



OMAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

# Various exhibitions at Muscat Nights offer an interactive cultural experience to visitors

**MUSCAT:** The cultural exhibitions featured within the cultural program of Muscat Nights 2026 at Oman Automobile Association offer an interactive cultural experience.

These exhibitions highlight various aspects of Omani identity by utilising modern technologies to present content in innovative ways that blend knowledge with entertainment.

The exhibition comprises a collection of pavilions and interactive cultural experiences, including the Omani Personalities Pavilion. This pavilion presents visual displays documenting the achievements and cultural contributions of Omani figures through a storytelling approach supported by 3D display technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

It also features interactive games that allow visitors to learn about these personalities via Virtual Reality (VR).

Further, the Visual Arts Pavilion celebrates the arts with an exhibi-



tion of artistic works, Arabic calligraphy experiences, live painting sessions in front of the public, and interactive installation art games based on the paintings of Omani artists.

Meanwhile, the Oman Encyclopaedia Pavilion showcases cognitive content through educational electronic games inspired by Oman Encyclopaedia for Youth.

It features visual presentations including infographics and short films that simulate features of Omani cultural identity, in addition to displays of Omani heritage vocabulary using VR technology.

Fatima Khalifa Al Hosni, Director of Oman Encyclopaedia Department at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, stated that Oman Encyclopaedia pavilion



consists of six main sections.

Foremost among these is the “Oman Encyclopaedia and Oman Encyclopaedia for Youth” corner, which provides information in a simplified scientific manner suitable for the younger generation, offering an interactive environment that fosters national spirit and consolidates values of loyalty and



belonging.

She added that the “Visual Presentations” corner showcases a series of films covering various topics found in Oman Encyclopaedia. Meanwhile, the “Educational Electronic Games” corner has seen significant interaction from children, featuring games such as “Siraj Oman,” which consists of interactive puzzles about immortal

Omani figures, their achievements, and the diverse flora and fauna of Oman. She further explained that the “Digital Infographic” corner aims to facilitate the delivery of information to visitors and attract them to explore the encyclopaedia’s content through a modern visual style.

Rehab Harib Al Saadi, Supervisor of Cultural Events at Muscat Nights 2026 festival, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the cultural exhibitions provide a cognitive and cultural space that introduces visitors to the components of Omani history.

She noted that these events offer a dimension beyond mere entertainment, building cultural awareness and creating a balance between visual enjoyment and the delivery of a cultural message. The high turnout of families reflects their keenness for their children to attend these interactive educational atmospheres to enjoy a cultural experience that is both fun and easy to understand. -ONA

MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

# Royal Hospital launches endoscopy, microdissection service for patients

**MUSCAT:** The Royal Hospital has launched endoscopy and microdissection service for layers of the digestive system.

The service constitutes a milestone that adds momentum to the Sultanate of Oman’s record of medical achievements.

It reflects an ongoing trend to enhance the quality of healthcare, improve specialised services and attract the latest advanced medical technologies in the treatment of digestive system diseases.

The event included the handling of two medical cases using modern technologies. The first was the removal of a tumour in the rectum using an endoscopes-enhanced microdissection technique.

The second case involved conducting a Peroral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM) procedure to treat achalasia.

The service was launched in the presence of Abed Allehibi, Consultant Gastroenterologist, Head of the Gastroenterology Depart-



ment at King Fahad Specialist Hospital in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The launch of the service was the outcome of scientific co-operation, exchange of expertise and joint support for advanced clinical practices.

Dr. Hisham Abdullah Al Dhahab, Senior Consultant of Gastroenterology and Advanced Interventional Endoscopy at the Royal

Hospital, said, “The launch of this service affirms the hospital’s commitment to adopt precise and safe technologies that keep pace with the best global practices.”

Dr. Hisham added that the new service would contribute to raising the quality of treatment outcomes, enhancing patient safety and developing clinical performance in line with the health

system’s drive towards innovation and sustainability.

He pointed out that the launch of the service stems from the Royal Hospital’s ongoing efforts to improve specialized services, enhance staff efficiency and establish a treatment environment based on quality and excellence, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. -ONA

KICK OFF ON 2 FEBRUARY

# Camel race fosters affection, harmony

**<FROM A1** In a statement to Oman News Agency, he pointed out that the festival represents a sporting, social, and economic gathering that brings together camel owners and trainers from various governorates of Oman and GCC countries.

He indicated that this annual event is held out of belief in its importance in preserving this Omani heritage and fostering affection and harmony among different segments of society on the land of Al Bashayer.

HH Sayyid Asa’ad added that the

organising committee is keen on developing the festival in terms of the prizes offered, the scale of participation, and expanding the race rounds, alongside diversifying the accompanying events.

He noted that the racetrack is undergoing continuous modernisation and development to be among the best camel racing fields, where camel owners and trainers find all means of comfort and facilitation for their camels and participation, while giving utmost priority to security and safety from the moment of entering the field until the finish line. -ONA



# Masirah Winter Festival promotes national identity, local tourism

The event brings together traditional maritime arts, sports activities, entertainment performances, productive families, artisanal crafts, traditional cuisine, and various competitions



**MUSCAT:** The Wilayat of Masirah in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate is currently celebrating the Masirah Winter Festival 2026, held under the theme “Masirah Gathers Us.”

The event brings together traditional maritime arts, sports activities, entertainment performances, productive families, artisanal crafts, traditional cuisine, and various competitions.

The nights of the Masirah Winter Festival showcased artistic and cultural displays that represent an integrated developmental and cultural model.

This model aims to strengthen

national identity, stimulate domestic tourism, and support the local economy.

The Wilayat of Masirah is distinguished by its intangible cultural heritage, particularly in the fields of diverse ancient traditional handicrafts.

Most notable among these are the spinning and weaving industries and the manufacture of traditional kohl, which remain part of daily life in the Wilayat.

These crafts contribute significantly to documenting and preserving traditional cultures while encouraging creative Omani skills.

The spinning and weaving in-



dustry, which continues to be practiced today, relies on animal hides and wool.

The process of hand-weaving textiles takes approximately 14 days, beginning with shearing wool from goats and sheep, followed by washing and spreading the wool.

This is followed by the twisting and spinning process; some threads may require dyeing in different colors to decorate and shape the textiles with vibrant hues.

The festival’s organising committee was keen to allocate sections for productive families and Small and Medium Enterprises

(SMEs). This highlights the vital role undertaken by the SMEs Development Authority “Riyada” in South Al Sharqiyah in supporting entrepreneurs, empowering their projects, marketing their products, and creating sustainable economic opportunities that contribute to professional stability and local income.

Total participation in the festival reached 113 participants, including 53 male and female artisans, in addition to 20 home-based business licenses.

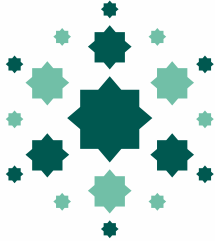
These figures reflect the high level of community engagement and confirm the festival’s positive

impact in enhancing the participation of business owners in national events and revitalizing local commercial activity.

It is worth noting that the Masirah Winter Festival is a qualitative addition to seasonal events.

It highlights the tourism and economic potential of the Wilayat and contributes to strengthening its position as a promising winter tourism destination by attracting visitors of all ages and providing an integrated experience that meets the aspirations of families and tourists in an attractive winter atmosphere.

-ONA



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# Oman participates in World Economic Forum ‘Davos 2026’

Oman is showcasing progress achieved in many sectors, including clean energy, logistics, digital transformation, human capital growth

**DAVOS:** The Sultanate of Oman is participating in the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) “Davos 2026,” with a delegation led by the Ministry of Economy.



The World Economic Forum will be held from 19 to 23 January 2026. It is themed “A Spirit of Dialogue,” bringing together global leaders from various sectors to discuss common challenges and anticipate the impact of advanced technological transformations.

The forum is addressing five key global challenges, including: building trust and enhancing collective action; identifying new drivers

for sustainable economic growth; focusing on skill development and investment in human capital; ensuring the responsible use of technology and innovation; and integrating environmental sustainability into economic growth models.

**Artificial Intelligence**  
Additionally, the forum is exploring issues related to Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital transformation, and cybersecurity, along with their effects on industries and societies.

During its participation, the Sultanate of Oman is showcasing progress achieved in several priority sectors, including clean energy, logistics, digital transformation, and human capital development.

**Oman Vision 2040**  
These presentations reflect the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the nation’s trajectory toward

economic diversification and long-term sustainability.

Oman’s participation also highlights national efforts in transitioning toward renewable energy, developing green hydrogen projects, enhancing the role of economic zones, and building an innovation- and knowledge-based economy. Furthermore, the delegation is presenting qualitative investment opportunities and partnerships that support inclusive and sustainable growth.

**A series of meetings**  
On the sidelines of the forum, the Omani delegation is scheduled to hold a series of meetings and dialogues with international partners and decision-makers.

These engagements aim to bolster Oman’s position as a reliable partner, a stable economy, and an attractive environment for investment and international cooperation. -ONA

## OMAN VISION 2040

## North Al Sharqiyah makes progress on path to digital transformation

**IBRI:** North Al Sharqiyah Governorate continues to make steady progress on the path of government digital transformation, achieving tangible and qualitative advancements throughout 2025.

This progress is reflected in a specialised package of digital projects and initiatives, alongside a systematic expansion in service automation.

These efforts align with the objectives of the National Programme for Government Digital Transformation (Tahawul) and the strategic directions of Oman Vision 2040 toward an integrated digital government that meets community aspirations and supports comprehensive development.

Dr. Badr Saif Al Hatmi, Head of the Digital Transformation Team in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, explained that the number of transactions completed through the governorate’s digital channels reached 21,555 during the period from January to November 2025. Digitisation efforts contributed to converting 14 external services and 11 internal services into an automated digital system, thereby enhancing institutional efficiency,



cy, raising the quality of services provided, and establishing a more flexible operating environment responsive to beneficiary needs.

He stated that during 2026, the governorate implemented several digital projects and initiatives,

most notably: the preparation of the governorate’s digital strategy and the institutional digital architecture document; the implementation of Virtual Reality (VR) projects for investment marketing and the “Smart Awareness Guide”;

and the use of drones to support data analysis and project planning.

Additionally, the development of the governorate’s website was completed, including the addition of digital access tools to assist people with disabilities and the elderly in browsing the site and utilising available services.

Digital surveys were also launched to measure beneficiary satisfaction and enhance community participation.

In the field of service empowerment, Al Hatmi pointed out that the network infrastructure has been upgraded according to the best standards and specifications. Furthermore, the “Digital Transformation Ambassadors” channel was launched on WhatsApp to raise community awareness of digital transformation concepts and programs.

The governorate also launched the “Document Management and Digital Transformation Award” to promote the use of technical systems and conducted workshops for the offices of Walis and municipalities regarding open data and the mechanisms for its collection and utilisation. -ONA

## CONDOLENCES



## Oman condemns terror attack in Afghan capital

**MUSCAT:** The Sultanate of Oman voiced its condemnation and denunciation of the terrorist bombing that took place in Kabul, Afghanistan, leaving many Afghan and Chinese citizens dead or injured. Oman expressed its sincere condolences and heartfelt commiserations to Afghanistan and the People’s Republic

of China. Oman also extended its sympathies to the families of the victims, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. In a statement issued yesterday, the Foreign Ministry affirmed the Sultanate of Oman’s steadfast stance against all forms of violence and terrorism, irrespective of their motives or causes. -ONA

## SIXTH EDITION

## Over 200 exhibitors to take part in Oman Perfume Show

**MUSCAT:** Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre will host the 6th edition of Oman Perfume Show, which will kick off today, Thursday the 22nd of January 2026.

More than 200 exhibitors from local, regional and international markets will take part in the week-long event, which reflects the evolution of the perfume industry in the Sultanate of Oman.

The exposition’s opening ceremony will be held under the auspices of HH Sayyida Basma bint Fakhri bin Taimur Al Said.

The show will take place amid a surge in the perfume and luxury goods sector in the Sultanate of Oman, driven by rising demand for high-end experiences, in addition to the expansion of international brands in the local market. The large turnout portrays the role of Oman Perfume Show as a specialised marketing and investment



destination at the regional level.

The event also contributes to supporting business and tourism in the Sultanate of Oman, as it attracts delegations and visitors from regional and international

markets, increases hotel occupancy rates, motivates services and activates the sectors of hospitality and restaurants.

The show offers visitors an opportunity to explore distinctive



fragrances, special offers and come in touch with a comprehensive experience that blends traditional and modern craftsmanship and innovation in the perfume industry.

The show, which runs until 28

January 2026, brings together prominent houses of perfume from the region, along with leading international brands, experts and specialists in the perfume industry.

The opening ceremony will see the launch of the new visual identity of Oman Perfume Show 2026 whose designed is inspired by Oman’s rich heritage and its historical bonds with scents and perfumes.

The updated identity incarnates Oman’s status as the land of perfumes and cradle of perfumery.

Besides celebrating the Sultanate’s historical role in the trade of frankincense, resins and roses (notably those of Jabal Akhdar), the event will show how Oman has acted as a meeting point of perfume trade routes that contributed to the development of the perfume industry throughout the ages.

More than 30,000 visitors turned up at the venues of Oman Perfume Show last year, which affirms the growing business reputation and community interest in the event. -ONA

MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM

# Oman participates in FITUR 2026 in Spain

**MADRID:** The Sultanate of Oman participated on Wednesday in the International Tourism Trade Fair, FITUR 2026, held in the Spanish capital, Madrid, from 21 to 25 January.

The Omani delegation includes a number of institutions and companies operating in the travel and tourism sector, hotel establishments, and several strategic partners.

Through its participation in FITUR 2026, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism aims to strengthen Oman's presence in one of the world's largest travel and tourism exhibitions. It seeks to highlight Oman as a sustainable global tourist destination that offers diverse, innovative tourism patterns and luxury experiences.

The Ministry is also working to introduce the latest developments



in Oman's tourism sector and hold meetings with major international tourism companies to discuss sector-specific topics.

Additionally, the delegation is attending accompanying conferences and seminars that show-

case the latest updates, statistics, and trends in the global travel and tourism industry. The participation provides an important promotional and economic platform for Omani tourism companies, enabling them to establish direct com-

munication channels with major global tourism firms through the exhibition's database.

Furthermore, the Ministry seeks to intensify strategic partnerships with international tourism bodies and deepen cooperation to develop the Omani tourism sector to record levels of growth and attractiveness.

This effort aligns with global aspirations and trends, directly contributing to increasing the tourism sector's contribution to national income, boosting tourist traffic to the Sultanate of Oman, and empowering tourism establishments to provide services of high quality and excellence.

Haitham Mohammed Al Ghasani, Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, noted that these global exhibitions rep-

resent an opportunity to introduce the unique and innovative tourism patterns found in Oman.

He highlighted that environmental, natural, and geological factors have made Oman a distinct destination that meets various aspirations. He added that the participation of major tourism institutions from around the world at FITUR 2026, alongside leading media organisations, helps in executing effective promotional programmes.

On his part, Anwar Said Al Balushi, Director of the Tourism Events Department at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, explained that the importance of participating in FITUR lies in it being the first major international tourism fair organized at the beginning of each year.

As one of the largest tourism ex-

hibitions in the Kingdom of Spain, it features more than 9,000 exhibitors from approximately 150 countries and includes over 800 pavilions, with attendance expected to exceed 150,000 visitors.

He emphasised that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is keen on its annual participation in this international event, alongside several Omani tourism institutions, to provide integrated promotion for Oman and introduce its most prominent landmarks and diverse tourism experiences.

Al Balushi noted that the participation includes a series of pre-scheduled meetings with major global tourism companies, as well as several media interviews with representatives of international press, contributing to the enhancement of Oman's presence on the global tourism map.

# EA implements plans to keep Musandam marine life safe



The marine environment in the governorate is renowned for its enchanting sandy beaches, winding inlets, and diverse islands



**KHASAB:** The Environment Authority in Musandam Governorate continues to implement integrated environmental programmes and projects, leveraging the region's wealth of marine inlets (khors), beaches, and islands that host a rich biodiversity of marine and terrestrial organisms.

Salim Humaid Al Junaibi, Director of the Environment Department in Musandam Governorate, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the governorate is one of the most prominent environmental regions in the Sultanate of Oman due to its unique natural characteristics. Foremost among these is a marine environment renowned for its enchanting sandy beaches, winding inlets, and diverse islands, which support significant biodiversity including marine mammals, turtles, and birds, alongside coral reefs that serve as ecosystems of high environmental and economic importance.

He added that the marine environment in Musandam faces several challenges, most notably overfishing and oil pollution from oil tankers and cargo ships, in addition to the dumping of waste into the sea.

He pointed out that the Environment Authority works to mitigate the impact of these challenges by enforcing strict environmental laws and regulations against violators of wildlife. These efforts are complemented by intensifying environmental awareness programs through workshops, seminars, and lectures, and conducting cleaning campaigns for both terrestrial and marine environments. Furthermore, field studies and surveys are conducted to monitor obstacles

and devise appropriate solutions to achieve a clean and sustainable environment.

Regarding the protection of dolphins, coral reefs, and marine life, Al Junaibi explained that the Authority places great importance on this area by raising environmental awareness among the local community and stakeholders, including government entities, tourism companies, divers, fishermen, and students from universities and schools.

He mentioned that the Authority implements scheduled periodic monitoring and surveillance programs using modern technologies, alongside field patrols and the preparation of environmental studies and research related to marine biodiversity. He noted that these monitoring and awareness programs undertake a pivotal role in balancing tourism activities with environmental conservation in Musandam by raising awareness about the importance of natural components and curbing violations that may negatively affect environmental resources.

On future plans to enhance environmental sustainability, he clarified that the Environment Authority is continuing its cleaning campaigns for land and sea in cooperation with relevant authorities and the local community. Plans also include intensifying periodic monitoring of various environments and conducting scientific research on terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

He further stated that the plans encompass afforestation projects to develop vegetation cover and combat desertification, enhancing environmental supervision



over industrial projects, enforcing environmental regulations, and implementing projects aimed at preserving wildlife.

He noted that the governorate is

currently witnessing several ongoing and planned environmental projects, most notably "Tharwa" Project which is dedicated to developing and rehabilitating coral

reef environments.

Other important example include the Osprey Nesting Sites Monitoring Project, the Wild Tree Fencing Project in the Wilayat of

Khasab, the Mangrove Planting Project in the Wilayat of Dibba and the Annual Seed Sowing Project in the Wilayat of Madha.

Al Junaibi also highlighted annual survey projects for terrestrial and marine environments, which include inventories of wild and sea birds, vegetation cover, terrestrial and marine mammals, turtles, beaches, wetland environments, and coral reefs. This is in addition to a project to survey types of marine mammals, the establishment and planting of the Al Mazi enclosure, and the implementation of programs for the Musandam National Natural Park in accordance with its approved management plan.

In conclusion, Salim Humaid Al Junaibi emphasized that these projects and programmes collectively aim to monitor, develop, and rehabilitate natural environments, preserve biodiversity, and enhance the concept of environmental sustainability to ensure a clean and safe environment for current and future generations in Musandam Governorate. -ONA

# Indian rupee hits all-time low, inches to INR238 against OMR1

On the global front, Madhusoodanan pointed to rising geopolitical tensions and heightened risk aversion linked to the Greenland issue

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Indian rupee plunged to an all-time low on Wednesday, weakening sharply against the US dollar and nearing the 238-mark against the Omani rial at exchange houses in the



Sultanate. The rupee closed at \$91.69 against the US dollar on Wednesday, after touching an intra-day low of \$91.74. On Tuesday, the currency had settled at \$90.97 per dollar. In Oman, exchange houses were offering rates of around \$237.20 to \$237.60 for one Omani rial, reflecting the sustained weakness of the Indian currency. Speaking to *Times of Oman*, Muscat-based financial expert R. Madhusoodanan said the rupee experienced significant volatility during the trading session, driven by a combination of domestic and international factors. On the global front, Madhu-



Muscat-based financial expert R. Madhusoodanan.

soodanan pointed to rising geopolitical tensions and heightened risk aversion linked to the Greenland issue. "The global investment community is moving funds away from risk assets towards safe-haven instruments such as gold," he said, noting that gold prices touched an

all-time high on Wednesday. Domestically, persistent foreign portfolio investor (FPI) outflows from Indian equity markets have added pressure on the rupee. The delay in concluding a trade agreement with the United States has further weighed on market sentiment. He also noted that increased demand for dollars from metal importers contributed to the currency's decline. Although foreign capital inflows remain below expectations, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) continues to maintain a strong buffer, with foreign exchange reserves standing at around USD 687 billion. "The RBI has been actively intervening in the market to curb excessive volatility," Madhusoodanan said. Despite the rupee's weakness — particularly during the second half of 2025 — India's current account deficit (CAD) remains at manage-

able levels, although it widened in December 2025. The rupee depreciated by around 5 per cent during 2025 and has already fallen by nearly 2 per cent in January 2026, making it Asia's worst-performing currency so far this year, he added. Looking ahead, Madhusoodanan said the rupee is likely to remain vulnerable amid ongoing global uncertainties and continued FPI outflows. "Concluding the trade agreement with the United States could provide some relief," he said. He expects continued volatility during February and March, though the Indian Union Budget, expected in the first week of February 2026, could offer support and direction to both markets and the currency. "FDI-friendly budget announcements would be positive for the rupee, while strong RBI intervention through dollar sales will remain a key determining factor," he said.

NATIONAL INSTITUTION

## Credit Oman signs pact to finance SMEs

**MUSCAT:** Credit Oman, the national institution specialised in credit insurance, signed a strategic agreement on Wednesday with Hal Capital—a Sharia-compliant fintech company operating in the Sultanate of Oman and licensed by the Central Bank of Oman. The agreement aims to enhance the ability of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to access financing and achieve sustainable economic growth. The agreement was signed by Haitham Abdullah Al Yaqoubi, Acting CEO of Credit Oman, and Aziz Diab, CEO of Hal Capital. This partnership embodies the shared vision of both parties to bolster the financial services available to SMEs, which are considered a fundamental pillar of the Omani economy. Under the terms of this agreement, Credit Oman will provide credit insurance coverage for the financing provided by Hal Capital to Omani SMEs. This partnership aims to enable these enterprises to obtain secure financing, thereby enhancing their ability to trade with confidence in both local and international markets. The move reflects an understanding of the challenges faced



by SMEs, such as lack of funding and insufficient collateral. Furthermore, this partnership reflects Credit Oman's ongoing commitment to improving SME access to finance and supporting financial inclusion and economic diversification. The agreement assists enterprises in overcoming financial and economic challenges, contributing to the realization of sustainable development. Haitham Abdullah Al Yaqoubi, Acting CEO of Credit Oman, stated: "The importance of this agreement lies in supporting SMEs, which fosters innovation and cre-

ates new job opportunities that contribute to driving the national economy forward." He added that this partnership falls within the framework of government directives aimed at strengthening the role of the private sector in the Omani economy and increasing its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product. Credit Oman's services work to protect business owners in their commercial transactions, while providing support and consultation through insurance solutions that facilitate selling with confidence and security in global markets. -ONA

NEW APP

## Oman advances towards cashless economy

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Sultanate of Oman continues to make strong progress on the digital front in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. Indicators from the Digital Economy Explorer show notable advancement across several pillars of the digital economy, supporting policy development for sustainable digital growth. As part of these efforts, the Ministry of Finance has launched the first phase of the Unified Government Financial System "Maliya", aimed at modernising financial procedures and strengthening connectivity among government institutions. Supporting the national digital vision, Global Money Exchange Co. LLC (GMEC) recently launched Global Pay, a new mobile payment application offering secure and inclusive digital financial services. Powered by Comviva's mobi-quity® Pay platform, the app enables local and international payments and is PCI-DSS certified, ensuring high standards of security and data protection. Sheikh Sulaiman Abdulmalik



Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of Global Money Exchange, said that the Global Pay App enables secure and efficient local and international payment transactions. "We believe the mobile application will be widely adopted by both Omani nationals and expatriates," he said. Subromoniyam K S, Managing Director of Global Money Exchange, stated that customers can conveniently pay utility bills and educational fees without the need for a bank account, thereby supporting broader financial inclusion. Sonam Dorje, General Manager of Global Money Exchange, said the Global Pay App is backed by a comprehensive customer support

framework. Customers may visit any GMEC branch across Oman or contact a dedicated customer support helpline for prompt assistance. Madhusoodanan R, Executive Advisor to the Board of Global Money Exchange, noted that GMEC is the first money exchange company in Oman to receive a Payment Service Provider (PSP) licence. He said the initiative strongly supports the Sultanate's vision of building a cashless economy, adding that additional features will be introduced under Global Pay in a phased manner for the continued benefit of customers.

TRADITIONAL MARKETS

## Visual style of Al Buraimi central market launched



**AL BURAIMI:** Al Buraimi Municipality yesterday launched the visual style of Al Buraimi Central Market. The step reflects the municipality's approach towards developing traditional markets in a manner that preserves their historical identity and enhances their urban presence and economic impact. The launch of the visual style of Al Buraimi Central Market stems from an integrated vision aimed at improving the urban landscape and raising the quality of public facilities. It seeks to establish a more organised and attractive commercial environment that embodies the spirit of the place and its his-

torical depth, while at the same time meeting the aspirations of the community and visitors. The new visual style of the market, inspired by the architectural and cultural heritage of Al Buraimi Governorate, features visual elements derived from Omani castles and forts, traditional wooden door engravings. It also depicts geometric decorations rooted in local architecture. The visual style of the market also evokes the features of the surrounding natural environment like oases, palm trees and aflaj (water channels) that have historically formed the lifeblood of the region and served as a cornerstone of economic and social activity. The visual style of Al Buraimi Central Market underscores a thoughtful balance between tradition and innovation through the use of recurring geometric patterns that carry deep cultural and social connotations, as well as colours inspired by the nature and environment of Al Buraimi. The visual style of Al Buraimi Central Market symbolises the values of stability, fertility and business activity. Its manifestations are tangible in all elements, including shop fronts, corridors, public spaces, promotional materials and digital applications. -ONA

ELEVENTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN

## Focus on generating more jobs

**<FROM A1** The Ministry's Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2026–2030) includes 17 strategic programmes. Immediate priorities for 2026–2027 focus on accelerating employment for job seekers in the public and private sectors, supporting self-employment, and developing programs for special categories of job seekers. For 2028–2029, the focus will shift to empowering national competencies, promoting self-employment platforms, and preparing



Omanis for supervisory, technical, and specialised roles in the private sector. A short film screened during the meeting highlighted the role of electronic systems in moni-

toring performance, improving beneficiary experience, developing training programs, and supporting institutional innovation and governance.



Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) invites registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

| NO | SUBJECT                                                                | TENDER NUMBER | LAST DATE FOR INQUIRIES | LAST DATE TO SUBMIT BIDS | TENDER DOCUMENT FEES+ VAT |
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| 1  | SUPPLY OF HYGIENE AND INSECTICIDES ITEMS FOR THE PERIOD OF THREE YEARS | 02/2026       | 23/02/2026              | 02/03/2026               | 887.800 RO                |

2. Tenders terms and documents may be obtained through MOD TABSEET e-Services portal at the following link: <https://eservices.tabseet.gov.om>

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4. Tender fees must be paid electronically via the aforementioned portal for each respective tender.

5. Bids must be submitted electronically through TABSEET portal in accordance with instructions provided.

6. For further information or inquiries, kindly contact us via email: [modit.pur@mod.gov.om](mailto:modit.pur@mod.gov.om) or via call center: 24300038.

UTAS

## Student startups forum begins in Muscat

**MUSCAT:** The activities of the Second Annual Student Startups Forum began yesterday. Organised by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), the forum aims to empower students and transform their entrepreneurial ideas into sustainable projects. The event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Numair Salim Al Said.

The two-day forum, held at

Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), features the participation of more than 30 student-led startups and 30 strategic partners, including decision-makers and investors. This year's edition focuses significantly on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its role in the future of entrepreneurship.

Dr. Said Hamad Al Rubaii, Vice Chancellor of UTAS, stated in his speech that the forum represents

a stage of maturity in the university's entrepreneurial path. He noted that UTAS has transitioned from individual initiatives to an integrated ecosystem, driven by the belief that a student is not merely a job seeker, but a creator of opportunities, a partner in development, and a driver of the knowledge economy.

He added that the university has worked to empower students

through a stimulating educational environment, active business incubators, and genuine partnerships with state institutions and the private sector. These efforts have resulted in remarkable growth in the number of student startups and entrepreneurs, as well as local and regional accolades. He said that the forum focuses on the sustainability of startups, linking them with investors. **-ONA**



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Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: **Mohamed Issa Al Zedjali**  
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Chief Executive Officer: **Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali**

**EDITORIAL:** Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: [editor@timesofoman.com](mailto:editor@timesofoman.com)  
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# Symposium focuses on ensuring safe, sustainable tourism environment

The sessions and workshops focused on enhancing safety and security in tourist and hotel facilities, sharing best international practices, and highlighting the importance of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The second day of the First Annual Symposium on the Security of Tourist Facilities in Oman, organised by Security and Safety Services in partnership with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, concluded with the participation of more than 100 specialists from Oman's tourism sector, alongside international experts in facility security and crisis management.

The sessions and workshops focused on enhancing safety and security in tourist and hotel facilities, sharing best international practices, and highlighting the importance of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors in ensuring a safe and sustainable tourism environment.

The lectures delivered addressed a wide range of topics, including preventive security, emergency response, data protection, training, risk management, and digital technologies that integrate the visitor experience from airport to hotel. The discussions also emphasised the role of tour guides as cultural and security ambassadors.

Brigadier General Eng. Saeed Al-Asmi, Chief Executive Officer



of Security and Safety Services, emphasised in his lecture during the opening session that security in tourist facilities is not merely a preventive measure, but a strategic investment that protects the national economy and strengthens Oman's reputation as a safe global destination.

He explained that the success of the tourism sector depends on the integration of efforts among all stakeholders, including hotels, security teams, local authorities, civil society, and tour guides.

He noted that tour guides play a dual role as cultural and security ambassadors by guiding visitors along safe routes and presenting a positive image of the Sultanate, which enhances visitor confidence and contributes to a high-quality tourism experience.

The lecture highlighted that effective tourism security increases return on investment by reducing risks, improving visitor satisfaction, and attracting foreign direct investment, demonstrating the close relationship between investment in security and the sustainability of the tourism sector.

### Institutional and civil society partnerships

The lecture stressed the importance of strategic partnerships among tourism institutions, local authorities, security teams, and civil society. Yusuf bin Rashid Al-Mafraji, Director of Human Resources at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, stated that hotel facility security requires integrated cooperation to ensure prevention, effective response, and recovery from any crisis.



He explained that strengthening tourism security includes developing strategic frameworks for hotel facilities aligned with operational objectives, adopting cybersecurity measures to protect visitor data and hotel booking systems, implementing preventive planning and risk and crisis management, and preparing effective evacuation plans.

He also emphasised building a culture of safety through training and qualifying national cadres while promoting safe behaviour among staff.

Al-Mafraji confirmed that these measures not only protect lives and property, but also enhance the guest experience, support economic stability, and attract international visitors. Global studies show that tourism security reduces losses and increases demand, while crises and terrorist incidents significantly reduce tourism activity, as seen after the events of September 11, 2001, and periods of unrest in the Middle East.

### Hotel security: Transition-



### ing to global standards and tourism sustainability

Kate Ansley, British Security Consultant, delivered a comprehensive lecture on hotel facility security, highlighting the importance of adopting international standards such as ISO 31000 for risk management and ISO 45001 for occupational health and safety.

She emphasised that hotel security is no longer limited to an administrative function, but represents an integrated approach that protects the brand, guests, and facilities.

She outlined key risks facing hotels, including unauthorised access, theft, fire incidents, cybersecurity breaches, accidents in pools and water facilities, and political unrest or protests that may disrupt operations.

Ansley presented a range of prevention and risk management strategies, including smart access systems, electronic locks, staff background checks, regular evacuation drills, fire suppression systems, network protection, separation of guest and internal systems, and flexible plans for managing civil disturbances in coordination with local authorities.

She stressed that continuous improvement, performance measurement through KPIs, repeated practical training, and digital transformation are essential elements in building a safe and sustainable tourism environment.

### Integrating the travel experience from airport to hotel: AST Services Model

AST Services presented an integrated model for managing the travel experience from airport to

hotel, aimed at improving operational efficiency, ensuring passenger comfort, providing real-time transparency, and enhancing security procedures.

The model relies on advanced digital technologies, including a unified application for transport booking and flight tracking, API integration between airlines, hotels, and transport providers, smart data analysis to predict demand and optimise schedules, and secure information systems to protect passenger data and transactions.

The model also includes tailored services for VIP and VVIP guests, such as secure reception after immigration, escorted luggage handling, coordinated transport and hotel scheduling with live updates, priority lanes, and enhanced security for baggage and transport.

AST Services emphasised that multi-level coordination through gold, silver, and bronze command centers, supported by emergency protocols, ensures business continuity and rapid response to unexpected situations.

### Analysing global attacks on tourist facilities: Key lessons

Steven Thompson, British Security Expert, presented an in-depth analysis of attacks on tourist facilities between 2020 and 2025, noting that complex attacks—often involving a vehicle-borne explosive followed by armed assailants—were the most common. These attacks frequently targeted hotels hosting foreign officials and international tourists.

He explained that weak security coordination, limited training, and

partial evacuation planning often lead to significant human and material losses. Thompson outlined key recommendations, including strengthening hotel perimeter security, applying layered screening and surveillance, conducting regular staff training, establishing unified command centers, coordinating with local authorities and intelligence agencies, integrating security with fire safety and crisis management, and focusing on early detection through advanced monitoring systems.

He concluded that investing in integrated security systems, prevention, training, and coordination among all stakeholders is the most effective way to protect visitors and maintain the stability of the tourism sector.

### Future Vision: Oman 2040

Participants emphasised that the security of tourist and hotel facilities is an integral part of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to attract sustainable tourism, diversify national income sources, create employment opportunities for Omani youth, and strengthen the Sultanate's position as a safe and innovative global destination.

The symposium highlighted the importance of combining traditional and digital security measures, continuous training, cooperation with civil society, and proactive risk management to create a tourism environment that is both safe and attractive to investors and visitors.

### Symposium conclusion

The symposium concluded by reaffirming that tourism security in the Sultanate of Oman represents a strategic investment that protects the economy, enhances the visitor experience, and ensures the sustainability of the tourism sector.

Participants praised the international participation and global expertise that supported knowledge exchange and improved the readiness of Omani facilities to face future challenges.

The organising committee called for continued cooperation between the public and private sectors, further development of national competencies, and the effective use of digital technologies to monitor and manage risks, ensuring that Oman becomes a global benchmark in tourism security.

NORTH AL BATINAH

## Details of upcoming Sohar Investment Forum announced

**SOHAR:** The organising committee for the Sohar Investment Forum 2026 has revealed details for the upcoming event, scheduled to take place from 4 to 5 February 2026.

The event was attended by Mohammed Sulaiman Al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah, with delegations from 30 countries confirmed to participate.

The introductory meeting highlighted the importance of the forum as a continuation of the success achieved in its previous edition.

It aligns with Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (OCCI) objectives to support economic development across governorates and enhance the investment environment in North Al Batinah, in accordance with Oman Vision 2040, by providing a platform that introduces investment opportunities and supporting incentives.

Eng. Said Ali Al Abri, Chairman of OCCI branch in North Al Batinah, explained that the upcoming edition of the Sohar Investment Forum is launched with a more focused and profound vision. He stated that the forum aims to



showcase Sohar as an integrated industrial and investment city and a primary engine of the national economy, powered by its advanced industrial infrastructure, integrated logistics system, and strategic location connecting regional and global markets. He added that the

forum focuses on manufacturing and advanced industries linked to industrial value chains.

This includes metallurgical industries, building materials, plastics, chemicals, food, and pharmaceuticals, as well as supporting and complementary industries, manu-

facturing-related services, supply chains, and smart logistics.

The introductory meeting revealed that the second edition of the forum will present approximately 50 investment opportunities ready for implementation, with an estimated total investment

value of OMR300 million. These opportunities have been prepared in cooperation with government entities and relevant institutions to cover value-added industrial and investment sectors.

The forum's programme will feature specialised panel discus-



sions on the future of industry and industrial investment, as well as working papers presented by officials and experts from both within and outside the Sultanate of Oman.

Additionally, it will host direct business-to-business (B2B) meetings aimed at building strategic partnerships and facilitating communication between project owners, financiers, and investors. An accompanying exhibition will showcase the capabilities of government agencies, economic institutions, and industrial companies, highlighting available opportunities and the incentives and programs designed to empower investors and stimulate project growth.

- ONA

# WEF in Davos: Is Greenland the wake-up call Europe needed?

By threatening some of the closest US allies with tariffs to coerce them into supporting his plans to annex Greenland from Denmark, a NATO member, Trump has raised the stakes several notches higher



**DAVOS:** This year’s annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos was always going to be a Donald Trump show. After all, the US president, who is returning to Davos after six years, is responsible for much of the fragmentation of the global order that the Davos crowd expects to discuss during the five-day event.

But by threatening some of the closest US allies with tariffs to coerce them into supporting his plans to annex Greenland from Denmark, a NATO member, Trump has raised the stakes several notches higher.

For the European leaders descending on the Swiss Alpine town, the tariff threat is yet another major blow to the already damaged transatlantic relationship.

The European Union has hit back against Trump’s threats, even drawing up retaliatory economic measures against US companies and discussing the use of its so-

called Anti-Coercion Instrument (ACI) that can limit US firms’ access to the massive EU single market. The episode has once again underscored Europe’s need to shrug off its complacency and reassess its reliance on the US for everything from defense to technology, a theme that’s also a big talking point at the WEF meeting.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told WEF participants that the “seismic change” Europe was currently going through was “an opportunity,” and in fact “a necessity to build a new form of European independence.”

“The truth is also that we will only be able to capitalize on this opportunity if we recognize that this change is permanent,” she added.

**An opportunity for Europe**  
EU leaders have thus far tried to keep Trump from turning their trade and diplomatic issues into a

full-blown rupture in transatlantic relations. This has come at the cost of diplomatic and economic setbacks. For example, they were sidelined from the Ukraine peace talks despite being Kyiv’s largest military and financial backers, and signed off on a lopsided trade deal with the US.

Some experts say Europe should be more forceful in its dealings with the US, given the huge leverage it enjoys. The region is not only a huge market for US companies but also America’s biggest lender, owning trillions of US bonds and equities, almost twice as much as the rest of the world combined. This is significant, considering how much the US relies on debt to pay its bills.

They point to China’s example. Beijing used its control over rare-earth metals to force Trump to back down on his exorbitantly high tariffs. While dumping US treasures is easier said than done, the EU

is already considering measures that could make life difficult for US firms dealing with the bloc.

However, others agree with von der Leyen that the EU should take this opportunity to address its long-term challenges, even as it deals with the growing tensions with the United States in the short term.

“The more productive you are, the more competitive you are, the more leverage you have in the world,” Matthias Tauber, head of operations in Europe at the Boston Consulting Group, told DW. “Recent developments underscore just how critical productivity and competitiveness are. This is where Europe needs to raise its game.”

**Struggling economy and lost competitiveness**  
The European economy has been growing at subdued, modest pace for years now, held back by deeper structural issues such as slow



decision-making because of its complex governance structure, a less flexible regulatory framework, energy insecurity and its dependency on imports for critical raw materials.

Some of the structural issues have caused Europe to fall further behind the US in economic growth, disposable-income gains, and productivity, making it less attractive for investments. Many European firms, particularly the newer ones, have struggled to raise investments because capital markets across Europe are small and fragmented.

Many of these issues are well-known and were also highlighted in a report on European competitiveness by former European Central Bank (ECB) chief Mario Draghi in 2024. But more than a year later, not much progress has been made on Draghi’s recommendation.

Von der Leyen covered these challenges in her Davos speech, including the need for creating a more predictable and simple regulatory environment.

“We live in an age where capital or data can cross Europe in a second. And business must be able to move just as freely,” she said.

The changed global order that von der Leyen referred to is already creating a sense of urgency within the EU as evidenced by the signing of a mega free trade deal with the Mercosur trade bloc in South America after 25 years of negotiations, as well as another one waiting to be signed with India.

The bloc is also investing heavily in defense — hundreds of billions of euros collectively — as it looks to lessen dependence on non-EU countries, including the US.

There is yet another dependency that the EU is looking to address: its overreliance on US Big Tech companies. German companies like Siemens and SAP are already working to ensure that Europe cuts its reliance on US technology, but they rule out a complete decoupling.

The Siemens CEO of Digital Industries, Cedrik Neike, told DW that it would be “foolish” to think that Europe would ever be able to produce European software, or personal computers equipped with GPUs and all the other components needed. “The reality is that the world is extremely dependent. We can reduce the risk, but we can never eliminate our reliance,” he further said. — **DW**

## NATIONAL SECURITY BENEFITS



## ‘We’re going to pay tariffs back,’ Trump says if SC upturns tariffs

**WASHINGTON DC:** US President Donald Trump has said that if the United States Supreme Court ruling is not in his administration’s favour, he will do his best to pay the tariffs back.

Trump further said that the US has significant national security benefits from tariffs.

He said, “I don’t know what the Supreme Court is going to do... Tariff is probably less severe than what a license could be... I don’t know where there’s a case even there, but we’ve taken in hundreds of billions of dollars, and if we lose that case, it’s possible we’re going to have to do the best we can in paying it back. I don’t know how that’s going to be done very easily without hurting a lot of people. But we’re waiting for that case anxiously. We have tremendous national security because of tariffs and tremendous income.”

Trump is making his first international trip of 2026 to Davos, Switzerland, where he is expected to deliver remarks focused on his vision of American dominance, including his desire to take over Greenland, ABC News

reported. Trump’s increasingly antagonistic language over acquiring the Danish territory puts him at odds with fellow NATO countries and other allies.

Trump will lead the largest US delegation to the World Economic Forum, according to event organisers, where he plans to meet with top business CEOs and international leaders, deliver a speech to conference attendees, and participate in the formal signing ceremony to solidify his Board of Peace that was proposed to oversee the recovery of Gaza but has since raised questions that it could expand to rival the United Nations.

This week, Trump will once again face some world leaders he has spent months criticising as he continues to test the limits of his presidential power and his standing in the world following weeks of reignited controversy over the capture of Venezuelan deposed dictator Nicolas Maduro and seizing the country’s oil and his public threats of acquiring Greenland by force, if necessary, as per ABC News. — **ANI**

## FOREIGN MINISTER ALBARES

# Spanish President to visit India soon

**NEW DELHI:** Spain’s President Pedro Sanchez Perez-Castejon is set to embark on a visit to India soon, the country’s foreign minister Jose Manuel Albares said on Wednesday.

He also expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also be able to visit Spain.

Delivering his opening remarks during his meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in the national capital today, Albares said that Spain is keen to join the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative and work bilaterally through the European Union. He also

“President Sanchez will be very soon here in India for an official visit, and I hope that Prime Minister Modi will be able to visit Spain as well. We are going to continue working bilaterally through the European Union and as well in the multilateral sphere and we will be very happy to join the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative and have brought the letter to you to mark that moment.

“And we will also express our wish of upgrading our relationship to a strategic association that is the highest level of relationship that we have with friends like is the case in India,” he said.

Albares also thanked Jaishankar for expressing solidarity for the victims of the recent train accident in Barcelona that killed over 40 people.

“And thank you very much for your message of solidarity to the Spanish people in this very painful



moment,” he said.

Albares said that the logo for the dual year of culture, tourism, and artificial intelligence represents India and Spain’s shared vision.

“It has been a pleasure for me to present jointly with you our common logo for the Dual year. It fully represents our shared vision for this year and for the future of our relationship that has been increasing in the last few years,” he said.

“I know that both countries, are working on a packed program of events that are going to mark this year, and I really look forward to having it presented in Spain as well. And I’m also very glad that it involved the participation of the public through the crowdsourcing method,” he added.

Albares said that as the world order is going through a churn, it is essential that Spain develops relations with a reliable country like India.

“In these very complicated times

in the world, it’s very important for Spain to foster our relationship with such a reliable country like India, a country that believes in international law, that upholds the principles of the United Nations Charter, and that believes in multilateralism,” he said.

He said that a positive sign would be the signing of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement.

“A very good sign would be the final agreement of the FTA with the European Union that we very much would love to see being put forward finally. It’s the right time for that. Spain and India, are the two fastest growing economies in the world and our enterprises are benefiting from that. We will discuss later on the possibility of continuing increasing our trade relations, the presence of Spanish companies in India, the presence of Indian company in Spain,” he said.

Albares stated Airbus and Tata’s

cooperation as the real example of the cooperation both nations aim to foster.

“I think that the partnership between Airbus and Tata is the real example of what we have to foster and what we have to be achieving. I hope that the pace of high-level visits that we have been having in the last years. And once again, I want to thank you for your presence as a special invitee in last year’s Ambassador’s Conference in Spain will continue,” he said.

He then said he looked forward to further engagements during his visit.

“So looking forward to this working session. Once again, thank you very much for the solidarity for the Spanish people in this very difficult moment for my people looking forward for the working session,” he said.

Albares arrived earlier in the day on Wednesday. A statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs on Tuesday said that Albares will hold talks with his Indian counterpart Jaishankar on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest.

Meanwhile, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Tuesday stated the European Union is close to finalising a Free Trade Agreement with India and noted that some describe it “the mother of all deals”. Addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos, she stressed Europe’s intent to expand trade and international cooperation. — **ANI**

## AFTER 27 YEARS OF SERVICE

# NASA astronaut Sunita Williams retires

**WASHINGTON DC:** NASA astronaut Sunita Williams has retired after 27 years of service, effective December 27, 2025.

With a remarkable career spanning three missions aboard the International Space Station, Williams has set numerous human spaceflight records, including logging 608 days in space, the second-most cumulative time by a NASA astronaut.

“Suni Williams has been a trailblazer in human spaceflight,



shaping the future of exploration through her leadership aboard the space station and paving the way for commercial missions to low Earth orbit,” said NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman. “Her work advancing science and technology has laid the foundation for Artemis missions to the Moon and advancing toward Mars, and her extraordinary achievements will continue to inspire generations to dream big and push the boundaries of what’s possible. Congratulations

on your well-deserved retirement, and thank you for your service to NASA and our nation,” NASA said in a statement.

Williams logged 608 days in space -- second on the list of cumulative time in space by a NASA astronaut. She ranks sixth on the list of longest single spaceflight by an American, tied with NASA astronaut Butch Wilmore, both logging 286 days during NASA’s Boeing Starliner and SpaceX Crew-9 missions. — **ANI**

# On a mission, not just a journey: Oman captain Jatinder Singh



The 36-year-old skipper embraces pride and responsibility ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup as team departs for Sri Lanka on Thursday

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** For Oman, the ICC Men's T20 World Cup has become familiar territory. For captain Jatinder Singh, however, this edition carries a meaning that goes far beyond qualification.

As Oman team prepares to depart on Thursday morning for Sri Lanka for a pre-World Cup camp followed by participation in their fourth Men's T20 World Cup, co-hosted by Sri Lanka and India from February 7, Jatinder spoke with a sense of pride rooted in history and responsibility shaped by the present.

No Asian Associate nation has appeared more times on this stage, and Oman's place among the game's global contenders is no longer a novelty.

"This is a big moment of pride for Oman," Jatinder said. "To play the World Cup for the fourth time, the maximum by an Asian Associate nation, means a lot to all of us."

This will be Jatinder's third T20 World Cup, having missed the previous edition, and his first as captain. Leading the national side at the sport's biggest event, he admitted, is a deeply personal honour.

"It is a huge honour to lead Oman," said the 36-year-old batter.

"Every World Cup is special, and to do this as captain is something I am really proud of."

Nearly ten years after Oman's famous debut victory over Ireland in 2016, Jatinder remains the lone survivor from that historic night in the North Indian city of Dharamsala. The memory still fuels him, particularly as Oman once again share a group with Ireland - along with former champions Australia, hosts Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe.

**A World Cup of firsts**

What sets this campaign apart is the scale of transition within the squad. Eleven players in the 15-member team will be making their T20 World Cup debut, a reality Jatinder viewed as an opportunity rather than a risk.

"It is a great feeling to lead a side where 11 players are playing their first World Cup," he said. "For many of them, this is a huge moment in their careers."

Inexperience, he felt, could actually ease the mental burden of the occasion. "The boys are hungry for success," Jatinder said. "They may lack experience, but they will also carry less pressure of playing a World Cup. That freedom can help."



Oman head into the tournament after a promising showing at the Asia Cup in Dubai in September last year, followed by their qualification in the Asia-EAP Qualifier at home in October and participation in the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup, before deciding their final 15.

Jatinder said the group now has the right blend. "We have skilful and experienced players, and overall the mindset of the team is in a good space," he said.

Preparation, he stressed, has been intense and purposeful. "We trained very hard under chief coach Duleep Mendis and his deputy Sulakshan Kulkarni," he said. "The support staff has been excellent, and we are really looking forward to the World Cup."

Group B presents Oman with no margin for comfort, but Jatinder saw value in the challenge ahead. "We will get a good measure of ourselves playing against the heavyweights," he said. "We are ready for that challenge."

Facing teams like Australia, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Ireland,

all Test-playing nations is not something the captain shies away from. "It is a big opportunity to play against the best in the world and against far more experienced teams," he said. "These are the matches you want to be part of."

Oman's T20 World Cup history includes just one win, achieved against Ireland on March 9, 2016. Jatinder, the only member of the current squad to have featured in that match, is keen to ensure the team's story does not remain frozen in the past.

"This is our fourth World Cup, and the only win came way back in 2016," he said. "We are eyeing our second win and more. We are charged up."

The message within the camp, he added, is clear. "We are not going just to turn up and make numbers," he said. "We are here on a mission."

Only two players of the current squad - Mohammad Nadeem and Shakeel Ahmad - featured in the 2024 World Cup in West Indies, where Oman were also grouped

## Oman Cricket bolsters T20 World Cup preparations



Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Oman Cricket (OC) on Wednesday announced a landmark partnership with Oman India Fertiliser Company SAOC (OMIFCO) for 2026, after the latter became the Principal Partner of the Oman men's and women's national teams.

The collaboration comes as Oman continues to strengthen its presence on the global cricket stage ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

Welcoming the partnership, Pankaj Khimji, Chairman of Oman Cricket, said: "We are delighted to welcome OMIFCO as the Principal Partner of Oman Cricket for 2026. Their continued support reflects a shared vision for the growth of cricket in the Sultanate and reinforces the strong link between sport, national pride, and community development."

"As Oman prepares to compete on the world stage for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, this partnership provides a significant boost to our men's national team. We are grateful

for OMIFCO's commitment to excellence and for standing alongside Oman Cricket as we strive to inspire the next generation and further elevate the profile of Omani cricket internationally. We also appreciate the support extended to the Oman women's national team and its long-term development."

Commenting on the partnership, Said Salim Mohammed Al Salmi, GM - People & Culture, OMIFCO, said: "Cricket has emerged as a strong ambassador for Oman on the global sporting stage, and the men's national team's participation in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is a moment of immense pride for the nation."

"Sports play a vital role in inspiring youth and strengthening national identity. As Oman's national teams prepare to compete against the world's best, OMIFCO is proud to support their journey, ambitions, and pursuit of excellence, while contributing to the continued growth and development of cricket across the Sultanate."

SCOTLAND TO REPLACE IF BCB DECIDES NOT TO TRAVEL TO INDIA

## Bangladesh face T20 World Cup exit, ICC rejects venue shift request

**DUBAI:** The International Cricket Council (ICC) has given the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) one more day to confer with the Bangladesh government and decide whether their team will travel to India to play the 2026 T20 World Cup, according to *ESPNcricinfo* report on Wednesday.

If Bangladesh continue to refuse to play in India due to security concerns, the ICC Board has decided to replace them with Scotland - based on team rankings - in the tournament.

The decision was taken at an ICC Board meeting on Wednesday where the majority voted in favour of a replacement team if Bangladesh stuck to their stance of not playing in India. It is understood that out of the 15 directors present only the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) backed BCB.

The meeting was called after the PCB wrote to the ICC and other boards on Tuesday stating it supported the BCB's position on wanting to play in Sri Lanka, which is a co-host of the tournament.

The board meeting was attended by the directors of all the Full Member countries. It is understood that, apart from the ICC chair Jay Shah, the participants included BCB president Aminul Islam, BCCI secretary Devajit Saini, SLC president Shammi Silva, PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, CA chairman Mike Baird, Zimbabwe Cricket president Tavenga Mukuhlani, CWI president Kishore Shallow, Cricket Ireland chair Brian MacNeice, Cricket New Zealand representative Roger Twose, ECB chair Richard Thompson, CSA representative Mohammed Moosajee and Cricket Afghanistan chairman Mirwais Ashraf.



Two Associate Member directors Mubashshir Usmani and Mahinda Vallipuram, ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta, ICC deputy chairman Imran Khawaja and ICC's general manager Gaurav Saxena were also in attendance.

"The decision was taken after considering all security assessments conducted, including independent reviews, all of which indicated there was no threat to Bangladesh players, media persons, officials and fans at any of the

tournament venues in India," the ICC said in a statement following the board meeting.

"The ICC Board noted that it was not feasible to make changes so close to the tournament and that altering the schedule under the circumstances, in the absence of any credible security threat, could set a precedent that would jeopardise the sanctity of future ICC events and undermine its neutrality as a global governing body."

"The ICC management also en-



gaged in a series of correspondences and meetings with the BCB in a bid to resolve the impasse, sharing detailed information on the event security plan, including layered federal and state law-enforcement support."

The ICC's decision follows weeks of uncertainty over Bangladesh's participation in the T20 World Cup after the BCB, in coordination with the Bangladesh government, wrote to the ICC on January 4 to state they would not

be sending their team to India due to security concerns. That move was in response to the BCCI instructing Kolkata Knight Riders to release Bangladesh fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman from their squad for IPL 2026, though no specific reason was given for that directive.

"Over the past several weeks, the ICC has engaged with the BCB in sustained and constructive dialogue, with the clear objective of enabling Bangladesh's participa-

tion in the tournament," the ICC said.

"During this period, the ICC has shared detailed inputs, including independent security assessments, comprehensive venue-level security plans and formal assurances from the host authorities, all of which consistently concluded that there is no credible or verifiable threat to the safety or security of the Bangladesh team in India."

"Despite these efforts, the BCB maintained its position, repeatedly linking its participation in the tournament to a single, isolated and unrelated development concerning one of its player's involvement in a domestic league. This linkage has no bearing on the tournament's security framework or the conditions governing participation in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup."

"The ICC's venue and scheduling decisions are guided by objective threat assessments, host guarantees, and the tournament's agreed terms of participation, which apply uniformly to all 20 competing nations. In the absence of any independent security findings that materially compromise the safety of the Bangladesh team, the ICC is unable to relocate fixtures. Doing so would carry significant logistical and scheduling consequences for other teams and fans worldwide, and would also create far-reaching precedent-related challenges that risk undermining the neutrality, fairness, and integrity of ICC governance."

Bangladesh are in Group C at the T20 World Cup and are scheduled to play their first three games in Kolkata on February 7, 9 and 14 and the final one in Mumbai on February 17.

**OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES**  
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by March 2026 reaching \$62.49, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 27 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was which was \$62.22. -ONA

# MARKET

## BUSINESS & FINANCE



**MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER**  
The MSX index closed at 6,187.19 points, down by -0.95% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.14% at 578.04 points. Oman Fisheries, up 19.44%, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 5.62%, was the top loser.

# Sohar Port strengthens its role as national engine for trade, investment

Sohar Port and Freezone plays a pivotal role in enhancing logistical connectivity, raising the competitiveness of supply chains, supporting economic diversification, and maximising value-added through localising production chains and developing local content

**MUSCAT:** Sohar Port and Freezone has consolidated its position as one of the most prominent national operational models embodying economic transformation on the ground, through an integrated system that links trade, industry, and



investment within a highly efficient and competitive environment. Sohar Port and Freezone plays a pivotal role in enhancing logistical connectivity, raising the competitiveness of supply chains, supporting economic diversification, and maximising value-added through localising production chains and developing local content. Since 2019, Sohar Port and Freezone has recorded consistent growth in line with Oman's economic transformation approaches. Total handling increased from 62 million metric tons to 72 million metric tons annually by the end of 2025, as a result of growing trade movement, enhanced integration of the system within global supply chains, and increased confidence from international shipping lines



and industrial operators. The number of vessels received by the port also rose from 3,144 to 3,427, reflecting the growing role of Sohar Port and Freezone as a key logistics hub on both the regional and international levels. Sohar Port and Freezone successfully attracted new investments worth \$968 million through eight agreements during the year. These included leasing 76 hectares of land within the port and freezone, with these projects aimed at supporting exports, in addition to their complete alignment with national priorities related to industrial diversification. Emile Hoogsteden, CEO of Sohar Port said that Sohar Port and Freezone continues to build an integrated industrial logistics system that supports trade and industrial development and enhances the resilience of supply chains in the long term. He indicated that this growth reflects strategic planning and continuous investment in infrastructure, with a clear focus on reliability and sustainability. He added that Sohar Port and Freezone's focus has not been limited to boosting movement and attracting investments, but has also been keen on consolidating its role in developing the local community. The fruits of its corporate social responsibility programs reached approximately 50,000 beneficiaries during 2025, including initiatives in education, skill development, healthcare, and environmental projects. Eng. Raid Al Rubaiey, CEO of

Sohar Freezone and Deputy CEO of Sohar Port said that the volume of investments in Sohar Port and Freezone reflects the level of confidence in Oman's economic path and its institutional stability, within the framework of the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. He indicated that these investments confirm their alignment with national priorities in the fields of economic diversification, increasing exports, and enhancing local content. He added that Sohar Port and Freezone operates as an integrated national system supporting comprehensive and sustainable development, built on established partnerships between the government, the industrial sector, and the local community. Sohar Port and Freezone organ-



ized its annual reception last night, with the participation of a number of officials, investors, and partners. The event served as a platform bringing together decision-makers and sector leaders to discuss growth opportunities and enhance impactful partnerships. This event comes at a stage where the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed tangible economic acceleration over the past six years. This acceleration has contributed to redirecting priorities, enhancing financial sustainability, and preparing a more attractive environment for investment, translating the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 into measurable programs and projects under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. -ONA

### INTEGRATION FOR IMPACT



## EJAAD leadership forum begins

**MUSCAT:** The activities of the 4th EJAAD Leadership Forum kicked off yesterday under the theme "Integration for Impact." Organized by the Research and Innovation Authority, the forum features the participation of 200 executive and academic leaders, as well as decision-makers from various sectors, under the auspices of Dr. Saif Abdullah Al Haddabi, Chairman of the Research and Innovation Authority. The forum aims to enhance the private sector's contribution to funding scientific research and innovation, improve the Sultanate of Oman's ranking in relevant global indices, and bolster the efficiency of the research ecosystem through the unified EJAAD platform. It also seeks to activate applicable industrial research projects to support a knowledge-based economy and achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. Najah Mohammed Al Rashidi, representing the Research and Innovation Authority, stated that the EJAAD Leadership Forum continues its annual meeting for the fourth consecutive year, underscoring the success of previous editions. She emphasized its role as a national platform that unites decision-makers, experts, and researchers to foster cooperation and build shared directions within the Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) ecosystem. She further explained that the "EJAAD" program serves as a pioneering national model embodying the integration of efforts across various sectors to support the research system. The program has contributed to enhancing the R&D hierarchy within private sector institutions and providing clearer, more effective mechanisms for decision-makers to identify future research priorities based on accurate data and actual business environment needs. The forum reviewed Qatar's

experience in promoting scientific research and innovation within the industrial sector and highlighted EJAAD's role in maximizing research and innovation value for the industry. Key highlights of the event included the signing of five membership agreements for the EJAAD platform with several national companies and the signing of five industrial-funded research projects to be executed by national academic institutions. A presentation was delivered about success stories from the industrial sector's journey in RDI. The forum witnessed the launch of the National Database for Instruments and Equipment "Mu'iddat," (Equipment) a national digital platform designed to organize and provide access to research and technical facilities across government, academic, and industrial institutions. This project aims to improve resource utilization and enhance integration between relevant entities. "Mu'iddat" serves as a centralized database documenting available research capabilities, providing detailed information on equipment, facilities, and related services. Developed in cooperation with local Omani companies—and featuring an electronic payment gateway provided by a national firm—the platform supports researchers and decision-makers in planning and identifying collaboration opportunities while enhancing local content. For the first time, the forum saw the inauguration of the "EJAAD Shield for Research and Innovation Leadership." This award honors leading entities from the industrial and academic sectors for their contributions to the RDI ecosystem, strategic partnerships, and the acceleration of transforming knowledge into applications with sustainable national impact. -ONA

### MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES

## Two new harbours worth OMR5.8 million to be constructed in Sadah

**SALALAH:** The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources is implementing projects to construct two fishing harbours in Hasik and the Hadbeen area in the Wilayat of Sadah, Dhofar Governorate, at a total cost of OMR5.8 million. These projects are part of the Ministry's efforts to develop fishing ports across the various governorates of Oman. This initiative aims to create an attractive investment environment and maximize the utilization of fish resources, while providing a suite of public and private services within the ports to increase the fisheries sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Eng. Abdunnasser Aubad Ghaswas, Director of the Fisheries Department, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the Ministry is continuing the implementation of the two fishing harbor projects in the Wilayat of Sadah. He noted that the completion rate for the Hasik harbor has reached 34%, while the project in the Hadbeen area has reached 50% completion.



He explained that each project includes the construction of breakwaters and floating piers, in addition to the preparation of basic infrastructure such as internal roads and lighting, and the establishment of necessary public facilities to serve fishermen. Regarding future plans for the fisheries sector in Dhofar Governorate, Eng. Abdunnasser pointed out four upcoming projects within the Ministry's priority matrix.

These include the development of the fishing port in the Wilayat of Mirbat, and the construction of three fishing ports in the center of the Wilayat of Sadah, the Wilayat of Rakhyut, and A'Shuwaymiyah in the Wilayat of Shalim and Al Hallaniyat Islands. It is worth noting that fishing ports are a fundamental pillar of the fisheries sector and its associated activities. They contribute to the social



and economic development of coastal wilayats and enhance the sector's contribution to the GDP by accommodating increased catch volumes, providing necessary facilities, and enabling the use of modern fishing gear. Furthermore, they offer investment opportunities in port services, fulfill requirements for landing, marketing, and handling operations, and provide maintenance services for ships and boats. -ONA

### SOHAR INDUSTRIAL AREA

## International Heavy Equipment strengthens industrial ties with special 'Open Day' in Sohar

**MUSCAT:** International Heavy Equipment (IHE), a leading provider of heavy equipment, trucks, spare parts, and industrial solutions in the Sultanate of Oman, hosted a special Open Day at its facility in the Sohar Industrial Area on January 20. The event showcased IHE's ongoing commitment to strengthening engagement with clients, partners, and key stakeholders across the industrial and infrastructure sectors. It also served as a high-level networking platform bringing together senior management from IHE alongside representatives from leading construction, logistics, manufacturing, and industrial companies operating in Sohar and surrounding areas. Designed to give stakeholders a hands-onlook at IHE's latest portfolio, the event provided opportunities for direct interaction and knowledge exchange, while strengthening professional relationships within the industrial sector. Attendees were introduced to IHE's extensive range of heavy-duty trucks, construction, and industrial equipment, as well as its comprehensive after-sales services and spare parts support. They were also familiarised with the company's bespoke equipment packages that are tailored for high-intensity demands of the Sohar Industrial



Zone. Commenting on the event's success, Sohraab Hasnain, General Manager of IHE, pointed out that the Open Day underscores the company's focus on building long-term partnerships through direct engagement and transparency. He noted that such initiatives enable IHE to better understand client needs while demonstrating its capabilities

and commitment to delivering dependable solutions aligned with international standards. He further added that IHE, a key entity within The Zubair Corporation's Mobility& Equipment sector, is continuously investing in its operational capacity to ensure it remains the most reliable partner for the nation's large-scale development projects. "Customer-centric initiatives such as open days play a vital role in fostering trust, encouraging dialogue, and reinforcing the company's position as a reliable market partner," he stated. The event witnessed strong engagement from attendees who toured the facility and gained firsthand insight into IHE's equipment range, service capabilities, and customised solutions aimed at improving efficiency, safety, and operational continuity across various industries.

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MARKET

# MSX index ends lower

Oman Fisheries, up 19.44%, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 5.62%, was the top loser.



**MUSCAT:** The MSX index closed at 6,187.19 points, down by -0.95% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.14% at 578.04 points. Oman Fisheries, up 19.44%, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 5.62%, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 4636 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 32.24 million, with more than 110.75 million shares changing hands. Out of 76 traded securities, 20 advanced, 28 declined, and 28 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for RO 827K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 796K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 31K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 10,686.80 points, down -0.76%. Prices of Financial Corporation, Financial Services, DIDIC, National Finance, Oman & Emir-

ates Investment were up by 9.76%, 9.46%, 1.55%, 1.13%, 0.89% respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, Muscat Finance, Oman United Insurance, Al Madina Investments, Ominvest were down by 5.62%, 3.08%, 2.63%, 2.44%, 2.22% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 8,644.75 points, up 0.36%. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Dhofar Cattle Feed, Galfar Engineering, Al Maha Ceramics, National Aluminium were up by 19.44%, 9.02%, 3.80%, 2.76%, 2.50% respectively. Prices of Oman Chlorine, Gulf International Chemicals, Oman Cement were down by 3.72%, 1.28%, 0.40% respectively.

Services Index was down by -0.83% before closing at 2,514.71 points. Prices of Salalah Port Services, National Gas, SMN Power Holding, Sembcorp Salalah, Ooredoo were up by 3.06%, 1.09%, 0.92%, 0.46%, 0.34% respectively. Prices of Abraj Energy, Phoenix Power, OQ Gas Networks, Al Batinah Power, Muscat Desalination were down by 1.93%, 1.79%, 1.46%, 1.19%, 1.10% respectively. — United Securities

# Vodafone Oman sets a new standard with BLACK postpaid membership plans

**MUSCAT:** Across Oman's post-paid market, customers are increasingly choosing services that offer predictability, built-in value, and a seamless experience. Recognising this shift, Vodafone Oman has launched its new BLACK Post-paid Membership Plans for Prime and Pioneer customers, introducing a 12-month subscription that offers greater consistency, simplicity, and value.

“BLACK Postpaid MembershipPlans are about doing post-paid differently,” said Usama Al Safi, Head of Brand and Communication. “We’ve taken what matters most to our Prime and Pioneer customers; value that lasts, benefits that stay on, and recognition that’s consistent and built a structure that reflects those priorities over time. It’s a smarter, simpler way to stay on BLACK, and one that puts everyday experience ahead of constant change.”

Designed around long-term usage patterns, the plans offer a structured, uninterrupted model that eliminates the need for frequent adjustments or short-term incentives. Each plan is packed with benefits that remain active across the full contract period from Take Your Home Tariff Abroad and data rollover to uninterrupted



entertainment access and ongoing eligibility for device instalments and upgrades.

With BLACK Postpaid Membership Plans, Prime and Pioneer customers unlock higher data allowances built into the monthly experience, delivering up to four times more bonus data. Pioneer membership includes 140GB at OMR 24 per month, while Prime membership includes 200GB at OMR 30 per month, offering customers up to 15% savings as part of a long-term structure designed around real usage.

Beyond connectivity, BLACK Postpaid Membership Plans recognise long-term commitment through Wafi, Vodafone Oman's new loyalty programme. Moving

beyond the occasional rewards, Wafi provides continuous recognition across lifestyle and everyday experiences, underscoring that loyalty truly matters.

The introduction of BLACK Postpaid Membership Plans marks a clear step forward in Vodafone Oman's postpaid journey, bringing lasting value, clarity and control to the forefront of the customer experience. More than a standalone offer, it reflects a strategic shift towards plans that are built around people, not promotions. As the postpaid market continues to mature, Vodafone Oman is setting the standard, delivering a BLACK in a way that is smarter, steadier, and shaped by what customers truly expect.

MUSCAT  
STOCK  
EXCHANGE

INDICES

| Index              | High      | Low       | Value     | Prev. Value | Diff   | Diff% |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|-------|
| MSX 30 INDEX       | 6,245.36  | 6,186.71  | 6,187.77  | 6,232.38    | -58.27 | -0.95 |
| FINANCIAL INDEX    | 10,768.17 | 10,661.04 | 10,668.80 | 10,768.17   | -81.27 | -0.75 |
| Industry Index     | 8,654.72  | 8,591.21  | 8,644.75  | 8,613.86    | 30.90  | 0.36  |
| Services Index     | 2,534.36  | 2,514.71  | 2,514.71  | 2,535.77    | -21.06 | -0.83 |
| MSX Shariah Index  | 581.09    | 576.81    | 578.04    | 578.85      | -0.81  | -0.14 |
| MSX TR INDEX       | 9,387.12  | 9,298.98  | 9,299.69  | 9,388.68    | -88.99 | -0.95 |
| FINANCIAL TR IDX   | 12,792.96 | 12,665.69 | 12,696.29 | 12,792.96   | -96.67 | -0.76 |
| INDUSTRIAL TR IDX  | 10,670.52 | 10,592.22 | 10,658.23 | 10,620.14   | 38.09  | 0.36  |
| SERVICES TR IDX    | 3,304.99  | 3,279.37  | 3,279.37  | 3,306.63    | -27.46 | -0.83 |
| FIXED INCOME INDEX | 1,206.62  | 1,206.62  | 1,206.62  | 1,206.62    | 0.00   | 0.00  |

Trading Summary

| Volume      | Turnover   | Trades | Market Cap.    | Up | Down | Equal | Sec. Trade |
|-------------|------------|--------|----------------|----|------|-------|------------|
| 110,751,779 | 32,239,868 | 4,636  | 33,214,241,734 | 20 | 28   | 28    | 76         |

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21

| ISN | SECURITY NAME | VOLUME | TURNOVER | TRADES | OPEN PRICE | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE PR. | PREV. CLOSE | DIFF (R) | DIFF % | LAST PR. | LAST BID | LAST OFFER | PAR VALUE | MARKET CAP |
|-----|---------------|--------|----------|--------|------------|------|-----|-----------|-------------|----------|--------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|-----|---------------|--------|----------|--------|------------|------|-----|-----------|-------------|----------|--------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|

REGULAR MARKET

|              |                                 |            |            |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |        |       |       |       |       |               |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| OM0000002804 | ASFAFA FOODS                    | 1,105      | 707        | 2     | 0.640 | 0.640 | 0.640 | 0.640 | 0.630 | 0.010  | 1.587  | 0.640 | 0.595 | 0.640 | 0.100 | 76,800,000    |
| OM0000003968 | OOREDOO                         | 34,400     | 10,037     | 7     | 0.296 | 0.296 | 0.295 | 0.295 | 0.294 | 0.001  | 0.340  | 0.295 | 0.295 | 0.296 | 0.100 | 192,028,548   |
| OM0000004183 | NATIONAL BANK OMAN              | 88,852     | 35,275     | 6     | 0.397 | 0.399 | 0.397 | 0.397 | 0.397 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.397 | 0.397 | 0.398 | 0.100 | 645,500,703   |
| OM0000002188 | AL ANVAR CERAMIC                | 22,960     | 4,587      | 9     | 0.201 | 0.201 | 0.196 | 0.200 | 0.200 | 0.000  | 0.200  | 0.200 | 0.200 | 0.200 | 0.100 | 44,400,000    |
| OM0000002226 | ALJAZEERA SERVICES              | 7,081      | 1,381      | 4     | 0.195 | 0.195 | 0.195 | 0.195 | 0.195 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.195 | 0.190 | 0.195 | 0.100 | 8,354,383     |
| OM0000003125 | GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO. | 160,000    | 37,243     | 15    | 0.230 | 0.235 | 0.230 | 0.235 | 0.235 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.235 | 0.229 | 0.235 | 0.100 | 47,000,000    |
| OM0000003024 | RENAISSANCE SERVICES            | 48,488     | 18,793     | 9     | 0.338 | 0.338 | 0.335 | 0.335 | 0.335 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.335 | 0.335 | 0.336 | 0.100 | 76,833,250    |
| OM0000003861 | VOLTAIR ENERGY                  | 32,740     | 35,842     | 14    | 1.331 | 1.400 | 1.350 | 1.400 | 1.400 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 1.400 | 1.400 | 1.400 | 0.100 | 131,038,427   |
| OM0000004833 | AL SUWADI POWER                 | 50,925     | 8,455      | 10    | 0.166 | 0.167 | 0.166 | 0.166 | 0.166 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.166 | 0.166 | 0.166 | 0.100 | 118,591,452   |
| OM0000004768 | MADINA TAKAFUL                  | 1,074,565  | 138,368    | 102   | 0.128 | 0.128 | 0.124 | 0.126 | 0.127 | -0.001 | -0.787 | 0.126 | 0.124 | 0.130 | 0.100 | 22,050,000    |
| OM0000004420 | BANK NIZWA                      | 64,283     | 7,613      | 16    | 0.118 | 0.119 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.119 | -0.001 | -0.840 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.119 | 0.100 | 353,360,458   |
| OM0000002796 | BANK MUSCAT                     | 32,067,149 | 11,347,909 | 406   | 0.355 | 0.355 | 0.352 | 0.352 | 0.355 | -0.003 | -0.845 | 0.352 | 0.352 | 0.352 | 0.100 | 2,642,251,766 |
| OM0000002440 | AL SHARIQA INVESTMENT HO.       | 206,360    | 22,925     | 16    | 0.110 | 0.112 | 0.110 | 0.111 | 0.112 | -0.001 | -0.893 | 0.111 | 0.111 | 0.111 | 0.100 | 9,990,000     |
| OM0000003026 | OMAN TELECOM                    | 4,238,553  | 4,658,577  | 141   | 1.089 | 1.101 | 1.088 | 1.088 | 1.100 | -0.012 | -1.081 | 1.090 | 1.087 | 1.090 | 0.100 | 816,000,000   |
| OM0000004625 | ALBATRAH POWER                  | 34,974     | 5,666      | 6     | 0.167 | 0.166 | 0.166 | 0.166 | 0.168 | -0.002 | -1.190 | 0.168 | 0.168 | 0.168 | 0.100 | 31,033,313    |
| OM0000002374 | UNITED FINANCE                  | 2,172,789  | 177,368    | 77    | 0.085 | 0.085 | 0.081 | 0.082 | 0.083 | -0.001 | -1.205 | 0.082 | 0.082 | 0.082 | 0.100 | 29,202,438    |
| OM0000000692 | OGAS NETWORKS                   | 7,940,055  | 1,621,209  | 650   | 0.206 | 0.206 | 0.203 | 0.203 | 0.206 | -0.003 | -1.456 | 0.203 | 0.203 | 0.203 | 0.100 | 879,116,656   |
| OM0000003036 | SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK        | 15,104,882 | 2,455,524  | 634   | 0.183 | 0.183 | 0.181 | 0.181 | 0.184 | -0.003 | -1.829 | 0.181 | 0.181 | 0.185 | 0.100 | 1,065,376,649 |
| OM0000005834 | ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES           | 798,883    | 259,914    | 143   | 0.361 | 0.361 | 0.356 | 0.356 | 0.363 | -0.007 | -1.928 | 0.356 | 0.356 | 0.362 | 0.100 | 274,193,200   |
| OM0000001053 | OMINVEST                        | 210,603    | 74,701     | 19    | 0.358 | 0.358 | 0.354 | 0.352 | 0.360 | -0.008 | -2.222 | 0.352 | 0.352 | 0.358 | 0.100 | 329,370,482   |
| OM0000001087 | OMAN UNITED INSURANCE           | 10,000     | 3,700      | 1     | 0.370 | 0.370 | 0.370 | 0.370 | 0.380 | -0.010 | -2.632 | 0.370 | 0.360 | 0.387 | 0.100 | 37,000,000    |
| Total        | 21                              | 64,288,276 | 20,916,596 | 2,287 |       |       |       |       |       |        |        |       |       |       |       |               |

Parallel Market

|               |                               |            |           |     |       |       |       |       |       |        |        |       |       |       |       |                 |            |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|------------|
| OM0000002911  | FINANCIAL CORPORATION         | 15,000     | 665       | 4   | 0.044 | 0.045 | 0.044 | 0.045 | 0.041 | 0.004  | 9.756  | 0.045 | 0.043 | 0.045 | 0.100 | 3,151,348       |            |
| OM0000003148  | FINANCIAL SERVICES            | 123,520    | 10,001    | 23  | 0.080 | 0.081 | 0.077 | 0.081 | 0.074 | 0.007  | 9.459  | 0.081 | 0.081 | 0.081 | 0.100 | 1,620,000       |            |
| OM0000003101  | DHOFA FOODS AND INVESTMENT    | 177,650    | 25,317    | 17  | 0.146 | 0.146 | 0.142 | 0.145 | 0.133 | 0.012  | 9.032  | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.100 | 28,663,154      |            |
| OM0000002633  | SALAHAT PORT SERVICES         | 2,500      | 928       | 1   | 0.371 | 0.371 | 0.371 | 0.371 | 0.360 | 0.011  | 3.056  | 0.371 | 0.370 | 0.370 | 0.000 | 0.100           | 66,719,675 |
| OM0000003463  | OMAN CEMENT                   | 8,012      | 2,345     | 3   | 0.298 | 0.298 | 0.298 | 0.298 | 0.298 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.298 | 0.298 | 0.299 | 0.100 | 15,566,888      |            |
| OM0000001000  | OMAN FLOUR MILLS              | 500        | 240       | 1   | 0.490 | 0.490 | 0.490 | 0.490 | 0.490 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.490 | 0.485 | 0.490 | 0.100 | 81,033,750      |            |
| OM0000005159  | DHOFA INTL DVNT & INVESTMENT  | 27,182     | 730       | 7   | 0.261 | 0.262 | 0.261 | 0.262 | 0.258 | 0.004  | 1.550  | 0.262 | 0.262 | 0.263 | 0.100 | 129,966,709     |            |
| OM0000002648  | NATIONAL FINANCE              | 134,304    | 23,587    | 10  | 0.177 | 0.179 | 0.175 | 0.179 | 0.177 | 0.002  | 1.130  | 0.179 | 0.173 | 0.179 | 0.100 | 108,854,650     |            |
| OM0000001160  | NATIONAL GAS                  | 240,644    | 22,516    | 25  | 0.093 | 0.095 | 0.092 | 0.093 | 0.092 | 0.001  | 1.087  | 0.093 | 0.092 | 0.100 | 0.100 | 7,905,000       |            |
| OM0000008868  | THE PEARL REIF                | 87,813     | 16,719    | 20  | 0.191 | 0.191 | 0.190 | 0.190 | 0.188 | 0.002  | 1.064  | 0.190 | 0.182 | 0.191 | 0.100 | 112,373,007     |            |
| OM0000004248  | SMN POWER HOLDING             | 84,048     | 18,248    | 9   | 0.217 | 0.220 | 0.216 | 0.220 | 0.218 | 0.002  | 0.917  | 0.220 | 0.216 | 0.228 | 0.100 | 43,919,832      |            |
| OM0000001881  | OMAN EMIRATES HO.             | 70,054     | 7,710     | 11  | 0.110 | 0.113 | 0.110 | 0.113 | 0.112 | 0.001  | 0.893  | 0.113 | 0.110 | 0.113 | 0.100 | 13,717,875      |            |
| OM0000002200  | AHLI BANK                     | 461        | 87        | 3   | 0.189 | 0.189 | 0.189 | 0.189 | 0.188 | 0.001  | 0.532  | 0.189 | 0.170 | 0.189 | 0.100 | 51,585,261      |            |
| OM0000004735  | SEMBOCAP SALAHAT              | 42,600     | 9,176     | 11  | 0.217 | 0.217 | 0.215 | 0.217 | 0.216 | 0.001  | 0.443  | 0.217 | 0.217 | 0.217 | 0.100 | 207,413,113     |            |
| OM0000000112  | OMAN NATL ECON & INVESTMENT   | 52,215     | 7,787     | 7   | 0.152 | 0.152 | 0.146 | 0.152 | 0.152 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.152 | 0.148 | 0.152 | 0.100 | 22,800,000      |            |
| OM0000003066  | QASR INSURANCE                | 4,682      | 3,296     | 4   | 0.711 | 0.711 | 0.700 | 0.700 | 0.700 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.700 | 0.670 | 0.702 | 0.100 | 77,712,532      |            |
| OM0000002077  | AL OMANYA FINANCIAL SERVICES  | 56,250     | 7,528     | 9   | 0.150 | 0.150 | 0.149 | 0.150 | 0.150 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.149 | 0.149 | 0.149 | 0.100 | 47,312,550      |            |
| OM0000002267  | GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS        | 4,973      | 1,910     | 6   | 0.381 | 0.387 | 0.380 | 0.380 | 0.380 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.380 | 0.379 | 0.387 | 0.100 | 17,391,003      |            |
| OM0000002572  | OMAN OIL MARKETING            | 530        | 466       | 1   | 0.880 | 0.880 | 0.880 | 0.880 | 0.880 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.880 | 0.850 | 0.880 | 0.100 | 53,822,000      |            |
| OM0000003141  | BARKA WATER AND POWER         | 15,900     | 2,761     | 5   | 0.174 | 0.174 | 0.173 | 0.173 | 0.173 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.173 | 0.173 | 0.180 | 0.100 | 27,680,000      |            |
| OM0000003281  | TAAQEER FINANCE               | 1,186,040  | 151,174   | 53  | 0.129 | 0.131 | 0.129 | 0.129 | 0.128 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.129 | 0.129 | 0.132 | 0.100 | 36,109,1794     |            |
| OM0000003679  | OMAN QATAR INSURANCE          | 2,000      | 368       | 1   | 0.184 | 0.184 | 0.184 | 0.184 | 0.184 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.184 | 0.183 | 0.202 | 0.100 | 29,664,127      |            |
| OM0000007407  | OMAN RETRETING FUND           | 56,990     | 4,837     | 4   | 0.085 | 0.085 | 0.085 | 0.085 | 0.085 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.085 | 0.085 | 0.086 | 0.100 | 18,890,400      |            |
| OM0000008447  | OMAN GEN. FUND                | 200,800    | 2,363     | 8   | 0.016 | 0.016 | 0.015 | 0.016 | 0.015 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.016 | 0.016 | 0.016 | 0.100 | 68,488,000      |            |
| OM0000009559  | JABAL REIF                    | 43,973     | 422,396   | 37  | 0.105 | 0.105 | 0.101 | 0.101 | 0.101 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.101 | 0.101 | 0.101 | 0.100 | 17,774,000      |            |
| OM0000009759  | OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION | 16,989,564 | 6,607,305 | 302 | 0.387 | 0.390 | 0.386 | 0.388 | 0.388 | 0.000  | 0.000  | 0.388 | 0.388 | 0.387 | 0.010 | 103,104,000,000 |            |
| OM0000001749  | OMAN CEMENT                   | 31,450     | 15,568    | 7   | 0.495 | 0.495 | 0.495 | 0.495 | 0.497 | -0.002 | -0.402 | 0.495 | 0.491 | 0.520 | 0.100 | 143,781,991     |            |
| OM0000002549  | BANK DHOFA                    | 1,706,014  | 300,007   | 201 | 0.176 | 0.177 | 0.175 | 0.177 | 0.178 | -0.001 | -0.562 | 0.177 | 0.176 | 0.177 | 0.100 | 53,830,443,340  |            |
| OM0000000908  | OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SPZ)      | 8,406,244  | 1,567,196 | 617 | 0.187 | 0.187 | 0.185 | 0.186 | 0.188 | -0.002 | -1.064 | 0.186 | 0.186 | 0.185 | 0.040 | 643,465,288     |            |
| OM0000007804  | MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION      | 24,766     | 2,229     | 5   | 0.090 | 0.090 | 0.090 | 0.090 | 0.091 | -0.001 | -1.099 | 0.090 | 0.090 | 0.100 | 0.100 | 13,999,538      |            |
| OM0000007010  | AMAN REAL ESTATE              | 255,635    | 19,788    | 33  | 0.079 | 0.079 | 0.077 | 0.079 | 0.080 | -0.001 | -1.250 | 0.079 | 0.077 | 0.081 | 0.100 | 15,800,000      |            |
| OM0000002028  | GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS  | 1,019,760  | 79,204    | 62  | 0.078 | 0.078 | 0.077 | 0.077 | 0.078 | -0.001 | -1.282 | 0.077 | 0.076 | 0.078 | 0.100 | 1,617,000       |            |
| OM0000007123  | ALANWAR INVESTMENT            | 63,333     | 8,245     | 8   | 0.131 | 0.131 | 0.130 | 0.130 | 0.132 | -0.002 | -1.515 | 0.130 | 0.131 | 0.132 | 0.100 | 38,811,881      |            |
| OM0000003963  | PICKNET POWER                 | 16,898     | 2,759     | 7   | 0.168 | 0.168 | 0.165 | 0.168 | 0.168 | -0.003 | -1.788 | 0.168 | 0.166 | 0.168 | 0.100 | 241,329,241     |            |
| OM0000004669  | SHARQIA DESALINATION          | 6,000      | 890       | 7   | 0.150 | 0.150 | 0.150 | 0.151 | 0.153 | -0.003 | -1.981 | 0.150 | 0.150 | 0.152 | 0.100 | 14,670,324      |            |
| OM0000000192  | AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING  | 39,000     | 1,560     | 3   | 0.040 | 0.040 | 0.040 | 0.040 | 0.041 | -0.001 | -2.439 | 0.040 | 0.038 | 0.040 | 0.100 | 3,400,000       |            |
| OM00000010120 | ASYAD SHIPPING                | 10,987,704 | 2,098,800 | 605 | 0.193 | 0.193 | 0.190 | 0.190 | 0.195 | -0.005 | -2.564 | 0.190 | 0.190 | 0.190 | 0.000 | 98,961,413      |            |
| OM0000001590  | MUSCAT FINANCE                | 942,270    | 59,828    | 41  | 0.065 | 0.065 | 0.063 | 0.063 | 0.065 | -0.002 | -3.077 | 0.063 | 0.062 | 0.063 | 0.100 | 9,350,218       |            |
| OM0000002341  | OMAN CHLORINE                 | 10,000     | 2,330     | 1   | 0.233 | 0.233 | 0.    |       |       |        |        |       |       |       |       |                 |            |

## STATISTICS

# Shanghai's GDP exceeds over \$814.1bn in 2025

**SHANGHAI:** Shanghai's gross domestic product (GDP) soared to over 5.67 trillion yuan (about 814.1 billion U.S. dollars) in 2025, registering an annual growth of 5.4 percent, the municipal statistics bureau said on Wednesday.

Industries and the service sector are the main driving forces of the economic development in the financial hub in east China, as the added value of Shanghai's primary, secondary and tertiary industries stood at 9.94 billion yuan, 1.165 trillion yuan and 4.496 trillion yuan, respectively, reflecting year-on-year increases of 2%, 3.5% and 6%.

According to the municipal bureau of statistics in Shanghai, last year the city's industrial added value witnessed a 5 percent rise from the year before. In terms of industries, the output value of the railway, shipbuilding, aerospace and other transportation equipment manufacturing industry surged by 15.8 percent year on year. The electrical machinery and equipment manufacturing industry saw an 11.1 percent rise, while the automotive manufacturing industry experienced a 7.8 percent increase.

Notably, Shanghai has made significant strides in the development

of new quality productive forces. In 2025 the manufacturing output value of the three leading industries in Shanghai, namely integrated circuits, biomedicine and artificial intelligence (AI), recorded a 9.6 percent year-on-year increase. Among them, the integrated circuit and the AI manufacturing industries posted growth rates of 15.1 percent and 13.6 percent, respectively.

"The Shanghai economy is embarking on a new growth trajectory driven by functional enhancement and new quality productive forces as core engines," said Ma Haiqian, vice president of the Shanghai

Academy of Development and Reform. "Its three leading industries are gradually gaining momentum through focused planning and sustained cultivation, becoming a crucial pillar of stable growth. This represents a concentrated manifestation of breakthroughs in new quality productive forces, innovation across the entire chain and the release of cluster effects," Ma said.

In 2025, the total output value of Shanghai's strategic emerging industries increased 6.5 percent year on year, accounting for 45 percent of the total output value of major industries. -Xinhua

# Dhofar Islamic signs pact with Endowments and Religious Affairs to facilitate Hajj and Umrah services

**MUSCAT:** Dhofar Islamic, the Islamic banking window of Bank-Dhofar, has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs during the second Hajj and Umrah Exhibition.

The agreement marks a key step in strengthening institutional collaboration and providing value-added services that ensure the comfort of pilgrims while enriching their spiritual journey through innovative, Sharia-compliant financial solutions. It also aligns with national initiatives aimed at enhancing partnerships between public and private sectors to improve the overall Hajj and Umrah experience.

Under the agreement, Dhofar Islamic will provide a range of Islamic financial services – including accessible financing options, simplified procedures, and advanced digital solutions – to support pilgrims and service providers.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior officials from both the Ministry and Dhofar Islamic. Amorbin Said Al Amri, CEO of Dhofar Islamic, expressed his pride in the partnership, not-



ing that it reflects the bank's vision of delivering banking services rooted in Islamic values and tailored to the needs of the community. He added that this cooperation represents a qualitative addition to Oman's Islamic banking sector.

For its part, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs commended Dhofar Is-

to develop Hajj and Umrah services and create a safe, accessible financial environment for beneficiaries. The Ministry emphasized that the partnership aligns with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, particularly in strengthening integration between government institutions and the private sector.



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- Age: Minimum 30 Years

Interested Candidates may send their CV to: cpcpvohra@gmail.com

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

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**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** years 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

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**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

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

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

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**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

IN BANGLADESH

India asks dependents of Mission, Post officials to return home

**NEW DELHI:** In light of the security situation, India has advised dependents of Mission and Post officials in Bangladesh to return home as a precautionary measure, sources stated.

The sources added that the Indian Mission and all Posts continue to remain open and fully operational.

Indian missions have been facing security threats, especially in the aftermath of the killing of Islamist youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi in December 2025. It spread after rumours were circulated that the shooters of Hadi had fled to India; however, later, one of the accused released a video claiming that he was in a Gulf country

**Safety of minorities**

India is also raising concerns over the safety of minorities, especially Hindus in Bangladesh, since the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus assumed office following the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024 after the students led uprising.

On January 9, India called on Bangladesh to firmly deal with communal incidents in the country. “We continue to witness a disturbing pattern of recurring attacks on minorities as well as their homes and businesses by extremists,” External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said.

According to the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, the reported cases of communal violence stood at 51, including 10 murders, in December 2025 alone.

The India’s advisory comes as the Bangladesh interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus on Monday released details on incidents affecting minority communities and the broader law and order situation in the country during 2025. — ANI

Trump’s ‘Board of Peace’ could pose threat to UN

The United Nations approved the plan last November by passing UN Security Council Resolution 2803. At the time, legal experts already warned it was a breach of international law

**NEW YORK:** Initially, US President Donald Trump intended to use his so-called “Board of Peace”, or BoP, to oversee peace and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip. The United Nations approved the plan last November by passing UN Security Council Resolution 2803. At the time, legal experts already warned it was a breach of international law.

Two months on, it increasingly appears that Trump plans to establish his BoP independently of the Middle East conflict. In the founding charter published by the Israeli newspaper The Times of Israel on Sunday, the conflict in Gaza was not even mentioned.

**What is Trump’s ‘Board of Peace’?**

According to its charter, the body is intended to “promote stability, restore dependable and lawful governance, and secure enduring peace in areas affected or threatened by conflict” around the world. The document grants its chair extensive powers, and names Trump as its



founding chair.

The charter explicitly names Donald J. Trump as the founding chairperson — for life. Early termination of the term of office is only possible through voluntary resignation or unanimous dismissal by the member states. Furthermore, each chairperson is to appoint a successor if he or she leaves office, a person who will immediately take over the official duties.

Therefore, this role is highly likely to remain in US hands, independent of Trump’s presidency in the US, which, according to the

US Constitution, ends in three years. Until then, he will also represent the US as a member state.

**Who will be its members?**

According to the charter, it is solely up to the chair to invite states to become members. Membership is limited to three years, but can be extended by the chair. Only states that contribute more than \$1 billion (€850 billion) to finance the BoP within the first year of its establishment will remain permanent members.

According to press reports, some 60 countries have so far received an invitation to join. Several NATO countries, including Germany, Turkey, Hungary and Canada, have confirmed receiving an invitation.

The Kremlin stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin was considering accepting the invite. In the Middle East, Egypt and Jordan have confirmed receiving an invitation, as has Pakistan. The presidents of Argentina, Javier Milei, and Paraguay, Santiago Pena, have expressly thanked the BoP for the invitation.

On Tuesday, the United Arab Emirates became one of the first countries to formally commit to the BoP, saying it stood ready to “contribute actively to the mission of the Board of Peace, supporting greater cooperation, stability, and prosperity for all.”

**Have individuals been invited to join the board?**

Trump’s appointment of individual members, such as his son-in-law Jared Kushner, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, World Bank President Ajay Banga, US

billionaire Marc Rowan and other political allies from the US, has caused quite a stir.

However, these are reportedly not council memberships, but positions in various subcommittees of the council. According to the charter, only states — represented by their respective heads of state or government — are eligible to be voting members of the BoP.

**How will the BoP operate?**

The BoP is heavily tailored to the role of the chairperson. Not only is the chair the only person who can invite members to join, but he or she is also the only person who can remove existing members. Other members can veto this decision, but only with a two-thirds majority.

The member states themselves are supposed to compile the agenda and be able to decide on important matters by a simple majority, according to the principle of one state, one vote. This includes, for example, “annual budgets, the establishment of subsidiary entities, the appointment of senior executive officers, and major policy determinations.” However, all decisions require the approval of the chair.

**Is the BoP a competitor to the UN?**

The charter declares in the first paragraph of its preamble that “durable peace requires pragmatic judgment, common-sense solutions, and the courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed.”

While the United Nations is not mentioned by name, Trump has repeatedly criticised the UN, describing it as an organisation that has failed to take action. The UN was founded in October 1945 at the instigation of then-US President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The organization currently numbers 193 member states.

SPAIN



Driver killed and passengers injured in new train crash

**BARCELONA:** At least one person was killed and dozens were injured after a commuter train crashed near Barcelona, Spain, on Tuesday night.

The train collided head on with retaining wall that had fallen onto the tracks near the town of Gelida, about 35 kilometrEs (22 miles) outside of Barcelona.

Local media reported that the train driver was killed in the accident. In an update posted on social media, emergency services in Catalonia said 37 people were injured, five of them seriously.

Some 20 ambulances had been sent to the site of the crash, and the injured were taken to three hospitals in the area, they said.

Catalonia’s fire service said “no one was left inside” the train, but it was sweeping the underside of the train and the area to rule out more victims.

The retaining wall likely fell because of heavy rainfall that swept across the northeastern Spanish region this week, Spain’s railway operator ADIF said.

Commuter train services have been canceled along the line, it said.

**Second train accident in Catalonia**

Spain’s El Pais newspaper reported another train accident on Tuesday evening.

A train operating between

Blanes and Macanet stations, also in Catalonia, derailed, although no injuries were reported, El Pais said.

The accident was caused by rocks that fell onto the track as a result of the storm that hit on Tuesday.

Service on that line has also been suspended.

**Death toll rises in Sunday’s high-speed train crash**

Meanwhile, more bodies have been found in Sunday’s crash between two high-speed trains near the town of Adamuz in the region of Andalusia in southern Spain.

The confirmed death toll has now risen to 42, Andalusia regional authorities said on Tuesday, after three more bodies were recovered from the carriages during the course of the day.

Ten of the dead have been identified so far, Cordoba provincial authorities said. No information was provided about their identities or nationalities.

It’s feared the death toll will continue to rise.

Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska told state broadcaster RTVE that 43 people were still listed as missing.

The front of the second train took the brunt of the impact, which knocked its first two carriages off the track and down a 4-metre (13-foot) slope. — DW

JAPAN

Assassin of ex-PM Shinzo Abe jailed for life

**TOKYO:** A court in Japan on Wednesday sentenced the man charged with fatally shooting former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to life in prison, more than three years after the assassination sent shockwaves around the world.

Tetsuya Yamagami, 45, had earlier pleaded guilty to killing Abe with a handmade gun in July 2022 in the western city of Nara.

The assassination took place in broad-daylight while Abe — Japan’s longest serving prime minister — was delivering an election campaign address.

Abe was not in power at the time of the shooting, but he remained one of the country’s most influential politicians with plans to return to office.

Yamagami was arrested on the spot.

**Shinzo Abe’s assassination ‘unprecedented’ in Japan’s recent history**

Yamagami’s trial began in October, with the shooter admitting to the murder.

A trial continues even if a de-



fendant admits guilt under the Japanese legal framework.

Last month, prosecutors had demanded a life sentence, deeming Yamagami’s act an “extremely grave incident that is unprecedented in post-war history”.

Judge Shinichi Tanaka of the Nara District Court handed down the sentence on Wednesday.

The sensational trial saw over 600 people queuing up in the morning to draw lots for the 31

denomination that many consider a cult.

The gunman told the police that he targeted Abe over his connections to the South-Korea based church.

Yamagami told the court that his mother was forced to make large donations to the church, driving his family to bankruptcy.

He said he took out his anger on Abe because the political leader had once sent a video message at an event held by a group affiliated with the Unification Church.

The Japan branch of the church acknowledged that the mother of the shooter was a member. It said that Abe — though not a member — had supported the church in promoting peace.

In the aftermath of Abe’s killing, the LDP pulled back from the Unification Church. Japan also ordered a probe into the religious organization, which ended with the church’s Japanese branch being stripped of its tax-exempt religious status and ordered disbanded.

OVER MARTIAL LAW CRISIS

South Korea jails ex-PM Han Duck-soo

**SEOUL:** A South Korean court on Wednesday sentenced former prime minister Han Duck-soo to 23 years in prison over charges including engaging in acts of insurrection.

The charges were linked to former President Yoon Suk Yeol’s short-lived declaration of martial law in December 2024.

The Seoul Central District Court said it considered Han instrumental in setting up the outward appearance of a cabinet meeting that facilitated the martial law declaration.

A judge described it as a “top-down insurrection.”

“The defendant was a prime minister who had been indirectly given democratic legitimacy and responsibility... Nevertheless, the defendant chose to turn a blind



eye... and participate as a member of the December 3 insurrection,” the judge said.

“As a result of the defendant’s

actions, South Korea was in danger of returning to the dark past when the basic rights and liberal democratic order of the people were violated, potentially preventing them from escaping from the quagmire of dictatorship for a long time.”

The court also convicted Han of several related offenses, including perjury and falsifying official documents. Han denied all charges except partial perjury.

At the age of 76, Han is the first former cabinet minister to receive a lower-court criminal ruling directly tied to the imposition of martial law. He was taken into custody immediately after the verdict.

The ruling is subject to appeal, and the presiding judge said he expects the case to be fought through to the Supreme Court.

**What happened to Yoon Suk Yeol?**

Last week, former president Yoon was sentenced to five years in prison in the first verdict stemming from eight criminal trials linked to his short-lived declaration of martial law in December 2024.

Yoon was impeached, arrested, and formally removed from office after the move sparked mass protests and a political crisis, with demonstrators accusing him of attempting to undermine democratic rule.

The most serious charge against Yoon alleges that his enforcement of martial law amounted to rebellion. An independent counsel has sought the death penalty on that count, with the Seoul Central District Court set to rule on that charge on Feb. 19. — DW



# Virus has killed almost 9 million birds – and counting

Authorities say bird flu poses a low risk to people right now, but in animals — both wild and domestic — it’s causing global devastation. If left uncontrolled, it could also mutate into something far worse for humans.

Despite the bird flu-related death of a man in the US, the risk of another human pandemic remains low — currently — according to public health agencies and experts.

The man who died in November 2025 was the first human case in the US since January. He did not appear to have passed the disease to anyone else, which experts say keeps the risk of a new and major human disease outbreak minimal. The same is true for other human bird flu cases in 2025.

But for animals, the disease has been devastating.

“It’s not, any longer, only an impact on the poultry sector or wild birds,” Gregorio Torres, head of science at the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), told DW.

Data obtained by DW shows almost nine million poultry birds have been culled worldwide since October, mainly in the US, Canada and in Germany, as both North America and Europe grapple with outbreaks on farms and in the wild.

And the effect has spread beyond birds. The current wave, largely of the H5N1 subtype, has seen cattle, pigs, cats and dogs, and wild mammals infected as well.

**Bird flu: Disease and death**

Highly pathogenic avian influenza — HPAI — refers to those bird flu viruses that cause severe infection in poultry.

Though the designation of these viruses is based on how they affect chickens, ducks, turkeys and other poultry, the effect of infection is usually the same as for wild birds — disease and then death.

WOAH, which is an intergovernmental organization responsible for coordinating and monitoring animal health across the globe, views the virus — specifically the 2.3.4.4b clade of H5N1 bird flu that is driving most infections in animal species — as a major threat to biodiversity.

Management of disease outbreaks is an intensive task. Collaboration between animal monitors, such as WOAH, veterinary and wildlife scientists and human

public health agencies, is considered critical for controlling the spread.

Carcasses of migrating cranes are transported in a tractor scoop, supervised by officials wearing hazmat clothing. Carcasses of migrating cranes are transported in a tractor scoop, supervised by officials wearing hazmat clothing

**Low risk to humans for now, high impact on animals**

HPAI has been detected on every continent in 2025, both on land and at sea.

The scale was highlighted on November 25 when Australian authorities confirmed bird flu had reached its remote, sub-Antarctic, Indian Ocean territory of Heard Island — around 4,300 kilometers (2,600 miles) southwest of the mainland — where it has infected elephant seals.

Bird flu has previously caused widespread death in similar populations along South America’s coastlines. Researchers have also detected infections in dolphins.

But bird flu continues to trouble

the agricultural sector most of all.

In fall 2025, German poultry farmers were confronted with an unwelcome early start to the bird flu season, with the disease being spread by migrating cranes from Sweden for the first time. This has led to more than a million poultry being culled in Germany.

**Migrating birds are the chief reason bird flu spreads across continents.**

As they flee the northern hemisphere when winter approaches, these birds make stopovers near wetlands to rest and recover. These stopovers can bring them into contact with local bird populations.

If infected with HPAI, there is a high chance migratory birds will transmit the pathogen to other wild or farm birds, setting off chain reactions of transmission. Recent research shows mutations in the 2.3.4.4b clade of H5N1 have made infection with all wild birds easier.

That means an airdrop of the disease among local duck, swan or geese populations can effectively

bring it to a region, where it may then continue to spread even without the help of migratory birds.

Part of the solution lies in “strong biosecurity” measures, experts told DW, meaning governments should have strict protocols in place to ensure agricultural spaces minimize bird flu risks at their local level.

Strong biosecurity is essential for containing outbreaks, preventing transmission and reducing the risk of future episodes, said Justin Bahl, an epidemiologist and evolutionary biologist at the University of Georgia, US.

“As long as we have biosecurity and we are being vigilant, then I think we’re in a good place right now,” Bahl told DW. “Lax biosecurity is probably the bigger risk.”

Controlling the spread of the virus among animals reduces the risk of a worse-case scenario — a mutation that makes transmission to, and potentially among humans, easier.

It’s a view echoed by Amira Roess, a global health epidemiologist at George Mason University,

US. Roess told DW that active surveillance and disease testing helps to prevent bird flu spread among bird flocks, but that it also reduces the risk of mutations that could make transmission to humans easier.

“Whenever we see an increase in influenza deaths in poultry or wild birds, we need to take notice and activate robust surveillance so that we can identify important mutations if they arise,” Roess said via email. “The fact that we haven’t seen severe human cases indicates that so far the circulating strains do not seem to cause a significant threat to human health.”

The experts DW spoke with for this article also emphasized the importance of cooperation between countries, as wild birds do not recognize borders and, as shown by the COVID-19 pandemic, nor do viruses.

“It’s a global problem,” said Torres. “We need to be transparent, and information needs to be shared for the benefit of everybody, including human and animal health.” —DW

SPORTS

# Play with pride, represent Oman with honour: OGA vice-chairman



Faiz Mohammed Riaz spoke to the young golfers at the felicitation ceremony



Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Oman Golf Association (OGA) celebrated the exceptional performances of its national golf teams at a felicitation ceremony held on Tuesday at the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) headquarters, with Vice-Chairman Faiz Mohammed Riaz delivering a stirring message to the country's young athletes.

The senior OGA official said: "We are proud of every one of you, and special congratulations to those who won medals for our country. Wearing the national colours and playing for Oman is a great honour and responsibility. Winning is important, but not everything - participation, commitment, and discipline are equally vital. You are role models for the next generation. Keep pushing,

keep believing, and keep making Oman proud."

Riaz emphasised the duty of players to give back to the nation through hard work, dedication, and consistent participation in major tournaments. "Not showing up is where a clear line is drawn. Commitment, discipline, and responsibility are non-negotiable," he added, calling on all athletes to uphold Oman's sporting reputation with pride and professionalism.

The call to excellence came as Oman's junior golfers delivered stellar performances on home and regional stages. At the 2025 GCC Ladies and Juniors Golf Championship, hosted by the Oman Golf Association at Ghala Golf Club in December, 12-year-old Yusuf Al Rumhy successfully defended his U13 individual crown, finishing



with a commanding total of 161 strokes, ahead of Bahrain's Mohamed Waheed (172) and Khalifa Al Fadhala (177).

Yusuf also teamed up with Ibrahim Faiz Riaz and Taimur Al Busaidi to claim silver in the U13 team event, overcoming the challenge of Taimur's late withdrawal due to illness.

Meanwhile, Mohib Al Kathiri secured bronze in the U16 boys' individual competition, capping Oman's medal tally at the championship and signaling the rise of a new generation of golfing talent.

Earlier last February, Oman's U18 boys' team made history at the GCC Golf Championship in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, winning the na-

champions of tomorrow."

Tuesday's felicitation ceremony brought together national team players, coaches, and federation officials, celebrating medal winners while honouring all participants for their commitment to the sport. The event served not only to recognise past achievements but also to inspire young golfers to uphold Oman's sporting prestige with pride, discipline, and passion.

Faiz added: "Each of you carry the honour of Oman when you step onto the course. Play with pride, represent your nation with dignity, and continue to make Oman proud on every stage - regional, Gulf, and international."

On this occasion, the men, women and girls golfers were honoured for their participation in GCC meets. Among those present were Ahmed Al Wahaibi, Badr Al Amri, Wafa Al Hadhrami, Umaima Al Abri, Yasmin Al Kathiri, Heba Al Nabhani and Miraeri Sampat.

Oman's recent successes signal a new era for golf in the Sultanate, with young stars like Yusuf, Ibrahim, Taimur, Adam, Mahir, and Pransh embodying the potential and promise of the country's rising golfing talent. The OGA remains committed to nurturing these athletes, providing them with the training, exposure, and competitive opportunities needed to turn promise into podium finishes.

FORMULA ONE



## Audi aim to be most successful F1 team in history: Wheatley

**LONDON:** Audi have set their targets on becoming "the most successful team in Formula 1 history" as they launched their assault on the highest level of the sport. Audi is entering F1 for the first time in its history this season, having taken over the Swiss-based Sauber team.

Team principal Jonathan Wheatley described the launch of the new team at a lavish event in Berlin as a "historic moment".

Wheatley said: "We're not here to mess around, it's an ambitious project. We're humble. We know where we're starting from and we know where we want to go. "We want to make Audi the most successful F1 team in history. There are milestones on that journey and we are starting it today."

Audi chief executive officer Gernot Dollner added: "Whenever we join a racing series, we join to win and to innovate and to bring motorsport forward. The ambition is to compete at the highest level and to compete for championships by 2030."

Mattia Binotto, the head of the Audi F1 project, said: "There is an awareness that we are just at the beginning of our journey. We are conscious there are a lot of challenges ahead of us but we are ready."

Although Audi ran their new car at the Circuit de Barcelona-



Catalunya last week, the car unveiled at the event was a show car not representative of the actual Audi design.

Audi will join the rest of the teams at the first pre-season test, which is to be held in private at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya next week. Audi unveiled a slogan for their new project: "To start something, stop at nothing."

Binotto said this described "our approach to the journey - we are aware there may be bumpy periods and failures, but to never stop, to have the passion to grow, it is the mindset to never stop pushing forward."

He added: "We spent a long time discussing what our targets should be for 2026, whether it be championship positions or points. It is to become competitive. We need to stay humble. There is much to learn. It is more about the attitude, being here learning. And becoming competitive means being average is not an option anymore." - Agencies

AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2025

## Alcaraz passes Hanfmann test

**MELBOURNE:** Carlos Alcaraz overcame an early stutter at the Australian Open to defeat German Yannick Hanfmann 7-6(4), 6-3, 6-2 on Wednesday and move into the third round as he continues his bid for a career Grand Slam at Melbourne Park.

After a breezy win in the first round against Adam Walton, the 22-year-old Alcaraz was given more of a workout by Hanfmann on a sunbathed Rod Laver Arena but he rose to the challenge and booked a clash with either Michael Zheng or Corentin Moutet.

"I knew he was going to play great," Alcaraz said.

"I knew his level. We came through the Challengers together, I've played him. It was tougher than I thought at the beginning and I didn't feel the ball that good."

"It was coming like a bomb," the Spaniard said of Hanfmann's power. "Forehand, backhand, serves. I had to be ready for those."

"I'm really happy that I got through a difficult first set ... and I played a really good level at the end of the match and get through."

**Medvedev survives scare**

Also, Daniil Medvedev survived an early scare against Frenchman Quentin Halys in the second round on Wednesday but dug deep to record a 6-7(9), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory.

A three-time finalist at Melbourne Park, Medvedev battled for over an hour in the first set, only to lose after an intense tiebreak.

The Russian was also broken early in the second set by the world number 83 but regained his composure to level the match.

The 11th seed controlled the baseline exchanges in the third set to convert an early break point and followed it up with an aggressive service game.

Medvedev then exploited Halys's weak returns with fierce



groundstrokes to secure the win and advance to the third round.

"I feel I was playing much better in Brisbane," said Medvedev, who won the Brisbane International tune-up event.

"I still can't get exactly used to the court here. I feel I am missing a bit of power in my shots."

"But while you continue winning in a tournament, you find it step-by-step. It's for the first time in a couple of years I am in a third round of a Grand Slam, so feeling good."

Medvedev, the 2021 U.S. Open champion, will meet Hungarian Fabian Marozsan in the third round.

**Sabalenka in third round**

In the women's section, eyeing her third title in four editions, top seed Aryna Sabalenka advanced to the third round on Wednesday with a straight-sets win over Chinese qualifier Zhuoxuan Bai.

World No.1 Sabalenka came through a rough patch in the opening set to defeat Zhuoxuan 6-3, 6-1 on Rod Laver Arena.

"Tricky opponent, she really



stepped in on the first set and for a moment I felt: what shall I do? She's crashing it," said Sabalenka, Melbourne Park champion in 2023 and 2024.

"Super happy I was able to close that set, I think it gave me a little more confidence that I'm there, that my game is there. Focus step by step."

"There's always a little gap to improve but I'm happy that in that game I didn't lose it and I was focused and I was trying to tell myself, one at a time, it's going to come back," added Sabalenka.

"You're ok, just keep fighting, keep trying and I'm glad I did it well."

In the third round, Sabalenka will be up against either Britain's Emma Raducanu or Austria's Anastasia Potapova.

Flawless third seed Coco Gauff took just 78 minutes to blast past Venus Williams' conquerer Olga Danilovic, and into the third round.

The 21-year-old emphatically won the first five games to stamp her authority on the contest and cruised home 6-2, 6-2 on Margaret Court Arena. - Agencies

# Mbappe, Vinicius shine as Real Madrid drub Monaco



Real Madrid won 6-1 to go second in the standings with 15 points, level with third-placed Bayern Munich and moved closer to securing a top-eight finish and direct qualification for the round of 16 in the Champions League

**MADRID:** Kylian Mbappe struck twice and Vinicius Jr scored a spectacular solo goal and provided two assists as Real Madrid cruised to a 6-1 victory over Monaco at the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday in the Champions League.

The comprehensive victory lifted Madrid to second place in

the standings with 15 points, level with third-placed Bayern Munich and trailing leader Arsenal by six, as they moved closer to securing a top-eight finish and direct qualification for the round of 16.

Monaco are 20th on nine points, giving it a chance of reaching the knockout-phase playoffs.

Mbappe opened the scoring in the fifth minute and gave Madrid a two-goal lead when he found the net again in the 26th, while Franco Mastantuono added the side's third goal six minutes after half-time.

Monaco defender Thilo Kehrer inadvertently turned a Vinicius cross into his own net in the 55th minute and the Brazilian crowned his man-of-the-match performance in the 63rd with an extraordinary solo goal, firing into the top corner after dribbling past three Monaco defenders inside the box.

Monaco pulled one back in the 72nd minute with a Jordan Teze strike before Jude Bellingham added to Real's tally with a strike from inside the box in the 80th.

The tension that permeated the Bernabeu during Saturday's La Liga clash with Levante was absent as Real Madrid's inspired display won over a crowd frustrated

by recent setbacks and the sacking of manager Xabi Alonso last week.

The fans showed their support, particularly for Vinicius Jr and Bellingham, who faced whistles on Saturday but received cheers this time around.

It took Real Madrid just five minutes to seize the initiative with Mbappe driving in a low finish after a good run by Mastantuono from the right and he extended the home team's lead in the 26th minute through a clinical counter-attack.

Arda Guler's incisive through ball found Vinicius bursting down the left. The Brazilian surged into the box and delivered a precise low cross that Mbappe calmly tapped past Monaco keeper Philipp Kohn's for his second of the night.

After halftime, Real Madrid turned on the style.

In the 51st minute, Vinicius darted through the middle and

slipped a perfectly weighted through ball to Mastantuono, who fired a first-time finish into the far corner.

Vinicius continued to torment the Monaco defence with another dangerous run down the left that ended with a low cross into the box that forced Kehrer into an own goal as he inadvertently turned the ball past his own keeper.

In the 63rd minute, Vinicius scored the goal of the night, unleashing a thunderous shot into the top right corner, prompting the crowd to chant his name while he celebrated with new manager Alvaro Arbeloa. It was his first goal at the Santiago Bernabeu since early October.

"I think that more than embracing me, Vinicius was embracing all Real Madrid fans around the globe," Arbeloa told Movistar Plus.

"Everyone is very happy about the partnership between Vini and

the fans and we are going to enjoy Vini here for a long time.

"I think it was a wonderful match, in our stadium, with our fans. The players enjoyed themselves, there were some great goals - this is what we want to see."

Monaco pulled one back, capitalising on a Real Madrid mistake. Dani Ceballos lost the ball on the edge of his own box, allowing Teze to pounce and fire a low shot past Thibaut Courtois.

Real Madrid, however, was not content with five. Bellingham added to the tally after Federico Valverde pounced on a rebound on the edge of the box.

The Uruguayan played a composed through ball to the Englishman, who rounded Kohn before slotting into an empty net.

**Other results:** Kairat 1 Club Brugge 4, Copenhagen 1 Napoli 1, Olympiakos 2 Bayer Leverkusen 0, Villarreal 1 Ajax 2. - **Agencies**

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



## Unfancied Bodo stun Man City

**BODO:** Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt pulled off a stunning upset in the Champions League on Tuesday, beating Manchester City 3-1 at home to secure their first-ever win in the competition and keep their slim hopes of making the knockout stage alive.

Kasper Høgh's quick-fire double and Jens Petter Hauge's stunning solo effort put Bodo in control and while City fought back with a Rayan Cherki goal, Rodri's second-half sending off for two quick bookings left it with a mountain to climb.

Bodo coach Kjetil Knutsen had a simple game plan focused on counter-attacking at every oppor-

tunity against the English giants, who won the Champions League in 2023. Bodo proved devastatingly effective as they made the most of its opportunities, eventually cantering to victory.

On a freezing night at the Aspmyra Stadium, Danish striker Høgh got proceedings underway with a rapid double midway through the first half, shrugging off the finishing issues that plagued him towards the end of last season.

He scored his first with a superb header through the legs of Gianluigi Donnarumma, and minutes later, added a second with a peach of a finish at the right-hand post.

In contrast, City striker Erling Haaland, who was warmly greeted before the game by the Bodo players, was anonymous as his teammates struggled to get him the ball.

City's struggles to create were exploited just before the hour mark when Hauge scored a third in the 58th minute.

City pulled a goal back through Cherki on the hour mark, but captain Rodri was sent off two minutes later for picking up two yellow cards in the space of a minute, derailing City's attempted comeback.

City are fourth in the 36-team table with 13 points while Bodo are 26th. - **Agencies**

LAST-MINUTE GOAL

## Holder PSG suffer shock loss against Sporting CP

**LISBON:** Holder Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) slipped to a 2-1 defeat at Portuguese side Sporting CP on Tuesday, jeopardising their bid to qualify directly for the Champions League last 16 after Luis Suarez struck twice, netting the winner in the final minute.

Sporting went ahead through Suarez against the run of play in the second half, despite sustained pressure from PSG.

The French champion hit back quickly as Khvicha Kvaratskhelia levelled with a superb strike, appearing to salvage a point.

Suarez, however, struck again in the dying moments to snatch victory for Sporting, leaving both teams on 13 points and inside the top eight, which assures direct qualification for the last 16, ahead of PSG's home match against Newcastle United and Sporting's trip to Athletic Bilbao.

Both teams lead ninth-placed Inter by a single point.

"We had too many chances and didn't score - it happens to us too often. We lacked concentration and made two mistakes. We do what we can, but if we don't convert our chances, we cannot afford to concede goals," said PSG midfielder Vitinha.

Luis Enrique's side dominated the opening stages in Lisbon,



with Nuno Mendes forcing Rui Silva into a sharp save from a tight angle and Senny Mayulu heading tamely at the Sporting goalkeeper after good work down the left.

The visitor thought it had taken the lead on the half-hour when Warren Zaire-Emery headed in Fabian Ruiz's cross, but the goal was ruled out after a VAR review judged Mayulu had fouled Geny Catamo in the build-up.

Nuno Mendes then had the ball in the net again late in the half, finishing from close range after a Zaire-Emery cross, only for the effort to be disallowed for an off-side against Ousmane Dembele.

The host then had their first shots on target and opened the

scoring in the 74th minute when Suarez coolly slotted a low shot past Lucas Chevalier after Catamo's attempt had been deflected into his path.

Five minutes later, Kvaratskhelia, who had come on for Mayulu, unleashed a superb shot into the far top corner from the edge of the box to equalise.

But PSG lacked their usual grit and was punished again in the 90th minute.

Trincão collected a low pass from the left just outside the box and struck first time with his left foot, forcing Chevalier to parry and Suarez nodded the rebound into the far corner to send the crowd into raptures. - **Agencies**

DEFEAT DORTMUND

## Tottenham triumph

**LONDON:** Tottenham Hotspur shrugged off its domestic gloom with a 2-0 victory over Borussia Dortmund that took the heat off head coach Thomas Frank and put the side within touching distance of the Champions League knockout stages on Tuesday.

First-half goals by captain Cristian Romero and Dominic Solanke gave Tottenham control against a desperately disappointing Dortmund side who played three-quarters of the match with 10 men after Daniel Sven-

sson's red card.

Tottenham have won twice in 11 Premier League matches at home this season - a run that has left Frank fighting for his job.

But in the Champions League, they have been impeccable in north London, winning four out of four without conceding.

The latest one lifted them into fourth place ahead of Wednesday night's games, meaning a win at Eintracht Frankfurt next week would seal a top-eight spot and progression to the last 16, while Dortmund next face Inter Milan.

JESUS SCORES A BRACE



## Arsenal in seventh heaven with win

**MILAN:** Arsenal made seven wins from seven in the Champions League with a 3-1 victory over Inter Milan at the San Siro on Tuesday, where Gabriel Jesus scored a first-half double and Viktor Gyokeres netted late on.

The win guaranteed Arsenal a top-two finish in the league phase which means home advantage in the second leg all the way through to the semifinals. The Gunners sit top of the standings on 21 points, six ahead of Bayern Munich who next host Union Saint-Gilloise.

Jesus marked his first start in

this season's competition in style, opening the scoring in the 10th minute and putting Arsenal back in front before the break after Petar Susic equalised, with Gyokeres wrapping up the win six minutes from time.

Last year's finalist Inter remain on 12 points and drops to ninth in the table, leaving them in danger of missing out on an automatic place in the last 16.

Inter looked to have weathered the early storm, but Arsenal hit the front when Jurrien Timber's scuffed effort was finished off by

Jesus' hooked shot from just outside the six-yard box. The hosts bounced back eight minutes later, Nicolò Barella's initial attempt was blocked and the ball fell to Susic who let fly from the edge of the area into the roof of the net as Arsenal conceded just its second goal of the competition.

Mikel Arteta made seven changes to the side which drew 0-0 with Nottingham Forest on Saturday but Arsenal proved too strong for the Serie A leader, as it marched on in its bid to win the trophy for the first time. - **Agencies**

ROUND-UP

# Masar Baushar food trucks initiative launched to support emerging Omani business owners

The initiative is implemented pursuant to a memorandum of cooperation previously signed between Muscat Municipality and Bank Muscat, with the support of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority

**MUSCAT:** Muscat Municipality, in partnership with Bank Muscat, announced the launch of Masar Food Trucks initiative aimed at supporting small businesses in the Wilayat of Baushar, Muscat.

The initiative is implemented pursuant to a memorandum of cooperation previously signed between Muscat Municipality and Bank Muscat, with the support of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority.

The Food Trucks initiative highlights the vital role played by both Muscat Municipality and Bank Muscat in empowering entrepreneurs by creating a supportive environment that enables business owners to develop their projects and encourages them to enter the field of entrepreneurship. Muscat Municipality has prepared and equipped the designated site to meet the operational needs of food truck businesses, including the provision of essential facilities and parking spaces. The Municipality will also oversee and monitor operations to ensure smooth implementation and full compliance with approved health and professional standards.

The initiative forms part of Bank Muscat's community partnership programmes, reflecting its



commitment to supporting small Omani businesses through the provision of modern food trucks designed to meet safety and operational requirements. These food trucks provide a dynamic platform

for business owners to showcase their culinary offerings, contributing to an enhanced experience for residents and visitors to the area. The initiative also offers business owners a valuable opportunity to manage small businesses, support the local community, and improve their income.

On the occasion of the launch, Muscat Municipality emphasized that the initiative represents an important step in supporting entrepreneurs by enabling them to develop and expand their businesses, while also contributing to local community development.

The Municipality expressed its appreciation for the cooperation with Bank Muscat and commended the Bank's active role in corporate social responsibility and its continuous efforts to implement sustainable initiatives that support various business sectors. Muscat Municipality also affirmed its commitment to supervising the site, ensuring the continuity of operations, and maintaining high standards of service quality through adherence to health and professional regulations.

For his side, Talib Saif Al Makhmari, Head of Community & Media Relations at Bank Muscat,

said: "We express our appreciation for the constructive cooperation with Muscat Municipality in implementing the Food Trucks Initiative. The initiative represents a strategic step that underscores the Bank's leading role in community service and its contribution to building a sustainable national economy through empowering entrepreneurs and supporting their growth in an increasingly competitive market. Food trucks have become a prominent feature of modern business models, offering flexible and innovative sales approaches that support emerging businesses and enhance their potential for success.

Bank Muscat is committed to launching sustainable initiatives and programmes that enhance social well-being. This initiative contributes positively to the local economy by creating new job opportunities for young Omanis, enabling entrepreneurs to launch their projects with reduced financial barriers. It also provides entrepreneurs with an opportunity to offer a diverse range of food products that cater to different tastes, foster healthy competition, and encourage the delivery of high-quality services.

FOUR-DOOR, FOUR-SEATER CAR



## Ferrari Purosangue: Unlike any other

**MUSCAT:** Ferrari Purosangue, is the first ever four-door, four-seater car in the Prancing Horse's 75-year history, in the magnificently atmospheric surroundings of the Teatro del Silenzio in Lajatico (Pisa).

Since the marque's earliest years, 2+2 cars (i.e. with two front and two smaller back seats) have played a significant role in its strategy. Many Ferraris have made combining benchmark performance with first class comfort one of the pillars of their success. Now, in the culmination of 75 years of leading-edge research, Ferrari has created a car that is unique on the world stage: not only do performance, driving pleasure and comfort coexist in perfect harmony, but it is also a peerless encapsulation of the Prancing Horse's iconic DNA. This is the reason why the name Purosangue, Italian for 'thoroughbred', was chosen.

To enable the company to achieve the ambitious goals set for this project and create a car worthy of a place in its range, a completely different layout and innovative proportions compared to modern GT archetypes (so-called crossovers and SUVs) were adopted.

The average modern GT's engine is mounted forwards in the car, almost straddling the front axle with the gearbox coupled directly to it; this results in less than optimal weight distribution that delivers driving dynamics and driving pleasure well short of the standards of excellence to which Prancing Horse clients and enthusiasts have become accustomed.

The Purosangue, on the other hand, has a mid-front-mounted engine with the gearbox at the rear to create a sporty transaxle layout. The Power Transfer Unit (PTU) is coupled in front of the engine to provide a unique 4x4 transmission. This delivers exactly the 49:51% weight distribution that Maranello's engineers deem optimal for a mid-front-engined sports car.

The Purosangue stands head and shoulders above the rest of

the market thanks to its performance and comfort. It is the only car with these proportions to sport a mid-front-mounted, naturally-aspirated V12. Maranello's most iconic engine debuts in this brand new configuration to ensure the car unleashes more power than any other in the segment (725 cv) whilst guaranteeing the most enthralling Ferrari engine soundtrack. Furthermore, it can deliver 80% torque even at low revs for unique driving pleasure at all times.

The Purosangue's aero development focused on making the bodywork, underbody and rear diffuser as efficient as possible. New solutions include synergy between the front bumper and wheelarch trim which generates an air curtain that aerodynamically seals the front wheels, preventing turbulent transverse air flows being generated.

Ferrari has also given the Purosangue the very latest iterations of the vehicle dynamic control systems introduced on its most powerful and exclusive sports cars, including independent four-wheel steering and ABS 'evo' with the 6-way Chassis Dynamic Sensor (6w-CDS). Making its world debut is the new Ferrari active suspension system.

This very effectively controls body roll in corners as well as the tyre contact patch over high-frequency bumps to deliver the same performance and handling response as in one of the marque's sports cars.

The all-new chassis has a carbon-fibre roof as standard to keep weight down and lower the centre of gravity.

Redesigning the bodyshell from scratch also meant the designers could incorporate rear-hinged back doors (welcome doors) to make ingress and egress easier while keeping the car as compact as possible. The cabin has four generous heated electric seats that will comfortably accommodate four adults.

The boot is the largest ever seen on a Ferrari and the rear seats fold to increase the luggage space.

PROMOTION

## Grab your favourite Kia before Big Savings offer ends

**MUSCAT:** Kia, globally recognized for its commitment to design excellence and innovative technology, invites to experience the joy of driving the favourite Kia models before time runs out. Kia Oman, has announced the final countdown for its Big Savings campaign, which will officially conclude on January 22, 2026.

Big Savings offer is well received by customers & hence Kia is making a last call on the offer.

Visitors to any Kia showroom will find exceptional rewards tailored to different segments, ensuring that the value of the Big Savings campaign reaches every corner of the Kia range. These additional benefits are part of Kia's ongoing mission to provide convenience, peace of mind and unmatched quality to every driver in the Sultanate.

The campaign highlights the Big Savings available across Kia's most sought-after models, offering unbelievable value for those looking to upgrade. Customers can enjoy significant savings of OMR 1,700 – 2,700 on the Sportage L, while the executive K8 sedan and the stylish Sonetare available with savings of OMR 1,500 and OMR 1,300 respectively. The Kia K4 also remains a key highlight of this offer, providing a seamless blend of performance and modern features.

Most purchases during this window are further enhanced with 3 years or 30,000 km of complimentary service, along with 1-year insurance and registration, delivering a truly rewarding ownership experience.

For those ready to embrace the future of mobility, the all-electric Kia EV6 serves as a centerpiece of this final call. This innovative crossover AWD is available with massive savings ranging from OMR 4,200 to OMR 4,800. Built on Kia's advanced Electric-Global Modular



Platform, the EV6 offers ultra-fast charging that can add 100 km of range in just 4.5 minutes. To ensure a worry-free transition to electric, every EV6 purchase includes an extensive 4-year or 60,000 km service package and comprehensive insurance coverage.

Beyond these featured highlights, Kia Oman is proud to offer even more offers for various other models available in the lineup.

Finally, for those seeking the ultimate in versatility, the Kia Carens 7-Seater MPV is offered as a stand-

out choice for businesses and families alike. Designed to handle everything from SME fleet demands to large family adventures, the Carens provides incredible space and practicality. Under the Year-End Big Saving Offer, the Carens comes with Big Savings offer of OMR 1,100, alongside free insurance, registration, and a 3-year or 30,000 km service package.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the official distributor for Kia in Oman, ensures a rewarding ownership experience.

UNVEIL EXCLUSIVE EUROPE AND USA OFFERS

## Khimji's House of Travel to hold SOTC Travel's Consumer Holiday Carnival

**MUSCAT:** SOTC Travel, a leading omnichannel Travel and Tourism Company announced its Holiday Carnival in Oman, featuring a wide-ranging portfolio of international holidays along with attractive, limited-period offers for Summer 2026. The holiday carnival will be held on 24 January, at Khimji's House of Travel, next to the Oman Air Office, Ruwi, Muscat.

As part of the holiday carnival, SOTC Travel has unveiled compelling offers across its most popular long-haul destinations. Travellers booking Europe holidays for 2026 can avail either a FREE 3-4 nights cruise or land stay, or enjoy discounts of up to USD 400 per adult, delivering enhanced value and immersive experiences. For USA holidays, customers can benefit from a cash discount of USD 500 per family (2 adults & 1 child – no bed), along with a FREE 5-night holiday and a complimentary upgrade to a balcony cabin on a Bahamas cruise, making summer travel to the USA more rewarding.

In addition to Europe and the USA, the holiday carnival will also

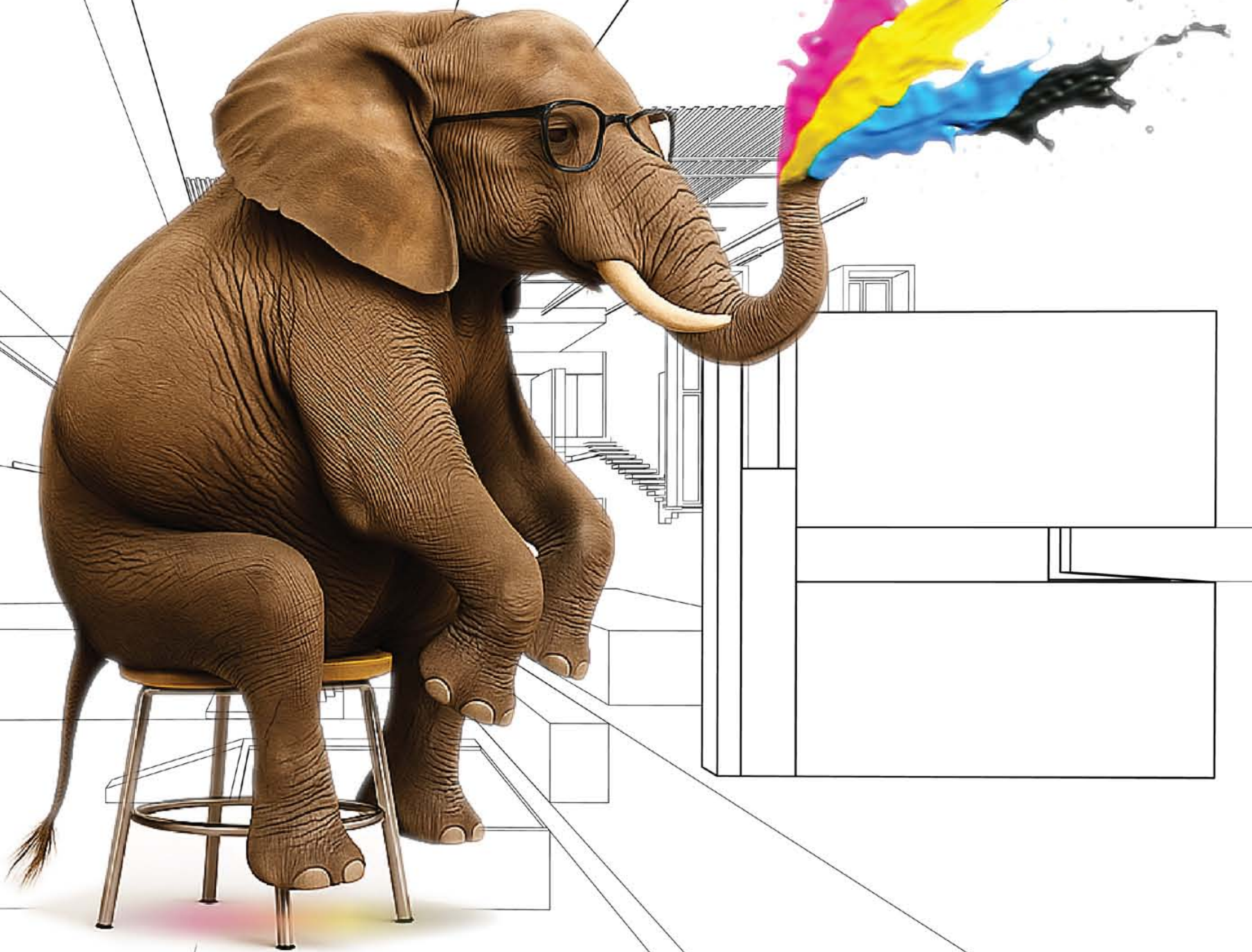


showcase SOTC Travel's diverse global holiday portfolio, including tours to South East Asia, Japan, China, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, addressing the evolving travel aspirations of families, couples, millennials and young professionals. In addition to special group tours (accompanied by an experienced Tour Manager), the holiday portfolio includes personalized tours specially designed based on the customer's unique preferences.

S.D. Nandakumar - President & Country Head - Holidays and Corporate Tours, SOTC Travel Limited said, "Oman continues to be an important and high-potential source market for SOTC Travel. Our annual consumer holiday carnival enables us to engage directly with travellers, understand their evolving preferences and present strong value-led holiday offerings. Backed by a diverse portfolio that spans group tours accompanied

by experienced tour managers, alongside personalized holidays designed around individual travel needs, we remain committed to delivering trusted, end-to-end travel experiences. With long-haul travel increasingly becoming a year-round aspiration, our Summer 2026 Europe and USA offers combine unique experiences with compelling value, making international travel more accessible for our customers in Oman.

# 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