



HM THE SULTAN GREETES PRESIDENT OF CUBA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Miguel Diaz-Canel of the Republic of Cuba on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Diaz-Canel and the people of Cuba.



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2 OMAN VS 1 SAUDI ARABIA

Rasheed Jaber's men provided a perfect New Year's celebration for Omani fans, delivering a performance brimming with resilience, tactical discipline, and fighting spirit

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Red Warriors fought like true heroes on the field, overcoming adversity to secure a thrilling 2-1 victory against a formidable Saudi Arabia in the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup semi-final on Tuesday.

Despite playing with ten men for more than an hour, Oman triumphed at the Jaber Al Mubarak Al Hamad Stadium in Sulaibikhat, Kuwait, earning their second consecutive final appearance.

Rasheed Jaber's men provided a perfect New Year's celebration for Omani fans, delivering a performance brimming with re-

silience, tactical discipline, and fighting spirit.

The victory sets Oman up for the final on January 4, where they will face either Bahrain or hosts Kuwait, who were to play later on Tuesday night.

The match began with Saudi Arabia asserting early dominance, launching waves of attacks from the kickoff.

Oman's captain and goalkeeper, Faiz Al Rusheidi, showcased his class and composure, making a crucial save in just the third minute to deny the Saudis an early lead. The Red Warriors took time to settle into the game, weathering Saudi Arabia's initial onslaught

while looking for counter-attack-ing opportunities.

The Saudis came close to scoring again in the 25th minute, but Marwan Al Sahafi missed a golden opportunity, allowing Oman to breathe a sigh of relief.

Drama unfolded in the 34th minute when Al Mandhar Al Alawi, a key component of Oman's attacking setup, was shown a straight red card by Turkish referee Khalil Umut.

The dismissal, which came after an ankle challenge on Salem Al Dawsari, left Oman a man down and under immense pressure. The controversial decision drew vehement protests from the Omani players, but the referee stood firm.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, Oman showcased remarkable composure. Al Rusheidi, in particular, played a pivotal role, producing several outstanding saves to keep the Saudis at bay. The first half ended goalless, with Saudi Arabia unable to capitalise on their advantage.

The second half saw a reinvigorated Oman side, determined to defy the odds. The breakthrough

came in the 74th minute, courtesy of a stunning free-kick from Arshad Al Alawi. Positioned outside the box, Al Alawi unleashed a powerful strike that broke through the wall of the Saudi defenders and past a diving goalkeeper Mohammed Al Owais, sparking jubilant celebrations among Omani fans.

Memorable victory

With the momentum in their favour, Oman pressed forward. In the 84th minute, Abdulrahman Al Mushaifri delivered a perfectly weighted pass to Ali Al Busaidi, who coolly slotted the ball into the net to double Oman's lead.

Saudi Arabia, however, refused to go down without a fight. In the 87th minute, Mohammed Kanno pulled one back for the Saudis, reigniting hopes of a comeback.

The intensity of the match escalated during the nine minutes of injury time, later extended by an additional five minutes. Oman's defence, led by the brilliant Al Rusheidi, absorbed relentless Saudi pressure, holding firm to secure a memorable victory. **>A8**

TO BE PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL GAZETTE

HM the Sultan issues three Royal decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik yesterday issued three Royal decrees reading as follows:

Royal Decree No. 70/2024 promulgates the Supplementary Tax Law on entities affiliated to multinational groups.

Article (1) states that the "Supplementary Tax Law on entities affiliated to multinational groups", attached to this decree, shall be enforced.

Article (2) stipulates that the Chairman of the Tax Authority shall issue the Executive Regulation of the law attached to this decree, as well as the regulations and decisions necessary for the implementation of its provisions.

Article (3) cancels all that contradicts the law attached to this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from 1 January 2025.

Royal Decree No. 71/2024 ratifies the Framework Agreement

for the Establishment of Private Sector Operations between the Sultanate of Oman and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), signed in Washington DC on 23 October 2024.

Article (1) states that the abovementioned agreement shall be ratified in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) says this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. 72/2024 endorses the concession agreement for the extraction and processing of sea salt between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and Naqa Salt Company, for Area No. (51-K), signed on 11 December 2024.

Article (1) endorses the abovementioned concession agreement for the extraction and processing of sea salt.

Article (2) says this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — **ONA**

STATE AND SHURA COUNCILS

Joint meeting held to discuss disputed bills



MUSCAT: The joint committees of the State Council and the Shura Council on Tuesday held a meeting to discuss the articles of dispute in draft laws.

Discussion

Referred for discussion by the Council of Ministers, the disputed bills were those on "Regulating the transfer and transplantation of human organs and tissues", "Public health" and "Electronic transactions".

The two councils disputed 26

articles in the draft law regulating the transfer and transplantation of human organs and tissues, 18 articles in the draft public health law and 19 articles in the draft law on electronic transactions.

Consensus reached

The committees reached a consensus on all the articles of disagreement between the two councils.

They will submit their report for discussion in the joint session between the State Council and the Shura Council. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Jordanian delegation visits Shura Council

1 Shura Council received a delegation from the Educational Department of the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College as part of their recent visit to the Sultanate of Oman. **>A2**

OMAN Sanad Service Centres ink 6 pacts

2 The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion organised the Sanad Service Centres Forum. **>A3**

MARKET OIA divests from one of its assets in Italy

3 Oman Investment Authority (OIA) made a successful divestment from one of its assets in Italy, which generated an investment return exceeding 50% of the original value. **>B1**

PROMISING NEW YEAR

Oman rings in 2025 with key reforms

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman steps into 2025 with a series of impactful regulatory changes, headlined by the withdrawal of specific currency denominations, the strengthening of the ban on single-use plastics, and the introduction of cost-reflective electricity tariffs.

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has officially withdrawn several banknotes from circulation, marking a significant shift in the country's financial landscape.

As of January 1, select notes will no longer be valid for transactions, ending their legal tender status. Affected denominations include banknotes from the fifth issue (1995), upgraded issues (2000, 2011, and 2012), and select commemorative notes issued in 2005, 2010, and 2019.

In a campaign that lasted a few months leading up to the deadline, the CBO urged residents to exchange these notes for newer versions, ensuring a smooth transition.

Banks across Oman facilitated this process, accepting the withdrawn notes until December 31.

"These changes are part of our efforts to modernise the currency system and enhance financial efficiency," a CBO spokesperson



SUNSET AT QURUM: The setting sun marks the last evening of the year 2024 - **K. Pureshthaman**

had reported at the time of the announcement.

Institutions and retailers were also directed to accept the outdated denominations during the exchange period, which officially ended on December 31 (Tuesday).

In an effort to enhance regional trade, Oman has also adopted a

unified customs tariff as part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative. Effective January 1, this new system introduces 12-digit codes, replacing the previous 8-digit format, to standardise customs procedures across GCC member states. This development is expected to facilitate smoother trade op-

erations and strengthen economic collaboration within the region.

Complementing these reforms, Oman has taken another significant step towards environmental sustainability with the second phase of its ban on single-use plastic bags from January 1.

The Environment Authority

(EA) has expanded the scope of the ban to include additional types of thin plastic bags, known for their environmental harm.

The initiative aims to reduce pollution affecting soil, marine life, and wildlife while promoting the use of sustainable alternatives such as cloth and paper bags. To ensure compliance, inspection campaigns and fines for violators will be implemented. "The long-term benefits of adopting reusable bags far outweigh the convenience of single-use plastics," the EA said, urging businesses and individuals to align with the initiative.

Also, the introduction of cost-reflective electricity tariffs marks a significant shift in Oman's utilities sector.

Residential and non-residential consumers can now choose from variable, fixed seasonal, or year-round tariffs based on their consumption. The rates are designed to promote energy efficiency and transparency while offering competitive options for different usage categories.

With these sweeping reforms, Oman signals its dedication to sustainability, economic modernisation, and regional cooperation as it embarks on a promising new year.



OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:15pm
Asr.....3:16pm
Maghrib.....5:36pm
Isha.....6:52pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:29am

Jordanian delegation briefed about Shura Council’s legislative process

The delegation from the Educational Department of the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College were informed about how to enhance parliamentary diplomacy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Taher Mabkhout Al Junaibi, Deputy Chairman of the Shura Council received a delegation from the Educational Department of the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College, headed by Brigadier General Tariq Khalaf Al-Hajjaya, Commandant of the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College, as part of their current visit to the Sultanate of Oman. Their visit to the Council aims

to learn about its powers and roles in the legislative process and to enhance parliamentary diplomacy.

Strong historical relations During the meeting, the strong historical relations between the two countries were reviewed in various aspects. The discussion then focused on the development of the Shura Council in the Sultanate of Oman, and the roles and powers of its members as defined by the Basic



Law of the State and the Law of the Council of Oman. The delegation was briefed on the Council’s legislative roles, especially regarding the review of draft laws referred by the government and those proposed by the Council. The Deputy Chairman of the Council also spoke about the tools

available for members to follow up on legislative matters, in accordance with the provisions of the Law of the Council of Oman, and the Council’s integrated role alongside other state institutions in national decision-making and achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040. Furthermore, the discussion

highlighted the working mechanism of the Council’s permanent committees, the system of procedures for regular sessions, and the role of the General Secretariat in providing technical support to members. Additionally, efforts by the Council to enhance parliamentary diplomacy in various regional and international forums and

meetings were discussed. As part of their visit, the Jordanian delegation toured the Council of Oman building and its facilities where they were introduced to the modern technologies used in the Council’s deliberation hall where regular sessions are held, as well as a tour of the Council of Oman Library.

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YOUTH-RELATED ISSUES

Young ambassadors visit Shura Council

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Youth and Human Resources Committee of the Shura Council welcomed a group of representatives from the Young Ambassadors Project on Tuesday. The visit provided an opportunity for the participants to gain insight into the committee’s efforts in addressing youth-related issues and advancing their potential and aspirations in Oman. The delegation was introduced to the vision and mission of the Shura Council, its roles, and its legislative and oversight responsibilities. The discussions highlighted the council’s collaborative role with other state institutions in shaping national policies and achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040. Participants also received a detailed explanation of the work and responsibilities of the Council’s Office and its standing committees. Additionally, they were briefed on the legislative process for draft laws referred to the council by the government, as well as the oversight tools available to council members and their implementation as outlined in the Basic Law of the State and the Oman Council Law. As part of their visit, the young ambassadors explored the advanced technologies utilised in the council’s deliberation hall, where sessions are held.

PREPARATORY PROGRAMME

Shura Council discusses assessment policies in government schools



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Education, Research, and Innovation Committee of the Shura Council hosted a group of academics from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) on Tuesday to discuss and gather insights regarding the proposed initiative on “Assessment Policies in Government Schools in Oman.” The meeting included a detailed presentation on the role of SQU’s Centre for Preparatory Studies in equipping admitted students for university life. The preparatory programme focuses on foundational subjects such as English, Mathematics, Information Technology, study and life skills, ensuring students are well-prepared for higher education. The discussions also explored challenges faced by the centre,

particularly the knowledge gap in English language proficiency between high school graduates and university preparatory courses, and the strategies implemented to address this gap. Additionally, the meeting highlighted the life skills imparted to students at this stage, such as time management, stress management, and problem-solving, which were recently introduced to the curriculum. Other topics included the centre’s efforts to align with labour market demands and entrepreneurship initiatives in Oman, as well as examining the reasons behind student withdrawal during the preparatory phase. The discussions emphasised the need to establish regulations to standardise and improve assessment efficiency during preparatory studies.

Suggestions were made to implement a unified tool for measuring student competency, compare student dropout rates in preparatory programmes with those of other GCC universities, and enhance coordination between the university and the Ministry of Education to address English language deficiencies among high school graduates. SQU academics also proposed improvements to the current school assessment system, stressing the importance of focusing on students’ strengths during the preparatory phase while addressing their weaker skill areas. The meeting took place during the committee’s third meeting of the second regular session of the tenth term (2023–2027) under the chairmanship of Jamal Ahmed Al-Abri, with the participation of committee members.



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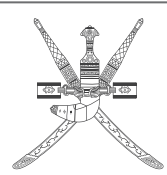
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SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects:

Tender No.	Project Category	Tender Name	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
43/2024	Constriction & Maintenance	CONSTRUCTION OF SUR EQUESTRIAN CLUB	13/01/2025	10/02/2025
Re-Tender 4/2024	Constriction & Maintenance	REHABILITATION WORK FOR ALSLAM CLUB - SHINAS	05/01/2025	20/01/2025
Re-Tender 41/2024	Consulting Offices	MASTER PLAN, CONCEPT DESIGN AND DETAILED DESIGN FOR SPORTS COMPLEX AT AL DUQM	05/01/2025	20/01/2025

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone: 24402200 or through email: etenderhd@ita.gov.om

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Sanad Service Centres sign six pacts, expand online services

The event also witnessed the launch of four new services through its e-portal as well as the recognition of outstanding Sanad Service Centre owners and their employees for their exceptional contributions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) on Tuesday organised the Sanad Service Centres Forum and its accompanying exhibition, themed 'Empowerment and Sustainable Growth', at the JW Marriott Hotel, Madinat Al Irfan.

The event was held under the patronage of Dr. Laila bint Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, in the presence of Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, and Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, President of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones.

The forum witnessed participation from distinguished officials, including Dr. Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry and Ibtisam bint Ahmed Al-Farooqi, Undersecretary for Investment Promotion.

The event was also attended by prominent CEOs, specialists, representatives from both public and private sectors, and owners of Sanad Service Centres.

The Sanad Service Centres Forum, being held from December 31, 2024 until January 1, 2025,

aims to achieve strategic objectives of developing and supporting Sanad Service Centres. Nasra bint Sultan Al Habsi, Director General of Commerce at the MoCIIP, emphasised the significance of Sanad Service Centres, stating: "These centres represent one of the nation's key initiatives. Since their inception, they have played a pivotal role in supporting the government's digital transformation journey and creating job opportunities for Omani youth. The growth figures we witness today for these small enterprises underscore the importance of continuing to support them."

Al Habsi added: "Omani youth are the true wealth of this nation. Investing in their skills and capabilities is an investment in a brighter future. The Ministry is dedicated to providing an appropriate environment that enables them to achieve their aspirations and actively contribute to the country's development."

The opening ceremony included a visual presentation about the Sanad Service Centres, highlighting their importance, the services

they provide, and the Ministry's vision to embed the importance of these centres in the minds of the public and the community.

The programme also featured the signing of six agreements and cooperation programmes with private entities, the launch of four new services through Sanad e-portal, and the recognition of outstanding Sanad Service Centre owners and their employees for their exceptional contributions.

Achieving strategic objectives

Mohammed bin Salem Al Mashai-khi, Director of Sanad Service Centres at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, delivered the Ministry's speech during the forum.

He stated: "In line with the attention His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik places on entrepreneurs in the Sultanate of Oman, and his encouragement for them to embrace self-employment, as well as his belief in their pivotal role in the Omani economy and their integration with large corporations, the Ministry has ensured special

attention is given to Sanad Service Centres."

"These centres are vital for creating job opportunities and contributing to facilitating a more seamless business environment for citizens and residents alike."

Al Mashaikhi pointed out that the Ministry seeks to make this forum serve as a platform for exchanging experiences and successful practices, as well as exploring ways to improve performance and enhance efficiency in service delivery.

He emphasised that these efforts align with the objectives and aspirations of Oman Vision 2040, which seeks to improve the quality and efficiency of public services and promote digital transformation across all sectors.

Signing agreements

The MoCIIP has signed six agreements and cooperation programmes with various public and private entities to introduce new services through Sanad Service Centres. These agreements and programmes aim to further develop the Sanad Service Centres sys-

tem, empower Omani youth, and entrust them with the responsibility of maintaining the achievements made during the previous phase. The goal is to ensure continued high efficiency during the next phase, which will contribute to increasing job opportunities within these centers.

The agreements were signed on behalf of MoCIIP by Dr. Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry, and by the CEOs of the other involved entities.

These agreements span various sectors, including:

- * Awasr and Vodafone Oman from the telecommunications sector
- * Dhofar Integrated Services Company from the public services sector
- * Oman Credit and Financial Information Centre (Mala'a) from the financial sector
- * Al Madina Takaful from the insurance sector
- * Bank Sohar from the banking sector

These agreements include the integration of their services with the e-portal of Sanad Service

Centres.

Launching new services

During the opening ceremony of the Sanad Service Centres Forum, a set of new services was launched, further strengthening the role of Sanad Service Centres as a key driver of local development and an essential partner in facilitating services for both citizens and residents.

MoCIIP in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, launched the service of certifying medical reports issued by private medical centers in Oman. Additionally, several insurance services were introduced in partnership with SuperJet platform from Gulf Travel Company.

The centres also launched a travel ticket booking service in collaboration with the Godoba platform of Al Raqi Business Company. Moreover, the centers will now offer credit report issuance services in partnership with the Oman Credit and Financial Information Centre (Mala'a).

Full story at timesofoman.com/oman

JOINT MEETING

Oman, KSA explore means of boosting cooperation in higher education field

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on Tuesday explored ways to enhance cooperation and explore investment opportunities in higher education, scientific research, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and administrative consultations.

This took place during the joint meeting held here on Tuesday between the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Inno-

vation and the Saudi Exports Development Authority, along with private sector companies from the KSA and higher education institutions from Oman.

The meeting included presentations on investment opportunities at the Innovation Park Muscat and about the Saudi Export Development Authority. Several Saudi private sector companies showcased their services during the meeting. — ONA

GENERAL COMMAND OF POLICE

NCEM holds meeting to review tasks

MUSCAT: The National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) on Tuesday held a meeting at the General Command of Police.

The meeting was chaired by Lt. Gen Hassan Mohsin Al Shraiqli, Inspector General of Police and Customs, Chairman of the National Emergency Management Committee.

Development mechanisms

The meeting reviewed the tasks of the National Committee for Emergency Management, the committee's development mechanisms and procedures of response in exceptional circumstances. Lt. Gen Al Shraiqli praised the process of integration among the authorities concerned and the high level of community awareness.

He thanked the members of the committee and relevant sectors and subcommittees.

— ONA

REF: BPO -01-2024

Used Containers for SALE

Bio Products Oman SAOC, (BPO) invites specialize vendor to participate in our tender for the "Used Containers for Sale" as per the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Ref no.	BPO -01/2024
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Location	Khazean Economic City (Barka)
Closing date of the tender	7.1.2025 (2pm)
Mode of payment of tender fees	By cash – Admin dept. Mr. Mohammed Obaid mobile no. 99845546
For communication	Abdullah AL-Mezeini Operation Manager / Bio Products Oman SAOC # 72733302

Therefore, please contact the person to inquire, and submit the offer in a sealed envelope with the tender Ref no. mentioned, and drop them at the tender box at Oman Flour Mills Company at Atayab Investment Building- Reception.



MORE THAN QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE VISIT MUSCAT NIGHTS

The organisers of Muscat Nights, Muscat Municipality, this year have rightly identified prominent locations to ensure accessibility for residents and visitors throughout the capital



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Nights welcomed over a quarter of a million visitors in its first week after it was opened for all from December 23, 2024. "More than a quarter of a million visitors enjoyed the events in its seven locations," the officials said.

The organisers of Muscat Nights, Muscat Municipality, this year have rightly identified prominent locations to ensure accessibility for residents and visitors throughout the capital.

These events are spread out across Amerat Park, Al Naseem Public Park, Oman Automobile Association, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), Al Hail Beach and Wadi al Khoud, besides Al Qurum Natural Park, many cultural centres and shopping malls.

"Each location offers its own unique experience, ensuring that there's something for everyone," a statement from Muscat Municipality added.

"The Muscat Nights, in many ways, is a microcosm of what makes Oman such a unique destination in the region. While there is plenty of culture and an opportunity to savour the traditions of the country, there are also several events that have been put up by the organisers to further modernise the event this time," Indian expat, Madhu further said.

"For families visiting the Muscat Nights this year, there are several events which are bound to stimulate all the senses. Besides, some of the region's finest and most exotic goods are being sold by merchants. Somehow, these are close to evoking memories of great bazaars of history, that are intrinsic to the way of life in Oman," said Murugesan, an Indian expat running his own business.

"From Cheeses and saffron, the finest dates, incense from the Omani heartland, the finest dried fruits and olive oil, silks and spices from the Indian subcontinent ... all of these fine goods will surely be attractive for the visitors," he further said.

Besides on offer at the Muscat Nights are a wide array of fine clothes, handbags, perfumes and so much more on offer this year, and when the little ones do get

bored of holding mummy and daddy's hands as they inquisitively move from stall to stall, there is plenty for them to check out beyond the bazaar.

Mirshad, an Indian from the state of Kerala said, "From games that test mental endurance and physical prowess to roller-coaster rides, the Muscat Nights has a plethora of opportunities for everyone to forget their troubles for a while, and take them back to a time when things were far simpler."

During this year's Muscat Nights, visitors will find themselves immersed in a range of exciting attractions, featuring some of the most beloved characters in entertainment. Step into vibrant worlds filled with Looney Tunes, Scooby-Doo, Batman, the Justice League, and Tom and Jerry.

These iconic characters will come to life in a way never seen before, making it a one-of-a-kind celebration that brings together your favourite childhood characters under one roof. The night's major highlights include the Flower Festival, Food Festival, Global Village, and stunning Drone Shows, as well as awe-inspiring Laser and Light Shows. Whether you're enjoying the pleasant weather, indulging in delicious cuisine, or watching a mesmerising light display, there will be no shortage of activities to keep you entertained.

Muscat Nights will also feature a host of engaging activities across its various venues. At Qurum National Park, visitors can experience the Al Qurum Carnival, equestrian championships, and theatrical performances, while Al Amerat Public Park will host a hybrid show, Heritage Village, amusement rides, and exciting air and acrobatics games.

The Children's Carnival at Al Amerat will also be a highlight for young festival-goers.

Other locations such as Al Naseem Public Park, the Oman Automobile Association, the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, and Sur Al Hadeed Beach will host a wide array of cultural performances, exhibitions, and more, ensuring that there's something for every family member to enjoy.

With such a variety of events and activities, the Muscat Nights is set to be an unforgettable experience and joy for all ages.





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ENHANCE COOPERATION

Royal Office Minister meets ambassador of Thailand

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office yesterday Warunee Pan-Krajang, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting reviewed developments on the regional and international arenas.

The Ambassador expressed her keenness to enhance cooperation to achieve joint interests and expand the bilateral relations towards wider horizons. -ONA



Project to survey digital economy's addition to GDP

The survey targets establishments operating in the communications and information technology sector



MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology yesterday began implementing a project to survey the contribution of digital economy to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The project will run until

May 2025.

The project seeks to measure the added value of "the communications and information technology sector" and the added value of "activities of financial and insurance services that are provided only digitally".

The survey targets establishments operating in the communications and information technol-

ogy sector (large, medium, small, and micro) and activities of financial and insurance services that are provided digitally.

The target segment comprises about 1,300 establishments in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. The survey will focus on the data of these establishments during 2023 as its core reference indicator. -ONA

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

Oman resumes exports of copper after 30-year hiatus

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman has marked a significant milestone with the export of its first shipment of copper concentrates in 30 years. The shipment departed from the Al-Asail mine in Sohar, North Al Batinah Governorate, via Sohar Port. This achievement underscores Oman's commitment to economic diversification and sustainable development.

Engineer Matar bin Salem Al-Badi, CEO of Oman Minerals Development Company, hailed the export of 900 tonnes of copper concentrates as a crucial step, demonstrating the company's ability to transform challenges into growth opportunities. He also expressed anticipation for the upcoming commencement of operations at the Al-Bayda mine, which is expected to further enhance the project's value and bolster the sustainability of Oman's mining sector.

Al-Badi emphasised the historical significance of this event, noting the region's 3,000-year history of copper mining, includ-

ing the pioneering work of the Oman Mining Company since 1983. He highlighted the advancements in exploration and extraction technologies that have enabled the reopening of mines, enhancing the value of these resources and contributing to the sector's economic and social impact. The Al-Asail mine, located in concession area 11B in Sohar, is being developed by the Oman Mining Company, a subsidiary of Oman Minerals Development Company.

The processed ore yields high-quality copper concentrates with concentrations between 18% and 22%, with the mine's average annual production estimated at around 500,000 tonnes of copper ore. Operations at the Al-Bayda mine in Liwa are projected to begin in 2025-2026. This redevelopment plan for both mines targets estimated reserves of approximately 2.78 million tonnes of copper ore, with the first phase expected to last four to five years. Ongoing exploration and drilling aim to further expand these reserves.

OMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



OCCI discusses Oman's participation in Mobile World Congress in Shanghai

MUSCAT: The Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence Committee at Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) held its 4th meeting of 2024 in Muscat on Tuesday.

Headed by Eng. Ibrahim Abdullah Al Hosni, Chairman of the Committee, the meeting discussed the Sultanate of Oman's participation in the Mobile World Congress

(MWC) in Shanghai, one of the largest global telecommunications industry events. The committee also discussed a number of initiatives for the empowerment of digital economy in Oman.

The initiatives undertaken by the committee include a project to modernize economic activities through the introduction of digital economy and artificial intelligence

in a manner that enhances productivity and services and attracts foreign investment, said Al Hosni.

He added that the meeting valued the efforts made by Oman Future Fund to support the system of venture capital investment and related funds, as well as the "Shuaa" platform, which provides access to the outcomes of research in Oman. - ONA



SULTANATE OF OMAN

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects:

Tender No.	Project Category	Tender Name	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
43/2024	Constriction & Maintenance	CONSTRUCTION OF SUR EQUESTRIAN CLUB	13/01/2025	10/02/2025
Re-Tender 4/2024	Constriction & Maintenance	REHABILITATION WORK FOR ALSLAM CLUB - SHINAS	05/01/2025	20/01/2025
Re-Tender 41/2024	Consulting Offices	MASTER PLAN, CONCEPT DESIGN AND DETAILED DESIGN FOR SPORTS COMPLEX AT AL DUQM	05/01/2025	20/01/2025

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone: **24402200** or through email: etenderhd@ita.gov.om



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 AMMAR BIN ALI AL-SAGOFF

ATTENDING OMAN

DRIVING INITIATIVE



Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Ref:	Description	Last date for collection of bidding document	Last date for submission of tenders	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non Refundable)
4734/2024/M OH/NIZH-5	Providing a pickup truck to transport gas cylinders from Nizwa Hospital to the Ministry's warehouses	23/01/2025	13/02/2025	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 25,000 Per set

Please note the following:

- Companies wishing to participate in the Tender can purchase the tender documents electronically through the website (etendering.tenderboard.gov.om), provided that they are registered in the system.
- Companies must submit their bids electronically via the above-mentioned website, provided that ABid Commitment Declaration, and bids received without the required Declaration will not be considered.
- Bids shall be placed in sealed and waxed envelopes in the tender box at the Office of the Head of Financial Affairs Department.
- The concerned entity is not obligated to accept the lowest bid or any other bid.
- For inquiries related to the above tender, please contact through the website of the Esnad system for electronic tendering: (etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)

SOUTH KOREA

Embankment in focus in Jeju Air crash probe

SEOUL: South Korea ramped up investigations into the Jeju Air crash at Muan International Airport on Sunday that killed everyone on board save for two crew members.

The plane attempted an emergency “belly-landing,” touching down without landing gear, soon after issuing a distress call. It skidded off the end of the runway and

burst into flames on contact with an embankment made of dirt and concrete fairly soon after the runway’s end.

A South Korean Transport Ministry official said it was still too soon to comment on a document, the airport’s 2024 operating manual, that appeared to make reference to the embankment and recommend it be moved to a safer

distance in an upcoming expansion at the airport.

Officials were also still working to identify five of the victims, as families gathered at the airport calling for their remains’ release to allow funerals.

The Transport Ministry also said eight US investigators — one from the Federal Aviation Administration, three from the National

Transportation Safety Board, and four from Boeing — had joined the team on site. The plane that crashed was a Boeing 737-800.

The government announced precautionary checks on the roughly 100 other such planes in the country, expected to be complete by January 3. Both parts of the so-called “black box” have been recovered. **-ow**



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People around world welcome 2025

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean were the first to ring in the New Year

SYDNEY: As Australia ushered in the New Year, thousands of citizens gathered at the iconic Sydney Opera House to witness the spectacular fireworks and celebrations.

People from across the globe converged at the Sydney Opera House to enjoy the festivities.

Kunal Verma, an Indian visitor, expressed his excitement for the fireworks. He also shared that the New Year coincided with his wife’s birthday, making the occasion even more special.

“It’s a very amazing feeling, this is the first time for us here. Earlier, we used to see this event on television. But seeing the event live is an amazing experience. Today is my wife’s birthday also, so it’s more special for me. Happy New Year to all the people. Stay fit and healthy. Best wishes for all,” he said.

Pooja, another Indian resident,



wished for world peace in the coming year.

“It’s absolutely fantastic and different experience altogether. Spread the happiness all over the world. Best wishes to all the citizens of Australia as well as all the countries. Stay happy, stay healthy,” she said.

Pratik Patroi, who travelled from Nepal, shared his excitement for the event.

“I am feeling so excited and this is my first time. I came all the way from Nepal to Australia to experience this amazing moment. It is looking like a wonderful time for me to experience. I want to give a message to all over the world, enjoy this new year. May this new year bring them all happiness to their

family, and friends, and peace and love and spirit harmony among all people,” Patroi told ANI.

Another visitor from Nepal added, “I’m feeling very excited. Happy New Year! Wishing you all a great new year and have a successful year ahead.”

A local woman shared her relief after a long wait to get to the venue. “We are happy to be able to watch the fireworks which seems to be difficult to reach this place here so glad we made it after 5 hours of waiting,” she said.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese also wished everyone a Happy New Year on social media.

As Australia is ahead of India in time zones, the New Year arrived

there first. Kiribati, an island in the Pacific Ocean, was the first country to celebrate the New Year, followed by other nations including New Zealand, Japan, Samoa, and Indonesia.

American Samoa, which is a little farther from Samoa, will celebrate New Year nearly a day later due to the International Date Line.

Russia’s Putin summarises 25 years in power in New Year’s address

In his annual address aired on state television, Russian President Vladimir Putin praised the country’s achievements made during his 25-year tenure as its leader.

“We still have a lot to decide but we can be rightfully proud of what has already been done,” he said,



adding the past 25 years had paved the way for “further development.”

Putin also mentioned Russia’s soldiers, just as he did last year, in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

“The thoughts, hopes of relatives and friends, millions of people across Russia are together with our fighters and commander,” Putin said.

Heavy snow causes flight cancellations in Japan

Heavy snow in Japan’s northern region canceled dozens of flights as millions of families were returning home to spend New Year’s Eve with their loved ones.

More than 20 centimetres (7.8 inches) of snow has fallen in some

areas of the northernmost island of Hokkaido since Monday.

Japan Airlines said it scrapped 42 flights, affecting 6,398 passengers, by early afternoon, with all of the flights being to or from Hokkaido.

Japan’s other airline, ANA, also cancelled 14 flights due to the rough weather in the north.

Fire brigades in Germany are preparing for a busy New Year’s Eve due to the private use of fireworks.

Karl-Heinz Banse, president of the German Fire Brigade Association, told the dpa news agency that the use of fireworks would contribute to the heightened workload, but he rejected calls for a nationwide ban on private fireworks. **-ANI**

AT INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION

Bangladesh Chief Adviser pays tribute to former Indian PM

DHAKA: Bangladesh Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on Tuesday paid a rich tribute to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who died last week.

Professor Yunus visited the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and placed a floral wreath at the portrait of late PM Manmohan Singh.

He also wrote a condolence message in the condolence book opened at the High Commission.

India is observing a seven-day mourning for the late Prime Minister of the country.

Indian High Commissioner Pranay Kumar Verma received the Chief Adviser at the High Commission at Baridhara at 11:30 am.

Professor Yunus spoke briefly with the High Commissioner and shared his memories with his long-time friend Manmohan Singh.

“How simple he was! how wise he was!” he said, recalling his friendship with the late Indian Premier. He also said that Singh played a big role in turning India



into a global economic giant.

Earlier on Friday, in his messages, the Chief Adviser described Dr Singh as a person of great humility, a visionary leader, and a statesman who was known for his unwavering commitment to ensuring the welfare of the people of India. The Chief Adviser said that the late Prime Minister would be remembered for his contributions to India’s economic transformation.

He stated that Dr Singh’s lead-

ership not only shaped the future of India but also contributed to strengthening the bond of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between Bangladesh and India.

Referring to Dr Manmohan Singh’s role in promoting regional cooperation, the Chief Adviser also highlighted the late leader’s vision and firm commitment to regional peace, prosperity, and role in advancing South Asian coop-

eration. He urged the South Asian countries to work together to build on the rich legacy of his ideas and work as a tribute to Dr Manmohan Singh.

The Chief Adviser recalled his many cherished memories with Dr Singh. In his condolence messages, Muhammad Yunus mentioned the warm congratulatory message the late Indian Prime Minister sent on the occasion of Dr Yunus’ winning the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2006.

He also recalled his meetings with Dr Singh in January 2007 in New Delhi and later in December 2009 as Yunus was invited to deliver the 2nd Prof. Hiren Mukerjee Annual Parliamentary Lecture, which was attended by members of both houses, including the Speaker of the Rajya Sabha.

The Chief Adviser extended, on behalf of the government and people of Bangladesh, his heartfelt condolences to the family of Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Government, and the people of India. **-ANI**

20TH ANNIVERSARY

Indian foreign minister highlights Quad’s progress

NEW DELHI : External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday marked the 20th anniversary of the Quad, emphasising its progress from providing a “shared response” to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami into a “vital force stability, progress and prosperity” in the Indo-Pacific region.

He further reaffirmed India’s commitment, alongside Australia, Japan, and the United States, to addressing the region’s needs.

Sharing a post on X, Jaishankar wrote, “Two decades ago, the idea of Quad began with a shared response to the Indian Ocean tsunami. Today, the Quad stands as a vital force for stability, progress and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.”

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of Quad cooperation, India, Australia, Japan, and the United States highlighted the grouping’s origins in the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and

tsunami. In a joint statement released by the Secretary of State of the US and the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India, and Japan, the group said, “Twenty years ago, in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, Australia, India, Japan, and the United States came together in service to the people of our region for the first time as the grouping now known as the Quad. The tsunami was one of the worst disasters in history, claiming the lives of nearly a quarter million people and displacing 1.7 million across 14 countries. Together, our four countries contributed over 40,000 emergency responders, working with other partners across the Indo-Pacific region to support millions of people affected by the catastrophe. We honour the memories of those no longer with us and recognise the survivors and the families of those who were lost.” **-ANI**

EIGHT YEARS

Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt reach divorce settlement

NEW YORK: Actors Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have reached a divorce settlement after eight years, marking an apparent end to one of Hollywood’s longest and most contentious divorces.

Jolie’s attorney, James Simon, confirmed the settlement on Monday to People Magazine.

“This is just one part of a long ongoing process that started eight years ago,” Simon said. “Frankly, Angelina is exhausted, but she is relieved this one part is over.”

There was no immediate comment from Pitt or his attorney.

Long-drawn-out tussle

Jolie, 49, and Pitt, 61, — nicknamed Brangelina for years — were among Hollywood’s most popular couples for 12 years.

Jolie filed for divorce in September 2016, which began the long and closely followed legal saga.

The couple reached a custody arrangement for their six children in 2018, which appears to have since fallen into disarray.

A year later, a judge declared them divorced. However, a separate settlement was required over the splitting of assets and child custody.

In a separate lawsuit filed by Pitt, the actor had alleged that Jolie backed out of a deal that she would sell him her half of a French winery that they co-owned. The couple had their wedding in the same vineyard.

It’s not clear how the divorce settlement could affect that lawsuit. **-ANI**

FLIGHT LX1885

Swiss Airlines confirms crew member’s death following emergency landing

BERN: Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) on Monday confirmed the death of a crew member following the emergency landing of flight LX1885 last week.

In a post on Facebook, the Swiss International Air Lines wrote, “Today is a dark day for SWISS. It is with heavy hearts that we must share the loss of a dear colleague following the emergency landing of LX1885 on 23 December 2024. Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with the family and the loved ones of our dear colleague, whose pain must be immeasurable.”

SWISS CEO Jens Fehlinger and COO Oliver Buchhofer offered the family of the deceased their condolences and assured support to the victim’s family.

Fehlinger said, “We are devastated at our dear colleague’s death.



His loss has left us all in the deepest shock and grief. Our thoughts are with his family, whose pain we cannot imagine. I offer them my heartfelt condolences on behalf of all of us at SWISS. And we will, of course, be doing everything in our power to help and support them at this extremely difficult time.”

Buchhofer said, “This is the saddest of days for us all. Losing our colleague and fellow member of our SWISS team leaves me distraught and dismayed. But we

stand with one another at this truly difficult time; and we will be doing our utmost, together with the relevant authorities, to determine the causes involved. We have many questions, and we want them answered. Our special thanks go to the responsible parties in Graz, particularly the local emergency services, who have given our passengers and our crew members such professional help and support.”

Notably, SWISS flight LX1885

from Bucharest to Zurich on December 23, 2024 had to make an emergency landing at Graz Airport due to an engine problem and smoke in the cockpit and cabin. The cockpit crew decided to abort the flight to ensure the safety of passengers and crew.

There were 74 passengers and five crew members on board the Airbus A220-300 with the registration HB-JCD. The aircraft landed safely and all passengers were evacuated. **-ANI**

Taliban orders all NGOs to stop employing women or face closure

An Afghan ministry official recently told NGOs that they would lose their licences if they continued to employ women

KABUL: Taliban has announced it will close all national and foreign nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) employing women in Afghanistan. In a letter shared on X, Taliban-led Ministry of Economy warned that failure to comply with the order would result in NGOs losing their licence to function in Afghanistan, Al Jazeera reported.

The Taliban announced the latest decision two years after they asked NGOs to suspend the employment of Afghan women, allegedly as they did not follow Taliban’s interpretation of the Islamic dress code for women.

The Taliban-led Economy Ministry said that it was responsible for the registration, coordination, leadership and supervision of all activities conducted by national



and foreign organisations.

The Taliban has once again ordered the women to stop working in institutions not controlled by Taliban, according to the letter. It said, “In case of lack of cooperation, all activities of that institution will be cancelled and the activity licence of that institution, granted by the ministry, will also be cancelled.”

Restrictions have been imposed on Afghan women since the Taliban seized power in August 2021, prompting the United Nations to denounce the “gender apartheid”

the authorities have established, according to Al Jazeera report.

Taliban has banned girls from studying beyond sixth class, restricted employment and blocked access to parks and other public places.

Temporary suspension

While announcing the decision, Taliban had said that the ban was a “temporary suspension” that would be resolved after creating a safe environment for girls to attend school. However, no change in decision has been announced

yet. Earlier this month, the UN Security Council was informed about that the rising number of female Afghan humanitarian workers being stopped from carrying out their duties, despite the critical need for relief work, Al Jazeera reported.

A senior UN official, Tom Fletcher, said that there was a rise in the number of humanitarian organisations that have had female or male staff blocked by Taliban, according to Al Jazeera report. The group has denied hindering work of aid agencies or interfering with their operations and defends

UN: Ban on Afghan women in NGOs ‘absolutely’ wrong

NEW YORK: The United Nations has told the Taliban to revoke a ban on Afghan women working in NGOs after the de facto government issued a circular warning international groups that they faced suspension and possible revocation of their license if they were found in violation of a decree first issued in 2022.

On reclaiming power in 2021, the Taliban said it would take a more moderate approach towards women than it had prior to the US removing it from power. But it has excluded women and girls from higher education, many jobs and public spaces and even forbidden public singing or poetry recitals. The

European Court of Justice defines Afghan women as a persecuted group.

‘No country can progress ... while excluding half its population’

The UN’s human rights chief, Volker Turk, issued a statement condemning the policy on Tuesday in response.

“I am deeply alarmed at the recent announcement by the de facto authorities in Afghanistan that non-governmental organizations’ licenses will be revoked if they continue to employ Afghan women. This is absolutely the wrong path being taken,” Turk said. -ANI

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

North Korea’s Kim calls Putin his ‘dearest friend’

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Tuesday called Vladimir Putin his “dearest friend and comrade” in his letter to the Russian president praising the close ties between the two countries.

Kim sent New Year greetings “to the fraternal Russian people and all the service personnel of the brave Russian army on behalf of himself, the Korean people and all the service personnel of the armed forces of the DPRK,” the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported, using an acronym of the North’s formal name. He also expressed his readiness “to design and push ahead with new projects” after their “meaningful journey in 2024.”

In a possible reference to Russia’s war in Ukraine, Kim wished that 2025 would be the year “when the Russian army and people defeat neo-Nazism and



achieve a great victory.”

Seoul and Washington have accused Pyongyang of sending tens of thousands of troops to help Russia fight Ukraine.

North Korean troops are experiencing mass casualties on the frontlines of Russia’s war against Ukraine, the Biden administration said last week.

At least 1,000 North Korean troops have either been killed or wounded last week alone in Russia’s Kursk region — where

Ukrainian troops have been holding territory since this summer — White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters.

The two nations have strengthened their political, military, and cultural ties since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

In June, Putin and Kim signed a landmark defence pact during the Russian leader’s visit to North Korea. The pact calls for each side to provide immediate military aid if the other is attacked. -ANI

WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL

Former US president Carter’s funeral to be held on Jan 9

WASHINGTON DC: The official state funeral of former US President Jimmy Carter will be held on January 9 in Washington, DC, CNN reported.

According to CNN, a White House official said that President Joe Biden will deliver a eulogy at the funeral service for Carter, who passed away on Sunday (local time) at the age of 100. The Joint Task Force-National Capital Region in the Department of Defense will conduct the ceremonies.

Biden also declared January 9 as a National Day of Mourning, hours after Carter’s death, the report added.

Earlier, Biden and First Lady Jill Biden mourned the loss of former President Carter, describing him as an extraordinary leader, statesman, and humanitarian.

In a statement released by the White House, they said, “With his compassion and moral clarity, he worked to eradicate disease, forge



peace, advance civil rights and human rights, promote free and fair elections, house the homeless, and always advocate for the least among us. He saved, lifted, and changed the lives of people all across the globe.”

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed grief over Carter’s passing, describing him as a “statesman of great vision.” PM Modi said that Carter’s contributions to fostering

strong ties between India and the US leave a lasting legacy.

In a post on X, PM Modi stated, “Deeply saddened by the passing of former USA President Mr Jimmy Carter. A statesman of great vision, he worked tirelessly for global peace and harmony. His contributions to fostering strong India-US ties leave a lasting legacy. My heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and the people of the US.” -ANI

SUPPORT TO ENTREPRENEUR

Trump backs Musk’s statement on contributions of immigrants

WASHINGTON DC: US President-elect Donald Trump has expressed his support to entrepreneur and aide Elon Musk, over his recent statements on the contributions of immigrants to the United States.

Musk had emphasised the value of hard-working individuals from all races, creeds, and nationalities who have contributed to the nation, urging Americans to preserve the country’s identity as a land of freedom and opportunity.

Musk in a post stated, “Anyone of any race, creed or nationality - who came to America and worked like hell to contribute to this country will forever have my respect. America is the land of freedom and opportunity. Fight with every fiber of your being to keep it that way!”

Showing his support for Musk, the President-elect reposted the Tesla CEO’s post on his social media platform Truth Social.

Two days earlier, Trump had expressed his support for the H-1B visa programme and acknowledged frequently using it for his own properties, calling it a “great programme,” according to a report by the New York Post.

Calling it a “great programme,” the President-elect said he has “always” been in its favour.

“I’ve always liked the visas, I have always been in favour of the



Musk had emphasised the value of hard-working individuals from all races, creeds, and nationalities who have contributed to the nation, urging Americans to preserve the country’s identity as a land of freedom and opportunity

visas. That’s why we have them,” Trump said in a telephonic interview with the New York Post.

He added, “I have many H-1B

visas on my properties. I’ve been a believer in H-1B. I have used it many times. It’s a great programme.”

Notably, during Trump’s first term, the administration imposed restrictions on H-1B visas, citing concerns over “abuse” and “economic strain.”

Trump’s remarks on H-1B visas came after a major divide emerged within his MAGA team in the United States, as Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy who advocated for the expansion of the visa program for ‘highly skilled workers’ faced heavy backlash from within the President-elect’s base.

Musk and Ramaswamy -- both foreign origin leaders heading Trump’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) -- reignited the debate on H-1B visas, while reflecting a divide over immigration policy as Trump prepares to assume office. -ANI

IN YEMEN

‘Indian govt extending all help to Kerala nurse’

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in India on Tuesday confirmed its awareness of the death sentence handed to Nimisha Priya, an Indian nurse in Yemen, and assured that the government is providing all possible assistance.

In response to media queries regarding the case of Nimisha Priya, MEA official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, “We are aware of the sentencing of Ms. Nimisha Priya in Yemen. We understand that the family of Ms. Priya is exploring relevant options. The government is extending all possible help in the matter.”

Nimisha Priya, who is sentenced to death in Yemen, is a trained nurse and has worked in private hospitals in Yemen for a few years.

Her husband and minor daughter returned to India in 2014 because of financial reasons and in that same year, Yemen was gripped by civil war, and they could not go back as the country stopped issuing new visas.

Later in 2015, Nimisha joined hands with a Mahdi to set up her clinic in Yemen’s capital city Sana. She sought Mahdi’s support because, under Yemen’s law, only nationals are allowed to set up clinics and business firms. In 2015, Mahdi accompanied Nimisha Priya to Kerala when she came



for a month-long holiday. During the visit, he stole a wedding photograph of Nimisha, which he later manipulated to claim that he was married to her.

A plea moved by mother of Nimisha Priya had stated, “After a while, Nimisha’s clinic began, Mahdi manipulated the ownership documents of the clinic. He also began to take money out of her monthly earnings after telling everyone that Nimisha was his wife Nimisha had alleged that Mahdi had been harassing her and her family for years. Mahdi also seized her passport. This was done to ensure that she would not leave Yemen. He tortured her under the influence of drugs. He threatened her at gunpoint several times. He took all the money from the clinic

and her ornaments.”

The plea further alleged that unable to cope with the torture, Nimisha complained to the police in Sana but instead of taking action against Mahdi, the police arrested her and put her in jail for six days. It was further alleged that on her return from jail, the severity of the torture increased manifold.

In July 2017, Nimisha took the help of a warden of a jail located near her clinic. The warden suggested that she should try to sedate him, and then convince him to give her passport. However, sedation did not affect Mahdi, who was a substance abuser. She tried sedating him again, using a stronger sedative to retrieve her passport but he died within a few minutes due to a drug overdose. -ANI

SPORTS

Red Warriors reach second successive Gulf Cup final



<FROM A1 The win marks Oman's sixth Gulf Cup final appearance, with the team now eyeing their third title.

For coach Rasheed Jaber, the triumph was a testament to the team's character and ability to perform under pressure.

The January 4 final offers the Red Warriors a chance for redemption after their heartbreak in the previous edition's final, where they fell short against Iraq.

Tuesday's win also highlighted Oman's tactical adaptability. Playing with ten men for more than an hour required a shift in strategy, with the team focusing on compact defence and swift counterattacks.

Jaber's ability to inspire his players and make tactical adjustments under challenging cir-

cumstances was instrumental in Oman's victory.

For the fans, the victory was more than just a football match; it was a celebration of national pride and unity.

The scenes of jubilation in the packed stadium and across Oman symbolised the collective joy of a nation that has long supported its team through thick and thin.

The remarkable semi-final performance will be remembered as one of Oman's finest moments in Gulf Cup history.

With the final just days away, the Red Warriors will aim to cap their journey with the ultimate prize, etching their names in football folklore.

The win certainly added sparkle to Oman's celebratory mode, a perfect way to end 2024 and ring in 2025.



ICC CRICKETER OF THE YEAR 2024



Bumrah, Head, Root and Brook shortlisted for top ICC honour

DUBAI: India pacer Jasprit Bumrah, Australia batter Travis Head, former England captain Joe Root and England batter Harry Brook have been shortlisted for the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year award.

"England's marathon run-scoring duo, Australia's swash-buckling left-hander and India's pace-bowling icon make for a stellar list of nominees for the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy," ICC said in a release on Monday.

Bumrah is the leading wicket-taker in Tests in 2024 - with 71 at an average of 14.92 - while Head

has scored three pivotal centuries and averages 40.53.

If Bumrah wins the Sir Garfield Sobers Award, he will become the fifth Indian to do so, after Rahul Dravid (2004), Sachin Tendulkar (2010), Virat Kohli (2017 and 2018), and R Ashwin (2016).

Root, 34, is the No.1-ranked Test batter in the men's game as a result of making 1,556 runs in 17 Tests at an average of 55.57 in 2024.

He was briefly displaced at the top of the rankings earlier this year by team-mate Brook, but a

disappointing third Test in New Zealand for the 25-year saw Root regain his spot.

Brook has otherwise enjoyed a stellar year, which peaked with a maiden triple hundred in Pakistan in October.

The Yorkshire batter hit 317 off 322 balls in Multan to help England to their third-highest total in Test history.

Australia's Annabel Sutherland, New Zealand's Melie Kerr, South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt and Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu have been nominated for the women's award. - Agencies

BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL

Djokovic begins season on a high

BRISBANE: Novak Djokovic began his season with straight set wins but Nick Kyrgios' return to singles action did not go according to his plans at the Brisbane International on Tuesday.

Djokovic tamed local favourite Rinky Hijikata 6-3, 6-3 in what was the top-seeded Serbian's first tour-level singles match since October.

A day after his doubles victory alongside Kyrgios, Djokovic was precise with his serve and groundstrokes as he outclassed Hijikata and greeted the applauding audience with a gesture of playing the violin.

He will meet two-time Australian Open quarterfinalist Gael Monfils of France in the second round.

"I always expect myself to do well on the court," Djokovic said in an on-court interview. "To start off the new season with a win, it's very important," added the Serb, who is bidding for the 100th singles title of his career. "Rinky made me work hard for the win."

Earlier, 21-year-old Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perreard fired 36 aces to beat Kyrgios 7-6 (7-2), 6-7 (4-7), 7-6 (7-3) in a battle of big servers at the Pat Rafter Arena.

Kyrgios later said that he is unsure whether he will be fit enough to compete at the Australian Open



after his first singles match in 18 months left him in "throbbing" pain.

The Australian Open in Melbourne starts on January 12.

In another men's singles match Tuesday, Frances Tiafoe beat Australian wild-card entry Adam Walton 7-5 (7-5), 6-3. Also, tournament No.5 seed and world No.22 Sebastian Korda withdrew with a lower back injury.

Sabalenka starts campaign with clinical win

World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka opened her season with a 6-4, 6-0 thrashing of Renata Zarazua at the Brisbane International on Tuesday. After receiving a bye for

the first round, it took Sabalenka just 63 minutes to beat Mexico's Zarazua and set up a third-round contest against Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva.

Sabalenka starts the year as the top-ranked player for the first time in her career after winning the US Open in September.

The Belarusian is aiming to win her third straight Australian Open in January but said she is not concerned about the weight of expectation that is upon her.

She'll play 15th-seeded Yulia Putintseva in the third round, the Kazakhstan player beating American Kessler McCartney 6-2, 7-5. - Agencies

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by February 2025 reaching \$74.43, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.04 from the price of Monday, which was \$75.47. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,551.663 points, up by 0.15% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1% at 421.50 points. OIFC, up 11.77%, was the top gainer while Al Fajar Al Alamia, down 2.17%, was the top loser

OIA achieves remarkable return on Italian asset divestment

This achievement reflects Oman Investment Authority's strategic success in maximising financial returns through global investment opportunities

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) made a successful divestment from one of its assets in Italy, which generated an investment return exceeding 50% of the original value.

This achievement reflects OIA's strategic success in maximising financial returns through global investment opportunities.

The latest issue of the quarterly newsletter of OIA, Enjaz and Ee-



jaz, pointed out that the Authority began this investment in 2007, involving a standalone office building known as RSC, located on the outskirts of Milan, Italy.

The property spans approximately 22,000 square metres of

leasable space and was designed to meet local market needs, which makes it highly attractive to a broad range of tenants.

The building was fully leased to a major media group, RCS Media Group, under a 20-year lease

agreement (2011–2031), with an option for a six-year extension. This arrangement ensured financial stability for the asset and significantly enhanced its market value over the years.

Continuing its strategy of ex-

panding international investments and strengthening partnerships with global stakeholders, the Uzbek-Oman Investment Company, one of OIA's strategic joint ventures, has pursued a landmark investment in Uzbekistan's capital, Tashkent. The initiative involves establishing an American university in collaboration with Arizona State University as an academic partner. The university, designed to meet global academic standards, is set to transform higher education in Uzbekistan with a capacity to accommodate over 4,000 students in technical and financial programs. Plans are underway to expand the campus's capacity to 9,000 students upon completion of the new facilities.

The Uzbek-Oman Investment Company, established in 2010 with a capital of \$200 million, is 75% owned by OIA.

Its portfolio currently includes ten diverse investment projects spanning textiles, food products, pharmaceuticals, retail, technology, real estate, and foreign currency markets, reflecting a focus on diversifying investments in promising and vital sectors.

In alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and its national goals, as well

as supporting the digital economy, the newsletter also highlighted a new digital initiative by OIA subsidiary Omantel. By developing an artificial intelligence-powered electronic platform Omantel seeks to enhance local advertising expenditure while reducing financial outflows.

Talal Said Al Mamari, CEO of Omantel, announced that the platform's pilot launch will take place soon, with full commercial deployment planned by early 2025. Al Mamari emphasized that this initiative represents not just a commercial step but a strategic transformation toward building a sustainable, tech-driven advertising ecosystem in Oman. The platform aims to benefit Omani society across all sectors, laying the groundwork for a regional expansion into GCC countries and driving the digital advertising sector's transformation.

The December 2024 issue of Enjaz and Eejaz also highlighted several topics, including the launch of locally branded Onsor computers, which have reached international markets, and the journey of Eng. Azza Al Subhi, a process safety engineer at OQ Exploration and Production. - **ONA**

BRIEFS

Oil prices rise as China's manufacturing grows



SINGAPORE: Oil prices rose in early trading yesterday, supported by data indicating that China's manufacturing activity expanded in December 2024, but oil is still heading for a second straight annual decline, amid concerns about demand in major consumer countries. Brent crude futures rose 47 cents, or 0.7 percent, to reach \$74.46 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures also rose 49 cents, or 0.7 percent, to reach \$71.48 a barrel. On the year, Brent crude fell 3.2 percent, while US West Texas Intermediate crude fell 0.6 percent. - **ONA**

Safe-haven gold poised for best year since 2010 on rate cuts



SINGAPORE: Gold prices were little changed on Tuesday, the last trading day of a record-breaking year that drove the metal to its best annual performance since 2010 on robust central bank buying, geopolitical tensions and monetary policy easing by major global banks. Spot gold eased 0.1% to USD 2,603.69 per ounce, as of 0608 GMT. US gold futures also shed 0.1% to USD 2,615.50, Reuters reported. As one of the best-performing assets of 2024, bullion prices have gained more than 26% year-to-date, the biggest annual jump since 2010, and scaled multiple records to end at \$2,790.15 on October 31. Bullion is considered a hedge against inflation and turmoil but high rates reduce the non-yielding asset's appeal. Spot silver shed 0.5% to USD 28.80 per ounce, palladium dropped 0.3% to USD 898.39, and platinum added 0.4% to USD 907.05. Silver is headed for its best year since 2020 and has added over 21%. Platinum and palladium are set for annual losses and have dipped about 8% and 18%, respectively. - **BNA**

Chinese stocks post annual gain in 2024 with key index up

BEIJING: As the last trading day of 2024 came to an end on Tuesday, China's major stock indices have seen significant gains this year, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index rising by 12.67 percent. On Tuesday, the Shanghai Composite Index went down 1.63 percent to 3,351.76 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 2.4 percent lower at 10,414.61 points. The combined turnover covered by the two indices stood at 254.42 trillion yuan (about \$35.39 trillion) in 2024, up 20.2 percent year on year. Shares related to artificial intelligence, low-altitude economy and finance posted brilliant performances in 2024. The ChiNext Index, tracking China's Nasdaq-style board of growth enterprises, lost 2.93 percent to close at 2,141.6 points on Tuesday. - **Xinhua**

GAS TRANSIT DEAL



As Russia-Ukraine gas deal ends, worries mount in EU's east

BRUSSELS: Currently, Russian gas is still flowing through Ukraine's pipeline network to the European Union (EU), generating revenue for Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin and funding his war against Ukraine. The Russian has claimed without Russian gas the bloc won't be able to meet its energy needs.

For Ukraine, by contrast, the gas transit deal has always meant first and foremost filling Putin's war chest, even though some of the revenue Russia gains from its exports via Ukraine stay in Kyiv as transit fees.

Now, as the year 2024 ends, Ukraine will not renew the gas transit agreement with Russia, as announced by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on December 19 in Brussels. Ukraine will no longer allow Moscow to "earn additional billions" while continuing its aggression against the country.

Russian President Putin also confirmed the contract's termination, telling reporters in a televised briefing on December 26 that a new contract was "impossible to conclude in 3-4 days."

Putin laid the blame firmly on Ukraine for refusing to extend the agreement. The end of the agreement, however, raises questions about gas supply in landlocked eastern EU countries, which cannot import liquefied natural gas (LNG) by sea. Austria, Hungary, and Slovakia still rely on Russian gas via Ukraine which is why the governments there are eager to continue purchasing Russian gas.

Russian gas: Mutually beneficial even during Cold War

Before the Ukraine war, Russia was the world's largest exporter of natural and Europe was Moscow's most important market. European governments prioritized access to cheap energy over concerns about doing business with Putin.

The mutually beneficial rela-

tionship began more than 50 years ago, when the former Soviet Union needed funds and equipment to develop its Siberian gas fields. At the time, the western part of then still divided Germany sought affordable energy for its growing economy, and signed the so-called pipes-for-gas deal with Moscow, under which West German manufacturers supplied thousands of kilometers of pipes to transport Russian gas to Western Europe.

This energy relationship persists, as European importers are often locked into long-term contracts that are difficult to exit.

According to the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, EU fossil fuel imports from Russia amounted to about \$1 billion (€958 million) per month at the end of 2023, down from \$16 billion per month in early 2022. In 2023, Russia accounted for 15% of the EU's total gas imports, trailing Norway (30%) and the US (19%), but ahead of North African countries (14%). Much of this Russian gas flows through pipelines via Ukraine and Turkey.

Major consumers include Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary. Additionally, countries like Spain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands still import Russian LNG by tanker, some of which mixes with other gas sources in Europe's pipeline network. As a result, it may even reach Germany, despite its efforts to forgo Russian gas.

Gas market upheaval triggers price spikes

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, gas prices surged dramatically — at times by more than 20 times — forcing some European factories to cut production and many small businesses to close. Prices have since dropped but remain above pre-crisis levels, making energy-intensive industries, particularly in Germany, less competitive.

European consumers are also suffering from high energy prices,

prompting many to reduce consumption amid a severe cost of living crisis. The additional expenses are a significant burden: Nearly 11% of EU citizens struggled to adequately heat their homes in 2023, according to the EU Commission.

The termination of the Ukraine-Russia agreement is already factored into European gas market forecasts, according to an EU Commission analysis reported about by Bloomberg in mid-December.

EU isn't desperate to keep gas route open

The EU is confident in its ability to secure alternative supplies.

"With more than 500 billion cubic meters of LNG produced each year globally, the replacement of around 14 billion cubic meters of Russian gas transiting via Ukraine should have a marginal impact on EU natural gas prices," Bloomberg cites from the commission's document, which is not yet public. "It can be considered that the end of the transit agreement has been internalized in the winter gas prices."

The EU has long argued that member states still importing Russian gas via the Ukraine route — particularly Austria and Slovakia — could manage without these deliveries. Therefore, the EU commission said it would not enter negotiations to keep the route open.

According to the Commission, member states have been able to reduce their gas consumption by 18% since August 2022 compared to the five-year average. Moreover, the United States is expected to create new LNG capacities over the next two years, and these supplies could help the EU address potential disruptions.

"The most realistic scenario is that no Russian gas will flow through Ukraine anymore," the EU commission said, adding the bloc was "well-prepared" for this outcome. - **DW**

WORLD BANK

India's digital capital increased entrepreneurship, business income

NEW DELHI: The World Bank in its latest report has recognised India's increasing digital capital as a significant driver of entrepreneurship, business income, and social mobility, especially benefiting small-scale vendors and economically lagging districts.

In a recent report, the institution outlined how digital technologies—such as the internet, mobile phones, and social media—are transforming the socio-economic landscape in the country.

It said "digital capital has increased entrepreneurship and business income in India and has favoured small-scale vendors and economically lagging districts". The report noted that Digital technologies provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds with access to instructional material, promoting talent development and social mobility.

These tools have also enabled individuals to build digital footprints—records of online activity and payments—which can serve as digital capital. This capital helps individuals establish financial credibility, as data on payments, receipts, taxes, and loan repayments can now be used by lenders to assess creditworthiness.

The report credits Nandan Nilekani, one of India's leading tech entrepreneurs, for pioneering the Aadhaar system in 2009. This digital identification initiative has allowed millions of Indians to accumulate digital capital and integrate into the formal economy.

The World Bank also highlighted India's remarkable strides in social mobility, particularly in urban areas. Since the country's economic liberalization, the gains have been more pronounced among disadvantaged communities in cities compared to rural areas.

It said "In India, social mobility has improved greatly in urban areas in recent decades, and has delivered larger gains for the disadvantaged than in rural areas".

It also noted that India's IT revolution has played a crucial role in this transformation. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) demonstrated to the world the availability of high-quality, cost-effective talent in India, becoming the first Indian company to export computing services to the United States. - **ANI**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

OIFC, up 11.77%, was the top gainer while Al Fajar Al Alamia, down 2.17%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,551.663 points, up by 0.15% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1% at 421.50 points. OIFC, up 11.77%, was the top gainer while Al Fajar Al Alamia, down 2.17%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while OQEP were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1418 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 6 million, with more than 33 million shares changing hands. Out of 72 traded securities, 38 advanced, 13 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for RO 459K while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 242K, followed by domestic investors for RO 216K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,640.11 points, up 0.447%. Prices of Ahli Bank, Oman United Insurance, Oman Qatar Insurance, Takaful Oman, DIDIC were up

by 10.00%, 9.71%, 9.60%, 8.70%, 8.51% respectively. Prices of Sohar International Bank, Bank Dhofar, Al Omaniya Financial Services were down by 1.46%, 1.27%, 0.59% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,290.70 points, up 1.26%. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Oman Chlorine, Dhofar Beverages, Gulf International Chemicals, Voltamp Energy were up by 6.25%, 5.67%, 5.37%, 4.29%, 3.75% respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Al Fajar Al Alamia, Salalah Mills, A'Saffa Foods were down by 5.00%, 2.17%, 1.36%, 0.24% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.28% before closing at 1,737.47 points. Prices of OIFC, Barka Water & Power Company, Al Jazeera Services, Shell Oman Marketing, Majan College were up by 11.77%, 9.52%, 9.42%, 7.64%, 4.81% respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Al Suwadi Power, Barka Desalination, Abraj Energy, Oman Telecom were down by 1.52%, 1.52%, 0.83%, 0.36%, 0.21% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,576.60	4,541.92	4,544.96	4,544.96	31.64	0.70
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,725.85	7,616.97	7,725.85	7,606.51	119.34	1.57
Industry Index	5,293.66	5,227.79	5,270.70	5,224.85	45.86	0.88
Services Index	1,743.08	1,732.92	1,743.08	1,732.57	10.51	0.61
MSX Shariah Index	425.50	425.50	425.50	417.27	8.23	1.97
MSX TR INDEX	6,409.53	6,360.95	6,409.53	6,365.21	44.32	0.70
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,777.36	8,653.67	8,777.36	8,641.78	135.59	1.57
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,107.63	6,031.63	6,081.14	6,028.23	52.91	0.88
SERVICES TR IDX	2,085.83	2,073.67	2,085.83	2,073.26	12.58	0.61

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
33,138,361	6,033,574	1,418	27,595,093,234	38	13	21	72

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	62,358	15,874	11	0.238	0.260	0.238	0.260	0.237	0.023	9.705	0.260	0.237	0.260	0.100	26,000,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	2,380	1,536	2	0.640	0.648	0.640	0.648	0.602	0.046	7.641	0.648	0.600	0.000	0.100	61,560,000
OM0000000132	OMINVEST	610,682	260,021	42	0.221	0.230	0.220	0.230	0.219	0.011	2.449	0.230	0.215	0.230	0.100	22,560,000
OM0000000125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	601,802	50,383	35	0.083	0.085	0.083	0.085	0.083	0.002	2.410	0.085	0.081	0.086	0.100	17,000,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	148,710	13,984	46	0.104	0.112	0.104	0.104	0.102	0.002	1.823	0.104	0.108	0.107	0.100	23,320,000
OM0000002224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	949,146	263,972	67	0.380	0.390	0.369	0.388	0.381	0.007	1.857	0.388	0.381	0.388	0.100	9,727,080
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	52,856	2,963	2	0.056	0.057	0.056	0.057	0.056	0.001	1.786	0.057	0.055	0.060	0.100	20,280,256
OM0000000440	AL SHARAFIA INVESTMENT HO	152,888	10,880	12	0.071	0.072	0.071	0.070	0.070	0.001	1.429	0.071	0.069	0.071	0.100	6,360,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	8,500	2,471	3	0.292	0.294	0.289	0.289	0.286	0.003	1.049	0.294	0.289	0.000	0.100	36,095,510
OM0000000152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	12,996	1,581	3	0.123	0.129	0.118	0.118	0.117	0.001	0.655	0.118	0.116	0.000	0.100	17,700,000
OM0000000702	QO GAS NETWORKS	3,456,788	476,609	92	0.138	0.139	0.136	0.138	0.137	0.001	0.730	0.137	0.130	0.145	0.100	597,626,101
OM0000002736	BANK MUSCAT	1,910,779	478,742	52	0.232	0.235	0.229	0.232	0.231	0.001	0.398	0.232	0.230	0.260	0.100	1,891,612,000
OM0000000181	OMAN EMIRATES HO	203,486	14,987	22	0.087	0.089	0.087	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.086	0.072	0.100	4,287,200
OM0000000149	OMAN CEMENT	2,600	987	4	0.380	0.380	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.000	0.000	0.378	0.380	0.000	0.100	125,060,884
OM0000000969	QOREDOO	11,415	2,625	6	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.000	0.000	0.220	0.225	0.220	0.100	14,671,773
OM00000004735	SEMCORP SALALAH	12,810	1,281	3	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.000	0.103	0.100	36,457,135
OM0000004788	MADINA TARAFUL	102,973	8,341	9	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.081	0.080	0.000	0.100	14,175,000
OM0000000422	AL KUTAINI POWER	176,604	11,635	10	0.068	0.068	0.066	0.068	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.065	0.071	0.100	44,542,370
OM0000000326	OMAN TELECOM	201,254	188,179	28	0.357	0.343	0.357	0.340	0.342	-0.012	0.940	0.889	0.942	0.100	703,000,000	
OM0000000284	ASAFA FOODS	11,500	4,690	5	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.344	0.400	0.390	0.400	0.100	40,000,000
OM0000000834	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	472,569	131,227	39	0.279	0.280	0.277	0.277	0.277	-0.001	0.960	0.277	0.278	0.277	0.100	21,345,400
OM0000002398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	6,294,161	865,172	51	0.137	0.138	0.135	0.135	0.137	-0.002	1.460	0.135	0.127	0.144	0.100	883,328,246
OM0000000493	AL SUWADI POWER	344,057	22,643	36	0.067	0.067	0.065	0.065	0.066	-0.001	-1.515	0.065	0.065	0.067	0.100	46,438,412
Total	29	16,020,194	2,939,792	571												

Parallel Market

OM0000000220	AHLI BANK	937,056	154,288	28	0.165	0.165	0.150	0.165	0.150	0.015	10.000	0.165	0.164	0.000	0.100	387,693,482
OM0000000679	OMAN QATAR INSURANCE	101,357	21,878	8	0.200	0.217	0.200	0.217	0.198	0.019	9.596	0.217	0.000	0.217	0.100	34,984,430
OM0000000341	BARKA WATER AND POWER	353,270	102,861	42	0.295	0.292	0.295	0.292	0.294	-0.003	9.854	0.292	0.291	0.296	0.100	61,530,000
OM0000002226	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	268	56	1	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.191	0.018	9.424	0.209	0.000	0.000	0.100	8,924,185
OM0000000478	TAKAFUL OMAN	50,913	2,503	6	0.044	0.050	0.044	0.050	0.046	0.004	8.696	0.050	0.042	0.050	0.100	12,500,000
OM0000000150	DHOFAH INTERNATIONAL DEV & INV HO	9,897	2,366	6	0.235	0.255	0.235	0.255	0.235	0.020	8.511	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.100	104,537,611
OM0000000095	OMAN REIT FUND	1,330,578	110,482	35	0.082	0.086	0.082	0.085	0.080	0.005	6.250	0.085	0.075	0.087	0.100	43,223,760
OM0000000241	OMAN CHLORINE	63,000	23,730	5	0.390	0.410	0.390	0.410	0.388	0.022	5.670	0.410	0.350	0.390	0.100	29,316,625
OM0000000121	DHOFAH BEVERAGES	5,000	1,052	2	0.205	0.216	0.205	0.216	0.205	0.011	5.366	0.216	0.000	0.000	0.100	14,320,000
OM0000000187	MAJAN COLLEGE	23,000	2,745	3	0.110	0.110	0.109	0.109	0.104	0.005	4.808	0.109	0.104	0.000	0.100	9,810,000
OM0000000028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	277	350	0	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	4.386	0.073	0.000	0.100	16,000,000	
OM0000000361	VOLTAMP ENERGY	389,910	155,963	18	0.400	0.415	0.400	0.415	0.400	0.015	3.750	0.415	0.000	0.000	0.100	33,782,141
OM0000000107	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	65,200	182,062	26	2.700	2.800	2.700	2.800	2.700	0.100	3.704	2.800	2.500	2.780	0.100	251,160,000
OM0000000868	THE PEARL REEF	1,000	120	1	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.119	0.004	3.448	0.120	0.000	0.100	10,972,436	
OM0000000707	DHOFAH GENERATING	125,754	8,139	16	0.063	0.065	0.063	0.065	0.063	0.002	3.175	0.065	0.060	0.066	0.100	14,445,600
OM0000000260	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	186,126	12,296	15	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.067	-0.001	3.077	0.067	0.065	0.071	0.100	14,200,000
OM0000000336	OMAN ARAB BANK	35,000	5,355	5	0.152	0.154	0.152	0.154	0.150	0.004	2.667	0.154	0.151	0.153	0.100	257,989,140
OM0000000195	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	564	78	1	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.135	0.003	2.222	0.138	0.000	0.000	0.100	2,292,287
OM0000000140	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	100	46	1	0.459	0.459	0.459	0.459	0.450	0.009	2.000	0.459	0.450	0.000	0.100	72,292,500
OM0000000720	ARABIA FALCON INSURANCE	1,000	115	1	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.113	0.002	1.770	0.115	0.120	0.115	0.100	1,197,691
OM0000000759	QO EXTORATION AND PRODUCTION	3,685,753	1,240,073	189	0.331	0.337	0.331	0.337	0.332	0.005	1.506	0.337	0.330	0.337	0.010	2,699,000,000
OM0000000428	SMN POWER HOLDING	25,000	8,675	3	0.347	0.347	0.347	0.347	0.346	0.001	0.289	0.347	0.332	0.350	0.100	69,273,553
OM0000000160	NATIONAL GAS	54,000	4,214	12	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.077	0.080	0.100	46,000,000
OM0000000190	MUSCAT FINANCE	39,800	1,711	3	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.000	0.000	0.043	0.043	0.000	0.100	13,207,252
OM0000000572	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	500	248	1	0.750	0.750	0.750	0.750	0.750	0.000	0.000	0.750	0.000	0.000	0.100	45,998,250
OM0000000548	NATIONAL FINANCE	36,000	4,990	7	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.000	0.100	0.100	31,318,599
OM0000000430	BANK NIZWA	83,076	3,187	12	0.098	0.099	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.096	0.103	0.100	45,998,250
OM0000000035	ALMANA CERAMICS	16,000	2,032	2	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.127	0.000	0.100	0.100	6,985,000
OM0000000063	PHOENIX POWER	85,956	5,032	10	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.100	54,830,885
OM0000000743	LIVA GROUP	21,300	6,714	5	0.320											



135-MILLION-YEAR-OLD TYRANNOSAUR TEETH



A GROUNDBREAKING study by the University of Southampton has uncovered evidence of diverse meat-eating dinosaurs in East Sussex, the United Kingdom (UK), 135 million years ago. Published in *Papers in Palaeontology*, the research identified fossilised teeth from tyrannosaurs, spinosaurs, and dromaeosaurs (Velociraptor-like theropods) in the Bexhill-on-Sea area. This marks the first identification of tyrannosaurs in sediments of this age and region. Led by Dr. Chris Barker, the team employed advanced methods, including machine learning, to analyse the

teeth, which offer crucial insights into ancient ecosystems. These mid-sized tyrannosaurs, a third the size of T. rex, likely preyed on small dinosaurs and reptiles. "This study highlights the importance of museum collections and dedicated collectors in expanding our understanding of prehistoric life," said Dr. Darren Naish, a co-author. The findings shed light on the lesser-known Cretaceous ecosystems of mainland southern England, complementing discoveries from the Isle of Wight and promising further revelations from reexamined collections. - **ONA**

UNEARTHED IN UK

Newcastle condemn Man Utd to 62-year low with dominant win

Newcastle forward Alexander Isak has now scored eight goals in his last six Premier League games

LONDON: Newcastle beat Manchester United 2-0 in a Premier League game at Old Trafford for only the second time since 1972 - and condemned their hosts to a third straight home loss for the first time in 45 years.

And not since Sir Matt Busby's days, in September 1962, have Manchester United lost five times in the league in a calendar month.

Early goals from Alexander Isak and Joelinton gave Eddie Howe's men a thoroughly deserved victory that left them fifth in an impressive end to 2024.

Newcastle have won their past four Premier League games, with the excellent Isak taking his tally to 12 and his recent strike rate to eight in six games, with six in successive games.

In contrast, the home side - who last lost three successive home league games in 1979 - were abysmal.

Head coach Ruben Amorim replaced forward Joshua Zirkzee with Kobbie Mainoo in the 33rd minute, confirmation that he had got a starting line-up that paired veterans Casemiro and Christian Eriksen together in midfield hopelessly wrong.

Marcus Rashford was brought back on to the substitutes' bench, but despite watching his side slide to a fourth successive defeat and fail to score for the third game on



the trot, Amorim opted against introducing the England man.

Manchester United end the year in 14th place, seven points above the relegation zone. What was once was humorous jibing about a fight to avoid the drop is now a little too close to comfort - and league leaders Liverpool lie in wait at Anfield on Sunday.

Manchester United's deficiencies in defending set-pieces have been highlighted in every post-match inquest since Nottingham Forest came to this stadium on 7

quarter of an hour later, he did the same thing.

On the first occasion, five home defenders were in a line. Yet Isak still got a free header to score. On the second, Joelinton outmuscled Lisandro Martinez as he jumped and the outcome was the same as Newcastle celebrated their good fortune.

It was 2-0 by the 19th minute and could have been more. Isak raced through after being left unattended by the touchline, but chipped a weak chip straight at Andre Onana. Gordon curled an effort over from the edge of the area and Joelinton blasted over after Gordon had skinned Noussair Mazraoui by the touchline.

In addition, Kieran Trippier tried to exploit Manchester United's glaring weakness by going for goal direct from a corner, which had Onana scrambling to punch away at his near post.

For Newcastle, with a Champions League place to fight for and a Carabao Cup semi-final next week against Arsenal - and prospect of a first trophy since 1969 - the rest of the contest was about containment. - Agencies

'Relegation a possibility'

LONDON: It is 50 years since Manchester United were relegated

Legend has it that the great Denis Law sent his old club down with a backheeled goal for Manchester City that he didn't celebrate.

The truth was slightly different as United were doomed in 1973-74 if Law had scored or not.

As time moved on and English top flight football came to be dominated by high finance - and United were able to generate more of it than anyone else - no-one remotely thought history might repeat itself.

We have long got used to United not being what they were but this season has been something else, and Monday's game - against a Newcastle side who ripped their hosts apart for half an hour - led to head coach Ruben Amorim uttering words it was scarcely believed imaginable.

Asked by *BBC Sport* if United were in a battle to avoid the drop, Amorim said: "I think that it is a possibility. We have to be clear with our fans."

Manchester United lost six games in all competitions in December, only the third month in their history which they have lost that many. They also conceded 18 goals in December, their most in a month since March 1964 (also 18). Since Amorim's first game in charge on November 24, only Southampton (7) have lost more games in all



competitions among Premier League clubs than United.

United will end New Year's Eve in 14th place in the Premier League, their lowest position at the turn of a year in the league since 1989, when they ended that year in 15th, eventually finishing 13th.

United have lost three consecutive home league games for the first time since February 1979, while they have lost three consecutive Premier League games within the same season for the first time since December 2015 under Louis van Gaal.

When Amorim spoke to the wider media, he offered up a startling admission.

"It is also my fault," he said, when asked if it was embarrassing to be a Manchester United coach and have to talk about relegation. "The team is not improving. It is a little bit lost in this moment and it is a bit embarrassing to be Manchester United coach and lose a lot of games.

"I think people are tired of excuses at this club. This club needs a shock." - Agencies

ASTON VILLA REMAIN NINTH

Watkins stars as Villa held by Brighton



LONDON: Ollie Watkins celebrated his 29th birthday with a goal and an assist but his Aston Villa side were held 2-2 by Brighton in a hard-fought Premier League encounter at Villa Park on Monday. The draw extended Brighton's seven-match winless run, despite the Seagulls scoring first in the 12th minute through Simon Adingra's curling effort on the break.

Having been denied a penalty moments earlier, Villa were awarded one in the 36th minute after a four-minute video assistant referee (VAR) check.

Watkins levelled as he sent keeper Bart Verbruggen the wrong way with a spot-kick on his return to the starting line-up.

Villa completed a fine comeback two minutes into the second half when Watkins chipped a lovely ball over the top which Rogers collected and buried into the bottom corner. But they were unable to hold on to a fifth win in seven in all competitions as Brighton full-back Tariq Lamptey levelled in the 81st minute. The hosts stayed ninth in the table. They are three points off fifth spot. - Agencies

ITALIAN SERIE A



Conceicao is AC Milan boss

MILAN: Former Porto manager Sergio Conceicao has been appointed AC Milan head coach following the sacking of Paulo Fonseca. The former Lazio, Inter Milan and Parma midfielder has signed an 18-month deal at San Siro.

Conceicao, 50, won 11 trophies in six years at Porto before stepping down at the end of last season.

The Portuguese coach's first game in charge will be on 3 January, when Milan take on Juventus in the first leg of the semi-finals of the Italian Super Cup.

Milan dismissed Fonseca on Monday, hours after a 1-1 draw against Roma. The result left the seven-time Euro champions in eighth place in the Serie A table.

FIRST HOME WIN OF THE SEASON

Delap shines as Ipswich deliver Chelsea title blow

LONDON: Liam Delap's exceptional performance helped Ipswich earn their first home win of the season as Chelsea's title hopes dwindled after a 2-0 defeat on Monday at Portman Road.

After scoring a 12th-minute penalty, the 21-year-old striker set up former Chelsea winger Omari Hutchinson for Ipswich's second eight minutes after the break.

Chelsea dominated possession but were wasteful and the video assistant referee (VAR) ruled out a Joao Felix first-half equaliser after a long check for offside.

Ex-Manchester City striker Delap powered in a penalty that he won himself for the opening goal, after a VAR ruling that there was sufficient contact by goalkeeper Filip Jorgensen as the Ipswich man dribbled past him.

Delap later capitalised on Axel Disasi's poor back pass to set up Hutchinson to make it 2-0 to the hosts.

Ipswich's win puts them above



Leicester City into 18th and just one point behind Wolves in the table as they look to move out of the bottom three.

Chelsea have now lost consecutive matches since the goalless draw at Everton that ended an eight-match winning run in all competitions, and they remain fourth in the Premier League.

Enzo Maresca's men are 10 points behind league leaders Liverpool - with Arne Slot's pace-setters also having a game in hand - leaving a sustained title challenge by the Blues looking unlikely.

But the Italian manager refused to be too hard on Chelsea after their second defeat in as many games. - Agencies

BRAZIL STRIKER

Wolves striker Cunha banned for two games

LONDON: Wolves forward Matheus Cunha has been banned for two games by the Football Association following his clash with Ipswich security earlier this month.

The Brazil striker was charged with misconduct after he elbowed a member of the Ipswich staff before snatching his glasses off his face.

Cunha, who has also been fined £80,000, will miss Wolves' Premier League game with Nottingham Forest and the FA Cup third-round trip to Bristol City.

The altercation came after the 2-1 defeat by Ipswich at Molineux, with Jack Taylor scoring an injury-time winner for the visitors.

The defeat cost manager Gary O'Neil and his backroom staff their jobs and they were replaced



by Vitor Pereira and his coaches.

Cunha was found guilty of acting in an improper manner during a confrontation between the two sides at the final whistle, with team-mate Rayan Ait-Nouri shown a second yellow card in the tunnel.

Since the incident, Cunha, 25,

has scored in wins over Leicester City and Manchester United and helped Wolves' to a 2-2 draw at Tottenham on Sunday.

He has 10 goals in 19 Premier League games this season with Wolves 17th, a point above the relegation zone before Monday's home game with Forest. - Agencies

FORMER ENGLAND CAPTAIN

Rooney parts ways with Plymouth Argyle

LONDON: Head coach Wayne Rooney has left Championship strugglers Plymouth Argyle by mutual agreement.

The 39-year-old former England captain oversaw just four league wins and suffered 13 defeats in 23 Championship games after taking charge of the Pilgrims in May.

He leaves with them at the foot of the division.

Rooney came to Home Park four months after being sacked by Birmingham City following an 83-day spell in charge that brought nine defeats in 15 games.

He and his players were booed following Sunday's 2-0 defeat by Oxford United - their sixth defeat in a nine-game winless run that began in early November.

Rooney defiantly said he did not take criticism "personally" after that loss, but it was enough to end



the tenure of the man who was lauded as "the perfect candidate to provide the exciting and attacking brand of football" when appointed.

Under Rooney - who set scoring records for England and Manchester United during his decorated playing career - Plymouth have dropped to the bottom of the table, scored the joint fewest goals in the second tier and have conceded more than any other club in Eng-

land's top four divisions.

Assistant head coach Mike Phelan and first-team coach Simon Ireland have also departed Home Park.

First-team coach Kevin Nancekivell and club captain Joe Edwards will lead the side for Wednesday's home game against Bristol City.

'Argyle will always hold a special place in my heart'

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board of Plymouth Argyle Football Club," Rooney said upon his departure., external

"Thanks also to all the staff who made me feel welcome and who make the club such a special place, the players and fans for their efforts and support during my time as head coach and I wish them all the best for the future." - Agencies

IN PICTURES

THE MOST



National mourning in Russia after 140 people were killed in a concert



Deadly strikes in Ukraine



End of Assad regime in Syria



Trump wins US presidential election

IMPRESSIVE PICTURES



Standing up for democracy in Hamburg, Germany



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange freed



Humanitarian crisis in Sudan

OF 2024



ROUND-UP

ROP and Bank Muscat organise lecture on cyber fraud awareness

The lecture was attended by a group of employees, who were introduced to prominent methods used by fraudsters in committing financial crimes as well as different ways to prevent fraud and how to respond to such attacks

MUSCAT: Within the scope of the joint awareness initiative between Royal Oman Police and Bank Muscat, an anti-fraud awareness lecture was organised recently at Bank Muscat Head Office.

The lecture was attended by a group of employees, who were introduced to prominent methods used by fraudsters in committing financial crimes as well as different ways to prevent fraud and how to respond to such attacks.

During the lecture, Major Khalid Mohammed Al Rawahi from the Directorate General of Inquiries and Criminal Search, Royal Oman Police, highlighted the prominent fraud methods such as fraudulent e-mail and bank data theft, and provided practical guidelines to help individuals avoid such attempts. He also emphasized the importance of promoting individual and community awareness and the role of institutions in spread-

ing a security culture. The awareness lecture was organised as part of ongoing initiative aimed at promoting social responsibility and increasing individual awareness of cybercrime, thereby contributing to the protection of the community. The public can easily contact the Royal Oman Police hotline at 80077444 to report fraud or for any fraud-related queries.

With cases of electronic fraud increasing globally and often causing tremendous financial and psychological harm to both individuals and businesses, Bank Muscat has further strengthened its efforts to combat this crime by partnering regularly with a number of institutions and authorities. Giving top priority to its role as the Sultanate's flagship financial institution, Bank Muscat has been part of a number of anti-fraud awareness campaigns over the past few years whereby the bank has sought to sensitise and educate the general public with information that will enable them to easily recognise and avoid fraud.



ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION



400 participants gather to commemorate World Meditation Day 2024

MUSCAT: Nearly 400 participants gathered at the Oman Hockey Stadium in Al Amerat to commemorate World Meditation Day, observed annually on December 21. Organized by the Art of Living Foundation in collaboration with Oman Hockey, the event provided a serene space for attendees to embrace the transformative practice of meditation.

The United Nations General Assembly designated December 21 as World Meditation Day to coincide with winter solstice, emphasising the ancient practice's profound impact on personal well-being and mental health.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Founder of the Art of Living, spoke during the UN observance of the day, stating,

"Meditation is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. It's akin to mental health; helping us stay centred and overcome aggression and depression. The mental health demands it more than ever."

As the world continues to adopt meditation as a universal tool, Oman's observance of the World Meditation Day underscores the importance of nurturing both mental and physical well-being through this timeless practice.

The meditation session led by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was streamed live, with over 8.5 million joining virtually and even physically in large groups to meditate for global peace and harmony.

STRATEGIC GROWTH

Sohar Islamic begins operations at Souq Al Haffa branch in Dhofar

MUSCAT: In its ongoing effort to make Sharia-compliant financial solutions more accessible to the local community, Sohar Islamic – the dedicated Islamic banking window of Sohar International – has commenced operations in its new branch at Souq Al Haffa in the Dhofar Governorate on 29 December.

This marks the third branch in Dhofar and the 20th in Sohar Islamic's growing network, demonstrating the bank's commitment to providing ease and accessibility to its customers. Located in a key hub in Dhofar, the new branch aligns with Sohar Islamic's strategic objective to expand its network of branches, and support Oman Vision 2040 goals of enhancing financial inclusion.

As a full-fledged branch combining retail and corporate services, the new branch offers a diverse range of Sharia-compliant products and services tailored to the unique needs of its clientele. In addition to day-to-day banking services, clients can access personalised financing solutions, various deposit accounts, cheque and card processing, and remittance services, ensuring an efficient and seamless banking experience. For corporate customers, Sohar Islamic



provides Sharia-compliant wholesale banking offerings alongside financing solutions for Large Corporates, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and government institutions, among other services. Supported by dedicated staff, corporate customers are also assigned a relationship manager to facilitate their banking needs effectively.

Abdul Wahid Al Murshidi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer, stated, "In today's continuously evolving landscape, our branches remain vital touchpoints, fostering meaningful connections, delivering personalized services, and more convenience to the customers. The commencement of operations at our Souq Al Haffa branch – the third in Dhofar, highlights

our commitment to meeting the governorate's increasing need for Sharia-compliant financial services while establishing a presence in key commercial hubs to offer accessible and convenient banking solutions. This expansion aligns with Sohar Islamic's commitment to fostering financial inclusion and empowering local communities."

He added, "By complementing advancements in digital banking with an enhanced physical presence, we are creating a comprehensive and unified banking experience that blends the enduring principles of Sharia with forward-looking innovation. This milestone underscores our dedication to meeting the evolving needs of our customers and contributing meaningfully to the country's progress."

PRIVILEGES

ahli islamic holds gathering for Al Shumookh premium customers

MUSCAT: ahli islamic, ahlibank's Islamic banking window, hosted an event for its premium 'Al Shumookh' customers at the ahlibank Head Office in Watayah. The event took place on 18 December, wherein the customers were welcomed to join the occasion organised by the ahli islamic team.

Al Shumookh Premium Banking was designed so that customers can enjoy a range of designed services especially curated to meet their current and future needs. Of the many privileges offered to Al Shumookh account holders are dedicated relationship manager to meet all customers' banking needs, premium lounges provided in selected branches, and branded cheque books, as well as branded debit and credit cards. Discounts and exclusive offers from premium merchants are also provided, including 24/7 concierge service. Upon completing different banking transactions, customers can earn redeemable Pearl Points, and credit card holders gain 1% cash-back on their spends. Moreover, complimentary chauffeur service is made available, alongside access to more than 1,000 airport lounges across the globe, 12 times a year.

Speaking on the event, Noora Sultan, AGM - Head of Retail Banking at ahli Islamic, said, "We remain committed to serving our



shared commitment to brilliance. Together, we strive to contribute meaningfully to achieving Oman's Vision 2040."

"At ahli islamic, we are dedicated to tailoring our premium solutions that align with our clients' individual needs and aspirations. We endeavor to offer unparalleled opportunities and services, reinforcing our commitment to fostering enduring relationships that support the long-term financial well-being of our clients. We believe connecting with them is key, as we continue to enhance our

shared commitment to brilliance. Together, we strive to contribute meaningfully to achieving Oman's Vision 2040."

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ties and build a solid foundation on which we can grow and expand exponentially," she added.

ahli islamic's continued focus on innovation in product and service delivery has ensured customer satisfaction at every level of its operations. Bolstered by its new Al Shumookh Center, it will continue to provide ease of access, privacy, and comfort to all of its premium customers. Digitalisation is at the forefront of its operations, and ahli islamic will continue to evolve and serve its customers in the best, most convenient way.

DELIVERY OF EXCLUSIVE MODEL

One-of-a-kind Audi RS 6 Avant GT finds its home in Oman

MUSCAT: Audi Oman, represented by Premium Motors, celebrates the delivery of the exclusive Audi RS 6 Avant GT to a single, discerning owner in Oman.

This one-of-a-kind model, powered by Audi's most potent 4.0-litre V8 twin-turbo TFSI engine in the RS 6 series redefines high-performance luxury with breathtaking speed, sharp handling, and unmatched agility.

Iconic RS badge

Bearing the iconic RS badge, the Audi RS 6 Avant GT combines motorsport-inspired performance with everyday usability. With its limited production, this collector's masterpiece blends bold design, engineering precision, and Audi's hallmark luxury, ensuring its place as a standout in the high-performance car world.

The Audi RS 6 Avant GT commands attention with its GT-specific bumper, visible carbon stripes on the bonnet, and a wide Audi Singleframe grille adorned with black Audi rings. Heritage-inspired wraps in Arkona white, grey, or black tones pair with striking paint options like Mythos black metallic and Nardo grey, celebrating Audi Tradition. Carbon-fibre accents, a roof-rail



free silhouette, and exclusive 22-inch six-arm wheels complete its dynamic exterior. Inside, black Dinamica microfibre on the door rails and dashboard, accented by bold copper and red stitching, seamlessly merges luxury with sportiness, showcasing Audi's impeccable craftsmanship.

Bold statement

Christian Nehme, General Manager of Premium Motors Oman said, "The Audi RS 6

Avant GT makes a bold statement in Oman, reflecting the rising demand for exclusive high-performance vehicles.

"Its arrival adds to the vibrant luxury car scene in the region and underscores Audi's commitment to constant innovation."

This rare masterpiece is set to turn heads and captivate car enthusiasts across Oman, offering its owner a prestigious addition to their collection and an unparalleled driving experience.