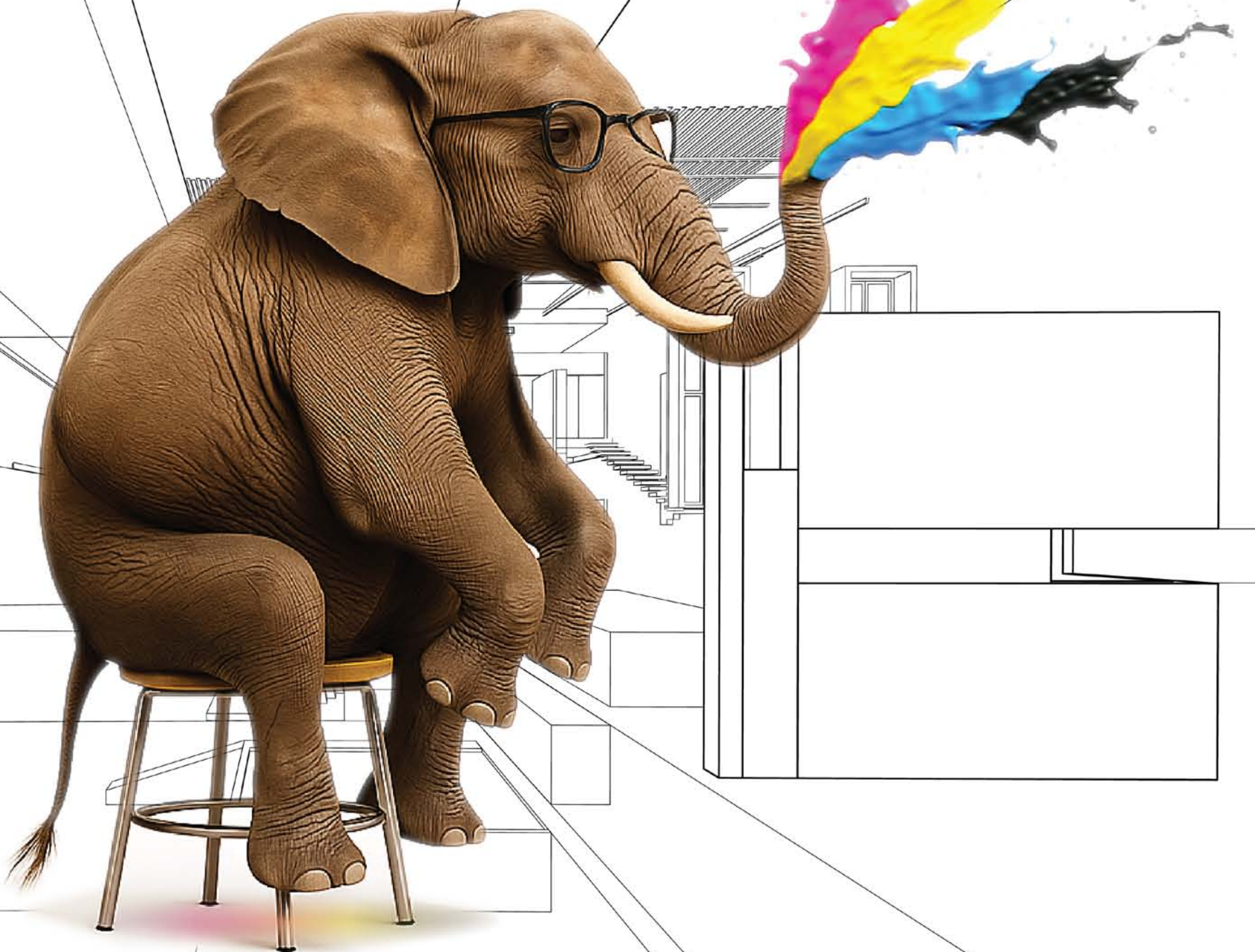


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Major road projects set to be opened across Oman in 2026

Officials noted that these projects will play a crucial role in enhancing economic activity by improving connectivity between cities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Several vital road infrastructure projects across the Sultanate are expected to be inaugurated in 2026, as part of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology's ongoing efforts to enhance connectivity, boost economic growth, and support sustainable development.

Among the key projects scheduled for completion are the dualization of Al Farooq Road in Dhofar

Governorate, paving of roads in Wilayat Muqshin, completion of Sultan Turki bin Said Road linking Al Kamil and Al Wafi with Sur in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, and the construction of the Aqabat Wadi Bani Khalid Road.

Other major works include the paving of the Harweeb-Al Mazunah-Maiten Road, construction of the Al Mughsail Road and Bridge Project, and paving of the Seih Al Khairat-Al Shisr Road in Dhofar.

The total value of road projects currently under implementation



by the Ministry stands at approximately OMR1.2 billion, reflecting the scale of investment being directed toward upgrading the national road network.

Prominent ongoing projects include Sultan Faisal bin Turki Road (Dibba-Lima-Khasab), Sultan

Said bin Taimur Road (Adam-Haima-Thumrait), the Eastern Expressway (Sultan Turki bin Said Road), the Al Batinah Coastal Road (Sultan Taimur bin Faisal Road), and the dualization of the Izki-Firq Road. Work has also commenced on the development

of Al Mouj Street and 18 November Street in Muscat.

- Roads expected to open in 2026 include:**
1. Dhofar Governorate: Dualisation of Sultan Taimur Road and Al Farooq Road; paving of roads in Wilayat Muqshin; paving of the Harweeb-Al Mazunah-Maiten Road; Al Mughsail Road and Bridge Project; and paving of the Seih Al Khairat-Al Shisr Road.
 2. Rehabilitation of Al Hazm-Rustaq Road in Wilayat Rustaq.
 3. Completion of Sultan Turki bin Said Road from Al Kamil and Al Wafi to Sur, South Al Sharqiyah.
 4. Rehabilitation of Sultan Thuwaini bin Said Road linking Wilayat Bidbid and Wilayat Nizwa in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.
 5. Completion of works on the Sohar Free Zone Link Road.
 6. Design and construction of Aqabat Aafri Road between Samail

and Izki, along with an asphalt road serving Al Suqari village in Al Dakhiliyah.

7. Completion of remaining works to upgrade Seih Qatna Road in Al Jabal Al Akhdar.

8. Tendering for completion of the dualisation project from Al Gas Roundabout to Bilad Sur.

Officials noted that these projects will play a crucial role in enhancing economic activity by improving connectivity between cities, ports, and production areas, increasing transport efficiency, and reducing the time and cost of commercial movement.

They are also expected to support economic diversification by stimulating multiple sectors, attracting investments, creating employment opportunities, supporting small and medium enterprises, and strengthening the competitiveness of local products in line with Oman Vision 2040.



REF: OFM/TD-01/2026

Tender for Hiring of Prime Mover with Qualified Driver on Lease Basis

Oman Flour Mills SAOG (OFM) invites specialized vendors to participate in the tender for the lease of a prime mover with a qualified driver, inclusive of diesel, in accordance with the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Documents:
Interested bidders are requested to send an email to tender3@omanflourmills.com to obtain the tender documents. Tender documents will be shared upon receipt of the tender fee deposit slip via email.

Tender Fee Details:
Tender fee shall be deposited directly to the following bank account:
•Account Name: Oman Flour Mills Company SAOG
•Bank: Sohar International
•Account Number: 001020032407
•Swift Code: BSHROMRUXXX

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-01/2026
Tender subject	Hiring of prime mover with qualified driver on lease basis inclusive of diesel
Tender Fee	RO. 100/- (non-refundable)
Start date for tender collection	14/01/2026
Last date for tender collection	22/01/2026
Last date for receiving the technical queries	25/01/2026
Closing date of the tender	26/01/2026
Mode of payment of tender fee	By Bank Transfer
Email address for receiving SOW & clarification	tender3@omanflourmills.com
Mode of submission	All bidders are required to submit their proposals online through email: bid-ofm@omanflourmills.com

•Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.
•Notwithstanding the specific terms in the Tender Documents, Tender fee is not refundable
•Bids submittal shall consist of 2 separate PDF files (Technical) & (Commercial), with bidder name on each and tender reference number OFM/TD-01/2026.



TWO-DAY FORUM

Forum on risk management and durability of business organised



MUSCAT: Muscat Governorate is organising a two-day forum on risk management and business durability.

Themed "Towards a Sustainable Institutional System that Enhances Governance and Service Flow", aims to exchange experiences and enhance institutional integration.

It focuses on the management of key files related to governance and service sustainability amid rapid modern time developments.

The forum is held under the auspices of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat.

The forum's programme includes specialised dialogue sessions and workshops that explore national and international experiences and highlight the risks and challenges of the digital age.

The events seek to establish a more sustainable institutional system that is capable of keeping pace with transformations and enhancing the comprehensive march of domestic development in the Sultanate of Oman.

Two working papers were presented in the first day of the forum. In her paper, Dr. Azza Al Sharji, a specialist in governance, risk management and compliance at Jadarat Development Academy, presented a working paper titled "Decision-Making During Crises: From Risk Management to Corporate Sustainability".

Response to the pandemic
Another specialist, Dr. Majda Al Salti, presented a working paper titled "Documenting the Sultanate of Oman's Experience in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic".

In her paper, she outlined a national project that was carried out in response to the pandemic across various sectors in Oman. -ONA



Re-Float

REF: OFM/TD-05/2025

Providing Forklift Operator

Oman Flour Mills invites qualified and licensed service providers to provide certified forklift operators to perform operational duties as instructed by the Customer's supervisors. The contract shall be for a period of two (2) years.

Tender Documents:
Interested bidders are requested to send an email to tender3@omanflourmills.com to obtain the tender documents. Tender documents will be shared upon receipt of the tender fee deposit slip via email.

Tender Fee Details:
Tender fee shall be deposited directly to the following bank account:
•Account Name: Oman Flour Mills Company SAOG
•Bank: Sohar International
•Account Number: 001020032407
•Swift Code: BSHROMRUXXX

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-05/2025
Tender subject	Providing forklift operators
Tender Fee	RO. 100/- (non-refundable)
Start date for tender collection	14/01/2026
Last date for tender collection	22/01/2026
Last date for receiving the technical queries	25/01/2026
Closing date of the tender	26/01/2026
Mode of payment of tender fee	By Bank Transfer
Email address for receiving SOW & clarification	tender3@omanflourmills.com
Mode of submission	All bidders are required to submit their proposals online through email: bid-ofm@omanflourmills.com

•Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.
•Notwithstanding the specific terms in the Tender Documents, Tender fee is not refundable
•Bids submittal shall consist of 2 separate PDF files (Technical) & (Commercial), with bidder name on each and tender reference number OFM/TD-05/2025.





Re-Float

REF: OFM/TD-04/2025

Ship Unloading Operator

Oman Flour Mills SAOG (OFM) invites specialized and experienced contractors to participate in providing skilled and qualified ship unloading operator in accordance with the defined scope of work and technical specifications.

Brief Scope of Work:
This tender aims to engage a competent and experienced contractor to provide qualified operators to support Oman Flour Mills in its ship unloading operations at Sultan Qaboos port. The contractor will be responsible for supplying eight (8) skilled operators capable of handling ship unloaders and other heavy equipment used in the discharge of bulk grains such as wheat, corn, barley, bran pellets, and soya.

Tender Documents:
Interested bidders are requested to send an email to tender3@omanflourmills.com to obtain the tender documents.

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-04/2025
Tender subject	Ship Unloading Operator
Start date for tender collection	14/01/2026
Last date for tender collection	22/01/2026
Last date for receiving the technical queries	25/01/2026
Closing date of the tender	26/01/2026
Email address for receiving SOW & clarification	tender3@omanflourmills.com
Mode of submission	All bidders are required to submit their proposals online through email: bid-ofm@omanflourmills.com

•Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.
•Bids submittal shall consist of 2 separate PDF files (Technical) & (Commercial), with bidder name on each and tender reference number OFM/TD-04/2025.



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FOR MORE

His Majesty reshuffles Cabinet, new ministers appointed

< FROM A1 It also cancels clauses No. (24, 25 and 27) from Annex No. (1) attached to Royal Decree No. 95/2020 on defining the specializations of the Ministry of Information and endorsing its organizational structure, and cancels clauses No. (5, 6, 7 and 8) from Annex No. (1) of Royal Decree No. 100/2020 on establishing Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, defining its specializations and endorsing its organizational structure.

It also cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (6) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree (No. 11/2026) establishes the Research and Innovation Authority, defines its specializations and endorses its organizational structure.



Article (1) stipulates that a public authority named the “Research and Innovation Authority” shall be established. It shall have legal personality, financial and administrative autonomy and report to the Council of Ministers.

Article (2) states that the headquarters of the Research and Innovation Authority shall be in the Governorate of Muscat. It may establish branches in other governorates as per a decision from the Authority’s board of directors.

Article (3) stipulates that the specializations of the Research and Innovation Authority shall be defined in accordance with Annex No. (1) attached to this decree.

Article (4) endorses the organizational structure of the Research and Innovation Authority in accordance with Annex No. (2) attached to this decree.

Article (5) stipulates that all allocations, origins, rights, obligations and assets of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation relevant to research and innovation shall be transferred to the Research and Innovation Authority. Employees of this ministry that are concerned with research and innovation shall be transferred to the Research and Innovation Authority.

Article (6) states that the phrases “Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation” and “Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation”—wherever quoted in laws and Royal decrees relevant to research and innovation—shall be replaced with the phrases “Research and Innovation Authority” and “Chairman of the Research and Innovation Authority”.

Article (7) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (8) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal decree (NO. 12/2026) amends the name of “Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education” to “Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education”, defines its specializations and endorses its organizational structure.

Article (1) amends the name of “Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education” to “Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education”, defining its specializations in accordance with Annex No. (1) attached to this decree.

Article (2) endorses the organizational structure of Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education in accordance with Annex No. (2) attached to this decree.

Article (3) stipulates that all allocations, origins, rights, obligations and assets of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation relevant to research and innovation shall be transferred to the Research and Innovation Authority. Employees of this ministry that are concerned with research and innovation shall be transferred to the Research and Innovation Authority.

tions and assets relevant to professional licenses, national studies and international studies from the Ministry of Education shall be transferred to Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education.

Article (4) stipulates that employees from divisions related to professional licenses, national studies and international studies at the Ministry of Education shall be transferred to Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education, along with their financial grades, in accordance with coordination between the heads of the two units.

Article (5) replaces the phrases “Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education” and “Chief Executive Officer”—wherever quoted in laws and Royal decrees—with the phrases “Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education” and “Chairman of the Authority”.

Article (6) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (7) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal decree (No. 13/2026) defines the specializations of the Ministry of Economy and endorses its organizational structure.

Article (1) defines the specializations of the Ministry of Economy in accordance with Annex No. (1) attached to this decree.

Article (2) endorses the organizational structure of the Ministry of Economy in accordance with Annex No. (2) attached to this decree.

Article (3) merges Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit in the Ministry of Economy. All allocations, origins, rights, obligations and assets of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit shall be transferred to the Ministry of Economy. Employees of the Unit shall be transferred to the Ministry of Economy, along with their financial grades.

Article (4) stipulates that subject to the provisions of Royal Decree No. 10/2026 on defining the specializations of the Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers and endorsing its organizational structure, the phrases “Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit” and “Head of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit”—wherever quoted in laws and Royal decrees—shall be replaced by the phrases “Ministry of Economy” and “Minister of Economy”.

Article (5) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (6) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal decree (No. 14/2026) merges the Ministry of Educa-

tion and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in one Ministry to be named “Ministry of Education”, defines its specializations and endorses its organizational structure.

Article (1) merges the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in one ministry to be named “Ministry of Education” and defines its specializations in accordance with Annex No. (1) attached to this decree.

Article (2) endorses the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education in accordance with Annex No. (2) attached to this decree.

Article (3) states that the following shall come under the purview of the Ministry of Education: All allocations, origins, rights, obligations and assets of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Employees of the two ministries shall be transferred to the Ministry of Education, along with their financial grades.

Article (4) stipulates that subject to the provisions of Royal Decree No. 11/2026 on establishing the Research and Innovation Authority, defining its specializations and endorsing its organizational structure and Royal Decree No. 12/2026 on amending the name of Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education to Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education, defining its specializations and endorsing its organizational structure, the phrases “Ministry of Education”, “Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation” and “Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation”—wherever quoted in laws and Royal decrees—shall be replaced by the phrases “Ministry of Education” and “Minister of Education”.

Article (5) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (6) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree (No. 15/2026) defines the specializations of the Ministry of Social Development and endorses its organizational structure.

Article (1) defines the specializations of the Ministry of Social Development in accordance with Annex No. (1) attached to this decree.

Article (2) endorses the organizational structure of the Ministry of Social Development in accordance with Annex No. (2) attached to this decree.

Article (3) cancels Royal Decree No. 14/2024 on defining the specializations of the Ministry of Social Development and endorsing



its organizational structure. It also cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree (No. 16/2026) amends the System of Oman Investment Authority.

Article (1) replaces the text of Article (12) of Royal Decree No. 57/2021 on the System of Oman Investment Authority with the following text: “The Chairman shall have two deputies who shall be appointed by a Royal decree. They shall enjoy all administrative and financial powers within the limits specified by the regulations of the Authority”.

Article (2) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree (No. 17/2026) restructures the Council of Ministers.

Article (1) restructures the Council of Ministers under the chairmanship of His Majesty the Sultan as follows:

-HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers

-HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq bin Taimour Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs

-HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs

-HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat

-Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal bin Saud Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court

-General Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu’amani, Minister of the Royal Office

-Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal bin Said Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior

-Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister

-Sultan bin Salim bin Said Al Habsi, Minister of Finance

-Dr. Madiha bint Ahmed bin Nasser Al Shaibani, Minister of Education

-Sayyid Saud bin Hilal bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

-Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Said Al Sa’eedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs

-Dr. Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Harrasi, Minister of Information

-Dr. Khamis bin Saif bin Hamoud Al Jabri, Minister of Economy

-Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said bin Ibrahim Al Busaidi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism

-Dr. Saud bin Hamoud bin

Ahmed Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

-Dr. Khalfan bin Said bin Mubarak Al Shu’aili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning

-Eng. Said bin Hamoud bin Said Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

-Dr. Laila bint Ahmed bin Awadh Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development

-Dr. Mahad bin Said bin Ali BaOwain, Minister of Labour

-Eng. Salim bin Nasser bin Said Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals

-Dr. Mohammed bin Said bin Khalfan Al Ma’amari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs

-Dr. Hilal bin Ali bin Hilal Al Sabti, Minister of Health

-Anwar bin Hilal bin Hamdoun Al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion

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

Royal Decree (No. 18/2026) conducts placements in some posts.

Article (1) appoints Qais bin Mohammed bin Moosa Al Yousef as Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones with the same rank and financial allocations.

Article (2) appoints Sayyid Faisal bin Hamoud bin Nasr Al Busaidi as Governor of Musandam with the rank of minister.

Article (3) says that this Royal decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree (No. 19/2026) appoints two advisors.

Article (1) appoints Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud bin Ali Al Sunaidi as Advisor at the Diwan of Royal Court with the same rank and financial allocations.

Article (2) appoints Dr. Said bin Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Saqri as Economic Advisor at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs with the same rank and financial allocations.

Article (3) says that this Royal decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree (No. 20/2026) grants the rank of minister.

Article (1) grants Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Zahir Al Hina, Ambassador-at-Large at the Foreign Ministry the rank of minister.

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

Royal Decree (No. 21/2022) conducts placements in some positions.

Article (1) appoints the follow-

ing as stated below:

- Sayyid Harib bin Thuwaini bin Shihab Al Said as Advisor at the Diwan of Royal Court with the same grade and financial allocations.

-Majid bin Said bin Sulaiman Al Bahri as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs with the same grade and financial allocations.

-Dr. Saif bin Abdullah bin Sulaiman Al Hadabi as Chairman of the Research and Innovation Authority with the same grade and financial allocations.

-Sheikh Rashid bin Ahmed bin Rashid Al Shamsi as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development for Family Affairs and Community Development with the same grade and financial allocations.

- Dr. Jokha bint Abdullah bin Hamoud Al Shukaili as Chairperson of Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education with the same grade and financial allocations.

-Sayyid Dr. Munthir bin Hilal bin Badr Al Busaidi as Head of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow up Unit at the Ministry of Economy with the same grade and financial allocations.

-Dr. Badr bin Hamoud bin Rashid Al Kharousi as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Education.

-Dr. Abdullah bin Ali bin Said Al Shibli as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Higher Education.

-Dr. Intisar bint Abdullah bin Sulaiman Ambosaidi as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Supporting Educational Programs.

-Ghalib bin Said bin Majid Al Ma’amari as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry.

-Said bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Balushi as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development.

-Dr. Abdullah bin Hamoud bin Abdullah Al Harthy as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development for Persons with Disabilities Affairs.

-Dr. Yousef bin Salim bin Mohammed Al Hina as Head of Communications and Government Performance Development Unit at the Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers with the special grade.

-Tahir bin Mabkhout bin Ali Al Junaibi as Governor of A’Dhahirah with the special grade.

-Eng. Ahmed bin Said bin Mohammed Al Amri as Chairman of Muscat Municipality with the special grade.

-Zahir bin Sulaiman bin Salim Al Salmi as Deputy Chairman of the State Financial and Administrative Audit Authority for Oversight on Government Units with the special grade.

-Sayyid Hamoud bin Sultan bin Hamad Al Busaidi as Advisor at the Diwan of Royal Court with the special grade.

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

Royal Decree (No. 22/2026) appoints two deputies for the Chairman of Oman Investment Authority.

Article (1) appoints Mulhim bin Bashir bin Abdullah Al Jaraf as Deputy Chairman of Oman Investment Authority for Investment.

Article (2) appoints Muneer bin Ali bin Nassir Al Muneeri as Deputy Chairman of Oman Investment Authority for Operations.

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

GOVERNORATES OF OMAN ORGANISED OPERETTA TO CELEBRATE HM THE SULTAN’S ACCESSION DAY



Al Buraimi



Al Buraimi



Dhofar



Muscat



North Al Batinah

MUSCAT: The Directorate General of Education in Muscat Governorate held a celebration marking the 6th anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq’s Accession Day. The celebration included a student operetta titled “Haitham of Oman—A Vision Manifested”. As many as 300 students took part in the operetta which included various tableaux that reflected the spirit of national unity and social solidarity.

The student national operetta titled “Fill the Universe with Light” was held at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Compound for Culture and Entertainment. Organised by the Directorate General of Education in Dhofar Governorate, the event commemorated the anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq’s Accession Day that reflected Oman’s renewed renaissance and its comprehensive developmental achievements.

The Directorate General of Education in Al Buraimi Governorate celebrated the anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq’s Accession Day.

The celebration included an operetta codenamed ‘Enjoy Prosperity’ that was performed by 150 students from six schools in the governorate. The operetta was based on the themes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq’s speeches, the accomplishments of the blessed Renaissance and development across all sectors.

The Directorate General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate celebrated the Accession Day of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq in the form of a student operetta codenamed “Hamat Al Majd” (Pinnacle of Glory).

The operetta was a comprehensive theatrical performance featuring the nation’s march that combined modernisation and cul-

tural legacy.

The Directorate General of Education in North Al Batinah Governorate organised a student operetta titled “Haitham Al Majd” (Haitham of Glory). The operetta was held at the Oman Hall at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Sohar, under the auspices of Mohammed Suleiman Al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah.

The Directorate General of Education in South Al Batinah Governorate celebrated the Accession Day. The celebration, held at the A’Rustaq Sports Complex, featured a student festival titled “Covenant and Belonging.” The event was held under the auspices of Eng. Masoud Said Al Hashmi, Governor of South Al Batinah.

The Directorate General of Education in North A’Sharqiyah Governorate organised a national student operetta titled “Haitham Salil Al Majd”. The event was held to commemorate the anniversary of His Majesty the Sultan’s Accession Day. The operetta was held under the auspices of Mahmoud Yahya Al Duhli, Governor of North A’Sharqiyah, and featured several purposeful national artistic tableaux.

The Directorate General of Education in South Al ‘Sharqiyah Governorate celebrated the Accession Day. The celebration was based on a student operetta titled “Farhat Watan” (A Nation’s Joy). The operetta showcased a vibrant national tableau featuring the accomplishments made during the reign of His Majesty the Sultan.

The Directorate General of Education in Al Wusta Governorate organised a student operetta titled “Ishraqat Noor”, included three tableaux. The first expressed the joy of the nation through folklore performances that portrayed a vivid embodiment of Omani heritage. -OMA



Al Dakhiliyah



Dhofar



South Sharqiyah



North Sharqiyah

Use of AI in RAM’s programmes, value chain reviewed

The Board reviewed institutional performance in 2025, approved the Annual Plan for 2026 and considered this year’s priorities



MUSCAT: The Board of Trustees of the Royal Academy of Management (RAM) held its first meeting of 2026, chaired by Sayyid Khalid Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of Diwan of Royal Court and Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The Board reviewed institutional performance in 2025, approved the Annual Plan for 2026 and considered this year’s priorities, including the Oman Global Economic Integration Initiative, Future Readiness Framework, and the seamless integration of AI into RAM’s programmes and across the value chain.

Al Busaidi highlighted RAM’s progress and measurable impact over the past year.

He praised RAM’s performance, noting its demonstrated results and contributions to a strategic shift in Oman’s leadership and administrative landscape.

He emphasised that RAM’s continued focus on developing national leadership capability and embedding modern knowledge, including through partnerships with leading local and international institutions, reflects the Royal Vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, which places investment in Oman’s human capital development at the centre of national priorities and future readiness.

The Board Members reviewed RAM’s overall institutional performance and achievements in the year 2025, which were guided by an integrated operating model focused on building effective leadership communities aligned with Oman’s future priorities.

The model was implemented through a range of initiatives, including structured executive programmes, national initiatives, applied studies, and curated dialogues, designed around a systematic learning philosophy informed by global best practices and



grounded in local context. RAM also delivered specialised studies on future readiness, alongside research related to local governance, decentralisation, and administration.

Reflecting RAM’s growing impact on leadership development, the Board of Trustees noted the expansion of RAM’s reach across leadership levels, with its total alumni exceeding 2,258.

Particular emphasis was placed on the development of leadership communities through the launch of RAM’s Alumni Platform, a professional network that supports knowledge exchange, sustains learning outcomes, and integrates alumni insights into RAM’s ongoing initiatives.

Regional cooperation
RAM’s contributing role in strengthening regional cooperation among GCC member states through the Future of Work in Government Programme was also recognised by its Board of Trustees.

The first edition of this bespoke programme delivered strong outcomes, engaging 65 senior leaders from GCC member states and the GCC Secretariat General.

Building on these excellent results, the Board confirmed RAM’s initiative to launch a second edition of its GCC programme under the theme Future Readiness, further reinforcing its role in advancing regional leadership capability and administrative collaboration.

During the meeting, RAM’s achievements in 2025 were highlighted as a testament to its commitment to enhancing leadership capacity across the public and private sectors, as well as society at large, supported by strategic local and international partnerships.

The Board of Trustees also noted RAM’s growing media presence across the GCC, wider region, and internationally.

Turning to future priorities, the meeting discussed RAM’s priorities for 2026, including continued work on the Oman Global Economic Integration Initiative.

Aiming to further strengthen Oman’s economic presence and strategic partnerships, the initiative will focus on supporting trade expansion and structured engagement with international organisations, in coordination with relevant government entities as well as the public and private sectors.

RAM has also established a Future Readiness Framework and is progressing work on a national methodology for measuring future readiness, developed in collaboration with local and international economic experts. This initiative aims to support decision-making and enhance institutional preparedness for long-term transformation.

RAM will also integrate artificial intelligence (AI) applications into selected programmes and across the value chain, aiming to further improve efficiency, enhance learning outcomes, and align with global developments in executive education, where AI is increasingly positioned not merely as a technology but as a strategic leadership capability.

The meeting of the Board of Trustees concluded with the approval of RAM’s Annual Plan for 2026, which encompasses a coordinated portfolio of programmes, initiatives, and studies that will be delivered through innovative approaches and in collaboration with leading international institutions. -ONA

Tender results of Treasury Bills worth OMR22.7 million issued

MUSCAT: The total issuance of Government Treasury Bills amounted to OMR22.7 million. The value of the allotted Treasury bills amounted to OMR12.1 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR 99.708 for every OMR 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO 99.705 per OMR 100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.80837% and 3.81953%, respectively.

The value of the allotted Treasury bills amounted to OMR 2 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.030 for every

OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.030 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.89066% and 3.92877%, respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted Treasury bills amounted to OMR5 million, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached OMR 98.082 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO 98.070 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.84654% and 3.92176%, respectively.

The value of the allotted Treasury bills amounted to OMR3.6

million, for a maturity period of 364 days. The average accepted price reached OMR96.400 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR96.400 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.60989% and 3.74470%, respectively. Treasury Bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The CBO acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). -ONA



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tenders:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/2026/002	UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION – Lot – 12A/2025	27-JAN-2026	05- FEB-2026	52.500
DISC/2026/003	UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION – Lot – 12B/2025	27-JAN-2026	05- FEB-2026	52.500
DISC/2026/005	UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION – Lot – 12D/2025	27-JAN-2026	05- FEB-2026	52.500
DISC/2026/006	UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION – Lot – 12E/2025	27-JAN-2026	05- FEB-2026	52.500
DISC/2026/007	11KV & LV NETWORK IMPROVEMENT WORKS OF 2025 IN ZONE-1 (LOT-03)	27-JAN-2026	05- FEB-2026	52.500
DISC/2025/165-2	Retender: UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION – Lot – 10D/2025	27-JAN-2026	05- FEB-2026	52.500
DISC/2025/179	Construction of 33/11kV, 2x20MVA Primary Substation designated as Adhan	27-JAN-2026	12- FEB-2026	1050.000
DISC/2025/114-2	Retender: Comprehensive assessment and improvement of Wastewater Directorate laboratory	27-JAN-2026	12- FEB-2026	52.500

- To purchase the tender document website via the link or the Barcode below:
https://isupplier.nama.om:4443/OA_HTML/OA.jsp?OAFunc=XXTEN_TENDER_FLOAT_DISC_F
- Every company wishing to participate in this tender must attach with its bid a bid bond in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman. Any bid that does not contain the bid bond will be disqualified.
- The original bid bond must be submitted in an envelope sealed with red wax and addressed to the chairperson of the minor tender committee and written on outside the Tender name and the Tender number and it should be placed in the tender box in Nama Dhofar Services in Salalah before 03:00 pm of the last day for submitting Bids.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "supplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The Tender fees are not refundable. However, Tenderers who are holding "Riyada" card issued from public authority for SME development will be exempted from providing the tender fee and the Bid bond.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.



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MEETINGS

SAF Chief of Staff meets Peninsula Shield Force official

MUSCAT: Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces, received in his office at Al Murtafa’a Camp today Maj. Gen Mohammed Abdulrahman Al Ruwais, Commander of the Peninsula Shield Force, and his accompanying military delegation.

Exchanged views
During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views and discussed several military topics of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Brigadier Ahmed Hamid Al Yaqoubi, Commander of the 23rd Infantry Brigade and Brigadier Saif Hamad Al Yousifi, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces for Operations and Planning.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen Matar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman also received Maj. Gen Mohammed Abdulrahman Al Ruwais, Commander of the Peninsula Shield Force and his accompanying military delegation at his office in Al Murtafa’a Camp.

During this meeting, the two sides discussed several military matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by several senior officers of the Royal Army of Oman.

Peninsula Shield Force Commander of visits MTC

Maj. Gen Mohammed Abdulrahman Al Ruwais, Commander of the Peninsula Shield Force, and his accompanying military delegation today visited the Military Technological College.

Upon his arrival at the college headquarters, the guest was received by Brigadier Ahmed Khalifan Al Hadidi, Dean of the Military Technological College.

During the visit, the Commander of the Peninsula Shield Force was briefed on the college’s educational mission, its academic curriculum, and the advanced technologies and educational tools it is equipped with.

Furthermore, the Commander of the Peninsula Shield Force visited the Maritime Security Centre, where he was received by Commodore Adil Hamoud Al Busaidi, Head of the Maritime Security Centre.

The Commander was briefed on the roles of the Maritime Security Centre and its efforts in maintaining the security and safety of the environment and navigation within the maritime zones of the Sultanate of Oman. He was also introduced to the center’s facilities and the modern technologies and systems utilised in its operations. -ONA

Tender Notice

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)
1/2026/MAFWR/HQ- 1	Cleaning works for the General Directorate buildings in Dhofar Governorate and the buildings of its affiliated departments and clinics	Thursday 11/1/2026	Wednesday 21/1/2026	Tuesday 10/2/2026	SMEs Specialized companies registered with Excellent, First Second, Third, fourth grades	(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 24402244 or etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

ROYAL DECREE

Member in State Council appointed

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday issued Royal Decree (No. 23/2026) on appointing a member in the State Council.

Article (1) appoints Dr. Mansour bin Saif bin Khamis Al Manthri as a Member in the State Council.

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

-ONA

MEETING

Tourism promotion

SALALAH: The Omani-Russian Tourism Promotion meeting in Salalah on Monday reviewed ways to enhance tourism and investment cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Russian Federation.

The meeting included an integrated programme that included visual presentations and specialised working papers, including a visual presentation that addressed the natural, tourism and heritage assets of Dhofar Governorate, in addition to a working paper on development, investment and economic opportunities in the tourism-related sectors in the governorate.

-ONA



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Ministry of Health inaugurates Central Public Health Laboratory

The establishment of the centre aims to enhance health and prevent disease by leading in laboratory sciences, supporting public health and environmental activities



He added that the Sultanate of Oman, during this glorious month of January of the current year, has witnessed in the era of the Renewed Renaissance a distinguished record for the health sector with the inauguration of three vital health development projects, marking a qualitative phase that places it among advanced nations through its comprehensive development march.

He noted that health constitutes one of the top priorities of Oman Vision 2040, and the vision of the Ministry of Health is summarized in a society enjoying sophisticated care and sustainable health, enabling it to live a secure and productive life socially and economically.

He pointed out that the wise Royal directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to establish the Central Public Health Laboratory translate his insightful vision of the importance of this vital project in strategic investments in the health of the Omani citizen, protecting society, and enhancing the national health sector's preparedness to deal with epidemiological, biological, chemical risks, and outbreaks of all kinds.

He added that this project is one

of the strategic programs being pursued by the Ministry of Health, under the directives of the future outlook for the health system, namely health crisis management.

He said that the opening of this laboratory is a qualitative shift in the concept of public health in terms of surveillance, diagnosis, and rapid response, and a practical affirmation that the Sultanate of Oman places human health at the forefront of its national priorities, in harmony with Oman Vision 2040, which has made quality of life and sustainable health a main axis of development.

He pointed out that the past years and the accompanying health crises have demonstrated the pivotal role of reference laboratories in the rapid detection of health threats, identification of microbial strains, monitoring of mutations, and guiding evidence-based health policies.

This was confirmed by statistics on laboratory tests conducted in the laboratories of the Ministry of Health in 2025, which amounted to approximately 22.9 million tests, in addition to tests conducted in the health sector laboratories in general, he added.

For his part, Dr. Ali bin Abdulhussein Al-Lawati, Advisor to the Minister's Office for Engineering Affairs at the Ministry of Health, confirmed that this laboratory represents one of the most prominent vital projects in the health sector of the Sultanate of Oman. It was established on a land area of 53,000 square metres, with a built-up area of 19,480 square metres and an estimated cost of OMR18.2 million. It houses the latest technologies and advanced laboratory facilities.

He explained that the building consists of three floors, including high-security laboratories with biosafety levels (BSL-2 and BSL-3), and specialised laboratories in the fields of virology, bacteriology, chemistry, toxicology, newborn screening, genetic sequencing, and bioinformatics.

It contains a lecture hall, a library, meeting rooms, and training laboratories in various fields to support the continuous training and education system.

He indicated that the cost of medical and laboratory equipment, electronic technical devices, and others amounts to approximately OMR11 million.

He noted that the Central Public Health Laboratory serves as an umbrella gathering the existing reference public health laboratories affiliated to the Ministry under one roof, and its importance lies in enhancing the diagnostic capabilities of laboratories.

Advanced reference tests such as molecular, microbiological, serological, and chemical tests will be conducted within it.

In a related context, Dr. Zakariya bin Yahya Al Balushi, Director General of the Disease Surveillance and Control Centre, said that the laboratory came to support and enhance the national health

system by achieving a level of quality, accuracy, and reliability, and by promoting public health and biosecurity objectives. It provides highly efficient laboratory services that contribute to the early detection of diseases and support rapid response to public health threats in accordance with national and international standards.

He pointed out that the Central Public Health Laboratory supports national epidemiological surveillance programs with the confirmed diagnosis of infectious diseases and will work on coordinating with international organizations as they are centers accredited by the World Health Organization in specific areas such as polio and influenza.

It will also work on developing and applying a comprehensive quality system in laboratories to ensure accreditation and compliance with international standards, in addition to supporting programs for training and qualifying national cadres in public health laboratory sciences and participating in research and scientific studies related to public health to be a scientific and research reference in the Sultanate of Oman.

In the same context, Dr. Hanan bint Salim Al Kindi, Director of the Central Public Health Laboratory Department at the Ministry of Health, explained that the Central Public Health Laboratory is one of the fundamental pillars of the epidemiological investigation and early warning system in the Sultanate of Oman, serving as a national, regional, and global reference for providing the most accurate laboratory tests and support for disease surveillance programs and outbreak response, as well as qualifying national cadres and developing advanced laboratory capabilities.

She added that the laboratory will effectively contribute to enhancing national health security and biosecurity through a comprehensive system of high-precision diagnostic services.

It will undertake many vital tasks through its various departments, such as: providing advanced reference services supporting disease prevention, control, and laboratory surveillance; providing reference and specialized tests; unifying laboratory standards; enhancing environmental health; ensuring food safety through laboratory tests; responding to health emergencies and supporting health system preparedness.

An internal committee in the laboratory assumes responsibility for safety and biosecurity by overseeing quality and biosafety requirements, setting policies and standards regulating the work environment security in medical laboratories, and following up on compliance with their application to ensure the protection of workers and the surrounding environment.

The quality assurance laboratory manages national and regional programs to monitor the quality of results from government and private laboratories, prepares and distributes quality control materials, monitors performance gaps in laboratories, and participates in regional programmes under the supervision of the World Health Organization.

It is worth noting that the laboratory encompasses a number of reference laboratories collaborating with the World Health Organization, among them the Regional Polio Laboratory, the Measles and Rubella Laboratory, the National Influenza Laboratory, and a Centre for Emerging and Re-emerging Diseases.

-ONA

MEDIA BRIEFING

Communications, IT sector attracts OMR1.2bn investments

MUSCAT: Investment in the logistics sector in the Sultanate of Oman during the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) increased to approximately OMR3.4 billion.

During its annual media briefing held yesterday in Muscat, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology indicated that it succeeded in attracting investments in the communications and information technology sector worth OMR1.2 billion in 2025.

This includes approximately OMR65 million invested in the field of artificial intelligence. Revenue growth from the ports sector



reached 17.4 percent, from maritime affairs 9.4 percent, and from land transport 18 percent.

Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al

Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, stated that the total length of roads under implementation during 2026 amounts to about 1,120 kilometres, with a total estimated cost of OMR1.2 billion.

In his speech, he added that Omani ports witnessed an increase in the volume of cargo handled during 2025, exceeding 143 million tonnes compared to 137 million tons in 2024.

More than 5.1 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) were handled, compared to 4.2 million TEUs in 2024. Additionally, Omani ports received more than 60

cruise ships carrying 200,000 passengers.

He explained that the investment agreements signed by the Ministry during the Tenth Five-Year Plan in the ports sector contributed to increasing the operational efficiency and productivity of the ports.

This, he said, led to an increase in handling volume during 2025 at Shinas Port by 689.3 percent and an increase in general cargo handling at Salalah Port by 16.7 percent.

For his part, Dr. Ali bin Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Commu-

nications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, affirmed that the Ministry is working on a number of investment projects in artificial intelligence and advanced technologies to enhance the digital economy.

Digital Triangle initiative

The most prominent of these include the announcement of Oman Digital Triangle initiative to develop three geographically dispersed but digitally connected digital zones, the Green AI Alliance project, and the AI Dedicated Zone project to attract supporting insti-

tutions and emerging technology companies in AI and other technologies from within the Sultanate of Oman and from Middle Eastern and African countries.

He clarified that the number of companies specialised in artificial intelligence in the Sultanate of Oman reached about 46 by 2025, and the number of companies operating in the space sector reached 25.

He explained that the Middle East Space Conference, concerned with promoting and marketing the space sector in the Sultanate of Oman, will be organised during this month.

-ONA



Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The Ministry of Defense (MOD) invites registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

NO	SUBJECT	TENDER NUMBER	LAST DATE FOR INQUIRIES	LAST DATE TO SUBMIT BIDS	TENDER DOCUMENT FEES + VAT
1	SUPPLY OF MEDICAL DRUGS FOR TWO YEARS FOR MCMSS	01/2026	16/02/2026	23/02/2026	1575 RO

2. Tenders terms and documents may be obtained through MOD TABSEET e-Services portal at the following link: <https://eservices.tabseet.gov.om>

3. Omanisation compliance certificate (Issued by Ministry of Labor) with a validity period not exceeding one month from the date of issuance must be submitted when purchasing tender's document.

4. Tender fees must be paid electronically via the aforementioned portal for each respective tender.

5. Bids must be submitted electronically through TABSEET portal in accordance with instructions provided.

6. For further information or inquiries, kindly contact us via email: modit.pur@mod.gov.om or via call center: 24300038.

MUSCAT NIGHTS

Over 600,000 visit venues

MUSCAT: The number of visitors to the Muscat Nights 2026 events has exceeded 600,000 since their launch across various locations in the Governorate of Muscat, reflecting strong public turnout and widespread engagement with the current edition of the events.

The wide distribution of activities across parks, gardens, shopping centres and tourist sites—offering cultural, artistic, sports and entertainment programmes—has contributed to boosting tourism, economic and cultural activity in the governorate.

This diversity has provided residents and visitors with the opportunity to enjoy the winter atmosphere and a variety of events catering to all age groups. Muscat Municipality has intensi-



fied its promotional efforts for Muscat Nights 2026 in its renewed format by leveraging various media platforms, including audio, print and visual media.

This was achieved through cooperation with radio and television stations, local newspapers and digital media outlets to provide

extensive coverage of the events and highlight activities across the eight designated locations.

The effective use of digital media has also played a significant role in expanding audience reach and engagement across different age groups.

-ONA

Indian PM Modi shares car ride with Merz, highlighting friendly relations



PM Modi had inaugurated the International Kite Festival-2026

GANDHINAGAR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who is on a two-day official visit to India, on Monday shared a car ride following their engagements in Gujarat, reflecting the warm and friendly ties between the two leaders and the growing partnership between the two countries. PM Modi posted a photo on X

of himself and Merz inside the car after their meetings to underscore the strength of bilateral relations. “The friendship between India and Germany continues to grow through shared values, extensive cooperation and mutual understanding,” the Prime Minister said in his post. In December last year, PM Modi broke with protocol to receive Russian President Vladimir Putin at the airport during the latter’s visit, and both shared a car ride to the Prime Minister’s residence at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg. Meanwhile, the interaction with the German Chancellor took place during Merz’s first official visit to India, which coincided with celebrations marking 75 years of diplomatic relations and 25 years of the India-Germany Strategic Partnership.

Earlier in the day, PM Modi and Chancellor Merz held delegation-level talks to discuss cooperation across key areas, including trade and investment, technology, education, defence, climate action, and people-to-people ties. Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited German universities to establish campuses in India as part of a comprehensive roadmap on higher education development between India and Germany during German Chancellor Friedrich Merz’s official visit to the country. Addressing a joint press conference with German Chancellor Merz, PM Modi expressed his gratitude to Merz for announcing visa-free transit for Indian citizens, calling it a step that would further strengthen people-to-people ties between the two nations. “The comprehensive roadmap

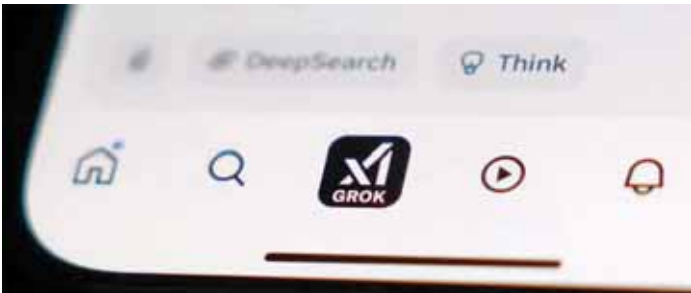
on higher education that we have developed today will give a new direction to our partnership in the field of education. I invite German universities to open their campuses in India. I express my gratitude to Chancellor Merz for announcing visa-free transit for Indian citizens,” the Prime Minister said. PM Modi said the two leaders also held wide-ranging discussions on global and regional issues, including the situation in Ukraine and Gaza, adding that both countries are united in their view that terrorism poses a grave threat to humanity and remain committed to combating it together. The Prime Minister also stressed the need to reform global institutions to address global challenges, citing joint efforts by India and Germany through the G4 group to reform the UNSC. **-ANI**

PM Modi welcomes German Chancellor Merz to Sabarmati Ashram on first official India visit

AHMEDABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday warmly welcomed German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, marking the German leader’s first official visit to India since taking office. After his arrival at the Ashram, both leaders paid floral tributes to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Merz also signed the visitors’ book there. Both leaders then participated in the International Kite Festival 2026, held at the Sabarmati Riverfront, underscoring the cultural and diplomatic significance of Chancellor Merz’s visit to India. The visit is part of Chancellor Merz’s official trip to India, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties between India and Germany, and coincides with celebrations marking 75 years of diplomatic relations and 25 years of the India-Germany Strategic Partnership. According to a Ministry of External Affairs post on X, Chancellor Merz was warmly received by Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat at the airport upon his arrival in the

western state. The visit came at the invitation of PM Modi. “Welcome to India! Willkommen in Indien! Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz has arrived in Ahmedabad on an official visit. Warmly received by Governor of Gujarat. The two leaders will review progress on the India-Germany Strategic Partnership, which recently marked its 25th anniversary. Their discussion will also focus on further intensifying cooperation in trade and investment, technology, education, skilling and mobility, while advancing collaboration in key areas of defence and security, science, innovation and research, green and sustainable development, and people-to-people ties. Prime Minister Modi and Chancellor Merz will also exchange views on issues of regional and global importance and engage with business and industry leaders of the two countries. The visit is expected to build on momentum from regular high-level political interactions. **-ANI**

DEEPPAKES



Malaysia, Indonesia block Grok AI bot over explicit images

JAKARTA: The two Southeast Asian countries became the first in the world to ban access to Elon Musk’s Grok over the weekend after the AI chatbot was used to produce explicit and non-consensual images. Indonesian regulators temporarily blocked the bot on Saturday, with Malaysia following suit on Sunday. Grok, which can be accessed through X, formerly Twitter, sparked global outrage after it was used to generate images of female users in bikinis. Some images also involved children. “The government sees non-consensual deepfakes as a serious violation of human rights, dignity and the safety of citizens in the digital space,” Indonesia’s Communication and Digital Affairs Minister Meutya Hafid said in a statement on Saturday. The Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) issued a statement on Sunday saying it was blocking access to Grok after it was repeatedly used “to generate obscene, grossly offensive, and non-consensual manipulated images, in-

cluding content involving women and minors.” The MCMC said it had contacted Musk’s X and xAI — the AI company behind Grok — demanding effective safeguards. According to MCMC, the responses failed to address the risk posed by the AI tools, instead referring to user-initiated reporting mechanisms. “MCMC considers this insufficient to prevent harm or ensure legal compliance,” it said. It added that the AI bot would remain blocked until effective safeguards were implemented. **What is Elon Musk’s Grok chatbot?** Grok is just one of the contestants in the AI race that includes offerings from Google and Microsoft, among others. AI tools have repeatedly sparked questions over a lack of regulations, with regulators struggling to keep up with the abilities of the new technology in some cases, and in other cases being explicitly told to limit regulation, as in the US under the Trump administration. **-BW**

MAIDEN OVERSEAS VOYAGE

Indian vessel ‘Kaundinya’ built using 2000-year-old technique enters Omani waters on historic voyage

NEW DELHI: A fortnight after Indian Navy’s ‘Kaundinya’ embarked on her maiden overseas voyage from Porbandar in Gujarat, the sailing vessel, which does not have an engine and was built using an over 2000-year-old stitching technique, has entered Omani waters. Economist and Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council member Sanjeev Sanyal, who is on board the vessel on Monday morning said that the vessel is “well inside Omani waters, North of Sur.” “Day 15. We are now well inside Omani waters, north of Sur. Winds are down and back to glassy seas. So close and yet immobile. Nonetheless, the main objective of the Kaundinya project now stands proved: we have demonstrated how ancient “stitched” ships from India could cross the oceans, we know the strengths and drawbacks of this design, and have good idea of the human experience of ancient mariners,” Sanyal posted. He shared a photograph of yesterday’s sunset and also a video from some days ago describing “what it looks like sleeping on the deck in full moonlight.” The ship had embarked on her first voyage from Porbandar in Gujarat to Muscat, Oman on December 29, 2025, along the ancient maritime trade route. On Sunday, Sanyal had posted on his social media, “INSV Kaundinya flying the tricolour across the Arabian Sea: Ship of Wood with Men of Steel.” The journey aims to recreate the ancient maritime trading route that connected India with West Asia and other parts of the world. Commander Y Hemant Kumar,



who has been associated with the project since its conceptualisation, and serves at the Officer-in-Charge of the INSV Kaundinya also posted on X that the ship had entered Omani waters. “Under sail, flying India’s Tricolour, retracting seas once sailed by our ancestors,” he said. Retired Naval officer Abhilash Tomy, who became the first Indian to complete the prestigious Golden Globe Race, the world’s toughest solo sailing race in which participants circumnavigate the globe non-stop without any modern technology, also congratulated the crew of the Kaundinya. Tomy took to X to post, “Oman can now see a mighty little ship flying the tricolor bobbing in their waters. Its sailors have just accomplished a feat from another era. I am sure the winds carry the smells of Omani cuisine, which should

guide them to a quick entry. Home revs now. Well done guys! You deserve all the rest land has to offer.” The INSV Kaundinya is based on a 5th-century CE ship depicted in the paintings of Ajanta Caves. Skipped by Commander Vikas Sheoran, leading a 16-member crew, the Kaundinya is estimated to arrive at Muscat around January 15. The project that began as an idea in the mind of Sanjeev Sanyal, who was inspired by an Ajanta cave painting. An agreement was signed in July 2023 between the Ministry of Culture, the Indian Navy, and Hodi Innovations, a Goa-based private boat builder with funding from the Ministry of Culture. Following the keel laying in September 2023, the vessel’s construction was undertaken using a traditional method of stitching by a team of skilled artisans from

Kerala, led by master shipwright Babu Sankaran. Over several months, the team painstakingly stitched wooden planks on the ship’s hull using coir rope, coconut fibre and natural resin. The ship was launched in February 2025 at Goa. The sails of the indigenously built ship display motifs of the Gandabherunda and the Sun, her bow bears a sculpted Simha Yali, and a symbolic Harappan-style stone anchor adorns her deck, each element evoking the rich maritime traditions of ancient India. Named after Kaundinya, the legendary first-century Indian mariner who sailed across the Indian Ocean to the Mekong Delta, where he married a Cambodian princess, the ship serves as a tangible symbol of India’s long-standing traditions of maritime exploration, trade, and cultural exchange. **-ANI**

VIDEO FOOTAGE

Woman was very disrespectful: Trump on fatal Minneapolis shooting by ICE agent

WASHINGTON DC [US]: US President Donald Trump has said that the woman who was killed by an ICE agent in Minneapolis last week was radical and violent. Talking to reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday, Trump cited video footage just before an ICE agent shot the woman Renee Nicole Good and said that no one should treat law enforcement agents in a disrespectful manner. “We have to respect our law enforcement. At a very minimum, that woman was very, very disrespectful to law enforcement... You can’t do that with law enforce-

ment, whether it’s police, or ICE, or Border Patrol or anybody else,” the US President said. Trump said, “Everyone’s seen it. And the woman was very violent. She’s a very radical person. Very sad what happened. Her friend was very radical.” The death of Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old US citizen and mother of three has sparked intense local and national debate. Good was killed on Wednesday morning when a federal ICE agent shot into her vehicle during an enforcement action in south Minneapolis. Video footage of the inci-

dent has circulated online, fueling disagreement over exactly what transpired, as reported by CNN. Trump, talking to reporters aboard Air Force One said, “You know, the law enforcement our country is doing really well despite the fact that Sleepy Joe Biden allowed people to pour through an open border. Crime stats just came out. We have the best crime stats on record, despite all the criminals he allowed into our country. We’ve gotten a lot of them out,” Trump said. “We have to respect our law enforcement at a very minimum.

That woman was very, very disrespectful to law enforcement. And you heard the same noises, you saw the same crunch that I saw. You can’t do that with law enforcement, whether it’s or ICE or Border Patrol or anybody else,” The US President said. Federal officials, including Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Trump allies, have characterized the incident as self-defence, alleging that Good attempted to “weaponise her vehicle” against officers. This narrative has been repeated by senior administration figures

who argue the agent acted appropriately under threat. **Lethal danger** However, state and local leaders, including Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, have strongly rejected that account, saying the available video does not support claims that Good posed a lethal danger at the time she was shot. Critics point to footage showing her vehicle turning away from the officers and dispute the justification for deadly force, reported CNN.

Good’s family and friends have remembered her as a compassionate and devoted parent, describing her as “one of the kindest people” they knew. Vigils and protests have taken place in her memory, with community members expressing grief and demanding accountability in the wake of the shooting. The appearance of the video evidence, political reactions, and controversy over the handling of the investigation have made the case a flashpoint in ongoing debates about federal immigration enforcement and use of force by authorities. **-BW**

SPORTS

ICC SECURITY ASSESSMENT

‘No specific threat to Bangladesh team in India during T20 World Cup’

DUBAI: The ICC has shared a security assessment with Bangladesh which indicates no specific or heightened threat to their cricket team in India for the 2026 T20 World Cup.

The assessment, an internal one, was shared with the BCB's security team and concluded there was no overall threat to the side but pointed to low to moderate risks in some venues and low to nil in others - standard ICC categorisations around the world that do not ordinarily constitute sufficient reason to move games.

The details of the security assessment, shared with the BCB last week, emerged after claims by Bangladesh sports adviser Asif Nazrul earlier on Monday that the ICC's assessment spelt out the difficulties in Bangladesh playing their 2026 T20 World Cup matches in India.

"We have sent two letters (to the ICC), after which the ICC security

team have sent a letter," Nazrul, effectively the country's sports head, said on Monday.

Nazrul said three factors were cited with potential security implications: Mustafizur Rahman's presence in the side, Bangladesh fans wearing team t-shirts in India and forthcoming elections in Bangladesh.

"So this statement of the ICC security team has proven beyond a doubt that there is no situation for the Bangladesh cricket team to play the T20 World Cup in India.

"If the ICC expects us to make a cricket team without our best bowler, our supporters will not be able to wear the Bangladesh jersey, and we will postpone the Bangladesh elections to play cricket, then there can be no more bizarre, unrealistic and unreasonable expectation than this."

The ICC views Nazrul's claims as misinterpretations of standard contingency planning, hypotheti-



cal scenarios and scenario planings of the kind that are standard in such assessments, as outright statements of fact and actual risk.

There is also no suggestion in that assessment that the ICC is setting conditions regarding player selections, or instructing fans to not move around in their team t-shirts, or that domestic elections

should be postponed.

Another Bangladesh government official as well as the BCB issued statements later, clarifying that the ICC's security assessment was not a response to Bangladesh's official request to move their T20 World Cup games out of India.

"The correspondence cited today by the Adviser for the Ministry

of Youth & Sports was in reference to an internal communication between the BCB and the ICC's Security Department related to threat assessments for the Bangladesh team ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," the BCB said.

"This does not constitute a formal response from the ICC to the BCB's request for the relocation of Bangladesh's matches outside India.

"The BCB reiterates that it has formally raised concerns regarding venue arrangements and has requested relocation of Bangladesh's matches outside India in the interest of the team's security. The Board confirms that it is still awaiting an official response from the ICC on this matter."

For the moment, however, the ICC's position on the matter remains unchanged; that is that the match schedule has been finalised and made public and that all participating teams are expected

to meet their obligations under the terms of participation of ICC events.

Bangladesh are currently scheduled to play their first three group matches in Kolkata and the final one in Mumbai. The venues became a problem once the BCCI instructed Kolkata Knight Riders to remove Mustafizur from its IPL 2026 squad.

No reason has been specified for that, though relations between the two countries have deteriorated of late. Since then, Nazrul has been at the forefront of demands to move Bangladesh's games out of India.

Following Mustafizur's removal, the Bangladesh government banned the broadcast of the IPL in the country, and the BCB sent a letter to the ICC refusing to play its T20 World Cup matches in India.

The 2026 T20 World Cup, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, is scheduled to begin on February 7.

INDIA VS NZ SERIES

Badoni replaces injured Sundar

VADODARA: India all-rounder Washington Sundar has been ruled out of the ODI series against New Zealand after suffering a rib injury in the series opener in Vadodara on Sunday.

Uncapped batter Ayush Badoni has been brought in as cover.

Washington, who bowled five overs for 27 runs, walked off midway through the New Zealand innings and did not return to field on Sunday. Then, despite the discomfort, he later came out to bat at No. 8 as India picked a four-wicket win.

"Washington Sundar reported an acute onset discomfort in his left lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at the BCA Stadium, Vadodara, on Sunday," a BCCI statement said on Monday.

He will undergo further scans, following which the BCCI Medical Team will seek expert opinion."

Badoni, 26, received his maiden call up to international cricket. He's played 27 List A matches and averages 36.47 with one hundred and five fifties. Although primarily a batter, he has been trying to prepare himself for situations where he'll need to bat down the order and even chip in with a few overs of off-spin.

Badoni has bowled 22 overs in three innings in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy for Delhi. He's picked up four wickets at an average of 19.75 and economy rate of 3.59. He hasn't done much with the bat this season, but over the years has had success coming in at No.5 or lower. His one List A hundred came from No.5. Badoni can draw on IPL experience as well, having played 56 games for Luc-



know Super Giants.

Washington is the third Indian player to pick up an injury, wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant was ruled out of the ODI series after suffering a side strain last week while Tilak Varma will be unavailable for the first three T20Is that follow due to a groin injury which required surgery.

ODI captain Shubman Gill had given an update on Washington following India's win on Sunday. "Washington Sundar has a side strain and will go for a scan after the match," he said at the post-match presentation.

After the first ODI in Vadodara, India and New Zealand play in Rajkot (January 14) and Indore (January 18) before shifting focus to the five-match T20I series, in Nagpur (January 21), Raipur (January 23), Guwahati (January 25), Visakhapatnam (January 28) and Thiruvananthapuram (January 31), which will set them up for the T20 World Cup, to be played in India and Sri Lanka in February-March. - Agencies

Sri Lanka seal narrow victory over Pakistan to square T20I series



The series, a warm-up for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, saw the visitors clinch the opener by six wickets before rain washed out the second game

DAMBULLA: Sri Lanka eked out a hard-fought 14-run victory over Pakistan in the third T20 at rain-hit Dambulla on Sunday, easing its batting jitters and squaring the three-match series 1-1.

The series, a warm-up for the T20 World Cup with Pakistan set to play all its matches in Sri Lanka due to political tensions with neighbour India, saw the visitor clinch the opener by six wickets before rain washed out the second game at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium.

"We were a bit worried about our batting, and I'm glad we addressed that today," said Wanindu Hasaranga, who walked away with both Player of the Match and Player of the Series honours.

"The bowlers did a good job, too.



The ball was wet, and it wasn't easy. We tried to bowl wide and slow and asked them to take risks," he added.

Hasaranga took four wickets in the game and in the process completed 150 wickets in T20Is.

In a contest trimmed to 12 overs

a side, Sri Lanka muscled its way to a competitive 160 before choking Pakistan to 146-8.

Having been bowled out inside 20 overs in the series opener, Sri Lanka needed a statement with the bat and duly ticked every box after being put in. The top order laid the

platform and the middle order applied the finishing touches.

Wicket-keeper Kusal Mendis made hay under the PowerPlay, blasting 30 off 16 balls while Dhananjaya de Silva (22 off 15) and Charith Asalanka (21 off 13) kept the scoreboard ticking.

Skipper Dasun Shanaka then swung the momentum decisively, clubbing 34 off just nine deliveries, peppered with five towering sixes.

The sixth-wicket stand between Shanaka and Janith Liyanage produced 52 runs in just 15 balls and proved the turning point, shifting the game firmly in Sri Lanka's way.

Pakistan came out swinging in reply, racing to 50 in just 19 balls with captain Salman Agha hammering 45 off 12 balls, including five fours and three sixes.

But once the field spread, Sri Lanka tightened the screws, applied the choke and forced the asking rate to spiral. "It was a good game of cricket," Agha said.

"We conceded too many runs, but our batting effort was good. Unfortunately, we fell short. We know we are going to play all our World Cup games in Sri Lanka, and it's important that we play in similar conditions," he added.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 160 for 6 in 12 overs (Shanaka 34, Mendis 30; Wasim 3-54) beat Pakistan 146 for 8 in 12 overs (Agha 45, Hasaranga 4-35) by 14 runs. - Agencies

ICC T20 WORLD CUP

Van der Merwe and de Leede return to Netherlands squad

AMSTERDAM: Scott Edwards will lead Netherlands at the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup.

The squad has a host of changes from the one that played the T20I series against Bangladesh in August-September, Netherlands' last T20I assignment.

Roelof van der Merwe, Bas de Leede, Michael Levitt, and Zach Lion-Cachet mark their returns, having last played in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Europe Region Final, the event that preceded Netherlands' tour of Bangladesh.

Colin Ackermann, the 34-year-old all-rounder who last played a T20I in November 2024, is also back. He scored 304 runs in 14 games for Durham in the 2025 Vitality Blast. Timm van der Gugten, also 34 and returning to T20Is for the first time since 2024, also finds a spot. He, too, played in the Blast and took six wickets in ten games.

Logan van Beek, the medium-fast pacer, last played for Netherlands in July 2024 during the previous T20 World Cup. He makes his return after having been part of the Super Smash, New Zealand's domestic T20 competition, where he took five wickets in seven games for Wellington.

Kyle Klein is the back-up wicketkeeping option to Edwards. Klein and Noah Croes have not



played a T20 World Cup game so far in their careers.

Teja Nidamanuru, Tim Pringle and Vikramjit Singh are notable absentees from the squad. All three were part of the squad for the Bangladesh T20Is along with Cedric de Lange, Sikander Zulfiqar, Sebastiaan Braat, Daniel Doram, Shariz Ahmad and Ryan Klein, who all missed out. Ryan Cook is the head coach of the team and Ryan van Niekerk and Heino Kuhn are the assistant coaches.

Netherlands are in Group A

alongside Pakistan (whom they will face on February 7 in Colombo), Namibia (February 10 in Delhi), USA (February 13 in Chennai), and India (February 18 in Ahmedabad).

Squad: Scott Edwards (capt & wk), Noah Croes (wk), Max O'Dowd, Saqib Zulfiqar, Aryan Dutt, Kyle Klein, Paul van Meekeren, Fred Klaassen, Colin Ackermann, Bas de Leede, Michael Levitt, Zach Lion-Cachet, Logan van Beek, Roelof van der Merwe, Timm van der Gugten. - Agencies

PLAYED 10 TESTS

Mohammad Ilyas, former Pakistan opener, dies aged 79

LAHORE: Mohammad Ilyas, the former Pakistan opener has died in Lahore after an illness. He was 79 years old. Ilyas, fondly if somewhat curiously known as 'John' to friends, played ten Tests for Pakistan in the 1960s, during a relatively fallow period in the country's history.

Six of his Tests came against New Zealand, in one of which - in Karachi in 1965 - he hit his only Test hundred. He had a more substantial first-class career, scoring 4607 runs in 82 games from 1961 to 1972 (though he played his last recognised first-class match in 1975) at an average of 35.71.

He worked his way up through a vibrant school and club circuit, playing for Crescent club, a powerhouse in Lahore and one of the oldest clubs in the city. His first-class debut, for a Lahore B side in the Quaid-e-Azam trophy followed not long after, in November 1961, when he was just 15.

He took a wicket and made an unbeaten 15, though a fellow debutant - Majid Khan - stole the headlines with a six-wicket haul and a ton.

Three years and three first-class hundreds later - including in a warm-up game against Queensland - he was debuting for Pakistan, in their one-off Test at the MCG. He was joined



again as a debutant by an illustrious contemporary, this time Ian Chappell. As an aggressive and enterprising batter, with a strong hook shot, he did well on the tour, scoring another hundred against South Australia after the Test.

He remained in and around Pakistan squads through the decade, touring England in 1967, playing against England at home in 1969. But that series proved to be his last Test.

He toured Australia and New Zealand for the 1972-73 series but was, infamously, turfed out of the squad after an alleged physical altercation with then BCCP (as the PCB was known) chief Abdul Hafeez Kardar.

Kardar was, at the time, the most influential figure in Pakistan

cricket, as board head, close to the ruling party of the day and a seminal captain in the 1950s. In other words, the worst person to pick a fight with. Ilyas was kicked out and chose to stay on in Australia, where he played some Sydney grade cricket. He would only play one more first-class match after that tour, signing off with a duck.

He moved around thereafter, playing Scottish league cricket, appearing in games in Zimbabwe (then known as Rhodesia) and settling in England for a while. He eventually returned to Pakistan and in the 2000s was a member of various national selection panels.

Typically, he was often in the news for other reasons in this time; picking a fight with a selector after his son-in-law Imran Farhat was overlooked; threatening to go on a hunger strike after he was banned from entering Gaddafi Stadium; talking in a leaked conversation about fixing in the ICL (Indian Cricket League); and a high-profile dispute with Shahid Afridi, who was Pakistan's white-ball captain at the time.

His last stint with the PCB was in 2014, when he was appointed as a junior selector. But administrative changes meant that tenure was short-lived. Shortly after his removal, he filed a petition against the PCB at the Lahore High Court. - Agencies

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by March 2026 reaching \$61.74, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 65 cents from the price of Friday, which was which was \$61.09. -**ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 6,192.57 points, up by 0.47% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.06% at 568.73 points. Jazeera Steel Products, up 9.96%, was the top gainer while, Dhofar Insurance, down 4.56%, was the top loser.

MoU signed to advance smart cities and digital innovation

The memorandum aims to establish a long term strategic partnership supporting the Opaz's efforts to adopt modern technologies to enhance operational and administrative efficiency across the areas under its supervision, and to develop a smart city model through the establishment of a regulatory and technical framework

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) signed yesterday (Monday, 12 January) a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the field of smart cities and digital innovation applications with



the Ibn Firnas Drone Center, as part of the Opaz's efforts to build a prosperous, technology driven economy.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the Authority by Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Vice Chairman of Opaz, and on behalf of the Ibn Firnas Drone Center by Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Harithi, CEO of the Ibn Firnas Drone Center.

The memorandum aims to establish a long term strategic partnership supporting the Opaz's efforts to adopt modern technologies to enhance operational and administrative efficiency across the areas under its supervision, and to develop a smart city model through the establishment of a regulatory and

technical framework.

The MoU provides for the implementation of a package of foundational projects during the first year following its signing, serving as a cornerstone for future cooperation. These include the implementation of an integrated pilot project in the many projects at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad), considered an ideal environment for testing smart city solutions in the fields of security and safety, environmental monitoring, and the improvement of logistics services.

The foundational projects also include support for the innovation ecosystem through contributing to the sponsorship and organisation

of at least one hackathon focused on developing innovative solutions to challenges facing SEZAD, alongside providing technical and advisory support to participants, with the aim of positioning the zone as a leading model for smart and sustainable cities.

In addition, the partnership seeks to stimulate innovation through contributing to the development of an integrated innovation ecosystem that supports start ups, attracts global digital investments, and enhances governmental and regulatory innovation through governance frameworks and the development of flexible policies to regulate and adopt smart city solutions, while guiding

investors towards standards and principles aligned with this strategic direction.

Following the initial foundational year, the partnership is expected to expand to include commercial activities serving the objectives of both parties. This includes the provision by the Ibn Firnas Drone Centre of commercial services to companies operating in Sezad, such as smart city solutions for managing and monitoring infrastructure, security and logistics using drones and AI, as well as specialised advisory services to investors and companies to support compliance with smart city requirements.

The partnership will also en-

compass big data projects, including contributing to the establishment of a platform for analysing data generated by smart city operations, providing insights to support decision making and improve service efficiency. In addition, a training academy possible to be established through which commercial training and qualification programmes will be launched to upskill the workforce in Sezad in the latest digital technologies.

The signing of the MoU comes within the Opaz's efforts to expand its strategic partnerships with specialised national institutions, contributing to the development of special economic zones and free zones, and strengthening the Sultanate of Oman's position as a leading regional hub in innovation and smart cities. The Ibn Firnas Drone Centre is a closed government owned company specialising in drone solutions and smart city applications.

It is worth noting that the Special Economic Zone at Duqm holds several factors supporting the success of smart city and drone projects, including an artificial intelligence zone covering an area of 18 square kilometres.

In recent years, the zone has witnessed a number of successful drone trials, including surveys of the commercial quay at Port of Duqm for inspection and underwater imaging using modern technologies instead of divers, as well as another trial involving the use of drones to conduct exploratory surveys of port cranes. Additional trials have included the delivery of postal parcels and food, 360 degree aerial imaging for mapping purposes, topographical surveys, and the preparation of three dimensional models of the area.

ECONOMIC PLANNER

China issues government investment fund evaluation rules

BEIJING: China's top economic planner on Monday released a trial regulation aimed at improving the evaluation and management of government investment fund allocations.

The move aims to better leverage these funds to serve national strategies, promote industrial upgrading, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

Issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the regulation highlights the role of allocation evaluations in guiding government investment funds to align with national industrial policies and support the development of a modern industrial system.

It also calls for stronger co-ordination between national-level funds and local government funds to support major national strategies, key sectors and weak areas where market forces fall short.

The regulation sets out evaluation criteria that focus on the funds' performance in supporting national strategies, such as fostering new quality productive forces, promoting technological innovation and commercialization of research outcomes, providing patient capital, and enhancing public well-being.

Additional indicators assess alignment with the country's regional strategies, priority investment areas and efficient capacity utilization, as well as policy implementation.

The NDRC said final evaluation results will be communicated to provincial-level governments, relevant departments, evaluated entities and relevant financial institutions. The results will be released through a registration system.

The move aims to better leverage these funds to serve national strategies, promote industrial upgrading, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship

On Monday, the NDRC and three other government departments also released a document to guide the planning and allocation of government investment funds, requiring the funds to focus on early-stage investments in startups and small enterprises, long-term commitments, and hard technology.

The document explicitly prohibits government investment funds from a series of investment activities, such as increasing local government debt through disguised means, engaging in publicly traded equity investments except for certain circumstances or engaging in futures or other derivative transactions, and providing guarantees for enterprises or projects.

Liu Guoyan, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said that the two documents together standardized the whole process of management of the government investment funds, and are expected to improve the efficiency of fiscal fund utilization, optimize the country's capital supply structure and promote the standardized and healthy development of the fund industry. -**Xinhua**

REPORT

India EV market hits 2.3mn sales in 2025, policy support, festive demand drive adoption

NEW DELHI: India's electric vehicle (EV) market crossed a major milestone in 2025, with total EV sales reaching 2.3 million units, accounting for 8 per cent of all new vehicle registrations, according to the Annual Report: India EV Market 2025 prepared by the India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA) based on Vahan Portal data.

The report released this week highlighted that EV adoption accelerated steadily through the year, supported by policy incentives and a sharp festive-led surge in the final quarter.

India's broader automobile market recorded 28.2 million vehicle registrations in 2025, with two-wheelers remaining dominant, accounting for over 20 million units (72 per cent of total sales).

Passenger four-wheelers crossed 4.4 million units, while tractors and agricultural vehicles exceeded 1.06 million units, reflecting broadly stable demand across segments. The report noted that overall vehicle sales growth remained broadly stable across Q1-Q3, followed by a festive-led acceleration in Q4, aided by GST benefits and year-end consumer demand.

Electric two-wheelers continued to anchor EV adoption, with 1.28 million units sold, representing 57 per cent of total EV sales.

Electric three-wheelers (L3 and



L5 combined) followed with 0.8 million units, or 35 per cent share, while electric four-wheelers recorded 1.75 lakh units.

In electric four-wheelers, the report noted "strong momentum in electric goods carriers, particularly in small and light commercial vehicle segments," indicating early progress in electrification in logistics applications.

Among states, Uttar Pradesh emerged as India's largest EV market in 2025, with more than 4 lakh EV units sold, accounting for 18 per cent of total EV sales.

Maharashtra accounted for 2.66 lakh units (12 per cent), and Karnataka for 2 lakh units (9 per cent),

together accounting for over 40 per cent of national EV volumes.

Despite lower absolute vehicle sales, states such as Delhi (14 per cent), Kerala (12 per cent), and Goa (11 per cent) recorded higher EV-to-ICE ratios.

The report also notes that Tripura (18 per cent) and Assam (14 per cent) recorded robust EV-to-ICE ratios in 2025.

The IESA report stated that the government determined the electric three-wheeler segment had reached a sufficient level of market maturity and penetration (around 32 per cent). A major policy development during the year was the conclusion of India's largest-ever

electric bus tender.

Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) announced the successful completion of a 10,900 electric bus tender under the Rs 10,900 crore PM E-DRIVE scheme, aimed at accelerating green public transport.

The report implied that while EV penetration remained strongest in light vehicle segments, government focus on electrifying heavy commercial vehicles, supported by dedicated charging infrastructure development, continued to strengthen the long-term electrification roadmap, positioning India's EV ecosystem for sustained growth beyond 2025. -**ANI**

TRANSPORT GENERAL AUTHORITY

Delivery sector hits 124 million orders across Saudi Arabia in Q4 2025, up 60%

RIYADH: The delivery sector in Saudi Arabia recorded strong growth in the fourth quarter of 2025, with a total of over 124 million orders nationwide, marking a 60 per cent increase compared to the same period last year, according to a statistical bulletin released by the Transport General Authority (TGA).

The authority said this growth comes amid the ongoing development of the delivery sector, supported by innovation in logistics services, the broader use of technological solutions, and the rising reliance on e-commerce, all of which have driven demand for delivery services.

The statistics show that Riyadh

accounted for the largest share of orders at 44.45%, followed by Makkah at 22.17% and Eastern Region at 15.9%.

Madinah accounted for 4.95% of orders, followed by Aseer with 3.31 per cent, Qassim with 2.62 per cent, Tabuk with 1.81%, Hail with 1.67 per cent, and Jazan with 1.13 per cent.

The remaining regions included Najran at 0.68%, Al-Jouf at 0.61%, Northern Borders at 0.49%, and Al-Baha at 0.21%.

Growing popularity

This surge highlights the growing popularity of delivery services and the sector's continued expansion across the Kingdom. -**SPA**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Jazeera Steel Products, up 9.96%, was the top gainer while, Dhofar Insurance, down 4.56%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 6,192.57 points, up by 0.47% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.06% at 568.73 points. Jazeera Steel Products, up 9.96%, was the top gainer while, Dhofar Insurance, down 4.56%, was the top loser. Shares of OQEP were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 5223 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 45.52 million, with more than 165.49 million shares changing hands. Out of 76 traded securities, 36 advanced, 19 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 1014K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 598K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 416K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 10,620.55 points, up 0.57%. Prices of Al Sharqia Investment, Global Financial Investments, Takaful Oman, Al Anwar Investment, Oman & Emirates Invest-

ment were up by 4.63%, 4.44%, 4.29%, 3.10%, 1.91% respectively. Prices of Dhofar Insurance, Financial Services, Al Madina Investments, Sohar International Bank, Bank Dhofar were down by 4.56%, 3.64%, 2.44%, 0.63%, 0.57% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 8,544.57 points, up 1.72%. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products, Gulf Mushroom Products, Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Fisheries, Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 9.96%, 9.44%, 4.05%, 3.57%, 2.93% respectively. Prices of Oman Chromite, Galfar Engineering, Oman Cables Industry, Voltamp Energy were down by 2.70%, 1.52%, 1.38%, 0.90% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.96% before closing at 2,561.65 points. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Phoenix Power, Al Jazeera Services, National Gas, Salalah Port Services were up by 7.96%, 5.33%, 5.08%, 3.13%, 3.03% respectively. Prices of Al Maha Markting, Dhofar Generating, SMN Power Holding, OQ Gas Networks were down by 1.84%, 1.10%, 0.89%, 0.49% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES						
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	6,194.00	6,163.17	6,192.57	6,163.73	28.84	0.47
FINANCIAL INDEX	10,624.95	10,560.07	10,620.55	10,560.07	60.48	0.57
Industry Index	8,587.17	8,400.35	8,544.57	8,400.35	144.22	1.72
Services Index	2,562.66	2,536.67	2,561.65	2,537.30	24.35	0.96
MSX Shariah Index	569.38	562.74	568.73	562.74	5.98	1.06
MSX TR INDEX	9,309.92	9,263.59	9,307.78	9,264.44	43.34	0.47
FINANCIAL TR IDX	12,622.81	12,545.74	12,617.58	12,545.74	71.85	0.57
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	10,587.24	10,356.90	10,534.72	10,356.90	177.82	1.72
SERVICES TR IDX	3,341.90	3,308.00	3,340.59	3,308.83	31.76	0.96
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,206.62	1,206.62	1,206.62	1,206.62	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary								
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded	
165,490,647	45,516,810	5,223	33,131,908,385	36	19	21		76

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 12

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST RD	LAST OFFER	P&A VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	196,010	160,349	34	0.793	0.872	0.793	0.872	0.793	0.079	9.962	0.872	0.872	0.872	0.100	108,911,021
OM00000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	443,633	92,118	70	0.199	0.211	0.199	0.207	0.197	0.010	5.076	0.207	0.206	0.207	0.100	8,868,499
OM00000004440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	983,319	110,541	64	0.110	0.114	0.110	0.113	0.108	0.005	4.630	0.113	0.112	0.114	0.100	10,170,000
OM00000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	385,132	88,897	21	0.227	0.235	0.227	0.235	0.225	0.010	4.444	0.235	0.232	0.235	0.100	47,000,000
OM00000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,735,589	358,832	98	0.205	0.218	0.205	0.211	0.205	0.006	2.927	0.211	0.211	0.213	0.100	46,420,000
OM00000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	7,132,459	2,507,257	464	0.348	0.355	0.346	0.355	0.348	0.007	2.011	0.355	0.355	0.355	0.100	273,421,000
OM0000001539	OMINVEST	25,619	9,186	8	0.355	0.362	0.355	0.360	0.355	0.005	1.408	0.360	0.358	0.362	0.100	338,654,175
OM00000002374	UNITED FINANCE	1,846,925	139,357	70	0.075	0.076	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.075	0.077	0.100	26,709,547
OM00000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	696,733	77,676	42	0.112	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.111	0.001	0.901	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.100	19,600,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	246,789	54,249	29	0.336	0.340	0.336	0.339	0.336	0.003	0.893	0.339	0.338	0.339	0.100	80,142,960
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	205,816	35,092	27	0.170	0.171	0.170	0.170	0.169	0.001	0.592	0.170	0.169	0.170	0.100	114,730,863
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	560,681	95,338	52	0.170	0.171	0.170	0.170	0.169	0.001	0.592	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.100	121,449,078
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	22,179,126	7,634,281	432	0.344	0.345	0.343	0.345	0.344	0.001	0.291	0.345	0.345	0.345	0.100	2,589,706,986
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	2,434,011	2,636,670	81	1.079	1.085	1.079	1.083	1.080	0.003	0.278	1.083	1.083	1.083	0.100	812,250,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	169,150	67,661	59	0.400	0.401	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.100	650,378,542
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	359,800	109,253	14	0.304	0.304	0.303	0.304	0.304	0.000	0.000	0.304	0.303	0.304	0.100	197,887,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	297,270	35,915	18	0.121	0.122	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.118	0.120	0.100	268,454,964
OM0000003072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	8,546,583	171,191	274	0.236	0.236	0.234	0.236	0.236	0.000	0.485	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.100	877,777,904
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	35,526,711	5,641,852	635	0.161	0.161	0.157	0.159	0.160	0.001	0.625	0.159	0.159	0.160	0.100	1,052,142,157
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	17,125	20,773	36	1.205	1.220	1.205	1.209	1.220	0.011	0.802	1.209	1.205	1.289	0.100	113,178,313
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	100	250	1	2.500	2.500	2.500	2.500	2.535	0.035	1.381	2.500	2.480	2.500	0.100	224,250,000
Total		83,790,580	21,616,680	2,529												
Parallel Market																
OM00000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	339,291	131,495	95	0.383	0.396	0.383	0.394	0.360	0.034	9.444	0.394	0.393	0.394	0.100	18,031,724
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	494,596	44,875	42	0.089	0.095	0.089	0.095	0.088	0.007	7.955	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.100	14,777,288
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	5,210,643	906,638	171	0.170	0.179	0.170	0.178	0.169	0.009	5.325	0.178	0.178	0.179	0.100	260,343,060
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	118,269	8,581	24	0.070	0.076	0.070	0.073	0.070	0.003	4.286	0.073	0.071	0.073	0.100	18,250,000
OM0000005905	ALMAHA CERAMICS	42,343	12,728	12	0.298	0.308	0.298	0.308	0.296	0.012	4.054	0.308	0.304	0.308	0.100	16,840,000
OM0000001169	NATIONAL GAS	346,600	34,323	30	0.095	0.102	0.098	0.099	0.096	0.003	3.125	0.099	0.099	0.102	0.100	8,415,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	2,491,915	325,477	73	0.129	0.135	0.129	0.133	0.129	0.004	3.101	0.133	0.131	0.133	0.100	39,707,540
OM0000002333	SALALAH PORT SERVICES	5,065	1,682	7	0.330	0.340	0.330	0.340	0.330	0.010	3.030	0.340	0.340	0.354	0.100	61,144,716
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	1,000	175	1	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.170	0.005	2.941	0.175	0.170	0.175	0.100	103,501,454
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	28,870	4,388	4	0.150	0.153	0.150	0.153	0.149	0.004	2.685	0.153	0.152	0.153	0.100	11,554,866
OM0000001132	OMAN NATIONAL ENG & INVESTMENT	107,632	16,298	20	0.150	0.154	0.149	0.153	0.150	0.003	2.000	0.153	0.151	0.153	0.100	22,860,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	360,100	39,031	20	0.107	0.110	0.107	0.107	0.105	0.002	1.905	0.107	0.105	0.108	0.100	13,040,625
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODN	46,130,288	17,777,373	1,013	0.383	0.391	0.383	0.389	0.383	0.006	1.567	0.389	0.389	0.389	0.010	312,000,000
OM0000002150	ALFAJAR ALAMIA	222	110	2	0.480	0.485	0.480	0.485	0.480	0.005	1.020	0.485	0.480	0.485	0.100	24,418,474
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	16,945	1,686	8	0.100	0.100	0.099	0.099	0.098	0.001	1.020	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	64,210,441
OM0000004735	SEMCORP SALALAH	41,000	9,045	11	0.220	0.221	0.220	0.220	0.218	0.002	0.917	0.220	0.216	0.220	0.100	210,005,829
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	84,384	41,485	16	0.488	0.488	0.481	0.481	0.480	0.001	0.204	0.481	0.480	0.481	0.100	163,458,501
OM0000001301	DHOFR FOODS AND INVEST	181,676	17,441	4	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.100	18,976,985
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	100	50	1	0.495	0.495	0.495	0.495	0.495	0.000	0.000	0.495	0.481	0.494	0.100	81,860,625
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	126	174	1	1.379	1.379	1.379	1.379	1.379	0.000	0.000	1.379	0.000	1.400	0.100	68,950,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	1,211,157	75,091	28	0.061	0.063	0.061	0.062	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.100	19,043,072
OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	1,100	770	1	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.000	0.000	0.700	0.700	0.000	1,000	7,717,532
OM0000003028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	375,154	27,881	46	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	1,575,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	2,185	1,961	2	0.760	0.760	0.760	0.760	0.760	0.000	0.000	0.760	0.750	0.770	0.100	72,300,000
OM0000002890	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INVNTS	100	155	1	1.550	1.550	1.550	1.550	1.550	0.000	0.000	1.550	1.550	1.610	0.100	108,500,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	53,863	8,901	7	0.168	0.168	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.165	0.168	0.100	100,340,879
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	29,923	5,386	7	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.000	0.180	0.179	0.180	0.100	28,800,000
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	520,982	68,759	42	0.132	0.132	0.131	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.000	0.132	0.131	0.132	0.100	36,857,464
OM0000004699	SHARQIYA DESALINATION	732,330	112,046	11	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.000	0.000	0.153	0.144	0.153	0.100	14,963,700
OM0000000743	LIVA GROUP	105,680	35,470	7	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.000	0.000	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.100	133,454,453
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	13,011,233	2,467,960	301	0.190	0.191	0.189	0.190	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.040	657,303,262
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	3,500	669	2	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.192	0.001	0.521	0.191	0.189	0.191	0.100	516,998,862
OM00000002549	BANK DHOFAR	2,021,750	353,619	271	0.177	0.177	0.174	0.174	0.175	0.001	0.571	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.100	528,924,945
OM0000004546	SMAN GROUP HOLDING	1,000	686	1	0.686	0.686	0.686	0.686	0.686	0.000	0.000	0.686	0.686	0.686	0.020	44,516,738
OM0000001120	ASYAD SHIPPING	6,708,289	1,273,710	280	0.192	0.192	0.188	0.190	0.192	0.002	1.042	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.000	989,661,413
OM00000007407	DHOFR GENERATING	90,026	8,142	5	0.091	0.091	0.090	0.090	0.091	0.001	1.099	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	200,01,600
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	108,900	8,623	13	0.080	0.080	0.079	0.079	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.079	0.079	0.081	0.100	158,000,000
OM00000030000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM LOGS MARKING	17,087	18,280	16	1.070	1.070	1.066	1.070	1.060	0.020	1.835	1.070	1.066	1.120	0.100	73,830,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	17,392	2,142	5	0.124	0.124	0.122	0.122	0.125	0.003	2.400	0.122	0.120	0.124	0.100	12,078,000
OM0000000962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	72,293	3,174	22	0.041	0.041	0.040	0.040	0.041	0.001	2.439	0.040	0.040	0.045	0.100	3,400,000
OM00000010126	OMAN DIAMONDITE	300	1,087	2	3.600	3.600	3.600	3.600	3.730	0.130	3.703	3.600	3.600	3.600	0.100	1,000,000
OM0000005969	JABAL REIF	168,331	10,479	23	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.003	2.885	0.011	0.010	0.011	0.100	1,575,000
OM00000001384	FINANCIAL SERVICES	203,381	10,835	21	0.054	0.054	0.053	0.053	0.055	0.002	3.636	0.053	0.052	0.060	0.100	1,060,000
OM00000010965	DHOFR INSURANCE	6,000	1,380	1	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.241	0.011	4.564	0.230	0.231	0.240	0.100	26,760,727
Total		44	81,474,321	23,876,843	2,661											



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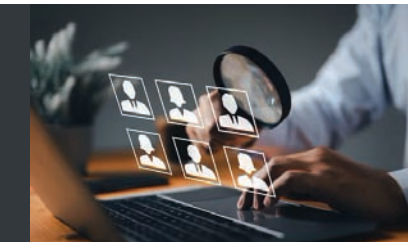


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Contact No. 95920740
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Indian male, MBA Finance, 20+ yrs Gulf experience in Accounting, Auditing, Oman VAT, Tax Assessment. Valid Oman Driving License. Available immediately.

Contact: 96987261 (Oman), +917418469385 (India)
Email: nrajan19742003@gmail.com

MEDICAL

Pharmacist with 16 yrs exp. in retail & hospital pharmacy in Muscat & India. Previously registered with MOH, Oman with work License, NOC with D/L, currently in Muscat

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

SALES & MARKETING

Seeking a suitable position in Sales & Marketing having 16 yrs of rich experience in Oman and 2 yrs in Africa in the field of Infrastructure, Construction, Building material and industrial products having good contacts with clients /consultants. BE Mechanical Engineering, PGDM in Management. Holding Valid Omani D/L.

Contact: 94976056

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JOB WANTED

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Finance manager, Indian 26yrs of experience, looking Job Change, Contact:- 98006226

Senior Accountant with 14 yrs experience (Oman & UAE) seeking suitable position in Oman. Mob 93150057.

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

Indian (M), 28, Accountant with overall exp. 3 yrs valid D/L. Contact: 78624277

Indian male, MBA finance, 15 yrs experience in accounting up to finalisation, VAT submission. Immediate joining. Contact: 96290882, Email: ajithakes@gmail.com

Indian male Accountant.10 years in muscat. D/L and NOC available. 79774800

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

Indian male Sr. Accountant (M.com with Finance) 17+yrs exp. in Oman with valid D/L. Contact: 91314540

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Seeking a job opportunity with solid background of finance and accounts for more than 20 yrs of experience in Oman. contact 92824146 / 94953826

Indian male, M.com (finance) 12 yrs accounting experience in Oman,handling accounts up to finalization independently & business development. Noc & D/L available Contact: 99859141,

Management, accounting operations & MIS reporting. Seeking a suitable managerial or senior accounting position. Contact: 78581435

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

Indian male, M.com (finance) 12 yrs accounting experience in Oman. Handling accounts up to finalization independently & Business development. Noc & D/L available Contact: 99859141,

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

Accountant looking for job. Contact: 75024166

Highly skilled chief accountant looking for suitable position. Contact: 79888153

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

MBA Finance Senior accountant, 13-yrs GCC experience looking for a job upto finalization. Contact: 98869499

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

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

Indian male MBA, Senior accountant, admin having 10 yrs experience. Contact: 95416322, Email: aabynarayan@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION

Indian male, 15 yrs experience in Oman seeks job for admin, secretary or proj-coordinator. Holding Oman D/L M: 94019955

Indian (M) 29 yrs, MBA graduate with 4 yrs experience in operations, stores management, office administration, yard management, accounts, finance and graphic designing. Looking for suitable job. Contact: 78439875

Indian male, 29 yrs, MBA with NEBOSH certified with 2+ yrs experience in administration looking for safety or administration jobs. Contact: +968 74105832, email: ashikthahir@gmail.com

Indian female, M.Sc. (Computer Science), overall 13+ yrs of experience in different administrative as well as project roles looking for suitable placement. Contact: 79166904/97498882

Highly skilled accounting and administrative professional with diverse experience in technical and office administration roles Contact: 90473476. Email: kpsanjay202@gmail.com

ARCHITECT

Architect, Interior Designer having more than 8+ yrs of experience with design and engineering consultants. Contact: 95759832, Email: ar.ahmedfaizal@gmail.com

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Indian female, completed MCA and also having experience in teaching, available in Oman on family visa, looking for a suitable job. Contact: +91 79090343/ +968 94117967, Email: induchandran01@gmail.com

IT

Indian male MCA graduate with 1+yrs experience as an IT support, Contact- 9471 8569- Email-syedfarhansj2002@gmail.com

MCA graduate seeking a suitable job opportunity in Oman. Available in Muscat. Contact: 91488059

TECHNICIAN

Telecom technician, networking and fiber optic, Omani driving license. Contact: 91423176

ENGINEER

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

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

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

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

Electrical engineer with experience 19 yrs in Oman. Tel: 98148034

Civil Site Engineer with 20 years experience in building construction in GCC.. 15 yrs in Oman and 5 yrs in UAE. Valid driving license. For contact, Shahedul Islam at 79128770

ENGINEER

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

LOGISTICS

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

LOGISTICS

Indian female with B.Ed. and BCA and 10 yrs of experience in Oman. Experienced in Logistics Operations and TeleSales, with strong communication & customer handling skills. WhatsApp: +968-97384206, Email: rashida_7861@outlook.com.

MANAGER

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

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

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Store Manager & Quality Controller with 12 yrs experience (Oman). Diploma in Warehouse & Procurement Management, B.Com graduate. Skilled in inventory, procurement, and compliance. Seeking a suitable position. Email: rajeshkumarktm@gmail.com Ph: +968 90218550

PDO-approved professional with MBA in Operations Management and 20+ yrs in oil & gas/manufacturing, seeking senior leadership in procurement, logistics, or contracts. Contact: 92422764

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

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

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

SALES/MARKETING

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

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

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

B.com graduate with 2 years marketing experience looking for a job , contact: 91447565

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

HR

B.Tech Computer Science Engineer 2 yrs experience in HR & Operations seeks relevant vacancies, skilled in administration, coordination, documentation, and system support. adaptable,quick learner,result oriented. Immediate joining syedabdulmujeeb04@gmail.com 77229475

\$4.2bn worth of oil from Venezuela on way to US right now, says Trump

The US President also spoke with the interim President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodriguez

WASHINGTON DC : US President Donald Trump spoke to reporters aboard Air Force One on the situation in Venezuela on Sunday. He said, “Venezuela is really working out well. We’re working along really well with their leadership, and we’ll see how it all works out.” Trump also spoke with the interim President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodriguez. On the meeting Trump said, “She’s been very good.

She asked us if we could take 50 million barrels of oil, and I said yes, we can, it is worth \$4.2 billion, and it is on its way right now to the United States...” This development comes after the President on Friday (local time) signed an Executive Order declaring a national emergency to protect Venezuelan oil revenue held in US Treasury accounts from legal attachment or judicial seizure, saying the move is aimed at advancing US foreign policy and



national security objectives. According to the White House, the Executive Order blocks any attachment, judgment, lien, execution, garnishment or other judicial process against Venezuelan oil revenues and diluent sales deposited in US Treasury accounts. These funds, termed “Foreign Government Deposit Funds,” are to remain frozen unless specifically authorised under the new order. The order also prohibits any transfer or dealing in the funds and overrides earlier directives that may have regulated or restricted such transfers or dealings. It states that the oil revenues are the sovereign property of Venezuela, held in US custody for governmental and diplomatic purposes, and cannot be claimed by private parties. Before this, US President Donald Trump on Friday (local time) met with top oil and gas executives at the White House to promote major investments in Venezuela’s energy sector, and said that “a lot of money is going to be made”. Earlier, on Saturday, Venezuelan Interim President Delcy Rodriguez stated that the US action that led to the capture of deposed dictator Nicolas Mauro and his wife “will go down in history as a major stain” on relations between Washington and Caracas. In a speech broadcast on the state channel Venezolana de Televisión (VTV), Rodriguez reiterated that the Executive Branch “will not cease to condemn the criminal aggression” that culminated in the capture of Maduro, currently detained in New York. -ANI

AGGRESSIVE REGIMES

Zelenskyy says combined forces of Europe, US can stop Putin’s ‘madness’

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday said that Russia has been suffering losses of no less than 1,000 soldiers killed every day since December, asserting that the country is paying a heavy price “just to keep the war from ending”. Calling the situation “madness,” Zelenskyy urged the United States, Europe, and international partners to unite in stopping Russia, stressing that the ongoing conflict highlights the world’s failure to protect itself from aggressive regimes. “Right now, Russian losses amount to no less than 1,000 killed per day - and this has been the case since December. This is how Russia is essentially paying just to keep the war from ending. This is madness and it can only be stopped by combined forces - the forces of Europe and the United States, the forces of all our partners,” Zelenskyy said. “Every day of this war is a reminder that the world cannot protect itself from madmen. We must protect it. Russia must be stopped,” he said.



The Ukrainian President expressed gratitude to countries and partners supporting Ukraine militarily. “Thank you to everyone who stands with Ukraine! Thank you to everyone who helps our people, our defense, and our recovery! Glory to Ukraine!” he said. Earlier on Friday, Zelenskyy said that Russia carried out a massive overnight aerial assault on Ukraine, launching 242 drones, 13 ballistic missiles and 22 cruise

missiles, killing at least four people and injuring dozens. In a post on X, Zelenskyy said the strikes heavily targeted Kyiv and several other regions in the country, damaging civilian infrastructure and energy facilities during a period of severe cold, as the war continues in Eastern Europe for the last four years. He confirmed that at least four people were killed in the capital alone, including a member of an ambulance crew. “In Kyiv and the region, the aftermath of the massive Russian strike is still being dealt with. All necessary services are deployed. Twenty residential buildings alone were damaged,” Zelenskyy said, adding that recovery operations are ongoing in the Lviv region and other parts of the country. “The Ukrainian President said dozens of people were injured in the attacks and noted that Russia carried out a second strike on a residential building precisely when first responders were providing assistance after the initial attack. -ANI

FAIR NEGOTIATIONS

Iranian foreign minister says Tehran is ‘ready for war but also for dialogue’

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that Iran was prepared for conflict with the US following threats of intervention, but that it was also open for negotiations. “The Islamic Republic of Iran

is not seeking war but is fully prepared for war,” Araghchi told a conference of foreign ambassadors in Tehran broadcast by state TV. “We are also ready for negotiations but these negotiations should be fair, with

equal rights and based on mutual respect.” US President Donald Trump on Sunday said that a “meeting is being set up, but we may have to act because of what’s happening before the meeting.” -IW

LONG HISTORY OF US INTERVENTIONS

From Guatemala to Panama: US affairs in Latin America

NEW YORK: In the early hours of January 3, US forces captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. Both were transferred to the US, where Maduro, now deposed, faces charges of narcoterrorism. The operation, illegal according to international law, marks the latest in a long history of US interventions in Latin America, often justified by Washington with claims of regional security. Many of these interventions can be traced back to the Monroe Doctrine, a foreign policy principle which despite its 19th century origins has continued to influence US foreign policy over the past 200 years. **What is the Monroe Doctrine?** The Monroe Doctrine dates back to 1823, when President James Monroe warned European powers against meddling in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere. The doctrine was later expanded by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904, in what’s known as the Roosevelt Corollary. Roosevelt argued that the US has the right to intervene in Latin American countries to prevent what he called ‘chronic wrongdoing’ and instability. The US national security strategy published in 2025 states: “After years of neglect, the United States will reassert and enforce the Mon-



roe Doctrine to restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere, and to protect our homeland and our access to key geographies throughout the region.” Trump also referred to the doctrine shortly after American forces captured Maduro, saying “The Monroe Doctrine is a big deal, but we’ve superseded it by a lot, by a real lot. They now call it the ‘Donroe’ Doctrine.” **US has intervened five times in Latin America since WWII** 1954 Guatemala: Government top-

pled by CIA-backed coup. In one of the earliest Cold War interventions in Latin America, the US backed the overthrow of the democratically elected President of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz. He had introduced land reforms which would nationalize property, including that owned by the US-based United Fruit Company (now Chiquita Brands International). The Eisenhower administration regarded Arbenz’s government as a communist threat, with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles accusing Arbenz of installing a ‘communist-type reign of terror’

IRAN PROTESTS

Respect freedom of expression, refrain from unnecessary use of force: UN chief

GENEVA: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday urged Iranian authorities to “exercise maximum restraint” amid unrest in the country, stressing that the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly “must be fully respected” and “protected”. The UN chief’s remarks come amid protests in Iran that killed at least 420 protesters during anti-government demonstrations over the past 15 days, including eight children, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran (HRA), CNN reported. In a post on X, the UN Secretary-General emphasised the need to refrain from the “unnecessary or disproportionate use of force” while handling public demonstrations. “Shocked by reports of violence & excessive use of force by the Iranian authorities against protesters resulting in deaths & injuries in recent days. The rights to freedom of expression, association & peaceful assembly must be fully respected & protected. I urge the Iranian authorities to exercise maximum restraint & refrain from unnecessary or disproportionate use of force,” Guterres said in his post. “I also urge steps that enable access to information in the country, including restoring communications,” the UN Secretary-General said. Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that they are “closely monitoring” the unfolding situation in Iran, as protests demanding freedom continue to spread



across the country. Netanyahu voiced strong support for the Iranian people’s struggle against what he described as “tyranny”. In a post on X, Netanyahu wrote, “Israel is closely monitoring the events unfolding in Iran. The protests for freedom have spread throughout the country. The people of Israel, and the entire world, stand in awe of the immense bravery of Iran’s citizens.” **Soaring inflation and economic hardship** The protests began on December 28 as demonstrations against soaring inflation and economic hardship but soon escalated into tense nationwide unrest, marked by violent clashes between protesters and security forces. Demonstrations have spread across multiple cities, with authorities responding through arrests, crackdowns, and the

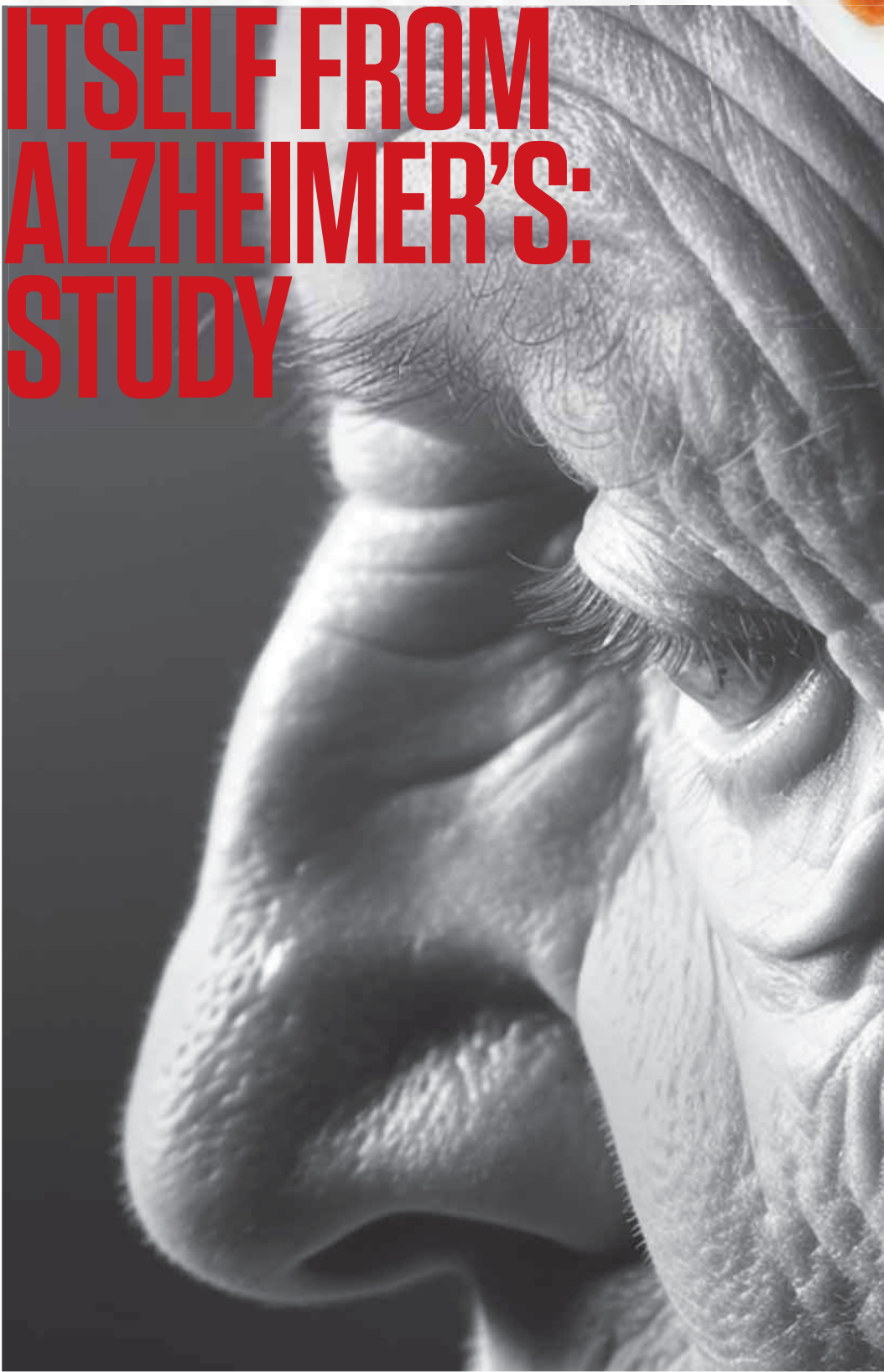
use of force. Human rights groups have repeatedly raised concerns over the scale of casualties and the treatment of protesters. Iranian authorities have blamed the unrest on “rioters” and foreign interference, while maintaining that legitimate economic grievances will be addressed. Amid the unrest, US officials told CNN that President Trump is weighing several military options in Iran following deadly protests, after warning Tehran against using lethal force on demonstrators. Iranian Attorney General Mohammad Movahedi Azad said legal action against protesters would be strict. According to Tasnim news agency, he said proceedings would be carried out “without leniency, mercy or appeasement.” “The charges against all rioters are the same,” he said. -ANI

the CIA landed at the Bay of Pigs, some 200 km from the capital, Havana. Expecting to spark a revolution and overthrow Castro, the plan quickly collapsed. Castro sent around 20,000 troops to the beaches, forcing a surrender. The failure proved a major embarrassment for the US, intensifying Cold War tensions in the region. **1973 Chile: Covert operations and a military coup** Still alarmed by the communist rule in Cuba and the prospect of Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere, the US opposed socialist President Salvador Allende’s government in Chile from the outset. Washington viewed Allende’s nationalization of key industries and close ties to the Soviet Union as a threat to US interests. Though the US did not directly carry out the coup, Washington sought to destabilize Chile through diplomatic pressure, financial restrictions, funding of opposition groups and anti-Allende propaganda. In September 1973, Chile’s military, led by Augusto Pinochet, overthrew Allende, with the former assuming power following Allende’s death during the coup. The right-wing dictator would go on to rule Chile for 17 years, marking the end of a 46-year history of democratic rule in Chile. His

regime was marked by widespread disappearances and torture. **1983 Grenada: Operation Urgent Fury** Following the assassination of Grenada’s Prime Minister Maurice Bishop during an internal coup, President Ronald Reagan ordered an invasion of Grenada. He cited the need to protect US citizens and to ensure the security of the region. Known as Operation Urgent Fury, the invasion came at a time when the US was alarmed at Grenada’s relationships with the Soviet Union and Cuba. The invasion was heavily criticized by the United Nations General Assembly who wrote that the intervention was “a flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of that State.” **1989 Panama: Operation Just Cause** In December 1989, President George H.W. Bush launched a full-scale invasion of Panama under Operation Just Cause, deploying roughly 24,000 troops to remove General Manuel Noriega from power. Noriega, once a US ally, was indicted and imprisoned in the US on charges including drug-trafficking, racketeering, and money laundering. -IW



BOOSTING THIS PROTEIN HELPS BRAIN PROTECT ITSELF FROM ALZHEIMER'S: STUDY



Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine have identified a natural process in the brain that can remove existing amyloid plaques in mouse models of Alzheimer's disease while also helping preserve memory and thinking ability

Researchers discovered that raising the protein Sox9 can help the brain's astrocytes clear out toxic plaque buildup linked to Alzheimer's.

In mouse models that already showed memory problems, activating these cells improved cognitive performance. The treatment also reduced plaque levels over time. The work points toward a natural, cell-based way to slow Alzheimer's decline.

Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine have identified a natural process in the brain that can remove existing amyloid plaques in mouse models of Alzheimer's disease while also helping preserve memory and thinking ability.

This process relies on astrocytes, star-shaped support cells, which can be guided to clear out the toxic plaque buildup commonly seen in Alzheimer's. When the team increased the amount of Sox9, a protein that influences many astrocyte functions during ageing, the cells became more effective at removing amyloid deposits.

The findings, reported in Nature Neuroscience, suggest that strengthening astrocyte activity could one day help slow cognitive decline linked to neurodegenerative disorders.

"Astrocytes perform diverse tasks that are essential for normal brain function, including facilitating brain communications and memory storage. As the brain ages, astrocytes show profound functional alterations; however, the role these alterations play in aging and neurodegeneration is not yet understood," said first author Dr. Dong-Joo Choi, who conducted this work while at the Center for Cell and Gene Therapy and the Department of Neurosurgery at Baylor. Choi is now an assistant professor at the Center for Neuroimmunology and Glial Biology, Institute of Molecular Medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Centre at Houston.

Focusing on Sox9 as a key regulator

For this project, the investigators set out to understand how astrocytes change with age and how those changes relate to Alzheimer's disease.

Their attention centred on Sox9, a protein that influences a wide network of genes involved in astrocyte ageing.

"We manipulated the expression of the Sox9 gene to assess its role in maintaining astrocyte function in the aging brain and in Alzheimer's disease models," explained corresponding author Dr. Benjamin Deneen, professor and Dr. Russell J. and Marian K. Blattner Chair in the Department of Neurosurgery, director of the Center for Cancer Neuroscience, member of the Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor and principal investigator at the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research

Institute at Texas Children's Hospital.

Testing the approach in symptomatic Alzheimer's models

"An important point of our experimental design is that we worked with mouse models of Alzheimer's disease that had already developed cognitive impairment, such as memory deficits, and had amyloid plaques in the brain," Choi said.

"We believe these models are more relevant to what we see in many patients with Alzheimer's disease symptoms than other models in which these types of experiments are conducted before the plaques form," added Choi.

In these models, the researchers either increased or removed Sox9 and then monitored each mouse's cognitive performance for six months.

During this period, the animals were tested on their ability to recognise familiar objects and locations.

After the behavioural studies were completed, the team examined the brains to measure plaque accumulation.

Higher Sox9 levels improve plaque removal and memory

The results showed a clear difference. Lowering Sox9 led to faster plaque buildup, reduced structural complexity in astrocytes and diminished plaque clearing.

Raising Sox9 had the opposite effect, increasing the cells' activity, supporting plaque removal and preserving cognitive performance. The protective benefits suggested that strong astrocyte engagement may help slow the cognitive decline associated with neurodegenerative disease.

"We found that increasing Sox9 expression triggered astrocytes to ingest more amyloid plaques, clearing them from the brain like a vacuum cleaner," Deneen said.

"Most current treatments focus on neurons or try to prevent the formation of amyloid plaques. This study suggests that enhancing astrocytes' natural ability to clean up could be just as important," added Deneen.

Future potential and ongoing research needs

Choi, Deneen and their colleagues note that additional research is needed to understand how Sox9 behaves in the human brain across time.

Still, these results point toward the possibility of developing therapies that harness astrocytes' natural cleaning abilities to combat neurodegenerative disorders.

Sanjana Murali, Wookbong Kwon, Junsung Woo, Eun-Ah Christine Song, Yeunjung Ko, Debo Sardar, Brittney Lozzi, Yi-Ting Cheng, Michael R. Williamson, Teng-Wei Huang, Kaitlyn Sanchez and Joanna Jankowsky, all at Baylor College of Medicine, also contributed to this work. - ANI

Al Harthy returns to 24H Dubai race to defend GT3 AM crown

Oman’s top endurance racer teams up with Paradine Competition aiming for back-to-back success

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s Ahmad Al Harthy, one of the Middle East’s most successful motorsport stars, has confirmed his return to the region’s premier endurance race, the Michelin 24H Dubai, this weekend at Dubai Autodrome.

The experienced racer will once again join forces with Paradine Competition, eager to defend the GT3 AM class victory he claimed at last year’s event.

Al Harthy delivered a commanding performance in January 2025, driving Paradine’s BMW M4 GT3 EVO.

The team qualified on GT3 AM pole position and ran at the front for the majority of the 24-hour race, even briefly leading outright.

Ultimately, Al Harthy, alongside team owner Darren Leung, Toby Sowery, and Simon Traves, finished fifth overall, securing the GT3 AM crown in a masterclass of speed, consistency, and strategy.

On last year’s triumph, Al Harthy said: “Winning GT3 AM last year was an incredible experience. Dubai is always a challenging race, with a huge grid and intense competition. At one point, I even had the chance to lead the race outright, which was a thrilling moment. It showed what a strong team effort we had with Paradine.”

This year, Al Harthy’s Paradine lineup is bolstered by James Kellett, a BMW M4 racer from the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup, and Anthony McIntosh, who finished second overall in the recent Michelin 6H ABU DHABI.



“Winning GT3 AM last year was an incredible experience. Dubai is always a challenging race, with a huge grid and intense competition. At one point, I even had the chance to lead the race outright.”

Ahmad Al Harthy

Together with Leung and Al Harthy, the team aims to once again combine pace, precision, and endurance to repeat their success.

“I’m thrilled to kick off the 2026 season in the biggest race of the region,” Al Harthy said.

“Partnering again with Darren and the team, and racing alongside James and Anthony, our goal is clear: defend the GT3 AM title. Dubai always delivers a spectacular 24 hours with an incredible grid – around 65 cars this year – and we’re ready for the challenge.”

The 2026 Michelin 24H DUBAI begins with practice sessions on Wednesday, 14th January, and Thursday, 15th January, followed by additional free practice on Friday, 16th January.

GT3 cars will undergo three qualifying sessions on Friday, with the Top 10 Shoot-Out. Night practice follows before the race kicks off at 13:00 on Saturday, 17th January, running through to 13:00 on Sunday, 18th January.

FORMER WORLD NO.3



Former Wimbledon finalist Raonic retires

LONDON: Former Wimbledon finalist Milos Raonic said he has been the “luckiest person” to live out his dreams as he announced his retirement from tennis.

The 35-year-old Canadian beat Roger Federer to reach the Wimbledon showpiece in 2016, where he fell to a straight-set defeat by Great Britain’s Andy Murray.

Raonic, who won eight tour-level titles, achieved a career-high world ranking of three that same year, having also reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open. Raonic reached four Masters 1000 finals but lost them all - three to Novak Djokovic and one to Rafael Nadal.

“The time has come, I am retiring from tennis,” Raonic posted on social media on Sunday.

“This is a moment you know will come one day, but somehow you never feel ready for it. This is as ready as I’ll ever be.

“Tennis has been my love and obsession for most of my life.”

Best known for his powerful serve, which earned him the nick-

name ‘Missile’, Raonic played his last match at the 2024 Olympics, losing in the first round to Germany’s Dominik Koepfer.

“I have been the luckiest person to get to live out and fulfil my dreams. I got to show up every day and focus on just getting better, seeing where that will take me, and playing a game I was introduced to at eight-year-old by complete luck,” he added.

“Somehow, this became my entire obsession and childhood, and then became my profession and life.”

Raonic was born in Titograd, Yugoslavia (now Podgorica, Montenegro) and moved to Canada when he was three years old. He won his first ATP title at the Pacific Coast Championships in 2011.

“What’s next? I won’t be slowing down. There is so much more life to live, and I am as motivated and hungry as I was in 2011, when I broke through on tour. I will put the same effort and intensity into the next thing,” he said. - Agencies

TEAM TENNIS EVENT

Poland clinch United Cup

SYDNEY: Poland won the United Cup title for the first time with victory over Switzerland, though they had to battle from behind after an opening singles defeat for world No.2 Iga Swiatek on Sunday.

Former Olympic champion Belinda Bencic gave Switzerland the best possible start in Sydney with a 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 victory over Swiatek.

But Poland’s Hubert Hurkacz came through a thrilling three-set encounter in the men’s singles, levelling the tie with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory over three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka.

In the deciding mixed doubles, Polish pairing Katarzyna Kawa and Jan Zielinski maintained their 100% record in the tournament, beating Bencic and Jakub Paul 6-4, 6-3 to clinch a 2-1 victory.

“Finally we have made it - third-time lucky... I mean, not lucky because we worked really hard,” said Swiatek about Poland’s win, following defeats by Germany and the United States in the 2024 and



2025 finals. “I want to thank our team because this year I felt like it was such a team effort. I really felt the support. Even though my singles performance wasn’t perfect, you really got my spirits up and each of you believed to the end.”

It looked as though Poland might lose a third consecutive final when Bencic continued her winning sin-

gles record at the United Cup with her ninth victory, beating Swiatek back into the tie, maintaining his own fine form after returning to competition following seven months out injured, beating 40-year-old Warwinka in his

final season on the tour.

Then Kawa and Zielinski proved too strong for Bencic and Paul, showing the form that helped them win a deciding rubber against the American pairing of Coco Gauff and Christian Harrison in the semi-finals, as they claimed a fifth successive win in the tournament to clinch the title for Poland. - Agencies

SWISS TENNIS STAR

From 421st to top 10: Bencic eyes Melbourne glory

SYDNEY: A year ago, Swiss Belinda Bencic found herself 421st in the world rankings. The former Olympic champion had dropped down after an 11-month maternity break in which she had daughter Bella.

But after a solid 2025 and a superb start to the 2026 season, Bencic is now back inside the world’s top 10.

She is the first woman to enter the top 10 in singles after giving birth since the great Serena Williams did so in 2019 - 17 months after having daughter Olympia.

After being named the Most Valuable Player at the United Cup, Swiss team-mate Stan Wawrinka said the side were “living in Belinda’s world”.

Her recent form means Bencic



will be a contender for the title when the Australian Open begins on Sunday. When Bencic made her top 10 debut in 2016 - aged just 18 - she became the first teenager in the top 10 of the WTA singles rankings since Caroline Wozniacki in 2009.

It wasn’t until five years later,

however, that she won her first big title, beating Marketa Vondrousova in the final of the Tokyo Olympics to claim the gold medal.

A few WTA Tour-level titles followed in 2022 and 2023, but her pregnancy meant she missed out on defending her Olympic gold in Paris. By the time Bencic returned from her maternity break in October 2024, she had slipped to 1,213th in the world.

But less than four months later, Bencic was back - reaching the fourth round of the Australian Open before winning the Abu Dhabi Open, which she celebrated with Bella in one arm and the trophy in the other. A deep run at Wimbledon in July - ended in the semi-finals by eventual champion Iga Swiatek - lifted her back into the

world’s top 20, and she clinched her second title of the year at October’s Pan Pacific Open.

During Wimbledon, she said: “I see myself as a mum first, and then a tennis player. My priorities are clearly with my family.”

When Bencic played in the United Cup at the start of 2025, she was thrashed 6-1 6-1 by Italy’s Jasmine Paolini as Switzerland failed to make it past the group stage.

But the 28-year-old enjoyed a stellar run in Australia earlier this month as she helped Switzerland reach the final for the first time.

She won all five of her singles matches, including victories over seventh-ranked Paolini and world No.2 Swiatek in the final, although Poland fought back to win the trophy in Sydney. - Agencies

FA CUP THIRD ROUND

Brighton knock out Man United



LONDON: Manchester United's problems mounted as the managerless Red Devils crashed out of the FA Cup third round after a 2-1 defeat against Brighton on Sunday.

Brajan Gruda put Brighton ahead in the first half at Old Trafford and former United striker Danny Welbeck netted after the break.

Benjamin Sesko's reply came too late to save his side from a third round exit as United teenager Shea Lacey was sent off in the final moments.

United was barraged by jeers from furious fans following the latest miserable result in another troubled season.

Midfielder Kobbie Mainoo started for only the second time this season as Fletcher left Casemiro on the bench in one of three changes from the midweek 2-2 draw at lowly Burnley.

Albion keeper Jason Steele made fine saves to deny Diogo Dalot and Bruno Fernandes in the early stages. But Brighton made the most of those escapes to take the lead in the 12th minute.

Welbeck was the catalyst with an incisive run and cross to Georginio Rutter, whose header was cleared off the line by Lisandro Martinez before Gruda slammed past Senne Lammens from close-range.

Brighton punished its sham-bolic defending to double the lead in the 64th minute.

Gruda was given time and space to pick out Welbeck inside the area and he lashed an exquisite strike past Lammens as the atmosphere turned even more toxic. Sesko set up a frenetic finale after heading home from Fernandes' 85th minute corner.

But United couldn't muster a late escape as Lacey, already on a booking, brought a fitting end to a painful defeat when he was sent off for throwing the ball away in frustration.

United, currently a disappointing seventh in the Premier League, is without a win in four games and has managed only one victory in its last seven matches.

Martinelli's hat-trick

At Fratton Park, Gabriel Martinelli scored a hat-trick as Arsenal came from behind to beat Portsmouth comfortably 4-1 and progress to the FA Cup fourth round.

After FA Cup shocks involving Wrexham and Macclesfield earlier this weekend, it looked as if the Gunners, who made 10 changes to their starting line-up, could be on the end of another when Colby Bishop put the Championship hosts ahead after three minutes.

But Arsenal were only behind for five minutes before Christian Norgaard forced the ball in via Portsmouth's Andre Dozzell after a trademark Gunners corner to level.

That goal settled the visitors down and they took the lead from another set-piece when Martinelli flicked Noni Madueke's corner into the net after 25 minutes.

Madueke had a chance to add a third from the penalty spot after he was brought down by Zak Swanson but the England international dragged the ball wide.

Martinelli, who also hit the post and missed a good chance in the first half, added a third after Gabriel Jesus played a low cross into the area following some quick thinking by Myles Lewis-Skelly and the Brazilian tapped in from close range.

Martinelli grabbed his third from another Arsenal corner when the forward flicked the ball on from the near post and into the net. There was then a piece of history when at 16 years and 135 days defender Marli Salmon became the youngest player to feature for the Gunners in the FA Cup. - Agencies



Barcelona edge Real to lift Spanish Super Cup

In the final played in Jeddah on Sunday night, Raphinha scored twice, including the winner to help Hansi Flick's men triumph 3-2 and retain the title

JEDDAH: Barcelona coach Hansi Flick commended Raphinha's mindset after the forward struck twice to help his team beat Real Madrid 3-2 and retain the Spanish Super Cup at the Alinma Bank Stadium at King Abdullah Sport City in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday.

The Brazilian winger has seven goals in his last five matches, including a brace in the 3-2 win over Los Blancos on Sunday.

Raphinha was out injured for around two months as Barca's form dipped in October and November, but has come back strongly.

"His mentality is unbelievable, his dynamic affects the whole team," Flick told reporters.

Raphinha missed a fine chance in the first half but almost immediately fired Barca into the lead in Jeddah. Then, with the score tied at 2-2, the 29-year-old struck the winner from outside the area, with the help of a deflection.

"He missed the first chance but the second one, he was there and (scored) the first goal, and it



gave the team more confidence," continued Flick. "This is what Raphinha brings on the pitch, it's a lot of intensity and we need this."

Barca won the Spanish Super Cup against Real Madrid last season on its way to claiming a domestic treble.

Flick said he hoped the victory would help the La Liga leader achieve its other ambitions this season. "We are in a good mood, we have a lot of confidence now," said Flick, after Barca's 10th consecutive victory across all competitions.

"This final was very important for us because against Real Madrid it's always something special. Again we won a final, and this is fantastic."

Flick has won all eight finals he has competed in as a coach, includ-

ing two last season against Madrid.

"When we are focused, we concentrate and play like we did today. I have a really good feeling with the team, because it's important," Flick added.

The coach brought on defender Ronald Araujo in the final stages, after the Uruguayan took a mental health break of around a month.

"To be on the pitch and to win this title means a lot for him," said Flick. "I'm really happy that he's back, and happy that it seems like it's okay -- we will support him always."

It marked a 16th triumph in the tournament for Flick's side.

Raphinha's floated shot in the 73rd minute proved to be the winner after a frantic ending to the first half.

Three quick-fire goals in first-



half stoppage time put the two on level terms at the break after Raphinha had opened the scoring, drilling into the bottom corner in the 36th minute.

Vinicius Jr equalised two minutes into three of added time, nutmegging Jules Kounde on a brilliant run before sliding into the far corner to score his first Real goal in 17 games, since 4 October, 2025.

Robert Lewandowski then clipped in off the post to restore Barca's lead in the 49th minute.

But Gonzalo Garcia hooked in three minutes later after a scramble in the box that saw Dean Huijsen's header hit the bar, as Barca boss Flick protested the half-time whistle should already have been blown.

Frenkie de Jong was shown a straight red card in stoppage time after lunging in on Kylian Mbappe, who came on as a substitute having recovered from a knee injury.

Late chances at both ends made for a nervy finale with Marcus Rashford shooting wide when clear, while Alvaro Carreras and then Raul Asencio both shot straight at goalkeeper Joan Garcia.

Barca have not lost to Spanish opposition since 26 October when Real beat them in El Clasico at the Bernabeu. - Agencies

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA



Bayern hammer eight past Wolfsburg

MUNICH: Bayern Munich moved 11 points clear at the top of the Bundesliga in style with an 8-1 thrashing of Wolfsburg on Sunday.

England striker Harry Kane took his league tally to 20 goals in 16 matches this season, bending a stunning right-footed strike into the far top corner to put his side 6-1 up.

Wolfsburg set a Bundesliga record by scoring an own goal for a third consecutive game when Kilian Fischer diverted Luis Diaz's

cut-back into his own net in the fifth minute. The visitors responded through Dzenan Pejcinovic's equaliser, but Bayern stormed back to take complete control.

Diaz restored their advantage by heading in Michael Olise's cross for his ninth league goal of the season, before the French forward struck twice himself in the second half of his 50th Bundesliga match for Bayern.

Olise curled home his first five minutes after half-time and added

a second in the 76th minute.

By then, a Moritz Jenz own goal and finishes from Raphael Guerreiro and Kane had already extended their commanding lead.

Leon Goretzka added an eighth from a tight angle in the 88th minute as Vincent Kompany's side made the perfect start as the league resumed following its winter break.

Second-placed Borussia Dortmund drew 3-3 at Eintracht Frankfurt on Friday. - Agencies

ITALIAN SERIE A

Inter held to draw by Napoli

MILAN: Inter Milan missed the chance to move five points clear at the top of Serie A as Scott McTominay scored twice to earn a 2-2 draw for Napoli, who had manager Antonio Conte sent off in their Serie A game on Sunday.

Inter went ahead in the ninth minute when Federico Dimarco latched on to Marcus Thuram's pass and fired home from an acute angle. Eljif Elmas played a ball into the path of McTominay, who burst into the box and scored at the near post to equalise for Napoli with 26 minutes played.

The hosts went back in front in the 73rd minute when Hakan Calhanoglu's thunderous penalty went in off the post with goalkeeper Vanja Milinkovic-Savic diving the wrong way.

Amir Rrahmani was judged to have caught Henrikh Mkhitaryan in the box - and Conte was dismissed for his angry reaction to the decision.

However, Napoli drew level once more through McTominay's superb first-time finish into the bottom corner nine minutes from time.

Inter are three points ahead of



rivals Milan while Napoli move up to third, level on points with Roma. Cristian Chivu's side have the chance to increase their lead to six points when they host Lecce on Wednesday.

Also, AC Milan missed the chance to join Inter Milan at the top of Serie A after snatching a late 1-1 draw at Fiorentina, ahead of its clash with Scudetto rival Napoli.

Christopher Nkunku lashed home Milan's leveller in the 90th minute at the Stadio Artemio Franchi to deny Fiorentina just a third win of a troubled season.

Fiorentina looked set for three points after Pietro Comuzzo headed home the opener in the 66th minute, but Nkunku's late strike left the Tuscans on 14 points in 18th place. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Toyota Corolla continues to lead in comfort and reliability



Designed to handle daily commutes, weekend trips, and long-distance journeys with ease, the Corolla offers a refined driving experience without compromising on style, efficiency, or practicality. Under the hood, the Corolla offers two engine options tailored to different driving needs

MUSCAT: The Toyota Corolla continues to set the benchmark for sedans in its segment, combining reliability, comfort, and advanced technology for drivers and families across Oman. Designed to handle daily commutes, weekend trips, and long-distance journeys with ease, the Corolla offers a refined driving experience without compromising on style, efficiency, or practicality. Under the hood, the Corolla offers two engine options tailored to different driving needs. The 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine produces 168

horsepower and 20.39 kg-m of torque, paired with a Direct Shift CVT transmission for smooth, responsive acceleration. The 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine, generating 121 horsepower and 15.7 kg-m of torque, provides a fuel-efficient and quiet drive. Both engines maintain Toyota's hallmark balance of performance and efficiency. Inside, the Corolla cabin prioritizes space, comfort, and convenience. Passengers benefit from generous legroom and headroom, plush seating with advanced cushioning, rear AC vents, and wide

armrests. The large boot ensures ample space for luggage, groceries, or sports gear, making the Corolla well-suited for family use and active lifestyles. Technology features include an 8-inch display audio system, a 4.2-inch multi-information display, six-speaker audio setup, cruise control, and an optional moonroof that enhances the cabin's sense of openness. These elements provide both connectivity and enjoyment for drivers and passengers alike. Safety is central to the Corolla's design, with four SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC),

Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Brake Assist, Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD), and Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS). These features ensure that occupants are protected at every stage of the journey, reinforcing the Corolla's reputation for dependable safety. With its combination of practicality, comfort, and dependable performance, the Toyota Corolla continues to be a preferred choice for drivers and families seeking a sedan that delivers value, safety, and a premium driving experience on every journey.

CELEBRATING IMPACT

Khimji Ramdas honours 49 long-serving employees



MUSCAT: Khimji Ramdas Group recently honoured 49 long-serving employees who have completed two decades and more of dedicated service, celebrating their enduring contributions and the lasting impact they have made on the organisation's growth and success. Now in its 28th year, the Khimji Ramdas Long Service Awards stand as a testament to the Group's people-first philosophy and its commitment to recognising those who have helped shape its journey

across generations. The ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Mahad bin Said bin Ali Baawain, Minister of Labour, in the presence of Khimji Ramdas leadership and senior management. Speaking on the occasion, Anil Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas stated: "Our people are our greatest strength. These awards celebrate not just years of service, but the loyalty, belief, and shared purpose that have driven progress across the Group. Each of our awardees

has played a meaningful role in building Khimji Ramdas into the organisation it is today". Reflecting on the milestone, Aida Al Balushi, Human Resources Department said, "Reaching a two decade service milestone is a powerful reflection of personal and professional evolution. At Khimji Ramdas, we are committed to fostering a culture of empowerment, development, and continuous excellence, enabling our people to grow alongside the organisation".

Sharing his personal experience, Abdullah Alamri from the Lifestyle Cluster mentioned: "Khimji Ramdas has provided an environment that encourages learning and growth. The organisation's focus on developing people for tomorrow has been a defining aspect of my journey". Hanish Mehta from the Procter & Gamble Business highlighted the values that underpin the Group's sustained success: "Respect, integrity, and strong values

are deeply embedded within the culture of Khimji Ramdas. These principles have enabled resilience, long-term growth, and enduring relationships over the years". The Long Service Awards reaffirm Khimji Ramdas Group's unwavering commitment to recognising dedication, nurturing talent, and building a future shaped by people who believe in its vision and values. Headquartered in Muscat, Khimji Ramdas (KR) is a leading di-

versified business group operating across four key clusters: Lifestyle, Consumer Products, Projects and Logistics, and Infrastructure. Renowned for its commitment to quality, integrity, and fairness, KR has established itself as a blue-chip corporate leader in Oman. The group is committed to supporting the Sultanate's Oman Vision 2040 plan, contributing to the nation's growth and development through its innovative business solutions and partnerships.

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