



OMAN'S OIL EXPORTS SURPASS 282MM UNTIL END OF NOVEMBER 2024

The Sultanate of Oman's oil exports recorded a decrease of 0.4% at the end of November 2024 to reach 282,192,100 barrels compared to the exports reported during corresponding period in 2023 when it was 283,413,300 barrels, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCST). **>B1**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Oman, Egypt to boost trade relations

1 Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion received on Monday Dr. Badr Abdel Aati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The meeting reviewed means of enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade and investment fields. **>A2**

WORLD 7 newborns in Gaza die of hypothermia

2 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said that at least seven newborns in the Gaza Strip have died of hypothermia due to the cold weather and lack of shelter, in light of the ongoing genocide committed by the Israeli occupation on Gaza. **>A7**

SPORTS SA rout Pakistan to clinch Test series

3 South Africa marked their qualification for the World Test Championship (WTC) final in style, romping to a ten-wicket win over Pakistan to win the second Test and the series 2-0 in Cape Town, South Africa, on Monday. It was South Africa's seventh successive Test victory. **>A8**

OMAN TO CELEBRATE HIS MAJESTY'S ACCESSION DAY ON 11 JANUARY



During the past five years, His Majesty has restructured the State's Administrative Apparatus and transformed the system of legislation and laws

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will celebrate on Saturday His Majesty the Sultan's Accession Day, which falls on 11 January every year. Oman's Renewed Renaissance has achieved accomplishments whose course was drawn out by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The accomplishments, made in harmony with the requirements of Oman Vision 2040, were put to shape through administrative, financial, commercial and investment operations that also featured the modernisation of systems of legislation, laws, governance, integrity, accountability and auditing.

During the past five years, His Majesty the Sultan has restructured the State's Administrative Apparatus and transformed the system of legislation and laws. As a result, the Sultanate of Oman has enjoyed remarkable progress that directly revamped various areas of development, with as many as 470 Royal decrees issued since His Majesty the Sultan assumed the reins of power in the country.

Experts in legal affairs affirmed

that the approach of His Majesty the Sultan was consistent with Oman Vision 2040, designed to keep pace with recurrent developments in the global arena.

Jamal Salim Al Nabhani, Spokesman of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, said that the promulgation of modern laws and legislation, since His Majesty's Accession Day, has shown developments in various aspects of political, social and economic life in the Sultanate of Oman. He added in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA) that this legislation reflects the developments that countries are going through. The State's Administrative Apparatus has been restructured in an integrated manner, including public legal entities, through the Royal Decrees issued to define the jurisdictions of these units and approve their organisational structures.

Al Nabhani explained that the first Royal Decree issued during the era of the Renewed Renaissance was No. 2/2020 amending (Annex No. 3) attached to the Law on State's Flag, Emblem and National Anthem. **>A2**

WORLD TOUR

Iconic Italian ship to arrive in Muscat for the first time

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The *Amerigo Vespucci* ship, historic sailing ship and Training Ship of the Italian Navy, will arrive in Muscat on 8 January, 32nd stage of the World Tour. This is the first visit of the ship to the Omani city.

The *Amerigo Vespucci*, guardian of the most ancient naval and seafaring traditions for over ninety years - is one of the most well-known symbols of Italy in the world. The initiative of the "Vespucci World Tour", strongly supported by the Minister of Defence, Guido Crosetto, combines the traditional training activity of the Officer Cadets and the promotion of the excellence of Made in Italy. The Vespucci is the emblem of the Navy and of Italy itself: following the maritime traditions, over



the years it has contributed to the growth of the country's prestige.

The ship left the Port of Genoa on July 1, 2023 to complete a round-the-world trip lasting about 2 years and brings with it the culture, history, innovation,

science, research, technology, which make Italy a country, appreciated throughout the world.

The ship arrival, expected to moor at berth no. 6 of the Port Sultan Qaboos, at 08:00 on January 8 2025, will be welcomed by the Italian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Pierluigi D'Elia, along with Military Officials.

The ship will be open to the local population on January 9, 10 and 11, 2025.

Admiral Enrico Credendino, Chief of the Italian Navy, will pay an official visit to the Sultanate on the occasion of Vespucci port visit.

From January 8 to 12, at The Sustainable City Yiti Experience Centre, a photographic exhibition "Voyages Across Oceans: The legacy of Amerigo Vespucci and Shabab Omani II Maritime Heritage" will take place.

SAYYID FAHD RECEIVES EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers received Dr. Badr Abdel Aati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration in the Arab Republic of Egypt, yesterday. — **ONA >A2**



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PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:18pm
Asr.....	3:20pm
Maghrib.....	5:41pm
Isha.....	6:56pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:31am

ON BEHALF OF HM

Sayyid Fahd receives Egyptian Foreign Minister

MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers received on Monday Dr. Badr Abdel Aati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

During the meeting, the guest minister conveyed greetings and best wishes of the Egyptian leadership to the leadership in the Sultanate of Oman, along with their wishes of further progress and prosperity for the Omani people.

The minister underlined the attention accorded by the Egyptian leadership to the distinguished relations with Oman in various spheres. He reviewed the regional developments, stressing the importance of the collaborative efforts to contain their repercussions.

HH Sayyid Fahd welcomed the guest and his accompanying delegation. He reviewed march of bilateral relations that stem from the advanced ties binding the two leaderships and peoples.

The meeting dealt with matters



of mutual interest and exchanged views on the efforts exerted to peacefully settle regional and international disputes to serve interests of all peoples.

Within the context of the bilateral cooperation, the meeting underscored the importance of activating tasks of the joint committee and intensifying consultations between the two sides on issues of mutual interest.

In his turn, the Egyptian minister lauded the wise and balanced policy pursued by the Sultanate of Oman, as well as its effective role

in backing efforts of understanding and positive dialogue among countries in a bid to maintain regional security and stability. He underlined the importance of talks he conducts with the officials in Oman, as they would positively contribute to boosting the joint cooperation.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister and Khalid Mohammed Abdul Halim Radi, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

Oman, Egypt to boost trade and investment

The meeting called for activating the role of Oman-Egypt Businessmen Council to be a main platform for boosting economic ties



MUSCAT: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion received here on Monday Dr. Badr Abdel Aati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Egypt.

The meeting reviewed means of enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade and investment fields. It stressed the importance of activating the role of Oman-Egypt

Businessmen Council to be a main platform for boosting economic ties.

The two ministers also discussed ways to develop trade exchange between the two countries by diversifying the exported and imported products in a manner that opens wider horizons for various economic sectors.

They also touched on means

of enhancing joint investments and encouraging private sector establishments in both countries to explore promising investment opportunities.

The meeting underlined the importance of laying emphasis on promoting integration in logistics, including the development of sea lanes between the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of

Egypt, along with offering incentives and facilities.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Saleh Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, Khalid Mohammed Abdul Halim Radi, Ambassador of Egypt to Oman, and several officials from both sides. -ONA

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Royal Office Minister receives Egyptian Foreign Minister

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office yesterday received Dr. Badr Abdel Aati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Arab Republic of Egypt, currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, the two

sides reviewed bilateral relations and aspects of joint cooperation between the two countries.

They also discussed means of promoting relations in various areas to serve the joint interests.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Egypt to Oman. -ONA



MEETING: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office with Dr. Badr Abdel Aati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Arab Republic of Egypt. -ONA

COMPREHENSIVE MODERNISATION

‘Laws on economy have received adequate care in Oman’

<FROM A1 It was followed by many Royal Decrees that included the promulgation and updating a large number of laws and legislation in line with the Renewed Renaissance, most notably Royal Decree No. 6/2021 on the promulgation of the Basic Law of the State, which paved the way for a new phase in the stages of building a state of law and institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

He stressed that the issuance of the Royal Decrees and laws was accompanied by many regulations and decisions of a legislative nature issued by the units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other public legal entities. These regulations and decisions stipulate governing and implementing many aspects that were stated in the Royal Decrees and laws. He explained that the laws regulating economic activities in the Sultanate of Oman have received adequate care and attention in updating them in line with the rapid developments witnessed by the country, including the promulgation of the Securities Law, the Labour Law, the Public Debt Law, the Bank Deposit Protection Law, and the Law on the Expropriation for Public Benefit, in addition to restructuring the bodies responsible for regulating economic activities such as the Board of Governors of the Central Bank, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and the Financial Services Authority.

As for the legislation governing social activities in the country, he said that they have passed through a comprehensive modernisation phase, as Royal Decree No. 50/2023 on the promulgation of the Bylaw of Social Protection Fund, and Royal Decree No. 52/2023 on the promulgation of the Social Protection Law, come as the general law governing the services and care provided by the state to individuals in the Sultanate of Oman. Pursuant to Royal Decree No. 50/2023, all units of the State's Administrative Apparatus concerned with retirement and social protection were restructured into one apparatus namely the Social Protection Authority.



Pursuant to the Social Protection Law, the legislation related to social protection was unified, in addition to the Social Security Law.

In her turn, Sadiya Khalfan Al Hadi, Member of the State Council and Member of the Legal Committee of the Council, said that since His Majesty the Sultan's Accession Day, the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed an update in existing legislation and the promulgation of new laws aimed at enhancing comprehensive and sustainable development and establishing the necessary legal frameworks to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

She told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the new laws issued and the updates to the existing legislation have all contributed to the development of many sectors in line with the objectives of the vision and Oman's Renaissance, which reflect the farsighted vision of the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan for the future of Oman.

She added that a set of laws have been issued that reflect the roadmap for Oman's Renewed Renaissance,

and support the strategic goal of promoting sustainable development, maintaining local and international security and peace and achieving prosperity and social wellbeing for the Omani people and residents on this homeland.

She pointed out that these laws included the Foreign Capital Investment Law, which aims to attract foreign investments, enhance the business environment in the Sultanate of Oman, and streamline investment procedures in line with economic development plans. She affirmed that these laws aim to attract more investments, and contribute to diversifying the Omani economy and reducing dependence on oil as a major source of revenue, as well as promoting the Sultanate of Oman as a country attractive to foreign investment.

She also affirmed that the issuance of the new Media Law aims to regulate media activities in the country, promote transparency and democratic values and build a 'responsible media community'.

She added that the issuance of the Media Law was in implemen-

tation of the provisions of the Basic Law of the State. She pointed out that the new law reflects a commitment to enhance media freedom. The new Media Law explicitly stipulates that media freedom is guaranteed in accordance with the Basic Law of the State, she said, noting that this includes the freedom of opinion, the right of individuals to practice media activities and obtain information, as well as the right of media professionals not to disclose their sources, she explained.

She concluded her speech by saying that the laws promulgated and updated during the reign of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik have greatly contributed to enhancing development in the Sultanate of Oman and support the partnership between the government, the private sector and civil society to achieve development goals. These laws function as essential tools for achieving sustainable development and promoting social justice. The Omani citizen is part of this development process through the active participation in various sectors.

On his turn, Dr. Ahmed Ali Al Sa'adi, members of the Shura Council and Head of the Legislative and Legal Committee at the council said that the new economic legislation has played a pivotal role in improving the business environment in the Sultanate of Oman, by providing incentives for foreign and local investments. This, added Al Sa'adi, has contributed to enhancing economic growth opportunities and diversifying sources of income.

He told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the legislation contributed to achieving the goals of economic sustainability by encouraging innovation, developing education, and enhancing the role of oversight to ensure the optimal use of national wealth and resources.

He pointed out that the social legislations also reflect the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to enhancing citizens' rights, supporting social balance, and empowering eligible groups through social security programs. They also provide a legal framework that enhances transparency and equality, in a manner that maintains national cohesion and achieves social solidarity.

Al Sa'adi affirmed that the new laws are consistent with the themes of Oman Vision 2040, which focus on sustainable development, education, and governance.

He further noted that the laws and legislation have contributed to consolidating the position of the Sultanate of Oman as a stable and attractive destination at the regional and international levels. These legislative efforts, explained Al Sa'adi, reflect a wise and ambitious vision that seeks to build a prosperous and sus-

tainable future for the Sultanate of Oman in light of its renewed renaissance.

Within the same context, Khalifa Marhoun Al Rahbi, Deputy Chairman of the Omani Lawyers Association pointed out to Oman News Agency (ONA) that since His Majesty's accession day, a comprehensive modernisation process was introduced to various legislative aspects that covered the economic, social and legal areas, in a bid to back march of the renewed renaissance in the Sultanate of Oman.

These laws, said Al Rahbi, came to keep pace with the aspirations of the next stage and enhance the pillars of sustainable development in the country. They contributed to establishing a modern legal structure that supports Oman 2040 vision and ensures the achievement of its strategic goals.

At the economic level, he explained that the new laws play a pivotal role in improving the investment environment and making it more attractive to local and foreign investors.

These laws included the Foreign Investment Law, the Public-Private Partnership Law, the Value Added Tax Law, the New Labor Law, the Government Performance Governance Law, the Natural Resources Management and Environmental Sustainability Law, in addition to other laws that have helped diversify sources of income and strengthen non-oil sectors such as logistics, industry, and tourism.

At the social level, Al Rahbi noted that the legislation focused on enhancing the quality of life for citizens and residents, through social security laws that strengthen the social safety net, and the new labor law that aims to improve the work environment and guarantees workers' rights. The new laws, he added, also supported women's empowerment and the protection of children's rights.

At the end of his statement, Al Rahbi affirmed that the legislative reforms witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman during its renewed renaissance reflect the wise leadership's commitment to building a promising future based on solid legal foundations. -ONA

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WORLD SHOOTING PRESIDENT ATTENDS

Muscat Nights: 692 participants compete in Al Amerat traditional shooting event



AL AMERAT: With the participation of 692 shooters from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, the shooting competition concluded at the traditional shooting ground in the Wilayat of Al Amerat on Saturday.

The competition was organised under the patronage of Sheikh Salim bin Rabie Al Senaidi, Wali of Al Amerat, in the presence of Luciano Rossi, President of the International Shooting Sport Federation. The competition was organised as part of the activities of the Muscat Nights. The participants were divided into 21 groups with 33 shooters in each group who competed for two days. The conclusion of the event saw tough competition among 50 shooters who qualified for the finals.

On the conclusion of the event, the Wali of Al Amerat honoured the shooters who bagged top places in the competition.

Ahmed bin Saif Al Shibli, Head of Al Amerat Traditional Weapons Shooting Team Committee presented Luciano Rossi, President of the International Shooting Sport Federation and the patron of the event Wali of Al Amerat with commemorative shields.

Luciano Rossi, President of the International Shooting Sport Federation expressed his delight over the organisation of the event and stressed the importance of supporting the youth and organising the championships. He hailed the attention and care accorded to these competitions by the bodies concerned.



ARTICLES OF DISPUTE

Joint committees reach consensus on 3 draft laws

MUSCAT: Joint committees comprising members from the State Council and the Shura Council on Monday held a meeting to discuss articles of dispute on three draft laws referred by the Council of Ministers, namely “The Individual Income Tax”, “The Financial Law” and “The Law on Special Economic Zones and Free Zones”.

The joint committees had a final debate on 30 articles of disagreement in the draft “Individual Income Tax Law”, 21 articles in the draft “Financial Law” and 22 articles in the draft “Law on Special Economic Zones and Free Zones”.

Some of the articles of dispute were in the original draft laws and



some were in new articles added by the Shura Council.

At the end of the debate, the joint committees reached consensus on all the articles of dispute. They will submit their report for discussion during a joint session scheduled to be held later by the State Council and the Shura Council. -ONA

A LIFE OF SUCCESS, AMBITION, AND BOUNDLESS GENEROSITY

Eng. Ahmed Sabbour: An inspirational Journey and Remarkable Legacy

ENG. AHMED SABBOUR serves as the Chairman and Managing Director of Al Ahly Sabbour Developments, a leading Egyptian company in the field of real estate development, renowned for its impressive portfolio of integrated projects across Egypt. With over 40 years of extensive experience in the real estate and engineering consultancy sectors, Eng. Sabbour is considered one of the most prominent and influential figures in these industries in Egypt. He has successfully transformed real estate projects from traditional models into exceptional architectural landmarks, contributing to the creation of engaging communities that meet the needs and aspirations of tomorrow's generations.



(EJB) and holds an active memberships in prestigious organizations including the American Society of Civil Engineering (ASCE), the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (AmCham), the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CanCham), the British Egyptian Business Association (BEBA), the Egyptian Business Association (EBA), and the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO). Through these affiliations, he continues to make valuable contributions to business development on both local and international levels.

Strategic Partnerships

Thanks to his exceptional expertise and outstanding leadership, Eng. Sabbour has established strong strategic partnerships with key governmental entities. Among these is his collaboration with Egypt's Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities, where he played a pivotal role in delivering exceptional real estate projects that elevated the company's position both locally and internationally.

Today, Eng. Sabbour continues his journey of success by collaborating with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in Oman to develop a groundbreaking project in Sultan Haitham City. This initiative represents a pioneering and visionary step in promoting sustainable urban development in alignment with Oman Vision 2040. It underscores Eng. Sabbour's commitment to leveraging his global expertise to provide added value to local communities.

California in 1987. Driven by an unwavering belief in the power of possibility to cultivate progress, Eng. Ahmed Sabbour embarked on his entrepreneurial journey in 1989, when he co-founded sabbour consulting Company, to redefine the real estate and construction landscape in the Egyptian market.

His bold leadership and extensive expertise led to the establishment of Al Ahly Sabbour Developments Company in 1994, in partnership with the National Bank of Egypt, the country's oldest and largest bank. This venture presented an innovative and forward-thinking approach that challenged industry norms, positioning the company as a beacon of excellence where passion, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit intertwine.

Global Recognition

Under Eng. Sabbour's leadership, Al Ahly Sabbour has embraced a dynamic development strategy, achieving remarkable successes locally and internationally. In 2024, the company earned two prestigious awards from * International Business Magazine Awards for 2024*: The Evolving Legacy in Real Estate Egypt 2024 Award and the 'Most Influential Real Estate Leader in Egypt 2024,' which was personally awarded to Eng. Sabbour in recognition of his visionary leadership.

Additionally, Global Business Outlook honored Eng. Sabbour with the 'Best Strategic Leader 2024' award, while the company's 'SUMMER' project was named 'Best Emerging Residential Project 2024.'

Finally, Forbes recognized Eng. Sabbour as one of the 'Most Influential Real Estate Leaders in the Middle East' for 2024, reflecting his exceptional expertise and distinguished contributions to real estate development and investment. These accolades highlight his career filled with innovation and success, embodying a forward-looking vision for excellence in real estate.

A Journey of Passion and Forward-Thinking Approaches

Driven by a deep belief in exploring possibilities to achieve progress, Eng. Sabbour earned a Bachelor of Civil Engineering from the University of Southern



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TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLIED

A new kind of fear: The haunted escape room blends horror with heritage

Bitu Charoosi, manager of Escape Room, located in Al Khoud, talks to *Times of Oman* about the concept behind creating escape rooms as a new form of entertainment in the Middle East

Q: What inspired you to create a horror-themed escape room, especially in the Middle East?

A: I've always been fascinated by the thrill of horror and the suspense it brings. In the Middle East, particularly in Oman, escape rooms are still a relatively new form of entertainment, and I wanted to bring something unique and memorable to the region. The idea of mixing the adrenaline of a haunted house with the intellectual challenge of puzzles felt like a perfect combination to provide a new, immersive experience for players. Horror taps into universal fears, making the experience deeply engaging.

Q: What were some of the biggest challenges in bringing the largest escape room in Oman to life?

The biggest challenge was introducing the concept of a horror escape room with live actors to a market that wasn't yet familiar with this type of entertainment. We had to make sure people understood the experience and felt intrigued rather than intimidated. Additionally, designing puzzles that are culturally appropriate while still delivering a thrilling experience took careful planning.

Q: What makes your horror escape room unique compared to others in the region?

Our escape room stands out because it's not just a series of puzzles — it's a fully immersive theatrical experience. The integration of professional live actors adds unpredictability and realism that you can't get from traditional escape rooms. We ensure every detail, from sound design to lighting, contributes to the eerie atmosphere, making it a uniquely chilling experience.

Q: Why did you decide to include live actors in your escape room, and how do they enhance the experience?

Live actors add a level of realism and unpredictability that static props or automated effects can't achieve. They create a dynamic experience by interacting with players, adjusting their performance based on reactions, and making the environment feel alive. This keeps players on edge and heightens the emotional stakes, making the horror feel more immediate and personal. It transforms the escape room into a blend of interactive theatre and puzzle-solving, which makes the experience unforgettable.

Q: How did you incorporate cultural elements into the escape room while maintaining its horror theme?



We drew inspiration from regional folklore, legends, and traditional ghost stories to ensure the horror theme resonates with local players. Elements like ancient superstitions, jinn, and traditional haunted house settings were woven into the storyline. By incorporating cultural symbols and Arabic language elements into the puzzles and atmosphere, we created an experience that feels authentic and connected to local traditions while still delivering the suspense and fear that players expect from a horror escape room.

Q: How do you ensure the safety of players and staff during such immersive experiences?

Safety is our top priority. Before each session, players receive a detailed safety briefing, our staff monitors the experience via cameras to intervene if necessary. The live actors are professionally trained to maintain boundaries and ensure their interactions are safe while still being scary. We also make sure the props and set

pieces are secure.

Q: What steps do you take to keep the escape room experience fresh and engaging for returning players?

We regularly update our puzzles, themes, and storylines to keep the experience exciting for repeat visitors. Our live actors are trained to vary their interactions and scare tactics, making each visit feel different. Feedback from players helps us understand what works well and where we can innovate further to keep the experience dynamic.

Q: Do you have plans for expanding your escape room or introducing new themes?

Yes, we are constantly brainstorming ways to expand! We plan to introduce new rooms with different horror themes, incorporating various levels of intensity to cater to both thrill-seekers and those who prefer a milder scare. We want to offer a range of unique, immersive adventures that continue to push the boundaries of escape room entertainment



PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS

Largest-ever Indian diaspora delegation heads to Odisha for PBD 2025

MUSCAT: The largest-ever Indian diaspora delegation from Oman will participate in the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention in Odisha from January 8 to 10, 2025.

With over 300 registrations on the PBD portal, the participating delegation includes representatives from various community groups, business leaders, and prominent members of the Indian diaspora in Oman.

Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to Sultanate of Oman, flagged off the delegation at a glittering ceremony at the Embassy on January 5, 2025.

He unveiled a specially designed logo for PBD participants



from Oman and felicitated the participating members with merchandise kits featuring the logo.

The logo titled "PRAVASI

FROM OMAN" symbolises the historical journey of the diaspora in Oman and their participation in the PBD Convention.

In his address to the gathering, Ambassador Amit Narang said "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is an important platform for our diaspora to reconnect with Bharat and contribute meaningfully to its developmental journey. I encourage all of you to make the most of this visit and represent the Indian community in Oman with pride."

This year, two distinguished members of the Indian diaspora in Oman will participate as panel speakers at the PBD Convention. Mohiuddin Mohammad Ali, Vice Chairman, Galfar Engineering and Contracting SAOG will participate in Plenary Session 1 on 'Diaspora Youth Leadership' while Aishwarya Hegde, Founder Director of De-

epam Odissi Academy will speak at Plenary Session 5 on 'Diaspora Dialogues: Stories of Culture, Connection, and Belonging'.

On the sidelines of PBD 2025, a special exhibition on diaspora archives curated by National Archives of India will showcase digitised documents highlighting the Indian diaspora's history in Oman. The exhibition is based on a landmark project conducted by the Embassy of India, Muscat that successfully digitised over 7,000 records in English, Arabic, Gujarati and Hindi from the private collections of long-resident historical Indian merchant families in Oman. A senior delegation from the Hindu Mahajan families

of Oman, whose documents were part of this initiative, will attend the exhibition at PBD 2025. This first of its kind exhibition is a proud moment for the Indian diaspora in Oman as their motherland recognises and celebrates their rich history as pravasis abroad.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas brings together the Indian community worldwide and remains an important link between India and its global diaspora.

The strong participation of the delegation from Oman highlights the time-tested bonds of the Indian community in Oman with India, as well as their enthusiasm to contribute to Bharat's rise as a global power.



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OMAN BUSINESS PLATFORM



Three new e-services launched to facilitate business activities in Oman

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with Muscat Municipality, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion on Monday launched the “Lease Contracts Service” via Oman Business Platform.

On the platform, the Ministry also launched the Financial Reports Service and the Interactive Guide Service for trade names.

The overall aim is to facilitate business activities and encourage investors to establish projects that support the national economy and enhance economic activity.

Undertaken in cooperation with relevant government and private establishments, the step will help improve the business



environment and apply the best international practices.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Saud Hilal Al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat. Dr. Saleh Said Masan, Under-

secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, said that the launch of the new services was in pursuance of action to implement a

comprehensive digital transition initiative.

He pointed out that Oman Business Platform is linked to 48 government institutions, 32 of which provide access in the field of data exchange and 14 engage in licensing procedures.

Ahmed Mohammed Al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, said that the new services constitute a step forward in enhancing innovation and digitisation in Oman’s business sector.

The ceremony was attended by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and officials from the Ministry, Muscat Municipality and the authorities concerned. — **ONA**

ROYAL AIR FORCE OF OMAN

RAFO’s swift response saves Omani child’s life

MUSCAT: The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) has carried out a vital medical evacuation, airlifting a critically ill Omani child from Masirah Hospital to Sur Hospital in the South Sharqiyah Governorate. This swift and coordinated

operation ensured the child’s safe transfer, enabling them to receive urgent medical treatment.

RAFO’s prompt response underscores its commitment to providing crucial medical assistance in emergency situations.



EMBASSY OF INDIA
MUSCAT

Embassy of India in Muscat invites sealed tenders in 3 (three) Bid Envelope System from eligible Bidders for the **Supply, Installation & Commissioning of CCTV cameras at the Embassy of India, Muscat**, as per terms and conditions mentioned in Tender Document. The tender document may be downloaded from <https://www.indemb-oman.gov.in/tenders.php> or from CPP Portal – <https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app>.

Important Dates

TENDER/ FILE NO.	MUS/815/01/2023
01 Date of Publication of bidding	0900 hrs on 07.01.2025 at the Embassy of India, Muscat
02 *Pre-Bid Meeting	1100 hrs on 07.01.2025 at the Embassy of India, Muscat
03 Last date of submission of written queries by bidding Companies	1500 hrs on 23.01.2025 at the Embassy of India, Muscat
04 *Last date for submission of bids	1700 hrs on 27.01.2025 at the Embassy of India, Muscat
05 *Date of opening of Technical Bids	1500 hrs on 28.01.2025 at the Embassy of India, Muscat
06 *Date of opening of Financial bids	To be announced

*Subject to change due to administrative/ logistic reasons

Interested companies may submit their sealed tenders in three bid system i.e. EMD, Technical bid and Financial Bid as per Terms and Conditions of the Tender Document to Embassy of India, Muscat at Diplomatic Area, Al Khuwair on or before the bid submission end date i.e. 27 January 2025 (1700 hrs).

Further clarifications, if any, can be sought during working days from 0900 hrs to 1700 hrs over telephone no. **+968-24684527** or through email addressed to admin.muscat@mea.gov.in.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Oman and Djibouti sign air transport agreement

MUSCAT: Represented by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the Sultanate of Oman yesterday signed an air transport agreement with the Republic of Djibouti for enhancing bilateral cooperation in the field of air transport and facilitating the movement of passengers and goods between the two countries.

The agreement was signed by Eng. Nayef Ali Al Abri, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority, and Diyauddin Saeed Ba’Makhramah, non-resident Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti to the Sultanate of Oman.



130 countries

Oman has so far inked agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in the field of air transport with more than 130

countries around the world. The pacts will promote Oman as a regional air transport centre and enhance its ability to interconnect various global markets. — **ONA**



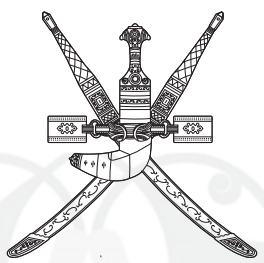
Royal Oman Police

ANNOUNCEMENT

On the occasion of ROP Annual Day, Royal Oman Police – Directorate of Public Relations and Security Information – announces to all citizens and residents that **Thursday 09/01/2025 shall be observed as an official holiday for ROP formations** that follow the official-working-hours system.

As for police stations, they will be practicing their regular duties and providing all services entrusted to them around the clock.

Best wishes for all!



Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
4/2025	Providing cleaning services for the building of the Cerebral Palsy and Physical Disability Center in Al Khoudh	Companies specialized in the field of cleaning, laundry and pest control services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Sunday 26-01-2025 02:00 PM	Sunday 16-01-2025 02:00 PM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖

Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), On On Tuesday 12/11/2024

❖

For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

“The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry”

www.mosd.gov.om

Equestrian sports is Oman's cultural asset

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman attaches great importance to equestrian sports and it lends constant support to participants in horse races organised by the Royal Horse Racing Club and Oman Equestrian Federation, in addition to jockeys from the Royal Cavalry who participate in various international competitions.

Royal Horse Racing Festivals constitute a cultural asset for the Sultanate of Oman. They were first organised at Madinat Al Adiyat racing track and they were initially limited to horse racing. Then, the races developed to cover various aspects of equestrian sports and skills performed between the rounds.

These festivals have contributed to the development of horse racing competitions in which the winners receive prestigious trophies, including His Majesty the Sultan's Cup.

The festivals also helped augment the standards of horse riders, both males and females.

The festivals encouraged Omani citizens, horse owners, coaches and jockeys to compete and contest the races, prompting horse owners to select the pure Arabian horses to participate and compete in the races and raising interest in horse breeding in the Sultanate of Oman.

Royal Horse Racing Festivals are presented through the use of advanced technology, thereby combining past originality and reflecting modern day realities, inspired by the enlightened vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, who has accorded great attention to horses and those interested in the field of equestrian sports, encouraging the sports to prosper and access global standards.

Sayyid Munthir Saif Al Busaidi, Chairman of Oman Equestrian Federation, affirmed that His Majesty the Sultan's gracing the Royal Race tomorrow (Tuesday) would inspire all members of the equestrian sport in the Sultanate



of Oman. Horse racing, he said, enjoys a special support from His Majesty, who is keen on the conservation of this ancient Arab sport that constitutes a source of income for a large segment of society in Oman, including youth, and encourages all to opt for local and international competitions.

He told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the Federation is embarked on constant action to advance horse racing in the Sultanate of Oman in cooperation with various parties, most notably the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. He added that the Federation gives priority to public interest, notably the interests of the parties engaged in equestrian sports.

He affirmed that horse racing achieved advanced levels in terms of timing of rounds and rating of horses, which motivated the competitors to participate in races abroad in which they continued to secure advanced places.

Sayyid Munthir stressed that Oman Equestrian Federation is constantly reviewing the opinions and suggestions of horse owners, coaches and jockeys through the meetings that precede the start of each season to determine the re-



quirements of the success of the events, facilitate public participation and develop everything that would contribute to the advancement of horse racing and the inculcation of the culture of racing among all participants.

He said that the tracks of the Sultanate of Oman boast global standards, including Al Rahba race track that is maintained by specialized companies. He added that horse races in the Sultanate of Oman always receive continuous commendation. He pointed out that the crew who organize the races are almost 100% Omanis and that this constitutes an added value to the country.

Sayyid Munthir commended the advanced places achieved by the Royal Cavalry at the global level, thus offering Oman a special sta-

tus among other countries of the world. He explained that Oman achieved a high global status through its participation in competitions for high-rated pure Arabian horses and endurance races.

He also highlighted the advanced results and positions achieved by the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Royal Cavalry, at the global level in horse races in various countries of the world, in which the high-rated horses participate, in addition to the Arabian horse beauty contests, as well as endurance and performance contests.

Omani jockeys now boast an advanced level of professionalism, which was manifested through their participation in competitions in Oman and abroad. Recently, they came into the limelight during the GCC horse racing season.

Tomorrow's Royal Race will see a thrilling competition from pure Arabian horses that once won first place or advanced positions at the start of the current season. The horses achieved ideal timings during the races organized by Oman Equestrian Federation and the Royal Horse Racing Club. -ONA



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FRATERNAL RELATIONS

Sayyid Badr meets Egyptian counterpart



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received at the general diwan of the ministry yesterday Dr. Badr Abdel Aati, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The meeting reviewed the deep-rooted and fraternal relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt. The two sides stressed the common desire to enhance the bilateral cooperation in various political, economic and cultural fields to serve the joint interests.

The two ministers exchanged views on a set of regional and international issues of common concern.

They also discussed the current regional situation and the escalating challenges, with a focus on developments of the Palestinian issue and the ceasefire

endeavours in the Gaza Strip.

Enhancing dialogue

The two sides also underlined the importance of enhancing dialogue as a means to achieve stability and back international efforts aimed at finding peaceful and sustainable solutions to conflicts, in a way that ensures security and development for the peoples of the region, within the context of commitment to the principles of international law and respect for the sovereignty of states.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, Khalid Mohammed Abdul Halim Radi, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate of Oman and a number of officials from both sides. -ONA

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Number of Gaza child deaths due to cold rises to seven, says UNRWA

UNRWA added in a statement issued that “cold weather and lack of shelter are causing the death of newborns in Gaza, while 7,700 newborns lack life-saving care.

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said that the number of child deaths in the Gaza Strip due to cold and lack of shelter has risen to seven, in light of the ongoing Israeli war of genocide on the Strip.

UNRWA added in a statement issued that “cold weather and lack of shelter are causing the death of newborns in Gaza, while 7,700 newborns lack life-saving care.”

So far, reports have indicated that “at least 7 children have died due to cold in the Strip.”

The statement indicated that “the World Health Organization (WHO) condemned the Israeli army’s attacks and the removal of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza from service.”

The UN agency stated that “Israel has been confirmed to have

carried out 50 attacks on Kamal Adwan Hospital and surrounding areas since October 2024.”

WHO also called for the release of Kamal Adwan Hospital Director Hussam Abu Safia.

The displaced people live in tents made of cloth and nylon, in harsh humanitarian conditions due to the scarcity of basic necessities of life, such as water and food, in addition to a severe shortage of clothing, fish blankets and heating devices during the winter.

Israel Undermines Public Order in Gaza: Euro-Med Monitor

The Israeli entity is pursuing a dangerous policy aimed at undermining public order and systematically dismantling the security and justice systems in the Gaza Strip, ensuring the destruction of the



Palestinian people, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor revealed in a new report.

Since the start of the genocide in Gaza on 7 October 2023, the Israeli occupation army has sought to target members of the civilian police and security forces to create a state of chaos and lawlessness, the Euro-Med Monitor said.

The report pointed to an Israeli strategy to destroy the Gaza Strip’s

security and justice system by bombing official and alternative police stations, judicial institutions, and police officers and staff, including local security personnel represented by private companies or civil committees.

The Geneva-based organization called on the international community to take immediate action to pressure Israel to stop targeting the justice system and police,

which are vital civil institutions.

Colonists seize agricultural land near Jenin

Colonists seized agricultural land in the town of Jaba’, south of Jenin, on Monday.

The landowner, Saad Fashafsheh, told WAFA that colonists stormed his agricultural land near the village of Al-Fandakumiya, with their agricultural machinery,

and began plowing and cultivating the land with the aim of seizing it, under the protection of the Israeli occupation army.

Fashafsheh added that the colonists had previously seized his 20-dunum land, but he had been cultivating it for many years, and intended to plant it with wheat this year.

He said that he had been attacked by settlers more than once while he was on the land, the last of which was d

Two children killed by Israeli airstrikes

Two Palestinians children were killed on Monday morning when Israeli warplanes bombed the town of Al-Shawka, east of Rafah.

The number of people killed since the start of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip on October 7th, 2023, has surged to 45,805, the majority of whom are children and women. Some 109,064 others have been wounded.

Thousands of victims are still trapped under the rubble or scattered on the roads, as ambulance and civil defense teams are facing difficulties in reaching them due to the continued Israeli attacks, the massive amount of debris and the shortage of fuel and heavy equipment. — Agencies

CANADA

Trudeau steps down as Liberal Party leader

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Monday that he would resign as the leader of Liberal Party and as Prime Minister as soon as a new candidate is found for the post.

Trudeau said that he had spoken to the Liberal Party President to start looking for a new Prime Ministerial candidate.

“I intend to resign as party leader and as Prime Minister after the party chooses next leader. If I have to fight internal battles I can’t be a good candidate. I have asked the liberal part president to search for a new candidate for the post of Prime Minister,” he said. Trudeau said that the Parliament house will now be prorogued till March 24.

Trudeau said that he will not put forth his candidature as a potential Prime Minister.

“I will not be putting my candidature. Liberal party is an important institution in our country. We were elected for 3rd time in 2021 to advance Canada’s stand in world. I



never bow down when faced with a fight but I do this job because of the interest of Canadians and the interest of democracy that I hold dear. And it is clear I can’t be that candidate due to internal battles,” he said. Trudeau, while speaking about Former Canadian Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said that he expected her to continue as the Deputy Prime Minister.

“Chrystia (Freeland) has been a political partner for many years. I had hope she would continue as deputy pm but she chose otherwise,” he said. — ANI

ARCTIC-LIKE TEMPERATURES

Major winter storm threatens much of the US with intense cold, snow and ice

KANSAS: Large swaths of the United States, from Kansas to New Jersey, were hit by a massive winter storm that brought snow, ice, wind and Arctic-like temperatures.

More than a dozen states, covering some 60 million people, were under severe storm warnings, advisories or watches on Sunday night into Monday.

Governors in several states, including Kansas, Kentucky, Arkansas, West Virginia and Virginia, declared states of emergency.

“Areas between central Kansas and Indiana, especially along and north of Interstate 70, are likely to experience heavy snowfall, with a high chance (60-90%) of at least 8 inches [20 centimetres] of snow,” representing the “heaviest snowfall in a decade,” the National Weather Service (NWS) posted on X.

Blizzard conditions brought gusts of wind of up to 45 mph (72.42 kph) in Kansas and Mis-



souri while the NWS issued New Jersey with storm warnings for Monday and Tuesday.

Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, meanwhile, were on “tornado watch,” the NWS said, having earlier issued the same warning for Mississippi.

Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear urged residents to “please stay home” after reporting multiple vehicle crashes.

In Virginia, police reported at

least 135 crashes as the storm entered the state Sunday. A handful of injuries were reported, but no fatalities.

Police in Missouri said they had responded to almost 600 stranded drivers and 285 crashes.

Air traffic monitoring site FlightAware showed almost 2,200 flight cancellations and over 25,000 delays.

While the storm was on course to head offshore, icy temperatures

are expected to linger until Tuesday. Many schools have decided to remain closed on Monday, including public schools in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Washington and Philadelphia.

Washington DC, however, is located in the storm’s path and was expecting severe weather on Monday, just as the new Congress is set to meet to officially confirm Donald Trump’s electoral victory. — DW

EXTREME WEATHER

Disaster-wary Philippines leads push for climate justice

MANILA: As the impacts of climate change intensify, vulnerable nations such as the Philippines are facing increasing devastation. The archipelago has become the country most vulnerable to extreme weather brought on by climate change.

Lorena Ivy Bello Oganian lives in Samar, a province in the central Visayas region, which borders the Pacific Ocean.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest tropical cyclones on record, left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened villages and devastated Samar.

Living on the front lines

“As a child, I loved playing in the rain. Now, it terrifies me,” Oganian told DW, recounting how two days of relentless rains left her on edge. She was pregnant with her third child at the time, and ended up giving birth in a tent.

Recovery from the typhoon was painfully slow, with the province enduring months without electricity.

Tony Abletes lived in the Philippine capital, Manila, during Haiyan and still remembers fearing for his family in Samar.

“I was on the phone with my mother when the line went dead,” he said. “For five days, I didn’t know if she was alive.”

Both Oganian and Abletes live on the front lines of the climate crisis, grappling with the trauma of surviving extreme weather. Toward the end of 2024, the Philippines



was pounded by six major storms in less than a month.

In November, Typhoon Usagi swamped rural villages in floods, knocked out power and displaced thousands. Just days earlier, Typhoon Toraji caused floods and forced more than 82,000 people to flee from their homes in northern provinces.

For Oganian, Abletes and others living in coastal communities such as Samar, the climate crisis has become almost a daily battle for survival.

Compensating climate losses

Nations vulnerable to natural dis-

asters linked to global warming, including the Philippines, had long requested financial assistance to help deal with the loss and damage caused by devastating weather events.

COP27, the 2022 UN climate conference in Egypt, produced what was deemed a “historic agreement” to establish a fund for loss and damage. The Loss and Damage (L&D) Fund was officially launched a year later at COP28 in Dubai.

The fund compensates developing nations that contribute little to global warming but face its worst impacts, covering losses such as destroyed livelihoods, infrastruc-

ture and biodiversity.

By requiring wealthy high-polluting nations to contribute, the fund attempts to address global warming inequities. In 2024, the Philippines was selected to host the L&D Fund Board to strategize fund disbursement and address urgent climate needs.

John Leo Algo, national coordinator of Aksyon Klima, a civil society network for climate action in the Philippines, told DW that the L&D Fund must function as a grant, not a financing agreement.

“Funds disbursed from the L&D Fund should not further burden countries that are already vulnerable to the climate crisis,” he said,



calling such a scenario “unacceptable and unjust.”

Algo said the fund should prioritize climate-affected communities, ensuring accessibility and availability during peak emergencies.

While hosting the L&D Fund Board doesn’t give the Philippines priority access, it highlights the country’s front-line experience with the climate crisis.

“Our role is to inform the board about emerging loss and damage trends worldwide, as we’ve experienced some of the highest risks and vulnerabilities in recent years,” Mark Dennis Joven, board member of the Fund Responding to Loss and Damage, told DW.

Joven, however, acknowledged the critical funding gap, with only \$750 million (€725 million) in pledges secured globally — far short of the billions needed.

“We need to act fast so we don’t

lose momentum,” he said. “Operationalising the fund and deploying funds quickly will encourage stronger commitments from donor countries.”

Joven emphasized the importance of mainstreaming L&D as the third pillar of climate financing, alongside mitigation and adaptation. “Unlike project-linked finance, L&D allows for rapid deployment and direct budget support, critical to achieving climate justice,” he said.

Domestic measures

As international talks on the L&D Fund continue, advocates in the Philippines continue to push for the Climate Accountability (CLIMA) Bill, which aims to hold carbon polluters accountable by creating a fund for climate loss and damage victims and linking reparations to corporate responsibility.

The CLIMA Bill is similar to recent legislative actions in the United States.

Under a bill signed into law last week, the US state of New York will fine fossil fuel companies \$75 billion over 25 years to cover climate damage costs, with funds directed at mitigating impacts such as by adapting infrastructure.

New York follows Vermont, which passed a similar law over the summer, both modeled on superfund laws that require polluters to pay for toxic waste cleanup.

— DW

SPORTS

SA seal ten-wicket win despite Pakistan’s stubborn resistance

The visitors overcame a deficit of 421 but South Africa’s target of 58 was little more than a formality to secure the Test series 2-0

CAPE TOWN: South Africa marked their qualification for the World Test Championship (WTC) final in style, sealing a dominant ten-wicket win over Pakistan in the second Test to clinch the series 2-0 in Cape Town on Monday.

This victory was their seventh consecutive Test win, and although it came after two and a half days of intense toil with the ball, the target of 58 was little more than a formality.

In a captivating contest that saw Pakistan fight back valiantly after trailing by 421 runs, South Africa were made to wait for their victory. With the target set at just 58 runs following Pakistan’s formidable second innings total of 478, the home side needed just 7.1 overs to wrap up the game and complete the series win.

When South Africa enforced the follow-on on Sunday afternoon, leading by 421, few would have expected to see another 122.1 overs of action.

Pakistan’s captain Shan Masood, unbeaten on 102 overnight, continued to show great resolve alongside Babar Azam, as they sought to rebuild from a colossal opening partnership of 205 runs. Masood, in particular, led the charge with a superb century, while Babar chipped in with a well-crafted 81.

Despite the solid start, South Africa’s bowlers remained patient. The breakthrough finally came when Keshav Maharaj, after a long spell, managed to get the first wicket of the day, dismissing Mohammad Rizwan for a well-made 39. Alongside Maharaj, Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada played crucial roles in chipping away at the Pakistan tail.



In the morning session, Jansen dismissed nightwatchman Khuram Shahzad early, and Rabada followed up with a perfect delivery to bowl Kamran Ghulam out.

Maharaj, however, was the standout bowler of the day. His variations in pace and flight, coupled with a turning ball, posed a serious challenge for the batters. Ghulam was constantly on edge, offering a

few chances before he finally succumbed to a fine delivery from Rabada that sent his middle stump crashing. The wicket marked Rabada’s 50th Test scalp at Newlands, and the roar from the crowd indicated just how much it meant to the South African paceman.

Pakistan’s fightback continued as Masood and Saud Shakeel built a partnership, frustrating South

Africa’s bowlers for a time. Just before lunch, South Africa could have had another breakthrough when Kwena Maphaka struck Shakeel on the pads with a delivery that straightened after pitching. However, the review was not taken, and Hawk-Eye later showed that the ball was heading towards the stumps.

Post-lunch, Masood’s resist-

ance was finally broken. Maphaka, continuing his fine spell, got one to seam away and skidded low, trapping Masood in front of the stumps. After a contentious delay as Masood contested the decision, the review showed the ball was hitting the stumps, sending Masood back to the dressing room for a 145-run knock that had shown grit and determination.

In the same over, Shakeel was dismissed for a 20-run innings, caught behind off Rabada’s delivery. Pakistan’s middle order was now under pressure, and Agha and Rizwan had to step up once again.

Agha, joined by Rizwan, worked hard to erase the deficit. Their partnership had an unhurried feel, accumulating runs at a slow pace, with only three fours in the first 55 runs of the stand. However, once the second new ball was taken, Agha was quick to capitalise on a loose delivery from Dwaine Pretorius, smashing two boundaries off consecutive balls.

The partnership was eventually broken when Rizwan chipped a delivery from Maharaj straight to short cover, where Temba Bavuma had placed a fielder. South African nerves were beginning to settle as the game neared its end.

Agha, though relieved by DRS

earlier, could not hold on for much longer. Maharaj, who had been the most consistent bowler, finally struck again, getting Agha caught behind in the slips for 48, and Pakistan’s resistance was crumbling.

Mir Hamza tried to provide some late entertainment with a six over mid-off, but he fell quickly to Rabada. Aamer Jamal, who had looked to attack, was next, reverse-sweeping Maharaj to slip, where Bavuma made no mistake.

With that, South Africa were left with a mere 58 to chase, and the Pakistan innings came to a close.

The chase was, of course, a mere formality for the South Africans. Aiden Markram and David Bedingham opened the batting with intent, and it took South Africa just 7.1 overs to seal the win. Bedingham, in particular, played an eye-catching knock, finishing unbeaten on 47 off just 30 balls. His aggressive strokes helped ensure the victory was completed in quick time, with South Africa needing just 43 balls to claim the victory.

Brief scores: South Africa 615 (Rickelton, Bavuma 106, Verreynne 100; Abbas 3-94) and 61 for no loss (Bedingham 47*) beat Pakistan 194 (Babar 58; Rabada 3-55) and 478 (Masood 145, Babar 81; Rabada 3-115). - Agencies

TEST SERIES VS ZIMBABWE



Rashid’s career-best haul spins Afghanistan to series victory

BULAWAYO: It had to be Rashid Khan. Afghanistan’s talismanic spinner, who had been the driving force behind their previous three Test victories in Dehradun, Chattogram, and Abu Dhabi, once again delivered a masterclass to seal their win against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo on Monday.

Rashid’s match-winning haul of 11 for 160 included career-best figures of 7 for 66 in the second innings, ending Zimbabwe’s resistance just 15 deliveries into the final morning.

The equation was straightforward: Zimbabwe needed 73 more runs with two wickets in hand, pinning their hopes on captain Craig Ervine. Afghanistan, on the other hand, needed just two good balls.

Even with such a short day in

prospect, there was no shortage of drama. Rashid started proceedings, targeting Zimbabwe’s No.10 Richard Ngarava.

Four balls in, the tension erupted. Ngarava mistimed an attempted slice, sending the ball high behind silly point. Hashmatullah Shahidi and Fareed Ahmad both converged, but with neither committing decisively, Shahidi spilled the chance. Rashid’s frustration was evident as he shot a glare at his captain, whose outstretched hands failed to make the ball stick.

Ngarava, however, didn’t last long. After surviving the remainder of Rashid’s over, he found himself stranded on the next delivery. Ervine, who had turned down singles to keep the strike, finally attempted a third run after driving Yamin Ahmadzai to deep extra

cover. Shahidullah’s sharp forward chase and precise throw to Afsar Zazai left Ngarava well short, as Zimbabwe’s hopes began to unravel.

With the final wicket pair at the crease, Ervine, the last recognised batter, fought valiantly but found no support.

Rashid, relentless as ever, pitched one full and just outside off, trapping Ervine in front as he missed an attempted sweep. Although umpire Ahsan Raza delayed his decision momentarily, the finger eventually went up, confirming Rashid’s match-clinching 11th wicket. Without DRS to challenge the call, Afghanistan erupted in celebration.

This victory was built on a remarkable turnaround after Afghanistan found themselves 86

runs behind in the first innings. Centuries from Rahmat Shah and debutant Ismat Alam in the second innings, along with vital contributions of 25 and 23 from Rashid with the bat, gave the visitors a fighting chance.

Afghanistan’s 1-0 series victory capped off a successful tour, as they secured wins across all three formats, leaving Zimbabwe with much to ponder. Rashid Khan, once again, stood at the heart of Afghanistan’s triumph, further cementing his status as one of Test cricket’s finest match-winners.

Brief scores: Afghanistan 157 (Rashid 25, Raza 3-30, Nyamhuri 3-42) and 363 (Rahmat 139, Alam 101, Muzarabani 6-95) beat Zimbabwe 243 (Ervine 75, Raza 61, Rashid 4-94) and 205 (Ervine 53, Rashid 7-66, Zia 2-44). - Agencies

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

Australia’s series vs India lived up to hype: Cummins



SYDNEY: Australia’s thrilling 3-1 series victory over India lived up to its billing, said captain Pat Cummins after the hosts reclaimed the prestigious Border-Gavaskar Trophy with a commanding six-wicket win in the fifth Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Cummins, who has led his team through an era of sustained success, reflected on the journey, emphasising the significance of this hard-fought series. “It has been an amazing series,” said the 31-year-old skipper. “It has been in the calendar for a while and is one you’ve had your eye on for a year or two. It has lived up to all the hype.”

“We talked about needing a squad, as especially in these five-match series, you rarely play the same XI,” Cummins explained. “Three debutants came in and contributed at different times - it feels like we are building something nice.”

“There were some key mo-

ments from some of our mainstays who really stood up,” Cummins added. “You need that to beat a side like India and in those key moments those guys put their hands up.”

The series victory also booked Australia a spot in the World Test Championship (WTC) final against South Africa at Lord’s in June.

Reflecting on this achievement, Cummins said: “The extra layer is now securing a spot in the WTC final, which was always a huge goal for us in this cycle, and we’ve done it. So we are really satisfied.”

Captaincy challenges

Cummins is expected to miss the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka due to the impending birth of his second child, with Steve Smith likely to step in as captain. Despite stepping back temporarily, Cummins reaffirmed his commitment to Australian cricket and his love for the role. - Agencies

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by February 2025 reaching \$76.60, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 7 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$76.53. -ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,580.00 points, up by 0.23% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.09% at 425.30 points. Muscat Desalination, up 6.15%, was the top gainer while National Gas, down 3.75%, was the top loser.

NCSI DATA

Oman's oil exports surpass 282mn barrels by November end

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's oil exports recorded a decrease of 0.4 per cent at the end of November 2024 to reach 282,192,100 barrels compared to the exports reported during corresponding period in 2023 when it was 283,413,300 barrels, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The NCSI statistics showed that the production of oil in the Sultanate of Oman fell by 5.1 per cent at the end of November 2024 to reach 332,693,800 barrels compared to 350,538,100 barrels during the corresponding period in 2023.

Crude oil production decreased by 6.5 per cent while the production of condensates remained sta-

ble at the end of November 2024 compared to the corresponding period in 2023.

Average oil price increased by 0.1 per cent to reach \$81.8 per barrel at the end of November 2024, compared to \$81.6 per barrel at the end of November 2023.

Average daily production decreased by 5.4% at the end of November 2024. As far as exports are concerned, Oman's oil exports to China recorded an increase by 1.5 per cent to reach 264,456,600 barrels at the end of November 2024 compared to 260,636,600 barrels in the same period of 2023.

Oil exports to India increased by 10.6 per cent and that of South Korea increased as well by 51.7 per cent. -ONA



Treasury bills worth OMR45mn issued



Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licenced commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR45 million by a way of allotting treasury bills on Monday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR20.350 mil-

lion, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR 99.695 for every OMR 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR 99.695 per OMR 100. The average discount rate and the

average yield reached 3.97541% and 3.98757%, respectively.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR 24.650 million, for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR 98.932 for every OMR 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR 98.930 per OMR 100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.28224 per cent and 4.32845%, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licenced commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The

Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

Repo operations

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 5.50 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. -ONA

GOVERNMENT TENDERS



ASMED holds first 2025 dialogue session to boost SME growth

MUSCAT: The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) yesterday organised its first dialogue session for the year 2025 in Muscat. The session dealt with ways of enhancing the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through "Isnad System" for government tenders, which is affiliated to the Secretariat General of the Tender Board.

The session focused on introducing "Isnad Platform", along with related policies, regulations and incentives. It also considered means of promoting In-Country Value (ICV) and discussed proposals on launching a guide for SMEs to streamline their registration to Isnad Platform.

Halima Rashid Al Zar'ai, Chairperson of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), said, "The session addressed the challenges facing entrepreneurs in

terms of measures to award contracts, tenders, procurements and Local Content regulations."

She pointed out that the session discussed scopes for increasing "direct awarding" to establishments that are holders of obtained a Riyadh Business Cards.

Eng. Badr Salim Al Ma'amari, Secretary General of the Tender Board, explained that participants in the dialogue session elaborated on the topics of a work plan specialized on In-Country Value (ICV), scheduled to be organized during the current year.

"Isnad Platform", an electronic platform for managing all government tenders and procurements, seeks to achieve high efficiency in terms of tender issuing, assessment and awarding in accordance with systematic and transparent practical principles that guarantee the right of tenderers to compete for these tenders. -ONA

SHARIA SUPERVISORY BOARD

Meethaq SSB meet discusses 2024 financial reports and endorses policies



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) Meeting of Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat reviewed Meethaq's performance, internal technical audit reports, financial statements for the third and fourth quarters of 2024, and the annual Sharia audit report of the transactions and charitable fund, and the annual Sharia Control Department works. It also looked into investment in a number of sukuk.

The topics were discussed during the sixth Board meeting of 2024 convened at the bank's head office, and chaired by Sheikh Dr Abdullah bin Mubarak Al Abri, the Board Chairman, alongside members of the Board and the Sharia Supervisory and Audit management members.

The Board endorsed several items including the investment policy, the code of conduct policy, the terms and conditions document, as well as the Sharia certificates.

The SSB regular meetings play a pivotal role in deliberating on topics pertaining to Islamic transactions, business contracts and practices, thereby facilitating the formulation of requisite recommendation and resolutions

The Sharia Supervisory Board is composed of scholars renowned for their expertise in Islamic jurisprudence, particularly in Islamic transaction processing and contemporary economy. Their primary scope of duties encompasses the review and approval of products, services, activities, investments, operations, and transactions before implementing them for business practices. The SSB oversees these aspects through the internal Sharia audit department to ensure their conformity with the legal aspects outlined in the decisions and fatwas issued by Board.

Since its inception in 2012, Meethaq Islamic Banking has spearheaded advancement in the Islamic Banking landscape revolutionizing the quality of the Sharia-

compliant banking services, products, and facilities. Catering to the diverse needs and preferences of Meethaq's valued customers, including individuals, institutions, and SMEs, Meethaq offers a comprehensive suite of value-added products and services.

These services and products undergo rigorous Shariah-compliance certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board, adhering to guidelines established by the Central Bank of Oman.

Over its 14-year journey, Meethaq has solidified its position as a leader in the Islamic banking sector within the Sultanate of Oman. Meethaq has achieved notable milestones, including the expansion of its branch network to 31 branches and centers of Hafawa for Priority Banking throughout various governorates. This extensive network is further enhanced by over 55 ATMs and CDMs, in addition to access to more than 890 devices of Bank Muscat, strategically located across Oman.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Muscat Desalination, up 6.15%, was the top gainer while National Gas, down 3.75%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,580.00 points, up by 0.23% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.09% at 425.30 points. Muscat Desalination, up 6.15%, was the top gainer while National Gas, down 3.75%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1700 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 6.39 million, with more than 40.6 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded securities, 16 advanced, 12 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 108K while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 91K, followed by foreign investors for RO 17K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,809.78 points, up 0.14%. Prices of Muscat Finance, Al Madina

Takaful, Global Financial Investments, Bank Muscat, Sohar International Bank were up by 2.22%, 1.22%, 1.15%, 0.79%, 0.73% respectively. Prices of Bank Nizwa, Oman Arab Bank were down by 1.01%, 0.65% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,257.61 points, down 0.06%. Prices of Oman Cement, Voltamp Energy were up by 1.30%, 0.75% respectively. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Galfar Engineering, Gulf International Chemicals were down by 2.94%, 2.67%, 1.39% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.44% before closing at 1,742.18 points. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Phoenix Power, Majan College, Barka Desalination, Al Batinah Power were up by 6.15%, 5.09%, 2.80%, 1.63%, 1.45% respectively. Prices of Dhofar Generating, National Gas, Barka Water & Power Company, Renaissance Services, Oman Telecom were down by 4.41%, 3.75%, 0.93%, 0.27%, 0.22% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,592.53	4,566.31	4,580.00	4,569.70	10.30	0.23
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,819.23	7,792.79	7,809.78	7,798.51	11.27	0.14
Industry Index	5,266.15	5,252.77	5,257.61	5,260.54	-2.93	-0.06
Services Index	1,744.12	1,733.88	1,742.18	1,734.55	7.63	0.44
MSX Shariah Index	426.01	424.79	425.30	425.69	-0.39	-0.09
MSX TR INDEX	6,431.84	6,395.11	6,414.28	6,399.86	14.42	0.23
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,883.45	8,853.41	8,872.71	8,859.91	12.80	0.14
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,075.89	6,060.45	6,066.04	6,069.42	-3.38	-0.06
SERVICES TR IDX	2,087.08	2,074.82	2,084.76	2,075.63	9.13	0.44
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,067.21	99.67	9.34

Trading Summary

Volume	.....	Turnover	.....	Trades	.....	Market Cap	.....	Up	.....	Down	.....	Equal	.....	Sec. Traded
40,609,610	.....	6,391,566	.....	1,700	.....	27,945,933,665	.....	16	.....	12	.....	20	.....	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 6

IDN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. RD	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFF	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	623,507	43,297	34	0.069	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.069	0.001	1.449	0.070	0.065	0.071	0.100	47,242,120
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	21,200	8,215	8	0.386	0.390	0.386	0.389	0.384	0.005	1.302	0.389	0.384	0.389	0.100	128,708,484
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	70,455	5,848	6	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.082	0.001	1.220	0.083	0.080	0.083	0.100	14,525,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	40,726	3,523	4	0.087	0.088	0.086	0.088	0.087	0.001	1.149	0.088	0.086	0.088	0.100	17,600,000
OM0000004735	SEMOB CORP SALALAH	4,192	411	2	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.095	0.106	0.100	93,548,051
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	6,023,746	1,536,992	48	0.254	0.260	0.254	0.256	0.254	0.002	0.787	0.256	0.256	0.255	0.100	1,921,637,648
OM0000000972	OQ GAS NETWORKS	7,544,515	1,014,495	170	0.133	0.136	0.133	0.134	0.133	0.001	0.752	0.134	0.134	0.135	0.100	580,303,605
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	2,840,906	393,374	35	0.137	0.139	0.137	0.139	0.138	0.001	0.725	0.139	0.138	0.139	0.100	819,797,232
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	5,000	590	1	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.118	0.125	0.100	17,700,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	74,506	24,238	15	0.325	0.327	0.325	0.325	0.325	0.000	0.000	0.325	0.325	0.326	0.100	217,218,763
OM0000002168	ALANWAR CERAMIC	405	45	1	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.106	0.110	0.100	24,200,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	34,899	2,059	5	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.100	21,011,511
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	65	15	1	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.000	0.000	0.235	0.230	0.235	0.100	152,971,894
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	447,196	31,286	24	0.068	0.071	0.068	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070	0.072	0.100	50,008,444
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,161,394	313,337	79	0.270	0.270	0.268	0.270	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.267	0.270	0.100	207,954,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	73,153	67,686	14	0.927	0.930	0.925	0.925	0.927	-0.002	-0.216	0.930	0.930	0.930	0.100	693,750,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	2,000	748	1	0.374	0.374	0.374	0.374	0.375	-0.001	-0.267	0.374	0.370	0.374	0.100	88,417,340
Total	17	18,967,865	3,446,160	448												
Parallel Market																
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	390	26	2	0.066	0.069	0.066	0.069	0.065	0.004	6.154	0.069	0.066	0.069	0.100	10,732,978
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	392,710	23,839	26	0.060	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.059	0.003	5.085	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.100	90,681,291
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	26,000	2,860	2	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.107	0.003	2.804	0.110	0.110	0.112	0.100	9,900,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	53,309	3,424	3	0.045	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.045	0.001	2.222	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	14,128,791
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	33,097	4,125	12	0.124	0.125	0.124	0.125	0.123	0.002	1.628	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.100	9,440,250
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SF2)	18,345,046	2,099,461	899	0.113	0.115	0.113	0.114	0.113	0.001	0.885	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.000	394,381,957
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	75,814	30,702	3	0.402	0.405	0.402	0.405	0.402	0.003	0.746	0.405	0.406	0.410	0.100	32,968,114
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	4,002	680	1	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.000	0.000	0.170	0.000	0.170	0.100	5,514,096
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	47,395	3,223	5	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.100	14,428,240
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	3,000	594	2	0.198	0.200	0.198	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.198	0.200	0.100	5,568,598
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	95,572	21,504	3	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.000	0.000	0.225	0.207	0.225	0.100	10,297,205
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	916	95	1	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.104	0.100	0.100	28,193,412
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	1,152	397	2	0.341	0.347	0.341	0.347	0.347	0.000	0.000	0.347	0.340	0.350	0.100	69,273,553
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	12,014	961	5	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	40,690,504
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	35,000	5,390	3	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.155	-0.001	-0.645	0.154	0.142	0.154	0.100	257,089,140
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	701	224	1	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.322	-0.003	-0.932	0.319	0.290	0.318	0.100	51,040,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	157,821	15,469	8	0.098	0.099	0.098	0.098	0.099	-0.001	-1.010	0.098	0.098	0.099	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	24,200	1,718	4	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.072	0.001	1.389	0.071	0.072	0.075	0.100	1,141,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	6,250	745	2	0.119	0.120	0.119	0.119	0.121	-0.002	-1.653	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.100	70,380,989
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	2,030,546	696,662	212	0.342	0.345	0.341	0.341	0.347	-0.006	-1.729	0.341	0.341	0.341	0.010	728,000,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	77,928	5,662	19	0.074	0.074	0.072	0.073	0.075	-0.002	-2.667	0.073	0.073	0.076	0.100	14,818,011
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	90,808	7,094	19	0.080	0.080	0.077	0.077	0.080	-0.003	-3.750	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.100	6,545,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	6,000	390	1	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.068	-0.003	-4.412	0.065	0.062	0.068	0.100	14,445,600
Total	39	21,519,601	2,924,247	1,235												
GCC STATISTICAL CENTRE																

GCC inflation rate increases by 1.5%

MUSCAT: The general inflation rate in the GCC countries increased by 1.5 percent by the end of September 2024 compared to the same month of the previous year (2023), according to consumer price data issued by the GCC Statistical Center.

Among GCC countries, Kuwait

recorded the highest inflation rate in September 2024 compared to the same month of the previous year, at 2.8 percent, followed by Saudi Arabia at 1.7 percent, Qatar at 0.8 percent, and both Bahrain and Oman at 0.4 percent each.

The annual increase in the GCC general inflation rate is primar-

ily attributed to the rise in housing prices, which recorded a significant increase of 5.7 percent. Additionally, the culture and entertainment category saw a rise of 2.6 percent, followed by goods and services at 1.8 percent, restaurants and hotels at 1.5 percent, and food and beverages, as well as educa-

tion, at 1.0 percent each.

In contrast, prices decreased in the transportation category by 3.0 percent, furniture and household equipment by 2.3 percent, tobacco by 1.2 percent, communications by 0.9 percent, and clothing and footwear by 0.8 percent, while health prices remained unchanged. - ONA

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- Weddings & Celebrations
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- and more

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- Custom Website Design
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GOLDEN GLOBES 2025: FULL LIST OF WINNERS

The 2025 Golden Globe Awards, held on Sunday night, celebrated the best in film and television, with several standout performances and films taking home the coveted honours. Among the big winners of the evening were ‘Emilia Perez’, ‘The Brutalist’, ‘Shogun’, ‘Hack’, and ‘Baby Reindeer’, along with celebrated actors such as Zoe Saldana, Fernanda Torres, Adrien Brody, Kieran Culkin, Jean Smart, and Jeremy Allen White, all of whom were recognised for their exceptional performances.



In the film categories, ‘Emilia Perez’ was one of the night’s most lauded films, winning both Best Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy and Best Non-English Language Film. Zoe Saldana earned Best Supporting Actress for her role in the film, while the track ‘El Mal’ secured the Best Original Song award for ‘Emilia Perez’. ‘The Brutalist’ emerged as the Best Motion Picture - Drama, with Brady Corbet winning Best Director and Adrien Brody being named Best Actor in a Drama. Meanwhile, Flow took home Best Animated Film, and Wicked was honoured with the award for Cinematic and Box Office Achievement. In television, ‘Shogun’ claimed the prize for Best Drama Series, with performances by Anna Sawai, Hiroyuki Sanada, and Tadanobu Asano earning them individual accolades. ‘Hack’ won Best TV Series - Musical or Comedy, with Jean Smart also receiving the award for Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Series - Musical or Comedy.

The limited series category saw ‘Baby Reindeer’ win Best Limited Series, Anthology Series, or Motion Picture Made for Television, with Jessica Gunning winning for her performance. Additionally, Ali Wong was honoured for Best Stand-Up Performance on Television for her special ‘Ali Wong: Single Lady’. Several other remarkable performances were celebrated throughout the evening. Fernanda Torres won Best Female Actor in a Motion Picture - Drama for her role in ‘I’m Still Here’, while Adrien Brody was named Best Male Actor in a Motion Picture - Drama for his performance in ‘The Brutalist’. Sebastian Stan earned Best Male Actor in a Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy for ‘A Different Man’, and Demi Moore was recognized for Best Female Actor in a Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy for her role in ‘The Substance’. On the television side, ‘Shogun’ stars Anna Sawai and Hiroyuki Sanada were honoured as Best Actress and Best Actor in a TV Drama, respectively. ‘Hacks’ Jean Smart and ‘The

Bear’s Jeremy Allen White received awards in their respective categories for Best Female Actor and Best Male Actor in a TV Series - Musical or Comedy. In limited series categories, Jodie Foster and Colin Farrell won for their roles in ‘True Detective: Night Country’ and ‘The Penguin’. The evening also featured the presentation of two prestigious honorary awards: Viola Davis received the Cecil B. DeMille Award, and Ted Danson accepted the Carol Burnett Award at the Golden Gala, a special ceremony held on Friday. This marked the second Golden Globes since the Hollywood Foreign Press Association was replaced by a more diverse group of voters from around the world, following the acquisition of HFPA assets by Dick Clark Productions and Eldridge, as per The Hollywood Reporter. The awards ceremony, hosted by Nikki Glaser, recognised talent across 27 categories in film and television. The 82nd annual Golden Globes aired live from the Beverly Hilton on CBS, Paramount+ and Lionsgate Play for audiences. -ANI



The full list of 2025 Golden Globes nominees and winners follows:

- BEST MOTION PICTURE - MUSICAL OR COMEDY**
Emilia Perez (Netflix) (WINNER)
Anora (Neon)
Challengers (Amazon MGM Studios)
A Real Pain (Searchlight Pictures)
The Substance (Mubi)
Wicked (Universal Pictures)
- BEST MOTION PICTURE - DRAMA**
The Brutalist (A24) (WINNER)
A Complete Unknown (Searchlight Pictures)
Conclave (Focus Features)
Dune: Part Two (Warner Bros. Pictures)
Nickel Boys (Orion Pictures/Amazon Mgm Studios)
September 5 (Paramount Pictures)
- BEST MOTION PICTURE - ANIMATED**
Flow (Sideshow/Janus Films) (WINNER)
Inside Out 2 (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
Memoir of a Snail (IFC Films)
Moana 2 (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl (Netflix)
The Wild Robot (Universal Pictures)
- CINEMATIC AND BOX OFFICE ACHIEVEMENT**
Wicked (Universal Pictures) (WINNER)
Alien: Romulus (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
Beetlejuice Beetlejuice (Warner Bros. Pictures)
Deadpool & Wolverine (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
Gladiator II (Paramount Pictures)
Inside Out 2 (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
Twisters (Universal Pictures)
The Wild Robot (Universal Pictures)
- BEST MOTION PICTURE - NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE**
Emilia Perez (Netflix) - France (WINNER)
All We Imagine as Light (Sideshow / Janus Films) - France / India / Luxembourg / Netherlands
The Girl With the Needle (Mubi) - Poland / Sweden / Denmark
I’m Still Here (Sony Pictures Classics) - Brazil
The Seed of the Sacred Fig (Neon) - Germany / France / Iran
Vermiglio (Sideshow / Janus Films) - Italy

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE ACTOR IN A MOTION PICTURE - DRAMA
Fernanda Torres (I’m Still Here) (WINNER)
Pamela Anderson (The Last Showgirl)
Angelina Jolie (Maria)
Nicole Kidman (Babygirl)
Tilda Swinton (The Room Next Door)
Kate Winslet (Lee)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A MALE ACTOR IN A MOTION PICTURE - DRAMA
Adrien Brody (The Brutalist) (WINNER)
Timothee Chalamet (A Complete Unknown)
Daniel Craig (Queer)
Colman Domingo (Sing Sing)
Ralph Fiennes (Conclave)
Sebastian Stan (The Apprentice)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE ACTOR IN A MOTION PICTURE - MUSICAL OR COMEDY
Demi Moore (The Substance) (WINNER)
Amy Adams (Nightbitch)
Cynthia Erivo (Wicked)
Karla Sofia Gascon (Emilia Perez)
Mikey Madison (Anora)
Zendaya (Challengers)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A MALE ACTOR IN A MOTION PICTURE - MUSICAL OR COMEDY
Sebastian Stan (A Different Man) (WINNER)
Jesse Eisenberg (A Real Pain)
Hugh Grant (Heretic)
Gabriel LaBelle (Saturday Night)
Jesse Plemons (Kinds of Kindness)
Glen Powell (Hit Man)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE IN ANY MOTION PICTURE
Zoe Saldana (Emilia Perez) (WINNER)
Selena Gomez (Emilia Perez)
Ariana Grande (Wicked)
Felicity Jones (The Brutalist)
Margaret Qualley (The Substance)
Isabella Rossellini (Conclave)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A MALE ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE IN ANY MOTION PICTURE
Kieran Culkin (A Real Pain) (WINNER)
Yura Borisov (Anora)
Edward Norton (A Complete Unknown)
Guy Pearce (The Brutalist)
Jeremy Strong (The Apprentice)
Denzel Washington (Gladiator II)

BEST DIRECTOR - MOTION PICTURE
Brady Corbet (The Brutalist) (WINNER)
Jacques Audiard (Emilia Perez)
Sean Baker (Anora)
Edward Berger (Conclave)
Coralie Fargeat (The Substance)
Payal Kapadia (All We Imagine as Light)

BEST SCREENPLAY - MOTION PICTURE
Peter Straughan (Conclave) (WINNER)
Jacques Audiard (Emilia Perez)
Sean Baker (Anora)
Brady Corbet, Mona Fastvold (The Brutalist)
Jesse Eisenberg (A Real Pain)
Coralie Fargeat (The Substance)

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE - MOTION PICTURE
Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross (Challengers) (WINNER)
Volker Bertelmann (Conclave)
Daniel Blumberg (The Brutalist)
Kris Bowers (The Wild Robot)
Clement Ducol, Camille (Emilia Perez)
Hans Zimmer (Dune: Part Two)

BEST ORIGINAL SONG - MOTION PICTURE
“El Mal” - Emilia Perez; Music and Lyrics By: Clement Ducol, Camille, Jacques Audiard (WINNER)
“Beautiful That Way” - The Last Showgirl; Music and Lyrics By: Andrew Wyatt, Miley Cyrus, Lykke Zachrisson
“Compress / Repress” - Challengers; Music and Lyrics By: Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross, Luca Guadagnino
“Forbidden Road” - Better Man; Music and Lyrics By: Robbie Williams, Freddy Wexler, Sacha Skarbek
“Kiss the Sky” - The Wild Robot; Music and Lyrics By: Delacey, Jordan K. Johnson, Stefan Johnson, Maren Morris, Michael Pollack, Ali Tamposi
“Mi Camino” - Emilia Perez; Music and Lyrics By: Clement Ducol, Camille

BEST TELEVISION SERIES - DRAMA
Shogun (FX/Hulu) (WINNER)
The Day of the Jackal (Peacock)
The Diplomat (Netflix)
Mr and Mrs Smith (Prime Video)
Slow Horses (Apple TV+)
Squid Game (Netflix)

BEST TELEVISION SERIES - MUSICAL OR COMEDY
Hacks (HBO/Max) (WINNER)
Abbott Elementary (ABC)
The Bear (FX/Hulu)
The Gentlemen (Netflix)
Nobody Wants This (Netflix)
Only Murders in the Building (Hulu)

BEST TELEVISION LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR MOTION PICTURE MADE FOR TELEVISION
Baby Reindeer (Netflix) (WINNER)
Disclaimer (Apple TV+)
Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story (Netflix)
The Penguin (HBO/Max)
Ripley (Netflix)
True Detective: Night Country (HBO/Max)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE ACTOR IN A TELEVISION SERIES - DRAMA
Anna Sawai (Shogun) (WINNER)
Kathy Bates (Matlock)
Emma D’Arcy (House of the Dragon)
Maya Erskine (Mr. & Mrs. Smith)
Keira Knightley (Black Doves)
Keri Russell (The Diplomat)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A MALE ACTOR IN A TELEVISION SERIES - DRAMA
Hiroyuki Sanada (Shogun) (WINNER)
Donald Glover (Mr and Mrs Smith)
Jake Gyllenhaal (Presumed Innocent)
Gary Oldman (Slow Horses)
Eddie Redmayne (The Day of the Jackal)
Billy Bob Thornton (Landman)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE ACTOR IN A TELEVISION SERIES - MUSICAL OR COMEDY
Jean Smart (Hacks) (WINNER)
Kristen Bell (Nobody Wants This)
Quinta Brunson (Abbott Elementary)
Ayo Edebiri (The Bear)
Selena Gomez (Only Murders in the Building)
Kathryn Hahn (Agatha All Along)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A MALE ACTOR IN A TELEVISION SERIES - MUSICAL OR COMEDY
Jeremy Allen White (The Bear) (WINNER)
Adam Brody (Nobody Wants This)
Ted Danson (A Man on the Inside)
Steve Martin (Only Murders in the Building)
Jason Segel (Shrinking)
Martin Short (Only Murders in the Building)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE ACTOR IN A LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR A MOTION PICTURE MADE FOR TELEVISION

Jodie Foster (True Detective: Night Country) (WINNER)
Cate Blanchett (Disclaimer)
Cristin Milioti (The Penguin)
Sofia Vergara (Griselda)
Naomi Watts (Feud: Capote Vs. The Swans)
Kate Winslet (The Regime)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A MALE ACTOR IN A LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR A MOTION PICTURE MADE FOR TELEVISION
Colin Farrell (The Penguin) (WINNER)
Richard Gadd (Baby Reindeer)
Kevin Kline (Disclaimer)
Cooper Koch (Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story)
Ewan McGregor (A Gentleman in Moscow)
Andrew Scott (Ripley)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE ON TELEVISION
Jessica Gunning (Baby Reindeer) (WINNER)
Liza Colon-Zayas (The Bear)
Hannah Einbinder (Hacks)
Dakota Fanning (Ripley)
Allison Janney (The Diplomat)
Kali Reis (True Detective: Night Country)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A MALE ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE ON TELEVISION
Tadanobu Asano (Shogun) (WINNER)
Javier Bardem (Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story)
Harrison Ford (Shrinking)
Jack Lowden (Slow Horses)
Diego Luna (La Maquina)
Ebon Moss-Bachrach (The Bear)

BEST PERFORMANCE IN STAND-UP COMEDY ON TELEVISION
Ali Wong (Ali Wong: Single Lady) (WINNER)
Jamie Foxx (Jamie Foxx: What Had Happened Was)
Nikki Glaser (Nikki Glaser: Someday You’ll Die)
Seth Meyers (Seth Meyers: Dad Man Walking)
Adam Sandler (Adam Sandler: Love You)
Ramy Youssef (Ramy Youssef: More Feelings) -ANI

Diallo earns Man United thrilling draw at Liverpool

Reds' Mohamed Salah equalled Thierry Henry's tally of 175 Premier League goals in the 2-2 draw on Sunday

LONDON: Manchester United demonstrated the spirit that has been missing under new manager Ruben Amorim to earn a superb point at Premier League leaders Liverpool with a 2-2 draw at Anfield on Sunday.

United, attempting to avoid four straight league defeats for the first time since 1979, took a shock lead when Lisandro Martinez powered a finish high past Alisson after 52 minutes.

Liverpool were level seven minutes later when Cody Gakpo scored with a superb angled drive before all United's good work looked to be in vain.

Mohamed Salah equalled Thierry Henry's tally of 175 Premier League goals from the penalty spot with 20 minutes left after handball was awarded against at Matthijs de Ligt following a video assistant referee intervention.

United were not to be denied, however, and Amad Diallo scored another big goal after his winner at Manchester City when he turned home Alejandro Garnacho's cut-back.

Harry Maguire could have won the game for United with almost the final kick but he blazed Joshua Zirkzee's bobbled pass over the bar from 12 yards.

United arrived at Anfield in a



Merseyside blizzard - with most fearing they were walking into a Liverpool hurricane.

Instead, United were resilient, determined and only that shocking last-ditch miss by Maguire denied them a win that would have topped even their triumph in the Manchester derby.

United stood up to the challenge presented by a Liverpool side threatening to extend their lead at the top of the Premier League to eight points, a sign of their improvement shown by the fact they will be disappointed not to claim all three points.

This was easily their best performance under Portuguese manager Amorim, who also deserves credit for stiffening United's midfield with Kobbie Mainoo and Manuel Ugarte, who worked well alongside the promptings of captain Bruno Fernandes.

It looked like they would suffer

the agony of defeat when Salah put Liverpool in front but United's response was outstanding, not only getting that equaliser but looking just as likely as the league leaders to snatch a late winner.

United and Amorim have come under heavy and justified criticism in recent weeks, but both manager and players can take huge heart and confidence from this display.

Trent Alexander-Arnold has been in the headlines this week as Real Madrid made an audacious bid to take him to the Bernabeu in January.

Liverpool rejected the move out of hand as speculation continues to surround the England defender about an end-of-season free transfer to La Liga.

Head coach Arne Slot was at pains to insist Alexander-Arnold has not been affected by the talk, but his cause was not helped by his hapless display against United.

The visitors preyed on Alexander-Arnold's defensive weakness throughout, launching regular raids down Liverpool's right flank, while his usual strong point of passing was also horribly wayward.

It was a poor pass by Alexander-Arnold that led to Martinez's opener while Diallo's equaliser originated on his flank.

Alexander-Arnold was shown a yellow card three minutes after Diallo's goal and it was almost a merciful release when he was replaced by Conor Bradley shortly after.

Liverpool were never at their best against this hugely improved United and were grateful for Maguire's late miss that spared them only their second league loss this season.

Slot's team are still in a commanding position, six points clear at the top with a game in hand on Arsenal, but this was not Liverpool at their barnstorming best.



Jimenez scores twice as Fulham salvage draw

Elsewhere, Raul Jimenez completed a penalty double in stoppage time to rescue a point for Fulham against Ipswich with a 2-2 draw as three spot-kicks were awarded in a dramatic second half on Sunday.

Despite Fulham dominating possession, Ipswich were in front at the break after Sammie Szmodics fired in the opener when wing-back Ben Johnson's header came back off the bar.

But the game really came to life in the second half, with the drama beginning as the home side levelled through a Jimenez penalty.

Referee Darren Bond initially waved away Fulham's appeals when Harry Wilson was tripped by Ipswich skipper Sam Morsy, but he overturned that decision after being sent to the screen by his video assistant.

Bond was later accused by Ful-

ham boss Marco Silva of performing "not at the level the Premier League demands".

A mere 21 seconds after the game restarted, Fulham defender Timothy Castagne kicked through Ipswich striker Liam Delap when attempting to clear the ball and Bond pointed to the spot again.

Delap duly struck the ball home powerfully for his eighth league goal of the campaign. The visitors nearly made sure of the points when Jack Clarke's low drive hit the post, but Fulham went down the other end and Jimenez was felled by Leif Davis.

The Mexico striker was quickly back on his feet and another nerveless penalty, hit high into the net, ensured Fulham's unbeaten run stretched to eight league games.

Fulham stay ninth in the Premier League while Ipswich remain 18th, level on points with Wolves who sit a place above them. - Agencies

PGA TOUR OPENER

Matsuyama wins with 35 under par



HAWAII: Japan's Hideki Matsuyama set a new PGA Tour record score for 72 holes of 35 under par in winning the season-opening event at The Sentry in Hawaii on Sunday. The 2021 Masters champion carded a final round 65 to make history on the Plantation Course in Kapalua.

He beat the previous record of 34 under, set by Cameron Smith at the same course in 2022.

Matsuyama's eight-under-par fourth round included an eagle, seven birdies and a bogey, with the 32-year-old sinking a birdie on the 18th to break Smith's record. "That last putt, it felt like if I make it, it's going to be the record,

so I'm so happy that it went in," said Matsuyama.

"I was able to get a great off-season and get a fresh start this week and play well so it's a great way to start."

American Collin Morikawa, who started the final round one shot behind Matsuyama, claimed second place on 32 under following a final round 67.

"He [Matsuyama] just never let up," Morikawa said. "I just knew I had to be on top of everything, and just kind of let a few slip on that front nine. "Just going through the shots I left out there, there was a good handful that I wish I could have back." - Agencies

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Serbian star Djokovic still has 'trauma' over Covid deportation

BRISBANE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic says he still experiences "trauma" when he visits Melbourne, three years after he was deported because of Australia's Covid-19 regulations.

Djokovic, who was not vaccinated against the virus, had his visa cancelled by the Australian government on "health and good order" grounds.

He was forced to stay at an immigration hotel for five days while he unsuccessfully appealed against the decision and was eventually forced to leave the country, meaning he missed the 2022 Australian Open.

Djokovic returned to Melbourne the following year, with Covid re-

strictions eased, and went on to win the Grand Slam for a record 10th time.

The Serb, 37, is back in Australia preparing for the 2025 tournament, which begins on Sunday.

"The last couple of times I landed in Australia, to go through passport control and immigration - I had a bit of trauma from three years ago," Djokovic told Melbourne's Herald Sun.

"And some traces still stay there when I'm passing passport control, just checking out if someone from immigration zone is approaching.

"The person checking my passport - are they going to take me, detain me again or let me go? I must admit I have that feeling."

PREMIER LEAGUE

I want the Grealish that won the Treble: City's Guardiola

LONDON: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said on Sunday that Jack Grealish must prove he deserves to regain his spot in the side's starting line-up by showing the quality he displayed when the club won the Treble in 2023.

The England international, 29, has appeared in 14 of City's 20 Premier League matches this season, but started just six times.

Grealish managed just six minutes in City's 4-1 win against West Ham United at the Etihad on Sunday, replacing Erling Haaland in the 84th minute.

Brazilian Savinho, a £30.8m signing from Girona last summer, started ahead of the former Aston Villa captain against the Hammers and provided both assists for Haaland's double in the win.

Guardiola says he will work with Grealish to help him regain the form that made him a key player two seasons ago when City lifted the Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League.

Asked whether Savinho could be an 'example' for the forward to win back his place, the City boss said: "Savinho is in better



shape and everything than Jack, and that's why I played Savinho [against West Ham]. "Do I want the Jack that won the Treble? Yeah I want it, but I try to be honest with myself for that.

"They have to fight. You can say it's unfair. OK, if you think that, then it's fine, but you have to prove [to me], 'OK, I'm going to fight with Savinho, to deserve to play in that position', every single day, every single week and every single month."

Grealish has won three Premier League titles, the Champions League and the FA Cup since his move from Aston Villa in 2021.

However, this season City suffered a run of nine defeats in 13

games before Christmas - six of them in the Premier League as they tumbled out of contention to claim a fifth successive championship. Grealish missed two matches over the festive period before returning for the morale-boosting win against West Ham.

"Two weeks ago, he was injured and he needs rhythm, and to play, but players need training," added Guardiola. "I don't have any doubt about the quality of Jack or any of these players. They would not be here [otherwise]. "I fought a lot for him, fought a lot to be here. I know that he can do it because I saw him. I saw his level and I want that, every single training session and every single game." - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA



Real manager defends Vinicius Jr

MADRID: Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti says the club are hopeful Vinicius Jr will avoid suspension after defending the Brazilian following his red card against Valencia. The forward, 24, was sent off for slapping goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski during Real's 2-1 win at Valencia on Friday.

Real are set to appeal Vinicius Jr's dismissal and Ancelotti said: "It wasn't a red, it was a yellow, and that's why we hope he will not face any suspension."

Three Valencia fans were sent to prison earlier this year for racially abusing the 24-year-old during a La Liga match at the Mestalla Stadium in May 2023. "It's difficult being in his shoes," added boss Ancelotti. "It's not easy to endure everything he goes through, including the insults. It's not simple, but he's trying to improve." - Agencies

visas is a matter for the federal government and those decisions were made by the federal government at the time," said Allan, who was part of a government crisis cabinet leading the Australian response to Covid in 2022 - but was not involved in the Djokovic case.

"Covid was tough for all of us. It didn't matter who you were, where you came from, Covid didn't discriminate in who it infected, how sick it made you and how sick it made others in our community."

Australia prime minister Anthony Albanese criticised the previous government's handling of the situation, particularly the decision to deny Djokovic access to an Orthodox priest in the build-up

to Christmas, which is celebrated on 7 January by most Orthodox Christians.

"I made comments at the time about it. I found it astonishing that in the lead up to Christmas, Novak Djokovic was denied by the then federal government the opportunity to see his Orthodox minister, priest, during that period," said Albanese, who became prime minister in May 2022.

"I think that was something that I think was hard to justify at that time."

Djokovic is hoping to win a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title when he competes in the Australian Open at Melbourne Park next week. - Agencies



He added: "I don't hold a grudge. I came right away the year after and I won.

"My parents and whole team were there and it was actually one of the most emotional wins I've

ever had, considering all that I'd been through the year before."

Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan said she prefers to focus on this year's tournament.

"The responsibility of granting

IN PICTURES



Libya launches anti-crime military operation in west coast
Soldiers stand guard in the city of Zawiya, Libya. The West Coast Military Zone of the Libyan Defence Ministry, said on Saturday that it launched a large-scale anti-crime operation in the area. The first phase of the operation will begin in the city of Zawiya, some 45 km west of the capital Tripoli, it said in a statement. *Xinhua*



Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt with their daughter Raha
Actors Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt pose with their daughter Raha, in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*

Los Angeles audiences enchanted by China's top dance troupe
Artists of China Oriental Performing Arts Group rehearse for the Dance of Oriental at Los Angeles' Music Centre in California, the United States. *xinhua*



Eight dead in Russia apartment building fire
A screenshot from a video shows rescue work underway after a fire broke out in Kirov region. Eight people were killed after a fire broke out in a wooden apartment building in Russia's western Kirov region, the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM) said. The EMERCOM teams are investigating the cause of the fire. *xinhua*



Students participate in creation of scroll to celebrate upcoming Year of Snake in Malaysia
Students paint on a long scroll marking the Year of the Snake in Kuala Lumpur. Around 160 students participated in the creation of a snake-themed long scroll to celebrate the upcoming Year of the Snake. *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Empowering moments: Timeless luxury with Lexus latest offers

Explore the finest Lexus collection at Saud Bahwan automotive showrooms near you before the campaign ends on January 23

MUSCAT: Indulge in impeccable luxury with a brand-new Lexus this season. Lexus is now offering its customers a unique opportunity to avail service perks up to 5 Years/50,000kms and first-year free registration.

Explore the finest Lexus collection at Saud Bahwan automotive showrooms near you before the campaign ends on January 23.

For Lexus enthusiasts, its innovative vehicle lineup includes the luxury crossover SUVs; Lexus RX and Lexus UX. For a more powerful ride; experience the prowess of Lexus LX, an epitome of innovation and performance coupled with luxury.

Shine into the limelight, attend corporate meetings spend quality family time in the meticulously engineered Lexus RX.

The RX500 is available in three power trims; RX350 featuring a 2.4L Turbo Charged, 4-cylinder engine and the RX350h and RX500h with hybrid capabilities. Equipped



with the latest technologies, the RX AWD provides an unparalleled driving experience with matchless fuel efficiency by both the hybrid and gasoline-powered trims.

The Lexus UX is a game-changer in its league, equipped with a 2.0-litre four-cylinder gas engine and a high-torque electric motor the crossover delivers an exhilarating response. The UX300h is

perfect for those seeking comfort without compromising on quality, style and comfort. Stand out among the crowd and make a statement in the bold and daring UX suited to match your corporate lifestyle. Merging traditional Japanese aesthetics the spacious driver's cockpit is augmented with high-tech features and safety features that spell sophistication.

Carefully crafted into the interiors, the Lexus Interface lets you personalize your multimedia experience; featuring a 12.3-inch high-resolution touchscreen display, hands-free access to advanced features, including wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility provide seamless connectivity throughout your drive.

In the sedan category, the Lexus

ES offers various trims with different performance outputs including the Lexus ES 250, and ES350 in gasoline-powered powerful engines of 2.5L, 16-valve, DOHC, and 3.5L, 24-valve V6 engines paired to an 8-speed Shift transmission. Bringing in new experiences, the ES300 is also available with Hybrid capabilities, the ES300h features a powerful dual-motor setup

with hybrid capabilities. Experience an exceptionally powerful and fuel-efficient sedan with an auto-charging system delivering an impressive 24.1 km/L mileage.

At Lexus, every vehicle represents a journey of life. Experience innovation and opt for luxury vehicles with Lexus Special Offer which is designed to transform your day-to-day experiences.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT CENTER

Lulu Exchange celebrates 14 years of customer-centric service in Oman



MUSCAT: Lulu Exchange, the leading provider of cross border payments in the Sultanate of Oman, marked their 14th anniversary with a grand celebration at its Bausher customer engagement center in Oman Avenues Mall.

The milestone event highlighted the company's unwavering commitment to serving Oman with excellence, innovation, and a customer first approach.

As part of the celebrations, the 2025 Lulu Exchange Wall Calendar was unveiled, showcasing 12 stunning winning artworks from the children's Lulu Exchange Art Competition 2024. Organized to celebrate young artists' creativity, the competition highlighted the rich culture and heritage of Oman through their imaginative expressions. The unveiling was led by Lathish Vichitran, General Manager of Lulu Exchange, in the presence of the team and attendees, marking

ing a vibrant start to the New Year.

Speaking about the occasion, Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of Lulu Financial Holdings, remarked, "Oman has achieved remarkable economic transformation in recent years, guided by the visionary leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. Lulu Exchange is proud to have been a part of this journey, contributing to its growth and progress. As we celebrate 14 years of service, I would like to reiterate Lulu Exchange's unwavering commitment to innovation and to placing the customer at the heart of everything we do."

Reflecting on the company's journey, Lathish expressed gratitude, "This milestone is a testament to the trust and support of our customers, partners, and the people of Oman. We remain committed to delivering innovative solutions and fostering growth together. We look forward to an exciting future

of continued success."

The anniversary celebrations will continue through January with impactful CSR initiatives at various branches. These activities aim to strengthen relationships with customers and the community while reflecting on the company's 14 years of achievements and contributions.

As Lulu Exchange celebrates this milestone, it remains steadfast in its mission to connect lives and deliver financial solutions that empower individuals and communities.

Recognising artistic talent

Nazish Shoukat Mukhari, Kesavbala Babumon, Sarah Mustafa, Abbas Shakil Ali, Bernice Adrienne L. Dador, KS Aadi Srikrishav, Pritisha Bhatnagar, Durvi Soni, Gaurangi, Audrey Arnila, Arun, and Havish Rajesh were adjudged winners of the Lulu Exchange Art Competition 2024.

RECOGNITION



Mitsubishi Motors Oman ranks No. 1 in Sales Satisfaction Index among all competing automotive brands in Oman

MUSCAT: Mitsubishi Motors Oman has secured the top spot in the prestigious Kantar Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) 2024 survey, ranking number one among all the competing automotive brands in Oman. This recognition underscores Mitsubishi's commitment to delivering exceptional customer experience and maintaining high standards in service delivery, customer centricity, and brand clarity.

The latest SSI Competitive Survey conducted by Kantar recognizes Mitsubishi as the leading brand in the new vehicle purchase experience. Kantar, the world's leading marketing data and analytics service provider, provides a comprehensive, brand-level analysis from the customer perspective.

Mitsubishi Motors Oman scored an impressive 815 points against an industry benchmark of 773 points, leading the way among competing automotive brands in Oman. Factors contributing to the score included purchase experience, dealership location convenience, working hours, parking availability, waiting area comfort, product information availability, showroom appearance, cleanliness, and amenities.

Sales advisor attributes significantly influenced customer satisfaction, with high points for explaining car finance and insurance details, professionalism, product knowledge, and responsiveness. The test drive experience also positively impacted the rating.

Other key areas influencing

the SSI score included transparency in paperwork and finance processes, timely final delivery, satisfaction with delivery times, and adherence to promised dates. Digital and call center aspects, such as website experience and interactions with call agents, were also considered, alongside sales follow-up experiences at the dealership.

Mitsubishi Oman's focus on investing in, building, and maintaining customer satisfaction and experience standards highlights its commitment to providing an exceptional vehicle purchase experience. This recognition by Kantar underscores Mitsubishi Omans' dedication to sales excellence and customer-centric approach.

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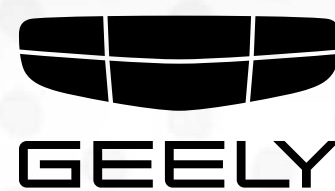
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