the e-portal at least 30 minutes prior to the AGM.

For more information, please contact Mr. Abdulhamed Al Jabri of Musandam Power Company (SAOG) on telephone No. 24063555.

|          |         |               |
|----------|---------|---------------|
| Chairman | Auditor | Legal Advisor |
|----------|---------|---------------|

#### Proxy Form

No. of Shares:

We/I \_\_\_\_\_ the shareholder of Musandam Power Cpmpany Co. SAOG hereby authorise Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ to attend the Annual General Meeting ("AGM") at 15:00 hrs (3:00 pm) on 06-March-2025 at the e-portal for convening general meetings which may be accessed through the Muscat Clearing and Depository SAOC ("MCD") website (www.mcd.gov.om). Failing quorum of the AGM, a second AGM shall be convened at 15:00 hrs (3:00 pm), on 10-March-2025 at the e-portal for convening general meetings which may be accessed through the Muscat Clearing and Depository SAOC ("MCD") website (www.mcd.gov.om), to vote on our behalf on all matters set out in the agenda of the meetings.

|       |            |        |
|-------|------------|--------|
| Date: | Signature: | Stamp: |
|-------|------------|--------|

INDIA

# Nepali girl's death: College issues apology, students demand justice

**Bhubaneswar, Odisha** - The Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday said that disciplinary action has been initiated against security staff and officials in connection with the death of an engineering student from Nepal, on its campus, and also issued an apology for distress caused by remarks made following the incident.

In a notice, the college said that two senior hostel officials and one senior administrative officer of the International Relations Office (IRO) were suspended, pending a thorough enquiry which is taking place. Besides, two security staffs were terminated immediately, the notice which was shared on X read.

The letter of apology from the KIIT-DU vice chancellor read: "We deeply regret the recent incident and reaffirm our commitment to the safety, dignity, and well-being of all our students, including our dear Nepali students."



Nepali students were forced to leave KIIT after tensions flared up following the alleged suicide of a female student from Nepal, in Cuttack on Monday (ANI)

The college further said that it has urged students to return to campus and has also set up a 24/7 control room for the pur-

pose to assist students.

Meanwhile, the students are now demanding justice and transparency from the college

administration.

The protesting students are also demanding an independent student body that can protect

their rights and interests. They also expressed their apprehensions about the safety of their fellow students.

"We only want a student body that is independent of the college itself and will protect us... Transparency from the faculty should be given on why such incidents are happening... An international student was

17 and was sent to judicial custody on the same day, as per a press statement by Police Commissionerate, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack.

"Investigation of the case is continuing, including seizure of

*The protesting students are demanding an independent student body that can protect their rights and interests. They also expressed their apprehensions about the safety of their fellow students*

treated like this, someday, we too can be treated like this..." said one of the protesting Nepali students.

On February 16, a third-year BTech student was found dead in her hostel room, following which Nepali students staged a protest claiming that she was harassed by her fellow student and demanded justice for her.

An accused student, identified by police as Advik Srivastava, was arrested on February

the documents and electronic gadgets as evidence...Commissionerate Police is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all the students including Nepali students," the release said.

Initially, KIIT had issued a notice stating that it was 'closed sine die for all international students from Nepal' and directed them to vacate the university campus.

ANI



Amir of the State of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Indian President Droupadi Murmu and PM Narendra Modi during a ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati Bhavan forecourt, in New Delhi on Tuesday (ANI)

## India, Qatar elevate ties to 'Strategic Partnership'

**New Delhi** - India and Qatar on Tuesday signed an agreement to formally elevate their relations to a Strategic Partnership and exchanged multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with focus on trade, energy, investments, innovation, technology, food security, culture and people-to-people ties.

The Agreement on Establishment of Strategic Partnership between the two countries was exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, at the Hyderabad House here in the national capital.

Prime Minister Modi and the Amir of Qatar held delegation-

level talks and both countries also signed an agreement on the revised agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion concerning taxes on income.

"PM @narendramodi & HH Sheikh @TamimbinHamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar held wide-ranging talks at Hyderabad House today. Both leaders decided to elevate India-Qatar relations to a Strategic Partnership with focus on trade, energy, investments, innovation, technology, food security, culture & people-to-people ties. They also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest," Official Spokesperson, Ministry of Ex-

ternal Affairs Randhir Jaiswal said.

Earlier today, the Amir of Qatar, who arrived in India on a two-day visit, received the Guard of Honour and a ceremonial welcome in the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

He was received by President Droupadi Murmu and PM Modi along with senior ministers from the government. The Qatari Amir also interacted with the ministers. President Murmu interacted with the Qatari delegation accompanying the Amir.

The Qatar Amir is accompanied by a high-level delegation, including ministers, senior officials and a business delegation. ANI

## Death penalty sought for ex-Congress MP

**New Delhi** - The prosecution in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots case sought the death penalty for former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar on Tuesday, who is convicted murdering a father-son duo in Delhi's Saraswati Vihar area.

Kumar was convicted in a case of killing of father son duo, Jaswant Singh and Tarundeep Singh on November 1, 1984 in Saraswati Vihar area. Additional Public prosecutor (APP) Manish Rawat filed written submissions and pressed for death penalty in view of the guidelines in Nirbhaya and other cases.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja has listed the matter for hearing arguments on sentence on February 21. The court asked the



Advocate H S Phoolka pays obeisance at the Golden Temple after Sajjan Kumar was convicted by a Delhi court, in Amritsar on February 13 (ANI)

counsel for victims and accused to file their written submissions before next date.

Senior counsel H S Phoolka is also going to file his written sub-

missions on behalf of riots victims. Meanwhile, the defence counsel could not appear due to lawyers strike and sought time to make his submissions.

APP Manish Rawat submitted that this case was a rarest of rare cases. In this case people from a community were targeted without any provocation.

It was also submitted the incident broke the 'entire fibre of trust and harmony among the communities', thereby severely effecting the knitting and assimilation of different religious and social groups. The Rouse Avenue court on February 12, convicted Kumar, who is serving a life sentence in another anti-Sikh riots case of Delhi Cantt.

As many as 2700 Sikhs were killed in Delhi in 1984, following the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. ANI



### TRAIN TRAVEL BLUES

Police personnel manage rush of passengers at Subedarganj railway station during the ongoing 'Mahakumbh 2025', in Prayagraj on Tuesday (ANI)

## Gyanesh Kumar appointed as new CEC, Opposition expresses dissent

**New Delhi** - The appointment of Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar as the new Chief Election Commissioner of India, has led to criticism from Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi who, on Tuesday, expressed strong dissent on the process by which the new CEC was appointed.

Gandhi criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's decision to exclude the Chief Justice of India from the selection committee. He said that by violating the Supreme

Court order and 'removing' the Chief Justice from the selection committee, the government has 'exacerbated the concerns of hundreds of millions of voters over the integrity of our electoral process'. The Congress leader, who is part of the committee led by PM Modi submitted his dissent note, terming the selection process as both 'disrespectful and discourteous'.

"As the LoP it is my duty to uphold the ideals of Babasaheb Ambedkar and the founding leaders of our nation and hold the government to account. It is



both disrespectful and discourteous for the PM and HM to have made a midnight decision to select the new CEC, when the very composition of the committee and the process is being

*Gyanesh Kumar succeeds Rajiv Kumar who demitted the office of the CEC on Tuesday. In terms of seniority, Gyanesh Kumar will be the senior-most Election Commissioner after Rajiv Kumar's retirement and has tenure till January 26, 2029*

challenged in the Supreme Court and is due to be heard in less than forty-eight hours," the dissent note read.

Gyanesh Kumar succeeds Rajiv Kumar, who will be demit-

ting the office of Chief Election Commissioner on Tuesday.

In terms of seniority, Gyanesh Kumar will be the senior-most Election Commissioner after Rajiv Kumar's

retirement and has tenure till January 26, 2029. The central government had earlier set up a search committee ahead of the meeting. The CEC and EC are appointed by the President of India based on recommendations of a selection committee.

The Congress party had heavily objected to the process, and earlier urged the government to postpone the selection meeting, as there is a case in the Supreme Court regarding the appointment of the previous CEC. The party on Monday had said that the new process 'cre-

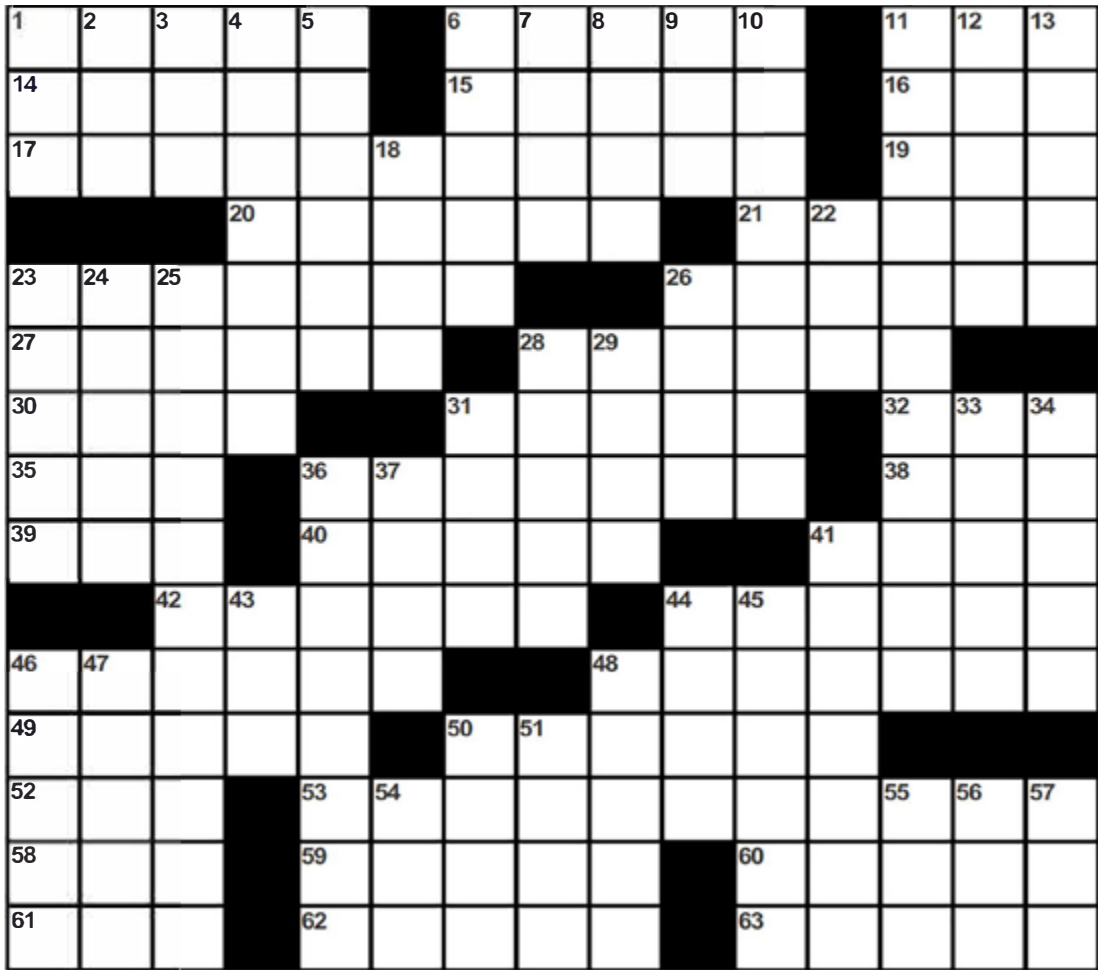
ates a partisan and non-neutral mechanism for the selection of Election Commissioners'.

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said the government wants 'only control but not credibility', and the most important aspect for the Election Commission is 'credibility'.

He said: "Removing or trying to keep the Chief Justice out of the appointment (of CEC) process as an independent entity, the government has made it clear, they want only control but not credibility."

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Plays a round  
6) Crooked  
11) Blueprint  
14) Circa  
15) Columbus' home port  
16) Suffix with "elect"  
17) Mystery to evolution-ists  
19) Gabriel, for one  
20) Pampered to a fault, to a Brit  
21) It makes ink pink  
23) Get in the game  
26) Help out  
27) In a melodic style  
28) Systematize, as laws  
30) Widespread  
31) Consumed  
32) Priestly garb  
35) That thing's  
36) Lost, according to this theme  
38) Bygone bird  
39) Choose not to prevent  
40) Animals with back-packs  
41) Trawler's haul  
42) Sweetened, in a way  
44) Charm

46) Operatives

- 48) Big fans  
49) Ban  
50) Maximally  
52) Branch of the U.N.  
53) River for this puzzle's theme  
58) Grassland  
59) Bailiwicks  
60) Chris of tennis  
61) Blasting stuff  
62) Approaches  
63) Hemmed, but didn't haw

DOWN

- 1) Group of whales  
2) One getting waisted in Tokyo?  
3) \_ Altos, Calif.  
4) Hard-to-please type  
5) Mushroom stems  
6) Texas A&M athlete  
7) Unload, as stock  
8) Wrinkle, as one's brow  
9) Many, many years  
10) It occurs each morning  
11) Fail to come close  
12) Be ofuse  
13) Pasta choice  
18) Part of a melody

22) Big galoot

- 23) Engage in quibbling  
24) Give a keynote address  
25) Be wrong  
26) Garden in the Bible  
28) Checked out for nefarious purposes  
29) Big name in elevators  
31) To be, to Caesar  
33) Winner's victim  
34) Thai money  
36) Kind of talk  
37) Horned Egyptian goddess  
41) Sneaky  
43) Lennon's wife  
44) Bothers  
45) Bark-covering plants  
46) Not quite vertical  
47) Famed Greek physician  
48) Cockeyed  
50) Between ports  
51) Russian ruler of old  
54) Anger  
55) Nave bench  
56) "Adolescent" lead-in  
57) " \_ be an honor"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You're entering a phase where you don't have to work as hard as you've been working. Now you can start to let go of the power you've been holding on to and let other people do the driving while you sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride. It may take you a while to get used to not being in total control, but you'll soon be intrigued by the interesting and exciting directions that other people can take you in.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Just like that little engine chugging up the big mountain, you're full of persistence today. Nothing can stop you once you have your heart set on something (or someone), and today you know exactly what you need to do. The momentum you've created is going to take you far toward your goal, but if you need any encouragement, you'll find it from the usual sources: the friends and family members you cherish the most. They're ready to be your cheerleaders.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

If you can put your biggest ideas in a nutshell, you can get all the support and perhaps even the financial backing you've been seeking. Being concise is important because it helps you get to the heart of the matter without wasting anyone's time (including your own). Instead of going on and on about what you hope to get out of something, just ask for what you want. You don't have to oversell yourself. If you deserve something, you'll get it.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

All you really wanted from this day was the chance to kick back, relax and pretend that a situation you're sure is about to erupt, won't. At least, not until you've had a chance to make a battle plan. But the phone just won't let you do that. If you've had it and you don't think you can help anyway, turn off the annoying thing and send it all to voicemail. Or better still, go and visit a friend who has no connection to the situation.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Making a sacrifice doesn't have to feel like a loss. Keep that fact in mind today when someone asks you to give something up for their sake. This small gesture on your part could make a huge difference for them and earn you immense (and long-lasting) gratitude. You might even be grateful for the opportunity to do this. It's up to you whether or not you let this fact be known, though. But even if it isn't ideal, you should do it.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Your vision is clear as a bell today, in every sense. If you've been struggling to make a decision or confused about which strategy to adopt, today is the perfect day to look at the situation again. It's time to reassess. Suddenly, the way might be embarrassingly obvious. Unfortunately, your omnipotent vision might also reveal a few problems you have to deal with. But wouldn't you rather know about them? Ignorance isn't always bliss.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Networking applies to more areas of your life than your profession. In romance, sports, leisure, and even in your extended family, you'll be much more fulfilled and stimulated if you're connected to more people. It's up to you to make the connections you need, though, so reach out and don't be shy. People are much more receptive to your overtures than you realize. You'll be surprised and encouraged by the associations you start to develop.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Prepare to become privy to at least one wonderful secret, if not more. The tricky part is you may need to keep this to yourself for a week or two. As wonderful as you'll be feeling, that may not be easy. But if you really try, you'll be able to pull it off. And when it's time for the big revelations, think of how wonderful you'll feel about letting the cat out of the bag. Pat yourself on the back when everyone wants to know how you managed to keep mum.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

What you expected to be a major turning point might actually be something of a minor blip on your radar screen today. Apparently your expectations were growing too big. Don't get too disappointed about it, though. Everything is happening the way it needs to happen. You should get comfortable with having less control over where your life is going now. Open your heart and relinquish some control over your future for the moment, at least.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Creating new things brings you an exceptional level of satisfaction now, so get busy! You don't have to literally build a structure, but you do need to use your mind and hands together to create something uniquely you. Cooking, painting, sculpting, writing, even car maintenance, are all legitimately positive ways to spend your time today. By tonight, you'll find a new level of joy in seeing what you can accomplish all on your own.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

It's all fine and dandy to mull things over and get a into your thoughts. After all, that's how you develop them into brilliant ideas! But today it's much more important to put your new ideas to work. Take them out of the abstract and bring them into the real world. It's time for a trial run. That new approach you wanted to try with your latest crush? Give it a whirl today. It just might work. If not, you'll get valuable clues you can use to tweak it



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You don't need to bat your eyelashes or drop your handkerchief. You're a couple centuries beyond that! Your technique for charming favors out of people is much subtler and more effective, anyway. You have personality to spare, so much, in fact, that too much can be, well, too much. Of course, it doesn't hurt that your way with words benefits others as well as yourself. It should get you exactly where you need to go.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which extra element did Einstein include in his understanding of general relativity, which he had not previously included in the theory he published in 1905 of special relativity?

- A. Electromagnetism  
B. Time  
C. Mass-energy equivalence  
D. Gravity

2. Anthony Wilding is the only New Zealander in what sport's Hall of Fame?

- A. Surfing  
B. Golf  
C. Tennis  
D. Archery

3. Who was shot by Valery Solanas on 3 June 1968?

- A. Larry Hagman  
B. John Lennon  
C. Ronald Reagan  
D. Andy Warhol

Answers: 1. D 2. C 3. D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| V | K | A | B |
| S | O | R | S |
| V | E | R | O |
| Y | I | T | O |

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

SOLUTION

20-25 words: Excellent,  
15-20 words: Very good,  
10-15 words: Good,  
5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   | 5 | 8 |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 8 | 7 | 4 |   |   |   |   |
| 7 |   |   |   | 9 | 6 |   | 5 |   |
|   |   | 9 | 5 |   | 7 |   | 8 |   |
| 3 | 6 | 7 |   |   |   | 1 | 9 | 5 |
|   | 8 |   | 6 |   | 9 | 4 |   |   |
|   | 4 |   | 9 | 8 |   |   |   | 6 |
|   |   |   |   | 6 | 4 | 5 |   |   |
|   |   | 2 |   | 7 |   |   |   |   |

WORD BUILDER



You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| 6 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 2 |
| 5 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| 2 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 6 |

# LOST IN TRANSLATION

Real Madrid’s Bellingham says foul language that got him sent off was not aimed at referee



Referee Jose Munuera Montero tells Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham to leave the field after sending him off

Madrid, Spain - An unlikely debate about translation and cultural interpretations of English profanity has ignited in Spain after Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham was sent off for verbally abusing a referee on Saturday.

Monday’s mainstream TV shows, radio phone-ins and the front pages of newspapers and major websites wrestled with the concept of Bellingham’s novel defence that he did not shout “fuck you” at the official, but merely “fuck off”.

Bellingham, 21, was shown a red card in Saturday’s 1-1 draw at Osasuna in LaLiga as referee Jose

Munuera Montero believed the England forward directed the foul language at him. However, Bellingham and his coach Carlo Ancelotti said the official was mistaken.

“I’m an English player... and when I speak on the pitch it’s normal that I use expressions that come naturally to me in English,” Bellingham told reporters on Saturday.

“There was no insult, you can see in the video right away, it was an expression to myself, I’m not even directing myself towards the referee. But obviously there was a misunderstanding. He’s believed I’ve said it to him.

*There was no insult, you can see in the video, it was an expression to myself, I’m not even directing myself towards the referee. But obviously there was a misunderstanding*

**JUDE BELLINGHAM**

“I’ve seen the video and it doesn’t match the (referee) report. I hope that the footage will be reviewed and see that it’s not the same as the report.”

Ancelotti, who managed in England with Chelsea and Everton, backed his player’s defence. “I think he (the referee) misunderstood Bellingham’s English... and punishments are uncommon.

## ‘Referees sickened by abuse’

Madrid, Spain - Spain’s football federation said referees are sickened by the abuse Jose Munuera Montero has received since he showed Real Madrid’s Jude Bellingham a red card and the situation reflects the “hatred and verbal violence” match officials have to endure.

Montero believed the 21-year-old England midfielder had directed foul language at him during Saturday’s 1-1 draw at Osasuna and showed him a straight red card.

However, Bellingham and his coach Carlo Ancelotti said the official was mistaken.

“The professional referees are absolutely repulsed by the attacks and threats that our colleague Jose Luis Munuera Montero is receiving through social networks, which not only target him personally but also his family,” the RFEF said in a statement. “These attacks add to the hatred and verbal violence through which we have to carry out our professional work every weekend, and that in the base categories becomes, even more regrettably, physical violence in many cases.”

Bellingham is now facing a lengthy ban, at a time when Real Madrid have allowed a seven-point lead to slip at the top of the La Liga table.

Carlo Ancelotti’s side are winless in their last three league matches and are now level on points with rivals Barcelona but are second because they have an inferior goal difference.

## Parma appoint Chivu as new manager after sacking Pecchia

Parma, Italy - Parma have appointed Cristian Chivu as manager to replace Fabio Pecchia, the Serie A club said on Tuesday, for what is the 44-year-old Romanian’s first senior coaching role.

Chivu previously coached youth teams at Inter Milan, the club where he finished his playing career, between 2018 and 2024.

Parma parted ways with Pecchia on Monday after a fourth consecutive defeat kept the club in the relegation zone. Pecchia had been in charge since 2022 and led Parma to promotion from Serie B at the end of last season.

“Chivu, alongside his staff made up of Antonio Gagliardi (assistant man-



Cristian Chivu

ager), Angelo Palombo (technical assistant) and Nicola Pavarini (goalkeeper coach), will begin training with the team as of this afternoon at the Mutti Training Center,” Parma said in a statement.

Chivu’s first game in charge will be a home match against Bologna on Sunday. Parma are 18th in Serie A on 20 points after 25 games, but are only one point off Empoli in 17th, outside the relegation places.

Sunday’s 1-0 loss at home to AS Roma extended Parma’s winless run to seven games which has seen the club drop to 18th place in the standings, having won just four of their 25 league games.

Pecchia took charge in 2022 with Parma in Serie B, and in his first season the club lost out in the promotion playoffs before winning the second tier championship last season to secure automatic promotion to the Italian top flight.

In October, Parma renewed Pecchia’s contract until 2027, but the side’s descent into the bottom three has brought a premature end to his time at the club. Parma host Bologna on Sunday.



## Messi’s Champions Cup debut for Miami delayed due to snowstorm

Miami, US - Argentinian superstar Lionel Messi’s Inter Miami Champions Cup match against Sporting Kansas City has been postponed due to adverse weather conditions, including heavy snowfall, the North American soccer body CONCACAF said on Monday.

The match, originally scheduled for Tuesday, would have been Javier Mascherano’s team debut in the continental competition, but will now be played on Wednesday.

The United States National Weather Service has issued a winter storm warning for the region, which includes parts of east-central and northeastern Kansas and central and west-central Missouri.

“The decision to postpone the match at Children’s Mercy Park was made with the safety

of the players and fans as a priority and in consultation with the two clubs involved and local authorities,” CONCACAF said in a statement.

The sports governing body added that the postponement was also prompted by the possibility of snow accumulating on the pitch.

The return leg is scheduled for February 25 at Miami’s Chase Stadium, with the winners advancing to face Jamaica’s Cavalier in the round of 16.

The Champions Cup, formerly known as the Champions League, is an annual international club competition organised by CONCACAF as its premier continental tournament for clubs from North America, Central America and the Caribbean.

# Arsenal fined for failing to control players after Lewis-Skelly red card

London, England - Arsenal have been fined 65,000 pounds (\$82,000) by the English FA for failing to control their players after defender Myles Lewis-Skelly was sent off during their Premier League win at Wolverhampton Wanderers in January.

The FA charged the Premier League club after the players surrounded referee Michael Oliver after he showed Lewis-Skelly a straight red card for a foul on Matt Doherty on January 25.

“An independent Regulatory Commission has imposed a £65,000 fine on Arsenal ... (as) it was alleged that Arsenal failed to ensure their players did not behave in an improper way around the 43rd minute, and the club subsequently admitted to this charge,” the FA said in a statement.



Arsenal players argue with referee Michael Oliver after he showed Lewis-Skelly a straight red card

The video assistant referee (VAR) upheld Oliver’s decision at the time of the incident but Arsenal subsequently appealed against the red card and the 18-year-old’s three-match ban was overturned.

The FA’s statement included a letter from Arsenal, who highlighted that the players “did not behave in a way which was offensive, violent, threatening, abusive, indecent, insulting or provocative.”

But the FA responded by saying that “there were, at times, nine AFC players in very close proximity to the referee” and that the red card “being overturned on appeal does not justify the reaction and affords no mitigation.”

# Liverpool’s Gomez out for weeks with hamstring injury

Liverpool, England - Premier League leaders Liverpool have been dealt a fresh injury blow ahead of Wednesday’s trip to Aston Villa with defender Joe Gomez ruled out for weeks with a hamstring injury, manager Arne Slot said on Tuesday.

England’s Gomez missed the start of the calendar year with a previous hamstring injury, and his return in this month’s 1-0 FA Cup loss at Plymouth Argyle lasted only 11 minutes with the 27-year-old leaving the pitch after picking up a fresh knock.



Joe Gomez returned from a hamstring injury in Liverpool’s FA Cup defeat at Plymouth Argyle only to suffer a fresh knock after just 11 minutes

“Joe will take quite a long time. He’s going to be out for numerous weeks because of a hamstring injury,” Slot told reporters.

Slot said Gomez, a Liverpool player since 2015, may need surgery and would miss a large part of the rest of the season.

“We expect him to be back at the end phase of the season,” the coach added.

“He worked really hard to come back. First game when he came back, after two or three minutes we saw him making a

sprint, and now he’s out for weeks again. That’s always very hard for a player.”

Striker Cody Gakpo, who missed Sunday’s 2-1 win over Wolverhampton Wanderers with an injury, was close to recovery but remained unavailable for Wednesday, Slot added.

The Dutchman said Liverpool, who sit seven points above second-placed Arsenal, would face a difficult test at Villa, despite the ninth-placed side being winless in their last four league games.

# POLE POSITION

Lewandowski penalty helps Barca edge Rayo and take LaLiga lead

Barcelona, Spain - Polish Striker Robert Lewandowski scored a first-half penalty to give Barcelona a hard-fought 1-0 home win over Rayo Vallecano on Monday that moved them to top of the LaLiga standings.

Barca took advantage of Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid dropping points over the week-end to leapfrog them from third-place to the top of the standings. Barca are level on 51 points with Real but ahead on goal difference.

Atletico trail both by a point, while in-form Rayo Vallecano are sixth on 35 points.

Barcelona defender Alejandro Balde felt his side did an "incredible job".

"We knew it was an important game to take the lead. I'm very happy with the team's work and keeping a clean sheet," Balde



Robert Lewandowski scores from the penalty spot to give Barcelona a crucial win against Rayo Vallecano

told the media.

"I'm happy. We have to give credit to the defensive phase, we did an incredible job today. We suffered but you have to know how to suffer.

"I haven't seen the play properly yet. From the little I've been able to see, I think it's a clear penalty. The referee decides.

"The important thing is the

three points, even if we had to suffer today."

Barca did just enough to snap Rayo's nine-match unbeaten streak in the league, leaving them fuming over several controversial decisions by the referee.

After Pathe Ciss fouled Inigo Martinez inside the box, Mario Melero Lopez awarded the home side a penalty following a lengthy

VAR check. Lewandowski netted the winner with a tidy finish from the spot in the 28th minute.

Despite Barca dominating possession, Rayo still looked the more dangerous of the two sides, forcing Barca goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny to put in a brilliant performance between the posts to frustrate their efforts.

Rayo players were left fuming when their pleas for a penalty was turned down after Pau Cubarsi appeared to foul Ciss - an incident they felt was similar to the one when Barca were awarded the spot kick. Rayo were again left outraged when Jorge de Frutos' goal was harshly ruled out in the 42nd minute.

Defender Martinez made a crucial goalline clearance with his head right before the break, while Szczesny kept working his magic in the second half to help secure the three points.

However, Rayo should have scored the equaliser when Jorge de Frutos missed a header from close-range in added time.

"I prefer to keep to myself my opinion regarding the referee today but everyone acts as they should or believe they should," a visibly frustrated Rayo manager Inigo Perez told Movistar Plus when asked about the controversial calls.

"You always have the pain of losing but today it will take a few hours for me to calm down considering everything that happened and the way we played. At the moment, the only word I can find is bitterness..."



## I believe in the VAR, that's all I can say: Flick

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona manager Hansi Flick defended the use of the video assistant referee (VAR) after Rayo Vallecano were left fuming following a number of controversial decisions during Monday's LaLiga match.

Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski scored the winner from the penalty spot in the first-half following a long VAR review over a foul inside the box that the referee did not catch on first sight.

Rayo also complained after they were denied a penalty and were further angered when they were denied an equaliser as they thought Jorge de Frutos' strike was harshly ruled out in the 42nd minute.

"I haven't rewatched the incidents but I will always stand by the VAR. We have the VAR and I believe in the VAR, that's all I can say about it," Flick told Movistar Plus.

"We are very happy for the three points because it was very difficult game for us to win against a great opponent. Rayo are in a good form, playing very well. It was a tough game for the players and I'm

proud of them."

Monday's incidents added to the growing debate surrounding refereeing in Spain, with Barca rivals Real Madrid clashing with Spanish FA and LaLiga.

With Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid dropping points over the weekend, Monday's result allowed Barca climb to the top of the standings. They are level on 51 points with Real but lead on goal difference.

Atletico trail both by a point, while Rayo, who lost their first league game since early in December, are sixth on 35 points.

"Everyone is happy and I think we played well, but we can also do better. I think it was a great success for us, winning here today and moving to first place, it's very positive," Flick said.

"However, I'm not a fan of looking at the table, we are still in February and there's a long way to go. But I'm happy for the players. Their mentality is to fight until the end and we will take it one game at a time."

## Pakhtakor in Asian Champions League last 16

Tashkent, Uzbekistan - Pakhtakor squeezed into the last 16 of the Asian Champions League Elite on Monday as a 2-1 win over Al Sadd from Qatar in Tashkent and Al-Gharafa's 4-2 loss against Saudi Arabia's Al-Ahli ensured the Uzbek side would advance to the next round.

However, the qualification prospects of Persepolis hang in the balance following their 0-0 draw in Tehran with an Al Nassr side missing Cristiano Ronaldo, the Iranians climbing up to eighth place ahead of Tuesday's final league phase matches.

A draw for fellow Iranians Esteghlal against Qatar's Al Rayyan, who had their progress confirmed after Monday's results, will take them into the knockout rounds at the expense of their bitter cross-Tehran rivals.

The top eight finishers in both west and east Asia advance to



Brayan Riascos of Pakhtakor celebrates after scoring against Al Sadd in Tashkent on Monday

the last 16, with teams due to face off over two legs. The quarter-finals, semi-finals and final will be played centrally in Saudi Arabia in April and May.

Pakhtakor had only scored twice in their previous seven matches in the competition but striker Brayan Riascos doubled that total to earn his side their

first win of the campaign.

The Colombian put Pedro Moreira's side in front against the already-qualified Qataris with a close range finish in the 18th minute, only for Al Sadd to level through a Hassan Al Haydos penalty eight minutes before the break. Eleven minutes after the resumption, though, Riascos net-

ted again, nodding home after Jonatan Lucca's free kick had looped up invitingly off the defensive wall.

Al Ahli were forced to come back from going behind in Jeddah to an early penalty from former Real Madrid striker Joselu to hand Al Gharafa a defeat that ends the Qatari side's hopes of advancing.

Joselu scored with six minutes on the clock but Ivan Toney bundled the ball home from close range to level in the 21st minute while Roberto Firmino gave the home side the lead when he slid in to score 13 minutes later.

An error from goalkeeper Sergio Rico allowed Galeno's rising shot through his hands for Al Ahli's third with a minute left in the half and Riyad Mahrez's penalty added to Al Ahli's cushion before Yacine Brahimi's 80th minute consolation spot-kick.

## Jaissle wants high-flying Al Ahli to aim for the title

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia - Matthias Jaissle wants his players to reach for the stars after Al Ahli's completed a near-perfect AFC Champions League Elite league stage campaign with a 4-2 win against Al Gharafa on Monday.

"We reacted wonderfully, and the players' reaction after conceding the goal was excellent, which is not easy and makes me very happy," said the 36-year-old German.

"We achieved a historic record in this edition without losing, and this is not easy. We have the support of the fans and we look forward to winning this tournament."

Al Ahli went behind to a Joselu strike in the sixth minute but roared back with goals from Ivan Toney, Roberto Firmino, Galeno and Riyad Mahrez.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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Indian male having 20 years of experience in Oman & GCC in Project and Dealer Market Sales, Business Development etc., having valid D/L, looking for the post of Sales Manager/BDM/Sr. Sales Executive Contact : 78099493

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"Looking for Structural Designer having experience in design of Structural Steel Building mainly in PEB industry. Minimum 3 years of experience with M-Tech Structural Design. Please Send CV to: hrjob191@yahoo.com"

### BIRTHDAY WISHES



AARON

Happy Birthday dear Son!  
"To the one who always makes us smile - Happy Birthday, kiddo!"  
May all your wishes come true..  
Luv Appa & Amma

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# BLACK CAPS IN INJURY CRISIS

Foot injury rules Ferguson out of Champions Trophy, Ravindra doubtful for opener

Karachi, Pakistan - New Zealand fast bowler Lockie Ferguson was ruled out of the Champions Trophy with a foot injury on Tuesday in a major blow for the Black Caps on the eve of the tournament opener against hosts Pakistan.

All-rounder Rachin Ravindra could also miss the Group A match as he continues to recover from a blow to his forehead sustained during a tri-series match in Lahore earlier this month.

Ferguson, who suffered a hamstring injury in a T20 tournament in the United Arab Emirates earlier this month, felt pain in his right foot after bowling in Sunday's warm-up match against Afghanistan.

An initial medical assessment suggested the 33-year-old would not be fit to take part in the entire tournament, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said.

New Zealand have decided to send him home and bring in Canterbury Kings fast bowler Kyle Jamieson, who will not reach Pakistan in time for Wednesday's match.

"We're really disappointed for Lockie," head coach Gary Stead said in the statement issued by the NZC.

"Lockie is a key part of the



Lockie Ferguson

*We will be taking a cautious approach with him (Ravindra). If he doesn't play this game, we expect he'll be right for the next one*

GARY STEAD, NEW ZEALAND

bowling group and brings a lot of major tournament experience and we know how much he was looking forward to representing New Zealand at another major event."

Jamieson returned to domestic cricket in December after 10 months on the sidelines due to a stress fracture in his back.

"Kyle brings plenty of pace and extra bounce which will suit

the conditions here in Pakistan," Stead said of Jamieson, who will be available for New Zealand's second Group A game against Bangladesh on Feb. 24.

Though on a high after winning the tri-series in Pakistan beating the hosts in Friday's final, New Zealand are also without quick Ben Sears due to a hamstring injury.

India's Jasprit Bumrah, Anrich Nortje of South Africa and Australian duo Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood are among other fast bowlers to miss out on the Champions Trophy with injuries.

New Zealand are also waiting to hear about the fitness of spin-bowling all-rounder Ravindra, who suffered a nasty blow after losing sight of the ball in the floodlights while attempting to catch it.

"He's had a couple of hits, but ... we'll take medical advice around it understanding with a hit in the head the way he got, and stitches to his forehead as well," Stead later told reporters.

"We will be taking a cautious approach with him. If he doesn't play this game, we expect he'll be right for the next one."

Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan confirmed Babar Azam would continue to open the innings like he did in the recent tri-series.

"Babar is our most solid player, technically. He will bat at the top," Rizwan told reporters.

New Zealand beat Pakistan twice in the recent tri-series but Rizwan was hopeful they would be third time lucky.

"We have identified our shortcomings and work on them. We are confident we will not repeat those mistakes tomorrow."

## Kenjige spins USA to big win over Oman



Nosthush Kenjige of the US took five wickets for 11 runs against Oman

Muscat - Oman's spin-heavy strategy backfired as Nosthush Kenjige's career-best spell tore through their batting lineup, leading the USA to a commanding 57-run victory in the ICC World Cup League 2 at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Tuesday.

The left-arm spinner's five-wicket haul (5-11) proved decisive as Oman collapsed for just 65, their lowest-ever ODI total, while chasing a modest 123-run target. Previously, Oman's lowest ODI score was 81 against Namibia in Windhoek in 2019.

With this win, the USA avenged their earlier defeat against Oman in the tri-series and strengthened their position at the top of the points table with 22 points from 16 matches.

Oman remained second with 18 at the end of the tri-series, which also featured Namibia (12 points from 16 games, while Canada, with four games in hand, are third on 16 points.

Batting first, the USA struggled early, losing four wickets inside the first 10 overs. Oman's spinners, led by Shakeel Ahmed (3-20) and Aamir Kaleem (2-22), ran through the top order, reducing the visitors to 31-5.

However, Milind Kumar (47 off 82, 6x4) held the innings together with two crucial partnerships. He added 30 runs with Aaron Jones (16) for the sixth wicket and another 33 with Sanjay Krishnamurthi (16) for the seventh, helping the USA post 122 before they were bowled out in 35.3 overs. Oman's spinners dominated the innings, with nine of the ten wickets falling to them with Kenjige run out.

Shakeel Ahmed finished as the leading wicket-taker of the tri-series with 13 scalps. Samay Shrivastava (2/41), Siddharth Bukkapatnam (1/11), and Jay Odedra (1/23) also played key roles in restricting the USA.

Chasing 123, Oman struggled from the outset as both openers, including skipper Jatinder Singh (7), fell cheaply. Hammad Mirza (29 off 43) was the only batter to offer resistance, but he found little support.

Kenjige was well supported by the USA's spin attack, with Yasir Mohammad (2-10), Milind Kumar (2-17), and Harmeet Singh (1-25) contributing to Oman's downfall. Kumar was adjudged the player of the match.

Oman's Jiten Ramanandi made his ODI debut, receiving his first cap from skipper Jatinder Singh.

## Players feel there is favouritism in anti-doping system: Djokovic

Doha, Qatar - Novak Djokovic said a majority of players believe favouritism is at play in the tennis anti-doping system and called for it to be overhauled in the wake of cases involving Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek.

Sinner on Saturday accepted a three-month doping ban after testing positive for anabolic agent clostebol last year, while Swiatek served a one-month ban at the end of 2024 when the banned substance trimetazidine (TMZ) showed up in her test.

"A majority of the players don't feel that (the process is) fair. A majority of the players feel like there is favouritism happening," Djokovic said.

"It appears that you can almost affect the outcome if you are a top player, if you have access to the top lawyers and whatnot."



Novak Djokovic

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# #OMTB2024 AWARDS

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## 'TRADITION OF TRUST' ENTERS EIGHTH YEAR

Business captains of 52 esteemed brands in Oman converged at the Ballroom of Shangri La Barr al Jissah Muscat on February 17 to receive the coveted trophy of **Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards 2024** – a symbol of consumer trust as well as a testimony of their commitment to quality and service excellence

The overall mood was of jubilation...the sentiments among invitees conveyed confidence...and the 'take home' for all present was a set of explicit tips on good branding practices delivered by none other than H H Sayyid Dr Faris bin Turki al Said, Member of the Technical Team for Oman's Promotional Identity - the ultimate voice in Oman on 'branding and consumer behaviour'.

Top management and business heads of esteemed brands in Oman came together in the Ballroom of Shangri La Barr al Jissah Muscat on Monday evening to cheer and honour the best brands in Oman which have scored high on quality and service excellence during 2024.

The eighth edition of Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards, hosted by Apex Media - publishers of Muscat Daily - saw winning brands across 52 categories bag the coveted trophy in a glittering function that celebrated the winning virtues that top brands have cherished and fostered in the sultanate over the years.

The event was held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Faris, the chief guest, who shared valuable insights about good branding practices relevant to Oman and later presented the awards to representatives of the winning brands.

The top brands were voted as Oman's Most Trusted Brands by consumers who participated in an online survey preceding the event.

More than one million



*You are ambassadors... When you brand yourself, it's not just about putting logos and celebrating Ramadan or National Day, it's about living and breathing Oman in every decision you make*

H H SAYYID DR FARIS BIN TURKI AL SAID

votes were polled as consumer interest in the survey took to new heights this year, expressing their loyalty and expectation for continuing the 'tradition of trust' through this awards event.

Welcoming the guests at the outset, executive chairman of Apex Media and editor-in-chief of Muscat Daily, Saleh Zakwani congratulated the representatives of all brands for earning the trust of consumers in Oman and for their dedication in maintaining high quality of products as well as service excellence.

"Trust is not something a brand can buy - it has to

be earned. Our experience over the past eight years proves that winning Oman's Most Trusted Brand Award is a badge of honour, a mark of excellence, and a symbol of consumer confidence. The brands we celebrate tonight have not only delivered quality and reliability but have also built lasting relationships with the consumers they serve. We are proud to celebrate your success...let the brands speak for themselves," he said.

H H Sayyid Faris, who delivered the keynote address, enlightened those present about the essential elements that make a good brand as well as the role and responsibilities of those brands in maintaining the trust



*Trust is not something a brand can buy – it has to be earned. Our experience over the past eight years proves that winning Oman's Most Trusted Brand Award is a badge of honour, a mark of excellence, and a symbol of consumer confidence*

SALEH ZAKWANI

of consumers in Oman. He congratulated the top brands for their endeavours in upholding consumer interests and pointed out that they were, indeed, ambassadors, not just for their respective brands, but also for Oman, and what it stands for.

"You are ambassadors... When you brand yourself, it's not just about putting logos and celebrating Ramadan or National Day, it's about living and breathing Oman in every decision you make. You enhance tourism - a lot of you may not be in tourism, but what you do as successful brands, you enhance tourism by making it tangible.

"Remember that restaurant you went to in that country...that bottle of

fizzy drink you had...that toy you bought for your child or that chocolate you bought from that country - that's the tangible aspect of tourism, and that's what you do as successful brands. You keep those memories locked in people and people love brands, they breathe brands, they eat brands, and do everything with brands. So, once you get awarded today for being successful in Oman, think of yourselves as ambassadors. And people who seek successful brands in a nation, want to work in that nation," H H Sayyid Faris emphasised.

He further pointed out, that Oman's values are generally traditional but if one considers the landscape today, the

sultanate has expanded its vision and its horizons, especially in the last five years under the direction of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and "you are the ambassadors who carry the Omani flag everywhere."

H H Sayyid Faris then presented the awards to the winning brands in 52 categories amid loud cheers and applause from the distinguished guests present. The winners of the eighth edition of Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards, who treasured their prestigious trophies, were all unanimous in their resolve to maintain this 'tradition of trust' with consumers.

Some of the winning brands have been securing the top position for several years consecutively, indicating their unflinching commitment to consumers.

Senior representatives of the winning brands expressed their gratitude towards Apex Media for creating and maintaining a platform wherein brand superiority can be celebrated, year after year. The awards, stemming from popular consumer choice, were an acknowledgment that they were doing things right, they said, adding that the award was a sure motivation to continue winning the trust of consumers.

Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards are based on the results of a month-long extensive survey which was open to general public for voting. In each passing year, OMTB Awards has grown in terms of both, attracting votes and number of categories. This year the survey attracted over one million votes across 52 different categories, indicating its significant growth as well as popularity among businesses and consumers.

OMTB awards were set up by Apex Media in 2016 to recognise and honour those brands in Oman that have lived up to the expectations of consumers and set parameters for others in the fray to follow suit. It has now become a red-letter day in the corporate calendar.



AIR CONDITIONER  
**GENERAL** (Khimji Ramdas LLC- Infrastructure Group)



AIRLINES (BUDGET)  
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AIRLINES (FULL SERVICE)  
**OMAN AIR**



APPAREL  
**CENTREPOINT**



AUTOMOTIVE (SUV CROSSOVERS)  
**CHANGAN** (Arabian Gulf Automobiles)



AUTOMOTIVE (CARS - SEDAN)  
**HYUNDAI** (OTE Group)



BANK (LOCAL)  
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BATHROOM FITTINGS AND ACCESS  
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**MUSCAT DERMATOLOGY & LASER CENTER**



DENTAL CLINIC  
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**SAMSUNG** (SARCO)



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**LULU HYPERMARKET**



LUBRICANTS  
**CASTROL** (Oman Oil Marketing Company)



LUXURY WATCHES  
**IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN** (Mistal)



MEAT  
**BUSHRA** (Al Bashayer Meat Co.)



OMANI BRAND (B2B)  
**OQGN**



OMANI BRAND (B2C)  
**NABIL** (National Biscuit Industries Limited)



PAINTS  
**JOTUN PAINTS**



POULTRY PRODUCTS (EGG)  
**DANA EGGS** (Arabian Food Product)



REAL ESTATE (PROPERTY MANAGEMENT)  
**AL HABIB & CO LLC**



SUPERMARKETS  
**NOOR SHOPPING** (Matrah Cold Stores LLC)



TELECOM  
**OOREDoo**



TILES  
**RAK CERAMICS** (Al Tasnim Middle)



# 2024 AWARDS

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**JETOUR** (MHD ACERE)



AUTOMOTIVE (LUXURY)  
**MERCEDES - BENZ** (Zawawi Trading Co. LLC)



AUTOMOTIVE (SUPER LUXURY)  
**ROLLS ROYCE** (Al Jenaibi International Automobiles LLC)



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BEVERAGES - (JUICES)  
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**SHARAF DG**



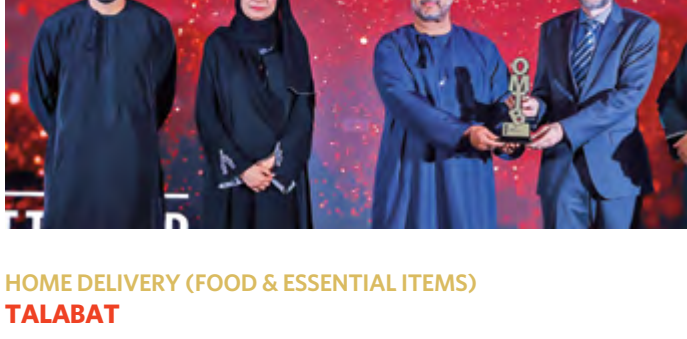
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**MUSCAT EYE LASER CENTER**



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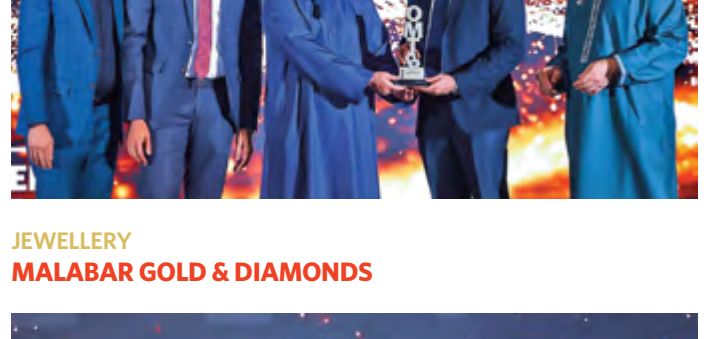
HOSPITALITY LUXURY  
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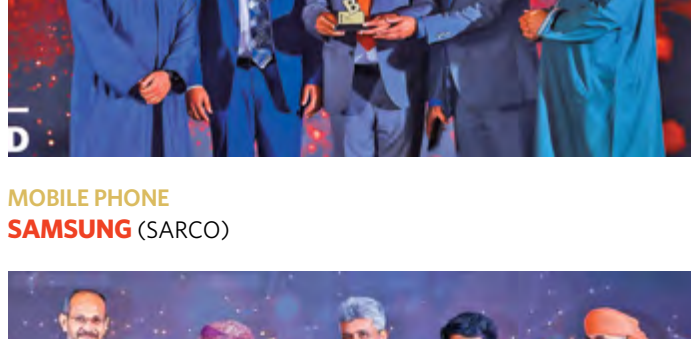
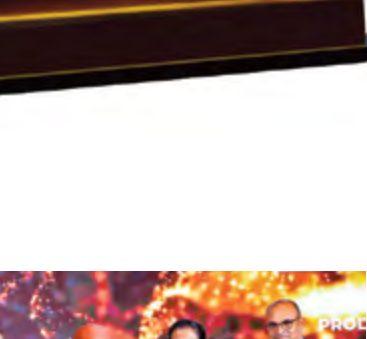
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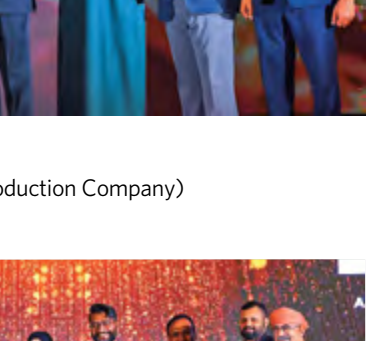
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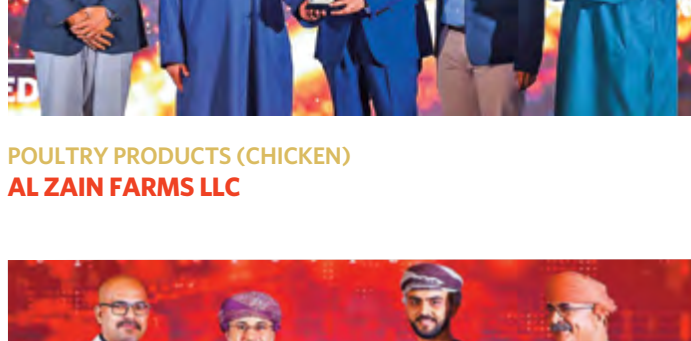
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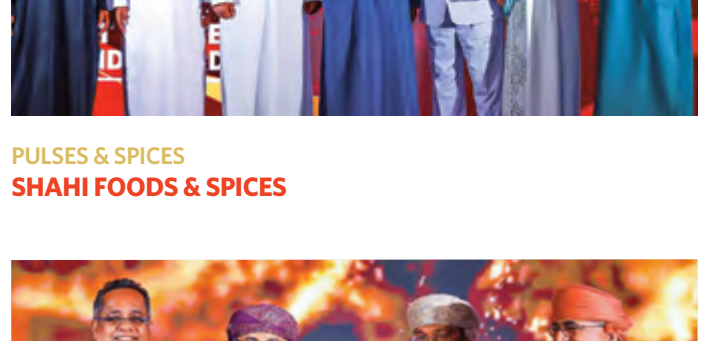
Production Company)



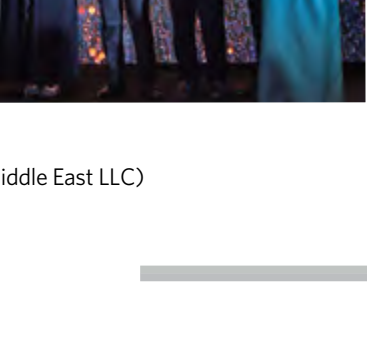
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**AL ZAIN FARMS LLC**



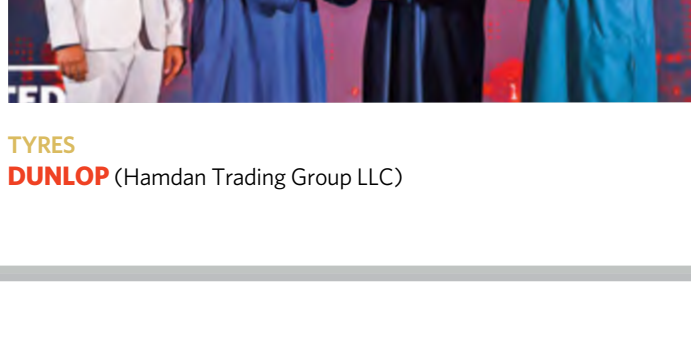
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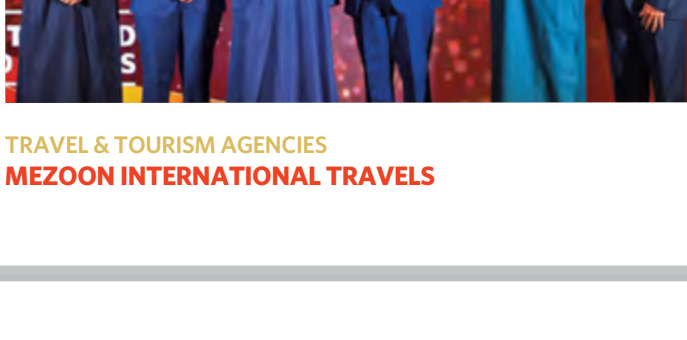
PULSES & SPICES  
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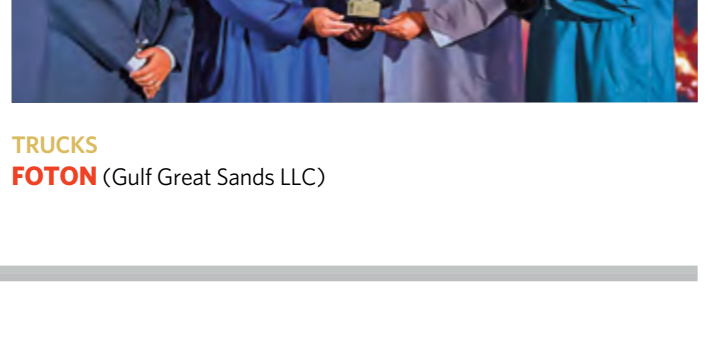
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# #OMTB2024 AWARDS



**Abdul Wahid Al Murshidi**  
Acting CEO,  
Sohar International

Earning the title of 'Oman's Most Trusted Brand 2024' is a powerful endorsement of Sohar International's unwavering commitment to setting new benchmarks in banking excellence. Trust is the cornerstone of sustainable financial leadership, and this recognition reflects our strategic focus on innovation, customer-centricity, and long-term value creation. As we continue to drive transformation in the financial sector, we remain dedicated to empowering individuals, businesses, and the national economy with forward-thinking solutions that inspire confidence and growth.



**Donatella Donatelli**  
Head of Marketing and Communication, Mercedes-Benz Oman

Mercedes-Benz has gained the trust of customers because it keeps delivering on its promise of luxury, quality, safety and innovation. Exceptional products, from Top-end to Entry luxury vehicles, are a testament of the brand's commitment to excellence. It's an honour to win the Oman's Most Trusted Brand Award in the luxury automotive category for the seventh consecutive year and we are fully committed to consistently deliver an exceptional customer journey throughout all touchpoints in the years to come.



**Abdul Latheef and Dr P A Mohamed**  
Managing Directors, Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals

The overall quality healthcare services governed by safe practices and protocols laid by international accreditation bodies and Ministry of Health, coupled with efficient and highly experienced and caring medical staff has made us ensure the best treatment for our patients in a safe environment. This award is an acknowledgment of the trust our patients and communities have shown in us. Brands chosen for the award by due voting and a stringent process are the actual voice of the people, so it is always encouraging and inspirational. This is our 7th OMTB award - we strive to keep on winning it every year ahead.



**Najeeb K**  
Regional Head,  
Malabar Gold & Diamonds

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is ranked as the world's 6th largest jewellery retailer, with over 375 showrooms across 13 countries. In Oman alone, it operates 12 world-class showrooms, with further expansions planned. Since entering the Omani market in 2010, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has become the country's leading jewellery retailer, known for its commitment to quality, craftsmanship, and exceptional service.



**Ahmed Bakhit al Shanfari**  
Div Head - Marketing & Business Development, Al Maha

Our success in maintaining a top position in the industry is driven by our commitment to excellence, innovation, and customer-centric services. With high-quality fuel products, an extensive network of service stations, and continuous investment in advanced technology, we ensure a seamless and reliable experience for our customers. Winning an award like Oman's Most Trusted Brand is both an honour and a significant motivator for us. It reinforces our dedication to building trust with consumers by consistently providing exceptional services and products.



**Ahmed Ballan Dad Mohamed al Balushi**  
AGM Marketing, OTE

Our unwavering commitment to innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction has been key to securing our top position in the industry. By continuously evolving our products and services to meet the dynamic needs of our customers, Hyundai remains a trusted brand in Oman. With this award, our dedication to building long-term relationships with our customers will only grow stronger. Winning the OMTB award serves as a powerful motivation to continue earning consumer trust. It validates the efforts we've made to provide exceptional products and services.



**Shabbir Boryawala**  
Chairman,  
Al Zain Farms

This award is an honour for both, myself and the entire Al Zain team. It not only serves as a testament to the dedication, hard work, and passion that we put into every product, but also reinforces our commitment to excellence in everything we do. Receiving such recognition adds a great deal of prestige to our brand, further solidifying the trust our consumers place in us. It also highlights the quality of our products and services, reinforcing that we are consistently setting the bar higher in our industry.



**Sajir C P**  
Business Director,  
Apex Media

OMTB is Oman's only consumer-driven brand award, making it a true reflection of public trust. Unlike industry-judged accolades, OMTB is decided entirely by consumers, ensuring authenticity and credibility. Over the years, it has evolved into the nation's most definitive benchmark for brand excellence, with no other event of this scale in the country. Winning this award is a testament to a brand's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction, reinforcing loyalty and boosting visibility across marketing platforms. It's more than an award - it's a powerful symbol of trust that drives business success in Oman's competitive market.



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