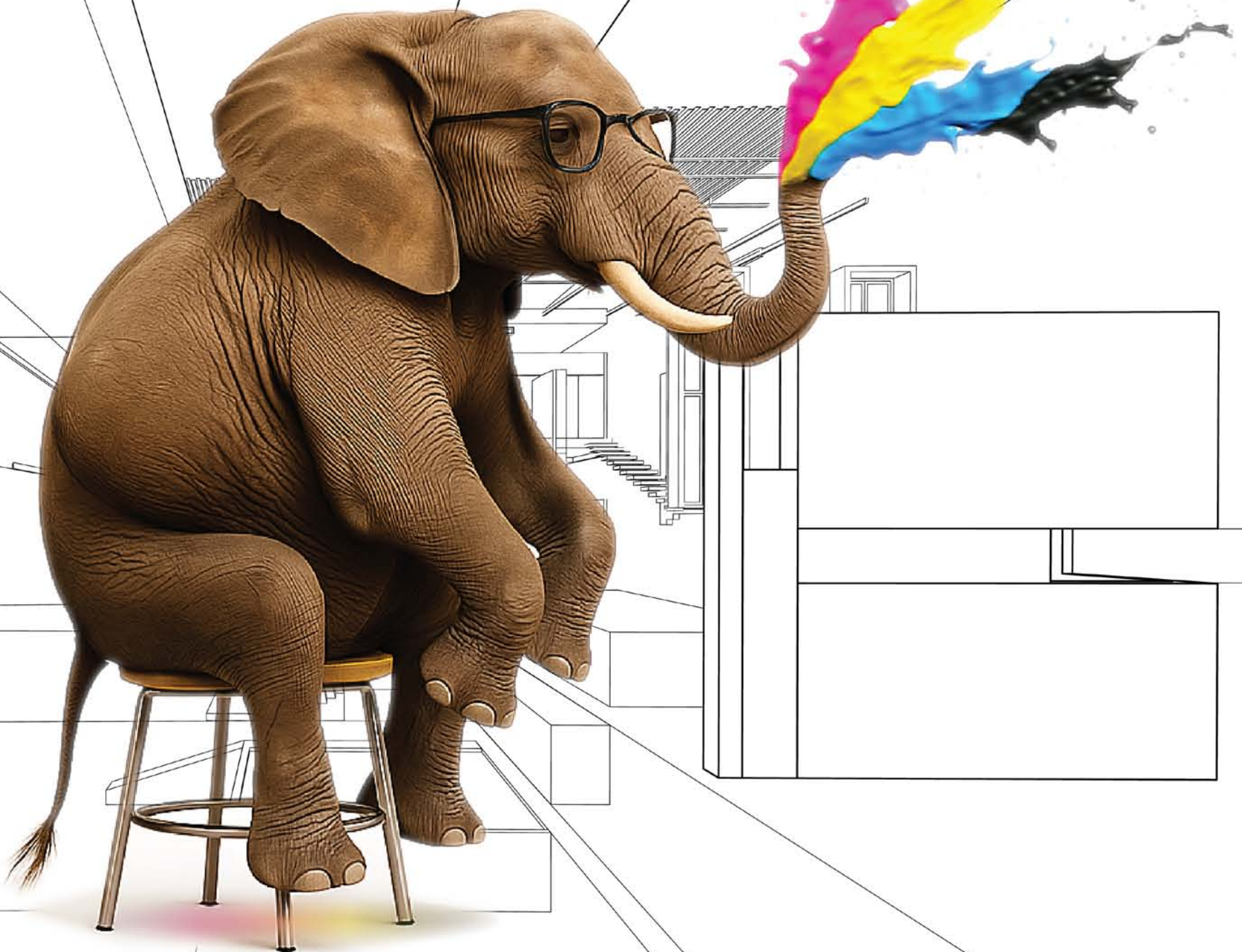


We make your Business bigger than your problems.



We get you ahead on

- Booth production
- Event conceptualisation
- Event management

Wait, there's more

- Large format digital printing
- Flex banners
- Vinyl stickers
- Back drops with metal frames
- Wooden standalones
- Backlit flex banners



PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:07pm
Asr.....	3:08pm
Maghrib.....	5:28pm
Isha.....	6:43pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:21am

MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL AUTOMOBILES UNVEILS THE ROX ADAMAS, A LUXURIOUS ALL-TERRAIN SUV IN OMAN



MUSCAT: Muscat International Automobiles unveiled the revolutionary ROX Adamas at a grand event held at the luxurious St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, setting a new benchmark in next-generation mobility with its world-leading REEV technology. The exclusive gathering of industry leaders, media, and distinguished guests marked the arrival of a true game-changer for Oman's automotive landscape.

The launch event captivated attendees with a dynamic showcase of the ROX Adamas, Next-Generation Luxurious All-Terrain SUV — a fusion of cutting-edge technology, unparalleled performance, and futuristic design. Guided by its product expression of “Gliding Luxury”, ROX Motor defines the ROX ADAMAS experience as the harmony between power, precision, and elegance, where advanced engineering meets refined comfort to deliver confidence, control, and long-distance resilience across every journey.

ADAMAS translates the flowing elegance of silk into a driving experience that feels composed on the highway, capable on the dunes, and effortless on all terrains.

Spokesperson of Muscat International Automobiles said: The unveiling of the ROX Adamas in Oman marks more than the introduction of a luxury SUV, it sets a new benchmark in sophisticated mobility and automotive innovation in the Sultanate. This launch reflects our commitment to delivering world-class vehicles that combine cutting-edge technology, comfort, and performance to Omani customers. All vehicles offered by Muscat International Automobiles undergo comprehensive testing and validation for the GCC market, and are engineered specifically to meet the region's demanding conditions. We are fully committed to providing our customers with the highest level of care, ensuring peace of mind and exceptional value for their investment.

All New ROX ADAMAS Introduction
Available in both six and seven-seat configurations, ROX ADAMAS combines versatility and practicality to meet the needs of regional lifestyles, equally suited for family travel, long-distance adventure, or everyday comfort. Powered by ROX's next-generation REEV system, it achieves a 235-km pure-electric and 1,226 km total range as per Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP), with dual-motor AWD delivering 469hp, 740 N•m, and 0–100 km/h in 5.5 s. A closed air suspension with DCC adaptive damping comfort and control across all terrains, supported by optimised driving modes including road, mountain, mud, snow, wading, and sand, plus off-road cruise control (2–15 km/h) and hill descent control (2–35 km/h) to enhance stability, safety, and ease of operation. A dedicated desert thermal manage-



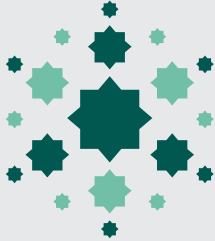
ment system maintains consistent performance and reliability even under extreme conditions.

About ROX Motor:
ROX Motor is an international new-energy vehicle company, focused on Smart, All-terrain, REEV innovation. We are dedicated to empowering those who yearn to explore faraway places through advanced technologies. Our vision is to become the world's leading outdoor lifestyle brand. For more information, please visit: <https://www.roxmotor.com/en>



ABOUT Muscat International Automobiles
Muscat International Automobiles, an associate of Bahwan Services and Trading, is a leading name in the region. Backed by the renowned Bahwan Group, the company offers a wide range of brands including passenger car to luxury and commercial vehicles and equipment, providing top-quality products and exceptional customer service. With a strong market presence and a commitment to excellence, Muscat International Automobiles continues to be a trusted choice for automotive solutions in Oman.
With the launch of the ROX Motors, Muscat International Automobiles cements its position as a trailblazer in Oman's automotive industry. The 3S facility, i.e., ROX showroom, service and parts center situated Al Azaiba. Apart from the above the customers can avail the after-sales service across oman in Bahwan (BAT) Service Centers.
For more information, call ROX Oman Toll free number 800 500 11 or Whatsapp 9662 8901 or visit [ROX-Oman.com](https://www.roxmotor.com/en).





ظفار الإسلامي
DHOFAR ISLAMIC

LEARNING HAS NO LIMITS
with profit rates starting at

3.49%

on education financing.



www.dhofarislamic.com | 24775777

*Terms and Conditions Apply.

COMMENTARY

Are there too many job layoffs in Oman?



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

Without exposing local companies that are laying off staff in large number here in Oman, it is now becoming a trend when many companies are consistently letting go their workers. Of course they have reason of doing that and the top management teams are blaming the economic situation in the country. Yes, from small retail businesses to rich corporate companies, most of them feel the slowdown of the economy. It is also a global economic slowdown as we can read from the news and Oman, like the rest of the regional countries, feel the impact. But while we can go on justifying the companies that layoff their workers but of course our hearts go to

the people who find themselves jobless. Now look at this typical situation. You are married and have a couple of small children to look after then wham! You are out of job the next day. It is a very stressful time knowing that your security pedestal has been removed overnight. We know that many would blame these companies for not doing enough to float above trouble waters for their business interests to stay profitable. Others would blame the ministry of manpower for imposing less stringent laws to employers. The biggest concern is that no company in the country is spared from the possibility of sudden losses. There are many reasons for that ranging from miscalculations of their incomes, no business strategies or contingency plans. Others would blame competitions from rivals or just simply put a finger on government's regulations not protecting them. While on the subject of protection, who is going to protect young people who have lost their income? It seems that there is a vicious cycle that goes round without bearing any fruit. One question still remains. What should be done to stop it or who should take the responsibility? Is it enough just to blame the unpredictability

of the economy? You cannot create jobs by legislation. You must give business freedom to companies. Yes, there are challenges in many folds but it should not be in the loss of income of people who have families to look after. Employers are saying if there are faced with challenges then they have no choice but to cut down their workforce. The top management will always defend themselves but their poor business decisions always lead to job cutting. They would blame market conditions but never themselves. Here in Oman, many top executives have lost their jobs due to that or just stepped down when the reins of power get too hot. They only have themselves to blame and not the economic conditions. If they don't know where the economy is heading five years down the line, they should not be managing anything. There is another thing. If you look at the salary scales, you will find out that about 40 percent of the payouts go to senior executives. Also, the management get fat annual bonuses. So who is draining the money out of the business? It is always the employees in the lower rungs of the employment ladder get the chop. It is tough time ahead. I personally fear there will be more job losses in 2026.

Oman denounces Sydney beach attack, extends condolences

The statement reaffirmed Oman's unwavering position in condemning all forms and motivations of violence and terrorism



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has expressed its strongest condemnation and denunciation of the attack that targeted civilians on a beach in Sydney, Australia, which resulted in a number of innocent casualties.

In an official statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Sunday, the Sultanate of Oman extended its heartfelt condolences and sincere sympathies to the families of the victims and to the government and people of Australia, while wishing the injured a swift and full recovery. The statement reaffirmed

Oman's unwavering position in condemning all forms and motivations of violence and terrorism. **Coexistence and tolerance** It renewed its call to strengthen the values of coexistence and tolerance among all religions and cultures, and to enhance international understanding and cooperation in combating the scourge of extremism. -OMA

HONOUR

Institutions in Oman bag Kuwait Creativity Award

KUWAIT: The Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit won the Kuwait Creativity Award 2025 for the initiative "All of Oman" in the category of Government Communication. This national achievement is added to the record of pioneering Omani experiences in institutional communication and community engagement. This achievement is a culmination of the Unit's efforts in developing the government communication system and introducing innovative initiatives that reflect the state's direction in enhancing institutional communication and establishing a responsible national discourse that supports the path of sustainable development. The "All of Oman" initiative is one of the national communication initiatives launched by the Unit. It aims to enhance community awareness of the national vision and establish the concept of partnership between the state and the community through diverse communication content that highlights the vision's priorities, tracks national achievements, and brings public policies closer to the citizen in a clear language and using modern tools. The initiative contributes to presenting an effective model for government communication based on transparency, interaction, and listening to the community, thus enhancing trust, supporting community participation, and keeping pace with transformations in modern communication and media patterns. The Sultanate of Oman Radio also won the Kuwait Creativity Award 2025 for the programme Studio Al Dhahira (Noon Studio) in the category of Radio and Television Programmes at the Arab Media Forum in Kuwait. The award witnessed wide Arab participation of about 1,600 entries from various Arab coun-



tries, distributed across several creative fields and axes, reflecting the scale of the competition and the value of the award at the Arab level. The programme is a daily dialogue program presented by Abdullah Al Saidi on the radio of the Sultanate of Oman. It addresses various local issues, follows up on public affairs developments, and discusses social, developmental, and economic topics, while highlighting issues relevant to community life and hosting specialists and officials in various fields. The win is a culmination of the efforts of the Sultanate of Oman Radio in offering professional radio content that meets audience aspirations, enhances the role of media in serving the community, establishes responsible dialogue, and follows up on public issues objectively and professionally. The Youth Centre in the Sultanate of Oman also won the Kuwait Media Creativity Award in

its thirteenth session, which was held in the State of Kuwait with the presence of several governmental and media institutions from various Arab countries. The Centre won in the category of Awareness Media Campaigns. The Centre conducted a number of campaigns targeting the community, specifically the youth category, including the "This Is Your Time" campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan, and the "Our Summer is Youthful" campaign coinciding with the summer programs implemented by the Center across the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. The Kuwait Creativity Award is one of the prominent Arab awards concerned with honoring distinguished media and creative initiatives and works, and contributes to supporting purposeful communication production and enhancing positive competition among Arab governmental and media institutions. -OMA

NATIONAL CARRIER

Oman Air's new flights to Taif Copenhagen, Baghdad, Moscow

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a move to enhance air connectivity, the Civil Aviation Authority has approved the operation of new scheduled flights by Oman Air, expanding the national carrier's international and regional network. The newly approved routes include direct services from Muscat to Copenhagen in Denmark with a stopover at Baghdad, Taif in Saudi Arabia and Baghdad in Iraq, in

addition to a new international route connecting Salalah with Moscow. The expansion is aimed at strengthening Oman's links with key regional and global destinations, supporting tourism growth, facilitating business travel, and offering passengers greater travel options. The new services are also expected to enhance connectivity between Europe, the Middle East, and Russia through Oman's airports.





CHANGAN



CS35 PLUS

Marking 5 Years in Oman
with 5 Exclusive Offers



2026 MY

1.4L Turbo Engine, 156 hp, 7 Speed DCT

5 YEARS OF TRUST IN OMAN

5TH ANNIVERSARY OFFERS

- FREE SERVICE: 3 YEARS / 55,000 KMS*
- FREE INSURANCE*
- FREE REGISTRATION*
- VAT (5%) ON US
- FREE GIFT: WINDOW TINTING**

Terms and conditions apply. Offer valid from 20th October till 19th December 2025, purchased through the CHANGAN Showroom Retail Offer. *Whichever is earlier. Periodic Maintenance Service only. Offer includes only 10,000 kms service intervals. **For 1st year only. *Whichever is earlier. Images shown are for illustrative purposes only. Specifications may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN Showroom.

Arabic Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

Showrooms:
Qurum 94641010, Mawaleh 97888180, Nizwa 96628940
Sohar 95351200, Salalah 96629050, Ibri 96628930, Barka 96629010, Sur 96628920

800 50800
9662 8909
@changanoman
www.changanoman.com

Oman’s telecom sector achieves record growth

The data shows that the total mobile service subscriptions reached 8,045,400, marking an 11.3% increase compared with the same period in 2024



MUSCAT: The latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicates sustained strong growth in the Sultanate of Oman’s telecommunications sector until the end of October 2025. The data shows that the total mobile service subscriptions reached 8,045,400, marking an 11.3 percent increase compared with the same period in 2024,

while the active postpaid mobile subscriptions rose by 1.9 percent to 1,260,429, while prepaid subscriptions grew by 3.0 percent to 5,200,770 subscribers. Subscriptions to Internet of Things (IoT – machine-to-machine) services recorded a sharp 68.0 percent surge, reaching 1,584,201 subscriptions by the end of October 2025, whereas the internet services also posted notable gains. The data also shows that, the

active mobile broadband subscriptions climbed to 5,432,686 subscribers, while active fixed broadband subscriptions increased by 3.6 percent to 595,692. **Fibre-to-the-Home/Building** Meanwhile the fibre-to-the-Home/Building (FTTH/B) subscriptions grew by 12.4 percent to 351,432, as the fixed 5G subscriptions edged up by 0.5 percent to 219,751 by the end of October 2025, while the fixed 4G subscrip-

tions declined sharply by 51.3 percent falling to 12,621. Subscriptions to ADSL services dropped by 37.9 percent to 10,237 subscribers, while satellite internet subscriptions rose by 35.5% to 904 ,whereas the other internet subscriptions, including power line internet, Ethernet, and leased internet lines, fell by 11.0% to 747 subscriptions by the end of October 2025, compared with the same period in 2024. -ONA

Agreement signed to boost infrastructure projects in Al Wusta



HIMA: A number of agreements were signed on Sunday in Al Wusta Governorate related to the initiative to enhance road and infrastructure projects across the governorate’s wilayats with the private sector. The agreements are valued at OMR1.8 million. The total length of the roads to be implemented reached 26 kilometres. The agreements were signed on behalf of the Governorate by Sheikh Ahmed bin Musallam Al

Katheri, Governor of Al Wusta, and on behalf of the private sector by representatives of the participating companies in the initiative, in the presence of a number of governorate officials. This initiative is the first of its kind in the Governorate and is part of the commitment to strengthen partnership with the private sector and its contribution to developing infrastructure and achieving sustainable development indicators. -ONA

UNICEF OMAN

Session held on promoting children’s rights, education

IBRA: Acting in cooperation with the Office of the Governor of North Al Sharqiyah, Children First Association and the Ministry of Education, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on Sunday organised dialogue sessions for children as part of the programme of World Children’s Day which takes the theme (My Day, My Rights) this year. Held under the auspices of Mahmoud bin Yahya Al Dhuhli, Governor of North Al Sharqiyah,

the event was attended by HH Dr. Mona bint Fahd Al Said and Sumaira Chowdhury, UNICEF Representative in the Sultanate of Oman. The dialogue sessions targeted students from public and private schools, special education schools and social integration schools. The dialogue sessions focused on listening to the opinions of the students, answering their queries and outlining children’s rights re-

lated to education, health, the environment and climate change. The dialogue sessions also elaborated on how students could contribute to promoting children’s rights and education in their social environs. In addition, they encourage leaders and decision-makers to listen to children and young people and involve them in decisions that determine their future, thereby creating a relationship of trust between society and government.-ONA



MUSANDAM GOVERNORATE WITNESSES MODERATE TO HEAVY RAINS

MUSCAT: Moderate to heavy rains fell in several wilayats of the Musandam Governorate, including Khasab, Bukha and Dibba. This has led to the flow of valleys and wadis due to the weather conditions being experienced by the Sultanate of Oman.



TOURISM

Permits for tourism projects post 48.7% rise in South Al Batinah

NAKHL: The number of permits issued for tourism investment projects in the South Al Batinah Governorate between January and October 2025 grew by 48.7 percent to 174, compared to 117 issued during the corresponding period in 2024. According to updated statistics from the Heritage and Tourism Department in South Al Batinah Governorate, the number of eco-lodges in the governorate stood at 48—of which 33 were set up in the Wilayat of Barka, 10 in the Wilayat of Al Musannah, 2 in the Wilayat of A’Rustaq and 1 in the Wilayat of Wadi Al Maawil. -ONA



MEETING

Oman, Burkina Faso review political, cultural relations

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received on Sunday at his office Karamoko Jean Marie Traoré, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation, and Burkina Faso.

During the meeting, the two ministers affirmed the importance of strengthening ties of cooperation and coordination between the two countries in diplomatic, political, cultural, economic, investment, and commercial fields.

This cooperation aims to achieve the common interests of the two friendly peoples. They also reviewed opportunities to enhance



future partnerships that support sustainable development areas.

Both sides exchanged views on regional and international situations and discussed ways to support dialogue and understanding regarding issues of mutual concern. -ONA

NATIONAL STRATEGY

Panel for care of persons with disabilities holds meeting



MUSCAT: The National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities discussed on Sunday, in its meeting chaired by Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development and Chairperson of the Committee, a proposal to prepare a National Strategy for the Disability Sector in the Sultanate of Oman for the

period 2026–2030.

The Committee reviewed the efforts made and measures taken in applying the mechanisms for functionality-based assessment of persons with disabilities.

Additionally, it discussed the mechanisms for dispensing prosthetic devices and assistive aids.

The Committee also discussed

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Oman’s National University on ALECSO’s distinguished list

DOHA: The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) has enlisted the Centre of Research in Environmental Science and Technology (CEEST) at the National University of Science and Technology on ALECSO’s list of Distinguished Arab Research Centres for 2025–2026 in the field of Renewable Energy.

The announcement was made during an official ceremony held at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in the State of Qatar.

The Centre was selected after competing with 35 Arab research centers, including five research centers from the Sultanate of Oman.

This inclusion grants the Center strategic advantages that include official Arab recognition, training and development programs for researchers, and technical and financial support.



Additionally, it expands opportunities for Arab and international cooperation and the dissemination of the Centre’s achievements on ALECSO’s platforms.

This success comes within the framework of the efforts exerted by the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science in supporting Omani

FOURTH MEETING

OAAAQA Board discusses project to re-engineer quality audit system

MUSCAT: The Board of Directors of Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) held its fourth meeting for the year 2025 on Sunday at its headquarters, chaired by Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

During the meeting, the Board discussed several topics, including updates on the project to re-engineer the quality audit system for General Foundation Programmes (GFPs), updating the Authority’s Strategic Plan (2026-2030).

During the meeting a visual presentation highlighted the school performance evaluation processes carried out by the Authority; the signing of the Conflict



of Interest form with institutions and programmes that will undergo evaluation processes; the Board of Directors’ self-evaluation for the year 2025 and the ratification of matters presented through circulation.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Jokha bint Abdullah Al Shukaili, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, and members of the Board of Directors. -ONA

BILATERAL COOPERATION

New opportunities explored between Oman, Burkina Faso

MUSCAT: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, met on Sunday with Karamoko Jean Marie Traoré, Burkina Faso’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinabe Abroad, within the framework of strengthening bilateral cooperation and exploring areas of economic and investment partnership.

During the meeting, opportunities for cooperation in a number of sectors of mutual interest were reviewed, along with ways to develop trade exchange and encourage reciprocal investments, thereby contributing to the achievement of common interests and supporting economic growth for both sides.

The two sides also discussed the importance of exchanging expertise, enhancing communication between public and private sector institutions, and opening new av-



enues for cooperation in commercial, industrial, and investment fields.

The Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion affirmed the Sultanate of Oman’s keenness to expand its economic partnerships with African countries, aligning with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which aim to diversify the economy, enhance

the competitiveness of the business environment, and attract quality investments.

This meeting comes within the framework of the Ministry’s efforts to boost international economic relations and build strategic partnerships that contribute to supporting sustainable development and achieving shared interests. -ONA

GCF

EA hosts Green Climate Fund Sub-Regional Dialogue

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority on Sunday hosted the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Sub-Regional Dialogue with Middle East and North Africa region. This reflects the growing role of the Sultanate of Oman in leading climate action at the regional level.

The dialogue, held under the auspices of Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, reaffirms Oman’s commitment to supporting climate action, regional and international cooperation, and strengthening its partnerships with the GCF.

This contributes to supporting sustainable development efforts and enhancing the ability to confront climate challenges in the region.

The Regional Dialogue, which continues until 16 December, is one of the most prominent annual events organized by the GCF. It brings together National Designated Authorities (NDAs), accredited entities to the Fund, banks and financial institutions, United Nations organisations, executive partners, and representa-



tives of government entities from the region.

The goal is to enhance regional coordination, exchange expertise, and discuss climate finance priorities in the areas of mitigation and adaptation.

The Regional Dialogue will include specialised technical sessions and interactive workshops focusing on capacity building in preparing and developing climate project proposals, improving countries’ readiness to benefit from available financing opportunities through the GCF, in addition to discussing the Fund’s strategic directions for the coming period.

It is noteworthy that the hosting of this dialogue aligns with Oman’s commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change and its keenness to support developing countries in accessing climate finance.

This also corresponds with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and its plans for transitioning to a low-emission economy capable of adapting to climate change. -ONA



Notice for The Extraordinary General Meeting and The Ordinary General Meeting of Dhofar University S.A.O.C

The Board of Directors of Dhofar University S.O.A.C is pleased to invite the company's shareholders to attend the **Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)**, followed consecutively by the **Annual Ordinary General Meeting (AGM)**, scheduled to be held **at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 30 December 2025**, via the electronic platform designated for general meetings, accessible through the website of Muscat Clearing and Depository S.A.O.C. (www.mcd.gov.om). If the legal quorum required for holding the meeting is not met, the second meeting shall be held **at 3:00 p.m. on the following day, Wednesday, 31 December 2025**, via the same electronic platform. The agenda of the valid meeting will be as follows:

EGM Agenda

- To approve the amendment to the Articles of Association of Dhofar University S.A.O.C. in accordance with the final draft resulting from the amendment.

(Attached: the amended draft of the Articles of Association, the Board's explanatory letter outlining the reasons for the amendment and the previous version of the Articles of Association).

AGM Agenda

- To complete the number of members of the Board of Directors of Dhofar University S.A.O.C. by electing three new members to complete the current term of the Board, if the Extraordinary General Meeting approves the amendment to the Articles of Association, or electing one member only in the event the amendment is rejected.

Any person wishing to be nominated as a member of the Board of Directors must fill out the nomination form prepared for this purpose. The form should be delivered to the company at least five working days before the AGM date, not later than the end of the workday on Monday, 22 December 2025.

As per the Articles of Association of the company, the MOC's guidelines of holding AGMs for SAOC companies via electronic means and the other relevant rules, please note the following:

a) A legal person only has the right to appoint a natural person to attend the AGM and vote on decisions taken on his behalf via electronic means. This natural person must have an ID issued by Muscat Clearing and Depository Company SAOC.

b) Shareholders have the right to vote on any of the agenda items starting no earlier than three days from the date of holding the AGM. In case the shares owned by a shareholder changed (increased/ decreased), the vote shall be void and a new vote needs to be made on the day of the AGM.

In case of any queries, please do not hesitate to contact
the Legal Advisor: Mohammed Abbas, Tel. No.: 23237108, GSM: 94043168

Chairman Tariq Salim Mustahil Al Mashani	Legal Advisor Mohammed Abbas	External Auditor ERNST & YOUNG LLC
---	---------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Sanad Service centres across Oman witness significant expansion

The number of completed electronic services and transactions through Sanad Service centres exceeded 813,000 from January to October

MUSCAT: The activities of the Sanad Service centres Lab began on Sunday. The lab is organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion in cooperation with the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit and will continue until 25 December.

This step aims to prepare a comprehensive developmental roadmap for the Sanad centres by designing practical initiatives that contribute to improv-



ing service quality, enhancing the beneficiary experience, and promoting the sustainability of the centres as a pivotal partner in providing government and community services.

The launch of the lab comes in light of the significant expansion witnessed by the Sanad centres over the past years, with their number exceeding 920 centres. These centres have contributed to providing more than 2,350 job opportunities for Omani youth, necessitating the development of their operating model, improving their service quality, and ensuring their financial and operational sustainability.

The Ministry affirmed that the

lab represents a pivotal station in the journey of the Sanad centres, more than 20 years after their establishment. It embodies the Ministry's commitment to adopting innovative and sustainable business models that enhance employment opportunities, upgrade service levels, and support national digital transformation, thereby positively impacting the community and the national economy.

The lab also aims to standardise procedures and service delivery standards, fully link Sanad centres with the unified government portal, and develop a classification and star rating system. Additionally, it aims to raise the efficiency and qualification of human re-

sources and launch wage-support programs and performance-linked incentives, thereby contributing to improving the beneficiary experience and creating an attractive and stable work environment.

It is worth mentioning that the Sanad Service centres have witnessed increasing demand for transaction completion, with the number of completed electronic services and transactions exceeding 813,000 during the period from January to October 2025. More than 523,000 services were executed through the Sanad centers electronic portal, in addition to over 290,000 services completed through the centers' on the "Oman Business" platform. — **ANI**



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

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

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 22009004, E-mail: amcoman@choueirgroup.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com



Al Nama Hospital 49.2% complete

AL MUDHAIBI: Construction work on Al Namaa Hospital in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate stands at 49.2 percent.

Eng. Yousuf Yaqoub Amboali, Director General of Projects and Engineering Services at the Ministry of Health, told the Oman News Agency (ONA) that the project constitutes part of the Min-

istry's efforts to develop health infrastructure and enhance the integration of medical services in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Amboali added that the hospital is being set up at a total cost of OMR56 million and that it is scheduled to be completed by 31 October 2026. — **ONA**

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Al Mudhaibi Health City signs key MoU with UTAS in Ibra

AL MUDHAIBI: Al Mudhaibi Healthy City, in the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in the field of exchanging expertise and scientific knowledge.

The memorandum stems from a cooperation accord between the World Health Organization (WHO) and Al Mudhaibi Healthy City. It is in pursuance of requirements for the official accreditation of Al Mudhaibi Healthy City and the issuance of the international accreditation certificate

for the city. The MoU was signed by Sheikh Saud bin Mohammed Al Hinai, Wali of Al Mudhaibi, (Chairman of the Health Committee and Chairman of Al Mudhaibi Health City) and Dr. Hafedh Said Abdullah Al-Rahbi, Assistant Vice Chancellor of UTAS in Ibra.

The MoU, which embodies the importance of integrating the efforts of Al Mudhaibi Health City and the UTAS in Ibra, contributes to supporting research, exchanging experiences, qualifying national cadres and empowering the community in a manner that keeps pace with the requirements of sustainable development. — **ONA**



INS HANSA, GOA

Indian Navy to Commission INAS 335 (Ospreys) on Wednesday

NEW DELHI: The Indian Navy will commission its second MH 60R helicopter squadron, INAS 335 (Ospreys), on December 17 at INS Hansa, Goa, in the presence of Adm Dinesh K Tripathi, the Chief of the Naval Staff, according to a release. The occasion will mark a pivotal moment in the Indian Navy's continued efforts towards modernisation and capability enhancement.

The advanced weapons, sensors and avionics suite make the helicopter a versatile and capable asset for the Indian Navy, offering enhanced capabilities to address conventional as well as asymmetric threats, the release stated.

The aircraft has been fully integrated with fleet operations and has proven its worth on numerous occasions. The Indian Navy will receive a significant fillip in its integral aviation capabilities with the commissioning of the squadron. Meanwhile, the Indian Navy is set to commission DSC A20, the first vessel of the indigenously designed and constructed Diving Support Craft (DSC), at Kochi on December 16 (Tuesday), under the aegis of Southern Naval Command.

The ship will be formally inducted into service in the presence of Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command. The event will mark the addition of a key operational asset to the Navy's inventory, enhancing its diving and underwater support capability, according to the maritime force.



DSC A20 is the lead ship in a series of five Diving Support Craft being built by M/s Titagarh Rail Systems Limited (TRSL), Kolkata. "Purpose-built for a wide spectrum of diving and underwater missions in coastal waters, the vessel is equipped with advanced, state-of-the-art diving systems that meet the highest standards of safety and operational efficiency," according to an official statement from the Ministry of Defence.

Featuring a catamaran hull form, the ship offers superior stability, enhanced deck area, and improved seakeeping characteristics, and has a displacement of approximately 390 tons.

The DSC is designed and built in accordance with the Naval Rules and Regulations of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS), DSC A20 underwent extensive hydrodynamic analysis and model testing at the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL), Visakhapatnam, ensuring optimal performance and reliability. — **ANI**

JUDICIAL CORRUPTION REVELATIONS

Political crisis in Romania continues

BUCHAREST: The film is shocking. In it, high-ranking prosecutors and judges describe how Romania's judiciary is controlled politically.

They detail how major corruption cases disappear into drawers, conscientious prosecutors and judges are thwarted and punished by their superiors, and politicians and civil servants embezzle millions with impunity. The court system is vegetating, a high-ranking justice official says at one stage in the two-hour documentary.

Since "Captured Justice" was released on December 9 by the Romanian investigative news platform Recorder, it has garnered nearly 4 million views on YouTube. It is now the number one topic in the media across the southeastern European country, roiling both politicians and the public. Angry citizens have demonstrated every evening in the capital Bucharest and several other cities since last Wednesday.

Romanian President Nicusor Dan has expressed his support for the report on his Facebook page, calling for more consistent judicial reform. The post registered 10,000 likes, but also thousands of angry comments calling on him to back up his words with action.

Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan told the media that he understood citizens' frustration, promising that "serious problems in the system" would be corrected.

New momentum, old problem

The rigged judicial system and delays in fighting corruption in Romania have been an issue for decades, and the focus of repeated protests, state crises, and changes of government. Numerous attempts at reform have failed to have lasting impact.

Some have confronted these failures in the past but the number of high-ranking prosecutors and



judges willing to speak out for the Recorder report, in addition to the level of detail they provide about the influence of politicians and senior officials, is new.

Among those featured is Liviu Lascu, a prosecutor and former head of the military department at the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA), Romania's most important authority in the fight against widespread political abuses. Lascu describes how he was prevented from pursuing meticulously documented cases of corruption within the security and military apparatus and forced out of his position.

Former DNA chief prosecutor Crin Bologa, who served until March 2023, also appears in the film, saying that he has the impression that the DNA was purged of unwelcome prosecutors under his successor Marius Voineag. This would explain why there have been hardly any corruption convictions for a while now.

Two high-ranking judges also discuss how judges in political corruption cases were replaced when defendants faced prison sentences. The allegations are directed primarily at Lia Savonea, former head of the Superior Council of Magistracy (CSM), the oversight body meant to guarantee judicial independence in Romania.

The CSM administers appointments, promotions and transfers for judges, and has the power to change the composition of court chambers and impose disciplinary penalties. Savonea and her loyal CSM members are said to have made extensive use of these powers to influence corruption proceedings in favor of defendants. The Romanian public views Savonea as a "face of the captured judiciary."

"We are simply being terrorised"

One prominent case covered extensively in the report is that of former Bucharest district mayor Marian Vanghelie, who stood trial for years on charges of abuse of office, bribery and money laundering. After an initial prison sentence of more than 11 years, a judicial odyssey ensued, and in March 2025 all proceedings against him were dropped because the statute of limitations had expired. Commentators speak of his case as an "exemplary failure of the judiciary system."

The report has swiftly unleashed political upheaval in Romania. On Thursday, the Bucharest Court of Appeal (CAB) — the court responsible for the Vanghelie case — held its first ever press conference.

Presiding judge Liana Arsenie wanted to defend herself against accusations in the report, but the

press conference ended in public embarrassment when another CAB judge, Raluca Morosanu, confirmed them. Speaking on behalf of her colleagues, she said "we are simply being terrorised with disciplinary proceedings and everything else that is known to be happening to us."

Bloated pensions amid economic strain

The release of the report comes at a delicate moment for Romania economically. In 2024, the country had the largest budget deficit in the European Union at 9.3%. The target for this year is 7%, which would still be a record.

After a turbulent period of domestic politics, in which a right-wing extremist almost became president, the pro-European, liberal-conservative, former anti-corruption activist Nicusor Dan took office in May 2025. The following month, a four-party coalition was formed with some difficulty under Prime Minister Bolojan of the National Liberal Party.

One of their most difficult tasks is reforming the budget, including so-called special pensions for civil servants, some of whom can retire as early as 48 and who receive up to €14,000 (\$16,000) per month. By contrast, the average pension yields around €540 per month and hundreds of thousands of former agricultural workers receive an average pension of just €120 a month.

Given the fact that former judicial officials often receive special pensions, the Recorder film has increased public pressure on the government to implement reforms, planned since August but blocked several times by the judiciary.

The Constitutional Court must now decide on the law to abolish special pensions, although it remains unclear just when that might happen. — **rw**

CONTINUED CLASHES



Thailand denies truce with Cambodia, hours after Trump claims deal

BANGKOK: Thailand has denied reaching any ceasefire agreement with Cambodia and said its military operations will continue along the disputed border, Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said on Saturday, contradicting claims made earlier by US President Donald Trump, according to media report.

Speaking amid ongoing clashes, Anutin said Thailand had not agreed to stop fighting and that there were no active ceasefire negotiations with Cambodia at this stage.

His comments came hours after Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim called on both sides to halt hostilities from 10 pm on Saturday. The call followed an announcement by Trump, who said Thai and Cambodian leaders had agreed to “cease all shooting”.

Neither Anutin nor Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet mentioned any ceasefire agreement in official statements released after their separate phone calls with Trump.

More than 20 people have been killed across both countries in six days of renewed fighting, with nearly 200 wounded. Around 600,000 people have been displaced on both sides of the 800-kilometre Thailand-Cambodia border, where tensions centre on disputed ownership of centuries-old temples, Al Jazeera reported. Thailand’s clarification came after Cambodia earlier accused Thai forces of continuing air attacks on its territory, hours after Trump claimed that Bangkok and Phnom Penh had agreed to stop fighting.

“It is likely a misunderstanding,” Anutin said. “Currently, there is a lot of communication going on. It would be best to listen to the statements from the military. At this time, there are no ceasefire negotiations, and it is not yet the time for that.”

Thai Defence Minister Gen

Nattaphon Narkphanit also said the government had issued no ceasefire order to the armed forces. He added that operations would continue until Cambodia “clearly ceases all hostility” toward Thailand.

Anutin said any real ceasefire would require Cambodia to submit a formal proposal directly to Thailand, with a complete halt to military action.

“A true ceasefire cannot involve only a verbal announcement or a partial suspension while troops remain in position,” he said.

Fighting continued on Saturday, with Thai authorities reporting fresh Cambodian attacks in Ubon Ratchathani province. Four Thai soldiers were killed as troops retook the strategic Hill 677.

“Is there a ceasefire?” Anutin asked. “This morning, Cambodia launched heavy attacks. BM-21 rockets landed in civilian areas, causing severe injuries and loss of limbs. At this point, should Thailand be listening to anyone else?”

The continued clashes stand in sharp contrast to Trump’s announcement late on Friday, in which he said he had personally brokered a halt to the fighting.

“I had a very good conversation this morning with the Prime Minister of Thailand, Anutin Charnvirakul, and the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Hun Manet, concerning the very unfortunate reawakening of their long-running War,” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

“They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord made with me, and them, with the help of the Great Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim,” he said.

Despite Trump’s statement, clashes has continued, and Thai officials have maintained that no ceasefire agreement is in place. — **ANI**

12 killed in shooting at Sydney’s Bondi Beach

Police confirmed that two people were taken into custody at Bondi Beach, while at least one of the suspected gunmen is believed to have been killed during the incident



SYDNEY: At least 12 people were killed following a shooting incident at Bondi Beach, Sydney in Australia. Dozens of rounds were fired into a large crowd on Sunday evening, triggering panic and a police warning for the public to take shelter, according to media report.

As reported by The Sydney Morning Herald, the incident occurred shortly after 6.40 pm, coinciding with the first night of Hanukkah. Residents in the area described police vehicles rushing towards Bondi as large numbers of people fled the beach amid scenes of chaos.

Around 1,000 people, including families with children, were present. Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese describes the attack as ‘an act of evil antisemitism’

Police later confirmed that two people were taken into custody at Bondi Beach, the report said, while at least one of the suspected gunmen is believed to have been killed during the incident.

Multiple fatalities
Journalists at the scene reported multiple fatalities, with injured victims being transported by ambulance to Prince of Wales Hospital in Randwick. Separate police sources cited by the outlet said a NSW Police officer was among those shot, though the officer’s condition was not immediately known.

Eyewitness accounts described the intensity of the attack, with people in Bondi saying they heard up to 50 gunshots and saw bodies

on the ground near Campbell Parade. A 30-year-old local resident, Harry Wilson, told the publication he “saw at least 10 people on the ground and blood everywhere”.

One victim, who sustained a gunshot wound to the leg, said he barricaded himself inside the North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club with dozens of others. He said he heard dozens of “popping noises” as people jumped security fencing and ran for cover.

Footage from the scene showed a bystander confronting an alleged gunman and wrestling a rifle from him, an act described as potentially lifesaving.

The gunman was firing from a grassy area near the Campbell Parade car park when the bystander intervened, The Sydney Morning

Herald reported.

Videos circulating on social media appeared to show multiple people lying on the ground while members of the public administered CPR. Police urged people to stay away from the area and had earlier advised those present to take shelter.

Eyewitnesses describe chaos in Bondi Beach shooting

Eyewitnesses have described scenes of chaos during the shooting at Sydney’s Bondi Beach, with reports of dozens of gunshots.

Witnesses told broadcaster Sky News they heard about 50 shots that sounded like a rifle and described seeing “huge, black guns” as people ran in panic. — **Agencies**

UNITED STATES

At least 2 killed in shooting at Brown University

RHODE ISLAND: Two people have died in the shooting at Brown University, said Brett Smiley, mayor of Providence, at a press conference.

Eight people are in a critical but stable condition at Rhode Island Hospital, he added. Smiley declined to say whether the victims were students. Police were still searching for the suspect.

“We do not have a shooter in custody at this time,” Providence Mayor Brett Smiley told a news conference. He said that a shelter-in-place was in effect for the area. Brown University also said that “the shooter or shooters still are not in custody at this time.”

The suspect was a male who was dressed in black and last seen leaving the building, according to



Timothy O’Hara, Deputy Chief of Police. Earlier, US President Donald Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that “the suspect is in custody,” only to later reverse the statement.

They are looking for a male dressed in black, who deputy police chief Timothy O’Hara said

may have been wearing a camouflage mask and could be in his 30s.

The surveillance video shows the suspect leaving the building where the shooting took place.

In the video, the suspect is seen wearing dark clothing. His face is not visible. While there is video footage from the building, authori-

ties do not yet have a video of the suspect from inside Brown University’s Barus and Holley building. Police have asked those who may recognise the suspect’s walking or have heard something to come forward.

US mass shootings in 2025 so far

In the United States, mass shootings at schools, workplaces and places of worship occur far more frequently than in many other developed countries.

The Gun Violence Archive, a non-profit organisation that tracks gun violence in the US, has recorded 389 mass shootings — any incident where four or more people, excluding the shooter, are injured or killed — so far this year. — **DW**

INCLUSIVE GROWTH, SUSTAINABLE POWER

How India’s development model is shaping global thinking

NEW DELHI: In a world where high growth has often failed to translate into inclusion, and sustainability has frequently been framed as a trade-off against progress, development itself has entered a credibility crisis. Against this backdrop, India’s trajectory over the last decade has stood apart.

Under PM Modi, development has been redefined not as an abstract economic pursuit, but as a systems-led, people-centric transformation that scales inclusion while delivering sustainability. What has drawn global attention is not the ambition of India’s claims, but the consistency of its outcomes. India’s experience is increasingly viewed not as an exception, but as a reference point for how growth, equity, and responsibility can move together.

Delivering sustainability at scale, not as a slogan

India demonstrated that climate responsibility and economic expansion are not mutually exclusive. The country crossed 500GW of installed electricity capacity, with over 51% coming from non-fossil sources, achieving its 2030 clean energy target years ahead of schedule. This milestone placed India among the few major economies to structurally tilt its energy mix while sustaining high growth.

Sustainability was not confined to utility-scale projects alone. Clean energy was embedded into household economics through



PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, under which nearly 2.4 million households have already installed rooftop solar systems. By linking climate action directly to household savings and energy security, India’s sustainability narrative gained credibility through delivery, not declarations.

India’s most distinctive contribution has been redesigning the architecture of inclusion itself. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) now processes over 640 million transactions daily, surpassing Visa to become the world’s largest real-time payment system. Its interoperability and low-cost design transformed digital payments into a universal public utility rather than a premium service.

This model did not remain confined within India’s borders. With UPI now live in seven countries,

India’s digital platforms have proven to be exportable, trusted, and adaptable across jurisdictions. Global institutions took note. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva publicly cited India’s digital ID and reform architecture as proof that large-scale digital inclusion is both feasible and transformative, positioning India as a key engine of global growth.

When inclusion becomes the definition of growth

As India demonstrated that inclusion could be engineered at scale, it also challenged how growth itself is defined. Across G20 platforms, PM Modi consistently argued that development must be measured not only through GDP aggregates, but through ease of living, dignity, and well-being. It was rooted in India’s domestic experience of link-

ing technology, access, and outcomes. India’s proposals on labour mobility, skilling portability, and inclusive financial systems were repeatedly referenced in G20 as a model of human-centric growth rooted in equity and empowerment. This reframing mattered because it shifted the global development debate. Growth was no longer judged solely by speed, but by who it reached and how sustainably it endured.

Inclusion as economic foundation, not welfare expansion

This global reframing rested on a quiet domestic reality. India ensured that rapid expansion did not create structural exclusion by securing population-scale access to banking through the JAM trinity, health coverage

through Ayushman Bharat, housing through PM Awas Yojana, and water through Jal Jeevan Mission. These interventions were treated as economic infrastructure, stabilising consumption, reducing vulnerability, and supporting labour participation. Rather than fragmenting growth through disconnected safety nets, India embedded inclusion into the growth process itself, allowing expansion to remain broad-based and socially stable.

Global validation through multilateral platforms

India’s development model gained decisive international validation during its G20 presidency. Instead of treating the presidency as a diplomatic showcase, India used it to translate domestic governance experience into global agenda-setting.

The launch of the Global Biofuels Alliance brought together over 30 countries and international organisations to promote sustainable biofuels, drawing on India’s own success in achieving 10% ethanol blending ahead of schedule.

Through Mission LiFE, PM Modi advanced a global framework that places lifestyle choices, consumption patterns, and citizen participation at the centre of climate action. The initiative has since been formally recognised and amplified by the United Nations and UNEP as a scalable behavioural model for climate mitigation. As a co-founder of the International Solar Alliance, India has helped

build a multilateral platform with over 120 member and signatory countries, focused on accelerating solar deployment across the developing world. By sharing policy frameworks and implementation models, India positioned itself as a facilitator of affordable energy transitions, particularly for the Global South.

The induction of the African Union as a permanent G20 member corrected a long-standing representational imbalance, expanding the forum’s legitimacy to include nearly 80% of the world’s population. The unanimous adoption of the New Delhi Declaration further reinforced India’s standing as a consensus-builder capable of delivering outcomes even in a fragmented world.

Why the world is paying attention

The cumulative effect of these shifts is now visible in institutional assessments. The IMF has repeatedly identified India as a primary contributor to global growth, citing reform depth, demographic scale, and institutional capacity. World Bank and UN assessments increasingly reference India’s digital public goods, sustainability approach, and inclusion frameworks as adaptable models for other developing economies.

This marks a transition. India is no longer viewed only as a large emerging market, but as a rule-shaper, offering practical governance solutions to shared global challenges. — **Agencies**

SPORTS

India outclass SA to go 2-1 up

The Proteas were bowled out for below-par 117; Abhishek Sharma's blazing knock ensured India won by seven wickets

DHARAMSALA: India reclaimed the series lead with a seven-wicket victory after they bowled South Africa out for 117 in seam-friendly conditions in Dharamsala on Sunday.

Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana, the latter playing in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, who was on leave for personal reasons, set the tone with three early wickets, and the support bowlers never let up.

Aiden Markram kept South Africa in the fight with a half-century, but they were at least 20 runs short of what could have been a fighting total, keeping in mind their strong seam attack.

Once Abhishek Sharma scored 35 off 18 balls, India could afford a wobble in the rest of the chase.

Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube cashed in on the conditions with a wicket each in their first overs, but it was Varun Chakravathy's four overs for 11 runs and two wickets that denied South Africa any chance of creeping back into the match.

One of his victims was Donovan Ferreira, the only other recognised batter to reach double digits.

Arshdeep struck first to dismiss Reeza Hendricks. He bowled three balls to Hendricks, all on a similar good length on middle and leg. Two of them seamed away to beat his outside edge, and the third nipped back in to trap him in front.

Rana swung the ball late, got some seam movement as well, but



his wickets were slightly inexplicable. Quinton de Kock missed a straight and full delivery, and Dewald Brevis dragged on a long wide half volley, making it 7 for 3 in 3.1 overs.

Markram and Tristan Stubbs saw through the rest of the powerplay, but Stubbs never looked at home. In his first over, Pandya drew just enough nibble to take Stubbs' outside edge to make it 30 for 4. Corbin Bosch, one of the three batters dropped in the field, missed the first ball from Shivam Dube by a long way: a 124kph length ball that nipped back to hit the top of middle.

In the 12th over of the innings, Ferreira hit a Kuldeep wrong'un for a no-look six, the first boundary of the innings by a batter not named Markram. This was the first time India had to deal with two threatening batters. The fifth wicket added 25 runs, but Varun got rid of Ferreira with a wrong'un that he missed by a mile. Varun repeated that dismissal in his next over, this time to a defensive push from Marco Jansen.

Dube had two catches missed

off his bowling. While Ferreira couldn't cause much damage, Markram went on to punish Rana in the 18th over, thus bringing up his fifty and taking South Africa past 100.

However, he ended up edging a slot ball from Arshdeep in the 19th over, leaving Kuldeep two tailend wickets to feast on in the last over to restrict the visitors for 117.

Abhishek kills the chase

Swivelling inside the line of the first ball and pulling Lungi Ngidi over fine leg for a six, Abhishek set the tone for the chase. He charged at Ngidi for a four in the same over, and went one better with a six off Jansen in the next.

When Abhishek hit Otniel Baartman for a six in the fifth over, he brought up India's fifty and went to 44 sixes in the first six overs of T20I innings, level with KL Rahul, who did so in more than twice than the matches. Rohit Sharma is the only Indian with more sixes in the first six overs.

The low target allowed Abhishek's opening partner Shubman Gill time to play himself in,



THIRD T20I

Hardik Pandya joins elite club

DHARAMSALA: India all-rounder Hardik Pandya on Sunday achieved a historic first in international cricket during the third T20I against South Africa at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamsala.

The 31-year-old is now the first pace-bowling all-rounder to complete the double of 1,000 runs and 100 wickets in T20Is.

Hardik dismissed Tristan Stubbs in the seventh over of South Africa's innings to achieve the feat. By doing so, he also became the third Indian to take 100 or more wickets in the format, joining Arshdeep Singh and Jas-



prit Bumrah in the elite list.

Arshdeep Singh has taken 107 wickets in 70 T20I matches at an economy of 8.35, with best figures of 4 for 9, while Jasprit Bumrah has picked up 101 wick-

ets from 82 matches, maintaining an impressive economy rate of 6.35, with best figures of 3 for 7.

Before Hardik, only four cricketers worldwide - Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan, Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi, Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, and Malaysia's Virandeep Singh - had accomplished the 1000-run, 100-wicket double in T20Is. They are all spinners.

Hardik made his long-awaited return to competitive cricket for India on Tuesday in Cuttack in the first T20I against South Africa. He had been out of action after September 26, 2025. - Agencies

but neither he nor Tilak Varma ever looked set with plenty of seam movement available. Suryakumar Yadav hit two fours, but managed only 12 off 11 balls. When Abhishek was at the wicket, 60 runs came

in 5.2 overs; the rest of the match featured 177 in 30.3 overs.

Twenty more runs for South Africa, and/or an early departure for Abhishek could have made this a much closer affair.

Brief scores: India 120/3 in 15.5 overs (Abhishek 35, Gill 28; Bosch 1-18) beat South Africa 117 in 20 overs (Markram 61, Varun 2-11, Kuldeep 2-12, Arshdeep 2-13) by seven wickets. - Agencies

THE ALL-NEW
COMMANDER
CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Starts from
OMR 16,995*

3 YEARS / 60,000 KM FREE SERVICE | 5 YEARS / 100,000 KM WARRANTY
5 YEARS / 100,000 KM ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE | FIRST YEAR FREE REGISTRATION

Jeep

Vehicle image shown is for illustrative purposes only and accessories shown might not be part of the standard model. ©2025 FCA US LLC. All Rights Reserved. Jeep is a registered trademark of FCA US LLC.

MOHSIN HAIDER DARWISH
AUTOMOBILES L.L.C.

mhdjeepoman

Offer valid until 10th January 2026 on Jeep Commander purchased at the Mohsin Haider Darwish Automobiles LLC dealership by retail customers for personal use only. 3 Years / 60,000Kms Free Service - Periodic maintenance service only. Whichever comes earlier. 5 Years / 100,000Kms Warranty & Roadside Assistance - Whichever comes earlier. Price mentioned is for 2026MY Commander LIMITED+ 4X4 AT9.

Toll Free - 800 22 008
www.jeep-oman.com

CR No: 142946

RENEWABLE WATER

Renewable water availability per person has continued to decline by a further 7% over the past decade, while pressure on already scarce freshwater resources is increasing in several regions, according to the AQUASTAT Water Data Snapshot released by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 5,955.62 points, up by 0.11% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.43% at 525.05 points. Dhofar Cattle Feed, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while, Construction Materials, down 7.50%, was the top loser.



Don't Miss Out on a
First-Year Annual Fee waiver
with Al Jawhar Visa Platinum
Credit Card from Bank Muscat



Bank Muscat. Better Everyday.
Terms and conditions apply.

OMR150mn modern sugar refinery to be inaugurated in Sohar today

The plant will also boost the resilience of supply chains and contribute to economic diversification in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone will see the opening of a modern sugar refinery today. The unit will add momentum to investments in the area and boost the food security sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The plant will also boost the resilience of supply chains and contribute to economic diversification in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The project, located in the vicinity of Sohar Port, has an investment value of more than OMR150 million.

It successfully passed the trial operation phase and met Category 2 standards according to Europe-

an specifications, ahead of transition to the commercial operation stage by January 2026.

The sugar plant applies an advanced European refining system that contributes to raising the efficiency of production and ensuring high quality in operations.

The unit has a production capacity of one million tons a year. It also boasts an extensive storage infrastructure that accommodates 500,000 tons of raw sugar and 70,000 tonnes of refined sugar.

The plant's advanced capabilities affirm the Sultanate of Oman's position as a regional centre for processing, distributing and re-exporting sugar. -ONA



REPORT

Labour Codes can significantly boost women's workforce participation in India

NEW DELHI: The recently notified four labour Codes, effective from November 21, 2025, have the potential to meaningfully expand women's participation in the workforce by making employment safer, more secure and more accessible, according to a white paper released by the All India Organisation of Employers (AIOE) in collaboration with law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas.

Titled "Breaking the Glass Ceiling: How the Labour Codes Boost Women's Participation in India's Workforce", the white paper noted that India's legal framework has evolved alongside social change, reflected in the rise in the female labour force participation rate from 23.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 41.7 per cent in 2023-24.

This progress, according to the white paper, has been supported by women-centric laws such as the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, as well as government initiatives including Mission Shakti, NAVYA and WISE-KIRAN.

The white paper further argued that the labour Codes modernise India's employment law framework by consolidating multiple legacy laws into a simpler and more coherent structure.

This, it noted, is particularly significant for women, as the reforms aim to make workplaces safer, social security broader and compliance more predictable.

One of the key outcomes of the Codes is their potential to expand women's participation across sectors by making work more sustainable and secure, rather than merely creating new opportunities

Under the Social Security Code, 2020, maternity protections remain robust, with 26 weeks of paid leave continuing



for eligible employees and 12 weeks for adoptive and commissioning mothers.

The white paper also highlighted that measures such as nursing breaks, medical support and simplified proof requirements for pregnancy and delivery are critical in reducing the economic and health disruptions that often force women to permanently exit the workforce.

The white paper also drew attention to the expansion of Employees' State Insurance coverage across all industries and districts, including plantations, which employ a large number of women workers.

The inclusion of gig and platform workers within the social security framework is described as a forward-looking shift, particularly for women who rely on flexible work arrangements to balance caregiving responsibilities.

Further, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code allows women to work in all establishments, including traditionally restricted sectors and night shifts, subject to consent and adequate safety arrangements. This is seen as a transformative provision for sectors such as IT, healthcare, aviation and logistics, removing an "invisible ceiling" on women's earnings and advancement. -ANI

COLLABORATION

Sharqiya Aviation and Ubar Hotels & Resorts sign strategic agreement to provide premium helicopter services for hotel guests

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sharqiya Aviation and Ubar Hotels & Resorts owners of (Golden Tulip Nizwa Hotel & Golden Tulip Muscat Hotel) have officially signed a strategic partnership agreement to introduce exclusive helicopter rental and transfer services for guests staying at Golden Tulip Hotels.

The new collaboration aims to elevate luxury travel experiences, boost tourism flows into the Dakhiliyah region, and provide seamless access to the historic and cultural city of Nizwa.

Under the agreement, Sharqiya Aviation will offer chartered helicopter transfers, aerial sightseeing experiences, and customized travel solutions directly accessible to guests of Golden Tulip Nizwa Hotel. The service is designed to reduce travel time significantly, making it ideal for tourists and business travellers with limited schedules who still wish to explore Nizwa's renowned heritage, traditional markets, and surrounding natural attractions.

"This partnership reflects our ongoing commitment to enhance the tourism ecosystem in Oman by offering innovative, high-quality travel solutions," said Salim Al Bussaidi, Chairman at Sharqiya Aviation. "By collaborating with Ubar Hotels & Resorts, we are providing visitors with an exceptional and efficient way to experience the natural beauty and cultural richness of the Dakhiliyah region."

The initiative aligns with the Sultanate's national tourism strategy, which focuses on improving regional accessibility and showcasing Oman's diverse historical and natural assets. The helicopter services will enable guests to reach Nizwa and nearby destinations swiftly from Muscat and other parts of the country—eliminating long road journeys and enhancing comfort and convenience.

Commenting on the agreement,



His Highness Sayyid Fahar Fatik Fahar Al Said Chairman at Ubar Hotels & Resorts stated: "Our guests seek unique, memorable experiences, and this partnership allows us to offer exactly that. Sharqiya Aviation's premium helicopter services will transform how visitors travel to and discover Nizwa. This collaboration supports our vision of positioning Ubar Hotels as a gateway to Oman's heritage, luxury, and authenticity."

Through this partnership, visitors will gain exclusive access to aerial tours covering landmarks such as

Nizwa Fort, the traditional Nizwa Souq, Jebel Akhdar, and other culturally significant sites—offering a new perspective on one of Oman's most treasured destinations.

Both organizations emphasized that the collaboration will contribute to strengthening the region's tourism economy by attracting more high-value travelers, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the visibility of Nizwa as a premier cultural destination.

Sandeep Jaitly CEO of Ubar Hotels & Resorts stated "This partnership supports our broader

vision of contributing to the sustainable growth of tourism in the Dakhiliyah region. By improving accessibility through premium helicopter services, we are encouraging more visitors to discover the cultural richness and historical significance of Nizwa. Ubar Group is proud to play a role in strengthening the local tourism landscape."

The agreement marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to integrate luxury aviation with hospitality services, setting a new benchmark for regional tourism experiences in Oman.


**ADVERTISE WITH US,
FIND THE RIGHT CANDIDATES
FOR YOUR COMPANY**

CONNECT
PRINT EDITION

WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025

**PLACE YOUR
ADVT HERE**
Email to : amcoman@choueirigroup.com



RENT

CARGO

VACANCY

**RENT OR
SALE?**
PLACE YOUR
ADVT HERE
Email: amcoman@choueirigroup.com

DNV 2.7-1 OFFSHORE CONTAINERS, REEFER CONTAINER SALES & RENTALS
ISO CONTAINER SALES, CONVERSIONS & RENTALS
CONTAINER SOLUTIONS LLC
Po Box 522, Pc 322, Falaj Al Qabail, Sohar Free Zone, Oman
Tel: +968 9358 5556, +968 99508921, +968 26942610
FAX: 26942611, Email: sales@containersolutions.com.
www.containersolutions.com

For High Impact Professional Oman Web Award Winner
WEBSITES
GULFCYBERTECH
E-Solutions
Tel: 99818819 Email: 24130929 info@gulfcybertech.com
www.gulfcybertech.com

Designing & Maintenance
E-Commerce Solns.
Domain & Hosting
Mobile Applications
Email Ads & Promotions

WJ Towell Group Company


**Quality car rentals
at competitive prices.**

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Muscat 9679 0594 9679 0684 Sohar 9731 6218 9429 9325 www.orbit-oman.com



JOB WANTED

DOCUMENT CONTROLLER
Experienced document controller seeking immediate placement in Oman. QA/QC, project coordination, skilled in EDMS, sharepoint, Aconex, and administrative support.
Contact: +971 585841339
Email: bajifazil@gmail.com

FINANCE
Chartered Accountant with 16+ yrs Exp-as Finance Head (Halliburton, ASAAS, ATC, ME). Expertise in IFRS, Reporting, Consolidation, MIS, Budgets, Tax, ERP. Seeking senior finance role in Oman.
CONTACT: 96741587
Email-umarustad@gmail.com.

MEDICAL
Pharmacist with 16 yrs exp. in retail & hospital pharmacy in Muscat & India. Previously registered with MOH, Oman with work License, NOC with D/L, currently in Muscat
Contact: 77336141
Email: confession.mercy@gmail.com

JOB VACANCY

URGENTLY REQUIRED

- Urgently Required Omani with minimum 5 years experience in Media house.
- Knowledge of English both writing & speaking preferred.



Interested candidate please forward
Cv-ASamarani.OPS@ChoueiriGroup.com

JOB WANTED

GENERAL MANAGER
Dynamic professional with 16+ yrs of progressive experience in financial strategy, business consulting/management, operational excellence, and growth leadership across Trading, Construction, RMC production, and MNCs company. Open to strategic senior management opportunities.
Contact: 92022786 or 97403883
Email: gm.seekers.2025@gmail.com

MANAGER
Finance and accounts Manager well experienced, MBA finance with 16years experience in Oman. Looking for senior position in Accounts and finance.
Contact No. 95920740
Email ID: hameed1527@hotmail.com

FINANCE
Experienced Senior Accountant 10+ years in financial accounting, auditing, VAT, and reporting seeks opportunity in Oman. MBA-Finance. Skilled in Tally ERP, Excel, Autoline, reporting, audit, tax, and compliance.
Contact: 94792025 / vjinuraj@gmail.com

FINANCE
Financial & Management Accountant with 15 yrs exp in manufacturing, trading, contracting, oil and gas, insurance, construction, IT. Skilled in accounting, auditing, VAT, payroll, budgeting, cost control, and financial reporting.
Contact: 92106856,
Email: lizmarytherese@gmail.com

FINANCE
Indian Male B.Com, MBA, with 18 yrs in healthcare, trading, logistics, IVMS up to finalization with MIS, LC, LTR software expertise, ERP, tally, Odoo & online Accountings, valid Omani D/L, can be join with short notice period.
Contact : 99279626

ENGINEER
Indian, B.Tech-Mech Engineering Holder having 13 years of experience in Oman specialized in Steel Fabrication looking suitable position.
Contact: Mobile : 95945230
Email : Arungopalakrishnan85@yahoo.com

**LOOKING
FOR
ENGINEERING
JOB ?**



Send email to:
amcoman@choueirigroup.com

**PLACE YOUR
ADVT HERE**
Send email to: amcoman@choueirigroup.com



URGENTLY REQUIRED
An excellent grade construction company requires
PROJECT MANAGER (ELECTRICAL)
Those who have Oman experience kindly forward their CV to
jobsoman2025@gmail.com

**LOOKING FOR
DRIVER JOB?**



Send email to: amcoman@choueirigroup.com

RENT

Furnished, attached
Single room in Ruwi.
Contact: 99743709

SERVICE
Cleaning services & pest control specialized cleaning of buildings carpet, sofa shampooing pest control, termite treatment Painting, plumbing, electrical works manpower supply. Glow Services Trading LLC Contact: 99844284, 99450130

JOB VACANCY

SALES/MARKETING

Looking for Sales Partner in Oil & Gas related supplies & services. Contact : ohvacancy977@hotmail.com

Required Two Filipino Sales Girls for marine/fishing equipment shops.Pls send CV Email:eastermarinesalah@gmail.com. Contact 92471989

JOB WANTED

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

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

Sri Lankan Accountant, reading CA. 3+ yrs of experience. Expertise in accounting, audit, bookkeeping, VAT, finalization. Contact: +968 76297279

Indian male, MBA finance, 15 yrs experience in accounting up to finalisation, VAT submission. Immediate joining. Contact: 96290882, Email: ajithakes@gmail.com

Indian male with 9 yrs (3yrs in Oman & 6yrs in India) experience in accounts, account receivables, payables, GL, tally prime, bank reconciliation seeks placement. Contact 94120095, Email shaikmunawar.ac@gmail.com

Indian male, M.com (Finance) 12 years accounting experience in Oman. Handling accounts up to finalization independently & Business development. Noc & D/L available Contact: 99859141,

Accountant looking for job. Contact: 75024166

Highly skilled chief accountant looking for suitable position. Contact: 79888153

Indian Male, MBA, 17 years experienced in key accounts, project sales, business development looking for suitable opportunities. Contact: 92790532

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

MBA Finance Senior accountant, 13-yrs GCC experience looking for a job upto finalization. Contact: 98869499

Accounts cum supervisor with 8yrs experience & D/L looking job. Contact: 95273377

14 yrs GCC exprienced Senior Accountant, looking for suitable position (Oman D/L). Contact: 93150057

Indian Male, Bcom, MBA Finance, 14 yrs of Oman and Indian experience, seeking suitable jobs in accounts. Have valid Oman D/L. Contact: 97436925. Email : sasdrsk@gmail.com

Accountant available immediate joiner, Indian male, B.Com, 10+ yrs exp (4 yrs Oman) Expert in Tally & Accounts Contact: 91417133

Indian Male MBA, Senior accountant, admin having 10 yrs experience. Contact: 95416322, Email: aabynarayan@gmail.com

MBA Finance & B com Computer with experience of 2yrs as an accountant in Muscat Oman, having Oman D/L. Presently in Oman. Contact: 93965857

Indian Male, Bcom, MBA finance, 14 yrs of Oman and Indian experience, seeking suitable jobs in accounts. Have valid Oman D/L. Contact: 97436925. Email: sasdrsk@gmail.com

Indian Male, B.com, MBA finance, 14 yrs of Oman and Indian experience, seeking suitable jobs. Contact: 97436925. Email: sasdrsk@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION

Indian Male, 15 yrs experience in Oman seeks job for admin, secretary or any suitable post. Holding Oman D/L M: 94019955.

Indian (M) 29 yrs, MBA graduate with 4 yrs experience in operations, stores management, office administration, yard management, accounts, finance and graphic designing. Looking for suitable job. Contact: 78439875

ADMINISTRATION

Indian Male, Arabic Diploma with 8 yrs of experience in UAE as a Typist, Data Entry, PRO and Admin looking for job in above position. Contact : +96890411524. Email Jabirvadinoor@gmail.com

Indian Male, 29 yrs, MBA with NEBOSH certified with 2+ yrs experience in administration looking for safety or administration jobs. Contact: +968 74105832, Email : ashikthahir@gmail.com

Sri Lankan Management Executive, 13 yrs operations and business development experience in distribution, manufacturing, service industries. Contact: 93297579

Indian Female, M.Sc. (Computer Science), overall 13+ yrs of experience in different administrative as well as project roles looking for suitable placement. Contact: 79166904/97498882

Highly skilled accounting and administrative professional with diverse experience in technical and office administration roles Contact: 90473476. Email: kpsanjay202@gmail.com

ARCHITECT

Architect, Interior Designer having more than 8+ yrs of experience with design and engineering consultants. Contact: 95759832, Email: ar.ahmedfaizal@gmail.com

DRIVER

Driver with 25 yrs experience, PDO licence looking for job. Contact: 99116288

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Indian Female, completed MCA and also having experience in teaching, available in Oman on family visa, looking for a suitable job. Contact: +91 79090343/ +968 94117967, Email: induchandran01@gmail.com

JOB WANTED

IT

Oman-based 2025 Computer Science Engineering graduate seeking job opportunities in IT support, administration, or document control roles. Fresher, currently in Muscat, and available to join immediately. Contact: +968 94988567

MCA graduate seeking a suitable job opportunity in Oman. Available in Muscat. Contact: 91488059

ENGINEER

Indian Male, 15+ yrs Sales exp. (IT/ Software). Open to Sales/BD roles in any industry. Valid Oman D/L. Contact: 94110178

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

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

Project Manager (Civil) Indian, 18 yr GCC experience, valid D/L and transferable visa, can join immediately. Contact: 97723786

Project Manager Civil seasoned professional with strong consultancy and construction expertise. Open for suitable opportunities. Contact 93455363 | WA +966 56 373 2589 (WhatsApp)

Quantity surveyor (B.Tech Civil, AIQS), 4+ yrs Oman experience. Skilled in primavera, BIM, Revit, ongoing RICS accreditation, valid Oman D/L. Seeking infrastructure, oil & gas roles. Contact: 97649953

MEP Engineer having 3+ yrs experience looking for a suitable placement. Ready to join immediately . Contact +968 7509 9651

ENGINEER

Electrical Engineer, experience 18 yrs in Oman. Contact 98148034

Sales Engineer Indian Male, 7 yrs experience in sales. Seeking suitable job opportunities NOC & Oman D/L available. Contact 94150903 Email:vaseem9633@gmail.com

BE Civil Engr. Indian Male, 11yrs experience in Oman, holding Oman D/L seeks placement. Contact: 93867573, Email: pineasdas@gamil.com

LOGISTICS

Indian Male Graduate with 25 yrs of proven experience in Car rental, fleet Management & logistics. Currently seeking for Senior/middle management position. Contact: 92152334.

Indian Male, 23 yrs of experience in store, logistics & commercial operations, looking for a suitable job. Contact : 91425510

Indian Male 24 yrs , Commerce graduate 1.5 yrs experience in logistics, procurement and sales in reputed MNC in Oman. Valid Oman D/L. Ready to join immediately. Contact +968 91121694 Email issacantony2002@gmail.com

MANAGER

Accounting Manager, Indian (M), 43yrs, 18+ yrs in Oman, D/L & NOC. Contact: 76432203

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

PURCHASE/ PROCUREMENT

Indian Male Procurement Executive with 11 yrs of experience in Oman, holding Oman D/L available in Muscat for immediate joining. Contact 92345876

PURCHASE/ PROCUREMENT

Indian male 41 yrs MBA, B.com having 13 yrs experience in procurement UAE & Oman with valid UAE D/L, seeking suitable opportunities in Oman. Contact: +971529546753

Procurement Engineer 19 yrs experience construction and trading. whatsapp: +96895839964

Indian Male 40 yrs Bcom MBA having 13 yrs experience in procurement UAE & Oman with valid UAE D/L, seeking suitable opportunities. Contact: +971529546753

SALES/MARKETING

Indian Male, 15+ yrs Sales exp. (IT/ Software). Open to Sales/BD roles in any industry. Valid Oman D/L. Contact: 94110178

Indian, MBA, 20yrs of experience in Sales (FMCG/retail) with D/L — seeks suitable placement. Contact: 95548480

Indian Male, 08 yrs experience having Oman D/L looking for suitable placement in Sales and Marketing. Contact: 94566786

Indian Male (35) MBA in Oman 10 yrs exp in marketing in FMCG, pharma Contact - 79755795

Indian Male (MBA) with 5 yrs experience looking for a business development, marketing manager role. Contact: 99470508

Indian Senior Sales & Operations, 7+ yrs exp, with D/L. Seeks suitable position. Cont: 71713865 | Email: praveenmkg@gmail.com

MEDICAL

Microbiologist, quality assurance executive, Indian female (M.Sc) having 5yrs experience in microbiological testing, Quality assurance, documentation in food Industry. Looking for a suitable job. Contact 95603424 Email: annmariasunny22@gmail.com

19 US state attorneys general sue Trump Administration over \$100,000 H-1B visa

The fee would create an insurmountable financial barrier for employers, particularly public-sector and government institutions, seeking to hire highly skilled foreign workers such as physicians, researchers, nurses, and educators

OREGON: A coalition of 19 US state attorneys general, led by Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield, has filed a lawsuit against the Trump Administration challenging its policy imposing a \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visa petitions, calling the move unlawful and harmful to employers facing criti-



cal labour shortages. In a press release issued by the Oregon Department of Justice on Friday, Attorney General Rayfield said the fee would create an insurmountable financial barrier for employers, particularly public-sector and government institutions, seeking to hire highly skilled foreign workers such as physicians, researchers, nurses, and educators. “Oregon’s colleges, universities and research institutions rely

on skilled international workers to keep labs running, courses on track and innovation moving forward,” Rayfield said. “This enormous fee would make it nearly impossible for these institutions to hire the experts they need, and it goes far beyond what Congress ever intended,” he added. The lawsuit alleges that the policy, implemented by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), violates federal law by imposing a massive fee not au-

thorised by Congress, bypassing required rulemaking procedures, and exceeding executive authority under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). The coalition also raised concerns that the policy grants the Secretary of Homeland Security broad discretion to determine which petitions are subject to the fee or exempt from it, potentially enabling selective enforcement. According to the proclamation issued by US President Donald

Trump on September 19, there will now be a USD 100,000 fee for new H-1B visa applications. According to the US State Department, the new fee requirement applies only to individuals or companies filing new H-1B petitions or entering the H-1B lottery after September 21. Current visa holders and petitions submitted before that date remain unaffected. Under the proclamation, a USD 100,000 fee must accompany every new H-1B visa petition filed after the deadline, including those submitted for entry into the 2026 lottery. The lawsuit issued challenged this very proclamation issued by the Trump administration. Under the H-1B visa programme, US employers can temporarily hire highly skilled foreign workers in speciality occupations requiring at least a bachelor’s degree. Congress caps most private-sector H-1B visas at 65,000 annually, with an additional 20,000 reserved for individuals holding a master’s degree or higher. The attorneys general argue that the fee far exceeds the typical H-1B filing costs, which usually range from \$960 to \$7,595, and is not tied to the actual cost of processing petitions, as required by law. They also contend the administration failed to conduct the mandatory notice-and-comment

process before implementing the policy. “By imposing this fee, the Administration is exceeding the fee-setting authority granted by Congress, which requires that fees be set based on the agency’s costs, rather than arbitrarily. Additionally, the Trump Administration issued the fee without going through the notice-and-comment process required by the APA and without considering the full range of impacts - especially on the provision of the critical services by government and nonprofit entities,” the release stated. Highlighting the impact on higher education, the lawsuit notes that Oregon State University currently sponsors over 150 H-1B faculty, researchers and staff, while the University of Oregon sponsors more than 50. Both institutions rely heavily on the programme to fill critical roles, and the increased fee threatens to leave positions vacant, undermining education, research and public service missions. According to the release, Attorney General Rayfield from Oregon is joined in the lawsuit by his counterparts from Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin. — **ANI**

SUDAN



Drone attack kills 6 UN peacekeepers from Bangladesh

NEW YORK: Six United Nations peacekeepers from Bangladesh were killed and eight more were wounded in a drone attack on a UN base in Sudan on Saturday, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said. The drone strike hit a logistics camp of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan state. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the “unjustifiable” attack and said that such attacks “may constitute war crimes under international law.” Sudan’s government and military blamed the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for the attack. Army chief General Abdel Fattah Burhan called the attack a “dangerous escalation”. The RSF in a statement on Telegram, however, refuted the allegations as “false accusations.” Bangladesh’s interim leader

Muhammad Yunus said in a statement that he was “deeply saddened” by the attack and urged the UN to provide emergency support to the Bangladeshi personnel. “The government of Bangladesh will stand by the families in this difficult moment,” Yunus added. The Bangladesh Army released a statement saying that the “situation in the area is still unstable and clashes with terrorists are ongoing.” The statement said authorities were making every effort to provide medical care and carry out rescue operations for the injured. Sudan has been wrecked by civil war since April 2023 between the military and the RSF militias. The war has created the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, killing tens of thousands of people, displacing millions, and pushing parts of the country into famine. — **DW**

NATIONAL ECONOMY

Pakistan out of economic woes; major indicators wonderful: PM Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, said that due to untiring efforts of the incumbent government and its economic team, Pakistan was economically out of woods as its mega indicators were wonderful. The prime minister said when they took over the reins of this government, the national economy was in a very difficult situation. “We were at the verge of financial default. Our inflation was galloping and policy rate was crippling. So one could not imagine any kind of investment in Pakistan, let alone FDIs. And the business in the country was in a turmoil. But we did not lose hope,” he said while addressing the launching ceremony of National Regulatory Reforms, broadcast live on national TV channels. Of course, he said, those were very scary challenges, right looking into their faces, but through outstanding teamwork, excellent planning and untiring efforts, the country was out of the economic woes. He further underlined the need of spilling blood and sweat to achieve the set targets and converting the dreams into reality. “And this was the commitment, unwavering determination to walk in that very difficult path in the last one and a half year. And here we are. And today, Alhamdulillah, we are now discussing how to now move forward and grow our economy,” he observed. The prime minister also referred to the news about IMF approving Pakistan’s \$1.2 billion tranche.



The prime minister said that earlier, the industrialists, businessmen and every walk of life who had been suffering immensely at the hands of very cumbersome rules and regulations and procedures and that had really given a severe blow to the overall economic environment. They were working on to have foreign investment in very attractive areas of mutual benefits for countries in Pakistan, agriculture, IT, mines and minerals, he added. He said “We have a very young population, youth bulge. We are offering them vast opportunities for vocational training and with international certification. They will find productive jobs not only in Pakistan but abroad, making Pakistan richer and prosperous.” Terming the launch of the regulatory framework as ‘a quantum jump,’ he said this would facilitate the business community, industry, agriculture, FDIs from Europe, from Far East, from Middle East,

adding this would also take care of immense waste of time and resources which led to corruption and nepotism. “So I think today is a great day that we are able to now announce and let the nation know, 240 million people, that the government is fully aware of the challenge of the day and they are ready to walk with them with the speed they want us to walk,” he added. The prime minister also commended the relevant team of federal government that worked in coordination with provincial governments. He also thanked the British government along with International Development UK for their support. The prime minister said that the UK had been a great partner in the progress of Pakistan, like many other friends of Pakistan in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia etc. He said Pakistan had a wonderful relation with United States and they were looking forward

to a wonderful time of mutual cooperation. Speaking on the occasion, PM’s Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, said Sunday marked more than a policy moment as it marked a turning of the page. Among the many reforms the government was undertaking, one stood out as foundational; the transformation of Pakistan from a regulatory state into a developmental state. He said the regulatory reform was not an isolated effort. It was part of a wider transformation guided by three pillars: tariff rationalization, regulatory modernization, and export-led industrial revival. Under the new national tariff policy, they were moving towards predictability, competitiveness and phasing out of arbitrary duties, he added. The Right Honourable Baroness Jenny Chapman, UK’s Minister of State for International Development, in her remarks, also highlighted the full potential, prospects of entrepreneurship, availability of natural resources and Pakistan’s place at the center of global trade. Terming the reforms as positive achievement, she said these were the ambitions for UK and Pakistan that they shared. “And the links between our people play a huge part in the flow of trade and investment between our two countries as well. Trade is now at 5.5 billion pounds a year. We’ve got a new trade dialogue and we’re supporting Pakistan’s efforts to work with the 1.6 million strong Pakistani diaspora in the UK to unlock private capital,” the Baroness added. — **AFP**

GERMAN SOCIETY FOR ENDOCRINOLOGY

Pre-Christmas warning: Cheap toys can pose health hazard

BRUSSELS: It’s that time of year again, when children in countries that celebrate Christmas all over the world are dreaming of what awaits them in brightly wrapped packages — everything ranging from model cars to plastic building blocks, dolls and so much more. Yet the German Society for Endocrinology, a specialist society for researchers studying the effects of hormones, warns that many children’s toys contain endocrine disruptors, which can have a negative impact on metabolic processes, growth, brain development and fertility. Endocrine disruptors (EDCs) are chemicals that, even in small quantities, can disrupt the way hormones function, and cause harmful effects. EDCs include plasticisers such as phthalates

and bisphenols, which are found in a variety of food packaging. They also include brominated flame retardants, which make plastics less flammable, so-called forever chemicals (PFAS), as well as heavy metals such as cadmium and bromine. **Harmful substances put children at risk** These substances can be found in all kinds of everyday household items such as cosmetic products, plastics, paints and textiles, but also in cheap children’s toys, said Josef Köhrle of the Institute for Experimental Endocrinology at Berlin’s Charite university hospital. He researches how different substances affect the body’s hormone systems. “Children’s skin and mucous



membranes are not yet fully developed as barriers to harmful substances,” said Köhrle during a press conference earlier this month. What’s more, young children explore the world with their mouths. This typical behaviour “can massively increase EDC exposure,” the

researcher warned. **EU aims to address lack of regulation** EDCs are identified as substances of very high concern in the EU, considered just as dangerous as carcinogenic or mutagenic substances such as asbestos. And

yet EDCs still end up in toys for children. Köhrle believes the oversupply of “cheap products” not manufactured in accordance with EU standards is to blame for this problem. Online retail platforms such as Amazon, Shein and Temu contribute to the widespread distribution of such goods because compliance with EU guidelines is not sufficiently monitored and enforced, he said. The European Parliament has, however, reacted to this situation and adopted new safety regulations for toys. “The EU is leading the world in trying to introduce and enforce regulatory standards for products and chemicals,” said Köhrle. Yet cheap and potentially harmful toys will still be on offer for the

time being. “According to optimistic estimates, it will take at least four and a half years before this decision [on new safety regulations] is implemented,” said Köhrle. This is partly because every EU member state is responsible for protecting the health of its own population. To date, there are no reliable EU-wide labels that certify a product being safe and compliant with EU standards. New EU safety regulations will require toys to have a digital product passport, allowing authorities and consumers to check whether the item is safe. Until then, choosing safe products remains an individual responsibility. A look at the European recall database can help avoid dangerous products in the first place — **DW**



LIFESTYLE

AI MUSIC
CREATES
UNEASE

As AI-generated music saturates the market, people are realizing they can't distinguish it from music made by actual humans. Many listeners, and musicians, are unsettled by this

Can you trust your ears to tell man from machine when it comes to music? Most people can't, it seems.

In a recent study by the streaming platform Deezer and market research company Ipsos, 97% of respondents could not tell the difference between music tracks made entirely by artificial intelligence (AI) and those made by humans. In other words, AI-generated audio is really convincing.

And it's already everywhere, including on the Billboard charts: "Walk my Walk," from Breaking Rust — an entirely AI creation, from instrumentals to vocals to image — reached number one on the country digital song chart in mid-November. Then there is Xania Monet (whose video you see below), a similar virtual artist with Gospel and R&B charting singles who was recently signed for \$3 million (€2.6 million) to a record label. And this summer, the band Velvet Sundown garnered 1 million Spotify monthly listeners before revealing itself as a "synthetic music project."

Do people react negatively to AI music?

At first glance, it might seem that listeners are welcoming AI-generated music with open arms and ears. But the truth is muddier. The same Deezer study found that 52% of respondents were uncomfortable about not being able to tell the difference between human and AI music.

So, how do listeners feel when they know a piece of music is AI-generated? Some studies have found that they like certain types of music less. Other studies, including one by Philippe Pasquier, the director of the Metacreation Lab for Creative AI at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, have found no bias for or against AI-generated music.

Part of this is because generative AI can be used in a myriad of ways that are not always clear to the listener. "It depends on what AI is used for — composition, interpretation, mastering — among other factors," Pasquier explained in a written interview with DW.

The ethics of listening to music

Sophia Omarji says she can enjoy an AI-generated piece of music. A Stockholm-based AI user experience researcher and music psychologist who hosts The Sound Mind podcast, she is also a musician. She told DW that while she thinks knowing a piece is AI-generated can make you want to "pull it apart," it doesn't technically change that much.

"You still enjoy the piece of music, but there is the kind of ethical and moral thing that might come [and make you think]: 'Is this something that I want to listen to?'"

One commonly raised ethical issue is that generative AI music platforms such as Suno and Udio train their machines on existing human artists' work. This potentially violates copyright laws for usage without payment.

This has moved many artists to protest, including former Beatle Paul McCartney, who in December will release the single "Bonus Track." The recording of an empty studio will be part of the silent album, "Is This What We Want?"

Created by over 1,000 co-writers that also include Kate Bush, Damon Albarn and Tori Amos, the release protests UK AI copyright legislation that artists say will devastate the music industry.

Can machines mimic human expression?

Human fear of technological disruption is nothing new. As early as the 16th century, people were fearing job displacement as automation was introduced into knitting.

Forays into music-producing AI software have been around — and criticised —since the early 1980s. In recent years, AI has been used to finish Beethoven symphonies and Beatles tunes alike.

But to many musicians and music lovers, the current moment feels different.

"It's not just the loss of work. It's part of my identity. It was my thing," musician and audio producer Mark Henry Phillips said in a recent US public radio feature, explaining how AI seemed superhuman, excelling across every musical genre, style and instrument. "My special skill just isn't that special anymore. From a musical and economic point of view, AI just has me beat."

The difference for Omarji has to do with her idea of creativity. She describes herself as a "big user" of AI for tasks like idea generation or quickly reading and summarising documents. Yet she doesn't use it in her music. "For me, music has always been about self-expression and creativity, and those are not words that I really associate with AI."

"I want to keep [music] a human process," she adds.

AI-generated music: Its own sort of art?

Pasquier also doesn't believe that AI systems are creative. "They are imitating the data they were trained on and lack intentionality and framing," he says. "They are missing quite a lot of what makes human [and] artistic creativity."

But, he adds: "Making a machine that makes art is a practice in itself, known as generative art, or metacreation. This is not new and has been a niche with its followers for a long time."

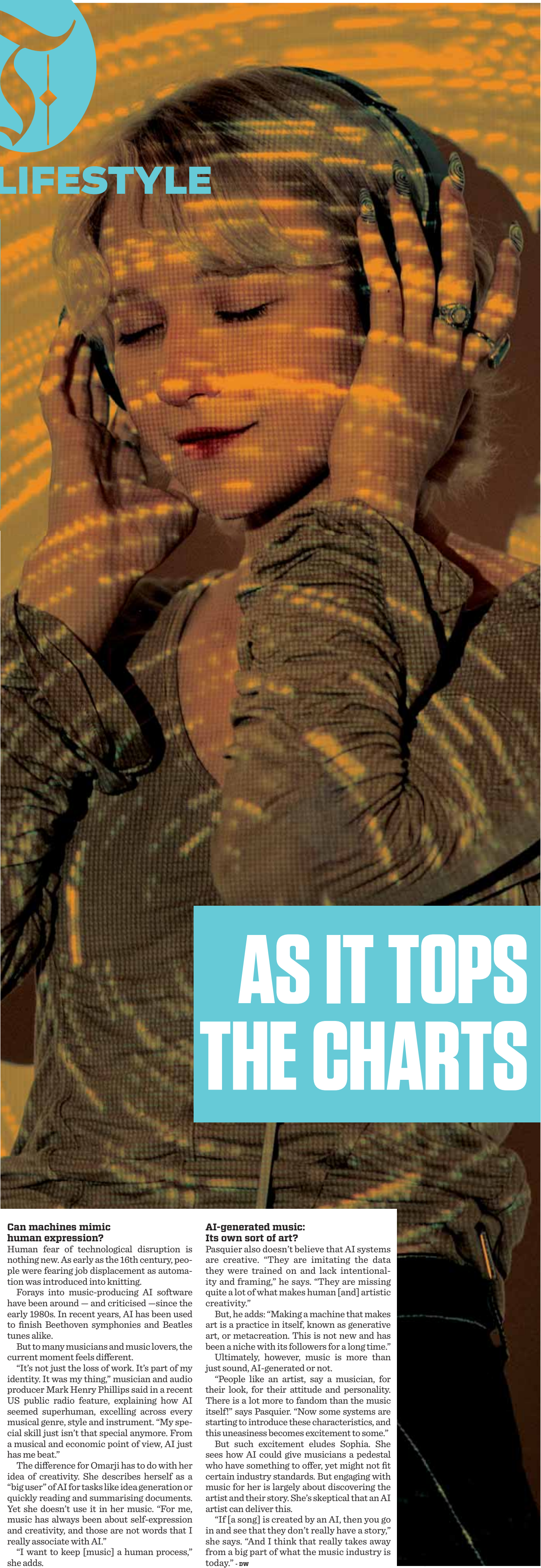
Ultimately, however, music is more than just sound, AI-generated or not.

"People like an artist, say a musician, for their look, for their attitude and personality. There is a lot more to fandom than the music itself!" says Pasquier. "Now some systems are starting to introduce these characteristics, and this uneasiness becomes excitement to some."

But such excitement eludes Sophia. She sees how AI could give musicians a pedestal who have something to offer, yet might not fit certain industry standards. But engaging with music for her is largely about discovering the artist and their story. She's skeptical that an AI artist can deliver this.

"If [a song] is created by an AI, then you go in and see that they don't really have a story," she says. "And I think that really takes away from a big part of what the music industry is today." - DW

AS IT TOPS
THE CHARTS



SPORTS

Arsenal ride luck to defeat Wolves and stay as leaders

Salah returned with a assist in Reds' win; Palmer's double in Chelsea victory

LONDON: Premier League leaders Arsenal rode their luck on Saturday with a dramatic 2-1 win at home to bottom of the table Wolverhampton Wanderers that assured that they maintain their lead at the top of the table, no matter what happens on Sunday.

It took a stroke of luck to put Arsenal ahead in the 70th minute, when visiting goalkeeper Sam Johnstone pushed Bukayo Saka's cross onto the post, only for it to bounce into the net off his back.

It still looked as if Wolverhampton would sneak a point when Tolu Arokodare headed them level in the 90th minute, but there was heartbreak for Wolves and three vital points for Arsenal deep in injury time when Yerson Mosquera flicked the ball into his own net as he tried to clear Saka's cross in the fourth minute of added time.

At Anfield, Mohamed Salah's return came with an assist as Arne Slot's side beat Brighton 2-0, thanks to a Hugo Ekitike double.

Victory pushed the Reds up to sixth as they extended their unbeaten run to five games following a first win at Anfield since 4 November. France's Ekitike opened the scoring in the first minute. Salah came on for the injured Joe Gomez after just 26 minutes and set up the second goal.

Earlier, Gomez played his part in Liverpool's opener as his header found Ekitike, who took one touch and volleyed past Bart Verbruggen after just 46 seconds - the quickest Premier League goal of the season so far.

Brighton had chances to level but failed to take them, with an outstretched leg from Alisson denying Diego Gomez, who was through on goal, before Gomez also missed an open goal after the break.



Salah's assist took him to 277 goal involvements in 302 Premier League appearances for Reds - the most by any player for a single club in the competition, overtaking Wayne Rooney (276) at Manchester United. He missed a golden opportunity to score his 251st goal for the club when he blazed wide in injury time after being teed up by Federico Chiesa's ball.

Chelsea beat Everton 2-0 with both of the goals coming in the first half, as Cole Palmer opened the scoring after a pass from Malo Gusto, who added the second himself on the stroke of halftime.

Fulham won 3-2 away to Burnley to take a big step away from the relegation zone, while inflicting a seventh consecutive league defeat on its rival.

Harry Wilson set up Emile Smith Rowe for Fulham's opener after just nine minutes and after Lesley Ugochukwu levelled for Burnley in the 21st minute, Wilson was on hand to set up Calvin Bassey for Fulham's second before halftime and then score the third himself in the 58th minute. Oliver Sonke pulled a goal back for Burnley with five minutes left to play, but Fulham held on for all three points.



PREMIER LEAGUE

'Easy decision' to recall Salah, says Slot

LONDON: Liverpool boss Arne Slot said it was an "easy decision" to include Mohamed Salah in his squad against Brighton and there was "no issue to resolve".

The 33-year-old made his first Liverpool appearance since claiming he had been "thrown under the bus" by the club following last weekend's 3-3 draw with Leeds. "What's been said between the two of us, I've said many times, for me that stays between us," Slot told Sky Sports after the 2-0 victory over Albion.

"He was back in the squad and we needed him."

The Egypt forward received warm applause from the home fans as he was substituted on in the 26th minute at Anfield, for injured defender Joe Gomez.

"He was a threat, the first ball he touched he almost gave an assist to [Alexis] Mac Allister," said Slot. "He was constantly involved, pleasing but also not a surprise because he's done that many times."

Uncertainty remains over his



future at the club as Salah is due to head to the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) on Monday.

With the Saudi Pro League interested in Salah, it is possible a move away from Merseyside could happen during the January transfer window - while he is away - but Slot did not indicate what might happen next.

"He goes to Egypt now to AFCON, that means for us another player down and we already didn't have a lot," he said.

"But we knew before the season he would go and maybe one or two players could come back from injury."

Salah did not travel to Italy for Liverpool's 1-0 Champions League win over Inter Milan on Tuesday and speculation around his future continues, despite his appearance on Saturday.

Although Salah is expected to return to Anfield after the AFCON, Saudi clubs have been interested in him for some time and Liverpool rejected a £150m offer from Al-Ittihad in the summer of 2023.

He still has 18 months left to run on the deal he signed in April. Salah is Liverpool's third top goalscorer of all time with 250 strikes in 421 games.

FRENCH LIGUE 1

PSG move top with nervy win at Metz

METZ: Injury-hit Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) went top of French Ligue 1 with a thrilling 3-2 win at Metz on Saturday.

Goncalo Ramos and Quentin Ndjantou put PSG 2-0 up at Stade Saint-Symphorien before Metz midfielder Jessy Deminguet halved the deficit just before halftime with a fine strike from the edge of the penalty area. PSG substitute Desire Doue struck just after the hour mark before Metz's Giorgi Tsitaishvili set up a frantic finish with an 81st-minute rocket that made it 3-2.

PSG teenage wingers Ibrahim Mbaye (17) and Ndjantou (18) showed why they are so highly rated. The two combined for PSG's second goal when Mbaye beat his full-back and produced a low cross from the left that Ndjantou converted on the slide for his first goal in senior football.

Doue was introduced at half-



time having recovered from a hamstring injury sustained in October, and marked his return to league action with a smart one-on-one finish past Metz goalkeeper Jonathan Fischer. Tsitaishvili's strike into the top corner after a give-and-go with Gauthier Hein was arguably the goal of the night, but it mattered little as PSG saw out the win.

SPANISH LA LIGA

Raphinha brace puts Barca seven clear

MADRID: Barcelona moved seven points ahead of Real Madrid on Saturday night with a 2-0 win at Camp Nou to Osasuna.

It looked set to be a frustrating evening for the defending champions, who had 21 shots to three for Osasuna until the Brazilian forward Raphinha struck the opening blow in the 70th minute.

Raphinha found the bottom corner from the edge of the penalty area before converting at the back post in the 86th minute when a cross deflected into his path.

Ferran Torres thought he had broken the deadlock in the 23rd minute when he beat the offside trap and headed in a Marcus Rashford cross. However, the video assistant referee (VAR) ruled out the goal because Raphinha's heel was offside during a short-corner routine in the build-up.

Torres then went close when he met Lamine Yamal's dangerous inswinging cross, but the former Manchester City forward lifted his first-time effort over the crossbar.



Barcelona's dominance was finally rewarded when Pedri drove forward from midfield, found Raphinha and he finished past Sergio Herrera.

Having ended the visitors' resistance, the 28-year-old made sure of the success in the final moments with a simple tap-in.

Seven weeks ago Barcelona

trailed Real Madrid by five points after a 2-1 defeat in El Clasico, but now find themselves seven points clear after winning seven consecutive league games.

Barcelona have scored 49 goals in 17 La Liga games this season.

The win piles the pressure on Real Madrid and their under-fire coach Xabi Alonso, who visit Deportivo Alaves on Sunday.

Atletico Madrid remains very much in the title race while making life difficult for Valencia at the wrong end of the table, with a 2-1 win in the Metropolitano stadium.

Mallorca won 3-1 at home to Elche to climb away from the relegation zone after a bad error from Elche goalkeeper, Inaki Pena, who gifted the ball for Omar Mascarell to put Mallorca 2-1 with less than 10 minutes to play.

Two goals in the last 15 minutes from Ukrainian forward, Viktor Tsygankov, gave Girona a 2-1 win away to Real Sociedad on Friday night to momentarily lift his side out of the bottom three.

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Terrier strike and Andrich header seal Leverkusen derby victory

BERLIN: Bayer Leverkusen claimed a 2-0 victory over Cologne in the German Bundesliga, with a moment of brilliance from substitute Martin Terrier and a late set-piece goal sealing their authority in the Rhine derby on Saturday.

Leverkusen controlled the contest from the opening stages, enjoying clear territorial and possession advantages, but initially struggled to translate superiority into goals.

The hosts pressed high, recycled the ball efficiently and repeatedly pinned Cologne back in their own half, while the visitors focused on defensive organisation and quick transitions.

The home side created the better chances before the break. Christian Kofane was denied from a tight angle, Arthur and Malik Tillman both fired narrowly wide, while Cologne goalkeeper Marvin Schwabe kept his side level by reacting sharply to efforts from Jonas Hofmann. Cologne threatened sporadically, with Luca Waldschmidt forcing a solid save from Mark Flekken, but rarely sustained pressure and struggled to involve their forwards consistently.

Leverkusen resumed with renewed urgency after the interval. Tillman missed a golden opportunity when sent clear, shooting over from close range, before Schwabe was again called into action to



deny Ibrahim Maza and Kofane as the hosts increased the tempo and numbers committed forward.

The breakthrough arrived in the 66th minute through substitute Terrier. Slightly behind the ball at the far post, the striker produced an improvised back-heeled finish from Arthur's cross, looping the ball over Schwabe in a spectacular scorpion-style effort that finally rewarded Leverkusen's dominance.

Cologne barely recovered before conceding again. After Schwabe prevented an own goal from a corner, Aleix Garcia delivered the subsequent set piece, and Robert Andrich rose unchallenged to head in from close range in the 72nd minute.

Leverkusen comfortably saw out the closing stages to win the 73rd Bundesliga derby between the sides. The victory allows Bayer 04 to defend fourth place in the table against Hoffenheim, while Cologne remain under pressure in the lower reaches of the standings.

Elsewhere in the 14th round, Eintracht Frankfurt edged Augsburg 1-0, Wolfsburg won 3-1 at Borussia Munchengladbach, St Pauli beat Heidenheim 2-1 and Hoffenheim thrashed Hamburg 4-1. Bayern Munich remained top on 37 points, eight clear of second-placed RB Leipzig, with Borussia Dortmund third on 28 and Hoffenheim up to 26.

Triple medal success for Oman at Arab women’s sailing meet

Oman Sail trio of Tarteel, Hadeel, and Ibtli clinched one silver and two bronze medals at the second edition of the regatta in Kuwait

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s women sailors delivered a commanding performance on the regional stage after securing three podium finishes at the 2nd Arab Women’s Sailing Championship in Kuwait recently, underlining the nation’s growing strength in competitive sailing and reaffirming Oman Sail’s status as a regional powerhouse.

Competing against 37 sailors from nine Arab nations, the five-member Oman Sail team claimed one silver and two bronze medals across the Optimist, ILCA 4 and ILCA 6 classes during the four-day regatta held in the first week of December at the Kuwaiti Maritime Sports Club.

The standout result came in the Optimist class, where Tarteel Al Hasni produced a composed and consistent series to secure the silver medal, navigating shifting conditions and intense pressure from a strong international fleet. Bahrain’s Malak Al Dosari took gold, while Egypt’s Laila Diaa finished third. Oman’s depth in the class was further evident with Abeer Al Zakwani finishing fourth and Layan Al Ruzaiqi seventh overall.

In the ILCA 4 class, Hadeel Al Mushaifri added another medal to her growing list of international achievements, claiming bronze following a determined campaign.

Egypt’s Karma Walid claimed gold, with the UAE’s Marwa Al Hammadi taking silver. Al Mushaifri had previously earned a



bronze medal in the Optimist class at the inaugural Arab Women’s Championship in Bahrain, highlighting her consistency at the regional level.

Oman’s third medal came in the ILCA 6 class, where Ibtisam Al Salmi captured bronze after a tactically mature performance in a highly competitive fleet. Kuwait’s Amina Shah won gold on home waters, while the UAE’s Duha Al Bashar secured silver.

Reflecting on her result, Al Salmi said the podium finish carried special significance after a demanding year of training.

“This achievement holds great

personal meaning as it marks an exceptional end to a year of hard work and intensive training,” she said.

“Returning to the podium after years away from the ILCA to compete in larger classes makes this moment even more meaningful.”

She acknowledged the intensity of the racing, noting that fluctuating winds and a punishing schedule of up to four races per day, each lasting 45 minutes, tested both physical endurance and tactical focus.

Looking ahead, Al Salmi added: “I aim to compete strongly in upcoming Arab and Asian champion-

ships, with a focus on international camps and events.”

She also encouraged young women to take up the sport, describing sailing as “an exciting and rewarding discipline full of challenge, passion, and endless opportunities for growth.”

The Omani team was guided by Sultan Al Zadjali, Head Coach of the Optimist Team, and Ahmed Al Wahaibi, Head Coach of the ILCA Team, with backing from the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth.

Their efforts were praised by Abdul Aziz Salim Al Shidi, Oman Sail’s Acting Director of Sailing.

He said: “This event signalled

great progress for our women’s sailing team and an important opportunity to build on our achievements.

“We are extremely proud of our sailors for representing Oman at this level and bringing medals home. Their determination and technical ability were evident throughout the regatta, and we move into the next series of competitions confident of continued success.”

Beyond the medals, Oman Sail’s women’s programme continues to reflect the broader ambitions of Oman Vision 2040, positioning sport as a driver of social

development and international representation.

Oman Sail has been a pioneer of women’s sailing in the region since launching its first all-women team in 2012, a journey highlighted by Raiya Al Habshi’s historic nomination for the Rolex World Sailor of the Year Award following her participation in the Rolex Fastnet Race onboard the victorious MOD70 Oman Air-Musandam.

The championship was organised by the Sailing, Rowing and Kayaking Committee of the Kuwaiti Marine Sports Club and overseen by an international jury representing six countries.

FORMER CAPTAIN



Powell ‘proud’ of WI captaincy stint in T20Is

DUBAI: Rovman Powell is “proud” of how he led the West Indies side from ninth to third spot during his T20I captaincy stint, which he termed “pretty successful” and “very good”.

Powell’s source of gratitude also comes from the fact that he has played over a hundred T20Is (107) for West Indies.

Powell captained West Indies in 37 T20Is, in a full-time role from March 2023 to December 2024, including at the 2024 T20 World Cup that the West Indies co-hosted with USA. “A lot of the stuff in your career you didn’t set out to achieve,” Powell told journalists in a media interaction organised by Dubai Capitals during the ongoing ILT20.

“You started with the ambition to play for the West Indies. That was the goal. And now the global landscape of cricket has grown over the last 10-15 years so much where now you also play for different franchises around the world.

“I set out to play for the West Indies, and now I’ve played over 100 T20I games - it’s something that I’m grateful for. I’ve moved the team from ninth in the rankings to No.3 in the world. Those

are the little things that during the duration of your career you feel proud about. I’ve won franchise titles with various teams around the world. That is also something you feel proud about.

“My captaincy stint with the West Indies was very good - a pretty successful stint. [It’s] something that I’m grateful for. It has fostered better interactions with the players. You open your eyes to each and every one in these leagues as soon as they’re playing, you look to see what they are doing, and how much they can contribute to West Indies cricket. So it fostered those healthy conversations. Whenever people would see you as captain, they would ask how far they are from playing for the West Indies, and what they need to do.”

At 32, Powell has been succeeded by Shai Hope as the T20I captain, but another important phase of a few months looms for him. He firstly doesn’t have to worry about the upcoming IPL auction after being retained by KKR, but once the ILT20 ends in January, the focus will switch to the T20 World Cup to be played in India and Sri Lanka from February 7. - Agencies

ASHES SERIES: THIRD TEST



ADELAIDE: Head coach Brendon McCullum said England are unlikely to make changes to their batting line-up for the crucial third Ashes Test in Adelaide, which begins on Wednesday.

England, 2-0 down after the first two Tests, must beat Australia at the Adelaide Oval to keep their hopes of regaining the Ashes alive.

No.3 Ollie Pope and wicketkeeper Jamie Smith may have been candidates to be left out if England had considered making changes.

But asked if he anticipated fielding the usual top seven, McCullum said: “I would have thought so.

“We’ve been in positions where we have made some mistakes, and that can happen at times. But for us to go on and win this series, it’s not about throwing out what has been successful for us over the last few years. It’s about having more conviction.

“Knee-jerk reactions and chopping and changing settled batting line-ups is not really our way.”

It is unusual for McCullum to address the media before a Test, and he explained his appearance on Sunday was because “we know where we are in the series”.

In wide-ranging comments, McCullum left the door open for spinner Shoaib Bashir and seamer Josh Tongue to play in Adelaide and said any speculation that his job would be on the line if England lose this week “does not really bother me.”

He explained his previous comments about England being “over-prepared” for their second-Test defeat in Brisbane and rejected any suggestion his team should go about things in a “casual manner”.

With changes to the top seven now seemingly off the table, England could opt to refresh their bowling line-up.

Conditions in Adelaide, including the high temperatures forecast when the Test begins on Wednesday, could necessitate the inclusion of specialist spinner Bashir.

All-rounder Will Jacks was chosen ahead of Bashir in Brisbane, though captain Ben Stokes insisted Bashir remains England’s first-choice spinner.

The 22-year-old was earmarked for this trip more than a year ago, but has not played a Test since July because of a broken finger and has figures of 2-266 from his two tour games in Australia.

Tongue would be the most likely candidate to come in if England want a new paceman, with Gus Atkinson possibly making way.

“We need to have a look at the conditions,” McCullum told BBC Sport. “We have a squad of 16 here, which in a five-Test series, we know we will have to call upon the majority if not all of those.

“We will work out what we think is the best option to be successful in these conditions.”

Though McCullum and Stokes

‘No batting changes for England’

ENGLAND COACH

‘Airport incident not ideal’

ADELAIDE: England coach Brendon McCullum has conceded an airport altercation between team security and a cameraman was “not ideal” but insists his side have handled their intense Ashes scrutiny well.

On the same day Cameron Green admitted he had some sympathy for the tourists, McCullum stressed his touring party had embraced the banter in Australia.

It came after a member of England’s security staff made contact with a Seven Network cameraman on Saturday at Brisbane airport, trying to block him from filming the team.

Cricket Australia (CA) media directives state that teams are not available for interview while in transit, but can be filmed “from a respectful distance”.

“I didn’t see [the airport incident], but obviously it wasn’t ideal,” McCullum said on Sunday. “But hopefully it’s been dealt with and everyone’s able to move on.

“Obviously, we know coming to Australia, there’s a lot of eyeballs, there’s a lot of intensity and scrutiny on everything we do. I feel like we’ve managed ourselves pretty well through-



out this tour. I thought the boys were outstanding.

“The last week we’ve had, they’re engaging with a lot of the locals and everyone was in good spirits. There was some good banter flying both ways and I think everyone treated it [well] and respected it.”

McCullum’s comments came as Green admitted he felt sorry for the tourists, admitting he too battled to grow accustomed to the spotlight put on players.

“You never like getting filmed, especially when you want to get away from it,” Green said. “There’s always sympathy for anyone in life that’s getting filmed in public or in a private space. It’s never a nice feeling.” - Agencies

are contracted to England until the end of the next home Ashes in 2027, their positions - along with that of director of cricket Rob Key - will come in for intense scrutiny if England are beaten in Adelaide.

Asked if a loss would put his job under pressure, McCullum said: “I don’t know, but it doesn’t really bother me, to be honest.

“I certainly don’t coach to protect the job. I coach to get the best

out of people and that’s the same with the skipper.

“We both go about that in our same way with the same level of conviction and that won’t be changing this week just because the prize is at its highest. I firmly believe that if we play our best cricket, we have a massive chance in this Test match. If we do that, then the narrative changes and the series momentum changes.” - Agencies

ROUND-UP

All-new Lincoln Navigator with bold design, reimagined interiors and unparalleled connectivity unveiled

The launch of the All-New Lincoln Navigator was more than just the introduction of a vehicle; it marked a milestone in the luxury automotive landscape of Oman, ushering in a new era where sophistication, performance and technology seamlessly converge

MUSCAT: In a spectacular evening celebrating innovation, craftsmanship and distinctive luxury, Arabian Car Marketing Company, the distributor of Lincoln vehicles in Oman, unveiled the highly awaited, All-New Lincoln Navigator at an event held at the Grand Hyatt Muscat.

The occasion brought together distinguished guests, partners and automotive enthusiasts from across Oman, making it an unforgettable celebration of luxury and engineering prowess.

The launch of the All-New Lincoln Navigator was more than just the introduction of a vehicle; it marked a milestone in the luxury automotive landscape of Oman, ushering in a new era where sophistication, performance and technology seamlessly converge.

The evening commenced with a warm welcome from Deenadayakaran Jeevamanickam, Business Head, Arabian Car Marketing Company, who reflected on Lincoln's commitment to creating compelling vehicles with an exceptional ownership experience to match.

He said, "Tonight, we gather not merely to unveil a vehicle, but to introduce an experience – an evolution of what modern luxury represents. The All-New Lincoln Navigator stands as a testament to power shaped by elegance, reflecting prestige, craftsmanship and innovation in every detail. At Arabian Car Marketing Company, we take immense pride in carrying forward Lincoln's distinguished legacy by curating extraordinary experiences worthy of the Lincoln name."

Later in the evening, Hani Badawi, Regional Manager, Lincoln Middle East, shared his insights on



the significance of the Navigator in Lincoln's global portfolio.

He said, "The Navigator is the cornerstone of the Lincoln brand – our flagship SUV that embodies the very best of Lincoln globally. Today we elevate its legacy with a bold, confident new design, a completely reimagined interior,

thoughtful signature features, and differentiated connected experiences crafted for the discerning tastes of Middle East drivers – delivering an elevated experience that seamlessly blends sophisticated design, intuitive technology, and unparalleled comfort."

The All-New Lincoln Navigator

exclusive Lincoln Split Gate, offering versatile cargo access and convenient seating for family or leisure settings. Complementing the exterior are 22-inch wheels with refined finishes and Adaptive Pixel Projector Headlamps that adjust with the speed for enhanced visibility and pre-illuminates the road ahead with the adaptive dynamic bending light.

Inside, the All-New Navigator's cabin has been transformed into a sanctuary of personalized luxury, featuring the 48-inch panoramic display alongside an 11.1-inch touchscreen, offering seamless connectivity, intuitive control and a multidimensional entertainment experience powered by the 28-speaker Revel Ultima 3D audio system. The Lincoln Digital Experience, backed by Google apps and Services, ensures effortless access to navigation, entertainment and vehicle controls, while Lincoln Rejuvenate provides a multi-sensory spa-like experience, blending sight, sound, scent, seat comfort and climate control to allow passengers to relax and recharge.

The interior is further elevated with the new Enlighten Presidential theme and premium Opulence leather seating, featuring 30-way and 28-way Perfect Position Seats with massage, heating and ventilation functions. The second and third

rows also include PowerFold seating with adjustable recline, ensuring unparalleled comfort for all occupants. A redesigned flat-top steering wheel and Piano Key Shifter seamlessly integrate technology with Lincoln's signature elegance.

Under the hood, the Navigator is powered by a Twin-Turbocharged 3.5L V6 engine delivering 440 horsepower and 691 Nm of torque, paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission and all-wheel drive with seven drive modes.

Adaptive Suspension responds instantly to road surfaces for a smooth, controlled ride. The Lincoln Co-Pilot360 Drive 2.0 suite of driver assist technologies ensures safety and confidence with features such as Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop-and-Go and Lane Centering, 360-Degree Camera, Blind Spot Detection, Lane-Keeping System, Evasive Steering Assist, Post-Collision Braking, and Reverse Brake Assist.

Guests at the event had the opportunity to experience the All-New Lincoln Navigator up close, discovering its intelligent features, luxurious interiors and exceptional versatility first-hand.

The All-New Lincoln Navigator is now available at the Lincoln showrooms. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

ISLAMIC BANKING

Meethaq contributes to strengthening national payments ecosystem and launches Maal debit card



MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat has launched the National Payment Card "Maal" debit card, recently introduced by the Central Bank of Oman, as part of Meethaq's ongoing efforts to provide innovative and secure payment solutions that keep pace with the latest developments, enhance the national payments ecosystem, and elevate the banking experience for its customers across the Sultanate.

The launch of the new card supports of the Central Bank's directions aimed at unifying payment systems and boosting reliance on the national payments infrastructure, thereby delivering added value to the national economy while promoting enhanced security, trust, and efficiency in financial transactions.

The "Maal" card is distinguished by its use of the latest global security standards, offering cardholders direct, around-the-clock access to their accounts for cash withdrawals and purchases across merchant outlets within the Sultanate. It also enables se-

cure payments on local websites, bill payments, government services, and provides faster and more efficient transaction processing. Being powered by the local Oman-Net network ensures added privacy and protection. Point-of-sale devices will be gradually enabled to accept the Maal card to better serve customers and enhance their banking experience.

Sami Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager, Meethaq Personal Banking, stated that the launch of the "Maal" card reflects Meethaq's continued commitment to offering modern banking services compliant with Islamic Sharia principles. "We are pleased to be among the first institutions to adopt this initiative, given its role in enhancing operational efficiency, simplifying customer transactions, and supporting digital transformation efforts in the financial sector, particularly within Islamic banking," he added.

Maal is issued to Meethaq customers at no additional cost. It

will be issued automatically to new customers upon opening an account, while existing customers will be notified via SMS once their cards are ready for collection.

Meethaq continues to invest in upgrading payment systems and offering innovative solutions tailored to diverse customer needs. The new card enables users to benefit from secure and reliable services, allowing them to conduct withdrawals and payments quickly and seamlessly, delivering a more advanced banking experience.

Meethaq employees across branches will also be ready to provide customers with all necessary information and technical assistance regarding the card and its usage, ensuring that everyone benefits from this new service.

The launch of the Maal card marks another milestone in Meethaq's journey to enhance Islamic banking services in the Sultanate, reinforce its position as a leading provider of Sharia-compliant financial solutions.

JAC
MOTORS

Own the JAC JS6

NOW AT



INTEREST*

Through Sohar International for 2 years.



FREE SERVICE
**UP TO 2 YEARS/
30,000 KMS**
(whichever is earlier)**

FREE
REGISTRATION
(for the 1st year on select models)***

WARRANTY
**6 YEARS/
200,000 KMS**
(whichever is earlier)#

**ROADSIDE
ASSISTANCE**
6 YEARS AAA##

Offer valid from November 23, 2025 - December 31, 2025

VISIT THE JAC SHOWROOM TODAY



  **7145 3300**

SHOWROOM

**WATTAYAH | AL HAIL | NIZWA
BARKA | SOHAR | SUR | SALALAH**



This offer is valid from November 23, 2025 to December 31, 2025. *0% interest rate for up to 2 years or 3% interest rate for up to 5 years through Sohar International's. Loans are subject to Bank/FC approval. **Free service package for 30,000 kms or 2 years (whichever is earlier). ***Free registration valid for the first year. #6-year / 200,000 km manufacturer warranty applies. ##AAA roadside assistance valid for 6 years from the date of retail purchase. Offer valid as per stock availability. Prices applicable on basic/entry models only and exclude VAT. Terms & conditions apply.