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Transformation paying off: Oman Air

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Air’s transformation journey is gathering momentum, achieving significant financial and operational improvements throughout 2024 and early 2025. The sultanate’s national carrier, which launched an ambitious transformation strategy in 2023, is now beginning to see tangible outcomes from a comprehensive overhaul.

At a joint annual press conference held on Wednesday under the patronage of H E Saeed bin Hamood al Mawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and Chairman of Oman Air and Oman Airports, both entities outlined key achievements and strategic priorities. The event focused on the airline’s roadmap towards sustainable growth and enhancing Oman’s status as a regional aviation hub.



Workforce rightsizing programme implemented last year expected to result in annual savings of RO18mn for airline

CON KORFIATIS

In his opening remarks, H E Mawali underlined the importance of strategic cooperation between Oman Air and Oman Airports in enhancing service quality and competitiveness both regionally and globally. He emphasised that the shared vision of the two organisations reflects a national commitment to building a prosperous and sustainable aviation future.



Oman Air’s transformation strategy has centred on optimising its network and fleet, restructuring its workforce, and prioritising point-to-point traffic in support of the sultanate’s tourism and economic development objectives.

At the press conference, Con Korfiatis, CEO of Oman Air, reported a 51% year-on-year improvement in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation for 2024 and revealed that the airline recorded the highest quarterly load factor

in its history in Q1 2025, a significant turnaround following two years of structural reform.

The airline sold 13 excess aircraft last year, reducing its fleet size by 29% compared to 2023 and 40% compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019. This move aligned capacity with demand and improved asset utilisation.

“Year 2024 marked Oman Air’s first full year of transformation,” said Korfiatis. “We delivered substantial structural changes in 2023 and 2024, and the momentum is clearly building. The positive results in 2024 demonstrate that we are now firmly on the path to transformation.”

He informed that passenger numbers exceeded 5.4mn in 2024, with available seat kilometres (ASK) reaching 19.4bn. Notably, the share of point-to-point traffic rose to 40%, up from 27% in 2019, highlighting a strategic shift to attract more direct travellers to Oman.

Workforce restructuring has also been a key element of Oman Air’s transformation aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and advancing localisation efforts. Omanisation rate has risen to 79.4%, up from 74.8% in 2023.

Korfiatis highlighted the fact that the workforce rightsizing programme implemented last year is expected to result in annual savings of RO18mn for Oman Air.

Oman Air has successfully redeployed 74 Omani employees within the company and offered new positions to 87 individuals across the broader aviation sector, even as 293 employees opted for severance packages ranging from 12 to 24 months. The airline invested approximately RO15mn in these packages to ensure financial stability for affected staff.

See also [Page 04](#)

BRIEF

DESTRUCTION OF VITAL LIFTING GEAR HALTS GAZA SEARCH OPERATIONS

Palestinian Territories - Families in Gaza were holding on to the slim chance of finding loved ones buried under the ruins of destroyed homes - but that hope is fading fast.

The destruction of key heavy machinery on Tuesday following reported Israeli airstrikes has brought rescue and recovery efforts to a standstill, making it even harder to reach the estimated 11,000 bodies still trapped under debris.

According to local authorities, the strikes put a halt to all solid waste and debris removal operations, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric told journalists at a briefing in New York on Tuesday.

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Muscat students win GLOBE science contest

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Omani walks 8,000km to promote peace and unity

TRA to launch business caller ID; telecom sector revenues up 4%

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) will soon introduce a business caller ID feature as part of efforts to curb fraudulent calls and improve consumer trust through advanced digital solutions.

The announcement was made during TRA’s annual media briefing on Wednesday held under the theme ‘Investing in Opportunities and Accelerating the Building of an Enhanced Digital Society’ which reviewed the authority’s 2024 achievements across the telecom and postal sectors.

Omar bin Hamdan al Ismaili, CEO of TRA, said new regulations would soon be issued to ensure accuracy of billing systems used by telecom operators in the sultanate.

Presenting key figures for the sectors, Ismaili said mobile subscriptions grew 7% in 2024 to 7.5mn, while Internet of Things



Revenue	Up 4% to RO920mn
Mobile subscriptions	Up 7% to 7.5mn
5G stations	Up 12%
IoT subscriptions	Up 72% to 1.1mn
Fixed broadband coverage	90% of residential units
	97% of public schools

(IoT) subscriptions surged 72% to 1.1mn. Fixed broadband subscriptions increased 2% and the number of 5G stations rose 12%.

A total of 6,500 telecom towers have been upgraded from 3G to 4G and 5G, and an additional 545 5G stations are expected to be built this year, taking the total to 5,856 - a 13% annual increase.

High-speed fixed broadband now covers 90% of residential

units, with 97% of public schools also connected. Ismaili confirmed that all public schools in Oman now have full Internet coverage.

The telecom sector generated approximately RO920mn in revenues in 2024, up 4% compared to 2023. Revenues from the postal sector increased 3% to RO27.2mn.

Ismaili said the revenue

growth reflects broader economic expansion and diversification of services. The number of companies licensed to provide telecom services rose 9% to 24, while those authorised to offer such services grew 63% to 399 with 72% of these being SMEs.

In the postal sector, the number of licensed operators increased 21% to 74 companies, 80% of which are SMEs. Incoming international postal shipments surged 60% in 2024 to 3.2mn.

Omanisation rates in the sectors remained high - 93% in telecom and 71% in postal services.

Ismaili noted that TRA secured a leading position among government service institutions for digital transformation, and that Oman advanced 26 places to rank 22nd globally in the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index. The sultanate also ranks among the world’s top 28 nations for average mobile data download speed.



Bosnia waives visa for Omanis this summer

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Citizens of Oman will be able to travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina without a visa this summer following a new decision by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The visa exemption, which also applies to citizens of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, will be in effect from June 1 to September 30, 2025.

The decision was based on a proposal from Bosnia’s Ministry

of Foreign Affairs and was formally adopted to encourage travel and tourism from the Gulf region.

Elmedin Dino Konakovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, confirmed the exemption and welcomed travellers from the region.

“We look forward to welcoming our friends from the Gulf region,” he said.

The move is expected to boost tourist arrivals from the GCC, especially during the peak summer holiday season.

44.01 wins \$1mn award for innovative CO₂ removal solution

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Omani startup 44.01 has won the Air category of the XPRIZE’s carbon removal competition and awarded a US\$1mn XFACTOR prize.

44.01’s project based in Fujairah, UAE uses Direct Air Capture technology to capture carbon dioxide from the air, which the startup then mineralises, ensuring it can never escape back into the atmosphere.

The four-year global XPRIZE competition challenged teams



around the world to develop high-quality CO₂ removal solutions that are scalable to gigatonne level. More than 1,300

teams from nearly 80 countries competed. Twenty finalists were selected in May 2024 and the winners announced in New York

on Wednesday.

44.01’s project is one of the world’s first to capture CO₂ from the atmosphere and store it durably underground. The XPRIZE judges said the project represents a compelling example of a safe, high-quality, scalable carbon removal solution with potential to make a meaningful difference in the fight against climate change.

Talal Hasan, Founder and CEO of 44.01, said, “The success of Project Hajar is testament to the leading role our region can play in decarbonising our atmosphere, providing new jobs and opportunities as we navigate the energy transition. Our climate needs decarbonisation solutions that can be deployed at scale, and we are working hard to scale up our technology in the Middle East and export it around the world.”

Having demonstrated its mineralisation technology in Oman and the UAE, 44.01 is now working to scale its technology and expand internationally. Mineralisation can be deployed on every continent and can play a significant role in helping remove CO₂

from the atmosphere, decarbonise heavy industries and help countries reach their net zero ambitions.

44.01 eliminates CO₂ by turning it into rock. The company’s pioneering technology accelerates the natural process of CO₂ mineralisation, removing it permanently in less than 12 months.

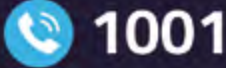
XPRIZE Foundation is a non-profit US-based organisation that designs and hosts public competitions intended to encourage technological development.



Effortless Parcel Delivery with Oman Post

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25 educators honoured with Omani Teacher Excellence Award for 2024/2025

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Education (MoE) honoured 25 outstanding teachers on Wednesday in the second edition of the Omani Teacher Excellence Award for the 2024/2025 academic year. The ceremony was held under the

patronage of H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

The winners included five female teachers of Grades 1 to 4, ten teachers (five male and five female) of Grades 5 to 8, and ten teachers (five male and five female) of Grades 9 to 12.

Speaking on the occasion,

H E Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, MoE Undersecretary, said, "The teaching profession is not just a job; it is a mission, a life project and a fundamental driver of human development. The teacher is the one who plants the seeds of inspiration in students, watering them with the values."

He described the award as a gesture of deep appreciation for the commitment and dedication of educators, and said it had gone through careful planning since its inception. "MoE has developed a dedicated electronic system to evaluate the second phase of the award, ensuring transparency and the highest

standards of fairness."

H E Ambusaidi praised the efforts of the Supervisory and Evaluation Committee and support teams involved in the award process, noting their contribution to setting standards and overseeing its implementation.

He congratulated the winners, calling their success a step

towards greater educational excellence.

The award process includes two stages. The first covers students' academic performance, inspection reports, teacher proficiency and learning time. The final phase evaluates teaching methods, school participation, professional development and

community involvement.

The award aims to encourage innovation and creativity in teaching, promote the use of interactive e-learning and raise academic outcomes. It also seeks to highlight outstanding initiatives and build stronger partnerships between schools and the wider community.



MoSD urges vigilance as cyber-extortion cases rise

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) held an awareness programme on electronic blackmail in Muscat on Wednesday highlighting the growing threat of cyber-extortion and the need for public vigilance in the digital age.

Organised in cooperation with Majan University College, the event was held under the patronage of Dr Hamad bin Abdullah al Maamari, Wali of Muttrah. It brought together students and members of the community to raise awareness on the psychological, social and financial risks linked to online blackmail.

Fatima bint Salem al Saadiya, Director of Department of Social Development in Muscat, said the



increasing use of social media platforms presents both opportunities and risks.

"In our digital age, social media has become an essential part of our lives. While it fosters communication and knowledge sharing, it also presents serious challenges," she said.

Fatima cited cyberbullying, identity theft, the spread of misinformation and violations of privacy as major concerns.

"Awareness programmes like this are vital in protecting the so-

The increasing use of social media platforms presents both opportunities and risks. While it fosters communication and knowledge sharing, it also presents serious challenges

FATIMA BINT SALEM AL SAADIYA

cial fabric of Omani society. Digital platforms must be used as tools for creativity and growth, not exploitation."

She urged individuals facing cyber-extortion or online harassment to report incidents to the authorities without delay.

The event featured a theatrical performance by students from Majan University College depicting the dangers of sharing personal information with strangers online. The performance aimed to underscore the importance of

privacy and caution when using digital platforms.

Legal advisor Khalifa bin Marhoon al Rahbi presented a paper on the legal framework on electronic blackmail, explaining how the law addresses such offences and the role of public awareness in both prevention and legal recourse.

The awareness drive was part of MoSD's broader efforts to promote safe digital behaviour and encourage responsible technology use in the community.

Oman Post joins global digital initiative to boost cross-border e-commerce

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Post, a member of Asyad Group, has joined Universal Postal Union's 'Postal Prosperity Zone' (PPZ) initiative, a move aimed at enhancing cross-border e-commerce through integrated digital logistics solutions.

The announcement was made during a high-level roundtable in Muscat on Wednesday held as part of the official visit of Universal Postal Union's Consultative Committee to Oman from April 22 to 24. The event brought together international postal and logistics leaders to discuss next-generation frameworks for customs, transport and delivery integration.

Developed under Universal Postal Union's Abidjan Strategy and aligned with both UPU and World Customs Organization (WCO) standards, PPZ seeks to enhance cooperation between public postal operators and private logistics providers. It aims to create a globally connected system that supports real-time data sharing between postal and customs systems, standardised labelling and tracking, and efficient movement of goods across air, sea, rail and road networks.

Delivering the keynote ad-



Universal Postal Union's Postal Prosperity Zone initiative seeks to enhance cooperation between public postal operators and private logistics providers

dress, H E Dr Ali al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology at Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, highlighted the role of digital transformation and cross-border partnerships in improving competitiveness of national postal systems.

"The integration of digital platforms and regulatory alignment is essential to unlock the full potential of cross-border e-commerce," H E Shidhani said.

Oman Post's involvement in the PPZ programme supports the sultanate's Vision 2040 economic diversification plan, which positions logistics as a critical growth sector. Through PPZ, Oman Post will gain enhanced digital capabilities, streamlined customs operations and improved connectivity with global e-commerce platforms.

ASYAD Group stated that the initiative will 'reinforce Oman Post's position as a regional logistics hub' and help develop a digital infrastructure that facilitates seamless international trade.

Implementation of the PPZ programme in Oman is set to begin in May 2025.

Omani-Libyan forum seeks to deepen trade, investment ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) hosted the Omani-Libyan Business Forum in Muscat on Tuesday with the aim of strengthening trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The event brought together investors, exporters, importers and representatives from various sectors including food security, construction, medical equipment, power generation, information technology, oil services, training and media. The forum is aligned with the objectives of Oman Vi-

sion 2040, which prioritises economic diversification and international partnership development.

The forum was attended by Hamoud bin Salem al Saadi, Second Deputy Chairman of OCCI Board of Directors and Chairman of its South Batinah Branch; Al Arif al Qajiji, Vice Chairman of Libyan Business Owners Council; and several OCCI members and business leaders.

Saadi said the forum reflects the strong bilateral relations between Oman and Libya and their shared commitment to expanding trade and investment ties. "The forum embodies the depth of the fraternal relations between



Oman and Libya, and reflects our shared commitment to advancing economic and trade cooperation between the public and private sectors in both countries,"

he said.

"It offers a strategic platform to expand trade and investment partnerships across vital sectors that drive mutual growth and en-

hance our economic competitiveness."

He added that OCCI is committed to creating a supportive environment for exchanging ex-

pertise and exploring investment opportunities. "We hope this forum will lead to agreements and partnerships that serve the common interests of both nations and contribute to their economic development."

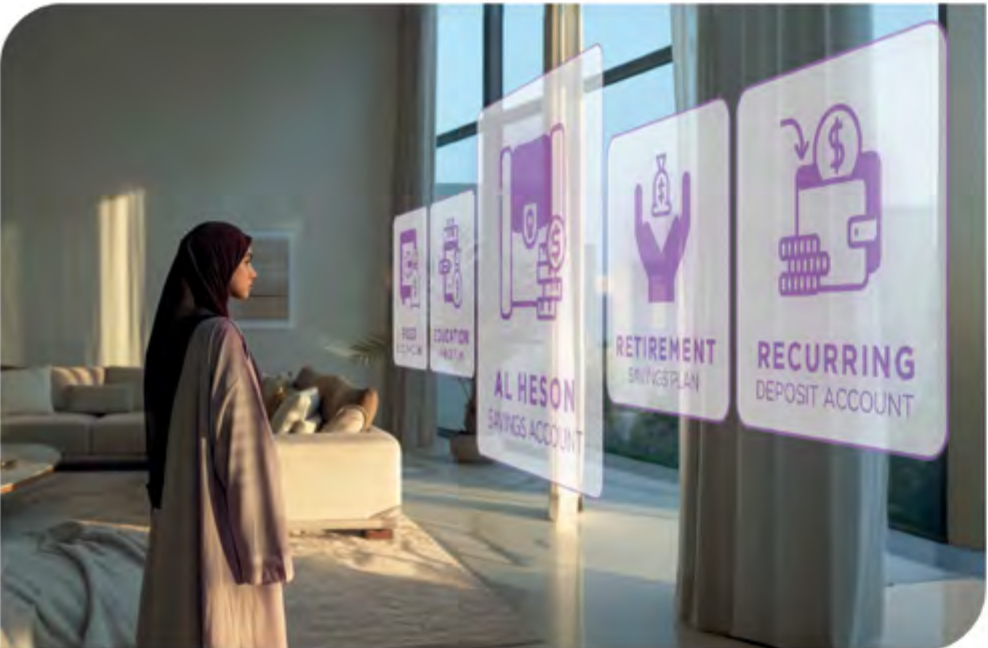
OCCI member Mohammed bin Ali al Gharbi delivered a presentation titled 'Explore the Omani Market' in which he highlighted Oman's stable economic indicators and favourable investment climate. He pointed to the country's strategic location, steady GDP performance and consistent inflow of foreign direct investment as key advantages. He also outlined Oman's main

exports, including petroleum products, liquefied natural gas, minerals, fish and petrochemicals.

Gharbi said the chamber's focus remains on improving the business environment, supporting diversification and encouraging development across all governorates in line with national development goals.

The forum concluded with bilateral meetings between Omani and Libyan business leaders, where participants discussed joint ventures and shared knowledge on high-potential sectors. It is expected to pave the way for closer trade ties and collaborative investments.

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Omani students win GLOBE science contest

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Two Omani school students have won top honours at the 2025 GLOBE International Virtual Science Symposium (IVSS), securing first place globally and within the Near East and North Africa region for their scientific research.

Khalfan bin Issa al Hussaini and Elias bin Walid al Sulaimani, students at Said bin Nasser al Kindi Basic Education School in Muscat, presented a project titled 'An Investigation of Temperatures Recorded by GLOBE Students Compared to the Meteorological Station in Al Amerat



Using protocols set by the GLOBE Programme, the students collected daily temperature data from 2015 to 2024 in Amerat and compared it with official records from the Meteorological Authority. Their aim was to assess the consistency between both datasets and explore reasons for any discrepancies.

The study found slight but consistent variations in monthly temperatures between the student data and meteorological station records. These differences were attributed to factors such as location of instruments and variations in monitoring equipment.

"This win highlights the ability of our students to engage with real-world data and contribute meaningfully to scientific understanding," a spokesperson for the school said.

Oman joined the 'GLOBE Programme' – a global science and education initiative led by NASA – in December 2009 through a Memorandum of Understanding for Environmental Cooperation. The programme promotes scientific learning through environmental research and fosters international collaboration among students.

The 2025 award is seen as a significant achievement for Oman's education sector and a recognition of the country's continued involvement in international scientific research.



MoCIIP urges full adoption of e-payment to combat hidden trade, tax evasion

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has reiterated its commitment to strengthening digital payment infrastructure across Oman, highlighting the significant role electronic payments play in combating tax evasion, curbing hidden trade practices, and supporting the national economy.

Speaking to Oman TV, Mubarak al Dohani, Director General of Planning and the ministry's official spokesperson, stressed the importance of verifying account ownership when making payments via QR code.

"When paying through QR codes, consumers must ensure the account belongs to the business entity and not an individual. This safeguards their rights and supports accountability," he said.

The ministry urged consumers to report any store that fails to provide electronic payment options or imposes unjustified additional fees on digital transactions. "The consumer is our mirror and partner in regulating the market," the official added.

MoCIIP has mandated all businesses to integrate electronic payment systems, in collaboration with banks and service providers. This directive applies to all commercial entities, including industrial zones, malls, food outlets, gold and silver shops, cafés, fruit and vegetable vendors, electronics retailers, tobacco sellers, and building materials suppliers.

In support of this transition, the Central Bank of Oman has worked with financial institutions to provide merchants with point-of-sale (POS) devices at no installation or annual fees-only standard transaction charges set by the central bank will apply.

"The adoption of digital payment systems is a key pillar of Oman Vision 2040," Dohani stated, warning that non-compliance could result in legal action.

As part of enforcement efforts, MoCIIP's Inspection Department in Muscat conducted 652 visits to fuel stations, uncovering 193 violations. Additionally, 73 exhibitions were inspected for licensing compliance, leading to four violation notices and one closure.

MAFWR moves to ease onion glut, support farmers

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has pledged support for farmers facing an oversupply of locally grown onions, assuring strategic measures to stabilise the market and safeguard national food security.

In a statement issued amid growing concerns from onion farmers, the ministry acknowledged the surplus and said it is working closely with stakeholders to identify long-term solutions for marketing the excess

produce.

The ministry fully understands the dedication of Omani farmers in producing high-quality crops and the importance of marketing these products in ways that protect both their livelihoods and the nation's food security,' it stated.

Among the steps under consideration are the regulation of production cycles, improved marketing mechanisms, and support strategies designed to ease market pressure during supply fluctuations.

Farmers and agricultural investors have been urged to reg-



ister with the 'Omani Farmers Association' to access structured planning tools, market data, and support programmes aligned with the sultanate's agricultural development policies. Officials

said such engagement could help farmers better manage supply and connect with broader distribution channels.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to backing Omani farmers and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, highlighting the sector's role in ensuring economic resilience and food security.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information, Oman had over 3,600 hectares under onion cultivation in 2022, yielding nearly 15,000 tonnes - meeting 14% of the country's annual demand.

MHT completes restoration of heritage towers in Shinas

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has completed restoration works on two historical towers in Murir village, in the wilayat of Shinas, as part of its ongoing efforts to preserve Oman's architectural and cultural heritage.

The project, supervised by the ministry's Department of Heritage and Tourism in North Batinah, focused on the conservation of the Al Murir and Al Muraba'a towers. Both structures are located in a region known for its historical significance and rich collection of archaeological sites.

Hassan bin Sulaiman al Jabri, Director of the department, confirmed that the restoration was conducted in collaboration with the local community, with the ministry providing essential building materials such as mortar and technical supervision.

Describing the restored landmarks, Jabri said the Al Muraba'a Tower is a square-shaped structure, measuring approximately 4.5m in length and 3.3m in width, and standing about 7m tall.



Located on an elevated hill and flanked by a flowing wadi to the south, the tower is built using mud and stones and features several access ramps and openings.

The Al Murir Tower, in contrast, is a circular structure made of mud and gravel, with a width of around 6m and a height of about 10m. It also contains a number of strategically positioned openings.

Shinas is home to 35 historic towers and several notable forts, including Shinas Castle, Khadrawin Fort, Ajib Fort, Al

Solar energy now fuels 25% of OCEC's power needs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) in Muscat, in collaboration with TotalEnergies Renewables Distributed Generation Middle East & Africa and with the support of Omran Group, has officially commissioned its solar rooftop project, now fully operational and powering the venue with clean solar energy since early 2025.

The project agreement was signed in March 2024, with construction commencing immediately thereafter. Completed in record time, the installation comprises 8,300 state-of-the-art solar photovoltaic (PV) modules spanning 16,600sqm across the OCEC's Atrium and Exhibition Halls rooftops. For perspective, this area is equivalent to 63 tennis courts, or two full-sized football pitches now covered with high-efficiency solar panels.

Designed to significantly reduce the venue's carbon footprint, the system is expected to avoid approximately 3,300 tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually amounting to over 72,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions avoided over the project's lifetime.

In addition to generating around 25% of OCEC's total energy needs, the PV modules offer added benefits such as lowering indoor temperatures by providing shade and protecting the roof from direct UV and rain exposure, contributing to further energy savings.

This initiative represents a major step in OCEC's wider sustainability journey, in line with Oman's national Net Zero 2050 ambitions. It complements a range of ongoing efforts, including the venue's LEED Gold certification, the development of a biodiverse garden, regular food donations, a robust waste recycling program, and close collaboration with local suppliers and SMEs to implement further sustainable solutions.



MARKET WATCH

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FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

India	221.81
Pakistan	730.27
Bangladesh	315.67
Philippines	146.92
Sri Lanka	778.20

*Rates as on April 23

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oil prices rise amid US trade policies

Oil prices rose on Wednesday due to concerns over uncertainties surrounding US trade policies and criticism by US President Donald Trump toward Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Jerome Powell. International benchmark Brent crude rose by around 1.34%, trading at \$68.35 per barrel, up from \$67.44 at the previous session's close. US benchmark West Texas Intermediate increased by about 0.51%, reaching at \$64.57 per barrel, compared to its prior session close of \$64.24

Concerns over uncertainties surrounding U.S. trade policies are influencing the upward trend in prices.

Oman Airports posts strong financial and operational growth for 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Airports – the entity responsible for managing and operating the sultanate’s civil airports and providing integrated airport operations and infrastructure management – on Wednesday announced strong financial and operational performance for 2024. This comes on the back of an extensive transformation strategy aimed at modernising infrastructure, enhancing the passenger experience, and bolstering financial resilience.

In mid-2024, Oman Airports launched a comprehensive transformation strategy to improve efficiency and customer experience through the adoption of cutting-edge digital technologies. This included self-service baggage drop systems, advanced crowd management solutions, a centralised digital dashboard, and system upgrades across its airports.

Speaking at a joint annual press conference held by Oman Airports and Oman Air at the InterContinental Hotel in Muscat, Hamood bin Musbah al Alawi, Acting CEO of Oman Airports,



Oman Airports and Oman Air organised their joint annual press conference at the InterContinental Hotel in Muscat on Wednesday

Oman Airports reported RO114.5mn in operational revenue, with total group revenue reaching RO142.6mn. Net profit rose by 15% year-on-year to RO23.5mn, while the company achieved its highest-ever EBITDA, up by 43%

delivered a presentation outlining the company’s performance in 2024.

Alawi highlighted several key financial and operational milestones achieved in 2024, despite what he termed ‘legacy challenges’, including significant emergency maintenance costs

educational and professional levels. In addition, 71 employment opportunities were offered to individuals affected by restructuring at Oman Air, supporting workforce continuity within the aviation sector.

Further demonstrating its localisation strategy, Oman Airports recruited 67 Omanis to operate and manage the parking facilities at Muscat International Airport. The company also absorbed 227 Omani employees following the withdrawal of a ground handling service provider from the local market, thereby reinforcing job stability and strengthening the national workforce.

At the annual press conference, both Oman Airports and Oman Air reiterated their joint commitment to sustainable growth, innovation, and strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing Oman’s global aviation profile.

The event concluded with a Q&A session, during which executives addressed questions from the media and underlined their alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and ongoing efforts to advance the Sultanate’s logistics and transport ambitions.

‘GCC banks face limited direct impact from US tariffs, but oil prices are key’

Our Correspondent
Muscat

US tariffs are likely to have only a small direct impact on the operating environments of GCC banks, but the indirect effects stemming from lower oil prices and weaker global economic activity – which could lead to reduced government spending – will be crucial, Fitch Ratings recently said.

Exports from the GCC to the US are dominated by hydrocar-

bons, which are exempt from tariffs. Non-hydrocarbon exports, which face a 10% tariff or 25% for aluminium and steel, are relatively low, limiting the direct impact of these tariffs on GCC economies and the operating environments of their banks.

Fitch noted that lower oil prices and weaker global demand pose the main risks for GCC bank operating environments. Government spending plays a significant role in shaping bank operating conditions across

most GCC countries, and a further drop in oil prices could lead to a downgrade of Fitch’s lending growth forecasts, which were published in December 2024.

Fitch believes that market balance and oil prices will largely be determined by global economic performance and OPEC+’s supply management.

Fitch’s pre-tariff base case projected that non-oil GDP for the GCC as a whole would grow by over 3.5% in both 2025 and 2026.

Oman hosts ADFIAP annual meeting

Muscat – The 48th annual meeting of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP) began on Wednesday in Muscat.

The meeting is being hosted by Oman, represented by the Development Bank (DB). Taking place from April 23 to April 25, the meeting focuses on community economic empowerment, development impact in Oman, entrepreneurship ecosystems, aligning capital with development goals, and building sustainable economies.

The inaugural event was held under the auspices of Eng Said Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology. It is themed “Economic Gardening and Development Impact.”

The meeting highlights the pivotal role of development finance in supporting national economic growth. The ADFIAP meeting has brought together around 300 participants from 40 countries, including policymakers, experts, and stakeholders in finance and development.

Mahmood Abdullah al Aweini, Chairman of the Development Bank, expressed pride in hosting the 48th ADFIAP meeting, calling the organisation a vital driver of national and regional development.

He added that the theme of



Hosting the meeting of Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP) in Muscat reflects Oman’s growing role in development finance, entrepreneurship, and SME support

economic gardening aligns closely with Oman Vision 2040, which serves as a roadmap for sustainable growth, innovation, and the empowerment of local communities under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Hussein Ali al Lawati, CEO of

the Development Bank, underlined the evolving role of development finance institutions. “With their tools and capabilities, these institutions stand at a crossroads where public policy meets entrepreneurship, guiding capital towards sectors that reinforce social cohesion and open new growth opportunities in underserved areas,” he said.

The meeting programme features sessions on green banking initiatives, sustainable lending practices, environmental risk management, innovative green financing tools, climate resilience strategies, and international co-operation for building adaptive capacities.

Dr Kao Thach, Chairman of the ADFIAP, noted that this year’s meeting is both timely and inspiring. “Under this year’s theme, we encourage a reimagining of development as a process rooted in local strength, one that grows from within and starts at the grassroots,” he said.

He explained that “At its core, economic development challenges us to nurture local entrepreneurs, invest in communities, and strengthen ecosystems that allow businesses and innovations to flourish. These elements are powerful levers for addressing global development challenges while supporting inclusive and resilient local economic growth. Through this year’s sessions, participants will explore critical topics such as community economic empowerment, the role of second-tier companies, entrepreneurship ecosystems, goal-aligned financing, financial resilience, and green and sustainable finance – all of which are foundational to inclusive development across the Asia-Pacific region.”

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Oman Green Hydrogen Summit in December

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman will host the fourth edition of the Oman Green Hydrogen Summit on December 1 in Muscat, as part of its growing efforts to become a major player in the global green hydrogen economy.

Organised by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM) in partnership with ‘Hydrogen Oman’ (Hydrom), the summit will be held under the theme ‘Hydrogen Management: Bridging Gaps, Driving Action’, signalling a shift from planning to execution in the country’s hydrogen development strategy.



Dr Firas bin Ali al Abdwani

The announcement was made at a press conference in Muscat on Wednesday. Officials said the summit would support the sultanate’s ambition to build an integrated hydrogen economy by addressing key areas including local manufacturing, localisation of components, national

workforce development, and maximising in-country value.

Dr Firas bin Ali al Abdwani, Director General of Renewable Energy and Hydrogen at MEM, said hydrogen – particularly green hydrogen – will be central to achieving carbon neutrality in Oman.

He noted that the country’s natural advantages such as solar and wind resources, more than 50,000sq km of land allocated for hydrogen projects, established infrastructure, and strategic location position it strongly in the global energy market.

As part of its hydrogen roadmap, Oman has already

awarded eight green hydrogen projects in Duqm and Dhofar. These initiatives are part of a long-term strategy to build a sustainable hydrogen ecosystem that contributes to both economic growth and energy transition.

Eng Abdul Aziz bin Saeed al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom, said the summit would serve as a key platform for international dialogue and cooperation. “The event is aimed at strengthening Oman’s global partnerships, increasing investor confidence, and supporting innovation-led sustainable development,” he said.

Jetour Oman opens branch in Suhar, launches all-new Jetour T2 PHEV

Jetour Oman, a brand synonymous with adventure, innovation, and premium driving experiences, proudly announces two exciting milestones - the grand opening of its new branch in Suhar and the launch of its highly anticipated plug-in hybrid model, the Jetour T2 PHEV.

As part of MHD Automobile's strategic expansion, the new Suhar facility reinforces the brand's commitment to making world-class automotive solutions more accessible to customers across the sultanate. This state-of-the-art branch is designed to deliver an exceptional sales and service experience, showcasing Jetour's latest models in a premium environment.

To mark the occasion, customers can now experience the all-new 2025 Jetour T2 Plug-In Hybrid - a cutting-edge vehicle that blends high performance with eco-friendly technology. In this exciting new addition to the Jetour lineup, innovation meets efficiency. Powered by the 5th-generation ACTECO 1.5T GDI



High-Efficiency Hybrid Special Engine, the Jetour T2 PHEV offers an ideal balance of power and fuel economy. It combines a turbocharged petrol engine with an intelligent hybrid system, delivering impressive acceleration, low emissions, and extended electric driving range - perfect for the modern Omani driver who seeks both performance and sustainability.

The Jetour T2 PHEV also boasts advanced features such as an all-terrain intelligent 4WD system, multiple driving modes, and a futuristic cockpit with a high-resolution infotainment display, smart connectivity, and enhanced safety tech, ensuring a smooth, confident, and connected drive across Oman's diverse landscapes.

Commenting on the occasion, Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of

Customers can experience the all-new 2025 Jetour T2 Plug-In Hybrid - a cutting-edge vehicle that blends high performance with eco-friendly technology

MHD ACERE, stated: "The launch of the Sohar branch alongside the introduction of the Jetour T2 PHEV is a testament to our ongoing mission to drive innovation and convenience for our customers. We are proud to expand our footprint in Oman while offering products that reflect the future of mobility - powerful, eco-conscious, and engineered for exploration."

Jetour continues to solidify its position as a preferred choice for both adventure-seekers and urban drivers alike.



NBO Muzn Islamic Banking signs three strategic MOUs

NBO Muzn Islamic Banking has announced signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with three leading real estate developers to facilitate Shari'a-compliant housing finance solutions for Omanis under Oman's national housing scheme.

The agreements were signed by Abdullah Zahran al Hinai, CEO of NBO, Faisal al Wahaibi, general manager and chief Retail and Digital Banking officer at NBO, Mundhir Abdullah al Hammadi, CEO of Al Daham Real Estate, Ahmed Hamed al Sabhi, chairman of Al Masa Real Estate, and Dr Thomas Alexander, CEO of Adrak Developers, at NBO head office in Azaiba. The signings reflect Muzn Islamic Banking's commitment to enable affordable home owner-

ship through strategic partnerships and Shari'a compliant financial solutions, a press release said.

The MOUs were signed with Al Masa Real Estate for the development of the Hayy Al Azm Project, with Al Daham Real Estate for the Hay Al Sumu Project, and with Adrak Developers for two projects the Yenaier and Hai Al Naseem.

These projects are part of integrated mixed-use developments under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning's Sorouh initiative. The initiative aims to support national housing policies by reducing land demand and offering eligible citizens high-quality, affordable residential alternatives.

Salima al Marzooqi, assistant general manager and chief Is-

lamic Banking officer at NBO Muzn Islamic Banking said, "Our support for the Sorouh initiative reflects Muzn Islamic Banking's continued commitment to advancing national development goals. These partnerships aim to empowering citizens with housing solutions while adhering to our core values of trust, transparency and Shari'a compliance."

Through these partnerships, Muzn Islamic Banking will provide eligible Omani citizens with streamlined access to housing finance that is fully compliant with Shari'a principles. The agreements ensure the rights of all stakeholders, including the bank, developer and customer, are protected and offer a transparent structure to support end-to-end financing.

Bank Muscat completes Dima W'attayeen project

Bank Muscat continues to hand over new 'Green Sports' fields to sports teams across Oman.

The bank recently participated in the inauguration of the synthetic turf project for Wadi Attayeen Sports and Cultural Team in the Wilayat of Dima W'attayeen at an event held under the patronage of Abdullah Ali al Hamahmi, Shura Council member, representative of Dima W'attayeen. The event was also attended by Bader Mohammed al Hajri, assistant regional manager - North Sharqiyah, Bank Muscat, and a number of team members, a press release said.

Bader Mohammed al Hajri, assistant regional manager - North Sharqiyah, Bank Muscat, said, "We are pleased to congratulate Wadi Attayeen Sports and Cultural Team for the completion of their



project as part of 'Green Sports' programme. This project will be a valuable addition to the team to make the best use of the facilities, including organising social and community events. The 'Green Sports' programme witnesses annually a noticeable turnout from local sports teams and we are proud today to see the positive impact of these projects around the sultanate."

Omran Mubarak al Habsi, head of Wadi Attayeen Sports and Cultural Team, said, "We are very pleased with the completion of the project and I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the bank for its pioneering role in corporate social responsibility. The 'Green Sports' programme plays a crucial role in enhancing the sports infrastructure for local teams across Oman. We are committed to developing and nurturing the talents of our members."

OABC announces partnership with Qatar Airways

The Oman American Business Council (OABC) has announced a new partnership with Qatar Airways, the World's Best Airline as voted by Skytrax in 2024, offering exclusive benefits to OABC members.

This strategic collaboration with Qatar Airways, which connects Oman to the US and beyond, will ensure seamless travel experiences, special discounts for the OABC community in Oman and opportunities for co-hosted events and further collaborative initiatives, a press release said.

OABC members can now enjoy up to 12% off Business Class and 10% off Economy



Class fares on Qatar Airways flights from Oman to select destinations across the airline's growing network of over 170

destinations. Bookings are valid until July 31, 2025, for travel through January 21, 2026. This offer ensures seamless journeys from Muscat and Salalah to a multitude of global gateways, including key destinations in the US, via Hamad International Airport - recognised as the 'World's Best Airport' by Skytrax in 2024.

"We are committed to continually delivering more value for our members, and Qatar Airways is the perfect partner for this endeavour," said Rebecca Olson, CEO of OABC.

BYD Seal - an all-electric ocean-inspired sedan - a leap forward

Dive into futuristic experiences and embrace the shift to all-electric vehicles with BYD. Begin your electrifying journey with the BYD Seal, a dynamic all-electric sedan.

Experience the thrill of high performance and cutting-edge technology, perfectly blended with BYD's advanced innovations. Designed to meet the growing demand for premium electric vehicles, the BYD Seal represents a significant leap forward in the future of mobility.

The BYD Seal is an all-wheel drive electric five-seater that embraces BYD's Super DM (Dual Mode) Technology. This C-segment family sedan is designed to

be spacious, practical, safe, and comfortable, all while featuring BYD's intelligent technology. It is a pure-electric car that harnesses the power of electric, and delivers enhanced driving performance for all.

Powered by BYD's revolutionary Blade Battery technology, the Seal offers an impressive range of 570km on a full charge, making every journey truly remarkable. Its dual-motor all-wheel-drive system delivers exhilarating acceleration, achieving 0-100km per hour in just 3.8 seconds.

Inspired by nature and the ocean, the BYD Seal's aerodynamic design enhances both en-



ergy efficiency and the driving experience while exuding elegance. Its sleek silhouette, bold front grille, and LED lighting details make it appealing from every angle.

Feel empowered and take control of your ride with the sporty, premium leather interiors, augmented by BYD's revolutionary 15.6" rotatable multimedia touchscreen, a 10.25" multi-information display, HIFI Dynaudio Premium Sound with 12 state-of-the-art speakers, a panoramic sunroof, wireless charger for smartphones and practical storage up to 400L in the rear and additional 53L storage in the front, among other ex-

citing features.

Prioritising safety and convenience, the Seal is equipped with a wide range of safety features, including lane-keeping assist, adaptive cruise control, and automatic emergency braking, anti-lock braking system, Forward Crossing Traffic Alert, Front Rain-Sensing Wiper, Intelligent Speed Limit Control, Predictive Collision Warning (PCW) and front and rear parking sensors to deliver peace of mind.

The dealer has invited customers to experience the electrifying performance and innovative features of the Seal at BYD showrooms in Wattayah, Al Mouji, and Mall of Oman.

Musk to scale back work with Trump’s DOGE task force

Washington, D.C., US - Tesla CEO Elon Musk announced on Tuesday that he will be significantly reducing his involvement in the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) starting in May, signalling a shift in priorities as the electric vehicle maker faces deepening financial and reputational challenges.

"Starting probably next month, in May, my time allocation to DOGE will drop significantly," Musk said during a conference call with investors following Tesla's first-quarter earnings release, CBS News reported.

The DOGE initiative, a signature cost-cutting task force launched by President Donald Trump in his second term, has been credited with eliminating tens of thousands of federal jobs in a bid to reduce 'fraud, waste and abuse'.

However, the programme has been dogged by controversy, including multiple lawsuits and accusations that it accessed voter data and slashed essential public programmes.

Despite distancing himself



Tesla CEO Elon Musk

from DOGE, Musk made clear he's not cutting ties entirely. "Starting next month, I'll be allocating far more of my time to Tesla," he added.

"But I still plan to spend one to two days a week on government issues."

‘Exiting DOGE won’t change that’

The news appeared to buoy Tesla's battered stock, which jumped 4% to US\$247.53 after Musk's announcement.

Still, shares remain down 41% year-to-date and have plunged over 50% from their December high, when optimism about Musk's influence in Washington briefly boosted investor confidence.

Tesla's Q1 earnings, released on Tuesday, deepened investor unease. Revenue dropped 9%, while profits plummeted 71%, missing Wall Street forecasts. Analysts suggest the company's woes run deeper than politics.

"Musk's personal brand has been permanently tarnished by his political activities in the last several months, and exiting DOGE won't change that,"

wrote Adam Crisafulli of Vital Knowledge in a note to clients.

Tesla is also grappling with fierce competition in the global EV market. Rivals from Detroit to Berlin are rolling out new models with cutting-edge tech, while Chinese giant BYD has developed a battery system capable of recharging in mere minutes.

Compounding Tesla's challenges, Chinese tariff retaliation recently forced the company to halt orders of its Model S and Model X in mainland China.

Anadolu Agency

Russia afraid of direct negotiations, says Zelensky eyeing to meet Trump

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday that Russia is 'afraid of direct negotiations', as he also confirmed his readiness to meet with US President Donald Trump at the Vatican during the funeral of Pope Francis, according to Ukraine's state-run news agency Ukrinform.

Speaking at a press briefing, Zelensky said: "Maybe they (Russians) are afraid that the Americans will leave the negotiation format, or maybe they are doing it to push them out."

Zelensky emphasised that Ukraine remains open to negotiations only after a full ceasefire, saying: "With an understanding of the term, we are ready for any format of negotiations with them. Any."

He cited ongoing contacts among defence ministers and senior officials from Ukraine, the US, the UK, and France, including upcoming ceasefire talks in London. On the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), currently under Russian control, Zelensky insisted that the facility cannot operate without Ukrainian technical staff.

"Without Ukraine, it will not work," he said, underlining that even US support alone would not be sufficient.

The president said Ukraine welcomes a partnership with the US for infrastructure restoration, such as at the ZNPP or the missile-hit Motor Sich facility in Zaporizhzhia, but stressed mutual commitment is essential. "We and America are not afraid to



Zelensky has confirmed his readiness to meet with Trump at the Vatican during the funeral of Pope Francis

Zelensky said Ukraine welcomes a partnership with the US for infrastructure restoration, such as at the ZNPP or missile-hit Motor Sich facility in Zaporizhzhia, but said mutual commitment is essential

enter into a partnership, but a partnership is a partnership."

Zelensky also addressed rumours about US involvement in ZNPP's management, stating that he had heard no official proposals: "There are a lot of mes-

sages, rumours. Officially, I have never heard any proposals."

As for potential US disengagement from the peace process, Zelensky warned it would amount to losing a strategic partner. "It's not just about aid. It's about intelligence, and about ballistics, and about life."

He confirmed plans to attend the funeral of Pope Francis in Rome, where Trump is also expected. "We are always ready to meet with partners from the United States. Always," he said in response to a question about meeting the US president at the Vatican.

Zelensky's remarks come amid increasing Western coordination for a ceasefire, as well as debate over the future operation of the Zaporizhzhia plant.

Russian strikes kill 9 in Dnipropetrovsk: Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine - Russia launched an overnight drone strike on Wednesday that hit a bus carrying workers in Ukraine, killing at least nine people in Dnipropetrovsk region's Marhanets city and targeting civilian infrastructure in east, south and central Ukraine, regional officials said.

"The Russians attacked a bus with employees of the enterprise who were on their way to work in Marhanets," Mykola Lukashuk, head of the Dnipropetrovsk region council, said in a post on the Telegram messaging service.

According to Ukrainian officials, Russia also launched 'a massive' drone attack on the central Ukrainian region of Poltava, wherein at least six people were injured.

The full scale of damage from the attack was not immediately known. The strike came after both Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky have hinted at agreeing on a pact that would ban striking civilian infrastructure.

DW

‘Crimea is our territory’

Zelensky reaffirmed that Ukraine does not legally recognise Russia's control of Crimea, which contradicts the country's Constitution. "This is outside our Constitution. This is our territory, the territory of the people of Ukraine," he said.

Regarding Ukraine's NATO aspirations, Zelensky emphasised that there was no official refusal, noting the US did not support such a decision.

"Russia cannot veto Ukraine's membership in NATO because it is not a member of the Alliance," he said.

Zelensky questioned the logic of abandoning NATO membership as a security guarantee, asking: "What will Russia abandon then? They said they entered Ukraine to protect their own security. If NATO is not approaching, what will Russia offer?"

Zelensky raised concerns about China's potential indirect role in Russian drone production.

He said he asked Ukraine's Security Service to provide Beijing with information on Chinese nationals working at a drone factory in Russia, suggesting Moscow may have stolen Chinese drone technology without official consent.

"It may be so ... that Russia stole - agreed with these citizens, outside of agreements with the Chinese leadership - these technologies," he said.

Anadolu Agency

Nigeria: Armed herdsmen kill 11 people

Lagos, Nigeria - At least 11 people have been killed in a renewed attack by armed herdsmen on the Afia community in the Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State in north-central Nigeria. The incident comes barely five days after the killing of over 50 farmers in the state.

According to Iyorkyaa Kaave, a leader in the affected community, the attack on Tuesday afternoon was 'unprovoked and part of a calculated agenda to displace indigenous farmers'. "Today's attack on Afia was particularly brutal, as the armed assailants stormed the community, firing sporadically at residents and leaving 11 dead on the spot, while several others sustained varying degrees of injuries," he said.

The north-central region of Nigeria has in the last few months, experienced a surge in violence between farmers and herders. The attacks across several communities in the region have led to the deaths of more than 100 people in two weeks. Nigeria's farmer-herder conflict is one of the country's gravest challenges in recent years. At the heart of the conflict is competing claims over land and water resources as well as issues related to livestock theft.

Anadolu Agency

Ties with China aligns with US interests: Seoul

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea's top diplomat on Wednesday said his country's engagement with China aligns with US interests in many ways and no country in the region wants to see US-China strategic competition become a 'zero-sum game'.

Speaking at an event in capital Seoul, Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul said South Korea maintains high-profile relations with both countries, upholding a military alliance with Washington while maintaining its largest trade relationship with Beijing.

"It is no secret that countries in the region don't want to be in a position of having to choose between Washington and China," Yonhap news quoted Cho as saying, adding that South Korea is no exception.

"Nor do they want to see US-China strategic competition become a zero-sum game," he said,



South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul

adding that 'in many ways, I believe our engagement with China aligns with US interests'.

The Donald Trump administration has ramped up its trade war with China, imposing hefty tariffs.

The response comes as China on Monday warned countries

against striking a broader economic deal with the US at its expense. The Commerce Ministry said it will firmly oppose any party striking a deal at China's expense and 'will take countermeasures in a resolute and reciprocal manner'.

Anadolu Agency

Pope’s body moved to St Peter’s Basilica

Vatican City - The pope's body arrived at St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City to lie in state before his funeral on Saturday.

Pallbearers carried the open coffin on their shoulders from the chapel of Casa Santa Marta, his residence and the place where he died. They were followed by red-robed cardinals and the Swiss Guards in their golden and blue uniforms.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell led the procession. He is temporarily running the Vatican until a new pope is elected.

Scholz sends traditional telegram

Meanwhile, in a formal message, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed his condolences over the death of Pope Francis.

"Through his tireless commitment to the faith and his calls for humanity and brotherhood, he gave people worldwide strength, confidence and inspiration," Scholz said. As a longstanding diplomatic tradition, the mes-



sage was sent in what is referred to as a 'telegram'. Although harking back to a previous era, this now usually refers to an email being followed up by an official letter sent in the post.

Scholz is planning to attend Francis' funeral on Saturday, along with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Leaders of numerous other states will also attend the funeral of Pope Francis, Italian media re-

ported on Tuesday.

Among those who will be attending are US President Donald Trump, French President Emmanuel Macron, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Argentinian President Javier Gerardo Milei and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, said the public broadcaster RAI.

St Peter's Basilica was opened

to the public at 11am (0900 GMT) on Wednesday morning and thousands already came to pay their respects to the pope. In the upcoming days, tens of thousands of people from all around the world are expected to bid the pope farewell.

The Vatican has published its opening hours for the public viewing: Thursday: 7am - 12am and Friday: 7am - 7pm.

Agencies

Terror attack: India reviews security situation

Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir - In the aftermath of the tragic terror attack that led to the death of many innocent lives on Tuesday, Indian Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday reviewed the security situation at the site of the terror attack in Pahalgam's Baisaran meadow.

The Union Minister first took an aerial stock of the region as he arrived at the site by helicopter, descending onto the meadow now bearing the scars of violence, earlier in the day.

Amit Shah walked around the area amid tight security and was briefed by top officials on the current situation and ongoing operations in the area.

The visit comes amid heightened alert across the Kashmir Valley following the attack, which targeted tourists in one of the region's key travel destinations.

Tuesday's incident is considered one of the most serious attacks in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. The government is yet to release an official count of casualties.

Before heading to Pahalgam, the Union Home Minister paid tribute to the victims with a 'heavy heart' during a poignant ceremony and met with the families of the victims outside the Police Control Room in Srinagar.

Taking to X, Amit Shah expressed the centre's firm resolve to combat terrorism, stating that 'Bharat will not bend to terror'.

"With a heavy heart, paid last respects to the deceased of the Pahalgam terror attack. Bharat will not bend to terror. The culprits of this dastardly terror attack will not be spared," Shah stated.

Meanwhile, a National Investigation Agency (NIA) team also arrived at the attack site to join



Army officials brief Indian Home Minister Amit Shah on Pahalgam terrorist attack at the site on Wednesday (ANI)

the probe and assist the Jammu and Kashmir Police on the matter, which is considered the deadliest assault on civilians in the region in almost twenty years.

The NIA team - led by a Deputy Inspector General-rank officer - visited Baisaran a day

after terrorists gunned down a group of tourists in the picturesque meadow, which is located around five kilometres from

Pahalgam town in Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Official sources privy to the development told ANI that 'the NIA team members will be assisting the Jammu and Kashmir Police in the investigation'.

The NIA's assistance to J-K Police underscores a key role in the overall investigation, as terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba's proxy, the Resistance Front (TRF), has claimed responsibility for the attack. The NIA team is expected to conduct a thorough assessment of the attack site, collect forensic evidence, and help in identifying those responsible for the carnage.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Kanpur on Thursday has been cancelled in the wake of the terror attack. According to an official statement, the Prime Minister was slated to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for development projects valued at over Rs 20,000 crore during the visit.

Besides, the Jammu and Kashmir government has announced ex-gratia worth Rs 10 lakh each for the families of deceased victims and Rs 2 lakh for those who sustained serious injuries.

"No amount of money can ever compensate for the loss of loved ones, but as a mark of support and solidarity, the J&K Government announces an ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh each for the families of the deceased, Rs 2 lakh for those seriously injured, and Rs 1 lakh for those with minor injuries," the J&K Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a post on X on Wednesday. "All arrangements for the dignified transport of the victims back to their homes have been made. The injured are being provided the best medical care," the CMO added.

ANI

Unaudited Interim condensed financial statements for the three-month period ended 31 March 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Muscat City Desalination Company SAOG ("MCDC" or the "Company"), I am pleased to present the Directors' Report together with the unaudited financial statements of the Company for the three-month period ended on 31 March 2025.

Health, Safety and Environment (HSE)

The HSE performance of the Company to date has been satisfactory, with no Lost Time Accidents ("LTA"). The operator entity, Muscat City Desalination Operations and Maintenance Company LLC ("MCDOMC") has completed 3,319 days without any LTA since the plant's commercial operations commenced on 19 February 2016. Similarly, there were no environmental incidents for the same period.

Operations

During the first three months of 2025, the Company achieved a higher availability of 95.66%, as compared to 94.74% during the same period in 2024. The water dispatched during the first three months of 2025 was 14,790,924 m3, a decrease of 1.68% as compared to 15,043,800 m3 during the same period in 2024. The total forced outage rate for the three-month period ending on 31 March 2025 was 0.37% (31 March 2024: 0.08%).

Financial Results

The Company's revenue for first three months of 2025 was RO 4.074 million whilst the direct operating cost was RO 2.517 million. Accordingly, the gross profit for the period was RO 1.557 million, which is 2.6% lower as compared to the corresponding period last year. General and administrative expenses for the first three months of 2025 were RO 0.258 million, which is higher by 9.8% as compared to the corresponding period last year. Finance costs for the first three months of 2025 were RO 0.615 million, which is 9.3% lower than the finance costs incurred for the corresponding period last year.

The Company recorded profit before tax (PBT) of RO 0.685 million which is 0.3% lower than the PBT for the same period last year. Overall, the Company achieved profit after tax of RO 0.578 million for the period as compared to profit after tax of RO 0.578 million for the corresponding period in 2024.

As at 31 March 2025, the share price of MCDC was 68 Baizas (31 March 2024: 74 Baizas).

During the Annual General Meeting held on 23 March 2025 ("AGM"), the Company's shareholders resolved to authorise the Board of Directors to determine and distribute cash dividends in May and November 2025, out of the retained earnings of the Company as reflected in the Company's audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024, provided that the aggregate amount of the dividends shall not exceed Baiza 5.143 per share (i.e. totalling circa RO 800,000), to the Company's shareholders who are registered in the Company's shareholders' register at the Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC as at dates to be determined by the Board of Directors.

Pursuant to the authority granted by the shareholders at the above-mentioned AGM, the Board of Directors, at its meeting held on 23 April 2025, resolved to distribute cash dividends with a value of Baiza 2.572 per share out of the Company's retained profits for the period ended 31 December 2024 to the shareholders who are registered in the Company's register at the Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC as at 15 May 2025, amounting to RO 400,000.

Corporate Governance

The Board of Directors and Management of the Company believe in the importance of the internal control system. The Company has a comprehensive system of internal controls in place. The Company has periodically carried out comprehensive reviews of its key internal policies and procedures to ensure its compliance.

The Audit Committee has approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2025 which will be implemented throughout the year.

Information Security

The Company has developed information technology ("IT") and security policy and procedures pursuant to the Financial Services Authority (previously the Capital Market Authority) ("FSA") Circular No. E/1/2022 on Information Security Guidelines for Public Listed Companies.

During the first quarter of the financial year, some enhancements were being implemented as suggested by consultants based on their assessments of the policy, procedure and IT infrastructures in the Financial Year 2024.

The Internal Audit Unit will review the implementation of the enhancement projects with supervision by the Audit Committee.

Future Outlook

All reasonable and prudent measures have been and will continue to be taken by the Company to ensure high standards of health, safety and environmental compliance, and to sustain and improve reliability and availability going forward.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our utmost appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik bin Taimur Al Said and His Government for their continued support and encouragement to the private sector by creating an environment that allows the Company to participate effectively in the growth of the Sultanate's economy and to contribute in the building of a strong nation.

Anwar Syahrin bin Abdul Ajib
Chairman of the Board



MUSCAT CITY
DESALINATION
COMPANY SAOG

Unaudited interim condensed statement of financial position as at 31 March 2025

	Unaudited 31 March 2025	Audited 31 December 2024
ASSETS	RO'000s	RO'000s
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	77,025	77,654
Lease asset (right of use assets)	219	222
Non-current portion of fair value of derivative financial instruments	1,379	1,892
Total non-current assets	78,623	79,768
Current assets		
Trade and other receivables	1,531	1,568
Cash and cash equivalents	2,717	2,286
Current portion of fair value of derivative financial instruments	136	189
Total current assets	4,384	4,043
Total assets	83,007	83,811
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	15,555	15,555
Legal reserve	2,978	2,920
Retained earnings	4,951	4,431
	23,484	22,906
Hedging Reserve	1,287	1,769
Net Equity	24,771	24,675
Non-current liabilities		
Non-current portion of term loans	37,983	38,796
Provision for decommissioning obligation	736	724
Deferred tax	6,196	6,173
Lease liability - non-current portion	240	241
Shareholders' bridge loans	5,902	5,870
Shareholders' stand-by equity loans	754	754
End-of-service benefits	56	52
Total non-current liabilities	51,867	52,610
Current liabilities		
Current portion of term loans	3,729	3,841
Lease liability - current portion	4	4
Shareholders' bridge loans	600	600
Trade and other payables	2,036	2,081
Total current liabilities	6,369	6,526
Total liabilities	58,236	59,136
Total equity and liabilities	83,007	83,811
Net assets per share (RO)	0.159	0.159

Unaudited condensed statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the three-month period ended 31 March 2025

	Unaudited 31 March 2025	Audited 31 December 2024
	RO'000s	RO'000s
Operating revenue	4,074	4,166
Operating cost	(2,517)	(2,567)
Gross profit	1,557	1,599
Other income	1	1
Administrative and general expenses	(258)	(235)
Finance costs (net)	(615)	(678)
Profit for the period before tax	685	687
Income tax	(107)	(109)
Profit for the period	578	578
Other comprehensive income / (loss) for the period – items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Changes in fair values of derivative financial instruments	(567)	555
Deferred tax on changes in fair values of derivative financial instruments	85	(83)
Other comprehensive income / (loss) for the period net of income tax	(482)	472
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the period	96	1,050
Earnings per share – basic and diluted	0.004	0.004

OHLEB C.F.N.: 116374

Trump affirms US support to India after terror attack

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump affirmed his support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the victims of terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on Tuesday.

Trump said he stood with India in its fight against terrorism. In a post on Truth Social, he said: "Deeply disturbing news out of Kashmir. The United States stands strong with India against Terrorism. We pray for the souls of those lost, and for the recovery of the injured. Prime Minister Modi, and the incredible people of India, have our full support and deepest sympathies. Our hearts are with you all!"

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday affirmed the US support for India.

The US Department of State condemned the heinous killing of tourists and civilians in the state.

In a post on X, Rubio stated: "The United States stands with India."

The State Department Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs stated that it was monitoring the situation and called for perpetrators to be held accountable.

In a post on X it said: "The United States strongly condemns the terrorist attack in Kashmir."

Security personnel inspect the site following the Tuesday terrorist attack, at Baisaran in Pahalgam on Wednesday (ANI)

Nothing can justify such a heinous act killing tourists and civilians. Our thoughts are with those who have lost their loved ones. We continue to monitor the situation and call for perpetrators to be held accountable."

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that Trump is expected to speak to PM Modi regarding the attack later in the day and that he has been briefed about the attack by the National Security Adviser.

"In regards to the terrorist attack that took place in India earlier today, the President has been briefed by the National Security Adviser. He's being kept up to speed as more facts are learned. What we know already is dozens were killed and even more were injured in a brutal terrorist attack in a popular tourist location in South Kashmir," she said.

Leavitt said the phone call will affirm US support to its ally, India.

"President Trump will be speaking with Prime Minister Modi as soon as he possibly can to express his heartfelt condolences for those lost and our prayers are with those injured and our nation's support for our ally India," she said.

ANI

India, Saudi Arabia deepen ties

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - India and Saudi Arabia have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening ties across education, connectivity, global economic coordination, and regional peace, as outlined in the joint statement issued at the conclusion of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State Visit to the Kingdom.

As per a joint statement shared by the India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), both sides welcomed the growing momentum in educational and scientific collaboration, highlighting its strategic importance in promoting innovation, capacity building, and sustainable development. The Saudi side expressed enthusiasm over the prospect of leading Indian universities establishing a presence in the Kingdom. The two nations also agreed on the importance of enhancing cooperation in labour and human resources, with a view to identifying further opportunities for collaboration.

Both nations reiterated their mutual commitment to the principles of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, following the signing of an MoU during the Crown Prince's State visit to India in September 2023.

The Corridor envisions enhanced connectivity through the development of critical infrastructure such as railways and port linkages, aiming to boost the flow of goods and services and deepen trade among participating countries. The two sides also expressed satisfaction with the growing number of shipping lines between them.

Both leaders welcomed the progress made under the October 2023 MoU on Electrical Interconnections, Clean/Green Hydrogen, and Supply Chains, seeing it as a critical step in realising the broader vision of regional integration and sustainability. Emphasising the importance of international collaboration, the two sides agreed to deepen coordination within key global platforms such as the G20, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank.

They highlighted their shared role in the Common Framework for Debt Treatment Beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), which was endorsed at the G20 Riyadh Summit in 2020.

ANI

‘Intolerable’: UK, France, Germany condemn Israel’s block on Gaza aid

London/Ankara - France, Germany, and the UK on Wednesday condemned Israel's ongoing blockade of humanitarian aid into Gaza, calling for an immediate resumption of unrestricted aid delivery and renewed efforts toward a ceasefire.

"Israel has now fully blocked the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza for over fifty days," the foreign ministers said in a statement, warning of dire consequences for the Palestinian population.

"Essential supplies are either no longer available or quickly running out. Palestinian civilians - including one million children - face an acute risk of starvation, epidemic disease and death. This must end."

The statement emphasised that during the nearly two-month ceasefire that took hold in January, aid was able to be delivered at scale by the UN and international NGOs, a contrast to the current situation which the ministers describe as 'intolerable'.

They also expressed strong disapproval of recent remarks by Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz and plans suggesting a prolonged Israeli presence in Gaza after the war.

"Minister Katz's recent comments politicising humanitarian aid and Israeli plans to remain in



The statement emphasised that during the nearly two-month ceasefire that took hold in January, aid was able to be delivered at scale by the UN and international NGOs, a contrast to the current situation which the ministers describe as ‘intolerable’

Gaza after the war are unacceptable - they harm prospects for peace. Humanitarian aid must never be used as a political tool

and Palestinian territory must not be reduced nor subjected to any demographic change. Israel is bound under international law to

allow the unhindered passage of humanitarian aid." The joint statement stressed the neutrality of humanitarian

work, insisting that aid must be allowed to reach those in need, regardless of political or military developments.

"Humanitarians must be able to deliver aid to those who need it most, independent of parties to the conflict and in accordance with their humanitarian principles. Israel must ensure unhindered access for the UN and

humanitarian organisations to operate safely across Gaza," it said.

Outrage was also expressed over Israeli strikes that have targeted humanitarian and medical personnel and infrastructure.

"We reiterate our outrage at recent strikes by Israeli forces on humanitarian personnel, infrastructure, premises and health-

care facilities," the statement said. Israel must do much more to protect the civilian population, infrastructure and humanitarian workers."

The ministers called for the restoration of humanitarian de-confliction mechanisms and for Israel to allow the movement of aid workers and medical evacuations. "They must allow the urgent healthcare needs of the population to be met, while allowing the sick and wounded to temporarily leave the Gaza Strip to receive treatment."

The statement concluded with a renewed call for an end to hostilities and a comprehensive political solution.

"Crucially, we urge all parties to return to a ceasefire. We continue to call on Hamas for the immediate release of all the remaining hostages, who are enduring terrible suffering. We must all work towards the implementation of a two-state solution, which is the only way to bring long-lasting peace and security to both Israelis and Palestinians and ensure long-term stability in the region."

Meanwhile, Israel's finance minister and army chief have clashed over the distribution of humanitarian aid into Gaza, according to Israeli media on Wednesday.

Anadolu Agency

Fresh US sanctions reflect ‘lack of goodwill’ for negotiations: Iran

Ankara/Washington, D.C. - Iran on Wednesday condemned the fresh US sanctions, saying the penalties reflect Washington's lack of goodwill for negotiations.

The US Department of the Treasury imposed new sanctions on Tuesday against an Iranian businessman and his large shipping network for allegedly selling oil and gas to other countries.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the fresh sanctions undermine the US claim of willingness to negotiate with Iran on its nuclear programme, according to the state news agency IRNA.

He called the US sanctions a 'bullying and illegal measure', saying the penalties reflect a lack of goodwill and seriousness.

"The imposition of unilateral sanctions against the Iranian nation is an arbitrary and illegal act, contradicting fundamental principles of international law," Esmail Baqaei said, calling for holding the US administration accountable for 'gross human rights violations'.

Washington claims that revenue from exporting oil is used to fund Iran's ballistic missile and nuclear programmes and armed groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Houthis.

State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said Tuesday that the Trump administration will vigorously enforce all US sanctions on Iran 'as part of its maximum pressure campaign'.

Iran and the US held two rounds of negotiations in Oman and Italy earlier this



Esmail Baqaei

month, with both the countries describing the talks as 'constructive'.

Trump has threatened military action against Iran if a new nuclear agreement is not reached to replace the 2015 nuclear deal brokered under the Obama administration.

The US imposed new sanctions on Tuesday against an Iranian businessman and his large shipping network for allegedly selling oil and gas to other countries

"Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is designating Iranian national and liquified petroleum gas (LPG) magnate Seyed Asadoollah Emamjomeh and his corporate network, which is collectively responsible for shipping hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of Iranian LPG and crude oil to foreign markets," said a statement by the Treasury Department.

Anadolu Agency

16 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza, says local sources

Gaza City, Palestine - The Israeli army killed at least 16 more Palestinians in airstrikes on the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, medical and local sources said.

Ten people were killed in a strike that targeted a school sheltering displaced people in the Al-Tuffah neighbourhood, northeastern Gaza City, according to the Civil Defence.

Four more people were killed and several others were injured in Israeli airstrikes on homes in the town of Jabalia in northern Gaza, it added.

In southern Gaza, the army killed two Palestinians and injured several others in two separate strikes in eastern Khan Younis and Al-Mawasi in the city's western area, a medical source said.

Five people were also injured in a third strike that hit a tent for



displaced people in Bani Suhaila town in eastern Khan Younis, witnesses said.

The Israeli army also opened

heavy machine-gun fire toward residential areas in eastern Gaza City, as well as on the eastern areas of the Maghazi refugee

camp in central Gaza.

Toll surges to 51,305
At least 39 more Palestinians

Yemen’s Houthis report new US airstrikes

Istanbul, Turkey - Yemen's Houthi group said on Tuesday that a series of US airstrikes targeted Al Hudaydah Governorate in the west of the country and Saada Governorate in the north.

The Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV channel reported that US airstrikes targeted Kamaran Island in Al Hudaydah, followed by two in Al-Salif District in the governorate.

It also said that four US airstrikes targeted Al-Salem District in Saada, without providing further details on casualties or material damage.

Earlier on Tuesday, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said in a televised statement that Houthi air defences shot down a US MQ-9 Reaper drone over Hajjah Governorate's coastal airspace using a locally made surface-to-air missile.



Saree also announced that Houthi missile, drone, and naval forces conducted two operations targeting the American aircraft carriers USS Harry S Truman and USS Carl Vinson along with their accompanying warships in the Red Sea and Arabian Sea.

The attacks involved 'winged missiles and drones', he said.

The US has carried out nearly 1,000 airstrikes in Yemen since March 15, killing 217 civilians and injuring 436, mostly women and children, based on official Houthi data that excludes losses among

their forces.

US President Donald Trump said last month that he had ordered 'decisive and powerful military action' against the Houthi group and later threatened to 'completely annihilate them'.

Anadolu Agency

Quake of 6.2 magnitude jolts Istanbul

Istanbul, Turkey - A powerful 6.2 magnitude earthquake struck Turkey on Wednesday, with the epicentre being Istanbul's Silivri district, the country's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) said.

The quake hit at 12.49 local time (0949 GMT) and was felt strongly across Istanbul and neighbouring provinces, prompting residents to flee buildings in fear. Another earthquake of magnitude 4.9 struck at 13.02 (10:02 GMT), with the epicentre off the coast of Buyukcekmece in the Sea of Marmara.

PERFECT TIMING

Nunes strikes in stoppage time to help Man City beat Villa in thriller

Manchester, England - Manchester City's Matheus Nunes scored deep in injury time to salvage a crucial 2-1 Premier League victory over Aston Villa on Tuesday in their breathless chase for a Champions League berth next season.

The teams appeared to be heading for a draw after Marcus Rashford's penalty cancelled out Bernardo Silva's goal in the first half, but Nunes fired home Jeremy Doku's cross in the 94th minute to lift City two places to third in the table on 61 points.

Pep Guardiola's men, however, have played one more game than the three teams directly behind them, while Villa, who have lost 15 successive games at the Etihad Stadium, remained seventh on 57 points in the crowded top of the table.

"We are not used to (scoring late winners), so I'm really, really happy for the goal that we scored at the end, because we are in the last four or five games, and a Champions League contender for qualification," Guardiola told Sky Sports.

City went ahead in the seventh minute when Omar Marmoush

raced by Villa right back Matty Cash before cutting the ball back for an onrushing Silva. Villa goalkeeper Emi Martinez got his gloves on the ball, but not enough to stop it from sailing into the back of the net.

Rashford, who had a shot clatter off the post 18 seconds into the game, pulled Villa level from the penalty spot in the 18th minute, after VAR determined Ruben Dias clipped Jacob Ramsey from behind with his right leg. Rashford calmly sent keeper Ste-



Manchester City's Matheus Nunes celebrates after scoring the winner against Aston Villa on Tuesday

Very important. This was a very tough game, very tough opponent, and we came with the mentality that we needed to win this game. And that's what happened

MATHEUS NUNES

"Very important," Nunes told Sky Sports. "This was a very tough game, very tough opponent, and we came with the mentality that we needed to win this game. And that's what happened. Perfect timing."

Nunes brought delirious City

fans to their feet with his first league goal for the team with the last shot of the game. Guardiola vigorously shook two fists in celebration while Villa manager Unai Emery looked crestfallen.

"(Villa) are on the run with us to this top five and it was a special game to get the three points," City's Dias told Sky. "Four games to go and all of them will be mas-

sively important. Important today to get the three points.

"We know how tight it is and how tight it's going to be until the end. It is a massive step for us."

City dominated possession with 61.6% and had the better chances, with the best coming in the second half.

City skipper Kevin De Bruyne sent a sumptuous second-half

pass to James McAtee, but he hit the ball just wide of the far corner. McAtee wasted another brilliant chance minutes later when Nico O'Reilly threaded a pinpoint cross to the midfielder but he missed the ball from close range.

Rashford caused problems for City several times including a second-half chance when the on-loan Manchester United striker



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola celebrates Matheus Nunes' goal against Aston Villa on Tuesday

This season has been bad, says Guardiola despite City closing in on Champions League

Manchester, England - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola scoffed at suggestions that his team could look back on this season as a special one if they clinch a Champions League berth.

City took a big step towards securing European qualification with their 2-1 Premier League win over Aston Villa on Tuesday thanks to Matheus Nunes's 94th-minute strike.

Guardiola's men climbed two spots to third in the league table, still 18 points behind leaders Liverpool and so will finish well short of their early-season goal of capturing an historic fifth consecutive league title.

"This season has been bad," Guardiola said. "It doesn't matter whether we reach the (FA Cup) final, or qualification for the Champions League. The reality is that what determines, what makes you feel the season is good is the Premier League, not

the Champions League, not FA Cups. It's that consistency in the Premier League.

"But it happens, sometimes you have bad seasons. The level of the teams (in the Premier League) is outstanding."

Pundit Roy Keane thought Guardiola's summary of the season was unfairly negative.

"I think he's been really harsh on his team there," the former Manchester United midfielder said on the Sky Sports broadcast. "Had a tough start, obviously had a huge setback with Rodri (suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament), and they've not been at their very best."

"But that was always going to happen. But I still think if they win the FA Cup and get in the Champions League, it's not bad going. But it's just because they set the standards so high over the last few years that any sort of drop-off kind of does look bad."

History-making PSG continue their unbeaten run with draw at Nantes

Nantes, France - Paris St Germain had to settle for a 1-1 draw at Nantes on Tuesday, keeping the Ligue 1 champions on course to become the first team to go unbeaten through an entire season in the French top flight.

The stalemate stretched PSG's unbeaten away league run to 39 matches, beating the long-standing record across Europe's top five leagues set by AC Milan between 1991 and 1993.

"It's important to talk about this record and the players from that era. We are at Milan's level. We're talking about the record for unbeaten away games," PSG coach Luis Enrique said.

"A team of our calibre can't afford to make mistakes. We can still improve and do even better. We should have won the match, and one small detail made all the difference."

In a slow first half the hosts were content to sit back and play on the counter, but Vitinha



Paris St Germain's Vitinha celebrates his goal against Nantes

struck a low half-volley off a Lee Kang-in pass to put PSG ahead after 33 minutes.

Nantes looked more aggressive after the break as Jean-Charles Castelletto drew a fine save from PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma on the hour mark.

Douglas Augusto finally found the equaliser seven minutes from time with a great shot from the edge of the box following an excellent run from Matthis Abline. Goncalo Ramos went agonisingly close to netting a winner for the visitors, but his stoppage-time header hit the crossbar.

"I'm very annoyed because conceding a goal is always frustrating for a goalkeeper," Donnarumma said. "We need to improve our ball retention so we don't lose possession. The team played a great game. We need to keep it up. We need to continue like this on Friday against Nice and then in the Champions League," the Italian added.



Jack Wilshere

Norwich name Wilshere as interim coach after parting ways with Thorup

Norwich, England- Norwich City have sacked Danish manager Johannes Hoff Thorup following a poor run of results and appointed his assistant and former England and Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere as interim coach until the end of the season, the Championship club said on Tuesday.

Norwich lost 3-1 at Millwall on Monday and have slipped to 14th place in the second-tier table with 53 points.

Sporting Director Ben Knapper said: "Whilst we made this appointment with a long-term focus and in line with our wider club strategy and direction, unfortunately recent results and performances have deemed it necessary for us make a change."

"Jack Wilshere ... will take charge of the first team on an interim basis for our two remaining Championship fixtures" Norwich added on their website.

Wilshere, who will be assisted by Tony Roberts and Nick Stanley, will take charge of Saturday's trip to Middlesbrough and the final-day game at home to Cardiff on 3 May. Wilshere has been assistant coach at Norwich since October 2024.

Former Brazil coach Tite pausing career to take care of his mental and physical health

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Former Brazil coach Tite said he is taking an indefinite career break in order to take care of his mental and physical health.

The 63-year-old, who led Brazil to the 2019 Copa America title, was hospitalised due to a heart issue last August. He was sacked by Flamengo the following month and had most recently been linked with the Corinthians job.

"I realised that there are times when you have to understand



Tite

that, as a human being, I can be vulnerable and admitting that will certainly make me stronger," Tite said in a statement posted on his son Matheus Bachi's Instagram on Tuesday.

"I'm passionate about what I do and I'll continue to be so, but after talking to my family and observing the signals my body was giving off, I decided that the best thing to do now is to take a break from my career to look after myself for as long as it takes."

ICC Asia Qualifier in Nepal a learning experience for Oman U19 team

Muscat - Oman's U19 cricket team may have ended their ICC U19 Cricket World Cup Asia Qualifier campaign in Nepal without a win, but the recently concluded week-long five-nation tournament (April 13-19) served as a valuable learning experience for a young side still finding its feet on the international stage.

Finishing fifth in the single-pool format, Oman faced well-drilled opponents in Afghanistan, Nepal, UAE, and Hong Kong — all of whom benefit from more established youth development structures. Despite the results, the squad returned with key lessons and clearer direction for the future.



The tough outing in Nepal provided valuable lessons for Oman's young players

Oman's campaign began with consecutive eight-wicket defeats to Afghanistan and hosts Nepal. A washed-out encounter against UAE denied them a potential breakthrough after a spirited bowling display, and the team wrapped up the tournament with a 10-wicket loss to Hong Kong.

Oman U19 coach Damith Warusavithana acknowledged the disappointing results but emphasised the developmental aspect of the outing.

"Oman entered the qualifiers as underdogs. However, we certainly have areas to reflect upon after an unfortunate run of results," he said. "We need to re-work our processes and improve

adaptability to game situations."

A cancelled warm-up game and early fixtures against tournament favourites posed significant challenges for the side.

"Our first two matches, against Afghanistan and Nepal, didn't allow us to build any momentum," Warusavithana noted.

In what was arguably Oman's most promising performance, the bowlers mounted a fightback against UAE after posting a modest total of 133. UAE were reeling at 77/4 before rain brought the contest to an abrupt halt, denying Oman a possible upset.

"Our game against UAE saw a batting collapse, but the boys fought back well with the ball and had the game at a crucial

stage until rain played spoilsport," the coach reflected.

Among the bright spots, Nishith Nadendla emerged as Oman's top scorer with 83 runs across four matches, while Jeet Shah contributed 76 runs and chipped in with two wickets.

"We have many areas to improve — from developing technical and tactical skills to instilling clarity, composure, and intent — so we can channel the talent of these young players in the right direction."

With the ACC U19 tournament scheduled later this year, Oman's young cricketers will aim to regroup and apply the lessons from Nepal to deliver more consistent performances.

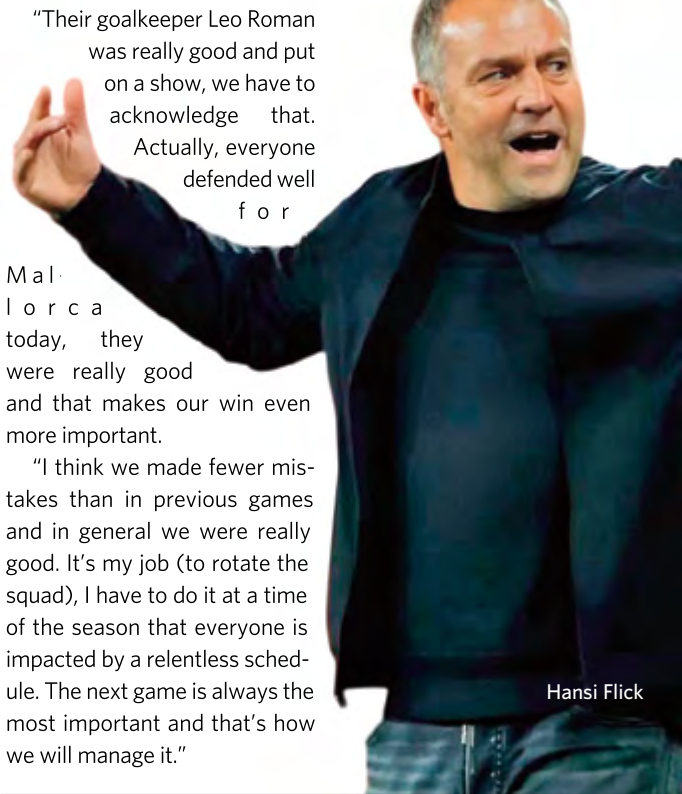
Barca manager Flick happy his rotation strategy is paying off

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona coach Hansi Flick was delighted that his decision to rotate his side paid off as they kept their LaLiga title charge on track with a deserved 1-0 win over Mallorca on Tuesday thanks to a second-half goal by Dani Olmo.

With Saturday's Copa del Rey final against rivals Real Madrid around the corner, Flick made a bold decision to start with Jules Kounde, Raphinha, Pau Cubarsi and Frenkie De Jong on the bench and he was thrilled with his much-changed side's solid performance.

The win lifted treble-chasing Barca to 76 points at the top of the LaLiga standings with Real, who visit Getafe on Wednesday, seven points adrift with a game in hand.

"I think we played a good game, we had a lot of chances to score more goals and win by a larger margin, but I'm still happy," Flick told reporters.



Barcelona today, they were really good and that makes our win even more important.

"I think we made fewer mistakes than in previous games and in general we were really good. It's my job (to rotate the squad), I have to do it at a time of the season that everyone is impacted by a relentless schedule. The next game is always the most important and that's how we will manage it."

I think we played a good game, we had a lot of chances to score more goals and win by a larger margin, but I'm still happy

HANSI FLICK

They will face Real Madrid in Saturday's Copa del Rey final and Inter Milan in first leg of their Champions League semi-final next week without top-striker Robert Lewandowski, who will be sidelined for several weeks with a leg muscle injury.

After Saturday's Clasico in Seville, treble chasing Barca will face last-placed Valladolid before hosting Real in a LaLiga clash that could decide the title on May 11.



Barcelona's Dani Olmo (R) celebrates with Eric Garcia after scoring against Mallorca on Tuesday

OLMOST THERE!

Dani goal proves the difference as Barca extend lead at the top

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona's Dani Olmo scored inside the first minute of the second half to earn a hard-fought 1-0 home win against Mallorca on Tuesday, extending their lead over Real Madrid at the top of the table to seven points with five games to go.

Barca dominated proceedings despite coach Hansi Flick deciding to rest several key starters ahead of Saturday's Copa del Rey final against rivals Real, but Mallorca goalkeeper Leo Roman put on a show between the posts to keep them at bay.

Barca finally managed to break the deadlock shortly after the interval thanks to a fine piece

of individual skill from Olmo, who took the ball in a tight space inside the box and quickly fired a left-foot shot into the bottom corner before Mallorca's defenders could challenge him.

The win lifted Barca to 76 points at the top of the LaLiga standings with Real, who visit Getafe on Wednesday, seven points adrift with a game in hand.

Mallorca are seventh, in a Europa League qualification spot, on 44 points.

"Their goalkeeper had a great game," Barcelona midfielder Gavi told Movistar Plus.

"We had the chance to take advantage and took it. It's football. We insisted, worked hard,

We had the chance to take advantage and took it. It's football. We insisted, worked hard, kept going and the goal finally came

GAVI, BARCELONA

kept going and the goal finally came.

"We played a great game overall and I'm very happy for the players who stepped up."

Missing LaLiga top-scorer Robert Lewandowski, who will

be sidelined for the Spanish Cup final and the first leg of their Champions League semi-final against Inter Milan next week with a leg muscle injury, Flick also started with Jules Kounde, Raphinha, Pau Cubarsi and Frenkie De Jong on the bench.

Barca didn't miss a beat, however, pushing Mallorca back out for an offside in the buildup right before the break.

Teenager Lamine Yamal was a constant menace but was denied several times by an inspired Roman who made three stunning saves to prevent the 17-year-old Spain winger giving the home side the lead.

Ferran Torres and Eric Garcia

also had efforts from close-range denied while Gavi's deflected strike from the edge of the box came off the post in the 28th minute, with Ronald Araujo missing a sitter from close range one minute later, firing wide from a corner.

Mallorca created a few chances on the counter with Mateu Morey having a goal ruled out for an offside in the buildup right before the break.

After Olmo finally gave Barca a deserved lead in the 46th minute, Mallorca's captain Antonio Rallo almost headed home the equaliser from a free kick in the 55th minute, but his effort went just wide.

LaLiga scores record commercial revenue in post-covid comeback

Madrid, Spain - Spain's top football league posted record commercial revenue in 2023-24, while recurring revenue surpassed five billion euros for the first time since the pandemic, though still falling shy of pre-Covid heights.

LaLiga's 5.049 billion euros from its four traditional recurring revenue pillars (matchday, commercial, broadcasting and UEFA prize money) represents a 3.2% increase over the previous season, riding a wave of fan enthusiasm that saw a record 16 million

spectators fill stadiums at an average 75.4% capacity.

The impressive attendance figures helped drive matchday revenue up 4.8%, while commercial income climbed 7.4% to exceed one billion euros for the second consecutive year.

"After the pandemic we said it would take four or five years to recover the Covid losses, and



Javier Tebas

that has been the case," LaLiga president Javier Tebas told reporters.

While recurring revenue was up, total revenue dipped 10% to 5.125 billion euros compared to last season's inflated 5.69 billion, which included half of the 1.99 billion euros from LaLiga's deal with private equity firm CVC Capital Partners.

"Taking away the effects of

last-year's levers, which distorted the total numbers, you can see that we are a sustainable league," Tebas said.

LaLiga projects attendance will surge to over 18 million fans next season and the league will finally break the pre-pandemic recurring revenue record of 5.065 billion euros set in 2019-20.

Tebas also announced changes to LaLiga's strict Financial Fair Play rules, introducing a minimum wage cap of 30% of a club's turnover.

Agassi to make pro pickleball debut

Former tennis world number one Andre Agassi will make his professional debut in the fast-growing sport of pickleball next week when he teams up with top ranked Anna Leigh Waters for the mixed doubles at the U.S. Open Pickleball Championships.

Invented in 1965 by a group of American friends, pickleball is a fast-paced paddle sport similar to tennis and badminton played on smaller courts using a perforated plastic ball, and interest has skyrocketed in recent years.

Waters, 18, is the Profes-

sional Pickleball Association's top-ranked player in the world for singles, doubles and mixed doubles and Agassi said he would likely weigh her down.

"She's probably sick of winning so much, and that's why she called me and asked me to play," Agassi, who won eight tennis Grand Slams among his 60 ATP Tour-level titles, told CNBC on Tuesday.

The 54-year-old

added that he did not see him joining the growing ranks of pro pickleball players after the tournament, which takes place in Naples, Florida.

"If I had the luxury of bandwidth to focus all my energy on just playing and body recovery and all that stuff, that would be a joy. But I don't. I'm in a different season now," he said.



Andre Agassi

FOURMIDABLE SHOW

Mukesh takes four wickets to stifle Lucknow as Delhi join Gujarat at the top of the table

Lucknow, India - KL Rahul was unavailable when Delhi Capitals (DC) met Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) earlier in IPL 2025. But coming up against LSG for the first time since they parted ways, Rahul anchored DC's chase with a half-century and guided them home along with his captain Axar Patel.

DC closed the gap with table-toppers Gujarat Titans, with only net run rate separating the two teams. DC's win was set up by Mukesh Kumar, who claimed career-best IPL figures of 4 for 33 to restrict LSG to 159 for 6 after they were 87 for 0 in the tenth over.

LSG captain Rishabh Pant bizarrely didn't walk out to bat until his team was five down, with just two balls left in their innings. After stepping out to his first ball and missing, he didn't connect with a reverse-ramp next ball,



Mukesh Kumar's career-best IPL figures of 4 for 33 helped Delhi Capitals restrict Lucknow Super Giants to 159 for 6 and win by eight wickets

TODAY'S MATCH

MATCH 42

6 PM



ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

VS

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

and ended up deflecting the ball back on to the stumps off his pads for a duck.

His opposite number, however, had a more productive outing. After having taken the new ball and bowled four tight overs on the trot, Axar cracked an unbeaten 34 off 20 balls from No. 4.

After being asked to bat, LSG had another strong start, passing fifty for the sixth time in nine innings in the powerplay this season. Aiden Markram scored 30 of the 51 runs LSG had scored in the powerplay, including two sixes. Mitchell Marsh was happy to ride in Markram's slipstream.

Markram also batted with high intent against spin, swatting Axar down the ground for four, and pulling Vipraj Nigam over midwicket for six. Markram went on to bring up his fifty off 30 balls, but when he tried to clear the bigger boundary on the off side, he holed out to sweeper cover for 52

off 33 balls.

It was Dushmantha Chameera who had provided DC with the breakthrough in his first game this season. Axar, meanwhile, had already bowled out by the seventh over, conceding 29 runs in four overs. It allowed him to backload Kuldeep Yadav's overs. Kuldeep bowled the 11th, 13th, 15th and 17th overs, giving away 33 runs in his four overs.

After being on 87 for 0 in the tenth over, LSG could manage only 72 off the last ten. Mukesh led DC's remarkable fightback with his hard lengths and reverse-swinging yorkers at the death.

In the 14th over, he coaxed a return catch from Abdul Samad, who was promoted to No. 4, and yorked Marsh while conceding just three runs. Then, in the last over of the innings, Ayush Badoni hit him for three fours in a row, but Mukesh bounced back to bowl both him and Pant, keeping LSG to their lowest total this season.

Mitchell Starc also played his part, having bested Nicholas Pooran with a slower bouncer for 9 off five balls. It was the fifth time in seven innings that Starc had dismissed Pooran in T20 cricket.

As for Pant, he batted at No. 7 for the first time in the IPL since 2016, and lasted all of two balls for zero runs.

Rahul shows former team Lucknow what they are missing

New Delhi, India - KL Rahul has racked up 40 half-centuries in 12 seasons in the Indian Premier League but few will have given him more pleasure than the one he made for Delhi on Tuesday against Lucknow Super Giants - the team which dumped him unceremoniously last year.

Rahul cracked an unbeaten 57 to anchor the Capitals' successful chase at Lucknow, sealing a comfortable eight-wicket victory with a six off Prince Yadav.

The 33-year-old captained Lucknow last season but was released after a fallout with the owners, who replaced him with fellow stumper-batsman Rishabh Pant.

While there was no animated celebration, Rahul raised his bat to point to the number one on the back of his Delhi jersey after bringing up his third fifty of the season.

Rahul is now Delhi's most prolific batter this season despite missing their first match,



KL Rahul anchored Delhi Capitals' chase with a 42-ball 57

and his former India teammate Cheteshwar Pujara said the batter's maturity was one of the keys to his success.

"He doesn't want to think about the past and wants to enjoy his batting and be in his zone, rather than think about what went wrong when he was

playing for the LSG team," Pujara told ESPNcricinfo.

"It's good to move on, which will also help him play well for DC and even for the India team. Because he is someone the India team also relies on, the way he's batting."

Rahul also became the fastest

to reach 5,000 runs in the IPL, doing so in 130 innings, five fewer than Australian David Warner.

In contrast, Pant, whose \$3.2 million deal with Lucknow made him the most expensive buy at an IPL auction, made a two-ball duck to prolong his lean run with

the new franchise, and Pujara questioned why he was batting down the order at number seven.

"I genuinely don't know what the thought process was," he said.

"There's no doubt he should be batting up the order."

It's good to move on, which will also help him (Rahul) play well for DC and even for India. Because he is someone the India team also relies on, the way he's batting

CHETESHWAR PUJARA



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Heinrich Klaasen plays a shot during his 44-ball 71 against Mumbai Indians on Wednesday. Klaasen's knock, along with Abhinav Manohar's 43, helped Hyderabad recover from a precarious 13 for 4 after 4.1 overs and post 143 for 8

Everything comes from purposeful practice, says Aniket on his six-hitting

Hyderabad, India - In a Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) team full of superstars like Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma and Heinrich Klaasen, Aniket Verma has emerged as the new star. The 23-year-old batter from Madhya Pradesh (14) has hit more sixes than Head (9), Abhishek (10) and Klaasen so far (10) in IPL 2025.

Aniket seamlessly slotted into SRH's power-packed batting line-up, hooking the second ball he faced this season, from Rajasthan Royals (RR) seamer Tushar Deshpande, for six.

The match against RR was only his second T20, having bagged a duck on debut for Madhya Pradesh in the 2024-25 Syed

Mushtaq Ali Trophy. While Aniket didn't have the benefit of domestic experience heading into the IPL, he had already lit up the Madhya Pradesh League with his six-hitting. He has now showcased those skills in the biggest T20 league in the world.

"Everything comes from purposeful practice," Aniket told ESPNcricinfo ahead of SRH's game against Mumbai Indians on Wednesday. "That's how I have developed everything. It all depends on your environment, and how you are doing things."

In an innings during the Madhya Pradesh League in 2024, he bashed 123 off just 41 balls at a strike rate of 300, including 13 sixes and eight fours. Overall,



Aniket Verma

The seniors in any team have a massive role to play. They support you, back you and direct you about what is to be done

ANIKET VERMA

Aniket hit the most runs (273) and most sixes (25) in the tournament. It caught the attention of SRH, who called him for trials, where the big-hitter impressed his eventual employers.

"These [state] leagues are benefitting us a lot," Aniket said.

"As a result, we realise what we need to do, and don't feel a lot of pressure as well. Also, the seniors in any team have a massive role to play. They support you, back you and direct you about what is to be done, and you need to trust them and know that what they are asking you to do is indeed the right thing."

"My team had started [the Madhya Pradesh League] with two losses. So no matter what, we wanted to win the third match. We got some momentum in that innings, and my senior Harsh Gawli backed me, saying 'you just focus on picking the bowlers, and go after them'."

After scoring seven off three balls against RR, Aniket smashed

five sixes during a cameo of 36 from 13 deliveries against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG). All five of those sixes came against the spinners Ravi Bishnoi and Digvesh Rathi.

The breakout performance, though, came in his next innings against Delhi Capitals (DC). He came out to bat when SRH were 25 for 3, which soon became 37 for 4. He counterattacked with 74 off 41 balls, including six sixes, to lift SRH to 163. All of his sixes came off spinners Vipraj Nigam, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav.

Aniket even tried to slog Kuldeep over midwicket immediately after lofting him for six over his head. But this time, he was caught on the boundary.



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DRIED FISH DELIGHTS
Add spice and sauce to any dried fish and convert them into magical bites



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IN TOWN
British Business Forum hosts a meeting to launch its internship programme



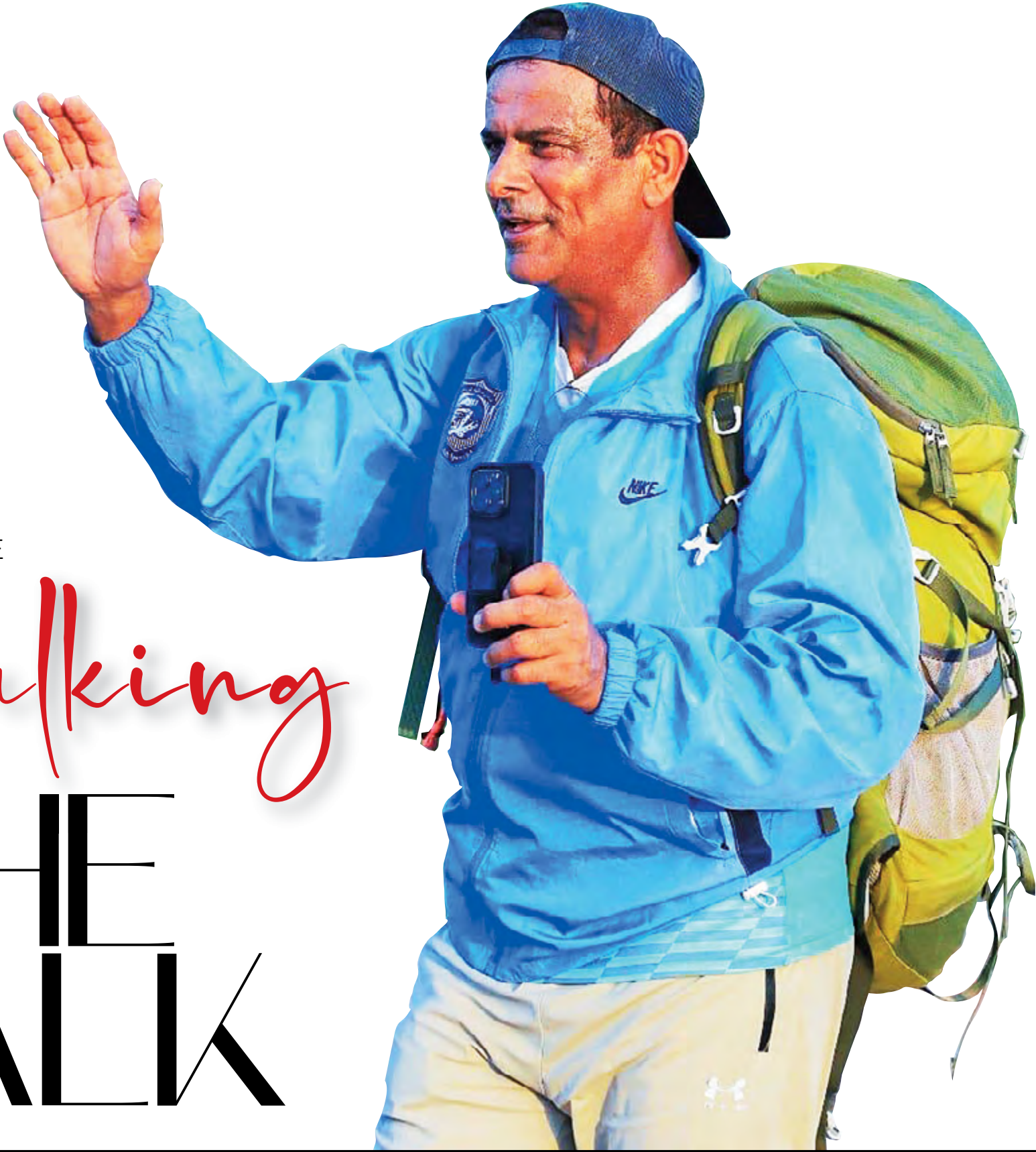
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ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town, in Hollywood and Bollywood

AROUND GCC

OMANI ADVENTURER WALKS 8,000KM ACROSS GCC TO PROMOTE UNITY, PEACE, AND BOOST TOURISM IN THE SULTANATE

Walking THE TALK



By Mohammed Taha

Bakhit Salim Mohammed al Amri, a 58-year-old resident of Sadah in Dhofar, has completed an extraordinary 8,000km journey on foot across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. His mission was to promote tourism, foster unity and peace among GCC citizens, and raise awareness on environmental sustainability.

Speaking to Muscat Daily, Amri said, "I began the first leg of my journey on January 1, 2024, walking from Salalah to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, covering over 3,000km in three months."

He had set out from the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Complex in Salalah, inspired by the historic routes his ancestors once took to perform Hajj and Umrah. Braving extreme weather and physical exhaustion, he reached Mecca on March 18, 2024, performed Umrah, and continued on foot

to Medina.

Encouraging young athletes

The second phase of his odyssey began on September 1, 2024, from Seeb Club. Over several months, Amri walked 4,200km across the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, averaging 40 to 45km daily. He returned to Medina by the end of December 2024 before flying back to Muscat.

"Throughout my journey, I visited sports clubs across Oman, encouraging young athletes to embrace adventure, fitness, and cross-cultural exchange," he said. "In the UAE, I explored major tourist landmarks and connected with local athletes. In Saudi Arabia, I met Bedouin sheikhs, while in Qatar, I engaged with sports officials."

One of the most challenging segments was a 200km coastal road to Dammam with no available services. "It was a true test of faith and endurance," he recalled. From there, he made his way to Bahrain, visited

the National Museum, and met local athletes. In Kuwait, he connected with Bedouin tribes and sports clubs, inviting them to explore Oman.

His journey also took him to Riyadh, ancient villages, and Buraidah - home to the region's oldest date market - before concluding this leg of the walk in Medina.

The final leg

On January 1 this year, Amri began the final stretch - a 1000km walk from Muscat to Salalah with the participation of Omani athletes. The 23-day trek included stops in Seeb, Fanja, Samail, Izki, Bashair, Adam, Northern Ghaba, Haima, Maqshan, Thumrait, Qairoun, Hayriti, and finally, Salalah.

Over the course of one year, Amri walked approximately 8,000km around the GCC and Yemen and visited Medina twice on foot - a historic first for a modern Omani.

While promoting tourism and unity, Amri also championed Oman's 2050 vision for

carbon neutrality. His campaign called for reduced fossil fuel consumption, increased tree planting - particularly palm trees - adoption of modern irrigation methods, and stronger environmental and wildlife conservation efforts across the GCC.

"My goal was to highlight the health benefits of walking, promote adventure sports, and showcase Oman's rich cultural and natural heritage," he said.

To prepare for the journey, Amri underwent rigorous training, walking 10km to 20km daily. Carrying a 10kg backpack, he relied on a tent, sleeping bag, and essential gear - but above all, determination.

Looking ahead, he plans to develop hiking trails in Dhofar and organise group walking trips to encourage healthy, environmentally conscious lifestyles.

"I'm inviting Omani sports teams to join me in promoting fitness, sustainability, and Oman as a top destination for eco-tourism and cultural discovery," he said.



My goal was to highlight the health benefits of walking, promote adventure sports, and showcase Oman's rich cultural and natural heritage

Bakhit Salim Mohammed al Amri



cook-up

Dried mackerel in Tamarind Sauce

Ingredients
3 dried mackerels – washed
1 onion – sliced
1 tomato – sliced
2tsp tomato paste
2tbsp tamarind pulp/sauce
2 green chillies – slit
2tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
½tsp turmeric powder
1tsp coriander powder
tsp salt
2tbsp oil
1tbsp chopped coriander – for garnish

Method
Wash and soak the dried mackerels in water for 15-20 minutes. Pat dry and set aside. Heat 1tbsp in a fry pan and fry the mackerels, either whole or cut in pieces, on both sides, till charred dark brown. Remove and set aside.
To make the sauce, heat 1tbsp oil in the same pan in which the dried fish was fried. Add the sliced onions and cook till translucent. Then add the sliced tomato and green chillies and cook on medium heat for 3-4 minutes. Add the spice powders, tomato paste, tamarind pulp and mix well. The add ½ cup water and cook on medium-low heat covered for 3-4 minutes. Then crumble the fried fish or add whole or pieces to the sauce. Mix well and simmer for 2-3 minutes before switching off the heat. Garnish with chopped coriander and serve hot as a side dish with rice or rotis.

SUNNY SEAFOOD

DRIED FISH COMES IN HANDY WHEN THE HOT CLIMATE DISSUADES YOU FROM MAKING A TRIP TO THE SUPERMARKET. CHURN OUT MAGIC WITH DRIED FISH TO ADD A SPICY ELEMENT TO AN ORDINARY MEAL

Dried shrimp patties

Ingredients
1 cup dried shrimps – washed
1 cup mashed boiled potato
2-3 slices of bread
1tsp minced ginger
1tsp minced garlic
2 green chillies - minced
1 spring onion – minced (green and white)
¼ tsp turmeric powder
½ tsp red chilli powder
½ tsp crushed black pepper
1 egg – beaten
½ tsp salt
½ cup breadcrumbs
Oil for deep frying

Method
In a large bowl combine all the ingredients, except the egg, breadcrumbs and oil. Mix with hand and knead well. Then with wet hands take portions of 1tbsp full heaping and form small balls. Slightly flatten each ball. Heat oil for deep frying. Keep the breadcrumbs and egg in two plates ready. Deep each patty in the egg, then roll in breadcrumbs to coat well and deep fry for 3-4 minutes to cook evenly, until golden brown. Serve hot with ketchup or tartar sauce.



Dried fish delights



Karuvadu Fry (Dried fried sardines)

Ingredients
Dried Fish Any Fish – 12
Chilli powder - 1tsp
Salt a pinch
Turmeric powder - 1tsp
Lemon Juice - half a lemon + 1tbsp
Onion - 1 sliced
Curry leaves - 1 spring
Oil for shallow frying

Method
Take the dry fish and soak them

in water for 20 mins. Now clean them well to remove excess salt and dirt. Coat them with chilli powder, turmeric powder, salt, lemon juice. Heat oil and add in the fish. Fry it for 5 mins on either side till it is cooked and golden. Now remove them to a plate. In the remaining oil, add in onions, curry leaves and saute for a min. Squeeze in 1 tbsp of lemon juice and mix well. Spoon this over the fried fish and serve with rice.



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BIRTHDAY WISHES

DIVITH SHETTY

24 April

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take a break

HOPPING AROUND WITH HOPIBI



Get on the tariff bandwagon

Since everyone is talking about US President Donald Trump's new tariffs, which is expected to generate trillions of dollars in new federal government revenue over a decade, I, too, decided to walk that road among my friends one day. While most offered a 'thumbs down' for the move, they also pointed out, that apart from momentarily bolstering the US economy, the net gain would be reduced by the damaging effects on the US economy and the expected retaliation. After a good 30-minute discussion, one of my frog-buddies asked the dumb question no one was expecting - What on earth are these tariffs? Everyone chose to focus on their cap-



puccinos while I turned to explain (there's always one dumbo in every group). "Tariffs are fees that businesses pay when importing foreign goods," I explained. "These levies can either be absorbed by the importing company, passed on to consumers through higher prices, or prompt

domestic alternatives." "So, why is everybody concerned?" he asked, like I wasn't expecting that. "My friend, governments impose tariffs to generate additional revenue and protect domestic industries by making foreign products less competitive. However, they also risk triggering re-

taliatory measures from trade partners," I retorted, studying his expression, to see if it went home. There was a long dramatic pause...everyone finished their coffees and left me to continue my tutorial. Then my uninitiated friend delivered a stunner... "Let's impose tariffs on everyone, foreigners or locals, who litter public places, deface public property or denigrate the environment in Oman. It will bring in additional revenue. And, if they retaliate likewise abroad, the world would be a better place," he said. There was no one around to applaud, except me. I put my hands together in a slow, dramatic clap. "You got it now!" I quipped.

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19 Everything happens for a reason. You've got no problem making decisions, but you may be surprised by some of the results today. That's okay. You don't need to control everything all the time, right? That's asking for way too much stress, and it leaves zero room for surprises. A day without surprises can be pretty dull, and you're not wild about boredom.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20 A partnership is ready to proceed at full speed. The lights are green and there's a clear stretch of road ahead. It may be business or personal, but you're more aware than ever that there's more to it than meets the eye. It deserves your full commitment and a willingness to explore all possibilities.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21 You're usually obsessed with variety, but right now you have the intensity and focus of a laser beam. Your love of change (the quicker the better) has developed into a serious hankering for exploration of the depths of your latest favourite topic. It might be a little bit off-putting at first. Constant metamorphosis is more your style.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22 You shouldn't be all that surprised if you're feeling overwhelmed, considering how many different directions are presenting themselves right now. You're not the only one in this situation, but don't let others' reactions influence your behaviour. Let everyone else run around freaking out while you go your own way. After you get a sense of what's going on, the solution should be obvious.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22 Your intriguing personality expands even further (there's a little room left) thanks to some strong celestial energy that needs to break down boundaries. Right now, you're all about delving into your intimate past for answers while firming up connections in the present. Let this brave new you surface in every area of your life. It's time to march to your own drummer.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22 Now is your time to pull out all the stops. The stars give you an all-access pass to the inner workings of your heart and soul, and that should help inspire you in all your work and play. These intangible but still incredibly important resources give you a big advantage, especially when it comes to using your creativity.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22 You're reevaluating your relationship with romance. How much of what you need from your intimate relationships has been dictated to you by others? Now you're ready to toss all that aside and focus on your real personal needs and desires from that special someone in your life. It might seem like a huge task, but finding someone who can keep up with you is a very rewarding venture.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21 Apply yourself, your irresistible energy, and your radiant confidence to getting rid of some mildly unfortunate habits that were once comfortable, but are just now starting to chafe. The familiar can easily become a prison if you let it stop you from exploring different possibilities. The cosmos is pushing you to grow and change, which means letting go of something you think you really need.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21 Mysteries and secrets have captured your full attention now, and with good reason. Your subconscious is working on untying a few knots that make your own life too restrictive. Don't worry about making them more snarled and confused. Instead, take your conscious mind offline for a while. Work on a puzzle, get friends together for games, or watch an absorbing movie.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19 Does it feel like you need somebody to lean on? If so, you're in luck, because there are plenty of people who are more than willing to be your rock. The most important part is up to you, however. You've got to step up and ask them for support. Swallow that pride and do what you know is right.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18 You are one of the most socially conscious and concerned people in your gang. You're certainly genuine in your desire to make the world a better place, and you love working with others to come up with new, exciting ways to make that happen. This ever-present impulse gets even stronger today, so get ready for a wild ride!



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20 Trust is one of the most important aspects of your life, not only trusting other people but also trusting yourself. Do you listen to your instincts or override them with logic? Do you pay attention to your feelings or dismiss them as unimportant? Now is the time to examine your attitudes toward yourself.

IN TOWN

BBF Internship Meet



The British Business Forum held a meet to launch their Internship Programme



Photos: VK Shafeer

BOGGLER

I	S	S	A
A	L	S	O
U	R	S	I
E	B	L	T

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

			1	8	7			
	3							1
4			7	5	2			
1		4		9		3		
2		9	1		3	8		6
		7		2		5		1
			2	3	9			5
	9							3
		3	6	8				

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

6	2	1	7	8	9	3	4	5
5	4	3	9	1	2	6	7	8
8	7	4	6	5	2	1	3	9
1	6	5	9	2	7	4	8	3
9	7	3	8	1	6	5	2	4
2	8	7	5	2	9	6	3	1
4	1	8	7	5	2	9	6	3
7	3	9	6	4	2	1	8	5
3	6	8	1	8	7	5	4	9

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

- What is bouillabaisse?**
A. A pre-historic mammal
B. A traditional French fish soup
C. A Chinese kite
D. A mason's technique
- Who invented the pressurised kerosene stove?**



- A. Frans Wilhelm Lindqvist
B. James Sharp
C. George Babcock
D. Melitta Bentz

- Which is the national animal of Oman, UAE, Qatar and Jordan?**
A. Silver Fox
B. Camel
C. Arabian Leopard
D. Arabian Oryx

Answers
1. B
2. A
3. D

WORD BUILDER



You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.
Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count



MICHELLE TRACHTENBERG'S 'BUFFY' CO-STARS LEAD TRIBUTES

Tributes began pouring in from Michelle Trachtenberg's former co-stars Wednesday after the news of her death broke. The actress was just 39 years old. Sarah Michelle Gellar, who starred with Trachtenberg on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, shared a tribute to the actress with an Instagram post. Gellar adapted some of Buffy's moving speech from the season five finale to her sister Dawn, played by Trachtenberg, in the caption. Their *Buffy* co-star, Alyson Hannigan, also shared a post dedicated to the star on her Instagram. "I am deeply saddened by the news of Michelle's passing. She brought a loving energy to the set of *Buffy*. My thoughts are with Michelle's family and friends," Hannigan wrote.

Hundreds of actors and Hollywood insiders sign open letter

Hollywood actors, directors and other creatives are pushing back on the loosening of AI regulations, with more than 420 entertainment industry insiders signing an open letter urging the government to uphold copyright laws that apply to artificial intelligence. The group, led by actress Natasha Lyonne, also includes Bette Midler, Aubrey Plaza, Ava DuVernay, Paul Simon, Mark Ruffalo and hundreds of others. The letter states that OpenAI and Google have recently recommended the government remove "all legal protections and existing guardrails surrounding copyright law protections for the training of Artificial Intelligence." The group believes loosening copyright laws to help AI learn would come at the expense of creative industries.



'Be Happy' - Jin's message to ARMY

Okay, so like this actually happened - Jin from BTS (my ultimate bias, and literal angel) was on the finale of Kian's Bizarre B&B and when they had to shout wishes to the sky, he said, "BTS ARMY, be happy." I swear my heart exploded. Like, how can someone be chooo chweet! He could've wished for anything, but he wished for US. For me. For all of us ARMYs. Even though he's super famous and has kept busy with different content and back-to-back albums, he still thinks of us first. And don't even get me started on his smile... or how he gave squid gifts to the whole crew. Who does that! Jin is honestly the purest, kindest, most perfect person (omega high priestess) ever and I'm not okay. I want to give him a big hug and tell him thank you for being the sunshine of my life. Jin, if you see this somehow... I'll always be happy for you!



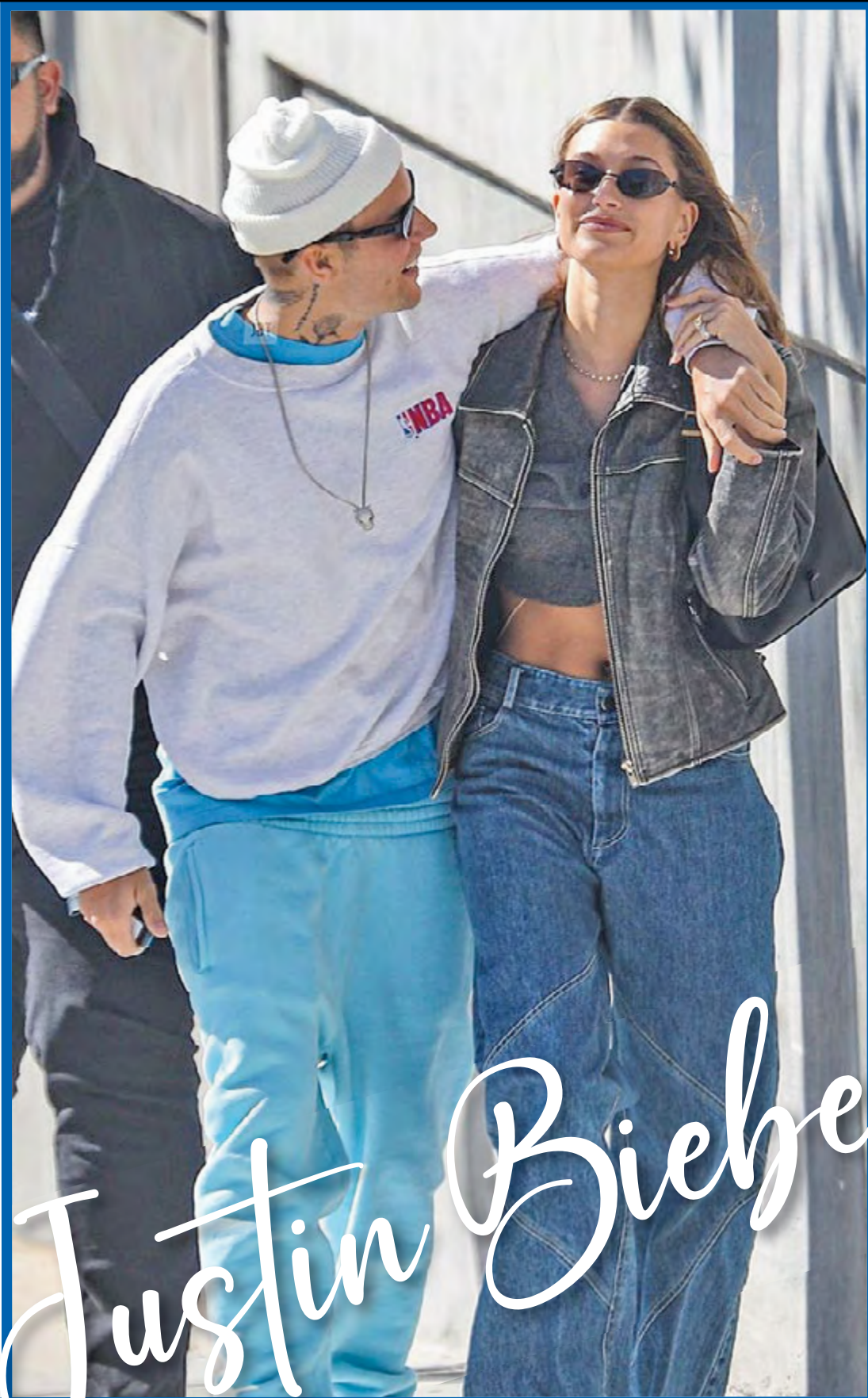
'SIXTH SENSE' STAR HALEY JOEL OSMENT ARRESTED

Sixth Sense child star Haley Joel Osment was arrested for public intoxication and possession of an unidentified controlled substance in Mammoth Lakes, California. Fox News Digital confirmed that Osment was in the chair two parking lot of the popular California ski resort. He was booked and released on April 8. According to People, the Mono County district attorney will decide whether to prosecute the case.



THE DIRE WOLF'S HOLLYWOOD DNA

What do genetic engineering, Hollywood and animal conservation have in common? Look no further than the Colossal Biosciences company, which lit up the internet in early April with its claim that it had brought the dire wolf back from extinction — nearly 10,000 years after the massive prehistoric canine panted its last breath. While a debate has since raged over whether Colossal's fluffy white beasts legitimately are dire wolves or whether they are simply gray wolves that have been genetically edited to approximate the real thing, one thing has been clear - Colossal pulled off a hell of a show — with Hollywood's help.



Justin Bieber AT CRISIS OF FAITH?

For the millions around the world wondering what Justin Bieber has been up to these past few years — since music seemingly took a back seat to his life as a full-time husband (he married Hailey Baldwin in 2018) and father (son Jack Blues was born in August) — it may be surprising to learn that the pop sensation did release something new this month. On April 3, the 31-year-old revealed his fashion brand, Skylrk, with a video directed by 3D artist Gal

Yosef that shows an animated Bieber riding an electric scooter to a house that he then promptly burns. Strewn about inside are relics of his past life, including the smiley face logo of the Drew House clothing line he started in 2019 with former friend Ryan Good (Drew is Bieber's middle name); outside, waiting while the residence goes up in flames, is his wife with a stroller. The two kiss and walk toward the setting sun holding hands, never turning back.



BOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW: **KESARI 2** - A tale of justice delayed but not denied Genre: Period, Drama Starring: Akshay Kumar, R Madhavan, Ananya Panday

Reliving the 'Raj'

There have been many movies on the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre in India in 1919 - the latest Akshay Kumar starrer *Kesari 2* has once again ignited emotions of pain, anger and patriotism. More than 1000 people were killed in the massacre after British General Dyer ordered army troops to open fire on a crowd of civilians rallying on a public ground. That's history, and then there's *Kesari 2*. At the film's centre is Sankaran Nair (Akshay), a respected Malayali lawyer who was part of the Executive Council. To make him the 'pet' of the empire, he was also bestowed with Knight-

hood. With time, he was troubled by the events in Punjab that led him to fight a case against the 'Crown' and blamed Dyer for the genocide. The film is inspired by The Case That Shook the Empire, co-authored by Raghu Palat and Pushpa Palat - descendants of Sankaran Nair. Set against the backdrop of post-massacre colonial India, it follows Nair's defamation case against Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, after Nair criticised British actions in his 1922 book *Gandhi and Anarchy*. Directed by Karan Singh Tyagi, the film is based on the book. Akshay Kumar has always excelled in comedy. However, here,



he matches the aura of a serious pain-stricken man so diligently with the character of Nair. You notice a clear change in his character and dialogue delivery as the narrative progresses. A few scenes that stand out are Sankaran Nair being stopped for accessing the courtyard as 'dogs and Indians are not allowed', Shankaran's visit to Pargat and Dilreet filing the case with Shankaran's

sudden appearance at the court. Post-interval, the Martha Stevens track is very memorable. The climax might seem predictable and yet, it packs a punch. The film ends on an exhilarating note, though the incessant 'F' word slur seemed a bit exaggerated. Sharing the screen alongside Akshay is R Madhavan, who portrays Advocate Neville McKinley, representing the British Crown. Ananya

Panday plays the pivotal role of Dilreet Gill, a key supporter in Nair's legal battle. Both the co-stars put a strong performance, though Madhavan could have been given more screen time. Although his character is interesting, he remains mum during the crucial pre-climax and climax sequences. Director Karan Singh Tyagi's choice to turn a historically significant event into a courtroom drama is commendable. The way he blended the courtroom drama with a historical context pushes the narrative forward interestingly. The background score by Sashwat Sachdev added intensity to a few crucial scenes while the solid cinematography poignantly captured the essence of a bygone era. The script, screenplay, and editing was equally tight. While the film raises patriotic feelings among the Indian populace, and contempt for the British Raj, it also carries an unnecessary item song (beat that?). Rating ★★★★★

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