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OF OMAN





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YEARS OF
LEGACY

Founded 1975 · Volume 50 No. 108 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group



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HM THE SULTAN RETURNS HOME

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has returned home, following a private visit to the United Kingdom (UK). May the Almighty Allah grant His Majesty success to achieve further progress and accomplishments. -ONA



SMART APPLICATIONS SPEARHEAD OMAN'S FARMING LANDSCAPE

Growing use of modern technologies in agricultural sector aligns with the objectives of 'Oman Vision 2040'



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has recently adopted smart agriculture as part of its strategy to achieve food security and preserve natural resources, aligning with the objectives of "Oman Vision 2040", which aims to modernise and develop the agricultural sector.

Oman has witnessed growing applications of modern agricultural technologies, including protected farming, smart irrigation, and drone usage. However, these applications are still in a phase of gradual expansion, primarily concentrated in research and private sector-supported investment projects.

Eng. Badriya Saif Al-Hosni, Head of the Smart Agriculture Department at the Directorate General of Agricultural and Livestock Research at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources, stated: "A key feature of the ministry's strategy to promote technology in agriculture is digital transformation in services, adopting modern techniques to enhance crop productivity, reduce input costs, and empower farmers with smart farming tools."

She added that continuous efforts are being made to balance the preservation of Oman's agricultural heritage with the adop-



tion of modern farming technologies by integrating innovations into traditional systems. Examples, she said, include conserving local plant varieties through gene banks and improving water distribution in aflaj (traditional irrigation channels) while maintaining their heritage character.

In recent years, Oman has implemented several advanced agricultural technologies, such as soilless farming (hydroponics),

integrated aquaculture-agriculture (aquaponics), and precision farming systems that rely on geographic and climatic data analysis to determine irrigation schedules and quantities. Drones have also been deployed for pest control, palm pollination, and crop monitoring, alongside smart irrigation systems using soil moisture sensors. Additionally, solar energy is being encouraged to power farming and greenhouse systems. >A3

Three killed in Ibri accident



MUSCAT: Three people were killed and another was seriously injured in a collision between two trucks in Al Rahba area of Ibri, Al Dhahirah Governorate, on Sunday. The Civil Defence and Ambulance

Authority (CDA) rushed to the accident site on getting information and provided medical care to the injured. The critically injured person was transported to the hospital for treatment.

OMAN Digital platform aids in home healthcare

1 A student team from the UTAS in Shinas has developed an innovative digital health platform named "Meaad", aimed at simplifying access to home healthcare. >A2

OMAN Labour Forum 2025 begins in Salalah

2 The Labour Forum 2025 opened on Sunday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Compound for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah. >A3

SPORTS Messi hurt as Inter Miami beat Necaxa

3 Lionel Messi suffered an injury as Inter Miami edged to a 5-4 penalty shootout victory over Necaxa in the Leagues Cup on Saturday. >B6

GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

Omani research team uses AI to detect genetic heart disorders

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A groundbreaking research initiative has made significant progress in identifying the genetic causes of cardiomyopathy in the Sultanate of Oman.

The study, titled "Implementation of Machine Learning Approach to Predict Pathogenicity of Genetic Variants Associated with Cardiomyopathy," utilises Whole Exome Sequencing (WES) and advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) methodologies to investigate the underlying genetic contributors to this complex heart condition.

The research was led by Dr. Ahmed Al Amri, Consultant of Molecular Genetics Lab and Head of Training and Professional Staff Development at the National Genetics Centre of the Royal Hospi-

tal. Cardiomyopathy, a heterogeneous group of myocardial disorders, remains a significant health burden worldwide. In the Sultanate of Oman, the genetic basis of the disease has been insufficiently characterised, hindering effective diagnosis and intervention.

This study aimed to bridge that gap by conducting genetic analysis on a cohort of Omani families affected by cardiomyopathy.

'CardioVar'

Dr. Ahmed Al Amri explained that central to the research is the development of a novel AI-based analysis model called "CardioVar."

This model is designed to enhance the interpretation of WES data through the integration of more than 50,000 genetic variants and mutations linked to cardio-



myopathy, supported by multiple AI algorithms to ensure analytical precision.

The research project achieved a diagnostic success rate of over 80%, uncovering both known and previously unreported genetic

mutations, some of which involve genes not previously linked to cardiomyopathy.

These findings offer valuable insight into the genetic landscape of the disease within the Omani population and present new op-

portunities for further research to confirm the clinical relevance of novel variants.

The AI model significantly improved both the speed and accuracy of genetic analysis, demonstrating its practical value in overcoming the limitations of traditional sequencing approaches.

Dr. Al Amri emphasised that this approach not only advances the understanding of the genetic basis of cardiomyopathy in the Sultanate of Oman but also provides a scalable framework for implementing AI in genomic medicine, enhancing diagnostic accuracy and personalised care.

The multidisciplinary research team included Dr. Ahmed Al Amri, Dr. Aisha Al Balushi, Nibras Al Mahrami, Dr. Musallam Al Ariami, Dr. Nadia Al Hashimi, Dr. Mo-

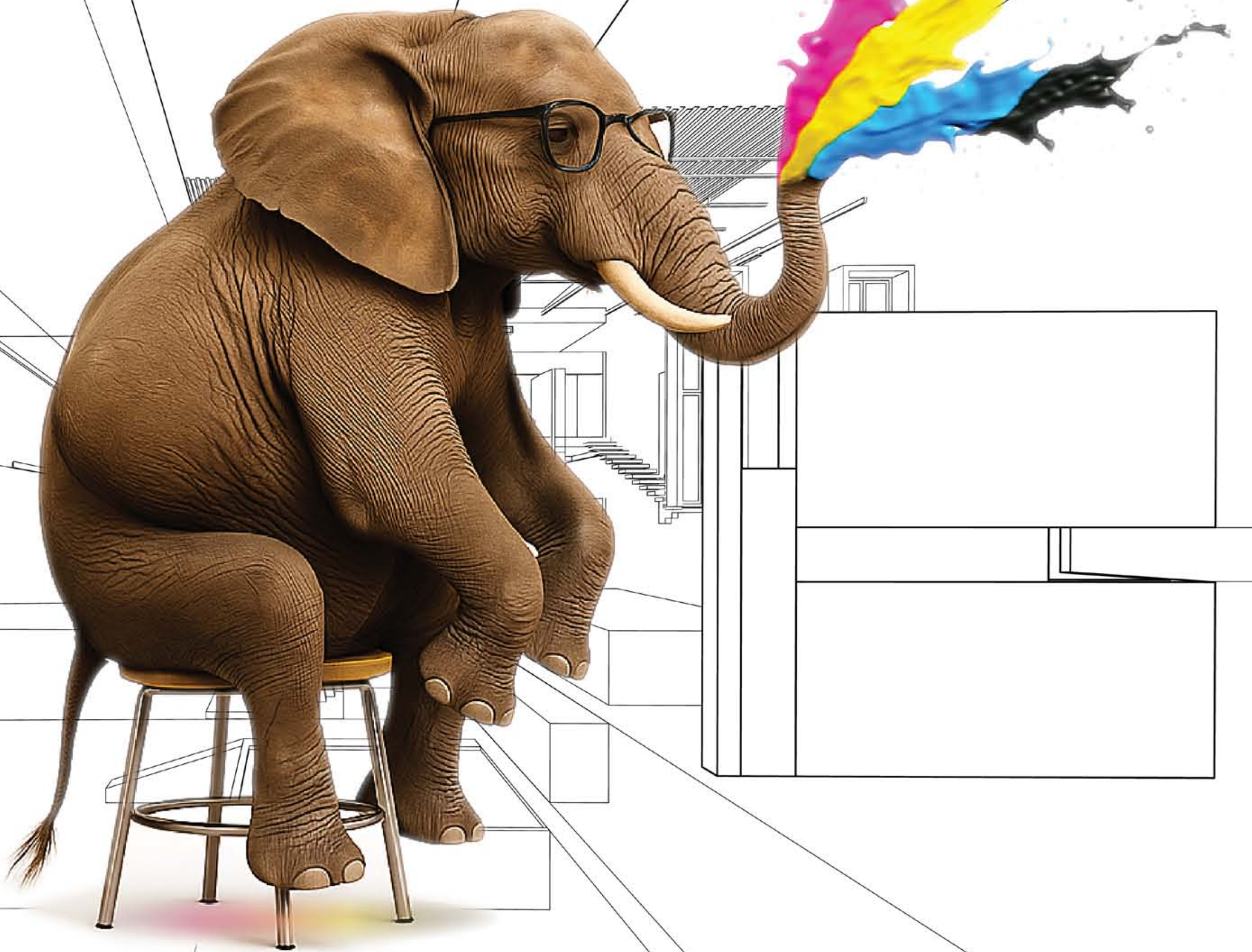
ammed Al Rawahi, Dr. Tuqa Al Lawati, Dr. Bushra Al Shamsi, Dr. Fahad Al Hattali, and Ms. Mashael Al Balushi.

Together, they have contributed to a practical model that blends clinical knowledge, laboratory science, and artificial intelligence to achieve high-impact results.

This research not only advances the scientific understanding of inherited cardiomyopathy in the Sultanate of Oman but also exemplifies how AI can transform genetic diagnostics.

It stands as a national model for the integration of precision medicine into routine clinical care, with plans to expand the study to include other hereditary heart conditions and incorporate its findings into everyday healthcare practices.

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TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:18pm
Asr.....3:42pm
Maghrib.....6:53pm
Isha.....8:10pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:17am

OMANI HERITAGE

Bait Al-Manzafah Museum is a heritage, tourist landmark

IBRI: Bait Al-Manzafah Museum in the Wilayat of Ibri, Al Dhahirah Governorate, stands as a heritage and tourist landmark, embodying the essence of Omani heritage and reviving a historical era spanning over a century.

Originally a family home built on ancestral roots, it has been transformed into a museum housing royal documents and rare artifacts.

The place reflects the spirit of community initiative, bridging the past with the present while blending historical depth with contemporary vitality.

National vision

This house, converted into the first private museum in Al Dhahirah Governorate on 1 January 2024, embodies a national vision that connects heritage with society and reinforces cultural identity. It also contributes to shaping a prosperous economic and touristic future.

The museum is located in the village of Majzi in the Wilayat of Ibri, distinguished by its picturesque geographical setting.

The old town sits atop a high hill overlooking lush palm oases, forming a unique tourist destination with its diverse terrain.

The area is also renowned for cultivating various fruits, such as figs, lemons, and grapes, alongside seasonal crops. -ONA



Digital platform helps in accessing home healthcare

The platform allows patients and visitors to easily book medical appointments while providing comprehensive information about doctors and clinics



underway to expand the platform by introducing new services such as medication delivery and virtual consultations, in addition to enhancing integration with government health institutions and broadening medical specialties. The company also aims to cover all governorates of Oman by next year while exploring plans for future expansion into the Gulf market.

The “Meaad” platform has achieved several milestones, including: First place in the Best Student Idea Competition; Best Idea Award at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Shinas (2025) and Best Idea Award at the Shinas Winter Festival (2024).

Additionally, the platform has established partnerships with the Ministry of Health and several private medical institutions, reflecting the growing recognition of this digital health innovation in academic and medical circles. -ONA

SHINAS: A student team from the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Shinas has developed an innovative digital health platform named “Meaad”, aimed at simplifying access to home healthcare services across North Al Batinah Governorate.

The platform allows patients and visitors to easily book medical appointments while providing comprehensive information about doctors and clinics. Featuring a flexible and user-friendly interface suitable for both elderly users and tech-savvy youth, Meaad also ensures high transparency in pricing. Leveraging artificial intelligence, it enhances user experience by suggesting appropriate services.

To date, the platform has served over one million users, including patients, doctors, and consultants, alongside more than 460 medical centres and clinics across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Muadh Murad Al-Maamari CEO of “Nahj” Foundation, stated that the team faced several challenges given the novelty of the idea. However, continuous coordination with relevant authorities and presenting a comprehensive vision helped highlight its importance in this vital sector.

He added that work is currently

NEW ACCOMPLISHMENT

RAFO secures first place in Scotland competitions

EDINBURGH: The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) band achieved first place overall in the Grade Four category of the World Pipe Band Championships held in the Scottish city of Dundonald.

This new accomplishment adds to the RAFO band's distinguished history of artistic excellence on the world stage.

It reflects the high level of professionalism the band has attained and highlights the dedicated efforts of its members in delivering polished musical performances. -ONA



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DHOFAR

Summer programme for students kicks off

SALALAH: The 2025 Summer Programme for school students, organised by the Directorate General of Education in Dhofar Governorate under the theme “Summer of Connection and Growth,” commenced yesterday at four summer centers in the governorate.

With the participation of 255 male and female students from various schools, the program will run for two weeks.

Hamed Bakhit Al Mashaikhi, Acting Director General of the Directorate General of Education in Dhofar and head of the local supervisory committee, explained that the events are being held as part of the Ministry of Education's commitment to utilising the summer break to develop students' skills and capabilities in a safe and stimulating educational environment.

He added that the programme aims to solidify national and community values and build an aware generation capable of keeping pace with technological developments while preserving national identity.

The programme includes diverse activities and workshops in multiple areas, such as social and voluntary work, arts, culture, literature, sports, and media, in addition to value-based themes.

The events of the first week will focus on honing personal, social skills by physical activities. -ONA

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COMMENTARY

The family ties and cultural encounter



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

When I had a heartburn eating its way in my chest, I decided to get up from my coffee shop table hoping the walk will get rid of it. About a hundred meters away, I saw a man standing over a screen typing “playground” and I stopped curiously to find out what was in his mind. He was actually typing on a car finder and expecting to find an indoor play area. I was still there when he turned around. I asked him if he had any luck. With a smile that betrayed his embarrassment, he told me “I just wanted to try it out.”

Seconds later, a young couple joined us. It turned out that it was his son and the woman was his daughter in law. They are Canadians and the young

couple bought a property in Muscat to settle in Oman. Then the “playground” riddle unfolded itself. The man was looking for a play area for his two grandsons. Obviously, the young couple were too busy earning a living and he, as a grandfather, had the unenviable task of entertaining the two little boys.

I wished them luck and continued with my battle of taming my heartburn. But two things were in my mind as I was walking around. First, the role of parents that we all have in different periods of our lives. There are many transitions but not without challenges. Like the rolling hills of life, there are ups and downs. The climb can be too steep and the descent very slippery.

Like my mother used to say to me jokingly, “there will be payback time somewhere in the future” when it is our turn. As I write these lines, I realize now there are actually two “paybacks”, not just one. From the role of a parent and that of grandparent. I am not sure which role is more testing. I would say, being a parent is much more challenging.

While the role of a grandparent is satisfying, because you can always return the little ones to their parents when they start driving you crazy. While on the subject, next week, my

wife and I will be spending time with an “army” of our grandchildren in Salalah.

My second thought was my encounter with non-Omanis settling in our blessed country. A good number of them are opting to work here and even buy properties that would lead to their retirement. The intercultural experience is good for the future of Oman. But having said that, Oman is well experienced with co-existence with different cultures. Our well documented history can verify it when our ancestors travelled half of the world.

So that chance encounter with the Canadian family in a busy mall said it all. For me, it triggered personal feelings and national loyalty at the same time. It reminded me once again that family ties are very important. There are the milestones of life. Where are we without them? If we ignore these ties then we are lost in a desert of despair.

While in the same context, our national identities are very important especially when we travel and meet people from different countries. Another thing comes to mind. Human interactions cannot be underestimated, too. When we see people from different background, it opens up new horizons to embrace a diversity of heritage and cultures.

Ministry initiative to sharpen digital skills of Omanis

It provides hands-on training opportunities within technological incubators and allows participants to work on their own digital game projects



SEEB: The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology on Sunday launched a video game development camp in collaboration with Al Nahdha Training Institute and the global company Unity.

The event is part of the “Makkeen” initiative, which aims to empower Omani competencies in modern digital fields.

The event was held under the patronage of Dr. Ali Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology.

Jalila Abdullah Al Fanna Al Arimi, Director of the Future Skills Development Department at the Ministry, stated in her speech during the launch ceremony that the camp targets 50 unemployed

participants with talent in game development.

It offers two specialised tracks: programming and animation design.

She added that the programme runs for 24 weeks, combining theoretical and practical aspects under the supervision of certified trainers and local and international experts.

It also provides hands-on training opportunities within technological incubators and allows participants to work on their own digital game projects, paving the way for the establishment of startups capable of competing in this vital sector.

Al Arimi explained that this initiative is part of the investment in national digital competencies, opening up new horizons for Omani youth to actively participate in the digital games industry, which is considered one of the world's most promising sectors.

She confirmed that the collaboration with Unity, a global leader in game engine and interactive technology development, is the

first of its kind in Oman.

This strategic partnership will contribute to transferring global knowledge and expertise to the participants, especially since Unity's technologies are used in over 50 percent of digital games worldwide.

For his part, Sheikh Humaid Jumaa Al Shamsi, a member of the Shura Council representing the Wilayat of Al Buraimi and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al Nahdha Training Institute, stated that this qualitative initiative is part of efforts to empower Omani youth with modern digital skills, which have become fundamental pillars of advanced global economies.

He added that the e-games industry is no longer just entertainment but an integrated knowledge-based industry that combines programming, design, artificial intelligence, and artistic creativity.

He noted that this camp serves as a practical platform that qualifies Omani youth to engage in this promising global sector. -ONA

INAUGURATED

Salalah labour forum draws more than 1,000 participants



SALALAH: The Labour Forum 2025, organised by the Ministry of Labour, officially opened on Sunday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Compound for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah.

The event has drawn extensive participation, with over 1,000 attendees from within Oman and abroad, representing government and private entities, academic institutions, and regional and international organisations. The forum will run for 12 days.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Mahad Said Ba'awin, Minister of Labour.

The forum serves as a national platform for constructive dialogue on the future of Oman's labour market.

It features the presentation and discussion of 33 working papers addressing key challenges and opportunities, alongside showcasing pioneering local and international experiences and practices.

The event enjoys strategic partnerships with several local institutions, including Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, General Federation of Oman Workers, educational institutions and the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones.

It also includes international partners such as the Arab Labour

Organisation, the Arab Administrative Development Organisation and the Executive Bureau of the GCC Labour and Social Affairs Ministers Council.

Nasser Salim Al Hadhrami, Director General of Labour in Dhofar Governorate, delivered a speech stressing the importance of keeping pace with global labour market changes.

He highlighted Oman's progressive steps in this field, including the issuance of the new Labour Law and Social Protection Law, as well as the adoption of integrated strategies encompassing education, training, employment, and modern work models.

In his turn, Mohammed Hassan Al Abidly, Director General of the Executive Bureau of the GCC Labour and Social Affairs Ministers Council, pointed out that rapid economic, technological, and environmental changes pose challenges that require joint efforts to develop skills, employment models, and social protection to ensure an effective and equitable response.

Meanwhile, Azar Bayramov, Director General of the Islamic Cooperation Labour Center, discussed the center's role in bridging cooperation between governments, workers, and employers, as well as providing capacity-building programmes for

member states.

He announced a specialised training session post-forum on effective leadership in occupational safety and health in Oman.

The forum aims to enhance innovation and professional development by highlighting the latest labour market technologies and innovations, improve the work environment and develop labour policies in line with economic, technological, and social transformations, in addition to strengthening international cooperation through the exchange of expertise and knowledge.

The forum continues until 14 August, featuring an exhibition of student projects from vocational colleges, - an open meeting between the Minister of Labour and business owners, a Future of Work Forum, a Government Transformation and Sustainable Leadership Conference, as well as a train-the-trainer program on occupational safety and health leadership.

This forum aligns with the Ministry of Labour's efforts to develop labour market policies and anticipate future trends in accordance with Oman Vision 2040.

It reinforces partnerships across sectors and integrates visions toward achieving sustainable economic and social development. -ONA

FARM SECTOR

New tech improves efficiency

< FROM A1 Al Hosni noted that the Directorate General of Agricultural and Livestock Research offers specialised training programmes for farmers on smart agriculture techniques, including mobile applications for farm management, drone operation, and soilless farming. Pilot field projects are also being implemented to transfer technology and train farmers.

The government allocates annual budgets to support digital transformation in agriculture, partnering with the private sector to expand the use of modern technologies while enhancing the investment environment in

this vital sector.

She emphasised that Oman has taken positive steps in adopting smart agriculture, with these technologies being central to the ministry's strategy for food security and agricultural sustainability. The ministry is integrating digital solutions and modern techniques through research projects and field applications, alongside awareness and training programmes for farmers.

Among the key technologies implemented are sensor-based smart irrigation, drones for crop monitoring and pest control, and soilless farming like hydroponics. These innovations con-

tribute to resource efficiency, increased productivity, and improved crop quality.

The ministry is keen on preserving Oman's agricultural heritage while incorporating modern technologies into traditional systems, such as upgrading aflaj with digital water distribution controls, she added.

Challenges to expanding smart agriculture include disparities in digital infrastructure across governorates, the need to enhance technical awareness among some farmers, and efforts to reduce operational and maintenance costs of these technologies, she pointed out. -ONA

THE FOUR POINT PLAN

- 1 Nurturing
- 2 Entrepreneurial Development
- 3 Legitimizing
- 4 Funding

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OMAN



Museums and archaeological sites boost cultural tourism during Khareef Dhofar season

The season is a golden opportunity to promote cultural tourism in the governorate, given the large number of visitors interested in Omani history and cultural identity

SALALAH: The museums and archaeological sites in Dhofar Governorate serve as a fundamental pillar of cultural tourism during the Khareef (monsoon) season. They attract visitors from within and outside Oman and reflect the richness of the governorate's cultural and archaeological assets.

Several officials from the heritage and tourism sectors, along with investors in archaeological sites, told Oman News Agency that the Khareef Dhofar season is a golden opportunity to promote cultural tourism in the governorate, given the large number of visitors interested in Omani history and cultural identity.

Ali Salim Al Kathiri, Director of the Land of Frankincense Sites at the Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate, stated that the archaeological cities of Samharam and Al Baleed represent a unique model of ancient port cities that flourished on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. These cities undertook a vital role in the maritime trade network, especially the frankincense trade.

He added that historical sources and excavation results at these two sites have revealed a succession of multiple civilizations, reflecting the rich civilizational heritage of southern Oman. Both sites have been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2000.

Al Kathiri noted that the number of visitors to the Land of Frankincense sites and the Museum of the Frankincense Land during the last Khareef season reached 54,569. He anticipates an increase in this number during the current season due to promotional efforts by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in collaboration with public and private sector partners.

He explained that the visitor experience is evaluated through regular field surveys, research studies conducted by specialized scientific institutions, and the national "Tajawob" platform, which receives public feedback and suggestions. This contributes to improving services and enhancing community interaction with these sites.

He added that efforts include using interactive and educational displays, providing specialized guides, and organizing educational workshops and activities for visitors and students. The local community is also involved in museum initiatives, which enhances awareness of cultural heritage and national identity.

Mohammed Ahmed Sawakheer, supervisor and investor in the Burj Al Askar and Taqah Castle sites, explained that these projects form two integrated heritage and



tourist destinations in the Wilayat of Taqah. They were developed in cooperation with several government entities to enhance the visitor experience and enable young Omanis to engage in sustainable projects.

He pointed out that the Burj Al Askar site received support from the Dhofar Governor's Office and was included in official visit programs. Dhofar Municipality also assisted by paving the road to the top of the tower and providing essential services. The SMEs Development Authority contributed by choosing the site for a handicraft village during the Khareef 2023 events and organizing several ac-

tivities during the winter season.

He explained that the tower features a heritage restaurant and café, outdoor recreational facilities, and agricultural terraces surrounding the site, offering an experience that blends heritage with nature. He added that a new investment in Taqah Castle aims to connect the two sites via a single tourist route using dedicated shuttles to transport visitors between the tower and the fort. This includes organizing cultural tours within the old city of Taqah to revive its folk and historical heritage.

Harith Mohammed Al Ghasani, a board member of the Dhofar Museum, stated that the museum



Historical sources and excavation results at these two sites have revealed a succession of multiple civilizations, reflecting the rich civilizational heritage of southern Oman. Both sites have been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2000.

serves as a window into the history of the Omani people since the first settlements. Located in the old quarter of Salalah, it is distinguished by its heritage design and its contents, which include over 1,000 artifacts collected by the museum's founder since the 1950s. It also offers translated information and integrated services.

He noted that the museum attracts researchers, enthusiasts, and tourists for the insightful experience it offers, which tells the story of the Omani people, their environment, and their civilizational connections.

For his part, Salim Ahmed Al Amri, owner of the "Tawasul Al



Ajyal Museum" (Generations Continuity Museum) in Taqah Wilayat, said that the museum is the first private museum licensed by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate. It aims to transfer authentic Omani heritage from previous generations to the next, affirming that preserving cultural memory is a shared responsibility between individuals and institutions.

He added that the museum's idea was born from the dream of his late mother, Tuffoul Ramadan Bamukhalef, in the 1950s and came to fruition after her death with the museum's opening in February 2023 inside the family home in the old quarter of Taqah. It serves as a living extension of the memory of the place and its people.

He explained that the museum includes four halls: the recep-

tion and library hall, the "Umm Salim" hall, which embodies the traditional urban environment, the crafts and industries hall that documents silver, pottery, palm-frond, leather, and perfume industries. It also features the "Dirham Hall," which displays rare historical coins and models of their trade routes through ports, as well as an outdoor courtyard with traditional doors, windows, and local trees.

In the same context, several visitors shared their cultural tourism experiences with Oman News Agency. Faiza Suwailim Al Kalbani explained that her frequent visits to Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef season, often for work-related conferences and media activities, are always accompanied by her deliberate effort to take time to visit archaeological and historical sites.

She added that she began her visit at the Museum of the Frankincense Land, then moved to the Al Baleed archaeological site, which is on the World Heritage List, where she learned about the history of the frankincense trade. She then continued her tour to the ancient city of Samharam and the historical Khor Rori Port, passing by Taqah Castle and then Mirbat Castle, in addition to several natural sites like Al Mughsayl Beach and Al Marneef Cave.

She confirmed that this experience added a cognitive and cultural dimension to her professional visit, making her trip to Dhofar Governorate a blend of work, history, and recreation.

For his part, Nasser Saif Al Maamari said that during his visit to Taqah Wilayat, he was keen to visit Burj Al Askar and Taqah Castle. He expressed his admiration for the meticulous architectural design of the two sites and the archaeological contents that embody the local heritage, expressing his pride in the achievements that reflect the focus on historical heritage.

Abdul Hamid Mohammed Al Khalidi, a visitor from Kuwait, described his visit to the Museum of the Frankincense Land as an enriching experience. He noted the noticeable tourist activity at cultural and archaeological sites during the Khareef season, especially from Gulf and Arab visitors, due to the diverse content that reflects Oman's ancient history.

He added that the exhibits at the museum shed light on the frankincense civilization, which was a vital hub in the region's trade. He explained that such landmarks enhance the appeal of Dhofar Governorate as a comprehensive tourist destination that combines natural beauty with cultural richness. -ONA



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IN DHOFAR

MoU signed for sesame cultivation

SALALAH: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Sunday at Salalah Free Zone between “Saifco,” a food industry company operating in the zone, and the Dhofar Governorate branch of the Oman Agricultural Association.

The agreement is for the cultivation of sesame in the Al Najd area, as part of efforts to support food security and enhance national value chains.

This initiative is a joint cooperation programme between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, and the Salalah Free Zone. It aims to connect local agricultural production with the food industry and achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Under the agreement, Saifco commits to purchasing the sesame harvest from farmers in the first season, with plans for expansion in subsequent seasons. The project covers an area of 600 acres, benefiting 35 farmers with an estimated production of 300 tonnes in its first phase.

This partnership seeks to reduce reliance on sesame imports and boost self-sufficiency to meet the needs of local food industries,



particularly for tahini and halwa. Sesame is a suitable crop for the desert environment of the Al Najd area and is known for its multiple uses in the food, cosmetic, and medicinal industries, in addition to its high nutritional value.

Dr. Ali Mohammed Tabuk, CEO of the Salalah Free Zone, affirmed that the initiative is part of the zone’s efforts to enhance economic development by stimulating qualitative partnerships between investors and the local community. He added that the Salalah Free Zone aims to empower local production-based industries and support integrated value chains, thereby contributing to sustainable development in Dhofar Governorate and Oman as a whole.

The project serves as a practical model of cooperation among government entities, free zones, and the private sector. It embodies the role of the Salalah Free Zone in supporting national projects that contribute to the development of local industries. — OMA

Campaign continues to boost products of SMEs

Riyada’s ‘Our Entrepreneurs in Dhofar’ campaign serves as an integrated platform combining empowerment, marketing, and education through a series of events



The campaign serves as an integrated platform combining empowerment, marketing, and education through a series of events, workshops, and exhibitions running throughout July and August, extending until early September across various key locations in Dhofar Governorate.

Diverse activities
The campaign features diverse activities including introductory

meetings, specialised training programmes, and open marketing spaces for entrepreneurs. Highlights include the SME corner at Al Haffa Beach Market, Oman Oil Bazaar, the “Khareef of Riyada” event in Atin Plain, the Future Pioneers Camp targeting youth to enhance their market readiness with confidence, the “Omani Crafts” exhibition in Samharam Village, and summer events accompanying Khareef (monsoon)

Dhofar Festival in Thumrait.

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority emphasised that the “Our Entrepreneurs in Dhofar” campaign reflects an integrated vision capitalising on Dhofar’s tourist season as an accelerator for promoting Omani products, business development, and creating economic opportunities for startups in an interactive environment with the public and visitors. — OMA

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INTERIM REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2025

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I present the unaudited financial statements for the period ended 30th June 2025 of Voltamp Energy SAOG.

Review Of Operations:

The Company's performance (including subsidiaries) is summarized as follows:

Amount in RO

Particulars	Six-month period ended 30th June 2025	Six-month period ended 30th June 2024	Increase / (decrease)
Revenue	36,922,623	16,174,277	128%
Finance & Other Income	47,870	65,614	125%
Expenditure	(28,958,443)	(13,768,689)	110%
Profit before tax	8,112,050	2,471,202	228%
Taxation	(1,307,088)	(396,212)	229%
Profit after tax	6,804,962	2,074,990	227%
Basic Profit / (Loss) per share	0.061	0.022	173%
Net assets per share	0.266	0.228	17%

prosperity and progress.

On behalf of Voltamp Energy SAOG, the Board expresses heartfelt appreciation to our esteemed shareholders for their enduring trust and confidence. We also acknowledge with gratitude the support of our valued clients, vendors, banking partners, regulatory authorities, A special note of appreciation goes to our management and the employees for their unwavering loyalty, hard work, and dedication, which have been instrumental in achieving these results.

Aymen bin Hamad Al Busaidi

Chairman

Voltamp Energy SAOG

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Quarter ended 30th June 2025	Quarter ended 30th June 2024	6 months ended 30th June 2025	6 months ended 30th June 2024	
RO	RO	RO	RO	
Revenue	18,374,210	9,635,818	36,922,623	16,174,277
Cost of sales	(11,962,993)	(6,315,290)	(23,760,098)	(10,855,339)
Gross profit	6,411,217	3,320,528	13,162,525	5,318,938
Other income	83,013	52,530	147,870	56,596
Selling, administrative and general expenses	(2,478,280)	(1,546,249)	(4,903,069)	(2,683,833)
Profit from operations	4,015,950	1,826,809	8,407,326	2,691,701
Finance cost	(183,376)	(115,020)	(295,276)	(220,499)
Profit / (Loss) for the period before taxation	3,832,574	1,711,789	8,112,050	2,471,202
Taxation	(638,579)	(284,521)	(1,307,088)	(396,212)
Profit/(Loss) for the period after taxation	3,193,995	1,427,268	6,804,962	2,074,990
Basic earnings per share (Bzs)	0.034	0.018	0.061	0.022
Net Income attributable to : Equity holders of the Parents Non controlling interest	2,691,480 502,515	1,199,254 228,014	5,750,974 1,053,988	1,826,478 248,512
Other comprehensive income				
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss				
Investments at FVOCI - net change in fair value	1,445	(3,253)	2,168	375,466
Total comprehensive (loss)/income for the period, net of tax	3,195,440	1,424,015	6,807,130	2,450,456

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT

30 June 2025	30 June 2024	31 Dec 2025	
RO	RO	RO	
Audited			
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	9,153,903	8,628,632	8,809,981
Intangible Assets	435,447	399,168	491,284
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	-	26,380	23,489
Right-of-use assets	2,846,570	2,286,367	2,903,325
Deferred tax asset	855,412	901,882	911,447
Total non-current assets	13,291,332	12,242,429	13,139,526
Current assets			
Inventories	14,861,475	9,419,826	15,205,671
Trade and other receivables	29,602,541	15,924,289	23,296,034
Term deposits	2,048,357	1,580,462	3,500,000
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	36,354	2,509,518	2,570,580
Cash in hand and at banks	907,172	3,460,197	560,503
Total current assets	47,455,899	32,894,292	45,132,788
Total assets	60,747,231	45,136,721	58,272,314
Equity and liabilities			
Equity			
Share capital	9,361,316	8,140,275	8,140,275
Share premium	1,925,029	3,146,070	3,146,070
Fair value reserve	-	(34,168)	(37,059)
Legal reserve	4,485,622	3,251,901	3,599,967
Retained earnings	9,175,493	4,087,700	7,194,161
Equity attributable to the share holders of the Parent	24,947,460	18,591,778	22,043,414
Non controlling interest	2,822,890	1,309,036	1,877,097
Total equity	27,770,350	19,900,814	23,920,511
Liabilities			
Non-current liabilities			
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	3,307,987	2,588,438	3,293,502
End of service benefits	943,159	791,813	815,197
Deferred tax liability	213,948	369,656	213,948
Total non-current liabilities	4,465,094	3,749,907	4,322,647
Current liabilities			
Dividend Payable	-	-	-
Bank borrowings	9,910,351	5,379,152	4,722,506
Trade and other payables	17,307,082	15,719,128	24,093,646
Current portion of lease liabilities	16,927	87,812	16,449
Income tax payable	1,277,426	136,600	1,107,605
Amount due to related parties	-	163,308	88,950
Total current liabilities	28,511,786	21,486,000	30,029,156
Total liabilities	32,976,880	25,235,907	34,351,803
Total equity and liabilities	60,747,231	45,136,721	58,272,314
Net assets per share	0.266	0.228	0.271

Significant expansion seen in Oman’s tourism and hospitality sectors

Oxford Business Group’s latest Growth Perspectives Video explores the sector’s expanding contribution to diversification under Vision 2040

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s tourism and hospitality sectors are undergoing significant expansion as the country advances its long-term development goals under Vision 2040. A new Growth Perspectives Video produced by Oxford Business Group (OBG), in partnership with Omran Group, examines how investment, innovation and sustainable practices are helping to position tourism as a key contributor to national progress.

The video, titled Oman’s tourism and hospitality sectors undergo transformative growth, highlights the country’s target of attracting 11 million tourists annually by 2040, supported by around OMR20 billion (\$51bn) in projected investment to the sector, according to National Tourism Strategy 2040.

Particular focus is placed on the contribution of the hospitality segment, which is forecast to achieve a compound annual growth rate of 6.3% by 2026, according to Oman’s National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The video outlines the importance of a broad range of offerings—from luxury resorts and business hotels to eco-lodges—and



explores Oman’s efforts to align tourism development with environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles.

In line with Oman’s National Tourism Strategy, the sector’s growth is being guided by a commitment to cultural preservation and sustainable development. Strategic projects such as the Sustainable City Yiti in Muscat—a \$1bn eco-urban initiative—demonstrate how Oman is combining infrastructure modernisation with climate-conscious planning. The country is also leveraging its rich cultural heritage and natural attractions, including UNESCO World Heritage sites and diverse landscapes across its governorates.

Dana Carmen Agarbicean, OBG’s Country Director for Oman, said the country’s growing profile as a tourism destination reflects effective public-private collaboration and a clear strategic vision.

“Oman’s tourism and hospitality sectors are becoming increasingly important pillars of economic diversification. The sector’s expansion is supported by targeted investment, institutional coordination and an emphasis on sustainable, inclusive growth.”

This Growth Perspectives Video forms part of Oxford Business Group’s wider research for The Report: Oman 2025, the Group’s forthcoming publication on the country’s investment opportunities and economic developments.

The report will also feature a detailed interview with Hashil bin Obaid Al Mahrouqi, the Chief Executive Officer at Omran Group.

Oxford Business Group (OBG) is a global research and advisory company with a presence in over 30 countries, spanning Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

It is recognised internationally as a distinctive and respected

provider of on-the-ground intelligence on world’s fastest-growing markets, termed The Yellow Slice, in reference to OBG’s corporate colour.

Through its range of products – Economic News and Views; OBG CEO Surveys; OBG Events and Conferences; Global Platform, which hosts exclusive video interviews; and The Report publications – as well as its Advisory division, OBG offers comprehensive and accurate analysis of macroeconomic and sector-level developments for sound investment opportunities and business decisions.

OBG provides business intelligence to its subscribers through multiple platforms, including its direct subscribers, Dow Jones Factiva subscribers, the Bloomberg Professional Services subscribers, Refinitiv’s (previously Thomson Reuters) Eikon subscribers, and more.



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112



Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
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Women’s Education and Guidance Centre achieves milestones

AL RUSTAQ: The Women’s Education and Guidance Centre in South Al Batinah Governorate, under the Department of Endowments and Religious Affairs, has recorded a series of qualitative achievements during the first half of 2025.

These accomplishments underscore the center’s vital role in empowering women and promoting religious, cultural, and social awareness through a comprehensive range of programmes and initiatives targeting various segments of society.

In the field of Quranic education, the centre supervised 113 Quran memorisation schools, with 4,281 male and female students enrolled. The “Noor” project for qualifying female Quran memorisers continued its progress, recording 310 participants, 33 of whom completed memorizing the entire Quran. Additionally, the center conducted 353 supervisory visits to Quranic

schools and achieved 7 diverse educational milestones.

In awareness and guidance programmes, the centre witnessed significant turnout from various community segments, reflecting strong public engagement with its initiatives and its pioneering role in promoting Islamic values and religious awareness.

For development and training, the centre organised 140 training courses with 8,042 beneficiaries, along with 60 weekly developmental programmes and 25 specialised training programmes, all aimed at enhancing individual skills and strengthening women’s role in society.

Emphasising community partnership, the centre carried out 49 activities in public schools and organized 106 diverse events benefiting 6,493 individuals, reinforcing its active presence in the social and educational spheres. — **DNA**

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Philippines President to visit India from August 4-8



NEW DELHI: Philippines President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr is set to visit India from August 4-8, and hold talks with President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other officials.

Marcos after arrival in New Delhi on August 4 will meet with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

On August 5, he will lay a wreath at Rajghat. Marcos will then hold talks with PM Modi in Hyderabad House.

Exchange of Memoranda of Understanding and Press Statements will take place thereafter.

Marcos will then meet JP Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare and thereafter President Droupadi Murmu.

The Philippines’ President will then travel to Bengaluru and meet Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot.

At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ferdinand R Marcos Jr will pay a State Visit to India, a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

This would be the first visit of Marcos to India since the assumption of office of the President of the Philippines.

Diplomatic relations between India and the Philippines were established in November 1949. Both countries have since developed a strong partnership across a broad spectrum of areas, including trade and investment, defence and security, maritime cooperation, agriculture, healthcare, pharmaceuticals and digital technologies. The two countries also engage closely at the regional level, including through India’s Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN. The statement added that India’s relations with the Philippines are an integral pillar of our ‘Act East’ Policy, Vision

MAHASAGAR and our vision of the Indo-Pacific. The forthcoming State Visit of President Marcos coincides with the 75th anniversary of India-Philippines diplomatic relations. The visit is an opportunity for both leaders to set the path for future bilateral cooperation and to engage on regional and international issues of mutual interest, it added.

India and the Philippines share warm and multifaceted bilateral relations rooted in historical ties and shared democratic values. Cooperation spans various sectors, including defence, trade, investment, and cultural exchange. — **ANI**

MEDIA REPORT

Italy records 10th death due to West Nile virus

ROME: A 93-year-old woman died in the Italian region of Lazio from the West Nile virus. This is the tenth death in the country. In Europe, infection cases were registered in five countries, according to media report.

The death toll from the West Nile virus in Italy since the beginning of the year rose to ten after a 93-year-old woman died at the Spallanzani Institute in Rome.

It was the fourth case verified in the Lazio region. The patient, originally from Cisterna di Latina, had been admitted to San Paolo in Velletri before being transferred to Rome.

Three other deaths from the virus were reported last Wednesday. This includes a 76-year-old man from Salerna, a 73-year-old man from Maddaloni and an 86-year-old who was admitted to the Santa Maria Goretti hospital in Latina. He was among the first infected in the area and reportedly suffered with several previous diseases.



In its latest report on Thursday, the Italian National Institute of Health reported the following data. It said 57 new human cases of West Nile virus were reported between July 24-30. Among the confirmed cases, eight deaths were reported. The lethality rate of the neuro-invasive form of the virus is 20 per cent in 2025 compared to 14 per cent in 2024 and 20 per cent in 2018.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control released the latest data on infections in Europe on Thursday which said that cases were registered in Italy, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and France, as per EuroNews. — **DW**



Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health (Ibri Regional Hospital) invites specialized companies to participate in following Tender :-

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Closing Time/ Day/ Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
01/2025	Bidding for renting a shop selling flowers, gifts and coffee at Ibri Regional Hospital	01/09/2025	Before 9.00 Am on Sunday 14/09/2025	Specialized Companies and small and medium enterprises	SME RO 10 LO RO 25

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E.Tendering website : <http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non- refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document .
- Regional Ibri Hospital is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accept or reject any tender .

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
Any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200
Email id: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

JOINT REPORT

More than 18,000 Palestinians detained by Israel in West Bank since the start of war on Gaza

GAZA: Israeli occupation forces have detained more than 18,500 Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem, since the beginning of the ongoing aggression on Gaza in October 2023, according to a joint report released on Sunday by the Commission for Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, the Palestinian Prisoners' Society, and Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association.

The report points to a sharp rise in detentions, with at least 570 Palestinian women detained – including those from the West Bank, Gaza (detained while in the West Bank), and Palestinian citizens of Israel. The figure does not include dozens of women detained directly from Gaza, whose numbers remain unconfirmed.

Detention of Palestinian children have also surged, with no fewer than 1,500 cases documented in the West Bank alone since the start of the Israeli assault. Meanwhile, over 194 journalists have been detained, 49 of whom are still behind bars.

The report documents widespread violations accompanying these detentions, including severe beatings, threats against detainees and their families, the use of hostages, and large-scale destruction of civilian property. Israeli forces have frequently looted homes, seizing vehicles, cash, and gold jewelry. Infrastructure, particularly in refugee camps in Tulkarm and Jenin, has also been systematically destroyed, alongside the demolition of homes belonging to detainees' families.

Additionally, the report states that many detainees were taken from their homes, at military checkpoints, or were forced to surrender under pressure. Others were taken as hostages. The arrest campaigns have also been accompanied by extrajudicial killings, including some targeting relatives of detainees.



Since October 2023, at least 75 Palestinians have died in Israeli custody, including 46 from Gaza. Dozens more from Gaza are believed to have died under conditions of enforced disappearance, with Israeli authorities withholding their names and the circumstances of their deaths. Among those confirmed dead, Israel continues to withhold the bodies of 72 prisoners out of 83 announced martyrs.

These figures do not include the full number of detainees from Gaza, as Israel continues to enforce a policy of forced disappearance against them. Thousands have been detained, including Gaza laborers working in Israel with valid permits and hundreds of workers and patients from Gaza who were in the West Bank at the time of the war. Some of them have since been released, but many remain unaccounted for.

Over 3,000 Israeli settlers storm Al-Aqsa Mosque

The number of Israeli settlers who stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque on Sunday has risen to 3,023, according to the Islamic Waqf Department in Jerusalem. The mass incursion was led by far-right Israeli National Security

Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and several extremist members of the Israeli Knesset.

The unprecedented escalation has sparked widespread condemnation and warnings from Palestinian officials and institutions.

The Palestinian Presidency described the provocative settler incursions as a “dangerous escalation” and a continuation of the genocide and starvation campaign being carried out against the Palestinian people in Gaza.

According to the Islamic Waqf, settlers performed Talmudic rituals, danced, chanted loudly, waved Israeli flags, and openly carried Torah scrolls near one of the mosque's gates. These acts were carried out under heavy police protection, amid growing efforts by Israel's far-right government to assert control over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

The Waqf stressed that the holy site is being subjected to daily violations by settler groups operating with state backing, as part of a clearly structured and escalating plan to take over religious landmarks.

Israeli forces also erected multiple military checkpoints throughout Jerusalem and barred many Palestinians from entering the Old City. – WAPA

SHEBA GOLD MINE

South Africa detains 1,000 foreign undocumented miners

BARBERTON: Nearly 1,000 undocumented migrants working illegally at a gold mine in north-eastern South Africa have been arrested, police said late on Friday.

Public broadcaster SABC reported that police had launched an operation titled Operation Vala Umgodi at the Sheba Gold Mine in Barberton, Mpumalanga province.

SABC cited a police spokesperson as saying those arrested were working underground at the mine, close to the borders of Eswatini and Mozambique.

The spokesperson said they would be charged with breaking immigration laws and possibly for illegal mining.

A police statement posted to Facebook said some of those arrested were likely “underage.”



The operation to round up the miners took nearly a week, AFP news agency reported, citing an unnamed police spokesperson.

The police said more arrests could follow. Mine owner Barberton Mines welcomed the arrests, saying “illegal mining will not be tolerated.” Sheba was founded in the 1880s and is one of South Africa's oldest and richest gold mines.

It played a key role in the country's early gold rush, attracting prospectors and shaping the region's mining legacy.

Today, the mine remains operational, but faces high costs and a massive issue with gold theft, prompting the owner to restructure operations to stay viable.

South Africa has around 6,000 abandoned mines, many of which have become hotspots for illegal activity. – DW

جامعة الشرقية
A' SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY



AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

ASU's Tender Committee is pleased to invite specialized companies to participate in the following tender:

TENDER DETAILS:

Tender No.	Description	Document Collection Deadline	Deadline for Tender clarifications	Bids Submission Deadline	Document fees
(ASU/60/24/25)	Tender for Providing & Supplying Equipment for A'Sharqiyah University Veterinary Hospital	10/08/2025	12/08/2025 At 12:00 PM	21/08/2025	OMR 100

- Specialized companies interested in participating in the auctions should obtain the auction document during official working days from **Sunday to Thursday, between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM.**
- Auction collection process:** The interested companies shall follow the following steps:
 - The payment should be made directly to ASU under the following bank account

Account Name	AL SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY
Account Number	0423010693610011
SWIFT CODE	BMUSOMRX
 - After payment, send the receipt to **(abdullah.al-harhi@asu.edu.om)** or via **WhatsApp** at **+968 25401118.**
 - The auction document will be sent to the company via email.
 - Companies that hold Riyadh certificate are exempted from auction document fees, They should send a copy of the riyadh certificate and the commercial registration to the email or WhatsApp number mentioned in the announcement.
- ASU general terms and conditions of tenders shall apply on all submitted bids. http://www.asu.edu.om/downloads/purchase_terms_conditions.pdf
- ASU is not bound to accept the lowest bid.
- For further details, please don't hesitate to contact us at: azza.rashid@asu.edu.om or 25401115 / 25401116.



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- Public Service Leader of the Year
- Digital Transformation Leader of the Year
- Sports Icon of the Year
- Health & Wellness Icon of the Year
- Creative Icon of the Year
- Social Change Champion
- Young Corporate Leader of the Year (Under 35)
- Marketing Leader of the Year

Organization & Initiative Categories:

- Excellence in Women in Leadership
- Excellence in Women-Centric Products & Services
- Excellence in Women Empowerment at Workplace
- Excellence in CSR Initiative for Women
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Oman Shooting Association Championship kicks off in Ghala

MUSCAT: The Oman Shooting Association Championship for 10-metre Olympic Airgun events (rifle and pistol) commenced at the Ghala Shooting Range on Sunday. The tournament, which runs till 11 August, features competitions for juniors (male and female), open category (men and women), and athletes with disabilities. The championship began with a series of official training sessions in a competitive atmosphere, aimed at refining the skills and expertise of shooters while showcasing national talent. -**ONA**



We are ready for Asia Cup: Pakistan T20I captain Agha

The Asia Cup will offer an opportunity to all the participating teams to fine-tune their preparations for next year's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka



FLORIDA: Captain Salman Ali Agha declared that Pakistan is "ready" for the Asia Cup, which is scheduled to begin on September 9, following their narrow two-wicket defeat in the second T20I against the West Indies. The tournament will follow the T20I format and feature eight teams: the five full members of the Asian Cricket Council: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, along with the UAE, Oman, and Hong Kong. The Asia Cup will offer an opportunity to all the participating teams to fine-tune their preparations for next year's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka. With barely a month left for the com-

mencement of the Asia Cup in the UAE, Pakistan skipper Agha has sent a bold message to the rest of the opposition. "The way spinners bowled in both games, I think we're ready for the Asia Cup. They always come in numbers and support us wherever we play," Agha said in the post-match presentation after the second T20I against the West Indies. India, Pakistan, UAE and Oman are in Group A, while Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Hong Kong are in Group B. Dubai will host 11 matches, and Abu Dhabi will be the home ground for eight fixtures. The tournament opener is between Afghanistan

and Hong Kong on September 9 in Abu Dhabi. Although India is the formal tournament host, a neutral venue will be provided for the opposing team for three years for competitions held in India or Pakistan, according to an agreement between the BCCI and the PCB. In the buildup of the series, Pakistan embarked on the three-match T20I affair against the Caribbean side with flying colours. In the series opener, the Men in Green hammered 178/6 on the board and defended it successfully with a spin masterclass. In the second fixture, fortune turned its face away from Pakistan.

Their batters struggled to find their mojo and limped to 133/9. In reply, Pakistan's spin troika of Mohammad Nawaz, Sufiyan Mugeem, and Saim Ayub failed to pull off a rescue act. Agha dissected his side's performance and felt a 130-run target was never going to be enough against an explosive West Indies side. "In this game, we didn't bat well in the powerplay and couldn't finish the game like we wanted either. But we bowled and fielded well. There's always room to improve - death bowling can be better. 130 was never enough, but they fought really well," he added. In the Asia Cup, India can face Pakistan three times in the tournament. Apart from the scheduled group stage fixture, India and Pakistan can compete in the Super 4 if they qualify from the group stage. If they manage to go past the Super 4 stage, they will square off for the third time in the tournament's final. Fans, various politicians and former cricketers believe that India should not play against Pakistan in the tournament. The outrage over India facing Pakistan in the tournament stems from the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam during which 26 tourists were killed on April 22 by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists in the name of religion. India responded with Operation Sindoor on May 7 to avenge the attack and dismantle the terror infrastructure across the Line of Control and deeper inside Pakistan. -**ANI**

TALISMANIC BATTER

Root becomes first to cross 6,000 runs in WTC history

LONDON: England's talismanic batter Joe Root became the first player in the World Test Championship history to cross the 6,000-run threshold after another clinical masterclass on the fourth day of the fifth Test against India at Kennington Oval. Root, a maestro at work, with his robust technique and sublime drives, enchanted the spectators as his name reverberated throughout the stadium under London's gloomy sky. He left no stone unturned to frustrate India seamers, bereft of his regular tormentor's company, Jasprit Bumrah. He stayed unruffled during England's pursuit of a 374-run target and added another feather to his cap by crossing 6,000 runs during his 69th Test appearance in the tournament. With 20 centuries and 23 fifties, Root sits at the summit as the top run-getter, followed by Steve Smith (4,278), Marnus Labuschagne (4,225), Ben Stokes (3,616) and Travis Head (3,300) in the WTC charts. The 34-year-old brought up his fifty by pushing the ball towards deep backwards square leg for a single. He celebrated the landmark moment with a gentle rise of the bat towards the England dressing room. He continued to pile up runs on the board and levelled former South Africa cricketer Herbie Taylor's record for



most 50-plus scores against an opponent in home Tests. The stylish right-handed star boasts a staggering tally of 16 fifty-plus scores against India, while Taylor also boasts the exact tally against England. Australia's legendary Don Brandman sits at the top with 17 fifty-plus scores against their arch-rival England. Root has been on a record-shattering spree across the five Tests in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy. Root took a step closer to breaking 'Master Blaster' Sachin Tendulkar's tally of 15,921, the most runs by a player in the format. He transcended to the second spot and left legendary Ricky Ponting and Rahul Dravid behind in the list. The prolific batter also tied Sri Lankan great Kumar Sangakkara (38 tons) for the joint fourth-most centuries in the longer format, standing behind Ponting (41), South Africa's Jacques Kallis (45) and Tendulkar (51). -**ANI**

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In a significant endorsement of its growing stature in the Islamic finance domain, Dhofar Islamic – the Islamic banking window of BankDhofar – has been appointed as Independent Sharia Advisor to OQ Base Industries (OQBI), a leading player in Oman's petrochemical sector.

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MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,770.45 points, down by 0.22% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.37% at 467.83 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 9.62%, was the top gainer while Muscat Insurance, down 9.97%, was the top loser.

Oman and Hong Kong discuss joint investment cooperation

The two sides reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation between Oman and Hong Kong in the economic, trade, and investment sectors, and touched on available opportunities to strengthen the partnership

HONG KONG: Abdulsalam Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), met with John Lee Ka-chiu, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation between Oman

and Hong Kong in the economic, trade, and investment sectors, and touched on available opportunities to strengthen the partnership between the two sides. This meeting took place during Al Murshidi's current visit to Hong Kong. He praised the existing relationship between Oman

and Hong Kong, emphasizing the importance of continuing reciprocal visits and enhancing cooperation in areas that serve the mutual interests of both sides. For his part, John Lee Ka-chiu, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong affirmed that Oman possesses an ambitious strategic vision in Oman Vision 2040, which aligns with the "Belt and Road" initiative. This, he noted, contributes to enhancing economic and commercial cooperation. He pointed out that Hong Kong, as a global financial and commercial hub, offers an attractive environment for investments in various sectors, including renewable energy and advanced technologies. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Hinai, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. -ONA



CRITICAL MILESTONE

ahlibank's rights issue oversubscribed amid strong shareholder demand

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a clear demonstration of market confidence and strategic momentum, ahlibank has successfully concluded its rights issue, which was oversubscribed. The offering comprised of around 357 million shares at a price of 142 Baiza per share (including 2 baiza issue expense per share), attracting robust participation from shareholders and strong interest across the investment community. This outcome reflects the strength of ahlibank's positioning and amplifies its readiness to capitalize on emerging opportunities with greater agility and scale. This landmark completion of ahlibank's rights issue marks a critical milestone, reinforcing the



bank's capital position and affirming strong shareholder confidence in its long-term growth agenda. This outcome reflects a clear endorsement of ahlibank's disciplined strategy to accelerate transformation, enhance operational agility, and strengthen its position in an increasingly competitive

banking landscape. More than a financial transaction, this initiative deepens alignment between shareholders and the bank's strategic vision – ensuring ahlibank remains well-positioned to deliver sustainable value, drive performance-led growth, and navigate future opportunities with resili-

ence and precision. The rights issue forms part of a broader capital optimization initiative designed to enhance the bank's financial flexibility and underpin its next stage of evolution. The funds raised will be directed toward executing core strategic initiatives while also enabling greater lending capacity to fuel business activity. These efforts will contribute to bolstering capital adequacy ratios, strengthening market resilience, and supporting the bank's objective of delivering superior value across its stakeholder ecosystem. This successful issuance not only reinforces confidence in ahlibank's governance and institutional strength but also highlights the bank's progressive strategy.

STATISTICS

GCC total GDP at constant prices exceeds \$456bn

MUSCAT: The gross domestic product (GDP) at constant prices for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries rose by 3.3% by the end of the fourth quarter of 2024, reaching \$456.3 billion, compared to \$442.3 billion during the same period in 2023. The latest statistics released by the GCC Statistical Centre showed that non-oil activities contributed 70.6% to the GCC's GDP at constant prices by the end of the fourth quarter of 2024, while oil activities accounted for 29.4%. The GCC GDP at constant



prices recorded a 1% growth in the fourth quarter of 2024, having registered \$452.2 billion in the third quarter. -ONA

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

A'Saffa Foods, up 9.62%, was the top gainer while, Muscat Insurance, down 9.97%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,770.45 points, down by 0.22% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.37% at 467.83 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 9.62%, was the top gainer while, Muscat Insurance, down 9.97%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 1990 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 18.31 million, with more than 116.18 million shares changing hands. Out of 63 traded securities, 24 advanced, 25 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 949K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 788K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 161K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 8,086.27 points, down 0.42%. Prices of Takaful Oman, Al Madina Takaful, Oman United Insurance, Dhofar Insurance, Al Sharqia Investment were up by 3.92%, 3.66%, 3.38%, 1.49%, 1.24% respectively. Prices of

Muscat Insurance, National Finance, Oman & Emirates Investment, Sohar International Bank, Al Anwar Investment were down by 9.97%, 1.49%, 1.43%, 1.41%, 1.16% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 7,044.89 points, up 2.02%. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Jazeera Steel Products, Gulf International Chemicals, Construction Materials, Oman Cement were up by 9.62%, 9.45%, 8.45%, 4.48%, 2.22% respectively. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products, Muscat Thread Mill, Oman Cables Industry, Al Anwar Ceramics, Oman Flour Mills were down by 1.29%, 1.15%, 0.66%, 0.55%, 0.21% respectively. Services Index was down by 0.5% before closing at 1,798.93 points. Prices of Sharqiyah Desalination, Muscat Desalination, National Gas, Al Batinah Power, Al Suwadi Power were up by 4.48%, 2.86%, 2.50%, 2.25%, 2.25% respectively. Prices of Sembcorp Salalah, Barka Water & Power Company, Gulf Hotels, Oman Telecom, Ooredoo were down by 5.66%, 4.47%, 2.78%, 0.90%, 0.80% respectively.—United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

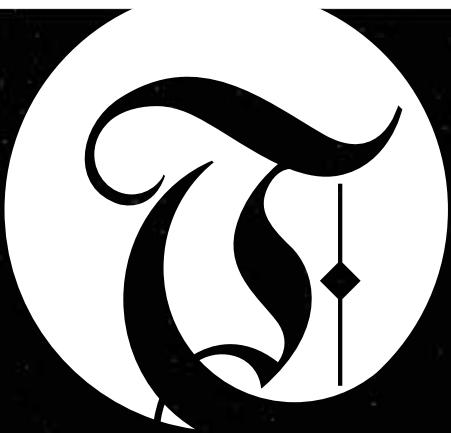
MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %	
MSX 30 INDEX	4,790.93	4,751.96	4,770.45	4,780.98	-10.54	-0.22	
FINANCIAL INDEX	8,136.44	8,084.84	8,086.27	8,120.05	-33.78	-0.42	
Industry Index	7,055.24	6,881.34	7,044.89	6,905.25	139.64	2.02	
Services Index	1,816.99	1,798.28	1,798.93	1,807.93	-9.00	-0.50	
MSX Shariah Index	468.47	463.43	467.83	466.11	1.72	0.37	
MSX TR INDEX	7,090.33	7,032.66	7,060.02	7,075.62	-15.60	-0.22	
FINANCIAL TR IDX	9,666.38	9,605.07	9,606.77	9,646.91	-40.13	-0.42	
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	8,669.83	8,456.13	8,657.11	8,485.51	171.60	2.02	
SERVICES TR IDX	2,323.92	2,299.99	2,300.83	2,312.34	-11.51	-0.50	
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,204.48	1,204.48	1,204.48	1,204.48	0.00	0.00	
Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.....	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
116,180,115	18,314,195	1,990	29,102,671,240	24	25	14	63

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 3

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF BD.	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BD.	LAST OFF.	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	33,745	16,097	11	0.469	0.514	0.469	0.513	0.468	0.045	9.615	0.513	0.461	0.510	0.100	61,560,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	111,991	51,022	25	0.430	0.475	0.430	0.475	0.434	0.041	9.447	0.475	0.475	0.475	0.100	59,326,531
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	2,059,923	181,284	167	0.085	0.090	0.085	0.085	0.082	0.003	3.659	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.100	14,875,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	733,120	175,537	36	0.287	0.245	0.257	0.245	0.257	0.008	3.376	0.245	0.245	0.250	0.100	24,500,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	143,696	13,051	21	0.089	0.091	0.089	0.091	0.089	0.002	2.247	0.091	0.091	0.093	0.100	61,414,756
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	652,088	178,955	60	0.089	0.091	0.089	0.091	0.089	0.002	2.247	0.091	0.089	0.091	0.100	63,019,977
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	25,000	2,050	2	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.001	1.235	0.082	0.077	0.082	0.100	7,380,000
OM0000008072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	25,085,576	3,748,255	271	0.148	0.151	0.147	0.151	0.150	0.001	0.667	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.100	65,924,212
OM0000002236	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	7,622	1,387	8	0.180	0.183	0.180	0.183	0.182	0.001	0.549	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.100	7,840,297
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	86,194	24,348	17	0.281	0.284	0.281	0.282	0.281	0.001	0.356	0.282	0.282	0.305	0.100	66,667,620
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	70,100	21,727	5	0.310	0.310	0.309	0.310	0.310	0.000	0.000	0.310	0.300	0.310	0.100	504,043,370
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	3,500	455	1	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.131	0.130	0.100	36,000,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,467,298	391,475	33	0.265	0.268	0.265	0.267	0.267	0.000	0.000	0.267	0.265	0.270	0.100	205,643,400
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	204,400	46,974	21	0.227	0.228	0.226	0.226	0.227	-0.001	-0.441	0.226	0.224	0.226	0.100	211,470,851
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	306,839	55,835	15	0.181	0.183	0.180	0.182	0.183	-0.001	-0.546	0.182	0.181	0.182	0.100	40,400,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	522	1,173	2	2.200	2.250	2.200	2.250	2.255	-0.015	-0.662	2.250	2.220	2.250	0.100	201,825,000
OM0000002786	BANK MUSCAT	7,168,146	2,110,256	86	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.398	-0.002	-0.771	0.398	0.390	0.390	0.100	2,221,893,530
OM0000003988	OOREDOO	300,200	74,600	9	0.250	0.250	0.248	0.248	0.250	-0.002	-0.800	0.248	0.240	0.248	0.100	161,434,169
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	282,523	256,361	25	0.889	0.889	0.882	0.882	0.880	-0.008	-0.898	0.882	0.882	0.885	0.100	861,500,000
OM0000004450	BANK NIZWA	55,143	5,680	9	0.104	0.104	0.102	0.103	0.104	-0.001	-0.962	0.103	0.100	0.105	0.100	230,406,162
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	31,837,282	4,480,434	142	0.141	0.142	0.140	0.140	0.142	-0.002	-1.408	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.100	926,414,478
Total		70,641,908	11,716,356	956												

Parallel Market																
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	1,323,391	100,432	116	0.074	0.077	0.074	0.077	0.071	0.006	8.451	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.100	1,617,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	173,230	12,468	7	0.071	0.073	0.070	0.070	0.067	0.003	4.478	0.070	0.066	0.071	0.100	4,375,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	5,040	709	7	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.134	0.006	4.478	0.140	0.135	0.140	0.100	13,692,300
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	461,500	24,692	32	0.055	0.055	0.053	0.053	0.051	0.002	3.922	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.100	13,250,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	5,000	360	1	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.070	0.002	2.857	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.100	11,199,623
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	200	16	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.080	0.002	2.500	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	6,970,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	2,100	966	3	0.456	0.460	0.456	0.460	0.450	0.010	2.222	0.460	0.455	0.470	0.100	152,201,447
OM0000001085	DHOFAH INSURANCE	13,660	2,806	3	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.202	0.003	1.485	0.205	0.204	0.204	0.100	129,709,928
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	237	216	1	0.912	0.912	0.912	0.912	0.900	0.012	1.333	0.912	0.915	0.900	0.100	45,600,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	34,100	2,646	3	0.080	0.080	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.001	1.299	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.100	17,334,720
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	4,100	802	5	0.193	0.198	0.193	0.195	0.193	0.002	1.036	0.195	0.195	0.197	0.100	38,928,942
OM0000008906	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	32,244,814	4,620,281	332	0.143	0.146	0.141	0.144	0.143	0.001	0.699	0.144	0.141	0.144	0.040	498,166,682
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	4,200	1,357	3	0.323	0.323	0.323	0.323	0.322	0.001	0.311	0.323	0.305	0.322	0.100	17,769,000
OM0000001500	MUSCAT FINANCE	158,491	8,559	7	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.000	0.000	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.100	16,585,902
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	39,750	1,641	2	0.119	0.119	0.118	0.118	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.112	0.116	0.100	32,389,893
OM0000005863	PHOENIX POWER	991,500	87,291	5	0.088	0.089	0.087	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.085	0.088	0.100	129,709,928
OM0000007043	LIVA GROUP	26,900	7,312	2	0.271	0.272	0.271	0.272	0.272	0.000	0.000	0.272	0.255	0.271	0.100	108,357,821
OM0000009739	QO EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	2,405,116	802,228	162	0.335	0.335	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.000	0.000	0.333	0.333	0.335	0.010	664,000,000
OM0000001020	ASVAD SHIPPING	5,925,479	723,419	140	0.122	0.123	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.000	0.000	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.000	635,466,802
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	180	86	1	0.479	0.479	0.479	0.479	0.480	-0.001	-0.208	0.479	0.462	0.479	0.100	79,214,625
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	1,421	424	2	0.285	0.300	0.285	0.300	0.301	-0.001	-0.332	0.300	0.285	0.300	0.100	21,117,000
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	6,921	6,235	8	0.905	0.905	0.900	0.900	0.905	-0.005	-0.552	0.900	0.880	0.900	0.100	62,100,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	3,903	582	1	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.150	-0.001	-0.687	0.149	0.149	0.150	0.100	403,313,248
OM0000003280	OMAN ARAB BANK	179,232	25,409	9	0.149	0.150	0.149	0.149	0.149	-0.001	-0.671	0.149	0.149	0.154	0.100	247,072,680
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REEF	22,808	2,851	9	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.126	-0.001	-0.794	0.125	0.125	0.126	0.100	73,929,610
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	18,825	1,638	8	0.088	0.088	0.087	0.087	0.088	-0.001	-1.136	0.087	0.080	0.087	0.100	56,427,358
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	3,600	619	2	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.174	-0.002	-1.174	0.172	0.171	0.191	0.100	3,031,270
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	394,767	26,107	15	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.085	0.086	0.1	25,276,995
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	79,147	18,206	21	0.231	0.231	0.229	0.230	0.233	-0.003	-1.288	0.230	0.229	0.235	0.100	10,526,134
OM0000002818	OMAN ESTATES H.O.	333,129	36,770	29	0.070	0.072	0.068	0.068	0.070	0.001	4.329	0.068	0.068	0.069	0.100	4,400,377
OM0000002848	NATIONAL FINANCE	2,500	580	1	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.134	-0.002	-1.493	0.132	0.131	0.135	0.100	80,272,700
OM0000001111	GULF HOTELS (OM)	1,500	525	1	3.500	3.500	3.500	3.500	3.600	-0.100	-2.778	3.500	3.500	3.600	1.000	11,999,122
OM0000004750	OMRKA WATER AND POWER	29,740	5,122	0.777	0.171	0.171	0.171	0.171	0.179	-0.008	-1.469	0.171	0.171	0.171	0.100	11,999,122
OM0000004735	SEMPORIB SALAH	318,625	49,985	30	0.186	0.188	0.156	0.156	0.159	-0.009	-5.660	0.150	0.153	0.156	0.100	143,189,730
OM0000001806	ALMAHA INSURANCE	855	677	2	0.786	0.786	0.786	0.786	0.873	-0.087	-9.966	0.786	0.786	0.786	1.000	1,665,678
Total		35	45,516,641	6,576,726	1,020											



LIFESTYLE

LATE-LIFE DEPRESSION: LEARN TO SPOT THE SIGNS EARLY



Depression and anxiety can go undiagnosed when symptoms are mistaken for age-related physical illnesses. We need to treat mental health issues earlier in life

It is perhaps the last place you would expect to find a generational divide, but even in mental health, we (those of us of a certain age) are told, “We [those of us of a younger age] are more aware of mental health than you” — as if awareness alone could remedy depression.

There is actually some truth to this. “There are shifts in younger generations and also in older generations. But unfortunately mental health is still very stigmatised for older adults,” said Pascal Schlechter at the Institute of Psychology, University of Münster, Germany. “It’s quite a big step [for some people] to admit, ‘I have a mental health problem and I want to talk about it.’” But it’s not only older patients who lack awareness or a willingness to talk about depression. It can also be their doctors, who may misdiagnose a mental health problem as a physical one, common when you grow old. “If a 30-year-old tells you they’ve stopped going out and are withdrawing [from social interaction], you would ask them, ‘Is anything wrong with your mental health? Are you depressed?’” said

Schlechter. “But with an older person, you might say, ‘You’re fatigued. It’s just part of the normal aging process. Just rest.’”

Symptoms: Is depression different for older adults? The generational divide closes when we talk about symptoms of depression — there is little to no difference in depression between younger and older adults. While at Cambridge University in the UK, Schlechter co-published a paper on the development of depressive symptoms in older adults, based on the results from a longitudinal study that tracked the progress of more than 11,000 people over a period of 16 years. Schlechter and colleagues found the same symptoms in older adults as in younger adults: Patients expressed they felt depressed, or that everything was an effort, they couldn’t get going, had restless sleep, or felt lonely. However, they noted: “In older adults, depression often presents with more somatic symptoms than in younger populations.” When Schlechter spoke with DW in July, he added: “Medical or somatic symptoms may be part of a depression, but [older adults] often misattribute these symptoms

to their aging process. This can lead to delayed recognition, [and as a result] their depression may manifest more chronically.” So, there is that difference: Whether it’s due to a lack of awareness among patients and physicians, or stigma, depression can be worse for older people. That may be because the depression is combined with — or, in part, “triggered” by — a somatic (physical) illness, or symptoms of depression were left unaddressed earlier in life — perhaps also due to a lack of awareness or stigma. As with most illnesses the earlier depression or anxiety are diagnosed, the better the chances of treating them. Some social factors also contribute to depression. As we enter late life, we are often forced to adjust to changes in our social status, our identity through work or elsewhere in a community, and people start dying around us. We may even experience abuse from our carers, as highlighted information from the World Health Organization on depression — another, potential contributing factor. All these things can bring what may have been a mild, latent depression to the fore in a chronic and severe way.

Treatments: Depression medication and psychotherapy There is a sense when talking to experts in the field that physicians may prefer to tackle physical ailments in older adults than mental ones. No matter what age a person is, depression is difficult to treat. But when older adults present with both physical and mental health problems, it’s even harder. “In both poorer and richer health systems in Europe, one of the main instruments we have to deal with depression is medication,” said Albino Oliveira-Maia, who heads the Neuropsychiatry Unit at the Champalimaud Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal. “When treating older adults [with] medication, [there is a] higher likelihood for interaction with other medication and for toxicities [to occur],” Oliveira-Maia told DW. “That might mean physicians pay more attention to physical health problems than mental health.” But medication is not the only treatment for depression — there are also a range of psychotherapy options, or so-called talk therapies, including cognitive behavioral therapy, and many others, specific to a patient’s situation.

Research: Older adults excluded from trials One aspect of depression we have not touched on yet is suicide. Suicide can affect all groups of people, young and old, male and female. But regulation often prevents people from participating in research if they are known to have suicidal thoughts or show suicidal behavior. And that means there is a lack of understanding and knowledge among researchers. “This is obviously an ethical concern,” said Oliveira-Maia. “It’s an act of generosity to participate in a research program, so we need to protect the people. But in doing that, there are sometimes consequences that lead to slower progress for some of the patients that are most in need.” People over 65 years can also be excluded from trials if they have existing medical conditions, such as vascular lesions in the brain, said Oliveira-Maia. Scientifically, this makes sense, even if only from a cold, unemotional perspective: If people die or their illnesses worsen during a trial, it can make it impossible for other teams to verify the results — which is a standard process and safety net in research, especially in the development of new medication.

Awareness: Speak to your doctor! Both Schlechter and Oliveira-Maia have reservations about awareness campaigns, and specifically about self-diagnosis, which can go either way — a younger person may be more inclined to say, “Yes, I have a mental health problem” even if they don’t, and an older person may deny all the signs. “For younger generations, there is more public awareness due to social media. And there are good campaigns that provide valid information,” said Schlechter. “But there’s also a lot of misinformation out there.” Oliveira-Maia, meanwhile, is concerned about people misdiagnosing themselves, whether they are young or old. “While [they are] valuable, there is also some data to suggest that the awareness campaigns can in themselves lead to misclassification in that some people that are healthy can value their normal symptoms of sadness and anxiety as a mental health problem.” The solution, as always with any illness or symptom that concerns you, is to speak to a health professional you can trust. - DW

SPORTS



PCB pulls out of World Championship of Legends, cites political bias and unfair conduct

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has officially announced that it will no longer participate in any future editions of the World Championship of Legends (WCL), raising concerns about the tournament's fairness, integrity, and political neutrality, The Nation reported, citing the PCB. "The championship's handling of events appeared to be under invisible pressures," the PCB noted. "The apology issued later seemed motivated by a specific form of nationalism, making it difficult for us to continue our participation," it added. The decision was taken during a Board of Governors meeting, chaired by PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi. According to the Nation, the board pointed to "double standards and politically motivated actions." One of the most contentious issues raised by the board was the decision to award points to a team that had voluntarily forfeited a match, a move the PCB claimed as "highly questionable" and against the spirit of fair competition. The board further criticised the press release put out by WCL organisers after the India-Pakistan match was called off. It termed the communication "politically charged and prejudiced."

The PCB said it would not take part in any event where the values of neutrality and fair play are undermined. The board made it clear that it will not be associated with tournaments that allow external agendas to dictate the course of the game. Earlier, the EaseMyTrip Co-founder Nishant Pitti has clarified that it will not be associated with any India-Pakistan match in the World Championship of Legends (WCL). The company clarified its stance, stating that despite entering into a 5-year sponsorship agreement with WCL two years ago, it will not associate with or participate in any match involving Pakistan. Nishant Pitti, co-founder of EaseMyTrip, took to his X account to express support for the Indian team, while explaining the company's position. -ANI

Holder becomes WI top T20I wicket-taker, stars in win over Pakistan

Jason Holder was deservedly named 'Player of the Match' for his stunning spell of 4/19 and a calm, composed finish with the bat an unbeaten 16 off 10 balls

FLORIDA: Jason Holder delivered a match-winning all-round performance to script a thrilling 2-wicket victory for West Indies over Pakistan in the second T20I, levelling the series 1-1 in Lauderhill on Saturday. With this, the experienced all-rounder also went past Dwayne Bravo to become the highest wicket-taker for West Indies in men's T20Is. Holder was deservedly named 'Player of the Match' for his stunning spell of 4/19 and a calm, composed finish with the bat, an unbeaten 16 off 10 balls, which included the match-winning boundary off the final ball of the game. Chasing a target of 134, West Indies looked in all sorts of trouble as they kept losing wickets at regular intervals. At one point,



the West Indies were 98/7 in 16.5 overs but Holder held his nerve in a tense final over, and took his team home. With eight required off the last six balls and two needed off the final delivery, Shaheen Shah Afridi steamed in but Holder stood tall and cracked him for a boundary to seal the deal for the hosts. They secured a nail-biting win, setting up a series decider on Monday. For Pakistan, Mohammad Nawaz was the pick of the bowlers. He returned excellent figures of 3/14 from his four overs, making life difficult for the Caribbean batters. **Struggled for momentum** Earlier, Pakistan won the toss and opted to bat first, but their innings followed a similar script. They too struggled for momentum, losing wickets in clusters. At 53/4 in 9.2 overs, they looked in deep trouble, but young Hasan Nawaz gave them a glimmer of hope with a quickfire 40 off 23 balls, including four towering sixes and a solitary boundary. Despite Nawaz's efforts, Pakistan could only manage 133/9 in their 20 overs. Holder was outstanding with the ball. In the end, it was Holder's calm head and seasoned hands that guided West Indies home, both with the ball and the bat. With the series now level, all eyes turn to the decider on Monday. Brief scores: Pakistan 133/9 in 20 overs (Hasan Nawaz 40, Salman Agha 38; Jason Holder 4/19) vs West Indies 135/8 in 20 overs (Gudakesh Motie 28, Shai Hope 21; Mohammad Nawaz 3/14). -ANI

LEAGUES CUP

Messi injured as Inter Miami beat Necaxa on penalties

WASHINGTON: Lionel Messi suffered an injury as Inter Miami edged to a 5-4 penalty shootout victory over Necaxa in the Leagues Cup on Saturday. The 38-year-old Argentine forward limped off after just 10 minutes at Chase Stadium in Fort Lauderdale with what appeared to be a right leg problem. "He felt discomfort and we will not be able to know until tomorrow how severe the injury is," Inter Miami manager Javier Mascherano told reporters after the match. "He did feel a pull so we'll have to wait and see."

Red card Telasco Segovia gave the MLS side the lead just after Messi's departure, but the hosts suffered a blow five minutes later when Maximiliano Falcon was shown a straight red card for a bad challenge on Diber Cambindo. Necaxa equalized through Tomas Badaloni, but the Mexican side was also reduced to 10 men on the hour after Cristian Calderon was shown a second yellow card for a tackle on Luis Suarez. Ricardo Monreal put Necaxa ahead with an 81st-minute strike before Jordi Alba's stoppage-time finish forced the game to penalties. Suarez converted the decisive spot-kick in the shootout after Badaloni missed on his team's third attempt. Inter Miami will host Pumas UNAM in its final group match on Wednesday, while Necaxa will visit Orlando City the same day. -Xinhua



LITTLE MASTER

India captain Gill receives special gift from Sunil Gavaskar after record-shattering series

LONDON: India captain Shubman Gill received a special gift from 'Little Master' Sunil Gavaskar after he came close but stood too far from breaking his record for most runs by an Indian in a Test series. Shubman agonisingly fell 20 runs short of breaking Gavaskar's tally of 774 as he concluded the series with 754 runs to his name. With his robust technique, he looked poised for an extended stay on the case but was undone by a sharply nipping delivery from Gus Atkinson, punching his return ticket on 11(9). At the end of a throbbing contest on Day 3 of the fifth Test, Gavaskar met Gill, gifted a shirt with the SG initials and a special cap that he doesn't give to too many people. He hopes that after missing out on the elusive milestone by a whisker, he will strive for it in future assignments. "I have got a gift for you in anticipation of you going past (me). At least you got something to aim for in the next series. It is just a little gift. It is a shirt with SG initials, someone made it for me, I am giving this to you, but I don't know if it will fit you. This is a cap which I give to very few people with my signature. All the best," Gavaskar said after meeting Gill in a video posted by Sony Sports on X. Gill and Mohammed Siraj's tactical play was on display during the final moments before the day's end. India played a double



bluff by setting up the field for a 'sweet chin music', but Siraj bowled a searing, angling yorker to rattle Zak Crawley's timber. Impressed by the brilliant piece of gambit, Gavaskar promised to wear his lucky jacket, hoping it would turn India's fortune. "That last over was fantastic. Sending a fielder over there, but then bowling the yorker. Tomorrow I am going to wear my lucky jacket, which I wore in Australia, the white one during the Gabba Test, on the last day," he concluded. In pursuit of a 374-run target, England opener Crawley and Ben Duckett raised a 50-run opening stand before the former departed on 14(36). As things stand, India is eight wickets shy of victory, while England needs 324 runs with two days left for play. -ANI

DUSIT2 NASEEM RESORT

Movement meets altitude in Oman's highest padel experience

JABAL AL AKHDAR: dusitD2 Naseem Resort, a leading mountain retreat under Dusit International, has unveiled the first-ever padel court in the Jabal Akhdar region, introducing an exciting new sports and wellness offering to one of Oman's most scenic destinations. Perched 2,000 metres above sea level, the state-of-the-art glass-and-mesh court is framed by sweeping mountain vistas. Designed for both beginners and sea-

soned players, the facility brings a vibrant, active dimension to the resort's diverse guest experiences. "This new addition reflects our holistic approach to wellness and adventure," said Jagdeep Thakral, General Manager at dusitD2 Naseem. "We're committed to creating purposeful experiences that inspire our guests to stay active, connect with nature, and enjoy world-class amenities." As part of the launch celebra-



tions, the resort will host the MountainMan Celebrity Padel Challenge on 8th August 2025 — a dynamic day of sport and adventure at altitude. The event will bring together invited celebrity sports figures, popular influencers, and notable personalities for a friendly tournament at the new padel court, along with competitions and activities at the resort's expansive Adventure Park. This signature event reflects

dusitD2 Naseem's commitment to community, wellness, and destination experiences that resonate with both locals and visitors. Now open to the public, the padel court welcomes guests and non-residents daily from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. Flexible booking options and exclusive offers make the padel court and adventure park accessible to all — from guests seeking new challenges to sports enthusiasts and families.

AL AIN VILLAGE

A DESTINATION FOR NATURE, ADVENTURE LOVERS

The village is rich in historical and cultural landmarks and a variety of agricultural crops, such as roses, pomegranates, and grapes, which are grown on terraces that embody Oman’s agricultural nature

AL JABAL AL AKHDAR: Al Ain village in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar (the Green Mountain), located in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, is a distinctive tourist destination for many of the wilayat’s visitors. It boasts a moderate climate in summer and is very cold in winter.

The village is rich in historical and cultural landmarks and a variety of agricultural crops, such as roses, pomegranates, and grapes, which are grown on terraces that embody Oman’s agricultural nature. The blend of mountain terrain, natural scenery, and farms in the village has made it a favourite spot for nature lovers, photography enthusiasts, and hikers who use the many old paths that connect it to other villages in Al Jabal Al Akhdar, Al Dakhiliyah, and some villages in South Al Batinah Governorate.

Eng. Yahya Nasser Al Riyami, a resident of Al Ain village, stated: “Al Ain is one of the oldest villages in Al Jabal Al Akhdar, with a history spanning hundreds of years. It holds great importance in the wilayat as it is centrally located and sits on a block of travertine rocks, known for their abundant water sources since ancient times. This location provides beautiful views of three other villages in the wilayat: Al Aqr, Al Sharijah, and Al Qasha.”

He added that the village’s name, “Al Ain,” which means “the spring,” is attributed to its water sources. Three aflaj (irrigation channels) originate here: Falaj Al Awar, which irrigates the farms of Al Ain, Al Aqr, and Al Qasha villages; Falaj Al Qunti, which irrigates the farms of Al Ain village; and Falaj Abu Kabeer, which irrigates the farms of Al Sharijah and part of Al Ain village. There are also other natural springs, such as “Ain Al Uyayna.”

Al Riyami told Oman News Agency that Al Ain village is known for a number of its historical, cultural, and religious landmarks. One is a site called “Al Qala’a” (the castle), which overlooks the village from the north and is one of the oldest residential houses.

The engineering of the underground aflaj channels is a historical masterpiece in itself, and the village houses—especially the old ones—are a testament to the village’s deep history.

Furthermore, the cultural aspect, which is a fundamental factor in preserving the village’s history and transmitting it through generations, is evident in the Holy Quran and religious sciences school. A collection of religious, cultural, scientific, and other books has been designated as a public endowment for the village, and a portion of the village’s farms is allocated to generate revenue for the upkeep of these books. The ancient mosques—of which there are four: Al A’ala Mosque, Al Naranja Mosque, Al Khashabatain Mosque, and Al Qunti Mosque—are historical witnesses to the residents’ interest in religion since ancient times.

Eng. Yahya Nasser Al Riyami explained that Al Ain village’s central location in Al Jabal Al Akhdar cre-



ated a network of hiking trails.

Eng. Yahya Al Riyami confirmed that Al Ain village is surrounded by agricultural farms. It has all types of agricultural crops found throughout the wilayat, such as deciduous fruit trees (pomegranates, peaches, apricots, walnuts, grapes, etc.), vegetable crops like garlic and onions, and forage crops. It is also distinguished by the cultivation of rose trees, which serve as a source of income for the residents, second only to the pomegranate harvest. Most residents are involved in the rosewater distillation profession,

which has given the village great importance and a good reputation at both the wilayat and national levels. This activity is expected to be a major draw for visitors during the rose harvest season.

He concluded by saying that the village attracts visitors throughout the year due to its unique features, though visitor numbers vary from time to time. Peak visitor periods are during holidays and official vacations, as well as during the rose harvesting and distillation season and the pomegranate harvest season. - ONA

ROUND-UP

Muscat Private Hospital, Premier Point Home Health announce strategic partnership to elevate home-based medical care in Oman

This alliance marks a significant milestone in the evolution of healthcare services in Oman

MUSCAT: In a transformative step toward expanding patient-centred healthcare across the Sultanate, Muscat Private Hospital (MPH) and Premier Point Home Health (Shifaouk) have entered into a strategic partnership designed to deliver advanced medical services directly to patients' homes.

The signing ceremony, held at MPH, was officiated by Hassan Al Lawati, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MPH, and Muntasar Zakhariya Alomairi, CEO Premier Point, in the presence of senior leadership from both organisations.

Hassan Al Lawati emphasised that this partnership represents a pivotal shift in how Muscat Private Hospital approaches health-



care delivery. "By combining MPH's robust infrastructure and clinical expertise with Premier Point's specialised home health capabilities, we are establishing a seamless continuum of care that is both accessible and compassionate," he stated.

"This collaboration takes MPH to a different level by providing essential post-discharge care directly in the comfort of our patients' homes. This includes skilled nursing care, physical therapy,

and addressing any other medical requirements, especially for long-term bedridden patients and elderly individuals.

"With homecare services easily accessible, we can profoundly improve the quality of life for these patients, enabling them to receive care in a familiar environment," he added.

Al Lawati also highlighted the positive impact of this partnership on patient recovery. "Research has shown that patients who receive

care at home often experience faster recovery times and reduced anxiety. This not only benefits their health but also alleviates the financial burden on their families, who may struggle with the costs and logistics of hospital stays."

Echoing this vision, Muntasar Zakhariya Alomairi noted, "The signing of this agreement with MPH aims to strengthen our collaboration in providing comprehensive healthcare services through our medical staff and spe-



cialists. This includes delivering primary and therapeutic care in the homes of our patients, administering intravenous injections, preparing medications in our compounding pharmacy, and offering various other essential services."

The event was attended by key members of MPH's leadership team, including Dr Raymond, Medical Director; Rajendar, Finance Director; Madhu Ramaiah, Operations Manager; and Vijay, Marketing Manager. Their pres-

ence underscored the strategic importance of the partnership and the shared vision for advancing healthcare accessibility and innovation throughout Oman.

This alliance marks a significant milestone in the evolution of healthcare services in the Sultanate. By joining forces, MPH and Premier Point Home Health are setting a new standard for integrated care—one that prioritizes patient comfort, clinical excellence, and community well-being.

THE VALUE SHOP



LOT opens fifth branch at Lulu Hypermarket in Bidiyah

MUSCAT: LOT - The Value Shop has further broadened its scope in Oman with the launch of its fifth outlet at Lulu Hypermarket in Al Bidiyah.

The launch of the fifth branch follows the success of the other four branches of LOT in Mall of Muscat, Wadi Al Lawami, Nujum Mall at Al Amerat and Al Buraimi. The expansion plan aligns with LOT's commitment to continuously enhance accessibility of retail offerings to customers even in the remote areas of the country. With the recent launch, the group aims to uphold its dedication to excellence while providing an unparalleled retail experience through quality products and services for the local community.

The value shop aims to serve the day-to-day needs of customers by offering a diverse range of products at affordable prices. Shoppers can explore an impressive assortment of household essentials, kitchenware, toilet essentials, travel accessories, stationery and a vast collection of toys.

There is also a separate area dedicated to household products prized at less than 0.350 baizas. Shoppers can find an exceptional collection of the latest seasonal fashion trend for men, women, and kids, footwear, elegant jewelry, and ladies' bags. Lot offers an enjoyable experience for those on the hunt for great deals and value in everyday essentials, without compromising on the quality.

SUPPORT

Liva Insurance reinforces commitment to public safety as gold sponsor of Traffic Safety Awareness Exhibition in Salalah

MUSCAT: Highlighting its continuous commitment to fostering a culture of safety and responsible driving, Liva Insurance participated as a Gold Sponsor of the Traffic Safety Awareness Exhibition, organized by the Royal Oman Police (ROP) at the Salalah Gardens Mall.

The event was inaugurated under the esteemed patronage of Najeeb Ali Al Rawas, Governor of the Al Dhahirah Governorate.

Held during the peak of Salalah's renowned Khareef season, the exhibition perfectly aligns with Liva Insurance's strategic focus this year, reinforcing the importance of road safety among residents and visitors alike. Khareef annually attracts several visitors from across Oman and beyond, significantly increasing traffic on the roads and presenting distinct driving challenges.

Throughout the exhibition, the Royal Oman Police provided visitors with essential safety guidelines and practical advice to effectively manage the unique driving conditions encountered during the Khareef season.

Commenting on this initiative, Bader Al Marzouqi, Head of Distribution Personal Lines, stated:



"At Liva Insurance, safeguarding the well-being of our community is central to everything we do. Supporting initiatives such as the Traffic Safety Awareness Exhibition is an integral part of our strategy to enhance road safety awareness, especially during the Khareef season when Salalah experiences a significant influx of visitors. Through our continuous support of events like this, we aim to proactively educate drivers and the wider community about responsible driving practices, ultimately contributing to safer roads for everyone in Oman."

During the Khareef season,

heavy fog often reduces visibility dramatically, requiring motorists to exercise heightened vigilance, use fog lights responsibly, and maintain safe distances between vehicles. Rainfall further complicates conditions, causing roads to become slippery, so drivers are advised to handle their vehicles gently, especially when navigating curves or steep turns.

Additionally, roads near mountainous areas may pose risks from rocks unexpectedly descending onto roadways, demanding cautious driving at all times. Recognizing these seasonal challenges,

Liva Insurance actively collaborates with the Royal Oman Police by advocating and promoting these essential driving guidelines.

Through its dedicated support for crucial public safety initiatives like the Traffic Safety Awareness Exhibition, Liva Insurance continues to demonstrate leadership – not only as a provider of innovative insurance solutions – but also as an active partner in national efforts aimed at reducing road accidents and fostering a culture of responsibility and caution among all road users across the Sultanate of Oman.

COLLABORATION

Taageer Finance partners with Oman Aviation Academy to support aspiring aviators with flexible student financing options

MUSCAT: In a strategic move aimed at empowering Omani youth and enhancing access to high-quality aviation training, Taageer Finance Company has partnered with Oman Aviation Academy, the Sultanate's premier aviation training institution. The collaboration introduces easy and flexible financing options for students, enabling aspiring pilots and aviation professionals to pursue their careers without the burden of upfront costs.

Oman Aviation Academy is widely recognized for its rigorous training programs, experienced faculty, and adherence to international aviation standards. By offering specialized courses tailored to the region's growing aviation sector, the academy is actively contributing to building a skilled national workforce.

Through this partnership, Taa-



geer Finance will offer students the opportunity to pay for their training programs in Equated Monthly Instalments (EMIs), making aviation education more

financially accessible. This initiative reflects the shared vision of both organizations to invest in human capital development and support Oman's broader goals of eco-

nomics diversification and youth empowerment.

Commenting on the partnership, Fahad Khamis Abdullah Al Bulushi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Taageer Finance, mentioned: "We are proud to support Omani youth in achieving their aviation dreams through this collaboration. This initiative aligns with our mission to enable skill development and reinforces our commitment to enhancing youth employability - not just within Oman, but on a global stage."

Mohammed Al Shanfari, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Oman Aviation Academy, said: "This partnership makes aviation training more accessible and helps us build a strong pipeline of skilled professionals for Oman's aviation sector. It reflects a shared commitment to empowering the next generation of aviators and playing a proactive

role in the nation's development."

This collaboration between Taageer Finance and Oman Aviation Academy marks a significant step forward in creating a sustainable and inclusive ecosystem for aviation training in Oman. By removing financial barriers, the partnership aims to inspire more young Omanis to take flight towards fulfilling and impactful careers in the aviation industry. Finance offers a diverse range of financial and leasing solutions for businesses and individuals. Headquartered in Al Khuwair in Muscat, the company boasts an extensive nationwide network, with branches at Wattayah, Sohar, Al Kamil, Barka, Nizwa, Salalah, and Seeb. By offering customers a cutting-edge digital platform, upholding the highest corporate governance standards, implementing resilient systems and procedures,

and utilizing state-of-the-art technology, Taageer has established itself as a trusted ally for customers. This includes the integration of Point of Sale (POS) machines at all branches, a robust mobile application with payment gateway integration to facilitate a streamlined cashless payment process, as well as the efficient processing of customer requests through its mobile application.

Taageer takes pride in being a responsible corporate citizen, actively supporting the community and contributing to the nation's socio-economic development goals. To drive its business growth, the company focuses on nurturing local talent and continuously enhancing its business processes, customer service standards, and finance solutions portfolio to meet evolving market demands.

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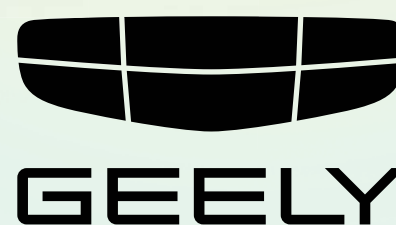
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