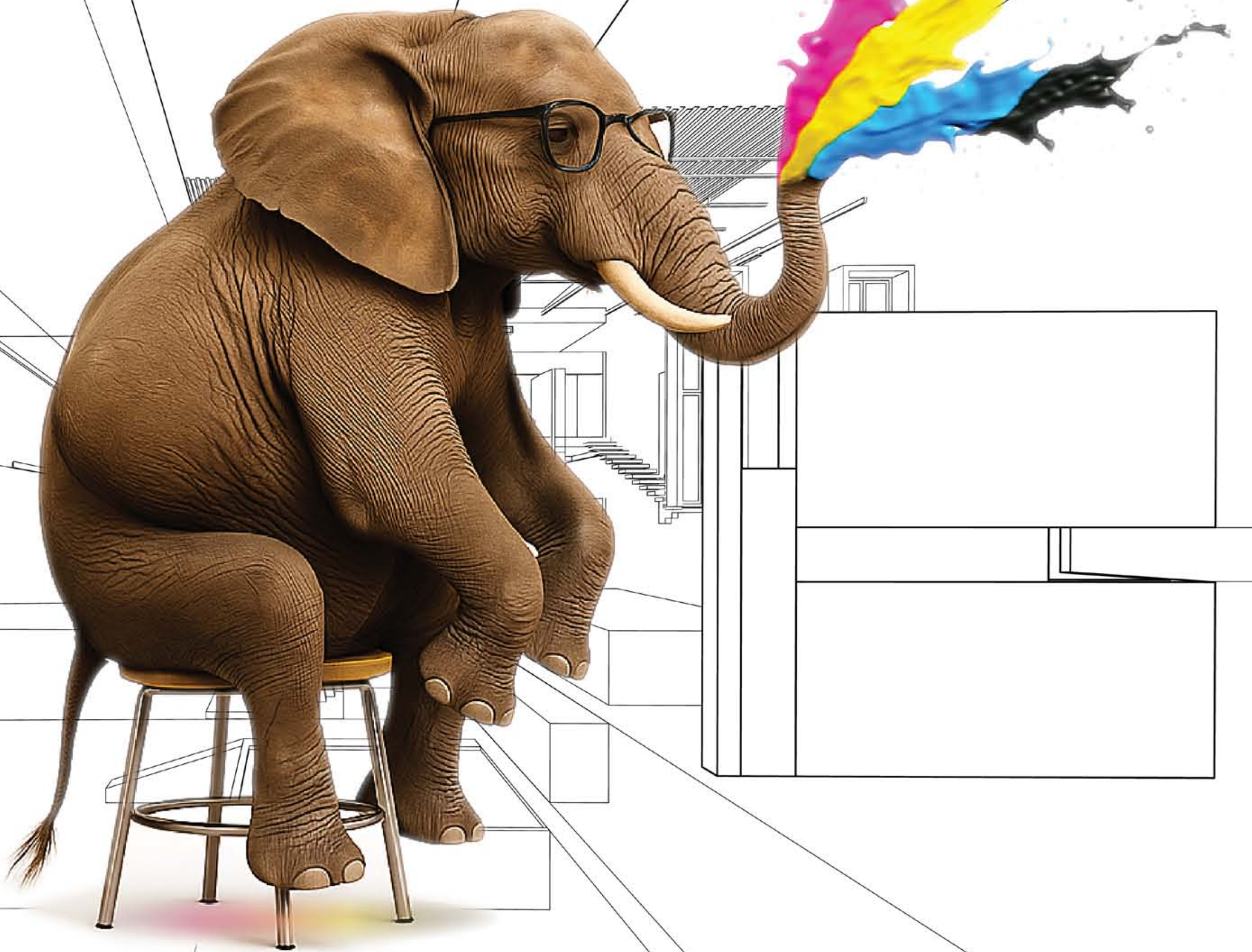




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Forum reviews health projects in Muscat

The forum included the felicitation of outstanding health workers and working teams for their sincere efforts

MUSCAT: Represented by the Directorate General of Health Services in the Governorate of Muscat, the Ministry of Health on Monday organised an event titled “Leadership Forum in the Governorate of Muscat” to review the Ministry’s development projects and future visions.

The forum was held under the auspices of Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti,



Minister of Health.

The opening programme included a visual presentation that outlined recent achievements of the Directorate, performance indicators and the direct impact of its achievements in terms of improvement of the quality of health services rendered to the community.

The forum included the felicitation of outstanding health workers and working teams for their sincere efforts to achieving the Directorate’s accomplishments. Dr. Hilal opened an exhibition that showcased the achievements of the Directorate that included initiatives to develop specialised services and improve the optimum use of resources. -**ONA**

Opportunities for investments in farm and livestock projects



AL BURAIMI: As many as 20 investment opportunities for agriculture and livestock projects were offered via “Tatweer” platform, covering a total area of (798.3) acres.

The Directorate General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Buraimi Governorate said that this initiative is part of its efforts to boost agricultural investment and achieve food sustainability in the governorate.

The investment opportunities are distributed across several wilayats and include projects for cultivating and producing onions, potatoes, and garlic using modern technologies, in addition to date palm cultivation and date production, sheep and goat fattening projects, fodder cultivation and processing, and the establishment of a veterinary clinic. -**ONA**



Oman Industry Day celebrated

IBRA: North Al Sharqiyah Governorate on Monday marked Oman Industry Day by organising an event themed “From Oman to the World: Competitive Industry and a Global Vision.”

The event was organised by the Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, in partnership with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and the branch of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in the governorate.

The event included presentations about Oman Industry Day and Oman Centre for Investment Promotion and Export Development, a workshop titled “Industrial Innovation Academy: Visions and Aspirations” and an exhibition featuring the achievements of the governorate. The event was held under the auspices of Sheikh Saud Saif Al Maawali, Wali of Al Mudhaibi. -**ONA**

Commerce ministry committed to promoting accreditation culture in govt, private entities

MUSCAT: The “Empowering the National Accreditation System and Achieving International Recognition” seminar, organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Muscat on Monday, reviewed the role of accreditation in elevating the Sultanate of Oman’s evaluation in the International Quality Infrastructure Index and the significance of securing such recognition.

The seminar highlighted several themes in the field of accreditation, most notably the Omani Accreditation Centre, its committees, and its role in serving conformity assessment bodies in the Sultanate of Oman.

It also addressed the role of accreditation in raising Oman’s rank in the International Quality Infrastructure Index, which is issued by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), alongside the importance of obtaining international recognition and enhancing the technical competence of technical assessors during accreditation processes for laboratories and other related entities.

Imad Khamis Al Shukaili, Director General of Specifications



and Measurements at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, stated that the seminar underscores the Ministry’s commitment to promoting an accreditation culture among government and private entities.

He explained that accreditation is a fundamental pillar of quality infrastructure worldwide, noting that approximately 100 national accreditation bodies globally have achieved international recognition. These bodies undertake a pivotal role in ensuring the competence and integrity of assessment and conformity activities, including laboratories, inspection bodies, and certification bodies.

He noted that the Ministry has adopted several initiatives

to develop this sector, launching nine initiatives covering various standardization fields such as specifications, conformity, metrology, laboratories, and accreditation. Among these is the initiative to establish the Omani Accreditation Center, for which a specific roadmap has been prepared—spanning from its establishment to achieving international recognition.

He added that various training programs related to different accreditation fields have been implemented to qualify Omani assessors in testing and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies, and certification bodies for products, management systems, and Halal products. Furthermore,

a Quality Manual for the Omani Accreditation Centre has been prepared in accordance with international specifications and requirements.

He mentioned that through this national project, the Ministry seeks to enhance the efficiency of the national accreditation system and secure international recognition for the center, fulfilling the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises quality, excellence, and innovation as key enablers for sustainable development.

This system will serve as an economic tool directly contributing to accelerating the access of Omani products to international markets, increasing export volume, reducing export costs, raising the competitiveness of national products, and diversifying export markets to reduce reliance on specific markets.

He stated that the next phase of the project to develop the standards and metrology system will focus on improving the manufacturing sector, food and pharmaceutical industries, minerals and precious metals, construction materials, energy, and the environment.

He also noted that work is currently underway to approve the National Halal System and finalize the National Quality and Standardisation Strategy, which serves as a roadmap for developing the institutional quality infrastructure in the Sultanate of Oman, enhancing Omani product competitiveness, and supporting exports.

For his part, Khalid Abdullah Al Saadi, Director General of the GCC Accreditation Center, explained that the Omani Accreditation Center represents a milestone in Oman’s quality journey.

He described it as a fundamental pillar for empowering the national economy, enhancing its confidence, and opening new horizons for Omani products and services in global markets.

He added that the GCC Accreditation Center has become a regional platform hosting world-class expertise leading the helm of quality and accreditation on the international stage, noting that this expertise is not exclusive to the centre but is a wealth of knowledge that the center seeks to localize and invest in across all GCC countries to achieve global leadership. -**ONA**

Study underway to establish silica, mining industries complex

< FROM A1 He also shed light on the projects that include the Integrated Cold Chain Economic Cluster in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), supporting the food and fisheries industries and linking them to supply and export chains; the Integrated Aluminium Economic Cluster in Sohar Industrial City; and the consultancy tender for the Integrated Mining Economic Cluster in Shaleem, covering market studies, feasibility studies, and detailed planning.

Additionally, a study is underway to establish a silica and mining industries complex in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, as one of the targeted industrial projects to maximise the use of the area’s available mineral resources.

In his turn, Eng. Ahmed Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of OPAZ, said that 2025 saw multiple achievements across the OPAZ’s focus areas, including planning and development, regulation and supervision, facilitation and post-service support, marketing and investment attraction, institutional excellence, and operations and business acceleration.

He added that last year saw further development of the legislative environment with the issuance of the Special Economic Zones and Free Zones Law under Royal Decree No. 38/2025, which aimed to unify the legislative framework across different zones, provide flexibility and additional incentives for strategic projects, and introduce provisions regulating real



estate development projects.

Additionally, Royal Decree No. 87/2025 established the Special Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate, while Royal Decree No. 88/2025 created the Special Economic Zone in Al Rawdah, located in the Wilayat of Mahdha, Al Buraimi Governorate.

Al Dheeb reviewed developments in the zones, noting that the Special Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah began construction of Phase I, including main roads and drainage channels, and the signing of 11 agreements between the main contractor and small and medium enterprises valued at OMR5.7 million, with a completion rate of around 14.9% by the end of last year.

Al Rawdah Special Economic Zone saw the signing of a development and operations agreement with Mahdha Development Company to implement Phase I over 14 square kilometres. The site was handed over to the developer and

the master plan approved, while tenders were issued for drainage works and project supervision.

In the Muscat International Airport Free Zone, progress was achieved on customs buildings, gates, and the security fence, with 72% of the road and basic infrastructure networks completed.

In the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, a consultancy tender was awarded to prepare a detailed master plan for the 31-square-kilometre coastal tourism area to attract further tourism investment and develop the lifestyle in Duqm.

Al Dheeb confirmed that the OPAZ worked last year to increase foreign investment by engaging with over 500 companies, targeting sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food, sustainable construction, services, logistics and warehousing, and renewable energy technologies and equipment.

He added that the OPAZ launched a Strategic Projects Tracking platform to monitor projects from negotiation to the signing of usufruct agreements and the start of construction. By the end of the previous year, 294 projects were registered on the platform in sectors including renewable energy, petrochemicals, food and fisheries, and minerals, along with other diverse sectors.

OPAZ reviewed the indicators and achievements of the Special Economic Zones, Free Zones, and Industrial Cities through a visual presentation.

The largest share of this investment was concentrated in the Salalah Free Zone at 28%, followed by the Sohar Free Zone at 26%. Both zones recorded high growth rates as a result of attracting significant agreements in the manufacturing and logistics sectors.

Approximately 97% of the added investment was concentrated in the industrial sector, amounting to nearly OMR1.39 billion. The remaining percentage was distributed across the commercial, service, logistics, and technology sectors, with relatively lower values, reflecting the continued concentration of investments in manufacturing.

The Authority also noted during its presentation that Khazaen Economic City recorded the highest growth rate in added investment, reaching approximately 63%, as a result of signing several new agreements in the industrial sector.

The Sohar Free Zone also recorded an increase of 28% due to the signing of several agreements, including the Shurooq Solar Energy Agreement.

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) also witnessed notable growth of 3.32% in added investment.

Regarding employment, Al Dheeb confirmed that the zones under OPAZ supervision provided 4,467 job opportunities for Omanis last year, surpassing the annual target of 2,500 positions.

This brings the total number of Omanis working in special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities to 30,780 out of approximately 85,000 workers, achieving a localisation rate of 36%. The amount of SMEs working in these zones reached 4,774.

During the briefing, the updated version of the OMap Platform was launched, serving as the central reference for spatial data and master plans for all special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities.

The platform provides a unified digital window that consolidates data for all zones, offering investors, government entities, and developers access to accurate, up-to-date information through interactive 2D and 3D maps, improving decision-making and expediting investment procedures.

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates “Madayn” also presented the RABT platform, an intelligent data system connecting local suppliers with existing industries in industrial cities, special economic zones, and free zones. It integrates local products and services into government tender

documents, linking them to procurement quantities and ensuring priority usage or supply. The platform also analyses all products and services offered by companies in industrial cities to connect them with other businesses and sectors.

OPAZ shed light on the achievements of the one-stop shop in 2025, including the issuance of 2,509 economic activity licenses, 1,125 public service licenses, 2,605 commercial registrations, 131 environmental licenses, and 225 environmental permits.

Additionally, 419 investor visas and 7,114 work permits were issued, alongside 284 building permits, reflecting the growing volume of services and streamlined procedures.

In 2025, the Special Economic Zone at Duqm signed a wind turbine project worth RO 70 million, with Phase I producing turbine components and Phase II manufacturing turbine towers.

In the Sohar Free Zone, a project to manufacture and supply high-efficiency solar cells and modules was signed, targeting 6 GW of solar cells and 3 GW of modules annually. The second and third phases of the ACME Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia project in Duqm cover 80 square kilometres, with each phase expected to produce 71,000 tonnes of green hydrogen and 400 tonnes of green ammonia annually. Ongoing projects include the ACME project (over 50% completed in Phase I and the Green Steel Plant by Jindal, exceeding 30% completion. -**ONA**



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Stress on research for guiding innovation

The symposium aimed to discuss the role of research chairs as platforms for generating knowledge, guiding innovation and supporting sustainable development

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education on Monday organised a national symposium titled “Engineering the Future of Research Chairs in the Sultanate of Oman”. The symposium was held under the auspices of Dr. Jokha Abdullah Al Shukaili, Chairperson of Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education.



RESEARCH CHAIRS: The symposium was held under the auspices of Dr. Jokha Abdullah Al Shukaili, Chairperson of Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education. - ONA

Assurance of Education. The symposium aimed to discuss the role of research chairs as platforms for generating knowledge, guiding innovation and supporting sustainable development in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. The research chairs are envisaged to help in exchanging local

and international experiences and developing practical frameworks for building a knowledge-based economy and meeting the goals of comprehensive development in the Sultanate of Oman. The symposium targeted public and private higher education institutions, university vice chancellors, directors of research

centres, heads of research chairs funding entities and researchers. The symposium saw the official launch of the UNESCO Research Chair at Muscat University, raising to 10 the number of such chairs in Oman that serve alongside two chairs of the ISESCO (the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). - ONA

Power projects worth OMR22mn implemented



HAIMA: Nama Electricity Distribution has announced the implementation of projects to develop and rehabilitate distribution networks in Al Wusta Governorate with investments exceeding OMR 22 million. Nama Electricity Distribution Company has signed contracts for the project to rehabilitate and develop the electrical network in the Wilayat of Al Jazir in Al Wusta Governorate, by awarding seven contracts worth RO 5 million to rehabilitate and develop electricity distribution networks in the wilaya. The signing ceremony was held under the patronage of Sheikh Ahmed Musallam Al Kathiri, Gov-

ernor of Al Wusta. It was attended by the Walis, members of the Municipal Council, and representatives from relevant government entities. Major accompanying projects for connection to the main network are currently being implemented with investments amounting to OMR17 million. These are currently underway and are expected to be completed in 2027. These projects aim to enhance the integration of local networks with the general electricity system, and improve operational flexibility and supply stability in various wilayats of Al Wusta Governorate. - ONA

Ramadan at home: How Al-Futtaim IKEA in Oman brings togetherness, taste, and thoughtful living this holy month



With the approach of Ramadan, we welcome a change in pace. The daytime becomes a moment for reflection and spirituality, while evenings grow fuller with gatherings around the table — where meaningful conversations unfold and home-cooked meals are shared. It is during this month that the home becomes a space where connection, generosity, and reflection naturally come together. Understanding the importance of these everyday moments, Al-Futtaim IKEA Oman continues to support families throughout Ramadan through thoughtful design, accessible offerings, and experiences that make daily life easier and more meaningful. This year, Al-Futtaim IKEA brings together home furnishings, dining experiences, and community initiatives that reflect the true spirit of the holy month: generosity, togetherness, and giving back.

Creating homes that feel ready for Ramadan During Ramadan, living rooms turn into gathering spaces. Dining tables host longer meals. Corners become quiet places for reflection. Small details begin to matter more. To create such spaces, IKEA's GOKVÄLLÄ Ramadan collection offers functional and beautiful pieces designed for the season. The collection features soft textiles, glowing lanterns, decorative accents, brass-finish tableware, and cosy furnishings that add warmth without overwhelming the space. Each item is designed to fit naturally into everyday homes, helping families create environments that feel welcoming for guests, comfortable for long evenings, and calm for moments of rest. Whether it is setting a table for Iftar or adding gentle lighting to a living space, the collection reflects IKEA's belief that good design should support real life needs.



Where Iftar becomes an experience For many families, Iftar is the most anticipated moment of the day. It is when everyone finally sits together, shares food, and reconnects after busy hours — something that would normally be harder any other month. This Ramadan, Al-Futtaim IKEA welcomes back its popular Ramadan Iftar Buffet, available daily from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the IKEA Restaurant in Oman Avenues Mall.

The buffet features over 30 dishes inspired by Middle Eastern, Indian, and international flavours. From live cooking stations and the iconic Lamb Shuwa to hot and cold mezzes, beverages, and desserts, the experience is designed to offer something for everyone. It also remains affordable and accessible, with prices set at OMR 8.9 for adults, OMR 2.9 for children aged 6 to 12, free dining for children under five, and a

special rate of OMR 6.9 for IKEA Family members. Each guest also receives an OMR 1.5 voucher to use in-store — extending the value beyond the meal. And for families choosing to gather in their own living spaces, Al-Futtaim IKEA offers a range of takeaway and food market options. Families can order a four-kilogram Lamb Shuwa meal, available for OMR 25 or OMR 19 for IKEA Family members, with orders placed at least 24 hours in advance. They can also choose from ready-to-cook Arabic mezze items from the Swedish Food Market, including cheese samosas and meat kibbeh, priced at OMR 2.5 each. These options make it easier for families to prepare generous meals without spending long hours in the kitchen — allowing more time for what truly matters: being together. **Turning small acts into meaningful giving** Giving back is at the heart of

Ramadan. It is expressed through quiet gestures, shared food, and looking out for others in the community. Through its Iftar Meal Box initiative, Al-Futtaim IKEA makes giving back easier. Priced at OMR 1.25, each box contains essential items for breaking the fast. Customers can pre-order — 24 hours in advance — a minimum of 10 boxes and choose to distribute them themselves or have Al-Futtaim IKEA manage the process, making it simpler to support those in need. In essence, Al-Futtaim IKEA Oman's Ramadan programme is built around real homes and real families. It reflects a simple idea that the most important moments of Ramadan are found in sitting together, sharing stories, offering help, and creating space for one another. For more information or reservations, customers can call 800 IKEA (800 4532). Terms and conditions apply.

Shura Council calls for counselling due to rising divorce among newlyweds

Members called for the introduction of mandatory family counselling programmes for couples intending to marry similar to premarital medical examinations

MUSCAT: The Shura Council continued for the second consecutive day, its discussion of the statement given by Dr. Laila t Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

The session was chaired by Khalid Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, in the presence of their Excellencies Council Members and Ahmed Mohammed Al Nadabi, Secretary-General of the Council.

Members called for the introduction of mandatory family counselling programmes for couples intending to marry similar to premarital medical examinations in light of statistics indicating a noticeable increase in divorce rates among newlyweds.

Deliberations focused on a range of issues related to empowering persons with disabilities in the labour market, expanding the scope of beneficiaries under the social protection system, and reviewing the economic and social conditions of dismissed workers. Members emphasised the need to establish exceptional employment pathways for individuals



facing special economic and social circumstances, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and relevant entities, to promote their economic empowerment.

Members also inquired about the Ministry's plans to support and empower eligible families benefiting from the Family Income Benefit by coordinating with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority and the Oman Investment Authority to propose projects that would enable and support these families economically.

The session underscored the importance of developing and empowering Omani Women Associations to become "Omani Family Associations" in alignment with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, enhancing their familial and societal roles through professional capacity building, and activating partial or full secondment systems within these associations to promote professionalism and integration between governmental and voluntary efforts.

Members further called for a review of financial support provided by the Ministry of Social Development to associations, directing it toward qualitative and sustainable projects.

During the discussion, Members questioned the Ministry's plans to strengthen volunteer incentives and ensure the sustainability of voluntary social services to enhance performance quality and sustain community programs.

They also inquired about efforts to ensure the sustainability of the social protection system in light of economic and demographic changes, noting that certain eligible groups such as housewives and job seekers should be included among social protection beneficiaries.

Monitoring social media

In highlighting the importance of monitoring social phenomena, Members addressed the increasing challenges facing juveniles and stressed the need to enhance early prevention programs and coordination with educational, security, and health authorities for early case detection.

They emphasised the necessity of establishing an integrated database to monitor social phenomena resulting from technological advancements and to utilize scientific research in policymaking.

The Minister, members emphasised the importance of enhancing the quality of life for the elderly

through home-based health and social care services in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, including regular visits, provision of home medical tests and medications, and partnerships with the private sector to achieve these objectives, supported by electronic linkage for health monitoring.

They proposed the establishment and activation of elderly clubs as a key pillar within the social care system, given their positive impact on improving seniors' quality of life and enhancing their psychological and physical well-being.

They further stressed the importance of ensuring adequate laws and legislation to safeguard the rights of the elderly.

Members also called for the establishment of Al Wafaa Centres across various wilayats and governorates, equipping them with the necessary tools to enable specialists to perform their duties efficiently.

They further emphasised the need to provide dedicated halls for children with autism equipped with educational technologies, allocate independent budgets for such facilities, and ensure the availability of specialists to conduct regular maintenance of equipment.

State Council discusses Draft Urban Planning Law

MUSCAT: The State Council today discussed the "Draft Urban Planning Law" during its 6th session of the third regular annual sitting of the 8th term.

The session was held under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council.

In his opening speech, the Chairman of the State Council stated that the session includes the discussion of several topics, foremost of which is the "Draft Urban Planning Law" and the report of the Economic and Financial Committee concerning it, which was referred by the Council of Ministers in accordance with the provisions of Article (49) of the Law of the Council of Oman.

He added that the session also covers proposals submitted by the standing committees regarding topics they intend to study during the current annual sitting of the eighth term. He emphasized the efforts exerted by the members to achieve a unified vision on draft laws, underscoring the harmony and joint cooperation with the Shura Council to serve the public interest.

Dr. Dhafer Awadh Al Shanfari, Chairman of the Economic and Financial Committee at the State Council, explained that the importance of studying the "Draft Urban Planning Law" lies in defining the foundations of sustainable urban planning and the general principles that government and non-government entities, as well as various segments of society, must adhere to across national, regional, and local planning levels.

The session further included discussions on study proposals submitted by the standing committees for the current annual sitting, in addition to reviewing a report from the General Secretariat regarding the activities of the Council's various bodies.





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Sayyid Badr holds meeting with Iran Foreign Minister

Sayyid Badr reaffirmed Oman’s commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, highlighting its continued efforts to support security, peace and stability



GENEVA: The Foreign Minister, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi and his Iranian counterpart Dr. Abbas Araghchi discussed in Geneva the preparations for the second round of Iranian–Ameri-

can talks, scheduled to be held on Wednesday. During the meeting, both sides underscored the importance of fostering understanding and building consensus to reach an agreement that fulfils the goals and aspirations of all parties in-

involved in the negotiations. Sayyid Badr reaffirmed Oman’s steadfast commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, highlighting its continued efforts to support security, peace and stability in the region. He stressed Oman’s determination to spare the region and

its peoples the scourge of wars and conflicts, and expressed deep appreciation for the trust placed in Omani mediation – a responsibility the Sultanate assumes with utmost seriousness and care. A number of officials from both sides attended the meeting. -ONA

Municipal Council discusses service, development plan

SUR: The Municipal Council in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate discussed, during its meeting on Monday, the latest updates on service and planning topics, as part of following up the progress of municipal work and improving the level of services provided in the governorate. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Yahya Badr Al Maawali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah and Chair-

man of the Municipal Council. The meeting also touched on efforts of the Ministry of Labour to employ the national workforce in the private sector within the governorate. The council also discussed proposals regarding the development of tourist sites in the Wilayat of Masirah, as well as a number of committee minutes and responses received from relevant authorities. -ONA



Objective of Oman Vision 2040 is to shape the future

MUSCAT: The Royal Academy of Management (RAM), in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, concluded the “Leadership in Cultural and Creative Industries Programme.” The concluding ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Said Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture. The programme targeted a select group of leaders from Oman’s cultural and creative sector, aiming to equip them with the knowledge and leadership capabilities necessary to transform the cultural landscape into a sustainable economic driver. This initiative reflects the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 in empowering national leadership and shaping the future. The Cultural and Creative Industries Leadership Programme engaged 30 leaders from Oman’s cultural and creative sector and was delivered through ten days of executive learning, including interactive workshops and a subsequent implementation phase during which participants designed and applied initiatives within their organisations. These organisation-specific initiatives addressed key areas including the creative economy, strategic governance, policy and regulatory frameworks, innova-



tion enablement, intellectual property, and investment and financing mechanisms. The programme concluded with participant-led presentations of their initiatives, highlighting the application of innovation, governance, and investment principles, and also provided a forum to share experiences and best practices. Dr. Fathiya Abdullah al Rashdi, RAM’s Vice-President for Programme Affairs, described the programme’s conclusion as a significant milestone in RAM’s mandate to develop national leadership capacity, stating that it “reflects our commitment to developing leaders who can translate cultural ambition into measurable economic value, while creating lasting

impact that supports the growth of Oman’s creative economy.” She added, “The bespoke Cultural and Creative Industries Leadership Programme was designed to bridge strategic insight with practical application, enabling participants to transfer learning directly into their work environments and lead initiatives that enhance the competitiveness of the cultural and creative industries in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.” Hilal Al Sabti, Supervisor of the Cultural and Creative Industries Leadership Programme, said, “The initiative undertook an important role in strengthening participants’ leadership capabilities and expanding their knowledge and understanding of policy, regulation,

and investment opportunities within the cultural and creative sector. The collaborative learning environment added significant value as it facilitated the exchange of knowledge and expertise and cultivated a leadership community focused on developing practical solutions. The programme’s commitment to impact measurement and post-programme follow-up, ensuring sustainable outcomes and tangible results at both institutional and sectoral levels.” In this context, Maryam Nasser Al Kharbooshi, Director of cultural identity department at the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth, affirmed that the cultural and creative industries represent a core pillar of Oman Vision 2040

and the national cultural strategy. She noted that the sector is a promising driver of economic development, particularly in light of global transformations that have positioned knowledge and innovation as fundamental pillars of the contemporary economy. She added that investment in the cultural and creative industries extends beyond contributing to gross domestic product, serving instead as a strategic instrument for preserving national identity and cultural heritage by presenting Omani cultural products, in their diverse forms, to global audiences. She further explained that the delivery of the Cultural and Creative Industries Leadership Programme, implemented through collaboration between the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Royal Academy of Management, reflects a shared conviction in the importance of building leadership capacity, developing national competencies, and creating an integrated platform for knowledge exchange and exposure to best practices in policy development, investment opportunities, and innovation within the sector. Reflecting on his experience as a participant, Eng. Ibrahim Hamoud Al Waili, Executive Director of Oman National Spacial Strategy, said, “The programme offers

a thoughtful approach to integrating culture and creativity in a way that responds to societal requirements. Oman’s emphasis on creativity, firmly rooted in our country’s cultural heritage, remains a key driver of long-term progress and prosperity.” Another programme participant, Badriya Al Siyabi, Executive Director of the Oman Adventures Centre, said, “The experience provided a valuable opportunity to expand professional horizons and explore cultural innovation through a practical, engaging learning experience. The exchange with peers from diverse institutions, alongside engagement with a distinguished group of experts and speakers, was among its most enriching aspects.” Delivered through a structured executive learning pathway, the Cultural and Creative Industries Leadership Programme combined specialised learning modules with applied projects to strengthen governance across the cultural and creative industries. The curriculum focused on developing environments that support talent, enhancing investment frameworks, and increasing institutional readiness. The programme is part of RAM’s broader efforts to support the growth and sustainability of Oman’s cultural and creative industries. -ONA

FUND’S VISION

Barka Endowment Fund launches ‘Sakha’ project

BARKA: Barka Endowment Fund on Monday launched “Sakha” endowment project. The ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Mohammed Said Al Maamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs. The event included a visual presentation highlighting the

Fund’s vision, mission, and key achievements over the past period. The event was attended by Sayyid Tarik Mahmoud Al Busaidi, Wali of Barka, some members of the State Council, sheikhs and dignitaries from the Wilayat of Barka. -ONA



ANNOUNCEMENT

ROP announces working hours during Ramadan

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police - Directorate of Relation and Security Information has announced that the official working hours during Ramadan in the various ROP divisions will be from 7:30 to 12:30 from Sunday to Thursday. Police Stations that operate round the clock will continue their regular duties as usual. The Main Committee for Moon Sighting said that Wednesday, 18 February 2026, will complete the month of Sha’ban 1447 AH, and Thursday, 19 February 2026 will be the first day of the holy month of Ramadan 1447 AH.

Tender Notice for the sale of used and unused Cables

Tender No. AW/IT/PH2/01/2026

Al Watanyiah United Engineering and Contracting Co. LLC hereby announce a Tender for the sale of used and unused Cables, as described in the table below, on an “as is, where is” basis. Those wishing to submit a Bid must obtain the Tender documents from the Company’s Head Office (HO) in Ghala Industrial Area after paying the specified Tender Fee in the Company’s Bank Dhofar account: 01040605344006 (IBAN NO: OM080250001040605344006).

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- The last date for submission of Bids accompanied by an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 10% of the total Bid value is on Wednesday, 11th March, 5 PM, detailed date on the above table.
- The EMD must be valid for 30 days from the last date of submission of the Bid and the original EMD along with the Bid must be submitted in the tender box at the reception of our Head Office at Ghala, Muscat, Oman on or before the date and time mentioned above.

Contact details: 24502581/82- Extn. 149/150. GSM: 92947637 / 77228166



NOTICE AND INVITATION TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of BARKA WATER AND POWER COMPANY SAOG (the “Company”) has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting , which will be held on Thursday at 03:00 PM on 12/03/2026, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om) and will be held in this location (Online). If the quorum requirement for holding the Annual General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Annual General Meeting General Meeting shall be held on Monday at 03:00 PM on 16/03/2026, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om) and will be held in this location (Online) to discuss the following agenda:

Annual Ordinary General Meeting Agendas :

1. To consider and approve the Board of Director’s Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
2. To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
3. To consider and approve the Auditor’s report and the audited financial statements of the Company for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
4. To ratify the payment of sitting fees to the Board of Directors and Sub-Committees for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 and to determine the sitting fees of the Board of Directors and Sub-Committees for the next financial year 31 December 2026.
5. To consider and approve the Directors’ remuneration for an amount of ٥٠,000 (Rials Omani fifty thousand only) for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
6. To notify the General Assembly with transactions carried out with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
7. To notify the General Assembly of donations disbursed to support community services during the financial year ended on 31 December 2025 (Annexure 3).
8. To consider and approve the allocation of a budget of ٥٠,000 (Rials Omani fifty thousand only) to support community services during the financial year ending 31 December 2026.
9. To approve the proposal authorizing the Board of Directors to determine and distribute cash dividends to the Company’s Shareholders (who are registered with the MCD as of the date to be decided by the Board of Directors) in July 2026 and January 2027 out of the retained earnings as per the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, provided that the aggregate amount shall not exceed 9.63 Baisas per share.
10. To appoint the statutory auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2026 and approve their fees.
11. To approve the Board of Directors performance appraisal performed by an independent consultant (Annexure 4).
12. To elect the new Board members from amongst shareholders or non-shareholders. Any person who wishes to nominate himself/herself to the Board of Directors should complete a nomination form available with the Company. The nomination form can be obtained from the Company’s head office. The completed forms should be delivered to the Company minimum five (5) days prior to the AGM date. Nomination forms received after 5pm on Thursday, 5th of March 2026 shall not be accepted.

According to the Company’s Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the capital market authority , we would like to draw your attention to the following:

1. Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCD.
2. Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder’s shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information please contact on telephone No 93872871 or email: ahussain@acwappower.com

New financing product to support franchises in Oman launched

Alama product was the outcome of an agreement signed by the OCCI, represented by the Commercial Franchise Centre, in cooperation with the Development Bank

MUSCAT: Represented by the Commercial Franchise Centre, and, in cooperation with the Development Bank, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday launched a new financing product named “Alama”, in a bid to support franchises.

The launch ceremony was held under the auspices of Faisal Ab-



dullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Alama product was the outcome of an agreement signed by the OCCI, represented by the Commercial Franchise Centre, in cooperation with the Development Bank.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Omani-Saudi Franchise Exhibition, which was organized by the OCCI in partnership with the Federation of Saudi Chambers in 2025 to lend financial support to project owners wishing to obtain the right to commercial franchise.

The launch of Alama highlights

efforts to promote entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman and to enable owners of SMEs to enter the franchise sector.

The measure also seeks to minimize the rate of project failure by supporting projects with commercially-proven business models.

It provides flexible financing that meets franchise requirements. It enhances institutional partnerships between the Development Bank and the OCCI with the prime objective of supporting economic diversification in line with the Oman Vision 2040.

Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of OCCI, stated: “This financing product to support fran-

chising comes as part of OCCI’s commitment to supporting the private sector and enhancing its role in economic development by providing quality financing opportunities that enable entrepreneurs to enter the franchising sector with confidence and sustainability.” He noted that the partnership with the Development Bank represents a model of integration between national institutions supporting entrepreneurship and achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Hussein bin Ali Al Lawati, CEO of the Development Bank, said: “The launch of the ‘Alama’ financing product to support franchising comes within the framework of the bank’s commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and enabling SMEs to access promising investment opportunities based on sound principles.”

“This product targets entrepreneurs and SMEs wishing to enter the franchising sector, existing businesses that own brands seeking financing to expand their activities, and Omanis looking for sustainable investment opportunities in development sectors supported by the bank,” he added. — **ONA**



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SWISS ALPS

Several injured as avalanche derails train in Switzerland

ZURICH: Several people feared to have sustained injuries after a train derailed near the village of Goppenstein in southern Switzerland after an avalanche crashed in the Swiss Alps on Monday, as per local media

Police fear that several people were injured in the accident, according to swissinfo.ch

The derailment occurred at around 7am on Monday morning in the canton of Valais, southwest Switzerland, police said on the social media platform X, according to the Swiss outlet. Approximately 30 passengers were on board at the time of the derail-

ment. According to Swiss Federal Railways, an avalanche caused the accident.

The RE1 line, which runs between Bern and Brig, is most affected, according to the outlet.

Route operator BLS told the Keystone-SDA news agency that the incident occurred in the Stockgraben Tunnel between Goppenstein and Hochtenn, beyond the Lotschberg Tunnel.

The affected train was a RegioExpress that departed Spiez at 6:12 am. According to the BLS, there were approximately 30 passengers on board at the time of the derailment. — **ANI**

CBSE CLARIFICATION

All students must appear for the first examination: Board

< FROM A1 The clarification follows several requests from students seeking permission to skip the first examination and instead appear for the second due to various reasons.

The Board emphasised that all students must appear for the first examination. Those who pass and are eligible will be allowed to improve their performance in up to three subjects from Science, Mathematics, Social Science and Languages.

“If a student has not appeared in three or more subjects in the first examination, then he/she will not be allowed to appear in the second examination. Such students will be placed in the ‘Essential Repeat’ category and can take the examination only next year during the main ex-

aminations in February,” the letter stated.

Students whose results are declared as ‘Compartment’ will be permitted to appear in the second examination under the Compartment category.

However, additional subjects will not be permitted after passing Class 10, and students will not be allowed to take stand-alone subjects.

According to CBSE, eligibility to appear in the second examination includes: (i) Improvement category (up to three main subjects), (ii) First/Third Chance Compartment, (iii) Compartment + Improvement, and (iv) Improvement for students who passed by subject replacement.

The Board added that it will not respond to further queries on the matter.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Treasury bills worth OMR30mn issued

MUSCAT: Oman’s central bank raised OMR30 million by way of allotting treasury Bills on Monday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR10 million for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.715 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.715 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.71518% and 3.72580%, respectively.

Additionally, OMR20 million was allotted, for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR99.040 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.040 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.85055% and 3.88787%, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity



to invest their surplus funds.

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 4.25% while the discount rate on the treasury bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 4.75%.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by

creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates.

Additionally, the Government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. — **ONA**

AT BHARAT MANDAPAM

PM Modi inaugurates India AI Impact Summit 2026

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated the India AI Impact Summit 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in the national capital, underscoring India’s commitment to responsible and inclusive Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The Summit, the first global AI gathering to be hosted in the Global South, will witness unprecedented participation, with over 20 Heads of State, 60 Ministers, and 500 global AI leaders.

Bringing together policymakers, technology companies, innovators, academia, and industry leaders, the Summit seeks to translate global AI deliberations into actionable development outcomes under the IndiaAI Mission and the Digital India initiative.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to deliver the inaugural address on February 19, setting the tone for enhanced global cooperation and advancing India’s vision for inclusive, trusted, and development-oriented artificial intelligence.

After inaugurating the summit, PM Modi interacted with exhibitors, including startups, researchers, and technology leaders, who showcased AI applications across sectors.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw and Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada.

An official release said that Ar-



tificial Intelligence (AI) is a key enabler of India’s development journey, strengthening governance and transforming public service delivery in alignment with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

It said AI has emerged as a transformative force with the potential to accelerate India’s economic growth, strengthen governance and improve the quality of life of citizens, anchored in the principles of People, Planet, and Progress.

For People, AI-enabled solutions are empowering citizens by expanding healthcare access through telemedicine and diagnostics, personalizing education

through adaptive learning, and securing financial systems through fraud detection.

For the Planet, AI is enabling smarter and more sustainable practices in agriculture through crop prediction, precision farming, and drone-based monitoring.

For Progress, AI is strengthening governance through language translation of court judgments, improving service delivery, and enhancing everyday efficiency through applications in food delivery, mobility, and personalized digital services, reflecting a shift towards inclusive and accessible technology for both rural and ur-

ban India.

For people, AI expands access to healthcare through telemedicine and diagnostics, personalises education, and strengthens financial security. For the planet, AI promotes sustainable agriculture through crop prediction, precision farming, and drone monitoring. For progress, AI enhances governance through language translation of court judgements, improves service delivery, and boosts efficiency in mobility, food delivery, and other public services, benefiting both rural and urban populations.

The Expo is being held across 10 arenas covering more than 70,000



square metres and hosts global technology companies, startups, academia, research institutions, Union Ministries, State Governments, and international partners.

Thirteen country pavilions are highlighting international collaboration in the AI ecosystem, including participation from Australia, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Serbia, Estonia, Tajikistan and African nations.

More than 300 curated exhibition pavilions and live demonstrations are being organised across three thematic “chakras”—People, Planet, and Progress—reflecting AI’s broad-based impact across sectors.

Over 600 high-potential startups are participating, many of whom are building globally relevant and population-scale AI solutions already deployed in real-world settings.

The Expo is expected to attract

over 2.5 lakh visitors, including international delegates, and aims to foster global partnerships and business opportunities within the AI ecosystem.

In addition, more than 500 sessions featuring over 3,250 speakers and panellists will be conducted during the event.

Under the IndiaAI Mission, the country is unveiling 12 indigenous foundation models developed by homegrown startups and consortia, trained on vast Indian datasets and tailored to the nation’s 22 official languages.

For India, a nation projected to see its AI market surge past \$17 billion by 2027, this summit is more than a diplomatic triumph—it’s a declaration of intent.

With 800 million internet users, a booming startup scene, and world-class digital public infrastructure, India is positioning itself as the bridge between innovation and impact. — **ANI**

Indian delegation to visit US next week to finalise legal framework of trade deal

The Commerce Secretary expressed cautious optimism about the timeline while acknowledging potential challenges

NEW DELHI: India's Chief negotiator and Special Secretary in the Department of Commerce, Rajesh Agrawal, confirmed that the India-US trade discussions are moving forward to establish a formal agreement.

"There have been virtual engagements going on (with US), and next week, the chief negotiator will be leading a delegation to the US to finalise the legal framework towards the legal agreement that work will carry on next week in Washington," Agrawal said, briefing the media yesterday while releasing the trade data for January.

Apart from the US trade deal, Agrawal also pointed towards the India-Canada FTA, stating,

"Teams engaged to finalise terms of reference."

Earlier this month, in an exclusive interview with ANI on the sidelines of BIOFACH 2026, Agrawal said India expects to finalise and sign the legal agreement for the interim trade deal with the United States before the end of March.

"The joint statement that India-US has released lays down the broad contours of the Interim Agreement that both sides have reached. Now this Interim Agreement and the understanding that has been reflected in the joint statement needs to be converted into a legal document. The process is on," Agrawal explained.

The Commerce Secretary expressed cautious optimism about the timeline while acknowledging potential challenges. "We expect that before the end of March, we should be able to finalise and sign the legal agreement. However, having said that, I think drafting a legal agreement to the satisfaction of both sides also sometimes may take time, but we are hopeful the teams are working on it, we should look at March as the timeline in which we should make it operational," he said.

Asked about the main sectors that will benefit from the agree-



ment, the Commerce Secretary highlighted India's competitive advantage in labour-intensive industries.

"The unique strength of India lies in the labour-intensive sectors. And since US has been a very strong market for India in the labour-intensive sectors, I think with this framework Interim Agreement, there will be an advantage back to our labour-intensive sector. They will be able to grow unhindered," Agrawal said.

Addressing concerns about the 18% tariff ceiling, he said that competitive countries in the same geography have tariffs above 18%.

only grow as they were doing well in the past years, but also grow in the coming years."

On whether India was able to protect sensitive sectors like dairy, Agrawal was emphatic about the country's negotiating position.

"India has always negotiated all agreements with a very clear mindset. Anything that is very sensitive to India, anything where we feel our farmers, our fishermen, our dairy, they are going to be impacted, I think we have been very clear to our partner countries that India cannot open up or provide access," he stated.

He pointed to India's recent track record in trade negotiations. "If you look at all the agreements that we have done in last one year, the five trade agreements that we did, all the sensitive sectors everywhere have been protected. In US also, all the key sensitive sectors have been protected. Wherever there is little sensitivity where we import also, I think we have used a TRQ [Tariff Rate Quota] mechanism to ensure that any market access is also limited in nature, and it does not impact our farmers and the ecosystem in any which way."

The Commerce Secretary said stakeholders and exporters have responded positively to the Interim Agreement.

"While negotiating the US agreement, we had deep consultations with all stakeholder ministries and even the industry at different points in time. Businesses are very happy with the outcome. They have given a thumbs up to the overall agreement," Agrawal said.

"They feel in the current scenario, when reciprocal tariffs are there to stay, all agreements provide for reciprocal tariffs. I think what we have been able to achieve under the Interim Agreement is good for India, good for our exports, and they are very positive about it. I don't see any major red line in this Agreement."

Asked about January export numbers, the Commerce Secretary expressed confidence in India's trade performance.

"Overall, India has been doing well. We have been holding well on both merchandise export and services. Services, as usual, have been doing phenomenally well. The data will come out on February 15, and you can expect a positive outcome that day," Agrawal said.

India is participating as Country of the Year at BIOFACH 2026 in Nuremberg, Germany and is showcasing its organic sector with 67 co-exhibitors from over 20 states in a 1,074 square metre pavilion.

— ANI

CENTRE-RIGHT TISZA PARTY



Hungarian opposition leader Peter Magyar launches anti-Orban election campaign

BUDAPEST: Hungarian opposition leader Peter Magyar launched his party's election campaign in Budapest on Sunday, vowing to end the 16-year rule of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, tackle corruption and reorientate Hungary back towards western Europe.

Magyar, a former influential member of Orban's nationalist Fidesz party, took over leadership of the centre-right Tiszsa party in 2024 and quickly established himself as the biggest challenge to Orban in over a decade.

In June 2024, Tiszsa - which is an abbreviation of the Hungarian words for "respect" (tisztelt) and "freedom" (szabadsag) - won around 30% of the vote in European Parliament elections and most independent polls show it with a significant lead ahead of election day on April 12.

"We're standing on the threshold of victory with 56 days left to go," Magyar told supporters in Budapest on Sunday. "Tiszsa stands ready to govern."

Who is Peter Magyar?

A 44-year-old former lawyer, Magyar has accused Orban's right-wing populist government of mismanaging Hungary's economy and social services, and of allowing corruption to run riot, leaving Hungary one of the poorest countries in the European Union. "Not only has the Hungarian economy not taken off; it has hit a dead end," he said.

He has also criticised Orban's antagonism towards the EU and continuing proximity to Russian President Vladimir Putin despite Russia's ongoing invasion of neighboring Ukraine.

After holding meetings with several European leaders at the Munich Security Conference (MSC) over the weekend, he said he would put an end to Hungary's "drift out of the European Union" under Orban.

"Hungary's place is in Europe," he said. "Not only because Hungary needs Europe, but also because Europe needs Hungary."

However, he also reiterated that a Tiszsa government would continue to oppose any accelerated Ukrainian accession to the EU and retain a border fence erected by Orban in 2015 as part of a continuation of anti-immigration policies.

Magyar pledges to combat corruption

Nevertheless, despite some EU-scepticism, Magyar has vowed to combat corruption and strengthen Hungary's democratic institutions and independent judiciary in order to regain access to billions of euros' worth of suspended EU funding.

"It is time to call corruption what it is: theft," he said, promising "total transparency in contracts involving public funds" and the "recovery" of all the money Hungary "has been deprived of over 16 years."

During the campaign so far, Magyar has specifically targeted Orban's traditional strongholds: small, conservative-leaning towns and villages across the country but far away from major cities like Budapest, focusing on bread and butter issues such as low wages and rapidly rising living costs.

He has challenged Orban to a TV debate - thus far without response - saying the "outgoing prime minister" is only capable of "agitation" and "threats," accusing him of spying on opponents.

"If they can search through my private life, then they can rummage through everyone's," said Magyar.

Opposition and rights groups regularly accuse Orban of silencing critical voices in the judiciary, academia and media, as well as cutting the rights of minority groups. — DW

SURGING DEMAND

Artificial intelligence-fuelled chip shortage drives up smartphone prices

BERLIN: The benefits of artificial intelligence (AI) may come at a high cost for consumers. Surging demand for memory chips is driving up the price of smartphones and computers - including in Germany.

"The AI boom, along with the massive investments in infrastructure and data centers that come with it, is having a noticeable impact on the memory chip market," Wolfgang Weber, CEO of the German Electro and Digital Industry Association (ZVEI), told DW.

"According to analyses by the World Semiconductor Trade Statistics (WSTS) institute, prices for these chips rose by 50% last year," Weber said. As a result, consumers may face not only longer delivery times but also higher prices for electronic and digital devices.

"Bottlenecks in such key technologies pose a serious problem for our economy," the association's head warned. "The chip shortage alone between 2021 and 2023 caused more than €102 billion (\$121 billion) in economic damage in Germany."

Boom in the semiconductor market

The latest figures from WSTS underscore the industry's rapid growth. In the first half of 2025, the global semiconductor market reached \$346 billion (€293 billion) - an increase of 18.9% compared with the previous year.

Overall, WSTS forecasts 22% growth for 2025, bringing the market to \$772 billion. For 2026, it expects an even sharper rise of more than 25%, pushing the market to \$975 billion.

By how much smartphone prices could increase has been examined in a study by the market



research firm IDC (International Data Corporation). "In a moderate scenario, average smartphone selling prices could rise by 3 to 5%," the study states. "In a pessimistic scenario, they could increase by as much as 8%."

Experts warn of a turning point. The age of cheap, plentiful memory and storage is ending. In 2026, technology is set to become more expensive - not because demand is booming, but because supply can't keep up.

Smartphones will become more expensive

In late January, Samsung Electronics President Wonjin Lee announced potential price increases in an interview with Bloomberg.

"Prices are going up," Lee said, adding: "Obviously, we do not want to convey that burden to the consumers. But we're going to be at a point where we have to actually consider repricing our products."

Apple, meanwhile, has not publicly commented on possible price increases. However, analysts at investment bank Morgan Stanley predict in their 2026 outlook that the company will likely keep prices

for its base model stable at a high level, while potentially charging more for devices with larger storage capacities.

More memory, higher costs for smartphones

The use - and cost - of memory chips in smartphone production has risen sharply over the past five years. According to industry data, memory accounted for around 8% of total component costs in a device such as the iPhone 12 Pro Max in 2020.

By September 2025, that share had climbed to roughly 10% in the iPhone 17 Pro Max. Due to the ongoing rise in memory chip prices, analysts at research firm Counterpoint Research estimate that this share could even increase to as much as 20%.

German market stagnates

In light of the current chip shortages, Germany's digital industry association Bitkom expects a period of stagnation - or even a slight decline - in the domestic market.

"Consumer demand in Germany is generally rather weak at the moment," Sebastian Klöß, Head of

Markets and Technologies at Germany's digital association, Bitkom, told DW. Still, industry revenues continue to post steady - albeit modest - growth. However, this is largely due to continuously rising device prices. According to a Bitkom study, the average price of a new smartphone in Germany increased from €591 (\$704) in 2024 to €605 (\$720) last year.

Refurbished smartphones are the winners

In contrast to sluggish demand for new devices, the market for used smartphones is experiencing strong growth.

According to a joint analysis by market research firm NIQ, the Society for Consumer Electronics (GFU), and IFA Management, refurbished smartphones reached a 9% market share in the EU in July 2025. In January of last year, the figure had been just 5%.

"In some markets, refurbished models now account for more than 40% of online sales in the sub-€600 segment," the analysis states. "Refurbished devices are evolving from a niche product into an established force in the market." — DW

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Iran's Revolutionary Guards launch drills

TEHRAN: Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) began on Monday a navy exercise in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, state media reported.

The intensive drills, named "Smart Control of Hormuz Strait" were being conducted by the IRGC naval forces, and under the supervision of the head of the IRGC, state TV reported.

The military drill aimed at testing the readiness of operational forces in the face of "possible security and military threats," the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported.

Why is the timing of the drills significant?

The exercise comes amid growing tensions with the US, both



over Iran's nuclear program and its deadly response to anti-regime protests last month.

Why is the Strait of Hormuz significant?

Iranian hardliners have threat-

ened to bloc the strategic Strait of Hormuz as tensions with Washington rose.

The Strait of Hormuz is a key waterway that lies between Oman and Iran, and connects the Arabian Gulf with the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

Transit chokepoint

The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) describes it as the "world's most important oil transit chokepoint."

Large volumes of crude extracted by OPEC countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq from oil fields across the Persian Gulf region and consumed globally flow through the strait.

— DW

Omarzai’s ‘all-round’ performance helps Afghanistan beat UAE by five wickets

Afghanistan's final group-stage fixture is against Canada, scheduled for Thursday

NEW DELHI: Afghanistan pulled off a dramatic victory over the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to register their first win of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in match 28 held at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Monday. Azmatullah Omarzai played a match-winning knock while chasing after achieving impressive bowling figures of 15/4 in Afghanistan's third Group D fixture, which helped the Rashid Khan-led side secure a five-wicket win over the UAE. Chasing a challenging target of 161 runs, Junaid Siddique got rid

of the in-form batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz on the second delivery of the first over. This was the fifth instance in T20Is that Siddique dismissed Gurbaz. Gulbadin Naib joined Ibrahim Zadran, and the duo added 40 runs for the second wicket. Zadran targeted Haider Ali and hit four boundaries to collect 18 runs from the fourth over. Naib thumped Muhammad Jawadullah for a couple of boundaries in the next over, before losing his wicket to Muhammad Arfan in the sixth over.



Sediqullah Atal replaced him at the crease and added 30 runs for the third wicket with Zadran before losing his wicket to Jawadullah after making 16 off 14 balls. Zadran completed his half-century but lost his wicket soon after that. He made 53 runs off 41 balls, including six fours and a six. Darwish Rasooli added 43 runs for the fifth wicket with Azmatullah Omarzai. Rasooli made 33 off 23 balls with the help of four boundaries. 52 runs were needed in the last five overs, but Omarzai made it look easy, first by setting a partnership with Rasooli, then finishing the match in the last couple of overs. Omarzai remained unbeaten on 40 off 21 balls with the help of two fours and three sixes. He also hit the winning boundary on the second delivery of the last over as

Afghanistan secured their first victory of the competition. Earlier, Afghanistan halted the UAE at 160/9 in 20 overs after inviting them to bat first. Omarzai was the best bowler for Afghanistan as he picked up four wickets while conceding 15 runs in his four overs. Mujeeb Ur Rahman also took a couple of wickets. Captain Rashid Khan also took one wicket in the match and became the first-ever cricketer to complete 700 T20 wickets. Alishan Sharafu made 40 runs off 31 balls, and Sohaib Khan's 68 runs off 48 balls helped the UAE set a challenging target for the Afghans. Afghanistan's final group-stage fixture is against Canada, scheduled for Thursday at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium, while the UAE will face South Africa in New Delhi on Wednesday.

T20 WC DEFEAT

Darkest period in our cricket history: Former Pakistan player Mohammad Yousuf

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan cricketer Mohammad Yousuf has blamed “political influence and personal agendas” in Pakistan cricket structure for the team's downfall, calling it the darkest period in the country's cricketing history, following their 61-run loss to India in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 group-stage match on Sunday. In a post on X, Mohammad Yousuf, who also captained the Pakistan men's team, said Pakistan cricket will not regain its former strength unless political interference and personal agendas are eliminated. “Unless we remove political influence and personal agendas from Pakistan cricket, we cannot return to the team we once were. This is the darkest period in our cricketing history, and my heart bleeds for it. Incompetent individuals must be removed from office and from the team.”

Pakistan lost the game in 1st innings Former Pakistan pace legend Waqar Younis said the Men in Green lost the match in the first innings itself when India posted 175, a total he believed was beyond their reach. Waqar believes Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav was smart with his bowling changes, as he gave Hardik Pandya the new ball, and praised Jasprit Bumrah's bowling, calling him ‘outstanding as always’. “Pakistan lost the game in the first innings. Once India reached 175, the game was out of Pakistan's reach. The ball was spinning, and Suryakumar Yadav was smart with his bowling changes. He gave the new ball to Hardik Pandya up front. Jas-



prit Bumrah was outstanding as always, attacking the stumps, swinging and seaming the ball. It was very difficult for Pakistan after that,” Waqar Younis said on JioStar. Waqar felt Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha delayed bringing on mystery spinner Usman Tariq, who later took a wicket for just 24 runs, but by then Ishan Kishan had already done damage. Waqar added that Pakistan's batting isn't strong and that if India had scored 140-150 instead of 175, the outcome might have been different. “When you look at how much spin Pakistani bowlers got, I don't think they used them as well as India did. But the game was over in the first innings because India scored too many runs. Salman Ali Agha allowed that to happen by not introducing Usman Tariq early. Tariq was superb, taking a wicket and conceding just 24 runs. We have been talking about him for weeks. But he was held back for too long. By the time he got the ball, Ishan Kishan had already done the damage. That is where the match was lost,” he added. **-ANI**

HIGH-PRESSURE GAME

Ishan’s childhood coach lauds batter’s ‘commendable’ knock against Pakistan

KOLKATA: Following Ishan Kishan's brutal 77 against Pakistan which earned India their third-successive win in T20 World Cup, the wicketkeeper-batter's childhood coach Uttam Mazumdar expressed happiness with his pupil's knock in a high-pressure game against the arch-rivals. Ishan's dream run in T20s continued as he breezed through the Pakistan spin ploy, slamming his second-successive T20 WC fifty and guiding a clinical India to a 61-run win at Colombo on Sunday, while also pulling off some fantastic work behind the stumps, including a stumping to remove a dangerous Usman Khan, who was slowly counter-attacking against Indian bowlers. Speaking to ANI, Ishan's coach said, “I am so happy. He scored 77 runs in 40 balls. To have scored this against Pakistan is truly commendable. I had told him yesterday that you have to dedicate your knock to your country. Everyone is really happy with the way he scored in such a high-pressure match. In Asia Cup (2023), he also scored 80-odd against Pakistan.



Skipper Suryakumar Yadav has also done well.” From Patna, Bihar, Ishan's parents, Pranav and Suchitra also reacted to their son's knock and India's win. Pranav said to ANI, “We are proud that our team India won. We feel really proud of the fact that Ishan got the ‘Player of the Match award’, but even prouder that India won. He worked very hard in these two years and played domestic cricket consistently, focused on batting. I will talk to him soon.”

MEN IN GREEN

We didn’t really give ourselves a chance: Pakistan head coach Mike Hesson after India’s victory

COLOMBO : Pakistan head coach Mike Hesson admitted that his side failed to adapt to match conditions in their high-pressure encounter against India after Men in Green suffered a one-sided 61-run loss in the Group A match at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. During the post-match press conference, reflecting on the contest, Hesson said India capitalised better on a surface that offered significant assistance to spinners early on. “With the ball, obviously it was spinning quite a lot initially, and I think the way Ishan Kishan played took the game away from us,” he noted. Hesson admitted that India managed to push the total beyond what Pakistan believed was a competitive score on the surface. “To be fair to India, they probably got about 25 above par on that surface.” However, the Pakistan coach pointed to his team's batting performance as the bigger concern. According to Hesson, the side failed to adjust its approach after assessing the pitch conditions, ultimately costing them the contest. “In terms of adjusting to conditions, we didn't really give ourselves a chance,” he remarked. Pakistan's head coach has dismissed suggestions that opting to ball first was a defensive move, insisting the decision was based purely on pitch assessment rather than caution. “Yeah, I mean, I've answered it. Both sides were going to bowl first because the pitch was soft and the ball spun twice as much in the first innings as in the second. There was talk before about the Australia game, which was a day game; this is a night game. So, as I said, nothing to do with the toss, it was just execution.” Hesson said. Hesson defended his team's



bowling strategy in their high-pressure clash against India, addressing questions about the late deployment of Usman Tariq. “Usman Tariq is a really good player when players are going after him, and he's got a pretty specific role for us.” “Yes, he could have. But I think, Abrar Ahmed has been doing a really good job for us, as has Shadab Khan post power play. They both bowled an over that didn't go their way in terms of the lengths. But certainly I'd back those guys any day to do that job as they have done in the last five wins. “So it didn't work today, but as I said, Usman Tariq's got a very clear role and I thought he was excep-

tional tonight,” Hesson added.

Execution was missing: Skipper Salman Agha Pakistan skipper Salman Agha admitted the spinners had an off day and execution was lacking, even though they've been solid for six months after a 61-run loss against India in the ongoing T20 World Cup in Colombo on Sunday. Agha noted that Pakistan lost too many wickets in the powerplay. A knockout punch in the form of a half-century by Ishan Kishan and a collectively brilliant bowling performance helped India secure a 61-run win against Pakistan in the ICC T20 World Cup at Colombo on Sunday.

“Our spinners had an off day. Execution was missing in some parts. We believe in our spinners; they've done well in the last six months. We lost too many wickets in the powerplay with the bat. In the first innings, it was tacky; the ball was gripping. The execution was missing with the ball. Pitch played better in the second innings than it did in the first. In these kinds of games, the emotions are always going to be high. Have to deal with it. Have played enough games like that. Have a game in two days' time, have to look forward to that. Need to win that game and qualify for the Super Eights. Then it's a new tournament again,” Agha said after the match. **-ANI**

T20 WORLD CUP

England defeat Italy by 24 runs, qualify for Super Eights

KOLKATA: England entered the Super Eights after a convincing 24-run victory over Italy in match 29 of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 held at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Monday. The Harry Brook-led England opted to bat first after winning the toss and set a big target of 203 runs for the fellow European side. Then they successfully defended the target and won the match. Phil Salt (28 off 15 balls) gave a blazing start, but Jos Buttler failed to score again and made just three runs before giving his wicket to Grant Stewart. Jacob Bethell (23 off 20 balls) and Tom Banton (30 off 21 balls) contributed well with the bat. Sam Curran hit a couple of sixes and made 25 runs. Coming to bat at number 7, Will Jacks made an unbeaten 53 off just 22 balls, which helped England cross the 200-run mark. Stewart and Crishan Kalugamage took a couple of wickets each as JJ Smuts, Ali Hasan and Ben Manenti shared one wicket each among them.



Chasing a big target of 203 runs, Italy were struck by two wickets in the first over when Jofra Archer dismissed Anthony Mosca and JJ Smuts for a duck. Italian captain Harry Manenti made just 12 runs off 11 balls before losing his wicket to Jamie Overton. His brother Ben Manenti (60 off 25 balls, with four 4s and six 6s) added 92 runs for the fourth wicket with Justin Mosca (43 off 32 balls, with the help of

seven fours). Stewart's quick 45 runs in just 23 balls kept the Italian side in the fray, but the English side displayed brilliant death over skills to halt them at 178 runs in 20 overs. Will Jacks was named Player of the Match for his match-winning performance. Italy will play their last group-stage match against the West Indies on Thursday at the same venue. **-ANI**

OMAN OIL PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by April 2026 reaching \$66.66, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 16 cents from the price of Friday, which was which was \$66.82. -ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 7,282.94 points, up by 2.17% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.67% at 643.06 points. National Aluminium, up 51.56%, was the top gainer while, Salalah Mills, down 8.73%, was the top loser.

Ways to utilise index results in policy making to be discussed

‘Capacity Building in the Governorates Competitiveness Index’ workshop will review the conceptual and methodological framework of the index, which focuses on four main elements: ‘people and society’, ‘economy and development’, ‘sustainable environment’ and ‘governance and institutional performance’

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Economy is organising a two-day workshop titled ‘Capacity Building in the Governorates Competitiveness Index’. The event forms part of the ministry’s efforts to foster a culture of knowledge-based competitiveness and support balanced development in the Sultanate of Oman.

The workshop is held under the auspices of Dr. Nasser Rashid Al Maawali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy. It will review the conceptual and meth-

dological framework of the index, which focuses on four main elements: “people and society”, “economy and development”, “sustainable environment” and “governance and institutional performance”.

The workshop discusses ways to utilise the index results in planning and policy making.

Key pillar

The workshop is in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the objectives of the 11th Five-Year Development Plan (2026–2030), which lays em-



phasis on the development of the governorates as a key pillar for promoting economic diversification, decentralisation and optimising

the use of comparative advantages of each governorate.

The workshop seeks to enhance the principles of transparency and

accountability and enable work teams in the governorates to conduct in-depth analytical perusal of results, besides establishing a

stage of building common knowledge that paves the way for the phase of practical application of the outcomes of the index. -ONA

OMAN COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION CENTRE



Workshop explores mediation’s role in strengthening FDI and investment protection

MUSCAT: Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre organised a workshop in Muscat titled “The Singapore Convention: Reconsidering Mediation as a Means to Re-balance Risks and Impact Investment”, which reviewed methods for enhancing Foreign Direct Invest-

ment (FDI) through mediation.

The workshop included several discussion sessions, most notably addressing FDI programmes enhanced through mediation, as well as the practical skills and strategic value of mediation in resolving commercial disputes. -ONA

NCSI DATA

Transaction value of real estate sales contracts in Oman exceeds OMR1.2bn

MUSCAT: The transaction value of sales contracts increased by 16 percent to reach OMR1,270.3 million across 67,074 sales contracts by the end of December 2025, according to statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

A slight decrease

The NCSI data further said that the total value of real estate transactions in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a slight decrease of 0.4 percent reaching OMR3,367.8 million by the end of December 2025 compared to OMR 3,379.8 million during the same period in 2024. In contrast, the transaction value of mortgage contracts witnessed a decline of 8.2 percent, recording OMR 2,086.8 million across 22,677 contracts, compared to OMR 2,271.9 million across 20,680 contracts during the same period in 2024. Furthermore, the transaction value of exchange contracts decreased by 18.2 percent to reach OMR 10,700,000 through 1,216 contracts by the end of December 2025, compared to OMR13,100,000 traded via 1,325



contracts during the same period in 2024.

As far as title deeds are concerned, the number of title deeds decreased by a marginal 0.1 per-

cent at the end of December 2025, reaching 233,172, compared to 233,345 title deeds issued during the comparable period in 2024. The number of title deeds issued

to Gulf Cooperation Council GCC citizens also fell by 13.5 percent, recording 1,252 compared to 1,447 by the end of December 2024.

-ONA

EUROSTAT DATA

Eurozone industrial output falls for first time in four months

BRUSSELS: Eurozone industrial production declined for the first time in four months in December, according to data from Eurostat released.

Industrial production logged a monthly fall of 1.4% in December, in contrast to the 0.3% increase seen in November. This was the first decline since August. Within total production, all main industrial groupings except durable consumer goods showed contraction in December.

Production of capital goods registered the biggest fall of 1.9%. Output of energy and non-durable consumer goods fell 0.3% each, while intermediate goods output fell only 0.1%. On the other hand, durable consumer goods production gained 0.2%.

The year-on-year increase in industrial production eased to 1.2% from 2.2% in November.

A similar pace of slower growth was last reported in August 2025. In the EU27, industrial production dropped at a faster pace of 0.8% on a monthly basis after falling 0.1% in November.



Compared to last year, production was up 1.4%, but weaker than November’s 2.0% gain. Among member states, the largest monthly decreases were recorded in Slovakia, Germany and Spain. Mean-

while, the highest increases were seen in Luxembourg, Sweden and Malta.

In 2025, the annual average industrial output grew 1.5% each in both the euro area and the EU. -ONA

US DOLLAR STRENGTHENED

Gold declines on firmer Dollar

SINGAPORE: Gold prices declined yesterday as the US dollar strengthened, prompting investors to take profits after the precious metal recorded gains of more than 2% in the previous session. The pullback came despite softer-than-expected US inflation data, which reinforced expectations that the US Federal Reserve could move toward interest rate cuts.

Spot gold fell 0.4% to \$5,020.10 per ounce, after rising 2.5% in the prior session, while US gold futures for April delivery edged down 0.1% to \$5,039.50 per ounce.

In other precious metals, spot silver declined 0.6% to \$76.92 per ounce after gaining 3% on Friday. Platinum slipped 0.4% to \$2,054.35 per ounce, while palladium rose 0.4% to \$1,692.23 per ounce.

Yen weakens amid rising rate-cut expectations

The US dollar held broadly steady yesterday, while the Japanese yen weakened after surrendering part of last week’s strong gains, as softer US inflation data reinforced expectations that the US Federal Reserve could move toward inter-



est rate cuts later this year.

The dollar index, which measures the performance of the US currency against six major peers, stood at 96.973 after declining 0.8% last week. The yen fell 0.3% to 153.15 per dollar, after rising nearly 3% last week; its strongest weekly gain in about 15 months.

The euro traded little changed at \$1.1863, while the pound sterling edged down slightly to \$1.36395.

The Swiss franc also eased marginally to 0.7686 per dollar after gaining more than 1% last week, as

investors grew increasingly cautious about potential intervention by the Swiss National Bank to curb the currency’s strength as a traditional safe-haven.

Meanwhile, the Australian dollar rose 0.2% to \$0.70865, remaining below its three-year high reached last week, while the New Zealand dollar slipped 0.1% to \$0.6033 ahead of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand’s policy meeting on Wednesday.

The central bank is widely expected to keep interest rates unchanged. -ONA

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

National Aluminium, up 51.56%, was the top gainer while, Salalah Mills, down 8.73%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,282.94 points, up by 2.17% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.67% at 643.06 points. National Aluminium, up 51.56%, was the top gainer while, Salalah Mills, down 8.73%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI 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 6069 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 59.41 million, with more than 202.47 million shares changing hands. Out of 79 traded securities, 39 advanced, 20 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 4265K while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 3479K, followed by foreign investors for RO 786K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 12,523.44 points, up 1.37%. Prices of Al Batinah Development Company, Bank Nizwa, Sohar International Bank, Financial Services, Bank Dhofar were up by 5.80%, 4.52%, 3.72%, 3.00%,

1.99% respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Anwar Investment, Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Omaniya Financial Services were down by 2.33%, 1.43%, 0.87%, 0.81%, 0.51% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,465.04 points, up 0.75%. Prices of National Aluminium, Raysut Cement, Construction Materials, Oman Chlorine, A'Saffa Foods were up by 51.56%, 4.21%, 2.74%, 2.61%, 1.38% respectively. Prices of Salalah Mills, Oman Packaging, Muscat Thread Mill, Al Anwar Ceramics, Oman Flour Mills were down by 8.73%, 4.57%, 0.91%, 0.51%, 0.20% respectively.

Services Index was up by 1.66% before closing at 2,815.64 points. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Oman Telecom, OQ Exploration & Production, Al Batinah Power, Al Suwadi Power were up by 5.26%, 3.48%, 2.46%, 2.38%, 2.37% respectively. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Ooredoo, Shell Oman Marketing, Sembcorp Salalah, Musandam Power were down by 1.47%, 0.57%, 0.49%, 0.45%, 0.27% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index.....	High.....	Low.....	Value.....	Prev. Value.....	Diff.....	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX.....	7,286.44	7,123.82	7,282.94	7,128.52	154.42	2.17
FINANCIAL INDEX.....	12,534.47	12,353.73	12,523.44	12,353.73	169.71	1.37
Industry Index.....	9,465.04	9,299.63	9,465.04	9,394.86	70.17	0.75
Services Index.....	2,818.83	2,769.73	2,815.64	2,769.73	45.90	1.66
MSX Shariah Index.....	645.50	638.79	643.06	638.79	4.27	0.67
MSX TR INDEX.....	10,951.93	10,707.50	10,948.87	10,714.56	232.11	2.17
FINANCIAL TR IDX.....	14,891.39	14,676.66	14,878.29	14,676.66	201.62	1.37
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX.....	11,669.57	11,465.64	11,669.57	11,583.05	86.52	0.75
SERVICES TR IDX.....	3,675.97	3,611.94	3,671.80	3,611.94	59.86	1.66
FIXED INCOME INDEX.....	1,206.85	1,206.85	1,206.85	1,206.85	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume.....	Turnover.....	Trades.....	Market Cap.....	Up.....	Down.....	Equal.....	Sec. Traded
202,475,060.....	59,413,709.....	6,069.....	35,955,268,194.....	39.....	20.....	20.....	79

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

ISIN.....	SECURITY NAME.....	VOLUME.....	TURNOVER.....	TRADES.....	OPEN PRICE.....	HIGH.....	LOW.....	CLOSE PR.....	PREV CLOSE.....	DIFF (IND).....	DIFF %.....	LAST PR.....	LAST BID.....	LAST OFFER.....	PAR VALUE.....	MARKET CAP.....
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004420.....	BANK NIZWA.....	4,730,453.....	759,556.....	266.....	0.155.....	0.163.....	0.155.....	0.162.....	0.155.....	0.007.....	4.516.....	0.162.....	0.162.....	0.162.....	0.100.....	362,386,391
OM0000003398.....	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK.....	36,750,370.....	8,070,838.....	712.....	0.215.....	0.223.....	0.215.....	0.223.....	0.215.....	0.008.....	3,721.....	0.223.....	0.223.....	0.223.....	0.100.....	14,756,459,918
OM0000003026.....	OMAN TELECOM.....	4,815,053.....	5,914,484.....	292.....	1.208.....	1.257.....	1.207.....	1.250.....	1.208.....	0.042.....	2,367.....	1.250.....	1.248.....	1.255.....	0.100.....	897,500,000
OM0000004925.....	ALBATINAH POWER.....	785,383.....	134,189.....	74.....	0.189.....	0.175.....	0.189.....	0.172.....	0.188.....	-0.004.....	2,381.....	0.172.....	0.172.....	0.172.....	0.100.....	116,080,638
OM0000004939.....	AL SUWADI POWER.....	628,771.....	107,688.....	74.....	0.189.....	0.175.....	0.189.....	0.172.....	0.188.....	-0.004.....	2,381.....	0.172.....	0.172.....	0.172.....	0.100.....	123,952,297
OM0000002804.....	ASAFFA FOODS.....	174,052.....	188,987.....	17.....	0.799.....	0.810.....	0.770.....	0.810.....	0.799.....	0.011.....	1,377.....	0.810.....	0.800.....	0.810.....	0.100.....	97,200,000
OM0000009072.....	OQ GAS NETWORKS.....	9,948,596.....	2,331,292.....	588.....	0.232.....	0.236.....	0.231.....	0.235.....	0.232.....	0.003.....	1,293.....	0.235.....	0.235.....	0.236.....	0.100.....	1,017,696,621
OM0000002796.....	BANK MUSCAT.....	9,435,196.....	3,897,066.....	262.....	0.410.....	0.415.....	0.408.....	0.414.....	0.409.....	0.005.....	1,222.....	0.414.....	0.414.....	0.414.....	0.100.....	3,107,648,384
OM0000008934.....	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES.....	2,286,135.....	949,618.....	379.....	0.411.....	0.418.....	0.411.....	0.416.....	0.411.....	0.005.....	1,217.....	0.416.....	0.416.....	0.416.....	0.100.....	320,403,200
OM0000002374.....	UNITED FINANCE.....	2,091,297.....	189,159.....	54.....	0.091.....	0.091.....	0.090.....	0.090.....	0.089.....	-0.001.....	1,124.....	0.090.....	0.090.....	0.090.....	0.100.....	32,051,457
OM0000003661.....	VOLTAMP ENERGY.....	21,133.....	37,236.....	16.....	1.770.....	1.770.....	1.755.....	1.764.....	1.750.....	0.014.....	0,800.....	1.764.....	1.764.....	1.800.....	0.100.....	165,133,618
OM0000004768.....	MADINA TAKAFUL.....	4,083,838.....	535,154.....	127.....	0.132.....	0.133.....	0.130.....	0.132.....	0.131.....	0.001.....	0,763.....	0.132.....	0.132.....	0.132.....	0.100.....	23,100,000
OM0000001707.....	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY.....	48,360.....	130,573.....	20.....	2.700.....	2.702.....	2.700.....	2.700.....	2.680.....	0.020.....	0,746.....	2.701.....	2.701.....	2.701.....	0.100.....	242,190,000
OM0000001533.....	OMINVEST.....	128,223.....	52,126.....	21.....	0.405.....	0.410.....	0.405.....	0.406.....	0.403.....	0.003.....	0,744.....	0.406.....	0.406.....	0.406.....	0.100.....	379,898,000
OM0000001087.....	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE.....	77,000.....	32,237.....	11.....	0.415.....	0.428.....	0.415.....	0.428.....	0.425.....	0.003.....	0,706.....	0.428.....	0.428.....	0.428.....	0.100.....	42,800,000
OM0000001483.....	NATIONAL BANK OMAN.....	2,118,620.....	826,855.....	12.....	0.385.....	0.385.....	0.380.....	0.385.....	0.385.....	0.000.....	0,000.....	0.385.....	0.383.....	0.385.....	0.100.....	642,248,810
OM0000002176.....	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS.....	205,675.....	199,743.....	36.....	0.929.....	0.975.....	0.877.....	0.974.....	0.974.....	0.000.....	0,000.....	0.974.....	0.975.....	0.974.....	0.100.....	121,650,613
OM0000003224.....	RENAISSANCE SERVICES.....	1,186,246.....	415,282.....	54.....	0.350.....	0.352.....	0.350.....	0.350.....	0.350.....	0.000.....	0,000.....	0.350.....	0.350.....	0.350.....	0.100.....	82,743,500
OM0000003125.....	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.....	306,000.....	89,583.....	13.....	0.294.....	0.294.....	0.292.....	0.293.....	0.294.....	-0.001.....	0,340.....	0.293.....	0.290.....	0.293.....	0.100.....	58,600,000
OM0000002188.....	AL ANWAR CERAMIC.....	13,320.....	2,295.....	7.....	0.195.....	0.195.....	0.194.....	0.194.....	0.195.....	-0.001.....	-0,533.....	0.194.....	0.194.....	0.194.....	0.100.....	42,680,000
OM0000003968.....	OOREDOO.....	986,873.....	344,750.....	25.....	0.350.....	0.352.....	0.347.....	0.348.....	0.350.....	-0.002.....	-0,571.....	0.347.....	0.347.....	0.347.....	0.100.....	226,528,592
OM0000002440.....	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.....	202,806.....	24,781.....	19.....	0.121.....	0.123.....	0.121.....	0.122.....	0.123.....	-0.001.....	-0,813.....	0.122.....	0.122.....	0.123.....	0.100.....	10,980,000
OM0000002226.....	AL JAZEERA SERVICES.....	66,835.....	13,460.....	15.....	0.202.....	0.203.....	0.200.....	0.201.....	0.204.....	-0.003.....	-1,471.....	0.201.....	0.200.....	0.205.....	0.100.....	8,611,441
Total.....	23.....	81,090,235.....	25,197,332.....	3,094.....												

Parallel Market

OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	273,790	26,923	27	0.098	0.100	0.097	0.100	0.095	0.005	5,263	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.100	15,555,040
OM0000004129	ASYAD SHIPPING	12,811,227	2,937,516	536	0.220	0.230	0.220	0.228	0.218	0.010	4,587	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.000	1,187,593,696
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	63,354,622	14,163,078	987	0.218	0.226	0.218	0.226	0.218	0.008	3,670	0.226	0.226	0.226	0.040	781,844,932
OM0000001384	FINANCIAL SERVICES	65,346	6,638	15	0.100	0.103	0.100	0.103	0.100	0.003	3,000	0.103	0.100	0.104	0.100	2,060,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	22,778	1,708	2	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.073	0.002	2,740	0.075	0.075	0.079	0.100	4,687,500
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	3,900	919	2	0.235	0.236	0.235	0.236	0.230	0.006	2,609	0.236	0.233	0.236	0.100	1,867,086
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	33,317,593	15,087,781	503	0.449	0.460	0.448	0.459	0.448	0.011	2,455	0.459	0.459	0.459	0.010	3,672,000,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	124,655	15,596	25	0.133	0.133	0.122	0.133	0.130	0.003	2,308	0.133	0.129	0.133	0.100	3,960,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	3,364,262	685,500	268	0.204	0.205	0.202	0.205	0.201	0.004	1,990	0.205	0.202	0.205	0.100	233,158,699
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	1,345,588	228,680	69	0.166	0.172	0.166	0.170	0.167	0.003	1,796	0.170	0.169	0.170	0.100	248,642,248
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INTL DEVNT & INVESTMENT	973,011	297,053	45	0.305	0.310	0.303	0.305	0.300	0.005	1,667	0.305	0.302	0.305	0.100	151,297,123
OM0000004348	SMN POWER HOLDING	104,582	23,322	10	0.223	0.224	0.223	0.224	0.221	0.003	1,357	0.224	0.223	0.224	0.100	44,718,374
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	31,250	2,500	7	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.079	0.001	1,266	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.100	16,000,000
OM0000001180	NATIONAL GAS	71,132	6,672	12	0.093	0.095	0.093	0.094	0.093	0.001	1,075	0.094	0.094	0.095	0.100	7,990,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	2,490	1,227	4	0.492	0.495	0.492	0.495	0.490	0.005	1,020	0.495	0.494	0.505	0.100	163,781,991
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	160,207	33,251	18	0.226	0.231	0.220	0.220	0.218	0.002	0,917	0.230	0.230	0.235	0.100	133,787,838
OM0000003141	BAKRA WATER AND POWER	14,675	2,495	8	0.165	0.171	0.165	0.171	0.170	0.001	0,588	0.171	0.170	0.171	0.100	27,360,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	207,306	41,537	18	0.205	0.205	0.200	0.201	0.200	0.001	0,500	0.201	0.200	0.201	0.100	544,066,865
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	10,000	2,010	1	0.201	0.201	0.201	0.201	0.200	0.001	0,500	0.201	0.200	0.201	0.100	402,551,410
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	72,038	30,854	21	0.432	0.432	0.426	0.426	0.425	0.001	0,235	0.426	0.418	0.426	0.100	19,496,230
OM0000001152	OMAN NATL ENRG & INVESTMENT	35,038	5,523	7	0.158	0.159	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.000	0,000	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.100	25,621,960
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	13,000	1,950	2	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0,000	0.150	0.150	0.153	0.100	29,651,538
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	160,090	13,407	20	0.083	0.085	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0,000	0.083	0.083	0.084	0.100	29,651,538
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	553,810	47,397	44	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.088	0.000	0,000	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.100	1,806,000
OM0000002281	TAGEER FINANCE	19,879	8,858	5	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.000	0,131	0.131	0.131	0.135	0.100	36,578,241
OM0000004680	SEAFARITY DESALINATION	85,262	12,964	4	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.000	0,152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.100	1,665,000
OM0000004778	TAKEFAL OMAN	13,613	10,553	22	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.079	0.000	0,000	0.079	0.078	0.079	0.100	18,750,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	35,000	3,150	3	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0,000	0.090	0.090	0.091	0.100	20,001,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	33,692	3,493	5	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0,000	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.100	67,843,596
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	541,060	55,188	29	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.100	0.000	0,000	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.100	177,400,000
OM0000001409	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	12,505	6,194	8	0.497	0.497	0.494	0.494	0.495	0.001	0,202	0.494	0.494	0.495	0.100	81,695,250
OM0000001181	MUSANDAM POWER	13,322	4,963	7	0.365	0.400	0.364	0.364	0.365	0.001	0,274	0.364	0.350	0.364	0.100	25,621,960
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	7,200	1,941	3	0.243	0.250	0.243	0.250	0.251	0.001	0,238	0.250	0.250	0.252	0.100	29,087,747
OM0000004738	SENAI SALAL	987,967	86,887	44	0.225	0.225	0.222	0.222	0.222	0.000	0,000	0.222	0.223	0.223	0.100	212,869,544
OM0000002575	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	19,620	16,123	19	0.824	0.825	0.820	0.825	0.820	0.004	0,820	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.100	71,900,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANTIA FINANCIAL SERVICES	606,645	116,995	19	0.195	0.195	0.190	0.194	0.195	0.001	0,513	0.194	0.190	0.194	0.100	611,980,888
OM0000000181	OMAN EMIRATES HO	257,337	29,528	21	0.112	0.117	0.112	0.114	0.115	0.001	0,870	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.100	13,893,750
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	17,863	3,866	9	0.219	0.219	0.215	0.217	0.219	0.002	0,913	0.217	0.217	0.217	0.100	3,824,333
OM0000000172	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	230,379	31,787	28	0.140	0.140	0.136	0.138	0.140	0.002	1,429	0.138	0.137	0.138	0.100	41,200,304
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	6,211	795	2	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.130	0.002	1,538	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.100	12,672,000
OM0000000162	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	97,198	4,095	15	0.042	0.043	0.042	0.042	0.043	0.001	2,328	0.042	0.042	0.043	0.100	3,570,000
OM0000009668	THE PEARL REIF	10,000	2,008	6	0.203	0.203	0.200	0.200	0.205	0.005	2,439	0.200	0.200	0.204	0.100	11,287,367
OM0000001908	SENAI SALAL	987,967	86,887	44	0.225	0.225	0.222	0.222	0.222	0.000	0,000	0.222	0.223	0.223	0.100	212,869,544
OM0000001888	SALALAH MILLS	27,968	12,636	7	0.470	0.495	0.456	0.460	0.504	0.004	0,730	0.460	0.454	0.554	0.100	28,793,008
Total	44	119,782,040	34,077,281	2,898												


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Contact : 97607069
Email : carolinellizabethjohn@gmail.com

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

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What's app: 0096895392251
Gmail: regi.lukose@gmail.com

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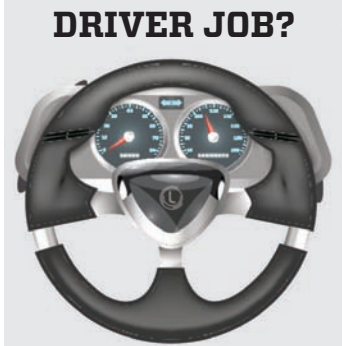
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Cost Accountant, B.Com with 15 yrs exp in Oman. Can join urgently, Contact: 7733 6141

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

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

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Female software engineer full stack developer also expert in digital marketing with 7 yrs experience. Contact 74102443

Pakistani B.Com, CA Articleship completed 28 yrs in Oman, work up-to finalisation/expert in book keeping, vendor & bank reconciliation. Seeking full/part time job. Contact: 99072361

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

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Accountant with 5+ yrs of experience in bookkeeping and VAT, seeking a suitable position in Muscat. Open to accountant, Inventory management, or office administration roles. Holds valid Oman D/L and is immediately available. Mob: +968 95459156, Email: ajiththomas454@gmail.com

Indian male, Bcom, MBA finance, 14 yrs of Oman and Indian experience, seeking suitable jobs in accounts. Have valid Oman D/L. Mob: 97436925.

Indian male, M. com (finance) 12 years accounting and office administration experience in Oman, looking for suitable position. NOC & D/L available Contact: 99859141,

Finance Manager, Indian, 26Yrs of experience, looking Job Change, Contact: 98006226

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

Accountant looking for job. Contact: 75024166

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

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

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Indian IT professional highly experienced in ERP and IT-Infrastructure Implementation, administration and support. Contact: 92593403

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

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

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

Indian male, 28 years, BBA graduate with 6 yrs experience in digital marketing and brand promotion. Skilled in social media management, Email marketing, SEO, website optimization, and poster designing. Seeking a suitable position in a reputed organization. Contact: 95352036

Europe looks to shore up its own defences amid US uncertainty

Kaja Kallas singled out Russia as Europe's biggest threat, saying its "endgame" was not the Donbas region of Ukraine but a wider assault on the region



MUNICH: Europe's collective defence still relies on the NATO trans-Atlantic alliance, the EU's top diplomat told the Munich Security Conference on Sunday.

But there is an urgent need, Kaja Kallas said, for Europe to take the lead in its own defence.

Kallas, the European Commission's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, channelled the Avengers superhero franchise with her address, titled "Europeans Assemble! Reclaiming Agency in a Rougher World."

She singled out Russia as Europe's biggest threat, saying its "endgame" was not the Donbas region of Ukraine but a wider assault on the region.

"Russia already seeks to cripple economies through cyberattacks, disrupt satellites, sabotage under-sea cables, fracture alliances with

disinformation, coerce countries by weaponising oil and gas," said Kallas. "And of course there is also the nuclear threat."

Europe's shield, she said would be a new security strategy, pursuit of a larger bloc with the addition of new member states and new trade agreements beyond its borders like those with India, Mercosur and an upcoming deal with Australia. These partnerships also include security agreements.

"We are getting there, dusting off our capes, pulling on our boots, revving up our engines," she said.

Stoltenberg: Europe has increased defence spending

Speaking on Sunday, MSC head Wolfgang Ischinger stressed the need to plan for European defence, in particular to "ramp up defence production and to create a more cohesive and globally competitive

European defence market."

Woven throughout speeches and soundbites from European leaders at the three-day event was an insistence they had started to deliver that, responding to demands from the Trump administration to pull their weight in NATO.

"The European Union is mobilising up to €800 billion [...] investing in the capabilities we need — from air and missile defence to drone and military mobility," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Saturday. "We are delivering."

Former NATO chief-turned-Norwegian finance minister Jens Stoltenberg said the US ultimatum had led to European allies and Canada spending "significantly" more on capability.

"When you listen to the US or the Trump administration, the criticism is not primarily against

NATO, it's against NATO allies not paying for NATO. And I think that's a valid point, and Europeans are delivering," Stoltenberg told DW.

EU members spent an estimated €381 billion (\$452 billion) on defence in 2025 — up from €251 billion in 2021, prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

For Kallas, though, it's not merely that NATO members need to meet Donald Trump's demand for 5% of GDP spending on defence, but ensuring it's spent wisely. She said European nations needed to cast their procurement nets wider to maximise return on investment.

"We have too many standards, we have too many different capabilities, and in order to bring down the costs, also bring down the procurement times, we really need to work together," said Kallas. "It's not only how much we spend,

but actually how to spend it more wisely."

Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said pooling Ukraine's defence capabilities — now tested for four years in its conflict with Russia — was an opportunity for Europe to advance its own security.

"We need to understand in Europe that it's not about a different national interest, about the defence industry," Tsahkna told DW.

"There is no competition between each other. We actually need more support, more new innovation, and Ukraine is our opportunity."

Europe considers defence future without US

In late January, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte told lawmakers at the European Parliament that those who thought Europe could defend itself without the United States should "keep dreaming."

And US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in a speech focused on preserving Western culture and defence in line with Trump's values, said on Saturday it wasn't Washington's "goal" to see the end of the trans-Atlantic alliance. Other US lawmakers mingling with the politicians, policymakers and security experts in Munich also tried to ease fears of a Trump-led withdrawal from the continent.

"Let us show [Europe] that we are trustworthy," Delaware Senator Chris Coons — a Democrat — told DW. "That we are the reliable partners that you've come to count on for decades, and find ways that

we can share the burden of our shared defence and security needs and find a positive path forward."

But this weekend made it clear that Europe is prioritising non-US partnerships — European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen explicitly singled out what she called Europe's "closest partners" Norway, Iceland, the UK and Canada for new security collaborations, with the US a notable omission.

While talking up collective defence, European leaders were quick to emphasize the role of NATO for the continent's overall security, particularly for its nuclear deterrent.

Leaders also scuttled talk of a unified European army as a kind of backup to NATO.

"NATO is actually the frame which is working, it's not a theoretical thing, these are the plans and commitments protocols, so we cannot start creating something different," said Tsahkna.

"If we become stronger in conventional capabilities, in cyber, in crisis management — if we take better care of Europe and other continents and thereby also relieve the United States — then I feel safe under the American nuclear umbrella, because the Americans also need us," said Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, head of the European Parliament's defense committee.

Washington's message was that "the US needs a stronger Europe," said Tsahkna. "Actually, we need a stronger Europe. And I think that this Munich conference showed that Europe is waking up." — **dw**

RENEWED DIPLOMATIC PUSH

Iran's Foreign Minister heads to Geneva for second round of nuclear talks with US

CAIRO: Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi headed to Geneva on Sunday for a second round of Tehran-Washington indirect talks, even as relevant parties laid out starkly different visions of what a deal should entail, exposing the fragile foundations of the renewed diplomatic push.

Araghchi is leading a "diplomatic and specialised" delegation to the talks on Tuesday. He is expected to meet Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, and Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, among other officials, according to a ministry statement.

US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff will lead the American team, according to media reports.

The meeting follows the first round in Oman's Muscat on Feb. 6 that both sides described as a "good start" but yielded no visible breakthrough.

In public statements ahead of the Geneva meeting, Iranian officials struck a tone of conditional openness mixed with defiance. Speaking to BBC on Sunday, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi signaled Tehran's willingness to compromise on its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief, but drew firm red lines.

"The ball is in America's court to prove that they want to do a deal," Takht-Ravanchi said.

He confirmed that Iran could discuss diluting its 60 percent-enriched uranium as the country's proof of flexibility, but flatly ruled out zero enrichment on Iranian soil.

"It is not on the table anymore," Takht-Ravanchi said, reiterating that Iran's missile program is non-negotiable.

Hamid Ghanbari, a deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy and a member of Iran's negotiating team, revealed that past discussions in Muscat explored joint investment in energy and mining projects and the potential purchase of US-made aircraft, according to Iran's semi-official Fars news agency.

Any agreement, Ghanbari stressed, must ensure the release



of Iran's frozen assets abroad in a "real and usable" manner.

He further stated that while Tehran is seeking a "serious agreement," it will not accept zero uranium enrichment.

According to Iran's official IRNA news agency, Iran's armed forces chief of staff, Abdolrahim Mousavi, warned Sunday that any war would carry consequences for the United States.

"If Trump seeks war with Iran, why does he speak of negotiation?" Mousavi said, adding that entering a conflict would "teach him a lesson" and end his "blustering."

Meanwhile, signals are similarly mixed from Washington. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Trump prefers diplomacy and a negotiated settlement. "No one's ever been able to do a successful deal with Iran, but we're going to try," Rubio said at a news conference in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, following his meeting with Trump in Washington, also suggested that Trump is "determined to exhaust the possibilities of achieving a deal, which he believes can be achieved now."

But Trump himself has kept military options open. He told reporters on Thursday that if negotiations with Iran fail, "we'll have to go to phase two. Phase two will be very tough for them."

On Friday, Trump said the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, had been ordered to join the USS Abraham Lincoln and three guided-missile destroyers already deployed to the Middle East region.

— ANI

Full story @ timesofoman.com/world

EUROPEAN UNION

Portugal joins growing EU push to tighten social media age limits

BRUSSELS: Portugal has proposed legislation requiring parental consent for minors under 16 to access social media platforms, becoming the latest European country to tighten age restrictions amid growing concerns over child safety online.

The draft law, introduced on Thursday, would require platforms to implement effective age-verification systems and comply with national child protection standards. The proposal places Portugal alongside Spain, France, Denmark, and Greece in strengthening safeguards for young users.

Earlier this month, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced plans to raise the minimum age for social media use from 14 to 16, pledging to protect the children from what he described as "the digital Wild West."

Sanchez said his government would also introduce legal accountability for technology executives who fail to remove illegal or harmful content, including child sexual abuse material and non-consensual deepfake imagery.

France's lower house of parliament recently approved legislation banning children under 15 from accessing social media, pending Senate approval. French President Emmanuel Macron has called for coordinated European action, saying platforms have the technical capacity to verify users' ages.



Several European governments are pursuing similar measures, though age thresholds vary.

Denmark and Greece are working toward setting a minimum age of 15, while Austria is considering a threshold of 14.

Italy has introduced proposals addressing social media use by minors, including rules affecting child influencers.

In November 2025, the European Parliament adopted a non-binding resolution recommending a minimum age of 16 for unrestricted access to social media across the bloc, with parental consent permitted for younger teenagers.

The European Commission has

said age limits remain a matter of national competence under the General Data Protection Regulation. Instead of imposing a bloc-wide threshold, Brussels is developing a European Union (EU) age-verification tool that member states may customize. Platforms would not be required to adopt it if they can demonstrate equally effective alternatives.

Under the EU's Digital Services Act, in force since 2024, major platforms are required to assess risks to minors and implement mitigation measures. Regulators have begun increasing scrutiny of compliance.

Scientific studies have helped

shape the policy discussions. Longitudinal research published in peer-reviewed journals has found associations between heavy social media use and higher rates of anxiety, depression, and sleep disruption among adolescents. Some studies suggest prolonged exposure to algorithm-driven content may affect brain regions linked to impulse control, emotional regulation, and attention.

Researchers caution that such findings demonstrate correlation rather than definitive causation. Many experts say risks are heightened with excessive, unsupervised use, while moderate, supervised engagement may offer social and creative benefits.

Outside the EU, Australia implemented a nationwide ban on social media use by those under 16 in December, placing enforcement responsibility on platforms. It was the first nation in the world to enforce such a law. In the United States, lawmakers have held hearings on youth online safety, and several states have filed lawsuits alleging that technology companies failed to adequately protect children from harmful content.

Britain has launched a consultation on whether to introduce an Australia-style ban on social media access for children under a certain age, though it hasn't officially implemented such a ban.

— Xinhua

STATE NEWS AGENCY

North Korea builds homes for families of soldiers killed during Russia deployment



PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inaugurated a new housing district in Pyongyang for the families of troops who died in overseas military operations, state news agency KCNA reported on Monday.

The new district symbolises "spirit and sacrifice" of the dead troops, Kim said in a speech, adding that the homes would allow the bereaved families to "take pride in their sons and husbands and live happily."

He further pledged to repay the "young martyrs" who "sacrificed all to their motherland."

Images released by the news

agency show the North Korean leader and his daughter, Kim Ju Ae, consoling families of the fallen soldiers while visiting their new homes. North Korea has sent around 14,000 soldiers to fight alongside Russian troops against Ukraine. Over 6,000 of those soldiers were killed or wounded during their deployment in the war, as per South Korean, Ukrainian and Western estimates.

Kim seeks to appease public

Pyongyang has conducted several public ceremonies over the last few months to honour the fallen soldiers, including a museum and

a memorial complex featuring sculptures of troops.

Promote unity

Analysts see the public ceremonies as a way to promote unity and quash potential public discontent stemming from lives lost in a foreign war.

The new housing district comes ahead of the Ninth Congress of the ruling Workers' Party, which will convene in late February.

The gathering is meant to showcase Kim's achievements and outline his goals for domestic and foreign policy for the next five years.

— DW



LIFESTYLE

People who ate two vitamin C-packed kiwifruit daily showed thicker, healthier skin. The findings suggest glowing skin really does start from within

Scientists discovered that vitamin C from food travels through the bloodstream into every layer of the skin, boosting collagen and skin renewal.

People who ate two vitamin C-packed kiwifruit daily showed thicker, healthier skin. The findings suggest glowing skin really does start from within.

Scientists at the University of Otago, Faculty of Medicine Christchurch Otago, have identified a direct connection between how much vitamin C people eat and how well their skin produces collagen and renews itself.

The findings show that skin health responds measurably to dietary vitamin C, not just topical treatments.

Published in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology, the research found that vitamin C levels in the skin closely mirror levels in the blood (plasma). Increasing intake through vitamin C rich foods was shown to raise both blood and skin concentrations.

Eating vitamin C raises skin levels and thickness

The study followed 24 healthy adults in Aotearoa New Zealand and Germany. Participants who raised their plasma vitamin C levels by eating two vitamin C rich SunGold™ kiwifruit each day showed a clear increase in vitamin C within their skin.

This increase was associated with thicker skin (collagen production) and greater renewal of the outer skin layer.

Lead author Professor Margreet Vissers from Matai Haora -- Centre for Redox Biology and Medicine within the Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine described the results as striking.

The strength of the association between skin thickness and vitamin C intake is "compelling," she explained.

Vitamin C moves from blood to skin

According to Professor Vissers, the relationship between blood vitamin C and skin vitamin C stood out compared to other organs.

"We were surprised by the tight correlation between plasma vitamin C levels and those in the skin this was much more marked than in any other organ we have investigated," she says.

The research team also found that vitamin C circulating in the bloodstream reaches every layer of the skin and supports healthier skin function.

"We are the first to demonstrate that vitamin C in the blood circulation penetrates all layers of the skin and is associated with improved skin function. I am very proud of my team and excited about what the data is telling us."

Why diet matters more than creams

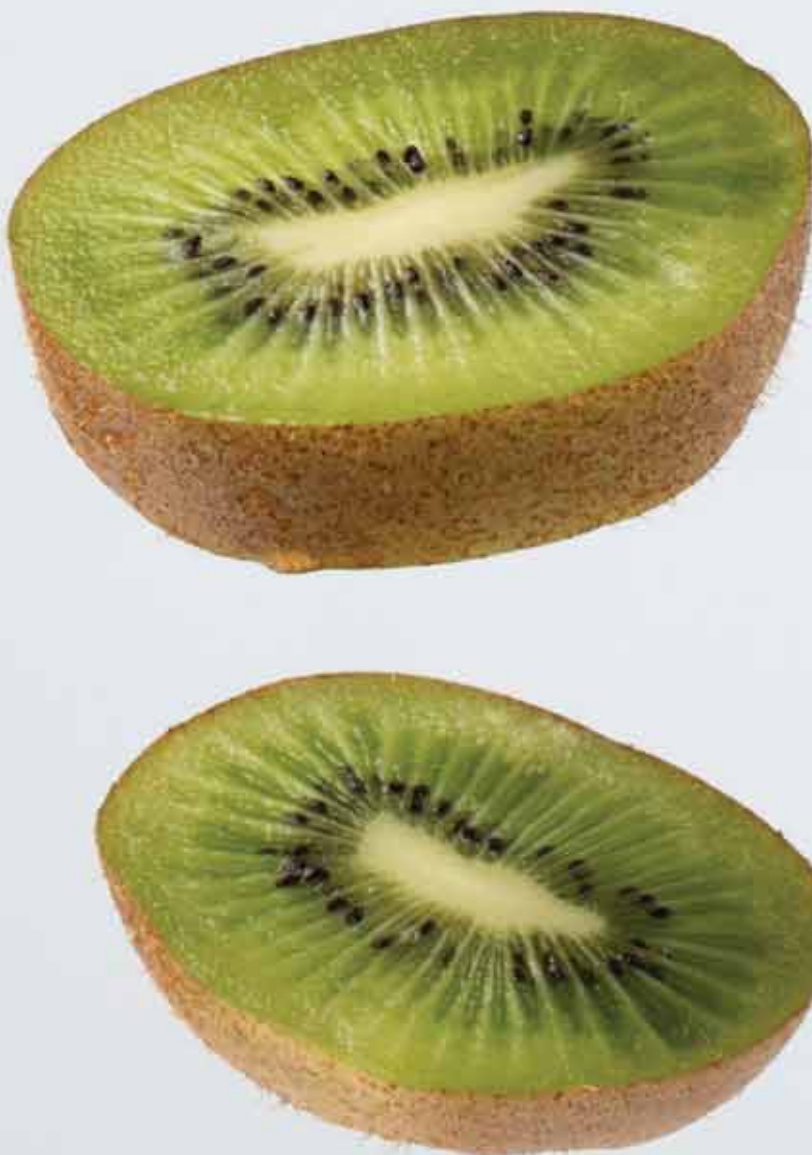
Professor Vissers says the findings reinforce the idea that skin health begins internally, with nutrients delivered naturally through the bloodstream.

Vitamin C is essential for collagen production, which is why it is commonly added to skincare products. However, vitamin C dissolves easily in water and does not absorb well through the outer skin barrier.

The study showed that skin cells are highly efficient at absorbing vitamin C from the blood, with uptake into the outer epidermal layer appearing to be a priority.



EATING MORE VITAMIN C CAN PHYSICALLY CHANGE YOUR SKIN: STUDY



How the study was conducted

The research was funded by New Zealand company Zespri International, along with a University of Otago Research Grant, and included two phases.

The first phase examined the relationship between plasma and skin vitamin C levels using healthy skin tissue from patients undergoing elective surgical procedures at Te Whatu Ora Canterbury (with support from the Otago campus's He Taonga Tapu Canterbury Cancer Society Tissue Bank).

The second phase involved a controlled dietary intervention carried out in Christchurch and Germany. Each location included 12 healthy participants.

Eight weeks of dietary change

Participants were asked to eat two Kiwi Gold kiwifruit daily for eight weeks. This provided the equivalent of 250 micrograms of vitamin C.

"All were instructed to consume two Kiwi Gold kiwifruit daily -- the equivalent of 250 micrograms of vitamin C -- for eight weeks. We then collected skin samples before and after the intervention, with separate analyses allowing us to look at the skin basal layers in Christchurch and the outer dermal skin layer and skin function tests in Germany," Professor Vissers explains.

German participants were recruited and tested by the SGS Institute Fresenius in Hamburg, which has the technical capability to collect samples from the outer dermal skin layer (the blister "roof").

The institute evaluated skin regeneration using ultrasound measurements of skin thickness, elasticity UV protection and epidermal cell renewal to assess overall skin function.

Clear gains in collagen and skin renewal

One of the most significant findings was a measurable rise in skin thickness among participants, indicating increased collagen production along with faster regeneration of epidermal cells.

"The other really substantial finding showed a significant increase in the participants' skin thickness levels, reflecting collagen production and an upsurge in the regeneration of their epidermal cells, in other words skin renewal," Professor Vissers says.

Other vitamin C foods likely offer similar benefits

SunGold kiwifruit was selected for the study because of its consistently high vitamin C content. However, the researchers expect similar benefits from other vitamin C-rich foods, especially fresh fruits and vegetables such as citrus, berries, capsicums and broccoli.

"We suggest that increasing your dietary vitamin C intake will result in effective vitamin C uptake into all compartments of the skin," Professor Vissers says.

Daily intake is key

Maintaining steady vitamin C levels in the blood is essential, since the body does not store the vitamin long term. Professor Vissers notes that healthy individuals can reach optimal plasma levels with about 250mg of vitamin C per day.

"The important thing is to keep your plasma levels optimal, which we know can be easily achieved in a healthy person with a vitamin C intake of around 250mg per day. The body however does not store the vitamin, so we recommend 5+ a day, every day, with one of those five being a high vitamin C food, as a good habit to cultivate." -ANI

SPORTS

Rayo stuns Atletico as Betis send Mallorca into bottom 3 in La Liga

The loss came three days after Atletico's impressive first-leg win over FC Barcelona in the Copa del Rey semifinals

MADRID: Atletico Madrid produced another poor away display on Sunday as Diego Simeone's side slumped to a 3-0 defeat to Rayo Vallecano. The loss came three days after Atletico's impressive first-leg win over FC Barcelona in the Copa del Rey semifinals. Simeone rotated heavily, but still named a strong starting lineup. With Rayo's Vallecas pitch deemed unplayable, the match was moved to Leganes' Butarque Stadium. Despite home fans chanting for club president Martin Presa to resign, Rayo looked the more composed side and went 2-0 up at halftime thanks to goals from Fran Perez in the 40th minute and Oscar Valentin in the 45th. Nobel Mendy added a third in the 76th



with a powerful header. Rayo's win meant Valencia kicked off its local derby away to Levante inside the bottom three, but Carlos Corberan's side eased clear with a 2-0 victory thanks to

two excellent second-half goals from Largie Ramazani and Umar Sadiq. Valencia's win leaves Mallorca in the relegation zone after a 2-1 home defeat to Betis. Abde Ezzalz-

ouli and Cedric Bakambu put Betis 2-0 up with goals in the 18th and 45th minutes, and although Vedat Muriqi pulled one back with a header in the 66th, Mallorca could not find an equalizer despite going

close through Jan Virgili. Athletic Bilbao made it two wins in two games with a 2-1 victory away to bottom side Oviedo. Oviedo were the better team before the break and Ilyas Chaira put the

hosts ahead on the half hour, but Athletic responded after halftime with a superb strike from Mikel Jauregizar before Oihan Sancet converted a penalty following a clear handball in the Oviedo area. On Saturday, Vinicius Jr. scored twice from the penalty spot as Real Madrid went top of La Liga with a 4-1 home win over Real Sociedad. Gonzalo Garcia opened the scoring and Fede Valverde added another, while Mikel Oyarzabal netted for the visitors. Espanyol remains without a win in 2026 after a 2-2 home draw with Celta Vigo. Ferran Jutgla put Celta ahead in the 37th minute, Kike Garcia equalized in the 65th, and Tyrhys Dolan then gave Espanyol the lead before Borja Iglesias earned Celta a deserved point in stoppage time with a close-range finish. Sevilla and Alaves shared the points in a bad-tempered 1-1 draw after Sevilla was reduced to 10 men in the 16th minute when Juanlu Sanchez was sent off. Djibril Sow gave Sevilla a 41st-minute lead, but Toni Martinez levelled for Alaves in the 59th. The game ended with Sevilla coach Matias Almeyda and midfielder Joan Jordan also sent off for protests from the touchline. Elche and Osasuna began the weekend with a dull 0-0 draw, while FC Barcelona visits Girona on Monday night. -xinhua

SHARED COMMITMENT

Oman Sail and the Ministry of Social Development sign MoU to create learning opportunities for Omani youth

MUSCAT: Oman Sail and the Ministry of Social Development have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) designed to empower Omani youth through a specialised life skills training programme which will lean on the lessons of sailing to inspire personal skills development, communication and teamwork. The agreement was signed by Dr. Khamis Salim Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, and Sayyida Maani Abdullah Al Busaidi, Director General of Family Development at the Ministry of Social Development.



This partnership underscores a shared commitment to supporting youth by providing them with the tools necessary to build a prosperous future. The training programme will engage 16 students, aged 10 to 16, who have been selected by the Ministry of Social Development. To ensure personalised attention and impactful learning, the participants will be divided into two separate batches of eight students each, with a curriculum is specifically designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. Over the course of three days for each group, the curriculum will focus on four core pillars: personal skills development, communication, teamwork, and an introductory 'Try Sailing' experience. This structured approach allows the students to master collaborative tasks on land before applying those same principles of coordination and leadership on the water,

ensuring that the youth are better prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Dr. Khamis Salim Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, said, "The primary objective of this initiative is to equip Omani youth with essential life skills that foster self-confidence and creativity. By integrating maritime activities with personal development workshops, the programme aims to expand the horizons of the participants and provide them with a supportive environment to explore their potential. Oman Sail is proud to play such an important role in shaping the next generation of resilient and capable Omani citizens." Sayyida Maani Abdullah Al Busaidi, Director General of Family Development at the Ministry of Social Development, emphasised the importance of such community partnerships in achieving social goals. She said, "This agreement represents a vital step in our

mission to provide comprehensive support and empowerment for children in our care. By teaching the youth how to communicate effectively and work as a team, we are giving them the keys to unlock a brighter, more independent future. The Ministry looks forward to working with our trusted partner Oman Sail and witnessing the positive impact this unique training will have on the students' personal growth and outlook." Oman Sail has always believed in the power of the sea to transform lives and instil a sense of discipline and ambition. The partnership with the Ministry of Social Development will expand the ability to reach young people and share the benefits of these experiences with a new group of individuals, helping them to discover their inner strengths and build a foundation of confidence that will serve them throughout their lives.

RUTHLESS AGGRESSION

Suryakumar hails Ishan's 'responsible' knock following win over Pakistan

COLOMBO: Following his side's win over Pakistan, Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav hailed Ishan Kishan for his magnificent knock, which oozed a mixture of ruthless aggression and responsibility at the same time, adding that the score India had was "15-20 runs over the par score". Despite Abhishek's second duck of the tournament, it was Ishan who stepped up yet again, firing a magnificent 77 in 40 balls, with 10 fours and three sixes to provide Team India the security they needed, with the right attacking intent. By the time he was out, Kishan had scored an overwhelming majority of his team's score, laying down a platform for his skipper Suryakumar Yadav (32 in 29 balls, with three fours) and Shivam Dube (27 in 17 balls, with three fours and a six) to take India to a competitive total of 175/7, which proved to be too much for Pakistan on a tough surface where for batters except Kishan, getting bound-

aries was proving difficult. Speaking during the post-match presentation, Suryakumar said, "This is for India. "We played the same brand of cricket we wanted to play. The way Ishan batted, he batted the same way (he has been batting in the last few games and domestic cricket). Ishan thought something out of the box. At 0-1, someone needed to take responsibility and he did that amazingly." The Indian skipper admitted that the Men in Blue lost their way in the middle overs, sinking to 126/4 in the 15th over, but he also acknowledged how Tilak (25 in 24 balls, with two fours and a six) held one end steady and the clean finishing by Dube and Rinku Singh (11* in four balls, with a four and a six). "As soon as we reached 175, we thought it was 15-20 runs over par. 155, it would have been a very tight game. "Hardik took the new ball, tak-



ing charge. (Jasprit) Bumrah then showed why he is the best in the world. It was great to see everyone contributing. (On how they intend to keep this

run going) We'll think about that tomorrow. We go back, have some good time together as a team (tonight) and think about that when we reach Ahmedabad (for the

Netherlands clash on February 18)," he concluded. **Ishan Kishan praises Bumrah, Hardik** After Team India thrashed Pakistan by 61 runs at the Group A match in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, Ishan Kishan reflected on the challenges of batting on a tricky surface and the importance of backing his strengths in a high-pressure India-Pakistan contest. During the post-match presentation ceremony, Kishan, who got 'Player of the Match' for his blistering 77, said that "The wicket was not that easy. Sometimes, you have to believe and focus on your strengths. I was watching the ball, sticking to my strengths and running as much as possible," Kishan said. He highlighted the work he has put into improving his offside game to better control the bowlers' lines. "I worked a lot on my off-side game, so I can have them bowl

where I want them to." On a large ground, Kishan emphasised the value of placement. "On a big ground, you get bigger gaps. Trying to hit the gaps, trying to take two runs. Knew we had to put up a total like 160-170, which would be a good total for us," he explained. Calling the India-Pakistan rivalry special, Kishan added, "India-Pakistan, always a special game, not just for us but for our country as well. They had pretty good spinners on their side. Winning this against Pakistan will give us confidence going forward." He reserved special praise for India's pace spearheads Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya. "They bowled well. Pace bowlers, when I was batting, did not feel like they were doing much for pacers. We know how Jassi can bowl, whether with the new ball or at the death. Credit goes to Hardik for bowling in tight areas and for executing his plans," Kishan added. -ANI



IN PICTURES



NBA basketball All-Star weekend festivities held in Los Angeles
San Antonio Spurs' Carter Bryant dunks in the slam dunk contest at the NBA basketball All-Star weekend festivities in Los Angeles, the United States. *xinhua*



Mass skiing competition at 2026 Ski Track of Russia held in Khimki
People take part in a mass skiing competition at the 2026 Ski Track of Russia in Khimki, Russia. *xinhua*



Chinese New Year cultural event held at Almaty Int'l Airport in Kazakhstan
Lion dance performers interact with a Kazakh child during a Chinese New Year cultural event at the Almaty International Airport in Almaty, Kazakhstan. *xinhua*



Valentine's Day marked in Damascus, Syria
A man holds a box of flowers on Valentine's Day in Damascus, Syria. *xinhua*



Carnival celebrations kick off in Buenos Aires, Argentina
Performers dance during a carnival parade in Buenos Aires, Argentina. *xinhua*



American tourists embark on China trips to experience Spring Festival
Tourists preparing to travel to China check in at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, California, the United States. *xinhua*



Bollywood actor Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan and Ahaan Shetty attend the success press meet of Border 2
Bollywood actor Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan and Ahaan Shetty attend the success press meet of Border 2, in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*

ROUND-UP

BYD becomes official partner of Manchester City Football Club

The new strategic partnership is one of the most significant collaborations between a global technology company and an iconic football brand – and its 360-degree approach reflects BYD Group’s multi-faceted innovation, and a shared vision for a more sustainable future

MUSCAT: BYD, the world’s leading manufacturer of new energy vehicles and sustainable mobility solutions, has today announced an agreement to be the official automotive partner of Manchester City Football Club.

The new strategic partnership is one of the most significant collaborations between a global technology company and an iconic football brand – and its 360-degree approach reflects BYD Group’s multi-faceted innovation, and a shared vision for a more sustainable future.

As well as supplying BYD and DENZA cars and other vehicles to Manchester City, BYD Group will bring its new-energy expertise through vehicle charging and energy-storage batteries at City Football Academy, the state-of-the-art training and development facility home to the club’s men’s, women’s and academy teams.



From today, BYD’s branding will feature on the training-kit sleeve of the men’s first team and from next season the women’s first team. In addition, BYD will have presence across the Etihad Stadium, with the brand’s logo featuring on the headrests of the dug-out area. One of the company’s cars will also lead the official Manchester City men’s first team bus into the stadium for Premier League and domestic-cup home fixtures.

The new partnership is the latest step in BYD’s strategy to establish a presence in international football to enhance awareness of its brand, cars and other technology products. The company has

previously been the official sponsor of the UEFA EURO 2024 and UEFA European Under-21 Championship 2025.

BYD Executive Vice President Stella Li commented: “Manchester City stands for excellence, innovation and the courage to push beyond limits – values that are deeply rooted in BYD’s DNA. This partnership is about more than football or mobility; it is about inspiring people around the world through technology that excites, connects and drives a more sustainable future. When innovation meets passion, the impact is truly global.”

Ferran Soriano, Chief Execu-

tive Officer at City Football Group, said: “BYD are global leaders within their field. Leaders in delivering excellence through technology and innovation. Leaders with purpose, to make the world a better place. All values that Manchester City share. As a Club, we are driven by a commitment to excellence and a passion for innovation. We partner with industry leaders to create a more environmentally sustainable future, starting with our facilities.

“This is why we are so proud to be BYD’s chosen partner and commit to work together for a better and more sustainable future for the duration of this multi-year partnership.”

Founded in 1894, Manchester City is one of the most successful clubs in football history, with 10 English league titles, seven FA Cups, one UEFA Champions League and a FIFA Club World Cup among its successes. Manchester City plays its home fixtures at the Etihad Stadium, a 53,000-seat arena that the club has called home since 2003, while the club can count its global fan base in millions.

BYD started as a battery manufacturer just over 30 years ago. It made its first New Energy Vehicle (NEV), the world’s first mass-produced plug-in hybrid, in 2008, and has since firmly established itself

as the global NEV leader, with record sales of both EVs and Super Hybrid PHEVs, and a market presence in more than 110 countries and regions. It celebrated production of its 15 millionth NEV as recently as December 2025.

In 2025 BYD sold 4.6 million vehicles globally, with more than a million of them finding customers outside of China. BYD’s global headquarters are in Shenzhen, and it employs 120,000 engineers in research and development, pushing the boundaries of innovation with an average of 45 new patent applications every working day.

In Oman, BYD vehicles are distributed by World Auto Business.

MILESTONE



ISSO Oman Games: A historic debut at ISWK Cambridge

MUSCAT: The sporting landscape in the Sultanate witnessed a significant milestone as the inaugural ISSO Oman Games 2026 concluded with a grand finale at ISWK Cambridge. This marked the first time the International Schools Sports Organisation (ISSO) brought its prestigious multi-sport platform to Omani shores, drawing student-athletes from across the region for a high-octane display of skill, stamina, and sportsmanship.

As an ISF-recognised school-sports organisation, ISSO is committed to building a structured, internationally aligned pathway for student-athletes—where participation evolves into progression through high-quality competition, standardised formats, certified officiating, and exposure to multi-sport excellence. The Oman edition reflected this vision by delivering professional event standards and a clear development platform

for emerging talent.

The tournament transformed the ISWK Cambridge campus into a hub of athletic excellence, featuring intense competitions in football, basketball, athletics, and badminton. With categories spanning Under-12, Under-14, and Under-18, the event provided a rare platform for young athletes to test their mettle in a competitive, international-standard environment.

A Masterclass in sportsmanship

The opening ceremony was attended by Talib Hilal Mohammed Al Thanawi, Head Coach of the Oman Beach Soccer National Team. Addressing the gathering, Al Thanawi emphasised the role of grassroots sports in building national character.

“The discipline and competitive spirit displayed here today are the building blocks of professional ex-

cellence,” he noted, praising the organisers for maintaining a high technical standard throughout the meet.

Looking ahead

The Games culminated in a vibrant trophy ceremony, celebrating both individual brilliance and collective teamwork. Beyond the medals, the event stood out as a triumph of planning, logistics, and community spirit—powered by a dedicated team of officials, referees, and volunteers who ensured smooth conduct across venues and fixtures.

By successfully hosting this debut edition, ISWK Cambridge and ISSO have laid a robust foundation for future championships. The event reinforces Oman’s growing reputation as a regional destination for school sports, ensuring that the next generation of athletes is nurtured in the spirit of fair play, healthy competition, and lifelong excellence.

EMPOWERING HOPE

Shell Oman strengthens its commitment to Oman’s humanitarian efforts



MUSCAT: In a continued demonstration of its commitment to building a more compassionate and resilient society, Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) has made its annual contribution to the Oman Charitable Organization (OCO).

This initiative aligns with Shell Oman’s belief that meaningful progress goes beyond commercial success. It is reflected in how a company uplifts people, supports national priorities, and stands alongside the community in times of need. This donation reflects those values, enabling OCO to continue delivering critical humanitarian and social support to individuals, families, and vulnerable groups across the Sultanate.

This donation is also made in accordance with the Ministerial Decision issued by the Ministry of

Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), reaffirming Shell Oman’s dedication to responsible corporate citizenship and its commitment to giving back to the community it serves.

By championing this initiative, Shell Oman strengthens its longstanding partnership with national institutions that work tirelessly to safeguard human dignity. The funds contribute directly to essential services, emergency relief efforts, and community support programs, helping to create pathways of hope for those facing hardship.

Mahmoud Al Abri, GM – Corporate Relations and Investor Relations Officer, commented: “At Shell Oman, we believe that our responsibility extends beyond our operations, it lies in being an active partner in the well-being of our

society. Our annual contribution to the Oman Charitable Organization reflects our commitment to compassion, solidarity, and shared progress. We are honoured to support an institution that plays such a vital role in uplifting communities and touching lives across the Sultanate of Oman.”

Through this contribution, Shell Oman continues to uphold its purpose-led approach to social responsibility, ensuring that the benefits of its growth extend well beyond its business. The initiative forms part of the company’s broader efforts to foster sustainable development, empower communities, and contribute to a brighter, more inclusive future for Oman in line with the priorities and objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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