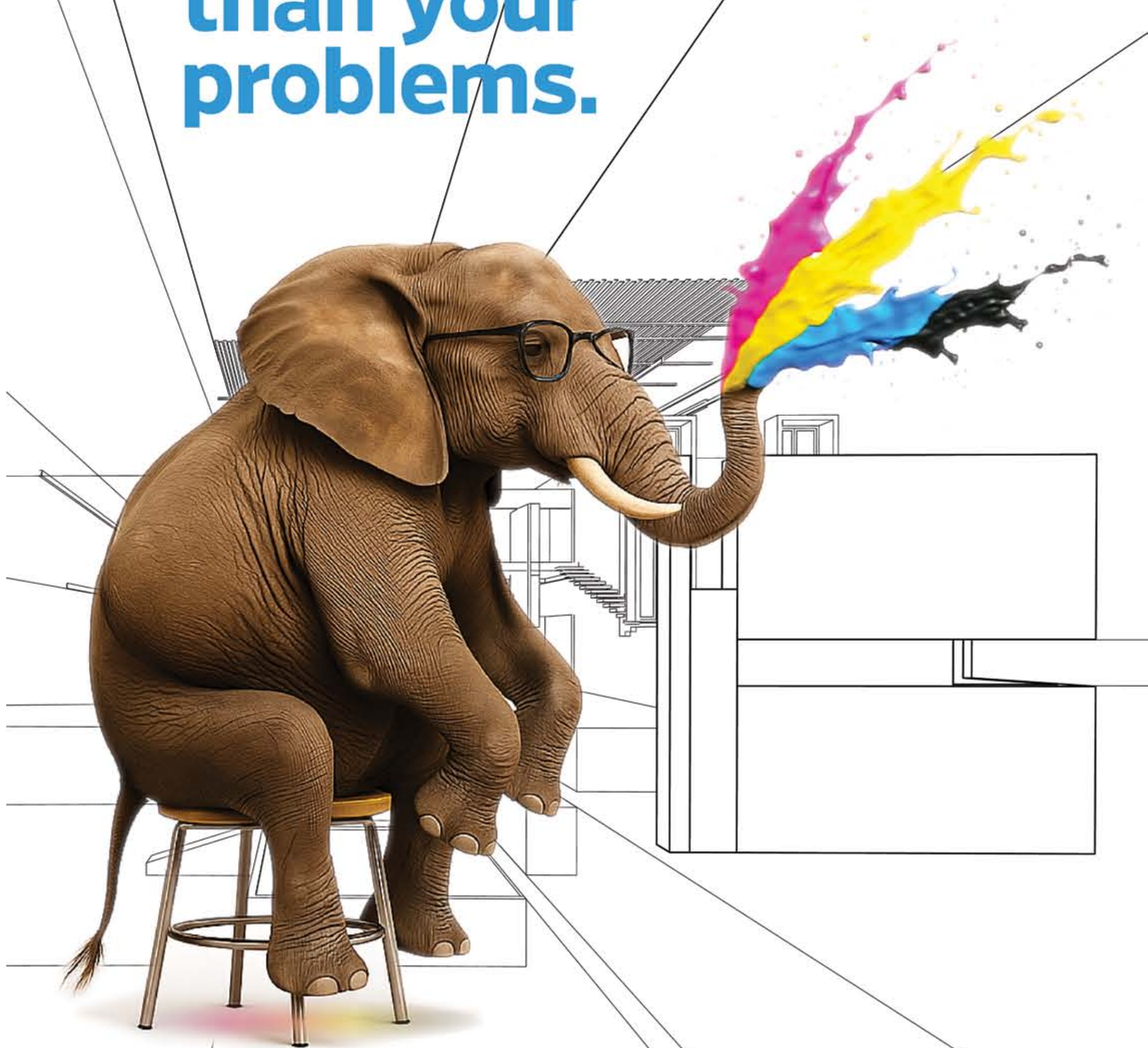


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Pact signed with Korean firm to produce EVs



MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed an investment usufruct agreement with EL B&T, a Korean electric vehicle (EV) technology company, to establish a project for the production of electric vehicles (EVs) and battery cells in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The project has an investment value of approximately OMR96.2 million (\$250 million).

The agreement was signed on behalf of OPAZ by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Chairman of OPAZ while Dr. Young Ill Kim signed on behalf of the company. The project will be implemented in two phases, with a production capacity of up to 60,000 vehicles annually and 1.6 million battery cells upon completion of Phase II.

Eng. Ahmed Ali Akaak, CEO of the SEZAD, said the new project comes as part of joint government efforts to localise various industries in the Sultanate of Oman and attract further investments in the vehicle sector.

The CEO of SEZAD explained that the project represents a new addition to the vehicle sector in the zone and marks the second project in this field after the launch of production at Karwa Motors several years ago.

Eng. Akaak shed light on the success achieved by the green industries sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm following the signing of several agreements in the field of wind turbine manufacturing.

He noted that the zone's management seeks through these projects to localise advanced industries in the EV sector and strengthen investment in green manufacturing industries in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and the Sultanate of Oman's strategy for carbon neutrality and the transition towards clean energy.

He added that the green industrial projects being implemented in the zone aim to position the Sultanate of Oman as a regional hub for green industries, establish sustainability and innovation driven industries, and develop the expertise of Oman's youth in future industries, including electric vehicle technologies, renewable energy projects, green hydrogen, and other green industries.

Phase I of the electric vehicle and battery cell production project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm will cover an area of 467,000 square metres, while the company is expected to reserve an additional 429,000 square metres for the second phase. **>A4**

OMAN'S FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY REACHES 67.3%

5.6MN

AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES PRODUCTION INCREASED FROM 4.3 MILLION TONNES IN 2020 TO 5.6 MILLION TONNES IN 2025



Agriculture and fisheries sectors contributed OMR1.13bn to GDP

MUSCAT: The Shura Council hosted Dr. Saud bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources on Sunday.

The performance of the agricultural, fisheries and water resources sectors during the Tenth



Five-Year Development Plan was reviewed, the achievements and indicators realised, as well as the strategic directions, programmes and projects planned under the Eleventh Plan, in alignment with national targets.

The minister pointed out that agricultural and fisheries pro-

duction increased from 4.3 million tonnes in 2020 to 5.6 million tonnes in 2025, a growth rate of 6.9 percent, reflecting an expansion of the production base.

The sectors' contribution to GDP rose to OMR1.132 billion, up from OMR776 million in 2020, a growth of 7.9 percent, while their

share of GDP increased from 2.3 percent to 2.9 percent, underscoring their economic significance.

He said that the food self-sufficiency rate reached 67.3 percent, with notable improvements across basic commodity groups.

Self-sufficiency rates stood at 146 percent for fish, 99 percent for dates, 96 percent for milk, 95 percent for table eggs, 79 percent for vegetables, 62 percent for white meat, 45 percent for red meat, and 24 percent for fruits excluding dates.

The agricultural sector has extensive resources for expansion, the minister said.

Cultivated land area stands at 312,000 acres, with more than 9.1 million palm trees. **>A5**

OMAN 'Musstir Heights' project unveiled

Several real estate projects across the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman were unveiled during the current edition of Oman Real Estate, Design & Build Exhibition and Conference, most notably the announcement of the "Musstir Heights" project, to be established in Jabal Akdhar. **>A5**

OMAN Diplomacy key to resolving conflicts

The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Muscat organised a seminar titled "Adhering to the Principle of Resolving Conflicts through Political and Diplomatic Means." The seminar addressed the importance of dialogue and understanding among nations in crisis management. **>A2**

WORLD Mediation efforts on conflict intensifies

The United States and Iran are exchanging proposals to end the war that erupted over two months ago, as a relative calm has taken hold following days of sporadic clashes. US is awaiting Tehran's response, with President Trump affirming that the ceasefire remains in effect. **>A7**

Nebras, Shams named Oman's flagbearers for GCC Games

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Taekwondo athlete Nebras Al Touqi and women's basketball player Shams Al Khonji have been named Oman's flagbearers for the opening ceremony of the fourth GCC Games in Qatar on Monday as the Sultanate begins its latest regional campaign with hopes of surpassing its record medal haul from the previous edition.

The Games, hosted by Qatar from May 11 to 22 under the slogan "One Gulf... One Heart", will officially open at Al Shaqab Indoor Arena in Doha with more than 1,074 athletes competing in 17 sports.

Oman's delegation is led by His Highness Sayyid Azzan bin Qais Al Said, president of the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) and head of mission, accompanied by



secretary-general Abdullah bin Mohammed Bamkhalif and deputy head of delegation Dr Marwan bin Juma Al Jumaa, along with administrative, technical and national



team officials. Oman will compete in 11 sports — aquatics, taekwondo, table tennis, fencing, karate, shooting, athletics, 3x3 basketball, snooker, volleyball and bowling —

with athletes aiming to continue the steady rise of Omani sport at GCC level.

Oman head into Doha determined to improve on its record-breaking performance at the 2022 GCC Games in Kuwait, where national teams collected 32 medals, including 12 gold, five silver and 15 bronze medals — the country's highest tally in the history of the event. The Sultanate first competed at the GCC Games during the inaugural edition in Bahrain in 2011, winning 11 medals, including four gold. Oman then increased their tally to 29 medals at the second edition in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, in 2015 before achieving its best-ever results in Kuwait four years ago.

Organisers said the opening ceremony would feature exceptional artistic and organisational displays reflecting the significance

of the Gulf event, which brings together athletes from across the GCC in a celebration of regional unity and sporting excellence.

Oman's administrative delegation manager Badr Aulathani confirmed that all logistical and organisational arrangements for the national teams had been completed, including accommodation, transport and medical support for athletes and officials throughout the Games.

Meanwhile, Oman's fencing team arrived in Doha ahead of competitions scheduled from May 13 to 15 at Aspire Dome.

The squad includes Ahmed bin Anwar Kaskas, Saeed Al Shuaibi, Ali Al Busaidi, Al Harith Al Harthy and Israa bint Saif Al Siyabi under the supervision of technical expert Hisham bin Ali Karshoud and coach Abdulrahman Adel Farouq.



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Grace Under Pressure, Impact with Meaning

Sustainability is becoming central to business strategy globally. How have you seen ESG practices evolve in Oman, and what opportunities do you see for the next generation of leaders?

Sustainability in Oman has matured from being a voluntary commitment to becoming a central pillar of corporate strategy and national progress. Over the past decade, we have seen a clear shift toward structured ESG integration, deeper alignment with Oman Vision 2040, and a stronger regulatory emphasis on transparency, governance, and long-term value creation. Organizations increasingly understand that ESG is not a compliance exercise but a catalyst for competitiveness, resilience, and stakeholder trust. This shift is especially evident in sectors embracing responsible finance, low-carbon innovation, and more holistic environmental and social stewardship.

For the next generation of leaders, this evolution presents unprecedented opportunity. They stand at the intersection of purpose and innovation, equipped with technological fluency, global awareness, and a growing desire to create meaningful impact. Their role will be to reimagine business models, advance sustainability-linked solutions, and embed ESG into strategic decision-making. Whether through green finance, digital transformation, or inclusive community development, they have the ability to shape a more sustainable and equitable economic landscape.

Ultimately, Oman's ESG journey will be propelled forward by leaders who combine strategic insight with a deep sense of responsibility, ensuring that progress, people, and the planet advance together.

Your career spans international experience with UNESCO and the ICC in Paris, as well as leadership positions



in Oman. How has this global exposure influenced the way you approach strategy and communication at National Finance?

My early exposure to international institutions like UNESCO and the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris played a powerful role in shaping the leader I am today. These experiences were my first real window into how global organizations think, collaborate, and communicate across cultures.

It brought forward an important insight: that operating on a global stage requires far more than alignment with international best practices. It underscores the need for cultural intelligence, diplomatic communication, and the ability to build consensus across diverse perspectives.

Such exposure also reveals the importance of systemic thinking—understanding how policy, culture, and business dynamics intersect, and how communication shapes trust in complex stakeholder ecosystems. Effective

TOP WOMEN LEADERS IN OMAN

communication, in this context, moves beyond messaging; it becomes a disciplined practice of articulating intent, purpose, and shared value with clarity and nuance. Growing up as a third-culture child, having lived most of my life abroad, added another important dimension to that foundation. You learn to navigate unfamiliar environments, read between the lines, understand people beyond their words, and adapt with sensitivity. It cultivates resilience, empathy, and the ability to view situations from multiple perspectives, qualities that are essential to effective leadership.

These principles remain foundational to my approach at National Finance. They



HH Sayyida Wisam Jaifar Al Said

Chief Marketing, Corporate Communication & Sustainability Officer at National Finance
With two decades of leadership across global institutions and Oman's corporate landscape, Her Highness Sayyida Wisam Jaifar Al Said brings rare depth to the intersection of brand, communication, and sustainability. Her work reflects a long-term view of value creation, where ESG is embedded into strategy, trust is built through clarity, and leadership is measured by impact on people, institutions, and the nation's progress.

have shaped a more integrated and forward-looking strategy for branding, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement, grounded in transparency, strong governance, and values-led storytelling. By combining global insight with a deep understanding of the Omani context, we are able to craft strategies that remain purpose-driven, internationally attuned, and authentically anchored in our national identity.

As a recognized thought leader and mentor, what advice would you give young Omani women aspiring to build careers at the intersection of marketing, corporate communications, and sustainability?

Young Omani women are standing at a remarkable moment in our nation's history. They are more educated, more confident, and more globally exposed than any generation before them. They carry the natural ability to blend tradition with innovation in a way that is uniquely Omani.

At the same time, the fields they are entering carry their own distinct demands and strengths, each shaping leadership in a different way. Marketing teaches you how to understand people. It's about human behavior, creativity, and building brands that resonate. It requires curiosity, agility, and a willingness to keep learning as consumer expectations evolve.

Communications teaches you how to move people and build trust. It's about clarity, transparency, and ensuring organizations communicate with responsibility and credibility. Strong communicators listen deeply and understand context, culture, and timing.

Sustainability, on the other hand, is all about discipline grounded in governance, impact, and long-term thinking. And yes, many people worry about greenwashing, which is why this field needs principled young women who are committed to truth, data, and real progress.

Sustainability is about measurable action first, and

communication second. For anyone entering these fields, my strongest advice is: Lead with integrity: Credibility is your currency. Never communicate what you can't stand behind. Stay curious: These fields evolve quickly. Follow global trends, understand new technologies, and pay attention to how the world is reshaping consumer expectations and sustainability standards.

Use your voice: Young women sometimes hesitate to speak up, but your perspective is often exactly what organizations need. Don't wait for permission. Contribute, question, and bring your ideas forward. Your perspective matters.

The fields of Marketing, Communications, and Sustainability are each separate careers in their own right but if you do choose to or get a chance to combine them, you become a powerful storyteller with the ability to shape mindsets, influence behavior, and build brands that stand for something.

CHINA EMBASSY

'Diplomatic efforts vital for resolving conflicts'

MUSCAT: The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Muscat organised a seminar on Sunday titled "Adhering to the Principle of Resolving Conflicts through Political and Diplomatic Means."

The seminar addressed the importance of dialogue and understanding among nations in crisis management and the enhancement of security and stability, as well as the role of diplomacy in fostering cooperation and mutual respect among peoples.

The seminar covered several themes related to the role of diplomacy in containing international tensions and the importance of mediation and peaceful solutions in building relationships based on cooperation and mutual respect.

Liu Jian, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, noted that his country believes in the importance of dialogue and consultation in addressing international issues and supports efforts aimed at promoting peace and shared development among nations.

He highlighted that his country's vision is based on four main principles: promoting peaceful co-existence among nations, respecting the sovereignty and independence of states, adhering to the rule



of international law, and linking the paths of development and security to achieve sustainable regional peace.

He affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman and the People's Republic of China share similar diplomatic philosophies and stances, pointing out that Oman's foreign policy is founded on a profound and consistent vision based on establishing friendly relations with all countries of the world, alongside its enduring commitment to enhancing regional and international peace and security.

The seminar featured extensive discussions and an exchange of views on the challenges facing diplomatic work amidst current

international changes, as well as ways to enhance international cooperation to achieve stability and sustainable peace.

Participants in the seminar emphasised the importance of strengthening dialogue and understanding among nations as the optimal way to address crises and conflicts, while underscoring the need to respect the principles of international law, the sovereignty of states, and collective action to achieve global security and stability.

The seminar was attended by a number of diplomats, academics, and those interested in political affairs and international relations.

-ONA

FOR 2026

Registration opens for Falling Walls Lab contest in Oman

MUSCAT: The Research and Innovation Authority, in collaboration with the German Falling Walls Foundation, has announced the opening of registration for the Falling Walls Lab competition in the Sultanate of Oman for the current year 2026, starting on Sunday until 11 June.

The Falling Walls Lab is a global forum for presenting innovative ideas and research work from various disciplines. It aims to strengthen relationships among researchers, academics, entrepreneurs, professionals, and investors, thereby supporting innovation and the exchange of scientific expertise.

The Lab derives its name from the fall of the Berlin Wall, symbolizing the role of science and humanities in removing barriers between nations and transferring research from laboratories to society for practical benefit and application.

The Lab organises an annual event that attracts science and innovation enthusiasts from various world countries to learn about diverse experiences and cultures.

Participation is open to innovators and researchers from various disciplines, subject to a number of eligibility criteria,



including that no more than 10 years have passed since obtaining a bachelor's degree, no more than 7 years since a master's degree, and no more than 5 years since a doctoral degree. Currently enrolled bachelor's, master's, and doctoral students may also apply. Applications must be submitted in English only.

Those wishing to participate can register via the following website: <https://falling-walls.com/falling-walls-lab-nizwa-oman>

The winner of the competition will have the opportunity to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the Falling Walls Lab finals, scheduled to be held during 5-9 November 2026 in

Berlin, Germany. The competition requires the submission of a research project, innovative idea, social initiative, or entrepreneurial venture, presented using PowerPoint in no more than 3 minutes, with the aim of persuading the judging panel of the idea's significance and viability. The panel comprises an elite group of experts, academics, researchers, and business leaders.

The Sultanate of Oman is participating in the competition for the 11th consecutive year. In the previous edition, 158 ideas and projects were submitted, of which 20 advanced to the local qualifiers, and 3 winners were selected to represent Oman in the finals held in Berlin. -ONA

CEDAW

National initiatives, programmes on women's welfare discussed

MUSCAT: The committee tasked with following up the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on Sunday held its first meeting in 2026.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Laila bint Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, who heads the Committee.

The meeting explored national initiatives and programmes on women's welfare. It looked into efforts made in drafting the Sul-

tanate of Oman's statement to respond to observations on the fourth national report of the Convention.

Encyclopedia of Omani Women

It also reviewed the National Plan for Omani Women, the programme of cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and a project titled Encyclopedia of Omani Women.

The meeting elaborated on ways to develop the Law of Oman Hu-



man Rights Commission in a manner that guarantees the expansion of mechanisms for protecting women's rights and preserving women's legal guards against any forms of discrimination.

Omani measures with the Paris Principles

The meeting studied the alignment of Omani measures with the Paris Principles, with the objective of ensuring women's representation in organisational structures of national institutions.

Women's Empowerment

The meeting included a presentation about the experience of the Women's Empowerment Team of the Central Bank of Oman. The presentation affirmed Omani women's contribution to all administrative, technical and specialised activities. -ONA

COMMENTARY

Are we missing the life's great moments?



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

Many times we don't realise until the great moments have passed to know what they were and then it may be too late. Precious moments go to waste while we have been looking the other way.

I was looking at the old photographs of my parents with my siblings. Suddenly, good memories flashed back. They never seemed that way those days. It was just a routine that needed to be gotten over. Later, I picked the photos of my children. I watched their faces and the bright smiles they had. The mischievous looks and the funny pauses. At that time it did not mean much to us. Years later, we now know they should have meant a lot.

I wish now I savored those moments. Photographs cannot

capture the essence of great times. They just remind of you about the lost moments. Now, looking at my grown up children, I wonder where the years have gone. I can make many excuses that I was busy making a living for them to have three decent meals a day and a comfortable home. What I forgot was that time never stands still. It marches on like a soldier in the war. It was really a battle with the time that made me blind to the splendid moments. Busy with my schedules, I never really put priority to what was really important to me.

But as I look at the present, I ask myself now if I have learned anything at all. The time still rushes on. It is still the old me and my old routine has never abandoned me. Priorities have perhaps changed but the urgency to sail past the routine in a hurry is still overwhelming. Why should it be like that? I guess it is all about thoughts and the hyperactivity of the mind. When I put back the old pictures, I thought I needed to change. I needed perhaps to slow down. The question I asked myself if weather it was worth to do things the right way. But then what is the right way? Putting work first before anything else? Let the flow of cash detect the terms of my life or just get busy for the sake of getting busy?

I thought of giving myself a little test. For one hour, I would

not put myself and my priorities first. So I started knocking the bedroom doors of my children. I started discussing topics they liked. For that hour, I got myself absorbed by being with them and listen to their "stories" rather than asking them to listen to my "stories" like it usually is. When the hour was up, I went back to my bedroom and assessed it all up. It was quiet satisfying. I felt good about it. Then I thought to extend the "hour of grace" and asked my wife to go with me for a quiet meal. Before I went to bed that night, I asked myself this question, "it was not bad, was it?"

The next morning, I felt the challenge was to keep it up without turning it into a routine. So I decided to do it randomly when my family least expected it.

Whether that would do the trick or not, I don't know. But I am confident it would make us, as a family, better communicate with each other. Family togetherness cannot be measured by the hours in a day but by the chosen moments that are carefully designed to bring delights between every member. There are many blessings behind it. The most important is that you feel good about it that you are taking the time. And one day, when the times comes for my children to pick up the old photographs when I am gone, they would not be too many regrets for them.

MEETING

Sayyid Badr, Maldives Minister discuss regional developments

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received a telephone call from Iruthisham Adam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives.

The conversation addressed the cordial relations between the two countries and means to enhance mutual cooperation, along with an exchange of views on the latest regional and international developments.

The two ministers affirmed the importance of intensifying efforts aimed at containing tensions, supporting dialogue, and advancing efforts to reach political solu-



tions that contribute to achieving security and stability and enhancing opportunities for regional and global peace. -ONA

PAEDIATRIC SURGERY

Endoscopy facility opened at Ibra Referral Hospital

IBRA: Ibra Referral Hospital on Sunday launched a surgical endoscopy system—a device for urological and paediatric surgery, with support from Oman LNG. The project is worth OMR 249,635. The launch of the system stems from efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Health to improve its services to citizens and residents and to introduce modern technologies that contribute to the realisation of high-quality healthcare.

Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Jabri, Director of Ibra Referral Hospital, Senior Consultant in Accident and Emergency Medicine, said that the launch of the system aims to raise the efficiency of diagnosis and ameliorate treatment services rendered to citizens and residents.

The system also offers an opportunity to localise advanced surgical services at the hospital, in addition to enhancing cooperation with private sector institutions.



Dr. Ahmed explained that the surgical endoscopy unit for urology and paediatric surgery would provide its services using advanced methods.

The services of the new device would benefit the governorates of North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta, he added.

Dr. Ahmed affirmed that the device would help diminish the number of treatment sessions required, enhance patient comfort, ease pain, minimise transfers to secondary care hospitals and spare patients the hassle of travelling about for treatment.

The inaugural ceremony was held under the auspices of Sheikh Dr. Faisal bin Ali Al Zaidi, Wali of Al Qabil. -ONA

SEMINAR

Role of cultural institutions in supporting creativity highlighted

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) working team, organised a scientific seminar titled "Culture and Art: Readings in Reality and Aspirations."

The seminar aimed to introduce the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980), review mechanisms for supporting and financing creativity through the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, raise awareness of the law protecting artists' works from plagiarism and literary theft, discuss the importance of art in addressing societal issues, developing art, and building the capacities of artists, highlight the role of cultural institutions in

supporting creatives, and underscore art as an effective tool in addressing various societal issues.

Strengthening identity

Abdullah Mohammed Al Harthy, Director General of Knowledge and Cultural Development at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Head of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity Working Team, emphasised in a speech delivered at the seminar the importance of culture and the arts in building societies, strengthening identity and understanding among peoples, and their role in supporting sustainable development, economic diversification, youth empowerment, and job creation.

In his turn, Dr. Amer Moham-

med Al Aysari, a member of Oman Society for Writers and Literati, highlighted the importance of culture in human communication as a driver of sustainable development and a preserver of national identity.

During the seminar's opening ceremony, the logo of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity Working Team was launched, a step reflecting the direction toward enhancing the presence of cultural initiatives and establishing the team's visual identity in line with its goals of supporting cultural and artistic projects.

The seminar programme included a scientific session titled "Culture and Art: Readings in Reality and Aspirations." -ONA

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MOUNTAIN VILLAGES IN SOUTH AL BATINAH: A RISING HUB FOR TOURISM INVESTMENT

This growing investment momentum underscores the importance of mountain villages in supporting the tourism sector in the Governorate of South Al Batinah.



A'RUSTAQ: The mountain villages in the Governorate of South Al Batinah are experiencing a notable acceleration in tourism investment, driven by their rich natural assets and stunning terrain. These attributes have positioned the region as an attractive destination for hospitality projects ranging from heritage inns to eco-lodges (green lodges). This growth aligns with the Sultanate of Oman's broader strategy to diversify and enhance the sustainability of its tourism product.

Data related to investment in this sector show a notable concentration in three main wilayats: A'Rustaq, Nakhal, and Al Awabi, with a total of 18 mountain tourist establishments providing approximately 154 hotel rooms. This reflects growing interest in developing mountain tourism and meeting the needs of visitors seeking an authentic environmental and cultural experience.

The Wilayat of A'Rustaq topped the list in terms of the number of tourist establishments in moun-



tain villages, hosting 10 facilities offering 112 hotel rooms, with a variety of classifications including guesthouses, heritage inns, and eco-lodges, in addition to a tourist camp, rest houses, and one one-star hotel.

These establishments are

spread across several prominent mountain locations such as Wadi Bani Awf, Wadi Al Sahtan, and Wadi Al Hoqein, as well as mountain villages with distinct tourism appeal such as Balad Seet, Bima, and Wajma village, thereby enhancing the wilayat's



attractiveness as an integrated tourist destination.

In the Wilayat of Nakhal, the number of mountain tourist establishments reached 7, providing 33 rooms, most of which are concentrated in guesthouses (6 establishments), in addition

to one eco-lodge. These investments are located in natural and mountain areas such as Wadi Mistal and the villages of Hadash, Wakan, Al Hajar, and Al Taw. These tourist facilities have contributed to enhancing the tourism appeal of the mountain

villages and surrounding wadis.

In the village of Al Aliyah in Wadi Bani Kharous, the Wilayat of Al Awabi, there is one mountain tourist establishment classified as a guesthouse, offering 9 rooms. This indicates promising opportunities to enhance tourism investment in mountain areas, particularly as these villages offer a tranquil environment for recreation and a passion for adventure, especially given their natural assets and mountain terrain suitable for this type of tourism.

This growing investment momentum underscores the importance of mountain villages in supporting the tourism sector in the Governorate of South Al Batinah. These establishments contribute to stimulating local economic activity, generating job opportunities, and enhancing the participation of local communities in tourism development, in line with the objectives of "Oman Vision 2040," which aims to diversify national income sources and promote sustainability.

FACT

Korean company to increase use of green energy in projects

<FROM A1 The project is expected to support the development of an integrated industrial ecosystem for the electric vehicle sector in the zone by strengthening value chains linked to batteries and other components, helping attract complementary industries in the future.

Dr. Young Ill Kim, Founder and Chairman of EL B&T, said the company expects to reach commercial operation by March 2028.

He affirmed the company's commitment to increasing the use of green energy in its produc-

tion processes, noting that plans include establishing a green power station at the industrial facility in Duqm to serve as the primary source of energy for operations.

He also stated that the company is currently studying, in cooperation with an entity from the Sultanate of Oman, the development of an external electric engine for rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) and fishing boats to support efforts to reduce carbon emissions in Oman's waters.

In addition, the company is exploring the establishment of a joint project to further develop fishing

boat concepts, with plans to export these boats to Indonesia, India, South Korea, and other international markets.

Meanwhile, Eng. Ahmed Al Rajhi, Acting Head of the Green Industries Department at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, said the selection of Duqm to host the project reflects the zone's competitive advantages, including advanced infrastructure, a strategic location, flexible legislation, and an integrated package of investment incentives that support business growth and sustainability.

He stated that the electric vehicle and battery cell production project reflects the growing confidence in Duqm as a promising investment destination at both the regional and international levels, and represents a strategic direction towards building a sustainable economy based on innovation and clean technologies in line with Oman's carbon neutrality goals.

EL B&T works in the development, manufacturing, and sale of electric vehicles and their components, including smart electric vehicles, electric motorcycles, elec-

tric three wheelers, electric buses, electric trucks, electric powertrain systems, and spare parts. The company is headquartered in Seoul and has several projects and partnerships in India, Türkiye, and countries across the region.

During Phase I, the project will focus on meeting demand in the local market in Oman, with gradual expansion planned towards the GCC, Middle East, and North African markets.

The electric vehicle and battery manufacturing project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm re-

flects the Sultanate of Oman's direction towards future industries and investments linked to clean energy and advanced technologies.

The project also aligns with the SEZAD's 2025 to 2030 strategy, which focuses on positioning Duqm as a preferred strategic hub for renewable energy and sustainable industries while creating broad business opportunities.

In addition, the project strengthens Duqm's leadership in green industries alongside several other industrial projects currently being implemented in the zone. -GNA

OMR300 million ‘Musstir Heights’ project unveiled in Jabal Akdhar

The project comprises more than 750 villas, designed to blend luxury, sustainability, and modern lifestyles



MUSCAT: Several real estate projects across the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman were unveiled during the current edition of Oman Real Estate, Design & Build

Exhibition and Conference, most notably the announcement of the “ Musstir Heights” project, to be established in Jabal Akdhar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

This project, developed by Musstir Company, a subsidiary of Mohamed Al Barwani Group, represents an investment of OMR300 million and forms part of the mas-

ter plan for the “Al Jabal Al Aali” project in the Wilayat of Jabal Akdhar. The project aligns with national priorities aimed at promoting sus-

tainable urban development, attracting high-value tourism and real estate investments, and cementing the Sultanate of Oman's position as a leading destination for contemporary living and leisure experiences.

Local and international investors

This comes amid growing interest from local and international investors, supported by advanced facilities related to foreign ownership and real estate investment.

The Musstir project will be developed on an area exceeding one million square metres.

Designed as a destination for relaxation, recreation, and celebration of the Sultanate of Oman's rich cultural heritage, it is situated at an elevation of approximately 2,400 metres above sea level.

The project comprises more than 750 villas, designed to blend luxury, sustainability, and modern lifestyles, in addition to residential units, a spa, a retail boulevard, a restaurant and café promenade, and a range of other amenities.

Dr. Mohammed bin Ali Al Barwani, Chairman of the Group's Board of Directors, stated that this project represents a significant milestone in the development of world-class projects that combine sustainability with authentic Omani identity.

Meanwhile, Harith Sulaiman Al Barashdi, CEO of Musstir Heights, explained that the project marks a major step forward in the company's growth trajectory, reinforcing its position as a developer of luxury and sustainable destinations both in the Sultanate of Oman and beyond. **-ONA**

PRESERVE NATURAL WATER SOURCES

Teams defy Dhofar terrain to rehabilitate remote springs

SALALAH: The Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Dhofar Governorate has completed maintenance and rehabilitation work on the Kiley, Don and Azghot water springs, located deep within valleys and mountain formations under challenging field conditions marked by rugged terrain.

The efforts are part of a drive to preserve natural water sources, enhance their sustainability and ensure they serve communities.

The Kiley spring, a freshwater source north of the A'downib area in the Wilayat of Salalah, is about seven kilometres away on foot. The Don spring, north of the Ain Kor waterfall site in Salalah, requires a four-kilometre trek through valleys and mountain slopes. The Azghot spring in the Wilayat of Rakhyyut lies about ten kilometres away along extremely



rugged mountain paths, making rehabilitation and maintenance work particularly difficult.

Eng. Ali bin Bakheet Beit Said, Director of the Water Resources Department, said the Kiley spring is classified as a remote source.

He stressed its importance as it lies within a vital pastoral area, providing water for valley travelers and livestock, as well as sup-

porting wildlife and preserving the region's ecological balance.

He pointed out that work at the Kiley spring included clearing the site, removing accumulated sediment and debris, constructing a permanent concrete collection basin, and building two livestock watering troughs — one 300 metres from the spring and another two kilometres away — along with



water pipeline extensions.

These measures help convey water to less rugged, more accessible locations for livestock, improving water resource efficiency.

He added that the directorate has also completed rehabilitation of the Don spring, located north of the Ain Kor waterfall site in Salalah.

The work included a water col-

lection basin, two animal drinking troughs — one adjacent to the basin and another 1,400 metres away — along with pipeline extensions and a water pump, ensuring sustainable flow and access at less rugged sites. In the Wilayat of Rakhyyut, comprehensive cleaning and rehabilitation of the Azghot spring, an important natural spring in a distinctive geological environment, involved tree and rock removal while preserving the site's features and avoiding any negative impact on the water source.

A retaining wall 15 metres long and one metre wide was built to hold the spring water, along with a livestock watering trough 250 metres from the spring, improving organised use and delivering water to more suitable locations.

The Water Resources Department Director noted that the ministry has, since 2025, rehabili-

tated 17 water springs in several wilayats of Dhofar as part of its plan to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of natural water resources.

Recent years have seen active community participation in maintaining and preserving the springs, as well as raising awareness of protecting natural water resources.

He said that current rehabilitation plans include a number of springs affected by the low pressure system called “Al Masarrat” in March 2026, among them the Shidham spring in Rakhyyut, the Thafnat spring in Taqah, and the Agharnut spring in the Alsan area of Salalah. These efforts are aimed at restoring natural water sources, enhancing their readiness and sustainability, and contributing to the preservation of the governorate's water and environmental resources. **-ONA**

SHURA COUNCIL

Fisheries sector employs over 60,000 Omani fishermen

< FROM A1 The livestock population is estimated at 4 million head, supported by 69 government veterinary clinics, 41 mobile clinics and a veterinary hospital.

He added that the fisheries sector employs more than 60,000 Omani fishermen and comprises 27,320 fishing boats, 1,243 vessels, 62 markets, 119 factories and 24 ports, forming an integrated system that strengthens value chains and enhances production and marketing efficiency.

On the water resources sector, the minister noted significant infrastructure development.

A total of 85 groundwater recharge dams have been built and commissioned with a combined capacity of 110,331 million cubic metres, alongside 116 surface storage dams with a capacity of 0.624 million cubic metres and seven protective dams with a capacity of 247,730 million cubic metres.

A water monitoring network of 3,483 stations has also been established, including 672 remote-operated stations and 14 cloud-seeding



stations, enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of water resource management.

He said the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2021-2025) saw strong investment growth, with 493 usufruct contracts signed at a total value of OMR1.87 billion based on feasibility studies. Investments grew by 39 percent in fisheries, 20.7 percent in water, and 19 percent in agriculture and livestock, exceeding targets and reflecting the sectors' attractiveness and ability to draw investment.

The minister pointed out that food industry exports reached OMR753 million, achieving 106 percent of the target, while fish exports stood at OMR209 million, achieving 127 percent. Agricultural and livestock exports reached OMR285 million, achieving 96 percent of the target, underscoring the sectors' growing export capacity, He added.

The local content rate reached 63 percent, represented by 35 agricultural and livestock industrial projects and 28 fish processing plants, with investments

exceeding OMR100 million.

He added that per capita water share reached 369 cubic metres, achieving 90 percent of the target, while the wastewater treatment rate stood at 98 percent. In employment, the sectors provided significant job opportunities: Omani workers in food security sectors numbered 51,283, those in technical and specialised positions 1,220, and self-employed workers rose to 48,789, enhancing the sectors' role in supporting the national labour market.

The minister explained that during the Tenth Five-Year Plan, 37 programmes were implemented with advanced completion levels, including infrastructure projects such as nine dams built at a cost of OMR149 million, maintenance of 75 dams, and maintenance and rehabilitation of 12 ports at a cost of OMR14.4 million. The strategic food reserve was strengthened with new grain silos of 160,000 tonnes capacity.

The minister confirmed that under the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, the ministry is moving into a new

phase built on past achievements, focusing on maximising economic returns, raising the sectors' contribution to GDP, expanding the investment base, creating jobs, developing strategic programmes for food security and sustainable resource management, accelerating technological transformation, and improving service quality through digital governance.

He also affirmed the vital role played by government companies, private sector enterprises and relevant associations as essential partners in supporting the food security system through investment, production, marketing and awareness-raising.

This reflects a participatory national approach that enhances the integration of roles and the achievement of goals. He expressed his gratitude to all partners from various government and private entities, associations, farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen who have contributed to strengthening the food security system in all its components.

The minister concluded by

emphasising the importance of developing policies and adapting and engineering procedures to improve implementation efficiency, thereby ensuring the maximisation of the impact of programmes and projects. He stressed the need to continue working to support the food security system, enhance sustainability, stimulate investment opportunities and improve resource use efficiency in a manner that achieves the national interest and the national development goals of the Sultanate of Oman.

The session was attended by Khalid bin Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, along with their the members and the Secretary-General of the Council.

The Shura Council held its regular session of the third annual sitting of the tenth term to discuss the ministry's statement across several key axes related to strengthening Oman's food and water security system, highlighting sector achievements, and outlining future strategic directions. **-ONA**

WILAYAT OF IBRA

Winners of innovation competitions honoured

IBRA: The Directorate General of Education in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate celebrated on Sunday in the Wilayat of Ibra the honouring of high-achieving students and winners of cultural and scientific innovation competitions for the 2025/2026 school year.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Intisar Abdullah Ambusaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Education and Supporting Educational Programmes.

The celebration comes within the framework of the commitment to nurturing talented and creative individuals, motivating students toward excellence and



innovation, and fostering a culture of achievement and positive competition across various educational, cultural, and scientific fields. The number of honorees reached approximately 360 students and teachers, in recognition of their efforts, excellence, and

honorable achievements at the level of the governorate's schools.

The ceremony included the presentation of several diverse segments, including chanting and poetry, as well as the honoring of high achievers in various fields and competitions. **-ONA**

المدينة الطبية للأجهزة العسكرية والأمنية

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The medical city of military and security invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders:

No	subject	Tender number	Grade	Last date for inquiries	Last date to submit bids	Tender document Fees + Vat
1.	Construction Of Raysut Medical Center	2026\05	First, Excellent	28 May 2026	09 June 2026	130 OMR
2.	Gate And Entrance Extension And Facade Modifications At The Hospital Of Medical City Of Military And Security Services - Al Khoudh	2026\06	First, Excellent	28 May 2026	09 June 2026	263 OMR
3.	Supply Of Digital Pathology Scanner	2026\09	—	27 May 2026	03 June 2026	53 OMR
4.	Gate And Entrance Extension And Facade Modifications At The Hospital Of Medical City Of Military And Security Services - Al Qurm	2026\10	First, Excellent	28 May 2026	09 June 2026	263 OMR

2. Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the secretary of the the Tender Committee in Medical City of Military and Security Services between 0900 to 1300 on the working days.

3. Omanisation compliance certificate (issued by ministry of labor) with a validity period not exceeding one month from the date of issuance must be submitted when tenders document collection.

4. payment of the tenders document to be made by transferring the amount to the bank account of Medical City of Military and Security Services details are provided on the official website (www.mcmss.gov.om/tenders).

Pact to build 45 social housing units at a cost of OMR1.8mn signed

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Ministry by Eng. Khalfan Said Al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and on behalf of the association by Maryam Issa Al Zedjali, Founder and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Dar Al Atta'a

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and Dar Al Atta'a Association signed a co-operation agreement on Sunday to construct 45 social housing units at a total cost exceeding OMR1.8 million, as part of the "Together We Build, Together We Achieve Impact" initiative.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Ministry by Eng. Khalfan Said Al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and on behalf of the association by Maryam Issa Al Zedjali, Founder and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Dar Al Atta'a. The signing took place on the sidelines of the 21st edition of Oman Real Estate, Design & Build Exhibition and Conference 2026.

The agreement stipulates the construction of 20 housing units in the Wilayat of Al Amerat in the Muscat Governorate, distributed equally between the "Hay Al Atta'a No. 2" and "Hay Al Atta'a No. 3" projects. Additionally, another 25 housing units will be constructed and distributed across several wilayats of the Sultanate of Oman



in cooperation with voluntary charity teams.

Maryam Issa Al Zedjali emphasised that this initiative aims to enhance family stability and social cohesion, noting that the association has successfully constructed more than 220 homes to date under the "My Home, My Haven" (Maskani Ma'mani) program. In June 2025, the association inaugurated the "Hay Al Atta'a" project in Sana'a Bani Ghafir in the Wilayat of Al Khaburah, which included 36 housing units designed according to the latest sustainable technical specifications, including the use of

solar panels for electricity and water recycling systems.

She further explained that the initiative relies on a precise mechanism for selecting beneficiaries in coordination with charity teams in the wilayats, where social cases are studied and verified to ensure they meet the approved conditions and specifications.

Subsequently, one case is selected from each target wilayat. She affirmed that the construction, supervision, and financing will be carried out according to specified allocations to achieve the desired social impact. — ONA



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North Al Batinah witnessing growing economic activity

SOHAR: North Al Batinah Governorate is undergoing growing economic momentum driven by a diversity of commercial, industrial, and investment activities, reinforcing its position as one of the vital governorates in the Sultanate of Oman.

Recent indicators confirm the ongoing national efforts to improve the business environment and stimulate investment, which has reflected positively on the volume of registrations and licenses of various types.

Jamal Abdullah Al Hinai, Director General of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion in North Al Batinah Governorate, stated that statistics revealed the cumulative number of commercial records in the governorate reached approximately 54,603 by the end of 2025. This total includes 4,271 new registrations, reflecting continuous commercial activity and the presence of a broad and diverse economic base.

Al Hinai pointed out that at the level of the governorate's wilayats, the Wilayat of Sohar led in terms of the number of commercial registrations with 1,922 records, followed by the Wilayat of A'Suwayq with 741, the Wilayat of Saham with 657, the Wilayat of

Liwa with 417, and the Wilayat of Al Khaburah with 262, while the Wilayat of Shinas recorded 272 registrations.

This highlights the pivotal role of the Wilayat of Sohar as a major economic hub alongside the growing activity across various other wilayats.

He added that North Al Batinah recorded notable activity in commercial licensing, particularly in the building and construction contracting sector, which topped the list of most licensed activities during 2025 with 3,184 licenses. This serves as an indication of the continuous urban expansion and developmental projects in the governorate's wilayats.

He confirmed that the governorate saw significant growth in completed commercial licenses after recording 35,432 licenses during 2025, bringing the total to 91,368 licenses.

This comes within the framework of efforts to facilitate government procedures and digital transformation, which contributed to accelerating the commencement of commercial activities and enhancing the investment environment.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business





MUSCAT GOVERNORATE MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No.(12/2026)

Muscat Municipality invites Companies specialized in the field and registered with General Secretariat of Tender Board, to participate and obtain tender documents from the website via the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
(PRE/26/005)	Design & Construction of Link Road at Mawaleh (11) (Re Call-1)	18/05/2026	26/05/2026
(PRS/26/013)	Supply of Labour Accommodation Furniture	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRS/26/014)	Supply of Food Stuff	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRS/26/015)	Supply of Central Printers	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRS/26/016)	Supply of Batteries for MM	18/05/2026	26/05/2026
(PRS/26/017)	Tailoring & Supply of Uniforms & Personal Protective Equipment for MM (Unit Rate)	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRE/26/022)	Consultancy Services for Seeb Seafront Development	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRE/26/040)	Landscaping Works at Darsait	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRE/26/058)	Supply of Road Bollards for MM (Unit Rate)	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRE/26/059)	RFP for Redressing Remote Sites of MM	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRE/26/060)	Supply & Installation of Lighting at Al-Jufinah	31/05/2026	21/06/2026
(PRE/26/061)	Design & Construction of Mountain Slope Stabilization Works in Darsait	31/05/2026	21/06/2026

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
2. Clarification and Support:
● For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
● For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@PTLC.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

Website: www.mm.gov.om



Strategic agreements linked to future cities in Oman announced

MUSCAT: The 21st edition of Oman Real Estate, Design & Build Exhibition and Conference 2026 commenced on Sunday at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC), taking place from 10 to 13 May.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Sultan Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance.

The event is organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Oman Real Estate Association, and Connect Company. The event saw broad participation from ministers, senior officials, real estate developers, investors, experts, and leading local and international companies specialising in real estate development, urban planning, design, and construction. As Oman's real estate and urban development sectors are witnessing accelerated momentum and transformative growth aligned with national objectives, the conference and exhibition serves as a key gathering point for industry stakeholders, fostering strategic partnerships, unlocking broader investment opportunities, and reinforcing Oman's growing position on the regional real estate and urban development landscape.

The conference provides a strategic platform to showcase major urban projects and national initiatives related to future

cities and integrated communities, while highlighting promising investment opportunities and strengthening public-private sector collaboration to support business growth and sustainable urban development. Meanwhile, the accompanying exhibition offers visitors and prospective buyers the opportunity to explore a diverse portfolio of real estate projects and residential developments presented by leading developers, alongside comprehensive insights into project details, services, and financing solutions.

The opening ceremony witnessed the announcement of a package of strategic agreements and projects linked to Oman's future cities, led by Sultan Haitham City. The Ministry signed a partnership and development agreement for residential neighbourhoods (3, 15, and 17) with Retal Urban Development Company from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The project spans more than 640,000 square metres, with an investment value exceeding OMR320 million, reflecting growing confidence in Oman's major urban developments and the strong investment appeal of its future cities.

Sultan Haitham City also saw the awarding of the first package (A) for site preparation and leveling works for the neighbourhoods and the Eastern Boulevard to Al Tasnim Group, with an investment value of OMR6.8 million.

The 12th package for the construction of external roads, bridges, underpasses, and utility works connecting Muscat Expressway to Sultan Haitham City was awarded to Strabag Oman, with a value exceeding OMR40 million.

The 9th package (A) for landscaping and horticulture works along roads and pedestrian pathways was awarded to GDS Company, with an investment value exceeding OMR3 million.

These agreements reflect the accelerated pace of implementation and the continued development of the project's infrastructure in line with the highest urban and engineering standards.

The ceremony also witnessed the awarding of a consultancy tender for supervision services related to developers' construction works, with an investment value exceeding OMR3 million, in collaboration with Al Khatib & Al Almi. The agreement comes as part of advancing the project's execution phase, while enhancing quality standards and technical governance across development projects. During the opening ceremony, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Artas Holding of Türkiye for the development of the Al Khuwair Downtown Project, in a step that reinforces the transformation of the project into a modern economic and urban hub at the heart of Muscat. — ONA

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business

Mediation efforts intensify as US and Iran exchange proposals to end war

Pakistan has reaffirmed its continued mediation efforts between Iran and the United States to bring a definitive end to the war, which began with a US-Israeli attack on Iran on 28 February, 2026

TEHRAN: The United States and Iran are exchanging proposals to end the war that erupted more than two months ago, as a relative calm has taken hold following days of sporadic clashes.

Washington is awaiting Tehran's response to its latest proposals, with US President Donald Trump having earlier affirmed that the ceasefire announced on 7 April 2026 remains in effect.

The war has disrupted energy markets, trade and maritime shipping, posing a mounting threat to the global economy.

Pakistan has reaffirmed its continued mediation efforts between Iran and the United States to bring a definitive end to the war, which began with a US-Israeli attack on



Iran on 28 February, 2026.

Washington has handed Pakistani mediators a proposal to extend the ceasefire, allowing for negotiations to resolve the conflict.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei confirmed to Iranian state television that the proposal is still under consideration.

According to US media reports, the proposal includes lifting the naval blockade on Iranian ports, restoring maritime security in the Middle East, and agreeing on a framework for negotiations over Iran's nuclear file.

In a related development, the UK Ministry of Defence announced it was sending a Royal Navy warship to the Middle East to take part in an international mission to protect navigation in the region.

The destroyer HMS Dragon, a Type 45 vessel, will be stationed in the area as part of what the min-

istry described as a "purely defensive and independent" mission.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, in coordination with French President Emmanuel Macron, had previously said the maritime protection mission would begin after the fighting in the region ends.

HMS Dragon is one of the Britain's most advanced warships, specialising in air and missile defence.

The ministry said the deployment was part of "contingency planning", allowing British forces to take part immediately in any multinational defensive mission in the Middle East if needed.

Fifty-one countries took part in talks last month on protecting commercial navigation in the region.

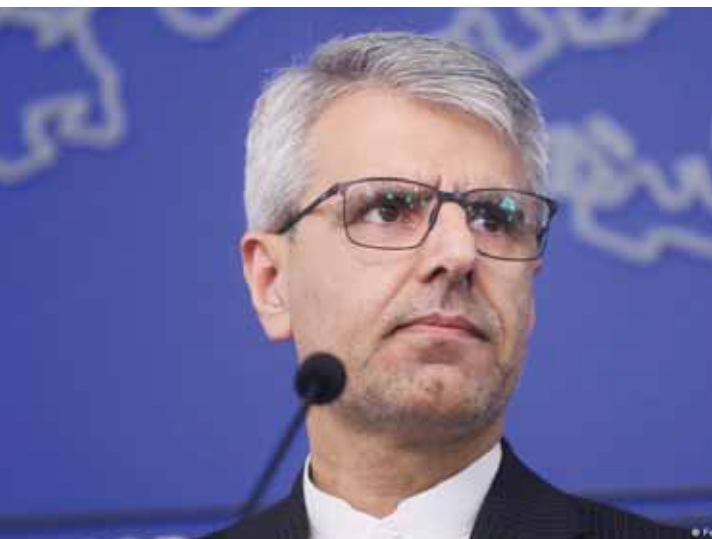
In Lebanon, the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel is under severe strain, with daily exchanges of fire.

After an initial round of ambassadorial-level talks in Washington, the US President announced a ceasefire that came into force on 17 April 2026. The truce was originally set to last ten days, but the president announced a three-week extension after a second round of White House talks.

Detailing the development, the state-run IRNA news agency stated, "The Islamic Republic of Iran sent today, through Pakistani mediators, its response to the latest text proposed by the United States to end the war."

The state media outlet further clarified the immediate objectives of the diplomatic outreach, adding that "According to the proposed plan, at this stage, negotiations will focus on ending the war in the region."

Authorities in Washington have been on standby for Tehran's feedback regarding a fresh diplomatic



framework. This proposed agreement aims to terminate the ongoing hostilities, restore commercial access to the strategic shipping lanes, and enforce a reversal of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Details of a "14-point plan" formulated by Tehran for ongoing truce discussions surfaced earlier last Sunday, according to a report by Al Jazeera. The broadcaster indicated that the Iranian strategy is structured into "three main stages," featuring a "30-day phase" designed to transition a temporary "ceasefire" into a "complete end to the war." This framework was reportedly introduced as a direct counter-proposal to the "nine-point peace plan" previously put forward by the United States.

According to Al Jazeera's coverage at the time, the Iranian draft includes specific demands for Washington to "lift sanctions on Iran" and terminate the "blockade

on Iranian ports." Furthermore, the proposal reportedly insists that the US must "withdraw US forces from the region" and "cease all hostilities," including a demand to end "Israel's war in Lebanon."

This diplomatic overture, however, occurs against a backdrop of deteriorating security, as Tehran recently cautioned Washington that it would cease its policy of strategic restraint regarding retaliatory strikes. This warning coincided with reports from Gulf nations of fresh maritime and territorial hostilities, including an assault on a freighter bound for Qatar.

Adding to the regional friction, the United Arab Emirates has accused Iran of orchestrating an attack on its territory. If verified, this would mark only the second "alleged strike" on Gulf countries since the commencement of a "month-old ceasefire." — Agencies

VICTORY DAY PARADE

Russia-Ukraine war could end soon, says Putin

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday hinted that the Ukraine war could soon end.

Speaking to reporters after marking Russia's Victory Day parade, Putin said: "I think that the matter is coming to an end."

The comment was made in response to a question about whether Western help to Ukraine went too far.

The Russian leader said: "They started ratcheting up the confrontation with Russia, which continues to this day. I think it is heading to an end, but it's still a serious matter."

Ceasefire is another hopeful sign

Putin's remarks come as Kyiv and Moscow observe a three-day ceasefire in Russia's war in Ukraine this weekend.

The truce was announced on Friday by US President Donald

Trump after negotiations brokered by Washington.

European Council President Antonio Costa on Thursday said the European Union was prepared to hold separate talks with Russia and Ukraine "when the right moment comes."

During his news conference, Putin was asked to name his preferred EU negotiator for those talks. He named former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

Schröder is one of Putin's closest Western allies and a longtime personal friend. But he has faced heavy criticism at home for those ties, which included lucrative board positions at Russian state-linked energy firms.

On Sunday, news agencies cited anonymous German government officials as saying Putin's suggestion was "not credible" as Moscow had not altered its conditions for ending the war.

— DW

'DROPPING LIKE BUTTERFLIES'

Trump's Truth Social feed blurs lines with AI war imagery, LIV Golf highlights

WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump unleashed a barrage of social media activity on his Truth Social platform, sharing over a dozen posts that featured artificial intelligence-generated depictions of maritime warfare alongside snapshots from a golf event.

The posts, which surfaced after a morning of silence from the President, depicted a high-stakes military confrontation involving the United States and Iran.

The digital flurry commenced at 3:51 pm on Saturday, when Trump shared a fabricated visual of unmanned aerial vehicles bearing Iranian insignia plunging into the ocean, accompanied by a description of them "dropping like butterflies."

This was followed by another artificial graphic portraying an American vessel discharging laser beams to trigger massive aerial explosions, which the President captioned: "Bye Bye, Drones."

Shifting his focus to political rivals, the President leveraged the synthetic imagery to target former

Drones Dropping Like Butterflies



Democratic leaders Joe Biden and Barack Obama, criticising their military posture regarding Tehran.

A split-screen visual juxtaposed a decimated Iranian fleet designated "Trump" against a fleet of

159 IRANIAN SHIPS



intact vessels under "Obama/Biden," aiming to validate his previous assertions that American forces had successfully decimated 159 Iranian ships.

In a further display of mili-

tary-themed propaganda, Trump shared an AI-generated image of himself stationed on a vessel, observing through binoculars as a fleet on the horizon was consumed by fire. This sequence of posts comes at a sensitive time, as a "tenuous ceasefire" persists between Washington and Tehran while both sides continue to maintain "duelling blockades" in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, amidst reports that the escalating "tensions remain broadly unpopular" with the domestic electorate.

Interspersed with the combat-related graphics, the President highlighted his weekend leisure activities at the LIV Golf tournament hosted at Trump National Golf Club in Virginia. Images appearing to be captured from a television feed showcased the expansive riverside estate along the Potomac River.

Trump, who recently attended the Cadillac Championship in Florida, was observed at the Virginia club seated behind bullet-proof glass in the company of his son, Eric Trump. — ANI

A DEFIANT TONE

Dialogue does not mean 'surrender', says Iranian President

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has struck a defiant tone regarding the nation's diplomatic stance, asserting that any engagement with international powers is a strategic pursuit of justice rather than a sign of weakness.

In a post on X, the Iranian President clarified the administration's position on potential diplomatic breakthroughs, stating, "We will never bow our heads before the enemy, and if talk of dialogue or negotiation arises, it does not mean surrender or retreat."

Connecting the principles of sovereignty to the current geopolitical climate, Pezeshkian emphasised that the Islamic Republic remains committed to a position of power. He noted that the primary objective behind any diplomatic engagement is to ensure the security and prosperity of the people.

"Rather, the goal is to uphold the rights of the Iranian nation and to defend national interests with resolute strength," Pezeshkian added, reinforcing the message that Tehran's participation in talks is contingent on the preservation of its fundamental rights.

This high-level rhetoric coin-



cided with a formal diplomatic move, as Iran submitted its reaction to the American proposal for de-escalating regional hostilities through Islamabad, Iranian state media announced on Sunday.

The move follows several affirmations from the Foreign Ministry spokesperson that Tehran's "views and considerations" concerning the Washington-led initiatives would be dispatched once a thorough "review and final conclusions" had been reached.

Detailing the development, the state-run IRNA news agency stated, "The Islamic Republic of Iran sent today, through Pakistani me-

diators, its response to the latest text proposed by the United States to end the war." The state media outlet further clarified the immediate objectives of the diplomatic outreach, adding that "According to the proposed plan, at this stage, negotiations will focus on ending the war in the region."

Authorities in Washington have been on standby for Tehran's feedback regarding this fresh diplomatic framework. The proposed agreement aims to terminate the ongoing hostilities, restore commercial access to strategic shipping lanes, and enforce a reversal of the Iranian nuclear programme.

The urgency of these talks is underscored by the emergence of a "14-point plan" formulated by Tehran, which surfaced earlier, according to reports by Al Jazeera. The broadcaster indicated that the Iranian strategy is structured into "three main stages," featuring a "30-day phase" designed to transition a temporary "ceasefire" into a "complete end to the war." This framework was reportedly introduced as a direct counter-proposal to the "nine-point peace plan" previously put forward by the United States.

According to the reports, the Iranian draft includes specific demands for Washington to "lift sanctions on Iran" and terminate the "blockade on Iranian ports." Furthermore, the proposal reportedly insists that the US must "withdraw US forces from the region" and "cease all hostilities," including a demand to end "Israel's war in Lebanon."

However, this diplomatic overture occurs against a backdrop of deteriorating security, as Tehran recently cautioned Washington that it would cease its policy of strategic restraint regarding re-

taliatory strikes. This warning coincided with reports from Gulf nations of fresh maritime and territorial hostilities, including an assault on a freighter bound for Qatar.

In a sign of escalating military preparedness amidst these tensions, Iran's military chief, Ali Abdollahi, held talks with Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei. According to Iranian state television, Abdollahi was issued "new directives and guidance for the continuation of operations to confront the enemy."

The maritime domain has faced simultaneous disruption, with South Korea reporting that "unidentified aircraft" struck a cargo vessel within the "Strait of Hormuz" last week. Further south, the Qatari defence ministry confirmed that a freighter travelling from Abu Dhabi was targeted by a drone on Sunday (local time) northeast of the "port of Mesaieed."

Providing technical details on the latest maritime incident, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) centre stated that the bulk carrier reported being hit by an "unknown

projectile." The UKMTO noted, "There was a small fire that has been extinguished; there are no casualties. There is no reported environmental impact."

While no group has made an "immediate claim of responsibility," Iran's Fars news agency asserted that "the bulk carrier that was struck near the coast of Qatar was sailing under a US flag and belonged to the United States."

Heightening the rhetoric, Ebrahim Rezaei, the spokesperson for the Iranian parliament's national security commission, issued a direct warning to the United States via social media, declaring, "Our restraint is over as of today." He further noted that "Any attack on our vessels will trigger a strong and decisive Iranian response against American ships and bases."

These warnings echo recent threats from Iran's Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) to strike American interests in the Middle East should Iranian tankers be targeted. This follows an incident on Friday where a "US fighter jet" reportedly "fired on and disabled two Iran-flagged vessels" in the "Gulf of Oman." — ANI

SPORTS

AHMED AL HASNI AND WALEED AL KINDI

Oman Sail 49er duo heads to 2026 worlds in France



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Sail's High Performance 49er duo of Ahmed Al Hasni and Waleed Al Kindi are set for a defining stretch of their Olympic journey as they line up against the world's best at the 2026 49er, 49erFX and Nacra 17 World Championships in Saint-Pierre Quiberon, France.

Racing from 12-17 May on the exposed Atlantic coast, the Omani pair will face a punishing mix of strong winds, shifting tides and relentless competition in one of sailing's most demanding natural arenas. The regatta brings together more than 86 elite teams, including Olympic medallists and leading contenders from the Sailing Grand Slam circuit, all sharpening their campaigns for LA28 Olympic qualification.

For Al Hasni and Al Kindi, the event is both a test and a benchmark. Following the World Championships, the duo will continue their European campaign at Kiel Week and the 49er European Championships in Germany, extending a critical run of high-intensity racing designed to accelerate development and consistency at the top level.

Oman Sail 49er coach Jacek Nowak underlined the significance of the back-to-back championship block. "The World and European Championships will be a big test for our sailors and an important check of our progress as we continue our journey towards Olympic qualification from the Asian region," Nowak said.

"Every race from now on is a chance to learn and improve, and by testing ourselves against an Olympic-level fleet we are offering our team an opportunity to impress, gain experience and sail



against some of the best in the world."

Oman Sail's Head Performance Coach Hashim Al Rashdi echoed that sentiment, pointing to steady progress and rising expectations.

"We have been encouraged by recent performances and now must take the next step in our development," he said. "The team has worked very hard to improve race after race, both physically and tactically, and we believe they have the potential to fulfil our ultimate goal of qualifying for the Olympic Games and representing the nation in Los Angeles in 2028."

Over five days of racing, the championship format will feature 15 races, beginning with a three-day Preliminary Series followed by Elimination and Final Series stages that will decide the podium.

Later in the season, Oman Sail's 49er campaign will head to Gdynia, Poland—host of the 2028 World Sailing Championships—during the Gdynia Sailing Days festival, further sharpening preparations on the Olympic pathway.

Oman pooled with KSA, Kuwait and Palestine in AFC Asian Cup 2027

Red Warriors open their campaign against Kuwait on January 8 in Riyadh

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman have been drawn together with heavyweights and hosts Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Kuwait and Palestine in Group A of the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027.

Oman, under Moroccan manager Tarik Sektioui, will kick off their campaign with their opening clash against Kuwait on January 8 at the King Saud University Stadium (26,000-seater) in Riyadh.

The Red Warriors then meet Saudi Arabia on January 12 at the King Fahd Sports City Stadium (72,000-seater) before concluding their group engagement with Palestine on January 17 at King Saud University Stadium.

The draw of the continental football showpiece concluded in Diriyah on Saturday night setting up the stage of spectacular showdowns from January 7 to February 5, 2027.

Asia's top 24 men's national teams will feature in the event and the six groups were finalised at the draw ceremony held amid the stunning backdrop of the Salwa Palace in Diriyah's historic At-Turaif District.

Further exemplifying the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's readiness to welcome the rest of Asia and the world, the official slogan of the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 was unveiled during the final draw as Ahlan Asia – a warm invitation to all to come together.

For the first time ever, Saudi Arabia are serving as tournament hosts and their quest for glory on home soil starts in the capital city of Riyadh with the opening clash against Palestine on Janu-



Group A	Group B	Group C
KSA	UZB	IRN
KUW	BHR	KOR
OMA	PNE	KGZ
PLE	JOR	CHN
Group D	Group E	Group F
AUS	KOR	JPN
TJK	UAE	QAT
IRQ	VIE	THA
SGP	LIBN/YEM	IDN



ary 7 (Thursday) at the King Fahd Sports City Stadium, which can hold 72,000 spectators.

Eight stadiums across three cities will serve as the battlegrounds for the 51 matches of the Asian Cup: five in Riyadh, two in Jeddah and one in Al Khobar.

Besides Oman game at the King Saud University Stadium, the Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University Stadium (25,000) begins with the Group B fixture between Bahrain and North Korea. Over at the King Abdullah Sports City Stadium (60,000) in Jeddah, Group B duo Uzbekistan and Jordan will cross paths.

On January 9 (Saturday), Riyadh's Kingdom Arena (26,000) welcomes its first pair of teams as Iran and China kick off their Group C campaign, while the Ara-

mco Stadium (45,000) in Al Khobar does likewise with a meeting between Group D's Australia and Singapore.

The Al Shabab Stadium (13,000) in Riyadh swings into action on January 10 (Sunday) with the Group D match between Tajikistan and Iraq, while Jeddah's Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Sports City Stadium (26,000) ignites on January 11 (Monday) as Japan and Indonesia go head-to-head in Group F.

With the conclusion of the group stage on January 20 (Wednesday), the Round of 16 will take place between January 22 to 25, before the tournament moves into the quarter-finals on January 28 and 29, and the semi-finals on February 1 and 2.

The spectacular AFC Asian

Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 will culminate in the grand final on February 5 (Friday) at the King Fahd Sports City Stadium, where the kings of Asia will be crowned.

For the third time running, the Asian Cup will feature 24 national teams, with 23 already confirmed. The sole remaining spot will go to either Lebanon or Yemen, who contest a play-off in Doha on June 4.

Group A: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine.

Group B: Uzbekistan, Bahrain, North Korea, Jordan.

Group C: Iran, Syria, Kyrgyz Republic, China.

Group D: Australia, Tajikistan, Iraq, Singapore.

Group E: South Korea, UAE, Vietnam, Lebanon/Yemen.

Group F: Japan, Qatar, Thailand, Indonesia.



Turn Up the *Freshness* This Summer



TRADE-IN^{@@}
BONUS

INSURANCE^{*}
1 YEAR

SERVICE^{**}
3 YEARS / 30,000 KMS 5 YEARS / 50,000 KMS

REGISTRATION^{***}
1 YEAR



Campaign Period: 10.05.2026 – 08.07.2026. Benefits applicable for all purchases except Government Organizations & Ministries. *Comprehensive 1 Year Insurance (Oman only, excluding diesel grades) on Yaris, Corolla, Camry, Camry HEV, Crown, RAZE, VELOZ, Urban Cruiser, Fortuner & Prado. **Cash gift in lieu of insurance" Cash Gift is given in Lieu of Insurance only as applicable for respective models. In case customer chooses Insurance (as applicable), he/she will not be eligible for "Cash gift in lieu of insurance" offer. Insurance benefit under the campaign would be given upto the extent applicable for Private vehicles only. Additional premium as per Insurance norms will have to be paid by the RAO. Tax & Driving School Company. *** 1st year Registration for the models Yaris, Corolla, Camry, Camry HEV, Crown 2.5 L, GR Yaris, Supra, GR86, RAZE, VELOZ, Urban Cruiser, Corolla Cross, Corolla Cross HEV, RAV4, RAV4 HEV, Highlander, Fortuner, Prado, LC300, LC300 HEV & Innova. **5 Years / 50,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 5 services at 10,000 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on Yaris, Corolla, Camry, Camry HEV, Crown 2.5 L, GR Yaris, RAZE, VELOZ, Corolla Cross, Corolla Cross HEV, RAV4, RAV4 HEV, Highlander, Fortuner, Prado, LC300, LC300 HEV & Innova. **5 Years / 50,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 5 services at 10,000 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on Supra. **4 Years / 60,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 8 services at 7,500 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on GR86, Urban Cruiser. ***5 Years / 30,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 3 services at 10,000 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on Hilux SC & Lite Ace (Excluding diesel grades). @@ Trade-In Bonus for the models Yaris, Corolla, Camry, Camry HEV, GR Yaris, Supra, GR86, RAZE, VELOZ, Urban Cruiser, Corolla Cross, Corolla Cross HEV, RAV4, RAV4 HEV, Highlander, Fortuner, Prado, LC300, LC300 HEV & Innova. The used vehicle offered for exchange must be legally owned by the customer, registered in Oman, and supported by valid and complete ownership, registration, and clearance documents at the time of evaluation and transaction. Imported vehicles that are not compliant with GSO specifications or vehicles with incomplete, altered, or disputed documentation are not eligible for exchange under this offer. Acceptance of any used vehicle for exchange is subject to physical inspection, valuation, and final approval by Best Cars, based on prevailing market conditions, vehicle condition, mileage, accident history, and documentation status. The fixed trade-in incentive of OMR 250 or OMR 500 depending on models is applied only as a discount on the purchase price of the new Toyota vehicle at the time of invoicing. This incentive is in addition to the assessed market value of the exchanged vehicle and cannot be redeemed for cash, transferred, or adjusted against any other charges. The final trade-in value is determined solely by Best Cars following inspection and may differ from preliminary or indicative estimates shared earlier. Vehicles may include dealer-installed items. For further details & to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Toyota showroom. Pictures and colours shown above are for illustrative purposes only.

RBI AND ECB INK PACT
In a significant move to bolster international financial stability and foster cross-border regulatory synergy, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the European Central Bank (ECB) have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation. — **ANI**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 8,331.13 points, down by -0.23% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -1.12% at 655.28 points. Sohar Power, up 9.57%, was the top gainer while, Oman Chromite, down 8.79%, was the top loser.



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Q1 2026



#30YearsOnMSX

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I present the unaudited financial statements for Renaissance Services SAOG for the three-month period ended March 31, 2026.

The first quarter of 2026 delivered a disappointing financial result for the business. Performance was impacted by timing-related factors in the accommodation portfolio and other one-off events, alongside a disruptive regional operating environment during the quarter. While the results are below the levels achieved in the corresponding period last year, they are best viewed in the context of these short-term dislocations rather than any structural change in the underlying business.

Renaissance operates from a position of financial discipline and operational depth. Its core contract services span essential sectors delivering stable performance during the quarter. Collections remain strong, and management has taken decisive steps to address any execution gaps, further sharpen cost control and strengthen accountability across operations as we embed the new Target Operating Model.

Financial Performance
RS Consolidated

	🏠 mn		USD mn	
	3-month period ended		3-month period ended	
	Mar 2026	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	Mar 2025
Revenue	24.86	27.09	64.57	70.36
EBITDA	3.04	4.35	7.90	11.30
Operating profit	0.88	2.11	2.29	5.48
Net profit after tax	0.12	1.11	0.31	2.88
Net profit after non-controlling interest	0.62	1.46	1.61	3.79

The quarter saw a decline in both revenue and profitability compared to the corresponding period last year, reflecting lower utilisation in parts of the accommodation portfolio and reduced activity levels across selected contracts. Revenue for Q1 2026 dipped by 8% to 🏠 24.86mn compared to 🏠 27.09mn in Q1 2025, while net profit attributable to shareholders declined to 🏠 0.62mn from 🏠 1.46mn.

The Accommodation Solutions segment was the primary driver of the variance. Occupancy across both the oilfields accommodation portfolio and Renaissance Village Duqm (RSVD) fell below expected levels during the quarter. In the oilfields, unexpected timing mismatches resulted in lower occupancies, and the client is providing active support to address the situation in the coming months.

Occupancy at RSVD remained a challenge compounded by a disruptive environment and the usage of non-compliant facilities by contractors. The authorities have taken a very serious view on the matter in support of their own worker welfare standards.

Management has initiated more structured engagement with key clients and stakeholders, with a clear focus on improving alignment between projected and actual demand, strengthening utilisation and enhancing visibility on forward occupancy.

In parallel, our utilities business experienced temporary disruption due to delays in the delivery of electricity meters by the client, which impacted installation activity and revenue, while other contracts were affected by broader operating conditions. This led to lower activity levels during the quarter, affecting revenue conversion and overall cost efficiency.

Although these factors affected the quarter's outcome, they are largely timing-related and are being actively addressed. The focus is on restoring utilisation, improving execution discipline and ensuring that activity levels across the business are more closely aligned with available capacity in the coming quarters.

Operational Review

Performance across core contract services remained stable in Q1, with service delivery maintained in line with contractual standards across oil & gas, healthcare, defence, education and other essential services contracts. These businesses provide a consistent operating base and reinforce the resilience of the company's integrated facilities management (IFM) platform.



The company secured new and retained business amounting to 🏠 10.5mn, including further progress in Hard FM, strengthening its position in higher-value IFM offerings. The order book and pipeline are healthy, with several large opportunities at advanced stages of evaluation, providing visibility for the periods ahead.

Cost discipline remains a key area of focus. The company is optimising its cost base and enhancing productivity across both site and support functions. Resources are being aligned with current activity levels to support consistent service delivery and long-term operational efficiency.

The company's receivables and collections performance remained well controlled, with strong cash conversion supported by timely collection of receivables and disciplined working capital management.

Strategic Progress



A key Q1 milestone was the completion of the Socat acquisition on March 31, 2026. This transaction represents an important step in Renaissance's inorganic growth strategy and strengthens the company's capabilities across catering and IFM in Oman. As we move into the next phase, the approach to integration will prioritise preserving the strengths of the acquired business while enhancing value across the combined platform.

Renaissance is actively evaluating targeted acquisition opportunities aligned with its core strengths across all aspects of facilities management, accommodation, waste management and related services. The Board remains selective in its approach, prioritising opportunities that strengthen earnings, deepen capability and support sustainable long-term growth.

The Target Operating Model endorsed in 2025 has moved from design into implementation. This is a necessary organisational shift, placing greater accountability closer to clients and contracts while maintaining central oversight of strategy, risk, governance and technology. This phase is reinforcing execution discipline across the business, with clearer accountability and a stronger emphasis on embedding operational excellence across sites.

Operational Efficiency and Sustainability

Cybersecurity resilience was further strengthened in Q1 through proactive monitoring and preventive measures. Since focused improvement efforts began in January 2025, the company's information security benchmark has shown steady progress for the fifth consecutive quarter.

The company continues to explore the application of AI where it can directly enhance safety, service quality and cost efficiency. Further progress was made on machine-learning-based room occupancy monitoring, which is now supporting more efficient HVAC energy management through improved real-time occupancy insights.

Renaissance commenced a pilot using real-time video analytics at its central kitchen facility to identify potential hazards and hygiene-related non-compliances, supporting a more proactive approach to health and safety. The initiative enables faster issue identification and corrective action, with a planned rollout to PACs (Permanent Accommodation for Contractors) in the oilfields in the second quarter.

Initiatives to improve energy and resource use progressed during the quarter, with an increasing emphasis on data-led tools to reduce waste and support more efficient operations. This reflects a long-standing commitment to responsible and sustainable operations, underpinned by strengthened governance and Board-level oversight of ESG.

The company published the 2025 Sustainability Report in the first quarter, marking its 15th edition. Prepared in line with GRI Standards, it is fully compliant with all mandatory ESG disclosure requirements of MSX (Muscat Stock Exchange), reflecting a long-standing commitment to transparent disclosure.

Outlook

The current operating environment remains competitive and cost-conscious, with continued variability in project mobilisation timelines across certain sectors. Tendering cycles also remain extended in parts of the market. At the same time, Oman's long-term energy, healthcare and industrial development priorities support underlying demand for IFM and accommodation solutions. These include new urban mixed-use developments, logistics, continued expansion of healthcare infrastructure and ongoing project activity within established economic zones such as Duqm.

As Oman accelerates its Vision 2040 priorities, performance-based PPPs (Public-private partnerships) present a clear opportunity for FM providers to evolve into long-term strategic partners. Renaissance is well positioned in this regard with over three decades of experience in long-term contracts structured around a life-cycle approach, where responsibility extends to asset performance,

upkeep and renewal. This reinforces our ability to manage the total cost of ownership while supporting improved earnings visibility and strengthening our role in the delivery of critical national infrastructure.

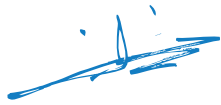
Recent data published by the Government of Oman indicates a gradual increase in consumer prices across key categories, including food and essential goods. These trends are expected to influence operating costs across the sector, and the company remains focused on managing these pressures through disciplined procurement, cost control and operational efficiency.

Renaissance enters the remainder of the year with clear priorities around utilisation, execution and cost control supported by a resilient core business. The company remains financially disciplined, operationally experienced and strategically well-positioned in sectors that are essential to Oman's development.

Tribute

Renaissance extends its gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the people of Oman. We remain committed to supporting national development by strengthening In-Country Value and delivering safe, reliable and sustainable services across the Sultanate.

On behalf of the Board, I also thank our employees, clients, shareholders and partners for their continued trust and support.


Samir J. Fancy
Chairman

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31, 2026		
	As at Mar 2026	As at Mar 2025
	🏠 '000	🏠 '000
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	123,264	130,465
Intangible assets	2,009	1,922
Investments	6,910	4,162
Deferred tax asset	771	846
Other non current assets	1,356	-
	134,310	137,395
Current assets	71,532	76,963
Current liabilities	59,772	61,557
Non-current liabilities		
Term loans excluding current maturities	36,156	42,388
Deferred tax liability	-	13
Other non current payables	10,090	10,254
	46,246	52,655
Net assets	99,824	100,146
Equity		
Share capital	23,641	23,641
Treasury shares held by subsidiary	(6,772)	(6,772)
Treasury shares held by liquidity provider	(142)	(161)
Share premium	26,936	26,936
Legal reserve	9,145	9,145
Other reserves	2,729	514
Retained earnings	27,473	28,185
Equity attributable to the owners of parent company	83,010	81,488
Non controlling interest	16,814	18,658
Total equity	99,824	100,146

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDED MARCH 31, 2026		
	3-month period ended	
	Mar 2026	Mar 2025
	🏠 '000	🏠 '000
Revenue	24,858	27,087
Operating expenses	(23,982)	(24,982)
Profit from operations	876	2,105
Net finance costs	(649)	(835)
Profit before tax	227	1,270
Tax	(110)	(162)
Profit for the period	117	1,108
Net loss attributable to non-controlling interests	(503)	(348)
Net profit attributable to the Shareholders of the Parent Company	620	1,456
Notes 1) The complete accounts will be sent by mail to shareholders within 7 days of receipt of request. 2) The complete set of financial results can be accessed at www.renaissanceservices.com		

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Sohar Power, up 9.57%, was the top gainer while, Oman Chromite, down 8.79%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 8,331.13 points, down by -0.23% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -1.12% at 655.28 points. Sohar Power, up 9.57%, was the top gainer while, Oman Chromite, down 8.79%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 3945 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 50.17 million, with more than 145.58 million shares changing hands. Out of 74 traded securities, 23 advanced, 29 declined, and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 713K while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 504K, followed by foreign investors for RO 209K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 13,233.91 points, down -0.25%. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Muscat Finance, Oman Arab Bank, National Bank Oman, Bank Muscat were up by 1.64%, 1.35%,

0.49%, 0.48%, 0.44% respectively. Prices of Financial Corporation, National Finance, Bank Dhofar, Ahli Bank, Oman Qatar Insurance were down by 4.76%, 3.06%, 2.33%, 1.52%, 1.08% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 10,113.71 points, down -0.98%. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Gulf International Chemicals, Oman Packaging, Raysut Cement, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 5.80%, 2.53%, 0.54%, 0.53%, 0.47% respectively. Prices of Oman Chromite, Oman Cables Industry, A'Saffa Foods, Oman Fisheries, Jazeera Steel Products were down by 8.79%, 4.00%, 3.78%, 3.57%, 3.13% respectively. Services Index was down by -0.16% before closing at 3,323.60 points. Prices of Sohar Power, Al Suwadi Power, Al Jazeera Services, Musandam Power, Al Batinah Power were up by 9.57%, 2.51%, 2.43%, 2.34%, 2.01% respectively. Prices of Phoenix Power, Renaissance Services, Oman Telecom, OQ Exploration & Production, Ooredoo were down by 1.33%, 0.82%, 0.68%, 0.59%, 0.55% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS									
MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE									
INDICES									
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%			
MSX 30 INDEX	8,358.48	8,324.23	8,331.13	8,350.53	-19.39	-0.23			
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,296.11	13,210.29	13,233.91	13,267.07	-33.15	-0.25			
Industry Index	10,240.05	10,113.71	10,113.71	10,214.06	-100.35	-0.98			
Services Index	3,353.85	3,321.02	3,323.60	3,328.89	-5.29	-0.16			
MSX Shariah Index	662.59	655.28	655.28	662.69	-7.41	-1.12			
MSX TR INDEX	12,905.95	12,853.07	12,863.72	12,893.67	-29.95	-0.23			
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,314.13	16,208.83	16,237.81	16,278.49	-40.68	-0.25			
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	13,114.90	12,953.10	12,953.10	13,081.62	-128.52	-0.98			
SERVICES TR IDX	4,481.61	4,437.75	4,441.20	4,448.26	-7.06	-0.16			
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,209.68	1,209.68	1,209.68	1,209.68	0.00	0.00			

Trading Summary									
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded		
145,588,072	50,172,042	3,945	38,262,858,981	23	29	22	74		

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, MAY 10

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST MD	LAST OFFER	P/B VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	1,061,820	219,178	125	0.209	0.212	0.202	0.204	0.199	0.005	2.513	0.203	0.203	0.217	0.100	145,738,893
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	22,800	6,724	9	0.284	0.285	0.284	0.285	0.288	0.007	2.431	0.295	0.285	0.295	0.100	12,638,682
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	4,567	1,574	5	0.343	0.350	0.343	0.350	0.342	0.008	2.339	0.350	0.345	0.350	0.100	24,636,500
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	1,343,234	277,564	133	0.209	0.212	0.203	0.203	0.199	0.004	2.010	0.203	0.203	0.204	0.100	137,002,148
OM0000001772	ALANWAH INVESTMENT	193,999	36,081	19	0.185	0.187	0.185	0.186	0.183	0.003	1.639	0.186	0.186	0.200	0.100	55,530,845
OM0000001152	OMAN NATL ENRG & INVESTMENT	33,000	5,108	9	0.152	0.156	0.152	0.156	0.154	0.002	1.299	0.156	0.156	0.160	0.100	23,400,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	10,644	4,470	3	0.418	0.420	0.418	0.420	0.418	0.002	0.478	0.420	0.422	0.420	0.100	682,897,469
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	13,546	5,733	9	0.422	0.425	0.422	0.424	0.422	0.002	0.474	0.424	0.424	0.427	0.100	21,345,168
OM0000002786	BANK MUSCAT	33,237,089	15,272,444	607	0.460	0.461	0.457	0.460	0.458	0.002	0.437	0.460	0.461	0.460	0.100	3,452,942,649
OM0000000672	QO GAS NETWORKS	26,774,702	7,268,009	557	0.270	0.274	0.270	0.273	0.272	0.001	0.368	0.273	0.273	0.273	0.100	1,182,260,330
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	163,000	53,890	13	0.330	0.331	0.330	0.331	0.330	0.001	0.303	0.331	0.330	0.331	0.100	66,200,000
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INTL DEVLPMNT & INVESTM	112	39	1	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.000	0.000	0.344	0.342	0.354	0.100	170,643,313
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	190	55	1	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.000	0.000	0.550	0.546	0.550	0.100	181,979,991
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	49,300	8,135	2	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.160	0.165	0.100	52,043,805
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	335,800	30,212	9	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.089	0.091	0.100	32,051,457
OM0000002372	OMAN OIL MARKETING	456	547	2	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	0.000	0.000	1.200	1.200	1.204	0.100	73,530,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	46,006,748	10,587,587	480	0.232	0.232	0.230	0.232	0.232	0.000	0.000	0.232	0.232	0.232	0.100	1,535,201,135
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	16,498	30,882	27	1.856	1.900	1.850	1.850	1.850	0.000	0.000	1.850	1.850	1.850	0.100	185,000,000
OM0000004735	SEMBOCORP SALALAH	77,128	20,222	16	0.264	0.264	0.261	0.263	0.263	0.000	0.000	0.263	0.263	0.263	0.100	251,052,423
OM0000004785	MADINA TAKAFUL	62,827	7,817	9	0.124	0.125	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.000	0.000	0.124	0.124	0.125	0.100	21,700,000
OM0000006908	QO BASE INDUSTRIES (SFG)	14,558,505	4,650,650	417	0.320	0.321	0.318	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.321	0.320	0.040	1,107,037,072
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	200	79	1	0.393	0.393	0.393	0.393	0.394	-0.001	-0.254	0.393	0.386	0.394	0.100	441,281,589
OM0000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODS MARKTG	390	450	1	1.155	1.155	1.155	1.155	1.158	-0.003	-0.259	1.155	1.110	1.155	0.100	76,695,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	825,087	406,430	186	0.495	0.496	0.490	0.493	0.495	-0.002	-0.494	0.493	0.493	0.493	0.100	379,708,600
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	43,750	15,902	6	0.365	0.365	0.363	0.363	0.365	-0.002	-0.548	0.363	0.363	0.364	0.100	236,292,755
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	81,500	14,178	3	0.174	0.174	0.173	0.173	0.174	-0.001	-0.575	0.173	0.173	0.175	0.100	21,084,375
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	8,752,321	4,488,587	404	0.508	0.509	0.506	0.507	0.510	-0.003	-0.588	0.507	0.506	0.507	0.010	4,456,000,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	192,874	28,772	20	0.150	0.150	0.149	0.149	0.150	-0.001	-0.667	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.100	333,306,002
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	3,130,596	4,602,118	103	1.479	1.480	1.466	1.469	1.479	-0.010	-0.676	1.469	1.467	1.470	0.100	1,101,750,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	90,299	33,050	20	0.367	0.367	0.365	0.365	0.368	-0.003	-0.815	0.365	0.365	0.367	0.100	86,289,650
OM0000001020	ASTAD SHIPPING	3,830,463	1,173,894	276	0.309	0.310	0.304	0.306	0.309	-0.003	-0.971	0.306	0.307	0.306	0.000	1,883,870,750
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	181,418	40,841	28	0.224	0.226	0.223	0.223	0.226	-0.003	-1.327	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.100	326,160,126
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	2,790,820	587,834	152	0.216	0.217	0.210	0.210	0.215	-0.005	-2.326	0.210	0.210	0.212	0.100	638,357,692
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	55,124	42,722	11	0.776	0.776	0.775	0.775	0.800	-0.025	-3.125	0.775	0.721	0.775	0.100	96,795,919
OM0000002804	ASAFAA FOODS	4,454	3,534	7	0.821	0.821	0.790	0.790	0.821	-0.031	-3.776	0.790	0.740	0.790	0.100	94,800,000
OM0000001077	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	4,000	11,520	5	2.880	2.880	2.880	2.880	3.000	-0.120	-4.000	2.880	2.880	2.880	0.100	258,336,000
Total	36	143,949,394	49,897,833	3,676												

Parallel Market																
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	512	104	5	0.206	0.206	0.200	0.206	0.188	0.018	9.574	0.206	0.206	0.206	0.100	4,120,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	95,973	28,754	21	0.283	0.310	0.283	0.310	0.293	0.017	5.802	0.310	0.281	0.310	0.100	17,050,000
OM0000003028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	35,000	2,781	9	0.079	0.081	0.079	0.081	0.079	0.002	2.532	0.081	0.072	0.081	0.100	1,701,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	18,580	1,959	3	0.105	0.107	0.105	0.107	0.105	0.002	1.905	0.107	0.105	0.107	0.100	16,643,893
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	205,442	24,721	41	0.120	0.122	0.120	0.122	0.120	0.002	1.667	0.122	0.120	0.122	0.100	10,370,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	11,888	892	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.073	0.075	0.100	23,035,974
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	14,300	1,296	5	0.090	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.090	0.001	1.111	0.091	0.090	0.092	0.100	20,223,840
OM0000008447	OMAN RETT FUND	147,359	16,132	17	0.109	0.110	0.108	0.110	0.109	0.001	0.917	0.110	0.109	0.110	0.100	71,757,650
OM0000003621	OMAN PACKAGING	3,369	628	1	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.186	0.001	0.538	0.187	0.187	0.190	0.100	6,065,506
OM0000005930	OMAN ARAB BANK	61,000	12,494	3	0.204	0.205	0.204	0.205	0.204	0.001	0.490	0.205	0.192	0.206	0.100	410,922,383
OM00000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	789	896	1	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.130	0.005	0.442	1.135	1.135	1.145	0.000	31,038,858
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	500	76	1	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.000	0.132	0.152	0.147	0.152	0.100	4,566,000
OM0000001493	OMAN OIL MILLS	289	152	1	0.626	0.626	0.626	0.626	0.626	0.000	0.085	0.626	0.595	0.626	0.100	96,198,719
OM0000001989	SALAH MILLS	10,899	6,903	10	0.600	0.660	0.600	0.660	0.660	0.000	0.660	0.595	0.665	0.100	41,225,622	
OM0000003622	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	54,800	2,047	4	0.038	0.038	0.037	0.038	0.038	0.000	0.000	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.100	3,230,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	1,000	211	1	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.000	0.000	0.211	0.211	0.212	0.100	3,904,523
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	140,000	17,080	2	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.000	0.000	0.122	0.122	0.123	0.100	34,610,276
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	10,000	720	1	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.070	0.078	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	290,870	53,096	31	0.184	0.184	0.181	0.184	0.185	-0.001	-0.541	0.184	0.180	0.184	0.100	40,480,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	14,287	2,572	4	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.181	-0.001	-0.552	0.180	0.180	0.181	0.100	36,537,560
OM0000001422	OMAN REFRESHMENT	13,671	17,772	6	1.300	1.300	1.300	1.300	1.310	-0.010	-0.763	1.300	1.295	1.300	0.100	65,000,000
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSURANCE	10,000	1,830	2	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.185	-0.002	-1.081	0.183	0.180	0.183	0.100	29,502,998
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	2,500	328	2	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.133	-0.002	-1.504	0.131	0.131	0.134	0.100	12,969,000
OM0000002260	ALBANK BANK	5,999	10,531	4	0.198	0.198	0.195	0.195	0.198	-0.003	-1.515	0.195	0.195	0.200	0.100	541,766,728
OM0000000829	JABALI REEF	1,100	110	1	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.100	0.106	0.100	177,640,000
OM0000004634	NATIONAL FINANCE	600	133	1	0.222	0.222	0.222	0.222	0.229	-0.007	-3.057	0.222	0.223	0.229	0.100	144,454,378
OM0000008968	THE PEARL REEF	51,752	9,180	26	0.179	0.180	0.176	0.176	0.182	-0.006	-3.297	0.176	0.176	0.179	0.100	104,092,891
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	11,600	1,171	6	0.102	0.106	0.100	0.100	0.105	-0.005	-4.762	0.100	0.104	0.106	0.100	7,002,996
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	154	482	3	3.150	3.150	3.101	3.101	3.400	-0.299	-8.794	3.101	3.060	0.000	11,256,630	
Total	29	1,262,194	215,054	213												



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Hantavirus-hit cruise ship reaches Tenerife as WHO oversees evacuation

As the ship anchored off Tenerife at sunrise, small boats with flashing sirens approached the vessel while medical personnel from the WHO gathered at the port. People in hazmat suits were also seen near the dock as preparations began for the controlled evacuation

TENERIFE: The MV Hondius, at the centre of a hantavirus outbreak linked to three deaths, arrived at the Port of Granadilla in Tenerife on Sunday, where an international operation is underway to safely disembark and repatriate passengers, according to media report. As the ship anchored off Tenerife at sunrise, small boats with



flashing sirens approached the vessel while medical personnel and officials from the World Health Organization (WHO) gathered at the port. People in hazmat suits were also seen near the dock as preparations began for the controlled evacuation. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus confirmed the ship's arrival in a post on X. "MV Hondius cruise ship has reached the shores of Tenerife. We are in the port, coordinating the next steps for the safe disembarkment of the passengers. #hantavirus," Tedros posted. According to CNN, Spain's Health Minister Monica Garcia said medical teams boarded the ship shortly before 8 am local time to carry out health checks on passengers and crew before evacuation procedures began. The outbreak aboard the vessel has been linked to hantavirus, a rare disease commonly spread

through exposure to infected rodents' urine or faeces. Since the ship departed Argentina last month, three deaths have been associated with the outbreak, while several others required medical evacuation. As per tour operator Oceanwide Expeditions, passengers will be brought ashore in small boats carrying no more than 10 people at a time. Disembarkation is being coordinated according to nationality and repatriation flight schedules. Several countries, including the United States, Germany, France, Belgium, Ireland and the Netherlands, are sending aircraft to evacuate their citizens. A US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention official told CNN that 17 American passengers, none showing symptoms, would be transported to the University of Nebraska Medical Centre for assessment and home-based monitoring for 42 days.

Spanish authorities said 14 Spanish passengers would be the first group to disembark. They will wear FFP2 masks during transport to a military hospital, where they will remain isolated in individual rooms and undergo PCR testing. Concerns raised The ship's arrival has also raised concerns in the Canary Islands. Regional leader Fernando Clavijo had earlier opposed allowing the vessel to dock, while port workers in Tenerife staged protests over what they described as insufficient communication regarding possible health risks. Following the evacuation of passengers, the MV Hondius is scheduled to continue to Rotterdam in the Netherlands, where the crew will disembark and the ship will undergo disinfection procedures, CNN reported. A total of eight Hantavirus cas-



es, including three deaths (case fatality ratio 38 per cent), were reported as of Friday (May 8). Six cases were laboratory-confirmed as hantavirus infections, with all identified as Andes virus (ANDV), according to a statement from the WHO. On May 2, a cluster of passengers with severe respiratory illness aboard a cruise ship was reported to the WHO. At that time, according to the ship operator, 147 passengers and crew were onboard, and 34 passengers and crew had previously disembarked. Since the last Disease Outbreak News published on May 4, three of the suspected cases have been confirmed, and one additional confirmed case has been reported. Meanwhile, in India, amid concerns triggered by reports of a hantavirus outbreak on the cruise ship carrying two Indian crew members, along with other passengers, medical experts on Friday sought

to allay fears, stating that there is no cause for panic and no pandemic threat to India. While speaking to ANI, Dr Naveen Kumar, Director of IC-MR-National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, stated that the reported infections among Indian nationals appear to be isolated imported cases and do not indicate any community spread within India. "At present, the reported infections among Indian nationals aboard a cruise ship appear to be isolated imported cases and do not indicate community spread in India. Since hantavirus transmission is primarily rodent-borne and not easily spread between humans, the immediate public health risk remains low," he added. Dr Kumar further explained the transmission pattern of the virus and clarified that human-to-human spread is extremely uncommon. —ANI

MEDIA REPORT



‘Israel had built secret Iraq base for Iran war’

TEL AVIV: Israel set up a covert military outpost in the Iraqi desert to support its air campaign against Iran and later carried out airstrikes against Iraqi troops who came close to discovering the facility, according to The Wall Street Journal, citing people familiar with the matter, including US officials. As per the news report the clandestine installation was built shortly before the outbreak of hostilities with the knowledge of the US. The base, according to the report, housed Israeli special forces personnel and functioned as a logistical hub for Israeli Air Force operations targeting Iran. The WSJ report stated that search-and-rescue teams were stationed at the site to respond in the event Israeli pilots were shot down during operations over Iranian territory. No Israeli pilots were reportedly lost during the campaign. The Wall Street Journal report also said that after a US F-15 fighter jet was shot down near Isfahan, Israel offered assistance in rescue efforts, though US forces ultimately recovered the two airmen independently. Israeli airstrikes were reportedly conducted to help secure the rescue operation. The covert base nearly came to light in early March after a local shepherd alerted Iraqi authorities about unusual military activity in the area, including helicopter movements. Iraqi troops were subsequently dispatched to investigate. According to one person cited by the newspaper, Israel launched airstrikes to prevent Iraqi forces from reaching the installation. The Iraqi government condemned the strike at the time, with reports indicating that one

Iraqi soldier was killed. "This reckless operation was carried out without coordination or approval," Qais Al-Muhammadi, deputy commander of the Joint Operations Command, a central security body, told Iraqi state media following the incident. Later in March, Iraq reportedly filed a complaint with the United Nations (UN), alleging that foreign forces and airstrikes were involved and attributing the operation to the United States. However, a source cited by the newspaper said the US had no involvement in the strike. The incident generated widespread speculation across Iraqi and Arab media regarding the identity of the forces involved. Meanwhile, the United States and Iran could resume negotiations as early as next week in Islamabad, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal citing people familiar with the matter. The report said both sides are working through mediators on a one-page, 14-point memorandum of understanding (MoU) intended to establish the framework for a month-long negotiating process aimed at ending the conflict. Regional tensions escalated after US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28 triggered retaliatory attacks by Tehran and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy shipping corridor. A ceasefire brokered through Pakistani mediation came into effect on April 8, though the first round of talks in Islamabad on April 11 failed to produce a durable agreement. The truce was later extended by US President Donald Trump without a defined end date. —ANI

GERMANY

Sugar tax sparks ‘nanny state’ debate

BERLIN: The German government's decision to introduce a levy on sugary drinks as part of its health care reform package has triggered a new debate on government interference in diets — even though many countries around the world have already introduced such a tax. The levy, which would only be introduced at the beginning of 2028 to give producers time to prepare, would bring in €450 million (\$530 million) a year, according to the German Health Ministry. This would not be folded into the federal budget, but reserved for investment in the health care system. Though the exact details of the levy are not in the ministry's draft health care reform law, a panel of experts who released a series of proposals in March suggested a tiered levy: Drinks with less than 5 grams (0.17 ounces) of sugar per 100 millilitres — tax-free, drinks with 5-8 gr per 100 ml: Levy — 26 euro-cents per litre, Drinks with more than 8 gr per 100 ml: Levy — 32 euro-cents per litre. Health Minister Nina Warken, of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), has said she is in favour of such a measure, though she admitted that the government still had to discuss the details — and that ultimately it was up to the Finance Ministry to decide fiscal policy anyway. Some members of her party have already voiced concern — there was a heated debate on the issue at the CDU conference in February, where many politicians expressed fears it would make the government look paternalistic. Doctors and nutritionists united in support But for Germany's doctors and



nutritionists, such a measure is more or less a no-brainer. Peter Philipsborn, chair of public health nutrition at Bayreuth University, said that more than 100 countries worldwide had introduced sugar taxes on drinks, and studies had shown that they are beneficial. "Overall, the evidence is quite clear that such taxes reduce consumption of sugary beverages," he told DW. "And we know from many other studies that regular consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages leads to weight gain and to increased risk of obesity and associated diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease." Research has also shown that Germans consume more sugar via soft drinks than people in any of the 10 most populous countries in western Europe: According to a study released in February by the consumer protection organisation Foodwatch, Germans drink nearly 26 grams of sugar each per day — more than they eat in the form of chocolate and candy (20 grams). In the UK, by contrast, where a tiered sugar levy was introduced in 2018, people only consume 16 grams each per day. The example of the UK also showed that drinks

companies responded to the levy not by raising prices, but by cutting the amount of sugar in their beverages. By 2019, there was a 35% reduction in the amount of sugar in UK soft drinks, Foodwatch said. Drinks businesses: Not convinced by sugar tax But the food and drinks industry does not appear to be convinced by these figures at all. Some point out that, despite the levy, the prevalence of childhood obesity is still higher in the UK than in Germany. Manon Struck-Pacyna, spokesperson for the Food Federation Germany, which represents some 250 food and drink companies, said the sugar levies in other countries may have only led to a shift in consumption to other sugary foods. "This is the so-called substitution effect," she told DW. "That means we're introducing something under the cover of health prevention, but it doesn't necessarily make a difference, because it hasn't shown that people are becoming slimmer than elsewhere." But it's unclear whether such a substitution effect really exists: A statement from April this year in

support of a sugar levy signed by several dozen German food scientists and public health organisations, including Peter Philipsborn, said that studies on the issue found there was no evidence that a sugar levy had led to a rise in consumption of other sugary foods. A burden for businesses? Nevertheless, Struck-Pacyna argued that despite these numbers, a sugar levy would inevitably lead to higher costs for consumers, at least in the short-term. "On top of the tax, there are higher bureaucratic expenses for the companies," she said. "That means they have to look at all the drinks in their portfolio, and work out how much sugar is in each one and in which category it falls. That means a lot of working hours, and those too are costs that would be passed on." This would, Struck-Pacyna argued, be particularly detrimental to small and medium-sized companies "that might only have one signature drink." "If that suddenly tastes different, then they have a problem — they could easily disappear from the market," she said. —DW

17 INJURED AT DENVER AIRPORT

Trespasser killed after being hit by plane

DENVER: A trespasser, who jumped the perimeter fence and ran onto the runway at the Denver International Airport (DEN), was killed after being struck by a Frontier Airlines plane during takeoff late on Friday night. According to a statement from Denver International Airport, the incident has also left 17 people injured, including five who were hospitalised. The individual reportedly jumped the airport per-

imeter fence and ran onto the runway, where they were struck by Frontier Flight 4345 just two minutes later. Emergency crews responded immediately, and passengers were bused to the terminal before departing on a replacement flight. "Frontier Flight 4345 reported striking a pedestrian during takeoff at DEN. Emergency crews responded to the scene. Passengers were bused to the terminal and

the majority have since departed DEN on a new Frontier flight. DEN can confirm the pedestrian jumped the perimeter fence and was hit just two minutes later while crossing the runway," the statement read. Airport authorities confirmed that the perimeter fence was intact, and preliminary findings indicate the trespasser was not an airport employee and has yet to be identified.

"The pedestrian is deceased, and is not believed to be an employee of the airport nor have they been identified. The airport has examined the fence line and found it to be intact," the statement added. The airport further added that Runway 17L remained closed temporarily for investigation. "We are extremely saddened by this incident and express our sympathies to those involved," the statement added. —ANI

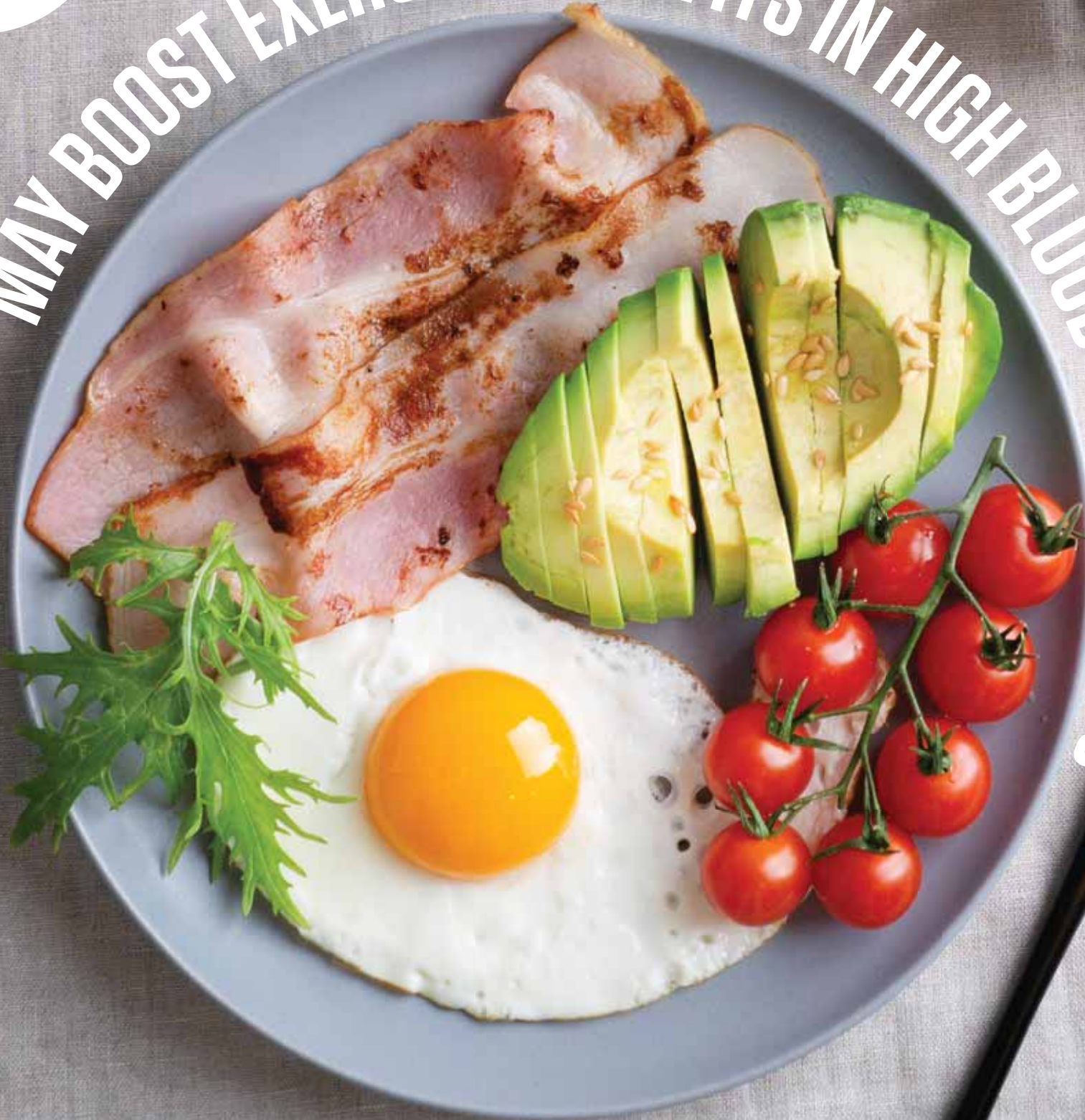


LIFESTYLE

NEW STUDY SAYS HIGH-FAT KETO DIET

In the research, mice with high blood sugar were placed on a ketogenic diet, which is high in fat and very low in carbohydrates. Within one week, their blood sugar levels returned to normal

MAY BOOST EXERCISE BENEFITS IN HIGH BLOOD SUGAR CASES



A new study suggests that eating more fat rather than less could help the body gain greater benefits from exercise when blood sugar levels are high, offering an unexpected perspective on how diet and physical activity work together to support metabolic health. According to Science Daily, the research, led by exercise medicine scientist Sarah Lessard at Virginia Tech, found that a ketogenic diet helped normalise blood sugar levels in mice and significantly improved how their muscles responded to exercise. The findings were published in the journal Nature Communications.

Exercise is widely known to improve the body's ability to absorb and use oxygen, a key indicator linked to long-term health and longevity. Regular physical activity also helps control weight, strengthen the heart and build muscle. However, individuals with elevated blood sugar often fail to experience some of these benefits, particularly improvements in oxygen uptake during exercise. High blood sugar, or hyperglycemia, is associated with increased risks of heart and kidney disease and can disrupt the body's metabolic response to physical activity. The new study suggests that dietary changes may help restore these benefits.

In the research, mice with high blood sugar were placed on a ketogenic diet, which is high in fat and very low in carbohydrates. Within one week, their blood sugar levels returned to normal.

"After one week on the ketogenic diet, their blood sugar was completely normal, as though they didn't have diabetes at all," Lessard said.

Over time, the diet also altered the structure of the animals' muscles. Researchers observed that the muscles developed more oxidative properties and responded better to aerobic exercise.

The mice that followed the diet and exercised regularly on running wheels also developed more slow-twitch muscle fibers, which are associated with greater endurance.

According to Lessard, the results show that the body used oxygen more efficiently, indicating higher aerobic capacity.

The ketogenic diet works by pushing the body into a metabolic state called ketosis, where fat rather than sugar becomes the primary source of energy. This approach contrasts with the low-fat diets traditionally recommended in many health guidelines.

While the diet remains debated, it has been linked to benefits for certain medical conditions such as epilepsy and Parkinson's disease. Historically, doctors also used similar dietary approaches to manage diabetes before insulin became widely available in the 1920s.

Lessard said the findings highlight how diet and exercise may interact rather than function as separate strategies.

"What we're really finding is that diet and exercise aren't simply working in isolation," she said, adding, "There are a lot of combined effects, and we can get the most benefits from exercise if we eat a healthy diet at the same time."

The researchers plan to expand the study to human participants to determine whether the same metabolic improvements occur outside laboratory conditions. - ANI

SPORTS



Man City hammer Brentford to turn up heat on Arsenal

Pep Guardiola’s men remain unbeaten in the league since January in a relentless run that has turned the final weeks of the Premier League season into a breathless title chase

LONDON: Manchester City kept the Premier League title race bubbling with a 3-0 win over Brentford on Saturday, thanks to second-half goals by Jeremy Doku, Erling Haaland and Omar Marmoush as they cut the gap with leaders Arsenal to two points with three games left.

City have 74 points from 35 games but their draw at Everton on

Monday meant they need Arsenal, who visit relegation-threatened West Ham United next, to squander points in one of their remaining games to have a chance at the title. “If you play for Manchester City, you think of titles every single day,” Haaland said of his team’s title hopes.

Manager Pep Guardiola’s City remain in contention for a seventh Premier League title.

“I love it. I love to be here again,” Guardiola said, adding he feels no tension in the heat of the title race.

City dominated much of the game at The Etihad but Brentford held strong before Doku, City’s

best player on the night, produced a moment of brilliance on the hour, cutting inside from the left and curling a right-foot shot into the top corner.

Haaland gave City a two-goal cushion when he bundled the ball into the net after 75 minutes.

In what was far from the prettiest of goals, Antoine Semenyo cut the ball back for Haaland, whose shot was blocked. The big Norwegian was, though, able to back-heel the ball into the net past Caoimhin Kelleher for his 26th league goal of the season.

Marmoush struck deep in injury time when he latched onto a

pass from Haaland, took a touch and then struck the ball across the ‘keeper and into the far corner to wrap up the win. City remain unbeaten in the league since January in a relentless run that has turned the final weeks of the season into a breathless title chase.

Brentford’s loss was a blow to their hopes of a place in Europe next term. They sit eighth, four points off the top six.

Brentford screamed twice for red cards to no avail.

Tempers flared in the first half when City captain Bernardo Silva and Nathan Collins battled for the ball and Silva punched Collins in

the back of the leg as he fell.

Then Kevin Schade went down in the box late on under pressure from Matheus Nunes but after a VAR check it was decided there was not enough contact for a penalty.

In other games, third-placed Manchester United drew at Sunderland 0-0 while there were wins for Champions League-chasing Bournemouth and Brighton.

Sixth-placed Bournemouth won at Fulham 1-0 in a game in which both teams were reduced to 10 men. Brighton were seventh and beat last-placed Wolverhampton 3-0. - Agencies

ITALIAN SERIE A



Inter trounce Lazio in dress rehearsal of Italian Cup final

ROME: Lautaro Martinez inspired Inter Milan to a dominant 3-0 win at Lazio on Sunday, dealing the hosts a psychological blow days before the sides meet again in the Italian Cup (Coppa Italia) final.

With Inter already crowned Serie A Champion and Lazio sitting eighth and out of European contention, the match served largely as a dress rehearsal for Wednesday’s decider at the Stadio Olimpico.

Martinez, back in the starting

line-up after an injury layoff, underlined his status as the league’s leading scorer by opening the scoring in the sixth minute.

Marcus Thuram flicked on a long throw and the Argentina striker volleyed past the goalkeeper for his 17th league goal of the season.

Inter doubled their advantage six minutes before half-time when Martinez combined neatly with Andy Diouf on the left before teeing up Petar Sucic, who curled a

first-time effort into the top corner from the edge of the area.

Lazio’s task became harder just before the hour mark as Alessio Romagnoli was sent off for a dangerous challenge on Ange-Yoan Bonny, leaving the home side to finish the match with 10 men.

The visitors wrapped up the win in the 75th minute after a flowing move through midfield ended with Henrikh Mkhitaryan firing into the roof of the net. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Celta exert pressure on Betis in fight for CL berth

BARCELONA: Real Betis missed a chance to take a step toward sealing their return to the Champions League after squandering a two-goal lead in a 2-2 draw at Real Sociedad in La Liga on Saturday.

Betis remained in fifth place with a four-point advantage over sixth-placed Celta Vigo, who put the pressure on the Seville-based side after they won at Atletico Madrid 1-0.

There are three games — and nine potential points — left for the two teams this season.

Spain clinched a bonus fifth entry into the Champions League on Thursday when Rayo Vallecano’s win against Strasbourg in the Conference League semi-finals gave Spain an insurmountable edge over Germany in the race for an extra berth. Barcelona, Real Madrid, Villarreal and Atletico all have spots in Europe’s elite club competition locked up.

Manuel Pellegrini has coached Betis into either the Europa League or Conference League for the past five campaigns. But the Seville-based team hasn’t played in the Champions League since 2005-06.

Betis’ Anthony scored near halftime when the Brazilian forward cut in from the right side and curled a left-footed shot from outside the area inside the far post.

Ez Abde made it 2-0 right after the break when the winger broke free down the left flank, dribbled past his marker and scored from a tight angle, with the ball going in off the far post.

Orri Óskarsson pulled one back for Sociedad from close range to spark a fightback, and Spain striker Mikel Oyarzabal equalised in injury time after a handball by Diego Llorente sent him to the penalty spot.



Betis finished with 10 men after striker Aitor Rubial was sent off with a second yellow card deep in stoppage time.

Sociedad have already booked a Europa League spot after they won the Copa del Rey last month.

Sevilla leapt from 17th to 12th place in the tightly packed lower part of the table after rallying with two late goals for a 2-1 win over Espanyol. Alaves remained in 18th place and among the three teams in the relegation positions after managing only a 1-1 draw at Elche. - Agencies

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA



Kane’s penalty streak ends against Wolfsburg

MUNICH: Harry Kane’s remarkable penalty conversion streak in the Bundesliga has ended at 24 as the Bayern Munich striker missed a spot kick for the first time on Saturday, while Leipzig secured a return to the Champions League.

Kane stepped up to the penalty spot at 0-0 against Wolfsburg after team-mate Michael Olise was fouled by defender Konstantinos Koulierakis. Bayern still got a 1-0 win in their second-to-last Bundesliga game of the season but it needed a spectacular curling goal

off the underside of the crossbar by Olise. Kane hadn’t missed a penalty in the Bundesliga since he joined Bayern in 2023, with 10 of his 24 scored this season alone.

Leipzig survived a late scare to secure a Champions League return for next season and a 2-1 win over St. Pauli made sure of third place in the Bundesliga.

Deniz Undav’s 19th league goal of the season capped a 3-1 comeback win for Stuttgart over Bayer Leverkusen to leave Stuttgart in the fourth Champions League spot. - Agencies

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

Record crowd turns up to watch Messi’s Inter Miami in smallest venue of World Cup 2026

TORONTO: Major League Soccer’s Toronto FC attracted its largest attendance at BMO Field in the club’s history on Saturday for a clash with Lionel Messi’s Inter Miami that served as a dress rehearsal for the World Cup matches being held at the venue.

Nearly 45,000 fans, many in Miami’s pink and black colours and Argentina’s blue and white, packed into the World Cup’s smallest venue to see the eight-time Ballon d’Or winner, giving the city a taste of what’s to come when it hosts six matches. “This weekend will serve as a real life test run with number of high attendance sporting events in town,” Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow said on Friday, also referring to a pair of Toronto Blue Jays games and the Sporting Life 10K event.

The allure of Messi, who scored in Miami’s 4-2 win, helped draw a crowd of 44,828 that offered Toronto services a chance to see how they will perform with similar large crowds, from getting fans in and out of the stadium to transit



operations.

BMO Field security was put to the test on Saturday when several pitch invaders tried to race across the field hoping to reach the 38-year-old Argentine as the clock wound down.

“This weekend’s match is a valuable opportunity for city divisions, emergency services, transit agen-

cies, venue operators and other partners to work together in a live event setting, to test and refine as required before the matches begin,” Sharon Bollenbach, executive director of the World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat, said in a statement.

The World Cup is expected to bring more than 300,000 visitors

to Toronto, the city has previously said.

Saturday’s match was Toronto FC’s final outing at BMO Field before the June 11-July 19 tournament.

The stadium had a USD 158 million facelift that added 17,000 temporary seats behind the goals to meet World Cup capacity standards. The seating was used for the first time on Saturday.

Metrolinx, which runs the city’s GOThe World Cup, co-hosted by Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, is expected to bring approximately half a million additional riders on its services, Metrolinx said on Friday.

Canada open their World Cup campaign against Bosnia and Herzegovina at the BMO Stadium on June 12. They also face 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar and Switzerland in Group B.

Rodrigo De Paul, Luis Suarez, Sergio Reguilon and Lionel Messi each scored for Inter Miami while Emilio Aristizabal scored a brace for Toronto. - Agencies

Mehidy five-for hands Bangladesh slim lead despite Awais’ debut ton

Agha and Rizwan fought back after Pakistan’s middle-order collapsed, before the hosts bagged a 27-run lead

MIRPUR: Debutant Azan Awais’ century was the centrepiece of Pakistan’s spirited reply on the third day, before bad light forced early stumps on Sunday. The umpires called off play at 5.30pm, although it was initially announced that play could go up to 6.15pm after a lengthy rain delay in the afternoon.

Mehidy Hasan Miraz’s five-for had handed Bangladesh a 27-run first-innings lead, before they batted for 1.5 overs in the second innings, with openers Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Shadman Islam adding seven.

It was Mehidy’s 14th five-for, and he finished with 5 for 102. Taskin Ahmed and Taijul Islam



took two wickets each, while Nahid Rana picked up one, as Pakistan were bowled out for 386 in reply to Bangladesh’s 413.

The day, however, belonged to Pakistan’s batters - especially Awais, who scored 103. The 21-year-old made a telling contribution with his that consisted of some excellent shots through the off side; but he was equally aplomb on the on side. The left-handed opener had two big partnerships:

106 with Imam-ul-Haq, and another 104 with fellow debutant Abdullah Fazal.

They became only the third debutant pair from Pakistan to put together a century stand.

Awais’ dismissal also sparked Pakistan’s batting collapse on the third morning. Taskin had him caught at first slip, making him his 50th Test wicket. He also got Pakistan captain Shan Masood caught at point for 9, before Mehidy got

into the act. He had Saud Shakeel lbw for a duck, before sucking Fazal into an uppish shot, which Taijul took gleefully at mid-on.

Fazal played second fiddle to Awais, striking seven fours and a six in his 120-ball stay. But when he fell, Pakistan went from 210 for 1 to 230 for 5 just before lunch.

Salman Agha and Mohammad Rizwan then went into recovery mode, and ensured Pakistan chipped away at Bangladesh’s



first-innings total. They struck 15 boundaries between them, but Rizwan fell soon after reaching his half-century. He couldn’t clear Mahmudul at mid-off when he tried to charge at Taijul just before tea.

Rizwan must have rued his shot further when he saw covers coming on seconds after he was dismissed. There was heavy rain for nearly an hour, after which play began at 4.15pm, about half an hour

after the rain had fully stopped.

Agha fell shortly after play restarted, as he was caught at first slip, before Mehidy removed both Noman Ali and Shaheen Afridi in quick succession. The innings ended when Taijul bowled Hasan, roughly an hour before the scheduled end of play.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 413/7 (Mahmudul 2*) vs Pakistan 386 (Awais 103, Fazal 60, Mehidy 5-102, Taijul 2-46). - Agencies.

IPL

Gill, Sudharsan, Rashid guide GT to No.2 spot with big win over RR



JAIPUR: Gujarat Titans (GT) produced a commanding all-round performance in Jaipur to defeat Rajasthan Royals by 77 runs, posting 229 for 4 before dismissing the hosts for 152 in 19.3 overs on Saturday.

The win—GT’s fourth in a row—lifted them to second place on the points table with 14 points, strengthening their late-season surge.

The foundation was laid by a superb opening stand of 118 between Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan. Gill struck a fluent 84, while Sai Sudharsan made a composed 55, as GT raced to 82 without loss in the powerplay despite a chaotic start from the bowlers.

Jofra Archer’s opening over—lasting 11 deliveries and featuring nine extras—set the tone for a high-scoring evening, as GT cashed in with minimal risk, repeatedly piercing the ‘V’ down the ground.

Rajasthan briefly clawed back control through the middle overs. Ravindra Jadeja (1-34) and Yash Raj Punja (1-37) slowed the scoring as both openers reached their half-centuries off 30 balls. However, GT still remained on course for a massive total before a sharp finish lifted them further.

Sai Sudharsan fell for 55, caught at long-on, while Gill, hampered by

a minor leg niggle, was dismissed after a fluent knock that anchored the innings.

Late cameos ensured momentum never dipped. Rahul Tewatia’s late assault and a finishing burst from Washington Sundar pushed GT to 229 for 4—their highest IPL total away from Ahmedabad.

In reply, Rajasthan Royals never recovered from early jolts despite a brisk 36 from Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and a short-lived surge from Dhruv Jurel. Mohammed Siraj (1-55) and Kagiso Rabada (2-33) set the tone with disciplined powerplay spells before spin took over.

The decisive blow came from Rashid Khan, whose masterful 4 for 33 dismantled the chase. He first broke through Dhruv Jurel’s aggressive start, then repeatedly deceived the middle order with sharp turn and variations in flight. His spell triggered a collapse as RR slipped from 68 for 3 to complete disarray.

Jadeja’s (38) resistance ended when he was trapped lbw, and Jason Holder (3/12) cleaned up the tail with three wickets in five deliveries to seal the result.

Brief scores: Gujarat Titans 229/4 (Gill 84, Sai Sudharsan 55; Brijesh Sharma 2-47) beat Rajasthan Royals 152 in 16.3 overs (Jadeja 38; Rashid 4-33, Holder 3-12) by 77 runs. - Agencies

JOINT FASTEST IPL 50

Urvil Patel’s record blitz powers CSK to five-wkt victory over LSG

CHENNAI: Urvil Patel equalled the record for the fastest fifty in IPL history as Chennai Super Kings (CSK) overhauled Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) by five wickets in a high-scoring thriller at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday, keeping their playoff hopes alive.

Chasing a daunting 204, CSK rode on Urvil’s sensational 65 off 23 balls and finished the job with four balls to spare, reaching 208 for 5 in 19.2 overs.

Shivam Dube (15 not out off 7) and Prashant Veer (17 not out off 12) applied the finishing touches, with Dube sealing the win in style by smashing back-to-back sixes.

Earlier, LSG posted 203 for 8 after a blazing start led by Josh Inglis, who smashed 85 off 33 balls with 10 fours and 6 sixes. His assault, alongside Mitchell Marsh’s 10 off 7, powered LSG to 77 without loss in the first five overs. Inglis raced to a 17-ball fifty, putting CSK under immediate pressure.

However, CSK clawed back through disciplined middle-overs bowling. Jamie Overton (3/36) delivered a decisive spell, removing Marsh and Rishabh Pant (15 off 12) in quick succession. Noor Ahmad struck early by dismissing Nicholas Pooran (1), while Mukesh Choudhary and Anshul Kamboj also kept things tight after the powerplay.

Akeal Hosein was expensive early, conceding 16 runs in an over as LSG maintained a daunting powerplay rate. At the end of six overs, LSG were 91 for 1, before CSK staged a comeback.

Pant’s poor form continued as he fell after a scratchy knock, and Aiden Markram was run out for 10 by



Dewald Brevis, leaving LSG wobbling at 130 for 5 in the 13th over. Shahbaz Ahmed (43 off 25) then counter-attacked brilliantly alongside Himmat Singh (17), adding a crucial 50-run stand for the sixth wicket to push LSG beyond 200.

But Urvil stole the show in the chase. Sent in at No. 3, he exploded

from the outset, smashing eight sixes and two fours. He targeted Avesh Khan and Digvesh Rathi relentlessly, hammering three consecutive sixes off Avesh and taking 25 runs off Rathi in a single over.

Even seasoned pacer Mohammed Shami was not spared, as Urvil launched him straight over

mid-wicket. He brought up his fifty in just 13 balls, joining Yashasvi Jaiswal in the record books for the fastest IPL half-century.

He finished on 65 before falling, but by then CSK were in complete control. Skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad (42) played the ideal supporting role, ensuring stability at the other end as CSK dominated the first half of the chase.

After reaching his milestone, Urvil held up a note reading “This is for you Papa”, dedicating his innings to his father Mukesh Patel.

With this win, CSK moved a step closer to playoff contention, while LSG suffered their eighth defeat in 11 matches, officially ending their qualification hopes.

Brief scores: Chennai Super Kings 208/5 in 19.2 overs (Urvil 65, Gaikwad 42; Shahbaz 2-30, Rathi 2-245) beat Lucknow Super Giants 203/8 (Inglis 85, Shahbaz 43; Overton 3-36, Kamboj 2-47) by five wickets. - Agencies

FRENCH MOTOGP

Ducati’s Bagnaia snatches pole at Le Mans

PARIS: Francesco Bagnaia picked Marc Marquez’s pocket in the dying moments of qualifying to claim pole position for the French MotoGP at Le Mans on Saturday, as Ducati’s factory team looked to bounce back from its Spanish Grand Prix disappointment.

Bagnaia edged out his teammate with a time of one minute 29.634 seconds in Q2, denying Marquez what seemed like a certain pole after the Spaniard had set the benchmark earlier in the session.

“I hope (things are starting to click), it’s never easy to say it after what was happening last year,” Bagnaia said.

Marquez’s route to the front row was anything but straightforward after he failed to move directly into Q2 on Friday. The Spaniard was forced through the Q1 qualifying



session in which he initially found himself pushed out of the top two and in danger of missing final qualifying altogether.

But the Ducati rider’s response was emphatic as he produced a scorching lap that shattered the circuit’s lap record with a time of one minute 29.288 seconds.

The effort was so blistering that Ducati team manager Davide Tardozzi shook his hand like he had touched something hot in the garage.

“I’m in a moment that I don’t understand many things; I need to understand the way I’m riding because it’s true that I cannot be consistent,” Marquez said.

“But when I have this extra adrenaline, I can do it because I know how to be fast on a bike.”

Marquez and home favourite Fabio Quartararo advanced from Q1 to Q2, where the Spaniard once again looked to have done enough before Bagnaia’s late intervention to claim his first pole of the season. The Ducati duo will be eager to convert their front-row lockout into race success after both riders dominated the sprint in Jerez two weeks ago but failed to finish Sunday’s race won by Marquez’s brother Alex.

Aprilia’s championship leader Marco Bezzecchi joins the two Ducatis on the front row in third, while VR46 Racing’s Fabio Di Giannantonio claimed fourth. KTM’s Pedro Acosta and Yamaha’s Quartararo complete the second row. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

General Motors marks 100 years in Africa & Middle East with renewed regional commitment

With 4.5 million regional sales, a 1-million vehicle production milestone and close to 60 million batteries sold, GM doubles down on its future with customer propositions, public engagement and much more

MUSCAT: As General Motors (GM) Africa & Middle East celebrates a century of shaping mobility, GM's renewed commitment to the region continues offering customer choice with reliability, patented innovation and partnership-led progress for the next hundred years and beyond.

Over the last half of a century, more than 4.5 million vehicles have been sold across the region, demonstrating the enduring record of how GM helped move people and economies through boom years, disruption, and rapid urban growth. Volumes stretched out across North African countries, Levant region as well as the Gulf. This included: Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain.



Additionally, full-size SUVs became steadily popular as the Chevrolet Tahoe, and Cadillac Escalade were introduced, giving customers an extended array of vehicles, catering to every lifestyle. GM vehicles became fixtures of family life, commerce, heritage and nation-building. And, GM continued to evolve its portfolio with more accessible, Chevrolet mainstream models such as the Optra, Groove and Captiva. Meanwhile, halo icons such as Chevrolet Corvette and Cadillac V-Series marked milestones in design and performance. Together, those nameplates turned the region's roads into a marketplace and a living museum of GM engineering across eras.

From an industrial development lens, GM Africa & Middle East has played a vital role in building local talent, diversifying the supply chain, and exporting to the wider region. In fact, in the last 40 years, GM's plant at 6th of October City, Cairo, Egypt has produced over one-million vehicles, becoming the first private manufacturer to reach this record figure in the

country. GM Egypt's plant is regarded as the most advanced automotive manufacturing facility in the country, working with more than 80 local suppliers and global partners to bring global quality and know-how to the region.

Meanwhile, GM's service and parts story in the region dates back to 1927, when Alexandria became the launchpad for modern automotive service, dispatching teams to equip and train dealers in countries where the very concept of vehicle servicing was still new. By 1936, GM's Parts Department was recognized as the best in the world across its export operations, following the start of GM Service Parts activities in Egypt assembling components for GM trucks and cars, and even Frigidaire refrigerators at the time.

Over the decades, this foundation evolved into today's GM Genuine Parts and ACDelco brands, built around safety and reliability and serving all vehicle makes. Today, at the heart of this ecosystem sits the Middle East Distribution Center (MEDC) based in Jebel

Ali, United Arab Emirates (UAE), which today supports the movement of parts sourced from five continents, enabling efficient, reliable distribution across Africa and the Middle East.

In Saudi Arabia, ACDelco batteries have been locally produced for the past 25 years, helping keep vehicles on the road as the region advanced. Across Africa and the Middle East, ACDelco and GM Genuine Parts became a constant in workshops, service bays, and parts counters as mobility needs evolved. To date, close to 60 million batteries have been sold, while also supporting a vast independent aftermarket and actively combating counterfeit products to protect customers and communities.

What began as core maintenance support matured into a trusted aftersales ecosystem mirroring shifts in customer expectations around durability, availability, and professional service. As vehicle generations change and technologies advance, GM's story continues, with GM Genuine Parts and ACDelco remaining the thread

that link engineering to everyday use supporting livelihoods, extending vehicle life, and anchoring reliability and quality long after the showroom.

Those milestones underscore GM's deep industrial footprint, resilient global and local supply chains, as well as its long-term investment in local economies. GM's presence in the region has always been defined by partnerships – growing alongside its government partners, dealers, suppliers, employees and customers, building trust over time.

Jorge Plata, President and Managing Director, GM Africa & Middle East, said: "For a hundred years, General Motors has grown with Africa and the Middle East – from our first plant in Alexandria to millions of vehicles and parts that became part of everyday life across the Middle East. That journey belongs first to our customers, dealers and partners who put their trust in our brands. Today, we are renewing our commitment to move forward together and continue investing in the region's prom-

ising visions. Throughout the year, we will be putting our communities' stories at the center. Starting with customers, we are honoring their loyalty with propositions across Chevrolet in select markets and will launch a regional campaign inviting the wider public to go back in time to share moments and memories with our vehicles.

Meanwhile, we will also shine a light on our long-standing dealers and valued partners whom – together with GM – have helped drive jobs, industrial capability and economic growth in their countries. And, stay tuned as Cadillac returns to Egypt and we put people in the GCC in the driver's seat to experience GM's cutting-edge in-vehicle technology with our world-first Super Cruise hands-free advanced driver assistance, our stepping-stone propelling us forward toward a brighter future that is safer, smarter and more rewarding for everyone we serve."

As part of its centennial year, General Motors is offering customers a series of enhanced retail propositions and market-level activations across Chevrolet. More than just propositions, these initiatives reflect GM's commitment to giving back to its customers and communities by delivering greater value and meaningful benefits across key markets in the region.

Building on this customer-first approach, GM and its brands will roll out additional region-wide centennial activities celebrating shared milestones and looking ahead to the future of mobility. These include heritage storytelling, market-specific initiatives, and customer-facing programs designed to strengthen engagement and reinforce the company's long-term presence in the region. GM dealers will communicate their retail propositions and activations at market level, tailored to local customer needs.

STUDENT COUNCIL



ISD celebrates leadership at investiture ceremony

MUSCAT: Indian School Darsait solemnly celebrated the Investiture Ceremony of its Student Council for the Academic Year 2026–27 on Thursday, 7 May, in the Senior School Auditorium. The prestigious occasion marked the formal induction of the newly elected student leaders, who pledged to uphold the cherished values and proud traditions of the institution with sincerity, commitment, and a deep sense of responsibility.

The ceremony commenced on a graceful note with the arrival of the Chief Guest, Colonel Nathan Mann, Senior Defense Official / Defense Attaché, Embassy of the United States of America in Oman, whose presence added grandeur to the occasion.

Mirza, Vice Principal Senior, warmly welcomed the Chief Guest and the august gathering, which included Shalimar Moideen, President, School Management Committee, members of the School Management Committee, school administrators, staff members, parents, and students.

A major highlight of the event was the announcement of the newly appointed student leaders by the Principal and the respective House Counsellors, followed

by the solemn oath-taking ceremony. Administering the pledge, the Principal exhorted the young leaders to uphold honesty, integrity, and dedication in the discharge of their duties, inspiring them to serve as worthy ambassadors of the school.

The Chief Guest, accompanied by the President, SMC, and the Principal, ceremonially adorned the Ceremonial Heads, House Coordinators, Captains, and Vice Captains with badges and sashes, formally entrusting them with the mantle of leadership.

The Vice Principals conferred badges and sashes upon the general prefects while the house counsellors bestowed the same upon the House Prefects, completing the investiture with grace and honour.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest reminded the young leaders that true leadership lies in placing people before self and serving others with humility, compassion, and sincerity. Emphasising forgiveness, kindness, and strong values, he noted that character shines brighter than accomplishments and that compassion paves the way to lasting success. He also shared reflections from his own life journey, acknowledging the

unwavering support of his parents and teachers in shaping his path.

Shalimar Moideen, President, SMC, congratulated the budding leaders of ISD and reminded them that true leadership is rooted in humility, responsibility, and selfless service.

He urged them to uphold integrity, strive each day to become better than before, and become agents of positive change within the school and the wider community.

Emphasizing communication, consistency, and perseverance, he encouraged them to earn the trust of their peers through exemplary conduct. He also called upon them to live in a manner that would make their parents, teachers, and the nation proud.

Representing the Student Council, Aaryan Pradeep, the Head Boy delivered the acceptance speech, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the trust reposed in the newly elected council and reaffirming their commitment to serve the institution with dedication and sincerity. The ceremony concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Nakshatra Rajeshkumar, the Head Girl, while the school choir added splendour to the occasion with melodious and inspirational songs.

WORKSHOP

Meethaq staff and faculty of Islamic Studies at SQU exchange expertise on waqf investment and financing

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance specialised knowledge and capacity building in the field of endowments (waqf), Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat announced its collaboration with the Division of Islamic Studies at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) to deliver a specialised workshop programme titled "The Contemporary Investment of Waqf."

The programme, designed for Meethaq employees, was held at the Bank's head office in Airport Heights and delivered by Dr. Majid Mohammed Al Kindi and Dr. Ahmed Salim Al Kharusi from SQU, with the participation of specialists from Meethaq. This initiative aims to strengthen applied knowledge, facilitate the exchange of expertise, and reinforce best practices in waqf investment and management in compliance with Islamic Shari'a principles.

The programme forms part of Meethaq Islamic Banking's broader efforts to enhance employees' understanding of the Shari'a and regulatory frameworks related to waqf management, investment, and financing, thereby contributing to enhanced institutional performance. It focused on key Sharia and regulatory frameworks governing waqf, while highlighting best practices in investment and financing to support sustainability and maximize the social and economic impact of endowments.

In addition, the programme addressed advanced topics in waqf investment, including the Shari'a and legal perspective of Waqf, its historical forms, as well as funding mechanism and their role in supporting its development, in addition to contemporary Waqf investment practices. The work-



shop also addressed the establishment of ownership conditions in Waqf funds and their role in enabling innovating in Islamic banking products.

This initiative represents the first step in a broader strategic collaboration between Meethaq and SQU, aimed at developing future joint training programmes, as well as advancing cooperation in research and professional development to support innovation and sustainability in the waqf and Islamic finance sector.

On this occasion, Ali Ahmed Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager of Meethaq Corporate Banking, stated: "The collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University reflects Meethaq's commitment to strengthening academic and professional partnerships that contribute to the development of national talent and the advancement of innovation in Islamic banking and waqf management, in line with the highest professional standards.

"This training programme marks an important milestone in Meethaq's journey to establish best practices in waqf management and investment. It also underscores

our unwavering commitment to equipping our workforce with specialised knowledge that integrates Shari'a authenticity with institutional excellence, thereby enhancing our ability to deliver sustainable, Shari'a-compliant financial solutions."

Waqf (endowment) is considered one of the most significant charitable financial instruments, based on the permanent dedication of assets such as real estate, cash, or investment holdings, with their proceeds directed toward religious, educational, social, and broader charitable causes. Waqf assets are distinguished by their inalienability, as they cannot be sold or inherited, ensuring the continuity of their benefits over time. Classified as a form of ongoing charity (sadaqah jariyah), waqf generates continuous returns that support the community, with assets being invested and reinvested to sustain their impact.

Meethaq Islamic Banking is a pioneer in offering banking products and services that comply with Islamic Sharia principles. In recognition of its role, Meethaq has received numerous local, regional, and international awards.



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