



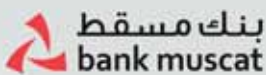
OVER 203,000 TOURISTS VISIT WILAYAT OF JABAL AL AKHDAR

The number of visitors to the Wilayat of Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate during the past year 2024 reached 203,629, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Statistics showed that the number of Omani citizens who visited the state of Jabal Al Akhdar during the past year was 96,856. **>A3**



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HM DEPARTS ON A PRIVATE VISIT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik left the homeland yesterday on a private visit lasting several days. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan in his journeys and grant him success. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Doctors conduct surgery of an obese patient

1 Acting in cooperation with the Anaesthesia Department and Obesity Treatment Unit at the National Diabetes Centre, a specialised medical team from the Royal Hospital has performed the first laparoscopic gastric sleeve operation without surgery. The operation is aimed to help obese patients lose weight. **>A5**

WORLD

Prince Harry expulsion

2 US President Donald Trump has ruled out deporting Prince Harry from the United States, despite ongoing litigation. **>A7**

MARKET

Opaz team in India

3 The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones organised a visit to India with the aim of enhancing cooperation. **>B1**

100 NEW INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS WORTH OMR1.5 BILLION SIGNED

The Industry Day slogan of this year is ‘Oman at the Centre of Global Supply Chains’

MUSCAT: Oman signs agreements for 100 new industrial projects with an investment volume of nearly OMR1.5 billion in the renewable energy, food and medical industries, air conditioning equipment industries, construction and building, metals and plastics industries, and in several industrial, economic and free zones.

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, celebrated Oman Industry Day, which falls on 9 February every year. The slogan of this year is “Oman at the Centre of Global Supply Chains”.

It reflects the Royal interest attached to this sector due to its vital role in enhancing diversification and spurring economic growth. The ceremony was held under the patronage of HH Sayyid Dr. Fahad bin Al Julanda Al Said, Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), in the presence of Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and some undersecretaries.

A number of officials and businessmen in the industrial sector and Omani companies also attended the ceremony.

Dr. Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, said that the latest data issued by the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicate an increase in the output of the converting sector by 8.5 percent to reach OMR2.686 billion by the end of September 2024 at constant prices compared to the same period in 2023. **>A6**



Development Bank finances over 1,300 industrial projects

MUSCAT: The number of loans granted by the Development Bank during 2024 to industrial projects in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman amounted to 1,318 industrial loans worth OMR 91.2 million.

This comes within the framework of the efforts made by the Development Bank to support the industrial sector by providing the necessary financing with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency, enhancing the value of local content, localising industries, supporting small and medium enterprises



and entrepreneurs, and expanding the industrial production base to enable the sector to play its role in diversifying the national economy. The Development Bank

seeks to provide attractive support and facilities for the manufacturing sector in line with the government's orientation towards strengthening national industries and achieving local added value, placing the sector at the top of the ladder of sectors targeted for financing within the framework of its annual plans.

The industrial sector accounted for 18 percent of the total number of loans, which the bank financed during 2024, about 7,398 loans in various sectors and governorates, worth OMR 235 million. **>A2**

FOREIGN MINISTRY

Oman expresses solidarity with Saudi Arabia, condemns Israel

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has expressed its full solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and its rejection of the statements made by the Israeli Prime Minister against the KSA and its territorial integrity.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, Oman reiterated its unwavering and supportive position for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on all its sovereign lands in Palestine, with East Al Quds as its capital, on the 1967 borders, in accordance with international resolutions and the principles of international law, and in a manner that ensures the achievement of permanent stability in the region.

The Secretary General of the Arab League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, strongly condemned statements made by the Israeli occupation's prime minister regarding the transfer of Palestinians to Saudi



Arabia, denouncing the rhetoric as unacceptable and completely detached from reality.

The Secretary General Aboul Gheit reaffirmed that the establishment of a Palestinian state will only take place on the land occupied in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Meanwhile the United Arab

Emirates has also expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the reprehensible and provocative statements made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and affirmed its categorical rejection of these unacceptable statements, which constitute a blatant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.

Khalifa Bin Shaheen Al Marar, Minister of State, underlined the UAE's full solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reaffirmed its unwavering position against all threats to the Kingdom's security, stability and sovereignty.

The minister stressed that the UAE considers Saudi Arabia's sovereignty as an inviolable ‘red line’ that no country should undermine or violate. — **ONA/Agencies**



Vervaeke's stellar
performance secures
maiden victory

A4

BRITISH MONTH

Connecting cultures, shaping futures and enduring friendship

Times News Service

MUSCAT: February 2025 marks the celebration of British Month, kicking off a significant year for the UK-Oman friendship.

This year commemorates the 225th anniversary of the 1800 'Unshook Agreement', which expressed the hope that "the friendship of the two states may remain Unshook till the end of time, and till the sun and the moon have finished their revolving career."

The historic bond between the two nations was rooted in trade and diplomacy, and today, this relationship continues to evolve.

As we "Connect Cultures," people-to-people ties are at the heart of our shared experience—whether through our mutual love for sport, food, film, education of more.

Throughout February, the best of British and Omani culture will be celebrated with a series of ac-



tivities designed to bring the two countries closer together.

This enduring friendship also looks forward. Together, the two countries are committed to shaping a shared future—strengthening trade relations, supporting economic diversification, and advancing sustainability.

Through collaborative partnerships and exchanges, the UK and Oman are building a foundation for resilient, diversified economies that will benefit future generations.

RAM programme to boost leadership skills

The initiative aims to fine-tune the skills of Municipal Council members and expand their ability to propose and implement new ideas

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Academy of Management (RAM), in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, has launched a specialised programme for Municipal Council members from across Oman.

The innovative programme was recently inaugurated under the auspices of Sayyid Khalifa bin Al Murtas Al Busaidi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior.

The initiative aligns with the vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, which aims to cultivate national leadership and enhance the skills of future-ready leaders to meet the goals of the Oman Vision 2040.

National talent

Fathiya Al Rashdi, Vice President for Programme Affairs at the Royal Academy of Management, said, "The launch of the Municipal Council Members Programme is part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the capabilities of national talent further, this time by fostering administrative and economic decentralisation in Oman's governorates. It explores the best practices in local public governance while focusing on positively



impacting the development and competitiveness of the governorates. It represents a fundamental step towards empowering Municipal Council members to innovatively and effectively perform their role and emphasises the importance of leveraging available resources to achieve sustainable development."

Dr Al Rashdi added that the Municipal Council Members Programme incorporates interactive workshops, dialogue sessions, and case studies. It also features practical models for operational plans and projects that enhance local development, improve the efficiency of national leadership, and advance administrative performance, all contributing to the growth of Oman's economy.

The programme aims to fine-tune the leadership skills of Municipal Council members and expand their ability to propose and implement innovative initiatives. It also seeks to boost their competencies in monitoring development and public service projects and build their capabilities in data analysis, strategic

planning, performance evaluation, and infrastructure development, which are all key areas that drive sustainable local development in alignment with national priorities.

A key objective of the programme is to strengthen the role of Municipal Council members within the local governance framework.

Leadership expertise

This includes equipping them with leadership expertise, enhancing their ability to evaluate proposals and initiatives, and deepening their understanding of administrative procedures for public service projects.

The programme encourages active community engagement, ensuring members contribute effectively to local decision-making processes.

The significance of fine-tuning skills of the Municipal Council members to deliver even more efficient public services and make more informed decisions that serve the greater good cannot be overstated.

An important objective of the programme is to foster collaboration between

Community initiatives

Council members and young Omanis, encouraging the development of innovative community initiatives and public service projects that support sustainable development and improve the quality of life of citizens across the governorates.

The Municipal Council Members Programme follows a structured learning approach, including a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities of the Municipal Council and the role of members in reviewing proposals, overseeing service projects, and engaging with local communities.

Running for five days per group, it will accommodate five groups, comprising a total of 148 Municipal Council members from across Oman. It will also feature advisory sessions with government officials and representatives from the private sector to facilitate knowledge exchange and institutional collaboration.

DEVELOPMENT BANK

Pharma sector receives OMR11 million funding

< FROM A1 The bank's statistics also indicated that the developmental impact of the financed projects in the industrial sector amounted to 14 projects in the food security sector, 4 projects falling under the category of foreign direct investment, 13 projects in the context of achieving self-sufficiency, and 9 projects to support exports, in addition to creating 1,330 job opportunities with an Omanization rate of 43 percent.

The industrial loans were distributed across the various governorates, with North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah Governorates topping the list with 369 loans worth OMR 45.8 million, followed by Muscat governorate with 156 loans worth OMR 22.6 million, then North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah Governorates with 313 loans worth OMR 6.9 million. Some industrial sectors received significant funding from the Development Bank. The food products

industry topped the list of funded sectors with a value exceeding OMR12 million distributed over 259 loans, followed by the coke and petroleum products industry, which received funding of OMR 11.7 million through 75 loans, while the financing of the manufacture of mineral products and other metals amounted to about OMR11.3 million for 35 loans.

The pharmaceutical products and medical preparations industry also received funding of OMR 11 million for 4 loans. In addition,

funding was provided to several other industrial sectors such as the chemical industry, motor vehicles, manufactured metal products, plastics and rubber, wood, beverages, and basic metals.

The funding values ranged between OMR94mn and OMR988 thousand. While projects such as furniture manufacturing, printing, transportation equipment, leather, electronics, and machinery received less funding, ranging between OMR528,000 and OMR15,000. -ONA

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ROP

One held for impersonating as policeman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: One person has been arrested for impersonating as a policeman and taking money

from a victim in the Muscat Governorate.

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) said in a statement: "Muscat Governorate Police Command

arrested a person for impersonating as a police officer and taking money from the victim. The legal procedures are being completed against him."

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COMMENTARY

When the roof of life collapses



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

God bless her soul, who used to say, “We all have two roofs.” She would leave the sentence trailing off, first tapped her gray head and then pointed towards the ceiling. She did not impress me then and I thought she was getting senile in her old age. Youth and old age sometimes do not hit off right away but they connect when one starts to bridge the wisdom gap, years later. As I come to think of it now, I know that the flashing light really does illuminate all the dark recesses.

A building structure has a roof and a human body has a head.

Unfortunately for humans, we cannot see what we pile on our heads until the roof caves in and crushes our mental faculties. Roofs tend to rust too and reduce the protective effectiveness. Similarly, a rusty mind diminishes a sense of reality when the burden becomes too heavy to carry.

When you start to worry over your life it is like slinging scraps of information in your mind. The deeper you worry, the more brain space you use up until there is none left. It then takes only one more slinging for you to start to go into depression mode. It is often petty disagreements you have with some aspects of your life that grow into a mountain of discontent. Worrying wrecks are usually fusspots who look for perfection.

Usually anxieties give way to despair, which in turn creates that hollow feeling in the pit of your stomach. The packed mind never lets you and will certainly send you packing to an early grave.

I know of a woman who looks for every excuse to ruin her day when everything sails smoothly. She would sit in her living room and look around to find that tiny speck that landed on her clean carpet. Her typical question would be, ‘Who moved that jug to the left?’

In doing so, she would deprive herself hours of relaxation. Such people always feel guilty when they are happy. They may not know how to handle good moments and get suspicious when everything runs smooth. I also know people who would spill food on their clothes but happily continue to eat despite futile glances from their wives. I should know because my wife has promised a countless number of times to buy me a bib.

If I could attest to my grandmother’s metaphor, then I would say that when the load hits the ceiling and become too much to handle, then we need to cut some of the overheads. I would suggest we begin by throwing away all the junk that pack the mind. Maybe then, we could free some space and let positive thoughts clear the way. But first, we need to convince ourselves we deserve to be happy no matter what the odds are.

NCSI

Over 203,000 tourists visit Wilayat of Jabal Al Akhdar

Times News Service

JABAL AL AKHDAR: The number of visitors to the Wilayat of Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate during the past year 2024 reached 203,629, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Statistics showed that the number of Omani citizens who visited the state of Jabal Al Akhdar during the past year was 96,856, the number of Saudi tourists was 12,007, the number of Emirati visitors was 1,175, the number of Bahraini visitors was 612, the number of Kuwaiti tourists was 1,083, and the number of Qatari visitors was 653.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information showed that the number of tourists from other Arab nationalities reached 7,734, while



the number of visitors from foreign nationalities reached 83,509.

The Wilayat of Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate is one of the favourite tourist destinations for many visitors to the Sultanate of Oman, due to its moderate climate in summer and cold climate in winter, and the availability of many hotels.

The wilayat is also one of the most important areas for eco-tourism and adventure tourism in the Sultanate of Oman, and visitors can enjoy various activities, such as: walking in valleys, visiting caves, and practicing mountain climbing, which in turn contributes to learning about the local culture in the wilayat.

5-DAY COURSE

GCC course on media analysis, monitoring techniques begins

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Information, the GCC Radio and Television Corporation is organising, in Muscat, a 5-day course titled “Media Monitoring and Analysis Techniques and Methods”.

The course, which kicked off on Sunday, seeks to provide skill-based empowerment for participants in using advanced monitoring and analysis platforms with the prime objective of improving the environment of media action and institutional decision-making.

It targets information per-

sonnel operating in the fields of public relations, media and journalism.

The course highlights the importance of digital media, its types and its role in building digital identity of websites. It offers deep insights into monitoring techniques and tools, editing digital content, managing digital websites and measuring and developing content performance, in addition to practical applications.

More than 300 participants are participating in the course through in-person attendance and video conferencing. -ONA



SUPREME JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Fifteen second-class public prosecutors take oath of office

MUSCAT: Fifteen second-class public prosecutors, comprising the “Development Batch”, took the oath of office at the Supreme Judicial Council on Sunday before Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council.

The ceremony was attended by Attorney General Nasr bin Khamis Al Sawa’ee.

The oath of office is taken in implementation of the text of Article (11) of the Public Prosecution Law issued under Royal Decree No. (99/92). It provides due permission to officially start judicial action and join the Public Prosecution Corps.

According to Article (10) of the Public Prosecution Law, it takes two years of study at the Higher Judicial Institute to complete the programme of Postgraduate Diploma in Judicial Sciences. -ONA



SUPREME JUDICIARY COUNCIL

Plan to improve judicial services

MUSCAT: The Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) yesterday held its third meeting of the year (2025) under the chairmanship of Sayyid Mohammed Sultan Al Busaidi, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council.

The meeting discussed a number of topics on the agenda in accordance with the Council’s mandate to supervise courts, judges and the Public Prosecution Department. The overall aim is to improve the quality of judicial services and develop the digital infrastructure of the judicial sector to help support the implementation of prompt justice and enhance transparency.

The meeting also dealt with decisions related to administrative and functional affairs of the Supreme Judiciary Council. It reviewed the organisational structure of the Supreme Judiciary Council after His Majesty the Sultan approved the same.

The meeting endorsed mechanisms related to the implementation of tasks cited in the organisational structure, as well as the Royal directives in this regard. It also reviewed topics related to the development of laws and legislation related to the Council’s course of action. -ONA

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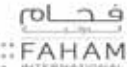
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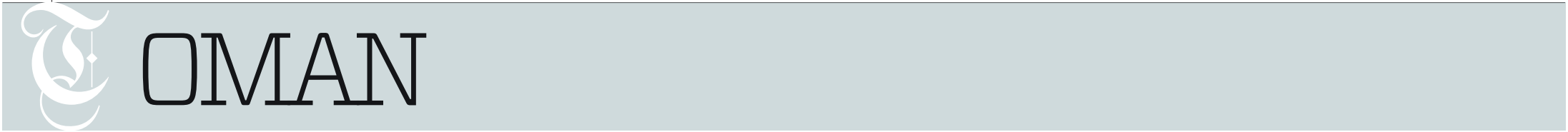
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VERVAEKE’S STELLAR PERFORMANCE SECURES HIS MAIDEN VICTORY AND OVERALL LEAD

Longest stage of 2025 Tour of Oman
concludes amid late drama on Sunday



MUSCAT: A gripping battle on the roads of Oman saw Louis Vervaeke (Soudal–Quick-Step) emerge victorious in a thrilling Stage 2 of the Tour of Oman 2025 on Sunday.

The 31-year-old Belgian rider claimed his first professional victory after a courageous solo effort atop the Yitti Hills, narrowly holding off a charging peloton in a crash-marred finale.

With the win, Vervaeke also surged into the overall lead of the race.

The stage, the longest of this year’s Tour of Oman at 202.9 kilometres, began with a picturesque yet challenging setting at Al Rustaq Fort. The peloton faced a hot and unforgiving morning sun, but the riders were soon engaged in a relentless battle for position. Early on, breakaway attempts began to take shape, as riders vied for the chance to form the day’s lead group.

By the ninth kilometre, the first significant breakaway emerged, with Kane Richards (Roojai Insurance) and Rodrigo Álvarez (Burgos Burpellel BH) breaking clear of the pack. The duo had tried their luck in Stage 1 as well but were caught just 25km from the finish.

However, their efforts were once again stymied as the peloton reeled them back in. At the 24th km, Mohamed Al Wahibi and Mundher Al Hasani, both from the Omani national team, joined the escape, and soon Magnus Kulset (Uno-X Mobility) added his presence. The lead group was now growing, and the peloton let them stretch their advantage to over six minutes by kilometre 34.

At this point, the peloton splintered into three parts, with a 17-man counter-attack forming at the

63rd kilometre. Among the riders involved were Valentin Madouas (Groupama–FDJ) and Ethan Hayter (Soudal–Quick-Step).

However, this move was short-lived as the break was quickly neutralised. With the lead group still holding a five-minute advantage over the main pack with 140 kilometres to go, Vervaeke took matters into his own hands.

At the halfway stage, Vervaeke made his move, bridging the gap to the front group, now comprising five riders, including Mikel Azparren (Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team), who had been chasing for some time. The two riders caught the leaders and formed a new six-man breakaway. As the race progressed, the group continued to work well together, despite some attempts from other riders, such as Madouas and Orluis Aular (Movistar), to make a solo bid for the front. Yet, the peloton, still trailing by over seven minutes, struggled to organize an effective chase.

The race intensified as the peloton bore down on the leaders, and the Bausher Al Amerat climb (3.3 kilometres at an average gradient of 9.8%) shattered the breakaway group. Vervaeke, Azparren, and Kulset were the only riders to hold strong and ascend together, maintaining a lead of around five minutes with 30 kilometres to go. However, with the peloton picking up speed under the efforts of Jayco–AlUla, the gap began to shrink quickly.

With 11 kilometres to go, the gap had already narrowed to just over one minute, prompting Vervaeke to make a decisive move on Al Jissah, the second-to-last climb of the stage. This bold attack split



the remaining escapees, and Vervaeke was soon alone in his pursuit of victory, holding a slim lead over a rapidly closing peloton. As he approached the final climb of the day, the pressure mounted, but Vervaeke managed to hang on, reaching the bottom of the last challenge—a 3km climb with a steep 1.6km section at 6.8% - with just over a minute to spare.

As the peloton surged behind him, the race for the win came down to a frantic final stretch. With seconds ticking away, crashes in the final kilometre further disrupted the chase, leaving Vervaeke with just enough to hold off his rivals. Valentin Paret-Peintre, Vervaeke’s teammate at Soudal–Quick-Step, made a valiant sprint to second place, crossing the line just two seconds behind. Sean Flynn (Picnic PostNL) rounded out the podium in third.

With Stage 2 now behind him, Vervaeke heads into the next phases of the race in a commanding position, ready to defend his lead with the support of his Soudal–Quick-Step teammates.





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UNIQUE PIECES OF JEWELLERY

National Museum hosts exhibition of Italian fashion jewellery

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The National Museum, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy in Muscat, is hosting on 9 February 2025 an exhibition titled ‘DIVA! Italian Glamour in Fashion Jewellery’, which highlights the beauty and creativity of Italian fashion.

The opening ceremony took place under the patronage of Her Highness Sayyidah Dr. Mona bint Fahd Al Said, Assistant Vice Chancellor for International Cooperation at Sultan Qaboos University and Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum.

The event was attended by individuals of interest in culture and artistry. The exhibition will run until 9 March, 2025.

Curated by Professor Alba Cappellieri, Professor of Jewellery Design at Politecnico di Milano and Director of the Vicenza Museum of Jewellery, and her team, the exhibition features more than 100 unique pieces of Italian fashion jewellery.

These jewels reflect the aesthetic and cultural transformations in modern Italian jewellery, showcasing how the style has evolved over time in response to societal changes and technological advances in jewellery-making.

The exhibition celebrates the craftsmanship and creativity that



define modern Italian jewellery, tracing its development from the 1950s to the present.

In his speech during the opening ceremony, H.E. Pierluigi D’Elia, Ambassador of the Italian Republic to the Sultanate of Oman, remarked: “The exhibition celebrates beauty, creativity, and Italian craftsmanship, highlighting how art transcends borders to create a global language that speaks of culture, harmony, innovation, and beauty.”

He added, “We are honoured to

collaborate with the National Museum and Professor Alba Cappellieri to bring this unique exhibition to the Sultanate of Oman. We hope it inspires a deeper appreciation for the art and creativity of Italian jewellery.”

Jamal bin Hassan Al-Moo-sawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, emphasised the importance of hosting ‘DIVA! Italian Glamour in Fashion Jewellery’.

He noted that the exhibition embodies Italian beauty and

creativity in the jewellery-making industry, craftsmanship, and the extraordinary blend of tradition with modernity which provides a significant opportunity to experience the unique Italian beauty.

He said: “We expect this exhibition to inspire visitors as well as Omani artisans and enhance their knowledge of the history and artistry of Italian jewellery, as well as its profound influence on global culture. We look forward to continued collaboration that

fosters cultural dialogue between our countries.”

Professor Alba Cappellieri also emphasised that modern jewellery is no longer viewed simply as an accessory but unique artefact that reflect the identity of an evolving and civilized society.

She described ‘Diva!’ as a journey into the heart of Italian creativity, celebrating the stories of the artisans and designers who have shaped it’.

She expressed her pleasure in sharing this celebration of Italian

glamour with the Omani people.

This exhibition, sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, represents a cultural dialogue between the Italy and Oman, strengthening the bonds of friendship and mutual cooperation between the two countries.

It also offers visitors the opportunity to explore the artistic and aesthetic history of modern Italian jewellery, which is considered one of the most prominent indicators of global Italian creativity.

ROYAL HOSPITAL

Surgery for obese patient carried out



MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Anaesthesia Department and Obesity Treatment Unit at the National Diabetes Centre, a specialised medical team from the Royal Hospital has performed the first laparoscopic gastric sleeve operation without surgery.

The operation, medically known as “gastric folding or gastric plication”, is aimed to help obese patients lose weight in a safe and effective manner.

The operation was a step forward in the Royal Hospital’s strategy to provide the best medical treatments and keep pace with rapid developments in the field of simple surgical interventions.

The Senior Consultant in Gastroenterology and Advanced Interventional Endoscopy department, said: “Laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy is a safe medical option, as the rate of complications is lower compared to traditional surgeries. It also takes only about one hour, and patients recover quickly afterwards. In addition, weight loss occurs gradually, which reduces the likelihood of skin sagging and hair loss that may accompany rapid weight loss.”

He added that the operation is performed through the mouth using a gastrointestinal endoscope, without the need for any surgical incision, as the stomach is reduced by 50-60 percent of its original size, by suturing the inner lining of the stomach.”

He pointed out that this technique is globally approved and does not require cutting or removing any part of the stomach.



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TENDERS

The company invites offers for the following tender:

Sl.	Tender ID	Description	Tender Fee	Deadline for Purchasing of Tenders	Deadline for Submission of Offers
1	1530000083-25	Installation of new Wobbler at Tital Crusher	RO. 52.500	06th March 2025 2359 Hours	11th March 2025 2359 Hours
2	1650000255-25	Refractory General Contract requirements for Kilns	RO. 52.500	27th February 2025 2359 Hours	04th March 2025 2359 Hours
3	1650000253-25	Supply of Kiln Refractory Castable on CFR basis at Sohar Industrial Port	RO. 52.500	27th February 2025 2359 Hours	04th March 2025 2359 Hours

Tender documents can be obtained by paying the below amount online to the Company's account detailed below: Account name: Oman Cement Company SAOG

Bank Name: Bank Muscat SAOG

Account number: 0423 01086 3070 017

Account Type: OMR

SWIFT Code: BMUSOMRX

Copy of deposit transaction of a non-refundable amount of writing on the above as tender fees to be emailed to CFOSecretary@omcement.com & Treasury@omcement.com with the Subject showing "Tender No." and "Tender Description" enabling the Company to provide tender document through email to your company. The above payment is a non-refundable amount.

Contact details: Office number: +968 22705601, Mobile number: +968 97932277

The last date for submission of offers is on Tuesday, 2359 hours detailed date on the above table, accompanied by a bid bond issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 1%) of the total tender value. The bid bond must be valid for 120 days from the last date of submission of offers and the ORIGINAL bid bond must be submitted on the tender box at the reception on our Administration Building, Al Mesfah West factory Site, Bausher, Muscat, Oman.

Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by a tender bond will NOT be considered. This publication is part of the tender documents.



وزارة المالية

Ministry of Finance

Invest in

Oman's Future

Steady & Attractive Returns

Auction of RO 100 Million for 5 Years at 4.6% Per Annum

Government Development Bonds

On behalf of the Government of Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman announces the 73rd issue of Government Development Bonds (GDBs) to be auctioned. The 73rd issue of GDBs will be issued on Tuesday, 18th of February 2025, carrying a coupon rate of 4.6% per annum for a maturity period of 5 years (maturing on 18th of February 2030). These Bonds will be auctioned and priced on Sunday, 16th of February 2025. Investors may apply for these Bonds through licensed commercial banks by completing the application form.

Security of Capital

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

Steady Returns

Interest shall accrue from the date of issue, and will be paid semi-annually on the 18th of February and 18th of August of every year until maturity. The first payment will be made on 18th August 2025. Interest payments will cease once the Bond matures.

Liquidity

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

Collateral Advantage

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

Who Can Invest?

The 73rd issue of GDBs is offered to all categories of investors, residents and non-residents (irrespective of their nationalities).

How to buy the bonds?

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

Bank Account Details

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

MCD Investor Code

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

For any enquiries:

Tel: +968 24822222

E-mail: mcd.support@mcd.om

Subscription & Auction Period

73rd issue

Open: Sunday, February 9th, 2025

Close: Thursday, February 13th, 2025

Auction: Sunday, February 16th, 2025

The minimum subscription amount

RO 100

To view the prospectus of the 73rd issue of GDBs, please visit the following websites:

Ministry of Finance | www.mof.gov.om

Central Bank of Oman | www.cbo.gov.om

Contact the Central Bank of Oman (Market Operations Department) or any commercial licensed bank for details.

Tel: +968 24822222 / 24822303 / 24822302 / 24822260

P.O Box 1161, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman

E-mail: mod@cbo.gov.om

'LEAP 2025'

Oman attends major tech show in Riyadh

RIYADH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, participated in the opening of the “LEAP 2025” exhibition and conference in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

Eighteen countries, 1,800 exhibitors, 630 emerging technology companies and more than 1,000

speakers from various countries of the world take part in a prominent technical event in the Middle East extending from 9 to 12 February 2025 under the slogan “Into New Worlds”.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology is organizing the Sultanate of Oman’s pavilion at the LEAP Exhibition and Conference

this year for the third consecutive time, as the pavilion includes 47 government and private technology companies.

This year, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, represented by “Invest Easy” platform, and 9 government companies, most notably Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel), Oman Information

and Communications Technology Group (ITHCA), and 37 Omani technology startups are participating in the pavilion with the aim of supporting the access of their technical products and services to regional and global markets, and promoting digital investment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman.

— ONA

Shura refers draft laws for legislative processing

Chairman of the Shura Council, highlighted the Council’s pivotal role in shaping national development plans

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Shura Council on Sunday referred two major draft laws—the Anti-Human Trafficking Law and the Real Estate Regulation Law—to the State Council for further legislative processing.

This action, taken during the fourth regular sitting of the second annual session (2024–2025) of the tenth term (2023–2027), is in accordance with Article 49 of the Oman Council Law, which stipulates that government-drafted laws must be reviewed by the Council for approval or amendment within three months of referral and then forwarded to the Sultan for ratification and issuance.

During the session, the Council also approved several additional legislative initiatives, namely: the proposal for a draft law establishing a Support Fund for Sports, Cultural, and Youth Activities, the proposal for amending the law governing private entities operating in the sports sector originally issued by Royal Decree No. 81/2007, and the expressed desire to establish a Centre for Omani Talents.

In his opening remarks, Khalid Hilal Al Ma’awali, Chairman of the Shura Council, highlighted the Council’s pivotal role in shaping national development plans and supporting state agencies in achieving sustainable stability and prosperity across all sectors.

Following his address, Dr. Ahmed Ali Al Saadi, Chairman of



the Legal and Legislative Committee, presented the committee’s report on the Anti-Human Trafficking Law draft.

He explained that extensive consultations were held with representatives from the Omani Human Rights Committee (OHRC) and the National Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, resulting in a comprehensive and balanced set of recommendations.

He emphasised that the draft law, designed to update the current legislation in line with the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Law, and relevant international agreements, provides enhanced legal protection for victims and establishes stronger deterrence against human trafficking crimes in Oman.

Subsequently, the Council reviewed the Real Estate Regulation Law draft.

Hamoud Ahmed Al Yahyai, Chairman of the Public Services and Utilities Committee, provided an overview of the draft, which comprises 64 articles across nine chapters.

He noted that the real estate sector is among the most rapidly growing and dynamic in the world, and that modern, unified legislation is essential to attract investors and regulate property

transactions.

He highlighted the need for clear, integrated legal provisions that govern real estate activities, define the rights and obligations of stakeholders, streamline licencing procedures, and enhance market stability.

During joint discussions, Dr. Talal Ali Al Saadi, Deputy Chairman of the Legal and Legislative Committee, presented the amendments where disagreements had arisen between the two committees.

Following extensive deliberations and input from Council members, the finalised texts for both draft laws were approved and subsequently referred to the State Council for further consideration.

In addition, the session approved the following initiatives for further discussion at upcoming sittings: the proposal for a draft law establishing a Support Fund for Sports, Cultural, and Youth Activities, aimed at bolstering sustainable development in these sectors and aligning with Oman Vision 2040; and the proposal for amending the law governing private sports entities, issued under Royal Decree No. 81/2007.

Furthermore, the Council endorsed the expressed desire to establish a Centre for Omani Talents.

This initiative is intended to identify and nurture young talent in accordance with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040, with anticipated positive financial, economic, legislative, and social impacts. The proposal includes plans for a future expansion through the creation of regional branches to further support national talent development.

Looking ahead, the Council will continue on Monday with its regular sitting, during which it will also deliberate on the draft Telecommunications and Information Technology Regulation Law referred by the government, as well as review the Public Services and Utilities Committee’s recommendations on a maritime transport agreement with the Government of the Republic of South Africa and a cooperation agreement with the Government of the Republic of Tunisia in the maritime and port sectors.

In addition, the Council will consider reports from the Media, Tourism, and Culture Committee on the expressed desires to maximize the economic returns of certain heritage sites listed as World Heritage and to support the Ministry of Information’s initiative to create personal communication channels that enhance media performance for the community.



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2025

ASMED reviews plans for SMEs

MUSCAT: The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) yesterday held a press gathering during which it reviewed options for the implementation of more supportive plans for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and discussed its accomplishments in 2024 and the salient features of its plan for 2025.

The media gathering stemmed from ASMED’s approach to consolidate transparency and enhance communication with the community.

During the meeting, Halima Rashid Al Zar’ai, Chairperson of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), stressed that ASMED ardently undertakes its role in supporting the empowerment of SMEs and startups, entrepreneurs and artisans.

She added that ASMED seeks to upgrade the contribution of all in driving sustainable development through cooperation with the parties concerned, including the Development Bank, Oman Investment Authority (OIA)—represented by “Oman Future Fund”—and the Financial Services Authority (FSA), which licenses alternative financing platforms. She pointed out that this integrated system contributes to providing financing through lending or alternative financing.

She explained that ASMED announced a package of incentives aimed at encouraging project owners to encourage them to keep innovating and growing.

The incentives provided by the Authority are in line with the strategic vision of the Sultanate of Oman to empower the SME sector and enable young entrepreneurs to come up with innovative ideas and upgrade them into successful projects that contribute to economic diversification and entrepreneurship as pillars of a promising future.

For his part, Abdullah Ali Al Sunaidi, Director of the Development and Empowerment Depart-

ment at ASMED, said that the total national workforce in the SME sector stood at 192,714. He pointed out the total number of SMEs that obtained the Entrepreneurship Card in the second half of 2024 stood at 64,436.

He explained that ASMED initiatives aimed at encouraging SME owners included the allocation of not less than 10 percent of government tenders and purchases to SMEs and exempting SMEs from providing temporary insurance (1 percent) when submitting their bids to participate in tenders.

This is in addition to excluding SMEs that obtained entrepreneurship cards from registration and classification fees at the Secretariat General of the Tender Board and cutting down registration fees for small and medium enterprises at the Secretariat General of the Tender Board by 50 percent, he added.

Al Sunaidi explained that the total number of trainees who participated in the Entrepreneur Readiness Programme in 2024 stood at 5,222. The programme provides intensive and integrated specialized training to develop the skills of entrepreneurs to help them keep pace with the rapid developments in the entrepreneurship system, notably by enhancing their technical and technological practices that contribute to the sustainability of their projects.

In this context, he said that the total number of specialised and general training programmes until the fourth quarter of 2024 stood at 209 and that 28,853 entrepreneurs benefited from the programmes in terms of general consulting service (3,203 beneficiaries), the economic feasibility study (4,653 beneficiaries) and the guidance programme (229 entrepreneurs). During 2024, a total of 123 “small enterprises” grew into “medium enterprises” during 2024, while 5 “medium enterprises” grew into “large enterprises”. -ONA

OMAN INDUSTRY DAY

Oman’s non-oil exports reached OMR7.5bn by 2023

<FROM A1 He said in his speech that the Global Competitive Industrial Performance Report issued by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) indicates that the Sultanate of Oman achieved third place in the Arab world and 53rd globally, which reflects the acceleration of industrial competitiveness capabilities over the past years.

He affirmed that the industrial sector has managed to achieve the targets of the Industrial Strategy 2040 during 2022 and 2023, as OMR3.44 billion was set as a target contribution for converting industries to the GDP for the year 2022. The contribution of this sector witnessed a growth of 19 percent between 2020 and 2023, reflecting the continuous progress towards achieving the goals of the strategy, thanks to the joint cooperation between the public and private sectors, he added.

The industrial sector also provided about 26,000 job opportunities for Omanis since 2020, achieving a growth rate of 79 percent compared to 2020, reflecting its prominent role in supporting the national workforce, said Dr. Saleh. Dr. Saleh pointed out that non-oil commodity exports recorded a remarkable increase, reaching about OMR7.5 billion by the end of 2023, compared to OMR3.4 billion by the end of 2020, reflecting the accelerated growth in the industrial performance of the Sultanate of Oman.



In his turn, Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) affirmed that the industrial sector enjoys tremendous opportunities for growth, sustainability and empowerment of the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

He pointed out that the OCCI supports the empowerment of the private sector by anticipating challenges and attracting investments, in addition to empowering the Omani product and raising its competitiveness in local and foreign markets.

During the ceremony, three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were inked.

The first one, signed with the International Centre for Industrial Transformation in Singapore, is related to supporting and encouraging factories to adopt the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The second MoU, signed with the Gulf

Organisation for Industrial Consulting, pertains to providing consultations to establish a center for advanced automation, while the third MoU announced a strategic partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion launched, during the ceremony, the service of obtaining the national product identity certificate within the Made in Oman platform. It aims to promote Omani industries and highlight national products.

The advanced automation centre was also launched, which aims to develop industrial capabilities to transform Omani industries into leading factories in digital transformation.

A programme to qualify certified assessors using the Siri methodology was also launched to ensure that assessments are conducted accurately and professionally by



training assessors on the latest methods and tools necessary to assess the readiness of facilities for industrial transformation.

The ceremony also saw the announcement of the Certificate Verification Programme (Professional Accreditation), which provides a reliable service to companies to facilitate the process of verifying academic and professional documents. The Ministry also launched the Industrial Sector Enablers Guide, with the aim of enabling partners to identify the opportunities available in the industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman and how to utilize them.

Meanwhile, Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Al Qasbi, Head of the Local Content Office at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, gave a visual presentation in which he reviewed the industry’s achievements and contributions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Ahmed bin Khalfan Al Bada-

wi, Director of the Industrial Strategy Implementation and Evaluation Department at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, also gave a visual presentation on the Industrial Observatory and its aspirations.

On her turn, Anfah Zaher Al Afani, Head of Markets and Trade Facilitation Department at Oman Logistics Center, gave a visual presentation on supply chain improvement methodologies and how to use connectivity and integration to improve the supply chain to reduce costs and increase efficiency. During the ceremony, a dialogue session was held on supply chains and their importance with the participation of a number of specialists from the public and private sectors.

Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, held a dialogue session with the Omani industrialists. The session addressed means of enhanc-

ing local content and focused on the importance of strengthening supply chains in the industrial sector.

They exchanged views on the challenges and opportunities available to Omani companies. It also highlighted how to enhance cooperation among various stakeholders to support sustainable growth in the sector.

Gerd Muller, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), lauded the Sultanate of Oman’s pioneering role in the field of sustainable manufacturing.

He pointed out that these efforts reflect Oman’s keenness to promote economic and social development in line with the organisation’s mandate, affirming that Oman has proven its ability to take serious steps towards developing a sustainable industrial sector, making it a role model to be emulated in the region.

In his turn, Jesmond Hong, Chief Operating Officer of the International Centre for Industrial Transformation, said that the centre looks forward to strengthening cooperation with the Sultanate of Oman to drive industrial transformation and enable the manufacturing sector to achieve a prosperous future.

The centre is a non-profit and independent organisation that aims to promote manufacturing transformation through collaboration with the public and private sectors.

‘Humanitarian aid entering Gaza insufficient to meet basic needs’

Spokesperson of Oxfam pointed out that the healthcare sector continues to face immense challenges, as Israel's deliberate destruction of health infrastructure has left more than 100,000 people injured

GAZA: Oxfam's spokesperson, Hadeel Qazzaz, has stated that the humanitarian aid currently entering the Gaza Strip is insufficient to cover even a small portion of the people's urgent needs, which have accumulated over the past 15 months. Speaking to the Voice of Palestine, Al-Qazzaz highlighted the dire shortage of clean, drinkable water, which tops the list of essential needs for the people of Gaza. This shortage is particularly critical given the widespread destruction of water pipelines across the region.



Additionally, she pointed out that the healthcare sector continues to face immense challenges, as Israel's deliberate destruction of health infrastructure has left more than 100,000 people injured, underscoring the need for more medical supplies. Qazzaz also pointed out the severe lack of tents and caravans, which has significantly worsened the suffering of displaced citizens, especially during the current cold weather front. Shelters are overcrowded, and many are unable to accommodate additional displaced persons. **Israeli occupation forces continue assault on Jenin and its refugee camp for the 20th consecutive day** Israeli occupation forces have

continued their assault on the city of Jenin and its refugee camp for the 20th consecutive day, leaving behind 25 fatalities and dozens of injuries since the beginning of the assault. Local sources reported extensive damage to homes and property in Jenin camp. After Israeli military vehicles withdrew from some areas of the camp, they repositioned in others, revealing houses that had been completely flattened. The destruction extended to streets, infrastructure, cars, and private property. Jenin Governor, Kamel Abu al-Rob, stated in a press release that over 15,000 people have been displaced from the camp, including 3,500 families, who are now scattered across several towns and villages in the governorate, with most of them currently residing in the

town of Burqin, west of Jenin. He confirmed that the occupation forces continue to demolish and burn citizens' homes in the camp, adding that the prolonged siege on Jenin city over the past two years has worsened the already dire economic situation. Meantime, Israeli drones continue to fly over Jenin refugee camp, repeatedly dropping bombs in the camp's square and several surrounding streets. Furthermore, Israeli forces have maintained their siege on Jenin Government Hospital, after bulldozing its entrance and the main street leading to it. For the 20th consecutive day, hospital departments are suffering from severe shortages of drinking water. The municipality of Jenin, in cooperation with Civil Defense

teams, has been attempting to deliver water to the hospital using small agricultural tractors, after Israeli forces prevented water tankers from entering. Israeli forces have also sent large reinforcements, including military bulldozers, to Jenin city and the surrounding areas of the camp. **Death toll in Gaza reaches 48,189** Medical sources reported on Sunday that the number of fatalities in the Gaza Strip has risen to 48,189 since the start of the Israeli aggression on October 7, 2023. The majority of those killed are women and children. According to the sources, the total number of injuries has reached 111,640, with thousands of victims still trapped under the rubble. The sources also mentioned that eight victims were brought to hospitals in Gaza during the last 24 hours, including seven whose bodies were retrieved and one new fatality. Furthermore, two new injuries were reported over the past 24 hours as a result of the ongoing Israeli assault on the region. **Jordan condemns Israeli statements on Palestinian statehood and Saudi Arabia** The Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates has strongly condemned the Israeli statements denying the Palestinians' right to establish their independent and sovereign state on their own land. These statements, which also

advocate for the establishment of a Palestinian state on Saudi Arabian territory, were described by Jordan as provocative and inciting, representing a clear violation of international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, and the sovereignty of states. In a statement issued today, the Jordanian Ministry's spokesperson, Ambassador Sufyan Qudah, reiterated that the Israeli government continues its provocative policies and statements that undermine the sovereignty of nations and the principles of international law. He emphasized Jordan's absolute rejection of these inflammatory remarks, which reflect an exclusionary, inciting ideology against peace and further fuel tensions in the region. Ambassador Qudah expressed Jordan's full support and solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, calling on the international community to condemn and denounce these irresponsible statements. The spokesperson further stated that the Israeli government's attempt to obscure the root cause of the ongoing conflict in the region—namely, the occupation and violation of Palestinian rights—would not succeed. He reaffirmed that the Palestinian people remain steadfast in their commitment to their land and their right to establish an independent state with full sovereignty, based on the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. He stressed that security, peace, and stability in the region cannot be achieved without this fundamental principle. — Wafa

INDIA

31 Naxals killed in encounter

BASTAR: 31 Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in the forests of the National Park area in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, officials said. Police during the operation also recovered weapons and explosives from the area. According to Bastar police officials, the encounter broke out in the forests on Sunday morning. "31 Naxalites were killed in the encounter in the National Park area of Bijapur district," Bastar IG P Sundarraj said. "Two jawans, including one from the DRG and the other from STF, lost their lives, while two others were injured in the gunfight." — ANI

UNITED STATES

Donald Trump rules out deporting Prince Harry

WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump has ruled out deporting Prince Harry from the United States, despite ongoing litigation questioning the Duke of Sussex's immigration status, the New York Post reported. In an interview with The New York Post on Friday, Trump made it clear that he does not want to take action against Harry. "I don't want to do that," he said. "I'll leave him alone. He's got enough problems with his wife. She's terrible," Trump added while speaking with the New York Post. This statement comes amid legal challenges involving Harry's visa, particularly from the Heritage Foundation, which has raised concerns over Harry's potential



failure to disclose past illegal drug use during his visa application process, the report added. The New York Post also stated

that Trump took the opportunity to express admiration for Harry's estranged older brother, Prince William, calling him "a great young man." The two had met privately in Paris during the reopening of Notre-Dame Cathedral in December 2024, a meeting that stood in stark contrast to Trump's strained relationship with Harry and his wife. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have long been vocal critics of Trump. Meghan Markle referred to him as "divisive" and "misogynistic" in previous public statements, while Trump has regularly ridiculed Harry, claiming that the prince is "whipped" by Meghan. "I think poor Harry is being led around by the nose," Trump remarked in a previous interview, the New York Post reported. The Heritage Foundation's lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security has called

into question Harry's honesty in his US visa application, citing admissions in Harry's autobiography Spare about his past drug use, including cocaine, cannabis, and psychedelics. Nile Gardiner of the Heritage Foundation said, "Anyone who applies to the United States has to be truthful on their application, and it is not clear that is the case with Prince Harry," the New York Post reported. The conservative think tank has also suggested that Harry may have received favourable treatment from the Biden administration after he and Meghan relocated to California in 2020, following their departure from the British royal family, a move widely known as "Megxit", the report added. — ANI

DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY

Delhi Legislative Assembly dissolved, paving way for next govt formation

NEW DELHI: Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has dissolved the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from Sunday. This came after Atishi tendered her resignation as Delhi Chief Minister on Sunday, following her party's loss in the Delhi assembly elections. She submitted her resignation to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena at the Raj Niwas. The dissolution of the assembly paves the way for the formation of a new government in the national capital under the BJP's leadership. "In exercise of the power conferred upon me by sub-section (2)(b) of section 6 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, I, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, hereby dissolve the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from February 8, 2025," the LG order said. Atishi, 43, had been serving as the Chief Minister of Delhi since September last year. Her elevation to the top post came after Kejriwal announced resignation from his post, days after resigning from the post. Atishi became the third woman chief minister of Delhi after Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit. The BJP won a historic mandate in Delhi polls on Saturday,



returning to power in the national capital after 27 years by ousting AAP. The BJP secured two-thirds majority bagging 48 out of 70 seats, while AAP's tally saw a massive drop at 22 from its previous tally of 62. Atishi, however, retained the Kalkaji seat after a hard-fought contest and defeated BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri by a margin of 3,521 votes. Atishi's win in Kalkaji constituency stands out for AAP, especially as several of its top leaders, including former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and ex-Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, lost their constituencies. BJP's Parvesh Verma emerged as a giant-killer in the assembly election with a decisive win of over 4,000 votes over former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the New Delhi seat. The Congress, which was

hoping for its revival in the national capital, again failed to win any seat. **Atishi resigns as Delhi Chief Minister** Atishi tendered her resignation as Delhi Chief Minister on Sunday, following her party's loss in the assembly elections. The Aam Aadmi Party leader submitted her resignation to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena at the Raj Niwas on Sunday. Atishi, 43, was serving as the Chief Minister of Delhi since September last year. AAP suffered a massive setback in the Delhi assembly elections, as it could secure only 22 seats, a huge drop from its previous tally of 62. The BJP won a historic mandate in Delhi polls on Saturday, returning to power in the national capital after 27 years by ousting AAP. — ANI



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tenders:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/2025/003	UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION – Lot -12B/2024	24-Feb-2025	03-Mar-2025	52.500
DISC/2025/004	SUPPLY OF SINGLE PHASE AND THREE PHASE SMART ENERGY METERS (AMR)	17-Feb-2025	24-Feb-2025	1575.000
DISC/2024/140-2	Re-Tender: Replacement of Existing 11kV Switchgear at Madinat Al Haq PSS	17-Feb-2025	24-Feb-2025	105.000
DISC/2025/006	ENTERPRISE ENDPOINT PROTECTION SOLUTION	24-Feb-2025	04-Mar-2025	52.500

- To purchase the tender document website via the link or the Barcode below: https://supplier.nama.om:4443/OA_HTML/OA.jsp?OAFunc=XXTEN_TENDER_FLOAT_DISC_F
- Every company wishing to participate in this tender must attach with its bid a bid bond in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman. Any bid that does not contain the bid bond will be disqualified.
- The original bid bond must be submitted in an envelope sealed with red wax and addressed to the chairperson of the minor tender committee and written on outside the Tender name and the Tender number and it should be paced in the tender box in Nama Dhofar Services in Salalah before 03:00 pm of the last day for submitting Bids.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "supplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The Tender fees are not refundable. However, Tenderers who are holding "Riyada" card issued from public authority for SME development will be exempted from providing the tender fee and the Bid bond.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.



Dhofar Integrated Services Company s.r.l.
CR Number 2180279, JO Reg 2020
P.O. 211, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman
Phone Number: 23330023 Fax 23301883
nama@dhofar-services.com



Australia cruise to comfortable Test series win over Sri Lanka

Australia spinners Nathan Lyon and Matt Kuhnemann took 30 of the 40 Sri Lanka wickets in the 2-0 series triumph

GALLE: A dominant Australia wrapped up a commanding nine-wicket victory over Sri Lanka early on day four in Galle on Sunday, sealing a 2-0 series sweep - their first in Sri Lanka since 2011.

After taking just 25 minutes to dismiss Sri Lanka for 231 in their second innings, Australia needed only 75 runs to secure the win. Despite losing Travis Head for 20, Usman Khawaja (27*) and Marnus Labuschagne (26*) comfortably guided the tourists home before lunch. The match also marked a farewell for Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne, who bowled the final over in his 100th and last Test.

Stand-in captain Steve Smith, whose 131 in the first innings followed his 141 in the series opener, praised his side's adaptability. "We played really well from the outset. The batters adapted to the conditions brilliantly, and our bowlers did a tremendous job," Smith said.

Australia's spin duo of Nathan Lyon and Matt Kuhnemann were the stars with the ball, claiming 30 of Sri Lanka's 40 wickets in the series. Kuhnemann, in particular, was outstanding, finishing as the series' leading wicket-taker with 16 scalps at 17.18, while Lyon contributed 14 wickets at 22.5.

Sri Lanka's hopes of setting a challenging target rested on Kusal Mendis, who resumed the day on 48 with his team at 211 for 8. He quickly reached his second



half-century of the match but fell soon after to a Lyon delivery that bounced viciously, gifting Smith his 200th Test catch - making him the first Australian to reach the milestone.

With Sri Lanka's hopes dashed, attention turned to whether Kuhnemann or Lyon would secure a five-wicket haul. Lyon had two unsuccessful lbw appeals, while Beau Webster, making an impact with his off-spin, clean-bowled Lahiru Kumara to end the innings.

Australia's chase began cautiously against Sri Lanka's spin-



ners, with Head attacking whenever the bowlers erred in length. However, left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya dismissed Head off a top edge. Labuschagne, enduring a lean patch, found some rhythm with crisp boundaries before sealing victory with a

confident drive.

Australia's clean sweep marked their first in Asia since defeating Bangladesh 2-0 in 2006, a testament to their ruthless execution. Unlike previous closely fought series in Sri Lanka, this time, Australia dominated from start to finish.

The victory also concluded the league phase of the 2023-25 World Test Championship cycle. Australia had already booked their place in June's final at Lord's, where they will face South Africa. Sri Lanka finished sixth in the standings, below England.

For Sri Lanka, it was a disappointing end to the campaign, and an unfortunate farewell for Karunaratne, as they slumped to their fourth consecutive Test defeat. Captain Dhananjaya de Silva admitted, "Losing a home series 2-0 is very disappointing. We never really got into the games, and Australia showed why they're in the final."

Brief scores: Australia 414 (Carey 156, Smith 131, Jayasuriya 5-151) & 75/1 (Khawaja 27*, Labuschagne 26*) beat Sri Lanka 257 (Kusal 85, Chandimal 74, Starc 3-37) & 231 (Mathews 76, Kusal 50, Kuhnemann 4-63, Lyon 4-84).

TRI-SERIES

Phillips' blazing century powers Kiwis to victory over Pakistan

LAHORE: Glenn Phillips' stunning 72-ball century propelled New Zealand to a commanding 78-run victory over Pakistan in the first ODI of the tri-series at Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday.

His late onslaught saw New Zealand rack up 330 for 6 before Mitchell Santner's three-wicket haul helped bundle Pakistan out for 252.

Winning the toss and opting to bat, New Zealand initially struggled against Pakistan's disciplined attack. Shaheen Shah Afridi made an immediate impact, removing Will Young in his first over. Rachin Ravindra injected early momentum with a quick-fire 25 but fell to Abrar Ahmed. Kane Williamson (58) and Daryl Mitchell (81) steadied the innings, but regular wickets kept Pakistan in control. At 232 for 5 in the 44th over, the game seemed in the balance.

Enter Phillips. Starting cautiously, he exploded in the final stretch, plundering 77 off his last 32 balls. He dismantled Salman Agha with consecutive sixes before launching Afridi and Naseem Shah into the stands. The final over yielded 25 runs, sealing Phillips' maiden ODI ton in breath-taking fashion. Afridi (3-88) was Pakistan's most successful bowler, but his figures were dented in the closing overs.

Chasing 331, Pakistan's hopes rested on a strong start from Fakhar Zaman and Babar Azam. However, Babar's promotion



to opener ended in disappointment as he fell cheaply to Michael Bracewell. Fakhar counter-attacked with a fluent 84 off 69 balls, keeping Pakistan's chase alive despite a sluggish effort from Kamran Ghulam.

With Fakhar taking on Santner and Bracewell, Pakistan remained in contention. But when Phillips, continuing his dream game, trapped him lbw in the 24th over, the resistance crumbled. Rizwan and Ghulam had already depart-

ed, and the required rate soared past nine.

A brief partnership between Tayyab Tahir and Salman Agha provided respite, but Bracewell's diving catch to dismiss Tahir extinguished Pakistan's hopes.

From there, New Zealand chipped away at the lower order. Khushdil Shah and Agha fell in quick succession, while Abrar Ahmed's late cameo only delayed the inevitable. Matt Henry wrapped things up by bouncing

out Naseem, sealing a dominant win for the Black Caps.

New Zealand's emphatic victory, powered by Phillips' heroics and backed by their spin attack, sets them up well for the rest of the tri-series and beyond, with the Champions Trophy on the horizon.

Brief scores: New Zealand 330 for 6 (Phillips 106*, Mitchell 81, Williamson 58, Afridi 3-88) beat Pakistan 252 all out (Fakhar 84, Santner 3-41) by 78 runs. - Agencies

Ravindra doubtful for SA ODI after head injury



LAHORE: New Zealand batter Rachin Ravindra is unlikely to feature in Monday's ODI against South Africa after sustaining a forehead injury during the tri-series opener against Pakistan.

Fielding at deep square leg in the 37th over, Ravindra positioned himself to catch Khushdil Shah's slog-sweep off Michael Bracewell but misjudged the trajectory. The ball struck him flush on the forehead, drawing immediate concern as he stood motionless, blood trickling down his face. Medical staff rushed in, and a stretcher was briefly called before Ravindra, aided by team medics, walked off to warm applause from the Gaddafi Stadium crowd.

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) later confirmed that Ravindra required stitches but had passed his initial Head Injury Assessment

(HIA). "He is otherwise well and will continue to be monitored under HIA protocols. He is unlikely to feature in tomorrow's match," the statement read.

New Zealand went on to secure a commanding 78-run victory, powered by Glenn Phillips' maiden ODI century. Ravindra had earlier contributed with a brisk 25 off 19 balls and bowled three overs.

Meanwhile, Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf left the field two balls into his seventh over with a "low-grade side strain," ruling him out of the chase.

With the Champions Trophy just 11 days away, New Zealand also await scan results for Lockie Ferguson's hamstring injury, sustained in the ILT'20. Their next tri-series match is against South Africa on Monday, while Pakistan face the Proteas on Wednesday.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY



South Africa replace injured Nortje with Bosch

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa have named bowling all-rounder Corbin Bosch as a replacement for the injured Anrich Nortje in their 15-member squad for the Champions Trophy in Pakistan later this month.

The 30-year-old Bosch, who debuted in ODIs against Pakistan in

December, was a standout seamer in MI Cape Town's SA20 title run.

Fast bowler Kwena Maphaka has also been added as a travelling reserve, while South Africa continue to deal with injuries to Gerald Coetzee (groin), Beuran Hendricks, and Lizaad Williams.

Bosch, Maphaka, and opener

Tony de Zorzi will depart for Karachi on Sunday to join the squad for the ongoing tri-nation ODI series against Pakistan and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, former Pakistan allrounder Yasir Arafat has joined South Africa's support staff as a consultant for both the series and the Champions Trophy.

Squad: Temba Bavuma (capt), Corbin Bosch, Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, Rassie van der Dussen. - Agencies

GLOBAL LEADER IN AI

The UAE is strengthening its position as a global leader in Artificial Intelligence (AI) by implementing comprehensive strategies that foster innovation, investment, and supportive legislation.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,550.64 points, down by 0.3% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.04% at 418.85 points. Dhofar Generating, up 6.25%, was the top gainer while Ooredoo, down 3.46%, was the top loser.

Opaz discusses opportunities for attracting investments from India

Coinciding with the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the Republic of India, in cooperation with Opaz, organised a business forum

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) organised an official visit to the Republic of India with the aim of enhancing economic cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Repub-



lic of India in the fields of special economic zones, free zones, and industrial areas.

The visit also aimed to discuss opportunities for attracting investments and exchanging experiences and best practices between the two friendly countries.

The delegation, headed by Engineer Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of Opaz, along with a group of CEOs from the regions overseen by the Authority, including Public Establishment for Industrial Estates – Madayn the Salalah Free Zone, and Khazaen Economic City, visited several Indian industrial and economic institutions. These included the projects of the Jindal Steel Group in the Anjoli zone of India, where they were introduced to the opera-

tional processes of the steel factory. The delegation also visited the O.P. Jindal Global University, exploring its academic programs, research centers, educational museum, and service facilities.

Coinciding with the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the Republic of India, in cooperation with Opaz, organised a business forum on February 6.

The forum was attended by over 80 Indian companies operating in various sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food, medical products, and energy. During the forum, the delegation presented a working paper outlining investment opportunities in the regions

overseen by the Authority, incentives offered to investors, and key target sectors in the zones. Additionally, the Oman Law House presented a briefing on the legislative frameworks and regulations in the Sultanate of Oman.

In his speech at the event, Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb emphasised the importance of the bilateral relations between the two countries. He pointed out that the Republic of India is one of Oman's key investment partners. He also discussed the role of special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities in attracting investments and enhancing economic cooperation between the two countries, stressing the importance of exploring investment opportunities in Oman.



COLLABORATION

COOPERATION AGREEMENT



Alizz Islamic Bank partners with Al Abrar Real Estate to offer home finance facilities in 'Hay Al Wafaa' project

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank recently partnered with Al Abrar Real Estate to provide home financing solutions for the bank's customers who wish to own a home in the 'Hay Al Wafaa' Project in Sultan Haitham City.

The agreement was signed by Saif Al Yahyai, Acting Chief Retail Banking Officer at Alizz Islamic Bank on behalf of the bank and by Salim Al Siyabi, Chairman of Al Abrar Real Estate on behalf of Al Abrar Real Estate.

Under this agreement, customers will receive competitive financing rates to purchase residential units in the 'Hay Al Wafaa' project located in Sultan Haitham City and that will span one million square metres comprising of a total of 1,800 residential units of different sizes and high-quality specifications. The project includes family-friendly amenities such as a school, three kindergartens, a cultural centre, shopping gallery, a community centre, a private hospital and state medical clinic, two mosques, children's and sports playgrounds; all connected to other areas of Sultan Haitham City by eco-friendly public transport including a bus stop near the residential complex. Green landscaped territory surrounds the homes in Hay Al Wafaa, with gardens, walking zones and a family park as the project's green heart.

Al Abrar Real Estate was established as an integral part of the Al Siyabi International Group, founded in 1997, reflecting an exceptional vision for creativity and innovation. It has excelled in providing design services with uniqueness and distinction, fo-

Under this agreement, customers will receive competitive financing rates to purchase residential units in the 'Hay Al Wafaa' project located in Sultan Haitham City and that will span one million square metres comprising of a total of 1,800 residential units of different sizes and high-quality specifications

cusing on a diverse range of areas including shopping centres, offices, hotels, multi-use complexes, and residential buildings.

Alizz Islamic Bank strives to partner with various real estate development companies, with the aim of providing multiple financing solutions to customers in purchasing homes that match their needs and financial capability across Oman.

ENHANCE SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY

Agreement signed to provide insurance services through Oman Post website

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Post, the national postal operator, and Al Madina Insurance Company (Al Madina Takaful) signed an agreement to enhance service accessibility by offering Al Madina Takaful's insurance services through the Oman Post's website.

The agreement was signed by Sheikh Ibrahim bin Sultan Al-hosni, Acting CEO of Oman Post, and Shakaib Mahmood, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Al Madina Insurance Company, at Oman Post headquarters. This strategic agreement facilitates customer access to a comprehensive suite of insurance products, encompassing both personal and corporate through Oman Post's website. The initiative is aligned with the government's overarching vision of modernising service delivery through the expansion of electronic service offerings.

Sayyid Nasr bin Badr Albusaidi, Postmaster at Oman Post said: "Oman Post is committed to expanding its portfolio of services offered to customers through various channels in order to meet diverse needs. This is reflected in our collaboration with Al Madina



Takaful, which aligns with our goal of providing a comprehensive customer experience."

Commenting on the partnership, Usama Al Barwani, Chief Executive Officer at Al Madina Insurance Company (Al Madina Takaful), said: "This agreement reflects our commitment to delivering innovative and comprehensive insurance services that cater to our customers' needs. We believe our collaboration

with Oman Post will significantly expand our reach and enable us to serve a wider segment of the community."

At the signing ceremony, Shakaib Mahmood, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Al Madina Takaful, remarked, "This strategic partnership will ensure that Al Madina Takaful reaches to every corner of Oman and be better equipped to serve customer's requirement, allowing them to

access our insurance products through the online platforms of Oman Post."

Oman Post, part of Asyad Group, through this collaboration, reflects its dedication to serving the community by offering value-added services that simplify daily life for citizens and residents alike. It also aligns with Al Madina Takaful's ambition to innovate and reach a broader audience through strategic partnerships.

GROWING AT 6.4% CAGR

India's total trade to reach \$1.8tn by 2033

NEW DELHI: India's total trade is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.4 per cent through 2033, reaching \$1.8 trillion annually, according to a BCG report.

A major factor fuelling this surge is India's growing appeal as a production hub for companies looking to diversify supply chains beyond China.

The government's substantial incentives for manufacturing, a vast low-cost workforce, and rapidly improving infrastructure are further strengthening India's position. As a result, the country is becoming a preferred destination for foreign investment and trade collaborations.

India's trade growth will be geographically diverse. Trade with the United States is projected to more than double over the next decade, reaching USD 116 billion by 2033.

This increase reflects deepening



political and economic ties between the two largest democracies, particularly in defence and technology sectors.

Additionally, trade with the European Union, ASEAN, and Africa is expected to expand by approximately 80 per cent. Notably, India's trade with Japan and Mercosur nations is projected to nearly double, while its trade with

Australia and South Korea is set to more than triple.

A significant surge is also expected in trade with Russia, driven by increased imports of discounted Russian hydrocarbons.

Europe's trade with India, Turkey, and Africa is expected to accelerate, reinforcing India's role in the global supply chain. The information technology, pharmaceutical,

and manufacturing sectors will be key contributors to India's trade expansion with the EU.

While India's trade growth with the West remains strong, China's trade with Western economies is expected to slow down. In response, China is strengthening its economic ties with India, Russia, ASEAN, Africa, and Mercosur nations. -ANI

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Dhofar Generating, up 6.25%, was the top gainer while Ooredoo, down 3.46%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,550.64 points, down by 0.3% from previous close. The Sh-aria Index ended down by 0.04% at 418.85 points. Dhofar Generat- ing, up 6.25%, was the top gainer while Ooredoo, down 3.46%, was the top loser. Shares of Galfar En- gineering were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while OQEP were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 627 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turn- over of RO 1.4 million, with more than 8.96 million shares chang- ing hands. Out of 48 traded sec- urities, 17 advanced, 17 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign in- vestors were net sellers for RO 149K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 142K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 7K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,865.40 points, down 0.4%. Pric- es of Oman & Emirates Invest- ment, Takaful Oman, Al Madina Takaful, Bank Muscat were up

by 4.76%, 2.08%, 1.19%, 0.78% respectively. Prices of Ahli Bank, Muscat Finance, Sohar Interna- tional Bank, OMINVEST, Global Financial Investments were down by 2.21%, 2.04%, 1.44%, 1.19%, 1.12% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,472.05 points, up 0.54%. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Oman Fish- eries, Al Anwar Ceramic, Con- struction Materials, Oman Ce- ment were up by 3.33%, 3.13%, 1.89%, 1.32%, 1.27% respectively. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products, A'Saffa Foods were down by 1.59%, 0.50% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.22% before closing at 1,690.11 points. Prices of Dhofar Gen- erating, Sembcorp Salalah, Al Batinah Power, OQ Gas Net- works, Sharqiyah Desalination were up by 6.25%, 2.02%, 1.47%, 0.76%, 0.72% respectively. Prices of Ooredoo, National Gas, Shell Oman Marketing, Oman Tel- ecom, Renaissance Services were down by 3.46%, 2.53%, 0.83%, 0.56%, 0.55% respectively.

— United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,568.38	4,549.97	4,550.64	4,564.30	-13.67	-0.30
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,901.11	7,853.45	7,865.40	7,897.32	-31.92	-0.40
Industry Index	5,515.91	5,442.44	5,472.05	5,442.44	29.61	0.54
Services Index	1,696.71	1,687.05	1,690.11	1,693.81	-3.70	-0.22
MSX Shariah Index	419.25	417.73	418.85	419.04	-0.19	-0.04
MSX TR INDEX	6,400.24	6,374.45	6,375.39	6,394.54	-19.15	-0.30
FINANCIAL TRIDX	8,976.47	8,922.33	8,935.90	8,972.17	-36.27	-0.40
INDUSTRIAL TRIDX	6,364.05	6,279.29	6,313.45	6,279.29	34.16	0.54
SERVICES TR IDX	2,034.81	2,023.23	2,026.90	2,031.33	-4.43	-0.22
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
8,967,808	1,399,808	627	27,487,291,027	17	17	14	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. RD	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	41,800	2,634	5	0.063	0.066	0.063	0.066	0.003	4.762	0.066	0.061	0.066	0.100	8,043,750
OM0000004735	SEBMCORP SALALAH	877,609	87,816	13	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.009	0.002	2.020	0.101	0.100	0.102	96,411,767
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	119,861	12,945	24	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.002	1.887	0.108	0.108	0.108	23,760,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	13,386	912	4	0.070	0.070	0.068	0.069	0.068	0.001	1.471	0.068	0.068	0.069	46,567,233
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	4,327	1,746	6	0.405	0.405	0.400	0.400	0.395	0.005	1.266	0.400	0.395	0.404	132,349,064
OM0000004769	MADINA TAKAFUL	60,007	5,101	4	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.084	0.001	1.190	0.085	0.084	0.085	14,875,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	490,759	127,150	12	0.258	0.260	0.258	0.260	0.258	0.002	0.775	0.260	0.257	0.264	1,951,663,236
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	821,980	109,879	98	0.133	0.135	0.133	0.133	0.132	0.001	0.758	0.133	0.133	0.134	575,972,981
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	4,249	251	1	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.059	0.061	21,011,511
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	34,368	2,372	4	0.070	0.070	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.070	49,294,057
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	306,122	71,781	54	0.236	0.237	0.234	0.236	0.237	-0.001	0.422	0.236	0.234	0.236	181,767,200
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	16,869	6,580	3	0.390	0.398	0.389	0.398	0.400	-0.002	0.500	0.398	0.390	0.398	85,107,600
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	62,040	22,334	3	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.362	-0.002	0.552	0.360	0.358	0.360	1,100,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	699	627	4	0.889	0.889	0.885	0.885	0.900	-0.005	0.556	0.885	0.885	0.905	671,250,000
OM0000004933	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	3,169	1,887	3	0.600	0.600	0.595	0.595	0.600	-0.005	0.833	0.595	0.595	0.600	56,525,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	38,500	3,339	5	0.089	0.089	0.088	0.088	0.089	-0.001	1.124	0.088	0.087	0.088	17,900,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	5,472	1,811	4	0.332	0.332	0.331	0.331	0.335	-0.004	1.194	0.331	0.328	0.331	221,228,956
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	422,075	58,250	14	0.139	0.139	0.137	0.137	0.139	-0.002	1.439	0.137	0.137	0.138	906,562,739
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	90,020	27,912	8	0.317	0.317	0.309	0.310	0.315	-0.005	1.587	0.310	0.310	0.310	38,718,368
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	60,225	13,336	18	0.229	0.229	0.223	0.223	0.231	-0.008	3.463	0.223	0.223	0.225	145,160,563
Total	20	5,472,338	558,918	283											

Parallel Market

OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	100	7	1	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.064	0.004	6.250	0.068	0.064	0.068	0.100	15,112,320
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	102,671	53,627	13	0.525	0.550	0.522	0.528	0.511	0.017	3.327	0.528	0.528	0.562	40,980,632	
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	21,250	1,613	5	0.074	0.076	0.074	0.076	0.074	0.002	2.703	0.076	0.070	0.076	38,655,978	
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	160	8	1	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.001	2.083	0.049	0.046	0.049	10,250,000	
OM0000001388	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	211,470	18,247	20	0.076	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.076	0.001	1.316	0.077	0.076	0.077	4,812,500	
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	36,700	8,976	4	0.243	0.245	0.243	0.245	0.243	0.002	0.823	0.245	0.240	0.245	11,212,621	
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	2,222	309	2	0.139	0.140	0.139	0.140	0.139	0.001	0.719	0.140	0.139	0.140	10,100,000	
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	118	118	1	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.998	0.002	0.200	1.000	1.000	0.000	50,000,000	
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	405	1,114	1	2.750	2.750	2.750	2.750	2.750	0.000	0.000	2.750	2.615	2.750	100	246,675,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	5,000	765	2	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.142	0.151	100	452,449,006
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	368,710	47,932	26	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.130	0.130	100	74,581,555
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	1,823,270	142,330	26	0.079	0.079	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.078	0.078	100	15,832,944
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,141,872	117,975	24	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.103	0.104	100	232,643,115
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	15,256	889	7	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.058	0.059	100	85,203,489
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	1,360	82	3	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.068	0.068	100	10,577,422
OM0000009719	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	1,191,653	380,296	129	0.316	0.323	0.316	0.316	0.317	-0.001	0.315	0.316	0.316	0.316	100	601,625,000,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	710	214	1	0.301	0.301	0.301	0.301	0.302	-0.001	0.331	0.301	0.272	0.301	100	48,160,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	42,494	4,887	10	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.115	0.116	-0.001	0.862	0.115	0.115	0.115	100	68,015,241
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SF2)	327,091	33,671	41	0.103	0.103	0.102	0.102	0.103	-0.001	0.971	0.103	0.102	0.103	100	352,868,067
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	40,000	1,920	2	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	2.041	0.048	0.048	0.052	100	14,743,032
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	100,000	17,700	3	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.181	-0.004	2.210	0.177	0.177	0.177	100	415,880,571
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	7,800	607	2	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.079	-0.002	2.532	0.077	0.077	0.078	100	6,545,000
Total	22	5,440,312	831,386	324												

OMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

OCCI launches development-oriented strategic approach

MUSCAT: Acting in coopera- tion with the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) launched the de- velopmental round of its strategic approach. The step reflects OCCI's commitment to enhance the busi- ness environment and achieve in- tegrated economic growth.



Representatives of 20 govern- ment institutions and private sec- tor establishments are taking part

in the three-day session, which highlights OCCI's approach to serve the private sector.

The approach focuses on three main pillars: improving the busi- ness environment, consolidat- ing partnership in governorates' economic development and ex- panding the base of economic diversification. The session was attended by Faisal Abdullah Al Ro- was, Chairman of OCCI Board of Directors. -ONA

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

UAE strengthens its global leadership in AI by implementing comprehensive strategies

DUBAI: The UAE is strengthen- ing its position as a global leader in Artificial Intelligence (AI) by implementing comprehensive strategies that foster innova- tion, investment, and supportive legislation. With its advanced in- frastructure, adaptive regulatory frameworks, and policies that promote technological advance- ment, the country continues to attract top AI talent and emerg- ing startups.

While the UAE's vision for AI extends beyond economic gains, the technology is expected to sig- nificantly impact the economy. The country is projected to rank third globally, after China and the US, in AI's contribution to the economy.

A report by PwC estimates that AI will contribute approximately 13.6% to the UAE's GDP, amount- ing to around \$100 billion by 2030. Additionally, AI's contribu- tion to regional economies is ex- pected to grow between 20% and 34%, with the UAE leading due to its strong commitment to AI de- velopment and implementation.

According to KPMG Interna- tional Limited, the UAE's regula- tory framework paves the way for innovations in financial technol- ogy and digital payments. Cyberse- curity has emerged as a key driver of digital transformation, with the UAE introducing multiple data privacy laws to safeguard personal and organisational information.

On the governmental level, Abu Dhabi aims to become the first AI-powered government. Its re- cently launched strategy focuses on establishing a robust digital in- frastructure, adopting sovereign cloud computing at 100% capac- ity, and fully automating and digi- tising government operations.

Nick Redshaw, Oracle's Senior VP of Technology Cloud in MEA and UAE Country Leader, praised the UAE's leadership for setting an inspiring vision in the AI era.

Ahmed Gamal, Business De- velopment Manager- Nvidia AI Solutions at Advanced Inte-



gration, a strategic partner of NVIDIA, highlighted the UAE's transformative progress in AI and technology, positioning it as a model for both regional and in- ternational markets.

He noted that the UAE was among the first countries to launch a national AI strategy in 2017 (the UAE Strategy of Arti- ficial Intelligence), aiming to es- tablish itself as a global AI hub by 2031. This strategy focuses on key sectors such as education, health- care, transportation, and energy.

The UAE has emerged as a premier destination for invest- ment in advanced technology, attracting AI talent and startups. Through government support and strategic partnerships with major global corporations like NVIDIA and Google, the coun- try has secured a distinguished place among the top AI nations worldwide.

Gamal further stated that the UAE is home to numerous global AI projects, and its investments in AI are expected to yield sub-

stantial economic benefits in the coming years.

Samer Al Jayyusi, Specialty AI & GenAI Regional Lead - Central & Eastern Europe, Middle East, Türkiye and Africa, emphasised the UAE's strategic approach, which combines flexible regula- tions with ambitious investments in emerging technologies. He noted that the UAE was among the first countries worldwide to implement policies governing AI usage while simultaneously fostering an environment for innovation.

Dr. Akram Awad, Managing Di- rector & Partner with the Boston Consulting Group, underscored the UAE's competitiveness in AI, attributing its success to a well- developed digital infrastructure and a supportive regulatory and investment ecosystem.

He also highlighted that the country has witnessed a 40% in- crease in AI professionals since 2022, reinforcing its position as a leading hub for AI talent and expertise. -WAM

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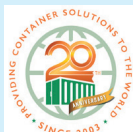
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LIFESTYLE

ANTIBODY TREATMENT HELPS PREVENT SEVERE BIRD FLU IN MONKEYS: STUDY

The antibodies target a stable part of the bird flu virus, ensuring that the immune protection can resist new variants and offer long-term protection against the globally spreading airborne infection. It helps in preventing severe bird flu in monkeys.

A prophylactic antibody-based immune therapy protects monkeys against severe disease caused by H5N1 avian flu, University of Pittsburgh and NIH Vaccine Research Center researchers report in Science.

The broadly neutralising antibody, which recognizes a relatively stable region of the bird flu virus, is less prone to losing its efficacy than antibodies targeting influenza's more mutation-prone structures.

This feature ensures that the immune protection can withstand the possible emergence of virus variants, akin to the SARS-CoV-2 mutants that evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide lasting protection against a globally spreading airborne infection.

"This type of prevention can be very useful in controlling infection outbreaks and containing the bird flu pandemic," said co-corresponding author Douglas Reed, Ph.D., associate professor of immunology at Pitt's School of Medicine and the Center for Vaccine

Research.

"In our testing, the antibody performed beautifully. The antibody could be useful as a prophylactic of severe disease in vulnerable populations, and it also helped us establish the testing threshold for antibody levels in the blood, which would be useful for judging the immune protection generated by a universal flu vaccine."

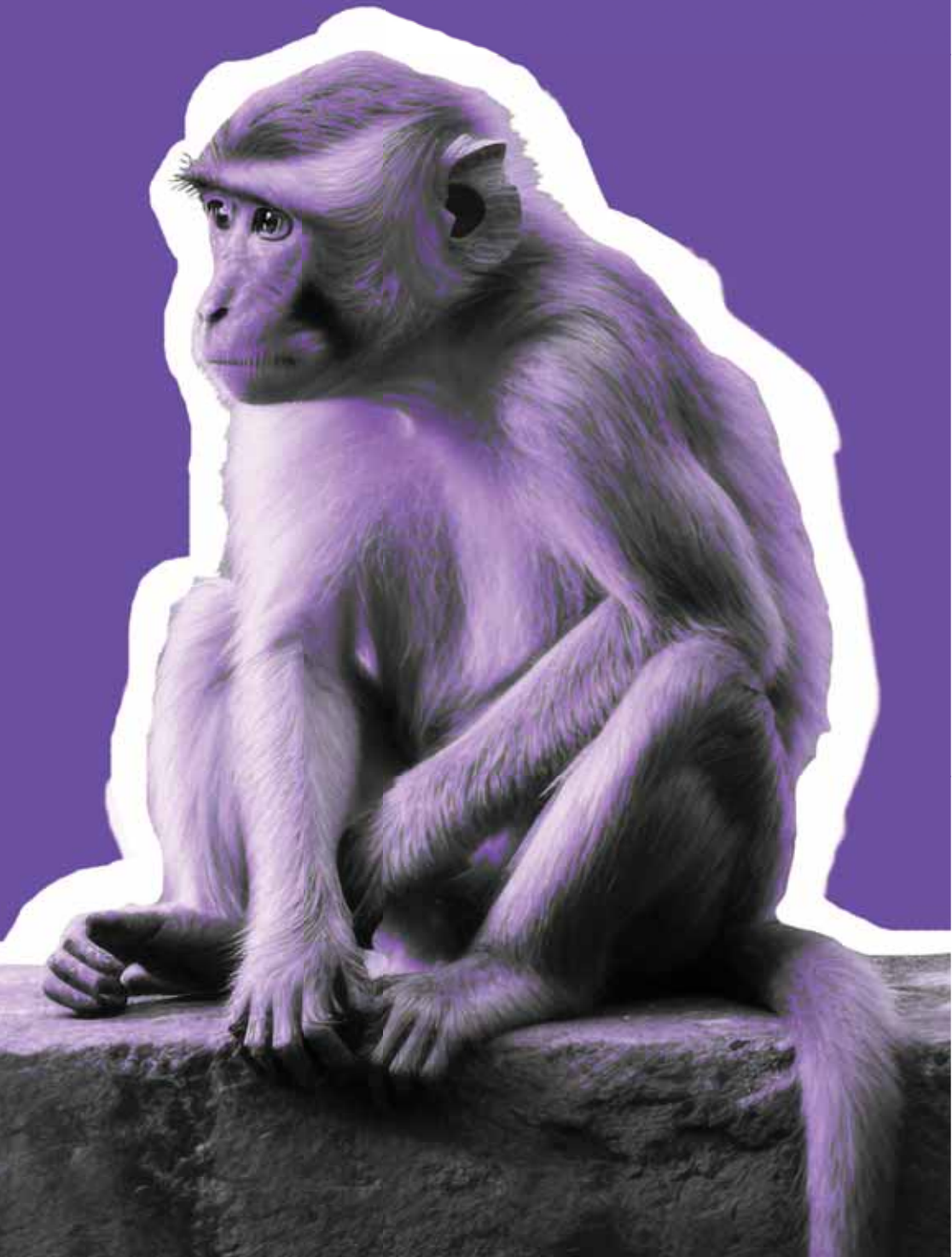
In a new study, monkeys pre-treated with a moderate dose of a broadly neutralising MEDI8852 antibody were universally protected against severe disease and death.

In addition to confirming the antibody's efficacy in preventing serious adverse health outcomes, scientists were also able to establish its minimum serum concentration required for protection -- a measurement useful for establishing the protective threshold of a potential universal flu vaccine.

The research sets the stage for the development of medical countermeasures against future influenza virus pandemics. Serum levels of MEDI8852 sufficient for protection remained stable for 8 to 12 weeks.

It suggests that, if given early, it could protect first responders and others caring for patients at the beginning of an outbreak of H5N1. -ANI

A prophylactic antibody-based immune therapy protects monkeys against severe disease caused by H5N1 avian flu, University of Pittsburgh and NIH Vaccine Research Center researchers report in Science



SPORTS

Oman’s Al Rawahi awarded third place after Al Kuwari penalised

It was the first podium finish of the ongoing 2025 MERC season for Al Rawahi and his co-driver Ata Al Hmoud

MUSCAT: Omani rally driver Abdullah Al Rawahi and his co-driver Ata Al Hmoud were awarded third place at the Qatar International Rally, the second round of the 2025 FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC) on Saturday.

Al Rawahi's podium position was secured following a five-second penalty imposed on competitor Abdulaziz Al Kuwari, which moved Al Rawahi up into third place in a late development.

The result was the first podium finish for the defending joint MERC champion after Al Rawahi had finished seventh in the season opener- Oman International Rally.

Earlier, Al Kuwari and Lorcan Moore ceded second to Mads Østberg and his Romanian co-driver Sergiu Itu but were able to fend off a fierce late challenge from Al Rawahi and Al Hmoud to claim the final place on the podium and a vital haul of MERC points in their Citroën C3 by just 3.3 seconds.

However, the Qatari was handed a five-second penalty on Saturday evening and that dropped him to fourth place.

Al Rawahi was pleasantly surprised to gain third place after



the finish. The Omani said: “We pushed like crazy, just three seconds away (before the penalty for Al Kuwari). Unfortunately, we lost some time on one stage and we had a lot of punctures on the first day. Anyway, I am happy with this performance. The pace is there but I got some penalties and I was

quite unlucky with the punctures.”

Speaking before the penalty, Al Kuwari said: “Very close. Abdulah gave us a hard time. He was very fast. He was pushing like hell. We were pushing but not with any risks. I like to be safe. I don’t like to break the cars. Mechanics working with me like that, you know.

eral of his competitors, including Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah and Mads Østberg.

The rally, set in the desert conditions of Lusail, Qatar, was grueling, but Al Rawahi managed to keep pace with the leaders throughout.

Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah and his Spanish co-driver Candido Carreira won five of the 13 special stages on the way to a resounding victory in the Qatar International Rally on Saturday.

A second success of the Qatari’s 2025 campaign to win a 20th FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC) title also marked his 18th in Qatar from 25 starts and gives him a strong foundation on which to build this year’s title challenge in his Autotek-run Škoda Fabia RS. The win was the 88th in his illustrious MERC career.

After his podium finish, Al Rawahi said, “We were lucky with the penalty on Al Kuwari, but at the end of the day, we had been pushing as hard as we could. It’s part of rallying - things can change quickly. I’m grateful to have made it onto the podium, especially with the challenges we faced with the tires.”

Looking ahead, Al Rawahi emphasised the importance of increased corporate support to further his career. “I’m grateful for the support I’ve had so far, but more corporate backing would be essential to push my career forward,” he said. “With more sponsorship, I could have the resources to compete at the highest level and aim for even better results in future rallies.”

As he heads into the next phase of the season, Al Rawahi remains focused on achieving more success and proving that Omani rallying talent can compete at the highest levels.

SPANISH LA LIGA

Mbappe strikes as Madrid derby ends in stalemate



MADRID: Kylian Mbappe salvaged a crucial point for Real Madrid in a tense Madrid derby, ensuring they remained top of La Liga despite a spirited challenge from Atletico Madrid.

Diego Simeone’s side took the lead in the 35th minute after a controversial penalty decision. Referee Juan Martinez Munuera awarded the spot-kick after consulting the VAR monitor, ruling that Aurelien Tchouameni had fouled Samuel Lino inside the box. Julian Alvarez stepped up and audaciously chipped his penalty down the middle in a Panenka-style finish, sending Thibaut Courtois the wrong way.

Real Madrid responded after the break, with Mbappe netting his 16th league goal of the season in the 50th minute. The French forward reacted quickest to a deflec-



tion off Jude Bellingham’s shot, slotting home from close range past Jan Oblak.

Bellingham, who was more influential in the second half, came close to winning it for Los Blancos, hitting the crossbar with a powerful header before forcing a fine save from Oblak. Despite a late surge from Real, Atletico’s defense held firm to secure a hard-fought draw.

The result keeps Real Madrid

a point ahead of second-placed Atletico, with Barcelona trailing by five. However, Xavi’s side could cut the gap when they face Sevilla on Sunday night.

Attention now shifts to the Champions League, where Real Madrid will travel to Manchester City for the first leg of their knockout-phase clash in midweek, while Atletico prepares for their European assignment. - Agencies

FA CUP FOURTH ROUND



Man City survive wonder goal; Chelsea crash out

LONDON: Manchester City narrowly progressed to the FA Cup fifth round after a thrilling 2-1 win over Leyton Orient in the fourth round on Saturday. The match featured a spectacular opening goal from Orient’s Jamie Donley, who launched a long-range shot from inside his own half.

The ball, which hit the crossbar and then deflected off Manchester City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega, was credited as an own goal. City responded with a deflected strike from Rico Lewis, and late in the game, Kevin De Bruyne’s clinical finish sealed the victory for Pep Guardiola’s side.

In a major upset, Premier League giants Chelsea were eliminated by Brighton & Hove Albion, losing 2-1 at the Amex

Stadium. Brighton’s goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen made an early mistake, spilling a cross from Cole Palmer into his own net. However, Georginio Rutter equalized for Brighton before Kaoru Mitoma scored the decisive goal in the second half, sending Chelsea crashing out.

Southampton also suffered a home defeat, losing 1-0 to Championship side Burnley. Marcus Edwards, making his debut after joining on loan from Sporting CP, scored the winner in the 73rd minute. Burnley’s win came as a blow to Southampton’s ongoing struggles in the Premier League.

Newcastle United also had to fight hard for their 3-2 win over Birmingham City. The Blues took the lead just 40 seconds into the

match through Ethan Laird, but Joe Willock leveled for Newcastle. Callum Wilson then gave the visitors the lead before Tomoki Iwata’s stunning long-range effort equalized for Birmingham. Willock struck again to secure Newcastle’s win, sending them into the next round.

Elsewhere, Ipswich Town triumphed 4-1 over Coventry City, reaching the fifth round for the first time since 2007. Fulham secured a 2-1 victory at Wigan Athletic thanks to Rodrigo Muniz’s brace, and Millwall defeated Leeds United 2-0. Two matches went to penalties, with Preston North End defeating Wycombe Wanderers and Cardiff City edging Stoke City after a dramatic 3-3 draw. - Agencies

IRISH BOXER

Cooney dies a week after title fight defeat

BELFAST: Tragic news has emerged following the passing of Irish super-featherweight boxer John Cooney, aged 28, who died a week after a brutal defeat to Welshman Nathan Howells in Belfast. Cooney, who suffered an intracranial haemorrhage during the bout, underwent emergency surgery to relieve pressure on his brain following the contest at Ulster Hall.

Cooney, a Galway native, was immediately assessed by the medical team inside the ring before being taken out on a stretcher and rushed to the Royal Victoria Hospital. Despite the medical team’s efforts to save his life, MHD Pro-

motions confirmed his death on behalf of his family. “It is with complete devastation that we have to announce that after a week of battling for his life, John Cooney has sadly passed away,” the statement read. The Cooney family thanked the hospital staff and expressed gratitude for the overwhelming support and prayers for fans.

Cooney was defending his Celtic super-featherweight title in the fight, which ended in the ninth round. His victory over Liam Gaynor in November 2023, securing the Celtic title, had marked a major milestone in his career. However, following a year-long

recovery from a hand injury, Cooney’s return in October 2024 saw him score a win over Tanzania’s Tampela Maharusi. The boxing community has been flooded with tributes to Cooney, with former WBO European champion Conrad Cummings expressing his grief, and Olympic medalist Michael Conlan offering his condolences.

Alvarez to face Scull in Saudi unification bout

In other boxing news, four-weight world champion Saul ‘Canelo’ Alvarez will take on IBF super-middleweight champion William Scull in May, as part of a four-fight

deal secured with Saudi Arabia’s Riyadh Season. The 34-year-old Mexican will fight in Saudi Arabia for the first time on May 3 against Scull, 32, marking the beginning of a highly anticipated series of bouts. Alvarez, who holds the WBA, WBC, and WBO super-middleweight titles, will aim to reclaim the IBF belt in this unification clash. The deal also includes a highly anticipated fight with Terence Crawford in September, followed by two more events in 2026. Meanwhile, YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul claimed to have been in talks with Alvarez for the May bout. - Agencies



IN PICTURES



Chinese high-end brand JUZUI shines at New York Fashion Week
A model presents a creation of JUZUI during the New York Fashion Week 2025 in New York City, the United States. Lighting up the New York Fashion Week stage, Chinese high-end brand JUZUI returned to the runway with its breathtaking Fall/Winter 2025 collection, “Winter Blooms Whispering,” captivating audiences at the Glasshouse in New York City. Xinhua



Chinese Lunar New Year celebration held in South Africa
Performers distribute gifts at Johannesburg China Town during a Chinese Lunar New Year celebration in Johannesburg, South Africa. Xinhua



People visit Valentine's Day-themed flea market in Canada
People visit a Valentine's Day-themed flea market in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Xinhua



Asian Winter Games: Men's slalom of alpine skiing event
Nikita Gorkovskiy of Uzbekistan competes during the men's slalom of alpine skiing event at the 9th Asian Winter Games in Yabuli, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. Xinhua



Amitabh Bachchan's cryptic tweet leaves fans anxious: "Time to Go..."
Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan, who often shares philosophical social media posts, has once again left his millions of fans in a state of confusion and concern following a cryptic tweet he posted on his official X handle. The 82-year-old actor, who remains a powerhouse in the entertainment industry, shared a tweet, “T 5281-time to go...” The tweet, which was sparse in details, immediately sent a wave of worry across his fanbase. ANI



Traditional fish-catching ceremony held in Siem Reap province, Cambodia
An aerial drone picture shows people taking part in a traditional fish-catching ceremony in a lake in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. Xinhua

ROUND-UP

Enjoy luxury experience in Lincoln Navigator

The Lincoln Navigator captivates with its imposing presence and meticulous craftsmanship

MUSCAT: Discover a realm where sophistication meets innovation – the Lincoln Navigator, a masterstroke of design and engineering tailored for discerning families who seek more than just a drive. It is a statement of elegance, comfort and extraordinary experiences, redefining what it means to journey in a luxury SUV.

The Lincoln Navigator captivates with its imposing presence and meticulous craftsmanship. Its adaptive pixel projector LED headlamps, complete with predictive curve illumination and sign-based lighting, ensure unparalleled visibility in any condition. The iconic Lincoln star graces the front grille, accentuated by the ethereal fade-in and fade-out of signature lighting, setting the tone for an exceptional driving experience. A panoramic vista roof with a power sunshade bathes the cabin in natural light, enhancing the open, airy ambience that complements its sumptuous interior.

At its core lies a powerful twin-turbocharged 3.5L V6 engine, delivering an exhilarating 440 horsepower. This dynamic force is



seamlessly paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission featuring SelectShift paddle activation, ensuring smooth, responsive handling. Whether navigating urban landscapes or exploring rugged terrains, the Navigator offers a driving experience that is both thrilling and refined—a true testament to its engineering prowess.

Step inside the Lincoln Navigator and immerse yourself in an oasis of tranquillity and advanced technology. The plush seating, designed with meticulous attention to detail, includes first-row passenger seat memory and a versatile third-row PowerFold 60/40 split bench with power recline. Ambient LED lighting and enhanced active noise control create a serene environment, while wireless charging adds a layer of modern convenience.

The 12-inch configurable LCD instrument cluster and head-up display provide intuitive access

to essential driving information. The standard SYNC® 4 system integrates audio, navigation, and communication controls seamlessly through a user-friendly touchscreen or steering wheel-mounted controls. For an unparalleled auditory journey, the available Revel® Ultima 3D audio system, with 28 strategically positioned speakers, envelops passengers in concert-quality sound.

Safety is paramount in the Lincoln Navigator, with cutting-edge technologies designed to protect you and your loved ones. Adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go, lane centering assist, blind-spot information with cross-traffic alert and evasive steering assist provide peace of mind on every journey. Additional features like auto high beams, pre-collision assist and trailer coverage enhance confidence, whether embarking on a cross-country adventure or

navigating city streets.

Further safeguarding is provided by dual-stage front airbags, front-seat side airbags and safety canopy side-curtain airbags with rollover sensors. The advanced AdvanceTrac system with Roll Stability Control (RSC), MyKey technology, and the SecuriCode invisible keypad offer additional layers of security and convenience.

From its striking exterior to its meticulously curated interior, the Lincoln Navigator sets a new benchmark for luxury SUVs. It embodies the perfect harmony of power, prestige and unparalleled comfort, transforming everyday drives into extraordinary journeys. The Lincoln Navigator isn't just a vehicle; it is an invitation to experience life's most remarkable moments with sophistication and grace.

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14TH EDITION



Bank Muscat to receive Green Sports applications until February 15

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, is still accepting submissions from local sports teams for the 14th edition of its landmark CSR programme “Green Sports” until 15 February 2025.

Teams can complete the application form electronically through: <https://www.bankmuscat.com/greensports/>. In case of any queries or doubts on the submission process, teams may email GreenSports@bankmuscat.com, or call 24801200/24801625 for more details.

The scope of Green Sports support for sports teams include greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights or water desalination equipment in areas facing problems of water salinity. The Bank has encouraged all interested teams to commence the process at the earliest and ensure that applications are submitted well ahead of the deadline.

Local sports teams play a vital role in engaging young people

of all ages. The landmark Green Sports Programme is one of Bank Muscat's CSR initiatives, which draws from the values of leadership and partnership so as to create a positive impact on Omani society. The programme aims to develop and provide a sustainable infrastructure for sports fields in Oman. The facilities developed as part of the programme are often used as a venue for other social activities by local communities, leading to stronger social bonding and positive behaviour among young people. It is a matter of great encouragement that Bank Muscat's Green Sports programme has so far benefitted 203 teams with over 70,000 team members across Oman since its launch in 2012.

In recognition of the Bank's efforts in this vital sector, it has received the North Batinah Award for Social Investment for its “Green Sports” annual programme. The award was organized by the Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry in the North Batinah Governorate.

FINANCIAL LITERACY AWARENESS

Dhofar Islamic's Minor Savings Account secures next generation's future

MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic's Minor Savings Account is designed to help the next generation achieve financial stability through a comprehensive set of benefits that provide a strong foundation for a secure financial future. The initiative underscores Dhofar Islamic's commitment to raising financial literacy awareness among young people and fostering responsible money management from an early age.

“The Minor Savings Account provides young people with the tools and resources they need to make informed financial decisions, helping them achieve their goals and dreams and ultimately enabling them to attain financial independence,” said Amer bin Said Mohammed Al Amri, DGM & Head of Retail Banking at Dhofar Islamic.

A fully Shari'a-compliant solution based on Mudarabah principles, the Minor Savings Account is specifically tailored to meet the financial needs of minors aged between 13 and 18 years. It offers a safe and accessible platform for young individuals to manage their funds while learning key principles of financial responsibility. With no minimum balance requirement and competitive profit payments calculated on the monthly average balance, the account ensures steady financial growth for young savers. Additionally, it provides flexibility in adjusting withdrawal limits upon the request of the father or legal guardian, along with a customized debit card to facilitate secure transactions.

Beyond financial security, the Minor Savings Account also aligns with the social protection program, ensuring eligible minors receive monthly financial assistance. The role of the father or legal guardian is integral, allowing them to actively participate in their child's financial journey. Guardians can monitor account activities and transactions, reinforcing transparency and promoting responsible financial habits.

As an added feature, a supplementary debit card will be issued



in the minor's name, granting unrestricted access for the father or guardian to deposit or withdraw funds at any time. The account also includes free standing instructions, making regular transactions seamless and efficient.

Since its inception, Dhofar Islamic, the Islamic banking window of Bank Dhofar, has played a key role in expanding access to Sharia-compliant financial services in Oman. The bank has responded to the growing demand for Islamic banking solutions by steadily expanding its network to 25 branches across multiple regions and governorates.

Dhofar Islamic continues to strengthen its position in Oman's Islamic banking sector by expanding its asset portfolio, financing capabilities, and customer deposits. Known for its modern and innovative services, the bank remains committed to delivering cutting-edge, Shari'a-compliant financial solutions that cater to the evolving needs of its customers.

Opening a Minor Savings Account is a simple and straightforward process. The father or legal guardian can open the account by providing a copy of the minor's passport or national ID, birth certificate, and proof of address (such as an electricity or water bill). The guardian will also need to present a valid Omani ID, while expatriates must provide a Resident Card and a copy of their passport visa page.

OMANI HIGH PERFUMERY HOUSE

Amouage chairman reflects on key drivers behind its 2024 achievements

MUSCAT: 2024 has been a defining year for Amouage, the world-renowned Omani high perfumery house. In this exclusive interview, Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad Al Bussaidi, Chairman of Amouage reflects on the key drivers behind its 2024 achievements, sharing his vision for the brand's future and unveiling a strategic partnership set to shape the next chapter in the House's journey.



Amouage has continued to make significant strides in the luxury fragrance industry. How would you describe the brand's performance in 2024, and what does it mean for its future?

2024 was a remarkable year for Amouage and I am proud to share that for the first time in our four-decade history, our retail sales have surpassed \$260 million, a 30% increase year-over-year. The demand for Amouage products was 2.5 times higher than the average of all luxury brands. These numbers tell more than just a financial story; they reflect the growing global appreciation for what Amouage represents – excellence in craftsmanship, authenticity, and a deep respect for Oman's heritage.

For me, this milestone is very personal. It reaffirms that a House born in Oman, inspired by its rich culture and natural treasures, can resonate with audiences worldwide without ever compromising its identity.

Beyond the numbers, this success fuels our vision for the future, highlighting the universal appreciation for artistry and the growing desire for authentic, meaningful luxury experiences. Today, the industry sees Amouage as the trend-setters of High Perfumery, however the potential for House is far greater.

What factors, in your opinion, contributed to Amouage's exceptional growth in 2024?

Amouage's exceptional growth in 2024 is the result of a well-designed and thoughtful approach that balances strategic expansion with a respect for the values that define us. We recognised early on that our clients appreciated more than just our fragrances. They loved the connections we created, craved the authenticity we represented, whether in our creative

process or stories, and valued our personalised experiences. This understanding shaped how we approached both our geographic and digital growth.

Our expansion into key markets like the Americas, with flagship boutiques in SoHo and at the American Dream Mall, was not just about establishing a presence in iconic locations, it was about creating immersive spaces that allow clients to experience Amouage in its fullest expression. Similarly, in Oman, we were able to grow by 33% – a result of our continuous drive to innovate through new boutique openings including Sohar, and with concepts like our in-hotel Petite Boutique at the Mandarin Oriental, Muscat, which offer a fresh lens on the Amouage experience.

The surge in online sales by 54% and the remarkable growth in travel retail reflect our ability to adapt to shifting consumer behaviors while maintaining the integrity of our experiences. What unites all these channels – whether physical or digital – is a consistent dedication to a unique storytelling, craftsmanship, and delivering an unparalleled customer experience, all linking back to our roots: Oman.

As Amouage navigates its impressive growth, what strategic steps are being taken to ensure the brand continues to thrive globally?

Amouage is recognized as a jewel in the industry, one of the most desired brands in the category with a talented trailblazer team. We have identified several areas of growth feeding the global expansion of the House, which include expanding our production capabilities in Oman and developing our

headquarter location in Muscat, as well as growing our boutiques footprint in key tier 1 cities, investing into back-end supply chain and identifying new opportunities to support local communities.

As we expand globally, we are committed to bringing a piece of Oman to the world. We have recently received a long-term minority investment from the world's leading beauty player, L'Oréal Groupe, that identified Amouage as the House pushing the boundaries to redefine the beauty of tomorrow and reinvent the global beauty value chain. This is a testament to the global recognition of the House and the remarkable growth we've achieved over the recent years.

Amouage remains an independent House contributing to the goals and ambitions of Oman's Vision 2040. The strategic investment from L'Oréal Groupe will grow our economic impact by expanding our production capabilities within Oman, accelerating our global footprint, and building on our export potential; all while ensuring that value creation is firmly rooted in the Sultanate. In fact, this is the first Foreign Direct Investment from a global category leader into Oman's fragrance and beauty sector.

Our commitment to sustainable development is equally paramount. Our aim is to advance the preservation and responsible sourcing of Oman's natural treasures, such as Royal Frankincense from Wadi Dawkah. This includes pioneering initiatives like the GCC's first smart forest, adopting cutting-edge technologies and blockchain-enabled traceability, as well as fostering a culture of circular economy through renewable energy and eco-

conscious practices. Most importantly, we will be able to create new opportunities for Omani talents. Through job creation, skills enhancement, and partnerships with local institutions, Amouage will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Oman's creative industries.

How will this new partnership impact Amouage's operations, creative direction, and global expansion plans?

Amouage will continue to operate as an independent Omani House, with full control over our creative direction, operations, and the uncompromising craftsmanship that has become synonymous with the House.

From a creative standpoint, Amouage will chart its own artistic course. Our commitment to crafting fragrances that represent the richness of Omani culture and heritage remains unwavering. The creative direction will stay under the stewardship of our in-house team, ensuring that each creation tells a story deeply rooted in authenticity, artistry, and craftsmanship.

The funds will enable us to enter new markets with mono brand boutiques, connecting personally with our clients around the world. However, growth for us is not simply about scale; it's about depth and resonance. Every step we take, every market we enter, will be guided by our core values, ensuring that Amouage continues to represent not just luxury, but a timeless connection to Oman and the artistry of perfumery.

Looking ahead, what is Amouage's vision for the future?

Our vision remains rooted in Oman's heritage with an ambitious focus on global growth and innovation. We see ourselves as custodians of Oman's natural treasures – whether it's through the responsible sourcing of Royal Frankincense from Dhofar or fostering sustainable rose farming practices in Jabal Akhdar. Amouage's future will continue to interconnect olfactive experiences with Omani rich cultural narrative while embracing opportunities that will push the boundaries of perfumery through transparency, authenticity, responsibility, instantaneity, to offer the best of perfumery to discerned clients around the world.

