



HM RECEIVES GREETINGS FROM INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE AND CUSTOMS

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, has received a message of greetings, from Lt. Gen Hassan Mohsin Al Shraiqi, Inspector General of police and Customs, on the occasion of Royal Oman Police (ROP) Day, which falls on 5 January every year. The Inspector General of Police and Customs expressed his sincere greetings and congratulated His Majesty the Sultan coupled with thanks and appreciation for the Royal Care, His Majesty accords for ROP, reaffirming that ROP is proceeding with the march of progress and modernisation for the security of all living in Oman. **-ONA**



Founded 1975 · Volume 49 No. 214 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group



بنك مسقط
bank muscat

Convenient Banking Anytime. Anywhere.
Meethaq Mobile & Internet Banking

Log in now

2465 6666

FOOTBALL

Heartbreak for Oman as Bahrain lift Gulf Cup

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's pursuit of their third Arabian Gulf Cup crown ended in heartbreak as Bahrain claimed a dramatic 2-1 victory in the final at the Jaber Al Ahmed International Stadium in Kuwait on Saturday. Despite a valiant effort, the Red Warriors were denied glory in a pulsating contest, settling for a second consecutive runners-up finish.

For Bahrain, it was their second title, the previous coming in 2019 in Qatar.

Oman took an early lead in the 17th minute, capitalising on a set-piece opportunity. Ali Al Busaidi's pinpoint corner found Abdulrahman Al Mushaifri, whose towering header soared past Bahrain's goalkeeper Ebrahim Lutfalla.

This advantage held until the halftime whistle, as Oman withstood Bahrain's relentless attacks.



However, the second half saw Bahrain rally with renewed intensity. In the 79th minute, Jameel Al Yahmadi's challenge on Bahrain's Mohamed Marhoon resulted in a penalty—a decision that sparked debate among spectators. Marhoon calmly slotted the ball into

the net, levelling the score.

Bahrain struck again just two minutes later. Marhoon, at the heart of the action once more, delivered a dangerous cross that Oman captain Mohammed Al Musalami inadvertently redirected into his own net.



Own goal

The own goal proved decisive, as Bahrain held their ground in the final moments to secure their second Gulf Cup title.

The loss marked Oman's first defeat in the tournament, a campaign under coach Rasheed Jaber

that had seen them progress unbeaten to the final. They showcased resilience throughout the competition, including a strong defensive display and moments of attacking brilliance.

In the opening exchanges of the final on Saturday, Bahrain's

Mohamed Al Romaihi created a golden opportunity, but teammate Mahdi Al Humaidan failed to convert the cross. Minutes later, Al Humaidan's powerful shot was superbly saved by Oman's dependable goalkeeper Faiz Al Rusheidi.

>A8

EXPERTS, ANALYSTS HAIL OMAN'S 2025 BUDGET

The key positive aspects of the budget include maintaining social support for petroleum products, electricity, water, sewage, waste sectors, as well as the social protection system

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's state budget for 2025 is balanced and maintains support for social aspects, with a positive step towards reducing public debt costs, economic analysts and experts said.

The key positive aspects of the 2025 state budget include maintaining social support for petroleum products, electricity, water, sewage, and waste sectors, as well as the social protection system, said Dr. Dhafir bin Awad Al Shanfari, Chairman of the Economic



and Financial Committee in the State Council.

"Additionally, there is good progress in reducing the cost of public debt annually through the restructuring of some lower-cost loans," he added.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Dr Al Shanfari said that there is significant scope for increasing investment spending with high local content if a financial surplus is achieved during the year. "There is also a need to reinvest the surplus in promising activities to enhance their contribution to GDP and future revenues, targeting sectors such as industry, tourism, fisheries, and logistics," he added.

He further noted that a specific amount is allocated to enhance job

opportunities in the private sector and support the employment of Omanis, along with training programmes.

He expressed hope for a proactive plan to leverage financial surpluses to stimulate the non-oil economy and address job seekers' challenges, expecting oil prices to average above \$70 per barrel, helping to prevent a deficit based on \$60 per barrel.

Dr. Mohammed bin Hamid Al Wardi, a member of the State Council, highlighted that the 2025 budget continues the Tenth Five-Year Plan and financial sustainability initiatives amid a global environment of geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainties. He pointed out that the budget for this year is the last

in the Tenth Five-Year Plan, with expenditure reaching OMR11.8 billion, a 1.3% increase compared to the approved 2024 budget.

He further noted that the 2025 budget aims for a growth of 2.7% aided by government spending of OMR 4.4 billion.

"The budget seeks to achieve fiscal and economic balance by reducing public debt, stimulating the economy, and continuing to enhance social services through the social protection system and support for electricity, water, and petroleum products sectors."

"Additionally, the 2025 budget has the lowest cost for public debt service compared to previous budgets, at OMR915 million," he further added. >A6

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Genome project to boost healthcare

1 The decision by the Council of Ministers, chaired by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, to launch the National Genome and Human Data Programme is a huge step to boost quality of healthcare. >A2



OMAN

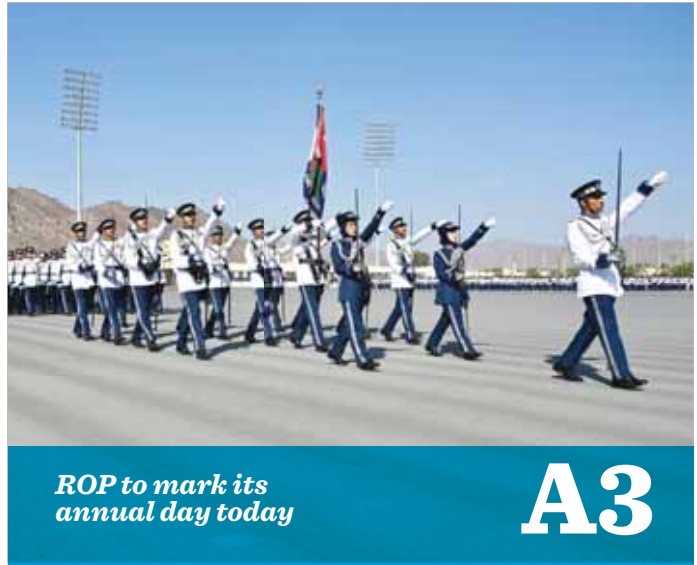
Walk organised to explore Nizwa

2 A tour aimed to explore the historic and heritage landmarks in the wilayat of Nizwa, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, kicked off, yesterday. >A5

WORLD

UN body warns of catastrophe in Gaza

3 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has warned the international community of a "human-rights catastrophe continuing to unfold in Gaza before the eyes of the world." >A7



ROP to mark its annual day today

A3

CHANGAN CS35 PLUS

1.4L Turbo Engine, 156 hp | 7 Speed DCT
Manufacturer's Warranty - 6 YEARS / 250,000 KMS*

INTERACTIVE AND SOCIAL SUV

EMI OMR 109* for 6 years

800 50800 9662 8909

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

Showrooms: Qurum 94641010, Mawaleh 97888180, Nizwa 96628940, Sohar 95351200, Salalah 96629050, Ibri 96628930

Sales Centers: Barka 96629010, Sur 96628920

National Human Genome and Data Programme to enhance healthcare

This initiative aims to improve disease diagnosis accuracy and develop personalised treatments for patients

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The decision by the Council of Ministers, chaired by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, to launch the National Genome and Human Data Programme, “Omani Genome,” marks a significant step towards enhancing the quality of healthcare in Oman.

This initiative aims to improve disease diagnosis accuracy and develop personalised treatments for patients.

Professor Khalid bin Humaid Al-Rasadi, Director of the Medical Research Centre at Sultan Qaboos University, highlighted the im-



portance of genetic samples and genomic data as vital national security content.

The programme will contribute to establishing policies to secure data, along with ethical standards for collecting, analysing, and utilising this data while ensuring confidentiality and privacy.

He added that the programme

will help create a national genomic database for the Omani population, promote genomic research, achieve national self-sufficiency in genomics and bioinformatics, and stimulate the knowledge economy in biotechnology and genomics.

It will also aid in the development of treatments and genetic industries.

The genetic and genomic database will improve healthcare for the Omani community by developing genetic screening programmes, including pre-marital, prenatal, and newborn screenings for rare genetic diseases, and focusing on common diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and lifestyle factors.



This comprehensive database will play a crucial role in early detection, prediction, and prevention of genetic diseases, guiding health planning, enhancing preventive healthcare, and reducing healthcare costs related to genetic disorders.

Regarding the expansion of research areas through this programme, Al-Rasadi noted that it will enrich research and innovation in rare and common genetic diseases, such as familial hypercholesterolemia, type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, and more.

These efforts will lead to the development of innovative diagnostics and treatments, enable experimental research and clinical trials, and establish Oman as a scientific reference in genomic research.

He emphasised the significant role that this data can play in developing personalised treatments and precision medicine, which relies on the understanding of social and behavioural data, blood test results, imaging, clinical health data, and genomic data. This integration will enhance the accuracy of diagnosing and treating genetic conditions.

Addressing ethical issues related to the collection and use of genomic data, Al-Rasadi explained that legislative and policy development based on local and international bioethical standards will regulate the collection, preservation, analysis, and utilisation of genomic data, safeguarding confidentiality, privacy, and individual and community rights.

Professor Khalid bin Humaid Al-Rasadi concluded by highlighting the potential benefits of the National Genome and Human Data Programme for individuals and society, including fostering community trust through transparency in handling genomic data, respecting individual privacy, encouraging participation in genetic surveys and research, and promoting healthy lifestyles based on genetic knowledge, such as appropriate diets and personalised exercise routines. -With inputs from ONA

SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT

Collapse of treated water collection basin floods Nizwa market

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A partial collapse of a treated water collection basin at the Nizwa sewage treatment plant has caused significant flooding at the Friday Market, damaging vendors' goods.

Nama Water Services has issued an apology and a clarification statement regarding the incident.

The overflow, caused by a breach in the embankment of the collection pond, resulted in water flowing into Wadi Kalbu. Nama Water Services has activated an emergency response plan and is coordinating with relevant authorities and field teams to manage the situation.

A specialised committee has been formed in cooperation with

the governor's office to assess and evaluate the damages caused by the flooding.

The company assures that the treated water meets approved standards and is used for irrigation and other purposes.

They also stated they are working on a new pipeline to utilise this water for larger development projects in the region.

The CEO of Operations and Maintenance of Namaa Water Services pointed out that the sewage treatment plant in the Wilayat of Nizwa, which was established in 2008, receives about 11,000 cubic metres of water per day and operates with the latest technologies for triple water treatment with high purity according to the best global practices.



MINISTRY OF COMMERCE

Smart factories project to boost industrial competitiveness

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, in collaboration with the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting (GOIC), has commenced field evaluations of several factories as part of the “Smart Production Factories” project. This initiative aims to transform Oman's industrial sector by adopting advanced technologies and the principles of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

This phase of the project involves a comprehensive assessment of participating factories based on specific criteria using the Smart Industry Readiness Index (SIRI).

The evaluation matrix consists of three main pillars divided into 16 dimensions, each providing an in-depth analysis of the factories' readiness to implement Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies and offering recommendations for performance improvement and development opportunities.

Eng. Idris bin Hassan Al-Sinan, Head of Knowledge-Based Industries at the General Directorate of Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, stated that the current phase focuses on enabling 10 factories to adopt Fourth Industrial Revolution applications and digital transformation.

The plan aims to convert 30%



of factories in Oman to smart factories by 2026. A specialised team comprising experts from GOIC and an accredited assessor from the International Centre for Industrial Transformation, in cooperation with ministry staff, is conducting field visits to the targeted factories.

Al-Sinan added that these visits aim to assess the current status of the factories and commu-

nicate with their work teams to complete the evaluation.

This initiative aligns with the ministry's strategy to implement the objectives of the Industrial Strategy 2040, which aims to enhance the competitiveness of Oman's industrial sector.

The initiative seeks to support the transition to smart production factories that rely on modern technology, thereby improving productivity, reducing costs, increasing operational efficiency, and creating specialised jobs that align with educational outcomes.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion invites all factories interested in digital transformation to participate in this project to benefit from the opportunities it offers to enhance their efficiency and competitiveness in the market.





INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Civil Aviation Authority, Sultanate of Oman announces the following investment opportunity:

RFP Ref. No.	RFP Title	Documents Fee	Date for RFP Issuance	Last Date For RFP Purchase	Submission Date
INV/01/2025	Operate and Manage Muscat International Airport's Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) Facility	300 OMR	5/1/2025	31/1/2025	6/2/2025

- The Interested Investors/companies can purchase the RFP documents by paying the value of the documents by bank deposit through the dedicated account of the Civil Aviation Authority as follows:

National Bank of Oman

1024110010001
- Send a copy of the receipt to the following email address (mro@caa.gov.om), indicating the following information:
 - RFP reference number.
 - Representative's name and job title.
 - Contact details (email address, phone number, etc.).
 - Commercial Registration Number (if any).
- The RFP document will be sent to the bidder's email address.
- The bids shall be submitted signed and stamped to the highlighted email address.
- Note:**
 - If there are any enquiries, please send them to the following email address mro@caa.gov.om.
 - The deadline for submission of bids is 14:00 Muscat time (GMT+4) and any bid received after the deadline will not be considered.
 - The Civil Aviation Authority is not bound to accept the highest bid or any other bid.





Terms and conitions apply

Empower your future today

With BankDhofar Ladies Account

Start Saving with BankDhofar Ladies account!
To know more, visit www.bankdhofar.com

bankdhofar

 2479 1111  www.bankdhofar.com



بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

ROP to mark annual day today

The Royal Oman Police has dealt with the various security incidents in all parts of through its commands and ROP stations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: 5th January is a glorious day for the Sultanate of Oman, and it is the day when Royal Oman Police (ROP) celebrates its annual day (ROP Day) and its achievements and renews its determination for extending more efforts in the march of progress and development.

The Royal Oman Police has dealt with the various security incidents in all parts of the Sultanate of Oman, through ROP commands and ROP stations. This is in addition to the role of ROP special tasks in support of all ROP formations.

ROP Service Centres in the various wilayats of the Sultanate offer



traffic, passports and civil services for citizens and residents.

On 18 November 2024, ROP activated/opened ROP Station in Raysuit, and the ROP Coast Guard Station and the security centre at Salalah Port.

ROP also added a number of electric cars to its security and traffic patrol fleet in a step that reflected its commitment to sustainable development and the efforts for using clean energy.

ROP also contributes to enhancement of the efforts of preparedness to confront the probable risks resulting from disasters and environment and industrial incidents through the National Emergency Management Centre, which strives to coordinate the national response and the fast recovery by adopting 'the integrated systems for management of crises and the advanced online portal for management of the information and

data coupled with dissemination of the awareness of society within the necessity for preparedness for facing crises.

ROP is one of the leading government institutions supporting Oman's digital society and egovernment through a system of over 650 electronic services.

ROP is making plans to keep abreast of the requirements of Oman Vision 2040 through launching initiatives, training of

the human cadre and employment of its resources for developing its systems using the state-of-the-art technology for making the procedures simple and easy for citizens and residents.

In 2024, Royal Oman Police launched the digital identity service in ROP application which allows verification of the person's identity.

Vehicle registration service
ROP also launched the first vehicle registration service through the car dealers, the service of transfer of licences of vehicles, the traffic violations service through the digital identity service and payment of fines through the banks' applications, Thawani portfolio and the platform of Tasdeed Company among other services.

ROP received three local awards within the Comex Awards for Excellence in Technology 2024 in recognition for its efforts in boosting the experience of the user and development of digital services. These awards are for the best electronic services; and best application for smartphones.

Digitalisation of procedures
ROP Customs through its Bayan system contributed to the improvement of customs work through digitalisation of procedures, which enhances the exchange of trade and security

measures. The system enables customs clearance prior to arrival of shipments.

In 2024, ROP launched a training programme for citizens who joined the management and handling operations at the border posts, which is one of the initiatives aimed to offer job opportunities for the Omani youth and the support of national talents.

The Directorate General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations boosted its performance in carrying out its assigned tasks and duties through continued modernisation of its systems by acquiring modern equipment and machines and technical programmes and admission of its personnel in specialised sessions.

The Directorate General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations also made available the modern equipment and systems for feeding its databases and intensified its efforts in combating human trafficking.

The coast guard command of the ROP Coast Guard assumes the responsibility of protection of Oman's territorial waters along with the search and rescue operations and combating smuggling and illegal immigration, preserving security within the ports and harbours and public establishments located at the beaches among other duties and responsibilities.



CHANGAN

Choose your favourite Changan model today!

Easy to own with low monthly installments.



CS95
2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp, 8-speed AT, 4WD, 7 Seater

EMI
OMR 181*
for 6 years





CS85 COUPE
2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp, 8-speed AT

EMI
OMR 134*
for 6 years





CS75 PLUS
2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp, 8-speed AT

EMI
OMR 150*
for 6 years





CS35 PLUS
1.4L Turbo Engine, 156 hp, 7-speed DCT

EMI
OMR 109*
for 6 years





EADO PLUS
1.5L Turbo Engine, 170 hp, 7-speed DCT

EMI
OMR 110*
for 6 years





ALSVIN
1.5L Engine, 105 hp, 5-speed DCT

EMI
OMR 64*
for 6 years



CHANGAN The Premium Range **Super Warranty up to 6 years / 250,000 Km***

ROP DAY

Royal Oman Police extends greetings to His Majesty



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Royal Oman Police Headquarters/Command and ROP personnel take privilege in extending their sincere greetings to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander on the occasion of the glorious Royal Oman Police (ROP) Day.

It is a source of pride and reflects the duty of preserving security and stability and reaffirms the preparedness of ROP personnel in serving the nation and all people living in Oman.

Inspired by the utmost care and attention, His Majesty accords to Royal Oman Police, for enhancing the mission of this security establishment to keep abreast of the modern changes and to build the capabilities of ROP by providing them with the state-of-the-art training and modern systems for serving citizens and residents, ROP employs all its capabilities for achievement of its noble goals.

With the celebrations of this glorious events, ROP is going forward with steady steps and is extending tremendous efforts for achievement

of its security mission.

The expansion of the security and digital services under the umbrella of security and stability and development of the human cadre, are all evidence for the Royal Vision which depicts the aspirations of the renewed renaissance of the Sultanate of Oman.

The unstoppable and continued march reaffirms that security is a basic cornerstone and a solid foundation for building prosperous societies and that Royal Oman Police would always keep its watchful eye for protecting the lives and property and for preserving the achievements.

On this day, Royal Oman :Police Headquarters and ROP personnel renew their loyalty and sincerity to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, reaffirming their determination for continuity with the march of renaissance and progress with steady steps and utmost determination. Al Ain Al Sahirah (the watchful eye) will always remain alert for safeguarding the achievements of the nation and for a more bright future. May the Almighty Allah protect Oman and its leader.





HONGQI



ACERE

HS5

OMR 134 PER MONTH

7 YEARS SERVICE | WARRANTY |

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE





Hongqi Oman



80080777



Azaiba

Walk organised to explore historic Nizwa landmarks

The walk saw the participation of over 3,500 participants of different age groups and nationalities

Times News Service

NIZWA: A tour aimed to explore the historic and heritage landmarks in the wilayat of Nizwa, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, kicked off, yesterday.

The walking tour was organised by the Tourism Committee of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate in cooperation with Nizwa Club and the adventure team of Al Sumoud Team affiliated to Nizwa Club.

The walk saw the participation of over 3,500 participants of different age groups and nationalities and with the support of the government departments and private sector establishments.

Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals inaugurated the walk which started from the parking area of Nizwa



Souq. The walk passed by the course of Al Wadi Al Byadh and along the gardens of Daris, the old buildings of Al Suwaiq Neighbourhood, Hisn Bait Salit Neighbourhood and Falaj Daris.

The walking tour included various archaeological and historic sites, a visit to Al Ghantaq area, the historic mosques of Kharaseen, Nizwa Fort, Soor Al Aqar and other famous landmarks and sites.

Khalfan Hamad Al Zaidi, Chairman of the Board of Nizwa Club supervising on the walk tour said that 3,608 people participated in the tour which saw no emergency cases.

The purpose of the walk is to shed light on the rich heritage and the unique tourism landmarks in Nizwa including the forts and falajs. The second walking tour will be in November 2025, he added.

MOBILITY SOLUTIONS

Bids for water taxi service opens

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology (MTCIT) has announced an investment bid (2025/1) to develop, manage, and operate a water taxi service in the Sultanate of Oman.

Transportation infrastructure

This initiative aims to improve transportation infrastructure and introduce innovative water-based mobility solutions.

The bid is open to both local and international companies and investors.

Interested parties can purchase

bid documents between February 9 and February 23, 2025, for a fee of OMR150.

The deadline for bid submissions is April 1, 2025, at 12:00PM.

Payments for bid documents should be made to Bank Muscat account number 0325001361300017.

AL MURTAFA CAMP

Royal Letters Patent handed over to officers

MUSCAT: Air Vice Marshal Khamis Hammad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), handed over the Royal Letters Patent (Al-Bara'a Al Sultania) to officers graduating from the Royal Air College (Cranwell) in the United Kingdom.

During the ceremony, held at Al Murtafa Camp, Al Ghafri congratulated the officers on the occasion of their graduation, which, he said, "reflected the efforts made to promote them to this honourable level and demonstrated the top military capabilities and skills that they gained during training at the Royal Air Force College (Cranwell) in the United Kingdom." — **ONA**



INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT
(Affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi, India) P.O. Box 1551, P.C. 114, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 24786693, 24783995
Email: office@isdoman.com Website: www.isdoman.com



TENDER NOTICE
REF: ISD/ADMIN/TENDER/2024-25/004
Indian School Darsait is seeking bids from specialised firms who are having experience in the supply of the following services:

1	Invitation to Retail Outlet Vendors for Supplying School & Physical Education uniforms
2	School Monitored Safe Transport Service
3	Furnished Container for School Canteen
4	Supply , Installation, Testing & Commissioning of CCTV Cameras

Interested parties shall collect the Tender documents from the school admin office against the payment of **RO 10/-** each as a non-refundable Tender fee from **05 January 2025 to 16 January 2025** during the working days (**Sunday to Thursday**) of the school between **07:30 a.m. and 02:00 p.m.**
The completed Tender shall be dropped in the Tender Box kept in the school office on or before **22 January 2025 by 2.00 p.m.**
The school reserves the right to reject any tender without providing any reason and does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender.
The Tender document should be submitted in a sealed envelope , addressed to **The Head Purchase Subcommittee, Indian School Darsait, PO Box 1551,PC114, Darsait, Muscat.**
Principal

WEATHER

Temperatures drop across parts of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As winter arrives, many regions in Oman are experiencing a notable drop in temperatures. Some areas have recorded temperatures below 1° Celsius early this morning.

According to Abdullah Al-Shehhi, a resident of the mountain area "Al-Say" in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate, the temperature reached 0.9°C.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has recorded temperatures across various locations in Oman during the last 24 hours. As of Saturday, January 4, 2025, Saiq recorded a temperature of 3.1°C, followed by Mugshin 4.0°C, Al-Mazyouna 5.6°C, Thumrait 7.0°C, Mahdha 7.8°C, and Yanqul 8.3°C.

These temperatures have been collected from the CAA's meteorological stations and highlight the current cold weather conditions affecting different regions of the country.

In its weather alert, Oman's Met office said that dust may reduce visibility in mountainous and coastal areas. Motorists have been told to remain vigilant while driving.





INDIAN SCHOOL SALALAH
PO BOX 2305, SALALAH 211, SULTANATE OF OMAN
PHONE:23235700 / 23235701, FAX: 23235376
Email: contactus@indianschoolsalalah.com Website :www.indianschoolsalalah.com



Tender Notice | Tender Ref No :ISS/023 – 05/01/2025
Sealed quotes are invited from reputed companies for the following Services:-

- General Insurance Renewal**
Fidelity Insurance, Comprehensive general liability, Money Insurance, Group personal accident – Students, Group personal Accident – Staff & Dependent, Life Insurance – Staff & Dependent, Property all risk, Work men compensation.
- Printing Works**
Students Diary – 4500 Nos, Souvenir- 4500Nos.
- Supply of Cleaning Staff**
Full Time – 6am to 6 pm (Male- 10 Nos & Female – 8 Nos)
Part Time – 3pm to 6pm (Male 8 Nos)
Support Staff – 7am to 4pm (Male – 3 Nos & Female – 1 Nos)

Interested parties shall remit a non refundable Tender fee of OMR 10/- each for SL No. 1 & 2 and OMR 25/- for SL No. 3 at School fee counter (Main Building) and can collect the Tender document between 9 am to 3 pm (Sunday to Thursday) from 05th January 2025 to 13th January 2025.
———— Indian School Salalah reserves the right to accept or reject any Tender. ————
Last Date for submission of Sealed Quotation is 16-01-2025 on or before 3 PM

UNCLAIMED SETS FROM OMASCO ELECTRONICS SERVICE CENTERS

Oman Marketing and Service Company LLC wishes to inform all customers that a number of “PANASONIC”, “AFTRON”, “BLUESTAR” AND “BLACK & DECKER” sets sent for repair to our Service Centers at Bousher, Sur, Sohar, Nizwa and Salalah before 30/06/2024 have not yet been collected.

Customers are hereby informed that all such sets must be collected within one month from the date of this Announcement on submission of the Official Repair Slip.

Sets not collected within 30 days from the date of the announcement will be disposed off and the company will not accept any claim whatsoever in this regard.

Toll-Free Number: 80062722



شركة عمان للتسويق والخدمات ش.م.م.
Oman Marketing and Services Company L.L.C.

NBO MONEY MARKET FUND OPEN-ENDED INVESTMENT FUND



EXTENSION OF SUBSCRIPTION PERIOD

Subscription Closing Date: 16th January 2025

Fund Objectives

The primary objective of the Fund is to generate returns with preservation of capital and daily liquidity, through investment in liquid, low-risk fixed income investments mainly comprising money market instruments issued by Omani, regional and international banks, governments and government-related entities (GREs), and other entities.

Fund Structure

Open-ended fund investing in (i) fixed income investments including mainly money market instruments and (ii) bank deposits and call accounts.

Initial Subscription Price

1.000 Rial Omani.

Minimum Subscription for Initial Issue:

The minimum Initial Subscription shall be 500 Units per Subscriber and thereafter in multiples of 100 Units.

This advertisement is an extract of the summary of the prospectus of NBO Money Market Fund ("Prospectus") approved by the Financial Services Authority of Oman ("FSA") vide its Administrative Decision No. KH/70/2024 dated 3 December 2024. NBO Money Market Fund (the "Fund") is an open-ended investment fund established by National Bank of Oman SAOG ("NBO"), a bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman as a specialized bank and licensed as an Investment Fund Manager in accordance with the regulations of the FSA. Terms used but not defined in this advertisement shall have the meaning given to them in the Prospectus.

This advertisement summary should not be relied on for making an investment decision and is not intended to be a substitute for reading the whole Prospectus. Each investor should read the Prospectus and Articles of Association of the Fund in full before making their investment decision. This advertisement summary has been extracted from the unofficial translation of the Prospectus prepared in Arabic and approved by the FSA.

Investment Manager & Issue Manager


Legal Adviser

Al Boudaly, Mansoor Jamal & Co.

Collecting Banks / Agents


FOR 2025



Budget estimates revenues at OMR11.18bn

<FROM A1 Dr. Khalid bin Said Al Amri, Chairman of the Oman Economic Society, said that the 2025 state budget estimates revenues at OMR11.18 billion, a marginal increase compared to the 2024 budget. “The budget heavily relies on oil revenues, constituting more than 50%, and gas revenues at about 16%, with oil and gas revenues making up over 70% of the total revenues in the 2025 state budget.” “The budget seeks to achieve fiscal and economic balance by reducing public debt, stimulating the economy, and continuing to enhance social services through the social protection system and support for electricity, water, and petroleum products sectors.” “Additionally, the 2025 budget has the lowest cost for public debt service compared to previous budgets, at OMR915 million,” he further added.

Dr. Khalid bin Said Al Amri, Chairman of the Oman Economic Society, said that the 2025 state budget estimates revenues at OMR 11.18 billion, a marginal increase compared to the 2024 budget. “The budget heavily relies on oil



revenues, constituting more than 50%, and gas revenues at about 16%, with oil and gas revenues making up over 70% of the total revenues in the 2025 state budget.” “The new year’s budget expenditure is OMR11.8 billion, a slight increase from 2024, while the projected deficit for 2025 is OMR620 million, equivalent to 5.5% of total revenues, compared to a surplus in 2024,” he further said.

He further pointed out that the 2025 state budget has allocated about OMR5 billion for social spending, representing approximately 42% of total expenditure. Investment in social services, especially education and health sectors, is crucial, with plans for over 22 new government schools and

several healthcare projects.

“The oil and gas sector plays a pivotal role, contributing significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP). The public debt-to-GDP ratio currently stands at 34%, expected to be within the acceptable range of 35-37% this year. The deficit is projected at 5.5% of public revenues, to be financed through internal and external borrowing and drawing from reserves, amounting to about OMR4 billion.”

Dr. Al Amri highlighted that the 2025 budget expenditure is estimated at OMR11.8 billion, with a significant portion directed towards social services OMR5 billion and OMR3 billion for defence and security. Public debt service

costs have decreased to over OMR1 billion. The government’s clear efforts in economic diversification were evident in the 2024 state budget and should continue this year.

Dr. Yusuf bin Ali Al Balushi, an economic expert, stated that the 2025 budget is relatively balanced, focusing on social aspects, expanding the social protection umbrella, completing infrastructure, and promoting investments in various economic areas.

He noted the reassuring reduction in public debt service costs to around OMR900 million, an improvement compared to the previous year, and the enhancement of Oman’s credit rating to a positive investment grade, boosting the economy’s strength and attracting investments.

He emphasised the need to focus on broader economic aspects, such as local investments and the private sector’s role, leveraging Oman’s strategic location, mineral resources, and tourism potential. There is a need to redirect spending to align with global changes, particularly in automation and the increased role of technology. - **ONA**



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

IN HUSH MONEY CRIMINAL CASE

Trump sentencing set for January 10

NEW YORK: A New York judge on Friday upheld President-elect Donald Trump’s conviction in his hush money criminal case and scheduled his sentencing for January 10.

New York Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan said Trump, who is 78, may appear at his sentencing in person or virtually.

Trump was found guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records to conceal a hush money payment his ex-fixer made to an adult film star ahead of the 2016 election.

Trump’s attorneys have fought to have the case dismissed in light of Trump’s reelection in November. Merchan said throwing out the jury verdict would “undermine the Rule of Law in immeasurable ways.”



“This lawless case should have never been brought and the Constitution demands that it be immediately dismissed,” Cheung said in a statement.

Trump’s attorneys have argued in separate cases that Trump was protected by presidential immunity while he was in office. Merchan rejected the argument, saying the president-elect would be immune from prosecution once he is sworn in as president.

“Finding no legal impediment to sentencing and recognising that Presidential immunity will likely attach once Defendant takes his Oath of Office, it is incumbent upon this Court to set this matter down for imposition of sentence prior to January 20, 2025,” the judge said.

Trump is expected to appeal his conviction and he may try other legal avenues in the next week to try to stop the sentencing. - **DW**

Judge says not inclined to sentence Trump to jail

Merchan wrote that he was not inclined to sentence Trump to jail and that a sentence of “unconditional discharge,” meaning no custody, monetary fine or probation, would be “the most viable solution.”

Trump spokesman Steven Cheung denounced the ruling, calling it a “direct violation of the Supreme Court’s Immunity decision and other longstanding jurisprudence.”

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE



Emirates operates its first ever Airbus A350 flight to Edinburgh

DUBAI: Emirates marked a significant milestone yesterday as its first Airbus A350 entered commercial service, operating its inaugural flight from Dubai to Edinburgh. Emirates newest aircraft combines next-generation cabin design and exceptional passenger comfort paired with outstanding onboard service.

The aircraft, featuring Emirates’ latest cabin products is the first of 65 A350s joining the airline’s fleet over the coming years.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates’ Deputy President and Chief Commercial Officer said: “This marks a pivotal moment in Emirates’ journey as we introduce the A350 into service. Our first Airbus A350 making its maiden journey to Edinburgh also underscores the strategic importance of the UK within our global network. The Emirates A350 offers the best of our latest inflight products, with new features and enhancements in every cabin. As we continue to expand our A350 fleet, we’re not just adding new aircraft - we’re setting new standards for global air travel.”

Kate Sherry, Chief Commercial Officer (Aero) at Edinburgh Airport said: “Starting the new

year with a brand-new aircraft is exactly the way we want to bring in 2025 at Edinburgh Airport. It’s a privilege to welcome the A350 to Scotland and to see Emirates selecting the Edinburgh to Dubai route for its maiden journey. It’s a clear show of confidence in the route and of the importance that Emirates places on a modern aircraft, raising the standards for passenger experience.”

A closer look at the A350

Emirates’ A350 showcases the latest in cabin innovation and has been designed to maximise customer comfort. Standout features include a newly-designed, more comfortable Economy Class cabin; upgraded Business Class and Premium Economy cabins; the best image quality on any aircraft with 4K and 4K HDR ultra-responsive touchscreens; extra-high ceilings with wider aisles in all classes; and faster Wi-Fi with uninterrupted global connectivity across all A350 destinations.

The most fuel-efficient large widebody aircraft in commercial service today, the A350 also offers the quietest twin-aisle cabin of any aircraft. Emirates has configured its A350 to provide three

spacious cabin classes, accommodating 312 passengers in 32 next-generation Business Class lie-flat seats, 21 Premium Economy seats, and 259 generously pitched Economy Class seats.

In the coming months, customers can look forward to experiencing the Emirates A350 on flights to eight more global destinations: Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kuwait, Bahrain, Colombo, Lyon, Muscat, and Bologna.

Connecting Scotland to the world

The Emirates A350’s arrival in Edinburgh follows the airline’s resumption of services to Scotland’s capital in November 2024. The airline operates 14 weekly flights to Scotland, including an A380 service to Glasgow - offering customers enhanced connectivity to more than 140 destinations across its extensive global network.

Emirates’ A350 flight EK23 departs Dubai at 14:50hrs local time, and arrives in Edinburgh at 19:05hrs, local time. The return flight EK24 departs Edinburgh at 20:40hrs and arrives in Dubai at 08:05hrs, local time the following day. - **WAM**

كاسابيللا
casabella

من 30% حتى 70%
FROM UP TO

تصفية نهاية الموسم
END OF SEASON CLEARANCE

يسري العرض من تاريخ: 28 نوفمبر وحتى 15 يناير 2025

Validity from: Nov 28th to Jan 15th 2025

@casabella.oman @casabella.oman @casabella_oman

UN rights commissioner warns of humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza

Volker Turk noted that Israel’s means and methods of warfare have killed tens of thousands of people and inflicted vast displacement and devastation across Gaza

GAZA: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk has warned the international community of a “human-rights catastrophe continuing to unfold in Gaza before the eyes of the world.” Turk’s remarks came during an emergency UN Security Council meeting on Friday regarding the collapse of health services in Gaza. The meeting was requested by Algeria, which has just taken over the UN Security Council presidency in January.



He noted that Israel’s means and methods of warfare have killed tens of thousands of people and inflicted vast displacement and devastation across Gaza. Citing a recent report by his Office, Turk highlighted a pattern of attacks on hospitals that

begin with Israeli airstrikes and are followed by ground raids and the detention of patients and staff -- “leaving the hospital essentially non-functional.” “The protection of hospitals during warfare is paramount and must be respected by all sides, at

all times,” Turk emphasised. He also highlighted the appalling destruction wrought by the Israeli military’s attacks on the Kamal Adwan hospital last Friday -- the last functioning hospital in north Gaza -- reflects the pattern of attacks documented in the



report. Staff and patients were forced to flee or were taken into custody, with many reports of torture and ill-treatment. The director of the hospital was taken into custody, and his fate and whereabouts are unknown. Underscoring that military operations must always distinguish between military targets and civilians, he observed, “The use of heavy weapons against hospitals is difficult to reconcile with that principle.” He underscored that failure to

respect any of these principles constitutes a breach of international humanitarian law, describing the deliberate destruction of hospitals and medical facilities as a form of collective punishment and a war crime. The UN official called for independent, thorough and transparent investigations into all Israeli attacks on hospitals, healthcare infrastructure and medical personnel, as well as the alleged misuse of such facilities. — ANI

OVERSEAS TRIP

Blinken heads to South Korea, Japan, France one last time

SEOUL: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to South Korea, Japan and France between January 4-9, the State Department said on Friday, in what is expected to be his last overseas trip in office. The US top diplomat will visit South Korea at a time of political turmoil in the country. In the latest development there, a stand-off between investigators and suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol’s team prevented investigators from arresting Yoon. Blinken to meet with his South Korean counterpart Blinken will meet with his counterpart Cho Tae-yul on Monday, Seoul’s foreign ministry said in a statement, to discuss the “South Korea-US alliance, South Korea-US-Japan cooperation, North Korea issues, and regional and global challenges.” The State Department statement also makes no direct mention of the current political turmoil in Seoul, saying Blinken will speak about “ways our two nations can build on our critical co-operation on challenges around the world based on our shared values.”

South Korea has been mired in a political crisis ever since Yoon briefly declared martial law on December 3 and sent soldiers to parliament. He has been under investigation on allegations of abuse of power and inciting an insurrection. Investigators probing Yoon’s declaration of martial law attempted to enforce a warrant for his arrest on Friday but were thwarted by presidential security guards. That warrant expires on January 6, the same day Blinken plans to meet Cho. Blinken in Japan, France In Japan, Blinken will meet senior Japanese government officials to review the “tremendous progress” between the two nations. The US and Japan have forged closer defence ties over the years, as both countries share similar concerns including what they describe as countering Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific. Blinken will wrap up his trip in Paris in meetings with French officials to discuss developments in the Middle East and European security, particularly in Ukraine. — DW

UNITED STATES

Mike Johnson wins re-election as House Speaker with Donald Trump’s backing

WASHINGTON DC: Mike Johnson overcame a razor-thin margin to keep his role as Speaker of US House of Representatives on Friday as the 119th United States Congress convened. Johnson’s election came despite earlier fears that some Republicans were dissatisfied with his performance and were looking to elect a new Speaker. He got almost unanimous support from Republicans, who hold a razor-thin majority over Democrats in the lower chamber of Congress. Three hard-right Republicans at first voted against him, leaving Johnson short of the majority he would need to remain in the job, but two of them changed their minds at the last minute. He received 218 votes out of the 434 members that voted. Democrats nominated and voted for Hakeem Jeffries, who received 215 votes. The House had to elect its speaker before the new Congress could do anything. Without a House speaker, Monday’s certification of President-elect Donald Trump’s 2024 election victory would have been in trouble. Trump fully supported Johnson on Friday hailing his victory as a sign of the country’s bright



future. “Mike will be a Great Speaker, and our Country will be the beneficiary. The People of America have waited four years for Common Sense, Strength, and Leadership,” Trump, posted on social media. Defeat for Johnson would have marked another embarrassment for Trump, who was shown the limits of his sway over House Republicans after they rebuffed his demands for a suspension of the country’s borrowing limit in December. Mike Johnson speaking to other Republicans to retain the Speakership as the 119th Congress holds its first session In his acceptance speech John-

son vowed to ‘drastically’ slash the size of government as Republicans take power in Congress. “We’re going to drastically cut back the size and scope of government, we’re going to return the power back to the people,” he said. Johnson vowed not “make deals with anyone,” to get their support. “I don’t do anything in exchange for a vote, other than commit to make this institution work as effectively, as efficiently as possible,” he said. He did however huddled with some of the holdouts in a chamber off the House floor before they changed their votes. The speaker’s election has been the key focus as the new Con-

gress opened. But the day has also marked some firsts. For the first time in US history, two Black women, Lisa Blunt Rochester from Delaware and Angela Alsobrooks from Maryland, have been serving in the Senate at the same time. Andy Kim from New Jersey has become the first Korean American senator. In the House, Sarah McBride has become the first openly transgender person in Congress. Former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has recently had hip replacement surgery after a fall, has returned to Washington and has received a standing ovation from Democrats as she has cast her vote for Jeffries. — DW

MEDIA REPORTS



World’s oldest person Tomiko Itooka dies at 116 in Japan

TOKYO: A 116 year-old woman from Japan, thought to be the world’s oldest person, has died, according to Japanese media reports. Japanese public television station NHK reported on Saturday that Tomiko Itooka died at a retirement home on December 29 in Ashiya in the southern Hyogo prefecture. Itooka was born on May 23

1908 in Osaka and was the oldest of three siblings. She had four children and five grandchildren. The Guinness World Records listed Itooka as the oldest living person after the August 2024 death of Spain’s Maria Branyas Morera at the age of 117. “During her long life, she has given us much courage and hope. We thank her once again and offer our sincere condolences to her

family and loved ones,” the television station quoted Ashiya’s mayor Ryosuke Takashima as saying. As of September, Japan counted more than 95,000 people aged 100 or older with 88% of that number being women. The oldest person ever to have lived was Jeanne Louise Calment from France aged 122 years and 164 days when she died in August 1997. — DW

AMID HMPV OUTBREAK

Nothing to be alarmed of HMPV outbreak, says Indian official

NEW DELHI: Amid concerns over the outbreak of the HMPV (Human Metapneumovirus) in China, Dr Atul Goel, Director-General of Health Services, reassured the public that there is nothing to be alarmed about the present situation, urging people to take general precautions. Speaking to the media, Dr Goel emphasised that hospitals are well-prepared for the seasonal surge in respiratory infections. Respiratory virus “Metapneumovirus is like any other respiratory virus that causes common cold, and in very old and very young it could cause flu-like symptoms. We have analysed the data of the respiratory outbreaks within the country, there is no such substantial increase in 2024 data. In any case during winter, there is an outbreak of respiratory infections and our hospitals are fully prepared for that with the necessary supplies and beds,” he said. “I want to request the public to



take general precautions, which means, those who have cough and cold should prevent coming in contact with other people to prevent the spread and take normal medicines prescribed for cold and fever... Otherwise, nothing to be alarmed about the present situation,” Dr Goel added. Meanwhile, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)

under the Union Health Ministry is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country, and is in touch with international agencies, according to Official sources. “We will continue to monitor the situation closely, validate information and update accordingly,” official Sources said. This development follows recent reports of an outbreak of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in China. “The data from December 16-22, indicates a recent rise in acute respiratory infections, including seasonal influenza, rhinovirus, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and human metapneumovirus (hMPV), however, the overall scale and intensity of respiratory infectious diseases in China this year is lower than last year. A seasonal increase in respiratory pathogens is expected in the northern hemisphere, particularly during the winter period,” sources said after an update from WPRO. — ANI

T

SPORTS

Bahrain edge Oman 2-1 to clinch 26th Arabian Gulf Cup in Kuwait

< FROM A1 Oman's goal was a textbook example of clinical execution from a set piece, but Bahrain's persistence paid off in the latter stages. Oman's forward line continued to threaten, with Jameel Al Yahmadi and Abdulrahman Al Mushaifri creating chances, but Bahrain's defence stood firm.

The second half was marred by a flurry of yellow cards as tensions escalated. Oman's Arshad Al Alawi and Bahrain's Al Romaihi were booked early in the half, reflecting the fierce contest on the pitch. Injury disruptions further complicated Oman's challenge, with Ahmed Al Khamisi forced off in the 58th minute and Al Rusheidi replaced during injury time after a heroic save.

Despite their valiant efforts, Oman couldn't find an equaliser. Bahrain's disciplined defence and composure under pressure ensured their victory, leaving Oman to rue missed opportunities and moments of misfortune.

While the Red Warriors fell short of the ultimate prize, their journey to the final underscored their quality and fighting spirit.



EXPERIENCE AMAZING

EMPOWERING
MOMENTS. TIMELESS
Luxury

FREE SERVICE*
UP TO
5 YEARS / 50,000 KMS
(WHICHEVER IS EARLIER)

FREE REGISTRATION**
1 YEAR

LX

The Lexus LX is engineered to elevate driving experiences to all new levels. Equipped with a range of inspiring technology and flagship luxury the LX rewards the senses with exceptional feelings unlike any other. Discover the LX at any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom today.

Saud Bahwan Automotive LLC (Lexus Division)
(SINCE 2007, 2015 Continues) | C. R. No. 1710412
Muscat: 24578913, 93320817, Al Mawaleh: 92858001,
Barka: 93201966, Buraimi: 91298576, Sohar: 99374199,
Ibri: 99898249, Nizwa: 91297256, Salalah: 99163579

Campaign ends on 23rd January 2025. The above benefits are applicable for all purchases except RAC, Government Organizations & Ministries.
*5 Years/50,000kms (whichever is earlier) covering 5 services at 1 year/10,000kms service interval (whichever is earlier) on 23 & 24 Model Years.
**Free first year registration where applicable. Vehicles specifications are subject to change without notice. Pictures & colours are indicative. For further details, please visit your nearest Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom.

Lexus Oman

Oman.Lexus

Lexus Oman

www.lexusoman.com

BIDEN BLOCKS SALE
Outgoing US President Joe Biden has blocked a controversial \$14.9 billion (roughly €14.4 billion) deal which would have seen the beleaguered US Steel company sold to Japan's Nippon Steel, citing concerns that it could hurt national security. - **B2**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX RECORDS GAINS
The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded gains in its market value last year estimated at about OMR3.8 billion, benefiting from the listing of OQ Exploration and Production Company and OQ Basic Industries.

Estimated revenues of Oman's 2025 budget exceed OMR11bn

Minister of Finance said that the government continues to improve public finance indicators and achieve financial sustainability, and is committed to maintaining the level of spending on basic services



product (GDP) at constant prices grew by 1.9 percent until the end of the third quarter of 2024, recording about OMR28.146 billion, compared to OMR27.632 billion at the end of the same period in 2023.

Regarding inflation, the minister said that data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCS) indicate that the inflation rate in the Sultanate of Oman until November 2024 stood at about 0.6 percent, compared to about 1.1 percent for the same period in 2023. The continued low inflation rates are attributed to government policies to control prices through several measures, including support for petroleum products, electricity and water support, as well as support for the prices of basic commodities.

As for foreign direct investments (FDI), the minister explained that as a result of the government's efforts to streamline procedures and adhere to the programmes it announced over the past years, from the beginning of the current five-year plan, preliminary data shows that the volume of FDI in the Sultanate of Oman stood at OMR26.877 billion by the end of the third quarter of 2024, an increase of 16 percent compared to the same period in 2023.

After that, Abdullah bin Salim Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance, presented a visual presentation in which he highlighted the prominent financial, economic and monetary indicators and the preliminary results of the State's General Budget for the fiscal year 2024 and the 2025 budget, as well as potential financial and economic risks, and projects and initiatives to develop the state's public finance management. -**OMA**

MUSCAT: Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance stated that the 2025 budget was prepared according to an approach that enables the government to maintain continued financial, economic and social stability.

He affirmed that the government continues to improve public finance indicators and achieve financial sustainability, and is committed to maintaining the level of spending on basic services.

He confirmed that the government continues to provide subsidy for electricity, water, wastewater, fuel, basic food commodities, and others, in addition to social and insurance programs and benefits.

This was unveiled during the media briefing on the 2025 budget held by the Ministry of Finance in Muscat. The minister said in his speech that the estimates of the state's general budget for the year 2025 were developed following joint work with the competent authorities of the State's Administrative Apparatus.

He added that the estimates were also based on key factors and data, with the total public revenues estimated at about OMR11.180 billion, based on an average oil barrel price of OMR60, an increase of 1.5 percent over the estimated revenues for 2024.

Al Habsi pointed out that oil revenues constitute 52 percent of the total revenues, while the gas sector's contribution is 16 percent, and non-oil revenues represent 32 percent of total public revenues.

The minister added that with regard to public spending, it was estimated in the state's general budget for the year 2025 at an amount of OMR11.800 billion, an increase of about OMR150 million over the public spending approved in the 2024 budget.

He pointed out that according to

these estimates, the 2025 budget included an estimated deficit of OMR620 million, which will be financed by borrowing OMR220 million, in addition to withdrawing OMR400 million from reserves.

Financial allocations
The Minister of Finance said that the state's general budget for the year 2025 included financial allocations for social services amounting to about OMR5.004 billion, distributed across education, health, housing and social welfare sectors, an increase of 4.2 percent over the allocations approved in 2024.

In response to journalists' questions, the minister announced that funds have been allocated in the 2025 budget to promote 2015-2016 senior employees, adding that 4,000 jobs will be available in the education sector in 2025.

Al Habsi added that in continuation of the policy of curbing inflation and keeping it at low levels, the State's General Budget for the fiscal year 2025 included financial allocations for subsidy amounting to OMR1.580 billion, of which

OMR577 million allocated to the Social Protection Scheme, OMR520 million allocated to subsidy for the electricity sector, and OMR194 million allocated to subsidy for the water and wastewater sector.

Additionally, OMR82 million allocated to subsidy for the transportation sector, OMR73 million allocated to support the interests of development and housing loans, and an amount of OMR59 million to support the waste sector, while the remaining subsidy allocations are distributed to support petroleum products, food commodities, among others.

The Minister of Finance explained that in order to enhance decentralised development in the governorates in accordance with the Royal Directives in this regard, an amount of OMR20 million was allocated to each governorate during the years of the 10th five-year plan, with a total of OMR220 million, the total amount actually committed from the approved amount has reached OMR147 million, at a rate of 68 percent until the end of 2024.

The minister affirmed that the

State's General Budget for the year 2025 gave importance to the Development Bank's continued financing of value-added projects by raising the loan portfolio and increasing the level of lending by approving an amount of OMR80 million to raise the bank's capital for the year 2025.

In this regard, he pointed out that the total number of outstanding loans at the Development Bank until the end of 2024 stands at more than 22,000 loans. He added that the bank's portfolio until November 2024 stood at more than OMR277 million, an increase of 34 percent over the size of the portfolio at the end of June 2023.

The Minister of Finance further said that with regard to the (Iskan) programme, which was launched in partnership with Oman Housing Bank during the past year, the bank's lending portfolio grew by 23 percent by the end of December 2024 compared to December 2022, as the size of the portfolio stood at more than OMR855 million.

He explained that the approved data indicate the gross domestic

MILESTONE

India achieves \$1 trillion FDI

NEW DELHI: A nearly 26 per cent rise in FDI to \$42.1 billion during the first half of the current fiscal year 2024-25 helped India's gross foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows reach an impressive \$1 trillion since the start of this century. India has achieved a remarkable milestone in its economic journey, with gross foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows reaching an impressive \$1 trillion since April 2000.

This landmark achievement was helped by a nearly 26 per cent rise in FDI during the first half of 2024-25.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry in a statement asserted that such growth reflects India's



growing appeal as a global investment destination. "FDI has played a transformative role in India's development by providing substantial non-debt financial resources, fostering technology transfers, and creating employment opportunities."

"Initiatives like 'Make in India', liberalised sectoral policies, and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) have enhanced investor confidence, while competitive labour costs and strategic incentives continue to attract multinational corporations," the Commerce Ministry said. Over the last decade (April 2014 to September 2024), total FDI inflows amounted to \$709.84 billion, accounting for 68.69 per cent of the overall FDI inflow in the past 24 years. To promote FDI, the government has put in place an investor-friendly policy, wherein most sectors, except certain strategically important sectors, are open for 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route. -**ANI**

CONFERENCE

World Future Energy Summit 2025 set to shine light on Middle East's sustainable cities leadership

ABU DHABI: The UAE is spearheading this drive with forward-thinking projects such as Masdar City, a hub for clean technologies and sustainable design, and Zayed International Airport, which integrates smart infrastructure to enhance efficiency. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's giga projects are redefining the urban landscape with smart, eco-friendly innovations.

Mohamed Al Breiki, Executive Director of Sustainable Development at Masdar City, stated, "Masdar City has been pioneering sustainable urban development for over 15 years, embodying the UAE's commitment to a net-zero future. Through several net-zero energy developments and innovative projects such as Masdar City Square and The Link, we showcase our dedication to innovation and sustainability. The Masdar City Free Zone provides a seamless environment for diverse business activities, while its high-impact industry clusters promote collaboration and innovation across key industries like AI, renewable energy, life sciences, Agri-tech, space technology, and smart mobility."

Progress
These advancements will take centre stage at World Future Energy Summit 2025, hosted by Masdar to run at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (AD-NEC) from January 14-16 as part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2025 (ADSW). The Summit will highlight the region's progress in transformative urban development and the power of smart cities in its dedicated Sustainable Cities conference and exhibition.

The conference is held against a backdrop of unparalleled regionwide investment in smart cities. Research house Frost & Sullivan says the UAE and Saudi Arabia will invest a staggering US\$50 billion in smart city projects by 2025 as the region looks for innovative solutions to better manage energy resources.

The UAE capital Abu Dhabi stands out as a regional beacon of innovation, characterised by its industry-leading Estdama Pearl Rating system and building design methodology, which is part of Abu Dhabi's Economic Vision 2030. It is recognised among the Top 10 Smart Cities in the 2024 Smart City Index — the only Middle Eastern city on the list. In Dubai, the smart city agenda is advancing with the latest development, Dubai Walk, a visionary initiative to transform the city into a pedestrian-friendly destination with an integrated network of walkways aimed at increasing pedestrian mobility to 25 per cent by 2040.

Leen Al Sebai, General Manager of RX Middle East and Head of the World Future Energy Summit, commented, "The Sustainable Cities Conference will focus on progress being made while driving the innovation and partnerships necessary for future-ready urban environments." -**WAM**

Green Tech Mining & Services Achieves Sustainability Milestone with Austrian Ecolabel Certification

MUSCAT: Green Tech Mining & Services LLC, a joint venture between Oman Mining Company and Austria-based BPG Precious Metal Storage Plc (BPG), has achieved a significant milestone in its journey towards environmentally responsible mining practices. BPG, the parent company, has been awarded the prestigious Austrian Ecolabel by Austria's Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Infrastructure, and Technology (BMK). This recognition sets Green Tech Mining & Services position as a pioneer in aligning its mine tailings remediation project in Oman with global ecological and social sustainability standards.

The Austrian Ecolabel for Sustainable Financial Products validates the company's integration of ecological and social considerations in its operations, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This certification guarantees adherence to rigorous standards for projects financed through Green Bonds, with independent audits reinforcing a commitment to transparency and accountability.

Adding to this momentum, BPG Precious Metal Storage Plc, a company with their focus in sustainable practices within the mining industry, has announced the issuance of a Green Bond aimed at fully financing their Oman project that aligns with its environmental and sustainability goals. Known for its innovative approaches to tailings remediation, sustainable resource recovery, and the rehabilitation of legacy mining sites, BPG remains persistent in its commitment to responsible mining and adherence to global environmental standards.

The Green Bond, developed under the guidelines of the Green Bond Principles (GBP) by the International Capital Market Association (ICMA), reflects BPG's dedication to transparency, accountability, and ecological stewardship. The bond aligns with the EU Taxonomy's environmental objectives and Paris Climate



Agreement goals, targeting key impact areas such as pollution prevention, sustainable water management, climate change adaptation, and environmentally sound resource management.

"We are honoured to lead the way in sustainability as the first Company in the GCC to achieve this prestigious recognition," said Ernst Grisseemann, Chairman of Green Tech Mining & Services LLC. "This award highlights our dedication to responsible financial investment through Green Bonds, marking the world's first one-of-a-kind mining remediation project to leverage such funding while prioritizing social well-being and environmental preservation."

As a key player to support Oman's mining industry, Green Tech Mining & Services is setting new benchmarks in resource recovery with sustainability at its core. The company is set to launch the first phase of its remediation and copper cathode production in January 2025, using advanced technologies to recover valuable resources from historical mine tailings while minimizing environmental impact.

The Austrian Ecolabel certification not only highlights Green Tech Mining & Services' leadership in sustainable mining but also sets a benchmark for advancing sustainability in Oman's mining sector. By adhering to global best practices, the company along with its stakeholders fosters ecological responsibility while contributing to the nation's broader development goals.

MARKET

MSX records impressive gains of OMR 3.8 billion in its market value

This was on the back of the rise in share prices of a number of companies listed on the bourse, in addition to a number of firms increasing their capital besides the listing of a number of companies on the closed market



MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded gains in its market value last year estimated at about OMR3.8 billion, benefiting from the listing of OQ Exploration and Production Company and OQ Basic Industries.

This was on the back of the rise in share prices of a number of companies listed on the bourse, in addition to a number of firms increasing their capital besides the listing of a number of companies on the closed market.

The market value of securities listed on the MSX rose by the end of 2024 to OMR27.59 billion with public joint stock companies contributing OMR12.33 billion, registering impressive gains of OMR3.36 billion last year.

The total market value also benefited from the increase in the trading of closed market, which rose by by OMR550 million to 10.95 billion by the end of last year's trading. The bonds and sukuk market witnessed a decline of OMR122.3 million to end last year's trading at

about OMR4.30 billion.

The market value of public joint stock companies in 2024 recorded a growth of 37.5 percent, benefiting from the listing of OQ Exploration and Production Company in October. Its market value at the end of 2024 amounted to about OMR2.7 billion, topping the listed companies in terms of market value. Bank Muscat came next with a market value of about OMR1.9 billion, Bank Sohar market value reached OMR893.3 million, Omantel at OMR 705 million and OQ Gas Networks at OMR 597.6 million.

The new listings were reflected in the trading value, which rose in 2024 to OMR1,257.3 million, recording an 11 percent growth over its level in 2023, which amounted to OMR1,132.7 million. The number of transactions executed also witnessed a 39 percent growth from 184,000 transactions to more than 257,000 transactions.

OQ Exploration and Production came in first place among the most traded companies in terms

of trading value at about OMR253 million, representing 20.1 percent of the total trading value. Abraj Energy Services came next at OMR 139.7 million, Bank Sohar International at OMR123.7 million. OQ Gas Networks trading value was OMR 96.7 million, Bank Muscat trading value amounted to OMR94.9 million, representing 7.5 percent of the total trading value.

The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange was able to close 2024 trading with a rise of 62 points at 4,576 points. The financial sector index recorded gains of 333 points and closed at 7,725 points. The services sector index rose by 177 points, recording the highest percentage of increase among the stock exchange indices last year at 11.3 percent and closed at 1,743 points. Meanwhile, the industrial sector index fell by 204 points and closed at 5,270 points, and the Sharia index fell by 21 points and closed at 425 points.

The year 2024 also witnessed an increase in the prices of 61 securities, compared to 59 securities

MSX rises in first week of 2025

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market delivered a strong performance during the week, gaining 2.35% as it started the new year, erasing losses from the previous three weeks and rebounding from a technical support level, according to an industry watcher.

"The market began 2025 with regional optimism, supported by improved growth rate projections and continued economic diversification efforts across the region," said Joseph Dahrieh, Managing Principal at Tickmill.

"Governments in the region are actively working to expand their non-oil sectors and develop their markets, with more initial public offerings (IPOs) expected this year to attract foreign investors. Also, crude oil prices rebounded this week, providing support to the market."

"However, market participants are closely monitoring potential policy shifts from the new US administration aimed at boosting domestic oil pro-



duction through deregulation and favourable industry conditions, which could impact both global oil markets and regional economies, including Oman," he further added.

The Financial sector emerged as the leading performer, advancing 3.90% for the week. Notable gainers included Sohar International Bank, which climbed 3.76%, while Bank Muscat added 0.80%, and Ominvest posted a solid gain of 2.81%.

The Industrial sector demonstrated robust performance with a 2.69% increase. Asa-

ffa Foods led the sector's gains with a 5.43% rise, followed by OQ Base Industries advancing 2.70%, while Oman Cables Industry recorded a gain of 7.31%.

The Services sector contributed to the positive market sentiment with a 1.38% increase. Key performers included OQ Gas Networks, which rose 0.75%, Renaissance Services advancing 1.60%, and SMN Power Holding gaining 2.07%.

"The positive market momentum aligns strongly with the encouraging fiscal and economic indicators from the 2025 budget announcement," said Joseph Dahrieh.

The country saw GDP growth of 1.9% through Q3 2024 and low inflation at 0.6%. Additionally, the government's successful fiscal management helped reduce public debt to 34% of GDP, while it maintained robust social spending at 5 billion rials. Combined with international forecasts suggesting oil prices between \$70-80 per barrel for 2025, these factors could create a potentially supportive environment for market strength this year.

whose prices declined and 19 securities that remained unchanged at their previous levels. Energy companies were at the forefront of the winning stocks after the crises they went through in 2022 and 2023. Barka Water and Power Company's stock recorded the highest increase, rising from 44 baisas to 322 baisas, recording an increase of more than 630 percent.

SMN Power Holding Company's stock rose from 76 baisas to 347 baisas, Al Batinah Energy Company's stock rose from 20 baisas to 66 baisas, Al Suwadi Energy Company's stock rose from 21 baisas to 65 baisas, and Oman Education and Training Investment Company's stock recorded an increase of 192 percent from 352 baisas to 1 riyal and 30 baisas.

Industrial companies were the top losers, with Galfar Engineering and Contracting recording the highest losses, falling by 55 percent to close at 76 baisas. Majan Glass fell by 39 percent from 23 baisas to 14 baisas, Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles fell from 171 baisas to 106 baisas, and Al Maha Ceramics fell by 36 percent from 200 baisas to 127 baisas. - ONA

CONTROVERSIAL DEAL

Biden blocks sale of US Steel to Japan's Nippon Steel



NEW YORK: Outgoing US President Joe Biden has blocked a controversial \$14.9 billion (roughly €14.4 billion) deal which would have seen the beleaguered US Steel company sold to Japan's Nippon Steel, citing concerns that it could hurt national security.

"This acquisition would place one of America's largest steel producers under foreign control and create risk for our national security and our critical supply chains," Biden said in a statement. "That is why I am taking action to block this deal."

The president added that "we need major US companies representing the major share of US steelmaking capacity to keep leading the fight on behalf of America's national interests."

Block cuts vital investment

Biden had vowed to block the acquisition back in March. But his decision Friday follows the failure last month of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to reach consensus on the potential national security risks of the deal.

The CFIUS sent a report on the merger to Biden, and he had 15 days to reach a final decision.

"Steel production — and the steelworkers who produce it — are the backbone of our nation,"

Biden said on Friday. "A strong domestically owned and operated steel industry represents an essential national security priority and is critical for resilient supply chains."

The blocking of the deal severs a critical capital lifeline for the American steel icon. US Steel has said it would have to idle key mills if it fails to secure the \$3 billion in promised investment from Nippon Steel.

The Japanese firm had paid a sizable premium in December 2023 to secure the purchase of US Steel, the country's second-largest steel producer. However, the controversial deal was opposed by the powerful United Steelworkers union (USW), as well as politicians. The union welcomed Biden's decision on Friday, describing it as "the right move for our members and our national security."

"We're grateful for President Biden's willingness to take bold action to maintain a strong domestic steel industry and for his lifelong commitment to American workers," USW International President David McCall said in a statement.

Tokyo keen on the deal

Nippon had vowed to legally challenge any decisions obstructing the deals, though lawyers say

such a challenge against the US government would be tough.

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba had urged Biden to approve the merger in a November letter, Reuters reported.

Biden had previously been vocal about his intention to keep US steel domestically owned and run.

"This is about US steel-making and keeping one of the largest steel producers in the United States an American-owned company," White House National Security spokesperson John Kirby said Friday.

President-elect Donald Trump, who should take office following his January 20 inauguration, has also vowed to block a foreign takeover of the US firm once he takes office.

Nippon Steel and US Steel expressed disappointment with the outcome, saying it "reflects a clear violation of due process and the law." "The president's statement and order do not present any credible evidence of a national security issue, making clear that this was a political decision," the companies said in a joint statement.

Japan is a key US ally in the turbulent Indo-Pacific region, as both countries strive to counter China's growing economic and military rise, as well as threats from North Korea. - **ow**

Elevate Your Business and Events with Us!

EVENT MANAGEMENT

- Corporate Events
- Weddings & Celebrations
- Product Launches
- and more

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

- Custom Website Design
- E-commerce Solutions
- User-Friendly Interfaces

SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLING

- Strategy & Campaign Management
- Creative Content Creation
- Analytics & Performance Insights
- 24/7 Online Presence

BRANDING

- Logo & Visual Identity Design
- Marketing Collaterals
- Brand Strategy Development
- Consistent Brand Messaging

The New 4th Dimension LLC
Po Box 86, Postal code 115
Sultanate of Oman

+968 92839679 +968 99321290



LIFESTYLE

CLIMATE
CHANGE
SLOWLY
KILLING
EUROPE’S
BEECH
FORESTS

Beech forests, vital for carbon cycles, biodiversity,
and timber, could see growth decline by 30% in
southern Europe by 2050



new study by the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Land-
scape Research (WSL) warned that European beech forests face
severe threats from climate change.

Researchers found that extreme droughts, like those experienced
from 2018 to 2023, have already caused significant damage, with
predictions of large-scale dieback and local extinction under both
optimistic and pessimistic climate scenarios.

Lead researcher Arthur Gessler emphasised the urgency of intro-
ducing drought- and heat-tolerant species, such as oak, to mitigate
impacts and enhance biodiversity.

Beech forests, vital for carbon cycles, biodiversity, and timber,
could see growth decline by 30% in southern Europe by 2050. In con-
trast, northern regions might experience modest growth increases.

High genetic diversity and structural complexity in beech forests
could reduce risks of total collapse. However, immediate adaptation
measures and sustainable forest management are essential.

Researchers also suggest leveraging the genetic resilience of
southern European beeches to enhance forest adaptation strategies.

Beech forests, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List for
their ecological importance, support diverse species and play a criti-
cal role in water management.

Preserving these ecosystems is crucial for biodiversity and com-
bating climate change. - **ONA**

SPORTS

Pant’s blitzkrieg propels India to 141 for 6, lead extends by 145 runs

Rishabh Pant, the wicketkeeper-batter ignited the innings with a scintillating counterattack

SYDNEY: Rishabh Pant’s blitz knock helped India post 141/6 on the board in their second innings on Saturday, extending their lead to 145 runs against Australia on Day 2 of the fifth Border-Gavaskar Test. Earlier in the day, Australia was bowled out for 181, giving India a slender lead.

Coming out to bat in the final session, Indian openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul displayed some fluent strokes, but the first breakthrough came when Scott Boland dismissed Rahul for 13, leaving India at 42/1. Jaiswal soon followed, clean bowled by Boland for 22.

India faced further setbacks as star batter Virat Kohli was caught in the slip cordon by Steve Smith off Boland for 17, falling to a delivery outside the off-stump. At 59/3, India was in trouble.

Debutant Beau Webster added to India’s woes, claiming his maiden Test wicket by dismissing



Shubman Gill for 13.

Rishabh Pant, the wicketkeeper-batter ignited the innings with a scintillating counterattack, smashing Mitchell Starc for a six on the very first ball he faced. He then unleashed a flurry of boundaries, hitting three in a single over from Webster. Pant raced to a half-century in just 29 balls, hitting

two consecutive sixes to Starc, the second-fastest fifty by an Indian in Tests. The record of 28 balls, also held by Pant, was set against Sri Lanka in 2022.

Pant’s explosive knock ended at 61 off 33 balls when he was dismissed by Pat Cummins. His innings featured six boundaries and four towering sixes, lifting India to



124/5. Nitish Kumar Reddy added only 4 runs before chipping a simple catch to Cummins at mid-off, becoming Boland’s fourth victim of the day.

At stumps, Ravindra Jadeja (8*) and Washington Sundar (6*) remained unbeaten, showing grit to keep India’s lead intact. With the match finely poised, India will look

to extend their advantage on Day 3.

Earlier at Tea on Day 2 of the Sydney Test, the Baggy Greens were bundled out for 181 conceding a 4-run lead to the visitors.

The second session resumed from 101/5, with debutant Beau Webster (28*) and Alex Carey (4*) unbeaten at the crease. The batters put on 31 runs before Carey was

dismissed in the 38th over of the innings after scoring 21 runs with the help of four boundaries.

Pat Cummins came next to bat along with Webster. They put on just 25 runs before the latter was dismissed by Nitish Kumar Reddy in the 45th over of the innings.

After that, in the 47th over, Nitish Kumar Reddy struck again as he dismissed the left-hand batter Mitchell Starc who made just 1 run.

At 166, Australia lost the ninth wicket of Webster who played a brilliant innings of 57 runs off 105 balls which was laced with five boundaries.

The last wicket of the Australian innings fell at 181 as Scott Boland was cleaned up by Siraj in the 51st over of their innings.

For India, three wickets were snapped by Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna while two wickets each were grabbed by Jasprit Bumrah and Nitish Kumar Reddy in their respective spells.

Earlier, the hosts resumed Day Two at 9/1, with opener Sam Konstas unbeaten on seven. Marnus Labuschagne joined him at the crease. However, the Indian bowlers applied pressure from the start, maintaining an accurate line.

Bumrah claimed the first wicket of the day, dismissing Labuschagne for just two runs. With this dismissal, Bumrah surpassed legendary spinner Bishan Singh Bedi’s record for the most wickets in an overseas Test series by an Indian bowler. **-ANI**

EFFECTIVE DISPLAY

Pat Cummins enters 500 wickets club



SYDNEY : Australia captain Pat Cummins entered the 500 international wickets club after another effective display with the ball in the fifth Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India.

The Sydney Cricket Ground bowed to Cummins after the Australian skipper took the spotlight with his faultless captaincy and stunning bowling display.

While up against a struggling Indian batting unit, Cummins kept the pressure on the top order but found his reward in the tail end. Washington Sundar and Jasprit Bumrah were his two victims in the first innings as he returned with figures of 2/37 in his 15.2 over spell.

With another clinical performance, Cummins entered the 500 international wickets club, becoming the seventh Australian to achieve the feat.

In 214 matches, Cummins has 500 wickets to his name at an average of 24.45 and an economy of 3.76. Among all the Australians, the 31-year-old’s average is only bettered by legendary

Glenn McGrath, who averaged 21.75 for his 948 scalps in 375 appearances.

Cummins joins the elite list of Australians who took 500 international wickets in their career, featuring Shane Warner (999), McGrath (948), Brett Lee (718), Mitchell Starc (699), Mitchell Johnson (590) and Nathan Lyon (569).

In the longest format of cricket, Cummins has made 66 appearances and scythed 289 wickets, averaging 22.54 while striking at 46.4. In ODIs, Cummins has featured for Australia 90 times and boasts 143 scalps with an average of 28.78 while striking at 32.7. In T20Is, Cummins has 66 wickets in 57 matches at an average of 23.57 with a strike rate of 19.0.

In the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Cummins is the second-highest wicket-taker in the series, with 22 wickets to his name. His tally is only behind India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. The stand-in Indian skipper boasts a whopping 31 wickets in five Tests at an average of 12.65. **-ANI**

PLACE AT THE TOP

Liverpool may pile agony on Manchester United as Premier League continues

LONDON: Premier League leader Liverpool has the chance to strengthen its place at the top of the table while piling the misery on eternal rival Manchester United, when the two sides meet at Anfield on Sunday afternoon.

Liverpool goes into the game after three consecutive wins, which have given the Reds a six-point lead over Arsenal, who has played a game more, and three more points would set Arne Slot’s side up ahead of next weekend’s break in the league for the third round of the FA Cup.

Dominik Szoboszlai returns after suspension, while defender Conor Bradley could also be available again after injury.

It has been a miserable holiday season for Manchester United, who has lost its last three games, conceding seven goals and failing to score in the process, leading new coach Ruben Amorim to comment after a 2-0 defeat at home to Newcastle that his side was in a battle against relegation.

Despite United’s lack of goals, Amorim has resisted putting the want-away Marcus Rashford back in his side, although he was on the bench for the latest defeat.

The weekend kicks off with another game between two sides with very different recent form as Tottenham entertains Newcastle United.

Tottenham is struggling for consistency, and its high defensive line could make it vulnerable to Newcastle, who travels to London after four consecutive wins have lifted the Magpies to fifth in the table, and with forward Alexander Isak in outstanding form.

Arsenal may be set to lose Bu-



kayo Saka for two months with injury, but the Gunners impressed in a 3-1 win at Brentford, where the team’s effectiveness from set pieces

was again a key factor. Mikel Arteta’s side travels to play Brighton, a side with four draws and a defeat in the last five games.

Manchester City took a much-needed win away to Leicester in the last game and will be confident of building on that at home to West Ham United.

The Hammers head north after a chastening 5-0 thrashing at home to Liverpool in a defeat that also robbed it of star forward Jarrod Bowen, who broke a bone in his foot.

Ederson is available again in the Man City goal, although coach Pep Guardiola may elect to stick with Stefan Ortega after his solid display at Leicester.

It wasn’t a good Christmas for Chelsea, with defeats at home to Fulham and away to Ipswich denting the Blues’ title hopes. Enzo Maresca’s men make the short trip to play a Crystal Palace side that has become tough to beat with just one defeat in the last eight league games.

Defeat at home to Nottingham Forest keeps Everton in the relegation dogfight, and Sean Dyche’s men now face a difficult visit to Bournemouth, where Andoni Iraola’s men continue to impress.

Aston Villa is at home to Leicester City after Ruud van Nistelrooy’s side slipped to second from bottom in the table after four consecutive defeats, although the Foxes impressed for long spells against Manchester City in the latest loss.

Bottom side Southampton hosts Brentford, whose poor away record may give Ivan Juric hope of a first win since taking over on the south coast, while Ipswich’s win at home to Chelsea means it will travel to Fulham with hopes of climbing out of the bottom three. **-Xinhua**

FOOTBALL

Athletic start Copa del Rey defence as Barca look to overcome Olmo fiasco

MADRID: Copa del Rey holder Athletic Bilbao kicks off this season’s campaign when they make the short trip to La Rioja to face UD Logrones.

In theory, a team that plays in the fourth tier of the Spanish game (RFEF II) shouldn’t be a threat to a team that has not lost a cup tie decided over one game since 2019, but Logrones has already beaten one top-flight side, seeing off Girona in the second round, by winning a penalty shootout with an outfield player in goal after playing for almost half and hour with a player less.

The Las Gaunas Stadium is sold out and there will be a great

atmosphere as Athletic coach Ernesto Valverde travels without the injured trio of Oihan Sancet, Yeray Alvarez and Inigo Ruiz de Galarreta.

With his side jetting off to Saudi Arabia to face FC Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup semifinal on January 8, Valverde has to find a balance between keeping players fresh and giving them some game time after the short Christmas break.

Barcelona has been in the news for all the wrong reasons this week, as it tried and failed to maintain Dani Olmo’s registration amid continued financial woes.

The club has appealed to the



Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) in a desperate attempt to have the Spain international available for their visit to RFEF II side Barbastro.

The two teams met at the same stage of the Cup last season, with Barcelona taking a narrow 3-2 win in what is considered one of the coldest grounds in Spain, in the foothills of the Pyrenees mountains.

Lamine Yamal misses out with an ankle injury, but Ronald Araujo could be back to give Hansi Flick more options in defense.

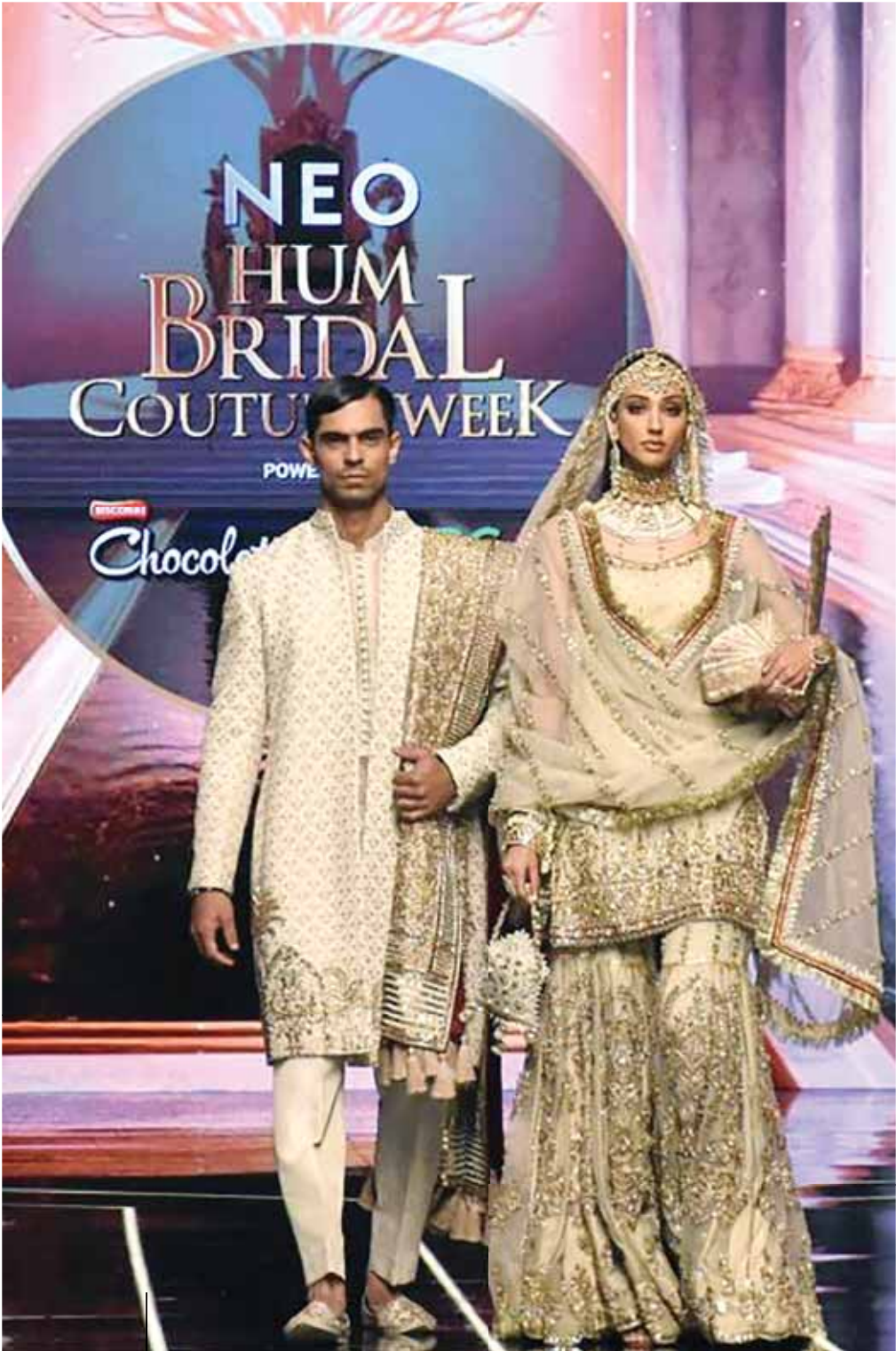
Atletico Madrid is away to third-tier rival Marbella, with the match played at Malaga’s La

Rosaleda stadium, and the team that went into the Christmas holidays as league leader will make few concessions, especially after flirting with defeat before goals in the last 10 minutes saw them past lowly Cacereno in the last round.

Players such as Conor Gallagher, Alexander Sorloth and Angel Correa are all likely starters, as Diego Simeone looks for a winning start to the new year.

The round has three more games, all of which could produce surprises, with second-tier Huesca at home to Real Betis, who has been very inconsistent this season. **-Xinhua**

IN PICTURES



Neo Hum Bridal Couture Week kicks off in Lahore, Pakistan
Models present creations on the second day of the Neo Hum Bridal Couture Week in Lahore, Pakistan. *Xinhua*



Bollywood actor Shabana Azmi and her husband and lyricist Javed Akhtar during the memorial service of veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal
Bollywood actor Shabana Azmi and her husband and lyricist Javed Akhtar with Bollywood actors Urmila Matondkar, Ila Arun and Divya Dutta during the memorial service of veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal, who recently passed away at the age of 90, at Y B Chawan Auditorium, in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



Around 25,000 cultivators produce at least 1,500 tonnes of honey a year across Bangladesh
Beekeepers show honeycombs at a blooming mustard field in Munshiganj, Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Institute of Apiculture (BIA), around 25,000 cultivators, including 1,000 commercial agriculturists, produce at least 1,500 tonnes of honey a year across the country. *Xinhua*



Ice and snow festival of Yuanmingyuan Park kicks off
Visitors enjoy snow tubing at Yuanmingyuan Park in Beijing, capital of China. *Xinhua*



Heavy snowfalls block multiple highways in Afghanistan
This picture shows a road amid snow in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. Multiple highways in Afghanistan, including Salang, the main highway linking the country's national capital, Kabul, to nine northern provinces, were inaccessible to traffic due to heavy snowfalls, an official at the Ministry of Public Work said. *Xinhua*



Scenery of Yamzbog Yumco Lake in Xizang
This picture shows herds of sheep grazing by the Yamzbog Yumco Lake in Shannan of southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Toyota Hilux now available with enticing Festival of Joy benefits

For adventurers seeking excitement, the Hilux Adventure delivers exceptional performance with its powerful 4.0-Liter V6 engine, producing 235 HP and 38.3 Kg-m of torque

MUSCAT: The powerful and exhilarating Toyota Hilux is now available with exclusive Festival of Joy benefits. Get Service from 3 Years / 30,000 kms up to 6 Years / 60,000 kms (whichever is earlier) insurance 1 Year and chance to win 1 out of 16 iPhone Pro Max phones.

The campaign is valid up to 23 January 2025 (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.)

For adventurers seeking excitement, the Hilux Adventure delivers exceptional performance with its powerful 4.0-Liter V6 engine, producing 235 HP and 38.3 Kg-m of torque. The Auto Disconnect Differential ensures uninterrupted momentum, making every drive exhilarating. This robust yet thrilling machine is engineered by Toyota to set your heart racing. On the other hand, the Hilux 4X4 comes equipped with a 2.7-Liter Petrol Engine, offering both 5-speed Manual and 6-speed Automatic Transmission options, delivering an impressive 164 HP.

The Hilux combines rugged capability with modern sophistication. Its bold design features a chunky front bumper sculpted like an SUV, front fog lamps, alloy wheels and striking side stripes that add to its commanding presence. Whether navigating tough workdays or chasing weekend adventures, the Hilux surpasses



expectations. It seamlessly transitions between being a reliable work truck during the week and a comfortable family vehicle on weekends, thanks to its advanced features, spacious cabin and robust safety systems.

The Hilux interior reflects its “Tough and Emotional” design philosophy, mirroring the meticulous attention to detail seen in its exterior. The cabin offers SUV-inspired styling, elegant accents and premium ornamentation. Comfort is elevated with features like an auto air conditioner with rear vents, an 8-inch navigation system and a multi-information display (MID).

Toyota prioritises safety with the Hilux, equipping it with a comprehensive suite of active and passive features. These include Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake-Force Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Hill Assist Control (HAC), Trailer Sway Control, SRS Airbags for both driver and front passenger.

From conquering challenging terrains to ensuring safety and comfort for your family, the Toyota Hilux stands as a symbol of strength, versatility and innovation. With its stunning design, exceptional performance and uncompromising safety, the Hilux is truly a class apart.

ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

Indian schools in Oman to implement new National Education Policy

MUSCAT: The Board of Directors of Indian Schools Oman has decided to implement the new National Education Policy (NEP) of India across all Indian Schools in the Sultanate of Oman.

As per NEP, the academic structure has been redefined into a 5+3+3+4 system, focusing on a holistic approach to education across different stages of a child's development.

As per the new education policy, the Foundational Stage, will now include three years of Kindergarten (Balvatika) for children aged 3 to 6 years, followed by Classes 1 and 2 for ages 6 to 8 years.

The Preparatory Stage will comprise Classes 3 to 5 for students aged 8 to 11 years, the Middle Stage will cover Classes 6 to 8 for ages 11 to 14 years, and the Secondary Stage will span Classes 9 to 12 for ages 14 to 18 years.

A significant shift for Indian Schools in Oman under the NEP is the expansion of the kindergarten program from the existing 2-year structure to a 3-year program,



ensuring a more comprehensive foundational education.

Dr. Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools Oman, reaffirmed the Board's unwavering commitment to implementing the new education policy. He further stated, “The implementation of the National Education Policy across Indian Schools in Oman represents a transformative step towards redefining the educational experience for our children. We assure parents of our steadfast dedication to delivering high-quality education aligned with global standards.”

He continued, “The introduction of Balvatika as a foundational program highlights our commitment to nurturing the youngest learners by fostering their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth from the earliest stages”.

Indian Schools Oman is set to implement ‘Balvatika’ (Pre-school) as a part of NEP 2020 with effect from the academic year 2025-2026, commencing from 1 April 2025.

Admissions for academic year 2025-26 will follow stringent age criteria as of March 31, 2025 as per below.

- Balvatika: Children aged 3 years but not 4 years
- KG I: Children aged 4 years but not 5 years
- KG II: Children aged 5 years but not 6 years
- Class I: Children aged 6 years but not 7 years

Admissions for interschool transfers will require valid Transfer Certificates, while the promotion policy for currently enrolled

students will remain consistent from KG I to KG II, and KG II to Class I respectively.

Following the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stages (NCF-FS) 2022, the curriculum for Balvatika will emphasize on the five core areas of child development viz.

Physical and motor development, Cognitive and intellectual growth, Language and communication skills, Social and emotional well-being and Creative expression and aesthetic appreciation.

The implementation of Balvatika marks an important advancement in formalizing education for children aged 3 to 8 years, creating an environment that nurtures discovery, learning, and creativity.

This initiative reflects the Board's dedication to adhering to the educational standards outlined in NEP to cater quality education to the students of Indian diaspora in Oman.

Parents are advised to await for more information on this from the respective schools.

WINTER OFFER



White Tap Dispenser
OR Tap dispenser
OR Manual water pump
OR Cradle with tap
+ 2 Full Bottles
+ 15 Refill Coupons

OMR
20
ONLY



Hot & Cold Dispenser
+ 2 Full Bottles
+ 30 Refill Coupons

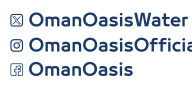
OMR
50
ONLY

Experience the purest winter with special offers from Oman Oasis

Promotion duration: 1 December 2024 to 28 February 2025

TOLL FREE

800 71 222
9275 5522



Enroll Now



OMR - 06 /1002 /2024





شانجان أوتو
CHANGAN AUTO

قيادة نحو آفاق أوسع Driving Forward With You

Choose your favourite Changan model today!

Easy to own with low monthly installments.



EMI
OMR **181***
for 6 years

CS95

2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp,
8-speed AT, 4WD, 7 Seater

CS85 COUPE

2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp,
8-speed AT

EMI
OMR **148***
for 6 years



EMI
OMR **150***
for 6 years

ALL NEW
CS75 PLUS

2.0L Turbo Engine,
224 hp, 8-speed AT

CS35 PLUS

1.4L Turbo Engine,
156 hp, 7-speed DCT

EMI
OMR **109***
for 6 years



EMI
OMR **110***
for 6 years

ALL NEW
EADO PLUS

1.5L Turbo Engine,
170 hp, 7-speed DCT

ALSVIN

1.5L Engine, 105 hp,
5-speed DCT

EMI
OMR **64***
for 6 years



CHANGAN The Premium Range

Super Warranty up to 6 years / 250,000 Km[#]

*Easy Monthly Installment is calculated based on 20% down payment for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals from Banks only. Applicable on vehicles purchased for personal use. Images shown are for illustrative purpose only. Specification may vary as per the model variant. #Whichever is earlier. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN Showroom.

Arabian Gulf Automobiles
and Equipment LLC

Showrooms : Qurum 94641010, Mawaleh 97888180, Nizwa 96628940
Sohar 95351200, Salalah 96629050, Ibri 96628930

Sales Centers : Barka 96629010, Sur 96628920

800 50800

changanoman
www.changanoman.com