عُمان OMAN

LET'S TALK Times OF OMAN

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HM THE SULTAN SENDS CONDOLENCES TO NAMIBIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Nangolo Mbumba of the Republic of Namibia on the death of former president of Namibia Sam Nujoma. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt condolences to President Mbumba, the deceased's family and the people of Namibia. — ONA

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NEW INDUSTRIAL CITIES TO CREATE MORE JOBS

The aim of OPAZ is to drive economic diversification and improve the quality of industrial products

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has begun developing new industrial cities as part of its plan to increase the number of industrial establishments, localise investments in the industrial sector, boost the sector's contribution to the gross domestic product, and create more job opportunities for Omani youth.

The industrial areas currently being developed by the Authority, in collaboration with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), include Mahas Industrial City in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate, where an agreement for road and infrastructure development was signed in October last year. Additionally, Al Mudhaibi Industrial City witnessed the signing of an agreement for the localisation of its first projects in the last quarter of the previous year. The tender for the construction of basic infrastructure for the first phase of the city has been floated for specialised companies in the Sultanate of Oman and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, allowing participation through an Omani-Saudi consortium. Last year also saw the completion of the consultancy services project for the design and supervision of the construction of Thumrait Industrial City in Dhofar Governorate, as well as the completion of the consultancy services project for the master plan of Seeh Al Sarya Industrial City. >A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Health centre opened in Dhofar Governorate

1 The Ministry of Health celebrated on Monday the opening of the Al Hallaniyat Health Centre in the Wilayat of Shalim & Al Hallaniyat Islands in Dhofar Governorate under the patronage of Dr. Ahmed Mohsen Al Ghassani, Head of Dhofar Municipality. >A2

OMAN

Oman and India sign cooperation pact

2 Oman and India signed an executive programme for the management of records and archives. >A2

MARKET

Real estate trading reaches OMR3.3bn

3 The total value of real estate trading in Oman recorded a rise of 29.6%, reaching OMR3.3 billion. >B1

OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:26pm
Asr	3:40pm
Maghrib	6:05pm
Isha	7:16pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	5:25am

Health centre opened in Dhofar Governorate

The project, built at acost of over OMR1.3 million, features an examination and consultation room equipped with modern tools

SHALEEM & AL HALLANIYAT ISLANDS: The Ministry of Health celebrated on Monday the opening of the Al Hallaniyat Health Center in the Wilayat of Shalim & Al Hallaniyat Islands in Dhofar Governorate under the patronage of Dr. Ahmed Mohsen Al Ghassani, Head of Dhofar Municipality.

The total cost of the project exceeds OMR1.3 million. The Centre, which spans a total area of 8,000 square metres with a building area of 861 square metres, includes two general clinics providing primary healthcare services and medical examinations.

It also features an examination and consultation room equipped with modern tools for accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment, an observation room with a medical bed for emergency cases, as well as radiology and sterilisation rooms. In addition, a dental clinic is available for oral and dental care.

The health centre also includes a maternity unit to ensure safe care for mothers and newborns, as well as a fully equipped maternal and child health ward to support women's and children's health on the island.

Additional facilities at the centre include a medical laboratory, pharmacy, a medicine storage room, reception areas, and waiting rooms for both men and women.

It is worth mentioning that the opening of this centre comes in response to the challenges faced by the local population and to meet their daily healthcare needs.

The residents previously struggled to access integrated healthcare services due to geographical isolation, making the provision of modern medical facilities essential to ensure a better quality of life for the community.

This move comes in line with the government's commitment to providing healthcare services across all parts of Oman. -ONA

EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME

Oman and India sign cooperation pact for archives

NEW DELHI: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA), signed with the National Archives of India in New Delhi, Republic of India on Monday, an executive programme for cooperation in the field of historical documentation and management of records and archives.

Documents and manuscripts

The programme was signed by Dr. Hamad bin Mohammed Al Dhoyani, NRAA Chairman and by Arun Singhal, Director General of the National Archives of India. The executive programme includes a set of cooperation items aimed at promoting cooperation in the field of copying documents, printing manuscripts and books and exchanging them, preserving and maintaining documentary documents and related technologies, in addition to cooperation in the field of publishing documentary, cultural, literary and historical publications.

The programme signing ceremony was attended by Issa bin Saleh Al Shaibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of India. -ONA

"BE WITH US FOR THEM"

Ministry celebrates graduation of 60 people with disabilities

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development on Monday held a ceremony to celebrate the graduation of 60 people with disabilities who comprised the second batch of a training programme carried out in implementation of an initiative themed "Be with Us for Them".

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, who delivered a statement in which she valued the role and contribution of the private sector, companies and government institutions that took the initiative, aimed to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities after they complete the training programme.

The initiative included training on customer service, office management, document printing and copying and electronic archiving.

The initiative included training and rehabilitation for handicapped people afflicted with mental, motor and hearing disabilities.

Twenty-one of the disabled received training at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in the Wilayat of Sohar in the Governorate of North Al Batinah, while 39 of them received training at Mohammed Al Barwani Training Institute in Al Athaiba, Governorate of Muscat.

The initiative, which stems from partnership between the Ministry of Social Development and the Specialized Human Development Centre, constitutes a step forward in the realization of the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The initiative focuses on engaging the main sectors in Oman to shoulder efforts of social responsibility, empower people with disabilities and utilise innovative ideas of human resources in general.

The initiative ("Be with Us for Them") began in September 2022. It has so far generated 57 direct employment opportunities for the disabled and offered on-the-job training for the segment through the participation of 13 private sector establishments.

The initiative envisages the occupational empowerment of 500 disabled people by 2027. -ONA

FUSION OF DANCE, MUSIC

Audiences hail 1001 Nights performance at ROHM

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Primorsky Stage of the Mariinsky Ballet in Vladivostok delivered a stunning performance of 1001 Nights at the Royal Opera House Muscat, captivating the audience with a spectacular fusion of dance, music, and storytelling.

The performance was met with overwhelming applause, as the audience marvelled at the exquisite choreography and the vibrant depiction of timeless tales.

Director General Umberto Fanni expressed his delight after the performance, stating, "It is an absolute honour to host such a magnificent company here at the Royal Opera House Muscat.

Seeing so many people come together to experience the magic of 1001 Nights is truly a pleasure, and we are proud to have brought this spectacular production to life on our stage.

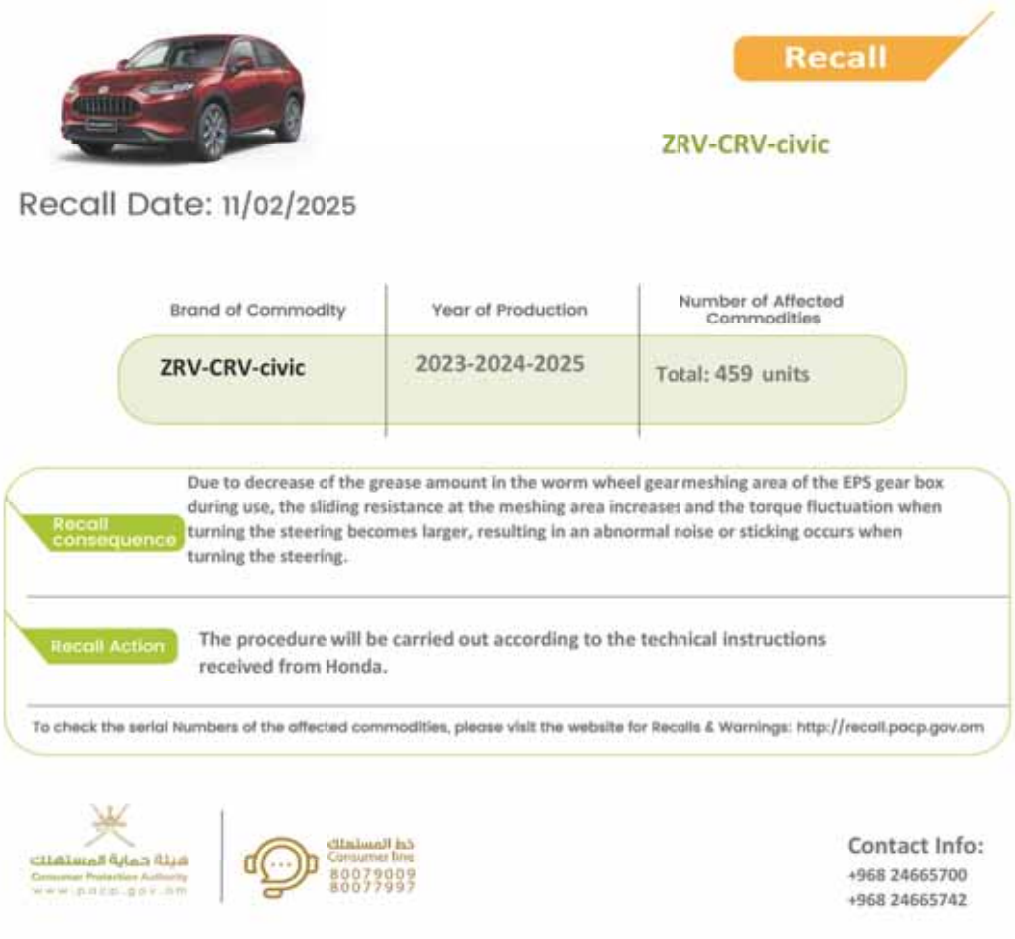
It's a perfect example of the power of art to connect, inspire, and move audiences."

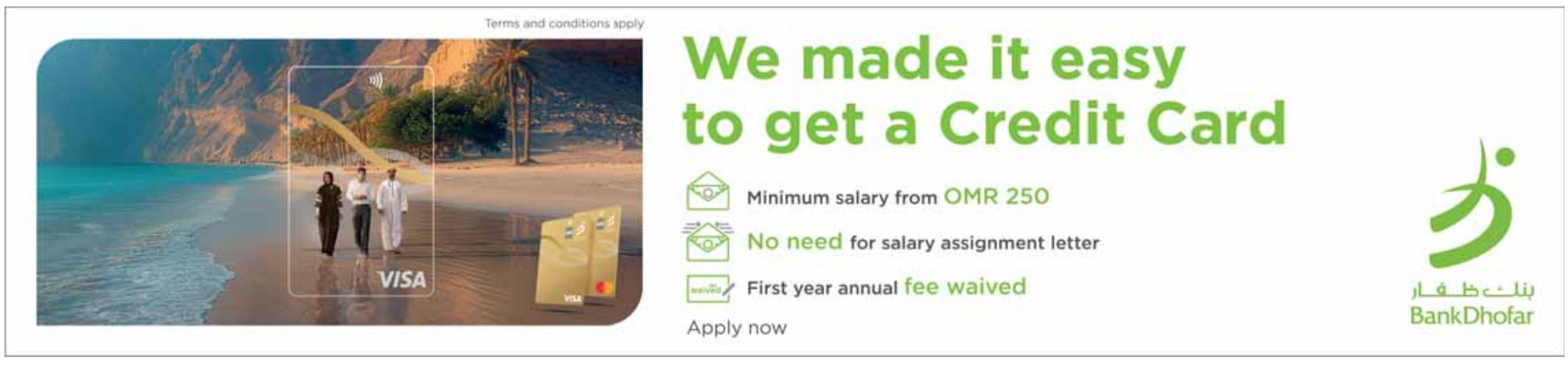
February continued at the opera house with the Emerging Talents initiative which saw the world-famous baritone Thomas Hampson delivering masterclasses to young musicians in Muscat, performing a lunchtime concert at the Opera Galleria, and a final formal evening concert at the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts on Sunday, 9 February with the Muscat Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Opera Choir Group.

Two further concerts are yet to come in this busy and spectacular month. On Thursday, 13 February, the annual Pipe Organ Concert will mean a packed auditorium once again.

With acclaimed organist Claudio Astronio, the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra, Gianluca Marciano on the podium, the children's choir of Piccolo Cantori di Torino, and the choirs of Cheltenham Muscat and Downe House Muscat Schools, this will be a rich and enthralling concert. Tickets are available via the website.

To close the month on 15 and 20 February, two unique concerts celebrating the legendary Arab musician, Mohammed Abdul Wahab, will take place alongside a programme of exciting outreach events, talks, lectures and a wonderful exhibition. A full schedule of these activities can be found on the website.





Officials review local content achievements

More than 300 participants representing 50 government departments took part in the meeting

MUSCAT: The National Office for Local Content held a meeting at the Secretariat General of the Tender Board on Monday to introduce indicators of local content within the context of the institutional excellence concept.

More than 300 participants representing 50 government departments took part in the meeting.

The meeting outlined three main objectives: to enhance the performance of local content application governance; to establish a comprehensive regulatory system to monitor adherence to local content policies; and to identify opportunities for improvement in a manner that contributes to the realisation of the strategic goals of "supporting the national economy" and "enhancing the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs)".

The organisers reviewed the local content achievements that have been made so far. Then, they identified the following:

- The mechanisms of applying indicators and methods and measuring their performance.
- The mechanism of applying local content standards to government projects, purchases and contracts.
- The mechanism of measuring local content performance according to specific indicators based on institutional excellence.

The meeting enabled the participants to learn about the stages of local content development—right from the stage of planning, through the stages of follow-up and to the stage of evaluation of performance.

The meeting also stressed the need to apply the "criteria of tender documents" to bids for projects/purchases/contracts, and to assess competitors according to the local content plans that they submit in their bid.

Local content indicators

The participants in the meeting also learned about the local content indicators, which cover three main areas: the "development project", the "operational contract" and the "government unit and its purchases".

Each area includes three main elements: developing employment opportunities for citizens, enhancing the use of local goods and services, and supporting small enterprises and employers.

The abovementioned areas comprise 11 sub-indicators that seek to measure the performance of government units' implementation of local content policies, as well as the extent to which they work towards the enhancement of local content in their purchases, contracts and projects—with the prime objective of maximizing the local return from government spending. -ONA

IRAN, VATICAN

HM sends greetings

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian of the Islamic Republic of Iran on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to President Pezeshkian to realise aspirations of growth, prosperity and stability for the people of Iran. His Majesty also wished the relations of cooperation between the two countries further progress. His Majesty the Sultan has also sent a similar cable of greetings to Pope Francis, Head of State of Vatican City, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to Pope Francis and the people of the Vatican, wishing further welfare and prosperity for them. -ONA

ENDANGERED CREATURE

Efforts to protect Arabian Leopard bear fruit

MUSCAT: Represented by the Environment Authority (EA), the Sultanate of Oman marked the "International Day of the Arabian Leopard", which falls on 10 February every year.

The event seeks to raise public awareness about the importance of the Arabian Leopard, considered a "critically endangered creature", according to the classification of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It also aims to enhance efforts to protect biodiversity and wildlife.

Dr. Mohammed bin Mahad Al Maashani, from the Environment Authority, said that, thanks to the Arabian leopard project in the mountains of Dhofar Governorate, efforts made to protect the species achieved remarkable progress evidenced by new births of leopards in the wild.

These new births instill hope for sustained presence of the Arabian leopard in open landscape and contribute to maintaining the ecological balance in the region, he added.

Al Maashani explained that the Arabian leopard, scientifically known as "Panthera pardusnimr", is one of the smallest and rarest species of leopard. Studies showed that the Arabian leopard suffers the loss of its natural habitat and a decline in the volume of prey, in addition to other threats like illegal trafficking. He said that Oman serves as one of few places where this species still survives, and that the Environment Authority is keeping track of the Arabian leopard in several sites in the Dhofar Mountains. -ONA

COOPERATION

Sheikh Khalifa meets Canadian official

MUSCAT: Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs received yesterday Dr. Martin Larose, Director General of the Middle East Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

The two sides reviewed aspects of cooperation between the two countries and means of promoting them in diverse fields in a manner that achieves mutual benefit. They also exchanged viewpoints on regional issues and latest developments at the Middle East. -ONA

RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Over 150,000 flock to Sinaw festival in North Al Sharqiyah

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The first "Sinaw is our Destination" festival in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate proved a resounding success, drawing over 150,000 visitors during its seven-day run from February 2 to 8.

The festival, organised by the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, attracted significant interest from both domestic and international tourists.

Badr bin Ahmed Al Habsi, Director of the Events and Awareness Department in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, stated that the festival, held for the first time in the Wilayat of Sinaw, featured a diverse programme of cultural, entertainment, social, and heritage events.

Highlights included a poetry evening featuring Omani and UAE poets, a captivating chanting evening with Qatari participation, camel racing competitions, the "Sword of the Governorate" competition, and Ardha run activities.

The festival also included a scientific symposium on animal wealth in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, accompanied by the "Calling" event, which provided a platform for local community members to showcase their knowledge of animal husbandry under the guidance of the General Directorate of Agriculture and Water Resources in North Al Sharqiyah.

The festival featured a variety of accompanying exhibitions, including heritage showcases, agricultural displays, and a dedicated space for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and productive families to showcase their products and services.

A vibrant food court offered a diverse range of Omani and popular cuisines, while Omani singing groups entertained visitors throughout the festival.

Al Habsi emphasised that North Al Sharqiyah Governorate hosted several successful festivals during the winter season.

These events, including the "Bidya Carnival" (120,000 visitors), the "Water Events" Festival in Wadi Bani Khalid (50,000 visitors), the "Zad Al Rakeb" Festival in Ibra (40,000 visitors), and the ongoing "Rahala" events in Al Qabil (approximately 100,000 visitors), have collectively attracted over 450,000 visitors.

These festivals have significantly contributed to enhancing domestic tourism, boosting the local economy through increased income for businesses and creating temporary job opportunities.

Additionally, they have played a crucial role in supporting SMEs and productive families by providing them with a platform to showcase their products and services to a wider audience.

64 teams to play in Bima Oman Football Academy League finals

A total of 43 matches are scheduled to be played in South Al Batinah Governorate to decide the finalists

MUSCAT: A total of 64 teams will qualify for the finals of the Bima Oman Football Academy League, scheduled to be held in Muscat in April.

The decision to expand the finals to a whopping number of 64 teams was taken by the organising committee recently.

The committee's meeting was chaired by Fadi Kattar, with the presence of Wa'eil El Sisi, technical expert at the Oman Football Association (OFA); Salim Al Habsi, Vice Chairman of the Organising Committee; Nabil Abu Fakher, Director of the league; and Manie Al Sulti, Chairman of the Volunteers Team.

The committee reaffirmed the qualification process of the 64 teams for the finals, ensuring representation from all 10 governorates.

The committee said that one team per age group from Al Wusta, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Buraimi, Al Dhahirah, North Al Sharqiyah, and South Al Sharqiyah will gain a spot in the finals while there will be two teams for each age group from North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, and Dhofar.

Muscat Governorate will send three teams in each age group into the finals.

The draw ceremony for the finals is scheduled for April 2, a week before the finals start.

The committee also finalised arrangements for electronic player registration and announced March 20 will be the deadline for submitting the team lists.

El Sisi, who is also chairman of the scouts committee, praised the league's progress, calling it a successful model for age-group championships in Oman.

He emphasised that the Oman Football Association views the Bima Oman League as a distinct platform for identifying talented players, with the Scouts Committee keen to spot and discover promising young footballers.

Meanwhile, Bahla Academy from Al Dakhiliyah qualified for the finals after defeating Samail Academy 2-1 in the under-14 category.

30 teams in action in South Al Batinah Governorate

Meanwhile, the league's matches in South Al Batinah Governorate kicked off at Al Sawadi playground, with 30 teams competing over three days.

A total of 43 matches will determine the qualifying teams for the next stage.

Results summary: Under-16 category: Majd Academy lead Group 1 with 6 points, followed by Al Salam Academy with 3 points.

In Group 2, Seham Academy and Al Arabi Academy are tied with 3 points each.

Under-14 category: Al Fahood, Al Arabi, and Abu Turki each have 3 points in Group 1.

Majd Academy top Group 2 with 3 points, followed by Al Seham and Al Yarmouk, both with 1 point each.

Under-12 category: Al Mustaqbal (Future) and Al Salam lead Group 1 with 7 points each.

In Group 2, Al Arabi, Tamayouz, and Abu Turki are tied with 7 points each.

Under-10 category: Al Yarmouk lead Group 1 with 9 points, followed by Majd Academy with 3 points. Smart Academy withdrew from the competition.

Tamkeen Academy top Group 2 with 6 points, followed by Al Fahood Academy with 5 points.

Gaudu wins Stage 3 of Tour of Oman, takes overall lead

French rider Gaudu narrowly defeated reigning champion Adam Yates (UAE Team Emirates XRG) by just one second

Times News Service

MUSCAT: David Gaudu of Groupama–FDJ claimed victory in Stage 3 of the 14th edition of the Tour of Oman on Monday, winning the challenging summit finish at Eastern Mountain set beneath the towering Jabal Shams, Oman's highest peak.

French rider Gaudu narrowly defeated reigning champion Adam Yates (UAE Team Emirates XRG) by just one second, securing his first win of the season and taking the red leader's jersey from Louis Vervaeke (Soudal–Quick-Step).

The 180.8-kilometre stage saw Gaudu outlast Yates in a thrilling sprint, with Damien Howson (Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team) finishing third, five seconds behind.

Gaudu now leads the overall classification by 6 seconds over Yates, with 12 seconds on Howson heading into the final stages of the race.

Stage 3 saw riders tackling the first of two summit finishes as it tested the climbers to their limits, with a grueling ascent to Eastern Mountain (1,016 metres above sea level, masl).

The stage unfolded under the hot, oppressive heat of Fanja as the peloton rolled out at 10:34 am, with 117 riders still in the race.

Six men initially broke away from the pack, including Nicolas Vinokourov (XDS Astana), Rayan Boulahoite (TotalEnergies), Nur Amirull Mazuki (Terengganu), Andreas Miltiadis (Roojai Insurance), and Omani national team members Said Al Rahbi and Mohamed Al Wahibi.

Al Wahibi, however, was forced to abandon the breakaway attempt early on due to a puncture at the 27 km mark, leaving his companions to continue without him.

Despite their efforts, the breakaway was not allowed to build a significant lead, as the peloton remained vigilant.

Soudal–Quick-Step, with Louis Vervaeke at the helm, quickly took control of the chase, keeping the gap from growing beyond 3 minutes. UAE Team Emirates XRG soon joined the effort, working to protect the interests of Yates, the reigning champion and hot favourite for a back-to-back win.

As the race pressed on, the breakaway group began to splinter. Al Rahbi, Miltiadis, and Mazuki each struggled and were eventually dropped from the front group, leaving just Vinokourov and Boulahoite to carry on. The two men maintained a 2-minute lead as they passed through the first intermediate sprint at Birkat Al Mouz, with Vinokourov taking top points and Kevin Vermaerke (Picnic PostNL) leading the peloton across the line for a bonus second.

By the time the breakaway reached the final climb to Eastern Mountain, Vinokourov had managed to gap Boulahoite, taking a 50-second lead into the base of the climb. The pack, however, was closing in quickly, and at the 2.7 km mark, Vinokourov was caught by the main peloton, which was now under the control of Groupama–FDJ.

With the climb now fully underway, Clément Braz Afonso of Groupama–FDJ played a crucial role in setting up his leader, Gaudu, for an attack just under the red kite.

In a thrilling sequence of attacks, Gaudu and Yates exchanged moves, with Gaudu unable to shake off the British rider for much of the climb. However, as the final few hundred metres approached, Gaudu found an extra burst of speed, edging out Yates in a fiercely contested sprint to the line.

Gaudu's victory also meant that he wrested the red jersey from Vervaeke, who had been dropped from the lead group with just 3 km remaining. The Belgian had been instrumental in helping his teammate Valentin Paret-Peintre, who finished fourth, 13 seconds behind Gaudu.

INDUSTRIAL CITIES

SEZAD is one of the key industrial investment hubs

< FROM A1

Furthermore, the consultancy services contract for designing the master plan and detailed design of Madha Industrial City (Seih Al Wasat) was awarded. The tender for consultancy services for the design and supervision of Al Suwaiq Industrial City in Al Batinah North Governorate has also been floated, while procedures are underway to issue the consultancy services tender for Al Wadi Al Kabir Industrial City in Muscat Governorate. Additionally, coordination is ongoing with the authorities concerned to allocate land for Shinas Industrial City in Al Batinah North Governorate.

The development of new industrial cities comes amid significant activity in special economic zones and free zones, which saw the number of industrial licenses rise to 183 by the end of 2024 across various regions of the Sultanate of Oman. Industrial cities accounted for the largest share of this growth, with 125 licenses issued, representing 68 per cent of the total licenses across all zones supervised by the Authority.

This growth reflects the increasing attention given to the industrial sector in Oman and the incentives provided by OPAZ to encourage investment in the sector.

The special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities under the Authority's supervision offer numerous investment opportunities that support industrial development and contribute to achieving the objectives of the Industrial Strategy 2040.

This strategy, approved by the Council of Ministers last year, aims to drive economic diversification, enhance the quality of Omani industrial products, and establish a modern manufacturing base driven by technology.

The zones under the Authority's supervision are well-known for their supportive infrastructure for the industrial sector, including investment-ready land, diverse spaces accommodating heavy, medium, and light industries, and essential infrastructure.

Many of these zones also have access to natural gas, investment incentives, tax and customs exemptions, and other facilities. Additionally, they are well connected to a network of ports and airports, facilitating the export of products and the import of raw materials.

In recent years, industrial investment in special economic zones, free zones and industrial cities has grown significantly, positively impacting the national economy by increasing the local added value of domestic industries and creating more job opportunities for Omani youth in the industrial sector.

OPAZ focuses on increasing industrial sector investments to enhance the added value of local industries and utilise domestic raw materials in establishing new investment projects that generate more job opportunities for young Omanis.

The Authority also emphasizes encouraging innovation in the industrial sector, integrating technology into various industries, and ensuring the sustainability of the sector by preserving the environment and reducing emissions.

Over the years, the economic and free zones, along with industrial cities, have made significant efforts to diversify their industrial base, resulting in an increase in the number of industrial establishments.

Currently, 2,012 manufacturing establishments operate across various zones under the Authority's supervision, covering a wide range of industries, including food production, bus manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, veterinary products, textiles, ceramics, construction materials, petrochemicals, iron and metal industries, plastics, packaging, water production, and more.

Micro-enterprises make up the largest share, accounting for 65 per cent of these establishments. These industries collectively employ over 42,000 Omani and expatriate workers, with Omanisation reaching 24 per cent of the total workforce in the sector.

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) is one of the key industrial investment hubs, hosting the Duqm Refinery, the crude oil storage terminal, and facilities supporting the growth of green industries and fisheries-based industries.

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) provides numerous investment opportunities in the industrial sector across all its industrial cities. Over the past years, Madayn has successfully attracted investments in building materials, food industries, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and metal and plastic manufacturing.

In Al Mazunah Free Zone, the import and export sector is one of the most prominent investment areas, benefiting from its geographical proximity to the Republic of Yemen. In recent years, investors have increasingly focused on food industries, water production, packaging, and other industries. -ONA

MUSCAT GOVERNORATE

Training on 'Wosool' platform

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Within its continuous efforts to promote digital transformation, Muscat Governorate, through its documents department, conducted a training workshop on the implementation of the electronic document management platform 'Wosool' on Monday.

This workshop introduces the employees of reconciliation and settlement sections to the procedures and functions that electronic document management requires.

The workshop included an explanation of the 'Wosool' platform, its advantages, and a practical application to use the main interface such as correspondence management, personal profile, E-signature, and the document management system.

The participants were trained on creating files, uploading and preparing internal memos, forwarding and comments procedures, and tracking and restoring of sent items.

It is part of Muscat Governorate's continuous efforts to implement digital transformation, enhance the efficiency of administrative work and ensure the security and privacy of government documents. Muscat Governorate is among the first government institutions to implement the 'Wosool' platform for electronic documents' management.

Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defence invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in the following Tender:

Subject	Tender number	Last date for Inquiries	Last date to submit the tender	Tender documnet price
Supply of Drugs items blanket purchase agreement for the period 1 year for armed forces hospital and medical centres	06/2025	10/03/2025	17/03/2025	175 OMR

- Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs. on the working days
- Payment of Tender documents to be made by using of any Visa Electron Cards or "Visa credit" Cards or through Smart Card issued from all the banks are operated in Oman.

OMAN

Shura Bureau reviews ministerial responses and committee reports

The Council of Ministers' response concerning the council's proposal to delineate employment pathways within the security and safety sector was also reviewed

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Shura Bureau convened on Monday to deliberate on a series of ministerial responses and committee reports.

Among these was the report prepared by the team responsible for the discussion session held with the Minister of Labour concerning employment initiatives. This report incorporated pivotal recommendations emerging from the dialogue, which the Shura Bureau resolved to submit to the Council of Ministers in accordance with the Law of Majlis Oman.

Additionally, the meeting examined the report submitted by the Health and Social Committee regarding the proposed draft law aimed at combating tobacco and its derivatives. The report delineated the rationale underlying the proposal, its principal provisions, and its ramifications for extant legislation.

Moreover, it encompassed an overview of the review process and the legal assessment provided by the Legislative and Legal Committee. Consequently, the Shura Bureau resolved to schedule the proposed draft law for consideration at an upcoming council session.

During its sixth regular meeting of the second annual session (2023–2027) of the tenth term, presided over by Khalid Hilal Al-Ma'awali, Speaker of the Shura Bureau, and attended by Bureau members, the Assembly reviewed the Council of Ministers' response concerning the council's proposal to delineate employment pathways within the security and safety sector.

The response affirmed that the Security and Safety Services Institution is undertaking an expansion of its operations to foster employment opportunities for job seekers, augment security services, and implement innovative solutions aligned with both current and prospective needs. In addition, a comprehensive report detailing the sectors and activities presently encompassed as well as those targeted for future expansion was submitted.

Governmental responses

Furthermore, the meeting scrutinised several governmental responses and communications, including one from His Excellency the Minister of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology regarding an inquiry pertaining to the establishment of a commercial port in Sur Industrial City (Madayn).

The ministerial response clarified that a government negotiation team has been constituted to review the feasibility study and the proposed model put forward by Sur Port Company, while the ministry is presently assessing alternative solutions.

In addition, the meeting assessed a response from His Excellency the Minister of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources concerning the ministry's initiative to eradicate the Dubas bug. The Shura Bureau further deliberated on a communication from His Excellency the Minister of Education regarding curriculum development. This response affirmed the ministry's ongoing endeavors to update educational curricula in alignment with prevailing educational objectives and market requirements, and it underscored recent modifications to the national assessment system—spanning all subjects and educational levels—to conform with contemporary pedagogical theories.

Moreover, the meeting examined a response from His Excellency the Minister of Labour pertaining to Omanisation rates in leadership and supervisory positions within the private sector. This response provided a detailed breakdown of leadership and supervisory roles across various private sector industries, accompanied by corresponding Omanisation rates derived from data furnished by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

In conclusion, the Shura Bureau reviewed several oversight instruments submitted by its members for monitoring the performance of diverse governmental institutions and resolved to refer these instruments to the pertinent authorities for further action.

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FOR FURTHER LEGISLATIVE PROCESSING

Shura refers telecom and IT regulation law to the State Council

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Shura Council, during its fifth regular sitting of the second annual session (2024–2025) of the tenth term (2023–2027), referred the Telecommunications and Information Technology Regulation Law to the State Council for further legislative processing.

The session, chaired by Khalid Hilal Al Ma'awali, Chairman of the Shura Council, was attended by Their Excellencies the Council members and Ahmed Mohammed Al Nadabi, Secretary-General of the Council.

The decision aligns with Article 49 of the Oman Council Law, which mandates that government-drafted laws be reviewed and approved by the Shura Council within three months before being referred to the State Council for further deliberation.

During the session, Dr. Hamoud Ahmed Al Yahyai, Chairman of the Public Services and Utilities Committee, presented the committee's report on the proposed law, highlighting its importance in modernising Oman's regulatory framework for the telecommunications and IT sector. The law clearly defines the roles of the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology in policy-making and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority as the sector's regulatory body.

It aims to establish a competitive and investment-friendly environment while ensuring quality service delivery and consumer protection.

As part of its review, the committee engaged representatives from Oman's telecom companies to assess industry challenges under the current legal framework, in addition to consulting government entities and sector experts.

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OMANI STARTUPS

Omani tech firms sign agreements worth over $10mn in Riyadh

RIYADH: On the second day of Oman's participation in LEAP 2025, which is being held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from February 9 to 12, nine cooperation agreements were signed between Omani startup tech companies and international firms, with a total value exceeding $10 million.

The agreements were signed at the Oman Pavilion in the presence of Dr. Ali Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology at the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology, along with several CEOs from participating public and private sector companies, as well as representatives from Omani and Saudi firms involved in the agreements.

Global Semiconductor & Microelectronics (GSME), a company established in Oman through an international partnership, signed an agreement worth approximately $10 million with the Saudi company e-Photonics. The agreement aims to foster cooperation, knowledge exchange, research, and services in semiconductors, electronics, and 3D computer vision solutions.

The Omani company DataMining signed an agreement worth approximately $1 million with the Saudi company AlJazeera

Falcons. The agreement focuses on software development, artificial intelligence, and the production of electronic products for the Saudi market.

In a move reflecting the expansion of Omani tech startups into international markets, several companies under the Oman Information and Communications Technology Group (ITHCA Group) successfully signed agreements with international firms.

Mubasher, a company specializing in digital advertising screen solutions, signed an agreement worth approximately $1 million with the Saudi company OOMCO.

Meanwhile, Osos, one of ITHCA Group's companies, signed six agreements with international companies in the fields of software solutions, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, applications, and technical support. -ONA

Pact signed for Gaza damage assessment, temporary shelters

The memorandum of understanding, valued at $80mn for the first phase, will enhance the Government's efforts on the ground to provide an emergency response to meet the urgent needs of the Palestinian people

GAZA: Under the patronage and presence of Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed today, Monday, at the Prime Minister's Office in Ramallah between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Arab and International Organization to Construct in Palestine (AIOCP), valued at $80 million for the first phase, under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, and the Arab and Islamic Funds Authority.

Since the ceasefire, this is the first intervention that is aimed at assessing the damage, removing debris from vital areas in the Gaza Strip, dealing with explosive ordnance and remnants of war, and establishing a number of temporary shelters, including the provision of necessary infrastructure and basic services.

The MoU was signed by Minister of Public Works and Housing, Ahed Bseiso, the UNDP UNDP Special Representative, Sarah Paul, and the legal advisor for the Arab and International Organisation to Construct in Palestine (AIOCP), Mohammad Abu Zeid, on behalf of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of AIOCP, former Jordanian Prime Minister Taher al-Masri, who attended the agreement via remote communication. The event was also attended by Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Wael Zakout, Minister of Social Development and Relief, Samah Hamad, and the Prime Minister's Advisor for Arab and Islamic Funds, Nasser Qatami.

Prime Minister Mustafa emphasised that this MoU will enhance the Government's efforts on the ground to provide an emergency response to meet the urgent needs of the Palestinian people. It is part of the ongoing work by the Government through the Government Operations Room, which involves over 30 ministries and government agencies, alongside international, humanitarian and relief partners.

Mustafa said, "The Palestinian Government has put in place a six-month programme to address the situation on the ground, along with a three-year plan to move from relief to economic revitalisation and early recovery, all the way to full-scale reconstruction over the next ten years, as part of a programme coordinated with the World Bank, the European Union, and the United Nations."

"This programme is part of our comprehensive plan and is significant because it marks the first large-scale intervention launched to directly implement a series of important interventions related to the continued existence of life and the restoration of vitality to Gaza, particularly in terms of temporary housing, rubble removal, and restoring basic services," he added.

The Prime Minister continued, "This programme we signed today includes a commitment of $80 million to finance several vital programs that will be carried out. We are taking real, practical steps on the ground from day one, supported by our Arab brothers and our colleagues at the UN through UNDP."

On behalf of the Palestinian people and President Mahmoud Abbas, the Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to all parties contributing to this programme, particularly to Mr. Taher al-Masri for his unwavering support, dedication, and commitment to the Palestinian cause, and for his readiness to do everything he can to help Palestine, in addition to UNDP and AIOCP. – WAFA

SPORTS

Namibia outplay Oman in a low-scoring match

Host nation's four-match winning streak at home came to an end in WCL 2 as they fell short at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Monday

MUSCAT: Oman's four-match winning streak at home in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League (WCL) 2 came to a halt on Monday as Namibia defeated the hosts by 23 runs in a low-scoring thriller at the Oman Cricket Academy ground Al Amerat.

This was Oman's first defeat in five WCL2 games at home, leaving them with 14 points from 13 matches, while Namibia's win closed the gap with Oman to just two points, with 12 points from 14 matches.

Oman's chase of Namibia's modest score of 169 faltered early with the dismissal of opener Aamir Kaleem (15). Skipper Jatinder Singh (25) and Ashish Odedara (11) couldn't build a lasting partnership either, leaving Oman at 58/4 with Wasim Ali out for a duck.

ODI debutant Hashir Dafedar (15) and experienced Sufyan Mehmood (11) were then dismissed in quick succession by Gerhard Erasmus, and the Omani middle order found it difficult to cope with the pressure from Namibia's spin attack.

Vinayak Shukla (17), one of the three ODI debutants of Oman, along with Hassnain Shah (16*) did hold on to offer some resistance along with the last batter, Shakeel Ahmed (13) but the hosts were eventually bowled out for 146 in 37.2 overs to lose by 23 runs.

Spinners Bernard Scholtz (2/26) and Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton (2/18) led the way with the ball, while another tweaker Gerhard Erasmus (2/42) and pacer Ruben Trumpelmann (2/32) supported well.

Earlier, Namibia, put to bat first, found themselves in early trouble as Oman's spinners ran riot on a slow pitch. Despite a slow start, managing just 24 runs in the first 10 overs, Namibia lost wickets at regular intervals after the mandatory powerplay.

Zane Green (21) was run out, but JP Kotze (29) provided some resistance before being sent back by Sufyan Mehmood. Captain Gerhard Erasmus (0) fell cheaply, the first of Samay Shrivastava's four victims, followed by Jan Frylinck (16).

The Omani spin trio of Shrivastav (4/56), Shakeel Ahmed (2/26), and Jay Odedra (1/26) ensured that Namibia couldn't build partnerships.

Malan Kruger added some resistance with a brisk 39 off 34 balls, including two sixes, but once he fell to Odedra, the lower order crumbled.

Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton (12), Jan-Izak de Villiers (2), JJ Smit (4), and Ruben Trumpelmann (1) all fell cheaply. Namibia's ODI debutant Jan Balt's unbeaten 35 off 50 balls helped the team cross the 150-mark before the team was bowled out for 169 in 46.3 overs.

Malan Kruger was named the Player of the Match for his valuable 39. Oman, coached by Duleep Mendis, will now hope to bounce back from the setback in their next game against the USA on Wednesday.

USA, table toppers, had won their first game of the tri-series against Namibia on February 8.

Brief scores: Namibia 169 all out in 46.3 overs (Malan Kruger 39, Zane Green 21, JP Kotze 29, Jan Balt 35*; Samay Shrivastava 4/56, Shakeel Ahmed 2/26, Jay Odedra 1/26, Sufyan Mehmood 2/15) beat Oman 146 all out in 37.2 overs (Jatinder Singh 25, Vinayak Shukla 17, Hassnain Shah 16*, Shakeel Ahmed 13; Bernard Scholtz 2/26, Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton 2/18, Gerhard Erasmus 2/42, Ruben Trumpelmann 2/32).

PAKISTAN TRI-SERIES

Williamson powers Kiwis to final; Breetzke's effort in vain

LAHORE: New Zealand stormed into the final of the Pakistan Tri-Nation Series with a six-wicket victory over South Africa, chasing down 304 in Lahore on Monday. Kane Williamson orchestrated the chase with a sublime, unbeaten 133, while Devon Conway's fluent 97 ensured New Zealand completed the third-highest successful chase at the venue.

The result sets up a virtual knockout between Pakistan and South Africa in Karachi on Wednesday.

Returning to ODIs for the first time since the 2023 World Cup, Williamson and Conway forged a record 187-run stand, the highest for New Zealand against South Africa. Conway's 97 was his first fifty in 11 innings, while Williamson's hundred - his first in 22 innings - came off just 72 balls, his second-fastest in ODIs.

Their efforts overshadowed a sensational debut century by Matthew Breetzke, whose 150 set a new record for the highest individual score on ODI debut. The 25-year-old became just the fourth South African to score a hundred in his maiden ODI, dominating an otherwise sluggish Proteas innings.

South Africa's innings was marred by a lack of acceleration in the middle overs. Breetzke and Jason Smith shared a 93-run second-wicket stand, but their scoring rate of 5.31 an over underlined New Zealand's disciplined bowling. After Smith's run-out, Kyle Verreynne fell to Michael Bracewell's off-spin, and South Africa managed just one boundary in the next 11 overs.

Breetzke reached his hundred off 128 balls before launching a late assault, his next 50 coming in just 19 deliveries. He fell attempting a big shot off Matt Henry, leaving Wiaan Mulder (64*) to push South Africa past 300. However, a lackluster final two overs, yielding just four runs, left their total below par.

New Zealand began cautiously, losing Will Young (19) early, but Conway and Williamson ensured there were no further hiccups. Conway reached fifty off 64 balls, while Williamson's came off 44, marked by exquisite strokeplay. His wagon wheel was symmetrically balanced, with 67 runs on the off-side and 66 on the leg.

Though Conway fell agonisingly short of a hundred, South Africa's bowling lacked penetration. Senuran Muthusamy was the pick, removing Daryl Mitchell and Tim Latham in successive deliveries, but Glenn Phillips joined Williamson to guide New Zealand home with eight balls to spare.

South Africa, now on a five-match ODI losing streak - their worst in 20 years - struggled without key players.

Brief scores: New Zealand 308/4 (Williamson 133, Conway 97) beat South Africa 304/6 (Breetzke 150, Mulder 64). - Agencies

INDIA WIN SERIES

I really broke it down into pieces: Rohit on his match-winning ton

CUTTACK: Rohit Sharma reaffirmed his ODI prowess with a sublime century, leading India to a commanding four-wicket victory over England in the second ODI in Cuttack on Sunday.

Chasing a challenging 305, India cruised home with 33 balls to spare, securing the series with a game in hand.

Despite his recent struggles in Test cricket, Rohit showcased his trademark control and power in the 50-over format, smashing 119 off just 90 balls.

His innings, laced with 12 fours and seven sixes, dismantled England's attack and put to rest any concerns about his form ahead of the Champions Trophy.

"I really broke it down into pieces about how I wanted to bat," Rohit said after receiving the Player-of-the-Match award.

"It's a 50-over format, longer than T20s but much shorter than Tests, so you need to assess and adapt. My focus was to bat as deep as possible once I got set."

His 136-run opening stand with Shubman Gill (60 off 52) provided India with the perfect launchpad. England had hoped to put India under pressure with a 304-run total, built on Joe Root's steady 69 and Ben Duckett's aggressive 65. However,

Rohit's aggressive intent from the outset dashed those hopes of the visitors.

Gill, effusive in his praise for his captain, highlighted Rohit's impact: "He makes things much easier than they seem. The way he dominated the fast bowlers today was a treat to watch."

Though England found a glimmer of hope when Rohit fell to Liam Livingstone's full-toss, India's depth ensured a smooth finish. Shreyas Iyer (44) and Axar Patel (41* off 43) kept the chase on track despite a brief stumble, with Ravindra Jadeja hitting the winning boundary.

England's innings, while promising in patches, crumbled under India's disciplined bowling. Three run-outs and an incisive spell from Jadeja (3-35) left them short of an imposing total. Their middle-order collapses remain a concern, especially against quality spin.

For India, the series win comes with the added confidence of their captain rediscovering his best. As the Champions Trophy looms, Rohit's return to ODI dominance is a crucial piece of India's puzzle, now firmly in place.

Brief scores: India 308/6 (Rohit 119, Gill 60, Iyer 44, Axar 41) beat England 304 (Root 69, Duckett 65; Jadeja 3-35).

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by April 2025 reaching $78.01, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 9 cents from the price of Friday, which was $77.92. - ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE

MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) dropped 17. 6 points, comprising a decline by 0.386% to close at 4533.08 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4550.64 points.

Omani-Brunei panel explores ways to boost trade relations

The meeting also reviewed exchange of expertise in writing and developing curricula and career guidance programmes

MUSCAT: The Omani-Brunei Joint Committee held its fourth meeting in Muscat on Monday to discuss means of enhancing cooperation between the two countries in the economic, investment and cultural fields.

The Omani side was chaired by Dr. Saleh Said Massan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, while the Brunei side was chaired by Dr. Hajah May Fa'ezah binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, Permanent Secretary (Economy) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy, Brunei Darussalam.

The meeting reviewed the trade and investment relations between the two countries and means of promoting them in sectors of common interest.

These include the exchange of expertise in best practices in writing and developing curricula, mechanisms for drafting school books, and career guidance programmes in both countries, in addition to enhancing cooperation in student guidance programs, health awareness initiatives, studying labour market trends and future needs.

The meeting also discussed the topic of organising regular dialogue sessions featuring prominent writers and thinkers from both countries, encouraging mutual participation in cultural, sports and youth festivals, events and exhibitions, as well as organising training camps for sports teams in tourist cities in both countries.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed to enhance the exchange of scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate studies, support the exchange of students and academics between higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman and Brunei Darussalam, facilitate the exchange of information on the procedures for submitting applications for recognition of Omani higher education institutions with the authorities concerned in Brunei, enhance cooperation in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, organise direct bilateral programmes between Omani higher education institutions and their counterparts in Brunei, and benefiting from Brunei Vision 2035 in the areas of lifelong learning and private education.

The Omani side expressed its interest in benefiting from Brunei Darussalam's experience in improving its ranking in the human development index, encouraging investment in tourism projects and products between the two countries, enhancing cooperation in exchanging expertise and experiences related to training and qualifying workers in tourism site management and local community empowerment initiatives, identifying best practices in sustainable tourism development and promotion, and supporting the establishment of unique and high-quality tourism projects and products that serve the common interests of the two countries. – ONA

END OF DECEMBER 2024

Oman's real estate market surges by 29.6% to OMR3.3bn

MUSCAT: The total value of real estate trading in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 29.6 percent, reaching OMR3.37 billion by the end of December 2024, compared to OMR2.60 billion during the same period in 2023.

Preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated that the fees collected for all legal transactions amounted to OMR69 million, an increase of 6.4 percent compared to the end of December 2023. The traded value of sales contracts amounted to OMR1,094.9 million by the end of November 2024, an increase of 4.8 percent, while the total sales contracts reached 13,668, an increase of 3.8 percent.

The traded value of mortgage contracts increased by 46.4 percent, recording OMR2,271.9 million for 20,680 contracts, while the number of exchange contracts reached 1,325 with a value of OMR13.1 million.

The number of title deeds issued by the end of December 2024 amounted to about 233,345, a decrease of 0.9 percent, while the number of title deeds issued for the GCC citizens amounted to 1,447, an increase of 10 percent.

– ONA

ENHANCING ITS COMMERCIAL SERVICES

OAB launches new suite of digital commercial banking services

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) unveiled a new suite of banking e-services for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), corporate clients and government entities on Sunday, February 9. The launch took place at a special event hosted by the bank under the patronage of Dr. Said bin Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Saqri, Minister of Economy, with the presence of more than 800 bank clients and high-profile guests.

The newly introduced digital commercial banking solutions from OAB provide businesses with seamless, real-time access to their financial transactions, enabling them to process payments, authorise transactions and manage payroll efficiently. The new e-services include:

Mobile Commercial Banking Application: This will allow the bank's valued customers to manage their banking accounts and conduct business transactions such as payments, payroll and transaction approvals at any time and from any location.

Host-to-Host Payment Solutions: A direct connection system linking the clients' systems with the bank's payment system, incorporating the latest developments in this field, significantly saving time and effort while reducing banking transaction costs.

Global "SWIFTNet" System: A global system that offers simplified connectivity for securely, quickly and efficiently transferring messages and financial transactions from the client to the bank.

Sulaiman Hamed Al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, stated, "In light of the rapid technological developments in banking, Oman Arab Bank continues its diligent efforts to adopt and localise the latest technologies, exploring the best digital solutions and utilising them. Its focus is serving the nation and supporting its development journey, setting an example of excellence and leadership in the banking sector. From this perspective, we have been eager to provide innovative banking services that cater to the needs of various sectors, beginning with micro-enterprises and progressing to small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the backbone of the national economy."

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Treasury bills worth OMR45mn issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR45 million by a way of allotting treasury bills on Monday.

The value of the allotted Treasury bills stood at OMR7 million, for a maturity period of 28 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR 99.701 for every OMR 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR 99.700 per OMR 100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.90140 per cent and 3.91311%, respectively.

The value of the allotted Treasury bills stood at RO 22 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached RO 98.959 for every RO 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO 98.955 per RO 100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.17602% and 4.21996%, respectively.

The value of the allotted Treasury bills amounted to RO 16 million, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached RO 97.835 for every RO 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO 97.835 per RO 100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.34190% and 4.43798%, respectively. -ONA

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

Ladayn Polymer Park to enter production stage

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ announced a significant milestone in the development of Ladayn Polymer Park, as three pioneering companies transition from the construction phase to production in early 2025.

Representing a combined investment of $42 million, these companies include one Omani and two international leaders, highlighting Ladayn Polymer Park's global appeal and Oman's growing role as a hub for industrial innovation and sustainability.

Since its inception, Ladayn Polymer Park has achieved extraordinary milestones, securing 16 agreements valued at almost $155 million. These agreements span diverse applications in packaging, construction, and advanced polymer solutions, reflecting the park's strategic importance in reducing Oman's reliance on imports and bolstering local manufacturing capabilities.

"This milestone demonstrates the transformative potential of Ladayn Polymer Park in fostering local manufacturing, creating jobs, and driving Oman's economic growth. By enabling the production of finished plastic products locally, we are not only reducing our reliance on imports but also positioning Oman as a regional hub for innovation and sustainability in the polymer industry," said Sadiq Hassan Al-Lawati, Managing Director of OQ Marketing.

Local and global collaborators leading way

Set to begin production in Q1 of 2025, Madayn Plastic Company (MAPCO), an Omani pioneer, invested $8 million to become the first company in the nation to produce Form Fill Seal (FFS) bags. MAPCO is projected to create 20 direct jobs, significantly strengthening Oman's self-sufficiency in the plastics sector. The company's operations mark a major step toward building a robust domestic manufacturing ecosystem.

Adding international expertise is M.A.K Sohar, a German company renowned for their expertise in developing high-performance chemical solutions in the areas of automotive, construction, agriculture, and healthcare. Leveraging cutting-edge machinery and collaborating with local contractors, M.A.K. Sohar has committed $11 million to a state-of-the-art facility in the Sohar Free Zone. It will start production in Q2 2025 focusing on TPE and engineering compounds designed to meet the evolving needs of polymer manufacturers.

Multibond Metal, a Chinese-Indian joint venture is also preparing for production in Q2. It made a landmark $23 million investment to Ladayn Polymer Park to focus on advanced polymer solutions for heat resistance and surface protection. The project will create 30 direct jobs, establishing Oman as a regional leader in cutting-edge polymer applications.

Partnerships

"Our partnerships with investors like MAPCO, M.A.K Sohar, and Multibond Metal LLC highlight the strategic importance of Ladayn Polymer Park in the region. Through initiatives like these, we are creating an integrated ecosystem that supports value-added manufacturing, addresses global challenges, and enhances Oman's industrial capabilities," said Mundhar Al Rawahi, Ladayn Park Program Leader.

"We are strategically positioned with access to emerging markets in West Asia and Africa. In addition, the park's bespoke incentives, advanced infrastructure, and dependable raw material supply from OQ create a thriving environment for businesses to succeed," adds Sadiq Al-Lawati.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Jazeera Steel Products, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while Muscat Desalination, down 4.41%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,533.08 points, down by 0.39% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.21% at 419.75 points. Jazeera Steel Products, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while Muscat Desalination, down 4.41%, was the top loser. Shares of OQGN were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Jazeera Steel Products were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 867 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 2.11 million, with more than 11.74 million shares changing hands. Out of 56 traded securities, 15 advanced, 23 declined, and 18 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 166K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 92K, followed by foreign investors for RO 74K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,840.74 points, down 0.31%. Prices of National Finance, Al Sharqia Investment, Muscat Finance, United Finance were up by 3.08%, 2.67%, 2.08%, 1.70% respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Al Madina Takaful, Global Financial Investments, Bank Nizwa were down by 2.82%, 1.27%, 1.18%, 1.14%, 0.96% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,551.10 points, up 1.44%. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products, Oman Chromite, Voltamp Energy, Oman Cement, Raysut Cement were up by 10.00%, 5.00%, 1.52%, 1.50%, 0.99% respectively. Prices of Construction Materials were down by 2.60% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.57% before closing at 1,699.73 points. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, Barka Desalination, Musandam Power, OIFC were up by 9.98%, 5.93%, 1.50%, 1.22% respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Dhofar Generating, Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, National Gas were down by 4.41%, 4.41%, 1.45%, 1.45%, 1.30% respectively.– **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,550.64	4,531.79	4,533.08	4,550.64	-17.56	-0.39
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,870.84	7,837.68	7,840.74	7,865.40	-24.65	-0.31
Industry Index	5,559.29	5,526.77	5,551.10	5,472.05	79.05	1.44
Services Index	1,704.93	1,678.37	1,699.73	1,690.11	9.61	0.57
MSX Shariah Index	420.78	418.85	419.75	418.85	0.90	0.21
MSX TR INDEX	6,375.39	6,348.98	6,350.79	6,375.39	-24.60	-0.39
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,942.09	8,904.41	8,907.89	8,935.90	-28.01	-0.31
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,414.10	6,376.58	6,404.66	6,313.45	91.21	1.44
SERVICES TR IDX	2,044.66	2,012.81	2,038.43	2,026.90	11.53	0.57
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
11,744,260	2,106,848	867	27,472,949,969	15	23	18	56

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	670,040	228,315	33	0.341	0.341	0.340	0.341	0.310	0.031	10.000	0.341	0.330	0.341	0.100	42,590,204
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	196,500	15,081	15	0.076	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.075	0.002	2.667	0.077	0.075	0.077	0.100	6,930,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	15,000	900	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.001	1.695	0.060	0.000	0.060	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	35,000	9,441	8	0.267	0.270	0.267	0.270	0.266	0.004	1.504	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.100	19,005,300
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	75,059	30,460	24	0.402	0.410	0.402	0.406	0.400	0.006	1.500	0.406	0.405	0.406	0.100	134,334,320
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	4,533	1,088	2	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.000	0.000	0.240	0.240	0.000	0.100	24,000,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	185,183	53,703	1	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.290	0.313	0.100	471,524,443
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	25,000	1,644	5	0.065	0.066	0.065	0.066	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.063	0.065	0.100	8,043,750
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	241,421	26,073	36	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.102	0.108	0.100	23,760,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	7,000	2,786	3	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.000	0.000	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.100	47,760,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	725,035	73,201	8	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	0.111	0.100	96,411,767
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	4,920	2,922	3	0.594	0.594	0.594	0.594	0.595	-0.001	-0.168	0.594	0.594	0.594	0.100	56,430,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	201,900	180,153	60	0.895	0.896	0.887	0.893	0.895	-0.002	-0.223	0.893	0.890	0.893	0.100	669,750,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	82,000	26,936	28	0.328	0.330	0.327	0.330	0.331	-0.001	-0.302	0.330	0.328	0.330	0.100	220,560,591
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	22,189	4,927	5	0.225	0.225	0.222	0.222	0.223	-0.001	-0.448	0.222	0.220	0.222	0.100	144,509,619
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	63,667	22,798	5	0.358	0.359	0.358	0.358	0.360	-0.002	-0.556	0.358	0.358	0.359	0.100	84,634,780
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,045,479	143,328	18	0.138	0.138	0.136	0.136	0.137	-0.001	-0.730	0.136	0.132	0.143	0.100	899,945,493
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,503,319	199,165	94	0.133	0.133	0.132	0.132	0.133	-0.001	-0.752	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.100	571,642,357
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	422,219	109,312	36	0.259	0.259	0.257	0.258	0.260	-0.002	-0.769	0.258	0.257	0.258	0.100	1,936,650,442
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	396,372	92,849	42	0.235	0.235	0.234	0.234	0.236	-0.002	-0.847	0.234	0.232	0.235	0.100	180,226,800
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	79,388	6,922	6	0.087	0.088	0.087	0.087	0.088	-0.001	-1.136	0.087	0.087	0.088	0.100	17,400,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	66,715	5,604	6	0.085	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.176	0.084	0.083	0.086	0.100	14,700,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	125,500	8,421	10	0.067	0.069	0.066	0.068	0.069	-0.001	-1.449	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.100	45,892,345
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	74,482	5,066	5	0.068	0.069	0.068	0.068	0.069	-0.001	-1.449	0.068	0.068	0.069	0.100	48,579,631
Total	24	6,267,921	1,251,094	454												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000003000	Al MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	100	114	1	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.032	0.103	9.981	1.135	0.000	1.131	0.100	78,315,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	12,800	1,600	2	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.118	0.007	5.932	0.125	0.120	0.125	0.100	9,440,250
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	49	154	1	3.150	3.150	3.150	3.150	3.000	0.150	5.000	3.150	3.000	3.150	1.000	10,395,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	1,119	150	1	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.130	0.004	3.077	0.134	0.128	0.143	0.100	76,876,374
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	93	1	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.091	0.002	2.198	0.093	0.091	0.093	0.100	18,600,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	200	10	1	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.001	2.083	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	15,050,170
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	15,391	8,179	6	0.528	0.536	0.528	0.536	0.528	0.008	1.515	0.536	0.531	0.536	0.100	43,631,874
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	580,431	184,268	88	0.317	0.319	0.316	0.317	0.316	0.001	0.316	0.317	0.317	0.318	0.0102	536,000,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	15,000	6,598	2	0.439	0.440	0.439	0.440	0.440	0.000	0.000	0.440	0.430	0.480	0.100	69,300,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	100	74	1	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.000	0.000	0.741	0.741	0.741	0.100	45,404,775
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	17,607	1,902	1	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.105	0.108	0.100	29,277,774
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	499,830	38,978	17	0.077	0.079	0.077	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.078	0.079	0.100	15,832,943
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	474,684	163,194	30	0.340	0.345	0.340	0.344	0.344	0.000	0.000	0.344	0.340	0.344	0.100	68,674,646
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	340	17	1	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.046	0.049	0.100	12,250,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	82,320	4,857	6	0.058	0.060	0.058	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.059	0.062	0.100	86,293,486
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	47,506	5,463	14	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.115	0.115	0.125	0.100	68,015,241
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	431,897	44,490	13	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.103	0.104	-0.001	-0.962	0.103	0.103	0.104	0.100	230,406,162
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	1,446,273	146,644	138	0.102	0.103	0.101	0.101	0.102	-0.001	-0.980	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.040	349,408,576
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	791,322	121,904	6	0.156	0.156	0.154	0.156	0.158	-0.002	-1.266	0.156	0.143	0.170	0.100	49,205,052
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	421,993	32,293	31	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.100	6,460,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	40,000	3,010	4	0.076	0.076	0.075	0.075	0.077	-0.002	-2.597	0.075	0.074	0.076	0.100	4,687,500
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	116,350	8,155	11	0.071	0.071	0.069	0.069	0.071	-0.002	-2.817	0.069	0.069	0.071	0.100	14,640,420
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	30,699	2,022	4	0.068	0.068	0.065	0.065	0.068	-0.003	-4.412	0.065	0.065	0.068	0.100	10,110,776
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	53,050	3,415	8	0.064	0.066	0.064	0.065	0.068	-0.003	-4.412	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.100	14,445,600
Total	24	5,080,061	777,583	388												

SOHAR ALUMINIUM

Endowment building of Takaful Sohar Charity launched

MUSCAT: Sohar Aluminium (SA) and Takaful Endowment Foundation celebrated the official launch of Endowment Building of Takaful Sohar Charity Team, established in the Wilayat of Sohar, North Al Batinah Governorate. The building is funded by Sohar Aluminium as one of its sustainable social investment projects.

Establishing this endowment building aims to enhance and ensure the sustainability of the activities of Takaful Suhar Charity Team, which serves the community in the Wilayat of Sohar.

The proceeds of this endowment building will support funding the team's various social and charitable activities that are conducted by the team since inception to achieve its goals.

The endowment building is a 4-storey residential and commercial building with a total built-up area of approximately 406 sqm. It consists of residential apartments and commercial units that are designed with high modern standards.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER

Asyad Group showcases logistics leadership at Break Bulk Middle East

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Asyad Group, Oman's global integrated logistics provider, is reinforcing its position as a transformative leader in the region's logistics landscape at the Break Bulk Middle East 2025 being held in Dubai in February 10–11. The event brings together industry leaders and key stakeholders to explore the dynamic future of breakbulk logistics in the GCC and Mena regions. Against the backdrop of unprecedented economic transformation, Asyad Group stands at the forefront of shaping the future of global logistics.

Juma Al Uraimi, Asyad Group's Acting Chief Commercial Officer, articulated the group's strategic vision. "As we navigate the dynamic landscape of breakbulk logistics in the GCC and MENA regions, we are witnessing an unprecedented convergence of efficient operations management in mega-projects, technological innovation, and sustainable practices that are redefining our industry's future. Our strategic vision is anchored in leveraging new technologies, embracing sustainability initiatives, and positioning ourselves as a global logistics hub that not only meets the demands of transformative projects but also champions operational excellence and environmental stewardship."

During the event, Asyad will host dynamic panel discussions to explore key industry challenges and opportunities shaping the logistics industry. Industry leaders will delve into the region's strategic logistics ecosystem and the effectiveness of integrated solutions in driving sector growth. Discussions will focus on enhancing efficiency and competitiveness, the transformative impact of technology, and infrastructure readiness. These panels will showcase the region's potential as a hub for breakbulk shipments, emphasizing effective stakeholder collaboration and the essential elements for successful implementation of integrated logistics solutions.

Reggy Vermeulen, CEO of the Port of Duqm, will deliver a keynote on the GCC's evolving energy investment landscape. He will highlight regional renewable energy targets, with the Sultanate of Oman's national plan to achieve zero neutrality by 2050, and Saudi Arabia aiming for 50% renewable energy by 2030.

Vermeulen will also emphasise the critical role of breakbulk logistics in facilitating this transition, particularly in transporting wind turbine components, solar panels, and other oversized equipment essential to renewable energy infrastructure.

Exploring the strategic landscape of global trade, Juma Al Maskari, Director at Asyad Logistics, will shed light on the transformative landscape of global logistics, emphasizing the industry's critical inflection point. With contract logistics projected to reach $300 billion by 2025 (6-8% CAGR), Al Maskari will outline the importance of strategic action. Al Maskari will also discuss the rise of supply chain outsourcing for optimized operational efficiency and sustainable cost reduction. The GCC and MENA regions, with Oman as a pivotal connector, are leading this revolution, strategically positioned to influence major international trade routes.

In a keynote address, Tom Anneberg, VP Commercial Strategy & Product Development at Asyad Group, will showcase the company's pivotal role in the hydrogen industry, hosting major green hydrogen and ammonia joint ventures in Salalah Freezone. These projects, with production targets of 1.1 million and 430,000 tons per annum respectively, position Asyad at the forefront of clean energy logistics.

The regional market is expected to contribute $20-25 billion to this global landscape, underscoring the strategic importance of the Middle East in global logistics. Notably, over 60% of logistics providers are investing in cutting-edge technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), signalling a profound digital transformation within the sector.

As digital transformation, sustainability, and bespoke logistics solutions redefine the industry landscape, Asyad Group stands at the forefront—transforming challenges into strategic opportunities and pioneering a new era of innovative, adaptive logistics solutions that transcend traditional boundaries.

Asyad Group, a $4.1+ billion logistics powerhouse, demonstrates its advanced capabilities in handling complex cargo and multimodal transportation, solidifying Oman's position as a global trade hub. This comprehensive approach cements the Group's dominance in international logistics, attracting global customers and investors to Oman's strategic trade crossroads.

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Indian male, CPA, CMA, CA finalist & B.com with 10+ yrs of experience. Currently working as finance manager, looking for senior management roles in finance.
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Indian, BE Civil Engineer with 10 years experience (8 years in Oman & 2 years in India) in commercial and residential project with valid oman D/L. Currently available in Oman with local NOC / Relese.
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JOB VACANCY

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Required sales engineer (Trading company) fresher or with 2-3 year exp, mechanical engineer graduate/ diploma. Cell/whatsapp - 98996978

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Indian, male, B.Com, 17 yrs experience in finance, Vat, looking for senior position in finance. Available for immediate joining. Contact: 97645592, Email: roshalpinto@ymail.com

Indian, male, 25, Account executive, M.Com with 2 yrs experience, ready to join immediately. Contact: 78691736

Accountant, B.com, graduate with 06yrs of experience.Proficient in finalization,vat and taxation with Oman DL. Contact: +968 97611460, Email: sreeju.8.ek@gmail.com

Indian (M), 28, Accountant with overall exp 3 yrs Valid D/L. Contact: 78624277

35 yrs, Indian, male, with 8yrs of experience in Oman & UAE looking for an accounting, admin job vacancy in Oman. Contact: 77484934

Senior Accountant upto finalization with D/L. Contact: +968 79471027

Indian male 34, finance professional. MBA & PGDM in finance. 8 yrs of experience in Oman out of 14 yrs exp. Handled independently accounts finalization, IFRS, Vat & tax audit. Know oracle & tally. Contact: 71181096. Email: kansebalvant@gmail.com.

Indian male, Accountant, 10 yrs experience in Oman up to finalization, audit, budgeting, MIS, VAT, tax assessments. Working experience in SAP & other ERP systems, looking for a suitable position, having valid D/L. GSM: 92024380, Email: mithun.chittedathu@gmail.com

Senior accountant, chief accountant, accounts manager & finance professional with 20+ yrs of experience in group companies in Oman, seeking a suitable placement. Contact: 99219937

Part-time accounting services book keeping, accounts, inventory, VAT, tax, and audit. Contact: 974419760

Experienced accounts manager seeks suitable senior level opportunity. Contact: 78581435

A skilled professional MBA (Finance & marketing) with more than 2 yrs experience in India seeks suitable accountant or sales positions. Contact: +91 6238349738 (WA), Email: thaha2255@gmail.com

Accounts Manager, 22 yrs of exp in accounts(20 yrs in Oman) until finalization (MIS, collections, handling inventory and payments and all related work). Contact: 91410602

Indian, male, Accountant, M.com (finance), 12 yrs experience in Oman. Handling accounts up to finalization independently, Noc & D/L available. Contact: 99859141

Indian, male, with 12 yrs of experience in accounts, sales coordinator, admin, printing media, and automotive fields is looking for a suitable job. Contact: 97474155.

Accounts manager, Ass. FM, Indian, male, B.com, MBA. More than 15yrs experience in accounting up to finalisation. Looking for immediate placement. Contact: 91469060

Sr. Accountant, finance officer ACCA (last paper), CA Inter, MS finance. 12 yrs gulf experience. Ready to join immediately. NOC & D/L available. Contact: 77258382

Sr. Accountant, accountant, 16 yrs of experience in Oman. Accounts up to finalisation and auditing. Contact: 94001764.

Junior accountant, Indian, male B.com graduate 2yrs experience in Oman seeking suitable job. Contact: 78047716

Highly skilled Chief accountant looking for suitable position. Contact: +968 79888153

Indian male, having 2.5 yrs of experience in Accounts, finance, admin looking for job. Contact: +968 79414996, Email: sajadzn29@gmail.com

Indian male with 4+ yrs exp. in Oman, worked as Accounts & admin executive Bachelor Degree in Management (BBA) with valid D/L, ready to join immediately. Contact: 93536020, Email: naseemtm24@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION

Executive secretary with 20+ yrs of experience in India and Oman looking for suitable placement. NOC available. Contact: 97932277

Dynamic and well-experienced professional: 5 yrs of Dubai and 4.5 yrs of Muscat experience in operations management, business excellence or key account management looking for new challenges. Contact: 96766702, Email: ilyas3299@gmail.com

Indian (M), 2 yrs experience, immediately available. Contact: 90445596

Female, Highly experienced candidate looking for a sutiable position in admin, accounts department & logistics, available in Oman to join immediate with valid D/L. Contact: 76452212

Female, B.com seeks Admin, finance job. Presently in Oman. Contact: 78354801

Indian (M), Oman experience in projects, corporate communications, CEO office. WhatsApp: +968 97457945.

Indian male MBA(HR) & Btech (Comp) with nearly 10 yrs of over all experience seeks job. Contact: +968 94168194, +91 9745020204, Email: gokulgopan91@hotmail.com

ARCHITECT

Qualified junior Architect with experience in software such as Auto- CAD, lumion, sketchUp, revit, 3Ds max etc. looking for job in Oman. Contact: +968 78902260, E-mail: ar.mohamedadhelka@gmail.com

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Indian female, completed MCA and also having experience in teaching, available in Oman on family visa, looking for a suitable job. Contact: 79090343/94117967, Email: induchandran01@gmail.com

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Diploma in Electrical Engineering looking for Fire Fighting site supervisor/suitable job. Contact: 95933453, Email: haquefaizan3786@gmail.com

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Male, B.E Civil engineer with 15+ yrs of experience. Have worked in oilfield and gas sector, building construction and piling. Along with PDO and standard D/L. Contact: +968 98505167, 97431611, Email: 80.ferdous@gmail.com

Civil engineer supervisor, 14 yrs experience civil & tower project with D/L & own visa. Contact: 78002980

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BE Project engineer 12-13 yrs experience. Contact: 93850875, Email: abdulcivilco2015@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Mechanical engineer with over 4 yrs experience in sales and operations having Oman D/L with MSc in Engineering management from UK available to join immediately. Contact: 96111283, Email: dobin.mathew@gmail.com.

BE Project engineer 12-13 yrs experience. Contact: 93850875, Email: abdulcivilco2015@gmail.com

B-Tech Civil Engineer with total 16yrs GCC experience include 11 yrs Oman experience, project manager job seeking. Contact: 97733497

IT

Indian male, data scientist & BSC computer science graduate,looking for job. Contact: : 78026010, Email: vivekkrishnan2233@gmail.com

Female, software Engineer, full stack developer also expert in digital marketing with 5 yrs experience. Contact: 78462153

Experienced developer, 8 yrs experience in full stack developer & NET developer. Contact : 96962176.

LOGISTIC

Indian male, 22 yrs, BBA in Aviation & logistic management seeking for opportunities in logistic, management or administrative, sales, marketing or any suitable position. Contact: 79487865, E-mail: Official.abdulraziq@gmail.com

Indian, male, 37 yrs , With 12 yrs experience in the Logistic and warehousing field in Oman, with D/L. looking for senior position. Contact: 97254050

Indian male, storekeeper, document controller 2+ yrs of experience in GCC, completed BCA ,ready to join immediately. Contact: +968 71818173, Email: swamierezhasouth@gmail.com

Sudanese Supply chain professional with CSCP certificate, MBA and 10 yrs experience in supply chain, logistics, procurement and project management. Contact: 95272472, Email: kemeir@hotmail.com

MANAGER

Finance manager with 15 yrs of experience in oil & gas multinational company looking for suitable placement. Contact: 95230609

Indian male, MBA. 12 yrs of experience as (branch Manager & key accounts executive) looking for suitable position. Contact : 98132055

MECHNICAL/ TECHNICAL

Production supervisor in printing press with 7 yrs experience in Dubai seeks job. Contact: +968 79896168, Email: anvinsildon99@gmail.com

MEDICAL

Indian (M), 2 yrs, hospital administration experience. immediate joining. Contact: 90445596

General practitioner doctor male with MOH licence, 30 yrs experience seeks locum or permanent job. Contact: 78559363

MISCELLANEOUS

Merchandiser job or helper with 4 yrs experience in Oman. Contact: 78651895

PROCUREMENT/ PURCHASE

Procurement officer, 15 yrs experience in construction,oil & gas & MEP materials looking for placement. D/L & local release available. ready to join immediately. Contact: 79563830 Email- rayancriston@gmail.com

27 yrs experience in Oman, Indian, looking for a manager position in purchase, sales, holding valid Omani D/L. Contact: 94338072 / 78177167.

Procurement engineer, Sudanese, 10yrs experience in Oman,MEP, firefighting, projects, D/L. Contact: 79027138

SALES/MARKETING

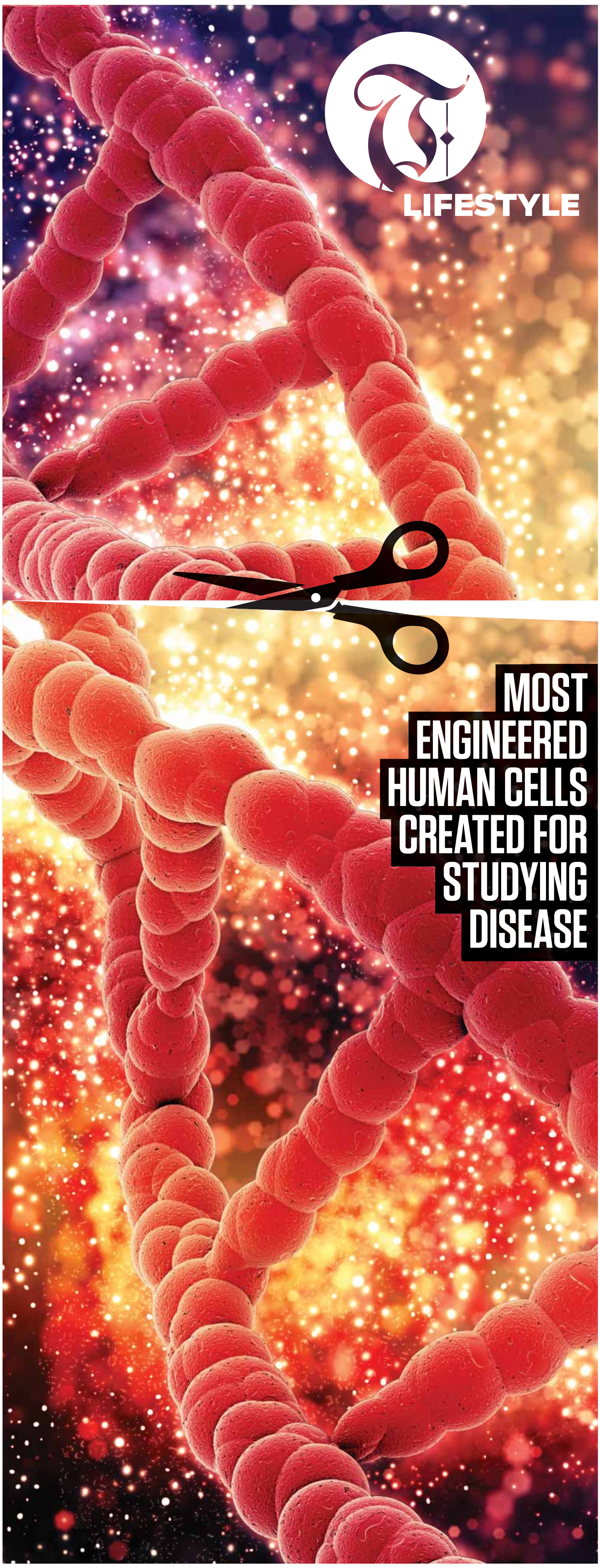
Indian, MBA, 20 yrs of experience in Sales. Previously held supervisory, managerial position with. D/L seeks suitable placement. Contact: 95548480

Sales & marketing manager, Indian MBA 25 yrs of experience in Oman in FMCG,consumer durables. Strong relationships with major retailers across the country. Seeking a suitable position. Contact: 93340457

Indian male with 14 yrs of sales & marketing experience. looking for suitable job with valid D/L. Contact: 95136784

Indian male, Sales executive (MBA in Marketing) with 10 yrs of experience in FMCG & automobile with strong communication skills, holding valid Oman. D/L. Contact: 92350798

Indian male MBA graduated specialized with Marketing & HR (fresher). Looking for suitable positions . Currently in Muscat Oman. Contact: +968 71084371, Email: ccrashid9@gmail.com



MOST ENGINEERED HUMAN CELLS CREATED FOR STUDYING DISEASE

The research shows that as long as essential genes remain intact, our genomes can tolerate significant structural changes, including large deletions of the genetic code. The work opens the door to studying and predicting the role of structural variation in disease

Scientists have successfully engineered the most complicated human cell lines ever, indicating that our genomes are more tolerant to significant structural alterations than previously assumed.

Researchers from the Wellcome Sanger Institute, Imperial College London, and Harvard University in the US and their collaborators used CRISPR prime editing to create multiple versions of human genomes in cell lines, each with different structural changes. Using genome sequencing, they were able to analyse the genetic effects of these structural variations on cell survival.

The research shows that as long as essential genes remain intact, our genomes can tolerate significant structural changes, including large deletions of the genetic code. The work opens the door to studying and predicting the role of structural variation in disease.

Structural variation is a change in the structure of an organism's genome, such as deletions, duplications and inversions of the genetic sequence. These structural changes to the genome can be significant, sometimes affecting hundreds to many thousands of nucleotides - the basic building blocks of DNA and RNA.

Structural variants are associated with developmental diseases and cancer. However, our ability to study the effects of structural variation in the genomes of mammals, and the role they play in disease, has been difficult due to the inability to engineer these genetic changes.

To overcome this challenge, Sanger Institute researchers and their collaborators set out to develop new approaches for creating and studying structural variation.

In a new study, the team used a combination of CRISPR prime editing1 and human cell lines2 - groups of human cells in a dish - to generate thousands of structural variants in human genomes within a single experiment.

To do this, researchers used prime editing to insert a recognition sequence into the genomes of the human cell lines to target with recombinase3 - an enzyme that enabled the team to 'shuffle' the genome.

By inserting these recombinase handles into repetitive sequences, which are hundreds and thousands of identical sequences in the genome, with a single prime editor they were able to integrate up to almost 1,700 recombinase recognition sites into each cell line.

This resulted in more than 100 random large-scale genetic structural changes per cell. This is the first time that it's been possible to 'shuffle' a mammalian genome, especially at this scale. The team then studied the impacts of the structural variation on the human cell lines. Using genomic sequencing, the team was able to take 'snapshots' of the human cells and their 'shuffled' genomes over the course of a few weeks, watching which cells survived and which died.

As expected, they found that when structural variation deleted essential genes, this was heavily selected against and the cells died. However, they found that groups of cells with large-scale deletions in the genomes that avoided essential genes, survived.

The team also conducted RNA sequencing of the human cell lines, which measures gene activity, known as gene expression. This revealed that large-scale deletions of the genetic code, especially in non-coding regions, did not seem to impact the gene expression of the rest of the cell.

The researchers suggest that human genomes are extremely tolerant of structural variation, including variants that change the position of hundreds of genes, as long as essential genes are not deleted. Plus, they query whether much of the non-coding DNA in human genomes is dispensable, but further research that engineers additional deletions in more cell lines is needed.

Researchers from the University of Washington had a similar goal of creating structural variants at large scale and studying their effects on the human genome. This team used a different approach, adding recombinase sites to transposons - mobile genetic elements - that randomly integrated in the genomes of human cell lines and mouse embryonic stem cells.

Using their method, they demonstrated that the effects of the induced structural variants can be read out using single-cell RNA sequencing. This advance paves the way for large screens of structural variant impact, potentially improving the classification of structural variants found in human genomes as benign or clinically significant.

Both studies came to similar conclusions that human genomes are surprisingly tolerant to some substantial structural changes, although the full extent of this tolerance remains to be explored in future studies enabled by these technologies.

Overall, this research presents the most engineered human cell lines to date. For the first time, researchers are able to create structural variants in human genomes, at large scales in a single experiment, and analyse the many random versions of our genomes.

This work will increase our understanding of the role of structure variants in disease, which may eventually lead to predictions being made around how damaging structural variants could be in an individual. This research also helps narrow the range of the genome for exploring structural variation that leads to disease, especially if non-coding DNA can be discounted.

Plus with this new tool, scientists can generate new, streamlined cell lines with evolved properties, such as being optimised for growth, studying drug resistance, or bioengineered to create medicines.

Dr Jonas Koeppel, co-first author previously at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, and now at the University of Washington, said, "If the genome was a book, you could think of a single nucleotide variant as a typo, whereas a structural variant is like ripping out a whole page. These structural variants are known to play roles in developmental diseases and cancer, but it has been difficult to study them experimentally.

Through creative and collaborative thinking, we've been able to do complex engineering in human cells that no-one has done before. By shuffling the genomes of human cell lines at large scale, we've shown that our genomes are flexible enough to tolerate significant structural changes. These tools will help focus future studies into structural variations and their roles in disease."

Dr Raphael Ferreira, co-first author and a postdoctoral researcher in the Church Lab at Harvard Medical School, said: "Our studies were only made possible because the right mix of ingredients came together at the right time: the scale of genome sequencing, cutting-edge genome engineering, and the use of recombinases.

And importantly, the open and collaborative nature of our science across global borders. Our teams independently had similar ideas and came together to make these pioneering studies happen."

Professor Tom Ellis, an author of the study and Associate Faculty at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, based at the Department of Bioengineering at Imperial College London, said: "Ten years ago, people thought it would take decades of work and hundreds of millions of dollars to engineer a rearrangeable human genome that scientists could use to study genome structure, but this work shows a way to make this possible right now. It's exciting to think about what new biology we can learn from rearrangeable genomes and where this might go next."

Dr Leopold Parts, co-lead author at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, said, "These studies represent a step change in the parallel creation and evaluation of structural variation in human genomes. The tools to create a single variant at a time had been available for decades, but we have demonstrated that interrogating variants and making randomised human genomes at scale is now doable. This gives new entry points both into the study of disease-associated variation, as well as opportunities for bioengineering." - ANI

SPORTS

Plymouth upset Liverpool in FA Cup giant-killing act

Arne Slot's gamble to field a heavily rotated squad backfires

LONDON: Plymouth Argyle delivered a stunning FA Cup upset, knocking out Premier League leaders Liverpool with a 1-0 victory at a packed Home Park in the fourth round on Sunday.

Championship strugglers Plymouth, sitting at the bottom of the table, defied the odds as Ryan Hardie's second-half penalty secured a famous triumph against Arne Slot's heavily rotated side.

The atmosphere was electric from the outset, with Plymouth's supporters sensing an opportunity when Liverpool's team sheet was revealed. With key figures like Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk absent from the squad and ten changes from the side that dismantled Tottenham in the Carabao Cup semi-final, the Reds fielded a makeshift lineup. However, their lack of cohesion proved costly against a determined Plymouth side.

The match remained cagey in the first half, with neither side managing to assert dominance. Liverpool had more possession, but clear-cut chances were scarce. Plymouth, well-drilled under new manager Miron Muslic, showed defensive discipline while waiting for their opportunity to strike.

That moment arrived eight minutes into the second half. A floated cross into Liverpool's penalty area saw Harvey Elliott commit a costly error, handling the ball under pressure. The referee pointed to the spot, and Hardie stepped up with nerves of steel to hammer his penalty past Caoimhin Kelleher, sending the home crowd into raptures.

Despite their struggles, Liverpool attempted a late fightback. Slot introduced attacking reinforcements, including Darwin Nunez, in a bid to salvage their FA Cup run. However, Plymouth's goalkeeper, Conor Hazard, produced heroics to preserve his side's lead. Hazard first denied Diogo Jota with a sharp reflex save before pulling off an even more astonishing stop from Nunez's close-range header in the dying moments. As Liverpool grew increasingly desperate, their final push was met with resolute Plymouth defending, culminating in a historic result for the Championship side.

A night to remember for Plymouth

At the final whistle, Home Park erupted in celebrations, with Plymouth's players and fans savoring a moment they will never forget. Under Muslic's guidance, the 'Green Army' have found new belief, and this FA Cup triumph serves as a beacon of hope in their battle for Championship survival.

For Arne Slot, this defeat marks the most significant disappointment of his tenure so far. The Dutch manager has enjoyed an impressive start to life at Anfield, guiding Liverpool to the Premier League summit and the Carabao Cup final, but his FA Cup gamble backfired spectacularly.

Making wholesale changes against a motivated lower-league opponent proved costly. While Liverpool still fielded experienced names like Luis Diaz, Federico Chiesa, and Wataru Endo, they struggled to cope with the intensity and physicality of Plymouth's approach.

Aston Villa edge Spurs to reach fifth round

Aston Villa secured their place in the FA Cup fifth round for the first time in a decade with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Tottenham Hotspur at Villa Park on Sunday. Jacob Ramsey set the tone for the hosts with a stunning opener just 57 seconds into the match, firing through the hands of Spurs goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky, who should have done better. Villa continued to dominate, and their persistence paid off in the 64th minute when Morgan Rogers pounced on a loose ball in the box and lashed it into the roof of the net for his 11th goal of the season.

Just a minute later, Villa introduced Marcus Rashford for his debut following his loan move from Manchester United. The two-time FA Cup winner almost made an instant impact, linking up beautifully with Rogers and Ramsey, but Kinsky redeemed himself with a crucial stop. - Agencies

From refugee to a hero: The Miron Muslic story

LONDON: Plymouth Argyle manager Miron Muslic pulled off one of the biggest upsets in FA Cup history, guiding his struggling Championship side to a stunning victory over Premier League leaders Liverpool.

"It is a magical day for us," Muslic said. "I told the lads to enjoy it, and we are now part of Argyle history. Somehow, I feel we deserve this day."

For Muslic, this victory is another chapter in an incredible personal journey. Born in Bosnia, he fled his hometown of Bihac with his family in 1992, escaping the brutal siege that lasted three years. They found refuge in Austria, where Muslic grew up facing hardships but never losing hope. "We had to leave Bosnia overnight, grabbing whatever we could carry. That was the start of our new life," he recalled. "Struggle has been part of my journey, but it has shaped who I am."

After a playing career in Austria, Muslic turned to coaching, leading Cercle Bruges to European qualification before taking over at Plymouth last month. Despite inheriting a team battling relegation, he instilled belief in his players.

"I've been in tougher situations in life than facing a possible defeat on a football pitch. I always tell my players: life is a struggle with beautiful surprises, and there is always something worth fighting for."

Muslic's passion for the game is evident. "Football is universal. It doesn't matter where you're from—on the pitch, it's just about the game. And that's the magic of football." - Agencies

TENNIS

Alcaraz clinches maiden indoor title in Rotterdam

ROTTERDAM: Carlos Alcaraz edged a tight final against Australia's Alex de Minaur to win the Rotterdam Open and claim the first indoor hardcourt title of his career on Sunday.

It was a 17th ATP title for the 21-year-old Spanish top seed but his first since winning in Beijing in September.

The four-time Grand Slam winner had to fight hard for the victory after third seed De Minaur won the second set to take the match into a decider.

But a break of serve for Alcaraz in the sixth game of the final set proved decisive and he went on to win the next two games to seal a 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 victory.

The reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion, who also claimed the US Open in 2022, has won grand slam titles on all three outdoor surfaces.

Alcaraz's latest success, in his first tournament back following defeat by Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open quarter-finals, added another string to his bow.

He thanked the Rotterdam crowd for a "special week" as he claimed the winner's prize in his first appearance at the event.

For De Minaur, however, it was a second successive defeat in the Rotterdam final, after finishing runner-up to world number one Jannik Sinner last year.

"It's been a lot of improvements in my game over the last couple of years and I am going to keep on pushing for more," said De Minaur, 25, who has won nine titles on the ATP tour.

"It's been two years now with this runners-up trophy, I'm hoping I will get my hands on the winner's one day."

At the Dallas Open in Texas, Denis Shapovalov beat second seed Casper Ruud 7-6 (7-5) 6-3 to secure the third, and biggest, ATP title of his career.

Canadian Shapovalov, 25, also defeated top seed Taylor Fritz and third seed Tommy Paul on his way to the final. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Barcelona thrash Sevilla to cut gap on Real Madrid

BARECLONA: Barcelona delivered a dominant performance against Sevilla, securing a 4-1 victory on Sunday to close the gap on La Liga leaders Real Madrid to just two points. However, the win was not without drama, as Fermin Lopez went from hero to villain in a frantic 15-minute spell.

The visitors got off to the perfect start when Robert Lewandowski opened the scoring in the seventh minute, reacting quickly to prod home Iñigo Martínez's header for his 19th goal of the season.

But Sevilla hit back almost immediately, with Ruben Vargas latching onto a clever pass from former Barcelona midfielder Saúl Ñíguez before rifling a shot past Marc-André ter Stegen.

The first half remained evenly contested, but Barcelona turned up the intensity after the break. Just minutes after being introduced as a substitute, Fermin Lopez made an instant impact, guiding a precise header into the bottom corner with his very first touch to restore Barcelona's lead.

However, the 21-year-old's joy was short-lived. A reckless knee-high challenge on Djibril Sow saw the midfielder initially escape punishment, but a VAR review resulted in a straight red card, leaving Barcelona with ten men for the final 25 minutes.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, Hansi Flick's side remained in control. Raphinha extended Barcelona's lead with a superb right-footed effort from outside the box, finding the bottom corner to make it 3-1 just before Lopez's dismissal.

Sevilla thought they had responded instantly when Vargas had the ball in the back of the net again, but his effort was ruled out for offside.

Moments later, the hosts were left frustrated as their penalty appeals were waved away after Jules Koundé and Sow collided in the box. - Agencies

JALEN HURTS NAMED MVP

Eagles crush Chiefs to scupper Super Bowl three-peat hopes

NEW ORLEANS: The Philadelphia Eagles delivered a dominant performance in New Orleans, dismantling the Kansas City Chiefs 40-22 on Sunday to halt their bid for an unprecedented third consecutive Super Bowl title.

Despite the pre-game narrative surrounding Kansas City's potential dynasty, Philadelphia's defence - the best in the NFL this season - left no room for debate. Patrick Mahomes was sacked six times and threw two interceptions, as the Eagles ruthlessly snuffed out any hopes of a Chiefs comeback at the Superdome.

The victory marked Philadelphia's second Super Bowl triumph, their first since 2018. Though the Chiefs managed to contain star running back Saquon Barkley, Jalen Hurts delivered a statement performance. The Eagles quarterback silenced critics with a masterful 46-yard touchdown pass that all but sealed Kansas City's fate.

Hurts, named Super Bowl MVP, reflected on the journey that led him to this moment.

"I've learned from every experience, the good and the bad, and used it as fuel," he said. "There's always doubt, but this was our time. Two years ago, it wasn't. Today, we finished the job."

The Chiefs, seeking to extend their dominance, never found their

rhythm. They recorded just one first down in the entire first half, and their struggles began early.

Philadelphia struck first with a 'tush push' touchdown from Hurts, followed by a Jake Elliott field goal. Then, the Eagles' defence took over - sacking Mahomes on back-to-back plays before rookie Cooper DeJean returned an interception for a 38-yard touchdown. Mahomes, who had gone 298 pass attempts without a pick, threw another just five plays later, leading to a touchdown by A.J. Brown.

The Eagles continued to pile on, with Hurts lofting a deep pass to DeVonta Smith for another score. Philadelphia fans, sensing history, mockingly mimicked Kansas City's Tomahawk Chop as the Chiefs risked becoming the first team ever shut out in a Super Bowl.

Mahomes salvaged some pride with a pair of late touchdown passes to Xavier Worthy and DeAndre Hopkins, but it was too little, too late.

"Credit to the Eagles, they were better from start to finish," Mahomes admitted. "I just didn't play to my standard, and I have to be better next time."

For the Chiefs, the dream of a historic three-peat crumbled in New Orleans. For the Eagles, it was a night of redemption and resounding triumph. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

CULINARY AFFAIR

Biryani cooking competition

MUSCAT: 'Dum Dum Biryani Fest,' organized by 'Me Friend,' the digital platform of Gulf Madhyamam, announced that preparations are underway to find the best Biryani chefs in Oman. The festival, which is the largest Biryani cooking competition in Oman, will proceed in three phases. The first phase, which included online registration and submission of cooking recipes, has already been completed. Positive responses have been received from participants from various countries, including India. Thousands of people have registered. In the second phase a semifinal competition featuring the top 50 contestants will take place on February 14th'2025. Details about the nature of the competition will be shared later through Gulf Madhyamam newspaper and social media pages.

In the third & final phase, a mega-final competition will take place on February 21st'2025 at the Muscat Bowsher Football Club, featuring the top 20 selected contestants. The grand finale will be a live cooking event.

The winners of the 'Dum Dum Biryani Fest' will be awarded exciting prizes. Prizes will also be awarded to those selected for the semifinals. The jury panel, consisting of renowned chefs such as Chef Suresh Pillai - The Ambassador of Kerala Cuisine, culinary expert Abida Rasheed - celebrity chef specialized in Malabari cuisine, and popular host Raj Kalesh - an Indian magician, chef, TV host, stage choreographer and performer hailing from Kerala, will choose the final winners. The 'Dum Dum Biryani Fest' presents a golden opportunity to showcase the unique taste of our homemade Biryani to the world.

Winners of Muscat's grand taste festival will be awarded the 'OMANS Biriyani Dum Star' title. The organizers expressed their happiness in bringing the 'Dum Dum Biryani Fest' to Oman after its successful execution in Kerala. Through this event, they aim to introduce the diverse flavors of Biryani to the Sultanate.

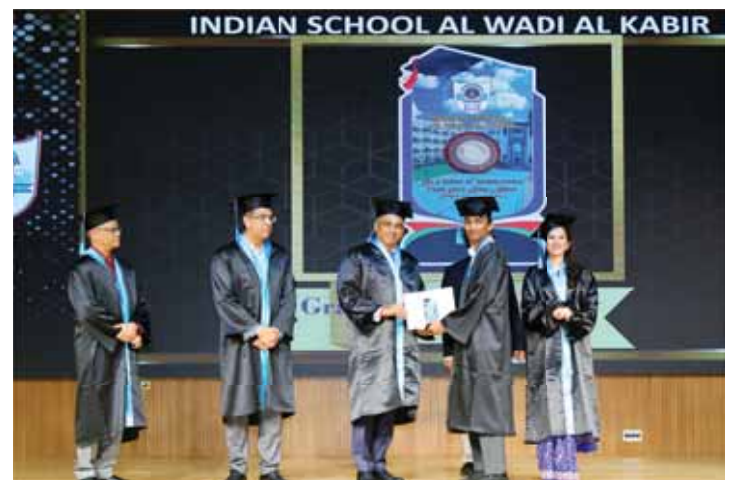
To add excitement to the grand finale night, there will be musical performances by popular singers Akbar Khan and Dana Rasik, along with a variety of entertainment activities such as game shows, a mehndi festival, kids' zones, food stalls offering chat counters, Kannur delicacies, and much more. Entry is free.

Shahi Foods is the event's main sponsor, with additional support from Badar Al Sama, SOUQRIMA.COM, Foodlands Restaurant, Bismi Jeerakashala Rice, G Gold Jewelry, Delta Pharmacy, Al Faw Poultry, Gulf Art, and more. The event is being coordinated by Intelligent Event.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Indian School Wadi Kabir bids a heartfelt farewell to the outgoing Class of 2024-25

MUSCAT: On 6th February 2025, Indian School Wadi Kabir hosted an emotional and memorable Graduation Ceremony for the outgoing batch of Class XII at Majan Heights auditorium. The event was graced by the esteemed presence of Mr. Giridhar S Varadachari, General Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the National Bank of Oman, who presided over the ceremony as the Chief Guest. Other distinguished dignitaries included Sheikh Shri Anil Khimji, Chief Patron; Mr. Rajendra Ved, Executive Director of ISWK and ISWK Cambridge; Mr. Alkesh Joshi, Assistant Executive Director of ISWK and ISWK Cambridge management committees; Mr. Sachin Toprani, Honorary President of the School Management Committee of ISWK; other esteemed members of the School Management Committee, Vice Principals, Assistant Vice Principals, Heads of various departments, Coordinators, teachers, parents of the outgoing batch, and, of course, the graduating Class XII students.



The event commenced with a traditional lighting of the lamp by Mr. Giridhar S Varadachari, along with Sheikh Shri Anil Khimji, Mr. Rajendra Ved, Mr. Alkesh Joshi, Mr. Sachin Toprani, other esteemed members of the School Management Committee, Head Boy and Head Girl of the outgoing batch. The lighting of the lamp symbolized the illumination of knowledge and the transition from school to new horizons.

A beautiful prayer song sung by the teachers added a spiritual and solemn touch to the ceremony, symbolizing the collective blessings for the students' future success. To honour the Chief Guest, a potted plant was presented by Master Isaan Mahadevan, Deputy Head Boy, and Miss Anagha Prasad Nair, Deputy Head Girl. The Western Music choir presented a soulful rendition of "I Have a Dream," further elevating the evening's emotional atmosphere.

In his address, Mr. Sachin Toprani, honorary President of the School Management Committee expressed his heartfelt wishes for the outgoing batch. He began by reading out a message from the Principal,

Mr. D. N. Rao, in which the Principal encouraged the students to cultivate adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills—qualities that go beyond academic excellence. He emphasized that success is not just measured by personal achievements but also by the positive impact one makes on the world. Mr. Toprani continued his speech by reminding the students that the world outside the school awaits, and they must embrace it with confidence, resilience, and wisdom gained over the years. He concluded with an inspiring quote from Albert Einstein: "Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value."

The Chief Guest, Mr. Giridhar S Varadachari, delivered a riveting speech that resonated deeply with the students. He emphasized the importance of time, adaptability, and change, reminding the students that those who embrace change would thrive in an ever-evolving world. Sharing personal experiences, Mr. Varadachari spoke about the key qualities that lead to success: embracing change, holding on to core values, being kind and compassionate, believing in oneself, and never ceasing to learn. He reassured the students that they are bigger than any challenges they might face and encouraged them to always seek help when needed. He reminded the students that if they waste time, time will waste them. His speech concluded with an introduction to the technique of visualization, helping students envision their dreams and work towards them with determination. As a token of appreciation, a memento was presented to the Chief Guest by Sheikh Shri Anil Khimji in gratitude for his inspiring words and guidance.

In their heartfelt valedictory addresses, Head Girl Ms. Harini and Head Boy Master Sajad Ahmed shared their memorable moments at the school, expressing gratitude to teachers, mentors, and parents for their unwavering support. They both reflected on their journeys from Kindergarten to Class XII, acknowledging the role of their teachers and peers in shaping their lives and education.

The ceremony reached its pinnacle when Mr. Giridhar S Varadachari, along with the distinguished members of the School Management Committee, presented certificates and mementos to the outgoing students. Special awards were presented to exceptional students: Aman Ikbal (Science), Tarnjot Kaur (Commerce), and Anakha Anoop (Humanities) were named Ideal ISWK Students, while John Abraham Mathew (Science), Meet Vinod Sangtani (Commerce), and Sakina Jariwala (Humanities) were honoured as Achievers of the Year.

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks, followed by the rendition of the National Anthem of Oman, and the National Anthem of India, marking a fitting end to the evening's proceedings.

IN PICTURES AROUND THE WORLD

Traditional handicrafts exhibition held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan
This photo shows the scene of a traditional handicrafts exhibition in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The exhibition attracted more than 100 artisans from across the country, who brought a variety of handicrafts, including accessories, clothes, carpets, souvenirs, wooden items, handwoven fabrics, etc. Xinhua

Indonesia launches Free Health Check programme to improve public health
A medical worker offers an ophthalmological checkup to a woman during the Free Health Check (CKG) programme at Ciater Community Health Centre in South Tangerang, Banten Province, Indonesia. Xinhua

People visit model expo at Malta Maritime Museum
People visit a model expo at the Malta Maritime Museum in Birgu, Malta. Xinhua

155 Iraqi families leave Syria's refugee camp in latest repatriation effort
People leave the al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria. A total of 569 people from 155 Iraqi families left the al-Hol refugee camp in northeastern Syria, in the latest repatriation efforts coordinated between the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Iraqi government. Xinhua

ROUND-UP

Kia Sonet 2025: Smart urban compact SUV

This compact SUV offers a sleek exterior, advanced technological features, bold and distinctive design based on Kia's 'Opposites United' philosophy

MUSCAT: The 2025 Kia Sonet PE combines modern design and functionality, making it an ideal choice for urban use and for small families alike.

This compact SUV offers a sleek exterior, advanced technological features, bold and distinctive design based on Kia's 'Opposites United' philosophy. The Sonet is built for spirited, young-at-heart consumers and offers a fulfilling driving experience, catering to a wide range of lifestyles and needs.

Displaying a dynamic stance in a confident, compact body, the Sonet features Kia's signature 'tiger-nose' grille, 'heartbeat' LED daytime running lights, and a stylish front skid plate beneath. It is introduced with Kia's focus on consumer insight-driven product innovation, targeting the young generation who are tech-savvy, aspirational, and socially connected.

In keeping with Kia's trendy, bold, and youthful brand persona, the Sonet's driving experience has been designed to provide a pleasurable yet sporty journey for all passengers. Customer safety is a top priority for Kia, thanks to an array of safety measures including, anti-lock braking system with Electronic Stability Program, Break Assist System, rear parking sensors and ISOFIX child-seat anchoring points to name a few.

The Sonet is offered with a versatile Smart stream 1.5-liter four-cylinder engine, producing 114 hp at 6300 rpm. Paired with a Kia's revolutionary Intelligent Variable Transmission (IVT). The drive train system offers a fuel coverage of 17.5 km/ltr as per GSMO standards.

Keeping the comfort of the driver and passengers in mind, the Sonet's interior offers a modern, dynamic, and bold design. It intelligently incorporates convenience, with plenty of legroom, headroom, and shoulder room for all passengers, along with a luggage capacity of 392 liters.

The newly redesigned center panel with a sophisticated design, the TFT cluster offers more High-Tech image, & 8-inch Audio touch-screen with infotainment options such as Android Auto and Apple Car Play.

Aiming to create the perfect atmosphere inside, the Sonet creates a concert-like ambiance with a high-end features like front and second-row USB chargers with AC vents &Auto Cruise Control (ACC). For added convenience, Kia has incorporated a Smart Key system with a button start.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the official distributor for Kia in Oman, offers a rewarding ownership experience.

ISLAMIC BANKING

Meethaq launches special offer for credit card holders

MUSCAT: In line with its strategy to provide special benefits to its customers and credit card holders, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat, has announced the launch of a special offer on its credit cards. The offer includes an annual fee reversal for the first year valid until 31 March.

The offer has been introduced to further reinforce Meethaq's commitment to providing outstanding banking offerings for customers. To avail this offer, customers need to activate their credit cards within 90 days of issuance and use the card at any of their preferred shopping destinations for transactions.

Diverse range

Meethaq Islamic Banking provides a diverse range of credit cards to cater to the various needs of its customers. These include the Meethaq Lulu Credit Card, Visa Platinum Credit Card, Visa Gold Credit Card and Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Card. Customers can get the privilege of paying for their purchases over a period of 12 months at 0% interest with the Easy Payment Plan. Additional features include free issuance of supplementary cards for family members, secured online shopping and global acceptance, allowing customers to access a world of offers and many other benefits.

On this occasion, Sami Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager - Meethaq Personal Banking, said: "The introduction of this offer was met with great enthusiasm last year, reflecting the value and benefits Meethaq's credit cards provide. We are delighted to extend this offer to even more customers this year. This initiative underscores Meethaq's unwavering commitment to enhancing its suite of products and services to meet the evolving needs and aspiration of our valued customers."

As the leading provider of Sharia-compliant financial services in Oman, Meethaq Islamic Banking offers a comprehensive suite of Sharia-compliant products and services. With a network of 32 branches across the Sultanate, Meethaq ensures enhanced accessibility to banking services through a dedicated network along with free access to over 890 ATMs and CDMs of Bank Muscat.

RECOGNITION

Europcar Oman & Bahrain wins top prestigious awards

MUSCAT: Europcar Oman & Bahrain, a leading mobility services company has recently achieved a remarkable feat by winning Best Customer Service Awards for 2025 as well as the Top Scorer Traveller Review Awards from Booking.com for both Europcar and Goldcar.

These accolades highlight the company's commitment to excellence and its dedication to providing unparalleled service to customers.

Muscat International Airport & Salalah Airport in Oman were recognized by world leading popular online platforms Rentalcars.com and booking.com, reaffirming the exceptional customer experience offered by Europcar in these locations.

The Goldcar brand which was launched in 2024 also has managed to secure it's position as an awardee voted in by the travellers at the Muscat International Airport. This remarkable achievement can be attributed to the company's employee-centric approach and their relentless pursuit of customer satisfaction.

"Our success is a result of our team's dedication to providing exceptional customer experiences. These awards reinforce our belief in the importance of prioritizing customer satisfaction in everything we do. Winning the Best Customer Service Awards for 2025 and the Top Scorer Traveller Review Awards from Booking.com is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence and unmatched service for our valued customers and we couldn't be prouder," said Nitin Sapre, CEO Europcar Oman & Bahrain.

Europcar's success story is undoubtedly linked to their focus on employee well-being. The company understands that satisfied employees translate into satisfied customers. By creating a positive work environment, Europcar empowers its employees to go above and beyond to ensure customer satisfaction. This focus on employee well-being results in a motivated and dedicated workforce that consistently delivers exceptional service.

The company believes in continuous improvement and growth, a philosophy that drives them to constantly evaluate their processes and adapt to changing customer needs.

These accolades reinforce Europcar Oman & Bahrain's position as the leading choice for mobility services in these regions and flexibility is what they offer through both their brands- be it to the premium segment as well as being an attractive option for budget-conscious travellers via Goldcar. By staying ahead of industry trends and embracing new technologies, the company ensures that their customers benefit from the latest advancements in mobility services.

IN AL WUSTA RELATIONSHIPS

BankDhofar engages with Al Riadah customers

MUSCAT: BankDhofar, the second-largest bank in Oman by branch network size, hosted an exclusive reception for its premier banking customers in the Wilayat of Duqm, Al Wusta Governorate.

The event was held under the patronage of Sheikh Bader bin Nasser Al Farsi, Wali of Duqm, and was attended by senior bank officials, representatives from local government agencies, and key executives from major companies in Oman.

As the first event of its kind in Al Wusta Governorate, this gathering aimed to build stronger connections with BankDhofar's elite clientele and corporate executives. Attendees were introduced to the bank's suite of tailored financial solutions, particularly its newly launched Private Banking Services division, which is dedicated to helping premium customers and their families manage their wealth with confidence and expertise.

Amjad Iqbal bin Hassan Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar, commented: "BankDhofar is committed to deepening relationships with our valued customers by engaging with them directly, understanding their needs, and incorporating their feedback into our service offerings. This meeting with our esteemed clients in Al Wusta, particularly in Wilayat of Duqm, reflects our dedication to customer satisfaction."

Attendees were also introduced to the exclusive benefits of BankDhofar's Al Riadah Privilege Banking Account, designed to complement their modern and fast-paced lifestyle. Features include attractive monthly interest rates on high-yield savings accounts, a variety of loan and deposit products, a robust rewards program, and seamless banking through the mobile application.

BankDhofar offers Al Riadah customers a range of premium financial services, including the Visa Infinite Debit Card, Visa Signature Debit Card, Visa Signature Credit Card, Visa Infinite Credit Card, and MasterCard World Credit Card. These cards provide customers with benefits such as hotel bookings, shopping protection, purchase security, access to international business lounges, and more. Additionally, the exclusive BankDhofar Rewards Program allows customers to earn and redeem points through the bank's mobile banking application, enhancing their overall banking experience.

With a strong focus on growth, innovation, and customer satisfaction, BankDhofar achieved a net profit increase of 12.5% in 2024, reaching OMR 43.6 million compared to OMR 38.7 million in 2023. The bank continues to lead in digital transformation, being one of the first in Oman to introduce Apple Pay and Samsung Pay. Its commitment to modernization is further reflected in the deployment of wholesale cash deposit machines and the launch of Easy Biz, a digital collection and settlement platform. Additionally, BankDhofar continues to make significant strides in cybersecurity, reinforcing its dedication to safeguarding customer transactions and data.

EMPOWERING FUTURE LEADERS

MCBS launches new course on sustainable development

MUSCAT: The Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) announced the launch of its new course, Introduction to Sustainable Development, which began in the Spring semester of the 2025 academic year. This initiative reinforces MCBS's deep commitment to integrating the principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability into its academic programs and operations.

Designed for students at OQF Level 6, the course explores critical topics, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), circular economies, and the practical application of sustainable practices within local Omani contexts. Students will actively participate in thought-provoking discussions, analyze real-world case studies, and engage in hands-on, activity-based projects that may include field trips and other exciting initiatives, addressing the specific sustainability challenges facing Oman.

This new course directly supports MCBS's broader mission to contribute to the realization of Oman Vision 2040 by empowering students to become future sustainability leaders. Through an emphasis on teamwork, problem-solving, and innovation, the course (SOSD 2000) will equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to confidently and creatively address pressing global and local challenges.The course is also part of MCBS's implementation plan for the National Strategy of Green Universities, issued by the Environment Authority and adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation.

Students will have the opportunity to study at Estidama, MCBS's state-of-the-art sustainability center, and join the vibrant Sustainable Development Club, where they can collaborate with fellow students to create meaningful change.

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THIS FEBRUARY, CELEBRATE LOVE IN ALL ITS FORMS

From cherished romantic escapes, exclusive dining moments and pampering journeys available from 12 to 15 February inclusive, Shangri-La Muscat offers you picture-perfect moments woven into memories to treasure forever.

CUPID'S DINING EXPERIENCES

A selection of dinner set menus for a memorable culinary experience.

Sultanah
5-course set menu
OMR 60 net per peson

Aangan by Rohit Ghai
5-course set menu
OMR 45 net per person

Capri Court
4-course set menu
OMR 40 net per person

Vegetarian options are available upon request

ROOFTOP ROMANCE DINING

Dine under a clear sky with the soothing sound of waves crashing on the shores. Choose your preferred set menu inspired by the freshest catch of the ocean.

Bait Al Bahr
From OMR 45 net per person

BEACH DINE BY DESIGN

Celebrate love with a 4-course seafood menu for two, inclusive of a bottle of sparkling bubbles, in an intimate setting, under the stars, on our beach at Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah.

4-course seafood set menu | OMR 150 net per couple with a bottle of sparkling bubbles and romantic table set up*

**Supplement applies for special setups with roses*

CLIFFTOP DINE BY DESIGN

A magical dinner overlooking the iconic Muscat arch with a 5-course set menu and a bottle of crisp bubbles.

OMR 250 net for two people
Prior bookings are required

Exclusive for one couple per evening

LOVERS' PAMPERING TIME

A luxurious 1-hour couple's massage, with a complimentary glass of sparkling bubbles and chocolates on us.

Chi, The Spa
OMR 160 net per couple | 14 February

ROMANTIC ESCAPADE

Gift yourself and your loved one a romantic getaway at Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah* for a fun and relaxing time or escape to Shangri-La Al Husn, located on the clifftop, for the ultimate retreat.

Stays are for two adults with daily breakfast.

**Special overnight stay offer available on 14th February, upon request, with romantic in-room*

RESERVATIONS
Dining: 2477 6565 | Stays: 2477 6262 | Chi, The Spa: 2477 6828
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