

Forum showcases opportunities for investment in private schools

Our Correspondent
Suhar

Ministry of Education (MoE) organised an event called Private Schools Investment Forum in Suhar on Monday.

Dr Ahmed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, Assistant Director of Private Schools Department in North Batinah, stated that the forum aimed to showcase investment mechanisms in private schools, the services these offer and their key governing regulations which was achieved by sharing successful experiences and insights of private



Dr Ahmed bin Abdullah al Ajmi

school investors.

Ajmi informed that North Batinah has 212 private schools in the 2024/2025 academic year, including 58 early education

schools, 91 private schools and nine international schools.

The forum featured presentations on the importance of investing in education and the opportunities available in North Batinah. One presentation focused on Oman Vision 2040 goals in education, while another addressed investing in education for special education students in private institutions.

Additionally, a successful private school investment model was reviewed covering four key areas - facilities, administration, technical support and financial planning.

Holiday sparks travel plans in Oman, abroad

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As the National Day holiday approaches, residents in Oman are eagerly planning getaways, sparking a surge in bookings for both local and international destinations. Travel agencies are reporting a rise in enquiries as holidaymakers consider both short domestic trips and nearby international options.

Asian destinations like Malaysia and Thailand continue to be popular, while new options like Kazakhstan and Armenia are generating interest for their scenic landscapes and rich cultural offerings.

Domestically, Oman's cooler weather with the onset of winter has spurred interest in mountain retreats, desert camps and coastal escapes alike. Many are eyeing trips to Masirah Island, Sur or Ras al Jinz for a nature-focused break.

For some, the preference is to stay close to home. Khalid al Balushi, a banker in Muscat, shared his plans for a local holiday. "I would need at least a week to travel abroad, so I'll be staying in Oman. I'm looking forward to a relaxing staycation in Sharqiyah Sands. It's been a while since I connected with nature." His plan reflects a trend of



local escapes, with many hotels offering special deals to attract staycationers.

Najeeb C P, managing director of a ceramics company, has mixed views on the long weekend. "It's crucial for my team to recharge and return productive," he said. "However, breaks can impact business timelines. This year, I'll be attending an event in India, representing Oman. Long weekends remind me of the value of teamwork and preparation, especially to ensure business runs smoothly while everyone unwinds."

Though enthusiasm runs high, rising airfares are a deterrent for some travellers. Samira Nasser

said, "Fares spike during holidays, so planning ahead is ideal. But holiday dates are often confirmed late, making it tough to avoid peak prices."

For Samira, Sri Lanka is top of the list this holiday. "It's close, easy to reach and visa-friendly. I love the beaches there."

Among domestic destinations, Nizwa, Jabal Akhdar and Jabal Shams continue to attract visitors seeking scenic and cultural experiences, while quick, visa-friendly getaways like Georgia, Azerbaijan and Egypt are popular among international travellers.

A senior sales manager from Global Holidays said, "We have seen more interest in people opt-

ing for inbound travel, which is normal for shorter holidays. We also have enquiries for Dubai, Saudi Arabia and Georgia."

Sreedhu Nair, Director of Sales at Travel Diaries, informed that there was growing anticipation for the holiday announcement. "Excitement is high following the official announcement," he said, noting the interest in short, hassle-free trips with only ten days to go before the holiday starts.

"Many families are favouring local escapes, while Gulf destinations like Qatar alongside countries like Turkey and Cairo are trending among Oman's travellers this holiday season."

Casio Math Challenge 2024 Celebrates Exceptional Mathematical Talent In Oman



Muscat - The second edition of the "CASIO Math Challenge 2024" was a tremendous success. This event showcased the remarkable problem-solving abilities, strategic thinking, and mathematical skills of students from some of Oman's most prestigious institutions.

It was organized by CASIO Middle East and Africa FZE (CMEA), the regional subsidiary of CASIO Computer Co., Ltd. and a leader in educational technology, in partnership with Al Nahar International Co. LLC., CASIO's authorized reseller, and ABQ Azzan Bin Qais International School as the host.

The competition brought together 80 talented high school students from esteemed schools, forming teams that highlighted their exceptional skills and enthusiasm for mathematics, with a strong emphasis on problem-solving and analytical thinking.

Reflecting on the event, Mr Takashi Seimiya, Managing Director of CASIO Middle East and Africa, expressed his excitement about the initiative in Oman. He said, "This collaboration is a testament to our shared commitment to fostering academic excellence and nurturing the next generation of mathematical talent. We are proud of the incredible potential and creativity displayed by all participants and are honored to be part of their academic journey. We firmly believe in the transformative power of education, especially in mathematics, which not only enhances skills but also inspires young minds to explore its limitless possibilities."

Mr Dederick Swart, Principal of the host school ABQ Azzan Bin Qais International School in Muscat, remarked, "At ABQ Education Group, we are deeply committed to nurturing and developing the talents of our students, and

watching students from across Muscat come together with such passion and determination has been one of the highlights of our year so far. It was truly inspiring to see their enthusiasm and dedication in action."

The competition concluded with the announcement of the top three teams:

1. First Place: Beaconhouse school - This team showcased exceptional problem-solving skills, excelling in all rounds of the challenge securing the first and third place.
2. Second Place: ABQ Azzan Bin Qais International - In a close contest, this team impressed judges with their strategic approach and quick solutions to complex problems.

This year's CASIO Math Challenge celebrated the spirit of mathematical inquiry and innovation, inspiring Oman's young minds to reach new academic heights.

Advertorial

MAFWR boosts food security with several initiatives in Dhahirah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has launched a series of initiatives aimed at advancing the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors in Dhahirah. This effort aligns with Oman Vision 2040, supporting the nation's overarching food security goals.

An official from the ministry said the Directorate General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Dhahirah is focusing on programmes and projects that increase productivity in agriculture, livestock and water resources. These initiatives are designed to maximise local resources, empower farmers and foster sustainable growth.

In 2024, the directorate has made substantial progress in crop cultivation, livestock management and water resource development. By September, it had



distributed close to 800 fruit seedlings and 19,500 wild seedlings to local farmers. Additionally, 3,000 fruit seedlings and 4,400 palm seedlings were provided as part of a model farming project, which aims to enhance agricultural output.

The governorate has also achieved a significant milestone in wheat production, ranking third with approximately 249 tonnes harvested from 245 acres

in the 2023-2024 season. To support wheat cultivation, the directorate provides farmers high-yield seeds and field support.

As of September, 13,832 agricultural and animal holdings were registered in Dhahirah, with 10,633 focused on agriculture and 3,199 on livestock. The beekeeping sector is also well-supported with the governorate having 982 licensed beekeepers and 23,457 hives. The directorate of-

fers educational resources, training and conducts field visits to improve beekeeping practices.

In pest management, the directorate has been active in controlling the red palm weevil, treating 4,207 infected trees, removing 924 severely affected trees, and carrying out aerial and ground spraying in vulnerable areas.

Ensuring compliance across sectors, MAFWR's Control Department conducted 88 inspections, identifying and addressing violations in water resources, agriculture and livestock activities to uphold standards. Food safety efforts are ongoing, with the Food Safety and Quality Department holding awareness talks and conducting regular health inspections in food establishments.

In line with its water security goals, the directorate has undertaken a project to rehabilitate and maintain 100 aflaj, completing work on 44 thus far, at a total cost of RO848,434.



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Suhar Festival returns with new attractions, events

Our Correspondent
Suhar

North Batinah has announced that the third edition of Suhar Festival will run from November 19, 2024 to January 3, 2025, showcasing a variety of attractions designed to boost tourism across Suhar and surrounding areas.

The announcement, made at a press conference on Monday, highlighted the festival's expanded lineup of events and the involvement of local businesses and cultural institutions.

Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of North Batinah, informed that the success of the festival's first two editions reflected the commitment of both public and private institutions to support local tourism. "The Suhar Festival is a tourism platform not only for Suhar but for all wilayats in the governorate, aiming to promote tourism at all levels," he said.

This year, the festival will introduce new features, including a water park, an electronic games city, a children's activity area and a dancing fountain. 'Lighting Environments' - a creative lights display - is expected to draw visitors from across the region.

Over the festival period, visitors can enjoy 35 performances



on the Grand Theatre stage and 40 shows on the Children's Theatre stage, besides 105 events in the heritage villages, which will highlight the region's bedouins, and agricultural and marine traditions. Sports events include Suhar Football Festival Championship, featuring 30 teams, and a governorate-level Sports Academies Championship, involving ten local sports

academies.

A key focus this year is community engagement, with the festival providing employment for 160 jobseekers and support for 120 local families showcasing their products. Small and medium enterprises in North Batinah are also expected to benefit from festival-related business opportunities.

Reflecting the region's cultural

heritage, the festival's heritage village will host demonstrations of traditional crafts and customs, as well as traditional sports like camel racing, shooting, horse racing and beach games.

The festival will feature several sports events with local and international participants, including the Suhar International Chess Championship and dhow rowing races involving teams from across the Gulf region. Football fans can look forward to live broadcast of Gulf Cup matches on a large screen, creating an exciting viewing experience.

In a move towards inclusivity, the festival will dedicate a special day for people with disabilities, allowing everyone in the community to take part in the celebrations. The third edition of the annual Coastal Walk will also be held, encouraging community participation in a fun, health-focused event along Suhar's coast.

Drones developed to detect pollution on Omani shores

Our Correspondent
Muscat



Oman has a unique geography and needs to safeguard its shores, which see heavy maritime traffic

DR AHMED AL MAASHRI

A pioneering project led by Dr Ahmed al Maashri, Associate Professor and Head of Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Sultan Qaboos University, has successfully developed an autonomous drone swarm system to detect oil spills and other pollutants along Oman's coastline.

The research, funded by Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation's Block Funding Programme, aims to provide a more efficient solution for monitoring marine pollution, particularly in light of Oman's busy shipping routes and strategic location near the Strait of Hormuz.

Maashri highlighted Oman's unique geography and the need to safeguard its shores, which see heavy maritime traffic and are vulnerable to fuel leaks from vessels. "Oil spills from tankers are rare, but leaks from engines occur more frequently, posing a risk to the marine environment. This puts pressure on local authorities to maintain round-the-clock vigil along the coastline," he explained. Current methods for spill detection, he noted, are slow, expensive and often ineffective, which spurred the team to explore the potential of unmanned vehicle systems for this task.

The project, conducted by Maashri alongside Dr Hadj Bourdoucen, Dr Ashraf Saleem and Dr Jawhar Ghoammam, leverages advanced remote sensing and artificial intelligence (AI) to detect and assess oil spills in real time. Using a coordinated approach between numerous unmanned aerial vehicles - or drones - the system achieves comprehensive coverage of targeted areas. The drones are equipped with thermal imaging technology and AI algorithms that can detect temperature differences, enabling efficient identification of oil contaminants during hot weather, when oil on water surfaces shows a temperature difference of 2°C or more.

The system's software-hardware co-design enhances communication between drones, facilitating smooth cooperation and coordination for more accurate detection. Field tests on Omani shores validated the system's performance, demonstrating its ability to assess spill locations and estimate their area in real time. Maashri further detailed how environmental variables - temperature, humidity, contamination type, season and time of day - affect the accuracy of detection, information crucial for refining the system.

"Through this project, we have achieved an autonomous, real time monitoring solution," Maashri said. The drone swarm, equipped with machine learning technology, is capable of detecting, sizing and mapping contamination zones, offering local authorities a faster, more cost-effective tool to address marine pollution threats.

Oman hosts 4-day global incentive tourism summit

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is hosting the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) Summit from November 9 to 12 aiming to enhance Oman's standing as a key destination in the incentive tourism sector.

Hosting rights for the summit, secured after a competitive selection process against several other countries, demonstrates Oman's capacity to attract major international tourism events and its commitment to expanding this vital field.

The summit's key activities include an educational day held on



Monday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre attended by over 150 stakeholders from the tourism industry. Participants included hotel representatives, travel companies, academics, students, employees working at tourist attractions and ministry staff. The day offered attendees a chance to learn new skills, stay

updated on the latest incentive tourism trends, and expand their professional networks internationally.

Hosting global events aligns with the ministry's strategy to boost Oman's tourism sector and showcase the country's ability to host large-scale international gatherings. The incentive tourism

sector plays a pivotal role in Oman's broader economic diversification efforts, opening doors to new cooperation and investment opportunities while establishing the country as a premier destination.

Incentive travel is the 'I' in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE).

While corporate meetings usually seek to inform or educate participants, incentive travel seeks to motivate and inspire them. Incentive travel is described by SITE as 'a powerful business tool to reward and unlock human potential to achieve corporate objectives'.

Founded in 1973 with over 2,500 members from 90 countries, SITE promotes cooperation and knowledge-sharing to advance incentive tourism. Since the summit's inception in 2004, it has spotlighted best practices and innovations in incentive tourism, helping members stay at the forefront of industry developments.

Chef competition showcases local talent, culinary innovation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The fifth edition of Oman Chef Competition has brought together an array of Omani culinary talent - from students to seasoned chefs - in a spirited celebration of the nation's culinary heritage. Organised by Oman Tourism College (OTC) with backing from Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), the event aims to highlight the sultanate's cuisine innovatively and sustainably.

A prominent platform for Omani chefs, the competition encourages participants to create dishes made with local ingredients and rooted in tradition. This year's focus is on eco-friendly practices, with chefs challenged to explore Omani flavours in sustainable ways that honour the nation's culinary legacy.



Dr Hamad Mohammed al Muhrzi, Dean of OTC, highlighted the competition's importance as both a tribute to Omani heritage and an inspiration for culinary innovation. "This competition serves as a platform that encourages our chefs to blend tradition with modern techniques, preserving Omani flavours while reimagining the future," he said. "We're thrilled by

the talent we've seen as these chefs honour and redefine our cuisine in exciting ways."

Amira Iqbal al Lawati, Director General of Tourism Development, noted the competition's



role in advancing Oman as a culinary tourism destination. "This event celebrates Oman's rich culinary heritage while highlighting the talent and creativity of our young chefs. Through this platform, we support the vision to position Oman as a destination for gastronomic tourism, elevating our cuisine on a global stage."

Badriya Abdulrahman al Siyabi, Director of Sustainability and Local Content at Omran Group, stressed the competition's alignment with Omran's sustainability goals. "Omran Group is proud to support the Oman Chef Competition, which empowers Omani youth and fosters career pathways in the culinary arts. This initiative

showcases Oman's unique resources and potential while supporting sustainable tourism development," she explained.

The competition features three rounds, with over 50 chefs participating this year. The initial round recently concluded, offering an impressive display of culinary creativity with chefs presenting traditional Omani dishes through fusion techniques and innovative presentations.

The annual event not only highlights the skill of Omani chefs but also contributes to Oman's community development by building a globally recognised culinary culture and expanding opportunities in the culinary arts for young Omanis.

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,683.02
Sensex	79,496.15
FOREX RATES	
(RO1 equals)	
India	219.20
Pakistan	721.88
Bangladesh	310.37
Philippines	152.44
Sri Lanka	760.15
*Rates as on November 11 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS

Oil prices slip as US storm threat eases

Oil prices on Monday extended declines as the threat of a supply disruption from a US storm eased and after China's stimulus plan disappointed investors seeking fuel demand growth in the world's No. 2 oil consumer.

Brent crude futures dropped 19 cents, or 0.3%, to \$73.68 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were at \$70.13 a barrel, down 25 cents, or 0.4%. Both benchmarks fell more than 2% last Friday.

Oil consumption in China, the worlds driver of global demand growth for years, has barely grown in 2024 as its economic growth has slowed, gasoline use has declined with the rapid growth of electric vehicles and liquefied natural gas has replaced diesel as a truck fuel.

Oman's non-oil exports decline 12%

The UAE continued to remain the top destination for Oman’s non-oil exports, with shipments rising by 11.6% to RO638mn in the first eight months of 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman’s non-oil exports declined by nearly 12% year-on-year in the first eight months of 2024, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The value of non-oil shipments fell to RO4.039bn, down from RO4.585bn in the same period last year.

The drop in non-oil exports was largely driven by a sharp fall in shipments to two of Oman’s key markets: Saudi Arabia and India.

Exports to Saudi Arabia, the sultanate’s leading trading partner in the Gulf, fell 19.2% to RO534mn from RO661mn in 2023. Likewise, exports to India saw a decline of 14.2%, totalling RO385mn compared to RO449mn during the same period last year.

Exports to the United States also posted a modest decline of 1.7%, dropping to RO279mn from RO284mn in 2023.

However, exports to the United Arab Emirates recorded robust growth. The UAE remained the top destination for Oman’s non-oil exports, with shipments rising by 11.6% to



RO638mn, up from RO571mn in the first eight months of 2023.

In a noteworthy shift, South Korea emerged as the third-largest recipient of Omani non-oil products. Exports to South Korea surged by more than 14 times, reaching RO487mn during the January-August period of 2024,

compared to just RO34mn in the same period last year.

Conversely, exports to other countries combined plummeted by nearly 34%, totalling RO1.715bn in the first eight months of 2024, down from RO2.586bn in the same period of 2023.

Minerals and Chemicals

The decline in non-oil exports was notably influenced by a sharp reduction in mineral product exports, which represent a significant portion of Oman’s non-oil exports. Shipments of mineral products fell by 20.8%

ports of base metals and related products saw a slight increase of 1.4%, reaching RO883mn, up from RO871mn in the previous year.

Re-exports drive growth in trade

In a more positive development, Oman’s re-exports grew by 14% year-on-year, reaching RO1.131bn in the first eight months of 2024, up from RO992mn during the same period last year. This growth was primarily driven by increased demand from regional and international markets, including the UAE, Iran, and China.

Re-exports to the UAE rose by 17.7%, totalling RO410mn, while shipments to Iran surged by 74%, reaching RO241mn compared to RO138mn in 2023. Oman’s re-exports to China also saw a dramatic increase, climbing by 349% to RO58mn, up from RO13mn last year.

However, re-exports to Kuwait fell by 21.8%, dropping to RO41mn from RO52mn in the corresponding period of 2023. Re-exports to other countries combined also declined by 14.4%, totalling RO335mn in 2024.

Fitch affirms Bank Muscat at BB+

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Fitch Ratings on Monday affirmed Bank Muscat’s Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at ‘BB+’ with a stable outlook. The agency also affirmed the bank’s Viability Rating (VR) at ‘bb+’.

Bank Muscat’s IDRs are driven by its VR and underpinned by potential support from the Omani authorities, Fitch said in a statement. The agency added, ‘Bank Muscat’s VR is capped by the Omani sovereign rating, given its large exposure to the sovereign, including to the government and public sector on both sides of its balance sheet, as well as its domestically focused business model.’

According to Fitch, Bank Mus-



cat’s Viability Rating reflects the bank’s flagship status in Oman, which provides it with access to high-quality borrowers and significant funding from the government and related entities. The rating also considers Bank Muscat’s stable asset quality, above-peer profitability, large capital

buffers, solid funding, and good liquidity.

Fitch noted that business conditions are favorable for Omani banks, supported by high oil prices, which the rating agency expects to average \$80 per barrel in 2024, above Oman’s fiscal break-even price.

Fitch said that Bank Muscat’s dominant market position gives it some pricing power, and a low-cost funding base supports its net interest margin. It added that the bank’s strong market position also provides access to lower-risk borrowers, enabling cautious growth in recent years.

The rating agency pointed out that Bank Muscat’s asset quality has remained stable, with a Stage 3 loan ratio of 3.8% at the end of Q3 2024 and at the end of 2023, the lowest among domestic peers. It also noted that the bank’s profitability continues to outperform its peers, with operating profit at 2.4% of risk-weighted assets in the first nine months of 2024, supported by a wider net interest margin and stronger revenue diversification.

CBO issues treasury bills worth RO48mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO), acting on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, issued two tenders for government treasury bills this week, totalling RO48mn.

In the first tender, RO15mn in treasury bills were allotted, with a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price was RO99.685 per RO100, while the minimum accepted price was RO99.680. The average discount rate and yield stood at 4.11% and 4.12%, respectively.

The second tender saw the allotment of RO33mn in treasury bills, maturing in 91 days. The average accepted price was RO98.866 per RO100, with the minimum accepted price at RO98.865. The average discount



rate and yield were 4.55% and 4.60%, respectively.

The CBO’s current repo rate is 5.25%, while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility is 5.75%.

Treasury bills are short-term, low-risk instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, offering licensed commercial banks an opportunity to invest surplus funds. The CBO manages the issuance process and provides liquidity support through its discounting and repurchase (repo) facilities.

COMMENTARY

Implications of Trump’s win for Oman’s economy

Trump’s policies might impact oil supply and demand and there will be a lot for Oman and OPEC+ partners to weigh as they decide upon production levels



JUSTIN ALEXANDER
Director of Khaliq Economics and GCC Economist at GlobalSource Partners

For the third election in a row, polling agencies significantly underestimated Donald Trump’s support. The reasons for his win will be debated for years, ranging from Joe Biden’s late exit to anger at the US’s role in Gaza and Lebanon which led some usually reliable Democrat-supporting Arab-American communities, such as Dearborn in Michigan, to flip to Trump. However, the primary reason was an anti-incumbency response to the inflation since 2021.

The Trump Administration that will take office on January 20, 2025 will have significant implications for many countries, including Oman. Details will become clearer as he forms his cabinet and as the final votes are counted to determine control of the House of Representatives.

One of his top priorities is tariffs. This was also the case in his first term when he imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum from most countries, including Oman. This time he has outlined a range of proposals including a universal tariff of 10%-20%, which would apply to Oman despite its free-trade agreement with the US, as well as punitive tariffs on certain products and countries,

particularly China. The fear is that these could ignite a wave of protectionism internationally, although Oman and the GCC could still advance trade deals with other partners, such as India.

The broader concern about tariffs is that they will be inflationary in the US, which is ironic given that anger about inflation was a major source of Trump’s support. They could potentially double inflation, which had fallen to just 2.1% in October. Other policies such as deporting undocumented immigrants and cutting taxes could also be inflationary. The US Federal Reserve would likely keep interest rates higher for longer to control this new pulse of inflation.

This would directly impact Oman because the rial-dollar peg means that it needs to closely follow US interest rates or potentially suffer destabilising capital flows (indeed, last week the Central Bank of Oman mirrored the Fed’s 25 basis point rate cut). This would keep borrowing costs high and potentially dampen corporate investment and consumer spending in Oman. Trump’s tax cuts might also increase the US government’s borrowing costs, which would also raise the cost of new debt issued in Oman, because the market

prices it relative to US Treasuries.

Then there is the oil market. The current OPEC+ plan would see Oman gradually increase its production next year, eventually adding 42,000 barrels per day, a 5.5% increase that would bring in over RO1mn a day in extra revenue. However, even before the election, there was uncertainty about the outlook for oil demand, which is why OPEC+ has twice delayed increases which were originally due to begin last month.

Trump could impact the oil market in several ways. Firstly, he could support a further increase in US production, already at a record level, but this would take several years to have an impact. He is also a climate skeptic and opposes subsidies on EVs and green energy and fuel efficiency standards. Changing policy in these areas could increase US oil consumption and sap up some or all of the additional domestic production, although this could prove politically difficult and would take time. Trump’s most immediate impact on the oil market could be on production abroad. If he really can end the war in Ukraine quickly, as he has claimed, then this could see additional Russian oil coming onto the market. Con-

versely, he could try to tighten sanctions on Iran and reduce its exports, although the Biden Administration has been trying to do this in recent months with little impact.

Given the wide range of ways that Trump’s policies might impact oil supply and demand, there will be a lot for Oman and its OPEC+ partners to weigh as they decide upon production levels. However, despite this uncertainty, Oman is in a strong position fiscally after several years of reforms. The IMF estimates that its budget will be in surplus next year if oil is higher than \$57, compared with \$91 for Saudi Arabia.

Economics aside, the biggest concern for the region will be whether Trump follows through on his promise to end the war in Gaza or, conversely, exacerbates the conflict and ramps up tensions with Iran. Whatever the scenario, Oman will have an important role to play as a neutral party that is well-regarded by all the countries involved.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Muscat Daily or Apex Media Publication

Trump 2.0 complicates Fed's rate cut path

Jennifer Schonberger

US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell made it very clear last week that he didn't think Donald Trump had the power to fire him, even if he wanted to do so. But there was one aspect of Trump's return to the White House that he was willing to leave as a mystery: How Trump's proposed economic policies might affect the Fed's expectations for a series of additional rate cuts in 2025.

"There is nothing to model right now," Powell told reporters last Thursday, after the Fed announced its second rate cut in seven weeks.

Economists say Trump's combination of proposed across-the-board tariffs, tax cuts and mass deportations of undocumented immigrants would put new pressure on inflation and balloon the deficit, all of which will make it more challenging for the Fed to cut rates.

A surge in Treasury yields that followed Trump's election last week could also cause complications if it continues into next year. Many economists are already scaling back their expectations for the number and pace of rate cuts next year on account of these proposed policies from a new Trump administration.

One is David Seif, chief economist for developed markets for Nomura. He now just expects one rate cut in 2025, with the Fed pausing rate cuts until any inflation shock from tariffs has passed. He predicts the new tar-



This file photo shows Donald Trump and Jerome Powell at the White House in 2017 (Xinhua)

iffs will lead to a "significant near-term boost" to inflation.

Capital Economics chief North America economist Paul Ashworth also now sees rates staying 50 basis points higher than previously forecast, with the Fed ending its rate cutting campaign in the range of 3.5%-3.75%. "The combined drag from immigration curbs and new tariffs mean that, in net terms, Trump's return is

likely to be a negative for the economy," he said.

Powell last week repeatedly refused to engage in a discussion about what Trump's proposals might mean for the Fed's current expectations of four more quarter-point rate cuts in 2025.

"We don't know what the timing and substance of any policy changes will be," Powell said Thursday. "We therefore don't

know what the effects on the economy would be, specifically whether and to what extent those policies would matter for the achievement of our goal variables: maximum employment and price stability."

He said Thursday the Fed is in no hurry to "quickly" get to neutral, a level where rates don't slow or spur inflation, but he did admit that the Fed is "beginning to think

about" slowing the pace of cuts. "We reach a point where we slow the pace, much like an airplane reaching the airport slows down."

He declined to say what might happen at the Fed's last 2024 meeting in December, saying "we're just going to have to see where the data led us. We have a whole six weeks of data to look at."

Investors may have to wait

Economists say Trump's combination of proposed tariffs, tax cuts and mass deportations of undocumented immigrants would put new pressure on inflation, which will make it more challenging for the Fed to cut rates

has found itself grappling with the impact of Trump policies. It was in the same place during its last meeting in December 2016, after Trump had been elected but before he took over as president.

Anticipated changes to fiscal policies under a new administration did come up at that Decem-

ber 2016 meeting, according to Matthew Luzzetti, chief US economist for Deutsche Bank Securities.

Fed staff built into its forecast an assumption of a 1% tax cut and a shift in fiscal policies that boosted the staff's assumption for the neutral interest rate — the rate that neither boosts nor slows growth — by 25 basis points, according to minutes and transcripts from that meeting.

In fact, minutes from that meeting showed that "about half" officials reflected changes to fiscal policies in their baseline outlooks but that "almost all" noted these policies shifted the distribution of risks toward stronger growth outcomes.

"Many" saw them as "potentially necessitating somewhat tighter monetary policy than currently anticipated."

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

Deja vu all over again

This is not the first time the Fed



Global gold demand reaches record high value of over \$100bn

New Delhi, India – Total global gold demand surged to an unprecedented high of over \$100bn in the third quarter of 2024, marking a significant milestone in the precious metal's market history, according to World Gold Council.

According to the Q3 2024 Gold Demand Trends report, total gold demand increased by 5% year-on-year, reaching 1,313 tonnes, driven by robust investment in a record-high price environment.

Investment demand for gold skyrocketed, more than doubling from the previous year to 364 tonnes. This surge was primarily fueled by a shift in demand for gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) among Western investors, with global gold ETFs adding 95 tonnes – a notable rebound as this marked the first positive quarter since Q1 2022.

Despite a 9% decline in bar and coin demand, the year-to-date total remains strong at 859 tonnes, significantly higher than the 10-year average of 774 tonnes. Central bank purchases showed a slowdown in Q3 but remained healthy, with demand totaling 186 tonnes. Year-to-date central bank demand reached 694 tonnes, aligning with figures from the same period in 2022.

Gold prices continued their upward trajectory during the quarter, averaging \$2,474 per ounce. This rise, however, tempered global demand for gold jewelry, which fell by 12% year-on-year in volume. Nevertheless,

the value of jewelry consumption increased by 13%, indicating that consumers are willing to spend more for smaller quantities of gold products.

Technological demand for gold also saws growth, rising 7% year-on-year, particularly supported by advancements in the electronics sector amid the ongoing AI boom.

The total supply of gold increased by 5% compared to the previous year, driven by a 6%

Total gold demand increased by 5% year-on-year in Q3 2024, reaching 1,313 tonnes, driven by robust investment in a record-high price environment

rise in mine production and an 11% increase in recycling efforts.

Louise Street, Senior Markets Analyst at the World Gold Council, said, "Q3 2024 saw increased investment and over-the-counter activity prop up global gold demand and drive price performance."

He added, "While the higher gold price dampened demand in the majority of consumer markets, the import duty cut in India kept jewellery and bar and coin demand remarkably high in a record-breaking price environment."

ANI

Big Tech spending on AI infrastructure surging

Colin Laidley

Big Tech's AI boom is still on. Artificial intelligence was the focus of the five tech giants, cumulatively valued at more than \$10tn, that reported quarterly earnings recently. Executives at Apple, Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, and Meta touted the progress their companies have made incorporating AI into their operations and rolling out new AI features for customers. They also spoke to the strength of AI demand—and the challenges they've met trying to meet it.

Investors now turn their attention to the last of the Magnificent Seven companies to report: Nvidia, whose results are due November 20. Its stock surged to a record high last month as investors anticipated that this week's earnings would contain evidence of booming demand for its AI chips.

Big Tech's spending on infrastructure has skyrocketed this year. Cloud providers have raced



to build out their AI operations and meet surging demand for cloud computing.

Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, and Meta spent a cumulative \$60bn on property and equipment in the third quarter, a 60% increase from the same period last year, according to an Investopedia analysis. All four indicated that infrastructure investments would continue to increase next year.

Surging infrastructure ex-

penses hung over tech giants during their last round of earnings reports in July, when Wall Street was antsy to see evidence that investments were paying off. Those fears seem to have abated somewhat with this week's reports.

A common refrain from tech executives recently was that they can't keep up with demand.

Microsoft warned that growth at its cloud unit could slow in its second fiscal quarter. AI demand

"continues to be higher than our available capacity," according to CFO Amy Hood. Her comments were echoed by Amazon CEO Andy Jassy on Thursday, who said Amazon Web Services was also having difficulty meeting cloud computing demand.

A shortage of the most advanced semiconductors, Jassy said, was the main bottleneck.

AI growth boosts business

Despite capacity constraints, AI is still driving growth for tech giants.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said the company's AI business was on track to reach an annual revenue run rate of \$10bn in the current quarter, making it "the fastest business in our history to reach this milestone." Jassy recently said Amazon's AI business is growing by triple-digit percentages, three times faster than cloud computing grew in its early stages.

Alphabet executives said

they expected AI investments to "translate to revenue in the fairly short term." AI Overviews in Google search were being monetized at "approximately the same rate" as older formats, he said, boosting confidence that AI can boost Alphabet's core ad business as well as its cloud unit.

Meta also touted the benefits it's seeing from AI. CEO Mark Zuckerberg said AI-driven feed recommendations had increased the time users spent on Facebook and Instagram this year, and that businesses using Meta's generative AI advertising tools had seen an increase in conversions.

Apple CEO Tim Cook noted on a call with analysts that iPhone users were adopting Apple's newest operating system, the Apple Intelligence-enabled iOS 18.1, at twice the rate of its predecessor, which the firm took as an early indication of strong demand for its custom AI. (Source: Investopedia.com)

China's consumer prices see stable growth in October

Beijing, China – China's consumer prices reported mild increases in October as the domestic demand continued to improve amid a sustained economic recovery.

The consumer price index (CPI), a main inflation gauge, was up 0.3% year on year in October, slightly lower than the 0.4% rise in September, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said.

Falling energy prices dragged down the price level last month, while food prices registered stable growth, according to NBS statistician Dong Lijuan.

The core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, rose 0.2% from a year ago in October, up from 0.1% in September.

On a monthly basis, the CPI slipped 0.3% in October after remaining unchanged in September.

The NBS data also showed the



country's producer price index (PPI), which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, went

down 2.9% year on year in October, slightly widening from the 2.8% decline in September.

Compared to a month earlier, the PPI only dropped 0.1%, narrowing from the 0.6% decline in

September and 0.7% in August.

The overall price level in China has maintained a stable trend this year thanks to an upward economy, effective pro-growth policies and warming domestic demand.

The country in March unveiled a program of promoting large-scale equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-ins to stimulate domestic demand and shore up the economy, which has bolstered consumer sentiment and boosted the sales of a wide range of products from automobiles to home appliances.

Looking forward, the mild recovery in inflation is expected to continue for the rest of the year due to better economic situations, seasonal factors and the weakening carryover effect, Sheng Laiyun, deputy head of the NBS, has said. Xinhua

Muscat Hiking Team shines in Open Hockey Tourney

In an exceptional achievement that added to its sporting history, the Muscat Freestyle Hockey Team achieved the third place in the Open Hockey Championship, which witnessed fierce competition between elite sports teams in the sultanate.

Not only did it win third place, but the team also succeeded in stealing the spotlight by crowning one of its players with the Best Rising Player award, making this achievement a strong announcement of its presence and brilliance in the world of Omani sports, a press release said.

The championship kicked off with the distinguished participation of the team, led by the distinguished coach Ayman al Kathiri, and his assistant Salah al Saadi, under the supervision of the team manager Al-Zubair bin Mohammed al Alawi.

Mercedes-Benz releases luxury certified pre-owned vehicles

Mercedes-Benz Oman announced exclusive prices on a range of certified pre-owned vehicles, giving customers a chance to own a luxury vehicle with the assurance of exceptional quality and value.

The certified pre-owned programme guarantees that every vehicle has undergone a comprehensive 150-point inspection by factory-trained technicians, ensuring it meets the highest performance, safety, and reliability standards, a press release said.

This quarter, Mercedes-Benz Oman features four standout models. The Mercedes-Benz A 200 (2023) is available for RO17,995, including VAT. With only 20,043km mileage, this model comes in Digital White Metallic with a refined leather two-tone Classic Red/Black interior.

For those seeking a more recent model, the Mercedes-Benz C 200 (2024) is priced at RO26,995, including VAT. Driven for only 10,753km, it is offered in a sleek Spectral Blue Metallic exterior and ARTICO



leather upholstery in Neva Grey/Black. Additionally, the Mercedes-

Benz CLA 250 (2024) is offered at RO23,995, including VAT. This model, with 13,684km

mileage, is finished in Spectral Blue Metallic and features ARTICO man-made leather in Sage

Grey and Black.

Lastly, for those with a preference for high-performance vehi-

cles, the Mercedes-AMG GT 43 (2023) is available at an exclusive price of RO46,995, including VAT.

With only 140km on the odometer, it boasts a striking Polar White exterior and a premium Exclusive Nappa Leather interior in a 2-Tone Red Pepper/Black combination.

Each Certified Pre-Owned vehicle comes with an unlimited-mileage warranty of one year, with the option to extend up to two years, alongside 24x7 roadside assistance for certain models.

Customers will also benefit from a complete history of all services performed and access to a variety of service packages, adding even more value to their purchase. With these additional benefits, owning a certified pre-owned Mercedes-Benz delivers peace of mind and unmatched quality.

These exclusive prices are valid until December 31. Given the limited stock, customers are encouraged to act swiftly to secure their desired model.

ISWK hosts 10th edition of W K Model United Nations

Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir hosted the 10th edition of its prestigious Wadi Kabir Model United Nations on October 4 and 5 in the senior school multipurpose hall.

The programme consisted of 45 delegates from 7 different Indian schools spread across Oman. This group of ambitious delegates shared a vision for a 'new world order' based on freedom and equality. They strongly believe that they will be able to eradicate war, poverty, disease, among many other problems around the world, and create a world, one that truly cares for its



people, a press release said.

The event was graced by the presence of Colonel Narayan Ra-

machandran who served as a Senior Consultant for Orthopedics and Trauma in the Armed Forces

Hospital, Oman, for 32 years. The guest of honour for the inaugural session was Pardeep

Kumar, first secretary (Education) and head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Muscat.

WKMUN 2024 is an annual event organised by the Department of Social Science of Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir, to engage students in authentic simulations of the United Nations and develop a wide range of skills in its participants, including the development of a global outlook and vision on different issues, fostering social responsibility, tolerance, research, confidence, and self-esteem.

The proceedings began with the sound of the gavel, marking the start of a vital discussion on integrating technology in education amidst today's global chal-

lenges. Each delegate, bringing their nation's unique viewpoint, passionately engaged in dialogue, exploring both, the challenges and prospects, for cross-border collaboration.

The Committee simulated the discussions of the United Nations General Assembly and deliberated on the importance of technological advancements in education. It produced a wide range of ideas and solutions, with each delegate proving their mettle in the skills of debate and consensus-building. The Draft Resolution was successfully passed with full consensus.

Umm Al Emarat Park offers family entertainment with variety of activities

Umm Al Emarat Park offers a range of exciting events celebrating culture, family, and sustainability.

Enjoy Emirati Heritage Workshops, Cinema in the Park, and the lively Park Market. Discover eco-friendly water solutions, wellness sessions, and fun weekend performances, a press release said.

Umm Al Emarat Park is bringing the Emirati Heritage and Cultural Workshops to life every Tuesday from 5pm to 7pm. Step into an engaging journey filled with traditional crafts and an exploration of the UAE's vibrant history and customs. Perfect for all ages, these workshops offer a rare and immersive experience to truly feel the spirit of Emirati culture.



Get ready for the return of the beloved 'Cinema in the Park', offering an unforgettable outdoor movie experience for the whole family. Set against the lush backdrop of Umm Al Emarat Park, this event is the perfect way to

relax, enjoy the beauty of nature, and watch favourite films under the stars.

Whether you're craving ice cream or fancy a sweet treat, come down to Umm Al Emarat Park for the Park Market, hap-

pening every Friday and Saturday from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM. This family-friendly event features over 40 local retailers, offering delicious food, unique goods, and a lively community atmosphere. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate rich cultures and enjoy a perfect day out with family and friends!

Umm Al Emarat Park has also partnered with A1RWATER, a global leader in atmospheric water generation, to advance the UAE's sustainability goals by installing five advanced atmospheric water generators throughout the park. These sustainable A1R30 and A1R100 models are capable of producing 30 and 100 litres of water daily from atmospheric humidity, provide eco-friendly, drinking water.



ISM organises Kaleidoscope to mark 50 years in education

The ISM@50 Exhibition - Kaleidoscope - at Indian School Muscat was a grand celebration marking 50 years of the school's excellence in education.

This event, organised with significant excitement, showcased the remarkable talents and achievements of students across various fields, reflecting five decades of growth and accomplishments, a press release said.

The exhibition was inaugurated on November 6, at the school's New Multipurpose Hall. The Chief Guest of the evening was Dr Nooreen al Balushi, president of Oman Transplantation Society and the only lady surgeon to do organ transplantation in Oman. The Guest of Honour, was Pardeep Kumar, First Secretary at Embassy of India, Oman.

The key guests inaugurated

the exhibition by cutting the ribbon ceremoniously in the presence of directors of the Board of Directors, Members of the School Management Committee, Principal Rakesh Joshi, vice-principals and other dignitaries.

In her address, Dr Nooreen hailed the creativity of the students and teachers. She congratulated the school on completing fifty glorious years of excellence imparting world class education and wished good luck for all its future endeavours.

Following the opening ceremony, the guests visited the Grand Gallery of Memories and 3D miniatures of ISM. They also explored the Subject Oriented Exhibitions displayed by the students of middle and senior sections which exhibited an array of creativity in the form of innova-

tions at its best. They enjoyed the inspiring exhibits, the fun zones, the activities, enthusiastic participants, and above all, the overwhelming attendees in each classroom.

As part of Kaleidoscope, students from different grades displayed projects that creatively explored themes in Languages, Science, Technology, Arts, Mathematics, and Culture. The exhibition also featured interactive installations, hands-on experiments, and artistic displays that captivated the audience and demonstrated students' understanding and appreciation for both, modern advancements and traditional knowledge.

The exhibition included special displays celebrating the school's history, and tracing the evolution of the school.

Saudi Film Commission holds International Film Criticism Conference in Riyadh last week

The Saudi Film Commission held the second edition of the International Film Criticism Conference in Riyadh, between November 6 and 10, in the presence of international filmmakers, critics, and cinephiles.

The conference was held under the theme 'Sound in Cinema', to explore the various impacts of sound on the film

experience and its influence on the film industry. The discussions covered different elements such as film scores, sound effects, and nature sounds. The conference will also included workshops, film screenings, and interactive exhibits.

The opening ceremony started with an introductory video about the conference, its

objectives, and past achievements, followed by a speech by the CEO of the Saudi Film Commission, Abdullah bin Nasser al Qahtani. "The Saudi Film Commission is dedicated to establishing, developing, and sustaining a strong and vibrant film industry, in line with Saudi Vision 2030," he said, adding, "The Film Commission focuses on empowering

criticism as an intellectual and artistic tool that illuminates the path of cinema and opens new prospects for it.

Prominent Saudi director, Abdullah al Mohaisen, said, "Film criticism relies on sentiment, honesty, and purposeful criticism. It is the dynamic driver of development and creativity for the director.

Oman obtains IMDRF membership

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance health standards and develop the medical care system, the Sultanate of Oman has obtained associate membership in the International Medical Device Regulators Forum (IMDRF). This follows Oman's participation in the Forum's recent conference, held in Seattle, USA, where representatives from various countries, medical device regulatory bodies, and experts in regulatory affairs gathered to discuss the latest developments and challenges related to the regulation and use of medical devices, a press release said.

The Ministry of Health, represented by the Drug Safety Center, participated in the IMDRF. The Center presented remarkable progress achieved in regulating and approving medical devices, highlighted ongoing efforts to develop healthcare in-



The IMDRF included panel discussions and workshops on topics such as harmonising global standards for medical devices

shared insights on successful experiences in medical legislation and outlined mechanisms adopted by Oman to improve the management and use of these devices, ensuring patient safety and the effectiveness of health-care services.

The forum represents a valuable opportunity for the Sultanate of Oman to strengthen international cooperation in the health sector and exchange expertise with other countries, contributing to an elevated standard of healthcare services. The Drug Safety Center aims to leverage international expertise to foster innovation in medical device regulation and apply best global practices.

The forum concluded with recommendations to unify international efforts to improve medical device regulation, with participating countries agreeing

COYA Muscat unveils exciting dining experiences in November

COYA Muscat, the premier destination for exquisite Peruvian cuisine, announced the launch of its new Friday Brunch and Saturday Lunch offerings, commencing November.

With perfect weather on the horizon, COYA Muscat is poised to elevate weekend dining experiences for both foodies and outdoor enthusiasts. Located within The St Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, the restaurant promises a culinary escape that combines delectable cuisine with a celebratory atmosphere, making it an ideal destination for outdoor dining and relaxation.



Every detail at COYA Muscat is designed to enhance the experience - from the appetising sharing plates to the stunning outdoor seating that invites guests to connect with nature while enjoying their meal.

As the brunch unfolds from 12 noon to 4.30pm, a live DJ sets the tone, infusing the air with infectious beats that elevate the celebratory vibe. This is designed to enhance the vibrant atmosphere, encouraging guests to relax and immerse themselves in the experience. It is an invitation for guests to enjoy the evening as the DJ sets the mood.

OTE Group hosts Isuzu Customer Connect event

The OTE Group recently hosted an exclusive Isuzu Customer Connect event at its Musannah Bidaya branch, dedicated to connecting with loyal Isuzu customers and highlighting the latest in Isuzu's powerhouse lineup: the renowned D-Max pickup truck and the rugged yet sophisticated Mu-X SUV.

The event offered a unique platform for customers to experience first-hand the exceptional power, durability, and versatility that Isuzu vehicles bring to the Oman market, a press release said.

Attendees were given an up-close look at the Isuzu D-Max, a vehicle celebrated for its robust build and unparalleled performance, especially suited for the challenging terrains and demands of Oman. As a utility powerhouse, the D-Max is equipped to handle both commercial and personal needs, making it a reliable choice for businesses and adventure-seekers alike.

In addition to the D-Max, the spotlight was on the Isuzu Mu-X SUV, an SUV that combines spaciousness with rugged capability. This vehicle brings together comfort, safety, and versatility, making it an ideal family SUV and offering the performance needed for off-road excursions.



ROHM welcomes Geronimo Stilton

The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) hosted the creative writer Elisabetta Dami over two days this week for creative reading sessions, featuring her beloved characters Geronimo Stilton and his sister Thea.

Scheduled on 6th and 7th November, these engaging sessions allowed students from various schools to discover the Geronimo Stilton story and explore the art of storytelling with the author herself. During the session, Omani sign language and simultaneous translation from Arabic-English were also offered to everyone, a press release said.

This initiative forms part of ROHM's education and outreach programme, reinforcing its mission to connect communities through enriching cultural experiences. The event included two engaging sessions each day, with 60 children per session, aged 7 to 12 years. Among the participants were students from various schools, including hearing-impaired students.

Commenting on the initiative, the artistic director and general director of the Royal Opera House Muscat stated, "The Creative Reading initiative is a vital

component of our educational and outreach programme, designed to provide world-class activities for audiences of all ages. I am immensely grateful to Elisabetta Dami for visiting Oman and conducting engaging sessions in this initiative featuring her beloved characters, Geronimo and Thea, for our students. As an institution, we are committed to bringing the best creative works from around the world to keep inspiring our younger generations."

The author of Geronimo Stilton, Elisabetta Dami, added, "I want to thank all my friends in Oman, and especially those at the Royal Opera House in Muscat, for the extraordinary welcome given to me, Geronimo and Thea Stilton, and my colleagues. It was an honour to share my experiences and the good values I believe in within this place of ancient culture and wonderful beauty. I was deeply impressed by the smiles, politeness and enthusiasm of the young people I met, who inspire me to continue writing new stories. The younger generations are our hope for a better future, and it is our responsibility to support their growth."

Quriyat Parents' Council visits schools in Quriyat

The Quriyat Parents' Council held its second meeting this year chaired by Talal bin Saif al Hosani, Quriyat Wali and the Council's chairman.

Several topics that enhance the educational process and the quality of school efficiency were discussed, a press release said.

During the meeting, three council committees (educational, social and financial) were formed. The Council's visits' programme to the schools for the first and second semesters was approved, besides a ceremony to honour teaching staff on the upcoming Teachers' Day.

Within the framework of the field visits' programme to schools, the Quriyat Parents' Council, chaired by the wali and attended by council members, visited Sheikh Abu Ubaidah Abdullah bin Muhammad Al Balushi Basic Education School (5-9).



The visit included following up on the educational process, listening to the school's requirements, and reviewing the students' innovations in the art exhibition and creativity projects. The council members also toured the school's interactive hall and theatre, where they appreciated the efforts to advance the school's education and learning system.

ARA Petroleum of TZC participates in ADIPEC 2024 in Abu Dhabi

ARA Petroleum (ARA), the oil and gas exploration and production arm of The Zubair Corporation (TZC), announced its participation in the prestigious Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC) 2024.

During the ADIPEC, ARA will deliver a number of technical papers as well as showcase the techniques and technologies it is using to increase production while constantly reducing emissions. ARA is on target to operate at almost net zero by 2030. The event, which attracts industry leaders from around the globe, provides a platform for



ARA to strengthen its regional presence and explore potential collaborations within the global energy landscape.

Speaking ahead of the event, Sultan al Gaithi, CEO of ARA, highlighted the company's commitment to driving innovation and operational excellence. "Our participation at ADIPEC underscores and publicises ARA's commitment to becoming a leader in low emission production by leveraging cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices. One example of this is our deployment of the world's first solar water treatment plant that takes oily saline produced

water and converts it into fresh water. We have many other examples, so look forward to engaging with industry peers and exploring new ideas that align with our production growth strategy and that are coupled with our sustainability goals. We want to connect with companies and individuals that can help us on this journey," he said.

Dr Omar al Jaaidi, vice president at ARA Petroleum, emphasised the importance of research and innovation in tackling the energy industry's challenges. "At ARA we fund a number of research projects across a broad spectrum."

Shigeru Ishiba retains Japan’s premier position in runoff vote

Tokyo, Japan - Japanese lawmakers voted in a runoff on Monday to reelect Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader Shigeru Ishiba, 67, as the 103rd prime minister of the country.

He won against Yoshihiko Noda of Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ). It is the first time in over 30 years that a vote to elect prime minister has gone to runoff in Japan.

The vote to elect the prime minister went to run off after the two main candidates failed to secure minimum support of 233 lawmakers in the lower

house of the parliament.

Shigeru Ishiba received 221 votes against 160 of Noda to win the premier election.

Ishiba, however, easily sailed through the election in the upper house of the parliament where LDP has majority with support of its junior partner Komeito.

With Ishiba winning in runoff, it means he will lead a minority government with outside support from smaller opposition parties.

He is expected to announce a new



Cabinet later today after his Cabinet members resigned en masse to pave way for the special four-day session of Parliament, locally known as Diet, to vote for the new prime minister.

The fresh vote to elect the chief executive comes after Japan held snap general elections on October 27 which threw up a hung parliament with no party gaining majority in the house of 465 lawmakers.

Ishiba’s LDP and Komeito lost their majority in the parliament while opposition CDPJ made substantial gains yet

short of forming a government.

Ishiba was elected 102nd prime minister of Japan in early October after he won the LDP leadership race in September.

Ishiba was eyeing support from Democratic Party for the People which boosted its numbers to 21 in the lower house of the bi-cameral parliament.

LDP and Komeito together are short of 18 seats for a simple majority of 233 and do not meet the mark even with the support of six independents.

Negotiating support from smaller

opposition parties means LDP-Komeito coalition will be conceding many positions inside and outside the parliament to lawmakers outside the two parties.

It also remains to be seen who from Ishin party, which has 38 lawmakers, will extend their support to.

The LDP has ruled Japan for almost all years since it was founded in 1955.

It faced the first setback in early 1990s and later in 2009 when it was ousted from the government for three years.

Anadolu Agency

Trump talks Ukraine in calls with Vladimir Putin and Olaf Scholz

Washington, D.C., US - US President-elect Donald Trump has spoken with Russian President Vladimir Putin about ending the war in Ukraine in a phone call reported by the Washington Post on Sunday.

The newspaper, citing several people familiar with the call who spoke on the basis of anonymity, reported that Trump had reminded Putin of the sizable US military presence in Europe.

The Post also reported that Trump was keen to have further conversations to talk about ‘the resolution’ of the war soon.

Trump has criticised the scale of military and financial support for Kyiv under US President Joe Biden’s administration, while the soon-to-be president has vowed to end the war quickly, without specifying how.

Trump spoke with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday shortly after his election victory was confirmed.

Ukraine’s foreign ministry said it was not informed in advance of the call between Trump and Putin. “We do not comment on private calls between President Trump and other world leaders,” Steven Cheung, Trump’s communications director, said when asked about the contact between the two leaders.

The call was reported to have taken place from Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate on Thursday.

Kremlin denies call took place

On Monday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the Washington Post report that a phone call took place.

“This is completely untrue. This is pure fiction, it’s just false information,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. “There was no conversation.” Peskov added there were

‘no concrete plans’ for speaking with Trump.

In previous comments on Sunday, Peskov said Trump’s return to the Oval Office sent ‘positive signals’. “At least he’s talking about peace, and not about confrontation,” Peskov said.

The Biden administration, which will remain in charge until Trump’s inauguration on January 20, has said it will send Ukraine as much aid as possible before Biden leaves office.

On Sunday, Biden’s National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, said the White House aims ‘to put Ukraine in the strongest possible position on the battlefield so that it is ultimately in the

strongest possible position at the negotiating table’. Sullivan also confirmed Biden has invited Trump to come to the White House for talks on Wednesday.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also spoke with Trump on Sunday about working together towards a ‘return of peace’ to Europe, according to Scholz’s spokesman Steffen Hebestreit.

During the call, Scholz emphasised the importance of continuing to provide Ukraine with support, Hebestreit said.

In their first telephone call since Trump won the US election, Scholz offered Trump the opportunity to ‘continue the decades of successful cooperation between

the governments of both countries’, the spokesman added.

On Sunday evening, Scholz appeared on a talk show on public broadcaster ARD, and seemed unfazed about the prospect of future cooperation with Trump, saying you have to take political situations as they come. “My principle is always, if I may say so casually: You dance with those who are in the room. And that also applies to the future president of the US,” Scholz said.

“I’m never naive, but I’m also a bit unflustered,” he added.

During his first term as US president, Trump criticised Berlin for insufficient military spending, the country’s trade surplus, and the German-Russian gas pipeline Nord Stream 2.

Scholz pointed out that Germany is now spending 2% of its gross national product on defence. This falls in line with NATO guidelines.

The chancellor also made it

clear that he expects Trump to adhere to the commitment made by outgoing President Biden to station US intermediate-range missiles in Germany.

“This is an agreement we have made with the US. It is in our mutual interest. So I want to accept it,” Scholz said.

Scholz also dismissed recent criticism from Trump supporter and tech billionaire Elon Musk, who mocked the chancellor over the collapse of the ruling coalition in Germany.

Musk had written in German on the social media platform X, which he owns: “Olaf is a fool.”

When asked if this bothered him, Scholz replied: “It honours me.”

“I don’t comment on tech billionaires,” the chancellor said. “He is not a head of state, even if one sometimes gets the impression that some tech corporations are more powerful than states.”

pw



US President-elect Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin

Kigali, Rwanda - At least 15 Chadian soldiers were killed and 32 injured in weekend clashes between government forces and the Boko Haram terrorist group in the country’s Lake Chad region, the military said on Sunday.

In a statement, the military said 96 terrorists were neutralised and 11 injured in clashes on Saturday.

The military recovered more than 100 weapons while six boats were destroyed, it added.

Boko Haram is in disarray and defence and security forces involved in the operation continue to hunt down the group’s remnants, the military said.

The injured soldiers were rushed for treatment to the capital N’Djamena.

The incident came weeks after President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno launched an operation against the terrorist group following an attack last month on a military base in Lac province that killed 40 soldiers.

Earlier on Sunday, Deby expressed his ‘sincere condolences to the families of the martyrs who died defending the homeland during the clashes’ and wished the wounded a speedy recovery.

“Following clashes between Chad’s security forces and a group of terrorists from the Boko Haram sect, I would like to salute the bravery of our valiant soldiers who fought a heroic battle that annihilated the group that ventured into our territory,” the president said in a message.

Last month’s attack targeted a defence and security forces base in the Barkaram area in Lac near Ngouboua, a town located around 480km (298 miles) northwest of N’Djamena.

Following the attack, Deby led an operation dubbed Haskanite to track down the assailants.

Anadolu Agency



15 Chadian soldiers killed in clashes with Boko Haram

Trump names Tom Homan as incoming ‘border czar’

Washington, D.C., US - US President-elect Donald Trump announced late on Sunday that the former acting director of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Tom Homan will serve as his administration’s ‘border czar’.

“I am pleased to announce that the Former ICE Director, and stalwart on Border Control, Tom Homan, will be joining the Trump Administration, in charge of our Nation’s Borders (‘The Border Czar’), including, but not limited to, the Southern Border, the Northern Border, all Maritime, and Aviation Security,” Trump said on Truth Social.

“I’ve known Tom for a long time, and there is nobody better at policing and controlling our Borders. Likewise, Tom Homan will be in charge of all Deportation of Illegal Aliens back to their Country of Origin,” he said.

He added that he has no doubt that Homan would do a ‘fantastic’ job.

Homan was a strong advocate for the Trump administration’s ‘zero tolerance’ policy.

Anadolu Agency

Germany’s Scholz ready to hold confidence vote before Christmas

Berlin, Germany - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Sunday that he would be willing to call a vote of confidence in parliament before Christmas.

“It is no problem at all for me to call a vote of confidence before Christmas if everyone agrees,” Scholz said during a one-on-one interview hosted by Caren Miosga on public broadcaster ARD.

“I am not glued to my post,” he added.

Following last week’s collapse of Germany’s governing coalition, Scholz announced

plans to call a parliamentary vote of confidence in his minority government.

The vote, which the chancellor is widely expected to lose, would pave the way for snap elections.

Scholz had initially scheduled the confidence vote for January 15, but increasing pressure has led the chancellor to consider bringing it forward.

A nasty game

Scholz refuted the notion that he orchestrated the breakdown of his governing three-way



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

coalition.

“I did not provoke it,” Scholz said, adding that he fought until the end to keep the three-party constellation of Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Free Democrats (FDP) together.

“I put up with the fact that I kept putting on a good face for the sake of compromise and cooperation, sometimes even playing a pretty nasty game. But when it’s over, it over,” Scholz said.

The coalition crisis, stemming from differences over economic and fiscal policy, escalated late

on Wednesday when Scholz dismissed Finance Minister Christian Lindner of the Free Democrats.

This reduced the three-party coalition government to two parties, Scholz’s Social Democrats and the Greens.

Decision to fire Lindner

Scholz also said he was vital in keeping the coalition together.

“Without my repeated efforts to achieve cooperation and compromise, the government would not have lasted this long. It

wouldn’t even have been formed.”

Scholz said it was a ‘clear and straightforward’ decision to fire his finance minister, Christian Lindner, a move which set the wheels in motion for the confidence vote, and possible election in 2025.

After the confidence vote, which Scholz is widely expected to lose, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will have 21 days to dissolve the Bundestag, with the election held within 60 days of the closure of parliament.

pw

Train service suspended in southwest Pakistan

Karachi, Pakistan - Authorities suspended railway services in southwest Pakistan on Monday following a deadly explosion at Quetta railway station that killed 26 people and injured dozens of others on Saturday.

All the trains from and to southwestern Balochistan province will remain suspended for next four days, a statement from Pakistan Railways said.

The provincial government also announced a three-day mourning in solidarity with the victims of Saturday's deadly bombing.

A suspected suicide bomber, according to security forces, blew himself up in the midst of over 100 passengers, including military personnel, who were waiting for a train at the railway station in provincial capital Quetta.

According to police, 14 military personnel were among the deceased, while several others were injured.

Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), an outlawed militant group, claimed responsibility for the attack. The group has long been targeting security forces and residents of other provinces in Balochistan.

Pakistan's largest Balochistan province, which borders neighbouring Iran and Afghanistan, is strategically important due to its rich copper, zinc, and natural gas reserves.

The province is also a key route of the US\$64bn mega project Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (PCEC), which aims to connect China's strategically important northwestern Xinxiang province to Balochistan's Gwadar port through a network of roads, railways, and pipelines for cargo, oil, and gas transportation.

However, Baloch separatists, mainly BLA, who have allegedly been involved in kidnapping and murdering Chinese workers in the recent past, oppose the project.

Anadolu Agency

Exploding pagers in Lebanon not made in Taiwan: Prosecutors

Taipei/Beirut - Taiwan said on Monday it had closed an investigation into the September pager attack on Lebanon's Hezbollah militia without finding evidence of any involvement of Taiwanese firms or individuals.

Security sources had previously said the pagers bore the name of Gold Apollo, a Taiwan-based company.

More than 40 people, including at least 12 civilians, were killed and more than 3,000 wounded in the incident, in which pagers used by Hezbollah instead of cell phones for security reasons exploded in what is widely believed to be an operation by Israel's intelligence agency.

What did prosecutors say?

The Taiwanese prosecutors said in a statement that the AR-924 pager model that exploded in Lebanon was manufactured, traded and shipped by a firm called Frontier Group Entity, and made outside of Taiwan.

Gold Apollo had, however, authorised the company to use its trademark, they said.

"There is no evidence indicating that any domestic manufacturers or individuals were accomplices in the relevant ex-



plosions, violating the Counter-Terrorism Financing Act, or engaging in other illegal activities," the statement said.

"No concrete evidence of criminal activity has been discovered in this case, nor have any specific individuals been implicated in any criminal activity, following a comprehensive

investigation," it added.

Gold Apollo has always denied producing the devices.

Controversial attack method

Using pagers as a method of attack has been criticised by rights groups as being too indiscriminate to comply with international

conventions on legitimate warfare, as the possible victims could not be identified in advance as militants or civilians.

Several children were among those injured in the incident on September 17, which was followed by walkie-talkie explosions on September 18.

The explosions came shortly

More than 40 people, including at least 12 civilians, were killed and more than 3,000 wounded in the incident, in which pagers used by Hezbollah exploded in what is widely believed to be an operation by Israel's intelligence agency

jured in overnight Israeli airstrikes in eastern and southern Lebanon, Lebanese media said on Monday.

The state news agency NNA said nine people lost their lives in two airstrikes in the eastern towns of Zighrin and Qasr.

Israeli warplanes also bombed Bednayeel town, killing four people and injuring three others, NNA said. Another strike targeting a building in the same town killed a father, wife, and two daughters.

One more person was killed when Israeli warplanes hit a building in the town of Saraaine El-Tahta, the same broadcaster said. An Israeli airstrike was also reported in Baalbek city, but no injuries were reported.

In southern Lebanon, five people were killed in two airstrikes on Sunday night in the towns of Kharayeb and Chehabiyeh near Tyre city.

Agencies

Meeting on Syria begins in Kazakh capital

Astana, Kazakhstan - The 22nd International Meeting on Syria, part of the Astana process led by Turkey, Russia, and Iran, kicked off in Kazakhstan's capital of Astana on Monday.

The two-day meeting, which will end on Tuesday, began with 11 delegations, including representatives from Turkey, Iran, Russia, Syria and the UN, according to a Kazakh Foreign Ministry statement.

Earlier, the ministry said the meeting will include bilateral and trilateral discussions among delegations, followed by a plenary session and press conference.

Key topics on the agenda include the development of the regional situation around Syria, the current 'on-the-ground' scenario, and efforts to reach a compre-



hensive settlement in the war-torn country. The talks will also address confidence-building measures such as the release of

hostages and efforts to locate missing persons, as well as humanitarian initiatives.

Participants will also discuss

mobilising international support for Syria's post-conflict recovery and creating conditions for the voluntary return of refugees.

The Astana format talks, the previous session of which took place in January, were launched in 2017 under the guarantors

Turkey, Russia and Iran to resolve the Syrian civil war, which began in early 2011.

Anadolu Agency

Security remains on edge in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan

Tehran, Iran - Violence continued to escalate in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province following the killing of five paramilitary Basij members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on Sunday.

In a statement, the IRGC's public relations department said the five local Basij members were killed in a 'terrorist incident' in Saravan County, located in this restive border region.

The Basij is a volunteer paramilitary organisation and one of five main branches of the IRGC. After the incident on Sunday evening, the IRGC said that it had launched a manhunt for the perpetrators. According to the provincial governor's office, the five Basij members were targeted during evening prayers.

The attack occurred less than two weeks after the appointment of Mansour Bijar, the province's first Sunni-Baloch governor. Bijar previously served as the deputy chief for urban development co-ordination and as director general



of the Technical Office in the governor's office.

Sistan and Baluchestan, with a population of about four million, is one of Iran's poorest provinces and faces a precarious security situation due to the presence of several militant groups.

Last month, ten police officers were killed in an ambush by armed assailants on police patrol units in the city of Taftan, following clashes between militants and border police. The Jaish al-Adl militant group, which fre-

quently targets Iranian security forces in the province, claimed responsibility for the attack.

In April, five police officers were killed when militants opened fire on their vehicles near Sib and Soran County, also close to the Pakistan border.

Less than a week earlier, clashes between Jaish al-Adl militants and security forces in the province led to the deaths of ten personnel and eighteen militants.

In January, the IRGC launched missile strikes on Pakistan's

Balochistan province, claiming to target the militant group's headquarters there. Pakistan condemned the strikes and responded with its own missile attacks on what it identified as militant positions along the Iran border, escalating tensions between the two countries.

As tensions de-escalated, both countries agreed to cooperate against shared security threats. Notably, hours before Sunday's attack, Iran praised actions taken by Pakistani military forces against 'strongholds of anti-Iran terrorists' in Balochistan.

"Terrorist groups affiliated with arrogant powers, playing into the hands of the United States and the Israeli regime as mere pawns, had set the common border between Iran and Pakistan as a scene of their acts of sabotage, and were staging terrorist attacks at both sides of the frontier," read a statement released by the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces.

Anadolu Agency



Israel demolishes Palestinian Bedouin village for 232nd time

Jerusalem - The Israeli authorities on Monday demolished the Palestinian Al-Araqib Bedouin village in the southern Negev region for the 232nd time in the past 14 years, according to a local activist.

This was the tenth demolition of the village's structures since the start of the year, activist Aziz al-Touri told Anadolu.

"The Israeli authorities raided the village of Al-Araqib today and demolished its housing structures for the 232nd time," Al-Touri said.

He noted that the village residents immediately started to rebuild their homes, as they insisted on staying in their land despite the Israeli repeated demolitions. Homes in Al-Araqib, inhabited by 22 Palestinian families, are built of wood and plastic.

The village was first destroyed in 2010 and rebuilt after every demolition since then. Israeli authorities claim that the site where it is located falls under 'state land'.

Al-Araqib residents are Arab citizens of Israel who were dis-

placed in 1951 when the nascent state of Israel claimed the area as 'state land'.

Zochrot, a Tel Aviv-based NGO, said in a recent report that Al-Araqib village was first built during the Ottoman period and its lands were purchased by residents.

Israeli authorities seek to seize control of the lands and expel its residents, with dozens of villages and Bedouin communities facing the same threat in the Negev area, according to Zochrot.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

No religion encourages pollution: SC

The Supreme Court said that the right to live in a pollution-free atmosphere is a fundamental right

New Delhi - The Supreme Court on Monday said that the right to live in a pollution-free atmosphere is a fundamental right of every citizen under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and no religion encourages any activity which creates pollution.

Questioning the authorities for their failure to implement the ban on firecrackers in Delhi during Diwali, a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih further said that if firecrackers are burnt in this fashion it also affects the fundamental right to health of the citizens.

“The right to live in a pollution-free atmosphere is a fundamental right of every citizen which is protected by Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Prima facie we are of the view that no religion encourages any activity which creates pollution or compromises with health of people. If firecrackers are burnt in this fashion it also affects the fundamental right to health of the citizens,” said the bench.

It further expressed dissatisfaction over the matter in which the ban on fire-crackers by the Delhi government on October 14 was not taken ‘seriously’ by the Delhi Police.

The bench said that the Delhi Police ought to have in-



A commuter rides a two-wheeler on Kartavya Path amid thick smog as Air Quality Index (AQI) remains in the ‘Very Poor’ category, in New Delhi on Monday (ANI)

Delhi Police must immediately inform those entities that sell firecrackers online on marketing platforms to stop the sale and delivery of firecrackers

SUPREME COURT

formed all licence holders to forthwith stop the sale of fire-crackers.

It further directed the Delhi Police Commissioner to immediately take action to inform all concerned people about the order of the apex court on the

ban of firecrackers and ensure that no license holder sells or manufactures firecrackers.

“Delhi Police must immediately inform those entities that sell firecrackers online on marketing platforms to stop the sale and delivery of firecrackers

within the limits of the National Capital Territory of Delhi,” it ordered.

The apex court also directed the Delhi Police Commissioner to form a special cell to ensure the effective implementation of the ban on firecrackers and

hold SHOs of all local police stations responsible for enforcing the ban throughout the year.

The bench further directed the Delhi Police Commissioner to file a personal affidavit before November 25 putting on record the steps taken by them to enforce the firecrackers ban.

It directed all NCR states to come up before it and inform about the steps taken by them to ensure pollution is being at minimal. The counsel appearing for the Delhi government stated that the government will decide on extending the ban throughout the year after consulting all stakeholders.

It directed the state government to make an appropriate decision on or before November 25.

The apex court was hearing the case relating to the pollution in Delhi and examining the action taken by authorities across Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to curb stubble-burning incidents.

On the last date of the hearing, the top court had asked the Delhi government and Delhi Police how the ban on fire-crackers to curb pollution was flouted during Diwali celebrations in the national capital. ANI

Rahul Gandhi says Wayanad brought ‘love’ in his politics

Wayanad, Kerala - Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, campaigned for sister Priyanka Gandhi in Wayanad ahead of the upcoming by-elections, and reflected how his political journey was transformed by embracing the concept of ‘love’.

Opening up on his experience during Bharat Jodo Yatra, the Congress leader said the purpose of his foot march was ‘political’, but by the end of the day, he had understood the meaning of ‘love’ in politics.

“When I first went on the Bharat Jodo Yatra, I was a bit surprised because it was a political walk. The purpose of the walk was political...but at the beginning of the yatra I noticed that I was hugging people and people were kissing me. I was saying, I love you. They were saying, we love you. I realised while I was on the plane today that for many years I did not use



Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi during a roadshow in Wayanad (ANI)

the word ‘love’ in politics,” Rahul Gandhi said at public meeting on Monday.

“After I came to Wayanad suddenly I started using the word ‘love’ in politics. I realised that it was because the people of Wayanad gave me so much

love and affection that my entire politics changed,” he added.

He further said that the people at Wayanad taught him the importance of ‘love’ and that’s why he is wearing a shirt with the quote ‘I Love Wayanad’.

ANI

Justice Khanna is 51st CJI

New Delhi - Justice Sanjiv Khanna was sworn in as the 51st Chief Justice of India (CJI) by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in a brief ceremony on Monday. Khanna has been part of benches in the Supreme Court that heard important judgments including upholding the abrogation of Article 370.

CJI Khanna was also part of the bench that scrapped the electoral bonds scheme passed in the Parliament earlier.

Khanna took the oath in English, in the name of God, bearing his allegiance to the Constitution of India ensuring that he will perform the duties of his office without fear or favour, affection or ill will.

The event was attended by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and several other Union Cabinet ministers, who graced the occasion



President Droupadi Murmu administers the oath of Office of the Chief Justice of India to Sanjiv Khanna (ANI)

with their presence.

Justice Khanna, who has served as a judge in the Supreme Court and Delhi High Court, succeeds former CJI D Y Chandrachud. Khanna will serve a six-month term as the 51st CJI.

In addition to the judges, the function was also attended by other legal luminaries, government officials, and key political

figures.

The participation of retired judges, including retired Chief Justices, adds a layer of respect and tradition, acknowledging the contributions of former members of the judiciary while also emphasising the collaborative and collegial nature of the Indian legal system.

The Government of India re-

cently issued a formal notification appointing Justice Sanjiv Khanna as the next CJI, effective from November 11, 2024. The Ministry of Law and Justice confirmed that the President, under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution, has appointed Justice Khanna to the highest judicial post in the country.

ANI

Belarus officially granted BRICS partner status

Istanbul, Turkey - Belarus announced on Monday that it has officially been granted BRICS partner country status.

A statement from the Belarusian Foreign Ministry said a letter by President Alexander Lukashenko addressed to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin was handed over by Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov to Moscow’s Ambassador to Minsk Boris Gryzlov.

Indicating that the letter on Minsk’s readiness to join BRICS as a partner country is dated November 5, the statement said the document was handed over to Gryzlov during a personal meeting with the Belarusian top diplomat. “An official response to a written invitation is a mandatory element of the procedure



agreed upon by member states to obtain partner status. It is from this moment that the country is officially considered a BRICS partner,” the statement said.

The statement further revealed the text of Lukashenko’s letter, in which he stated that

BRICS has been steadily strengthening multilateral cooperation, becoming a pillar of multipolarity, since its formation.

“The spirit of mutual respect and equality, the attractiveness of its goals with inexorable logic lead to the expansion of BRICS,”

the statement said, indicating that Lukashenko thanked Putin for his support and noted the formalisation of Minsk’s participation in BRICS as a partner state during Russia’s presidency.

Among other things, the status of a BRICS partner country

provides for permanent participation in special sessions of the bloc’s summits and foreign ministers’ meetings, it added.

The statement said partners can join the final documents of BRICS.

Anadolu Agency

UN calls for urgent climate finance agreement at COP29

Baku, Azerbaijan - The UN on Monday called on global leaders to prioritise urgent climate action and financial reform, emphasising the economic and human cost of inaction.

“An ambitious climate finance goal is not charity - it’s self-interest for every nation,” Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), said in his opening remarks at COP29 in Baku.

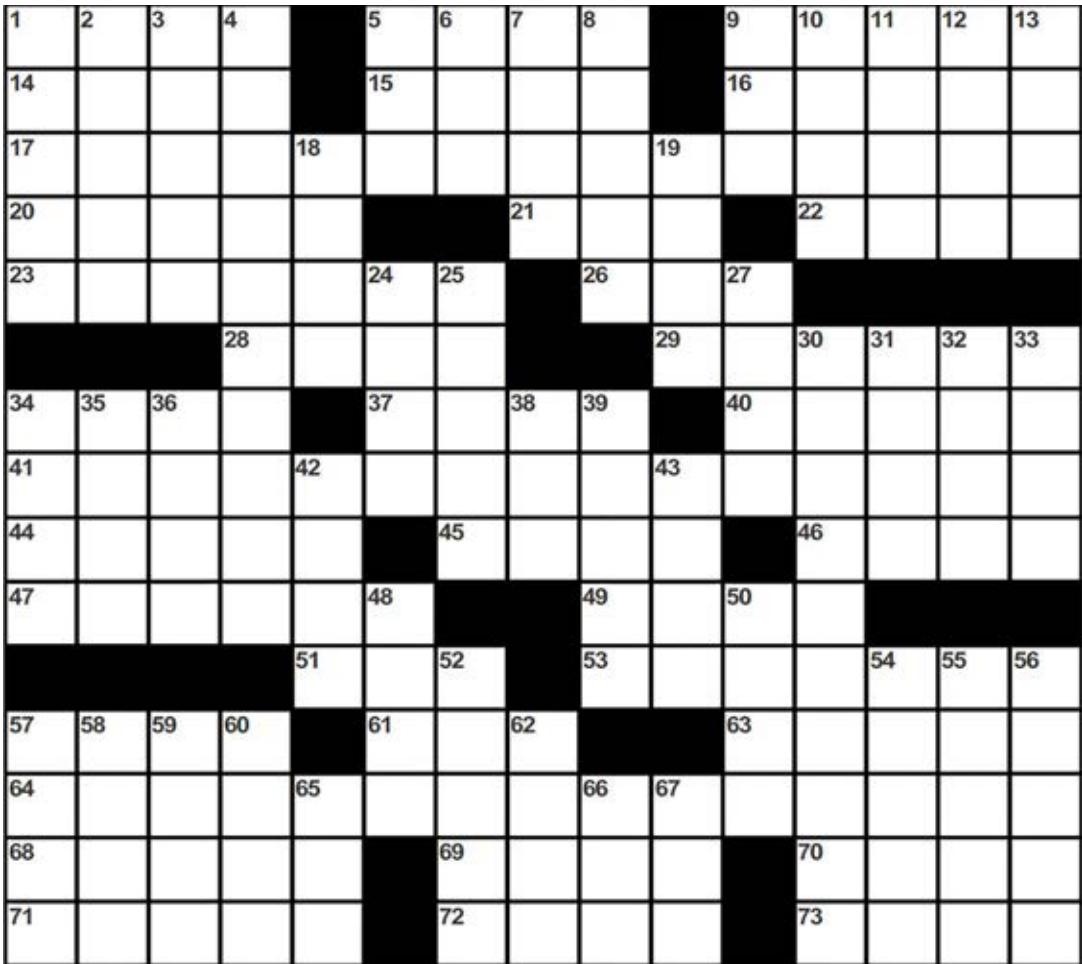
The 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN-

FCCC commenced in Baku on Monday, bringing together world leaders, policymakers, and activists with a renewed commitment to address intensifying climate crises. Running until November 22, the event will see discussions around global warming, climate adaptation, and sustainability.

“An ambitious new climate finance goal is entirely in the self-interest of every single nation, including the largest and the wealthiest,” he said.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Delivery advice
- 5) Ty of the Baseball Hall of Fame
- 9) Group of female elephant seals
- 14) Populous continent
- 15) Common fertilizer compound
- 16) Nice school?
- 17) Three before "down"
- 20) Armistice
- 21) Red, white and blue inits.
- 22) Ago, long ago
- 23) Cement alternative
- 26) Barley bristle
- 28) Tool for a duel
- 29) Try again, legally
- 34) Alphabetize, perhaps
- 37) "... does it"
- 40) One time through
- 41) Three before "down"
- 44) "That was_ miss!"
- 45) Bunker, for one
- 46) Male turkeys
- 47) _ and Herzegovina
- 49) London art gallery
- 51) Type of tide
- 53) Arctic parkas
- 57) Squelches a squeak

- 61) William Tell's Canton
- 63) Extra-important exam
- 64) Three before "down"
- 68) Public perception
- 69) Particular pop
- 70) Nautical direction
- 71) Chic or jaunty
- 72) Eat supper backward?
- 73) For fear that
- DOWN**
- 1) Carbo loader's en tree
- 2) Manipulative ones
- 3) Promote good posture
- 4) Professional killer
- 5) It can be chalked up
- 6) Dungeons & Dragons humanoid
- 7) Boyfriend
- 8) Light wood
- 9) Males
- 10) Sense of soreness
- 11) Have a good laugh
- 12) Masons' colleagues
- 13) Join up
- 18) Look before you do this
- 19) Bryn _ College
- 24) Bruce and Jason
- 25) Instruct
- 27) Head holder
- 30) More than funny

- 31) Sound effect
- 32) Many a homecoming attendee
- 33) Steeps flax
- 34) Bayonet thrust
- 35) Words of woe
- 36) Wishes it weren't so
- 38) Hindu holy man's address
- 39) Black Sea port
- 42) Creamy cracker topper
- 43) Chieftain's group
- 48) Border on
- 50) Curdled soybean milk
- 52) Prepare for a collision
- 54) Tarsus location
- 55) Hardy cabbages
- 56) Icy wet stuff
- 57) Kimono sashes
- 58) "Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer
- 59) Grassy meadows
- 60) Droops down
- 62) Xerox competitor, once
- 65) Lock opener
- 66) Seed remover Whitney
- 67) Terrible

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

When dealing with other people today, listen to their ranting and raving with an open mind. Not everyone around you will be able to agree on the right way to go about doing things. Luckily, you should find all this bickering quite amusing. Let them vent their frustration without offering up your own opinion. Amid all the griping, you might find a creative solution to a vexing issue.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You need a change of scenery. Sitting still has always been a challenge for you. But at the moment, it's going to basically be impossible. Why fight it? Get out there and mix it up. Someone special would like to spend some quality time with you right now. Whether it's an old friend, a new flame, or a long-neglected family member, share yourself with someone you adore.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You've been carrying on this behind-the-scenes infatuation for far too long. It's time to get this show on the road. So treat yourself to romance, extravagance, and nothing but the best, especially when it comes to enchanting someone into your lair. That's your mission, and no one needs to ask you if you're willing to accept it. You're ready and raring to go!



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Actress Brooke Shields was married to whom for 2 years from April 1997?

- A. Roger Federer
- B. Lance Armstrong
- C. Andre Agassi
- D. Greg Norman

02. Alfonso de Albuquerque took areas of which modern day country for Portugal in the early 1500s?

- A. Vietnam
- B. USA
- C. Mexico
- D. India

03. The humerus bone connects what joints?

- A. Knee and hip
- B. Ankle and knee
- C. Elbow and wrist
- D. Elbow and shoulder

Answers: 1.C 2.D 3.D



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Rules are made to be broken. Everyone knows that. Consider putting your policy of not dating coworkers on the shelf for a bit. Someone interesting is in your department, and the two of you can't keep you eyes off each other. Just lay down some ground rules before you hop in the sack. You want to have a framework to operate within if things go south. After all, you had this job first and you're keeping it.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You're totally engrossed in your work, and that's how it should be. But a certain authority figure has been on your mind lately too, and your thoughts are anything but professional. A crush on the boss? Is the feeling mutual? Perhaps! Tread carefully. Before you start planning your wedding and considering the names of your children, ponder if you're ready to lose your job over this fling. If you don't care, by all means go for it.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Too much is going on, and you'll miss out on some exciting stuff if you're not careful! You've been cruising along in the fast lane lately, but today you might want to put on the blinker and ease over to slower traffic. Sometimes it's nice to downshift, get off the main highway, and take a more leisurely route to your destination. The landscape is lovely in your life right now. Why not take a longer look and invite a passenger along for the ride?



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It can go one of two ways for you right now, romantically speaking. An existing relationship will become far more intimate or a new relationship will take off like a speeding train. Either way, you'll have to excuse the rest of the world and sneak off to your little love shack. Don't worry, everything will still be here when you emerge next week or whenever.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

More than anything right now, you're enjoying the intimacy you've allowed yourself to give and receive. Your favorite peeps have confided in you, and you've shared your own secrets with them too. It's not the intrigue that has you so mesmerized, not exactly. Although, honestly, that does appeal to you. What you really love is the closeness that opening up your heart brings.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Your reputation is your top concern right now, so tend to it with a little TLC. Avoid being seen in the wrong places with the wrong people, at least for the time being. Make sure you come off in a good light. Attention to detail is more important than ever, so reread your professional communique at least twice and don't dress too casually for any occasion.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

If you really want to be different, why not put your money away and breathe new life into a garment or accessory you already own? You're always in the mood to shop, but are you ever in the mood to create something new? Instead of making more debt, why not explore ways to stabilize your financial future. Invest in some raw materials. You might end up with a profitable part-time business.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

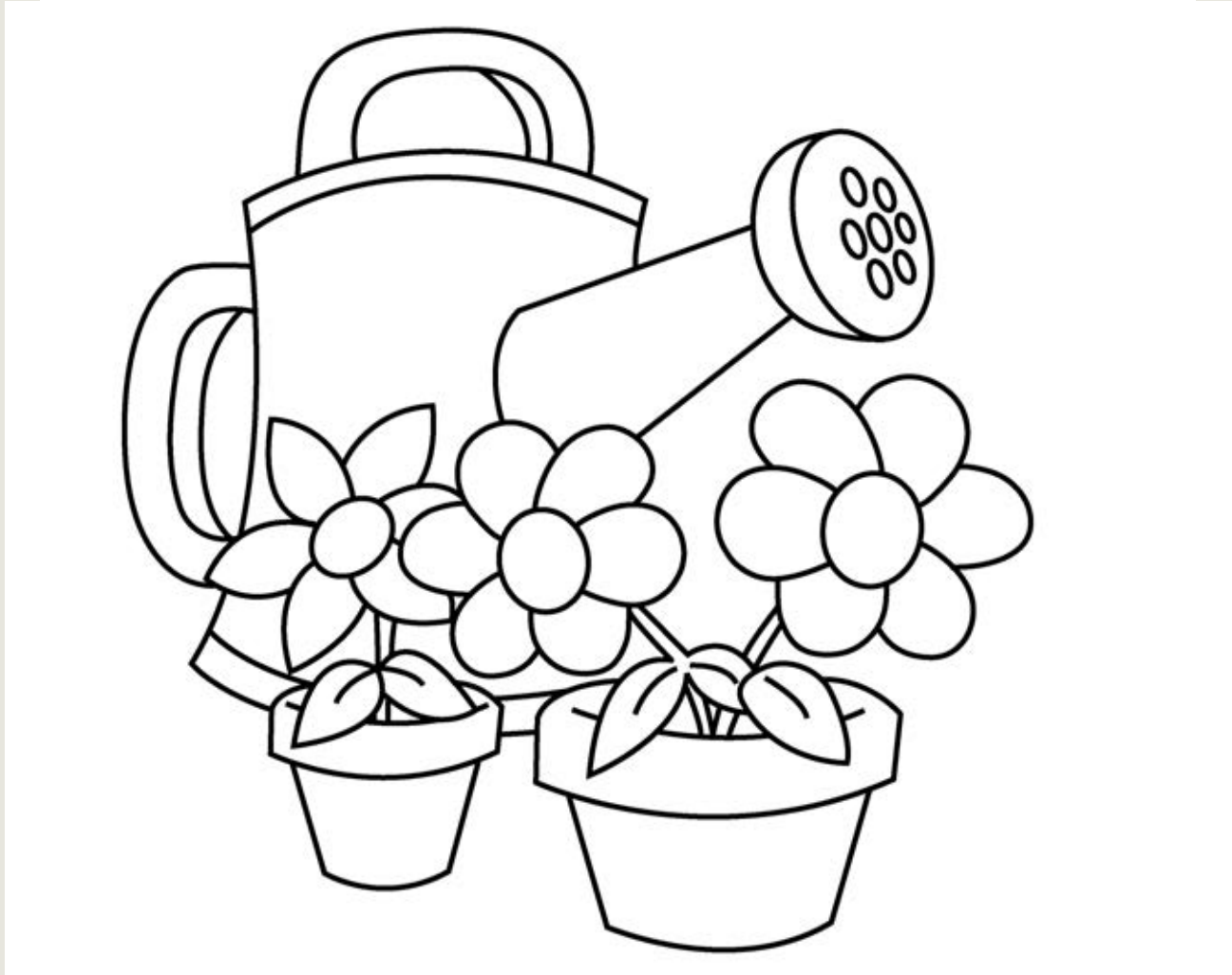
You definitely have a way with words, but today's astrological additives will magnify your verbal dexterity tenfold. If you you've been meaning to make amends, reveal a secret or just get something off your chest, clear your throat and start talking. It couldn't be a better time to set yourself up for success. You'll triumph in all your communicative endeavors.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Everything will go so well if everyone cooperates today, and they will. Mostly. Except, of course, for a few die-hards. Just ignore those folks. No matter how you shake it, today is a great day to be you. It'll be an even better day if that certain special someone you've been obsessed with somehow materializes in the process. You've never had it so good!

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

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

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



Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli scores against Chelsea in their Premier League match on Sunday

Chelsea and Arsenal share the spoils in London derby

London, England - Chelsea and Arsenal shared the spoils in a tense 1-1 battle at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, keeping the

London sides level in the Premier League but still nine points adrift of leaders Liverpool. In a finely balanced game, the sides enjoyed almost equal possession and both had three shots on target. It was Arsenal who looked the more disappointed at the whistle, Mikel Arteta holding his head in disbelief after substitute Leandro Trossard failed to put away

two late chances. Gabriel Martinelli had put the visitors in front in the 60th minute, turning in a neatly lifted ball from captain Martin Odegaard, whose influence on his return from injury proved crucial after the Gunners' failure to score in their last two games. Chelsea equalised 10 minutes later when substitute Enzo Fernandez pushed the ball to the

ever-lively Pedro Neto just outside the Arsenal area and the Portuguese stepped to one side and shot low to David Raya's left. "We came to win, so we're not as happy as we wanted to be, but we didn't want to lose and it's a good point against a good team," Neto told Sky Sports. Chelsea's Cole Palmer had almost made the perfect start but his third-minute rocket was

tipped over by the ever-vigilant Raya. Arsenal thought they had gone ahead in the 32nd when former Chelsea striker Kai Havertz latched on to a speedily taken free kick and sent the ball across Robert Sanchez into the bottom corner. But VAR showed the German was fractionally offside. Sanchez had been called into

action five minutes earlier, getting his hand to a shot from Martinelli. Chelsea fluffed a couple of second-half chances with Levi Colwill shooting just over and Noni Madueke firing high and wide. But as the minutes ticked down it was Arsenal who pushed forward. Sanchez kept out substitute Mikel Marino, before

Trossard fired over from close range. In time added on, William Saliba sent the ball across the six-yard box but Trossard could not connect with it despite an open goal. The result lifted Chelsea to third and Arsenal, who have gone four Premier League games without a win, to fourth in the table, both on 19 points.



Ruud van Nistelrooy acknowledges the crowd at Old Trafford

It wasn't goodbye, says Van Nistelrooy

Manchester, England - Ruud van Nistelrooy lingered on the Old Trafford pitch after Manchester United thrashed Leicester City 3-0 on Sunday in his final game as interim boss, but the Dutchman said it was more about celebrating a great moment than a potential goodbye. United recorded three wins and a draw across all competitions in the four games since Erik ten Hag was sacked and Van Nistelrooy temporarily took charge. "No (it wasn't goodbye)," Van Nistelrooy said. "I felt like closing this period down and basically it was a moment, here and now, and that was the beauty of the moment in my opinion where, yeah, circumstances came together and it was a beautiful moment and it was gratitude from my side to them, and the reception I received was unbelievable."

I feel ready for the challenge, says new Man United boss

Braga, Portugal - New Manchester United head coach Ruben Amorim said he is under no illusions about the difficulty of the task he faces when he moves to England from Portugal but he is looking forward to the challenge. The Premier League club announced Amorim's appointment earlier this month, with the 39-year-old Portuguese set to arrive from Sporting on Monday on a contract until June 2027. Amorim, who replaces sacked Dutchman Erik ten Hag at United, marked his final game as coach of Sporting with a 4-2 comeback victory at Braga on Sunday. "I feel ready for the new challenge," he told reporters after the match.



Ruben Amorim

"I'm not naive, I know it's going to be very different, very difficult. I'm at peace now, I can focus on my new job and I'm looking forward to starting tomorrow."

Considered one of Europe's brightest young managers, Amorim's first match is slated for Nov. 24 at promoted Ipswich Town in the Premier League. United are 13th in the league on 15 points from 11 matches, four points adrift of Chelsea in third. Interim manager Ruud van Nistelrooy has guided the side to three wins and a draw in all competitions since Ten Hag was fired on Oct. 28. "I know it will be difficult to reproduce what I have here elsewhere, but there are other places with different exposure and pressure ... It's been a fantastic adventure," said Amorim, who has won the Primeira Liga twice with Sporting. "I apologise for this mid-season decision, but I felt it was my time and my way."

Joelinton is like gold dust, says Howe

Nottingham, England - Newcastle United manager Eddie Howe praised the versatility of forward Joelinton, who was the catalyst for a come-from-behind 3-1 Premier League victory over hosts Nottingham Forest on Sunday that moved his side into the top half of the table. Forest led 1-0 at halftime but a superb second period from the visitors saw them score goals through Alexander Isak, Brazilian Joelinton and Harvey Barnes to claim a deserved victory. "Joelinton is like gold dust because wherever you put him, you know he's going to do a good job," Howe told SkySports. "His attitude never changes in train-



Newcastle United's Joelinton celebrates his goal

ing. He's playing in different positions, so he has to do the training. I'm really pleased again with his performance." Howe said he hoped his side

could find some consistency in the coming matches. "The Premier League is really, really tight this season and you need consistent victories."

They don't look very good: Rice, Saka add to Arsenal injury list

London, England - Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has two new worries to add to what he describes as a nightmare run of injuries after Bukayo Saka and Declan Rice both failed to finish the 1-1 draw with Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday. Rice went off after 71 minutes and Saka was replaced 10 minutes later with both sustaining knocks. "It doesn't look good because for two players of that importance to say they want to come off is unusual," Arteta told reporters after the derby at Stamford Bridge. "I don't expect them to be fit (for the international break) because if not they don't come off." Arsenal, who began without the likes of Riccardo Calafiori and Takehiro Tomiyasu, took the lead with a Gabriel Martinelli goal but were pegged back when Pedro Neto was allowed far too much time and space to drill in Chelsea's equaliser. The result left Chelsea in third place and Arsenal fourth - both of them nine points behind leaders Liverpool. Arteta said he was disappointed with way his side conceded the equaliser after working so hard to get ahead. "After scoring the first goal I'm very disappointed with how we conceded the goal. That's nowhere near the standards," the Spaniard said. "That's not very much like us. I think today



Arsenal's Bukayo Saka and Chelsea's Marc Cucurella battle for the ball

After scoring the first goal I'm very disappointed with how we conceded the goal. That's nowhere near the standards

MIKEL ARTETA

we have to fault ourselves. That's something that we have to do better." One positive for Arsenal, who have now gone four games

without a win in the Premier League, was the return of captain Martin Odegaard to the starting lineup after a lengthy lay-off with an ankle injury. "I don't know another player that is capable of doing that after six weeks out," Arteta said of the Norwegian's performance. While much of the focus surrounds Arsenal's sudden loss of form, Chelsea head into the international break in the top three of the Premier League for the first time since the 2021-22 season.



Real Sociedad's Sberaldo Becker scores against Barcelona on Sunday

REAL STUNNER

Becker scores the winner as Sociedad stun Barcelona

San Sebastian, Spain - Barcelona suffered a shock 1-0 LaLiga defeat at Real Sociedad on Sunday that ended their seven-match winning streak in all competitions as Sberaldo Becker scored for the Basque side in the first half.

Leaders Barcelona got their first taste of defeat in over a month and only their second in their domestic season after they were dominated throughout the

match by the home side who wasted several chances.

Heading into the match, Barca had the most prolific attack in Europe's top five leagues with 40 goals as well in the Champions League with 15, yet Hansi Flick's side finished the game having had no shots on target.

Barcelona still lead the standings on 33 points, six ahead Real Madrid who have a game in hand in second place, while Atletico Madrid are third on 26 points. Real Sociedad are eighth on 18 points.

Missing teenager Lamine Yamal, who had not fully recovered from a right ankle injury suffered in their Champions League

win at Red Star Belgrade on Wednesday, Barca thought they had opened the scoring in the 13th minute.

Robert Lewandowski fired home a rebound from inside the box, but the goal was ruled out by the VAR, who spotted the Polish striker was marginally offside in the build up.

Real Sociedad then took control of the match and, after Barca goalkeeper Inaki Pena made a fine save to deny a Mikel Oyarzabal free kick, Becker beat the off-side trap to race on to a Luka Sucic header before slotting a tidy finish just inside the post in the 33rd minute.

The home side squandered

chance after chance as they overran a chaotic Barcelona defence and the visitors were lucky to get to halftime not losing by a wider margin after Oyarzabal missed a sitter just before the break.

Becker also wasted three golden opportunities early in the second half and Barca goalkeeper Pena made several critical saves to deny efforts by Oyarzabal, Take Kubo and Brais Mendez.

Real continued to dominate but failed to turn their superiority into goals and almost paid the price as Barca went close in the 57th minute.

Fermin Lopez tried his luck with a strike from the edge of the box which deflected off a de-

fender and almost wrongfooted the home side's goalkeeper Alex Remiro, who was quick to recover and palm away the effort for a corner.

"Real Sociedad are a team that presses very well. It was very difficult for us to put the ball in play," Barcelona's Pedri told Movistar Plus.

"We weren't accurate today and I think it'll be a one-day thing. The team is doing well and it's nothing to worry about.

"In the second half we didn't have any clarity. We have to analyse it and keep working after the international break. We're doing well and we're still in the lead."

No excuses, says Barcelona manager Flick



Hansi Flick

San Sebastian, Spain - Barcelona manager Hansi Flick offered no excuses for his side's poor showing in a surprise 1-0 defeat at Real Sociedad on Sunday that ended their seven-match winning streak in all competitions.

Flick praised their opponents' performance and said Barca had to move on. Flick's side are still top of the LaLiga standings on 33 points, six ahead Real Madrid who have a game in hand in second.

"Today was not our day," Flick told a press conference.

"I think we have to accept this result because they played decisively. It's clear, there are no excuses. We didn't create enough chances.

"We started well with the ball, I was happy, but then we started to suffer and their goal came. We also made some bad decisions and that's something we have to live with."

Barca had scored in every single match they played until Sunday, but finished the game at San Sebastian with no shots on target.

Real Sociedad created sev-

eral chances and could have won by a wider margin following a series of bad mistakes by an erratic Barca defence, something that Flick thinks they will have to study carefully.

"The responsibility for the defeat is ours. We could and should have played much better," Flick said.

We started well with the ball, I was happy, but then we started to suffer and their goal came

HANSI FLICK

"We haven't held possession of the ball the way we wanted and suffered. But the games we have played before have been fantastic and I appreciate what the team has done so far this season.

"We tried until the last second, united, and I told the team that. But today we weren't strong enough to deserve a better result."

Calhanoglu scores blinder, misses penalty as Inter falter

Milan, Italy - Hakan Calhanoglu finally missed a penalty for Inter Milan after scoring a stunning equaliser as they were held to a 1-1 home draw by leaders Napoli in Serie A on Sunday.

The match was a rollercoaster for the 30-year-old Turkey midfielder, who scored a superb long-range goal to cancel out Scott McTominay's opener for Napoli.

However, he then hit the post with a penalty, his first miss for Inter from the spot to end a streak of 19 successful efforts and his first penalty miss since November 2016, when he played for Bayer Leverkusen.

The result tightened the race at the top of Serie A, with Napoli leading the way on 26 points. Atalanta, Fiorentina, Inter and Lazio all have 25 points.

While disappointed to let three points slip from their grasp, Calhanoglu admitted he was bound to miss a penalty eventually.

"We dominated the game, we deserved more. We were unlucky, I'm sorry I missed the first penalty, but I knew it would happen, I just didn't want it to happen today," he said.

"It was an intense match, many duels, we always tried to find our strikers. In the second half, we were better down the wings, but we couldn't score."

The visitors took the lead in the 23rd minute against the run of play when McTominay



Inter Milan's Hakan Calhanoglu celebrates after scoring against Napoli

We dominated the game, we deserved more. We were unlucky, I'm sorry I missed the first penalty, but I knew it would happen, I just didn't want it to happen today

HAKAN CALHANOGU

pounced to poke home from close range after a corner was flicked on. Two minutes before the break, Calhanoglu equalised with a powerful strike from outside the box, which beat Napoli keeper Alex Meret before nestling in the top corner.

Inter took control in the sec-

ond half, pressing relentlessly and going close on several occasions, including a powerful shot from Federico Dimarco that rattled the post.

Tensions rose on the pitch when Inter coach Simone Inzaghi received a booking for protesting 10 minutes into the second half.

Napoli boss Conte slams VAR after draw

Milan, Conte - Napoli coach Antonio Conte criticised the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) for not intervening to reverse a penalty that Inter Milan's Hakan Calhanoglu eventually missed in their 1-1 draw on Sunday.

Napoli earned a point at San Siro to hold on to their lead at the top of Serie A in what is shaping up to be a tight title race. Conte's side sit on 26 points, one clear of Atalanta, Fiorentina, Inter and Lazio.

While Turkey midfielder Calhanoglu failed to convert from the spot, Napoli manager Conte criticised the VAR for not overruling the referee's decision to penalise Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa for a foul on Denzel Dumfries.

"Can they (VAR) only intervene when it suits them? A decision from the referee like this can transform a match and VAR cannot do anything about it?," Conte



Antonio Conte

told DAZN.

"Either VAR is there to correct errors or it is not. If there is an error, it has to intervene. It really angers me, but it does to all coaches, it has to intervene if there is a mistake.

"If there is VAR, it must be used to correct errors or show the referee situations that he did not see. If it's a clear error, and it was, then why should (referee Maurizio) Mariani be allowed to just do that."

Despite his frustration with refereeing decisions, Conte was satisfied with his team's performance against the Italian champions.

"I said that we would not come here to just be sparring partners against the strongest squad in Serie A, so it was important for us to face them with strength, character, accepting duels all over the field," he said.

"On that score, I am very satisfied. It was not easy to play here, we all know that we are making improvements and working hard, otherwise you don't come to San Siro twice and also against Juventus without defeat.

"The lads are proving themselves, though of course we could've done much, much more in terms of quality today. There were too many errors, a lot of technical errors, but I am sure there will be further improvements."

Serie A side Roma axe coach Juric



Ivan Juric

Rome, Italy - AS Roma have sacked coach Ivan Juric, the Serie A club said on Sunday, as the Croatian became the capital side's second coach to be fired this season.

Roma lost 3-2 at home against Bologna on Sunday, their fourth loss in the last five league games, leaving them 12th in the standings.

"We would like to thank Ivan

Juric for his hard work these past weeks," Roma said in a statement.

"He handled a difficult environment with the utmost professionalism, and for that we are grateful... The search for a new head coach has already begun and an announcement will be made in the coming days."

Former Italy coach Roberto Mancini is reportedly in talks

with club owners to take over, La Gazzetta dello Sport said.

Roma appointed Juric in September to become their third coach in the span of eight months after they sacked Daniele De Rossi.

De Rossi, who spent nearly two decades at Roma as a player, was appointed as head coach in January after Jose Mourinho was fired.



Stubbs shines as SA edge India in second T20

Gqeberha, South Africa - An unbeaten 47 from Tristan Stubbs, and a 42-run partnership with Gerald Coetzee, saw South Africa haul themselves over the line for a three-wicket win over India in their Twenty20 international at St George's Park on Sunday.

South Africa scored 128-7 in 19 overs in reply to India's 124-6 to level the four-match series at 1-1 in a dramatic finish after their top order were undone by India spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who took a career-best 5-17.

Stubbs and Coetzee chased down a 40-run target in three overs of swashbuckling hitting at the death to rescue the result when it looked as if India would pull off an unlikely victory.

The visitors had been put into bat and struggled to deal with South Africa's seam attack, losing

wickets cheaply before Hardik Pandya's unbeaten 39 gave them a total to try to defend.

India opener Sanju Samson, who scored a sparkling century as the tourists beat South Africa by 61 runs in Durban on Friday, was bowled by Marco Jansen three balls into Sunday's contest, while Abhishek Sharma and captain Suryakumar Yadav also departed early. Tilak Varma (20) and Axar Patel (27) made contributions to India's total although South Africa would have been confident of chasing down the target when they came out to bat in reply.

But their top order were undone by a masterful display of bowling from Varun, whose googly bamboozled the home batsmen and gave India the upper hand.

OMAN WIN THRILLER

Hosts clinch one-run victory over Netherlands to finish unbeaten in tri-series

Muscat - Oman's spinners dazzled once again, leading the hosts to a thrilling one-run victory over the Netherlands in a low-scoring battle at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Monday.

The win marked Oman's fourth consecutive triumph in the Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series, ending their campaign on a high note.

Defending a modest total of 155, Oman's bowlers, particularly the spinners, were relentless. Shakeel Ahmed, Aamir Kaleem, Samay Shrivastav, and Siddharth Bukkapatnam combined efforts to trap the Dutch batters, making it incredibly challenging to chase down the target.

The moment of the match, however, came from captain Jatinder Singh's bold decision to introduce off-spinner Karan Sonavale in the 46th over.

With the Netherlands needing just three runs from 30 balls and Oman desperately needing a wicket, Sonavale's first over of the game saw him dismiss Aryan Dutt, who skied a catch to Muzahir Raza, igniting jubilation in the Oman camp.

The Dutch side's chase began with setbacks as Ahmed, Oman's prolific wicket-taker throughout the series with 13 dismissals in four matches, removed both openers to leave the Netherlands at 33/2 after 12 overs.

Kaleem, Oman's wily spinner, then tore through the middle



Oman players celebrate their win against the Netherlands

order, and Shrivastav's economical bowling kept the pressure on, leaving the Netherlands floundering at 70/6 in 24 overs.

Dutch hopes were revived briefly by a resilient 52-run stand between Teja Nidamanuru (34) and Timm van der Gugten (17) for the seventh wicket.

However, Kaleem once again swung the game in Oman's favour by breaking the partnership in a match where momentum see-sawed dramatically. Bukkapatnam, making his debut, delivered a crucial over, removing Roelof van der Merwe and Nidamanuru in the span of five balls to bring the hosts within touching distance of victory.

The last-wicket pair of Kyle

Klein and Aryan Dutt pushed Oman's nerves to the edge, forging a gritty 24-run stand that almost clinched the match for the Netherlands.

But it was Sonavale's surprise entry into the bowling attack that turned the tide, sealing a dramatic one-run victory for Oman.

The spin quartet shone brightly, with Kaleem finishing with impressive figures of 4/24, Ahmed taking 2/15, Bukkapatnam chipping in with 2/23, and Shrivastav and Sonavale contributing one wicket each.

This consistent spin assault left the Dutch batters struggling throughout their innings.

Earlier, Oman's innings was built on a solid foundation laid by

openers Ashish Odedara and Jatinder Singh, who shared a 94-run stand in 24 overs. Odedara scored 41 off 70 balls, including five boundaries, while Jatinder completed a measured half-century, scoring 59 off 89 balls with six boundaries.

However, Odedara's dismissal triggered a collapse as Oman fell from 94/1 to 113/7 within ten overs. The Dutch spinners, led by Colin Ackermann (4/22) and Roelof van der Merwe (3/30), exploited the conditions skillfully, reducing Oman to 125/8.

A late surge from Jay Odedra, who struck a quick 22 off 22 balls with three sixes, and a record 30-run last-wicket stand with Raza,

who scored 10, helped Oman reach 155 in 44.2 overs. This resilience at the end proved crucial in what turned out to be a nail-biting contest.

With Monday's win, Oman, coached by Duleep Mendis, improved their points tally to 14 from 12 games, to stay at fifth place in the eight-nation League 2 standings.

The Netherlands and Scotland have also accrued 14 points but maintain a superior net run rate (NRR), with Scotland having played one less game. The United States top the table with 16 points, followed by Canada. Namibia (10 points), Nepal (6), and the UAE (4) complete the standings.

Oman Sail's women's team ready for Arab Women's Sailing Championship

Muscat - A five-strong team of female sailors from Oman Sail will head to Bahrain for the 1st Arab Women's Sailing Championship in Bahrain, which starts on Tuesday.

Omani sailors will line up alongside competitors from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates at a new landmark for women's sailing in Optimist, ILCA 4 and ILCA 6 sailing.

The Oman team at the five-day event comprises Marwa Salim al Khaifi (ILCA), Ibtisam Salim al Salmi (ILCA), Hadeel Yousof al Mushaifri (Optimist), Tarteel Zaid al Hasani (Optimist) and Abeer Khalil al Zakwani (Optimist). Sultan AbdulAziz al Zadjali will lead the team coached by



Omani sailors will compete alongside the best talent from the region at the Arab Women's Sailing Championship

Hussain Said al Jabri. The team was selected based on previous performance at ranking races and progress throughout the season.

All members of the squad represented Oman at the recent Mussanah Race Week 2024

from across the region. We are very proud of our women's sailing program, and to be able to compete at such a high level is a great honour and very exciting for women's sailing in Oman and the sport in Asia. We have been preparing well and hope that this experience is beneficial for our race performance and overall growth of the team."

Racing will begin on Thursday after a practice day for all classes on Tuesday and a practice race on Wednesday. All three competing classes will then race each day with the final races on Saturday.

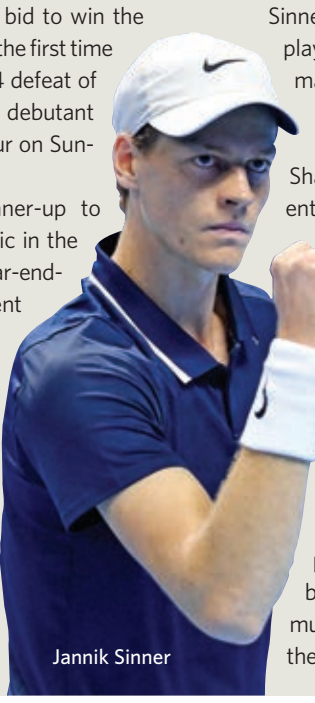
The championship is organised by the Bahrain Maritime Sports Association in collaboration with the Arab Sailing Federation.

Sinner beats De Minaur in ATP Finals

Turin, Italy - World number one and home favourite Jannik Sinner began his bid to win the ATP Finals for the first time with a 6-3 6-4 defeat of tournament debutant Alex de Minaur on Sunday.

Sinner, runner-up to Novak Djokovic in the prestigious year-ending tournament last year, dropped behind early in the first set but quickly hit back to dominate the contest.

Earlier in the Ilie Nastase Group



Jannik Sinner

American Taylor Fritz beat Russian Daniil Medvedev 6-4 6-3.

Sinner, 23, had not played a competitive match for four weeks since taking the title in Shanghai, his seventh of the season, and there was some early rust as he dropped serve to trail 2-1 in the opening set.

But he broke back immediately and his power from the baseline proved too much for De Minaur thereafter as he was

roared on by the crowd in the 13,000-seater Inalpi Arena.

"Considering I hadn't played for four weeks I'm very happy," Sinner said at court side. "I started off with some unforced errors at the beginning of the match but I stayed there mentally knowing that at some point my tennis would arrive."

"It arrived quite early and started to return very well. Today I'm pleased with the win and it will give me confidence."

Sinner is hoping to cap a superb year on the court, although a cloud still hangs over the Italian who was cleared of wrongdoing by an independent tribunal after testing positive for the anabolic agent clostebol in March this year.

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

Senior accountant, Indian, male, 18 years' experience in Oman. Immediate joining. Contact: 91172545

BIRTHDAY WISHES

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For inspection of the items please contact with Mr. Jubair 92676771 for further assistance.

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EAR CARE

The ear is an organ of hearing and balance. It is one of the most important organs that consists of three parts - the outer ear, middle ear and inner ear that enable receiving aural messages that are processed in the brain for suitable action or reactions.

Hearing starts with the outer ear. When a sound is made outside the outer ear, the sound waves, or vibrations, travel down the external auditory canal and strike the eardrum (tympanic membrane). The eardrum vibrates. The vibrations are then passed to 3 tiny bones in the middle ear called the ossicles. The ossicles amplify the sound. They send the sound waves to the inner ear and into the fluid-filled hearing organ (cochlea).

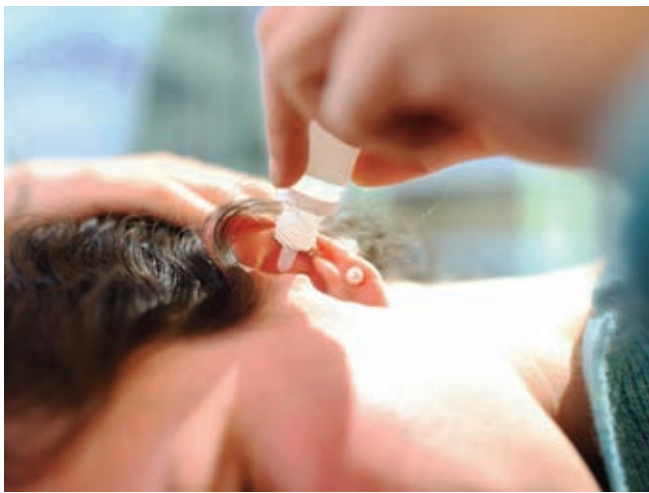
Once the sound waves reach the inner ear, they are converted into electrical impulses. The auditory nerve sends these impulses to the brain. The brain then translates these electrical impulses as sound.

Ear care facts

- Ears are designed to clean themselves (skin migration and jaw movements facilitate emptying wax)
- Some wax is meant to remain in the ear canal, it provides protection against dust, dirt and infections
- Do not use cotton buds to clean your ears, it can push the wax further down the canal, potentially result in wax impaction and ear canal trauma or bud stuck in the canal.
- 'Don't stick anything in the ears smaller than the elbow' is a popular saying to prevent traumatic scratches and the mechanical wax build up pushing the wax like play-doh further down the ear canal, even when it is itchy, as this can cause blockage and impaction of the wax preventing the evacuation of wax-debris.
- Generally, avoid over the counter eardrops as some of the preparations can irritate the sensitive ear canal skin. Ear care professionals can give guidance in the use of eardrops.
- Avoid getting water, soap or shampoo into the ear when having a bath or shower. Place a piece of cotton wool coated in Vaseline to prevent entry of water. Ear plugs may be used for swimming if having recurrent ear infections. Keep your ears dry especially if you have a tympanic membrane perforation or any skin condition such as eczema or psoriasis.
- If the skin of your ears is very dry and itchy moisturisers can be used around the bowl of the ear and the entrance of the ear canal.
- If the ears are very dry and itchy oil eardrops/spray can be used sparingly.
- If experiencing discomfort and being unsure about the state of the ears it is advised to get them checked by your GP and/or refer to the ear specialist to assess the ears.
- Ear micro-suction can be performed to clear wax/debris from the canal, allow examination and manage different ear conditions, especially where water irrigation is not advised, e.g. drum perforations, ear surgery, skin conditions and recurrent ear infections, unilateral deafness

THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED EXCRUCIATING EAR-ACHES KNOW WELL THAT THERE CAN'T BE ANYTHING MORE DISTRESSING THAN THIS. PROPER EAR CARE IS, HENCE, IMPORTANT TO AVOID INFECTIONS AND HEARING DEFECTS

Aural moral



PROPER EAR CLEANING METHOD

Earwax is a helpful and natural part of your body's defences. It cleans, lubricates and protects your ear canal by trapping dirt and slowing the growth of bacteria. Earwax blockages commonly occur when people try to clean their ears on their own by placing cotton swabs or other items in their ears. This often just pushes wax deeper into the ear, which can cause serious damage to the lining of your ear canal or eardrum.

Never attempt to dig out excessive

or hardened earwax with available items, such as a paper clip, a cotton swab or a hairpin. The following remedies may be helpful:

- Soften the wax. Use an eyedropper to apply a few drops of baby oil, mineral oil, glycerin or hydrogen peroxide in your ear canal.
- Use warm water. After a day or two, when the wax is softened, use a rubber-bulb syringe to gently squirt warm water into your ear canal. Tilt your head and pull your outer ear up

and back to straighten your ear canal. When finished irrigating, tip your head to the side to let the water drain out.

- Dry your ear canal. When finished, gently dry your outer ear with a towel or hand-held dryer.

You may need to repeat this wax-softening and irrigation procedure a few times before the excess earwax falls out. Earwax removal kits available in stores also can be effective at removing wax buildup.

VANDANA CHAWLA



NUTRITION & YOU



Is dark chocolate a healthy food?

some varieties leave an after-taste but it has a range of health-boosting properties when consumed in moderation.

Nutritional profile

According to USDA, a bar (100g) of dark chocolate with 70-80% cocoa solids give 604 kcal, 7.8 g of protein and meets 55-80% Daily Value(DV) of some vital minerals like magnesium, iron, manganese, and zinc.

The fatty acid profile is also good as most of the fat is oleic acid which is found in olive oil (heart-healthy oil) but, in addition, contains stearic and palmitic acid. Stearic acid has a neutral effect on cholesterol but palmitic acid can raise bad cholesterol.

Overall a very impressive profile but the sugar content spoils it a bit which is 24g (equivalent to approx. 5tsp) in a 100 gm bar.

Health benefits

Rich in antioxidants

Dark chocolate is packed with powerful antioxidants, flavanols, polyphenols and theobromine. These compounds help neutralise free radicals, reducing oxidative stress and protect cells from damage. The high concentration of these compounds in dark chocolate is associated with a



lower risk of chronic conditions like heart disease, by improving circulation and lowering inflammation in the body.

Heart friendly

One of the most well-documented health benefits of dark chocolate is its positive effect on heart health. Studies have shown that the active compounds in dark chocolate can help reduce blood pressure, improve blood flow, and reduce the risk of heart disease. These compounds relax the arteries by producing certain compounds which play the required role. This helps in improving the blood

flow and reducing blood pressure but, the impact is mild.

One of the important risk factors associated with heart disease is the ratio of good cholesterol to Bad (HDL: LDL). Studies indicate that it can increase levels of HDL (good) cholesterol and decrease the oxidation of LDL (bad) cholesterol, which is a major factor in the development of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).

Improved mood and brain function

Dark chocolate can also have mental health benefits. It stimulates the brain

to release endorphins, the body's natural 'feel-good' chemicals and boosts serotonin production, a neurotransmitter that helps regulate mood. This is why, dark chocolate is often associated with stress relief and emotional comfort. Additionally, the presence of caffeine and theobromine can enhance cognitive function, improving focus and alertness.

Low Glycemic Index

Dark chocolate has a low Glycemic Index, meaning it does not bring a rapid spike in blood sugar levels. Choosing low-GI foods always is beneficial as it not only prevents or man-

ages type 2 diabetes but also helps in managing healthier body weight and increasing energy levels.

Good for gut health

Studies indicate that consuming dark chocolate increases the diversity of the gut microbiome, thus helping to keep the gut healthy.

Risks

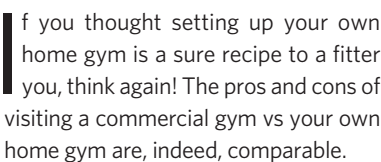
Since most of the health benefits are due to the presence of flavonoids, the content of it varies from one product to another. Moreover, the processing techniques used may reduce the flavonoid content. Sadly, this never comes on the chocolate labels and therefore, one never gets to know if it's truly rich in flavonoids. In addition, high sugar and fat content makes it a calorie-dense food. Sugar content varies, hence it is better to check the labels.

To conclude, while dark chocolate offers numerous health benefits, always remember, it is calorie-dense and often contains added sugars, making it more calorie dense. Hence moderation is the key. Enjoy it wisely and when you get the bitter taste, remember, that it can be both, nutritious as well as indulgent.

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By setting up a home gym, you don't have to pay an outrageous monthly payment or worry about crowds. A home gym also allows you to create a gym that fits your need, not to mention the convenience. If you have the right space, follow a few tips to get rolling



The key word here is 'commitment' - you need to have a will to be committed to a fitness programme or regimen in order to make the most of a gym, whether it is your own home gym or one down the road. A home gym might appear a convenient option but it is, in fact, the greatest deterrent to fitness - ask those who have a gym at home, they'd tell you it is better to get gym membership and make the most of it than to rely on working out at home because there is always an excuse to avoid it.

If you have the right space and resources, couple with the right mindset and will, however, setting up a gym at home would be a better option for you. Consider a few basic tips:

Find the right space

Before you start getting a bunch of home fitness equipment, you first need to figure out what space you will work with. You can place your gym in various places in your house or apartment. Some of the best places in your house or apartment might include basement, garage, spare bedroom, even a covered

portion of terrace or a huge balcony.

Once you know where you will put your gym, clear out the area and find other storage space for whatever you had in there previously. After that, you can now properly plan and decide on the fitness equipment that would fit in the space.

Get rubber flooring

If you plan on having free weights in your gym, it's important to avoid damaging your home, especially if it's in a finished basement. To avoid damage, get rubber flooring for these areas. This will not only protect the ground but will also reduce the amount of noise. You can also get mats to go under some exercise equipment, such as treadmills, steppers, and bikes.

Invest in bumper plates

Another way to reduce the amount of noise in your home gym is to get bumper plates. Bumper plates offer a great alternative to noise iron plates, and they're also a bit safer. In addition to bumper plates, consider getting rubber dumbbells and kettlebells if you're really worried about making too much noise in your home, particularly if you like to work out early in the morning.

Install a mirror

Every gym has mirrors for a reason. For one, it allows you to see your form and improve as you work out. A mirror can also make your home gym feel bigger than it actually is, and it can make the most out of natural light. Think about placing a mirror behind a dumbbell rack, treadmill, or squat rack to improve the overall aesthetic of your home gym.

Use the wall for storage

Since you might have to work with limited space, another thing you should put up on the walls are racks for storage. You can use a rack for yoga mats, stability and medicine balls, towels, plates, and so much more equipment without taking up unnecessary room in the gym.

Add a TV

If you're looking for something else to add to your home gym wall, install a TV. A TV in your home gym can be great for when you work out on the treadmill or need guidance for a yoga session. Just make sure you position it strategically or get a moveable stand.

Have a clock

Another addition to the wall that can help with your workouts is a clock. Some kind of clock on the wall can help you in several ways. For one, you can keep track of time so that you don't get lost in your workout. A clock is also great for your home gym wall because you can refer to it when you take a rest in between sets or if you do a timed exercise, such as planks.

Install speakers

Music is another huge motivating factor for people in the gym. The great thing about having your own gym is that you can blast whatever kind of music you want. This is why you may want to consider getting some speakers. You can either get portable speakers or place them on the wall. Either way, you can push through your workout while listening to the music you enjoy.

Multipurpose equipment

An additional way you can maximise the space you have in your home gym is to take advantage of multipurpose equipment. Instead of having a bench press and a squat rack, you can use the same rack for both. Some racks even come with a pull-up bar as well. Because you can adjust the racks, you can get far more out of the equipment without worrying about taking up too much room.

Get fans

Gyms can quickly turn into a sauna if you don't have the proper ventilation. When summertime rolls around, think about adding a fan to your gym. A wall fan is not a bad idea, but you can also just have a temporary one that blows onto you as you break a sweat. A fan can be incredibly helpful in garages and spare bedrooms.

Keep it organised

Just because it's your personal gym that doesn't mean you shouldn't treat it with respect. Make sure you keep your gym organised so that you can easily find the equipment you need. This means getting dumbbell racks and bumper plate trees. A huge benefit of having your own gym is that you don't have to worry about other people misplacing weights.

Find quality equipment

When you get equipment for your home, it's important that you invest in high-quality equipment. You want to have that equipment in your home gym for several years, whether treadmills, exercise bikes, strength equipment, etc.



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