

Times

OF OMAN

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50

YEARS OF LEGACY

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OMAN RISES IN GLOBAL RANKINGS

The National Competitiveness Office released the third annual report on Oman Competitiveness 2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's determined push for economic reform, environmental stewardship, and digital transformation is yielding powerful results on the world stage, with the Sultanate registering significant advances across several international indices in 2024.

The third annual Oman Competitiveness Report, issued by the National Competitiveness Office, paints a compelling picture of progress — elevating the country's global standing and reaffirming its

long-term development ambitions under Vision 2040.

The report aims to raise local awareness of global benchmarks, serving as a reference for government and private institutions, as well as researchers interested in Oman's current rankings across various fields compared to other nations.

It also identifies top-performing countries in these indicators to serve as benchmarks for enhancing Oman's competitiveness.

The report highlighted Oman's significant progress in several



global indices. The most notable leap was in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), where Oman surged 94 places to rank 55th out of 180 countries. It also secured the top global position in several EPI sub-indicators, including: Strictness of marine pro-

tection; Black carbon emissions growth rate, and Bottom trawling in exclusive economic zones.

Additionally, Oman climbed 39 spots in the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, now ranking 56th globally.

The country's economy was up-

graded from the "Mostly Unfree" to "Moderately Free," reflecting improvements in key sub-indicators, namely Government Spending (rising from 59.4 to 70.8 out of 100), Investment Freedom (increasing from 60 to 70) and Fiscal Freedom (jumping from 50 to 60).

The Network Readiness Index also saw progress, with Oman advancing four places to 50th globally, outperforming many nations in sub-indicators such as: 9th worldwide in government promotion of emerging tech investment, 11th worldwide in the gender gap in internet usage and 23rd worldwide in ICT skills within the education system.

In the Future of Growth Report, Oman scored 50.59 out of 100, surpassing the global average. It ranked first globally (with a perfect 100) in: ICT capital per capita (USD) and Rural electrification gap. **>A6**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
World Bank praises Oman Vision 2040

1 The World Bank has commended Oman's Vision 2040. **>A6**

OMAN
Military Hajj Mission leaves for Saudi Arabia

2 The Military Hajj Mission left yesterday for the sacred lands. **>A7**

MARKET
Big strides in green energy projects

3 Oman is making big strides in implementing green energy projects. **>B1**



Oman CX Forum & Awards 2025
Highlights Oman's Commitment
to Customer Experience Excellence

A3, A4, A5

SWF GLOBAL

OIA's role in supporting development of local economy in Oman lauded

NEW YORK: A new report by the SWF Global commended Oman Investment Authority (OIA) for strengthening Oman's global ties through targeted foreign investments, joint funds, and reinvesting divestment proceeds and returns into national projects.

This approach sets OIA apart from its peers, as it adopts a unique philosophy centred on the "Omani Angle" making it a foundational principle in its investment decision-making.

SWF Global is a specialised organisation that focuses on tracking activities of state-owned investment organisations, including sovereign wealth funds, central banks, and pension funds worldwide.

The report highlighted OIA's success in building an extensive network of strategic relationships by promoting the concept of economic diplomacy with various countries across the Middle East, Asia, North Africa, Europe, and the Americas over the past five years.

Among the most recent strategic partnerships is the signing of a joint fund agreement with Algeria worth USD 300 million, targeting investments in vital sectors such as mining, food se-



curity, and pharmaceuticals. Additionally, OIA partnered with Turkey's OYAK Fund to establish a joint investment fund valued at USD 500 million and launched a joint fund with Uzbekistan, which focuses on establishing a university in Tashkent in collaboration with Arizona State University of USA. Furthermore, OIA has invested in the Vietnam-Oman Investment Company, which has allocated nearly USD 400 million to projects in solar energy, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and food.

The report also noted that OIA's focus is not limited to establishing strategic partnerships through joint investment funds alone, but also extends to direct

investments in global companies, which primarily aim to localise advanced global technologies in the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to generating returns that are later reinvested into local projects.

Notable examples include OIA's stake in Elon Musk's artificial intelligence firm 'xAI', in addition to 'Tidal Vision', a US-based company offering cutting-edge technological solutions to address pollution and climate-related challenges in the agriculture and water sectors.

In the technology sector, OIA partnered with 'Golden Gate Ventures' of Singapore to establish a USD 100 million joint fund, leading to establish a local venture office in Muscat to manage joint investments between the two countries, and investing in local companies like 'Bayanat'. Collectively, these efforts underscore OIA's commitment to embedding the Omani angle across all its investments and partnerships.

Moreover, the report highlighted OIA's policy to carry out strategic investments from certain government assets, which contributed to revitalising the Muscat Stock Exchange. **>A6**

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Promotion period 15th May - 30th June 2024

The Salalah trip includes economy flight tickets for 2 adults and 2 children under 12 and a 3-night stay at a 4-star hotel with breakfast, offering a suite or 2 attached rooms depending on availability, along with airport-hotel transfers. Lunch, snacks, beverages, dinner, and all other expenses are not covered.



OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:10pm
Asr.....	3:29pm
Maghrib.....	6:54pm
Isha.....	8:16pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	3:54am



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COMMENTARY

Can employers deny requests to combine holidays with annual leave?

Employees often seek to combine official holidays with their annual leave, but whether employers can approve or deny such request based on applicable laws and workplace policies.

Speaking exclusively to the Times of Oman, a representative of Muhammad Ibrahim Law Firm, a leading law office in Oman, explained that, as per Article 78, ‘workers are entitled to 30 days of annual leave per year’.

However, the scheduling of such leave must consider the ‘interest of work’, a standard that gives employers discretion in approving or rejecting the timing of leave. While the law does not expressly prohibit combining holidays with annual leave, it clearly distinguishes between the two. Article 79 guarantees paid official holidays as separate entitlements, and Article 78 requires that annual leave be scheduled through mutual agreement with the employer, said Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Zadjali, Chairman of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm.

Employers retain the authority to deny employee’s requests to combine official holidays with annual leave, provided such de-



DR. MOHAMMED IBRAHIM AL ZADJALI, Chairman of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm



postpone it for up to 06 months based on business needs. Employers may lawfully reject leave combinations if such requests would disrupt operations, staffing, or continuity especially in critical roles.”

Article 3 reinforces the principle that employers must uphold minimum statutory rights but are not obligated to enhance terms unless mutually agreed. If employment contracts or internal policies do not permit the combining of holidays and

annual leave, employers have no legal duty to approve such requests, the spokesperson said.

Combining holidays with annual leave is not legally forbidden, but it is subject to employer’s approval, operational demands, and the terms of employment contracts or internal policy. Employers are encouraged to maintain clear leave policies and communicate expectations transparently to avoid conflicts and ensure lawful and fair practices, the expert said.

(Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm(Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm (info@mohammedibrahim.net), (+968 244 87 600) was established 18 years ago and is serving clients through its offices in Muscat and Sohar, as well as operating on a request basis in other areas. It offers legal representation across a wide range of practice areas that include Labour Law, Corporate, Commercial, Contracts, Banking and Finance, International Trade, Foreign Investment, Insurance, Maritime Law, Construction and Engineering Contracts, International Arbitration, Intellectual Property and more).

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Eid Al Adha holiday begins on June 5



MUSCAT: Eid Al Adha holiday 1446 AH for employees in the State’s Administrative Apparatus and other legal entities, as well as establishments of the private sector will start on Thursday, 9 Dhul Hijja 1446 AH, corresponding to 5 June 2025 till Monday, 13 Dhul Hijja 1446 AH, corresponding to 9 June

2025. Work shall be resumed on Tuesday, 10 June 2025.

The Ministry of Labour pointed out that employers may agree on terms to engage employees on the said holiday—if deemed necessary due to the nature of their work—provided they compensate the workers for the holiday. **ONA**

FIRST ASCENT OF MT. EVEREST

Nepal embassy hosts tourism event to mark Sagarmatha Day

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of Nepal in Muscat hosted a tourism promotion event on Thursday to mark Sagarmatha Day, commemorating the first ascent of Mt. Everest by Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary on 29 May 1953.

This year’s event also coincided with Republic Day of Nepal, adding further significance to the vcelebration.

The event was graced by Guest of Honour Dr. Jamal bin Hasan Al-Moosawi, Secretary General of the National Museum of the Sultanate of Oman, and Ambassador Abdullah al Riyami, Director General of the Cultural Cooperation Department, Foreign Ministry of Oman.

The event was attended by Ambassadors, Diplomats, a Sagarmatha Climber, prominent business leaders and media professionals, making the evening a rich gathering of diplomatic and cultural exchange.

The ceremony formally began with the lighting of the traditional Panas lamp by Dornath Aryal, Ambassador of Nepal to the Sultanate of Oman.

In his welcome address, Ambassador Aryal highlighted the symbolic, ecological and geopolitical significance of Sagarmatha.

Ambassador Aryal also highlighted Nepal’s initiation in climate dialogue through the first



edition of the Sagarmatha Sambaad (Everest Dialogue), held in Kathmandu from 16 to 18 May 2025.

Centered on the theme “Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity,” the international conference welcomed many national and international delegates, and concluded with the issuance of a 25-point “Sagarmatha Call for Action.”

Nepal Ambassador Aryal concluded his remarks with a warm invitation for all attendees to visit Nepal, praising its stunning natural beauty and rich cultural heritage.

Ms. Nadhira Al Harthy, Sagarmatha summiteer, shared inspiring and engaging presentation of her Everest expedition. Ms. Al Harthy also recounted her experience as a panelist during the recent Sagarmatha Sambaad.

The programme featured a video showcasing Nepal’s breathtaking landscapes, including the Himalayan range and diverse cultural heritage. As part of the cel-

ebration, Ambassador Aryal honoured Ms. Nadhira Al Harthy with traditional shawl and felicitated Master Shiva Kochale, a 13-year-old teen who reached the Sagarmatha Base Camp in April 2025.

As a token of appreciation, the Ambassador presented souvenirs and photo frame of Sagarmatha to the Guest of Honour and all the participants were also handed over beautiful photo frame of Sagarmatha.

The evening was conducted by. Bisesh Kumar Sah, Second Secretary at the Embassy, who welcomed guests and guided the programme with warmth and poise.

Appt was played during the dinner depicting the natural beauty and diverse culture of Nepal.

Earlier on Saturday morning and afternoon, the Embassy of Nepal held a flag hoisting ceremony and a brief event to observe Republic Day.

During the event, the ambassador congratulated and highlighted the importance of the Republic Day of Nepal.



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OMAN CX FORUM & AWARDS 2025
HIGHLIGHTS OMAN’S COMMITMENT
TO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE EXCELLENCE



PANELISTS: **Muadh Al Omairi**, Infoline; **Vanessa Humphrey**, VP Strategy & Partnerships, Tadoom; **Hawra Fida**, Head of Customer Experience, Al Mouj Muscat; **Dr. Hazem El Nadi**, COPC; **Ammar Askari**, Head of Customer Experience, Bank Dhofar; **Eng. Asim Al Zadjali**, Business Consultant; & (moderator) **Ahmed Khalifa**, Head of Customer Experience, Oman Data Park.

Oman’s growing focus on customer-centric business practices came into focus at the Oman CX Forum & Awards 2025, held on May 28 at the St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort. The prestigious event, presented by Infoline and organised by Muscat Media Group – publishers of Times of Oman and Shabiba – in collaboration with Gulf Leaders Circle, brought together more than 250 business leaders, C-level executives and customer experience (CX) professionals from across Oman and beyond.

His Highness Mohammed Bin Salim Al Said graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In his welcome address, Fadi Kattar, COO of Muscat Media Group, emphasised the uniqueness of the event, stating, “The Oman CX Forum 2025 – the first of its kind in Oman – has brought together CX experts from Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, India and the USA to share insights, spark innovation and elevate standards, and explore how digital transformation, service design and empathy can unlock more inclusive and impactful experiences for everyone we serve.”

Backed by key partners such as Tadoom (Strategic Partner), Bahwan CyberTek (Digital Transformation Partner), and Jindal Steel Sohar (Support Partner), the forum explored how businesses in Oman can transform and enhance their CX strategies in an increasingly digital and competitive land-

scape. The event featured participation from over 80 companies across diverse sectors including banking, insurance, retail, telecom, automotive, utilities, FMCG, consumer electronics, food & beverages, tourism, manufacturing and real estate, etc.

The Forum offered deep insights through a series of powerful presentations by CX thought leaders. Muadh Al Omairi, Vice President – Commercial at Infoline, spoke on the topic: ‘The New Currency of Business’. Dr. Hazem El Nadi, Senior Vice President - Business Development – MENA at COPC, delivered a compelling session on ‘The Silent Advantage: How Proactive CX Service Journeys Beat Reactive Support.’ This theme was echoed by Dr. Emmanuel Manyonganise, Head of Customer Experience & Digital Transformation at Bank Albilad, who spoke on the topic: ‘The Evolution of CX towards Hyper-Personalisation and the Use of AI in CX’.

Navin Prasad Durgaprasad, Executive Vice President and Global Head of Experience at Bahwan CyberTek, delivered an insightful session titled ‘Spirit of the Moment – A CX Meets AI Story’. Alex Rodriguez, Creative Director & Head of AI Creative Content at Saatchi & Saatchi, UAE, explored the future of brand engagement in his talk on ‘The Future of Creative Content: How AI is Redefining Brand-Customer Relationships.’ Other notable speakers included Tanmay Sahoo, President & IMEA Area Leader at Novulis, who dis-

cussed ‘Future-Proofing CX with AI-Enabled Business Apps,’ and Nour Taher, Co-Founder & CEO of Intella, who addressed the blending of emotional intelligence and automation in her presentation on ‘Humanizing Automation.’

A panel discussion on the topic ‘Beyond Expectations: Designing CX Strategies for a Digital-First World’ brought together key industry experts including Muadh Al Omairi, Infoline; Vanessa Humphrey, VP Strategy & Partnerships, Tadoom; Hawra Fida, Head of Customer Experience, Al Mouj Muscat; Dr. Hazem El Nadi, COPC; Ammar Askari, Head of Customer Experience, Bank Dhofar; and Eng. Asim Al Zadjali, Business Consultant. The moderation was done by Ahmed Khalifa, Head of Customer Experience, Oman Data Park.

The event culminated in the Oman CX Awards 2025, which honoured top brands in over 25 categories based on nationwide consumer voting. Winners received the Times of Oman Best Brand in Customer Experience Award. In addition, nine exceptional organisations and professionals were felicitated for their role in advancing CX innovation in the Sultanate.

The Oman CX Forum & Awards 2025 marked a significant step in the nation’s journey towards a more service-focused, experience-driven business environment, setting the tone for future advancements in customer experience excellence.





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OMAN CX AWARDS 2025
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Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing

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Steel
Jindal Steel Sohar

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Consumer Electronics
Panasonic

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Joyalukkas Exchange

Islamic Banking
Alizz Islamic Bank

Foreign Bank
QNB

Corporate Banking
Oman Arab Bank

Retail Banking
Bank Muscat

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Ubhar Capital

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New India Assurance

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Mitsubishi

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Volvo

Auto – Sedan
Changan Eado Plus

Rent-A-Car
Sixt

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Sohar Cooking Oil

Poultry
Al Zain

Dairy Products
Al Khamayil

Mobile Retail
Global Phone Technology (GPT Group)

Telecom
Omantel

Real Estate Services
Al Osool

Luxury Real Estate
Al Mouj Muscat



Excellence In Digital Transformation In Customer Experience - Government Services Award
Ministry Of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion

Outstanding Visitor Experience Award
Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC)

Outstanding Commitment to SME Growth & Empowerment Award
Oman Arab Bank

Excellence In B2B Services - Customer Centric Debt Recovery And Credit Evaluation Award
Sadad International

IOT and Smart Cities Solutions Award
Tadoom

Excellence in Innovation in Drone Technology & Products Award
Star Drones

CX Digital Transformation Company of the Year Award
Bahwan Cybertek

CX Leader of the Year
Said Al Marhoobi
Head - Customer Experience,
National Bank of Oman

CX Team of the Year
Sohar International



Investment Services
UBHAR CAPITAL



Insurance
NEW INDIA ASSURANCE



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MITSUBISHI



Hatchback Cars
SUZUKI



Luxury Cars
GMC



Heavy Vehicles
VOLVO



Auto – SEDAN
CHANGAN EADO PLUS



Rent-A-Car
SIXT



Wellness And Beauty
AZURA CLINIC



Edible Oil
SOHAR COOKING OIL



Poultry
AL ZAIN



Dairy Products
AL KHAMAYIL



Mobile Retail
GLOBAL PHONE TECHNOLOGY (GPT GROUP)



Telecom
OMANTEL



Real Estate Services
AL OSOOL



Luxury Real Estate
AL MOUJ MUSCAT



Excellence In Digital Transformation In Customer Experience - Government Services
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY & INVESTMENT PROMOTION



Outstanding Visitor Experience
OMAN CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE (OCEC)



Outstanding Commitment To SME Growth & Empowerment
OMAN ARAB BANK



Excellence In B2B Services - Customer Centric Debt Recovery & Credit Evaluation
SADAD INTERNATIONAL



IOT And Smart Cities Solutions
TADOOM



Excellence In Innovation In Drone Technology & Products
STAR DRONES



CX Digital Transformation Company of the Year
BAHWAN CYBERTEK



CX Leader Of The Year
SAID AL MARHOوبي
NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN



CX Team Of The Year
SOHAR INTERNATIONAL

SINGAPORE

Omani delegation takes part in Shangri-La Dialogue of IISS

SINGAPORE: A delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), headed by Air Commodore Yaqoub Rashid Al Maamari, Director General of Administration and Human Resources at the Royal Air Force

of Oman (RAFO), participated in the 22nd Shangri-La Dialogue of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) held in Singapore. The dialogue, which continues until today, discussed a number of regional and interna-

tional issues, as well as regional co-operation, with the participation of a number of military commanders, senior defense officials, and strategic experts from all countries of the Indo-Pacific region. The delegation from the Ministry of Defence and

the Sultan's Armed Forces also met with a number of military officials and chief executives from various sectors. During the meetings, views were exchanged and several topics and areas of joint cooperation were discussed. -ONA

World Bank hails Oman Vision 2040

The report noted that Oman has implemented major regulatory reforms to stimulate private sector growth and attract foreign investment



and innovation by launching new funding programs to support scientific research and transform ideas into marketable products. Additionally, innovation clusters and business incubators have been established to nurture start-ups and turn student projects into commercial enterprises. Young entrepreneurs receive financial and training support through public-private sector partnerships.

The report noted that Oman has implemented major regulatory reforms to stimulate private sector growth and attract foreign investment. These measures are crucial in creating a business-friendly environment, strengthening the role of the private sector, and mod-

ernizing ports, airports, and free zones.

The development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, along with improvements at Salalah and Sohar ports, reflects this strategy. These investments aim to facilitate the flow of goods and position Oman as a key player in global supply chains.

According to the article, the economic transformation is becoming increasingly evident, as non-oil sectors such as manufacturing, transportation, construction, food security, and water management are experiencing rapid growth, reflected in economic and developmental projects across various governorates of Oman.

IPO

OIA plays a key role in Oman's economic growth

< FROM A1 Among the most notable of these divestments was the initial public offering (IPO) of 25% of 'OQ Exploration & Production' shares in October 2024, which marked the largest IPO in the history of the Sultanate of Oman.

The offering aimed to strengthen foreign investor confidence in the Omani market while also involving citizens in the transformational shift of Oman's economy, in which OIA plays a central role.

The report further noted that since mid-2022, OIA has successfully divested from 19 assets, generating returns exceeding OMR2.7 billion. These included public offerings such as 'The Pearl REIF', 'Abraj Energy Services' and 'OQ Gas Networks', all of which witnessed demand surpassing the supply.

These IPOs are not only about generating financial returns; they are also intended to inject liquidity into Oman's financial markets, attract long-term foreign investment, and pave the way for future divestments.

Locally, the report discussed OIA's efforts to strengthen its investments in the national economy through the National Development Fund (NDF), noting that total capital investment spending in local projects rose to OMR1.9 billion, surpassing the initial target of OMR1.7 billion.



The report stated that the NDF represents 60% of the assets managed by OIA, and its investments are aimed at supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Additionally, OIA established Future Fund Oman (FFO) with a capital of OMR2 billion, of which 90% is allocated to large direct investments in viable local projects, and 10% to small, medium, and emerging enterprises- with the latter portion exceeding US\$519 million.

The Fund focuses on sectors such as green energy, industry, and tourism to support the diversification of the Omani economy. FFO has witnessed strong interest in its first year, attracting investments worth more than US\$ 2 billion, 70% of which came from foreign investors, across ten priority sectors, including artificial intelligence, fintech, clean energy,

and ICT. This approach has distinguished OIA from its regional counterparts, where investment strategies are predominantly focused on the oil and real estate sectors.

The SWF Global concluded its analysis by noting that the dual role played by OIA in strengthening Oman's strategic partnerships while simultaneously advancing the national economy positions it to lay the foundation for Oman's future economy.

This is achieved through the establishment of joint funds, localisation of advanced global technologies, execution of a strategic divestment plan, and attraction of foreign direct investment. These efforts make OIA a model for transforming Gulf economies toward sustainable development and economic diversification. -ONA

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IN DHOFAR

Environmental initiative to preserve wild trees

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In the enchanting mountains of the Dhofar Governorate, more than 5,000 wild trees, Arabian Dhofari Buttontree and wild fig trees were pruned during the years 2023 and 2024, as part of a qualitative initiative to protect them and enhance their growth.

The field results showed a significant improvement in tree health and growth.

The Environment Authority has introduced a groundbreaking initiative focused on pruning wild trees in the mountains of Dhofar Governorate.

This project aims to enhance the health of key native species, including the Arabian Dhofari Buttontree (Anogeissus Dhofarica) and wild fig trees (Ficus Acacia). By protecting these trees from environmental threats and pests, the initiative supports Oman's Vision 2040 for ecological sustainability.



Scheduled to take place annually in May and June—just before the autumn season—the program has already demonstrated promising results. Field surveys have observed noticeable growth in new branches and overall improvements in tree health.

Pruning statistics indicate steady progress:
- 2023: 2,032 trees pruned
- 2024: 3,180 trees pruned
- 2025: 3,000 trees targeted for pruning

The effort spans multiple areas, including Salalah, Taqah, Mirbat, Rakhyut, and Dhalkut. Experts predict that this focused approach will contribute significantly to preserving Dhofar's natural environment and ensuring sustainable practices for future generations.

This initiative showcases Oman's commitment to environmental stewardship while fostering the longevity of its rich and diverse landscapes.

RANKING

In governance metrics, Oman makes noticeable headway

< FROM A1 As for Worldwide Governance Indicators, Oman showed improvement across most metrics, particularly those aligned with Oman Vision 2040: Rule of Law (70.2/100); Regulatory Quality (66.5/100) and Government Effectiveness (62.2/100).

Dr. Salim Abdullah Al Sheikh, official spokesperson of the Ministry of Economy, emphasized that the National Competitiveness Office continues to monitor Oman's standing in key global indices and reports, which attract significant attention from tens of

thousands of individuals and organisations worldwide.

In a statement, he said: "The office remains committed to supporting national teams in enhancing Oman's position through targeted programs and initiatives, while addressing challenges that may arise in these efforts."

As Oman moves forward, the 2024 Competitiveness Report serves not only as a record of progress but as a strategic guidepost — signalling the Sultanate's rising profile on the global stage and its ongoing pursuit of sustainable, inclusive development. -ONA



ROYAL VISION

Al Dakhiliyah witnessing comprehensive growth

NIZWA: The Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah is heading towards comprehensive development at consistent pace on the Royal Vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, who set the foundations of Oman Vision 2040.

The Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah works on investing its budget in all the Wilayats of the governorate.

Sheikh Hilal bin Said Al Hajarri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah said that the governorate is currently executing 68 development projects at the cost of OMR44.7 million to boost sustainable development in the governorate , coupled with award of 10 new development projects at the cost of OMR5.2 million as part of the strategy of the governorate targeting development of the infra-



structure and improvement of the services offered for citizens.

He said that the governorate received 40 projects during the past period at the cost of OMR16.3 million which would contribute to enhancement of the economic and social development in the local community.

The total spending from the amount allocated for the programme of the governorates' development during the period from 2022 to 2025 stood at OMR12.68 million which represented 70% of the total budget allocated for this programme, he said, adding that the governorate would continue to execute the projects associated with the programme.

He said that the governorate enjoys supportive basic structure including modern road network, several cultural centres, museums, public libraries and human capital.

He said that the award of works to SMEs amounted to OMR 1.2 million in 2023, representing 9% of the total award which percentage increased to 51% from December 2024 to February 2025. -ONA

AGREEMENT

Porsche Centre Oman and Shell Oman to expand EV charging infrastructure

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Porsche Centre Oman, SATA L.L.C., has announced a partnership with Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) to significantly increase the roll-out of electric vehicle (EV) chargers across Oman.

The agreement will see at least eight co-branded Porsche and Shell DC high performance charging stations installed in the Sultanate.

Porsche Centre Oman and Shell Oman will also cooperate to install 125 AC Porsche Destination Chargers at convenient locations, allowing Porsche customers to top up, free-of-charge.

"Thursday marks a significant step forward in our commitment to a more sustainable future. Through this collaboration with Shell Oman, we are proud to lead the charge – quite literally – in building the infrastructure needed to support electromobility in the Sultanate," said Samir Abdul Rasool Qassim Al Zadjali, Chief Executive Officer, Porsche Centre Oman.

"By introducing both high-performance and destination chargers, we are not only meeting the evolving needs of our customers but also supporting Oman's broader vision for electromobility and sustainable progress. Our collaboration with Shell marks a major milestone in accelerating EV adoption in Oman."

Porsche Centre Oman cus-



tomers who purchase their new EV model from 1 June 2025 will receive a two-year subscription package, which includes 2,250 kWh worth of charging at Porsche-branded DC high performance charging sites at no additional cost.

Additional charging is then available at a preferential rate thereafter. Customers will also have the possibility to purchase a subscription package separately.

The AC Porsche Destination Chargers will remain free of cost for Porsche owners.

The collaboration underscores a mutually strong commitment from Porsche Centre Oman and Shell Oman to support Oman's transition to more sustainable mobility, and aligns with the country's long-term sustainability and electrification vision.

"At Shell, we are committed to driving more sustainable mobility solutions. This partnership rein-

forces our dedication to providing a reliable EV charging infrastructure in Oman," said Burair Al Lawati, General Manager – Strategy & Energy Transition, Shell Oman.

"This partnership marks a significant milestone in expanding Oman's EV infrastructure at key destinations. It underscores our commitment to feasible, scalable, and more sustainable consumer-focused solutions, built through strong collaboration with key stakeholders and guided by a clear national roadmap.

"We extend our sincere appreciation to Porsche's authorised importer in Oman, SATA LLC, and to the dedicated teams at Porsche regionally and globally for their instrumental support.

"Together, we are creating a EV ecosystem that empowers motorists with the infrastructure, reliability, and peace of mind they need to make the transition to electric vehicles."

HAJJ

Military Hajj Mission leaves for Saudi Arabia

MUSCAT: The Military Hajj Mission left yesterday for the sacred lands for performing the Hajj rituals.

The mission was seen off at Seeb Airbase by Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Mattar bin Ali Al Obaidani and a number of senior officers at SAF and the other military and security apparatuses.

On the occasion, Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Mattar bin Ali Al Obaidani, gave a speech in which he spoke on the Hajj as a key pillar of Islam.

He said that the military Hajj mission came as a gesture from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, which (the mission) is annually organised for the personnel (retired and- on-the job) of SAF and the other military and security apparatuses for performing rituals of the Hajj.

Captain Abdulrahman bin Ali Al Bimani, Head of the Military Hajj Mission, said that proceeding with performing the Hajj rituals is not just a journey but also a national message that depicts the ties between the Omani military personnel and their Islamic belief, the nation and religion and the duty and worship.

The mission receives the Royal Care and Attention of His Majesty



Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, which is a continuation of the care and attention accorded by late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, he said, adding that we believe that the members of the mission are ambassadors for the Sultanate of Oman.

Medical officer/doctor of the Military Hajj Mission, Major Haitham bin Mohammed Al Mah-rooqi, said that all arrangements have been made for the comfort, safety and security of the Military Mission for Hajj. -ONA



Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defence invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

No	Subject	Tender number	Last date for Inquiries	Last date to submit the tender	Tender documnet price
1	Supply of Ration for Royal Army of Oman for three years	14/2025	23/06/2025	30/06/2025	175 RO
2	Supply of different Socks for the period of three years	15/2025	07/07/2025	14/07/2025	149 RO
3	Supply of Clothing accessories for modes for three years	16/2025	07/07/2025	14/07/2025	204 RO
4	Supply of Towels for three years	17/2025	07/07/2025	14/07/2025	166 RO

- Tenders terms and documents may be obtained through MOD TABSEET e-Services portal at the following link: <https://eservices.tabseet.gov.om>
- Tender fees must be paid electronically via the aforementioned portal for each respective tender.
- Bids must be submitted electronically through TABSEET portal in accordance with instructions provided.
- For further information or inquiries, kindly contact us via email: modit.pur@mod.gov.om or via call center: 24300038



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Advertisement No. 15/2025

Companies specialized in the field and registered with Tender Board, may obtain Prequalification documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
(PRE-24-315)	Design, implementation and Operation of Mobile Toilets at Qurriyat (Re-Call)	20/06/2025	10/07/2025
(PRE-25-020)	Design and Construction of Road Connections in A'Seeb (Lump Sum) (Re-Call)	08/06/2025	16/06/2025
(PRE-25-021)	Design and Construction of Road Connections in Al Amerat (Lump Sum) (Re-Call)	08/06/2025	16/06/2025
(PRE-25-078)	Parking Pavement Works in Al Khoudk 7 Park & Hay Al Shurooq Park	20/06/2025	10/07/2025

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
- Clarification and Support:
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
 - For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@gstb.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

SALE OF USED VEHICLES

Jeep COMPASS



NISSAN SUNNY

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Offers are invited for the purchase of the above individual vehicles, with preference given to the highest bidder. RFQs available at the Khimji Ramdas Automotive Workshop, Ghala.

*Images are representative

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SPORTS

Tyre woes puncture Al Rawahi's victory charge at Jordan Rally

Omani driver finished second after pushing leader Nasser Al Attiyah to the limit

MUSCAT: Oman's top rally driver Abdullah Al Rawahi came heart-breakingly close to a potential victory at the 2025 Jordan Rally, only for punctures on the final day to derail his challenge and force him to settle for second place behind Qatari legend Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah.

Al Rawahi, partnered by Jordanian co-driver Ata Al Hmoud in a Škoda Fabia R5, had been within striking distance of the 19-time FIA Middle East Rally Champion after a blistering performance on the opening day.

But his hopes took a major hit with a costly puncture on Sunday morning's first stage, followed by another tyre issue later in the day.

"It was a long two days for us," said Al Rawahi after completing the rally.

"The first day was quite good, especially with the pace — we were very close to Nasser [Al Attiyah]. Unfortunately, today we had some punctures and lost time.

"Overall, we are very happy with our performance. It has been the closest we have ever been to him in battle."

Despite the setbacks, the Omani ace finished just under three minutes behind Al Attiyah, clocking a total time of 2hr 16min 42.5sec over the gruelling 12-stage rally held across the heat-soaked Dead Sea and Jordan Valley terrain.

The defining moment came during the opening 17.12km Panorama stage on Sunday, where Al Rawahi dropped over 30 seconds after suffering a front-right tyre puncture.

Al Attiyah capitalised immediately, extending his overnight lead and widening the gap over the next



two stages.

"The first stage this morning we got a puncture and lost over 30 seconds," Al Rawahi explained. "When you try to keep up and push, this can happen sometimes. We were able to continue, but the gap got bigger. It's not impossible, but it was close before."

Another tyre issue later in the afternoon confirmed Al Attiyah's path to victory, but Al-Rawahi

didn't let up.

He held his nerve through the final loop to secure second overall and his second Jordan National Championship event win of the weekend — a testament to his growing consistency and determination.

Al Rawahi acknowledged the challenges he faces against more experienced and better-equipped rivals like Al Attiyah.



"We don't really have enough seat time in the car," he admitted.

"After this rally I have three months off not really driving. My car is also an older generation, and there is an experience difference between me and Nasser. That's why it is good that he is in the championship — he helps us push and get closer to him. We wanted to win, but we are still happy."

Al Rawahi's performance ce-

ments his place as a top contender in the FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), where he continues to close the gap to the region's dominant figure.

The Oman Rally Team, backed by Al Manar Investments, the Oman Automobile Association, WMS, Zamakan, OQ, Strike, Size, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and National Finance, will now turn their attention to the next

round of the MERC, scheduled for September 5–7 in Lebanon.

2025 Jordan Rally – final standings (Top 10): 1 Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah (QAT)/Candido Carrera (ESP) – Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 – 2:13:47.7; 2 Abdullah Al Rawahi (OMA)/Ata Al Hmoud (JOR) – Škoda Fabia R5 – 2:16:42.5, 3 Abdulaziz Al Kuwari (QAT)/Lorcan Moore (IRL) – Citroën C3 Rally2 – 2:19:01.3; 4 Bassel Abu Hamdan (KSA)/Firas Elias (LBN) – Škoda Fabia R5 – 2:33:25.3; 5 Abdullah Al Zubair (OMA)/Taha Al-Zadjali (OMA) – Subaru Impreza N14 – 2:37:26.0; 6 Nasser Khalifa Al Attiyah (QAT)/Ziad Chehab (LBN) – Ford Fiesta Mk II Rally2 – 2:38:58.3; 7 Sheikh Bader Al Fayezi (JOR)/Vili Oslaj (SLO) – Škoda Fabia Rally2 – 2:40:34.9; 8 Koda Al Aamri (OMA)/Mohammed Al-Mazroui (OMA) – Subaru Impreza N14 – 2:41:53.0; 9 Shadi Shaban (JOR)/Samer Issa (JOR) – Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX – 2:42:10.2; 10 Rashid Al Muhannadi (QAT)/Gary McElhinney (IRL) – Peugeot 208 Rally4 – 2:46:12.6

FRENCH OPEN

Sinner marches into fourth round

PARIS: Jannik Sinner dropped only three games in a ruthless performance as he crushed Jiri Lehecka to reach the French Open fourth round on Saturday. The Italian top seed blew the Czech world No.34 away inside one hour and 35 minutes with a 6-0, 6-1, 6-2 victory.

The win extended Sinner's winning streak against players ranked outside the top 20 to 64 successive matches. "After today I don't think there's much I can improve but every opponent is different," three-time major champion Sinner said.

Sinner, bidding for a first French Open title, will play 17th seed Andrey Rublev for a place in the quarter-finals. Rublev advanced when France's Arthur Fils withdrew before their match with injury.

Elsewhere, third seed Alexander Zverev saw off unseeded Italian Flavio Cobolli in straight sets to reach the fourth round. Last year's finalist Zverev won 6-2, 7-6 (7-4), 6-1 as he continues his bid for a maiden Grand Slam title.

Zverev will face unseeded Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor next after he beat American Ethan Quinn 4-6, 6-1, 6-7 (2-7), 6-1, 6-4.

Also on Saturday, Britain's Jack Draper came up with an efficient win over Brazilian rising star Joao Fonseca in the third round. Fifth seed Draper beat 18-year-old opponent 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

Earlier on Friday, defending champion Carlos Alcaraz was forced to fight for his place in the fourth round with a testing victory over a dogged Damir Dzumhur.

The second seed had looked to be making light work of his opponent with a two-set lead, before a revival from the Bosnian pushed their encounter into a fourth set under the lights on Court Philippe Chatrier. Spaniard Alcaraz, seeking to becoming the first man since compatriot Rafael Nadal in 2020 to retain the Roland Garros title, eventually ground out a 6-1, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 success.

"I didn't enjoy it too much," said the 22-year-old. "I suffered quite a lot but I'm happy to have played



a good match with Damir. Alcaraz will face 13th seed Ben Shelton next after the American beat Italy's Matteo Gigante 6-3, 6-3, 6-4.

Danish 10th seed Holger Rune also reached the fourth round by beating France's Quentin Halys in five sets. Rune had to come from two-sets-to-one down in a 4-6, 6-2, 5-7, 7-5, 6-2 victory.

Rune will next face Italian eighth seed Lorenzo Musetti, who beat Argentine Mariano Navone.

Elsewhere, 12th seed Tommy Paul won his second five-set match in a row to set up a fourth-round tie with Australian 25th seed Alexei

Popyrin. The American, 28, ousted Russian 24th seed Karen Khachanov 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (9-7), 3-6 6-3, while Popyrin recorded a 6-4, 7-6 (13-11), 7-6 (7-5) win over Portugal's Nuno Borges.

American 15th seed Frances Tiafoe beat compatriot and 23rd seed Sebastian Korda 7-6 (8-6) 6-3 6-4 and will face unseeded German Daniel Altmaier next, who defeated Serbia's Hamad Medjedovic 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-2.

Andreeva thanks fan for 'lucky charm'

In the women's category, Mirra An-

dreeva thanked a fan for gifting her a "lucky charm" before her French Open third-round victory against Yulia Putintseva. The Russian world No.6 had a small colourful fabric patch with floral patterns on her bench during her 6-3, 6-1 win over Kazakh 32nd seed Putintseva.

"When I was walking on court a little girl put a drawing on my bench and I kept it. It's my lucky charm," the 18-year-old said. "Wherever that little girl is, I want to thank her because it is my lucky charm."

Andreeva will next face good friend Daria Kasatkina. Kasatkina, competing in her first Grand Slam since switching allegiance to Australia from Russia, beat Spanish 10th seed Paula Badosa 6-1, 7-5.

Third seed Jessica Pegula battled back to beat former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova 3-6, 6-4, 6-2 in their third-round encounter.

Pegula will face France's Lois Boisson, who is ranked 361st in the world, after her 6-3, 0-6, 7-5 win over compatriot Elsa Jacquemot.

On Friday, world No.1 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus reached the fourth round. The three-time major winner beat Serbia's Olga Danilovic 6-2, 6-3 to set up a clash with American Amanda Anisimova.

Defending champion Iga Swiatek also secured a spot in the last 16 with a 6-2, 7-5 victory over Romania's Jaqueline Cristian.

Swiatek will face Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina next after the 12th seed brushed aside Latvian 21st seed Jelena Ostapenko 6-2, 6-2.

Elsewhere, Italian fourth seed Jasmine Paolini eased past Ukraine's Yuliia Starodubtseva in a 6-4, 6-1 victory. Paolini, who reached the final at Roland Garros 12 months ago, will face another Ukrainian, Elena Svitolina, in the fourth round after she beat American Bernarda Pera in straight sets.

China's Zheng Qinwen, the eighth seed, beat 18-year-old Grand Slam debutant Victoria Mboko of Canada 6-3 6-4 and will face Russian Liudmila Samsonova for a place in the quarters. - Agencies

F1 SPANISH GRAND PRIX



Piastri edges Norris to pole in Barcelona

BARCELONA: McLaren's Oscar Piastri set a stunning pole position from team-mate Lando Norris at the Spanish Grand Prix at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya on Saturday.

The Australian beat Norris by 0.209 seconds, vaulting himself ahead of the Briton -who had been faster on the first runs in final qualifying but made an error on his last lap.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen was third fastest, 0.302secs slower than Piastri.

Mercedes driver George Russell set exactly the same lap time as the Dutchman but will start fourth because he set it a few seconds later.

Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton beat team-mate Charles Leclerc for

only the second time in a grand prix qualifying session this year to take fifth, ahead of Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli.

Leclerc, Alpine's Pierre Gasly, Racing Bulls' Isack Hadjar and Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso completed the top 10.

Piastri's advantage suggests that a rule change aimed at restricting the flexing of front wings for aerodynamic gain has had no effect on McLaren.

It was introduced by governing body the FIA after intensive lobbying by Red Bull, who - along with Ferrari - hoped it would peg back some of McLaren's performance.

Piastri is leading Norris by three points in the drivers' championship. - Agencies

IZDIHAR REAL ESTATE FUND
Izdihar Real Estate Fund managed by Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, has successfully completed the acquisition of the school premises of the latest school by GEMS, in partnership with the GEMS Group. > **B2**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



OMRAN GROUP RESULTS

Oman Tourism Development Company (Oman Group) announced robust financial and operational results for 2024, reaffirming its central role in advancing tourism development and sustainable economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman. > **B2**

MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERALS

Oman to generate 30% of power from renewables by 2030

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman is making significant strides in implementing green energy projects, aiming to generate around 30% of its total electricity production from renewable sources by 2030, in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, revealed that five to six new renewable energy projects utilising wind and solar power will begin this year, with a strong focus on wind energy due to Oman's favourable conditions for wind-powered electricity generation.

Speaking to Oman News Agency, he stated that these projects will be established in locations where wind energy measurements have been conducted, primarily in Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates. They are expected to be operational by the end of 2027, producing over 2,000 megawatts of electricity.



The Ministry of Energy and Minerals is collaborating with Nama Group and the Authority for Public Services Regulation to explore the best ways to store renewable energy, whether through conventional or innovative methods tailored to Oman's needs. A formal announcement regarding the first renewable energy storage project in the Sultanate is expected soon.

Eng. Al Aufi emphasised that these projects will strengthen Oman's transition to renewable energy and open new opportunities for industries reliant on clean energy.

Oman has already inaugurated the 'Manah 1' and 'Manah 2' renewable energy stations with a combined capacity of approximately 1,000 megawatts. Initial results indicate that each station has exceeded expectations, producing over 500 megawatts.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, along with the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology and Petroleum Development Oman, is working on establishing a hydrogen transport corridor. This project involves developing hydrogen production and refueling stations within concession areas to supply hydrogen as fuel for trucks operating in these regions.



FULL YEAR 2024

Total investment in Al Buraimi Industrial City hits OMR274mn

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Buraimi Industrial City, affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), successfully signed 16 investment contracts in 2024, with a total investment value of OMR7,970,000. These contracts involve establishing projects on areas exceeding 165,000 square metres across various sectors, including automotive oil manufacturing, paper and cardboard, food, water, and cosmetics.

Said bin Abdullah Al Balushi, Director General of Al Buraimi Industrial City, stated that the industrial city has recorded an outstanding performance during 2024 as the cumulative investment volume has now exceeded OMR274 million. "This is attributed to the constant efforts by Madayn to create a competitive and attractive business environment for investors, while emphasising on job creation, supporting small and medium enterprises, and promoting economic diversification and sustainable industrial growth in line with Oman Vision 2040."

Al Balushi pointed out that the dualisation of Al Buraimi-Mahdah Road, currently being implemented by the relevant authorities in coordination with Madayn, represents a key project of strategic significance, serving as a main artery linking the Wilayat of Mahdah with Al Buraimi Governorate. The road



will connect to both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Al Buraimi Industrial City, providing major solutions for organising entrances and exits to each phase, ensuring smooth access between them, and ultimately serving investors by saving time and effort.

He added that Al Buraimi Industrial City signed a cooperation agreement last week with Al Buraimi University College to enhance collaboration through knowledge exchange, events and activities, training of students and national cadres, and support for research and innovation projects.

It is worth noting that Al Buraimi Industrial City spans 14,414,294 square metres, of which 4,247,099 square metres area is already developed. Strategically divided into two geographically distinct phases, the industrial city enjoys a prime location along the Sultanate of Oman's border with the United Arab Emirates.

Credit granted by banks in Oman reaches OMR33.6bn

Data on its distribution across various sectors indicate that the non-financial corporate sector accounted for the largest share, representing 46.6 percent by the end of April 2025, followed by the individual sector at 44 percent



by the individual sector at 44 percent. The remaining share was distributed between the financial corporate sector at 5.6 percent and other sectors at 3.7 percent.

Total deposits in the Omani banking sector grew by 9.3 percent, reaching OMR32.8 billion by the end of April 2025. Within this total, private sector deposits in the banking system increased by 7.1 percent, reaching OMR21.5 billion by the end of April 2025.

When looking at the distribution of the total private sector deposit base across various sectors, the figures indicate that the individual sector holds the largest share, amounting to approximately 50.3 percent, followed by the non-financial corporate sector and the financial corporate sector with shares amounting to 30.4 percent and 17.0 percent, respectively. The remaining percentage (2.3 percent) was distributed across other sectors.

Domestic liquidity hits OMR25.1bn

Domestic liquidity in the Sultanate of Oman registered a remarkable growth by the end of January 2025, reaching OMR25.61 billion, a 7.2 percent increase compared to the same period in 2024, when it reached OMR23.375 billion.

Preliminary data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that total loans and financing provided by commercial banks and Islamic windows rose by 6.5 percent to OMR32.47 billion by the end of January 2025, compared to OMR30.48 billion by the end of January 2024. The average interest rate on total loans also rose by 1.1 percent to 5.608 percent by the end of the same period.

In the same context, private sector deposits in commercial banks and Islamic windows increased by 7.2 percent to OMR20.967 billion by the end of January 2025 compared to OMR19.559 billion by the end of January 2024. Total foreign assets at the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) also increased by 5.3 percent reaching OMR7.096 billion by the end of January 2025 compared to OMR6.741 billion during the same period in 2024.

As for the narrow money supply (M1), which consists of total cash outside the banking system in addition to current accounts and demand deposits in local currency, it witnessed a significant increase of 15.5 percent reaching OMR7.32 billion compared to OMR6.90 billion at the end of January 2024.

On the other hand, cash issued decreased by 8.3 percent to reach OMR1.44 billion by the end of January 2025 compared to OMR1.57 billion by the end of January of the previous year. The effective exchange rate of Omani riyal rose by 2.7 percent to reach 119.1 points, compared to 116 points at the end of January 2024. - **ONA**

MAY 2025

Market capitalisation of Muscat Stock Exchange tops OMR27bn

MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded gains of OMR806.1 million in May, with its market capitalisation rising to OMR27.927 billion by the end of trading session on Thursday. The market capitalisation benefited from rising stock prices amid several positive economic indicators, improved investor confidence, and a decline in trading pressures that prevailed in the first four months of this year.

The Muscat Stock Exchange's main index rose 244 points in May, closing at 4,561 points, marking its first monthly gain this year after incurring losses of more than 260 points in the previous four months. Sectoral indices registered a collective rise in May, with the industrial sector index rising 604 points, the financial sector index rising 300 points, the services sector index rising 87 points, and the Shariah index rising 42 points to close at 445 points, recording the highest rate of increase among sectoral indices during the past month, having risen by 10.4 percent.

The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSE) witnessed a 43.4 percent increase in trading value in May, reaching OMR149.4 million, compared to OMR 104.2 million in April. May's trading is the second highest this year, while February saw exceptional trading volume of OMR234.5 million, including private deals on Ahli Bank shares worth OMR162.7 million, as a result of Ahli United Bank selling its 35 percent stake in Ahli Bank to the Royal Court Affairs and a number of Omani investors.

In May, the Muscat Stock Exchange recorded a record number of transactions executed this year, reaching 32,736, compared to 23,246 in April and 17,843 in March.

OQ Basic Industries accounted for 17.5 percent of the total trading value, with transactions worth OMR26.3 million. OQ Exploration and Production came in second place with transactions worth OMR22.9 million. Bank Muscat came in third with OMR20 million, while Bank Sohar International came in fourth with transactions worth OMR17.5 million. OQ Gas Networks came in fifth with transactions worth OMR15.4 million, representing 10.3 percent of the total trading value. - **ONA**

MSX continues its upward trajectory in weekly trading

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market recorded its fifth consecutive day of positive performance this week, continuing its upward trajectory and further recovering recent losses. This sustained rally indicates strong underlying demand within the market, according to an industry watcher.

"This performance contrasts with broader regional trends, where markets largely continued to grapple with uncertainty, consistent with the previous week. Profit-taking was evident in some regional markets as external factors weighed on general sentiment," said Joseph Dahrieh Managing Principal at Tickmill. "However, the Omani stock market appeared more focused on positive internal developments, which have been bolstering investor confidence," he further added.



While potential risks associated with lower oil prices and global economic uncertainty remain, these factors have seemingly had a less pronounced impact on the Omani market lately, said Joseph Dahrieh.

Given recent positive developments and current momentum, the market appears well-positioned to potentially continue its upward trend in the near term.

"Reinforcing this positive sentiment are key national economic initiatives unveiled this week. The landmark UAE-Oman agreement to develop the Al Rawdah Special Economic Zone in Al Buraimi signals a substantial long-term boost," said Joseph Dahrieh. "This joint venture is anticipated to attract considerable investment, stimulate cross-border trade and diverse economic sectors, thereby offering a sustained positive outlook for both the wider economy and the stock market," he added further.

The Industrial sector led the gains, continuing its strong performance for a second consecutive week with a 5.89% increase. Within this sector, Al Anwar Ceramic was higher by 4.21% and Al Maha Ceramics by 13.75%, both maintaining their upward momentum. Oman Cables Industry surged by 16.50%. OQ Base Industries contributed

to the positive trend with a gain of 1.75% and was the most traded stock in terms of both value and volume.

The Services sector also achieved a solid advance, rising by 2.29%. Key contributors included OQ Gas Networks, which gained 2.78%, and OQ Exploration and Production, which rose by 3.11%. In telecommunications, Oman Telecom edged higher by 0.60%, while Ooredoo recorded a strong performance, climbing 12.30%. National Gas also saw a significant increase of 8.22%.

The Financial sector posted a more modest gain of 0.42%. Sohar International Bank rose by 0.71%, and Al Anwar Investment climbed by 2.41%. Muscat Finance also performed well, increasing by 3.92%, while Al Sharqiyah Investment Holding registered a gain of 1.25%.

MARKET

OMAN STOCKS

Omran Group posts strong financials with OMR25.2mn net profit in 2024

Omran Group's Board of Directors reviewed its accomplishments and discussed ongoing financial and operational developments at a recent meeting



MUSCAT: Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) announced robust financial and operational results for 2024, reaffirming its central role in advancing tourism development and sustainable economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman.

The group achieved a net profit of OMR25.2 million with revenues surpassing OMR 58.3 million, reflecting its operational efficiency and institutional excellence.

During its recent meeting, Omran Group's Board of Directors reviewed these accomplishments and discussed ongoing financial and operational developments. The board emphasised the group's continued commitment to supporting economic diversification efforts and enhancing quality tourism investments across Oman.

The financial results demonstrate Omran Group's success in attracting strategic investments, including foreign direct investment exceeding OMR156 million in 2024. This achievement aligns with Oman Vision 2040's objectives to increase foreign investment inflows and expand various economic sectors' contributions to GDP.

In the hospitality sector, OM-

RAN Group strengthened its operational performance by welcoming 820,365 guests across its hotel properties in 2024, representing 6% growth compared to the previous year. The Group achieved an average occupancy rate of 45%, marking a 2.6% year-on-year increase. The year also saw the official opening of JW Marriott Hotel Muscat, which has become a distinguished addition to Oman's

luxury hospitality landscape.

As part of its strategy to position Oman as a premier global tourism destination and attract world-class hospitality brands, Omran Group announced several landmark projects. These include a partnership to develop the Middle East's first Club Med resort and a strategic collaboration with Santani Wellness Resorts to enhance medical tourism in Al Dakhiliyah.

Demonstrating its commitment to sustainability and local value creation, Omran Group achieved a 40% local value-added index. The Group allocated over OMR19 million to support small and medium enterprises, which accounted for 34.7% of total expenditure. Omran Group's nationalization efforts resulted in 370 new job opportunities for Omani talent, with Omani-ization rates reaching 94% in the parent company and 53% across subsidiaries.

The Group further strengthened its corporate governance practices by launching its Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Framework in 2024. This initiative institutionalizes sustainability principles and enhances transparency while adhering to global best practices across all operations and projects.

These positive results underscore Omran Group's continued leadership as the primary driver of tourism sector development in Oman, achieved through close collaboration with relevant authorities including the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. -**ONA**

BY 75BPS IN 2025

US dollar weakness opens door for RBI to further cut repo rates



NEW DELHI: The weakness in the US dollar has created real room for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to lower interest rates further by up to 75 basis points (bps) by the end of calendar year 2025, according to a report by global financial services firm Jefferies.

The report highlighted that similar trends are visible in other emerging markets as well. Alongside India, Bank Indonesia also has room to ease rates further, thanks to the softening of the US dollar.

It stated, "US dollar weakness has created real room to cut rates for both Bank Indonesia and the Reserve Bank of India".

For India, the disinflationary trend has become increasingly visible. Consumer price inflation averaged 4.6 per cent in the last financial year and dropped to just 3.2 per cent in April this year, the lowest since July.

This fall in inflation has increased expectations of further monetary easing by the

central bank.

Jefferies says that since Sanjay Malhotra took charge as the new RBI Governor in December, replacing Shaktikanta Das, the central bank has already cut the repo rate by 50 basis points.

Malhotra's approach is seen as more dovish, with the market interpreting the inflation trend as positive for equities due to the greater potential for rate cuts under his leadership.

It said "The same disinflation-

ary trend is increasingly evident in India, though for now it is interpreted as bullish for equities in terms of the potential for RBI rate cuts under the more dovish RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra".

In its latest Annual Report, RBI projected average inflation of around 4 per cent for the ongoing financial year, which ends in March 2026 (FY26).

However, Jefferies' India office believes there is room for an additional 75 basis points of rate cuts

by the end of 2025, assuming the current economic and currency conditions persist.

This outlook, supported by easing inflation and global currency trends, could boost domestic growth and improve the investment climate in the country.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the April Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting had announced a 25-basis-point (bps) cut in the repo rate, reducing it from 6.25 per cent to 6 per cent. -**ANI**

MANAGED BY BANK MUSCAT

Izdihar Real Estate Fund acquires a major school property in Dubai



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Izdihar Real Estate Fund managed by Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, has successfully completed the acquisition of the school premises of the latest school by GEMS, in partnership with the GEMS Group. The acquired property is called GEMS School of Research and Innovation, a premier British Curriculum School in Dubai, UAE.

Scheduled to open in September 2025, the state-of-the-art property is in advanced stages of being developed at a cost of USD 100 million approximately. Strategically located in the immediate vicinity of premium residential communities, Tilal Al Ghaf, Victory Heights, and Jumeirah Golf Estates, the school has already seen strong early enrolments, demonstrating the continued demand for quality education in Dubai.

The new School of Research and Innovation will offer British curriculum with focus on research-based learning, STEAM education, and holistic student development in line with GEMS' visionary of academic excellence.

Speaking on the successful transaction, Khalifa Abdullah Al

Hatmi, Deputy General Manager - Investment Banking and Capital Markets at Bank Muscat, said: "We take pride in partnering with GEMS Education, a recognized leader in private education sector through this investment in GEMS School of Research and Innovation, Dubai. This investment aligns with Izdihar Fund's long-term strategy of supporting essential community infrastructure and generating sustainable value for our investors. Education remains a resilient and essential sector, and we are pleased to contribute to a project that will serve generations of students."

From his side, Dino Varkey, Group Chief Executive Officer, GEMS Education, said: "We are delighted to welcome Bank Muscat's Izdihar Real Estate Fund as a strategic partner in this landmark project. Their investment underlines the strength of our education platform, our continued focus on high-quality infrastructure, and confidence in Dubai as a leading global education hub."

Izdihar Fund, regulated by the Financial Services Authority and incorporated in 2015, is Oman's first and amongst the largest Real Estate Investment Trust ("REIT") funds in the country with assets under management

in excess of US \$ 230 million. The shareholders of the Fund comprise of large sophisticated investors such as sovereign and pension funds, corporate entities and family offices. Since its inception, the Fund has distributed an average dividend of more than 7 per cent per annum.

The investment objective of Izdihar Fund is centred around delivering sustainable and attractive long term returns to investors through investment in income generating, well tenanted, marquee assets in Oman and the GCC. The Fund has a well thought out strategy to structure investments that generate steady income from rentals and an upside from capital gains upon exit. In line with the stated objective, the Fund proactively focuses on investor value creation across the deal life cycle, from sourcing quality transactions, diligent evaluation, prudent investing and portfolio monitoring and exiting these investments in a timely manner.

Izdihar Fund is managed by a team of highly experienced professionals at Bank Muscat. Bank Muscat and Izdihar Real Estate Fund were assisted by Baker McKenzie (legal advisor) and Knight Frank (technical advisor) on this landmark transaction.

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GSM +968 78647611/95171197
Email: shaikmansoor782@gmail.com

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HR manager 15 yrs experience in the Gulf looking for a suitable position. NOC available, valid D/L. Qualification: MBA in HR & Certifications. Available to join immediately.
Contact: 95323264
Email: deep.vg9@gmail.com

JOB VACANCY

We are Hiring !

Job Description
Market Research & Business Development Assistant

Company : Zenith Gulf LLC
Location : Remote/ Nizwa

Job Summary
We are seeking a young enthusiastic Omani national sales and marketing representative to support our business growth in Oman and the Gulf region. The ideal candidate will help expand our market presence in the chemical industry, particularly in the fields of paint, resin, construction materials, and polymer additives.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain relationships with local clients, distributors, and industrial buyers.
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- Promote and sell company products in accordance with corporate strategy.
- Participate in industry events, exhibitions, and trade meetings.
- Coordinate with internal supply and logistics teams to ensure timely delivery and customer satisfaction.
- Provide customer feedback and local market insights to management.
- Assist with proposal preparation, pricing, and contract negotiation.

Requirements

- Fluent in Arabic and English.
- Proven experience in B2B sales or marketing, preferably in chemicals, construction, or industrial sectors.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.
- Oman-based (preference given to Muscat/Nizwa residents or those with local network).
- Driving license and willingness to travel locally.
- Familiarity with government procurement processes is an advantage.

Employment Type : Full-time (initial 3-month probationary period)
Compensation : Competitive base salary + sales commission + travel allowance

Interested candidates please
Send C.V to (a.sharifi@zenithgulf.om)

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Email: murshid9493@hotmail.com

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Mobile: 95945230
Mail id: mearung@gmail.com

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IVMS / DFMS Technical Support	- Diploma/Bachelor's in IT or relevant field - Handles backend processes and technical validations - Strong organizational and multitasking abilities - Good command of MS Office and job management tools
Project Coordinator	- Diploma/Bachelor's in Projects / IT or relevant field - Experience in fleet operations and IVMS - ERP working experience mandatory - Coordinating IVMS and telematics solutions across sites
Executive – Data Management & Certification	- Diploma/Bachelor's in Software / IT or relevant field - Experience with ERP systems and data work flows - Detail-oriented - Proficient in report generation and data platforms

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Trump bids adieu to Musk, assures DOGE will remain functional



By [Redacted]

The President also listed the contracts that were terminated after DOGE recommendations to help boost the economy

WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump on Friday

praised Elon Musk for doing a “fantastic job” as head of the DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) and assured that the department, founded by Musk to cut unnecessary funding and boost the US economy, will remain functional.

Addressing the press at the Oval Office with Elon Musk on his last day, Trump said, “Elon has worked tirelessly helping lead the most sweeping and consequential government reforms in generations.”

Trump also assured that many of the DOGE employees are staying behind and suggested that Musk will remain integral in the project.

“Many of the DOGE people are staying behind, too, so they’re not leaving, Elon is really not leaving.

He’s gonna be back and forth. I want to thank Elon for his time as a special government employee for coming and helping us.”

The President also listed the contracts that were terminated after DOGE recommendations to help boost the economy.

“We have terminated many many contracts and many contracts are being looked at and it may be six months or maybe a year or something in some cases. We are going through procedures, we are going through courts and we’ll remember you (Elon Musk). DOGE cancelled USD 101 million for DEI contracts at the Department of Education. USD 59 million for illegal alien hotel rooms in New York City. USD 45 million for diversity, equity and inclusion scholarships in

Trump again claims credit for India-Pakistan ceasefire

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump once again claimed credit for brokering the cessation of hostilities between India and Pakistan, asserting that he used trade as a negotiation tactic.

Speaking at the Oval Office during an event marking Elon Musk’s departure from his advisory role, Trump said, “We stopped India and Pakistan from fighting. I believe that could have turned out into a nuclear disaster, and I want to thank the leaders

of India and Pakistan, and I want to thank my people. Also, we talk trade, and we say we can’t trade with people who are shooting at each other and potentially using nuclear weapons. They’re great leaders in those countries, and they understood and they agreed.”

Trump’s remarks come amid continued debate over the role of international influence in recent de-escalation efforts between the South Asian nations. -ANI

spending. The DOGE mission will only strengthen over time as it becomes a way of life throughout the government.”

We don’t want students causing trouble”: Trump

President Donald Trump remains adamant on restricting Harvard University’s ability to enroll foreign students, stating that he doesn’t want “students who are causing trouble” in the country.

Trump also highlighted the administration’s tussle with Harvard University over the funding of the institution.

“We want students, I want foreign students here... Our country has given Harvard \$5 billion plus over a short period of time. Nobody knew that; we found that out. I wouldn’t say that was a DOGE thing,” Trump said.

“We ended up in litigation for other reasons because they’re very anti-semitic. And in finding out and in going through the books, we found out that the country gave them \$5 billion plus, much more than that, actually, and we’re having it out with them, and let’s see what happens. It’s a very sad case. It’s a case we win. We can’t lose that case because we have the right to make grants. We’re not going to make any grants like that, but I don’t think Harvard has been acting very nicely,” he added.

The dispute escalated after the Trump administration moved to block Harvard University from enrolling international students, leading to a legal battle.

Earlier, Trump advocated that the institution should cap the number of foreign students it admits at 15 per cent. -ANI

WIDESPREAD FLOODS

Death toll in Nigeria floods crosses 150, over 3,000 hit



MOKWA: The death toll from widespread floods in central Nigeria rose to more than 150 people on Saturday, local emergency services reported.

After torrential rains earlier in the week, flood waters have swept away more than 50 homes in the market town of Mokwa in the central Niger state. More than 3,000 people have been displaced.

How did President Tinubu respond to the flooding?

“I extend my heartfelt condolences to the affected families and the good people of Niger State at this difficult time,” Nigerian President Bola Tinubu said in a statement on X.

“Search-and-rescue operations are ongoing, and all relevant federal agencies have been mobilised to support the state government’s efforts,” he added.

“Relief materials and temporary

shelter assistance are being deployed without delay.”

Ibrahim Audu Hussein, spokesperson for the Niger State emergency agency told AFP on Friday that he “expected the toll to rise considerably because there are different rescuers at different locations.”

Why is flooding so dangerous in Nigeria?

Mokwa is a key local hub for traders from the south of the country and farmers from the north. It is located around 220 kilometres (140 miles) west of the capital Abuja.

The flooding was triggered by several hours of heavy rain, with the collapse of a nearby dam exacerbating the situation.

Nigeria’s Meteorological Agency warned of possible flash floods in 15 of Nigeria’s 36 states, includ-

ing Niger State, between Wednesday and Friday.

Nigeria’s rainy season has only just started and normally lasts around six months.

The annual occurrence regularly kills hundreds of people. A lack of drainage, the construction of homes on waterways and the dumping of waste in drains and water channels all make the flooding worse.

Flood awareness and alleviation in Nigeria

Nigeria suffered one of its worst disasters in decades in 2024, with flooding killing more than 1,200 people and displacing another 1.2 million.

The flooding, which impacted 31 of the country’s 36 states, also destroyed more than 1.4 million hectares (3.5 million acres) of farmland. -DW

QUAD COOPERATION

Expanding our security ties with India, says US Defence Secretary

SINGAPORE: The United States on Saturday announced the expansion of its security partnerships with India through robust military exercises while emphasising the amplification of its co-operation within the QUAD and other multilateral frameworks.

During his address at the Shangri-La Dialogue here, US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth underscored the US’s commitment to strengthening ties with Indo-Pacific allies, addressing threats from China, and promoting a pragmatic foreign policy grounded in mutual self-interest amidst a shifting global security landscape.

“We are expanding our security partnerships with India through robust military exercises like Tiger Triumph and amplifying cooperation within the QUAD and other multilateral friendly groups,” the US Secretary of Defence stated.

“Within the QUAD, we are also leading an initiative called the Indo-Pacific Logistic Network, which enables QUAD partners to leverage their logistics capabilities in the Indo-Pacific,” he added, highlighting the QUAD’s role in the region.

The QUAD is a diplomatic partnership among India, Australia, Japan, and the United States, committed to fostering an open, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient.

Hegseth emphasised a broader commitment to regional partnerships, noting the need to find



new ways to work with not just treaty allies but also key defence partners in ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific.

“We will continue to wrap our arms around our friends and find new ways to work together, not only with our treaty allies here but also with our key defence partners in ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific,” he stated.

He further pointed to the US-India defence relationship as a cornerstone, adding, “Look no further than our growing defence relationship with India, where we pass new milestones by the day. From the shared venture of our defence industries to the increased operational coordination and interoperability within our military.”

The Defence Secretary also

outlined the Trump administration’s new foreign policy approach, which he says was grounded in “common sense” and “national interest.”

“President Trump’s approach is grounded in common sense and national interest, built on a willingness to work with others while respecting mutual self-interests... The United States is not interested in the moralistic, preachy approach of the foreign policy of the past. We are not here to pressure other countries to embrace or adopt policies or ideologies. We are not here to preach to you about climate change or cultural issues. We are not here to impose our will on you. We are all sovereign nations,” the Defence Secretary stated.-ANI

WESTERN UNITED STATES

250 million bees escape after truck overturns in US

WASHINGTON: A commercial truck carrying an estimated 70,000 pounds (31,751 kilograms) of honeybee hives overturned in western United States, releasing millions of bees, authorities said on Friday.

The accident happened in northwestern Washington state, close to the Canadian border near Lynden, the Whatcom County Sheriff’s Office said in social media posts.

About 250 million bees are estimated to have escaped from the truck.

“250 million bees are now loose,”

wrote Whatcom County Sheriff on its social media page. “Avoid the area due to the potential of bee escaping and swarming.”

Roads in the region have been closed as bee experts help with the clean-up.

“Thank you to the wonderful community of beekeepers: over two dozen showed up to help ensure the rescue of millions of pollinating honey bees would be as successful as possible,” according to the sheriff’s office.

The plan is to allow the bees to return to their hives and find their queen bee in the next day or two, it

added.

The goal is to save as many of the bees as possible.

Honeybees play a key role in pollination and food production.

They pollinate over 100 crops, including nuts, vegetables, berries, citrus and melons.

Bees and other pollinators have been facing numerous threats and declining for years.

Experts blame insecticides, parasites, disease, climate change and lack of a diverse food supply for their decline, which could have major implications for agriculture and food security. -DW



SPORTS

Rohit, MI ride their luck into Qualifier 2

A half-century by Rohit Sharma guided Mumbai Indians to a 20-run win over Gujarat Titans to set up a meeting with Punjab Kings, winner of Qualifier 2 will meet Royal Challengers Bengaluru for title

MULLANPUR: Rohit Sharma has now scored four fifties in IPL 2025 – all in winning causes. The latest, a match-defining 81 off 50 balls in the Eliminator on Friday, came with a generous slice of luck. But Rohit made the most of it, guiding Mumbai Indians (MI) to a 20-run win and a spot in Qualifier 2, where they will face Punjab Kings (PBKS). “I definitely would have liked to get more [fifties],” Rohit said after being named Player of the Match. “But today was a good day for us as a team. I do understand the importance of playing this Eliminator and going through to the next step. Again, a complete team performance, which we are really, really proud of.” Rohit’s innings wasn’t with-



out drama. He was dropped twice within the first three overs – chances that proved costly. Capitalising on the reprieves, he went on to dominate the innings, hammering four sixes and becoming only the second batter after Chris

Gayle to reach 300 sixes in IPL history. “To be honest, I’ve played all those shots before and unfortunately, I kept finding the fielders,” Rohit said. “Somewhere down the line, you’ve got to be lucky, and to-

day was that day for me. I got lucky. Those catches were dropped. But even after that, you still have to play well to get those runs. That was my focus – to keep the momentum going, maintain the tempo. It was brilliant from our entire batting unit to get that score, and the bowling effort complemented it well.” Rohit also had words of praise for Jonny Bairstow, who blazed 47 off 22 balls in his MI debut. Coming in for Ryan Rickelton, Bairstow formed a blazing 84-run opening stand with Rohit and launched a brutal assault on Purple Cap holder Prasidh Krishna, smashing 35 off just 11 balls against the pacer. “I’ve watched him over the years from the other side,” Rohit said of Bairstow. “But it was nice to be on the same side and have a crack at it. We know the quality he brings – a lot of experience in this format, and we know what he can do up front with the bat. That’s exactly what he did today. It never looked like he was playing his first game for the franchise. He settled in quickly, took his chances, and it came off. That’s the kind of start we always look for, and we capitalised on it.” With momentum firmly on their side, MI will now turn their focus to PBKS in Qualifier 2 in Ahmedabad on Sunday, hoping Rohit’s luck – and form – continues to hold. **Brief scores:** Mumbai Indians 228 for 5 (Rohit 81, Bairstow 47, Suryakumar 33, Sai Kishore 2-42, Prasidh 2-53) beat Gujarat Titans 208 for 6 (Sai Sudharsan 80, Washington 48, Boulton 2-56) by 20 runs. - Agencies

Plenty to improve, says Sai Sudharsan

MULLANPUR: Gujarat Titans (GT) opener Sai Sudharsan capped off a stellar IPL 2025 season as the tournament’s leading run-scorer, but the 23-year-old believes there’s still significant work to be done on his T20 game. Speaking after GT’s narrow defeat in the Eliminator against MI, Sudharsan admitted that while his performances were consistent, the season felt incomplete without a title finish. “I mean, playing for the country is obviously a dream for everybody, so I would love to do that,” he said when asked about his prospects for next year’s T20 World Cup. “But I’m not thinking on those lines right now. If you look at the season, I have a lot of things to improve as a T20 batter. There are so many facets of the game I need to work on before I play T20s again. I’m focusing on that.” Despite being a key figure in GT’s campaign – scoring over 600 runs and forming a formidable opening partnership with captain Shubman Gill – Sudharsan was left with mixed emotions. “It’s good to see that I had a good season or was consistent enough for my team,” he said. “But when the job is not finished, you don’t get that ultimate satisfaction. There’s definitely a lot of disappointment in the environment, especially considering how well we played in the first 12 or 13 games. Even in hindsight,



we were a really solid unit. So, ending the tournament like this doesn’t give that complete satisfaction. But appreciating the performances and learning from them is the way forward.” While the IPL campaign has ended, Sudharsan’s season is far from over. He is part of the India A squad touring England, and is also in contention for the senior team’s five-Test series starting in July. GT’s early exit means both Sudharsan and Gill could now join the India A squad in time for the second four-day game in Northampton on June 6. Having previously represented Surrey in county cricket, Sudharsan feels prepared for red-ball challenges. “I think I played seven games [for Surrey] and it was a great experience,” he said. “It improved my batting in multiple ways – technically and mentally. It reminded me that the basics are everything in batting. I’ll focus on what I learnt there and create that awareness going into the series.”

GADDAFI STADIUM

Pakistan secure T20I series with dominant win over Bangladesh

LAHORE: Pakistan clinched the three-match T20I series with a game to spare after a commanding 57-run victory over Bangladesh in the second T20I at the Gaddafi Stadium on Friday night. Chasing a daunting target of 202, Bangladesh were bowled out for 144 in 19 overs despite a valiant 50 from tailender Tanzim Hasan Sakib. The left-handed batter struck five sixes and a four in his 31-ball knock, but his effort came too late to alter the course of the game. Pakistan’s spinners were instrumental in dismantling the Bangladesh batting order. Abrar Ahmed led the way with figures of 3 for 19, while Shadab Khan (1-13), Saim Ayub (1-14), and Khushdil Shah (1-25) shared four wickets between them. The spin quartet combined for 6 wickets for 71 runs in 11 overs. Fast bowlers Faheem Ashraf, Haris Rauf, and Hasan Ali chipped in with one wicket each. Bangladesh had a bright start through opener Tanzim Hasan, who hit five fours and a six in a 19-ball 33. He featured in a 44-run stand for the first wicket before Haris Rauf removed him in the fourth over. Abrar struck twice in two balls in the seventh over, triggering a collapse that saw Bangladesh slip to 65 for 5. At the halfway stage, the visitors



were struggling at 78 for 7. Mehidy Hasan Miraz (23 off 17 balls, 2 fours) added 44 off 25 deliveries with Tanzim in a spirited eighth-wicket stand. However, with No.11 Shoriful Islam unable to bat due to injury, the innings folded with an over to spare when Saim Ayub dismissed Tanzim at the end of the 19th over. Earlier, Pakistan posted 201 for 6 – their second consecutive 200-plus total and the fourth time they’ve crossed the mark in their last eight T20Is – on the back of half-centuries from Sahibzada Farhan and Hasan Nawaz. After opting to bat first, Pakistan lost Saim Ayub early, but Sahibzada and Mohammad Haris stitched together a 103-run partnership for the second wicket. Their stand lasted nine overs



and included seven sixes and seven fours, propelling Pakistan to 67 in the Powerplay and 107 at the 10-over mark. Haris scored a brisk 41 off 25

balls with four fours and two sixes before falling in the 11th over. Sahibzada continued to accelerate and brought up his maiden T20I half-century off 29 balls. He eventually departed for a career-best 74 off 41 deliveries, which included six boundaries and five sixes. Captain Salman Ali Agha (19 off 12, 3x4s) then combined with Hasan Nawaz to add 45 off 24 balls for the fourth wicket. Their partnership helped Pakistan score 26 runs in the 13th and 14th overs before Salman was trapped lbw by Hasan Mahmud in the 16th over with the score at 166 for 4. Pakistan added 40 runs in the final five overs, thanks largely to Hasan Nawaz’s unbeaten 51 off 26 balls, featuring two fours and three sixes – his maiden T20I half-century. Tanzim Hasan Sakib (2-36) and Hasan Mahmud (2-47) were the pick of the Bangladesh bowlers. With this win, Pakistan take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. The final T20I will be played on Sunday. **Brief scores:** Pakistan 201-6 (Sahibzada Farhan 74, Hasan Nawaz 51; Mohammad Haris 41; Tanzim Hasan Sakib 2-36, Hasan Mahmud 2-47) beat Bangladesh 144 all out in 19 overs (Tanzim Hasan Sakib 50, Tanzid Hasan 33, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 23; Abrar Ahmed 3-19, Shadab Khan 1-13). - Agencies

SERIE A



AC Milan reappoint Allegri as manager

MILAN: AC Milan have on Friday reappointed Massimiliano Allegri as their head coach. The 57-year-old Italian previously managed the Serie A club from June 2010 to January 2014. Allegri succeeds Sergio Conceicao, who was sacked on Thursday after only six months in charge of the Rossoneri. “The club extends a warm welcome and best wishes to Massimiliano and his staff,” a Milan statement read. Milan finished 2024-25 in a disappointing eighth position and lost to Bologna in the final of the Coppa Italia, which means they will not play in Europe next season. The last of their 19 Serie A titles came in 2021-22 under

Stefano Pioli. Allegri won the Scudetto in his first season of charge of AC Milan in 2010-11 - the club’s first since 2004 - before he was sacked. He then enjoyed a trophy-laden spell in charge of Juventus between 2014 and 2019, where he won the Serie A title in five consecutive seasons. During that time Juve were also twice beaten in the final of the Champions League before he left by mutual consent. After two years out of management, Allegri returned for a less successful stint with the Turin club between 2021 and 2024. Allegri also previously managed Aglianese, SPAL, Grosseto, Sassuolo and Cagliari. - Agencies

ALGERIAN OLYMPIC CHAMPION

Khelif told to undergo gender test before return to World Boxing ring

LONDON: Olympic welterweight champion Imane Khelif has been told she must undergo a gender test before being allowed to compete in World Boxing-sanctioned events, as the sport’s new governing body enforces a fresh eligibility policy. The 26-year-old Algerian boxer, who won gold in Paris last year, had been at the centre of a gender eligibility row after being disqualified from the 2023 World Championships by the now-discredited International Boxing Association (IBA). At the time, the IBA claimed Khelif did not meet the eligibil-

ity requirements for female athletes – a claim the International Olympic Committee (IOC) later dismissed. The IOC allowed Khelif to compete at the Paris Olympics based on the gender listed in her passport, and clarified that her case was not related to transgender participation, countering speculation linking her to differences of sexual development (DSD). Despite competing exclusively in the women’s division and identifying as female, Khelif must now comply with World Boxing’s newly announced rule requiring all athletes over the age of 18 to undergo a



PCR-based genetic test to confirm their eligibility for male or female categories.

Khelif was due to make her return at the Eindhoven Box Cup in early June. However, World Box-

ing has stated she cannot compete unless she completes the gender verification process. In a letter sent to Khelif and the Algerian Boxing Federation, World Boxing said the new rules were developed to “safeguard athletes in combat sports,” citing the physical risks involved in Olympic-style boxing. The Algerian federation joined World Boxing in September. “World Boxing respects the dignity of all individuals,” the organisation said in a statement. “But to ensure safety and fairness, strict male and female competition categories must be upheld.”

Khelif’s situation echoes the controversy she and Taiwanese boxer Lin Yu-ting faced last year, when both were excluded from the World Championships but went on to claim Olympic gold in Paris – turning their victories into symbols of resilience and sparking worldwide debate. Khelif has called the allegations against her “baseless and offensive.” The case now stands to shape not just her career but the global conversation around gender in combat sports – at a time when boxing’s Olympic future is being redefined under new leadership. - Agencies

Graduation ceremony at Muscat International School by Amity marks a milestone for Class of 2025

The event was graced by the presence of His Highness Sayyid Fatik bin Fahr Al Said, alongside distinguished guests from the Ministry of Education, as well as proud parents, staff, and teachers

MUSCAT: Under the esteemed patronage of His Excellency Mr. Salim bin Mohammed Al Mahruqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Muscat International School by Amity proudly celebrated the graduation of its Year 12 students. The ceremony, held in the school's auditorium, was a joyful and memorable occasion that marked a significant milestone in the lives of the graduating class. The event was graced by the presence of His Highness Sayyid Fatik bin Fahr Al Said, alongside distinguished guests from the Ministry of Education, as well as proud parents, staff, and teachers. The ceremony began with an inspiring address by the school's Principal, Ms. Barbara, who expressed immense pride in the graduates and their achievements. She highlighted the ceremony as a celebration of the students' dedication, growth, and readiness to embrace the future with confidence and purpose. Highlights of the evening included moving speeches by the Head Girl and Head Boy, a series of captivating piano performances by the school's talented musicians, and the presentation of a special Loyalty Award to 13 students who have been with the school since



international School by Amity is part of the Amity Education Group, a not-for-profit Education Foundation with campuses across the world. The school delivers high-quality international education based on the British curriculum, from Foundation Stage through to Sixth Form. With purpose-built, state-of-the-art facilities, Muscat International School by Amity fosters academic excellence, creativity, and holistic development. At MIS by Amity, students are empowered to become confident global citizens - ready to shape the future.

the start of their educational journey, recognising their long-standing commitment and connection to the school community. Five Awards of Excellence were also presented, honouring students for their accomplishments across academic and personal development domains:

- Academic Excellence Award
- International Citizenship Award
- Citizenship Award
- Foundation Award
- Sporting Award

These accolades reflected the

students' exceptional performance and contributions to both school life and the wider community. As the ceremony drew to a close, the school's leadership team extended heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the graduates, expressing confidence that Muscat International School by Amity has equipped them with the knowledge, skills, and values to thrive in their next chapter.

About Muscat International School by Amity
Located in Al-Qurum, Muscat In-



ESSENCE OF OMAN

Annual Oman Perfume Show inaugurated at Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre

MUSCAT: The Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) officially opened the annual Oman Perfume Show on May 29, under the patronage of H.E Halima bint Rashid al-Zari Chairperson, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, and in the presence of Eng. Said Al Shanfari, CEO of OCEC. This year's edition is a celebration of the very essence of Oman: its ingredients, its craftsmanship, and the scents that define its identity. Bringing together over 100 exhibitors, the five-day show is expected to welcome more than 30,000 visitors, matching last year's attendance. With the GCC fragrance and perfume market valued at over \$3 billion in 2024 (Mordor Intelligence), the sector continues to grow, spanning from niche artisanal labels to established international names. The Oman Perfume Show responds to this growing demand, offering a platform for discovery and connection. Oman's natural richness, from frankincense to Damask rose, has shaped the region's fragrance heritage. These scents reflect a deep connection to tradition and craftsmanship. The Oman Perfume Show highlights this journey, showcasing the country's biodiversity and creative spirit as raw ingredients transform into luxurious perfumes. This year's line-up features renowned names such as Majid Oud, Junaid, Shaikh Saeed, Ahmed Al Maghrabi, Abdulsamad Al Qurashi, Safar, and Lootah. New to the event are Thailand's Immortal Oud, and GGC brands Asateer Oud and Dkhon Emirates marking



welcome over 100 exhibitors to our 2025 edition, with many regional and local brands showcasing some of their latest collections in exclusivity to our audience." A variety of activities will take place alongside the event, including live music performances and interviews with visitors, perfumers, and other participants. In addition, visitors will be able to enjoy seven local food and beverage outlets such as Historia Roastery & Cafe, Arte Roastery Cafe and Maani Cafe. The event also features a gift-wrapping service and a calligraphy corner, where personalised perfume bottles can be inscribed with names - ideal for gifting. The Oman Perfume Show will be open daily from 29th May until 2nd June from 12 PM until 10 PM daily and from 4 PM until 10 PM exclusively on Friday, in Exhibition Hall 1. For more information, visit www.omanperfumeshow.om or follow @omanperfumeshow on Instagram.

their first appearance in Oman. Timed ahead of Eid Al Adha, the show offers visitors the opportunity to explore and purchase a wide range of perfumes, incense, and

frankincense products, making it the perfect pre-Eid destination. Commenting on the event, Eng. Said Al Shanfari, CEO of OCEC, said: "Oman's land speaks through

scent with famous natural ingredients like frankincense or our Damask rose becoming legendary perfumes. These natural treasures have always told a wider story

of place and identity. This year's Oman Perfume Show captures this journey from land to luxury, a celebration of our heritage, creativity, and craft. We are proud to

ROUND-UP

EVENT HELD IN DUBAI

OHI Leo Burnett clinches big wins at Transform Awards MEA 2025

MUSCAT: Oman’s leading communications agency, OHI Leo Burnett, once again raised the bar in brand excellence across the region, winning three major accolades at the Transform Awards MEA 2025 in Dubai.

This year’s edition, held at the Mandarin Oriental Jumeirah, recognised outstanding work in brand development and strategic design. OHI Leo Burnett proudly represented the Sultanate as the only shortlisted agency from Oman – continuing an unmatched record of 12 consecutive years of recognition at the Middle East and Africa’s most prestigious brand transformation awards.

The agency secured:

- Gold for its bold rebranding of OQ Exploration & Production

(OQEP)

- Silver for the branding of the Oman Institute for Energy (OIE)
- Bronze for a dynamic rebrand of Douglas OHI

100% Omani-owned entity, OHI Leo Burnett is led by a homegrown team of professionals across client servicing, creative, and digital communications. Their work is supported by a multicultural team that blends regional and international experience - positioning the agency to serve both legacy clients and future-focused brands across Oman.

“We are proud of the recognition OHI Leo Burnett has received at the Transform MEA 2025 Brand Awards. This reinforces our competitive standing in Oman and the

region and further strengthens our belief in the power of partnerships with our clients,” said Ammar Al Saleh, Chairman of the OHI Group.

“OHI Leo Burnett’s track record is more than just a streak of awards - it’s a sign of strategic consistency and creative depth,” said Aaron Hennessey, Group Chief Operating Officer at OHI.

“As we expand our footprint across the region, this agency plays a vital role in how we tell our story and support our clients in building brands that last.”

OHI Leo Burnett’s sustained recognition reinforces its leadership in branding - not just in Oman, but across the region - as it continues to champion the region’s brand narratives through purposeful creativity.



CAMPAIGN UNTIL 14 JUNE

Malabar Gold & Diamonds unveils exciting offers for summer shoppers

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 5th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 400 showrooms across 13 countries, has just launched exciting offers for summer shoppers. The Golden Summer offers, which will run until the 14 June across all of brand’s showrooms in Oman, will give customers the chance to get free cash vouchers on their diamond & precious gem jewellery purchases.

As part of the Golden Summer offers, customers will be eligible for a free cash voucher worth OMR 10 for every diamond or precious gem worth OMR 300. The voucher is equivalent to cash and can be used for the purchase of gold or diamond jewellery, gold coins or gold bars. As part of the offers, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is also offering 8g Gold coins at zero making charges.

“We have introduced the Golden Summer offers to enhance the jewellery purchase experience of our customers, who are entering the last leg of their summer shopping. With diamond jewellery increasingly becoming the most preferred

gifting article amongst individuals and families, the exquisite collection of Diamond jewellery that Malabar Gold & Diamonds offers makes it the perfect destination for jewellery shopping. Additionally, with the opportunity to get free cash vouchers along with their favourite jewellery, our customers are getting added value for money”, commented Shamlal Ahamed, MD- International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

With a jewellery array comprising thousands of designs from numerous exclusive brands & collections such as Mine, Era, Viraaaz, Ethnix, Precia& Divine, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has been constantly updating their jewellery portfolio to cater to the refined tastes & preferences of its immense customer base.

With all purchases covered under the Malabar Promise of 100% Value on Diamond & Gold exchange as well as Free lifetime maintenance, Malabar Gold & Diamonds guarantees its customers unmatched value & service assurance on their purchase.

KEY ROLE

Sheraton Oman appoints new marketing manager

MUSCAT: Sheraton Oman Hotel announced the appointment of Aziza Gharbi as the hotel’s new marketing manager.

Aziza holds a Master’s degree in Tourism Management and brings over a decade of experience in the hospitality industry. She began her career in Doha, Qatar, where she developed a solid foundation in marketing across the region’s competitive hospitality sector.

For the past two years, she has



been part of Marriott International, most recently leading the Marketing & Communications efforts at The Westin Doha Hotel & Spa. During her tenure, she played a key role in elevating the brand’s presence and driving significant business results. Aziza now continues her journey within Marriott International, bringing her expertise and vision to Sheraton Oman Hotel.

Known for her strategic mind-

set, creative approach, and strong leadership, Aziza excels in delivering impactful marketing campaigns and compelling brand storytelling tailored to today’s business travelers.

Fluent in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish, she brings a global perspective to the Oman market and is committed to strengthening Sheraton Oman’s position as a leading destination for business & leisure travel in the region.

AT MUSCAT HEADQUARTERS

Europcar Oman & Bahrain hosts Travelex induction event

MUSCAT: Europcar Oman & Bahrain hosted Travelex, the world’s leading travel exchange company, for the induction program of its 20 newest team members. The event recently took place at Europcar’s state-of-the-art headquarters in Muscat, setting a new benchmark for corporate hospitality and employee engagement experiences in the region.

Travelex selected Europcar HQ not only for its professional infrastructure but also for its unique lifestyle amenities. The Boardroom, equipped with advanced audio-visual capabilities, offered an ideal setting to impress and onboard the new team members with a dynamic and inspiring



atmosphere.

Beyond the formal proceedings, participants had exclusive access to the expansive Europcar HQ facilities. The space includes a Gaming Lounge featuring Table Tennis, Billiards/Snooker, PS5, Chess, Carom, Darts, Board Games, and a Golf Putting Green—designed to offer mental and physical rejuvenation.

Guests also enjoyed the Wellness Zone, which includes a fully equipped Gym, serene Yoga Studio, Massage Chair, and tranquil indoor waterfalls and greenery.

Adding to the experience, the Europcar Café offered unlimited specialty coffees, karak chais, chilled beverages, and a selection of snacks such as popcorn, nachos, and cookies, all enhanced by high-speed WiFi connectivity throughout the premises.

Europcar HQ also offers a unique array of complimentary amenities tailored for SMEs, start-ups, and professionals, designed to enhance creativity, productivity, and collaboration. This pioneering initiative creates a harmonious blend of work and relaxation in a vibrant and stimulating environment, inviting guests to immerse themselves in a rejuvenating experience like no other.

The New India Assurance Co. Ltd., Oman honoured with Times of Oman Best Brand in Customer Experience Award



MUSCAT: The New India Assurance Co. Ltd., Oman, has been recognised with the prestigious Times of Oman Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in the insurance category at the Oman CX Awards 2025. This distinguished accolade highlights the company’s unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional service and customer satisfaction across the Sultanate.

The New India Assurance Co Ltd. has its presence in Oman since 1974 through the chief agents M/s. Abdul Aziz & Bros LLC, under the visionary leadership of Majid Abdul Rahim Jaffer Al Bahrani.

Expressing his gratitude, Majid extended heartfelt thanks to all customers and partners for voting New India Assurance as the Best Brand in Customer Experience under the Insurance category.

The award ceremony was graced by His Highness Sayyid Mohammed Bin Salem Al Said, who was the chief guest, alongside Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali, CEO of Muscat Media Group.

Gaurav Sharma, Chief Operating Officer of New India Assurance, Oman Operations, received the award on behalf of the company, joined by his dedicated team.

Commenting on the achievement, Gaurav Sharma stated, “This award is a testament to the exceptional service delivered by our team. We are deeply honored and extend our sincere appreciation to all our valued customers and partners for their continued trust and support.”

The Oman CX Awards 2025 celebrated excellence across 35 sectors and services categories, with winners determined through

nationwide consumer voting. The event underscored the critical role customer experience plays in brand reputation and long-term success.

As Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali noted, “Customer experience is no longer a support function – it is now central to brand reputation and long-term success.”

This recognition follows a series of customer-centric innovations by New India Assurance, including the launch of a state-of-the-art Customer Care Centre in December 2024, offering direct call lines and WhatsApp support to enhance client accessibility and responsiveness.

For more information about New India Assurance Co. Ltd., Oman, and its services, please visit their official website or contact their Customer Care Centre at +968 2483 8800

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