



HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREETSPRESIDENT OF PARAGUAY

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Santiago Peña of the Republic of Paraguay on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Peña and the people of Paraguay. — **ONA**

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1 'Leader's Order' conferred on His Majesty the Sultan by the Arab Parliament. The medal is the loftiest honour conferred on Arab leaders. **>A2**

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3 The IMF mission concluded its preliminary meetings with the government of Oman during 30 April to 8 May 2024. **>A3**

GAZA DEATH TOLL as of May 13, 2024



HIS MAJESTY, EMIR OF KUWAIT HOLD TALKS TO BOOST TIES

His Majesty the Sultan expressed his utmost thanks and appreciation to Kuwait Emir for the warm welcome and hospitality



KUWAIT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Sheikh Mishaal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait held an official session of talks at Bayan Palace in the capital, Kuwait City on Monday.

At the outset of the session, the Emir of Kuwait reiterated his welcome to His Majesty the Sultan, being an eminent guest of the State of Kuwait, wishing His Majesty and his accompanying delegation a pleasant stay.

In his turn, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his utmost thanks and appreciation to the Emir for the warm welcome and hospitality.

The session reviewed the deep-rooted and fraternal relations binding the two countries and their peoples, as these relations enjoy constant support and attention of the two wise leaderships.

The two leaders explored means of promoting areas of the existing cooperation and partnership in a manner that serves the Omani and Kuwaiti peoples.

The two sides also exchanged views on a set of regional and international issues.

The official session of talks was attended from the Omani side by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nuamani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Afi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed

Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Dr. Saleh bin Amir Al Kharousi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait.

From the Kuwaiti side, it was attended by Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hammad Al Sabah (Head of the Mission of Honour), Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Prime Minister in charge of forming the government, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al Saleem Al Sabah, Prime Minister in charge of handling urgent matters and Dr. Mohammed bin Nassir Al Hajri, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman. **-ONA**

CORDIAL RELATIONS

HM the Sultan gives audience to Kuwaiti PM

KUWAIT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave an audience at his residency in the capital, Kuwait City yesterday to Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

During the audience, the two sides exchanged cordial conversations and stressed the fraternal and historical relations binding Oman and Ku-

wait in various areas

The audience was attended from the Omani side by HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said.

From the Kuwaiti side, it was attended by Sheikh Sabah Khalid Hamad Al Sabah (Head of the Mission of Honour) and Dr. Mohammed Nassir Al Hajri, Ambassador of Kuwait to Oman. **-ONA**

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Asr.....	3:31pm
Maghrib.....	6:46pm
Isha.....	8:04pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:02am

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FOR SERVING ARAB CAUSE

Arab Parliament confers ‘Leader’s Order’ on HM

MUSCAT: At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Special Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received the ‘Leader’s Order’ conferred on His Majesty the Sultan by the Arab Parliament. The medal is the loftiest honour award conferred on Arab leaders by the Parliament.

The medal was conferred on His Majesty the Sultan in appreciation and gratitude for his outstanding efforts in serving issues of concern to the Arab nation and his continuous endeavours in support for the joint Arab action.

The conferment of the Arab medal took place when HH Sayyid Asaad received Adel Abdulrahman



Al Asoomi, Speaker of the Arab Parliament, and his accompanying delegation in Muscat today.

The conferment ceremony was attended by Khalid bin Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, the Secretary-General and Adviser at HH Sayyid Asaad’s Office and some members of the Arab Parliament. -ONA

DATA

Mobile subscriptions up by 5.2%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The total number of mobile phone subscriptions in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 5.2 percent by the end of March 2024 to reach 7.2 million com-

pared to the end of March 2023. Statistics showed that postpaid mobile phone subscriptions increased by 9.8 percent by the end of March 2024 to reach 1,863,307 compared to the same period last year.

The number of prepaid mobile phone subscriptions increased by 3.7 percent, reaching 5.3 million by the end of last March. Among these were 4.1 million subscriptions from operators and 1.2 million subscriptions from resale.



صندوق الحماية الاجتماعية
SOCIAL PROTECTION FUND

Tender Notice

The Social Protection Fund (SPF) announces following E-Tender for 2024:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Deadline for Specifications Request	Deadline for tender bids	Tender Price
03/2024	IT Works for Ghala Heights Complex	19 May 2024	30 May 2024	60 RO
04/2024	WhatsApp Business Automation And Integration	23 May 2024	06 Jun 2024	37,700 RO
05/2024	Developing Enterprise Risk Management and Compliance frameworks	23 May 2024	06 Jun 2024	30 RO
06/2024	Supply, Install and configure Secure Web Gateway with local Support	19 May 2024	30 May 2024	75 RO

Interested companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender document from the E-Tendering website: <http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. The Vendors must provide electronic proposal valid for (120) days and addressed to Social Protection Fund on mentioned website.

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender inquiry : All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at eTendering system (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering system inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering system technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel : +968 24402200 E-mail : etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

SPF is not obliged to accept the lowest or any tender that may be received

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Oman’s public debt stands at OMR15.1 billion

By the end of Q1 of 2024, the Ministry of Finance repaid more than OMR206 million to the private sector



MUSCAT: The size of the public debt of the Sultanate of Oman stood at about OMR15.1 billion at the end of March 2024, compared to OMR15.3 billion at the end of 2023, comprising a decrease of about OMR188 million.

By the end of Q1 of 2024, the Ministry of Finance repaid more than OMR206 million to the private sector. This reflects the payment vouchers received through the e-financial system that have completed the documentary cycle.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the public revenue amounted to OMR2.826 billion, down by 12% compared to OMR3.217 billion registered over the same period in 2023.

This is mainly due to a decrease in net oil and gas revenues and current revenue.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the net oil revenue amounted to OMR1.688 billion, down by 1% compared to OMR1.707 billion registered over the same period in 2023. The average realised oil price amounted to US\$ 83 per barrel and average oil production reached 1,014,000 barrels per day.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the net gas revenue amounted to OMR444 million, down by 38% compared to OMR720 million registered over

the same period in 2023. This is due to the deduction of gas purchase and transport expenses from the total revenue collected from Integrated Gas Company.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the current revenue amounted to OMR691 million, down by OMR96 million compared to OMR787 million registered over the same period in 2023.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the public spending amounted to OMR2.664 billion, down by OMR103 million, i.e. 4% compared to the same period in 2023.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the current expenditure of civil ministries amounted to OMR1.978 billion, down by OMR49 million compared to OMR2.027 billion registered over the same period in 2023.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the development expenditure of ministries and government units amounted to OMR200 million, representing 22% of total development spending, i.e. OMR900 million, allocated for 2024.

At the end of Q1 of 2024, the total contributions and other expenses amounted to OMR486 million, up by 78% compared to OMR273 million registered over the same period in 2023.

This is mainly due to the appli-

cation of social protection system, alongside oil products subsidy which amounted to OMR140 million and OMR72 million, respectively, by the end of Q1 2024. Furthermore, an amount of OMR100 million was transferred to future debt obligations budget-item.

In recent years, the Sultanate of Oman has successfully reduced its public debt to minimise the risks associated with its debt portfolio, by implementing various measures and initiatives to rationalise public spending and increase non-hydrocarbon revenue.

Furthermore, this was achieved by utilising part of the additional revenue for liability management through buy-back some of the sovereign bonds for less than its nominal value, replacement of high-cost loans with low-cost loans and issuance of Sukuk and domestic bonds in the Muscat Stock Exchange at a preferable rate.

Government efforts to reduce public debt and mitigate its effects on economic growth have directly contributed to raising Oman’s credit rating and improving its outlook.

The credit rating agencies have praised government efforts in managing financial obligations and reducing public debt. -ONA



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BANGKOK

Oman takes part in IOTC meeting

BANGKOK: Represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Sultanate of Oman took part in the opening session of the meeting of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

The IOTC meeting began today in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand, and will run until 17 May 2024.

Oman’s delegation was headed by Eng. Yaqoub Khalfan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries. The meeting discusses reports by three committees: The Compliance Committee, the Fisheries Management Standards Committee and the Administration and Financial Affairs Committee.

The meeting also looks into arrangements for the meeting of the IOTC’s main committee comprising delegates from member states, in addition to the meeting of the “Group of 16” that will bring together the representatives of coastal countries in the Indian Ocean.

Oman joined the IOTC in 2000. The Commission, mandated with laws regulating tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean, comprises 31 countries with full membership and 2 countries on “cooperating non-contracting” membership status. -ONA



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His Majesty the Sultan leaves for two-day state visit to Kuwait

The visit has been made in response to an invitation by the Emir of Kuwait to boost the historic and fraternal relations binding the two countries and their peoples

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik left here on Monday for the State of Kuwait on a two-day state visit, during which he will meet Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait.

The visit, made in response to an invitation by the Emir of Kuwait, comes as an extension of the historic and fraternal relations binding the two countries and their peoples.

His Majesty the Sultan was seen off at the Royal Airport by HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Special Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, Khalid bin Hilal Al Ma'awali, Chairman of the Shura Council, Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, Nasr bin Hamoud Al Kindi, Secretary General of the Royal Court Affairs, Dr. Madeeha bint Ahmed Al Shibani, Minister



of Education, Sheikh Al Fadl bin Mohammed Al Harthy, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Lt.Gen Hassan bin Mohsin Al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, Lt.Gen Said bin Ali Al Hilali, Head of the In-

ternal Security Service, Dr. Mohammed bin Said Al Ma'amari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Dr. Hilal bin Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's

Armed Forces, Maj.Gen Mattar bin Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman, Air Vice Marshal Khamis bin Hammad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman, Rear Admiral Saif bin Nassir Al Rahbi, Com-



mander of the Royal Navy of Oman and Maj.Gen Musallam bin Mohammed Jaaboub, Commander of the Sultan's Special Force.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan will be accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nuamani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of

Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Dr. Saleh bin Amir Al Kharousi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait.

"May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan in his journeys and grant him success for the good of his loyal people and dear homeland!" -ONA

HAILS OMAN EFFORTS

IMF experts, Oman officials discuss economic issues

MUSCAT: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission concluded its preliminary meetings with the government of the Sultanate of Oman during the period from 30 April to 8 May 2024 within the framework of Article IV consultations for the year 2024.

The Fund's team and the Omani side discussed the most prominent recent economic and financial developments, the economic prospects in the near and medium term in light of regional and international developments, and public policy priorities in the Sultanate of Oman.

At the conclusion of the mission, the team issued a statement in which it indicated the continued positive growth of economic activity in the Sultanate of Oman, as the real GDP grew by 1.3 percent in 2023, supported mainly by the expansion in non-oil activities.

Economic growth is to remain moderate at 0.9 percent in



2024, as a result of extending the OPEC+ agreement on oil production cuts until the first half of this year (2024), however it is expected to accelerate to 4.1 percent in 2025 as a result of the recovery of oil activities, in addition to the expected relaxation of restrictions imposed on OPEC+ quotas.

Furthermore, the mission statement also indicated that the

growth of non-oil activities is expected to accelerate to 2.6 percent in 2024, and 3.2 percent in 2025 as a result of the government's commitment to the reform plan and investment projects, compared to the growth recorded in 2023, which was 2.1 percent.

The mission affirmed that the ongoing reform efforts and the continued favourable oil prices

enhanced the public finance balance and the external account balance, as the fiscal balance recorded a surplus of 6.6 percent of the GDP in 2023.

The surplus balance is expected to continue in the medium term, supported by favourable oil revenues, growing non-oil revenues, and continuing financial control efforts.

In addition, the mission indicated that the level of public sector debt as a percentage of GDP decreased significantly to 36.5 percent in 2023, compared to 40.9 percent in 2022, as the government continued to use part of the financial surplus to repay public debt.

The level of State-owned enterprises (SOEs) debt stabilised at around 31 percent of GDP.

The mission also praised the continued efforts in implementing the plan to reform SOEs affiliated with Oman Investment Authority (OIA) as planned, which resulted

in the completion of 9 sales operations in 2023 with a profit estimated at approximately \$3 billion.

As for the external balance, the mission stated in its statement that the current account balance showed a surplus of 1.4 percent of GDP in 2023, and is expected to remain in surplus in the medium-term. Despite the reduction in leverage ratios in the public sector, the total international reserves at the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) reached \$17.5 billion in 2023 buoyed by a significant increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

In its statement, the Fund's mission emphasized the solidity of the banking sector, noting the high levels of bank capital, liquidity and profitability along with strong asset quality.

It is worth noting that in December 2023, the net foreign assets of banks became positive for the first time since 2014, as a result of an increase in investments

in foreign securities.

The statement praised the structural reforms currently underway, which include implementing social protection and labour laws, making progress in selling state companies, reducing debt, and investing in climate-related initiatives to achieve renewable energy and green hydrogen targets in the medium term.

Among the government's priorities, as mentioned in the statement, are improving tax administration, continuing to simplify financial expenditures, strengthening the medium-term financial framework, facilitating financing for SMEs, and accelerating digital transformation.

It is also worth noting that the priorities and reforms mentioned are in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 in fostering a more comprehensive, sustainable, and knowledge-driven economy. -ONA

HM the Sultan arrives in Kuwait



Sheikh Mishaal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait led the welcoming party for His Majesty at the Amiri Airport in Kuwait



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq arrived in the State of Kuwait yesterday on a two-day state visit. Sheikh Mishaal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait led the welcoming party for His Majesty the Sultan at the Amiri Airport in Kuwait, wishing His Majesty and his accompanying delegation a pleasant stay in Kuwait. Alongside the Emir of Kuwait, His Majesty was also received by Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Hamad Al Sabah (Head of the Mission of Honour), Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Mubarak Al Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, Sherida Abdullah Saad Al Maousherji, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Council of Ministers Affairs, Imad Mohammad Al Atiqi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

Oil, Abdullah Ali Al Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmad Fahad Al Fahad, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan, Dr. Mohammed Nassir Al Hajri, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman, senior Kuwaiti officials and members of the Omani Embassy in Kuwait. Official reception protocols were conducted for His Majesty the Sultan upon his arrival. When the Royal airplane (Nizwa) entered the airspace of the State of Kuwait, it was escorted by a fleet of Kuwaiti Air Force until its landing at the Amiri Airport. There, the Emir of Kuwait received His Majesty the Sultan. Passing between rows of guard of honour, the two leaders headed to the Dais of Honour at the Amiri Hall, where the Omani Royal Anthem was played, followed by the Kuwaiti National Anthem. After that, His Majesty the Sultan inspected the Guard of Honour, which gave the salute to His Majesty. Then, His Majesty the Sultan shook hands with senior members of the Kuwaiti welcom-



ing party, while the Emir of the State of Kuwait shook hands with the members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, welcoming them and wishing them a pleasant stay. Then, His Majesty the Sultan, accompanied by the Emir of Kuwait, boarded the motorcade that took His Majesty over to his residence at Bayan Palace in the capital, Kuwait City. As the motorcade of the two leaders left the Amiri Airport's gate, it was flanked by a group of

motorcycles. A group of children lined the sides of the road, waving the Omani and Kuwaiti flags in an emotional manifestation of amity and fraternity, while helicopters carrying the flags of the two countries hovered over the sky of the ceremony. Upon the arrival of the motorcade carrying the two leaders at Bayan Palace, the artillery fired a 21-gun salute for His Majesty the Sultan, while a group of cavalrymen surrounded the parade. After that, a group of Kuwaiti

folklore bands performed the art of the Ardha, chanted songs and poetic verses and rejoiced over the auspicious arrival of His Majesty the Sultan. During the visit, His Majesty is accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, HH Sayyid Bilal bin Haitham Al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al

Nuamani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Dr. Saleh bin Amir Al Kharousi, Ambassador of Oman to Kuwait. -ONA

COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Oman-Kuwait business forum explores ways to boost ties



KUWAIT: The Oman-Kuwait Business and Investment Forum, held at Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Monday, discussed ways to enhance existing cooperation between the two countries in various fields. The forum was held on the sidelines of the current "State Visit" made by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to the State of Kuwait. Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said in a speech at the forum that Oman and Kuwait have shared commercial partnerships since old times.

He added that the visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will help consolidate joint action, expand elements of economic integration to develop a vibrant economy that is capable of interacting with global economies and maintaining sustainability. Al Yousef added that the two countries' trade and investment cooperation in priority sectors would contribute to generating employment opportunities and promoting sustainable development in both countries. "We hope that this forum will open up new vistas of cooperation and investment in the sectors of

logistics, tourism, industry, food security and converting industries," said Al Yousef, who stressed the importance of joining hands to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and Kuwait Vision 2035, notably in the sectors of trade, industry and investment. He pointed out that the agreements and memorandums of understanding signed by the two countries would enable the private sector to realise further growth and sustainable development. For his part, Eng. Omar Saud Al Omar, Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry, said that the forum would help activate stra-

tegic cooperation in the fields of trade and investment. He referred to what he described as "remarkable development in economic relations between the two countries over the past few years". Al Omar added that "the forum constitutes an important platform for exchanging visions, ideas and investment opportunities, as well as means to develop joint recommendations and build a better framework for exchanging trade and investments and overcoming challenges that might face Omani firms wishing to enter the Kuwaiti market".

During the forum, Oman presented two visual displays: the first by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (represented by "Invest

Oman" lounge) and the second by Oman Investment Authority. Another presentation was made by Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). -ONA

BAYAN PALACE

In honour of HM, Emir of Kuwait hosts dinner

KUWAIT: In honour of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait hosted an official dinner at Bayan Palace, marking His Majesty's visit to Kuwait.

The dinner was attended by members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, as well as some Kuwaiti sheikhs and senior officials. -ona



His Majesty holds discussion with Prime Minister of Kuwait



STATE VISIT

Oman and Kuwait sign 4 MoUs in different fields



KUWAIT: The Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait signed at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Monday 4 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) in the fields of direct investment, metrology activities, diplomatic studies and training, as well as another MoU between the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and the Kuwait Investment Authority.

Signing the MoUs comes within the framework of the current state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the State of Kuwait.

These MoUs represented in the MoU between the Foreign Ministry and its Kuwaiti counterpart in the fields of diplomatic studies and training. This MoU aims at cooperation, development and proposing modern methods for training specialists in the fields of foreign policy, international relations, political science and other related fields, in addition to exchanging documents, studies and experiences on topics of mutual interest.



In the areas of direct investment and standardization, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion signed two MoUs; the first with the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, and related to establishing a framework for cooperation in the field of direct investment and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences between them.

The second MoU inked with the Kuwait Public Authority for Industry in the field of standardisation. It aims to strengthen cooperation relations between them in the fields of standardisation, quality, laboratories and conformity assessment activities, and to contribute to raising the quality of non-food industrial products and services exchanged between the



two countries.

Oman Investment Authority (OIA) also signed a MoU with the Kuwait Investment Authority.

This MoU aims to establish a common framework for cooperation and coordination in joint investments between the two parties and to enter into discussions about future investment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman and the

State of Kuwait, as well as studying investment opportunities in existing investment funds affiliated to the Oman Investment Authority, which are concerned with various fields, such as energy, utilities, infrastructure, communications, transportation and logistics services, in addition to the possibility establishing a joint investment fund.

The MoUs were signed from the

Omani side by Abdulsalam Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of the Oman Investment Authority, Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Ibtisam Ahmed Al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, and Dr. Saleh Amer Al Kharousi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait.

The MoUs were signed from the Kuwaiti side by Dr. Mishal Jaber Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, Ziad Abdullah Al Najem, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Nasser Subaih Al Sabeeh, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Saud Al Nasser Institute Affairs and Ghanem Suleiman Al Ghenaiman, Managing Director of the General Investment Authority in the State of Kuwait. -ona



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International Companies specialized in the field and registered with Tender Board, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Tender Description	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
PRE/24/036 RE-CALL	Remedial Works For Bridges at Muscat Governorate Package 1	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/042 RE-CALL	Beautification of Mutarih wall	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/048 RE-CALL	Offices Renovation in Building "A" at Muscat Municipality	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/076	Consultancy Services for Supervision of the Construction for Dualization of Al Nuzha Street	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/093	Consultancy Services for Supervision of Roads in AL Khoudh Village	22/05/2024	29/05/2024
PRE/24/115	Maintenance of Roads in Al Amirat & Qurayat	25/05/2024	03/06/2024
PRE/24/116	Maintenance of Roads in Boushar, Al Seeb, Muscat & Muttrah	25/05/2024	03/06/2024
PRE/24/120	Beautification & Development of Al-Sawaqim area in Qurayat	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/121	RFP for Replacement & Maintenance of Network Switches	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/123	Rehabilitation Works from Municipality Street Intersection to Wadi Al-Kabir Bridge Intersection	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/124	Design & Construction of Wadi Channels, Box Culverts & Protection Works in Al Bustan at Muttrah	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/125	Supply & Installation of Tactile System at Golden Jubilee Walkway	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/126	Construction of Parking in Al Mabela South	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/127	Proposed Solutions to Resolve Storm Water Stagnation in Al Mabelaa	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/128	Construction of Roads leading to Al Ezab Area in Al Jifneen	02/06/2024	23/06/2024
PRE/24/131	Supply of LED Street Light & Cloud Based Street Light Management System – Phase 3	02/06/2024	23/06/2024

1.

Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.

2.

Clarification and Support:

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For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

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For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcif.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

DOHA

Book fair

DOHA: The Sultanate of Oman, which is the guest of honour at the Doha International Book Fair in its 33rd edition, received a number of officials and residents from the State of Qatar. They praised the intellectual, cultural and historic heritage displayed at the Oman's pavilion in Doha.— **ONA**



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MEETING

Foreign Minister receives Speaker of Arab Parliament

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received here on Monday Adel Abdulrahman Al Asoomi, Speaker of the Arab Parliament, within the framework of his current visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The guest commended stances of the Sultanate of Oman towards various regional issues, the foremost of which is the Palestinian cause. He also hailed Oman's efforts in supporting the joint Arab action.

The meeting touched on means to develop the Arab parliamentary role in a manner that contributes to backing efforts of solidarity and integrity and achieving



the joint Arab goals to serve the supreme interests and confront the challenges facing the region and the world at large.

The meeting was attended by members of the Arab Parliament and officials from both sides.

— **ONA**

OMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Workshop on human rights data collection

MUSCAT: A three-day international workshop kicked off in Muscat on Monday to discuss means of collecting data and indices for measuring the progress made in the field of human rights in accordance with international standards

The workshop is organised by the Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) in cooperation with the UN centre for training and documentation in the field of human rights for Southwest Asia and the Arab region.

Dr. Khalifa Abdullah Al Barwani, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), said that the workshop aims to upgrade Omani capabilities in accomplishing related tasks through professional hands-on training.

OHRC Chairman Dr. Rashid Hamad Al Balushi said in a speech on Monday that the international workshop is being attended by representatives of civil society organisations and representatives

of government institutions.

The workshop provides insights about applying the UN standard methodology for collecting information on human rights and identifying relevant indicators at the national level.

Using indicators and adopting a standard human rights-based approach to data collection constitutes a way for countries and national human rights institutions to decide the extent to which individuals enjoy human rights.

— **ONA**



DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE THREE MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Dear Shareholders,

The Board of Directors of Raysut Cement Group of Companies (SAOG) are pleased to present to you the financial results of the Group For the three months period ended 31 March 2024.

Overview:

The year kicked off with significant uncertainty in the global economy, primarily attributed to the Red Sea conflict. These events resulted in adverse effects on the worldwide economy. The company's sales have been influenced by logistical hurdles in its export region, while local sales have been cyclically affected by Ramadan during the reporting period.

Companies under the Group and major markets:

The domestic market of the Parent Company is primarily focused on the Dhofar region, with significant export destinations extending to Yemen and the East African regions. While Sohar Cement Factory sells cement in northern Oman, for one of the other subsidiaries Pioneer, the main markets are UAE and Oman. The company also has its presence in Yemen through its' Associate company Mukalla Raysut Trading and Industrial Company. Raysut Maldives Cement Pvt. Ltd., another subsidiary of the company caters to the market of Maldives and thus the Group has set up its presence with the strategic intention to cover larger geographic area.

Capital Structure Change:

There was no capital restructuring increase or reduction in capital or issue of bond, during the three months period ended 31 March 2024.

Dividend Policy:

The company has adhered to a dividend policy determined by its performance, market conditions, and investor expectations. No dividends have been declared over the past five years.

Employees:

The company always gives importance to attract and retain qualified and competent staff and to develop and enhance their competencies by providing proper training programs.

Social Responsibility:

The company prioritizes social responsibility and environmental protection, following international standards and continuously striving for improvement.

Internal Control:

The Board of Directors has set up an efficient system of internal financial controls, for ensuring effective and efficient conduct of operations, safeguarding of Company assets, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and reliable financial reporting. The independent Internal Audit function of Raysut Cement Company regularly appraises and monitors the implementation of financial controls, while the Audit Committee reviews the effectiveness of the internal control framework and financial statements quarterly.

Future Outlook:

The Group aims to achieve optimum capacity utilization in all the plants while continuing with the cost reduction initiatives and focusing on increasing the sales revenue.

The steps taken towards setting strategic direction, improving the internal control system and strengthening corporate governance system and competency in human resources are also progressing as planned.

Acknowledgement:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik and the Government for the support and guidance.

On behalf of my colleagues at the Board, I would like to thank you for your support and for your confidence in us. I would also like to thank our associates, dealers, customers, the management team and all our employees for their loyalty, integrity contributions, commitment, and continued support to the overall success of the Company.

Shabib Mohammed Al Darmaki
Chairman of the Board of Directors

CONDENSED INTERIM SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE THREE MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Parent		Consolidated	
	31-Mar-2024 (Unaudited) RO	31-Dec-2023 (Audited) RO	31-Mar-2024 (Unaudited) RO	31-Dec-2023 (Audited) RO
Revenue	9,913,441	11,597,215	17,453,970	17,998,702
Cost of sales	(8,669,943)	(8,210,930)	(16,331,929)	(14,356,473)
Gross profit	1,243,498	3,386,285	1,122,041	3,642,229
General and administrative expenses	(838,489)	(1,097,825)	(1,303,414)	(1,534,357)
Selling and distribution expenses	(1,073,960)	(1,157,604)	(1,256,222)	(1,489,463)
Other income	1,034	203,102	208,102	226,775
Operating (loss)/profit	(667,917)	1,333,958	(1,229,493)	845,184
Finance cost - net	(1,084,626)	(1,070,463)	(1,515,746)	(1,435,470)
Investment income	143,321	96,014	143,321	96,014
Fair value loss on financial assets at FVTPL	(6,666)	(246,041)	(6,666)	(246,041)
(Loss)/profit before tax	(1,615,888)	113,468	(2,608,584)	(740,313)
Income tax expense	-	(103,310)	(1,497)	(120,795)
(Loss)/profit for the period	(1,615,888)	10,158	(2,610,081)	(861,108)

CONDENSED INTERIM SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Parent		Consolidated	
	31-Mar-2024 (Unaudited) RO	31-Dec-2023 (Audited) RO	31-Mar-2024 (Unaudited) RO	31-Dec-2023 (Audited) RO
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Goodwill	-	-	3,335,872	3,335,872
Property, plant and equipment	58,480,486	59,494,078	100,051,131	103,263,314
Right-of-use assets	2,268,113	2,324,213	5,957,216	6,067,534
Investment in subsidiaries	30,025,940	30,025,940	-	-
Deferred tax asset	-	-	227,469	242,722
Total non-current assets	90,774,539	91,844,231	109,571,688	112,909,442
Current assets				
Inventories	11,496,083	13,555,010	17,102,124	20,716,057
Trade receivables	2,256,969	2,436,285	5,370,390	6,285,166
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	3,179,071	3,185,737	3,179,071	3,185,737
Prepayments, advances and other receivables	2,303,061	1,862,133	2,160,361	1,987,832
Cash and bank balances	852,050	411,727	1,816,427	1,687,943
Total current assets	20,087,234	21,450,892	29,628,373	33,862,735
Total assets	110,861,773	113,295,123	139,200,061	146,772,177
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000
Share premium	13,456,873	13,456,873	13,456,873	13,456,873
Legal reserve	6,666,667	6,666,667	6,666,667	6,666,667
Asset replacement reserve	3,647,566	3,647,566	3,647,566	3,647,566
Voluntary reserve	6,352,434	6,352,434	6,352,434	6,352,434
Accumulated losses	(48,326,197)	(46,710,309)	(41,638,661)	(39,024,175)
Equity attributable to owners of the Parent	1,797,343	3,413,231	8,484,879	11,099,365
Non-controlling interest	-	-	444,366	439,961
Total equity	1,797,343	3,413,231	8,929,245	11,539,326
LIABILITIES				
Non-current liabilities				
Borrowings	29,291,933	29,289,525	40,106,622	40,310,251
Lease liabilities	2,182,798	2,429,927	6,170,366	6,433,947
Other liabilities	12,996,768	12,996,768	12,996,768	12,996,768
Deferred tax liability	1,513,000	1,513,000	1,513,000	1,513,000
End of service benefits	708,645	710,303	1,274,331	1,293,756
Total non-current liabilities	46,693,144	46,939,523	62,061,087	62,547,722
Current liabilities				
Borrowings	3,984,743	4,071,543	5,672,354	5,965,016
Lease liabilities	328,016	162,727	568,846	403,556
Trade and other payables	39,871,227	40,241,187	41,469,338	45,245,230
Other liabilities	12,322,158	12,322,158	12,322,158	12,322,158
Short term borrowings	5,865,142	6,144,754	8,059,582	8,596,110
Income tax payable	-	-	117,451	153,059
Total current liabilities	62,371,286	62,942,369	68,209,729	72,685,129
Total liabilities	109,064,430	109,881,892	130,270,816	135,232,851
Total equity and liabilities	110,861,773	113,295,123	139,200,061	146,772,177
Net assets per share	0.009	0.017	0.042	0.055

CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION



Students of Indian schools in Oman excel in CBSE Class 10th and 12th exams

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's educational landscape shone brightly as Riti Mithesh Patel, representing Indian School Muscat (ISM), and Akshaya Alagappan from Indian School Al Maabela (ISAM) jointly secured the top position in the 2024 CBSE Class 10th examinations with an outstanding score of 98.8 percent.

Meanwhile, Yadu Krishna Balakrishnan, a student of Indian School Darsait (ISD), emerged as the topper in the Class 12th science stream, clinching an impressive 99 percent, as announced by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Monday. According to the Indian School Board in Oman, Bhargavi Vaidya from ISAM, alongside Vishaka Rahul Shinde and Ann Sinu Kurian from ISM, attained the joint second position with an impressive score of 98.6 percent in the Class 10th exams.

Ananditha Sashidar, yet another ISM student, secured the third

position with a score of 98.4 percent, further reinforcing ISM's academic supremacy in Oman among Class 10th results.

In the Class 12th science stream, Sadiya Khatoon from Indian School Salalah and Aman Saji from Indian School Sohar shared the overall second position with an impressive score of 98 percent each. Additionally, Nityant Karthik Rao from ISM and Ojas Pandey from Indian School Wadi Kabir (ISWK) both secured the joint third position with a commendable score of 97.8 percent.

In commerce stream Furthermore, Gunjan Karwani from ISWK emerged as the topper in the commerce stream in Class 12th in Oman, achieving an impressive score of 98.6 percent.

Following closely, Jamiehitesh Ramaiya from Indian School Sohar secured the second position with an impressive score of 97.4 percent, while Devika Balakrishnan from Indian School Al

Ghubra clinched the third position with a notable score of 96.6 percent.

In the class 12th humanities stream, Kiara Denise Frank from Indian School Al Ghubra (ISG) secured the top position with a brilliant score of 98.6 percent. Bhumika Gulani and Hansi Thakur from ISM jointly secured the second position with a remarkable score of 98 percent, while Rithika Chandramohan from ISG secured the third position with an admirable score of 97.8 percent.

This year, thousands of students from 21 Indian schools in Oman appeared for the Class 10 and 12 examinations, marking another milestone in Oman's educational journey.

A total of approximately 39 lakh students took part in the CBSE Class 10th and 12th exams. The Class 10th exams were conducted from February 15-March 13, while the Class 12th exams commenced on February 15 and concluded on April 2.

SALALAH MILLS COMPANY SAOG

Salalah-Sultanate of Oman



REPORT OF MATERIAL EVENTS

Dear Shareholders,

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Board of Directors, to present to you the Unaudited Financial Statements of Salalah Mills Company and its subsidiaries for the First Quarter ended on 31st March, 2024.

Sales

The total sales value during the first quarter of 2024 was RO 20.6 million, showing an increase of 10.7%, compared to the same quarter of 2023 because of increased sales quantity. The export revenue increased by 29.3% in first quarter compared to last year.

Net Profit

The mother company made a net profit or RO 300 thousand in the first quarter of current year compared with a profit of RO 428 thousand during the same quarter of last year. And the Group made a net profit of 253 thousand during the first quarter compare to RO 428 thousand made last year due to lower margins. The profit includes the Subsidy of Wheat approved by the Government for local sales of Flour.

Ahmed bin Abdullah Saeed Al Rawas
Chairman

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests the company in either Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of receipt of the request at P.O. Box No. 67, Al Awqadain, P.C. 217, Sultanate of Oman.

@salalahmillsco

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Parent company		Group	
	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	31,806,786	25,409,682	31,823,213	25,409,682
Right of use assets	3,510,394	3,634,413	3,510,394	3,634,413
Investment in subsidiaries and associates	2,523,904	50,000	2,468,663	-
Total non-current assets	37,841,084	29,094,095	37,802,270	29,044,095
Current assets				
Inventories	15,770,401	38,204,556	15,770,401	38,204,556
Trade and other receivables	27,846,080	21,397,182	28,130,419	21,397,182
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	366,276	354,578	366,276	354,578
Amounts due from related parties	805,204	1,189,595	805,204	1,189,595
Cash and cash equivalents	1,816,012	2,877,807	2,104,870	2,927,807
Total current assets	46,603,972	64,023,718	47,177,170	64,073,718
TOTAL ASSETS	84,445,057	93,117,813	84,979,440	93,117,813
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Capital and reserves				
Share capital	4,996,306	4,996,306	4,996,306	4,996,306
Share premium	3,587,782	3,587,782	3,587,782	3,587,782
legal reserve	2,089,103	2,089,103	2,089,103	2,089,103
General reserve	2,891,826	2,891,826	2,891,826	2,891,826
Retained earning	19,345,551	19,291,612	19,139,339	19,291,612
Total capital and reserves	32,910,568	32,856,629	32,704,356	32,856,629
Non-current liabilities				
Lease liability- Long term	3,292,153	3,405,554	3,292,153	3,405,554
Borrowings-non current	13,713,960	6,446,600	13,713,960	6,446,600
Staff terminal benefits	738,246	594,464	739,077	594,464
Deferred tax	914,846	914,846	914,846	914,846
Total non-current liabilities	18,659,206	11,361,464	18,660,037	11,361,464
Current liabilities				
Lease liability- Short term term	150,943	113,443	150,943	113,443
Borrowings	19,528,727	44,087,620	19,528,727	44,087,620
Trade and other payables	12,995,065	4,099,808	13,004,880	4,099,808
Amounts due to related parties	121,200	175,540	851,149	175,540
Provision for tax	79,347	423,309	79,347	423,309
Total current liabilities	32,875,283	48,899,720	33,615,047	48,899,720
Total liabilities	51,534,489	60,261,184	52,275,084	60,261,184
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	84,445,057	93,117,813	84,979,440	93,117,813
Net assets per share	0.659	0.658	0.655	0.658

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024				
	Parent company		Group	
	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023
Revenue	20,598,382	18,633,398	20,598,382	18,633,398
Cost of sales	(18,689,806)	(16,508,748)	(18,689,805)	(16,508,748)
Gross profit	1,908,577	2,124,650	1,908,578	2,124,650
Other income	5,648	2,978	5,652	2,978
General and administrative expenses	(1,203,616)	(1,222,815)	(1,252,067)	(1,222,815)
Selling and distribution expenses	(28,594)	(16,842)	(28,594)	(16,842)
Operating profit for the year	682,014	887,971	683,568	887,971
Finance expense	(328,278)	(383,657)	(328,278)	(383,657)
Net profit before tax for the year	353,736	504,314	305,290	504,314
Income tax expense	(53,230)	(75,806)	(53,230)	(75,806)
Net profit after tax/Other Comprehensive Income	300,505	428,508	252,060	428,508
Earnings per share - basic & diluted	0.006	0.009	0.005	0.009



Muscat Gases Company SAOG
PO Box 11, PC 124, Rusayl, Sultanate of Oman. Tel: 22526900
Email: info@muscatgas.com

COMPANY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

Dear Shareholders,

We would like to present to you the unaudited consolidated financial statements for the period ended 31st March 2024.

At the group level, the total turnover of the Company for the period ended 31st March 2024 is 4.679 million OMR compared with 6.193 million OMR for the same period of the last year, i.e. a decrease of 24%.

The parent Company's total turnover for the period ended 31st March 2024 is 4.492 million OMR compared with 5.994 million OMR for the same period of last year, i.e. a decrease of 25%.

At the group level, net loss after tax for the period ended 31st March 2024 is OMR 11,791 compared with net profit of 83,368 OMR for the same period of the last year.

The parent Company's net profit after tax for the period ended 31st March 2024 is 32,127 OMR compared with net profit of 74,794 OMR for the same period of the last year.

The Management is focusing on the enhancement of LPG business to yield better results in the coming period and the Company will put all its efforts to maximise the shareholders return.

Thanking you,

Engr. Omar Ahmed Salim Qatan
Chairman

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	31st March 2024		31st March 2023	
	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO
Revenue	4,492,101	4,679,250	5,993,932	6,193,150
Cost of sales	(4,247,018)	(4,405,009)	(5,700,963)	(5,877,896)
Gross Profit	245,083	274,242	292,969	315,254
General and administration expenses	(223,407)	(294,203)	(228,611)	(239,847)
Investment and Other Income	16,120	16,120	23,635	23,635
Profit for the period before tax	37,797	(3,840)	87,993	99,042
Provision for Income tax	(5,670)	(7,950)	(13,199)	(15,674)
Net Profit for the period after tax	32,127	(11,791)	74,794	83,368
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income	32,127	(11,791)	74,794	83,368
Earnings per share	0.001	(0.000)	0.002	0.003

Note: The complete account will be sent by email to any Shareholders who request them in either Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of the request.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31, 2024

	31 March 2024		31 March 2023	
	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO
ASSETS				
Non-current Assets:				
Property, plant and equipment	2,815,533	3,086,617	3,175,182	3,401,380
Right of use assets	214,694	214,694	232,020	232,020
Deferred Tax Asset	-	-	-	2,635
Investment	2,004,118	-	1,901,475	-
Goodwill	-	996,800	-	996,800
Trade Receivable	-	-	249,912	249,912
Total Non-current Assets	5,034,346	4,298,111	5,558,589	4,882,747
Current Assets:				
Inventories	746,002	870,119	1,024,681	1,119,725
Trade and other receivables	5,348,689	4,578,719	4,352,684	3,863,008
Cash and cash equivalents	1,182,083	1,251,635	2,504,048	2,520,132
Total Current Assets	7,276,774	6,700,473	7,881,413	7,502,865
TOTAL ASSETS	12,311,119	10,998,584	13,440,002	12,385,612
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity:				
Share capital	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Statutory reserve	1,000,000	1,013,094	1,000,000	1,012,670
Special reserve	1,457,067	1,457,067	1,457,067	1,457,067
Land revaluation reserve	807,666	807,666	807,666	807,666
Retained earnings	(209,115)	(286,844)	(97,315)	(25,166)
Total Equity	6,055,618	5,990,983	6,167,418	6,252,237
Non-current Liabilities:				
End of service benefits	126,138	134,948	83,961	86,914
Non current portion of Term Loan	-	-	163,608	163,608
Non current portion of lease liabilities	234,920	234,920	230,702	230,702
Deferred tax	133,189	139,690	147,149	147,330
Total Non-current Liabilities	494,247	509,558	625,420	628,554
Current Liabilities:				
Trade and other payables	5,212,963	3,946,482	6,038,309	4,891,185
Bank overdraft	361,401	361,401	409,433	409,433
Current portion of Term Loan	123,838	123,838	141,505	141,505
Current portion of lease liabilities	24,574	24,574	24,500	24,500
Income Tax	38,478	41,748	33,417	38,198
Total Current Liabilities	5,761,253	4,498,043	6,647,164	5,504,821
Total Liabilities	6,255,501	5,007,601	7,272,584	6,133,375
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	12,311,119	10,998,584	13,440,002	12,385,612
Net Assets Per Share (RO)	0.202	0.200	0.206	0.208

The All-New Kia EV6

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Electric Global Modular Platform (E-GMP)



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Augmented Reality Head Up Display

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- 0% VAT
- Registration fee waiver

Introducing the Kia EV6, an electric vehicle that redefines sustainable mobility with zero carbon emissions. The EV6 sets a new norm with an elevated futuristic driving experience. Visit the Kia showrooms in Muscat (Wattayah) and Mawaleh for a first-hand experience.

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- 0% VAT
- Registration fee waiver

The all-new KIA EV9 is set to transform the future of mobility. Introducing sustainable and environment-friendly vehicles with zero carbon emissions, explore the world of EVs with their spectacular design and modern features. Experience the vehicles available for display in Muscat at the Wattayah and Mawaleh showrooms today.
Reliable International Automotive LLC. C.R. No. 1707183, Wattayah: 92858004, Al Mawaleh: 99473174

*The figures for all electric range reflect the expected results under Worldwide Harmonized Light Vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP). # Insurance applicable would be given to the extent of a private vehicle, additional premium if any would have to be paid by the buyer. @ Manufacturer's Warranty of 5 Years/ 100,000 Kms whichever is earlier. For paint and body perforations, standard Kia warranty terms are applied.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by July 2024 reaching \$83.88, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 90 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$84.78. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,769.56 points, down by 0.19 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.08 per cent at 450.11 points. Oman Arab Bank, up 4.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Marketing, down 6.98 per cent, was the top loser.



Welcome to a
World Beyond Banking
With Asalah Priority Banking
from Bank Muscat



Bank Muscat. Better Everyday.

Oman showcases bold national energy transition roadmap

The World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam is the largest and most important global hydrogen event to date, and Oman is participating in this edition

Times News Service

ROTTERDAM: The Sultanate of Oman is marking its participation in the World Hydrogen Summit 2024 in Rotterdam, Netherlands from May 13-15, by showcasing its bold vision to become one of the largest exporters of low-carbon hydrogen by 2030.

The World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam is the largest and most senior global hydrogen event, and Oman is participating in its biggest edition to date.

The high-level Omani delegation includes senior officials of Oman's Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Transport, and The Sultanate's Embassy in the Netherlands, alongside a consortium of Oman's biggest hydrogen-focused players includ-



ing Hydrom and OQ Alternative Energy. In addition to an impressive pavilion steeped in true Omani hospitality, Oman's participation at the summit includes a carefully planned roster of activities including speaking opportunities, high-level discussions and meetings as well as site visits to green hydrogen projects in Amsterdam.

Throughout these engagements, the Omani delegation will focus on presenting the country's ongoing efforts to build a full-fledged ecosystem that capitalises on its strategic position and unlimited potential to become a rising global hub on the green hydrogen map.

A cornerstone of Oman's aggressive energy transition plan, Hydrom has secured over \$49 billion to produce 1.38 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. This significant milestone, achieved af-

ter the successful second round of green hydrogen block auctions in Dhofar, marks the completion of Phase A of Oman's Hydrogen Strategy. In preparation, Oman is ramping up its infrastructure, planning to install 40 million solar panels, 2,000 wind turbines, and 650 electrolyzers by 2030 to power its green hydrogen ambitions.

Speaking on Oman's successful participation in the World Hydrogen Summit, Mohsin Al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, said, "Oman's participation in one of the most prominent forums for the hydrogen sector globally reinforces our commitment to join world efforts to create a sustainable energy future and aligns with our national strategy for energy transformation and environmental preservation which aims to reduce emis-



sions without affecting economic growth and global energy supply.

"Oman has developed a roadmap aimed at achieving Net Zero by 2050. This strategic planning has facilitated the establishment of a solid foundation for a green hydrogen sector, serving as a cornerstone for driving investment opportunities to the country, together with over 50,000km of land earmarked for green hydrogen and renewable projects, an investment-friendly ecosystem and by our local capabilities and expertise. Our ambitious plans aim to produce more than 1 million tons of hydrogen by 2030, and approximately 8 million tons by 2050, with expected investments amounting to \$140 billion. The Sultanate has also begun setting controls for the exploration and production of geological hydro-

gen, and is close to completing a feasibility study for blue hydrogen, which is considered a type of low-carbon hydrogen that contributes to reducing emissions of some sectors that Oman seeks to attract."

Al Hadhrami went on to add, "Our strategic vision will reinforce Oman's position and role in energy security, locally and globally, as well as our contributions to the growth of the renewable energy and low-carbon hydrogen sectors. The projects in Oman are integral to our plans and we are investing to further expand on our programs and projects leveraging on our natural resources."

Ghalib Al Maamari, Chief of Business Development at OQ Alternative Energy, said: "At OQ Alternative Energy, we're spearheading low-carbon molecules projects as part of our energy tran-

sition plan, facilitating the production of green hydrogen, through vectors such as ammonia. We are leveraging Oman's key competitive advantages of abundant and complimentary renewable energy resources for large-scale solar and wind energy projects and world-class infrastructure, including established export terminals along trade routes. Our efforts are pivotal in driving the energy transition worldwide. Collaborating with our partners, we've made significant strides in advancing three green hydrogen projects through various stages of development."

Commenting on Oman's progressive energy transition strategies, Eng. Hafsa Rashid Al Subhi, Account Manager at Hydrom said, "Oman is already putting green hydrogen aspirations into action having awarded eight large-scale green hydrogen projects to date at a total investment of more than \$49 billion and a total production of 1.38 million tonnes per annum from 34.8 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity at the sites." She added, "Our target is to achieve Oman's 2030 production targets, amplifying Oman's potential as a key global producer of green hydrogen."

With ambitious targets and visionary leadership, Oman's drive to become a leading global green hydrogen hub seems well underway driven by innovation, abundance and a futuristic outlook that promises to reshape the global energy landscape through the power of green hydrogen.

FITCH RATINGS

Asset quality issue at Indian banks subsiding, bolstering appetite for growth

NEW DELHI: Asset quality pressures are subsiding at Indian banks, creating a favourable business environment and bolstering banks' potential and appetite for growth, said Fitch Ratings.

Bank loans grew by 16 per cent in the financial year that ended in March 2024, similar to 2022-23, and exceeding the 8 per cent CAGR over 2014-15-2021-22.

Large private banks gained significant market share in the last credit cycle and continue to grow rapidly; state banks also returned to brisk growth but lagged large private banks, said the rating agency.

Retail loans, that constitute around 10 per cent of system loans, grew at a 20 per cent CAGR since 2020-21, fuelled by a shift towards unsecured credit to expand margins.

Fitch's assessment of Indian banks' risk profiles also factors in lower transparency in terms of data disclosures on retail underwriting, such as loan-to-value ratio, borrower debt serviceability, credit bureau scores, and recovery rates, than most Asian banking systems.

Further, the rating agency asserted that India's household debt is among the lowest in the world, despite rising to around 40 per cent of GDP from 38 per cent in 2022-23.

Nonetheless, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expressed concerns through various media regarding the fall in the household

savings rate, early delinquencies, higher loans per borrower (43 per cent of consumption loan borrowers had three live loans), and surge in consumption loans, even though secured loans dominate banks' loan books.

Banks' interest in SME and farm loans is also rising, notwithstanding above-average impaired loan ratios of 5 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively, in the first half of 2023-24, though off their peaks in the last credit cycle.

"State banks have limited flexibility to avoid these sectors due to their quasi-policy roles, but appetite is also driven by high yields. Banks often rely on government guarantees to mitigate risk in SME loans, but there is room for better visibility on risks covered by these guarantees," Fitch said.

The RBI's recent measures have reinforced safeguards, including improvements in governance, risk management, and reporting. "It increased risk-weights on certain loan categories in November 2023 to improve buffers against the potential for build-up of risks, applied punitive business restrictions in specific segments for regulated entities in case of supervisory concerns, and is proposing to increase provisioning on project finance. We believe these measures can foster greater caution towards risk-taking, but their effectiveness is not yet proven through the cycle." - **ANI**

CBO

Treasury bills worth OMR33mn issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR33 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR8 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.645 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.645 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.62768 per cent and 4.64417 per cent, respectively.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR25 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.747 for



every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.730 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.02657 per cent

and 5.09037 per cent, respectively. Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed

commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The CBO acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 6.00 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.50 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

SHARES

Asian stocks touch 15-month top, wary of US inflation

SYDNEY: Asian shares eked out a 15-month high on Monday in a week when inflation figures could either support or undermine expectations for earlier US rate cuts, while Chinese activity data will test optimism about a sustained recovery in the world's No. 2 economy.

Beijing has already reported inflation to an annual 0.3% in April. Forecasts favour further gains in April retail sales and industrial output due on Friday.

Chinese authorities are also set to sell 1 trillion yuan (\$138.24 billion) in longer-dated bonds to help fund stimulus spending at home.

The improved sentiment has helped lift Chinese blue chips to a seven-month high. The index was 0.1% softer on Monday with some sectors pressured by reports the



White House was about to release details of new tariffs on Chinese goods. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan edged up 0.1%, after rallying for three weeks straight.

Japan's Nikkei slipped 0.3%, with speculation further losses for the yen could lead the Bank of Japan to raise rates in the next

few months. The central bank sent a hawkish signal to markets on Monday by cutting the amount of Japanese government bonds it offered to buy in a regular operation, pushing yields up.

Globally, now depends on whether the US April inflation report will show a moderation after three months of upside surprises. Medi-

an forecasts are for core consumer prices to rise 0.3% in the month, compared with 0.4% in March, pulling the annual rate down to 3.6%.

So crucial is the data that rounding to the second decimal place could make all the difference.

A low number would likely boost bets the Federal Reserve could ease as soon as July, which is currently priced at only a 25% chance. Equally, a high inflation print could push a rate cut out past September and challenge pricing for 42 basis points of easing this year.

Also, due are figures on US producer prices, retail sales and jobless claims, along with final reports on European inflation that should reinforce expectations for a June rate cut from the European Central Bank. - **BNB**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman Arab Bank, up 4.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Marketing, down 6.98 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,769.56 points, down by 0.19 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.08 per cent at 450.11 points. Oman Arab Bank, up 4.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Marketing, down 6.98 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Oman Arab Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Abraj Energy Services were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 739 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.56 million, with more than 13.8 million shares changing hands. Out of 45 traded securities, 8 advanced, 20 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR527,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR505,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR22,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,706.79 points, up 0.24 per cent. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, Al Madina Takaful, Bank Nizwa were up by 4.00 per cent, 1.24 per

cent, 1.00 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Sharqia Investment, Oman & Emirates Investment, Takaful Oman, Oman United Insurance, Ominvest were down by 2.60 per cent, 2.38 per cent, 1.96 per cent, 1.96 per cent, 1.06 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,903.60 points, down 0.42 per cent. Prices of A'Saffa Foods were up by 1.32 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Thread Mill, Voltamp Energy, Galfar Engineering, Jazeera Steel Products, Al Anwar Ceramics were down by 3.19 per cent, 2.41 per cent, 1.74 per cent, 1.01 per cent, 0.55 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.96 per cent before closing at 1,798.91 points. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, SMN Power Holding, Abraj Energy, Oman Telecom were up by 1.30 per cent, 0.61 per cent, 0.34 per cent, 0.10 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, National Gas, Sembcorp Salalah, Phoenix Power, Barka Water & Power Company were down by 6.98 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 1.91 per cent, 1.64 per cent, 1.32 per cent respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,782.30	4,769.56	4,769.56	4,778.53	-8.97	-0.19
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,722.91	7,678.63	7,706.79	7,687.98	18.81	0.24
Industry Index	5,932.02	5,890.92	5,903.60	5,928.40	-24.80	-0.42
Services Index	1,817.72	1,797.79	1,798.91	1,816.40	-17.49	-0.96
MSX Shariah Index	450.48	448.54	450.11	450.48	-0.38	-0.08
MSX TR INDEX	6,635.64	6,617.97	6,617.97	6,630.41	-12.44	-0.19
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,754.60	8,704.41	8,736.32	8,715.00	21.32	0.24
SERVICES TR IDX	2,100.34	2,077.31	2,078.60	2,098.81	-20.21	-0.96
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,844.15	6,796.72	6,811.35	6,839.96	-28.62	-0.42
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,068.20	1,068.20	1,068.20	1,068.20	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
13,800,935	2,558,983	739	24,381,213,295	8	20	17	45

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, MAY 13

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PRPREV. CLOSEDIFF. BDIFF. %LAST PDLAST BDLAST OFFRPREV. VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	63,005	23,967	9	0.380	0.385	0.380	0.385	0.380	0.005	1.316	0.385	0.385	0.418	0.100	46,200,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	268,302	20,874	25	0.077	0.079	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.001	1.299	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.100	55,723,695
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	58,951	4,797	3	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.001	1.235	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	14,350,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,320,687	691,648	94	0.299	0.299	0.298	0.299	0.298	0.001	0.336	0.299	0.291	0.306	0.100	230,289,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	242,141	253,603	62	1.048	1.053	1.047	1.050	1.049	0.001	0.095	1.050	1.055	1.050	0.100	787,500,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	110,000	30,030	4	0.273	0.273	0.273	0.273	0.273	0.000	0.000	0.273	0.273	0.273	0.100	443,883,355
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	9,885	3,657	2	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.000	0.000	0.370	0.366	0.370	0.100	122,422,903
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	274	219	2	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.100	76,000,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	494,290	34,076	15	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.066	0.069	0.100	13,800,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	51,000	19,381	5	0.381	0.381	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.000	0.380	0.376	0.380	0.100	88,835,800
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	88,681	6,740	4	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.075	0.077	0.100	51,291,445
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	70,000	21,001	10	0.301	0.301	0.300	0.300	0.301	-0.001	-0.332	0.300	0.300	0.302	0.100	195,283,289
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	538,034	146,627	24	0.263	0.263	0.262	0.262	0.263	-0.001	-0.380	0.262	0.262	0.262	0.100	1,966,676,030
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	33,734	6,082	6	0.181	0.181	0.180	0.180	0.181	-0.001	-0.552	0.180	0.170	0.183	0.100	39,600,000
OM0000009072	QO GAS NETWORKS	911,872	129,225	167	0.142	0.143	0.141	0.141	0.142	-0.001	-0.704	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.100	610,617,973
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	789,750	106,528	22	0.135	0.135	0.134	0.134	0.135	-0.001	-0.741	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.100	747,351,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	10,101	2,930	3	0.290	0.295	0.290	0.295	0.298	-0.003	-1.007	0.295	0.275	0.295	0.100	36,844,898
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	106,412	39,606	10	0.372	0.377	0.372	0.372	0.376	-0.004	-1.064	0.372	0.372	0.372	0.100	248,631,938
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	462,870	47,676	21	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.105	-0.002	-1.905	0.103	0.102	0.103	0.100	96,320,911
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	12,100	3,025	4	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.255	-0.005	-1.961	0.250	0.246	0.255	0.100	25,000,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	287,935	24,015	21	0.084	0.084	0.082	0.082	0.084	-0.002	-2.381	0.082	0.081	0.083	0.100	9,993,750
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	1,000	75	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.077	-0.002	-2.597	0.075	0.076	0.080	0.100	6,750,000
Total	22	6,951,024	1,615,783	514												

Parallel Market

OM00000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	3,700,000	481,000	1	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.125	0.005	4.000	0.130	0.130	0.137	0.100	217,023,300
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	335,155	33,716	23	0.100	0.102	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.001	1.000	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.100	225,982,256
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	301,250	99,421	16	0.330	0.337	0.330	0.330	0.328	0.002	0.610	0.330	0.328	0.335	0.100	65,879,748
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	147,300	7,070	8	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.100	14,743,024
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	8,437	20,671	7	2.450	2.450	2.450	2.450	2.450	0.000	0.000	2.450	2.450	2.446	0.100	219,765,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	591,200	52,026	26	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.086	0.088	0.100	18,128,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	10,500	725	1	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.100	5,865,000
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	20,000	2,080	4	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.104	0.105	0.100	28,193,412
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	17,000	2,795	6	0.164	0.165	0.164	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.164	0.166	0.100	9,075,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	19,000	4,670	3	0.245	0.248	0.245	0.248	0.250	-0.002	-0.800	0.248	0.235	0.248	0.100	15,178,660
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	2,885	866	3	0.300	0.320	0.300	0.300	0.304	-0.004	-1.316	0.300	0.000	0.300	0.100	48,000,000
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	264,160	15,850	19	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.058	0.067	0.100	87,750,098
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	877,726	149,106	51	0.173	0.173	0.168	0.169	0.172	-0.003	-1.744	0.169	0.168	0.169	0.100	34,304,709
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	43,070	2,158	4	0.051	0.051	0.050	0.050	0.051	-0.001	-1.961	0.050	0.048	0.050	0.100	12,500,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	16,464	4,659	5	0.283	0.283	0.283	0.283	0.290	-0.007	-2.414	0.283	0.283	0.288	0.100	23,038,978
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	264,000	20,481	14	0.080	0.080	0.077	0.078	0.080	-0.002	-2.500	0.078	0.077	0.079	0.100	6,630,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	1,000	91	1	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.094	-0.003	-3.191	0.091	0.092	0.095	0.100	1,491,864
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	15,684	15,685	11	1.000	1.005	1.000	1.000	1.075	-0.075	-6.977	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.100	69,000,000
Total	18	6,634,831	913,069	202												

STRONG DOLLAR

Oil slips on signs of weak fuel demand



SINGAPORE: Oil prices extended declines on Monday amid signs of weak fuel demand and as comments from US Federal Reserve officials dampened hopes of interest rate cuts, which could slow growth and crimp energy use in the world's biggest economy.

Brent crude futures slid 7 cents, or 0.1%, to \$82.72 a barrel by 06:24 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were at \$78.21 a barrel, down 5 cents, according to Reuters.

China's producer price index (PPI) contracted in April, suggesting that business demand remained sluggish, adding that recent US economic data signalled a slowdown as well.

Both benchmarks settled about \$1 lower on Friday as Fed officials debated whether US interest rates are high enough to bring inflation back to 2%.

Analysts expect the US central bank to keep its policy rate at the current level for longer, supporting the dollar. A stronger greenback makes dollar-denominated oil more expensive for investors holding other currencies.

Oil prices also fell amid signs of weak demand, ANZ analysts said in a note, as US gasoline and distillate inventories rose in the week ahead of the start of the US driving season.

The shipping industry is under increasing pressure to decarbonise. Especially now that the International Maritime Organization, the IMO, is being pushed to implement a charge on the sector's greenhouse gas emissions, potentially as soon as September 2024, with the goal of reaching net zero by 2050.

Refiners globally are struggling with slumping profits for diesel as

new refineries boost supplies and as mild weather in the northern hemisphere and slow economic activity eat into demand.

Still, the market remained supported by expectations that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies, together known as Opec+, could extend supply cuts into the second half of the year.

Iraq, the second-largest Opec producer, is committed to voluntary oil production cuts agreed by Opec and is keen to cooperate with member countries on efforts to achieve more stability in global

oil markets, its oil minister told the state news agency on Sunday.

The minister's comments followed his suggestion on

Patidar and bowlers keep Bengaluru in playoffs race

A win over Delhi Capitals was the fifth on the trot for the Royal Challengers Bengaluru as they climbed to fifth spot

BENGALURU: A fifth successive win, this time over Delhi Capitals (DC), on Sunday not only kept Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in contention for a playoffs spot but also lifted them to fifth spot on the points table, just above Delhi Capitals who have the same points as RCB but an inferior net run rate, *ESPNCricinfo* reported.

The M Chinnaswamy had gone all quiet when RCB lost Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli inside four overs. It seemed their batting troubles from the start of the season had come back to haunt them. Will Jacks and Rajat Patidar put to rest any such worries with a counter-attacking partnership, but the DC bowlers struck back with a near-perfect death-overs show to restrict RCB to 187/9.

With the Bengaluru crowd firmly behind them, the RCB bowlers had their tails up. They reduced DC to 30/4, which included the massive wicket of Jake Fraser-McGurk, who was run out at the non-striker's end after a straight drive from Shai Hope deflected off Yash Dayal's fingers onto the stumps.

In his 250th IPL outing, Kohli had a relatively easy opponent first up: Ishant Sharma, against whom he had scored 93 off 67 balls without being dismissed. He kept out a sharp inswinger on the first ball of



the match and then pulled one over square leg for a six on the last ball of the opening over.

In Ishant's next over, he hit a

hind to the wicketkeeper. With a 13-ball 27, Kohli made his intent clear but failed to do justice to the Midas touch he seemed to be in.

Patidar raced to 15 off eight balls with the help of three fours in a Mukesh Kumar over. When Axar Patel, the stand-in captain for DC, brought himself on in the sixth over, Patidar duly slogged him over deep midwicket. He also tore into Kuldeep Yadav, bashing him straight over his head.

At the other end, Jacks also hit Kuldeep for a six in each of his first two overs as RCB put the dismissals of their openers behind them. Thanks to the assault from Patidar and Jacks, RCB scored 49 in the four overs after the powerplay. In the process, Patidar brought up his fourth half-century in his last five innings, and his first in Bengaluru this season.

DC brought Rasikh Salam on in the 11th over and he could have dismissed Patidar first ball but Axar failed to hang on at cover. But Salam exacted revenge in his next over with a hard-length ball. Patidar looked to force it over the off side off the front foot but ended up miscuing it towards cover, where Axar moved to his right to

Skipper du Plessis lauds pacers Dayal and Ferguson

BENGALURU: Following his side's 47-run win over Delhi Capitals (DC), Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) skipper Faf du Plessis lauded bowlers Yash Dayal and Lockie Ferguson for their performances.

Speaking at the post-match presentation, Du Plessis said, "Brilliant, we put in some good performances and were really pleased. First half of the season, things didn't quite come together and from that batting perspective and bowling perspective we have been able to put it together now.

"Sometimes people talk about match-ups and all, but as a left-hander with the ball spinning in, you hope that works out sometimes and he has (Swapnil Singh, left-arm spinner) done brilliantly for us. A lot of work



has gone behind the scenes, and we are getting it right and I feel there is a lot more variety in our bowling now and Yash and Lockie have been exceptional in the last few games. We want to be bold. Even today, we played swing up front and bounce upfront, we had 60-odd in the powerplay, and guys are pushing." - **ANI**

pouch that. That brought curtains to his 88-run stand with Jacks, who fell soon after to Kuldeep.

But Mahipal Lomror and Cameron Green combined to take 22 off Kuldeep's final over, the 17th of the innings, to raise RCB's hopes. Khaleel Ahmed, who was taken for 23 in his first two overs, struck twice in three balls in the 18th over to dismiss Lomror and Dinesh Karthik. He finished with figures of 2/31 from his four overs. Salam got rid of Swapnil Singh and returned 2/23 from his three. DC conceded only 40 in the last four overs, and picked up five wickets, to keep RCB under 200.

Axar fights a lone battle
David Warner, back in the side after missing four matches, was out

for 1 off two. Dayal had bounced out Abishek Porel cheaply. It was only the second time this season that RCB picked up four wickets inside the powerplay.

Only Axar Patel, leading for the first time in the IPL, managed to offer some resistance with his second half-century of the season. He bookended Jacks' only over with sixes to bring up his fifty off 30 balls. But long before he top-edged Dayal over backward point, where du Plessis took a tumbling catch, the result was a foregone conclusion.

Brief scores: Royal Challengers Bengaluru 187/9 (Rajat Patidar 52, Will Jacks 41, Rasikh Salam 2-23, Khaleel Ahmed 2-31) beat Delhi Capitals 140 in 19.1 overs (Axar Patel 57; Yash Dayal 3-20, Lockie Ferguson 2-23). - **Agencies**

ICC T20 WORLD CUP

Spin-heavy Sri Lanka aim to achieve success at World Cup



COLOMBO: While the ongoing IPL may be a certifiable run-fest, the current school of thought surrounding the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup is that conditions in the USA and Caribbean might be a little less batter-friendly.

At least, that's the working assumption Sri Lanka's selectors were going on when they named their 15-man squad for the tournament, *ESPNCricinfo* reported.

"If you look at the conditions in America and the West Indies, most of it is pointing towards the wickets there being quite slow," chief selector Upul Tharanga said at a media briefing on Monday.

"The Major League tournament was played in Dallas with drop-in pitches. If you look at those, even though they're being brought down from Australia they are still quite uneven and a little slow. This could of course change, so it's a little hard to predict."

It's this line of thinking that has seen them stock their squad with spin-bowling options. While Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana will lead the line, Dhananjaya de Silva, Kamindu Mendis, Charith Asalanka and Dunith Wellalage all offer all-round options, while Vijayakanth Vijayakanth is among the travelling reserves.

Among the main beneficiaries of Sri Lanka's focus on spin have been Dhananjaya and Wellalage.

A lack of power-hitting pedigree has seen the 32-year-old Dhananjaya struggle to become a mainstay of the T20 side, while his position in the batting line-up has also yo-yoed.

Over the past four years, he's battled in each of the top seven positions, though primarily in the middle order, and of Sri Lanka's nine T20Is this year he's only played in four of them. As for Wellalage, he is yet to debut for Sri Lanka in T20Is, though he has 21 ODIs and a solitary Test to his name.

But despite this lack of game time, both have been included in Sri Lanka's squad, and Tharanga explained that it was their versatility that cemented their inclusion.

"There could be a chance that we play three spinners sometimes. Looking at that is why we picked Dunith, particularly his batting, because sometimes we could go with him ahead of a fast-bowling all-rounder.

"As for Dhananjaya, we value his bowling. And with regard to power-hitting, we think we can get that from elsewhere in the side. In terms of his all-round input, and taking into consideration the conditions, he was a better option."

Tharanga also revealed that the uncapped Vijayakanth, who had impressed in the LPL in recent seasons as well as the ILT20 earlier this year, had been picked as a travelling reserve ahead of the

likes of Jeffrey Vandersay and Akila Dananjaya owing to him being more suited to the conditions.

"Viyaskanth is taller and has a higher arm action, and because of that we thought he would suit the West Indian conditions better. Along with Viyaskanth, we looked at Akila Dananjaya and Jeffrey Vandersay, and compared to them Viyaskanth has bowled more in franchise cricket, and so we think he's best suited to fill in the case of any injury."

Tharanga also said: "If you look at scores in the West Indies historically, as well as the US, average scores are around 160. But until we play on them we won't know how such wickets behave. But I do believe that this is a team capable of meeting any challenge."

Matheesha Pathirana had impressed in his second IPL campaign, picking up 13 wickets for Chennai Super Kings in six games before being sidelined with a hamstring strain. According to Tharanga, they are hopeful of the slinger being fit for the start of the tournament but will have to wait on the final medical report before identifying a clear timeline for his return.

He is one of five seamers Sri Lanka will be taking to the US, alongside fellow slinger Nuwan Thushara, Dilshan Madushanka, Dushmantha Chameera and travelling reserve Asitha Fernando. - **Agencies**

NETHERLANDS SQUAD

Ackermann, van der Merwe opt out of T20 World Cup

AMSTERDAM: Netherlands will be without the experienced pair of Colin Ackermann and Roelof van der Merwe at the T20 World Cup 2024. The two of them made themselves unavailable for selection, choosing to fulfil their county commitments instead.

Netherlands have called up Daniel Doram, the Leeward Islands left-arm spinner, to a full T20I squad for the first time.

The T20 World Cup clashes with the start of the Vitality Blast, England's county T20 competition, which has forced Associate players to choose between their primary employers and their national teams, *ESPNCricinfo* reported.

Bas de Leede (Durham) and Fred Klaassen (Kent) will be released by their counties for the T20 World Cup, but Ackermann and van der Merwe have committed to Durham and Somerset respectively. Neither was named in the Netherlands' provisional squad on Monday.

Brandon Glover, meanwhile, wasn't considered as he continued his comeback after an injury, while Timm van der Gugten is out of action with a calf injury.

In van der Merwe's absence, Doram has been named as one of two left-arm spinners in the squad along with Tim Pringle. He is a Dutch passport-holder from Saint Maarten, a constituent state of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and played first-class and List A cricket for Netherlands as a teenager.

Doram, who is 6' 7" tall, has been playing for Leeward Islands in the West Indies Championship and picked up 29 wickets at 20.27 this season. He has never played a professional T20 match but was on standby when Netherlands toured Nepal earlier this year.

"We have been able to select a well-balanced team, which we are confident will be able to perform in the conditions against the opposition we face in the US and West Indies," Ryan Cook, the Netherlands head coach,



said in a release.

"All of the players have been training well and have been involved in the recent ProSeries with some exciting performances showing the growing depth and quality in Netherlands cricket.

"We have managed to perform admirably in the last two World Cups we have participated in and will be determined to rise to the challenges we face ahead to reach the next round

of the tournament."

Scott Edwards will captain the side, as he did at the 2022 T20 World Cup, and there are several changes to the squad that finished fourth in their Super 12s group in that tournament. Shariz Ahmad, Tom Cooper, Stephen Myburgh, Ackermann, van der Merwe, Glover and van der Gugten are out; Wesley Barresi, Aryan Dutt, Michael Levitt, Sybrand Engelbrecht, Vivian Kingma and Doram have come in.

Netherlands will prepare for the tournament with a tri-series against Scotland and Ireland, which starts on Saturday. They have been drawn in Group D of the T20 World Cup alongside Bangladesh, Nepal, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

Provisional squad: Aryan Dutt, Bas de Leede, Daniel Doram, Fred Klaassen, Logan van Beek, Max O'Dowd, Michael Levitt, Paul van Meekeren, Scott Edwards (capt/wk), Sybrand Engelbrecht, Teja Nidamanuru, Tim Pringle, Vikramjit Singh, Vivian Kingma, Wesley Barresi Travelling reserve: Kyle Klein. - **Agencies**

Gunners edge past Manchester United to keep title race alive

Arsenal returned to the top of the Premier League with a solitary goal victory at Old Trafford on Sunday

LONDON: Arsenal returned to the top of the Premier League and ensured the title race will go to the final day with 1-0 victory over Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The Gunners delivered an unconvincing display against a severely depleted United side but did enough to secure the win that puts them one point ahead of Manchester City having played a game more.

Leandro Trossard struck after 20 minutes when lazy defending from struggling veteran Casemiro played Kai Havertz onside and his cross was turned in by the Belgian at the near post.

United showed plenty of endeavour but suffered from a glaring lack of quality and never seriously tested Arsenal keeper David Raya, as their own hopes of European football next season faded further.

Arsenal must now hope north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur do them a favour by getting a result at home to Manchester



City on Tuesday.

The Gunners host Everton in their final game of the season next Sunday, while City are at home to

West Ham. United's squad, hardly fit for purpose when all players are available, was stripped of key assets such as captain Bruno Fernandes, who watched from the directors' box with a pained expression.

Manager Erik Ten Hag, his smart suit soaked by a torrential downpour amid a thunderstorm that hit Old Trafford late on, will point to his lack of resources - and rightly so on this occasion.

But the fact United were unable to cause Arsenal keeper Raya any serious problems was a sobering lesson in the current

state of the Red Devils.

Kobbie Mainoo tried to galvanise the hosts' midfield while Alejandro Garnacho ran tirelessly out wide, but it was a tough afternoon for young striker Rasmus Hojlund, who got very little change out of Arsenal defensive duo William Saliba and Gabriel.

United are a club that needs a reboot and re-invigoration and - while this was not the day to make judgements on Ten Hag - it is becoming increasingly difficult to see how the Dutchman can be part of the new era and structure under Ratchcliffe.



The elation of Arsenal's fans at this vital win was not dampened by the storm that arrived in Manchester just before the final whistle as skies darkened and lightning flashed around the stadium.

Arsenal know Manchester City's fate still lies in the champions' own hands and two wins against Spurs and West Ham will take a fourth successive title to the Etihad Stadium.

Mikel Arteta's side, however, have done all they can and two hazardous-looking fixtures - away to Spurs in the north London der-

by and here at United, where they have suffered before - have been safely negotiated.

The Gunners still have a chance of their first title in 20 years going into the final game of the season - and they would have happily settled for that in August.

Arsenal were nervy and unconvincing but they have now won 15 of their past 17 games in the face of the usual sustained Manchester City assault at this stage of the season, banishing the label of "chokers" that was attached to them when they slipped up late last season. - Agencies

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen go 50 games unbeaten



MUNICH: Bayer Leverkusen thrashed 10-man Bochum 5-0 on Sunday to notch up a half-century of unbeaten matches in all competitions.

Patrik Schick's crisp strike put Leverkusen ahead and Victor Boniface increased their lead from the penalty spot. Amine Adli added a third in the second half with a header from a corner before late goals from Josip Stanisic and Alex Grimaldo completed the rout.

Xabi Alonso's side are now without in one game of completing the first part of an invincible treble.

If Leverkusen avoid defeat in their final league game of the season - at home to Augsburg next Sat-

urday - they will become the first team to go through a Bundesliga campaign without tasting defeat.

Bayern Munich lost just once in their title successes of 1986-87 and 2012-13. After next weekend the Bundesliga champions face Italian side Atalanta in the Europa League final in Dublin on 22 May and play in the German Cup final against Kaiserslautern in Berlin three days later.

The last time Leverkusen tasted defeat was way back in May 2023.

On Sunday, Bochum defender Felix Passlack was sent off in the 15th minute, Passlack clipped Nathan Tella as he threatened to break through on goal and was

shown a straight red card.

Leverkusen scored in the 41st minute when Schick found the net.

Die Werkself were then awarded a penalty in first-half added time when the lively Tella was brought down by Keven Schlotterbeck.

Boniface calmly sent Bochum goalkeeper Manuel Riemann the wrong way from the spot. After the break Adli headed in fellow substitute Jonas Hofmann's corner in the 76th minute.

Stanisic then fired past the unsighted Riemann from the corner of the box before Grimaldo rounded off a ruthless counterattack in added time to tap into an empty net. - Agencies

FRENCH LIGUE 1

Mbappe scores in final home game

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe scored in his final Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) home game but the French champions were beaten 3-1 by Toulouse on Sunday before celebrating with the Ligue 1 trophy.

In his first appearance since announcing he will leave PSG when his contract expires at the end of the season, Mbappe struck after eight minutes.

The France forward, 25, who BBC Sport understands is set to sign a five-year deal with Real Madrid, fired in after controlling a long ball over the Toulouse defence from goalkeeper Arnaud Tenas.

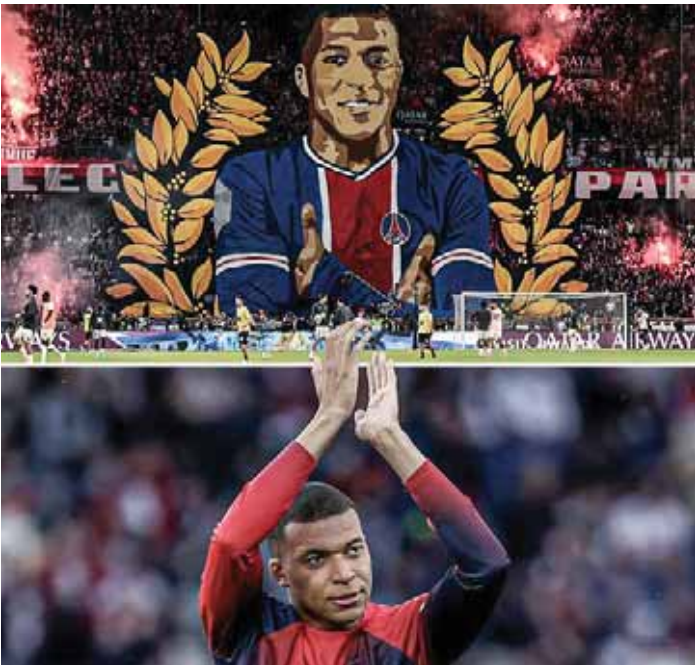
But Toulouse drew level within five minutes through Thijs Dallinga, and went ahead through Yann Gboho's stunning finish before Frank Magri added a late third.

PSG clinched their third consecutive Ligue 1 title - and 10th in the past 11 years - in April.

But Luis Enrique's side have now lost their past three games after Borussia Dortmund won both legs of their Champions League semi-final 1-0.

PSG have away fixtures at Nice and Metz to come in the league before the French Cup final against Lyon on 25 May.

The home supporters displayed a tifo banner for Mbappe, who joined PSG from Monaco for £165.7m in August 2017.



The World Cup winner will depart as PSG's record goalscorer, having netted 256 goals in 307 appearances for the 12-time French champions.

Mbappe took his tally this season to 44 goals and 10 assists in 47 games across all competitions - but the hosts could not build on his opener.

After Dallinga's close-range finish ensured Toulouse ended

the first half level, Gboho's stunning strike from the edge of the box put the visitors on course for victory and Magri completed a deserved win in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

Despite defeat, PSG were able to celebrate their league success as the supporters stayed behind to watch the players lift L'Hexagone - the Ligue 1 trophy - in a post-match ceremony. - Agencies

ITALIAN OPEN

Djokovic 'felt different' in shock defeat after bottle incident

ROME: Novak Djokovic on Sunday said that he felt hampered by the after-effects of being hit on the head by a bottle as he fell to a shock Italian Open defeat by Alejandro Tabilo.

The world No.1 was accidentally struck by the water bottle as he signed autographs following his second-round win over Corentin Moutet on Friday.

He struggled to find any rhythm against Tabilo on Sunday, with the Chilean needing just 67 minutes to win the third-round match 6-2, 6-3.

"That has really impacted me a lot. After that I got medical care, [and went] through half-an-hour [to] an hour of nausea, dizziness and blood," said Djokovic.

The Serb initially made light of the incident when he jokingly wore a bicycle helmet to training on Saturday, but says he will

now have further scans.

"I managed to sleep OK, I had headaches. The next day, or yesterday, was pretty fine, so I thought it's OK. Maybe it is OK, maybe it's not," he added.

"The way I felt on the court today was just completely like a different player entered into my shoes.

"Just no rhythm, no tempo, no balance whatsoever on any shot. It's a bit concerning."

It was a first career victory over a top-10 ranked opponent for Tabilo, who is ranked 32nd in the world.

The 26-year-old was dominant throughout, breaking Djokovic's serve four times and not conceding a single breakpoint.

"It's incredible. I came on court just looking around and soaking it all in, trying to process everything. I'm trying to wake up right now," said Tabilo.



"I was just trying to keep my nerves and keep swinging. Every time you feel like you are close to the end your arms get a little tighter.

"I was just trying not to think about it and take it point by point. It's crazy, I can't believe what's happened."

Tabilo is the first Chilean to beat a world number one since Fernan-



do Gonzalez beat Roger Federer at the ATP Finals in 2007.

He will play Karen Khachanov in the next round after the Russian 16th seed beat Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo 6-2, 6-4

It means six-time champion Djokovic will fail to reach at least the quarter-finals in Rome for the first time since 2006.

The 36-year-old, who is yet to

reach a final in 2024, has played just six matches on clay this year as he prepares for the defence of his French Open title.

The tournament at Roland Garros begins on May 26.

Elsewhere, Aryna Sabalenka eased through to the last 16 in Rome with a comfortable straight-set win over Dayana Yastremska.

The Belarusian Australian Open champion did not drop a single service game as she beat Ukrainian Yastremska 6-4, 6-2 in one hour 28 minutes.

She will play Ukraine's Elina Svitolina in the next round after the two-time winner breezed past Russia's Anna Kalinskaya 6-3, 6-3.

Climate protesters interrupt two matches

Two matches at the Italian Open in Rome were suspended following a protest by climate ac-

tivists on Monday.

A last-16 women's tie between Madison Keys and Sorana Cirstea was interrupted, along with a doubles match in which Santiago Gonzalez and Edouard Roger-Vasselin were facing Marcelo Arevalo and Mate Pavic.

American Keys was leading 6-2 3-1 when, according to a statement on the Italian Open website, two external activists wearing orange vests ran onto the court and threw confetti.

Others glued themselves to the stand before police and firefighters arrived.

The protestors were then taken away before the match resumed and Keys beat Cirstea, of Romania, 6-2 6-1.

There were similar scenes which caused a stoppage to the doubles match on court 12 before it started again. - Agencies

Number of Palestinians leaving Rafah due to Israeli strikes rises to 360,000

In north Gaza, bombardments and other evacuation orders have created more displacement and fear for thousands of families, UNRWA said on Monday

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said that “nearly 360,000 people have fled Rafah since the first evacuation order a week ago.” “Meanwhile, in north Gaza bombardments and other evacuation orders have created more displacement and fear for thousands of families,” UNRWA said in a statement on Monday. “There’s nowhere to go. There’s NO safety without a ceasefire,” UNRWA reiterated. The Israeli occupation forces continue to close the Rafah border crossing and the Karam Abu Salem commercial crossing in the southern Gaza Strip for the eighth consecutive day which threatens to exacerbate the humanitarian catastrophe in the besieged Strip. These forces expanded their ground and air attacks in all gov-



ernorates of the Gaza Strip after demanding the displacement of residents from large areas in Jabalia, north of the Gaza Strip, and east and south of Rafah, and their incursion into southern Gaza and east of Khan Yunis. The Israeli occupation continues its aggression on the Gaza Strip by land, sea, and air, since 7 October 2023, resulting in the martyrdom of 35,034 citizens, the majority of whom were children and women, and the injury of 78,755 others, in an indefinite toll, as thousands of victims are still under the rubble. **Israeli colonists prevent aid from reaching the Gaza Strip** Israeli colonists on Monday attacked humanitarian aid trucks near the Tarqumiya checkpoint,

west of Hebron, preventing their passage from the occupied West Bank to the Gaza Strip, and threw the contents of one of them on the ground. For a week, Israel has continued to close the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings to the crossing of aid, which has made the situation more disastrous in Gaza, where about 2.3 million Palestinian citizens live. Video clips circulated on social media showed a group of Israeli colonists preventing trucks from advancing near the Tarqumiya checkpoint. The clips also showed colonists throwing the load of one of the trucks on the ground, to prevent it from entering the Gaza Strip, which it has besieged for the 18th year. Israeli sources reported that the so-called “Order 9 members” and

other demonstrators prevented the aid trucks that left Hebron from making their way to Gaza at the Tarqumiya checkpoint. “Order 9” is a right-wing Israeli group that is leading protests to prevent humanitarian aid trucks from entering Gaza, which has been subjected to a devastating Israeli aggression since last October 7. Earlier Monday, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) warned, via X platform, that Israel’s prevention of aid from reaching Gaza is “a matter of life and death” for the people of the Strip. **Scores of civilians killed in Israeli bombardment** Scores of Palestinian civilians on Monday were killed and others were injured in the ongoing Israeli



occupation bombing of Beit Lahia and Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip. Local sources reported that Israeli fighter jets targeted the main street in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip, resulting in the killing of several civilians. Additionally, Israeli occupation warplanes intensively targeted Jabalia camp, north of the Gaza Strip, causing multiple casualties among civilians. The wounded individuals were rushed to Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia. In Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip, occupation artillery bombed citizens’ homes in the Al-Jeneina and Al-Salam neighborhoods, east of the city. The number of people killed since the onset of the Israeli aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip on October 7th, 2023, has reached 35,034, most of whom were children and women. Around 78,755 people have been wounded. Thousands of victims are still trapped under the rubble, or scattered on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them. **Israel continues to shut down Gaza’s main crossings, causing human catastrophe** The Israeli occupation forces continue to shut down the Rafah land crossings across the border with the Arab Republic of Egypt, and Karm Abu Salem, the only commercial crossing in the Gaza Strip. For the seventh day in a row, the occupation forces continue to close the Rafah crossing, which led to a complete halt to the movement of passengers, especially the sick and wounded, and the entry of humanitarian aid, or the transfer of accumulated aid to the people of the Gaza Strip in the southern and northern areas. — Agencies

RIO GRANDE DO SUL STATE



Brazil floods death toll surges to 143

BRASILIA: Brazilian authorities announced that the death toll of Brazil’s Rio Grande do Sul State’s floods, south of the country, soared to 143 people, with 125 others still missing. The devastating floods that swept Rio Grande do Sul also injured 806 people, while around 618,000 other people were forced to leave their homes, the state’s Civil Defense Department said. Brazilian news agency indicated that about 90 percent of all cities in the state were damaged as a result of the floods. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva pledged to provide significant support for rescue and reconstruction efforts in the state. Rio Grande do Sul was hit last September by a tropical cyclone

causing floods that killed more than 50 people. Earlier on Sunday (May 12), the World Bank had provided emergency support to the state of Rio Grande do Sul, heavily impacted by recent rains and floods. Approximately \$125 million in resources from ongoing projects are already available for immediate reallocation. The funds come from the projects “Urban Resilience Program in Southern Brazil”, “Revitalization Program for the Central Area of Porto Alegre”, and “Support Program for the New Bolsa Familia”. In addition, teams from the institution are providing technical assistance in damage assessment, resource prioritisation, and funds deployment. — Agencies

INDIA LOK SABHA POLLS

62.31% voter turnout recorded till 5pm in Phase 4, figure highest in West Bengal

NEW DELHI: About 62.31 per cent voter turnout was recorded as of 5 pm across the 96 constituencies in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections on Monday, according to the Election Commission of India (ECI). West Bengal recorded 75.66 per cent voter turnout, which is the highest as of 5 pm on Monday, followed by Andhra Pradesh at 68.04 per cent and Madhya Pradesh at 68.01 per cent. The lowest was recorded in Jammu and Kashmir, 35.75 per cent. Voting percentages in other states participating in the fourth phase polling as of 3 pm are Bihar 54.14 per cent, Jharkhand 63.14 per cent, Maharashtra 52.49 per cent, Odisha 62.96 per cent, Telangana 61.16 per cent and Uttar Pradesh 56.35 per cent, as per the ECI. The voting across the 96 parliamentary constituencies in the nine states and one Union Territory started at 7 am on Monday. The polling for 175 seats in the Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly and 28 out of the 147 seats in the Odisha legislative assembly also started simultaneously with the general elections. According to the ECI data, about 67.99 per cent voter turnout was recorded in Andhra assembly polls as of 5 pm. The first phase of the four-phase assembly polls in Odisha witnessed a voter turnout



of 62.96 per cent. Of the 96 Lok Sabha seats voting today, 25 are from Andhra Pradesh, 17 from Telangana, 13 from Uttar Pradesh, 11 from Maharashtra, eight each from Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, five from Bihar, four each from Jharkhand and Odisha, and one from Jammu and Kashmir. As many as 1,717 candidates are in the fray across the 96 Lok Sabha seats voting today. Prominent figures contesting today’s poll battle included AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, Samajwadi Party

chief Akhilesh Yadav, West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, JDU’s Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh), TMC leaders Mahua Moitra, Shatrughan Sinha and Yusuf Pathan, Union Minister Arjun Munda, BJP leaders Giriraj Singh, Madhavi Latha, and Andhra Pradesh Congress Chief YS Sharmila, among others. The remaining three phases of voting will be held on May 20, May 25 and June 1. The results of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections will be announced on June 4. — ANI



SUDAN

Looming Darfur carnage likely to spur deadly revenge

DARFUR: “Massacre.” “Carnage.” “Bloodshed.” United Nations observers and human rights organizations have said they fear the worst in the event the ongoing siege by Sudan’s Rapid Support Forces on El Fasher — the last stronghold of the opposing Sudanese Armed Forces in Darfur — culminates in an attack. Since the outbreak of the war in Sudan in April 2023, El Fasher has turned into Darfur’s largest humanitarian hub. Today, it’s home to around 1.5 million people, including 800,000 internally displaced persons. An informal peace deal between the warring parties — the Sudanese Armed Forces, or SAF, under General Abdel Fattah Burhan, and his rival, the head of the Rapid



Support Forces, or RSF, General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo — has so far granted relative safety for the city’s growing population. This situation, however, changed last month when two armed groups in El Fasher, the Sudan Liberation Army and the

Justice and Equality Movement, announced plans to side with the Sudanese Armed Forces. “These two groups not only have their own local networks, but they see the Rapid Support Forces as a shared enemy, which is a very potent driver to unite them,” Hager

Ali, a researcher at the German think tank GIGA Institute for Global and Area Studies, told DW. In turn, the RSF stepped up its military efforts to ensure these new alliances neither get too strong, nor that they could strike military counter campaigns, she added. “El Fasher now hosts the largest population in the cities of Darfur, including camps for internally displaced people and over 50 shelter centers within the city,” said Michelle D’Arcy, Sudan country director of the Norwegian People’s Aid organisation. Yet, the current tensions around El Fasher have prevented the entry of humanitarian aid, she confirmed. Toby Harward, the UN’s deputy

humanitarian coordinator for Sudan, said earlier this month that the humanitarian situation in and around El Fasher is catastrophic. “There has been a significant deterioration in the security situation, including increasing arbitrary killings, theft of livestock, systematic burning of entire villages in rural areas, escalating air bombardments of parts of the city and a tightening siege around El Fasher, which has halted humanitarian aid convoys and choked off commercial trade,” he said in a report on May 2. A recent analysis by Yale University’s Humanitarian Research Lab also confirmed that 23 communities in North Darfur have been burned in apparent arson attacks since mid-April.

And according to the UN World Food Program, “time is running out to prevent starvation in the vast region.” US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield told reporters in late April she fears “history is repeating itself in Darfur in the worst possible way,” adding that El Fasher was “on the precipice of a large-scale massacre.” After the outbreak of war in April 2023, the fighting between the SAF and RSF quickly extended from Sudan’s capital, Khartoum, to Darfur — where a part of the population identifies as Arab and others as African — and where the RSF is based. — DW

ROUND-UP

Kidsity and bp Oman organise National Robotic Olympics for kids

The programme opens new horizons for students, giving them a dose of creativity and analytical thinking, and sharpening their spirit of perseverance

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman and collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Kidsity held the fifth National Robotics Olympics closing ceremony, held under the patronage of Talal bin Nasser



Al-Adawi, Assistant Director-General of the Directorate-General of Administrative Affairs for Human Resources Development. The National Robotics Olympics is a team competition to design and programme the best designed robot using EV3 (evolution 3 Lego) and Spike Prime robotics models to complete the competition tasks and win matches against teams from all 11 governorates in



Oman. In this cycle, a total of 459 beneficiaries participated in the programme and 24 teams comprising a total of 48 students qualified for the final stage. The competition started with a qualification stage which was held for a duration of three weeks, qualifying two teams from each governorate to compete in the final stage of the competition. The matches required designing and programming

robots to compete in green hydrogen production by operating the hydrogen production unit and then collecting hydrogen atoms and storing them in their designated places. Saif Al-Manji, co-founder of Kidsity, highlighted the importance of the National Robot Olympics competition, saying, "These programmes open new horizons for students, giving them a dose of creativity and analytical thinking, and



sharpening their spirit of perseverance. Kidsity actively contributes to building a promising future for talented Omani youth, who in turn will play a key role in building a sustainable future for Oman." Ibrahim Al Hinai, Social Investment Manager at bp Oman, Kuwait and Qatar, commented, "We believe in inspiring innovation across younger generations especially in the field of education. Education

is a key pillar of Oman's 2040 vision which we aim to support and is vital for Oman's future development. The national robotic Olympics competition allows students to learn in a creative way, explore their potential in robotics and supports their knowledge in STEM education. Throughout the last five cycles of the National Robotics Olympics we were able to benefit more than 1800 beneficiaries."

INNOVATIVE SERVICE

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MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic, the Islamic Banking Window of Bank-Dhofar, announced the launch of "Dhofar Islamic-Pay", an innovative service that allows customers to pay via smartphones easily and safely. They can swipe a mobile phone that runs on the Android system and supports Near Field Communication (NC) technology and conduct their banking transactions quickly and comfortably without the need to use a regular debit card. Dhofar Islamic-Pay service allows users to securely add their existing debit card details to their Android mobile phones. Once set up, the mobile phone becomes a digital card, allowing the customer to easily conduct payment transactions by simply swiping the phone over the point-of-sale devices. This eliminates the need to carry physical cards, providing a seamless payment experience for customers. Bilal Faiz Muhammad Al Raiisi, AGM and Cards & Bancas-



urance stated, "Dhofar Islamic works to provide easy and safe financial services to customers that are compatible with various technological developments and a fast-paced lifestyle. Therefore, we launched Dhofar Islamic-Pay, which provides a wonderful banking experience for customers." The customer can activate with ease and it only takes a few minutes. First, he must update the mobile banking application from Google Play and login to it, then activate the service from the menu, by accepting the terms and conditions, specify with a direct debit card, the "Dhofar Islamic-Pay" service is activated.

ADVANCED SAFETY

Bestune B70S stands out with its fusion of cutting-edge technology, supreme comfort

MUSCAT: The Bestune B70S, a stylish coupe SUV, is setting new standards in its category with exceptional handling. It comes with two engine options: a powerful 2.0-litre turbo-charged variant or a smaller 1.5-litre option. The 2.0-litre model, equipped with a six-speed transmission, offers 215 HP and 340 torque. Developed on the cutting-edge FMA architecture, the B70S features an array of active safety technologies for a safe and comfortable journey. A spokesperson for GGS LLC said, "The Bestune B70S SUV represents a fusion of sporty sophistication and expansive comfort. Boasting a comprehensive array of safety features and state-of-the-art technology, it offers a driving experience that is both safe and innovative. The vehicle's ample seating and smart connectivity enhance its appeal. Most importantly, the B70S stands out for its exceptional control and stability, offering a driving experience that is as assured as it is comfortable." Spanning 4,555 mm in length,



1,850 mm in width, and 1,515 mm in height, with a wheelbase of 2,750 mm, the B70S is crafted to stand out. Its physique resembles a streamlined coupe SUV, giving it a nimble and modern look. The front boasts a sturdy design with an expansive trapezoidal lower grille and eye-catching headlights, making for a striking appearance. The rear's broad, flat tail adds to the vehicle's sporty vibe, resulting in a design that is as fashionable as it is practical. Complementing with a touch of luxury and convenience, the SUV comes equipped with a range of features like a panoramic sunroof, combined LED headlights and

System (ABS), Electronic Braking Force Distribution (EBD/EBV), Emergency Brake Assist (BA), Traction Control System (TCS/ASR/TRC), Hill Assist Control (HAC), front parking radar, rear parking radar, 360° panoramic image. Offering supreme comfort, the interior of the B70S has a top-grade feel and offers customized leather, driver's seat six-direction power adjustment, front passenger manual four-direction seat, heated front seats, driver's seat memory, automatic rear sliding of driver's seat. The dashboard comes with 12.3-inch full-color HD central control screen plus 7-inch LCD instrument cluster. It also has adaptive cruise control (ACC), automatic parking, mobile phone wireless charging and Bluetooth key. With an objective to enhance customer service and convenience, Gulf Great Sands, official dealers/representatives of Bestune Oman, has announced the relocation of its showroom to a new, larger/more spacious facility in Al Qurum.

EDUCATION GROUP

ABQ introduces Shamil dedicated programme for inclusive learning

MUSCAT: ABQ Education Group believes in the power of inclusion and recognises the limitless potential of every student. With this ethos in mind, the group recently launched Shamil, a dedicated learning support programme offered at their three international schools in Muscat and Sohar. Shamil is designed to address the diverse needs of their students, acknowledging each child's unique strengths and challenges. By offering tailored support, the programme ensures that no student is left behind, irrespective of their learning style, pace or specific requirements. ABQ Education Group Chief Learning Officer, Sigve Austheim, commented, "Shamil embodies our schools' dedication to academic excellence and underscores their commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals prepared for a diverse and ever-evolving world." Derived from Arabic, Shamil



translates to completeness, comprehensiveness, universality, and inclusivity. The programme aims to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all ABQ international school students. Shamil is tailored for students in grades 1-6 who may benefit from additional resources, support, or accommodations. The programme offers experienced professionals who collaborate closely with class teachers to provide customised support.

Austheim added, "ABQ's commitment to inclusivity enhances academic outcomes as it creates an atmosphere where every student feels valued, understood, and empowered." The selection process for Shamil is meticulous, ensuring alignment with the inclusion team's expertise and the unique needs of each student. It involves collaboration between teachers, parents, and the Shamil team, considering factors such as academic performance and individual learning circumstances. With Shamil, children spend most of their day in regular classrooms and participate in pull-out sessions as needed. The programme also offers various sensory learning spaces, regular progress monitoring and individualised educational plans crafted in collaboration with parents and teachers.

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Toyota Gazoo Racing clinches first place victory at 6 Hours of Imola

MUSCAT: Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR) clinched the first place in the 6 Hours of Imola, the second round of the 2024 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), after an incredible team effort. Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Nyck De Vries took victory in the No. 7 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar despite turbulent conditions thanks to faultless driving and intelligent strategy on a day of twists and turns among a 19-strong vehicle line-up. This round marks TGR's first outing at the 4.909km Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari, located around 40 km south-east of Bologna in the Emilia-Romagna region. It replaces Monza as Italy's representative on the 2024 schedule, the circuit boasting its own illustrious motorsports history since its opening in 1953 and hosting of three World Championship endurance



races throughout the years. Nobuyuki Takemura, Chief Representative of Middle East & Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "Congratulations to Conway, Kobayashi and De Vries for battling it out to the top of the podium in the team's first participation in 6 Hours of Imola! The Toyota

GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar continues to prove itself across the world's most demanding race-tracks and increasingly staunch competition. Toyota's ongoing motorsports participation allows us to shape a more sustainable future fueled by our passion for developing 'ever-better cars' to ensure that no one is left behind."



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Which mountain on the Oman-UAE border lends its name to the railway project between the two countries?

'Hhalas', 'Hhunaizi' and 'Fargh' are varieties of which fruit associated with Omani heritage?

Two violins, one viola, and one cello make up a "String _____"

What is the name given to Taylor Swift's fanbase?

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