

## TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

## TOXIC CHEMICALS

## TEHRAN DIALOGUE FORUM

The plan was devised using a comprehensive, scientific, and participatory methodology, drawing on international best practices and lessons learned from previous plans while ensuring alignment with the strategic approaches of “Oman Vision 2040.” **>A3**



As for the environmental benefits, Yusra emphasized that the innovation is more sustainable than traditional filters, particularly activated carbon. The pro-

On challenges faced during development, Yusra highlighted difficulties in conducting scientific experiments and proving the material's efficacy after her graduation, as she no longer had direct access to university labs. **>A3**

During the workshop, an overview of the Eleventh Five-Year Development Plan and proposed programmes for sustainable governance and urban development



# Participants of ambassadors’ forum visit iconic projects in Muscat region

The programme involved field visits to the Oman Botanic Garden, Sultan Haitham City, the dualisation of Al Ansab-Jafnain Road, and a visit to the Green Walk

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The First Governors’ Envoys Forum, which kicked off on Tuesday, aims to promote institutional integration and the exchange of best practices in contracts and tenders management. It supports the government’s directives to decentralisation, empowering governorates, and achieving balanced development across the Sultanate of Oman.

On Wednesday, the first Governorates Ambassadors Forum programme involved field visits to a number of vital projects in Muscat Governorate, including the Oman Botanic Garden, Sultan Haitham City, the dualisation of Al Ansab-Jafnain Road, and a visit to the Green Walk.

During the visit, a number of visual presentations were also shown that showcased other ongoing projects such as the Rifq Centre for the Care and Rehabilitation of



Stray Animals, the Al Amerat Path Project, the Flagpole Project, and the Yeti Sustainable City Project, to familiarise participants with the diversity of projects and business models adopted in the governorate.

**Sultan Haitham City**

The forum programme included a field visit to Sultan Haitham City, the first smart city in Oman.

The ambassadors were briefed on the most prominent features of the city, which was built on an area of more than 14 million square metres to accommodate about 100,000 people, and includes 20,000 housing units distributed in 19 full-service neighbourhoods, as well as educational, health and community facilities, and a smart transport network that adopts sustainability criteria, such as renewable energy, green spaces, and environmentally friendly designs.

In addition to educational, health and community facilities, and a smart transport network

based on sustainability standards, such as renewable energy, green spaces, and environmentally friendly designs.

The city is a model for modern urban planning, providing a flexible environment, enhancing the quality of life, and providing lifestyles that meet the aspirations of all society groups.

**The Oman Botanic Garden**

The programme also provided a field visit to the Oman Botanic Garden, one of the largest environmental projects in the Arab world.

Located on 430 hectares in Al Khoud village in Seeb, surrounded by Oman’s northern mountains, the garden includes all types of Omani plants in carefully designed natural environments, including facilities such as the visitor centre, nursery, field studies centre, and indoor environments such as the northern and southern mountain climates.

The park is a unique model of natural heritage conservation and

houses the largest seed bank in Oman, making it a scientific and tourism centre that combines research, education and ecological experience.

**Duplication of Al-Ansab-Jafnain Road**

During the field visits, the participants were also briefed on the Al Ansab-Jafnain road dualisation project, which is one of the vital projects aimed at enhancing traffic infrastructure in Muscat Governorate, extending 15 kilometres from Falaj Al Sham area in Bausher to Al Jafnain in Seeb.

The project includes three lanes in each direction, 20 kilometres of service roads, and four major intersections that include bridges and tunnels to ensure mobility.

The project aims to improve connectivity between Muscat Governorate and the interior and north-eastern governorates, and relieve congestion on the Rusayl-Muscat highway.

The cost of the road project is

approximately OMR 53 million.

**The ‘Green Walk’ Project**

The ambassadors visited the ‘Green Walk’ project in Al Maabillah South in Seeb, which was implemented by Muscat Municipality in collaboration with Occidental Oman on an estimated area of 152,000 square metres.

The project includes multiple sports and recreational facilities such as a 3,400-metre-long walkway and cycle track, sports fields, children’s play areas, green spaces, rest areas, and commercial and service facilities.

The project reflects Muscat Governorate’s commitment to providing an integrated urban environment that enhances the quality of life and supports the concepts of sustainability and public health, in partnership with the private sector.

‘It was a successful step with a tangible impact, taking us from the theoretical discussion to the reality of field implementation,

enhancing practical understanding and opening up new horizons of inspiration,’ said Engineer Shaikha bint Ahmed Al Wahshi, of Al Dhahirah Governorate.

She added: ‘The visit to Sultan Haitham City and the Oman Botanical Garden showed the extent of planning and precision in implementation, and was a rich experience that provided us with a practical visualisation of what can be achieved in terms of development and innovation in institutional and service work.’

Engineer Anfal bint Essa Al Hamdani, Ambassador of South Al Batinah Governorate, stated that through field visits, we discovered the features of Sultan Haitham City, which focused on the partnership of government and private entities; the project was designed accurately and internal and external roads were considered and linked to Sultan Qaboos Street and Muscat Highway; in addition to the diversity of green spaces in open spaces, plazas, and large areas.

## CULTIVATION OF WILD TREES

### EA organises competition

**AL BURAIMI:** The Environment Authority in Al Buraimi Governorate has launched an environmental competition targeting government sector institutions and their employees.

The initiative aims to encourage participation in the distribution and cultivation of wild trees as part of the national campaign to plant 10 million wild trees, implemented by the Environment Authority across the Sultanate of Oman.

The competition coincides with the International Day for

Biological Diversity, observed annually on 22 May, reflecting the Authority’s commitment to raising environmental awareness among institutions and the community while promoting sustainable practices that contribute to preserving biodiversity in Oman.

As part of the initiative, the Authority conducted field visits to several government entities in the governorate, delivering awareness lectures to introduce employees to the campaign’s objectives and participation mechanisms. - ONA



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## FOUNDATION PROGRAMME

### Speakers from 13 countries discuss empowerment of varsity students

**SOHAR:** The First Foundation Programme Conference on Empowering University Students in the 21st Century commenced today at Sohar University in North Al Batinah Governorate.

The conference features speakers and academics from 13 countries alongside higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Hamdan Sulaiman Al Fazari, Vice Chancellor of Sohar University, emphasised that the conference aligns with global trends in empowering university students within foundation programs, addressing developments in higher education and modern disciplines in line with labour market demands and student aspirations.

He added that higher education institutions undertake a pivotal role in empowering students and fostering their trans-



formation in the 21st century by investing in human capital, offering programmes, policies, and platforms that not only prepare students for careers but also cultivate them as future creative and innovative leaders.

These initiatives provide programs and specializations that meet labour market needs, align with technological advance-

ments, and keep pace with artificial intelligence and digital transformation.

The conference includes 13 parallel sessions featuring 56 scientific presentations and working papers, which explore key areas such as artificial intelligence in language teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, enhancing student engagement in

learning environments, student autonomy and 21st-century skills, digital integration, critical thinking, academic integrity, and innovation in education.

Additional topics focus on AI literacy and educational innovation, developing language skills using AI, assessment and feedback strategies, learner autonomy and self-evaluation, innovative language teaching methodologies, integrating AI and critical thinking, digital technologies and academic integrity, as well as 21st-century skills and digital competencies.

The conference brings together 80 speakers from universities and educational institutions in Oman, alongside academics and experts from 11 countries, which are France, Spain, Morocco, the UAE, Malaysia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, the People’s Republic of China, Iran, Nigeria, and Algeria. - ONA

## SOCIAL UPBRINGING

### Forum explores importance of family and its role in social upbringing

**A’SEEB:** A forum titled “Family & Society: A Journey into the Dimensions of Social Upbringing,” was held in Muscat on Wednesday.

The forum, organised by the Directorate General of Social Development in Muscat Governorate in cooperation with Zulfa Center for Psychological Counseling and Family Guidance, examined the importance of the family and its role in proper social upbringing, with a focus on contemporary challenges facing families.

The forum featured several working papers, including one titled “Parenting and the Family’s Role in Social Upbringing,” presented by Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim Nasser Al Sawafi, Fatwa Secretary at the Office of the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman.

The paper addressed methods of proper upbringing, the role of role models within the family, and balancing firmness and gentle-



ness in dealing with children.

The second paper, titled “Family Cohesion and Its Role in Social Upbringing,” was delivered by Dr. Sabira Saif Al Harrasi, a specialist in psychological and educational counseling.

She highlighted the importance of effective communication within the family, the impact of cohesion on children’s mental health, and mechanisms for strengthening family belonging.

The third paper, presented by Ahmed Abdullah Al Shabibi, Head of Zulfa Centre for Psychological Counselling and Family Guidance, focused on “Divorce and Its Impact on Social Upbringing,” addressing the psychological and social effects on children post-divorce, ways to mitigate the negative consequences of separation, and the role of institutions in supporting broken families.

Meanwhile, Aida Saleh Al Rahbi’s fourth paper emphasized the importance of premarital medical check up.

The working papers concluded with “Social Media and Its Impact on the Family,” where Dr. Mona Salim Al Alawi, in her fifth paper, outlined the positive and negative effects on family relationships, protecting children from the dangers of digital content.

At the conclusion of the forum, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed Al Shamsi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development, the chief guest, honored the participants and supporting entities.

It is worth noting that the forum, held at the National Autism Center in the Wilayat of Seeb, aimed to facilitate the exchange of expertise among specialists in education, sociology, and family counseling, in addition to presenting practical recommendations to support family stability and improve the quality of family life. - ONA

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MEETING

# HM receives written message from President of Comoros

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from President Othman Ghazali of the Union of the Comoros. The message deals with relations between the two countries.

It was received by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, when he received Mbae Mohamed, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Envoy of the President of the Union of the Comoros at the General Diwan of the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the Comorian envoy conveyed greetings and best wishes of President Ghazali to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people.

In his turn, Sayyid Badr asked the guest to convey His Majesty's greetings and best wishes to President Ghazali and the people of the Comoros.

During the meeting, the two sides also discussed the historical relations and fraternal cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Union of the Comoros, exchanging views on

ways to enhance partnership in economic fields—particularly food security, transportation, and tourism—in a manner that serves both nations. Additionally, the two sides addressed several issues and developments of mutual concern, as well as efforts to promote peace, harmony, and the consolidation of security and stability worldwide.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, along with a number of officials from both sides. -ONA



# Over 85% work of Khasab Hospital project complete

The project is being constructed on a 100,000-square-metre plot, with a built-up area of 36,000 square metres and a total cost of over OMR48 million



**KHASAB:** The overall completion rate of the new Khasab Hospital in Musandam Governorate has surpassed 85%.

The project is being constructed on a 100,000-square-metre plot, with a built-up area of 36,000 square meters and a total cost exceeding OMR48 million.

With a capacity of 164 beds, the hospital will enhance healthcare services in the governorate.

Eng. Yousef Yaqoob Amboali, Director General of Projects and Engineering Services at the Ministry of Health, stated that the new Khasab Hospital in Mu-

sandam Governorate is among the key developmental health projects in the governorate and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

He added that the hospital will include an emergency and accident unit, radiology department, nephrology unit, outpatient clinics, rehabilitation unit, intensive care units (adult, pediatric, and cardiac), mater-



nity and neonatal care department, day surgery unit, administrative offices, meeting halls, a central sterilisation department, and inpatient wards, along with general services.

Once operational, the Khasab Hospital will provide specialised medical services to meet the needs of citizens and residents, alleviating the burden of travelling to other governorates. -ONA

STRENGTHENING COOPERATION

# Oman, Iraq to enhance judicial, legal relations

**MUSCAT:** Sayyid Mohammed Sultan Al Busaidi, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council, on Wednesday received at his office Dr. Faiq Zidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq, and his accompanying delegation.

The visit of the Iraqi official aims at strengthening cooperation between the judicial institutions of the two countries.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to develop judicial and legal relations, expand areas of joint cooperation, exchange expertise, and activate training and technical programs—measures that would positively impact the performance of the justice system and enhance its efficiency.

The two sides also reviewed a number of topics of mutual in-

terest, most notably modernizing court procedures, developing legal training mechanisms, and improving the quality of judicial services while expediting litigation processes.

The Iraqi delegation was briefed on key aspects of Oman's experience in developing its judicial work environment, particularly in areas related to digital transformation and leveraging technology to serve justice—ensuring improved litigant experiences and higher institutional efficiency.

Al Busaidi emphasized that this visit represents an important step toward strengthening judicial relations between Oman and Iraq, noting that the exchange of knowledge and expertise is a fundamental pillar for advancing judicial work and building effective strategic partnerships. -ONA



'MANAFI'

# Promising innovation

**< FROM A1** Yusra Yousef Al Ghadani overcame this by assembling a multidisciplinary research team.

Another hurdle was securing institutional support—after initially failing to qualify for incubation under 'Manafi,' she eventually joined OQX, an accelerator under OQ, which provided the necessary backing.

Looking ahead, Yusra aims to implement a pilot project in an oil and gas field to validate the product's real-world performance.

She also plans to establish a startup, InkClear, to professionally develop and market the innovation globally, aspiring to posi-

tion the Omani-made solution as a sustainable standard for industrial water treatment, particularly in the energy sector.

Her project has been selected to represent Oman at the International Invention, Innovation, and Technology Exhibition (ITEX) 2025 in Malaysia.

Yusra expressed pride and responsibility in this achievement, stating that the event offers a global platform to showcase Omani innovation, attract investors, and build partnerships. "My presence there represents not just me, but every Omani youth who believes in their ideas and works to turn them into reality," she said. -ONA

WORKSHOP

# < FROM A1 Urban development

The methodology emphasises integration across development sectors, incorporating national sectoral strategies—including urban development strategies and outputs from national programs and labs—alongside diagnostic and analytical studies and re-

ports to define national priorities based on current realities and challenges.

The workshop was attended by some Royal family members, Governors, the Head of Oman Vision 2040 Follow-up Implementation Unit. -ONA

AUGMENTED REALITY

# Muharrrik platform driving digital transformation in education

**MUSCAT:** The "Muharrrik" platform represents an entrepreneurial initiative that leverages augmented reality (AR) technologies for digital learning, offering innovative educational solutions based on interactive 3D models that have significantly improved students' academic performance.

Ziyad Salim Al Hinai told Oman News Agency that the idea for the platform emerged during his studies in the United States, where he faced several academic and personal challenges.

However, these challenges helped refine his entrepreneurial skills and avoid future mistakes. He noted that the platform originated from a personal desire to enhance digital learning tools and provide an engaging educational environment.

He added that this challenge motivated him to seek innovative educational solutions, ultimately leading to the adoption of augmented reality technology. AR enables the transformation of abstract information into in-



teractive 3D models, simplifying comprehension and stimulating learning.

Al Hinai explained that AR technology allows complex concepts to be presented in a visual, three-dimensional format, accelerating understanding and retention.

The platform has expanded its use of AR into other fields, such as museums, engineering, and healthcare, collaborating with

international companies to train medical personnel.

He pointed out that the platform's trials have demonstrated a tangible impact on improving education.

An experiment involving early-grade students using fourth-grade tailored content showed a 54% improvement in academic achievement, confirming the technology's effectiveness in simplifying scientific concepts and

making them more engaging.

Al Hinai emphasised that the support provided by Oman Technology Fund was pivotal, not only financially but also through training workshops and knowledge mentoring, which enhanced the team's entrepreneurial capabilities and helped turn the idea into a viable and sustainable project.

He added that "Muharrrik" is currently finalizing a direct partnership with Oman's Ministry of Education to promote the use of AR technology in schools. The platform also aims to expand into Arab and global markets by exporting digital educational content rather than importing it.

Notably, the platform has received international awards and recognition from the UNICEF and the Generation Unlimited initiative, marking a turning point in the company's trajectory and boosting the team's confidence to grow further. This recognition also helped attract its first investor, the Oman Technology Fund. -ONA

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11TH REGULAR SESSION

# Shura Council completes review of Draft Civil Society Institutions Law

**MUSCAT:** The Shura Council on Wednesday concluded its review of the draft Civil Society Institutions Law following extensive discussions on several provisions, referring it to the State Council to complete the legislative process.

This came during the 11th regular session of the second annual convening (2024-2025) of the tenth term (2023-2027), chaired by Khalid Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council.

During Wednesday's session, the Council finalised discussions on the draft law referred by the government, with the project report presented by Mansour Zahir Al Hajri, Chairman of the Health and Social Committee.

Al Hajri explained that the draft law responds to developments in civil society work in



Oman, noting that the new legislation aims to address social and regulatory challenges facing civil society institutions.

It establishes a flexible and progressive legal framework that accommodates ongoing transformations while enhancing

sociations, volunteer work, and final provisions.

He indicated that the committee held multiple meetings with various civil society institutions and relevant entities to consider their perspectives and observations on the draft law's articles. He affirmed that the committee carefully examined all legislative and social dimensions during its review.

During the session, Council members provided observations on several provisions and proposed enhancements to strengthen the legal texts and ensure alignment with the practical realities of civil society institutions.

Discussions also addressed aspects related to licensing, classifications, governance of civil work, as well as penalty clauses. - ONA

FESTIVAL PLAZA STATION

# Oman's cultural heritage showcased in Expo Osaka 2025

**OSAKA:** The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Wednesday organised a specialised event highlighting Oman's diverse cultural, heritage, and tourism offerings as part of the accompanying activities for the Sultanate of Oman's participation in Expo Osaka 2025 in Japan.

The event was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth, along with the General Commission of Oman Pavilion at Expo Osaka 2025.

The one-day event took place at the "Festival Plaza Station" hall in Expo Osaka 2025 and featured a variety of specialised



displays, activities, and corners showcasing Oman's rich cultural, heritage, and tourism diversity. The initiative aimed to introduce, promote, and spotlight Oman's unique attractions. - ONA

INTERACTIVE DIGITAL CONTENT

# Ministry of Education launches curricula digitisation project



**MUSCAT:** Acting in cooperation with BP Oman, the Ministry of Education on Wednesday launched a curricula digitisation project for grades 1 to 12.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng. Said Hamood Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and attended by Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al Shaibani, Minister of Education, and senior government officials.

The project seeks to transform curriculum subjects into interactive digital content aligned with trends in modern education and digital transition in the education sector.

The project is envisaged to improve the quality of educational outcomes and provide a flexible and inclusive learning environment, besides enhancing self-learning and collaborative learning skills, providing students with skills needed in the future, improving academic achievement and giving access to easy-to-use digital content that supports the diversification of teaching and assessment methods.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Abdullah Khamis Ambusaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Education for Education, said that the curriculum digitization project provides teachers with modern educational tools and supports students with a more interactive, flexible and comprehensive learning experience that suits their individual needs and abilities.

Ambusaidi pointed out that the project enhances the Ministry's efforts to build an integrated, technology-driven and future-oriented educational system.

For his part, Eng. Yousef Mohammed Al Ojaili, Chairman of BP Oman, said that BP's cooperation with the Ministry of Education in implementing this project fits with the company's commitment to support educational development in the Sultanate of Oman.

He stressed the significance of public-private partnerships in driving innovation and establishing a sustainable impact in education. The ceremony included a presentation on model lessons using interactive screens and highlighting the salient features of the project.

The project comprises 6 phases: the preparatory phase, the analysis phase, the educational scenario preparation phase, the digital production phase, a pilot phase and the digital book propagation phase (giving access to digital content via the e-learning portal and later via the "Noor" system). - ONA



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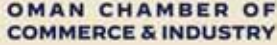
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OMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY



غرفة تجارة وصناعة عُمان

## Invitation to attend the chamber's ordinary general assembly meeting

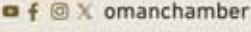
Pursuant to Article (18) of OCCI Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. (56/2022) on invitation of the assembly to ordinary meeting at least once per year,

OCCI Chairman has pleasure to invite the assembly members who paid the annual fees due for the assembly membership to attend the ordinary general meeting to be held at **5 pm, Tuesday, 17 June 2025, at OCCI's head office in Ruwi**, to discuss the following agenda:

- To discuss the annual report on OCCI's work, and the balance sheet of the last fiscal year as well as the auditor's report on the fiscal year ending 31 December 2024 and approve them.
- To consider suggestions of the registered members which are presented to the board at least (15) fifteen days before its meeting.
- To appoint an auditor for the new fiscal year and define his fees.

**Important note:**

- In accordance with OCCI's law, registered members shall be represented in the general meeting as owner or authorized partner singly or authorized manager singly, in accordance with the commercial register data. Every member shall have one vote. No authorization or proxy may be granted in attendance of the assembly meeting or voting thereat.
- Members shall note that the first meeting shall be valid if attended by at least (200) two hundred registered members. In the event this quorum is not satisfied, the second meeting shall be held within (15) days after the date of the first meeting at the same place and time regardless of the number of attendees.
- The annual report on OCCI's works is available in OCCI's head office and branches.
- The auditor's report on the last fiscal year.
- Please log in for attendance of the meeting via OCCI's website: [www.omanchamber.om](http://www.omanchamber.om)
- Registration is also available in all OCCI branches in governorates.



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OCCI Chairman

SOUTH AL SHARQIYAH

be'ah conducts awareness visits to schools

**SUR:** The Community Awareness and Engagement Team from the Oman Environmental Services Holding Company “be’ah” carried out a series of awareness visits to six schools in the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, targeting more than 5,219 students and educational staff.

This initiative aligns with the company’s commitment to

spreading environmental awareness and promoting sustainable practices among younger generations. The visits included interactive educational sessions focusing on sustainable consumption, smart shopping, and proper waste disposal methods.

The team aimed to deliver simplified and engaging content tailored to the students’ age groups,

fostering a culture of environmental conservation from an early age.

**Waste transfer stations**

Additionally, the visits highlighted the company’s efforts in managing engineered landfills in compliance with the highest environmental standards, as well as the operational mechanisms of waste transfer stations. — **ONA**



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**EDITORIAL:** Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com  
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Oman reaffirms its commitment to maritime security at UNSC session

Oman’s Permanent Representative to the UN reiterated the Sultanate’s emphasis on strengthening adherence to international law, particularly UNCLOS, as the comprehensive legal framework for all maritime activities



**NEW YORK:** The Sultanate of Oman has affirmed its decades-long active role in supporting the security and safety of regional and international maritime navigation, recognising the vital importance of these waterways to global trade and energy movement, as well as the legal, security, and humanitarian responsibilities they entail.

This came in a speech delivered by Ambassador Omar Said

Al Kathiri, Oman’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), during the high-level session of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on “Enhancing Maritime Navigation Security through International Cooperation for Global Stability,” held in New York.

In his address, the Ambassador emphasised that Oman has worked to align its national legislation with relevant international legal frameworks, foremost the United Nations Convention on

the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which is based on the principle of freedom of navigation, safeguards the responsibilities of coastal and transit states, and establishes the legal foundations for resolving maritime disputes. He noted that Oman recently hosted the eighth Indian Ocean Conference, which focused on enhancing cooperation and integration in maritime security management, reflecting the importance of joint regional action. He stressed that Oman

firmly believes the security of seas and waterways is a fundamental pillar for maintaining regional and international stability, ensuring freedom of navigation, sustaining global trade, safeguarding food and energy security, and promoting sustainable development.

Oman’s Permanent Representative to the UN highlighted that escalating transnational threats—such as maritime terrorism, piracy, human and drug trafficking, organised crime, and illicit trade—along-

side environmental repercussions from climate change and attacks on maritime infrastructure, necessitate well-considered collective responses that reflect the spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility enshrined in the UN Charter.

He also addressed Oman’s pivotal mediation role in reaching the ceasefire agreement announced on 6 May 2025, to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. This constructive step demonstrates Oman’s commitment to easing regional tensions, enhancing maritime stability, and securing the smooth flow of international shipping. He reiterated Oman’s emphasis on strengthening adherence to international law, particularly UNCLOS, as the comprehensive legal framework for all maritime activities, while stressing the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and cooperation with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and other specialised bodies.

He pointed to the need for capacity-building in developing nations, particularly in maritime surveillance, information-sharing, emergency response, infrastructure protection, and combating organized crime through well-planned collective initiatives and effective partnerships.

Al Kathiri stated that modern

technology is a crucial tool for enhancing maritime domain awareness and improving states’ ability to respond promptly to challenges, utilising satellites, data analysis, and artificial intelligence.

He underscored the importance of addressing the worsening impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, which compound maritime security risks, and called on the international community to develop integrated strategies for protecting the marine environment.

He also emphasised the value of constructive dialogue and preventive diplomacy in achieving collective security, resolving disputes, building trust among nations, and fostering a safe, stable environment for maritime, commercial, and economic activities.

Concluding his speech, the Ambassador affirmed that Oman—guided by its foreign policy principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference, and respect for international law—will remain a responsible partner in enhancing maritime navigation security, ensuring stability in international waterways, and supporting multilateral efforts to develop effective, comprehensive solutions to challenges facing seas and oceans. This commitment upholds international peace and security and serves the interests of all nations. — **ONA**

AL BURAIMI GOVERNORATE

National Survey, Geospatial Information Authority showcases key functions

**AL BURAIMI:** The National Survey and Geospatial Information Authority at the Ministry of Defence yesterday organised an awareness program in Al Buraimi Governorate under the auspices of Sheikh Rashid Said Al Kalbani, Governor of Al Buraimi.

This event continues the series of introductory visits the Authority is conducting across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Held at the Al Buraimi Governor’s Office, the program featured presentations on the roles and responsibilities of the National Survey and Geospatial Information Authority, along with the services it provides to various entities. The event also included an accompanying exhibition showcasing the Authority’s projects and activities.

Specialised discussion sessions were held on geospatial require-



ments, exploring ways to enhance integration and cooperation between the Authority and different stakeholders.

The awareness visit was attended by Brigadier Nasser Ali Al Harthy, Head of the National Survey

and Geospatial Information Authority, along with several Walis of the governorate, directors general, representatives from government departments and the private sector, and a group of specialists in the field of geospatial data. — **ONA**

THE VIOLETTA PROJECT: A JOURNEY INTO FASHION DESIGN

ROHM announces winners of Violetta design project

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM), in collaboration with the Scientific College of Design, announced the winners of The Violetta Project: A Journey into Fashion Design, a special initiative inspired by its recent production of Verdi’s La Traviata.

This project invited fashion design students to explore the character of Violetta through the lens of costume design, reimagining her emotional journey in fresh, creative ways.

As a place of learning and cultural enrichment, the Royal Opera House Muscat continues to open its doors through educational initiatives that make opera and the arts more accessible.

This project encouraged stu-

dents to approach opera from a new perspective, deepening their engagement with narrative, character, and historical context.

After a series of curated workshops that supported students in translating Violetta’s dramatic evolution into visual design, two standout participants, Nihal Al-Khaziri and Shadan Al-Malki, were selected for their compelling work.

Their designs impressed judges with their ability to capture the complexity and transformation of Violetta’s character, blending narrative insight with innovative fashion interpretation.

**Creative growth**

The project fostered both technical and creative growth, equipping young designers with pro-

fessional tools in storytelling and character development while inspiring a deeper appreciation for opera and its emotional richness.

**Acclaimed performances**

The initiative coincided with two acclaimed performances of La Traviata on May 1 and 3, conducted by the legendary Plácido Domingo with the Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro Carlo Felice, under the direction of Marta Domingo.

The production starred Juliana Grigoryan in her faultless and emotionally bruising debut as Violetta and Yusif Eyvazov as Alfredo, his fabulous tenor voice offering the perfect partnership. The production featured striking visuals and flamenco-inspired choreography by the Antonio Gades Company.

SULTAN’S ARMED FORCES

SAF Chief of Staff visits DSEI Japan 2025 exhibition in Tokyo

**TOKYO:** Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF) yesterday visited the Defence and Security Equipment International “DSEI Japan 2025” exhibition, held in Tokyo.

The SAF Chief of Staff and his accompanying military delegation toured the exhibition and the various companies participating in the DSEI Japan 2025. He also attended several discussion panels held at the sidelines of the exhibition.

Meanwhile, Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces met here today with General Yoshihide Yoshida, Japan’s Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff.

During this meeting, the two sides discussed several matters of mutual interest.

The meeting and the DSEI Japan 2025 opening ceremony were attended by Dr. Mohammed Said Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Japan. — **ONA**



# EU pledges additional \$56mn in aid for Gaza and West Bank

The money, which is to be made available to aid organisations in the region, is intended “to help meet the urgent needs and ease the suffering of the Palestinians,” said EU Crisis Management Commissioner Hadja Lahbib

**GAZA:** The European Commission on Wednesday announced an additional \$56.7 million in humanitarian aid for Gaza and the West Bank as part of a larger aid package for the region.

The money, which is to be made available to aid organisations in the region, is intended “to help meet the urgent needs and ease the suffering of the Palestinians,” said EU Crisis Management Commissioner Hadja Lahbib.

“But no aid can reach those who need it without safe, unimpeded access for humanitarian workers. That must be guaranteed,” Lahbib said.

The new funding brings the total of humanitarian assistance allocated to Gaza and the West Bank in 2025 to €170 million.

The commission said it will provide



vide an additional € 20 million in humanitarian aid to Syria to cover basic support like food and healthcare, bringing the total for this year to € 202.5 million.

“In Syria, we’re boosting funding for the north-east, where people urgently need healthcare and protection, and we are doing so with neutrality and without any discrimination,” Lahbib said.

An additional € 13 million was allocated to Lebanon.

“In Lebanon, as families try to cope under a fragile ceasefire, we’re scaling up help with basics like food and medical care - especially for vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese communities,” said the commissioner.

**Death toll across Gaza Strip surges to 53,655, over 121,950 injured**

At least 82 Palestinians were killed and 262 others were injured in the Gaza Strip over the last 24 hours

as a result of the ongoing Israeli genocide in the region, according to medical sources.

They confirmed that the Palestinian death toll from the Israeli onslaught since October 2023 has risen to 53,655 fatalities, with an additional 121,950 people sustaining injuries. The majority of the victims are women and children.

According to the same sources, the death toll since Israel’s resumption of the genocide on March 18 after a two-month truce has also climbed to 3,509, in addition to 9,909 others injured.

**Gaza health system collapsing, says WHO**

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Wednesday that the intensified Israeli ground operations in Gaza and the new evacuation requests have pushed the health system beyond the point

of collapse. In a post on Instagram, Ghebreyesus noted that the Indonesian, Kamal Adwan, and Al-Awda hospitals, along with three clinics and four health points, are located within the evacuation zone announced by the Israeli occupation army on Tuesday.

Ghebreyesus stated that the European Gaza Hospital and other health points in southern Gaza are within the evacuation zones announced on Monday.

He noted that the Nasser Medical Complex, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, five clinics, and 17 health points are located approximately one kilometer from this area.

He continued, “Even if health facilities in Gaza are not attacked or forced to evacuate, attacks on areas there and the presence of soldiers prevent patients from accessing healthcare and prevent WHO from resupplying hospitals. This could quickly disrupt hospital operations.” Ghebreyesus empha-



sised the WHO’s call for the immediate protection of health services, emphasizing the need to not target hospitals and to implement a ceasefire.

**UN experts call on the Security Council to protect women and girls in Gaza**

A group of independent human rights experts on Wednesday urged the UN Security Council to urgently address Israel’s unprecedented assault on civilians in Gaza and reaffirm its commitment to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. “Ahead of the Council’s open debate on the protection of civilians, chaired by Greece, we urge a meaningful discussion of the grave and gendered impact of the ongoing genocide on women and girls in the besieged Gaza Strip,” the experts said.

The experts stressed that the attacks have shattered every aspect of civilian life, with clear gendered consequences, and that Palestinian girls and women of all ages have suffered in overwhelming numbers, while Israel continues to block critical humanitarian access.

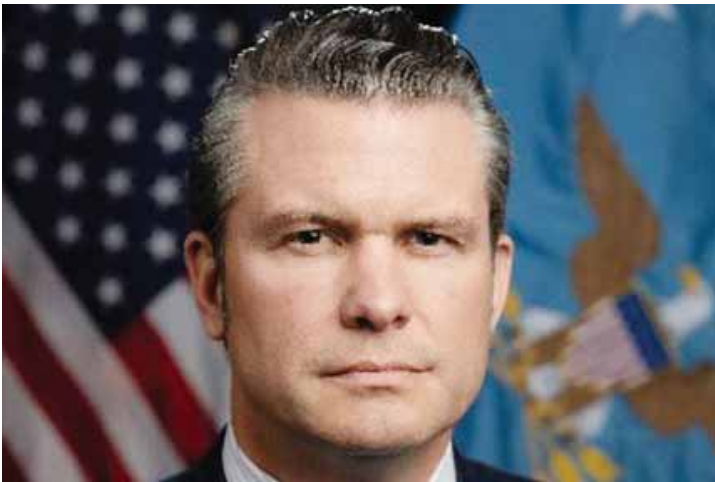
They noted that “more than 28,000 women and girls have been killed, thousands injured, and nearly a million people displaced.

Nearly 13,000 women are the sole breadwinners for their families. The entire population remains at risk of famine. Nearly 71,000 children and 17,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women will require urgent treatment for severe malnutrition in the near future.”

They continued, “Women continue to suffer devastating losses while caring for families with limited access to water, medicine, adequate food, sanitary products, or sexual and reproductive health care.” The experts noted that women and girls with disabilities face particularly acute risks—disproportionately suffering neglect, increased exposure to violence, and significant barriers to accessing essential services.

The experts said: “The destruction of civilian infrastructure and the extreme suffering endured by women and girls demand immediate and sustained action by the Security Council. The devastation inflicted on women, girls, and entire communities is not accidental, but the result of deliberate Israeli policies and actions. The killing of thousands of women and girls may constitute the deliberate imposition of living conditions designed to bring about the physical destruction, in whole or in part, of the Palestinian people.” — WAFPA

US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE



## Pentagon to conduct comprehensive review of 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan

**WASHINGTON, DC:** The US Department of Defence on Wednesday announced a comprehensive review of the 2021 military withdrawal from Afghanistan, which resulted in the deaths of 13 US service members and 170 civilians in a suicide bombing at Kabul airport.

The review aims to provide accountability and transparency, examining previous investigations and decision-making processes that led to the tragic event. A Special Review Panel will be convened to analyse findings of fact, sources, and witnesses, ensuring a thorough understanding of what transpired.

“On August 26, 2021, Former US President Joe Biden’s administration led a chaotic withdrawal of US military and embassy officials from Afghanistan that led to the deaths of 13 US Service members and 170 civilians in a suicide bombing at the Kabul International Airport’s Abbey Gate,” according to US Department of Defence.

Further, US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth said that President Donald Trump and he “formally pledged full transparency for what transpired during our military withdrawal from Afghanistan.”

“The Department of Defense has an obligation, both to the Ameri-

can people and to the warfighters who sacrificed their youth in Afghanistan, to get to the facts. This remains an important step toward regaining faith and trust with the American people and all those who wear the uniform, and is prudent based on the number of casualties and equipment lost during the execution of this withdrawal operation,” the statement added.

Hegseth noted that the Department has been “engaged in a review of this catastrophic event in our military’s history over the last three months.”

“I have concluded that we need to conduct a comprehensive review to ensure that accountability for this event is met and that the complete picture is provided to the American people. To meet this imperative, I am directing the Assistant to the Secretary of Defence for Public Affairs (ATSD-PA) and Senior Advisor, Sean Parnell to convene a Special Review Panel (SRP) for the Department who will thoroughly examine previous investigations, to include but not limited to, findings of fact, sources, witnesses, and analyse the decision making that led to one of America’s darkest and deadliest international moments,” as per US Department of Defence. — ANI

IN 2024

## Wildfires fuelled record forest loss

**MARYLAND:** Mariana Oliveira, a forests expert at the World Resources Institute in Brazil, didn’t mince words when describing how wildfires have ravaged her country.

“Last year, Brazil experienced its most intense and widespread drought in seven decades. Combined with high temperatures, this caused the fires to spread on an unprecedented scale throughout the country,” she said, speaking with reporters. “This was quite a hard year for us.”

A new report from the World Resources Institute’s Global Forest Watch platform and the University of Maryland in the US outlines just how hard it was — in Brazil and worldwide. Tree cover loss data show that record-breaking global temperatures contributed to a catastrophic surge in forest loss worldwide in 2024, with wildfires responsible for nearly half of the destruction.

Fires destroyed five times more primary tropical forests last year than in 2023, especially in Latin America. That made fires the leading cause of tropical primary forest loss for the first time, ahead of agriculture.

**Which countries were affected by wildfires the worst?**

Brazil, which is gearing up to host the COP30 climate change conference in November, saw its



worst year for forests since 2016. Some 2.8 million hectares (7.0 million acres) of old-growth forest were wiped out, an area only slightly smaller than Belgium.

Two-thirds of that loss was due to fires sparked primarily by human activity. Around 80% was in the Amazon rainforest, often called the lungs of the world for its vital role in soaking up planet-heating carbon dioxide.

Forests not only mitigate the effects of climate change but also influence local temperatures and rainfall — and everything that depends on that, including agriculture and human health. Robust, biodiverse forests shelter ecosystems that, in turn, support the livelihoods of one-third of the world’s population.

The hot, dry conditions and severe drought experienced in Brazil also fueled larger, more widespread blazes across South America, especially in Bolivia and Colombia. But land clearing for agriculture, especially soy and

cattle ranches, along with mining and logging operations, also contributed to forest destruction, especially in Colombia.

Primary forest loss also spiked in Africa’s Congo Basin, one of the world’s last major carbon sinks. In one of the world’s poorest areas, locals rely on the forests for food and fuel. Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo has also put tree cover at risk. But even here, in the neighboring Republic of Congo, fires were behind 45% of the destruction.

**Why wildfires are becoming ‘more intense’**

“The underlying cause of a lot of this is climate change, which is ultimately fueled by human activities,” said Rod Taylor, director of forests and nature conservation at World Resources Institute. But, he added, the world has entered a new amplifying phase, a “real climate change feedback loop where fires are just much more intense and much more ferocious than

they’ve ever been.”

Taylor told DW that as the forests dry out and become increasingly degraded, fires that might have once been snuffed out on their own are spreading further. “Instead of being resistant to fire, [forests are] tinder, ready to go.”

The forest loss wasn’t just concentrated in the tropics. Major wildfires in northern boreal forests in places like Canada and Russia added to a record disappearance of 30 million hectares worldwide in 2024, with global wildfires adding 4.1 gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere.

Sarah Carter, a research associate at Global Forest Watch, pointed out that unlike in tropical forests, fires are part of the natural process in boreal forests. But, even here, “feedback loops of drier conditions and more intense fires are being seen as the climate warms.”

**How countries have reduced forest loss from wildfires**

A few countries managed to buck the trend, however. Indonesia saw an 11% decrease in forest loss in 2024 that Carter said was due, in part, to fire prevention and response efforts and the work of the private sector and local communities. — DW

Full story @ [timesofoman.com/world](https://timesofoman.com/world)

WRITER AND ACTIVIST

## Indian wins International Booker Prize

**MYSORE:** Banu Mushtaq, the Indian writer and activist, was awarded the International Booker Prize on Tuesday for her short story collection “Heart Lamp,” the first Kannada-language author to win the prize for translated fiction.

The 77-year-old Mushtaq will share the £50,000 (\$67,000, €59,300) prize with her translator Deepa Bhashti, who also helped with picking the stories featured in the award-winning collection.

This marks the first time that a collection of short stories receives the award. It also makes Bhashti the first Indian translator to win the prize in its current form, adopted in 2016.

**English-language fiction**

The annual International Booker Prize is run alongside the Booker Prize for English-language fiction, but the latter is handed out in the fall.

The award ceremony was held

at London’s Tate Modern Museum, and announced by bestselling Booker Prize-longlisted author Max Porter, who chairs the five-member voting panel.

Porter hailed “Heart Lamp” as “something genuinely new for English readers.”

“These beautiful, busy, life-affirming stories rise from Kannada, interspersed with the extraordinary socio-political richness of other languages and dialects,” said Porter. — DW



## IPL 2025: DEFEAT CSK



## Rajasthan Royals sign off with six-wicket win

**NEW DELHI:** Rajasthan Royals (RR) finally executed a clinical chase — on their last outing of the IPL 2025 season — to beat Chennai Super Kings (CSK) by six wickets with 17 balls to spare on Tuesday, signing off a turbulent campaign with some satisfaction.

Opting to bowl despite eight failed chases out of nine this season, RR's decision paid off as their bowlers clicked in unison to restrict CSK to 187/8 on a batting-friendly Kotla pitch. Akash Madhwal was outstanding at the death, conceding just 17 off the final three overs and finishing with figures of 3 for 29, while Yuvhvir Singh also impressed with 3 for 47.

Chasing 188, RR were propelled early by Yashasvi Jaiswal, who raced to 36 off 19 balls, smashing the first ball of the innings for a

boundary — a record-extending 13th time he has done so in the IPL. His brisk knock provided a strong platform before Vaibhav Suryavanshi took charge with a composed yet commanding 57 off 33 deliveries, laced with powerful hits against both spin and pace.

Sanju Samson (41 off 31) provided stability and flair in a 98-run stand with Suryavanshi, keeping RR ahead of the asking rate. Dhruv Jurel then ensured there were no last-minute hiccups, hammering 31\* off just 12 balls. His flurry of boundaries, including an 18-run over off Ashwin, snuffed out any lingering CSK resistance.

**Brief scores:** CSK 187/8 (Mhatre 43, Brevis 42, Dube 39; Madhwal 3-29, Yuvdhir 3-47) lost to RR 188/4 in 17.1 overs (Suryavanshi 57, Samson 41, Jaiswal 36; Ashwin 2-41).

**PAKISTAN T20I SQUAD**

Babar, Rizwan, Shaheen dropped

**LAHORE:** In a bold move, Pakistan have left out three of their biggest names — Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Shah Afridi — from the 16-member squad for the upcoming three-match T20I series against Bangladesh from May 28-June 1. It would be new white-ball head coach Mike Hesson's first assignment.

Rewarded for his standout form in PSL 2025, Sahibzada Farhan has earned a recall. He is one of eight changes from the squad that toured

New Zealand in March. Farhan is joined by the experienced Hasan Ali, and Saim Ayub. Pakistan will host Bangladesh for T20Is on May 28 and 30, and June 1.

Squad: Agha Salman (capt), Shadab Khan (vc), Sahibzada Farhan (wk), Mohammad Haris (wk), Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Hassan Nawaz, Khushdil Shah, Hussain Talat, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Mohammad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf, Abrar Ahmed, Muhammad Irfan Khan. - **Agencies**

# Oman rout Niger ahead of World Cup qualifiers

Rasheed Jaber's Red Warriors record 4-1 win in a friendly on Tuesday but suffer blow with injury to first-choice goalie Ibrahim Al Mukhaini

*Times News Service*

**MUSCAT:** With just two matches left in the crucial third round of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Asian Qualifiers in June, Oman signalled their intent with a dominant 4-1 victory over Niger in a closed-door friendly on Tuesday night, held at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex as part of their ongoing domestic training camp.

The Red Warriors, coached by Omani Rasheed Jaber, produced an assured attacking performance, led by the rising star Tariq Al Saadi, who opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 25th minute. Midfielder Mohammed Al Ghafri added a quickfire brace just before and after the break (45', 46'), while Mohsin Al Ghassani rounded off the scoring with another penalty in the 86th minute.

Niger's lone goal came in the first half, with Oman holding a 3-1 lead at the interval.

The match offered valuable playing time for several squad members, with head coach Jaber making seven second-half substitutions.

Among those introduced were goalkeeper AbdulMalik Al Badri (Al Shabab Club), Hatim Al Roushdi, Yousef Al Malki, Ahed Al Mashakheyi, Hussain Al Shahri, Issa Al Naabi, and Mohammed Abdulhakeem.



The rotation helped test tactical flexibility and improve cohesion as Oman sharpen their focus ahead of the must-win qualifiers.

"The goal was to test depth, fine-tune our attacking transitions, and reinforce defensive discipline," said coach Jaber, who alongside assistant Yaqoob Al Sabahi, continues to assess form and fitness in the build-up to June's double-header against Jordan (June 5 in Muscat) and Palestine (June 10, away in Jordan).

However, Oman's preparations have been dealt a setback with the injury to first-choice goalkeeper

Ibrahim Al Mukhaini, who fractured a finger in his left hand. The national team's medical staff confirmed a four-week recovery period, ruling him out of the remaining qualifiers. In response, Jaber has called up Ahmed Al Rawahi and Motasim Al Wahaibi to reinforce the goalkeeping department.

Four nations remain in the mix for direct qualification in Group B, with South Korea, Jordan, Iraq and Oman all putting their hopes on the line in June's final two matches.

The Koreans will seal their spot on 5 June should they avoid de-

feat against Iraq in Basra. Jordan, meanwhile, will qualify for a first World Cup on the same day should they defeat Oman in Muscat and Iraq lose against South Korea.

With two rounds remaining, Oman sit fourth with 10 points from eight matches. South Korea lead the group with 16 points, followed by Jordan (13), Iraq (12), and Oman (10). Palestine (6) and Kuwait (5) complete the table. The top two teams will progress to the final round of World Cup qualifying.

Oman's recent form – two wins from their last three games – suggests growing momentum, but qualification hinges on back-to-back victories. The June 5 clash against Jordan at home is being billed as a do-or-die fixture, and a positive result could set up a decisive finale against Palestine.

As the Red Warriors prepare for the final stretch, belief remains strong in the camp. The commanding win over Niger may have been a friendly, but it offered more than just confidence — it served as a reminder that Oman still have the tools, talent, and tenacity to fight for a place on the road to 2026.

Oman play their final warm-up game against Lebanon on May 28 ahead of their match against Jordan at home.



Empowering Businesses

PRESENTS



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**OMAN OIL PRICE RISES**  
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by July 2025 reaching \$66.05, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$1.04 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$65.01. -ONA

## MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM  
THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025



**MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER**  
The MSX index closed at 4,471.13 points, up by 0.31% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.01% at 426.17 points. Oman & Emirates Investment, up 8.96%, was the top gainer while, Oman REIT Fund, down 2.44%, was the top loser.

# ‘Development Bank serves as a catalyst for sustainable growth’

We aren’t just financing projects, we’re enabling Oman’s transition to a low-carbon, resilient economy that can thrive despite climate challenges, said Development Bank CEO Hussain Al Lawati

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Development banks are evolving from project financiers to strategic climate partners, fundamentally reshaping sustainable finance. Development Bank CEO Hussain Al Lawati explored these changes during a panel discussion at the Islamic Development Bank Group Annual Meeting in Algiers on Wednesday, sharing insights from his institution’s experience.

For Oman, this evolution means moving beyond traditional project funding. Al Lawati highlighted Development Bank’s commit-

ment to key industries including manufacturing, fisheries, agriculture, mining, logistics and tourism with a focus on projects that will help achieve the 2050 Net Zero target. “We serve as a catalyst for sustainable development by providing tailored financing solutions that support Oman Vision 2040 and drive economic diversification,” he remarked.

This approach is clear in the bank’s response to national priorities. Al Lawati explained how Development Bank’s work connects local and global climate goals: “We aren’t just financing projects, we’re



enabling Oman’s transition to a low-carbon, resilient economy that can thrive despite climate challenges.” Oman’s changes are part of a big-

ger picture. Al Lawati noted how the global investment landscape has changed since November’s COP29, where countries commit-

ted to providing at least \$300 billion annually for climate action in emerging economies by 2035, with developed nations leading the charge. This historic climate finance deal marks a turning point in worldwide environmental efforts.

### Prosperous future

The proposed funding, combined with domestic finance will help countries adopt low-carbon technologies, build climate resilience and unlock green development opportunities. “It’s about building a safer and more prosperous future for everyone,” added Development Bank CEO.

Addressing the economic implications, Al Lawati said climate change poses the biggest long-term threat to the global economy. Without decisive action, temperatures could rise by nearly 3°C, potentially shrinking the world economy by as much as 18% over the next 30 years. This reality underscores the urgency behind Oman’s climate targets, including emission reductions of 21% by 2030 and 92% by 2050.

In response to these challenges,

Oman has designated 65,000 km<sup>2</sup> for renewable energy projects and launched major green hydrogen initiatives at the Special Economic Zone in Duqm. These projects not only address environmental concerns but are also expected to create quality jobs, supporting skilled employment and contributing to sustainable economic development.

Development Bank is funding renewable projects and working with partners to attract private investment into the country’s climate transition. “We’re expanding beyond traditional lending to become a strategic partner in Oman’s green economy,” commented Mr. Al Lawati. “Investing in renewable energy projects today creates long-term economic value, proving that climate action makes both environmental and economic sense.”

“Our goal is to ensure Omani businesses of all sizes can access the financial solutions and expert advice needed for sustainable, green growth,” said Al Lawati, reflecting on Wednesday’s panel. “By working together, we can build a more resilient and competitive economy for the future.”

BY EUROMONEY

## United Securities named Oman’s Best Broker for 2025

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** United Securities has been recognised as Oman’s Best Broker for 2025 by Euromoney, the globally renowned financial publication. This prestigious award underscores United Securities’ industry leadership, relentless innovation, and continued contribution to the development of Oman’s capital markets.

The accolade reflects a year of exceptional achievement for United Securities, marked by advancements in trading technology, deeper institutional engagement, enhanced liquidity provision, and a comprehensive buildout of its research and digital capabilities.

In 2024, United Securities fortified its number one position on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) through strategic investments in infrastructure and digital transformation. From the deployment of cutting edge trading technologies to the launch of intelligent mobile platforms and AI enabled onboarding systems, the firm has significantly raised the bar for brokerage services in the region.

By streamlining client onboarding and execution flows, and by integrating sophisticated trading tools—including algorithmic strategies tailored for institutional and high-net-worth clients—United Securities made market access more seamless, efficient, and inclusive.

### Driving institutional reach and research depth

United’s institutional footprint expanded meaningfully during the year, with focused investor outreach in key GCC markets and strengthened collaborations with global funds. The firm’s research franchise remains one of the most comprehensive in the country, offering actionable insights on a wide array of listed Omani companies and key economic sectors.

The award was formally announced and presented at a glittering ceremony held last week in Tunis, Tunisia, organized by the Arab Federation of Capital Markets. United’s Chairman and CEO, Mustafa Ahmed Salman, and Managing Director, Hassan Ali Jawad, jointly received the award on behalf of the firm.

The ceremony was attended by senior regional officials, including representatives from the MSX, who were also present to witness United’s recognition on a regional stage.



The accolade reflects a year of exceptional achievement for United Securities, marked by advancements in trading technology, deeper institutional engagement, enhanced liquidity provision, and a comprehensive buildout of its research and digital capabilities

“Our approach has always been rooted in client trust, strategic clarity, and technology-first thinking,” said Mustafa Salman, Chairman and CEO of United Securities. “This recognition by Euromoney is a testament to the strength of our team, the loyalty of our clients, and our long-term commitment to shaping a more vibrant and liquid capital market in Oman.”

United Securities also achieved a landmark milestone in 2024 by becoming one of the first firm in Oman to obtain a Market Making & Liquidity Provider Services license. Through this initiative, United helped deepen order books, improve price discovery, and encourage more active participation across key large-cap stocks reinforcing its position as a catalyst for sustainable market development.

IN ALGERIA

## Oman signs several agreements with Islamic Development Bank Group

**ALGIERS:** The Sultanate of Oman yesterday signed several agreements with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group to the tune of RO 243 million to contribute to financing climate-resilient flood protection dam projects and their associated components.

The signing took place on the sidelines of the 50th Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank Group’s Board of Governors held in Algeria.

The agreements were signed by Sultan Salem Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, and Dr. Mohammed Sulaiman Al Jasser, Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank Group.

Al Habsi also signed a framework memorandum aimed at achieving strategic cooperation between the two parties and enhancing economic integration with the Islamic Development Bank Group and member states.

### Memorandum

The memorandum covers several areas of cooperation, including infrastructure development, supporting the private sector, and other fields such as roads, electricity, water, sanitation, tourism, manufacturing industries and industrial zones, in addition to human and institutional capacity building. -ONA



AUTHORITY FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT

## ASMED organises dialogue session on banking services that support SMEs

**MUSCAT:** The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) organised a dialogue session in Muscat on banking services that support small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The session discussed policies and legislation supporting banking services, licenses required to provide these services and factors that support the sector, like partnership and training programmes, incentives, incubators, business accelerators and financing. In particular, the session stressed the importance of partnerships between banking institutions and SMEs and



means to identify major challenges that limit performance. A total of 149,219 from different governorates

had been registered under the banner of ASMED by the end of March 2025. Of those, 27,611 had obtained

an Entrepreneurship Card. The session was part of a programme conducted by ASMED to promote public-private sector partnerships and enable SMEs to meet challenges, achieve sustainable growth and enhance the entrepreneurship climate. The dialogue session was attended by Halima Rashid Al Zar’ee, Chairperson of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), Rashid Zayid Al Ghassani, Deputy Chairman for Supervision and Regulation at the Central Bank of Oman, and officials, specialists and representatives of small and medium enterprises. -ONA

KEY STRATEGIC MILESTONES

## Ominvest 2024 Sustainability Report highlights strategic ESG milestones and responsible investment commitments

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Ominvest announced the release of its third Sustainability Report for the fiscal year 2024, marking a transformative year of progress across its sustainability journey. This report underscores the group’s deepened commitment to responsible investing practices, transparent disclosure, and alignment with international recognised ESG standards.

The 2024 report details key strategic milestones, including the alignment of Ominvest’s ESG strategy with MSX and relevant global frameworks. Notably, Ominvest integrated ESG due diligence into its investment process, conducted its first double materiality



assessment, and completed a comprehensive review of its sustainability strategy and related policies. The company also launched its first recycling partnership, and implemented Group-wide ESG training and ISSB capacity-building initiatives, reinforcing its commitment to fostering a sustainability-

conscious organization.

Abdulaziz Al Balushi, Group CEO of Ominvest, commented: “The publication of our third Sustainability Report marks a significant step forward in Ominvest’s ongoing sustainability journey. This report reaffirms our steadfast commitment to responsible investing, transparent disclosure, and alignment with global ESG benchmarks. The milestones achieved in 2024 reflect our proactive approach to cultivating a more sustainable and resilient future for all our stakeholders.”

Waleed Al Yarubi, Chief People, Corporate Communication and Sustainability Officer at Ominvest, added: “Our achievements in 2024 underscore Ominvest’s ambitions

to establish new standards for ESG excellence within the region, and demonstrate the effectiveness of cross-functional collaboration across the Group. From preparing for ISSB adoption to refining our policies, we are building a more agile and accountable ESG foundation, with the objective of driving positive impact and sustainable growth throughout our portfolio and beyond.”

As the sustainability landscape continues to evolve, Ominvest remains committed to lead the drive towards sustainable investment and setting benchmarks for the regional investment ecosystem — further reinforcing its role as a responsible investor and corporate leader.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Oman & Emirates Investment, up 8.96%, was the top gainer while, Oman REIT Fund, down 2.44%, was the top loser



**MUSCAT:** The MSX index closed at 4,471.13 points, up by 0.31% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.01% at 426.17 points. Oman & Emirates Investment, up 8.96%, was the top gainer while, Oman REIT Fund, down 2.44%, 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 2564 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 10.07 million, with more than 63.62 million shares changing hands. Out of 65 traded securities, 27 advanced, 14 declined, and 24 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 828K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 737K, followed by foreign investors for RO 92K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,870.21 points, up 0.45%. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Madina Takaful, Al Anwar Investment,

Global Financial Investments were up by 8.96%, 5.13%, 3.85%, 3.66%, 3.26% respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, National Bank Oman, Oman United Insurance, Ahli Bank, Bank Nizwa were down by 2.22%, 1.70%, 1.40%, 1.27%, 0.98% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,218.60 points, up 1.39%. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Al Anwar Ceramics, Gulf International Chemicals, Oman Flour Mills, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 5.93%, 4.87%, 4.05%, 2.04%, 1.43% respectively. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Salalah Mills were down by 2.26%, 1.97% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.47% before closing at 1,585.46 points. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Sembcorp Salalah, OQ Gas Networks, Oman National Engineering, National Gas were up by 5.03%, 2.94%, 2.90%, 2.63%, 1.35% respectively. Prices of Phoenix Power, Al Batinah Power, Muscat Gases, Ooredoo, SMN Power Holding were down by 1.59%, 1.41%, 0.99%, 0.53%, 0.48% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

| Index              | High     | Low      | Value    | Prev. Value | Diff. | Diff% |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|-------|-------|
| MSX 30 INDEX       | 4,471.42 | 4,452.73 | 4,471.13 | 4,457.34    | 13.79 | 0.31  |
| FINANCIAL INDEX    | 7,870.21 | 7,829.83 | 7,870.21 | 7,835.20    | 35.01 | 0.45  |
| Industry Index     | 6,225.05 | 6,133.53 | 6,218.60 | 6,133.53    | 85.07 | 1.39  |
| Services Index     | 1,585.46 | 1,575.93 | 1,585.46 | 1,578.00    | 7.46  | 0.47  |
| MSX Shariah Index  | 426.39   | 421.66   | 426.17   | 421.90      | 4.27  | 1.01  |
| MSX TR INDEX       | 6,609.43 | 6,581.80 | 6,609.00 | 6,588.62    | 20.38 | 0.31  |
| FINANCIAL TR IDX   | 9,327.19 | 9,279.33 | 9,327.19 | 9,285.69    | 41.50 | 0.45  |
| INDUSTRIAL TR IDX  | 7,549.66 | 7,537.19 | 7,549.66 | 7,541.72    | 7.94  | 0.11  |
| 139SERVICES TR IDX | 2,016.45 | 2,004.32 | 2,016.45 | 2,006.96    | 9.49  | 0.47  |
| 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 |
|------------|------------|--------|----------------|----|------|-------|-------------|
| 63,622,061 | 10,072,092 | 2,564  | 27,652,435,574 | 27 | 14   | 24    | 65          |

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

| RUN             | SECURITY NAME                    | VOLUME     | TURNOVER   | TRADES    | OPEN PRICE | HIGH  | LOW   | CLOSE PR. | PREV. CLOSE | DIFF (RD) | DIFF % | LAST PR | LAST RD | LAST OFFER | P/B VALUE | MARKET CAP    |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------|-------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------|---------|---------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| REGULAR MARKET  |                                  |            |            |           |            |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |         |            |           |               |
| OM0000000440    | AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.        | 1,056,226  | 84,835     | 57        | 0.078      | 0.083 | 0.077 | 0.082     | 0.078       | 0.004     | 5.128  | 0.082   | 0.081   | 0.082      | 0.100     | 7,380,000     |
| OM000000226     | ALJAZEERA SERVICES               | 893,184    | 164,018    | 98        | 0.180      | 0.189 | 0.177 | 0.188     | 0.179       | 0.009     | 5.028  | 0.188   | 0.188   | 0.188      | 0.100     | 8,054,482     |
| OM000000168     | AL ANWAR CERAMIC                 | 3,937,896  | 676,822    | 232       | 0.186      | 0.185 | 0.186 | 0.184     | 0.185       | 0.008     | 4.865  | 0.184   | 0.184   | 0.184      | 0.100     | 42,680,000    |
| OM0000004788    | MADINA TAKAFUL                   | 633,830    | 50,839     | 40        | 0.078      | 0.082 | 0.077 | 0.081     | 0.078       | 0.003     | 3.846  | 0.081   | 0.081   | 0.084      | 0.100     | 14,175,000    |
| OM0000003125    | GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.  | 283,120    | 24,670     | 22        | 0.082      | 0.085 | 0.082 | 0.085     | 0.082       | 0.003     | 3.261  | 0.085   | 0.083   | 0.085      | 0.100     | 19,000,000    |
| OM0000000072    | OQ GAS NETWORKS                  | 8,129,169  | 1,388,850  | 339       | 0.138      | 0.142 | 0.138 | 0.142     | 0.138       | 0.004     | 2.899  | 0.142   | 0.142   | 0.142      | 0.100     | 634,946,597   |
| OM0000003398    | SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK         | 4,811,592  | 654,431    | 75        | 0.135      | 0.137 | 0.135 | 0.137     | 0.135       | 0.002     | 1.481  | 0.137   | 0.137   | 0.137      | 0.100     | 906,562,739   |
| OM0000002176    | JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS           | 5,800      | 2,055      | 2         | 0.353      | 0.355 | 0.353 | 0.355     | 0.350       | 0.005     | 1.429  | 0.355   | 0.355   | 0.360      | 0.100     | 44,338,778    |
| OM0000003224    | RENAISSANCE SERVICES             | 164,538    | 47,988     | 25        | 0.298      | 0.299 | 0.297 | 0.299     | 0.297       | 0.002     | 0.897  | 0.298   | 0.297   | 0.298      | 0.100     | 88,322,480    |
| OM0000001707    | OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY             | 102,207    | 205,177    | 19        | 2.050      | 2.060 | 2.000 | 2.060     | 2.050       | 0.010     | 0.488  | 2.060   | 2.060   | 2.200      | 0.100     | 184,782,000   |
| OM0000002796    | BANK MUSCAT                      | 3752,410   | 1,029,718  | 159       | 0.275      | 0.276 | 0.273 | 0.276     | 0.275       | 0.001     | 0.364  | 0.276   | 0.280   | 0.276      | 0.100     | 2,071,765,589 |
| OM0000001533    | OMINVEST                         | 309,606    | 89,398     | 45        | 0.223      | 0.225 | 0.222 | 0.223     | 0.223       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.223   | 0.222   | 0.231      | 0.100     | 208,663,686   |
| OM0000003661    | VOLTAMP ENERGY                   | 60,328     | 39,193     | 9         | 0.643      | 0.651 | 0.643 | 0.650     | 0.650       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.650   | 0.650   | 0.654      | 0.100     | 60,848,555    |
| OM0000004383    | AL SUWADI POWER                  | 305,168    | 21,249     | 14        | 0.070      | 0.070 | 0.069 | 0.070     | 0.070       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.070   | 0.069   | 0.071      | 0.100     | 50,008,444    |
| OM0000008894    | ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES            | 1,592,321  | 403,443    | 97        | 0.254      | 0.255 | 0.252 | 0.254     | 0.254       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.254   | 0.260   | 0.254      | 0.100     | 195,630,800   |
| OM0000003026    | OMAN TELECOM                     | 250,912    | 210,474    | 31        | 0.840      | 0.840 | 0.837 | 0.837     | 0.840       | -0.003    | -0.357 | 0.837   | 0.837   | 0.840      | 0.100     | 627,750,000   |
| OM0000003968    | OOREDOO                          | 162,042    | 30,329     | 21        | 0.188      | 0.188 | 0.187 | 0.187     | 0.188       | -0.001    | -0.535 | 0.187   | 0.186   | 0.187      | 0.100     | 121,726,571   |
| OM0000004420    | BANK NIZWA                       | 40,473     | 4,088      | 6         | 0.101      | 0.101 | 0.101 | 0.101     | 0.102       | -0.001    | -0.880 | 0.101   | 0.101   | 0.110      | 0.100     | 225,932,256   |
| OM0000001087    | OMAN UNITED INSURANCE            | 65,601     | 13,972     | 6         | 0.214      | 0.214 | 0.212 | 0.212     | 0.215       | -0.003    | -1.395 | 0.212   | 0.212   | 0.213      | 0.100     | 21,200,000    |
| OM0000004925    | ALBATTINAH POWER                 | 663,595    | 46,522     | 28        | 0.070      | 0.071 | 0.070 | 0.070     | 0.071       | -0.001    | -1.408 | 0.070   | 0.070   | 0.071      | 0.100     | 47,242,120    |
| OM0000001483    | NATIONAL BANK OMAN               | 207,600    | 60,175     | 3         | 0.290      | 0.290 | 0.290 | 0.290     | 0.295       | -0.005    | -1.685 | 0.290   | 0.290   | 0.290      | 0.100     | 471,524,443   |
| OM0000002804    | ASAFAA FOODS                     | 118,980    | 44,701     | 26        | 0.380      | 0.383 | 0.370 | 0.380     | 0.389       | -0.009    | -2.256 | 0.387   | 0.387   | 0.387      | 0.100     | 46,800,000    |
| Total           |                                  | 27,106,488 | 5,022,326  | 1,354     |            |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |         |            |           |               |
| Parallel Market |                                  |            |            |           |            |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |         |            |           |               |
| OM0000001681    | OMAN EMIRATES HO.                | 1,090,122  | 77,631     | 52        | 0.067      | 0.073 | 0.067 | 0.073     | 0.067       | 0.006     | 8.955  | 0.073   | 0.073   | 0.073      | 0.100     | 8,896,875     |
| OM0000005005    | ALMAHA CERAMICS                  | 261,703    | 69,872     | 61        | 0.256      | 0.270 | 0.255 | 0.268     | 0.253       | 0.015     | 5.929  | 0.268   | 0.264   | 0.268      | 0.100     | 14,740,000    |
| OM0000003029    | GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS     | 2,442,263  | 185,939    | 132       | 0.075      | 0.077 | 0.074 | 0.077     | 0.074       | 0.003     | 4.054  | 0.077   | 0.077   | 0.078      | 0.100     | 1,617,000     |
| OM0000001772    | ALANWAR INVESTMENT               | 2,886,592  | 248,246    | 84        | 0.081      | 0.085 | 0.081 | 0.085     | 0.082       | 0.003     | 3.659  | 0.085   | 0.084   | 0.085      | 0.100     | 24,400,961    |
| OM0000004735    | MUSCAT FINANCE                   | 115,349    | 11,355     | 8         | 0.117      | 0.117 | 0.117 | 0.117     | 0.117       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.117   | 0.117   | 0.117      | 0.100     | 100,528,000   |
| OM0000001152    | OMAN NATIONAL ENGG & INVESTMENT  | 13,600     | 1,591      | 4         | 0.117      | 0.117 | 0.117 | 0.117     | 0.114       | 0.003     | 2.632  | 0.117   | 0.115   | 0.117      | 0.100     | 17,550,000    |
| OM0000001400    | OMAN FLOUR MILLS                 | 10,000     | 1,350      | 3         | 0.450      | 0.450 | 0.450 | 0.450     | 0.441       | 0.009     | 2.041  | 0.450   | 0.445   | 0.450      | 0.100     | 74,418,790    |
| OM0000009908    | OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SF2)         | 19,216,591 | 2,150,648  | 350       | 0.111      | 0.114 | 0.111 | 0.114     | 0.112       | 0.002     | 1.796  | 0.114   | 0.114   | 0.114      | 0.040     | 394,381,957   |
| OM0000001509    | DHOFAH INTL DEV & INVESTMENT HO. | 7,136      | 1,813      | 2         | 0.250      | 0.254 | 0.250 | 0.254     | 0.250       | 0.004     | 1.600  | 0.254   | 0.250   | 0.250      | 0.100     | 103,948,564   |
| OM0000009759    | OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION    | 6,214,860  | 1,794,265  | 262       | 0.182      | 0.189 | 0.183 | 0.186     | 0.182       | 0.004     | 1.418  | 0.186   | 0.186   | 0.186      | 0.100     | 288,000,000   |
| OM0000001160    | NATIONAL GAS                     | 834,249    | 63,061     | 72        | 0.075      | 0.077 | 0.074 | 0.075     | 0.074       | 0.001     | 1.351  | 0.075   | 0.068   | 0.075      | 0.100     | 6,375,000     |
| OM0000000720    | OMAN TOURISM                     | 1,500      | 118        | 1         | 0.145      | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.145     | 0.145       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.145   | 0.135   | 0.145      | 0.100     | 1,000,000     |
| OM0000008710    | BARKA DESALINATION               | 14,950     | 1,869      | 2         | 0.125      | 0.125 | 0.125 | 0.125     | 0.124       | 0.001     | 0.806  | 0.125   | 0.120   | 0.126      | 0.100     | 9,440,250     |
| OM0000001749    | OMAN CEMENT                      | 22,331     | 10,131     | 12        | 0.447      | 0.452 | 0.447 | 0.449     | 0.447       | 0.002     | 0.447  | 0.449   | 0.444   | 0.449      | 0.100     | 148,561,947   |
| OM0000001590    | MUSCAT FINANCE                   | 86,654     | 4,436      | 2         | 0.051      | 0.051 | 0.050 | 0.050     | 0.050       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.050   | 0.050   | 0.050      | 0.100     | 15,357,316    |
| OM0000001897    | MAJAN COLLEGE                    | 10,000     | 1,066      | 2         | 0.106      | 0.107 | 0.106 | 0.107     | 0.107       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.107   | 0.103   | 0.107      | 0.100     | 9,630,000     |
| OM0000002036    | MUSCAT THREAD MILLS              | 1,500      | 118        | 1         | 0.145      | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.145     | 0.145       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.145   | 0.135   | 0.145      | 0.100     | 1,000,000     |
| OM0000002287    | GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS           | 10,125     | 2,228      | 5         | 0.220      | 0.220 | 0.220 | 0.220     | 0.220       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.220   | 0.219   | 0.222      | 0.100     | 10,068,476    |
| OM0000002275    | SHEEL OMAN MARKETING             | 700        | 398        | 2         | 0.569      | 0.569 | 0.569 | 0.569     | 0.569       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.569   | 0.530   | 0.569      | 0.100     | 54,055,000    |
| OM0000002572    | OMAN OIL MARKETING               | 500        | 335        | 1         | 0.669      | 0.669 | 0.669 | 0.670     | 0.670       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.669   | 0.669   | 0.669      | 0.100     | 41,054,250    |
| OM0000002848    | NATIONAL FINANCE                 | 15,068     | 1,808      | 4         | 0.120      | 0.120 | 0.120 | 0.120     | 0.120       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.120   | 0.119   | 0.120      | 0.100     | 72,975,185    |
| OM0000003281    | TAAGER FINANCE                   | 1,719      | 1,219      | 1         | 0.104      | 0.104 | 0.104 | 0.104     | 0.104       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.104   | 0.104   | 0.104      | 0.100     | 29,039,214    |
| OM0000004776    | TAKAFUL OMAN                     | 100,000    | 4,200      | 6         | 0.042      | 0.042 | 0.042 | 0.042     | 0.042       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.042   | 0.042   | 0.044      | 0.100     | 10,500,000    |
| OM0000005280    | OMAN ARAB BANK                   | 15,000     | 2,200      | 2         | 0.148      | 0.148 | 0.148 | 0.148     | 0.148       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.148   | 0.147   | 0.148      | 0.100     | 24,277,031.48 |
| OM0000007407    | DHOFAH GENERATING                | 4,055      | 219        | 2         | 0.054      | 0.054 | 0.054 | 0.054     | 0.054       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.054   | 0.054   | 0.054      | 0.100     | 12,000,860    |
| OM0000001176    | MUSCAT FINANCE                   | 773        | 186        | 1         | 0.238      | 0.238 | 0.238 | 0.238     | 0.238       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.238   | 0.238   | 0.238      | 0.100     | 1,000,000     |
| OM0000000888    | THE PEARL REIT                   | 108,190    | 12,550     | 5         | 0.116      | 0.116 | 0.116 | 0.116     | 0.116       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.116   | 0.115   | 0.120      | 0.100     | 68,696,678    |
| OM0000004548    | MUSCAT POWER HOLDING             | 27,282     | 16,230     | 1         | 0.592      | 0.592 | 0.592 | 0.592     | 0.592       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.592   | 0.592   | 0.592      | 0.100     | 41,524,205    |
| OM0000001178    | MUSCAT GASES                     | 17,910     | 1,801      | 5         | 0.101      | 0.101 | 0.100 | 0.101     | 0.101       | -0.001    | -0.890 | 0.100   | 0.098   | 0.100      | 0.100     | 3,000,000     |
| OM0000002280    | AHLI BANK                        | 600,385    | 26,252     | 2         | 0.155      | 0.155 | 0.155 | 0.155     | 0.157       | -0.002    | -1.274 | 0.155   | 0.155   | 0.000      | 0.100     | 364,196,307   |
| OM0000001092    | PIROMO POWER                     | 20,000     | 1,240      | 1         | 0.062      | 0.062 | 0.062 | 0.062     | 0.062       | -0.001    | -0.478 | 0.062   | 0.062   | 0.062      | 0.100     | 1,000,000     |
| OM0000003423    | SALALAH MILK                     | 600        | 269        | 2         | 0.448      | 0.448 | 0.448 | 0.448     | 0.447       | -0.001    | -0.969 | 0.448   | 0.442   | 0.502      | 0.100     | 27,963,453    |
| OM0000001481    | AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING     | 10,678     | 1,394      | 1         | 0.044      | 0.044 | 0.044 | 0.044     | 0.045       | -0.001    | -2.222 | 0.044   | 0.045   | 0.045      | 0.100     | 374,000       |
| OM0000000447    | OMAN RETT FUND                   | 28,250     | 2,262      | 10        | 0.082      | 0.082 | 0.080 | 0.080     | 0.082       | -0.002    | -2.439 | 0.080   | 0.080   | 0.080      | 0.100     | 40,690,504    |
| Total           |                                  | 34         | 36,329,027 | 4,967,347 | 1,182      |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |         |            |           |               |

# DARK MATTER FORMED WHEN FAST PARTICLES SLOWED DOWN AND GOT HEAVY: STUDY



LIFESTYLE

The extremely low-energy particles they suggest make up dark matter would have a unique signature on the Cosmic Microwave Background, or CMB, the leftover radiation from the Big Bang that fills all of the universe

A study by Dartmouth researchers proposes a new theory about the origin of dark matter, the mysterious and invisible substance thought to give the universe its shape and structure. The researchers report in Physical Review Letters that dark matter could have formed in the early life of the universe from the collision of high-energy massless particles that lost their zip and took on an incredible amount of mass immediately after pairing up, according to their

mathematical models. While hypothetical, dark matter is believed to exist based on observed gravitational effects that cannot be explained by visible matter. Scientists estimate that 85 percent of the universe's total mass is dark matter. But the study authors write that their theory is distinct because it can be tested using existing observational data. The extremely low-energy particles they suggest make up dark matter would have a unique signature on the Cosmic Microwave

Background, or CMB, the leftover radiation from the Big Bang that fills all of the universe. "Dark matter started its life as near-massless relativistic particles, almost like light," says Robert Caldwell, a professor of physics and astronomy and the paper's senior author. "That's totally antithetical to what dark matter is thought to be -- it is cold lumps that give galaxies their mass," Caldwell says. "Our theory tries to explain how it went from being light to being lumps." Hot, fast-moving particles dom-

inated the cosmos after the burst of energy known as the Big Bang that scientists believe triggered the universe's expansion 13.7 billion years ago. These particles were similar to photons, the massless particles that are the basic energy, or quanta, of light. It was in this chaos that extremely large numbers of these particles bonded to each other, according to Caldwell and Guanning Liang, the study's first author and a Dartmouth senior. They theorise that these massless particles were pulled together

by the opposing directions of their spin, like the attraction between the north and south poles of magnets. As the particles cooled, Caldwell and Liang say, an imbalance in the particles' spins caused their energy to plummet, like steam rapidly cooling into water. The outcome was the cold, heavy particles that scientists think constitute dark matter. "The most unexpected part of our mathematical model was the energy plummet that bridges the high-density energy and the lumpy low energy," Liang says. "At that stage, it's like these

pairs were getting ready to become dark matter," Caldwell says. "This phase transition helps explain the abundance of dark matter we can detect today. It sprang from the high-density cluster of extremely energetic particles that was the early universe." The study introduces a theoretical particle that would have initiated the transition to dark matter. But scientists already know that the subatomic particles known as electrons can undergo a similar transition, Caldwell and Liang say.

-ANI

# All-Omani team shows promising signs in hard-fought T20 series

Hosts go down 2-1 to Bahrain in closely contested matches at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat recently

**MUSCAT:** A determined All-Omani Development Team came close to pulling off a remarkable series win against the visiting Bahraini National Team in a recently concluded three-match T20 series at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat.

Despite losing the series 2-1, the all-Omani side earned praise for their resilience, growing maturity, and ability to compete until the very last ball.

For a team built entirely around domestic talent, the performances were a sign of exciting progress in Oman's cricketing pipeline.

Head coach of the team, Prashanth Chandran said: "As the coach of the All-Omani Development Team, I'm incredibly proud of the players' mindset and their eagerness to learn."

He added: "Despite their limited cricketing experience and match practice, they showed tremendous grit and competed hard in all three games against Bahrain."

Chandran said: "The final match, taken down to the very last ball, was a true display of their fighting spirit and desire to win. With structured training and consistent match exposure, I firmly believe this team has the potential to develop into a highly competitive unit that can make Oman proud on the regional and continental stage."

The three-match series offered



All-Omani team [Oman Development Team] acknowledges their fans at Oman Cricket Academy ground



Rashad Al Balushi



Faris Khalid Al Balushi



Shoaib Ismail Al Balushi



Sufyan Mehmood

a range of challenges for the Omani side, but they responded with character.

The opening game was a close-fought contest, with Bahrain setting a modest target of 144/8, thanks to tight bowling spells from Faris Khalid Al Balushi (2/12) and Shoaib Ismail Al Balushi (2/18). Oman fell just short in the chase, finishing at 135/7 despite a well-constructed 56 from Sufyan Mehmood and a steady 34 from Shoaib.

The second match saw the hosts come roaring back with a high-scoring win. Batting first, Oman

posted a commanding 188/4, led by a fluent 61 from Shoaib and a powerful 50 from Mohammed Al Balushi. Bahrain responded with a spirited chase but were stopped at 185/7, with Faris once again impressing with the ball, claiming four crucial wickets.

With the series level at 1-1, the decider turned out to be a nail-biter. Oman put up 165/6 on the board, built around Majid Al Balushi's 40 and another solid knock by Mohammed (27).

Defending the total, Rashad Al Balushi nearly turned the tide with a devastating spell of 5/12.

However, Bahrain's Abdulla Parvej played a match-winning hand, scoring 97 runs and steering his team to victory by just one wicket off the final delivery.

While the result may not have gone in Oman's favour, the series featured a number of standout performances.

Bahrain's Abdulla Parvej topped the run charts with 127 runs, including his match-winning 97 in the final encounter.

For Oman, Shoaib Ismail Al Balushi impressed with a total of 118 runs across the three games, closely followed by Sufyan Mehmood,

who amassed 115 runs.

On the bowling front, Faris Khalid Al Balushi led the charge for Oman with seven wickets, while Rashad Al Balushi made a major impact with his five-wicket haul in the final game.

The series offered a valuable glimpse into the potential that lies within the country's domestic circuit.

## Brief scores:

**1st T20 match:** Bahraini National Team 144/8 (Faris Khalid Al Balushi 2/12, Shoaib Ismail Al Balushi 2/18) beat Oman Development

Team 135/7 (Sufyan Mehmood 56 (47), Shoaib Ismail Al Balushi 34 (31).

**2nd T20 match:** Oman Development Team 188/4 (Shoaib Ismail Al Balushi 61 (39), Mohammed Al Balushi 50 (30)) beat Bahraini National Team 185/7 (Faris Khalid Al Balushi 4/38, Sufyan Mehmood 0/26).

**3rd T20 match:** Oman Development Team: 165/6 (Majid Al Balushi 40 (35), Mohammed Al Balushi 27 (23)) lost to Bahraini National Team: 166/9 (Abdulla Parvej 97; Rashad Al Balushi 5/12, Abbas Al Balushi 1/22).



## Bellingham to miss start of season after surgery

**MADRID:** Real Madrid and England midfielder Jude Bellingham is expected to miss at least the first six weeks of next season when he has shoulder surgery after the FIFA Club World Cup. The 21-year-old has struggled with a persistent shoulder problem since 2023 and Real have scheduled the operation for when the tournament in the United States is over.

The former Birmingham City midfielder has worn strapping on his shoulder when playing for England and for his club, having initially missed two games for both Madrid and England at the end of 2023 after injuring his shoulder against Rayo Vallecano.

The expanded 32-team

Club World Cup takes place in the United States between 15 June and 13 July.

Bellingham is expected to miss the whole of preseason and at least the first six weeks of the new campaign, which would also mean being absent for England's World Cup qualifiers against Andorra and Serbia in September.

Bellingham starred in his first season in Spain after signing for £115m from Borussia Dortmund.

He helped Madrid to the La Liga title and Champions League, scoring 23 goals in 43 appearances. This season, though, he has scored just 14 in 52, with Madrid losing the title to Barcelona and being knocked out of Europe in the quarters by Arsenal. - Agencies

## PREMIER LEAGUE

# Reduce squad size or I'll quit: Guardiola

**LONDON:** Pep Guardiola has threatened to quit as manager of Manchester City if the club does not reduce the size of his squad this summer, saying leaving so many players out is "impossible for my soul".

A number of Man City's senior players were not included in the matchday squad for Tuesday's 3-1 win against Bournemouth and Guardiola said he is unhappy at leaving so many players out.

Abdukodir Khusanov, Savinho, James McAtee, Claudio Echeverri and Rico Lewis all missed out on Tuesday's 20-man matchday squad as City moved to third in the Premier League and within a point of Champions League qualification.

But, despite this showing the depth Guardiola has at his disposal, the Spaniard wants to work with a smaller squad next season.

He said: "I said to the club I don't want that [a bigger squad]. I don't want to leave five or six players in the freezer. I don't want that. I will quit. Make a shorter squad, I will stay."

"It's impossible for my soul to [tell] my players in the tribune [stands] that they cannot play."

Guardiola said it is difficult to continually leave players out of City's matchday squad.

"Maybe [for] three, four months we couldn't select 11 players, we didn't have defenders, it was so difficult. After, people came back,



but next season it cannot be like that," the 54-year-old added.

"As a manager I cannot train 24 players and every time I select I have to have four, five, six stay in Manchester at home because they cannot play. This is not going to happen. I said to the club, I don't want that."

City spent more than £200m on four players in January, with Khushanov, Omar Marmoush, Nico Gonzalez and Vitor Reis arriving

at the Etihad Stadium while Echeverri, a 2024 signing from River Plate, also joined following a loan spell back at the Argentine club.

Kevin de Bruyne is the only player confirmed to be leaving City this summer, while the future of midfielder Jack Grealish, who last started a Premier League match on 2 April, is also in doubt.

When asked if it meant more exits were inevitable, Guardiola - who signed a deal keeping him at

the club until 2027 - said: "It is a question for the club. I don't want to have 24, 25, 26 players when everyone is fit. If I have injuries, unlucky, we have some players for the academy and we do it."

Guardiola said a big squad is unsustainable and that it is important for "the soul of the team" that his players "create another connection with each other that this season we lost it a bit".

All Premier League clubs can name a 25-man squad, but this is not an exhaustive list of all players eligible to play. A team can also include under-21 players who are eligible over and above the 25-man squad limit.

Manchester City's website lists 28 first-team squad members, plus four players who are on loan elsewhere.

Guardiola has explained in the past, why he prefers to manage a smaller squad, going into the 2023-24 season with 20 senior players.

In comparison, Chelsea's official website lists 31 players in their squad list, with 21 other players out on loan, Brighton and Tottenham list 29 players, while Wolves name 30 players on their squad list. Clubs with smaller squads than Manchester City this season include Arsenal with just 24 players and champions Liverpool, Aston Villa, Everton and Nottingham Forest with 25 squad players. - Agencies

## WILDCARD FOR GENEVA OPEN

# At the moment, I'm not in need of a coach, says Djokovic

**GENEVA:** Novak Djokovic on Tuesday said he "couldn't get more" out of his partnership with Andy Murray but is in no rush to find a new coach.

The Serb, who turns 38 on Thursday, parted company with former rival Murray earlier in May after six months working together.

Djokovic has taken a wildcard into the Geneva Open - one of the final tournaments before the French Open - as he looks to find more rhythm on the court.

The French Open starts on

Sunday, with Djokovic seeking a standalone record 25th Grand Slam title.

On his time working with Murray, Djokovic said: "We felt like we couldn't get more out of that partnership on the court, and that's all there is to it. My respect towards Andy remains the same, even more actually, I got to know him as a person."

"I think he has a brilliant tennis IQ, he has a very rare mind of a champion that obviously has achieved what he has achieved, and he sees the game incredibly well."



Djokovic has yet to win a match on clay this year, having suffered early exits in Monte Carlo and Madrid before skipping the Italian Open.

Lifting the title in Geneva would make Djokovic just the third man in the Open era to win 100 ATP singles titles - as well as be a welcome boost before Roland Garros.

Djokovic is joined in Geneva by Dusan Vemic, who was previously part of his team, and assistant coach and analyst Boris Bosnjakovic. "At the moment, I'm not in need of a coach," Djokovic said.

"I don't need to rush in any context. I feel comfortable with the people around me. In the next few tournaments, we'll see what happens."

Djokovic reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open in his first tournament working with Britain's former world number one Murray, before he was forced to retire through injury. He has had a difficult start to the 2025 season, losing his first match in four of his past five tournaments and being beaten in the Miami Open final by Czech 19-year-old Jakub Mensik. - Agencies

# BankDhofar’s Al Heson savings account offers convenient 24/7 access for all residents in Oman

With features like cardless cash withdrawals, debit card access, and card control through the mobile app, customers enjoy full flexibility and control over their banking experience

**MUSCAT:** A reliable everyday banking option, the Al Heson Savings Account is tailored to meet the needs of both Omani nationals and expatriates residing in the Sultanate. It offers easy, 24/7 access to funds through BankDhofar’s Mobile App, Internet Banking, ATMs, CDMs, and nationwide branch network, empowering customers to benefit from easy account operation.

With features like cardless cash withdrawals, debit card ac-



cess, and card control through the mobile app, customers enjoy full flexibility and control over their banking experience.

Commenting on the significance of this everyday banking account Amjad Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer of Bank-

Dhofar, stated: “Al Heson is an ideal solution for customers seeking simplicity and control in their day-to-day banking. It reflects our

ongoing efforts to make banking easier, faster, and more secure for customers to manage their money in the way that fits their require-

ments. Its suite of digital and traditional access options, coupled with its ease of use, makes it an ideal choice for everyday banking.”

While the Al Heson Account is a non-interest-bearing savings account, customers looking for returns on their deposits can explore BankDhofar’s range of guaranteed return deposit products, such as High Yield, Fixed Deposits, Recurring Deposits, as well as Education and Retirement Saving Plans. These offer attractive, fixed rates of return over specified periods, supporting customers’ long-term financial goals.

Customer can easily open Al Heson Savings Account within minutes via the Intilaqa App, or customers may visit their nearest BankDhofar branch. Eligibility is open to Omani nationals and expatriates over the age of 18.

To open an Al Heson Savings Account, Omani nationals are required to furnish their Civil ID card, while expatriates need to provide passport copy, resident ID, and proof of local and permanent addresses (e.g., utility bill, lease agreement, employer letter, or bank statement) BankDhofar continues to enhance customer convenience through its digital platforms and product offerings, reinforcing its position as a leading bank in the Sultanate with services that cater to modern lifestyles.

UNMATCHED BENEFITS



## Sohar International and Sohar Islamic launch credit card campaign offering premium rewards

**MUSCAT:** Reinforcing their customer-first philosophy and commitment to delivering superior banking experiences, Sohar International and Sohar Islamic have recently launched a Credit Card Acquisition and Spend Campaign aimed at enhancing value, convenience, and access for both new and existing clients. The campaign encourages customers to apply for and actively use their Visa Credit Cards, unlocking a suite of exclusive benefits and a chance to win premium prizes through monthly raffle draws.

Commenting on the launch, Abdul Qader Al Sumali, Chief Retail and Premier Banking Officer at Sohar International, stated, “At Sohar International, we firmly believe that banking excellence is not merely about delivering financial solutions, it’s about enriching our customers’ lives through exceptional value-added benefits. Our credit card packages are thoughtfully designed to address a wide range of needs, from comprehensive insurance and 24/7 global assistance to concierge services, travel and shopping privileges, and exclusive deals from leading international brands. These distinctive offerings reflect our unwavering commitment to delivering a holistic banking experience that places our customers at the forefront of distinction and exclusivity.”

To incentivize engagement, Sohar International and Sohar Islamic are offering a combined total of more than 400 smart devices as part of this campaign. Winners will be selected through monthly raffle draws, with 30 winners from Sohar International and 10 from Sohar Islamic each month. The prizes will be distributed on a rotating basis to

maintain excitement and encourage sustained participation.

Anchored in a customer-centric product offering, the campaign highlights the compelling credit card proposition designed to meet the various needs and preferences of consumers. Whether new-to-bank or existing customers, applicants will benefit from a lifetime free card, eliminating annual fees and ensuring long-term affordability, in addition to an easy payment plan. Additionally, cardholders gain access to the widely recognized Entertainer App, unlocking hundreds of exclusive offers across dining, retail, and entertainment outlets.

Tailored for those with dynamic lifestyles, the card further enhances the travel experience by providing access to over 1,000 international airport lounges, delivering elevated comfort across global journeys. To add immediate value, new users will receive up to 5,000 welcome points and 500 bonus points upon activation. For continued benefit, cardholders enjoy 1% cashback on their purchases, reinforcing everyday utility with tangible financial rewards.

The campaign is designed to engage a diverse range of customer segments. Customers who spend a minimum of OMR 50 using their credit card will qualify for entry into the monthly raffle draw. The offer applies to all existing Sohar International and Sohar Islamic credit card holders, as well as current customers who do not yet hold a credit card but apply for one during the campaign period. Additionally, the campaign is open to new-to-bank customers who open an account with Sohar International or Sohar Islamic and subsequently apply for a credit card.

TRUE ICON

## Reimagine every drive with Toyota Fortuner

**MUSCAT:** The Toyota Fortuner, a true icon in the SUV world, continues to elevate expectations and captivate hearts with its unmatched blend of strength, elegance and off-road prowess. Engineered for those who demand more from every drive the Fortuner is designed to conquer with confidence and inspire every journey.

At the heart of the Fortuner’s powerful performance lies a choice between two dynamic petrol engines. The 2.7-litre four-cylinder engine delivers a solid 164 HP and 25.0 Kg-m of torque, offering smooth, responsive driving ideal for everyday city commutes and weekend escapes alike.

For those who crave greater exhilaration, the mighty 4.0-litre V6 engine powers forward with an impressive 235 HP and 38.3 Kg-m of torque, unleashing the full potential of the Fortuner on highways and harsher terrain.

Both powertrains are paired to a sophisticated 6-speed automatic transmission, providing seamless gear shifts, optimal fuel efficiency and complete command across every terrain. Whether it is a regular city drive, a desert drive, or a coastal road trip, the Fortuner is built to perform, without compromise.

Step inside the Fortuner and you will discover a refined cabin. Every detail is crafted for comfort,



style and practicality. Seat yourself in the plush leather seats and grip the leather-wood finished steering wheel with paddle shifters, designed to put control and sophistication right at your fingertips. From the cool glove box to keep beverages chilled to the power back door system that makes loading a breeze, every feature enhances your experience on the road. Cruise control adds ease to long-distance drives, while smart ergonomics and premium materials ensure every ride feels first-class.

Packed with innovative technology, the Fortuner keeps you connected and in control wherever

you go. The intuitive navigation system helps you find your way with ease, while a rear-view camera ensures you park and reverse with confidence. The 6-speaker audio system fills the cabin with rich, immersive sound, setting the perfect mood for every adventure.

Toyota’s unwavering commitment to safety is evident in the Fortuner’s robust suite of advanced safety systems. From the anti-lock braking system and vehicle stability control to the comprehensive SRS airbag system (including driver, passenger, side, curtain and knee airbags), every aspect of the Fortuner is designed to protect.

The tyre pressure monitoring system monitors the wheels for optimum performance and safety, while the three-point emergency locking retractor (ELR) seatbelts respond instantly in case of impact. No matter the terrain or the challenge, peace of mind comes standard.

A true embodiment of power, elegance and intelligent design, the Toyota Fortuner continues to redefine the SUV experience. Built to go beyond expectations and engineered for those who dare to explore the extraordinary, the Fortuner is the ultimate companion for families, adventurers and trailblazers.

WELL-ROUNDED SEDAN

## Explore versatility and refinement of Changan EADO PLUS available for EMI of OMR 110

**MUSCAT:** The Changan EADO PLUS brings together performance, style, and innovation in a well-rounded sedan designed for today’s drivers. Available in two well-equipped variants, Limited and Trend, the EADO PLUS caters to different preferences without compromising on technology, safety, or value. Both share the same powerful 1.5L Turbo GDI engine producing 170 hp and 260 Nm of torque, paired with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission, delivering smooth power with excellent fuel efficiency at 18.3 km/L.

The Trend variant makes a strong case for everyday comfort and convenience. It features 17-inch dual-tone alloy wheels, LED headlights and taillights, a sunroof, and rain-sensing wipers. Inside, it includes leather seats, a 13.2-inch touchscreen infotainment system, a 10.25-inch digital instrument display, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and remote engine



start. Safety is well-covered with ABS, traction control, four airbags, hill-start and descent control, rear parking sensors, and a right-front blind spot camera.

For those seeking an extra layer of technology, comfort, and safety, the Limited variant builds on the Trend with a comprehensive upgrade in features and sophistication. Visually, it stands out with 18-inch alloy wheels, a panoramic

sunroof, exterior welcome lights, and electronically foldable rear-view mirrors. Hidden electronic door handles and a fixed tail wing give it a sleek, modern touch.

Inside, the Limited offers ventilated leather seats, 6-way power adjustment for the driver, a rear armrest with cup holders, wireless charging, and power windows with anti-pinch function. It also boasts a sound system with six speakers

and features a fully digital 10” instrument cluster.

Where the Limited truly excels is in its safety and driver assistance features. These include Forward Collision Warning, Active Emergency Braking, 540° panoramic camera, Blind Spot Detection, Lane Departure Warning and Lane Keeping Assist, Traffic Jam Assist, and ADAS Level 2 driving support; features that put it in league with more premium sedans.

The EADO PLUS Limited also offers exceptional value with monthly installments starting at just OMR 110. This EMI is based on a 20% down payment and a six-year financing plan, available through participating banks and subject to credit approval for salaried individuals.

With both variants offering compelling features, the Changan EADO PLUS delivers versatility and refinement tailored to a wide range of drivers.

ROUND-UP

# Meethaq team to assist pilgrims at Muscat International Airport and Al-Rub’ Al-Khali Border in Ibri

These teams will distribute gifts to the pilgrims, including a specially designed Haj bag with essential supplies that will support them throughout their journey

**MUSCAT:** As part of its commitment to enhancing its role in social responsibility and community service, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat is launching an initiative focused on supporting pilgrims and facilitating their experience during their journey to perform Hajj.

This initiative is a testament to Meethaq’s dedication to strengthening its community engagement across various religious, national and social occasions.

From May 25 to June 4, Meethaq will deploy dedicated teams at Muscat International Airport and the Al-Rub’ Al-Khali Border with Saudi Arabia in Ibri, Al Dhahirah Governorate, in partnership with The Ibri Charity Team. These teams will distribute gifts to the pilgrims, including a specially designed Hajj bag with essential supplies that will support them throughout their journey. In addition, the teams will assist pilgrims by providing information about

Peace of mind with exclusive Meethaq Hajj Offers



available benefits and addressing any inquiries about Meethaq’s services, ensuring a smooth and supportive journey.

Ali Ahmed Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager – Meethaq Islamic Banking, said: “We are delighted to celebrate this important religious occasion with our valued customers. This initiative offers an opportunity to enhance our services and support pilgrims with financial facilities. Our presence at Muscat International Airport and Al-Rub’ Al-Khali Border reaffirms our commitment to customer care and providing a comfortable experience. We also extend our sincere

gratitude to The Ibri Charity Team and other partners for their continuous support and efforts.

During the Hajj season, Meethaq is offering tailored banking services for pilgrims. The services include Travel Finance at a competitive profit rate and a wide range of credit card benefits. These perks include travel assistance, exclusive airport lounge access, cashback rewards and much more, ensuring a seamless and rewarding experience for customers.

Meethaq’s comprehensive Travel Finance solution features 100% financing, easy installment plans, competitive pricing, minimal

charges, and partnership with top travel operators across the Sultanate. Pensioners can also avail Travel Finance by assigning their pension to Meethaq. Notably, The Travel Finance offering operates under the principle of service ijarah.

Meethaq Islamic Banking also offers a wide range of credit cards designed to meet the diverse needs of customers. These include the Meethaq Lulu Credit Card, Visa Platinum Credit Card, Visa Gold Credit Card and Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Card. Customers can enjoy exclusive benefits such as lounge airport access, cashback rewards and the convenience of the Easy

Payment Plan. Additional features include free issuance of supplementary cards for family members, secure online shopping and global acceptance, providing access to a worldwide of offers and privileges. Furthermore, Meethaq has provided a package of banking facilities for companies and contractors involved in Hajj and Umrah campaigns, accredited by the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs. This initiative aims to support their working capital needs and facilitates the purchase of buses.

Meethaq is a pioneer in offering innovative digital banking products and services, aligned with global

best practices in Islamic banking and finance. Customers can easily track their transactions through Meethaq’s robust Internet Banking and Mobile Banking platforms. Meethaq continues to focus on the development of new products and delivering cutting-edge services to meet evolving customer needs.

Meethaq upholds the highest standards of professionalism and adheres strictly to Shari’a principles. Every Meethaq product goes through the process of Sharia-compliance certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board and is developed in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



## University of the West of Scotland London campus offers quality UK education at affordable rates

**MUSCAT:** The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) London Campus offers Omani students and expats an exceptional opportunity to gain a prestigious UK qualification in one of the world’s most vibrant cities, combining academic excellence with affordability.

Located in London’s dynamic business district, UWS London provides internationally recognized degrees in business, health, technology, and social sciences. With state-of-the-art facilities

and a diverse student community representing over 70 countries, students benefit from a truly global learning experience.

UWS takes pride in its practical approach to education, with strong industry connections ensuring graduates are career-ready. The university’s impressive 94% graduate employment rate demonstrates its commitment to student success in the global job market.

What sets UWS London apart is its commitment to making quality UK education accessible

to. For the 2025/2026 academic year, UWS is offering substantial scholarships of up to 40% on selected courses for international students. Combined with tuition fees already significantly lower than many London universities, these scholarships make UWS an exceptionally affordable choice without compromising on quality.

The campus provides comprehensive support services tailored to international students, including visa guidance, application assistance, and dedicated academic

advisors to ensure a smooth transition to UK study.

With multiple intake periods throughout the year and accelerated degree options, students can begin their educational journey at a time that suits them and potentially complete their studies more quickly than at traditional universities.

For Omani students seeking an affordable route to a respected UK qualification in London, UWS offers the perfect balance of academic excellence, practical experience, and value for money.

IMPROVED CAPITAL RATIOS

## Capital Intelligence upgrades Alizz Islamic Bank’s rating with stable outlook



**MUSCAT:** Alizz Islamic Bank announced that the international credit rating agency, Capital Intelligence Ratings has upgraded Alizz Islamic Bank’s Long-Term ratings on the Oman National Scale to ‘omAA+’ from ‘omAAA’ while also affirming the bank’s Short-Term national rating at ‘omA1+’.

Alizz Islamic Bank’s rating has been upgraded due to improved capital ratios, bolstered by a recent additional Tier 1 Sukuk issuance that enhances its growth potential and finances absorption capacity. The report emphasised that the credit rating of Alizz Islamic Bank is based on the Bank’s sound financial metrics in terms of financing asset quality, liquidity and improving profitability.

The continued expansion of

customer deposits further supports the Alizz Islamic Bank’s sound liquidity position.

Financially, Alizz Islamic Bank reported higher earnings in 2024, primarily driven by net financing income and an improvement in the cost-to-income ratio.

Commenting on the result of this report, Ali Al Mani, Chief Executive Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank, said, “Strengthening of the fiscal balance and improved macroeconomic indicators resulted in improvement of the outlook for Oman’s sovereign rating and will have a positive effect on the banking sector as well. At Alizz Islamic Bank we will continue our mission to deliver sustainable results for our shareholders based on our well-defined strategy.”

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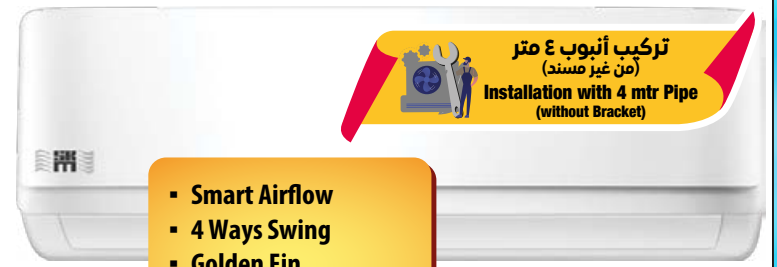
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