



OMAN RANKS SECOND AT ME LEVEL IN ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX 2024

Statistics from the 2024 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) show that the Sultanate of Oman took second place both in the GCC states and the Middle East. This was unveiled by the Centre for Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Yale in the United States. **>A3**



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HM RECEIVES CREDENTIALS OF AMBASSADORS

His Majesty the Sultan welcomed the ambassadors, expressing his gratitude for their leaders' greetings and best wishes

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received separately at Al Alam Palace on Monday credentials of a number of ambassadors accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

His Majesty received credentials of the following ambassadors:

1. Showkutally Soodhun, Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritius to the Sultanate of Oman.
2. Christophe Farnaud, Ambassador of the European Union to the Sultanate of Oman.
3. Jean-Philippe Linteau, Ambassador of Canada to the Sultanate of Oman.
4. U Tin Yu, Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar



to the Sultanate of Oman.

5. Duncan Mulima, Ambassador of the Republic of Zambia to the Sultanate of Oman.

6. Razim Colic, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the

Sultanate of Oman.

7. Roberto Ebert Grob, Ambassador of the Republic of Chile to the Sultanate of Oman.

8. Dan Munyuza, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the

Sultanate of Oman.

9. Jacques Yacoub Nahayo, Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi to the Sultanate of Oman.

10. Nikoloz Revazishvili, Ambassador of Georgia to the Sul-

tanate of Oman.

11. Miroslav Sestovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Sultanate of Oman.

12. Uk Sarun, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the

Sultanate of Oman.

During their sidelines meetings with His Majesty the Sultan, the ambassadors conveyed greetings of their countries' leaders and their best wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to His Majesty. They also wished the Omani people further development and growth under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

They also expressed their great honour and delight at presenting their credentials to His Majesty. They affirmed to exert all efforts to promote relations of their respective countries with Oman in various spheres in a manner that serves the joint interests of the Omani people and their countries' citizens.

His Majesty the Sultan welcomed the ambassadors, expressing his gratitude for their leaders' greetings and best wishes.

His Majesty affirmed that they would receive all support from him, the Government and the Omani people to facilitate carrying out their duties.

The credentials presentation ceremony was attended by the Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, the Foreign Minister, the Commander of the Royal Guard of Oman, the Head of the Royal Protocols and the Military Aides to His Majesty the Sultan. **-OMA**

See also >A4

GAZA DEATH TOLL
as of June 3, 2024

Deaths
36,479

Injured
82,777

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman participates in Cairo meeting

1 Represented by the Ministry of Social Development, Oman took part in the 15th session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), held in Cairo. Oman's delegation was headed by Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar. **>A2**

WORLD

'Only two-state is the solution for peace'

2 Palestine PM Mohammad Mustafa and his Jordanian counterpart, Bisher Al-Khasawneh affirmed that the two-state solution is the only way for stability and peace. **>A7**

SPORTS

Oman go down to Namibia in a thriller

3 Namibia rode on an all-round performance by their star David Wiese to scrape home but not before Oman produced one of the memorable fightbacks in the T20 World Cup. **>A8**

Mandarin Oriental, Muscat brings exceptional hospitality to Oman

B7

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

Indian schools to close early, shift to online mode

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The rise in temperatures in the Sultanate of Oman has forced Indian schools to reduce their study timings or shift to online mode for the safety of students.

Speaking to the *Times of Oman*, Dr. Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Indian Schools in Oman, said: "We have asked all Indian schools to reduce their timings or shift to online classes based on their convenience."

In a circular to the parents, Indian School Muscat said: "Due to the extreme weather conditions, the School Management has decided to reschedule the school timings from Tuesday, June 4 to Thursday, June 6, 2024."

HIGHEST TEMPERATURE RECORDED IN THE LAST 24 HOURS

HAMRA AD DARU	- 49.3 DEGREE CELSIUS
FAHUD	- 49.0 DEGREE CELSIUS
SUNAYNAH	- 48.5 DEGREE CELSIUS
IBRI	- 48.3 DEGREE CELSIUS
LIWA	- 48.2 DEGREE CELSIUS
SOHAR	- 48.0 DEGREE CELSIUS
BARKA	- 47.9 DEGREE CELSIUS
SAHAM	- 47.6 DEGREE CELSIUS

The class timings of KG I and KG II will be from 8.15 am to 10.30 am, Class I to IV will be from 7.50 am to 10.30 am, Classes V to VIII will be from 7.10 am to 12.00 noon, and Classes IX to XII will be from

7.10 a.m. to 12.00 noon.

Similarly, in a circular sent to the parents, Indian School Bausher, said: "Considering the extreme heat conditions prevailing in Oman and prioritising the well-

being of our students, we are implementing some changes to our academic schedule."

The circular further said, "Today, 3 June 2024, will be the last working day for students from KG to Grade V and online sessions for Grades VI and above."

The school also said, "We appreciate your understanding and cooperation under these challenging weather conditions. Wishing all our students a happy and safe summer vacation!"

According to the Oman Meteorology Department several areas of Oman are witnessing very high temperatures this week.

According to data by the Oman Meteorology, Hamra Ad Duru station in Al Dhahirah Governorate recorded 49.3 degree Celsius, the highest temperature in

the last 24 hours, followed by Fahud station in Al Wusta Governorate with 49.0 degree Celsius and Sunaynah station in Al Buraimi Governorate recorded 48.5 degree Celsius.

While Ibri station in Al Dhahirah Governorate recorded 48.3 degree Celsius, 48.2 degree Celsius in Liwa station, and 48.0 degree Celsius in Sohar station in North Al Batinah Governorate, Barka station in South Al Batinah Governorate registered 47.9 degree Celsius and 47.6 degree Celsius in Saham station in North Al Batinah Governorate.

Oman Meteorology has urged people to stay away from direct exposure to sunlight to avoid sunstroke and exhaustion from heat and drink sufficient amount of liquid to avoid dehydration.

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Sales Centers: Nizwa 96628940, Barka 96629010, Ibra 96628920

ITALY EMBASSY HOLDS RECEPTION

The Embassy of the Italian Republic held a reception on Sunday on the occasion of the Italian National Day. The ceremony, which was held at the Grand Hyatt Muscat Hotel, was attended by a number of officials in the Sultanate of Oman, heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the Sultanate of Oman, and a number of officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. -ONA



Dr. Laila takes part in UN body meeting

The meeting discussed the problem of escalating inequalities that emanate from a succession of crises in some countries

CAIRO: Represented by the Ministry of Social Development, the Sultanate of Oman took part in the 15th session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), held in Cairo.



Oman's delegation was headed by Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development. The meeting discussed the problem of escalating inequalities that emanate from a succession of crises in some countries, population segments in the Arab region, means to address common challenges, follow-up of achievements made in the field of social development and recommendations issued by the ESCWA committee during its 14th session. The meeting reviewed the programmes of the expert working group on persons with disabilities, and reviewed the activities of the expert group on social protection reform to support coordination, cooperation and exchange of experiences on social protection issues at the regional level, and focus on providing appropriate solutions to reduce inequality in times of crises and conflicts. It also reviewed economic growth in the Arab region, in addition to developing appropriate solutions to provide job opportunities for various groups and classes in the Arab region. -ONA

TENDER
ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Labour announces the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender title	Last date for tender purchase online	Bid submission date
25/2024	Purchase of 130 computers for the examination hall at the General Office of the Ministry of Labour	Thursday 13/06/2024 2:00 p.m.	Monday 24/06/2024 10 a.m.
14/2024 Re-floated	Completing the first floor of the Directorate General of Labour building in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate	Thursday 13/06/2024 2:00 p.m.	Thursday 27/06/2024 10 a.m.

- Specialized establishments may obtain the tenders' documents online through the following link, starting from Tuesday 04/06/2024 at 08:00 a.m.: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Bids shall be submitted online.
- Bids shall be opened at 11:00 am on the date mentioned against each tender.

(The Ministry shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid)

labour_OMAN

ACADEMY

Kuwaiti military delegation visits National Defence College

MUSCAT: A delegation from Mubarak Al Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College of the State of Kuwait on Monday visited the National Defence College. Upon the arrival of the visitors at the academy, they were received by Rear Admiral Ali Abdullah Al Shidi, Commandant of the NDC. During the meeting, the two sides discussed several matters of mutual interest, especially in academic and training spheres.

The visitors were also briefed about the college and its facilities. They also toured its various departments. Moreover, the Kuwaiti delegation visited the Joint Command and Staff College. During this visit, the guests watched a presentation about the college and its training programmes. They also toured its various facilities and departments. -ONA

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MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Manual gives details of snakes in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has issued the updated second edition of the "Manual of Snakes in the Sultanate of Oman". It is an illustrative manual that identifies and creates awareness about the types of snakes in the Sultanate of Oman and classifies them into poisonous, with average poisons and non-poisonous snakes. The manual provides detailed characteristics and specifications of the various snakes available in the Sultanate of Oman, based on scientific reviews made by specialised experts, including researcher Ahmed Al Busaidi from the Nizwa University. The manual sheds light on the risks of snakes that live in the Gulf region in general and in Oman in particular.

Wild snakes
The manual stated that the real threat comes from nine species of wild snakes and marine snakes of all species. The manual also shows the geographic distribution of snakes and includes explanations of the local names of snakes and offers important information on ways of protection from snakes and immediate first aid and actions to be taken against snakes' bites.

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Oman ranks 2nd in GCC and at ME level in Environmental Performance Index 2024

This was unveiled by the Centre for Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Yale in the United States

MUSCAT: Statistics from the 2024 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) show that the Sultanate of Oman took second place both in the GCC and the Middle East.

This was unveiled by the Centre for Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Yale in the United States.

Oman advanced 99 places. Its score in the EPI stood at 51.9 points out of 100. This places Oman in the 50th position, up from the 149th position in 2022 from among 180 world countries. This will reflect positively on various ratings in the development sectors, notably economic sectors.

The EPI focuses mainly on the vitality of ecosystems. It measures the extent to which countries succeed in preserving, protecting, and enhancing ecosystems, as well as the services that the countries provide.

The vitality of ecosystems comprises 42 percent of the total score of the index as a whole. It consists of 6 categories covering different aspects: habitat and biodiversity, ecosystem services, fishing areas, acidic rains, agriculture and water resources.

The index also measures the extent to which countries im-

plement environmental health policy objectives in protecting their populations from environmental health risks. This aspect comprises 20 percent of the total index score as a whole and it consists of 4 segments: air quality, drinking water and sanitation, heavy metals and waste

management.

Represented by the Environment Authority and other relevant bodies, Oman took steps to achieve standards set for the “quality of ecosystems” pillar, which deals with the protection and optimal management of biodiversity.

The “quality of ecosystems” pillar comprises about 42 percent of the total weight of sub-indices. The issuance of Royal decrees to announce new natural reserves had a significant impact on raising Oman’s rating. As a result, the total number of reserves in the Sultanate of Oman grew to about 30. The decrees also helped raise the number of sites focusing on biodiversity to more than 25 sites.

The Environment Authority has also made efforts to effectively manage the nature reserves and provide specialised staff, infrastructure and means

of relocation that helped eliminate more than one million alien and invasive birds.

In addition, the Environment Authority endorsed initiatives to rehabilitate and protect threatened species, achieve land reclamation and combat desertification. -OMA

MUSCAT TO BRIDGETOWN

The unwavering spirit of Oman’s cricket fans

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Embarking on a journey spanning over 12,130 kilometres from the vibrant capital of Oman, Muscat, to the sun-kissed shores of Bridgetown, Barbados, requires more than just time – it demands an unwavering passion for cricket.

For Vinu Mathew, his family, and their friend Ikram Sadaat, this arduous voyage that entailed over 25 hours of travel to support Oman’s national cricket team in the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 epitomised not only their dedication to the sport but also their pride in representing their nation in the heart of the Caribbean, a region renowned for producing cricketing legends.

Forming a formidable group affectionately known as the “fabulous five” their collective presence marked a small but significant representation of Oman-based supporters amidst the roaring crowd at the Kensington Oval ground, underscoring their commitment to the sport and their nation.

Mathew, a prominent figure within Oman’s cricketing community as the manager of two prestigious domestic teams, the Oman Stallions and Yalla Shabab, wears the badge of a fervent Oman supporter with pride.

Having traversed the globe to witness Oman’s triumphs in various international tournaments, including their historic victory over Ireland in the ICC T20 World Cup 2016 in Dhar-

amshala, India, he exuded admiration for his team’s journey to prominence.

Expressing his sentiments ahead of Oman’s clash with Namibia in Bridgetown, Mathew reflected on the evolution of Oman cricket, a narrative he has closely followed for decades.

His unwavering support extends beyond mere fandom; it embodies a deep-rooted connection to the players he has nurtured and mentored within Oman’s domestic cricketing framework, now poised to shine on the global stage.

Oman cricket enthusiasts

Mathew said, “I am proud of this team. I have been closely following Oman cricket for now decades and am lucky to see the suc-

cess story of the national team. In fact, I have witnessed all of Oman’s T20 World Cup games so far. First in 2016 in India and then in 2021 when Oman co-hosted with the UAE.”

Accompanied by his wife, Bonnie, a fellow aficionado of Oman cricket, along with his children Ryan and Rhea, Mathew’s family symbolises the collective spirit of Omani cricket enthusiasts who rally behind their team with unyielding fervour.

For Ikram Sadaat, a former domestic cricketer and a well-known team manager, witnessing Oman’s ascent to the pinnacle of international cricket represents the realisation of a lifelong aspiration. His presence alongside the Mathew family underscores the camaraderie shared among Oman’s cricketing fraternity, united in their shared dream of witnessing their beloved team create history on the grandest stage of them all. Sadaat remarked, “Watching our boys play at the biggest stage is like living a dream.” As they bask in the electrifying atmosphere of Bridgetown, the “fabulous five” stand as proud ambassadors of the Sultanate, their unwavering support serving as an example of inspiration for Oman’s national team. With hopes of witnessing their team orchestrate memorable upsets and progress to the tournament’s latter stages, they remain steadfast in their belief that their presence may indeed serve as the fortuitous charm Oman requires to etch their name in T20 World Cup folklore.

Over 9,500 visit Al Khamis Fence and Tower site

Times News Service

AL-MUSANNAH: A total of 9,866 tourists of different nationalities visited Al Khamis Fence and Tower in the Wilayat of Al-Musannah in South Al Batinah Governorate from its opening in January till April 2024. The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism had awarded this project to the private sector for operation.

Badriya bint Mubarak Al Buisaidi, Director of Forts, Castles and Historic Landmarks at the Directorate General of Heritage at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism said that investment in Al Khamis Fence and Tower by the company operating the project comes within the efforts of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to employ cultural heritage for sustainable tourism.

She said that the award of the site of Al Khamis Fence and Tower to the private sector targeted the creation and development of various tourism destinations in the governorates.

Saif bin Said Al Khamisi,

Chairman of the board of Hisn Al Khairat Trading Company, said that the landmark consists of a mosque and a modern museum representing three environments (sea, agriculture and Bedouin) in the Wilayat of Al-Musannah. It also accommodates a tower that represents the Omani culture as it incorporates the symbols with which Omanis identify themselves, such as the dagger, the gun and the stick.

He said that the activities organised by the company at the main yard of the site showcase the heritage and culture of the population in the area and their association with the surrounding environment and the society. -OMA



HM THE SULTAN RECEIVES THE CREDENTIALS OF AMBASSADORS



More than 29,500 people visit Fatah Al Khair Centre

The centre in the Wilayat of Sur, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate is a cultural and historic landmark that showcases the maritime heritage

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) reported that the Fatah Al Khair Centre in the Wilayat of Sur, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, has received 29,586 visitors from various nationalities, both from within and outside Oman, since its opening in November 2021 until the end of April 2024.

The centre is a cultural and historical landmark that showcases the maritime heritage of Sur.

Ali Al Mashaikhi, the Acting Director of the Fatah Al Khair Centre, said that the centre aims to introduce the maritime heritage



and legacy of Sur and its maritime history, highlighting the achievements of the ancestors through the large ships that crossed the oceans.

He further noted that the centre comprises five halls: a hall that narrates the history of Sur, including some archaeological sites, forts, castles, and traditional ships that contributed to the economic and maritime role; a maritime heritage hall displaying the craft of traditional shipbuilding and models of traditional ships famous in Sur, such as Al Ghanjah, Sambug, Jalboot, and Al Bum, along with various tools used in traditional shipbuilding; and a Sinbad Adventures hall dedicated



to children, offering educational and informative materials related to maritime history.

The centre's courtyard features the Fatah Al Khair ship and other Omani boats known for their craftsmanship. Additionally, the center enhances the tourism aspect of Sur, serving as a cultural and educational reference and destination for visitors.

It highlights the pioneering and cultural role Omanis have played in maritime navigation.

In addition to the Fatah Al Khair ship and other boats, the centre, as Al Mashaikhi noted, houses over 400 artifacts.

It also includes the manuscript 'Maden Al Asrar Fi Elm Al Behar Manuscript' by Nasser bin Ali bin Nasser Al Khudhori, as well as the tools of the master carpenter, the captain's tools, traditional household items from Sur, and old doors, including a door made on the ship Al Malik Nasr in 1942.

Furthermore, as Al Mashaikhi mentioned, the centre features various artifacts and clothing that were historically used in the Wilayat of Sur.

He also noted that the centre organises workshops and training sessions for university and college students, school students, and public and private entities, providing a range of information related to the maritime heritage of Sur.

Oman Air upgrades its retail and distribution capabilities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Air has unveiled a significant enhancement to its distribution capabilities, ushering in a new era of convenience and choice.

Partnering with Accelya, a global leader in software and technology solutions, the airline has introduced cutting-edge functionality that will enable its trade partners to seamlessly manage their customers' travel needs. Part of the airline's ambitious retail transformation programme, it leverages the latest IATA New Distribution Capability (NDC) technology, representing a substantial advancement from the previous booking tools available to travel agents.

"NDC stands as a pivotal tool, empowering us with enhanced flexibility and control over our distribution channels. Oman Air's NDC journey has yielded significant growth in recent years and our partnership with Accelya marks an important milestone in this journey," commented Con Korfiatis, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Air.

"Not only does the new upgrade support us to streamline our customer experience and enable us to scale up and provide more robust services, it also represents a significant reduction in our distribution costs, paving the way for more efficient operations and revenue diversification."

Sam Gilliland, Chief Executive Officer at Accelya, added "We are delighted that Oman Air has chosen Accelya to take control of their retailing future and help them on the journey to Offer & Order transformation. More and more airlines, covering a range of scale and operating models, are choosing Accelya's FLX Platform due to our track record of delivering fast, impactful results. Our partnership with Oman Air is an example of how Accelya is leading the market in modern retail solutions and bringing the benefits of our technology to customers across the travel industry."

In addition to enhancing its distribution capabilities, Oman Air is bolstering its loyalty system, also powered by Accelya, with enriched customer relationship management (CRM) capabilities.

This includes advanced campaign management features and a dedicated partner portal, enabling the airline to implement coalition loyalty programs and unlock new revenue streams through loyalty points sales.



INTERNATIONAL SAGARMATHA DAY

Embassy of Nepal hosts event to mark 'Everest Day'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of Nepal, Muscat organised a tourism, investment and export promotion event on 29 May, 2024 on the occasion of International Sagarmatha Day (Everest Day) at Nepal House.

The programme was organised to seek the opportunities in the field of tourism, export, trade and investment in both Nepal and Oman.

The programme was attended by more than 30 high profile guests including eminent businesspersons, CEOs, media persons, social media campaigners, airline and bank officials.

While speaking at the programme, Ambassador Dornath Aryal outlined the policies of the Government of Nepal to promote export of Nepali products, attract the foreign investment in various ongoing mega investment projects and the trade partners of Nepal in goods and services.

Multi-faceted tourism activities in Nepal

Ambassador Aryal highlighted the multi-faceted tourism activities in Nepal that caters to the need of all age-group individuals, ranging from cultural and religious tourism to high adrenaline adventure activities to natural and serene experiences.

Ambassador Aryal requested all the guests to visit Nepal and experience the breathtaking nature and also look for the opportunities in trade and investment while con-



sidering the strategic location of Nepal and lucrative policies.

Ambassador Aryal informed the guests of the successful completion of Nepal Investment Summit 2024 and its achievements.

He also informed that Nepal showcased 152 ready-to-go projects and that more than 2,400 participants including 800 international participants from 50 countries took part in the Summit.

First female Everest climber of Oman Nadira Al Harathi briefed about her journey from Oman to scaling the mighty Sagarmatha on the occasion. Few snaps and attractive videos related to the expedition of the Omani Climbers to climb Mount Everest were displayed.

Another Everest climber Sulaiman Hamoud Mahfodh Al Naabi of Oman shared a breathtaking

video and photos of his expedition and those were also displayed.

The ambassador and Madam Swadesh Aryal honoured Everest climbers by offering metal plaque and Pashmina shawl.

A tourism promotional video of Nepal was also showcased for the guests to take a glimpse of the beauty of Nepal. Fathiya Al Jadzali shared how visiting Nepal transformed her life, and she urged everyone to take the opportunity to visit Nepal and love the purest form of Nature.

Highlighting her experiences of seven base camps trekking of different Himalayas of Nepal, she advised everyone to go to trekking to Nepal.

The event was followed by dinner. Bishesh Kumar Sah, Second Secretary of the Embassy conducted the programme.

Preparations for Baku climate summit begin

Thousands of government negotiators, researchers and civil society members are gathering in the German city of Bonn for the next two weeks to lay the groundwork for the COP29 climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, at the end of the year

BONN: Forking out for the rising costs of climate change has been a contentious issue for years. But as the climate continues to heat up, leading to ever more unpredictable and extreme weather events, it is an issue of growing importance. Against that backdrop, thousands of government negotiators, researchers and civil society members are gathering in the German city of Bonn for the next two weeks. There, they will lay the groundwork for the COP29 climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, at the end of the year. Among the thorniest questions on the table are: Which developed nations should pay? How much money should come from government coffers and how much from private businesses? And how can



countries be transparent about where the money is going? “The questions are so complex and there are so many countries involved, the two weeks in November aren’t enough,” said Petter Lyden, Head of International Climate Policy at the NGO Germanwatch. “A conference like the one in Bonn to prepare is crucial.”

From billions to trillions
In 2009, richer countries decided to provide US \$100 billion (€92 billion) annually by 2020 to help developing nations mitigate and cope with the effects of the climate crisis. The OECD, which has been tracking progress towards the goal, found the donors met the target for the first time in 2022 – two years later than agreed.

“While fully reaching the \$100 billion annual goal is worth celebrating, the funding needed to come to grips with the climate crisis in the years ahead goes well beyond this amount,” Melanie Robinson of the US-based World Resources Institute (WRI) said in a statement.

Indeed the signatories of the Paris Agreement pledged to come up with a new finance goal before 2025. And the pressure to up the target is growing.

According to a 2021 study by the WRI, climate finance needs to rise to a whopping US \$5 trillion per year by 2030. Especially

as mega economies continue to burn fossil fuels – and heatwaves, rainstorms, droughts and wildfires linked to rising temperatures devastate more and more places around the world.

“This is not just a cost, it’s an investment,” said Joe Thwaites who works on international climate policy for the US non-profit Natural Resources Defense Council. “Even when the investment gets into the scale of trillions of dollars, we’ll save multiple trillions of dollars in avoided damages.”

Who is going to pay?

The question is where to get these sums from. Many of the developed countries who agreed to the 2009 goal are calling on other high-polluting economies to pull their weight. Top emitters like China and Saudi Arabia have so far been exempt because the UN counts them as developing nations.

“It’s the time of taking action and we need more countries that take their fair share,” Germany’s Development Minister Svenja Schulze said at a Berlin climate conference in April. “All the ones who are big emitters, also the Gulf states, also China, we all need to do more.”

Another sticking point is how to get private investments flowing into climate action.

Ultimately, Thwaites says, this is a responsibility that falls back on

the state, be it via taxation, regulation or subsidies. Because it is governments, not the private sector, negotiating and enforcing the new finance goal.

“While it’s important to be looking at what roles every part of the global economy should play in meeting the climate challenge, the commitments need to be things that governments can be held accountable for,” he said.

Agreeing about transparency

One of the challenges in implementing the original finance goal is transparency.

Without clear reporting regulations on different types of funding, interpretations between donor countries and recipients often get muddled. In other words, money that was meant for a development project, for example, might be used to reduce emissions or to adapt to a warming world.

The uncertainty also makes it hard to follow which countries upheld their end of the bargain

“Developed countries can have a lot of room to play with how they present their climate finance statistics,” said Tom Evans, Senior Policy Advisor at the climate think tank E3G. “That’s led to a lot of distrust and skepticism about whether targets are being met.” – DW

Full story at timesofoman.com/world



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REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

Indian American student Bruhat wins spelling bee crown

MARYLAND: In a remarkable achievement, Bruhat Soma, a seventh-grade Indian-American student from Florida, has emerged victorious at the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Expressing his excitement and disbelief at winning the championship, Bruhat shared, “When I won, I was excited. I was really happy because, for the past year, I’ve been working hard. So when I just won, it was like a dream come true.”

Being of Indian-American descent, Bruhat’s victory holds special significance for many in India who were rooting for him. He told ANI, “A lot of my relatives in India, most of them are in India. They’ve sent congratulations. A lot of them watch the video. So, yeah, that’s pretty exciting to know that all of my relatives back in India were rooting for me.”

Hailing from Telangana, India, Bruhat discussed his plans to visit his homeland in the future. “I’ll probably go back in any summer, like for vacation. Or one of my relatives... They’re planning her wedding, so I might go back then. But yeah, it depends. But I’ll probably go back pretty soon,” he shared.

Bruhat’s remarkable memory



prowess extends beyond spelling, as he revealed his accomplishment of memorizing 80 per cent of the Bhagavad Gita. “The Bhagavad Gita, I did this program called Prajna, and it taught me the Vishnu Sahasranamam and the Bhagavad Gita,” he disclosed.

Despite winning a significant prize of \$50,000, Bruhat intends to donate the amount to a worthy cause. “Well, I mean, for the \$50,000, I’ve decided to donate it to a good cause, but I don’t know the cause yet. But yeah, it will be for a good cause,” he stated.

Looking ahead, Bruhat aspires to become a doctor and believes that his championship win will aid him in achieving his goal. “Yeah, I want to be a doctor when I grow up, and this championship is going to help me get into a good university to study medicine better,” he remarked.

— ANI

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‘Two-state solution is the only answer to achieve peace, stability in Palestine’

This was announced at a joint press conference between Prime Ministers of Palestine and Jordan in Amman yesterday

RAMALLAH: Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa and his Jordanian counterpart, Bisher Al-Khasawneh, on Monday affirmed that the two-state solution is the only way for stability and peace.

This came in a joint press conference between Prime Ministers Mustafa and Al-Khasawneh, in the Jordanian capital, Amman, on the sidelines of the meeting of the Joint Jordanian-Palestinian High-er Committee.

The Prime Mustafa said that what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank does not only affect the economy and commercial activity, but also affects stability and security in the region, which requires engaging in a serious political process that leads to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mustfa confirmed, “we have several obligations, whether in reconstruction, or in humanitarian issue, stressing that the gateway to all of these issues lies in ending the occupation and establishing an in-



He pointed out that most of the colonists' attacks took place in Nablus Governorate, reaching a total of 75 attacks, while 27 attacks occurred in Bethlehem Governorate and 25 attacks took place in each of Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate and Al-Khalil (Hebron).

The report indicated that the occupation authorities carried out 27 demolition operations, affecting 66 facilities, including 35 inhabited homes, five uninhabited, and 15 agricultural facilities and others, noting that most of these demolitions took place in the governorates of Al-Quds (Occupied Jerusalem), Al-Khalil and Bethlehem. — Agencies

dependent Palestinian state.”

The Prime Minister stressed the necessity of an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip in light of the great humanitarian catastrophe it is facing in order to move to the real, integrated relief and to begin arranging the situation and preparing for reconstruction after the destruction.

He stressed that 14 agreements had been signed with Jordan in several fields, through which we will be able to move to a new and advanced level in the joint relationship between the two countries. Regarding the financial situation, the Prime Minister confirmed that we received a promise of financial support in the next stage during the international partners' conferences in Brussels.

Israel commits 1,127 violations against Palestinians in May 2024

The Palestinian Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission (CWRC) said that the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) and the colonizers committed 1,127 violations against the Palestinian people, their land and their sanctities, only during the month of May 2024.

The Head of CWRC Mu'ayyad Shaa'ban explained in the commission's monthly report on violations of the occupation and measures of colonial expansion, that IOF carried out 906 attacks, while the colonists carried out 221 attacks.

The occupying entity's violations are not limited to carrying waves of terrorist attacks against Palestinians in all their places of residence, but also reinforces them with decisions and legislation that give the colonists more power to seize Palestinians' lands and impose new realities, Shaa'ban explained.



RULING PARTY CANDIDATE

Mexico elects Claudia Sheinbaum as first woman president

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's ruling party candidate Claudia Sheinbaum has won the presidential elections, according to exit polls released on Monday.

The 61-year-old former Mexico City mayor won around 58% of votes, according to a representative statistical sample released by election officials on Monday.

The result puts her comfortably ahead of leading opposition rival Xochitl Galvez, who had 29%.

What did the Morena party say about the election victory?

“I won't fail you,” Sheinbaum told supporters after preliminary results showed her achieving a landslide victory.

“I will become the first woman president of Mexico,” she added.

Mexico's president-elect pledged to run a “fiscally responsible” administration that respects the Bank of Mexico's autonomy.

The leader of the ruling Morena party, outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, congratulated her on the win.

Morena national president Mario Delgado told the Milenio TV broadcaster that the party had won a simple majority in Congress, short of the two-thirds majority it



would need to push constitutional reforms past the opposition and do away with oversight agencies it claims are wasteful.

Opposition candidates have said such changes would endanger Mexican democracy.

Currently, the Morena Party also holds 23 of Mexico's 32 governorships.

The election was overshadowed after two people were killed in violence at polling centers on Sunday amid a campaign that has already seen 38 candidates murdered, including a local candidate who was fatally shot on Saturday night. The deadly incidents have raised concerns about the threat of warring drug cartels to democracy. — dw

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL REPORT

Burkina Faso tops list of the world's most neglected crises for a second year in a row

OUAGADOUGOU: Burkina Faso topped a list of the world's most neglected crises for a second year in a row, according to a report released on Monday by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

The humanitarian organisation said there were currently around 2 million internally displaced people in the West African country, most of them cut off from aid.

Junta-ruled Burkina Faso has been grappling with an insurgency for years. In 2023, more than 8,000 people were killed in the violence.

What is the list of neglected crises?

To arrive at its 2023 ranking, the NRC looked at which countries were worst affected by three metrics: funding shortfalls, lack of media attention and faltering international diplomatic initiatives.

It analysed 39 crises in total.

All but one of the countries in the top 10 were in West or Central Africa.

Burkina Faso was in first place, followed by Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger, Honduras, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad and Sudan.

A group of people walk through a dry landscape on the border of



Burkina Faso and Ghana

‘New normal’ of neglect

“The utter neglect of displaced people has become the new normal,” said Jan Egeland, the NRC's secretary general.

“The world is neither shocked nor compelled to act by stories of desperation and record-breaking statistics,” Egeland added. “We need a global reboot of solidarity and a refocus on where needs are greatest.”

The NRC said its annual assessments pointed to a decline in international support and media coverage, partly due to the lack of media freedom in many of the countries on the list. However, the “ongoing reduction of humanitarian funding” was most stark, the report added.

In 2023, the shortfall between humanitarian appeals and money actually donated amounted to \$32 billion (€29.5 billion), the NRC said, around \$10 billion higher

than in 2022.

The lack of resources was, in turn, leading to rising hunger levels across all countries on the list, the NRC said.

“We urgently need investment for the world's most neglected crises. These investments must be made both in the form of diplomatic initiatives to get warring parties to come to the negotiating table, as well as funding commensurate with needs from donor countries,” said Egeland. — dw

CLIMATE ADVISORY BODY

Germany to miss 2030 climate change goal: Experts

BERLIN: Germany's climate advisory body has called for new policy measures to slash greenhouse gas emissions, warning that the country looks set to miss its 2030 climate change targets.

In a report published on Monday, the Council of Experts on Climate Change said Germany was unlikely to reach its goal of cutting 65% of emissions by the end of the decade compared to 1990 levels.

The panel, which is appointed by the government and has independent authority to assess the country's climate performance, said sectors such as transport and construction in particular were struggling to decarbonise.

The findings contradict statements from German Climate Protection Minister and Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck, who said in March that projections from the Federal Environment Agency

(UBA) showed emissions were falling and Germany would meet its goal.

The Council of Experts on Climate Change said the UBA's estimates were overly optimistic and that emissions from the energy, building and transport sectors had been underestimated.

What happens now?

Under the Climate Protection Act, the government will have to take further measures to meet its 2030 target if the council of experts confirms its findings in its next annual report in 2025.

But the council's chairman advised acting sooner rather than later.

“Against this background, we recommend not waiting for the target to be missed again, but rather examining the timely implementation of additional measures,” Chairman Hans-Martin Henning said in a statement.

The council also warned Germany could miss targets further down the road, including its goal to cut emissions by 88% by 2040 compared to 1990 levels and reach climate neutrality by 2045.

Reducing emissions

Reducing emissions by moving away from burning fossil fuels is seen as crucial to tackling the threat of global warming.

The release of the experts' report on Monday comes as government negotiators meet in the German city of Bonn to lay the groundwork for the COP29 climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, at the end of the year. The talks are expected to focus on the contentious issue of how countries should pay for the rising costs of climate change.

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— dw



Oman go down to Namibia in a thriller

Oman's Mehran Khan's final over spell takes the game into a Super Over; Namibia's David Wiese's heroics in the Super Over leads Namibia to win in their opening ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 match

Times News Service

BRIDGETOWN: There was drama till the end, and few would have imagined a match script swinging like a pendulum from one side to another. From the depths of despair to a near-delight for Oman, the opening Group B game between Oman and Namibia in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown will go down as one of the early thrillers of the 2024 edition.

In a match where both the teams scored a paltry 109 each to tie and force a Super Over, Namibia rode an all-round performance by their star David Wiese to scrape home but not before Oman produced one of the memorable fightbacks in the T20 World Cup.

It has been 12 years since the T20 World Cup witnessed a Super Over, the last was when West Indies beat New Zealand in Pallekele, Sri Lanka, on October 1, 2012.

The fighting spirit from Duleep Mendis-coached Oman will certainly be a big positive the team



will take along as they continue their campaign in the World Cup. Not only did they apply brakes on the Namibian batters in the chase, a sensational final over from Mehran Khan saw Oman tie with Namibia as the latter were restricted to 109/6. Needing five of the final over, Mehran conceded just four to take the match into a Super Over.

However, Namibia's star all-rounder David Wiese dug in all his experiences as a leading franchise player, to power his team to victory in the one-over eliminator and earn two points.

Wiese and skipper Gerhard Erasmus hammered Oman's main pace spearhead Bilal Khan in the Super Over for three boundaries and a maximum as they posted 21 runs. Wiese followed up his batting heroics with a tidy spell to restrict Oman to just ten runs and claimed the wicket of Naseem Khushi.

The Super Over began with a classic cover drive by Wiese off the first ball from Bilal and he capitalised on a full toss off the next for a maximum over long on to set the tone. Erasmus slammed two successive boundaries to lead his team to 21.

Wiese's bowling spell ensured that Oman couldn't repeat the

comeback they had orchestrated few minutes back on the magical spell from Mehran Khan, who defended five runs off the last over.

Earlier, Oman put up an under-par score but Aqib Ilyas, leading Oman for the first time in the T20 World Cup, marshalled his skillful bowlers successfully to put a squeeze on Namibian batters. Had it not been for the butterfingers of Oman fielders, the Men in Red could have even pulled off a heist as Namibia's top-scorer, Jan Frylinck, who scored 45, was dropped twice while Nikolaas Davin, the opening batter, also was dropped before he departed for 24.

Namibia found the chase tricky and brought it down to 18 off the last three overs with Frylinck at the crease till the last over.

Magical Mehran

Mehran, the 37-year-old experienced medium pacer, who made a comeback to the national team earlier this year after 2019, came up with an inspiring spell to bring back Oman from the jaws of defeat to the brink of victory. He started the 18th over with four byes, but then had JJ Smit caught at long-on before bowling three dots on the trot to the dangerous Wiese.

A six from Wiese in the 19th over, helped bring the equation to five off the final over.

Mehran was given the responsibility to defend. He bowled Frylinck off the very first ball and followed it up with a dot ball. On his third delivery, he trapped Zane Green leg before, who attempted an ambitious leg-side scoop. New batter Malan Kruger took a single and got Wiese on strike with four needed off two. Wiese was able to get only two off the penultimate ball and Mehran's final ball was missed by Wiese but wicket-keeper Naseem Khushi, who was standing up the stumps, fumbled as the Namibia pair scrambled for a single bye. Despite Khushi's attempt to hit the stumps with a reverse throw it missed the stumps. Had the throw hit the wickets, Oman may have recorded one of the most thrilling wins. Mehran finished with figures of 3-1-7-3.

Trumpelmann rips through

Trumpelmann's three-wicket spell in his first two overs set the tone of Namibia's dominance in the game. Kashyap Prajapati was leg before off the first ball and Ilyas returned to pavilion off the next ball. The left-arm pacer then sent back Naseem Khushi in his

second over to have Oman reel-ing at 10/3. Former captain Zeeshan Maqsood and Khalid Kail took the team past the powerplay at 36/3 with a counterattack but Maqsood departed in the next over after powerplay, as left-arm spinner Bernard Scholz trapped him lbw in the seventh over.

With the spinners Scholz and Erasmus operating in tandem, Oman batters Kail and Ayaan Khan failed to break the shackles as they managed just five runs from the two overs after the powerplay. Ayaan Khan then gave charge to Scholz, hitting him for Oman's first six of the innings before Kail started the tenth over with a four off Erasmus.

Namibia bowlers' tight spell meant Oman failed to hit any boundaries for 44 deliveries and with pressure mounting Oman lost two more wickets.

Ayaan was caught at long-off off Erasmus and he then trapped Mohammad Nadeem in front in his next over. Mehran and Shakeel Ahmed hit a couple of boundaries to take Oman past 100-mark before Wiese finished the final over with two wickets as they were bowled out in 19.4 overs.

Bilal Khan gave Oman a dream start with a breakthrough when

Michael van Lingen got an inside edge onto the stumps off an out-swinging off the second ball of the opening over. Namibia were se-date in powerplay as they crawled to 32/1.

Ilyas, along with Shakeel Ahmed, Maqsood, Kaleemullah, Ayaan and Mehran, gave nothing to Namibian batters with Ilyas beginning his spell with a maiden. Namibia could have been two down in the eighth over but for Mehran dropping a catch from Davin off his own bowling in the eighth over.

Frylinck and Erasmus tried to steady Namibia, although Oman had a chance to break the partnership, only for another caught-and-bowled chance to go down when Ilyas gave Frylinck a life in the 11th over when he was on 21. Two overs later, Frylinck was given another reprieve, on 24, when he was dropped at deep midwick-et by Kail.

With the match decided in a Super Over, Oman are left to rue the missed chances.

Namibia 109 for 6 (Frylinck 45, Mehran 3-7, Ilyas 1-17) beat Oman 109 (Kail 34, Trumpelmann 4-21, Wiese 3-28) via Super Over. Super Over Namibia 21 beat Oman 10.

GROUP B MATCH

Oman put us under pressure: Wiese

Times News Service

BRIDGETOWN: The hero of Namibia's Super Over win against Oman, David Wiese said that the opening Group B match was a "tight one."

In his post-match press conference, Wiese, who was also named the player of the match, said: "All credit to Oman to fight back and defend the under-par score. They put us under pressure, and we were lucky with the single off the last ball [that forced the tie and Super Over]."

Wiese said that "his experience of playing franchise cricket all around the world including CPL, helped him during the Super Over."

"When one plays franchise cricket, you come across such situations [Super Over]. It helped me today as I was in my zone during the eliminator. We are happy to have picked up two points despite the narrow margin," he said.

He added: "The pitch was difficult, didn't play the way we thought. But we adapted well. It was two-paced, it was a difficult wicket to get yourself in. One needed to spend a bit of time before capitalising. Lots of learnings from this game."



In his remarks to official broadcasters after the match, Namibia skipper Gerhard Erasmus said: "The pitch was tough to get momentum. We tried that with running between the wickets but felt we needed that odd boundary. Unfortunately, we couldn't do that, and we need to take accountability for that before the next game."

He added: "Batting was tough on a tough wicket like that. It showed in the Super Over that if you put pressure there will be some scoring opportunity. It is great to be part of a Super Over. Winning a close game early breaks the duck and brings you into the tournament. Experienced everything in this game."

T20 WORLD CUP

Many positives despite narrow loss against Namibia: Maqsood

Times News Service

BRIDGETOWN: Defending a below-par target of measly 109 was always going to be a tough task for Oman against Namibia in their opening Group B match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Kensington Oval ground in Bridgetown, Barbados on Sunday night (Monday morning, Oman time).

Despite the defeat in the Super Over, the mood in Oman camp was upbeat with former captain and the most experienced player in the squad, Zeeshan Maqsood, highlighting the team's fighting spirit that nearly pulled off a victory for the Men in Red.

Speaking at the post-match press conference, Maqsood, flanked by Oman team's media manager Varun Khimji, said: "It was an outstanding team effort even in the defeat. The bowlers were exceptional, and Mehran Khan was the pick of the lot. He was just awesome and brought us back into the game."

"We knew defending 109 on this wicket would be a challenge but we showed that under Aqib Ilyas' captaincy the players put in a fightback that we all can be proud of. Ilyas made some tactical bowl-



ing changes to keep the team in the running till the last over."

Maqsood said that the team "had to also pay a price for the 3-4 dropped catches."

He said: "Had we taken those, we could have won the game despite the wickets helping the bowlers. At the break time, we were not very confident of de-

fending 109 but with the pitch conditions assisting us, we fought back. We took the match into Super Over where David Wiese was outstanding with both bat and ball."

Maqsood added: "The defeat has given quite a few positives including a display of team's fighting spirit and the excellent display by the bowlers. We hope to take these lessons into our next game against Australia on Wednesday night (Thursday morning, 4.30am, Oman time)."

Oman skipper Aqib Ilyas told the official broadcasters on the ground after the match. "We would have enjoyed the thriller

more if we were on the winning side. Losing and winning is part of cricket but we possibly were maybe 15-20 runs short"

On the decision to bowl Bilal Khan in the Super Over, Ilyas said: "I think Bilal is one of the best bowlers you can have in Associate and this level. But there are days where you plan is not executed. He was clear, we were clear, but maybe the ball was wet, and he couldn't execute. Some days it is your day, some days it goes the opposite way."

Ayaan Khan, another key Oman all-rounder, said: "In such a low-scoring game, there are bound to be negatives but we are only looking at the positives. To take the game into the last over was an excellent display by our bowlers."

Ayaan, who was involved with the biggest partnership of 31 with Khalid Kail, said: "We lost early two wickets and then another in the third over. Our plans to accelerate during powerplay went haywire but we failed as there were no big partnerships. We were short by 20-30 runs."

He said: "The dressing room is still positive, and we look forward to putting up a much better display in the next game."

WEST INDIES CAPTAIN

Can be better in all three departments: Rovma Powel after WI survive PNG scare to win match

GUYANA: West Indies captain Rovma Powell hailed Papua New Guinea for their valiant effort and said that he wanted his team to improve in all three departments - bowling, batting, and fielding.

In a low-scoring affair, PNG made West Indies work hard for each run and gave the co-hosts a run for their money while defending 137.

PNG rode high on Sese Bau's fifty and influential 27*-run cameo from Kiplin Doriga. Their efforts helped the visitors put up 136/8 on the board.

With the ball, they kept their

line and length tight and hardly left any room for error while defending their total.

After the game, Powell gave PNG credit for the fight that they put up against one of the tournament favourites. But admitted that they ended up giving up 10 to 15 runs more to the opposition.

"Credit has to be given to PNG. I think their plans were simple and they played good cricket. I think (PNG's score of 136 for 8) it's a little, 10 or 15, too much. And as a bowling group that's something we need to work on. They played smartly," Powell said in the post-

match presentation.

Alzarri Joseph bagged two scalps but proved to be costly. He conceded two boundaries in the final over. Gudakesh Motie was expensive compared to his compatriot spinners.

During the chase, it took a master-class chase from Roston Chase for the West Indies to avoid slumping to an early upset in the tournament.

Chase timed his knock to perfection and paced his scoring rate according to the demands of the situation.

He had six runs in his first 12 balls, he ended up scoring 42* off

27 deliveries which was laced with four boundaries and two towering maximums.

"That was very good. Started from a bowling effort, I think he bowled pretty well. And coming at the end, when we were under pressure coming there with composure, and to come out with a winning innings was great for us. I think we can be better in all three departments," Powell concluded.

After clinching a five-wicket win and kicking off their campaign on a winning note, West Indies will face Uganda on June 9 at the Providence Stadium.



OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by August 2024 reaching \$81.85, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 14 cents. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,821.45 points, down by 0.25 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.22 per cent at 458.32 points. SMN Power Holding, up 3.41 per cent, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 6.98 per cent, was the top loser.



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Sohar Port receives first shipment of biofuel for marine tug operations

Through these operations, the Port of Sohar seeks to cut down greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent, in line with Oman's plan for zero carbon neutrality by 2050



MUSCAT: Sohar Port received the first shipment of biofuel to begin the experimental phase of using this fuel in tug and barge operations in cooperation with Svitzer Company, Wogod Company, and Hormuz Marine Company.

Through these operations, the Port of Sohar seeks to cut down greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent, in line with the Sultanate of Oman's plan for zero carbon

neutrality by 2050. Biofuel constitutes one of the renewable energy sources. It is produced locally from cooking oil and serves as an environmentally friendly alternative.

The move to use biofuel spearheads the strategy of Sohar Port and Free Zone to promote the circular economy. It supports economic development in Oman by maintaining the sustainability of its natural resources.

Emile Hoogsteden, CEO of Sohar Industrial Port, said that the use of

biofuels will significantly contribute to reducing the level of harmful emissions. He pointed out that this project is an example to be emulated in the region and beyond.

The project is an outcome of efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and its strategic partners in the Omani ports to develop strategic plans to transition to green mobility and achieve zero carbon neutrality in Oman by 2050.

The ministry is joining hands with other government units to implement 18 carbon laboratory initiatives in the field of green ports. It devised a roadmap for projects to reduce emissions, modify equipment to operate with electric power and smart systems, connect ships to sources of electric power and remove carbon from the ports sector. The strategy also envisages the establishment of a regional centre for supplying vessels with clean fuel. - **ONA**



Agreement signed to provide electronic payment services for investors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has signed an agreement with Sadat Electronic Payment Gateway on the sidelines of Comex Global Technology Show 2024, aimed at introducing electronic payment services for investors and business owners.

Through this partnership, investors and business owners will gain seamless access to Sadat Gateway's comprehensive payment platform, ensuring secure and efficient transactions within the Sultanate of Oman.

As per the agreement, self-service payment machines will be located at Masar Service Centres across various industrial cities



under Madayn's purview.

The provided services, including payment kiosks and mobile applications, will empower users with convenient and secure payment options, enhancing their overall experience with Madayn's services. The agreement was

signed by Khalid bin Sulaiman Al Salehi, Director of Industrial Incubations and Innovation at the Industrial Innovation Academy on Madayn's part, and Eng. Ibrahim bin Abdullah Al Hosni, CEO of Sadat Gateway.

Madayn aims to boost efficiency and productivity through this agreement by introducing self-service payment machines, streamlining payment processes, and reducing the need for investors and employees to leave their premises for transactions.

The agreement also supports digital transformation by promoting advanced technologies and electronic payment systems, aligning with global trends, and elevating user experience with smooth payment methods, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction. Additionally, the agreement incorporates training national cadres in the maintenance of electronic payment machines, money collection, and FinTech software, and providing maintenance opportunities for SMEs.

Oman's digital transformation accelerates under national programme

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's journey towards a digital future under its National Programme for Digital Economy is explored in a new advisory report produced by Oxford Business Group (OBG) in partnership with the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology (MTCIT).

Titled "Oman's Digital Future," the report provides an in-depth analysis of the country's efforts to enhance its digital infrastructure, advance e-government services, adopt artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies, and foster growth in the space, e-commerce and fintech sectors.

Guided by the National Programme for Digital Economy, Oman's digital transformation process is revolutionising its economy and society by enhancing productivity and fostering new growth engines.

The report highlights significant advancements in connectivity, AI innovation, cybersecurity, and the burgeoning e-commerce and fintech sectors. It delves into the eight executive programmes guiding Oman's progress towards achieving its digital economy goals and enhancing its global competitiveness in next-generation technologies and future-oriented industries.

To increase the digital economy's contribution to GDP by 10% by 2040, the National Programme for Digital Economy is driving several key initiatives. These include the expansion of 5G networks, the development of satellite communications capabilities, and the establishment of comprehensive cloud systems. Investment in AI and cybersecurity is also being prioritised to ensure Oman remains at the cutting edge of technological innovation.

Said bin Hamoud bin Said Al



Mawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and IT, emphasised the importance of the digital economy in meeting the long-term objectives of Oman Vision 2040, the country's long-term blueprint for socio-economic development.

"Government entities in Oman understand the importance of the digital economy in spurring innovation and growth. Top priorities include the expansion and enhancement of digital infrastructure, in addition to stimulating growth in the digital content industry and capitalising on Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies to enable the digital transformation of various economic sectors, data centres, cloud services and government," he said.

Commenting on the report, Dana Carmen Agaribicean, OBG's Country Director for Oman, said that the findings underscore Oman's commitment to becoming a leader in the digital economy.

"Our report explores the strategic initiatives driving Oman's significant progress in developing a robust digital economy. These efforts are positioning Oman as a competitive player in the global technology landscape and boosting productivity in government and the corporate sector," she said.

"Oman's Digital Future" is part of a series of tailored studies that OBG is producing with its partners, offering valuable insights into the economic developments taking place across various sectors and regions.

Pact inked to provide Uqudo digital identity solutions for infrastructure

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Data Park and Omantel signed a pact to provide Uqudo digital identity solutions for infrastructure, that will contribute to accelerate the digital transformation in Oman. The signing celebration was held at the Comex 2024 exhibition.

Under this agreement, Oman Data Park will provide Uqudo's digital identity solutions service in the Sultanate of Oman, to enable individuals and the company's clients in various government entities and private sector companies to securely authenticate and verify identities online.

In a statement about the deal, Eng. Maqbool Al-Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park said: "This deal with Omantel will empower us to enlarge the chances of utilising Uqudo's platform that provides



end-to-end digital identity technologies for customer enrollment, digital identity verification and biometric detection, NFC-based passport reading and verification, document cognitive analysis and scanning as well as utilising the (eKYC) technologies and Artificial intelligence (AI).

Al-Wahaibi added: In accordance with this cooperation, both parties have committed to building combined offerings to facilitate and accelerate the digital journey in Oman. This will enhance user experience and security and improve access to online services across the country, supporting Oman's efforts in the process of digital transformation.

He added that Uqudo service by Oman Data Park, and within the cooperation with Omantel, will contribute to enhance the businesses on the ODP platform, which will gain access to exhaustive identity solutions that can support their overall growth while being compliant with regulatory requirements.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

SMN Power Holding, up 3.41 per cent, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 6.98 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,821.45 points, down by 0.25 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.22 per cent at 458.32 points. SMN Power Holding, up 3.41 per cent, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 6.98 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 744 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.05 million, with more than 16.38 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 9 advanced, 18 declined, and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR174,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR170,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR4,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,961.21 points, down 0.25 per cent. Prices of DIDIC, Oman Arab Bank were up by 2.17 per

cent, 0.65 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Sharqia Investment, Global Financial Investments, Al Madina Takaful, Al Anwar Investment, Taageer Finance were down by 5.13 per cent, 1.45 per cent, 1.24 per cent, 1.14 per cent, 0.97 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,927.10 points, down 0.59 per cent. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics were up by 1.18 per cent respectively. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Oman Flour Mills, Galfar Engineering, Voltamp Energy were down by 6.98 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 0.60 per cent, 0.34 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.28 per cent before closing at 1,799.44 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Muscat Desalination, Sembcorp Salalah, Al Maha Marketing were up by 3.41 per cent, 2.67 per cent, 1.00 per cent, 0.10 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Phoenix Power, Shell Oman Marketing, OQ Gas Networks were down by 5.00 per cent, 3.95 per cent, 1.67 per cent, 1.24 per cent, 0.70 per cent respectively. - United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
Industry Index	5,973.84	5,915.81	5,927.10	5,962.30	-35.20	-0.59
Services Index	1,802.91	1,796.44	1,799.44	1,804.40	-4.96	-0.28
FINANCIAL TR IDX	9,047.82	9,024.73	9,024.73	9,047.73	-23.00	-0.25
SERVICES TR IDX	2,090.83	2,083.32	2,086.80	2,084.95	1.86	0.09
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00
MSX Shariah Index	459.97	456.88	458.32	457.33	0.99	0.22
MSX TR INDEX	6,711.43	6,694.96	6,694.96	6,706.42	-11.46	-0.17
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,981.57	7,961.21	7,961.21	7,981.50	-20.29	-0.25
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,892.39	6,825.44	6,838.46	6,879.08	-40.62	-0.59
MSX 30 INDEX	4,833.31	4,821.45	4,821.45	4,833.31	-11.86	-0.25

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
16,388,243	3,046,128	744	24,437,508,059	9	18	22	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JUNE 3

SEC. NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PB	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAV VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	100	10	1	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.100	0.001	1.000	0.101	0.098	0.101	0.100	96,411,767	
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	632	72	1	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.000	0.000	0.114	0.114	0.122	0.100	17,100,000	
OM0000000881	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	177,740	14,752	6	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.081	0.085	0.100	10,115,625	
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	2,350	423	1	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.000	0.180	0.178	0.180	0.100	39,600,000	
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	6,260	1,753	4	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.000	0.000	0.280	0.000	0.280	0.100	34,971,429	
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	194,804	208,913	60	1.065	1.065	1.065	1.062	0.000	0.000	1.062	1.062	1.065	0.100	796,500,000	
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	1,775	692	2	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.000	0.000	0.390	0.368	0.390	0.100	92,199,900	
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	4,266	1,288	2	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.000	0.000	0.302	0.299	0.302	0.100	196,585,157	
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	272,709	80,615	45	0.297	0.298	0.295	0.295	0.000	0.000	0.295	0.288	0.303	0.100	227,200,000	
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	5,320	2,044	5	0.385	0.385	0.384	0.384	0.000	-0.260	0.384	0.385	0.384	0.100	256,652,324	
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	3,484,350	888,547	88	0.258	0.258	0.255	0.255	-0.001	-0.391	0.255	0.254	0.255	0.100	1,914,131,251	
OM0000009972	OQ GAS NETWORKS	927,494	131,546	169	0.142	0.143	0.141	0.142	0.143	-0.001	-0.699	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.100	614,948,597
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	4,662,479	652,593	48	0.140	0.140	0.139	0.139	0.140	-0.001	-0.714	0.139	0.139	0.140	0.100	775,237,232
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,100	880	2	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.810	-0.010	-1.235	0.800	0.750	0.800	0.100	76,000,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	109,959	8,797	5	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.235	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.100	14,000,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	35,000	2,385	3	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.068	0.069	-0.001	-1.449	0.068	0.064	0.071	0.100	13,600,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	195,256	14,036	19	0.074	0.074	0.072	0.073	0.076	-0.003	-3.947	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.100	49,266,782
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	486,835	36,577	41	0.076	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.080	-0.004	-5.000	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.100	54,294,882
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	54,085	4,015	10	0.076	0.076	0.074	0.074	0.078	-0.004	-5.128	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.100	6,660,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	8,600	3,409	3	0.388	0.400	0.388	0.400	0.430	-0.030	-6.977	0.400	0.420	0.400	0.100	48,000,000
Total	20	10,629,114	2,051,347	515												
Parallel Market																
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	20,000	6,690	1	0.334	0.334	0.334	0.334	0.333	0.011	3.406	0.334	0.325	0.333	0.100	96,678,290
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	25,000	1,925	2	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.075	0.002	2.667	0.077	0.074	0.078	0.100	11,977,381
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	400	48	1	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.117	0.003	2.564	0.120	0.119	0.120	0.100	60,972,426
OM0000001509	DHOFAIR INTERNATIONAL DEV & INV HO.	12,343	2,901	2	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.230	0.005	2.174	0.235	0.210	0.235	0.100	96,172,884
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	29,768	5,110	15	0.170	0.173	0.170	0.172	0.170	0.002	1.176	0.172	0.170	0.172	0.100	9,460,000
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	78,428	11,113	12	0.155	0.156	0.154	0.156	0.155	0.001	0.645	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.100	269,427,960
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	1,997	2,039	3	1.021	1.021	1.021	1.021	1.020	0.001	0.098	1.021	1.021	1.021	0.100	70,449,000
OM0000001095	DHOFAIR INSURANCE	113,500	22,927	6	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.000	0.000	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.100	22,776,021
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	5,000	395	1	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.079	0.077	0.081	0.100	6,715,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	45,072	1,945	3	0.046	0.046	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.042	0.045	0.100	2,625,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	116,550	5,478	8	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.043	0.047	0.100	14,435,877
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	180,570	10,751	11	0.060	0.060	0.057	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.058	0.060	0.100	5,103,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	2,000	188	1	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.090	0.094	0.100	1,541,046
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	4,000	3,200	1	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.800	0.800	0.880	0.100	49,020,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	111,153	12,190	16	0.109	0.110	0.109	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.110	0.113	0.100	246,064,834
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	650	49	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.060	0.075	0.100	36,812,728
OM0000003961	VOLTAMP ENERGY	785,226	218,364	28	0.289	0.289	0.289	0.289	0.294	-0.005	-1.730	0.290	0.289	0.290	0.100	23,604,799
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	3,684,109	619,176	70	0.170	0.170	0.166	0.167	0.168	-0.001	-0.595	0.167	0.162	0.167	0.100	33,898,736
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	550	56	1	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.103	-0.001	-0.971	0.102	0.102	0.108	0.100	27,651,231
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	330,552	28,818	18	0.088	0.088	0.087	0.087	0.088	-0.001	-1.136	0.087	0.086	0.089	0.100	17,922,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	198,658	11,721	11	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.060	-0.001	-1.667	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.100	86,293,486
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	3,300	1,518	4	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.470	-0.010	-2.128	0.460	0.460	0.470	0.100	72,450,000
Total	22	5,716,126	967,159	216												

CBO

Treasury bills worth OMR19.06 million issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR19.06 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR98.726 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.725 per OMR100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.10856 per cent and 5.17447 per cent, respectively.



LIFESTYLE

RESEARCHERS

FIND HOW

BETTER SLEEP

IS LINKED TO

LOWER LEVELS OF

LONELINESS

Adults should sleep seven hours per night on a regular basis to promote optimal health, productivity and daytime alertness

A recent study discovered that greater sleep health was linked to lower levels of loneliness, with the association being stronger among younger persons.

The findings of the study were presented at the SLEEP 2024 annual meeting.

The findings show that higher sleep health is related with significantly lower total loneliness, emotional loneliness, and social loneliness. Better sleep health was associated with lower total and emotional loneliness across all ages, however this association was higher in younger persons. However, age did not influence the relationship between sleep health and social loneliness.

"Loneliness is an urgent public health crisis, and there is a pressing need for providers to better understand and treat it," said lead author and principal investigator Joseph Dzierzewski, who has a doctorate in clinical psychology and is vice president of research at the National Sleep Foundation in Washington, D.C.

"Our results highlight the important role that sleep plays in understanding loneliness across the adult lifespan. Perhaps efforts to improve sleep health could have a beneficial effect on loneliness, especially for young people."

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, sleep is essential to health. The AASM and the Sleep Research Society recommend that adults should sleep seven hours per night on a regular basis to promote optimal health, productivity and daytime alertness.

The study involved 2,297 adults with a mean age of 44 years; 51 percent were male. Participants completed an online sleep health questionnaire and loneliness scale. The researchers analyzed the results using correlation and linear regression analyses along with moderation analyses.

In 2023 an advisory from the US surgeon general warned about a public health crisis of loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection. It noted that even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately half of US adults reported experiencing measurable levels of loneliness.

According to the authors, efforts and programs that aim to reduce loneliness should include an emphasis on promoting sleep health, especially in younger adults.

"Why younger adults might experience more sleep-related benefits to loneliness than older adults is unknown and intriguing -- certainly worth further investigation," Dzierzewski said. -ANI

SPORTS

French Open: Dimitrov and Sinner reach quarterfinals

The 33-year-old has now advanced to the final eight in each of the four Grand Slam competitions

PARIS : Grigor Dimitrov advanced to a Grand Slam milestone at the French Open 2024 as the Bulgarian registered a 7-6(5), 6-4, 7-6(3) victory against Hubert Hurkacz to reach his maiden quarter-final at the clay-court major.

The 33-year-old has now advanced to the final eight in each of the four Grand Slam competitions.

Despite a severe fall after diving for a ball deep into the third set, which required treatment for his hand, Dimitrov won in two hours and 51 minutes on Court Suzanne-Lenglen. It was a continuation of his dominance over his close friend Hurkacz in the Lexus ATP Head2Head series. He has won all six tour-level matches against the Pole.

Dimitrov expressed his desire to reach the quarterfinals of the French Open after failing to do so previously.

"It's very hard to play against such a good friend. I've known him



for quite a few years. We practice a lot and we've had quite a few moments together. I knew it was going to be a difficult match, but I knew also that I had to fight a lot," Dimitrov said in his on-court interview as quoted by ATP.

"I always wanted to get to that second week. Roland Garros was the only Slam where I felt that I could not get that extra step. But today, 15 years later, I made it, so I'm very happy with that," he added.

The 10th seed Dimitrov saved all five break points he faced in the first set of the fourth-round match in the French city, including three at 5-5, 0/40. After winning the

first-set tie-break, the Bulgarian was a more consistent player over the next two sets and appeared to be cruising to victory when he led 3-1 in the third.

Hurkacz, who was also aiming for his maiden quarter-final appearance at Roland Garros, dug deep to force a tie-break but was unable to maintain his momentum. Dimitrov won the opening four points of the tie-break and went on to win despite Hurkacz's 20 aces.

"I think especially when you play on a clay court here, you have to paint [a picture with your tennis]. You need to have finesse and also be able to read the court a lit-



tle bit. Clay courts are always very tricky, you never know what kind of conditions you are going to get," Dimitrov said when asked about his aesthetically pleasing style.

"I like my chances, I like when I can use my body a lot and chase balls around the court. Use my slice, use my variety. At the same time, when the ball is there to be hit, I try to make the most out of it," he added.

The No 10 in the ATP Rankings will square off against second seed Jannik Sinner in the quarter-finals.

World No 2 Jannik Sinner survived an early onslaught from home favourite Corentin Moutet

to advance to the quarterfinals with a 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 victory Sunday at Roland Garros.

For one stunning opening set, the No 79-ranked Moutet had the Court Philippe-Chatrier crowd in the palm of his hand, dazzling both the fans and Sinner with his distinctive variety-filled lefty style.

Moutet, who missed two chances to seal a rare bagel against the No 2 after trailing 5-0, 40/15, led by a set and a break at 6-2, 1-0, when Sinner's comeback began.

Fought valiantly

The 22-year-old Sinner proved too steady from the baseline for Moutet, who fought valiantly

throughout but was unable to counter his opponent's power in the second, third, and fourth sets.

Sinner seemed unfazed by the intense atmosphere created by the home supporters, as he won in two hours and 41 minutes to set up a quarter-final against Grigor Dimitrov.

"It was very tough for me. I think he played very, very well in the first set. I had some chances, but he played much better than me, so I had to adjust a little bit. He had an amazing run here at Roland Garros. The atmosphere as always was amazing," Sinner said in his on-court interview as quoted by ATP.

"He plays differently to most of my opponents, so it was tough for me. He is also a lefty. You don't play so many times against left-handers, so I'm happy to be in the next round," he added.

The Italian's comeback victory was built on an improvement in his serve as his first Lexus ATP Head2Head match with Moutet progressed.

In the first set, he won only 53 per cent (9/17) of the points behind his first serve, but by the end of the match, he had increased that figure to 73 per cent (45/62).

Sinner's 32nd tour-level win of the year kept the pressure on Novak Djokovic in the race for World No 1 at Roland Garros.

Djokovic must reach at least the championship match in Paris to have a chance of maintaining his title after the clay-court major. -ANI

25-MAN LIST

Mbappé not in France squad for Paris Olympics

PARIS: Kylian Mbappé was left out of France's provisional squad for the Paris Olympics on Monday, though coach Thierry Henry said the list "can evolve."

The World Cup winner, who is widely expected to join Real Madrid after leaving Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) as a free agent, had stated his desire to play at the Games in his home nation but was not included in Henry's initial 25-man list.

PSG's Warren Zaire-Emery and Bradley Barcola were included, as well as veteran striker Alexandre Lacazette.

Unlike most international tournaments like the World Cup, European Championship and Copa America, clubs are not required to let their players compete at men's Olympic tournaments.

Euros for France

With Mbappé set to play at the Euros for France, his involvement at the Paris Games would have meant he was unlikely to get a break during the offseason.

Gary Lineker concluded, "I'll be absolutely shocked if we don't win at least one of them with this crop of players." -ANI

T20 WORLD CUP

Hasaranga-led Sri Lanka boosted by Mathews' presence, aims to start campaign on high note

NEW DELHI: The young and exciting Sri Lankan side will be aiming to start their ICC T20 World Cup campaign against South Africa in New York on Monday.

Sri Lanka is a part of Group D along with South Africa, Netherlands, Bangladesh and Nepal. In the previous T20 WC in Australia back in 2022, Sri Lanka could not make it past the group stage, finishing at the fourth spot in group one with two wins and three losses.

Ahead of the Sri Lanka-South Africa clash, let us look at the form, talking points and key players of the Lankan Lions:

-Sri Lanka tour of India (January 2023):

India won this three-match T20I series by 2-1 to kickstart the home season with a bang. The highlight of this series was once again, a knock of 112* in 51 balls by Suryakumar in the third T20I and some fine all-round performances by Axar Patel. Sri Lanka lost the first T20I by just two runs and then captain's Dasun Shanaka's all-round (56* and 2/4) helped Lanka defend a target of 207 in the second game. However, SL lost the decider clash by 91 runs while chasing 229 runs.

-Sri Lanka tour of New Zealand (April 2023)

Sri Lanka lost this well-fought series by 2-1. The 2022 Asia Cup champions started off by win-



ning in a Super Over with Charith Asalanka scoring the winning runs. However, in the next two matches, Kiwis proved to be a better side while chasing, first chasing 142 runs with nine wickets in hand and then getting to the winning score of 183 runs in the final T20I with four wickets and one ball left.

-Zimbabwe tour of Sri Lanka (January 2024)

A return to home proved to be game-changing for Sri Lanka, who were struggling for momentum. They won this series by 2-1, starting off with a seven wicket win while chasing 144 runs in the first T20I. However, Zimbabwe

made a solid comeback by chasing 174 runs in the second T20I, with Craig Ervine scoring 70 in 54 balls. In the final T20I, Zimbabwe was bundled out for just 82 runs, which Lankans chased down easily.

-Afghanistan tour of Sri Lanka (February 2024)

Sri Lanka continued their winning run at home with a 2-1 series win against Afghanistan. Sri Lanka won a nail-biting first T20I by four runs while defending 161 runs against a spirited Afghanistan side, despite Ibrahim Zadran's 67*. Having escaped a loss by a whisker, Sri Lanka came back with a much better performance in the second

game, restricting Afghanistan to 115 runs while defending 183 runs. Afghanistan got a consolation series win in the final T20I, preventing Sri Lanka from chasing down 210 runs and leaving them three runs short. Rahmanullah Gurbaz scored a brilliant 70 in 43 balls in this game.

-Bangladesh tour of Sri Lanka (March 2024)

Sri Lanka concluded their T20 WC preparations with a fine 2-1 win over Bangladesh, who have emerged as strong rivals to the Lankan Lions recently. Sri Lanka in the first T20I, prevented Bangladesh from chasing down 207 runs, with Charith Asalanka's knock of 44* in 21 balls, with six sixes being the difference between the teams. In the second T20I, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto scored 53* to help Bangladesh chase down 166, setting up a decider. In the final T20I, Bangladesh fell 28 runs short of 175-run target by Sri Lanka, skittled out for 146 runs. Sri Lanka won the series.

Talking points for Sri Lanka ahead of the tournament:

-Explosive starts by Kusal Mendis being a huge bonus for Sri Lanka.

-Fine form of their top spinners, Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana.

-X-Factor presented by young pacer Matheesha Pathirana, with

his slingy, Malinga-like action.

-The return of an experienced, in-form Angelo Mathews to the squad.

-Inconsistent and underwhelming batting returns of Dhananjaya de Silva and Pathum Nissanka since the last T20 WC, scoring just 166 and 216 runs in 10 and 12 innings respectively. Their averages and strike rates (21.60 and 128.57 for Nissanka) and (18.44 and 128.68) does not inspire a lot of confidence.

-Dilshan Madhushanka, who had a breakthrough CWC 2023, has been underwhelming in T20Is since 2023. He has taken eight wickets in eight games at an average of 34.75, economy rate of 10.69 and a strike rate of 19.50. Best figures are 2/45

*Top performers for Sri Lanka since the last T20 WC in 2022:

-Kusal Mendis: 495 runs in 15 matches and innings, at an average of 33.00 and a strike rate of 150.91, with best score of 86.

-Angelo Matthews: 206 runs in nine matches and seven innings at an average of 51.50, strike rate of 137.33, with one fifty. Best score of 66*. 7 wickets at an average of 21.85 and an economy rate of 8.34, with best figures of 2/9.

-Charith Asalanka: 329 runs in 13 matches at an average of 27.41 and a strike rate of 143.04, with two fifties. Best score of 69. -ANI

LEFT-ARM SPINNER

Green is getting better in all formats, says Ashton Agar

BRIDGETOWN [BARBADOS]: Australia left-arm spinner Ashton Agar feels that "maturing" all-rounder Cameron Green is stronger at shifting between the three formats and this bodes well for the Aussie's T20 World Cup tilt in the Caribbean.

Australia will open their T20 World Cup campaign against Oman in Barbados on June 5, before Group B fixtures against England, Namibia and Scotland.

Agar said Green is constantly developing and believes the all-rounder is also improving his transitional skills across formats.

Green is another three-dimensional Australian player. He bowls medium pace and has a good slower one, which can be effective in slow tracks. Adding to that, he has improved his power-hitting in



T20s, which makes him a valuable asset for the team.

Green recently played in the Indian Premier League 2024 for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). He started with an unbeaten 37 and 2 for 12 against Sunrisers Hyderabad, the tall all-rounder who rediscovered his

stride and became one of RCB's success stories. Along the way, he pressed his case for a middle-order spot in Australia's T20 World Cup squad. He'll compete with Mitchell Marsh and Marcus Stoinis for a berth in the playing XI in the T20 tournament.

-ANI

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Kroos gives cheeky reply to Bellingham after Real Madrid's record 15th UCL title

NEW DELHI : England star mid-fielder Jude Bellingham got a cheeky reply from his Real Madrid compatriot Toni Kroos after they helped the club extend their record UEFA Champions League title record.

Goals from Vinicius Junior and Daniel Carvajal helped Real Madrid beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to win a record 15th UEFA Champions League (UCL) title at the iconic Wembley Stadium on Sunday.

A post-match banter between Kroos and Bellingham took place after, Bellingham took to Instagram and shared glimpses of celebrating with the UCL title and captioned it, "Good morning Madridistas. See you later."

Kroos commented on Bellingham's celebratory post and replied, "Not that bad for a first



season..."

Along with Kroos, UCL final goalscorer, Vinicius Junior replied "New LEGEND," while goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois wrote, "What a player". Bellingham's England teammate Harry Magui-

re posted three applause emojis to congratulate the 20-year-old on his success.

The end of the UCL clash marked the end of club career for Kroos. Before the final, the German midfielder announced his retirement from football after the end of the Euro 2024.

The UCL final against Borussia Dortmund marked the final club game for the 34-year-old with Real Madrid.

Coming to the game, the first half of the final match stayed goal-less as both sides played a tactical game. However, in the second half, the Los Blancos showed why they came into the match as the favourites to win the prestigious title.

Despite enjoying dominance, Dortmund failed to break the stalemate as the first half ended with a 0-0 scoreline. -ANI



Mandarin Oriental, Muscat brings exceptional hospitality to Oman

Mandarin Oriental's legendary service, combined with distinctive dining concepts, a world-class spa and authentic Omani-inspired experiences, will ensure that the much-anticipated resort will bring a new level of exceptional hospitality to the country



HONG KONG: Mandarin Oriental, Muscat has opened its doors today, marking the group's debut in the Sultanate of Oman. The distinctive architectural design of this urban resort and branded residences takes full advantage of the views over the Arabian sea, while its location in the heart of the city in Shatti Al-Qurum, a prestigious neighbourhood, is perfectly positioned to explore Muscat's intriguing ancient architectural treasures and vibrant culture. Enhancing its heartfelt charm is the breathtaking backdrop of the majestic Hajar Mountains. Mandarin Oriental's legendary service, combined with distinctive dining concepts, a world-class spa and authentic Omani-inspired experiences, will ensure that the much-anticipated resort will bring a new level of exceptional hospitality to the country. To mark the occasion, the hotel's official opening ceremony was graced by esteemed guests including His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, the Minister

of Culture, Sports and Youth, and His Highness Sayyid Asaad bin Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Co-operation Affairs and the personal representative of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman. Their Highnesses were welcomed by Nicolas Dubort, General Manager of Mandarin Oriental, Muscat, who commented: "It is our great pleasure to introduce this beachfront gem to the local community and the world, as we commit to delivering exquisite experiences that honour Omani hospitality, mirror its rich culture and set the benchmark for its luxury offerings. This charming resort truly captures Muscat at heart". Envisioned by renowned French interior designer Xavier Carton, the hotel's architecture draws inspiration from the richness and diversity of Oman's culture, inviting guests to embark on a journey of discovery. Entering the hotel lobby through grand Omani wooden doors, guests experience a seamless blend of influences from various regions and civilizations, honouring the culture and craftsmanship of Oman. At the heart of the lobby, three fountains stand as a tribute to the

country's rich legacy, reflecting the cultural tapestry woven from the threads of the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The hotel's stunning chandelier beams with colourful crystal lanterns, illuminates the lobby from all angles. Finally, the captivating sea views, framed by exotic coconut and palm trees, evoke a sense of wonder for guests to further explore the allure and mystique of Muscat. The natural beauty of Oman inspires the design of the 103 guestrooms and 47 suites, featuring locally sourced natural materials including Desert Rose marble and Ashwood. Each handcrafted piece invites travellers to uncover the country's treasures. The bed backboard draws inspiration from the "Kuma", the traditional Omani hat, while authentic motifs and fabrics pay homage to traditional handwoven patterns. Brass lanterns are inspired by the iconic "Khanjar", the Omani daggers showcasing the region's artisanal heritage. With a collection of 156 private homes, The Residences at Mandarin Oriental offer an unparalleled waterfront lifestyle, featuring exceptional comfort and service. The five distinct restaurants

and lounge will provide a wide range of international cuisines with Mandarin Oriental's renowned culinary excellence under the leadership of Executive Chef Raymond Rjaily who joins from Mandarin Oriental, Jakarta. The signature restaurant, Essenza, invites you to a journey through Italy's coastal regions, featuring traditional recipes passed down through generations. The Mandarin Cake Shop specialises in indulgent pastries, cakes and offers a bakery corner with an array of viennoiseries, breads and savouries, paired with a selection of specialty teas and coffees. Executive Pastry Chef Stephane Tranchet leads this team, having worked at legendary Michelin-starred institutions around the globe, and more recently at Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo, where his signature "cloud cake" established his status as a pastry maestro. Offering a holistic wellness experience, The Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Muscat blends Mandarin Oriental's award-winning Asian inspired treatments with local healing traditions. This serene urban oasis enjoys natural daylight with stunning sea views.

Tailormade wellness journeys, guided by experts, include exclusive body massage and skincare treatments, alongside bespoke wellness therapies. The spa features a traditional Hammam, combining Moroccan healing techniques with modern therapies, embracing a personalised approach to relaxation. Exquisite mosaics adorn the interiors, and fragrant oils scent the air, enhancing the soothing experience. Featuring the latest in gym technology, the Fitness and Wellness Centre comprises state-of-the-art equipment and facilities designed for health enthusiasts. Additionally, a relaxing outdoor pool provides the perfect place for refreshing laps and unwinding with an array of tasteful light bites and drinks from the pool bar. The little ones can enjoy the kids' pool and play area nearby as well as a kids' club located in the promenade. For the most sophisticated events and weddings, the hotel offers 2,000 square metres of indoor venues and an additional 335 square metres of outdoor space. All venues are bathed in natural daylight, including a one-of-a-kind 800-square-metre ballroom with

spectacular sea views, an adjoining Bridal Room and three dedicated banqueting and meeting spaces. To celebrate the opening, the resort has introduced a Fans of Muscat package. This exclusive offer includes luxurious accommodation, a private guided tour of the Royal Opera House and credit for culinary and wellness experiences. Mandarin Oriental is the award-winning owner and operator of some of the world's most luxurious hotels, resorts and residences. Recognised for creating exceptional properties, each destination reflects the Group's oriental heritage, local culture and unique design. The Group's mission is to completely delight and inspire guests through delivering passionate service. Having grown from its Asian roots over 60 years ago into a global brand, the Group now operates 40 hotels, 12 residences and 23 exclusive homes in 26 countries and territories with many more projects under development. Mandarin Oriental continues to drive its reputation as an innovative leader in luxury hospitality, delivering sustainable growth over the long term.

ROUND-UP

Unlock exclusive benefits with Mopar’s special offer campaign



During this offer period, customers can enjoy discounts ranging from 25% to 50% on their 10,000-kilometre service, excluding VAT

MUSCAT: MHD Automobiles, the official distributors of the iconic Stellantis brands — Jeep, Dodge, Ram, and Alfa Romeo — and the after-sales brand Mopar, are excited to announce a special offer for Jeep, Dodge, and Ram vehicle owners. During this offer period, customers can enjoy discounts ranging from 25% to 50% on their 10,000-kilometre service, excluding VAT. This offer is applicable to Jeep,

Dodge, and Ram vehicles from the 2019 model year or older, with open recalls, and is limited to the first 500 unique VINs. Please note that this offer is not applicable to Diesel, 1.3 Turbo, SRT, Hellcat, and 392 engines. Eligible customers can avail themselves of the 10,000-kilometer service at the special rate of OMR 35 (excluding VAT). To check if their vehicles have an open recall, customers can call

the CRM at 80022008. If eligible, they can then make an appointment for the service. This special campaign underscores Mopar's commitment to customer satisfaction and vehicle maintenance, encouraging customers to check for open recalls and schedule their appointments promptly to take advantage of these significant savings. Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles, expressed his enthusiasm for the campaign, stating, "At MHD Automobiles, we are dedicated to providing our customers with the best service possible. This campaign is an excellent opportunity for our valued customers to benefit from substantial discounts while ensuring their vehicles are serviced and maintained to the highest standards." This offer is valid until June 17.

HOTELIER MIDDLE EAST

Sheraton Hotel’s Samir Messaoudi awarded Oman’s GM of the year

MUSCAT: Sheraton Oman Hotel announced its exceptional achievements at the first-ever GM Awards organised by Hotelier Middle East. The hotel has been honoured with two distinguished awards, celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of its General Manager, Samir Messaoudi. Messaoudi was selected as General Manager of the Year - Oman, a recognition that follows his three consecutive features on Hotelier Middle's East GM Power List from 2021 to 2023. Samir Messaoudi's exemplary leadership and strategic vision have significantly elevated the positioning of Sheraton Oman Hotel. His direction has not only driven excellent financial performance but also fostered a culture of innovation and excellence within his team. Under his guidance, the hotel has achieved notable milestones, including leading the market in 2023 by achieving the highest revenue per available room (RevPAR) compared to its competitors, with exceptional growth over the previous year. The award also highlights the hotel's significant increase in total sales for 2023 and improved



overall profitability, demonstrating Messaoudi's dedication to operational excellence and financial success. His strategic initiatives have expanded the hotel's outside catering services which has facilitated the successful conversion of numerous diplomatic events and functions, further boosting the hotel's revenue streams. Beyond his operational endeavors, Samir Messaoudi has been deeply engaged in industry initiatives, currently serving as the co-

chair of the Oman Tourism Committee which aims to boost the tourism development holistically, considering not only the immediate needs of travellers but also the long-term economic impact on the destination. His involvement in promoting economic growth and collaboration, includes his role as the current sub-committee chair of Government Affairs and Culture under the Oman Marriott Business Council, which highlights his broader impact on the industry and community. Additionally, Justin Jacob, the property's Director of Revenue has been recognized as the Future Leader in the Region. This distinction is a testament to the strong leadership and guidance provided by Messaoudi, who has been instrumental in nurturing talent and driving professional growth within his team. "These awards are a reflection of our commitment to delivering exceptional service and achieving excellence in all aspects of our operations," said Samir Messaoudi. "I am incredibly proud of our team's hard work and dedication, which have made these accomplishments possible."

HIGH-PERFORMANCE



Ranger Raptor: Ford’s ultimate adventure and thrill truck

MUSCAT: Explore Ford's Ranger Raptors rugged off-road and towing prowess. Understanding the high-performance vehicle's dynamics is crucial before you make the final call. The mighty Ford Ranger Raptor ensues modern technologies and safety measures that elevate adventures to a new level. The Ranger Raptor is a massive cruiser designed for exhilarating expeditions on rugged mountain terrains and unpredictable muddy surfaces. Let's delve deep into what the Ford Ranger Raptor has to offer; Developed by Ford Performance, the Ranger Raptor is equipped with a twin-turbo 3.0-litre EcoBoost V6 engine, delivering 392 HP Power and 583 NM Torque. Ford Performance ensured that the engine delivers prompt action to throttle inputs and embedded a race-bred anti-lag system similar to the first one seen on the Ford GT road car and Focus ST. It promises rapid on-demand boost delivery when revving up for the race. Moreover, the new anti-lag system can be accessed through the Baja mode on the Raptor. It keeps the turbochargers spinning for up to three seconds after the driver backs off the throttle, allowing faster acceleration resumption. The need to use this mode arises in extreme off-roading conditions when the car's suspension requires an instant boost. In addition, each selectable mode is programmed with an individual turbocharging boost profile for swift action and optimised performance across various terrains. In addition, the Raptor is fitted with the next-generation FOX® 2.5-inch Live Valve internal bypass shock absorbers equipped with position-sensitive damping capability. These shock absorbers

are the most advanced ever fitted to Ranger Raptor and are loaded with Teflon™ infused oil, which decreases friction by about 50% compared to its predecessors. For the first time, Ranger Raptor gets an advanced full-time four-wheel drive system with an all new electronically controlled on-demand two-speed transfer case, combined with front and rear locking differentials – a valuable feature for hard-core off-road enthusiasts. The dominant exterior flaunts flared wheel arches and C-clamp headlights that emphasise the pick up's width. The Ford emblem on the grille and the tough separate bumper add more weight to its outlook. The matrix LED headlights with LED daytime running lights push Ranger Raptor's lighting performance. Its predictive curve lights, glare-free high beam and auto dynamic levelling delivers better visibility for drivers and other road users. The 17-inch alloy wheels create an enormous impact in increasing its all-terrain performance echoing its herculean feel. Functional vents, aero features and tough, grip cast-aluminium side steps on the side and the rear help in easy boarding. The cabin features all-new, jet fighter-inspired sports seats lined with aesthetic lighting to boost the mood. Adding to the vehicle's persona, the latest digital technologies have been integrated into the cabin. It features a 12.4 inch all-digital cluster and 12-inch centre touchscreen boasting Ford's new-generation SYNC 4A® connectivity and entertainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto™ compatibility. Flare up music on the built-in 8-speaker B&O® sound system 6 on your next adventure.

SIGNIFICANT

Hankook partners with Alpha Motors in Oman

MUSCAT: Alpha Motors unveiled the latest range of Hankook Tires in Oman, heralding a significant partnership poised to redefine driving experiences across the Sultanate of Oman. With over 80 years of illustrious history, Hankook is globally recognised for crafting some of the finest off-road and on-road tires, underpinned by its iconic 'Driving Emotion' ethos. This collaboration with Alpha Motors introduces a groundbreaking selection of safe, reliable, and high-value tires tailored for car owners in Oman. The official launch ceremony, held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Muscat, under the auspices of Kiejoo KIM, Korean Ambassador to Oman, witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries from Hankook Tires, including Ham Jeong Seung (Managing Director, Hankook Middle East), Kurian Dennis (Senior Sales Manager, Hankook Middle East) and Senior Officials from Alpha Motors.



Hankook was founded in 1941 in Seoul, South Korea. Hankook Tire has emerged as a global leader in radial tire manufacturing, annually producing over 97 million tires for passenger cars, commercial vehicles, and motorsports. With an unwavering commitment to research and development, Hankook maintains five R&D centers and eight large-scale production facilities worldwide. In 2023, the company achieved global sales exceeding 6.3 billion EUR across 160 countries. Renowned car manufacturers worldwide entrust Hankook Tires for their original equipment, a tes-

tament to the brand's relentless pursuit of innovation. Hankook Tire pioneers driving innovation through cutting-edge technology, transcending traditional tire boundaries to delve into high-end mobility solutions. From delivering unparalleled driving experiences to championing sustainable practices for the benefit of the planet, Hankook's journey towards innovation continues to shape the future. Hankook Tires epitomize superior driving experiences, intricately woven with innovation. The future of safe and convenient mobility hinges on innovative tire solutions, driving Hankook's steadfast dedication to research tailored for future mobility needs. A senior spokesperson at Alpha Motors expressed enthusiasm about the partnership with Hankook Tire, affirming their joint commitment to shaping the future of mobility and enhancing driving experiences for all in Oman.





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