

Times

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OF OMAN



50

YEARS OF LEGACY

Founded 1975 · Volume 50 No. 232 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group





Choose your perfect match

With Najahi New Subscription-Based Current Accounts from Bank Muscat

Basic

Advanced

Premium



Bank Muscat. Better Everyday.

Terms and conditions apply.

OMAN URGES STRONGER ARAB-INDIAN ECONOMIC AND SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

Sayyid Badr emphasised the importance of reforming the UN to boost its effectiveness



NEW DELHI: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the second session of the Ministerial Meeting of the Arab-Indian Cooperation Forum, in New Delhi on Saturday. In his address, Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister and Head of the Sultanate of Oman's delegation, emphasised the depth of the historical relations linking the Arab world and the Republic of India. He noted that these relations are founded on a shared civilisational heritage and long-standing human and cultural ties, which over centuries have contributed to strengthening mutual understanding, promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence, and establishing a partnership based on constructive cooperation and respect for the sovereignty and independence of states.

He highlighted the strategic importance the Sultanate of Oman attaches to Arab-Indian cooperation, affirming its support for cooperation programmes in vital and promising fields, particularly trade and investment, which contribute to diversifying economic partnerships and opening wider horizons for the private sector. He also underscored cooperation in the fields of health, pharmaceutical industries, environmental protection, and addressing cross-border challenges, including combating terrorism, extremism and hate speech. He pointed out that the resources and expertise of Arab countries, combined with India's advanced industrial and technological capabilities, offer broad opportunities to enhance cooperation in energy

security, agriculture, and food security, supporting the sustainability of supply chains in these critical sectors. The Foreign Minister stressed the importance of coordination and cooperation in the area of maritime security, ensuring the freedom of international trade and the safety of sea lanes, in a manner that serves regional and global economies and safeguards shared interests. He also underlined the importance of exchanging views on regional and international developments, stressing the need to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause, guaranteeing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with international legitimacy resolu-

tions and the two-state solution. This includes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and securing its full membership in the United Nations. He affirmed the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to supporting partnerships based on mutual respect and common interests, and to advancing Arab-Indian relations toward a comprehensive partnership that meets the aspirations of peoples and responds to future challenges. He also emphasised the importance of reforming the United Nations system to enhance its effectiveness, fairness, and ability to address growing international challenges. **-With ONA inputs**

Indian PM receives Sayyid Badr, asks to convey his greetings to His Majesty



NEW DELHI: Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, received on Saturday Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, on the sidelines of the second session of the Ministerial Meeting of the Arab-Indian Cooperation Forum, held in New Delhi. During the meeting, Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Prime Minister of

India, along with His Majesty's sincere wishes for him and for the friendly Indian people for continued growth and prosperity. For his part, the Prime Minister of India asked the Foreign Minister to convey his sincere greetings and appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan, as well as his best wishes for continued progress and prosperity for His Majesty and the Omani people. **-With ONA inputs**

OMAN Oman to host meet on air traffic management

1 The Sultanate of Oman is hosting the Air Traffic Management Coordination Meeting and Crisis Management Workshop for the Middle East region, organised by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), with participation from the ICAO Regional Office for the Middle East and Asia Pacific. **>A2**

WORLD UN faces 'imminent financial collapse'

2 United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has cautioned that the world body is heading towards an "imminent financial collapse" as member states fall behind on annual contributions. **>A7**

MARKET Oman's economic activity resilient

3 Oman's economic activity remained resilient amid a challenging global environment, according to the Sultanate's central bank's its latest Macroeconomic Stability Report 2025. **>B1**

MOCIIP Omani non-oil exports reach OMR5 billion

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The non-oil exports of Oman recorded a strong performance in 2025, reflecting the positive transformation of the country's economy in line with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) continues to implement programmes and policies aimed at developing exports and strengthening the presence of Omani products in regional and global markets, contributing to the diversification of national income sources and reinforcing the position of the Sultanate of Oman as a reliable trading partner within in-



ternational trade chains. Official statistical indicators showed that the value of Oman's non-oil exports reached approximately OMR5.002 billion, achieving growth of 10.3 per cent by the



end of September 2025 compared with the same period in 2024. This reflects an improvement in the competitiveness of national products and the success of efforts to open new markets. This growth

is attributed to an integrated support framework that included external promotion, facilitation of procedures, participation in international exhibitions, and the enhancement of product quality, strengthening the ability of Omani products to compete sustainably in global markets. At the sectoral level, data showed that growth was driven by the expansion of several key export sectors. Base metals and articles thereof led exports with a value surpassing OMR1 billion, followed by chemical industry products valued at nearly OMR658 million, while exports of electrical machinery and equipment reached approximately OMR460 million. **>A5**

CHANGAN

EADO PLUS
Trend



Beyond Your Expectation

EMI starting from
OMR 91*
for 6 years



1.5L Turbo Engine, 170 hp | 7 Speed DCT
Manufacturer's Warranty - 6 YEARS / 250,000 KMS*

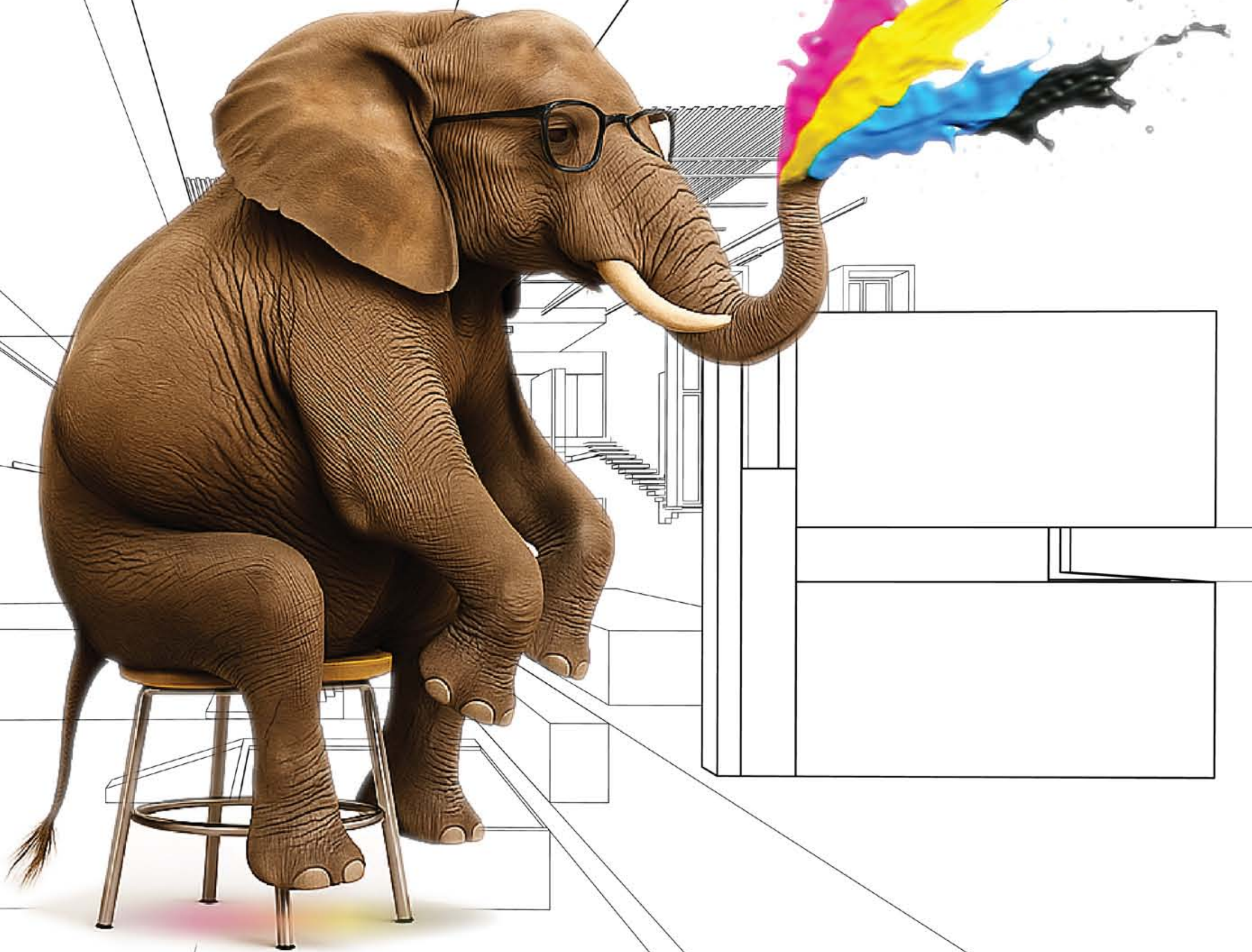
800 50800 9662 8909

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

Images shown are for illustrative purpose only. Specification may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN AUTO Showroom.

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

We make your Business bigger than your problems.



We get you ahead on

- Booth production
- Event conceptualisation
- Event management

Wait, there's more

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

COMMENTARY

The legal framework governing company conversion in Oman

In a changing commercial landscape, businesses may need to restructure their legal form to support growth, investment, or strategic objectives. Oman's Commercial Companies Law, issued under Royal Decree 18/2019, provides a clear legal mechanism allowing an existing company to convert from one legal form to another without dissolution or re-establishment.

In an exclusive interview with Times of Oman, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Zadjali, Founding Partner of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm, a leading law office in the Sultanate, explained that "conversion requires a resolution passed according to the rules for amending the company's constitutive documents, accompanied by a statement of assets and liabilities and their valuation. It mandates publication of the resolution within fifteen days and requires endorsement by the Registrar once passed."

He emphasized that "a core principle of conversion under the law is the continuity of legal personality. Conversion does not create a new juristic person. The



company retains all its rights and obligations, ensuring legal continuity."

Addressing creditor protection, Dr. Mohammed stated that "creditors are granted a statutory period following official notification or publication to submit written objections. Where an objection is raised, the conversion cannot proceed unless the debt is settled, existing guarantees are maintained, or the objection is rejected by a competent court," he said, adding that liabilities arising prior to conversion remain



enforceable, and critically, the joint liability of general partners for those debts continues unless their creditors provide written consent to the conversion.

He further explained that "the law ensures equitable treatment of shareholders and partners during conversion. Each shareholder or partner receives shares or interests in the converted company equivalent to the value of their previous holding, ensuring fairness and continuity of ownership. However, a key exception applies

when converting to a Limited Liability Company; if the value of a partner's contribution is below the mandatory minimum share value, they must pay the difference in cash within 30 days or be deemed to have withdrawn from the company."

"Oman's Commercial Companies Law offers a transparent and balanced framework for corporate conversion, enabling structural flexibility while safeguarding creditor rights and shareholder interests," he concluded.

(Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm (info@mohammedibrahim.net), (+968 244 87 600) was established on 14th December 2006 and is serving clients through its offices in Muscat and Sohar, as well as operating on a request basis in other areas. It offers legal representation across a wide range of practice areas that include Labour Law, Corporate, Commercial, Contracts, Banking and Finance, International Trade, Foreign Investment, Insurance, Maritime Law, Construction and Engineering Contracts, International Arbitration, Intellectual Property and more).

NCSI

1.8mn vehicles registered by end of 2025



Times News Service

MUSCAT; The total number of vehicles registered in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 5.6 percent by the end of December 2025, reaching 1,851,469 vehicles, compared to December 2024.

According to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), private vehicles accounted for the largest share of registered vehicles in the Sultanate, representing 79.2 percent, with a total

of 1,465,455 vehicles. Commercial vehicles followed at 14.8 percent, numbering 273,508 vehicles, while rental vehicles accounted for 2.4 percent, or 44,606 vehicles.

The remaining percentage was distributed among taxis, government vehicles and other categories.

The statistics also showed that vehicles weighing less than three tonnes constituted the majority of registered vehicles, accounting for 90.7 percent of the total, or 1,679,463 vehicles. **-ONA**

Air traffic coordination meeting to focus on airspace management

The events highlight the Sultanate of Oman's position as a regional hub for civil aviation, supporting ICAO's efforts, enhancing regional and international cooperation



Crisis Management Workshop for the Middle East region, organised by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), with participation from the ICAO Regional Office for the Middle East and Asia Pacific.

The Coordination Meeting, scheduled for February 1-3, 2026, will address global developments in air traffic management and the challenges affecting air traffic flows within the Middle East and at interregional contact points.

Discussions will focus on improving airspace management, enhancing regional coordination, and updating joint agreements between countries regarding air traffic services.

The Crisis Management Work-

shop, to be held on February 4-5, 2026, will review ICAO emergency planning requirements, the operation of the Emergency Coordination Team, and the exchange of experiences between ICAO regions.

The workshop emphasises strengthening cross-border coordination and developing regional emergency arrangements.

Safety and operational efficiency

The events highlight the Sultanate of Oman's position as a regional hub for civil aviation, supporting ICAO's efforts, enhancing regional and international cooperation, and promoting higher levels of safety and operational efficiency in regional airspace.

The meeting and workshop will bring together representatives from 19 countries, 3 international organisations, and 3 airlines, with a total of 90 participants, including experts, specialists, and airspace users.

Eng. Saleh bin Abdullah Al Harthi, Director General of Air Navigation at the Civil Aviation Authority, said the Sultanate's hosting of the events reflects its growing status as a regional and international center for technical cooperation in civil aviation.

He noted that the meetings aim to strengthen coordination between countries, develop joint cooperation mechanisms, and share best practices and operational plans to ensure continuity of air navigation services and improve readiness for emergencies.

He added that these events provide an important platform for exchanging technical expertise and reviewing international experiences in emergency planning and air traffic management, contributing to safer, more efficient, and smoother air traffic operations, and consolidating Oman's role as an active partner in regional and international civil aviation development.

15TH EDITION

Fibre connect meeting to focus on long-term digital transformation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of His Highness Dr. Adham bin Turki Al Said, the Sultanate of Oman will host the 15th Edition of the Fibre Connect Council MENA Conference & Expo, on February 2-3, 2026, in Muscat.

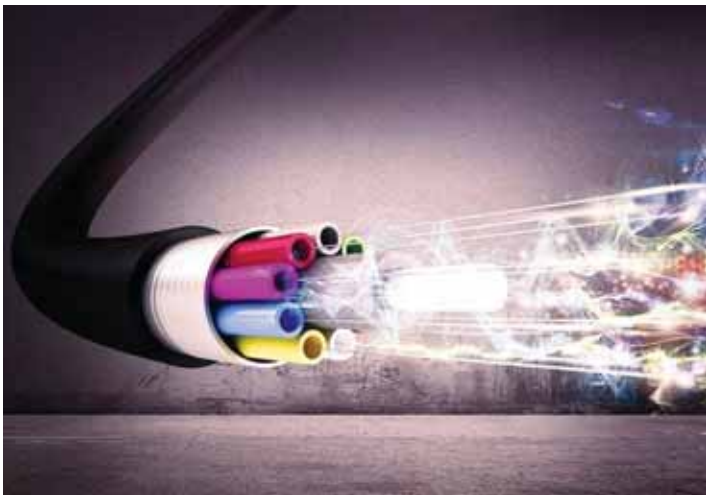
The patronage underscores the strategic importance of digital infrastructure and fibre connectivity in supporting Oman's Vision 2040 and the nation's long-term digital transformation agenda.

The two-day flagship event will explore critical topics shaping the broadband ecosystem, including next-generation fiber networks, open-access models, data centres, smart cities, and the role of fiber in enabling digital economies and inclusive growth.

The conference will bring together 14 leading national and international companies specializing in fiber, artificial intelligence, and communications technologies, along with more than 20 expert speakers and delegates from over 20 countries across the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe.

An accompanying exhibition will showcase the latest innovations in fibre networks, 5G, IoT, data centers, and digital infrastructure.

Held under the theme "Fibre Empowered Futures: Connecting



Intelligence, Infrastructure, and Innovation," the conference will highlight national and regional milestones in digital transformation across MENA, emphasizing fiber as the foundation for future-ready economies. The program will feature keynote addresses, expert-led panel discussions, and knowledge-sharing sessions to foster dialogue, collaboration, and strategic partnerships.

Dr. Alaa' Jasim, President of Fibre Connect Council MENA, said: "This year's edition continues our long-standing legacy of providing a collaborative platform where industry leaders and policymakers can exchange insights, address challenges, and explore opportunities that will define the

next phase of connectivity in the MENA region."

He added, "Hosting the event in Muscat reflects Oman's rapidly growing digital infrastructure and its alignment with Vision 2040, which places digital transformation, advanced connectivity, and knowledge-based economic growth at the core of national development."

Over the past 15 editions, the Fiber Connect Council MENA Annual Conference has shaped regional dialogue on fiber deployment, regulatory frameworks, and technological innovation.

This year, the Council will unveil a new regional study on the evolving digital infrastructure landscape in MENA, highlighting



fiber as a foundational element for AI-ready digital infrastructure and demonstrating the shift from connectivity expansion to compute density, driven by investments in hyperscale and sovereign data centers, subsea cable systems, and fiber-deep networks.

The 15th edition is supported by 14 major national and international sponsors. Oman Broadband and Ooredoo are Platinum Sponsors, Omantel serves as Technology Partner, and Earthlink Telecommunications is the Strategic Partner. Additional sponsorship reflects strong industry commitment to advancing fiber infrastructure across the region.

The conference exhibition will provide a dedicated networking platform for participants, enabling direct engagement with companies showcasing the latest technologies and solutions shaping the future of connectivity.

WINDS OF PEACE 2026

Omani-Saudi naval drill ends



MUSCAT: The joint Omani-Saudi naval exercise (Winds of Peace 2026) concluded on Saturday.

The exercise was carried out by a number of ships of the Royal Navy of Oman and a number of ships of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces, with support from the Royal Army of Oman and the Royal Air Force of Oman, in the Al Batinah Maritime

Region.

The exercise included several training programmes and practical applications, the execution of the practical demonstration, as well as the exchange of experiences between the crews of the participating ships, in accordance with the plan drawn up for the exercise.

-ONA

ROP

Vehicle driver held

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP), represented by the South Al Batinah Governorate Command, has apprehended a vehicle driver after a video clip circulated on social media showing him performing dangerous stunts, drifting, and

producing disturbing noises in the Wilayat of Rustaq, thereby causing public disturbance.

The police authorities have confirmed that the vehicle driver was detained and that the necessary legal procedures have been taken against him in accordance with the law.

بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

Transfer your salary
and get more

www.bankdhofar.com 2479 1111

FOR MORE

Oman makes significant strides in trade and logistics sectors

Oman's three main seaports — Sohar Port, Duqm Port, and Salalah Port — play a central role in connecting the Sultanate to regional and global markets

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has made significant strides in enhancing the efficiency of its international trade and strengthening its competitiveness in logistics by streamlining customs procedures, promoting digital trade, and developing its strategic ports.

Oman's three main seaports — Sohar Port, Duqm Port, and Salalah Port — play a central role in connecting the Sultanate to regional and global markets. As part of its economic diversification strategies, Oman has invested in upgrading port infrastructure, enhancing operational and digital efficiency, and meeting the growing demands of trade volume.

The Royal Oman Police, through



the General Directorate of Customs, has implemented qualitative improvements across administrative, procedural, and technical levels to enhance customs services for the business community, facilitate international trade, attract foreign investment, strengthen the logistics sector, and secure supply chains. A key initiative is the 'Bayan' system, which integrates 74 government and private entities and offers 496 electronic services.

These include pre-clearance customs, electronic payments, deferred tax payments, clearance under bank guarantees, temporary import requests, and goods splitting requests, all without the need to visit customs offices or ports.

Such initiatives have contributed to Oman's leading position in trade facilitation.

According to the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report, Oman ranked first in the Gulf in the Cross-Border Trade Index, thanks to infrastructure upgrades at Sohar Port, the introduction of electronic risk-based inspections, and the development of the customs audit system.

Further measures include the Secure Customs Corridor initiative, which connects ports with free zones and investment warehouses, streamlining the movement of goods between customs zones.

In addition, the Electronic Air

Waybill initiative allows air carriers and handling authorities to submit shipping documents electronically, speeding up clearance processes.

These developments form part of Oman's broader digital transformation and trade facilitation strategy, enhancing its role as a competitive regional and international logistics hub.

The e-commerce sector has also seen remarkable growth, driven by rising online consumer activity and strengthened digital infrastructure.

The market was valued at US\$575 million in mid-2023, with projections reaching US\$1.1 billion by 2028, growing at a



CAGR of over 13%.

Increased internet penetration, exceeding 90% of the population, and the promotion of electronic payments contributed to a 40% rise in transaction volumes, supported by digital wallets and the national payment gateway. Oman is also cooperating with neighboring countries to streamline cross-border e-commerce flows.

Eng. Abdullah bin Ali Al Bussaidi, Director General of the Oman Logistics Center, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, told ONA that these measures reduce the cost and time of goods movement while improving Oman's competitiveness as a global logistics hub through integrated transport systems and digital solutions.

Omar bin Mahmoud Al Mahrizi, CEO of Asyad Ports and Freezones, highlighted that the maritime transport sector achieved a 12% compound annual growth rate between 2018 and 2024, reflecting

the efficiency of Omani ports.

He noted that Omani ports are currently linked to 86 commercial ports in 40 countries through around 200 direct weekly trips, positioning them as global logistics centers.

He emphasised that ports continue to drive economic development by integrating with free zones and economic zones, offering investment incentives, pre-clearance systems, and advanced digital procedures that accelerate goods release, reduce inspections, and lower operating costs.

In addition, Oman's strategic location along major shipping routes and partnerships with global shipping companies enhance its role as a global trade and logistics hub.

These initiatives support the National Logistics Strategy 2040, aiming to establish the Sultanate of Oman as a leading global logistics center, ensuring the smooth flow of supply chains and securing essential goods for local markets.

OMNEX 2026

Omani-Turkish Business Council to boost investment

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), represented by the Omani-Turkish Joint Business Council, will launch the Oman International Expo and Forum (OMNEX 2026) on Monday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event will continue until 4 February 2026 and will feature broad local and international participation.

The Republic of Türkiye will attend as the Guest of Honour, underscoring support for national efforts to stimulate investment and strengthen economic and trade partnerships.

The forum will include a series of specialised investment sessions, workshops, and bilateral meetings bringing together officials and business leaders.

An accompanying exhibition will showcase Omani, Turkish, and international products and services, alongside cultural and artistic events highlighting the rich heritage and shared history of both countries.

The expo and forum will focus on a wide range of strategic sectors, most notably trade and investment, industry, energy and mining, tourism and heritage, technology and innovation, as well as services and transport, education and health, youth and sports, and the agriculture and fisheries sector contributing to stronger integration across key segments of the national economy.

Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stated: (The organising of the Oman International Expo



and Forum comes as part of the Chamber's efforts to support the private sector and strengthen its role as a key partner in economic development)

He added: "This reflects the Chamber's commitment to providing high-quality economic platforms that help open new horizons for investment and enhance partnerships among business owners at the local and international levels, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 for economic diversification and the attraction of quality investments."

For his part, Sheikh Salem bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Omani side of the Omani-Turkish Joint Business Council, noted that the expo and forum

present genuine investment opportunities in promising sectors that form a cornerstone of the national economy.

He added that the event marks an important milestone in the evolution of economic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Türkiye, reflecting a shared determination to elevate bilateral cooperation to broader and more diversified horizons.

He emphasized that Türkiye's selection as Guest of Honour highlights the strength of the existing partnership and opens new avenues for the exchange of ideas and expertise, as well as the development of strategic partnerships between the business communities of the two friendly nations.

SEND US YOUR VIEWS AND COMMENTS

editor@timesofoman.com
webeditor@timesofoman.com

REF: OFM/TD-02/2026

Manpower Supply for Loading & Unloading Services

Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) invites specialized contractors to participate in "Manpower Supply for Loading and Unloading Services" tender as per the scope of work.

Tender Documents:

Interested bidders are requested to send an email to tender3@omanflourmills.com to obtain the tender documents. Tender documents will be shared upon receipt of the tender fee deposit slip via email.

Tender Fee Details:

Tender fee shall be deposited directly to the following bank account:
Account Name: Oman Flour Mills Company SAOG
Bank: Sohar International
Account Number: 001020032407
Swift Code: BSHROMRUXXX

Tender Ref no	OFM/TD-02/2026
Tender subject	Manpower Supply for Loading & Unloading Services
Tender fee	RO. 100/- (non-refundable)
Bid Bond	Not Required
Start date for tender collection	01/02/2026
Last date for tender collection	08/02/2026
Last date for receiving the technical queries	11/02/2026
Closing date of the tender	12/02/2026
Mode of payment of tender fee	By Bank Transfer
Email address for clarifications and communication	tender3@omanflourmills.com
Mode of submission	All bidders are required to submit their proposals through email: bid-ofm@omanflourmills.com

- Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.

- Notwithstanding the specific terms in the Tender Documents, Tender fee is not refundable.

- Bids submittal shall consist of 2 separate PDF files (Technical) & (Commercial), with bidder name on each and tender reference number OFM/TD-02/2026.

Muscat Nights: More than 200 take part in Ardha camel race



Sheikh Hamid bin Nasser Al Kathiri, Deputy Wali of Al Amerat presided over the event and honoured the winners

AL AMERAT: The two-day competitions of the Al Ardha camel race held on Friday and Saturday concluded at the camel racecourse in the Wilayat of Al Amerat. Camel Khamisa for owner Mohammed bin Nasser Al Hakamani from the Wilayat of Barka grabbed 2026 Muscat Nights' Bayraq (flag) prize at Al Zamat Camel Race , fol-

lowed by Camel Samha for owner Musa'ab bin Hamad Al Jalandani from the Wilayat of Sumail and Camel Shabbaz for Mohammed bin Rabie Al Rahbi from the Wilayat of Ibra, respectively. Muaz bin Amer Al Saadi , Musa'ab bin Amer Al Saadi, Salim bin Ali Al Qutaiti and Ali bin Salim Al Qutaiti won in Al Tamayoz race,

while Mohammed bin Yousef Al Rahbi and Mohammed bin Nasser Al Rahbi won the prize of the distinct riders. Al Zamat and Al Bayraq camel races topped the activities of Al Ardha camel race organised by the camel owners in the wilayat of Al Amerat , Muscat Governorate within the programmes and activities of 2026 Muscat Nights. The activities saw the participation of over 200 participants from the various governorates of Oman. Sheikh Hamid bin Nasser Al Kathiri, Deputy Wali of Al Amirat presided over the conclusion of the event and honoured the winners of the competitions and the bodies contributing to the event and members of the committees. -ONA



AL TAHAYIM

Omani horse riders display their skills

JALAN BANI BU HASAN: Al Tahayim Racecourse in the Wilayat of Jalan Bani Bu Hasan hosted Al Ardha horse race competitions yesterday as part of the winter season (Al Tahayim) activities. The event was held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed bin Ali Al A'aka'ak, Wali of Jalan Bani Bu Hasan. The event aimed to highlight the deep-rooted association between Omanis and equestrian traditions, an integral part of the Sultanate's cultural identity. Riders showcased their skills in horse, along with other equestrian performances, accompanied by Omani folk arts, poetry, and songs. The activities reflected the rich cultural heritage of the wilayat and its longstanding equestrian knowledge and traditions. -ONA



US eyes Red Sea as Landau visits Africa

According to the Department of State, Landau’s visit aims to promote President Donald Trump’s priorities of “rebalancing trade, ensuring a positive business environment, and promoting security and peace.”

WASHINGTON DC: US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau is on a diplomatic tour of Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti from January 24 to February 1.

According to the Department of State, Landau’s visit aims to promote President Donald Trump’s priorities of “rebalancing trade, ensuring a positive business environment, and promoting security and peace.”

Landau has described the trip, his first to the region, as “one of the great privileges” of his job, which allows him to exchange ideas with world leaders.

Out of the four countries Landau is touring, three are part of the US-led multinational naval force deployed in the Red Sea to defend against attacks from Houthis.

The trip also comes on the back of a statement by Ambassador Tammy Bruce, deputy representative of the US to the United Na-



tions, referring to the Houthis as a “terrorist organisation who pose a continuing threat to regional stability and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and surrounding waterways.”

Some analysts believe this trip to the Red Sea region could be part of America’s push for dominance in the geopolitical competition for global influence.

“The visit signals how the US views East Africa and the Red Sea as a single interconnected strategic theater,” Charles Amo-Agyemang, a senior lecturer of politics and international relations at the University of Ghana, told DW. “The choice of these countries was not accidental. It was deliberate, strategic and it was conscious.”

How crucial is the Red Sea region?

The Red Sea region, which encompasses Egypt, Eritrea, Djibouti, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, stretches from the Suez Canal through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to the Gulf of Aden.

It covers approximately 438,000 square kilometres (170,000 square miles) and borders some of the world’s most volatile regions: the

Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the western shore of the Indo-Pacific area.

The International Maritime Organisation says its waters “constitute one of the most critical maritime routes enabling global trade, and present immense opportunities for development and prosperity in the region.”

Despite the crucial role it plays in international trade, the region is also plagued by increasing regional instability, conflict, piracy and transnational organized crime, which the US is committed to tackling.

Timing of Landau’s trip

General Dagvin Anderson, commander of US Africa Command (AFRICOM), stressed that the visit signifies America’s readiness to help resolve threats in the Red Sea region.

“There are threats that we share here in the Horn [of Africa]. Threats of al-Shabaab, ISIS and a coordination across the Red Sea with the Houthis trying to destabilize the region,” said Anderson, who has accompanied Landau during his visit.

However, Etse Sikanku, dean of

the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Ghana’s University of Media, Arts and Communication, believes the timing is due to a shift in global power alliances.

“There is that recognition that the US is loosening its hold within the continent and there is a certain eagerness to make sure that they can reinsert themselves into the global relationship as far as Africa is concerned,” Sikanku told DW.

For Amo-Agyemang, Africa is caught between two great powers.

“The US intends to maintain a strategic foothold despite China’s expanding presence,” he said, adding that in international relations, there is a lot of interest in these kinds of great power rivalry.

“But importantly, we must be careful not to use Africa as a launching pad for great power competition.”

The African Union has emphasised that Africa and the US can build on a strategic partnership “grounded in mutual respect, shared interests and a common commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity.”

But experts are split on whether the continent can truly benefit from this renewed interest. —DW



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

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

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

US an ‘economic miracle’: Trump

WASHINGTON DC: In an opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal, US President Donald Trump has justified his sweeping tariffs on other countries, stating that they “brought America back” while dismissing their ripple effects on the nations, saying they were “doing just fine.”

In an op-ed published in The Wall Street Journal on Friday, Trump said, “When I imposed historic tariffs on nearly all foreign countries last April, the critics said my policies would cause a global economic meltdown,” Trump wrote. “Instead, they have created an American economic miracle, and we are quickly building the greatest economy in the history of the world, with other countries doing just fine!”

The US president said in a barrage of tall claims that his ‘sleepy’ predecessor handed him a ravaged economy, and he was accused of triggering a “worldwide recession” through his policies.

“Nine months later, the results are in, every one of those predictions has proven completely and totally wrong. Since I was elected in 2024, we have had 52 stock market highs, with virtually no inflation. There has never been anything like it!” Trump’s opinion piece stated, adding that the American economy had low in-



flation at 1.4% and is growing at 4.4%.

Trump’s Wall Street Journal opinion piece said that economic growth lowers inflation, and the real incomes for American workers rose by USD 1,000 to USD 2,000.

“Since “Liberation Day,” the stock market has skyrocketed, with the strong possibility that we will soon break 50,000 on the Dow Jones Industrial Average, something which everyone thought was impossible, at least in one year!” Trump opined in The Wall Street Journal.

Trump further said that his administration “cut federal budget deficit by a staggering 27% in a single year, and even more incredibly, we have slashed our monthly trade deficit by an astonishing 77%—all with virtually no inflation,” as quoted in The Wall Street Journal. —ANI



‘Transformation in Middle East relevant for India’s relationship with Arab nations’

NEW DELHI: India’s External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said that the churn in global order is the most apparent in the Middle East.

Jaishankar, delivering opening remarks at the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, said the impact of developments in the Middle East is felt in India as well.

“Warm welcome to India for the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. We meet at an important juncture where the global order is undergoing transformation for a variety of reasons. Politics, economics, technology, and demography are all fully in play. Nowhere is this more apparent than in West Asia or the Middle East, where the landscape itself has undergone a dramatic change in the last year. This obviously impacts all of us and India as a proximate region. To a considerable degree, its implications are relevant for India’s relationship with Arab nations as well,” he said.

Jaishankar said that everything happening in the Middle East, including the Gaza situation, has been a focal point in world politics.

“Multiple developments, each of considerable consequence, have taken place in the Middle East and West Asia over the last few years. Many of them have reverberated well beyond the region. The situation in Gaza, in particular, has been the focus of the international community. Many of us were present at the Sharm el-Sheikh Peace Summit in October 2025,” he said.

“This evolved into the UN Security Council Resolution 2803 of November 2025. Advancing the comprehensive plan to end the Gaza conflict is now a widely shared priority. Various countries have made policy declarations on the peace plan individually or collectively,” he added.

Jaishankar said that Sudan is also affected by the conflict.

“This is the larger context in which we deliberate on the region’s challenges and prospects. There are several other regions and situations in the region that also merit our collective attention. One is the conflict in Sudan that is exacting a deadly toll on its society,” he said.



Jaishankar also pondered on the situation in Yemen, where Indian troops are present, and that in Libya.

“Another is that in Yemen, with the additional implication for the safety of maritime navigation. Then there is the concern about Lebanon, where India has troops committed to UNIFIL. In Libya, we all have an interest in advancing the national dialogue process. The direction of events in Syria is also critical for the well-being of the region,” he said.

Jaishankar then added that the common threat between the Middle East and India is terrorism.

“Contemplating this multitude of challenges, our shared interests warrant strengthening forces of stability, of peace, and of prosperity. A common threat in both our regions is that of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Cross-border terrorism is particularly unacceptable because it violates the basic principles of international relations and diplomacy,” he said.

“Societies targeted by terrorism have the right to defend themselves and will understandably exercise it. It is essential that we strengthen international cooperation to combat this global scourge. Zero tolerance for terrorism must be an uncompromising universal law,” he added.

Jaishankar said that the historical collaboration with Middle Eastern countries has reached new heights, taking on a contemporary form.

“Excellencies, India has strong

partnerships with all LAS nations, in many cases, maturing to a strategic level. Much of that is rooted in history, where we have long exchanged goods, people, and ideas. In the contemporary era, this collaboration has taken different forms with various partners,” he said.

Jaishankar noted the strong people-to-people ties between the region and India, noting that the largest expatriate community lives there.

“The region has some of our largest expatriate communities, key energy sources, major trade relationships, and increasingly emerging technology and connectivity initiatives. We are crucial to each other in terms of food and health security. Today’s deliberations, while collective in nature, will nevertheless have a significant impact on many bilateral ties. Colleagues, the India-Arab Cooperation Forum serves as a platform to give our positive sentiments a practical shape,” he said.

Jaishankar further said that India is looking to increase cooperation in several fronts, including agriculture, education, etc.

“Our meeting will examine an agenda for such cooperation in 2026-28. It currently covers energy, environment, agriculture, tourism, human resource development, culture and education, amongst others. India looks forward to a more contemporary dimension of cooperation being included, such as digital, space, start-ups, innovation, etc,” he said. —ANI

IRANIAN AMBASSADOR TO INDIA



EU’s designation of IRGC a ‘strategic miscalculation’

NEW DELHI: Terming the European Union’s decision to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation a “strategic miscalculation,” the Iranian Ambassador to India, Mohammad Fathali, has warned that such moves ignore the “realities on the ground” and violate international law.

In an exclusive interview with ANI, Ambassador Fathali asserted that the IRGC is a formal and legal military institution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He emphasised that targeting an official state force contradicts established international norms.

Fight against terrorism

Ambassador Fathali highlighted the IRGC’s role in regional stability, particularly its efforts against ISIS. He stated that over the past years, the IRGC has been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism in the region and argued that had this on-the-ground struggle against ISIS not taken place, European countries would today be facing terrorist groups on the streets of their own cities. He described the EU’s decision as a form of “ingratitude” toward the sacrifices made by the IRGC in enhancing international security.

Responding to a query regarding the recent visit of India’s Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) Pavan Kapoor to Tehran, the Ambassador noted

that the visit falls within the framework of continuous co-operation and regular security dialogue. He noted that Iran and India enjoy a long-standing and robust history of bilateral cooperation, particularly in the areas of security and regional affairs. He expressed hope for upcoming visits by senior security officials from both nations to further expand cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Addressing alleged threats from American forces, the Ambassador maintained that while Tehran does not seek war, it remains in a state of full preparedness to defend its sovereignty. He cautioned that the United States should seriously reconsider its military and security calculations regarding Iran and refrain from approaches that escalate tensions and instability, adding that Iran has always welcomed diplomatic solutions.

Regarding the internal climate in Iran, Fathali described the situation as normal and stable, despite what he characterised as a difficult period in recent weeks. He noted that President Masoud Pezeshkian is personally monitoring the economic situation, with a focus on improving the livelihoods of the Iranian people. He said that through the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei and the unity of the Iranian people, the country successfully overcame those challenging circumstances. — ANI

UN faces ‘imminent financial collapse’ as dues pile up: Guterres

Detailing the gravity of the situation, Guterres recently circulated a letter to all UN member nations, warning of a severe financial crunch and urging governments to either reform budgetary rules or face “the very real prospect of the financial collapse of our Organisation”

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has cautioned that the world body is heading towards an “imminent financial collapse” as member states fall behind on annual contributions and structural funding issues deepen.

Detailing the gravity of the situation, Guterres recently circulated a letter to all UN member nations, warning of a severe financial crunch and urging governments to either reform budgetary rules or face “the very real prospect of the financial collapse of our Organisation”, according to Al Jazeera. He also called on countries to clear their outstanding dues.



The warning was addressed publicly during a Friday afternoon briefing, when a UN spokesperson was asked about the letter and responded that, “when it comes to paying, it’s now or never.”

Expanding on the organisation’s financial vulnerability, spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters, “We do not have the sort of cash reserves and the sort of liquidity to keep functioning as we’ve done in previous years - and this is something that the secretary-general has warned with increasing strength each year.”

While Guterres did not single out any country, the appeal comes at a time when US President Donald Trump has moved to cut Washington’s financial support for multilateral bodies. His administration has announced plans to withdraw from several UN agencies and has also promoted what Trump calls a “Board of Peace” initiative. Against this backdrop, Al Jazeera reported that some experts believe the initiative is aimed at sidelining the United Nations.

Commenting on the proposal,

Louis Charbonneau, UN director at Human Rights Watch, said, “Trump’s board appears to be a kind of pay-to-play, global club, judging from the USD 1 billion fee for permanent membership.”

He further added, “Instead of handing Trump USD 1 billion checks, governments should work together to protect the UN and other institutions established to uphold international human rights and humanitarian law, the global rule of law, and accountability.”

Under the existing system, UN membership fees are calculated based on factors such as national gross domestic product, debt levels and economic capacity, with the United States contributing 22 per cent of the core budget, followed by China at 20 per cent.

Despite this framework, Guterres said that by the end of 2025, unpaid dues had reached a record USD 1.57 billion, without identifying the countries responsible.

Reiterating the urgency of reform, he warned, according to Al Jazeera, “Either all Member States honour their obligations to pay

in full and on time - or Member States must fundamentally overhaul our financial rules to prevent an imminent financial collapse.”

Even as financial pressures mount, the UN earlier this month approved a USD 3.45 billion budget for 2026, reflecting a 7 per cent reduction from last year as the organisation attempts to curb spending. However, despite these cost-cutting steps, Guterres cautioned in his letter that the UN could exhaust its cash reserves by July.

He also pointed to what he described as an outdated rule that requires the organisation to return hundreds of millions of dollars in unused funds to member states each year. Highlighting the impact of this mechanism, Guterres said, “In other words, we are trapped in a Kafkaesque cycle expected to give back cash that does not exist.” Reflecting the scale of the challenge, figures published on the organisation’s website show that as of Thursday, only 36 of the UN’s 193 member countries had fully paid their regular 2026 contributions. — ANI

INDIAN COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS

Arab League chief backs US-led Gaza peace board, says “we have to try”

NEW DELHI: Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit defended Arab states’ decision to support the US-led Board of Peace on Gaza, saying it offered a rare opening for a ceasefire after repeated diplomatic efforts had failed to stop the fighting.

Setting out the Arab League’s broader regional approach during the interaction, Aboul Gheit, speaking on Friday at a public event hosted by the Indian Council of World Affairs and moderated by former diplomat Talmiz Ahmad, said Gulf countries have consistently opposed military escalation and advocated diplomatic solutions.

Providing context for Arab backing of the Gaza initiative, he said, “We have had a president in Washington who admitted that he was a Zionist himself. He supported Israel directly as a Zionist.”

Referring to former President Joe Biden, he added, “Four times there have been calls in the Security Council and draft resolutions presented calling for a ceasefire in Palestine, and the American administration at the time vetoed them all.”

Against this backdrop, most Gulf Arab states signed on to the Board of Peace last week in Davos, despite scepticism over its framework.

Several European countries, including France, the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden, have declined, citing concerns that the body could undermine the United Nations.

Responding to those reservations, Aboul Gheit defended Arab participation, saying, “When I heard for the first time that the American president himself, in person, was committing himself to lead a council or a board to supervise a settlement, well, welcome!”

He added, “Between someone who was saying, ‘I am the strongest adviser and supporter to Israel, I am a Zionist’ and a president who says, ‘I am for peace and for



the ending of the killing and ending the conflict’, if we are logical, we have to try.”

At the same time, he acknowledged unresolved questions surrounding funding, oversight, coordination with the United Nations and the absence of the Palestinian Authority from the executive committee, stating, “How the implementation will proceed remains to be seen.”

Turning from Gaza to wider regional security concerns, Aboul Gheit warned that any military action against Iran would have serious consequences for the region and beyond.

Referring to a potential strike, he said, “If such an event happens, it will be negative for the region and for everyone else,” adding, “It will be a disaster for the peace of the world.”

His remarks came in response to a question on US President Donald Trump’s announcement that a naval armada had been dispatched to the Gulf, raising fears of possible military action against Tehran.

Placing the deployment in historical context, Aboul Gheit noted that the US Fifth Fleet has been based in Bahrain since 1995 and that American forces have main-

tained a presence in the region since 1945.

“The presence of the American troops in the Gulf, Bahrain, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean is not a new development,” he said, adding that what had changed was “the politics and policies” in Washington.

Questioning recent US statements in this context, the former Egyptian foreign minister said, “I am not taken in by [the] declarations of Americans.”

He added, “Yes, they want to settle from that point of view, thinking that Iran is a nuclear country.”

Broadening the discussion to the Palestinian issue, Aboul Gheit addressed Israel’s opposition to Palestinian statehood, saying occupying powers rarely concede political demands voluntarily.

“An occupying power will never tell you, ‘Yes, sir, you are permitted to do so,’” he said, drawing parallels with colonial rule.

Linking regional tensions to wider global shifts, he also warned of increasing international instability, saying, “I claim that we are in the midst of a Cold War,” while arguing that the American empire was facing decline.

Reflecting on historical prec-

edents, Aboul Gheit said, “There is no way for a new order to emerge without war,” citing the formation of the United Nations after the Second World War.

Asked how the current turbulence might be resolved, he said, “In all honesty, I don’t know. The situation is very fluid.”

Earlier in the day, Aboul Gheit met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in New Delhi.

In a post on X, Jaishankar said the two held a “warm” meeting and exchanged views on “recent developments in the region”.

Touching on bilateral relations during the interaction, Aboul Gheit expressed optimism about India-Arab ties, praising India’s achievements and highlighting the large Indian workforce across Gulf countries.

“The Arabs understand the potential of India,” he said, while noting that momentum in ties had slowed in recent years.

Aboul Gheit is in New Delhi to participate in the second Arab-India foreign ministers’ meeting, taking place today after a ten-year hiatus.

He also inaugurated the Arab-Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Friday.

US TAKE CONTROL OF GREENLAND



US needs Europe, German defence minister says

BERLIN: German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius urged European governments to act more confidently toward the United States.

It would be a mistake “if we stared at the White House like a rabbit staring at a snake,” Pistorius told the RND media group.

He added: “Then we would lose focus on what we need to do: Become more sovereign and independent.”

US President Donald Trump relies on uncertainty and fear to achieve his goals, “but those who are afraid make the wrong decisions, so let’s not allow ourselves to be intimidated,” said the defence minister.

Pistorius was referring to European governments’ resistance to Trump’s renewed push to have the US take control of Greenland, a semiautonomous territory of Denmark.

Europe’s strategic importance to the US

He stressed that the US needs Europe just as much as the Europeans need the US, saying that Europe is of geostrategic and geo-economic importance to Washington.

“Imagine if Europe were to become Russia’s sphere of influence if [Russian President] Vladimir Putin succeeded in driving the Americans out of here or causing them to with-

draw,” Pistorius said.

Washington would be “sandwiched between Russia and China. That would certainly not be in the Americans’ interest,” he added.

‘No signs that Russia seriously wants peace,’ says Pistorius

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius has said he doubts that Russian President Vladimir Putin really desires peace as the US leads efforts to end Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

In comments published on Saturday, Pistorius told the RND media group that although US President Donald Trump had given new impetus to diplomatic efforts toward peace, recent actions by Moscow seemed to speak a different language.

“So far, [...] I see no signs that Russia seriously wants peace,” Pistorius said, noting that even while recent US-led negotiations in Abu Dhabi were going on, Putin had attacked Ukraine “in a way that has hardly been seen in this war.”

Pistorius also rejected claims by the Kremlin that its attacks have never targeted civilians or civilian infrastructure, saying: “This is terror directed exclusively at the civilian population during a winter with temperatures of minus 20 degrees [Celsius] (-4 degrees Fahrenheit).” — nw

Another World Cup chapter awaits Oman at ICC T20 World Cup 2026

Oman will return to cricket's biggest T20 stage for the fourth time, joining seven other Associate Nations at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in India and Sri Lanka

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As Oman continue their steady rise on the international cricket scene, the national team will once again take the field at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, this time co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, from February 7 to March 8. Qualification marks Oman's fourth appearance at the tournament, underlining the progress the team has made since its first World Cup entry in 2016. Oman secured their spot through a strong campaign at the Asia-EAP Regional Qualifier, finishing second in the Super Six behind Nepal. Nadeem Khan and Jiten Ramanandi were standout performers with the ball in that tournament, each taking 11 wickets, while batting was anchored by the experience of Jatinder Singh, Oman's all-time leading T20I run-scorer. Speaking to Times of Oman ahead of the team's departure to Sri Lanka, where the team is currently camping for the first game on February 9, Jatinder described the achievement as both motivating and a learning opportunity. "It's a proud moment, the boys are really looking forward to playing in the World Cup. To play for the fourth time as an Associate nation is something we are proud of and we are looking forward to showcase our talent on the biggest stage." Oman's journey reflects the growing professionalism and



depth of cricket in the country. With a mix of seasoned campaigners and emerging talent, Oman are well-positioned to test themselves against elite opponents. Oman, coached by Duleep Mendis and his deputy Sulakshan Kulkarni, will compete in Group B alongside co-hosts Sri Lanka, Australia, Ireland, and Zimbabwe with their opening match against Zimbabwe on February 9. While Oman carry the hopes of their fans, they are part of a larger Associate nation's presence that adds diversity and competitive intrigue to the tournament with a total of eight nations along with Oman at the upcoming edition. Here's a closer look at the other Associate teams: **Italy:** They will make their World Cup debut, having topped European sub-regional qualifying and edged past Jersey in the Europe Regional Qualifier. Led by Wayne Madsen and featuring former South Africa international JJ Smuts, Italy are in Group C.



Canada: They made a winning T20 World Cup debut in 2024, and return after a perfect Americas Regional Qualifier, winning all six matches. All-rounder Shivam Sharma led the wickets, while 22-year-old captain Dilpreet Bajwa continues to impress. Canada

will play in Group D. **Namibia:** They continue their reliable World Cup record, making a fourth consecutive appearance. All-rounder JJ Smit starred at the Africa Qualifier, with captain Gerhard Erasmus leading a largely experienced squad. Despite a final

loss to Zimbabwe, Namibia's qualification was assured. **Nepal:** The Asian nation arrived unbeaten from the Asia-EAP pathway, surviving multiple tight finishes including a one-run victory over the UAE. Rohit Paudel captains the squad, supported by all-rounder Dipendra Singh Airee. Nepal will be hoping to progress beyond the group stage for the first time in their third World Cup appearance. **Netherlands:** The Dutch secured their seventh T20 World Cup berth, topping the European Regional Qualifier. Led by Scott Edwards, they bring experience in Asian conditions and a balanced squad for Group A, which includes co-hosts India and Pakistan. **Scotland:** They earned a late entry, replacing Bangladesh as the highest-ranked team not already qualified. Ranked 14th globally, Scotland make their seventh World Cup appearance, with a well-balanced squad ready for the challenge.

UAE: The Gulf nation finished third behind Nepal and Oman in the Super Six, and sealed the final World Cup spot from Asia with a decisive win over Japan. Captain Muhammad Waseem leads a side highlighted by Alishan Sharafu, the Qualifier's leading run-scorer. **USA:** They qualified automatically thanks to their historic 2024 campaign, which included a famous win over Pakistan and a Super 8 finish. Coach Pubudu Dassanayake believes his side can replicate that success and compete across all departments. For Oman, the focus remains on building from experience and testing themselves with a blend of experience and youth against world-class opposition. With leadership, talent, and growing depth, the team looks to add another proud chapter to their World Cup story, searching for success after having recorded only two victories from their previous three World Cup appearances. (With inputs from ICC)

SEMI-FINALS



HM's Cup final: Oman vs Al Nahda

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Club and Al Nahda Club will clash in the His Majesty's Cup Football Championship final on 14 February at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher, promising a historic showdown between two sides. His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, will preside over the final. Oman Club will be aiming for their third HM's Cup title, having previously lifted the trophy in 1979 and 1994 — maintaining a perfect record in finals to date. Their appearance in the 2026 final comes 32 years after their last triumph, marking a long-awaited return to the competition's showpiece. Al Nahda, meanwhile, will hope to build on recent success, having claimed their maiden HM's Cup title in the 2022-23 season. The Buraimi-based side has reached four finals overall, winning once and finishing runner-up three times, and will be eager to add a second trophy to their cabinet. At the Al Buraimi Sports Complex on Thursday, Al Nahda



produced a commanding performance in the second leg, overturning a 1-0 first-leg deficit with a 2-0 win. Azzan al Tamimi restored parity in the aggregate scoreline before Ahd al Mashaikhi doubled the lead, securing their place in the final. In Salalah, Oman advanced after a 1-1 draw in the second leg on

Thursday, building on a 2-0 first-leg victory. Al Nasr took the lead through Abdullah al Musharafi, but Ahmed al Siyabi equalised for Oman. A red-card incident reduced Al Nasr to 10 men, and Oman Club managed the closing stages with composure to confirm their final berth under Moroccan coach Driss El Mrabet.

LAHORE

Pakistan spin out Australia in second T20I to clinch series

LAHORE: Skipper Salman Agha hit his highest score in the shortest format before Pakistan's spinners routed Australia by 90 runs in the second Twenty20 international in Lahore on Saturday. Agha hit a 40-ball 76 and Usman Khan smashed a 36-ball 53 as Pakistan made 198-5, their highest-ever T20I total against Australia. This was enough for Pakistan's spin quintet who shared all ten wickets between them with Abrar Ahmed returning the best figures of 3-14 and Shadab Khan finishing with 3-26. Australia were routed for 108 in 15.4 overs, giving Pakistan their biggest T20I victory over Australia eclipsing the 66-run win in Abu Dhabi in 2018. The victory gives Pakistan an unbeatable 2-0 lead after they won the first match by 22 runs, also in Lahore, on Friday. This is Pakistan's first T20I series win over Australia since 2018. The final match is on Sunday, also in Lahore. Despite skipper Mitchell Marsh coming back after resting on Friday, the visiting batters had little answer to Pakistan's spin assault. Ahmed dismissed Marsh for 18, Josh Inglis for five and Matthew Short for 27. Cameroon Green top scored with a 20-ball 35 before spinner Usman Tariq dismissed him on his way to figures of 2-16. Earlier, Agha and Usman led Pakistan to a fighting total after they won the toss and batted. Agha built the innings with Saim Ayub (11-ball 23) during a second wicket stand of 55 as Pakistan scored 72 runs in the power-paly. Agha's previous highest in all T20 cricket was 68 not out. After Babar Azam failed with a five-ball two, Usman helped Agha add another quickfire 49 for the fourth wicket before Sean Abbott broke the stand. Agha smashed four sixes and



eight fours in his sixth Twenty20 half century. Pakistan added a good 61 runs in the last five overs with Usman knocking two sixes and four fours in his second T20I half century while Shadab's knock had two sixes and a four. The Usman-Shadab fifth-wicket stand yielded 63 runs off just 39 balls. Shadab finished with an unbeaten 20-ball 28. Pacer Xavier Bartlett and spinner Matthew Kuhnemann were expensive, conceding 92 runs between them in their eight overs. **Brief scores:** Pakistan 198/5 (Salman 76, Usman 53, Connolly 1-30) beat Australia 108 in 15.4 overs (Green 35, Abrar 3-14, Shadab 3-26, Tariq 2-16) by 90 runs. - Agencies

INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES

India's foreign exchange reserves reached a new all-time high in the week ended January 23, according to the Reserve Bank of India's latest data.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MARKET CAPITALISATION

The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded gains in its market capitalization of about OMR1.5 billion in January, benefiting from the rise in share prices and the increase in the market cap of public shareholding companies and the bond and sukuk market.

Oman's economic activity remains resilient despite global challenges

Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth reached 1.6 percent in 2024 and further accelerated to 2.3 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2025

MUSCAT: Oman's economic activity remained resilient amid a challenging global environment, according to the Sultanate's central bank's its latest Macroeconomic Stability Report 2025 released on Thursday.

Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth reached 1.6 percent in 2024 and further accelerated to 2.3 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2025. This reflects moderate hydrocarbon output alongside sustained expansion in non-hydrocarbon sectors. "Growth was driven mainly by services and manufacturing, supported by ongoing diversification efforts and increased private sector investment," the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) Macroeconomic Stability Report 2025 said.



The report further indicated that fiscal developments in Oman continued to support macroeconomic stability. Fiscal consolidation efforts—underpinned by expenditure rationalisation, non-oil revenue mobilisation, and proactive public debt management—contributed to an improved fiscal position. "Together with contained

inflation and a stable external position, these developments helped reduce macroeconomic and macro-financial vulnerabilities," the report further added. CBO's Macroeconomic Stability Report 2025 further indicated that monetary and financial conditions remained broadly accommodative while preserving price and exchange rate stability. The exchange

rate peg of the Omani Rial to the US dollar continued to provide a credible nominal anchor. The banking sector remained sound, supported by adequate capital and liquidity buffers, resilient asset quality, and a robust regulatory and supervisory framework. "Liquidity conditions in the financial system were comfortable, facilitating continued credit intermediation to the

productive sectors of the economy," the report further added. The report is structured around an integrated assessment of global developments and oil market dynamics; domestic economic conditions; monetary sector developments; fiscal balance and fiscal performance; external buffers and the sustainability of the exchange rate peg; price stability

and inflation risks; and sovereign ratings and perceived country risk. Together, these pillars provide a coherent macro-financial framework for evaluating economic conditions, identifying vulnerabilities, and assessing their implications for financial stability. Looking ahead, the report assesses the near- to medium-term outlook as favourable, supported by ongoing structural reforms, strategic investment, and an improving business environment. Continued progress in economic diversification, human capital development, and productivity-enhancing reforms will be essential to sustaining growth and strengthening resilience to external shocks. Overall, the Macroeconomic Stability Report 2025 complements other flagship reports produced by CBO and serves as an effective information tool aims to monitor developments, assess risks, and evaluate the implications of macroeconomic trends for financial stability. The CBO's new report is a periodic flagship publication providing an analytical assessment of recent macroeconomic developments and their spillovers to the financial system. It presents a forward-looking evaluation of economic and financial conditions, enhancing transparency and providing a reference for policymakers, market participants, and researchers, in line with Oman Vision 2040. -Oman

LONG-TERM GLOBAL INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT



European PTA and PET industrial complex relocates to Sohar in major petrochemical investment

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone continue to strengthen its position as an integrated industrial and logistics hub following the announcement of the relocation of an existing industrial platform for the production of purified terephthalic acid (PTA) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) from the Port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands to Sohar. The move reflects the growing attractiveness of the Sultanate of Oman as a destination for long-term global industrial investment. The development follows the signing of two strategic agreements with two subsidiaries of Germany's MAC Group—Sohar Petrochemicals Company and Sohar International Mineral Chemicals Company—alongside OQ Refineries and Petroleum Industries Company, to develop an industrial complex for the production of PTA and PET. Total investment in the project is estimated at approximately OMR 211 million. The project highlights the expanding regional role of Sohar Port and Freezone as a centre for advanced downstream industries and export-oriented manufacturing, demonstrating its ability to attract established and scalable international investments within a supportive operational

and regulatory environment. It also underscores the efficiency of the port's operating model, where bulk handling operations, pipeline networks, logistics services, and industrial manufacturing are fully integrated within a single, expandable operational framework. The agreements include a land lease in Sohar Freezone and a sub-lease agreement within Sohar Port, establishing a dual-site development model that links port-based logistics operations with manufacturing activities in the freezone under a unified regulatory and operational structure. The project covers a total area of 65.5 hectares, including 11.9 hectares within Sohar Port and 53.6 hectares in Sohar Freezone. This configuration enables storage, handling, and the direct connection of raw materials to the manufacturing site through dedicated pipeline infrastructure. Emile Hoogsteden, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar Port, said the project reflects a strategic decision to relocate to an operating environment capable of efficiently supporting complex industrial processes with long-term stability. He noted that Sohar Port and Freezone offer an integrated ecosystem combining infrastructure, logistics, and industrial manufacturing, a key factor in global industrial re-

shoring and relocation decisions. In a statement to the Oman News Agency, Hoogsteden said the complex is expected to supply markets across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe with PTA and PET products, reinforcing Sohar's role as a manufacturing and export hub beyond the local market. These materials are essential inputs for a wide range of industries, including packaging, polyester fibers, plastic films, textiles, coatings, and other advanced industrial applications. He added that operationally, the project enhances the value proposition of Sohar Port and Freezone by enabling raw materials to be imported through the port, stored and handled using specialized infrastructure, and transported directly via pipelines to manufacturing facilities in the freezone, reducing logistical complexity while improving safety and efficiency. According to reports by ICIS Chemicals and Energy, additional raw materials such as monoethylene glycol and acetic acid will be imported through Sohar Port and transported via dedicated pipelines through storage facilities operated by Advorio, further demonstrating the depth and cohesion of the industrial ecosystem at the port and freezone. For his part, Raed bin Mohammed Al Rabie, Chief Executive Of-

ficer of Sohar Freezone and Deputy CEO of Sohar Port, said the land lease agreement strengthens the freezone's position as a key hub for strategic downstream industries with sustainable economic impact. He added that the project supports Oman Vision 2040 objectives by reinforcing industrial diversification, maximizing local value addition, and promoting export-led growth. Al Rabie noted that at the regional level, the project consolidates Sohar Port and Freezone's status as an advanced industrial and logistics gateway linking global supply chains with high-value manufacturing. Locally, the project contributes to enhancing downstream value creation by converting raw materials into high-value industrial products, expanding export capacity, and deepening national industrial capabilities. He concluded that the project represents a clear strategic milestone, reflecting Sohar's evolution from a destination for new investments into a platform capable of attracting, relocating, expanding, and integrating existing international industrial operations within a comprehensive ecosystem encompassing logistics services, storage infrastructure, pipeline networks, and industrial manufacturing.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Muscat Municipality awards contracts for development of 7 residential park projects in Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: At the Municipality's headquarters in Darsait, Eng. Ahmed bin Saeed Al Amri, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, chaired a meeting of the Municipality's Internal Tenders Committee last Thursday, during which contracts were awarded for seven residential park projects across several wilayats in the Governorate of Muscat as part of the Municipality's project plan for the current year. The projects aim to increase the number of parks in residential neighbourhoods, enhance the urban landscape, and improve social well-being and public amenities for residents. The meeting approved the rehabilitation of Wadi Al Kabir Park, with an area of 2,363 square metres, to include children's play areas, lighting, seating, and shaded zones. The projects also include the rehabilitation of Al Khiran village Park, covering 5,878 square metres, as well as the construction of a residential park in Al Amerat, covering 8,750 square metres. The Al Amerat Park will feature a multi-purpose sports court, shaded areas, lighting, and children's playgrounds. The list also includes the development of two residential parks in Al Maabala. The first covers 7,417 square metres and the second 10,091 square metres. Both parks will offer a range of facilities, including lighting, seating areas, multi-purpose courts, shaded spaces, and children's play areas. One of the parks will also include a café and public restrooms. The meeting further approved the construction of a residential park in Qurayyat, covering 7,698 square metres, as well as the development of Al Rawiyah Park in Muscat, with an area of 251 square metres. Al Rawiyah Park will include a play area, green spaces, and seating facilities. Commenting on the awarding



of the projects, Eng. Ahmed bin Saeed Al Amri said, "The implementation of residential neighbourhood park projects reflects Muscat Municipality's commitment to enhancing the visual character of residential areas and providing modern infrastructure in line with urban expansion and sustainable development across the governorate. These efforts also align with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 to create more human-centred cities and expand green spaces." He added, "The Municipality is committed to the optimal use of available land, increasing green coverage, and delivering sustainable services to residents across different areas. These initiatives contribute to creating a vibrant natural environment that enhances community well-being throughout the Governorate of Muscat." Through the implementation of these projects, Muscat Municipality reaffirms its commitment to creating a healthy, attractive urban environment and to providing public facilities that meet the needs of all segments of society. These initiatives strengthen social cohesion and encourage active and healthy lifestyles, supporting the Municipality's vision for a vibrant, prosperous, and sustainable Muscat.

MARKET

MSX market capitalisation records gain of OMR1.5bn in January 2026

The market capitalisation of securities listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange rose to OMR33.51 billion by the end of January trading, recording a growth of 4.6 percent compared to its level in December 2025



MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded gains in its market capitalization of about OMR1.5 billion in January, benefiting from the rise in share prices and the increase in the market cap of public shareholding companies and the bond and sukuk market.

The market capitalisation of securities listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange rose to OMR33.51 billion by the end of January trading, recording a growth of 4.6 percent compared to its level in December 2025, which amounted to OMR32.11 billion.

The market capitalisation of public shareholding companies constituted 51.6 percent of the total market cap after rising to OMR17.3 billion by the end of trading in January, while the market cap of bonds and sukuk market reached OMR5.1 billion, constituting 15.3 percent of the total market cap of the stock exchange. The market capitalisation of closed companies reached OMR11.49 billion while the market capitalisation of promising companies market reached OMR2.7 million.

OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) topped the list of public shareholding companies with the

highest market value at OMR3.17 billion, followed by Bank Muscat at OMR2.70 billion, Bank Sohar International at OMR1.85 billion, Asyad Shipping with a market value of OMR994.8 million and OQ Gas Networks has a market value of OMR892.1 million.

The Muscat Stock Exchange benefited in January from the rise in share prices of many public shareholding companies. In January, the exchange witnessed an increase in the prices of 80 securities, compared to 20 securities whose prices declined and 11 securities that remained stable at their previous levels.

These gains pushed the main index and sectoral indices of the Muscat Stock Exchange to record new record levels, as the main index closed at the end of January trading at 6,330 points, recording gains of 463 points, rising by 7.9 percent. The industrial sector index rose by 14.8 percent and closed at 9,009 points, recording a rise of 1,162 points. The financial

sector index rose by 10.1 percent and closed at 1,091.8 points, rising during the month by 1,009 points. The services sector index rose by 12.8 points, and the Sharia index recorded gains of 63 points.

Trading value in January reached OMR836.8 million, registering a decline of 6.7 percent from its level in December 2025, which amounted to OMR897.5 million. The number of transactions executed decreased from 101,000 transactions to about 97,000 transactions.

The trading of Bank Muscat and Bank Sohar International constituted about 35 percent of the total trading value. Bank Muscat saw trading worth OMR147.5 million, and Bank Sohar saw trading worth OMR143.4 million. OQ Exploration and Production came in third place with trading worth OMR133.6 million, Omantel came in fourth with trading worth OMR85.5 million, and OQ Basic Industries came in fifth place with trading value at OMR74.2 million. -ONA

Local investment institutions inject more liquidity on MSX in weekly trading

MUSCAT: Local investment funds and institutions increased their purchases on the Muscat Stock Exchange during the week, reflecting the level of optimism among local investment institutions that injected more liquidity into the stock exchange after public shareholding companies announced their financial results and recommendations for distributing profits.

During the week, banks and several public shareholding companies disclosed their dividend distribution proposals to shareholders. Oman Cables Industry recommended a cash dividend of 95.5 baisa per share, while Gulf Mushroom Production recommended a cash dividend of 25 baisa per share and a 10% bonus share distribution.

Most banks announced their dividend recommendations, such as Bank Muscat, which recommended a cash dividend of 18 baisa per share; National Bank of Oman, which announced a dividend of 10.5 baisa per share; Bank Dhofar, which announced a dividend of 7.5 baisa per share; and Bank Nizwa, which recommended a cash dividend of 2.7 baisa per share and mandatory convertible bonds (Sukuk) at a rate of 4.54% of paid-up capital. Ahli Bank and Bank Sohar International opted to combine cash dividends and bonds. These recommendations will be presented to the Annual General Meetings (AGMs) scheduled for next March.

Trading data issued by the Muscat Stock Exchange indicated that purchases by local investment institutions during the week amounted to



OMR170.7 million, accounting for 72.6 percent of the total trading value, compared to sales of OMR146.5 million, representing 62.3 percent of the total trading value. Meanwhile, local individual investors tended to sell to take advantage of the gains achieved by shares during the past months, with their sales constituting 17.5 percent of the total trading value, compared to purchases of 14.4 percent.

The industrial sector index recorded the highest gains, rising 263 points, benefiting from the rise in shares of Voltamp Energy, Al Jazeera Steel Products, Oman Chrome, and a number of other industrial companies. The financial sector index rose 149 points after the rise in shares of a number of banks and investment companies. The services sector index recorded an increase of 17 points, and the Sharia index rose to 589 points, recording an increase of 6 points.

Bank Muscat topped the list of most traded companies in terms of trading value, with trades worth OMR48.1 million, accounting for 20.4 percent of the total trading value. Oman-

tel came in second with trades worth OMR32.1 million, Bank Sohar International came in third with trades of OMR30.9 million, OQ Exploration and Production came in fourth with trades worth OMR29.9 million, while OQ Basic Industries came in fifth with trades worth OMR21.8 million.

The week also saw the prices of 48 securities rise, compared to 31 securities whose prices declined and 20 securities that remained unchanged at their previous levels. Gulfar Engineering and Contracting topped the list of winning stocks, rising by 25 percent and closing at 105 baisa. Voltamp Energy came in second place, rising by 17.6 percent and closing at 1 rial and 700 baisa. National Finance rose to 204 baisa, recording an increase of about 14 percent.

The share of Majan Glass led the losing shares, declining by 29.4 percent and closing at 12 baisa. The share of Gulf Hotels - Oman fell by 10 percent and closed at 3 rials and 555 baisa, and the share of Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles declined by 6.4 percent and closed at 188 baisa.

-ONA

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES



India's forex reserves hit record high of \$709.4bn

NEW DELHI: India's foreign exchange reserves reached a new all-time high in the week ended January 23, according to the Reserve Bank of India's latest data.

Foreign exchange reserves rose sharply by USD 8.053 billion in the week to \$709.413 billion, driven by a jump in both gold reserves and foreign currency assets.

Over the past few weeks, the forex kitty has been largely in an uptrend.

Its previous high was USD 704.89 billion, touched in September 2024.

For the reported week (that ended January 23), India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of foreign exchange reserves, stood at USD 562.885 billion, up USD 2.367 billion.

The RBI data showed that gold reserves currently stand at USD 123.088 billion, up USD 5.635 billion from the previous week.

After the latest monetary policy review meeting in early December, the RBI had said that the country's foreign exchange reserves were sufficient to cover

more than 11 months of merchandise imports.

Overall, India's external sector remains resilient, and the RBI is confident it can comfortably meet external financing requirements.

In 2025, the forex kitty has increased by about 56 billion, according to data.

In 2024, reserves rose by just over USD 20 billion.

In 2023, India added around USD 58 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of USD 71 billion in 2022.

Foreign exchange reserves, or forex reserves, are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority, primarily in reserve currencies such as the US dollar, with smaller portions in the Euro, Japanese yen, and Pound Sterling.

The RBI often intervenes by managing liquidity, including selling dollars, to prevent a steep depreciation of the rupee. The RBI strategically buys dollars when the Rupee is strong and ideally sells when it weakens. -ANI

STEEPEST ANNUAL DROP

Trump tariffs, dollar's dip a double-hit to eurozone exports

WASHINGTON: The US dollar continues to fall sharply in value against other major currencies, continuing the trend that saw its steepest annual drop in almost a decade in 2025.

The dollar fell by 1.3% against a basket of currencies on Tuesday, meaning that it has fallen by 2.6% since the start of 2026. It slumped by 9.5% in 2025.

The fall in the dollar has implications for the euro and other currencies. The single European currency has now hit the \$1.2 level for the first time since 2021, while the British pound and Japanese yen have also reached recent highs against the US currency.

Several economists and analysts have attributed the dollar's continuing decline to a lack of investor faith in the US currency amid continuing concern over unpredictable policymaking from US President Donald Trump.

There is also the view that Trump and many in his economic team want the dollar to lose value in the hope that it will boost US exports and manufacturing as part of a long-held strategy.

Trump has done little to dispel this.

When asked this week if he was concerned by the dollar's fall in value, he said: "No, I think it's great."

Stephen Miran, a former chairman of Trump's Council of Economic Advisers and now a member of the Board of Governors of the US Federal Reserve, published a "User's Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System" in November 2024 with possible tools for correcting the trade deficit, mentioning specifically tariffs and devaluation of the dollar as the main instruments.

Should Europe care?

Whatever the implications of a falling dollar for the US economy may be, it has consequences for the eurozone economy and the euro, which surged by 13% against the dollar in 2025 already — its best year since 2017.



Jack Allen-Reynolds, deputy chief eurozone economist with economic consultancy Capital Economics says the rise of the euro matters because it plays an "important role in the performance of the economy, the health of the labor market and households' financial position."

"A stronger euro makes exports less competitive, harming the region's manufacturers, while making imports cheaper, lowering prices for consumers," he told DW.

Ricardo Amaro, lead eurozone economist for Oxford Economics, an economic forecasting and advisory firm, notes that if the euro continues to rise in value against the dollar, it would make European companies that export a lot to the US less and less competitive.

Although this would be offset by cheaper prices for US products on European shelves, he believes the current exchange rate, if maintained, would have a negative impact on European growth.

"Our global economic model suggests Eurozone GDP would be around 0.2% lower by year-end should the euro-dollar exchange rate remain at current levels, rather than around the \$1.16 level that acted as a reference point post EU-US trade deal in late July," Amaro told DW.

Mixed picture for exporters

However, Zsolt Darvas, a macroeconomics specialist with the

Bruegel think tank in Brussels, Belgium, points to the fact that during periods when the euro was valued significantly higher than it is now, European exports still performed well.

The latest value of \$1.20 is still below levels observed during 2021, and significantly lower than the \$1.30 to \$1.50 range frequently seen from around 2004 to 2014, Darvas told DW.

"The recent slight decline in the dollar is unlikely to cause significant economic troubles in Europe," said Darvas, adding that widespread media coverage of the falling US dollar may even "encourage investors to shift their focus from US investments to the EU."

But given how exporters have already been jolted by Trump's trade tariffs last year, there are concerns that the exchange rate could "deal another blow," he cautions.

Companies in the STOXX Europe 600 stock market index of major European companies derive around 30% of their revenues from the US, according to Goldman Sachs.

While the stronger euro is already tied to more optimistic growth estimates, certain European sectors could be vulnerable to a cheaper dollar.

Ricardo Amaro says the pharmaceutical and automotive sectors are especially at risk, although he thinks the US reliance on Eu-

ropean pharmaceutical products may offset any potential damage.

Jack Allen-Reynolds, meanwhile, points to generally weak eurozone exports in recent years, particularly due to intensifying competition across a range of sectors from China.

"We doubt that the moves seen so far would have a very big impact on export demand, but it certainly won't help," he said.

Time for ECB market intervention?

The surge in the euro against the dollar has prompted speculation as to whether the European Central Bank (ECB) should intervene in some form.

Austrian central bank governor Martin Kocher thinks the euro's recent gains were "modest" but said the ECB would have to intervene if the exchange rate started to lower inflation forecasts.

Most analysts agree that now is not the time for any significant intervention in monetary policy, but warn further hikes in the value of the euro may force ECB policymakers' hands if inflation goals were to be impacted.

Ricardo Amaro already sees ECB policymakers trying to influence market expectations by stating they are "monitoring the situation and voicing some concern about recent moves."

"This brings rate cut discussions back into the table and acts against the euro appreciation momentum," said Amaro.

For Allen-Reynolds there's also no need to act based on the exchange rate changes so far seen in January. However, further changes could see the ECB cutting interest rates later this year, he believes.

And Zsolt Darvas argues the current inflationary impact is close to zero and that no sector is especially vulnerable.

"Exchange rates have fluctuated widely over the past decades, and companies have adapted to manage much larger swings in exchange rates than what we are currently observing," he said. -DW



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

CONNECT

PRINT EDITION



WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 01, 2026

PLACE YOUR
ADVT HERE

Email to : amcoman@choueirigroup.com





RENT



CARGO



VACANCY



RENT OR SALE?

PLACE YOUR
ADVT HERE

Email: amcoman@choueirigroup.com

DNV 2.7-1 OFFSHORE CONTAINERS, REEFER CONTAINER SALES & RENTALS

ISO CONTAINER SALES, CONVERSIONS & RENTALS



CONTAINER SOLUTIONS LLC
Po Box 522, Pc 322, Falaj Al Qabail, Sohar Free Zone, Oman
Tel: +968 9358 5556, +968 99508921, +968 26942610
FAX: 26942611, Email: sales@containersolutions.com.
www.containersolutions.com



PLACE
YOUR
ADVT HERE

Send your ad to: amcoman@choueirigroup.com



LOOKING FOR
LOGISTIC JOB ?



Send your advt. to:
amcoman@choueirigroup.com

JOB VACANCY

VACANCY

TRUCK AUTO SPARE PARTS DIVISION

Required:

Sales man and store keeper
Priority for experienced

Interested candidates
can send cv to:

hrrecruitmentautoparts@gmail.com

URGENTLY REQUIRED

- Urgently Required Omani with minimum 2 years experience in Media house.
- Knowledge of English both writing & speaking preferred.

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



JOB WANTED

DOCUMENT CONTROLLER

Experienced document controller seeking immediate placement in Oman. QA/QC, project coordination, skilled in EDMS, sharepoint, Aconex, and administrative support.

Contact: +971 585841339
Email: bajifazil@gmail.com

SALES & MARKETING

Seeking a suitable position in Sales & Marketing having 16 yrs of rich experience in Oman and 2 yrs in Africa in the field of Infrastructure, Construction, Building material and Industrial products having good contacts with clients /consultants. BE Mechanical Engineering, PGDM in Management. Holding Valid Omani D/L.

Contact: 94976056

FINANCE

Senior Management Accountant/ Finance Manager

Indian male, MBA Finance, 20+ yrs Gulf experience in Accounting, Auditing, Oman VAT, Tax Assessment. Valid Oman Driving License. Available immediately.

Contact: 96987261 (Oman), +917418469385 (India)
Email: nrajan19742003@gmail.com

BUSINESS HEAD

Accomplished Indian management professional (Engg+MBA). Extensive Marketing & Sales experience in consumer durables industry. Well networked with all channels /corporates of Oman seeking senior management opportunities.

Contact No.: 7708 8859



LOOKING FOR
ENGINEERING
JOB ?

Send your advertisement to:
amcoman@choueirigroup.com

LOOKING FOR
ARCHITECT
JOB?



Send your advertisement to:
amcoman@choueirigroup.com

MEDICAL

Pharmacist with 16 yrs exp. in retail & hospital pharmacy in Muscat & India. Previously registered with MOH, Oman with work License, NOC with D/L, currently in Muscat

Contact: 77336141
Email: confession.mercy@gmail.com

LOOKING FOR **DRIVER** JOB?



Send your advt. to: amcoman@choueirigroup.com

GENERAL MANAGER

Dynamic professional with 16+ yrs of progressive experience in financial strategy, business consulting/management, operational excellence, and growth leadership across Trading, Construction, RMC production, and MNCs company. Open to strategic senior management opportunities.

Contact: 92022786 or 97403883
Email: gm.seekers.2025@gmail.com

MANAGER

Finance and Accounts Manager well experienced, MBA finance with 16years experience in Oman. Looking for senior position in Accounts and finance.

Contact No. 95920740
Email ID: alhameed1527@gmail.com

SERVICE

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

JOB VACANCY

DOMESTIC HELP

Experienced cook required for a respectable Omani family, with experience in Arabic, Indian, continental food, able to read, write and speak English preferred. Good salary and benefits offered. Please send CV with photo to 99239659 or muscatprojects@gmail.com

JOB WANTED

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Cost Accountant, B.Com with 15 yrs exp in Oman. Can join urgently, Contact: 7733 6141

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

Indian male Accountant. 10 yrs in muscat. D/L and NOC available. 79774800

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

Looking for an accounts job with hands-on knowledge of tally and excel. dedicated and detail-oriented. Contact +96896246456

Indian Male Accountant / Accounts Manager, B.Com, 12yrs experience in Oman, valid D/L, looking for suitable job. NOC available. Contact: 90302933.

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

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Indian male, 20 yrs experience, seeking a senior position in accounts & finance (Finalisation, Tax Audit, VAT Returns, Credit Control).contact:96761026/ email:mehreenraiz.com

Indian male Sr. Accountant (M.com with Finance) 17+yrs exp. in Oman with valid D/L. Contact: 91314540

Seeking a job opportunity with solid background of finance and accounts for more than 20 yrs of experience in Oman.contact 92824146 / 94953826

Management, accounting operations & MIS reporting. Seeking a suitable managerial or senior accounting position. Contact: 78581435

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

B.Com, CA Articleship completed 28yrs experience in Muscat Oman. Expert in book keeping, vendor & bank reconciliation, seeking job. Contact : 99072361

Accountant looking for job. Contact: 75024166

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

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

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

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

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

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

ADMINISTRATION

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

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

ARCHITECT

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

IT

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

ENGINEER

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

ENGINEER

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

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

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

Indian male, B.E mechanical with 4+ yrs automotive CFD experience (underhood thermal, ANSA). senior CFD engineer at Alten India. immediate joiner. Contact: 9080451226 | +96896008574 | maheshbabuv1799@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Software Engineer / full-stack developer B. Tech computer science with experience at Google strong in Python, Java, Go, Cloud & AI systems. Contact: +968 91950661 | anaswer.impluse@gmail.com

DRIVER

Qualified pickup light driver available, valid PDO documents available, speaks English and Hindi, contact 97681676

DRIVER

Looking for driver job. Contact: 72852929.

Looking for driver job experience 4 yrs contact 94981482/ 76303505

LOGISTICS

PDO-approved professional with 25+ yrs in oil & gas/ manufacturing, seeking senior leadership in procurement, logistics, or contracts. Contact: "79011679"

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

MANAGER

Finance manager, Indian 26 yrs of experience, looking Job Change, Contact:- 98006226

Indian male, looking assistant MEP manager experience in fit out and construction field. Phone -72815895

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

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

PURCHASE/ PROCUREMENT

Strategic operations leader with 22 yrs experience in Logistics, Procurement and Commercial administration. Expert in leading high performing teams across Store, Branch office, Warehouse, Service and Financial domains. Seeking leadership roles. Contact 93451519, Email anirudhadat@gmail.com

Indian male procurement executive with 11 yrs of experience in Oman, holding Oman D/L available in Muscat for immediate joining. Contact: 92345877

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

SALES/MARKETING

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

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

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

Indian male 15 yrs experience having Oman D/L Looking for suitable placement in sales & marketing- contact - 9169 3829

Minneapolis: Thousands rally against Trump immigration blitz

The demonstrators in Minneapolis carried posters amid freezing temperatures with slogans such as “ICE OUT NOW!” Others held images of Renee Good and called for Trump and US Vice President JD Vance to be impeached

MINNEAPOLIS: Thousands of protesters rallied in Minneapolis and other parts of the United States on Friday against the hard-line immigration tactics used by US President Donald Trump’s administration.

Last month, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection launched Operation Metro Surge in Minneapolis and neighboring St. Paul in an attempt to detain undocumented immigrants in the metropolitan area.

Some 3,000 federal agents have been deployed to Minneapolis amid the operation, five times the number of local police officers in the city.

What happened during the demonstrations?

The killing of two US citizens, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, by federal agents during the operation



this month has sparked national and international indignation and ramped up calls for the Trump administration to end its raids in the Twin Cities as well as broader calls to reform and defund ICE.

The demonstrators in Minneapolis carried posters amid freezing temperatures with slogans such as “ICE OUT NOW!” Others held images of Renee Good and called for Trump and US Vice President JD Vance to be impeached.

Rock star Bruce Springsteen also performed his new single “Streets of Minneapolis” in the city to show solidarity with protesters at a benefit concert hosted by Rage Against The Machine guitarist Tom Morello.

The protests were part of an event called the “National Shutdown,” which called for a “nation-wide day of no school, no work and no shopping.”

In addition, demonstrations were also reported in US cities, including Los Angeles. US media also reported that students walked out of high schools in states such as Indiana, Wisconsin and Maine.

DOJ opens civil rights probe into Alex Pretti killing

The demonstrations come as

the US Department of Justice has opened a civil rights probe into the killing of 37-year-old nurse Alex Pretti by US Border Patrol agents.

“We’re looking at everything that would shed light on what happened that day and in the days and weeks leading up to what happened,” US Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said of the investigation.

The decision to open an investigation has raised questions about whether the federal government can accurately probe a killing by its own agents. Moreover, the federal government has not opened an investigation into the killing of Nicole Good, who was shot dead by an ICE agent.

US Senate passes DHS stopgap as Democrats urge ICE reform

The killings of US citizens — and the deaths of six non-US nationals while held in ICE custody — and reports of unconstitutional activity by ICE and Border Patrol triggered demands from federal Democratic lawmakers for reform, and abolition, of ICE.

The US Senate on Friday voted to fund most of the government through the end of September,



dodging the worst impacts of a government shutdown. However, the Department of Homeland Security, which is responsible for ICE and Border Patrol, will only be funded for two more weeks.

This stopgap measure gives legislators time to discuss possible ICE reforms, such as a ban on face masks and an end to warrantless roving patrols.

“Senate Democrats were successful in separating and passing the five bipartisan government funding bills from the DHS bill,”



Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin of Illinois said. “Now I am willing to give the White House and Republicans two weeks to work with Democrats to reform ICE and the campaign of terror we’ve witnessed in Chicago Minneapolis and around the country. After two weeks, I make no promises.”

Many Republicans have rebuked the Democrats’ demands and defended ICE.

“There is no way in h--- we’re going to let Democrats kneecap

law enforcement and stop deportations in exchange for funding DHS,” Republican Senator Eric Schmitt of Missouri said ahead of the government funding vote. He accused Democrats of wanting to make it “impossible to actually enforce our immigration laws.”

The Senate government funding deal will now move to the US House, which will not convene until Monday. This means the government will partially shut down for a short period, as funding runs out on January 30. —nw

POTENTIAL POLITICAL VIOLENCE

US Embassy issues security alert ahead of elections in Bangladesh

DHAKA: As Bangladesh gears up for the upcoming elections, the US Embassy in Dhaka has issued a security alert warning of potential political violence during the election period and calling for American citizens to remain vigilant.

In a post on X on Friday, it said, “Bangladesh will hold parliamentary elections and a national referendum simultaneously on February 12, 2026. During the election period, political violence or extremist attacks may occur, potentially targeting rallies, polling stations, and religious sites. U.S. citizens should remain vigilant, avoid demonstrations, and exercise caution in the vicinity of any large gatherings.”

The post shared a statement by the US Embassy in Dhaka that further advised people to avoid large crowds and demonstrations, be aware of their surroundings, monitor local news, remain vigilant, keep a low profile, carry a charged mobile phone for emergency communications, review their personal security plans and plan for alternative travel routes.

Earlier on Thursday, the Bangladesh Interim Government expressed deep concern over the recent violent incident in Sherpur that resulted in the death of a political activist of the Jamaat-e-Islami party.

Any loss of life linked to violence is unacceptable and deeply regrettable, the Chief Adviser Press Wing said.

With the national election only two weeks away, the government called on all political parties, including the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, to demonstrate responsible leadership and ensure restraint among their supporters. Violence, intimidation, and loss of life have no place in a democratic process, it added.

The statement called for all parties, leaders, and campaigners to play their role in maintaining peace, respecting the rule of law, and engaging voters through



peaceful and constructive means. The nation’s future depends on calm, discipline, and democratic conduct from all sides.

It said that the Interim Government remains committed to ensuring a peaceful, free, and fair election.

Ahead of the upcoming elections, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council in a statement placed demands for the election commission to create a level playing field and foster a positive environment so that religious and ethnic minority voters can go to polling centres without obstruction, prohibit use of religion and communalism in election campaigns, ensure religious places are prohibited from being used for election campaigning and that religious hate speech, statements, the spread of false rumors, or any such propaganda should be treated as punishable offenses.

As the elections draw close, the Bangladesh Election Commission said it is duty-bound to protect the voting rights of minorities and ensure a peaceful poll.

Senior Assistant Secretary Matiur Rahman said, “Our intelligence agencies have already gathered information regarding potential vulnerabilities in the region. The Election Commission has implemented preventive measures to ensure that no one can disturb the process or harm the voting of any group, including minorities. All agencies are carrying out their duties as per instructions. I can confidently say that no one will be able to interfere with the casting of votes.”

—ANI

OFFICIAL VISIT

Putin calls UAE a ‘key trade partner in Arab world’ during Kremlin talk

MOSCOW: President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, arrived in Russia on an official visit.

A formal welcoming ceremony was held in St. George Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace on Thursday, where he was received by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin. The development was shared on the official website of the Russian President and reported by TV BRICS.

During the meeting, President Putin highlighted the consistent growth in bilateral trade and the positive momentum in Russia-UAE relations. He noted the effective functioning of the intergovernmental commission on trade, economic and technical cooperation, along with the expansion of joint investment initiatives, business forums and sectoral partnerships.

As reported by TV BRICS, the Russian President also underlined the strengthening of humanitarian cooperation between the two countries. He pointed to growing collaboration in education, science and sports, adding that the Days of Russian Culture were successfully organised in the UAE in November.

He further mentioned plans to establish a Russian university and a youth science park in the Emirates as part of long-term cooperation efforts.

Tourism has also seen notable



growth, with a steady increase in the number of Russian visitors to the UAE. In the first nine months of 2025 alone, nearly 1.5 million Russians travelled to the UAE, marking an 18 per cent rise compared to the same period last year.

President Al Nahyan expressed confidence that 2026 would be a year of progress and development for Russia and further prosperity for bilateral relations. He reaffirmed the UAE’s commitment to deepening cooperation and strengthening strategic ties with Moscow.

He emphasised that agreements on trade in services and investments signed last year, along

with the economic partnership agreement between the UAE and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), would play a key role in expanding trade, boosting mutual investments and enhancing economic cooperation.

Commenting on the partnership, Mikhail Khachaturyan, PhD in Economics and Associate Professor at the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, said that while trade structures are not yet fully balanced, rapid growth, rising investments and new agreements are creating a more stable and diversified partnership.

He noted that Russia is in-

creasing exports of agricultural products, including halal meat and confectionery, while Russian investments in the UAE have crossed \$30 billion, with around 4,000 Russian companies registered in the country. Key sectors driving cooperation include energy-related machinery, space, nuclear energy, pharmaceuticals, digital technologies, tourism, payment systems and agriculture.

The last meeting between the two leaders took place on August 7, 2025, during President Al Nahyan’s previous visit to Russia, when both sides reviewed ongoing cooperation and outlined future plans.

—ANI

PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR

Many killed in coltan mine disaster in DRC

NORTH KIVU: Several coltan mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s North Kivu province collapsed amid landslides on Wednesday and Thursday, killing at least 200 people and injuring several others, according to authorities associated with the M23 rebel group.

“For now, there are more than 200 dead, some of whom are still in the mud and have not yet been

recovered,” Lubumba Kambere Muyisa, spokesperson for the rebel-appointed provincial governor said on Friday.

Muyisa said the dead included miners, children and market women.

The toll could not yet be independently verified by agencies.

Scavengers said part of a hillside in the Rubaya mining zone collapsed on Wednesday afternoon

and that a second landslide struck on Thursday morning.

“It rained, then the landslide followed and swept people away. Some were buried and others are still in the pits,” freelance miner Franck Bolingo told AFP news agency.

Muyisas said the governor had temporarily halted artisanal mining on the site and ordered the relocation of residents who had built

shelters near the mine.

Mineral-rich region

Rubaya lies in the heart of mineral-rich eastern Congo, a region that has experienced decades of violence from government forces and different armed groups.

The Rwanda-backed M23, one of those groups, seized the town and took control of its mines in May 2024. —nw

Cambridge scientists have created a breakthrough material that can sense tiny chemical changes in the body, such as the increased acidity during an arthritis flare-up, and release drugs exactly when and where they're needed.

By mimicking cartilage while delivering medication, this smart gel could ease pain, reduce side effects, and provide continuous treatment for millions of arthritis sufferers.

The squishy material can be loaded with anti-inflammatory drugs that are released in response to small changes in pH in the body.

During an arthritis flare-up, a joint becomes inflamed and slightly more acidic than the surrounding tissue.

The material, developed by researchers at the University of Cambridge, has been designed to respond to this natural change in pH.

As acidity increases, the material becomes softer and more jelly-like, triggering the release of drug molecules that can be encapsulated within its structure.

Since the material is designed to respond only within a narrow pH range, the team say that drugs could be released precisely where and when they are needed, potentially reducing side effects.

If used as an artificial cartilage in arthritic joints, this approach could allow for the continuous treatment of arthritis, improving the efficacy of drugs to relieve pain and fight inflammation.

Arthritis affects more than 10 million people in the UK, costing the NHS an estimated £10.2 billion annually. Worldwide it is estimated to affect over 600 million people.

While extensive clinical trials are needed before the material can be used in patients, the researchers say their approach could improve outcomes for people with arthritis, and for those with other conditions including cancer.

Their results are reported in the Journal of the American Chemical Society.

The material developed by the Cambridge team uses specially engineered and reversible crosslinks within a polymer network.

The sensitivity of these links to changes in acidity levels gives the material highly responsive mechanical properties.

The material was developed in Professor Oren Scherman's research group in Cambridge's Yusuf Hamied Department of Chemistry.

The group specialises in designing and building these unique materials for a range of potential applications.

"For a while now, we've been interested in using these materials in joints, since their properties can mimic those of cartilage," said Scherman, who is Professor of Supramolecular and Polymer Chemistry and Director of the Melville Laboratory for Polymer Synthesis.

"But to combine that with highly targeted drug delivery is a really exciting prospect," added Scherman.

"These materials can 'sense' when something is wrong in the body and respond by delivering treatment right where it's needed," said first author Dr Stephen O'Neill.

"This could reduce the need for repeated doses of drugs, while improving patient quality of life," added Dr Stephen O'Neill.

Unlike many drug delivery systems that require external triggers such as heat or light, this one is powered by the body's own chemistry.

The researchers say this could pave the way for longer-lasting, targeted arthritis treatments that automatically respond to flare-ups, boosting effectiveness while reducing harmful side effects.

In laboratory tests, researchers loaded the material with a fluorescent dye to mimic how a real drug might behave.

They found that at acidity levels typical of an arthritic joint, the material released substantially more drug cargo compared with normal, healthy pH levels.

"By tuning the chemistry of these gels, we can make them highly sensitive to the subtle shifts in acidity that occur in inflamed tissue," said co-author Dr Jade McCune.

"That means drugs are released when and where they are needed most," added Dr Jade McCune.

The researchers say the approach could be tailored to a range of medical conditions, by fine-tuning the chemistry of the material.

"It's a highly flexible approach, so we could in theory incorporate both fast-acting and slow-acting drugs, and have a single treatment that lasts for days, weeks or even months," said O'Neill.

The team's next steps will involve testing the materials in living systems to evaluate their performance and safety in a physiological environment.

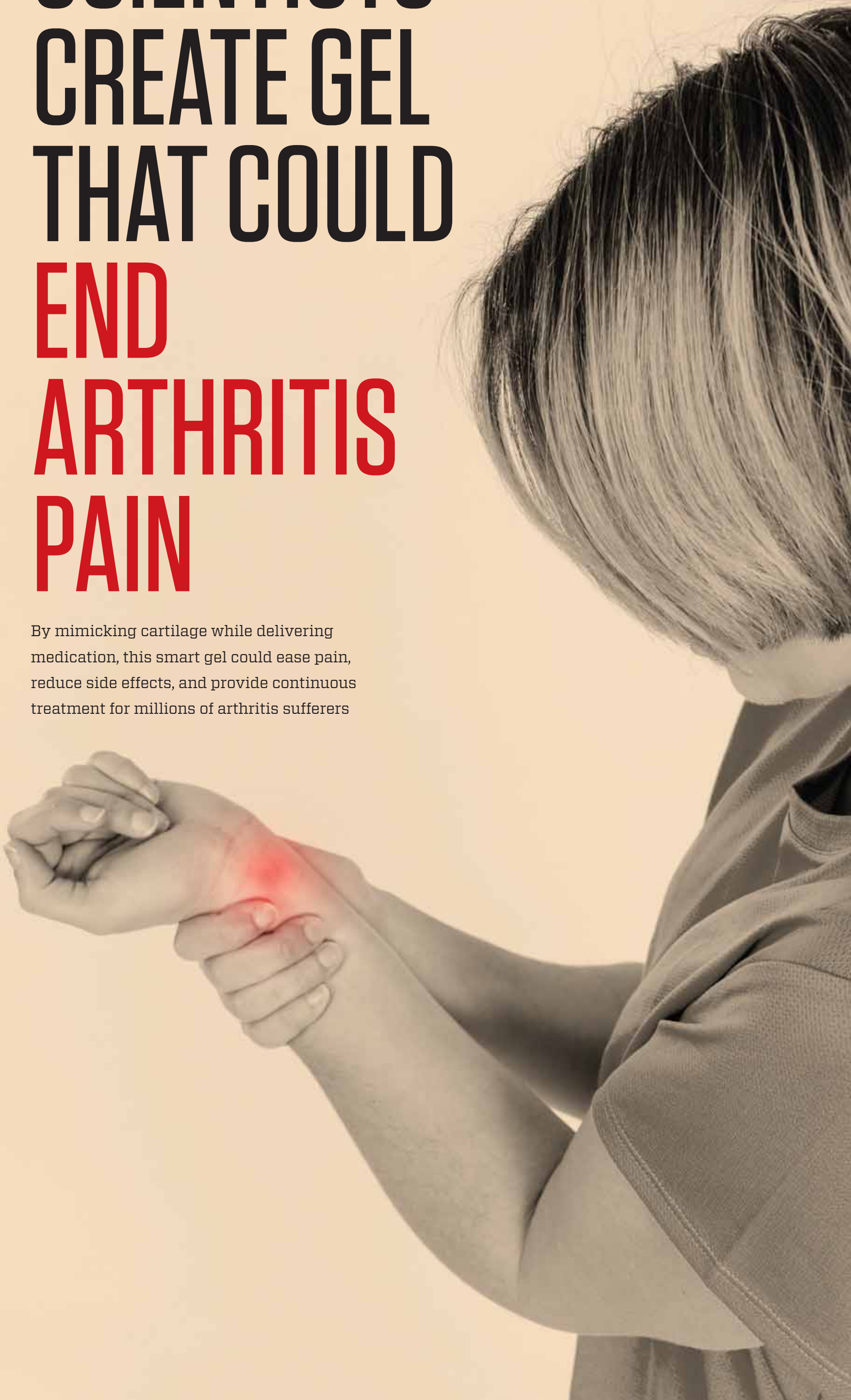
The team say that if successful, their approach could open the door to a new generation of responsive biomaterials capable of treating chronic diseases with greater precision. - **AM**



LIFESTYLE

CAMBRIDGE SCIENTISTS CREATE GEL THAT COULD END ARTHRITIS PAIN

By mimicking cartilage while delivering medication, this smart gel could ease pain, reduce side effects, and provide continuous treatment for millions of arthritis sufferers



SPORTS

The big-serving Kazakh fifth seed defeated Aryna Sabalenka at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne to win the women’s singles title at the Australian Open 2026 on Saturday

RYBAKINA
CROWNED
CHAMPION
6-4 | 4-6 | 6-4



MELBOURNE: Elena Rybakina took revenge over world No.1 Aryna Sabalenka to win a nail-biting Australian Open final on Saturday and clinch her second Grand Slam title and the first in Melbourne.

The big-serving Kazakh fifth seed held her nerve to pull through 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne in 2hrs 18mins.

It was payback after the Belarusian Sabalenka won the 2023 final between two of the hardest hitters in women’s tennis.

The ice-cool Rybakina, 26, who was born in Moscow, adds her Melbourne triumph to her Wimbledon win in 2022.

It was more disappointment in a major final for Sabalenka, who won the US Open last year for the second time but lost the French Open and Melbourne title deciders. She was into her fourth Australian Open final in a row and had been imperious until now, with tears in her eyes at the end.

Speaking after the win, Rybakina said: “It’s hard to find the words



but I want to congratulate Aryna. She’s had amazing results for a couple of years and I hope we’re going to play many more finals together.

“I want to say thank you to you [the crowd] for an incredible atmosphere. Your support kept us going. Thank you everyone who made this tournament possible. It really is the ‘Happy Slam’, I always

enjoy coming here and playing in front of you guys.”

Sabalenka said: “I’m really speechless right now. I want to firstly congratulate Elena [Rybakina] on an incredible run, congratulations to you and your team on such an incredible achievement.

“Thank you to everyone who makes this tournament possible. I love playing here and I love playing



in front of you guys, thank you for your incredible support. I always look forward to coming and playing in front of you, let’s hope next year is going to be a better year for me. I love you guys.

With the roof on because of drizzle in Melbourne, Rybakina immediately broke serve and then comfortably held for 2-0.

Rybakina faced two break points

at 4-3, but found her range with her serve to send down an ace and dig herself out of trouble, leaving Sabalenka visibly frustrated.

Rybakina looked in the zone and wrapped up the set in 37 minutes on her first set point when Sabalenka fired long. Incredibly, it was the first set Sabalenka had dropped in 2026. The second game of the second set was tense, Rybakina saving three break points in a 10-minute arm-wrestle.

They went with serve and the seventh game was another tussle, Sabalenka holding for 4-3 after the best rally of a cagey affair.

The tension ratcheted up and the top seed quickly forged three set points at 5-4 on the Kazakh’s serve, ruthlessly levelling the match at the first chance to force a deciding set. Sabalenka was now in the ascendancy and smacked a scorching backhand to break for a 2-0 lead, then holding for 3-0.

Rybakina, who also had not dropped a set in reaching the final, looked unusually rattled.

She reset to hold, then wrestled back the break, allowing herself the merest of smiles.

At 3-3 the title threatened to swing either way.

But a surging Rybakina won a fourth game in a row to break for 4-3, then held to put a thrilling victory within sight.

Rybakina sealed the championship with her sixth ace of the match. The finalists were familiar foes having met 14 times previously, with Sabalenka winning eight of them.

Sabalenka came into the final as favourite but Rybakina has been one of the form players on the women’s tour in recent months.

She also defeated Sabalenka in the decider at the season-ending WTA Finals. Rybakina beat second seed Iga Swiatek in the quarterfinals and sixth seed Jessica Pegula in the last four in Melbourne.

Rybakina switched to play under the Kazakh flag in 2018 when she was a little-known 19-year-old, citing financial reasons. - Agencies

SEMI-FINALS

‘I am lost for words’: Djokovic

MELBOURNE: Serbia’s Novak Djokovic said he was lost for words after his thrilling five-set Australian Open semifinal win over world No.2 Jannik Sinner at the Rod Laver Arena on Friday.

“I can’t speak right now. It’s surreal to have played for so long and at such a high level,” Djokovic said in an on-court interview after his 3-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 win. The victory against Sinner was Djokovic’s first in their last six meetings.

“It feels surreal to be honest playing over four hours,” Djokovic said on court. “I was reminiscing in 2012 when I played Rafa (Nadal) in the final, that was six hours almost. “The level of intensity and quality was high (against Sinner) and



that was the only way to have a chance to win. “He won the last five matches against me, he had my mobile number, so I had to change my number tonight.

“Jokes aside I said at the net: “Thanks for allowing me at least

one’. Tremendous respect, an incredible player. He pushed me to the limit, so he deserves applause for his performance,” said the 38-year-old.

“Thank you to all of you who stayed up until late at night to watch the match. The atmosphere today was one of the best I’ve ever experienced.”

Djokovic will next take on Carlos Alcaraz in the final on Sunday as he chases a record 25th Grand Slam title. “I said it would be difficult to beat Sinner and Alcaraz... but not impossible! “I have to come back and fight the No.1 in the world. I hope I have enough gas left to go toe-to-toe against him,” he said.

“That’s my desire. Let the God decide the winner.” - Agencies

AUSTRALIAN OPEN FINAL

Alcaraz is the clear favourite: Nadal

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal says he has “full respect” for old rival Novak Djokovic but tipped Spanish compatriot Carlos Alcaraz to win Sunday’s Australian Open final.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner, who retired from tennis in 2024, is set to attend the blockbuster title match in Melbourne.

A two-time Australian Open champion himself, Nadal believes world No.1 Alcaraz is the clear favourite, but would not be surprised if 38-year-old Djokovic caused an upset.

“I think the favourite is Carlos,” Nadal told host broadcaster Channel Nine on Saturday.

“He’s young, he has the energy and he’s in his prime. But I mean, Novak is Novak. He’s a very special player. I don’t know if Novak has



lost a final here. It’s always a challenge and he likes the challenges. (But) favourite is Carlos from my point of view.”

Speaking separately to the Melbourne Age, Nadal said it was a “positive thing” to have somebody at Djokovic’s age fighting with Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner.

Djokovic stunned 24-year-old Sinner in the semifinals over five

tough sets to surge into his 11th Australian Open final. He has won all previous 10.

“I really believe that he is here for one simple reason – because if I don’t get injured, probably I will be here playing too,” said Nadal, who is one year older than Djokovic.

“When you like to do this thing, if you are not injured and if you are not super tired mentally, why wouldn’t you be here? I think it’s a positive example of commitment, of resilience.

“I mean, Novak, for obvious reasons, he’s not at his prime, but he is still very, very competitive at an age that is difficult to be very competitive. So full respect.”

Djokovic is bidding to become the oldest man to win the Australian Open. The 37-year-old Ken Rosewall won it in 1972. - Agencies

MEN’S SINGLES

History on the line as Djokovic takes on Alcaraz in AO final

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz meet in Sunday’s Australian Open final with history in the balance, as the Serbian great chases a record 25th Grand Slam title and the Spanish dynamo bids to become the youngest man to win all four majors. Modern men’s tennis has not lacked for champions pushing for the next frontier of greatness but the stakes have rarely been higher in a single match.



With 24 major trophies and a record 10 at Melbourne Park, Djokovic’s legacy is already secure. Few can argue there have been better players to grace the men’s game. And yet Djokovic’s record remains bracketed with Australian icon Margaret Court, who also won 24 titles in the women’s game, including 13 in the amateur era.

With different eras, opponents and technology, their records are as comparable as apples and oranges - but fourth seed Djokovic has long craved the elusive 25th title to take top spot alone.

Clinching it at Melbourne Park, where he claimed his first major trophy in 2008, would be a fitting coup de grace for a 20-year career at the top. Having taken Ken Rosewall’s record as the oldest man to reach the final by beating defending champion Jannik Sinner, Djokovic can top the Australian again as the oldest to win any Grand Slam title.

No other man has dominated Melbourne like Djokovic, who has hoisted the trophy four times more than the next-best duo of Roy Emerson and Roger Federer.

Djokovic’s dominance has not meant universal adulation from all at Melbourne Park in a country which, incredibly, once detained

and deported him for not being vaccinated for COVID-19.

But judging by the deafening cheers at Rod Laver Arena on Friday when he knocked out Italian Sinner in a five-set classic, plenty of fans will be in the fourth-seeded Serb’s corner.

He may need all their support as he looks to scale another Everest against world No.1 Alcaraz. The 22-year-old Spaniard has had Melbourne on his mind since winning his second US Open title last year. He said he would gladly trade winning the three other majors this year if it meant hoisting the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup alone at the end of Sunday’s final.

With two trophies at each of the French Open, Wimbledon and Flushing Meadows, victory over Djokovic would make Alcaraz the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam, eclipsing Don Budge, who wrapped up his at the 1938 French Open two days before his 23rd birthday.

He would also become the first men’s player under 23 to win seven

Grand Slam titles, a tally that eluded Djokovic until he was 27.

Remarkably for such a young career, Alcaraz has already racked up a slew of classic matches against Djokovic, who holds a 5-4 record against him.

They have both inflicted bruising defeats, with Alcaraz denying Djokovic in back-to-back Wimbledon finals in 2023-24 and the Serb snatching the gold medal in the Paris Olympic final.

While Djokovic knocked Alcaraz out of last year’s Australian Open quarter-finals, he was well-beaten the last time they faced on a Grand Slam hardcourt, losing 6-4, 7-6(4), 6-2 in the US Open semis.

Both enter Sunday’s final after taxing, five-setters. With 18 fewer Grand Slam titles than Djokovic, he should be more hungry than the Serb. Like Rafa Nadal at the French Open, there is something magical beneath Rod Laver Arena’s blue centre court that only Djokovic can mine. In all 10 of his previous finals, he has never exited without the trophy. - Agencies

Curran claims hat-trick as England thump Sri Lanka

The Englishman became the second bowler after Chris Jordan to claim a hat-trick in T20Is as England bundled out Sri Lanka for 133 with four deliveries still left in the innings

COLOMBO: Sam Curran claimed a hat-trick as England beat Sri Lanka by 11 runs under the Duckworth-Lewis method in their rain-marred opening Twenty20 International in Pallekele on Friday. The left-arm seamer became the second Englishman, after Chris Jordan, to claim a hat-trick in T20 Internationals as England bundled



out Sri Lanka for 133 with four deliveries still left in the innings. Phil Salt led England's successful chase with 46 off 35 balls as the tourists clinched the low-scoring match that had been reduced to a 17-overs-a-side contest following rain. Earlier put into bat, Sri Lanka cruised to 76-1 in seven overs, with Kusal Mendis (37) and Pathum Nissanka (23) in the middle. Spinner Adil Rashid (3-19) triggered a batting collapse as he re-



side strain, returned figures of 3-0-22-0. When England came out to bat, Jos Buttler (17) hit Ehsan Malinga for four fours in a row before losing his stumps to the pacer. Malinga also removed Jacob Bethell, and Salt could have been dismissed too, but Kamil Mishara dropped a sitter at deep mid-wicket. Tom Banton fell after a breezy 29, but Sri Lanka's sloppy catching was on display again as Nissanka dropped a regulation catch in the deep in a major relief to England captain Harry Brook when the batter was on 11. Shanaka eventually dismissed Salt in the 15th over, but England were on the verge of victory by then. England were 125-4 in 15 overs when rain stopped play with the visitor comfortably ahead of their target at that stage. The second T20 International of the three-match series is scheduled on Sunday. **Brief scores:** Sri Lanka 133 in 16.2 overs (Kusal 37, Rashid 3-19, Curran 3-38) lost to England 125/4 in 15 overs (Salt 46) by 11 runs on DLS method. - Agencies

AUSTRALIA SQUAD

Cummins ruled out of T20 World Cup

MELBOURNE: Pat Cummins was on Saturday ruled out of the 2026 T20 World Cup because of his back injury, and Ben Dwarshuis has replaced him in Australia's final 15. Matthew Short, meanwhile, has been dropped and has been replaced by Matt Renshaw on form, and there is no place for Steven Smith but he remains in contention if an injury occurs. Josh Hazlewood, Tim David and Nathan Ellis have all been passed fit for the World Cup. Hazlewood has not played since injuring his hamstring and Achilles prior to the Ashes. David missed most of the BBL and the Pakistan series because of a hamstring injury, while Ellis missed the BBL finals and the Pakistan tour with a hamstring niggle. Cummins had initially been named in Australia's provisional 15-man squad with a view to carrying him through the early rounds while he continued to rebuild from his back injury. He has not played since the Adelaide



Test against England in mid-December, which was his only game since last July, when he initially had symptoms of a lumbar stress injury in his lower back. He was shut down after the Adelaide Test with the Ashes secured with a view to rebuilding for the T20 World Cup. His latest scans in January had been positive but Cricket Australia said Cummins

"needs more time" to recover fully. "With Pat needing more time to recover from his back injury, Ben is a ready replacement who offers a left-arm-pace option as well as dynamic fielding and late-order hitting," Australia selector Tony Dodemaide said. "We believe his ability to swing the ball at good pace along with clever variations will be well suited to the condi-

tions we expect and overall structure of the squad. Mitchell Marsh will continue to lead the side. Meanwhile, Steve Smith, who impressed with his 41-ball hundred for Sydney Sixers late in this season's Big Bash League, was overlooked. "Steve is an exceptional player who has worked very hard on his short-form game and was rewarded with a great stint in the Big Bash batting at the top for the Sixers," Dodemaide said. "The current T20 top order has been very successful building into this tournament so we feel we're well-placed in that area. "If a replacement is required Steve is very much in contention and this has been communicated with him." **Squad:** Mitchell Marsh (c), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Ben Dwarshuis, Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Renshaw, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa. - Agencies

NIGHTCLUB INCIDENT

England skipper Brook admits to lying to protect teammates

COLOMBO: England white-ball captain Harry Brook admitted on Friday to lying to protect teammates who were with him when he was hit by a nightclub bouncer in New Zealand. Brook originally said this month he was alone when he tried to enter the nightclub in Wellington on October 31, the day before the third and last One Day International against New Zealand. But after The Telegraph reported on Friday that teammates Jacob Bethell and Josh Tongue were fined for their involvement and were being investigated by the cricket regulator, Brook confessed that he was not alone in a statement released after England beat Sri Lanka in a T20I. "I accept responsibility for my actions in Wellington and acknowledge that others were present that evening," Brook said. "I regret my previous comments, and my intention was to protect my teammates from being



drawn into a situation that arose as a result of my own decisions. I have apologised and will continue to reflect on the matter. This has been a challenging period in my career, but one from which I am learning." Brook was fined and given a final warning over his conduct for the Wellington incident. But the episode wasn't made public until this month after the Ashes series, which England lost 1-4 in Australia. Brook apologised at the time to teammates and supporters, and again before the ongoing Sri Lanka tour. - Agencies

FRENCH LIGUE 1



Lens edge Le Havre to reclaim top spot

PARIS: Most moved back above Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) into top spot in the French Ligue 1 table on Friday after a Ruben Aguilar goal secured a 1-0 win at home to struggling Le Havre. Aguilar, a right-back capped once by France in 2020, arrived at the far post to score from a Matthieu Udol cross in first-half stoppage time on a rainy night in far northern France. It was a welcome return to winning ways for Lens, who had recorded 10 straight victories between league and cup before a 1-3 in Marseille loss last weekend. Lens, who won the Ligue 1 title

in the 2022-23 season came into this match in second place in the table, two points behind PSG. The win moved them a point ahead at the summit after 20 games. However, Luis Enrique's team could reclaim first place by avoiding defeat away to Strasbourg next. Lens are also eight points clear of Marseille, which will seek to bounce back from the disappointment of elimination from the Champions League in midweek when it travel to Paris FC. Lyon hosts Lille on Sunday in a meeting of the teams in fourth and fifth place respectively. - Agencies

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Benfica meet Real in play-offs after dramatic league phase encounter

LONDON: Benfica will face Real Madrid in the Champions League play-offs just three weeks after their dramatic league phase encounter. On Wednesday, goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin's 98th-minute goal earned Jose Mourinho's side a 4-2 win against the Spanish giants. Newcastle will play Qarabag after finishing the league phase in 12th place, while defending champions Paris Saint-Germain, who finished 11th, will face Ligue 1 rivals Monaco. The two-legged play-offs are for teams who finished between 9th and 24th in the league phase and the first games will take place on 17-18 February, with the second round one week later. The Puskas Arena in Budapest, Hungary will host the 2025-26 final on 30 May. Qarabag finished 22nd in the league phase after winning three, drawing one and losing four of their matches. They were defeated 6-0 against Liverpool at Anfield in their final outing and have not beaten a Premier League team in nine previous attempts. The Azerbaijan champions avoided defeat for the first time against an English club when drawing 2-2 with Chelsea in November. The winner of the tie between Newcastle and Qarabag will face either Chelsea or Barcelona in the last 16. Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City and Tottenham all finished in the top eight of the



league phase and have qualified automatically for the last 16. The draw for the last 16, quarter-finals, semi-finals and final all take place on 27 February. Once the eight winners of the play-offs have been determined they progress to the last 16, where they will meet the top eight finishers from the league phase. From this point onward the competition adopts a knockout format, with each fixture other than the final contested over two legs. As with the play-offs, teams' final ranking in the league phase will influence seeding in the last 16, with seeded sides - those that fin-

ished in the top eight of the league - given the advantage of playing their second fixture at home. This is the first season that the position in which teams have placed in the league phase will also influence seeding for the quarter-final and semi-finals. Teams finishing first to fourth at the end of the league phase will be seeded for the quarter-finals, and therefore given the second leg home advantage for their potential quarter-final tie. The two sides who finish top and runner-up in the league will also be seeded for the semi-finals, earning them the benefit of playing the second leg of their semi-final tie at

home should they reach that stage. If a seeded team does not progress to the quarter or semi-finals, the team that knocked them out inherits their seeding position. **Champions League play-offs draw:** Bodo/Glimt v Inter Milan, Benfica v Real Madrid, Monaco v PSG, Qarabag v Newcastle, Galatasaray v Juventus, Club Brugge v Atletico Madrid, Borussia Dortmund v Atalanta, Olympiacos v Bayer Leverkusen. **Knockout phase:** Last 16: 10-11 and 17-18 March, Quarter-finals: 7-8 and 14-15 April, Semi-finals: 28-29 April and 5-6 May, Final: 30 May. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Sohar International concludes partnership with Oman Design Week as creative arm partner

Partnership with Oman Design Week reflects Sohar International’s belief in the power of creativity as a driver of economic and social progress

MUSCAT: Sohar International has successfully concluded its participation as the Creative Arm Partner of Oman Design Week 2026, reaffirming its commitment to supporting Oman’s creative economy and strengthening the role of design, architecture, and innovation in national development.

The second edition of Oman Design Week took place from 27 to 31 January at Al Khuwair Square on Ministries Street, as part of the cultural programme of Muscat Nights 2026. Jointly organised by Muscat Municipality and the Oman Design Association, the five-day event brought together designers, architects, artists, and creative professionals from Oman and abroad, offering a dynamic platform for dialogue, collaboration, and creative expression.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Ibra-



him bin Saeed Al Busaidi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and was attended by senior officials and dignitaries, including Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, reflecting the Bank’s strong support for national cultural and creative initiatives.

Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said, “Our partnership with Oman Design Week reflects Sohar International’s belief in

the power of creativity as a driver of economic and social progress. Supporting platforms that empower local talent, encourage innovation, and bring communities together is central to our role as a national financial partner. The success of this year’s event highlights the growing importance of design and creative industries in shaping Oman’s future.”

Held under the theme “Between Us”, Oman Design Week 2026 explored shared spaces between individuals, cultures, and ideas,

presenting design as a universal language that fosters communication, integration, and cultural dialogue. The programme featured a diverse mix of professional workshops, intellectual talks, exhibitions, immersive digital and physical installations, and a dedicated creative marketplace that enabled designers and artists to showcase and commercialise their work. As part of its participation, Sohar International hosted a dedicated stall, where visitors were intro-

duced to the Bank’s range of products and services, highlighting its digital capabilities and customer-centric solutions in an engaging and interactive setting.

Beyond Oman Design Week, Sohar International continues to support a wide range of cultural, tourism, and community events across the Sultanate, including Muscat Nights, regional festivals in various governorates, and seasonal initiatives such as Khareef Dhofar. Through these engagements, the

Bank plays an active role in promoting community participation, supporting local economies, and contributing to vibrant cultural experiences that enhance Oman’s tourism and creative sectors. Sohar International continues to champion initiatives that enrich the cultural landscape, strengthen the creative economy, and promote meaningful engagement between creativity and community—further reinforcing Oman’s position as a bridge between cultures and a hub for innovation.

INSIGHTFUL



ABA Oman International School hosts careers day

MUSCAT: ABA Oman International School recently hosted an engaging and insightful Careers Day for Grade 10 students, offering meaningful exposure to a broad range of academic and professional pathways. Led by Jinane Helou, ABA University and Careers Counsellor, the event was designed to support students at a key decision-making stage as they begin to explore subject choices, career interests, and future aspirations.

“Careers Day is an invaluable opportunity for our students to hear directly from professionals across different industries and gain insights that help them make informed, confident decisions about their future. We are incredibly grateful to our community for sharing their time, experience, and guidance,” stated Jinane. “Our goal is to help students make decisions with confidence, not pressure. Careers Day offers a safe space to explore options, understand different industries, and learn from professionals”, she added.

The Careers Day brought together a diverse group of professionals from fields including science and medicine, engineering, technology, entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, international development, media, health and wellness, and the creative industries. Drawing on the expertise of parents, educators, industry leaders, and senior students, the sessions provided real-world insights into career journeys, evolving industries, and the skills needed to succeed in a rapidly changing global landscape.

“Career paths are not always linear; they are built over time through learning, experience, and

the development of skills such as communication, resilience, and adaptability. Careers Day empowers students to explore possibilities, ask meaningful questions, and understand how their strengths can translate into real-world impact,” stated Craig Williamson, ABA Head of School.

Among the speakers were Dr. Zahia Asekova, Assistant Professor in Plant Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University, who shared her work on climate-resilient crops and sustainable food systems. Dr. Nausheen Yaqoob, an experienced histopathologist, introduced students to the world of medical diagnostics and research, highlighting how laboratory science plays a vital role in healthcare decision-making. In the technology and innovation space, ABA alumni Aaditya Khimji, Technology & AI Advisor and Business Leader, explored how artificial intelligence is being applied in real business contexts, while Ashmeed Hosein provided insights into engineering careers in the upstream oil and gas sector.

Marketing strategist Anna Popova spoke about reinventing careers in a changing world, emphasizing how marketers adapt to new platforms, audiences, and technologies over time. ABA Board Director Hana Syed Fayyaz, MD, AHM Holding, discussed her journey from chemical engineering to global finance and private investment, while Sumaira Chowdhury, UNICEF Representative to Oman, discussed leadership, global impact, and career pathways in humanitarian and policy-driven work. Entrepreneur and angel investor Idriss Mokhtarzada offered

a candid perspective on startup culture, innovation, and building companies for impact, while Ivana Hadzic, Personal Trainer & Fitness Coach, led an interactive session focused on health, fitness, and sustainable lifestyle habits, alongside career opportunities in wellness and sport science.

Jinane Helou guided students through building a strong digital presence and first impressions on LinkedIn, while alumni parent Clauss Niazi, Educational Consultant, led practical workshops on résumé writing, equipping students with essential tools for future internships and applications. Students also participated in skills-focused sessions, including a media workshop led by Huda Al Mosawi, Programme Director and Presenter at Virgin Radio Oman, offering a look at broadcasting, communication, and confidence on air.

The day concluded with a student-led panel discussion featuring Grade 11 and 12 students, facilitated by ABA’s Diploma Programme (DP) Coordinator, Samantha Cole. Senior students shared personal experiences related to IBDP subject choices, university applications, time management, and maintaining balance, giving grade 10 students the opportunity to ask questions and learn from peers who had recently navigated similar decisions.

“Careers Day helped me understand what different jobs actually involve and what skills I need to build now. Learning from industry professionals made me feel more confident about choosing my subjects for IBDP,” shared a Grade 10 student.

INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA COLLABORATION

Europcar presents 2nd edition of Oman Internship Fair 2026

MUSCAT: Europcar successfully hosted the second edition of the Oman Internship Fair 2026 on January 25 at The Diplomatic Club, powered by AmCham Oman, held in partnership with The Diplomatic Club, with British Business Forum Oman and the Indo Gulf and Middle East Chamber of Commerce (INMECC) as strategic partners and supported by Crowe, reaffirming its strong commitment to youth empowerment and industry-academia collaboration.

Organised in collaboration with German University of Technology, Majan University College, Arab Open University and the National University of Science & Technology, the initiative reflects a strong multi-stakeholder commitment to developing future-ready talent in Oman.



Building on the success of its inaugural edition, this year’s fair witnessed a significant increase in participation and engagement, underscoring the growing demand for structured internship opportunities across the Sultanate.

The event attracted over 500 students and welcomed 70 participating organisations, including leading private sector companies and NGOs. Employers represented a wide range of industries such as energy, banking and financial services, automotive, hospital-ity, construction, insurance, travel and tourism, healthcare, IT, HR consultancy, and business advisory services, offering students exposure to diverse career pathways.

The day commenced with a networking breakfast for participating companies, sponsored by Europcar, followed by welcome addresses, student registrations and a full day of internship interviews and networking sessions. A networking lunch was later hosted for participating organisations, co-sponsored by Europcar and Mumtaz Mahal Restaurant, further encouraging meaningful interaction between employers and partners.

This year also marked the addition of the National University of Science & Technology as a new university collaborator, further strengthening the platform’s reach across Oman’s higher education ecosystem. Due to overwhelming interest from both students and organisations, reg-

istrations for the fair were closed ahead of schedule, highlighting the strong demand for internship opportunities and the relevance of the initiative.

The Oman Internship Fair is guided by a distinguished Advisory Board comprising senior leaders from industry, business councils, and academia, ensuring strong strategic direction and relevance to both employers and students. The Advisory Board includes Nitin Sapre, Chief Executive Officer, Europcar Oman & Bahrain; Rebecca Olson, Chief Executive Officer, AmCham Oman; Charm Majolica, Director, The Diplomatic Club; Maggie Jeans, Founder Director, British Business Forum Oman; Davis Kallukaran, Founder, Indo Gulf and Middle East Chamber of Commerce (INMECC) and Managing Partner, Crowe; Dr. Kabaly Subramanian, Dean – Faculty of Business Studies, Arab Open University; Dr. Fatima El Madkouri, Head of Registration & Student Affairs, German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech) and Dr. Ramalingam Dharmalingam, Professor – Faculty of Information Technology, Majan University College.

Nitin Sapre, CEO of Europcar Oman & Bahrain, said: “At Europcar, we strongly believe that investing in young talent is an investment in Oman’s future. The Oman Internship Fair was created to move beyond conversations and provide real, practical oppor-

tunities for students to engage with industry. The response this year has been truly encouraging.”

Rebecca Olson, CEO of AmCham Oman, commented: “The Internship Fair offers AmCham member companies a valuable opportunity to connect directly with motivated students. The scale and diversity of participation this year clearly demonstrate the strength and relevance of this platform.”

Charm Majolica, Director of The Diplomatic Club, stated: “Our vision and aim is to give Omani graduates real opportunities—hands-on internships that build skills, open doors, and support them as they begin their career journey.”

Maggie Jeans OBE, Founding Director of British Business Forum Oman, noted: “Initiatives like the Oman Internship Fair play a crucial role in preparing young Omanis for the workplace while strengthening the bridge between education and business.”

Davis Kallukaran, Director of INMECC and Managing Partner of Crowe, added: “By connecting students with employers early in their careers, the Internship Fair helps build a confident, skilled workforce while supporting organisations in identifying future talent.”

The Oman Internship Fair 2026 once again demonstrated the power of collaboration between business, academia, and professional networks, reinforcing its position as a flagship platform for internship-led talent development in Oman.



ALL NEW
EADO PLUS
PREMIUM

BEYOND YOUR EXPECTATION



1.5L Engine, 103 hp | 7 Speed DCT

Manufacturer's Warranty - 6 YEARS / 250,000 KMS[#]

*Terms and Conditions Apply



Vehicle images shown are for illustrative purpose only



AVAILABLE ONLY IN BEIGE COLOUR
WITH FABRIC SEATS

Specification may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN AUTO Showroom.

Arabian Gulf Automobiles
and Equipment LLC

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

800 50800
9662 8909
@changanoman
www.changanoman.com