



HM RECEIVES THANKS CABLES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China in reply to His Majesty cable on the victims of the earthquake that struck Tibet in southwestern China. In the cable, the Chinese President expressed his sincere appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's heartfelt sentiments, wishing His Majesty good health and wellbeing. He also wished the Omani people continuous peace and prosperity. — **ONA**



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SHEIKH TAMIM'S VISIT TO BE A TURNING POINT IN OMAN-QATAR BILATERAL TIES



Emir of Qatar to visit Oman on Tuesday

MUSCAT: Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, will pay a state visit to the Sultanate of Oman from Tuesday, 28 January 2025.

The Diwan of Royal Court issued a statement to this effect reading as follows: "Based on the Royal keenness of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, to expand areas of cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar in a manner that brings about more prosperity and development for the two countries and further benefit their two peoples, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, will pay a state visit to the Sultanate of Oman with effect from Tuesday, 28 January 2025.

"During this visit, the two countries will discuss matters of common interest, with the prime aim of realising their aspirations for a brighter and more prosperous future.

"The two countries will also engage in consultations about various issues of relevance to developments on the regional and international arenas.

"May Allah the Almighty grant the wise leaderships of the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar success in their endeavours to achieve the good of the two countries, the Arab and Muslim nations." — **ONA**

Oman's investments in Qatar increased from OMR4.1mn in 2022 to OMR4.3mn in 2023

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar continue promoting their distinguished relations in various areas in a manner that serves their interests, under the wise leaderships of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

A new track for bilateral relations between the two countries will be launched on Tuesday when the Emir of Qatar begins his state visit to Oman. This path reflects the commitment of the two countries to push these distinguished relations to wider horizons in all fields, constituting a new turning point in the course

of relations and pushing bilateral economic and trade relations between the two sides towards more fruitful cooperation.

The common visions that unite the two countries is reflected on the continuous political coordination, whether at the regional level between the GCC countries, the Arab League, or at the global level through international organizations.

Their role in backing all that would achieve stability in the region and the world through peaceful dialogue and understanding to resolve conflicts is evident. This was clearly demonstrated through the convergence

of stances and coordination between them, and the continuous consultation regarding regional and international issues, most notably the Palestinian cause.

The Omani-Qatari Joint Committee, which was established in 1995, contributes to enhancing joint cooperation between the two countries by exploring various aspects of cooperation, finding possible opportunities, and setting up investment projects that serve their common interests. The committee held 23 meetings until last year.

Data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicate that the volume of trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar reached OMR1,113.3 million by the end of 2023, of which OMR284.7 million were the value of Omani exports to the State of Qatar and OMR828.6 million the value of Omani imports from Qatar. **>A2**

GHALA BASE

HH Sayyid Theyazin graces RAFO annual day ceremony, graduation of cadets, officers



MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, today presided over the Royal Air Force of Oman's (RAFO) annual day celebration, which falls on 25 January every year, and the graduation of officer cadets, limited service officer cadets and university officers, who all completed the respective training courses.

The ceremony took place at the military parade grounds at Ghala Base and Sultan Qaboos Air Academy.

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

Upon the arrival of HH Sayyid Theyazin to the celebration ground, the graduates gave the military salute and the RAFO band played the Royal Anthem.

Then, HH Sayyid Theyazin inspected the front column of the graduates' column.

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

Then, HH Sayyid Theyazin handed over the Sword of Honour to Flying Lieutenant Al Waleed Khalid Al Maamari, who won the overall first place at the Basic Officer Candidates Course.

He also honoured Air Lieutenant Yaqoub Khalifan Al Riyami, who won first place at the level of the Course for Limited Service and University Officer Recruits.

This was followed by protocols of the Sultan Qaboos Air Academy's banner handover from the graduating batch to the batch currently undergoing training, whose members swore to keep the Academy's banner fluttering high. **>A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Incredible shows of opera masterpieces

1 The month of January at ROHM brought classical greatness in opera as audiences experienced a weekend of operatic mastery. Verdi's Simon Boccanegra pulled the audience at ROHM into a captivating thriller. **>A3**

OMAN Indian embassy marks Republic Day

2 The Embassy of India in Muscat celebrated the 76th Republic Day with patriotic fervour. The event was attended by over 500 members of the Indian community. **>A4**

WORLD 70 killed in attack on Sudan hospital

3 A drone attack on the only functional hospital in the western Sudanese city of El Fasher has killed about 70 people and injured 19, WHO chief said on Sunday. **>A6**

MERC2 TRIUMPH

Abdullah Al Zubair brings pride to fans of Oman rally



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Local rally driver Abdullah Al Zubair earned the coveted MERC2 title along with his co-driver Taha Al Zadjali at the 28th Oman International Rally, the first round of the FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), which concluded in Sohar on Saturday.

Driving a Subaru Impreza, the Al Zubair and Al Zadjali did the host nation proud with overall sixth place and top honours in the MERC2 category.

Qatar's Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah and his new Spanish co-driver Candido Carrera cruised to the overall title win in 6min 13.6sec victory.

The Qatari secured a record-breaking eighth win in the Sultanate in his Skoda Fabia RS and a staggering 87th career victory in the FIA Middle East Rally Cham-

pionship (MERC) with a seventh different co-driver. He won nine of the 13 special stages, including the Power Stage finale.

Al Zubair's return to competitive rallying was marked by his determination to excel in the N category.

Prior to the rally, he emphasised the challenges posed by the new stages in Sohar, noting that success would require "effort, patience, caution, and experience."

He also expressed gratitude to his sponsor, Ara Petroleum Company, highlighting the importance of corporate support in the demanding sport of rallying.

Al Zubair's extensive rally experience includes participation in the Middle East Rally Championship, the Jordan National Rally Championship, the World Desert Rally Championship, and various Baja events across Europe. **>A5**

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:25pm
Asr.....	3:33pm
Maghrib.....	5:55pm
Isha.....	7:08pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:31am

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STATE VISIT

Omani-Qatari relations: Towards economic integration

<FROM A1 The volume of trade exchange between the two countries reached about OMR950.8 million by the end of November 2024, of which OMR205.9 million were the value of Omani exports to Qatar, representing 0.9 percent of the total value of Omani exports, and OMR754.9 million were the total value of Omani imports from Qatar, representing 5 percent of the total imports.

Qatari investments in the Sultanate of Oman witnessed a growth of 12 percent by the end of 2023, reaching OMR730 million, compared to OMR651.9 million in 2022. Omani exports to the State of Qatar until October 2024 amounted to about OMR140.2 million, while the total imports of the Sultanate of Oman from the State of Qatar until October 2024 amounted to about OMR708.7 million.

After analysing the data issued by the National Center for Statistics and Information, it becomes clear that the trade balance until October 2024 was in favor of the State of Qatar, as the value of Qatari investments by the end of the third quarter of 2024 amounted to about OMR488.3 million, and the number of Qatari companies investing in the Sultanate of Oman reached 15. In contrast, the value of direct Omani investments in the State of Qatar increased from OMR4.1 million in 2022 to OMR4.3 million in 2023.

Sayyid Ammar bin Abdullah Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Qatar told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the upcoming state visit of Sheikh Tamim to Oman is an important step that reflects the distinguished relations between the two countries and contributes to enhancing joint cooperation in all fields, whether political, economic or cultural.

He affirmed that the visit would open new horizons for boosting the strategic partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar, as they enjoy a long history of fruitful cooperation at various levels, and have been and continue to be a successful and distinctive model of bilateral relations.



He added that the Omani-Qatari relations reflect the shared future vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. The two leaders seek to expand the horizons of joint cooperation between the two countries in various economic fields, in a manner that serves interests and well-being of their peoples, affirmed the Ambassador.

He explained that a joint investment fund named “Al Hosn Investment Company” was established in 2007 between the Omani and Qatari sides. It is a closed joint stock company headquartered in Muscat, and a partnership between Qatar Holding Company, affiliated to Qatar Investment Authority, with a 50 percent share, and Omani Investment Authority with a 50 percent share.

The ambassador said that the company invests in projects from various sectors, including banking, industry, communications and technology, food, healthcare, education, tourism, oil and gas.

He stated that in a bid to activate cooperation between businessmen from both sides, the Omani-Qatari Businessmen Council was established under the umbrella of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry to boost trade relations and open areas of joint investment between the two countries.

The ambassador added that Qatari investments in the Sultanate of Oman varied between converting industries in the food and

pharmaceutical security industries, and other sectors including education, banking, communications and technology at the level of investment authorities, and the construction, wholesale trade, tourism, logistics, mining, real estate, communications, insurance and others.

As for cooperation between the two countries in the field of renewable energy, Ambassador Al Busaidi pointed out that the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar have a unified vision regarding encouraging investment and setting up clean energy projects, as the Sultanate of Oman attracts major companies to set up projects related to producing green hydrogen and generating clean electricity through solar and wind energy, so the two countries can set up joint projects in this regard.

At the end of his statement, Ambassador Al Busaidi affirmed that Oman and Qatar are working continuously to enhance cooperation in facing global and regional challenges, whether political, economic or environmental. Joint efforts include maintaining regional security, sustaining natural resources, and addressing the challenges of climate change, he added. The two countries, said the Ambassador, are also keen on joint cooperation in facing health, educational and social challenges.

Sheikh Mubarak bin Fahad Al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Sultanate of Oman, noted that bilateral relations between the two countries are witnessing remarkable growth and

development in all fields, especially in joint investments. He added that there are many Qatari investments in the Sultanate of Oman, including the Karwa Motors project and the Qatari Diar Ras Al Hadd project.

The Qatari ambassador told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the state visit of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, to the Sultanate of Oman is receiving great attention at the official and popular levels. It would constitute an important chapter in the history of bilateral relations between the two countries and the exchange of common interests in all fields.

He indicated that the visit would provide an opportunity to exchange views on global challenges and current issues. It would also contribute to opening new vistas of mutual understanding and strategic partnerships between Oman and Qatar, as well as pushing these partnerships towards higher levels by boosting constructive bilateral cooperation.

Sheikh Mubarak bin Fahad Al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Sultanate of Oman said that during the visit, several agreements and memoranda of understanding will be signed between the two countries. This move would provide vast opportunities for cooperation in various fields between companies and businessmen and the establishment of joint investments with economic returns for the benefit of the two countries' peoples.

On his turn, Faisal Abdullah

Al Rowas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) stressed that the distinguished bilateral relations between the two countries have been realised into fruitful cooperation in various economic and commercial fields. This, he added, embodies the vision of the two wise leaderships to strengthen the bonds of joint cooperation in order to realize common aspirations of growth and prosperity.

Al Rowas pointed out that recent years have witnessed a remarkable development in the level of trade cooperation between Oman and Qatar.

The State of Qatar, Al Rowas affirmed, has become a strategic partner for the Sultanate of Oman in many economic fields, and these distinguished relations have contributed to enhancing the movement of inter-trade and opening up new vistas for investment in priority sectors.

The trade and investment relations between the two countries focus on vital sectors such as energy, industry, tourism, logistics services, and other areas that serve mutual interests, Al Rowas said.

He also underscored the importance of benefiting from these relations in a manner that enhances the business environment in a bid to achieve sustainable economic gains.

The Chairman of OCCI said that the Omani-Qatari relations represent a model to be emulated in fraternal and economic cooperation, and constitute a fundamental pillar for enhancing joint action to achieve GCC economic integration. This is in line with the aspirations of the peoples of the two countries and the vision of their wise leaderships towards a more prosperous future.

In the same context, Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al Thani, Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI), affirmed that the state visit of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar to the Sultanate of Oman and his upcoming meeting with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, reflects the commitment of the leaderships of the two countries to strengthening

fraternal bonds. It also constitutes a move towards opening up broader and more comprehensive vistas for cooperation in all fields, especially at a time when the region is witnessing important developments at all levels.

The Chairman of QCCI said that for the private sector, this visit would represent a strategic step that will expand the horizons of cooperation, deepen strategic ties between the two countries, and enhance their ability to face global challenges. The visit would enhance the partnership and economic cooperation between the two countries, facilitate mutual investments, develop trade exchange and augment the volume of exports and imports, he added.

He stressed that trade exchange between Oman and Qatar is continuously growing, and the growth rate reached 20 percent in the past two years.

Regarding mutual investments between the two countries, the Chairman of QCCI pointed out that there are many successful Qatari investments in the Sultanate of Oman in various sectors, in addition to joint Omani-Qatari projects in the sectors of trade, contracting, services, hospitality, energy and maintenance. There are also Omani companies operating in the State of Qatar in various economic sectors. He pointed out that there are also many companies operating in both countries that seek to enhance cooperation and partnership through commercial projects and alliances in a way that supports the vision of the two countries to achieve economic diversification.

He said that Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry supports and encourages the rapprochement and cooperation of the private sector in the two countries. QCCI, he affirmed, is ready to provide support to Omani business owners wishing to enter the Qatari market by introducing them to the market and the available opportunities, in addition to arranging meetings that bring them together with Qatari business owners to discuss establishing partnerships and joint projects, both in Oman or Qatar. — **ONA**

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CDAA

Two fires extinguished by CDAA

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Firefighting teams from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) in Musandam Governorate responded to a house fire in the Wilayat of Madha. The fire was successfully extinguished without any injuries reported. In another incident, firefighting teams from the CDAA in Al Dakhiliyah responded to a vehicle fire on the road to Jebel Akhdar. The fire was doused without any injuries.



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Family-friendly extravaganza

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The “Rahala” event stands out as a family-friendly entertainment extravaganza taking place in the Wilayat of Al Qabil in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate. Nestled amidst the golden sands and lit by bright lights, the event offers a unique and enjoyable family atmosphere. It will continue until February 27.

Badr bin Ahmed Al-Habsi, Director of the Events and Awareness Department in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, said: “The “Rahala” event has been organised in partnership with the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate Office, Omran Group, and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.”

The goal is to promote domestic tourism, showcasing the natural beauty and cultural diversity of North Al Sharqiyah Governorate. The event is expected to attract over 300,000 visitors from both within Oman and abroad. The event features a wide range of activities.

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COMMENTARY

Towering Achievements



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

The man was so short that I mistaken him for a child. He walked in quick but short strides to keep up with his family. Walking with his wife, he looked like a ten-year old tagging behind her. His three kids were much taller than him and his wife towered a foot over his bald head. But he was happy to be with them though he appeared to struggle to keep up with their pace. I knew who he was but I lost contact with the man since my college days. I could not have mistaken his thin eyebrows and flat nose. Another trademark of his features was his smile. It was genuine, full of life and infectious.

He saw me but he was not sure if I was the same person who used to trade war of words with him years ago in a college campus. I waved my hand and the smile lit up his face. He pushed through a crowd with the astonishing speed for a small man who was a few inches under five feet. He gave me a bear hug and I literally lifted him off his feet when I hugged him back. For a few seconds, we caused a spectacle to a dozen people or so who turned their heads to look at us. For some understandable reason, it made his family a little uncomfortable. They just kept walking perhaps pretending that the man had nothing to do with them. But it did not matter to

my friend. He just gave them his blessing by waving them away. We caught up with the old times. We called him 'tiny' then and he was not great to academic achievements. However, as I know now, there is nothing tiny about his current achievements. He has a thriving business with a couple of big projects coming along. The man certainly knows how to build tall buildings in contrast to his physical stature. He was not boasting but it was I who probed about his life. He was almost embarrassed when he talked about it and quickly changed the subject. We talked a good part of the hour in the crowded café. In the end, his wife came to rescue him from my idle

conversation. We exchanged business cards as we parted company but a month later now, neither of us bothered to call the other. It was a chance meeting. This is the problem of old colleagues who drifted and a chance encounter is not enough to fill the void of a long passage of time. There is nothing else to talk about after catching up with lost time. We might have been friends then but now we are a couple of strangers who just knew each other in the past. The funny thing is that, when you are a teenager trying to make sense what they teach you in the classroom, the future is a distant endeavor. Something that can

wait and you are in no hurry to get there. Now, life flashes past you so fast that you see some of your ambitions dashed for good. Having said that, I am happy that 'tiny' made something from his life with his tall buildings. I don't have to ask him but being a building contractor was far from his mind those days. I don't envy him. At least I knew I was going to end up entertaining people with my written ramblings one day. I knew when to get out from a boring career before it got the better of me. Next time I see him, I might ask him if his small status had inspired him from building towering structures to make up for his lack of height.

CLASSICAL GREATNESS



An incredible weekend of classic opera at ROHM

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The month of January at Royal Opera House Muscat brought classical greatness in opera as audiences experienced a weekend of operatic mastery. Verdi's Simon Boccanegra pulled the audience at Royal Opera House Muscat into a captivating thriller about profound inner conflict and the human capacity for repentance and mercy. This was performed by the prestigious Mariinsky Theatre on January 23 and 25, who also presented a concert of opera soloists in Opera Masterpieces on January 24. Audiences were treated to an incredible three nights of stunning musical performances. Simon Boccanegra by Giuseppe Verdi has been considered one of the great classical operas since its premiere in 1857. In a remarkable career spanning six decades, Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) composed Simon Boccanegra at the pinnacle of his career pioneering new heights for operatic art.

Opera Masterpieces performed on January 24 with the participation of singers, choir, and orchestra of Mariinsky Theatre presented a programme of beautiful arias and symphonic excerpts from operas and ballets by some of the greatest Russian and European composers including favourites from Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, and Wagner. It was performed by young opera soloists of the Mariinsky Theatre, graduates of the Atkins Young Artists Programme at the Mariinsky Theatre and La Scala Opera Academy. Commenting on the operatic excellence of a weekend, Umberto Fanni, Director General and Artistic Director of ROHM said: "It is an honour to present a weekend filled with such masterpieces as Verdi's Simon Boccanegra, exquisitely brought to life by the Mariinsky Theatre, a historic theatre of opera. It will remain one of the most memorable highlights of our season."

Looking forward to a dazzling February, guests should expect no less eventful a month of extraordinary performances and educational initiatives. Opening the month on February 6 and 7 with one of the only ballet performances this season is A Thousand and One Nights. A Pipe Organ Concert on February 13 with the participation of extraordinary artist Claudio Astorino, harpsichordist, organist, and conductor, will present the grand melodies at ROHM. February will also be a month dedicated to one of the Arab world's most iconic composers and singers, Mohammed Abdul Wahab. Enjoy a week full of educational initiatives delving deep into the timeless music of Abdul Wahab and seeing his works remastered in two homage concerts on February 15 and 20. For more information and tickets, visit the Royal Opera House Muscat website rohmuscat.org.om or contact the Box Office.

FOREIGN MINISTRY

Oman condemns attack on Saudi hospital in Sudan

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has condemned and denounced the attack on the Saudi Hospital in the city of Al Fashir, the Republic of Sudan, expressing its heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the Sudanese government and families of the victims. In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Sunday, Oman stressed the need to respect international humanitarian law and spare civilian, medical facilities and



their personnel the impacts of armed conflicts. Oman called upon all parties to resort to dialogue to resolve differences, in order to preserve the supreme interests of Sudan. -ONA

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION

Oman is keeping pace with the global digital transformations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, participated in the International Day of Education, which falls on the 24 January of each year. The aim is to support efforts for achieving the fourth goal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals related to education, which is to provide quality, equitable and inclusive education for all, and to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for all. The celebration of this year's International Day of Education comes under the slogan: "Artificial Intelligence and Education: Challenges and Opportunities." On the Sultanate of Oman's participation with countries around the world in celebrating this occasion, Dr. Mahmoud Al-Abri, Secretary of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, said: "The Sultanate of Oman realises that digital transformation is no longer an option, but rather an inevitable necessity imposed by the variables of the modern era. "It represents an essential pillar for achieving economic and social progress and reflects a deep awareness of the importance of smart integration between digital technologies, processes and skills in various sectors and levels." Regarding the interest in the digital transformation of the educational process, Al-Abri said: "The National Commission for Education, Culture and Science works with international and regional organisations to integrate artificial intelligence technologies and tools in the fields of education, especially with regard to teaching, evaluation, educational management, and curricula." He said the Sultanate of Oman has also worked to benefit posi-



tively from international organisations in this field, and has established a number of scientific chairs specialised in artificial intelligence and its ethics, such as: the UNESCO Chair at Sultan Qaboos University, and the (ICESCO) Chair at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, in addition to its participation in international conferences and workshops, and its launch of the National Programme for Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Technologies, with the "Artificial Intelligence Makers" initiative with the aim of developing national talents and promoting a culture of innovation. The Sultanate of Oman has achieved remarkable progress in the Government AI Readiness Index, rising to 45th globally for 2024. The committee is also working in coordination with the Ministry's AI team to integrate AI technologies into education by activating AI initiatives in coordination with national and international entities to achieve comprehensive digital integration in line with global quality standards, to become a regional center for educational innovation based on AI. The Sultanate of Oman has also achieved progress in the data and infrastructure axis by 77.84%, in the technology axis by 41.29%, and in the governance axis by 69.61%." In line with the direction and great interest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in using artificial intelligence applications in all sectors, including the education sector; so that the Sultanate of Oman is at the forefront of countries that keep pace with global transformations.,

ANNUAL DAY

<FROM A1 Graduating RAFO officers take the oath of loyalty

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

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

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

At RAFO's annual day celebration and the graduation of officer candidates, HH Sayyid Theyazin posed for a commemorative photo with the graduates. -ONA



Indian embassy celebrates 76th Republic Day with gaiety, fervour



The national flag was unfurled by the ambassador, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by students from ISG

MUSCAT: The Embassy of India in Muscat celebrated the 76th Republic Day of India with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm.

The event was attended by more than 500 members of the Indian community and friends of India in Oman. Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, accompanied by his spouse, Mrs Divya Narang, began the celebrations by laying a floral tribute at the stat-

ue of Mahatma Gandhi, honouring his legacy of peace and non-violence.

The national flag was unfurled by the ambassador, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by students from the Indian School Al Ghubra. The ambassador also read excerpts from the Hon'ble President of India's Republic Day address, highlighting India's progress, democratic

values, and aspirations for the future.

Patriotic songs performed by the students from the Indian School Al Ghubra further enhanced the festive atmosphere. Beautiful tricolour sashes were distributed to all attendees, who wore them with pride as a symbol of their love for India.

The event also included the felicitation of the winners of the Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz from Oman, a Government of India initiative designed to connect diaspora youth with India's rich culture, history, and achievements. The quiz received enthusiastic participation from the Indian community in Oman.

As part of the Republic Day celebrations, the Embassy will host a grand reception on the evening of January 27, 2025.



INDIAN HERITAGE

ISG students celebrate Republic Day



Times news Service

MUSCAT: Indian School Al Ghubra celebrated the 76th Republic Day with great pride and joy on Sunday. The day's celebration reflected on 75 years of progress. The theme for the year is 'Swarnim Bharat- Virasat aur Vikas' which translates into Golden India- Heritage and Development. The event began with the welcoming of distinguished guests, members of the school management committee, parents, teachers, and students. The audience was reminded of the significance of the day, marking the adoption of India's Constitution in 1950, and encouraged to step into the 76th year of the Republic with renewed

pride and hope.

The day's programme was filled with soulful tributes, starting with a rendition of the National Anthem by the school band. Following this, the band played two iconic patriotic songs 'Vande Mataram' and 'Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja' which resonated deeply with the spirit of the nation.

The school choir performed 'Three Colours,' a heartfelt tribute to the values of the Indian flag, evoking unity and pride in the hearts of the listeners. It was followed by an interlude based on a fusion of Indo-Spanish music on the guitar and the tabla. The graceful dances embodied the rich cultural heritage and unity of India, leaving the audience in awe.



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PRESTIGIOUS GATHERING

Oman’s progress under His Majesty’s wise leadership praised by Pakistan ambassador

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A grand and historic event commemorating the Accession Day of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik was organised at the Crowne Plaza Muscat by Ameer Hamza, Chairman, Board of Directors, Pakistan School System.

The event also marked the formal welcome of Dr. Syed Naveed Bokhari, the newly appointed ambassador of Pakistan to the Sultanate of Oman.

The prestigious gathering was graced by His Highness Syed Faris Fatik as the chief guest and attended by an esteemed audience.

Distinguished participants included members of the Senate, parliamentarians, officials from the Human Rights Commission, representatives from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Housing, and the Chairman of the Oman Bar Council.

The embassy officials and representatives from Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Iran, Malaysia, the United States,



the United Kingdom, and Russia were also present on the occasion.

In addition, Omani civil society members and prominent representatives of Pakistan’s business community enhanced the significance of the occasion.

During the ceremony, Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali, Chairman of Times of Oman, was honoured with the Pakistan-Oman Friendship Award by His Highness Syed Faris Fatik, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to strengthening bi-

lateral relations between Pakistan and Oman.

Visionary leadership

In his address, Ameer Hamza paid tribute to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, lauding his visionary leadership, which has made Oman as a global symbol of peace, stability, and development.

He emphasised the historic and enduring ties between Oman and Pakistan, rooted in shared cultural values and mutual respect.

Hamza highlighted the opportunities for growth and collaboration in education, trade, and diplomacy, which remain vital for the prosperity of both nations.

The highlight of the event was the speech by Dr. Syed Naveed Bokhari, who expressed deep gratitude for the warm reception.

Dr. Bokhari praised Oman’s remarkable progress under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, describing the Sultanate as a beacon of harmony



and stability in the region and beyond.

Dr. Bokhari emphasised the historic relationship between Pakistan and Oman, underscoring its foundation of mutual respect, shared values, and centuries-old cultural and trade connections.

He pledged to enhance cooperation in education, economic partnerships, and cultural diplomacy, highlighting the immense potential for strengthening bilateral trade ties to benefit both nations.

The ambassador reiterated Pakistan’s commitment to supporting Oman’s vision for peace and sustainable development, expressing optimism for an even brighter future of cooperation.

This significant event celebrated the enduring partnership between Pakistan and Oman, underscoring their mutual dedication to progress, peace, and prosperity, guided by the visionary leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Workshop explores Oman’s business environment



The workshop focuses on addressing challenges facing investors and enhancing integration between government departments



in the Sultanate of Oman in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The workshop focuses on means of addressing the challenges facing investors and enhancing integration between government departments to help devise policies that better support the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI).

The workshop lays special emphasis on improving the Sultanate of Oman’s ranking in international indices related to ease of doing business, a key step in strengthening the country’s position as a global investment destination.

The new policies being discussed during the workshop are envisaged to eventually ease the process of establishing and running projects, ameliorating integration among relevant au-

thorities (to ensure unification of efforts), realising transparency and developing services provided to investors.

In particular, the workshop will elaborate on challenges posed to employment, commercial companies, freezones, financing procedures, taxes, legislation, laws, tenders, and practical steps to improve economic performance and raise the level of competitiveness.

The opening ceremony was attended by Ibtisam Ahmed Al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Mahmoud Abdullah Al Owaini, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance, Khalid Salim Al Ghamhari, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Labour, experts and officials from authorities concerned. -OANA

MERC2

Al-Attiyah clinches 8th win

< FROM A1 The experience stood out handy as he claimed MERC2 success while navigating the demanding routes in Sohar.

Rakan Al Rashed returned to the series in impressive style by taking second overall with Portugal’s Hugo Magalhães in a Toyota GR Yaris Rally 2.

The Saudi overcame a couple of flat tyres on Friday’s opening stage and measured his pace well once Abdulaziz Al Kuwari had blotted his copybook on the last stage of the first day.

Qatar’s Nasser Khalifa Al Attiyah and his Lebanese co-driver Ziad Chehab went largely under the radar to deliver a polished performance to snatch the final place on the podium in their Ford Fiesta.

Defending regional champion Abdulaziz Al Kuwari overcame a seventh stage accident and the resultant 10-minute penalty to retain third at the start of the final

day in his QMMF-backed Citroën C3. But the luckless Qatari ground to a halt with suspension issues on the penultimate stage. Irishman Lorcan Moore performed well on the pace notes.

Al Kuwari’s cruel demise lifted Rashid Al Muhannadi and Gary Mcelhinney into fourth place in the new Peugeot 208 Rally 4. They suffered late drama of their own when the car got stuck in the regrouping zone before the final stage and an attempt to pull it clear resulted in extensive damage to the front end.

Jordan’s Shadi Shaban and Samer Issa secured a fine fifth place in their Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX followed by the Subaru Impreza crew of Al Zubair and Al Zadjali.

Saudi Arabia’s Ibrahim Al-Muhanna (Can-Am) finished seventh and last year’s winner and Oman’s Abdullah Al Rawahi and Ata Al Hmoud benefited from four fastest

times to lift themselves into an unlikely eighth in the second Autotek Škoda after a cruel retirement on the first stage on Friday morning.

Shadi El-Fakih (Renault), Yosra Jazzar (Can-Am) and Zakariya Al Aamri (Subaru) rounded off the FIA finishers in ninth, 10th and 11th positions after India’s Saneem Payyakkal and Musa Sherif stopped in the penultimate stage.

Zakariya Al Auqi claimed victory in the Oman National Championship event with his co-driver Mutasim Al Balushi.

On the final day, a total of 15 crews graced the start list for the final leg of six special stages with both Al Rawahi and Al Kuwari returning to the fray and chasing as many points as possible.

Only Mohamed Mansoor Parol’s Subaru Impreza was missing from the list. All five crews competed in the Oman National Rally made the restart.



جامعة الشرقية
A' SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender No.	Description	Document Collection Deadline	Bids Submission Deadline	Document fees	Remarks
ASU/ 05/24/25	Supply and Installation of Appliances for Student Accommodation Buildings at A' Sharqiyah University Campus in IBRA	03/02/2025	17/02/2025	50.00 OMR	The company must be classified as grade one and above

- Specialized companies interested in this tender can obtain the tender document during working days from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.
- Bids must be submitted in closed, sealed envelopes with red wax, addressed to the **Tender Committee at A' Sharqiyah University, Ibra**. The envelopes should clearly indicate the tender subject and reference number but must not display the bidders' names.
- The main submission envelope should contain the following:
 - A separate sealed envelope with the technical proposal (1 original copy, 1 copy, and 1 soft copy on a USB flash drive).
 - A separate sealed envelope with the commercial proposal (1 original copy, 1 copy, and 1 soft copy on a USB flash drive).
- Required appliances with quantities are mentioned in the attached QR Code.
- Companies that hold Riyadh certificate are exempted from tender document fees.
- A' Sharqiyah University is not obligated to accept the lowest bid.
- ASU general terms and conditions of tenders shall apply on all submitted bids. http://www.asu.edu.om/downloads/purchase_terms_conditions.pdf
- For further details, feel free to contact us via phone at **25401115/25401116**, or by email at ajza.rashid@asu.edu.om



BILATERAL RELATIONS

Sayyid Badr receives Tajik official

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received here on Sunday Zubaydullo Zubaydov, Envoy of Sirojiddin Muhriddin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Message conveyed
The envoy conveyed a message to the Foreign Minister dealing with

bilateral relations and means of enhancing them, as well as reviewing areas of partnership and exchanging expertise to serve mutual interests.

Meeting
The meeting was attended by several officials from both sides.

— ONA



WHO CHIEF

Attack on hospital in Sudan kills 70

EL FASHER: A drone attack on the only functional hospital in the western Sudanese city of El Fasher has killed about 70 people and injured 19, World Health Organization (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Sunday.

“The attack comes at a time when access to health care is already severely constrained in the state due to the closure of health facilities following intense bombardments,” he said in a post on X.

“Above all, Sudan’s people need peace. The best medicine is peace,” he added.

Local officials reported the attack on the Saudi Teaching Maternal Hospital in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state, on Saturday, citing a similar death toll.

Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Ministry denounced the attack as “a violation of international law.”

Local authorities blamed the strike on the rebel Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which is fighting the Sudanese military and allied forces. The paramilitary group has seized nearly the entire vast western region of Darfur since April 2023.

UN official Clementine Nkweta-Salami, who coordinates humanitarian efforts in Sudan, said that the RSF had given a 48-hour ultimatum to the Sudanese Armed Forces to vacate



El Fasher.

The city has been under siege by the RSF since May 2024, but groups aligned with the Sudanese military had recently pushed back.

The army, under chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has made significant progress against the RSF in recent months.

Earlier this month, the United States announced sanctions against Burhan and also against his rival, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who heads the RSF.

Sudan has been embroiled in a war since April 2023.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced more than 12 million and driven hundreds of thousands into famine.

More than 24.6 million people — around half of Sudan’s population — face “high levels of acute food insecurity,” according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative, backed by the United Nations. — DW

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING

Housing ministry amends some of its service fees

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has announced amendments to some real estate service fees, with the aim of achieving added value for beneficiaries, enhancing the investment environment in the real estate sector and upgrading the efficiency of the services.

The amendments, which covered 85 government services, included streamlining and merging fees of 47 services, cancelling the fees of 11 services, cutting down the fees of 8 services and introducing 14 new services as part of the principle of consolidating transparency in all aspects related to service pricing and service application.

The amendments include the following:

- Reducing the registration fees for sales contracts to 1% instead of 2% for Omani individuals and companies. This will contribute to diminishing the costs of real estate ownership by 50%.

- Reducing the fees for selling real estate through Islamic banks to 0.5%. This will enhance real estate financing according to solutions that are in line with market needs.

- Reducing the mortgage registration fees to a maximum of 0.5%. This will provide more flexible financing opportunities for the real estate sector.

The decision constitutes a strategic move that reflects the Ministry’s keenness to enhance investments and support the business environment.



The decision related to amending service fees provides for recovering sums paid for change of type of business activity. This step considers the circumstances of current investors and provides them with necessary support, to help boost their confidence in the investment environment in the Sultanate of Oman.

In the same context, the decision stipulated changing the price of the land use permit, while at the same time exempting (from fees) the agricultural lands whose use has been shifted to non-investment purposes, provided that these lands are located in detailed government plans.

The decision also included changing the fees for use of agricultural lands that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources had previously collected. This change is applied in accordance with the determinants in effect at the time of payment.

As part of efforts made to im-

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monthly income does not exceed OMR300.

The decision also included determining the fees for registration and documentation of real estate transactions, as well as transfer fees and requests to prove ownership of businesses.

The decision also regulated the following:

- Registration fees for those licensed to practice the real estate brokerage profession.
- Real estate development services fees.

- Registration fees for those licensed to practice real estate pricing.

The decision also fixed fees for registering and documenting real estate transactions, transfer fees and ownership verification requests.

It also regulated the registration fees for other categories:

- Those licensed to practice the real estate brokerage profession.
- Real estate development services fees.

- Registration fees for those licensed to practice real estate valuation.

- Fixing fees for services provided to real estate owners’ associations.

- Fixing prices of contract forms, applications forms and maps issued by the Ministry.

The amendments will also contribute to raising the level of beneficiary satisfaction to 90%. The Guide includes improving the clarity of fees structure and ease of carrying out procedures. — ONA

India showcases military might, diversity at Republic Day parade

Thousands gathered in the capital to watch the choreographed spectacle featuring the country’s missile systems, fighter jet fly pasts, motorbike stunts and floats representing different Indian states

NEW DELHI: The vibrant traditional parade was the centerpiece of India’s Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on Sunday.

Thousands gathered in the capital to watch the choreographed spectacle featuring the country’s missile systems, fighter jet fly pasts, motorbike stunts and floats representing different Indian states.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Droupadi Murmu and other government officials and leaders attended the event.

“May this occasion strengthen our efforts towards preserving the ideals of our Constitution and working towards a stronger and prosperous India,” Modi wrote on social media platform X.

India and Indonesia strengthen ties

The chief guest was the visiting president of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto. A 342-member band



and marching contingent of the Indonesian National Armed Forces also joined the celebration, marking the first time the country’s troops have participated in a foreign parade.

Prabowo’s two-day state visit to India is his first to the country since becoming president in 2024. India and Indonesia signed a series of agreements on cooperation in health, maritime security and digital technology.

Indonesia was the guest nation at India’s very first Republic Day in 1950, Modi said on Saturday. Back then, Sukarno, Indonesia’s first president and leader of the country’s struggle for independence, attended as the guest of honour.

Modi said it was a matter of “great pride” that Indonesia was part of the parade again.

Celebration of independence

India has a tradition of inviting foreign heads of state to witness the parade. French President Emmanuel Macron attended last year, and former US President Barack Obama attended in 2015.

Republic Day celebrations mark the anniversary of the official adoption of India’s Constitution on January 26, 1950, nearly three years after independence from British colonial rule.

The parade took place on Rajpath Avenue, built by India’s former British rulers and lined by huge lawns, canals and rows

of trees.

The avenue was redeveloped as part of the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian independence. It was renamed Kartavya-path, or the Boulevard of Duty, in 2022.

Tableaux highlights India’s progress

The presentation of tableaux at the Republic Day Parade is one of the most awaited event. The 76th Republic Day celebrations featured a vibrant display of tableaux, showcasing India’s rich cultural heritage and impressive progress in various fields.

Tableaux from various states, union territories and Central Ministries, rolled down the Kartavya



Path, mesmerizing the audience with their designs, decorations, and themes.

Among this, the Ministry of Rural Development presented a tableau with the theme of “Lakhpati Didi Initiative”. The tableau of the Ministry of Rural Development showcases the “Lakhpati Didi Initiative,” which focuses on women’s economic empowerment through entrepreneurship, selfreliance, and education.

The front features a radiant statue of Lakhpati Didi, symbolizing a successful female entrepreneur achieving financial independence and confidence. Surrounding scenes depict women engaging in economic activities like weaving, handicrafts, and agriculture,

showcasing the initiative’s transformative impact on women’s livelihood.

The tableau highlights digital literacy through women using computers and emphasizes the positive effects of women’s empowerment on children’s education. Vibrant cultural elements, traditional costumes, and rural motifs enrich the tableau.

The banner reads “Empowered Women, Prosperous Families, Strong Nation,” encapsulating the initiative’s essence in uplifting lives and strengthening the nation.

Coming to the next, the Department of Financial Services from the Ministry of Finance showcased the evolution of banking services in the country. — Agencies

Thousands of displaced Palestinians await return to their homes in Gaza

For days, they have been gathering on Rashid and Salah al-Din Streets in the heart of the Gaza Strip, after being forced out of their homes by Israeli forces during the ongoing war

GAZA: Thousands of displaced Palestinians are enduring severe hardships as they wait for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the so-called Netzarim Corridor, which splits the Gaza Strip into two halves, to return to their homes in Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip.

For days, they have been gathering on Rashid and Salah al-Din Streets in the heart of the Gaza Strip, after being forced out of their homes by Israeli forces during the ongoing genocidal war.

Many of these displaced individuals spent the night out in the open, braving the harsh cold along the coast of the Mediterranean, waiting to return to their cities and villages after being pushed south by the Israeli occupation.

The situation remains dire as Israel continues to block their return



to the northern regions, violating terms agreed upon in a ceasefire deal that entered into effect last Sunday.

Wafa correspondent reported that tens of thousands of displaced people, many of them families with young children, are anxiously awaiting the chance to go back to their homes. For many, this return would require a grueling 7-kilometer walk through rubble and destruction.

Despite knowing that their homes may have been destroyed in the Israeli onslaught, some displaced individuals are holding onto hope, bringing tents with them that they will set up over the remains of their houses.

One displaced woman, who spoke with Wafa, described how she and her family had been forced to burn wooden pieces they had used to build makeshift shelters just to stay warm through the night. With no other means of heating, they rely on these small fires for survival as they wait in uncertainty.

Many of the displaced have transported what little they can carry—blankets, clothing, and personal belongings—on vehicles and carts, all in preparation for the moment when they are finally allowed to return home. Some are determined to rebuild their lives and homes, while others are still searching for lost family members

beneath the rubble of what once were their neighborhoods.

One displaced man, Mohammad al-Kahlout, 46, shared his concern for the safety of his family as they wait to return to the northern Gaza Strip. “We want to go home, but we fear the Israeli occupation will target us again. There are no guarantees of safety on this journey.”

Another displaced man, Ismail al-Shanbari from Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, expressed his resolve to return despite the devastating losses he had endured.

“My home was destroyed at the beginning of the war,” he said. “We’re tired of this humiliation and displacement. We will return

no matter the cost—even if we are killed. Whether it’s in the north or the south, we will return to our land, even if we have to set up tents on the rubble of our homes.”

A woman named Sara Baker, who is seven months pregnant, added, “I have no idea what happened to my home in Gaza, but I will go back—even if I have to walk the entire way.”

Since the beginning of the Israeli assault on Gaza in October 2023, the situation has grown increasingly dire. By January 2025, the aggression had resulted in the killing and injuries of more than 158,000 Palestinians, with most victims being women and children. More than 14,000 people remain miss-

ing, and over 1.93 million Palestinians—85% of Gaza’s population—have been displaced due to the destruction of their homes.

The scale of the devastation is unimaginable, with more than 80% of Gaza’s infrastructure left in ruins. Around 1.6 million displaced individuals are currently sheltering in overcrowded camps and tents, struggling to survive amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Israeli occupation forces impose widespread closures in Salfit and Bethlehem

Israeli occupation forces imposed closures on multiple towns and villages in the Salfit and Bethlehem governorates in the occupied West Bank, severely disrupting movement and daily life for Palestinians.

In Salfit, local sources reported that a military checkpoint was erected near the entrance of Qarawat Bani Hassan, leading to heavy traffic congestion.

Additionally, the entrances to the town of Salfit and the villages of Bruqin, Kifl Haris, Deir Istiya, and Kafr ad-Dik were blocked with metal gates, restricting access.

Meanwhile, in Bethlehem, Israeli occupation forces closed the main entrance to the village of Al-Manshiyah late last night by locking its iron gate. This closure effectively cuts off the only route connecting residents of southern rural areas to Bethlehem city, a critical hub for services and commerce.

These closures have further restricted Palestinian movement and disrupted access to essential services, intensifying the hardships faced by affected communities. — Agencies

LEFT-WING EXTREMIST



Is Colombia seeing more war than peace?

BOGOTÁ: Since January 16, the guerilla group ELN and offshoots of the former militant organisation FARC have been fighting each other in the Catatumbo region in the northeast of Colombia near the border to Venezuela. At least 80 people have died so far in the violence.

At least 20 more people have been killed in clashes in the Amazonas region in the south of the country between rival splinter groups of FARC.

According to the Colombian military, almost 20,000 people have fled their homes for safer areas amid the extreme violence.

“They have pulled people from their houses and cruelly murdered them,” army commander General Luis Emilio Cardozo said in an internet video. “It is our job as the national army to stabilise the region.”

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called for an “immediate cessation of acts of violence against the civilian population,” said UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric. “The secretary-general is deeply concerned about the recent violence in the Catatumbo region of Colombia,” Dujarric said.

The rival left-wing extremist groups in the Catatumbo region are seeking to gain control over human trafficking, the weapons trade, illegal mining, the cultivation of drugs and the cocaine trade.

The region is seen as strategically important, as drugs can be transported out of the country from there.

Daniel Parra, a researcher for the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation in Cucuta in the northeast of Colombia, says he cannot say precisely what has triggered the current clashes

between the ELN and the FARC splinter groups.

“Some national media have cited military intelligence that everything happened after the loss of a cocaine delivery and the murder of an ELN head of finance,” he told DW. “But we know nothing for certain about why this armed confrontation broke out.”

According to Roberto Garcia Alonso, a professor for law and politics at La Sabana University, the basic reason for the present violence is clear: Drugs.

“The fight for territorial control and the drug trade, which have always been central elements in this conflict, is putting more and more pressure on this border region, which serves as a corridor for the drug trade with Venezuela,” he said.

There have been armed conflicts between leftist guerilla groups, drug gangs, right-wing paramilitaries and the army in Colombia since the 1960s, leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

Some 7 to 8 million people were displaced, and some 80,000 Colombians are classified as “missing.”

Who are the actors?

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were previously by far the biggest guerilla group in Colombia. In 2016, they signed a peace agreement with the government of the time. The FARC disbanded, but several splinter groups rejected the peace deal.

The so-called National Liberation Army (ELN) was founded in 1964. It was not involved in the peace agreement and is seen as the strongest rebel organisation still active in Colombia. — DW

IN BRATISLAVA

Slovakia’s peaceful anti-government protests against PM grow nationwide

BRATISLAVA: Late on Friday afternoon, people slowly gather at Freedom Square in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, to protest against the government of Prime Minister Robert Fico.

The atmosphere is calm. People are streaming into the square from all directions, carrying banners and the flags of Slovakia, the EU and even NATO. Their message is clear: Slovakia belongs to Europe.

This isn’t the first rally of its kind being held in Bratislava. The latest series of protests began on December 23, a day after the prime minister’s surprise trip to Russia, and have been held at regular intervals ever since.

The protesters here agree on one thing: Slovakia does not belong to Russia.

And many feel that Fico’s pre-Christmas meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow was an act of treason.

Slovakia has been a member of NATO since 2002, and joined the EU in 2004.

The people taking part in the protests in over 20 cities across the country are peacefully demanding that Slovakia remains in these international organisations and that the government stop undermining Slovakia’s international position.



Fighting for democracy — again

“I feel really disappointed by our government,” says a 47-year-old protester named Richard who has tied an EU flag around his shoulders. “When I was 12 years old, I took to the streets with my father, protesting against communism in November 1989, and here I am, fighting for democracy, once again,” he tells DW.

The crowd in the square is getting bigger by the minute. People of all ages have come and are joining in the chants of “Enough of Fico,” “We are Europe,” “Shame” and “Treason.”

Some are calling for Fico to step down as prime minister.

“I feel unhappy about what is happening in this country and the people who rule it, and I want to voice my opinion,” says 26-year-old Al-exandra. She says she was not put off by the prime minister’s talk of increased danger and unrest the previous day. “I have feared for my safety ever since Fico won the election,” she says.

Talk of an alleged coup

On Thursday, the day before demonstrations, President Peter Pellegrini convened a meeting of the state’s Security Council, claiming he had been given serious information about a threat to the state’s security.

“The establishment of our constitution is being threatened; there are groups of people who want to escalate tension within the country and attack the institutions of government,” said Pellegrini, adding that these groups are being coordinated from abroad.

Fico made very similar claims, saying that some groups were allegedly planning a coup. “It is an attempt to organise a typical coup in Slovakia so that the government falls and those who cannot get into power through democratic parliamentary elections come to power,” he said.

Coup claim roundly rejected by protesters

“It’s very difficult to react to such delusions,” said Lucia Stasselova, one of the organizers of the protest in Bratislava, ahead of Friday’s protest. “Nothing of what the prime minister or the president are saying is true.”

“It’s what all of them say,” added Marian Kulich, another of the protest’s organizers. “Listen to Erdogan in Turkey, Orban in Hungary, Irakli Kobakhidze in Georgia, Serbia, they all use the same narrative. In my opinion, Slovakia is just one of the countries that are submitting to the Moscow regime — thanks to our prime minister,” he told DW.

Both Stasselova and Kulich are members of the civic group Peace to Ukraine, which was set up shortly after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It is now also campaigning in support of democracy in Slovakia.

“We started to organize the rallies in Bratislava, and slowly, other cities began to coordinate with us. More than 20 cities and towns are currently involved. The protests in each town are organized by different people,” said Stasselova.

60,000 take part in Bratislava alone

Apart from a brief interruption due to a power outage on stage, the rally goes off smoothly and peacefully — without rioting, and certainly no attempted coup.

DW spoke with the organizers just a few hours before the pro-

test, who said they were expecting around 30,000 to take part. Most media outlets have estimated that some 60,000 joined the protest in Bratislava — four times as many as took part in the last protest two weeks ago.

But demonstrations were not just restricted to the capital; the numbers taking part in other cities also increased. In Banská Bystrica, for example, attendance on Friday was up to 10,000 from 6,000 two weeks ago.

Indeed, several media outlets estimated that a total of 100,000 people took to the streets of Slovakia’s cities in protest on Friday.

On Tuesday, Fico faced a no-confidence vote in the Slovak parliament. However, when the prime minister unexpectedly called for the session to be held in secret on the grounds that he would be sharing confidential information with the parliament, the opposition withdrew its no-confidence motion in protest.

It has said it will call a new no-confidence vote in the near future, and is now demanding another parliamentary session next week.

A ‘paranoid’ prime minister

Opposition leader Michal Šimečka, head of the Progressive Slovakia party, called the prime minister’s speech “paranoid.”

“I’m afraid that the prime minister is suffering from delusions,” he said. “He sees things that don’t exist. There’s no other explanation I can think of. So, this is my takeaway from his speech.”

Fico’s critics have said there was no genuinely secret information in the report, and some claim the SIS is being instrumentalised for political purposes. — DW



Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

Professional0

Al Mawaleh3

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL HOSON0

AL KHOD ACADEMY3

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL SEEB3

PROFESSIONAL0

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

3M3

Excellence0

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

MFA0

Al Shamali3

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

JENOVA0

EXCELLENCE2

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

ALL STAR3

SPORTA SPORT0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

Junior Star Academy0

All Star1

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL SEEB5

GHALA SCHOOL1

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL NOOR0

SPORTA SPORT1

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

FUTURE GENERATION0

SPORTA SPORT2

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL HOSON0

AL NOOR6

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

CR70

AL KHOD ACADEMY3

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL IBDA'A SCHOOL3

ALEGRIA0

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL IBDA'A SCHOOL1

PRO 114

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

MFA3

GHALA SCHOOL1

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AJIAL AL RIFAQ3

CR70

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

SEEN0

ALEGRIA3

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

PROFESSIONAL0

AL MAWALEH7

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL SEEB2

Sporta Sport0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

Jenova0

Al Muhtarif4

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

3M2

FUTURE GENERATION1

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

GHALA SCHOOL1

AL MUHTARIF4

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

MFA0

Al Muhtarif0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

Alegria0

Professional0

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

JENOVA0

Professional0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

FUTURE GENERATION1

AL SHAMALI2

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL NOOR0

MFA2

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

Professional0

Al Muhtarif3

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL KHOD ACADEMY1

EXCELLENCE0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

MFA3

AL SHAMALI2

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AJIAL AL RIFAQ0

AL NOKHBA SCHOOL0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

JUNIOR STAR ACADEMY2

3M5

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

3M2

AL SHAMALI0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

ALL STAR1

ALEGRIA1

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

EXCELLENCE2

AL SHAMALI1

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL MAWALEH0

AL SEEB1

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL SHAMALI1

AL KHOD ACADEMY1

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 1A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

MFA1

ALL STAR2

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 2B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

SPORTA SPORT3

AL SHAMALI0

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

GHALA SCHOOL1

JUNIOR STAR ACADEMY0

Group B - Muscat ... Pitch 1B - Al Seeb Stadium ...

AL KHOD ACADEMY5

FUTURE GENERATION1

Group A - Muscat ... Pitch 2A - Al Seeb Stadium ...

ALEGRIA4

ALL STAR0



11/11/2019

Mohsin Al



The playgrounds of Seeb Club saw tough competitions in round seven of the league.

Seven goals were scored by the Al Mawaleh team.

M3 team won its match VS Al Najm Al Sa'eid (5-2) while Pro

The total goals scored in Round Seven amounted to 172 goals in the matches of all 4 age

under 16 category with 15 points followed by Al Noor team with (12 points). The second group is led by Al-Falaj team with 10 points.

Team Al Mawaleh led the first group in the under 14 category with 24 points followed by Seeb

The second group is led by Al Ibda'a School team with 22 points followed by Al Jazayer Team with

pions of the governorates qualifying for the finals at a function under the patronage of Mohsin

The ceremony for the qualified teams of the academies will be held at Changan Automobile Hall.

By sponsoring OFAL, Changan Automobile aims to offer the young players and their techni-

then reinforces the support and passion for exercising the sport, which is considered the top sport, worldwide.

the company.



BRAZIL CURRENCY

Down by over 20%, the Brazilian real received the ignominious title of worst-performing major currency in 2024. The selloff has eased somewhat recently, but the country's fiscal woes still have financial markets on edge.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,553.31 points, down by 1.1% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.29% at 415.18 points. Al Suwadi Power, up 3.03%, was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 15.79%, was the top loser.

Fish landing in Oman exceeds 477,000 tonnes by end of Sept

The value of fish landed (including artisanal, commercial and coastal) by the end of September 2024 reached OMR348 million

MUSCAT: The amount of total fish landed through artisanal fishing in the Sultanate of Oman by the end of September 2024 reached 477,312 tonnes, comprising a rise by 11.6% compared to 427,589 tonnes by the end of September 2023, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The value fish landed (including artisanal, commercial and coastal) by the end of September 2024 reached OMR348 million.

Statistics indicate that the amount of fish landed through commercial fishing reached 33,688 tonnes, while fish landed through coastal fishing reached 6,358 tonnes.

The biggest volume of fish landed through artisanal fishing was

recorded in the Governorate of Al Wusta (164,816 tonnes), followed by the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah with 137,971 tonnes. The governorates of North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah recorded 61,532 tonnes, followed by the Governorate of Dhofar with 49,249 tonnes. Fish landing through artisanal fishing in the Governorate of Musandam reached 37,061 tonnes, while the figure in the Governorate of Muscat stood at 26,683 tonnes.

Small pelagic fishes constituted the highest number of fish landed through artisanal fishing by the end of September 2024 with 237,614 tonnes. The quantity of the landed large pelagic fishes through artisanal fishing reached 134,337 tonnes, while demersal fish reached 85,475 tonnes. -ONA



AUTO TECH COMPANY REPORT

India's used car market to grow 13% annually through 2030: Report

NEW DELHI: India's used car market is projected to grow from 4.6 million sales in 2023 to a whopping 10.8 million by 2030, cruising ahead with an impressive compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13 per cent, as per a report by auto tech company CARS24.

The Indian used-car market is shifting gears, the auto tech company asserted. As customer preferences change for more affordable and dependable options, the used-car market is witnessing an uptick vis-a-vis the new car market, the auto tech company said in a statement.

Redefines car ownership
Gajendra Jangid, Co-Founder of CARS24, said, "The once niche pre-owned car market has taken by storm and redefined car ownership in India. The Gear of Growth report by CARS24 reflects the changing consumer preferences, buying trends, and the evolving used-car market."

2024 used-car market trends witnessed an increase in eco-conscious buyers as EV sales increased 5X in 2024 with Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Delhi

leading the charge, the CARS24 report revealed.

Continuing the momentum from 2023, SUVs continued to dominate the market share with 16.7 per cent in 2024. Their spacious design, versatility, and premium appeal made them a favourite across both urban and rural markets, the report argued.

The Average Selling Price (ASP) of new cars continues to climb, further widening the gap between the ASP of new and used cars. New car ASPs have seen a 32 per cent surge, while used cars experienced a 24 per cent increase, CARS24 said.

Financing for new cars has seen significant growth, climbing from 60 per cent in 2010 to an impressive 84.2 per cent in 2024, highlighting the increasing consumer reliance on loans for vehicle ownership.

Similarly, the used-car financing market has also made strides, rising from 15 per cent to 23 per cent during the same period. However, this lower penetration in the used-car segment reveals a vast opportunity for financial institutions and dealerships to expand their offerings, the report said. -ANI

SOFTWARE SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY FRAMEWORK

OIC-CERT, Huawei release framework to secure software supply chains across member states

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Huawei, in collaboration with the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation-Computer Emergency Response Team (OIC-CERT) and the Oman National CERT, announced the release of the OIC-CERT Software Supply Chain Security Framework.

This framework provides crucial guidance to OIC member states on establishing robust software supply chain security management, ensuring end-to-end cybersecurity. This comes at a critical time when cybersecurity is a top priority for businesses in the region, with 55% of companies in the Middle East prioritising mitigating digital and technology risks over the next year, exceeding the global average of 53%, according to a report by PwC. Within this, cyber risks remain a significant concern, with 42% of regional businesses focusing on them.

Developed by the OIC-CERT Supply Chain Security working group, co-chaired by the Oman National CERT and Huawei, the framework addresses the growing complexity and interconnectedness of software systems and the increasing risks of supply chain attacks. It offers practical guidance for regulatory authorities in member coun-

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tries to formulate effective policies for software supply chain manufacturers and service providers.

The framework provides a comprehensive approach to software supply chain security governance, covering key areas such as supplier cybersecurity management, open-source software management, R&D and production management. It guides organizations in implementing security measures throughout the entire software lifecycle, from evaluating and selecting suppliers to securing the development and deployment processes. It also emphasizes the importance of managing open-source software components and integrating security practices into research, development, and production environments.

This holistic approach aims to mitigate risks throughout the software supply chain.

Aloysius Cheang, Chief Security Officer for Huawei in the Middle East and Central Asia, said: "Huawei is committed to collaborating with global partners to enhance cybersecurity for all. This framework represents a significant step forward in strengthening software supply chain security across the OIC member states. We believe that by working together and sharing best practices, we can create a more secure and trustworthy digital environment for everyone."

Dr. Saleh Said Al Hashmi at Oman National CERT, highlighted the significance of this framework and the value of collaboration, stating: "In today's interconnected

world, software supply chain security is paramount. This framework provides a crucial foundation for OIC member states to build resilient digital economies. Our collaboration with Huawei leverages their expertise and industry insights to develop comprehensive guidelines that address the evolving threat landscape. By adopting these recommendations, nations can effectively mitigate risks and protect critical infrastructure. We believe this joint effort will significantly enhance cybersecurity across the OIC community."

The framework's release comes at a pivotal moment, as software supply chain attacks continue to evolve and pose significant threats to organizations and nations. By prioritizing supply chain cybersecurity, OIC member states can protect their digital assets, foster trust, and enhance resilience in an increasingly interconnected world.

This initiative underscores Huawei's ongoing commitment to contributing to the development of cybersecurity standards and enhancing industry security capabilities. By collaborating with international organisations like OIC-CERT, Huawei aims to support the building of cyber resilience and contribute to a more secure and trustworthy cyberspace.

FLEET OF RELIABLE MITSUBISHI VEHICLES

Jalmood National partners with Mitsubishi for its business needs

MUSCAT: Jalmood, a 100% Omani-owned company, has placed its trust in Mitsubishi Motors Oman to support its extensive operations in the Sultanate of Oman.

To meet its diverse business needs, Jalmood has selected a fleet of reliable Mitsubishi vehicles, including the Eclipse Cross HL Plus, Montero 2.4 GLS Diesel AT, and L200 2.4 Diesel DC MT. These vehicles have been chosen for their exceptional durability, impressive performance, and proven suitability for the demanding environments in which Jalmood operates.

By choosing Mitsubishi, Jalmood ensures that its team is equipped with top-quality vehicles that can withstand the rigors of their projects while maintaining efficiency and reliability. This partnership exemplifies Jalmood's dedication to excellence and its strategic decision to align with a brand that shares its values of performance, safety, and long-term value. The selection of these



Mitsubishi vehicles highlights Jalmood's commitment to investing in high-quality resources that support their mission and enhance their operational capabilities.

Established in 2006, Jalmood has rapidly grown and flourished as a contractor in the Oil & Gas Industry, driven by the top management's unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction.

Since its inception, Jalmood Na-

tional has been registered with the Petroleum Development of Oman, the General Secretariat of the Tender Board, and the Oman Society for Petroleum Services (OPAL). The company has successfully undertaken numerous projects, including well pad construction, access road construction, road maintenance and re-sheeting, road grading, civil works, and conductor and earth hole drilling.

DRIVING FORCE

UAE strengthens its role in advancing clean energy

ABU DHABI: The UAE has solidified its global position as a driving force in the transition to clean energy through its advanced projects that enhance energy security and inspire the world in innovation and sustainability on its journey to a more prosperous future.

On the occasion of the International Day of Clean Energy, celebrated annually on 26th January, the UAE has made rapid strides in developing renewable and clean energy projects, becoming a global model in the shift towards sustainable and equitable energy for all.

In statements to the Emirates News Agency (WAM), Dr Nawal Al-Hosany, UAE's Permanent Representative to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), emphasised the success of the UAE's leadership in achieving international consensus to designate 26th January as the International Day of



Clean Energy, coinciding with the founding date of IRENA. This day underscores the importance of future energy, which protects the planet's environment and resources, stimulates sustainable development, creates jobs, and strengthens business sectors.

She added that the UAE continues to promote global investment in clean energy projects through its strategic partnerships, support-

ive platforms, and financial solutions for sustainable initiatives, particularly in climate-vulnerable and developing communities.

The UAE continues its achievements in clean energy strategic projects, with the first weeks of this year witnessing the launch of the world's first large-scale 'round the clock' gigascale project, combining solar power and battery storage in Abu Dhabi. -WAM

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Suwadi Power, up 3.03%, was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 15.79%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,553.31 points, down by 1.1% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.29% at 415.18 points. Al Suwadi Power, up 3.03%, was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 15.79%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while OQEP were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 837 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 1.58 million, with more than 9.43 million shares changing hands. Out of 55 traded securities, 6 advanced, 34 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 329K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 317K, followed by foreign investors for RO 11K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,843.47 points, down 0.76%. Prices of were up by respec-

tively. Prices of Taageer Finance, Oman & Emirates Investment, Bank Muscat, National Finance, Ominvest were down by 6.14%, 5.97%, 1.92%, 1.59%, 1.51% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,365.01 points, down 0.81%. Prices of Voltamp Energy were up by 0.42% respectively. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Oman Cables Industry, Galfar Engineering, Gulf Mushroom Products, Al Maha Ceramics were down by 15.79%, 2.81%, 2.53%, 2.45%, 1.54% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.92% before closing at 1,693.06 points. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Muscat Desalination, Renaissance Services, Al Maha Markting were up by 3.03%, 1.52%, 1.49%, 0.83%, 0.10% respectively. Prices of Barka Desalination, Abraj Energy, Oman Oil Marketing, Shell Oman Marketing, OQ Gas Networks were down by 6.25%, 5.93%, 5.00%, 3.07%, 2.96% respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,603.61	4,553.31	4,553.31	4,603.84	-50.53	-1.10
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,899.31	7,843.47	7,843.47	7,903.53	-60.06	-0.76
Industry Index	5,408.61	5,360.04	5,360.04	5,408.61	-43.60	-0.81
Services Index	1,708.39	1,692.47	1,693.06	1,708.84	-15.78	-0.92
MSX Shariah Index	421.56	414.83	415.18	420.60	-5.43	-1.29
MSX TR INDEX	6,447.35	6,376.91	6,376.91	6,447.67	-70.76	-1.10
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,974.43	8,910.99	8,910.99	8,979.22	-68.23	-0.76
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,240.25	6,184.21	6,189.95	6,240.25	-50.30	-0.81
SERVICES TR IDX	2,044.32	2,025.27	2,025.98	2,044.85	-18.88	-0.92
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	1,166.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
9,431,508	1,584,339	837	27,633,169,689	6	34	15	55

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (R)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PRE VALUE	MARKET CAP		
REGULAR MARKET																		
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	543,663	36,317	17	0.066	0.068	0.066	0.068	0.066	0.002	3.030	0.068	0.060	0.072	0.100	48,579,631		
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	204,000	13,467	10	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.100	45,217,458		
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	56,567	20,581	3	0.360	0.364	0.360	0.364	0.361	0.003	0.831	0.364	0.363	0.367	0.100	86,053,240		
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	500	198	1	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.000	0.000	0.395	0.391	0.395	0.100	130,694,720		
OM0000002274	UNITED FINANCE	129,355	7,631	3	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.100	2,010,511		
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	78,574	5,736	5	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.073	0.075	0.100	6,570,000		
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	60,400	13,580	3	0.223	0.225	0.223	0.225	0.225	0.000	0.000	0.225	0.223	0.225	0.100	146,462,452		
OM0000003026	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	1,227	301	1	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.246	0.246	-0.001	-0.407	0.245	0.240	0.245	0.100	24,500,000		
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	104,086	94,346	13	0.909	0.909	0.905	0.906	0.910	-0.004	-0.440	0.906	0.905	0.906	0.100	679,580,000		
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,799,893	252,300	62	0.140	0.141	0.140	0.140	0.141	-0.001	-0.709	0.140	0.140	0.141	0.100	926,414,478		
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	117,540	12,408	28	0.105	0.107	0.105	0.106	0.107	-0.001	-0.935	0.106	0.105	0.106	0.100	23,320,000		
OM0000004735	SEMBOOP SALALAH	43,179	4,232	7	0.089	0.089	0.088	0.088	0.089	-0.001	-1.010	0.088	0.088	0.089	0.100	93,548,051		
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	223,950	19,287	20	0.087	0.087	0.086	0.086	0.087	-0.001	-1.149	0.086	0.086	0.089	0.100	17,200,000		
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	65,820	5,522	4	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.083	0.084	-0.001	-1.190	0.083	0.080	0.086	0.100	14,525,000		
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	8,000	2,452	3	0.306	0.308	0.306	0.306	0.310	-0.004	-1.290	0.306	0.306	0.310	0.100	38,218,776		
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	6,645	2,180	5	0.329	0.329	0.327	0.327	0.332	-0.005	-1.506	0.327	0.327	0.337	0.100	218,555,494		
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	352,790	90,365	24	0.237	0.239	0.235	0.235	0.239	-0.005	-1.923	0.235	0.234	0.235	0.100	1,914,131,251		
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,305,256	174,033	122	0.134	0.135	0.131	0.131	0.135	-0.004	-2.963	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.100	567,311,734		
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	6,100	3,675	3	0.610	0.610	0.601	0.601	0.620	-0.019	-3.065	0.601	0.000	0.605	0.100	57,095,000		
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	542,163	131,494	139	0.251	0.251	0.238	0.238	0.253	-0.015	-5.929	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.100	185,307,800		
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	46,146	2,854	8	0.065	0.065	0.063	0.063	0.067	-0.004	-5.970	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.100	7,678,125		
Total	21	5,695,804	893,060	481														
Parallel Market																		
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	6,000	408	1	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.001	1.493	0.068	0.000	0.068	0.100	10,577,427		
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	67,695	32,532	12	0.480	0.488	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.002	0.417	0.482	0.482	0.482	0.100	39,238,126		
OM0000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	10,540	10,972	2	1.045	1.045	1.041	1.041	1.040	0.001	0.096	1.041	1.040	1.041	0.100	71,829,000		
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	161,700	12,196	17	0.077	0.079	0.075	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.076	0.079	0.100	6,715,000		
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	9,100	1,020	3	0.121	0.121	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.102	0.112	0.100	10,080,000		
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	1,300	250	1	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.000	0.000	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.100	8,223,854		
OM0000003265	NATIONAL DETERGENT	300	222	2	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.000	0.000	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.100	14,800,000		
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	10,748	505	2	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.045	0.047	0.100	11,750,000		
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	1,000	73	2	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.070	0.073	0.100	37,130,085		
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	3,000	307	1	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.000	0.000	0.119	0.117	0.119	0.100	70,380,889		
OM0000009908	QCBASE INDUSTRIES (SPZ)	1,277,203	141,895	53	0.112	0.112	0.111	0.111	0.112	-0.001	-0.893	0.111	0.111	0.112	0.100	384,003,484		
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	1,000	101	1	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.102	-0.001	-0.980	0.101	0.101	0.102	0.100	1,7574,000		
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	29,554	2,885	12	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.099	-0.001	-1.010	0.097	0.097	0.098	0.100	219,221,397		
OM0000001772	AL ANWAR INVESTMENT	316,409	21,321	26	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.067	0.068	-0.001	-1.471	0.067	0.070	0.070	0.100	14,216,060		
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	278	36	1	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.130	-0.002	-1.538	0.128	0.000	0.128	0.100	7,040,000		
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	28,115	3,504	3	0.125	0.125	0.124	0.124	0.126	-0.002	-1.587	0.124	0.125	0.128	0.100	71,139,331		
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	90,309	2,979	11	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.639	0.080	0.059	0.080	0.100	8,775,088		
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	1,052,895	350,358	135	0.337	0.337	0.331	0.331	0.339	-0.008	-2.360	0.331	0.331	0.331	0.100	648,000,000		
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	10,850	2,593	3	0.239	0.239	0.239	0.239	0.245	-0.006	-2.449	0.239	0.239	0.246	0.100	10,938,026		
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	42,600	13,249	1	0.311	0.311	0.311	0.311	0.319	-0.008	-2.508	0.311	0.000	0.312	0.100	49,760,000		
OM0000003531	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	364,571	28,022	24	0.077	0.078	0.076	0.077	0.079	-0.002	-2.332	0.077	0.077	0.082	0.100	15,629,956		
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	1,731	4,786	5	2.752	2.770	2.752	2.770	2.850	-0.080	-2.807	2.770	2.701	2.770	0.100	248,468,000		
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	900	679	2	0.770	0.770	0.741	0.741	0.780	-0.039	-5.000	0.741	0.721	0.855	0.100	45,404,775		
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	576	62	1	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.114	0.107	-0.007	-6.140	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.100	29,006,683		
OM0000007010	BARKA DESALINATION	22,700	2,734	3	0.121	0.121	0.120	0.120	0.128	-0.008	-6.250	0.120	0.118	0.125	0.100	9,062,640		
OM0000003910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	13,120	1,141	6	0.091	0.091	0.084	0.084	0.092	-0.008	-8.696	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.100	16,800,000		
Total	26	34,834,994	634,890	330														



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Researchers at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus found a promising therapeutic candidate that could aid in the restoration of vision in those suffering from multiple sclerosis (MS) and other neurodegenerative diseases.

The medicine, LL-341070, improves the brain's ability to repair damaged myelin—the protective sheath that surrounds nerve fibers. Myelin damage is a hallmark of disorders such as MS, as well as a normal consequence of aging, and it frequently causes visual loss, loss of motor abilities, and cognitive decline.

The research, focused on vision, demonstrated that while the brain has some ability to repair itself when myelin is damaged, the process can be slow and inefficient. Researchers observed that LL-341070 significantly accelerated the repair process and improved brain function related to vision in mice, even after severe damage.

"This research brings us closer to a world where the brain has the capacity to heal itself" said Ethan Hughes, PhD, co-lead author and associate professor in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology at the CU School of Medicine.

"By harnessing this potential, we hope to help people with diseases like MS by potentially reversing some of the damage, offering people the opportunity to regain their vision and cognitive function."

Researchers discovered that the treatment makes the repair process much more effective following serious damage, highlighting the importance of intervention with severe injury. Even partial repair of myelin was found to significantly improve vision-related brain functions.

"We've known for years that myelin plays a crucial role in brain function," said Daniel Denman, PhD, co-lead author of the study and assistant professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at the CU School of Medicine. "This study highlights the role of cortical myelin in visual function. The

drug could be a game-changer because it accelerates the brain's natural repair mechanisms."

The researchers plan to test the drug in other areas of the brain and refine the treatment, hoping to make it even more effective and eventually accessible to patients.

"This discovery is just the beginning," Hughes said. "We are optimistic that LL-341070 and similar therapies could one day provide real, tangible benefits to patients by improving overall brain function and quality of life." -ANI

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SPORTS

Liverpool cruise, Man City fight back, Arsenal dig deep in Premier League

Liverpool had few problems against a side that lost 6-0 at home to Manchester City last weekend

LONDON: Liverpool secured a comfortable 4-1 victory over relegation-threatened Ipswich Town at home, maintaining their six-point lead over Arsenal at the top of the Premier League.

Liverpool had few problems against a side that lost 6-0 at home to Manchester City last weekend and led 3-0 by halftime thanks to an 11th minute goal from Dominik Szoboszlai, who hit a low shot.

Mohamed Salah doubled Liverpool's lead with a powerful half-volley from a narrow angle, and Cody Gakpo added a third when he followed in after Szoboszlai's shot had been saved.

Gakpo scored his second of the game from Trent Alexander Arnold's cross in the 67th minute, with Jacob Greaves heading a late consolation goal.

Arsenal kept pace with Liverpool, but had to dig deep to win 1-0 away to Wolverhampton Wanderers after seeing defender Myles



Lewis-Skelly shown a direct red card for tripping Wolves' defender Matt Doherty, catching the defender with his studs as Doherty looked to launch a counter-attack.

It was 10 against 10 with 20 minutes to play when Joao Gomes was sent off for a second yellow card and Riccardo Calafiori put Arsenal in front four minutes later, after a VAR check for a possible offside.

Manchester City bounced back from Wednesday's painful Champions League defeat to Paris Saint-Germain, overcoming an early goal conceded to Chelsea to secure a

decisive 3-1 victory at home.

City coach Pep Guardiola gave debuts to two of this week's new signings with Omar Marmoush and Abdulkodir Khusanov both in his starting 11, but that looked to be a bad mistake when Khusanov gifted Chelsea a goal as his attempted back-pass allowed Noni Madueke to score after just three minutes.

City had several chances before Josko Gvardiol leveled in the 42nd minute and Erling Haaland put them ahead with an individual goal, latching onto a long clearance and curling a shot over the advancing Robert Sanchez.

Phil Foden sealed City's win after Haaland set him up to run on goal from halfway and score his side's third goal.

Bournemouth extended their unbeaten run to 10 games with a stunning 5-0 win at home over third-placed Nottingham Forest, ending Forest's eight-game unbeaten run in emphatic style.

Andoni Iraola's side continued their irrepressible football with Justin Kluivert putting them in front after nine minutes and Dango Ouattara scoring a second half hat-trick with goals after 55, 61 and 87 minutes.



Antonio Semenyo scored Bournemouth's fifth goal in injury time as Bournemouth's stunning season continues.

Winning ways

Newcastle returned to winning ways after falling behind to an early goal away to bottom of the table Southampton, who have still to take a point since the arrival of new coach Ivan Juric.

Jan Bednarek put Southampton ahead after just 10 minutes, but a poor challenge on Alexander Isak in the 26th minute allowed the Swedish striker to level from the

penalty spot and Isak put Newcastle ahead four minutes later.

Sandro Tonali made it 3-1 for Newcastle six minutes into the second half, with the visitors surviving a scare when Mateus Fernandes had what would have been Southampton's second goal ruled out after a VAR check.

Everton continue to improve under David Moyes, with Iliman Ndiay's 42nd minute penalty giving them a second win in two games as they took all three points away to Brighton, who couldn't break down their well-drilled defence. -Xinhua

GRAND SLAM

Sinner crushes Zverev to defend Australian Open title



MELBOURNE: Italian tennis star and world number one Jannik Sinner secured back-to-back Australian Open titles on Sunday, defeating Alexander Zverev in a hard-hitting title clash in Melbourne, becoming the first player from his country to secure three Grand Slam titles.

Sinner downed Zverev by 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-3 in a two-hour, 42-minute final in which he did not face even a single break point. He managed to defend the title which he had won last year. While there were moments of genius from Zverev, as he came within two points of winning the second set his wait for a major title will continue further. Zverev faces a 0-3 loss record in Grand

Slam finals. The world number two came close to becoming the fifth player from Germany to win a Grand Slam but left the court with many questions in his mind and tears in his eyes.

Sinner, after having won the Australian Open and US Open last year, is on a memorable 21-match winning streak at the hard-court Grand Slams. He is the fifth player in the Open Era to have won three successive Grand Slam titles, and the first since Novak Djokovic in 2015-16, as per ATP's official website. He restricted Zverev's attacking game and was imperious behind serve in the first set, winning 85 per cent of points behind his first delivery. -ANI

COMFORTABLE AWAY WIN

Mbappe scores hat-trick as Real Madrid extend lead at top of La Liga

MADRID: Kylian Mbappe scored a hat-trick as Real Madrid moved four points clear at the top of La Liga with a comfortable away win against bottom of the table Valladolid, while Atletico Madrid were held at home to Villarreal.

Mbappe opened the scoring after 30 minutes after exchanging passes with Jude Bellingham and scored his second of the game 10 minutes into the second half after Rodrygo drove forward and slipped the ball to the left, allowing Mbappe to cut inside and score with a right foot shot.

Real Madrid were given their 10th penalty of the season in the closing minute for a foul on Bellingham, while Valladolid defender Mario Martin was sent off, with Mbappe scoring from the spot to make it 3-0 and complete his hat-trick.

Atletico Madrid dropped two points in their title chase as they



were held to a 1-1 draw at home to fifth placed Villarreal.

Atletico coach Diego Simeone left Antoine Griezmann and Rodrigo de Paul out of his starting 11, with an eye on next week's vital Champions League away game to Salzburg and his side paid the price in a dull first half.

Neither side created much in

attack, but Villarreal took the lead from the penalty spot after Gerard Moreno was brought down by Reinildo Mandava, with Atletico's players insisting the left-back had made contact with the ball.

Moreno made no mistake from the penalty spot, although Samuel Lino equalized as he fired home after Angel Correa's shot was only

parried. Atletico were unable to take any of the chances they created in the closing half-hour.

Cedric Bakambu scored a 97th minute header to give Betis a 1-0 win away to Mallorca, who had the better of the game and the better chances until they were reduced to 10 men in the 70th minute when midfielder Omar Mascarell was shown a slightly rigorous red card.

Espanyol claimed an important point in their efforts to avoid relegation thanks to a 1-1 draw away to Sevilla, with Marash Kumbulla stabbing home for the visitors after a corner, before Loic Bade assured a point for Sevilla, curling in from outside of the area just eight minutes after seeing a goal ruled out for a prior foul.

A late free kick from Adnan Januzaj saved a point for Las Palmas and denied Osasuna their first league win in nine games. -Xinhua

T20I

Captain Jos Buttler all praise for Tilak

CHENNAI: England captain Jos Buttler gave all credit to Tilak Varma for steering India over the line while expressing his satisfaction with the debutants and the style his side played with in the second T20I.

It was a chase for the ages as

England gave the T20 World Cup champions a run for their money with an inspired bowling performance.

Even though debutant Brydon Carse almost silenced the Chepauk singlehandedly with his scorching spell, Tilak's flamboy-

ance was too much to handle for the touring party.

The Three Lions roared in patches, but Tilak's unbeaten 72-run blitzkrieg was the perfect answer for Buttler's side.

The young southpaw evaluated the permutation and combina-

tion to figure out the best course of action.

He picked his moments, chose the bowlers to target and unleashed his repertoire of shots to bring India home with a slender 2-wicket win.

-ANI

MATCH-WINNING PERFORMANCE

India captain Suryakumar lauds Tilak Varma for his sensible knock against England in Chennai

CHENNAI: India captain Suryakumar Yadav was delighted after seeing Tilak Varma take "responsibility" and deliver a match-winning performance that steered the hosts to victory.

The second T20I contest became a high-strung affair, especially when the equation came down to 20 needed in 18 balls. Tilak looked hesitant to rotate the strike when the opportunity was available in the first couple of deliveries.

But, Tilak decided to rotate the strike on the fourth delivery, leaving Bishnoi to face the final two deliveries of the over. With Brydon Carse charging down from the other end, Bishnoi appeared to be galvanised with the way Tilak was batting at the other end. He neatly

clipped it through midwicket for a four, lifting the spirits in the entire stadium.

It was a similar situation in the penultimate over, and it was Bishnoi against Liam Livingstone in the next over. On a fuller delivery, Bishnoi gave away an outside edge to find another four, eventually bringing the equation down to 6 in 6.

Tilak held his nerves to see off the game with a flashy drive, bringing India home with a two-wicket win and four balls to spare.

"Very happy with the way Tilak batted, good to see someone like him taking responsibility. Ravi Bishnoi has been putting the hard work in the nets. He wants to contribute with the bat," Suryakumar said in the post-match

presentation.

Even though things were jittery for India towards the middle phase in the second innings, the bowling performance was an all-rounded display. On a surface where 180 is expected, India restricted the Three Lions to 165/9.

When India came out to bat, the extra depth in the batting order handed the hosts a much-needed advantage to see off the game.

"A little bit of relief. The way the game was going, we felt 160 was good, but the way they bowled, was good that the game went down to the wire. We have been playing with an extra batter for the last few series. That batter gives us two-three overs," Suryakumar said.

Even in the chase, when wickets

kept falling at regular intervals, India's appetite to play with aggression remained undaunted. When the opportunity presented itself, the Indian batters went hard to stay in the chase. The small partnerships were stitched throughout the chase, taking the pressure off India's shoulders.

"The chat was to play like the last game. Good to see we are playing an aggressive brand of cricket. At the same time, the guys put their hands up and stitched the small partnerships.

The boys have taken off a lot of pressure, and the atmosphere in the dressing room is light. There will be days it won't come off, but we know what we want to do. If we are on the same page, good things will take place," he concluded. -ANI

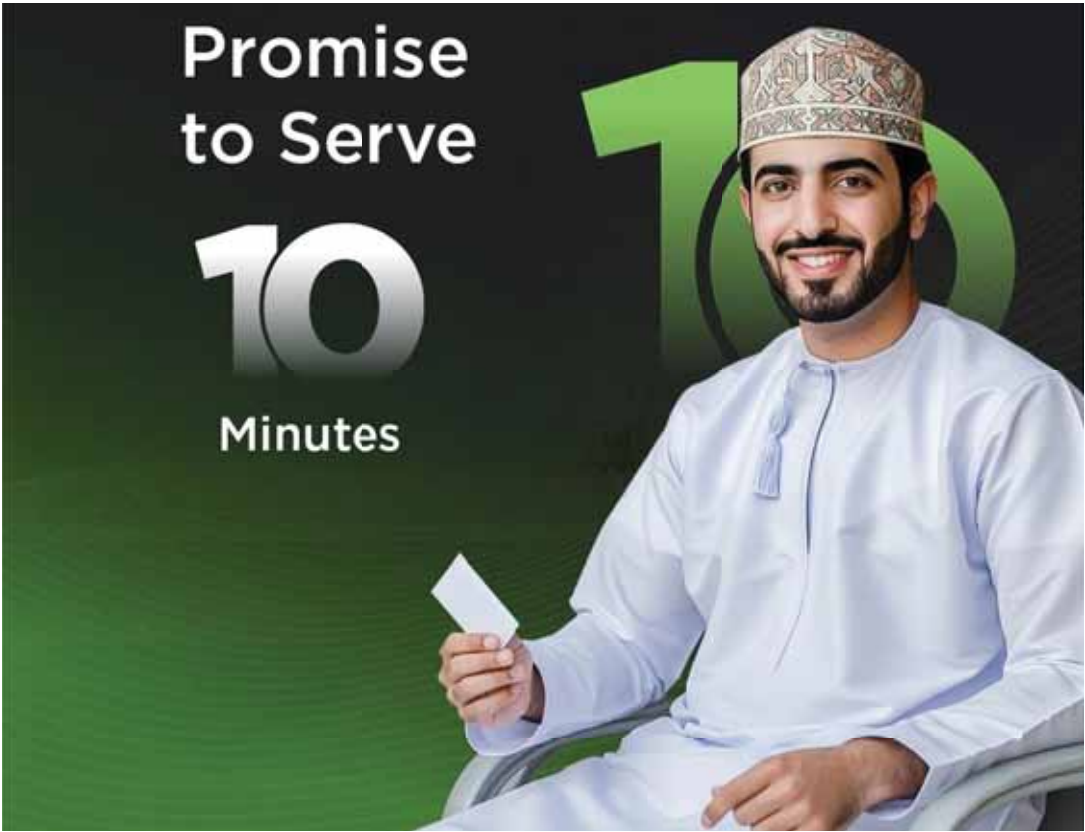


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MUSCAT: BankDhofar, the second largest bank in the Sultanate of Oman in terms of the number of branches, announced that it has achieved serving 95% of its customers in its various branches spread across the Sultanate of Oman within less than 10 minutes, which reflects BankDhofar’s continuous efforts to satisfy customers and respect their valuable time. BankDhofar’s readiness to provide its banking services to its customers from all segments of

society by reducing waiting hours in branches to no more than 10 minutes from entering the branch until the service begins indicates BankDhofar’s commitment to achieving excellence in providing banking services through its 131 branches spread across the Sultanate of Oman, which keeps the bank close to its customers, provides easy access to a comprehensive range of financial services and responds to various inquiries and comments.



This initiative does not only highlight the bank’s focus on efficiency but also its understanding of the fast-paced nature of modern life, where time is of the essence. By

minimizing wait times and streamlining processes, BankDhofar aims to provide a seamless banking experience that leaves customers feeling valued and appreciated.

The bank has developed a wide-ranging suite of products tailored to meet the diverse needs of its customer base. Whether catering to youth, ladies, priority banking

customers, or small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), BankDhofar’s relationship banking model is designed to enhance the financial well-being of its customers. Each product and service offering are carefully crafted to address the unique requirements of different customer segments, ensuring personalized solutions that contribute to their financial success. Through this step, the bank ensures that every customer interaction is marked by speed, efficiency, and a personalized approach, reinforcing BankDhofar’s position as a leading provider of exceptional financial services in Oman. By fostering loyalty and a sense of belonging, BankDhofar continues to build lasting relationships that go beyond financial transactions, supporting the growth and prosperity of the communities it serves. As a technology-driven institution, BankDhofar continues to lead in leveraging advanced technology to enhance customer experience, safety, and convenience. A prime example of this is the recent launch of “Dhofar Pay” and “Sam-sung pay”, “Apple Pay” an innovative services that allows customers to make payments by simply swiping their smartphones at POS terminals, further simplifying the banking experience.

PROMOTION

BYD’s powerful SEAL now available with exclusive 30th anniversary benefits



MUSCAT: Customers looking to make the most of the world’s leading electrifying automotive experiences in the BYD SEAL can benefit with Service 3 Years/60,000 km EV Battery Charger, First Year Insurance and Exclusive Gift Coupon from RO 200 – RO 450. The offer that began on 10th December 2024, will last until 8th February 2025. (*Conditions apply. For details please visit any BYD showroom). The BYD SEAL is a cutting-edge electric sedan that perfectly blends performance and style. Designed to appeal to the growing demand for premium electric vehicles, the BYD SEAL represents

a significant leap forward in the future of mobility. Powered by BYD’s revolutionary Blade Battery technology, the SEAL offers an impressive mileage that makes every journey truly remarkable. Its dual-motor all-wheel-drive system delivers exhilarating acceleration, achieving 0-100 km/h in just 3.8 seconds. Drawing inspiration from the ocean, the BYD SEAL’s aerodynamic design enhances performance and energy efficiency while exuding elegance. Its sleek silhouette, bold front grille and LED lighting details make appealing from every angle. The spacious interior is impressive as it is functional.

Equipped with BYD DiPilot, an advanced driver assistance system, the SEAL ensures safety and convenience with features such as lane-keeping assist, adaptive cruise control and automatic emergency braking. The intuitive infotainment system, powered by a large touchscreen interface, offers seamless connectivity with smartphones, navigation and entertainment options. Customers are invited to experience the electrifying performance and innovative features of the SEAL at the BYD showrooms at Watayah, Al Mouj and Mall of Oman. In Oman, BYD vehicles are distributed by World Auto Business.

‘SPORTS FOR ALL’ INITIATIVE

Alizz Islamic Bank partners with SQU on 10th GCC University Sports Tournament

MUSCAT: As part of the banks ‘Alizz Cares’ program and the ‘Sports for All’ initiative that strives to encourage sports and development in the community, Alizz Islamic Bank recently partnered with Sultan Qaboos University on the 10th Sports Tournament for Students of Universities and Higher Education Institutions in the GCC. The tournament, which lasted from the 18 to 24 January, included a range of sports, such as athletics, swimming, football, basketball (3x3), volleyball, badminton, and table tennis. More than 500 students from across the GCC universities and higher education institutions took part in the annual tournament. It served as an opportunity to enhance cooperation between educational and sports institutions on the one hand, and to strengthen fraternal ties between students in the Gulf countries while facilitating the exchange of experiences among them. Asaad Al Kharusi, Chief Operating Officer, Alizz Islamic Bank attended the closing ceremony, held at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher, which was under the auspices of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal



Al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat and attended dignitaries, heads of delegation and representatives of participating universities. Touching on the partnership Lina Al Abdulsalaam, Head of Marketing & Communications at Alizz Islamic Bank said “We are honoured to partner with Sultan Qaboos University on the tenth edition of this event which showcased unity and sportsmanship among all athletes. At Alizz Islamic Bank we believe in empowering the next generation through sports. We aim to inspire the youth to embrace an active lifestyle, foster teamwork and develop lead-

ership skills that will serve them in the future. This has been the driving force behind the ‘Sports for All’ initiative that was recently launched which plays an important role in aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals.” Alizz Islamic Bank has embarked on many partnerships that have a positive impact on society and with the goal being to strive to provide a better life for the people beyond their banking needs. Accompanied by a belief that investing in sustainable initiatives is the decisive element in creating a brighter future for the country and its people.

COLLABORATION

Visit Oman and Civitatis launch digital campaign to showcase unique Omani experiences



MADRID: In a significant move to inspire Spanish travellers to explore Oman, the National Travel Operator – Visit Oman and Civitatis announced the launch of a dynamic digital campaign during its participation at Fitur 2025 in Madrid, Spain. As part of an ongoing partnership, this collaboration empowers travellers worldwide to seamlessly discover and book an array of Omani tours and attractions directly through the user-friendly Civitatis platform. Recognised as a B2B2C marketplace with over 90,000 activities worldwide in Spanish and a leader in excursions and guided tours, Civitatis now features nearly 50 unique experiences from local tourism providers in Oman. Carefully curated to appeal to a global audience, with a focus on the European market and travellers from Spain, this complements and aligns with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism’s strategic efforts to promote Oman in key source markets.

“Visit Oman’s collaboration with Civitatis represents a significant step forward in fulfilling our commitment to showcasing the entire travel supply chain of Oman to a global audience and driving inbound tourism to the Sultanate of Oman through joint campaigns and bookable experiences,” said Shabib Al Maamari, Managing Director at Visit Oman. “By digitally distributing these unique experiences from local tourism providers on a global stage, we not only achieve awareness of unexplored experiences across the country, but also drive direct bookings and contribute to the growth of the tourism sector. Visit Oman serves as a vital bridge, connecting global demand – from travel trade partners and discerning travellers worldwide – with the exceptional offerings of our diverse supply of tourism providers.” “We are pleased to expand our partnership with Visit Oman and make it easier for travellers to explore this fascinating country,”

said Enrique Espinel, Chief Operating Officer at Civitatis. “By adding nearly 50 unique and culturally rich Omani experiences to our platform, we are providing travellers with more options to discover authentic adventures. This collaboration aligns with our mission to connect travellers with exceptional travel experiences worldwide, and we believe Oman has the potential to become a popular destination for our users.” The campaign highlights a variety of experiences, including: Stargazing in the mountains of Jabal Akhdar, exploring the historic Bukha Fort in Musandam, overnight desert camping in the Empty Quarter, thrilling hot air balloon rides over the A’Sharqiyah Sands, and many more memorable experiences that complete a unique travel itinerary in Oman. These carefully curated experiences showcase the diverse beauty and cultural richness of Oman, from its dramatic mountains and desert landscapes to its ancient forts and vibrant cities.

ROUND-UP

Lulu unveils ‘India Utsav’ 2025



From fresh food and grocery to lifestyle and fashion, the ‘India Utsav’ festival will offer customers a unique opportunity to experience Indian extravaganza in every section

MUSCAT: Lulu Oman launched ‘India Utsav’ 2025 to coincide with the 76th Republic Day of India as well as to highlight the close ties between Oman and India. The week-long festival, which will be held from January 26 to February 2, will showcase the rich and diverse culture, heritage, traditions and regional flavours of India. The event was inaugurated at Lulu Hypermarket at Darsait by Amit Narang, the Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, in the presence of a host of officials from the Indian community, Lulu dignitaries and customers.



From fresh food and grocery to lifestyle and fashion, the ‘India Utsav’ festival will offer customers a unique opportunity to experience Indian extravaganza in every section. There will also be amazing promotions and offers on a wide range of Indian products on display. Selected brands of home appliances and home furnishing are also featured as part of this promotion.

The festival will enable customers to savor the real taste of India’s finest dishes and enjoy a wonderful culinary experience. Shoppers can experience the genuine flavors of India in a variety of dishes that speak for themselves in terms of the authenticity and the rich history of India. There will be special stalls for customers to savor a selection of melt-in-the-mouth Indian sweets and snacks.

In his speech during the event, Amit Narang lauded Lulu’s initiative in organizing the Indian festival in Oman. “It is a very special occasion for every Indian citizen to be part of this event and Lulu has taken a major step in not only promoting Indian products in Oman but also enhancing trade and cultural relations between the two countries,” he added.

Speaking during the press conference, Shabeer K A, Regional Director – Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, stated, “We are glad to organise the ‘India Utsav 2025’ to showcase the beauty and diversity of Indian culture. It is also an opportunity for us to foster the cultural ties between Oman and India and strengthen and enrich

the longstanding bilateral relations between the two countries. We have flown in many exclusive Indian products from our network of food processing and logistics centres across India as part of the festival,” he added. The festival being held across the outlets of Lulu Hypermarkets in Oman will showcase a wide range of food products, fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as meat and seafood. Various food items, including organic fruits, vegetables, millets, and other plant-based protein products that are suitable for vegans will also be available. A huge range of authentic specialties, desserts, and street food delicacies will be offered in the hot food section. Shoppers can grab trendy fashion garments as well as a unique collection of designer wear suitable for festivals and weddings for a complete Indian culture experience. In order to enhance the overall shopping experience, customers will be offered samples of a variety of Indian cuisine throughout the festival period. The ‘India Utsav’ festival is an opportunity for Lulu customers to explore the incredible products, culinary delights, and cultural glimpses that India has to offer. India Utsav promotions will also be available online for shoppers to avail offers and special discounts on products during the festival.

RECOGNITION



ARA Petroleum wins first place for Best Practices in Health & Safety in Opal Awards

MUSCAT: ARA Petroleum (ARA), the Energy arm of The Zubair Corporation announced that it has been awarded First Place in the “Operator” category for Health & Safety at the prestigious Opal Awards for Best Practices 2024, out of more than 200 entries. This recognition underscores our ongoing commitment to safety, innovation, and operational excellence. The award highlights the success of ARA Petroleum’s Integrated QHSSE Digital AI Solution (Mfano), a platform developed in-house to enhance the management of QHSSE processes. Mfano serves as a key tool for tracking QHSSE-related activities with complete traceability and visibility across

all operations. Available on all computers and mobile phones, the platform ensures transparency and accountability, empowering every individual within the company to prioritise safety. **Culture of openness** Mfano embodies ARA’s philosophy of creating a culture of openness, where employees are not only encouraged but also have the authority to stop work and ensure that it is performed safely. This approach reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement and is central to achieving our organizational goals. The platform integrates multiple modules to streamline various

aspects of Q&HSSE management. It supports the reporting of unsafe or safe acts, incident management, and corrective actions, while also ensuring compliance through training, certifications, and the management of permits. Additionally, Mfano helps track personnel, monitor key performance indicators, manage risk assessments, and organize critical documentation, all contributing to a safer and more efficient work environment. By utilising Mfano, ARA Petroleum ensures real-time tracking and responsiveness to safety-related activities, maintaining a strong focus on creating a safe, sustainable, and compliant workplace. This award is a direct re-

flexion of ARA Petroleum’s ongoing drive for excellence, and we remain committed to our high safety standards. ARA Petroleum was formed in 2014 and is part of the wider Zubair Corporation, one of the oldest and most respected business groups from Oman who have broad interests across many sectors throughout the Middle East, Africa and beyond. Furthermore, ARA is a dynamic member of the Exploration & Production industry in Oman and Tanzania. The company is a full cycle E&P company which explores, appraises, develops and produces oil & gas resources both in Oman and internationally.

GRANDEUR

Indian School Al Maabela celebrates 76th Republic Day



MUSCAT: India’s 76th Republic day was celebrated in all its solemnity and grandeur by Indian School Al Maabela (ISAM) on 26th January. Ahmed Bin Saeed Bin Rashid Al Balushi (Member of the Shura Council, Wilayat of Seeb) attended the occasion with his benign presence as the chief guest. The programme was presided over by Shamim Hussain, President, School Management Committee and attended by Dr Saiprabha Sivakumar, Chairperson – Welfare, Health & Grievances, Dr Masood Alam, Deputy Chairperson, Purchase, Pallavi Venkat Rao, Deputy Chairperson, Sports & Co Curricular. The day began with the national anthem of Oman and India followed by the opening ceremony. The march past of the students stole the hearts of all as they displayed a true example for

synchronization and teamwork. In his speech, the Principal, Parveen Kumar read the excerpts of Droupadi Murmu, the President of India and emphasized the importance of being responsible citizens and contributing to the nation’s development. Shamim Hussain delivered the republic day message and spoke about the sanctity of the occasion. Cultural activities that followed included patriotic song and patriotic dance which inspire feelings of pride in one’s country. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks by Savita Saluja, Vice Principal, followed by the school anthem. Principal, Parveen Kumar assisted the entire event with his supervision. It was a day of rejoicing and the entire event worked with meticulous scheduling and reflected values of patriotism, sportsmanship and teamwork.

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