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Times OF OMAN

GOLDEN JUBILEE | 50 YEARS OF LEGACY

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SURVEY TO ASSESS DIGITAL ECONOMY'S SHARE IN OMAN'S GDP

Oman plans to achieve the goal of increasing the digital economy's share of GDP to 10% by 2040

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman has launched a vital survey to assess the digital economy's contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2023.

The initiative is a key part of the country's efforts to achieve the ambitious goal of increasing the digital economy's share of GDP to 10% by 2040.

The survey will provide essential data to track the progress of Oman's digital economy and inform future policies.

It focuses on measuring the contribution of digital services, including communications, information technology, and financial services, to the national economy.

The findings will help policymakers make informed decisions to enhance growth in these sectors.

Hamad bin Nasser Al Shikaili, Director of the Survey Project at the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology, emphasised the importance of private sector cooperation for the success of the survey.

The data collected through the survey will offer a detailed picture of the current state of Oman's digital economy, including key economic indicators such as the digital economy's contribution to GDP, the added value of digital services, investment in digital infrastructure, and employment trends across the sector. >A2

CABLE

HM greets president of Bulgaria

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Dr. Rumen Radev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere wishes to President Dr. Rumen Radev and to the people of Bulgaria. — ONA

MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Plan to develop adventure tourism in Dhofar region

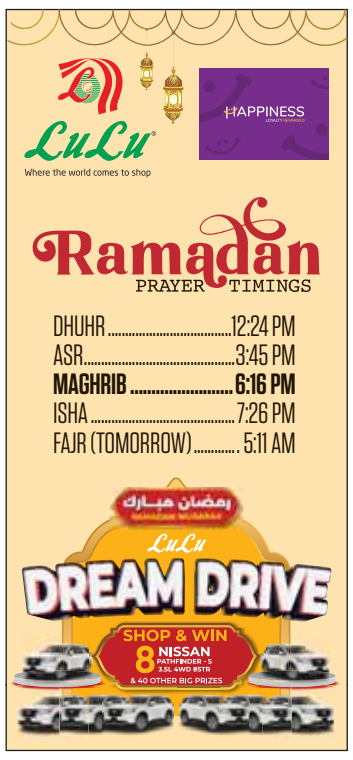
Times News Service

SALALAH: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has plans to develop three mountain trails in the Dhofar Governorate.

Specialised local companies in the governorate have been allotted the work to develop adventure tourism infrastructure in the governorate.

The project of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism includes the establishment of a track for high-wire (Via ferrata) activity in Jabal Samhan.

It's a kind of adventure activity practiced on iron tracks in high mountain regions with steep slopes. The work also includes providing tracks for mountain climbing in the Ain Hasheer area, the Tabaldi trees, and the Ain Ghaydh path with signposts to direct visitors to the aforementioned paths. >A2



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Efforts to protect Arabian ibex in Al Dhahirah

1 Al Dhahirah Governorate offers many habitats for wild animals, including the Arabian ibex. Al Dhahirah Nature Reserve is home to different species of wild animals. >A2

WORLD

UK, France, Ukraine to present peace bid

2 British PM Keir Starmer has said the UK, France and Ukraine have agreed to work on a ceasefire plan. >A7

SPORTS

Atletico move to top of Spanish La Liga

3 Julian Alvarez scored his 10th goal of the season to help Atletico Madrid beat Athletic Club. >A8

DLive

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- Cloud Services Provider of the Year
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OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

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Asr.....3:45pm
Maghrib.....6:16pm
Isha.....7:26pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)..... 5:11am

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SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

Efforts on to protect Arabian ibex in Al Dhahirah

IBRI: Al Dhahirah Governorate offers many habitats for wild animals, including the Arabian ibex. Al Dhahirah Nature Reserve, which extends over an area of more than 860 square kilometres, is home to different species of wild animals.

Field surveys show that the nature reserve houses good numbers of the Arabian ibex, in addition to the Arabian gazelle, the lynx, the mountain fox and wild cats.

The Arabian ibex, in particular, constitutes a salient feature of the natural heritage of the Sultanate of Oman. In Al Dhahirah Governorate, the Arabian ibex forms the most common view of animals living normally in the wild.

Al Dhahirah Nature Reserve stands apart for its unique location amid the rugged mountainous terrain, which provides a suitable environment for reproduction and growth of the Arabian ibex away from threats.

Yasser bin Hamoud Al Hinai,, Head of the Environmental Monitoring Department in Al Dhahirah Governorate, pointed out that the Arabian ibex, also known as the Arabian tahr, lives on the rugged mountaintops and is a shy animal that is difficult to see. It is very active in September during the mating season.

He explained that the specialists in the Environment Department in Al Dhahirah Governorate were able to monitor the ibex with trap cameras in several areas of the governorate, and several poaching activities were monitored to preserve it from extinction.

He added that field studies show that the Arabian ibex is found in the mountain ranges extending from the south of Wadi Al Khabeeb in the Wilayat of Dhank to the Al Mazam area northwest of the Wilayat of Ibri. Despite the efforts made to protect this species, the Arabian ibex faces several threats, most notably: poaching, in some cases, as illegal hunting of the Arabian ibex has been detected in some areas, which requires enhancing environmental awareness and strictly enforcing laws to protect this natural treasure.

He stated that the Environment Authority is making strenuous efforts to preserve the Arabian ibex and its natural habitats.

These efforts include implementing continuous monitoring patrols, cooperating with the local community to report any violations, in addition to awareness programmes on the importance of preserving this rare species of wildlife in the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

PICTURESQUE REGION

Adventure tourism in Dhofar region

< FROM A1

The work also includes repainting of walking routes for convenience of tourists.

Parts of the paths were paved to make the walk easier for users, which will enhance the influx of visitors to the picturesque region. It is worth noting that the geographical diversity of Dhofar Governorate makes it full of opportunities for adventure tourism, where hiking or mountain walking teams can practice their activities in more than 40 well-known mountain trails, due to its caves and water springs. -With ONA inputs

MUTTRAH ENRICHMENT FORUM

Discussion on sustainable financial management in education field

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The third Muttrah Enrichment Forum under the theme 'Professional Development and Knowledge Enrichment' was held at the Muscat Governorate building.

The forum was attended by several officials and specialists from education field, including Dr Hamad bin Saeed Al Mamari, Wali of Muttrah and Chairman of the Parents Council.

The meeting discussed sustainable financial management among schools' administrators and students through various working papers presented by experts and specialists.

Dr Mubarak bin Khalfan Al Rahbi from the State Audit Institution presented the forum's first paper on 'Integrity Role in Protecting Public Funds'.

He discussed about financial integrity to strengthen citizens' trust in institutions and achieve economic and social security.

Hamad bin Saif Al Jabri from the Central Bank of Oman highlighted 'Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Risks' in the second paper.

He reviewed the stages of money laundering and ways to prevent it, and the Central Bank's efforts to combat it.

To raise participants' awareness on financial management, Dr Suad bint Jassim from the College of Banking and Financial Studies presented the third paper on 'Managing Financial Resources Smartly: Achieving Effective Financial Sustainability in Educational Institutions'.

She outlined the best practices to achieve financial sustainability in educational sector. Hussain bin Ali Al Balushi presented the fourth paper entitled 'Managing Financial Resources in Schools', discussing financial management and planning in schools and the expenditure, documentation and financial resources auditing.

This forum was a voluntary initiative implemented by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Parents' Council in Muttrah.

It promotes awareness of financial resources sustainability and their role to achieve sustainable development, according to the Oman Vision 2040's strategic objectives.

SURVEY

Future strategies

< FROM A1

These insights will be valuable for policymakers, researchers, and international comparisons to shape future strategies.

Targeting 1,300 private sector establishments across Oman, the survey will cover various industries involved in ICT and digital financial services.

The results will be used to compare regional and international trends, support economic studies, and guide Oman's digital economy roadmap.

Unified portal

Alongside the survey, the Ministry has also recently launched the Unified Government Services Portal (gov.om), streamlining access to nearly 100 government services.

The portal, which eliminates the need for multiple platforms, simplifies processes for citizens, residents, and businesses. The second phase of the portal, set to launch between March and June, will add more services to the platform.

These initiatives reflect Oman's commitment to achieving its digital economy goals, driving growth, and positioning the country as a regional leader in the digital age. The portal provides personalised dashboards for tracking services, step-by-step guides, and efficient procedures for accessing a wide variety of government services, benefitting citizens, residents, and businesses alike.

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COMMENTARY

Another month of blessing

SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

We are now enjoying the blessings of the holy month of Ramadan once more as we fast during the day and enjoy the holy privileges bestowed on us during the night.

But make no mistake about it, Ramadan is not about refraining from eating the whole day but it has many health benefits as confirmed by medical experts and nutritionists. Voluntary starvation is an opportunity, too, to think of the poor people who are regularly starving because they cannot afford a decent meal in any single day.

That should encourage us to donate to the poor and the less fortunate because fasting is to remind us how it feels to go about our business without food all day long. The third element is to sit back and meditate by reflecting the graces of God where there are signs of his creations everyway we go. Normally, we live in a very fast lane of life. Not only the physical part of it, like when we go to our offices or conducting our trades, but mentally, too, when our thoughts travel to areas that interfere with our health.

In this context, I personally take examples of real life events. On the first day of Ramadan, I was caught in a road traffic during the early hours of the afternoon. There was a long line of cars in front of me and I knew I would be stuck there for at least an hour. When the first pangs of frustration started to work their way into my nerves, I quickly calmed myself with a thought that there was no lunch waiting for me to hurry through.

So I composed myself and looked at the long line of date trees, the flowers and the occasional sand dunes as my car inched its way forward on the road. I also watched the birds who came sweeping down from the sky to land on the trees. Normally, I am not that attentive when I get stuck on a road. But the grace of a Ramadan's day calmed my nerves while watching the creations of God.

When I finally got out of traffic, I hit the brakes just a few kilometers from my home, when a camel, who had no business to be there, crossed the street road.

It stopped in the middle of the road, turned its long neck and looked at the cars as if to say to all drivers," what are you going to do about it?"

Cars behind me honked furiously to scare it off but the animal took its time and was in no hurry to get out of the road. I enjoyed every second watching it knowing that I may never see an animal that size stopping the traffic. I also took a few photos of the camel to remind me of the occasion. When it finally decided to move to the other side, I was thoroughly entertained by its unexpected appearance.

Looking back now, I truly now believe that it was all part of the blessings of the month of Ramadan. We slow down a little bit being grateful that we are all well under the safety net of God, as part of his creations. So let us rejoice the rest of the month and look forward for Eid in the next three weeks and half.

WORDS OF WISDOM

"Fasting has been prescribed for you during] the certain number of days, but if some of you are sick or on a journey, [you should fast] the same number during other days. And those who are not able to fast should feed a poor person as an atonement, and whosoever volunteers more [and feeds more than one poor] it is better for him. Fasting is better for you if you know."

IFTAR RECIPE

Kavya Ramasubramanian

SWEETCORN VEGETABLE VADAA

INGREDIENTS:

Sweet corn kernels - one bowl
Grated carrot - half carrot
Finely chopped onion - 1 medium sized
Garlic pearls finely chopped
- 1 or 2 garlic pearls (optional)
Coriander finely chopped
- for garnishing
Green chilli finely chopped
- as required Salt
- as required Gram flour
- 1.5 tablespoons
Rice flour
- 1 tablespoon

METHOD:

• Remove the corn kernels from three corns
• Using a mixie, grind the corn kernels coarsely and transfer the content to a bowl
• Add the above mentioned Ingredients into the bowl
• Mix well using hands to make a dough
• Take small quantities and make it into flattened round shaped patties
• Drop it in hot oil and deep fry it
• Remove the vadaas when golden brown and transfer it onto a kitchen tissue.
• Enjoy the vadaas with mint chutney or any sauce of your choice

RECITATIONS OF THE QURAN ILLUMINATE WORLD CITIES DURING RAMADAN

One of the most frequently heard phrases by Muslims during Ramadan is that this is "the month of the Quran." Perhaps the most important and accurate statement about Ramadan is precisely this.

To speak of Ramadan is to speak of the Quran. Islamic scholars constantly emphasize this connection; recitations of the Quran are held in mosques and homes, and with Ramadan, the Quran is once again revealed, illuminating Muslim cities. The connection between Ramadan and the Quran stems from the revelation sent down this month. "The Night of Power" ("Laylat al-Qadr"), the night when the Quran's first verses were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is also within this month. What we hear about the relationship between Ramadan and the Quran is true: the real issue is fulfilling its requirements.

The Quran is divine speech. Muslims know that when they read their holy book, they are not reading just any ordinary words; they do not see it as just another book. A particular line of reasoning defines the framework of Muslims' relationship with the Quran: God is the ultimate reality, and one aspect of His being the ultimate reality is that His words are eternal. Therefore, His speech is not something acquired or learned — it is primordial.

We can consider three fundamental aspects of how reading the Quran directly affects our lives.

First, the Holy Quran is not confined to any particular time. To think of it as limited to a specific time is to misunderstand divine speech completely. It is a timeless book; its truth is always relevant and binding. When it was revealed, that moment did not become just another moment in history — it became the essence of time itself. The first principle we should derive from this is: "The Quran at all times." Thus, when we say, "Ramadan is the month of the Quran," we mean that Ramadan is the time when we should deeply contemplate the Quran's timeless nature and its encompassing presence in all moments.

Second, the Quran is not confined to a specific place or geography. Although it was revealed in a particular location, its eternal nature prevents it from being restricted to that place. When divine revelation reaches a place, that place comes to represent and encompass all places. At the moment of revelation, the Hijaz was not just a region of the world — it was the whole world. The fact that the Quran was revealed to the Arabs or in the Hijaz does not make that place exclusive, nor does it mean the Quran belongs solely to that land. The Quran is a book for all geographies. The second principle to be drawn here is: "The Quran everywhere!"

Third, Islam's holy book addresses all of humanity. As an eternal book, it does not prioritize one group over another. For instance, it does not place men above women or disregard women. To claim that Islam differentiates between social classes, categorizes people based on intelligence or abilities, or was revealed to suit the understanding of a particular group is utterly nonsensical. Islam, without making distinctions between men and women, gathers all of humanity under one fundamental principle: human dignity. Its prophet who received the revelation was not just an individual; he embodied all of humanity — we were all there, potentially, in that moment. The divisions and separations that arise due to our different roles and abilities in the world are united under the umbrella of the divine book, forming the true community of humanity. Thus, "The Quran for everyone!"

Simply, the universality of Islam means the Quran at all times, everywhere, and for everyone, the Turkish Daily Sabah newspaper said while highlighting spiritual rituals during the holy month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, we need this kind of awareness and excitement — to look at the eternal book with fresh eyes, as if hearing revelation for the first time.

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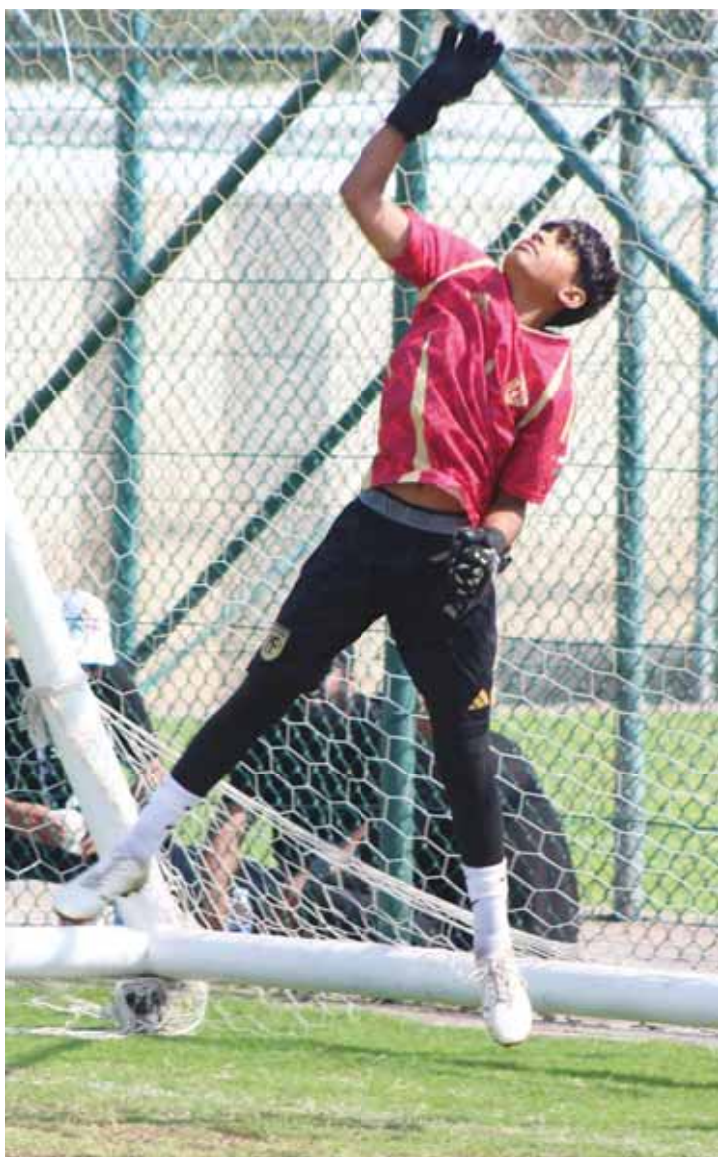

Bima Oman Academies Championship set for grand finale at Seeb Stadium

A total of 72 teams from 10 governorates to compete in the three-day finals scheduled to be held in early May

MUSCAT: The stage is set for the highly anticipated Bima Oman Academies Championship, with 72 teams from 10 governorates gearing up for the grand finals at Seeb Stadium in early May 2025.

This follows an intense qualification process that began on November 15, 2024, with 200 teams competing for a place in the final showdown.

Fadi Kattar, head of the organising committee, confirmed that preparations are in place for what promises to be "Oman's largest football and entertainment festival", bringing together young talent, passionate fans, and families for a celebration of the sport.

The tournament will be played over three days, with the opening ceremony on May 1 and the finals on May 3, where the top three teams in each category will be crowned.

The event is expected to draw over 15,000 spectators, with a mix of competitive matches and engaging activities for attendees.

The competition format will see teams in each age category divided into three groups of six, playing in a single-round league.

The top two teams and the best third-placed teams will advance to the quarterfinals, followed by knockout rounds to determine the champions.

Matches in the early stages will last 25 minutes, while knockout rounds will be played in two halves.

The organising committee, in coordination with the Oman Football Association (OFA), has ensured full refereeing teams and the implementation of new offside, card, and substitution rules.

To enhance the tournament's efficiency, all teams must submit their final 25-player rosters electronically by March 20, ahead of the pilot launch of the OFAL app, which will streamline player and team management.

Additionally, a special coaching course for the trainers of qualifying teams will be conducted by Wael Sisi, OFA's technical expert, before the finals.

Official draw on April 15

Adding to the excitement, the official draw will take place on April 15 in a special event featuring Omani, Gulf, and Arab football stars, as well as key media personalities.

Scouting top young players

Meanwhile, a talent identification committee, led by Sisi and including Khalid Al Alawi, Mohammed Taqi, and Anmar Al Bakri, will be scouting top young players throughout the tournament.

With all preparations in place, the Bima Oman Academies Championship is set to deliver an unforgettable experience, blending competitive football with a vibrant festival atmosphere.

OMAN/WORLD

Engineering innovation in spotlight at SQU event

The 15th Engineering Gathering provides a broad platform for showcasing innovative ideas and advanced technical solutions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The 15th Engineering Gathering commenced at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Dr. Adham bin Turki Al Said, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics and Finance at the College of Economics and Political Science. The event took place at the Al-Fahm Hall in the Cultural Centre.

The gathering welcomed engineering students from within the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Students participating in the gathering represent various higher education institutions, including Sohar University, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Muscat and Shinas), United Arab Emirates University, the University of Al-Anbar in Iraq, the International College of Engineering and Management, and the National University.

Engineering disciplines

Covering a range of engineering disciplines such as architecture, civil engineering, chemical engineering, petroleum engineering, mechanical engineering, industrial engineering, and mechatronics engineering, the gathering provides a broad platform for showcasing innovative ideas and advanced technical solutions.

Students will present their innovations and projects, competing for a series of awards, including the departmental engineering award for each specialisation and the grand prize for the best projects.

The gathering also features an engineering exhibition in the grand hall of the University Cultural Centre, displaying 32 carefully selected projects following rigorous screening stages.

Additionally, interactive activities and events enrich participants' knowledge and foster experience exchange. The gathering will continue until 5th March, running from 11:00amto 5:30pm and from 7:30pm to 10:30pm.

One of the projects featured at the gathering is the design of Musandam International Airport by SQU. This project focuses on designing a modern airport in the Musandam region to boost tourism and support the local economy. The design incorporates sustainable architectural solutions tailored to the region's mountainous topography while ensuring safety and operational efficiency. The project also includes a study of air traffic movement and space management to enhance passenger experience.

Another notable project is Recycling Marble Powder in Concrete Production by SQU. This project aims to utilise waste generated from the marble industry by incorporating marble powder into precast concrete blocks. The research focuses on enhancing the strength and durability of concrete while reducing the environmental impact of marble waste accumulation. The project also explores the potential for reducing natural resource consumption, promoting sustainability in the construction sector.

Enhanced Oil Recovery Using Chemical Injection by the National University, investigates the use of chemical injection techniques to improve crude oil extraction from oil fields. It aims to enhance production efficiency by reducing the water content in extracted oil, thereby conserving resources and minimising environmental impact. The project also examines different chemical formulations to optimise output at minimal cost.

The Brain-Controlled Robotic Arm System, developed by the University of Al-Anbar, Iraq, utilises electroencephalography (EEG) technology to enable individuals with disabilities to control prosthetic limbs using brain signals. An advanced electronic interface is being developed to translate neural signals into motion commands, providing users with precise and seamless control over prosthetic limbs, thereby enhancing their quality of life.

Another innovative project is the Design and Manufacturing of a Thermal Energy Storage System for Oman by SQU. This project seeks to develop a thermal energy storage system powered by solar energy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and improve energy efficiency in Oman. The design incorporates innovative solutions using phase change materials (PCM) and advanced heat transfer systems, enabling stored energy to be used later for heating or electricity generation. This initiative supports global trends in renewable energy and environmental sustainability.

A Miniature Robot for Lunar Surface Exploration, developed by SQU, aims to develop a small robot capable of efficiently exploring the lunar surface. The robot is designed to be lightweight and capable of navigating rugged terrain while equipped with smart technologies for data collection and analysis. This innovation contributes to the advancement of space exploration and unmanned exploration technologies.

Another groundbreaking project is the Production of Blue Hydrogen from Flare Gas by SQU. This project seeks to harness wasted flare gas in Oman to produce blue hydrogen, aligning with the environmental goals of the Oman Vision 2040. The project employs steam methane reforming (SMR) technology combined with carbon capture and storage (CCS) to reduce emissions and promote sustainability. The technical analysis suggests that 1.5 million standard cubic feet of flare gas per day can be converted into 36 tonnes of blue hydrogen daily, strengthening Oman's role as a key producer of low-carbon hydrogen.

Artificial Intelligence for Optimising Medical Appointment Scheduling by SQU, aims to develop an AI-powered system to enhance medical appointment scheduling by leveraging machine learning algorithms to predict patient no-shows, reduce waiting times, and optimise the utilisation of medical resources. The system analyses clinical data and patient behaviour to provide flexible and accurate scheduling solutions, improving healthcare service efficiency.

The 15th Engineering Gathering serves as a dynamic platform that opens horizons for young minds to redefine engineering innovation. Through the participating projects, creativity merges with ambition, crafting solutions to address future challenges. This event is not merely a celebration of achievements but an invitation to continue research and development, reinforcing the role of young engineers in building a smarter and more sustainable future. Here, engineering emerges as a tool for transformation and a means of shaping tomorrow.

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KNOWLEDGE OMAN, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Pact to equip students with essential future-ready skills signed

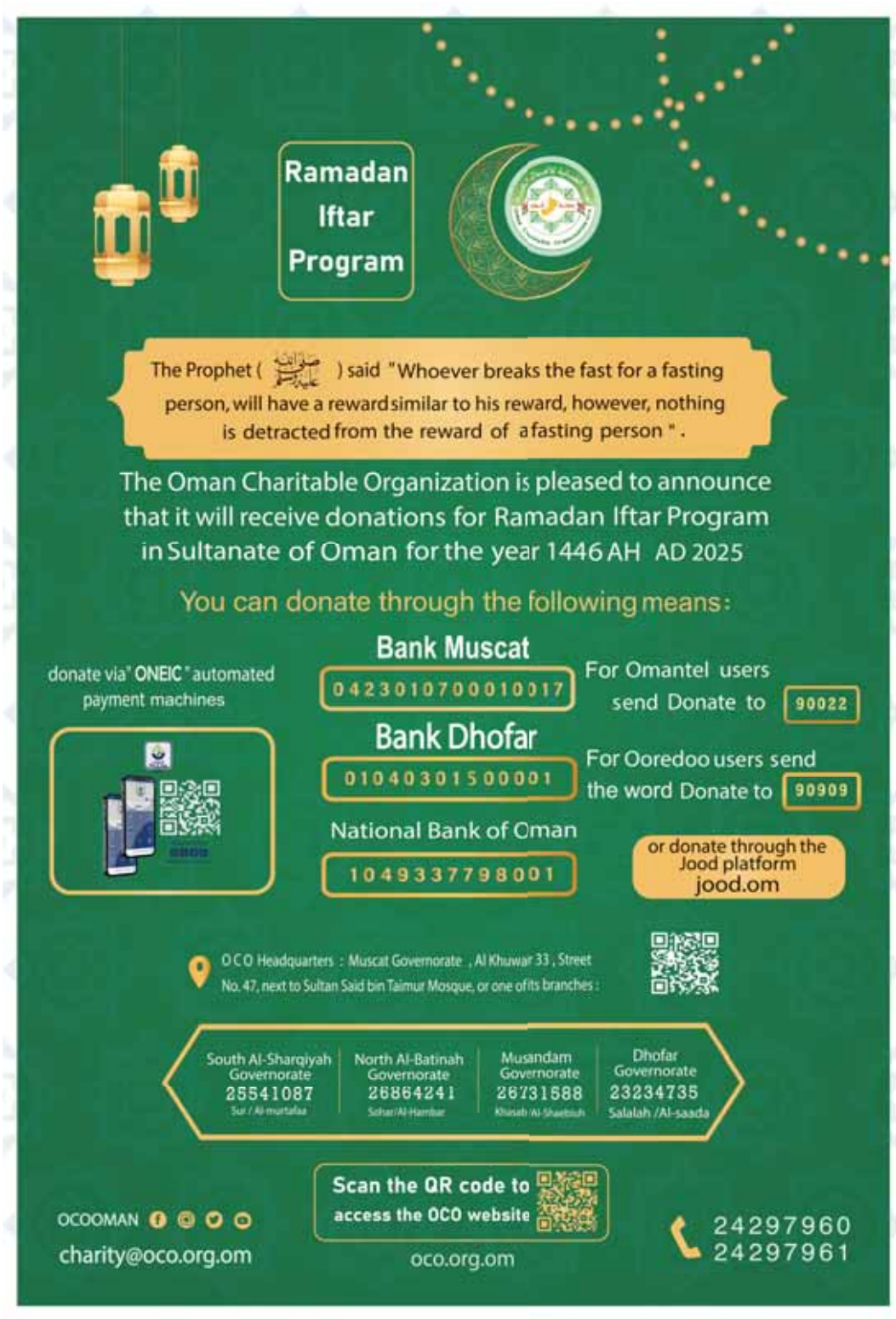
Times News Service

MUSCAT: Knowledge Oman (KO), the leading community-knowledge sharing platform, and the National University of Science and Technology (NU), have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to equip students with essential future-ready skills needed to thrive in the evolving job market. In the presence of the senior academic staff along with Knowledge Oman team, the Vice-Chancellor of National University of Science and Technology, Dr Ali Al Bimani, and Knowledge Oman Founder, Tariq Al Barwani, signed the strategic partnership agreement that aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry by providing students with practical learning experiences, industry insights, and opportunities for professional growth.

"We are committed to providing our students with an education that extends beyond textbooks. Partnering with Knowledge Oman enables us to offer real-world insights and hands-on training that will equip our students with future-ready skills. This initiative will strengthen our students' capabilities and enhance their employability in the ever-changing job market" said Professor Vallavaraj, Dean of the College of Advanced Technology.

As part of the agreement, Knowledge Oman will organise a series of seminars, community engagement initiatives, and expert-led presentations to deliver hands-on sessions that align with the latest industry demands. These initiatives will ensure that students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also develop the skills necessary to succeed in a competitive workforce.

"At Knowledge Oman, our mission has always been to empower the next generation with knowledge and skills that drive innovation and success. Through this collaboration, we are excited to bring industry experts, practical sessions, and community initiatives to students, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future." said Balqees Al Hassani, Knowledge Oman President.



HISTORIC FEET

Firefly Aerospace's 'Blue Ghost' lands on the moon

FLORIDA: A US private spaceship has achieved its first ever uncrewed lunar landing on Sunday, marking the second commercial moon landing.

Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost touched down near an ancient volcanic vent on Mare Crisium, a large basin in the northeast corner of the moon's Earth-facing side.

"We're on the moon," Mission Control reported, adding the lander was "stable."

The mission is part of a NASA partnership with industry to cut costs and support the Artemis programme, which strives to return astronauts to the moon.

"We're going to be putting America first, we're making America proud, we're doing this for the US citizens," said acting NASA director Janet Petro.

Blue Ghost was launched in mid-January from Florida, carrying 10 experiments from NASA to the moon. The space agency paid $101 million (roughly €97.3 million) for the delivery, and $44 million more for the science.

The four-legged spaceship is roughly the size of a compact car.

The lander is carrying a vacuum that would suck up moon dirt for analysis. On board is also a drill to measure temperature as deep as 10 feet (3 metres) below the surface.

The demos should run for roughly two weeks, before lunar daytime is up and the lander shuts down.

The lander captured stunning footage of Earth and the moon along its journey.

It is due to capture high-definition imagery of a total eclipse on March 14, when Earth blocks the sun from the moon's horizon. It will then record a lunar sunset on March 16, in an effort to provide insight into how dust levitates above the surface under solar influence. — DW

DEPARTMENTAL POLICE COMMAND

37 killed in Bolivia bus crash

SUCRE [Bolivia]: At least 37 people lost their lives, and 39 others were injured in a bus crash in Bolivia's Potosi region, according to media report, citing police and local officials' statements.

The accident occurred around 7 AM local time on Saturday on the road between Uyuni and Colchani. Authorities said one of the buses veered into the opposite lane, leading to the collision.

Uyuni is the gateway to the Salar de Uyuni, a major tourist attraction and the world's largest salt flat at more than 10,000sq km (3,900sq miles), as per Al Jazeera.

Speaking to reporters, a spokesperson for the Departmental Police Command of Potosi stated, "As a result of this fatal accident, we have 39 people injured in four hospitals in the town of Uyuni, and 37 people have lost their lives."

Police personnel are working to identify people who were killed and those who were injured and hospitalised, the spokesperson added.

One of the buses was travelling to Oruro, where a major carnival celebration was underway. Authorities suspect that one of the drivers, who survived the crash, had been drinking before the accident. Passengers reportedly saw him consuming spirit. — ANI

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

US to deploy 3,000 more troops to its southern border

WASHINGTON DC: The US Department of Defence said on Saturday that about 3,000 more soldiers will be deployed to its southern border with Mexico.

About 2,400 soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) and 500 soldiers from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade will be sent, US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) said in a statement.

"These deployments will bring additional agility and capability to further efforts to stop the flow of illegal migrancy and drugs at the southern border," its commander, General Gregory Guillot said.

What tasks will the troops be assigned

The statement said the Stryker unit "will not conduct or be involved in interdiction or deportation operations," it said.

Their tasks will include "detection and monitoring; administrative support; transportation support; warehousing and logistic support; vehicle maintenance; and engineering support."

Stryker vehicles, which are a lightly armored attack vehicle that carries up to 11 soldiers, are generally equipped with a machine gun or grenade launcher and have been used in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. The United States also provided the vehicles to Ukraine for use in its incursion in the Kursk region of Russia.

The aviation unit troops will "assist in the movement of personnel, equipment, and supplies; and provide aerial medical evacuation capabilities," the statement added.

US-Mexico border

The US-Mexico border sees thousands of immigrants and refugees fleeing poverty, violence and political instability in their home countries, mostly from Latin America.

The US has been sending military forces to its border with Mexico since the 1990s to curb migration, crime and drug trafficking.

President Donald Trump had made this issue one of the biggest talking points of his election campaigns. Since taking office, he has launched a major effort to stop illegal immigration, which includes immigration raids, arrests and deportations. — DW

Israel halts humanitarian aid to Gaza, closes crossings

The Israeli decision was taken during a meeting held on Saturday night, in the context of Israel's reneging on the ceasefire agreement, as this coincides with the end of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement

GAZA: The Israeli occupation on Sunday decided to stop the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and close the crossings until further notice.

Palestinian news agency (WAFA) reported that the Israeli decision was taken during a meeting held on Saturday night, in the context of Israel's reneging on the ceasefire agreement, as this coincides with the end of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement. The ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip entered into force last January 2025, after a bloody war and genocide waged by the Israeli entity on the Gaza Strip since 7 October 2023, leaving nearly 50,000 martyrs and more than 119,750 wounded.

Israeli forces continue assault on Jenin for 41st consecutive day

Israeli occupation forces are continuing their assault on the city of Jenin and its refugee camp for the 41st consecutive day, so far leaving 27 civilians killed and dozens injured.

The Israeli forces have maintained a complete blockade on the Jenin refugee camp since the beginning of the assault, preventing residents from reaching their homes. Heavy machinery, including bulldozers, remains stationed around the camp while additional military reinforcements have been deployed to the entrances of the camp.

On Saturday, the Israeli forces brought tanks into the camp's central square and brought in armored vehicles of the Eitan type along with D9 bulldozers.

Since the beginning of the assault, Israeli soldiers have turned several residential buildings into military outposts. The forces also destroyed the street leading to the Al-Asir Mosque in the camp.

The Israeli forces are systematically altering the landscape of the camp, so far demolishing a total of 120 homes completely and partially destroying dozens more.

The Israeli military also continues to prevent both local and international journalists from entering the camp to document the destruction and the daily violations against the residents.

Israeli military continues its assault on Tulkarm

Israeli occupation forces continue their wide-scale assault on the city of Tulkarm and its refugee camps for the 35th consecutive day, as well as on the nearby Nour Shams refugee camp for the 22nd day. The forces have been carrying out raids, home demolitions, forced displacement of residents, and widespread destruction, including the burning of homes.

Saturday night, eyewitnesses reported that Israeli forces raided and destroyed the contents of the Al-Amir building on Nablus Street, after taking control of it and forcibly evicting its residents. Personal belongings were thrown out of windows during the attack.

Since the beginning of the offensive, the Israeli forces have imposed a complete siege on the Tulkarm and Nour Shams refugee camps, preventing entry and exit, while continuing to raid homes, vandalize properties, and interrogate residents inside.

In the Nour Shams camp, early on Sunday, the occupation forces set fire to homes in the Al-Manshiya neighborhood, with flames seen rising from the buildings. This follows a series of demolitions on Saturday, during which more than 11 homes and their surroundings were destroyed by Israeli forces.

Israeli forces forced residents of the Wadi al-Qalansawa neighbourhood in Nour Shams to evacuate their homes, following raids and the use of stun bombs. Soldiers used the residents as human shields, and local sources reported that seven families were given until 8AM on Sunday to leave their homes. — Agencies

Egyptian and Palestinian prime ministers discuss Gaza reconstruction plan

CAIRO: Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly met with Palestinian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Mustafa here on Saturday to discuss plans for the early recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, according to a statement released by the Egyptian cabinet.

Madbouly reaffirmed Egypt's support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, especially the right to self-determination and independence.

The Egyptian government has prepared an integrated plan for the early recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip while keeping the Palestinians in the enclave, Madbouly said.

He stressed that Egypt had exerted sincere efforts to back the Palestinian cause and people, either through endeavors to implement the ceasefire deal in all its phases or the reconstruction of Gaza. They also discussed coordination efforts between Egypt and Palestine to follow up on the completion of the reconstruction plan before presenting it to the upcoming emergency Arab Summit slated for March 4. The meeting was attended by Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Wael Zaqout, Palestinian Ambassador to Egypt Diab Al-Louh, and Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration Badr Abdelatty. — Agencies

CEASEFIRE PROPOSAL

UK, France and Ukraine to present peace proposal to US, says Starmer

LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has said the United Kingdom, France and Ukraine have agreed to work on a ceasefire proposal to present to the United States, according to media report.

Starmer said he believes US President Donald Trump wants a durable peace in Ukraine and reiterated his assertion that US security guarantees will be needed to make any peace deal work, as per Al Jazeera.

"I've always been clear that that is going to need a US backstop because I don't think it would be a guarantee without it," Starmer said.

The British PM said he hoped a European "coalition of the willing" would come together to support Ukraine but any ceasefire had to be underpinned by the US to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine again.

"In other words, we've got to find those countries in Europe that are prepared to be a bit more forward-leaning," Al Jazeera quoted Starmer as saying.

"The UK and France are the most advanced on the thinking of this, and that is why President Macron and I are working on this plan, which we will then discuss with the US," added Starmer, who spoke to Macron and Trump on Saturday after having talks with Zelenskyy in Downing Street.

French President Emmanuel Macron said that Russia is likely to expand its military operations in Ukraine farther west unless it's stopped, as per Al Jazeera.

"We have an overarmed and aggressive Russia on our borders. It is carrying out terrorist actions and massive disinformation campaigns here and in Europe," Macron told France's local media, as per Al Jazeera.

If Putin is not stopped, "he will certainly move on to Moldova and perhaps beyond to Romania," Macron argued.

"It's our security that's at stake," he added.

"The clear destiny of the Americans is to be on the side of the Ukrainians, I have no doubt about that," Macron added. "I want the Americans to understand that disengagement from Ukraine is not in their interests."

Earlier in the day, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked Starmer for his unwavering support during their meeting in London, calling it a "meaningful and warm" discussion.

The two leaders spoke about the challenges facing Ukraine and Europe, coordination with international partners, and efforts to achieve a just peace with strong security guarantees. — ANI

A NEW PREDICTIVE MODELS

Scientists crack the code for why locusts swarm

BERLIN: After months of building, the biggest locust swarm recorded in 70 years swept across 10 countries in East Africa in spring 2020.

The damage to crops was estimated at $8.5 billion (€8.1 billion) in a region where 23 million people face severe food insecurity.

During these invasions, desert locusts (Schistocerca gregaria) eat their own weight in food every day. The biblical-scale plague ate through 160,000,000 kilograms of food a day — enough to feed 800,000 people for a year.

Scientists have been trying to understand how individual locusts gather in swarms for decades. Knowing their behaviour would help with predicting and managing outbreaks.

A new model, published on Saturday in the journal Science, casts light on the hive mind of locusts. The study describes how individual locusts transition from behaving as solitary animals to giant swarms with collective motion.

"Our work provides a new perspective for considering collective motion in animals, and robotics too," lead author Iain Couzin, a neurobiologist at Centre of the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour, Konstanz, Germany.

"One application is a new class of predictive models of how and where swarms move. Future research on this could impact the livelihoods of 1 in 10 people on the planet," Couzin told DW.

A new model of swarming, using insect VR

Locusts swarms have threatened food security for millennia and have played their part in history — locusts were one of the 10 plagues brought upon Egypt as retold in the Book of Exodus.

For decades scientists have been trying to understand how individual locusts move en masse.

In 2006, Couzin developed a model explaining how locusts would march together in a line when they swarm.

"This model came from particle physics and suggested that individuals bump into each other randomly, then flow together all in the same direction if there is a high density of individuals," said Couzin.

Study author Sercan Sayin began probing this model in locusts using a virtual reality (VR) stage set for locusts. Sayin had the insects walk on a ball surrounded by panoramic views on screens. These landscapes reconstructed the world in 3D to make the locusts think they were in a swarm, Sayin said.

But he couldn't replicate the 2006 findings that animal density was responsible for locusts forming swarms.

Vision cues swarming behaviours

Field experiments in Kenya during the huge 2020 swarm showed certain visual cues caused locusts to behave with collective movements when swarming.

"Previously we'd thought that bumping into each other caused swarms, but our experiments showed that it's vision that's important," said Couzin.

"We found instead that [swarm behaviours] are triggered by the type of sensory information around them, not how many locusts they're surrounded by."

Jan Ache, a neurobiologist at the University of Wuerzburg, Germany, who was not involved in the study, said the research expands a mathematical model of swarms which acknowledges the individuality of locusts.

"In order for locusts to have collective motion, they need very basic forms of cognitive processing — where insects integrate their own position relative to the position of those around them, then actively follow other locusts," he said.

This occurs in individual locusts, but when they come together in crowds it creates the emergent effect of a swarm.

How the brain makes decisions

Ache said locusts are fascinating to study because they exist in two different states: solitary or swarming. Normally avoidant, the insects switch into marching bands after several hours of crowding.

"When they change from one type to the other, the brain is in two different states. In each state, the same neurons drive very different behaviors — like being attracted to or repelled by other locusts," Ache said.

Ultimately, the findings are about decisions-making in neuronal systems, Couzin said.

"At the basic level, there's competition between groups of neurons in the brain. The brain must come to a consensus and make a decision about movement," Couzin said.

In other words, when there's a conflict in the brain, neuronal pathways compete until a decision is made when one pathway "wins" over the other.

In their experiments, the visual cues of other locusts in front acted as a target causing the navigation systems to pull the organism in the same direction.

"This is very similar to opinion dynamics in humans, where people adopt similar opinions to others and dismiss other opinions," said Couzin.

Predicting swarms and crowds?

Couzin said the new model has important implications for predicting swarms in the real world.

"If we were able to create a model predicting how swarms move, we were using the wrong model before. The implication is new ways to predict how and where swarms move based on a biological understanding of collective motion," said Couzin.

It could also help to understand how fish move in schools; birds move in flocks and potentially how mammals move in herds. Couzin is also applying their research in robots, creating collective motion in autonomous vehicles.

Couzin said their findings are worth considering in human crowds too, perhaps to help prevent crowd crushes, but "it's too early to make any claims as those experiments haven't been done." — DW

SPORTS

FA CUP: FIFTH ROUND

O'Reilly comes to Man City rescue against Plymouth

MANCHESTER: Manchester City survived a scare at the Etihad Stadium, overcoming a resilient Plymouth Argyle side 3-1 to secure their place in the FA Cup quarter-finals on Saturday.

It was a tale of two halves in the fifth round game as Nico O'Reilly's second-half brace spared City's blushes and denied the Championship strugglers from pulling off another giant-killing act.

For a brief seven-minute spell, it seemed as though the travelling Plymouth fans might just witness another magical FA Cup upset. The 7,800-strong contingent, who had made the 560-mile round trip north, had their hopes lifted when 24-year-old Maksym Talovierov, the January signing from LASK, rose to meet Matthew Sorinola's corner and nodded in to give Plymouth a shock lead. The exuberant celebrations from the visiting supporters were filled with belief - had they just knocked out Premier League leaders Liverpool, and now could they conquer another football giant?

However, Manchester City's response came swiftly. With the clock ticking down in first-half stoppage time, Kevin de Bruyne, a maestro of the competition, swung in a perfectly executed free-kick. O'Reilly, the young talent, was in the right place to head home and restore parity just before the break.

The game took a decisive turn 14 minutes from the end when Plymouth goalkeeper Conor Hazard denied Erling Haaland and Bernardo Silva with a double save. But O'Reilly proved unshakable, rising to meet Phil Foden's corner at the far post and scoring his second of the match to put City ahead.

Plymouth's valiant efforts were dashed in the final minute, as de Bruyne capped an influential performance with a low cross for Haaland, who squared it for the Belgian to tap in from close range and seal a 3-1 victory.

City's triumph was testament to their quality, but Plymouth's spirited performance did not go unnoticed. Their passionate supporters, who had travelled across the country, had a lot to be proud of, having witnessed their team push one of the Premier League's top sides to the limit.

"I'm happy with the way we played, especially to reach the quarter-finals. How many times have we reached the semi-finals? Six times in a row, that's why the FA Cup is important to us," said City manager Pep Guardiola. "We'll keep pushing – one more step to Wembley."

As for Plymouth, manager Steven Schumacher will no doubt take pride in his team's efforts and the unforgettable atmosphere created by their fans.

Other results: Crystal Palace 3 Millwall 1, Preston North End 3 Burnley 0, AFC Bournemouth 1 Wolverhampton Wanderers 1 (After extra time, Bournemouth win 5-4 on penalties). - Agencies

Atletico climb to top as Alvarez sinks Athletic

Isco scores winner as Real Betis stun Real Madrid in Spanish La Liga

MADRID: Atletico Madrid surged to the top of Spanish La Liga after Julian Alvarez's clinical strike sealed a 1-0 victory over Athletic Club, while Real Betis completed a dramatic 2-1 comeback against Real Madrid with Isco's winning penalty on Saturday.

At the Riyadh Air Metropolitano, Atletico Madrid looked to capitalise on Real Madrid's earlier loss to Real Betis, with a win over Athletic Club securing them the top spot.

The match remained goalless until the 66th minute when Alvarez latched onto a brilliant through ball from Marcos Llorente, calmly slotting past Athletic goalkeeper Unai Simon to break the deadlock.

Athletic Club almost equalised in agonizing fashion when Benat Prados' header hit the post, and Inaki Williams' rebound ricocheted off the underside of the crossbar. Despite their efforts, Atletico held on to their narrow lead, and the three points propelled them above both Barcelona and Real Madrid into first place - though their position may be short-lived as Barcelona has a game in hand against Real Sociedad.

Atletico will now turn their attention to the first leg of their Champions League last 16 clash with Real Madrid on Tuesday, where they hope to inflict further pain on their city rivals.

Meanwhile, in Seville at the Estadio Benito Villamarín, Real Betis secured a remarkable comeback victory over Real Madrid. Madrid took the lead when Kylian Mbappe's assist set up Brahim Diaz for an easy finish in the first half. However, Betis responded strongly, with Johnny Cardoso heading in the equaliser from Isco's corner in the 34th minute.

Isco, captaining Betis against his former club, continued to haunt Madrid in the second half.

The 32-year-old netted the winner with a 54th-minute penalty after Antonio Rudiger fouled Jesus Rodriguez inside the box. Isco, who had previously starred in Betis' victory over Getafe, delivered an all-around masterclass, contributing with an assist, a goal, and 97 touches, the most of any player on the pitch.

Despite a few chances from Madrid, including a missed opportunity from Cucho Hernandez, Betis held firm, securing a well-deserved victory. This result leaves Carlo Ancelotti's side reeling, with their fourth La Liga loss of the season. Real Madrid remains second, trailing Barcelona on goal difference.

Isco's resurgence has been key for Betis, with six goals in 15 appearances this season, including four in the past month. The victory lifted Betis to sixth in the La Liga standings, as they look to continue their strong form under manager Manuel Pellegrini.

Other results: Girona 2 Celta Vigo 2, Rayo Vallecano 1 Sevilla 1. - Agencies

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE

AUSTRIA REGAINS STATUS

Austria has regained its status as an electricity-exporting country for the first time since 2009, driven by its transition towards clean energy, with electricity exports reaching 4,747 gigawatt-hours last year.

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,441.01 points, up by 0.12% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.59% at 404.81 points. Muscat Finance, up 2.13%, was the top gainer while Oman Chromite, down 4.76%, was the top loser.

MSX index witnesses marginal decline in February trading

Sectoral performance was mixed, with two out of the three sector indices on the exchange recording losses during the month, while the third reported a gain

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The MSX 30 index maintained its downward trajectory in 2025, declining by 2.4% in February-2025 to close the month at 4,435.9 points, according to a new report. This followed a 0.7% drop in January-2025, reflecting a continued bearish trend.

"Throughout February-2025, the index traded within a narrow, declining range, primarily due to a lack of significant market catalysts. Sectoral performance was mixed, with two out of the three sector indices on the exchange recording losses during the month, while the third reported a gain," the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest said in its latest GCC Market report.

The Financial Index fell by 1.1%, closing the month at 7,739.7 points. This decline was largely driven by losses in shares of major companies within the sector, including National Bank of Oman (-4.8%) and Sohar International Bank (-3.6%). The Services Index also declined during the month by 3.5% and closed at 1,632.9 points. In contrast, the Industrial Index posted a notable monthly gain of 7.8%, closing in February-2025 at 5,832.22 points.

In terms of company performance, Al Jazeera Steel Products Co. topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 25.4% followed by Oman Cement Co. and Construction Materials Industries Co. with 24.0% and 20.6% monthly share gains, respectively. On the decliner's side, Oman Cables Industry Co. led the chart with a 11.6% share price fall followed by Oman Qatari Telecommunications Co. and Muscat Gases Co. which witnessed a share price drop of 10.3% and 10.0%, respectively.

The report further said that trading activity on the exchange witnessed strong gains during February-2025. Total volume of shares traded in the exchange increased by 166.4% to 1.1 billion during February-2025 shares as compared to 424.8 million in January-2025. Similarly, total value traded in the exchange increased by 204.5% to OMR217 million against OMR71.3 million in January-2025. OQ Exploration & Production (OQEP) topped the monthly value traded chart with trades at OMR 13.8 million followed by OQ Base Industries and Bank Muscat with total value traded at OMR5.2 million and OMR 4.2 million, respectively. In terms of monthly volume traded, Ahli Bank topped the list with 828.0 Mn shares followed by OQ Base Industries and OQ Exploration & Production with volumes at 51.3 million shares and 43.6 million shares, respectively.

Meanwhile, in the initial public offering (IPO) market, Oman marked its first primary market transaction for the year with the IPO of Asyad Shipping.

The logistics company backed by Oman's sovereign wealth fund is set to sell a 20% stake in the company and expected to raise around OMR128.1 million, valuing the company at around OMR640 million at the top end of the valuation range of OMR0.117-OMR 0.123 per share. The company plans to pay annual cash dividend of $150 million in 2025 and 2026, indicating a dividend yield of around 9% based on the expected valuation. The IPO comes as part of the Sultanate's wide ranging privatisation programme that aims to sell stakes in around 30 firms.

On the economic front, after the upgrade to investment grade rating by S&P last year, the sovereign rating on Oman got a further boost from the latest report from Capital Intelligence that upgraded the sovereign rating on the Sultanate to an investment grade at BBB– from BB+ with a positive outlook. The upgrade reflects ongoing efforts to strengthen Oman's public finances underpinned by ongoing fiscal consolidation and proactive debt management that resulted in a decline in government debt and the accumulation of financial assets.

GCC markets monthly report

After witnessing healthy gains at the start of the month, GCC index closed February-2024 with a marginal decline led by a fall in large-cap stocks in the market. The decline came despite positive performance recorded by three out of the seven exchanges in the region.

The decline reflected a fall in key global markets, including the US, led by issues that include an economic slowdown in the US, geopolitical standoff between Russia and Ukraine, elevated valuations and the uncertainty related to trade wars. Crude oil also had an uneventful month with a decline of 4.7% led by increasing supply.

The GCC monthly performance chart showed a marginal decline of 0.4% for the MSCI GCC index. At the exchange level, Bahrain was the best performing market during the month with a gain of 4.3% closely followed by Kuwait with a gain of 4.1%. Dubai also registered a growth of 2.6%. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia was the biggest declining market in the region with a fall of 2.4%, in line with the decline in Oman followed by Qatar and Abu Dhabi with declines of 2.1% and 0.2%, respectively. In terms of YTD-2025 performance, the GCC remained in the green with a gain of 2.6%, reflecting gains at the start of the year. Kuwait was the best performing market with a double digit gain of 10% since the start of the year followed by much smaller gains for the UAE markets and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand Bahrain and Qatar witnessed declines during YTD-2025.

At the sector level, GCC markets were weighed down by a decline in a majority of the sectors during the month. Insurance, Healthcare and Utilities witnessed mid-single digit declines during the month. Large cap sectors like Materials and Energy declined by 5.1% and 1.7%, respectively. On the gainers slide, the Real Estate sector topped with a gain of 2.5%, followed by Telecom and Banks with gains of 2.0% and 1.9%, respectively.

BANK MUSCAT

Al Wathbah Ramadan souq set to open on Thursday with participation of entrepreneurs

MUSCAT: The SMEs Development Authority and Bank Muscat announced the inauguration of Al Wathbah Ramadan souq, taking place from Thursday, March 6 to Saturday, March 8, at the bank's headquarters in Airport Heights. Marking the 11th edition this year, the souq will feature the participation of approximately 150 entrepreneurs and home business owners. This initiative reflects the Bank ongoing commitment to enhancing social responsibility and supporting the development of the business sector.

Al Wathbah Ramadan souq provides a platform for entrepreneurs and home businesses to showcase their diverse range of products to the public, thereby opening new marketing avenues and fostering collaboration and experience-sharing among participants.

Attendees can expect to find a variety of local products, including fashion items, health and beauty products, home décor, accessories, culinary delights, heritage tools, perfumes, and a wide array of supplies in preparation for Eid al-Fitr. The souq will be open to the general public from 8 PM to midnight.

This annual event underscores the dedication of the SME Development Authority and Bank Muscat to nurturing and developing this vital sector, which serves as the backbone of the national economy.

Al Wathbah souq has garnered significant attention from both the community and the media, encouraging visitors to support local initiatives and fostering awareness of the importance of small and emerging enterprises. Following the success of previous years, the event is anticipated to witness a particularly vibrant atmosphere this year, especially that it is happening during Ramadan, a time of heightened commercial activity and Eid preparations.

Bank Muscat remains committed to supporting SMEs through various strategic initiatives, including Al Wathbah Academy, launched in 2014 to empower Omani entrepreneurs. Also, Al Wathbah department offers a comprehensive range of banking and non-banking solutions, including education, training, and workshops aimed at enhancing growth and expansion opportunities for entrepreneurs. The Bank continues to strengthen its partnerships with government institutions and the private sector, with a particular focus on empowering youth, who play a crucial role in the strategic plans of Oman Vision 2040.

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Alizz Islamic Bank continues to educate SMEs through seminars

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank and Al Jabr MENA recently held the third 'Alizz Business Seminar' titled 'Marketing Campaigns... The Secrets of the Industry' with guest speaker Israa Al Muqimiin the Grand Hall at the Alizz Islamic Bank Head office with around 100 participants.

The seminar is part of the 'Alizz Business' value proposition wherethe bank focuses on the importance of developing SMEs and equipping them with knowledge that will enable them to sustain and grow. AsAlizz Islamic Bank,we are committed to raise the SMEs capabilities and set them up for success.

Israa Al Muqimiis a Brand Manager at Al AlAlamah Marketing where she manages the brand identity for corproate clients and has a proven track record of success. She is renowned for her ability to develop marketing strategies, manage marketing campaigns and manage customer relationships.

Alizz Business is a special value proposition for SMEs that meets all their banking requirements. This value proposition has been designed to offer attractive savings, financing and investment solutions. Given the increasing funding needed for SMEs, 'Alizz Business' offers flexible and convenient financing for business expansion, working capital, business line diversifications and other growth drivers that may require injecting capital. The bank also provides SMEs with an enhanced internet banking platform that enables corporate customers to conduct their various business transactions securely anytime, anywhere.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Muscat Finance, up 2.13%, was the top gainer while Oman Chromite, down 4.76%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,441.01 points, up by 0.12% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.59% at 404.81 points. Muscat Finance, up 2.13%, was the top gainer while Oman Chromite, down 4.76%, was the top loser. Shares of OQEP were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 794 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 3.98 million, with more than 16.56 million shares changing hands. Out of 46 traded securities, 8 advanced, 21 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 1384K while domestic investors were net sellers for RO 1073K, followed by foreign investors for RO 311K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,750.23 points, up 0.14%. Prices of Muscat Finance, Bank Muscat, Sohar International Bank were up by 2.13%, 1.58%, 0.74% respectively. Prices of National Finance, Global Financial Investments, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Madina Takaful were down by 3.57%, 2.22%, 1.32%, 1.18% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,793.95 points, down 0.66%. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics, Oman Cement were up by 0.81%, 0.41% respectively. Prices of Oman Chromite, Voltamp Energy, Galfar Engineering, Construction Materials, Muscat Thread Mill were down by 4.76%, 3.17%, 2.56%, 2.44%, 0.66% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.55% before closing at 1,623.95 points. Prices of Musandam Power were up by 0.37% respectively. Prices of National Gas, Sembcorp Salalah, Phoenix Power, Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power were down by 2.56%, 2.15%, 1.70%, 1.52%, 1.49% respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,450.36	4,435.10	4,441.01	4,435.86	5.14	0.12
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,766.88	7,735.95	7,750.23	7,739.70	10.54	0.14
Industry Index	5,850.46	5,793.95	5,793.95	5,832.22	-38.27	-0.66
Services Index	1,639.07	1,623.95	1,623.95	1,632.89	-8.94	-0.55
MSX Shariah Index	407.28	404.81	404.81	407.22	-2.41	-0.59
MSX TR INDEX	6,234.90	6,213.52	6,221.80	6,214.59	7.21	0.12
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,823.98	8,788.83	8,805.06	8,793.09	11.97	0.14
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,750.04	6,684.84	6,684.84	6,729.00	-44.16	-0.66
SERVICES TR IDX	1,965.68	1,947.56	1,947.56	1,958.28	-10.72	-0.55
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
16,568,766	3,983,961	794	27,324,774,840	8	21	17	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 2

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	340,322	87,531	13	0.254	0.258	0.254	0.258	0.254	0.004	1.575	0.258	0.257	0.258	0.100	1,936,650,442
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	254,000	31,721	17	0.124	0.126	0.124	0.125	0.124	0.001	0.806	0.125	0.120	0.133	0.100	27,500,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	112,253	15,261	6	0.135	0.137	0.135	0.136	0.135	0.001	0.741	0.136	0.136	0.137	0.100	899,945,493
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	8,395	4,147	10	0.498	0.500	0.490	0.493	0.491	0.002	0.407	0.493	0.493	0.496	0.100	163,120,246
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	3,111	840	2	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.269	0.001	0.372	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.100	19,005,300
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	24,821	6,950	4	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.000	0.000	0.280	0.280	0.300	0.100	455,264,979
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	80,384	26,926	23	0.334	0.336	0.334	0.334	0.334	0.000	0.000	0.334	0.334	0.335	0.100	223,234,052
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	282,580	110,659	27	0.392	0.400	0.388	0.390	0.390	0.000	0.000	0.390	0.390	0.406	0.100	48,710,204
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	626	369	1	0.590	0.590	0.590	0.590	0.590	0.000	0.000	0.590	0.590	0.600	0.100	56,050,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	15,999	13,173	9	0.822	0.824	0.822	0.822	0.822	0.000	0.000	0.822	0.820	0.822	0.100	616,500,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,000	200	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.202	0.218	0.100	130,188,846
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	825,490	199,791	52	0.243	0.245	0.241	0.242	0.242	0.000	0.000	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.100	186,388,400
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	2,690,585	349,866	79	0.130	0.131	0.129	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.100	562,981,110
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	200,806	68,879	8	0.344	0.344	0.343	0.343	0.344	-0.001	-0.291	0.343	0.342	0.344	0.100	81,088,630
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	62,092	5,217	5	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.176	0.084	0.084	0.087	0.100	14,700,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	50,000	3,750	2	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.076	-0.001	-1.316	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	6,750,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	261,735	17,508	24	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.066	0.072	0.100	44,542,570
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	359,047	23,687	21	0.066	0.066	0.065	0.065	0.066	-0.001	-1.515	0.065	0.065	0.066	0.100	46,436,412
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	30,000	2,730	2	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.093	-0.002	-2.151	0.091	0.092	0.093	0.100	86,866,047
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	160,412	14,237	11	0.089	0.089	0.088	0.088	0.090	-0.002	-2.222	0.088	0.089	0.088	0.100	17,600,000
Total	20	5,763,658	983,441	317												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	36,704	1,762	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.001	2.128	0.048	0.046	0.050	0.100	14,743,024
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	1,818	300	1	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.000	0.165	0.100	5,351,917
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	12,595	3,007	2	0.240	0.240	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.000	0.000	0.238	0.236	0.244	0.100	10,892,260
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	691	508	1	0.735	0.735	0.735	0.735	0.735	0.000	0.000	0.735	0.720	0.735	0.100	45,037,125
OM0000003265	NATIONAL DETERGENT	800	592	1	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.000	0.000	0.740	0.725	0.740	0.100	14,800,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	2,173	300	1	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.000	0.000	0.138	0.130	0.138	0.100	13,496,698
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	29,569	1,922	3	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.065	0.066	0.100	10,110,776
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	124,725	15,591	9	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.122	0.130	0.100	9,440,250
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	2,741,879	968,904	219	0.371	0.371	0.340	0.349	0.350	-0.001	-0.286	0.349	0.350	0.349	0.100	69,672,824
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	5,449,672	1,766,583	120	0.325	0.328	0.323	0.324	0.325	-0.001	-0.308	0.323	0.323	0.324	0.0102	592,000,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	6,900	1,036	4	0.152	0.152	0.150	0.150	0.151	-0.001	-0.662	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.100	2,459,116
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	8,620	1,026	1	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.120	-0.001	-0.833	0.119	0.116	0.119	0.100	70,380,989
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	983,606	99,503	37	0.102	0.102	0.101	0.102	0.103	-0.001	-0.971	0.102	0.101	0.102	0.040	352,868,067
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	29,100	5,263	6	0.181	0.182	0.180	0.180	0.182	-0.002	-1.099	0.180	0.180	0.182	0.100	7,711,738
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	299,675	17,481	11	0.060	0.060	0.058	0.058	0.059	-0.001	-1.695	0.058	0.054	0.060	0.100	84,830,885
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	375,625	30,050	3	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.082	-0.002	-2.439	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	5,000,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	383,737	29,349	29	0.079	0.079	0.076	0.076	0.078	-0.002	-2.564	0.076	0.076	0.080	0.100	6,460,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	26,696	2,029	7	0.079	0.079	0.075	0.076	0.078	-0.002	-2.564	0.076	0.076	0.079	0.100	15,426,970
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	29,066	2,242	4	0.078	0.078	0.076	0.076	0.078	-0.002	-2.564	0.078	0.072	0.078	0.100	38,655,978
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	8,749	5,078	3	0.600	0.600	0.580	0.580	0.599	-0.019	-3.172	0.580	0.585	0.600	0.100	47,213,595
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	219,500	29,682	8	0.150	0.150	0.135	0.135	0.140	-0.005	-3.571	0.135	0.131	0.140	0.100	77,450,078
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	200	600	1	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.150	-0.150	-4.762	3.000	3.000	0.000	1.000	9,900,000
Total	22	10,772,100	2,982,806	472												

TRANSITION

Austria regains status as electricity exporter due to renewable energy

VIENNA: Austria has regained its status as an electricity-exporting country for the first time since 2009, driven by its transition towards clean energy, with electricity exports reaching 4,747 gigawatt-hours last year.

Austrian Power Grid (APG), the national transmission system operator, attributed this achievement to the significant expansion of renewable energy systems, including photovoltaic, hydropower and wind energy, which enabled Austria to export electricity on 243 days of the past year.

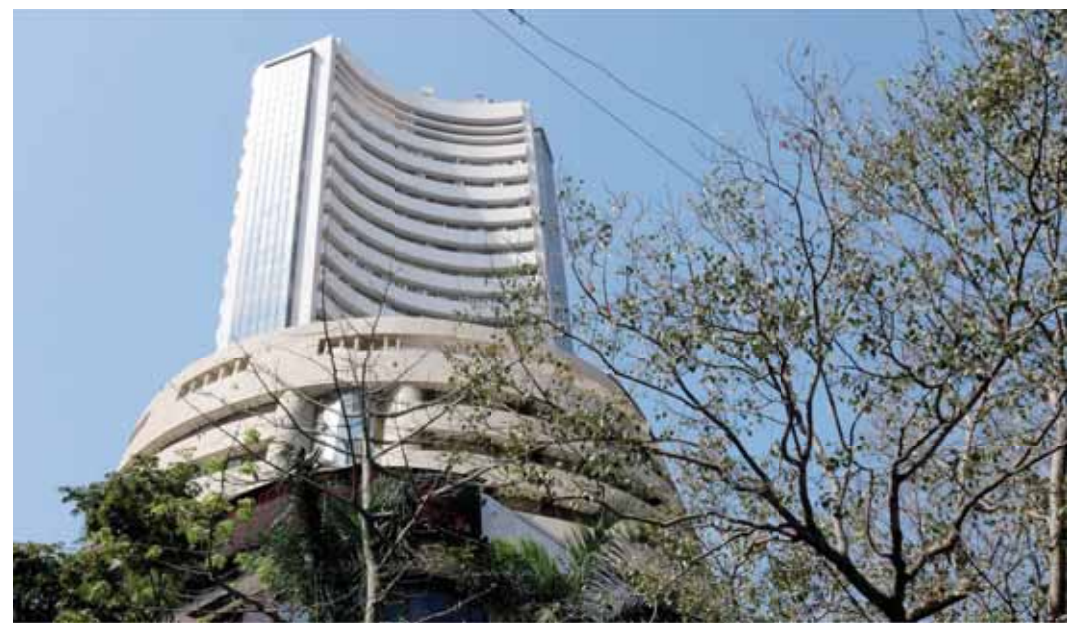
Growing proximity

Gerhard Christiner, Chief Executive Officer of APG, highlighted the increase in renewable electricity generation in Austria, stating, "The growing proximity to the upper limits of grid capacity necessitated a reduction in renewable energy production on multiple days last year."

Official figures indicated a notable increase of 14.4 percent in Austria's total electricity generation from renewable sources in 2024, bringing the country's total clean energy production to 57,713 gigawatt-hours. -WAM

MARKET OUTLOOK

Investors in Indian stock market to focus on foreign selling, US tariffs, geopolitical risks and PMI data



NEW DELHI: In absence of major domestic events next week starting from Monday, the investors in the Indian stock markets will watch trends of foreign sellings, developments around the US tariffs, geopolitical risks, and upcoming Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) releases. According to the market analysts, market may see volatilities in the upcoming week, continuing its previous trends.

"With no significant domestic events on the horizon, global factors--such as developments around tariffs, geopolitical risks, and FII trends--will remain in focus. Additionally, as the new month begins, market participants will closely track high-frequency data, including auto sales and PMI figures," said Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

He added, "Uncertainty often weighs more than the actual event, and the market is currently grappling with concerns over potential trade wars."

Market analysts also say that the persistent Foreign Institutional Investor (FII) selling wil continue to add pressure to the sentiments of the investors.

In its weekly commentary, Bajaj Broking Research team added that first week of March 2025 will be crucial for market sentiment, with key data releases shaping trends. On March 1, Indian auto companies will report monthly sales estimates, providing insights into demand across vehicle segments, as per the research team.

Additionally, it added, "Manufacturing and services activity will be tracked through S&P Global PMI data (March 3 & 5) for India and the US, while ADP Nonfarm Employment Change (March 5) will offer a glimpse into US job market trends."

March 6 and 7 will focus on US labour market data, including Initial Jobless Claims, Nonfarm Productivity, Nonfarm Payrolls, and Unemployment Rate, which could influence Federal Reserve policy expectations, the research team of Bajaj Broking added.

"With global liquidity, interest rate expectations, and domestic fiscal trends in focus, markets may see volatility, creating opportunities in auto, banking, and consumer sectors," the Bajaj Broking Research team said.

Anticipating the mood of investors for the next week, Manish Goel, Founder and MD, Equentis Wealth Advisory Services, said, "All eyes are now turning to the upcoming PMI releases, particularly the Manufacturing data on March 3, and the Services PMI on March 5, where analysts are seeing a glimmer of optimism within the manufacturing data."

Markets ended their week-long consolidation phase with a sharp 3 per cent decline, primarily driven by weak global cues.

Concerns over the impact of US tariffs on global trade and persistent foreign fund outflows kept the sentiment negative from the outset. Although select heavyweights attempted to limit the downside midweek, a sharp sell-off in the final session confirmed the bearish tone.

As a result, both benchmark indices, Nifty and Sensex, closed at their weekly lows of 22,124.70 and 73,198.10, respectively.

All major sectors moved in line with the broader market, posting losses, with IT, realty, and energy emerging as the top underperformers. After a brief pause, the broader indices also resumed their downward trajectory, losing between 5-6 per cent. -ANI

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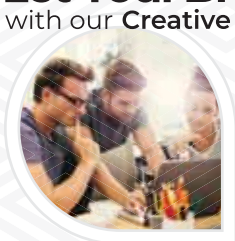

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induchandran01@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Experienced Biomedical Engineers seeking opportunities in Oman. Presently in Oman & available for immediate joining.
Email: asmathalipvl@gmail.com
Contact: +968 72031225

Indian male with 10 yrs. Experience in Oman, have 3 yrs Electrical diploma, General maintenance, valid Oman D/L.
Contact: 93220672

Diploma in Electrical Engineering looking for Fire Fighting site supervisor/suitable job.
Contact: 95933453, Email:
haquefaizan3786@gmail.com

Indian, male, Mechanical engineer with 1yr experience in HVAC engineering, looking for a suitable job.
Contact: 76342333
Email: mohdyaz750@gmail.com

BE Civil site, project engineer (Keralite) having 12 years of experience in Oman looking for a suitable position as a site engineer (part time/full-time) in any reputed companies. having valid Oman D/L.
Contact: 91281006, 78385414

Civil Engineer with expertise in Software such as revit, autocad,naviswork, sketchup and having experience in site supervision is looking for job in Oman.
Contact: +968 78441832, Email:
shamilabdulla664@gmail.com

Indian, male, Diploma Civil site engineer with 27 yrs experience in Oman looking for a job,
Contact: 99423274, Email:
mmthomasvarghese@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Civil engineer with 5 yrs (India) & 1 yr(Muscat) experience as Site engineer,NOC available from company seeking placement. immediate joining.
Contact +968 78230150, Email:
ajaykumar270212@gmail.com

Civil engineer supervisor, 14 yrs experience civil & tower project with D/L & own visa.
Contact: 78002980

BE Project Engineer, 12 -13 yrs. experience.
Contact: 93850875, Email:
abdulcivilco2015@gmail.com

Mechanical engineer with over 4 yrs experience in sales and operations having Oman D/L with MSc in Engineering management from UK available to join immediately.
Contact: 96111283,
Email: dobin.mathew@gmail.com.

B-Tech Civil Engineer with total 16yrs GCC experience include 11 yrs Oman experience, project manager job seeking.
Contact: 97733497

BE Project engineer 12-13 yrs experience. Contact: 93850875,
Email: abdulcivilco2015@gmail.com

LOGISTIC

Sudanese Supply chain professional with CSCP certificate, MBA and 10 yrs experience in supply chain, logistics, procurement and project management. Contact: 95272472.
Email: kemeir@hotmail.com

MANAGER

Indian, male, having 19 yrs of experience in manufacturing & FMCG operations management 15 yrs in Oman market , looking for opportunity to join immediate.
Contact: 77431223,
Email: dev4ducati@gmail.com

Finance manager with 15 yrs of experience in oil & gas multinational company looking for suitable placement.
Contact: 95230609

Indian male, MBA. 12 yrs of experience as (branch Manager & key accounts executive) looking for suitable position.
Contact : 98132055

CARGO AND LOGISTIC
classifieds@timesofoman.com

MEDICAL

Clinical pathologist with Oman license looking for suitable job.
Contact: 90158005

Veterinary doctor having BVSC & AH degree from India with 5 yrs experience in animal health, poultry and meat production processing, Seeking a suitable position.
Contact: 76409087, Email:
dramitchauhan0@gmail.com

PROCUREMENT/ PURCHASE

Keralite, purchase assistant, store keeper 10 yrs working experience in Oman with valid Oman D/L(light) Looking for suitable job.
Contact: 98615731,
Email: sanalk73@gmail.com

Purchase officer, incharge with 7 yrs of GCC experience seeks placement .
Contact: +968 9954 8041

Procurement engineer, Sudanese, 10yrs experience in Oman,MEP, firefighting, projects, D/L.
Contact: 79027138 .

SALES/MARKETING

Indian Mechanical Engineer with D/L. 1 yr experience and NEBOSH IGC certified, Seeking job opportunities. Contact: 79860144

Indian male, Sales executive (MBA in Marketing) with 10 yrs of experience in FMCG & automobile with strong communication skills, holding valid Oman. D/L.
Contact: 92350798

Indian male MBA graduated specialized with Marketing & HR (fresher). Looking for suitable positions . Currently in Muscat Oman.
Contact: +968 71084371,
Email: ccrashid9@gmail.com

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HEALTH

LIFESTYLE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AFFECT HEALTH AND AGEING MORE THAN GENES: STUDY

Of the 25 independent environmental factors identified, smoking, socioeconomic status, physical activity, and living conditions had the most impact on mortality and biological ageing

A new study led by researchers from Oxford Population Health has shown that a variety of environmental factors, including lifestyle choices (such as smoking and physical activity) and living conditions, have a more significant impact on health and premature death than our genes.

The study, which analysed data from nearly half a million UK Biobank participants, examined the influence of 164 environmental factors and genetic risk scores for 22 major diseases on ageing, age-related diseases, and premature death. The findings were published recently in Nature Medicine.

As per the key findings, the environmental factors explained 17% of the variation in risk of death, compared to less than 2% explained by genetic predisposition (as per the present).

Of the 25 independent environmental factors identified, smoking, socioeconomic status, physical activity, and living conditions had the most impact on mortality and biological ageing. Smoking was associated with 21 diseases; socioeconomic factors, such as household income, home ownership, and employment status, were associated with 19 diseases; and physical activity was associated with 17 diseases.

The early life exposures, including body weight at 10 years and maternal smoking around birth, were shown to influence ageing and risk of premature death 30-80 years later.

Environmental exposures had a greater effect on diseases of the lung, heart and liver, while genetic risk dominated for dementia and breast cancer.

Professor Cornelia van Duijn, St Cross Professor of Epidemiology at Oxford Population Heath and senior author of the paper, said 'Our research demonstrates the profound health impact of exposures that can be changed either by individuals or through policies to improve socioeconomic conditions, reduce smoking, or promote physical activity.

The research shows that whilst many of the individual exposures identified played a small part in premature death, the combined effect of these multiple exposures together over the life course (referred to as the exposome) explained a large proportion of premature mortality variation. The insights from this study pave the way for integrated strategies to improve the health of ageing populations by identifying key combinations of environmental factors that shape the risk of premature death and many common age-related diseases simultaneously. - ANI

SPORTS

Mohammed and Mariam shine at Renaissance Inter-School Regatta

Sur Basic Education School named the best-performing school overall in the 2025 edition that witnessed participation of 15 government schools across Muscat, Mussanah and Sur

MUSCAT: Mohammed Al Balushi of Musab bin Al Zubair Basic Education School, Mussanah, and Mariam Al Hadhrami of Al Safa Basic Education School, Mussanah, claimed top honours at the Renaissance Inter-School Regatta 2025, emerging as champions in the boys' and girls' competitions, respectively.

The highly competitive event, held at Al Mouj Muscat, saw 45 schoolchildren from 15 government schools across Muscat, Sur, and Mussanah take to the waters in Optimist dinghies as part of the Oman Sail Community Sailing Programme.

Mohammed secured victory in the boys' category after a tight race with Ibrahim Al Maskari from Durat Al Ajyal Basic Education School, Muscat, who finished second. Timur Al Amri, also from Durat Al Ajyal, claimed third place.

In the girls' competition, Mariam edged out Mariam Al Hashar of Sur Basic Education School, who took silver, while Jameela Al Jalboobi, also from Sur, secured third place.

Sur Basic Education School emerged as the best-performing school overall, finishing ahead of Durat Al Ajyal Basic Education School, Muscat, in second place, while Al Rawae Basic Education School, Muscat, took third.

Abdul Aziz Al Shidi, Oman Sail's Acting Director of Sailing, said, "The Inter-School Regatta, sponsored by Renaissance Services, is one of the leading youth sports events in Oman, combining competition with a focus on enriching the community. Through sport, the sailors learn valuable lessons to take with them on and off the water. Oman Sail and Renaissance Services are delighted to create a platform to develop the abilities of young Omanis."

Stephen R. Thomas, CEO of Renaissance Services, praised the young sailors. He said: "The Renaissance Inter-School Regatta is a great opportunity to showcase the benefits of the Community Sailing Programme. We are pleased to support these young sailors through this initiative, which not only teaches them how to sail but also imparts valuable lessons that extend beyond the sport. It is encouraging to see so many young people taking an interest in sailing and contributing to Oman's rich maritime traditions."

The Oman Sail Community Sailing Programme has introduced 301 boys and girls to sailing this year alone. The programme is part of an annual commitment to train 900 students aged 8-10 from government schools in Al Batinah South, Al Sharqiyah South, and Muscat.

Each student undergoes a five-week sailing course, featuring weekly on-water sessions in Optimist boats, and participates in a beach clean-up to help preserve Oman's coastal environment for marine life and future generations of sailors.

Participating Schools: Muscat: Al-Rawae Basic Education School, Musab bin Al Zubair Basic Education School, Durat Al Ajyal Basic Education School, Al Manhal Basic Education School, Sheikh Salem bin Hamood Al Siyabi Basic Education School.

Mussanah: Sur Basic Education School, Al Shars Basic Education School, Al Raja Basic Education School, Durat Al Ma'arifa Basic Education School, Al Safa Basic Education School, Wadam Al Sahil Basic Education School.

Sur: Al Afiyah Basic Education School, Al Shiraa Basic Education School, Al Birr Basic Education School, Al Bahjah Basic Education School.

TENNIS

Tsitsipas breaks through in Dubai, wins first ATP 500 title

DUBAI: Stefanos Tsitsipas secured his first ATP 500 title with a dominant straight-set victory over Felix Auger-Aliassime in the final of the Dubai Tennis Championships, triumphing 6-3, 6-3 in just 88 minutes on Saturday.

The Greek fourth seed, whose previous two attempts in Dubai finals ended in defeat to Novak Djokovic (2019) and Roger Federer (2020), finally claimed the trophy on his third try, showcasing his consistency and improved form.

Tsitsipas' serving was a standout feature, winning 83.3% of his first-serve points, and he converted all three break points during the match. Despite Auger-Aliassime creating more break-point opportunities, he was unable to capitalize on any, as Tsitsipas controlled the proceedings throughout.

With the win, Tsitsipas adds his 12th career tour-level title, his first ATP 500 crown, and his biggest outdoor hard-court victory to date. The triumph also guarantees his return to the ATP Top 10 rankings for the first time since May 2024, marking a significant milestone in his career.

"I've had this in my mind for a while, and it's a big relief to hold that trophy after the third attempt," Tsitsipas said following his victory.

"It's definitely one of the greatest feelings a tennis player can experience to be back in the Top 10. It's been a lot of hard work and sacrifice, but I'm happy to be in this position where I can really celebrate."

Tsitsipas's victory has significant implications for his season, as the win further cements his place among the sport's elite. Meanwhile, his opponent, the in-form Auger-Aliassime, who had been leading the ATP Tour with 16 match wins and two titles this year, was unable to add to his tally in Dubai. - Agencies

OMAN CRICKET

ISM-B and OCA reign supreme in U16 Schools and Academies League

MUSCAT: ISM-B (Indian School Muscat) and OCA (Oman Cricket Academy) emerged as champions of the Oman Cricket U16 Schools and Academies League Season 2024-25.

ISM-B claimed the title in the Schools League after an intense competition, while ISWK (Indian School Wadi Kabir) finished as the runners-up.

In the Academies League, OCA dominated the tournament, going unbeaten with a perfect six-out-of-six record, while MCCC Yellow (Muscat Cricket Coaching Centre) secured the runners-up position.

The tournament featured intense competition, showcasing the growing talent in Oman.

The Schools League saw participation from 13 teams, divided into two groups, with the top two from each group advancing to the semi-finals and then the final.

Meanwhile, the Academies League had seven teams competing in a round-robin format.

The prize distribution ceremony was graced by Oman Cricket officials, including Alkesh Joshi, Treasurer; Kiran Asher, Board Member; and Duleep Mendis, Chief Development Officer.

Individual accolades were awarded to outstanding performers, with Devin Sethmina named best batter, Samrudh Shankar best bowler, and Aryan Joshi best all-rounder in the Schools League.

In the Academies League, Shravan Sharat Kurup took home the best batter award, Vihaan Chauhan was named best bowler, and Ayush Shetty was recognised as the best all-rounder.

Speaking on the occasion, Alkesh Joshi emphasised the importance of youth cricket in Oman's sporting landscape.

He said: "Youth cricket is the foundation of our cricketing future in Oman. Their participation in structured leagues not only honed their skills but also instills discipline, teamwork, and a winning mindset. Oman Cricket remains committed to providing these young players with the best opportunities, ensuring they have a platform to excel and represent the nation at higher levels. The enthusiasm and growing participation in youth cricket reflect a bright future for the sport in Oman."

MG launches all-new MG HS: Bold step in Middle East's mid-size SUV segment

The all-new MG HS, with its sporty design and advanced features, it is perfect for younger buyers seeking passion, drive and control in their everyday adventures

MUSCAT: MG Motor Oman has announced the launch of the all-new MG HS, an exceptional mid-size SUV that redefines style, performance and technology in the sector.

Building on the success of the first-generation MG HS, which was voted Middle East Car of the Year by a panel of industry experts in 2020, the all-new model is now available across Oman in all of the brand's showrooms located across Oman. The MG HS brings a bold new vision to the segment, building further on its international success.

The all-new MG HS, with its sporty design and advanced features, it is perfect for younger buyers seeking passion, drive and control in their everyday adventures.

The all-new MG HS is designed to stand out in the competitive mid-size SUV segment, offering a perfect balance of style, performance, and technology. Its five-star Euro NCAP safety rating highlights MG's commitment to safety, with the Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) providing added convenience and protection. Safety is further enhanced with features such as Intelligent Cruise Control, Automated Emergency Braking, Lane Departure Warning, Lane Keep Assist, Forward Collision Warning, and Blind Spot Information System.

The vehicle includes a 360-degree HD camera, front and rear parking sensors, and up to six airbags, ensuring maximum occupant security.

Under the bonnet, the MG HS offers two powerful and efficient engine options. Drivers can choose between a 1.5T powerplant, delivering 173 hp with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission, or the 2.0T engine, producing 231 hp with a 9-speed automatic transmission. These engines, coupled with superior handling dynamics and enhanced NVH (Noise, Vibration, and Harshness) levels, make every drive smooth, responsive, and exhilarating. The sporty three-spoke squaricle steering wheel adds a touch of dynamism, ensuring an engaging driving experience that matches the SUV's bold character.

Visually, the MG HS is a masterpiece of modern design. Its striking 'Hunting Eye' LED headlights and 'The Shard' full-length LED taillights lend it a confident and sophisticated look.

Inside, the cabin combines high quality materials with cutting-edge technology. Dual 12.3-inch HD screens provide a fully immersive digital cockpit experience, while the memory function on the powered leather seats saves your driving position for utmost driving comfort. Convenience features such as dual-zone air conditioning, rain-sensing wipers, a wireless phone charger, and seamless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto integration further benefit the driving experience.

Practicality meets elegance in the MG HS, with a power tailgate and a versatile cargo capacity of up to 1,397 litres, making it perfect for family adventures and weekend getaways. The electronic panoramic roof invites natural light into the cabin, creating a spacious and airy feel, while memory functions for the driver's seat and mirrors add a personalised touch. By delivering a winning combination of utility, performance, and affordability, the MG HS offers unparalleled value for young professionals and families.

Tom Lee, Managing Director of MG Motor Middle East, remarked: "The all-new MG HS represents the next step in our journey to redefine the mid-size SUV experience. Designed with the needs of young, ambitious drivers in mind, it combines passion, power, and practicality. If buyers are looking for a reliable SUV which is both sporty and stylish, the MG HS delivers on all fronts, making it a game-changer in the segment."

Speaking on the occasion of launch Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO MHD ACERE remarked, "At MHD ACERE, we are committed to bringing world-class mobility solutions to Oman, and the launch of the all-new MG HS is a testament to that vision. With its dynamic design, advanced technology, and uncompromising safety features, the MG HS is perfectly suited for the modern driver who seeks both performance and style. As MG continues to grow in Oman, we are excited to offer a vehicle that redefines expectations in the mid-size SUV segment."

VALUE-ADDED FEATURES

Earn more with BankDhofar's High-Yield Savings Account

MUSCAT: BankDhofar's High Yield Savings Account redefines banking convenience by offering not only competitive interest rates of up to 4.25% but also a suite of value-added features designed to enhance the financial experience of account holders.

Designed for customers seeking to maximize their savings potential while maintaining seamless access to their funds, this account stands out as an innovative financial solution in today's market.

Unlike conventional savings accounts, the High Yield Savings Account allows customers to optimize their interest earnings on the funds maintained in their account. With a peak interest rate of 4.25%, returns are calculated daily based on the closing balance and credited at the end of the month. This ensures that account holders can make the most of their savings by earning interest in a way that compounds effectively over time. By allowing interest to accumulate daily, the account provides customers with a steady and predictable way to grow their wealth while ensuring their funds remain easily accessible whenever needed.

Beyond its attractive interest structure, the High Yield Savings Account serves as a gateway to a comprehensive range of essential banking services. Customers can seamlessly link their savings account to their debit and credit cards, giving them immediate access to funds and enabling smooth, everyday transactions.

This account can be used to receive your salary where you can earn interest on your salary. Additionally, the account is integrated with term deposits, providing customers with the flexibility to manage their financial portfolio efficiently. Insurance options are also available, allowing customers to safeguard their financial well-being while continuing to earn interest on their balances.

BankDhofar has made banking easier than ever by ensuring that account holders can access their funds at any time. Whether through the user-friendly mobile banking app or the secure online banking platform, customers can manage their accounts around the clock, transfer funds, set up direct debits, and complete transactions with ease.

The bank's extensive ATM network enables convenient withdrawals and deposits, while features such as cardless cash withdrawal add an extra layer of accessibility and security.

In addition to its savings benefits, the High Yield Savings Account also provides access to a range of financing solutions tailored to the needs of customers and offers insurance solutions, including personal accident insurance, motor insurance, and travel insurance, ensuring that customers have peace of mind in all aspects of their financial journey.

Opening a High Yield Savings Account is a simple and hassle-free process. Existing BankDhofar customers can open the account instantly through the bank's mobile app. Alternatively, they can visit one of the bank's 131 branches located across Oman to receive in-person assistance from banking professionals.

As Oman's second-largest banking institution by branch network, BankDhofar remains dedicated to innovation and digital transformation, aligning with the objectives of Vision 2040 to drive national economic growth

RAMADAN PROMOTION

Lulu picks first 2 winners of Dream Drive promotion

MUSCAT: Lulu Hypermarket announced the first two set of winners of its ongoing Ramadan Dream Drive promotion. The first draw was held on February 19, 2025 and the second draw was held on February 27. The promotion, which started on February 12, will run till April 12, at all Lulu stores in Oman.

Saud Suleiman Al Wahaibi and Divyesh Parandy were the lucky grand prize winners of Nissan Pathfinder cars in the first two draws.. Many other winners of the lucky draws also took home their prizes.

As part of the Dream Drive promotion, customers get a chance to win 8 Nissan Pathfinder-S 4WD as Grand prize during the entire promotional period. Apart from the Grand prize, other prizes include 40 gifts from Ikon, including smart TVs, cooking ranges, refrigerators, washers and air fryers.

Commenting on the Ramadan promotion, Shabeer K A, Regional Director – Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, stated, "We have announced the first two sets of winners of our Ramadan Shop and Win promotion. The first two draws were held in two consecutive weeks. We congratulate both the grand prize winners and all other winners of the first and second draws. I believe this is the perfect time to shop with us, as there are six more draws left for our shoppers to win big during Ramadan," he added.

In addition to the amazing prizes, Lulu has lined up several other offers and deals to enhance customer experience and to make shopping a memorable and fun-filled experience during Ramadan. There will also be huge discounts and exclusive offers on all essential commodities, including fresh foods, beverages, frozen foods and other grocery items during the promotional period.

Shoppers purchasing for a minimum value of RO 10 or more in a single receipt at any Lulu Hypermarket in Oman during the promotional period are entitled to participate in the e-raffle. The system will automatically send a WhatsApp message or SMS once this eligibility criteria of RO 10 is billed. Upon receiving the message, customer must click the provided link in the SMS to access the registration portal and fill in the details to participate in the e-raffle draw. Customers can download Lulu APP and check their coupons in the e-bills portal. Eight electronic draws will be held on different dates during the promotion period.

MODERN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

MCBS and Boeing partner to empower local talent, shape sustainable mobility solutions

MUSCAT: The Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) and Boeing announced a collaboration to drive innovation and cultivate talent for the emerging advanced air mobility industry in Oman.

The joint "Air Taxis and Advanced Air Mobility" initiative will leverage MCBS' strong academic foundation and Boeing's industry expertise to unleash the potential of this sector in Oman. The initiative will provide MCBS' undergraduate aviation students, 76% of whom are women, with opportunities for cutting-edge research to spearhead advanced air mobility technologies. Additionally, students will participate in business challenges related to urban air mobility, and gain leadership and entrepreneurship skills.

Kuljit Ghata-Aura, President of Boeing Middle East, Türkiye, Africa, and Central Asia, stated: "Boeing has a longstanding commitment to Oman, and we are eager to support the evolution of advanced air mobility in the country. By leveraging our global expertise, we aim to foster innovation and empower the next generation of Omani talent. We look forward to supporting the students at MCBS as they explore the opportunities within this burgeoning sector."

Dr. Muneer Al-Maskari, MCBS' Executive Chair, said: "With the recent launch of the MCBS Innovation X Center, the collaboration with Boeing is a game-changer for our students. It offers them unparalleled opportunities to apply their learning and develop leadership skills needed to excel. We are thrilled to partner with Boeing, a company that shares our commitment to new technologies, youth engagement, and sustainability."

Over 530 undergraduate Bachelor of Science students at MCBS will participate in the program in 2025.

The initiative encompasses curriculum enrichment, student projects, research and development, outreach and advocacy. Working together, MCBS and Boeing will integrate advanced air mobility into undergraduate aviation management and airport management programs at MCBS. Additionally, some students will take part in the Advanced Air Mobility Student Challenge.

The research and development efforts will include establishing the Advanced Air Mobility Research Hub, focusing on uncrewed aircraft system traffic management, noise mitigation, and low-emissions technologies. MCBS with support from Boeing will also organize conferences, workshops, and campaigns to promote safe and sustainable air mobility solutions in Oman.

PARTNERSHIP

Oman Air signs pact with Mazoon Dairy for locally-sourced products

MUSCAT: Oman Air has signed amajor new agreement with Mazoon Dairy, the flagship dairy project of the Sultanate of Oman. Through the partnership, Mazoon Dairy will serve as the airline's primary supplier of high-quality dairy products, including milk, yoghurt, laban, and cheese.

During the signing ceremony, Captain Nasser Al Salmi, Oman Air's Chief Operating Officer, said, "As part of our commitment to In-Country Value (ICV), we are proud to support Oman's food industry and contribute to Mazoon Dairy's mission to enhance local self-sufficiency. This partnership underscores our dedication to procuring locally made products and strengthening domestic suppliers, ensuring that we continue to provide our guests with the highest quality food and beverages sourced from within Oman."

Ali Al-Buali, Chief Executive Officer at Mazoon Dairy, added, "We are proud to partner with Oman Air as their official dairy provider. This agreement represents a milestone in our growth journey, expanding our reach on a global scale, while supporting our broader vision for national economic development. Today, we offer a diverse range of high-quality products, adhering to the highest industry standards and best practices. We look forward to meeting the expectations of the national carrier by delivering premium dairy products on board."

The initiative is part of Oman Air's broader strategy to contribute to ICV by prioritising local sourcing and fostering partnerships with homegrown businesses. In 2024 the airline collaborated with 323 local Omani companies, including 44 Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Meanwhile, through its Vendor Development Programme, Oman Air also supports SMEs in improving their capabilities, contractual performance and product development. Once onboarding them, the airline helps them to scale their products and measure their performance, with the goal of a long-term contract.

ROUND-UP

GRAND CELEBRATION

AL Misfat Equipment Company Celebrates 10 Years of Excellence, Secures WEICHAI Dealership and Unveils All-Terrain 800-ton SANY Crane

MACARANAS MARJORIE
MANAGING DIRECTOR
Almisfat Integrated LLC

MUSCAT: AL Misfat Equipment Company commemorated its 10th anniversary with a grand celebration, marking a decade of leadership, innovation, and excellence in Oman's heavy equipment industry. The event brought together industry leaders, key clients, and top executives, solidifying AL Misfat's position as the trusted name in heavy machinery and lifting solutions.

Night to remember: AL Misfat's landmark celebration

Held at an exclusive venue, the event was a spectacular showcase of AL Misfat's growth, achievements, and vision for the future. Attendees were treated to engaging presentations, interactive product showcases, and live demonstrations, all designed to highlight the company's commitment to driving industry progress.

Major announcements and key milestones

Among the major highlights of the night were two groundbreaking announcements:

1. The signing of an exclusive dealership agreement with WEICHAI Engines, offering businesses access to high-performance, cost-effective power solutions.

2. The grand reveal of the powerful All-Terrain 800-ton SANY Crane, the largest and most advanced crane in Oman, setting a new benchmark for lifting capabilities in the region.

As the All-Terrain 800-ton crane was unveiled, attendees watched in awe as it performed a live demonstration, showcasing its unparalleled strength, precision, and efficiency. This monumental launch marks a new era in Oman's heavy equipment industry, giving contractors and infrastructure developers a new level of capability in lifting operations.

"This milestone reflects our dedication to innovation, service excellence, and industry leadership. We are excited for even greater advancements ahead." Nassib B Kamar, GM. "Al Misfat" does not just sell equipment; they provide long-term support. The unveiling of the 800-ton crane was breathtaking—it isa significant change for Oman's heavy lifting industry!" Client Testimonial from Truck Oman Group:

Expanding our portfolio with WEICHAI Engines

The partnership with WEICHAI Engines is a strategic move that allows AL Misfat to provide reliable and cost-effective power solutions to industries across Oman. WEICHAI's globally renowned engines are efficient, durable, and designed for high-performance applications, making them an excellent addition to AL Misfat's growing portfolio of world-class equipment. "With the inclusion of WEICHAI Engines, we can now offer businesses a wider range of solutions tailored to their operational needs. We believe this partnership will enable new startups and expanding companies to access powerful, affordable, and high-quality engine solutions without compromising reliability," Samir F Chalhoub, Founder & CEO.

Future of heavy equipment: Bigger innovations coming soon

While the All-Terraine 800-ton crane stole the spotlight, AL Misfat also announced plans for an even more powerful crane, which will soon be introduced to the market. The next-generation crane is set to push the boundaries of lifting technology, offering even more efficiency, reach, and capacity for mega construction and infrastructure projects. "This is only the beginning. We are preparing to introduce an even larger and more powerful crane that will redefine the heavy lifting industry," Samir F Chalhoub, Founder & CEO.

Commitment to excellence and customer success

AL Misfat Equipment Company's 10-year journey has been shaped by its unwavering commitment to quality, customer satisfaction, and innovation.

The company continues to expand its product range, after-sales services, and technical support, ensuring clients receive the best solutions for their operational needs. Looking ahead, AL Misfat aims to invest in more advanced machinery, enhance its service network, and drive Oman's construction and infrastructure sectors toward greater efficiency.

"Our journey has been built on strong relationships, trust, and the ability to adapt to changing industry needs. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to bringing the latest advancements in heavy equipment to Oman," Samir Chalhoub- CEO & Founder.

"The AL Misfat event was a defining moment! The unveiling of the 800-ton crane was an unforgettable highlight for Oman's construction sector." Client Testimonial from Arabian Logistics:

Legacy of leadership: Looking ahead to the future

As the night concluded, attendees engaged in discussions about the future of Oman's construction and industrial sectors, with many expressing enthusiasms for AL Misfat's role in shaping the industry's next phase. With a solid foundation built on trust, expertise, and continuous innovation, AL Misfat Equipment Company is set to lead the heavy equipment market for decades to come. For inquiries, please contact: Phone:+968 92970970 & +968 99339966 Email:inf@almisfat.com website: www.almisfat.com

Exciting Ramadan offer now available on BYD

This Ramadan, fuel your journey with BYD Oman's exclusive offers introducing unbeatable prices and incredible benefits on its all-electric and hybrid vehicles

MUSCAT: BYD is thrilled to continue its journey in Oman by bringing innovative vehicles and futuristic experiences to its customers.

This Ramadan, fuel your journey with BYD Oman's exclusive offers introducing unbeatable prices and incredible benefits on its all-electric and hybrid vehicles.

Experience the best of BYD's innovations and invest in an all-electric vehicle with stress free service perks up to 5 years/100,000 km on all-electric vehicles and 5 years/50,000 km on a plug-in hybrid vehicle (PHEV). Get additional perks like free EV and PHEV chargers, first-year free insurance, and unlock-unbeatable value for money before the offer ends on 24th April 2025.

Find your perfect BYD vehicle-and get the best value for money! Get unbeatable prices and drive home the plug-in hybrid QIN Plus Classic starting at OMR 6,790 or Atto3 EV classic and Song Plus Comfort PHEV, now priced at OMR 9,990.Plus, get an exciting chance to enter the Raffle Draw to win the BYD Qin Plus Classic.

The BYD Qin Plus DM-i is a cutting-edge plug-in hybrid vehicle (PHEV) powered by a 1.5-liter gasoline engine and an electric motor. Thanks to BYD's innovative DM-i Super Hybrid Technology, it offers a 100 km electric range and ultra-low fuel consumption. With a combined range of up to 1,000 kilometers, it's setting new standards in efficiency and performance.

The BYD ATTO 3,is the perfect choice for those seeking an electric SUV with impressive performance and fuel-efficiency. Powered by BYD's revolutionary Blade Battery, it delivers exceptional safety, high performance output in premium comfort setting.

The gym-themed cockpit is designed to deliver an immersive driving experience with a 5-inch LCD dashboard, the exemplary 12.8-inch rotatable screen, rhythmic interactive ambient lighting and ergonomic seats.

Additionally, the BYD Song Plus Comfort is a plug-in hybrid SUV featuring BYD's Super DM technology, that delivers impressive ultra-low fuel consumption, and remarkable response handling.

With a combined range of up to 900 kilometers (NEDC), the AWD offers a luxurious driving experience with features like ambient lighting, a 360° camera, a panoramic sunroof, a Dirac audio system, and compatibility with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Further enhancing the experience with BYD's revolutionary 15.6" rotating multimedia screen, multi-color ambient lighting —all while blending outstanding performance with state-of-the-art technology and comfort.

In Oman, BYD vehicles are distributed by World Auto Business.

NEW INITIATIVE

bp Oman, eMushrif launch 'Aman' for safe school transportation in Al Dhahirah

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman and in collaboration with the Directorate General of Education in Al Dhahirah Governorate, eMushrif has successfully launched "Aman" initiative to transform regular school buses into smart buses.

This initiative aimed at enhancing the safety and efficiency of school transportation. Through converting traditional school buses into "smart buses," Aman initiative is set to improve the daily transportation experience for students, ensuring their safety and providing peace of mind for parents and school administrators.

Aman initiative has made significant strides in enhancing school transportation safety across Al Dhahirah by targeting 300 buses and 30 schools, benefiting more than 18,000 students. The project implements advanced technology specifically designed to prevent incidents where children are left behind in buses.

Each bus is equipped with a multi-layered safety system, including a push-button mechanism installed at the rear of the vehicle. This feature ensures that drivers perform a mandatory visual check inside the bus after every trip, should the driver forget, a small alarm sounds as a reminder. Additionally, motion sensors are activated for two hours after the bus has been vacated, adding an extra layer of security to ensure no child is left behind.

Ibrahim Al Hinai, Social investment manager at bp Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar, commented: "At bp Oman, we are committed in investing in solutions that positively impact the communities we serve. The Aman Project reflects our dedication to the safety and wellbeing of Oman's children. By introducing innovative technologies like the visual check system and motion sensors, we are taking tangible steps to ensure that no child is left behind on a school bus. We are proud to support this initiative, which aligns with our broader vision of creating safer, smarter, and more sustainable communities."

Zuwaina Al Mazroui, General Manager of the Directorate of Education in Al Dhahirah Governorate, expressed her support for the Aman Project, stating: "The safety of our students is of the utmost importance, and the Aman Project is a critical step toward ensuring that. By integrating smart technologies into our school buses, we are confident that we are providing an extra layer of protection that will benefit both the students and their families. This initiative is setting a new standard for school transportation in the region, and we are proud to be part of it."

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