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Times OF OMAN

GOLDEN JUBILEE

50 YEARS OF LEGACY

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OCCIDENTAL MUKHAIZNA

Oman secures OMR11.5 billion investment through Block 53

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Energy and Minerals has signed an agreement to extend the Block 53 Exploration and Production Sharing Agreement (EPSA) for Occidental Mukhaizna and its partners, securing operations until 2050.

Under the amended agreement, the concession has been extended to 2050, facilitating an estimated investment of OMR11.5 billion (approximately USD30 billion) over the extended term.

These investments will cover capital and operational expenditures designed to enhance production efficiency and deploy advanced extraction technologies, optimising resource recovery within the block.

The anticipated investments are expected to strengthen supply chain sustainability and operational support contracts, fostering economic growth and generating employment opportunities across Oman's oil, gas, and related industries.

The Mukhaizna field in Al Wusta Governorate has been a key contributor to Oman's oil production, consistently ranking as Oman's highest-producing crude oil field.

Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, emphasised that the extension of this agreement is a strategic milestone in ensuring the field's continued role in supporting the national economy.

He highlighted that the planned investments will drive production growth and enhance value creation within Oman's energy sector. -ONA

20-22 MAY 2025

His Majesty to visit Spain on Tuesday

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on a state-visit to the Kingdom of Spain this Tuesday.

A statement was issued by the Diwan of Royal Court to this effect. It reads as follows:

"In a manifestation of ties of friendship between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Spain, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on a state-visit to the Kingdom of Spain during 20-22 May 2025.

The visit, which comes in response to an invitation received by His Majesty from King Felipe VI of Spain, aims to boost the relations of cooperation between the two countries and push them towards wider horizons.

His Majesty's visit to Spain comes within the context of elevating cooperation between the two countries in various spheres to serve the joint interests and meet their current and future aspirations. The visit will address a set of regional and international developments. >A5

Steady Efforts Towards Strategic Relations and New Partnerships >A4

ROLE OF SHURA AS A PARTNER IN OMAN'S GROWTH EMPHASISED

Council of Ministers, Shura Council hold joint meeting

MUSCAT: The Council of Ministers and the Shura Council today held a joint meeting at the Council of Ministers' premises in accordance with the Basic Law of the State and the Council of Oman Law.

The meeting was aimed to support ongoing cooperation among institutions of the state and formulate common visions that contribute to the implementation of public policies and the promotion of the country's supreme interest.

HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, and members of the Council of Ministers received Khalid bin Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, and members of the Shura Council Office.

At the outset of the meeting, HH Sayyid Fahd underscored the importance of the Shura Council's coordination with the government towards enhancing the process of comprehensive development witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman.

He reviewed means of supporting cooperation between the two councils in a manner that maintains efforts to serve the nation and its citizens.

The meeting also laid emphasis on the priority accorded by Council of Ministers to the role of Shura Council as a partner in the nation-building process.

In pursuance of this approach, service ministers periodically respond to the Shura Council's request (to the ministers) to submit ministerial statements that explain efforts made by government units to implement projects, according to the priorities of each phase to provide the best services to citizens.

The government also responds to Shura Council requests to host government officials to present visual presentations and discuss topics proposed by its committees.

The proposals and opinions of the Shura Council members are studied and incorporated into economic and social plans and programmes.

The joint meeting reviewed several topics, including continued coordination and cooperation with the government, as well as ways to enhance community awareness programmes and activate the role of the Coordination Committee that liaises between the two councils.

For their part, the Shura Council Chairman and the members of the Shura Council's Office expressed the importance of the joint meeting and the positive outcomes that it yielded. >A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Mid-day work break

1 From June 1, workers will be prohibited from working at construction sites or open areas in the afternoon. >A2

OMAN
CBSE class 12 toppers

2 Behind every top score is a story — of quiet resolve, unexpected surprises and study sessions. >A2

WORLD
Two dead in US

3 Two people were killed and 19 others injured after a Mexican ship collided with the Brooklyn Bridge. >B5

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Dreams, discipline, a dash of doodling: Meet Oman's CBSE class 12 toppers

Sakina Jariwala

Tarnjot Kaur

What's common among Oman's Class 12 CBSE toppers is not just their academic excellence, but a deep sense of self-awareness, passion for learning beyond textbooks, and a belief in balance

Sanghvi Anand

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Behind every top score is a story — of quiet resolve, unexpected surprises, snack breaks turned study sessions, and families that stood firm like a backbone.

What's common among Oman's Class 12 CBSE toppers is not just their academic excellence, but a deep sense of self-awareness, passion for learning beyond textbooks, and a belief in balance. Whether from commerce or humanities, these students charted their own unique paths to success — with creativity, curiosity and calm.

No rigid routine, just meaningful study: Sakina Jariwala, ISWK

In her remarks from Mumbai, Sakina — the Indian School Wadi Kabir student who topped Oman in the humanities stream (98.4%) — admitted her study routine wasn't rigid, but it worked for her. "If I'm being totally honest, I didn't have a strict, fixed study schedule. I was mostly surviving off mini phone and snack breaks to freshen up. But when I did study, I made sure it actually counted," she said.

Her approach leaned heavily on understanding over rote learning. Psychology was her favourite subject "It wasn't about memorising random facts, I could actually see it play out in everyday life, which made it super interesting."

Creative to the core, Sakina said she finds calm in origami, doodling, and Pinterest boards. "Basically, if it's creative or calming, I'm into it," she added. Even during the intense prep months, she didn't disconnect completely. "I believe you need little breaks to stay sane and focused."

Though she wasn't expecting to top, the moment she found out was unforgettable. "I was actually in shock when I saw my marks. But once it sunk in... yeah, I was over the moon. Still feels surreal."

She is planning a BBA with a focus on marketing, right here in Oman. Family, she added, was her biggest emotional support. "My parents didn't pressure me or stress me out about marks — they just trusted me to handle things my way. That kind of space made a big difference."

She also recalled the warmth of celebrating with friends and cake, and thanked her teachers for being a calm, consistent support throughout. "They were always there to clear doubts, motivate us, and just keep things steady even when we were all freaking out."

From accounts to authors, joy in both: Sanghvi Anand, ISM

Sanghvi, a Class 12 student of Indian School Muscat, topped the commerce stream in Oman with 97.8%. She described her preparation as intense but ultimately fulfilling. "There were times when it felt like a lot to handle... but gradually, I found my rhythm."

Calm and composed walking into the exam hall, she aimed to top her school — but the Oman topper title left her stunned. "It took a moment to sink in... I felt proud. All the late nights and revision marathons had truly paid off."

With a natural flair for Accounts and Applied Math, Sanghvi also finds Economics deeply engaging. "Understanding how real-world systems work, connecting theories to what we see in the news or experience in daily life — that was fascinating."

Her hobbies span public speaking, baking, reading and playing the guitar. "Reading became my go-to way to relax during breaks... baking was comforting. It gave me a moment to breathe."

Sanghvi plans to pursue Chartered Accountancy in India. "It's a field that's both challenging and rewarding. I see it as a solid foundation for the career I want to build."

Her family's support, she said, was unwavering. "They believed in me even when I was unsure, and that kind of emotional strength really helped me keep going."

On her celebration to mark the occasion, she replied: "It was simple and intimate. Just my family and I. They've been part of this journey from the very beginning, so celebrating with them felt right."

She also credited her teachers and school for constantly encouraging growth. "They went beyond the syllabus — they challenged us to think deeper. Co-curriculars like Model United Nations (MUN) and the business pitch competition ISM BRIDGE enriched my school life. MUN helped me grow as a speaker and critical thinker... and ISM BRIDGE gave me a real-world sense of entrepreneurship."

Consistency and confidence: Tarnjot Kaur, ISWK

Ranked third in commerce across Oman (97.2%), Indian School Wadi Kabir's Tarnjot Kaur said her strategy was consistency. "We started regular testing in November, and that gave me a solid base. By the time the final exams arrived, I felt prepared and confident."

She scored a perfect 100 in Accountancy and said Economics helped her understand global trends. "It was fascinating how events in the world suddenly made more sense when you studied them through an economic lens."

A passionate debater and Model UN delegate, Tarnjot also led ISWK's Business & Entrepreneurship Club in Grade 12 and spearheaded a sanitary health campaign called SHE: Show Her Empowerment, collecting more than 4,000 sanitary pads for shelters and public outreach.

She now heads to the University of Bristol in the UK to pursue a degree in Law — a field she sees as her calling. "My parents, both in STEM fields, always encouraged me to carve my own path. And my teachers — they were available at any hour, answering our doubts and offering reassurance."

Her celebration was spiritual and sweet. "We started the day with ardaas (prayer) at the Gurdwara, and then spent time as a family. I also made sure to call my grandparents back in India — they were waiting to hear the news!"

More than marks

From psychology to accountancy and economics to activism, these toppers displayed that excellence isn't just about textbooks — it's also about curiosity, community and calm. Whether planning a career in law, marketing or finance, each of them carries forward more than just marks — they bring with them confidence, character and compassion.

FROM JUNE 1

Midday breaks announced for workers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: From June 1, workers will be prohibited from working at construction sites or open areas with high temperatures during the midday hours, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The rules will remain in force till August.

Heat stress

The Ministry of Labour (MoL), said on Sunday, "A Safe Summer campaign to raise awareness of heat stress and the need to adhere to the midday work stoppage, in accordance with Article (16), Clause (2) of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations, which states the following:

High temperatures

Workers are prohibited from working at construction sites or open areas with high temperatures during the midday hours from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. during the months of June, July, and August."

The Ministry called on all private sector establishments to cooperate and comply with this measure, which is part of efforts to promote a safe work environment and reduce heat-related injuries.

COMMENTARY

The old age revenge

Saleh Al-Shaibany

I met an interesting elderly gentleman while I was coming out from the hospital. He was on the wheel chair and struggling to push it so he could come out of the crowded corridor.

There was a pleading expression on his face as I was passing him that made me stop and offer him my help. He happily accepted it and asked me to wheel him at the waiting lounge. He also asked me to get him water "mixed with fruit juice ".

That was a challenge but I ended buying him a bottle of water and a can of apple juice. I found a plastic cup at the water dispenser that I used to mix up the drinks. He gratefully accepted the cup and as I walking away, he motioned me to sit next to him.

He also motioned me to pour him another cup of the stuff. I did and I watched him drink wondering where his family was.

He read my mind and said," don't worry, I have not been dumped here. My daughter is somewhere around. She will turn up sometime."

Since I had no wish to babysit for an old man, I excused myself to leave. It was then he started to tell me about himself. After doing a good deed, I did not want to appear rude to erase the good effort. So I stayed and listened.

He had a prostrate cancer when he was 62 and the operation was not successful. The young doctor, trying to comfort him said there should be no regret if he passed away since he had already "reached a ripe old age."

The comment scared him and made him feel very old but last night, he told me, with a bright toothy grin, he celebrated his ninety first birthday! He lived 30 years after the second operation. He now realized how "young" he was at the tender age of 62 only because he made it past ninety now.

A thought passed my mind. I asked him how old was the doctor then? He was in his early thirties and added " I am sure he is now the same age as I was when he diagnosed me."

I suddenly became suspicious of his motives for being in the same hospital where he did his prostrate operation just a day after his ninety first birthday. It did not look like he was waiting for a doctor.

Yes, he calmly answered, that he was indeed waiting for a doctor. A minute later, a woman in her fifties walked towards us with a grey-haired man in a white coat. She was his daughter followed by the same doctor. The medical man smiled broadly and understood why he was there. "I guess we are both old men now."

"No, you are not," the elder man answered quickly," I have that privilege. You don't have it yet. Wait for another thirty years before you can declare yourself old."

It was quick, short and sweet. The doctor returned to his duties and the old man invited me to his house to celebrate his birthday the "proper way". I politely declined and left him in the good hands of his daughter. As I was driving out of the hospital, I saw him being wheeled to the car.

He had a bright smile on his face, brighter than the morning sun. The meeting with the doctor might have embarrassed his daughter but I suspect it was a personal triumph for him. I am sure he would celebrate every day that passes by and he would die happily when his time finally comes.

And why not?

EXCHANGE EXPERTISE

Shura Council Chief receives delegation from Iraqi Council

MUSCAT: Khalid bin Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, on Sunday received a delegation from the Electricity and Energy Committee of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

The Iraqi delegation is on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman to exchange expertise with the Shura Council about legislative and economic aspects.

At the outset of the meeting, Al Maawali commended bilateral relations and the strong bonds binding the peoples of the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Iraq.

He underscored the significance of mutual visits between legislative councils in consolidating parliamentary diplomacy, expertise and supporting bilateral relations in economic and investment fields.

For his part, Mohammed Nouri Abed Rabbo, Chairman of the Parliamentary Energy and Electricity Committee in the Iraqi Council of Representatives, stressed the importance of maintaining communication and exchanging visits to serve the shared legislative interests of the two countries.

As part of the programme, the Shura Council's Economic and Financial Committee held a joint meeting with the Iraqi Council of Representatives' Electricity and Energy Committee. The meeting was chaired by Ahmed bin Said Al Sharqi, Chairman of the Shura Council's Economic and Financial Committee, and Mohammed Nouri Abed Rabbo, Chairman of the Parliamentary Energy and Electricity Committee in the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

During the meeting, Al Sharqi reviewed the legislative roles undertaken by the Shura Council. He also spoke about the integration between the Shura Council and other institutions of the state within the context of national decision-making and the realisation of the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Al Sharqi also highlighted the tasks of the Council's standing committees, the role of the Secretariat General in providing technical support to members and discussed the Council's efforts to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy in various regional and international forums and meetings.

Al Sharqi spoke about the role of the Shura Council's Economic and Financial Committee in debating draft laws of economic nature, analyzing the state's general budget and reviewing economic agreements, in addition to highlighting economic challenges.

For his part, Mohammed Nouri Abed Rabbo spoke about the draft laws being discussed by the Parliamentary Energy and Electricity Committee in the Iraqi Council of Representatives. The bills include one on regulating electricity production and distribution and promoting investment in the renewable energy sector. Then, the Iraqi delegation toured the Shura Council's halls and listened to a briefing about modern technologies used in the council's deliberations and the electronic voting process. -ONA

Pact signed to boost digital economy's contribution to GDP

The move aims to enhance the position of the Sultanate of Oman as a regional centre for advanced technologies

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, signed a collaboration programme with Indian company "Kaynes Semicon" to establish a company to design very-large-scale integrated (VLSI) circuits in the Sultanate of Oman.

The move aims to enhance the position of the Sultanate of Oman as a regional centre for advanced technologies.

The company's activities will focus on promoting semiconductor design innovation and developing national cadres.

According to the collaboration program, Kaynes Semicon will execute a 12-month qualification programme funded by the Ministry of Labour for 80 Omani engineers on semiconductor design techniques to qualify them as semiconductor specialists who can keep up with the requirements and updates of the future labour market in this field through the company's commitment under this collaboration to transfer global knowledge and standards in the field of semiconductors to the Sultanate of Oman.

This collaboration is part of the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology's efforts to implement a digital industry program under the 'National Program for Digital Economy.'

The initiative aims to attract international technology projects to the Sultanate of Oman in order to enhance the digital economy's contribution to the GDP.

Additionally, it seeks to localise technology, hire qualified Omani personnel, improve the competitiveness of Omani youth in the semiconductor sector, and strengthen the semiconductor system and organisation in Oman.

The programme was signed by Dr. Ali Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communication, and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources and Raju Panicker, CEO of Kaynes Semicon.

Al Shidhani, said that signing this collaboration program with Kaynes Semicon is a remarkable step to build up an integrated sector in the field of the semiconductor industry, which forms an essential pillar of the international digital economy.

This step is part of the strategic inclinations of the Sultanate of Oman to localise advanced technologies, attract qualitative investments that promote national potentials, and increase the quality of Omani cadres.

He added that the centre will be an axis point for the company operations of designing semiconductor chips on the regional level, while relying on national cadres qualified and trained to handle the latest advanced technologies.

In the context of executing a digital industry program Al-Shidhani said that the Ministry is working on creating an environment that attracts advanced technology investments that goes in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 towards a diversified and knowledge-based economy that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

On his turn, Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour said that signing this program is part of the ministry's efforts to qualify national cadres, which undoubtedly will promote the digital economy and market requirements and needs.

He also added that this program is part of the Ministry of Labour's programs related to the labour market, which represents a fundamental step towards diversification and innovation, given that the Sultanate of Oman has achieved considerable accomplishments in its modern renaissance.

OMAN & SPAIN: STEADY EFFORTS TOWARDS STRATEGIC RELATIONS AND NEW PARTNERSHIPS

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman- under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik—seeks to maximize the benefits of its distinguished relations with countries around the world, fostering mutual interests and upholding the principles of international peace and security.

In this context, His Majesty's upcoming state visit to the Kingdom of Spain stands as one of the key milestones, building upon over five decades of advanced bilateral ties rooted in mutual respect and understanding.

Over the past fifty years, the Omani-Spanish relations have been characterized by mutual respect and constructive cooperation, solidifying a robust partnership across various fields, most notably in politics and economics. This has been evident through the exchange of visions, high-level meetings, and bilateral agreements, including the visit of King Felipe VI of Spain to meet His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to offer condolences following the demise of late Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

Furthermore, the two leaders reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest during a phone call on 8 October 2024. Additionally, former King Juan Carlos I of Spain made several visits to Oman, the latest in 2014, which saw the signing of multiple agreements and memoranda of understanding across various sectors.

Oman and Spain share collaborative efforts in numerous sectors to enhance economic and investment cooperation. Business forums, agreements, and MoUs between public and private sectors, along with investment funds, contribute to integration in this regard, strengthening mutual benefits and capitalizing on opportunities in renewable energy, tourism, food security, infrastructure, technology, and defense.

Thamer bin Fayez Al Alawi, Oman's Ambassador to Spain, stated: "This historic visit reflects the depth and strength of the close friendship between our two nations. The meeting of the two leaders will serve as a powerful catalyst to elevate the strategic partnership that has existed since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972 to broader horizons across all fields."

He explained to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the Omani-Spanish relations continue to grow steadily, marked by close bilateral cooperation that has yielded multiple partnerships at various levels. Notably, economic and investment ties have flourished since the 1980s, culminating in the establishment of the Oman-Spain Private Equity Fund (SOPEF) in 2018—a fruitful result of the economic partnership between Oman Investment Authority and Spain's state-owned COFIDES. The fund was further bolstered in 2023, reaching a total value of approximately RO 133 million, with investments in 11 Spanish companies across sectors such as food industries, renewable energy, technology, healthcare, and marketing.

He noted that recent years have seen a significant expansion in agreements between the two countries' sovereign wealth funds, operating on an international scale. Oman has become the third-largest recipient of Spanish investments in the GCC, amounting to around RO 37 million, positioning it as a reliable and attractive partner for Spanish economic sectors, including tourism, civil engineering, chemical and metal industries, water management, and commercial activities.

Trade between the two nations reached nearly RO 94 million by the end of 2024, with Oman's exports to Spain totaling RO 33.8 million and imports from Spain amounting to RO 60.4 million , according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Key imports from Spain include ships, aircrafts, vehicles, foundry products, flooring, and ammunition, while Oman's primary exports to Spain consist of aluminum, plastics, electrical materials, organic chemical products, and frozen fish.

Over 30 Spanish companies are developing strategic projects in Oman, such as Aqualia, which collaborates with Majis Company in managing water facilities at Sohar Port. Spanish company Elecnor is implementing solar and wind energy projects in Oman, while Técnicas Reunidas is involved in the new Duqm refinery. Efforts to strengthen economic cooperation were further highlighted by the first Oman-Spain Business Forum held in Madrid and Barcelona in October 2024, organized in collaboration with the two countries' chambers of commerce.

On cultural ties, the ambassador noted the deep-rooted historical connections dating back to the Arab migration to Andalusia and their role in its civilization. Among prominent Omani figures in Andalusia was the physician Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Uzdi Al Sohari (Ibn Al-Dhahabi), author of the Encyclopedia of Water (the first linguistic-medical dictionary in history), who passed away in Valencia in 1064. Further evidence of historical ties includes Spanish researchers identifying royal Spanish insignia engraved on ancient cannons in Omani forts, particularly at Jabrin Castle.

The ambassador affirmed that Oman remains committed to promoting its cultural, heritage, tourism, and academic wealth in line with Oman Vision 2040. This was vividly showcased at the FITUR International Tourism Fair, where Oman's pavilion won the award for best innovative design, enhancing its image as a tourist destination for Spanish audiences. An Omani cultural evening held on the sidelines attracted over 300 high-profile guests, offering insights into Oman's rich heritage and tourism attractions, he added.

Bilateral and multilateral coordination between the two nations is crucial in promoting regional and global stability through joint efforts in security, mediation, and conflict resolution, stressed the ambassador. Their political stances align closely, as seen in their unified votes at the UN General Assembly on key issues, including ending the occupation of Palestinian territories, recognizing the State of Palestine, and supporting the two-state solution—reflecting a shared commitment to protecting international order, multilateralism, and peoples' right to self-determination and peaceful coexistence, pointed out the Ambassador.

For his part, Francisco Javier Simone, Spain's Ambassador to Oman, emphasized that relations between the two nations are exceptionally friendly and robust, marked by mutual respect and strong institutional ties. Both countries take pride in their joint efforts to promote global understanding and cooperation, alongside advocating dialogue and adherence to international law in conflict resolution.

He told Oman News Agency (ONA) that His Majesty the Sultan's visit holds immense significance for bilateral relations, serving as a unique opportunity to assess past cooperation and explore new collaborative avenues. Oman's strategic regional position and trade ties with major markets like the U.S. and India make it an ideal partner, affirmed the ambassador.

He pointed out that Spanish companies have increasingly recognized the importance of a sustained presence in Oman, with many specializing in engineering and construction having executed projects over the past two decades. Cooperation extends to energy, civil aviation, defense, logistics, and tourism, with promising opportunities in space and clean energy.

When it comes to culture, the ambassador stressed the importance of learning the Arabic and Spanish language to strengthen academic relations and long-term people-to-people exchanges. He noted a growing sense of closeness between the two peoples, with Omanis frequently traveling to Spain for business and tourism, while more Spanish people express interest in visiting Oman.

On his turn, Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), stated that His Majesty the Sultan's visit to Spain marks a pivotal moment in strengthening bilateral relations, reflecting the deep-rooted ties between the two nations. The visit underscores His Majesty's keenness on enhancing economic cooperation and opening new avenues for trade and investment partnerships, he added.

He noted the significant progress in economic cooperation and trade between the two countries, with the OCCI working alongside its Spanish counterpart to explore promising investment opportunities across various sectors. Business forums have played a key role in fostering private-sector engagement, facilitating trade discussions, and developing joint projects that support economic diversification and mutual investment, he pointed out.

"We take pride in the success of the Oman-Spain Private Equity Fund, which embodies the two nations' commitment to long-term economic partnerships. The fund allows the Omani market to benefit from Spanish expertise, technology transfer, and profitable returns, contributing to economic growth in both countries," he said.

He highlighted promising opportunities for cooperation in vital sectors such as industry, tourism, the digital economy, medical tourism, and food resource management, noting that the Spanish market serves as a gateway for Omani investments into Europe. -ONA

IRAN-US NEGOTIATIONS

Foreign Minister, Iranian counterpart discuss Iran-US talks

TEHRAN: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister met with Dr. Abbas Araghchi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Tehran on Sunday.

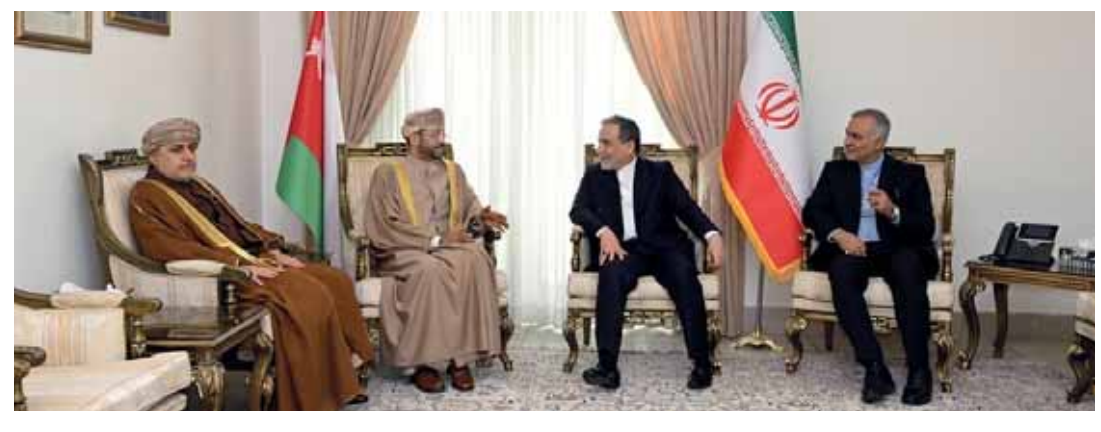
The two ministers discussed a range of ideas and proposals related to Iran-US negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement that fairly, practically, and bindingly addresses the concerns and priorities of both parties while serving regional security and stability.

Additionally, a joint meeting was held between Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister; Dr. Abbas Araghchi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran; and Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar.

During the meeting, the latest developments in the Iran-US talks were discussed within the framework of Oman's mediation efforts.

Mediation efforts

Both the Omani Foreign Minister and his Iranian counterpart welcomed Qatar's initiative to convene this constructive meeting and consultations on ways to support and enhance dialogue while bridging viewpoints to reach understandings that would lead to the desired agreement between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Such an agreement would contribute to strengthening the foundations of regional and international security and stability. -ONA



PATRONAGE OF KING CHARLES III

Royal Cavalry showcases Omani music, equestrian arts

LONDON: The Royal Cavalry of Oman took part in the third day of the 2025 Royal Windsor Horse Show, under the patronage of King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth, at the grounds of Windsor Castle.

During its participation, the Royal Cavalry showcased Omani music and traditional equestrian arts unique to the Sultanate of Oman. Its riders—both male and female—performed displays of the Ardah gallop and horse calming techniques, while the Royal Cavalry Band played Omani, Arab, and international musical pieces.

The Royal Cavalry began its participation with two horse-drawn carriages carrying the flags of the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, parading around the showground. Inside each carriage, the riders scattered Omani frankincense across the grounds of Windsor Castle, engaging the audience.

After that, the Royal Cavalry's musical band and mounted riders entered the arena to the tune of "Jewel of the Arabs," followed by musical formations set to Omani pieces such as "Desert Nights." The riders then formed synchronized movements to the rhythm of "The Distance Has Become One."

The Royal Cavalry Band also performed "Two Shores and One Song," during which the riders—both mounted and on foot—spelled out the initials "RWHS" (Royal Windsor Horse Show) in formation. As the riders exited the arena, the band played the famous English tune "Greensleeves," drawing applause and enthusiastic reactions from the crowd.

In this context, Badr bin Mohammed Al Manthari, Oman's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, emphasized that the Royal Cavalry's participation in the 2025 Royal Windsor Horse Show reflects the deep historical ties between Oman and the UK.

He noted that such engagements highlight the paramount importance of equestrian sports in Omani identity and contribute to strengthening cultural exchange between the two nations. -ONA

TWO-DAY TRIP

High-level delegation to visit Spain

< FROM A1

His Majesty the Sultan will be accompanied during the visit by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Eng. Salim bin Nassir Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Thamer bin Fayez Al Alawi, Ambassador of Oman to Spain.

May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan in his journeys, grant him good health and wellbeing and guard him as a source of pride for Oman and its people!" – ONA

EMPOWER CHILDREN

Oman Childhood Conference & Expo to kick off in October

MUSCAT: The second edition of Oman Childhood Conference & Expo will kick off on 14 October, organised by the "Children First Association* under the theme: "Horizons of Rehabilitation and Empowerment for People with Disabilities in the Era of Emerging Technologies."

This event aligns with ongoing efforts to support and empower children in the Sultanate of Oman, particularly those with disabilities, in line with the pillars of Oman Vision 2040, and will run for three days.

HH Dr. Mona bint Fahd Al Said, Chairperson of the Children First Association, stated during a press conference held by the association on Sunday that this conference builds on the success of its first edition, which focused on gifted children in Oman, emphasizing the importance of discovering and nurturing them as a national wealth and strategic investment for the future.

She added: "This year, we open a new window to support a group dear to us all—children with disabilities—exploring empowerment opportunities through modern technologies that enable rehabilitation, inclusion, and independence."

She noted that the first edition of the Oman Childhood Conference & Expo was a major success, serving as a platform for engagement among stakeholders in child welfare and relevant segments of society.

It featured participation from over 50 exhibitors from within Oman and abroad, including government and private sector institutions.

In his turn, Khalid Saif Al Matrushi, a member of the Children First Association, highlighted the objectives of the second edition, which focuses on challenges facing childhood and opens broad horizons for rehabilitation and empowerment using cutting-edge technologies.

This comes amid growing institutional and societal commitment to building an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all children and provides them with equal opportunities for growth, development, and contribution to the nation's progress.

Rights of children

He stated that the conference aims to raise societal awareness about the rights of children with disabilities, present scientific and practical insights into their integration into society, examine key challenges they face, and highlight the efforts of government and private institutions, as well as higher education entities, in this field.

He added that the conference includes training workshops for children, their families, and professionals in education, health, and social services, alongside showcasing the latest assistive technologies for empowering children with disabilities.

Al Matrushi pointed out that the conference will be accompanied by a comprehensive exhibition—the first of its kind in Oman—bringing together under one roof all institutions, companies, and centers concerned with childhood affairs, including medical and educational centers, rehabilitation institutions, educational and psychological consultancies, as well as entertainment activities and theatrical performances for children.

He pointed out that the conference and exhibition will see participation from several government and international entities, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, Sultan Qaboos University, the Omani Human Rights Commission, UNICEF, alongside numerous civil society associations, rehabilitation centers, and NGOs.

The event targets a broad segment of society, including children and their families, school and kindergarten students. -ONA

CONDOLENCES

****

The Chairman, Management and Staff of Decorstone International LLC, express our deep condolences on the sad demise of

Mr Koshy P Thomas

Inventor, Founder & CEO of Decorstone

****

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family. May the Almighty grant him peaceful rest.

INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT

(Affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi, India) P.O. Box 1551, P.C. 114, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 24786693, 24783995

Email: office@isdoman.com Website: www.isdoman.com

TENDER NOTICE

REF: ISD/ADMIN/TENDER/2025-26/002

Indian School Darsait is seeking bids from suitably qualified vendors who have experience in the execution of the following services:

1	Computer Lab Furniture Replacement
2	Students' Chair & Table Replacement, Staff Chair Replacement
3	Supply of Graduation Gown
4	Purchase of Air Conditioners
5	Interactive Smart Boards
6	Desktop Computers

Interested parties shall collect the Tender documents from the school admin office against the payment of **RO 10/-** each as a non-refundable Tender fee from **19 May 2025 to 26 May 2025** during the working days **(Sunday to Thursday)** of the school between **07:30 a.m. and 02:00 p.m**.

The completed Tender shall be dropped in the Tender Box kept in the school office on or before **27 May 2025 by 2.00 p.m.**

The school reserves the right to reject any tender without providing any reason and does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender.

The Tender document should be submitted in a sealed envelope , addressed to **The Head Purchase Subcommittee, Indian School Darsait,** PO Box 1551,PC114, Darsait, Muscat.

Principal

JOINT MEETING

Matters of public interest discussed

< FROM A1

They spoke about various matters of significance to the public interest. They also expressed their thanks and appreciation to the government and to the country's leadership for their efforts in supporting cooperation between the two councils.

The Shura Council members affirmed that the next phase of development would see more coordination envisaged to safeguard the gains made so far in the march of progress and prosperity in Oman. -ONA

OMAN

AL MURTAFAA CAMP

SAF Chief of Staff receives UK military delegation

MUSCAT: Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) received in his office at Al Murtafaa Camp on Sunday a delegation of the Royal College of Defence Studies in the United Kingdom.

Matters of mutual interest discussed

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views and discussed a set of military matters of mutual interest.

Meeting

The meeting was attended by Commodore Ali Mohammed Al Bulushi, Sultan's Armed Forces Assistant Chief of Staff for Administration and Supply.

— ONA

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Royal Academy of Management marks achievements of 35 C-suite executives

The graduation ceremony reflects Oman's ongoing commitment to enhance leadership capabilities at the national level, which is in line with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Academy of Management (RAM) celebrated the achievements of 35 C-suite executives, all private sector leaders, who recently completed the National CEO Programme. Held under the auspices of Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of the Royal Court and Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Royal Academy of Management, the graduation ceremony reflected Oman's ongoing commitment to enhance leadership capabilities at the national level, which is in line with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040 and the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to invest in human capital and strengthen institutional excellence.

The National CEO Programme is a flagship initiative designed to equip private sector executives with the tools to lead effectively in today's complex and dynamic work environment.

The participants undertook an eight-month immersive learning journey consisting of five core modules, interactive workshops, coaching sessions, field visits, and exposure to global business trends. Delivered in partnership with the reputed London Business School (LBS) in the United Kingdom,the curriculum focused on strategic leadership, digital transformation, innovation, talent development, and building agile and resilient organisations

Hiba Yasser Al Henai, Programme Manager at the Royal Academy of Management, emphasised the national significance of the National CEO Programme and its alignment with Oman's ambition to empower future-ready leaders.

She noted that since the launch of the programme in 2014, The National CEO Programme underscored the requirement for continued investment in executive talent to boost the private sector's competitiveness and inspire future generations.

Helen Kerkentzes, Associate Dean for Executive Education at LBS, praised the fruitful collaboration with RAM, enabling the delivery of a truly distinguished learning experience.

She expressed her pride in the partnership and commended the joint efforts that contributed to the programme's success. Kerkentzes also highlighted the comprehensive and multifaceted nature of the learning journey, which blended academic theory with practical application. She emphasised the value of site visits and engagement with global experts, allowing participants to benefit from diverse perspectives on leadership, innovation, and business strategy.

Delivering remarks on behalf of the graduates, Eng. Hamad bin Abdullah Al Maamari, Executive General Manager, Technical Services and Decarbonisation Executive, Oman LNG, reflected on the transformative nature of the experience he shared with his fellow participants. He highlighted several key moments during the programme that significantly shaped their leadership development and broadened their strategic perspective. In his closing remarks, he extended his appreciation to the teams at RAM and LBS, as well as the subject matter experts, speakers, and facilitators who enriched the programme with global insights and international best practices.

The National CEO Programme incorporated a diverse mix of learning methodologies to ensure deep understanding and effective applications of theory. Individual coaching sessions helped participants explore their leadership styles and develop new ways of thinking by simulating real-life executive environments. These scenarios challenged participants to build high-performing teams and lead organisations capable of adapting and competing in an ever-evolving landscape.

Reflecting on his experience, Adnan Ahmed Hamed Al Shuaili, Co-founder and CEO of eMushrif, said, "The programme offered a series of enriching hands-on experiences, including in-depth case studies of leading global corporations and insights into how strategic decisions are made. It also featured immersive field visits that introduced us to international business cultures, making it an exceptional executive programme."

Dukhan Abdullah Matar Al Foori, Corporate Planning Manager at CCED, added, "It was a privilege to join this inspiring community of national leaders. Beyond the skills and knowledge gained, the programme transformed my understanding of leadership and its impact on my organisation, sector, and country."

Yousuf Ahmed Dawood Al Busaidi, Senior Legal Counsel, Co-Founder, and Deputy Manager at Asyad, commented, "The National CEO Programme was a defining moment in my career. Its rigorous academic content and diverse practical experiences have equipped me with the mindset and tools required to contribute actively to Oman's development and long-term prosperity."

Maha Saud Abdulaziz Al Raisi, AGM, Head – Retail Products at National Bank of Oman, added, "Through this programme, I came to realise that leadership is not merely about making decisions and giving directions, it is about creating an environment that allows others to innovate and grow. The most challenging form of leadership begins with the self; a leader must first transform from within before seeking to change the world around them."

Delivered in partnership with LBS, one of the world's top-ranked business institutions with over five decades of experience in delivering executive education programmes, the National CEO Programme reflects RAM's strategic vision to hone executive leadership styles across all sectors. Through this and other national initiatives, RAM continues to cultivate a new generation of transformative and impactful leaders capable of shaping Oman's future and positioning the private sector as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth.

IN-COUNTRY VALUE

NDC launches programme on ICV promotion

MUSCAT: The 9th parallel programme titled "Mechanisms for Enhancing Local Content" kicked off on Sunday at the National Defence College (NDC) under the auspices of Rear Admiral Ali bin Abdullah Al Shidi, Commandant of the NDC.

Al Shidi delivered a speech in which he said that enhancing local content (in-country value) in government, security and private sectors has become a strategic necessity imposed by global challenges and changes.

He added that success in achieving local added value can only be achieved through integrated policies, an integrative approach across various sectors, and continuous support for knowledge innovation, local industries, and the localisation of supply chains.

A briefing was presented about the general objectives of the parallel programme, most notably highlighting the importance of enhancing ICV and its role in achieving sustainable development.

The programme also highlights key national, regional and international practices and experiences in the field of enhancing local content, as well as reviewing major challenges facing the government-society partnership. The event included recommendations and initiatives that enhance ICV and guide integrated policies and practices between various sectors in line with Oman Vision 2040.

The 9th parallel programme, which runs until 22 May 2025, is conducted within the framework of the NDC's national role to enhance the leadership skills and capabilities of government leaders and senior officers of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF). -ONA

NEW DELHI

OCCI participates in India Expo 2025

NEW DELHI: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Sunday took part in the 21st Franchise Exhibition held in New Delhi, Republic of India.

Oman's delegation was headed by Eng. Hamoud Salim Al Saadi, Second Deputy Chairman of the OCCI Board of Directors, Chairman of the OCCI Commercial Excellence Centre. Eleven Omani trademarks participated in the event alongside the OCCI.

Oman's participation in the expo reflects the country's keenness to explore franchising opportunities in the Indian market, consolidate international trade ties and encourage the Omani business brands to expand into new markets abroad, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which underscores the importance of empowering the private sector and expanding its global presence through strategic partnerships and innovative, value-added projects.

Al Saadi pointed out that Oman's participation in the New Delhi Franchise Exhibition was aimed to convert pioneering ideas into business models capable of expanding in global markets.

Al Saadi underlined the significance of franchising as one of the most practical models for enabling entrepreneurs to expand safely and in an organised manner. Franchising, he added, constitutes a pillar for the growth of an economy based on innovation and entrepreneurship.

Al Saadi said that India is one of the largest and fastest-growing markets in Asia.

He explained that the Indian market represents an important gateway for Omani companies seeking expansion, notably within the context of the strong historical relations between Oman and India and amid the scope of economic integration between the two countries. -ONA

SPECIALISED EXHIBITION

Oman to take part in IMEX Frankfurt

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will participate this Tuesday in IMEX Frankfurt 2025, one of the world's specialised exhibitions for the incentive travel and conferences sector. The 3-day event will be held in Frankfurt, Germany.

Through this participation, Oman aims to promote its diverse tourism offerings and boost its position as a premier destination for incentive travel, conferences, and exhibitions.

This participation aligns with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism's strategy to attract business tourism and international events, as well as to enhance the tourism sector's contribution to GDP. The meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions market is a key pillar supporting this direction.

Oman's pavilion at the expo will feature 17 tourism companies, institutions, and hotel establishments representing the country's tourism sector. These include tour operators, event and conference organizers, and Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Khalid Waleed Al Zadjali, Director of the Oman Convention Bureau at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, emphasized the importance of participating in this exhibition, which serves as a key opportunity to connect with leading global business tourism and event organizers. He noted that Oman will showcase its advanced capabilities in hosting international conferences, exhibitions, and meetings.

He added that the participation will focus on building strategic partnerships with industry leaders* and exploring new opportunities to attract high-profile events, further enhancing Oman's regional and global standing. -ONA

TEHRAN DIALOGUE FORUM

Sayyid Badr emphasises dialogue for conflict resolution

TEHRAN: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, emphasised the paramount importance of dialogue as an essential instrument for addressing challenges, while highlighting the Sultanate of Oman's unwavering commitment to this indispensable approach - regardless of its complexity - even with parties with whom significant differences may exist.

This was stated during Sayyid Badr's address at the Fourth Tehran Dialogue Forum, convened under the patronage of President Masoud Pezeshkian of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The forum brought together foreign ministers, senior government officials, policymakers, and thought leaders from across the globe, alongside representatives of regional and international organisations.

The Foreign Minister reaffirmed the importance that the Sultanate of Oman attaches to its existing bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, while simultaneously commending the flexibility, precision, and candour that the Iranian counterpart brings to Oman's contributions in regional and international dialogues.

Sayyid Badr particularly focused on the Palestinian cause, describing the violence and genocide endured by the Palestinian people as "a global tragedy that should never have occurred" - one that could have been prevented had opportunities for dialogue been seized. This remark referenced both the refusal of successive Israeli governments to engage in substantive dialogue with the Palestinian side and the international community's failure to exercise effective influence.

Flexible approach

He expressed optimism regarding developments emerging in recent months, particularly from the United States of America, which may indicate a shift toward a more realistic and flexible approach regarding potential dialogue partners.

The minister noted that this development, though occurring amidst military escalation and immense humanitarian suffering, suggests a renewed willingness for genuine dialogue - even as Tel Aviv continues attempts to circumvent it through escalation on multiple fronts.

Sayyid Badr emphasised that while dialogue is not an easy option, it remains the only viable path to achieving a just settlement. He cited what he termed "the horrific lesson" embodied by the Gaza tragedy when courage to engage in dialogue is absent.

The minister expressed hope that this Tehran forum would help attract more voices advocating dialogue and strengthen the international community's conviction that solutions are built not through force but through understanding and openness.

The current session of the forum examined the role of regional states in the evolving global order, reviewing key shared challenges in political, economic and energy domains, while exploring ways to enhance multilateral cooperation mechanisms for addressing international crises amid rapid geopolitical transformations. -ONA

MEDICAL TEAM

Scoliosis surgery performed

NIZWA: A specialised medical team from the Spine Unit at Khoula Hospital, in collaboration with a medical team at Nizwa Hospital, successfully performed the first surgical procedure to treat a case of degenerative scoliosis at Nizwa Hospital.

This achievement is part of ongoing efforts to enhance medical cooperation and localise specialised healthcare services in the governorates' health institutions.

Dr. Sultan Saif Al Kalbani, Head of the Spine Unit at Khoula Hospital, Consultant in Orthopedic and Spine Surgery, and leader of the medical team, explained to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the surgery was performed on a patient suffering from an abnormal curvature of the spine, using the latest surgical techniques.

He clarified that degenerative scoliosis occurs in elderly patients due to the deterioration of cartilage, joints, and ligaments in the back, leading to curvature and severe back pain during movement.

He noted that this type of scoliosis differs from the scoliosis that affects children. Dr. Al-Kalbani emphasized that this accomplishment is the result of joint coordination between Khoula Hospital, the national reference centre for spine surgeries, and Nizwa Hospital, in line with the Ministry of Health's strategy to enhance specialized services across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman and reduce pressure on central referral hospitals. -ONA

Oman Investment Authority records 21% rise in asset value

The portfolio aims to maximise local content by increasing spending on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and raising the proportion of local content in the total value of contracts awarded by the OIA

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has revealed that its "National Development Portfolio" has achieved several objectives aligned with "Oman Vision 2040" since its establishment in 2021. The portfolio manages over 160 local assets and companies across 10 key sectors.

The authority has set key targets for these companies, including financial sustainability, investing in projects that support Oman Vision 2040, and developing human capital by generating job opportunities for Omanis and implementing a localisation plan within the OIA and its subsidiaries.

Additionally, the portfolio aims to maximise local content by increasing spending on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and raising the proportion of local content in the total value of contracts awarded by the OIA and its affiliated companies.

From 2021 to the end of 2024, the portfolio delivered strong performance, achieving an annual asset growth rate of 21.5%, bringing total assets to approximately OMR12.1 billion by the end of 2024.

Revenue also grew by 25%, reaching OMR82.8 billion. Furthermore, the portfolio contributed OMR3.7 billion to the state's general budget, invested OMR8.8 billion in long-term assets, and attracted OMR638 million in foreign direct investments.

The portfolio has also implemented a divestment strategy to empower the private sector and increase its contribution to the national economy, while securing local and international strategic or financial partners to enhance corporate performance.

It has redirected revenues toward investments in sectors that support economic diversification, completing 19 divestments with total returns of around OMR2.7 billion since its inception.

The portfolio has diversified its investments across priority sectors under Oman Vision 2040. Key projects include the Duqm Refinery and the Bisat Field in Block 60, which doubled daily oil production, as well as the OQ Ammonia Plant in Dhofar.

In mining, the portfolio advanced the redevelopment of the Al-Asil and Al-Bayda mines. In logistics, it launched the Hafeet Rail Project and operationalized the Asyad Container Terminal. In public services, the portfolio initiated the Manah1 and Manah 2 projects.

In the ICT sector, the OIA established a semiconductor design center and opened a drone manufacturing facility in Oman. In fisheries, the Adamas vessel joined Oman's fleet, alongside the inauguration of a tuna canning factory and the launch of an aquaculture and advanced boatbuilding project.

The tourism sector saw the opening of several projects, including the Jumeirah Muscat Bay Resort and the Naseem Resort by Dusit in Al Jabal Al Akhdar.

The OIA has established a clear governance framework for local content within its subsidiaries, incorporating it into their corporate performance scorecards and launching a collective investment policy. It also set targets for SME spending by its affiliated companies.

As a result, the OIA reported an increase in local content to 32.4% of total contract value in 2024, alongside OMR265.5 million spent on SMEs—equivalent to 19.8% of total supply chain expenditures for the year.

Over the past four years, the OIA and its subsidiaries generated 6,500 jobs for Omanis, bringing total employment to 41,000 with an Omanization rate of 77.7% by the end of 2024. The authority has also focused on fostering integration among its subsidiaries under the National Development Portfolio to align efforts and drive collaboration toward national goals. -ONA

GLOBAL PLATFORM

Registration for Falling Walls Lab Oman 2025 from today

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation, in cooperation with Germany's Falling Walls Foundation, has announced the start of registration for the Falling Walls Lab Oman 2025, starting from Monday, 19 May until 19 June.

The Falling Walls Lab is a global platform for presenting innovative ideas and research projects across various disciplines. It aims to build and strengthen connections between outstanding researchers, academics, entrepreneurs, professionals, and investors. The lab's concept involves organizing an annual event and inviting passionate individuals from various world countries with an interest in science to share their cultures and experiences.

Innovators and researchers from all fields are eligible to apply. The competition is open to bachelor's degree holders (graduated within the last 10 years), master's degree holders (graduated within the last 7 years), and PhD holders (graduated within the last 5 years). Current undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students may also register. Participation applications must be submitted exclusively in English.

The winning participant will have the opportunity to represent Oman at the Falling Walls Lab global finals, scheduled for 5-9 November in Berlin, Germany.

The competition requires participants to present a research project, innovative idea, social initiative, or entrepreneurial venture in a three-minute PowerPoint presentation, convincing a jury of experts from academia, research institutions, and the business sector of the idea's significance.

This marks the tenth edition of Oman's participation in the competition. In the latest round, 62 ideas and projects were submitted, with 20 qualifying for the local finals. Three winners were selected to represent Oman in Berlin.

Interested candidates can register via the official website:https://falling-walls.com/falling-walls-lab-oman. -ONA

IN DHOFAR

Heritage and Tourism marks International Museum Day

SALALAH: The Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate, in cooperation with the Directorate General of Education in the governorate, celebrated International Museum Day at the Land of Frankincense Museum in Salalah.

The event, held annually on May 18, was organised under the theme "The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities."

The ceremony featured a visual presentation of the projects participating in the "Omani Heritage Through a Future Lens" competition, launched by the Land of Frankincense Museum to showcase innovators in Dhofar's schools.

The competition encouraged the utilisation of heritage using modern technology and artificial intelligence tools to produce visual works that narrate history through innovative methods.

At the conclusion of the event, Moosa Abdullah Al Qassabi, Director General of Culture, Sports, and Youth in Dhofar Governorate, the chief guest, honoured the winning schools. Al Wadi School secured first place, while Ajyal School came second, and Qayrun Hairiti School took third place. -ONA

SPORTS

IPL 2025

Brar spins magic as Kings hold off Royals in high-scoring thriller

JAIPUR: In a game that saw 428 runs scored and batters dominate for large parts, it was Harpreet Brar's brilliant left-arm spin that proved decisive as Punjab Kings (PBKS) held their nerve to beat Rajasthan Royals (RR) by 10 runs at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Sunday.

Brar returned figures of 3 for 22 — a rare economical spell in a match otherwise brutal for bowlers — to derail Rajasthan's strong chase of 220 and secure a vital win for Punjab. The victory took PBKS to second place on the points table with 17 points, behind only RCB on net run rate.

Chasing a steep target of 220, Rajasthan got off to a blistering start as young openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and 14-year-old debutant Vaibhav Suryavanshi added 76 runs in just 5.4 overs. Suryavanshi dazzled on debut, smashing 40 off 15 balls with 4 fours and 4 sixes, before Brar struck in his first over to have the teenager caught at long-on.

Brar, brought on early by stand-in skipper Shashank Singh — as regular captain Shreyas Iyer did not take the field due to a finger injury — absorbed the pressure after being hit for consecutive boundaries and came back strongly.

At the end of the powerplay, Rajasthan were 89 for 1 and looked in control, but Brar's post-timeout spell turned the game on its head. He dismissed Jaiswal (50 off 25 balls) with a cleverly tossed-up delivery and later cleaned up Riyan Parag with a sharp arm-ball to leave the Royals reeling.

While Dhruv Jurel kept RR in the hunt with a fighting half-century (53 off 31 balls), wickets fell at the other end.

Azmatullah Omarzai (2/44) and Marco Jansen (2/4 made key inroads, and although Arshdeep Singh was expensive (0/60), he delivered an excellent 19th over, conceding just eight runs.

Jurel's dismissal in the final over left Rajasthan needing an improbable 20 off the last three balls, and Punjab sealed the contest with ease as Royals were restricted to 209/7.

Earlier, Punjab Kings posted a formidable 219/5 after being asked to bat first. Nehal Wadhera smashed a career-best 70 off 37 balls, laced with 5 fours and 5 sixes, while Shashank Singh remained unbeaten on 59 off 30 balls to power the Kings past 200.

Openers Prabhsimran Singh (21 off 10) and Priyansh Arya (9) gave a brisk start, but both fell to Tushar Deshpande (2/37).

Debutant Mitchell Owen, promoted to No. 3, fell for a duck attempting an audacious shot off Kwena Maphaka.

Wadhera then rebuilt the innings alongside Shreyas Iyer (30 off 25), who played a steady hand despite carrying a finger injury. The duo added 67 runs before Iyer fell in the 11th over to Parag.

Wadhera and Shashank took control in the middle and death overs. Azmatullah Omarzai chipped in with a useful cameo (21* off 9 balls), ensuring a strong finish. Rajasthan's bowlers, barring Deshpande and Parag (1/26) struggled. Akash Madhwal went for 48 in his four overs, and Maphaka took 1/32 in three.

Brief scores: Punjab Kings 219/5 in 20 overs (Nehal Wadhera 70, Shashank Singh 59*, Tushar Deshpande 2/37) beat Rajasthan Royals 209/7 in 20 overs (Dhruv Jurel 53, Yashasvi Jaiswal 50, Harpreet Brar 3/22, Omarzai 2/44). - Agencies

Everton give Goodison Park a fitting farewell

A 2-0 victory over Saints saw the 'Grand Old Lady' host its final Premier League game after 133 years on Monday

LIVERPOOL: Everton bid an emotional farewell to Goodison Park on Monday with a 2-0 win over relegated Southampton, marking the final Premier League game at their iconic home of 133 years in style.

A crowd awash with blue – from banners to jerseys – packed the streets hours before kickoff, creating a carnival atmosphere outside the 'Grand Old Lady'. Inside, it was a sea of emotion as fans cheered every tackle, pass, and goal in a game that mattered more for sentiment than for standings.

Senegal international Iliman Ndiaye was the hero of the afternoon, scoring twice to ensure the Toffees ended their Goodison chapter on a winning note.

His first came in the sixth minute, a sublime effort on the half-turn that he drove low into the bottom corner, sparking bedlam in the stands.

With Goodison greats like Wayne Rooney, Tim Cahill and Duncan Ferguson watching on, Everton kept pressing. Ndiaye added his second in first-half stoppage time, latching on to a clever through ball from James Garner, skipping past goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale with a feint before tapping home.

Beto had two goals ruled out for offside, but it did little to dampen the celebratory mood. The second half played out more like a testimonial than a competitive fixture, but Everton still showed enough quality to underline the improvements made under returning manager David Moyes, who took over in January after Sean Dyche's dismissal.

Veteran captain Seamus Coleman, a fan favourite since his £60,000 arrival in 2009, was given a thunderous ovation in what is likely his final Goodison appearance. Though his afternoon lasted just 17 minutes, it was long enough for the crowd to show their gratitude for years of service. Ashley Young replaced him for his own farewell appearance, while Abdoulaye Doucouré was also visibly emotional as he left the pitch to a standing ovation.

Southampton, rooted to the bottom of the table with just 12 points from 37 games, were ideal party guests — offering little resistance as Everton celebrated their past and looked toward the future.

Although Saints had moments of threat, notably a late effort from Cameron Archer well saved by Jordan Pickford, they were mostly bystanders in a match that symbolised an end and a beginning.

Southampton's fans, to their credit, travelled in numbers and maintained vocal support despite enduring a dismal campaign. With Will Still reportedly in the frame for the managerial role next season, the Saints now turn their attention to life in the Championship and a much-needed rebuild.

As for Everton, they move on to the Hill Dickinson Stadium at Bramley-Moore Dock, their new riverside home. Goodison Park will now host the club's women's team, but for the men, this was a moment of closure.

Ndiaye, whose double earned him a rousing send-off, looks set to be a key figure in the new era under the Friedkin Group's ownership. The scenes in the final minutes – with fans singing, clapping, and even tearing up – told the story of a club with deep roots, proud traditions, and cautious optimism for what lies ahead.

Goodison Park may no longer host Premier League football, but its spirit will echo through Everton's future. - Agencies

EMILIA-ROMAGNO GRAND PRIX

Verstappen edges Norris to claim top honours in Imola

IMOLA: Red Bull's Max Verstappen took a dominant victory in the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix in Imola, Italy, on Sunday, founded on an audacious overtaking move on the first lap.

The four-time champion passed pole-sitter Oscar Piastri's McLaren around the outside of the first chicane after the start and controlled the race from there.

A late safety car closed the field up and put the McLarens of Piastri and Lando Norris on Verstappen's tail.

But a consummate restart from the Dutchman allowed him to break free while Norris, on much fresher tyres than Piastri, fought for three laps before finally passing the Australian to take second.

The result, Verstappen's second win of the season, reduces Piastri's championship lead over Norris to 13 points from 16, and puts the four-time champion nine behind Norris.

Lewis Hamilton benefited from an offset strategy, starting on the hard tyre, and the two safety cars to fight up from 12th on the grid to finish fourth for Ferrari, passing his team-mate Charles Leclerc in the hectic closing laps thanks to much fresher tyres.

For McLaren, there will be questions about strategy, after they pitted Piastri early in the race when he was second behind Verstappen, albeit beginning to lose time.

That decision put Verstappen in a comfortable 10-second lead over Norris, who was unable to do anything about the Red Bull's advantage, and forced Piastri to have to fight back through the midfield cars to reclaim his position.

A virtual safety car mid-race made Verstappen's life even easier for a while, and wrecked Piastri's hopes of second place, but the Red Bull had long ago taken control of the race.

Earlier on Saturday, Piastri beat Verstappen to pole position in a qualifying session that featured an enormous accident for Red Bull's Yuki Tsunoda.

Piastri edged Verstappen by 0.034 seconds despite encountering traffic in the final two corners and failing to improve his time in the final sector.

Both Verstappen and McLaren's Lando Norris fell short on their final laps, and the Briton was demoted to fourth by Mercedes' George Russell.

And the surprise of qualifying was both the performance of the Aston Martin team and the failure of Ferrari to get either car into the top 10.

Fernando Alonso took Aston Martin's best result of the season with fifth place, team-mate Lance Stroll also making the top 10 in eighth place. Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton could manage only 11th and 12th places at Ferrari's first home race of the season, underlining their continuing struggles.

Italian 18-year-old Kimi Antonelli, whose family home is just half an hour from the track, could only manage 13th in the other Mercedes. The session featured two red flags, the first for a terrifying accident for Tsunoda, who lost control on the entry to the Villeneuve chicane and spun across the gravel before the car was launched into the air off the tyre barrier.

It somersaulted and landed upside down, before righting itself upon landing. The Japanese was uninjured and able to walk away from the crash. - Agencies

OQGN SIGNS AGREEMENT

OQ Gas Networks (OQGN), the exclusive owner and operator of Oman's natural gas transmission network, announced the signing of a Term Sheet Cooperation Agreement with Fluxys, the Belgian based global energy infrastructure group, to jointly develop the hydrogen transportation infrastructure in Oman.

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,436.01 points, up by 0.58% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.13% at 416.88 points. OIFC Bonds, up 11.11%, was the top gainer while, Al Madina Investments, down 6.38%, was the top loser.

Omantel Group reshapes future with strategic evolution towards technology

Omantel transcends traditional telecom services, evolving into a leading regional provider of generative AI-driven and advanced technological products and solutions

MUSCAT: Omantel held its annual media gathering, bringing together journalists and industry professionals to showcase its strategic evolution from a conventional telecom provider to a pioneering regional digital technology powerhouse.

This transition aligns with Oman Vision 2040, reinforcing the company's commitment to driving innovation, expanding digital infrastructure, and positioning itself at the forefront of technological leadership in the region.

Talal Said Al Maamari, CEO of Omantel said, "Omantel Group transcends traditional telecom services, evolving into a leading regional provider of Generative AI-driven and advanced technological products and solutions."

Al Maamari added that the company is redefining connectivity by integrating cloud computing, Internet of Things, Generative AI, cybersecurity, and fintech into its portfolio, enabling a more robust digital ecosystem that supports businesses and individuals in Oman.

"With 98% 4G and 92% 5G coverage, Omantel has solidified its role as a key driver of digital transformation. The fiber-optic network spans over 16,000 kilometers, ensuring seamless high-speed internet accessibility," he pointed out.

Al Maamari said that Omantel has also pioneered Oman's first virtual 5G network, integrating cloud-based computing into its telecom infrastructure. Additionally, Wi-Fi calling has been introduced to enhance seamless communication experiences. Approximately 90% of internet traffic in Oman is now managed locally, ensuring data security and optimized performance.

He further noted that with the aim of further supporting Oman's digitalization, Omantel has connected over 500,000 smart electricity meters and 300,000 smart water meters using Internet of Things (IoT) solutions, reinforcing its contribution to smart city initiatives.

The CEO of Omantel highlighted that the number of Omantel Group subscribers, including Zain, across various markets in the region has surpassed 54 million. The Group's revenue has exceeded RO 3 billion as of the end of 2024. He elaborated that Zain Omantel International (ZOI) - the Group's wholesale arm - has expanded its terrestrial links to 16,000 km, covering numerous countries in the Middle East. This expansion contributes significantly to reinforcing the leadership position of Omantel Group and Zain in the business sector.

As part of its efforts to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, he elaborated, the company has established the Omantel Innovation Labs, an incubator for startups. In 2024, it supported 30 companies in sectors such as fintech, cybersecurity, and edtech, while also offering advanced funding mechanisms in collaboration with Future Fund Oman. Additionally, Omantel introduced specialized accelerators designed to aid startups in the fields of artificial intelligence and logistics, thereby enhancing digital entrepreneurship within the Sultanate of Oman. The incubated startups have created 200 new job opportunities, and their market value has reached USD 172 million, underscoring the effectiveness of these labs in achieving their objectives.

Talal Al Maamari added that Omantel's strategy centers around developing an integrated digital ecosystem, incorporating AI-driven automation, secure cloud solutions, and next-generation cybersecurity to facilitate smarter, more efficient operations. The company's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) division has achieved remarkable success, reporting a 55.5% revenue growth, underscoring Omantel's expansion into enterprise technology services. A pivotal initiative in Omantel's transformation is its investment consolidation strategy, designed to streamline technological products and solutions under a unified platform encompassing cloud, cloud services, cybersecurity, IoT, and managed and professional services. This approach enhances operational efficiency, fosters innovation, and ensures seamless service delivery. The company's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) & Enterprise division has achieved remarkable success, reporting a 55.5% revenue growth, underscoring Omantel's expansion into enterprise technology services.

Al Maamari noted that "Beyond its digital advancements, Omantel Group remains committed to sustainability, with clear objectives to reduce emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. The company has initiated solar-powered data centers, reinforcing its commitment to environmentally conscious operations. Over 200 tons of electronic waste have been recycled as part of its eco-conscious efforts, accompanied by a comprehensive roadmap aimed at improving energy efficiency and minimizing environmental impact. Omantel has unveiled its 2024 Sustainability Report, underscoring its unwavering dedication to environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and robust governance practices. This comprehensive report showcases the company's ongoing initiatives and strategic commitments to driving sustainable growth while fostering a positive impact on communities and the environment.

Moreover, he said that Omantel actively supports small and medium enterprises (SMEs), contributing to their growth through procurement contracts and funding programs. The total allocated procurement contracts for SMEs have reached OMR13.1 million, with OMR2.5 million assigned as subcontracts, reinforcing the company's commitment to fostering local businesses. Over the last three years, Omantel has contributed OMR2 million in corporate social responsibility initiatives, further strengthening Oman's economic ecosystem.

Furthermore, he noted that talent development remains a key priority for Omantel, as the company continues to invest in programs that equip Omani professionals with the expertise needed to thrive in a digital economy. The company maintains a 94% Omanization rate, ensuring local expertise remains integral to its workforce. In 2024, Omantel created 71 direct job opportunities for Omanis. As part of its commitment to fostering young talent, Omantel has trained 625 graduates, while its flagship Gen Z program has successfully graduated 182 professionals since its launch in 2020.

Al Maamari emphasized Omantel's commitment to redefining digital commerce in the Sultanate of Oman. He highlighted the launch of the e-marketplace platform designed to support SMEs and promote e-commerce through integrated digital logistics and payment solutions, with plans to expand to the MENA region.

Al Maamari underscored that Omantel Group remains dedicated to digital innovation, utilizing ambitious strategies to reinforce its position as a leading driver of technological progress in Oman and the broader region.

The Media Meet included a dedicated panel discussion titled "The Role of Omantel Ecosystem in Empowering the Digital Economy," featuring three key leaders from Omantel's Enterprise ecosystem. The session explored Omantel's pivotal role in shaping Oman's digital transformation through its integrated technology solutions, strategic investments, and innovation-driven approach. The panelists highlighted Omantel's contributions to cloud computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and IoT, underscoring how these advancements enable businesses, startups, and government entities to accelerate their digital capabilities.

Discussions also covered the significance of Omantel's partnerships with global technology leaders, the impact of its infrastructure expansion, and the company's commitment to fostering digital entrepreneurship. The session provided valuable insights into Omantel's vision for empowering a more connected, efficient, and secure digital economy in Oman and beyond. -ONA

WITH VITOL ASIA

Oman LNG signs optimisation agreement

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman LNG signed an agreement with Vitol Asia Pte. Ltd. to optimise the company's LNG supply portfolio, marking another significant step in strengthening its global partnerships. The signing ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

The agreement, commencing in 2026, entails optimizing up to 0.8 million metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of liquefied natural gas (LNG) with Vitol on a Delivered Ex-Ship (DES) basis. This collaboration builds upon Oman LNG's strategic portfolio and leverages the flexibility from its DES commitments, particularly aligning with evolving market demands.

Hamed Al Naamany, Chief Executive Officer of Oman LNG, commented: "This agreement with Vitol reflects our agility and continuous adaptation to market dynamics. We are pleased to see continued positive market response to Oman's strategy in gas and LNG. Vitol is a key portfolio trader and a trusted partner, and we are pleased to extend our cooperation through this deal which supports our long-term growth and value delivery."

The agreement, commencing in 2026, entails optimising up to 0.8 million metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of liquefied natural gas

Mahmoud Al Baloushi, Chief Commercial Officer of Oman LNG, added: "This optimisation agreement with Vitol is a testament to our proactive commercial strategy, enhancing our portfolio's adaptability and responsiveness to global market shifts. It allows us to further capitalize on our established reputation and experience to unlock new value."

The signing ceremony for the agreement was held in Muscat, reflecting the continued support of the Omani government in advancing the nation's strategic energy objectives.

GREEN HYDROGEN EXPANSION

Pacts inked to incorporate Phase 2, Phase 3 of ACME green hydrogen ammonia project

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Hydrom, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz), and ACME Group have signed a Project Development Agreement and Usufruct Agreement for the incorporation of Phase 2 and 3 of ACME's green hydrogen and ammonia project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad).

The agreements mark the formal onboarding of one of the Oman's earliest hydrogen initiatives into Hydrom's portfolio, concluding the consolidation of all commercial hydrogen developments under a single national structure.

The agreements were signed by Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, The Minister of Energy and Minerals and Hydrom's Chairman along with Sheikh Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of Opaz, and Gursharan Jassal, Country Manager for ACME.

The two new phases span a combined area of 80 square kilometres and are projected to produce around 71,000 tonnes of green hydrogen and 400,000 tonnes of green ammonia annually per phase. This expansion follows the commencement of construction for ACME's Phase 1 with an output of 100,000 tonnes of green ammonia annually, backed by an offtake agreement with YARA BIRKELAND AS. With all phases completed, ACME aims to reach an annual production capacity of 0.9 million tonnes of green ammonia.

Eng. Abdulaziz Al Shidhani, Managing Director of Hydrom, said "The formal integration of ACME's project into Hydrom's framework marks a significant milestone in Oman's green hydrogen journey. This step not only consolidates Oman's early initiatives but also demonstrates our commitment to structured and scalable development. By unifying all major projects under a cohesive national strategy, we are boosting investor confidence and reaffirming Oman's position as a competitive player in the global green hydrogen market."

The agreement comes as Hydrom advances its third land auction round, highlighting the sustained momentum of Oman's hydrogen strategy. With a complete portfolio now in place and the regulatory, infrastructure and human capital enablers progressing as planned, the sector is moving forward with the clarity and coordination needed to meet global offtake demand and realize Oman's long-term ambition to become a leading global exporter of green hydrogen.

Engineer Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of SEZAD, said the agreements reflect Duqm's growing appeal as a hub for green hydrogen and ammonia investment. He affirmed the attention given to the green hydrogen sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm as part of the zone's strategy (2025–2030), and the administration's efforts to adopt green industrial projects in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the strategy of the Sultanate of Oman to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Gursharan Jassal, Country Manager for ACME in Oman expressed, "We are honoured to sign this landmark agreement for the development of the next phase of the green ammonia project in Duqm — a pivotal step in advancing Oman's transition to a sustainable energy future. This milestone reflects our shared commitment to achieving Oman Vision 2040 and reinforces the Sultanate's growing role in the global green hydrogen economy. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, the Ministry of Energy & Minerals, Hydrom, and Sezad for their continued support and partnership. Together, we aim to create lasting value for Oman and the wider region as we progress towards a cleaner, more resilient future."

With this signing, Hydrom's awarded portfolio of large-scale green hydrogen projects in the Governorates of Al Wusta and Dhofar rises to nine, representing over USD 50 billion in expected investment commitments and a combined production capacity of nearly 1.5 million tonnes of green hydrogen per annum by 2030. Enabled by nearly 35 GW of renewable energy, these projects are coordinated within a single national framework designed to deliver at scale and aligned with global demand.

Through this structured portfolio, Hydrom continues to advance Oman's positioning as one of the most advanced and investment-ready hydrogen ecosystems globally. As global markets move from hydrogen ambition to action, Oman is delivering a credible platform that enables scale, certainty, and long-term offtake. With legacy developments now integrated, new projects underway, and Round 3 in progress, the Sultanate offers a complete value chain, from resource to infrastructure to export.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

OIFC Bonds, up 11.11%, was the top gainer while, Al Madina Investments, down 6.38%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,436.01 points, up by 0.58% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.13% at 416.88 points. OIFC Bonds, up 11.11%, was the top gainer while, Al Madina Investments, down 6.38%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1279 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 5.13 million, with more than 33.86 million shares changing hands. Out of 51 traded securities, 25 advanced, 7 declined, and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 379K while foreign investors were net buyers for RO 307K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 72K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,796.69 points, up 0.64%. Prices of Global Financial Investments, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Muscat Finance, United Finance, Bank Nizwa were up by 8.43%, 4.17%, 4.17%, 1.75%, 1.00% respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Sharqia Investment, Bank Muscat were down by 6.38%, 1.33%, 0.37% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,012.87 points, up 0.27%. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Gulf Mushroom Products, Oman Cement were up by 6.10%, 1.86%, 0.69% respectively. Prices of Oman Flour Mills, Oman Cables Industry were down by 1.12%, 0.44% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.95% before closing at 1,579.95 points. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Abraj Energy, Muscat Gases, Oman Telecom, SMN Power Holding were up by 6.13%, 3.78%, 3.33%, 1.82%, 0.97% respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination were down by 2.82% respectively.— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,436.01	4,403.52	4,436.01	4,410.22	25.79	0.58
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,796.69	7,746.92	7,796.69	7,746.92	49.78	0.64
Industry Index	6,022.24	6,001.44	6,012.87	5,996.75	16.12	0.27
Services Index	1,579.95	1,561.09	1,579.95	1,565.15	14.80	0.95
MSX Shariah Index	416.88	413.15	416.88	412.22	4.66	1.13
MSX TR INDEX	6,557.08	6,509.05	6,557.08	6,518.96	38.12	0.58
FINANCIAL TR IDX	9,240.06	9,181.06	9,240.06	9,181.06	58.99	0.64
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	7,400.42	7,374.87	7,388.92	7,369.11	19.81	0.27
SERVICES TR IDX	2,009.44	1,985.46	2,009.44	1,990.13	19.31	0.97
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
33,865,540	5,130,271	1,279	27,726,257,815	25	7	19	51

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, MAY 18

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
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	2,054,316	175,612	81	0.083	0.090	0.083	0.090	0.083	0.007	8.434	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,421,388	593,180	126	0.237	0.247	0.237	0.247	0.238	0.009	3.782	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.100	190,239,400
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	339,374	282,136	55	0.826	0.840	0.826	0.840	0.825	0.015	1.818	0.840	0.838	0.840	0.100	630,000,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	13,275	758	5	0.058	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.001	1.754	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.100	20,655,383
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	230,337	23,254	11	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.001	1.000	0.101	0.101	0.109	0.100	225,932,256
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	434,799	96,907	52	0.222	0.226	0.222	0.222	0.220	0.002	0.909	0.222	0.222	0.223	0.100	207,727,974
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	2,792,590	385,079	117	0.138	0.139	0.136	0.139	0.138	0.001	0.725	0.139	0.130	0.139	0.100	601,956,725
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	126,151	23,572	16	0.186	0.188	0.186	0.188	0.187	0.001	0.535	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.100	122,377,515
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	183,665	31,759	27	0.173	0.174	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.000	0.000	0.172	0.160	0.173	0.100	37,840,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	39,100	6,572	6	0.168	0.169	0.168	0.168	0.168	0.000	0.000	0.168	0.168	0.169	0.100	7,197,622
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	600	239	1	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.000	0.000	0.399	0.371	0.399	0.100	47,880,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	82,380	23,441	17	0.286	0.287	0.282	0.287	0.287	0.000	0.000	0.287	0.286	0.287	0.100	67,849,670
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	2,991,475	398,155	37	0.133	0.134	0.132	0.134	0.134	0.000	0.000	0.134	0.128	0.134	0.100	886,711,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	124,700	9,727	11	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.078	0.079	0.100	13,650,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	4,850	349	2	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.100	48,591,895
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	90,084	6,396	5	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.068	0.074	0.100	50,722,850
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,965,561	806,120	52	0.273	0.273	0.271	0.272	0.273	-0.001	-0.366	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.100	2,041,740,001
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	200	410	1	2.050	2.050	2.050	2.050	2.059	-0.009	-0.437	2.050	2.000	2.050	0.100	183,885,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	197,934	14,668	14	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.100	6,660,000
Total	19	15,092,779	2,878,334	636												

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
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	1,401	297	3	0.212	0.225	0.212	0.225	0.212	0.013	6.132	0.225	0.200	0.224	0.100	36,000,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	34,115	7,568	23	0.214	0.226	0.214	0.226	0.213	0.013	6.103	0.226	0.225	0.230	0.100	12,430,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	510	43	2	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.080	0.004	5.000	0.084	0.076	0.088	0.100	42,725,029
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	241,794	11,997	16	0.049	0.050	0.049	0.050	0.048	0.002	4.167	0.050	0.049	0.050	0.100	15,357,316
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	1,000	125	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.120	0.005	4.167	0.125	0.123	0.000	0.100	39,427,125
OM0000010120	ASYAD SHIPPING	1,439,845	166,879	56	0.114	0.118	0.114	0.118	0.114	0.004	3.509	0.118	0.120	0.118	0.000	614,631,825
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	12,700	1,171	4	0.090	0.093	0.090	0.093	0.090	0.003	3.333	0.093	0.091	0.095	0.100	2,790,000
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	44,277	9,580	7	0.215	0.219	0.215	0.219	0.215	0.004	1.860	0.219	0.215	0.219	0.100	10,022,710
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	13,743,446	1,475,928	261	0.108	0.110	0.107	0.110	0.108	0.002	1.852	0.110	0.107	0.110	0.040	380,543,994
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	10,000	1,040	2	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.001	0.971	0.104	0.101	0.104	0.100	29,039,214
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	21,188	4,377	8	0.208	0.209	0.206	0.209	0.207	0.002	0.966	0.209	0.207	0.227	0.100	41,723,840
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	8,373	3,668	12	0.435	0.440	0.435	0.438	0.435	0.003	0.690	0.439	0.439	0.439	0.100	144,922,247
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	22,180	3,482	1	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.156	0.001	0.641	0.157	0.156	0.000	0.100	368,896,222
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	1,342,250	378,318	131	0.281	0.284	0.280	0.281	0.280	0.001	0.357	0.281	0.280	0.285	0.010	248,000,000
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	5,000	1,000	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.000	0.200	0.100	22,550,516
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	22,437	1,595	6	0.072	0.072	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.069	0.071	0.100	6,035,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	443,279	35,906	28	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.000	0.000	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.100	23,252,680
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	400	58	1	0.144	0.144	0.144	0.144	0.144	0.000	0.000	0.144	0.144	0.150	0.100	2,537,807
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	400	228	1	0.569	0.569	0.569	0.569	0.569	0.000	0.000	0.569	0.561	0.569	0.100	54,055,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	22,889	15,235	5	0.670	0.670	0.665	0.665	0.665	0.000	0.000	0.665	0.665	0.670	0.100	40,747,875
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	53,000	6,327	5	0.119	0.120	0.119	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.119	0.120	0.100	72,975,185
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	126,050	12,857	8	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.100	97,366,339
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	504,612	30,781	21	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.100	89,218,689
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	28,896	12,720	6	0.442	0.442	0.440	0.440	0.445	-0.005	-1.124	0.440	0.440	0.485	0.100	72,765,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	44,272	3,051	5	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.071	-0.002	-2.817	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.100	10,732,978
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	7,965	350	2	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.047	-0.003	-6.383	0.044	0.044	0.047	0.100	3,740,000
Total	26	18,182,279	2,184,581	616												

GCC-STAT

GCC inflation stood at 1.7% by end of December

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Consumer Price data released by the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat) indicate that the general inflation rate in the GCC countries rose by 1.7% at the end of December 2024 compared to the figures recorded during same month of the previous year.

The increase in the annual general inflation rate in the Gulf is primarily driven by a 5.9% increase in housing prices and a 2.8% rise in the prices of goods and services. The culture and entertainment group recorded a 1.8% increase, while both the food and beverages group and the education group rose by 1.2% each. The restaurants and hotels group saw a 1.1% increase, and the health group edged up by 0.1%.

This was offset by a 2.7% decline in prices in the transportation group, 1.7% in furniture and household equipment, 1.1% in tobacco, 0.9% in communications, and 0.2% in clothing and footwear.

The overall Gulf inflation rate was also lower than the European Union inflation rate of 2.7%, and lower than many of the GCC's major trading partners in total merchandise imports. Brazil recorded the highest inflation rate in December 2024 compared to the figures recorded during the same month of the previous year, at 4.8%.

TERM SHEET COOPERATION AGREEMENT

OQGN and Fluxys sign cooperation agreement to develop hydrogen transportation network in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ Gas Networks (OQGN), the exclusive owner and operator of Oman's natural gas transmission network, announced the signing of a Term Sheet Cooperation Agreement with Fluxys, the Belgian based global energy infrastructure group, to jointly develop the hydrogen transportation infrastructure in Oman, where Fluxys, alongside OQGN, intends to own and operate the hydrogen network as a minority shareholder.

OQGN and Fluxys share similar vision in leading energy transition activities, and with complementary infrastructure and aspirations, they are well positioned to enable rapid and efficient development of hydrogen infrastructure to cater to Oman's need in line with Oman's vision 2040 and hydrogen production targets.

This Cooperation Agreement solidifies the partnership between Fluxys and OQGN following the signing in September 2023 of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two organizations to strategically collaborate in the hydrogen and CO2 network developments in Oman, as well as Fluxys' acquisition of a 4.9% stake in OQGN as an anchor investor as part of the Initial Public Offering (IPO) of OQGN.

The partnership highlights OQGN's commitment in enabling the timely development of decarbonization infrastructure in Oman, as well as Fluxys' strategy in connecting and investing in new low-carbon energy value chains with high renewable potential countries to Belgium and Europe and also reflects their intention to exchange knowledge derived from their experiences and prior learnings.

The agreement was signed by Eng. Mansoor bin Ali Al Abdali, OQGN CEO, and Pascal De Buck, Managing Director and CEO of Fluxys, at a ceremony held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Muscat. The event was held under the patronage of Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

Commenting on the agreement, Eng. Mansoor bin Ali Al Abdali stated: "We are very excited to work with Fluxys in jointly developing the Hydrogen transportation network in Oman, and supporting Oman's green hydrogen and decarbonization initiatives. This cooperation is a clear signal of our commitment as the national energy infrastructure company in leading the development and deployment of green hydrogen infrastructure to support Oman's energy transition goals and aspirations. Together with Fluxys, we will leverage our considerable joint experience and capabilities meeting Oman's requirements for hydrogen transport infrastructure and realizing the national agenda in a cost-effective manner."

Pascal De Buck added: "We are delighted to partner with OQGN in developing a new hydrogen transportation network in Oman. As a shareholder of OQGN, this collaboration is a pivotal step in our strategy to accelerating the energy transition and creating new value chains. By harnessing our combined expertise, we aim to bring renewable hydrogen to Belgium and Europe, while also significantly contributing to Oman's sustainable energy goals. Together, we are committed to creating a brighter, greener energy future."

NEAR EURA AIRPORT

5 dead after helicopters collide in Finland: Police

KAUTTUA: Five people have died after two helicopters collided midair in western Finland, police said on Saturday.

Police said the midair collision occurred shortly after noon near the town of Kauttua. The wreckage fell about 700 metres from the Ohikulkutie road.

"Five people died in a helicopter accident near Eura Airport on Saturday," Detective Chief Inspector Johannes Siirila said in a statement.

Finnish police confirmed that three people were travelling in one of the aircraft and two in the other.

The civilian helicopters had taken off from the Estonian capital Tallinn, and were heading towards Piikajarvi Airport in Kokemaki, about 15 kilometres (9 miles) from Eura airport.

Media reports said they were carrying Estonian businessmen.

Finnish and Estonian authorities were cooperating closely, a police statement said Police have sealed off the area near the accident as preliminary investigations were underway. Roads leading to Eura airport have been closed.

"Several rescue units and police patrols" were at the scene, said police, who were alerted to the crash at 12:35 p.m. local time (10:35 a.m. GMT)

The two helicopters involved in the collision were found approximately 100 metres apart in a wooded area near Eura airport.

It was not immediately clear what caused the collision.

Finnish newspaper Iltalehti quoted a witness who said they had seen the helicopters collide during a manoeuvre. — DW

Gaza death toll reaches 53,339 amid ongoing Israeli genocide

Emergency services are still unable to reach many casualties and dead bodies trapped under the rubble or scattered on roads across the war-torn enclave, as Israeli occupation forces continue to target ambulance and civil defence crews, according to the health authorities

GAZA: At least 67 Palestinians were killed and 361 others were injured in the Gaza Strip over the last 24 hours as a result of the ongoing Israeli genocide in the region, according to medical sources.

Local health authorities confirmed that the Palestinian death toll from the Israeli onslaught since October 2023 has risen to 53,339 fatalities, with an additional 121,043 people sustaining injuries. The majority of the victims are women and children.

According to the same sources, the death toll since Israel's resumption of the genocide on March 18 after a two-month truce has also climbed to 3,193, in addition to 8,993 others injured.

Emergency services are still unable to reach many casualties and dead bodies trapped under the rubble or scattered on roads across the war-torn enclave, as Israeli occupation forces continue to target ambulance and civil defense crews, according to the health authorities.

Israel's genocidal onslaught continues undeterred despite calls from the United Nations Security Council for an immediate ceasefire and directives from the International Court of Justice urging measures to prevent genocide and alleviate the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Arab League backs Palestine's bid to lead 81st UN General Assembly session

The Arab League Council, meeting at the summit level in Baghdad, has officially endorsed the State of Palestine's candidacy for the presidency of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly, scheduled for the 2026–2027 term.

In a resolution adopted during the summit, the Council expressed full support for the nomination of Palestine's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Riyad Mansour, to assume the presidency of the General Assembly.

The decision also calls on all Arab states to intensify diplomatic efforts with friendly nations to rally support for this nomination.

Furthermore, the Council requested the Secretary-General of the Arab League to follow up on the implementation of the resolution and coordinate efforts to ensure the success of Palestine's bid.

PNC: What is happening in Gaza is ethnic cleansing and genocide; international action needed

The Palestinian National Council (PNC) declared on Sunday that the crimes committed by the Israeli occupation army in the Gaza Strip have gone beyond the scope of a mere military assault, describing them as a clear example of systematic ethnic cleansing and genocide carried out in cold blood, targeting the very existence, identity, and survival of the Palestinian people.

In a press statement, the PNC emphasised that Israel is not only targeting unarmed civilians, but is also engaging in selective, systematic killings of prominent figures in Palestinian society—including academics, doctors, intellectuals, and journalists—in an effort to erase collective memory and strip society of its pillars of resilience and development.

The Council also condemned the recent Israeli airstrike on the surgical unit of the Kuwaiti Hospital in Khan Younis, which rendered it out of service. It described the attack as a crime against humanity and part of Israel's ongoing policy to destroy vital infrastructure and undermine civilian resilience in Gaza, particularly amid the sharp rise in casualties and the collapse of the healthcare system.

Furthermore, the PNC condemned the killing of five journalists in the past few hours, bringing the total number of journalists killed since the beginning of the assault on Gaza to 219. This, the Council stated, reflects a deliberate effort to silence the Palestinian narrative and suppress media coverage of the ongoing atrocities.

PNC Chairman Rawhi Fattouh affirmed that these actions constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. He called for immediate international intervention, urging the European Union to reconsider its agreements with the occupying power, especially the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which requires respect for human rights.

The Council demanded comprehensive political and economic sanctions, including halting bilateral cooperation, freezing trade agreements, banning arms exports to Israel, and imposing a full boycott of illegal Israeli settlement products.

— WAFA

NEW YORK TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

2 dead after Mexican Navy ship hits Brooklyn Bridge

BROOKLYN: At least two people were killed and 19 others injured after a Mexican Navy training sailing ship collided with the iconic Brooklyn Bridge during a promotional tour on Saturday, New York City Mayor Eric Adams said.

"At this time, of the 277 on board, 19 sustained injuries, 2 of which remain in critical condition, and 2 more have sadly passed away from their injuries," Adams posted on X.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum also expressed sadness on social media at the "loss of two crew members of the Cuauhtemoc Training Ship."

The tops of the Cuauhtemoc's three masts struck the city's landmark bridge, partially collapsing as the vessel moved along the East River. Adams said the 142-year-old Brooklyn Bridge was spared major damage.

The New York transport department posted on X that there were no signs of any structural damage to the bridge.

The cause of the collision is under investigation.

What else do we know about the crash?

Multiple eyewitness videos captured the masts snapping and partially collapsing as they crashed into the bridge's deck. Videos showed heavy traffic on the bridge at the time of the collision.

The vessel then drifted toward the river's edge as onlookers scrambled away from the shore. Sailors could be seen aloft in the rigging on the damaged masts.

The New York Post reported that victims were rushed to local hospitals.

Nick Corso, a witness, told AFP that it looked like there was a lot of panic aboard the vessel with "lots of screaming" and "some sailors hanging from the masts."

The Cuauhtemoc, a barque built in 1982 with a mast height of 48.2 meters (158 feet) had been on a training maneuver at the time and was damaged in the "mishap," a statement posted by the Mexican Navy on X said. — DW

NCS STATEMENT

Earthquake of magnitude 3.8 jolts Tibet

TIBET: An earthquake of magnitude 3.8 jolted Tibet on Sunday, a statement by the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) said.

As per the NCS, the earthquake occurred at a depth of 10km, making it susceptible to aftershocks.

In a post on X, the NCS said, "EQ of M: 3.8, On: 18/05/2025 13:14:15 IST, Lat: 29.12 N, Long: 86.75 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Tibet."

Earlier on May 12, the region was struck by another earthquake of magnitude 5.7 on the Richter Scale. — ANI

SOUTH AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

DNA study 'fills gaps' in Indigenous Americans' ancestry

COLOMBIA: The first people to inhabit the Americas migrated from modern-day Russia about 20,000 to 30,000 years ago, a new study has found.

Published on May 15 in the journal Science, the study suggests that the languages and traditions of Indigenous groups living in the Americas today can be traced back to these early settlers. Traces of their cultures exist in the genes of modern Indigenous groups.

The study also found that the early settlers split into groups that became isolated in different environmental settings. The findings provide a new genetic and cultural understanding of present-day South American communities, said the researchers.

"[It fills] key gaps in our understanding of how the diverse populations of present-day South America came to be," said Elena Gusareva, the study's lead author, who is based at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

Gusareva said the participants in the study had been "deeply motivated" to uncover their people's history, showing the importance of ancestral knowledge for people's identities.

The researcher cited an "urgent case" involving the Kawesqar people of Patagonia, whose population and 6,000-year-old cultural heritage is in danger of disappearing. "This genetic record is one of the last chances to preserve their legacy."

Eurasian roots of Indigenous Americans

Gusareva and other researchers sequenced the genomes of 1,537 individuals from 139 ethnic groups in northern Eurasia and the Americas. They compared the millions of tiny variations in the genes of modern-day Indigenous people to ancient DNA from the first peoples to arrive in the Americas, creating a genomic dataset from people previously underrepresented in ancestral science.

Tracing how these genetic codes changed in people from different geographical regions and various Indigenous groups allowed them to study patterns of population history, migration and adaptation over thousands of years.

"Our genetic analysis of Indigenous groups is crucial because their genomes carry unique insights into the earliest human history in the region," said Gusareva's colleague, Hie Lim Kim, a geneticist at Nanyang Technological University.

Their analysis appears to corroborate existing archaeological evidence, showing the first peoples in the Americas diverged from North Eurasians between 19,300 and 26,800 years ago.

The dates are "consistent with a large body of archaeological evidence," said Francisco Javier Aceituno, an archaeologist at the University of Antioquia, Colombia, who was not involved in the new study.

By comparing genetic datasets, the researchers said they had been able to find the closest living relatives of Indigenous North Americans are west Beringian groups, such as the Inuit, Koryaks and Luoravetlans. Beringia was an ice bridge between modern-day Russia and North America during the last ice age.

Foundation of South America's Indigenous groups

Gusareva and Kim's study found that after the early settlers had arrived in South America and then split into four distinct groups — Amazonian, Andean, Chaco Amerindian and Patagonian — they each became isolated in different environments.

Aceituno told DW these groups of hunter-gatherers probably divided "to occupy new territories, generate new family groups and avoid isolation."

Gusareva believes the new genetic data shows natural barriers, such as the Amazon rainforest and the Andes mountain range, led to the isolation of these Indigenous groups.

"This made their genetic makeup more uniform, similar to what is seen in island populations," Gusareva said.

Ancient gene mutations affect modern South Americans' health

The study also found Indigenous groups have distinct genetic traits, which may have evolved through their adapting to extreme environments and long-term isolation from other groups.

For instance, a group of Andean highlanders carries a gene mutation that helps them adapt to low levels of oxygen.

Mutations in the gene EPAS1 stimulate new blood vessel formation and produce more red blood cells. EPAS1 mutations have also been found in people from Tibet.

"As people adapted to diverse and often extreme environments — like high altitudes or cold climates — their genomes evolved accordingly," said Kim.

Previous studies have found genetic variations among Brazil's Indigenous groups may cause them to respond differently to medication for blood clots or high cholesterol.

Kim said the new research had revealed more than 70 gene variations that could increase [people's] vulnerability to emerging infectious diseases. "Many of these populations are already small. It's critical to provide tailored health care and disease prevention efforts to support their well-being," said Kim. — DW

SPORTS

Palace stun City to lift FA Cup

Eze's goal helps Eagles win first major trophy in their history

LONDON: Crystal Palace won the first major trophy in the club's history with a 1-0 victory against Manchester City in the FA Cup final at Wembley on Saturday night.

Eberechi Eze was Palace's hero when he crowned a superb counter-attack by sweeping home Daniel Munoz's cross after 16 minutes.

City, meanwhile, endured a day of total frustration as they failed to win a trophy in a season for the first time since manager Pep Guardiola's first campaign in charge in 2016-17, *BBC Sport* reported.

They were furious when Palace keeper Dean Henderson was not shown a red card when he handled outside his area under pressure from Erling Haaland in the first half, the video assistant referee (VAR) adjudging that City's striker was moving away from goal and therefore not denied a clear opportunity.

Henderson then emerged as Palace's hero when he saved Omar Marmoush's penalty after 36 minutes following Tyrick Mitchell's foul on Bernardo Silva, Haaland stepping aside from spot-kick duties after failing with three of his past seven attempts.

City dominated possession but Oliver Glasner's side defended magnificently, with Henderson outstanding, saving from Haaland, Josko Gvardiol and Jeremy Doku in the first half, then denying Claudio Echeverri after the break.

The final whistle sparked scenes of ecstasy among Palace fans as the long wait for success was over for the Eagles.

The greatest day in Palace's history was richly deserved and reward for faith in the work of Glasner, who has masterminded their superb run to FA Cup glory.

Palace did not win their first Premier League game this season until 27 October, but faith in the Austrian never wavered and the payback is this big prize - as well as a place in the Europa League next season.

Eze and Henderson have been two standout heroes on the road to Wembley, and they inspired the Eagles once again as City were punished at one end and thwarted at the other.

Eze provided the moment of magic, as he did in the quarter-final win at Fulham and the semi-final win against Aston Villa at Wembley, pouncing ruthlessly on Munoz's cross to leave Stefan Ortega helpless.

City will forever believe Henderson should have seen red when he clawed the ball away from Haaland in the first half, but VAR ruled otherwise and Henderson produced an otherwise faultless display in front of watching England head coach Thomas Tuchel.

When he dived to his right to save Marmoush's penalty, Henderson became the first keeper to save a penalty in an FA Cup final - excluding shootouts - since Petr Cech for Chelsea against Portsmouth in 2010.

Munoz was another standout performer for Palace, whose fans had to go through 10 agonising minutes of additional time before the memories of losing FA Cup finals in 1990 and 2016 could be banished. Glasner's reaction, like his management, was calm and measured, while joy exploded for Palace elsewhere.

There were tears of joy on the pitch and in the stands as Palace finally sampled the sweet taste of success. City's FA Cup final display summed up their season of disappointment under Guardiola. It was laboured, faltering and came up short. There was the heavy scent of the end of an era for a great side as there was no glorious last hurrah for Kevin de Bruyne, whose City career is coming to a close, while Silva may also come into the same category.

It was also another miserable Wembley day for Haaland, who has failed to score in six games at Wembley or in eight finals for City.

This is the second year in a row City have lost the FA Cup final, after losing to Manchester United last season.

Guardiola cut an irritated figure, appearing to exchange words with Henderson after the final whistle.

Guardiola said: "We didn't score so congratulations to Crystal Palace for the victory - we did everything. "Today we were more aggressive. If you're not going to score goals, you're not going to win." - Agencies

'Maybe the thought of taking a penalty at Wembley was too much'

LONDON: Erling Haaland will be sick at the sight of Wembley Stadium.

The Norway striker had the chance to end his goalscoring curse at the national stadium on Saturday, but opted to pass on the opportunity during Manchester City's FA Cup final loss against Crystal Palace.

With ball tucked firmly under his arm and with the chance to equalise from the penalty spot, Haaland astounded spectators inside the arena and those watching at home by kissing it and handing it over to Omar Marmoush, who saw his spot-kick saved by Dean Henderson.

"I thought he would want to take it but they didn't speak," said City manager Pep Guardiola, *BBC Sport* reported.

"That moment for the penalty, it's the feeling and how they feel.

"They decided Omar was ready to take it.

"Omar took a lot of time when the ball was stopped, so it put more pressure on him, and Henderson made a good save."

Former Manchester United captain Wayne Rooney suggested the occasion may have got to Haaland, saying: "Erling Haaland is a world-class forward, but when we are talking about Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, there is no way they are giving that ball away.

"That is what separates them two players from Erling Haaland or Kylian Mbappe and these players. They are selfish and they want to score every game.

"When he misses chances I think you can see it gets to him and it does affect him.

"Maybe the thought of taking a penalty at Wembley might have been too much for him. You never know, he is a human being." - Agencies

FRENCH LEAGUE

PSG rally to defeat Auxerre in Ligue 1 season finale

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) came from behind to end their title-winning campaign in Ligue 1 with a 3-1 victory against Auxerre on Saturday.

They wrapped up a fourth successive Ligue 1 title with six games to spare after beating Angers on 5 April. Lassine Sinayoko scored for the third time in six games, taking his season tally to five, to give Auxerre a shock lead at half-time.

But PSG scored twice in the space of eight second-half minutes to record their 26th league victory of the season.

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia levelled before Marquinhos headed the hosts in front. Goncalo Ramos spurned the opportunity to extend PSG's lead from the penalty spot but January signing Kvaratskhelia struck in the 88th minute to wrap up the 3-1 win.

Luis Enrique's side will attempt to add further silverware to their trophy cabinet when they feature in two finals over the next 14 days.

PSG face Reims in the Coupe de France final on 24 May and take on Inter Milan in the Champions League final on 31 May.

Having already beaten Monaco in the French Supercup in January, they could end the season with four trophies.

They are also set to feature in the revamped FIFA Club World Cup in June. - Agencies

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Muller bids farewell as Bayern Munich finish on a high note

MUNICH: Newly crowned Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich finished the season with a 4-0 away win over Hoffenheim as Thomas Muller made his final appearance for the club on Saturday.

The 35-year-old - who has won 13 Bundesliga titles and two Champions Leagues in Bavaria - will leave the club he has spent his entire senior career with when his contract expires this summer.

Muller made his 503rd Bundesliga appearance to go 12th in the league's all-time appearance list, though he couldn't add to his 248 club goals before being replaced by Harry Kane after an hour.

Muller is Bayern's third highest scorer of all time.

Michael Olise opened the scoring in the 33rd minute with a curling free-kick over the the wall that sneaked inside the post.

Hoffenheim striker Andrej Kramaric has scored eight goals against Bayern during his career - more than any current Bundesliga player - but the Croatian missed a clear chance in a one-on-one with Manuel Neuer early in the second half. Shortly afterwards Joshua Kimmich doubled Bayern's advantage when his close-range strike deflected past Oliver Baumann, before Serge Gnabry added a third with a low shot from the edge of the penalty area and Kane scored his 26th league goal of the season. Kane's former Tottenham team-mate Eric Dier made his final appearance for Bayern before a free transfer to Monaco this summer. Leroy Sane came on as a late substitute amid speculation he could also leave the club this summer.

Champions Bayern finish the campaign 13 points clear of closest challengers Bayer Leverkusen, while Hoffenheim avoided dropping into the relegation play-off spot thanks to Heidenheim's defeat by Werder Bremen. - Agencies

WOMEN'S SINGLES

Paolini beats Gauff to end wait for home winner at Italian Open

ROME: Jasmine Paolini produced a scintillating display as she blew away Coco Gauff in straight sets to end a 40-year wait for a home winner of the women's singles at the Italian Open on Saturday.

Roared on by a partisan crowd at the Foro Italico in Rome, including Italian president Sergio Mattarella, Paolini triumphed 6-4, 6-2 against Gauff of the United States.

Paolini, who was a surprise finalist at the French Open and Wimbledon last year, wrapped up victory on the clay in one hour 29 minutes.

The 29-year-old was the first Italian woman to win the tournament since Raffaella Reggi in 1985 and only the fourth overall since its inception in 1930.

"It doesn't seem real. It's incredible to have the trophy in my hands. I'm so emotional," Paolini said.

"I came here as a kid to watch this tournament so to lift the trophy is beyond what I ever dreamed of."

Neither player was able to hold serve in the opening three games before Paolini's nerves eventually settled as she took a 3-1 lead.

That was the point at which Paolini upped the ante as she closed out the set in emphatic fashion.

Paolini raced into a 3-0 lead in the second set with two early breaks before Gauff claimed a break back and then managed to hold her serve.

However, Gauff was unable to wrestle momentum back her way as Paolini swaggered through the remainder of the set.

Guaff saved one match point but, at 40-30, Paolini sealed victory with a powerful serve down the middle. Victory means she will move up a place to fourth in the world rankings on Monday and obtain a top-four seeding for the French Open, which begins next weekend. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

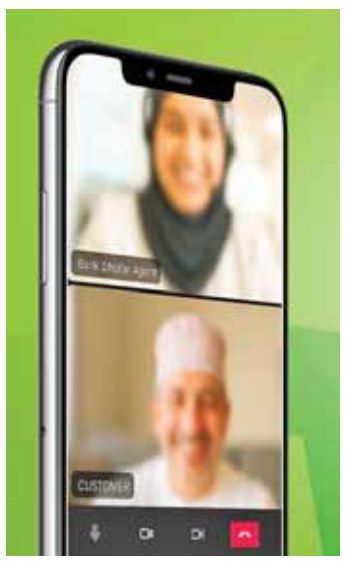
ENHANCING CUSTOMER CONVENIENCE

Bank Dhofar unveils next-generation 'Intilaqa' digital account opening experience

MUSCAT: In a significant step towards enhancing customer convenience and supporting Oman's digital transformation agenda, Bank Dhofar has launched the new and improved version of its widely-used Intilaqa Digital Onboarding App. This upgraded platform marks a new era in account opening by offering a 100% digital, fully paperless process that redefines how customers begin their banking journey.

The enhanced Intilaqa app enables customers to open a Savings Account, Children's Account, or High-Yield Account completely online, without visiting a branch or submitting physical documents. From identity verification to receiving the debit card, every step is digital. The process is completed through a secure video call, allowing real-time Know Your Customer (KYC) verification—one of the first such implementations in the Sultanate of Oman.

The new digital journey is integrated seamlessly with Mala'a, Oman's Credit and Financial Information Centre operating under the Central Bank of Oman. This ensures that customer onboarding is not only fast and convenient but also fully compliant with national regulatory standards, offering both



speed and security.

This transformation underscores Bank Dhofar's commitment to putting customers at the heart of innovation. Whether it's a young professional looking to manage finances on-the-go, a father opening an account for their child, or a resident in a remote area seeking accessible services, Intilaqa delivers a smart, intuitive, and frictionless banking experience to all.

Customers who complete their onboarding receive their debit cards delivered directly to their doorstep, eliminating the need for branch visits entirely. The onboarding process has been streamlined to take only a few minutes, offering the kind of speed and simplicity that aligns with the needs of today's fast-paced, digital-first world.

The launch of the enhanced Intilaqa app is a key milestone in Bank Dhofar's broader digital banking strategy. Alongside recent innovations such as Dhofar Pay, Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, and virtual merchant accounts for seamless reconciliation, Bank Dhofar is building a cohesive, customer-centric digital ecosystem that aligns with Oman Vision 2040 and sets new industry benchmarks.

To ensure successful adoption, Bank Dhofar has also trained frontline staff extensively, equipping them to guide customers through the digital onboarding process and provide end-to-end support.

By embracing the latest in fintech, compliance, and user experience design, Bank Dhofar continues to strengthen its leadership in the digital banking space—making banking smarter, faster, and more accessible for everyone in Oman.

LUXURY CROSSOVER

Enhance your on-road experience with Lexus NX

MUSCAT: The Lexus NX seamlessly blends luxury, style, and cutting-edge technology to elevate the driving experience to unprecedented heights. The luxury crossover, combines modern intelligence with premium features and high-performance, meeting the diversified needs of today's new-age customers.

A visually stunning innovation, the Lexus NX is a true head-turner. With bold curves, a dynamic waistline, eye-catching 3-eye LED headlights, and striking 20-inch wheels, it makes a powerful statement on the road and creates an unforgettable driving journey from every angle.

Across the NX lineup of luxury SUVs, you can choose between two powertrain options. The first is a 2.4-liter, 4-cylinder turbocharged engine that delivers 275 horsepower and 430 Nm of torque, paired with an 8-speed Direct-Shift Automatic Transmission (8AT).

Redefining luxury with sustainability, the second option is a hybrid-electric model powered by a 2.5-liter petrol engine and two electric motors, producing a combined 240 horsepower. This variant is equipped with a Direct-Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT). Each trim is thoughtfully engineered to deliver optimal on-road performance while embodying Lexus' core brand values.

Once you're behind the wheel, the driver-focused cockpit welcomes you with refined details, including premium leather seating, a crisp 14-inch touchscreen multimedia system compatible with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™, a 7-inch color Multi-Information Display (MID), wireless smartphone charging, dual-zone climate control, and ventilated seats. For an even more luxurious experience, the NX offers Smart-Access with push-button start, a 10-speaker premium surround sound system, a panoramic roof, and a power tailgate for convenient luggage storage.

To accommodate diverse lifestyles and ensure peace of mind, Lexus introduces the advanced Lexus Safety System+. This suite of security features gives drivers exceptional control in various driving conditions. Designed to minimize risk and protect all occupants, key technologies include the Pre-Collision System (PCS) with expanded detection range, Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB), Emergency Steering Assist (ESA), Daytime Pedestrian Detection (DPD), Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC), and Curve Speed Reduction (CSR). Additional features like Lane Tracing Alert (LTA), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS), and the Adaptive High-Beam System (AHB) further enhance safety.

Oman Tourism Association forms 1st Board of Directors for 2025–2026

This milestone marks a significant step in strengthening the institutional foundations of Oman's tourism sector and advancing collective efforts toward its long-term sustainability and growth

MUSCAT: The Oman Tourism Association has announced the formation of its inaugural Board of Directors for the 2025–2026 term, following its official establishment under Ministerial Decision No. 397/2024, issued on 18 December 2024 by the Ministry of Social Development. This milestone marks a significant step in strengthening the institutional foundations of Oman's tourism sector and advancing collective efforts toward its long-term sustainability and growth.

The newly appointed Board brings together a distinguished group of Omani professionals and industry experts, with Abdulrahman Awadh Burham Ba Omar serving as Chairman, Hadi Ali Al Sarhani as Vice Chairman, Issa Sultan Al Ismaili as Secretary, and Jamal Saif Al Azki as Treasurer.

The Board also includes Moath Salim Al Ghazali, Shabib Mohammed Al Maamari,Khamis Said Al Wahaibi, Said Salim Al Shanfari, and Zahir Hamad Al Rashdi as members.

The Association is committed to supporting the development and regulation of tourism services across the Sultanate, working in full alignment with national laws and policies. In close partnership with key stakeholders—most notably the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism—it plays a proactive role in shaping the future of Oman's tourism landscape.

At the heart of the Association's mission is the promotion of Oman as a world-class, culturally rich tourism destination. By fostering collaboration with public and private sector entities, it seeks to spotlight the Sultanate's unique natural assets and heritage.

The Association also focuses on building synergies among its members, championing industry best practices, and empowering startups and SMEs to thrive within an increasingly competitive environment.

Functioning as a dynamic professional platform, the Association facilitates strategic dialogue, knowledge exchange, and the development of actionable solutions to sector-wide challenges. A central pillar of its strategy is the enhancement of local content and in-country value, achieved through targeted initiatives that strengthen the tourism sector's economic contribution.

The establishment of the Board marks the formal activation of the Association's mandate as a key institutional partner in driving innovation, resilience, and sustainable development within Oman's tourism ecosystem. Positioned as an enabler of national tourism ambitions, the Association is set to play a pivotal role in realizing sectoral objectives and supporting the broader goals of Oman Vision 2040.

MUSICAL JOURNEY

'Suhani Ruhani Shaam' event celebrates local musical talent

MUSCAT: Continuing their journey in support of local talents Talent Hunters Oman organised Musical Journey-VI "Suhani Ruhani Shaam" on May 16 at College of Banking & Finance, Oman Hall – Bausher.

A group of extremely talented local singers which included 2 Omani singers – Mohd. Rafi & Munther Hassan & 7 Indians - Varsha, Sneha, Joshika,Neha, Haider, Vineet & Sarfaraz rendered their heart out in a 2 hour Musical Extravaganza.

Talent Hunters Oman is a group of dedicated people having passion for performing arts. The aim of the group is to encourage the local talents, to give them a platform to perform & get them the recognition they deserve. The group also train and groom the local talents, with the objective of bringing out the best in them.

G. V. Srinivas, Indian Ambassador to Oman & Redha Juma Al Saleh – Ex Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, were the guests of honour.

The show started exactly at the scheduled time at 7 p.m. The choicest songs of music maestros O.P. Nayyar Ji & Madan Mohan ji

were rendered one after the other by the talented singers in a Non-stop Musical Extravaganza of 2 hours. The Full House audience was mesmerized by the Cheerful songs composed by Melody King O. P. Nayyar ji, which made them swing & Dance. The Soulful songs composed by Ghazal King Madan Mohan ji, made them emotional ... sad...! A few songs were accompanied by dancers – Krishnapriya, Niraja & Niranjana from DADS& CHAMPS which added glamour to the show. The Indian Ambassador added flavor to the show by singing a song which was a pleasant surprise. Script was crisp & hosts Gajesh & Humera were able to carry the whole show on their shoulders mixing information with punch lines. Dr. Sateja managed the singers &performers backstage & saw that the flow of the show was smooth. Haider Naqvi ensured the sound & other technology used were perfect. Sunil handled the project room efficiently & the volunteers made the audience comfortable.

The entire evening was filled with energy, talent, and top-notch entertainment. From start to finish everything was meticulously planned. It was a true celebration of Music& art. It was indeed a memorable musical experience for the music lovers of Oman.

The Founder of Talent Hunters Oman & the Director of the show Dr. Sanjay Dalal in his speech thanked G.V. Srinivas, Eng. Redha JumaAl Saleh & delegates who attended the event.

ST.REGIS AL MOUJ MUSCAT RESORT

Winning golfers Andrew More and Josh Armstrong secure spot in 2025 Audi Quattro Cup final

MUSCAT: The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort marked the successful conclusion of the 2025 Audi quattro Cup Qualifier.

Following an intense and closely contested competition, Andrew More and Josh Armstrong emerged victorious, securing the coveted opportunity to represent Oman at the Audi quattro World Cup at Al Mouj Golf from November 22 to 24. This global event annually attracts approximately 70,000 golfers from 38 countries, underscoring the qualifier's significance at an international level.

The winning team was celebrated during an elegant prize ceremony luncheon at The St. Regis, where they received premium awards from Audi and The St. Regis. The ceremony also recognized outstanding performances with honors for nearest the pin, longest drive, and an exciting hole-in-one challenge. Additional raffle prizes further enhanced the excitement of the event.

"Hosting this event highlights our resort's dedication to luxury, precision, and excellence," remarked Wassim Daageh, General Manager of The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort. "We were delighted to offer our renowned hospitality to golfers and guests alike, creating an unforgettable experience for all."

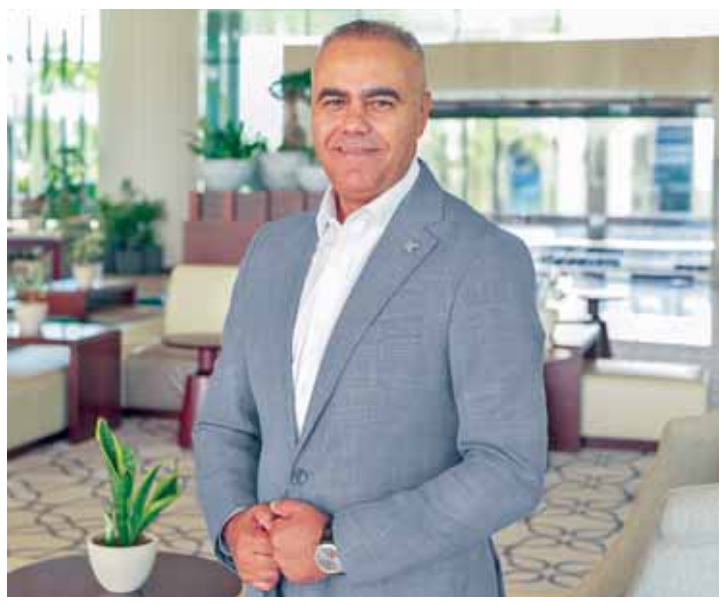
Christian Nehme, General Manager of Premium Motors, added, "The Audi quattro Cup represents the perfect fusion of precision and passion, values closely shared with our partners, The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort and Al Mouj Golf. We are proud to host an event that unites sporting excellence with exceptional hospitality."

Scott McCaw, General Manager of Al Mouj Golf, stated, "Our championship course, designed by Greg Norman, challenged the competitors while offering breathtaking views of the Sea of Oman. We look forward to seeing the winning team represent Oman on the world stage."

ROUND-UP

JW Marriott Hotel appoints Samir Messaoudi as new general manager

A visionary leader in luxury hospitality, Samir Messaoudi has consistently redefined standards of performance, innovation, and sustainability within Oman's tourism landscape



MUSCAT: JW Marriott Hotel Muscat announced the appointment of Samir Messaoudi as its new General Manager, bringing with him over two decades of global hospitality expertise and a transformative leadership style that has shaped some of the most iconic properties.

Known for his exceptional operational acumen, strategic foresight, and commitment to excellence, Samir steps into this role poised to further elevate the hotel's positioning as the city's premier luxury urban resort.

A visionary leader in luxury hospitality, Samir Messaoudi has consistently redefined standards of performance, innovation, and sustainability within Oman's tourism landscape. Over the past decade, his leadership has driven measurable success across financial performance, guest experience, and associate engagement.

Samir began his journey with Marriott International in 2006 at The Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon Bay in California. After holding several operational roles in the United States, he moved to the Middle East in 2009, where he built a robust foundation in F&B operations at Sharq Village & Spa, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Doha. His professional experience through Dubai, Jakarta, Doha, and Muscat, has enhanced his ability to navigate diverse markets and cultural nuances.

Notably, Samir has led key leadership roles at flagship properties, including Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Oman, where he served as Hotel Manager, and JW Marriott Marquis City Center Doha, where he was Acting General Manager. In 2020, he was appointed General Manager of Sheraton Oman Hotel. There, he achieved remarkable milestones, from market-leading RevPAR (revenue per available room) and record-setting revenue, to significant improvements in guest satisfaction and operational efficiency.

Beyond hotel operations, Samir has participated in initiatives aimed at enhancing the hospitality sector in Oman. In 2025, he was appointed Chairperson of the Marriott Business Council Oman, to spearhead growth initiatives and innovation across the portfolio of Marriott International in The Sultanate. His reappointment for a second term as a Board Member for Oman American Business Council (AmCham) and the Chair of the Tourism Committee further reflects his commitment to strengthening diplomatic and business ties between Oman and the US, while bridging the gap between tourism authorities and the travel industry through strategic endeavors.

Samir has also played a pivotal role in promoting Oman as a world-class destination on the international stage. In 2024 and 2025, he was featured in several high-profile media interviews across Tunisian television and radio, reinforcing Oman's position as a must-visit tourism hub. His contributions have earned him regional acclaim, including being named General Manager of the Year – Oman by Hotelier Middle East in 2024, a recognition that follows three consecutive appearances on their prestigious GM Power List. He is currently shortlisted for the 2025 accolade.

Reflecting on his appointment, Samir shared: "It is an honor to lead the exceptional team at JW Marriott Hotel Muscat. As the city's leading luxury urban resort, we are committed to offering a sanctuary of calm and comfort, delivering personalized service for guests of all ages, from international travelers to local families and little guests at Family by JW. Together, we will continue to raise the bar for hospitality in Oman, with an unwavering focus on innovation, authenticity, and guest satisfaction."

With Samir Messaoudi at the helm, JW Marriott Hotel Muscat embarks on an exciting new chapter, defined by bold vision, elevated service, and a deep-rooted commitment to excellence in every detail.

Underpinned by exceptional love of service and hospitality, JW Marriott Hotel Muscat features 304 luxurious, spacious guest rooms and suites featuring unique interior design. A short drive from Muscat International Airport in the heart of Madinat Al-Irfan, it also boasts direct connectivity to the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) and offers business and leisure travelers a haven to escape from the hustle and bustle of urban living.

JW Marriott Hotel Muscat is a Green Key certified hotel, standing as a beacon of environmental sustainability, with its architectural excellence aligning with the stringent standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

ZUBAIR ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Zubair EDC champions digital education with new computer lab at Janayen Hamra School

Muscat: As part of its ongoing commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and supporting digital learning, the Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC) has launched an impactful initiative to establish a fully equipped computer lab at Janayen Al Hamra Private School in Al Hamra.

The school, founded by entrepreneur Kadhia Al Nabhani—an active participant in the Centre's Direct Support Program—benefits directly from this collaborative effort.

This initiative is designed to empower students from the earliest stages, including kindergarten, by introducing them to digital tools and technology-enhanced learning. By providing access to modern educational resources, the initiative seeks to develop essential digital competencies in students from a young age and prepare them for the evolving demands of the digital era.

The Centre emphasised that this project aligns with its broader vision to support entrepreneurs across sectors, particularly in education, by driving sustainable, community-focused initiatives that deliver measurable local impact. The establishment of the computer lab exemplifies how entrepreneurship can serve as a catalyst for social development—fostering both individual growth and long-term community benefits.

Commenting on the initiative, Hilal Al Siyabi, Group Head of Corporate Services at The Zubair Corporation, stated, "At The Zubair Corporation, we firmly believe that access to digital education should not be limited by geography. This initiative reflects our wider commitment to strengthening community institutions and supporting educational advancement. It also highlights the power of collaboration across our subsidiaries—INMA LLC facilitated logistics, Oman Computer Services LLC handled installation and equipment, and The Zubair Corporation provided the classroom furniture."

He added, "Through this initiative, we are proud to have contributed to creating a comprehensive learning environment that empowers the children of Janayen Al Hamra School to grow, explore, and reach their full potential."

Ali Shaker, Head of ESG and Sustainability at The Zubair Corporation, also remarked, "Our support for entrepreneurs in the education sector stems from our belief that sustainable development begins with education. By backing Kadhia Al Nabhani's efforts, we're helping to build a modern learning space that serves the aspirations of the region's youth—furthering our mission to enable socially impactful projects."

Expressing her appreciation, Kadhia Al Nabhani, Founder and Principal of Janayen Al Hamra Private School, said, "We are deeply grateful for this partnership, which strengthens our mission to provide quality, future-focused education for the children of Al Hamra. It's incredibly fulfilling to see our students gaining access to tools that will shape their futures. I sincerely thank The Zubair Corporation, Zubair EDC, and the supporting affiliates for believing in our vision and helping turn it into reality."

HONOUR

Bank Muscat receives Sustainability Award in ESG category at OSW 2025

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, announced that it has recently received the Sustainability Award in the ESG category at the Oman Sustainability Week Awards (OSW) ceremony held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC).

The event was hosted under the patronage of Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, who handed over the award to Afaf Ali Moosa, Assistant General Manager, Large Corporates, Bank Muscat, with the presence of a number of senior officials and executives from various public and private sectors. The Oman Sustainability Week Awards came in existence to raise public awareness on sustainability. It also represents a medium to enhance corporate responsibility for implementing strategic plans and embarking on sustainable and ESG practices which contribute to national development and sustainable economic growth. The event was organized to recognize the institutions that play a pioneering role in implementing sustainability and ESG practices.

The Oman Sustainability Week Awards event represents a national platform aiming to highlight Bank Muscat's role in the field of sustainability and the Sultanate's commitment to implementing innovative strategies and sustainable practices conducive to the development of the nation, as strategized in Oman Vision 2040 and in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Speaking on this achievement, Afaf Ali Moosa, Assistant General Manager, Large Corporates, Bank Muscat, said, "We are delighted to receive the Sustainability Award at the glittering OSW Awards ceremony, which reaffirms Bank Muscat's strategy of promoting sustainability through its endeavors of utilizing and investing in renewable energy to expand sustainable projects as an integral pillar for creating national sustainable economy. The bank has undertaken many initiatives to promote sustainability, including the development of its ecofriendly green finance product. The launch of this product came with the aim to allow customers to install solar panels on their rooftops and use solar energy for a large part of their household energy requirements. Bank Muscat is committed to implementing recent technologies to reduce water and electricity consumption rates, reduce gas emissions that lead to global warming, and decrease paper waste.

Afaf Ali Moosa further added: "It is a matter of great pride that the Bank also implements a strategic plan to take advantage of the potential opportunities to enhance the Sultanate's economic growth in as strategized in Oman's Vision 2040. As the leading financial institution in the country, the Bank constantly upholds its dedication to sustainability and community service through the ongoing launch of sustainable programmes and initiatives.

Throughout its journey of over 40 years, Bank Muscat has been showing strong and excellent presence in the fields of sustainability as well as corporate social responsibility(CSR). In this regard, the Bank has been setting strategic plans to further enhance its pioneering role in CSR and running a number of sustainable initiatives that aim to serve the community. Examples of the Bank's sustainable initiatives comprise the annual Green Sports Programme that has so far benefitted 203 teams with over 70,000 team members across the Sultanate, the Tadhamun Programme set to support social welfare and low-income families and which has served until today over 2200 families since its launch in 2013, and the Al Wathbah SME Academy which equips the Omani entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to support their businesses. In addition to the bank's other community-driven initiatives, Bank Muscat has recently contributed to establishing a public park in Al Koudh in the Wilayat of Seeb in cooperation with the Muscat Municipality.

COLLABORATION

Alizz Islamic Bank participates in AI and judicial sector international summit

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank, represented by the CEO of the bank Ali Al Mani, recently participated in the 'International Summit of the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Judicial Sector' that was held under the patronage of Sheikh Ghosn bin Hilal Al Alawi, Chairman of the State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution.

The summit sought to explore the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) within judicial systems, focusing on innovation, sustainability and future applications. Key topics of discussion included the legal, technical and ethical challenges associated with integrating AI into judiciary practices. The summit brought together government ministers, dignitaries, legal professionals, AI experts academics and private sector representatives to foster dialogue and collaboration.

Touching on the summit, Ali Al Mani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank, said: "At Alizz Islamic Bank we believe in partnering with the government on their projects and community initiatives, in order to give back to society. We are confident that Islamic banks are making strides towards the required contribution by working hand in hand with our partners to achieve the desired outcomes. Our strategy focuses on investing in sustainable initiatives as they are the decisive element in creating a brighter future for the country and its people."

As part of Alizz Islamic Bank's broader strategic vision, it aims to strengthen collaboration between the government and the private sector. The bank's strategy extends beyond just banking. It's about creating sustainable synergy across various sectors in Oman, including partnerships with public and private entities enabling the bank to play a key role in building economy in the Sultanate of Oman.

Alizz Islamic Bank has embarked on many projects that have a positive impact on society and with the goal being to strive to provide a better life for the people beyond their banking needs. Accompanied by a belief that investing in sustainable initiatives is the decisive element in creating a brighter future for the country and its people.

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