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HM RECEIVES WRITTEN MESSAGE FROM TANZANIAN PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received a written message yesterday from President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania, dealing with the bilateral relations between the two countries. The message was delivered when His Majesty gave an audience at Al Baraka Palace to Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania. During the audience, the minister conveyed the greetings of the Tanzanian President and her best wishes of good health and success to His Majesty the Sultan. He also conveyed the Tanzanian President's wishes of further progress and prosperity to the Omani people. His Majesty, in turn, asked the guest to convey his greetings and best wishes of happiness and success to the President. His Majesty also wished the Tanzanian people continued development and growth. The meeting was attended by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister and Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office. From the Tanzanian side, attendees included Maulidah Hassan, Advisor to the President, and Abdullah Abas Kilima, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA

CONVEYED GREETINGS

HM gives audience to Saudi Foreign Minister

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik yesterday gave an audience to Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at Al Barakah Palace.

Prince Faisal conveyed greetings of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

He also conveyed their best wishes of good health and wellbeing to His Majesty and further progress and prosperity for the Omani people.

In his turn, His Majesty asked Prince Faisal to convey his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health and wellbeing to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. His Majesty also wished the Saudi people further progress and prosperity.

The audience explored prospects for cooperation between the two countries in various fields in light of the meetings of the Omani-Saudi Coordination Council and its efforts aimed at strengthening the robustness of bilateral relations and consolidate shared interests. This is in pursuance of the directives of the two countries' monarchs.

The Saudi minister highlighted a set of ongoing regional and international developments and the perspectives of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia concerning them, while he listened to the views of His Majesty the Sultan on the matter.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office and Ibrahim Saad Bishan,Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Shura Council panel praises cultural visa

1 The Media, Tourism, and Culture Committee of the Shura Council praised the introduction of a long-term cultural visa, which was recently introduced by the Royal Oman Police's Decision No. 156/2025 amending certain provisions of the Executive Regulation governing the residence of foreigners. >A2

OMAN
UN envoy lauds Oman's role

2 Hans Grundberg, the United Nations (UN) Special Envoy to Yemen, has expressed his profound gratitude to the Sultanate of Oman for hosting the pivotal negotiations in Muscat that culminated in the signing of a prisoner exchange agreementfor Yemen. >A6

MARKET
Oman, Egypt explore cooperation

3 The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones highlighted opportunities for cooperation in the fields of economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities to support economic integration between Oman and Egypt. The meeting focused on several strategic pillars aimed at enhancing investment. >B1

OMANISATION FULLY PROTECTED UNDER CEPA WITH INDIA: MOCIIP

Trade pact to boost exports, investment, and SMEs while safeguarding local jobs

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP) on Tuesday reassured the public and business community that the recently signed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the Republic of India does not affect Omanisation policies, stressing that the Sultanate's laws remain the sole reference for regulating the labour market and ensuring that national interests are firmly protected.

At a media briefing in Muscat, Qais Al Yousef, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, underlined that the agreement, which takes effect only after Royal Decree ratification, remains fully subject to Oman's laws and regulations, with priority in employment continuing to be accorded to Omani nationals "without exception."

Trade-defence measures

He emphasised that Oman retains its sovereign right to deploy trade-defence measures, including anti-dumping, safeguard, and countervailing actions, should local industries face harm or unfair practices. "The agreement allows Oman to take protective action when harm is proven or suspected in practices affecting local industries," Al Yousef said, adding that the CEPA gives Oman a comparative advantage in trade with India. >A5

Lulu Hypermarket Oman Wins Best Event Activity at TOMI 2025

MUSCAT: Lulu Hypermarket Oman was awarded Best Event Activity at The Oman Marketing Impact Awards (TOMI), recognising an initiative that combined purpose, creativity and community engagement during the Back-to-School season. Kicking off the season with energy and impact, Lulu Hypermarket engaged thousands of children across Oman through a series of inspiring, fun and free workshops designed to build real-life skills. From promoting healthy eating at the Lulu Lunch Tiffin Lab to encouraging sustainability at the Lulu Creative Carnival, where children created reusable bags while learning the value of recycling, the initiative delivered learning beyond the classroom.

TOMI AWARDS
THE OMAN MARKETING IMPACT

Blending education, creativity and community spirit, the campaign served as both a warm-up for school and a lesson for life—helping shape little champions for a brighter tomorrow and earning Lulu Hypermarket Oman the title for Best Event Activity at TOMI 2025.

OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:11pm
Asr	3:12pm
Maghrib	5:32pm
Isha	6:47pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	5:26am

DISCUSSIONS

State Council discusses 3 draft laws, study on education quality

MUSCAT: The State Council on Tuesday discussed the "Draft National Geospatial Data and Information Law," the "Draft Unified Industrial Regulation Law for the GCC States," and the "Draft Amendment to the Unified Customs Law for the GCC States".

Additionally, the Council reviewed a study by the Education and Research Committee titled "Enhancing the Quality of Educational Attainment and Mastery of Competencies and Skills in School Education in the Sultanate of Oman: An Analytical and Legislative Study."

These discussions took place during the fourth session of the third regular sitting of the eighth term, presided over by Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council.

In his opening speech, the Chairman noted that several of the draft laws are specific in nature as they are linked to a shared legislative system among the member states of the GCC.

He urged the permanent and special committees to expedite their studies and proposals to ensure they are ready for discussion in upcoming sessions.

The Council then discussed the Legal Committee's opinion on the "National Geospatial Data and Information Project Law." Sheikh

Sultan bin Matar Al-Azizi, Chairman of the Committee, explained that the draft law aims to establish an integrated national framework responsible for setting policies, standards, and technical specifications governing the collection, production, exchange, and publication of national geospatial data and information.

This would be achieved by unifying mechanisms, policies, standards, and specifications across the public and private sectors, in a manner that supports sustainable development plans and contributes to qualifying and building the capacities of personnel working in the surveying field.

He added that the draft law defines the scope of its application within the Sultanate of Oman and regulates surveying activities, operations, and satellite image reception stations, in accordance with conditions and controls to be specified in the executive regulations.

The Council also discussed the opinion of the Economic and Financial Committee on the "Draft Law/System of Unified Industrial Regulation for the GCC States."

The Vice Chairman of the Committee, stated that the draft law represents a legislative framework aimed at unifying and developing the industrial sector, encouraging investment, achieving economic integration among GCC states, and adopting modern technologies while localising national labour.

He noted that the draft seeks to regulate and promote industrial development, increase the sector's contribution to national income, expand industrial interdependence, and integrate economic activities among GCC countries.

It also supports the implementation of GCC industrial policies, contributes to meeting the requirements of economic development plans and programs, enhances cooperation and coordination in industrial affairs, stimulates innovation, and promotes the adoption and localisation of advanced technologies to enhance competitiveness.

He stressed the importance of strengthening policies related to qualified national manpower in the industrial sector in line with applicable laws and regulations in GCC states. He highlighted that the draft law encourages digital transformation in industrial projects, modernization of manufacturing technologies, and alignment with the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including knowledge-based and environmental industries. It also promotes the use of energy-efficient machinery and adherence to security, health, safety, and environmental protection standards.

Regarding the "Draft Law to Amend Certain Provisions of the Unified Customs Law (System) of the GCC," he explained that the draft aims to unify customs procedures and systems among member states and enhance customs cooperation, in line with developments in the customs field and the outcomes of practical implementation of the current law. T

he amendments seek to achieve integration with national customs legislation, enhance the efficiency of customs operations, simplify procedures, and facilitate intra-regional and external trade, consistent with GCC directions toward unifying related policies and procedures.

At the conclusion of the session, the Council discussed a study by the Education and Research Committee entitled "Enhancing the Quality of Academic Achievement and Mastery of Competencies and Skills in School Education in the Sultanate of Oman: An Analytical and Legislative Study." His Excellency Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Sarmi, Chairman of the Committee, explained that the study aims to assess the current level of academic achievement and skills mastery among students, based on national and international assessment indicators, and to evaluate the policies and efforts of the Ministry of Education across various educational stages, while drawing on international best practices.

He noted that the study presents a set of recommendations to enhance academic achievement through comprehensive frameworks and integrated programs, including curriculum development, enrichment of educational activities, improvement of teacher preparation programs in higher education institutions, and mechanisms to engage students, families, and community institutions as active partners in improving educational outcomes.. -ONA

National drill on emergency response starts

Organised by the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) in cooperation with relevant authorities, the exercise will span two days.

MUSCAT: The national exercise "Nation's Readiness 2025" commenced on Tuesday in the Governorate of Muscat.

Organised by the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) in cooperation with relevant authorities, the exercise will span two days.

Colonel Zayed bin Hamad Al Junaibi, Head of the National Emergency Management Centre, told Oman News Agency that the exercise aims to raise the efficiency of response teams, promote coordination among various entities involved in emergency management and achieve effective measures to protect lives and public property at a national level.

Simulations

Colonel Zayed added that the exercise includes simulations of several emergency hypotheses, such as managing responses to extreme weather events, implementing and coordinating safety maneuvers and validating approved national plans and measuring the speed of response and decision-making under diverse conditions.

The exercise involves the various sectors of the NCEM and the Subcommittee for Emergency Management in Muscat Governorate, with support from military and security forces and other relevant stakeholders.

Colonel Zayed emphasized that the exercise is part of continuous national efforts to strengthen the emergency management system and align with international best practices.

These efforts ensure the highest levels of safety and the protection of the community and infrastructure in the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

MEDIA, TOURISM, AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Shura Council panel praises long-term cultural visa

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Media, Tourism, and Culture Committee of the Shura Council held its second meeting of the third regular session (2025–2026) of the tenth term (2023–2027) on Tuesday, during which it reviewed a number of items listed on its agenda.

At the outset of the meeting, the committee reviewed several responses to submitted proposals, including the Council of Ministers' appreciation of the efforts exerted by the Shura Council in presenting proposals that support the public interest.

This was reflected in the views submitted by the Shura Council regarding the introduction of a long-term cultural visa, which was recently translated into practice through the issuance by the Royal Oman Police of Decision No.

156/2025 amending certain provisions of the Executive Regulation governing the residence of foreigners.

The amendment included provisions related to the cultural visa, which is expected to contribute to enhancing cultural activity in the Sultanate of Oman.

In another context, the committee reviewed the response of the Council of Ministers to the submitted proposal concerning the adoption by the Ministry of Information of an initiative to establish personal communication channels and enhance their operational mechanisms.

The committee discussed the substance of the response and the directions it outlined, which aim to strengthen institutional communication, develop modern communication tools, and improve the level of engagement with society in a manner that serves the public interest and elevates the institutional media message.

The meeting also reviewed and discussed the committee's report on the submitted proposal to transform the Wilayat of Qurayyat into an integrated tourism zone.

Members examined the developmental and tourism dimensions of the proposal, its importance in leveraging the wilayat's natural and heritage assets, its role in stimulating tourism activity and supporting the local economy, as well as its contribution to creating new investment opportunities and employment prospects.

In the same context, the committee discussed its report on the submitted proposal to establish integrated service stations for mobile homes and tourism services, in response to the growing needs of tourists and in support of providing appropriate infrastructure that strengthens the tourism sector across the governorates.

During the meeting, the committee also reviewed the executive program of its work plan for the current third regular session (2025–2026), during which work priorities and focus areas for the session were discussed, with a view to strengthening the committee's role in following up on issues related to the tourism and culture sectors, in line with development plans and Oman Vision 2040.

The meeting was chaired by Abdullah Hamad Al Harthy, Chairman of the Committee, and attended by the committee members of the Media, Tourism, and Culture Committee.

CEREMONY

Medical City for Military, Security Services marks Research Day

MUSCAT: The Medical City for Military and Security Services marked its second Annual Scientific Research Day.

The event, held under the theme "Empowering Minds... Enriching the Future," was conducted under the patronage of Brigadier (Doctor) Saqr bin Zayed Al Busaidi, Assistant Head of the Medical City for Military and Security Services for Medical Affairs.

The ceremony, held at the Military and Security Services Pension Fund yesterday, commenced with a visual presentation titled "Towards Research Leadership: From Vision to Achievement." The presentation highlighted key scientific research in medical studies. Following this, the Commandant of the Medical City School for Military and Security Services delivered an address emphasising the vital role of scientific research in advancing public health.

The event featured scientific and panel discussion sessions covering a range of medical fields and specialisations.

A specialised exhibition in medicine and scientific research was also organised, showcasing a selection of scientific studies and medical research projects.

In conclusion, the chief guest of the event honoured the guest speakers and the winners of the scientific research competition. Marking this day aims to strengthen and enrich medical environments by promoting relevant scientific and applied research within the healthcare sector. -ONA

TOMI 2025 Awards Asian Paints for Best Event Design

MUSCAT: Asian Paints Middle East, Oman was honoured with the Best Event Design Award at The Oman Marketing Impact Awards (TOMI), recognising an immersive and thoughtfully curated experience that celebrated creativity, innovation and the power of design.

Marking 25 years of excellence in Oman, Asian Paints continues to stand as a symbol of quality, innovation, and trust, transforming homes, businesses, and landmarks through cutting-edge technology, superior products and a strong commitment to sustainability. These values were brought to life at COLOUR NXT – Muscat 2025, a visually compelling gathering that united creatives from across the region.

The event explored the intersection of design, material and colour, culminating in the reveal of 'Cardinal' as the Colour of the Year. Inspired by meaningful conversations, diverse perspectives and meticulous attention to detail, the experience set a new benchmark for event design excellence, earning Asian Paints top honours at TOMI 2025.

The trophy was presented by His Highness Sayyid Suhaib Bin Barghash Bin Said Al Said. TOMI 2025, organised by Muscat Media Group, took place on 10th December at Crowne Plaza Qurum, Muscat, bringing together over 200 marketing professionals from Oman and the MENA region in a celebration of creativity, strategy, and impact.

Oman-Egypt Business Forum to boost investment

The Egyptian Minister welcomed the proposal to create a joint investment platform, which would act as a single window to showcase available opportunities

MUSCAT: The Oman-Egypt Business Forum, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), underscored the critical importance of capitalising on investment opportunities in both nations.

The forum focused on strengthening partnerships between Omani and Egyptian private sector establishments to boost trade and investment volumes, facilitate the transfer of expertise, and broaden cooperation in key economic sectors.

These include construction and contracting, energy and oil, engineering consultancy and real estate, and industry.

Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousuf, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, stated that the ministry aims through this forum to enhance investment and commercial exchange, leveraging the comparative and competitive advantages of Oman and Egypt to achieve the desired economic integration.

In his address, the minister expressed his aspiration for the forum to yield substantive recommendations that serve as a practical starting point for building robust partnerships and economic ties between the two countries.

He emphasised the pivotal role of the private sector in fortifying these relations for the benefit of both Omani and Egyptian people. Furthermore, he voiced his hope for Oman to evolve into a regional hub, utilising its extensive network of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

He added that this meeting represents an opportunity to translate the promising shared economic vision into actionable plans, enhance trade and investment flows, and secure priority access for Omani products in the Egyptian market.

For his part, Lieutenant General Eng. Kamel Al Wazir, Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Industry and Transport of Egypt, highlighted the necessity of bolstering the role of the business community in both countries.

He stressed supporting cooperation between Egyptian and Omani businessmen by activating bilateral cooperation mechanisms, noting that the forum will help increase trade, expand joint investments, and open new avenues for economic collaboration.

The Egyptian Minister welcomed the proposal to create a joint investment platform, which would act as a single window to showcase available opportunities in Oman and Egypt.

This platform would streamline communication between investors, complementing the work of Egypt's Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade and Oman's Investment Authority to capitalize on promising opportunities in targeted sectors and expedite their implementation.

In turn, Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, emphasized the need for ongoing coordination between the Omani and Egyptian chambers, increased exchange of trade delegations, and enhanced dialogue among small and medium-sized enterprises, given their central role in stimulating inter-trade and creating sustainable employment.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, he reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to supporting all initiatives that deepen economic cooperation with Egypt, expressing optimism that the forum will unlock new horizons for collaboration between the two nations.

The forum featured the presentation of two working papers detailing the investment climate and opportunities in Oman and Egypt.

Oman, Egypt review promising opportunities

Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), received in his office Lt. Gen. Eng. Kamel Al-Wazir, Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Industry and Transport of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the prospects for joint action and explored promising potentials and investment opportunities that align with the priorities of both the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

They further discussed existing areas of cooperation between the two countries in priority sectors and examined ways to strengthen partnerships in various investment fields. -ONA

POSITIVE SPIRIT

Oman welcomes Yemen prisoners exchange pact

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman welcomed the agreement signed in Muscat regarding the exchange of prisoners in Yemen. Oman praised the positive spirit that prevailed throughout the negotiations, which took place from 9-23 December.

Oman commended the cooperation of Saudi Arabia and the efforts of the Office of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and all parties involved in the negotiations.

Oman notes that these collective efforts contributed to reaching this significant humanitarian agreement, expressing hope that it will create the necessary conditions to address other outstanding issues related to the situation in Yemen.

Jasem Mohammed Al Budaiwi, GCC Secretary-General has welcomed the agreement that signed in Muscat today for the exchange of prisoners in Yemen.

Al Budaiwi commended the efforts of Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations to Yemen and the International Committee of the Red Cross in reaching this agreement.

Al Budaiwi expressed the hope that this agreement would contribute to strengthening the march of peace and stability in Yemen, alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people and build confidence among the parties concerned. He also hoped that the agreement would lead to a comprehensive and sustainable political solution that guarantees Yemen's security, stability and unity and serves the aspirations of the people of Yemen for peace and prosperity. -ONA

IN PICTURES

HIS MAJESTY, PRINCE FAISAL DISCUSS WAYS TO BOOST BILATERAL COOPERATION

BILATERAL RELATIONS

HM the Sultan receives written message from Tanzanian President

NCSI DATA

Oman's import price index rises

MUSCAT: The general index of import prices in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 15.2 percent during the third quarter of 2025 compared to the same quarter of 2024, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The statistics explained that the beverages and tobacco group recorded the highest rate of increase at 34.7 percent, followed by the miscellaneous manufactures group at 16.1 percent, and the machinery and transport equipment group with an increase of 12.1 percent.

Prices also rose for the animal and vegetable oils, fats, and waxes group by 7 percent, and the food and live animals group by 4.8 percent, while the prices of mineral fuels, lubricants, and related materials increased by 1 percent.

In contrast, the group of inedible raw materials (excluding fuel) witnessed a decrease of 19.2 percent, followed by chemicals and related materials with a decline of 6 percent, and manufactured goods classified mainly by material with a decrease of 5.2 percent.

The data indicated that, compared to the second quarter of 2025, the general import price index rose by 8.3 percent. The highest rates of increase were recorded in the group of inedible raw materials (excluding fuel) at 19.5 percent, followed by mineral fuels, lubricants, and related materials at 12.6 percent, and beverages and tobacco at 7.6 percent.

Prices for the food and live animals group also increased by 3.5 percent and animal and vegetable oils by 3.4 percent, in addition to a slight rise in the miscellaneous manufactures group by 0.7 percent. Conversely, the chemicals and related materials group saw a decrease of 11.9 percent, followed by manufactured goods classified mainly by material at 9.7 percent, and machinery and transport equipment at 1.7 percent. -ONA

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EXCHANGE VIEWS

RAFO Commander meeting

MUSCAT: Air Vice Marshal Khamis bin Hammad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), received on Tuesday at his office in Al Murtafa'a Camp, Lt. Gen Turki bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Commander of the Royal Saudi Air Force, and his accompanying military delegation. -ONA

PARTNERSHIP

< FROM A1

'CEPA supports competitiveness'

Al Yousef highlighted that the CEPA supports the competitiveness and diversification of the national economy, opens avenues to broaden the production base, empowers SMEs, and expands employment opportunities for citizens.

It also establishes a comprehensive trade liberalisation framework, covering reduction of customs duties, regulation of non-tariff barriers, facilitation of trade procedures, and rules to protect Omani products.

He said: "Omani goods will gain preferential access to over 400 million Indian consumers, strengthening exports, enhancing their global presence, and consolidating Oman's position as a regional logistics and industrial hub and gateway to Asian markets."

Speaking at the Diplomatic Club, Al Yousef elaborated on the agreement's scope, noting that it opens access to Indian consumers and reduces customs duties on several products to nearly zero.

He described the pact as a natural progression of the centuries-old trading relationship between Oman and India, now the world's fourth-largest economy with a rapidly expanding middle class.

The Minister said that the agreement is expected to encourage Indian companies to establish production and export bases in Oman, boosting investment inflows while ensuring compliance with Omanisation requirements.

"The focus is on economic growth, employment, and diversification," he said, adding that Omani and Indian professionals will work together in new ventures to serve regional and global markets.

Al Yousef also highlighted Oman's unique position as one of the few countries with trade agreements linking it to both the world's largest and fourth-largest economies, describing it as a strategic advantage.

He stressed that although the CEPA will come into force only after a Royal Decree, preparatory work must begin immediately, including raising awareness among businesses, identifying competitive Omani products, and ensuring the private sector is ready to capitalise on opportunities once the agreement takes effect.

Negotiations, conducted over five rounds between 2023 and 2025, were supported by detailed studies including an assessment by Deloitte & Touche, confirming the CEPA's feasibility and potential to enhance value addition and competitiveness.

Under the agreement, Oman secured 97.4 percent liberalisation of its current export volumes, while Indian markets provide 77.8 percent access, with special liberalisation for goods of strategic importance to Omani industries.

In return, Oman granted India gradual customs liberalisation up to 99.22 percent, aligned with national economic policies and safeguards for domestic industries.

Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), said the Chamber will organise trade missions to India, host Indian delegations in Oman, and conduct awareness workshops across governorates to maximise private sector gains from the CEPA.

The briefing also traced the CEPA's negotiation journey from initial talks to the final agreement, comprising 16 chapters and technical annexes, reaffirming that the pact does not require Oman to amend its Omanisation policies.

Pankaj Khimji, Advisor to the Ministry for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, said that a committee will be formed soon to review the progress of CEPA once implemented. He added that CEPA will give both the countries a big boost to bilateral trade and he expects a lot of investments from Indian businessmen in future.

Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Sharqi, Chairman of the Economic Committee at Oman's Shura Council, welcomed the agreement, saying it fully safeguards the Sultanate's national interests and will be subject to periodic review through a joint mechanism. He noted that the Shura Council had conducted a detailed examination of the CEPA to ensure alignment with Oman's economic and national priorities.

The briefing concluded that the CEPA represents a major strategic step in deepening Oman-India economic cooperation, opening new avenues for trade and investment while safeguarding the Sultanate's sovereignty, national industries, and employment priorities.

Tender Announcement

E-Tender 24/2025/OPAZ

الهيئة العامة للمناطق الاقتصادية الخاصة والمناطق الحرة
Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones
Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عمان

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) invites the reputable and experienced Local companies for the following tender; through an E-Tendering portal (Esnad)

CONSTRUCTION OF PRIORITY INTERNAL INTEGRATED ROADS FOR BLOCKS 13, 53, 54, 55, 56, 60, & 61 OF SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AT DUQM at Wusta Governorate, Sultanate of Oman

Place of Buying and Collecting the Softcopy of Tender Documents:	Through E-Tendering System https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
Start of Tender Document Sale (Date):	Tuesday, December 23, 2025 (12:00 PM)
End of Tender Documents Sale (Date):	Tuesday, January 6, 2026 (15:00 PM)
Site showround / Visit (for all bidders):	Tuesday, January 6, 2026 (10:00 AM, Muscat Time) at SEZAD at wilayat Al Duqm - Al Wusta Governorate
Tender Closing (Submission) and Opening of Technical Bids Date:	Thursday, February 5, 2026 (12:00 PM, Muscat time)
Cost of Tender Documents:	OMR. 3000 (Omani Rials Three Thousand)

- All specialized local and international interested companies that are registered with the projects,tenders and local content authority (Tender Board) can participate and get the specification and conditions of the above tender from the following website: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
- Bidders should submit their bids online on the given website Signed and Sealed. The Bidders shall submit an official commitment letter for their bids validity for (180) calendar days from the Proposals submission date and addressed to HE THE CHAIRMAN, OPAZ Tender COMMITTEE (OTC)'s
- OPAZ is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bid, and reserves the right to accept or reject any offer without giving reasons.

For further clarifications, you may contact:
Help desk support team Tel. +968 24402244 and/or, Email: etenderhd@gstb.gov.om

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ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Symposium to be held on integrated management of radioactive waste

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority is organising a two-day symposium on integrated management of radioactive waste. The symposium is held in Muscat in cooperation with Oman Environmental Services Holding Company.

The symposium, which brings together experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), aims to highlight modern methods in managing radioactive waste that is the by-product of medical and industrial applications, as well as radioactive waste of natural origin.

The symposium is being attended by representatives of government departments, academic institutions, research centres, private sector companies and civil society organisations.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Ahmed bin Salim Al Manthari, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Planning and Health Regulation.

— ONA

Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 10:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
4859/2025/ MOH/HQ-404	Construction of Oman Genome Center and Bio Bank in Governorate of Muscat	01-01-2026	28-01-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board Excellent	● SME: 30 ● LO: 299.500

- Tenders should be submitted on line on https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200 , Email id **etenderhd@ita.gov.om**

OMAN/WORLD

UN SPECIAL ENVOY

Oman's role in facilitating Yemen prisoner exchange pact hailed

MUSCAT: Hans Grundberg, the United Nations (UN) Special Envoy to Yemen, has expressed his profound gratitude to the Sultanate of Oman for hosting the pivotal negotiations in Muscat that culminated in the signing of a prisoner exchange agreement for Yemen.

In a statement issued by his office, the Envoy lauded Oman's diplomatic efforts, underscoring the critical humanitarian significance of the deal.

The statement confirmed that the conflict parties concluded intensive discussions held in Oman from 9 to 23 December, successfully reaching an agreement on a new phase for the release of conflict-related detainees from all sides.

Crucial step

Commenting on the outcome, the UN Special Envoy stated, "Securing an agreement on another phase of detainee releases is a positive and crucial step that will help alleviate the immense suffering of detainees and their families across Yemen."

He further emphasised that the "effective implementation of the agreement will require the sustained engagement and cooperation of the parties, coordinated regional support, and continuous efforts to build on this progress toward securing further releases."

The Office of the UN Special Envoy reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to continuing its role in facilitating the implementation of the detainee exchange, in full accordance with established humanitarian principles. — ONA

HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE

Saudi Arabia lauds Oman's role in facilitating Yemen prisoner exchange

MUSCAT: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has commended the sincere efforts and noble diplomatic initiatives undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in hosting and mediating the negotiations that resulted in the agreement for the exchange of prisoners and detainees in Yemen.

The KSA affirmed that this humanitarian initiative will help alleviate suffering and contribute to building confidence among the parties. The KSA also lauded the pivotal role played by the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and all participating parties in the negotiations. The KSA reiterated its steadfast support for all endeavours aimed at establishing peace, security and stability, in alignment with the aspirations of the Yemeni people. — ONA

DHOFAR GOVERNORATE

Four Yemeni nationals held

MUSCAT: Coast Guard Police patrols, led by the Dhofar Governorate Police, apprehended a boat carrying four Yemeni nationals after it illegally entered Omani territorial waters. The suspects were found in possession of quantities of narcotics intended for smuggling and trafficking.

In another incident, Directorate General for the Control of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances , led by the South Al Batinah Governorate Police, arrested an individual in the Wilayat of Barka in possession of quantities of drugs.

Oman business leaders meet to shape future of tech investment

The forum, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Muscat, was inaugurated under the patronage of Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority

MUSCAT: The second Tech and Telecom CEOs' Forum, focused on "Future Technologies and the Knowledge Economy," convened to explore the future of technology investment and the critical role of tech companies in accelerating service digitalisation and fostering innovative solutions.

The forum, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in Muscat, was inaugurated under the patronage of Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA).

In his remarks, Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of OCCI, emphasised that the technology sector is a primary engine of economic growth.

He stated that the digital economy has become a fundamental pillar for diversifying national income and strengthening private sector competitiveness.

Al Rowas added that the forum aligns with the nation's ambition to build an advanced digital economy, where innovation and artificial intelligence are central to its development strategy, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

He underscored the importance of digital transformation in creating a globally competitive economy that generates high-value opportunities and empowers Omani youth.

He noted that OCCI, through its dedicated Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence Committee, is committed to nurturing the business ecosystem, empowering enterprises, streamlining procedures, and fostering integrated partnerships between government and private institutions.

Eng. Ibrahim bin Abdullah Al Hosani, an OCCI Board Member and Chairman of its Digital Economy and AI Committee, affirmed that the technology and telecom sector is a cornerstone of the transition towards a diversified and sustainable digital economy.

He stressed that direct dialogue between industry leaders and policymakers is essential for crafting impactful initiatives and forging partnerships that can turn ambitions into reality, thereby strengthening integration within the national technology landscape.

He further stated that Oman's technology and telecommunications sector has evolved into a significant economic contributor, pivotal for empowering businesses, building national capacity, and localising technology. The next phase, he explained, demands a unified effort to enhance collaboration between large corporations and SMEs, while leveraging leading regional and international best practices.

The forum's agenda featured expert presentations on "Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Sectors: Evolving IP Models and Economies" and "Leadership in the Age of Artificial Intelligence." A dedicated panel discussion on "The Role of Tech Companies in Accelerating Digital Services and Developing Innovative Solutions" examined strategies to advance digital transformation across public and private sectors.

It also addressed challenges related to digital adoption and explored solutions through partnerships, supportive regulation, and investment in digital infrastructure.

The event concluded with a leadership session where several CEOs shared their experiences and insights on the sector's future and the impact of digital transformation on business sustainability and growth.

A concurrent startup showcase featured innovative technology projects, highlighting the dynamism of Oman's entrepreneurship ecosystem and its role in delivering promising digital solutions.

— ONA

FESTIVE SEASON

High tariffs bite into US holiday shoppers' wallets

NEW YORK: Holiday shopping in New York's Bryant Park, usually marked by festive crowds and impulse buys, has taken on a more cautious tone this year as higher prices reshape how Americans spend, amid rising tariffs and supply-chain costs.

At the park's open-air holiday market in Midtown Manhattan, which typically hosts more than 125 stalls and draws millions of visitors each holiday season, shoppers paused longer on price tags. Kendall Gregory, 30, who traveled from New Jersey to the park on Wednesday, said prices were shaping how she chose gifts.

"Everything is way too expensive. Unless they're a girlfriend or a wife or a mom, then it doesn't matter. But for everyone else, you get a budget," she said.

Gregory said tariffs were a key factor behind rising prices, and it's hard for small businesses to make a profit. "They're either giving up their sales or they're paying 20,000 dollars to be here for a month," she said.

A recent analysis conducted by Groundwork Collaborative, The Century Foundation and the American Federation of Teachers showed that prices for many of the most popular holiday gifts in the United States have jumped sharply this season, with prices soaring by an average of 26 percent from a year earlier, nearly nine times the broader inflation.

The groups attributed the higher prices in part to record-high US tariffs on imported goods from major manufacturing hubs.

The Budget Lab at Yale assumes the Federal Reserve "looks through" the tariffs, allowing prices to rise so that the tax burden is passed on through higher prices rather than wages. The lab estimates that, even with exemptions, tariffs will increase costs by $1,700 for each average American household.

"If you have tariffs and if you have rent increases, everything increases. It has to go up a certain amount because ... if I stay the same, I go out of business," Paul Prianti, owner of Christmas Cottage, a decades-old Christmas decor store in Manhattan, told Xinhua on Saturday. Younger shoppers are also adjusting their habits. Brynn Bohuny, 18, from a generation that has largely come of age with online shopping, was walking the streets of New York on Wednesday in search of holiday gifts for her family.

Bohuny said a swimsuit that typically costs about $100 ended up costing around $340 after shipping, which she said was due to tariffs.

"I think it's definitely impacted in-person shopping versus just online. I feel like it's increased in-person shopping for me personally, because I don't want to pay for shipping and stuff," said Bohuny.

The United States ended duty exemption for international shipments worth 800 dollars or less at the end of August, leaving such packages subject to the tariff rate of their country of origin.

Persistent high prices are also reshaping how US families approach holiday shopping.

A Gallup poll conducted in November found a sharp pullback in Americans' holiday spending plans. Estimated gift budgets fell by 229 dollars between October and November, dropping well below last year's levels and marking the largest mid-season decline Gallup has ever recorded. — Xinhua

Oman take positive strides at GCC Women's T20I Championship 2025

Hosts reached final, showcasing growing depth and resilience in the tournament won by UAE at Oman Cricket Academy ground recently

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman concluded a competitive and encouraging campaign in the GCC Women's T20I Championship 2025 recently at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat, finishing runners-up and underlining the steady growth of women's cricket in the Sultanate.

Led by captain Priyanka Mendonca, the hosts reached the final of the six-nation tournament, reflecting resilience, improving depth, and a promising future for the women's game in the country.

Competing against five other GCC nations from December 12 to 19, Oman shrugged off their opening loss to eventual champions UAE to bounce back strongly, winning their next four matches consecutively to secure a place in the final.

In the title clash against the UAE, Oman posted 84/7 in their allotted 20 overs, with Fiza Javed top-scoring with 17. UAE's disciplined bowling attack, led by Katie Thompson (2 for 10) and Esha Oza (2 for 21), restricted the hosts' scoring.

The visitors chased down the target comfortably, reaching 85/1 in 12.3 overs, anchored by Samaira Dharnidharka (38) and Theertha Satish (25). Oman captain Priyanka claimed the lone wicket, finishing with figures of 1/26.

Reflecting on the campaign, Priyanka said, "Reaching the final itself shows how much we have progressed as a team. The preparations were good, and the girls responded well throughout the tournament. UAE is a very strong side with experienced players and more exposure at the international level.

"For us, the key takeaway is that we need to play more matches at this level to keep improving."

Oman's journey to the final was marked by several commanding performances.

After suffering a 10-wicket defeat to UAE in their opening match, the team rebounded emphatically, posting 203 for 3 against Saudi Arabia in a 167-run victory — the highest total of the tournament.

Successful chases followed against Bahrain (won by nine wickets), Kuwait (won by nine wickets) and Qatar (won by six wickets), highlighting Oman's balance in both batting and bowling.

The decisive win over Qatar showcased the all-round contributions of Priyanka and Jayadhanyha Gunasekar, with Gunasekar scoring a composed 32 while Priyanka anchored the innings with an unbeaten 37.

Oman's disciplined bowling and sharp fielding also played a key role throughout the tournament, limiting opponents and maintaining pressure in crucial phases.

Oman women's team coach Desmond Berhardt said: "This experience provided valuable exposure and competitive cricket, which was highly beneficial. The introduction of DRS for the first time added an interesting element and tested the players' decision-making skills."

He added: "The girls played fearless cricket, and their results underlined it. I am extremely proud of the team, especially how they recovered after the opening loss to the UAE. We went on to win four consecutive games before losing to the UAE in the final.

"We saw significant improvement across all areas of their game. We recognise there are still areas that require attention, and this experience will certainly build confidence moving forward."

While UAE's dominance in the final and in the tournament highlighted the experience gap, Oman's overall performance across the championship reflected a team on the rise.

ASHES DEBACLE

McCullum wants to stay as England head coach

MELBOURNE: Head coach Brendon McCullum says he wants to remain in charge of England but admits a decision on his future will be out of his hands.

McCullum has presided over an Ashes defeat in Australia inside three Tests, a series he previously said would "define" his team.

The New Zealander is contracted to England through to the end of the 50-over World Cup in 2027, a period that includes the next home Ashes in the same year.

"It's a pretty good gig. It's good fun," said McCullum. "You travel the world with the lads and try to play some exciting cricket and try to achieve some things.

"You want to try to get the best out of people. I don't do anything to protect the job. It's a matter of trying to just get the very best out of the people and try to achieve what you can with them."

In the aftermath of defeat in the third Test in Adelaide, Ben Stokes said he "absolutely" wants to remain England captain.

Like McCullum, Stokes has a deal with England until 2027 after signing a new central contract in November. The futures of both men would possibly be decided by England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) men's managing director Rob Key, whose position will also come under scrutiny.

Asked if he believes he will be in charge for the home summer next year, McCullum said: "I don't know. It's not really up to me, is it?

"I'll just keep trying to do the job, trying to learn the lessons I haven't quite got right here and try to make some adjustments. Those questions are for someone else, not for me."

Former New Zealand captain McCullum was appointed by Key in 2022. Alongside Stokes, McCullum revitalised England's Test cricket, presiding over 10 wins from his first 11 games in charge.

But England's form has since stagnated. They have not won any of their marquee five-match series against Australia or India. Following the initial run of success, England have won 15 and lost 16 out of 33 Tests.

Any decision over McCullum's future is complicated by the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka early next year. Initially appointed solely as Test coach, McCullum also assumed responsibility for the England white-ball teams at the beginning of this year. - Agencies

AUSTRALIAN PLAYERS

Cummins and Lyon ruled out of Ashes

MELBOURNE: Australia captain Pat Cummins and spinner Nathan Lyon will miss the rest of the Ashes series, starting with the Boxing Day Test against England in Melbourne.

Cummins is being rested for the fourth and fifth Tests after rushing his return from a back injury to play in the decisive third Test in Adelaide.

Spinner Lyon had surgery on the hamstring injury he suffered in Adelaide on Tuesday and there is no timeframe for his recovery.

Batter Steve Smith, who missed the third Test with illness, once again steps up to lead in Cummins' absence, while Todd Murphy comes in to replace Lyon.

Pace bowler Jhye Richardson takes Cummins' place in the squad. Australia have an unassailable 3-0 lead in the Ashes series and will look to move a step nearer to a 5-0 clean sweep when the fourth Test begins on Friday.

Cummins suffered a back problem following the tour of West Indies in July. Before the Adelaide Test, he explained how he condensed a recovery period that should have taken three or four months down to six or seven weeks in order to take part in the Ashes.

With the urn retained inside three Tests, the 32-year-old will not be risked and faces a wait to see if he will be fit for the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, beginning in February.

"We were taking on some risk," said head coach Andrew McDonald. "We've now won the series and that was the goal. To jeopardise him long-term is not something we want to do and Pat is really comfortable with that."

McDonald said that Cummins would be part of a discussion with the other selectors about the T20 World Cup squad, which is due to be named soon, and indicated that further medical advice would be taken around Cummins' participation.

Cummins has not played a T20I for Australia since mid-2024 at the previous World Cup in the Caribbean and the USA. Shortly after the upcoming edition takes place in India and Sri Lanka, IPL 2026 will begin, where Cummins is due to captain Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH).

"That'll be an assessment," McDonald said of Cummins' T20 World Cup chances. "I'm assuming he'll have a check-in scan at some point and gather more information around where his back is at... looking forward to the World Cup, whether he'll be there or not. I can't really say. It's quite grey at the moment. We're hopeful."

Lyon, 38, bowled only two overs in the first Test then was left out of the second. When he returned to the Australia team for the third Test, he took five wickets in the match before suffering the injury to his right hamstring making a diving stop on the boundary.

It is the second time Lyon has been ruled out of an Ashes series - he suffered a calf problem in the second Test at Lord's in 2023.

"He's pretty shattered," said McDonald. "He'll be back around the team tomorrow and will be present at the Test match. He's facing a long recovery."

Smith's return will mean a further rejig in the Australia batting line-up after Usman Khawaja was left out for the third Test, then recalled on the morning of the game when Smith was ruled out.

Left-hander Khawaja made scores of 82 and 40 in Adelaide and now seems likely to be retained, probably at the expense of Josh Inglis. Khawaja would bat at number five, wicketkeeper Alex Carey at six and all-rounder Cameron Green at number seven.

England trained at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday and look set to make at least two changes for the Boxing Day Test. Jacob Bethell could come in for Ollie Pope at number three, while pace bowler Brydon Carse seems likely to be left out in favour of Gus Atkinson or Matthew Potts. - Agencies

DIRECTOR OF CRICKET

'England have been at about 20% of their capacity': Key on Ashes defeat

MELBOURNE: England director of cricket Rob Key said on Tuesday that he is "gutted, disappointed and sorry" for England being at "20% capacity" in their awful Ashes campaign.

England once again lost the first three Tests in Australia to extend their winless run in this country to 18 matches and remain without a series victory here since 2010-11.

In what was billed as a supreme opportunity to win back the urn from a weakened Australia team, England lost the series in 11 days of cricket and will be battling against a 5-0 clean sweep in the remaining Tests in Melbourne and Sydney.

"I don't feel like we've put anything like the best account of ourselves out here," Key told BBC Sport on Tuesday.

"The most frustrating, disappointing thing is that we're so much better than what we've shown.

"We've got some brilliant players that haven't been anywhere near their full capacity, which is what you're trying to do in these jobs.

"I don't feel like we've always given them the best chance to do that."

He apologised to England supporters for the outcome of the tour

He also said that England will investigate reports of excessive drinking on the players' holiday in the beach town of Noosa.

The England squad spent four nights on the Queensland coast between the second and third Tests.

Several outlets, including the BBC, reported that some players were drinking for a significant portion of their time in Noosa, as well as on two previous days in Brisbane, the venue for the second Test.

Key said: "Headlines can be misleading at times, saying it's a stag do and stuff like that.

"Stories of players drinking six days solid - that's unacceptable. We'll be looking into seeing what the facts are as opposed to the things that have been embellished or elaborated on."

The break in Noosa was arranged in advance of the Ashes tour and went ahead despite England falling 2-0 behind after two Tests.

"They do care about winning, don't get me wrong, but they've given so many headlines to so many people. All they've done is set themselves up for a fall and it really is a great shame.

"England are where they deserve to be in this series but their drinking has not cost them the series, that's the bottom line."

Key took over as director of cricket in 2022, in the aftermath of a 4-0 defeat on the previous tour of Australia. - Agencies

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE

EUROPE CAR SALES RISE

New car registrations in Europe increased for the fifth straight month in November 2025, driven by robust growth in battery electric cars sales, data from the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) showed.

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 5,947.76 points, up by 0.06% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.00% at 526.97 points. Ominvest, up 4.62%, was the top gainer while, Financial Services, down 8.82%, was the top loser.

Oman, Egypt explore cooperation in special economic and free zones

The meeting focused on several strategic pillars aimed at enhancing bilateral investment, namely exploring potential projects within the special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities in both countries

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) highlighted opportunities for cooperation in the fields of economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities to support economic integration between the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

This took place during a meeting between Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of Opaz, and Lt. Gen Eng. Kamel abdulhadi Al Wazir, Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Industry and Transport of Egypt.

Bilateral investment

The meeting focused on several strategic pillars aimed at enhancing bilateral investment, namely exploring potential projects within the special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities in both countries.

It also reviewed means of utilising existing raw materials and production chains within factories located in these zones to increase the added value of products and exchanging technical knowledge to enhance the attractiveness of these zones for international and regional investors.

The meeting also discussed mechanisms to facilitate the movement of products and industries between the economic and industrial zones of Oman and Egypt to boost trade volume.

Both sides emphasised the importance of continued coordination to explore partnership opportunities that strengthen economic ties.

The talks highlighted the role of free zones as vital hubs for regional trade, aligning with the industrial development goals of both nations.

The meeting was attended by Yassir Mohammed Ahmed Shaban, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Oman, along with several officials from both sides. -ONA

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING

India's IPO market gains momentum

NEW DELHI: India's IPO market has shown strong momentum in 2025, emerging as a key exit route for private equity investors, according to KPMG's Pulse of Private Equity (PE) Q3'25 report. It noted that India's stock markets have performed exceptionally well so far in 2025, creating a favourable environment for IPO activity. Companies operating in in-demand sectors have achieved strong exit-day multiples, often higher than those available in other jurisdictions. – ANI

جهاز الضرائب
Tax Authority

Announcement

The Tax Authority draws the attention of producers and importers of soft drinks to the following decisions:

- Suspend the customs obligation of applying the Digital Tax Stamp on soft drinks.
- Postpone the local obligation of applying the Digital Tax Stamp on soft drinks, which was scheduled to commence as of 1st January, 2026, until further notice.

These decisions come within the framework of the Tax Authority's commitment to support procedural smoothness and to ensure the technical and operational readiness of companies, importers, and traders for the optimal implementation of the system.

The Tax Authority emphasizes that:

The decision is strictly limited to soft drinks.

This postponement does not result in any change to the implementation of the DTS system on other excise goods subject to the system.

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MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Ominvest, up 4.62%, was the top gainer while, Financial Services, down 8.82%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 5,947.76 points, up by 0.06% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.00% at 526.97 points. Ominvest, up 4.62%, was the top gainer while, Financial Services, down 8.82%, 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 3225 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 30.05 million, with more than 130.76 million shares changing hands. Out of 68 traded securities, 26 advanced, 25 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 2177K while domestic investors were net sellers for RO 1877K, followed by foreign investors for RO 300K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 9,858.74 points, up 1.53%. Prices of Ominvest, Ahli Bank, National Finance, Al Anwar Investment, Oman Arab Bank were up by 4.62%, 4.19%, 3.27%, 2.73%, 2.35% respectively. Prices of Financial Services, Muscat Finance, United Finance, Oman Qatar Insurance, Al Omaniya Financial Services were down by 8.82%, 1.82%, 1.43%, 1.01%, 0.71% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 7,786.29 points, down -0.25%. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 1.59%, 0.94% respectively. Prices of Raysut Cement, Dhofar Cattle Feed, Al Anwar Ceramics, Gulf International Chemicals, National Detergent were down by 5.00%, 4.00%, 1.70%, 1.41%, 0.69% respectively.

Services Index was down by -0.41% before closing at 2,434.05 points. Prices of Musandam Power, Phoenix Power, Al Maha Markting, Al Jazeera Services, Oman National Engineering were up by 3.28%, 1.96%, 1.54%, 1.08%, 0.68% respectively. Prices of Ooredoo, Dhofar Generating, National Gas, Barka Desalination, Al Suwadi Power were down by 1.36%, 1.11%, 1.06%, 0.65%, 0.61% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev . Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	5,959.52	5,928.06	5,947.76	5,944.34	3.42	0.06
FINANCIAL INDEX	9,859.05	9,709.90	9,858.74	9,709.90	148.84	1.53
Industry Index	7,787.74	7,758.03	7,786.29	7,805.98	-19.69	-0.25
Services Index	2,449.47	2,432.16	2,434.05	2,444.13	-10.08	-0.41
MSX Shariah Index	528.05	526.12	526.97	527.00	-0.03	0.00
MSX TR INDEX	8,957.49	8,910.20	8,939.81	8,934.67	5.14	0.06
FINANCIAL TR IDX	11,712.89	11,535.70	11,712.53	11,535.70	176.83	1.53
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	9,601.61	9,564.98	9,599.82	9,624.10	-24.28	-0.25
SERVICES TR IDX	3,194.29	3,171.72	3,174.19	3,187.33	-13.15	-0.41
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,206.62	1,206.62	1,206.62	1,206.62	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
130,761,364	30,049,389	3,225	32,154,664,023	26	25	17	68

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	311,500	105,133	23	0.320	0.340	0.320	0.340	0.325	0.015	4.615	0.340	0.321	0.338	0.100	318,141,943
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	3,637	684	1	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.186	0.002	1.075	0.188	0.186	0.188	0.100	8,054,482
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	52,935	5,084	15	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.001	1.042	0.097	0.095	0.097	0.100	16,975,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	879,400	96,371	19	0.109	0.110	0.109	0.110	0.109	0.001	0.917	0.110	0.109	0.111	0.100	246,064,834
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	160,104	33,553	10	0.210	0.210	0.208	0.208	0.207	0.001	0.483	0.208	0.208	0.209	0.100	41,600,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	77,355	24,443	7	0.309	0.320	0.309	0.309	0.308	0.001	0.325	0.309	0.309	0.309	0.100	30,900,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	18,155,949	6,134,536	317	0.338	0.340	0.337	0.338	0.337	0.001	0.297	0.338	0.338	0.338	0.100	2,537,162,207
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	44,247	16,633	3	0.376	0.376	0.373	0.376	0.375	0.001	0.267	0.376	0.376	0.376	0.100	611,355,829
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	19,572	12,310	12	0.610	0.630	0.610	0.630	0.630	0.000	0.000	0.630	0.630	0.640	0.100	78,685,715
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	52,800	5,016	5	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.100	8,550,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	65,663	32,832	9	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.100	60,000,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	119,984	39,238	9	0.328	0.328	0.327	0.327	0.327	0.000	0.000	0.327	0.326	0.327	0.100	77,306,070
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	45,583,314	7,471,668	426	0.164	0.165	0.163	0.164	0.164	0.000	0.000	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.100	1,085,228,388
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	41,210	45,147	22	1.100	1.100	1.080	1.100	1.100	0.000	0.000	1.100	1.081	1.200	0.100	102,974,478
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	2,738,384	2,912,630	67	1.066	1.066	1.062	1.062	1.065	-0.003	-0.282	1.062	1.062	1.040	0.100	796,500,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,546,700	535,730	250	0.347	0.348	0.345	0.346	0.347	-0.001	-0.288	0.346	0.346	0.346	0.100	266,489,200
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	14,973,050	2,930,198	494	0.196	0.197	0.194	0.195	0.196	-0.001	-0.510	0.195	0.194	0.196	0.100	844,471,664
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	7,604	1,235	3	0.164	0.164	0.162	0.162	0.163	-0.001	-0.613	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.100	109,231,764
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	17,604	2,854	4	0.164	0.164	0.162	0.162	0.163	-0.001	-0.613	0.162	0.162	0.163	0.100	115,733,827
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	460,150	134,773	19	0.295	0.295	0.290	0.291	0.295	-0.004	-1.356	0.291	0.291	0.292	0.100	189,424,771
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	308,000	21,252	15	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.070	-0.001	-1.429	0.069	0.069	0.076	0.100	24,572,784
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	22,000	3,836	4	0.175	0.175	0.174	0.174	0.177	-0.003	-1.695	0.174	0.174	0.194	0.100	38,280,000
Total	22	85,641,162	20,565,154	1,734												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	613,051	106,664	18	0.172	0.174	0.172	0.174	0.167	0.007	4.192	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.100	470,983,256
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	6,781	2,078	3	0.305	0.315	0.305	0.315	0.305	0.010	3.279	0.315	0.302	0.315	0.100	22,172,850
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	73,864	11,615	11	0.156	0.158	0.156	0.158	0.153	0.005	3.268	0.158	0.142	0.158	0.100	96,083,993
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,102,034	123,158	57	0.110	0.114	0.110	0.113	0.110	0.003	2.727	0.113	0.106	0.113	0.100	33,736,481
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	145,000	24,695	14	0.170	0.174	0.169	0.174	0.170	0.004	2.353	0.174	0.171	0.175	0.100	348,477,340
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	2,216,291	343,580	59	0.153	0.156	0.153	0.156	0.153	0.003	1.961	0.156	0.150	0.156	0.100	228,165,828
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	64,222	10,274	5	0.159	0.160	0.159	0.160	0.157	0.003	1.911	0.160	0.158	0.160	0.100	94,629,901
OM0000007043	LIVA GROUP	50,920	14,712	7	0.285	0.290	0.285	0.290	0.285	0.005	1.754	0.290	0.290	0.300	0.100	115,528,559
OM0000003000	Al MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	3,640	3,819	4	1.041	1.054	1.041	1.054	1.038	0.016	1.541	1.054	1.042	1.054	0.100	72,726,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	143,600	14,071	17	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.098	0.099	0.100	11,943,750
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	9,660	3,118	5	0.321	0.325	0.321	0.323	0.320	0.003	0.938	0.323	0.323	0.324	0.100	14,782,353
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INV.	665	99	1	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.148	0.001	0.676	0.149	0.146	0.154	0.100	22,350,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	4,289,000	638,364	241	0.150	0.150	0.148	0.150	0.149	0.001	0.671	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.100	455,969,780
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	5,500	4,483	2	0.815	0.815	0.815	0.815	0.810	0.005	0.617	0.815	0.815	0.820	0.100	49,939,125
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	5,000	570	1	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.000	0.000	0.114	0.114	0.125	0.100	3,420,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	27,395	3,266	5	0.118	0.120	0.118	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.119	0.120	0.100	11,880,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	1,500	300	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.190	0.204	0.100	3,524,733
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	17,065	3,823	5	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.000	0.000	0.224	0.216	0.245	0.100	44,718,374
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	8,000	1,231	2	0.155	0.155	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.000	0.000	0.152	0.152	0.155	0.100	14,865,928
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	30,530	1,697	5	0.056	0.056	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.100	13,750,000
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	13,000	1,027	2	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.079	0.079	0.081	0.100	15,800,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	48,684	4,770	7	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.095	0.098	0.100	63,561,851
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	1,680	173	1	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.102	0.103	0.100	17,922,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,720	1,235	1	0.718	0.718	0.718	0.718	0.719	-0.001	-0.139	0.718	0.649	0.720	0.100	68,210,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,400	690	2	0.494	0.494	0.493	0.493	0.494	-0.001	-0.202	0.493	0.493	0.494	0.100	163,120,246
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	16,698,087	3,153,200	400	0.190	0.190	0.188	0.189	0.190	-0.001	-0.526	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.040	653,843,771
OM0000010120	ASYAD SHIPPING	5,409,767	1,003,304	298	0.186	0.188	0.185	0.185	0.186	-0.001	-0.538	0.185	0.186	0.186	0.000	963,617,692
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	8,626,523	3,184,175	184	0.371	0.372	0.367	0.369	0.371	-0.002	-0.539	0.369	0.369	0.369	0.010	2,952,000,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	1,000	152	1	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.153	-0.001	-0.654	0.152	0.150	0.152	0.100	11,479,344
OM0000003265	NATIONAL DETERGENT	500	360	1	0.720	0.720	0.720	0.720	0.725	-0.005	-0.690	0.720	0.000	0.720	0.100	14,400,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	2,612,110	367,789	30	0.142	0.142	0.140	0.140	0.141	-0.001	-0.709	0.140	0.135	0.140	0.100	44,158,380
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSURANCE	90,000	17,780	9	0.198	0.198	0.197	0.197	0.199	-0.002	-1.005	0.197	0.186	0.196	0.100	31,760,058
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	97,000	9,125	7	0.094	0.095	0.093	0.093	0.094	-0.001	-1.064	0.093	0.092	0.093	0.100	7,905,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	31,000	2,759	4	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.087	0.088	0.100	19,779,360
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	29,000	2,030	7	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.071	-0.001	-1.408	0.070	0.070	0.072	0.100	1,470,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	1,684,344	337,131	27	0.203	0.204	0.200	0.200	0.203	-0.003	-1.478	0.200	0.200	0.203	0.100	190,914,390
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	19,704	1,064	1	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.055	-0.001	-1.818	0.054	0.054	0.055	0.100	16,585,902
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	20,300	1,462	3	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.075	-0.003	-4.000	0.072	0.068	0.075	0.100	14,232,738
OM0000001384	FINANCIAL SERVICES	13,615	922	4	0.068	0.068	0.062	0.062	0.068	-0.006	-8.824	0.062	0.062	0.068	0.100	1,240,000
Total	39	44,213,152	9,400,765	1,452												

ROBUST GROWTH

Europe car sales rise in November

BRUSSELS: New car registrations in Europe increased for the fifth straight month in November 2025, driven by robust growth in battery electric cars sales, data from the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) showed.

Car registrations grew 2.1% year-on-year in November, compared to a 5.8% rise seen in October. In November, battery-electric car sales surged 44.1% from a year ago.

Sales of plug-in hybrid advanced 38.4%, while those of hybrid electric vehicles grew only 4.2%.

In contrast, petrol car sales plunged 21.9% and sales of diesel cars declined 23.2%. Between January and November 2025, new EU car registrations moved up 1.4% compared to the same period last year.

Despite the recent positive momentum, overall volumes remained well below pre-pandemic levels, ACEA said.

In the year-to-date period, battery-electric cars reached a market share of 16.9%.

Although this was in line with projections, there is still room for growth to stay on track regarding the transition to emissions-free transport, ACEA said.

The lobby group noted that hybrid-electric vehicles are the most popular power type choice among buyers, with plug-in hybrids continuing to gain momentum.

Hybrid-electric car registrations captured 34.6% of the market in the eleven months to November. Meanwhile, the combined market share of petrol and diesel cars fell to 36.1% from 45.8% in the same period last year. **-DNA**

LONG-RUNNING LEGAL FIGHT

Why Trump is backing Bayer in weedkiller cancer battle

NEW YORK: The long-running legal fight over Bayer's weedkiller Roundup has seen nearly 200,000 cancer claims filed in US courts over the past seven years and is now being turned into a political tug of war.

In prior Roundup lawsuits, the US Justice Department under former President Joe Biden, had argued that consumers should be allowed to pursue damages against Germany's chemical giant, with most claims involving non-Hodgkin lymphoma after long-term exposure to the pesticide.

Earlier this month, however, President Donald Trump's administration reversed course. After the US Supreme Court sought the Solicitor General's view, the Justice Department sided with Bayer and urged limits on the tens of thousands of outstanding claims.

Bayer has already paid out around $10 billion (€8.53 billion) to settle disputed cancer claims in the US. In July, the firm said it would set aside a further €1.2 billion ($1.41 billion), much of it for compensation.

Bayer acquired Roundup in 2018 as part of its $63 billion purchase of Monsanto, the US agribusiness giant best known for genetically modified seeds and controversial agrochemicals.

Policy change sets up states vs federal battle

Biden's Justice Department had argued that federal pesticide law does not shield Bayer from state-court lawsuits, since liability and consumer protection are traditionally matters for individual states.

Plaintiffs — from farmers to home gardeners — brought claims under their own state rules, alleging that Roundup's active ingredient, glyphosate, causes cancer and that Bayer failed to provide adequate warnings.

US federal law sets national standards for pesticide approval, but does not override states' public-safety powers. So even with glyphosate approved by the federal regulator, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), people could still sue if they believed Bayer's labeling was misleading.

Lawsuits labelled a costly drag on the industry

By contrast, the Trump administration has now urged the Supreme Court to accept Bayer's argument that federal law preempts such lawsuits, effectively narrowing the scope for the 65,000 remaining plaintiffs.

Supporters of federal preemption say it creates consistent national rules for pesticide labels, avoiding confusion from varying state requirements and supporting the EPA's central role in regulating safety.

Trump's team has also reframed the Roundup litigation as an unnecessary burden on business, as it exposes Bayer to massive, unpredictable liabilities even when the EPA has approved its products.

Critics denounced Trump's position as advancing corporate agendas at the expense of justice for the vast number of claimants, many of whom report terminal or severely disabling conditions.

"This trend of restricting citizens' rights by extreme right-wing governments [like Trump's] is ... frightening," Martin Dermine, executive director of PAN Europe, a network of NGOs working to eliminate hazardous pesticides and promote sustainable agriculture, told DW.

Other opponents of Trump's latest move argue the reversal shows a failure to protect public health and weakens state-level authority, stripping local courts of their power to hold corporations accountable.

Bayer urges speedy end to controversy

Bayer has lobbied US legislators over the mass lawsuits and petitioned Supreme Court justices to review a ruling by a court in Missouri that upheld a $1.25 million jury award to John Durnell, who claimed his non-Hodgkin's lymphoma was caused by exposure to the weedkiller.

The German pharmaceutical and biotechnology giant has cited decades of studies that it says show Roundup is safe for human use. This argument was, however, weakened when a key review paper from 2000, often cited in defense of glyphosate's safety, was retracted earlier this month due to undisclosed ghostwriting by Monsanto and other ethical issues.

Even so, the vast majority of regulatory bodies worldwide still classify glyphosate as noncarcinogenic when used as directed.

Bayer's CEO, Bill Anderson, warned the firm may stop selling Roundup in the US if the lawsuits can't be resolved soon. Anderson told an event by the US news site Axios in May that the weedkiller is "table stakes" [indispensable] in the fight against global food insecurity.

He recently welcomed Trump's policy reversal, adding: "The stakes could not be higher as the misapplication of federal law jeopardizes the availability of innovative tools for farmers and investments in the broader US economy."

Supreme Court ruling could limit future claims

US Supreme Court justices must now decide whether to hear Bayer's petition. If accepted, a ruling by mid-2026 will determine whether the German company wins sweeping legal protection.

Mary J. Davis, dean at the University of Kentucky's Rosenberg College of Law, explained that the court is reflecting on its own decision from 20 years ago on US federal pesticide law.

In that 2005 ruling, the justices said federal rules control what warnings must appear on pesticide labels and that states cannot demand different or extra warnings. However, this does not automatically stop all state-level lawsuits against companies like Bayer for failing to warn about risks.

"The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) is not particularly clear on the scope of state law," Davis told DW. "There is a pretty good chance that the court may want to clarify how that law works."

A favorable ruling could potentially save the company billions from outstanding claims. It could also make it harder for consumers to file lawsuits over harmful products and sharply limit compensation claims.

Davis, a leading products-liability scholar whose career includes decades of research on federal supremacy in legal cases, put the stakes for Bayer bluntly:

"If this case does not get heard by the Supreme Court and decided in the company's favor, there will be many more years of litigation," she told DW.

No matter the outcome, Chris Hilson, professor of law and climate change at the UK's University of Reading, cautioned that the Roundup lawsuits may prove to be "just the start" of a broader wave of litigation against the agri-food sector.

"Climate litigation has so far mainly targeted the energy transition, with fossil fuel companies in the firing line," Hilson told DW. "We can expect to see more court cases brought by the environmental movement, on both climate and biodiversity and human health grounds."

Bayer's case is being closely watched in Europe, where the European Union has extended glyphosate's approval until 2033 despite fierce opposition from environmental groups. Some EU member states, including France and Austria, continue to push for stricter limits or outright bans. **-DW**

FREE TRADE PORT

Hainan FTP to become important gateway of China's high-standard opening up

BEIJING: The Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) will become an important gateway of China's high-standard opening up, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said.

Lin made the remarks at a regular news briefing when answering a question about China's recent launch of the island-wide special customs operations in the Hainan FTP.

From the establishment of Hainan special economic zone in 1988 to the most recent launch of island-wide special customs operations in the Hainan FTP, Hainan has left a deep mark in the course of China's reform and opening-up. To "develop the Hainan FTP to high standards" is written into the Recommendations of the Central Committee of the CPC for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development adopted at the fourth plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, Lin said.

In the face of growing uncertainties in global economy, China's response is to deliver its commitment of opening up with concrete actions, to fight protectionism with firm resolve, and promote an open world economy, he said.

China's negative list for foreign investment access has shrunk, restrictions of access for the manufacturing sector has been brought down to naught, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines has been granted to all least developed countries, he said. **-Xinhua**

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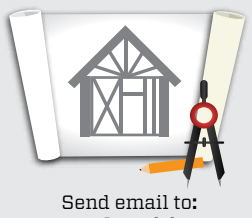

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ENGINEER

Diploma in Electrical Engineering looking for Fire Fighting site supervisor/suitable job. Contact: 95933453, Email: haquefaizan3786@gmail.com

Experienced Biomedical Engineers seeking opportunities in Oman. Presently in Oman & available for immediate joining. Email: asmathalipv1@gmail.com Contact: +968 72031225

ENGINEER

Project Manager (Civil) Indian, 18 yr GCC experience, valid D/L and transferable visa, can join immediately. Contact: 97723786

Project Manager Civil seasoned professional with strong consultancy and construction expertise. Open for suitable opportunities.Contact 93455363 | WA +966 56 373 2589 (WhatsApp)

B. Tech Civil Engineer with 15+yrs experience. Society Engineering certificate, valid Omani D/L. Looking for a suitable position. Available for immediate join. NOC available.Mob: 91693008

Civil Site Engineer with 24 yrs of experience in building construction,15 yrs in oman,valid D/L looking for job.Contact 79128770

Indian male (22yrs), Diploma in HSE. 1 yrs experience. Contact: 75086973

Sales Engineer Indian Male, 7 yrs experience in sales.Seeking suitable job opportunities NOC & Oman D/L available. Contact 94150903 Email:vaseem9633@gmail.com

LOGISTICS

Indian male Graduate with 25 yrs of proven experience in Car rental, fleet Management & logistics. Currently seeking for Senior/middle management position. Contact: 92152334.

Indian male 23 yrs of experience in store, logistics & commercial operations, looking for a suitable job. Mob:91425510

MANAGER

Accounting Manager, Indian (M), 43yrs, 18+ yrs in Oman, D/L & NOC. Contact: 76432203

MANAGER

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

PURCHASE/ PROCUREMENT

Indian male Procurement Executive with 11 yrs of experience in Oman, holding Oman D/L available in Muscat for immediate joining. Contact 92345877

Indian male 41 yrs MBA, B.com having 13 yrs experience in procurement UAE & Oman with valid UAE D/L,seeking suitable opportunities in Oman. Contact: +971529546753

Procurement Engineer 19 yrs experience construction and trading. whatsapp:+96895839964

Indian male 40 yrs Bcom MBA having 13 yrs experience in procurement UAE & Oman with valid UAE D/L,seeking suitable opportunities. Contact: +971529546753

SALES/MARKETING

Indian male, 15+ yrs Sales exp. (IT/ Software). Open to Sales/BD roles in any industry. Valid Oman D/L. Contact: 94110178

Indian, MBA, 20yrs of experience in Sales(FMCG/retail) with D/L seeks suitable placement. Contact: 95548480

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

Indian male (35) MBA in Oman 10 yrs exp in marketing in FMCG, pharma Contact -.79755795

WORLD

'TRUMP-CLASS' VESSELS

Trump unveils new class of warship named after himself

WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump late on Monday unveiled plans for a new class of Navy ship named after himself.

While speaking at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida, the president claimed the "Trump-class" Navy vessels "will be the largest battleship in the history of our country."

The new initiative will start with two "Trump-class" vessels before being expanded to up to 25 new watercraft, which is being dubbed the "Golden Fleet." The first "Trump-class" ship will be called the "USS Defiant."

"The US Navy will lead the design of these ships along with me, because I'm a very aesthetic person," Trump said at the event, with US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Navy Secretary John Phelan and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in attendance.

The president vowed to "restore America as a major shipbuilding power."

Trump said the ships could be equipped with atomic weapons and would have a weight between 30,000 and 40,000 tonnes. The ships are the latest attempt by the US president to leave his mark on the US Armed Forces. Trump has never served in the military.

Naval ships are frequently named after prominent political figures, such as the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier. There are currently not any warships named after Trump.

Trump has previously complained of "rusty" US Navy ships. During his confirmation hearing in February, Navy Secretary Phelan said Trump asked him "numerous times" what he is going to do about corroded US ships.

Plans for new ships also comes amid US naval blockade of Venezuela

The plans to expand the Navy with new battleships also come as the US military engages in a maritime blockade of Venezuela.

The president last week has called on the Navy to seize sanctioned oil tankers entering and exiting Venezuela, as the Trump administration puts pressure on Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro. The US has seized two oil tankers so far and is reportedly pursuing a third.

"If he wants to do something, if he plays tough, it'll be the last time he'll ever be able to play tough," Trump said at the Mar-a-Lago event, referring to Maduro.

Trump has characterised Maduro's Venezuela as functioning as a narco-trafficking hub. Trump said it would be "smart" for Maduro to step down.

Maduro on Monday shot back at Trump, telling the president he would be "better off" focusing on US domestic issues rather than targeting Venezuela.

"President Trump would be better off in his country and in the world," Maduro said on public Venezuelan television. "He would be better off in his own country on economic and social issues, and he would be better off in the world if he took care of his country's affairs." — DW

Russian drone and missile attack on Ukraine kills at least 3 people

Zelenskyy said the attacks primarily targeted Ukraine's energy system and civilian infrastructure, disrupting what he described as "the entire infrastructure of daily life"

KYIV: Russia launched one of its largest aerial attacks on Ukraine overnight on Monday, firing more than 650 drones and over 30 missiles across at least 13 regions, killing three people, including a four-year-old child, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, in an X post.

In a strong statement on social media, Zelenskyy said the attacks primarily targeted Ukraine's energy system and civilian infrastructure, disrupting what he described as "the entire infrastructure of daily life".

"As of now, air raid alerts remain in effect across most of Ukraine. At the same time, all necessary services are engaged in dealing with the aftermath of the strike. Tragically, lives were lost. In the Kyiv region, a woman was killed by a Russian drone. One person was pronounced dead in the Khmelnytskyi region. In the Zhytomyr region, a four-year-old child was killed after a Russian drone struck a residential building. My condolences to the families and loved ones, " Zelenskyy wrote.

Zelenskyy said that while Ukrainian air defence systems managed to shoot down a large number of drones and missiles, several targets were still hit.

"Repair crews and energy workers are already on the ground, working to ensure normal life for people, our cities, and our communities," he said, adding that detailed information from the Air Force would be released once all assessments were completed.

Condemning the timing of the assault, Zelenskyy said the strike was carried out just days before Christmas, when families hoped to be safe at home.

"An attack ahead of Christmas, when people simply want to be with their families, at home, and safe," he said, calling it a clear sign of Russia's intentions.

He also pointed out that the attack came during ongoing discussions aimed at ending the war, accusing Russian President Vladimir Putin of refusing to stop the violence.

"This Russian strike sends an extremely clear signal about Russia's priorities. An attack ahead of Christmas, when people simply want to be with their families, at home, and safe. An attack was carried out essentially in the midst of negotiations aimed at ending this war. Putin still cannot accept that he must stop killing. And that means that the world is not putting enough pressure on Russia."

"Now is the time to respond. Russia must be pushed toward peace and guaranteed security," he said.

While major peace talks have recently taken place in Miami and Berlin, the situation on the ground remains highly volatile with significant escalations in both aerial warfare and territorial incursions.

US President Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, said that Russia "remains fully committed to achieving peace" in Ukraine, as the United States concluded talks with the Russian delegation in Miami, Florida.

In a statement on X, Witkoff said that Russia "highly values" the United States' efforts to resolve the conflict.

The US envoy said, "Over the last two days in Florida, the Russian Special Envoy Kirill Dmitriev held productive and constructive meetings with the American delegation to advance President Trump's peace plan on Ukraine. The American delegation included Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, Jared Kushner, and White House staff member Josh Gruenbaum."

"Russia remains fully committed to achieving peace in Ukraine. Russia highly values the efforts and support of the United States to resolve the Ukrainian conflict and re-establish global security," the statement read.

"Russia remains fully committed to achieving peace in Ukraine. Russia highly values the efforts and support of the United States to resolve the Ukrainian conflict and re-establish global security," the statement read. — ANI

IN INDIA

Bangladesh summons Indian High Commissioner over its mission's security

DHAKA: Bangladesh on Tuesday expressed grave concern over attacks on its diplomatic missions in India, summoning the Indian High Commissioner to protest incidents in New Delhi and Siliguri, according to Bangladesh Foreign Ministry statement.

"Bangladesh condemns such acts of premeditated violence or intimidation against diplomatic establishments, which not only endanger the safety of diplomatic personnel but also undermine the principles of mutual respect and values of peace and tolerance", it added.

The Bangladesh Foreign Ministry condemned the violence, citing threats to diplomatic personnel and establishments, and urged India to ensure their safety and security.

"The Government of Bangladesh called upon the Government of India to conduct a thorough investigation into the incidents, to take all necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of such acts and to ensure safety and security of Bangladesh's diplomatic missions and related facilities in India", the statement said.

The incidents include vandalism at the Bangladesh Visa Centre in Siliguri on 22 December 2025 and a protest outside the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi on 20 December 2025.

"The Government of Bangladesh expects the Government of India to immediately take appropriate steps in accordance with its international and diplomatic obligations to safeguard the dignity and security of diplomatic personnel and establishments", it said.

Bangladesh has suspended visa operations in Delhi and Siliguri, citing security concerns, a foreign ministry official told ANI.

"In Delhi, an incident occurred in which a group of people surrounded the Bangladesh High Commission. After this event, Bangladesh expressed concerns over security. As a result, no visas are currently being issued from the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi," the official said.

"In Siliguri, although Bangladesh does not have an official mission, visa processing was carried out through a private agency, VFS. However, members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad reportedly vandalised the VFS office and issued threats. In response, the Bangladesh government has also suspended visa operations in Siliguri," he alleged.

India has dismissed allegations of inadequate security, stating the New Delhi protest was brief and posed no threat. The row stems from the killing of a Hindu youth in Bangladesh, sparking international concern over minority safety. — ANI

TRADITIONS

Vatican Christmas traditions explained

VATICAN CITY: This year, Pope Leo XIV will lead the Christmas celebrations at the Vatican for the first time. But the popular Christmas traditions at the heart of the Roman Catholic Church remain unchanged.

For Catholics, the Advent season started on November 30 this year — and with it, the excitement for Christmas.

At the Vatican, the festivities begin with the official lighting of the Christmas tree and the inauguration of the Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square, which both took place on December 15 this year.

Every year, a different Roman Catholic diocese has the honour of donating a Christmas tree to the Vatican.

This year's tree is a Norway spruce from the diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone in Italy's South Tyrol province. The 27-metre (88 feet) Christmas tree weighs nearly eight tonnes.

In an interview on the Vatican's website, Bishop Ivo Muser from the Bolzano-Bressanone diocese said: "I hope that wonder before Creation will also be stirred by our Christmas tree and that it will inspire reflection." He also called upon people to be attentive, respectful and "ready to embrace sustainable and modest lifestyles."

Whether this is possible, considering the opulent decorations and the festive lights blinking in constantly changing colors, remains to be seen.

For the fifth time in a row, the Christmas tree is from Italy. A total of four Christmas trees have been donated from places in Germany so far, and in 2028, Deggendorf in Bavaria is set to donate the fifth German Christmas tree.

Pompous Christmas celebrations have been taking place at the Vatican for at least 500 years, but the tradition of placing a Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square started in 1982 during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II.

Nativity scenes from all over the world

The Nativity scene was designed and crafted by the diocese of Nocera Inferiore-Sarno, located in the Salerno province in Campania, southern Italy. The scene features life-sized figures and incorporates architectural elements typical of the region surrounding Nocera.

At the inauguration of the Nativity scene, Bishop Giuseppe Giudice called it "a great opportunity for the evangelisation and redevelopment of the entire region."

The "100 Nativity Scenes in the Vatican" exhibition, held for the eighth time, is also on show under the left colonnade of St. Peter's Square. The exhibition features nativity scenes designed by artists from 23 countries. This year's edition is part of the cultural event series "Jubilee is Culture." According to Vatican News, the exhibition serves as "an expression of gratitude for the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope."

What happens on Christmas Eve?

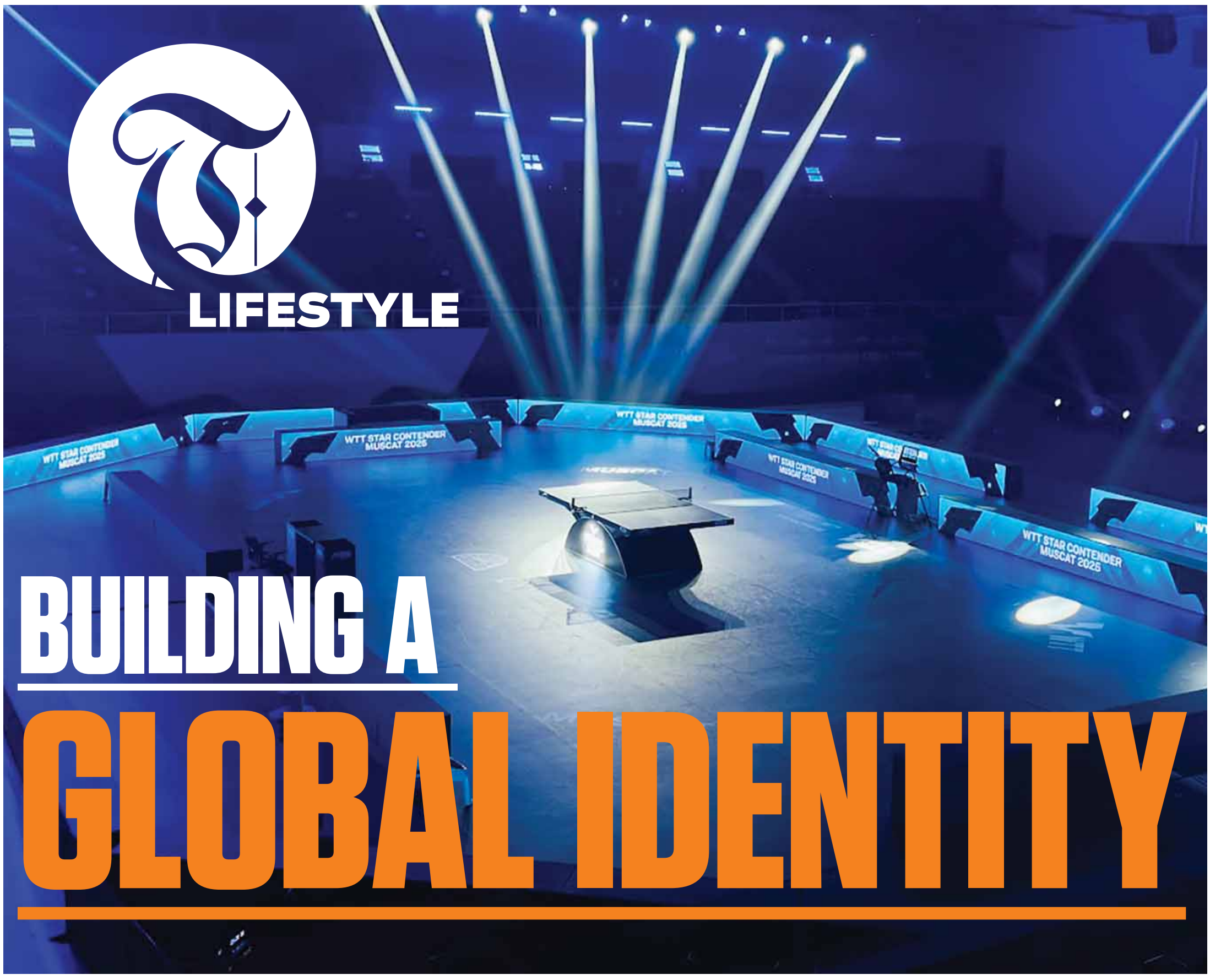
Pope Leo XIV will lead the Midnight Mass at St. Peter's Basilica at 10 p.m. You need a ticket to enter, but they're free of charge — which is also why there are all booked months in advance.

No tickets are required to attend the "Urbi et Orbi" ("To the City and the World") Papal blessing on Christmas Day.

Leo XIV will give his message and blessing from atop the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica in front of tens of thousands assembled around St. Peter's Square.

The "Urbi et Orbi" address starts at 12 p.m. and here, too, you should arrive early — especially as it is a highlight of the Jubilee Year of Hope, which ends after the Christmas season.

On New Year's Eve, the pope will hold a New Year's Eve Vespers, and the "Te Deum" hymn will be sung to give thanks for the past year. — DW



BUILDING A GLOBAL IDENTITY THROUGH OMAN'S AUDIO-VISUAL STORYTELLING

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In today's Oman, creativity hums as loudly as construction cranes. A new generation of storytellers is emerging - dreamers who blend art, culture, and technology to define the nation's modern identity.

At the forefront of this movement stands The Ultimate AV Production, a Muscat-based pioneer in AV rental & production company, transforming how audiences experience live events.

With its seamless blend of technical mastery, artistic flair, and cultural pride, the company is shaping the visual and emotional language of modern Oman.

For Joby Philip, Managing Partner, it all began with music - an early fascination with rhythm and the shared energy of performance.

What started as a passion with just two PA systems soon became a mission: to connect people through experiences that move both the senses and the spirit. With over a decade of its presence, The Ultimate AV Production today stands as one of the leading and most trusted AV production houses in the country.

Known for its innovative technology, dependable performance, and global standards of excellence, the company is now in the process of attaining ISO certification, further strengthening its commitment to quality and professionalism.

The company has been the first in the region to own JBL's flagship VTX line array system, a world-class setup engineered for powerful, precise sound in large-scale events and festivals. This investment underscores their commitment to delivering superior audio quality for every type of event - from grand national celebrations to intimate cultural performances.

Equally impressive is the company's latest Pixel 1.9 LED screen, offering ultra-fine resolution that delivers crystal-clear visuals even at close viewing distances.

Designed for both indoor and outdoor applications, these high-definition LED panels ensure stunning clarity, color accuracy, and seamless integration for corporate events, conferences, and immersive brand showcases.

"As an Omani company, our strength lies in understanding our people and our culture," says Saud Ali Nasser Al Busaidi, Board Member. "We take pride in being locally rooted yet globally capable. Every client - whether corporate, government, or private - has a different story to tell, and we customize our solutions to match their theme, vision, and budget. Our goal is simple: to create experiences that feel personal, purposeful, and proudly Omani."

From transparent OLED interactive displays and intelligent motion lighting to dynamic sound and kinetic stage design, every element is crafted to immerse audiences in a unified sensory experience. Beyond light and sound, the company also excels in fabrication and scenic design - building custom stages, LED tunnels, and modular structures that transform venues into visual spectacles rooted in Omani character and global style.

"Our philosophy is simple - combine creativity with reliability," says Joby Philip. "Technology gives us power, but creativity gives it meaning."

Behind every production stand Team Ultimate - a collective of engineers, designers, and visual artists whose precision and passion define the company's success.

For the past 10 years, Anish Jose, Head of Operations, has been playing a pivotal role in ensuring every project runs seamlessly from planning to execution, while Jafar Sadique, HOD-AV, in-charge of maintaining the company's benchmark of technical excellence across all productions.

As Oman advances its Vision 2040, The Ultimate AV Production's journey mirrors the nation's drive to nurture a vibrant creative economy. By investing in local talent, pioneering new technologies, and delivering world-class experiences, it is helping position Oman as a regional hub for innovation and artistic excellence.

As part of its regional growth, the company has also opened a new location in Dubai, ensuring expanded capabilities while maintaining uninterrupted, dedicated service to all clients in Oman.

From humble beginnings to national prominence, The Ultimate AV Production continues to elevate how Oman celebrates – through Innovation, Precision, and Impact - proving that when passion meets purpose, even fleeting moments can become timeless.

SPORTS

Salah rescues Egypt with late winner against Zimbabwe

The Liverpool striker struck in Egypt's 2-1 win against Zimbabwe in a Group B match at the Africa Cup of Nations

AGADIR: Mohamed Salah struck deep into stoppage time to spare Egypt an opening-day shock at the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), sealing a hard-fought 2–1 win over Zimbabwe as the record champions made a winning start to their Group B campaign on Monday.

Salah captained the side in his first start for nearly a month and fired into the bottom corner in stoppage time to spare Egypt embarrassment against a team ranked 129th in the world.

Egypt, the record seven-time champions, were thwarted for long periods in the coastal city of Agadir by Zimbabwe's stubborn defending and an outstanding performance from goalkeeper Washington Arubi.

Prince Dube stunned the favourites in the 20th minute when he took Emmanuel Jalai's cross with his first touch, turned and flicked the ball past Egypt goalkeeper Mohamed El-Shenawy with his next.

Salah tried to rally his teammates, but Egypt suffered another blow shortly afterwards when Emam Ashour went off injured. The midfielder's tears suggested his tournament could be over just as it had begun.

Arubi tipped over a fierce strike from Omar Marmoush, Trézéguet was booked for diving in an attempt to win a penalty, and Salah, Marmoush and Mohamed all had efforts blocked before the break.

The pattern continued after half-time until Marmoush finally found a way through, scoring from a difficult angle in the 64th minute to level the match.

Salah's winner earned the Pharaohs three points in Group B. The Liverpool forward has never won Africa's premier international competition. - Agencies

AFCON: GROUP A CLASH

Spectacular Zambia equaliser spoils Mali's dream debut

RABAT: Zambia's Patson Daka scored with a spectacular diving header in stoppage time to see his side come from behind and force a 1-1 draw with Mali in their opening Group A clash at the Africa Cup of Nations finals on Monday.

Mali looked in control for most of the encounter but paid the price for sitting back in the closing stages as Zambia staged a late recovery, with Daka leaping through the air to force home Mathews Banda's curling cross two minutes into stoppage time at the end of the game.

Lassine Sinayoko had taken advantage of sloppy defending to give Mali a 62nd-minute lead after his strike partner El Bilal Touré had a first-half penalty saved.

The penalty had been awarded after a VAR check as defender Banda caught the heel of Dorgeles Nene as he attempted to clear the ball away from Mali's dangerous winger. But Touré's 42nd-minute spot kick was well saved by Zambia's goalkeeper Willard Mwanza.

Nene caused Zambia's defence no end of turmoil with his jinxing runs down the left flank, while Sinayoko and El Touré also proved a difficult frontline duo to deal with and Mali looked as if they would cruise to an easy three-point haul.

Sinayoko might have had the first goal of the game after 15 minutes when he stole possession away from Zambia's defence, but his shot was saved.

Penalty save hero Mwanza stood no chance with the Mali goal as first El Touré had an effort from a corner blocked before Sinayoko picked up the rebound and tried a shot which was again blocked, only for the ball to fall onto his right foot and allow the Ligue 1 striker to blast it home from close range.

Zambia fight back

Conceding the goal galvanised Zambia into a fightback and they had several close chances before Daka's dramatic equaliser as Mali sat back and sought to absorb the pressure.

Captain Fashion Sakala had an effort at the back post blocked with some 15 minutes left, and Dominic Chanda's spectacular overhead effort soon after was plucked out of the air by Mali goalkeeper Djigui Diarra.

Mali next meet hosts Morocco in Rabat on Friday while Zambia take on Comoros in Casablanca the same day. Morocco are at the head of the standings after the host nation opened the tournament on Sunday with a 2-0 win over Comoros in Rabat. - Agencies

HARD-FOUGHT VICTORY

South Africa kick off AFCON with victory against Angola

MARRAKESH: Lyle Foster gave South Africa a winning start to the Africa Cup of Nations with a hard-fought 2-1 over Angola on Monday.

The Bafana Bafana ended a six-game winless streak against Angola, which had won three and drawn three of their meetings since a World Cup qualifier in November 2015. South Africa's Oswin Appollis opened the scoring in Marrakech with a low strike inside the left post in the 21st minute, but midfielder Show equalised some minutes later when he deflected Fredy's free kick from the wing inside the near post.

Tempers frayed after a foul by South Africa's Aubrey Modiba before the break. Tshepang Moremi thought he scored a brilliant goal after it. The goal was ruled out for offside after a VAR review, and Mbekezeli Mbokazi struck the crossbar with a fierce strike as South Africa kept pushing.

Angola coach Patrice Beaumelle refreshed his attacking lineup by sending on Mabululu and Milson in the 76th, but it was Foster who scored at the other end when he curled the ball beyond Hugo Marques' outstretched arm in the 79th minute. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE: LIVERPOOL STRIKER

Isak faces two months out after 'reckless' tackle, says Slot

LONDON: Liverpool manager Arne Slot said on Monday that Alexander Isak faces "a couple of months" out injured after a "reckless" challenge by Tottenham defender Micky van de Ven.

Isak sustained a fracture to his left leg following a sliding tackle from Van de Ven as he scored for the Reds in a 2-1 win at Spurs.

The Sweden international had an operation on what Liverpool described as "an ankle injury that included a fibula fracture".

"It's going to be a long injury, for a couple of months," said Slot. "It's a big disappointment for him and, as a result, for us."

Van de Ven escaped any punishment for his challenge, while team-mate Xavi Simons had earlier been sent-off when he caught Reds centre-back Virgil van Dijk on his calf with a late tackle.

On Van de Ven's challenge, Slot added: "This was for me a reckless challenge.

"I've said a lot about the tackle of Xavi Simons, which for me was completely unintentional. I don't think you will ever get an injury out of a tackle like that.

"The tackle of Van de Ven - if you make that tackle 10 times - I think 10 times there is a serious chance that a player gets a serious injury."

Former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher called the Isak injury a "huge blow" for the Reds but said the tackle from Van de Ven was "a challenge I'd probably make".

"There's been a lot made about a lot of the challenges in the game from Tottenham players and a lot of them weren't clever," Carragher said on Sky Sports' Monday Night Football.

"I put myself in Van de Ven's position and that's a challenge I'd probably make.

"He's trying to block it - it's just the follow through. I don't know where else anyone thinks his foot's going to go. He has to make that challenge. You can't let the striker just get a shot away in that situation.

"It's just really bad luck for Isak. It's probably one of the first glimpses we've seen of his real quality in a Liverpool shirt."

Liverpool host Wolves on Saturday and, apart from Isak, Slot's attacking options will also be limited with Mohamed Salah at the Africa Cup of Nations with Egypt.

Cody Gakpo has been out injured with a muscle injury but the Netherlands forward could be back for the game against Wolves.

Jeremie Frimpong returned from a hamstring injury when he came on as a substitute and played on the right wing against Tottenham, with Slot saying he was now able to start if needed.

However, the Reds boss ruled out recalling attacking midfielder Harvey Elliott from his loan spell at Aston Villa to help with his resources.

"No, Harvey is an Aston Villa player and he is supposed to be going there for a season," said Slot. "Any questions about him, the best thing to ask is at Villa, who are doing quite well by the way."

Isak's injury is the latest setback for him since he made a British transfer record £125m move to the Anfield club from Newcastle United in the summer.

The 26-year-old has struggled for form and fitness and managed just three goals in 16 appearances for the Reds.

Asked if Isak could still play an important role for his side towards the end of the season, Slot said: "Yes."

He added: "You join a new club and you are very excited. You want to show immediately all the qualities you have but that was simply impossible [with him]." - Agencies

Neres inspires Napoli to lift third Italian Super Cup title

The reigning Serie A champion recorded a 2-0 win over Bologna in Riyadh on Monday

RIYADH: David Neres scored twice as the reigning Serie A champion Napoli beat Bologna 2-0 to win its third Italian Super Cup at the King Saud University Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Monday.

Napoli broke the deadlock in the 39th minute when Neres controlled a throw-in outside the area and curled a shot into the top corner.

The Partenopei doubled their lead around the hour mark as Neres won the ball inside Bologna's box and finished from a tight angle past the onrushing goalkeeper.

The victory gave Napoli its third Supercoppa Italiana title after lifting the trophy in 1990 and 2014.

Since 2023, the Supercoppa Italiana has adopted a four-team format, pitting together the reigning Serie A champion, the runner-up, and the winner and runner-up of the Italian Cup.

Defending champion Napoli beat AC Milan 2-0 in the semi-finals, while Coppa Italia holder Bologna advanced by defeating Inter Milan on penalties in Saudi Arabia.

Napoli claimed the third Super Cup in the club's history and the second of the Aurelio De Laurentiis era.

The Napoli president celebrated the success with praise for the team.

He said: "We've settled the score with Bologna, but by winning a trophy in a very prestigious competition. We're dedicating this victory to Napoli's fans, who deserve this joy.

"Now we'll continue on our path. Tonight we enjoyed ourselves and we've won two trophies in a single year, just like in the Maradona era. To the people of Naples, I'll just say you should keep dreaming because together we can achieve great goals."

Manager Antonio Conte gave his take on the performance. He said: "I want to congratulate the lads because, against Milan and Bologna, they put in two outstanding performances. Tonight we really played a great match and I have to acknowledge that. We're happy, trophies matter and being able to add another one to the cabinet after the Scudetto triumph means we're on a very good path.

"I also would like to congratulate Bologna and Vincenzo Italiano because they're achieving impressive results and they deserved to be here competing for this trophy.

"Now we'll celebrate a more peaceful Christmas together with our fans. That said, we've got to keep working hard. We've made progress, but we're not yet at the level we want to reach. It'll take patience and there's still a long way to go, but we're certainly aware that we've got quality and we showed that again tonight, both individually and as a team."

Two-goal hero Neres shared his delight. He said: "I'm really happy with how the evening has gone, with the two goals, but above all because we won the trophy. It's a wonderful success that the team deserved.

"These wins help us keep moving forward with confidence. We've got a competitive group that can do well in every competition and achieve major targets." - Agencies

T20I MATCH

Indonesia bowler takes five wickets in an over

BALI: Gede Priandana, Indonesia's 28-year-old right-arm quick bowler, has become the first to pick up five wickets in an over in an international T20I match (where fall-of-wickets data is available), achieving the feat in the first T20I against Cambodia in Bali on Tuesday. He is the first man or woman to achieve the feat.

Indonesia had the upper hand in the game, but Cambodia were not out of it yet at the end of the 15th over of the chase of 168, the scorecard reading 106 for 5.

Bowling his first over, Priandana struck off the first three balls to record a hat-trick, sending back Shah Abrar Hussain, Nirmaljit Singh and Chanthoeun Rathanak. A dot ball followed, after which Priandana got rid of Mongdara Sok and Pel Vennak to finish off the match, Cambodia getting just one run in the over, a wide between the last two wickets, to end 60 runs short.

Priandana had earlier scored 6 in 11 balls opening the innings

alongside Dharma Kesuma, the wicketkeeper-batter, who led the batting show for Indonesia with an unbeaten 110 in 68 balls with eight fours and six sixes.

Priandana has taken 24 wickets at an average of 17 and scored 1,040 runs at 19.62 in 63 T20s for Indonesia.

Cricket Indonesia chairman Abhiram Singh Yadav told BBC Sport: "Today Indonesia showed two things at once: the ability to execute games and win, and the ability to produce world-class moments.

"Five wickets in one over is a symbol of discipline, courage and the training standards we continue to build.

"This is not the finish line. This is a sign that Indonesian cricket is levelling up."

Indonesia are 64th and Cambodia 46th in the International Cricket Council T20 rankings.

Priandana's feat has, however, been achieved twice before in men's T20s. Al-Amin Hossain took five wickets in an over against Abahani Limited playing for UCB-BCB XI in the Victory Day T20 Cup in 2013-14.

The other was when Karnataka's Abhimanyu Mithun dismissed five Haryana batters in the semi-final of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2019-20.

While this is the first time a bowler has taken five in an over in an international game, there have been 14 instances of a bowler taking four in an over before Tuesday. The most famous of these was when Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga famously took four in four balls in the third over of a T20Is against New Zealand in 2019. - Agencies

BRAZILIAN STAR

Neymar undergoes knee surgery

RIO DE JANEIRO: Santos and Brazilian forward Neymar has undergone successful surgery to repair a torn meniscus in his left knee, the Brazilian Serie A club said on Monday.

Brazil national team doctor Rodrigo Lasmar carried out the arthroscopy at the Mater Dei Nova Lima hospital in the southern city of Belo Horizonte. "The surgery was a success and the player is doing well," read a statement on Santos' official website.

It added that the 33-year-old was discharged on Monday afternoon and will "immediately begin" his rehabilitation process, coordinated by physiotherapist Rafael Martini. - Xinhua

KICKER MAGAZINE

Bayern's Kane named Personality of the Year

BERLIN: Harry Kane's rise from the most expensive debut signing in Bundesliga history to a record-setting scorer and commanding team figure has turned his Bayern Munich spell into a full-blown success story, capped by *Kicker* magazine naming him its 2025 Personality of the Year.

Praise poured in from every corner and the 32-year-old England captain could not hide his grin when told about the award during an on-pitch TV interview. He had just scored his 81st league goal in only his 78th appearance in Bayern's 4-0 win over last-placed Heidenheim. "Really? Oh, that's great," he said.

Kicker ran the headline "King and servant," calling Kane the ideal ambassador who has won over German fans. His impact has gone far beyond the 100-million-euro fee and the goals that followed.

Bayern board member for sport Max Eberl said Kane "not only scores, but makes others shine too," describing him as a standard-bearer for both the club and the league as they chase greater global relevance.

Eberl called him "grounded, world-class, and a game-changer," noting his presence in every training session as a model professional. "First in the morning, last in the evening, and treating everyone with the same respect," he said.

Former Liverpool winger and Colombia international Luis Diaz, now a Bayern teammate, said Kane "does incredible things that stun me every day in training," calling him a relentless source of inspiration.

His 2023 move from Tottenham to Bayern, driven by a hunger for silverware, delivered immediate reward. Kane was the Bundesliga's top scorer in each of his first two seasons, and finally won a league title in May 2025 after 14 years at Spurs and several brief loans earlier in his career.

Kane has also embraced a leadership role with Bayern's young prospects. Coach Vincent Kompany highlighted his influence on emerging talents Cassiano Kiala, David Daiber, Deniz Ofli, Felipe Chavez, Javier Fernandez Gonzales, Wisdom Mike and Lennart Karl, all of whom were named in the squad for the Heidenheim match amid a wave of injuries. - Agencies

INNOVATION

FIFA tests new tech for ball out of play and offside

LONDON: FIFA, the world football governing body, is testing new technology which can determine if the ball went out of play before a goal was scored.

The 'Out of Bounds' innovation is one of a series which were tested in three Intercontinental Cup matches in Qatar this month.

FIFA has also expanded 'Real-time 3D Recreation' to make line-of-sight judgements for offsides quicker and clearer.

There are two virtual feeds, available to the video assistant referee (VAR) and TV viewers, which replicate the perspectives of both

goalkeepers. The new technologies have been developed by FIFA and Hawk-Eye Innovations. It remains to be seen if they would become available to domestic leagues.

The Premier League has produced many controversial incidents in recent seasons which this technology could have helped resolve.

Two seasons ago Arsenal were furious when VAR ruled Joe Willock had kept the ball in play before Anthony Gordon scored the only goal of the game for Newcastle. The VAR did not have the necessary camera angle to prove the ball was out.

The 'Out of Bounds' technology uses the same tracking data points and configurations as advanced semi-automated offside. It is still only in offline testing but was provided with the opportunity to show how reliable it was in Qatar. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat explores future of mobility with automotive partners

The event featured a workshop titled "From Horsepower to Innovation: The Next Era of Mobility," delivered by Abideen Al Balushi, Presenter, Suhaib Shaashaa, Co-founder of ArabGT and Karim Deeb, Co-founder and Presenter at ArabGT

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen partnerships across various sectors, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, organised a special event in Sohar, North Al Batinah Governorate, for its partners, including agents, companies, and specialised automotive showrooms in the governorate.

The event featured a workshop titled "From Horsepower to Innovation: The Next Era of Mobility," delivered by Abideen Al Balushi, Presenter, Suhaib Shaashaa, Co-founder of ArabGT and Karim Deeb, Co-founder and Presenter at ArabGT.

On this occasion, Saleh Mohammed Al Maaini, Deputy General Manager of Capital Regions at Bank Muscat, said: "Organising this annual gathering reaffirms the importance of the Bank's successful partnerships and collaboration in delivering the best services to customers, as Bank Muscat continues its journey of growth and development year after year. We are proud of the achievements realized in this sector and appreciation for the positive feedback and continued trust in the Bank's products and services. This emphasises the Bank's commitment to further strengthening these partnerships to continue delivering excellence."

Radhiya Hassan Al Lawati, Head of Sales at Bank Muscat, noted:"This event is one of the initiatives implemented by the Bank to strengthen partnerships with its valued customers and has become an important platform for supporting sales objectives in the automotive sector across the Sultanate. The Sohar event follows a series of similar engagements held in other governorates. We extend our appreciation for the long-standing partnerships that have contributed to delivering competitive services, facilities, and benefits to customers over the years."

During the workshop, the speakers highlighted key trends shaping the future of the automotive sector, focusing on innovation, evolving mobility technologies, and the transformation of driving experiences.

This event represents one of Bank Muscat's initiatives aimed at enhancing collaboration with partners by providing a platform for dialogue and exchange of ideas to further improve service quality in line with customer expectations. Bank Muscat remains committed to strengthening cooperation with automotive agencies and showrooms to support customers in acquiring vehicles, recognising their importance as a key mode of transportation in the Sultanate. The results achieved to date reflect the success of these joint efforts in supporting the stability of the automotive sector despite existing challenges and competition, while underscoring the need to introduce new initiatives, facilities, and benefits aligned with emerging industry trends.

Bank Muscat continues to enhance its role in this area, starting with the launch of the "Sayyarati" Auto Finance product in 2003, aimed at supporting customers in owning their preferred vehicles through competitive banking solutions. Customers can benefit from fast and efficient financing procedures through the Bank's branches across the Sultanate, as well as through Sayyarati Centers located in Al Watiyah, Muscat Governorate, and Salalah, Dhofar Governorate.

PROMOTION

Kia Oman announces exciting Year-End Big Savings offer

MUSCAT: Kia Oman has announced its exciting Year-End Big Savings offer, providing exceptional value across popular models including the Sportage L, K8, Sonet, and K4. The campaign runs until 22 January 2026 and is designed to make owning a Kia in Oman more rewarding than ever.

Customers can enjoy unbelievable savings of OMR 1,700 – 2,700 on the Sportage L, OMR 1,500 on the K8 and OMR 1,300 on the Sonet.

In addition, every purchase includes 3 years or 30,000 km of complimentary service (for EVs: 4 years or 60,000 km, whichever comes first), along with 1-year insurance and registration (Terms &conditions apply; visit your nearest Kia showroom for details).

The Year-End Big Savings offer reflects Kia's commitment to delivering exceptional value, convenience, and peace of mind to our customers. With significant cash savings, inclusive service, and insurance coverage, every Kia owner can enjoy a seamless and rewarding ownership experience.

The Sportage L combines bold design, advanced technology, and exceptional space. Available in two trims, the 2.0T MPI 4-cylinder AWD with 233 HP and the 1.5T 4-cylinder with 197 HP, both mated to an 8-speed transmission, the Sportage L delivers performance, fuel efficiency, and reduced emissions. Additional comfort comes from adjustable front and rear seats, a panoramic sunroof, and a sporty D-shaped steering wheel.

The cabin offers seamless connectivity with dual 12.3-inch integrated cluster and infotainment system, wireless charging for smartphones, and advanced technology features. Safety and convenience are enhanced through the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) like Smart Cruise Control and Blind-Spot Collision Warning.

The K8 sedan stands out for its bold design and modern luxury, delivering an executive-class driving experience. Powered by a 3.5-litre GDI Smart stream engine paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission generating 296 HP at 6,400 rpm, it offers smooth and dynamic performance. Inside, the cabin features ventilated seats with lumbar support, a memory seating system, and a panoramic sunroof. Advanced technology includes a 12.3-inch infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, Bluetooth with voice recognition, a 14-speaker Meridian surround sound system, wireless charging trays, remote engine start, and keyless entry. Safety remains paramount with ADAS, including Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist, Surround View Monitor and Front and Reverse Parking Assist.

The Sonet is the perfect compact SUV for students and young drivers seeking style, fun, and efficiency. Powered by a 1.5-litre Smartstream engine producing 114 HP, the Sonet delivers an impressive 17.5 km/l fuel economy. You also get an 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, USB ports, rear AC vents, push-button start, Smart Key, and Cruise control. Safety features include ABS, ESP, Brake Assist, and ISOFIX mounts, providing protection for every journey.

The Big Savings Year-End Offer has been designed to ensure that owning a Kia in Oman is rewarding, providing remarkable value through significant savings, inclusive service, insurance, and registration. The campaign reduces upfront costs, supports long-term vehicle care, and delivers an exceptional ownership experience. Customers can visit any Kia showroom across Oman to explore these benefits and select the model that best suits their lifestyle.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the official distributor for Kia in Oman, ensures a rewarding ownership experience. Ranked #1 by Kia in 2024 for Sales Customer Satisfaction in the Middle East and Africa, RIA delivers excellent products and unmatched facilities to guarantee customer satisfaction every mile.Kia continues to lead in design and innovation, with recent accolades including the Red Dot Design Award 2025 for the EV3 and EV9, the Kia K4 winning the 2024 Good Design Award, and four iF Design Awards recognizing Kia's innovative designs. The EV9 was also voted World's Best Car for 2024, highlighting Kia's leadership in electric mobility.

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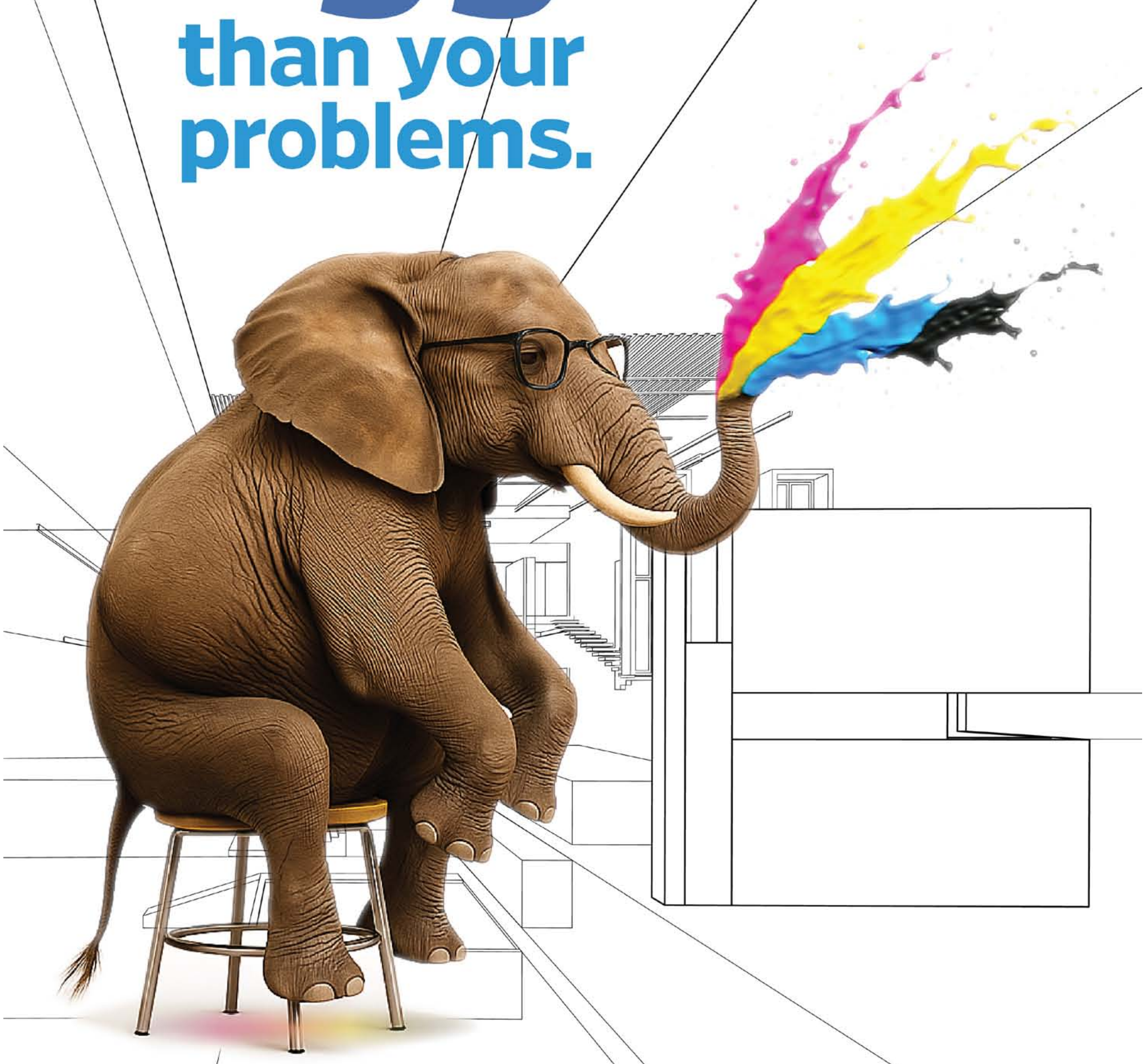

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