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14 FEBRUARY

HH Sayyid Bilarab to grace final of HM the Sultan’s Football Cup



MUSCAT: At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, will grace the final match of His Majesty the Sultan’s Football Cup for the 2025/2026 sports season. The final is scheduled to take place at 8:00 PM on Saturday, 14 February 2026, at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. – **ONA**



Royal Air Force of Oman marks its Annual Day **A4**

SULTANATE, USA PLAN TO MAXIMISE BENEFITS OF FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Oman announced its approval to join the ‘Artemis Accords’ for space exploration

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the United States of America held a strategic dialogue at Diplomatic Club in Muscat on Sunday during which they discussed means of maximising the benefits of the free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries and augmenting American investments in sectors of priority for the Sultanate of Oman. These sectors include the digital economy, technology and space, in addition to mining, logistics, aviation, and infrastructure. Cooperation in the fields of education and culture was also discussed, particularly educational programmes, academic and professional exchange, and investment in research and innovation. During the third session of the meeting, Oman and USA further exchanged views and positions on a number of regional and international issues, emphasising the importance of backing efforts for peace, stability, and development. During the dialogue, the Omani side was chaired by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, while the American side was chaired by Allison Hooker, US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs. The Omani side announced the Sultanate of Oman’s approval



to join the “Artemis Accords” for space exploration. The Artemis Accords are a set of non-binding, multilateral principles established in 2020 by NASA and the U.S. Department of State to guide safe, sustainable, and transparent civil space exploration. With many countries and private companies conducting missions and operations around the Moon, the Artemis Accords provide a common set of principles to enhance the governance of the civil exploration and use of outer space. A cooperation statement on the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America was also signed. The statement also includes the commemoration of the historical relations between the two countries. Furthermore, a memorandum of understanding for partnership and cooperation was signed between the Embassy of the United States of America in the Sultanate of Oman and the Oman American Business Centre.

OMAN

Omani-Saudi naval exercise begins

1 The Omani-Saudi joint naval drill “Winds of Peace 2026” began yesterday. The exercise is being carried out by several vessels from the Royal Navy of Oman’s fleet in Al Batinah region. **>A2**

WORLD

Over 13,000 flights cancelled in US

2 Over 13,000 US flights were cancelled, as an “unusually expansive” winter storm descended across much of the eastern half of the country. More flights are scheduled to be cancelled. **>A7**

MARKET

Inflation rate rises in Oman by 1.6%

3 The general consumer price index in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 1.6 percent in December 2025 compared to the same month of 2024 (base year 2018). **>B1**

WORLD CUSTOMS DAY

One-stop customs permits hit 140,000, fastest issued in 16 seconds

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s Directorate General of Customs is redefining government efficiency with its one-stop electronic permit system, issuing over 140,000 permits in 2025 - some in as little as 16 seconds - a milestone in speeding up trade and service delivery for businesses and citizens alike. The achievement was highlighted during this year’s World Customs Day, themed “Customs protects society through vigilance and commitment”, showcasing how digital integration across government entities is transforming Oman’s logistics and regulatory environment. Brigadier Said bin Khamis Al Ghaithi, Director General of Customs, said the one-stop station is part of the broader Bayan platform, which connects customs with multiple government agencies to allow complete electronic processing of permits, risk management, and post-clearance audits. Brig. Al Ghaithi said that the one-stop shop ensures that compliance does not slow down trade, while maintaining strict controls to prevent prohibited goods from entering the country. He added that digital transformation is no longer optional - it is a strategic enabler of both security and economic growth. In addition to the one-stop per-



mits, the Directorate processed over 1.29 million customs declarations in 2025, demonstrating that high-volume efficiency and tight control can coexist. The use of artificial intelligence in customs valuation and risk management has allowed officers to detect more than 1,000 cases of smuggling or prohibited imports, marking a 10% increase over 2024. The one-stop initiative also supports Oman’s broader economic diversification goals by reducing administrative friction for businesses, attracting investment, and speeding the flow of goods across borders. The Directorate is also focused on building national talent capable of managing advanced digital systems, alongside public awareness campaigns and a 24-hour toll-free call centre (80080022) to assist traders and passengers.

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MUSCAT

CABLES

His Majesty sends greetings to Australia and India

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Sam Mostyn, Governor-General of Australia on her country's National Day.

His Majesty the Sultan has also

sent a cable of greetings to President Droupadi Murmu of India on her country's Republic Day.

In the cables, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and lauded the relations

binding Oman with Australia and India. His Majesty also underlined the keenness to enhance this cooperation and utilise these relations in a manner that serves the common interests. -ONA

COMMENTARY

The Real Me



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

Disaster is never far aware when you try to do a hundred things at the same time. I reminded myself that two hands and a pair of eyes were all I had to do everything. I make many excuses when the pressure is on. I blame the time for whizzing past and sometimes people around me. I also blame unkind deadlines of my work and even the telephone that keeps ringing all the time. It was only last week, after I swept away a steaming cup of tea off the table, that I realised I needed to put everything in a proper perspective. I looked at the broken glasses and I said to myself quite loudly, "slow down, man, slow down." The tone of my voice surprised me. It was as if the

words were spoken by somebody else. I let my imagination run wild as I cleaned up the floor. There was another person lurking inside me, I thought. This person was in a great hurry and wanted to live in a fast lane of life. This person, I let my thoughts wonder even further, thrive in pressure and ignores the potential dangers.

The second person was opposite and has the temperament of a man with fewer demands. As I disposed of the broken glasses in the bin, I wondered which character was in control that precise moment. It was then the shrill of the telephone disturbed the silent discussions between the two personalities in me.

I grabbed the phone and my impulse was to snap on whoever was at the end of the line. I guess that came from the character who was always in a hurry. However, I refused to bow to his demands and said quite calmly to the mouth-piece, "hello."

It was a secretary of the CEO who I requested an interview. She said her boss would not be available to answer my questions for the next thirty days.

"He is going on holiday..." there was a pause, perhaps she was looking for reaction but when none came, she added, "sorry about that but I will be in touch."

There was an awkward silence after that because she

expected me to say something back. The truth is that I was giving one of my characters a chance to decide who was going to respond first. I think the more sensible one won the argument and I heard myself saying, "that's okay. I can wait for another month."

Before she hung up, she asked me, "are you alright, Mr Shaibany?"

I told her I was perfectly alright. Deep inside, as I put down the phone, I knew there was some change in me and I was far away from being alright. Minutes later, as I stared blankly at the screen of my computer, I wondered if I was going mad. Was the clash of the two personalities in me an imaginary one? Or was it just a conflict between what was right and wrong was taking hold of me?

It took more several minutes for me to decide what I thought was the right thing to do. I switched off the computer and decided to do nothing at all. I also switched off my mobile and disengaged the office telephone. I then went on to do something I never did for many years.

I took off straight to the beach and plunged into the warm water for a quite swim. As the gulls hovered above me, I knew I had to do something about the two personalities in me. I may have to go back to the root of my conflict to find the real me. But where is he?

BILATERAL COOPERATION

HM receives message from Sultan of Brunei Darussalam

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam.

The message deals with the cordial relations and bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The message was handed over to Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, when he received on Sunday Dato Erywan, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, who is on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, which was held at the General Diwan of the Foreign Ministry today, the two sides reviewed the friendship relations between the two countries. They emphasised a shared commitment to enhancing existing cooperation across various



fields to serve mutual interests, particularly in economic and commercial domains.

The focus was also on developing partnership in the field of renewable energy, tourism projects, and infrastructure sectors such as transportation, in addition to deepening cultural and civilisa-

tional communication between the two peoples.

They also exchanged viewpoints on a number of issues and regional developments in both the ASEAN region and the Middle East, in addition to the developments on the international arena. -ONA

AL BATINAH

Omani-Saudi naval drill 'Winds of Peace 2026' starts

MUSCAT: The Omani-Saudi joint naval drill "Winds of Peace 2026" commenced on Sunday.

The exercise is being carried out by several vessels from the Royal Navy of Oman's fleet in the Al Batinah maritime region.

It features the participation of crews from vessels of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces. It is supported by the Royal Army of Oman and the Royal Air Force OF Oman.

The exercise will encompass numerous training programs and practical applications, involving the execution of various naval operations, formations, maneuvers, and specialised exercises.

This will be alongside an exchange of expertise among the participating ship crews, in accordance with the exercise's planned agenda.



The execution of this joint exercise falls within the framework of the annual training plans of the Royal Navy of Oman and the joint exercise plans with the navies of sisterly and friendly countries.

It aims to maintain the operational readiness levels of the Royal Navy of Oman's fleet and its personnel across various naval specialisations, aligning with the national tasks assigned to it. -ONA

NEW ACCOMPLISHMENT

Al Suwaiq Hospital conducts a milestone colon surgery

A'SUWAIQ: Al Suwaiq Hospital recently succeeded in conducting the first laparoscopic colon resection in its history.

The surgery set a milestone in the hospital's medical achievements. It was the outcome of rapid development in the hospital's facilities, helping it keep pace with updates in surgical specialisations.

Dr. Hatim Dhiab Al Saadi, Director of A'SuwaiqHospital, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the surgery lasted three hours and was conducted in accordance with approved medical standards.

He added that the patient's condition was clinically stable and was discharged from the hospital on the fourth day after the surgery.

Dr. Hatim added that the surgery gains significance as a new accomplishment in providing specialised surgical care within North Al Batinah Governorate.

He pointed out that the hospital brought this type of specialised surgery close to the local community, noting that, earlier, patients from North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah governorates could only access this service in Muscat.

The success of the laparoscopic



colon resection at Al Suwaiq Hospital also reflects the high level of integration and institutional cooperation with the specialised team of the Royal Hospital, said Dr. Hatim, noting that this step contributes to the principle of decentralisation in health services.

Dr. Hatim explained that the operation was performed by qualified national staff from Al Suwaiq Hospital, assisted by a specialised surgical team from the Royal Hospital.

This type of cooperation stems from a vision to transfer expertise from larger health institutions and to enhance the sustainability of such advanced

surgeries with each health establishment, he added.

Speaking about future plans of Al SuwaiqHospital, Dr. Hatim said that the hospital seeks to expand its advanced endoscopic surgeries to include upper and lower gastrointestinal surgeries, liver and pancreas surgeries, as well as orthopaedic and paediatric surgeries.

He added that the hospital's plans fit within a clear strategic vision aimed at developing specialised services, raising the efficiency of national cadres and enhancing the quality of health-care provided to the local community. -ONA

MUSANDAM

Municipal Council discusses service-related topics

KHASAB: The Municipal Council of Musandam Governorate discussed a number of development proposals aimed at improving traffic flow, enhancing safety levels, and facilitating access between various areas of the Wilayat of Khasab.

This comes within the framework of efforts to develop the infrastructure of Khasab and enhance the efficiency of the road network in line with urban and population



growth. This took place during the Municipal Council's first meeting

this year, chaired by Sayyid Faisal Hamoud Al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam and Chairman of the Municipal Council for Musandam Governorate.

This falls within a comprehensive approach to enhance the infrastructure of the Wilayat of Khasab and achieve balanced and sustainable development that meets the aspirations of citizens and contributes to improving the level of services provided.

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Auction of RO 100 Million Bonds, 5 Years at 4.05% Per Annum

Government Development Bonds

On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman announces the 80th issuance of Government Development Bonds (GDBs) to be auctioned. The 80th issuance of GDBs will be issued on Tuesday, 3rd February 2026, carrying a coupon rate of 4.05% per annum for a maturity period of 5 years (maturing on 3rd February 2031). These Bonds will be auctioned and priced on Sunday, 1st February 2026. Investors may apply for these Bonds through licensed commercial banks by completing the application form.

Security of Capital

The GDBs are direct and unconditional obligations of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman.

Steady Returns

Interest shall accrue from the date of issuance and will be paid semi-annually on 3rd February and 3rd August of every year until maturity. The first payment will be made on 3rd August 2026. Interest payments will cease once the Bond matures..

Liquidity

The bonds will be listed and can be traded before maturity in the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) at the prevailing market price.

Collateral Advantage

The Bonds can be used as collateral security to obtain loans from any licensed commercial bank.

Who Can Invest?

The 80th issuance of GDBs is offered to all categories of investors, residents and non-residents (irrespective of their nationalities).

How to buy the bonds?

Investors may obtain bonds through any licensed commercial bank operating in the Sultanate of Oman, upon the submission of an eligible application form. Investors must provide their MCD Investor Code in the application form.

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The investor must provide the same Bank Account details registered with Muscat Clearing and Depository Co. S.A.O.C. (MCD).

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Anyone without an MCD Investor Code can obtain it from MCD's website (www.mcd.gov.om) or via the Oman Stocks app at least one day before applying through the commercial bank.

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To view the prospectus for the 80th issuance of GDBs, please visit the following websites:

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Oman, USA discuss bilateral ties

The US official met with Minister of Royal Office and Foreign Minister



MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of Royal Office received Allison Hooker, US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and her accompanying delegation in his office on Sunday. Gen. Al Nu'amani welcomed the guest, who extended her thanks and appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for promoting ways of co-

operation to achieve the common interests of the two countries. The meeting also featured an exchange of cordial conversations and viewpoints on matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by AnaA.Escrogima, Ambassador of the United States to Oman.

Foreign Minister meets US official
Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received Allison



Hooker, United States Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs. During the meeting, the two sides discussed prospects for enhancing bilateral cooperation across various political and economic fields. They also touched on ways to encourage American investments in priority sectors for the Sultanate of Oman in a manner that supports the long-term strategic partnership between the two countries. -ONA

Many digital projects implemented

SUR: The South Al Sharqiyah Governorate witnessed the implementation of distinctive packages of digital projects and initiatives during 2025. This included the digitisation of 14 government services, the completion of 5,694 digital government transactions, and the full execution of 12 digital projects, while work is ongoing to implement 4 other digital projects. Eng. Abdullah Saif Al Araqimi, Head of Digital Transformation Team in South A'Sharqiyah Governorate, stated that this work comes within an integrated phased framework aimed at enhancing performance efficiency, raising the readiness of the digital infrastructure, and achieving a sustainable impact on service quality. He indicated that the Digital Transformation Plan (2026-2030) has been prepared, the "South A'Sharqiyah Hackathon" was implemented in cooperation with Oman Investment Authority, the "Smart Helmet" project was launched to enhance fieldwork using augmented reality, and the "Smart Lighting" project was launched as part of smart city initiatives. -ONA

HAILS OMAN'S EFFORTS

Royal Office Minister meets Palestinian Ambassador

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of Royal Office received in his office yesterday Ahmed Mahmoud Ahmed Al Rowaidhi, Ambassador of the State of Palestine appointed to the Sultanate of Oman. Ambassador Al Rowaidhi expressed his appreciation for the efforts exerted by the Sultanate of Oman to enhance avenues of cooperation in achieving common interests between the two countries. He also lauded Oman's steadfast and balanced political stances and its supportive endeavors aimed at achieving peace in coordination with all relevant international parties. During the meeting, cordial conversations were exchanged, and a number of matters of mutual interest were discussed. -ONA

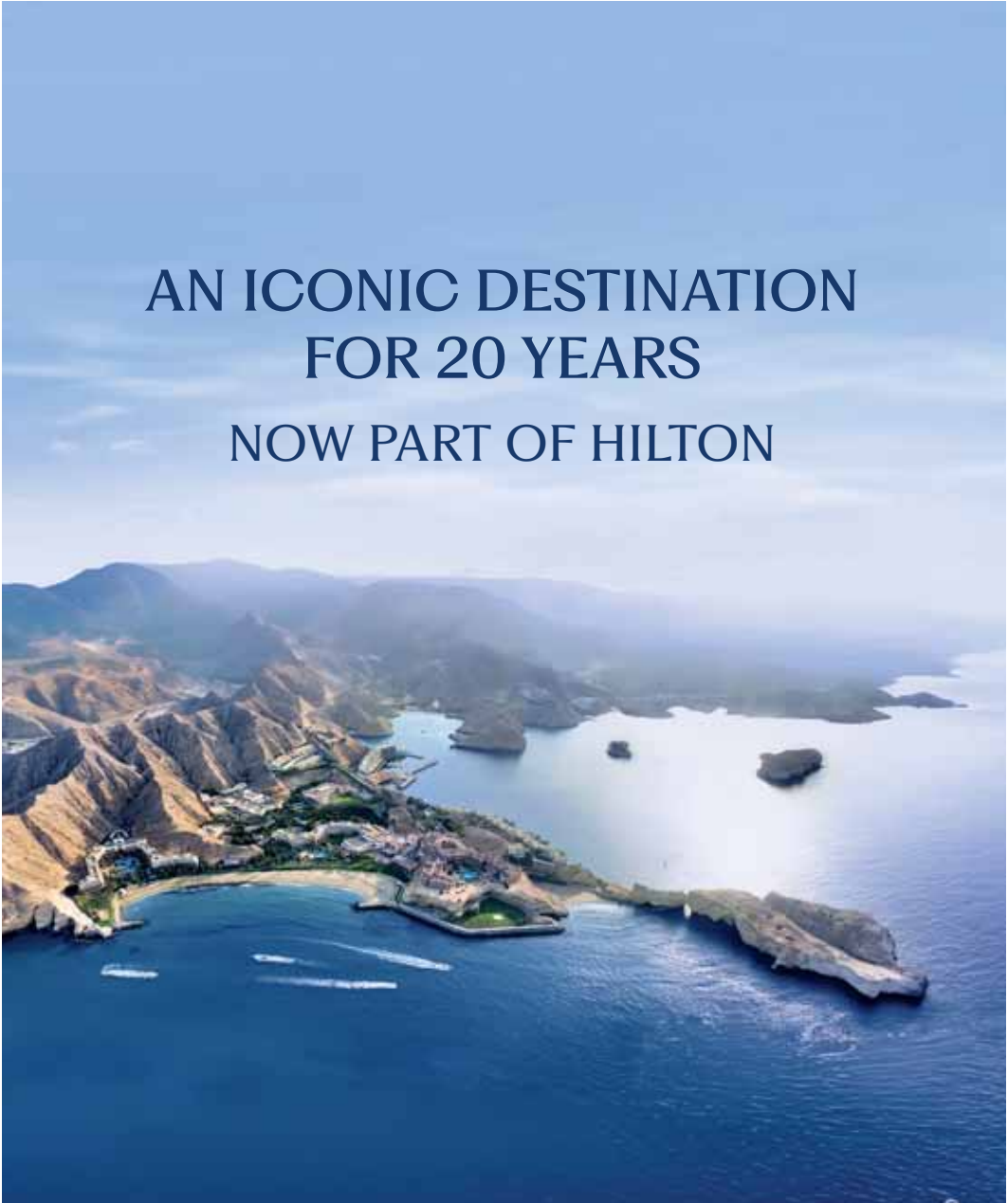


DRUGS UNEARTHED

Two persons arrested

MUSCAT: The Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Control Department, in coordination with the Al Dhahirah Governorate Police Command, has arrested a Yemeni national for possessing large quantities of psychotropic substance tablets intended for trafficking and personal use. In another incident, an Asian national was apprehended by the South Al Batinah Governorate Police Command for selling chewing tobacco and unauthorised cigarettes' in the Wilayat of Wadi Ma'awil.

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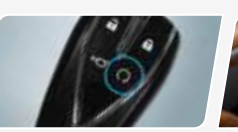
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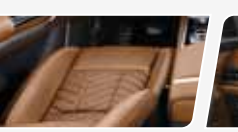
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RAFO marks its Annual Day

The RAFO performed a military parade that demonstrated the skill of its personnel and highlighted the great attention accorded to the RAFO by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander

MUSCAT: The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) celebrated its Annual Day, which coincides with the 25th of January each year, along with the graduation of the Basic Officer Candidate Course and the Limited Service/University Graduate Officer Candidate Course.

The ceremony took place at the military parade grounds of Ghala Base and Sultan Qaboos Air Academy, under the patronage of HH Sayyid Dr. Kamil bin Fahd Al Said, Secretary General at the Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers.

On this auspicious occasion, the RAFO performed a military parade that demonstrated the skill of its personnel and highlighted the great attention accorded to the RAFO by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander.

Upon the arrival of the chief guest to the celebration ground, the graduates gave the military salute and the RAFO band played the Royal Anthem. Then, HH Sayyid Dr. Kamil inspected the front column of the graduates' column.

After that, the front column of the graduates presented an infantry parade—headed by the Sultan Qaboos Air Academy's standard, passing in front of the dais, to the accompaniment of bands playing military music. Then, the column moved forward in the parade formation.

Then, HH Sayyid Dr. Kamil handed over the Sword of Honour to Flying Lieutenant Al Farooq Hamad Al Jabri, who won the overall first place at the Basic Officer Candidates Course. He also honoured Air Lieutenant Abdulrahman Nabhan Al Amri, who won first place at the level of the Course for Limited Service and University Officer Recruits.

This was followed by protocols of the Sultan Qaboos Air Academy's standard handover from the graduating batch to the batch currently undergoing training, whose members swore to keep the Academy's standard fluttering high.



Then, the graduating officers chanted the anthem of the Royal Air Force of Oman, took the oath of loyalty, pledged allegiance and proclaimed thrice: “Long live His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander.”

Then, a number of fighter aircraft of the Royal Air Force of Oman presented an airshow in the sky of the celebration square, demonstrating RAFO's high level of modernization, its armament, training and human capabilities. The overall display reflected the great attention accorded to the RAFO by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander. After that, the RAFO band played the Royal Anthem.

Then, the commander of the graduates' column asked HH Sayyid Dr. Kamil permission to dismiss. The graduates' column quitted the parade ground, passing in front of the dais. After that, the RAFO Band played a variety of military melodies that reflected the perfect musical performance that distinguishes its members and the modern musical equipment and instruments with which it has been equipped.

The event was attended by some Royal family members, ministers, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces and other military and security services, as well as a number of invitees.



Role of emerging technologies, AI in managing governorates discussed

The conference serves as a strategic national platform that brings together decision-makers, experts, and innovators to promote the concepts of smart governorates



SUR: The “Smart Governorates and Cities Conference and Hackathon” began on Sunday in the Wilayat of Sur, aiming to build a smarter and more sustainable future based on innovation and digital transformation.

The event was held under the patronage of Dr. Yahya Badr Al Maawali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah.

The conference serves as a strategic national platform that brings together decision-makers, experts, and innovators to promote the concepts of smart governorates.

This aligns with the priorities of “Oman Vision 2040,” which aims to enhance the quality of government services and achieve technical integration across various sectors.

The conference sessions discuss local and international trends and policies in the fields of sustainability and innovation.

They focus on the role of emerg-

ing technologies and artificial intelligence applications in managing governorates, addressing developmental and environmental challenges through innovative digital solutions that enhance institutional efficiency.

Dr. Al Maawali emphasised in his speech that the conference embodies a strategic approach to serve society and promote comprehensive development.

He noted that innovation and digital transformation have become a national necessity driven by global changes, contributing to increasing government performance efficiency and improving the quality of life for citizens and residents.

He affirmed that the conference and hackathon align with the targets of Oman Vision 2040, particularly in the pillars of the economy, development, governance, and institutional performance, to build

a knowledge-based economy and an effective digital government capable of competing regionally and globally.

He also underlined the Governorate’s full commitment to supporting the outcomes of the “Smart Governorates Conference and Hackathon 2026” and working to transform the creative solutions presented by participants into implementable field projects.

For his part, Dr. Ali Amer Al Sheithani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, stated that the conference represents a pioneering idea for developing smart governorate models. He indicated that adopting modern technologies contributes to raising performance efficiency, improving productivity, and reducing costs.

He expressed his hope that the

hackathon would produce quality solutions that support digital transformation pathways and increase user satisfaction.

The conference featured a presentation by the international speaker, Mounir Kabbara, who addressed the accelerated transformations in global urbanization patterns, where 68% of the world’s population is expected to live in cities by 2050.

Kabbara reviewed the significant growth in the smart cities market, which is estimated to reach \$4.06 trillion by 2031.

He also highlighted the evolution stages of cities from traditional models to “cognitive cities” reliant on data and artificial intelligence, explaining ways to overcome challenges faced by municipalities, such as cybersecurity and upgrade costs, through flexible financing models and effective data governance.

The hackathon accompanying the conference focused on six main themes: Environment and Sustainability, Smart Cities and Services, Smart Agriculture and Fishing, Transportation and Safety, E-commerce, and Smart Urban Planning.

The Smart Governorates Conference concluded with a set of strategic recommendations aimed at accelerating the pace of digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman, in line with the targets of “Oman Vision 2040.”

Participants emphasised the necessity of focusing on high-impact use cases and integrating them into the national digital system, while linking smart city initiatives to the competitive economic advantage of each governorate.

The programme reviewed the experience of Sultan Haitham City as the first integrated smart city in the Sultanate of Oman, relying on digital infrastructure and smart governance to ensure sustainable urban management.

In a related context, Fatima Said Beit Dashesha, Director of Salalah Smart City Project, presented the strategic vision for Dhofar Governorate, affirming that smart technologies represent a lever for sustainable development that serves humanity and the environment and supports modern urban planning.

The conference was accompanied by an exhibition of digital projects in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, highlighting practical applications.

These included utilising satellite data to support planning and decision-making, smart lighting and irrigation projects, the “Mashariq” application and the Governorate’s digital portal, and the “An’am” application for smart

slaughterhouses.

For its part, ETCO Space Company showcased advanced technologies for analysing satellite images supported by artificial intelligence, aimed at monitoring urban and environmental changes and providing interactive geospatial analysis platforms to support decision-making based on precise data.

At the end of the conference, a set of strategic recommendations were announced, most notably adopting the Governorate as a national pilot model for implementing the smart governorates approach, and developing a unified platform for government services in the Governorate based on artificial intelligence technologies.

On the sidelines of the conference, entrepreneurs from the Wilayat of Sur showcased innovative digital solutions. Prominent among these were the “Sahim” application, specialized in the smart management of containers and reports, and the “Radm” electronic platform for efficiently managing construction waste.

These innovations reflect the growing role of the private sector and youth in promoting environmental sustainability and enhancing the quality of municipal services.

The conference culminated in the conclusion of the hackathon activities, where the three winning teams who presented promising technical solutions were felicitated.

The conference recommended adopting these projects and enrolling their owners in business accelerators and innovation incubators, to ensure transforming their ideas into pioneering projects that contribute to the digital renaissance in the Governorate. -ONA

JAALAN BANI BU HASSAN

Dates & Honey Forum explores marketing strategy

JAALAN BANI BU HASSAN: The 4th Dates and Honey Forum held yesterday in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, presented innovative marketing methods aimed at enhancing the added value of Omani agricultural products and achieving sustainability in the sectors of beekeeping and date palm farming.

The forum, which saw the participation of 7 government departments and private establishments, was aimed to encourage farmers and beekeepers to develop their industries in accordance with the



latest marketing practices.

Salim Sultan Al Aaraimi, Director of the Department of Agriculture,

Fisheries and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, told Oman News Agency

(ONA) that the forum participants applied modern display methods and attractive packaging procedures that adhered to the highest standards of food safety. This approach, he observed, contributes to enhancing the marketing climate for local products and activating the role of small and medium enterprises.

Al Aaraimi said, “The forum focuses on diversifying products made from from dates—like sweets, biscuits and dates syrup—and presenting them in modern ways that meet consumers’ aspirations. It also outlines the stages of

producing Omani honey and highlighting the progress made in the household-based food processing sector.”

Al Aaraimi pointed out that the production of dates in the South A’Sharqiyah Governorate in 2024 stood at 28,387 tons and that the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan occupied first place at the level of the governorate (12,588 tons) and 10th place at the level of the Sultanate of Oman—thus affirming its status as a strong contributor to food security and the diversification of national economy at large. -ONA

AT SQU

Arabic language programme kicks off

MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) on Sunday launched the 3rd edition of its landmark “Arabic Language and Omani Culture Programme” organised by the university’s International Cooperation Office. The programme runs until 22 February 2025.

The programme’s opening ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Dr. Fahad bin Al Julanda Al Said, Vice Chancellor of SQU.

Salim Mohammed Al Hajri, Acting Head of the Academic and Student Exchange Department at the SQU, gave a speech in which he underlined role of Arabic language in promoting cultural communication and enhancing knowledge transfer.

He added that the programme reflects the university’s efforts in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, in cooperation with international universities, including Kazan Federal University in Russia, the universities of Pusan National University and Dankook University in South Korea and Peking University in China.

Al Hajri pointed out that the programme seeks to provide the participating students with skills of speaking, writing and reading in Arabic. -ONA

NORTH AL BATINAH

Forum to enhance governance

SOHAR: The Office of the Governor of North Al Batinah organised yesterday the Governorates’ Financial Forum under the slogan “Governance & Efficiency & Impact”. This 2-day event is

held within the framework of enhancing financial management efficiency, entrenching the principles of governance and sustainability, and raising the quality of institutional performance. -ONA



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TENDER NOTICE
REF: ISM/ADMIN/TENDER/2025-26/004

Sealed tenders are invited from potential **service providers / contractors / consultants** for the following requirements of the school.

- Supply & Installation of (CCTV) Surveillance System (394 Nos.)
- Supply & Installation of Enterprise Grade High Availability (HA) IPPBX System
- Supply & Installation of High-performance, Scalable and Reliable Rack Server
- Renovation of Computer Labs including the supply of Furniture for the lab
- Consultancy Services for the design and development new AI Lab and Dance/Music Room
- Consultancy Services for the design and development of new Track & Artificial Turf Ground in the ISM Main Campus
- Renovation of cricket practice nets in A & D Blocks and construction of a new retaining wall near to the D Block practice net
- Development of new Artificial Turf Ground in the Jibroo Campus

Interested parties shall collect the tender documents from the school cash counter against the payment of **RO.10/-** as a non-refundable tender fee from **27th January to 5th February 2026** during the working days of the school between **7.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.**

The tender should be submitted in separate sealed envelopes; one with the technical documents and another with commercial proposal clearly indicating the title on the top of the cover. The parameters for the technical evaluation are provided in the tender for the information of vendors. It is the responsibility of the vendor to submit the documents related to the technical evaluation along with the tender in a separate envelope. The tender should be in a sealed envelope, addressed to **The Chairman, Purchase Sub Committee, Indian School Muscat, P.O. Box: 2470, PC: 112, Sultanate of Oman.**

Note: The tender shall clearly mention the "Name of service quoted for" by the bidding party. Any tender without the name of service/supply will be considered disqualified.

Last date of tender submission: 17th February 2026



Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender title	Last date for tender Purchase Online	Bid submission date
73/2025 Re-floated	Providing cleaning services for the Ministry's headquarters building, the Directorate General of Labour Welfare building, the Seeb Labour Department building, and the Muttrah Labour Department building.	Thursday 29/01/2026 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 08/02/2026 10 a.m.
03/2026	Pre-qualification for on-the-job training programs.	Monday 09/02/2026 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 01/03/2026 10 a.m.

- Specialized establishments may obtain the tenders' documents online through the following link, starting from Wednesday 21/01/2026 at 08:00 a.m.: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Bids shall be submitted online.
- Bids shall be opened at 11:00 am on the date mentioned against each tender.

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



Padma Awards 2026 honour unsung heroes from across India

This year's list reflects a strong focus on people who have dedicated their lives to serving 'Divyangjan', women, children, Dalits and tribal communities

New Delhi: The list of Padma Awards recipients for 2026 was announced on Sunday on the eve of the Republic Day, recognising 45 unsung heroes from across the country for their distinguished service in diverse fields, including social work, literature and education, healthcare, public service and community welfare.



The awardees include individuals who have worked quietly at the grassroots for decades, many of them hailing from marginalised communities, Dalit and backward sections, primitive tribes and remote or difficult terrains.

This year's list reflects a strong focus on people who have dedicated their lives to serving 'Divyangjan', women, children, Dalits and tribal communities, while promoting education, healthcare, sanitation, sustainability and livelihoods.

Among the recipients, Anke

Gowda from Karnataka will be conferred the Padma Shri 2026 in the unsung heroes category.

Other awardees include Armida Fernandez, Bhagwandas Raikwar, Bhikya Ladakya Dhinda, Brij Lal Bhat, Budhri Tati, Charan Hembram, Chiranji Lal Yadav, Dharmiklal Chunilal Pandya, Gafruddin Mewati Jogi, Inderjit Singh Sidhu, Kollakkayil Devaki Amma G, Kumarasamy Thangaraj, Mahendra Kumar Mishra, Mir Hajibhai Kasambhai, Mohan Nagar, Nilesh Vinodchandra Mandlewala, Nuruddin Ahmed, Padma Gurmet,

Pokhila Lekthepe, Raghuveer Tukaram Khedkar, Rajastapathi Kaliappa Goundar, Rama Reddy Mamidi, Ramchandra Godbole and Sunita Godbole, Sangyusang S Pongener, Shafi Shauq, Shirang Devaba Lad, Simanchal Patro, Taga Ram Bheel, Techu Gubin and Yumnam Jatra Singh.

The Padma Awards are among the highest civilian honours of the country and are conferred in three categories -- Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service, Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of a high order, and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field.

The awards are given across a wide range of disciplines such as art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports and civil service.

The Padma Awards are presented by the President of India at ceremonial functions held every year at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. — ANI



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AGE OF 90

Famed journalist, author Mark Tully passes away

NEW DELHI: Legendary journalist Mark Tully passed away at the age of 90 at a private hospital in the national capital on Sunday, the hospital said.

The former BBC journalist had been admitted to Max Super Speciality Hospital in the south Delhi locality of Saket for the past week.

According to an official statement from the hospital, Tully passed away on January 25 at 2:35 PM.

"The cause of death was multi-organ failure following a stroke. Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with his family, loved ones, and all those affected by his passing," the statement said.

Senior Congress leader Pawan Khara has also expressed condolences at the passing away of the Padma awardee journalist Mark Tully. Khara recollected living in the same locality as Tully.

Tully was born in Calcutta in 1935 into a wealthy family of British settlers. His father was the director of a railroad and a partner in a holding company that owned a bank, an insurance firm, and tea plantations. After the Second World War, his parents sent him to boarding school in the United Kingdom. He later took theology courses at Cambridge University and then entered a seminary.

— ANI

GLOBAL HEALTH WATCHDOG



WHO chief says US reasons for withdrawal 'untrue'

GENEVA: World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Saturday depicted as "untrue" the reasons given by the United States for its withdrawal from the global health watchdog.

On the social platform X, the WHO chief noted that the move will make the United States itself and the world "less safe."

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Jan. 20, 2025, the first day of his second term to formally initiate the US exit from the UN specialised agency. The United Nations received the formal notice two days later. Under the UN charter, the withdrawal takes effect one year after notice is given.

Commending the contribution made by the United States as a founding member to many of WHO's greatest achievements, Tedros wrote in the X post, "Unfortunately, the reasons cited for the US decision to withdraw from WHO are untrue."

The US move "makes both the

US and the world less safe," he said, expressing hope that the United States "will return to active participation in WHO in the future." Also on Saturday, the WHO issued a statement, voicing regret over the US withdrawal and rejecting accusations made by the Trump administration.

The US withdrawal raises issues that will be considered by the WHO Executive Board at its regular meeting starting on Feb. 2 and by the World Health Assembly at its annual meeting in May 2026, it said.

In dealing with the consequences, the WHO Secretariat "will act on advice and guidance of our governing bodies accordingly," a WHO press official told Xinhua in an email on Wednesday. The United States has yet to pay its outstanding membership dues, according to the official. "As of today, the USA has not paid the invoiced amounts for its assessed contributions for the biennium 2024-2025," the official said.

— Xinhua

16TH EU-INDIA SUMMIT

European Union delegates receive guard of honour upon arrival in Delhi

NEW DELHI: European Council President Antonio Luis Santos Da Costa and President Of European Commission Ursula Von Der Leyen received a guard of honour upon their arrival in India on Sunday.

Costa expressed his happiness upon arriving in India.

In a post on X, he said, "Honoured to arrive in New Delhi for the 16th EU-India Summit, on the eve of India's 77th Republic Day. Celebrating a strong and growing EU-India partnership--from trade and security to the clean transition and vibrant people-to-people connections."

A lot seems to be on the table as India is set to host the 16th EU-India Summit on January 27.

The leaders are expected to adopt a joint EU-India comprehensive strategic agenda and expand regional and multilateral cooperation.

The President of the European Council, Antonio Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, will represent the EU at the 16th EU-India summit in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host the summit, a statement by the European Council said.

The statement quoted Costa as saying, "India is a crucial partner for the EU. Together, we share the capacity and responsibility to protect the rules-based international order."

The summit will offer an opportunity to build on the EU-India strategic partnership and further strengthen collaboration across key policy areas such as trade, security and defence, the clean transition and people-to-people



cooperation.

Presidents Costa and von der Leyen will also attend India's 77th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, as guests of honour.

The summit will take place against the backdrop of the positive momentum in EU-India relations in recent years and the sustained high-level engagement across all domains, as per the statement.

In October 2025, the Council of the EU endorsed the new strategic EU-India agenda and its objective of further developing EU-India ties.

At the summit, leaders are expected to adopt a joint EU-India comprehensive strategic agenda that aims to increase strategic cooperation across several areas, reinforced by enablers across the following pillars: prosperity and sustainability, technology and innovation, security and defence, connectivity, and global issues.

Earlier, On the occasion of India's Republic Day and the 16th

EU-India Summit, European Council President Antonio Luis Santos da Costa will be visiting New Delhi in order to enhance strategic and economic relations between the two regions.

In a post on X, the EU in India said that ties between India and the European Union are moving forward with a focus on key cooperation areas.

"EU-India ties move forward. @EUCouncil President @antonio-costapm and @EU_Commission President @vonderleyen will be in New Delhi for the Republic Day & 16th EU-India Summit. Trade, security & clean transition and more on the agenda," the post read.

EU in India added, "We are coming all the way to India to strengthen our unique and trusted relationship... Our cooperation holds immense potential."

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, along with European Council President Antonio Luis Santos da Costa, will serve as chief guests at India's 77th Repub-

lic Day celebrations on Monday. The visit will be followed by the India-EU summit and the formalisation of a trade agreement.

Von der Leyen arrived in the national capital on Saturday on a state visit and was received by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada.

Speaking earlier this week at the World Economic Forum in Davos, von der Leyen said, "We are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement (with India)." Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has described the proposed free trade agreement as "the mother of all deals", as New Delhi and Brussels look to expand market access amid tightening global trade conditions driven by US tariffs and Chinese export restrictions.

India and the European Union have both been impacted by the trade approach of US President Donald Trump. India faces tariff rates of up to 50 per cent on certain exports to the United States, while the EU is yet to ratify a trade arrangement with Washington that has been criticised as imbalanced.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, has described India as "indispensable" to Europe's economic and strategic future. The 27-nation bloc has also advanced a new security and defence partnership with India. Together, India and the European Union represent around a quarter of the global population and gross domestic product. According to EU data, bilateral trade in goods touched 120 billion euros in 2024, marking an increase of nearly 90 per cent over the past decade, while trade in services amounted to an additional 60 billion euros. — ANI

TAIPEI 101

US man, Alex Honnold, free climbs Taiwan's 101-storey tower

TAIPEI: An American climber scaled Taiwan's tallest tower on Sunday, without a safety net or a harness, becoming the first person to do so.

Hundreds of spectators gathered as Alex Honnold, 40, began his journey up the "Taipei 101."

508 metres

After an hour and a half, Honnold had successfully climbed 1,667 feet (508 metres), uttering the word "sick" as he took in the view. He then rappelled down to his wife Sanni McCandless Hannold.

The risky adventure was captured and broadcast live on streaming platform Netflix.

"Time is finite," Honnold said in a press briefing, adding that people should "use it in the best way."

Was is Alex Honnold?



The adventurer rose to fame in 2017 after he climbed Yosemite's "El Captain" which is lauded among climbers as the pinnacle of technical difficulty.

Honnold told reporters that it had been a lifelong dream to scale

Taipei 101 to his list of achievements.

Honnold said he had considered to scale the building without permission after his first request was denied.

"But then out of respect for the

building and respect for all the people on the team who'd allowed me access to look at it, I was like, well obviously I'm not going to poach this, I'm going to respect the people and just see if it ever comes together," he told reporters.



"For the project to come together more than a decade later... It's so great. What an opportunity, it is such a pleasure."

Before Honnold, Alain Robert — dubbed the "French Spiderman" scaled the building to reach its

peak in 2004. But that was with the use of safety ropes.

Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te congratulated Honnold in a Facebook post on Sunday, branding the challenge "truly moving."

— DW

US Federal agents shoot and kill a 37-year-old man in Minneapolis

The man shot by federal agents in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Saturday, 37-year-old US citizen Alex Jeffrey Pretti, was an intensive care unit nurse at a local veteran affairs hospital, according to his family

MINNEAPOLIS: US Federal agents have shot and killed another person in Minneapolis. The deceased, a US citizen, has been identified as ICU nurse Alex Pretti

The man shot by federal agents in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Saturday, 37-year-old US citizen Alex Jeffrey Pretti, was an intensive care unit nurse at a local veteran affairs hospital, according to his family.

Pretti was “a kindhearted soul who cared deeply for his family and friends” and those he looked after at a Minneapolis Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital, his parents said in a statement on Saturday.

“Alex wanted to make a difference in this world. Unfortunately, he will not be with us to see his impact,” his parents said.

A hospital colleague of Pretti’s, Dimitri Drekonja, who heads the Infectious Diseases Section, called him “a good kind person who lived to help.” In a post on the Bluesky social media platform, he said Pretti worked “to support critically ill Veterans.”

Pretti’s father was cited by The Associated Press as saying that



his son had been deeply disturbed by the actions of federal immigration officials in Minneapolis, and had taken part in anti-ICE protests triggered by the death of another US citizen, Renee Good, in the city at the hands of a federal officer on January 7.

“He thought it was terrible, you know, kidnapping children, just grabbing people off the street. He cared about those people, and he knew it was wrong, so he did participate in protests,” Michael Pretti said.

The killing of a 37-year-old Minneapolis nurse named Alex Pretti on Saturday comes just three weeks after another Minnesota resident, 37-year-old Renee Good, was also shot and killed by a federal agent.

Bondi blames Minneapolis’s sanctuary city policies after second fatal shooting of resident

US Attorney General Pam Bondi has echoed the White House’s line that Minnesota’s authorities and their immigration policies have to do with the shooting that killed a Minneapolis man, Alex Pretti.

Speaking during an interview with Fox News, Bondi said the unrest in the city was “because you have a mayor, you have a governor who has declared Minneapolis a ‘sanctuary city.’”

A sanctuary city is a loosely defined term referring to a municipality that limits its cooperation

with the federal government in enforcing immigration law.

Proponents of the approach say sanctuary cities help build community trust and improve public safety, while critics argue that they undermine federal law and encourage illegal immigration.

Bondi claimed that Minnesota was stopping ICE from detaining immigrants who have allegedly been charged with violent crimes.

What Pam Bondi said

“Federal law enforcement agents are doing heroic work to remove the worst of the worst in Minnesota — and they’re only there in the first place because of [Minnesota Governor Tim] Walz, [Minnesota Attorney General Keith] Ellison, and [Minneapolis Mayor Jacob] Frey’s dangerous sanctuary policies,” Bondi posted on X.

She accused the state’s leaders of “creating the conditions for violence against law enforcement.” “NOTHING will stop us from enforcing the law — and NOTHING will stop President Trump from protecting the good people of Minnesota,” Bondi said.

During the interview with Fox News, Bondi said the Justice Department had sent a “very strong letter” to Walz, in which she told him he “better support President Trump, he better support the men and women in law enforcement, because if he doesn’t, we are.” AP’s report said he was born in Illinois, and was an avid lover



of outdoor life.

Court records have shown he had no criminal record.

His family said his contact with law enforcement had previously been limited to a handful of traffic tickets.

Democrats threaten shutdown after Minneapolis shooting

Several Democratic senators have said they will not pass upcoming federal government spending bills after the shooting of a second US citizen in Minneapolis by federal agents, meaning that a government shutdown next week has become increasingly likely.

The current funding for large parts of the federal government expires on January 31.

The funding, which would go partly to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Pentagon, has been passed by the Republican-led House of Representatives through September but will require Democratic support to get through the 100-member Senate with the required majority of 60 votes.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement Saturday that “Senate Democrats will not provide the votes to proceed to the appropriations bill if the DHS funding bill is included.”

Democratic Senator Catherine Cortez Masto from the state of Nevada was one of those who said they would vote against the funding for the DHS.

She accused the Trump admin-

istration and DHS chief Kristi Noem of “putting undertrained, combative federal agents on the streets with no accountability.”

Another Democratic senator, Mark Warner of Virginia, also said he would not approve the DHS funding following the shooting death in Minneapolis.

“I cannot and will not vote to fund DHS while this administration continues these violent federal takeovers of our cities,” he wrote on a post on X.

The last government shutdown, the longest in US history at 43 days, ended only in November.

Such shutdowns mean that hundreds of thousands of federal employees are furloughed, with only those deemed essential being asked to work on without pay. — DW

UNHRC MEETING



Iran reaffirms 3000-year civilisational bond with India

NEW DELHI: Iran’s ambassador to India, Mohammad Fathali, appreciated India’s stand on the United Nations Human Rights Council’s (UNHRC) 39th special session to address the deteriorating human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

“The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran always insists on good relations and collaboration between Iran and India...I hope that in Chabahar they will work nicely...The history of the relationship and collaboration between Iran and India goes to 3,000 years ago, before the emergence of Islam. Even at that time, we were using philosophical books of India,” he said.

India voted against the resolution at the UNHRC calling for increased scrutiny of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, aligning itself with a group of countries that opposed what they described as a selective and politically driven initiative.

The resolution sought to address what sponsors termed a deteriorating human rights situation in Iran. India’s vote placed it among a minority of states rejecting the measure, while several others abstained.

The resolution was adopted at the session by 25 votes in favour, seven against and 14 abstentions.

Reacting to India’s vote, in

a statement on X, Iranian Ambassador to India Mohammad Fathali welcomed New Delhi’s stance, saying, “I extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of India for its principled and firm support of I.R. of Iran at the UN_HRC, including opposing an unjust and politically motivated resolution. This stance reflects India’s commitment to justice, multilateralism, and national sovereignty.”

Earlier, noting that the history of the relationship and collaboration between Iran and India dates back hundreds of years before the emergence of Islam, Abdul Majid Hakeem Ilahi, the Representative of Iran’s Supreme Leader, said that India philosophical texts were studied in Iran.

He said India’s achievements in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine were studied in Iran and people of Iran have always learned about the relationship between the two ancient civilisations.

“Even at the university, we studied philosophical books of India, and in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, we were also using your civilisation, your knowledge, and we always learned through our schools the relationship between Iran and India,” he added.

UNITED STATES

US winter storm: More than 13,000 flights cancelled as temperatures dip

TEXAS: More than 13,000 US flights were cancelled from Saturday through Monday, as an “unusually expansive” winter storm descended across much of the eastern half of the country.

More flights within, into or out of the US are scheduled to be canceled on Sunday, with disruption approaching levels not seen since the coronavirus epidemic, aviation analytics firm Cirium said.

Heavy snowfall, sleet and freezing rain threatened nearly 180 million people between the Rocky Mountains and New England, the National Weather Service (NWS) said on Saturday night. That’s more than half of the entire population of the US.

“The snow and the ice will be very, very slow to melt and won’t be going away anytime soon, and that’s going to hinder any recovery efforts,” said Allison Santorelli, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service. “By the time this event winds down late Monday, it will leave a trail of more than 2,000 miles of wintry precipitation, in a nearly continuous path, from New Mexico to Maine,” the National Weather Service said.

US President Donald Trump also approved emergency declarations for multiple states to receive assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

More than 670,000 homes without power

The major storm has left thousands of families in the dark while forecasters warned that damage could rival that of a hurricane, especially in areas pounded by ice.

More than 670,000 households have been hit by outages nationwide, with more than 100,000 each in Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee, according to the website poweroutage.us on Sunday.

Other states affected included



Kentucky, Georgia, Virginia and New Mexico.

Storm of the decade

Georgia’s senior state meteorologist warned people that this could be “perhaps the biggest ice storm we have expected in more than a decade.”

“Ice is a whole different ballgame than snow,” Lanxton said. “Ice, you can’t do anything with. You can’t drive on it. It’s much more likely to

bring down power lines and trees.”

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp said he was deploying 120 National Guard members to the state’s northeast, after having earlier put 500 of them on standby.

Houston Mayor John Whitmore urged residents to hunker down by late on Saturday. “We’re not used to what’s supposed to be coming,” he said.

New York City Mayor Zohran

Mamdani urged New Yorkers to stay home if they could help it.

“Please, if you can avoid it, do not drive, do not travel, do not do anything that can potentially place you or your loved ones in danger,” he said.

“Instead, I urge every New Yorker who can to put a warm sweater on, turn on the TV, watch ‘Mission Impossible’ for the 10th time, above all to stay inside.” — DW

SPORTS

Abhishek's blitz seals India win

The opener hit 14-ball fifty, after Bumrah and Bishnoi restricted New Zealand to 153 in the third T20I

GUWAHATI: Abhishek Sharma's blistering unbeaten 68 off 20 balls, featuring seven fours and five sixes, powered India to an eight-wicket rout of New Zealand in the third T20I Guwahati on Sunday. Combined with skipper Suryakumar Yadav's unbeaten 57 from 26 deliveries, the pair chased down 154 in just 10 overs to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series. India's chase began in dramatic fashion when Matt Henry clean-bowled Sanju Samson with the first ball of the innings. Any hope of a contest, however, evaporated swiftly. Abhishek launched a ferocious counterattack, supported by Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar. Kishan gave India early impetus with a rapid 28 off 13 balls before falling to Ish Sodhi, but



the third-wicket partnership between Abhishek and Suryakumar proved decisive. The duo added an unbeaten 102 runs off only 38 balls, dismantling the New Zealand attack with audacious strokeplay and fearless intent. Abhishek was at his belligerent best. The hard-hitting left-hander mostly dealt in boundaries and brought up his fifty off 14 balls - the

second-fastest by an Indian only behind his mentor Yuvraj Singh. Abhishek's power hitting propelled India to 94/2 at the end of the first six overs, which is their second highest powerplay score in T20Is. Earlier, Jasprit Bumrah led a disciplined bowling display, returning figures of 3/17 from his four overs, while Ravi Bishnoi (2/18) and Hardik Pandya (2/23)

provided effective support as New Zealand were restricted to 153 for nine after opting to bat. Glenn Phillips held the innings together with a determined 48 off 40 balls, while Mark Chapman contributed 32 and Mitchell Santner struck a late 27 off 17 deliveries. India's bowlers set the tone early, reducing New Zealand to 34 for three inside the powerplay.



Bumrah's pace and movement proved difficult to negotiate, while Bishnoi's control through the middle overs choked the scoring rate. A 52-run partnership between Phillips and Chapman briefly stabilised the innings before Bishnoi broke the stand, and despite Santner's late flourish, New Zealand never managed sustained momentum. The fourth game of the series

will be played at the ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. The five-match series is India's last assignment before the T20 World Cup 2026 begins on February 7. **Brief scores:** India 155/2 in 10 overs (Abhishek 68*, Suryakumar 57*, Kishan 28; Henry 1-28) beat New Zealand 153/9 (Phillips 48, Bumrah 3-17, Bishnoi 2-18, Pandya 2-23) by eight wickets. - Agencies

PAKISTAN SQUAD FOR T20 WORLD CUP

Azam picked, Rauf dropped

LAHORE: Pakistan, on Sunday, announced a 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, set to be played in India and Sri Lanka next month. Pakistan are drawn in Group A alongside co-host and defending champion India, Netherlands, USA and Namibia. The 2009 champion will be led by Salman Ali Agha, with Haris Rauf and Mohammad Rizwan being notable omissions from the squad. Babar Azam has secured a spot in the team, while Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah will lead the pace attack in the absence of Rauf, the highest wicket-taker for Pakistan in T20I cricket. Chief selector Aaqib Javed said the naming of the squad had nothing to do with Pakistan's ultimate call on participation. "We are selectors, and our job



is to pick the team. We've announced the team very close to the deadline. The government will decide on our participation so I can say nothing on that front. That's what the chairman has said, too, so we'll wait for their decision." **Squad:** Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay (wk),



Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Saibzada Farhan (wk), Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Usman Khan, Usman Tariq. **Pakistan's group-stage schedule:** (all games in Colombo) February 7: Pakistan vs Netherlands, February 10: Pakistan vs USA, February 15: Pakistan vs India, February 18: Pakistan vs Namibia. - Agencies

ICC T20 WORLD CUP

Bangladesh won't challenge ouster from T20 World Cup

DHAKA: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) are not going to challenge the ICC's decision to replace Bangladesh with Scotland in the upcoming T20 World Cup. Amzad Hossain, the BCB's media committee chairman, made the announcement following a board meeting in Dhaka on Saturday. This comes after reports that the BCB had requested the ICC's dispute resolution committee to look into the matter but Amzad said no such measures were taken. "We have accepted the decision of the ICC board," Amzad said. "Since the ICC has said that we cannot go and play or they cannot shift our games to Sri Lanka, in this case we cannot go and play in India. Our position remains the



same. We are not going to any separate arbitration or anything here." **'A sad moment for cricket': WCA chief** The absence of Bangladesh from next month's T20 World Cup is a sad moment for the game and should serve as a call for stakeholders to work towards uniting

the sport, not dividing it, the international cricketers' association said on Sunday. "The withdrawal of Bangladesh from the T20 World Cup, and resulting absence of a valued cricketing nation from cricket's pinnacle international T20 event, is a sad moment for our sport, the Bangladesh players and fans, and one that requires deep reflection," World Cricketers' Association (WCA) Chief Executive Tom Moffat said in a statement. "Rather than allowing division or exclusion to take hold, we call on the game's leaders to work with all stakeholders, including Governing Bodies, leagues and players, to unite the sport, not divide it..." - Agencies

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UAE'S GLOBAL STANDING
The UAE continues to consolidate its global standing in the field of autonomous and unmanned systems and future engineering, in accordance with national directives led by the wise leadership.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 6,191.05 points, down by -0.37% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.42% at 580.73 points. Galfar Engineering, up 10.71%, was the top gainer while, Oman Fisheries, down 6.45%, was the top loser.

Oman’s inflation rate rises 1.6% in December

The average inflation for the period from January to December 2025 also rose by 1 percent

MUSCAT: The general consumer price index in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 1.6 percent in December 2025 compared to the same month of 2024 (base year 2018). The average inflation for the period from January to December 2025 also rose by 1 percent. Data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the category of miscellaneous goods and personal services topped the list of increases, recording a price rise of 10 percent. It was followed by the Transport category at 2.8 percent, then the Restaurants and Hotels category at 2.6 percent, the Furniture, Household Equipment, and Maintenance category at 2.4 percent, and the Education category at 2.2 percent. Prices also rose in the Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages cat-



egory by 1.1 percent, the Clothing and Footwear category by 0.2 percent, and the Health category by 0.1 percent. Conversely, the Recreation and Culture category recorded a price decrease of 0.1 percent, while prices in the Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas, and Other Fuels category, the Tobacco category, and the Communications category remained stable with no change. As for the Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages category for December 2025 compared to the same month of 2024, prices for Fish and Seafood rose by 6 percent, Fruits by 4 percent, Sugar, Jam, Honey, and Confectionery by 3.5 percent, Milk, Cheese, and Eggs by 2.1 percent, Non-Alcoholic Beverages by 0.9 percent, Meat by 0.8 percent, Bread, Cereals, Oils, and Fats by 0.7 percent, and Food Products Not Elsewhere Classified by 0.4 percent. Meanwhile, Vegetable prices decreased by 5.8 percent. A'Dhahirah Governorate recorded the highest inflation rate increase by the end of December 2025 compared to the same period of the previous year, with the index rising by 2.5 percent. The inflation rate also increased in A'Dakhiliyah Governorate by 2.1 percent, in the Governorates of Muscat and Al Buraimi by 1.7 percent, and in South Al Batinah Governorate by 1.5 percent. In the Governorates of South A'Sharqiyah and Musandam, the rate of increase reached 1.1 percent, while the Governorates of North A'Sharqiyah and North Al Batinah recorded an increase of 0.9 percent. The rate also rose in the Governorates of Al Wusta and Dhofar by 0.8 percent. -ONA

Egypt eyes \$12bn trade with India

NEW DELHI: Egypt's Ambassador to India, Kamel Zayed Kamel Galal, after addressing the press here on Egypt-India bilateral relations, said that the real trade potential between India and Egypt is not less than \$30 billion per year, adding that efforts were underway to raise bilateral trade to \$12 billion from the current level of \$5 billion. On Thursday, Galal told ANI, "The potential of our relationship, whether in trade or in any other field, is beyond the sky. This is what I'm going to work on during my tenure here. I have an objective of bringing trade to \$12 billion, up from \$5 billion. I'm much more ambitious than this. I will be working on that because the real potential for our two economies is not less than \$30 billion per year." The ambassador also spoke about India's understanding of Egypt's positions on regional issues. "Our foreign minister was here in October and had a very clear discussion with Minister Jaishankar, the prime minister, and other officials, and he gave a complete explanation of the current situation in the Middle East to the Indian leadership. I'm sure the Indian leadership understands the Egyptian position, and they are largely in line with it regarding regional development," he added. Galal highlighted the significance of the upcoming 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting,

scheduled to be held in New Delhi on January 30-31, 2026. "This is a very important opportunity for Arab countries and India to get together to speak in one language and to exchange views regarding the geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges that we are facing as well as the opportunities that is open for us together," he said. On January 16, Union Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh met Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and held wide-ranging discussions aimed at further strengthening the Strategic Partnership. "Pleased to meet H.E. Badr Abdelatty, Foreign Minister of Egypt, and held wide-ranging discussions on strengthening - Strategic Partnership. Discussions also covered forthcoming India-Arab Foreign Ministerial Meeting, strengthening of India-Egypt collaboration in pharmaceuticals and healthcare, trade, investments, technology & tourism," MoS Singh posted on X. India and Egypt, two of the world's oldest civilisations, have enjoyed a history of close contact from ancient times. The joint announcement of the establishment of diplomatic relations at the Ambassadorial level was made on 18 August 1947. Both countries have cooperated closely in multilateral fora and were the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. -ANI

JOINT VENTURE

Kunooz Oman Holding partners with Belgian company Etex for local gypsum-based business development

MUSCAT: Kunooz Oman Holding, a leading Omani mining company, has joined forces with Etex, a leader in lightweight construction solutions headquartered in Belgium by signing a joint venture agreement on 19 January 2026 to develop gypsum-based activities in the Sultanate. The deal also includes the acquisition of 25% of the holding's subsidiary Kunooz Gypsum's activities by Etex. The joint venture and partnerships agreements between the two companies were signed in Muscat, Oman by Sheikh Salim Al Rawas, Chairman, Kunooz Oman Holding and Jochen Friedrichs, Head of Division Building Performance, E'TEX NV. Also, the ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng. Mohsin Hamad Al Hadhrami, The Undersecretary, Ministry of Energy& Minerals, who attended the occasion. Also, present at the ceremony were Sheikh Yasser A. Al Rawas, Director, Kunooz Oman, Mr. Yves Slachmuylders, Head of Gypsum Platform, E'TEX NV, and Eng. Naif Al Awaid, Group CEO, Kunooz Oman. The gypsum industry plays a vital role in lightweight construction



solutions and the construction sector as a whole, with products such as plasterboards. The industry is expected to grow globally by more than 4% annually until 2032. With the Sultanate of Oman owning large gypsum resources and being strategically located, this deal provides strong local access to gypsum. Sheikh Salim Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman, Kunooz Oman Holding: "This collaboration will also contribute to Oman's economy by developing downstream business for high-value products and leveraging Etex's technological and marketing capabilities in gypsum-based lightweight construction. This is based on Kunooz Oman's strategy which aligns with the Sultanate of Oman's vision 2040" Bernard Delvaux, CEO, E'TEX: "Etex already operates in more than 45 countries worldwide, and joining forces with Kunooz Oman Holding, in a new location for us, is highly strategic. Our partnership goes beyond gypsum mining. We are committed to further develop activities that create value and employment in the Sultanate of Oman and beyond. We look forward to growing further together, building on Etex's strengths' and Kunooz Oman Holding's leadership and people."

Naif Al Awaid, GCEO, Kunooz Oman Holding: "Through this strong partnership with the leading global lightweight construction player that is Etex, we are strengthening our position as a key player in gypsum mining and related downstream industry for both local and export use." Jochen Friedrichs, Head of Building Performance Division at Etex: "Partnering with Kunooz Oman Holding will allow both companies to expand their scopes for the crucial raw material that is gypsum both within Oman and across key markets in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Africa." Kunooz Oman Holding is one of the leading companies in Oman engaged in the mining of different minerals. Both the parties have agreed to develop jointly gypsum board factory. This deal marks Etex's first site in Oman. Globally, Etex operates more than 190 sites across 45 countries, recording 13,500 employees and achieving a revenue of EUR 3.777 billion in 2024. External advisors on the deal included SASLO and PwC for Etex, and CMS for Kunooz Oman.

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

Oman Arab Bank unveils Tumouhi: New platform for SME growth

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank has officially launched its new SME growth initiative for 2026 during a press conference held on Sunday, 25 January 2026, marking a significant milestone in the bank's long-term commitment to empowering small and medium enterprises across the Sultanate. The initiative is positioned as a national growth platform that goes beyond conventional banking support, offering SMEs a structured journey focused on capability building, sustainability, and long-term impact. Designed to support Oman's Vision 2040 objectives, the initiative reflects Oman Arab Bank's strategic role as a partner in economic development. By combining financial solutions with non-financial enablement, the program aims to strengthen SME resilience, improve competitiveness, and contribute meaningfully to private sector growth. The launch event brought together key stakehold-



ers from across the business and institutional ecosystem, reinforcing the collaborative nature of the initiative. The program will unfold over multiple phases throughout 2026, beginning with a nationwide application and selection campaign to ensure geographic and sector diversity. Selected SMEs will then embark on a structured journey that includes training, mentorship, and incubation elements, covering critical business areas such as finance, business development, marketing, and governance. This approach is designed to address real operational challenges while supporting sustainable growth. Beyond direct SME engagement, the initiative places strong emphasis on visibility and impact storytelling. Through ongoing content, media engagement, and progress updates, Oman Arab Bank aims to highlight the tangible outcomes of the program and the journeys of participating businesses. This sustained visibility underscores the bank's belief that meaningful impact is built over time, not through one-off interventions. The initiative will conclude with a graduation and awards phase later in the year, celebrating SME achievements and setting the foundation for future editions beyond 2026. With this launch, Oman Arab Bank reinforces its position as a long-term SME partner, committed to enabling growth, fostering innovation, and supporting the next generation of Omani businesses through a platform built for lasting value.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Galfar Engineering, up 10.71%, was the top gainer while, Oman Fisheries, down 6.45%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 6,191.05 points, down by -0.37% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.42% at 580.73 points. Galfar Engineering, up 10.71%, was the top gainer while, Oman Fisheries, down 6.45%, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 4,712 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 31.9 million, with more than 126.06 million shares changing hands. Out of 74 traded securities, 24 advanced, 31 declined, and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for RO 360K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 356K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 4K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 10,699.82 points, down -0.64%. Prices of Financial Services, Bank Dhofar, Al Sharqia Investment, Bank Nizwa were up by 8.99%, 1.13%, 0.89%, 0.83% re-

spectively. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, United Finance, Al Anwar Investment, Takaful Oman, Taageer Finance were down by 6.25%, 4.55%, 3.03%, 2.38%, 2.34% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 8,714.69 points, down -0.36%. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Salalah Mills, Dhofar Cattle Feed, Raysut Cement, Oman Cement were up by 10.71%, 7.50%, 3.23%, 2.17%, 1.63% respectively. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Jazeera Steel Products, Oman Chlorine, A'Saffa Foods, Al Anwar Ceramics were down by 6.45%, 2.30%, 0.84%, 0.57%, 0.50% respectively. Services Index was up by 0.07% before closing at 2,517.83 points. Prices of Salalah Port Services, Oman Oil Marketing, Sharqiyah Desalination, Al Suwadi Power, Phoenix Power were up by 9.80%, 1.67%, 1.33%, 1.21%, 1.20% respectively. Prices of Dhofar Generating, Abraj Energy, Al Jazeera Services, OQ Gas Networks, Oman Education & Training were down by 2.27%, 1.11%, 1.03%, 0.98%, 0.62% respectively.— **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	6,238.60	6,189.24	6,191.05	6,214.18	-23.13	-0.37
FINANCIAL INDEX	10,813.59	10,698.83	10,699.82	10,768.96	-69.14	-0.64
Industry Index	8,746.14	8,639.36	8,714.69	8,746.14	-31.45	-0.36
Services Index	2,531.70	2,516.32	2,517.83	2,516.20	1.64	0.07
MSX Shariah Index	584.72	580.21	580.73	583.16	-2.43	-0.42
MSX TR INDEX	9,376.96	9,302.77	9,305.49	9,340.26	-34.77	-0.37
FINANCIAL TR IDX	12,846.93	12,710.58	12,711.75	12,793.90	-82.15	-0.64
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	10,783.23	10,651.58	10,744.46	10,783.23	-38.77	-0.36
SERVICES TR IDX	3,301.53	3,281.47	3,283.44	3,281.31	2.14	0.07
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,206.62	1,206.62	1,206.62	1,206.62	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary	Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
	126,067,337	31,896,550	4,712	33,244,337,647	24	31	19	74

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST RD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	123,089	20,472	18	0.165	0.167	0.165	0.167	0.165	0.002	1.212	0.167	0.167	0.172	0.100	119,305,859
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	515,074	58,886	45	0.113	0.117	0.113	0.114	0.113	0.001	0.885	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.100	10,260,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,589,450	194,907	44	0.120	0.124	0.120	0.122	0.121	0.001	0.826	0.122	0.122	0.124	0.100	272,908,270
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	311,259	100,702	13	0.323	0.325	0.323	0.325	0.323	0.002	0.619	0.325	0.326	0.330	0.100	76,833,250
OM0000004925	ALBATTINAH POWER	132,400	22,018	17	0.165	0.168	0.165	0.167	0.166	0.001	0.602	0.167	0.167	0.170	0.100	112,706,201
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	460,743	181,537	13	0.395	0.396	0.394	0.395	0.395	0.000	0.000	0.395	0.394	0.395	0.100	642,248,810
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	32,535,309	11,515,799	633	0.353	0.356	0.352	0.352	0.352	0.000	0.000	0.352	0.352	0.352	0.100	1,643,251,766
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	8,971	12,869	9	1.420	1.445	1.420	1.444	1.445	-0.001	-0.069	1.444	1.436	1.444	0.100	135,177,406
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	3,851,304	4,180,232	102	1.087	1.087	1.084	1.085	1.086	-0.001	-0.092	1.085	1.085	1.085	0.100	813,750,000
OM0000003968	OQREDOO	216,038	63,163	16	0.283	0.294	0.292	0.292	0.293	-0.001	-0.341	0.292	0.291	0.292	0.100	190,075,715
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	99,692	20,141	15	0.202	0.203	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.001	-0.498	0.200	0.195	0.200	0.100	44,000,000
OM0000002804	ASAFA FOODS	350	230	3	0.635	0.700	0.635	0.700	0.704	-0.004	-0.568	0.700	0.635	0.700	0.100	84,000,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	26,133,719	4,229,899	587	0.161	0.163	0.160	0.160	0.161	-0.001	-0.621	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.100	1,058,759,403
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	6,086,006	1,239,935	450	0.204	0.206	0.202	0.202	0.204	-0.002	-0.980	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.100	874,786,032
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	30,123	5,843	7	0.196	0.196	0.193	0.193	0.196	-0.002	-1.028	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.100	8,268,697
OM0000003894	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,202,711	791,843	348	0.359	0.362	0.356	0.356	0.360	-0.004	-1.111	0.356	0.356	0.356	0.100	274,191,200
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	2,000	747	3	0.346	0.375	0.346	0.375	0.380	-0.005	-1.316	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.100	37,500,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	500,374	62,527	52	0.128	0.128	0.124	0.124	0.128	0.000	-0.002	0.125	0.124	0.125	0.100	21,875,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	129,465	29,747	11	0.230	0.230	0.228	0.228	0.232	-0.004	-1.724	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.100	45,600,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	30,887	11,185	11	0.370	0.370	0.360	0.360	0.368	-0.008	-2.174	0.360	0.359	0.360	0.100	336,856,175
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	3,000	2,550	2	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.000	-0.020	0.850	0.842	0.850	0.100	106,163,266
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	5,783,161	497,951	123	0.088	0.091	0.084	0.084	0.088	-0.004	-4.545	0.084	0.084	0.090	0.100	29,914,693
Total	22	80,745,235	23,243,122	2,524												

Parallel Market

OM0000002333	SALALAH PORT SERVICES	23,056	10,158	15	0.408	0.448	0.408	0.448	0.040	9.804	0.448	0.447	0.445	0.100	80,567,155	
OM0000001384	FINANCIAL SERVICES	156,158	15,111	35	0.092	0.097	0.092	0.097	0.009	0.008	0.989	0.097	0.097	0.100	1,940,000	
OM0000001889	SALALAH MILLS	5,300	2,270	8	0.425	0.430	0.425	0.430	0.000	0.030	7500	0.430	0.425	0.430	0.100	26,859,118
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	1,610	259	5	0.170	0.170	0.160	0.160	0.155	0.005	3,226	0.160	0.160	0.158	0.100	31,628,308
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	4,000	3,420	1	0.855	0.855	0.855	0.855	0.000	0.000	1,661	0.855	0.841	0.855	0.100	52,390,125
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	10,406	5,107	7	0.490	0.498	0.490	0.498	0.000	0.008	1,633	0.498	0.490	0.498	0.100	164,774,610
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	100	140	1	1.400	1.400	1.400	1.400	1.378	0.021	1,523	1.400	1.450	0.000	0.100	70,000,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	8,000	1,216	1	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.150	0.002	1,333	0.152	0.149	0.152	0.100	14,865,928
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	113,109	19,126	17	0.169	0.170	0.169	0.169	0.167	0.002	1,198	0.169	0.167	0.169	0.100	247,179,647
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	3,242,486	576,182	322	0.177	0.177	0.179	0.177	0.179	0.002	1,130	0.179	0.178	0.179	0.100	544,123,937
OM0000007884	BANK CITY DESALINATION	11,274	1,025	4	0.091	0.091	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.001	1,124	0.090	0.088	0.090	0.100	13,999,538
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	33,000	3,054	9	0.094	0.094	0.090	0.093	0.092	0.001	1,087	0.093	0.090	0.092	0.100	7,905,000
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	38,800	8,454	11	0.217	0.219	0.217	0.217	0.215	0.002	1,050	0.217	0.217	0.217	0.100	207,142,113
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	85,999	10,228	16	0.120	0.120	0.118	0.120	0.119	0.001	984	0.120	0.118	0.119	0.100	3,600,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	9,334	1,624	2	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.173	0.001	978	0.174	0.171	0.178	0.100	27,840,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	1,231	261	2	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.211	0.001	974	0.212	0.210	0.215	0.100	17,528,217
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	59,088	22,669	23	0.382	0.385	0.382	0.383	0.382	0.001	962	0.383	0.383	0.383	0.100	17,528,301
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	3,000	798	1	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.000	0.000	0.266	0.266	0.292	0.100	30,948,363
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	4,578	183	1	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.040	0.042	0.100	3,400,000
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	379,093	28,834	26	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.075	0.077	0.100	1,617,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,270	645	1	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.150	0.153	0.100	47,627,967
OM0000003000	AL MAJMA PETROLEUM PROD MARKTG	37,501	49,394	7	1.100	1.100	1.075	1.075	1.075	0.000	1,075	1.075	1.075	1.096	0.100	74,173,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	350	76	1	0.218	0.218	0.218	0.217	0.217	0.000	0.000	0.218	0.218	0.218	0.100	43,320,925
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	14,409	4,179	5	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.100	15,950,000
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	7,000	2,205	2	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.000	0.000	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.100	22,172,850
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	55,000	4,238	3	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.077	0.082	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	45,160	8,580	8	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.189	0.198	0.100	112,373,007
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	1,281,081	129,379	17	0.101	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	17,574,000
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	7,484,035	2,903,692	113	0.387	0.388	0.387	0.388	0.388	0.000	0.000	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.100	101,034,000,000
OM0000010120	ASTAD SHIPPING	7,515,360	1,439,118	440	0.193	0.193	0.190	0.191	0.191	0.000	0.000	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.100	994,870,157
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	4,330	2,198	4	0.480	0.480	0.485	0.488	0.480	0.000	0.480	0.488	0.485	0.488	0.100	80,703,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	281	53	2	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.189	-0.001	0.529	0.188	0.182	0.188	0.100	528,996,461
OM0000002580	OMAN EDU & TRAINING INVESTMENTS	1,380	2,208	1	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.610	-0.010	-0.621	1.600	1.551	1.600	0.100	112,000,000
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INTL DEVNT & INVESTMENT	27,061	7,064	5	0.262	0.262	0.260	0.260	0.262	-0.002	-0.783	0.260	0.261	0.263	0.100	128,974,597
OM0000002341	OMAN CELEBRINE	30,570	7,192	5	0.236	0.236	0.234	0.235	0.237	-0.002	-0.844	0.235	0.232	0.235	0.100	16,804,578
OM0000008447	OMAN RET FUND	87,351	9,069	16	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.103	0.104	-0.001	-0.962	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.100	66,804,803
OM0000009908	QO BASE INDUSTRIES (SZF)	12,892,001	2,403,976	586	0.188	0.188	0.186	0.186	0.186	-0.002	-1.064	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.100	643,465,286
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	4,529,573	304,539	118	0.065	0.069	0.065	0.065	0.066	-0.001	-1.515	0.065	0.065	0.068	0.100	19,964,511
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	246,677	21,214	12	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.088	-0.002	-2.273	0.086	0.086	0.088	0.100	19,113,644
OM0000007408	TAKAFUL OMAN	402,294	50,835	92	0.128	0.128	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	-0.902	0.125	0.125	0.131	0.100	67,902,444
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	592,561	47,900	42	0.083	0.084	0.079	0.082	0.084	-0.002	-2.381	0.082	0.080	0.084	0.100	20,500,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAN INVESTMENT	2,379,252	306,676	68	0.130	0.130	0.128	0.128	0.132	-0.004	-3.030	0.128	0.128	0.130	0.100	38,214,777
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGG & INVESTMENT	91,386	13,530	9	0.152	0.152	0.147	0.147	0.152	0.005	-3.289	0.147	0.147	0.149	0.100	22,505,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	323,633	34,550	31	0.110	0.110	0.105	0.105	0.112	-0.007	-6.250	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.100	12,796,875
Total		42,242,518	8,455,869	2,035												



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

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

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

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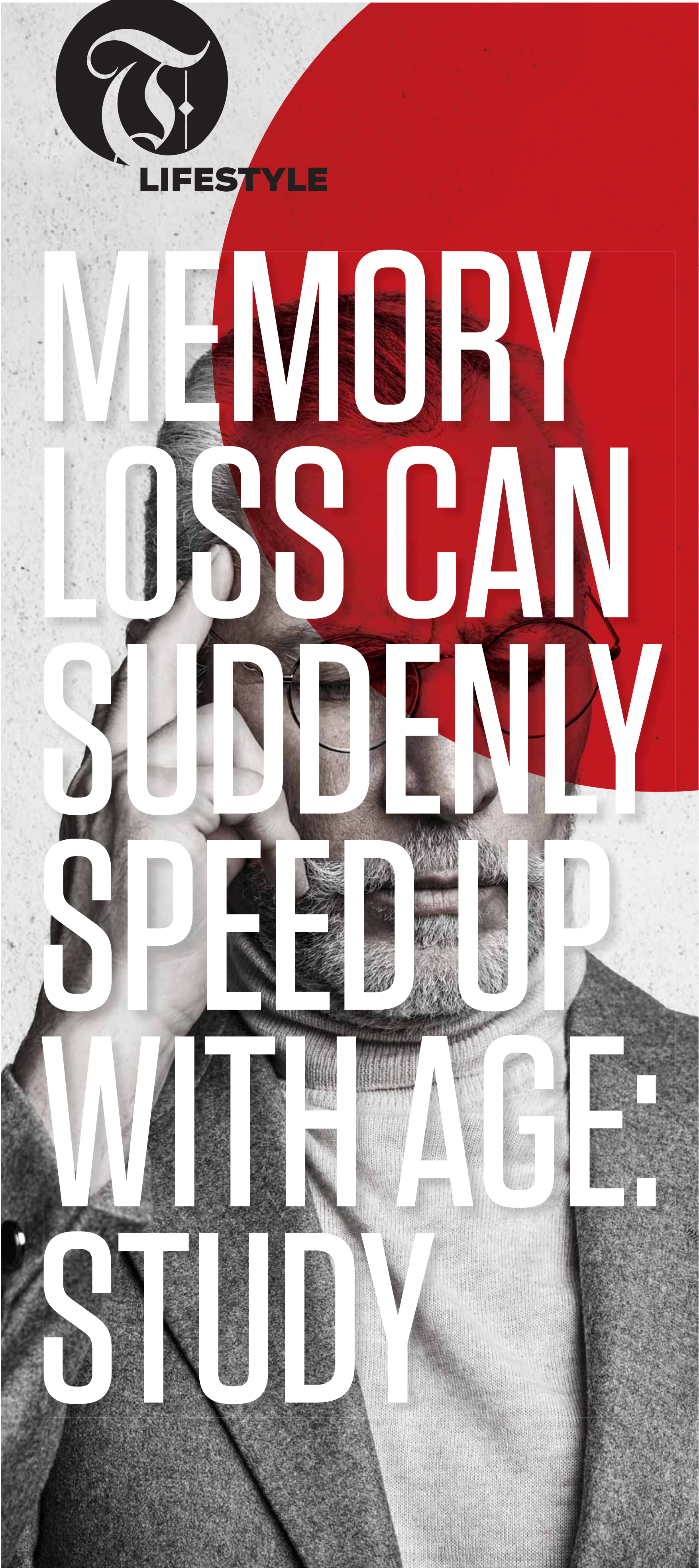
Friday 23 January 2026

Friday 23 January 2026					
Group A - MCT 2017		Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2015	
Pitch 2 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2014		Pitch 3 - Muscat	
 Egypt		3		 Al Seeb Academy	
 Juventus Oman White		3		 Juventus Oman	
7		1		1	
Group A - MCT 2015		Pitch 4 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2016	
Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2013		Pitch 2 - Muscat	
 Al Mohtaref		1		 Juventus Oman	
 Catalunia		0		 Al Seeb Academy	
7		2		1	
Group A - MCT 2014		Pitch 3 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2015	
Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2017		Pitch 1 - Muscat	
 Etimad		5		 Juventus Oman Black	
 All Star		0		 Al Seeb Academy	
5		2		2	
Group A - MCT 2013		Pitch 2 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2013	
Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2011		Pitch 1 - Muscat	
 Champions		0		 Al Seeb Academy	
 Juventus Oman		3		 Al Noor	
2		0		1	
Group A - MCT 2012		Pitch 2 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2012	
Pitch 2 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2012		Pitch 2 - Muscat	
 Juventus Oman		0		 Al Noor	
 Alegria		2		 Egypt	
7		2		2	

Saturday 24 January

Group A - MCT 2009		Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2009	
Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2009		Pitch 1 - Muscat	
 Qernas		0		 Alegria	
 All Star		1		 PLFA Oman	
0		4		0	
Group A - MCT 2010		Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2010	
Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2010		Pitch 1 - Muscat	
 Al Seeb Academy		0		 Al Seeb Academy	
 Safety		0		 Safety	
0		0		0	
Group A - MCT 2009		Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2009	
Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2009		Pitch 1 - Muscat	
 Egypt		0		 Qernas	
 Juventus Oman		3		 Alegria	
0		0		0	
Group A - MCT 2009		Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2009	
Pitch 1 - Muscat		Group A - MCT 2009		Pitch 1 - Muscat	
 PLFA Oman		0		 PLFA Oman	
 All Star		0		 All Star	
0		0		0	





LIFESTYLE

MEMORY LOSS CAN SUDDENLY SPEED UP WITH AGE: STUDY

WASHINGTON DC: A massive international brain study has revealed that memory decline with age isn't driven by a single brain region or gene, but by widespread structural changes across the brain that build up over time.

Analysing thousands of MRI scans and memory tests from healthy adults, researchers found that memory loss accelerates as brain tissue shrinkage increases, especially later in life.

While the hippocampus plays a key role, many other brain regions also contribute, forming a broad vulnerability rather than isolated damage.

An unprecedented international research effort combining brain imaging and memory testing from thousands of adults is offering a clearer picture of how age-related brain changes affect memory.

By bringing together data from multiple long-running studies, scientists were able to examine how memory performance shifts alongside structural changes in the brain over time.

The analysis drew on more than 10,000 MRI scans and over 13,000 memory assessments from 3,700 cognitively healthy adults across 13 separate studies.

The results which tracked people across a wide age range revealed that the link between brain shrinkage and memory decline is not simple or linear. The association grows stronger in later life and cannot be explained only by well-known genetic risk factors for Alzheimer's disease, including APOE e4.

Together, the findings suggest that brain aging involves complex, widespread changes rather than damage driven by a single cause.

Memory Decline Reflects Widespread Brain Changes

Published in Nature Communications, the study titled "Vulnerability to memory decline in aging revealed by a mega-analysis of structural brain change" shows that memory-related brain changes extend far beyond one isolated region.

Although the hippocampus showed the strongest connection between volume loss and declining memory, many other areas of the brain were also involved.

Both cortical and subcortical regions demonstrated meaningful relationships between structural decline and memory performance. Rather than pointing to failure in a single brain structure, the findings indicate a distributed vulnerability across the brain.

Researchers observed a gradual pattern across regions, with the hippocampus showing the largest effects and smaller but still significant associations appearing across much of the brain.

A Nonlinear Pattern With Accelerating Effects

The researchers also found that the relationship between brain atrophy and memory loss varied widely between individuals and followed a nonlinear pattern.

People who experienced faster-than-average structural brain loss showed much steeper declines in memory. This suggests that once brain shrinkage passes a certain level, its impact on memory increases more rapidly instead of progressing at a steady pace.

This accelerating effect appeared across many brain regions, not just the hippocampus. The consistency of this pattern supports the idea that memory decline during healthy aging reflects large-scale and network-level structural changes.

While the hippocampus remains especially sensitive, it functions as part of a broader system rather than acting alone.

What the Findings Mean for Understanding Aging

"By integrating data across dozens of research cohorts, we now have the most detailed picture yet of how structural changes in the brain unfold with age and how they relate to memory," said Alvaro Pascual-Leone, MD, PhD, senior scientist at the Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research and medical director at the Deanna and Sidney Wolk Center for Memory Health.

"Cognitive decline and memory loss are not simply the consequence of ageing, but manifestations of individual predispositions and age-related processes enabling neurodegenerative processes and diseases.

These results suggest that memory decline in ageing is not just about one region or one gene it reflects a broad biological vulnerability in brain structure that accumulates over decades.

Understanding this can help researchers identify individuals at risk early, and develop more precise and personalised interventions that support cognitive health across the lifespan and prevent cognitive disability. -ANI

SPORTS



Alcaraz, Djokovic book spot in quarter-finals

The Serbian, who is chasing record 25th Grand Slam title, had a walkover into the last eight when Jakub Mensik withdrew

MELBOURNE: Carlos Alcaraz powered into the Australian Open quarter-finals on Sunday and Novak Djokovic joined him without hitting a ball, as the next generation roared at Melbourne Park, where temperatures eased to 22C after the brutal heat of a day earlier.

Top seed Alcaraz was in ominous touch at Rod Laver Arena, dismissing the American Tommy Paul 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 7-5 in a masterclass.

The 22-year-old plays home hope and sixth seed Alex de Minaur, who defeated 10th seed Alexander Bublik in straight sets.

"He started pretty strong I knew I was going to have my chances and I think I did that," Alcaraz said on court.

"Overall it was a really high level of tennis from both sides but really happy I got it in straight sets."

Djokovic, chasing a record 25th Grand Slam crown, was scheduled to face Jakub Mensik in the last-16 on Monday but the Czech player pulled out injured.

Djokovic will face American ninth seed Taylor Fritz or the fifth seed Lorenzo Musetti of Italy for a place in the semi-finals.

Alcaraz, who is yet to drop a set at this year's tournament, has never gone beyond the quarter-finals in Melbourne. If he can finally break his Australian duck he will become the youngest man in history to win a career Grand Slam of all four majors.

The Spaniard has in the past struggled with precision and a lack of consistency in his serving technique. He is now sporting a new-look serve that has become a handy weapon - and been compared to Djokovic's serve.

"I had a Djokovic message saying, 'you have to pay me'," he said in his on-court interview after making light work of 19th seed Paul, to laughter from an adoring crowd.

"Unfortunately decision to make for me," said rising star Mensik. "After the last couple of matches I started to feel worse, and actually the problem is my abdominal muscle on the left side."

"The fact that my fourth-round match was to be against Novak on Rod Laver Arena makes it even more difficult," added the 20-year-old.

"So, of course, I'm super sad not to step on the court and to compete against my idol and the GOAT."

Australian No.1 de Minaur pierced 10th-seeded Kazakh Bublik's defences with relentless pressure to seal a 6-4, 6-1, 6-1 win on Sunday, reaching his second

straight Australian Open quarter-final and seventh at the Grand Slams overall.

De Minaur is looking to become the first Australian man to claim the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup since Mark Edmondson's triumph 50 years ago.

Also on Sunday, Alexander Zverev, well beaten by Jannik Sinner in last year's final, plays Learner Tien of the United States next.

Germany's third seed demolished Argentina's 18th seed Francisco Cerundolo 6-2, 6-4, 6-4.

The 28-year-old German has lost all three Grand Slam title clashes he has contested, including last year's final, has flown under the radar this time as he seeks another opportunity.

The 25th seed Tien ran out a surprisingly easy three-set winner over three-time finalist Daniil Medvedev.

Tien, 20, overcame a nosebleed in the opening set to school Medvedev 6-4, 6-0, 6-3 and moved into the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam for the first time in his young career. - Agencies

Sabalenka powers into last eight

MELBOURNE: World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka played tiebreak tyrant again as she fended off Canadian young gun Victoria Mboko 6-1, 7-6(1) to reach the Australian Open quarter-finals for a fourth time in succession on Sunday.

Twice champion Sabalenka crushed Mboko in a 31-minute first set in the early match at Rod Laver Arena but gave up a 4-1 lead in the second as the 17th seed mounted an impressive comeback.

"What an incredible player for such a young age," the Belarusian said of Mboko, 19. "It's incredible to see these kids coming up on tour."

"She pushed me really hard today. Super happy with the win ... and happy to be through."

Following her 7-6(4), 7-6(7) win over Anatasia Potapova in the previous match, Sabalenka has now racked up 22 tiebreak wins in succession, including 19 in a row last year.

Playing on centre court for the first time at a Grand Slam, Mboko bowed out of her Australian Open main draw debut with reputation enhanced.

Sabalenka set up a quarterfinal against Iva Jovic next, who beat

Yulia Putintseva 6-0, 6-1.

Fans at John Cain Arena had barely settled in as 29th seed Jovic swept aside Putintseva in a display of precision and relentless pressure, with the contest done and dusted in 53 minutes.

"Obviously, the scoreline is favourable but it doesn't matter how you get it done," Jovic said on court.

"I just wanted to get it done and I felt like if I let her come back a little bit, it would become a dogfight. So I just tried to keep it as far away as possible and just so happy to be in the quarter-finals."

American third seed Coco Gauff weathered a three-set thriller to beat Karolina Muchova 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 and advance to the quarter-finals on Sunday, extending her perfect record against the Czech player to five straight wins.

The result bodes well for the American, who has won every tournament in which she has beaten Muchova, including the 2023 U.S. Open.

"I think today I didn't panic. I felt like the second set could have easily went my way," Gauff said. "So I knew I just had to capitalise on those chances in the third set and I did that." - Agencies



SPANISH LA LIGA

Mbappe's brace in Real win

MADRID: Kylian Mbappe struck twice in the second half as Real Madrid secured a 2-0 victory at Villarreal on Saturday, climbing above Barcelona to take provisional pole position in La Liga.

The win moved Alvaro Arbeloa's side to 51 points, two clear of second-placed Barcelona, who host bottom-placed Oviedo on Sunday night.

Villarreal are fourth, level on 41 with Atletico Madrid.

Real dominated from the outset, with Vinicius Jr. causing endless problems on the left flank.

The Brazilian's pivotal moment came just after half-time when he weaved past defenders in the 47th minute and fed Mbappe inside the penalty area, leaving the French forward an easy finish from close range.

Real continued to control the tempo and Mbappe sealed the win in stoppage time, converting from the penalty spot after being clumsily fouled inside the box.

Real sealed the win in stoppage



time. Vinicius released Mbappe with a perfectly weighted pass and as the Frenchman charged into the box he was brought down from behind by Alfonso Pedraza.

Mbappe, the league's top scorer, stepped up to calmly chip the resulting penalty into the middle of

the goal for his 21st goal in 20 La Liga appearances this season.

"(Vinicius and Mbappe) are the two best in the world," manager Alvaro Arbeloa told Real Madrid TV.

Other results: Rayo Vallecano 1 Osasuna 3, Valencia 3 Espanyol 2, Sevilla 2 Athletic Club 1. - Agencies

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Augsburg end Bayern's unbeaten run with comeback victory



MUNICH: Struggler Augsburg scored twice in six minutes late in the second half to come from a goal down and stun hosts Bayern Munich 2-1 in the Bavarian derby on Saturday, handing the league leader their first Bundesliga loss of the season.

The hosts took a 23rd-minute lead through Hiroki Ito's header but lacked spark up front as Augsburg struck in the 75th and 81st minutes through Arthur Chaves and Han-Noah Massengo to earn its first win in Munich in 11 years.

Vincent Kompany's men are still eight points clear at the top, after second-placed Borussia Dortmund, on 39, cut that gap with a 3-0 win at Union Berlin.

Bayern, unbeaten in their previous 27 league matches, never hit top speed but still dominated the first half, taking a 23rd-minute lead through Ito's header from a Michael Olise corner.

Other results: Bayer Leverkusen 1 Werder Bremen 0, Eintracht Frankfurt 1 Hoffenheim 3, Heidenheim 0 RB Leipzig 3, Mainz 3 Wolfsburg 1.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Adli's slams last-gasp winner for Bournemouth against Liverpool

LONDON: Bournemouth midfielder Amine Adli struck deep in second-half stoppage time to condemn Liverpool to its seventh Premier League defeat 3-2 of the season on Saturday, leaving the reigning champions still searching for their first league win of 2026.

Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk said he thought he had been fouled in the build-up to Bournemouth's winner, which came after a chaotic scramble following a long throw, but in the end, his side capitulated again despite dominating for much of the second half.

Goals from Evanilson and Alejandro Jimenez had Bournemouth 2-0 up by the 33rd minute, but Van Dijk pulled one back before the break and Dominik Szoboszlai levelled with a brilliant free kick in the 80th minute.

The Reds looked set for a fifth draw in a row in the league but Adli struck in the 95th minute to shatter the visiting side and send them back to Merseyside empty-handed.

"I don't think there's any question about that togetherness but the consistency that we're looking for, that's something still needs to be found and that's the reality," Van Dijk said.

"I think there was a lot of praise of our performances and a lot of individual praise and we know how it works, and three days later, you lose a game like we did today and then the other side of the world comes out, so that's something we have to deal with."

"But you know, we want to perform, we want to win games, and unfortunately today it didn't happen."

The defeat left Liverpool languishing in fourth place on 36



points, 14 behind leader Arsenal, who face Manchester United on Sunday, while Bournemouth moved up to 13th on 30 points

Man City beat Wolves to end winless streak

Also, goals from Omar Marmoush and Antoine Semenyo powered Manchester City to a much-needed 2-0 home win over Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday.

City's first league win in nearly a month have them with 46 points after 23 games, while the misery continued for Wolves, who are last in the table on eight points, 14 points from safety.

Starting ahead of Erling Haaland in his first league action since playing for Egypt at the Africa Cup of Nations, Marmoush put

City on the scoresheet in the sixth minute with his first league goal of the season.

Semenyo, signed two weeks ago from Bournemouth, doubled City's lead in first-half injury time with his first league goal for the club, when Bernardo Silva found him on his right. Semenyo took a touch to set up his shot before unleashing a blistering low shot past Jose Sa.

The victory was City's first in the league since a 2-1 win over Nottingham Forest on December 27, with three draws and a derby loss to Manchester United since then costing it precious points in the title race.

Other results: West Ham United 3 Sunderland 1, Burnley 2 Tottenham Hotspur 2, Fulham 2 Brighton & Hove Albion 1. - Agencies

Malaysia, Iran clinch titles

Intense battles were witnessed in both men and women's finals as Muscat Nights International 3x3 Basketball Championship concluded at the Al Araithi Boulevard

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Malaysia emerged as men's champions and Iran secured the women's title as the Muscat Nights International 3x3 Basketball Championship concluded on Saturday evening at the Al Araithi Boulevard, following two high-intensity finals that showcased strong technical quality and competitive depth.

Malaysia lifted the men's trophy after a narrow 16-14 victory over Oman's national team (B) in a closely fought final, while Iran dominated the women's decider with a 21-14 win against India.

The awards ceremony was held under the patronage of Sheikh Salim bin Abdullah Al Araithi, Board Member of Al Araithi Boulevard, and attended by Engineer Khalfan Al Naabi, Chairman of the Oman Basketball Association, Engineer Salem bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Director General of Muscat Municipality in Seeb, along with several officials and a large audience. In the men's final, Oman (B) made a strong start through Osa-



ma Al Riyami, with the contest remaining tight throughout. Abdulrahman Al Maamari and Ahmed Al Sinani played key roles for the hosts, but Malaysia's composure

and accurate shooting in the closing stages proved decisive, allowing them to edge ahead and secure the championship.

The women's final saw Iran

take control from the opening moments. Elina scored first before Shadi added two quick points to establish an early lead. Despite India's efforts to respond, Kimia's

timely baskets helped Iran maintain momentum and gradually extend the margin. Iran sustained their attacking rhythm to win the title convincingly.

Earlier classification matches saw Oman (A) finish third in the men's competition after defeating the Philippines 21-13, while Oman (A) women secured third place with a 5-4 victory over Oman (B).

Speaking after the tournament, Said Al Habsi, Acting Secretary-General of the Oman Basketball Association, praised the event's organisational and technical success, attributing it to the cooperation of partners and the efforts of the organising committee.

He noted that hosting an international tournament of this scale for the first time posed challenges, particularly with teams arriving from outside the Gulf region, and thanked Muscat Municipality for its support.

Al Habsi added that the participation provided valuable international exposure for Omani players, contributing to improved technical standards, and reaffirmed the association's ambition to further develop the championship in future editions while strengthening Omani basketball's regional and international presence.

2026 WINTER CUP



Multiple winners shine ahead of national sailing team selection



Times News Service

MUSSANAH: Oman's emerging sailing talent delivered standout performances as the 2026 Winter Cup concluded in Mussanah, with podium finishers strengthening their claims for selection to the national team ahead of key international competitions.

Organised by Oman Sail, the regatta brought together 61 sailors, drawn from Oman Sail's sailing schools at Al Mouj Muscat, Sur and Mussanah, competing across Optimist, ILCA 4, ILCA 6 and ILCA 7 classes following an intensive 14-day training camp.

In the Optimist fleet, Mohammed Al Qasbi claimed overall victory, finishing ahead of Khaled Yahya Al Suraihi in second and Ahmed Mohammed Al Mujaini in third. Abeer Kalil Al Zakwani topped the girls overall standings, with Dima Khalfan Al Balushi runner-up. The Optimist Junior title was won by Mohammed Sulaiman Al Balushi, followed by Al Kalil Ibrahim Al Fori and Taha Mohamed Al Mujaini.

The ILCA 4 overall title went to Hassan Nassar Al Wahabi, with Aws Maher Al Busaidi and Khamis Nasser Al Mashaikhi finishing second and third respectively.



Tarteel Al Hassani secured the ILCA 4 Girls title ahead of Hadeel Al Mushifri.

In ILCA 6 competition, Al Mutasim Al-Farsi emerged victorious, with Elias Al Fadhli second and Ibtisam Al Salmi third.

The ILCA 7 class was won by Hussein Al Jabri, who finished ahead of Ahmed Al Balushi and Abdul Latif Al Qasbi.

The Youth Club Optimist overall category was claimed by Mulham Haitham Al Braiki, with Ali Adil Al Tarshi second and Ghalib Ahmed Al Balushi third.

The Winter Cup served as a key assessment event for national team selection ahead of the Arab Sailing Championships 2026, which will be held from January 28 to February 2 in Soma Bay,

Egypt. Hashim Al Rashdi, Oman Sail's Head Performance Coach, said the competition provided a strong benchmark for the season ahead.

"The standard of racing was very high and reflected the commitment shown by the sailors throughout the training camp," he said. "These events are vital in preparing athletes to perform under pressure and to represent Oman internationally."

Oman will compete at the Arab Sailing Championships in the Optimist and ILCA 7 classes, alongside KiteFoil and iQFOiL windsurfing events.

The national 49er team will travel to Vilamoura, Portugal, for a training camp ahead of the championship later next month.

OCA-SAUDI OLYMPIC COMMITTEE JOINT STATEMENT

Asian Winter Games 2029 in Saudi Arabia postponed

KUALA LUMPUR: The Asian Winter Games, due to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2029, have been postponed, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee said in a joint statement on Saturday.

"The Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee and the (OCA) have agreed on an updated framework for future hosting of the Asian Winter Games, confirming the postponement of the 2029 edition to a later date to be announced in due course," the bodies said.

"Under the revised framework, Saudi Arabia will host a series of standalone winter sports events in the coming years. These competitions are designed to promote winter sports... while providing additional preparation time to support wider regional representation at future Asian winter events," the statement added.

In August, the OCA had said preparations for the games were on schedule after South Korea and China emerged as potential replacements.

The OCA in 2022 unanimously approved the desert kingdom's bid to stage the Games at its \$500



billion megacity NEOM, part of Saudi Arabia's splurge on major sporting events, including the 2034 football World Cup.

However, Riyadh has appeared to stall on delivery of the ski resort and had discussed staging the event four years later than planned. The Saudis were mulling approaching South Korea and China to instead play host in 2029, media reports at the time indicated. South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that the OCA asked Korean Sport & Olym-

pic Committee (KSOC) president Ryu Seung-min if the country would be willing to replace Saudi Arabia. South Korea and China had been suggested as potential replacements because they hosted the Winter Olympics in 2018 and 2022, respectively.

China also staged the Asian Winter Games in its northern city of Harbin in February.

The futuristic and under-construction NEOM was to feature a year-round winter sports complex in the mountains of Trojena.

FORMULA ONE

Cadillac team 'here to do great things', says Perez

LONDON: The arrival of the start-up Cadillac Formula 1 team for the 2026 season signals a new era for Formula 1. As well as an 11th team on the grid, there is also a raft of new technical regulations governing how the car is powered and designed. But it's not all change, as two famous F1 faces - drivers Sergio Perez and Valtteri Bottas - are ready to make a comeback with Cadillac.

"I definitely want to go all the way with this team," Perez, 35, told BBC podcast F1: Back at Base.

"I want to enjoy the journey with them and I'm pretty confident that we will be able to progress extremely quickly. Cadillac is here to do great things."

The first Cadillac F1 car completed its first laps at a private shakedown at Silverstone on 16 January with Mexican Perez behind the wheel.

On the other side of the garage, Finland's Bottas - who kept his finger on the F1 pulse as a reserve



driver for Mercedes in 2025 - is also counting down to the next chapter of his career.

"For me, it's like a comeback," Bottas said. "I want to make it the best season I've had personally, when I look at my personal results. I really want to minimise things that I can feel that I could have done better."

"I want to give it all to myself, but first of all, to the team. If I can finish with a feeling that there was nothing I could have tried harder or could have done better, that's a good goal." The arcs of Perez and Bottas' F1 careers have followed a similar trajectory.

Perez made his debut for Sau-

ber in 2011, two years before Bottas made his bow with Williams. Both went on to play a big part in winning constructors' world championships, Bottas contributing to five during his five seasons at Mercedes and Perez two during his four-year stint with Red Bull, which came to an end in 2024.

Cadillac's new pairing will utilise all that experience as they take on a bigger role to help accelerate the new team's growth.

"We've been basically through the whole paddock, we've done it all, we've seen it all in the sport," said Perez. "So I think we have a great combination of drivers."

"Starting with a new team, it's a different sort of challenge. Being able to be part of building a new team really excited me about this project."

Bottas has 10 F1 race wins among 67 podiums

Bottas also believes he and Perez will complement each other on and off the track. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Toyota sets new standard in hybrid electric vehicles on Oman roads

With a well-proven range already trusted by motorists across Oman, the brand’s hybrid models continue to attract drivers seeking fuel economy, performance and advanced technology designed for local conditions

MUSCAT: Toyota is strengthening its established leadership in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) as demand for efficient and sustainable mobility continues to rise in Oman.

With a well-proven range already trusted by motorists across the Sultanate, the brand’s hybrid models continue to attract drivers seeking fuel economy, performance and advanced technology designed for local conditions. Reflecting Toyota’s long-standing commitment to innovation, the HEV line-up combines dynamic powertrains, comfort-focused interiors and comprehensive safety systems suited for everyday use. Among the key models contributing to Toyota’s hybrid presence is the RAV4 Hybrid, which pairs a petrol engine with an electric motor to deliver a total of 219 hp. Its fuel efficiency of 22.2 km/L, combined with confident performance on both city routes and longer drives, has made it a popular choice. The model also offers a spacious cabin, practical storage



areas and premium features such as Qi wireless charging, ventilated front seats and a six-speaker sound system. Safety is supported through 7 SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control, ABS, EBD and Downhill Assist Control.

Toyota’s strong position in the sedan segment is reinforced by the Camry Hybrid, a model that continues to build on a four-decade legacy. Supported by Toyota’s Hybrid System and the TNGA-K platform, it delivers a total output of 226 hp through an ECVT, offering smooth acceleration and impressive fuel efficiency. A range of driving modes—including NORMAL,

ECO, SPORT and EV mode—allows adaptability across different environments.

The interior is equipped with refined materials, a 12.3-inch touchscreen with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and a range of comfort and convenience features. In addition, Toyota Safety Sense enhances daily driving through systems such as Pre-Collision detection, Dynamic Radar Cruise Control and Lane Tracing Assist. Toyota’s hybrid advancements are also evident in the Crown, which is offered with two distinct hybrid powertrains.

One combines a 2.4-litre turbo

engine with a front electric motor and All-Wheel Drive to produce 340 hp, while the other pairs a 2.5-litre engine with two electric motors for a total of 222 hp and fuel efficiency of 21.6 km/L. Multiple drive modes, a premium 12.3-inch multimedia display, JBL audio, ventilated seats and a hands-free powered trunk add to the model’s appeal, while Toyota’s latest safety systems provide comprehensive driver assistance.

Toyota’s expanding hybrid portfolio in Oman now also includes the newly launched Land Cruiser 300 Hybrid, which brings Hybrid Electric Technology to one of the

brand’s most iconic nameplates. Powered by a 3.5-litre V6 twin-turbo engine paired with a motor generator, the Land Cruiser Hybrid delivers 457 horsepower and 790 Nm of torque, offering a distinctive hybrid drive that combines strength with confident performance.

Designed for versatility, it features a 1500W (220V) AC power supply to ensure power availability on the go. The model is equipped with Toyota Safety Sense 3.0, including Pre-Collision, Lane Assist and Radar Cruise Control, while a 12.3-inch multimedia screen provides access to navigation, en-

tertainment and vehicle settings. Comfort is enhanced through an Electric Air Conditioning System, smart hybrid battery cooling and Four-Zone Climate Control, reinforcing the Land Cruiser’s reputation for capability without compromise.

Together, these models underline Toyota’s continued commitment to efficient performance, comfort and safety. As hybrid mobility gains momentum in Oman, Toyota’s HEV range remains well positioned to support the Sultanate’s transition toward cleaner and more advanced transportation solutions.

GREEN SPORTS PROGRAMME

Bank Muscat inaugurates lighting project in Ibri



MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing efforts to promote community development and support youth initiatives, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, recently celebrated the inauguration of the lighting project for Sadadab Sports and Cultural Team in the Wilayat of Ibri, implemented as part of its Green Sports Programme, one of the Bank’s flagship corporate social responsibility initiatives.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of Rashed Abdullah Al Kiyumi, CEO of Shams Al-Din and Al Kiyumi International, and attended by Juma Khamis Al Yaqoubi, Regional Manager, South Sharqia in Bank Muscat, alongside a number of team officials and residents of the Wilayat.

During the ceremony, Juma Khamis Al Yaqoubi, Regional Manager, South Sharqia in Bank Muscat, stated: “The inauguration of the floodlighting project at the Sadadab Sports and Cultural Team field in the Wilayat of Ibri reflects Bank Muscat’s commitment to supporting community sports teams and empowering them to play their vital role in attracting youth and developing their capabilities. The Green Sports Programme contributes to providing a safe and integrated sporting en-

vironment that enables members to practice sports, or organise cultural, and social activities at different times, positively impacting the community.” He also wished the team’s management continued success in implementing its various activities and initiatives.

For his part, Dr. Hamid Masood Al Shmali, Head of Sadadab Sports Cultural Team in the Wilayat of Ibri, expressed his sincere appreciation and gratitude to Bank Muscat for its continuous support of local sports teams, noting that the lighting project represents a significant milestone in the team’s journey. He explained: “The project will help expand the scope of sports and community activities organised by the team, in addition to supporting and refining the talents of its members and developing their skills. We are committed to making optimal use of the project in a manner that serves the residents of the Wilayat.”

Meanwhile, Khalil Hamad Al Shmali, a team member, expressed his pride in the sports field lighting project, noting that it will make a substantial difference in preparation and training levels. He added that the project will provide a suitable environment for evening training sessions, helping players balance their various commitments,

enhance performance quality, and create greater opportunities for development and competition.

Another team member, Majid Rashed Khalifa, highlighted the strong community dimension of the project, describing it as a key pillar that underscores the importance of the Green Sports Programme. He explained that community sports facilities provide open spaces that serve the residents of the Wilayat, functioning as platforms that bring community members together, foster a spirit of belonging and cooperation, and reinforce the team’s role as an active contributor to community development.

The Green Sports Programme is one of Bank Muscat’s leading initiatives under its corporate social responsibility and sustainability efforts. The programme focuses on developing the infrastructure of local sports facilities and strengthening their role as active community hubs that embrace youth and support their potential. Since its launch, the programme has supported 223 local sports teams across various governorates of the Sultanate, benefiting more than 77,000 team members, and contributing to a sustainable model of community partnership aimed at empowering youth.

DESERT ADVENTURE



GWM Oman hosts Haval H9 Family Fun Fest in Wahiba Sands

MUSCAT: GWM Oman successfully hosted the GWM Haval H9 Family Fun Fest on 9 January 2026, bringing together more than 30 families for a full day of desert adventure and shared experiences.

The event offered an exclusive opportunity for Haval H9 owners and their families to experience real-world desert driving across Wahiba Sands in a safe and organised convoy format.

The day began with participants gathering at the GWM showroom in Wattayah for a morning briefing and preparation session before setting off together in a guided convoy.

Families then drove their own Haval H9 vehicles towards Wahiba Sands, where the SUV’s genuine 4x4 capability was demonstrated over long distance desert routes and light off-road terrain, while maintaining high levels of comfort for all passengers.

The experience went beyond a traditional test drive and was designed as a lifestyle-led event centred on family togetherness. Along with convoy driving, the day included shared meals, live entertainment, and scenic photography moments, especially during the sunset in Wahiba Sands, creating lasting memories for participating families. The program concluded with an evening return convoy, reinforcing the Haval H9 as a dependable companion for long journeys with loved ones.

The Haval H9 is a 7-seater SUV that combines strong 4x4 ability with comfort, safety, and convenience for family travel. The Family Fun Fest highlighted these strengths in real conditions by allowing families to experience the vehicle over a complete day of driving, dining, and leisure activities in the desert environment.

A senior spokesperson for OTE

Group said, “We were delighted to welcome our Haval H9 families for this special desert experience.

The Family Fun Fest was not just about driving, but about giving our customers a full day to enjoy time together, build memories, and truly experience what the Haval H9 is made for. The event showed how the H9 brings capability, comfort, and confidence together for real family adventures in Oman’s unique landscapes.”

The GWM Haval H9 Family Fun Fest reflects GWM Oman’s focus on experiential engagement and lifestyle-based brand building, offering customers opportunities to connect with both the product and the wider GWM community.

Customers can experience the Haval H9 at GWM showrooms in Wattayah, Sohar, Mabella, Nizwa and Salalah and book a test drive to explore its features and performance first hand.



On the proud occasion of the 77th Republic Day of India, warm greetings are extended to the people of India, the Indian community, and to friends and partners in the Sultanate of Oman.

Republic Day is a moment to reflect on India's remarkable journey, from the ideals born in our Constitution to the resilient nation that we are becoming today. It is a celebration of democratic values, institutional strength, and a collective resolve to build a prosperous, inclusive, and forward-growing India.

India's growth story today is anchored in a strong foundation; structural reforms, modern labour codes, digital public infrastructure, and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem that have propelled India into a new phase of development. From the success of our lunar missions to our role as the "Pharmacy of the World," the spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat is propelling us toward becoming a developed nation—Viksit Bharat—by 2047. As Bharat is on this development journey, it has achieved the status of being the world's fastest-growing major economy and one of the leading global innovation hubs. India is shaping opportunities not only for its citizens but also for trusted friends and partners across the world.

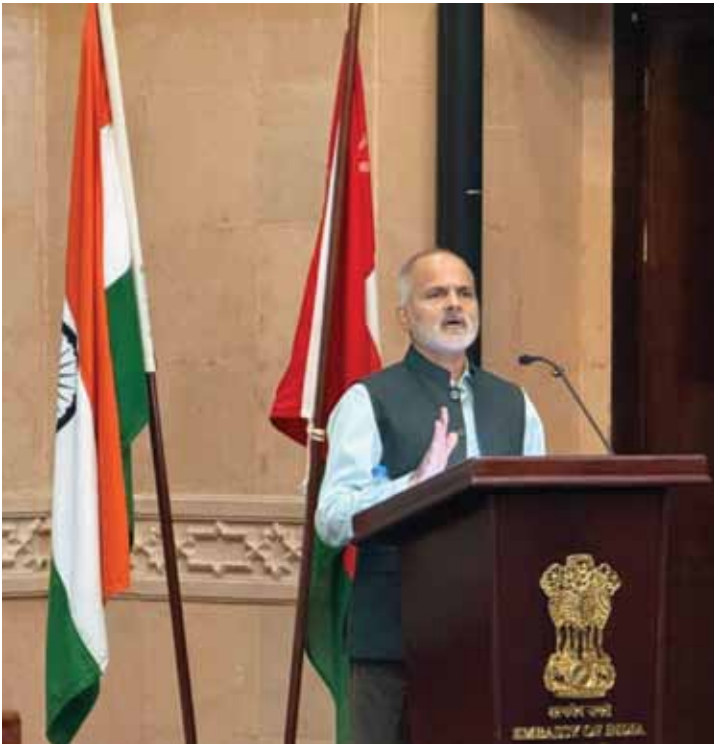
Addressing the Indian community in Oman, Prime Minister

Shri Narendra Modi highlighted the deep-rooted civilisational, cultural and maritime ties between India and Oman, nurtured over centuries. He lauded the Indian diaspora for strengthening people-to-people bonds and contributing positively to Omani society. Emphasising shared values and a forward-looking partnership, he said "The India-Oman Friendship Festival (Maitri Parv) symbolises this enduring relationship. MAITRI stands for Maritime heritage, Aspirations, Innovation, Trust & Technology, Respect, and Inclusive growth, reflecting the shared history and a prosperous future for both nations."

India and Oman stand upon a foundation laid over thousands of years, built through maritime commerce, cultural exchange and a shared history of cooperation, and our progress stands as a testament to this shared progress. Rooted in centuries of maritime relations across the Indian Ocean, our relationship has now evolved into a comprehensive strategic partnership spanning trade, energy, logistics, education, technology, and people-to-people ties.

The sea that once carried spices, textiles, and ideas now carries cooperation, connectivity, and shared ambition.

The recent visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Oman in December 2025 marks a significant milestone in this enduring partnership. The signing of the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has opened a new chapter in bilateral relations, enhancing



AMBASSADOR GODAVARTHI VENKATA SRINIVAS'S MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 77TH REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA

market access, boosting trade, and unlocking opportunities across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, services, and emerging technologies. CEPA reflects India's commitment to open, fair,

and future-ready economic engagement.

Maritime cooperation remains a central pillar of our partnership. The Joint Vision on Maritime Cooperation underscores our shared commitment to safe sea lanes, maritime security, sustainable ocean resources, and regional stability. In this context, the voyage of INSV Kaundinya, inspired by ancient Indian shipbuilding traditions, was a powerful symbol, reconnecting history with the present and reliving the civilisational links that have bound India and Oman for centuries.

India's leadership in the global energy transition also presents new avenues for collaboration. Initiatives in green hydrogen, green ammonia, renewable energy, and sustainable infrastructure demonstrate India's resolve to pursue growth that is both economically robust and environmentally responsible. Oman's partnership in these emerging sectors further strengthens our shared vision for a cleaner and more resilient future.

India's emergence as a global leader in the "Techade," driven by a robust ecosystem of Science, Technology, and Innovation, is noteworthy. From the historic milestones of the Gaganyaan mission and the expansion of the Indus AI mission to the global footprint of our Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), India is redefining the boundaries of the digital frontier.

With the world's third-largest startup ecosystem and a specialised focus on semiconductor design and quantum computing, the nation is not just a consumer of technology but a primary architect of global digital solutions, aiming for a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047.

The potential of a strategic partnership between India and Oman is limitless. By leveraging Oman's strategic location as a gateway to the Gulf and India's vast pool of STEM talent, both nations are co-creating a future-ready workforce and a resilient technological supply chain that promises shared prosperity and security in the Indian Ocean Region.

Equally important are the human connections that underpin our relationship. The Indian community in Oman, our students, professionals, entrepreneurs, and innovators, continue to act as bridges of friendship, contributing to Oman's development while strengthening people-to-people ties.

As we celebrate Republic Day, we do so with confidence, purpose, and optimism. Guided by constitutional values and powered by innovation, India is prepared to contribute meaningfully to global growth, stability, and sustainability. The India-Oman partnership, grounded in trust and shared aspirations, will continue to sail forward — from heritage to horizon.



On the occasion of **India's 77th Republic Day**, Khimji Ramdas sends heartfelt greetings to the people of India.

Celebrating the deep-rooted friendship between our two nations, we look forward to strengthening our bonds for a future of shared success.



Landmarks across India glow in tricolour hues

NEW DELHI: From the mountains of north to the coasts of South, several cities on Saturday, including Reasi, Mumbai, and Lucknow, were transformed into a sea of saffron, white, and green on Saturday as iconic structures were illuminated to mark the lead-up to the 77th Republic Day.

Major landmarks, including the Salal Dam in Jammu and Kashmir, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai, and the Government buildings in Lucknow, reflected a vibrant, patriotic atmosphere in the cities.

Several buildings were illuminated in the hues of the tricolour in Mumbai ahead of the Republic Day 2026 celebration, including the Western Railway headquarters, which were lit up in the colours of the Indian national flag on Saturday night.

Government buildings and major roads in the capital city of Uttar Pradesh were illuminated. The city witnessed tricolour lighting on Saturday as primary roadways were decorated for the 77th Republic Day. The full-dress rehearsal for the 2026 Republic Day parade was

held on Saturday in front of the Assembly building in Lucknow, where senior district officials were in attendance. During the rehearsal, the contingents of the participating forces, schoolchildren, and artists impressed everyone with their flawless performance.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army will present a powerful, future-ready combat profile at the 77th Republic Day Parade, scheduled to be held on 26 January at Kartavya Path in the national capital, through a first-of-its-kind "Battle Array" (Ranbhoomi Vyuh Rachna) formation. - **ANI**



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Republic Day marks completion of India's journey to constitutional self-governance

Republic Day unfolds each year as a shared national moment, where ceremony, colour, and collective memory come together

NEW DELHI: Republic Day marks a defining milestone in India's national journey. It marks the day the Constitution of India came into force on January 26, 1950, formally establishing the country as a 'Sovereign Democratic Republic'.

While independence on August 15, 1947, ended colonial rule, it was the adoption of the Constitution that completed India's transition to self-governance based on law, institutional accountability, and the will of the people of India.

This constitutional milestone is commemorated each year through observances that reflect the functioning of democratic institutions and the diversity of the nation. According to a press release, Republic Day celebrations bring constitutional ideals into the public domain, most visibly through the national ceremony and parade held in New Delhi along the Kartavya Path. The parade presents a coordinated display of military discipline, cultural heritage, and regional representation, with tableaux from states and Union Territories highlighting India's cultural plurality.

Across the country, flag-hoisting ceremonies, official programmes, and cultural events are organised in state capitals, districts, educational institutions, and local communities. These events make Republic Day a shared civic occasion that reaffirms the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution.

As per the release, the 77th Re-

public Day celebrations are organised around the central theme "150 Years of Vande Mataram". The theme runs across the Republic Day Parade, cultural performances, tableaux, public competitions, and outreach programmes, placing the national song at the heart of this year's observance while linking freedom, cultural expression, and contemporary national aspirations.

At the national level, the Republic Day Parade 2026 has been planned as a large-scale ceremonial and cultural event with enhanced public participation. The President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission will be the Chief Guests, reflecting India's engagement with key international partners. This year's parade will also feature a Battle Array format by the Indian Army for the first time, alongside traditional marching contingents and service presentations.

Key events of the Republic Day Parade 2026 include a total of 30 tableaux, presented by States, Union Territories, and central ministries, built around the themes Swatantrata ka Mantra - Vande Mataram and Samridhhi ka Mantra - Atmanirbhar Bharat. Participation of around 2,500 artists in the cultural presentation at Kartavya Path. Invitation of approximately 10,000 Special Guests from across the country, representing farmers, artisans, scientists, innovators, women entrepreneurs, students,

sportspersons, beneficiaries of flagship government schemes, and frontline workers.

Complementing the parade, a range of citizen-centric initiatives have been launched in the run-up to Republic Day to extend participation beyond the ceremonial space, said the release. Through platforms such as MyGov and MY Bharat, the Government has organised national competitions designed to engage citizens—especially youth and creative communities—with the Republic Day theme. These include an essay competition on Swatantrata Ka Mantra - Vande Mataram, a painting contest on Samridhhi Ka Mantra - Atmanirbhar Bharat.



Singing competitions featuring renditions of Vande Mataram. Quizzes on themes such as the evolution of Vande Mataram, India's achievements in space and sports, and national development initiatives. Participation in these activities is facilitated through a dedicated MY Bharat portal for Republic Day 2026, which enables registration, coordination, and outreach. Selected winners are also invited to be associated with Republic Day events, creating a direct link between public engagement and the national celebration.

Taken together, the theme-driven parade, expanded public presence, and nationwide participa-

tory programmes position the 77th Republic Day as a celebration that combines ceremonial tradition with inclusive engagement, allowing citizens to connect with the occasion both as spectators and participants.

The decision to declare January 26 as Republic Day reflects a deliberate historical choice to anchor India's constitutional beginning in the milestones of its freedom struggle. Over two decades, the date came to symbolise a clear progression, from the assertion of complete independence in 1930 to the formal adoption of a constitutional system of self-government in 1950. Understanding this journey is essential

to understanding Republic Day itself, as it reveals how political aspiration was gradually transformed into a durable, constitutional order.

As per the release, the demand for Purna Swaraj (complete independence) became a formal political objective in 1929, after resolutions adopted during the national struggle for freedom. On January 26, 1930, Indians across the country observed Purna Swaraj Day, committing themselves to the goal of complete self-rule and rejecting dominion status under British governance. This declaration and nationwide observance marked a decisive shift in the freedom movement, articulating a clear political

objective that went beyond demands for constitutional reforms under colonial rule.

The Constituent Assembly of India met for the first time on December 9, 1946, at the Constitution Hall, now the Central Hall of Parliament House. This marked the formal beginning of India's constitution-making process. Entrusted with the responsibility of framing a Constitution for independent India, the Assembly worked for two years, eleven months, and seventeen days to complete this historic task. During this period, it held eleven sessions spread over 165 days, with 114 days devoted to detailed discussion of the Draft Constitution. Its members were chosen through indirect elections by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, along with representatives of the princely states, ensuring that the Constitution was shaped through a broadly representative and deliberative process.

On August 15, 1947, India attained independence, bringing an end to nearly two centuries of colonial rule. The transfer of power marked the culmination of a long and sustained freedom struggle led by leaders, freedom movements, and ordinary citizens across the country. Independence restored political sovereignty to the Indian people and initiated the task of nation-building, as the newly free nation began shaping its future based on democratic ideals, unity, and self-determination.

After nearly three years of extensive deliberations, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India, completing one of the most significant exercises in democratic institution-building. The drafting process involved detailed discussions on the nature of the Indian State, the rights and duties of citizens, the balance of power between different parts of government, and

safeguards for social justice and equality. The adoption of the Constitution marked the culmination of this collective effort to establish a governance framework rooted in democratic values and constitutional principles.

The date of adoption, November 26, 1949, is formally recorded in the concluding line of the Preamble, underscoring its constitutional authority and historical importance.

When the Constitution came into effect on January 26, 1950, India was formally established as a Sovereign Democratic Republic, marking the beginning of constitutional governance in independent India. Through the 42nd Amendment Act in 1976, 'Socialist and Secular' were added, thereby making India Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic. The newly drafted Constitution was enforced by replacing the Government of India Act 1935. With this, authority was given to democratic institutions operating under the Constitution, and sovereignty was placed with the people.

The choice of January 26, was deliberate, as the date carried the historical legacy of the Purna Swaraj observance of 1930, when complete independence had been asserted as the national objective. By bringing the Constitution into force on this date, independent India symbolically connected the political aspirations of the freedom movement with the institutional framework of a constitutional republic.

Republic Day unfolds each year as a shared national moment, where ceremony, colour, and collective memory come together. From the capital to the farthest corners of the country, the day is marked by flag hoisting ceremonies and parades by armed forces and school children, creating a shared sense of significance.

The grandest and most impor-

tant of these parades is held at the Kartavya Path in New Delhi, which showcases a multi-hued image of the country's cultural heritage and military prowess. The day begins with a solemn tribute at the National War Memorial, where the Prime Minister pays homage to our fallen soldiers, setting a reflective tone before the main ceremony.

At Kartavya Path, the arrival of the President of India formally marks the commencement of the proceedings. The unfurling of the National Flag, accompanied by the National Anthem and a 21-gun salute, signals the beginning of the parade. Marching contingents of the Army, Navy and Air Force, along with other uniformed services, pass in ceremonial formation, reflecting discipline and coordination. Mechanised columns and selected defence presentations further add to the spectacle.

A distinctive feature of the parade is the presentation of tableaux by States/ Union Territories and the Ministries, which highlight regional culture and themes of national importance. Cultural performances integrated into the procession also add visual depth without interrupting its formal rhythm. One of the main functions of the parade is to honour the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the country and to bestow bravery awards upon military personnel and citizens. Signature segments such as the motorcycle display and the Indian Air Force fly past bring the parade to its grand conclusion.

The ceremonial observances conclude a few days later on January 29. This is called the Beating the Retreat ceremony, which is held at Vijay Chowk, marking the formal close of Republic Day celebrations. 'Beating Retreat' marks a centuries-old military tradition, when the troops ceased fighting. - **ANI**





Happy Republic Day

- 26TH OF JANUARY -



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Indian expats celebrate Republic Day

Schools across Oman are marking the day with programmes that blend learning and celebration

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As India marks its 77th Republic Day on Monday, Oman's Indian expatriate community of nearly 520,000 is observing the occasion by celebrating the nation's Constitution, democratic values, cultural heritage, and the enduring friendship between India and the Sultanate.

The Embassy of India in Muscat will host the traditional Flag Unfurling Ceremony at 7.00 am, welcoming Indian nationals and friends of India to witness the event. The Embassy will remain closed for the day in observance of the national holiday.

This year's Republic Day celebrations continue with a Com-

munity Reception on Wednesday, January 28, at the Grand Lawn of Crowne Plaza, Qurum. The Embassy has invited performers, painters, and other creative artists to contribute to a cultural programme and art exhibition.

Folk dances, musical performances, and other artistic displays of up to three minutes will be showcased alongside original artworks, reflecting India's rich heritage and its cultural ties with Oman. "Republic Day is a chance to share our culture with friends abroad while remembering the values that built our nation," said Meenakshi, an artist participating in the event.

"Performing here in Oman feels like connecting two nations - cele-



brating India's traditions alongside a historic country that has shared centuries-old ties with India."

Schools across Oman are marking the day with programmes that blend learning and celebration.

Flag hoisting, the national anthem, patriotic songs, dances, and skits recount India's freedom struggle and the journey of its Con-

stitution. For many students, these activities offer more than ceremony - they are lessons in citizenship, unity, and responsibility.

"Republic Day teaches our children the importance of democratic values and the significance of our Constitution," said a principal of an Indian school in Muscat.

"Through songs, dances, and

skits, they connect with history and understand the role they play in shaping a progressive society."

He added, "January 26 marks the day India formally became a sovereign, democratic republic, governed by laws written by Indians for Indians."

For Indian expatriates, the celebrations carry deep emotional significance. "Being away from India makes this day even more meaningful," said R. Madhusoodanan, a former State Bank of India official.

"Republic Day reminds us of the strength of our Constitution and the responsibility every citizen carries in building a progressive and inclusive nation. As Indians, many of us are consciously experiencing an awakening that generates positive energy to nurture the world. Viksit Bharat is about this inner and collective renewal."

Community leaders note that the Republic Day events in Oman reflect India's cultural richness and unity in diversity. By involving artists, students, and residents, the Embassy and local associations

strengthen the bonds of people-to-people diplomacy that have long connected India and Oman.

Cultural and artistic expressions form the heart of the celebration. Participants are encouraged to submit performances and creative works, with selected entries displayed at the reception and featured on the Embassy's social media channels. The combination of music, dance, and visual art brings alive stories of India's heritage, its constitutional values, and the friendship shared with Oman.

"Every dance, every painting, every note of music tells a story of India's spirit," said Sivakumar, a long-term expatriate in Muscat. "Living away from home makes Republic Day even more meaningful. It brings the entire Indian community together under one flag."

From embassy ceremonies to school programmes and artistic showcases, Republic Day in Oman is a reflection of India's democratic ideals, rich cultural heritage, and the deep sense of belonging felt by its community abroad.

'ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT'

Blending rich legacy with a modern vision for self-reliance

NEW DELHI: As India celebrates its 77th Republic Day, the nation reflects on its journey from a dominion to a republic, blending its rich legacy with a modern vision for self-reliance and growth.

The Republic Day Celebrations 2026 at Kartavya Path is set to be a grand affair, marking 150 years of the iconic national song 'Vande Mataram'. The event will showcase India's military prowess and rich cultural heritage, featuring 30 tableaux from states, Union Territories, and ministries. The day highlights India's defence capabilities and honours citizens, including children, for acts of bravery.

The theme 'Swatantrata ka Mantra: Vande Mataram' with special tableaux and a new musical rendition composed by MM Keeravani and sung by Shreya Ghoshal and 'Samridhi ka Mantra: Aatmanirbhar Bharat' will highlight India's journey towards prosperity and self-reliance.

By pairing the two, the government is signalling that modern technological self-reliance is the logical conclusion of the freedom struggle. It's the journey from "Self-Rule" (Swaraj) to "Self-Reliance" (Atmanirbharta).

You might wonder why a 150-year-old song is paired with Atmanirbhar Bharat. In 1905, Vande Mataram was the anthem of the Swadeshi Movement (the original "Self-Reliant India" movement).

The Government of India launched the Vande Mataram 150 portal for citizens to record their own renditions and download commemorative certificates.

Composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875 in Sanskritized Bengali. It first appeared in his 1882 novel Anandamath. Rabindranath Tagore first sang it at the 1896 session of the Indian National Congress.

It became a rallying cry against British rule, particularly during the 1905 anti-partition movement of Bengal, and was the anthem of the Swadeshi movement. It personified the nation as a 'Mother', demanding devotion and sacrifice. The Ministry of Culture tableau will be showcasing the original manuscript and its journey from 1875.

It was adopted as the National Song by the Constituent Assembly on January 24, 1950.

While 1947 gave us our breath of freedom, 1950 gave us our soul--a framework that ensures every Indian is the master of their own destiny. This year is particularly special as we celebrate 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', the song that ignited the flame of revolution in the hearts of millions.

But a Republic is not just about its past; it is about its future. Today, we see an India that no longer just 'asks,' but 'provides.' From the indigenous BrahMos missiles and Tejas aircraft to being a global leader in digital payments and vaccines, our self-reliance--our Atmanirbharta--is our true strength. When we use a 'Made in India' product or support a local startup, we are practising the modern form of patriotism.

By early 2026, the first "Made

in India" semiconductor chips will be entering the global supply chain. This reduces dependence on imports for everything from mobile phones to fighter jets.

Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) is built on five core pillars announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2020: Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography, and Demand.

Economy, not just incremental growth, but "Quantum Jumps"; Infrastructure, symbolised by the PM Gati Shakti and the expansion of "Water Metros"; System, driven by 21st-century technology (e.g., UPI, which has now gone global). Vibrant demography by utilising our young population as "smart soldiers" and innovators, and Demand, making sure the "Power of India's Market" is met by "Made in India" goods.

This initiative aims to transform India into a global economic power, fostering self-sufficiency, boosting local production, and driving modernisation through technological advancements, supported by a 20 lakh crore package.

The Constitution acts as the "software" that runs the diverse "hardware" of India. True independence is achieved when a nation can stand on its own feet while keeping its head held high in the global community.

To truly understand why Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) is a centrepiece of the 2026 Republic Day, we have to look at the transition from "assembling for the world" to "inventing for the world."

India's self-reliance has moved into "deep-tech" and "critical minerals." The DRDO is showcasing indigenous Long-Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missiles, placing India in an elite club of nations with this level of speed and precision.

With over 300 private space startups, the 2026 celebrations highlight progress toward India's own Space Station and the successful testing of indigenous jet engines--a feat achieved by only a handful of countries.

Republic Day is not just a holiday, but a moment to reflect on the resilience of Indian democracy and its ongoing journey towards progress and inclusivity.

India surpassed Japan to become the world's 4th-largest economy in 2025, with a GDP of over USD 4 trillion, driven by rapid digitalisation, robust manufacturing, infrastructure development, and structural reforms such as GST and IBC. This rapid ascent from 10th place in 2014 was anchored by strong domestic demand, a burgeoning services sector, and a young workforce.

India is recognised as the world's fastest-growing major economy, with real GDP growth averaging 6.5%+ in recent years, and is projected to become the 3rd-largest economy, surpassing Germany.

Though India became a free nation on August 15, 1947, it declared itself a Sovereign, Democratic and republican state with the adoption of the Constitution on January 26, 1950. **ANI**

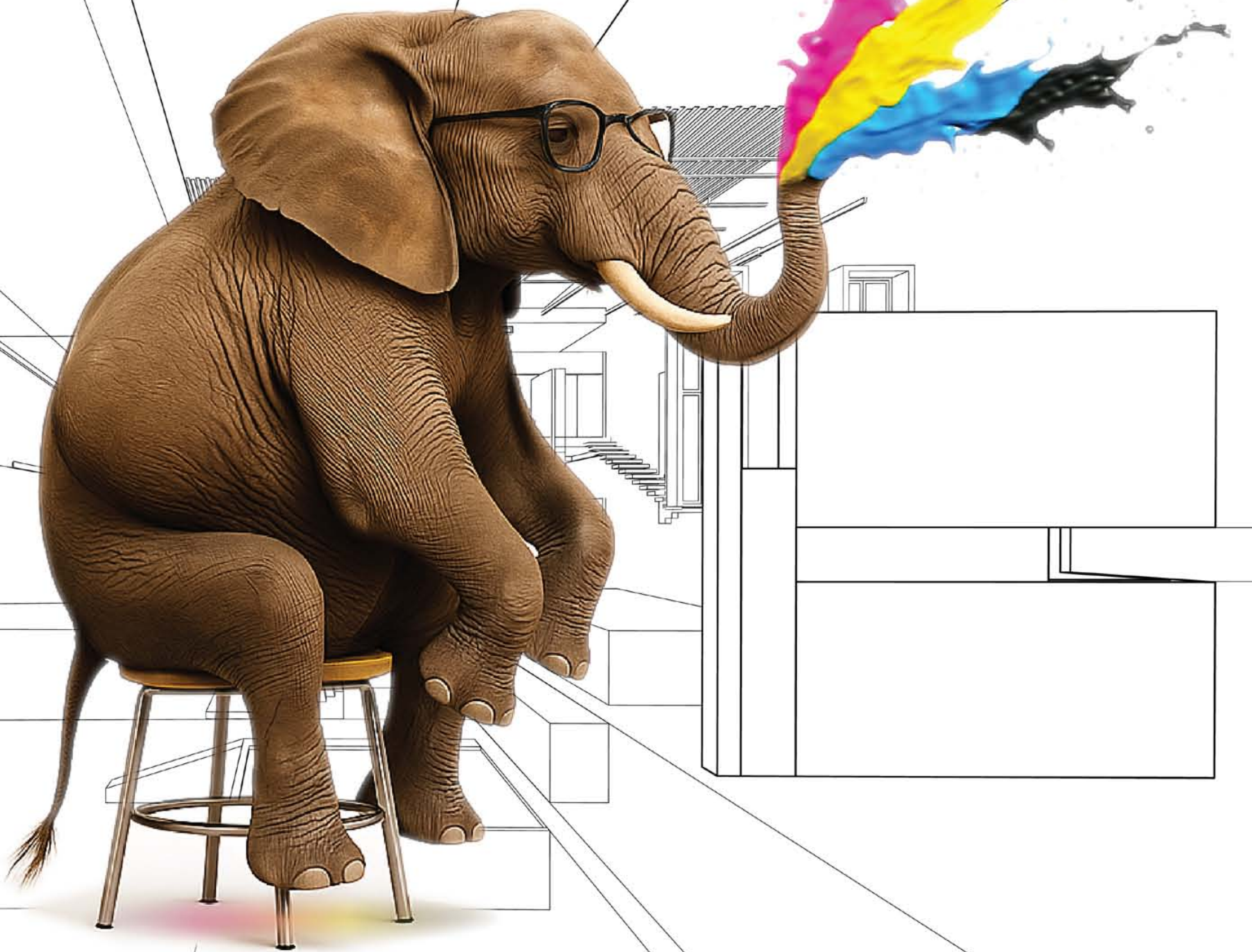
Happy Indian Republic Day

On this historic occasion, we proudly celebrate the spirit and legacy of India and extend our sincere appreciation to its visionary leaders whose leadership continues to guide the nation toward lasting peace and prosperity.

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