



HM CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT TRUMP

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Donald Trump on the occasion of him being sworn in as a President for the United States of America (USA). In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments to President Trump, wishing him success in leading the US during his upcoming presidential term to realise further progress at all levels. His Majesty also wished the cooperation and partnership relations between Oman and the US further growth. — **ONA**



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NATIONAL DAY

HM issues Royal Decree

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik yesterday issued Royal Decree No. 15/2025 amending some provisions of Royal Decree No. 88/2022 on fixing official holidays.

The decree reads as follows: Article (1) states that the text of Clause “D”, item “Firstly”, “Article (1)” of Royal Decree No. 88/2022, shall be replaced with the following:

D – The National Day of the Sultanate of Oman to be on 20 and 21 November.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — **ONA**

1ST LEG OF QUARTERS COMPLETE

His Majesty’s Cup football enters the final stretch

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The coveted His Majesty’s Cup Football Championship has entered its decisive phase, with the first leg of the quarterfinals now complete.

Eight teams – holders Dhofar, Al Nasr, Al Seeb, Al Nahda, Ibri, Al Shabab, Sohar, and Saham – are battling for the coveted title, setting the stage for an exciting conclusion to the 2024–2025 season.

The second leg of the quarterfinals, scheduled for January 28 and 29, promises to be equally riveting as teams vie for a place in the semifinals.

The tournament will then progress to the double-legged semifinals in February, culminating in



the grand finale on February 20 at Ibra Sports Complex in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sheikh Al Fadhl bin Mohammed Al Harthy, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, will preside over the final and crown the champion of the season.

In the first leg of the quarterfinals last week, the competition delivered a series of thrilling encounters. Former winners Al Nahda secured a hard-fought 1-0 win over two-time champions Saham, with Ahmed Al Kaabi scoring a dramatic header in the 95th minute, breaking a deadlock that had seemed inevitable.

Earlier, Saham’s goalkeeper

Hassan Al Buraiki had made an incredible penalty save to keep his team in the game, but the late goal gave Al Nahda a vital advantage ahead of the second leg.

Meanwhile, Al Shabab edged Sohar 1-0, thanks to a well-taken goal from Jouleson in the 15th minute. The match, held at Al Rustaq Sports Complex, saw Sohar pushing for an equaliser but failing to breach the solid defence of Al Shabab.

Four-time champions Seeb delivered a dominant 3-0 victory over Ibri at Seeb Sports Stadium. Despite a missed penalty in the first half, Seeb broke the deadlock in the 60th minute through Abdulrahman Al Mushaifri, with two more goals following shortly after,

one from Zahir Al Aghbari and another from Al Mushaifri, leaving Seeb in a commanding position heading into the second leg.

In the final match of the first leg, five-time winners Al Nasr secured a stunning 1-0 win over defending champions Dhofar at Al Saada Sports Complex in Salalah.

The match was evenly contested, but a 60th-minute strike from Mulhim al Sunaidi, exploiting a defensive error, gave Al Nasr the edge. Dhofar will look to overturn this narrow deficit in the return leg as they aim for a record 12th title.

Quarter-final results (first leg): Al Nahda 1 Saham 0, Al Shabab 1 Sohar 0, Seeb 3 Ibri 0, Al Nasr 1 Dhofar 0.

MUSCAT AMONG THE TOP 10 SAFEST CITIES IN WORLD

Known for its low crime rates and high safety standards, Muscat continues to stand out as a secure and thriving destination

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat, the serene capital city of Oman, has been recognised as one of the safest cities globally, securing the seventh spot out of 382 cities in the 2025 Numbeo Safety Index.

Known for its low crime rates and high safety standards, Muscat continues to stand out as a secure and thriving destination, joining an exclusive list of cities that prioritise public safety and quality of life.

This recognition reflects Muscat’s proactive measures to ensure the well-being of its residents and visitors.

The city scores particularly high in safety during both day and night, showcasing the effective-



ness of its law enforcement and community-focused initiatives.

The methodology

The Numbeo Safety Index evaluates cities worldwide based on public surveys and statistical data. Rankings are determined by factors such as crime rates, public safety perceptions, healthcare quality, cost of living, and environmental conditions. Cities with a low crime index and a high safety index, such as Muscat, are considered among the safest globally.

Muscat excels in areas such as low rates of theft, assault, and vandalism, along with high levels of confidence in public safety. Its

commitment to sustainable urban planning and community well-being further enhances its reputation as a top-tier city for safety and quality of life.

Regional, global top cities

Abu Dhabi retained its position as the safest city in the world for the ninth consecutive year, with an impressive safety index score of 88.4.

Doha followed in second place (84.1), while Dubai, Taipei, Sharjah, ranked third, fourth, and fifth, respectively, each scoring 83.8. Manama (81.0), Muscat (80.9), The Hague (79.5), Munich (79.4), and Trondheim (79.3) completed

the list of the top 10 safest cities.

European cities like The Hague, Munich, and Trondheim secured spots due to their effective public welfare systems and consistent efforts in crime prevention, while Gulf cities continue to dominate the rankings, reflecting their strategic focus on security and quality of life.

The world’s top 10 safest cities in 2025: 1 Abu Dhabi, UAE, Safety Index: 88.4, 2 Doha, Qatar: 84.1, 3 Dubai, UAE: 83.8, 4 Taipei, Taiwan 83.8, 5 Sharjah, UAE: 83.8, 6 Manama, Bahrain: 81.0, 7 Muscat, Oman 80.9, 8 The Hague, Netherlands: 79.5, 9 Munich, Germany: 79.4, 10 Trondheim, Norway: 79.3.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN State Council chief lauds Oman-UAE ties

1 Sheikh Abdulmalek Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council yesterday received Saqr Ghobash, Speaker of the Federal National Council of the UAE and his accompanying delegation. **>A2**

OMAN Desert locusts under control, says ministry

2 The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources said that a recent desert locust survey and control campaign indicates that the current situation is stable and under observation. **>A3**

MARKET Nama completes two treatment plants

3 Nama Water Services company has completed the project of expansion of the two wastewater treatment plants in the Wilayat of Al Khabourah and the Wilayat of A'Suwaig. **>B2**



**Turkiye ski resort
death toll rises to 66**

A6

MADAYN

New incentives to boost investment in Al Mazunah Free Zone



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has unveiled a new package of incentives for investors and business owners in Al Mazunah Free Zone.

The announcement was made during the activities of Al Mazunah Economic Exhibition and Forum, reaffirming Madayn’s commitment to enhancing a robust investment environment in the Sultanate of Oman and attracting new investments.

Eng. Ahmed Khamis Al Kasbi, Director General of Al Mazunah

Free Zone, stated that the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has approved a set of incentives for the free zone in recognition of the significance of enhancing the investment climate and encouraging investors to expand their operations.

Al Kasbi said, “Among the highlights of these incentives include exempting investors from accumulated debts by 30%, in addition to a 50% reduction in rental costs for the next five years for existing and new investors. These incentives aim at increasing the

free zone’s competitiveness and enhancing investment appeal. In fact, these incentives form a cornerstone of efforts to support economic growth, and promote innovation and sustainability.”

Al Kasbi added that Al Mazunah Free Zone has achieved significant progress in recent years in terms of investment and commercial activity.

“In 2024, the volume of goods imported to the free zone reached over 240,000 tonnes, marking an increase of more than 20% compared to the volume recorded in 2023. The free zone presents a vi-

tal gateway for regional trade and a hub for economic activities with its fully developed infrastructure, essential facilities including road network, electricity, water and telecom networks, electronic services, warehousing spaces, and transportation services,” Al Kasbi added.

On another note, Al Mazunah Economic Exhibition and Forum continues its activities with the participation of over 100 local and international companies. The event provides a platform to explore collaboration and partnership opportunities.



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FRATERNAL RELATIONS

Chairman of State Council praises relations between Oman and UAE

MUSCAT: Sheikh Abdulmalek Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council on Tuesday received Saqr Ghobash, Speaker of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and his accompanying delegation.

The Chairman of the State Council lauded the depth of fraternal relations between Oman and the UAE.

These relations, he added, have consolidated over decades be-



tween the two countries' leaderships.

In his turn the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the UAE underscored the depth of distinguished parliamentary relations between the two councils. He also stressed the importance of boosting these relations towards wider horizons.

The meeting was attended by several officials from the State Council. -ONA

Oman Design Week kicks off

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, the Oman Design Week officially kicked off yesterday.

Organised by Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) in collaboration with the Oman Design Association, the event aims to position the Sultanate of Oman as a global hub for creativity and culture. It also seeks to highlight the trans-

formative role of creativity and design in enriching the tourism experience and promoting environmental sustainability by integrating innovation into various aspects of life. The opening ceremony was attended by Her Highness Sayyidah Mayan bint Shihab Al Said, Chairperson of the Oman Design Association, Dr. Hashil bin Obaid Al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran Group, along with several highnesses.

TWO-DAY FORUM

Forum in Muscat to promote sustainable, integrated healthcare

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Governorate will participate in the sixth health leaders forum under the title 'Integration and Progress' organised by the Ministry of Health at Bait Al Zubair Museum on Wednesday.

The forum, which will last for two days, will promote integration between various sectors and support efforts to achieve a sustainable and integrated health system.

The governorate's participation includes an opening session in which Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat, will give a speech explaining the governorate's achievements in the health sector.

He will also discuss ways to improve the quality of services, promote a sustainable environment, and initiatives and projects to improve the quality of health services.

The forum's agenda will include several dialogue sessions and workshops that will discuss issues in the health sector. The forum provides exchanging experiences and best practices among health leaders from various sectors. It also promotes integration between



government and private entities to improve health services, and confirms the importance of benefiting from modern innovations to achieve sustainability and provide high-quality health services.

Muscat Governorate continuously creates a healthy and sustainable environment by collaborating with various entities.

It has many achievements in this sector by enhancing community awareness of public health and supporting national initiatives in this field. Muscat Governorate's participation reflects its pioneering role in supporting the health sector and contributing to achieve Oman's Vision 2040.

Student startups forum draws 24 companies

The two-day forum being held in in the Wilayat of Manah aims to highlight the role of youth in the field of entrepreneurship and enhance their innovative talents



MANAH: The first annual student startups forum for the academic year 2024/2025 kicked off on Tuesday at "Oman Across Ages Museum" in the Wilayat of Manah, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

Organised under the slogan "Empowerment and Sustainability", the forum saw the participation of 24 student companies representing various branches of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS).

The two-day forum aims to highlight the role of youth in the field of entrepreneurship and enhance their innovative talents.

The opening ceremony of the forum was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Loay Khalid Al Said and attended by Sheikh Hilal Said Al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah.

The first day's programme included three visual presentations, the first of which outlined UTAS role in providing necessary support for student startups; the second was a self-explanatory presentation, titled "Experiences that build the Future", while the third presentation showcased innovative student projects covering various sectors.

An elite group of experts and entrepreneurs from Oman and abroad participated in the forum. They offered inspiring visions on the future of sustainability of



startups.

Towards the end of the ceremony, His Highness Sayyid Loay felicitated the sponsoring companies and institutions and the participants.

Then, he opened an exhibition of student startups that covered the fields of artificial intelligence (AI), renewable energy, the Internet of Things (IoT), agriculture, environment, industry, education, health, sports, community service, oil and gas.

The exhibition also included 45 research posters and a special gallery for Muscat Innovation Complex. -ONA



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Workshop defines financial culture

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Educational Studies and International Cooperation, organised a training workshop entitled: "Financial Culture", targeting employees of the department and the Legal Affairs Department.

The training workshop was held at the technical laboratory in the Ministry's General Diwan.

The training workshop was presented by Yousef Al-Hasani, a systems analyst at the department, presented the workshop which covered several topics, namely: defining financial culture and its importance, basic financial concepts, managing personal income and expenses, saving, and investing, managing debt and financial risks, long-term financial planning, and financial technology (FinTech).

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Desert locusts under control, says ministry

The desert locust poses a big threat to food security and it causes significant economic damage



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources said that a recent desert locust survey and control campaign that it conducted in various governorates indicates that the current situation of desert locusts in the Sultanate of Oman is stable and under observation.

The Ministry explained that the campaign monitored the status of the desert locust in terms of propagation, breeding locations and the availability of a suitable environment for the insect's re-

production, including wild vegetation and soil moisture as a result of recent rainfall.

Dr. Tarik Hamoud Al Mantheri, Head of the Pest Control Department at the Ministry of Agriculture, said that the Ministry is regularly monitoring the situation in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman through field surveys and exploration operations at local locust breeding sites to detect all developments and deal with them as early as possible.

Al Mantheri pointed out that monitoring operations carried out in the governorates of Al Wusta, North A'Sharqiyah and South A'Sharqiyah—from 22 December to 20 January—unveiled the presence of desert locust groups technically classified as “individual cases” and “transitional cases”. The operations enabled the Ministry to intervene early by conducting a successful campaign, he added.

The desert locust poses a big threat to food security and it causes significant economic damage. The insect takes only three weeks to grow into the adult age that can last from 90 to 150 days.

The economic damage caused by desert locusts is significant. A small swarm of desert locusts covering an area of 1 square kilometre can consume a daily amount of food that is sufficient for 35,000 people. Each adult desert locust can consume a daily amount of food that is equivalent to its own weight. -ONA



Latest innovations in artificial lift field discussed



MUSCAT: More than 400 specialists from 30 countries and 106 international organisations are taking part in the 10th Middle East Artificial Lift Forum (MEALF), being held in Muscat (20-22 January 2025).

The event elaborates on the use of artificial lift techniques to upgrade oil-well productivity, as well as the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in data analysis to improve operational efficiency. The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Mohsin Hamad Al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

Al Hadhrami said that the forum constitutes a technical platform that brings together international experts and specialists who exchange the latest innovations in the field of artificial lift—a key instrument in improving the efficiency of oilfield produc-

tion and longevity.

The forum discusses more than 50 working papers on vital operations, including monitoring greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing the sustainability of artificial lift systems and exploring the role of modern technology in improving production efficiency and developing mature oil and gas fields.

The forum addresses all personnel operating in the oil and gas sector, including professionals and amateurs, in addition to students of Omani colleges—with the prime aim of developing local competencies.

An exhibition is held on the sidelines of the forum to showcase the products of major international companies and the latest innovations and technical solutions that contribute to developing the oil and gas sector. -ONA

Legal help to citizen in India

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Foreign Ministry of Oman has issued an official statement regarding a case involving an Omani citizen currently in India.

The case has garnered significant attention on social media over a lawsuit filed against the citizen by her relative.

This has resulted in a travel ban for the citizen until the case is resolved or an amicable settlement is reached between the concerned parties.

The Oman's Foreign Ministry emphasised that it is following the case keenly in cooperation with the Omani Embassy in New Delhi.

A law firm has been hired to

defend the citizen, and efforts are being made to encourage the involved parties to resolve their family disputes amicably, while respecting the applicable laws.

The statement underscores the ministry's commitment to ensuring the well-being of its citizens abroad and its efforts to provide legal support and mediation in such cases.



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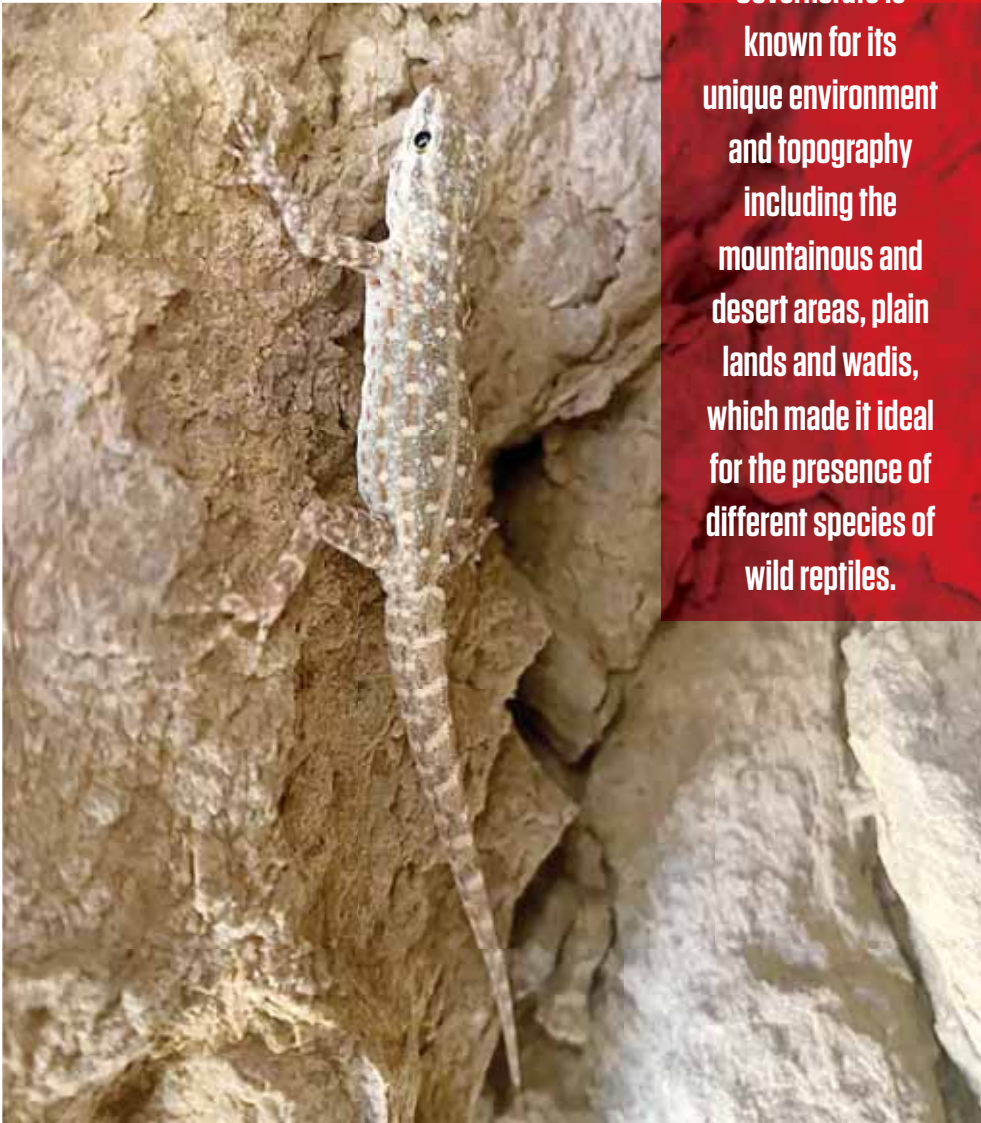
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SEVEN SPECIES OF WILD REPTILES SPOTTED IN NORTH AL SHARQIYAH



North Al Sharqiyah Governorate is known for its unique environment and topography including the mountainous and desert areas, plain lands and wadis, which made it ideal for the presence of different species of wild reptiles.



IBRA: The Environment Authority in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate spotted seven species of wild reptiles, according to the initial survey in the governorate.

The initial findings of the survey showed a large distribution of the reptiles in the mountain areas and wadis while the distribution of some species of reptiles are limited to plain lands and deserts, which shows the different environment adaptation of each species and the impact of the climate conditions such as the high temperatures and drought conditions on the behaviour and distribution of reptiles.

The field survey of reptiles in the governorate aimed to provide updated data, geographic distribution maps and interaction of reptiles with the environment.

The survey also aimed to register all species, to document their distribution and environment conditions. The Atlas of Oman's wild reptiles, issued by the Environment Authority has documented more than 101 species of reptiles in the Sultanate of Oman, representing some 50% of the total species of reptiles in the Arabian Peninsula including 21 species of snakes and 80 species of lizards.

North Al Sharqiyah Governorate is known for its unique environment and topography including the mountainous and desert areas, plain lands and wadis, which made it ideal for the presence of different species of wild reptiles.

Said Saif Al Busafi, Environment Inspector at the Environment Department in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, said that the field survey covered three wilayats in the governorate which are the wilayats of Dima Wal Ta'en; Al Qabil and Ibra. The survey work in these wilayats was done with GIS technology to provide comprehensive data, distribution maps and interaction of reptiles with the various environments, he added.



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COMMENTARY

Building environment to combat obesity in Oman



DR SALMA AL-KALBANI

Obesity is a complex public health issue that necessitates a multifaceted approach to address and reverse the trend globally. From 1990 to 2022, the rates in children and adolescents climbed fourfold, from 2% to 8% worldwide, while in adults they more than doubled, from 7% to 16%. In Oman, over half of the Omani population is overweight or obese, with 30% having obesity, body mass index of over 30 kg/m2. Obesity is a major risk factor for chronic diseases like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, musculo-skeletal disorders, and certain cancers. Childhood obesity increases the chance of developing related illnesses early in life and can last into adulthood if not treated. Since obesity is a complex medical problem, governments in all sectors have an obligation to address the growing burden of obesity at the individual, healthcare, societal levels with the aim to have health in all policies.

At the individual level, understanding the sociodemographic determinants of developing obesity is critical to addressing the problem. These include the circumstances under which individuals are born, grow, work, live, and age, as well as the system in place to deal with illness. It also involves the societal norm around obesity, as well as knowledge about the consequences of the problem. Addressing the sociodemographic determinants of health is crucial for preventing obesity, promoting healthy lifestyles, and achieving societal justice. Having said that, there are other elements beyond the individual level that must be addressed to combat obesity.

At the healthcare setting, the Ministry of Health is working hard to screen for, manage, and promote awareness of the impact of obesity on one's health among all individuals attending healthcare facility. Beyond that, it conducts frequent campaigns to raise awareness of the health consequences of obesity in developing non-communicable diseases. Additionally, patients with obesity receive all available assistance (including medical and surgical) to treat obesity and its complications. However, this is not enough. With an increasing prevalence of obesity, we must consider solutions outside the scope of the Ministry of Health. Aside from individual counselling, therapeutic and surgical approaches will help at the personal level but will not be enough to manage the epidemic throughout the country. The government will require a broader population-based approach to tackle this issue.

At the educational level, there should be a clearly defined "national meal program" that covers all preschool and school levels, both public and



private. Unfortunately, some schools continue to serve unhealthy foods such as uncarbonated soft drinks, junk food, and fast food, as well as sugary drinks, with no clear plan to incorporate healthy options, like fruits, into their meal plan. A similar scenario exists at the higher educational institutes. To combat unhealthy diets, some countries implement regulations at higher education institutions to reduce unhealthy food consumption. One example is discontinuing the serving of sugary and uncarbonated soft drinks in the canteen. Other ideas include introducing health education about healthy meals and a food pyramid that explains the healthy portion within the educational curriculum starting from preschool stage throughout all educational levels.

At the societal level, many countries understand the importance of building an environment to combat obesity. The built environment, which includes man-made environments such as buildings, parks, amenities, and infrastructure, has been proposed as a potential driver of obesogenic behaviours and obesity. Several measures can help in reduce the impact of obesogenic environment. First, expanding the amount of green space where adults and kids can engage in outdoor physical activities. This should be part of municipal planning so each residence has a well-designed green area with a playground where children may enjoy outdoor activities. Second, introducing sidewalk rails for pedestrians and cyclists should be defined on selected roads to ensure safe and enjoyable use. Third, public transportation should be improved to lessen reliance on personal vehicles. Evidence suggests that switching from personal to public transportation through new well-designed infrastructure or altered ticket pricing reduces the risk of obesity. Increased fruit and vegetable store distribution near schools and residential areas, while reducing fast food retail outlets, may increase access and consumption of healthy foods.

Another term that has recently been identified as a significant contributor to the development of obesity by influencing one's choices is the "commercial determinants of health." It is defined as private-sector activities that influence people's health, either positively or negatively. These activities can be used to lobby and influence health policies. This is evident in multi-corporate tobacco com-

panies and fast-food establishments. Their influence on food choice manifests itself in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, increasing fast food supply chains, improving product design and packaging, introducing additive flavour, increasing portion size, supporting research, mass advertising, and price promotion. Additionally, participation in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, such as participating in initiatives at health or education sectors, aims at enhancing the community's reputation and thus increase consumption of unhealthy products. Furthermore, the way different markets are designed, where fast, unhealthy food is placed in areas that are easily accessible and seen in the market, while healthy options are placed far away or on higher shelves, all have an impact on consumer choice. The use of billboards, social media, and other places to advertise unhealthy options can also impact one's decision. Understanding these tactics is the first step to pinpointing the factors that influence one's choice and proposing measures to combat hazardous choices.

Obesity poses significant threats to individuals, health sectors, and communities as whole. A population-based approach should be prioritized, involving all sectors in planning and management.

Health should be at the heart of every policy, and policies should align with the health mission of reducing the root cause of noncommunicable disease, including obesity.

Early detection and management of obesity in life can prevent the progression of noncommunicable diseases. Understanding all the factors that may lead to obesity is critical to managing it successfully. Investing in nationwide surveys can help identify and address the sociodemographic, health-related, and societal factors that contribute to obesity and address then in timely manner.

The author is a senior specialist family medicine and public health doctor from Oman. She holds a bachelor's in health science, a degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD), a certificate of completion of training and specialty from the Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB), a membership from the Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP), an Arab Board certificate in family medicine, a master's in public health from University College Dublin (Hon.), Diplomate Membership of Faculty Public Health Medicine (DFPH, Ireland), and Clinical fellowship in Public Health from Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (FRCPI).

THIRD MEETING

Shura panel discusses draft law of collection of state dues



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Economic and Financial Committee of Majlis Al Shura held its third meeting within the activities of the second annual convening (2024-2025) on Tuesday.

The committee discussed the draft law of collection of the state dues referred by the government as per article (47) of the Law of the Council of Oman. It stipulated referral of the draft laws prepared by the government to the Council of Oman for endorsement or amend-

ment before their direct referral to His Majesty the Sultan for ratification and issuance.

During the discussion, the committee delivered detailed discussions on a number of articles of the draft law and the justifications for preparation of the draft law and its impacts on the legislations prevailing in the Sultanate of Oman.

The discussion also tackled key differences between the prevailing law and the draft law. The committee also reviewed a number of comparative laws in some

Arab countries.

The draft law replaces the prevailing law applicable for almost 31 years. The draft law keeps abreast of a number of legislative amendments on several laws.

The meeting was held under the chair of Ahmed bin Said Al Sharqi, Chairman of the Committee in the presence of the committee members, and discussed the Wages Protection System issued by the Ministry of Labour and the financial consequences of the fines imposed and their impacts on the cash flows of the SMEs.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Stations in Oman book launched

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Curriculum Development, Citizenship Department, celebrated the launch of 'Stations in Oman' book.

The launch ceremony was at-

tended by Dr. Said bin Saif Al Amri, Head of the Office of the Minister of Education, and a number of directors general and officials from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth.

The launch ceremony included

a speech by Dr. Warda Al Busaidi, Director of the Citizenship Department, and a poem recited by student Mohammed Al Qatabi. Students Enas Al Rahbi and Hasna Al Kharousi presented a silent play that tells the story of the Omani people's adherence to their identity and history.



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Tender Document Sales End Date	09/02/2025		
Last Date for Bid Submission	04/03/2025		
Grade	Excellent, First		
E-Tendering Portal	https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om		
Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E.Tendering website: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om , against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents.			
• The Tenderers must acknowledge commitment to the bid.			
• The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids			
• The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).			
Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om or 24402200		
For further information	Email : sotic@mht.gov.om Phones : 22088348 - 22088085		

Turkiye ski resort fire death toll rises to 66

Some of the victims are reported to have died after jumping from the building in panic, while local media also described guests trying to climb down from their rooms using bedsheets and blankets

BOLU [TURKIYE]: At least 66 people have died and more than 50 others were injured in a fire at a hotel at a ski resort in northwestern Türkiye.

The blaze broke out in the restaurant of the 12-storey Grand Kartal hotel in the mountain-top resort of Kartalkaya at 3:27am local time (0027 GMT) on Tuesday.

“Our pain is great,” Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya told reporters at the scene.

Some of the victims are reported to have died after jumping from the building in panic, while local media also described guests trying to climb down from their rooms using bedsheets and blankets.

Television footage showed the roof and top floors of the hotel on fire, sending plumes of smoke into the sky with a snowcapped mountain in the background.

The hotel was reported to be between 80-90% full due to school holidays, with over 230 guests checked in.

Necmi Kepcetutan, a ski instructor at the hotel, told private broadcaster NTV he had helped around 20 people to evacuate the building, but that it was difficult to locate fire escapes due to the smoke.

“I cannot reach some of my students,” he said. “I hope they are OK.”

Reporters for NTV suggested



that the design of the 161-room hotel, with wooden chalet-style cladding, may have accelerated the spread of the fire.

Officials said 30 fire trucks and 28 ambulances were dispatched to the site, but the hotel’s location backed onto a cliff was hampering firefighters’ efforts to tackle the flames.

Other nearby hotels were evacuated as a precaution, with guests

relocated in other accommodation in the area.

Kartalkaya is a popular ski resort in the Koroğlu mountains, some 300 kilometres (185 miles) east of Istanbul and 170 kilometres (100 miles) northwest of the capital, Ankara.

Turkish Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunc said six prosecutors had been appointed to lead an investigation into the fire, the exact

cause of which remains unclear.

Witnesses said the hotel’s fire detection system failed to activate.

“My wife smelled the burning. The alarm did not go off,” said Atakan Yelkovan, a guest staying on the third floor, speaking to the IHA news agency.

“We tried to go upstairs but couldn’t, there were flames. We went downstairs and came outside,” he said, adding that it took about an hour for the fire brigade to arrive.

“People on the upper floors were screaming,” he said. “They hung down sheets... some tried to jump.”

The resort is a popular destination for holidaymakers during the winter, particularly during school holidays, which begin in January and end in the first week of February, the report said.

Governor Abdulaziz Aydın stated that there were around 234 guests staying at the hotel, CNN reported, citing Anadolu Agency.

Aydın mentioned that two of the victims died after jumping out of the building “in panic.”

Several videos, some posted on social media platforms and others broadcast by Turkish TV channels, showed flames coming out of the top floors of the hotel. In the video, some people tried to use tied bedsheets to escape the blaze.

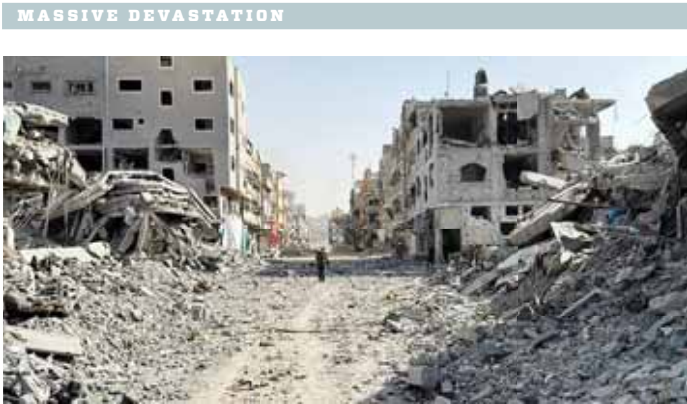


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‘Gaza’s reconstruction requires global support’

GAZA: Rebuilding Gaza is far beyond the capacity of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) due to the massive devastation caused by 470 days of Israeli aggression, the agency revealed.

Adnan Abu Hasna, UNRWA spokesperson, stated that while the agency is working to rehabilitate camp infrastructure and restore essential services, the sheer scale of destruction demands extensive global efforts.

He noted that UNRWA staff have been working at full capacity, distributing aid after over 1,000 trucks entered Gaza. However, restoring water, electricity, and addressing unexploded ordnance, estimated in the tens of thousands, requires urgent expertise and resources.

Abu Hasna also expressed concern over Israeli restrictions hampering the agency’s work, warning of significant challenges ahead.

Palestinian government strongly condemns Israeli’s onslaught on Jenin city and its camp

The Palestinian government condemned the aggressive Israeli measures against the Palestinian people, the latest of which was the occupation’s onslaught on the city of Jenin and its camp, which resulted in the killing of eight Palestinians and the injury of 35.

The government further condemned the displacement of families from the camp and the occupation’s installation of new barriers and iron gates to isolate Palestinian villages and cities from each other, and to give a free hand to terrorise the colonists.

The Council of Ministers tasked the Ministerial Committee for Emergency Actions with strengthening its interventions in the areas targeted by the attacks of the occupation army and colonists, in order to take the necessary measures to enhance the steadfastness of our people in their land.

Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa had said at the beginning of the weekly cabinet session that all our embassies and international missions had been instructed to address representatives of various countries on the need for urgent action and pressure to stop the settlers’ attacks and the illegal occupation measures. — Agencies

GLOBAL HEALTH AGENCY

WHO regrets US announcement to withdraw, hopes for reconsideration

GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed regret over the United States’ announcement to withdraw from the global health agency and emphasised the importance of WHO in safeguarding the health and security of people worldwide, including Americans.

However, the agency does hope that the United States will reconsider its decision and looks forward to engaging in “constructive dialogue” to maintain the partnership between the US and the agency for the health and well-being of millions around the globe.

The statement from WHO came after US President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Monday, announcing the withdrawal of the US from WHO. According to the order, the withdrawal was due to the organisation’s mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global health crises.

The statement shared by WHO’s Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on X reads: “The World Health Organization regrets the announcement that the United States of America intends to withdraw from the Organization. WHO plays a crucial role in protecting the health and security of the world’s people, including Americans, by addressing the root causes of disease, building stronger health systems, and detecting, preventing and responding to health emergencies, including disease outbreaks, often in dangerous places where



others cannot go.”

The global health agency noted that the US was a founding member of WHO in 1948 and has been involved in shaping and governing the organization’s work ever since, alongside 193 other Member States, including through its active participation in the World Health Assembly and Executive Board.

In the statement, WHO said, “For over seven decades, WHO and the US have saved countless lives and protected Americans and all people from health threats. Together, we ended smallpox, and together we have brought polio to the brink of eradication. American institutions have contributed to and benefited from membership in WHO.”

WHO further stated that, with the participation of the US and other states, it has implemented the largest set of reforms in its history over the past seven years to transform its accountability, cost-effectiveness, and impact in countries. The organisation added, “This work continues.” — ANI

UNITED STATES

Donald Trump’s flurry of executive orders signal ‘America First’ goals

WASHINGTON DC: Donald Trump signed a flurry of executive orders on his inauguration day Monday. It wasn’t just the high number that was unusual Trump signed several presidential edicts at a red desk at Capitol One Arena in front of tens of thousands of cheering fans. The crowd of Trump supporters had gathered at the venue to watch a livestream of the inauguration and celebrate their president in person afterwards.

Normally, the incoming US president signs executive orders at the Oval Office in the White House, which Trump did later in the day with more edicts.

Executive orders are directives the president issues without having to consult Congress, which is in charge of passing regular laws. The president can circumvent the House and the Senate by issuing his own instructions directly to federal officials.

“Executive orders set the framework for action by [federal] agencies,” Michelle Egan, professor of politics, governance and economics at the American University in Washington D.C., told DW via email.

Executive orders can, however, be challenged in court and can be reversed by the next president. Signing these presidential edicts has “become an increasingly important form of governance but also easily overturned,” Egan said.

What executive orders did Donald Trump sign on day one?

The first executive order Trump signed, with a Sharpie, as the 47th president of the United States, was to rescind 78 regulations established by his predecessor Joe



Biden. Other directives signed at Capitol One Arena included an order to all federal departments and agencies to address the cost-of-living crisis as well as an order to stop government censorship.

He also signed an executive order stating that the US is withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement and, later at the White House, a directive indicating the US would withdraw from the World Health Organization.

“Many Trump voters are skeptical of political organizations and institutions, so we saw some early bones thrown to that group” with the two major withdrawals, J. Miles Coleman, election analyst with the University of Virginia Centre for Politics, told DW.

One of Trump’s biggest campaign topics, immigration, was also part of the slew of day one executive orders. The president declared a national emergency at the US border with Mexico, so that the government could take control of what Trump says is a disastrous situation and stop the “invasion”

of undocumented immigrants he said occurred under Biden’s presidency.

A new order stated that according to US policy, there would only be two genders, male and female, and diverse option no longer in existence. The order directed federal agencies to revoke policies issued under President Biden that had made it easier for transgender people to update their gender markers on federal identification.

What do Trump’s directives mean for the US?

The executive orders Trump signed on his very first day in office show the president’s priorities.

“I do think these [culture war] issues will be prominent in the early days of the new administration and in the early days of the new Congress,” Craig Saperstein, a partner at the public policy practice of international law firm Pillsbury, told DW.

At the same time, not all of Trump’s day one executive orders

spell immediate change for the country. The withdrawal from the World Health Organization, for example, will take one year to go into effect. And it will take a while before Americans will feel the consequences of some of the other orders as well, says Saperstein’s fellow government law expert Aimee Ghosh.

Trump may sign an order declaring a national emergency, but the policies that he would like to see implemented through that will have to go through a several-step process at the federal agencies in charge, Ghosh explains.

“The details of how all of this is going to be unrolled are really important, because a lot can change in terms of who’s impacted, the timing, and whether there are exceptions,” Ghosh, who’s also a partner at Pillsbury, told DW. “Some things may happen immediately on day one, but a lot of the executive orders [Trump signed] are going to go through a period of study, review and other administrative procedures.” — DW

Djokovic defies injury and age to shock Alcaraz in a thriller

The Serb has won a record 24 Grand Slam men’s singles titles - a figure matched only by Australia’s Margaret Court in the women’s game - and is eyeing a record-breaking 25th major



MELBOURNE: Serbia’s Novak Djokovic showed once again why he’s one of tennis’ greatest ever players, overcoming both injury and age to defeat the rising star Carlos Alcaraz of Spain in a thrilling four-set battle at the Australian Open on Tuesday.

The 37-year-old Serb triumphed 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 in a match that lasted an exhausting three hours and 38 minutes, securing his place in the semi-finals and extending his pursuit of a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title.

Djokovic’s victory, in which he battled through an upper left leg injury, is further testament to his unyielding resilience.

“I’ve never experienced anything like this, honestly,” Djokovic said after the match. “It’s been a long road to get to this point, and I just want to keep going.”

The match started with a set-back for the Serbian legend, who limped off court after the first set to receive treatment for his leg. However, Djokovic returned to the court with a renewed intensity, playing aggressively and outlasting Alcaraz, who struggled to find his rhythm as the match wore on.



Despite his physical discomfort, Djokovic’s experience and tactical adaptability allowed him to regain control of the match. After losing the first set, Djokovic unleashed a barrage of powerful shots, including a backhand winner to clinch the second set, and a decisive break in the fourth to seal victory.

“Djokovic is a champion, and I have a lot of respect for him,” said Alcaraz, who had previously been on the cusp of completing a career Grand Slam at just 21. “It was an incredible match, and I learned a lot today.”

For Djokovic, it was another reminder of his remarkable ability to defy expectations. Just a year ago, many questioned whether time had caught up with him, especially after missing out on a Grand Slam title for the first time since 2017.



Yet here he is again, still chasing history in Melbourne, where his dominance is unquestioned.

In what was seen as a battle between youth and experience, Djokovic’s refusal to be outlasted by the young Spanish star – a player many believe could be the future of the sport – will go down as one of the most impressive moments of his career. Djokovic will now face German second seed Alexander Zverev in the semi-finals, with an eye firmly set on extending his record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles.

Reflecting on his recent challenges and what it means to continue his pursuit of glory, Djokovic said, “Every match is an opportunity to show why I’m still here. It’s been a tough journey, but I believe in my game and my body.”

For Alcaraz, the defeat ends his hopes of becoming the youngest player to complete the career Grand Slam, but his time will surely come.

As for Djokovic, the pursuit of his 25th Grand Slam title continues, adding another remarkable chapter

to his already storied career.

Zverev edges Paul

Earlier, Zverev continued his bid for an elusive first Grand Slam title with victory over Tommy Paul to reach the semi-finals.

The German second seed won 7-6 (7-1), 7-6 (7-0), 2-6, 6-1 against the American 12th seed on Rod Laver Arena on Tuesday.

The victory was 27-year-old Zverev’s seventh in a row and continues his unbeaten start to his season.

“I should have been down two sets, he played better than me and I was not playing great,” Zverev said.

“The fourth set was definitely the best I played and I’m happy to be back in the semi-finals.”

Zverev previously reached the semi-finals at Melbourne Park in 2020 and 2024.

The match will be Zverev’s ninth Grand Slam semi-final - the most among active players who have not won a major.

Paul, a semi-finalist Melbourne in 2023, had chances to serve out the first and second set, but was denied by Zverev on both occasions.

Zverev won the first set on a tie-break before losing his cool at 4-2 in the second.

With Zverev set to make a return, the umpire called “let” as a feather fell near the German.

“It’s a feather! There are millions of them on the court,” an irritated Zverev said as he held up the feather to the umpire.

Zverev recovered to break Paul back and win another tie-break, before dropping the third set. Zverev would regain the momentum, however, in the latter stages of the match before sealing his place in the last four with an ace. - Agencies

WOMEN’S SINGLES

Sabalenka on course for ‘three-peat’; Badosa upsets Gauff to reach semis



MELBOURNE: Aryna Sabalenka said she was “all over the place” as she survived a scare against Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova to reach the Australian Open semi-finals on Tuesday and continue her bid for a third straight Melbourne title.

The world No.1 is attempting to become the first woman since Martina Hingis 26 years ago to complete a ‘three-peat’ at the hard-court Grand Slam.

After racing through the first set, Sabalenka’s title hopes were left hanging by a thread as Pavlyuchenkova swept up the second and broke early in the decider.

But the Belarusian kept her cool to fight back and wrap up a 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 win.

“I think it is good to have these tough battles and be tougher in the later stages of the tournament,” Sabalenka said.

“I was all over the place. I’m really glad that at some point I was able to put myself back together.”

It is the first time Sabalenka has dropped a set at the Australian Open since the 2023 final, where she fought back to beat Elena Rybakina and win her first major singles title.

The top seed said she “can’t

wait” to face her friend Paula Badosa in the last four after the Spaniard stunned third seed Coco Gauff earlier on Tuesday.

A 10th career Grand Slam semi-final for Sabalenka was starting to look unlikely at the start of the third set.

Sabalenka’s serve wavered and Pavlyuchenkova broke five times in a row to take the second set and go up a break in the third.

But despite having momentum on her side, the Russian 27th seed could not make the most of her early lead, and Sabalenka levelled immediately.

The three-time major winner settled herself with a hold to go 3-2 up, claimed a crucial break for a 5-3 lead before serving out a 19th successive victory at Melbourne Park.

Sabalenka, who has reached the semi-finals in eight of her past nine Grand Slam appearances, joked afterwards that she would make her team get tiger tattoos if she won the Melbourne title.

The 26-year-old said the tattoo of a tiger on her forearm is a “reminder of never giving up, staying aggressive, staying hungry and pushing myself no matter what is going on in life.”

She added: “If I win the Australian Open, which hopefully I do fingers crossed, we are going to celebrate. Then I’m going to call a tattoo specialist so they wake up with a tiger tattoo.”

Badosa reaches first major semi-final

Badosa stunned Gauff to reach her first Grand Slam semi-final - just one year after fearing she would have to retire from tennis.

The Spaniard, a former world No.2, spent almost two years struggling with back problems and fell to 140th in the rankings

But, after a strong end to 2024, Badosa’s comeback continued in sensational fashion as she ended American Gauff’s 13-match winning streak with a 7-5, 6-4 victory.

“I’m a bit emotional - as you know, I’m a very emotional person,” Badosa said.

“I’ve been through a lot. I was in the past one of the best players in the world but I think now I’m a better player.”

Badosa was named the WTA’s Comeback Player of the Year in 2024 after recovering from a stress fracture in her spine that saw her miss two of the four majors in 2023.

The 27-year-old won her first title in over two years at August’s Washington Open before reaching the quarter-finals of the US Open a month later.

“A year ago I was here with my back and I didn’t know if I had to retire from this sport,” 11th seed Badosa said.

“Now I’m here playing against the best in the world. I won today, I’m in the semi-finals.

“I will never think that a year after I would be here. This is a dream come true.”

Third seed Gauff arrived in Melbourne as the most in-form player on tour, having won last year’s WTA Finals and all five of her singles matches at the season-opening United Cup - including a victory over Iga Swiatek.

Before her last-16 win against Belinda Bencic, the 20-year-old had not dropped a set in eight matches this season.

“Paula was playing great. Maybe some moments in the first set could have gone my way,” Gauff, the 2023 US Open champion, said. “I’m obviously disappointed, but I’m not completely crushed.

“Even though I lost today, I feel like I’m in an upward trajectory.” - Agencies

TRIAL BASIS



Coach Ivanisevic parts ways with Rybakina after Melbourne exit



MELBOURNE: Former Wimbledon champion Goran Ivanisevic said on Tuesday that he has ended his coaching stint with world No.6 Elena Rybakina after her Australian Open exit.

The pair started working together in mid-December on a trial basis.

Rybakina, a former finalist at Melbourne Park, lost 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 to Madison Keys in the fourth round on Monday.

On Tuesday, Ivanisevic posted on Instagram that he would not be continuing with Rybakina, writing: “After our trial period that finished with the Australian Open, I wish Elena and her team best of luck moving forward.”

Ivanisevic previously coached 24-time Grand Slam men’s cham-

pion Novak Djokovic in 12 of his major wins.

Rybakina announced at the start of January that she wanted to bring her former coach Stefano Vukov back into the team - despite Vukov being provisionally banned by the WTA.

Vukov, 37, has been suspended by the women’s governing body while an investigation into his conduct towards the player continues.

Vukov has denied any wrongdoing and Rybakina has said she never made any complaints about him.

Croat Vukov was not given credentials to attend the Australian Open as part of 2022 Wimbledon champion Rybakina’s team. - Agencies

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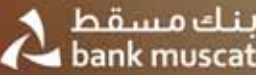
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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by March 2025 reaching \$83.11, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 49 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$83.60. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,612.71 points, down by 0.09% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.56% at 425.38 points. Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, up 14.29%, was the top gainer while Financial Corporation, down 7.90%, was the top loser.



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Asyad showcases logistics efficiency with breakbulk shipment for PDO

This milestone also emphasises Asyad’s role in strengthening the Port of Duqm’s logistics ecosystem through seamless cargo flow and strategic connectivity and contributing to the broader national economic growth

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Asyad Group, alongside Petroleum Development Oman’s (PDO) Logistics Team, completed a significant breakbulk shipment for PDO, delivering 10 complex items to the Port of Duqm, demonstrating dedication precision and

reliability in providing tailored logistics solutions that ensure safe, efficient, and timely cargo delivery. This milestone also emphasises Asyad’s role in strengthening the Port of Duqm’s logistics ecosystem through seamless cargo flow and strategic connectivity and contributing to the broader national



economic growth. The Group’s world-class logistics operations, customer focus, and extensive global network have positioned it as a leader in this field, playing a pivotal role in facilitating energy and industrial projects in Oman and beyond.

“Asyad Group is dedicated to delivering excellence in every shipment we handle, and our recent success with PDO is a testament to our expertise in managing complex logistics projects,” said Juma Al Maskari, Director of Asyad Logistics. He further added, “This achieve-

ment not only highlights our technical capabilities but also reinforces our commitment to providing top-quality logistics services to different sectors in Oman and the region, thereby enhancing the efficiency and reliability of breakbulk supply chains globally.

ASIAN TRADING

Dollar rises as Trump talks of Canada, Mexico tariffs

SINGAPORE: The US dollar rebounded in choppy Asian trade yesterday after US President Donald Trump suggested the United States could impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico in the near future. Trump was quoted saying his team was thinking of tariffs around 25% which could be announced on 1 February, but offered no other specifics. The dollar index bounced 0.6% to 108.65, having shed 1.2% overnight in what had been the sharpest daily loss since late 2023. The dollar climbed 1.2% to 1.4475 Canadian dollar, while adding 1.3% on the peso. The euro fell back to \$1.0364, from an early top of \$1.0434. - **ONA**

REPORT

Gartner forecasts worldwide IT spending to total \$5.61 trillion in 2025

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Worldwide IT spending is expected to total \$5.61 trillion in 2025, an increase of 9.8% from 2024, according to the latest forecast by Gartner, Inc. “While budgets for CIOs are increasing, a significant portion will merely offset price increases

within their recurrent spending,” said John-David Lovelock, Distinguished VP Analyst at Gartner. “This means that, in 2025, nominal spending versus real IT spending will be skewed, with price hikes absorbing some or all of budget growth. All major categories are reflecting higher-than-expected prices, prompting CIOs to defer

and scale back their true budget expectations.” Segments including data centre systems, devices and software will see double-digit growth in 2025, largely due to generative AI (GenAI) hardware upgrades (see Table 1). However, these upgraded segments will not differentiate themselves in terms of functionality yet,

even with new hardware. “GenAI is sliding toward the trough of disillusionment which reflects CIOs declining expectations for GenAI, but not their spending on this technology,” said Lovelock. “For instance, the new AI ready PCs do not yet have ‘must have’ applications that utilise the hard-

ware. While both consumers and enterprises will purchase AI-enabled PC, tablets and mobile phones, those purchases will not be overly influenced by the GenAI functionality.” Spending on AI-optimised servers easily doubles spending on traditional servers in 2025, reaching \$202 billion dollars.

“IT services companies and hyperscalers account for over 70% of spending in 2025,” said Lovelock. “By 2028, hyperscalers will operate \$1 trillion dollars’ worth of AI optimised servers, but not within their traditional business model or IaaS Market. Hyperscalers are pivoting to be part of the oligopoly AI model market.”



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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, up 14.29%, was the top gainer while Financial Corporation, down 7.90%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,612.71 points, down by 0.09% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.56% at 425.38 points. Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, up 14.29%, was the top gainer while Financial Corporation, down 7.90%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 762 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 2.9 million, with more than 25.2 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 11 advanced, 16 declined, and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 275K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 253K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 22K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,909.25 points, down 0.06%.

Prices of Ominvest, Bank Muscat were up by 1.53%, 0.39% respectively. Prices of Financial Corporation, Takaful Oman, Oman & Emirates Investment, National Finance, Sohar International Bank were down by 7.90%, 4.08%, 3.03%, 1.54%, 1.41% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,410.47 points, up 0.25%. Prices of Construction Materials, Muscat Thread Mill, Galfar Engineering were up by 8.93%, 3.43%, 2.53% respectively. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products were down by 1.29% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.56% before closing at 1,714.01 points. Prices of Musandam Power, Shell Oman Marketing, OQ Gas Networks, Al Jazeera Services were up by 4.51%, 0.81%, 0.74%, 0.53% respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Renaissance Services, National Gas were down by 4.29%, 2.94%, 2.94%, 1.63%, 1.22% respectively.

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INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,617.33	4,604.22	4,612.71	4,616.88	-4.17	-0.09
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,913.94	7,887.46	7,909.25	7,913.94	-4.69	-0.06
Industry Index	5,420.68	5,396.98	5,410.47	5,396.98	13.49	0.25
Services Index	1,723.59	1,711.88	1,714.01	1,723.59	-9.58	-0.56
MSX Shariah Index	427.59	423.96	425.38	427.77	-2.38	-0.56
MSX TR INDEX	6,466.57	6,448.21	6,460.10	6,465.94	-5.85	-0.09
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,991.05	8,960.97	8,985.72	8,991.05	-5.33	-0.06
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,254.17	6,226.83	6,242.40	6,226.83	15.57	0.25
SERVICES TR IDX	2,062.51	2,048.49	2,051.05	2,062.51	-11.46	-0.56
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
25,203,414	2,904,500	762	28,069,398,554	11	16	22	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 21

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BD.	LAST OFFER	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	1,100	306	1	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.266	0.012	4.511	0.278	0.268	0.279	0.100	19,568,420
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	70,053	22,966	10	0.326	0.332	0.324	0.332	0.327	0.005	1.529	0.332	0.330	0.331	0.100	221,897,321
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,310	812	2	0.620	0.620	0.620	0.620	0.615	0.005	0.813	0.620	0.620	0.625	0.100	58,900,000
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,723,123	234,351	135	0.135	0.137	0.135	0.136	0.135	0.001	0.741	0.137	0.136	0.137	0.100	588,964,853
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	226,210	58,825	13	0.260	0.261	0.260	0.261	0.260	0.001	0.385	0.261	0.261	0.261	0.100	1,959,169,633
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	120	48	1	0.396	0.396	0.396	0.396	0.396	0.000	0.000	0.396	0.393	0.396	0.100	131,025,593
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	91,064	9,015	11	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	21,760,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	80,000	4,880	2	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.100	21,723,765
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	5,315	399	2	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.074	0.076	0.100	6,750,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	1,650	660	2	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.400	0.360	0.428	0.100	48,000,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	10,012	9,131	6	0.912	0.912	0.912	0.912	0.912	0.000	0.000	0.912	0.905	0.920	0.100	684,000,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	76,000	6,864	5	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.088	0.092	0.100	17,600,000
OM0000000824	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	46,179	11,758	33	0.256	0.256	0.253	0.254	0.256	-0.002	-0.781	0.254	0.250	0.254	0.100	195,630,900
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	81,825	18,878	17	0.231	0.231	0.230	0.230	0.232	-0.002	-0.862	0.230	0.225	0.230	0.100	149,717,173
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	20,667	1,756	4	0.085	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.176	0.084	0.084	0.085	0.100	14,700,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	4,000	1,224	2	0.306	0.306	0.306	0.306	0.310	-0.004	-1.290	0.306	0.299	0.310	0.100	38,218,776
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	46,057	6,468	3	0.141	0.141	0.140	0.140	0.142	-0.002	-1.408	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.100	926,414,478
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	9,486	3,463	5	0.366	0.366	0.363	0.363	0.369	-0.006	-1.626	0.363	0.363	0.363	0.100	85,816,830
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	271,580	17,954	15	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.066	0.068	-0.002	-2.941	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.100	44,542,570
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	187,000	12,373	14	0.067	0.067	0.065	0.066	0.068	-0.002	-2.941	0.066	0.062	0.066	0.100	47,150,818
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	118,530	7,653	13	0.065	0.065	0.064	0.064	0.066	-0.002	-3.030	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.100	7,800,000
Total	21	3,073,281	429,784	296												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001388	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	769,437	45,702	44	0.058	0.061	0.058	0.061	0.056	0.005	8.929	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.100	3,812,500
OM0000003036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	1,900	151	1	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.146	0.005	3.425	0.151	0.000	0.151	0.100	2,475,510
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	2,109,703	169,520	99	0.079	0.082	0.079	0.081	0.079	0.002	2.532	0.081	0.081	0.083	0.100	16,441,902
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	209	40	1	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.190	0.001	0.526	0.191	0.191	0.000	0.100	8,183,011
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	136	136	2	0.998	0.998	0.998	0.998	0.998	0.000	0.000	0.998	0.000	0.000	0.100	49,900,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	166,458	11,273	13	0.069	0.069	0.067	0.068	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.100	14,428,240
OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	661	212	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.000	0.320	1.000	3,528,015
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	242,479	12,138	13	0.050	0.051	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.052	0.100	4,250,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	40,985	4,058	8	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.098	0.100	0.100	221,456,350
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	22,000	3,300	3	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.100	250,411,500
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	898	56	1	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.061	0.065	0.100	90,681,281
OM0000007407	DHOAFAR GENERATING	4,000	252	1	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.063	0.065	0.100	14,001,120
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	7,709,473	786,376	2	0.103	0.103	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.101	0.103	0.100	17,748,000
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	9,534,623	1,068,147	105	0.112	0.113	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.040	387,462,975
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	896,270	304,232	111	0.340	0.340	0.339	0.339	0.340	-0.001	-0.294	0.339	0.339	0.340	0.010	212,000,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	130,000	10,440	11	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.100	6,885,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	21,600	2,768	3	0.130	0.130	0.128	0.128	0.130	-0.002	-1.538	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.100	73,434,148
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	103,756	4,861	12	0.045	0.048	0.045	0.047	0.049	-0.002	-4.082	0.047	0.045	0.048	0.100	11,750,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	13,000	880	4	0.070	0.070	0.067	0.067	0.070	-0.003	-4.286	0.067	0.067	0.070	0.100	10,421,877
OM0000002811	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	3,129	110	3	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.038	-0.003	-7.895	0.035	0.000	0.035	0.100	2,451,049
Total	20	21,769,817	2,424,672	438												
NAMA WATER SERVICES																

Nama completes 2 sewage treatment plants expansion



MUSCAT: Nama Water Services company has completed the project of expansion of the two wastewater treatment plants in the Wilayat of Al Khabourah and the Wilayat of A'Suwaqi. The project reflects the company's commitment to improve the quality of life in the basic services sector.

The project was a step for-

ward in consolidating the pillars of sustainable development in the governorates covered by the company's services.

Adds momentum
Eng. Hilal Masoud Al Sharji, Acting Manager of Operations Support at Nama Water Services, said that the expansion project of the

two wastewater treatment plants adds momentum to the growth of the wastewater sector's infrastructure in the two wilayats.

"The project dealt with treating wastewater and producing regenerated and triple-treated water through the application of the best international practices in this field," Al Sharji added.



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FINANCE

CA, CPA, CIA with 20 years' experience in Strategic finance, Financial reporting, Budget, VAT. Looking for Senior management position in finance. Available to join immediately.

Contact: +968 92148608 +91 7510366356

ENGINEER

Mechatronics Engineer, 7 years of comprehensive experience in energy projects & product design. On Oman visa available for immediate joining.

Contact: +968 96609047
Email: salihputhussery@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Indian, BE Civil Engineer with 10 years experience (8 years in Oman & 2 years in India) in commercial and residential project with valid oman D/L. Currently available in Oman with local NOC / Release.

Contact: +968 7900 6803
Email: thirumurugan9360@gmail.com

PROJECT LEAD

Female, well-versed in Project Administration with 13 years of proven experience in training, recruitment, administration, finance, and secretarial support. As an Executive MBA holder, I can contribute effectively to your organizational goals and looking forward to an interview call and the opportunity.

Contact: 98260708 | meena.v24@gmail.com

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ADMINISTRATION

Required project coordinator (construction site) with 4-5 years' experience in GCC & Oman D/L. [Call/Whatsapp: +968 97123333](mailto:classifieds@timesofoman.com)

ENGINEER

Required MEP, Eng. 5-7 yrs experience with Tech & Marketing skills, knowledge of Oman Market with valid D/L. Send CV to: TQ.BITC@gmail.com

Looking for an HSE officer, Engineer (preferably Omani) and an Engineer (must have experience in water pipeline projects). Please send your resume to: hrgmt@gmail.com

DESIGNER/ AUTOCAD DRAUGHTMAN

Required Draftsman 5 years of experience in steel, aluminum, and woodwork, with knowledge of civil and architectural building drawings. Send CV to TQ.BITC@gmail.com

MANAGER

Required Workshop and manufacturing manager 10 years of experience in steel, metal, aluminum, and wood industries, as well as general building construction. Send CV to: TQ.BITC@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

Required young Gardener for family in Qurum. Experience is must. Contact: 99373548

JOB WANTED

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Business Analyst with 12 yrs experience. Handled migration projects in Banking. IT experience in SQL, Oracle and SAP HANA/BW. Financial experience in GL, core banking. Seeking an opportunity. Contact: 91799438

Indian (M), 28, Accountant with overall exp 3 yrs Valid D/L. Contact: 78624277

Indian male accountant with 1yr experience inOman,looking for suitable job.Contant 76896289

Sr. Accountant, finance officer ACCA (last paper), CA Inter, MS finance. 12 yrs gulf experience. Ready to join immediately. NOC & D/L available. Contact: 77258382

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Accountant MBA (Finance) having 5 yrs experience in airport & logistics ready to join immediately. Contact: 77596968, Email: mohdirfanahmed64@gmail.com

Junior accountant, Indian, male B.com graduate 2yrs experience in Oman seeking suitable job. Contact: 7804 7716

Senior Accountant cum purchaser 18 yrs of exp in Oman. Expert in finalisation, banking, VAT, auditing etc. Well known of tally ERP, quickbook, with valid D/L. Contact: 93653482

Experienced Accounting professional, B.Com, MBA seeks Senior or managerial level opportunity. Contact: 78581435

Highly skilled Chief accountant looking for suitable position. Contact: +968 79888153

Indian MBA graduate having 2 yrs experience in accounting department. Contact: 79819938 Email: mohammedasim955@gmail.com

Indian male, Accountant, M.com (finance), 12 yrs experience in Oman. Handling accounts up to finalization independently, Noc & D/L available. Contact: 99859141

Accounts, finance, A well experienced Indian male [MBA Fin] having more than 19 yrs of experience in Oman,looking for suitable placement, NOC available and can join immediately. Contact: 92076716

Indian male, having 2.5 yrs of experience in Accounts, finance, admin looking for job. Contact: +968 79414996, Email: sajadzn29@gmail.com

Indian male with 4+ yrs exp. in Oman, worked as Accounts & admin executive Bachelor Degree in Management (BBA) with valid D/L, ready to join immediately. Contact: 93536020, Email: naseemtm24@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION

Dynamic and well-experienced professional: 5 yrs of Dubai and 4.5 yrs of Muscat experience in operations management, business excellence or key account management looking for new challenges. Contact: 98766702, Email: ilyas3299@gmail.com

Male with Masters degree in HR,12 yrs of Oman experience in core HR recruitment, succession planning,manpower, bugeting, HR metrics.Overall 16 yrs of experience working in & industry domain. Contact: 78683491, Email: amirfurqan.m@gmail.com

ARCHITECT

Qualified junior Architect with experience in software such as AutoCAD, lumion, sketchUp, revit, 3Ds max etc. looking for job in Oman. Contact +968 78902260 E-mail: ar.mohamedadhelka@gmail.com

Indian male graduate Architect with 5 yrs of GCC experience in a consultancy office looking for job. Contact 79565499

Graduate Architect with valid Oman D/L. Proficient in various Design software. Looking for Architect, interior designer roles. Contact: 93249129, Email: psmenez2015@gmail.com

DESIGNER/ AUTOCAD DRAUGHTMAN

Young, Indian lady specialised in fashion designing, but ready to take up any suitable vacancy like, front desk manage in five star hotels or official work etc. looking for job. Contact: 92781260, Email: ashneliekka@gmail.com

10 yrs Oman experienced Draftsman with valid D/L seeking for suitable positions. Contact: 94408342

Autocad draftsman 10 yrs experience. Ready to immediate join. Oman D/L. Contact: 92752215

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Looking for driving job. Contact: 91891433

Looking for driving job with 10 yrs experience. Contact: 78193255

Looking for driving job, 12 yrs experience in Muscat Oman. Contact: 93211430

Looking for driving job with 15 yrs experience. Contact: 78037801

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Looking for driving job have car. Contact: 98586920

Looking for driving job. Contact: +968 99532361

Looking for driving job with 2 yrs experience. Contact: 97995898.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Indian female, completed MCA and also having experience in teaching, available in Oman on family visa, looking for a suitable job. Contact: 79090343/94117967, Email: induchandran01@gmail.com

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Chemistry teacher with 7 yrs experience of teaching IGCSE chemistry (Pakistani). Currently in Oman. Contact: +968 78684306

ENGINEER

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

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

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

ETC Engineer with hands-on training in industrial automation and project implementation. Proficient in SQL, Proteus, VMware workstation, and CISCO. Eager to apply my skills in electronics design, automation, or telecommunication. Seeking opportunities. Contact : +968 76343443, Email: zarifaga7@gmail.com

Senior Civil engineer having 15 yrs exp in government & private projects and tendering, looking for a suitable position with Oman D/L, Contact: 95962450 Email: solanki.ahmed@gmail.com

BE Project engineer 12-13yrs experience. Contact: 93850875, Email: abdulcivico2015@gmail.com

MEP Mechanical Engineer with 5+ yrs of experience in the GCC, specializing in project implementation, estimation, product sales, and cost estimation. Holds a valid GCC D/L. Contact: +968 92503075, Email: afham232@gmail.com

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BSc in Civil engineer and OSE membership with over 11.5 yrs experience of construction, industrial project and planning. Seeking a suitable position in Oman. WhatsApp: +968 94086556, Email: ccceng.bd@gmail.com

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

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

ENGINEER

Indian male, civil engineer telecom. Total 11 yrs experience 7 yrs GCC experience job seeking. Contact: 95971311

IT

IT Manager with 23 yrs of expertise in ERP implementation, IT infrastructure development, and administration. Seeking a suitable position. Mnb: 93362311, Email: ragesh.vr@gmail.com.

BTech (Computer Science) graduate with 4 yrs experience in software and network implementation, as well as crypto mining farm setup and operations.,holds a valid Oman D/L. Contact: 94187460, Email: edasseryashim98@gmail.com

15+ yrs Oman experienced IT support professional, looking for suitable opportunities with valid visa & NOC available. Contact: 79063180. Email: dd.mcp@hotmail.com

Software developer lead, 22+ yrs experience, Indian male, dotNET, C#, PowerBI, PowerApp, SQL Server, SSIS, SSRS, Nintex, Power-automate. Contact: 92056372

Indian female, under graduate looking for a suitable job in any field. Contact: 94594501

Female software Engineer with advance skills with 5 yrs experience looking for an opportunity. Contact: 78462153

MANAGER

Workshop Manager 30 yrs experience in electrical mechanical machines and equipments seeking suitable opportunities. Contact: 78473341

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

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

LOGISTIC

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

PROCUREMENT/ PURCHASE

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

27 yrs experience in Oman, Indian, looking for a manager position in purchase, sales, holding valid Omani D/L. Contact: 94338072, 78177167

SALES/MARKETING

Indian male 37 yrs old with 15+yrs' experience in Oman FMCG market, handled leading key accounts, market experience, looking TT and MT sales supervisor position. Contact: 77329533, Email: Jasfeerjaleel@hotmail.com

Indian male MBA graduate with 4 yrs experience in India as Assistant manager . Looking for suitable job. Contact: 78633502

Indian male graduate with 14 yrs sales & marketing experience looking for suitable job with valid D/L. Contact: 95136784

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

Indian male MBA graduated specialized with Marketing & HR (fresher). Looking for suitable positions . Currently in Muscat Oman. Contact: +96871084371, Email: ccrashid9@gmail.com



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LIFESTYLE



Located approximately two hours from Muscat, the drive takes you through Oman's rugged terrain before the golden dunes of Rimal Al Sharqiyah come into view

DESERT DREAMS: A JOURNEY INTO LUXURY AT RIMAL AL SHARQIYAH'S DESERT NIGHTS RESORT

Times News Service

The dunes seemed endless, stretching to the horizon like golden waves frozen in motion. As the sun dipped lower, casting long shadows across the sand, my anticipation for what lay ahead grew. I was en route to Desert Nights Resort, a luxury hideaway in Rimal Al Sharqiyah, better known as Wahiba Sands. This wasn't just a stay - it was a journey into the heart of Oman's desert, where luxury and tradition meet under star-filled skies.

The journey to Desert Nights Resort is an adventure in itself. Located approximately two hours from Muscat, the drive takes you through Oman's rugged terrain before the golden dunes of Rimal Al Sharqiyah come into view.

A warm welcome

The first thing I noticed upon arriving at the resort was the quiet - deep, almost reverent silence broken only by the occasional whisper of wind through the sands. Greeted with a cool refreshing towel followed by warm Omani coffee and dates, I was ushered to my deluxe two-bedroom villa in the shape of a tent, though 'tent' hardly does justice to what awaited me.

The resort offers a total of 88 accommodations: 55 luxurious Bedouin-style tents and 33 deluxe rooms. The spread-out accommodation includes 6 one-bedroom pool villas and 10 premium villas.

The tents are spacious and air-conditioned, feature king-sized beds, en-suite bathrooms, and private sit-out areas where guests can soak in panoramic views of the dunes.

The accommodations were Bedouin-style on the outside, blending seamlessly into the desert landscape. Inside, they were an oasis of luxury. Plush bedding, handcrafted furniture, and traditional Omani decor created a space that was both comforting and authentic.

The bathroom alone felt like a sanctuary, with a rainfall shower and premium amenities - a stark but welcome contrast to the starkness of the desert outside.

Dune bashing and sunsets

As I had arrived just in time for the much talked about sunset, the hotel offered a complimentary drive up the dunes for a visual treat.

We paused atop a particularly high dune just as the sun began to set. The guide, a cheerful local with an encyclopedic knowledge of the area, gestured for us to sit. Watching the sun sink into the sands, painting the landscape in hues of amber and crimson, was an almost spiritual experience. Adding to the enjoyment was the offerings of complimentary tea/coffee and



cold drinks along with dates and other savories.

Back at the resort, I dined under the stars at the Dunes restaurant. The menu offered an array of Omani and international dishes. Every bite was a celebration of flavour, enhanced by the cool desert breeze and the softly glowing lanterns around me that blended perfectly with the soft notes of local singers and lute musicians, enhancing the evening.

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast to start the day that was both diverse and memorable with guests able to also enjoy live cooking stations.

I then took a complimentary camel ride where the guide shared stories of Bedouin traditions, from their survival skills in this unforgiving landscape to their deep connection with camels.

Eager to dive into the desert experience, I signed up for a dune-bashing excursion.

As the 4x4 climbed, dipped, and skidded across the towering dunes, my heart raced. The thrill of navigating the shifting sands was matched only by the breathtaking vistas at every peak.

Later, I visited a local Bedouin family, an experience that left a lasting impression. The family's hospitality was unmatched, and I was invited to share freshly baked bread and kahwa while listening to tales of life in the sands. It was humbling to witness their resourcefulness and deep respect for their environment.

A balance of adventure and relaxation

For those seeking serenity, Desert Nights Resort offers ample opportunities to unwind. I spent my afternoon at the Mandara Spa, where I indulged in a rejuvenating massage using locally sourced oils. As my tension melted away, I realised how perfectly the resort balances adventure with relaxation.

One of the highlights of my stay was simply stargazing. With no light pollution, the desert sky transforms into a celestial masterpiece. Wrapped in a blanket, I lay on a lounge chair outside my tent, marveling at constellations and the desert's tranquil beauty.

Desert Nights Resort is committed to preserving the pris-



tine beauty of Rimal Al Sharqiyah. The resort employs eco-friendly practices, such as minimising water and energy consumption and reducing plastic use. Additionally, it actively supports the local community by partnering with Bedouin families and artisans, ensuring that tourism benefits the region's inhabitants.

During my stay, Anurin Jansen, the resort's General Manager, shared insights into the plans for 2025, including new experiences designed to deepen the connection between guests and the desert.

"We want every visitor to leave with a piece of Wahiba Sands in



their heart," he said. "It's not just about luxury; it's about creating memories that last a lifetime."

Upcoming offerings include guided photography tours, focusing on the interplay of light and shadow in the dunes, and immersive cultural workshops where guests can learn traditional crafts.

As my stay drew to a close, I felt a pang of reluctance to leave this extraordinary place. Desert Nights Resort isn't just a luxury retreat - it's a gateway to a deeper understanding of Oman's culture, history, and the sheer beauty of its deserts.

Driving away, I took one last

look at the dunes, now bathed in the soft light of early morning. The memories of my time here - thrilling adventures, peaceful moments, and heartfelt connections - would linger long after the sands had faded from view.

For anyone seeking an unforgettable journey into the heart of Oman's desert, Desert Nights Resort offers more than just a place to stay; it offers a story waiting to be lived for an unparalleled experience in the heart of Oman's iconic desert.

Here, the dunes tell ancient stories, the stars shine brighter, and every moment is steeped in

the timeless allure of the desert. It's more than just a stay - it's a journey into the soul of Oman.

Exclusive daycation offers for Oman resident

Residents can now enjoy discounted rates for stays and day outings at Desert Nights Resort. Daycation packages are available from just OMR 30 per person and staycation packages are available from OMR 60 per room. The offer is valid for outings and stays between January - June 2025. For reservations and more information, contact reservations@desertnightscamp.com or call +968 92818388.

SPORTS

Haas appoint Muller as Formula One's first female race engineer

The German engineer will partner with team's new driver Esteban Ocon as Haas announces significant changes

LONDON: Haas has announced a series of significant changes to its race operations team, including the groundbreaking appointment of Laura Muller as Formula One's first female race engineer.

The German engineer will partner with Haas' new driver, Esteban Ocon, in one of two pivotal race engineer roles.

This marks a historic milestone in F1's pursuit of greater diversity and inclusion.

Haas also welcomes Carine Cridelich, formerly of Red Bull's Racing Bulls team, as its new Head of Strategy. Starting 1 March, Cridelich joins a growing number of female leaders in high-profile F1 roles.

Race engineers play a critical part in a driver's performance, being their primary point of contact



for car setup, strategy, and real-time feedback during races. Muller's counterpart on British rookie Oliver Bearman's car will be Ronan O'Hare, an internal promotion from his previous role as Performance Engineer.

Haas Team Principal Ayao Komatsu emphasised the importance of meritocracy in his decision-making.

He said: "It's not about nationality or gender - it's about capability, teamwork, and performance. Lau-

ra and Ronan are simply the best choices for the job."

Komatsu, who stepped into the team principal role in 2024, has been driving improvements to Haas' race operations since early last year.

The team has also filled key roles previously left vacant, including Chief Race Engineer (Francesco Nenci, with experience at Audi's Dakar Rally programme, Sauber, and Toyota), and Sporting Director (Mark Lowe, promoted from

Operations Team Manager).

Komatsu admitted Haas had room to improve its execution, despite having the fifth-fastest car by the end of last season.

"We should have finished sixth in the Constructors' Championship, but operational inefficiencies cost us points," he said.

With a more competitive budget aligned to F1's cost cap for the first time and a shift to retaining last year's Ferrari suspension for aerodynamic stability, Haas aims for

consistency in 2025.

Cridelich joins a prestigious group of women in F1 strategy, including Hannah Schmitz at Red Bull. Other trailblazers, such as Ruth Buscombe and Bernie Collins, have transitioned into broadcasting, paving the way for new talent.

Based in Kannapolis, North Carolina, with its race team headquartered in Banbury, Oxfordshire, Haas continues to deliver results that surpass expectations. Ko-

matsu remains optimistic about the team's trajectory. He said: "Haas has always punched above its weight, and with these changes, we're focused on sustaining and building on that momentum."

Haas finished seventh in the Constructors' Championship last year, ahead of Racing Bulls, Williams, and Sauber. With fresh leadership and renewed ambition, the team is setting its sights on a consistent and competitive season ahead. - Agencies

IN KOLKATA

Wood returns for England's first T20I against India

KOLKATA: Fast bowler Mark Wood will play for the first time since August in England's first T20I against India at Edne Gardens in Kolkata on Wednesday.

Wood, 35, has not played since the first Test against Sri Lanka last summer after a stress fracture was discovered in his elbow while he was sidelined with a minor thigh issue.

The Durham player joins Jofra Archer in England's pace attack with Ben Duckett set to open the batting alongside Phil Salt.

It will be the first time Duckett, England's Test opener, has opened in T20s for six years.

The five-match series against India and the three one-day internationals that follow and England's first matches with Brendon McCullum as their white-ball coach.

McCullum has transformed the Test side since being appointed in 2022 and now takes on both roles until 2027.

Wicketkeeper Jamie Smith, pace bowlers Brydon Carse and Saqib Mahmood, as well as leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed are the players to miss out on a place in McCullum's first XI.

Duckett's promotion means England return to the opening partnership used in the ODI series against Australia in September.

Duckett missed the white-ball tour to West Indies in November because of his Test commitments and Salt opened with Surrey batter Will Jacks, who was left out of the



squad to tour India.

Salt will continue to keep wicket against India with captain Jos Buttler leading from the field.

Gus Atkinson has been selected for his first white-ball matches since 2023 on the back of a stellar debut year in Test cricket where he took 52 wickets in 11 matches in 2024.

He has previously played three T20s and nine ODIs.

Spin-bowling all-rounder Jacob Bethell also retains his place after a breakthrough winter.

He impressed in the under-strength England side on his debut tour of West Indies and then scored fifties in each of his first three Tests in New Zealand before Christmas.

"All credit to him [Bethell]," Buttler said.

"He has done incredibly well

coming into international cricket. "He has a good head on his shoulders and has the game for it.

"It was fantastic to watch him in New Zealand. He has been playing really well and this is a new challenge for him and one I know he is excited for."

McCullum's arrival comes as England begin preparations for the Champions Trophy in Pakistan next month.

The next T20 World Cup is also in India and Sri Lanka next year.

India are the current T20 world champions but have named a youthful squad for the T20 series. Experienced fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah is injured and will miss the series.

England XI: Salt (wk), Duckett, Buttler (c), Brook, Livingstone, Bethell, J Overton, Atkinson, Archer, Rashid, Wood. - Agencies

IPL 2025

Pant vows to give '200%' after being unveiled as LSG captain

KOLKATA: Rishabh Pant has vowed to "give 200%" to Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) after being officially unveiled as the franchise's captain for IPL 2025.

Pant was bought at the pre-season auction for a record INR 27 crore (USD 3.21 million approx.).

"Thank you to the LSG family for showing faith in me," Pant said, alongside team owner Sanjiv Goenka and mentor Zaheer Khan, in Kolkata on Monday.

"I will give my 200% and that's my commitment to you. I will try whatever is in my power to repay the faith you have shown. Looking forward to having a new beginning with new energy and just having a blast out there, and having lots of fun."

Pant takes over from KL Rahul, who led the franchise for its first three seasons before going back into the auction this time around. Pant moves to LSG after a long stint with Delhi Capitals - he was with the franchise since 2016, took over its captaincy in 2021 and led all through barring the 2023 season, when he was recuperating from a serious car accident.

With LSG, he has a chance to build on the team's previous three seasons of moderate success; they made two playoffs in a row before missing out in IPL 2024.

"Yes this is a new team and a new set-up but my ideology of captaining a side doesn't change," Pant said. "But as a cricketer you are [always] trying to add to your captaincy. If you give confidence



and trust in a player, he will do things you can't even imagine. That's the ideology we will try to have. We will give them trust, clear communication and lay out what role we have for them.

"One thing we will stress on is a never-say-die attitude. 'You fight till the last ball.' That's what I emphasise on. Performances will come and go, but are you fighting enough? Are you giving your 100% on the field? And that is something you can control as an individual.

"See, everyone gets tired but eventually how far are you willing to take it? Are you willing to give that extra 20-30% for the team, even though your body is not allowing? That's the kind of character we want in the team and that's the culture we are building."

Zaheer, who as captain of Delhi Daredevils in 2016, had worked

with a young Pant fresh off his India Under-19 stint, said Pant is someone who has inspired a new style of play. He said that acquiring Pant and naming him captain was the first of many pillars that LSG were putting in place to create a winning franchise.

But will their crew of middle-order left-hand batters affect team balance? LSG will potentially line up with Pant, David Miller and Nicholas Pooran back-to-back. Zaheer said good batters will always find a way.

"It can be a tactical edge also," Zaheer said. "That's how we are looking at it. I haven't looked at how many left-handers I want in the team. It's fine as long as you have the balance, you have options in the squad and your bases are covered. When I'm looking at our team, it's looking like a solid unit." - Agencies

T20I SERIES AGAINST ENGLAND

India's new vice-captain Axar Patel hints at flexible middle order

KOLKATA: All of India's batters apart from their openers can expect to have flexible roles in the T20I line-up.

Axar Patel, India's newly appointed vice-captain in the format, suggested this could be the case in his press conference ahead of the five-match T20I series against England.

The series is set to kick off in Kolkata on Wednesday, with Chennai, Rajkot, Pune and Mumbai to host the remaining T20Is.

In recent years, India have used Axar to good effect as a floater. It's a reflection of his improvement with the bat - having averaged 21.26 and struck at 131.25 in all T20s until the end of 2022, he has upped his performances significantly, averaging 30.32 and striking at 145.62 since the start of 2023 - and his versatility, with India, Delhi Capitals and Gujarat sending him out in a variety

of situations. He has scored six half-centuries in these last two years, from Nos. 3, 4, 6 and 7.

Over recent months, India have used not just Axar but also Hardik Pandya, Tilak Varma, Nitish Reddy, Washington Sundar and Rinku Singh as floaters with varying levels of success.

"Batting wise, it's not just with me, but we spoke in 2023-24 itself that the openers are fixed, but everyone from Nos. 3 to 7 have been told that they can come into bat anytime, in any situation. It is not just that one batter will bat at a particular position," Axar told reporters ahead of the first game. "Our middle order will come to bat depending on the match situation, what kind of bowlers are bowling at the time, which match-up works well.

"We've spoken about that, how we can all be floaters, be it com-



ing in early or obviously finishing. This is not just for me, but for everyone from No. 3 and below, especially if they are in good touch in the nets. We will adjust accordingly. In T20Is, how you use your batters is so crucial, so this is an important factor in batting."

As Suryakumar Yadav's deputy

in T20Is, Axar felt he would have to learn to take difficult calls. It is a topic he has discussed with the support staff too.

"It has just been a day, but as part of the leadership group there is an extra responsibility," Axar said. "The T20I side is settled, so there's not much pressure, but

there are small decisions that need making and during the game I need to work closely with Suryakumar.

"As part of the leadership group, you have to learn to take harsh decisions. We have spoken about sharing our genuine opinions and that will help build trust in this group.

"The T20I format is such that it is so fast that you have to make decisions quickly, so the larger conversations [with the coaches] are about how to do that."

India's immediate focus is on ODI cricket, with the Champions Trophy looming, but T20Is will assume greater significance once that tournament ends. Defending champions India and Sri Lanka are set to co-host the T20 World Cup in February-March 2026.

Apart from these five matches against England, India don't have too many T20Is lined up before

they embark on their title defence: currently, they are scheduled to play three T20Is in Bangladesh in August, and five at home against South Africa later in the year.

"The World Cup is coming up in a year so how we approach leading up to that, we want to try it from now itself. That's the main target," Axar said.

"Momentum is a big thing because if you start well, you can carry it. We finished 2024 well so we want to carry the momentum into this series too.

"But we've discussed that the past is past, however, we want to move ahead with the positives we gained from there. We have taken forward the points that brought us success.

"Transition is also something happening, across all formats, but that's a call for the selectors and captain to take." - Agencies

ROUND-UP

MG RX9 redefines luxury and performance in SUV segment

It combines elegance, power, and advanced technology, ensuring that every drive is an extraordinary experience

MUSCAT: MHD ACERE, the official distributor of MG in Oman, recently launched all-new MG RX9, setting a new standard in the SUV segment. The MG RX9 blends sophistication, power, and versatility, offering an unparalleled driving experience for both urban explorers and adventure enthusiasts.

Speaking about the car, Mohsin Hani Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, emphasized the significance of the MG RX9 for the Omani market, “The MG RX9 represents a remarkable step forward in redefining what a premium SUV can offer. It combines elegance, power, and advanced technology, ensuring that every drive is an extraordinary experience.

“At MHD ACERE, we are committed to bringing innovative



and versatile vehicles to Oman, and the MG RX9 is a testament to that promise.”

Statement of class
The exterior of the MG RX9 exudes sophistication with its sharp lines, premium 21-inch dual-tone alloy wheels, and pop-out flush door handles. Noise-cancelling front windscreens enhance the tranquil experience, while the composed and confident design ensures that the MG RX9 turns heads wherever it goes.

Cloud nine comfort
Inside, the MG RX9 offers an un-

matched level of comfort. Spacious seating and thoughtful design create a serene environment for all passengers.

The 140-degree reclining second-row seats provide flight-like comfort, while the 3rd-row passengers enjoy up to 35 degrees of reclining space and ample leg-

room. Every aspect of the interior is designed to make every journey effortless and enjoyable.

Best of both worlds
Powered by the 2.0T “Net Blue” engine, the MG RX9 delivers 201 HP and 350 Nm of torque, offering an exhilarating performance

across any terrain. With five distinct driving modes—Auto, Sport, Snow, Off-Road, and Eco—this SUV adapts seamlessly to every environment, putting you in control of thrilling adventures or smooth urban drives.

Engineered for ease
Advanced technology is at the heart of the MG RX9. From wireless charging and seamless smartphone integration with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto to the premium 12-speaker BOSE audio system, it ensures every drive is convenient and connected. Dual 12.3-inch displays add a touch of luxury while putting entertainment and essential controls at your fingertips.

All-star confidence
Safety is a priority in the MG RX9. Equipped with side and curtain airbags, Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), Lane Departure Warning, Blind Spot Monitoring, and a 360-degree camera system, it provides confidence and peace of mind on every journey. Built with over 80% high-strength steel, the MG RX9 combines strength and style in one remarkable package.

The MG RX9 is not just an SUV—it’s a statement of prestige, a promise of performance, and a sanctuary of comfort.

CRITICAL ROLE

Sohar International and Sohar Islamic: Strategic sponsor and key participant at second Finance and Insurance Forum

MUSCAT: Recognising the finance sector’s critical role in driving economic growth, Sohar International and Sohar Islamic served as strategic sponsors at the Second Finance and Insurance Forum.

The forum was organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Al Batinah North Governorate branch, on January 20–21, 2025. Held under the patronage of Shaikh Abdullah Salim Al Salmi, Executive President of the Capital Market Authority (CMA), the forum convened industry leaders to address challenges and explore opportunities in finance and insurance, aligning with Oman’s vision for sustainable economic progress.

The forum featured high-level discussions that delved into critical themes within finance and insurance, offering actionable insights to fortify these essential sectors. Abdul Wahid Mohammed Al Murshidi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, contributed to a high-level panel discussion titled “The Legislative Environment of the Financial System and its Role in Enabling Institutions and Businesses.”

Speaking on the occasion, Abdul Wahid Mohammed Al Murshidi said, “At Sohar International, we believe that effective dialogue is a catalyst for sustainable development. Our sponsorship and participation in this forum reflect our commitment to driving innovation



and supporting Oman’s vision for a diversified economy. Events of this scale provide valuable opportunities to address systemic challenges, explore groundbreaking solutions, and unite key stakeholders from the financial and insurance sectors. By engaging in these critical discussions, we reaffirm our role as a strategic partner in shaping a resilient economic future for the nation. Through these discussions, we also gain unique perspectives that allow us to refine our services and develop tailored solutions that align with the aspirations of businesses, entrepreneurs, and individuals. These exchanges not only enable us to adapt to evolving market needs but also empower us to contribute meaningfully to the nation’s economic transformation.”

At the forum, the bank led discussions on the impact of financial policies on enhancing private

sector performance, the role of financial services in attracting foreign investments, and innovative approaches to overcoming financing challenges for commercial enterprises. These discussions complemented the forum’s objective of bringing together diverse perspectives to address key industry concerns. In addition to this, the forum featured sessions on ‘Digital Transformation in the Insurance Sector: Opportunities and Challenges’ and ‘Innovative Financing Prospects for Startups,’ which provided valuable insights into emerging trends and growth opportunities. Specialized workshops further enriched the agenda, addressing sector-specific needs through targeted programs.

Sohar International and Sohar Islamic remain dedicated to shaping the future of Oman’s financial landscape through its participation in pivotal industry forums.

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT SAFETY



Burjeel Holdings Oman organises international nursing conference

MUSCAT: Burjeel Holdings Oman organised the International Nursing Conference at the Crowne Plaza hotel, Muscat, under the theme “Advancing Excellence in Nursing: Innovations in Patient Safety and Quality Care.”

The event witnessed an overwhelming response with around 250 participants from both public and private establishments, including distinguished representatives from the Ministry of Health, healthcare leaders, and guests.

The conference was graced by chief guest Dr Mohammad bin Khamis Al Farsi, (Advisor to the Minister for Planning and International Relations) and he was accompanied by Idrees Fahad Said Al Rasbi (Director of Undersecretary Office for Human Resources Development) whose inspiring presence underscored the significance of advancing nursing excellence for better healthcare outcomes.

Professor Dr. Mohammed Issa Al Ismaili, Interim Dean of Oman Dental College, extended his special greetings and best wishes for

the success of the event.

The conference featured a dynamic lineup of speakers, including national and international experts, who shared their insights on critical topics related to nursing innovation, patient safety, and quality care. Among the speakers were professionals from the Ministry of Health, Occupational Health, clinical specialties, and seasoned nurses, encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration.

Key sessions included

- * Expert discussions on innovative nursing practices to address modern healthcare challenges.
- * A thought-provoking panel session themed around The future of Nursing: redefining the safety standards in digital era, featuring diverse perspectives from clinical nurses, Nursing Leaders, Academicians, and policy experts.

With an engaging mix of knowledge-sharing and interactive discussions, the event provided a unique opportunity for healthcare professionals to explore

emerging trends, share best practices, and cultivate a culture of continuous improvement.

The conference was a pivotal step in addressing the evolving demands of the healthcare industry, emphasizing the critical role of nursing in driving healthcare excellence.

The conference attracted a diverse audience of 300+ attendees, including healthcare leaders, nursing professionals, policymakers, and representatives from public and private establishments. The presence of distinguished members from the Ministry of Health further highlighted the importance of the event in advancing Oman’s healthcare system.

The International Nursing Conference reaffirmed Burjeel Holdings Oman’s commitment to excellence in nursing, innovation, and patient-centred care. It provided a powerful platform for interdisciplinary collaboration and set the stage for ongoing advancements in healthcare practices in Oman and beyond.

CAMPAIGN

Chery now offers amazing opportunities to enjoy impressive savings



MUSCAT: Chery Oman recently unveiled a fantastic campaign that encourages car buyers to make the most of impressive savings.

Customers purchasing any Chery model will benefit with Free Service up to 50,000 kms, Free VAT, Registration 1 Year, Insurance 1 Year, Scratch and Win assured gifts such as 1 Samsung S24 Plus Phone, 2 laptops, 3 Smart TVs, 54 Fuel Cards and Engine warranty of 10 years /1,000,000 kms (Conditions apply. Please visit any Chery showroom for more details.) The offer that began on 2 December 2024 will last until 30 January 2025.

The dynamic Arrizo 8, is available in both 1.6-litre and 2.0-litre engine variants. Designed to deliver a seamless blend of power, style and advanced technology, the

Arrizo 8 is set to redefine driving experiences for car enthusiasts. Both variants are equipped with cutting-edge Turbocharged Direct Injection (TDI) technology, ensuring optimal fuel economy without compromising on power.

The Arrizo 8 is a statement of sophistication. With its bold grille, sleek LED headlights and aerodynamic silhouette, the sedan exudes modernity and elegance. Inside, drivers are welcomed by a premium cabin featuring plush upholstery, multi-colour ambient lighting and a driver-centric cockpit that redefines comfort.

The Arrizo 8 is loaded with smart features, including Dual 12.3-inch Screens, a fully digital dashboard and infotainment system for an intuitive user experience. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)

enhances safety with adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, and collision avoidance.

The Arrizo 8 sets a benchmark in safety, boasting a 5-star NCAP rating. With its rigid body structure and a suite of active and passive safety features, this sedan ensures peace of mind on every journey.

Whether seeking an efficient urban companion or a performance-driven powerhouse, the Arrizo 8 delivers. Available in a range of stunning colors it offers something for every taste and preference.

Kantar and Google jointly released the 2023 Chinese Global Brand Builders. Chery is ranked as the best Chinese global brand builder in cars and 14th in the overall list and its brand power has achieved strong growth.

ROUND-UP

Khedmah signs pact with Vodafone for seamless bill collection services

This strategic partnership enables Vodafone Oman customers to seamlessly manage and pay their prepaid and postpaid bills securely through the user-friendly Khedmah App, the Khedmah website, or through its extensive network of branches



MUSCAT: In a strategic initiative to expand its service portfolio and enhance customer convenience, Oman Investment and Finance Company (OIFC) Khedmah has signed a bill collections agreement with Oman Future Telecommunications (Vodafone Oman). The agreement was formalised by Said bin Ahmed Safar, Chief Execu-

tive Officer of OIFC, and Eng. Badr bin Saud Al-Zidi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Future Telecommunications (Vodafone Oman). This strategic partnership enables Vodafone Oman customers to seamlessly manage and pay their prepaid and postpaid bills securely through the user-friendly Khedmah App, the Khedmah website,

or through its extensive network of branches. Commenting on the occasion, Saud bin Ahmed Al Siyabi, Chief Operating Officer of OIFC Khedmah, remarked, "We are excited to partner with Vodafone Oman, a collaboration that underscores the shared commitment of both companies to streamline bill payment

and recharge processes for Vodafone Oman customers. "This partnership is a testament to the growth both companies are experiencing and our collective efforts to enhance the customer experience. It highlights the trust Khedmah has built in bill collection and its deep expertise in customer service. This partnership will further solidify Khedmah's position as a leader in digital billing and collection." Khedmah's dedication to excellence and innovation is reflected in its ongoing efforts to deliver unique digital solutions that address the diverse needs of customers across the Sultanate. With a legacy spanning over four decades, Khedmah has established itself as a pioneer in billing and collections in Oman, providing a centralized platform for customers to pay bills for electricity, water, telecommunications, internet, social protection fund subscriptions, traffic fines and more. This streamlined

process significantly reduces the time, effort, and costs involved in managing these services through a single platform. Its extensive network includes 61 branches across various governorates and regions, complemented by strategically placed self-service kiosks, as well as branches of Wasel Exchange, fully owned by Oman Investment and Finance Company. Khedmah further enhances convenience and accessibility through a suite of digital channels, including the Khedmah mobile application, website, and the groundbreaking E-wallet, Khedmah Pay. Recently, the company expanded its offerings by launching Khedmah Delivery, a user-friendly food ordering and delivery app designed to ensure a seamless experience and secure transactions. This continued innovation underscores Khedmah's commitment to enriching customer experiences and advancing digital transformation in Oman.

ISLAMIC BANKING



Now open Mudaraba Savings account via Dhofar Islamic app and enjoy debit card fee exemption

MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic, the Islamic banking window of BankDhofar, has introduced a new feature that allows customers to open a Mudaraba Savings Account conveniently through its mobile application. This service, available in a few simple steps, comes with an exemption from debit card fees starting from mid-January until December 31, 2025. The initiative reaffirms Dhofar Islamic's dedication to offering innovative banking solutions that cater to customers' everyday financial needs. By enhancing the features of its electronic channels and mobile application, Dhofar Islamic ensures a seamless and efficient experience for its customers. The ability to open a Mudaraba Savings Account within minutes through the mobile app saves

valuable time and effort, significantly elevating the banking experience. Customers can simply download the app, complete the process effortlessly, and track their request status with exceptional ease and comfort. Amor Said Mohamed Al Amri, DGM & Head of Retail Banking Dhofar Islamic, highlighted the bank's commitment to enriching the customer experience. He noted that the bank's ongoing focus on developing digital channels ensures that customers can manage their accounts conveniently, anytime and anywhere. He emphasized that the Mudaraba Savings Account feature is part of a broader range of pioneering digital services and solutions available through BankDhofar's mobile application, which operates 24/7 to provide unparalleled financial convenience.

EXPANDS NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Development Bank concludes 'The Pioneers of Development' programme to enhance entrepreneurs' skills

MUSCAT: The Development Bank, in partnership with Outward Bound Oman, has concluded the 'The Pioneers of Development' programme held in the Sharqiyah Sands. The programme aimed to develop entrepreneurial skills, strengthen the ability to face challenges, and expand the networking opportunities of Omani entrepreneurs. The programme sought to enhance the life skills of entrepreneurs, enabling them to increase the success rates of their companies and projects through a well-structured set of outdoor activities and group discussions, accompanied by a 3-day hiking and camping experience in an inspiring desert environment. The programme also focused on developing essential entrepreneurial capabilities, team leadership, creative thinking, seizing opportunities, and boosting resilience to overcome challenges. Additionally, it helped raise awareness about Oman Vision 2040 and ways to contribute to its realization. More than 27 entrepreneurs participated in the programme from the customers' base of Development Bank, which provided an exceptional opportunity to improve



their competitive capabilities, contributing to the sustainability of their businesses and the enhancement of the local economy. Mohammed bin Nasser Al Abdulsalam, the Marketing Manager at Development Bank, said: "We are proud to organize this programme, which reflects our commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and enhancing leadership skills among Omani youth. This programme is an effective op-

portunity that combines practical experience and theoretical knowledge, enabling entrepreneurs to face market challenges and contribute to sustainable economic development." Ishaq AlShiriani, CEO of Eghna Academy and a participant in the programme, expressed his benefit, stating: "The programme helped me understand the importance of team alignment before embarking on any task, as well as the necessity

of effective communication between leaders and subordinates." Additionally, Ashwaq Al Sinani, a flower shop owner and one of the programme's beneficiaries, said: "I benefited personally from stepping outside of conventional ideas, which allowed my mind to rest and discover my intellectual potential. Professionally, I developed skills in collaboration, courage in action, working under challenges and pressure, perseverance, and strength."

APPOINTMENT

St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort welcomes Wassim Daageh as general manager

MUSCAT: The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, Muscat's most alluring address, welcomes Wassim Daageh as General Manager, joining the resort from his previous role as General Manager in Doha, Qatar. With over two decades of exemplary experience in the luxury hospitality sector, Wassim is dedicated to further elevate the resort's operations within the region's luxury landscape. Owned by the renowned Alfordan Group, the resort is a luxurious coastal haven nestled in the heart of Al Mouj Muscat. This exquisite property seamlessly blends Omani heritage with contemporary design, offering guests an unparalleled experience of refined elegance and exceptional service. Wassim's career spans multiple leadership positions across some of the world's most renowned properties. He has overseen large-scale, high-profile international events—including the FIFA World Cup and Formula 1—and consistently delivered guest experiences defined by personal attention and service excellence. Throughout his tenure, he has garnered numerous industry accolades, from the Qatar Tourism Service Excellence Award to being



named Global General Manager of the Year for one of Marriott International's hotels, and was repeatedly recognized in the 'General Manager Power 100' by Hotelier Middle East. "I am deeply grateful for the journey that has led me to this moment," said Wassim Daageh. "My time in Qatar, a place I have proudly called home, has been invaluable, and I now look forward to this new chapter at The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort and

The St. Regis Residences in Oman. Both destinations will undoubtedly shape my perspectives and approach to hospitality, and I am honored to continue contributing to the region's vibrant and evolving luxury landscape." A graduate with a bachelor's degree in Hotel Management, Wassim is also a Six Sigma Green Belt and a certified service culture trainer for two of Marriott International brands. His innovative approach has led to the implementation of progressive operational enhancements such as key mobile check-in, unique dining-to-go concepts, and advanced digital communication platforms for guests. Wassim is deeply committed to sustainability and community engagement. He champions initiatives that nurture local talent, support indigenous artisans, and promote responsible sourcing from local producers, aligning with the St. Regis dedication to creating meaningful connections within its communities. Under Wassim's visionary leadership, guests can expect thoughtfully curated experiences that reflect the essence of St. Regis hospitality—where every detail is crafted with care and every moment is an opportunity for connection.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Omantel CEO hosts leaders of 'Ruwad Alizz' programme

MUSCAT: As part of the Ruwad Alizz leadership programme, the delegates of batch IV of the programme recently conducted a visit to the Omantel head office where Talal Al Maamari, the CEO of Omantel in the presence of Ali Al Mani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank welcomed them and conducted a keynote session highlighting his career journey, the biggest challenges facing leaders today, and the importance of continuous innovation. The candidates were then given a comprehensive tour of the company's key facilities such as the innovation labs, smart shop, museum and more. The 'Ruwad Alizz' programme is a comprehensive leadership development journey that spans various stages of study. Initially, employees engage with Harvard University, accessing educational online materials. As part of the programme, participants conduct independent research on a specific leadership topic and experience a comprehensive and accelerated development journey. The programme facilitates assimilation of diverse experiences and leadership styles throughout the 6 months course. Touching upon the recent visit Ghalib Al Kharusi, Head of Human Capital at Alizz Islamic Bank said, "It was a pleasure to be hosted by Omantel and tour their Head Of-



fice. The candidates were all fascinated by the use of technology and the logistical processes by various departments. One of the biggest takeaways for the participants was how reciprocal the relationship is in Omantel between innovation and customer service." Al Khaursi added, "At Alizz Islamic Bank we are focused on collectively serving our beloved country by developing future leaders in alignment with Oman's Vision 2040. We reiterate the bank's dedication to this by equipping talented Omanis with suitable opportunities for innovation and sustainable growth and visits such as this provided a unique opportunity for participants to learn from diverse leadership styles and organisational experiences, which is essential for future success."

Alizz Islamic Bank continuously strives to develop the future leaders of Oman; placing great importance on education, training and development, empowering future leaders and equipping them with the skills and capabilities needed to contribute their creative potential towards serving their communities. Ruwad Alizz Programme is designed to empower and develop 40 employees annually, 20 from Alizz Islamic Bank and 20 from other esteemed Government & Private Sector institutions as part of the Bank's strategic direction and sustainability drive. The program entails six consecutive months of dedicated study, with the first, second and third batches having already more than 90 successful Ruwad Alizz graduates.

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