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OMAN AND RUSSIA SHARE COMMITMENT TO FURTHER ENHANCE BILATERAL COOPERATION



The two leaders expressed deep concern over the tragic situation in the Gaza Strip

MOSCOW: In furtherance of the bonds of friendship and the historic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Russian Federation, and in response to the gracious invitation extended by President Vladimir Putin, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik undertook a State Visit to the Russian Federation on Monday and Tuesday, 21–22 April 2025.

The two leaders held official talks in the Grand Hall of the Kremlin Palace, characterized by a spirit of friendship and a shared commitment to further enhancing bilateral cooperation across all sectors in a manner that serves the mutual interests of the two friendly countries and their peoples.

Both sides expressed satisfac-

tion with the progress achieved in bilateral relations in recent years and emphasized the importance of building on those accomplishments and advancing their cooperation and partnership to broader and deeper levels.

The two leaders discussed a range of issues of mutual concern and explored ways to strengthen economic and trade relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Russian Federation across various sectors considered vital for development.

They also stressed the importance of boosting joint investment opportunities and intensifying communication and exchange of visits between the authorities concerned in both countries to

follow up joint cooperation programs.

On international affairs, the two leaders reviewed current issues and underscored the importance of resolving conflicts and disputes through dialogue and peaceful means, in full respect of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. They also exchanged views on the Palestinian issue and reaffirmed the necessity of reaching a just solution that ensures the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, based on the two-state solution that establishes an independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with relevant international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The two leaders further expressed deep concern over the tragic situation in the Gaza Strip, affirming their support for international efforts aimed at achieving an immediate and sustainable ceasefire, ensuring the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians, initiating recon-

struction efforts, and securing the return of displaced persons to their homes. They stressed the need for a full withdrawal of occupying forces from the Gaza Strip and all other occupied Palestinian territories.

As part of their commitment to strengthening the friendship and enhancing cooperation between their countries, the two leaders welcomed the signing of a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding across various fields of mutual cooperation, the establishment of a Joint Economic Committee, and the mutual exemption of entry visas for citizens of both countries.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik expressed his deep appreciation to President Vladimir Putin, the Government of the Russian Federation, and its friendly people for the warm reception and generous hospitality. His Majesty extended an invitation to President Vladimir Putin to visit the Sultanate of Oman, which was warmly welcomed by His Excellency.

HM the Sultan, Russian President grace signing of agreement, protocol, 9 MoUs



MOSCOW: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation yesterday graced the signing of an agreement, a protocol, and 9 memoranda of understanding at the Kremlin Palace in Moscow, during His Majesty's state-visit to the Russian Federation.

The pacts covered several areas, including a mutual visa waiver agreement, an economic and technical cooperation protocol—a proposal of establishing a joint economic committee between the governments of Oman and the Russian Federation—and MoUs on climate change and low-carbon development, transport and transit, and cooperation in combating money laundering and terrorist financing between Oman's National Centre for Financial Information and Russia's Federal Financial Monitoring Service.

Additional MoUs were signed on fisheries cooperation between Oman's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources and Russia's Federal Agency for Fisheries; news and information exchange between Oman's Ministry of Information (represented by Oman News Agency) and Rossiya Segod-

ya media group; diplomatic cooperation between the Diplomatic Academy of Oman and the Diplomatic Academy of Russia; media cooperation between the Ministry of Information and Russia Today TV; partnership between Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Russia's Roscongress Foundation; and administrative collaboration between the Royal Academy of Management and the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.

The pacts were signed on behalf of the Omani government by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister; Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; Salim bin Hamood Al Tuwaya, Oman's Ambassador to Russia; and Colonel Abdulrahman bin Amer Al Kiyoumi, CEO of the National Centre for Financial Information.

Meanwhile, they were signed on behalf of the Russian government by Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister; Maxim Reshetnikov, Minister of Economic Development; Roman Vladimirovich Starovoi, Minister of Transport; and several other Russian officials. -**UNA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

19,000 tenders awarded through 'Esnad' platform

OMAN

Oman joins world in celebrating Earth Day

MARKET

Focus on aluminium scrap recycling sector

2 The Secretariat General of the Tender Board said on Tuesday that 'Esnad' platform has awarded more than 19,000 tenders, including 1,564 awarded from the beginning of 2025 until mid-April. **>A7**

3 Sohar Aluminium's 2nd Aluminium Recycling Forum focussed on advancing the aluminium recycling industry and promoting sustainable development in the Sultanate of Oman. **>B1**

OMAN-FRANCE RAIL & MOBILITY DAY

Muscat Metro, cross-border rail projects in focus as Oman pushes sustainable mobility agenda

MUSCAT: Oman's ambitious drive to overhaul its transport sector is gaining pace, with work progressing on two landmark projects—the Muscat Metro network and the Hafeet Rail link connecting Oman and the UAE. These initiatives, central to the Sultanate's long-term mobility goals, were a key focus of discussions during the Oman-France Rail & Mobility Day held in Muscat on Tuesday.

The event was inaugurated by Luciano Rispoli, deputy head of mission at the French Embassy to the Sultanate of Oman, and highlighted the cooperation between the two nations and their shared commitment to building a sustainable mobility roadmap for the region.

As part of Oman Vision 2040 and the Transport and Logistics Strategy (2021–2025), the Sultanate has committed more than US\$4 billion in recent years to modernise its infrastructure—transforming the way people and goods move across the country.

The Muscat Metro project, now in the feasibility stage, proposes a 50-kilometre network with 36 stations across the capital. Once operational, it will become Oman's first urban rail system, significantly easing congestion in the capital while promoting more sustainable modes of travel.

Designed to support Muscat's growing population and expanding cityscape, the metro is envisioned as a backbone of the city's future transport ecosystem—linking key residential, commercial, and transit hubs. Also moving forward is the Hafeet Rail Project, a cross-border railway that will connect Oman with the United Arab Emirates. The line is expected to streamline the flow of both freight and passengers between economic zones in the two countries, enhancing trade and regional integration.

Both projects are being developed with a strong focus on sustainability, multi-modal connectivity, and alignment with the broader logistics and economic goals of the Sultanate. **>A3**



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Chairman of the Board of Directors
Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry



Firas Al Lawati
General Manager - Information Technology
Central Bank of Oman (CBO)



Kawthar Al Hinai
Head of Digital Transformation Programs
Ministry of Transport, Communications
& Information Technology (MTCIT)



Muadh Al Omairi
Vice President - Commercial
Infoline

PANEL 1 : 'Digital Innovation: Advancing Oman's Vision 2040'



Abdullah Al-Maskari
General Manager, Cybersecurity Services
Dreamlab Technologies Oman



Faris Abdullah Al-Kharusi
Transformation Consultant



Dr. Haitham AL Hajri
Chief Information Security Officer
Oman Housing Bank

MODERATOR

PANEL 2 'AI - Shaping the Future of Work, Life and Beyond'



Ali Hassan Moosa
Financial Expert/Advisor - Estidamah,
Ministry of Finance & Member - Finance &
Insurance Committee, Oman Chamber of
Commerce & Industry (OCCI)



Dr. Kamal Al-Sabahi
Director - Centre for Excellence in
FinTech, College of Banking &
Financial Studies (CBFS)



Hamza Adil Mohamed Al Sabri
Security Operation Center Lead,
Securado



Dr. Haider Al-Lawati
Senior Manager - AI
Oman Data Park



Sanjeev Madavi
Digital Transformation Expert

MODERATOR

PRESENTATIONS BY:



Saud Al Zakwani
Head of Digital Transformation
Petroleum Development Oman (PDO)



Nameer Khan
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& Founder and CEO of Fils



Ali Abdul Hossain Al-Lawati
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Oman joins world in celebrating Earth Day to protect the planet

The occasion aims to further promote sustainability values and advance climate action initiatives



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is joining global celebrations of Earth Day, observed annually on 22 April, under the theme “Our Power, Our Planet”, emphasising collective efforts to drive change and protect the Earth as a shared responsibility. This occasion brings together over 190 countries to raise aware-

ness among individuals, communities, and organisations about the importance of safeguarding the environment, its natural resources, and the ecological challenges facing the planet. It also aims to promote sustainability values and advance climate action. In this context, the Environment Authority (EA) is implementing sustainable environmental policies

with a growing focus on protecting ecosystems through natural reserve management, pollution control, and climate change adaptation. The Authority is also developing strategic plans, projects, and qualitative initiatives, including programs for ecosystem restoration, clean energy innovation, and scaling up carbon capture projects.

Efforts are underway to boost investment in natural reserves, green hydrogen, blue carbon, and the enforcement of environmental policies. These measures seek to balance modern demands for environmental, economic, and social projects—such as reducing carbon emissions and expanding green spaces—to secure a prosperous and sustainable future,

prioritizing environmental and natural resource conservation. Oman aims to make significant progress in the 2024 Environmental Performance Index, currently ranking first among Arab countries and 22nd globally for least polluted nations in 2025, according to Numbeo. Earth Day serves as a global call to unify international efforts

in environmental protection and addressing climate challenges threatening the planet. It also inspires action toward a cleaner, fairer, and more sustainable future by accelerating renewable energy adoption, transitioning to green and circular economies, and raising awareness about the necessity of environmental commitments.

— ONA



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SECOND MEETING OF 2025



Ministry of Interior monitors digital transformation projects

MUSCAT: The Supervisory Committee for Digital Transformation at the Ministry of Interior held its second meeting of 2025, chaired by Khalifa Al Mardas Al Busaidi, Secretary-General of the Ministry and Chairman of the Committee.

The meeting discussed several agenda items, most notably track-

ing progress rates in digital transformation projects under the current operational plan, reviewing implementation challenges, and assessing the stages of various technical initiatives.

Semi-annual evaluation

The committee also examined the results of the first semi-an-

nual evaluation of excellence in government digital transformation and addressed several topics related to developing e-service systems and enhancing digital efficiency within the Ministry.

These efforts support the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and advance the transition toward a smart government. — ONA

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Over 30 arrested in Muscat

MUSCAT: More than 30 foreigners have been arrested for violating labour and foreign residency laws in Muscat Governorate, said the Royal Oman Police (ROP).

ROP said in a statement: “Muscat Governorate Police Command, in cooperation with the Police Special Task force Command, conducted an inspection cam-

paign in the Wilayat of Bausher and apprehended 36 expatriates violating labour and foreign residency laws. Legal procedures are being completed.”



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MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Best practices in leadership and management highlighted

MUSCAT: The National Plans and Achievements Conference, titled “Foreseeing the Future and Achieving Ambitions,” began on Tuesday in Muscat to discuss key themes such as strategic planning, sustainable development, and enhancing cooperation between government and private institutions.

The event is organised by Media Thought Firm in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour.

The two-day conference highlights best practices in leadership and management by showcasing successful experiences in institutional performance development, notable national plans, and achievements. It also examines



success factors and their impact on sustainable development.

The conference addresses the role of modern technology in in-

novation, improving institutional efficiency, and methodologies for future foresight to develop long-term strategies for tackling chal-

lenges and leveraging future opportunities.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Salem

Muslim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development, and attended by a group of national leaders, experts, and specialists from within and outside the Sultanate of Oman.

The conference targets leaders from public and private sector companies, government executives, strategic planning managers, professionals in foresight and planning centers, bank and financial institution managers, as well as internal audit and human resources directors.

The event highlights successful national experiences in planning and implementation, fostering col-

laboration among national entities to exchange expertise, and presenting innovative strategies for future foresight.

Tuesday’s agenda featured three panel discussions: The first on sustainable development and international partnerships, the second titled “Vision and Working Toward the Big Goal,” and the third on “Protecting Society from Financial Fraud Through AI-Driven Technological Advancements.”

Wednesday’s agenda will include five panel discussions focusing on digital transformation, planning, and future foresight, presented by a number of experts and specialists. — **DNA**



Second phase of survey on NCDs launched

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat, sponsored the first Health Forum 2025, organised by the Health Committee in Muttrah. It was attended by Dr. Saeed bin Harib Al Lamki, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs, and a number of officials and concerning stakeholders.

Working papers discussed

This forum reviewed a number of strategies to reduce narcotics and psychotropic substances, the achievements of the first phase of the national survey of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) implemented by the Directorate of Health Services in Muscat Governorate, which concluded with the monitoring and visiting 88% of homes in Muscat Governorate. and discussed working papers regarding the National Competition To Combat Narcotics And Psychotropic Substances and the role of

the educational sector to reduce this issue.

Dr Hamad bin Said Al Mamari, Wali of Muttrah, appreciated the implemented efforts by the Ministry of Health and the health committees in Muscat Governorate.

He remembered Muttrah’s participation in the third edition of the National Competition to Combat Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances and the second position winning of the ‘Together We Unite’ campaign in Oman.

Dr Yousuf bin Mohammed Al Farsi, Director General of Health Services in Muscat Governorate, confirmed that the forum is a national event that carries a shared responsibility to promote partnership and integration to improve the health of individuals and society.

This Forum marked the launch of the second stage of the National Noncommunicable Diseases Survey, which targets citizens and residents aged 15 years and older in the Sultanate of Oman.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY ROADMAP

Oman working to modernise its public transport systems

< FROM A1 In parallel with rail infrastructure, Oman is working to modernise its public transport systems through the introduction of electric buses, improved service integration, and upgraded transit infrastructure—key elements in the shift toward greener mobility solutions.

French expertise supports Oman’s vision

While the focus remains firmly on Oman’s strategic goals, the event also underscored the value of international partnerships. Organised by Business France with the support of the French Embassy in Oman, the Oman-France Rail & Mobility Day brought together key Omani institutions including Mwasalat, ASYAD, and the Oman Chamber of Commerce, alongside 13 French companies

offering solutions in railway engineering, urban mobility, safety systems, and digital infrastructure. The event was inaugurated by Luciano Rispoli, deputy head of mission at the French Embassy to the Sultanate of Oman, and highlighted the deepening cooperation between the two nations and their shared commitment to building a sustainable mobility roadmap for the region.

Among them, Dassault Systèmes presented simulation tools that support metro and rail system optimisation. VINCI Construction Grands Projets and RATP Dev shared expertise in large-scale project execution and public transit operations, while others such as Apave, Co-dra, OXYSIGN, and Saerstahl Rail showcased technologies for maintenance, signage, and safety.

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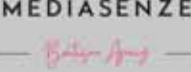


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TWO-DAY STATE VISIT CONCLUDES

HM the Sultan returns home



MOSCOW: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik arrived in Muscat last night from Moscow after a two-day state visit to the Russian Federation. His Majesty the Sultan was seen off at Vnukovo International Airport by Maxim Reshetnikov, Minister of Economic Development, some officials in Russia and members of the Omani embassy in the Moscow.

Upon his departure, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a cable of thanks to President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality.

His Majesty lauded the outcomes of his meeting with the Russian President, as it was an opportunity to enhance areas of cooperation, promote the advanced relations and opening new vistas for partnership and investment in a manner that serves the joint interests.

His Majesty the Sultan wished the President Putin success to achieve further aspirations of progress and prosperity for the Russian people.

His Majesty the Sultan was accompanied during the visit by a high-ranking official delegation that comprised HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Youssef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Jamal bin Hassan Al Mosawi, Secretary General of the National Museum and Hamoud bin Salim Al Tuwaih, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation. - ONA

HM talks with Russian President centre on boosting bilateral ties

The two nations are now marking 40 years of diplomatic relations and are working to elevate these ties into a distinguished and mutually beneficial partnership that serves the interests of their friendly people

MOSCOW: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik expressed his gratitude to President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation for the gracious invitation to visit his country and for the warm welcome and hospitality during their meeting.

His Majesty stated that his discussions with the Russian President focused on building solid relations between the two countries in recent times. The two nations are now marking 40 years of diplomatic relations and are working to elevate these ties into a distinguished and mutually beneficial partnership that serves the interests of their friendly people, His Majesty said.

His Majesty the Sultan commended his meeting with a group of business leaders from the Russian Federation, noting their keen interest in advancing this relationship in energy, agriculture, and trade. His Majesty pointed out that many have already begun exchanging visits and establishing commercial offices. His Majesty expressed Oman's aspiration to augment its volume of investments in Russia, with Oman Investment Authority already engaging with relevant Russian entities.

At the end of his speech, His Majesty the Sultan extended his thanks and appreciation to the Russian officials who visited Oman recently and expressed his hope that Omani officials would continue their visits to Moscow.

On his turn, President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation welcomed His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Russian capital, Moscow, thanking His Majesty for his state visit to Russia.



In honour of HM the Sultan, Russian President hosts working lunch

MOSCOW: In honour of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation hosted a working lunch at the Kremlin Palace in

Moscow yesterday.

The banquet was attended by members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty and several Russian officials. - ONA

foundation of bilateral relations.

President Putin highlighted the significant potential for expanding trade relations, particularly in mutual investments, transit, transportation, and agriculture, especially as Russia exports agricultural and food products to Oman.

He underlined the interest of Russian companies in boosting energy cooperation with Oman and mentioned the practical matters discussed during the talks.

President Vladimir Putin also underscored the close coordination between the foreign ministries of both countries and noted that Russia is gearing up to host the first Russian-Arab Summit, which, he said, enjoys broad support from friends in the Arab world. - ONA

STATE VISIT

HM the Sultan accorded official reception protocols in Russia

MOSCOW: An official reception ceremony was held at the Kremlin Palace in Moscow yesterday for His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the occasion of his state visit to the Russian Federation.

President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation led the welcoming party for His Majesty the Sultan, wishing His Majesty and the official accompanying delegation a successful visit and a pleasant stay.

Then, the Royal Anthem of Oman and the National Anthem of the Russian Federation were played.

After that, His Majesty shook hands with senior officials from the Russian side, while the Russian President shook hands with members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan and the Russian President held a cordial meeting.

The two leaders then held an official session of talks at the Kremlin Palace in Moscow.

The session discussed the march of the advanced relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Russian Federation, as well as their fruitful cooperation and means of promoting the relations in various spheres to serve the joint interests. The two leaders also exchanged views on a set of issues and global developments.

The session was attended by members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan and several Russian officials. - ONA



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TEJARAH TALKS

Sports leaders to map Oman’s \$2.65 trillion opportunity

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s sporting heritage and natural advantages position it to capitalise on the rapidly expanding global sports economy. At 11:00am Tuesday, 29 April industry leaders will gather at the Civil Aviation Authority Training Centre to explore strategic opportunities in this dynamic sector.

The 70-minute Tejarah Talks, ‘Game On: The Potential of Oman’s Sports Economy,’ session brings together experts who understand both the country’s competitive advantages and emerging trends in the world’s ninth-largest industry, valued at \$2.65 trillion.

Moderated by Jamal Al Asmi, Executive Producer, RealityCG, the panelists are His Excellency Pankaj Khimji, Foreign Trade & International Cooperation Advisor, Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion (MoCIIP); Joe Rafferty, Events Director, Oman Sail; and Ali Al Ajmi, CEO, Sabco Sports.

The discussion will highlight market opportunities, including sports tourism which contributes \$583 billion annually to the global economy and the fast-growing eSports sector, now valued at \$6.6 billion with over 500 million viewers worldwide. The sustain-



able sports market, worth \$26.2 billion and projected to grow at 7.9% CAGR through 2032 offers particular promise as Oman pursues its 2050 Net Zero target.

Key topics will include the unique, year-round sports experiences offered by Oman’s diversity of landscapes and favourable climate for sports tourism and events, developing infrastructure through public-private partner-

ships and creating career pathways in sports management. And with a median age of approximately 29 and internet penetration exceeding 95%, Oman’s demographics align well with emerging sports sectors like eSports.

The panel will examine successful international models, including Barcelona’s Olympic investments that yielded substantial economic returns and Singapore’s innovative Sports Hub PPP structure. These case studies offer valuable insights for Oman’s strategic sports planning.

Beyond economic potential, the session will address the broader societal impact of sports. Research indicates communities with strong sports infrastructure experience enhanced social outcomes while regular physical activity reduces national healthcare costs significantly.

Organised by Oman Business Forum in association with MoCIIP and supported by MHD, Nortal, Invest Oman Lounge and Oman FM, April’s Tejarah Talks aims to provide actionable insights for investors, policymakers and industry stakeholders interested in developing Oman’s sports sector in alignment with Vision 2040 objectives.

SHURA COUNCIL’S ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

Proposal concerning assessment of local industrial sector reviewed

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Economic and Financial Committee of the Shura Council held its eighth meeting of the second annual session (2024–2025), chaired by Ahmed Saeed Al Sharqi, and in the presence of their Excellencies members of the committee. The session hosted a number of experts from the Industry Committee of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) to discuss the proposal concerning the assessment of the local industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman. The meeting aimed to identify key challenges and explore development opportunities in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

The meeting, the Chairman emphasised the Shura Council’s commitment—through its Economic and Financial Committee—to supporting national industries and creating an enabling environment for industrial growth. This, he noted, would be achieved through well-researched legislation and inclusive initiatives developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

The stakeholders gave a comprehensive presentation analysing the current state of local industries, with a focus on modern industrial sectors such as hydrocar-



bons, mining, and manufacturing. The presentation also reviewed the structure of industrial activities and their contribution to Oman’s gross domestic product (GDP).

The industrial indicators and the growth rates of the sector in recent years were highlighted, alongside ongoing development plans in industrial zones. These initiatives reflect significant government efforts and public-private partnerships aimed at enhancing competitiveness, achieving self-sufficiency, generating employment for local talent, and increasing investment in factories and enterprises within industrial cities.

The discussions addressed major challenges facing Oman’s industrial sector, particularly amid evolving regional and international dynamics. These included legislative and regulatory hurdles, operational issues related to

skilled human resources, financial challenges such as project funding and high production costs, as well as market access and the promotion of Omani products locally and internationally. The committee also explored available government incentives and facilitation mechanisms supporting domestic industries.

Members of the Economic and Financial Committee engaged in in-depth discussions with OCCI’s Industry Committee, stressing the need for a regular and comprehensive evaluation of the industrial sector. Such evaluations are essential to understanding current challenges and future opportunities, ultimately enhancing the sector’s contribution to GDP and supporting economic diversification. The meeting also included the exchange of ideas and proposed solutions aimed at addressing sectoral obstacles and boosting industrial performance.

The discussions covered the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and emerging technologies on the competitiveness of Omani industries. The committee highlighted the importance of technological modernization and digital transformation as key enablers of industrial sustainability and competitiveness.

SOCIAL PROTECTION BENEFITS REVIEW TEAM OF SHURA COUNCIL



Data and projections on demographic structure, income levels presented

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Social Protection Benefits Review Team at the Shura Council held its fourth meeting, chaired by Tahir Makhout Al Janibi. This session forms part of a series of in-depth reviews of Oman’s social protection system, in line with the government’s strategic direction to enhance social welfare, ensure fair distribution of benefits, and achieve sustainable protection for all segments of society.

Participating in the meeting were specialists from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), who gave two detailed presentations featuring precise data and projections on Oman’s demographic structure, income levels, and expenditure trends.

The first presentation focused on income levels and their distribution among various societal groups in Oman, highlighting the proportions of Omanis and expatriates across different income brackets. The presentation also outlined the methodologies used for calculating income levels, the characteristics of each group, and the criteria for measuring household and individual well-being—an essential foundation for de-



signing balanced and effective social protection policies.

The second presentation addressed Oman’s population projections through 2040, showcasing forecasted growth scenarios for both citizens and expatriates and analysing how these demographic shifts may affect the distribution of services and social benefits. It also provided an overview of population distribution across governorates, demographic segmentation by age groups, and a focus on the economically active population as a critical element in ensuring the sustainability and funding of the social protection system.

The meeting further explored key economic and social indica-

tors reflecting household income, spending, and consumption patterns in Oman, particularly in light of global economic shifts, inflation, and changing lifestyles. The discussions included an analysis of income sufficiency to meet basic needs and the impact of economic changes on low-income groups.

This meeting marks an important milestone in the team’s efforts to establish a comprehensive strategic vision for the development of Oman’s social protection system. The approach is grounded in accurate data, analytical studies, and forward-looking insights to ensure that adopted policies are inclusive, sustainable, and socially equitable, while also addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, especially amid accelerating economic and demographic changes.

The session also reflects the Shura Council’s commitment to its legislative and oversight roles, ensuring government performance is closely monitored and aligned with citizens’ aspirations. It reinforces the national objective of achieving Oman Vision 2040, particularly in areas related to human development, social justice, and securing a dignified standard of living for all citizens.



TENDERS ADVERTISEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) announces the following tenders:

Sr. No	Tender No.	Tender name	Floating date	Last date for obtaining the documents	Bid Submission Date	Requirements from participants	Tender Document's Fees (Including VAT) (RO)
1	31/2025 (Extension)	Construction of OETC Emergency Response Center, Warehouse Enhancement, and New Access Road for Ghala Grid Station in Muscat Governorate.	23/04/2025	30/04/2025	20/05/2025	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	1,575/-
2	35/2025	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Solar System at OETC Offices (Muscat and Salalah).	23/04/2025	07/05/2025	03/06/2025	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration, S3 Solar Installer DCRP registration, Grade C & above – DCRP registration	525/-
3	36/2025	Comprehensive Service & Maintenance for Oil Type on Load Tap Changer (OLTC) for Five (5) Years	23/04/2025	07/05/2025	03/06/2025	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	105/-

Participation	Interested Companies may obtain Tender Document with the necessity Apply on E-tendering.
Buying the Tender	By E-Tendering System.
Fees	Against non-refundable payment as mentioned above against each set of document. (Payment Through Bank Transfer), SMEs are exempted from tender's fees.
The deadline for clarification	Before (21) Days from bid submission date.
Submission	The submission of hard copy will be only for Bid Bond & other documents by E-Tendering
Terms and conditions	- Specifying the name of the Company or whatever refers to in the Bid Guarantee Envelope. - The bid should be valid for not less than (90) days from bid submission date. - The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the bid value and should be valid for (90) days from bid submission date, addressed to Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC). Small & Medium Enterprises are exempted from the submission of 1% of the bid bond. - Any bid not comply with the required guarantee, will not be accepted. - OETC is not bound to accept the lowest or any other offers.
Offer	The bid bond should be submitted in Tender Box No. (1) at the company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission of the Tenders.
Company Address	Muscat - Al Mawaleh Road No: 2153 – Building No. 423 O Block No: 321 Contact Details: 93515198
Email Website	tenders@omangrid.com www.omangrid.com / link of E-Tendering System https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx



OETCOMAN    





Oman and Russian relations witness qualitative leap: Commerce Minister

Qais Mohammed Al Yousef said that the Russian Federation is a key strategic partner for Oman, and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is committed to building on this shared legacy



MUSCAT: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, affirmed that the visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Russian Federation underscores the importance of the bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

These relations are built on foundations of mutual respect and understanding, explained the minister. In a statement to the Oman News Agency (ONA), he emphasised that relations between the two countries have seen remarkable development over the years,

reflected in the growth of cooperation and the diversification of its fields. This embodies the shared desire to strengthen partnership ties and expand their scope to include more diverse and innovative horizons, he added. He noted that Omani-Russian relations have undergone a quali-

tative leap in recent years, culminating in Oman's participation as a guest of honour at the 2023 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum—a historic milestone that provided a vital platform to showcase Oman's economic and cultural strengths. The event facilitated high-level meetings with Russian

institutions and companies, further enhancing cooperation across various sectors. Al Yousef added that any discussion of Omani-Russian relations must acknowledge the cultural dimension, which serves as a crucial bridge between the two peoples. He said: "This aspect is rooted in knowledge and artistic exchange, as well as mutual participation in cultural events and international exhibitions. Such cooperation reflects the depth of both nations' civilizational heritage, fosters human understanding, and strengthens dialogue between institutions and societies". He pointed out that the Russian Federation is a key strategic partner for Oman, and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is committed to building on this shared legacy. He stressed that this historic visit marks a pivotal milestone in bilateral cooperation, opening new avenues to elevate economic relations to more integrated levels. This, said the minister, will be achieved by activating partnerships in priority sectors such as industry, logistics, tourism, food security, energy, modern technologies, and manufacturing. He reiterated Oman's commitment to deepening cooperation in innovation and technical knowledge exchange

to enhance competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth. The visit, he explained, crowns continuous efforts at both governmental and private-sector levels, with several agreements and memoranda of understanding signed. These include an Economic and Technical Cooperation Protocol, the establishment of a Joint Economic Committee, and MoUs on climate change, low-carbon development, transport, and transit. These agreements strengthen the institutional framework for cooperation and provide real platforms for the private sector to capitalise on investment opportunities in both countries. In light of global economic challenges, he reaffirmed Oman's commitment to fostering an attractive and secure investment environment that supports entrepreneurship, boosts trade exchange, and achieves balanced economic growth. Concluding his remarks, Qais Mohammed Al Yousef expressed confidence that this auspicious visit will herald a new phase of close cooperation, reinforcing Oman's position as a promising investment destination and a reliable international partner under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan.

— ONA

INITIATIVE OF OMAN POST AND RUSSIAN POST

Joint postage stamp to celebrate Oman, Russia historical ties announced

MOSCOW: Oman Post, in collaboration with Russian Post, announced an initiative to issue a joint postage stamp in celebration of the enduring historical ties between the two friendly nations. The move comes within the context of His Majesty's current state-visit to the Russian Federation. This effort aims to strengthen cooperation and expand partner-

ship opportunities in areas of mutual interest. Additionally, Oman Post unveiled a commemorative stamp featuring a distinctive artistic design to mark four decades of diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Russian Federation. The stamp highlights the robust economic and cultural bonds

between the two countries, symbolising friendship and mutual understanding. **Shared maritime heritage** The stamp's design draws inspiration from the shared maritime heritage of both nations, depicting two prominent 15th-century figures who undertook pivotal roles in advancing navigation and geo-

graphical knowledge, namely the renowned Omani explorer Ahmed bin Majid Al-Saadi, who made pioneering contributions to the study of seas and geographic locations—including the Caspian Sea and the city of Derbent—and the Russian merchant and traveler Afanasy Nikitin, the first Russian to visit the Arabian Peninsula. Nikitin documented his attendance of an

Easter Mass in Muscat, reflecting the religious tolerance and cultural openness for which Oman has been known throughout history. This initiative underscores both nations' commitment to enhancing cooperation in postal services and related activities, contributing to deeper bilateral relations and opening new avenues for joint collaboration. — ONA



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OMAN REFRESHMENT COMPANY SAOG

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e-mail : info@pepsioman.com, Website: www.pepsioman.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the unaudited results on the performance of the Company for the three months period ended on 31st March 2025. The period has been challenging however, despite challenges our collective determination and strategy have led to an improved financial result.

The Company (ORC Group) has reported a net loss after tax of OMR (0.125) million on a turnover of OMR 13.99 million during the three-month period ended on 31st March 2025, compared to a net loss after tax of OMR (1.59) million on a turnover of OMR 13.63 million for the corresponding period of last year.

Revenue has increased by 2.6% during the three months period ended on 31st March 2025, and loss after tax decreased by 92.2% vs corresponding period of last year. We are optimistic about the prospects for the next Quarter.

Our focus remains on driving sustainable growth, further improving our efficiencies & exploring new opportunities for expansion.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I take this opportunity to extend our sincere appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and his Government for their wise leadership, guidance and direction which continue to motivate and inspire us towards greater participation in the development and service of Oman.

We pray to the Almighty Allah to bestow His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq with the best of health and bless him with long life to lead the Sultanate of Oman on the path of prosperity.

Buti Obaid Al Mulla
Chairman

UNAUDITED SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

(Expressed in Omani Rials)

	Parent Company		Group	
	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Q1 2025	Q1 2024
Revenue	9,339,892	8,071,843	13,987,022	13,631,431
Cost of sales	(6,382,869)	(5,973,097)	(9,772,620)	(9,897,117)
Gross Profit	2,957,023	2,098,746	4,214,402	3,734,314
Selling and distribution expenses	(2,622,750)	(3,286,463)	(3,322,235)	(4,167,388)
General and administrative Expenses	(767,462)	(966,554)	(1,095,327)	(1,356,394)
Impairment loss on financial assets	-	(10,000)	-	(10,000)
Other income	10,475	55,289	18,424	71,700
Finance income (net)	252,658	258,863	88,575	166,344
Loss before income tax	(170,056)	(1,850,119)	(96,161)	(1,561,424)
Income tax	-	-	(28,610)	(31,986)
Loss after tax	(170,056)	(1,850,119)	(124,771)	(1,593,410)
Other comprehensive income				
Items that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Foreign exchange difference on translation of goodwill			12,437	(3,420)
Foreign exchange differences on translation of foreign operations			1,63,977	(78,727)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(170,056)	(1,850,119)	51,643	(1,675,557)

UNAUDITED SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

(Expressed in Omani Rials)

	Parent Company		Group	
	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Q1 2025	Q1 2024
Assets				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	26,209,224	28,917,963	56,373,473	58,040,375
Intangible assets	-	-	1,422,636	1,434,724
Right-of-use assets	-	-	222,163	18,721
Investment in subsidiaries	24,471,200	730,715	-	-
Other investments	-	-	6,668	7,697
Deferred tax asset (net)	412,853	-	1,366,754	898,587
Financial assets at amortised cost	2,841,645	3,261,830	2,841,645	3,261,830
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	620,185	-	620,185	-
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-	13,764	-	13,826
Total non-current assets	54,555,107	32,924,271	62,853,524	63,675,760
Current assets				
Inventories	6,807,147	7,516,212	12,754,449	14,153,117
Trade and other receivables	7,572,482	8,102,788	9,316,100	9,418,787
Loan to a subsidiary	-	23,741,161	-	-
Term deposits	17,000,000	19,000,000	17,000,000	19,000,000
Cash and cash equivalents	1,966,148	1,702,495	4,797,636	3,232,294
Total current assets	33,345,777	60,062,657	43,868,185	45,804,198
Total assets	87,900,884	92,986,928	106,721,709	109,479,958
Equity and liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Legal reserve	1,666,667	1,666,667	1,696,167	1,696,167
Foreign currency translation reserve	-	-	840,495	604,954
General reserve	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
Retained earnings	67,281,386	69,587,683	67,628,743	68,934,984
Total equity	76,448,053	78,754,350	77,665,405	78,736,105
Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	-	5,988,349	3,694,078	6,494,181
Lease liabilities	-	-	132,338	9,643
Deferred tax liabilities (net)	-	341,800	127	356,915
Other Provisions	-	-	122,953	-
Employees' end of service benefits	1,282,932	1,587,492	1,309,004	1,616,021
Total non-current liabilities	1,282,932	7,917,641	5,258,500	8,476,760
Current liabilities				
Term loans	2,708,757	-	10,337,780	8,728,616
Lease liabilities	-	-	1,01,309	12,227
Trade and other payables	7,437,742	5,551,974	13,300,135	12,692,682
Provision for income tax	23,400	762,963	58,580	833,569
Total current liabilities	10,169,899	6,314,937	23,797,804	22,267,094
Total liabilities	11,452,831	14,232,578	29,056,304	30,743,854
Total equity and liabilities	87,900,884	92,986,928	106,721,709	109,479,958

Notes: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder, who requests them either in Arabic or English, within 7 days of receipt of such request. The address to which the shareholder should send his/her request is as follows Oman Refreshment Company SAOG, P.O. Box 30, CPO Airport, PC 111, Sultanate of Oman

TRADE WAR

Gold prices hit record high in Oman on Tuesday

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Gold prices in Oman hit a record high on Tuesday morning, April 22, with 24-carat gold surpassing OMR44 per gram for the first time amid global economic uncertainty.

At 3pm Oman time on Tuesday, 24K rose to OMR44.050 per gram. Among the other variants,

22K, 21K and 18K surged to OMR41.200, OMR38.250 per gram, and OMR32.600 per gram, respectively.

Najeeb K, Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, said, "Despite gold prices reaching record highs this week, customer sentiment has remained resilient across our showrooms. Demand continues to be steady, highlight-

ing the deep-rooted belief in gold's enduring value and its role as a secure and value appreciating investment."

He also said while a small slowdown in purchases can be expected amongst price-conscious consumers, such dips are typically short-lived as consumers adapt to the new price range. "Notably, there has been no significant rise in gold

exchange transactions, indicating that customers are holding onto their gold assets — a strong sign of their trust in its lasting worth and stability," he said.

Rajesh Rokde, Chairman of the Gem and Jewellery Council of India (GJC), pointed to the ongoing trade war between some countries as one of the main reasons behind the surge in gold prices.



TENDER BOARD



Over 19,000 tenders awarded through 'Esnad' platform

MUSCAT: The Secretariat General of the Tender Board announced that the number of companies registered on the "Esnad" platform reached 17,523 by mid-April 2025, including 9,717 local companies and 3,371 international firms.

Additionally, 4,352 registered companies were small and medium enterprises (SMEs), along with other entities such as property owners.

A total of 3,510 tenders were floated on the platform by mid-April, comprising 2,145 local tenders, 90 international tenders, and over 1,127 tenders exclusively for SMEs.

Since its launch, the platform

has awarded more than 19,000 tenders, including 1,564 awarded from the beginning of 2025 until mid-April. Local companies secured 818 tenders, while international firms won 6 tenders. SMEs were awarded 740 tenders.

Turki Sulaiman Al Hasani, Director General of Statistics and Information Systems, stated that "Esnad" serves as an integrated national platform that accelerates procedures, reduces change orders, and ensures compliance with approved budgets, enhancing the quality of government project implementation.

He noted that thousands of companies have benefited from the platform, expanding par-

ticipation and promoting equal opportunities, particularly for SMEs.

Al Hasani emphasised that the platform maximizes the efficiency of government spending by adopting best local, regional, and international practices, optimizing financial resources and supporting sustainable economic development goals.

Engineer Said Hamad Al Amri, Director General of Tenders, added that the Tender Board awarded tenders worth a total of OMR203 million by the end of March 2025. He noted that 26 tenders were floated in the first quarter of 2025, with a total value of OMR400 million. — ONA

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

*Images are representative

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SPORTS

New era for Oman Olympic Committee as HH Sayyid Azzan takes over as chairman

Succeeds Khalid Al Zubair, who served as the OOC president from 2013

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Marking the beginning of a new chapter in Oman's Olympic journey, HH Sayyid Azzan bin Kais Al Said has been elected Chairman of the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) unopposed for the 2024-2028 electoral term.

His endorsement was formally approved by the OOC General Assembly during its annual meeting held on Tuesday in Muscat, attended by key stakeholders from across the national sporting fraternity.

Sayyid Azzan, who served as OOC vice-chairman in the previous board succeeds Khalid bin Mohammed Al Zubair, whose leadership of the OOC spanned over a decade, beginning in 2013.

Al Zubair's tenure is widely credited with enhancing the administrative and international profile of the OOC. Al Zubair played a pivotal role in professionalising the structure of Oman's sports associations, expanding international cooperation, and overseeing the country's representation in major global competitions, including the Olympic Games in Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020.

His period in office also saw a stronger alignment between the national sports strategy and the broader goals of Oman Vision 2040.

With Sayyid Azzan at the helm, the OOC is poised to continue its mission of empowering athletes, enhancing governance within associations, and promoting Olympic values at the national level.

Known for his strategic outlook and understanding of the sports



landscape, Sayyid Azzan's election is seen as a signal of continuity with renewal. As a keen golfer and dedicated sportsperson, Sayyid Azzan brings a unique sporting mindset to his new role.

His personal experience in sports will undoubtedly influence his leadership approach, fostering a deeper connection with athletes and a greater emphasis on nurturing talent and sportsmanship across all disciplines.

The general assembly meeting brought together 17 voting members, including representatives of Olympic and non-Olympic sports federations, elected sports personalities, athlete delegates, and a representative from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. The session also included candidates contesting seats for the 2024-2028 OOC board of directors.

The OOC assembly elected Dr. Abdullah Khamis Ambusaidi as Vice Chairman of the new board. Several appointments were also

confirmed based on OOC's statutory structure:

Taha Sulaiman Al Kishry and Abdullah Mohammed Bamakhalf were named as representatives of Olympic sports associations. Yousuf Awad Beit Salim was appointed to represent non-Olympic sports associations.

Khalifa Hamad Al Jabri was confirmed as the athletes' representative, having been elected by the Oman Athletes' Committee.

Sayyida Sanaa Hamad Al Busaidi was selected to represent women's sports, reflecting OOC's continued commitment to gender inclusion in sports governance.

In a competitive field of nine candidates, six individuals were elected to serve as members of the Board of Directors from Olympic sports associations. They are Moosa Khamis Al Balushi, Oman Handball Association chairman, Dr. Marwan Juma Al Juma, Oman Hockey Association chairman, Said Mohammed Al Ha-



jri, Oman Athletics Association chairman, Qais Saud Al Zakwani, representing the Oman Aquatics Association, Eng. Khalfan Saleh Al Naabi, Oman Basketball Association chairman and Eng. Ibrahim Abdullah Al Miqbali, Oman Volleyball Association chief.

To complete the board, two well-known figures from Oman's sports community, Sheikh Badr Ali Al Rowas and Jihad Abdullah Al Sheikh, were chosen to fill the seats allocated to sports personalities.

The meeting agenda extended

beyond elections, encompassing a comprehensive review of the OOC's performance and plans.

Members ratified the minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly session held earlier this year on 16 February 2025, and examined the annual report detailing key technical and administrative achievements.

The assembly also reviewed the proposed activity calendar for 2025, the financial statements for the previous fiscal year, the auditor's report, and the proposed

budget for the current year. The election of HH Sayyid Azzan comes at a time when Oman's sporting ambitions are growing, with a focus on youth development, Olympic preparation, and enhanced international partnerships.

The newly elected board is expected to play an instrumental role in shaping the country's sports framework, with a special emphasis on athlete support systems, capacity building within federations, and increasing Oman's visibility on the global sports map.

The smooth transition and the broad representation on the board reflect a maturing sports governance environment in Oman. As Sayyid Azzan begins his term, there is growing optimism that the new leadership will continue to build on the momentum achieved over the past decade, and steer Omani sports towards greater competitiveness, excellence, and global recognition.

IPL 2025

Gill, Sudharsan impress as GT tighten grip on top spot



KOLKATA: Sticking to a formula that has served them well, Gujarat Titans (GT) posted a clinical 39-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders to consolidate their position at the top of the IPL 2025 table on Monday. After an assured and measured approach with the bat, GT backed it up with disciplined bowling to make it five wins in six games.

Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan shared a composed 114-run opening stand, anchoring the innings on a surface that demanded application. Gill, who scored 90 off 55 balls, was the standout with his well-timed acceleration, while Sudharsan outpaced him briefly to reach his fifty in 33 balls before departing for 52. Jos Buttler's late cameo of 41* off 23 balls ensured

GT posted a formidable 198 for 3.

After the second-slowest powerplay in this IPL for a side without losing a wicket, GT's top order stayed committed to their strategy of conserving wickets early and exploding later. Once set, Gill cut loose against Moeen Ali and took on the spinners at the death, while Sudharsan peppered the gaps with ease, especially against his Tamil Nadu teammate Varun Chakravarthy and Harshit Rana.

Despite a brief stutter following Sudharsan's dismissal to Andre Russell's steep bounce, Buttler kept the momentum going with three consecutive boundaries in the same over. GT's spinners played a key role as well, tying down KKR with clever changes of

pace and length—ensuring there was no late twist.

Gill fell short of a hundred, holding out in the deep to a full toss in the 18th over, but the Titans still managed 85 runs in the final eight overs, keeping the scoring rate brisk till the end.

In response, KKR's innings never quite gathered momentum. Rahmanullah Gurbaz was undone by a peach from Mohammed Siraj, while Ajinkya Rahane (50 off 36) was the only batter to show any fluency. Venkatesh Iyer struggled for timing, crawling to 14 off 19, and even Russell's brief fireworks fizzled out under pressure.

Sai Kishore and Washington Sundar kept things tight in the middle overs, while Rashid Khan

dismissed Russell to put the game beyond KKR's reach. Prasidh Krishna once again impressed at the death, picking up two wickets to take his tournament tally to 16 and extend his lead in the purple cap race. With this win, GT not only maintained their position at the top of the table but also reinforced their status as the team that thrives on discipline and clarity—eschewing flash for consistency, and in the process, often getting the better of more flamboyant oppositions.

Brief scores: Gujarat Titans 198/3 (Shubman Gill 90, Sai Sudharsan 52, Jos Buttler 41) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 159/8 (Ajinkya Rahane 50; Prasidh Krishna 2-25, Rashid Khan 2-25) by 39 runs.

PREMIER LEAGUE



Forest go third after win over Tottenham

LONDON: Nottingham Forest boosted their Champions League hopes as an impressive 2-1 victory against Tottenham on Monday night moved them back up to third in the Premier League.

The visitors started the day sixth but were in a determined mood from the outset at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium to get the result that would see them climb back up the table.

They took just five minutes to open the scoring when Elliot Anderson's thunderous volley deflected off Rodrigo Bentancur to fly into the back of the net.

Spurs' poor league form this term has been well documented and despite winning at Eintracht Frankfurt last Thursday to reach the Europa League semi-finals, they failed to carry that momentum into this game.

They saw plenty of the ball and got into good positions but were not threatening enough and instead Forest added a second in the

16th minute when Chris Wood nodded in from Anthony Elanga's delivery.

Wood has been instrumental to Forest's impressive form this season with this strike his 19th in the Premier League this season.

Mathys Tel lashed wide when unmarked towards the end of the first half, while Richarlison - making his first Tottenham start since February - headed over from close range.

Harry Toffolo made a crucial goalline clearance to hook away Dejan Kulusevski's effort midway through the second half, before Matz Sels produced an excellent save to deny Richarlison late on.

Spurs came alive in the final minutes and got a goal back with three minutes remaining when Richarlison finally beat Sels with a header.

But Forest held their nerve to seal a victory and edge closer towards securing European football next season. - Agencies

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

Oman Crude (June Delivery 2025) rose by 26 cents to reach \$68.81 per barrel, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). Average price of Oman Crude (April Delivery) has stabilised at \$77.63 per barrel, \$2.63 per barrel lower than March delivery. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,290.91 points, down by 0.05% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.10% at 396.53 points. Majan College, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while, Jazeera Steel Products, down 6.76%, was the top loser. **>B2**



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Forum discusses opportunities in aluminium scrap recycling industry

Sohar Aluminium Recycling Forum brings together industry key players, experts, policymakers, and sustainability advocates to exchange insights, global trends, sustainability frameworks and the future of aluminium recycling in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Aluminium (SA) held the 2nd Aluminium Recycling Forum, in collaboration with the Environment Authority, under the patronage of Dr Abdullah bin Ali Al Amri, Chairman of Environment Authority, at Intercity Hotel, Muscat. The Forum marks an influential gathering dedicated to advancing the aluminium recycling industry and promoting sustainable industrial development in the Sultanate of Oman.

This year's edition aims to build on the success of its inaugural edition

by bringing together industry key players, experts, policymakers, and sustainability advocates to exchange insights, global trends, sustainability frameworks and the future of aluminium recycling in Oman.

The Forum featured national and international keynote speakers renowned for their contributions to global sustainability, circular economy frameworks, and aluminium stewardship, such as Marlen Bertram, Director – Scenarios and Forecasts, International Aluminium Institute, Dr. Fiona Solomon, Chief Executive Officer, Aluminium Stewardship Initiative,



Dr. Gabriel Carmona Aparicio, Circularity Research Manager, Aluminium Stewardship Initiative, Mahmood Dailami, Secretary General, Gulf Aluminium Council, and a presentation by Dr. Mohammed bin Saif Al Kalbani, Director General of Environmental Affairs at the Environment Authority.

The Forum also included two high-level discussion panels that aim to dive deeper into the operational, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities within the aluminium scrap recycling industry.

The first session explored the practical and strategic challenges faced by recycling operators, collectors, regulators, and industry partners and end-users, with a focus on how leading industries in Oman and the Gulf region are integrating recycling into their operations and supporting broader circular economy goals. It also touched on the

evolving regulatory landscape in Oman and how clear policies can help address logistics and compliance barriers to recycling.

While the second panel highlighted the economic potential of the recycling industry, and the investment enablers required to unlock its full value. It focused on identifying the challenges SMEs face and the tools, incentives, and support systems they need to thrive in this industry.

The panelists discussed how trade policies, import and export regulations, and regional cooperation can stimulate the recycling economy. They further highlighted the innovative financial mechanisms, ESG-focused investments, green financing and public-private partnerships that can accelerate sustainable development in aluminium scrap recycling.

Speaking on the occasion, Eng. Said Al Masoudi, CEO of Sohar Aluminium, emphasised the strategic importance of the forum in aligning industry progress with national sustainability goals. "At Sohar Aluminium, we believe recycling is more than just an environmental obligation; it is a strategic driver of economic resilience, resource efficiency, and innovation. This forum brings a unique opportunity to align cross-sector efforts, foster new partnerships, and spark policy dialogue that supports the emergence of a strong recycling ecosystem in Oman and the wider region. By bringing together global thought leaders and local stakeholders, we aim to build a roadmap that transforms challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth."

COLLABORATION



Awasr partners with Madarek to foster innovation and drive digital transformation

MUSCAT: Awasr, the leading provider of broadband internet services in Oman, has announced a strategic partnership with Madarek, an innovative ecosystem dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship, research, and knowledge exchange. This collaboration aims to incubate cutting-edge innovation projects within Awasr, reinforcing the company's commitment to driving technological advancements and digital transformation in the Sultanate.

Through this partnership, Awasr will leverage Madarek's extensive expertise in innovation management, research, and strategic consulting to develop and implement forward-thinking initiatives that enhance connectivity and digital solutions. The collaboration will focus on nurturing in-house talent, supporting pioneering digital projects, and fostering a culture of continuous innovation.

Eng. Adnan Mohammed Al Alawi, CEO of Awasr, expressed his enthusiasm for this partnership, stating: "Our collaboration with Madarek represents a significant milestone in Awasr's journey toward technological excellence. By integrating Madarek's ecosystem with our innovation-driven approach, we aim to explore new frontiers in

telecommunications and digital services, ultimately providing our customers with state-of-the-art solutions."

Aiman Al Zakwani, CEO of Madarek, also commented on the partnership, saying: "At Madarek, we believe in empowering organizations with the right tools and knowledge to drive innovation. Partnering with Awasr allows us to contribute to the advancement of the telecommunications sector in Oman by facilitating research-driven, cutting-edge initiatives that align with the nation's digital transformation goals."

Eugen Comendant, Chief Commercial Officer of Awasr, added: "Innovation is at the heart of everything we do at Awasr. This partnership with Madarek allows us to accelerate our efforts in developing next-generation solutions that will redefine the digital landscape in Oman. By fostering a culture of creativity and forward-thinking, we aim to deliver exceptional value to our customers and drive sustainable growth in the telecommunications sector."

This initiative is set to position Awasr at the forefront of digital innovation in Oman, ensuring the company remains a key player in shaping the future of connectivity and smart solutions in the region.

MADAYN

Session focuses on 'Investment Projects Financing'

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Madayn", represented by Al Wadi Al Kabir Industrial City, organised a discussion session titled 'Investment Projects Financing'.

The session aimed to shed light on financing and insurance mechanisms and programmes related to the industrial and commercial sectors, while also addressing the challenges faced by investors and exploring potential solutions in collaboration with various financial institutions.

Speaking at the event, Eng. Ali bin Salim Al Mashani, Director General of Al Wadi Al Kabir Industrial City, emphasised the key role of the industrial sector as a key enabler of economic diversification and sustainable growth, in alignment with Oman Vision 2040. He also highlighted Madayn's commitment to present an attractive and competitive investment climate through the constant



development of industrial infrastructure, and hence attract local and foreign investments.

Al Mashani further called for the establishment of dedicated financial portfolios tailored to the needs of industrial projects, which will ultimately play a role in driving innovation, advancing development, and boosting overall competitiveness.

Following this, representatives from Bank Dhofar and Ahli Bank spotlighted their services and products tailored for investment projects, with a focus on financing solutions designed to support the growth and sustainability of such ventures. Additionally, representatives from Credit Oman provided an overview of their of-

ferings, which include SME credit insurance, domestic credit insurance, export credit insurance, multi-buyer trade credit insurance, among others. Regarding the sectors covered by Credit Oman's insurance, company officials elaborated that the sectors include petrochemicals and plastics, food products, building and construction materials, mining, packaging, and agricultural products.

This session is part of Madayn's ongoing efforts to strengthen partnerships with financial institutions, promote sustainable solutions for industrial development, and ultimately enhance the Sultanate's investment appeal and competitiveness on both regional and international fronts.

NEW CHAPTER

Vodafone Oman opens first-ever Business Hub to power next phase of business growth

MUSCAT: Marking a new chapter in its journey to reshape business connectivity, Vodafone Oman opened its first-ever Business Hub in Oman at Active Oman. Building on the momentum of its successful entry into the enterprise segment in 2024, the purpose-designed Hub offers SMEs and corporates access to tailored telecom solutions and value-added services, all under one roof.

The new space represents a physical extension of Vodafone Oman's connected tech-telco ecosystem, created to simplify how businesses interact with their telecom partner. From onboarding and consultations to services and support, the Hub brings together digital convenience and in-person expertise, enabling businesses to navigate their growth journeys with greater clarity, speed, and confidence.

Eng. Mohammed Al Alawi, Head of Enterprise at Vodafone Oman, said: "As Oman's business landscape evolves, so do the expectations of its enterprises. Today's companies, especially SMEs, are looking for more than just connectivity; they want simplicity, speed, and partners who understand their



needs. The Business Hub is one way in which we are ensuring that we continue to be part of our customers' growth every step of the way."

The new Hub brings together Vodafone's full portfolio of enterprise services from advanced connectivity and mobility to cybersecurity and IoT. Business customers can explore BLACK for Business postpaid plans, Makani Internet, MaxImpact Messaging for bulk campaigns, Mobile Pri-

ivate Network (MPN), as well as tailored ERP and IoT solutions, all designed to scale with evolving business needs.

More than just a customer touchpoint, it is the first-of-its-kind to integrate government-related services for business customers, including SANAD service counters, making it easier for customers to complete key administrative processes in one place. Vodafone has also joined hands

with partners like Oman Automobile Association, Action Point, and Strike Padel to deliver exclusive experiences, positioning the Hub as a space that supports operational needs while fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation. As part of this collaboration, business customers will benefit from a range of limited-time offers and curated activations, adding tangible value to their experience from day one.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Majan College, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while, Jazeera Steel Products, down 6.76%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,290.91 points, down by 0.05% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.10% at 396.53 points. Majan College, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while, Jazeera Steel Products, down 6.76%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 892 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 3.36 million, with more than 18.33 million shares changing hands. Out of 55 traded securities, 20 advanced, 16 declined, and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 633K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 572K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 61K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,546.83 points, up 0.19%. Prices of Financial Corporation, Liwa Group, National Finance, Global

Financial Investments, Oman & Emirates Investment were up by 6.90%, 3.85%, 2.54%, 2.50%, 1.59% respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Sohar International Bank, Ominvest, Bank Muscat were down by 2.04%, 1.52%, 0.44%, 0.40% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,723.25 points, down 0.78%. Prices of National Aluminium, Al Anwar Ceramics, A'Saffa Foods, Oman Cement were up by 9.52%, 2.38%, 1.49%, 0.26% respectively. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products, Voltamp Energy, Al Maha Ceramics were down by 6.76%, 4.15%, 1.20% respectively. Services Index was down by 0.23% before closing at 1,542.31 points. Prices of Majan College, Oman Oil Marketing, Oman Telecom were up by 10.00%, 0.43%, 0.12% respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, SMN Power Holding, Renaissance Services, Al Jazeera Services, Ooredoo were down by 2.99%, 1.72%, 1.03%, 0.65%, 0.59% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,295.89	4,281.86	4,290.91	4,293.00	-2.09	-0.05
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,555.13	7,532.08	7,546.83	7,532.40	14.43	0.19
Industry Index	5,760.66	5,684.58	5,723.25	5,768.06	-44.81	-0.78
Services Index	1,546.72	1,540.34	1,542.31	1,545.86	-3.55	-0.23
MSX Shariah Index	396.53	393.28	396.53	396.12	0.41	0.10
MSX TR INDEX	6,349.96	6,329.23	6,342.60	6,345.70	-3.10	-0.05
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,953.77	8,926.46	8,943.93	8,926.83	17.10	0.19
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	7,078.99	6,985.50	7,033.02	7,088.08	-55.07	-0.78
SERVICES TR IDX	1,968.71	1,958.59	1,961.10	1,965.61	-4.51	-0.23
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
18,330,491	3,358,626	892	27,112,425,851	20	16	19	55

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 22

RIN

SECURITY NAME

VOLUME

TURNOVER

TRADES

OPEN PRICE

HIGH

LOW

CLOSE PR.

PREV. CLOSE

DIFF (RD)

DIFF %

LAST PR

LAST RD

LAST OFFER

PAR VALUE

MARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	336,500	26,957	15	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.002	2.500	0.082	0.080	0.082	0.100	16,400,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	910,395	116,991	80	0.128	0.130	0.127	0.129	0.126	0.003	2.381	0.129	0.127	0.129	0.100	28,380,000
OM0000001881	OMAN EMIRATES HO	105,100	6,672	15	0.063	0.066	0.063	0.064	0.063	0.001	1.587	0.064	0.064	0.066	0.100	730,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	900	364	2	0.404	0.409	0.404	0.409	0.403	0.006	1.489	0.409	0.370	0.407	0.100	4,080,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	30,000	6,345	4	0.212	0.213	0.211	0.213	0.212	0.001	0.472	0.213	0.210	0.213	0.100	21,300,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	4,500	1,760	2	0.390	0.393	0.390	0.393	0.392	0.001	0.255	0.393	0.387	0.393	0.100	130,032,975
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	281,736	229,694	28	0.816	0.818	0.812	0.817	0.816	0.001	0.123	0.817	0.816	0.817	0.100	812,750,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATL ENG'G & INVESTMENT	2,358	273	2	0.115	0.116	0.115	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.116	0.114	0.118	0.100	17,400,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	37,940	2,908	6	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.100	13,475,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	84,990	5,950	6	0.070	0.071	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.100	47,422,120
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	70,088	4,906	5	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.067	0.071	0.100	50,008,444
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	95,530	21,688	22	0.227	0.228	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.000	0.000	0.227	0.227	0.228	0.100	174,835,400
OM0000003072	QIGAS NETWORKS	1,613,667	266,508	74	0.128	0.128	0.127	0.128	0.128	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.127	0.128	0.100	354,319,000
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	1,000	258	1	0.258	0.258	0.258	0.258	0.259	-0.001	-0.386	0.258	0.250	0.258	0.100	18,160,620
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,503,022	376,908	19	0.250	0.251	0.250	0.250	0.251	-0.001	-0.398	0.250	0.250	0.251	0.100	1,676,599,266
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	114,596	25,795	23	0.227	0.227	0.224	0.226	0.227	-0.001	-0.441	0.226	0.222	0.227	0.100	211,470,821
OM0000003868	OOREDOO	45,986	7,812	6	0.170	0.170	0.169	0.169	0.170	-0.001	-0.588	0.169	0.169	0.172	0.100	110,008,575
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	81,412	23,626	15	0.291	0.291	0.288	0.289	0.292	-0.003	-1.027	0.289	0.288	0.289	0.100	68,332,490
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	5,523,482	719,654	30	0.132	0.132	0.130	0.130	0.132	-0.002	-1.515	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.100	960,242,015
OM0000000276	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	20,780	7,359	9	0.370	0.370	0.340	0.345	0.370	-0.025	-6.757	0.345	0.347	0.371	0.100	493,089,796
Total		20	10,863,962	1,792,328	364											

Parallel Market

OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	62,335	6,783	6	0.105	0.110	0.105	0.110	0.100	0.010	10.009	0.110	0.102	0.109	0.100	9,900,000
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	12,446	386	1	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.029	0.002	6.897	0.031	0.029	0.031	0.100	2,170,929
OM0000007043	LIVA GROUP	40,000	10,781	5	0.260	0.270	0.260	0.270	0.260	0.010	3.846	0.270	0.260	0.270	0.100	10,761,072
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	98,169	10,108	3	0.100	0.103	0.100	0.103	0.100	0.003	3.000	0.103	0.103	0.106	0.100	17,622,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	11,200	2,908	4	0.118	0.121	0.118	0.121	0.118	0.003	2.542	0.121	0.120	0.121	0.100	1,568,125
OM0000000249	BANK DHOFAR	113,514	16,963	1	0.048	0.048	0.146	0.148	0.002	1.370	0.146	0.146	0.148	0.100	448,889,183	
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,233,898	96,863	53	0.078	0.080	0.078	0.078	0.077	-0.001	1.299	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.100	22,391,470
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	222,528	22,019	15	0.099	0.100	0.098	0.099	0.098	0.001	1.020	0.099	0.099	0.100	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000002872	OMAN OIL MARKETING	123,283	85,554	11	0.690	0.695	0.690	0.695	0.692	0.003	0.434	0.695	0.694	0.695	0.100	1,586,152
OM0000009759	QI EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	1,751,818	487,841	124	0.278	0.279	0.277	0.279	0.278	0.001	0.360	0.278	0.278	0.279	0.100	1,001,232,440
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	250	717	2	2.700	3.000	2.700	3.000	3.000	0.000	0.000	3.000	3.000	3.300	1.000	9,900,000
OM00000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	4,237	1,789	5	0.423	0.423	0.420	0.423	0.423	0.000	0.000	0.423	0.420	0.423	0.100	69,953,625
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INT'L DEV & INVESTMENT HO	2,613	627	1	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.000	0.000	0.240	0.240	0.000	0.100	98,218,116
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	38,000	1,832	7	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100	15,050,170
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	6,600	442	1	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.100	1,407,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	5,740	396	4	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.100	1,046,065
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	102,407	12,084	6	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	69,789,552
OM0000008908	QIBASE INDUSTRIES (SPF2)	1,434,981	144,927	91	0.101	0.102	0.100	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.105	1,049,498,578
OM0000002236	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	36,999	5,557	5	0.154	0.154	0.149	0.153	0.154	-0.001	-0.649	0.153	0.151	0.159	0.100	6,554,978
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	67	11	1	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.167	-0.002	-1.198	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.100	9,075,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	11,731	903	5	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.078	-0.001	-1.282	0.077	0.073	0.077	0.100	39,164,610
OM0000004348	SMN POWER HOLDING	6,699	2,227	6	0.233	0.233	0.229	0.229	0.233	-0.004	-1.717	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.100	45,716,552
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	8,294	398	2	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.100	4,080,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	7100	462	1	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.067	-0.002	-2.985	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.100	10,110,776
OM00000010120	ASYAD SHIPPING	1,077,174	117,798	101	0.112	0.112	0.108	0.108	0.112	-0.004	-3.571	0.109	0.110	0.109	0.000	562,544,382
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	660,739	442,694	30	0.670	0.670	0.660	0.670	0.669	-0.029	-4.149	0.670	0.670	0.670	0.100	62,720,819
Total		26	7,075,817	1,471,212	495											

REPORT

Indian banks outpace global average in digital banking services

NEW DELHI: Indian Banks have made significant progress across digital banking services, outpacing global average on most fronts, according to the 6th Deloitte Global Digital Banking Maturity (DBM). According to the Global Digital Banking Maturity (DBM) survey, nine Indian banks have been recognised as 'Digital Champions' among

40 banks that received the title globally. Since 2022, India's DBM Index has grown from 43 percent to 59 percent, witnessing a 16-percentage point (pp) increase. Indian banks have observed the most notable gains in day-to-day banking (+9.8 pp) and expanding relationships (+3.4 pp). This change reflects Indian banks' increasing digital

maturity, showcasing their focus on customised advisory, rapid technological advancements, AI integration and beyond-banking offerings, the report said. The Global DBM study, conducted biennially, surveyed 349 banks in its latest edition, assessing participants based on their retail banking maturity across three main

channels: public websites, internet banking and mobile banking, which includes application messenger service-based banking. The survey further highlights that Indian Digital Champions have outperformed their global peers across most journey steps, with India's overall DBM Index exceeding the global average index by 20 pp. -ANI

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They got Pulitzers for a bunch of lies: Hegseth

Hegseth accused the media of publishing “hit pieces” based on anonymous sources from disgruntled former employees



WASHINGTON DC : The Secretary of Defence of the United States, Pete Hegseth, in a post on social media, criticised the media’s handling of the Signal chat controversy. Hegseth expressed scepticism about the media’s sudden interest in the story after a few individuals were fired for leaking information.

Hegseth accused the media of publishing “hit pieces” based on anonymous sources from disgruntled former employees, drawing parallels with the Russia hoax controversy. Hegseth also criticised the media for receiving Pulitzer Prizes for what he described as “a bunch of lies,” implying that the awards were undeserved.

In a video shared by CSPAN on X, when asked about the Sig-

nal chat controversy, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said, “You know, what a big surprise that a few leakers get fired and suddenly a bunch of hit pieces come out from the same media that peddled the Russia hoax. won’t give back their Pulitzers, they got Pulitzers for a bunch of lies ...”

He questioned the media’s integrity, suggesting that they are more interested in damaging reputations than in objective reporting.

Attacking the media, he further said, “As they peddle those lies, no one ever calls them on it. See, this is what the media does. They take anonymous sources from disgruntled former employees and then they try slash and burn people and ruin their reputations. Not going

to work with me because we’re changing the Defence Department, putting the Pentagon back in the hands of war fighters”

He further added that “anonymous smears from disgruntled former employees on old news doesn’t matter.”

Referring to the Easter egg roll celebrations, Hegseth told the media that he would participate with his family and kids.

Attacking the democrats, Hegseth in his fiery speech further said, “This is why we’re fighting the fake news media. This is why we’re fighting slash-and-burn Democrats. This is why we’re fighting Hoax-sters... that peddle anonymous sources from leakers with axes to grind and then you put it all

together as if it’s some news story”.

In concluding his remarks, Hegseth said that he had spoken to the President about it, “and we are going to continue fighting on the same page all the way.”

Earlier, the New York Times reported on Sunday that Hegseth shared sensitive information about the planned strike in Yemen on March 15 in a private group chat that included his wife, brother, and personal lawyer.

Hegseth shared sensitive details about a planned military operation targeting the Houthis in Yemen through a private Signal group chat on his personal phone, CNN reported, citing three sources.

Two sources said the chat was initially created during Hegseth’s confirmation hearings to coordinate with his closest allies and strategise. However, he continued to use it post-confirmation, maintaining communication with over a dozen people.

The revelation comes as some of Hegseth’s closest advisers have begun sounding the alarm about the secretary’s judgment, including his former press secretary, John Ullyot, and three former senior officials Hegseth fired last week -- his top adviser Dan Caldwell, deputy chief of staff Darin Selnick, and Colin Carroll, who served as chief of staff to the deputy secretary of defence, CNN reported. **-BW**



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ORLANDO AIRPORT

Delta plane catches fire at US airport

FLORIDA : A Delta Air Lines flight caught fire on the tarmac at Orlando International Airport on Monday, following which the passengers had to evacuate via the emergency slides, CNN reported.

Engines caught fire.

CNN reported, quoting the Federal Aviation Administration and Delta Air Lines, that the flight bound for Atlanta had just departed for the runway when one of the two engines caught fire.

The FAA has launched an investigation into the incident that resulted in a ball of flames coming out of the right engine, as captured by the cellphone of a passenger in the terminal.

There were 282 passengers on

board, luckily, no injuries have been reported, CNN reported.

Flames in the tailpipe

“Delta flight crews followed procedures to evacuate the passenger cabin when flames in the tailpipe of one of the aircraft’s two engines were observed,” the airline said as reported by CNN.

“We appreciate our customers’ cooperation and apologize for the experience. Nothing is more important than safety, and Delta teams will work to get our customers to their final destinations as soon as possible,” the airline said. Delta will fly the passengers to their final destinations on other aircraft while maintenance teams are examining the aircraft which had the fire. **-ANI**

MEETING

Great leader: US VP Vance lauds Prime Minister Modi

NEW DELHI : United States Vice President JD Vance on Monday said it was an “honour” to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and called the PM a “great leader” on the first day of his India visit.

Vance also expressed gratitude for hosting his family at the PM’s residence in New Delhi and said that PM Modi was “incredibly kind to my family.”

Responding to PM Modi’s post on X, the US Vice President wrote, “It was an honor to see Prime Minister Modi this evening. He’s a great leader, and he was incredibly kind to my family.”

Vance further expressed willingness to strengthen friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

“I look forward to working under President Trump’s leadership to strengthen our friendship and cooperation with the people of India!” Vance said.

PM Modi, after meeting Vance, said that both nations are committed to mutually beneficial cooperation in various sectors.

“Pleased to welcome US Vice President JD Vance and his family to New Delhi. We reviewed the fast-paced progress following my visit to the US and meet-



ing with President Trump. We are committed to mutually beneficial cooperation, including in trade, technology, defence, energy and people-to-people exchanges,” PM Modi wrote on X.

He also emphasised that India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership will be a “defining” partnership of the 21st Century for India and the world.

During the meeting, the two leaders reaffirmed the strength of the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and jointly launched the India-U.S. COMPACT (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology) for the 21st Century, which as described by a statement from

US Vice President office is an “initiative anchored in mutual trust, shared interests, goodwill, and robust engagement of their citizens”.

The two leaders also welcomed the progress in the negotiations for a US-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). They formally announced the finalisation of the Terms of Reference for the negotiations.

“Vance and Modi welcomed significant progress in the negotiations for a US-India BTA and formally announced the finalisation of the Terms of Reference for the negotiations, laying down a roadmap for further discussions about our shared economic priorities,” said the statement from Vance’s office. **-ANI**

ARRESTED

Justice will be done: FBI Director on arrest of terrorist Harpreet

CALIFORNIA: Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kash Patel on Monday assured that justice will be done after the FBI arrested terrorist Harpreet Singh, involved in attacks in Punjab.

Kash Patel, lauding the team’s efforts, said the FBI Sacramento conducted the investigation in coordination with India.

“CAPTURED: HARPREET SINGH, part of an alleged foreign terrorist gang here illegally in the United States, who we believe was involved in planning multiple attacks on police stations both in India and the United States,” Patel wrote on X.

FBI Sacramento conducted the investigation, coordinating with our partners locally as well as in India. Excellent work from all, and justice will be done,” Patel added. Patel further assured that the FBI continue finding those who perpetrate violence.

“The FBI will continue finding those who perpetrate violence -- no matter where they are,” Patel said.

The FBI and Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) arrested a terrorist, Harpreet Singh, involved in attacks in Punjab.

The FBI said that Harpreet Singh is linked to two international



terrorist groups and entered the US illegally. According to the FBI, he used burner phones to evade capture.

In a post shared on X, FBI Sacramento stated, “Today, Harpreet Singh, an alleged terrorist responsible for terror attacks in Punjab, India, was arrested by the FBI and ERO in Sacramento. Linked to two international terrorist groups, he entered the U.S. illegally and used burner phones to evade capture.”

Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav lauded the arrest of Harpreet Singh alias Happy Passia and termed it as a “major milestone” in the crack-

down on terror networks sponsored by Pakistan’s ISI.

In a post on X, DGP Punjab Gaurav Yadav said, “The arrest of Harpreet Singh alias Happy Passia, a USA-based key operative of ISI-backed Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and close associate of Pakistan-based Terrorist Rinda, is a major milestone in the sustained crackdown on ISI-backed terror networks.”

The Punjab Director General of Police also stated that the FBI and ICE’s arrest was the result of “excellent international co-operation” and the exchange of information between the United States and India. **-ANI**

CARDINALS

Who will be the next Pope after the passing of Francis?

ROME: There’s an intercontinental array of possible successors to Pope Francis, with the initial strong contenders coming from Asia, Africa, North America and Europe.

Popes are elected in a secretive and highly ritualized process called a conclave, held in Vatican City’s Sistine Chapel.

Only cardinals under the age of 80 are eligible to vote, and typically about 120 of them participate. Below are some of the prospective pontiffs who will most likely be considered.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle (67, Filipino, Vatican evangelisation chief)

Dubbed the “Asian Francis” for his focus on social justice, Tagle is seen as the favorite in some quarters and would also be the first Asian pope — just like Francis was the first pope from the Americas. On paper, Tagle seems to have all the boxes ticked to qualify him to be a pope. However, Tagle’s prospects may be dimmed due to accusations of institutional bullying in Caritas Internationalis, a global Catholic charity association, which he led for several years. The Holy See dis-



missed Tagle as the head of Caritas Internationalis in 2022.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin (70, Italian, Vatican Secretary of State)

A potential bridge between various Church factions, Parolin has been Francis’ secretary of state since 2013 and he is among the leading contenders for the papacy. His role is the second highest in the hierarchy after pope. A career diplomat, he’s been criticized by conservatives for his role in an agreement with Beijing on the appointment of bishops in communist China. His election would return the papacy

to Italy after three non-Italians.

Cardinal Peter Turkson (76, Ghanaian, Vatican official and diplomat)

A possible first sub-Saharan African pope, Turkson blends pastoral work in Ghana with diplomatic skills and Vatican leadership experience. Francis sent Turkson as his special envoy to pursue peace in South Sudan. His strong communication skills — and the fact that he comes from one of the most dynamic regions for the Church as it struggles with secularism in Europe — should bolster his credentials.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet (79, Canadian, ex-head of Vatican’s bishops’ office)

A veteran Vatican insider with global experience, Ouellet has long been in papal conversations. Theologically conservative and fluent in multiple languages, he appeals to traditionalists. Allegations of misconduct emerged in recent years but were dismissed.

Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu (65, Congolese, Archbishop of Kinshasa)

A veteran Vatican insider with global experience, Ouellet has long been in papal conversations. Theologically conservative and fluent in multiple languages, he appeals to traditionalists. Allegations of misconduct emerged in recent years but were dismissed.

Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu (65, Congolese, Archbishop of Kinshasa)

A rising star from Africa, Ambongo combines firm traditional views with advocacy for social justice. He is a key voice for the continent’s rapidly growing Church. At the same time, his vocal opposition to same-sex blessings has raised his

international profile — boosting his standing among conservatives.

Matteo Zuppi (69, Italian, Archbishop of Bologna)

Often called the “Italian Bergoglio” for his alignment with Pope Francis, Zuppi is a “street priest” who focuses on the poor and migrants, and avoids pomp — sometimes riding a bike instead of using an official car. More conservative church factions may be wary of his progressive leanings.

Jean-Marc Aveline (66, French, Archbishop)

Aveline is known for his humor and good rapport with Francis, especially on immigration and Muslim relations.

If elected, Aveline would be the first French pope since the 14th century and the youngest since John Paul II. He understands Italian but doesn’t speak it fluently — potentially a drawback in a role that would also make him the Bishop of Rome.

Cardinal Peter Erdo (72, Hungarian, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest)

A strong advocate for traditional

Catholic teachings and doctrine who has nonetheless built bridges with Francis’ progressive world, Erdo was a 2013 papal contender. Fluent in several languages, including Italian, he isn’t seen as particularly charismatic, but might appeal to those seeking a steadier papacy.

Cardinal Mario Grech (68, Maltese, Bishops’ Synod Secretary General)

Initially considered conservative, Grech has become a leading figure in promoting Francis’ reforms. In 2014, he called for a more accepting stance towards Catholics — a speech praised by Francis. His high-profile Vatican role and cross-faction friendships make him well-positioned for the highest seat.

Cardinal Juan Jose Omella (79, Spanish, Archbishop of Barcelona)

Close to Francis, Omella leads a modest life despite his senior role. Made cardinal in 2016, he joined the pope’s nine-member advisory council in 2023. His proximity to Francis may be a liability if the conclave wants a change in tone. **-BW**

SPORTS

Bumrah, Mandhana named Wisden Leading Cricketers in the World

West Indies batter Nicholas Pooran was named the ‘Leading T20 Player in the World’ in the 2025 Wisden Cricketers’ Almanack

LONDON: India's cricketing excellence took centre stage in the 2025 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, released on Tuesday, with Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana named the Leading Cricketers in the World.

For Bumrah, 2024 was a year of remarkable dominance across formats. The fast bowler became the first in Test history to reach 200 wickets at an average of under 20—an unprecedented feat that cemented his status among the greats. His 71 wickets in the calendar year came at less than 15 apiece, and he played a pivotal role in India's T20 World Cup triumph in the Caribbean.

Lawrence Booth, Wisden's editor, hailed him as "quite simply the star of the year."

His performance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, where he led India's attack almost single-handedly with 32 wickets at 13.06, drew particular praise. "He was so lethal, so uniquely challenging—a staccato of limbs some-

how forming a symphony—that runs scored off him should have counted double," Booth wrote, even suggesting that Bumrah had staked a claim as "the greatest of all time."

Smriti Mandhana mirrored that impact on the women's stage, becoming the highest run-scorer in a single year of international women's cricket with 1,659 runs. Her run tally included four ODI hundreds—a record—and she capped her golden year with a second Test century, a commanding 149 against South Africa that helped secure a ten-wicket victory.

West Indies' Nicholas Pooran was named the Leading T20 Cricketer in the World, recognised for his explosive batting and consistent performances in the shortest format.

Wisden also named its traditional Five Cricketers of the Year, an honour awarded only once in a player's career, with this year's list featuring a strong Surrey contingent. Gus Atkinson, Jamie Smith



and Dan Worrall played key roles in securing Surrey's third consecutive County Championship title.

Atkinson, in particular, emerged as a breakout star for England, taking 52 wickets at 22 in his debut Test summer. He impressed at Lord's with 12 wickets against West Indies and followed it up with a second five-wicket haul and a maiden century from No. 8 against Sri Lanka. He also claimed a hat-trick against New Zealand in Wellington.

Worrall, the Australia-born seamer who qualifies to play for England this year, was a steady force for Surrey, collecting 52 wickets at an average of 16. Smith, too, made a promising Test debut and contributed to Surrey's dominance.

Hampshire's Liam Dawson and England's Sophie Ecclestone com-

pleted the quintet. Dawson had a standout season, taking 54 wickets with his left-arm spin and scoring 956 runs at nearly 60—numbers that Booth described as making him the "most effective all-rounder in county cricket."

Ecclestone, despite a tough winter during the Women's T20 World Cup and the Ashes, bounced back to lead England's unbeaten home summer. She took 26 wickets across formats at under 10 runs apiece and maintained an economy rate below three.

The Wisden Trophy for the year's outstanding performance went to New Zealand's Mitchell Santner, who produced a sensational 13-wicket haul in the second Test against India in Pune. That performance helped seal a 2-0 series lead, handing India their first home series defeat in over a dec-



ade. New Zealand went on to complete a 3-0 sweep, one of the most remarkable overseas triumphs in recent history.

As always, Wisden's editorial notes pulled no punches. Booth criticised the state of global cricket governance, calling 2024 "the year cricket gave up any claim to being properly administered." He highlighted the abrupt transition of Jay Shah from BCCI secretary to ICC chair—while tensions still lingered over Pakistan's hosting rights for the Champions Trophy—as a symbol of the chaos.

Booth also questioned the integrity of the current World Test Championship structure, calling the upcoming final between Australia and South Africa "a shambles masquerading as a showpiece."

This year's Almanack also paid

tribute to James Anderson, who ended his storied Test career in July after 21 years and 704 wickets—an England record unlikely to be broken anytime soon.

Two significant losses were also remembered with heartfelt tributes. Derek Underwood was honoured by his former captain Mike Brearley, while the late Graham Thorpe, who died by suicide in August, was remembered in a moving piece by his widow, Amanda. "He tried many therapies and medications—he tried so hard to beat it... It felt like he was in the grip of a sickness he just couldn't get out of," she wrote, urging greater understanding and compassion around mental health struggles.

The cover of the 2025 edition features England's Harry Brook, seen as one of the brightest young stars in world cricket. - Agencies

FORMER PAKISTAN COACH

Gillespie and PCB in financial dispute

SYDNEY: Former Pakistan head coach Jason Gillespie and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) are locked in a financial dispute following his abrupt resignation from the role in December 2024.

Gillespie claims the PCB owes him outstanding payments, including performance-related bonuses and other financial entitlements. He has accused the board of multiple contractual breaches, while the PCB maintains that Gillespie violated the terms of his agreement by quitting without serving the mandatory four-month notice period.

Speaking to ESPNcricinfo, Gillespie said he had contacted the PCB in an attempt to recover unpaid dues. These reportedly include bonuses promised for Pakistan's Test series win over England in October and their ODI series victory against Australia the following month. He has since escalated the matter to the ICC, although it remains unclear whether the global governing body has jurisdiction over such contractual issues.

The PCB, however, issued a statement on Sunday denying Gillespie's claims, which were made in an interview with PakPassion. The board described his departure as "a clear breach of contractual terms" and confirmed it had formally communicated its stance to Gillespie's representatives. While the board has



not publicly confirmed whether it will seek compensation, sources indicate it is considering legal options.

Gillespie, who initially stepped in as interim ODI coach during Pakistan's tour of Australia, following Gary Kirsten's resignation, insists he had received written assurances regarding financial remuneration—assurances he says were not honoured.

Tensions between Gillespie and the PCB had reportedly been simmering for months prior to his resignation. In October, he was removed from the national selection panel, and later said his role had been reduced to that of a "matchday strategist," far removed from the responsibilities he was originally promised. By November, reports emerged that Gillespie would not lead Pakistan on their South Africa tour, with Aaqib Javed stepping in as interim coach. - Agencies

PLAYED 74 TESTS



Ex-cricketer Slater sentenced over domestic violence charges

MELBOURNE: Former Australia Test cricketer Michael Slater has been handed a partly suspended four-year prison sentence after pleading guilty to domestic violence charges.

However, the 55-year-old will walk free - having already served more than a year in custody after being refused bail in 2024. Slater, who played 74 Tests for Australia between 1993 and 2001, pleaded guilty to two counts of common assault, one of unlawful striking, one of assault occasioning bodily harm, burglary and two counts of strangulation. In 2022, he was sentenced to a two-year community corrections order by a Sydney court after pleading guilty to charges including common assault and attempted stalking of a woman.

After making his debut during the 1993 Ashes tour, Slater played 74 Tests for Australia, amassing 5312 runs at an average of 42.83 with 14 hundreds.

Oman U16 ready to shine at ACC Men's West Zone Cup in Qatar

MUSCAT: As the ACC Men's U16 West Zone Cup 2025 kicks off on April 23 in Qatar, the Oman U16 cricket team arrived in Doha with quiet confidence, a well-balanced squad, and the ambition to make their mark on the regional stage.

Led by skipper Aryan Joshi, who joins the team fresh from the ICC U19 CWCQ Asia in Nepal along with Kavish Shah and Vignesh Karthikeyan, the squad is a vibrant mix of talent and youthful promise.

Under the guidance of head coach Parviz Al Balushi, the team has shaped through a comprehensive selection process and rigorous training schedule.

"We had more than 60 picked players from different schools and clubs participating in Oman's junior domestic league to conduct selections from," said Al Balushi.

"We picked the best squad that would suit the conditions along with match our team combination for the way we want to play our cricket."

That combination, Parviz added, is built not just on talent, but on cohesion and tactical clarity.

"The side have gelled well and the team combination looks settled. We have worked on the fitness of the players initially, phasing into the skills with target-specific net sessions and a series of practice games to give our boys a solid preparation," he said.

Several members of the team also play in Oman's senior domes-



tic leagues, bringing with them a level of maturity that belies their age. From top-order resilience to bowling depth, Oman's squad offers versatility across departments.

"This is a unique composition of experience and youth at this level," Al Balushi said. "We are evenly stable with our batting and bowling unit, which allows us to be flexible with our positive plans."

Oman launch their campaign against Saudi Arabia on April 23 at 9:30am. The tournament continues with matches against Bahrain (April 25), hosts Qatar (April 28), Kuwait (May 1), and UAE (May 3), followed by the final on May 5, offering a demanding yet exciting fixture list. The long-serving coach believes this tournament is more than just a competitive outing—it's a crucial step in the developmental journey of the players.

"This tour certainly is pivotal for the U16 boys in terms of the exposure and experience they will reap out of this, enabling a smoother transition to U19 cricket," he said. "The team believes that this is the right opportunity to express the efforts put into the game from their young age and to make the most out of the tournament. We want to trust and believe in ourselves and our process to expect positive results."

Squad: Aryan Joshi (captain), Kavish Shah, Mohammad Aseel, Guransh Singh, Christo Tredoux, Vihaan Sanjay Chauhan, Mohammad Eisa, Arav Pillai, Mathew Samuel Kevin, Sethmina Devin, Shravan Sharat, Hafiz Mohamed, Vignesh Karthikeyan, Ayush Shetty. Coach: Parviz Al Balushi, Assistant coach: Amir Ali, Manager: Sher Mohd Al Balushi.

LIMITED-OVERS SERIES FROM APRIL 21

Oman step up WCL 2 preparations with series against Kerala at home

MUSCAT: In an effort to provide Oman players quality games that will serve as ideal tune-up to the tri-nation series of ICC Men's Cricket World Cup (CWC) League 2 (2024/27) in the USA next month (May 17-27), Oman Cricket is hosting the Kerala state team over a four-match limited-overs series at the Oman Cricket Academy ground.

The first match of the series, played on April 21, Monday, ended in favour of the visitors as they edged the hosts by four wickets. The second match of the series will be played on Wednesday.

Oman's recent form in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 has been promising. Oman are currently placed fourth in the WCL 2 standing comprising eight nations with 18 points from 16 games.

USA lead the standing with 22 from 16 while the Netherlands are second with 20 from similar number of matches. Canada are third with 20 points from 16 games followed by Oman and Namibia (14 from 20 games).

The visiting Kerala side, which



finished as Ranji Trophy - India's premier domestic red-ball competition - runner-up this season, are up against an ICC side for the first time.

The Oman Chairman's XI squad features players from the national team and is led by national team skipper Jatinder Singh.

Kerala is led by wicketkeeper-batter Mohammed Azharuddeen, but the squad will miss star Indian cricketer Sanju Samson, Sachin Baby and Vishnu Vinod, who are involved with the ongoing IPL 2025. The team is coached by for-

mer Indian cricketer Tinu Yohannan.

Ahead of the start of the series, Mendis welcomed the Kerala team to Oman. He said: "We are pleased to host the Kerala team, the finalist of Ranji Trophy this season for a four-match friendly series. The team has quality players and we are keen to play against such good sides as we prepare for our USA tour next month."

He added: "This series is ideal for our boys as they have been undergoing rigorous training over the past few weeks. The boys will



gain confidence ahead of our USA tour of WCL 2 that will also feature Canada. We will also play another strong Indian state team of Karnataka later this month and the two series will provide our boys the needed warm-up and hopefully we can get good results"

"We're treating these matches with the same seriousness as international fixtures," he said.

Mendis added that the Oman team management sees the series as a platform to test combinations and assess form.

The former Sri Lankan great

said: "This will help our selectors and coaching staff make key decisions on the final 15 before the League 2 tournament. We're also happy to build sporting ties with teams like Kerala and encourage these exchanges."

Oman team: Jatinder Singh, Aamir Kaleem, Pruthvi Machhi, Hammad Mirza, Mohammad Nadeem, Sufyan Mehmood, Shakeel Ahmed, Jay Odedra, Samay Shrivastava, Wasim Ali, Vinayak Shukla, Hassnain Ali Shah, Muhammad Imran, Mujib Ali, Sandeep Goud, Ashish Odedara, Hashir Dafedar, Mohammed Bilal Shah, Muzahir Raza, Ubaidullah.

Remaining fixtures: April 23: Second match, 2pm; April 25: Third match, 2pm; April 27: Fourth and final match, 10am.

First match brief scores: Oman Chairman's XI 326 in 50 overs (Jatinder Singh 150, Aamir Kaleem 73, Vinayak Shukla 29, MD Nidheesh 4/53, Edhen Apple Tom 4/65) lost to Kerala 329/6 in 49.1 overs (Rohan Kunnimmal 122, Salman Nizar 87, Shoun Roger 56; Hassnain Ali Shah 4/50).

ROUND-UP

CITY AMPHITHEATRE IN QURUM

Indian dance king Prabhu Deva set to scintillate Muscat in debut performance



MUSCAT: All roads lead to the City Amphitheatre in Qurum this Thursday, April 24. From 7.30pm onwards the amphitheatre will be lit up to celebrate the rollicking dance of the one and only Indian king of dance, the inimitable Prabhu Deva, all the way from Chennai, India.

First-ever live performance
Titled 'Prabhu Deva's Bash', the show features the dance king in his first-ever live performance in Oman. The event is organised by Black & White Oman in association with JMR Events and Mediasenze.

Indian Michael Jackson
The Indian Michael Jackson, as Deva is popularly known since the time he blazed many of India's dance stages and the celluloid world, is an actor, dancer, choreographer, producer and director. The troupe is led by the show



Salim Saed Salim Al Harrasi, also known as Salim Sinbad, will be part of the show, along with two of his team mates.

Young dancers of Oman
The event offers a unique opportunity for some of the talented young dancers of Oman to rub shoulders with the dance maestro himself, a dream come true for many dance aspirants.

Charity fund raiser
Another highlight of the event is a charity fund-raising dinner -- for Children First Association -- that will be organised on Wednesday, April 23, a day before the dance show, at the lawns of the W Muscat.

Dutch Whistler
Geert Chatrou, a professional Dutch whistler par excellence, will be entertaining the guests at the fund raiser. Contact: 95358513/77591594.

director, Harikumar of Shaa Entertainments.

Muscat on previous occasions.

Famous orchestra
Playing a perfect foil for Deva and Singh are Tamil Nadu's most-famous light music orchestra, Saadagai Paravaigal, who has accompanied many stars to successful shows in

Oman's top singer
Oman's topmost singer, Haitham Mohammed Rafi, will be an exciting add on as he will open the dance event on Thursday.

Salim Sinbad's breakdance
Famous Omani break dancer,

A'SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY

SQU celebrates Biomedical Laboratory Sciences Day

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University, represented by the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, celebrated International Biomedical Laboratory Science Day 2025 at A'Sharqiyah University. The event was held under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Mahmoud bin Rashid Al-Saadi, Wali of Al Qabil.

Organised annually by the Department of Biomedical Science, the event aims to highlight the vital contributions of professionals in the field, inspire those working in biomedical sciences, and promote awareness of the discipline.

It also seeks to underscore the importance of the various branches of biomedical science and raise

public awareness of the role biomedical scientists play in diagnosing diseases within clinical laboratories.

Despite being a key profession in the healthcare system, the role of biomedical laboratory specialists is often not fully understood by patients and the wider community due to limited direct interaction.

The event featured an exhibition comprising four main sections. The first showcased academic programmes in biomedical sciences offered by public and private universities and colleges, allowing institutions to promote their educational offerings.

The second section focused on the main branches of biomedical laboratory sciences—Haematology, Histopathology, Biochemistry,

Microbiology, and Immunology. Staff members from each branch engaged with visitors by demonstrating selected diagnostic tests and explaining their relevance.

The third section hosted participating associations, including the Oman Cancer Association, the Oman Hereditary Blood Disorders Association, and the Oman Transplantation Society, offering insights into their work and community impact.

The fourth section featured an interactive student corner, where scientific posters were displayed and various competitions were held for visitors.

It is noteworthy that the College of Medicine and Health Sciences first marked this international occasion in 2017.



MG DISTRIBUTOR CONFERENCE



MG Motor recognised for Marketing Innovation and Customer Excellence

MUSCAT: MG Motor Oman, a division of MHD ACERE, announced its dual victory at the prestigious MG Distributor Conference held in Dubai on April 15, 2025. The brand was honored with awards for Best Corporate Marketing and Best Customer Experience, solidifying its position as a regional leader in innovation, customer engagement, and brand strategy.

The Best Corporate Marketing award recognized MG Motor Oman's holistic and strategically integrated approach to corporate outreach. The Corporate Program, a first-of-its-kind, brought the MG brand experience directly into the workplaces of Oman's top companies.

MG Motor Oman built a 360° Corporate Marketing Ecosystem, combining on-ground activations with targeted digital engagement, employee-exclusive benefits, and long-term partnership strategies. By collaborating with large organizations across banking, telecom, oil & gas, and government sectors, MG was able to embed itself within the daily lives of high-potential working professionals.

This multi-pronged strategy not only delivered high-quality leads and boosted test drive volumes, but also established MG as a trusted

mobility partner for Oman's workforce, reinforcing the brand's positioning beyond showrooms.

In parallel, the Best Customer Experience award celebrated MG Oman's consistent focus on personalized service, seamless after-sales support, and customer-centric innovation. From digital service tracking tools to VIP test drive experiences and rapid response service teams, MG has transformed every touchpoint of the customer journey.

Commenting on this achievement, Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, said: "These awards are a testament to the power of innovation, agility, and listening to the voice of the customer. At MG Motor Oman, we believe that marketing is not just about visibility—it's about value, connection, and creating experiences that resonate. I'm incredibly proud of our team for bringing bold ideas to life and for consistently delivering a customer experience that sets us apart in the region."

The accolades reflect MG Motor Oman's commitment to driving growth through meaningful engagement and world-class service—pillars that continue to shape its success story across Oman and the GCC.

This accolade reflects Meethaq's excellence in Islamic Banking and its contribution to customer needs

MUSCAT: In recognition of its pioneering roles in advancing the Islamic banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman while delivering top-tier Sharia'a Compliant financial solutions to individual and corporate customers, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat has been honoured with the Best Islamic Investment Bank in Oman 2025 by the prestigious Islamic Finance News (IFN).

At a high-profile award ceremony held in Dubai, Salim Said Al Shanfari, Chief Representative of the Bank's UAE Representative Office, received the award on behalf of Meethaq. The event was attended by distinguished officials from across the Middle East. This accolade reflects Meethaq's excellence in Islamic Banking and its contribution to customer needs by offering innovative Sharia-compliant banking solutions and services to customers.

Speaking about this milestone of achievement, Ali Ahmed Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager -Meethaq Corporate Banking, expressed his delight, stating: "We are immensely honored to receive this prestigious award, which stands as a statement to Meethaq's unwavering commitment to excellence in Islamic Banking. This

Meethaq recognised as Best Islamic Investment Bank in Oman 2025



recognition would not have been possible without the trust and confidence of our valued customers. We extend our gratitude to the Islamic Finance News team for recognizing Meethaq's leadership in the industry. We remain dedicated to delivering exceptional Sharia compliant services and innovative solutions that align with the aspirations of our customers."

Al Lawati further emphasized Meethaq's ongoing journey of success, saying: "Meethaq has reached significant milestones by continuously enhancing its portfolio of tailored Sharia'a Compliant financial products. One notable achievement is the launch of the Meethaq Equity Fund, a Sharia-Compliant investment fund developed in collaboration with Bank Muscat's Asset Management Unit. The Fund is designed to drive long-term capital appreciation and dividend distributions through investments in

Sharia-compliant stocks listed in the Sultanate and across the GCC region. This is just one example of how Meethaq remains at the forefront of innovation, providing customers with value-driven Islamic Banking solutions.

Beyond industry recognition, Meethaq continues to offer a comprehensive suite of Sharia-compliant banking products and facilities, ensuring they cater to the evolving needs of individuals, SMEs, and corporates. These products undergo rigorous Sharia compliance certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board and adheres to the guidelines set forth by the Central Bank of Oman. Meethaq Islamic Banking offers various types of savings and current accounts, including children saving accounts and Meethaq saving plan. It also provides diverse financing solutions such as personal financing, car financing,

home financing, travel finance, education finance, marriage finance, and personal goods financing. In addition to individual banking, Meethaq plays a pivotal role in catering to corporates and SMEs by offering a diverse range of products and services. These include current accounts, project financing and working capital financing, as well as short-term and long-term financing solutions, such as commercial financing, "Ijarah" financing, and Sharia-compliant large-scale projects. Strengthening its presence across the Sultanate, Meethaq operates 32 branches, complemented by a network of more than 50 ATMs and CDMs, with access to an extensive banking network of 900 ATMs and CDMs of Bank Muscat. This widespread infrastructure ensures that customers can easily and conveniently access Meethaq's Sharia'a compliant banking services.

ROUND-UP

Alizz Islamic Bank Sharia Supervisory Board members conduct branch visits

These site visit comes as part of the esteemed scholars belief in the importance of reviewing the reality of banking in a practical environment and overseeing the branch operations to ensure Sharia compliance



MUSCAT: Sheikh Dr. Essam Khalaf Al Enezi, Chairman of the Sharia Supervisory Board of Alizz Islamic Bank and their Eminences members of the Sharia Supervisory Board recently conducted field visits to several Alizz Islamic Bank branches. These site visit come as part of the esteemed scholars belief in the importance of reviewing the reality of banking in a practical environment and overseeing

the branch operations to ensure Shari'a compliance. Touching upon the visits Issa bin Salim Al Riyami, Head of the Shari'a Compliance & Audit department said "The continued efforts of the Shari'a Supervisory Board of Alizz Islamic Bank are dedicated to strengthening the relationship between the bank and

the various segments of society and through their guidance we aim to achieve the maximum benefit and broadcast awareness about Islamic banking and the services and products accompanying the sector resulting in positive effects that enhance banking awareness and financial stability." The Shari'a Supervisory Board

is one of the cornerstones of Alizz Islamic Bank, as the decisions and judgments that are taken form a major role in all the commercial operations that the bank undertakes. The Shari'a supervisory board of Alizz Islamic Bank reviews all Islamic banking agreements, documents, products and services launched by the Bank.

The Board includes members who are knowledgeable about Shari'a law and transaction jurisprudence in particular. They work in accordance with the Central Bank of Oman and with the higher Sharia Supervisory Authority to provide the bank customers with peace of mind by offering products and services that are approved by fat-

was and resolutions. The Shari'a Supervisory Board also helps reassure shareholders and depositors whose trust is undoubtedly one of the most important factors for the bank's success. It is also through their contribution of their knowledge and experience that plays a key role towards the success of the Islamic banking in the Sultanate.

CULINARY EXPERIENCE

'Tales of Morocco' - A Moroccan culinary week highlighting Chef Mansour Benali's specialities at Shangri-La Al Husn



MUSCAT: From 23rd of April to 1st of May, Shangri-La Al Husn invites guests on a mesmerizing journey through the heart of Morocco with Tales of Morocco, a vibrant week-long culinary experience that celebrates the kingdom's rich flavours, traditions – and the captivating art of belly dancing. At the heart of this exclusive pop-up is Chef Mansour Benali, a Casablanca native whose signature style blends the deep roots of Moroccan culinary heritage with

contemporary finesse. Known for his soulful cooking and elegant presentations, Chef Mansour will showcase an exceptional array of Morocco's most cherished dishes – from tagines and fluffy couscous to smoky kebabs and delightful dessert. Evenings come alive with the rhythmic charm of live belly dancing performances, adding a cultural sparkle to every dinner service. This immersive element transforms each evening into a true Moroccan celebration, echo-

ing the spirit of traditional souks feasts, and festive gatherings. Guests will enjoy a specially curated set menu at OMR 29 net per person, featuring classic appetisers, soup, a choice of hearty mains – including Chef Mansour's signature lamb or chicken tagines – and the traditional "Mhencha" dessert, served with Moroccan mint tea and cookies. The evening is designed to transport you – from the warm spices and rich aromas to live Mo-

roccan entertainment, traditional performances, and captivating belly dancing, all set against the stunning backdrop of Shangri-La Al Husn. This exclusive pop-up is available from 23rd of April to the 1st of May from 7pm to 10.30pm and is open to guests aged 13 and above. With the spiced aromas, lively performances, and culinary artistry, Tales of Morocco promises a multi-sensory experience that's as unforgettable as it is delicious.

TRAINED 346 JOBSEEKERS



Al Masarrah Youth in partnership with bp Oman, concludes second cycle of 'Mahtat' programme



MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman, Al Masarrah Youth concluded its second cycle of the 'Mahtat' programme in a closing ceremony held under the patronage of Sheikh Saud bin Salim Al Maamari, Deputy Wali of Ibri. The programme trained 346 jobseekers specialised in electrical engineering degrees through various interactive, theoretical and practical workshops. The trainees developed their technical skills which allowed them to compete in the labour market, and 206 trainees achieved an official national license to practice electrical work across the country. Suleiman Al Maqrashi, Project Manager at Al Masarrah Youth, added: "This programme is aligned with Oman Vision 2040 to empower and develop their technical skills. We believe that this partnership contributes to sharing knowledge and builds the capabilities of our Omani youth."



Ibrahim Al Hinai, Social Investment Manager at bp Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar, commented: "This programme plays a huge role in upskilling and equipping our local capabilities to compete the labour market, to improve the national employability rates and economy, whereby it trained a to-

tal of 374 trainees across the two cycles of the programme. "The license enables them to work across the Sultanate for both personal and commercial projects. The programme is unique in how it links both the theoretical knowledge learnt at university and the practical work and skills required in electrical engineering current working fields." It is worth mentioning that this practical electrical license will allow the young Omani to legally practice electrical work independently, with the highest health and safety protocols and standards, with a total of 231 trainees gaining the license across the two cycles of the programme and 11 trainees were able to work on their individual projects.



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