

SalamAir continues fleet expansion with 15th aircraft ‘Barr Al Hikman’

SalamAir continues to support the aviation ecosystem in advancing Oman Vision 2040 by increasing tourism levels and contributing to the Sultanate's economic diversification

Times News Service

MUSCAT: SalamAir, Oman's low-cost airline, proudly announces the arrival of its 15th aircraft, a brand-new Airbus A321neo, named "Barr Al Hikman" after the famous coastal area located in the Sultanate of Oman, often referred to as the Maldives of the Middle East, known for its natural beauty



and abundant wildlife. Mohamed bin Abdullah Al Khonji, Chairman of SalamAir, said: "We are delighted to welcome Barr Al Hikman, our 15th aircraft, to our expanding fleet. SalamAir is committed to making air travel more affordable while supporting Oman's aviation and tourism goals. This newest addition to our fleet marks the start of executing our strategic plan to reach 25 aircraft by 2028. SalamAir continues to support the aviation ecosystem in advancing Oman Vision 2040 by increasing tourism levels and contributing to the Sultanate's economic diversification. We underscore the importance of public-private collaboration and com-

plementarity to grow tourism for the benefit of Oman." "Part of SalamAir's strategy since 2024 has been to focus on unserved routes", said Mohamed Al Khonji. "We firmly believe that Vision 2040 will be achieved through ambitious, forward-looking growth. For example, the United Arab Emirates operates more than 560 aircraft with a population of around 11 million, while Qatar operates about 230 aircraft with a population of around 3 million. By comparison, both Omani airlines combined operate no more than 46 aircraft with a population of around 5 million, which shows Oman's substantial headroom for growth. By working together



through codeshare and other forms of cooperation, seeking to complement rather than compete, both Omani airlines can be part of the growth story. With our 15th plane delivered, we are inaugurating a new phase in our growth journey." "With our fleet now of 15 aircraft, the airline can begin to expand that demand further while opening new markets, including our long-term plan to establish a base for two to three aircraft in Salalah. A Salalah base supports balanced regional development, bringing more visitors to Dhofar and stimulating year-round tourism and employment." Adrian Hamilton-Manns, Chief

Executive Officer of SalamAir, commented: "This new aircraft will enable SalamAir to expand its network by increasing frequencies to Nairobi; launching new services to Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia; strengthening our presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia via Abha; resuming Beirut; and launching service to Medan in Indonesia. With a growing list of previously unserved destinations across the region, SalamAir plays a key role in supporting Oman's efforts to expand transport links, making it easier for people to travel to Oman and for residents to have direct access to more destinations." "Our 15th plane is a launchpad for growth. It will be used to open

new routes and to add more seats to high-demand destinations like Salalah. SalamAir's OMR 9.99 domestic fare, launched in November 2024, has proven to be hugely popular and has stimulated new travel demand. Over the past year, the airline has transformed into a leading low-cost airline in the region, and this growth will continue." "This expansion will allow SalamAir to offer more competitive fares, add new routes, and expand flights in line with market demand. It will also create 182 jobs, increasing our workforce by 24% over the next 12 months, taking the company from 750 employees today to higher levels that further strengthen our contribution to the national economy." With this addition, SalamAir further cements its role as a key pillar of the Sultanate's aviation and tourism sectors, expanding its route network, strengthening Oman's position as a regional travel hub, and opening wider opportunities for tourism, trade, and cultural exchange. These initiatives align with Oman Vision 2040 by diversifying the economy, empowering the private sector, and positioning Oman as a connected and sustainable regional hub.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Clinics on campus ready to provide all necessary healthcare

< FROM A1 These services include health promotion programmes, youth counselling services, mental health, health education, first aid, primary healthcare, referral and follow-up, and special follow-up for chronic cases.

Ensuring full readiness She stated that the Ministry of Health is always keen to ensure that clinics on campus are ready to provide the necessary healthcare, adding that there are regular supervisory visits to higher education institutions and training for healthcare personnel to ensure full readiness for the start of the new academic year. For her part, Yusra bint Faqir Al Balushi, a senior specialist nurse in the School Health Department, explained that the Ministry of Health is monitoring the readiness of all school health clinics

and ensuring the availability of the necessary medical equipment and supplies to receive students at the start of the school year. She said implementation of specialised programmes that support student health, including: the Health-Promoting Schools Initiative to implement the concept of the school as a comprehensive environment that supports physical and mental health, the Psychosocial Support Initiative to enhance the psychological and social well-being of students, awareness programmes on psychotropic substances and drugs to protect young people from health and social risks, and programmes such as: Girls' Health (Mental Health) and Adolescent Health, and the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Programme to train eleventh-grade students and school staff to respond to emergency situations and save lives.

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FIRST HALF OF 2025

Madayn implements an integrated marketing plan to enhance exports

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) implemented an integrated marketing plan during the first half of 2025 to enhance its presence locally and internationally, attract foreign investments, localise national capital in industrial cities, encourage Omani exports, and establish export industries in the Sultanate. Khalid bin Sulaiman Al Salhi, Director General of Marketing and Commercial Affairs at Madayn, said that since assuming the chairmanship of the supervisory team for promoting Omani products (OPEX) in January this year, which includes Madayn, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, the Corporation has implemented 10 major events, including organising and participating in six international exhibitions, two local exhibitions, and two internal events. He explained that these participations aimed to introduce stakeholders to the potential of Omani industries and the competitive advantages of the industrial cities, in addition to supporting local investors in accessing new markets and expanding the network of relationships with regional and international partners. Represented by the Directorate General of Marketing and Commercial Affairs, Madayn participated in the Gulf Food Exhibition



"Gulfood 2025", the Baghdad International Fair, the Algiers International Fair, the Saudi Food Show in Riyadh, the Iran Expo in Tehran, and the Mobile World Summit (Shanghai). He added that the marketing team at Madayn, through these participations and bilateral meetings, was able to attract and localise nine projects in a number of industrial cities, with a total investment volume exceeding OMR13 million on a total area of up to 60,000 square metres, in the sectors of food industries,

plastics, marble, industrial detergents, and warning and anti-theft systems. This has had a positive impact on strengthening the corporate identity and attracting new investments. He explained that participation in external economic events represents an added value in order to double Omani exports and attract quality investments and localise them in industrial cities. Initial indicators indicate the success of Omani companies and factories participating under the Sultanate of Oman's pavilion at the Gulfood 2025 exhibition, held last February in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in signing 115 contracts and commercial deals worth more than half a million Omani rials. He pointed out that the Directorate General of Marketing and Commercial Affairs at Madayn completed 15 marketing and investment projects during the first half of 2025, most notably the OPEX Events Plan for the upcoming period and its approval. A comprehensive plan was pre-

pared in coordination with relevant authorities, including the identification of external events, target markets, and participation mechanisms. A comprehensive study was also conducted to establish an integrated research and development center at Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM). The study aims to stimulate industrial research and innovation to support national priority sectors, contribute to attracting foreign investments by providing an advanced research and development environment, and enhance the utilization of university outputs by transforming research into practical solutions. The projects also included a competitive study project for "Madayn" in the medical industries sector, through a comprehensive analysis of "Madayn" competitive position in the medical industries market, regionally and internationally, identifying potential investment opportunities and challenges in this sector, in addition to implementing a project to develop an investor journey map, which aims to improve the investor experience from the inquiry stage to the start of operations, while simplifying procedures and providing a clear path. He explained that the implementation of the "Madayn" marketing strategy project aims to develop a comprehensive strategy to enhance the promotion of industrial cities and increase investment attraction, adding that there are plans for digital and field promotion and identifying target markets.

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY

MSX initiatives led to rise in trading volumes

< FROM A1 The Ministry explained that the MSX initiatives have led to the diversification of financial instruments available to investors, increased market depth, and enhanced the exchange's performance by creating activities such as market makers and liquidity providers, which contributed to increasing trading volumes. The initial public offerings (IPOs) under the Oman Investment Authority's share allocation programme confirmed the steady progress made in efforts to empower the private sector and provide investment opportunities in promising sectors such as oil and logistics. These IPOs have been successful in increasing the total market value of securities listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange and attracting new investments, which confirms confidence in the in-



vestment prospects of the Omani capital market and the promising opportunities it offers, in light of the progress made in efforts to achieve sustainability and economic diversification and the strong foundations upon which the growth of the national economy depends. The Ministry of Economy explained that the Muscat Stock Exchange's general index crossing the 5,000-point barrier in recent days represents a new positive development that reflects the strengthening of the Omani

capital market's depth, improved liquidity levels, and investor confidence in the national economy. The Ministry noted that the implementation of the capital market incentive programme has improved the investment environment, empowering the private sector, and increasing its role as a driver of growth and job creation. This is achieved through the incentive package the programme offers to private sector companies wishing to benefit from the programme and list on the Muscat Stock Exchange. The Ministry explained that the establishment of the "Promising Companies Market," which aims to stimulate the listing of small and medium-sized enterprises, private and family businesses on the stock exchange, represents an important qualitative leap that complements the strategic programmes that are being imple-

mented during the tenth five-year plan within the priorities and objectives of the "Economy and Development" axis in Oman's future vision. These include financing programmes and developing the investment system, stimulating private sector contribution in the field of artificial intelligence and advanced technologies, upgrading and modernisation to support national industry, expanding specialised incubators in the governorates, establishing an academy for entrepreneurship, establishing a special economic zone for small and medium-sized enterprises, and other economic programmes and policies that aim to empower and support the private sector and entrepreneurship institutions and achieve the priorities of sustainability, economic diversification and investment, and national employment targets.

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COMMENTARY

Oman, India set to seal landmark trade pact

Oman and India are set to conclude a landmark Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), a deal expected to boost trade, investment, and cooperation between the two nations.

Speaking exclusively to the Times of Oman, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Zadjali, Founding Partner of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm, said that “this CEPA is anticipated to boost trade, attract investments, and open opportunities across sectors such as energy, technology, agriculture, and logistics. It represents a major step toward economic diversification and strategic cooperation.”

Negotiations for the CEPA began in November 2023 and progressed at a remarkable pace. The legal text is currently being translated into Arabic and will be reviewed by the governments of both countries. Prior to its signing, the agreement must be submitted to the Majlis al-Shura, in accordance with its authority to review economic and social agreements that the government intends to sign or accede to, and to provide its opinions thereon, as stipulated in Article 54 of the Law of the Council of Oman. Accordingly, and pursuant to Article 13 of the same law, which stipulates



DR. MOHAMMED IBRAHIM AL ZADJALI, Founding partner of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm



India's vast consumer base provides Oman with opportunities to expand exports such as minerals, fertilizers, and seafood

that members of the Majlis al-Shura are elected to represent all wilayat of the Sultanate, the citizen is thereby considered to have participated—through

their elected representatives—in the process of expressing an opinion on the agreement, and the agreement attains effect only upon the issuance of a Royal Decree by His Majesty the Sultan, Dr. Mohammed explained.

He further stated that “India's vast consumer base provides Oman with opportunities to expand exports such as minerals, fertilizers, and seafood, while Oman's strategic ports offer India a vital gateway to the Middle East and Africa. The CEPA is expected to make Indian exports, like textiles, machinery, and IT services more competitive in Oman, while giving Omani natural gas and chemicals stronger access to India and reinforcing

Oman's role in regional connectivity and growth. It may also provide for a gradual reduction of tariffs by both countries to facilitate greater market access and smoother trade flows.”

He concluded by stating that “This is not only about the movement of goods across borders; it is also about long-term collaboration, skill-sharing, and investments that could benefit both nations. It could create jobs for Omanis, facilitate knowledge transfer, and strengthen people-to-people ties. Ultimately, the CEPA represents a win-win that could drive prosperity and stability amid an uncertain global economy.”

(Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm (info@mohammedibrahim.net), (+968 244 87 600) was established 18 years ago and is serving clients through its offices in Muscat and Sohar, as well as operating on a request basis in other areas. It offers legal representation across a wide range of practice areas that include Labour Law, Corporate, Commercial, Contracts, Banking and Finance, International Trade, Foreign Investment, Insurance, Maritime Law, Construction and Engineering Contracts, International Arbitration, Intellectual Property and more).

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

OCCI to organise 3 business forums

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) will organise three business forums - the Omani–Thai Business Forum, the Omani–Pakistani Business Forum and the Omani–Estonian Business Forum, besides an orientation meeting at the Omani Commercial Office in the USA.

These activities come within the efforts of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry for boosting its strategic move aimed at improving the business environment and to expand the base of economic diversification in consistent with Oman Vision 2040.

The first forum will kickstart, tomorrow, with the Omani–Thai Business Forum aimed at enhancement of commercial and investment cooperation between Oman and Thailand.

The form represents a platform for acquainting the Omani companies and the private sector with the opportunities available in the Thai market.

It also aims to explore ways of establishing trade and investment partnerships besides the discussion on the challenges and



exchange of expertise between the entrepreneurs of both the countries.

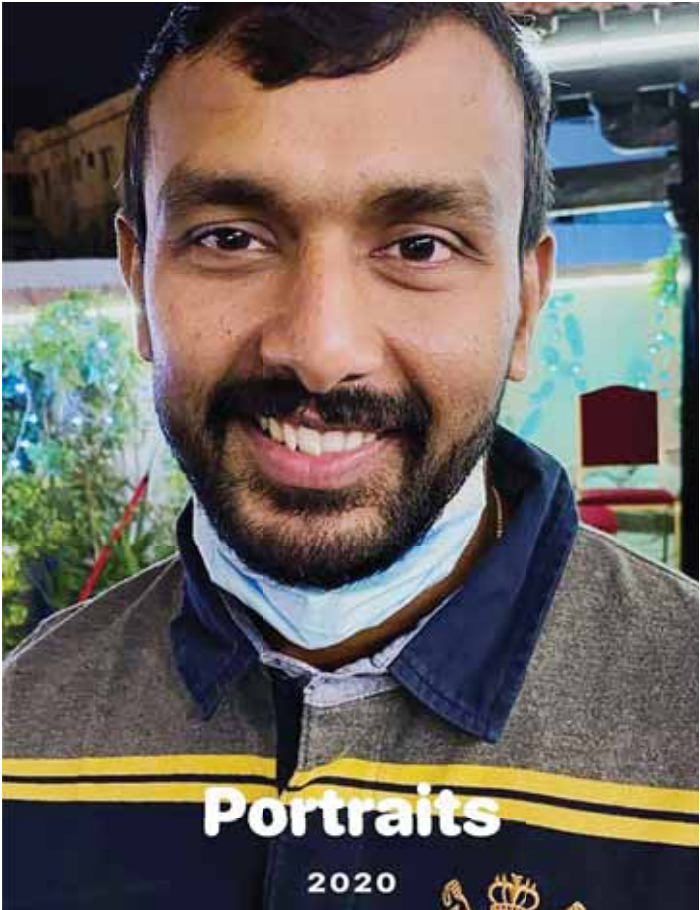
The OCCI will organise the Omani–Pakistani Business Forum on Tuesday.

The forum aims to boost the joint projects, and investment and trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, mainly the projects that support economic diversification in the two countries.

The OCCI, represented by the Omani Commercial Office in the USA will organise on Wednesday an orientation meeting which reviews the vital role of the office and the mechanisms for the support of the Omani companies to enter into the US market and to boost the commercial and investment partnerships between the two countries.

Colleagues pay glowing tributes to Krishna Nair

Krishna, originally from Ernakulam district of Kerala, worked with an engineering consultancy firm in Muscat.



Times News Service

MUSCAT: What was supposed to be another joyful Friday exercise, turned tragic when Krishna Nair, a well-known Indian expatriate and a swimming coach in Muscat, passed away after suffering a massive heart attack while swimming at Kalboubh Park. He was 45.

“He was gone within minutes,” recalled his friends, who had been swimming with him that morning.

“Every Friday, we swam from Kalboubh Park to the nearby mountain and back. Krishna always reached first, and last Friday was no different. But when we turned back, he told us, ‘You carry on, I’ll follow.’ Sadly, he never made it back.”

Krishna, originally from Ernakulam district of Kerala, worked with an engineering consultancy firm in Muscat.

Yet to many in the community, he was far more than an engineer—he was a coach, mentor, and inspiration.

An avid member of the Alawi Swimming Academy, he had trained hundreds of children and residents, instilling in them both

skill and confidence in the water. He was also a passionate trekking expert who encouraged others to embrace outdoor adventure.

Colleagues remembered him as “the heart of the swimming group” and “a captain who led with kindness.”

Members of Alawi Swimming Academy said: “We are grieved to announce the sudden and unexpected demise of our beloved Krishna Nair. Words cannot capture our loss. We pray for his soul and for the strength of his family.”

Krishna is survived by his wife Swapna, an employee with the Kerala government, and two children, Raghuram Krishna and

Poornima Krishna. He had been living alone in Muscat for work.

Messages of grief and gratitude flowed across the community. One of them wrote: “Krishna, you live forever as my first swimming coach. The memories of your teachings are still fresh in my thoughts.”

Another added: “It is a very sad and shocking day for the Alawi Swimming Academy. He will be loved and remembered by all.”

And as one of his friends movingly said: “Krishna will be remembered by many every time they touch water for swimming.”

Arrangements are being made to repatriate his body to Kerala.

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Oman Chef

competition showcases local talent, innovative cuisines

The initiative reflects Omran Group's commitment to social investment and the development of national talent in the tourism and hospitality sector



Times News Service

DHOFAR: The first phase of the sixth edition of the “Oman Chef” competition concluded on Saturday at Hawana Salalah, coinciding with the Khareef tourism season.

Organised by Oman Tourism College in partnership with Omran Group and Muriya, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the competition aims to spotlight Omani culinary talents and showcase local cuisine in innovative ways that preserve its authenticity.

The initiative reflects Omran Group's commitment to social investment and the development of national talent in the tourism and hospitality sector.

The competition featured chefs from Dhofar and Al Wusta Governorates who presented dishes inspired by local ingredients, ranging from traditional to modern fusion.

Beyond the spirit of competition, the event sought to inspire young chefs to develop creative recipes and acquire professional skills that contribute to strengthening Oman's culinary and hospitality industries.

Dr. Hamad bin Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Dean of Oman Tourism College, said: “The Oman Chef competition represents a national platform to document and showcase Omani culinary arts, presented in a professional manner aligned with international stand-



ards. “Through this initiative, the college aims to empower young chefs, ensure the sustainability of Omani culinary heritage, and increase the global competitiveness of national talents.”

Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rasbi, Social involvement lead at Omran Group, added: “Omran Group is proud to organise initiatives that support and empower Omani



emphasised the importance of the initiative, saying: “We are working to enhance career pathways for chefs, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and build qualified national talent that contributes to the growth of the tourism economy while strengthening the competitiveness of Omani human capital.”

Eng. Wael Al Lawati, CEO of Muriya, commented: “Hosting the competition at Hawana Salalah reflects our commitment to empowering Omani talent and creating real opportunities for chefs to achieve new levels of excellence. This initiative is central to our vision of supporting sustainable tourism and reinforcing the cultural and culinary identity of Oman.”

At the conclusion of the event, the winners were announced as follows: First place went to Ammar Al Harthy, second to Maryam Al Maani and Azzan Al Balushi came third.

The winners will be awarded an accredited training programme with Le Cordon Bleu, one of the world's leading culinary institutions, to help them advance their professional careers with international expertise.

The “Oman Chef” competition will continue its journey in Muscat from October to December 2025, culminating in the grand finale that will bring together the top chefs from across the Sultanate.

youth in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The ‘Oman Chef’ competition reflects the Group's commitment to social investment and to promoting authentic tourism experiences that highlight the richness of Oman's cultural heritage.”

Talal bin Humaid Al Khusaibi, Director General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate,





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Oman to witness total lunar eclipse on September 7

This phenomenon provides Oman with a unique opportunity to become a leading scientific tourism destination

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The skies over the Sultanate of Oman will witness a total lunar eclipse on Sunday evening, September 7, which will be visible across most continents.

The Omani Society for Astronomy and Space announced the commencement of preparations to observe the phenomenon, in co-operation with the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the governors' offices in various governorates, and the Muscat Municipality.



Salem bin Saif Al Siyabi, Board Member of the Omani Society for Astronomy and Space and Director of the Total Lunar Eclipse Observation Project, said: "This phenomenon is one of the rare astronomical events that provides the Sultanate of Oman with a prominent opportunity to become a leading scientific tourism destination at the regional and international levels. In addition, it has natural resources and diverse terrain that qualify it to attract thousands of interested people from various countries of the world, including astrophotographers, amateurs, researchers, as well as citizens, residents, and visitors to the Sultanate of Oman."

He added that monitoring this phenomenon contributes to highlighting the Sultanate of Oman's name as one of the most prominent global destinations for observing and documenting astronomical events, and enhances its presence in international forums, in addition to its role in achieving direct and indirect economic benefits for the tourism sector and various related activities, in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Al-Siyabi explained that preparations include organising public events to observe the eclipse using astronomical telescopes at prominent tourist attractions in the Sultanate of Oman's governorates, in addition to preparing

specialised scientific publications explaining the details of the eclipse and methods of observing it in a simplified manner that contributes to spreading astronomical culture among various segments of society.

He explained: "The events will include accompanying activities such as theoretical lectures, specialised workshops, and astronomical observation evenings, providing participants with a scientific and cultural experience that combines grandeur, beauty, and inspiration."

He pointed out that the project is not limited to public monitoring only, but also aims to photograph and scientifically document the phenomenon, and to invite scientific research institutions, universities, and specialised centres to conduct scientific studies and research during the eclipse, thus enhancing the production of astronomical knowledge and placing the Sultanate of Oman in a leading position on the international astronomical research map.

Al-Siyabi emphasised that the participation of higher education institutions, including Sultan Qaboos University, the University of

Technology and Applied Sciences, and astronomy clubs at universities and colleges, represents an important scientific contribution, as it provides students and researchers with direct opportunities for field learning and opens up new horizons for them in the field of scientific research and practical applications, which contributes to building an aware and capable generation in the fields of astronomy and space.

He pointed out that the scientific benefits of observing such phenomena are directly reflected in young people, as they instill in them a love of exploration and research, and contribute to building new generations of astronomers, both amateur and professional, capable of advancing the scientific and cultural level in the field of astronomy and space, and interacting with the growing global interest in space sciences.

Al-Siyabi concluded his statement by emphasising that the association invites all segments of society, including citizens, residents, and visitors, as well as local and international media, to participate in and cover the observing activities.

KYRGYZSTAN

His Majesty the Sultan sends greetings

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Sadyr Japarov of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan on his country's Independence Day anniversary.

In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his wishes of good health and happiness to the president and for his country's people further progress and prosperity. -OMA

CABLE

His Majesty congratulates Malaysia King

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia on his country's National Day.

In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health and happiness to him and for the relations between the two countries continued progress and development in all fields. -OMA



GOVERNORATE OF MUSCAT
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 26/2025

Announcement

In reference to **Advertisement No (26/2025), Muscat Municipality** informs you of the modification of the dates related to the Bid as follows:

Sl. No	Bidding No.	Bidding description	Document fee	Deadline for obtaining docs.	Deadline for inquires	Deadline for submission
401/2025	11/2025	Investment of plot No. (1578), Block (M/3), in the Al-Misfah area, Wilayat Bousher, designated for truck parking.	228/- OMR	01/9/2025	03/9/2025	07/9/2025

Registered companies with Muscat Municipality which are Specialized in above bids are invited to participate as per the following procedures:

- Company registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid to obtain the bid document.
- Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:

Bank Muscat

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- A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (**SQ.QS@mm.gov.om**), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name,office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
- 2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.
- Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without any company information) and place in the box located in On the first floor of the Quantity Survey and Contracts Department building (A) in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait.

NOTES:

- Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the municipality's website (**www.mm.gov.om**).
- For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (**crm@mm.gov.om**).
- If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to sent their inquiries through the following e-mail (**SQ.QS@mm.gov.om**)
- 10:00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
- Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

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GOVERNORATE OF MUSCAT
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 22/2025

Announcement

In reference to **Advertisement No (22/2025), Muscat Municipality** informs you of the modification of the dates related to the Bid as follows:

Sl. No	Bidding No.	Bidding description	Document fee	Deadline for obtaining docs.	Deadline for inquires	Deadline for submission
1	2/2025	Design, implementation, and management of various events and activities accompanying Muscat Festival 2026	25/- OMR	01/09/2025	04/09/2025	11/09/2025
2	3/2025	Design and construction of Omani sweets for the production and sale at the Muscat Festival 2026	25/- OMR	01/09/2025	04/09/2025	11/09/2025
3	4/2025	Implementation and management of inflatable games at Al Amerat Public Park for the Muscat Festival 2026	25/- OMR	01/09/2025	04/09/2025	11/09/2025
4	5/2025	Design and construction of Horror City, Al Naseem Park, Al Amerat, Muscat Festival 2026	25/- OMR	01/09/2025	04/09/2025	11/09/2025

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- Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

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Construction work of first school in Sultan Haitham City begins

Sultan Haitham City features an integrated educational system. The first phase includes three modern educational complexes, each housing three schools with a capacity of over 2,300 students

MUSCAT: The construction of the first school in Sultan Haitham City in District 9 with a capacity of more than 1,400 students has begun.

The school will be a landmark in the city's educational landscape and will have 90 classrooms, eight science laboratories, six art and technology classrooms, besides an integrated sports facilities.

All of these are designed to provide a modern educational environment that meets academic needs, sports and artistic activities and opens up broad horizons for innovation and creativity.

Sultan Haitham City features an integrated educational system, the first phase of which includes three modern educational complexes, each housing three schools with a



capacity of over 2,300 students.

These schools are located within 10 minutes from residential areas. These complexes provide vibrant educational environments that combine academic and extracurricular activities and include playgrounds, green spaces, swimming pools and creative spaces.

These are designed to be an extension of the local community through shared spaces such as school cafeterias, multipurpose rooms and break areas. They also

emphasise sustainability through green rooftop gardens used as outdoor educational spaces and recreational areas, contributing to natural thermal insulation and providing a healthy and attractive environment for students.

Faten bint Hamoud Al Harthi, an urban planner and architectural designer at the Executive Office for Future Cities at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, emphasised that Sultan Haitham City is working to create a new

generation of educational environment that go beyond the traditional form of school buildings, becoming a living part of the city's urban fabric.

The design of educational projects has taken into account the schools' role as spaces that encompass knowledge and community interaction, embodying the national trend toward sustainable education.

She added: "These educational projects are being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, to provide an integrated model for public and private school complexes. With the commencement of the implementation of the first private school and the preparation of two other models, the outlines of a new experience are taking shape, which will later be extended to various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, making schools a fundamental nucleus for modern urban development." — **ONA**



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US appeals court rules Trump tariffs as illegal

WASHINGTON DC: An appeals court in Washington, DC, ruled on Friday that the sweeping tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump are largely unconstitutional.

"The statute bestows significant authority on the President to undertake a number of actions in response to a declared national emergency, but none of these actions explicitly include the power to impose tariffs, duties, or the like, or the power to tax," the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit said.

In its 7-4 ruling, the court, however, also said the tariffs could remain in place until October 14 to allow the government to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court.

Friday's ruling largely upheld a May decision by a specialised federal trade court in New York which had ruled Trump's Liberation Day tariffs "exceed any authority granted to the President" under the emergency powers law and ordered a halt to the tariffs.

Shortly after the ruling on Friday, the US Attorney General's office announced it would appeal the decision.

Trump says ruling would 'destroy' the US

Trump contended that the ruling was "incorrect" and attacked the court for partisanship.



"ALL TARIFFS ARE STILL IN EFFECT! Today a Highly Partisan Appeals Court incorrectly said that our Tariffs should be removed, but they know the United States of America will win in the end," he wrote in a post on his Truth Social network. "If these Tariffs ever went away, it would be a total disaster for the Country."

"If allowed to stand, this Decision would literally destroy the United States of America," he added.

The US president has turned to tariffs on foreign goods as a means of putting pressure on countries that export goods to the United States.

The Trump administration warned that striking down tariffs could force refunds of import taxes that has been collected, impacting the US Treasury considerably.

Tariff revenue reached \$159 billion (£136 billion) by July, twice of last year's amount. — **DW**





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What's next after Thailand's Prime Minister leaves office?

BANGKONG: Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra has been removed from the top job after the country's Constitutional Court ruled she had violated ethics rules.

At 39 years old, Paetongtarn is the youngest prime minister in the history of Thailand. She boasts impressive political connections as the daughter of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and niece of yet another prime minister, Yingluck Shinawatra. She is also the head of the Pheu Thai party, which controversially formed an alliance with pro-military forces in 2023 to form the current government.

Paetongtarn was suspended in early July over a leaked phone call with veteran Cambodian leader Hun Sen amid a deadly border conflict. In the call, Paetongtarn referred to the elderly former dictator as "uncle," professed love and respect for him, and criticized her own military commanders.

Paetongtarn has insisted that her comments were a negotiating tactic to prevent conflict at the border and save lives.

"As a Thai person, I insist on my sincerity to work for the Thai people. I'd like to reiterate to the people that what I adhere to most is the lives of the people — be it soldiers or civilians," she told reporters after the Friday verdict.

Nevertheless, Paetongtarn accepted the court decision ordering her to leave office.

Who will take Paetongtarn's place?

The Hun Sen scandal has already wreaked havoc on Thailand's politics. The conservative Bhumjaithai party has dropped out of the ruling coalition, leaving Pheu Thai with a razor-thin majority and stoking fears of another military coup.

Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai, who has been caretaker PM since Paetongtarn's suspension, will remain in the role until Thailand's House of Representatives votes in a new prime minister.

Phumtham announced on Fri-



day that the government coalition parties hope to appoint a new prime minister as soon as possible.

Pheu Thai will likely nominate Chaikasem Nitisir as its candidate to replace Paetongtarn. Chaikasem, 77, is a lawyer and former attorney general who served as Thailand's justice minister in 2013.

Other potential candidates may include former interior minister Anutin Charnvirakul and Prayuth Chan-ocha, who led the 2014 military coup and stayed on as head of government until Paetongtarn took office in 2023.

If the lawmakers fail to agree on Paetongtarn's successor, they could also stage a vote of no confidence and dissolve the parliament, which would trigger snap elections.

What's next for Shinawatras' Pheu Thai party?

Napon Jatusripitak, a political scientist at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, says the removal

of Paetongtarn has political ramifications for the Pheu Thai party.

"Pheu Thai will be forced to contest the next election without a clear prime ministerial candidate. This raises the risk of party implosion, particularly if it opts not to rally behind its remaining nominee in the event that a new prime minister must be chosen," he told DW.

"Pheu Thai already compromised on its ideological commitments once, when it formed an alliance with its former conservative adversaries in 2023. That coalition left the party in a vulnerable position and unable to deliver on its flagship policy promises. A repeat would further damage both the Shinawatra legacy and the Pheu Thai brand beyond repair," he added.

Thaksin Shinawatra avoids prison

With the fall of Paetongtarn Shinawatra, some Thai analysts have questioned if this scandal will also spell the end of the Shinawatra political dynasty.

Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political scientist and professor at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, told DW that the Shinawatra family "has been in decline for some years."

"Now with what Paetongtarn has done with a leaked phone call, I think that the family, for all intents and purposes, the Shinawatra family, is no longer a potent force in Thai politics," he added. — **DW**

UNRWA: 6,000 aid trucks ready for Gaza, blocked by Israeli restrictions

UNRWA has an effective system in place to distribute aid safely and on a large scale, the agency reiterated. It added, “Our warehouses in Egypt and Jordan are full and ready to load approximately 6,000 trucks” if Israel approves their entry

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said its warehouses in Egypt and Jordan are “full and ready to load approximately 6,000 trucks” of aid into the Gaza Strip.

In a post on X, the agency stressed that Israeli authorities’ ban on the entry of UNRWA humanitarian aid into Gaza must be lifted.

“UNRWA has an effective system in place to distribute aid safely and on a large scale,” the agency reiterated.



It added, “Our warehouses in Egypt and Jordan are full and ready to load approximately 6,000 trucks” if Israel approves their entry. UNRWA stressed that it must be allowed to deliver “life-saving aid through land routs” into the enclave.

Macron warns Gaza humanitarian catastrophe unacceptable, famine a direct result of Israeli blockade

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron affirmed that the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip is unacceptable, stressing that the famine declared by the United Nations is a direct c of Israel’s obstruction of humanitarian aid to the Strip.

Macron’s remarks came during a joint French-German cabi-

net meeting in Toulon, southern France, on Friday, with the participation of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. Macron underscored that he discussed the situation in the Middle East with Merz, saying, “I want to say that the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip is unacceptable.”

He added, “The situation declared by the United Nations as a famine is a direct result of the obstruction of humanitarian aid to Gaza.”

Severe malnutrition threatens pregnant women in Gaza, warns ActionAid

ActionAid International has warned on Saturday of rising malnutrition rates among pregnant and breastfeeding women in the Gaza Strip, confirming that 70 to 75% of the 300 women who visit

Al Awda Hospital daily, the organization’s partner, suffer from a lack of food and essential pregnancy supplements.

The organisation cited testimonies from doctors and pregnant women about pregnancy complications resulting from hunger and a lack of medical supplies, a week after the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) confirmed a famine in Gaza City.

Dr. Yasser, a physician at Al Awda Hospital, said, “Women are suffering from malnutrition, which is reflected in their low weight, low birth weight, decreased fetal movement, and deteriorating maternal and fetal health.” There is anemia, calcium deficiency, and vitamin D deficiency, all negatively affecting mothers and unborn children.”

Doctors have warned that the lack of calories and nutrients en-

US revokes visas of Palestinian officials from UNGA meeting

WASHINGTON DC: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced on Friday that the US would not issue visas to Palestinian officials to bar them from attending the annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York next month.

According to a statement by the US Department of State, the visa ban applies to officials from the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organisation who are not based at the Palestinian mission to the UN.

“In accordance with US law, Secretary of State Marco Rubio is denying and revok-

ing visas from members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) ahead of the upcoming United Nations General Assembly. The Trump Administration has been clear: it is in our national security interests to hold the PLO and PA accountable for not complying with their commitments, and for undermining the prospects for peace,” read the statement.

The statement said that the Palestinian Authority must end its affiliation with terrorism and must condemn the same. — **ANI**

dangers the lives of both mothers and fetuses, increasing the risk of pregnancy complications, including miscarriage.

Dr. Mohammed Salha, Acting Director of Al-Awda Hospital, said, “The situation in Gaza is extremely difficult. More than 60,000 women have been affected by food shortages, and many of them are facing malnutrition. Although the nutrition department distributes supplements, the need exceeds our capacity.”

Some women spoke about their

immediate suffering. Nevin, who is two months pregnant, said, “There is no food or medical supplies, and I have had two miscarriages due to the lack of vitamins and medical care.” Duaa, a mother about to give birth, said, “I feel dizzy and trembling from hunger, and there are no treatments or medications.”

ActionAid called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and an end to the blockade on humanitarian aid to allow the entry of food, medical supplies, and fuel. — **Wafa**

EXPORT COLLECTION STORE



Yiwu Selection store debuts in Nairobi

NAIROBI: Yiwu Selection, a brand export collection store, officially opened in Nairobi, Kenya’s capital, on Friday, introducing high-quality and affordable Chinese products to local shoppers.

Yiwu, a county-level city in east China’s Zhejiang Province, is a global hub for consumer goods manufacturing, known for offering products that combine quality with affordability.

The Nairobi outlet, the first Yiwu Selection store in Africa, was located at China Square, a sprawling shopping complex in Waterfront Mall in the city’s southwestern suburbs. It mainly stocks female products such as cosmetics, designer clothing, beachwear, and household appliances.

More than 20 Yiwu brands are already on the shelves, covering categories such as household items, digital accessories, and fashion jewelry.

Speaking at the launch, Shao Chunhong, vice mayor of Yiwu, said that the high-quality and affordable Yiwu products are well-suited to the African market, and the opening of the store aligns with China’s broader commitment to deepen economic and trade ties with Africa.

Olivia Rachier, general manager for legal and corporate affairs at the Kenya Investment Authority, welcomed the move as a milestone, saying that Kenya welcomes Chinese investment across a wide range of sectors.

Kenya has enjoyed macroeconomic stability, is endowed with a young and skilled workforce, has a sophisticated financial system, and is strategically located as a gateway for East Africa, offer-



ing vast opportunities to foreign investors, including those from China, Rachier said.

“We see great potential for Chinese investors to partner with us in manufacturing and industrialization, to establish industries in the economic zones, to drive exports into Africa and beyond,” Rachier added.

Yuan Ying, general manager of Yiwu China Commodities City Overseas Investment Development Co., Ltd., said that the Nairobi store will help deliver brands that resonate with local consumers.

“We have a very good partner here in China Square, and I believe we will bring more goods, more brands to Africa, including daily consumer goods like ornaments, clothes, perfumes, necklaces for female clients,” said Yuan.

Cheng Lei, managing director of China Square, said the new store will ensure Yiwu products are easily accessible to local consumers. He added that China Square plans to explore franchising arrangements with Kenyan retailers to expand the distribution of Yiwu products tailored for women aged 25 to 55. — **Xinhua**

CRUCIAL MEETING

Indian PM arrives in Tianjin, China for two-day visit to attend SCO Summit

TIANJIN: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday arrived at Binhai International Airport in Tianjin for a two-day official visit to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in China.

Several Chinese officials and Indian officials greeted him with handshakes. The Prime Minister also received a warm welcome upon arrival, with artists staging a dance performance.

PM Modi will participate in the SCO summit meetings and hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines. He is also scheduled to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin during the course of the summit.

The SCO summit is crucial for India, as it comes after the US’s 50 per cent tariffs took effect. Of these, a 25 per cent tariff was imposed on New Delhi for buying Russian crude oil.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, along with the host, Chinese President Xi Jinping, will also be attending the summit. The SCO comprises 10 members.

In addition to India, they include Belarus, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

There are also several dialogue partners and observers. India has been a member of the SCO since 2017, having been an observer since 2005. During its membership period, India has held the



chair of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in 2020 and of the SCO Council of Heads of State from 2022 to 2023.

This will be PM Modi’s first visit to China following the Galwan Valley clashes in 2020. Recently, India and China have taken multiple steps to smooth their bilateral relationship, including the resumption of trade through the Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand, Shipki La Pass in Himachal Pradesh, and Nathu La Pass in Sikkim.

During the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visit on August 18-19, both sides agreed to resume direct flight connectivity between the Chinese mainland and India at the earliest, and finalise an updated Air Services Agreement.

They also agreed on the facilitation of visas to tourists, businesses, media and other visitors in both directions. Both sides agreed to uphold multilateralism, enhance communication on major international and regional issues, maintain a rules-based multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core, and promote a multipolar world that safeguards the interests of developing countries.

Indian diaspora in Tianjin welcomes PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday received a rousing welcome from the Indian diaspora on his arrival in China’s Tianjin.

Members of the Indian diaspora in Tianjin welcomed PM Modi

with great enthusiasm upon his arrival at a hotel in the city. PM Modi landed at Binhai International Airport in Tianjin on Saturday for his two-day official visit and was greeted by senior Chinese and Indian officials. At the hotel, members of the Indian community gathered to welcome him, while artists staged a cultural performance. The Prime Minister Modi will participate in the 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit on Sunday, August 31, and hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines. He is also scheduled to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin during the course of the summit. — **ANI**

PORTUGAL

Teen admits to starting several wildfires

LISBON: A 14-year-old boy admitted deliberately starting several wildfires in Portugal by riding to forest areas on a scooter and using matches to start a blaze in an interview with police, EuroNews reported.

Officers believe he may have been responsible for blazes in Seixões, Ardegão and Arnozela.

“The minor may have acted out of anger and frustration, given his poor school performance and the obvious precariousness of his social relationships,” the national criminal police, the Policia Judiciaria, said in a statement, adding that they hadn’t ruled out the boy acting as part of a group, as per EuroNews.

Police launched an investigation



after wildfires repeatedly began in the same areas. “During the summer period, these parishes were systematically ravaged by forest fires, sometimes on a daily basis, causing concern among the local

population and consuming several hectares of forest,” the police statement said, as quoted by EuroNews.

The Braga Judicial Police, which carried out the investigation, handed the case over to the

Public Prosecutor’s Office, which will then take it to the Family and Children’s Court.

By August 20, police had already arrested 52 people on suspicion of arson. The data, compiled by the Lusa news agency, showed most of the arrests were made in August.

Emergency services said that on Friday morning, 97 fires were still burning but most are under control and in the process of being extinguished.

The fire in the municipality of Vinhais is reportedly the only one that is still significantly active and posing a danger. More than 400 firefighters, 140 vehicles and six planes were deployed to the area to tackle the fire on Friday, as per EuroNews. — **DW**

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LA LIGA

Rayo Vallecano to test skills of FC Barcelona players

MADRID: The third round of matches in La Liga takes us to the first international break of the season and the close of the summer transfer window. Here are four things to look out for in Spain over the weekend.

1. Rayo and Barcelona to entertain and defences to suffer

FC Barcelona travels to play Rayo Vallecano in the small Vallecas Stadium in a match that nearly always provides plenty of entertainment.

Under coach Inigo Perez, Rayo is an aggressive side that likes to get onto the front foot, win possession and pull its rivals' defenders out of position and the club is on a high after qualifying for the group stage of the Conference League on Thursday.

Barca's attacking quality is well-known, but last weekend's win in Levante showed it is vulnerable in defense without Inigo Martinez as Ronald Araujo isn't comfortable playing in a high line and right footed Pau Cubarsi moving to the left to cover for the departed Martinez.

Lamine Yamal, Raphinha and company could be enough to win the game for Barca, but Rayo will show if that attack is built on a solid defense.

2. Rotations to continue at Real Madrid

Xabi Alonso caused some surprises last weekend when he brought Rodrygo and Dani Carvajal into his starting 11 for the visit to Oviedo, leaving Vinicius Jr and Trent Alexander-Arnold on the subs' bench.

Alonso has made it clear that he is very much his own man, and anyone who wants to play will have to prove their worth on the



training ground by following his instructions-especially when it comes to maintaining a high press on the pitch.

Real Madrid will be at home to Mallorca on Saturday, and Alonso is likely to make more changes, with many eyes on Rodrygo and Dani Ceballos, both of whom were linked with moves away over the summer.

3. Must win game for Atletico Madrid

Atletico Madrid's visit to face Deportivo Alaves on Saturday has become a 'must-win' game for Diego Simeone's side in just the third round of matches of the season.

An opening day defeat to Espanyol was followed by a 1-1 draw at home to newly promoted Elche last weekend to leave Atletico with one point from a possible six.

With Barcelona and Real Madrid (as well as Villarreal and Athletic Bilbao) winning both of their opening games, Atletico has already given itself a five-point handicap in the title race, and failure to win in Vitoria could see Diego's Simeone's side drop fur-

ther behind.

It's still early days but with neither Barca nor Real Madrid likely to lose many games, Atletico's title hopes are in danger and after another big-spending summer, that simply isn't good enough.

4. Early drama in Girona

Saturday's game in the Montilivi Stadium has become an early season crunch match for both Girona and Sevilla.

Girona goes into the match after a 3-1 opening day defeat to Rayo Vallecano, followed by a 5-0 thrashing in Villarreal with Michel Sanchez's side 4-0 down before reaching the half-hour mark.

Girona's defense looks fragile and the coach is thought to be unhappy with the club's summer transfer business.

Sevilla was unlucky to lose in Bilbao in its opening game but was outplayed in the home debut against Getafe. With off-field problems and issues with registering players due to financial fair play, another defeat would mean the tension continuing over the international break. -Xinhua

TASHKENT

Oman hold Uzbekistan to a draw in CAFA Nations Cup

Times News Service

TASHKENT: The Oman national football team began their campaign at the 2025 Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) Nations Cup with a 1-1 draw against hosts Uzbekistan in their opening match held on Saturday at the Olympic Stadium in Tashkent.

Placed in Group A alongside Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, the Red Warriors showed resilience in their first outing of the tournament.

The CAFA Nations Cup serves as an important preparatory event for Oman ahead of their decisive fixtures in the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to 2026. The team will face Qatar on October 8 and the United Arab Emirates on October 11 in Doha, crucial matches that will determine their path to the FIFA World Cup 2026.



23-YEAR-OLD STRIKER

Who is Germany's new Premier League star?

BERLIN: The 23-year-old striker, who has been nicknamed the "two-meter Messi-Musiala" by Stuttgart fans, has burst onto the scene in the last year. The combination of his size and skill as a striker makes for a rare player type in the modern era, which is perhaps part of the reason why there has been such interest in a forward who only really started playing regular Bundesliga football last season.

Woltemade scored 17 goals in all competitions last time out, including a goal in the German Cup final that helped the Bundesliga club win the trophy. His performance in the U21 European Championship this summer saw his stock rise even further

as Woltemade scored a hat trick against Slovenia in the group stage and led Germany to a second-place finish. He is in the latest Germany squad and will hope to play a big role in their World Cup qualifying campaign.

Woltemade was a Werder Bremen youth player, before he got a chance in the first team. A loan move to Elversberg proved beneficial as the striker helped them achieve promotion to the second division, but it wasn't until last season that the big forward emerged as one of the most exciting young strikers in European football. They absolutely did, but Stuttgart reportedly turned down two bids as they were not happy with what

the record champions were offering. The Bundesliga side Stuttgart look clear winners here, rewarded for their patience in the transfer market by receiving a reported €85 million (\$99 million) fee for the striker. The fee would set a new record received transfer fee in Stuttgart's history, and is another miss in a summer of disappointments for Bayern Munich.

Bayern, who have made a strong start to the domestic season, also missed out on Florian Wirtz, who joined Liverpool instead this summer. With the club always keen to be home to the best German players, missing out on both Wirtz and Woltemade will likely be a jolt to the system. -dw

US Open: Sabalenka, Alcaraz in 4th round as Andreeva bows out

Spaniard Alcaraz continued his good form and eased past Italy's Luciano Darderi 6-2, 6-4, 6-0

WASHINGTON: Women's world No.1 Aryna Sabalenka and men's second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz reached the singles fourth round in straight sets respectively, while Taylor Townsend shocked the fifth-seeded Mirra Andreeva of Russia in the women's singles third round of the 2025 US Open on Friday.

Confronting Canadian Leylah Fernandez, Sabalenka of Belarus shook off a slow start in the tournament's first two rounds and clinched a 6-3 win in the first set. The 31st seed Fernandez forced the second set to a tie-breaker, but Sabalenka managed to seal the vic-



tory 7-6 (2).

Russian talent Andreeva, 18, was upset by Townsend 5-7, 2-6. The best singles result for Andreeva in Grand Slams this year was the quarterfinals at Roland Garros and

Wimbledon.

The 29-year-old Townsend said after the match, "All I want to say is welcome to the show. The job is not done. I am going to continue what I did tonight."



Spaniard Alcaraz continued his good form and eased past Italy's Luciano Darderi 6-2, 6-4, 6-0. "I just tried to start awake," Alcaraz said. "My first goal was to start well, to start focused, to start with

energy. I think I started pretty well, pushing him [Darderi] to the limit, trying to play long rallies, get a good rhythm with the serve and the return, and after that just keep it going."

Novak Djokovic is slowly but surely finding his rhythm at the US Open 2025. The Serbian legend produced a gritty performance, overcoming a spirited challenge from Britain's Cameron Norrie to secure a 6-4, 6-7(4), 6-2, 6-3 win at the Arthur Ashe Stadium, as per the official website of the ATP Tour.

For the 38-year-old seventh seed, it wasn't just about getting the win; it was about fighting through discomfort and showing why he remains one of the game's fiercest competitors. Djokovic looked in top gear in the first set, dropping just two points on serve and firing 17 winners, but late in the set, there was a moment of concern when he grabbed his lower back after an awkward movement at the net to reflex back a ball that was above and behind his head.

In men's doubles, top-seeded British pair Julian Cash and Lloyd Glasspool were upset by Alexander Erler of Austria and American Robert Galloway 6-7 (6), 6-7 (4) in the first round.

"Yeah, it's all right," Djokovic said, as quoted from the official website of the ATP Tour. -Agencies

INDIAN ECONOMY TO EXPAND
India's economy is expected to expand by around 6.5 per cent in FY26, reflecting steady domestic momentum, said the Bank of Baroda, noting that the escalating concerns over ongoing tariff negotiations pose a downside risk, with potential adverse effects on the external sector. > **B2**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX MARKET CAP NEARS OMR30Bn
The Muscat Stock Exchange's main index hit its best level in nearly eight years during the week, driven by increased confidence, a rise in the number of transactions executed, trading volumes and values, and a market capitalisation (Cap) approaching OMR30 billion. > **B2**

Credit Oman boosts exports, local sales, insures over OMR211 million



Sheikh Khalil bin Ahmed Al-Harthy, CEO of Credit Oman, said that the Omani economy continues its accelerated growth over the past five years due to the economic and political improvements implemented by the government

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Credit Oman has reported a 15% increase in the volume of Omani exports and local sales insured by its services in the first half of this year, totalling over OMR211.33 million compared to OMR183.78 million during the same period last year.

Sheikh Khalil bin Ahmed Al-Harthy, CEO of Credit Oman, said that the Omani economy continues its accelerated growth over the past five years due to the economic and political improvements implemented by the government.

He highlighted Credit Oman's efforts in driving economic development in the Sultanate and increasing non-oil Omani exports through insurance services and solutions that assist Omani manufacturers and exporters in selling their products and expanding their sales, as well as entering promising and non-traditional markets.

Al-Harthy further noted that



Omani exports insured by Credit Oman saw a significant growth of 14%, totalling over OMR120,668 compared to OMR106,594 during the same period last year.

The CEO explained that the food and consumer goods sector witnessed an increase in the value of insured sales for exports and local markets, amounting to OMR102,498 recording a growth rate of 22%.

The construction and building



materials sector also continued its growth, reaching 19% with a total value of OMR62,767. However, the petrochemicals and plastics sector experienced a decline in the total value of insured sales for exports and local markets, amounting to OMR23,914 compared to OMR27,925 during the same period last year, reflecting a decrease of approximately 14%.

Al-Harthy stated that non-oil Omani exports grew by 7.2%

from January to May 2025, according to statistics from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), reaching OMR2.701 billion.

This reflects the quality of Omani products in foreign markets and is a result of government efforts to diversify income sources and promote economic diversification, in addition to encouraging investment attraction and localizing various industries.

He added that insured local sales recorded a notable increase of 17%, totalling OMR 99.6 million compared to OMR77.1 million during the same period last year. The clothing sector saw an improvement in insured local sales amounting to OMR79,200, while the food and consumer goods sector and the construction materials sector also experienced growth in their insured local sales.

Al-Harthy urged companies operating in the Sultanate to take advantage of the credit insurance services provided by Credit Oman, which help protect businesses from financial risks resulting from payment defaults.

He further emphasised that these services enhance growth and expansion opportunities, contributing to the safer achievement of business objectives. He reinforced the importance of relying on credit insurance as a strategic tool to ensure financial sustainability and enhance business relationships.

BRIEFS

Islamic banking assets in Oman rise to OMR9.2bn



MUSCAT: Total assets of Islamic banks and windows increased by 17.4 percent to approximately OMR9.2 billion by the end of June 2025, representing 19.9 percent of the total assets of the banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman, compared to the same period last year. Statistics issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) indicate that the total financing balance granted by units engaged in this activity increased by 13.1 percent, reaching approximately OMR7.2 billion. Deposits at Islamic banks and windows also increased by 19.6 percent, reaching approximately OMR7.2 billion by the end of June 2025. - **ONA**

Oman's producer price index declines by 2.7%



MUSCAT: The producer price index (PPI) in the Sultanate of Oman fell by 2.7 percent during the second quarter of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Mining and quarrying prices rose by 1.2 percent, driven by a 1.3 percent rise in crude oil and natural gas prices and an 18.2 percent rise in mineral ore prices, while stone and sand prices fell slightly by 0.6 percent. In contrast, prices in the manufacturing group declined by 8.3 percent, driven by a 1.1 percent decline in food, beverages, and textiles, a 10.5 percent decline in other transportable goods, and a 7.5 percent decline in metal products, machinery, and equipment. Prices in the electricity production group and the water production group also declined by 5.5 percent and 5 percent, respectively. - **ONA**

NCSI DATA

Oman's import price index rises by 1.2%

MUSCAT: The general import price index (IPI) in Oman rose by 1.2 percent during the second quarter of 2025 compared to the same quarter of 2024, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Statistics showed a 13 percent increase in prices for the group of oils, fats, and vegetable and animal waxes, followed by the group of machinery and transportation equipment, which rose by 9.6 percent, then the group of food and live animals, which rose by 4.8 percent, while the group of miscellaneous manufactured goods rose by 3.5 percent.

In contrast, the group of mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials decreased by 20.6 percent, followed by the group of inedible raw materials excluding fuels, which decreased by 10.7



percent, then the group of chemicals and related materials, which decreased by 4.8 percent, in addition to a decrease in the group of beverages and tobacco, which decreased by 2.9 percent, and the

group of manufactured goods classified mainly by material, which decreased by 2.6 percent.

Statistics indicated that compared to the first quarter of 2025, the general import price index

recorded a decline of 3.4 percent, affected by a 28 percent decline in the prices of the non-edible raw materials group excluding fuel, and a 25.7 percent decline in the prices of the mineral fuels, lubricants, and related materials group, in addition to a 5.7 percent decline in the machinery and transportation equipment group, and a slight 0.2 percent decline in the food and live animals group.

In contrast, prices for the beverages and tobacco group rose by 15.3 percent, followed by the miscellaneous manufactured goods group by 13.3 percent, the chemicals and related materials group by 2.5 percent, and the manufactured goods group classified primarily by material by 2.4 percent. Prices for the vegetable and animal oils, fats, waxes, and waxes group also rose slightly, by 0.2 percent. - **ONA**

SECURE RECURRING PAYMENT

National Bank of Oman advances digital payments with direct debit eMandate

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman's (NBO) Direct Debit E-Mandate offers secure and automated recurring payment solutions for both corporate and retail customers. It reflects the bank's commitment to provide convenient, flexible, and efficient digital banking experiences while driving innovation in Oman's financial sector.

Aligned with the Central Bank of Oman's efforts to modernize pay-

ment systems, this service simplifies different transactions including utility bills, loan repayments, subscription services, and corporate payments by enabling customers to schedule, approve, and manage recurring payments directly. It is accessible to corporate customers through NBO's Corporate Internet Banking and to retail customers through the NBO app.

Customers using the Direct Debit

E-Mandate can select from a range of payment frequencies, including daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly. By offering transparency, security, and flexibility, the solution highlights NBO's focus on improving financial convenience and reinforcing its leadership in digital banking, while ensuring payments are processed securely and automatically. This reduces manual effort and reliance on cheque-based transactions.



ENHANCING DIGITAL BANKING SERVICES

Bank Nizwa launches eMandate Direct Debit service

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing commitment to delivering innovative and Sharia-compliant digital banking solutions, Bank Nizwa, the leading and most trusted Islamic bank in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the launch of its Electronic Mandate (E-Mandate) for Direct Debit service. Designed to streamline recurring transactions and enhance the overall banking experience, the new service complies with the Central Bank of Oman's (CBO) regulatory framework and advances its overarching goal of building a sustainable and resilient digital economy.

The E-mandate service for direct debit is a digital solution that enables both corporate and individual customers to efficiently manage their recurring financial commitments. By automating a wide range of routine payments, such as monthly transfers, utility bills, rent, and subscriptions, this service reduces paperwork and supports sustainability efforts, ensuring a smooth and convenient experience. Customers can ben-



efit from the flexibility to set up, modify, or cancel authorizations electronically as needed, with the option to schedule payments at different intervals.

The E-mandate for direct debit service represents a solution aimed at improving operations and increasing efficiency through automations, managing cash flows, and maintaining liquidity more efficiently through easy set-up. Companies can automate recurring payments, including payroll disbursements, rent payments, subscriptions, and other expenses.

This service offers a modern banking experience that enhances efficiency in financial management.

Commenting on the service, Mr. Mohammed Iqbal Al Balushi, Assistant General Manager of Operations at Bank Nizwa, stated: "The E-mandate service for Direct Debit reflects our ongoing commitment to driving digital innovation in the Islamic banking sector and providing flexible, secure financial solutions that meet our customers' expectations. It also comes in response to the rapidly increasing demand for automated payment services, particularly in light of the digital transformation underway in the Sultanate's banking sector. The launch of this service marks an important step in empowering our customers with a secure and convenient solution to manage their recurring financial obligations, without relying on paper-based or traditional mandates. This contributes to enhancing efficiency and reliability, promoting digital transformation in the financial sector, reducing

operational costs and the use of checks, and minimizing transaction processing time - all of which help reduce risks and errors and increase the speed of fund transfers between various parties."

The E-mandate service provides a secure digital approval process that enables customers to create and authorize mandates, as well as modify or cancel them easily through the bank's digital platforms. This ensures smooth and scheduled payment transactions without the need for manual follow-up.

Bank Nizwa continues to integrate a comprehensive range of innovative digital solutions designed to enhance customer experience, convenience, and ease of access to its services. With its continued focus on strengthening digital offerings, the bank is reinforcing its position as the preferred banking partner for both individual and corporate customers, while solidifying its leading role in the digital transformation of Islamic banking services.

MARKET

Muscat Stock Exchange market cap seen approaching OMR30bn

This increase coincided with the rise in prices of 44 securities, compared to 20 securities whose prices declined, and 23 securities that remained stable

MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange's main index hit its best level in nearly eight years in the week, driven by increased confidence, a rise in the number of transactions executed, trading volumes and values, and a market capitalisation approaching OMR30 billion.

The main stock exchange index rose by more than 100 points, closing at 5,062 points, its best level since January 15, 2018, benefiting from rising shares in banks, energy companies, a number of industrial and investment companies, and petroleum product marketing companies.

Sectoral indices recorded a collective rise, led by the financial sector index, which rose by more than 200 points. The services sector index rose by approximately 71 points, the industrial sector index rose by 67 points, and the Sharia index rose to approximately 475 points, recording a weekly increase of 4 points.

This increase coincided with the rise in prices of 44 securities, compared to 20 securities whose prices declined, and 23 securities that remained stable. These increases were reflected in the



market value of the Muscat Stock Exchange, which recorded gains of OMR291 million, concluding the weekly trading at OMR29.94 billion, thus approaching the OMR30 billion level, benefiting from the rise in stock prices and the listing of the 76th issue of government development bonds (GDBs) worth OMR90 million.

Trading value during the week's trading to OMR136.9 million, compared to OMR125 million compared to the week before, registering a 9.5 percent increase. Deals executed rose from 10,210 to 11,800, registering a 15.6 percent increase.

Sohar International Bank's shares witnessed the highest trading value at OMR32.3 million, accounting for 23.5 percent of the total trading value. Bank Muscat's trading value reached OMR18.2 million, while OQ Basic Industries' trading value reached OMR 15.1 million. National Bank of Oman (NBO) trading value reached approximately OMR14.4 million, and

OQ Gas Networks trading value reached OMR13.6 million, representing approximately 10 percent of the total trading value.

Sembcorp Salalah topped the gainers, rising 16.7 percent to close at 195 baisas. Phoenix Energy rose 11.3 percent to close at 98 baisas. Al Anwar Investments rose 10.8 percent to close at 92 baisas. National Bank of Oman rose 7.1 percent to close at 330 baisas. Oman Oil Marketing Company rose 6.6 percent to close at 800 baisas. Al

Maha Ceramics also rose 6.6 percent to close at 320 baisas.

Aman Real Estate Investment Fund units led the decliners, falling 7.7 percent to close at 83 baisas. United Finance Bonds fell 7.4 percent to close at 75 baisas. Dhofar International Development and Investment shares fell 2.7 percent to close at 280 baisas. Oman Cables Industry shares fell to OMR2.140, recording a 2.7 percent decline. National Finance shares fell 2.2 percent to close at 131 baisas.

In corporate news, OQ Exploration and Production announced the start of operations at the advanced processing plant expansion project in the Bisat field, explaining that this step will enhance the Sultanate of Oman's ability to produce and process crude oil. The company stated that this expansion has increased the plant's total capacity to 777,000 barrels of liquids per day, including 67,000 barrels of oil per day. - ONA

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RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

India's economy projected to expand at 6.5% in FY26

NEW DELHI: India's economy is expected to expand by around 6.5 per cent in FY26, reflecting steady domestic momentum, said the Bank of Baroda, noting that the escalating concerns over ongoing tariff negotiations pose a downside risk, with potential adverse effects on the external sector.

These projections align with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) projections of 6.5 per cent, which were announced during the latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on August 6.

The growth outlook is supported by a strong start to the fiscal year, with GDP accelerating to 7.8 per cent in Q1FY26 from 6.5 per cent in the same period last year.

Manufacturing, agriculture, and services sectors provided a significant boost, alongside reasonable traction in consumption demand.

The report added that the upcoming festive season spending and a recovery in urban consumption are likely to further support growth. Expectations of another RBI rate cut and potential fiscal support could also positively influence the economic trajectory, the report added. According to the official data, India's nominal GDP grew at an 8.8 per cent rate during

the April-June quarter.

Sources in the Finance Ministry also said that the GDP growth figures reflect strengthening momentum in the economy, anchored by strong macroeconomic fundamentals. They noted that supply-side growth was driven by manufacturing, construction, and services, reflecting an all-around growth.

On the demand side, robust expansion in Private Final Consumption Expenditure (7.0 per cent) and Gross Fixed Capital Formation (7.8 per cent) underpinned performance, the sources said, adding that Private Final

Consumption Expenditure's (PFCE) share in GDP rose to 60.3 per cent, the highest first-quarter level in 15 years.

The Government's capital expenditure also sustained the momentum in Gross Fixed Capital Formation's (GFCF) growth.

On the investment front, Central government capital expenditure posted a significant 30.1 per cent increase over the average of the past three years. Private investment sentiment also improved, with new investment announcements rising 3.3 times on a year-on-year basis in Q1. -ANI

INDIA-UAE

Talks focus on bilateral trade

NEW DELHI: India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) held discussions focused on expanding bilateral trade and investment in key sectors such as infrastructure, energy, and technology.

In an X post, Union Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, on Friday, informed that two countries have reaffirmed their commitment to deepen the partnerships.

"Honoured to welcome Dr @ThaniAlZeyoudi, the UAE's Minister of Foreign Trade, and congratulated him on assuming his

new role. Our discussions focused on expanding bilateral trade and investment in key sectors such as infrastructure, energy and technology. We reaffirmed our shared commitment to deepening the India-UAE partnership and unlocking new avenues of growth together," the Union Minister wrote in the X post.

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the two countries completed three years of signing in

February, marking a significant development.

According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, since the signing of CEPA, bilateral merchandise trade has nearly doubled from \$43.3 billion in FY 2020-21 to \$83.7 billion in 2023-24.

During the current FY till January'25, it reached \$80.5 billion. CEPA has been successful in realising its potential for diversification of trade basket as non-oil trade touched \$57.8 billion in FY 2023-24, accounting for more than half of the total trade. - ANI



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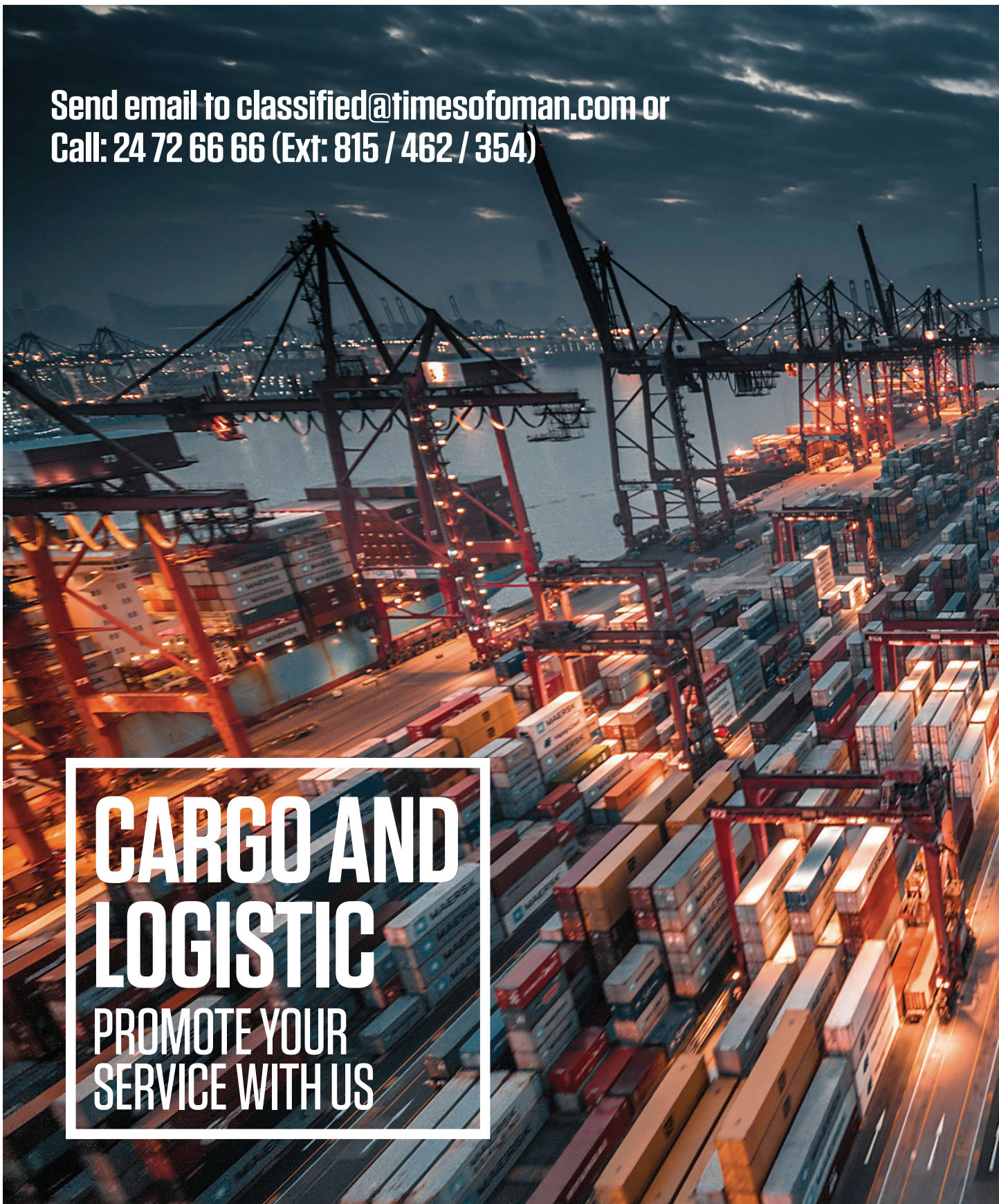
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Accounts asst with 4 yrs of exp in Gulf (accounts) looking for a job. Contact 76253948. Email: jafarali2016m@gmail.com

ACCA, CA Inter.MS finance Senior accountant. 12 yrs Gulf exp. Can join immediately. NOC & D/L available. Contact: 77258382

Indian (male) Accountant who is having good experience in accounts seeking suitable placement. Contact 99262495

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

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

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

Indian male 31 yrs BBA(finance), 2 yrs experience in accounts(India). Contact +96876410874. Email mingadnakhuda@gmail.com

Qualified Indian male Accountant with 18 yrs of experience in Oman capable of handling upto finalisation with valid D/L is available for immediate placement. Contact 95345872. Email: carrierfin2026@gmail.com

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LIFESTYLE

SLEEP DISORDERS DOUBLE RISK OF RELAPSES IN HEART FAILURE PATIENTS: STUDY

A new American study has revealed that disrupted sleep patterns in heart failure patients may double their risk of experiencing serious health relapses over a period of as little as six months, even after taking into account other sleep disturbances and co-morbidities.

The research team from Oregon State University explained that improving sleep schedules may be a simple and effective way to improve recovery and survival, urging patients to pay attention to going to bed and waking up at consistent times each day.

According to Science Daily, the researchers found that irregular sleep increases the likelihood of complications such as hospitalisation, emergency department visits, and even death.

Lead researcher Brooke Schaefer said that adhering to a consistent sleep and wake-up routine not only improves overall health but can also have a significant impact on people with heart failure.

After following 32 patients with heart failure at a university hospital, the team concluded that regular sleep could be a low-cost therapeutic approach that mitigates complications.

Schafer added that variability in sleep times may disrupt the mechanisms responsible for regulating the cardiovascular system, exacerbating health risks in this group of patients. — **ONA**

SPORTS

Pakistan defeat Afghanistan by 39 runs in tri-nation series

Rashid played an entertaining 39(16) cameo before holing it, and Hasan Nawaz as Afghanistan surrendered to a 39-run defeat

SHARJAH: Pakistan's all-round display took the limelight as Afghanistan crumbled to a 39-run defeat just more than a week before the Asia Cup on Friday at Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

While pursuing the 183-run target in the tri-nation series opener, Afghanistan were jolted early with Ibrahim Zadran (9) left bamboozled from a searing inswinging yorker from Shaheen Shah Afridi, a trademark from the left-arm speedster.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz upped the



ante while executing his shot with chivalry in the powerplay. He shuffled across the crease and whipped tearaway Haris Rauf over the deep backwards square-leg fence with his sheer power to lift Afghanistan to 50/1 at the end of the first six overs.

Gurbaz's belligerent approach ultimately led to his downfall. He tried to sweep Mohammad Nawaz, missed and saw the stumps ignite, forcing Gurbaz to return on 38 (27).

Rauf's searing deliveries

The floodgates opened, and the game-changing moment came from Rauf's searing deliveries. He cranked up the pace and bowled a double-wicket maiden over in the 12th, scything wickets of Sediquallah Atal (23) and Karim Janat (0) in the process.

Sufiyan Muqeem cast a spell with his left-arm wrist spin and lured Darwish Rasooli (21) to chip the ball back into his hands.

The wicket kept moving towards the slower side, which massively shot down Afghanistan's chances to pull off the heist. From 93/2, Afghanistan were left threadbare at 97/7 as the required rate soared

past Afghanistan's reach.

Rashid played an entertaining 39(16) cameo before holing it, and Hasan Nawaz as Afghanistan surrendered to a 39-run defeat.

Earlier in the contest, the coin spun in Pakistan's favour, and they opted to bat on the Sharjah pitch, which bore hardly any resemblance to its true nature. Fakhar Zaman (20) and Sahibzada Farhan (21) got off to a start but failed to convert.

Saim Ayub remained rustic and eventually perished against Afghanistan skipper and its premier spinner Rashid Khan. With Pakistan reeling at 63/3 in 7.3 overs, a captain's knock from Salman Ali Agha's bat was the need of the hour.

Salman rose to the occasion and found the boundary rope at his will. His brisk-paced unbeaten 53 from 36 deliveries, laced with three fours and as many towering maximums, set the tone for Pakistan.

Mohammad Nawaz (21 from 11) and Faheem Ashraf (14 from 5) played an impactful cameo to propel Pakistan to a daunting 182/7, which proved too much for Afghanistan at the end. **-ANI**

IN LONDON

India submits proposal to host Commonwealth Games

LONDON: An Indian delegation with representation from the Commonwealth Games Association of India and the Government of Gujarat submitted their formal Games proposal to Commonwealth Sport in London to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

The delegation was led by Harsh Sanghavi, Minister of Sports, Government of Gujarat. The bid positions Ahmedabad as the host city for the Centenary edition of the Games, marking 100 years of the Commonwealth Games.

The proposal reflects India's commitment to delivering a Games that is sustainable, inclusive, and aligned with the Commonwealth's Games Reset principles. Speaking on the submission, Sanghavi highlighted that the 2030 Commonwealth

Games would hold significance for both India and the Commonwealth. The event will mark a century of sporting excellence, unity, and shared values within the Commonwealth, making the Centenary edition a landmark celebration, as per a press release.

He further said that India's Games will be based on the ancient principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', meaning "the world is one family," offering unity and human connection. Atithi Devo Bhava, or "the guest is divine," will guide the planning for all the stakeholders that will visit India for the Games.

Dr. PT Usha, President of the Indian Olympic Association and Commonwealth Games Association (India), said: "This bid represents the aspirations of an entire nation. The Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad will



showcase not just India's sporting capabilities but also the values of friendship, respect, and inclusivity that define our sporting culture. As we celebrate the centenary edition, India stands ready to welcome the Commonwealth family with warmth and excellence, inspiring a new generation to dream and achieve through sport."

Ahmedabad offers a compact and modern Games footprint, designed to ensure efficiency, accessibility, and a seamless experience for athletes, officials, and spectators alike. With international-standard venues, robust urban transport systems, and high-quality accommodation infrastructure, the city is well-positioned to deliver an unprecedented Games experience.

The choice of date of submission of the bid by the Indian delegation, August 29, carries special significance as it coincides with National Sports Day in India, celebrated in honour of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand. It un-

derscores India's sporting heritage, its commitment to youth, and its vision for future generations.

The bid reinforces India's growing position as a global sporting hub. Hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games is aligned with the country's long-term ambition of becoming a leading sporting nation, where mega-events serve as catalysts for wider participation in support, infrastructure development, and international collaboration.

With strong backing from the Government and the Commonwealth Games Association of India, the proposal provides robust governance, guarantees, and alignment with national sporting goals.

The delegation expressed confidence that the 2030 Commonwealth Games in India will not only mark a century of Commonwealth Games but also anchor the future, creating a foundation that could define the next century of the Commonwealth Sport movement. **-ANI**

FIH

Pakistan agree to send team to India for Junior Men's Hockey World Cup

RAJGIR: Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh said on Saturday that Pakistan has agreed to send its junior team to India for the International Hockey Federation (FIH) Junior Men's Hockey World Cup 2025, scheduled to be held in Tamil Nadu later this year.

The development comes after Pakistan opted out of the Asia Cup, being held in Bihar's Rajgir.

Earlier, Hockey India President Dilip Kumar Tirkey confirmed that Pakistan had withdrawn from the tournament, citing 'security concerns.' Considering their withdrawal from the Men's Hockey Asia Cup, there was uncertainty about Pakistan's participation in the Junior Hockey World Cup. India and Pakistan have been drafted into Pool B alongside Chile and Switzerland.

Clearing speculation about Pakistan's participation in the tournament, Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath said that he had held discussions with the Pakistan Hockey Federation, confirming that they would be sending their junior team to India for the tournament.

"Pakistan have agreed to send their Junior hockey team to play in the FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup 2025 to be held in Chennai and Madurai," Nath told the media.

The event is scheduled to be held from November 28 to December 10 in Madurai and Chennai. **-ANI**

XABI ALONSO

Vinicius can make big impact off the bench: Real Madrid coach



MADRID: Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso spoke about forwards Vinicius Jr and Rodrygo, as well as discussing the future of midfielder Dani Ceballos, when he spoke to the press on Friday.

Real Madrid plays Mallorca on Saturday, and after introducing several squad rotations in last weekend's win away to Oviedo, which saw Rodrygo start and Vinicius drop to the bench, the coach was asked about Vinicius' future after contract talks between player and club have halted for the moment.

"I am very happy with him, he showed he can make an impact off the subs' bench against Oviedo, and I want him to have a great season," said Alonso.

"We are just starting the season and everyone is important and Vinicius is going to be fundamental," he commented, who also had a message that he wants to see discipline in his squad.

"It's vital in a dressing room that everyone is willing to contribute, be that on the pitch or off it. I really think that is the key, and everyone here does that. Vinicius is very important in that," Alonso insisted.

The coach believes Rodrygo can play in "different positions," but "I think the left wing is a very good position for him, and after not playing in several matches, I think it was important for him to feel part of the team again," he insisted.

Alonso was also asked about Ceballos, who had looked to be close to a move to Olympique de Marseille, only for the deal to fall apart at the last moment.

"Ceballos has stayed here, and I'm glad he is here. Dani will have the same role that he was going to have, what has happened and that doesn't change my opinion of him. How much is he going to play? Nobody knows, not even me," he concluded. **-Xinhua**

NEVER-SEEN-BEFORE FOOTAGE

Disgusting, heartless, and inhuman: Sreesanth's wife slams Lalit Modi, Michael Clarke for revealing footage of pacer's 'slapgate' with Harbhajan

NEW DELHI: Former cricketer S Sreesanth's wife Bhuvneshwari Sreesanth lashed out at ex-Indian Premier League (IPL) commissioner Lalit Modi and ex-Australian batter Michael Clarke for revealing the never-seen-before footage of former Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh's 'slapgate' with pacer. Pointing out how both players have moved on from the incident, she termed Modi-Clarke's act as "disgusting, heartless and inhuman".

Modi and Clarke revealed the never-seen-before footage of the slapgate in the aftermath of an IPL 2008 fixture between the Mumbai Indians (MI) and the Punjab Kings (then Kings XI Punjab), on the latest episode of Aussie legend's Beyond23 Podcast.

In the footage, Harbhajan could be seen slapping the pacer with the

back of his hand during the post-match handshakes. Harbhajan was MI's captain, and his team had faced a 66-run loss to Punjab.

The footage, which was never available until now, has finally surfaced. Sreesanth was left in tears after the incident, being consoled by his captain and Sri Lankan legend Mahela Jayawardene. Harbhajan then once again proceeded to return towards Sreesanth, making an animated gesture before Irfan Pathan and Mahela diffused the situation.

Taking to her Instagram story, Bhuvneshwari wrote, "Shame on you @lalitmodi and @michaelclarkeofficial. You people are not even human to drag up something from 2008 just for your own cheap publicity and views. Both @sreesanthnair36 and Harbhajan have long moved on, they are fathers



now with school-going children, and yet you try to throw them back into an old wound. Absolutely disgusting, heartless, and inhuman."

In another story, she pointed out how the footage's emergence has been "painful" for her family and added that both should be sued for not just hurting the players, but "scarring their innocent children

who now have to face questions and shame for no fault of theirs."

During the podcast, Modi revealed that broadcast cameras did not capture the incident as they were switched off after the match and instead it was one of his personal security cameras, which captured Harbhajan giving a "backhand" to Sreesanth".

"I had kept that video. The game was over, and the cameras had shut off. One of my security cameras was on because I was walking in the field. It was caught as the teams finished playing. The players were going thanking each other and shaking hands. One team was going one way, the other team was going the opposite way, and then it came down to Sreesanth and Bhajji. Bhajji just looks at him, said something, and gave him a backhand. I had not put it out for so long - it has been 18 years now," said Modi as quoted by Wisden.

This incident led to an eight-match ban on Harbhajan. On the ban received by 'Bhajji', Modi said he found the incident offensive and boundaries needed to be set.

"I sat them both down afterwards and had to penalise Bhajji in

the meeting. He received an eight-match suspension, although some people were calling for a lifetime suspension. It was a new league, lots of passion, but I found it offensive. It was not just about Bhajji or Sreesanth; we needed to set boundaries," he said.

Recently, Harbhajan had reflected on this incident on Indian cricket legend Ravichandran Ashwin's YouTube Channel, saying, "One thing I'd want to change in my life is that incident with Sreesanth. I want to remove that incident from my career. What transpired was wrong, and I should not have done what I did. I apologised 200 times. What I felt so bad about was that even years after that incident, I have been apologising every opportunity or stage I get. It was a mistake." **-ANI**

ROUND-UP



“GLASS MENAGERIE” EXHIBITION HELD IN WARSAW, POLAND: Animal glass sculptures are seen at the “Glass Menagerie” exhibition by Polish-born artist Marta Klonowska at the Ursynow Cultural Centre in Warsaw, Poland. The exhibition presents a collection of animal sculptures created from thousands of pieces of coloured glass wastes. — Xinhua



HIGHLIGHT OF BUENOS AIRES TANGO FESTIVAL & WORLD CUP 2025 IN ARGENTINA: Dancers compete during the Semi Final of the Buenos Aires Tango Festival & World Cup 2025 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. — Xinhua



82ND VENICE FILM FESTIVAL TO RUN UNTIL SEPT. 6: This photo shows a view of Venice, Italy. The 82nd Venice Film Festival began on Aug. 27 and will run until Sept. 6 at the Venice Lido island in Italy. — Xinhua



COLLABORATIVE EXHIBITION ON SCO COUNTRIES' CULTURAL HERITAGE KICKS OFF IN BEIJING: A woman visits an exhibition themed “Where Civilizations Meet: Collections from Museums of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States” at the National Museum in Beijing, capital of China. The exhibition features 220 cultural relics and artifacts selected from 10 cultural institutions across the member states of the SCO. — Xinhua

ALBINO KANGAROO JOEY SEEN AT BELGRADE ZOO, SERBIA: A six-month-old albino kangaroo joey rests near her mother at the Belgrade Zoo in Belgrade, Serbia. — Xinhua



ROAD CLEARANCE WORK IS UNDERWAY AFTER A LANDSLIDE: Road clearance work is underway after a landslide triggered by incessant rainfall at Kalijhora along NH 10, in Kalimpong. — ANI video grab



PEOPLE TAKE PART IN RALLY TO PROTEST AGAINST FAMINE SITUATION IN GAZA STRIP: People take part in a rally to protest against the famine situation caused by Israeli military's operation in the Gaza Strip, in Jerusalem. The demonstrators called on the Israeli government to immediately end the war in Gaza and reach a ceasefire with Hamas. — Xinhua



ROUND-UP

Sultan Center unveils flagship Al Hail Store, elevating premium retail experience in Oman

The Al Hail branch sets a new benchmark in product curation

MUSCAT: Sultan Center, a leader in grocery retail and a trusted household name, announced the opening of its flagship store in Al Hail. This milestone not only expands the brand's footprint to nine strategic locations across Oman but also ushers in a new era of el-



evated shopping, marked by exclusivity, quality, international standards, and a refreshed brand identity.

Strategically located to serve the dynamic communities of Al Hail, Mawaleh, Al Mouj, and Al Khoud,

the new store is more than a retail space — it's a destination designed to meet the discerning tastes of modern consumers. The Al Hail branch sets a new benchmark in product curation, offering a premium selection of exclusive imports, rare international finds, and top-tier local produce. Since introducing Oman to its first modern grocery retail experience in 1999, Sultan Center has remained at the forefront of innovation and quality. Today, that legacy continues with a renewed focus on sourcing the finest goods from across the globe—from hand-selected fresh fruits and vegetables, sustainably sourced seafood, and premium-grade meats, to specialty baked items, traditional con-

fections, and an artisan sushi bar. Each department has been thoughtfully designed to deliver an elevated customer experience, showcasing high-quality products that are often unavailable elsewhere in the market. Whether it's a niche international brand or a carefully sourced local delicacy, Sultan Center ensures that every item meets the highest standards of freshness and authenticity. The Al Hail launch also marks the debut of Sultan Center's contemporary visual identity. The refreshed branding—featuring a sleek grey and vibrant orange palette—mirrors the company's commitment to innovation while preserving its neighborhood charm. Enhanced by refined store layouts,

bright interiors, and a welcoming team, the rebrand reinforces Sultan Center's evolving role as Your Neighbourhood Grocer. "Al Hail is a significant milestone that reflects both our heritage and our future direction," said Ali Hamdar, Country General Manager of Sultan Center Oman. "We are combining the exclusivity of world-class products with the approachability of community-centric service. This store represents our vision to make premium retail experiences accessible and enjoyable for every customer." The Al Hail flagship is now open to the public, with limited-time grand opening promotions and exclusive product offers available in-store.

PREMIUM NEW ENERGY VEHICLE



Yangwang U9 Track Edition sets EV top-speed record of 472.41 km/h

MUSCAT: Yangwang, BYD's premium new energy vehicle brand (NEV), has set a new global electric vehicle (EV) top-speed record of 472.41 km/h at the ATP Automotive Testing Papenburg test track in Germany. The feat was achieved with YANGWANG's latest U9 Track Edition supercar on 8 August 2025, making it the world's fastest EV. Built using BYD's futuristic technologies in its core, the high-performance EV will soon be available for sale for customers in Oman. Watch out for the space to explore the U9 and experience the innovation at your nearest BYD Flagship showroom in Wat-taya, Al Mouj and Mall of Oman. The Yangwang U9 Track Edition is built upon the same e4 Platform and DiSus-X core technical architecture as the YANGWANG U9 currently on sale in China. On top of this, it features the world's first mass-produced 1200V ultra-high-voltage vehicle platform, paired with a thermal-management system optimised for extreme conditions. This combination of an existing technical footprint and ground-breaking enhancements elevates the Yangwang U9 Track Edition's performance to unprecedented levels. Breaking world records demands both relentless power delivery and exceptional high-speed stability. The Yangwang U9 Track Edition's e4 Platform — the world's first quad-motor system to feature 30,000rpm high-performance motors — delivers peak power of 555kW per motor, with a combined system output exceeding 3,000PS. This grants the vehicle an astonishing power-to-

weight ratio of 1,217PS per tonne, placing it among the top tier in the global automotive industry. Beyond this, the e4 Platform's quad-motor independent torque-vectoring system continuously monitors road feedback, adjusting each wheel's torque at an ultra-high frequency that exceeds 100 times per second. Even at high speeds, it maintains absolute control over body posture, ensuring no wheel slip or loss of traction. The DiSus-X Intelligent Body Control System performs rapid, independent vertical adjustments to the suspension at each corner of the vehicle during aggressive acceleration and cornering, or on uneven surfaces. This not only suppresses pitch and roll — enhancing driver comfort and confidence — but also actively optimises the contact patch between the tyres and the road, maximising grip. Working in synergy with the e4 Platform, it delivers dual guarantees for vehicle stability and driving safety. Unlike traditional supercars, the Yangwang U9 adopts the innovative "e4 Platform + DiSus-X" technical architecture, introducing "body posture control" to racetrack scenarios and exploring the boundaries of safety and performance for supercars in track environments. Furthermore, the Yangwang U9 Track Edition retains the aerodynamic design of the current Yangwang U9 and is equipped with an enhanced, optional carbon-fiber front splitter that is already in mass production, fully verifying the scientific design and technical reliability of the Yangwang U9 under ultra-high-speed operating conditions.

DIAMOND COLLECTION

Beverly Hills Polo Club's latest collection arrives at Salman Stores exclusively

MUSCAT: Salman Stores has once again taken the spotlight in Oman's retail scene by unveiling the exclusive launch of the Beverly Hills Polo Club Diamond Collection. This latest release captures the essence of glamour and sophistication, bringing international elegance directly to the local market. Known for its global appeal and stylish innovation, Beverly Hills Polo Club has introduced a collection that stands out with the brilliance of real diamonds. Designed for modern men and



women who value both fashion and function, these timepieces represent a perfect balance of luxury and accessibility. "Exclusivity matters. At Salman Stores, we take pride in introduc-

ing collections that can't be found elsewhere — giving our customers the privilege of owning something truly unique. Beverly Hills Polo Club Diamond Collection is exactly that: stylish, aspirational, and only available at Salman Stores," said by Muhammad Haris Aslam, Chief Executive Officer of Salman Corporation. From elegant everyday watches adorned with subtle diamond accents to bold statement pieces made to turn heads, this new collection is a celebration of individu-

ality and timeless design. Available only at Salman Stores across Oman, the Beverly Hills Polo Club Diamond Collection will soon extend to Salmanstores.com, ensuring customers can experience exclusivity both in-store and online. With this launch, Salman Stores strengthens its role as the exclusive destination for global lifestyle brands, redefining what accessible luxury means in Oman. It's more than a collection, it's a statement, and it's only with Salman Stores.

ACHIEVEMENT

Special Olympians from Alizz Islamic Bank's 'Sports for All' initiative return victorious



MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank celebrated the triumphant return of the Special Olympians from the bank's 'Sports for All' initiative who participated in the Regional Special Olympics for the Middle East and North Africa that was held in Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates. The athletes represented Oman and returned home with medals that reflect their determination, resilience and the power of community support. This achievement is a source of national pride and a testament to Alizz Islamic Bank's long-standing commitment to empowering individuals of all abilities. By creating platforms for inclusion and celebrating diversity, the Bank actively contributes to building a society where everyone is given the opportunity to thrive. The bank had partnered with the Special Olympics Oman under its 'Sports for All' initiative

to sponsor a specialised full year training programme for 10 athletes ahead of their participation in the games. This comes as part of the bank's 'Alizz Cares' program and underscores its commitment to fostering inclusivity, empowering communities, and enhancing the quality of life, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Alizz Islamic Bank has positioned itself as a community partner that fosters positive change across Oman. Commenting on the achievement, Lina Al Abdulsalaam, Head of Marketing & Communications at Alizz Islamic Bank, said: "At Alizz Islamic Bank, we believe that true progress is achieved when everyone is included, supported and celebrated. This victory is a milestone not only for the athletes but for the entire community. These champions have shown us what determination and resilience

is all about. We believe that we are not just helping them train, we are helping them inspire others and become champions representing our beloved country Oman." Special Olympics Oman works with the objective to build behavioral, physical, and professional skillsets of its members by integrating them into society. The association's longstanding commitment to raise awareness on the needs of people with special needs extends to supporting and encouraging their participation in social, cultural, sports, health, professional and recreational activities, in collaboration with government and non-government entities. In addition, Special Olympics Oman works with the families of people with special needs, involving them in programs, initiatives and events that are designed for the benefit of their children while promoting a culture of volunteerism.

CREDIT CARDHOLDERS



ahli islamic offers instant 15% discount at Babyshop

MUSCAT: As part of strengthening meaningful and rewarding partnerships for its customers and their families, ahli islamic partnered with global brand Babyshop, to offer credit cardholders with an instant 15% discount, in celebration of the back-to-school season. This offer reflects ahli islamic's commitment to providing the best deals for its clientele, enhancing their Islamic banking experience. Coinciding with preparations for a vibrant and energetic new academic year, the offer ran from 13 to 16 August, 2025. The initiative witnessed exceptional engagement across Babyshop outlets in the Sultanate, with families making the most of discounted access to Babyshop's Back to School Collection — a wide and diverse selection of over 3,000 products, including clothing, bags, feeding supplies, stationery, as well as arts and crafts materials, catering to the needs of both boys and girls of all ages.

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