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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Omani Commercial Office opens in US

1 Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) inaugurated the Omani Commercial Office in the United States during a ceremony held at the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre in Washington, DC. >A3

OMAN

Oman, China explore academic cooperation

2 Dr. Fahd Al Jalanda Al Said, Vice Chancellor of SQU met with Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China. >A5

MARKET

Abraj signs contract to supply drilling rig

3 Abraj Energy Services has signed a contract with BP Oman to supply a drilling rig in Block 61 on Wednesday, with operations expected to commence in the fourth quarter of 2025. B1

FOREIGN MINISTRY

Oman welcomes US President's announcement to lift sanctions on Syria

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has welcomed the announcement of President Donald Trump of the United States of America regarding the lifting of US sanctions on the Syrian Arab Republic — a step that enables the Syrian government and people to achieve development and prosperity.

Promoting stability

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, Oman commended the efforts of all Arab and friendly countries in promoting stability, which supports the political and economic recovery of Syria. — ONA

GULF-US RELATIONS ARE LONG-TERM & STRATEGIC, SAYS SAYYID ASA'AD

On behalf of HM the Sultan, Sayyid Asa'ad attended Oman's delegation at Gulf-US Summit in Riyadh

RIYADH: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the Gulf-US Summit held in Riyadh yesterday.

In his speech during the summit, HH Sayyid Asa'ad conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and his best wishes for the success of the meeting.

The speech reads as follows:

"I am honoured to represent His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman, at this important Gulf-US summit. I am pleased to convey to you all His Majesty's greetings and his best wishes for the success of this meeting.

We hereby express our deep thanks and gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for their kind invitation to this summit.

We would also like to express our thanks and appreciation to the United States of America for its ardent and constructive partnership. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its hospitality and warm welcome.

We meet here yesterday at a historical moment, one that we hope it will help shape a better future for the Middle East and chart out a path of stability, prosperity and goodness for all. The Gulf-US relations are long-term and strategic that aim at establishing the foundations of security, stability and prosperity.

This partnership that binds us takes shape in our shared commitment to achieve integration and reciprocity in political, economic, technological and defence interests, besides cooperating to resolve regional and international crises and addressing challenges. In this context, we would like to express our profound concern about the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, the outcome of decades of illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. This ongoing injustice, coupled with the international community's inability to achieve a just peace, is at the heart of many regional challenges. Yet, a glimmer of hope still exists.

We have witnessed historic steps being made toward peace and stability. We would like to express our appreciation for President Donald Trump's constructive role in ending the conflict with Yemen and restoring safe navigation in the Red Sea. We hope that this achievement will pave the way for further success in the Yemeni issue, leading to a lasting peace and prosperity for this age-old Arab country. >A3

AT AL BURAIMI HOSPITAL

New Cardiac Care Unit inaugurated

AL BURAIMI: A new Cardiac Care Unit was inaugurated on Wednesday at Al Buraimi Hospital, marking another step in the Ministry of Health's efforts to develop specialised healthcare services and enhance medical infrastructure in line with community needs. The unit is staffed with qualified cardiac specialists and equipped with advanced medical devices, following internationally approved treatment protocols to ensure effective and safe care for both critical and chronic cardiac cases.

The opening ceremony, presided over by Dr. Said Harib Al Lamki, Ministry of Health's Undersecretary for Health Affairs, included an inspection tour of the facility.

Attendees reviewed the unit's emergency response systems and operational workflows designed to optimise cardiac emergency management.

Dr. Majid Rashid Al Maqbali, Director General of Health Services in Al Buraimi Governorate, stated: "This unit is a strategic addition to the governorate's healthcare network, reflecting our ongoing plans to upgrade specialized services with integrated, standards-compliant treatment environments." Dr. Aisha Rashid Al Maqbalia, Director of Al Buraimi Hospital, said: "The unit significantly elevates healthcare quality indicators in the governorate. Our teams have undergone intensive training to ensure operational readiness." — ONA

OMAN

Muscat Municipality highlights urban transformation initiatives

The Sultanate of Oman participated in the Arab European Cities Dialogue – Riyadh 2025 headed by Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Humaidi, the Chairman of Muscat Municipality

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the first edition of the Arab European Cities Dialogue Forum – Riyadh 2025 (AECD 2025), hosted by the Saudi capital, over three days from 11 to 13 May, under the theme "City Partnerships for a Better Future."

The Omani delegation included representatives from several governorates of the Sultanate and the Ministry of Interior, headed by His Excellency Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality.

The forum, the first of its kind, saw participation from more than 120 mayors, governors, and municipal leaders from major Arab and European cities, along with over fifty urban organisations, banking institutions, and development funds.

Oman's participation reflects its firm vision of the importance of strengthening international partnerships, drawing from best practices, and reinforcing the status of Omani cities as distinctive Arab urban identities that blend authenticity with sustainable development standards.

His Excellency emphasised that Oman's participation in the forum represents a continuation of its institutional commitment to international engagement, stating: "Participation in Arab European Cities Dialogue Forum 2025 reflects our commitment to building bridges of communication and knowledge, and to fostering cultural interaction to shape the future of our cities on the foundations of sustainability, innovation, and integration – aligned with the broader goal of humanising cities."

He further explained: "We convened at the discussion table with our brothers to shape a future grounded in experience and aspiring to greater brilliance, through smart approaches inspired by the realities of European cities. This opens new horizons linking policies with services and visions with execution, towards vibrant urban development that embraces best practices and draws on solutions that align with our authentic identity."

Oman's vision at the forefront

On the sidelines of Oman's participation, His Excellency the Chairman of Muscat Municipality took part in an open discussion session titled "Mayors' Meetings with the Arab Urban Development Institute 2025," which aimed to spotlight municipal experiences in the Arab world and the key challenges and opportunities in the regional urban landscape.

During the session, His Excellency delivered a detailed presentation of Muscat Municipality's vision and experience in urban development, focusing on a comprehensive three-pronged approach: identity, transformation, and challenge.

In the first approach, he highlighted Muscat's urban identity, affirming that it is not merely an architectural city, but one with a living spirit that embodies the convergence of history and modernity.

He showcased its strategic planning excellence that balances urban growth with environmental preservation and cultural heritage, which has made it a meeting point of civilisations and a pivotal commercial hub throughout the ages.

In the second approach, His Excellency addressed the major municipal transformations Muscat has undergone – from the early signs of municipal organisation in the 1920s, through the blessed Omani Renaissance under the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour, to the current manifestations of progress under the Renewed Renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik (may God protect him).

He noted that the Muscat Governorate and Muscat Municipality continue on a path aligned with the objectives of "Oman Vision 2040" and the National Urban Strategy, laying the groundwork for a prosperous, vibrant, and sustainable Muscat.

Highlighting the third approach, His Excellency discussed current urban challenges facing Muscat, including geological conditions, population density, the transportation system, and climate impacts. He explained that Muscat Municipality is adopting smart strategic solutions to address these challenges, such as enhancing flexible urban planning, expanding green cover, developing a sustainable mobility network, using advanced technologies, and fostering the concept of "urban awareness" through community awareness campaigns.

The Riyadh Municipality hosted AECD 2025 in partnership with the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI), Platforma, and the International Development Center for the Innovative Local Governance (CILG).

The forum included six main tracks: inter-city cooperation, climate change, digital transformation, financial sustainability, and a city leadership summit. It also featured a number of field visits to pioneering projects in the Saudi capital.

DHOFAR GOVERNORATE

Poachers arrested for illegal hunting

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA), has arrested a number of citizens for hunting wild birds and monitor lizards in Dhofar Governorate.

According to EA, East Thumrait Control Unit specialists, in coordination with the Royal Oman Police, were able to arrest a number of citizens for violating the Natural Reserves and Wildlife Conservation Law. The violations involved hunting wild birds and monitor lizards.

The Authority affirms that it will not tolerate any complacency in taking legal action against violators.

THREE-DAY EVENT

Conference to highlight role of museum and heritage institutions in tourism development

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The international conference titled "Museums and Their Role in Tourism Development" will launch on Sunday at the Oman Across Ages Museum.

The event will see the participation of over 42 researchers, academics, and experts from 21 countries. It will be held under the patronage of Salim bin Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and is organised by the Oman Across Ages Museum in cooperation with the National Records and Archives Authority and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

Spanning three days, the conference aims to highlight the role of museum and heritage institutions in tourism development and the preservation of cultural components.

It also seeks to promote museum-based tourism, the cultural economy, and associated investment opportunities.

Furthermore, it will address the educational and knowledge-based role of museums through academic partnerships and the integration of modern digital technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality to enrich visitor experiences. Another key goal is to foster the exchange of expertise both locally and internationally in this field.

Workshops and accompanying exhibition

The international conference will feature six specialised workshops as a core component to enhance the outcomes of the event.

These workshops will focus on key museum-related issues and provide a platform for interactive knowledge-sharing among participants.

Topics include digital technologies, museum management, community engagement, and cultural content development, bridging theoretical approaches with practical applications.

An accompanying exhibition will also take place, featuring contributions from both governmental and private institutions, alongside prominent researchers and academics.

The exhibition aims to showcase the cultural and economic dimensions of museums and to highlight their growing societal and tourism roles.

Promoting knowledge-based roles

Commenting on the significance of the event, Moza Al-Wardiyah, Assistant Director General for Museum Affairs, stated that the conference represents a strategic opportunity to spotlight museums as dynamic cultural and economic drivers.

She emphasised that Oman's hosting of such a distinguished group of specialists underscores the country's commitment to enhancing the intellectual and societal roles of museums.

This, she noted, supports sustainable development goals and strengthens national efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage through tourism. Al-Wardiyah added that the collaboration among organising entities reflects a spirit of institutional synergy and affirms the importance of leveraging culture and heritage as a sustainable economic resource that strengthens identity and enriches the visitor experience.

Royal orchestra to accompany the event

As part of the conference's side events, the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra will perform two musical evenings on Sunday and Monday.

The programme will include The Epic of Ahmed bin Majid, offering an artistic experience that celebrates Oman's maritime history and immortalises its civilizational legacy. This participation provides a valuable opportunity to experience the event in its historical and artistic dimensions, complementing the conference's cultural message through musical storytelling.

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GULF-US SUMMIT IN RIYADH

< FROM A1

'US has opened a practical path for real positive change'

It is encouraging to observe the realism and mutual respect that mark the ongoing dialogue between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran about the non-proliferation of nuclear arms. These efforts inspire confidence in the possibility of reaching a practical and sustainable agreement between the two sides, motivating us all to cooperate collectively to address other issues in the region.

The Trump administration's pursuit of a policy of strategic diplomacy – which favours dialogue and deal-making over escalation and confrontation – represents an exemplary approach that is highly welcomed by us. By engaging all parties and, by challenging outdated theories, the United States has opened a practical path for real positive change.

Comprehensive peace

We hereby reaffirm that it is impossible to achieve comprehensive peace, lasting security and the prosperity sought by all except through the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, enabling both Palestinians and Israelis to live in dignity, exercise sovereignty over their respective lands and build prosperous and dignified nations. Therefore, we look forward to the Trump administration's drive to resolve this long-standing conflict that weighed heavily our region for a long time."

Meanwhile, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also delivered a speech at the opening of the summit saying that "This summit is in pursuance of the historical relationship and strategic partnership between the GCC states and the United States of America."

He pointed out that this relationship continued to grow and developed over the past decades and it has become a model for joint cooperation. This, he added, reflects joint commitment to collective action to consolidate relations, expand and develop strategic partnerships in order to meet the common aspirations.

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed explained that the GCC states share the United States' belief in the importance of economic partnership and trade cooperation. He described the United States as a major trade and investment partner, as the volume of trade exchange between the two sides stood at about $120 billion in 2024.

"The future we aspire to establish through the Sustainable Development Goals requires a stable and secure environment. We are aware of the magnitude of the challenge facing our region. With Your Excellency, Mr. President, and, in cooperation with our brethren in the GCC states, we seek to de-escalate the confrontation in the region, end the war in Gaza and find a lasting and comprehensive settlement to the Palestinian cause in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant international resolutions in a manner that achieves security and safety for the peoples of the region," said His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

In his speech, US President Donald Trump said that the GCC states are among the most stable and prosperous nations and that the entire world is looking out for opportunities available in these countries, lauding their effective role in halting the escalation in Gaza and commending their endeavours to enhance prospects for peace in the region.

In his speech, Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, commended the Sultanate of Oman's diplomatic efforts that gave rise to a ceasefire agreement between the United States and Yemen. He pointed out that this step will contribute to ensuring freedom of navigation and the smooth flow of international commercial shipping.

Sheikh Mishal added, "The GCC states believe that regional stability is a shared responsibility. Partnership with the United States represents a cornerstone in this process. We hope that this summit will be a step forward in building a more stable, balanced and integrated regional system based on international law, mutual respect, and shared interests."

HH Sheikh Mishal expressed the hope that the summit would provide a gateway for addressing the region's concerns and for highlighting the need to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause. He also hoped that the summit would bolster the international community's efforts to ensure security and stability in Syria, preserve the Arab republic's sovereignty and territorial integrity, end the suffering of its people and halt foreign interference in its affairs.

In his speech, King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain, expressed his aspiration for the realization of further cooperation to establish a safe, stable and prosperous zone that comprises all countries of the region.

King Hamad said that this wise political approach represents a unique opportunity for us all to move together toward achieving a just and lasting peace that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people through a Two-State Solution, preserves regional security and stability, and contributes to making the region free of weapons of mass destruction.

In his speech, Jassim Mohamed Al Budaiwi, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), said the Gulf-US partnership—based on solid grounds, supported by figures and facts—paves the way for a future phase of close cooperation in all areas of common interest.

Al Budaiwi noted that the GCC states continue to lead in traditional energy markets and are moving forward with partnerships with the United States in the field of clean energy. He expressed the GCC's hope for the success of international efforts to achieve a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and establish an environment that ensures security and stability for the Palestinian people.

The summit dealt with means of consolidating the strategic partnership and economic investment between the GCC states and the United States, notably in the fields of technology and artificial intelligence (AI). It also covered current regional and international issues of significance to security and stability in the region. — ONA

Sayyid Asa'ad returns home after Gulf-US Summit

MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan returned back to the Sultanate of Oman from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), after heading Oman's delegation in the Gulf-US Summit. The summit held between the GCC countries and the United States took place in Riyadh.

HH Sayyid Asa'ad was accompanied by an official delegation comprising several ministers and undersecretaries. -ONA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Interactive English language textbook project launched

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education yesterday launched the Interactive English Language Textbook Project for grades one to six, under the patronage of Dr. Abdullah Khamis Ambusaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Education for Education.

The launch ceremony highlighted the project's objectives and implementation mechanism, featuring an introductory video on the interactive English textbooks' content.

The materials include interactive activities, games, digital assessments, and audiovisual resources designed to make learning more engaging. This was followed by a video showcasing feedback and real-life experiences from teachers, students, and parents regarding the new textbooks.

The Undersecretary stated: "The launch of the Interactive English Textbook Project reflects the Ministry's commitment to enhancing English language instruction. Starting with grades one to six in collaboration with the implementation company, these books incorporate interactive elements such as dialogues and audio exercises to boost student engagement.

This initiative aims to improve learning outcomes, helping students grasp English language concepts and skills effectively. The Ministry will continue expanding the project to cover grades seven and eight, eventually extending it through grade twelve." — ONA

Omani Commercial Office in United States inaugurated

The office aims to support Omani exports to the US market

WASHINGTON: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) inaugurated the Omani Commercial Office in the United States during a ceremony held at the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre in Washington, DC, under the patronage of Talal Sulaiman Al Rahbi, Oman's Ambassador to the United States.

The office aims to support Omani exports to the US market, enhance imports of high-quality American goods, attract US investments to Oman, and enable Omani companies to expand into American markets while fostering trade partnerships.

Additionally, the office will play a pivotal role in coordinating trade delegations, organizing business meetings, and providing advisory services on leveraging the US-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

It will also supply economic reports to aid decision-making in Omani exports and mutual investments.

Faisal Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of OCCI's Board of Directors, stated that the opening of the office marks a strategic step in empowering Oman's private sector and strengthening its presence in global markets.

He emphasised that the move aligns with OCCI's efforts to broaden trade and investment horizons while establishing direct channels with major global economies.

Al Rowas added that the office is expected to boost Omani exports, attract high-value investments, and serve as an effective platform for business engagement between the two nations. It will also facilitate access to regulatory information for Omani products entering the US market, supporting private sector growth and sustainable economic development.

He noted that the office will act as a knowledge hub, offering practical solutions to sustain Omani and American businesses while fostering international partnerships. This initiative aligns with Oman Vision 2040 goals to diversify the economy and enhance global economic integration.

Ibtisam Ahmed Al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, highlighted that the office reflects Oman's strategic focus on increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and their contribution to the national economy.

She stressed that the office will provide American companies greater access to Oman's competitive business environment, noting that it is part of Oman's broader plan to expand its overseas representation in key markets. The U.S. market, she added, is vital for Oman, particularly under the FTA, which offers trade facilitations and investment opportunities.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Talal Al Rahbi described the office as a milestone in Oman-U.S. trade relations, rooted in a 200-year history of cooperation. He emphasised its role in economic diplomacy and expanding Oman's global trade network, calling it a direct bridge for business communities in both countries—especially in sectors like industry, technology, and clean energy.

Ana Escrogima, US Ambassador to Oman, affirmed that the office underscores the advanced economic ties between the two nations. She described it as a new economic bridge offering mutual benefits and enhancing private sector competitiveness.

Saud Ahmed Al Nahari, OCCI Board Member, stated that the office will help Omani companies navigate the U.S. market through tailored support, joint economic events, and data-driven insights.

Zakariya Abdullah Al Saadi, OCCI's CEO, said that the office institutionalises Oman's external economic outreach, improving export competitiveness in dynamic markets.

Meanwhile, Amy Hahn, Director of the Omani Commercial Office in the US, outlined its digital platform as an integrated hub offering analytics, reliable data, and sector-specific resources. The office will also launch two strategic programs: a Business Assistance Programme for specialised consultations and a Business Accelerator Programme for targeted entrepreneurs over the next two years. — ONA

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FROM 20-22 MAY 2025

First Governorates' Ambassadors Forum to be held in Muscat

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Secretariat General of the Tender Board, the Governorate of Muscat will host the first Governates' Ambassadors Forum during 20-22 May 2025.

The event aims to strengthen institutional integration and exchange expertise among various government entities.

The forum will bring together specialists and professionals in project management and administrative governance from the offices of the Governors across the Sultanate of Oman.

The forum seeks to establish effective communication channels between stakeholders, share best practices in contracts, tenders, and project management, and support balanced development. It also aims to enhance governmental coordination at the governorate level while showcasing key projects implemented in Muscat.

The agenda includes an official opening ceremony, followed by specialised sessions and workshops. On the second day, participants will conduct a field visit to observe vital projects in Muscat, bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application.

The forum will conclude on its third day with the presentation of working papers by experts from Muscat Governorate and the Secretariat General of the Tender Board. This event serves as an opportunity to enhance local capacities and refine operational tools within the governors' offices, aligning with Oman's decentralization strategy to empower governorates with broader mandates. It also contributes to balanced and sustainable development across all regions.

It is worth mentioning that this is the first forum of its kind organized by the Secretariat General of the Tender Board in partnership with the governorates. It is set to be held periodically, rotating among different governorates, to standardise practices and improve institutional frameworks in contracts and tenders.

The forum reflects Oman's governance approach, reinforcing transparency and national collaboration to enhance government efficiency across Oman. — ONA

Oman, China discuss avenues for academic, scientific collaboration

The Vice Chancellor emphasised SQU's pivotal role in educating and preparing future leaders across various fields

Muscat: Dr. Fahd Al Jalanda Al Said, Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), on Wednesday met with Xiao Jie, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China.

The meeting aimed to discuss avenues for academic and scientific collaboration between the Sultanate of Oman and the People's Republic of China.

The Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University emphasised SQU's pivotal role in educating and preparing future leaders across various fields.

He highlighted existing cooperation agreements between SQU and Chinese academic institutions, particularly last year's agreement to teach the Chinese language at SQU's College of Arts and Social Sciences.

The Vice Chancellor also noted the scholarships offered for study in the People's Republic of China and student exchange programmes between SQU and several Chinese universities.

Xiao Jie, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China commended SQU's national achievements and referenced the Sultan Qaboos Chair for Arabic Language Studies at Peking University, established in 2007 as a cultural bridge between the two nations.

The Chair supports research on Omani-Chinese relations, Arabic-Chinese translations, the dissemination of distinguished academic content, and student activities that strengthen scientific and cultural cooperation. — ONA

TWO-DAY EVENT

Ways to transform waste from environmental burden to promising economic resource explored

MUSCAT: A workshop titled "Environmental Sustainability in Managing Construction and Demolition Waste: Challenges and Opportunities in Oman" kicked off on Wednesday in Muscat.

The two-day event explores ways to transform waste from an environmental burden into a promising economic resource within the circular economy framework.

The event was held under the patronage of Sayyid Khalifa bin Al Mardas Al Busaidi, Secretary-General at the Ministry of Interior.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Mohammed Saif Al Kalbani, Director General of Environmental Affairs at the Environment Authority, highlighted the current state of construction and demolition waste management in Oman, the existing challenges, and the exchange of expertise among stakeholders.

He emphasised that Oman has placed significant importance on environmental protection and the preservation of natural resources as a cornerstone of its comprehensive development strategy across all stages. This commitment is reflected in making "Sustainable Environment" and the prioritisation of natural resources one of the pillars of Oman Vision 2040.

Al Kalbani noted that the waste sector in Oman is a vital field requiring continuous coordination and innovation from all relevant parties. The Environment Authority is working closely with government and private entities to develop legislative and regulatory frameworks for sustainable and efficient waste management, he pointed out.

The workshop, held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center, addresses major challenges and investment opportunities in maximizing the sector's potential. It also reviews best regional and international practices applicable in Oman and explores ways to strengthen public-private partnerships in advancing recycling and treatment technologies.

Discussions focus on integrating roles between government entities and private companies to establish a comprehensive national waste management system under a strategic vision that ensures environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

The workshop also seeks to develop a clear institutional and regulatory framework for managing construction and demolition waste through binding legislation, technical standards, economic incentives for the private sector, and enhanced monitoring systems to ensure effective implementation.

Organised by the Environment Authority in cooperation with Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah) and other stakeholders, the workshop brings together government agencies, academic institutions, research centers, regional and international organisations, private sector companies, and civil society groups. This aligns with ongoing efforts to achieve the strategic objectives of environmental and natural resource priorities under Oman Vision 2040.

Specialists, decision-makers, and experts from government bodies, the private sector, academia, and research institutions are participating in the workshop. Key topics include the current legislative and regulatory framework and associated challenges, the environmental and economic impacts of uncontrolled construction and demolition waste disposal, and regional and international experiences in waste treatment and recycling. — ONA

SHABAB OMAN II DOCKS AT JEDDAH PORT

The Royal Navy of Oman's (RNO) vessel Shabab Oman II docked today at Jeddah Islamic Port in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as part of its seventh international voyage (Glories of the Seas) on route to Europe. The vessel will make stops at several ports and destinations throughout its journey. — ONA

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OMAN

National E-Commerce Plan reaches 73% completion in Oman

Oman issued 9,232 e-commerce licenses and certified 204 stores on the Maroof Oman platform post-Ministerial Decision (499/2023) on regulating e-commerce

MUSCAT: The Supervisory Committee for the National E-Commerce Plan convened its first meeting of 2025 at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion headquarters to review progress on the plan's initiatives.

Chaired by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, the meeting included representatives from government entities such as the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), Royal Oman Police (ROP), Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Central Bank of Oman (CBO), Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and Consumer Protection Authority.

Dr. Saleh Said Masan, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion's Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry, emphasised the meeting's role in evaluating the plan's implementation, with 73% completion (22 of 30 initiatives) achieved by the end of 2024.

The Undersecretary added that the plan focuses on: Supporting e-commerce firms with competitive telecom services; Streamlining e-procurement and business procedures; Enhancing logistics, digital payments, and legal frameworks and raising awareness and skills development.

He noted that global e-retail sales reached $6 trillion in 2024, reflecting the sector's rapid growth. Locally, Oman issued 9,232 e-commerce licenses and certified 204 stores on the Maroof Oman platform post-Ministerial Decision (499/2023) on regulating e-commerce.

Azza Ibrahim Al Kindi, the Ministry's E-Commerce Director, said that these milestones demonstrate accelerated sectoral growth and compliance awareness.

The plan—aligned with Oman Vision 2040 and developed with the UNCTAD—aims to position Oman as a regional e-commerce hub by 2027 through strategic digital transformation. — ONA

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AL AHD NEIGHBOURHOOD

Sales launched for integrated model residential project

MUSCAT: Al Madina Real Estate Company has launched Phase 1 sales in Al Salam Square of the Al Ahd Neighbourhood project in Al Amerat, marking the first fully serviced residential community in Al Amerat.

Developed in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning under the "Surouh" initiative, the project offers 1,065 residential units, including standalone, semi-attached, and townhouse villas, as well as apartments designed to meet modern Omani family lifestyles. Eligible citizens will benefit from subsidised pricing.

The Al Ahd Neighbourhood initiative aims to provide ready-to-occupy housing solutions at affordable prices, reducing waitlists through this innovative model.

Eng. Abdulrahman Awadh Barham, CEO of Al Madina Real Estate, stated that the 450,000sqm project—with a total cost of OMR50 million represents a public-private partnership delivering an exceptional living experience in a community with premium services. In a statement to ONA, Eng. Abdulrahman Awadh Barham noted the neighborhood includes essential amenities, commercial spaces, and recreational facilities across three phases: Al Salam, Al Rukha, and Al Izdihar Squares.

Sami Said Al Nabhani, Business Development Director at Al Madina Real Estate, confirmed sales have begun for 74 villas in Al Salam Square, with prices starting at OMR52,000 via direct purchase (interest-free) and flexible payment plans. Financing solutions with local banks are underway.

Phase 1 offers 12 standalone villas, 22 twin villas, and 40 townhouses (188–350 sqm).

— ONA

AL WUSTA GOVERNORATE

New Mahout Hospital 90% complete

MAHOUT: Construction work at the new Mahout Hospital in Al Wusta Governorate is progressing rapidly, aiming for completion by the end of this year. The facility will provide primary and secondary healthcare services to residents of Mahout and neighbouring wilayats, with construction already 90% complete.

Eng. Yousuf Yaqoub Amboali, Director General of Projects and Engineering Services at the Ministry of Health, stated that work on the new Mahout Hospital is advancing smoothly. The project, spanning over 15,000 square metres, has achieved 90% completion and incorporates modern specifications in line with international standards to ensure a unique and contemporary design.

He added that the hospital will feature 54 beds and is being built on a 200,000-square-metre plot. Upon completion, it will enhance primary and secondary healthcare services for the local population and nearby villages, serving approximately 2,000 residents.

He noted that the hospital will include outpatient clinics, an emergency department, operating theaters, a maternity ward, medical laboratories, a radiology unit, inpatient wards, an intensive care unit (ICU), a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), a dialysis unit, and a services building. Additionally, the facility will be equipped with full electrical, mechanical, and air-conditioning systems, computer networks, and all necessary support services.

It is worth noting that Mahout Hospital will provide essential healthcare services to citizens and residents, saving time and reducing the need to transfer patients outside the governorate. — ONA

PUIC CONFERENCE

Council of Oman participates in Jakarta forum

JAKARTA: The Council of Oman took part in the 19th session of the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member States (PUIC), held in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday.

Oman's delegation was headed by Khalid Hilal Al Ma'awali, Chairman of the Shura Council.

In his speech at the opening of the session, Al Ma'awali lauded the theme of the conference titled "PUIC Silver Jubilee – Good Governance and Strong Institutions as Pillars of Resilience".

This theme, Al Ma'awali said, "matches our aspirations and affirms that the progress of nations can only be built on the principles of justice, integrity and transparency. He also laid emphasis on the concept of good governance which, he observed, has become a cornerstone for progress, noting that societies are not measured by their natural resources alone, but also by their wise management of those resources through efficient and independent institutions that enjoy the confidence of society."

He stressed that parliaments play a significant role in consolidating the values of justice, integrity and transparency, since parliaments are the bodies that enact laws and legislation and regulate concepts of transparency and reform.

Al Ma'awali pointed out that Oman's experience in promoting good governance has always been the centre of attention when devising future plans. Through Oman Vision 2040, the government paid great attention to the principle of governance, recognising its significance in promoting comprehensive national development. — ONA

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

WTO Roundtable highlights Oman's role in supporting multilateral trade integration

MUSCAT: The 13th World Trade Organisation (WTO) Accessions Roundtable concluded its sessions by underscoring Oman's pivotal role in advancing the organisation's mission and the technical support it has provided to facilitate the accession of several countries.

Held in Muscat, the meeting emphasised the Arab region's growing presence in the global economic landscape by addressing key issues related to WTO accession. As one of the foremost international forums, the roundtable shed light on the challenges and opportunities tied to integration into the multilateral trading system.

In statements to Oman News Agency (ONA), officials and experts highlighted the WTO's role in strengthening member economies and fostering an attractive environment for trade and investment. They reviewed Oman's successful 25-year journey within the organisation, noting its active role in technical coordination and sustained support among member states, which has helped drive investment-friendly policies.

They emphasised that Oman's hosting of this international event reflects its unwavering support for global cooperation efforts, reinforcing its position as a key platform for economic dialogue at regional and international levels. The discussions also underscored the importance of Arab economic integration, investment promotion, and the growing need for fair and inclusive trade mechanisms that align with aspirations for sustainable growth and balanced partnerships.

Dr. Saleh Said Masn, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Investment, stated that the 13th WTO Roundtable's significance lies in fostering constructive dialogue and cooperation within the multilateral trading system. He noted that the roundtable served as a platform for exchanging views and experiences among WTO members, particularly as Oman has worked in recent years to modernize its legislative framework and business environment in line with WTO standards.

Masn stressed that Oman has not merely joined the WTO but has been an active contributor to its development, providing technical support to several countries—especially Arab states—in their accession efforts.

He added that Muscat's hosting of the event coincides with the 25th anniversary of Oman's WTO membership, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening its role in the organisation, advancing global trade integration, and supporting Arab nations' accession to the international trading system.

Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, emphasised that WTO accession is a strategic milestone that opens broad horizons for growth and investment while enhancing competitiveness. He stressed the importance of fostering a more transparent and fair trade environment, enabling developing and emerging economies to actively participate in global markets and strengthen international partnerships.

He noted that public-private partnerships play a central role in achieving sustainable economic development, with the exchange of best practices and success stories helping aspiring nations overcome challenges and accelerate trade and economic reforms. He highlighted Oman's longstanding role in regional and international trade, leveraging its strategic geographic location and open economic policies.

Meanwhile, Pankaj Khimji, Advisor for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, stated that Oman's WTO accession was a strategic milestone, enabling the nation to achieve numerous objectives, capitalize on opportunities, and enhance its economic standing.

He pointed out that Oman's investment environment has seen remarkable growth over the past 25 years since joining the WTO, with investments now exceeding $30 billion. These investments span diverse sectors, including food, logistics, oil and gas, and other areas that attract global capital.

He affirmed that Oman has signed multiple free trade agreements, creating an attractive and conducive investment environment backed by incentives and facilitations. The establishment of integrated industrial and free zones has also been instrumental in attracting investors across economic sectors, particularly in promising industries that bolster Oman's regional and international standing.

For her part, Hilda Ali Al Hinai, Secretary-General of the Arab-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Geneva, emphasized Oman's vital role within the WTO, noting that its accession was a strategic step that supported the multilateral trading system and fostered a transparent, open investment climate.

She explained that Oman's active presence in the organisation reflects its ambitious economic vision and commitment to expanding global trade relations, aligning with its plans for economic diversification and sustainable development.

Faisal Ali Al Hinai, Deputy Head of Oman's Mission to the WTO, highlighted the roundtable's importance as a high-level annual platform bringing together WTO members and aspiring nations. He noted Oman's initiatives in promoting Arab and international cooperation under the WTO's umbrella, solidifying its position as a hub for economic dialogue and trade diplomacy.

Yan Dong, Vice Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, praised Oman's prominent role in the WTO, stating that the roundtable's convening in Muscat—coinciding with Oman's 25th accession anniversary—offered a unique opportunity to discuss accelerating other nations' WTO integration.

He commended Oman's rapid economic growth and sustained development, stressing the importance of trade flows and multilateral principles in enhancing global economic stability. China, he affirmed, stands ready to collaborate with all WTO members to safeguard and advance this system, contributing to global economic stability and shared development.

Ambassador Xiangchen Zhang, WTO Deputy Director-General, lauded Oman's active contributions to the organization, noting that its 25th accession anniversary marks an important occasion to reflect on achievements and future prospects.

He announced that the event compared Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members' economic visions and launched a joint Arab study highlighting best practices in completed and ongoing accessions. He also praised Oman's leadership in advancing economic diplomacy and regional prosperity.

He emphasised the importance of expanding WTO membership to strengthen global trade ties, commending Oman's contributions to economic integration and constructive collective action.

He concluded by stressing the value of knowledge-sharing among members and welcoming Oman's hosting of such collaborative forums. — ONA

Trump to lift all curbs against Syria

Trump said the decision came after discussions with both Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

RIYADH : US President Donald Trump on Tuesday declared his intention to lift longstanding American sanctions on Syria, following the fall of the Assad regime late last year, CNN reported.

Speaking at the Saudi-US Investment Forum 2025, Trump said the move would "give them a chance at greatness," and framed it as a step toward peace and progress in a war-torn country.

Trump said the decision came after discussions with both Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"Syria, they've had their share of travesty, war, killing in many years," he said, adding that his administration had already begun taking steps to restore normal diplomatic relations with Syria. He emphasised this would mark the first such effort by the US in over a decade.

As part of this process, Trump noted that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to meet Syria's foreign minister in Turkey "later this week," further advancing the thaw between the two nations, reported CNN.

The Assad regime, which collapsed during the final phase of the Biden administration in December, had long been under intense international sanctions. Trump suggested the time had come to turn the page.

"The sanctions were brutal and crippling and served as an important -- really an important function -- nevertheless, at the time," Trump stated. "But now it's their time to shine. So I say, 'Good luck, Syria.' Show us something very special."

Trump expressed optimism that the country's new leadership "will hopefully succeed in stabilising the country in keeping peace," suggesting the US is ready to support Syria's transition, CNN reported.

Syria's new President Ahmad al-Sharaa, once the founder of the militant group Jabhat al-Nusra, broke ties with al-Qaeda in 2016, according to the US Centre for Naval Analyses.

A White House official confirmed that Trump is expected to informally greet al-Sharaa in Riyadh on Wednesday, signalling further engagement between Washington and Damascus.

US President Donald Trump began his Middle East visit on May 13, which includes Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. -ANI

'My administration brokered historic ceasefire'

RIYADH: US President Donald Trump while participating in the US-Saudi Investment Forum took credit for the cessation of tensions between India and Pakistan.

Trump said that he used trade to a large extent to reach the agreement.

"Just days ago my administration brokered an historic cease-fire to stop the escalating violence between India and Pakistan and I used trade to a large extent to do it. I said, fellas, come on, let's make a deal, let's do some trading, let's not trade nuclear missiles, let's trade the things that you make so beautifully, and they both have very powerful leaders, very strong leaders, smart leaders, and it all stopped," he said.

Trump further hoped that the cessation of hostilities remain and credited US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and US Vice President JD Vance for it.

"Hopefully it will remain that way but it all stopped. I was very proud of Marco Rubio and all of the people that worked so hard. Marco, what a great job you did on that. Thank you, JD Vance," he said.

Trump further offered that both sides, India and Pakistan have a 'nice dinner' together as a mark of them getting back together.

"The whole group worked with you but there's a great job. They are actually getting along. Maybe we can even get them together a little bit, where they go out and have a nice dinner together. Wouldn't that be nice? We've come a long way," he said.

Trump added that millions could have died in the conflict that 'started off small'.-ANI

'BHARGAVASTRA'

India's homemade counter swarm drone test fired

NEW DELHI : A new low-cost Counter Drone System in Hard Kill Mode 'Bhargavastra', has been designed and developed by Solar Defence and Aerospace Limited (SDAL) signifying a substantial leap in countering the escalating threat of drone swarms.

The micro rockets used in this counter-drone system underwent rigorous testing at Gopalpur achieving all designated objectives.

Three trials were conducted for the rocket at Gopalpur on May 13 in presence of senior officials of Army Air Defence (AAD). Two trials were conducted by firing one rocket each. One trial was conducted by firing two rockets in salvo mode within 2 seconds. All four rockets performed as expected and achieved the required launch parameters underscoring its pioneering technology in mitigating large-scale drone attacks.

A Unified Solution for Countering Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Threats: 'Bhargavastra' boasts of advanced capabilities for detecting and eliminating small, incoming drones at distances of upto 2.5 km. It employs unguided micro rockets as the first layer of defence capable of neutralising swarm of drones with lethal radius of 20 meters and guided micro-missile (already tested earlier) as the second layer for pin point accuracy, ensuring precise and impactful neutralisation.

Designed for seamless deployment across diverse terrains, including high-altitude regions (> 5,000 m above sea level), the system addresses the unique operational demands of India's armed forces. -ANI

POTENTIAL DEPLOYMENT

President Macron open to deploying French nuclear weapons in Europe

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday that he was open to discussing the potential deployment of his country's nuclear weapons elsewhere in Europe.

The comments came in an interview with French broadcaster TF1 on Tuesday evening.

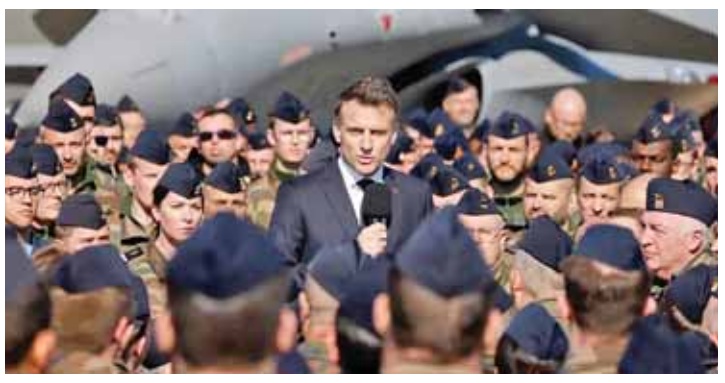
Macron noted that the United States already stations nuclear-armed aircraft in Europe.

"The Americans have the bombs on planes in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Turkey," Macron said. "We are ready to open this discussion."

"I will define the framework in a very specific way in the weeks and months to come," he said.

Macron lists conditions for sharing France's nuclear umbrella

In the interview, Macron made clear that any expansion of France's nuclear deterrence to other European countries would be subject to conditions.



France, the European Union's only nuclear power, wouldn't pay for the security of others, and its own defense capabilities must remain fully intact, he stressed.

Ultimate control over the use of the weapons would also remain solely with the French president, Macron said.

France held around 280 nuclear warheads in 2024, according to figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Its military has the power to launch these independently from its own submarines or use jets to drop them from the sky.

Britain also has nuclear weapons, some 225 of which are stockpiled. But the country's Trident nuclear submarine program is closely linked to the US system and relies on the US for maintenance.

This raises "concerns about [Trident's] independence," according to UK think tank Chatham House. Poland, Denmark and Lithuania have said in the past months that they were open to such a possibility.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said in March that Poland was "talking seriously" with France about being protected by French nuclear weapons.

Interest in Eastern Europe is closely linked to fears of further Russian aggression following its invasion of Ukraine, but Macron was careful not to drive up tensions with Moscow.

In his Tuesday interview, he also said that France didn't want to unleash "World War III" over Russia's war in Ukraine.

"We must help Ukraine defend itself but we do not want to unleash a Third World War," Macron said.

"The war must cease and Ukraine must be in the best possible situation to go into negotiations," he added. -DW

28 MINISTERS

Canadian PM Mark Carney unveils 38-member cabinet

OTTAWA : Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Tuesday unveiled a 38-member cabinet, comprising 28 ministers and 10 Secretaries of State.

The Cabinet is also supported by 10 Secretaries of State who will provide dedicated leadership on key issues and priorities within their minister's portfolio.

Following the unveiling of the new Cabinet, Carney outlined the government's top priorities -- creating new economic and security relationships with the United States, tackling the cost of living, and strengthening Canada's economy. Carney wrote, "Canada, meet your new Cabinet. This is a team that is empowered and expected to lead. Together, we will create a new economic and security relationship with the United States and build a stronger economy -- the strongest economy in the G7."

In another post, he wrote, "Canadians elected this new government with a strong mandate: to define a new economic and security relationship with the United States, bring down the cost of living, and build a stronger economy. This new cabinet is focused, ready, and built for this moment."

One of the key faces of the newly unveiled cabinet includes Indian-origin Anita Anand, who has been appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The cabinet includes Shafqat Ali, President of the Treasury Board; Rebecca Alty, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations; Anita Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety; Francois-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Finance and National Revenue; Rebecca Chartrand, Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency; Julie Dabrusin, Minister of Environment and Climate Change; Sean Fraser, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada; Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Transport and Internal Trade; Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages; Mandy Gull-Masty, Minister of Indigenous Services; Patty Hajdu, Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario; Tim Hodgson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources; Melanie Joly, Minister of Industry; Dominic LeBlanc, Minister responsible for Canada-US Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy.

The cabinet also includes Joel Lightbound, Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement; Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food; Steven MacKinnon, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons; David J. McGuinty, Minister of National Defence; Jill McKnight, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence; Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; Marjorie Michel, Minister of Health. -ANI

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

'Awami League activities banned to protect security of Bangladesh

DHAKA : Bangladesh has banned Awami League, the oldest and one of the largest political parties of the country, to protect the national security and sovereignty, Press Secretary to the Chief Adviser said late on Tuesday.

"We have witnessed how Awami League completely destroyed our democratic fabric, severely squeezed our political space and compromised our sovereignty during its 15-year-long tyrannical and kleptocratic rule. The wounds caused by the crimes against humanity perpetrated by this party are still fresh," Shafiqul Alam, Press Secretary to the Chief Adviser, told the reporters, responding to India's comments on banning Awami League activities.

"I have already said that the ban on activities of this party is necessary to protect national security and sovereignty, ensure the safety of July Movement activists, and safeguard plaintiffs and witnesses of the International Crimes Tribunal", he added.

"As for elections, we recall how the Awami League repeatedly resorted to grossly farcical elections and caused irreparable damage to our electoral processes and institutions. We are engaged in a reform process to rebuild our democratic system", Alam said.

"Elections are entirely our internal matter. We urge all to respect the sovereign will of our people in matters relating to elections", he said.

Earlier on the day, India's Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, expressed concern over the ban on Awami League activities.

"The ban on the Awami League without due process is a concerning development. As a democracy, India is naturally concerned at curtailment of democratic freedoms and shrinking political space", Jaiswal said.

"We strongly support the early holding of free, fair and inclusive elections in Bangladesh", India's spokesperson added.

The United States also opposed the ban on Awami League activities. "We are aware that the interim government has banned the Awami League from all political activities until a special tribunal for the party and its leaders concludes. We do not support any one political party in Bangladesh over another," said Thomas Pigott, Principal Deputy Spokesperson, to the U.S. Department of State.

"We support a free and democratic process as well as fair and transparent legal processes for all individuals. We urge all countries, including Bangladesh, to respect the freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association for all," Pigott told the reporters, replying to a question during the Department Press Briefing on May 13, 2025.

Notably, the Bangladesh interim government on Saturday took a decision to ban all activities of the Awami League, including in cyberspace, under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the President of Awami League, was ousted from power in a student-led uprising on August last year. Hasina fled to India. An interim government led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus was formed. -ANI

SPORTS

Oman to host first-ever World Sailing Inclusion Championships

More than 200 sailors from around the world, along with coaches and support teams, are expected to gather in Mussanah for this historic regatta from 30 November to 8 December, 2025

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Sail has been officially selected to host the inaugural World Sailing Inclusion Championships, a landmark event in the global sailing calendar.

Scheduled from 30 November to 8 December 2025 at the Mussanah Sailing School, the regatta will open on a symbolic note — the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The championship will celebrate inclusivity and diversity in sailing, bringing together Para classified athletes and other sailors with disabilities who fall outside the IPC classification code.

Competition categories will include RS Venture Connect, RS21, Wingfoil, and ILCA (Special Olympics) classes. More than 200 sailors from around the world, along with coaches and support teams, are expected to gather in Mussanah for this first-of-its-kind event. Preceding the regatta will be the World Sailing Inclusive Development Programme (IDP) —a three-day initiative designed to empower national Para Inclusive sailing programmes. The IDP will connect athletes and coaches with World Sailing experts to provide tailored support and guidance.

The championship will also feature a dedicated 'Tourism Day', showcasing Oman's rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality to the global sailing community.

Dr Khamis Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, said: "Hosting the first-ever World Sailing Inclusion Championships is a tremendous honour. It reflects our longstanding commitment to breaking down barriers in sailing and empowering people with disabilities through our SailFree programme.

"Mussanah offers world-class facilities, accessible infrastructure, and a proven track record in hosting international sailing events. We look forward to welcoming the world to Oman and continuing to grow Para Inclusive Sailing on a global scale."

Jim Morris, World Sailing Director of Events, commented: "Oman's winning bid stood out for its strong focus on accessibility, sustainability, and lasting impact. The Inclusive Development Programme will strengthen Oman's SailFree initiative while supporting other nations to launch similar efforts. We are thrilled to partner with Oman Sail to make this vision a reality."

Hannah Stodel, Para World Sailing Manager, said: "This championship sends a powerful message - that sailing is for everyone. Mussanah is an outstanding venue with a deep commitment to Para Sailing, and we are confident this regatta will become a cornerstone of the inclusive sailing movement."

The Mussanah Sailing School, which hosted the RS Venture Connect World Championships in 2022, is the home of SailFree, the region's first sailing programme for people with disabilities, developed in partnership with bp Oman and the Oman Paralympic Association. It is also a Category A High Performance Centre, certified by the Asian Sailing Federation (ASAF).

OMAN CRICKET ACADEMY GROUND

Oman women whitewash Bahrain in T20I series clean sweep

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's national women's cricket team delivered a commanding statement of intent, sweeping Bahrain 3-0 in a one-sided T20I series at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat recently.

From start to finish, Oman's all-round superiority was on full display, as they registered victories by five wickets, 57 runs, and five wickets in the three-match series.

The opening encounter saw Oman chase down Bahrain's 87 with composure, setting the tone for the series. In the second match, Oman flexed their batting muscles, piling up 162/5 before restricting the visitors to 105/5 for a thumping 57-run win. The third and final game mirrored the team's consistency as they reached 95/5 in 14.5 overs to chase down Bahrain's 93, sealing a deserved clean sweep.

Standout performances came from across the squad, led by opener Jayadhanyha Gunasekar, who amassed 84 runs in the series and picked up four wickets. Her steady opening partnerships with Trupti Pawde gave Oman a strong start in all three games.

Captain Priyanka Mendonca was the backbone in the middle order, contributing 68 runs and emerging as the most successful bowler of the series with six wickets. Spinner Sameera Khan also shone with five scalps, while Amanda and Jayadhanyha kept the Bahrain batters in check with tight spells.

Coach Desmond Berhardt was effusive in his praise for the team's growth, especially considering the limited international match practice leading up to the series.

"I'm absolutely thrilled by the team's brilliant performance and the hard work that led to this 3-0 victory," he said. "It's remarkable what they achieved with such a short preparation period. The ability to adapt and perform under pressure speaks volumes about their resilience."

Berhardt highlighted the key contributions of Jayadhanyha and Trupti at the top, and praised Priyanka's leadership and composed knocks under pressure. He also credited Fiza Javed, Hina Javed, and Sameera Khan for impactful cameos with the bat.

"Our spinners - Priyanka, Amanda, and Jayadhanyha - were outstanding, taking 13 wickets between them. Sameera's efforts with the new ball and at the death were vital," he added.

Despite the clean sweep, Berhardt noted areas for development and welcomed the upcoming domestic schedule to sharpen skills and build depth in the squad. "This kind of achievement will undoubtedly inspire more individuals to take up the sport, which will be instrumental in building a strong foundation for our future selection process," he said.

Oman Cricket Treasurer Alkesh Joshi later hosted the team and their families in a post-series celebration, reinforcing the board's commitment to structured growth and more opportunities for women's cricket in the Sultanate.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE

OMAN OIL PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by July 2025 reaching $66.35, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 92 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was $65.43. -ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,397.25 points, up by 0.82% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.04% at 410.14 points. Ooredoo, up 6.32%, was the top gainer while, Al Omaniya Financial Services, down 4.00%, was the top loser.

WRAPS UP PARTICIPATION

Oman boosts trade and export opportunities at Saudi Food Show 2025

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman concluded its successful participation in the 3rd edition of the 'Saudi Food Show' in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, reaffirming the growing presence and competitiveness of Omani products. Oman was represented by the Supervisory Team for Promoting Omani Products (OPEX), alongside a number of Omani companies and factories.

The participants under Oman's pavilion highlighted the pivotal role of specialised exhibitions in enhancing the visibility of Omani industries on the global scale, inking strategic partnerships, and opening new export opportunities, all of which support the national economy in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Rashed Al Maqimi, Sales Director at Zamzam Company for soft drinks, shared his thoughts on the exhibition, saying, "Our participation in the Saudi Food Show reflects our commitment to showcasing premium products and strengthening our presence in Saudi, regional, and international markets.

:This exhibition marks a key milestone in our strategy to expand into Arab and global markets, and hence creating new opportunities for partnership and distribution. Moreover, the support from the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Madayn" has been instrumental in helping emerging companies grow and compete regionally, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040to boost competitiveness and elevate national industries on the global stage."

Ziyad Al Shukaili, Marketing Specialist at Oman Foodstuff Factory (Al Mudhish),commented, "Participating regularly in specialised F&B exhibitions is integral to achieving our key objectives, particularly the expansion of our high-quality exports and the sustained promotion of our products. The early days of the Saudi Food Show 2025 have already yielded positive results, including new orders for our products and several key meetings to finalise new contracts and renew existing ones."

Mohammed Al Balushi, Business Development Manager at Areej Vegetable Oils and Derivatives, stated that "The Saudi market remains one of the major importers of our products, making our participation in this exhibition in Riyadh a key priority. The exhibition provides a prime platform to showcase our diverse range of products including cooking oil, vegetable ghee, natural ghee, butter, and margarine. Additionally, the exhibition provides invaluable opportunities to attend workshops and seminars to gain insights into industry trends, and engage with potential partners and consumers to explore new markets."

Dr. Ibrahim Al Haddabi, General Manager of Nabaa Al Amana Trading, emphasised the value of the exhibition for the SMEs, pointing out, "The exhibition presents an excellent opportunity to showcase products from the SMEs. Since our establishment in 2019, we have been committed to offering high-quality natural and organic food products. Therefore, participating in this event enables us to build customer trust, expand into global markets, and position our brand among leading international names."

Oman's participation in the Food Show underscores the strong economic and investment ties between Oman and Saudi Arabia, bolstered by the leadership of both nations. The event reinforces bilateral cooperation and trade exchange, in line with Oman Vision 2040 and Saudi Vision 2030.

Abraj signs contract to supply drilling rig

This move marks a new milestone in Abraj Energy Services' efforts to expand operational capabilities and strengthen its local market presence through high-impact projects

MUSCAT: Abraj Energy Services has signed a contract with BP Oman to supply a drilling rig in Block 61, with operations expected to commence in Q4 2025. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Oman Petroleum & Energy Show (OPES) and Oman Sustainability Week 2025.

This partnership reinforces Abraj Energy Services' position as a trusted and leading entity in Oman's oil and energy sector, reaffirming its commitment to operational excellence, HSE standards, and innovative solutions that support the growth of Oman's energy industry.

Eng. Saif Said Al Hamhami, CEO of Abraj Energy Services, stated: "This move marks a new milestone in our efforts to expand operational capabilities and strengthen our local market presence through high-impact projects."

In a statement to ONA, he added: "This agreement reflects our partners' confidence in Abraj Energy Services' efficiency and ability to deliver safe, effective operational solutions that meet global standards. As part of our commitment to maximizing in-country value, we will continue investing in national talent development and enhancing operational sustainability." -ONA

FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Vale signs pact with OQAE to advance decarbonisation of its Oman operations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of its strategy to decarbonise its operations in Oman and transition its industrial energy use to renewable sources, Vale in Oman has signed a Head of Agreement (HOA) with OQ Alternative Energy (OQAE) during Oman Sustainability Week.

The agreement establishes a framework for developing renewable energy solutions to power Vale's pelletising plant in Sohar Port as well as support future energy needs for the upcoming Green Metallic Mega Hub in Duqm.

The agreement outlines the direction for future project development by establishing clear areas of cooperation related to energy supply, land coordination and long-term planning, all aimed at enabling the integration of renewable energy into Vale's operations.

Saleh Al Muslahi, Chief Executive of Mega Hubs-Middle East and North Africa, said:"Achieving large-scale decarbonisation demands more than ambitions, it requires strategic planning, strong partnerships, and reliable access to sustainable energy. Our agreement with OQAE embodies this approach. By aligning on demand aggregation, infrastructure readiness, and long-term supply models, we are creating the critical conditions to advance our transition in Sohar and unlock the potential of our f uture mega hub in Duqm."

Najla Zuhair Al Jamali, Chief Executive of OQ Alternative Energy said, "Our collaboration with Vale reflects OQAE's commitment to enabling the industrial sector's transition to clean energy. This agreement goes beyond decarbonising a single site — it lays the foundation for a new model of sustainable industrial development in Oman, powered by renewables. Together, we are shaping a future where energy innovation drives national growth and global climate progress."

Vale's ambition is to help decarbonise the mining industry and support the transition to net-zero steelmaking in the long term. Stemming from its belief that energy transition is a great growth engine, the company has made public commitments to reduce its environmental footprint by investing in cleaner technologies, improving operational efficiency, and adopting advanced emissions control systems.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE, INSPIRING IMPACT

OSW Awards 2025 honours national sustainability champions

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, the recognised organisations of Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) Awards 2025 have been announced.

The event carried an inspiring message – sustainability is not just a goal, it is a national imperative. The OSW Awards, part of Oman Sustainability Week—overseen by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals—marked the official launch of the 2025 edition. The evening was dedicated to honouring pioneers of sustainability.

Co-organised by be'ah (Oman Environmental Services Holding Company) and CONNECT (Oman Exhibitions Organising Company LLC), the ceremony took place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The gathering brought together senior government officials, industry leaders, and sustainability experts to celebrate and elevate the organisations driving Oman's environmental and economic transformation.

The OSW Awards serve as a powerful catalyst, propelling organisations toward more transparent, accountable, and future-focused operations. Rooted in international sustainability standards, including the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), and the Sultanate's ambitious Net Zero 2050 pledge, the awards framework ensures a rigorous, credible evaluation of ESG leadership across sectors.

Commenting on the event, Mohsin bin Hamad Al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, stated: "We are launching the coming together of Oman Sustainability Week and the Oman Petroleum & Energy Show 2025 with the Oman Sustainability Week Awards ceremony, which embodies our vision to continue strengthening support for sustainability, alongside our commitment to developing the energy sector, diversifying its sources, and enhancing its security and stability."

He added, "This event reflects our commitment to promoting a culture of sustainability within our institutions and society. We take pride in the ongoing partnership between the public and private sectors to advance this direction. Honouring pioneering initiatives in the fields of environment, society, governance, and sustainable mobility is a pivotal step toward building a more resilient and prosperous future."

He further emphasised, "The continuity of this movement enhances Oman's role in supporting the sustainability journey and encourages organisations to adopt innovative practices with a positive impact, in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and the national ambition to achieve net-zero by 2050."

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Mohab Ali Al Hinai, Vice President of Sustainability and Circular Economy at be'ah, stated, "As co-organisers of the fourth edition of the Oman Sustainability Week Awards, we take pride in providing a unique platform that encourages organisations to integrate sustainability and responsibility into their corporate strategies, contributing to the development of a sustainable business community in Oman. Since the launch of the initiative in 2022, we have witnessed remarkable growth in the number of participating organisations, increasing from 12 to 29 in 2025. Many of these organisations have shown significant improvement, with some raising their scores by over 30%, and one SME achieving a 70% increase. This continuous growth reflects the commitment of Omani institutions to adopt best sustainability practices, and we are proud to support this movement, in alignment with Oman Vision 2040."

In 2025, the awards continued to focus on two pivotal categories: Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) and Eco-Mobility—each representing a strategic pillar in Oman's sustainable development roadmap.

The ESG category, developed in collaboration with the Centre for Sustainability and Excellence (CSE) in Chicago, received 29 standout submissions across four subcategories: Academia, Government, Small Business, and Medium to Large Enterprises. The submissions showcased transformative ESG integration—driven by strategic foresight, stakeholder inclusivity, and measurable social and environmental impact.

In the ESG Category, Platinum recognition was awarded to Asyad Group, Petroleum Development Oman, SLB, Sohar Aluminium, and Veolia. Gold honours went to Daleel Petroleum, Destination Sustainability, Oman Electricity Transmission Company, Oman Petro Environmental Services Company, and OQ Group. Silver recipients included Bank Muscat, Bank Nizwa, BP Oman, OQ8, Green Universe Enterprise, Gulf Energy, Oman LNG, Omantel, Ominvest, OQGN, Special Oilfield Services, and Sultan Qaboos University. In the Bronze segment, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Modern College of Business and Science, University of Nizwa, and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences were recognised.

The Eco-Mobility category, managed by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, spotlighted innovations in clean and connected transport. With 15 finalists, the category emphasised scalable solutions for sustainable mobility. Judging was conducted by an expert panel representing key regulatory and strategic bodies — including the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the Environment Authority, and the Authority for Public Services Regulation — reflecting the growing importance of this sector and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in its development.

In the Eco Mobility category, Platinum honours went to Electric Vehicle Oman – EVO and Shell Development Oman. Gold recognition was awarded to ABB, Oman Shell Marketing, and MWASALAT. Silver recipients included EnvirOM Solutions, OQ, Audi Oman, and Petroleum Development Oman, while 44.01 was recognised in the Bronze segment.

Throughout the evening, speakers delivered powerful addresses on the urgency and opportunity of sustainable transformation. From policy updates to personal reflections, these moments underscored the national momentum toward a greener, more inclusive economy.

The event featured several notable highlights, beginning with an insightful opening address by Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, who emphasised the growing importance of the awards. Experienced explorer Mark Evans captivated the audience with his introduction of the Jewel of Arabia expedition.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Ooredoo, up 6.32%, was the top gainer while, Al Omaniya Financial Services, down 4.00%, was the top loser.

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,397.25 points, up by 0.82% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.04% at 410.14 points. Ooredoo, up 6.32%, was the top gainer while, Al Omaniya Financial Services, down 4.00%, was the top loser. Shares of OQGN were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1236 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 5.72 million, with more than 31.05 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 21 advanced, 13 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 1040K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 521K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 519K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,756.93 points, up 0.6%. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Sohar International Bank, Ominvest, Bank Muscat, Al Sharqia Investment were up by 3.08%, 2.29%, 2.27%, 1.88%, 1.35% respectively. Prices of Al Omaniya Financial Services, Liva Group, Takaful Oman, Al Madina Investments, Al Anwar Investment were down by 4.00%, 2.72%, 2.22%, 2.08%, 1.22% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,003.69 points, up 1.02%. Prices of Oman Cement, Voltamp Energy, Al Anwar Ceramics, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 3.61%, 3.04%, 2.35%, 1.43% respectively. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products were down by 2.27% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.67% before closing at 1,556.01 points. Prices of Ooredoo, Oman Education & Training, Barka Desalination, Musandam Power, Al Jazeera Services were up by 6.32%, 4.35%, 4.17%, 2.80%, 1.20% respectively. Prices of Al Batinah Power, Oman Telecom, Oman Oil Marketing were down by 1.39%, 0.37%, 0.30% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev . Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,397.95	4,359.24	4,397.25	4,361.33	35.92	0.82
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,756.93	7,710.88	7,756.93	7,710.88	46.06	0.60
Industry Index	6,003.69	5,947.89	6,003.69	5,943.21	60.49	1.02
Services Index	1,556.01	1,530.62	1,556.01	1,545.60	10.40	0.67
MSX Shariah Index	410.14	402.49	410.14	405.91	4.24	1.04
MSX TR INDEX	6,500.82	6,443.61	6,499.79	6,446.69	53.10	0.82
FINANCIAL TR IDX	9,192.94	9,138.35	9,192.94	9,138.35	54.58	0.60
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	7,377.64	7,309.07	7,377.64	7,303.31	74.33	1.02
SERVICES TR IDX	1,978.51	1,946.24	1,978.51	1,965.29	13.23	0.67
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
31,050,424	5,724,532	1,236	27,685,044,080	21	13	15	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	923,549	162,684	77	0.175	0.185	0.160	0.185	0.174	0.011	6.322	0.185	0.171	0.185	0.100	120,424,683
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	53,094	34,015	15	0.631	0.645	0.630	0.645	0.626	0.019	3.035	0.645	0.646	0.650	0.100	60,380,489
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,831,167	319,281	73	0.171	0.177	0.171	0.174	0.170	0.004	2.353	0.174	0.172	0.174	0.100	38,280,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	5,431,996	722,611	79	0.133	0.134	0.132	0.134	0.131	0.003	2.290	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.100	886,711,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	444,122	99,003	64	0.220	0.225	0.220	0.225	0.220	0.005	2.273	0.225	0.223	0.225	0.100	210,535,109
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	4,333,214	1,166,210	93	0.268	0.271	0.267	0.271	0.266	0.005	1.880	0.271	0.275	0.271	0.100	2,034,233,604
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	35,965	12,640	6	0.350	0.355	0.350	0.355	0.350	0.005	1.429	0.355	0.350	0.355	0.100	44,338,776
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	80,000	5,925	4	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.100	6,750,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	98,698	7,601	6	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.001	1.299	0.078	0.077	0.078	0.100	13,650,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	194,754	32,972	35	0.168	0.170	0.168	0.169	0.167	0.002	1.198	0.169	0.169	0.177	0.100	7,240,465
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	6,925,537	930,789	127	0.133	0.137	0.133	0.136	0.135	0.001	0.741	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.100	588,964,853
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	596,290	139,537	33	0.235	0.236	0.233	0.234	0.233	0.001	0.429	0.234	0.234	0.249	0.100	180,226,800
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	191,222	10,900	8	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.100	20,299,256
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	200	80	1	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.399	0.399	0.000	0.000	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.100	47,880,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	161,248	46,439	12	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.000	0.000	0.288	0.287	0.287	0.100	68,086,080
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	70,000	7,000	7	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.102	0.100	223,695,303
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	390,824	27,718	14	0.070	0.071	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070	0.071	0.100	50,008,444
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	454,652	373,104	53	0.824	0.824	0.819	0.820	0.823	-0.003	-0.365	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.100	615,000,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	2,511	535	1	0.213	0.213	0.213	0.213	0.215	-0.002	-0.930	0.213	0.213	0.214	0.100	21,300,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	37,550	3,079	3	0.082	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.084	-0.001	-1.190	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.100	16,600,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	205,614	14,628	14	0.071	0.072	0.071	0.071	0.072	-0.001	-1.389	0.071	0.071	0.072	0.100	47,917,008
Total	21	22,462,207	4,116,750	725												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	6,000	624	2	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.099	0.005	5.051	0.104	0.000	0.104	0.100	18,096,000
OM0000002580	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INVTS	2,000	2,395	2	1.150	1.200	1.150	1.200	1.150	0.050	4.348	1.200	1.150	0.000	0.100	84,000,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	4,000	499	4	0.124	0.125	0.124	0.125	0.120	0.005	4.167	0.125	0.123	0.125	0.100	9,440,250
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	17,282	7,304	12	0.417	0.430	0.417	0.430	0.415	0.015	3.614	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.100	142,275,265
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	99,562	6,564	13	0.066	0.067	0.065	0.067	0.065	0.002	3.077	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.100	8,165,625
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	4,640	1,192	2	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.250	0.007	2.800	0.257	0.251	0.257	0.100	18,090,230
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	10,000	860	1	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.001	1.176	0.086	0.080	0.093	0.100	2,580,000
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	3,157,190	337,767	77	0.107	0.108	0.105	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.935	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.040	373,625,012
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	3,826,887	1,099,934	234	0.288	0.290	0.286	0.287	0.285	0.002	0.702	0.287	0.287	0.287	0.010	2,296,000,000
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	1,000	200	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.000	0.200	0.100	22,550,516
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	11,500	817	4	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.069	0.071	0.100	6,035,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	5,600	571	3	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.101	0.102	0.100	97,366,339
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	5,000	1,000	2	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.192	0.199	0.100	11,000,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	21,730	1,326	3	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.056	0.061	0.100	89,218,689
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	51,530	4,052	6	0.079	0.080	0.076	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.077	0.080	0.100	40,690,504
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	20,200	13,675	2	0.677	0.677	0.677	0.677	0.679	-0.002	-0.295	0.677	0.612	0.677	0.100	41,483,175
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	700	84	2	0.120	0.120	0.119	0.119	0.120	-0.001	-0.833	0.119	0.119	0.120	0.100	72,367,058
OM0000010120	ASYAD SHIPPING	488,250	54,798	62	0.113	0.113	0.111	0.113	0.114	-0.001	-0.877	0.113	0.115	0.113	0.000	588,588,104
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	596,703	48,374	31	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.081	0.083	0.100	23,252,680
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	21,273	1,000	3	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.048	-0.001	-2.083	0.047	0.044	0.047	0.100	3,995,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	229	10	1	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.045	-0.001	-2.222	0.044	0.044	0.049	0.100	11,000,000
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	29,874	6,443	9	0.217	0.217	0.215	0.215	0.220	-0.005	-2.273	0.215	0.215	0.220	0.100	9,839,647
OM0000007043	LIVA GROUP	1,000	250	1	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.257	-0.007	-2.724	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.100	99,593,586
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	77,760	9,331	7	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.125	-0.005	-4.000	0.120	0.120	0.137	0.100	37,850,040
Total	24	8,459,910	1,599,070	484												

AT OMAN PETROLEUM & ENERGY SHOW

OOISS showcases advanced energy solutions

MUSCAT: Oman Oil Industry Supplies & Services Co. (OOISS), a leading provider of operational intelligence and integrated energy solutions within The Zubair Corporation's Energy & Natural Resources sector, actively participated in the Oman Petroleum & Energy Show.

OOISS engaged with industry leaders, government representatives, and technology partners throughout the event to discuss critical sectoral challenges and explore strategic collaborations. The company's exhibit featured cutting-edge solutions in real-time operational intelligence platforms, predictive maintenance and asset integrity management, digital twin and remote monitoring technologies.

"We are pleased to be part of OPES and to contribute to the dialogue around the future of energy in Oman and beyond. Our goal is not only to showcase innovation but to identify shared objectives that can accelerate operational excellence and energy transition pathways," said Abdullah Al Hammasi, GM at OOISS.

NEW CHAPTER IN SEASIDE DINING

Shangri-la Muscat unveils BAB'S Brunch at Bait Al Bahr

Muscat: As Shangri-la Muscat celebrates 20 years of heartfelt hospitality in Oman this 2024, the resort introduces a fresh weekend ritual to mark the occasion: BAB's Brunch at Bait Al Bahr—a relaxed yet refined dining experience that captures the spirit of the sea, the warmth of the sun, and the serenity of coastal dining.

Launching this summer, BAB's Brunch is served every Saturday from 1pm to 4pm, inviting guests to unwind with spectacular cuisine and majestic panoramic views of the beach, all from the elegant indoor temperature-controlled setting of Bait Al Bahr. Perched along the resort's iconic lazy river, the venue offers one of Muscat's most breathtaking dining locations—where gentle waves and ocean breezes frame every bite.

For the first time, Bait Al Bahr opens during the day to welcome brunch lovers with a shared-style concept comprising of a selection of appetisers, followed by live-grilled premium cuts (beef, lamb chops, chicken), and the freshest seafood—including lobster, king prawns, octopus, and seasonal fish—are all served directly to the table, encouraging convivial dining and memorable moments alongside live entertainment.

To complement this indulgent Saturday afternoon, free-flow beverages are included, and other premium options are also available.

Bait Al Bahr commonly known as BAB has long stood at the heart of Muscat's vibrant community, and this new offering brings together the spirit of coastal dining with the warmth of Omani hospitality — reimagined in a setting that blends a relaxed atmosphere with an elegant brunch.

Limited seating available. Advance reservations are required.

STRATEGIC PLATFORM

Bank Nizwa reinforces its role as sustainability pioneer at Oman Sustainability Week 2025

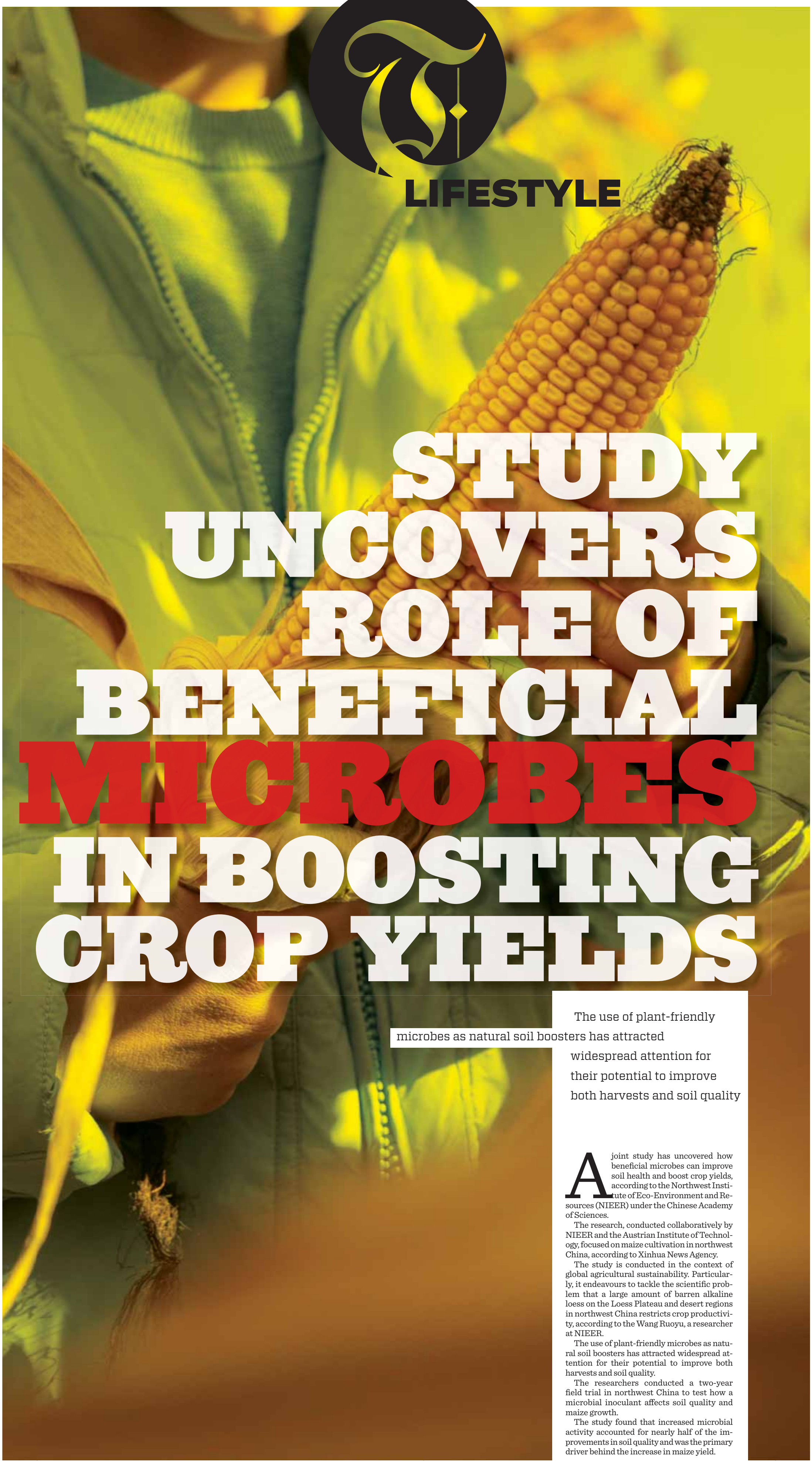
MUSCAT: Demonstrating its unwavering commitment to sustainability, Bank Nizwa, the leading and most trusted Islamic bank in Oman, showcased its sustainability milestones during Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) 2025, held from 11 to 14 May at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event served as a strategic platform for the bank to spotlight the critical convergence of Islamic finance, sustainable development and its most notable achievements in the field of sustainability. Through its active engagement, Bank Nizwa renews its dedication to environmental stewardship, the advancement of community well-being, and the promotion of inclusive, long-term economic growth rooted in responsible finance.

At the 2025 edition of Oman Sustainability Week, Bank Nizwa played a pivotal role in promoting dialogue on Islamic finance and sustainability. Through a series of enriching interactive sessions hosted at its dedicated pavilion, the bank brought together a diverse group of experts from various government and private sectors, as well as SMEs specializing in this field. The sessions covered a wide range of topics, including sustainability and Islamic finance, alternative energy sources, green buildings, and sustainability in the logistics sector, among others. The bank's pavilion at Oman Sustainability Week 2025 served as a vibrant platform, inviting attendees to explore a variety of impactful initiatives by Bank Nizwa. These included sustainability-linked financing solutions, eco-friendly debit and credit cards, digital transformation efforts, and environmental and community awareness programs led by the Masoliyati volunteer team. Visitors had the unique opportunity to explore innovative financial offerings and discover how Islamic finance can serve as a powerful catalyst for a more sustainable future.

Ahmed Abdullah Al Waily, Head of Marketing, Corporate Communication and Sustainability at Bank Nizwa, remarked, "Our participation in Oman Sustainability Week 2025 not only reinforces our commitment to integrating sustainability across all aspects of our operations, but also underscores our leadership in driving tangible change within the Islamic finance sector."

LIFESTYLE



STUDY UNCOVERS ROLE OF BENEFICIAL MICROBES IN BOOSTING CROP YIELDS

The use of plant-friendly microbes as natural soil boosters has attracted widespread attention for their potential to improve both harvests and soil quality

A joint study has uncovered how beneficial microbes can improve soil health and boost crop yields, according to the Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources (NIEER) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The research, conducted collaboratively by NIEER and the Austrian Institute of Technology, focused on maize cultivation in northwest China, according to Xinhua News Agency.

The study is conducted in the context of global agricultural sustainability. Particularly, it endeavours to tackle the scientific problem that a large amount of barren alkaline loess on the Loess Plateau and desert regions in northwest China restricts crop productivity, according to the Wang Ruoyu, a researcher at NIEER.

The use of plant-friendly microbes as natural soil boosters has attracted widespread attention for their potential to improve both harvests and soil quality.

The researchers conducted a two-year field trial in northwest China to test how a microbial inoculant affects soil quality and maize growth.

The study found that increased microbial activity accounted for nearly half of the improvements in soil quality and was the primary driver behind the increase in maize yield.

SPORTS

Alcaraz sets up clash with Draper in quarter-finals

Also, world No.1 Jannik Sinner maintained his winning return from a doping ban with a victory over Francisco Cerundolo

ROME: Monte Carlo champion Alcaraz advanced to the Italian Open quarter-finals with a 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 win over Russia's Karen Khachanov in Rome on Tuesday.

The reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion will now meet Britain's Jack Draper in the last eight.

Englishman Draper recovered from being "bamboozled" by Corentin Moutet in a lively match to reach the quarter-finals.

Draper battled fatigue and the shot-making variety of his French opponent to come through 1-6, 6-4, 6-3 in just over two hours in Rome.

"At one point I was looking at the slides I'd been doing - I was covering the whole court, I don't know what was going on. I've got a dizziness from it," world No.5 Draper told Sky Sports. "I'm proud of my efforts today. I was a bit bamboozled in the start, I haven't played someone like that ever.

Meanwhile, world No.1 Jannik Sinner maintained his winning return from a doping ban with a 7-6 (7-2), 6-3 victory over Francisco Cerundolo.

The Italian has won all three matches since returning from a three-month suspension, but showed signs of rustiness in the opening set after exchanging breaks of serve with Argentine Cerundolo before closing out a tie-break. The second set was much more comfortable and Sinner will face either Norway's Casper Ruud or Spain's Jaume Munar in the quarter-finals.

Adriano Panatta was the last Italian to win the men's Rome title in 1976 and Sinner will be joined in the last eight by compatriot Lorenzo Musetti as they both bid to end the 49-year wait for a home champion.

Musetti engineered his way to match point against Daniil Medvedev before having to wait three hours to complete his victory as heavy rain forced the players from the court.

Wawrinka gets French Open wildcard

Former champion Stan Wawrinka has been awarded a wildcard entry into the men's singles draw at the 2025 French Open. Wawrinka defeated Novak Djokovic in four sets to lift the trophy in 2015, the second of his three Grand Slam titles.

Now aged 40, the Swiss player has dropped to 132nd in the ATP rankings.

He reached round two at Roland Garros in 2024, losing to Russia's Pavel Kotov, and hasn't reached the second week of a Grand Slam event since the 2020 Australian Open. Frenchman Richard Gasquet, 38, who will retire after the tournament, has also received a wildcard for the main draw.

The 2025 French Open will run from 25 May to 8 June. - Agencies

NOTTINGHAM FOREST STRIKER

Awoniyi in induced coma after surgery

LONDON: Nottingham Forest striker Taiwo Awoniyi is in an induced coma after having the first phase of surgery on a serious abdominal injury. The Nigeria international, 27, collided with the post in the 88th minute of the 2-2 draw against Leicester at the City Ground on Sunday as he attempted to get on the end of a cross from Anthony Elanga. Awoniyi is reported to have suffered a ruptured intestine in the collision.

He had surgery on Monday night and remains in hospital, with the rest of the procedure set to be completed on Wednesday.

On Tuesday Forest said Awoniyi was "recovering well" following the operation.

Awoniyi, a late substitute for Ibrahim Sangare on Sunday, received lengthy treatment on the pitch. Elanga was in an offside position when he collected the ball but the assistant referee did not raise their flag until after Awoniyi's collision. When an immediate goalscoring opportunity is likely to occur, assistant referees are told to keep their flag down until the passage of play is complete.

If a goal is scored, the incident can then be reviewed by the video assistant referee (VAR).

Although this allows goals to be scored, critics say the protocol needlessly endangers players.

Forest owner Evangelos Marinakis took to the field after the game to express his concern to manager Nuno Espirito Santo over how Awoniyi's injury was handled.

Marinakis is being kept updated on the forward's condition.

On Tuesday, Forest said Awoniyi's injury was "a powerful reminder of the physical risks in the game and why a player's health and wellbeing must always come first". - Agencies

ITALIAN OPEN

Paolini fights back to reach semis

ROME: Home favourite Jasmine Paolini recovered from a set down and a 4-0 deficit in the second set to edge past Diana Shnaider and reach the Italian Open semi-finals on Tuesday.

The sixth seed claimed a 6-7 (1-7), 6-4, 6-2 victory to become the first Italian woman to reach the last four in Rome since 2014 when her doubles partner, Sara Errani, was beaten by Serena Williams in the final. Having won the opening set after a tie-break, Shnaider led 3-0 in the second before rain interrupted play.

Shnaider held serve to stretch her advantage to 4-0 after play resumed but Paolini, backed by the vociferous home support, won the next six games to level the match.

Paolini, who cruised to victory in the deciding set, paid testament to Errani for her influential words of encouragement during the rain delay. "It was a good thing that it rained for five minutes. I got some coaching from Sara," Paolini said of Errani, who was watching from the stands.

The 29-year-old will face either two-time Italian Open winner Elina Svitolina or Peyton Stearns in the last four. Raffaella Reggi was the last Italian woman to win the tournament in 1985. - Agencies

UNDER-15

Ronaldo 'proud' of his son after Portugal debut

LISBON: Cristiano Ronaldo said he was "very proud" of his eldest son after he made his debut for Portugal Under-15s at the Vlatko Markovic tournament. Cristiano Ronaldo Jr came on in the 54th minute of a 4-1 win against Japan in a tournament in Croatia on Tuesday.

The 14-year-old was watched on by grandmother Dolores Aveiro, Ronaldo Sr's mother.

Ronaldo Jr played in the No.7 shirt that his father has famously worn throughout his career

Five-time *Ballon d'Or* winner Ronaldo Sr said on Instagram: "Congratulations on your debut for Portugal, son. Very proud of you."

Ronaldo Sr forward has four other children - twins Eva and Mateo, 7, Alana Martina, 7, and Bella, 3.

ITALIAN FOOTBALL

Sampdoria relegated to Serie C for first time

GENOA: Sampdoria have been relegated to Serie C for the first time in their 78-year history after a season dogged by managerial upheaval. The Genoa-based club were held to a goalless draw at Juve Stabia in their final Serie B match.

That ensured they finished in 18th place, a point behind Salernitana who secured a relegation play-off place with a 2-0 victory over Cittadella.

Sampdoria, who won their only Serie A title in 1991 with a star-studded team, had been playing in Italian football's second tier since they were relegated at the end of the 2022–23 season.

Italian World Cup winner Andrea Pirlo was hired as coach in June 2023 but was unable to secure an immediate return to the top flight after they lost in the play-offs. The month before Sampdoria's play-off exit Pirlo was called "a key part of the project" by the club's owners, but three games into the current campaign he was dismissed following two defeats and a draw. - Agencies

LIVEROOL AND URUGUAY STRIKER

Nunez ordered to serve ban after CAS rejects appeal

LONDON: Liverpool striker Darwin Nunez has been ordered to serve the remainder of a ban for his involvement in an altercation with fans while playing for Uruguay.

The sanction was confirmed as an appeal against the ban was rejected by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

In August 2024, Nunez was banned by South American football's governing body CONMEBOL for five international games, and fined £15,145 ($20,000), for an incident with spectators after Uruguay were beaten by Colombia.

The 25-year-old was seen physically confronting Colombia supporters in the stands after the final whistle in the Copa America semi-final in July 2024.

Nunez served two matches of the ban before CAS agreed to temporarily lift the suspension in October 2024 while the case against him was investigated following an appeal by the Uruguay Football Association.

Four other Uruguay players were also handed bans, and fined, for their involvement in the incident at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, USA, all of which have now been served.

Tottenham midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur, 27, received a four-game suspension.

Napoli defender Mathias Olivera, 27, Barcelona defender Ronald Araujo, 26, and Atletico Madrid defender Jose Maria Gimenez, 30, received three-game bans.

The appeal by the Uruguay FA had sought to annul or reduce the suspensions and fines on the grounds the players acted in self-defence, but that was dismissed by CAS. "The panel found that in this case the principle of self-defence does not apply," said CAS.

"The conduct of the players constituted a voluntary, violent and unjustified action which was in violation of the CONMEBOL disciplinary code."

Nunez will now sit out Uruguay's World Cup qualifiers in Paraguay and at home to Venezuela next month, along with the match against Peru in September.

Nunez was involved in the incident with Colombia fans after last year's Copa America semi-final in Charlotte.

CONMEBOL had originally opened an investigation into what they called "unacceptable" scenes following Uruguay's 1-0 defeat by Colombia. Disorder broke out in a section of the stadium where many family members of the Uruguay players were seated.

Nunez had climbed railings and made his way into the crowded stands. More than 70,000 fans were at the game in Charlotte, with estimates suggesting more than 90% of the crowd was there in support of Colombia.

"There were no police and we had to defend our families," said Uruguay captain Gimenez at the time.

"This is the fault of two or three people who had a few too many drinks and don't know how to drink." - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Aster Al Raffah Walk Again Advanced Robotic Rehabilitation Centre launched in Oman

A state-of-the-art facility launched by Aster Al Raffah Hospitals & Clinics, is set to revolutionise advanced neuro-rehabilitation in Oman, GCC and the African countries

MUSCAT: Aster Al Raffah Hospitals & Clinics, a leading integrated healthcare provider under Aster DM Healthcare in the GCC, has officially launched the Aster Al Raffah Walk Again Advanced Robotic Rehabilitation Centre. Located in Al Ghubra, Muscat, this first-of-its-kind facility in the Sultanate marks a significant milestone in healthcare innovation, poised to transform neuro-rehabilitation across the region.

The facility was inaugurated by Dr. Ahmed bin Salim Al-Mandhari, Undersecretary for Planning and Health Regulation, Ministry of Health, Sultanate of Oman, alongside; Dr. Sherbaz Bichu, CEO of Aster Hospitals and Clinics - UAE, Oman, Bahrain; Shailesh Guntu, Deputy CEO of Aster Hospitals, UAE & Oman; Rahul Kadavakolu, Group Chief Marketing Officer, Aster DM Healthcare; Dr. Sachin Kandhari, CEO of Walk Again India, and other distinguished guests.

Aster Al Raffah Walk Again is Oman's one of the first private hospital to introduce a specialized robotic rehabilitation facility. It offers a multidisciplinary approach to recovery, utilizing advanced robotic technologies to support patients with neurological, spinal, stroke-related, and sports injuries. Spanning three floors, the centre provides specialized rehabilitation for a wide range of conditions, including stroke, spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, and motor neuron diseases, among others. The facility serves both pediatric and adult patients, with provisions for international care.

The centre is designed as a multidisciplinary facility of excellence, specializing in Neurology, Spine, and Sports Medicine, ensuring holistic care for patients recovering from complex injuries and neurological disorders.

A key highlight of the centre is the Cyberdyne HAL, a robotic exoskeleton that assists patients with mobility impairments, enabling walking and limb movement by interpreting bioelectric signals from muscles. Other cutting-edge technologies include the Recoverix Pro system, which uses Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) for stroke and multiple sclerosis rehabilitation, and Vibramoov, a vibration therapy system that enhances gait and mobility. Additional innovations such as Luna EMG, a neurorehabilitation system, and Meissa OT, a robotic upper limb rehabilitation device, ensure comprehensive recovery for patients with varied needs.

The centre also offers advanced neuromodulation treatments, including Deep Brain Stimulation for movement disorders and Vagus Nerve Stimulation for treatment-resistant epilepsy. These technologies, along with Functional Electrical Stimulation, enhance muscle strength and coordination, supporting patients in regaining independence.

The Aster Al Raffah Walk Again Advanced Robotic Rehabilitation Centre is supported by a team of nationally and internationally recognized specialists in Neurosciences, Orthopedics, Spine, and Rheumatology. Leading the clinical team is Dr. Ali Al Balushi, Consultant - Vascular Neurologist & Neurointerventionalist at Aster Al Raffah Hospitals & Clinics, along with other esteemed doctors who bring extensive expertise in managing complex neurological and musculoskeletal conditions.

By focusing on neuroplasticity, the process through which the brain reorganizes itself after injury, the Aster Al Raffah Walk Again Hospital facilitates recovery through a range of therapies tailored to individual needs. Utilizing US FDA-approved technologies, the centre aims to harness the brain's ability to form new neural connections, a critical element of rehabilitation following neurological conditions.

Dr. Ahmed Al Mandhari speaking about the launch, remarked, "We are proud to inaugurate this world-class facility in Oman, which will help bring advanced rehabilitation care closer to home for our people.

The launch of the Aster Al Raffah Walk Again Advanced Robotic Rehabilitation hospital reflects our vision of building Oman as a leading hub for innovative healthcare. The Government of Oman and the Ministry of Health will continue to partner closely with the private health sector to ensure their success and to bring the best medical technologies to our country for the welfare of our people. This state-of-the-art rehabilitation solution will not only benefit citizens across Oman but will also attract patients from outside Oman, strengthening Oman's position as a destination for world-class treatment."

Dr. Azad Moopen, Founder Chairman of Aster DM Healthcare, commenting on the significance of the initiative, added, "The Aster Al Raffah Walk Again Advanced Robotic Rehabilitation Hospital is a monumental step forward in providing accessible, world-class rehabilitation care to patients in Oman and the region. This facility is part of Aster's commitment to offering innovative healthcare solutions, and it will undoubtedly transform the lives of patients by offering hope and enabling recovery that was once thought impossible. Through our 'Treat in Oman' initiative, we aim to eliminate the need for residents to travel abroad for advanced care, making Oman a global leader in healthcare excellence."

Alisha Moopen, Managing Director & Group CEO of Aster DM Healthcare, commented, "The launch of the Advanced Robotic Rehabilitation Hospital in Oman marks a defining moment in our mission to make cutting-edge, patient-centric care accessible to all. At Aster, we believe in transforming lives through innovation and compassion. This facility embodies that vision, providing hope and advanced recovery solutions to patients with neurological and musculoskeletal conditions. As we expand our footprint in Oman, we remain committed to raising the bar for specialized care and making the country a leading destination for healthcare excellence in the region."

Dr. Sachin Kandhari, CEO of Walk Again India, reflecting on the collaboration, said, "As a leading provider of neuro-rehabilitation, Walk Again is excited to partner with Aster in bringing advanced robotic rehabilitation to Oman. Our mission is to help patients recover from spinal cord injuries, stroke, and other neurological disorders. Through this Hospital, we are committed to leveraging state-of-the-art technology and global expertise to provide the highest standards of care."

OMAN CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTER

Swiss innovation, green tech, and art shine at Oman Sustainability Week 2025

MUSCAT: The Swiss Embassy in Oman is proud to host a pavilion at the Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) 2025 Exhibition, taking place from 12 to 14 May at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center.

Seventeen Swiss companies from diverse sectors - including renewable energy technology, sustainable infrastructure, construction, environmental technology, carbon storage, sustainable financing, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence - are represented at the pavilion. Notable participants include ABB, AIK Technik, Arva Greentech, Burckhardt Compression, Dreamlab Technologies, Edmond de Rothschild, Georg Fischer Corys, ReadyMix Holcim, Kanadevia Inova, Landis + Gyr, LGT, Macun, MAN Energy Solutions Switzerland, Reichle & De-Massari, SGS, Swiss AI and Synhelion.

A delegation will also travel to Muscat for the OSW 2025, comprising the Delegate of the Swiss Federal Council for the Agenda 2030 and representatives from the Swiss Federal Office of Energy, Swissmem (the Swiss association for mechanical and electrical engineering industries), the Swiss Export Risk Insurance (SERV), the Swiss Business Hub Middle East, the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology (Empa), and the Oman Switzerland Friendship Association (OSFA).

The Delegate for the Agenda 2030 and several company representatives will participate in the International Sustainability Resources & Technology Conference (ISRTC) and the OSW and OPES Talks, sharing insights into their vision and innovative solutions.

Additionally, a workshop will be held between the Swiss Delegate for the Agenda 2030 and the Directorate of Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Economy focusing on strategies to achieve the national targets of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

In celebration of the Oman Sustainability Week, the Swiss Embassy is also unveiling a new mural at SOHAR Port and Freezone by the renowned Swiss artist duo Nevercrew. The artwork, portraying a fragile glass whale sheltering a miniature marine environment, reflects the delicate balance between human activity and nature. Through imagery tied to water and green hydrogen, the mural also points to the vital role of alternative energy in creating a sustainable tomorrow and serves as a powerful visual reminder of our shared responsibility to protect the environment.

H.E. Dr. Thomas Oertle, Ambassador of Switzerland to Oman, remarked: "The Swiss pavilion will likely be one of the most buzzing places at OSW with many state-of-the-art solutions being presented to advance the sustainability agenda. Switzerland – ranked consistently for the past 15 years as the world's most innovative country – reaffirms its commitment to fostering collaboration and exchange between the two like-minded nations, Oman and Switzerland."

MHD ACERE REPRESENTS DEFENDER IN OMAN

Defender completes first rally-raid prototype test and signs Dakar Rally legend

MUSCAT: Original British adventure brand Defender has accelerated its preparations for entering the World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) by completing prototype test activity in Morocco with the Defender Dakar D7X-R, in addition to signing two stellar drivers.

In Oman, MHD ACERE represents Defender, aligning with the brand's adventurous spirit and engineering excellence. Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, remarked, "MHD ACERE is proud to represent Defender in Oman, a brand synonymous with adventure, resilience, and innovation.

"The Dakar Rally partnership is a perfect reflection of Defender's ethos, and we are excited to see these legendary vehicles in action at the world's toughest rally. This collaboration underscores Defender's engineering prowess and aligns with Oman's love for off-road adventures."

Fourteen-time Dakar Rally winner Stéphane Peterhansel will join the Defender Rally team for the ultimate epic adventure, alongside emerging talent Rokas Baciuška. French driver Peterhansel joined the Defender Rally team in Morocco, successfully completing early test activity with the first prototype of the Defender Dakar D7X-Ras they began preparations for competing at the Dakar Rallyin January 2026 – an event renowned as the world's most gruelling long-distance off-road race.

Defender, the iconic and unstoppable 4x4, which is designed and engineered for capability and durability, will make its works debut at the Dakar Rally, where three Defender Dakar D7X-Rs will compete in the 'Stock' category for production-based cars.A two-car entry will contest the remaining rounds of the 2026 FIA World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC).

James Barclay, Managing Director of JLR Motorsport, said: "Completing our first official test in the Defender Dakar D7X-R prototype is a huge milestone and kicks off a busy calendar of testing activity on our journey to Dakar. The team are doing phenomenal work as we prepare for the world's most challenging off-road race in just eight months' time."

"I'm also extremely proud and excited to announce the first two of our world-class driver line-ups. The world-renowned Stéphane Peterhansel brings a remarkable amount of practical experience to the team as the most successful Dakar Rally competitor ever. His knowledge is going to be a huge asset to our programme."

"Rokas Baciuška is one of the most exciting and promising upcoming rally talents, boasting an impressive track record since he first entered the Dakar in 2022 – the same year he was crowned FIA World Rally-Raid Champion in the T4 class."

"With Stéphane and Rokas now on board and testing of the Defender Dakar D7X-R accelerating, it's a hugely exciting time for the team as we focus on the work that lays ahead."

The Defender Dakar D7X-R, the team's purpose-built, production-based, competition challenger, will share the same robust D7x aluminium body architecture, transmission and driveline layout as production Defenders, testament to its extreme durability and strength. The Defender Dakar D7X-R is powered by a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 engine, and the prototype is wrapped in a distinctive camouflage design. It was put through its paces to verify the reliability, durability and capability baselines in the demanding sand dunes of the Sahara Desert.

Just like Defender's embrace the impossible ethos, having impressive physical and mental strength as a driver is a prerequisite for success. Drivers will be tested to the extreme in the harshest of environments, and only those possessing a determined spirit, unwavering bravery and a passion for adventure will have what it takes.

All of the Defender Rally team's drivers will demonstrate their fearless speed, meticulous skill and unwavering stamina in the heat of competition.

Mark Cameron, Managing Director, Defender, said:"It's a fantastic feeling to be sharing these first images of the Defender Dakar D7X-R prototype with the world. The team is really starting to take shape as we develop Defender to compete in the Stock category – which means the competition D7X-R will be very closely linked to the production Defender. It's also a special moment to announce our two drivers for the W2RC in Stéphane and Rokas, each of them bringing something unique to the team and with human endurance being such a vital component of World Rally-Raid success."

"Competing in the Dakar Rally and W2RC will be the ultimate proving ground for Defender's capability, durability and performance and it won't be long until our competition Defender D7X-R will be put through its paces on the world-stage."

Heralded as the most successful Dakar Rally driver of all time, Peterhansel – who completed Defender testing duties in the Sahara – is no stranger to the demands of the desert. The 59-year-old has competed in the Dakar Rally 35 times on both bike and car and has won the ultimate epic adventure 14 times.

ROUND-UP

Meethaq Islamic Banking extends its special auto finance offer

Customers availing auto finance during the offer period can also get an extended tenor of upto 10 years on new and used vehicles, making their financing experience even more accessible

MUSCAT: In line with its customer-centric vision, Meethaq Islamic banking from Bank Muscat has extended its exclusive Auto Finance offer for customers wishing to purchase their dream car.

This limited-time offer is available until 31 May and applies to Meethaq Auto Finance, providing customers with attractive benefits. Customers availing auto finance during the offer period can also get an extended tenor of upto 10 years on new and used vehicles, making their financing experience even more accessible.

In addition, applicants will enjoy quick processing and minimal documentation, making the process seamless and hassle-free. Meethaq customers are eligible for up to 80% financing on their vehicles purchase.

The launch of this attractive offer is based on a detailed study of customer needs, reinforcing Meethaq's commitment to delivering tailored financial solutions. Meethaq remains committed to enhancing its suite of Sharia-compliant products and services to meet customer needs while keeping pace with global trends.

As Oman's leading provider of Sharia-compliant financial services, Meethaq Islamic Banking offers a comprehensive range of products and services.

With a network of 32 branches across the Sultanate, Meethaq ensures enhanced accessibility through its dedicated banking network and provides with free access to over 900 ATMs and CDMs under Bank Muscat.

Every Meethaq product is created in accordance with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman and undergoes Sharia compliance review and certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board.

ENRICHING TALKS ON IOT AND AI

GCET concludes AIoT Congress 2025

MUSCAT: The Global College of Engineering and Technology (GCET) organized the AIoT Congress on 13 May, at the Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC, Al Irfan City. The event was held under the patronage of Dr. Saif Abdullah Sulaiman Al Haddabi Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, for Research and Innovation.

It was attended by representatives from various public and private institutions, industry leaders, innovators, and visionaries involved in integrating artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things. The congress also featured more than 15 official speakers, including specialists, researchers, and academics from government entities, academic institutions, and local companies specialized in creative technologies, urban planning, business development, cyber security, energy, and more, with the participation of over 200 attendees involving professionals and enthusiasts in these fields.

The congress aimed to empower innovative solutions and explore the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things on transforming vital industrial sectors. It also highlighted their contributions to advancing various fields and achieving national visions. Key topics discussed included security threats and challenges associated with these technologies, their role in vital and industrial sectors such as Energy and Mechanical Engineering, their applications in enhancing the efficiency and connectivity of smart cities and urban life, and the current landscape and innovation in IoT. These discussions occurred over keynote addresses and panel sessions, where participants shared their experiences, knowledge, insights, and forward-looking perspectives.

Dr. Khawla Al Harthi, Head of the Computer Science and Creative Technologies Department at GCET, emphasized the importance of such events in raising awareness about technological advancements and sharing visions, aspirations, and successful experiences in applying creative technologies, alongside their contributions in drawing inspirations from experiences in aligning with the growth and development in these areas.

Al Harthi stated: "We believe that scientific research, exposure, and participation in specialized discussions and talks are among the most powerful tools for development and ensuring continuous improvement across various sectors. As one of the leading educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman, we carry a significant responsibility. We are committed to organizing such events in collaboration with relevant institutions to ensure their success and reach the highest efficiency and quality levels in discussing key topics. Organizing the AIoT Congress stems from our commitment to promoting progress, growth, and development in this area.

"We aim to expand the applications of these creative technologies and harness them to serve development across sectors in line with national visions and aspirations, while ensuring we move forward with the highest levels of security and readiness to confront any potential cyber-challenges or threats".

EXCLUSIVE EVENT

St Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, Premium Motors and Al Mouj Golf to host 2025 Audi Quattro Cup Qualifier

MUSCAT: The St Regis Al Mouj Muscat, Premium Motors and Al Mouj Golf are honoured to welcome golf enthusiasts for the prestigious 2025 Audi quattro Cup Qualifier, set to take place on Friday, May 16 at the legendary Greg Norman designed golf course at Al Mouj Golf.

This exclusive event epitomizes the perfect blend of refined luxury, sporting excellence, and exceptional hospitality, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Oman's premier coastal resort.

Up to 100 players will compete in teams of two, employing the Greensomes Stableford format, vying for the coveted opportunity to represent Oman at the Audi quattro Cup World Final. This global event draws approximately 70,000 amateur golfers from 38 countries annually and will return to Al Mouj Golf from November 22nd to 24th, 2025.

Participants will be treated to a prize ceremony luncheon at the resort, showcasing the seamless collaboration between The St. Regis, Audi, and Al Mouj Golf. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to precision, excellence, and unparalleled luxury hospitality.

Competitors stand to win premium prizes offered by Audi and The St. Regis, including awards for top placements, nearest the pin, longest drive, and an exciting hole-in-one challenge. Additional raffle prizes will add to the event's excitement.

Al Mouj Golf, a championship 18-hole course and a floodlit 9-hole par three layout, offers a challenging course with stunning views along the Sea of Oman, perfectly complementing the resort's luxurious oceanfront setting. The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, recently nominated for multiple prestigious awards including Oman's Leading Luxury Resort 2025, ensures participants experience world-class service and amenities throughout the event.

AT OPES

Federal Transformers and Switchgears showcases innovation in power solutions

MUSCAT: Federal Transformers and Switchgears (FTS), a leading Omani manufacturer of power and distribution transformers, proudly announces its participation in the Oman Petroleum & Energy Show (OPES), taking place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

As a subsidiary of the Federal Electric Group under The Zubair Corporation, FTS stands at the forefront of precision engineering and sustainable electrification. With a firm commitment to innovation and quality, the company will showcase its advanced portfolio of transformer solutions designed for energy efficiency, safety, and durability across diverse industrial applications.

At OPES 2025, FTS will spotlight its state-of-the-art products and services, including conservator and hermetically sealed transformers up to 20 MVA, engineered for performance and longevity; compact, packaged substations tailored for modern grid infrastructure; specialised transformers for solar, oil & gas, and converter duty applications; dry-type cast resin transformers, known for high efficiency and superior fire safety; and end-to-end service solutions, including on-site maintenance, rewinding, oil filtration, and transformer re-engineering.

"Our participation at OPES 2025 reflects our continued drive to support Oman's energy transition with safe, sustainable, and technologically advanced solutions," said Mickey Patel, General Manager at FTS. He also added that "we look forward to engaging with industry leaders, partners, and clients to demonstrate how our local manufacturing capabilities contribute to regional growth and energy resilience."