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FOUNDATION DAY

HM receives thanks cable from King of Saudi Arabia

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable on the occasion of the Foundation Day. In the cable, King Salman expressed his appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's heartfelt sentiments and prayers, wishing His Majesty good health and happiness. He also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



HAPPINESS

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Ramadan
PRAYER TIMINGS

DHUHR 12:22PM
ASR 03:46PM
MAGHRIB 06:20PM
ISHA 07:30PM
FAJR (TOMORROW) 05:03AM



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8 NISSAN
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OMAN EMPOWERS WOMEN IN SCIENTIFIC INNOVATION

Dr Laila Ahmed Al Najjar leads the delegation at 69th Session of Commission on Status of Women in New York



among Omani women. “Oman is keen to provide an attractive ecosystem for women’s scientific and technological advancements, strengthening their position and enabling them to achieve significant milestones regionally and internationally,” she said. Speaking at the side event, “Women and Technology: Inspiring Stories in the GCC Countries,” Al Najjar highlighted Oman’s efforts in advancing educational and vocational infrastructure to align with labour market demands. She pointed out that the country has developed modern facilities,

including digital laboratories, to cater to technological requirements, ensuring that women are well-equipped for roles in emerging scientific fields. Notably, she cited an increase in female enrolment rates in science and technology disciplines for the academic year 2024/2025 as a testament to these efforts. Oman’s presence at CSW69 extended to the high-level interactive dialogue with regional committees, where Al Najjar delivered a speech on the “Muscat Declaration on Progress in Implementing the Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action in the Arab Region after Thirty Years.” She underscored that the “Beijing Declaration” offers strategic pathways for strengthening women’s rights and fostering their empowerment globally. **Condemns Israeli aggression** On the international stage, Al Najjar strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli aggression in the occupied Palestinian territories, denouncing grave violations of international law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. **>A2**

OMAN Research tackles innovation management

1 ‘Challenges Facing Innovation Management in Omani Higher Education Institutions from the Point of View of Innovative Students’ by Marhoua Hamed Al Maqbali has won the NRA projects award. **>A2**

OMAN Travel tips for Eid

2 A growing number of cities worldwide are imposing tax on tourists. **>A3**

MARKET Asyad Shipping Co.

3 MSX will mark the start of Asyad Shipping Company share trading today. **>B1**



21 MAY 2025, MUSCAT

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OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:22pm
Asr.....3:46pm
Maghrib.....6:20pm
Isha.....7:30pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:03am

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Research tackles innovation management in Oman’s higher educational institutions

Marhouna Al Maqbali, the NRA winning Omani researcher, stated that managing innovations effectively is one of the main challenges facing countries worldwide

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The 11th National Research Award (NRA), organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, celebrated some of the brightest and innovative minds in the Sultanate of Oman.

Among the 13 winning NRA projects, “Challenges Facing Innovation Management in Omani Higher Education Institutions from the Point of View of Inno-

vative Students” by principal investigator Marhouna Hamed Al Maqbali, a teacher at the Ministry of Education and a PhD student in Educational Administration at the Department of Foundations and Educational Administration, College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), was awarded in the Education and Human Resources field in the Young Researcher’s category.

Discussing her research project, Marhouna stated that managing



innovations effectively is one of the main challenges facing countries worldwide.

Hence, this study aimed to identify the major challenges confronting innovation management in higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman, as perceived by innovative students; before, during, and after the innovation process.

The study adopted a qualitative research approach using a phenomenological design to delve deeper into the challenges.

Marhouna and her research team conducted interviews with 30 students who had previously participated in competitions or received research funding from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

To ensure a comprehensive perspective, the study considered diversity in terms of years of participation and the stages achieved by the student teams or company.

As for the main findings of the study, results revealed several intertwined challenges facing innovation management, and issues emerging in one stage often extend to the subsequent stages highlighting the importance of planning from the outset.

Researcher Marhouna elaborated that the challenges of the first

stage focused on innovative ideas exploration, team formation, and suitable supervisor selection.

Personal challenges

The second stage’s challenges were an extension of the first phase and included personal challenges, policies and regulations, human and financial resources, logistics support, coordination among entities, incubator, knowledge and data access, and challenges related to decision-makers.

In the third stage, the challenges included a lack of follow-up after competitions, entities’ readiness limitation to adopt innovations, and human resources challenges as well as market and societal challenges.

Marhouna proposed several recommendations, including giving more attention to innovation management through pre-planning for the three stages and developing specific policies for innovative

students to facilitate their work during the three phases.

The research project was published in the Educational Studies journal of the University of Jordan.

The research team consisted of Marhouna, Prof. Aisha Salim Al Harthi, Dr. Khalaf Marhoon Al Abri, and Prof. Said Suliman Al Dhafri.

Regarding her win, researcher Marhouna mentioned that “winning the National Research Award serves as a motivation to continue completing the whole research project and an incentive for conducting further research projects that contribute, even in a small way, to serving the country. Moreover, the success of this project highlights the voice of innovative students, whom I hope will receive greater attention from stakeholders, as they are the future and promising hope of the Sultanate of Oman.”

UNWAVERING COMMITMENT

<FROM A1> Oman raises concerns over the humanitarian crisis in Sudan



She stressed the need for adherence to international resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the occupation’s illegal status.

She also raised concerns over the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, particularly the escalat-

ing violence against women and girls. She emphasised that regional conflicts and crises lead to forced displacement, deprivation of fundamental services, and increased insecurity, disproportionately affecting women.

Oman’s participation at



CSW69 highlights its unwavering commitment to advocating for women’s empowerment, both within the Sultanate and on the global stage, ensuring that issues impacting women remain at the forefront of international dialogue.

(With inputs from OMA)

FORMAL AGREEMENTS

Knowledge Oman to bridge gap between academia and industry

MUSCAT: Knowledge Oman is all set to bridge the gap between academia and industry by formalizing agreements with leading companies. This initiative will bring industry experts into academic institutions, equipping faculty members and students with practical skills that align with real-world industry demands.

“Creating a strong bridge between academia and industry is not just an opportunity—it is a necessity. To truly empower students and faculty, we must bring real-world expertise into the classroom, ensuring that education translates into impactful careers. This is a key mission for Knowl-



edge Oman this year and we are committed with the help of industries to making this a reality” said Knowledge Oman Founder, Tariq Hilal Al Barwani.

Knowledge Oman Academy launched last year received approximately 300 registrations till

date from individual community speakers. Topics of speakers include Technical Skills, Business Entrepreneurship, Leadership & Management, Marketing & Sales, Sustainability & Corporate Responsibility, Health & Wellness, Finance & Wealth Management, Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence. Knowledge Oman has hosted hundreds of events in the form of seminars, workshops and community engagement across the Sultanate since inception in 2008.

“Our initial goal was to capture individual community interest on their personal capacity to speak as an expert for the academia” added Barwani

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Labour announces the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender title	Last date for tender purchase online	Bid submission date
13/2025	Providing maintenance services for the building of the Directorate General of Labour in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate and Al Mudhaibi Labour Department	Sunday 30/03/2025 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 20/04/2025 10 a.m.
14/2025	Providing maintenance services for the building of the Directorate General of Labour in South Al Batinah Governorate and Barka Labour Department	Sunday 30/03/2025 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 20/04/2025 10 a.m.
15/2025	Supply and installation of furniture for the building of the inspection team at the Directorate General of Labour in Dhofar Governorate	Monday 31/03/2025 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 20/04/2025 10 a.m.
41/2024 (Re-floated)	Adding a first floor in Al Buraimi Labour Department	Monday 31/03/2025 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 20/04/2025 10 a.m.

- Specialized establishments may obtain the tenders’ documents online through the following link, starting from **Tuesday 11/03/2025 at 08:00 a.m.:** <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Bids shall be submitted online.
- Bids shall be opened at **11:00 am on Sunday 20/04/2025.**

(The Ministry shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid)

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AL BURAIMI

Large haul of illegal chewing tobacco destroyed

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) in Al Buraimi Governorate, in conjunction with the Oman Environmental Holding Company (Be’ah), has destroyed a significant quantity of illegal smokeless chewing tobacco. The action was taken in accordance with Decision No. (256/2015) and its subsequent amendments, which prohibit the sale and distribution of such products due to their detrimental health effects.

A total of 2,300 bags, each containing 100 grams of the prohibited tobacco, were destroyed, amounting to 230,000 grams. This destruction followed the completion of all necessary legal procedures. The Authority maintains a rigorous programme of market surveillance, actively monitoring and seizing unauthorised goods, and swiftly taking legal action against those who violate the law. The CPA urges consumers to remain vigilant and report any suspected violations they observe. They provide various communication channels for this purpose, encouraging public participation in maintaining consumer safety and upholding legal standards.

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Travelling abroad during Eid holidays? What Oman travellers need to know

Steep tourist taxes will make many destinations more expensive in 2025

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People travelling abroad this Eid should keep in mind a few unforeseen expenses. A growing number of destinations worldwide are collecting a tax on tourists – a fee that’s often added to hotel bills or charged upon arrival to boost their revenues.

Bhutan
In Bhutan tourists are charged \$100 (OMR 39) as Sustainable Development Fee per person per day to visit except those from India, who presently pay INR 1200 (OMR 6) per person per night.

Bhutan’s tourism authority says this revenue goes directly toward helping the country’s approximately 800,000 citizens. Authorities put tourists’ money toward health care, education and infrastructure while strengthening initiatives that support the environment and help local businesses.

Spain
The population of the Spanish island of Mallorca is similar to that of Bhutan. However, residents there have been inundated with tourists in recent years and have



staged numerous protests. About 13 million people vacationed on the island in 2024. As a result, it’s hardly surprising that many residents have been lobbying to put limits on mass tourism. The island installed an accommodation tax in 2016. Depending on the hotel category, vacationers must pay up to €4 per day. However, this tax has done little to deter tourists from visiting – the island sets new tourism records year after year. Then in Barcelona, for example, travellers currently pay up to €7.50 per day, depending on the hotel category.

Germany and France
In Berlin, meanwhile, a tax of 7.5% of the price of an overnight stay is charged, while in Paris visitors may have to pay almost €16 a night for the most expensive category of hotels.

Loath to criticise tourism
In many destinations, the revenue from tourism taxes makes up a significant portion of a city’s tax-related revenue. In Barcelona, the money earned from tourism taxes is around €100 million (\$104 million), according to the municipality, making it the third-largest source of municipal



income. Yet, Barcelona has been wracked with anti-tourism protests as locals face soaring rent prices due to short-term holiday rentals from companies like Airbnb. As a result, Barcelona’s authorities say they are now deliberately focusing on financing projects that benefit the general public and not just the tourism sector. Around €100 million (\$104 million), raised from taxes on overnight stays in tourist accommodations, is currently going into Barcelona’s School Climate Plan, which installs climate control systems in the city’s schools. The revenue from the overnight

accommodation tax in Berlin, also known as the City Tax, has not yet been earmarked. The money, which was almost €90 million in 2024, currently flows into the city’s general budget.

Netherlands
This is also the case in Amsterdam, where a tourist tax has been in place since 1973. It currently amounts to 12.5% of the price of an overnight stay and is expected to generate revenue of €260 million in 2025, according to a spokesperson for the city council. City officials maintain that the tax is both an important source of revenue and a tool to

control tourism growth. However, the deterrent effect of such a tax is likely to be small.

Venice
After much ado, Venice, Italy, initiated its much-talked-about tourist tax in 2024. Day-trippers had to pay an entrance fee of €5 on 29 peak season days. Opposition politicians criticised the fee for being too low to deter tourists from visiting the overcrowded city. As a result, Venice pushed up the number of fee-charging days to 54. Anyone who does not pay the fee four days in advance of their visit will now have to pay €10.

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The Prophet (ﷺ) said "Whoever breaks the fast for a fasting person, will have a reward similar to his reward, however, nothing is detracted from the reward of a fasting person".

The Oman Charitable Organization is pleased to announce that it will receive donations for Ramadan Iftar Program in Sultanate of Oman for the year 1446 AH AD 2025

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» WORDS OF WISDOM



And when I am ill, it is [God] who cures me.”

When I fall sick, no one is able to heal me but Him, Who heals me with the means that may lead to recovery.

» FASTING HEALTH TIP

ADD BANANAS IN YOUR IFTAR MEALS



INCLUDING bananas in your Iftar meals offers both spiritual and physical benefits during Ramadan. This potassium-rich fruit provides a quick energy boost after a day of fasting, helping to replenish electrolytes and prevent muscle cramps that can occur from dehydration. Bananas are also easy to digest, making them gentle on your empty stomach while providing sustained energy through natural sugars and fiber.

Their versatility allows them to be incorporated into both sweet and savory dishes - from fruit salads and smoothies to more traditional dishes like banana fritters or even sliced alongside savory proteins. Following the Prophetic tradition of breaking fast with dates, adding bananas creates a nutritionally balanced start to your evening meal that helps stabilize blood sugar levels and provides the sustained energy needed for evening prayers and activities.

» GOOD DEEDS

PURSUE WISDOM,
CONTEMPLATE DEEPLY, AND
ACHIEVE ILLUMINATION



Reading or learning the Holy Quran will help you to discover the right path in your life. It will give insight into how to live with a purpose to serve Almighty Allah. Those who have been reading the Holy Quran during Ramadan, get into the habit

of reading it daily even when Ramadan is over. And if you have not been very regular in reading it then take out time from your busy schedule to read the Holy Quran daily. Reading the Holy Quran helps you to attain inner peace and solace. It is also a source of guidance. You will be amazed to

find how easily it comforts you and calms your disturbed mind. One of the most important good deeds is sharing the knowledge that Allah the Almighty has blessed us with. Whether in religion or in our respective lives, try to build good relationships with those around you. Offer them what you have learned

during Ramadan. You would be surprised to know how rewarding the deed is. And when it comes to religious views and spirituality, God loves those who pass on their knowledge to others and guide them, as he would shower them with endless rewards and virtues.

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OMAN AND AFGHANISTAN HOLD BILATERAL TALKS

Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Al Busaidi received Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, who is on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. Both the ministers expressed their desire to develop bilateral cooperation in various fields that benefit the two peoples and their friendly countries. — ONA



INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Oman beach handball team begins preparations for 2 major tournaments

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Handball Association (OHA) has announced an intensive training programme for the national beach handball team as it gears up for two major tournaments - the GCC Beach Games, set to be hosted by Oman in April, and the 10th Asian Beach Handball Championship in May 2025, which serves as a qualifier for the 2026 Beach Handball World Cup. Oman have been placed in Group A of the Asian Championship alongside Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, and the Maldives.

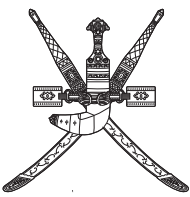
Group B includes Iran, the Philippines, Jordan, Pakistan, and India. The championship will see nine teams competing in Oman for a spot in the World Cup. **Daily training sessions** The national squad will begin preparations on Wednesday with daily training sessions at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex, continuing until the end of March. Efforts are also underway to arrange a series of friendly matches ahead of the Gulf Beach Games. The team will then enter a short

domestic training camp from April 1-3 before participating in the GCC Beach Games from April 4-11. Another internal camp is scheduled from April 13-18, with morning and evening training sessions planned in Sohar or Sur. A key part of the team's build-up will be an overseas training camp from April 19-May 1, during which Oman will play six friendly matches. Upon returning, the squad will undergo final preparations at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex from May 3-5 before the Asian Beach Handball Championship kicks off.



SEND US YOUR VIEWS AND COMMENTS

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Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
114/2025	Consulting services works (design and supervision) for the establishment of the Social Welfare Home project in the Wilayat of Barka	Companies specialized in the field of consulting offices and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with an excellent or first class	Thursday 27-03-2025 02:00 PM	Thursday 10-4-2025 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
115/2025	Consulting services works (design and supervision) of Hydrotherapy building in Liwa	Companies specialized in the field of consulting offices and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with an excellent or first class	Thursday 27-3-2025 02:00 PM	Thursday 10-4-2025 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), on Wednesday 12/03/2025
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

“ The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry”

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NOTICE AND INVITATION TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of MUSCAT GASES SAOG (the “Company”) has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting , which will be held on **Wednesday at 03:00 PM on 26/03/2025**, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om) and will be held in this location (Online) . If the quorum requirement for holding the Annual General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Annual General Meeting shall be held on Wednesday at 03:00 PM on 02/04/2025, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om) and will be held in this location (Online) to discuss the following agenda.

Annual Ordinary General Meeting Agendas:

- To consider and approve the Report of the Board of Directors for the financial year ended on 31/12/2024.
- To consider and approve the board of directors on the company's Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended on 31/12/2024.
- To consider the auditor's report and approve the balance sheet and profit and loss account for the financial year ended on 31/12/2024.
- To approve the sitting fees of the Board and Committee meetings paid to the Board Members for the previous financial year and to determine the sitting fees for the upcoming financial year (as per the annexure).
- To consider the related parties transactions entered by the Company during the financial year ended 31/12/2024 (as per attachment)
- To consider the amounts allocated and spent for the company's social responsibilities for the year ended on 31/12/2024 (as per the Annexure).
- To consider and approve the allocation of an amount of OMR 3,000 for the corporate social responsibility program, for the year ending on 31/12/ 2025 .
- The appointment of the Auditors for the Company for the financial year ending 31/12/ 2025 and approve their fees.

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

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

For further information please contact on
telephone No 91239958 or email: Salim.d@muscatgas.com

Chairman
Engr. Omar Ahmed Salim Qatan

Legal Advisor
Rajab AlKathiri & Associates

External Auditor
BDO



◆ Invitation of the AGM of Omantel for the financial year ended 31/12/2024 ◆

The Board of Directors of Oman Telecommunications Company SAOG (Omantel) has the pleasure of inviting the honorable shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on Thursday, 27th March 2025 at 5:00 pm via electronic portal of Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (MCD C) (www.mcd.gov.om). If the quorum is not met, the second Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on 3rd April 2025 at same time and electronic portal. The meeting is to discuss the following agenda:

Item	Subject
1.	To study and approve the Directors Report for the financial year ended 31st December 2024.
2.	To study and approve the company's Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31st December 2024.
3.	To study the Auditors Report and approve the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss account for the financial year ended 31st December 2024.
4.	To study and approve the Board proposal to distribute cash dividends of 55 Bzs. per share.
5.	To ratify the sitting fees paid to board of directors and its subcommittees during the financial year ended 31/12/2024, and to determine the sitting fees for the financial year 2025 as recorded in annexure No.1.
6.	To study and approve the proposal to distribute remuneration to the Board of Directors for the financial year ending 31/12/2024 as per the attached in Annexure No.2.
7.	To notify the shareholders with the related party transactions entered into the ordinary course of business during the financial year 2024 as explained in the note (27) on the financial statements, attached in annexure No.3.
8.	To notify the shareholders with the donations made as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) during the financial year ended 31st December 2024 as explained in annexure No. 4.
9.	To study and approve the proposal to allocate an amount of OMR 750,000 (Rial Omani Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand) for the purpose of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for the year 2025.
10.	Approve the criteria for the performance evaluation of the Board of Directors, as per annexure No. 5.
11.	To appoint independent office to assess the board's performance for the financial year ending 31/12/2025 and approve their fees.
12.	To appoint the auditors for the financial year ending 31/12/2025 and approve their fees.

As per the Article of Association of the company and the rules of using the new electronic means for AGMs, we wish to inform you with the following:

- Only natural person can authorize any person (except board members) to attend the AGM and vote on his/her behalf through the electronic portal. The natural person must have an investor number at Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (MCD C).
- The voting on any of the agenda items shall start (3) days prior the meeting and finish at the day of the meeting. Any changes to the holding shares (plus/minus) the voting shall be canceled and need to revote on the day of the meeting.

For any queries, may call Mr. Faris Mohammed Al-Maamari on Office: 24244579 or email: Faris.Maamari@omantel.om

Chairman

External Auditors

Legal Advisor

Trump administration ordered to pay \$2bn in aid by US district judge

The administration halted aid on January 20, Trump’s first day in office, but Judge Amir Ali in Washington said payment must be made for work that has already been completed

WASHINGTON DC: A United States district judge has ruled that President Donald Trump’s administration must pay nearly \$2 billion (€1.84 billion) in outstanding foreign aid.

The administration halted aid on January 20, Trump’s first day in office, but Judge Amir Ali in Washington said payment must be made for work that has already been completed.

He, however, declined a request from nonprofit groups and businesses to order the administration to restore thousands of foreign



aid contracts and grants that have been cancelled.

At the same time, Ali ruled against the Trump administration on a major legal issue, saying that the president must spend money approved by Congress.

Monday’s ruling comes after the US Supreme Court last week rejected Trump’s emergency request to freeze nearly \$2 billion in foreign aid payments for work done up to February 13.

Ali initially ordered the Trump administration to restart foreign

aid in a February 13 ruling, setting a February 26 deadline.

The administration asked the Supreme Court to block the deadline, but the justices rejected the request in a 5-4 ruling on Wednesday.

Rubio says purge of USAID programmes complete

On Monday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that the Trump administration had completed its six-week review of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which has

been around for sixty years.

He said some 5,200 of USAID’s 6,200 programmes were eliminated.

Those programmes “spent tens of billions of dollars in ways that did not serve (and in some cases even harmed) the core national interests of the United States,” Rubio wrote.

“In consultation with Congress, we intend for the remaining 18% of programmes we are keeping ... to be administered more effectively under the State Department,” he further said. — **bw**

BILATERAL RELATIONS

India-Armenia ties deeply rooted in history: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan, on Monday in New Delhi.

The two leaders held a bilateral meeting where several avenues of India-Armenia ties were discussed.

In his opening remarks, the EAM noted that the meeting between the two leaders would allow the countries to discuss bilateral ties and regional interests.

“Where our own countries are concerned, these are ties very, very deeply rooted in history... Today, we have good political cooperation, our trade figures are increasing, we have defence collaboration and culture has always been a strong point”, the EAM said.

Speaking about Armenia being



home to many Indian students, he thanked Foreign Minister Mirzoyan for looking after the Indian students.

“We have a very good exchange of people, so our agenda really is to

take each one of these dimensions forward, and I look forward to discussing how best we can do that”, the EAM added.

He also highlighted several international projects where India

and Armenia work together.

“I want to mention that we had received the parliamentary delegation led by the chairman of the National Assembly, Alen Simonyan, in December last year,” EAM added.

He gave the examples of Armenia’s membership of the International Solar Alliance, its participation in the voice of the Global South and the two countries working together at the UN.

The EAM also shared the meeting on X.

He said, “Pleased to welcome FM @AraratMirzoyan of Armenia this evening in Delhi. Productive discussions on advancing trade, investment, education, connectivity, mobility & culture. Also shared perspectives on the recent global and regional developments.” — **ANI**



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A TONGUE-IN-CHEEK FAREWELL



Justin Trudeau exits Parliament with chair in hand

Ottawa: After resigning as Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau was captured exiting Parliament in a playful style -- carrying a chair and with his tongue sticking out.

As per convention Canadian lawmakers are allowed to take their chairs with them when they leave Parliament, Brian Lilley, Political columnist for the Toronto Sun noted in a post on X.

“When any MP leaves the Commons, they are allowed to take their chair, their seat with them. I find it a great tradition, one that I support. That said, this is a weird photo of Trudeau leaving with his. Also, perhaps another sign of a looming election”, he wrote on X.

Trudeau had in his remarks while stepping down highlighted the ‘achievements’ of the Liberal Party over the past decade while looking towards the future, hours ahead of the announcement of his successor as the leader of his party as per CBC News.

In his speech at the Liberal Leadership Convention, Trudeau said, “I am damn proud of what

we’ve done over these past 10 years for the middle class and the people working hard to join it.”

As the Liberal Party enters a new era, Trudeau told the crowd that “there is a responsibility to ensure that Canada stays the best country on Earth! In one of his last speeches as Liberal leader and Canada’s PM, he urged his supporters to keep fighting for Canada as hard as they can.

Trudeau resigned on January 6 as both- the Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party amid widespread anger over his government’s handling of a housing crisis and rising costs of living.

Prime Minister-Designate of Canada, Mark Carney was elected on Sunday to lead Canada’s Liberal Party into the next federal elections later this year.

Carney stepped up in this role as Canada seeks to counter its looming trade war with US President Donald Trump.

In a post on X, he said, “Thank you. Now let’s build a stronger Canada, together,” adding, “We’re strongest when we are united.” — **ANI**

TENDER NOTICE



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries
Wealth and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender no.	Tender title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales end Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are eligible to participate	Tender Document fee (R.O)
1	102/2025/MAFW R/HQ-15 Implementing and Managing the Media Campaign for the Red Palm	Tuesday 18/2/2025	Monday 10/3/2025	Sunday 30/3/2025	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
2	111/2025/MAFW R/HQ-16 Cleaning services for the directorate's building and its affiliated buildings in Al Dakhiliya Governorate for a period of three years	Tuesday 25/2/2025	Monday 17/3/2025	Monday 07/4/2025	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
3	116/2025/MAFW R/HQ-17 Purchasing hydrometric Monitoring Instruments for updating of flood maps projects & water current meter	Thursday 27/2/2025	Wednesday 19/3/2025	Tuesday 8/4/2025	Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

- above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@gstb.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources



Majority of the world has polluted air: Report

GENEVA: Most of the global population is breathing dirty air, with only 17% of cities meeting air pollution norms, a report has found.

The findings were published by Switzerland-based air quality monitoring database IQAir on Tuesday as part of its World Air Quality Report for 2024.

Chad, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Congo and India were among the five most polluted countries in the world.

Meanwhile, only seven countries — Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Estonia, Grenada, Iceland, and New Zealand — met the annual average PM2.5 guideline established by the World Health Organization. The company’s analysis is based on data collected from 40,000 air quality monitoring stations in 138 countries.

India accounted for 13 out of the top 20 polluted cities across the globe, according to the report.

Byrnhat, a small industrial town situated in the country’s northeast, was the most polluted metropolitan area in the world.

Delhi continued to remain the most polluted capital city globally. The report said that several parts of the world were not equipped with the monitoring required for more precise data, meaning that the real amount of air pollution could be much more.

For instance, it highlighted that in Africa there was only one monitoring station for every 3.7 million people.

“There has been notable progress in expanding air quality monitoring across various countries, regions, and territories over the past 12 months. However, considerable gaps still exist in government-operated regulatory systems in many parts of the world,” the report said.

Meanwhile, Oceania was listed as the cleanest region on the planet, with 57% of the cities meeting the air quality guidelines. — **bw**

90% of Gaza’s population unable to access water: UNICEF warns

UN agencies estimate that 1.8 million people, more than half of whom are children, urgently need water, sanitation and health assistance, stressing that the situation has deteriorated further after the decision to cut off electricity to the Strip

GAZA: The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has warned that the severe water shortage in the Gaza Strip has reached critical levels, with only one in 10 people



currently able to access safe drinking water, or 90% of the population unable to access water. UNICEF official in Gaza, Rosalia Poulin, reported that 600,000 people regained access to drinking water in November 2024, but it was cut off again. UN agencies estimate that 1.8 million people, more than half of whom are children, urgently need water, sanitation and health assistance, stressing that the situation has deteriorated further after the decision to cut off electricity to the

Strip, which disrupted vital water desalination operations. **Death toll across Gaza Strip surges to 48,503, over 111,927 injured** Medical sources announced today that the death toll in the Gaza Strip has risen to 48,503, the majority of whom are children and women, since the start of the Israeli occupation aggression on October 7, 2023. They added that the number of injuries has risen to 111,927, since the start of the aggression,

while a number of victims are still under the rubble, and ambulance and civil defence crews cannot reach them. They affirmed that 36 slain Palestinians and 14 injuries arrived at Gaza Strip hospitals during the past 24 hours. **Tulkarm remains under military escalation** The Israeli occupation forces continue their aggression on the city of Tulkarm and its camp for the 44th consecutive day, and on

the Nour Shams camp for the 31st day, amidst a military escalation that includes intensive reinforcements, a tight siege, and extensive raids on homes. Wafa correspondent said that the occupation forces sent military reinforcements towards the city and its two camps, and deployed infantry squads in the camps’ neighborhoods and surroundings, amidst the firing of live ammunition and sound bombs to terrorize people. She added that the occupation forces, with their heavy machinery and bulldozers, reinforced their military presence in front of the houses they seize on Nablus Street, which connects the Tulkarm and Nour Shams camps, and turned them into military outposts, and set up mobile checkpoints to restrict the movement of citizens. During the night hours, the occupation forces tightened the measures on Nablus Street, where they intercepted passing vehicles, stopped them, searched them, checked the IDs of their passengers, detained a number of them, especially young men, abused them, and investigated them in the field. But no detentions were reported, however. The occupation forces escalated the military operations in Tulkarm

camp, where they intensified their foot patrols in all its neighborhoods, including Al-Murabba’a and Al-Khidmat neighborhoods, amidst extensive raids on homes and shops after removing their doors, blowing them up, and vandalizing their contents, while firing bullets randomly. The camp is suffering from widespread and comprehensive destruction of its infrastructure, in addition to the homes that were completely and partially demolished, vandalized, and burned, while the occupation forces turned the remaining homes into military barracks, which increased the suffering of the residents in light of the ongoing aggression. In Nour Shams camp, the occupation forces continue their tight siege on it, accompanied by extensive raids on homes, and deliberately destroyed their contents after searching them, and subjecting their residents to interrogation under threat. They also continue to transform the home of local resident Adnan Al-Malik in Jabal Al-Nasr area in Nour Shams camp into a military barracks, where they seized it completely, and forced its owner to provide the soldiers with water.

— Agencies

300 FAMILIES EVACUATED

Volcano erupts in Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemala’s Volcano of Fire erupted, prompting authorities to evacuate nearly 300 families and warn that 30,000 more people could be at risk. The eruption sent gas and ash high into the sky, forcing school closures and the shutdown of a key road. Local authorities fear lahars—deadly flows of ash, mud, and debris—could endanger nearby communities. The 12,300-foot (3,763-meter) volcano, one of Central America’s most active, last erupted in June 2023. In 2018, a major eruption killed 194 people and left 234 missing. Local authorities expect volcanic activity to intensify. — OMA

MULTIPLE OUTAGES

Elon Musk claims X hit by ‘massive cyberattack’

CALIFORNIA: Elon Musk, the billionaire owner of X, claimed Monday that the social media platform had been the target of a “massive cyberattack” after outages left it unavailable for thousands of users. “There was (still is) a massive cyberattack against X,” Musk said in a post. “We get attacked every day, but this was done with a lot of resources,” he claimed, adding that “either a large, coordinated group and/or a country is involved.” **Musk blames ‘IP addresses in Ukraine’** Later, in an interview with Fox Business, Musk said the computer systems used in the alleged attack appeared to have IP addresses in

Ukraine but did not immediately provide any evidence for his claim. However, some cybersecurity experts stressed this does not necessarily mean the attack originated in Ukraine. **Downdetector.com** Nearly 40,000 users initially reported problems with X at the peak of the outage at around 10 a.m. US East Coast time (2 p.m. UTC) on Monday, according to tracking site Downdetector.com. The number then fluctuated, dropping significantly before rising around noon to almost 35,000 and then falling again. X, formerly Twitter, has experienced several glitches since tech mogul Musk acquired the platform in 2022. — DW

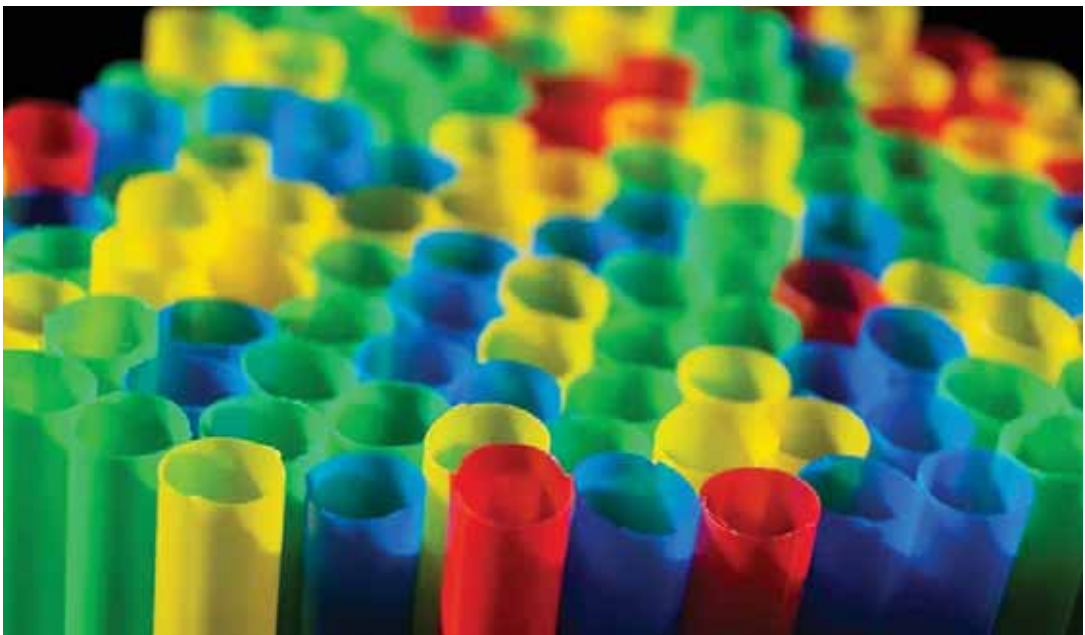


ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Just how bad are plastic straws for the environment?

WASHINGTON DC: When US President Donald Trump vowed to end the “ridiculous situation” of paper straws with an executive order recently, he noted that he had used “them many times, and on occasion, they break, they explode.” The order rolled back a previous policy aiming to phase out single-use plastic items, including straws, in federal operations such as food service, and directed the government to stop buying paper versions. Many people will have encountered a soggy paper straw that flops after a few sips. It’s a frustrating experience for sure, but some are concerned Trump’s targeting of them could be a signal of a broader move “back to plastic.” The US president is using the item’s poor design “as a representation or a token” to suggest being environmentally friendly is inconvenient for us, said Randa Kachef, urban waste and sustainability expert and research affiliate at King’s College London in the UK.

What’s the problem with plastic products like straws? Just over a decade ago, it was not the image of exploding paper ones that came to mind at the mention of straws, but one of animal suffering. In 2015, the video of a plastic straw being painfully removed from a turtle’s bleeding nostril went viral, spurring a movement to reduce plastic waste. Since then, plastic straws have become emblematic of the global plastic pollution problem that now touches every part of life on Earth. Annually, humans produce an estimated 380 million tonnes of plastic waste, including 43 million tonnes of single-use items, such as straws. A lot of that ends up polluting the environment. According to one estimate, over 8 billion plastic



straws litter the world’s coastlines. Plastic can take hundreds of years to break down but never fully decomposes. Tiny particles have been found in water, soil, air, the food chain and even in our bodies. An increasing number of studies have suggested plastic is linked to serious health issues like decreased reproductive capacity and cancer. While estimates suggest plastic straws make up less than 1% of the weight of ocean plastic waste, their lightness and size mean they are quicker to fragment and harder to collect than bigger plastic items, said Kachef. They have also offered a tangible entry point to tackling the huge challenge that is the plastic crisis, she added. For example, in recent years, environmental concerns have driven several US cities and states, brands such as McDonalds and Starbucks, as well as the UK, EU, Canada and India to restrict plastic straw use as part of wider clamp downs on

single-use plastic. **How good are the alternatives to plastic straws?** Growing awareness of plastic straws’ harmful impact has led to a surge in eco-alternatives made from materials such as metal, glass, bamboo, and, of course, paper. When it comes to the paper versions, Donald Trump isn’t their only critic. “Nobody likes paper straws,” said Kachef. “The design of the straw was not the best. I’ll admit to that.” On the other hand, most have barely noticed the replacement of plastic items such as cotton buds or coffee stirrers with other materials, she added. Still, many of the alternatives also have their own environmental drawbacks. Paper straws, for example, are often coated in plastic to keep them water resistant. Some studies

have suggested they contain higher levels of PFAS – chemicals that contaminate water and have been linked to a range of health issues – than plastic. According to one study, when it comes to emissions involved in producing a straw, paper versions were better than plastic. However, reusable options, such as glass and stainless-steel, involve energy intensive production processes. They would have to be used 23-39 and 37-63 times respectively to “break even” with the emissions of disposable alternatives, found the study. While no alternative is perfect, single-use plastic is still the worst option, said Kachef, adding the type of plastic they are usually made from – polypropylene – mostly can’t be recycled. “Every straw we’ve ever used still exists, either in landfill or in the environment— unless it has been incinerated which has other implications of air pollution,” said



Kachef. Kachef said plastic itself is really important in a medical environment to prevent cross-contamination and that straws are essential for people with certain medical conditions or disabilities. But a wider move back to plastic straws would unequivocally be a backwards step for the environment and climate, added Kachef. “A single metal steel straw might have an environmental impact that is greater than a single plastic straw... but I think if someone uses that for the rest of their life, that’s not a problem,” said Kachef. “The issue is not to treat alternatives or ‘for life’ products as disposable.” **What impact could the executive order on straws have?** Practically speaking, Donald Trump’s executive order means places like US government buildings and properties, including national parks, will now offer plastic rather than paper straws, said Rachel Radvany, environmental health campaigner at the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL). It’s a move that would see “an increase in completely preventable plastic waste,” she said. But it’s one

the plastics industry is celebrating. “Straws are just the beginning — ‘Back to Plastic’ is a movement we should all get behind,” said Matt Seaholm, CEO of the Plastics Industry Association, in a statement following the executive order. Radvany added that straws are just one tiny part of the plastic crisis but have “become a flash point in culture wars” that distract from a wider issue, namely “the fact that plastics are fossil fuels in another form.” Some 99% of plastic is made from chemicals derived from fossil fuels. The rapidly expanding, multibillion-dollar industry is the fastest growing source of industrial emissions. By 2040, it could account for 19% of the greenhouse gases responsible for heating up the planet and fuelling extreme weather. As the world transitions away from oil and gas, some see plastics as an alternative business model for the fossil fuel industry. It’s important to pay close attention to the plastic straw executive order, said Radvany, “to ensure it does not become a pro-plastic Trojan Horse, leading to broader policies and guidance that will favor sustained or even increased production of plastics.” — DW

SPORTS

MCG TO BE THE VENUE

Australia-England 150th anniversary Test to be day-night clash

MELBOURNE: The highly anticipated 150th anniversary Test between England and Australia will be played as a day-night fixture at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Cricket Australia announced on Tuesday.

The one-off match, commemorating the first-ever men's Test in 1877, is scheduled to take place from March 11-15, 2027 at the iconic venue, which boasts a capacity of approximately 100,000.

The MCG hosted the inaugural

Test match between the two sides in March 1877, where Australia emerged victorious by 45 runs. England then levelled the series with a win in the second match at the same venue.

A century later, the 100th anniversary Test in 1977 also saw Australia triumph by the exact same margin.

Cricket Australia chief executive Todd Greenberg described the upcoming match as "one of the great cricket events."



"Playing under lights will be a fantastic way to celebrate both our game's rich heritage and Test cricket's modern evolution. It will also help ensure more people are able to attend and watch what will be a fantastic occasion. We look forward to celebrating this historic occasion further as it draws nearer," he said.

Australia hold a dominant record in day-night home Tests, winning 12 out of 13 matches played under lights. The 2027 fixture will

also mark the latest-season Test match in Australia since their 1978-79 series against Pakistan. However, it will be a standalone match, not part of the Ashes or the World Test Championship (WTC).

Meanwhile, England will aim to reclaim the Ashes when they tour Australia later this year for a five-match series, beginning in Perth on November 21, 2025. Australia are set to return to England for another Ashes series in 2027. - Agencies

Bracewell to lead NZ against Pakistan in T20I series at home

Sodhi, Sears, Seifert

return to squad for five-match series, starting on March 16

WELLINGTON: New Zealand will be led by all-rounder Michael Bracewell in a revamped T20I squad for their upcoming five-match series against Pakistan at home, starting on March 16.

Bracewell takes the reins for the second time as captain, having previously led the team during the tour of Pakistan in April 2024.

Seven members of New Zealand's silver-medal-winning Champions Trophy squad have been selected, though players with IPL commitments have not been included in the squad.

"Mitch Santner has done a fantastic job as the white-ball captain, and I'm looking forward to building on the good work he's done while creating a positive environment for the team to perform in," Bracewell said in a New Zealand Cricket (NZC) statement.



"Pakistan are always a formidable side in T20s, with plenty of power and pace, and we know they'll be eager to bounce back after an early exit from the Champions Trophy."

Key inclusions for the series are fast bowler Ben Sears, who has recovered from a hamstring injury, and leg-spinner Ish Sodhi, who missed the recent home series against Sri Lanka. Kyle Jamieson and Will O'Rourke are named for the first three matches only, with

selectors managing the workload of pacers from the Champions Trophy.

Matt Henry, who sustained a shoulder injury in the Champions Trophy semi-final, has been included for the final two T20Is, provided he is fit. Meanwhile, Finn Allen, James Neesham, and Tim Seifert are also back in the squad after confirming their availability for the lead-up to the 2026 T20 World Cup.

With Devon Conway, Rachin Ravindra, and Glenn Phillips un-

available due to IPL commitments, Daryl Mitchell and Mark Chapman will have expanded roles with the bat. Both Lockie Ferguson and Mitch Santner will miss the series due to IPL that starts on March 22.

Kane Williamson, who is also preparing for PSL duties with Karachi Kings starting in April, opted out of selection.

From the recent series against Sri Lanka, top-order batter Tim Robinson, fast bowler Zakary Foulkes (for the last two games), and wicketkeeper Mitchell Hay are included in the squad.

"We are starting to focus on the ICC T20 World Cup in India next February and March," said selector Sam Wells. "With half of the squad just returning from the Champions Trophy, we'll need to manage these players carefully. The series against Pakistan will give everyone a chance to perform and push for a spot in next year's World Cup squad."

New Zealand squad: Michael Bracewell (capt), Finn Allen, Mark Chapman, Jacob Duffy, Zakary Foulkes (games 4 & 5), Mitchell Hay, Matt Henry (games 4 & 5), Kyle Jamieson (games 1, 2 & 3), Daryl Mitchell, James Neesham, Will O'Rourke (games 1, 2 & 3), Tim Robinson, Ben Sears, Tim Seifert, Ish Sodhi. - Agencies



PCB calls out ICC on presentation snub at the final in Dubai

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has formally requested an explanation from the International Cricket Council (ICC) after Pakistan's representative, Sumair Ahmed, was excluded from the Champions Trophy final presentation in Dubai on Sunday.

Ahmed, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief operating officer and tournament director, had been in Dubai for the final and was expected to stand in for PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, who was unable to attend due to illness. Despite Pakistan being the official host of the event, no PCB official was included in the ceremony, which featured ICC chair Jay Shah, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Roger Binny, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia, and New

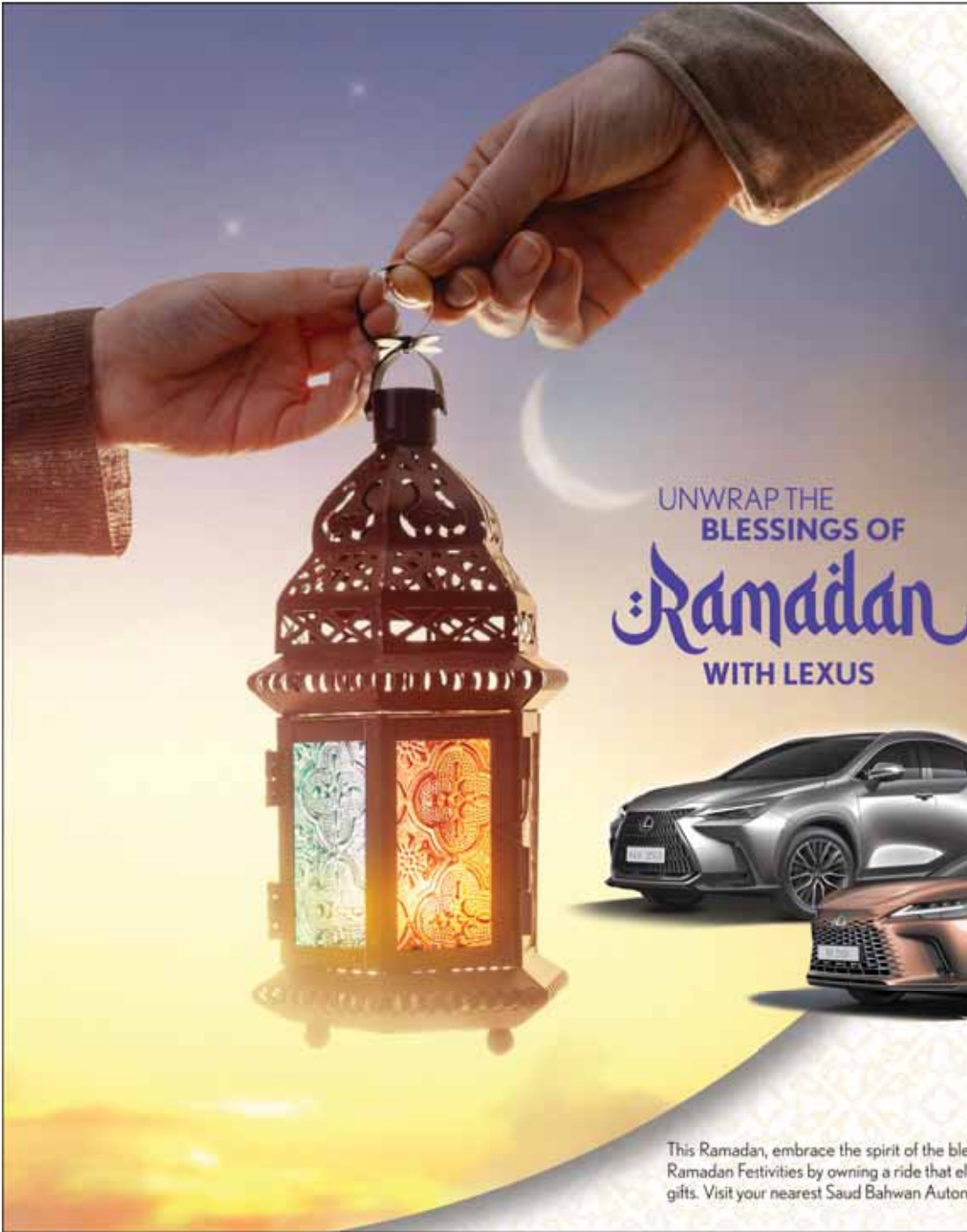
Zealand Cricket (NZC) director Roger Twose.

The PCB expressed frustration over the exclusion of their representative, noting that host nation officials are traditionally part of the presentation ceremony.

While the PCB did not inform the ICC in advance about the substitution of Naqvi, the board believes it was the ICC's responsibility to reach out and discuss the replacement.

This marks the third time during the tournament that the PCB has raised concerns with the ICC, following incidents that the board felt undermined Pakistan's role as the official host.

These included omissions of Pakistan's name from the official broadcast logo and a mix-up of national anthems before matches. - Agencies





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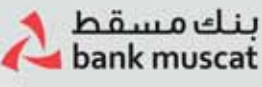
This Ramadan, embrace the spirit of the blessed month with a drive that empowers your soul. We, at Lexus Oman invite you to journey with us and become a part of the Ramadan Festivities by owning a ride that elevates lifestyles and builds deeper connections. Get free service, registration and a chance to win iPhone 16 Pro max as Raffle gifts. Visit your nearest Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom today!

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by May 2025 reaching \$70.50, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 87 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$71.37. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,405.42 points, down by 0.02% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.10% at 402.82 points. Muscat Insurance, up 9.94%, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 7.69%, was the top loser.



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Port of Duqm, Oman Oil partner to advance clean energy solutions

This agreement aligns with Oman Vision 2040 and the nation's ambitious goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, contributing to the development of sustainable infrastructure and the transition to renewable energy in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of the port's strategic direction toward a sustainable future and its ongoing efforts to position Port of Duqm as a gateway for clean energy, Port of Duqm Company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Oman Oil Marketing Company (Oman Oil) to explore and develop options for implementing solar energy systems, biofuels, and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at Port of Duqm. This agreement aligns with Oman Vision 2040 and the nation's ambitious goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, contributing to the development of sustainable infrastructure and the transition to renewable energy in Oman.

The MoU was signed by Reggy Vermeulen, CEO of Port of Duqm Company, and Tariq Mohammed Al Junaidi, CEO of Oman Oil Marketing Company, in the presence of Eng. Hashim Taher Al Ibrahim, Chief Business Support Officer and Mohammed Hassan Al Mujaini, Deputy General Manager for Occupational Health, Safety, Quality, and Sustainable Development at Oman Oil Marketing Company. On this occasion, Reggy Vermeulen, CEO of Port of Duqm Company, stated: "We are committed to developing sustainable energy solutions at the port, and this agreement strengthens our efforts toward achieving an environmentally friendly operational environment that aligns with Oman Vision 2040. Our partnership with OOMCO will open new avenues in the clean energy sector, contributing to the transformation of Port of Duqm into a sustainable logistics gateway at both the regional and international levels."



pany, commented: "At Oman Oil Marketing Company, we are committed to providing innovative and sustainable energy solutions beyond fuel. Our advancements in solar energy, EV charging infrastructure, and biodiesel support Oman's transition to clean energy. This MoU with Port of Duqm marks a key step in enabling the port to optimize energy use, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance sustainability. It also allows us to expand the reach of our green solutions, reinforcing our role in driving a more sustainable future for Oman." This collaboration will enable Port of Duqm to enhance its operational efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and serve as a model for the development and operation of sustainable ports. Moreover, it represents a key step in establishing Duqm as a gateway for green and clean energy. By adopting renewable energy solutions such as solar power and biofuels, Port of Duqm will become a central hub for sustainable shipping, storage, and transportation operations, reinforcing its position as a leading destination in the transition to a low-carbon economy and supporting national efforts to achieve carbon neutrality.

START OF TRADING ITS SHARES



MSX to celebrate Asyad Shipping Co's listing today

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) will celebrate today, 12 March, the listing of Asyad Shipping Company and the start of trading its shares after the completion of the initial public offering (IPO) process for 20 percent of its capital. Asyad Shipping Company will be the first company from the maritime transport sector to be listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange as part of the efforts made to boost the MSX by listing companies that reflect the performance of all sectors in the national economy.

This step is within the framework of Oman Investment Authority's (OIA) approaches to divest from some government assets. It also reflects the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which aim to attract national and foreign investments. The bell ringing ceremony will be held under the auspices of Dr. Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. - **ONA**

ENHANCING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

OAB partners with FSA to launch five digital trading platforms on MSX

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its leadership in innovation and advanced financial solutions, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) played a key role in collaboration with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) to launch five digital trading platforms for licensed brokerage firms on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). These platforms are part of broader financial sustainability initiatives aimed at facilitating and stimulating investment, driving comprehensive digital transformation in the Omani capital market, and expanding investor access to local markets. Through this strategic partnership, OAB continues to play a leading role in fostering financial sector growth and promoting investment in the capital market. Recently, the bank introduced a suite of advanced digital services, including collection solutions via virtual accounts, which enable clients to manage cash flows more efficiently by opening virtual accounts. These solutions enhance transparency, simplify the tracking of outstanding amounts for each project or product, and significantly streamline financial transactions among institutions operating in the financial sector.



Commenting on this initiative, Sulaiman Al Harthi, CEO of OAB, stated: "The launch of digital trading platforms aligns with evolving regulatory requirements in modern financial markets, aiming to enhance service quality, ensure data protection, and promote transparency. At OAB, we are committed to leading the way in financial service development and introducing initiatives that build investor confidence. Our collection solutions via virtual accounts represent a major advancement in electronic connectivity between financial institutions, strengthening financial inclusion and improving the investment landscape in Oman."

He further highlighted: "These virtual solutions are among the most advanced of their kind, empowering clients to manage cash flows more effectively. They facilitate seamless transactions, including investment procedures and financial transfers for buying and selling securities, securely and

effortlessly between OAB clients' bank accounts and their investment portfolios on the MSX." Al Harthi also emphasized OAB's commitment to expanding strategic partnerships to drive financial sector growth in line with Oman Vision 2040. The bank recently organized a dedicated training workshop for brokerage firms in collaboration with FSA, providing them with insights into virtual account collection solutions. This initiative enhances companies' understanding of this innovative technology, accelerating its adoption across the financial sector, attracting new investor segments, increasing trading volumes on the MSX, and reinforcing oversight and investor protection. As a distinguished banking institution in Oman, OAB remains at the forefront of financial innovation, delivering cutting-edge banking solutions while actively contributing to the growth of the financial sector. The bank has also been instrumental in supporting efforts to upgrade the MSX to an emerging market. Notably, OAB was among the first to introduce a liquidity provider service for its listed shares on the MSX through a strategic partnership with Ubhar Capital.

STATISTICS

Oman electricity production increases by 7.6% in 2024



MUSCAT: The total electricity production in the Sultanate of Oman till the end of December 2024 grew by 7.6% to 48,452.7 gigawatts per hour, compared to 45,012.9 gigawatts per hour during the corresponding period in 2023, according to preliminary statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The governorates of North Al

Batinah, South Al Batinah and Al Dhahirah registered a total production of 30,253.2 gigawatts per hour, constituting a rise by 6.4% compared to December 2023. Total production in the Governorate of Muscat dropped by 19.4% to stand at 486.9 gigawatts per hour, while production in Dhofar Governorate went up by 11.9% to reach 5679.7 gigawatts per hour.

Moreover, total production in the governorates of North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah rose by 7.2% to reach 10,609.4 gigawatts per hour. Meanwhile, production declined in the Al Wusta governorate by 24.5% to reach 169.6 gigawatts per hour. Musandam Governorate saw an increase in electricity production by 6.6% to reach 503.8 gigawatts per hour.

Statistics indicate that the net electricity production of Oman till the end of December 2024 increased by 7.2% to reach 46,813 gigawatts per hour. On the other hand, Oman's production of water by the end of December 2024 reached 520,368,700 cubic meters, compared to 520,358,700 cubic meters during the corresponding period in 2023. - **ONA**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Muscat Insurance, up 9.94%, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 7.69%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,405.42 points, down by 0.02% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.10% at 402.82 points. Muscat Insurance, up 9.94%, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 7.69%, was the top loser. Shares of Abraj Energy Services were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 828 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 3 million, with more than 13.4 million shares changing hands. Out of 55 traded securities, 10 advanced, 27 declined, and 18 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 450K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 438K, followed by domestic investors for RO 12K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,678.90 points, down 0.12%. Prices of Muscat Insurance, Oman & Emirates Investment, Takaful Oman, National Bank Oman were

up by 9.94%, 8.07%, 2.22%, 1.75% respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Global Financial Investments, Muscat Finance, Taageer Finance were down by 2.86%, 2.60%, 2.30%, 2.13%, 1.82% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,700.87 points, down 0.97%. Prices of Oman Cables Industry, Voltamp Energy were up by 1.90%, 1.72% respectively. Prices of Muscat Thread Mill, Oman Flour Mills, Al Anwar Ceramics, Gulf International Chemicals, Jazeera Steel Products were down by 7.69%, 4.76%, 4.07%, 2.67%, 2.01% respectively. Services Index was up by 0.1% before closing at 1,614.20 points. Prices of Abraj Energy, Al Maha Marketing, Oman National Engineering, Renaissance Services were up by 2.42%, 1.96%, 0.83%, 0.29% respectively. Prices of Shell Oman Marketing, Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, National Gas, Ooredoo were down by 3.20%, 1.56%, 1.52%, 1.30%, 1.04% respectively. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

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INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %	
MSX 30 INDEX	4,410.92	4,390.45	4,405.42	4,406.16	-0.73	-0.02	
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,684.66	7,658.20	7,678.90	7,688.21	-9.31	-0.12	
Industry Index	5,745.74	5,698.36	5,700.87	5,756.69	-55.82	-0.97	
Services Index	1,619.12	1,610.68	1,614.20	1,612.53	1.67	0.10	
MSX Shariah Index	403.87	402.32	402.82	402.40	0.42	0.10	
MSX TR INDEX	6,179.65	6,150.97	6,171.95	6,172.97	-1.03	-0.02	
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,730.57	8,700.50	8,724.02	8,734.60	-10.58	-0.12	
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,629.22	6,574.55	6,577.45	6,641.85	-64.40	-0.97	
SERVICES TR IDX	1,941.76	1,931.63	1,935.86	1,933.86	2.00	0.10	
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	0.00	0.00	
Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.....	Up.....	Down.....	Equal.....	Sec. Traded
13,401,369.....	3,000,805.....	828.....	27,031,627,905.....	10.....	27.....	18.....	55.....

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 11

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (R)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	P&A VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	400	27	1	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.062	0.005	8.065	0.067	0.062	0.067	0.100	8,165,625
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	3,453,637	874,435	89	0.248	0.259	0.248	0.254	0.248	0.006	2.419	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.100	195,630,800
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,727	501	1	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.285	0.005	1.754	0.290	0.290	0.297	0.100	471,524,443
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	10,000	1,283	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.121	0.121	0.004	0.869	0.125	0.125	0.122	0.100	18,300,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	70,000	23,932	9	0.340	0.344	0.340	0.344	0.343	0.001	0.292	0.344	0.333	0.344	0.100	81,325,040
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	4,000	972	1	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.000	0.000	0.243	0.000	0.243	0.100	24,300,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	12,197	5,850	7	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.000	0.000	0.480	0.445	0.480	0.100	158,819,901
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	10,000	600	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.000	0.060	0.100	21,367,838
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	52,299	3,837	9	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.100	5,660,000
OM0000004735	SEMO CORP SALALAH	5,434	209	3	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.060	0.067	0.100	85,911,476
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	74,156	6,242	13	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.084	0.085	0.100	14,700,000
OM0000009072	OQAS NETWORKS	1,039,917	133,339	80	0.128	0.130	0.127	0.128	0.128	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.100	554,319,862
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	80,222	26,534	12	0.334	0.334	0.330	0.334	0.335	-0.001	-0.299	0.334	0.333	0.334	0.100	223,234,052
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	658,268	167,869	25	0.256	0.256	0.254	0.254	0.255	-0.001	-0.392	0.254	0.254	0.255	0.100	1,906,624,454
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,283,990	162,453	33	0.127	0.127	0.126	0.126	0.127	-0.001	-0.787	0.126	0.120	0.126	0.100	833,773,030
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	267,956	216,295	25	0.811	0.814	0.800	0.813	0.820	-0.007	-0.854	0.813	0.813	0.826	0.100	609,750,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	79,409	15,229	23	0.192	0.196	0.190	0.190	0.192	-0.002	-1.042	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.100	123,679,404
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	35,359	13,790	2	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.395	-0.005	-1.266	0.390	0.380	0.393	0.100	46,800,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	286,295	18,442	26	0.065	0.065	0.064	0.065	0.066	-0.001	-1.515	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.100	43,967,683
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	219,700	13,841	25	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.064	-0.001	-1.563	0.063	0.060	0.063	0.100	45,007,599
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	31,513	12,291	8	0.392	0.395	0.390	0.390	0.398	-0.008	-2.010	0.390	0.380	0.395	0.100	48,710,204
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	1,178,651	100,386	76	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.087	-0.002	-2.259	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	17,000,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	52,217	17,450	15	0.531	0.531	0.515	0.515	0.532	-0.017	-3.195	0.515	0.505	0.520	0.100	48,923,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	43,585	5,161	12	0.121	0.122	0.117	0.118	0.123	-0.005	-4.065	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	25,960,000
Total	24	8,930,922	1,820,938	497												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	615	231	3	0.352	0.387	0.352	0.387	0.352	0.035	9.943	0.387	0.360	0.387	1.000	4,266,693
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	2,000	92	1	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.045	0.001	2.222	0.046	0.042	0.048	0.100	11,500,000
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	3,860	4,014	1	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.020	0.020	1.961	1.040	1.040	1.090	0.100	71,760,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	20,000	1,889	1	2.415	2.415	2.415	2.415	2.370	0.045	1.889	2.415	0.000	2.415	0.100	216,635,500
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	22,047	12,853	15	0.580	0.590	0.580	0.590	0.580	0.010	1.724	0.590	0.550	0.638	0.100	48,027,623
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	1,000	79	1	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.079	0.078	0.083	0.100	2,370,000
OM0000001366	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	15,046	1,444	2	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	5,000,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	18,109	13,220	1	0.730	0.730	0.730	0.730	0.730	0.000	0.000	0.730	0.710	0.729	0.100	44,730,750
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	424,202	42,431	13	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	223,695,303
OM0000004669	SHARQIYA DESALINATION	24,000	3,240	3	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.100	13,202,292
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	2,264	278	1	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.120	0.127	0.100	4,765,000
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	82,500	4,950	9	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.063	0.100	87,736,088
OM0000009847	OMAN REIT FUND	90,850	5,976	6	0.074	0.075	0.073	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.068	0.075	0.100	27,638,716
OM0000009908	QO BASE INDUSTRIES (SF2)	590,217	59,322	48	0.101	0.101	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.110	0.100	345,949,085
OM0000001095	DHOOFAR INSURANCE	4,000	896	1	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.225	-0.001	-0.444	0.224	0.000	0.224	0.100	25,258,578
OM0000009709	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	662,030	211,374	106	0.319	0.320	0.318	0.318	0.320	-0.002	-0.625	0.318	0.318	0.320	0.100	101,024,000
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,200	286	1	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.240	-0.002	-0.833	0.238	0.238	0.245	0.100	10,892,260
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	84,400	27,720	25	0.330	0.330	0.327	0.327	0.330	-0.003	-0.909	0.327	0.327	0.327	0.100	65,280,841
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	100,000	7,600	3	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.075	0.078	0.100	6,460,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	3,700	270	2	0.074	0.074	0.072	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.100	15,020,997
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	3,063	334	1	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.110	-0.002	-1.818	0.108	0.099	0.110	0.100	29,277,774
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	72,000	3,260	3	0.046	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.047	-0.001	-2.128	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	14,128,731
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	106,700	16,003	20	0.150	0.150	0.148	0.150	0.154	-0.004	-2.597	0.150	0.140	0.150	0.100	47,312,550
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	43,750	3,202	3	0.075	0.075	0.073	0.073	0.075	-0.002	-2.667	0.073	0.073	0.075	0.100	1,533,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,903,785	89,830	22	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.068	0.070	-0.002	-2.857	0.068	0.066	0.068	0.100	10,892,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	70,699	29,248	16	0.420	0.420	0.400	0.400	0.420	-0.020	-4.762	0.400	0.380	0.400	0.100	63,000,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT TREAD MILLS	12,050	1,446	2	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.130	-0.010	-7.692	0.120	0.120	0.130	0.100	21,114,844
Total	27	3,737,297	539,084	315												



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I, Ali Asgar (holder of Indian Passport No. T9484730) Son of Shabbir Husain having permanent residence in Rani Laxmi Bai Marg Manasa, Neemuch Pin: 458110 M.P, India (complete postal address in India) and presently residing in P.O. Box 125 Darsait, Muscat near Indian School Darsait, Muscat (complete postal address in Oman) intend to change my name from **ALI ASGAR** (old name) to **ALI ASGAR TALWALA** (new name) for all practical purpose. Any objection towards my name change may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P.O. Box No 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

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Using a four-dimensional microscopy technique, researchers at Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Centre have created 3D video images of mouse lung tissue grown in the laboratory

Researchers have created 3D video images of mouse lung tissue grown in the laboratory using a four-dimensional microscopy technique. What they have learned has been nothing short of groundbreaking. A new study suggests that understanding resilience--the ability of injured lung tissue to heal and regenerate--may be key to advancing the treatment and prevention of life-threatening lung disease in extremely premature babies. Using a four-dimensional microscopy

technique, researchers at Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Centre have created 3D video images of mouse lung tissue grown in the laboratory. "For the first time, we've been able to live-image the lung as it forms, and quantify and measure those cellular movements that come together to make an organ with a surface area large enough for gas exchange," said Jennifer Sucre, MD, associate professor of Pediatrics and Cell and Developmental Biology. The group's findings, published Feb. 24 as the cover article in JCI Insight, the

journal of the American Society of Clinical Investigation, represent a significant step toward improved treatment and prevention of bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), which occurs in about 50% of infants born two to four months prematurely. "If we can understand how the lung forms, then we have a blueprint for how to grow new lungs after injury," said the paper's first author, Nick Negretti, PhD, a senior post-doctoral fellow in the Sucre lab who co-led the research. "Mice have an extraordinary ability to repair the lung," said Sucre, the paper's senior author, who directs the Bio-developmental Origins of Lung

Disease (BOLD) Centre at VUMC. "I want to give babies the superpower of the mouse." Premature babies with BPD require oxygen and mechanical ventilation in the early days after birth to help them breathe. Oxygen therapy is a double-edged sword because it also can damage delicate lung tissue. The innovative technology implemented by the Sucre lab allows for testing and identification of the specific molecules and pathways that guide this process. It is also a discovery tool for drugs promoting tissue regeneration after injury. -ANI

STUDY FINDS
POSSIBLE WAY
TO HEAL
DAMAGED
LUNGS AFTER
PREMATURE BIRTH

SPORTS

Man Utd unveils £2bn plan for 100,000-seat stadium

Once the new stadium is completed, the existing Old Trafford will be demolished, according to Sir Jim Ratcliffe, the club's co-owner

LONDON: Manchester United has revealed plans to build the UK's largest stadium, a £2bn, 100,000-seater venue near their iconic Old Trafford home, according to a *BBC Sport* on Tuesday.

The new ground is set to be the "world's greatest football stadium," according to co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe, with the club hoping for completion within five years. Once the new stadium is finished, the existing Old Trafford will be demolished.

The club has decided to pursue a new stadium after an extensive consultation process, weighing options between redeveloping



Old Trafford or starting from scratch.

Old Trafford, Manchester United's home since 1910, will remain in use until the new stadium is ready.

The stadium's design, by renowned architects Foster and Partners, features an umbrella-style roof, a massive public plaza twice the size of Trafalgar Square, and three towering 200-meter "trident" masts visible

from 25 miles away.

Despite being £1bn in debt, the club has not yet revealed how it plans to fund the project.

CEO Omar Berrada expressed confidence that the stadium would be a "very attractive investment opportunity," ensuring the financing will be secured.

The project is set to be a major part of a regeneration effort for the Old Trafford area, which is expected to create 92,000 new jobs,

17,000 homes, and generate an additional £7.3bn annually for the UK economy.

The plans have received government backing, with Chancellor Rachel Reeves offering support for the venture.

Ratcliffe emphasised the stadium's potential to become one of the most iconic football arenas globally, saying, "Our current stadium has served us brilliantly for the past 115 years, but it has fallen

behind the arenas in world sport."

He added that the timeline for construction would depend on the government's progress with the regeneration programme.

The project will include the prefabrication of stadium components, which will be shipped along the nearby Manchester Ship Canal.

The redevelopment of Old Trafford comes as criticism of the current stadium has grown,

particularly due to issues like leaks from the Sir Bobby Charlton Stand. The venue, which has not seen significant development since 2006, currently holds 74,140 spectators, making it England's largest club stadium.

Foster and Partners, the architects behind the new Wembley Stadium and Lusail Stadium (the 2022 World Cup final venue), will lead the design of the new Manchester United stadium. - Agencies

CANDID INTERVIEW

Ratcliffe slams underperforming, overpaid Man United players

LONDON: Sir Jim Ratcliffe, co-owner of Manchester United, has openly criticised some players at the club, describing them as "not good enough" and "overpaid."

In a candid interview with *BBC Sport*, Ratcliffe, who purchased a 28.94% stake in the club last year, highlighted several players his regime had "inherited," including Casemiro, Rasmus Hojlund, Andre Onana, and wingers Antony and Jadon Sancho, the latter of whom is currently on loan at other clubs.

Ratcliffe, a lifelong Manchester United fan and chairman of the petrochemicals company Ineos, addressed the club's ongoing struggles on the pitch, with United currently sitting 14th in the Premier League.

Despite these challenges, Ratcliffe expressed confidence in the team's future, reiterating his commitment to bringing silverware to the club by 2028.

He also revealed the club's financial difficulties, admitting that Manchester United could run out of money by the end of the year unless "unpopular" actions are taken. These remarks came just a day after protests by fans against the club's ownership.

Among the issues Ratcliffe discussed were the club's financial obligations, including a £17m payment still owed on Jadon Sancho's transfer from Borussia Dortmund.

Sancho, a £73m signing in 2021, has since been loaned to Chelsea after falling out with former manager Erik ten Hag.

In his interview, Ratcliffe emphasised the ongoing process of



transformation, and said, "Some players are not good enough and some probably are overpaid, but for us to mold the squad we are fully responsible for, it will take time." He also acknowledged that moving away from the club's past mistakes would require patience.

Despite the criticism, Ratcliffe expressed optimism about the future, highlighting the talents of players like Bruno Fernandes and

reaffirming his dedication to turning Manchester United into the "most profitable club in the world" with plans for a new world-class stadium.

Ratcliffe's first year in charge has been challenging, but he remains committed to reshaping the club into a competitive and financially secure powerhouse, with a focus on both player development and long-term success.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Guimaraes' strike seals vital win for Newcastle



LONDON: Newcastle United moved up to sixth in the Premier League with a vital 1-0 victory over West Ham on Monday, just days before their Carabao Cup final appearance.

The win, secured by a second-half strike from Bruno Guimaraes, provided Eddie Howe's side with the momentum they needed ahead of their showdown with Premier League leaders Liverpool at Wembley this Sunday.

With just one win in their previous four league games, Newcastle needed a result to keep

their confidence high.

The match at London Stadium, however, nearly got off to a rocky start. Within the opening minute, Tino Livramento's failed clearance allowed Tomas Soucek to surge through, but the West Ham midfielder blazed his shot over from close range, letting Newcastle off the hook.

Despite a bright start from the Hammers, Newcastle gained control, with Barnes playing a key role. Just moments after Areola's brilliant save to deny a Max Kilman own goal, Guimaraes opened the scoring in the 57th minute.

The Brazilian midfielder turned in Barnes' lofted pass, securing the all-important goal.

It was a timely strike, providing the perfect tonic for Newcastle, who had been hampered by injuries and suspensions in recent weeks.

Newcastle's victory means they now sit just two points off the top four, and while the upcoming cup final is a major focus, For West Ham, the defeat leaves them in 16th place, still 16 points clear of the relegation zone but now 12 points adrift of the top eight. - Agencies

FORMER IPL CHIEF



Vanuatu revokes Lalit Modi's citizenship amid India's pursuit

LONDON: Vanuatu's prime minister has ordered the cancellation of fugitive Indian businessman Lalit Modi's citizenship, just days after India confirmed that the former Indian Premier League (IPL) chief had acquired a passport from the Pacific island nation.

Modi, wanted in India on corruption charges linked to rigging bids during his tenure at the helm of the lucrative IPL, has lived in the UK since 2010 and denies all allegations. India has made multiple failed attempts to extradite him.

On Friday, India's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir

Jaiswal confirmed that Modi had applied to surrender his Indian passport in London.

"We continue to pursue the case against him as required under law," Jaiswal said.

The revelation of Modi's Vanuatu citizenship caused a stir in India, where he was once a prominent figure in the cricket and social circuits, frequently seen with Bollywood celebrities and business elites.

However, on Monday, Vanuatu Prime Minister Jotham Napat announced the decision to revoke Modi's passport, stating that citizenship was a "privilege" meant for those with legitimate reasons.

"None of those legitimate rea-

sons include attempting to avoid extradition, which the recent facts brought to light clearly indicate was Mr. Modi's intention," Napat said in a statement.

He noted that background checks and Interpol screenings at the time of Modi's application revealed no criminal convictions.

However, he recently learned that Interpol had twice rejected India's requests for an alert notice against Modi due to a lack of "substantive judicial evidence."

"Any such alert would have triggered an automatic rejection of Mr. Modi's citizenship application," the statement added.

The development could aid In-

dian authorities, as Vanuatu - unlike the UK - lacks an extradition treaty with India, complicating efforts to bring Modi back.

A day earlier, Modi posted on X (formerly Twitter), asserting that no cases were pending against him in any Indian court and accusing the media of spreading "fake news."

Modi, who played a key role in launching the IPL in 2008, was banned for life by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in 2013.

The charges against him include bid manipulation during the 2010 franchise auctions and unauthorised. - Agencies

Visit Oman signs agreement with Expedia Group to drive digital distribution of local tourism offerings

This collaboration includes integrating local tours and activities providers onto Expedia Group’s platform using API technology and creating a global digital marketing campaign targeting US, UK and Middle Eastern travellers and marks a significant step forward in Visit Oman’s strategy to enhance digital distribution and connectivity

BERLIN: The National Travel Operator – Visit Oman and Expedia Group, one of the world’s largest travel technology companies, have signed an agreement at the world’s leading travel trade show, ITB Berlin.

This collaboration includes integrating local tours and activities providers onto Expedia Group’s platform using API technology

and creating a global digital marketing campaign targeting US, UK and Middle Eastern travellers and marks a significant step forward in Visit Oman’s strategy to enhance digital distribution and connectivity. This strategic agreement aims to digitize and aggregate Oman’s diverse tourism offerings, making them readily accessible to Expedia Group’s



Shabib Al Maamari, Managing Director of Visit Oman, stated: “By leveraging Expedia’s global reach and advanced digital marketing capabilities, we are bringing Oman’s rich cultural heritage and breath-

ence. We’re committed to empowering local tourism providers and SMEs by placing Omani offerings on the global digital map.”

Jennifer Andre, Vice President of Business Development Expedia Group Media Solutions, said: “We’re thrilled to partner with Visit Oman to showcase Oman’s diverse travel offerings to targeted international markets. By adding Omani activities onto our platform and creating impactful marketing campaigns to drive demand, we are helping to connect local tourism providers to the right traveller, at the right time, boosting awareness and economic value to the destination.”

The launch of this partnership will significantly enhance Oman’s presence on a leading global OTA, driving inbound tourism and showcasing the country’s unique travel offerings.

This collaboration underscores Visit Oman’s commitment to empowering local tourism providers and SMEs through digital distribution, ensuring that Oman’s diverse tourism offerings are accessible to a global audience.

STRENGTHEN TIES WITH GOLFING COMMUNITY

Europcar Oman & Bahrain sponsors Aramco Oilman’s Golf Tournament



MUSCAT: Europcar Oman and Bahrain sponsored the prestigious Aramco Oilman’s Golf Tournament, held at the Rolling Hills Golf Course (RHGC) in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in October 2024. This sponsorship further reinforced its commitment to the sport and strengthening its presence within the golfing community. As one of the key sponsors, Europcar played a vital role in supporting the event and enhancing the overall experience for participants and guests.

Nitin Sapre, CEO of Europcar Oman and Bahrain, attended the event and took the opportunity to extend a special invitation to David Bedford, President of RHGC. The invitation was for a group of golfers from Aramco to visit Oman and experience its world-class golf courses and exceptional facilities. This initiative materialized in February when 20 Aramco golfers arrived in Oman for an exclusive golfing experience.

Europcar ensured a seamless experience for the visiting golfers by managing all logistics, includ-

ing car rentals, hotel bookings and golf course arrangements. The golfers had the opportunity to play at three of Oman’s premier golf clubs—Al Mouj Golf Club, Ghala Golf Club and La Vie Golf Club at Muscat Hills. To further elevate their visit, Europcar hosted a dinner reception at La Vie Golf Club, fostering a memorable and hospitable atmosphere.

Continuing its dedication to the golfing community, Europcar has once again committed to sponsoring this year’s Aramco Oilman’s Golf Tournament at Rolling Hills Golf Course in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. As part of this sponsorship, Europcar will offer an exclusive grand prize, which includes an invitation to the Europcar Golf Open at Al Mouj Golf Course in Muscat, Oman, on December 5th. The prize package features a round-trip air ticket from Saudi Arabia to Muscat, a luxurious two-night stay at a five-star hotel, and a two-day SUV rental, ensuring an exceptional experience for the winner.

HOLY MONTH

ahlibank partners with Al Rahma Association to launch charitable Ramadan initiatives

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its commitment to social responsibility and community support, ahlibank has signed a strategic partnership with Al Rahma Association for Motherhood and Child Welfare to launch a series of charitable initiatives during the holy month of Ramadan. These initiatives aim to provide essential assistance to underprivileged families, enhance their living conditions, and support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by offering marketing platforms that foster economic empowerment.

As part of this collaboration, ahlibank will provide Eid clothing to over 250 underprivileged families, ensuring they can celebrate the festive season with joy. Additionally, recognizing the importance of a comfortable living environment, the bank will also contribute essential household appliances, including air conditioners, to families registered under Al Rahma Association. This initiative is designed to enhance their standards of living and alleviate financial burdens.

Additionally, the agreement includes a dedicated booth for home-based businesses supported by Al Rahma Association at the bank’s third annual Ramadan Souq. This initiative will provide entrepreneurs with a valuable platform to present and sell their products,



fostering financial independence and contributing to their growth and financial independence.

Jumana Al Hashmi, AGM-Head of Marketing & Corporate Communications at ahlibank, emphasized the bank’s strong commitment to creating a positive social impact, stating:

“At ahlibank, corporate social responsibility is at the heart of our values. We believe in creating meaningful and lasting change by extending our support beyond banking services. Our initiatives aim to empower communities,

foster financial independence, and promote a culture of giving. Ramadan provides the perfect opportunity to reinforce these principles, and we are confident that our efforts will make a tangible difference in the lives of those in need.”

She further highlighted the significance of such collaboration with charitable organizations to maximize impact, noting that this partnership aligns with ahlibank’s broader vision of expanding its community outreach and increasing the reach of its social

initiatives. Supporting home-based businesses, she added, is a strategic step towards economic empowerment, contributing to sustainable development and aligning with Oman Vision 2040.

Through these initiatives, ahlibank continues to reaffirm its dedication to making a positive and sustainable impact on society. The bank remains committed to expanding its social contributions, implementing transformative projects, and enhancing the quality of life for individuals and families across Oman.

CAMPAIGN

Win big this Ramadan: Buy a Mazda, enter to win Mazda 6

MUSCAT: This Ramadan, Mazda Oman invites you to experience the thrill of owning a Mazda while participating in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to win a free Mazda 6 through raffles. This campaign is not merely about purchasing a vehicle—it’s about embracing a legacy of engineering brilliance, refined design, and unparalleled value.

At the heart of this campaign lies a dual promise: the joy of driving a Mazda and the chance to win another. Every customer who purchases any Mazda model during this period will automatically enter a raffle, with four brand-new Mazda 6 sedans up for grabs. The raffle draws will be held on March 16th, March 23rd, April 6th, and April 17th, amplifying the excitement throughout Ramadan.

Beyond the raffle, Mazda Oman enhances ownership confidence with a complimentary 4-year service package and 3-year AAA roadside assistance, ensuring that your vehicle remains in peak condition long after the festive season. This combination of opportunity and assurance underscores Mazda’s commitment to



delivering value that transcends expectations.

Mazda’s Ramadan campaign showcases a curated selection of vehicles, each engineered to cater to distinct lifestyles and preferences. Below, we delve into the unique attributes of each model, highlighting why they stand apart in their respective segments.

Starting at RO 7,966, the Mazda 6 redefines sophistication in the midsize sedan category. Available in 2.0L and 2.5L engine variants, it marries fuel efficiency with responsive performance, making it ideal for both city commutes and long drives. Its sleek KODO design language, premium interior craftsmanship, and advanced i-Activ-

ense safety suite position it as a benchmark for modern sedans. For those seeking a vehicle that balances practicality with prestige, the Mazda 6 is a compelling choice. This Ramadan, purchasing one could also secure you a second—a testament to its unmatched value proposition.

The CX-5 starting at RO 8,955 is a

masterclass in versatility. Powered by a robust 2.5L engine, this compact SUV delivers a harmonious blend of power and agility, effortlessly navigating urban streets and rugged terrains alike. Its spacious, ergonomically designed cabin, coupled with Mazda’s intuitive infotainment system, ensures comfort for both driver and passengers. The CX-5’s bold styling and Skyactiv technology underscore its appeal to families and adventure enthusiasts. This Ramadan, it offers more than just a vehicle—it offers a gateway to new experiences.

The CX-60 starting at RO 12,999 marks Mazda’s bold entry into the premium SUV segment. Offering two electrified powertrains—a 2.5L and a 3.3L Turbo MHEV—the CX-60 combines exhilarating performance with eco-conscious engineering. Its avant-garde design, plush Nappa leather interiors, and cutting-edge driver-assistance technologies make it a standout in the luxury SUV segment. For discerning buyers seeking innovation without compromise, the CX-60 is a statement of ambition.

The CX-90 starting at RO 15,999 represents the zenith

of Mazda’s engineering prowess. Equipped with a 3.3L Turbo MHEV engine, this three-row SUV delivers robust power and precision, tailored for those who demand excellence. Its spacious, tech-forward cabin, adorned with authentic wood and metallic accents, caters to both families and executives. The CX-90’s i-Activ all-wheel-drive system and predictive safety features ensure confidence in every journey. It is not merely a vehicle—it is a declaration of sophistication.

As the official distributor of Mazda Oman, Towell Auto Centre brings this campaign to life with its unwavering dedication to customer satisfaction. With state-of-the-art showrooms, a team of automotive experts, and seamless after-sales support, Towell Auto Centre ensures that every customer’s journey—from exploration to ownership—is nothing short of exceptional.

With the campaign ending on April 15, delay risks missing your chance to drive home a Mazda—and potentially, a second one. Embrace the spirit of Ramadan with Mazda Oman. Your journey toward excellence begins today.

ROUND-UP

Realise your luxury wish list with Lincoln’s exclusive benefits

Lincoln’s impressive range in Oman includes the Corsair, Nautilus and Navigator, each offering an exceptional blend of sophistication, technology and performance

MUSCAT: For those who aspire to experience luxury at its finest, Lincoln presents an exciting opportunity. Now, when you own a



luxury Lincoln, you receive exclusive benefits, including 5 Years / 100,000 km Service, 5 Years / 100,000 km Warranty, Free Insurance and 1 Year Registration, all designed to enhance your ownership experience. (Conditions apply. Visit the Lincoln showroom in Wattayah for details.) The offer ends on 17th April 2025. Sharing his thoughts about the latest campaign, a representative

from Arabian Car Marketing, the dealers for Lincoln in Oman said, “Lincoln embodies effortless luxury and with these exclusive benefits, we are making it even more rewarding for our customers to drive home a vehicle that exudes sophistication, power and cutting-edge technology. This is the perfect time to realise your luxury wish list with a Lincoln that redefines refinement and performance.”

Lincoln’s impressive range in Oman includes the Corsair, Nautilus and Navigator, each offering an exceptional blend of sophistication, technology and performance. A statement of style and power, the Lincoln Corsair seamlessly merges luxury with technology. Designed for those who appreciate comfort and performance, this two-row SUV features a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder

engine delivering 250 horsepower and 275 lb.-ft. of torque, paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission for a smooth, refined drive. Inside, Lincoln Co-Pilot360™ 2.1 Vision driver-assist features enhance safety, while a premium 10-speaker audio system ensures an immersive experience. The Corsair is crafted to glide effortlessly on the road, staying true to Lincoln’s Quiet Flight DNA. With a bold new Lincoln signature grille, sleek tail lamps and an elegant light bar, the Nautilus makes a powerful first impression. Designed for those who desire both luxury and SUV versatility, it boasts a 2.7-liter twin-turbo V6 engine delivering 335 horsepower and 515 Nm of torque, paired with adaptive suspension and all-wheel drive disconnect for ultimate control. The Nautilus also offers an all-new wheel line-up, including premium 18” painted aluminium and 20” machined aluminium options for an even more distinguished stance. A true icon in the world of luxury

SUVs, the Lincoln Navigator sets the standard for spaciousness and cutting-edge technology. Powered by a twin-turbo V6 engine generating 440 horsepower, this SUV is engineered for an exceptionally smooth ride, supported by a 10-speed automatic transmission. Inside, the Navigator delivers next-level opulence with Revel® Ultima audio featuring 28 speakers, a panoramic roof that floods the cabin with natural light and SYNC® 4 technology for seamless connectivity. Passengers enjoy personalised comfort with second-row audio and climate control, while the third-row seats feature power recline capability for a first-class experience. For those seeking to elevate their driving experience, now is the perfect time to own a Lincoln with these exceptional benefits. Visit the Lincoln showroom at Wattayah today and make your luxury wish list a reality. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

ENHANCING SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE



Al Samood sports team members applaud Green Sports initiative for supporting local teams

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues its commitment to nurturing youth and enhancing sports infrastructure through its “Green Sports” programme. Recently, the Bank celebrated the inauguration of the Al Samood sports team stadium lighting project in Bediya, North Sharqiya governorate. The event was patronised by Sheikh Hilal Saeed Al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, alongside Abdullah Juma Al Araiimi, Senior Regional Manager of Bank Muscat’s Sharqiyah and Dhakhiliyah branches, Mohammed Saeed Al Hajri, Head of the Al Samood sports team, and other distinguished guests and team members. During the ceremony, Abdullah Juma Al Araiimi, Senior Regional Manager of Bank Muscat’s Sharqiyah and Dhakhiliyah branches, delivered a speech expressing his pleasure in supporting the Al Samood sports team through the Bank’s “Green Sports” initiative. He emphasized the critical role of sports in sustainable development and community cohesion, affirming the Bank’s belief in creating safe and supportive environments for youth athletic activities. He extended heartfelt thanks to the Al Samood sports, reaffirming the Bank’s ongoing dedication to community service and sustainable development. Mohammed Saeed Al Hajri, Head of Al Samood sports team, expressed gratitude to Bank Muscat for its unique initiative that supports youth talent by providing robust infrastructure for sports teams. He highlighted the opportunities such projects create for youth to hone their skills and showcase their abilities. Team members shared their excitement about the project’s impact. A number of Al Samood sports team members also expressed their happiness over the project’s inauguration. Wael Abdullah Al Saqri, a team player, said: “This project is anticipated to make a big difference in the way of training and playing, as good lighting will allow us to practice in the evening, which gives us more

The Green Sports programme by Bank Muscat aims to bolster Oman’s sports infrastructure by funding national teams’ projects, promoting green spaces, and fostering community engagement

flexibility in the timings. Thus, we will give our best and achieve our goals. I would like to thank Bank Muscat for its commitment to sports development.” Abdullah Sadood Al Hajri, another player, emphasised that the project not only boosts performance but also enriches the playing environment for players and fans alike. “Thank you, Bank Muscat, for “Green Sports” programme, as this type of support contributes to the development of sports infrastructure and enhances team spirit and competition between local teams,” he said. The Green Sports programme by Bank Muscat aims to bolster Oman’s sports infrastructure by funding national teams’ projects, promoting green spaces, and fostering community engagement. The programme has continued to achieve success since its launch in 2012, and this is evident through the intense competition by the national teams to benefit from the funding provided annually. The programme has been a model of success, with numerous teams competing annually for funding. To date, the programme has supported 203 teams, benefiting over 70,000 members across various governorates. The initiative serves as a benchmark for supporting local communities in sports and cultural fields, ensuring the sustainability of projects and providing venues for diverse activities, thereby enhancing the sporting landscape across Oman.

AUTO AND GOODS FINANCING

Muzn Islamic Banking announces exclusive Ramadan financing offers

MUSCAT: NBO Muzn Islamic Banking has announced the launch of special Ramadan financing offers for Auto and Goods Financing, available from 1 March to 30 April, offering Sharia-compliant financial solutions tailored to meet customers’ needs and expectations. This exclusive financing opportunity allows customers to benefit from special profit rates across various tenures: 4.75% for Auto and Goods Financing under two years, 5.25% for three to five years, and 5.45% for five to ten years. These limited-time offers are designed to cater to both existing and new customers, reinforcing Muzn Islamic Banking’s dedication to financial inclusion and customer-centric banking. Commenting on the offer, Salima Obaid Issa Al-Marzogi, Assistant General Manager and Chief Islamic Banking Officer at NBO said: “At Muzn Islamic Banking, we prioritise financial empowerment through Sharia-compliant solutions that align with our customers’ expectations. With these special Ramadan offers, we are making it easier for in-



dividuals to access hassle-free financing options that support their personal and financial growth while ensuring transparency in

every transaction.” By providing competitive rates and easier access to financing, Muzn Islamic Banking con-

tinues to uphold its vision of delivering trusted Sharia-compliant financial services that uphold Islamic banking principles.

GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Takaful Oman Insurance recognised among Best Workplaces in Oman for 2025



MUSCAT: Takaful Insurance announced its recognition as one of the Best Workplaces in Oman for 2025, awarded by Great Place to Work. This prestigious acknowledgment is a testament to our commitment to fostering a workplace culture that empowers, inspires and nurtures talent. Takaful Insurance is the only insurance company in Oman to achieve this feat, marking its second major milestone after being the certified as Great Place to Work in February 2024. “At Takaful Insurance, we believe that our employees are the cornerstone of our success. Our sincere effort in creating a positive and inclusive work environment is reflected in our commitment to enhance employee engagement, well-being and career growth opportunities. We strive to provide an atmosphere that encourages collaboration, innovation and pro-

fessional development, ensuring that our team members feel valued and supported at every stage of their careers.” – Neelmani Bhardwaj - CEO. As part of our ongoing efforts to develop and empower talent, Takaful Insurance has implemented a range of initiatives focusing on Learning & development and digital transformation of HR processes, designed to enhance skills and support career progression. Takaful Insurance is committed to fostering a progressive and employee-centric workplace through employee-friendly HR practices with a strong focus on having competency development framework for effective succession planning. To support continuous learning, we offer classroom training programs for comprehensive skill enhancement and actively participate in regulator (FSA) initiated training programs to align with in-

dustry compliance standards. Our digital learning platform, TALEM (Takaful Academy of Learning Management), provides on-demand eLearning opportunities, enabling employees to upskill at their convenience. Additionally, the launch of a modern HRMS system, TOPS (Takaful Oman People System), has streamlined HR processes, from recruitment and onboarding to performance and payroll management. TOPS also serves as an engaging internal professional networking platform, keeping employees informed and connected within the organization. These initiatives provide an edge to the company by adopting a Hybrid talent management and development approach which blends traditional and digital learning experiences to cater to diverse needs of employees. “Our recognition as a Best

Workplace is a reflection of our commitment to nurturing Oman’s talent pool by providing meaningful employment opportunities, supporting skill enhancement and ensuring career growth for our employees. By cultivating a workplace that values integrity, teamwork and continuous learning, we are proud to contribute to the development of a highly skilled workforce in Oman which is aligned toward Oman Vision 2040.” – Ismail Mohammed Al Ismaili - CHRO. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our employees for their dedication and contributions, which have made this achievement possible. Takaful Insurance remains steadfast in its mission to uphold a dual approach of thriving through adoption of cutting-edge digital solutions and strengthening of its human capital by setting up new benchmarks for workplace excellence in industry.



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