

'Enough is enough'

This must stop now: 18 UN agency chiefs call for Gaza ceasefire

New York, United States - The heads of all major UN agencies issued a rare joint statement on Sunday expressing outrage at the civilian death toll in Gaza, calling for an 'immediate humanitarian ceasefire' in the war between Israel and Hamas.

'For almost a month, the world has been watching the unfolding situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory in shock and horror at the spiralling number of lives lost and torn apart,' the UN chiefs said.

The heads of 18 organisations including UNICEF, the World Food Program and the World Health Organization, described the horrific toll on both sides since the October 7 Hamas cross-border attack from Gaza into Israel.

Israel has retaliated with relentless air and artillery strikes that have killed over 10,000 people, mostly civilians,



Women with an injured toddler outside Shuhada al Aqsa Hospital following Israeli bombardment of Deir Balah in Gaza Strip on Monday

says the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza. While killings of civilians in Gaza is an outrage, cutting off food, water, medicine, electricity and fuel supplies to

2.2mn Palestinians is horrific.

In Gaza, the UN statement said, 'an entire population is besieged and under attack, denied access to the essentials

for survival, bombed in their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship. This is unacceptable'.

It called on Hamas to release the

240 - or more - hostages it took in its attack and urged both sides to respect their obligations under international law as the war rages on.

The UN leaders said more food, water, medicine and fuel must be allowed into Gaza to help its besieged population as Israel attacks with the stated goal of destroying Hamas.

'We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It's been 30 days. Enough is enough. This must stop now,' the statement said.

More than 100 attacks against healthcare facilities have been reported. Scores of aid workers have been killed since October 7, including 88 UNRWA personnel - the highest number of UN fatalities ever recorded in a single conflict.

'We renew our plea for the parties to respect all their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. We renew our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians held hostage.' Civilians and the infrastructure they rely on - including hospitals, shelters and schools - must be protected, it concluded.

See also [Page 07](#)

Death toll: 10,000 and counting...

Gaza - The health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip said on Monday the death toll from Israeli bombardment of the Palestinian territory had surpassed 10,000, nearly one month after the start of the war.

The toll of 10,022 deaths was announced at a press conference in Gaza by health ministry spokesman Ashraf al Qidreh.

He said at least 292 Palestinians were killed overnight from Sunday into Monday in intense bombardments by Israeli army, which he accused of "perpetrating 19 massacres in the last hours".

According to the health ministry, the majority of those killed in Gaza since the start of the war have been civilians, including more than 4,000 children.

The war in Gaza was triggered by the October 7 Hamas attacks which killed 1,400 in southern Israel, mostly civilians according to Israeli officials.

Revenues of star hotels up 26% to RO153mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Revenues of 3- to 5-star hotels in the sultanate exceeded RO153mn at the end of September 2023, up 26.4% over the corresponding period of 2022, according to statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

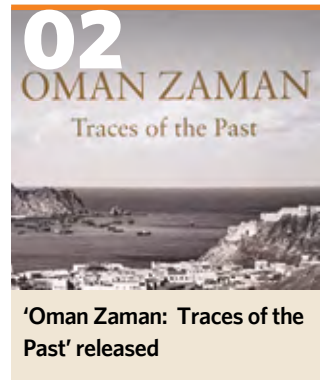
The total number of hotel guests rose 27.3% to 1.43mn by the end of the third quarter, compared to 1.13mn for the corresponding period of 2022.

Hotel occupancy rate registered a growth of 10.1%.

The NCSI data shows Omani residents - 567,447 - made up the majority of hotel guests.

Guests from GCC countries showed a significant rise of 27.6% reaching 156,703. European guest numbers climbed 43.4% to 295,155, while there was a modest increase of 1.8% in American guests totalling 41,079.

Guests from African nations increased notably by 41.2% to 8,361, and Asian guests surged 43.6% to 213,980. A remarkable jump - 204.5% - was seen in visitors from Oceania to 30,898.



'Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past' released



China, Australia can become 'trusting' partners: Xi Jinping



Oman mulls local storage options to boost transition to renewable energy

Our Correspondent
Sur

Oman is considering developing local energy storage solutions to accelerate the sultanate's transition to renewable energy sources, according to the Minister of Energy and Minerals.

H E Salim bin Nasser al Afi said sustainable energy storage solutions will play a crucial role in achieving the sultanate's goal of generating at least 30% of power from renewable sources by 2030 and reaching 100% by 2050.

Energy storage solutions play a critical role in transitioning to renewable energy as these address the irregular nature of energy sourced through renewable sources such as solar and wind.

The Omani government has



H E Salim al Afi

allocated 65,000sqkm of concession land for renewable energy projects. Of this, approximately 50,000sqkm will be dedicated to green hydrogen projects, while the remaining will be used for renewable power generation projects.

On Monday, H E Afi inaugurated a 17-megawatt peak (MWp) solar photovoltaic (PV) farm producing green energy to

power the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant in Sur.

Speaking at the inauguration of the solar PV farm, H E Afi said the government has identified four main contributors to CO2 emissions, power generation being one of the biggest contributors.

He said, "Our biggest challenge in accelerating the renewable energy share in power generation is energy storage. We are studying most of the options available for energy storage and pushing to develop local sustainable solutions. We are working on that and hopefully there will be some really great ideas so that we can provide the storage capacity needed to entirely transition to renewable energy by 2050."

Continued on [Page 03](#)

Mega projects to transform Buraimi into economic hub

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In its efforts targeting sustainability and job creation, Buraimi is embarking on a development plan that is going to see it transform into an economic hub.

Governor Dr Hamad bin Ahmed al Busaidi outlined a comprehensive strategy to overhaul the governorate's landscape, including the construction of Al Buraimi Oasis, an artificial lake and a pivotal railway line enhancing connectivity with the UAE.

Busaidi emphasised a holistic approach in the development process that will synergise economic, agricultural, social, cultural and health sectors in partnership with relevant entities. A special economic zone in Rawdah district is also in the advisory stages, which will offer investors lucrative prospects post-implementation.

Highlighting a digital leap, Busaidi revealed a collaboration



with Omantel to propel Buraimi's digital transformation. This includes a memorandum of understanding to review the current digital framework and provide necessary technical assistance. A dedicated digital portal is also in the works to serve as an information and investment promotion hub for both internal and external stakeholders.

For tourism, the governorate has partnered with Omran Group to launch attractions like Al Abila Park, Jabal Al Qatar and a digital museum at Buraimi Gate.

The governorate has also revitalised Al Buraimi and Sa'ra aflaj

as tourism sites.

Buraimi hosts 25 hotels, 40 tourism firms and several historic mosques, monuments, archaeological sites and geological wonders.

A unified digital investment platform is operational for investments, and a forum was held recently in collaboration with Oman Development Bank, when agreements were inked for SME projects worth RO16mn. Other projects in the pipeline include a health resort in Mahdha, the View Square project and a poultry slaughterhouse in Buraimi.

Festival for persons with disabilities on Nov 27

Our Correspondent Muscat

To mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth will host an annual festival dedicated to persons with disabilities from November 27 to December 3 in Muscat.

Observed every year on December 3, the day is promoted by the United Nations for action to ensure inclusivity and equality.

Ziana Abdullah al Yarabi, festival director, said that the fourth edition of the festival is designed to empower professionals working with disabled individuals through training to nurture athletic talent and identify those with exceptional abilities for potential inclusion in national the Paralympic team.

The festival aims to facilitate integration of people with disabilities into society and highlight issues pertinent to them.

"The objective of the festival



(Supplied photos)

extends to building a society that is socially and economically cohesive, with special focus on promoting physical and sports activities among people with disabilities for their well-being and leisure," Ziana added. She emphasised the festival's alignment with Oman Vision 2040, aspir-

ing to foster competitiveness in national and international sports events.

The event schedule is diverse, featuring educational workshops, awareness campaigns, cultural and sports events and entertainment, besides excursions to tourist spots. A key element of the festival will be a symposium addressing the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

include an entrepreneurship exhibition by people with disabilities, an art and photography exhibition, and musical performances by various artists.

Hamoud bin Salim al Jabri, vice-chairman of the festival's main committee, informed that the event will include of all categories of disabilities, families of persons with disabilities and industry professionals.



The objective of the festival extends to building a society that is socially and economically cohesive, with special focus on promoting physical and sports activities among people with disabilities

ZIANA ABDULLAH AL YARABI

abilities, with an aim to propose - and later implement - effective recommendations and initiatives.

The festival will feature an array of sports, such as bocce, goalball, basketball, football for the deaf and bowling. It will also

An estimated 1,400 participants, including individuals with disabilities, technicians and administrators are expected to attend.

Jabri highlighted the participation of multiple ministries and organisations, including the

"The festival is a step towards fostering a spirit of community and support throughout Omani society, spotlighting the aspirations and needs of people with disabilities, ensuring their continuous integration and providing ongoing support," Jabri added.

VIII ITALIAN CUISINE WEEK IN THE WORLD

NOVEMBER 8 - 14, 2023

Under the theme "At the table with Italian cuisine: well-being with taste", the 8th edition of the Italian Cuisine Week in the World will be celebrated around the globe.

On this occasion, the Embassy of Italy in Muscat will highlight the week from November 8 to 14, 2023 through many initiatives that will provide the opportunity to the public to taste the best of the Italian culinary tradition. With the presence of Michelin-starred chef Paolo Gramaglia, the founder of "President" restaurant in Pompeii in Italy, a special evening at the Italian Residence will be hosted indulging the guests with delicious Italian recipes and live cooking. Focusing on culinary education, a Master Class will be presented by the Chef at Oman Tourism College.

The initiative, which is endorsed each year by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, aims at promoting the Italian gastronomic culture emphasizing the regional specialties, the importance of a healthy lifestyle and attention to the environmental dimension of food consumption

BREZZA - JUMEIRAH MUSCAT BAY

Brezza at Jumeirah Muscat Bay presents 'A Taste of Italy - a Journey from North to South.' From the rich, olive oil-infused dishes of the North to the sun-drenched, seafood-laden specialties of the South, the menu captures the vitality and authenticity of each region's culinary heritage. Embracing the harmony between taste and well-being. For more information: +968 7199 7759

COME PRIMA - CROWNE PLAZA MUSCAT HOTEL

Taste the essence of Italy through an exquisitely curated White Truffle Menu at Come Prima Restaurant. For more information: +968 24 660 660

FRESCO - ALMOUJ MUSCAT

Join Fresco Al Mouj for the Italian Cuisine Week and savor Michelin Star Chef Paolo Gramaglia's dishes that capture the essence of Italy's culinary excellence from November 8 to 14, 2023. For more information: +968 9424 5174

TOMATO - INTERCONTINENTAL MUSCAT

Special Italian menu prepared with care of your well-being at Tomato at InterContinental Muscat from November 8 to 15, 2023. For more information: +968 24 680 000 or +968 9137 3243

TUSCANY - GRAND HYATT MUSCAT

Revel in the simplicity of fresh products with the art of fine cooking put together for you in Muscat's timeless Italian restaurant, Tuscany at Grand Hyatt Muscat. Experience the Italian Taste from November 8 to 14, 2023. For more information: +968 24 641 234

'Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past' released

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in collaboration with Oman Historical Society, launched a book titled *Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past*, on Monday at National Museum of Oman. Authored by Margaret Kapenga Shurdom, the book presents a vivid portrayal of life in the sultanate during the 1950s, drawn from her American family's experiences.

Margaret's connection to Oman spans from 1948 to 1983, a time that allowed her a deep engagement with Omani society.

The book's launch was graced by the presence of H E Salem bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, alongside the author and an assembly of dignitaries and witnesses to the era's historical richness.

This English language publication, soon to be available in Arabic, offers a window into the past in three comprehensive chapters, enriched by an array of over 300 photos, illustrations and personal correspondences. These elements collectively narrate the so-

(Supplied photos)

cial fabric of Omani life in those times.

Complementing the book's launch, a mini-exhibition featuring artwork and photography was inaugurated. Among the displayed works are paintings by the author's grandmother, artist Evelyn Underwood, who drew inspiration from her 1950s sojourn in Oman.

Her artistic lens captures more than 30 scenes depicting the architectural and urban landscapes of Muscat, Muttrah and beyond, accessible to National Museum visitors for three days.

The tome spans the years 1948 to 1970, a seminal yet lesser-known chapter in Omani history, largely unfamiliar to the younger generation. This literary effort aims to encapsulate and convey the cultural and historical wealth of Oman to contemporary and future audiences, ensuring the nation's storied past remains a touchstone for its cultural identity.

Manafaa challenge invites entries for its sixth edition

Our Correspondent Muscat

Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre (Mawarid), a part of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, has opened registrations for the annual Manafaa innovation contest. Now in its sixth year, the challenge continues to support inventive minds and registration is open till January

5, 2024.

Khalid bin Ali al Busaidi, genetic resources investment specialist at Mawarid, informed that the programme is designed to expand Oman's economic prospects. "It empowers Omani innovators, entrepreneurs and residents to present and evolve their product ideas on a collaborative platform."

The programme's objectives extend to fostering the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises rooted in the application of research in biological resources. It also aims to enlighten the public about the wealth of opportunities in the biodiversity investment landscape.

Participants keen to present their innovative ideas to the Manafaa challenge can sign up through the dedicated Mawarid portal - www.mawarid.gov.om/manafaa

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Oman looks to bolster agri tourism

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has initiated a novel project to propel agricultural tourism by forging collaborations with several ministries and the private sector.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Khalid bin Hamad al Aghbari, Project Lead at Agritourism Development Company and member of Food Security Laboratory 2023, informed that a team of eight has been formed with staff of Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to set the ground for agri tourism in the sultanate.

According to Aghbari, the team's objective is to streamline investment procedures, address challenges faced by the nascent agri tourism sector, and amend existing policies and laws to accommodate its needs.



Agri tourism not only educates and entertains guests but also promises an alternative income for farmers

KHALID AL AGHBARI

He said agri tourism combines farm visits with learning and leisure, aiming to immerse visi-



tors in the essence of agricultural life and rural culture.

"This model not only educates

and entertains guests but also promises an alternative income for farmers, inviting participation

in farm activities, savour local cuisine and purchase produce straight from the source," said

Aghbari.

He highlighted the fact that despite potential, there are hur-

dles such as the absence of specific legislation and dual-use land allocation, which are pivotal for the sector's operational and licensing frameworks.

He highlighted the Rummana festival held in Jabal Akhdar in August, Oman's foray into agri tourism focused on cultural engagement and culinary innovation, which was the result of a collective effort by various entities.

Aghbari emphasised the urgent requirement of regulations to safeguard ventures from financial downturns and to attract investment.

With a global visitor count of 500mn to farm-based tourism in 2022 and a projected annual growth rate of 7% until 2030, agri tourism stands as a robust contributor to the economy and creator of myriad job opportunities, he informed. "Oman now positions itself to avail this opportunity, enriching its rural heritage and bolstering economic vitality."

Entries open for Omani teachers' excellence award

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Education announced on Monday opening of registration for the second edition of the Educational Excellence Award for Omani Teachers. This biennial national award was instituted to acknowledge and promote the dedication of Omani educators in public schools.

At the inauguration ceremony, H E Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary for Education, said, "The ministry aims to sustain this award to encourage the enthusiasm of teachers and bolster their innovative and creative engagement in the educational sector. Focusing on teachers as a pivotal component of the education system, we have ensured that the award's monetary value remains significant to encourage teachers to pursue excellence."

He also announced the formation of a supervisory committee to finalise the award's theme and assessment criteria, while urging all government schoolteachers in Oman to par-



The ministry aims to sustain this award to encourage the enthusiasm of teachers and bolster their innovative and creative engagement in the educational sector

H E DR ABDULLAH AMBOSAIDI

ticipate and showcase their capabilities.

Dr Sulaiman al Jamoudi, Director General of Education Supervision, presented details of award, which was followed by introduction of a portal - accessible on moe.gov.om - to register for it by Said al Wahaibi, Head of Educational Portal In-

terface Management Department. Sultan al Shuraqi, Senior Information Systems Specialist, explained the registration procedure and form submission requirements.

Spanning two academic years, starting in September/October, the award's evaluation process comprises two phases. The initial phase involves an automated sorting through an electronic system based on established criteria to shortlist candidates for the second phase in which shortlisted educators are required to complete a detailed application on the designated website.

The award reflects the ministry's commitment to elevate the stature of Omani educators and recognising their creativity and proficiency. It aims to highlight their integral role in nurturing students' skills, enriching the educational milieu, and strengthening community partnerships. Furthermore, it will motivate teachers who excel academically, pedagogically and technically, incentivising their contribution to educational advancement.

Oman mulls local storage options for renewables

Continued from Page 01

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, H E Afi said there are many internationally known storage solutions available, including lithium batteries, which are not sustainable in the long term as these involve issues of waste generation and continuous replacement etc.

"We are currently studying all the different options. There are many that we can use, but having local solutions for energy storage is by far the best and most promising," he added.

H E Afi informed that Nama Power and Water Procurement Company has been instructed by his ministry to work on and finalise a study on potential local energy storage solutions.

Stressing the importance of sustainable energy storage solutions in achieving Oman's renewable energy goals, he emphasised, "Without sustainable storage solutions, achieving a 100% share of renewable energy in power generation is not possible. To meet the objective of fully transitioning to renewable energy by 2050, we must effectively store the energy generated during the day for use when needed."

INVITATION TO TENDER

Sohar Aluminium LLC (SA), PO Box 80, PC- 327, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman hereby invites qualified Vendors for the following tenders:

Tender No. :	2023-ENG-SOW-0065	
Tender Title :	Electronic Permit System	
Scope :	Sohar Aluminium Co. LLC (SA) is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to develop and implement a Web-Based Permit Management System equipped with a comprehensive set of functionalities to manage various permit types and ensure compliance with local regulations.	
Last Date for Applying Tender Documents	Date of Issuing Tender Documents	Last Date for Tender Submission
15 November 2023	17 November 2023	03 December 2023
Tender No. :	2023-ENG-SOW-0069	
Tender Title :	Refurbishment of the Cooling Towers	
Scope :	Sohar Aluminium Co. LLC (SA) requires the refurbishment of its cooling towers (Internal and external) steel structures, application of a corrosion-resistant coat, adding extra fins etc. to improve the cooling towers' efficiency.	
Last Date for Applying Tender Documents	Date of Issuing Tender Documents	Last Date for Tender Submission
15 November 2023	17 November 2023	03 December 2023
Tender No. :	2023-ENG-SOW-0075	
Tender Title :	Controller Upgrade for Compressors	
Scope :	Sohar Aluminium Co. LLC (SA) has several industrial compressors that cater to compressed air requirements throughout the Smelter. SA seeks to replace the out-of-date controllers in these compressors.	
Last Date for Applying Tender Documents	Date of Issuing Tender Documents	Last Date for Tender Submission
15 November 2023	17 November 2023	30 November 2023
Detailed scope of work will be shared with the vendors expressing their interest to participate in this tender.		
Kindly send your email and company profile to: tender@sohar-aluminium.com For list of active tenders visit: https://www.sohar-aluminium.com/en/content/tender-listing		

Oman, Egypt explore new avenues for ties, SME collaboration

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Egyptian Businessmen Association convened a seminar in Muscat on Monday titled 'Cooperation Opportunities between Oman and Egypt in the Field of Small and Medium Projects'.

The meet aimed to shed light on Oman's incentives for SMEs and investors.

Highlighting the deep-rooted ties binding the two nations, Abdullah Nasser al Rahbi, Oman's Ambassador to Egypt, referenced the recent visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Egypt and his discussions with President Abdel Fattah el Sisi, as a catalyst to enhance bilateral relations across diverse sectors, including politics, economy, commerce and culture.

Rahbi drew attention to a noteworthy uptick in trade between Oman and Egypt, citing growth from US\$650mn in 2021 to US\$1.1bn in 2022. Egyptian ex-

ports to Oman marked a 24% increase, totaling US\$200mn, while Omani exports stood at US\$870mn.

He highlighted the robust Egyptian presence in Oman's market, with investments pegged at US\$680mn across 744 firms with the cumulative capital injection surpassing US\$1.8bn in infrastructure, roadways and real estate. Omani investments in Egypt, Rahbi informed, totaled US\$77.5mn in 92 companies engaged in various sectors, notably industry, tourism, agriculture and construction.

Rahbi underscored the fertile ground for Egyptian ventures in Oman's diverse sectors, particularly infrastructure and tourism.

He emphasised the potential of establishing manufacturing units in Oman's free zones, leveraging the sultanate's strategic position and trade agreements for re-export opportunities to global markets, including USA, Europe, Middle East and Asia.

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Veolia, partners inaugurate sultanate's largest solar farm for desalination plant

Our Correspondent
Sur

H E Salim bin Nasser al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, on Monday inaugurated the 17-megawatt peak (MWp) solar photovoltaic (PV) farm producing green energy to power the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant in Sur.

It is the largest solar power system for a desalination plant in Oman with an annual capacity of over 32,000 MWh of green electricity which will cover 100% of the desalination plant's consumption over the daylight period.

Developed by Veolia in partnership with TotalEnergies, the plant is a significant milestone towards decarbonisation efforts in the region as it will help cut about 27,200 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year, equivalent to the emissions generated by approximately 6,000 internal combustion engine-powered vehicles over the same period.

Speaking during the event, H E Afi said, "I am glad to witness the official inauguration of this crucial solar photovoltaic facility at the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant, which serves over 600,000 inhabitants of the Sharqiyah region with clean drinking water. The solar plant aligns well with global efforts to-



Developed by Veolia in partnership with TotalEnergies, the plant will help cut about 27,200 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year

wards energy transition for a net-zero world."

According to the Minister, this facility will also be one of the significant contributors to water se-

curity in Oman and to the National Energy Strategy, which aims to derive 30% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030 - one of the objectives of Oman

Vision 2040.

"I commend Veolia, its partners, and everyone involved in the development of this plant for their unwavering commitment and hard work in bringing this project to fruition."

Philippe Bourdeaux, vice president - Africa, Near & Middle East of Veolia, said, "We are delighted to see that our solar project has started serving its mission. This

achievement would not have been possible without the support of the leadership in the Sultanate of Oman, particularly the Ministry of Energy and Minerals. We express our gratitude to them and our private sector partners for helping us join local efforts towards energy transition and decarbonisation. Veolia aims to be the world leader in ecological transformation."

The inauguration was attended by Veolia's and TotalEnergies senior management and group's partners including government officials and representatives of the Sharqiyah Desalination Company and the Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (NPWP).

Denis Le Maout, chairman of the Board of Sharqiyah Desalination Company, said, "With desali-

nation capacity of 131,837 cubic metres per day (m³/day), producing over 400mn cubic metres of water since 2007, our desalination plant in Sur is among the most important projects in the sultanate and one of the lifelines for delivering drinking water for local communities, while reducing the extraction of already scarce freshwater resources.

As the conventional desalination process comes at a heavy price for both the environment and the economy, our efforts have been to tap the potential of innovative technologies, including renewable energy to positively impact the environment, create economic opportunities and contribute to the community's overall welfare."

Ahmed bin Salim al Abari, acting CEO of Nama for Power and Water Procurement Company, said, "NPWP is collaborating with water desalination plants to support them in transitioning to the use of renewable energy for desalination purposes. This effort aligns with Oman's objectives to reach 30% of electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030 and 40% by 2040. We congratulate Sharqiyah Desalination Company for having the solar farm which will ensure water supply to North and South Sharqiyah governorates using renewable energy."

OPAZ reviews consultancy results for cargo tracking system



Muscat - The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has reviewed a consultancy study that aims to improve the tracking of goods and shipments, as well as customs clearance procedures in the special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities in Oman.

The study aims to put into practice advanced digital solutions that will enhance the smooth management of goods movement and customs clearance in these areas. These solutions will be in line with international best practices and procedures and will comply with globally recognised process manuals.

The review workshop was attended by Ahmed bin Hassan al Deeb, OPAZ deputy chairman, as well as representatives from the Directorate General of Customs, Royal Oman Police, and the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology.

Additionally, officials from the zones supervised by the authority were present at the workshop, which focused on reviewing the current procedures for the movement of goods and shipments.

The proposed modern procedures for managing shipping and customs procedures in the zones supervised by the authority were also discussed. The evaluation of these procedures identified the accompanying challenges, and solutions were devised to improve the efficiency of goods transportation between customs ports and zones supervised by the authority.

These solutions aim to reduce the financial and administrative burdens associated with traditional means, control the customs movement of goods between different regions in Oman, and create a strong database that can enable competent authorities to know the volume of trade exchange.

OPAZ conducted a consultancy study in collaboration with Crimson Logic to document the existing procedures for managing and shipping goods.

The study involved visits to various regions, holding coordination meetings with relevant authorities including the General Administration of Customs at the Royal Oman Police, and reviewing customs procedures and regulations.



Omantel hosts annual Global Carrier Community Meeting in Muscat

Muscat - Represented by the Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel), the Sultanate of Oman is hosting the annual Global Carrier Community Meeting (GCCM) that began in Muscat on Monday.

The two-day event is being organised by the Carrier Com-

munity, headquartered in Berlin, Germany.

More than 600 telecommunications professionals, representing decision makers of more than 300 telecom operators, content providers and suppliers from over 50 countries are attending the GCCM Mid-

dle East this year.

The event offers an opportunity for members of the wholesale telecom operators community to hold business meetings. The community represents companies providing international services for phone calls, data, SMS, services via

submarine cables, satellites and data centres, among other sectors. The event includes panel discussions and furnishes a platform for the participants to meet their counterparts, build relationships, exchange experiences, strike deals and other related business activities.

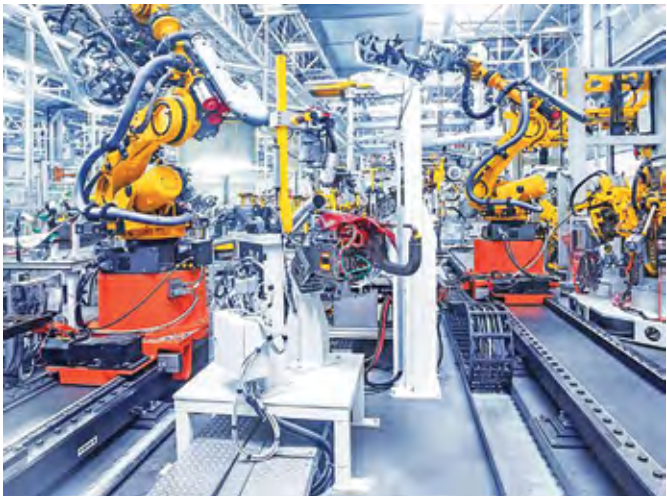
Rise in demand lifts German factory orders

Frankfurt, Germany - German factory orders rose slightly in September, buoyed by stronger foreign demand, official data showed on Monday, in a glimmer of good news for Europe's biggest economy as it battles a slowdown.

New orders, a key indicator closely watched as a sign of future business activity, were up 0.2% from a month ago, federal data agency Destatis said.

Analysts surveyed by financial data firm FactSet had predicted a substantial drop of 1.3 percent.

The positive data followed a big rise of 1.9% in August - a figure that was revised significantly downwards from a previous estimate due to errors in data provided by some sectors.



Foreign demand and in particular large orders had lifted September's numbers, said the economy ministry in a statement, with orders from abroad

rising 4.2%.

If large orders were stripped out, September's overall industrial figures would have dropped 2.2% on the month, added the

ministry.

Domestic orders meanwhile slumped 5.9%.

High inflation, elevated energy costs and weaker demand from key market China have all been weighing on Germany's crucial manufacturing sector in recent months.

Germany tipped into a recession at the start of 2023, and economic growth stagnated in the second quarter. A slew of weak indicators since then have added to fears of a prolonged slowdown.

The International Monetary Fund has predicted that Germany will be the only major advanced economy to shrink this year.

AFP

EU probes AliExpress to examine curbs on illegal items

Brussels, Belgium - The EU on Monday announced an investigation into Chinese e-commerce giant AliExpress, seeking more details on what measures it is taking to protect consumers online from illegal products, including fake medicines.

The European Commission said it had sent a formal request for information to AliExpress, owned by Alibaba, in what is a first step in a process under a new EU law, the Digital Services Act (DSA), that aims to counter the spread of illegal goods and content online.

It wanted to know more about how AliExpress will "comply with obligations related to risk assessments and mitigation measures to protect consumers online, in particular with regard to the dissemination of illegal products online such as fake medicines".

AliExpress has until November 27 to respond.

The European Union has developed a powerful armoury to challenge the might of Big Tech with its milestone DSA and a sister law, the Digital Markets Act, that hits web giants with strict curbs, obligations and oversight on how they do business.

The DSA came into effect in August for 19 'very large' platforms, including AliExpress, Facebook and Instagram, that have more than 45mn monthly European users.

The EU has already started probes into Meta, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter), requesting more details about how they have acted against disinformation. Platforms face fines that can go up to 6% of global turnover for violations. Amazon Store, Google Shopping and clothing retailer Zalando are also among the 19 platforms named by the EU.

AFP

Europe stocks falter on weak data despite sound Asia rally

London, UK - Europe's main stock markets faltered on Monday as traders focused on concerns over weak economic data and the Middle East conflict, setting aside strong gains in Asia.

Frankfurt, London and Paris had nudged higher at the open but erased gains after underwhelming Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) survey data in Europe.

"It seems like sentiment has definitely been impacted by disappointing PMIs from European economies which came in below expectations in Italy and France," XTB analyst Walid Koudmani told AFP.

"Furthermore, the geopolitical situation continues to be troubling... in the Middle East conflict."

Israeli forces pushed on with intense strikes targeting Palestinian militants in Gaza on Monday as the war neared one month and the Hamas-run health ministry's death toll approached 10,000 inside the besieged territory.

Determined to destroy Hamas whose October 7 attack left 1,400 dead in Israel and saw over 240 hostages taken, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed no letup despite



It seems like sentiment has definitely been impacted by disappointing PMIs from European economies which came in below expectations in Italy and France

WALID KOUDMANI

mounting international calls for a ceasefire.

Back in Asia, equities rallied following another strong performance before the weekend on

Wall Street, as below-forecast US jobs data fanned optimism that the Federal Reserve had reached the end of its interest-rate hiking cycle aimed at taming

inflation.

After a tough year for traders, the Fed's decision last week to pause on monetary policy for a second meeting and hint that it would not tighten further has provided some much-needed vigour, and sparked talk of a new year cut.

Those hopes were given a boost Friday by figures showing far fewer jobs than expected were created in October, while other data pointed to a slowing

economy, easing pressure on policymakers to lift rates further.

"The recent deluge of (US) economic data does not paint a picture of an impending recession," said SPI Asset Management analyst Stephen Innes.

All three main indexes on Wall Street jumped Friday after the jobs reading, which also fuelled bets on an interest rate cut by June, while Treasury yields eased back from 16-year highs.

Observers now say the road is open for equities to end the year on a strong note.

Expectations that the Fed would not lift rates any further also kept downward pressure on the dollar, with the yen holding its gains after rallying at the end of last week, having come within a whisker of a three-decade low.

Oil prices ticked higher after key producers Saudi Arabia and Russia said they would stick to their output curbs until the end of the year.

The news came after the commodity fell more than six percent last week as investors grew optimistic that the Israel-Hamas conflict would not spill over into a wider war in the crude-rich Middle East.

AFP



Ryanair rewards shareholders after profit soars

London, UK - Irish no-frills airline Ryanair on Monday announced the start of regular dividends to shareholders after net profit surged 72% in its first half on higher fares and record traffic.

Profit after tax came in at €2.2bn (US\$2.4bn) in the six months to the end of September year-on-year, Ryanair said in a statement.

The Dublin-headquartered airline said it would begin regular dividend payments for the first time in its history.

It comes as the aviation sector is enjoying a strong recovery after suffering heavy losses at the start of the decade when the COVID pandemic grounded flights worldwide.

"We want to thank those shareholders for their support during a very difficult COVID period," Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary said.

The carrier announced "a maiden ordinary dividend of €400mn" spread across two equal payments in February and September next year.

In the years ahead, Ryanair said it expects to pay about 25% of net profits in dividends.

The dividend announcements, along with expectations of record-high annual profits despite a number of headwinds, helped send Ryanair's share price rallying six percent to €16.12 in Dublin.

Ryanair has previously paid out a total of €6.74bn in share buybacks and ad hoc dividends in the 12 years to 2020, the company confirmed to AFP.

Clouded outlook

O'Leary added that the carrier's full-year outlook "remains highly dependent on the absence of any unforeseen

adverse events - for example such as Ukraine or Gaza - between now and the end of March".

Ryanair profits ballooned in the first half 'thanks to a strong Easter in the first quarter, record summer traffic and higher fares which offset significantly higher fuel costs', the company statement said.

Traffic grew 11% to 105mn passengers and average fares jumped by almost one quarter.

Profit after tax came in at €2.2bn in the six months to the end of September YOY. We'll pay a maiden ordinary dividend of €400mn spread across two equal payments in February and September next year

RYANAIR

O'Leary said the company expects record full-year net profit of between €1.85bn and €2.05bn - a forecast that assumes 'modest losses' over the winter.

He added that the outlook was clouded by uncertainty over the delivery of new Boeing planes, "a significantly higher full-year fuel bill, very limited fourth-quarter visibility and the risk of weaker consumer spending over coming months".

US planemaker Boeing last month reported another hefty loss as it trimmed its full-year forecast for deliveries of the 737 to address a manufacturing problem on the aircraft.

AFP

Moody's creates new private credit analytical franchise, appoints Ana Arsov as global head

New York, US - Moody's Corporation on Monday announced the creation of a new analytical franchise within Moody's Investors Service (MIS), the rating agency, that will focus on delivering strategic insights into the rapidly expanding private credit sector.

Ana Arsov has been named Global Head of Private Credit, and will lead coordination of relevant research and rating initiatives across MIS. Ms. Arsov will also co-head the global Financial Institutions Group (FIG) along with Simon Harris.

The organizational updates reflect the growing importance of private credit in capital markets and investor demand for Moody's research and ratings adjacent to the sector. The analytical franchise will provide transparency into the complex



private credit markets and their interlinkages with broader capital markets.

"The rapid growth of the private credit market in recent years has introduced new challenges and opportunities for investors, who are looking for fresh analysis from a trusted source,"

will promote engagement across MIS rating groups, including Financial Institutions, Corporate Finance, and Structured Finance, and will deepen existing analytical capabilities for business development companies, CLOs, and other private credit-related assets.

She will also provide appropriate support to Moody's Analytics, which offers relevant customer solutions related to counterparty assessment and portfolio risk.

In her capacity as co-head of FIG, Ms. Arsov will continue to engage with a broad range of financial institutions including global systemically important banks, capital markets intermediaries, and non-bank financial services companies. Prior to today's announcement, Ms.

Arsov was the global co-head of bank ratings and held a number of senior management roles overseeing ratings for banks, securities firms, speciality finance, and more. She contributed to Moody's rating methodologies for finance companies, securities firms, and clearing houses, and led the development of Moody's counterparty risk rating.

MIS rates over US\$70tn of debt split between its four major rating groups:

- Financial Institutions, co-headed by Ana Arsov and Simon Harris
- Corporate Finance, headed by Myriam Durand
- Structured Finance, headed by Annabel Schaafsma
- Global Public, Project, and Infrastructure Finance, headed by Anne Van Praagh

Polish transporters block Ukraine border points

Dorohusk, Poland - Several dozen owners of transport companies on Monday blocked three major Polish border crossings with Ukraine to protest what they say is unfair competition from the neighbouring country's businesses.

Trucks lined up at the border checkpoint in Dorohusk, with almost all cargo traffic blocked by protesters who blamed the liberalisation of European Union rules for the slump in their revenues.

"We want the rules of fair competition to be restored," Rafal Mekler, a co-organiser of the protest, told AFP in Dorohusk.

Clad in neon safety vests, a group of protesters led by Mekler had left their trucks parked on the main road to the Dorohusk checkpoint, effectively blocking the route.

On the vehicles, a banner detailed the protesters' demands, with reinstating entry permits for their Ukrainian rivals at the top of the list.

Following Russia's full-scale

invasion of Ukraine, the EU waived a system of permits for Ukrainian transport companies to enter the bloc.

The Polish companies claim the move has triggered an influx of Ukrainian competitors into the sector, plunging their profits.

"Their costs of servicing a truck, hiring a driver or merely of opening a business or paying social insurance are much lower," Marek Oklinski, a transport company owner, told AFP in Dorohusk.

"They drive the prices down and take the cargo that we used to carry," he added.

Oklinski has had 25 years of experience carrying goods to Ukraine, but according to him and his fellow truckers, the competition with Ukraine is now proving too difficult to endure.

Apart from reinstating the EU entry permits, their second biggest concern was dealing with procedures upon returning back to Poland from Ukraine.

AFP

Profits ebb at US oil giants as they tout big fossil deals

New York, US - ExxonMobil and Chevron reported lower profits compared with the year-ago blowout quarter as the oil giants touted recent acquisitions they said balance economic and environmental priorities.

The two petroleum heavyweights - which in recent weeks have unveiled large takeovers of mid-sized fossil fuel players - both reported third-quarter profits that were big, but dwarfed by those in the year-ago period.

ExxonMobil reported third-quarter profits of US\$9.1bn, less than half the level in the 2022 period of booming commodity prices, while Chevron scored profits of US\$6.5bn, down 42% from the year-ago level.

The lower profits reflected an ebbing in commodity prices compared with the year-ago period, when Russia's invasion of Ukraine lifted oil and natural gas prices. The results were released only days after Chevron announced a US\$53bn acquisition of Hess that includes a significant stake in an oil-rich Guyana



offshore territory.

That followed on the heels of ExxonMobil's US\$60bn takeover of Pioneer Natural Resources, a big player in the Permian Basin, a fast-growing petroleum region in the southwestern US.

The two large transactions have raised hopes among investment bankers of additional merger and acquisition activity involving fossil fuels, while angering progressive lawmakers and others focused on addressing climate change.

"While our homes get destroyed by climate-supercharged storms, Chevron and Exxon are betting the house on a fossil-fueled future," Democratic Senator Ed Markey said on X, formerly Twitter, earlier this week.

"We have to make Big Oil fold their hand before our future goes bust."

Betting on 'climate failure'?

In the latest quarter, ExxonMobil scored higher oil and natural gas

volumes compared with the second quarter and said that 2023 capital and exploration spending would be 'at the top end' of its forecast 'as the company pursues value accretive opportunities', according to its earnings press release.

"We delivered another quarter of strong operational performance, earnings and cash flows, adding nearly 80,000 net oil-equivalent barrels per day to support global supply," said Chief Executive Darren Woods.

ExxonMobil has said it plans significant investment in Pioneer's Permian Basin fields that would enable Exxon to more than double its current volumes from the region to 2mn barrels of oil equivalent per day in 2027.

In its press release, ExxonMobil characterized its approach as a balanced strategy, noting the company has also announced a US\$4.9bn takeover of Denbury Inc. as a bet on carbon capture and sequestration, which the company has touted as a climate solution.

ExxonMobil said it would boost petroleum output and 'accelerate Pioneer's path to net zero' emissions.

"The two transactions we've announced further underscore our ongoing commitment to the 'and' equation by continuing to meet the world's needs for energy and essential products while reducing emissions," Woods said.

"Pioneer will help us grow supply to meet the world's energy needs with lower carbon intensity while Denbury improves our competitive position to economically reduce emissions in hard-to-decarbonize industries."

Chevron's results also showed an uptick in third-quarter production, with the company citing the boost from its earlier purchase of PDC Energy, smaller Permian operator. Chevron as well highlighted its comparatively small efforts in its 'New Energies' division, which last month closed a transaction to acquire a majority stake in Aces Delta.

AFP

46 graduate from Bank Muscat's Al Wathba

Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, celebrated the graduation of 46 entrepreneurs through its Al Wathba Academy programme, in Duqm, Al Wusta governorate.

This programme, held in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, has been designed to promote the concept of entrepreneurship among community members and implement plans to develop the skills of entrepreneurs small and medium-sized enterprises.

The participants successfully completed a training programme that covered lectures, workshops, discussions and practical training on a number of specialised fields in the business sector such as management, finance, marketing, and others, the bank stated.

This ceremony marks the continuation of the successful Al Wathba Academy programme over the past years and confirms Bank Muscat's commitment to provide training programmes that contribute to the development of entrepreneurs' skills in various governorates of the sultanate.



Earlier this year, the bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority to launch this programme for entrepreneurs in Al Wusta, in cooperation with Radiant Sail.

Trainees received an internationally recognised certificate from the KnowledgeWorks institution. Bank Muscat will continue implementing plans for the development of small and medium enterprises.

On this occasion, Ibrahim bin Khamis al Balushi, senior assistant general manager, SMEs, Bank Muscat, congratulated all the graduates for their commitment during the training period.

"We are proud to see such a big number of participants in a single batch which shows how keen are the people here to benefit from training programs. Al

Wathba programme come within the bank's efforts to reinforce its pioneering position as a socially responsible bank in the field of entrepreneurship," he said. "Bank Muscat will continue to implement such programs taking in new batches of entrepreneurs with a focus on choosing courses that keep pace with the latest developments required by the business sector."

Bank Muscat is proud of its track record of success and support for young Omani entrepreneurs who benefited from Al Wathba programme and are now efficiently running their own projects.

Over the past years a number of 237 Omani entrepreneurs have successfully completed the programme from different governorates of the sultanate.

Bank Muscat has contributed significantly to the development of SMEs in Oman.

Minister of Education heads Oman delegation to Unesco conference

H E Dr Madiha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education and Chairperson of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, left on Monday for Paris, to head the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman participating in the 42nd session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) to be held from November 7 to 22 at the organisation's headquarters in the French capital.

The conference will see the participation of delegations of the member states and representatives of a number of international, civil society and civil community organisations.

The Oman delegation included H E Dr Hamad bin Saif al Hamami, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the Unesco, and Amna bint Salem al Balushi, Secretary of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

Also, part of the delegation, representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Agricultural Wealth, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Environment Agency, Sultan Qaboos University, and the General Authority for Academic Accreditation and Assurance of Education Quality.



This is to attend a number of specialised committees emanating from the General Conference in education, culture, science, and communication.

H E Shaibaniyah, the Minister of Education and head of the delegation, will deliver Oman's speech before the General Conference on December 8.

The programme for opening of this session includes a speech by the Director-General of the organisation, a speech by the president of the Executive Council, approval of the agenda of the session, and the election of the president of the General Conference, vice presidents, committee chairs, vice-chairs, and rapporteurs.

It will discuss the Director-General's report on the organisation's activities in the period from 2018 to 2021, as well as a report on the activities and programmes of the organisation's Executive Council. At the end of the session, the members of the Executive Council will be elected.

Indian Social Club - Sanskrit Wing organises blood donation camp

The Indian Social Club - Sanskrit Wing organised a blood donation camp, with the participation of many members in the Bowsher Blood Bank in Muscat.

A total of 123 individuals actively participated in this significant event, with over 90 generous individuals donating their blood. The success of the camp was made possible through the dedicated efforts of volunteers such as Sunesh, Dhiraj, Daya, Vivek, Sanjay, Girish, Yogesh, Vinod, Sachin, Sudhir, Ashok and several others from the Ghala area.

The volunteers were present to assist donors in completing the necessary forms and provide support throughout the process, the club stated.

The club vice chairman C M



Sardar graced the event with his presence at the blood bank, to uplift the spirits and morale of the donors, whose contributions play a vital role in saving lives.

The organisers - ISC Sanskrit Wing - expressed its gratitude to all participants, volunteers, and supporters who contributed to

the success of this blood donation camp.

Such initiatives are a testament to the caring and compassionate nature of our community, and we look forward to continuing our efforts to make a positive difference in the lives of those in need.

MoH designated as WHO collaborating centre for research

The Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases, has been designated as the World Health Organization's (WHO) collaborating centre for research and training in the area of chronic respiratory diseases.

This comes as a result of the Ministry's role, and in cooperation with its partners, namely the Oman Respiratory Society, in integrating the management of the most common chronic respiratory diseases at the level of primary healthcare and integrating the services at all levels of care.

The Ministry of Health has enhanced and developed health services for patients with chronic respiratory diseases at all levels of health care. It has also established 161 asthma clinics at the primary health care level and continues to provide a wide range of medications of different doses and devices.

In addition, the Ministry of Health has invested in training and building the capacity of

pharmacists, doctors and nurses to ensure optimal healthcare delivery to patients.

The WHO Collaborating Centers are distinguished global institutions that work to support and promote the goals of the World Health Organization in a variety of health fields.

This recognition gives the Ministry a unique opportunity to actively participate in addressing chronic respiratory diseases at the global level.

This centre will support the region and countries around the world in developing and improving health services for patients with the most common chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

This centre is the third collaborating centre with WHO in the sultanate, where the Ministry of Health is a collaborating centre with the World Health Organization in the area of patient safety and in the area of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.

JW Marriott Hotel appoints new general manager

JW Marriott Hotel Muscat has appointed Juliana Salla as its general manager, responsible for overseeing the brand's flagship hotel in Oman, which reopened its doors in October this year.

With over 20 years of experience within the international tourism and hospitality sector in South America, North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia Pacific and China, Salla has worked with Marriott in a variety of positions for the company's brands, including senior leadership roles at W owned properties in Qatar, Indonesia and China.

"I am honoured to be taking on this leading role with such a prestigious, meticulously designed property. We aim to foster a serene sanctuary for business and leisure, or a seamless blend of both, for meaningful stays that feature the highest levels of attention to detail every step of the way," said Juliana.

"Despite their geographical distance, Oman and Brazil share a common appreciation for rich cultural diversity and natural beauty and Muscat is the perfect

destination to experience JW Marriott's serene sanctuary and make memorable connections. I am extremely happy to be here and excited to extend our extraordinary hospitality to all who join us."

For six years before moving to Muscat, she took up integral positions at two Ritz-Carlton properties, in Bali from 2017 to 2020, then at Fari Islands, Maldives from 2020 to 2023. Prior to those appointments, she honed her inspiring leadership skills for 10 years with the W brand, while playing a key role in the pre-opening of various W properties.

Salla kick started her career with Disney Cruise Lines before gravitating to land-based hotel



operations.

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

Italian embassy to celebrate 8th cuisine week in Muscat

The 8th edition of the Italian Cuisine Week in the World is back under the theme 'At the table with Italian cuisine: well-being with taste'.

The initiative, which is endorsed each year by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, aims at promoting the Italian gastronomic culture emphasizing the regional specialties, the importance of a healthy lifestyle and attention to the environmental dimension of food consumption.

During the week from Wednesday to next Tuesday (November 14), many initiatives will provide the opportunity to

the public to taste the best of the Italian culinary tradition.

Michelin-starred chef Paolo Gramaglia, the founder of 'President' restaurant in Pompeii in Italy, will be in Muscat and will participate in a special evening at the Italian Residence indulging the guests with delicious Italian recipes and live cooking.

As the Embassy of Italy in Muscat also focuses on education, a Master Class will be presented by Chef Gramaglia at Oman Tourism College, highlighting the importance of having a healthy lifestyle through rich ingredients found in the Mediterranean Diet.

The Embassy of Italy in Mus-

cat also aims at promoting exchanges with young Omani chiefs, while it invites everyone to experience the Italian taste around the city.

Among the chosen one, Brezza at Jumeirah Muscat Bay presents 'A Taste of Italy - a Journey from North to South'. From the rich, olive oil-infused dishes of the North to the sun-drenched, seafood-laden specialties of the South, the menu captures the vitality and authenticity of each region's culinary heritage. Embracing the harmony between taste and well-being.

At Come Prima - Crown

Plaza Muscat, one can taste the essence of Italy through an exquisitely curated White Truffle Menu, while

Fresco Al Mouj calls people to visit and savour Michelin Star Chef Paolo Gramaglia's dishes that capture the essence of Italy's culinary excellence from November 8 to 14.

Tomato Restaurant - InterContinental Muscat will be preparing special Italian menu with 'care of your well-being'.

The Tuscany at Grand Hyatt Muscat invites people to revel in the simplicity of fresh products with the art of fine cooking put together to celebrate the week.



MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Israel steps up war, cuts Gaza into two

Hundreds of overnight strikes push death toll to 10,022, mostly women and children

Jerusalem - The death toll in Gaza now exceeds 10,000 after nearly one month of Israeli bombardment, the Hamas-run health ministry said on Monday as the offensive against the Palestinian fighter group showed signs of intensifying.

Determined to destroy Hamas whose October 7 attack left 1,400 dead in Israel and saw over 240 hostages taken, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed no letup despite mounting international calls for a ceasefire.

Hundreds of overnight strikes pushed the death toll to 10,022, mostly women and children, a spokesman for the health ministry told a press conference on Monday afternoon. Two paediatric hospitals and Gaza's only psychiatric hospital were hit, the ministry said, after the director of another hospital, the Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, reported he had counted 58 dead.

"These are massacres! They destroyed three houses over the heads of their inhabitants - women and children," one resident, Mahmud Meshmesh, told AFP. "We have already taken 40 bodies out of the rubble," he



This photo taken from Sderot along the border with the Gaza Strip early on Monday shows smoke rising from northern Gaza after Israeli strikes, amid ongoing battles between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas movement (AFP)

said as crowds prayed around corpses wrapped in white shrouds.

The Israeli military accuses Hamas of building tunnels underneath hospitals, schools and places of worship in Gaza to hide fighters, store arms and ammunition, and plan attacks - charges the group has denied.

Ground forces with tanks have flooded the northern half of the Gaza Strip and tightened an encirclement of Gaza City, ef-

fectively splitting the territory in two, even as hundreds of thousands of civilians remained in the north despite Israeli evacuation orders.

The Israeli army said on Monday it had pounded Gaza with 'significant' new strikes on 450 targets, having earlier said it had already hit over 12,000. It also reported seizing a Hamas command post in central Gaza, where tanks were driving between the ruins of buildings.

"We will take the fight to Hamas wherever they are - underground, above ground," Israeli army spokesman Jonathan Conricus said, referring to Hamas tunnels, and repeating calls for civilians to leave the urban war zone. "We will be able to dismantle Hamas, stronghold after stronghold, battalion after battalion, until we achieve the ultimate goal, which is to rid the Gaza Strip - the entire Gaza Strip - of Hamas."

Israeli troops and Hamas fighters have engaged in fierce house-to-house combat in densely populated north Gaza, where the war has sent 1.5mn people fleeing to other parts of the territory. Netanyahu has remained firm on his position, vowing on Sunday that 'there won't be a ceasefire until the hostages are returned'.

Shortly before the latest barrage of strikes, internet and telephone lines were cut, the army

said. Israel has air-dropped leaflets and sent text messages ordering Palestinian civilians in northern Gaza to head south, but a US official said on Saturday at least 350,000 civilians remained in the worst-hit areas.

The Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt reopened on Monday to allow the evacuation of foreigners and dual nationals, the Hamas government said, ending a two-day closure prompted by a dispute

over the passage of ambulances.

Six ambulances carrying wounded Gazans also arrived in Egypt on Monday as the evacuations resumed, a border official said. The war has exacerbated tensions in the West Bank, where more than 150 Palestinians have been killed in clashes with Israeli forces and settlers since it started, according to the Palestinian health ministry. AFP

Iran says US 'encouraging' Israel to kill Palestinians

Tehran, Iran - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Monday accused the United States of 'encouraging' Israel to kill and carry out 'cruel acts' against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

"The aid from the United States to the Zionist regime (Israel) is encouraging them to kill and commit cruel acts of neglect against the Palestinian people," Raisi said at a joint news conference in Tehran with visiting Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

"We believe that the bombings must stop as soon as possible, that a ceasefire must be declared immediately and that aid be provided to the oppressed and proud people of Gaza," Raisi said.



Iran President Ebrahim Raisi speaking during a joint press conference with Iraq's prime minister (not in picture) in Tehran on Monday (AFP)

"These horrible crimes against humanity are a genocide, which is carried out by the

Zionist regime (Israel) with the support of the United States and certain European countries."

These horrible crimes against humanity are a genocide, which is carried out by the Zionist regime with the support of the US and certain European countries

EBRAHIM RAISI

The Iraqi leader's visit to Iran comes a day after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a surprise stop in Baghdad on his diplomatic tour of the Middle

East to meet with Sudani.

In Baghdad, Blinken slammed 'attacks or threats' against US troops in Iraq and Syria by militias that the United States says have ties to Iran.

Since the start of the Hamas-Israel war, rocket and drone attacks have targeted military bases hosting US forces in Iraq.

Iraq is close to Iran, and neither Baghdad nor Tehran recognises the state of Israel.

On October 25, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei described the United States of being 'the undeniable accomplices of the crimes' perpetrated in Gaza.

Iran financially and militarily backs Hamas. AFP

Israeli army arrests activist Ahed Tamimi

Jerusalem - The Israeli army said on Monday it had arrested the prominent 22-year-old Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi during a raid in the occupied West Bank.

'Ahed Tamimi was arrested on suspicion of inciting violence in the town of Nabi Salih' near the city of Ramallah, an army spokesman told AFP. "Tamimi was transferred to Israeli security forces for further questioning."

The activist was arrested during an Israeli army raid 'aimed at apprehending individuals suspected of being involved in violent activities and incitement to hatred' in the north of the West Bank, the spokesman added.

When AFP inquired about the reasons for her arrest, a security source forwarded an Instagram post, which has circulated widely on social media and is attributed to the young activist. According to the post, written in Arabic and Hebrew, she called for the massacre of Israelis in explicitly violent terms, referring to Hitler.

The activist's mother, Nariman al-Tamimi, denied she wrote the post. "There are dozens of (online) pages in Ahed's name with her photo, with which she has no connection," Tamimi told AFP.

She added that her husband, Bassem al-Tamimi, was arrested on October 20 and

since then there was no news about his whereabouts.

AFP was not immediately able to verify whether the Instagram account in question, which was blocked on Monday morning, actually belongs to Tamimi.

Tamimi became famous at age 14 when she was filmed biting an Israeli soldier to prevent him from arresting her brother who had his arm in a

Tamimi became famous at age 14 when she was filmed biting an Israeli soldier to prevent him from arresting her brother who had his arm in a cast

cast. She has become an icon of the Palestinian cause and a large portrait of her has been painted on the Israeli separation wall with the West Bank in Bethlehem near Jerusalem.

She was arrested in 2017 and held for eight months for slapping two Israeli soldiers in the courtyard of her family home in the West Bank as she asked them to leave.

Since the start of the Gaza war, Israeli security forces have carried out large-scale arrests of Palestinians suspected of links to Hamas or of inciting violence. AFP

Blinken pledges more Gaza aid during Turkey visit

Ankara, Turkey - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday that Washington was working 'very aggressively' to dramatically expand the amount of aid reaching trapped civilians in Gaza.

The top US diplomat held 2.5 hours of one-on-one talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan focused on soothing the anger at both Israel and the West of one of Washington's most strategic but difficult allies.

NATO member Turkey has been an increasingly vocal critic of the way Israel has been pursuing its month-long offensive against Hamas fighters who staged an October 7 attack into Israel - the deadliest in the country's history.

Police used tear gas and water cannon to disperse hun-



People stand behind a giant Palestinian flag as they hold a protest against the visit of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken near the State Department in Ankara on Monday (AFP)

dreds of protesters who marched on an air base housing US forces in southeastern Turkey hours before Blinken's arrival on Sunday.

Hundreds more rallied outside the Turkish foreign ministry during his visit.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself was

travelling across Turkey's remote northeast on Monday in an apparent snub of Washington's top diplomat.

Blinken told reporters after

the meeting that Washington was aware of 'the deep concern' in Turkey 'for the terrible toll' in Gaza. "We are working, as I said, very aggressively on getting more humanitarian assistance into Gaza and we have very concrete ways of doing that," Blinken said before boarding a plane for Japan.

"I think we will see in the days ahead that the assistance can expand in significant ways," he added without providing details.

A Turkish diplomatic source said Fidan pressed Blinken for 'an immediate ceasefire in Gaza'. "Fidan also pointed out to his US counterpart Blinken that bombing civilian targets and destroying infrastructure in Gaza is unacceptable," the Turkish source said.

AFP

One year from election, polls offer gloomy view for Biden

Washington, US - With exactly a year to go before the US presidential election, a new string of polls painted a grim picture on Sunday for Joe Biden, showing him trailing likely challenger Donald Trump among a pessimistic electorate.

The Democratic incumbent's numbers look especially bleak among people of colour and young voters, according to a *New York Times*/Siena College poll.

The survey shows Biden trailing Trump by between four and 10 percentage points among voters in Nevada, Georgia, Arizona, Michigan and Pennsylvania - five crucial states that helped him defeat the Republican in 2020.

In Wisconsin, however, respondents said they preferred Biden by two percentage points - within the margin of error.

A CBS News/YouGov poll showed Biden trailing Trump by three points (51 per cent to 48 per cent) in a national head-to-head match-up.

"The real bottom line? One year from today, the American people will fire Crooked Joe Biden and hire President Donald J Trump to Make America Great Again," the Trump campaign said in a triumphant statement following the poll data.

The Biden campaign put on a brave face, countering that 'predictions more than a year out tend to look a little different a year later', and pointing to the polling struggles of Biden's former boss Barack Obama before his 2012 election win.

"President Biden's campaign



The survey showed Biden trailing Trump by between four and 10 percentage points in five crucial states (AFP)

President Biden's campaign is hard at work reaching and mobilising our diverse, winning coalition of voters one year out. We'll win in 2024 by putting our heads down and doing the work

KEVIN MUNOZ

is hard at work reaching and mobilising our diverse, winning coalition of voters one year out," campaign spokesman Kevin Munoz added. "We'll win in 2024 by putting our heads down and doing the work, not by fretting about a poll."

'Legitimate concern'

But the former head of the Obama campaign, Democratic strategist David Axelrod, said Biden's numbers were cause for

'legitimate concern'.

"If he continues to run, (Biden) will be the nominee of the Democratic Party. What he needs to decide is whether that is wise; whether it's in HIS best interest or the country's," Axelrod said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Voters have a negative impression of both candidates, according to an ABC News/Ipsos poll, with 60 per cent taking an unfavourable view of Trump and

50 per cent saying the same about Biden.

And in the CBS News/YouGov poll, 73 per cent of US adults feel things are going 'somewhat badly' or 'very badly' for the country. Two-thirds of respondents in the *New York Times*/Siena poll said the country is moving in the wrong direction.

Economy, immigration

In all three polls, those surveyed highlighted fears over the economy, with Ipsos respondents saying inflation was their most important concern. Thirty-five per cent said they trust Republicans to do a better job on the issue, while only 21 per cent said they trusted Democrats more.

The polls also showed Trump and the Republicans coming out

on top in questions on immigration, though the *Times* found that Biden is still seen as more trustworthy among voters on abortion. *Times* respondents also said that on the issue of democracy, they preferred the president over Trump - who is facing four criminal trials, including one centred on accusations that he actively conspired to overturn the 2020 election results.

A majority of women said they preferred Trump, while Biden's advantage among voters under 30 has slipped to only one percentage point, according to the *Times* poll, despite their strong support for the Democrat in 2020.

And support for Biden also faltered on the age question, with more than 70 per cent of respondents to the *Times* poll saying the 80-year-old Biden is too old to be president, while only 19 per cent said the same of Trump, who is 77.

All three polls, conducted in late October and early November, come in the wake of a difficult period for Biden, as he faces harsh criticism over the US reaction to Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Thousands of protesters gathered in Washington on Saturday to call for a ceasefire in Gaza amid Israel's relentless bombing campaign. Many slammed the US president's response to the conflict, shouting slogans such as 'Biden, Biden you can't hide, you signed off on genocide' and 'We say no, Genocide Joe'.

AFP

Guinea: 9 dead in weekend jailbreak raid

Conakry, Guinea - At least nine people were killed during a weekend jailbreak in Guinea that saw armed commandos briefly pluck ex-dictator Moussa Dadis Camara from prison, officials said on Monday.

Heavily armed men burst into the prison in the capital Conakry early on Saturday, taking Camara and three other former officials who were on trial alongside him over a 2009 massacre during his presidency.

It was unclear whether Camara had escaped of his own free will in the raid, which the army described as an attempt to 'sabotage' government reforms. Later on Saturday, the army and Camara's lawyer said he had been recaptured and was back behind bars, without providing details on how he was recaptured.

Two of the men seized alongside Camara were also returned to the prison, while a third, Claude Pivi, was still at large.

On Monday, a statement from Prosecutor General Yamoussa Conte said that nine people had died as a result of the jailbreak commando operation, including three suspected attackers, four security forces and two people, presumed to be civilians, who had been in an ambulance.

Press reports had said earlier that civilians inside an am-

bulance had been hit during an exchange of gunfire during the raid.

Dadis Camara has been detained since going on trial in September 2022.

He and about 10 other former military and government officials are accused over a 2009 massacre carried out by security forces loyal to the then junta leader.

The killing of 156 people and the rape of at least 109 women started at a political rally in a Conakry stadium on September 28, 2009, and continued in the days that followed, according to a UN-mandated inquiry.

Camara - who himself came to power in a coup in December 2008 - and his co-defendants are charged with murder, sexual violence, torture, abduction and kidnapping. They face life in prison if convicted.

The trial is unprecedented in a country ruled for decades by authoritarian regimes, where people had become used to the impunity of the security forces.

Guinea, a West African country of about 14mn people, has been led by a junta since Colonel Mamady Doumbouya stormed the presidential palace with soldiers and overthrew civilian president Alpha Conde in September 2021.

AFP

PADDLING TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE



Britain's Prince William, Prince of Wales (in white) paddles during a dragon boat event in Singapore on Monday. The Prince is visiting Singapore to attend the Earthshot Prize 2023 that aims to reward innovative efforts to combat climate change. The ceremony will take place on Tuesday (AFP)

Colombian rebels suspend dialogue with government

Bogotá, Colombia - Leftist guerrilla holdouts in Colombia who refused to disarm when the rebel army FARC accepted a peace accord in 2016 walked out of talks with the government on Sunday.

Less than a month after these negotiations began, the FARC dissidents complained that the government of leftist President Gustavo Petro had failed to live up to what the dissidents called promises it had made. But the holdouts did not specify what these pledges were.

"Today, we declare the dialogue and the agenda with the government suspended," this faction called the Central General Staff said in a statement.

The talks began October 16 in the city of Tibu in the country's northeast, an area surrounded by crops for making cocaine and hard-hit by violence between the



General Commander of the Military Forces, Helder Bonilla, boarding a helicopter in the village of El Plateado, Colombia on Sunday (AFP)

guerrillas and the army.

The parties also agreed to observe a ceasefire until January 15, and the statement issued on Sunday said this truce still holds.

The government's goal was to demobilise some 3,500 fighters and put an end, once and for all,

to their armed insurgency.

Petro took office last August with a vow to bring 'total peace' to a country battered by decades of civil conflict between the state and various left-wing guerrilla groups, right-wing paramilitaries and drug traffickers.

AFP

10 years after typhoon, Philippine city of Tacloban rises from the ruins

Tacloban, Philippines - Filipino widow Agatha Ando has learned to laugh again in the decade after Super Typhoon Haiyan smashed into the central Philippines, killing more than 6,000 people and leaving millions homeless.

Fierce winds tore apart houses and toppled trees as tsunami-like waves whipped up by the storm obliterated mostly poor coastal communities on November 8, 2013.

Ando's husband and three of her siblings refused to leave their homes in Tacloban City that were less than 100 metres (109 yards) from the sea and died along with four children when water and debris crashed over them.

In the aftermath, their man-

gled bodies were hastily wrapped in wet blankets and a scavenged tarpaulin, and buried a few metres from where Ando's house now stands.

"I am now able to laugh again, but I will never forget them," said Ando, 57, who survived because she heeded official warnings to go inland before the storm hit.

Ten years on, the family's mass grave is one of the few visible reminders of the devastation in Tacloban, the capital of Leyte province.

Tacloban bore the brunt of Haiyan's fury and had to be rebuilt almost from scratch.

Now, it looks like any other Filipino city, with traffic-clogged streets and bustling restaurants.



A fisherman standing beside boats by the waterfront in Tacloban city, Leyte province on October 13 (AFP)

An 18km (11-mile) seawall has been built along the coast to protect it against future storm surges. "I think we have fully recovered," Mayor Alfred Romualdez told AFP during a recent visit to the city of around 280,000 people.

As the Philippines prepares to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Haiyan, Romualdez said survivors had 'moved on' from the disaster.

"But I don't think they'll ever forget," he said.

Scientists have long warned that storms are becoming more powerful as the world becomes warmer because of human-driven climate change.

The Philippines, which typi-

cally endures more than 20 major storms a year, has plenty of experience dealing with disasters. But that did not prepare the country for one of the strongest typhoons on record.

Haiyan unleashed winds of up to 315km (195 miles) an hour that flattened towns and cities across a 600km (370-mile) stretch of central islands.

Coastal houses and buildings thought safe enough to be used as evacuation centres on Leyte and Samar islands were swamped by storm surges up to five metres high.

About 6,300 people were killed and a decade later more than a thousand are still missing.

AFP



Commuters make their way along a road amid heavy smoggy conditions in New Delhi on Sunday (AFP)

Toxic smog: New Delhi to restrict vehicles

New Delhi, India - New Delhi will restrict the use of private vehicles for a week in a bid to offer residents some respite from the toxic smog choking the megacity, authorities announced on Monday.

Delhi, home to 30mn people, is blanketed in acrid smog at the onset of winter every year, primarily blamed on stubble burning by farmers in the neighbouring agrarian states.

The city is regularly ranked as one of the most polluted on the planet, with its smog blamed for hundreds of thousands of premature deaths each year.

So far, government-led efforts have failed to tackle the country's air quality problem, which a 2017 US study found kills one million people prematurely in India every year.

Gopal Rai, Delhi's environment minister, said the road-rationing scheme would be introduced for a week from next Monday, a day after Diwali - the Hindu festival of lights, when revellers set off firecrackers.

Under the scheme, cars with odd and even number plates would be allowed to travel on alternate days during the period.

"The decision has been taken

as after Diwali, pollution may rise further," Rai said at a press conference. The situation would be reviewed after November 20, he added.

Levels of the most dangerous PM2.5 particles - so tiny they can enter the bloodstream - reached 184 micrograms per cubic metre on Monday according to IQAir, 12 times the daily maximum recommended by the World Health Organization.

Nonetheless, cricketers from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka took to the field for a World Cup match in the afternoon.

It is not the first time the road

restriction scheme has been tried in the capital - it was put into action in 2016, 2017 and 2019.

Vehicle emissions account for a significant proportion of air pollution in Delhi, but a 2018 study by Indian government scientists found that the odd-even rule did not succeed in reducing emissions - and may even have increased them due to disruption to normal traffic patterns.

Rai also said schools in the city will remain closed till November 11 and construction activities will be banned.

AFP

Floods hit Kenya, at least 15 killed

Nairobi, Kenya - At least 15 people have died in Kenya as floods swept away scores of houses and devastated farmland following torrential rains, the Red Cross said on Monday.

Heavy rainfall has pounded the country, particularly the bone-dry north, in recent days, and sent water gushing into homes and submerging roads, with similar scenes playing out across other parts of East Africa.

"As of yesterday, 15,264 households have been affected, with 15 casualties reported," the Kenya Red Cross said on X, formerly Twitter.

More than 1,000 livestock have died while at least 240 acres (97 hectares) of agricultural farmland have been destroyed, it added.

The UN's humanitarian agency, OCHA, said last month that eastern Africa would likely encounter heavier than normal rains over the October-December period because of the El Nino phenomenon.

Kenya's Meteorological Department also warned last week that the heavy rains were 'likely to be accompanied by gusty winds'.

"The strong winds may blow off roofs, uproot trees and cause structural damages," it said in an advisory.

Images broadcast on local media have shown flood waters inundating entire villages and sending residents fleeing for higher ground.

Dramatic footage showed a civilian chopper rescuing people from a lorry marooned in Samburu county, some 300km (190 miles) north of the capital Nairobi.

El Nino is a naturally occurring weather pattern associated with increased heat worldwide, as well as drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere.

Since the start of the current rainy season, more than 20 people have died and over

Heavy rainfall has pounded Kenya, particularly the bone-dry north, and sent water gushing into homes and submerging roads

12,000 others have been forced out of their homes in Ethiopia's Somali region due to flash flooding, the regional government said at the weekend. At least 14 people have also been killed in Somalia, OCHA said in a situation report released on Saturday.

"At least 47,100 people have relocated to higher grounds to avoid the risk of flooding," the agency said, adding that the downpours had cut off access to markets and farmland in some areas.

AFP

China, Australia can become 'trusting' partners: Xi Jinping

The Chinese leader met Australian PM Albanese in Beijing on Monday

Beijing, China - Chinese leader Xi Jinping told Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday that their countries could become 'trusting partners', pledging to work with Canberra on everything from regional security to climate change as the two leaders eased years of tensions that cut billions of dollars in trade.

Beijing is Canberra's biggest trading partner, but relations plummeted in 2020 after Australia's then-conservative government barred Chinese tech giant Huawei from 5G contracts and called for an inquest into the origins of COVID-19, which was first detected in China.

A furious Beijing then slapped punitive tariffs on a slew of Australian commodities including coal, barley and wine as the relationship descended into a deep freeze.

But China has reversed course since Albanese took power in May last year, lifting most of its restrictions on Australian goods and saying it wants 'healthy and stable' ties.

Meeting Albanese in Beijing on Monday, Xi said the two countries had 'no fundamental conflict of interests'.

China and Australia, Xi said, could 'become mutually trusting and mutually successful partners', according to a readout of the meeting by state broadcaster CCTV.

"In the face of major changes



China's Premier Li Qiang and Australia's PM Anthony Albanese at the opening ceremony of China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai on Sunday (AFP)

In the face of major changes in the world, the two sides should grasp the correct development direction for China-Australia relations

XI JINPING

in the world, the two sides should grasp the correct development direction for China-Australia relations," he said.

This included cooperation on everything from 'the peace and stability of the Asia Pacific region' to climate change, the Chinese

leader said.

And in opening remarks shown by Australia's public broadcaster ABC, Albanese - the first Australian leader to visit China in more than seven years - hailed the 'unquestionably very positive' progress in ties.

Since the two leaders met in Indonesia last year, Albanese told Xi, 'trade is flowing more freely to the benefit of both our countries'.

"We can of course today take up the opportunity to explore how we can have further cooperation between our two countries," he said.

Albanese has previously acknowledged the need to remain 'clear-eyed' about the differences between the two countries.

"We need to cooperate with China where we can, disagree

where we must, and engage in our national interest," he told reporters Monday.

And China has bristled at Australia's security pact with the United States and Britain, and rebuked its decision to purchase nuclear-powered submarines - widely seen as an effort to parry Chinese military might in the Asia-Pacific.

Albanese has spoken up on behalf of nations' right to self-determination, as well as human rights and maintaining peace.

AFP

Public outcry over construction near Vietnam's Ha Long Bay

Hanoi, Vietnam - A huge residential complex being built on the borders of Vietnam's Ha Long Bay prompted a public outcry in the Southeast Asian country on Monday, as concerns mount over human impacts that have degraded the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The bay, famed for its brilliant turquoise waters dotted with towering rainforest-topped limestone islands, is one of Vietnam's most popular tourist destinations, attracting more than seven million visitors last year.

The shore and the surrounding town are already heavily developed. But on Sunday pictures were published in state media of an enormous construction site running through the waters - and next to the spectacular karsts - of Bai Tu Long Bay, which borders Ha Long.

The project owner, Do Gia Capital Limited Company, is preparing the ground for a residential and hotel complex on an area of more than 318,000



The construction site of a residential and hotel complex near Ha Long Bay in Vietnam's Quang Ninh province (AFP)

square metres, *Tien Phong* newspaper said.

The paper reported that the construction site is in Ha Long Bay's 'buffer zone', which UNESCO says provides an additional layer of protection to a World Heritage property.

Once finished, the complex will consist of 451 villas and houses, multiple seven-storey hotels, and service and trade areas, *Tien Phong* added.

Truong Quoc Binh, former deputy head of the culture ministry's heritage department, said 'the boundaries of Ha Long Bay had been seriously violated', according to the paper.

In Facebook posts that received thousands of likes and shares, Nguyen Xuan Dien, a well-known historical researcher, called the plans 'a direct threat' to the world heritage site.

AFP

Russia strikes Odesa, damages museum

Kyiv, Ukraine - Russian strikes overnight in the southern Ukrainian region of Odesa left eight people wounded and damaged a historic art museum, Ukrainian officials said on Monday, in the latest barrage of drones and missiles.

Images released by officials from inside the Odesa Fine Arts Museum showed art ripped from the walls of the 19th-century building and windows blown out by the aerial bombardment.

Deputy foreign minister Emine Dzheppar said Kyiv was 'deeply outraged' by the attack and urged the United Nations' Paris-based heritage agency UNESCO to condemn the strike.

Kyiv said earlier that Russian forces had launched four missiles and nearly two dozen attack drones from occupied regions of the country in the south overnight. Ukraine's military downed 15 drones and one of the missiles, it said in a statement.

The gallery said on social media the attack had occurred on the museum's 124th birthday and the facility would be closed



Firefighters working to extinguish a fire in a building following a late strike in Odesa on Sunday (AFP)

until further notice.

The governor of the Odesa region, Oleg Kiper, said most of the collection had already been removed during the war. "Cannases and paintings from the current exhibition were not damaged," he added on social media.

A woman who lived in a nearby building said she and her family were away during the

strike but their home had been damaged.

"God led us away. We'll see what happens in the flat next. Out of five windows, I have none left," the woman, who gave her name only as Svitlana, told AFP.

Interior Minister Igor Klymenko meanwhile said the overnight attacks had also damaged 20 residential buildings and

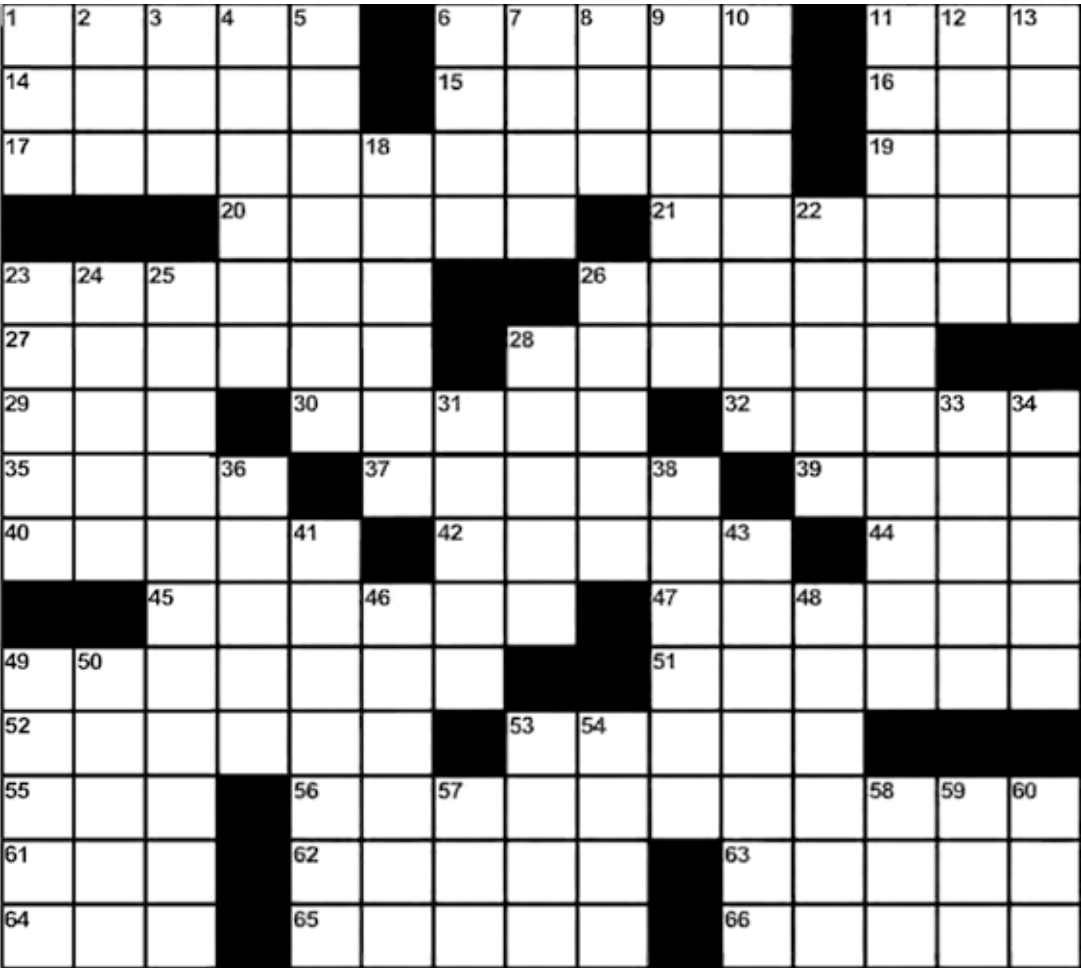
infrastructure facilities.

Eight people were wounded in the Odesa region, he said.

Kiper also said that the strikes had ignited fires at warehouses and on trucks carrying grain but the flames had been extinguished. Fears are building in Ukraine that Moscow will again launch systematic attacks.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) Comments that sting
6) "Donna" or "vera" opening
11) Infant's soft food
14) Become waterlogged
15) Continental cash
16) The whole shootin' match
17) Littering thieves?
19) Lead-in for "Bravo"
20) Functioning currently
21) Worthy of holy veneration
23) Units of light flow
26) Nerve cells
27) Negative battery terminals
28) Card carrier
29) French vineyard
30) One of Satan's minions
32) Feline nickname
35) Show of affection
37) Kind of typing
39) Metric weight
40) Type of grain
42) Trousers fold
44) Thanksgiving dinner request
45) Checked IDs
47) Core groups?

49) More saline
51) Catches on to
52) Up and at 'em
53) Cancel, as a liftoff
55) Bird in the "Arabian Nights"
56) Like delicious chow for a chow?
61) Seek an answer
62) Not perfectly round
63) Piano specialist
64) Various guys
65) High times?
66) One for the books?

DOWN

1) Network on the telly
2) "Mode" lead-in
3) Become decayed
4) Mollycoddled
5) Astounded
6) Cribbage needs
7) _of thumb
8) CP A's nest-egg suggestion
9) Food tidbit
10) Battery's partner in crime?
11) Payments for some high-maintenance birds?

12) "Men in Black" creature
13) Walks laboriously
18) Autumn apple
22) Haunted house noise
23) Is deficient
24) Tear open, ironically
25) What the rodent match-making club wants?
26) John _ Gamer (FDR's first veep)
28) Is willing to
31) One with a long, sad face
33) Censor's insertion
34) Lotus position instructors
36) They prevent mattress sags
41) Used the fitting room
43) Castle features
46) From the beginning
48) Racket-stringer's material, once
49) Silverman of comedy
50) Left one's seat
53) Once more, country-style?
54) Physiques, informally
57) Baby's first word,

sometimes
58) Ms. Yoko

59) " ... _ the fields we go ..."
60) Empty, as a well

NOTE PAD

A	L	E	R	T	A	W	A	S	H	V	I	E
D	E	B	A	R	F	O	L	I	O	A	N	D
S	U	B	D	I	S	T	R	I	C	T	T	A
R	E	B	U	K	E	R	S	C	O	N	C	E
E	V	O	K	E	D	C	O	R	O	N	A	
C	A	R	E	T	D	O	N	U	T	N	E	O
O	D	D	S	W	I	N	E	D	A	C	E	R
N	E	E	S	A	V	E	S	W	E	I	R	D
R	A	M	R	O	D	S	O	R	T	I	E	
D	I	S	R	U	P	T	A	N	N	O	Y	E
A	N	T	E	D	K	N	I	T				
C	P	A	G	O	I	N	G	T	O	T	O	W
H	U	T	E	R	R	O	L			N	O	V
A	T	E	S	K	A	T	E	S	T	A	R	T

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Try to be the person who takes on the more passive role in today's activities. This isn't the greatest time for heavy action for you. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Let someone else call the shots for a while and see how it feels. You might find that you like it a lot. You shouldn't let anyone boss you around, but there's no reason to feel threatened if someone else has a better idea than you do. Your ego can handle it and your energy will be invigorated by it

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

When a friend or loved one gets in a bind, it's only natural that you feel protective and want to defend them. But before you leap up and do your best impression of a mother bear protecting her cubs, stop and wait for them to ask you for help. Chances are they won't. You can't take responsibility for other people, no matter how much you think they need your help. Let them fight their own battles and learn from their own mistakes.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You could have some time to play with today, so what kind of game are you in the mood for? If you do something fun that's also physical, you're sure to have a fabulous time. You get bonus points if you can take part in a sporting activity with friends you haven't seen in a long while. Everyone is in the mood to blow off some steam and get competitive without it getting out of hand. Few things will feel as rewarding today as playing with some of your favorite people.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which of these are creatures from Greek mythology that had the head and body of a woman and the wings and feet of a bird?
- A. Lutenists
B. Pianists
C. Trumpeters
D. Harpies
02. Where would you hear the word "chukka" used?
- A. In a chicken coop
B. At the door of a night club
C. To describe someone who has had too much to drink
D. At a polo match
03. Which author, poet, playwright, actor, Shintoist and nationalist committed seppuku in 1970 after declaring "Long live the Emperor"?
- A. Yukio Mishima
B. George Takei
C. Noriyuki "Pat" Morita
D. Shūji Terayama

Answers: 1. D 2. D 3. A

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Today, the act of selflessly helping others will help you get rid of a lot of guilty feelings that your recent prosperity has given you. You shouldn't feel the need to justify what you have, but you should definitely remind yourself how lucky you are. Put your needs behind the needs of others today and you'll feel better about your place in the world. You will help create more balance and give yourself something else to be proud of.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Someone else's lack of good judgment could turn your perfectly fine day into a pretty lousy one. But you have some amazing friends in your corner, and they can lift you out of any blue mood quickly. When a mistake gets made, call up your sweetest friend and give them the scoop. Their comments will surprise you and send you happily all the way back to your tasks. Friends are like the perfect mini vacation in a day of possible stress.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

All signs are pointing to you taking a positive journey. Some sort of geographical change is coming your way and it will bring a smile to your face. If a business trip is already in the works, you can expect it to go well, and the higher-ups will reward you for the role you played in it. And if your upcoming travel is devoted to pleasure, you should prepare yourself for a fantastic time. You deserve it.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

In order to boost your attitude, you should try to be more active in social situations. This means that you have to start calling the shots. Take the initiative in the group and make a few suggestions about where to go and what to do. Everyone else is looking for a change just as much as you are, and the only way to have a new experience is to consult a new source. That's where you come in! Pipe up for once and tell everyone what you think would be a fun thing to do.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

There could be too many strangers in your daily life right now. It's time for you to acknowledge those unfamiliar faces and try to turn one or two of them into casual acquaintances. Say hello the next time you see that person. They recognize you, you recognize them, so what's the problem? It's easy to break the ice. It's all about living life to its fullest and doing your best to connect with another human being.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Relationship issues could come to the forefront today when it feels like someone isn't being completely honest with you. It's time to reevaluate the situation and ask yourself if this person is adding anything valuable to your life or only contributing chaos. Do they make you happy or confused? If they make you happy, this tense situation is just a phase you're going through together now. Don't worry about it. But if they add only chaos and confuse you, it's time to end cut them loose.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Are you being careful enough about where you put your money and your trust? Now is not the time to get paranoid, but you should be very careful in any business deals you're working on right now. These deals could be anything from something major like a corporate buyout to something more modest like the purchase of an expensive item. You need to feel good about what you're doing and what you're planning to do today. Put off signing on any dotted lines at least until tomorrow.

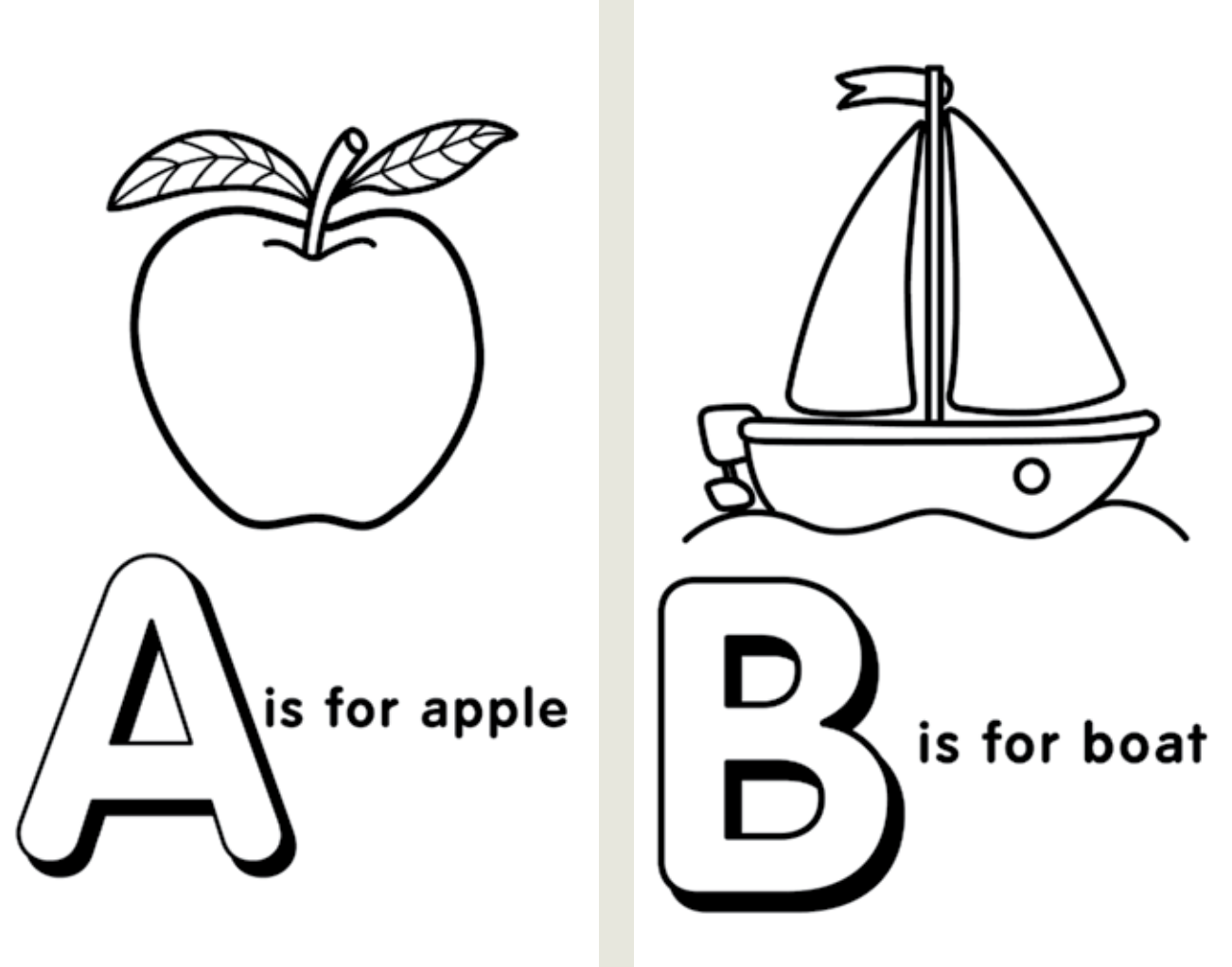
SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Big news could be coming your way, but try not to overreact when you hear it. Other people are going to be watching you for clues about how they should react, and if you amp up the emotion, they're sure to follow suit. Stay cool, calm, and collected no matter what the news. Carry on as you normally would and roll with any punches that come along. It might be hard to hide what you really feel, so if you have to talk about your reaction, at least try to play it down.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Little changes you make in your life now can create larger, more inspiring changes down the road, so don't assume that you always have to make major revisions in order to make a major difference. Once the ball gets rolling, you can follow it to some amazing adventures. You just need patience. Start small. Instead of leaping out of your rut, just nudge your way a little to the side. Sometimes reaching a smaller goal is much more valuable than reaching a big one.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

A	E	S	E
R	D	A	D
M	R	R	I
A	D	M	E

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

7	2			1	6			
		3	2	8				
6			4	3				
		4			3			8
	7	9				5	3	
5			7			4		
				9	1			7
			6		2	9		
			5	4			8	2

WORD BUILDER



You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

2	8	3	7	4	9	1	6	
4	1	6	2	8	9	7	5	3
7	5	9	1	6	3	2	4	8
1	2	4	6	9	7	8	3	5
9	3	5	4	2	8	6	1	7
8	6	7	3	5	1	4	9	2
6	7	2	5	4	3	1	8	9
5	9	1	8	7	2	3	6	4
3	4	8	9	1	6	5	2	7



'IT'S A HUGE HONOUR TO EQUAL MY HERO'S RECORD'

Kohli matches Tendulkar's mark of 49 one-day international hundreds

Kolkata, India - Virat Kohli said he felt "honoured" to equal "hero" Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 one-day international hundreds during India's 243-run World Cup rout of fellow semi-finalists South Africa on Sunday.

Kohli, on his 35th birthday, made a superbly paced 101 not out in a total of 326-5 after India captain Rohit Sharma won the toss on a tricky pitch at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

India, who have now won all eight of their pool play matches so far and are guaranteed to finish top of the 10-team table, then dismissed South Africa for just 83 in 27.1 overs, with left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja taking 5-33.

During the innings break, the now retired Tendulkar, acknowledged his fellow batting great's feat on X, formerly Twitter.

"Well played Virat," said Tendulkar, whom Kohli lifted on his shoulders in celebration after they were team-mates in India's 2011 World Cup final win.

"It took me 365 days to go

from 49 to 50 (years old) earlier this year. I hope you go from 49 to 50 and break my record in the next few days. Congratulations."

It had taken Kohli 277 innings to score 49 hundreds and his first chance to get to a 50th will be in the last group game against the Netherlands next weekend.

"Tendulkar's tweet is quite

gin was all the more impressive given South Africa, whose only defeat in the tournament before this match was a shock loss to the Netherlands, are second in the 10-team table and already assured of a last four spot themselves.

"It was a big game," said Kohli. "We were probably playing the

Former India opener Sunil Gavaskar said Kohli's ability to rise to the occasion reminded him of celebrated England all-rounder Ian Botham's comeback to international duty in a 1986 Test against New Zealand at the Oval following a suspension for recreational drug use.

Botham took a wicket with his first ball and then dismissed Jeff Crowe to surpass Australia legend Dennis Lillee's world record tally of 355 Test wickets.

"At which point Graham Gooch who was also playing in the (England) team asked him 'who writes your scripts?'," said Gavaskar.

"And that is the question Kohli should be asked - 'who has written your script where on your birthday you score your 49th (hundred) to equal your hero?' An incredible script."

Former South Africa captain Faf du Plessis, also commenting for Star Sports, said Kohli was a "master of playing spin in these conditions".

AFF



India's Virat Kohli plays a shot during his knock of 101 against South Africa on Sunday (AFP)

We were probably playing the toughest team in the tournament so far, there was motivation for doing well. People made it a bit more special on my birthday.

VIRAT KOHLI

special," said Kohli. "It's all too much to take in for now. It's a huge honour to equal my hero's record. He's perfection with the bat. It's an emotional moment. I know the days I come from, I know the days I have watched him on TV.

"To receive appreciation from him means a lot to me."

India's colossal winning mar-

toughest team in the tournament so far, there was motivation for doing well.

"People made it a bit more special on my birthday. I had a sense of it being something more."

He added: "The message from the management was for me to bat deep, I was happy from that perspective."

Shanto shines as Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka after Mathews 'timed out' row

New Delhi, India - Sri Lanka batsman Angelo Mathews became the first player to be given "timed out" in the 146-year history of international cricket on Monday in a fiery World Cup clash won by Bangladesh.

Chasing 280 for victory, Bangladesh rode on a 169-run stand between Najmul Hasan Shanto (90) and skipper Shakib Al Hasan (82) to reach their target with three wickets and 53 balls to spare.

The result sealed Sri Lanka's exit from the semi-final race but Mathews' dismissal overshadowed the result after he was adjudged "timed out" for taking longer than the regulation two minutes to take strike when he arrived at the crease to bat.

The dismissal contributed to a tense atmosphere.

Shanto and Sri Lanka's Sadeera Samarawickrama were involved in a verbal exchange and had to be separated by the umpires.

Later, Sri Lankan players sur-



Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews speaks with Bangladesh players after he was timed out in their match (AFP)

rounded the umpires demanding a ball change as the game got away from them.

Mathews had come into bat after the fall of Samarawickrama in the 25th over but was unable to secure his helmet strap tightly

enough, an action which delayed the resumption of play.

As a result, Shakib appealed for the wicket.

On-field umpires Marais Erasmus and Richard Illingworth talked to both teams before the

decision was upheld.

The 36-year-old Mathews reluctantly trudged off with most spectators appearing bemused by the decision.

Shakib was later voted man of the match.

Sri Lanka sacks cricket board days after India thrashing

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka's sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe sacked the national cricket board on Monday, days after a humiliating defeat by India at the World Cup.

Ranasinghe has been at loggerheads with Sri Lanka Cricket - the richest sports organisation on the financially stricken island - for months over allegations of widespread corruption.

The country's 1996 World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga has been appointed chairman of a new interim board, Ranasinghe's office said in a statement.

"Sports minister Roshan



Arjuna Ranatunga has been appointed chairman of a new interim board

Ranasinghe has formed an interim committee for Sri Lanka Cricket," the statement said.

The new seven-member panel also includes a retired

supreme court judge and a former board president.

The move came a day after the board's second-highest officer, secretary Mohan de Silva,

quit. Ranasinghe publicly demanded the entire board's resignations after Sri Lanka's 302-run World Cup thrashing by hosts India last week.

Sri Lanka were at one point 14-6 and were all out for 55, the fourth-lowest World Cup total in history, while chasing India's 358 in Mumbai on Thursday.

The defeat prompted a public outcry and police have been deployed outside the board office in Colombo since angry protests on Saturday.

Ranasinghe had said that Sri Lanka Cricket officials had no moral or ethical right to remain in office.

Smith's vertigo adds to Australia concerns

Mumbai, India - Australia star batsman Steve Smith revealed Monday that he had suffered a fresh attack of vertigo, a condition that has affected him several times in recent years.

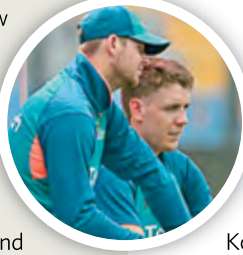
The 34-year-old former Australia captain was hopeful of being fit to face Afghanistan in Tuesday's World Cup match at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium but appeared to suffer further discomfort during net practice on Monday and was seen sitting head bowed, under a canopy, on the outfield.

"I've had a bit of vertigo stuff the last day or so, so it's just been a bit annoying," Smith told reporters shortly before the training session.

"Occasionally, I've had a few episodes, so I can tell you it's not the funniest space to be in, but yeah, I'll go out and have a hit and hopefully be OK and we'll see how we go," he

added. If Smith is given the all-clear, it would mean Australia had all 15 members of their squad available, with Mitchell Marsh having returned to India following the death of his grandfather.

Marsh's fellow all-rounder Glenn Maxwell is in contention again after missing the victory over England last time out in bizarre fashion having suffered concussion as a result of falling off a golf buggy.



Australia's Steve Smith (L) with Cameron Green



Rob Walter

South Africa can 'turn tables' after huge India defeat

Kolkata, India - South Africa coach Rob Walter insisted they could "turn the tables" if they meet India again in the World Cup despite a colossal 243-run defeat by the unbeaten hosts.

The Proteas are second in the standings of the 10-team event and, like leaders India, were already into the semi-finals before Sunday's pool game in Kolkata.

But they were, in Walter's words, "out-skilled" by a "hell of a team", India star Virat Kohli equalling Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 one-day international hundreds with 101 not out in an imposing total of 326-5 on an awkward surface at Eden Gardens.

As if that was not bad enough, South Africa were then dismissed for just 83 by a powerful India attack that only days earlier had skittled out Sri Lanka for an even more meagre 55. It was South Africa's second-lowest ODI total and lowest in a World Cup.

Lower-order batsman Marco Jansen top-scored with 14 as left-

arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja took 5-33.

South Africa could yet face India, who've now won all eight of their pool games so far, again in a semi-final or even the November 19 final in Ahmedabad.

Walter, however, was adamant the Proteas would benefit from this experience rather than be scarred by a colossal defeat.

"This game is a funny game and you get taught new lessons every single day and get surprised every single day," South Africa white-ball coach Walter told reporters. "So, it wouldn't surprise me if the tables turned the next time around."

"The beauty of it is there may well be another shot for us and we've been given an opportunity to learn from that," he added.

Jansen had a chastening match in his primary role of new-ball bowler.

The towering left-arm quick conceded 17 runs in his first over, with the 23-year-old finishing with costly figures of 1-94 in 9.4 overs.

AFF

Mercedes car doesn't deserve to win: Wolff

Sao Paulo, Brazil - Team boss Toto Wolff slammed his Mercedes outfit's car and Brazilian Grand Prix performance on Sunday, claiming it was akin to a three-wheeler and "does not deserve to win" a race this year.

A visibly shaken and angry Wolff said the team's performance in Sao Paulo, where they won last year's race and had hoped for a similar result this year, was "inexcusable".

In a race dominated by three-time champion Max Verstappen and Red Bull, Lewis Hamilton struggled home eighth and George Russell, the 2022 victor, retired.

"An inexcusable performance," said Wolff. "I don't have words for that. That car finished second last week and whatever we did to it was horrible.

"Lewis survived out there, but not George - I can only feel for the two driving such a miserable thing.

"It shows how difficult the car is. It's on a knife's edge. We've got to develop it better for next year because it can't be that within seven days you finish on the podium as one of the two quickest cars and then you're nowhere near finishing."

Speaking to Sky Sports F1, he added: "We're clearly not world champions on sprint race weekends. We do some good work on track to get it done, but still it doesn't explain what went wrong.



Toto Wolff

That car finished second last week and whatever we did to it was horrible

TOTO WOLFF

"That car almost drove like it was on three wheels -- not on four.

"This car doesn't deserve a win. We need to push for the last two races and recover."

Hamilton, who drove conservatively to preserve his tyres, said: "It didn't feel as disastrous as yesterday when I literally had no tyres left -- they were worn to zero and I feel like I drove a better race in terms of managing the tyres.

"There are moments it works and moments it doesn't and it's so inconsistent... And we are so slow on the straights and really slow on the corners."

SWIATEK IN FINAL

World No 2 beats top-ranked Sabalenka in WTA Finals semifinals

Cancún, Mexico - Second-ranked Iga Swiatek defeated world number one Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 6-2 on Sunday to reach the title match of the WTA Finals, where she will face fellow unbeaten Jessica Pegula.

By downing the reigning Australian Open champion, Swiatek denied Sabalenka a victory that would have clinched the year-end top ranking for the 25-year-old from Belarus.

Instead, reigning French Open champion Swiatek of Poland can claim the year-end world number one spot for the second consecutive season by defeating American Pegula in Monday's championship match.

"I feel like it's still a long way away because I feel like tomorrow's match will be the toughest one," Swiatek said. "We can talk about it tomorrow after the match. I'm just going to continue doing what I've been doing."

Sabalenka overtook Swiatek for the top ranking two months ago but would keep it only if Pegula wins.

Pegula beat compatriot Coco Gauff 6-2, 6-1 in an hour on Saturday to reach the WTA Finals championship match, stretching her overall win streak to nine matches.

Swiatek owns a 5-3 career edge over Pegula in their rivalry but the American has won two of their three meetings this year, at the United Cup and in an August semi-final on Montreal hardcourts. Swiatek beat Pegula in this year's Doha final.

AFP



Poland's Iga Swiatek celebrates after defeating Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus on Sunday (AFP)

Verstappen takes 13th win of the season in Brazil as Alonso snatches third on the line

Sao Paulo, Brazil - Max Verstappen secured his 17th win in a record-breaking season on Sunday, resisting early pressure from Lando Norris to triumph in an accident and incident-hit Sao Paulo Grand Prix.

Red Bull's three-time world champion came home 8.277 seconds ahead of McLaren's Norris on a sunlit afternoon at a packed Interlagos circuit.

Behind them, Fernando Alonso snatched third for Aston Martin by just 0.053 seconds from Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull.

Alonso and Perez provided a thrilling finale as they battled through the final laps before the Spaniard regained the podium position and held the Mexican at bay as they roared across the line.

Lance Stroll finished fifth in the second Aston Martin ahead of Carlos Sainz of Ferrari, whose team-mate Charles Leclerc



Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen celebrates on the podium after winning the Formula One Brazil Grand Prix on Sunday (AFP)

crashed out on the formation lap, and Pierre Gasly of Alpine.

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton finished eighth for Mercedes after a race-long survival battle against degrading tyres ahead of Alpha Tauri's Yuki Tsunoda and Esteban Ocon in the second Alpine.

For Verstappen, it was his 52nd career win, lifting him one clear of four-time champion Alain Prost on the list of all-time winners. "It was really good," said Verstappen. "A well-executed race by the team, perfect pit-stops and well done I think. I had two good starts which was very important and then managed the tyres."

For Norris it was a seventh podium this year and 13th of his career, the most by any driver without recording a victory.

"I couldn't have done any better," Norris said. "P2 is as good as it gets nowadays. So, I'm happy with that. Max always had an an-

swer."

Alonso held off Perez after the two swapped places twice in the closing laps.

"It was like 30 laps of pressure from Checo! When he passed me two laps from the end, I thought a podium was not possible and it was gone, but I got it back," said the Spaniard.

After the extreme weather of Friday and Saturday, the race began in moderate conditions with a track temperature of 46 degrees and the air at 23 as Verstappen took the lead from his 11th pole of the year.

By then, the luckless Leclerc was already out. He lost hydraulics on the formation lap, smacking into the barriers and damaging his front wing. "Why am I so unlucky?" he asked.

Without a front-row rival, Verstappen powered away but a collision involving Williams' Alex Albon and Kevin Magnussen of Haas brought a red flag.

Closing eagle lifts Van Rooyen to PGA Tour title in Mexico

Los Cabos, Mexico - South Africa's Erik van Rooyen, inspired by a sick friend, rolled in a long eagle putt at the final hole to grab an emotional two-shot triumph Sunday in the US PGA Tour World Wide Technology Championship in Mexico.

Van Rooyen saved his best for last in claiming a second US tour title to go with his 2021 Baracuda Championship win.

He played the last five holes in five-under, playing the back nine in eight-under 28 on the way to a nine-under par 63 and a 27-under par total of 261 at Cardonal at Diamante in Los Cabos - the first Tiger Woods-designed course to be used for a PGA Tour event. His walk-off eagle gave him a two-shot triumph over third-round co-leaders Matt Kuchar and Camilo Villegas.

"I was calm because there's bigger stuff in life than golf," said van Rooyen, breaking down in



Erik van Rooyen

tears as he explained that dear friend Jon Trasamar is battling cancer. "Every shot out there today was for him," van Rooyen said. "When you're playing for something bigger than winning some silly trophy it puts it in perspective and at the end of the day whether I won here or I lost here it really didn't matter."

Durant leads Suns to NBA victory while Cavaliers end mastery of Warriors

Washington, United States - Kevin Durant scored 41 points to lead the Phoenix Suns over Detroit and former Suns coach Monty Williams on Sunday while Britain's O.G. Anunoby sparked Toronto's stunning NBA rally at San Antonio.

Toronto made a 22-point fightback to beat the Spurs 123-116 in overtime while the Cleveland Cavaliers sparked as well, snapping a 12-game regular-season losing streak to Golden State dating to Christmas 2016.

Durant added five assists, four rebounds, three blocked shots

and a steal to power the Suns past the host Pistons 120-106.

"He was terrific, scored the ball every way you can, really wants it," Suns coach Frank Vogel said. "Just a really terrific performance. He's really good at basketball and he showed it tonight."

The Suns outscored Detroit in every quarter as Eric Gordon contributed 21 points and eight assists for Phoenix, which snapped a three-game losing skid. Cade Cunningham led Detroit with 26 points in the first regular-season matchup be-

tween the Suns and their former coach Williams.

After Williams was fired as the Suns' coach following a second-round playoff exit last season, Detroit signed him to a six-year deal worth \$78.5 million.

The Suns were without Bradley Beal, sidelined by back spasms, and Devin Booker, out with a calf strain.

At Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points and Darius Garland added 24 to power the Cavaliers over Golden State 115-104.

"The biggest thing for us is

that we put together a full game," Mitchell said. "We fought hard. That's a tough team. They have a lot of guys who have won championship rings and we're trying to get to that level. We've got to continue this momentum."

Evan Mobley added a game-high 16 rebounds for the Cavs.

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 28 points, hitting 7-of-11 shots from 3-point range, while Draymond Green added 18 points for Golden State, which saw a five-game win streak ended.

AFP



Kevin Durant of Phoenix Suns drives to the basket during the game against the Detroit Pistons on Sunday (AFP)

'FREEDOM FOR DAD'

Diaz implores group to release kidnapped father after saving Liverpool from Luton shock

London, United Kingdom - Luis Diaz saved Liverpool from a shock defeat at Luton in a 1-1 draw on Sunday on his first appearance since his parents were kidnapped in his native Colombia.

The winger was introduced as a substitute moments after Tahith Chong had given Luton a stunning lead 10 minutes from time.

Diaz's soaring leap and header five minutes into stoppage time denied the Hatters their first ever home win in the Premier League.

His mother was rescued

It is wonderful he wanted to be here. It's a wonderful moment but it doesn't change the situation. The most important thing is his father is released

JURGEN KLOPP

within hours of her capture on October 28, but the search goes on for his father Luis Manuel Diaz. The 26-year-old revealed a t-shirt saying "freedom for Dad" after scoring and again at full-time.

"It's a wonderful moment but it doesn't change the situation," said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp. "The most important thing is his father is released.

"It is wonderful he wanted to be here. For us a super important goal and for him very important and emotional, but that's it."

Diaz's remarkable show of



Liverpool's Luis Diaz scores against Luton Town on Sunday (AFP)

strength glossed over a poor performance and result for the Reds.

Liverpool spent more on each of their starting midfield trio this summer than Luton have in the

transfer market since the advent of the Premier League in 1992.

Yet, Rob Edwards' men were seconds away from one of the biggest shocks in Premier League

history.

Darwin Nunez struck the crossbar early on for the visitors.

But it was a spectacular miss with the score still level at 0-0

that will haunt the Uruguayan.

Mohamed Salah should also have scored with a free header from close range 20 minutes from time.

But when the Egyptian's effort fell to Nunez, he somehow

blazed over with the goal gaping.

Instead it was Chong who opened the scoring in controver-

sial fashion.

Liverpool were screaming for a penalty for handball against Ross Barkley at a corner as Luton broke upfield and Issa Kabore crossed for the former Manchester United winger to slot home.

Diaz was then summoned from the bench and in a fairytale ending grabbed the equaliser when he met Harvey Elliott's cross to the back post.

Liverpool missed the chance to go second in the table but edged up to third, above Arsenal on goal difference.

A point takes Luton out of the relegation zone.

Earlier, Nottingham Forest stunned Aston Villa with their first Premier League win in seven games as Ola Aina and Orel Mangala struck in a deserved 2-0 win. The sides came into the match in very different form as Villa's six-game unbeaten league run had taken Unai Emery's men to fifth in the table.

However, Villa made a terrible start when Aina found the bottom corner from outside the box after five minutes and the visitors never recovered.

Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez picked up the prize for the world's best goalkeeper at the Ballon d'Or ceremony earlier this week for his heroics in helping Argentina to World Cup glory last year. Yet it was an error from Martinez that gifted Forest their second goal as he got a hand to Mangala's strike, but did not do enough to divert the ball to safety as it looped back into his goal.



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior (R) battles for the ball with Rayo Vallecano's Oscar Valentin (AFP)

'No drama' says Madrid's Ancelotti despite Rayo draw

Barcelona, Spain - Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said there was "no drama" despite his team failing to build on their Clasico triumph, dropping two points in La Liga's title race with a 0-0 derby draw against Rayo Vallecano on Sunday.

Los Blancos spurned several chances as they drove Rayo back throughout at the Santiago Bernabeu but could not find the last-gasp winner they so often manage to produce.

The draw leaves Madrid second, two points behind shock leaders Girona, who came from behind to beat Osasuna, and two ahead of Barcelona after the Catalans' fortunate win over Real Sociedad on Saturday.

"In the table we are doing very well, we're in the fight, we're doing very well in the Champions League - there is no drama," Ancelotti told reporters.

"We're confident, we will do things well, like we always do, like we did today."

The Italian said the result was

not fair on his team, who could not find the goal they craved.

"We're hurt by the result, not the performance, clearly it was a game we deserved to win," added Ancelotti.

"We tried in every way, and it

We're hurt by the result, not the performance, clearly it was a game we deserved to win. We tried in every way, and it didn't come off, we tried until the last second

CARLO ANCELOTTI

didn't come off, we tried until the last second."

Ancelotti lined up with the energetic Eduardo Camavinga replacing injured holding midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni, as well as starting Luka Modric in place of Toni Kroos.

Real Madrid took the game to their neighbours from the off, with Rayo Vallecano's Macedonian goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski

kept extremely busy.

He made a superb save to thwart Fede Valverde who burst through on goal early on.

Madrid had an early scare when Jude Bellingham, the league's top goalscorer with 10

Benzema's misfiring Al Ittihad beaten

Dubai, United Arab Emirates - Karim Benzema's Al Ittihad suffered their first defeat in this season's Asian Champions League when they were beaten 2-0 by Air Force Club in Iraq on Monday to pile the pressure on manager Nuno Espirito Santo.

The current Saudi Arabian champions, struggling in the Saudi Pro League, went into the match in Erbil boasting a 100 percent record in Group C after defeating Air Force Club 1-0 in Jeddah last month.

However, goals at the Franso Hariri Stadium from Ali Jasim and Mohannad Abdulaheem pulled the hosts to within two points of the group leaders after four matches. Back-to-back Asian champions in 2004 and 2005, Ittihad fell behind to the dominant home side one minute before half-time, when Jasim fired home Abdulaheem's cut-back.

In Group D, four-time winners Al Hilal maintained their unbeaten record with a 2-0 win against Mumbai City in India and advanced to the knockout stages.

Winger Michael opened the scoring just after the hour at the DY Patil Stadium before Aleksandar Mitrovic doubled the visitors' advantage in the 85th minute. Mumbai City, who lost the corresponding fixture last month 6-0, had defender Mehtab Singh sent off nine minutes into the second half for a second bookable offence.

Juve squeeze past Fiorentina to keep pace with leaders Inter

Milan, Italy - Juventus kept pace with Serie A leaders Inter Milan thanks to Sunday's 1-0 win at Fiorentina in a match controversially played despite deadly floods, while Romelu Lukaku fired Roma to a late 2-1 win over Lecce.

Massimiliano Allegri's side are two points behind Inter after a hard-fought win in Florence earned thanks to Fabio Miretti's first goal for the club in the 10th minute. "I'm happy because I was looking for it for a long time and finally it's arrived. I hope others are going to come," said Miretti to DAZN.

It was a classic Juve performance under Allegri, whose team were content to sit back and soak up wave after wave of attack from their profligate hosts and try to strike on the break.

Juve have kept six clean sheets in as many matches since shipping four goals at Sassuolo in



Fabio Miretti scores against Fiorentina on Sunday (AFP)

late September and without European football they look Inter's most credible rivals for this season's Scudetto, with the pair meeting in Turin after this month's international break.

"You also have to win games on the back foot, with good defending," said Allegri.

Sunday's match took place amid protests from a section of Fiorentina's hardcore support and even the mayor of Florence who had both demanded the fixture be postponed following the serious damage wrought across Tuscany by Storm Ciaran.

AFP

Stuttgart lose ground on leaders in shock defeat to Heidenheim

Berlin, Germany - Heidenheim striker Tim Kleindienst scored from the centre circle as the promoted Bundesliga side stunned high-flying neighbours Stuttgart with a 2-0 win on Sunday.

Kleindienst's brilliant long-range strike in injury time handed the underdogs a famous win as the two south-western clubs met for the first time in Germany's top flight.

"We made too many mistakes today and in the end it's fair to say they deserved to win," Stuttgart goalkeeper Alexander Nuebel told DAZN after watching Kleindienst's shot sail over his head into the goal.

"We were catastrophic going



Heidenheim's Tim Kleindienst (C) celebrates after scoring against Stuttgart on Sunday (AFP)

forward today," added striker Deniz Undav.

Stuttgart, who had been the surprise package of this season with seven wins from their first

eight games, have now lost two regional derbies in a row after defeat to Hoffenheim last weekend.

They remain in third after Sunday's loss, but have slipped seven points behind league leaders Bayer Leverkusen and five behind champions Bayern Munich in second.

In Sunday's early game, US international Kevin Paredes scored a rare Bundesliga goal as Wolfsburg were held 2-2 at home by Werder Bremen.

Wolfsburg midfielder Paredes, 20, found the net for the first time this season as Niko Kovac's side came from behind to end a run of three straight defeats in the league.

RENAISSANCE SERVICES TAKE LEAD AT OMAN GOLF LEAGUE

Muscat - Renaissance Services emerged as the front-runners, accumulating 97 points in the first round of the Oman Golf Corporate League Al Mouj Golf. They were closely followed by Marafiq with 97 points, and Omantel were third place with 94 points. The event featured an impressive line-up of teams representing various industries including banking, oil and gas, telecommunications, and logistics.

Hole-in-one lit up the green as several individual performances shined on the course of Oman Golf Corporate League. Alistair Stock from Marafiq won the closest-to-pin award, while Ahmed Al Wahaibi from Medco LLC claimed the longest drive

award on hole 15. Securing his spot at the top, Abhishek Kalla from Europcar Oman clinched the best overall individual performance with a stellar 39 stableford points.

The tournament will run for five months, with teams from more than 14 leading businesses in Oman competing over 18 holes each month at the Sultanate's first links-style course, highlighting not only the golfing talent in the corporate world but also bringing people from across industries together.

Nasser al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said "We were delighted with the participation and outcomes of the Oman Golf League's inaugural round, a unique event that is already set

to become a benchmark for golf events in Oman. Our goal was to enable individuals and companies to foster connections through an unparalleled golfing experience - congratulations to this month's champions. I eagerly await the next rounds at our premier golfing destination."

The second round will be held on November 17.



Teams from more than 14 leading businesses are competing in the Oman Golf League



Barcelona coach Xavi (R) speaks to young player Lamine Yamal

Barcelona target early Champions League progress

Barcelona, Spain - After two years of misery in the Champions League group stage, Barcelona have the chance to book their place in the knockout rounds against Shakhtar Donetsk on Tuesday in Hamburg.

The Spanish champions can guarantee progress with a fourth consecutive victory in Group H, something they have not managed since 2021, when they were knocked out by Kylian Mbappe's Paris Saint-Germain in the last 16.

Undoubtedly Barcelona have improved since Xavi arrived in November that year, winning La Liga last season,

but they have still struggled in Europe and lacked the sparkle many, including the coach, wishes to see in their game.

Consecutive 5-0 wins over Real Betis in La Liga and Royal Antwerp in the Champions League in September were the high point of the club's season so far, but they have not produced that football on a consistent basis.

Despite strolling around Shakhtar in the first half of their 2-1 win at home in October, the Catalans did not put the game to bed and suffered in the final stages as the Ukrainians sought a leveller.

AFP

PSG's Donnarumma braced for fierce reception as he returns to crisis-club Milan

Milan, Italy - Gianluigi Donnarumma will be given a fierce reception on Tuesday when he faces crisis-club AC Milan at the San Siro for the first time since jumping ship for Paris Saint-Germain and becoming public enemy number one.

Donnarumma enraged Milan supporters when he left as a free agent just over two years ago, costing the seven-time European champions a hefty transfer fee for a goalkeeper considered at the time one of the best, if not the best, in the world.

Milan have lost other players in that manner over the past few seasons, including Serie A title-

winning midfielder Franck Kessie, but Donnarumma hurt the most.

The Italy 'keeper signed for Milan as a 14-year-old, became a first-team player at 16 and had repeatedly professed his love for the club, making supporters believe that he would remain a fixture in the way Gianluigi Buffon had at Juventus.

Instead he refused to bend on wage demands over months of talks and walked away, replaced by PSG academy product Mike Maignan who was crucial to Milan claiming their first title in 11 years in 2022.

However, Maignan's superb



Gianluigi Donnarumma

performances between the sticks did not do anything to dull the anger of the betrayal, while Donnarumma to Mediaset last month, talking about criticism.

"We're all human, obviously

Donnarumma was inundated with boos and whistles on all three occasions he has played at the San Siro with Italy in the last two years, Milan fans in the crowd making their feelings very clear

narumma has failed to convince fans in Paris where he moved after starring in Italy's European Championship triumph.

"It's tough but you need to distance yourself from it," said

Donnarumma was inundated with boos and whistles on all three occasions he has played at the San Siro with Italy in the last two years, Milan fans in the crowd making their feelings very clear and leaving no doubt of the reception he would receive should PSG ever come to town.

Last week Milan's hardcore supporters hinted at the welcome they would give Donnarumma when he takes the field at the San Siro, publishing on their Instagram page a picture of boxes containing material for a pre-match display which will almost certainly be aimed at the 24-year-old.

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CARE AT HOME

STRETCHES

for sciatica

The term sciatica is broadly used to describe pain that involves the sciatic nerve, which runs down the back of the leg. People describe sciatica as a dull, aching, shooting or even burning pain.

You may also have numbness, tingling, muscle weakness or altered reflexes in the affected leg. In mild cases, the pain may only travel down to the thigh, while in severe cases, it is felt all the way down to the foot.

There are two main types of sciatica: mechanical, where something like a bone spur or herniated disc pushes on the nerve, and inflammatory, where swelling due to injury, pregnancy, infection, or another condition applies pressure.

Keeping up an active routine can actually help ease sciatica. However, you can do five simple moves at home to ease your discomfort. Remember to do them regularly, breathe deeply while doing so, and stop them if they tend to cause more pain.



CLAMSHELL STRETCH

- Lie on your side with both knees bent. Tuck your bottom arm under your head to support it.
- Engage your core, drawing in your belly button toward your spine.
- Keeping your feet together, slowly raise your top knee, opening your legs like a clamshell opens. Use your top arm to help steady yourself so you don't roll toward your back.
- Hold 5 to 30 seconds. Lower slowly. That's one rep.

COBRA STRETCH

- Lie on your stomach with your hands under your shoulders and elbows tucked close to your body.
- Inhale as you press into your palms, slowly extending your arms as you lift your head, chest and shoulders. Keep your elbows slightly bent and your chin lifted at all times.
- Tighten the muscles in your core (abs and back) and your thighs.
- Hold 30 seconds. Lower slowly. That's one rep.

CHILD'S POSE STRETCH

- Start on all fours. Bring your knees together as you sink backward, bringing your hips toward your heels.
- Allow your arms to extend so they are outstretched or place them alongside your body in a comfortable position. Allow your forehead to rest on the ground.
- Sink deeper into the stretch, allowing your upper body to relax fully and shifting your weight into your butt and thighs. Don't worry if your butt does not touch your heels.
- Pause, breathing deeply. Imagine the tension leaving your body, especially in the backs of your buttocks.
- Hold for 5 minutes or as long as you like. There's no need to repeat this move, but you can if it feels good to you.

GLUTE BRIDGE STRETCH

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Allow your arms to rest straight at your sides, palms down.
- Tighten your core, drawing in your belly button toward your spine.
- Press your arms into the floor for support and push through your heels, raising your hips toward the ceiling and squeezing your glutes. The goal is for your body to form a straight line from head to knees, with very little arch in the lower back.
- Hold 5 to 30 seconds. Lower slowly. That's one rep.

KNEE-TO-CHEST STRETCH

- Lie on your back with your legs extended. Try not to arch your back.
- Slowly bring one knee toward your chest and grasp it with your hands (behind or on top of the knee).
- Pull on the knee gently until you feel a mild stretch in your lower spine and hip.
- Hold 5 to 30 seconds. Lower slowly. That's one rep.

Cobra Stretch

Prebiotics, probiotics and gut health



VANDANA CHAWLA

NUTRITION & YOU

We often hear the terms, prebiotics and probiotics. Moreover, the concept of taking a daily dose of prebiotics and probiotics to maintain gut health is getting quite popular. The terms may appear similar, but both play a very specific role in gut health.

What are prebiotics and probiotics?

- Prebiotics - These are types of carbohydrates that the human body cannot digest. They serve as food for the good bacteria present in our bodies. These are found in foods like, apples, dates, prunes, apricots, garlic, whole grain foods, lentils, beans, cashews, pistachios, etc.
- Probiotics - They are live bacteria,

which are found in foods and supplements. They provide many health benefits to the body. Foods like yoghurt, kefir, kimchi or kombucha are all good sources.

Benefits of prebiotics

- Better digestive health
- Fewer antibiotic related side-effects
- Improve calcium absorption
- Supports the growth of good bacteria

Benefits of probiotics

- Reduces the risk of antibiotics related diarrhoea
- Better mental health, owing to the link between the gut and brain.
- Better digestive health, particularly in people with intestinal bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Better immunity and improved skin health

For better digestive health, it is very important, that as prebiotics serve as food for probiotics, the right amounts of both should be taken.

How to balance prebiotics and probiotics

- Eat a variety of foods as listed above, that provide both of them.



- Including plain yoghurt with live cultures or probiotics in the daily diet is a great way of including beneficial bacteria.
- Fermented foods if pasteurised, destroy

the good bacteria. Hence, taking them as a source of probiotics may be a waste.

- New research indicates that foods that are dark-coloured like berries, tomatoes,

broccoli, aubergine, etc, contain antioxidants that not only have health benefits related to heart and blood sugar levels but also have an effect on gut bacteria. They change the composition of gut bacteria, making more good bacteria.

- Some spices and herbs like thyme, ginger, rosemary, cinnamon, garlic, chilli, and cardamom all work towards gut health as gut bacteria need the healthy components from these ingredients.
- Dark chocolate contains extra strong antioxidants and works like a probiotic. Good bacteria, like bifido bacteria, are particularly fond of chocolate flavonoids, ferment them, and hence act as probiotics. Eat in moderation - only one small square a day and preferably the one with nuts, or use it as a sprinkler or a dip to go with fresh strawberries.
- Probiotic supplements - There are some supplements that can go up to the large intestines and give good results but some don't even go past the stomach. Also, in some individuals, it may show some untoward symptoms. Hence, before taking remember, all probiotic supplements do not have the same type or combination of bacteria or contain the same quantity of bacteria. Hence, always consult your doctor.

(Vandana Chawla is an Online Nutrition Expert and a Registered Nutritionist-UKVRN)

MIGRAINE

Start a 'Food Diary'



In those moments when the world diminishes in the grip of a migraine, it might be difficult to identify the trigger. But by maintaining a food diary, one can, indeed, confirm or rule out if something in your diet was the cause

If you have been suffering from frequent bouts of migraine and no medication can bring in relief, it might be time to introspect on possible triggers.

Migraine is a debilitating neurological disorder that causes severe head pain, nausea, and extreme sensitivity to light, sound, and smell. People living with migraine miss more days of work, run up higher medical bills, and have an increased risk of other serious conditions than those without the condition.

Many factors can bring on a migraine attack, from stress and poor sleep to changing hormone levels in the menstrual cycle. However, some find that diet does play a role, though it is difficult to pinpoint the culprit on your plate.

According to a recent article in *CNN Healthguides*, many people find their migraine attacks are triggered by specific foods, but it's different for everyone. The best way to see if there's a connection between eating a certain food and having a migraine is at the individual level.

Start a food diary that includes what you eat at what time. If a food triggers a migraine, the time between eating it and onset of an attack is usually 12 to 24 hours. Go

easy on yourself with this exercise. It's difficult for most people to pinpoint food triggers because so many other factors are at play at the same time.

It can help to know the suspected food triggers most commonly reported to the American Migraine Foundation are alcohol, particularly red wine, and chocolate. A solid link has also been established between drinking too

EAT
RIGHT

There is no one proven migraine-friendly diet you can adopt. However, some experts recommend these general guidelines:

- Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Include foods rich in vitamin B12 like eggs and nuts
- Get enough magnesium through spinach and whole grains
- Avoid processed foods
- Eat five or six small portions at regular intervals throughout the day
- Stay hydrated



GOOD HEALTH - MYTHS AND MARKERS



**Dr Madhu
Sivaraman Nair**
*Specialist Orthopaedic
Surgeon*
Badr Al Samaa
Hospital, Ruwi

A paradoxical premise one may wonder, but today people are getting injured, more in their pursuit of health. Also, in today's world, obesity and lifestyle diseases are on the rise, especially due to lack of exercise and improper food habits.

Most people over the age of 40 that I see walking in the parks or on the treadmill, would either have had a cardiac event themselves or seen it happen to someone close to them. And, a glut of articles in print and digital media about lifestyle diseases do cause a sense of misplaced



urgency among them.

Many patients come to our outpatient departments, with aches and pains after a bout of sudden activity or exercise. Most say that they had decided to lose weight or build strength or correct other disorders with exercise. However, it is important to note that a sudden increase in activity or exercise may actually put one in harm's way.

While simple aches and pains, are quite a natural result of such activity, one may suffer grievous injuries like muscle sprains, tears, ligament injuries and even fractures. Patients with hypertension and/or diabetes mellitus may also suffer catastrophic events like heart attacks and strokes - the very complications they were trying to prevent.

Then there are those who believe that losing weight and health are connected, and therefore go on drastic diets, and end up with all sorts of medical problems.

What then should one do? The answer is quite simple: we just have to be smart about what we do.

Tips for good health

- Do not go for drastic diet control. Decrease excess consumption of food by 10% every week or fortnight.

- Avoid or decrease intake of fried food, processed foods, fast food. Go for healthier options like steaming, poaching, grilling rather than frying.
- Vegetables and fruits should be a regular part of one's meals.
- Get advice from a dietician on special diets. Get medical clearance from qualified physician and advice from qualified trainers before starting an exercise regimen.
- Have patience regarding results - losing gaining weight should be a gradual not speedy process. And remember, a toned or muscular body and not necessarily indicators of good health.
- If you develop any problems, however minor, get immediate expert opinion. Never ignore the signals that your body gives you.
- If you suffer an injury, allow your body to recover completely before going back to your workout schedule.
- Get adequate sleep. Rest is a crucial element of good health.
- Ensure adequate hydration. A person may require between 2 - 3 litres of fluids (water is the best) a day. Remember to hydrate during your exercises session with sips of water.




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