



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS REVIEWED

The audience was attended by Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance. — **ONA**

ANNOUNCEMENT

Article (2) stipulates that the Central Bank of Oman shall issue the regulations, decisions, instructions and circulars necessary for the implementation of the law attached to this decree. Till such time, the existing regulations, decisions, instructions and circulars shall continue to be effective, without prejudice to the provisions of the attached law. **>A5**

At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the bounties He bestowed on the Sultanate of Oman. He prayed to the Almighty Allah that 2025 be a year of successive accomplishments. He hoped that the new year would see the realisation of

His Majesty the Sultan reviewed the local conditions. The Council of Ministers listened to the assessment of economic and social conditions in the country over the year 2024. It took note of the positive outcomes achieved in this respect, thanks to the efforts made by all departments in the areas of economic diversification,

In this context, and, with reference to the growth of the actual contribution of promising economic activities to the gross domestic product (GDP), a tangible rise in the added value of non-economic activities and, with the aim of doubling efforts and reinforcing the non-oil trade balance, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to the Council of Ministers to continue focusing on positive factors that enhance economic growth, back the role of the private sector in its drive to benefit from opportunities of partnerships made available through programmes and projects implemented by the government—while at the same

After listening to a briefing on the State's General Budget for fiscal year 2025—the last budget in the current Five Year Plan (2021-2025), as well as the general framework for preparation of the 11th Five Year Plan (2026-2030), the Council of Ministers gave directives to the authorities concerned to follow up the implementation of the current plan, assess the extent to which they met their target goals, state the challenges posed to its programmes and to complete the remaining projects of the current five-year plan. **>A4**

1 The Shura Council hosted representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to deliberate on the proposed Real Estate Regulation Draft Law referred by the government. **>A2**



2 Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Sultanate of Oman's Foreign Minister made a phone call with Assad Hassan Al Shaibani, Foreign Minister of the interim Syrian government. **>A3**

3 New Orleans authorities on Wednesday announced 10 deaths and 30 injuries after “a mass casualty incident involving a vehicle that drove into a large crowd on Canal and Bourbon Street.” **A7**

Speaking after the match, Jaber reflected on his squad's ability to overcome adversity, playing nearly an hour with 10 men following a



"The match became very difficult after the red card in the 34th minute," Jaber admitted.

He also addressed perceptions about Oman's game management.

For Jaber, the focus remains clear: "It's about believing in each other and playing as one. This journey has been about belief, teamwork, and the Omani spirit." **>A3**



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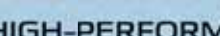


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Shura Council committee discusses Real Estate Regulation Draft Law

The Public Services and Utilities Committee of the council stressed the need for implementing a green building code for all structures in Oman with representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Services and Utilities Committee of the Shura Council hosted representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to deliberate on the proposed Real Estate Regulation Draft Law referred by the government.

The meeting began with an overview of the ministry's efforts to advance the real estate sector and the challenges it faces in Oman.

Key provisions of the proposed law were then discussed, focusing on its capacity to address these challenges and streamline processes related to real estate development.

Discussions included mechanisms and criteria for granting developers ownership of parts of project lands, emphasising

the importance of transparency and creating an investor-friendly environment.

The committee also explored handling delays or failures in project completion, reviewing provisions related to licencing and penalties to safeguard the rights of all parties involved.

The committee members raised questions about the feasibility of establishing a specialised committee to oversee real estate projects, particularly those delayed or stalled.

They also discussed the potential creation of a real estate stock exchange for listing and trading shares and indicators in the sector.

A critical point of inquiry was the law's omission of mandatory or incentivised use of renewable energy and eco-friendly materials in real estate projects, given the



sector's significant potential in this area. The committee stressed the need for implementing a green building code for all structures in Oman and establishing environmental, urban, and economic planning standards before distributing residential lands.

They highlighted the rapid urban growth in Muscat Governorate, which increased by approximately 23% recently, leading to encroachment on Wadis and other natural areas.

These discussions are part of a series of meetings and consultations by the committee to

thoroughly examine the Real Estate Regulation Draft Law before presenting it in upcoming council sessions.

The proposed law aims to create a transparent and well-regulated environment for real estate transactions, ensure investor and consumer protection, enhance the capabilities of the local real estate market, and boost investment and construction activity in Oman.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Hamoud Ali Al-Yahyai, Chairman of the Public Services and Utilities Committee, and attended by committee members.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY



TRA sets percentage for employment of non-Omanis in network operations centres

MUSCAT: The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has issued a decision to determine the percentage of employment of non-Omanis in Network Operations Centres (NOC).

The decision, which addresses TRA licensees, seeks to raise the efficiency of national cadres, enabling them to manage this vital sector in line with the Authority's strategy and the approaches of Oman Vision 2040.

The decision sets the aforementioned percentage at a maximum of 6% of the total number of employees in these centres.

The licensees who have not yet achieved the abovementioned percentage are granted a period of up to 8 months to adjust their status in line with the specified percentage.

The decision also instructs the licensees to submit a clearcut Omanisation plan that will be reviewed and approved by the TRA. It also requires the licensees to submit monthly follow-up reports on the implementation of their respective plans. The reports have to indicate the progress made in achieving this percentage, as per the TRA decision. — **ONA**

SHURA COUNCIL'S LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL COMMITTEE

Anti-Trafficking Law reviewed with Omani Human Rights Committee

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Legislative and Legal Committee of the Shura Council continued its deliberations on the proposed Anti-Trafficking Law referred by the government.

On Wednesday, the committee hosted the Chair and members of the Omani Human Rights Committee (OHRC) to gather their insights and observations regarding the proposed legislation.

During the meeting, the committee discussed the provisions of the draft law with members of the Omani Human Rights Committee, examining potential shortcomings and challenges in the existing law.

They also assessed the alignment of the proposed law with relevant international agreements and conventions.

This discussion was part of the committee's fourth regular meeting for the second annual session (2024–2025) of the council's 10th term.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Ahmed Ali Al-Saadi, Chairman of the Legislative and Legal Committee, with the attendance of committee members.

The proposed Anti-Trafficking



Draft Law is an updated version of the existing legislation, aiming to align it with current legal frameworks such as the Penal Code and to meet the requirements of international agreements.

The revisions address practical gaps and deficiencies observed during its application, ensuring it is equipped to tackle emerging challenges in combating trafficking crimes.

The law seeks to introduce enhanced measures for the protection of victims and incorporates best practices from regional and international experiences.



AVAILABLE IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH

National Museum launches unique Audio Guide service

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of the National Museum's efforts to provide an interactive and unique Museum experience for its visitors, the Museum launched on Wednesday the Audio Guide service.

This service seeks to enrich visitors' experience by providing a detailed historical explanation of the Museum Galleries and selected artefacts while touring the Museum.

The service includes 395 items and is available in Arabic and English. It also supports two tour options: self-guided tours or group tours.

The Audio Guide service is featured by options designed specifically for visitors with disabilities, such as audio descriptions for the visually impaired, and sign language for the deaf-mute.

Additionally, the device shows audio and visual instructions to facilitate its use, along with an interactive map to help visitors



to enrich visitors' experience by adding cognitive and cultural dimensions that expand their understanding of the exhibits and encourage greater interaction with them.

It is worth noting that last December, the National Museum launched the Virtual Tour service on its official website, which offers visitors the opportunity to explore the Museum's Galleries and learn about the rare artefacts that tell the stories of Oman through the ages, as if they were at the heart of the Museum.

familiarise themselves with the Galleries and most significant artefacts.

The launch of this service aligns with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 that aspires to enhance digital transformation, as well as

"Notice"

31/December / 2024

The Ministry of Labour urges companies, establishments, and individuals with outstanding financial obligations to settle their dues without delay.

Failure to do so may result in the suspension of services for those with fines, fees, violations, or other financial obligations recorded in the Ministry's system.

Payments can be made through the Ministry's website, Sanad offices, or by visiting the nearest Ministry of Labour building.



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INTERIM GOVERNMENT

Sayyid Badr makes phone call to Syrian Foreign Minister

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister made a phone call with Assad Hassan Al Shaibani, Foreign Minister of the interim Syrian government.

The Foreign Minister reaffirmed the Sultanate of Oman's steadfast position in supporting the will of the Syrian people, preserving Syria's sovereignty and unity, as well as strengthening the historical ties between the Omani and Syrian peoples.

He also stressed the importance of maintaining mutual cooperation and supporting efforts for development and stability in Syria and the region. — **ONA**



Ministry of Education signs pacts to enhance digital transformation

Ministry signed three cooperation agreements with telecommunications companies, OmanTel, Awasr and Ooredoo to develop and upgrade internet and telephone services in government schools

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of the Ministry of Education's efforts to enhance digital transformation and develop the education infrastructure, the Ministry of Education signed three cooperation agreements with telecommunications companies (OmanTel, Awasr, Ooredoo) to develop and upgrade internet and telephone services in government schools.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Ministry by Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Saadi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Financial Affairs, on behalf of HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry for Administrative and Financial Affairs, and on behalf of Awasr by Eng. Talal bin Khalfan Al Jabri, Vice Chief of Sales at the company, on behalf of OmanTel by Salim Abdul Latif, Executive Vice Chief of Procurement, and on behalf of Ooredoo by Abdulaziz bin Saud Al Abri,



Director General of Commercial Business.

These agreements stipulate increasing the internet speed in schools by ten times, from 100 megabits per second to 1 gigabit per second, providing the necessary telephone services in schools, upgrading 550 schools with fibre technology, 550 schools with 5G technology, and 50 schools with other technologies to be implemented in stages.

Free browsing

The agreement also stipulated free browsing of educational platforms during distance learning period due to weather conditions or emergency circumstances for all users; all with the aim of supporting the educational process, facilitating access to digital resources, enhancing the quality of education, and providing an advanced educational environment that is in line with the requirements of the digital age.

26TH ARABIAN GULF CUP



Bahrain await Oman in the final

< FROM A1 Oman's opponents in the final, Bahrain, also demonstrated their mettle in a grueling semifinal against hosts Kuwait.

Despite being reduced to 10 men early in the second half, Bahrain held on for a 1-0 victory,

thanks to Mohamed Marhoon's clinical finish in the 74th minute.

Bahrain were down to ten from the 51st minute following Mahdi Abduljabbar's red card.

Kuwait, backed by a passionate home crowd of over 60,000, pushed relentlessly for an equal-

iser, but Bahrain's resolute defence held firm.

Oman's tactical discipline and Bahrain's defensive grit set the stage for a thrilling final between two teams that have earned their place through sheer determination.

WITH THE DAWN OF 2025, LET THE GOLDEN RAYS INSPIRE ONE AND ALL WITH PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Sea gulls flutter around at Muttrah Corniche as the first rays of 2025 touch the coast of Muscat on Wednesday early morning. People welcomed the new year with hearts full of hope and gratitude for the new year. — Pictures by Puroshothaman





Recall

Accord - CRV - Civic
2023-2024

Recall Date: 02/01/2025

Brand Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
Accord - CRV - Civic	2023-2024	Total: 456 units

Recall Consequence

Gasoline leak from the cracks on the solenoid component part of High-pressure pump and smell of gasoline fumes while driving and idling the vehicle. some cases large amount of leak visible.

Cracks occurred in High pressure fuel pump solenoid component during supplier manufacturing process due to inappropriate machining and heat treatment.

Recall Action

The procedure will be carried out according to the technical instructions received from Honda.

To check the serial number of the affected commodities, please visit the website for Recalls & Warnings: <http://recall.pacp.gov.om>



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MEETING



His Majesty presides over the Council of Ministers meeting

< FROM A1 The Council of Ministers also stressed the fact that the 11th Five Year Plan should include specific programmes and projects for implementing the priorities and indices of Oman Vision as planned, while at the same time bearing in mind the need to boost the growth of projects that are expected to provide added value to the national economy and generate jobs for Omani citizens.

After studying the most outstanding efforts made by different government departments during 2024 and the objectives of 2025 and, after the Council of Ministers listened to a briefing about the efforts exerted by the Central Bank of Oman, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, the Tax Authority, Oman Investment Authority, the State Audit Institution, His Majesty the Sultan stressed the importance of pressing ahead with cooperation and coordination among the departments concerned in a manner that consolidates economic growth, generates employment opportunities for Omani citizens and reflects positively on the improvement of the Sultanate of Oman's indices at all levels.

On the other hand, and, following a briefing on accomplishments made in the health sector—deemed one of the top national priorities—His Majesty the Sultan expressed his satisfaction over the positive outcomes in this regard. He lauded the role of the Ministry of Health and its achievements and thanked all personnel of the health sector for their valuable efforts in offering the best health-care services.

In this context, and, in further consolidation of specialised health services, the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the National Genome and Human Data Centre (Genome Oman) in the Ministry of Health with the aim of establishing a genetic database of Omani society and expanding areas of research in this domain that would improve early diagnosis of treatment targeting hereditary diseases.

The Council of Ministers also gave directives to set up a National Centre for Ophthalmology and Eye Surgery that accommodates all related services and keeps pace with the growing demand of society for this service. The centre is envisaged to introduce the latest technologies in diagnosis and treatment and to conduct related research.

The Council of Ministers also gave directives to launch a national programme for early detection of the most common cancer cases

among women by establishing 7 early detection units covering all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to expanding nuclear medicine services by establishing a radioisotope production facility and a nuclear pharmacy to cover the rising demand for radio-pharmaceutical isotopes to diagnose and treat patients with cancer.

After the Council of Ministers listened to a briefing about the Social Protection Scheme that was established with the aim of providing social care and support, enhancing social solidarity, protecting entitled segments and achieving social and economic stability in society, His Majesty the Sultan stressed the importance of the competent authorities' optimum follow-up over the performance of the Scheme and all its programmes, while at the same time assessing them on an ongoing basis.

Following a briefing about the progress made within the National Employment Programme—and the efforts and initiatives made by the competent authorities to address the challenges posed to the programme—the Council of Ministers laid emphasis on the integration of efforts among the departments supervising the economic sectors that generate employment opportunities. The Cabinet advised those departments to devise appropriate plans and mechanisms for 'replacement and localization' in those sectors in a manner that accelerates the employment of the national workforce, notably jobseekers.

After reviewing a number of social phenomena, the challenges facing the population structure and their social, economic and cultural impacts, and related demographic developments that may affect some aspects of life, His Majesty instructed the Council of Ministers to conduct necessary studies and develop specific programmes and policies tailored to find appropriate solutions to all challenges in this regard.

As part of His Majesty the Sultan's review of relations with Arab and friendly countries, he spoke about the good outcome of visits and meetings that took place over the the past period. His Majesty stressed the significance of the Sultanate of Oman's maintaining cooperation with all countries and in all fields to help achieve common interests in a manner that is consistent with Oman's steadfast principles.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan spoke about various aspects of interest to the Omani nation and citizens. He gave his noble directives in this regard, wishing all further success and prosperity for the nation and its loyal offspring. - ONA





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HM the Sultan issues nine Royal decrees

<FROM A1 Article (3) states that the licenses, permits and approvals issued by the Central Bank of Oman prior to the implementation of the attached law shall continue to be valid until their expiry and that the renewal of the same shall be in accordance with the provisions of the attached law.

The provisions of the attached law and the regulations and instructions of the Central Bank of Oman shall govern all activities and operations of those for whom the abovementioned licenses, permits and approvals have been issued.

Those concerned must adjust their status in accordance with the provisions of the attached law within six months from the date of its enforcement. The Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman may extend the aforementioned duration for more periods, not exceeding two times.

Article (4) cancels the Banking Law issued by Royal Decree No. 114/2000, as well as all that contradicts the attached law or contravenes its provisions.

Article (5) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall be effective from the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. 3/2025 on the promulgation of the System of the Central Bank of Oman.

Article (1) states that the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) shall have a legal personality and shall enjoy financial and administrative independence in a manner that empowers the CBO to exercise its duties, functions and tasks and

achieve its objectives. The CBO shall be governed by the provisions of the System attached to this decree.

Article (2) states that the headquarters of the Central Bank of Oman and its main treasuries shall be in the Governorate of Muscat. Under a specific decision, the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman may establish branches, treasuries, offices and other facilities within the Sultanate of Oman or abroad to carry out its missions, functions and tasks.

Article (3) stipulates that the organizational structure of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) shall be approved in accordance with the Appendix attached to this decree. The establishment, amendment and cancellation of administrative divisions in the structure shall be made under a decision by the Governor of the Central Bank of Oman, after the approval of the CBO's Board of Directors and the authorities concerned.

Article (4) states that wherever the phrases "Board of Governors" and "Chief Executive Officer" appear in the laws and Royal decrees, the phrases shall be replaced with the phrases "Board of Directors" and "Governor", as appropriate.

Article (5) cancels all that contradicts this decree and the attached system or contravenes their provisions.

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

Royal Decree No. 4/2025 on the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman.



Article (1) appoints HH Sayyid Taimour bin Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman, along with his existing grade and financial allocations.

Article (2) states that the following shall be members in the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman:

- Minister of Economy as Deputy Chairman.
- Governor of the Central Bank of Oman.
- Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance.
- Chairman of the Financial Services Authority.
- Sayyida Rawan bint Ahmed bin Thabit Al Busaidi.
- Dr. Said bin Mubarak bin Said Al Mahrami.
- Dr. Khalfan bin Mohammed bin Khalid Al Barwani.
- Dr. Jamil bin Darwish bin Jamil Al Shaqsi.

Article (3) cancels all that contradicts this decree, or contra-

venes its provisions.

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

Royal Decree No. 5/2025 on appointing a Governor for the Central Bank of Oman.

Article (1) appoints Ahmed bin Ja'afar bin Salim Al Musalami as Governor of the Central Bank of Oman, with the rank of Minister.

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

Royal Decree No. 6/2025 on amending some provisions of Royal Decree No. 64/83 on the establishment of the College of Banking and Financial Studies.

Article (1) states that the name "Board of Directors of the College of Banking and Financial Studies" shall be amended to "Board of Trustees of the College of

Banking and Financial Studies" wherever the name appears in the aforementioned Royal Decree No. 64/83.

Article (2) states that text of Article (4) of Royal Decree No. 64/83 shall be replaced by the following text:

"The Board of Trustees of the College of Banking and Financial Studies shall be formed by a decision of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman after the approval of the Board—from an odd number of not less than 5 members, including the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Deputy Chairman and 2 members representing the banking sector."

Article (3) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall come into effect on the day following the date of its publication.

Royal Decree No. 7/2025 on appointing advisors in the Private Office.

Article (1) appoints Hussein bin Ali bin Abdul Latif as Advisor in the Private Office, with the rank of Minister.

Article (2) appoints Sayyid Dr. Sultan bin Ya'arub bin Qahtan Al Busaidi as Advisor in the Private Office, with the rank of Minister.

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

Royal Decree No. 8/2025 on approving the Organizational Structure of the Royal Court Affairs.

Article (1) approves the Organizational Structure of the Royal Court Affairs in accordance with the appendix attached to this decree.

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

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

Royal Decree No. 9/2025 deals with promotion to the rank of "Major General" and the appointment of a Head of the Special Medical Affairs Unit at the Royal Court Affairs.

Article (1) states that Brigadier Dr. Saif bin Zahir bin Saif Al Salmi shall be promoted to the rank of "Major General" and appointed as "Head of the Special Medical Affairs Unit at the Royal Court Affairs."

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

WILAYAT OF AL HAMRA



Over 43,000 people visit Al Hoota Cave in 2024

AL HAMRA: Al Hoota Cave in the Wilayat of Al Hamra, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, witnessed a footfall of over 43,000 visitors in 2024 following the introduction of electric car service inside the cave and the hanging rope service.

Shams bin Abdullah Al Hat-tali, a tour guide at Al Hoota Cave, spoke on the recently added electric car and the hanging rope services for adventure lovers.

He said that the cave extends for five kilometres and has two entrances, the first at Al Hoy village and the other entrance prepared for reception of visitors which offers the visitors a tour of 500 metres. Salman Al Subhi, incharge of the Geological Exhibition at the cave, said that the exhibition provides visitors an idea about the unique geological nature of the area and the impact of water on the formation of the cave and its formations. — ONA





Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عُمان

وزارة التراث والسياحة

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

Tenders Announcement

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism announcement of internal tenders:

Tender No.	276/2024/MHT/HQ-69	Tenders Name	Provision of Materials and Labor for the Restoration and Consolidation of Bahla Wall.		
	277/2024/MHT/HQ-70		Maintenance of Barka Fort in the Wilayat of Barka, South Al Batinah Governorate.		
	278/2024/MHT/HQ-71		Implementing An integrated visual identity for the Al-Hajar Geopark.		
	279/2024/MHT/HQ-72		Coordinating, printing, and supplying books in Omani neighborhoods		
Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)		276/2024/MHT/HQ-69	25 O.R		
		277/2024/MHT/HQ-70	30 O.R		
		278/2024/MHT/HQ-71	25 O.R		
		279/2024/MHT/HQ-72	25 O.R		
Tender Document Sales End Date		19/01/2025			
Last Date for Bid Submission		11/02/2025			
Grade	276/2024/MHT/HQ-69	First			
	277/2024/MHT/HQ-70	Second &Third			
	278/2024/MHT/HQ-71	Excellent, First, Second, Third, Fourth			
	279/2024/MHT/HQ-72	Excellent& First			
E-Tendering Portal		https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om			
Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om , against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents.					
The Tenderers must acknowledge commitment to the bid.					
• The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids					
The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).					
Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om				
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Bangladesh protesters demand justice for killed in July protests

Protesters demanded the Proclamation of July uprising by January 15

DHAKA: Thousands of protesters on Tuesday gathered in Dhaka to demand justice for those killed during a mass uprising against the government of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in July, the Dhaka Tribune reported.

The "March for Unity" began on Tuesday afternoon at the Central Shaheed Minar, with participants observing a minute of silence to honour those who lost their lives in the July protests. The event, organised by the Students Against Discrimination, started at 4:00 pm.

Meanwhile, the Students Against Discrimination and the Jatiya Nagorik Committee an-



nounced they would stage further demonstrations if the government fails to issue the Proclamation of July Uprising by January 15, The Daily Star reported.

Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Students Against Discrimination said, "We still do not have a document of proclamation on the July mass uprising. It must be issued by January 15. That day we want to reunite here with the proclamation."

He further said that their fight against "fascism" and the Awami League will continue. "Our struggle against fascism and the Awa-

mi League will continue. Many couldn't accept our uprising and that is why there are conspiracies afoot at the Secretariat, in the police, and even in the courts," Abdullah said.

The convener of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee Nasiruddin Patwary said, "We want a new Bangladesh that will not tolerate any intimidation by any country; we want a country without any tender manipulation and extortion. We want the government to immediately bring the Awami League and Sheikh Hasina to book," according to The Daily Star.

Akhtar Hossain, member secretary of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee asserted, "The next election will be held to elect a constituent assembly which will decide on the new constitution and later will play the role of the legislature."

Arif Sohel, member secretary of Students Against Discrimination said, "We learned from the uprising that the meaning of independence is the rights of farmers-labours, the basic human rights of all people, their right to food, education and health. All these should be in the proclamation."

On August 5, a student-led movement ousted Sheikh Hasina, after weeks of protests and clashes that killed over 600 people. Hasina, 76, fled to India and an interim government led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus was formed. In July, tens of thousands of students hit the streets, demanding reforms in the quota system which reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in the 1971 war of independence against Pakistan. **-ANI**



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India becomes 4th nation to achieve space docking

NEW DELHI: Following the successful launch of the SpaDeX mission, Union Minister of state Jitendra Singh stated that India has become the fourth country to join the select league of nations to achieve space docking through its own indigenously developed "Bharatiya Docking System."

Taking to X, Singh said, "India has become the fourth country to join the select league of nations to achieve space docking, through its own indigenously developed 'Bharatiya Docking System.'"

"Privileged to be associated with the Department of Space at a time when Team #ISRO mesmerizes the world with global wonders, one after the other," the Minister added.

Hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi for laying the road to "Viksit

Bharat," Singh said, "A humble tribute to PM @narendramodi's mantra of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' heading towards 'Viksit Bharat,' which will pave the way for a journey beyond the skies for 'Gaganyaan' and 'Bharatiya Antriksha Station.'"

Meanwhile, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing for the launch of the NVS-02 satellite in January 2025, aboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), said ISRO Chairman S. Somanath. Speaking about the upcoming mission, Somanath added that this mission is just one of many planned for the upcoming year.

"In 2025, we have many missions. To start with, we have the mission of GSLV launching the NVS-02 in the month of January," Somanath said. **-ANI**

10 dead as vehicle plows into New Orleans crowd

NEW YORK: New Orleans authorities on Wednesday announced 10 deaths and 30 injuries after "a mass casualty incident involving a vehicle that drove into a large crowd on Canal and Bourbon Street."

"There are 30 injured patients that have been transported by [New Orleans Emergency Medical Services] and 10 fatalities," the city's public alert system announced.

National broadcaster ABC also reported, citing a police spokesperson, that the strike had appeared to be intentional.

The incident took place on Bourbon Street at around 3:15 a.m. local time, various outlets reported. This is a popular tourist and social hotspot in the French



Quarter of the city of roughly 360,000 people in the southern state of Louisiana.

Shortly before Christmas, an attack using a car at a Christmas market in Magdeburg, Germany, killed five people and injured more than 200, drawing international attention. **-DW**

'Impeached president will be held soon'

SEOUL: Head of South Korea's Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials Oh Dong-woon said that impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol will be arrested by Monday following an arrest warrant, according to Al Jazeera.

Speaking with the reporters on Wednesday, Oh Dong-woon warned that any attempts to obstruct the arrest, including barricades or locked gates, would be seen as interference with official duties.

Oh Dong-woon said that the arrest warrant against Yoon would be executed "within the valid period," the last day of which is Monday.

"We aim for a smooth process without major disturbances, but we are also coordinating to mobilise police and personnel in preparation," he told reporters.



He added, "We consider actions such as setting up various barricades and locking iron gates to resist the execution of our arrest warrant as obstruction of official duties," Al Jazeera reported.

A Seoul court on Tuesday had approved a warrant to detain Yoon, who was impeached over his failed attempt to impose martial law.

Yoon was impeached by the National Assembly over his attempt to impose martial law in the country on December 3.

While issuing the warrants, the court rejected Yoon's claims that the CIO lacks jurisdiction over insurrection cases and that the warrant request was therefore illegal. The court also dismissed Yoon's

claims that he couldn't attend questioning sessions because arrangements for his personal safety and security detail, as the president, had not been made, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Earlier on December 14, Yoon was impeached by the National Assembly over his attempt to impose martial law in the country. The members of the unicameral National Assembly had voted 204 to 85 to impeach South Korea's President.

Three members of the National Assembly abstained from voting while eight votes were declared invalid. The voting was conducted through a secret ballot, with two-thirds of the vote needed for impeachment. All 300 members of the assembly cast their votes.

After his impeachment, Yoon was suspended from office.

Elon Musk insults German President

NEW YORK: Billionaire Elon Musk on Tuesday extended his record of personal insults against European politicians with a new post taking a swipe at the country's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

The comments from Musk, an ally of US President-elect Donald Trump, referred to Steinmeier speaking out against outside influence in his speech on the dissolution of the Bundestag.

What has Musk said now?

His post on the social media platform X was a response to criticism of Steinmeier — who is Germany's head of state — by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD)-affiliated influencer Naomi Seibt.

"Steinmeier is an anti-democratic tyrant!" Musk wrote in English. "Shame on him."

Steinmeier's office said that it had noted the post but would not



comment on it.

After the break-up of Germany's three-way coalition government in November, Musk wrote about Chancellor Olaf Scholz in German: "Olaf ist ein Narr" (Olaf is a fool). In a previous post, Musk predicted that Scholz would lose the upcoming German election in February, misspelling his name.

Plans for online Musk-Weidel meeting

The spokesman for the leader of the AfD, Alice Weidel, said concrete plans were underway for an online meeting between her and Musk.

That came after Musk himself suggested a meeting between the two via X's Spaces chat feature. "Wait until Alice and I do an X

Spaces conversation. They will lose their minds," he posted.

Germany's Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck on Tuesday hit out at Musk and his attempts to influence the German elections.

"Elon Musk is equipped with billions and unbridled communication power," Habeck wrote on X. "His call for the AfD is systematic: He wants to weaken Europe. Power must be limited: no business model must destroy our democracy. Europe must now use its power consistently."

Concerns are also growing in the UK as Musk takes an increasingly close interest in Britain's political scene, aligning himself with hard-right lawmaker Nigel Farage.

Musk has busied himself with taking aim at the UK's center-left Labour government, launching a series of blistering comments against British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. **-DW**

BURJ KHALIFA LIGHTS UP FOR 2025

Dubai residents and tourists were treated to pyrotechnic shows at 45 locations in the city, as the UAE celebrated the start of 2025. The world's tallest skyscraper, the Burj Khalifa, was the setting for one of the world's most notable light and fireworks shows, attended by thousands of people. **- ANI**



Ex-Indian PM ancestral village in Pakistan mourns his demise

CHAKWAL: Though ties between India and Pakistan continue to remain not ideal, Gah, a small village in Pakistan, which is also the ancestral place of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, mourned his demise with a special event.

The villagers held a special event to pay tribute to Manmohan Singh, who breathed his last, on December 26, 2024, in AIIMS Delhi at the age of 92.

The villagers took pride in their connection to the late leader, celebrating his journey from a modest upbringing to becoming the head

of the world's largest democracy.

A villager said, "A matter of pride for me is that Manmohan Singh was the fellow classmate of my father. Whenever I saw the name of Manmohan Singh in school, I felt proud that a boy of this small village became Premier of such a big democracy and handled the honour of India."

Another villager extended the invitation to Manmohan Singh's family to visit his native village.

He said, "Since he (Manmohan Singh) is no more now but is survived by his wife and daughters, we extend them an invitation.

Whenever they are here, they will find their home even today. We are all waiting for them. If they want to come, we will welcome them in such a way that perhaps, it will be written in history."

Manmohan Singh passed away at the age of 92 in Delhi on December 26. He was cremated with full state honours at Nigambodh Ghat in Delhi's Kashmere Gate in the presence of his family, friends, colleagues, and government dignitaries on December 28.

Singh's political career spanned several decades, with notable positions including Finance Minister

from 1991 to 1996, during which he spearheaded economic reforms that transformed India's economy. He served as the Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014, succeeding Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

His tenure is particularly remembered for his steady leadership during economic crises and his contributions to modernizing India's economy.

He was succeeded by Narendra Modi in 2014 after the Congress-led UPA lost the general elections. Earlier this year, Manmohan Singh retired from Rajya Sabha.

-ANI



SPORTS



Bumrah scripts ICC rankings history



The speedster became highest-ever ranked Indian Test bowler with 907 points

DUBAI: India speedster Jasprit Bumrah on Wednesday became the highest-ever ranked Indian Test bowler in ICC rankings history after overtaking Ravichandran Ashwin's landmark of 904 rating points, according to ICC.

With 907 points, Bumrah stands joint-17th in the all-time list - with Derek Underwood of England.

Bumrah's unrelenting display in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar series yielded him nine wickets in the MCG clash between India and Australia and helped him consolidate his lead as the No.1 Test bowler in the recent rankings update.

Bumrah is also shortlisted for the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year award for the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy.

The list is led by England seamers Sydney Barnes (932) and George Lohmann (931) who played more than a century ago while Imran Khan (922) and Muttiah Muralitharan (920) are third and fourth.

The Test bowling rankings also

see positive movement for Australia skipper Pat Cummins, who jumped 15 rating points due to his six scalps in the Boxing Day Test, and goes up by a place to sit at No.3 in the bowling rankings.

Cummins' all-round rise

Cummins also secures a third place in the Test all-rounder rankings, on the back of the above bowling exploits and 90 crucial runs during Australia's stellar win in Melbourne.

Another pacer to gain due to his Boxing Day exploits is Marco Jansen, who jumps up six places to sit at five in the bowling rankings due to his seven wickets in the Proteas win over Pakistan in the Centurion Boxing Day clash. This is the first time Jansen went past 800 rating points.

Pakistan seamer Mohammad Abbas has re-entered the rankings in 23rd position after taking seven wickets in the match. In the same game, Aiden Markram's resilient innings of 89 and 37 propelled him back into the world's top 20 bat-



Australia skipper Pat Cummins made a jump in the ICC Test bowling and all-rounder rankings

ters, as South Africa secured their spot in the ICC Test Championship final with a win over Pakistan.

Gritty knocks from Yashasvi Jaiswal, Steve Smith, Saud Shakeel, and Nitish Kumar Reddy in the above games saw them make gains in the Test batting rankings.

On the other hand, free-flowing run-scoring in Bulawayo saw as many as six hundreds being scored in the Zimbabwe-Afghanistan Boxing Day Test, and significant batting rankings gains for Rahmat Shah, and Hashmatullah Shahidi who surpassed the highest-ever

Test scores for Afghanistan with their double hundreds.

For the hosts, the beneficiaries were Sean Williams, Craig Ervine and Brian Bennett - who entered the top 100 Test bowlers after his maiden five-wicket haul.

Besides, performers in the on-

going T20I series between New Zealand and Sri Lanka also made inroads in the T20I rankings. Pathum Nissanka gained three places to close in on the top five batters, while Mitchell Santner jumped into the top 10 of the bowling rankings. - Agencies

SYDNEY TEST



‘Starc ready to push through back pain’

SYDNEY: Mitchell Starc, hailed as one of Australia's "toughest" cricketers, is expected to be fit for the fifth and final Test against India in Sydney despite a back issue.

Starc maintained speeds above 140kph during the Melbourne Test, where he played a crucial role, dismissing Virat Kohli in a dramatic final-day victory.

Starc experienced discomfort in the first innings at the MCG and underwent scans on Wednesday. However, he also hit the gym during an optional training session. "He'll be fine. He'll push through," said Alex Carey, the wicketkeeper-batter.

"I've played with Starc for a long time; he's one of the toughest cricketers I've seen. He'll grimace, grab his rib, but he'll be ready for the contest."

Starc has impressed throughout the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, taking 15 wickets at 28.73. Former captain Ricky Ponting has praised him as bowling his best ever in this series. Despite limited rewards at the MCG, his first spell in the second innings was described by Carey as "some of the best bowling I've seen."

Historically, Starc's form has dipped late in Test campaigns, with his average in fourth and fifth matches rising to 41.82 compared to 25.91 in earlier games. At the SCG, his home ground, he has taken 24 wickets in nine Tests at 44.16. The pitch for the upcoming Test appears well-grassed, potentially aiding the quicks.

Should Starc be unavailable, Jhye Richardson, who took 3/29 in a recent Big Bash League game, or Sean Abbott could step in.

With Australia leading 2-1, a draw in Sydney would secure the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for the first time in a decade but leave World Test Championship qualification uncertain ahead of the Sri Lanka tour.

"We can't look too far ahead," Carey said. "India is a quality outfit capable of bouncing back. For us, it's head down - another opportunity to win a Test match and hopefully secure the trophy."

The SCG Test will also serve as the annual Pink Test, raising funds for the McGrath Foundation. Weather may play a role, with forecasts predicting potential showers on the final two days. - Agencies

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

The reckoning awaits: Kohli seeks redemption in Sydney

MELBOURNE: Six years ago, on this very tour, Virat Kohli produced one of the finest centuries in cricket history. His heroic knock in Perth 2018 wasn't just a performance - it was a declaration of belief, binding fans to the idea that with Kohli at the crease, anything was possible.

Fast forward to the start of 2024, and Kohli still showcased flashes of brilliance.

In South Africa, he made 46 on a pitch where the hosts were skittled for 55 - a testament to his resilience. His batting, often described as mechanical in precision, remains artful in its defiance of expectation.

Kohli has always thrived on challenges, elevating his game when others faltered.

But the present tells a different story. Kohli is struggling, his hallmark defiance crumbling under a recurring flaw - succumbing to balls outside the off stump. All six of his dismissals in Australia this series have followed the same pattern, sparking concern.

"It's time he not only scores runs but also gets out differently to show he's overcome this issue," said Sanjay Manjrekar on *ESPNcricinfo*.

"I've never seen a batter of Kohli's calibre endure such a prolonged weakness. It's uncharacteristic for a player of his impact and stature."

This tour has flipped Kohli's career script.

He's walked in under pressure nearly every innings, except for one glorious century. The once-revered hero found himself booed at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) - a rare sight for a crick-



eter who has commanded global adulation.

Adding to the tension was a fiery moment with 19-year-old Sam Konstas during the Boxing Day Test.

Kohli, known for turning confrontations into inspiration, misjudged the situation, inadvertently fuelling the young batter's aggression.

Former Australian captain Aaron Finch weighed in and said, "Virat thrives on pressure and plays his best when he feels cornered. But now, it feels like he's trying to

create that pressure himself, almost forcing a confrontation to find his rhythm."

Kohli's misjudgments have come to define this series - on the field and at the crease. His innings in Melbourne, which could've been a masterclass, unraveled after a pivotal misstep: the run-out of Yashasvi Jaiswal. That moment rattled him, leading to another ill-fated swipe outside off.

As India head to Sydney for the fifth and final Test for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, needing a win to retain the trophy, the stakes

couldn't be higher. Kohli remains a passionate presence on the field, urging his teammates, engaging the crowd, and embodying his unyielding spirit.

But the Kohli holding the bat - the one who can redefine matches with his skill and grit - is what India needs most now.

Sydney offers a clean slate, a chance for redemption. The cricket world will watch, hoping 2025 ushers in the Kohli of old, the one who turns adversity into artistry, rewriting the narrative yet again. (With inputs from *ESPNcricinfo*)

TESLA'S ENERGY STORAGE
US carmaker Tesla's Shanghai energy storage Megafactory has begun trial production, serving as a good example of cooperation between China and the United States to address climate challenges. - 82

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,579.96 points, up by 0.07% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.70% at 422.51 points. Galfar Engineering, up 3.95%, was the top gainer while Al Jazeera Services, down 4.31%, was the top loser.

HM appoints Ahmed Al Musalmi as CBO Governor

The Royal Decree No. 4/2025 also appointed the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday issued a Royal Decree appointing Ahmed bin Ja'afar bin Salim Al Musalmi, as the Governor of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), with the rank of Minister.
Prior to his appointment as CBO Governor, Al Musalmi was serving as the Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International.
The Royal Decree No. 5/2025 on appointing a Governor for the Central Bank of Oman, the Article (1) appoints Ahmed bin Ja'afar bin Salim Al Musalmi as Governor of the Central Bank of Oman, with the rank of Minister. Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.
The Royal Decree No. 4/2025 also appointed the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman.
Article (1) appoints HH Sayyid Taimour bin Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman, along with his existing



- grade and financial allocations.
- Article (2) states that the following shall be members in the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Oman:
 - Minister of Economy as Deputy Chairman.
 - Governor of the Central Bank of Oman.
 - Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance.
 - Chairman of the Financial Services Authority.
 - Sayyida Rawan bint Ahmed bin Thabit Al Busaidi.
 - Dr. Said bin Mubarak bin Said Al Mahrami.
 - Dr. Khalfan bin Mohammed bin Khalid Al Barwani.
 - Dr. Jamil bin Darwish bin Jamil Al Shaqsi.

SENSEX, NIFTY

Indian bourses end on a positive note

NEW DELHI: The Indian stock market began the new year on a positive note, with the Sensex closing 443.09 points higher at 78,582.10, marking a strong start for 2025. The NSE Nifty too closed at 23,742.90, up by 98.10 points.
The broad market showed a mixed performance, with 37 stocks advancing and 13 declining from the Nifty 50 index.
Among the top gainers were Maruti, M&M, LT, Bajaj Finance, and Tata Motors, which saw strong upward movements,

while Hindalco, Dr Reddy's, Adani Ports, ONGC, and Tata Steel struggled, contributing to the decline in the Nifty.
Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, attributed the positive market opening to a broad-based recovery. He noted that the sustainability of this trend would depend on earnings growth in the upcoming Q3, with expectations positive on a quarter-on-quarter basis.
"The market started on a positive note on the first day of 2025. The recovery was broad-based,

while the sustainability of the trend will depend on the earnings growth in Q3, where the expectation is positive on a QoQ basis. An uptick in core sector data and the prospect of a ramp-up in capex spending by the government in the remaining part of the fiscal-aided sectors like capital goods, industrials, auto, and power," Nair added. The market's performance on the first trading day of 2025 set a positive tone, though investor sentiment will remain closely tied to the forthcoming earnings season. - ANI



E-SYMPHONY

OQ launches Oman's largest private cloud ERP deployment

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ, a global investment energy group, announced recently the official launch of e-Symphony, its large-scale project to implement RISE with SAP on a private cloud.
This initiative marks a groundbreaking transition of OQ's One ERP platform into a cloud-based environment—opening doors to enhance operational efficiency, advanced analytics, and data-driven decision-making across OQ's operations.
Maryam Al Shaibani, Vice President of OQ Corporate IDS, commented: "This milestone signals more than a technological upgrade; it heralds a new era of innovation, where collaboration, real-time analytics, and agility underpin every aspect of our operations. Moving our core business platform to the cloud reinforces our commitment to setting new benchmarks of excellence, both within OQ and across the region."
RISE with SAP on a private cloud gives OQ the flexibility to scale seamlessly, reduce infrastructure costs, and minimize system downtime. As an end-to-end cloud offering, it delivers faster implementation cycles, automated updates, and real-time data insights — critical for agile decision-making and resource opti-



mization. By integrating mission-critical functions into a single, secure platform, OQ can respond swiftly to evolving market demands at an unprecedented scale.
OQ's longstanding partnership with SAP spans multiple implementations, including SAP Success Factors, SAP Concur, and SAP Integrated Business Planning, demonstrating the organization's commitment to comprehensive digital transformation.
Congratulating OQ on this major achievement, Sergio Maccotta, Senior Vice President, SAP Middle East and Africa - South, said: "OQ's successful deployment of RISE



with SAP in a private cloud stands as a testament to its leadership in digital transformation and the company's critical role in advancing Oman's economic ambitions. By leveraging cutting-edge technology and actionable insights,

OQ is not just enhancing its operational efficiency—it is actively shaping an innovation-led future for the country. This milestone underlines how forward-thinking organizations can drive sustainable growth, reinforce Oman's compet-

itiveness on the global stage, and contribute to the realization of the nation's strategic vision."
The launch of the e-Symphony project further underscores OQ's unwavering dedication to digital transformation and operational

excellence. With its new cloud-based ERP at the core of its business processes, OQ stands poised to meet evolving market demands, empower stakeholders with actionable insights, and drive sustainable growth well into the future.

AFRICA IN 2025

Strengthening democracy key to Africa's economic growth in 2025



BRUSSELS: For the African continent, many experts say that strengthening democracy is key to economic growth in 2025.
In Mozambique, for example, political observers fear that protests against the country's ruling Frelimo party — which was accused of rigging the October presidential election to extend its 49 years in power — will continue into the new year.
Supporters of popular opposition leader Venancio Mondlane filed a complaint with Constitutional Court and called for talks with Frelimo, which has ruled Mozambique since its independence from Portugal in 1975.
"The dialogue, which is supposed to be about fundamental points for a fair electoral system, is not being taken seriously by the government," said Adriano Nuvunga, director of the Center for Democracy and Human Rights in the Mozambican capital, Maputo.

Democratic resilience: A cause for hope
The lack of democratic norms and problems with unclear elections will remain a cause for concern, said Serwah Prempeh, a senior fellow at the Africa Policy Research Institute's (APRI) economy and society program.
Tunisia and Mauritania have taken steps towards democratization, but elections in both countries were marked by irregularities. Tensions in Tunisia mounted in September after the electoral commission, citing irregularities in their filings, rejected a court ruling to reinstate three candidates for the October vote.
At least three people were killed in Mauritania in July during deadly clashes between security forces and protesters rallying against the reelection of President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani. His main rival, anti-slavery activist Biram Dah

Abeid, rejected the outcome and said the result was falsified.
These kinds of incidents will continue in 2025 if countries do not strengthen their institutions to improve the integrity and quality of elections, transparency and the multiparty system, Prempeh said. "Overall, progress has been made and these areas of democratic resilience give cause for hope," she said.
There were also numerous elections in 2024 and a peaceful transition from a dominant party to a multiparty government, for example in South Africa or Botswana — where opposition parties have gained ground, South African analyst Daniel Silke told DW. Silke said he hoped that this trend would continue in 2025.
The stakes are high in South Africa, the largest industrialized country on the continent, following the formation of a coalition between the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) and the ruling African National Congress after the ANC lost the majority it had enjoyed since the first postapartheid election, in 1994.
"The government of national unity is under pressure — it has to show results," Silke said, with a view toward regional elections planned for 2026.
Creating jobs and boosting South Africa's ailing economy are key to the coalition's political success in 2025. The new government's reform efforts have slightly improved growth prospects, with forecasts for 2025 ranging from 1.5% (International Monetary Fund) to 2.6% (Economist Intelligence Unit).
South African President Cyril Ramaphosa aims to use the country's G20 presidency, which began on December 1, not only to represent national interests but also to position South Africa as the mouthpiece for the entire continent and the Global South. -DW

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Galfar Engineering, up 3.95%, was the top gainer while Al Jazeera Services, down 4.31%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,579.96 points, up by 0.07% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.70% at 422.51 points. Galfar Engineering, up 3.95%, was the top gainer while Al Jazeera Services, down 4.31%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while OQEP were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 717 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 1.69 million, with more than 10.33 million shares changing hands. Out of 50 traded securities, 18 advanced, 13 declined, and 19 remained unchanged.

Financial Index closed at 7766.18 points, up 0.52%. Prices of Al Sharqia Investment, Global Financial Investments, United Finance, Al Anwar Investment, Oman & Emirates Investment

were up by 2.82%, 2.35%, 1.75%, 1.49%, 1.47% respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, National Finance, Oman United Insurance were down by 8.00%, 1.43%, 0.39% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,302.95 points, up 0.61%. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Al Anwar Ceramics, Oman Cement, Muscat Thread Mill were up by 3.95%, 3.77%, 1.59%, 1.45% respectively. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Oman Cables Industry, A'Saffa Foods were down by 2.41%, 0.43%, 0.24% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.24% before closing at 1,738.85 points. Prices of Gulf Hotels, Al Suwadi Power, National Gas, Al Batinah Power were up by 3.70%, 3.08%, 2.56%, 1.52% respectively. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Renaissance Services, Majan College, OQ Gas Networks, Oman Oil Marketing were down by 4.31%, 3.35%, 1.84%, 1.45%, 1.33% respectively. – United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,588.68	4,575.96	4,579.96	4,576.60	3.36	0.07
FINANCIAL INDEX	7766.18	7727.96	7766.18	7725.85	40.32	0.52
Industry Index	5,322.64	5,289.41	5,302.95	5,270.70	32.25	0.61
Services Index	1,744.47	1,738.85	1,738.85	1,743.08	-4.24	-0.24
MSX Shariah Index	425.92	422.01	422.51	425.50	-2.99	-0.70
MSX TR INDEX	6,426.45	6,408.63	6,414.23	6,409.53	4.70	0.07
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,823.17	8,779.76	8,823.17	8,777.36	45.81	0.52
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,141.06	6,102.73	6,118.34	6,081.14	37.20	0.61
SERVICES TR IDX	2,087.50	2,080.76	2,080.76	2,085.83	-5.07	-0.24
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,067.21	1,067.21	1,067.21	1,067.21	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,333,997	1,689,009	717	27,570,834,125	18	13	19	50

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BD.	LAST OFF.	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	67,812	7,452	22	0.110	0.111	0.109	0.110	0.106	0.004	3.774	0.111	0.110	0.111	0.100	24,200,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	43,290	2,900	8	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.065	0.002	3.077	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.100	47,865,225
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	168,914	12,304	10	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.071	0.002	2.817	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.100	6,570,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	238,236	20,572	26	0.085	0.087	0.085	0.087	0.085	0.002	2.353	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.100	17,400,000
OM0000002274	UNITED FINANCE	58,390	3,329	4	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.001	1.754	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.100	20,655,383
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	14,000	5,360	5	0.381	0.384	0.381	0.384	0.378	0.006	1.587	0.384	0.378	0.385	0.100	127,055,121
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	79,500	5,327	5	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.067	0.066	0.072	0.100	45,217,458
OM0000001881	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	7,527	519	3	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.001	1.471	0.069	0.069	0.074	0.100	8,409,375
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	793	65	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.001	1.235	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	14,350,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,915,542	263,219	34	0.137	0.138	0.136	0.136	0.135	0.001	0.741	0.136	0.136	0.145	0.100	899,945,493
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	302,839	76,021	7	0.252	0.253	0.251	0.253	0.252	0.001	0.397	0.253	0.250	0.253	0.100	1,890,118,457
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	81,000	26,730	9	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.000	0.000	0.330	0.327	0.340	0.100	220,560,591
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	1,449	1,365	4	0.943	0.943	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.000	0.000	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.100	705,000,000
OM0000004735	SEMBOORIP SALALAH	30,000	3,000	1	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.097	0.101	0.100	95,457,195
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	353,152	97,804	34	0.278	0.278	0.276	0.277	0.277	0.000	0.000	0.277	0.276	0.277	0.100	213,345,400
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	1,350	551	1	0.408	0.408	0.408	0.408	0.409	-0.001	-0.244	0.408	0.408	0.408	0.100	48,960,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	5,500	1,425	2	0.259	0.259	0.259	0.259	0.260	-0.001	-0.385	0.259	0.240	0.280	0.100	25,800,000
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	497,632	67,948	82	0.136	0.137	0.136	0.136	0.138	-0.002	-1.449	0.136	0.136	0.140	0.100	588,964,853
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	74,562	29,081	8	0.380	0.380	0.375	0.375	0.388	-0.013	-3.351	0.376	0.376	0.376	0.100	88,653,750
Total		19	3,941,488	623,866	266											
Parallel Market																
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	1,242,840	98,189	45	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.079	0.076	0.003	3.947	0.079	0.077	0.079	0.100	16,035,929
OM0000001111	GULF HOTELS (OM)	38	148	1	3.899	3.899	3.899	3.899	3.760	0.139	3.697	3.899	0.000	0.000	1.000	13,367,027
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	300,035	23,998	35	0.079	0.081	0.079	0.080	0.078	0.002	2.564	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.100	6,800,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	582,406	39,533	21	0.067	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.067	0.001	1.493	0.068	0.065	0.073	0.100	14,428,240
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	796	111	1	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.138	0.002	1.449	0.140	0.140	0.151	0.100	37,701,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	20,619	3,023	5	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.098	0.100	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	700	76	1	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.098	0.108	0.100	3,240,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	151,000	52,397	12	0.347	0.347	0.347	0.347	0.347	0.000	0.000	0.347	0.345	0.347	0.100	69,273,553
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	6,988	887	1	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.127	0.127	0.139	0.100	6,985,000
OM0000005390	OMAN ARAB BANK	4,100	631	1	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.000	0.000	0.154	0.139	0.155	0.100	29,780,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	91,811	5,397	13	0.058	0.059	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.058	0.059	0.100	84,830,885
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	79,814	5,168	7	0.065	0.065	0.064	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.065	0.068	0.100	14,445,600
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	260	24	2	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.091	0.097	0.100	18,400,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REEF	5,500	660	3	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.100	70,972,426
OM0000009608	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SEF)	2,051,980	229,825	149	0.112	0.113	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.040	387,462,975
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	3,939	10,995	13	2.800	2.800	2.788	2.788	2.800	-0.012	-4.429	2.788	2.785	2.788	0.100	250,083,000
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	1,734,860	576,528	114	0.334	0.335	0.332	0.333	0.337	-0.004	-1.187	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.010	694,000,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	1,150	853	3	0.750	0.750	0.740	0.740	0.750	-0.010	-1.333	0.740	0.740	0.750	0.100	45,543,500
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	15,000	2,070	1	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.140	-0.002	-1.429	0.138	0.138	0.140	0.100	79,171,191
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	4,700	503	1	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.109	-0.002	-1.835	0.107	0.107	0.112	0.100	9,630,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	4,670	380	6	0.079	0.085	0.079	0.083	0.085	-0.002	-2.353	0.083	0.082	0.085	0.100	42,216,398
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	2,500	1,013	2	0.405	0.405	0.405	0.405	0.415	-0.010	-2.410	0.405	0.405	0.415	0.100	32,968,114
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	214	44	2	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	-0.009	-4.306	0.200	0.200	0.207	0.100	8,568,558
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	9,277	43	1	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.050	-0.004	-8.000	0.046	0.046	0.053	0.100	11,500,000
Total		24	6,315,307	1,051,880	440											
ROBUST GROWTH																

ABU DHABI: Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, stated that the industrial sector's contribution to the UAE's GDP has surged by 57%, with projections exceeding AED210 billion.

In press statements, he added that the UAE industrial exports have experienced robust growth,

increasing by 63% and are anticipated to surpass AED190 billion, since the establishment of the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology in 2020.

He highlighted the 'Operation 300 bn', which aims to develop the UAE's industrial sector and enhance its role in stimulating the national economy. "It has been a

game-changer in enhancing the in-country value and industrial production to ensure sustainable supply chains and self-sufficiency."

Other initiatives include "Make it in the Emirates" campaign, which represents an open invitation for local and international investors, innovators and developers to join the UAE on its journey of industrial

growth and serves as a reminder of the attractive value proposition of the UAE.

He highlighted the pivotal role of the 'Make it in the Emirates' Forum in driving sustainable economic growth. Across its first 3 editions, the forum successfully identified over 2,000 products with a value of AED143bn for local manufacturing. -WAM

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Tesla's Shanghai energy storage Megafactory begins trial production

SHANGHAI: US carmaker Tesla's Shanghai energy storage Megafactory has begun trial production, serving as a good example of cooperation between China and the United States to address climate challenges.

The new plant is dedicated to manufacturing Megapacks, Tesla's energy-storage batteries, with mass production expected to commence fully in the first quarter of 2025, Tesla China told Xinhua.

The facility was built with an initial annual production capacity of 10,000 units, equal to around 40 gigawatt-hours of energy storage, according to the company.

The project is Tesla's second plant in Shanghai, underscoring the US company's commitment to investing in the world's second-largest economy, its confidence in China's manufacturing capabilities, and the strengthened economic ties between the two countries in the new energy sector, Wu Qisheng, a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, told Xinhua.

Trial production was launched just seven months after construction began, setting a new record for "Tesla speed" in China, with the Shanghai Gigafactory -- Tesla's first plant in the country's eastern financial hub -- having been built and inaugurated within a year in 2019.

Covering an area of approximately 200,000 square meters, the new plant represents a total investment of about 145 billion yuan (about \$201.7 million), according to the administration of the Lin-gang Special Area of China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone.

The Megafactory is the first of its kind that Tesla has built outside the United States. At its launch ceremony in May, Tesla signed a deal with Shanghai Lingang Economic Development (Group) Co., Ltd., securing the first batch of orders for its Megapacks in China.

Lauding China's efforts to develop the new energy industry, including the energy storage sector, Tesla Vice President Tao Lin in May told Xinhua that the country offers a complete industrial chain, vast market potential, and a production and business environment crucial for enterprise growth.

As a global renewables powerhouse, China is a major market for energy storage. In 2023, its installed renewable energy capacity surpassed its thermal power capacity for the first time, accounting for approximately 50 percent of all additions to the global renewable energy capacity.

Tesla's energy storage technology has already achieved a high level of commercialization and market success in the United States, said Liu Qing, vice president of the China Institute of International Studies. There remains room for market-driven cooperation between China and the United States in addressing climate challenges, particularly in advancing energy storage and energy-saving technologies.

Wu Xinbo, head of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University, credited the rapid construction of Tesla's new factory to China's world-class infrastructure capabilities and the exceptional business environment offered by Shanghai and the broader Chinese market.

Tesla has not been alone in strengthening its commitment to the Chinese market this year. A record 52,379 foreign-invested companies were established in China in the first 11 months, an 8.9 percent increase from the previous year. In November, foreign direct investment in the Chinese mainland in actual use also saw a 6 percent year-on-year rise, data from the Ministry of Commerce shows.

In a bid to help foreign investors leverage its supply chain, market potential and innovation strengths, China has made significant strides in its opening-up.

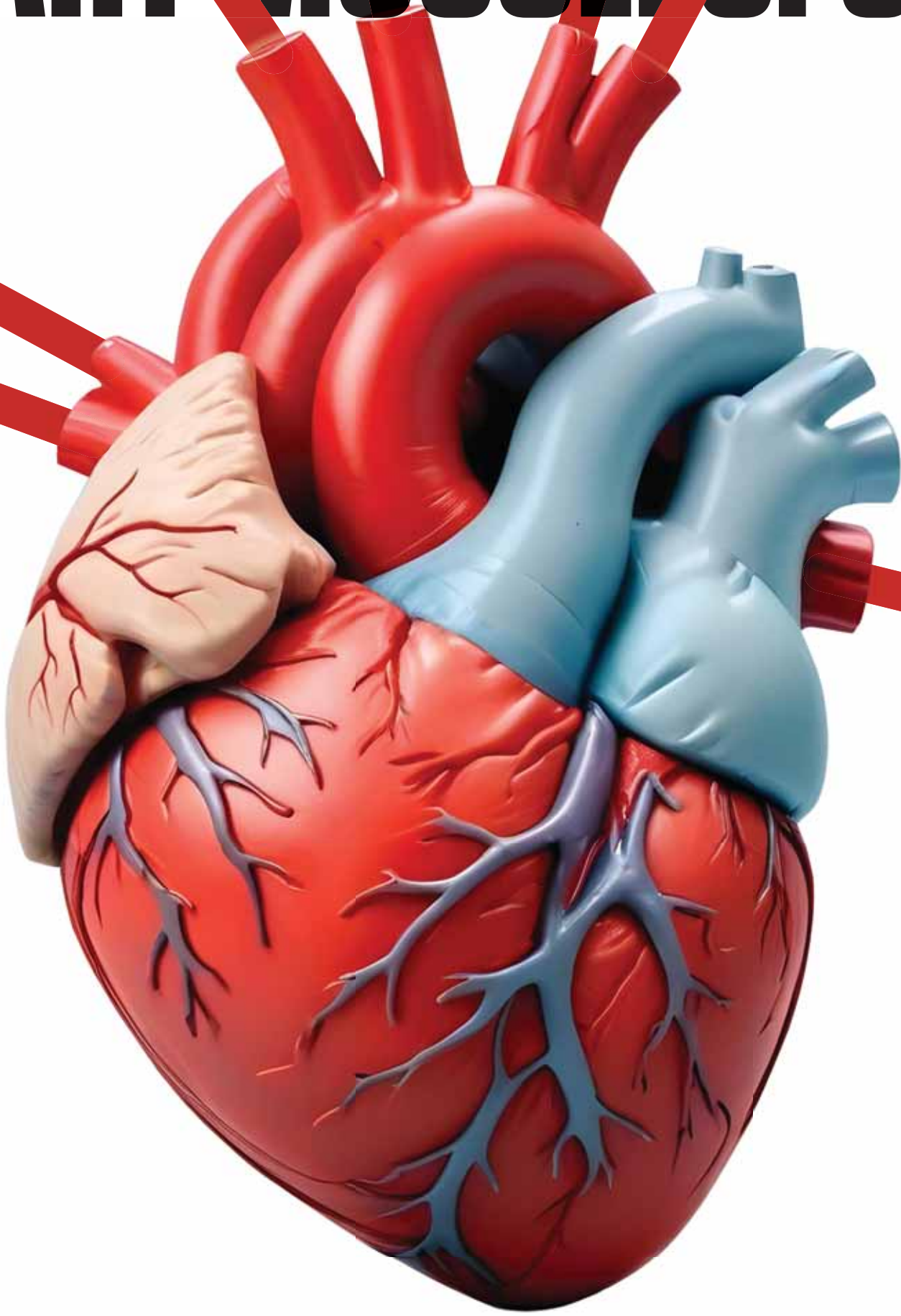
Throughout 2024, the Chinese government has rolled out a range of key measures to foster a more welcoming environment for global investors. These measures included expanding access to key industries and launching pilot programs to facilitate foreign investment.

A key move was the rollout of the 2024 national negative list for foreign investment, effective Nov. 1, which removed all market access restrictions for foreign investors in China's manufacturing industry. This unprecedented breakthrough overcame the final hurdles that global manufacturers face when entering a pillar industry in China. - Xinhua



LIFESTYLE

ARTIFICIAL HEART PATIENTS CAN REGENERATE HEART MUSCLES: STUDY



The investigators found that patients with artificial hearts regenerated muscle cells at more than six times the rate of healthy hearts

A research team at the University of Arizona College of Medicine--Tucson's Sarver Heart Center found that a subset of artificial heart patients can regenerate heart muscle, which opens the possibilities of new ways to treat and perhaps someday cure heart failure. The results of the research which was co-led by a physician-scientist were published in the journal *Circulation*. Comparing the repair of skeletal muscles to heart muscles, Hesham Sadek, MD, PhD, director of the Sarver Heart Center and chief of the Division of Cardiology at the University of Arizona College of Medicine -- Tucson's Department of Medicine said that

when a heart muscle doesn't grow back if it gets injured, "We have nothing to reverse heart muscle loss." Sadek led a collaboration between international experts to investigate whether heart muscles can regenerate. The study was funded through a grant by the Leducq Foundation Transatlantic Networks of Excellence Programme. The project began with tissue from artificial heart patients provided by colleagues at the University of Utah Health and School of Medicine led by Stavros Drakos, MD, PhD, a pioneer in left ventricular assist device-mediated recovery. Jonas Frisen, MD, PhD, and Olaf Bergmann, MD, PhD, of the Karolin-

ska Institute in Stockholm, led teams in Sweden and Germany and used their innovative method of carbon dating human heart tissue to track whether these samples contained newly generated cells. **Regeneration** The investigators found that patients with artificial hearts regenerated muscle cells at more than six times the rate of healthy hearts. "This is the strongest evidence we have, so far, that human heart muscle cells can actually regenerate, which really is exciting, because it solidifies the notion that there is an intrinsic capacity of the human heart to regenerate," Sadek said.

Earlier, Sadek published a paper in *Science* showing that while heart muscle cells actively divide in utero, they stop dividing shortly after birth to devote their energy to pumping blood through the body nonstop, with no time for breaks. In 2014, he published evidence of cell division in patients with artificial hearts, hinting that their heart muscle cells might have been regenerating. "The pump pushes blood into the aorta, bypassing the heart," he said. "The heart is essentially resting." Sadek's previous studies indicated that this rest might be beneficial for the heart muscle cells, but he needed to design an experiment to determine whether patients with artificial hearts

were actually regenerating muscles. "Irrefutable evidence of heart muscle regeneration has never been shown before in humans," he said. "This study provided direct evidence." However, Sadek wants to figure out why only 25 percent of patients responded to the regeneration of the muscle. "It's not clear why some patients respond and some don't, but it's very clear that the ones who respond have the ability to regenerate heart muscle," he wrote. Sadek believes that in future a mechanical heart will not be a therapy on which people will rely and with this study, he hopes to deliver regeneration of heart muscles in future. - **ANI**

Kenya’s Chebet smashes own women’s 5km world record

The runner crowned a golden year, having won 5,000m and 10,000m gold at the 2024 Paris Olympics

BARCELONA: Double Olympic champion Beatrice Chebet crowned a golden year as she smashed the women’s 5,000m world record at the Cursa dels Nassos road race in Barcelona on Wednesday.

The 24-year-old Kenyan finished the race in 13 minutes and 54 seconds to become the first woman to break the 14-minute barrier in the event.

Chebet, who won 5,000m and 10,000m gold at the Paris Olympics earlier this year, beat her



previous mark - set a year ago to the day in the same race - by 19 seconds.

“I’m super happy as everything went according to plan,” she said.

“I felt capable of running under 14 minutes and I managed to do so. Two races in Barcelona and two world records, can I ask for more?”



“My focus for next year is to win gold medals over 5,000m and 10,000m at the World Championships in Tokyo.”

Chebet was all on her own as she sprinted through the race and embraced friends at the finish line after adding yet another accolade to her name.

Alongside her Olympic suc-

cess in 2024, she also broke the 10,000m world record in Eugene in May, before claiming her second Diamond League title in the 5,000m in September. - Agencies

GO DOWN TO TOP SEEDS

Djokovic and Kyrgios lose in doubles at Brisbane event



BRISBANE: Novak Djokovic and Nick Kyrgios were knocked out of the men’s doubles in the second round at the Brisbane International after a narrow defeat by top-seeded pairing Nikola Pietrangeli and Michael Venus on Wednesday.

Kyrgios, 29, lost a three-set match to Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard on Sunday on his return to singles competition after 18 months out through injury.

The Australian said the defeat left him in “throbbing” pain and suggested he was a doubt for this month’s Australian Open.

But he fulfilled his promise to play alongside Djokovic in the doubles and appeared comfortable, only occasionally grabbing his right arm between serves.

The pair lost the first set 6-2 but responded well to win the second 6-3 to take the match to a deciding first-to-10-points tie-break.

With Djokovic and Kyrgios two points from victory, a double fault from the Serbian proved costly at 8-6. It shifted the momentum of the tie-break back towards Pietrangeli and Venus, who won the next three points to seal the win 6-2 3-6 10-8.

Djokovic, pursuing his 100th career ATP title, is through to the quarter-finals of the singles, where he will play France’s Gael Monfils. - Agencies

‘It seems surreal’: Wimbledon finalist Dabrowski reveals cancer surgery

LONDON: Wimbledon doubles finalist Gabriela Dabrowski has revealed she had breast cancer surgery earlier this year, undergoing further treatment while she challenged for the sport’s biggest prizes.

The 32-year-old Canadian, who is a three-time major champion, was diagnosed in April.

“It is a privilege to be able to call myself a survivor,” world number three Dabrowski wrote in an Instagram post.

After two surgeries and a three-month break from the WTA Tour, she returned to win the Nottingham grass-court title alongside New Zealand’s Erin Routliffe in her first tournament back.

Four weeks later, the pair reached the Wimbledon final where they lost to Katerina Siniakova and Taylor Townsend.

Dabrowski had delayed further treatment to be able to play at the All England Club and represent her nation in the



Paris Olympics, then underwent radiation therapy before the US Open in late August.

Despite dealing with fatigue as a result of the treatment, Dabrowski reached the quarter-finals in New York alongside Routliffe.

She also started hormone therapy before ending the season on the “highest note possible” by winning the WTA Finals title alongside Routliffe.

“It all seems surreal,” wrote Dabrowski, who said she was

sharing her story now to help other women facing similar treatment.

“If you saw me smiling more on court in the past six months, it was genuine.

“My cancer diagnosis was the catalyst for more sustained change.

“When the threat of losing everything I’d worked for my entire life became a real possibility, only then did I begin to authentically appreciate what I had.” - Agencies

WEST HAM CAPTAIN

Bowen sidelined with broken foot

LONDON: West Ham captain Jarrod Bowen is set for a spell on the sidelines after suffering a fractured left foot in Sunday’s Premier League game against Liverpool.

The 28-year-old England forward said he sustained the injury in the first half but tried to play on.

Bowen eventually limped off and was replaced by Crysencio Summerville after 60 minutes as West Ham fell to a 5-0 home defeat by the league leaders. “Unfortunately, in the first half of our game on Sunday I suffered a fracture to a bone in my foot,” he wrote on Instagram.

“As always I tried to fight on and continue playing until I physically couldn’t.”

“Injuries happen in football, but I’m already looking forward to getting back out there as soon as possible. See you all soon.”

Bowen is West Ham’s top scorer in the league this season with five goals and has four assists.

The club have given no time-scale for his return, but said the injury “will sideline the Hammers captain heading into the New Year”.

Bowen’s setback is a blow for under-pressure manager Julen Lopetegui, with the club 13th in the Premier League - eight points above the relegation zone. West Ham travel to Manchester City in the league on Saturday. - Agencies

DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL

West Ham’s striker Antonio ‘grateful for being alive’ after car accident

LONDON: West Ham striker Michail Antonio said that he is “grateful” to be alive after sustaining a broken leg in a car accident.

Antonio, 34, was discharged from hospital on Tuesday, more than three weeks after undergoing surgery on a lower limb fracture following the crash.

The Jamaica international needed to be released from his car after becoming trapped during the incident on 7 December in Epping, Essex, and was taken to a central London hospital.

“Every year around this time, I’m asked what I’m grateful for, and every year I’ve struggled to find the right words. But this year,



I know exactly what I’m grateful for: being alive,” Antonio wrote on Instagram. His social media post included a photograph of himself standing with crutches.

“I’ve spent so many years taking

life for granted. I made plans for the next day, the next year, always assuming tomorrow was guaranteed. I’ve seen close friends pass away, witnessed others face near-death experiences, and even then

I didn’t fully grasp just how precious life is,” Antonio said.

“What I’ve been through recently has opened my eyes. Life is fragile, and every single moment matters. I’m so grateful to God for giving me the strength to keep going and for allowing me to still be here.”

Antonio is West Ham’s all-time leading scorer in the Premier League, with 68 goals in 268 league appearances.

He added: “I’ll be back on that pitch soon.”

Antonio also thanked the emergency and medical services that have supported him since the accident, along with the “whole football community”. - Agencies

NEW YEAR HONOURS

Former England football manager Southgate awarded knighthood



LONDON: Former England football team manager Gareth Southgate has been awarded a knighthood in the New Year Honours list.

Southgate, 54, stepped down from the role in July after leading England to the final of Euro 2024.

England were beaten by Spain in their second consecutive European final under Southgate, who also guided the side to the 2018 World Cup semi-final during his eight-year tenure.

Southgate is the fourth England

manager to be knighted, following Sir Walter Winterbottom, Sir Alf Ramsey and Sir Bobby Robson.

FA chair Debbie Hewitt said Southgate had “embodied the best of English football”.

“He brought our fans closer than ever to the team, stood up for what he believed in and inspired players to share his pride in representing England,” she said.

“It has been a privilege to know the man and the manager. All of us who have experienced his thoughtfulness, dedication and leadership are delighted with this

wonderful news.”

Former Wales and British & Irish Lions winger Gerald Davies will also receive a knighthood.

The 79-year-old, who was president of the Welsh Rugby Union for four years up to 2023, has been honoured for services to the sport and to voluntary and charitable service in Wales.

“I feel very emotional about it. I am surprised by it. Words are really quite inadequate to describe it,” Davies told the PA news agency.

“It comes out of the blue. I was dumbstruck in many ways, but you

don’t achieve these things on your own.”

Olympic 800m champion Keely Hodgkinson, the BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2024, becomes an MBE.

“This year has been incredibly special for so many reasons and it’s such a nice surprise to have been honoured in this way,” Hodgkinson said. The 22-year-old is recognised alongside several Team GB colleagues after this summer’s Games in Paris, while numerous Paralympians are also awarded honours. - Agencies

People celebrate New Year across world

PERTH, AUSTRALIA



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