

Sovereign wealth forum showcases potential of investment in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The 16th annual meeting of International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds (IFSFWF) opened in Muscat on Monday with H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, inaugurating the event.

IFSFWF 2024, led by Oman Investment Authority (OIA), brings together representatives from 50 sovereign wealth funds from 46 countries.

In his opening remarks, H H Sayyid Theyazin highlighted Oman's growing reputation in the global financial community. "This event reflects Oman's capacity to build cooperation and form strategic partnerships," he said. "The decision to hold this event in Oman underscores our commitment to governance and sustainability, as well as our success in achieving 'Investment Grade' credit status." This development, he added, has opened



H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said (L) and Abdul Salam al Murshidi at the opening of IFSWF on Monday (Oman)

Returning to 'Investment Grade' credit status has opened new opportunities for global investments across Oman's economic sectors

H H SAYYID THEYAZIN BIN HAITHAM AL SAID

new opportunities for global investments across Oman's economic sectors.

Abdul Salam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of OIA, spoke of Oman's commitment to economic growth through diver-

sified investments. "OIA's portfolios contribute to the national economy, creating employment and supporting emerging industries," he said, adding that Oman's elevated credit status underscores OIA's commitment to transparency and strong financial management. The forum, Murshidi informed, is an opportunity to present Oman's potential to global sovereign wealth funds, while fostering sustainable investment partnerships.

Obaid Amrane, Acting Chairman of IFSWF, addressed the transformative role of artificial intelligence in the financial world, emphasising the need for prudent strategies in managing the opportunities and risks AI presents. "It is essential to balance technical progress with financial stability," he said, urging funds to prioritise sound governance.

Via video call, Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, spoke on innovation and AI, emphasising the need for ethical practices in developing economic intelli-

gence technologies. He highlighted the importance of sovereign wealth funds investing in AI-driven sustainable development projects.

Robert F Smith, a prominent American investor, also addressed the forum, underscoring AI's growing role in government and private-sector investments.

In a nod to Omani heritage, OIA designated 'Al Mandoos al Omani' as the forum's logo. Mandoos are traditional Omani decorative boxes used historically for storing valuables and hence symbolic of savings. To commemorate the event, OIA issued a silver coin and postage stamp that pay tribute to Oman's maritime history and artistic heritage.

Running until November 6, the forum's agenda includes workshops and sessions covering investment trends in energy transition, AI and supply chain. The forum will conclude with the election of a new IFSWF board of directors.

HM issues two Royal Decrees

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued two Royal Decrees on Monday reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 55/2024 ratifies an agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on mutual exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, special and service passports. The agreement was signed in New York on September 23, 2024.

Article 1 ratifies the above-mentioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 56/2024 ratifies an agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of Suriname on mutual waiver of visas for holders of diplomatic, special and service passports. The agreement was signed in New York on September 26, 2024.

Article 1 ratifies the above-mentioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

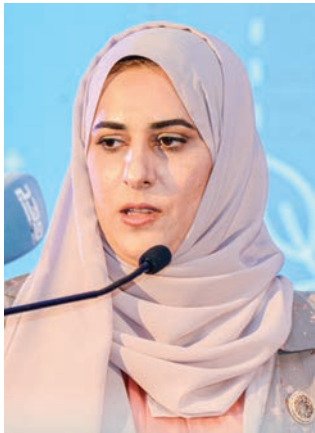
Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Carbon neutrality efforts expanded with new initiative to meet targets

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The National Programme for Carbon Neutrality unveiled its latest initiative - Neutrality 3 - on Monday, marking a significant expansion of Oman's efforts to meet its 2030 carbon reduction targets. The launch event was attended by Dr Khamis bin Saif al Jabri, Head of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

Dr Maryam bint Muhammad al Busaidi, Head of the National



Dr Maryam al Busaidi

Programme for Carbon Neutrality, presented the programme's progress and future plans. She highlighted the fact that Neutrality 3 has expanded its scope to include 212 projects, up from 108, covering sectors from transport and energy to agriculture and education, with new partnerships across military and security sectors. The initiative aligns with the national strategy to achieve carbon neutrality - under the UN's climate framework - focusing on reducing emissions and fostering

sustainable development.

In the industrial sector, 16 projects target energy efficiency and electric vehicle adoption, while eight new biofuel and afforestation projects have brought the sector's total to 24. The oil and gas industry has added three projects, including carbon capture, gas recycling and electrification, totalling ten initiatives. The electricity sector now has 28 projects, while transportation includes 36 projects focused on sustainable mobility. Meanwhile, the cities

and buildings sector is developing 26 projects for green urban planning and renewable energy.

Dr Abdullah al Amri, Chairman of Environment Authority, emphasised Oman's commitment to tackling climate change, which he described as a "tangible reality affecting multiple sectors". He added, "Oman is among the leading countries committing its nationally determined contributions to reduce CO2 emissions."

Amri explained that Oman's

goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 focuses on four critical sectors: energy, industry, transportation and buildings. The 2030 target aims to cut emissions by 21% from 2020 levels, engaging a range of existing carbon neutrality projects.

Neutrality 3 categorises projects under enabling, limited reduction and high reduction, each aimed at meaningful progress towards Oman's long-term target of zero carbon emissions by 2050.





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MAFWR enhances food security with key agricultural research projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) is undertaking several projects aimed at strengthening Oman's agricultural sector and ensuring food security. The projects span research in crop productivity, disease management and water resource efficiency, with strong emphasis on using innovative ways to address the region's unique agricultural challenges. The ministry has launched research programmes targeting the use of treated and saline water in agriculture, genetic improvement in livestock, and disease monitoring in animals. "These efforts are essential to our strategy of improving agricultural and animal productivity," said Dr Hamdan bin Salem al Wahaibi, Director-General of Agriculture and Animal Research at MAFWR. Enhancing genetic strains of cows and goats, he added, will contribute to better

livestock quality and productivity. One of the projects focuses on tissue culture technology to boost date palm and crop productivity. Through this method the ministry is also increasing production of specific fruit crops and ornamental plants, and improving the availability of high-quality seeds and seedlings across Oman. Another initiative will investigate antibiotic and hormone residue in broiler meat sold in local markets to ensure safe food practices. MAFWR is also conducting studies on bacterial resistance in broiler farms, sustainable garlic cultivation and integrated fruit fly management. These research efforts, funded by Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, promote the advancement of agriculture by enhancing crop quality and meeting market demand. Developments are underway to increase production of grain



management. A semen bank for horses has been established in an effort to support animal husbandry. Wahaibi stressed the fact that agricultural research is critical to Oman's food security.

The ministry has launched research programmes targeting the use of treated and saline water in agriculture, genetic improvement in livestock and disease monitoring in animals

DR HAMDAN BIN SALEM AL WAHAIBI

ence and innovation. One noteworthy initiative is the sultanate's National Strategy for Date Palms which aims to boost date production while controlling pests with safer management methods. In addition, gene banks have been set up to preserve Oman's agricultural biodiversity, housing an extensive collection of local fruit varieties, including 252 varieties of mango, 250 date palms and 34 citrus fruits. These banks also have an impressive collection of genes of bananas, grapes, figs and guavas, among other fruits, ensuring the preservation of local genetic resources and bolstering the resilience of Oman's agricultural sector.

RNO CELEBRATES ANNUAL DAY



Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) celebrated its Annual Day on Monday, marked every year on November 3. The ceremony, held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, took place at the military parade ground of Said bin Sultan Naval Base. The event featured the graduation of officers from General Education Diploma, university and limited service courses, and awards presented to the top graduates by the chief guest. Attendees were treated to military and musical performances by a parade column showcasing RNO's advancements under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander (ONA)

Artists create 133sqm mural to celebrate Sur's cultural heritage

Our Correspondent
Sur

Seventeen Omani artists have collaborated to create 'Al Sawari Wall', a 133sqm mural in the Masar area of Jabal al Eid in Sur, South Sharqiyah. This artistic landmark highlights Sur's rich cultural heritage, showcasing elements of traditional architecture, maritime history, arts, handicrafts, engravings, decorations, writings and its distinctive costumes in celebration of its designation as Arab Tourism Capital 2024. The project was supported by Omani Society for Fine Arts in South Sharqiyah as part of the 27th Literary and Artistic Forum held from October 20 to 24. Saeed bin Ali al Alawi, one of the participating artists, stated that the mural represents Sur's civilisation, cultural and historic maritime legacy. "The initiative aligns with sustainable cultural work, making culture a lifestyle and fulfilling community aspirations while promoting the city's tourism appeal." The mural was created by prominent Omani artists from various governorates. Special colours and dyes were used to



It contributes to the tourism profile of Sur and creates a new attraction for visitors as it celebrates the Arab Tourism Capital 2024 status

SAEED BIN ALI AL ALAWI

produce a cohesive, vibrant artwork that enhances the beauty of Sur and the governorate as a whole. Alawi added that the mural reflects the city's cultural and historical landmarks while fostering and refining artistic talent. "The project supports the development of art skills and

contributes to the tourism profile of Sur, creating a new attraction for visitors as it celebrates its status as Arab Tourism Capital 2024."

Ishraq fund launched to boost waqf sector investments

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, in partnership with Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, Bank Nizwa, and Oman National Investments Development Company, launched Ishraq Endowment Investment Fund on Monday. Having initial capital of RO10mn, the fund seeks to create investment opportunities that align with Islamic sharia principles, supporting both individual and corporate financial goals while promoting shared responsibility for community welfare. The launch event was attended by H E Dr Mohammed Said al Maamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs.



According to Dr Ahmed bin Ali al Kaabi, Chairman of Board of Directors of the fund, Ishraq aims "to enhance the developmental and investment role of the endowment sector in Oman and contribute to sustainable social and economic growth through sharia-compliant investments."

The initiative aligns with Oman's broader goals of empowering society and advancing sustainable development. The fund allows participation in three ways catering to varied investment and endowment interests. A permanent endowment option allows contributors

to designate their funds permanently for specific charitable causes, such as supporting mosques, orphans or other community welfare initiatives under the ministry's supervision. Those interested in temporary endowment can set aside funds for a specific period, directing returns towards specific goals. An investor subscriber option allows individuals and companies to seek financial returns through fund investments, with a minimum subscription of RO500 for individuals and RO5,000 for companies, plus a subscription fee of 20bz per unit. The fund reflects the government's commitment to bolstering Oman's endowment sector, aiming to foster comprehensive development and drive progress at all levels of society.



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Musandam unveils strategic development projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Musandam is charting a path towards sustainable development with its 2040 economic and social strategy, focusing on diversifying income sources, improving living standards and promoting growth across multiple sectors, while safeguarding its cultural heritage and natural resources.

Sayyid Ibrahim bin Saeed al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam, highlighted major projects set for investment in 2024, including Musandam Airport, currently 30% complete, and ongoing consultations for the development of Khasab Port. Progress is also being made on the Khasab-Lima-Dibba road, which is 26% complete.

Musandam has seen steady growth in small and medium enterprises engaged in sectors such as construction, transportation



The focus is on economic and social development through the sustainable management of the governorate's unique resources

SAYYID IBRAHIM AL BUSAIDI

and retail, with 967 SMEs currently active. A major investment in Dibba fishing port, now 78% complete with an allocation of



over RO40mn, aims to enhance economic activity and logistics infrastructure in the governorate. Outlining Musandam's urban

vision for 2040, the governor said, "The focus is on economic and social development through the sustainable management of

the governorate's unique resources." The Aarnes Bay Development Project, winner of the Best Devel-

opment Project Competition, exemplifies this approach. Collaborative projects with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning include developments in Khasab, Nakheel Hills, Kumzar and Madha, aimed at expanding residential and commercial spaces. Real estate investment in Musandam has also been active, with trading surpassing RO5mn in the first half of the year. Transactions by GCC citizens grew 8.6% in the second quarter, while 19 usufruct contracts worth over RO58,000 were signed covering the industrial and agricultural sectors. Addressing housing needs, the governorate allocated RO650,000 for housing assistance to 36 families in 2024. Royal Directives have resulted in commencement of construction of 60 housing units, including 20 in Kumzar, where another infrastructure project covering an area

of 143,000sqm worth over RO4.2mn is underway. Musandam's tourism sector is set to expand with the onset of the winter season which will position the governorate as a global tourism destination through cultural, economic and entrepreneurial activities. New healthcare facilities are being developed, including the Khasab and Madha Reference Hospitals, with the latter expected to be operational by late 2025. In education, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Musandam welcomed 300 students this academic year on its recently completed temporary campus. Infrastructure work in the Mahas City project is now 91% complete. Additionally, the governorate is finalising agreements for four new factories to support industrial growth and create SME opportunities.



Bids invited for development of ponds in Wadi Bani Khalid

Our Correspondent
Muscat

North Sharqiyah Governor's Office has announced a tender for development of water bodies in the Maql area of Wadi Bani Khalid in an effort to enhance domestic tourism and provide entertainment options for the public. The initiative is part of a wider agenda to improve infrastructure in the region and enhance local resources and services.

Additionally, tenders have been floated for the redevelopment of the Al Mudayrib Market facade in the wilayat of Al Qabil.

Bids close on November 18. Wadi Bani Khalid is renowned for its archaeological

cal monuments, including Al Mawalik Fort, which dates back to the 4th century. The area has numerous wadis, primarily situated near mountains or expansive agricultural oases. Located approximately 250km from Muscat, Wadi Bani Khalid is considered one of Oman's key tourist attractions.

Visitors to Wadi Bani Khalid can explore various geological sites, such as the Maql Cave, and enjoy the calm tranquility of 12 springs, including Ain al Sarooj, Ain al Lathb, Ain Kanara, Ain al Muntajar and Ain Ghalala. The region is also known for its 56 aflaj, with Al Haili, Al Fardh, Al Sarooj and Al Jarbi being particularly notable.

MoHERI ramps up efforts to develop tourism workforce

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), in collaboration with Oman Tourism College and Omani Society for Human Resources Management, held a tourism forum called 'Daraya' in Muscat on Monday. The forum was inaugurated by H E Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

It focused on developing human capital in Oman's tourism sector, identifying industry challenges and exploring solutions to empower Omani leaders in tourism. A key focus of the forum was alignment of higher and vocational education programmes with industry needs and evaluating how training by educational institutions impacts sustainable



growth in tourism. Dr Hamad bin Mohammed al Mahrazi, Dean of Oman Tourism College, informed that the forum was the first of several initiatives to strengthen ties between educational institutions and tourism stakeholders across public and

private sectors. He described the forum as a platform for "sector stakeholders to discuss challenges and propose practical solutions," emphasising its collaborative nature which aimed to encourage knowledge-sharing across the industry.

The forum included four sessions covering human resource challenges, leadership development, the importance of matching educational content to industry needs, and a presentation on Oman's tourism landscape.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in partnership with Oman Tourism College, also organised a job fair alongside the event, aimed at expanding employment opportunities and supporting jobseekers in the tourism sector.

Session discusses youth engagement in cultural events, sports

Our Correspondent
Nizwa

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, in partnership with Dakhliyah Governor's Office, held the third edition of Youth Dialogue Session at Nizwa Cultural Centre on Monday. The three-day session, designed to address pressing issues in the cultural and sports sectors in Dakhliyah, brings together university and college students as well as community members engaged in culture and sports.

This year's session aims to explore solutions to challenges impacting youth involvement in these fields, drawing on local and international experiences. Participants are encouraged to propose



investment ideas and initiatives aligned with Oman Vision 2040, encouraging projects that can empower the community across various sectors. Discussions are structured

around four key areas. On the opening day, topics included development of theatre and cinema, enhancing visual arts, and growth in sports tourism - sectors identified as pivotal to both youth and

community engagement in the governorate. Day 2 will focus on the governance of civil society institutions related to culture and sports. Recommendations from these

discussions will be shared with local decision-makers, offering a bridge between youth perspectives and policy development. Khadija bint Saeed al Khayari, Director of Office for Monitoring and Implementation of Oman Vision 2040 in Dakhliyah, highlighted the event's role as a "platform for exchanging ideas and tackling the challenges young people face in the fields of culture and sports".

The session will conclude with a summary of recommendations aimed at shaping future development plans. These outcomes are expected to guide the governorate in its efforts to address community needs and to support youth initiatives that align with national goals.

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,718.17
Sensex	78,782.24
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
India	218.47
Pakistan	724.21
Bangladesh	310.52
Philippines	151.86
Sri Lanka	761.85
*Rates as on November 04 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS

IMF to review Egypt's loan programme

Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly announced that the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) fourth review of Egypt's loan programme is scheduled for Tuesday.

This came during a press conference on Sunday in the presence of the Managing Director of the IMF Kristalina Georgieva.

Georgieva noted that Egypt's inflation reached 37% in 2023 but has decreased to between 25% and 26%.

She emphasised that Egypt is generating more job opportunities through the private sector. She stressed that the IMF aims to support the prosperity of this sector to create enough job opportunities for the over million young people who enter the labour market yearly.

OQBI to offer up to 49% stake in IPO

Subscription period for OQ Base Industries' IPO is expected to begin this month, pending approvals from the Financial Services Authority. The company is expected to list on the Muscat Stock Exchange in December

Our Correspondent
Muscat

OQ Base Industries (OQBI), Oman's sole integrated producer of methanol, ammonia, and LPG products, has announced plans for an initial public offering (IPO) of up to 49% of its shares. This move adds to a series of recent IPOs from subsidiaries of OQ Group.

The subscription period for the IPO is expected to begin this month, pending approvals from the Financial Services Authority (FSA). OQBI is expected to list on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) in December 2024, according to a press statement issued on Monday.

Bank Dhofar, Bank Muscat, and Morgan Stanley have been appointed as joint global coordinators. Both Bank Dhofar and Bank Muscat will also serve as issue managers, with Kamco Investment Company and BSF Capital acting as joint bookrunners.

OQBI's IPO follows the successful public offerings of three other OQ subsidiaries: Abraj Energy Services, OQ Gas Networks, and OQ Exploration and Production. This new IPO provides investors with exposure to Oman's only integrated producer of



methanol, ammonia, and LPG products, which include propane, butane, condensate, and cooking gas. For the year ended December 31, 2023, the company reported revenue of \$510mn, with an adjusted EBITDA margin of 43.1%.

OQ Group owns 100% of the capital of OQBI directly and through its subsidiaries, Takamul Investment Company and OQ Salalah Industries Company.

Commenting on the proposed IPO, Ashraf Hamed al Mamari, Group CEO of OQ, said, "We are pleased to announce the upcoming public offering for OQ Base Industries, one of our key subsidiaries. This follows the success of three previous offerings, which drew high interest from investors. The strong demand has been fuelled by our solid financial performance, operational strength, and attractive dividend policy. This strategic step reflects our commitment to growth and ongoing investment in the energy sector."

Khalid Khalfan al Asmi, CEO of OQ Base Industries, said, "We are pleased to announce OQ Base Industries' intention to go

public. This milestone is a testament to our employee's dedication and the trust we have earned from clients and partners. Oman's strategic location has been a key strength, supporting our competitive business model and increasing the global appeal of our products."

Dividend Policy

OQBI intends to distribute dividends twice a year following the offering. The company aims to maintain a robust dividend policy designed to return a substantial portion of its distributable free

cash flow to shareholders after providing for growth opportunities, subject to credit rating considerations.

For fiscal year 2024, OQBI anticipates a dividend payment of RO32.7mn. The first distribution of approximately RO24.5mn is expected by January 2025 for the first nine months of 2024, with a second distribution of about RO8.2mn anticipated by April 2025. Subsequently, for the fiscal years ending December 31, 2025, and December 31, 2026, the company plans to increase dividends by a minimum of 5%

year-over-year.

OQBI is the only integrated producer in Oman of methanol, ammonia and LPG Products, which comprise propane, butane, condensate and LPG sold domestically in the form of cooking gas.

The company is active throughout the natural gas value chain, operating three advanced plants with a combined nameplate production capacity of 1,816 ktpa. OQBI operates through three strategic divisions, methanol, ammonia and LPG products. Its plants are located in the Salalah Free Zone in the south of Oman, near the Port of Salalah. OQBI's plants process rich and lean natural gas feedstock that is supplied under long-term agreements with Integrated Gas Company through a natural gas transmission network operated by OQ Gas Networks, a subsidiary of OQ.

With the exception of a small portion of LPG sold domestically in the form of cooking gas, all of OQBI's products are sold pursuant to long-term, arm's-length exclusive take-or-pay offtake agreements with OQ Trading for export to end markets, principally in Asia and the MENA region and, to a lesser extent, Europe and Africa.

Oman government raises RO98mn through development bonds issue

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman successfully raised RO98mn through the 72nd issuance of government development bonds, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced on Monday.

The bond issuance, which was significantly oversubscribed, initially targeted a minimum raise of RO75mn, with a green shoe option to increase the size of the issuance. This marks Oman's fourth issuance of government development bonds this year.

According to a statement from the CBO's Market Operations Department, the 72nd government development bond issue received applications totaling RO173.41mn.

The average yield was set at 4.75% for a nominal price of RO100, with the highest yield reaching 4.77% at a price of RO99.910, and the lowest yield at 4.74% for a price of RO100.045. The five-year bond will be issued on Tuesday and will mature on November 5,



Bond issuance, which was significantly oversubscribed, initially targeted a minimum raise of RO75mn, with a green shoe option to increase the size of the issuance

2029, carrying a coupon rate of 4.75% per annum.

This year's prior three issuances of Omani government development bonds also saw substantial demand, all being comfortably oversubscribed.

In July, the government raised

RO100mn from its 71st issuance of five-year bonds at a coupon rate of 5.1%. Earlier in April, RO125mn was raised through the 70th issuance of two-year bonds, which offered a coupon rate of 4.85%. In February, the sultanate secured RO100mn via

its 69th issuance of three-year bonds at a 4.9% coupon rate.

These government development bonds are direct and unconditional obligations of the Government of Oman, making them eligible as collateral for loans from licensed commercial banks. They can also be traded on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX).

In a separate announcement, the CBO on Monday reported the issuance of government treasury bills worth RO23.4mn across three different maturities. The allocated treasury bill amounts include RO3.1mn for a maturity period of 28 days, RO7mn for 182 days, and RO13.3mn for 364 days.

Treasury bills are short-term, highly secure financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, providing licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the issue manager, offering the added benefit of liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

Al Mudhaibi Industrial City signs first investment project

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Al Mudhaibi Industrial City, part of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has signed its first investment contract with Desert Sand Mobile Trading to establish a manufacturing unit for liquefied and compressed gases used in medical and construction activities.

The investment for this project is valued at approximately RO2mn and will occupy an area of 16,000 sqm. Construction is set to commence at the beginning of next year, coinciding with the awarding of the recently announced tender for the development of Al Mudhaibi Industrial City.

Phase one of this development of the city will cover approximately 2.5mn sqm and will include key services such as roads, water and sewage networks, lighting, security fencing, and a surveillance system. Additionally, several ready-made industrial units, each covering an area of 500 sqm, will be estab-



lished within the Madayn Entrepreneurial Complex. The development will also include the Facility Building, Masar Service Centre, and other facilities.

Due to Al Mudhaibi Industrial City's strategic location and its proximity to the main road connecting the Special Economic Zone in Duqm to major ports and border crossings in Oman, an area of 100,000 sqm has been allocated for logistics investment

to provide logistical services.

Furthermore, areas will be designated for agricultural investment to attract investments in the agricultural sector that support transformation industries related to food security in the governorate. The industrial city will also focus on investing in renewable energy and knowledge industries in coordination with educational institutions in the governorate and relevant private entities.

Number of subscribers for Oman's fibre optic network exceeds 300,000

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The number of active subscribers to Oman Broadband Company's fibre optic network reached 301,000 by the end of October 2024, while the total number of covered units reached approximately 881,103, according to Eng Sultan Ahmed al-Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Broadband Company.

The number of covered units is expected to reach one million across all governorates of Oman during 2025, he noted.

Muscat accounts for 56.2% of total fibre optic network sub-



scribers in Oman, with 169,052 active subscribers.

For his part, Eng Yarjan al-Balushi, Director General of Service Delivery at Oman Broadband Company, confirmed that Oman Broadband strives to

provide distinguished services that support the main telecommunications service providers in Oman, in addition to operating the largest fibre optic network in the country.

"This is achieved through a highly qualified, specialised Omani team, as well as a number of contractors and technicians spread across all governorates of the sultanate. The company provides comprehensive training programmes to enhance their skills and develop their capabilities, ensuring that the fibre optic network reaches the widest possible geographical area in Oman."

Tax Authority discusses tax developments

Muscat – The Tax Authority on Monday organised a meeting with the largest auditing and accounting firms to discuss the key changes related to tax matters resulting from updates to International Accounting Standards and tax legislation.

The meeting was attended by H E Nasser Khamis al Jashmi, Chairman of the Tax Authority, along with other officials from the Authority.

During the meeting, the challenges facing taxpayers were reviewed, and potential solutions to facilitate compliance with tax legislation were



discussed. The IFRS 16 standard was chosen as a main focus of this meeting.

This gathering was part of the Tax Authority's commitment to ensure the effective application of international standards to enhance transparency and credibility in the financial statements of taxable companies. The Authority also intends to organise such dialogue meetings periodically to foster cooperation among tax consultants and to exchange expertise and knowledge in the tax field.

ONA

Lulu increases IPO size to 30% on strong demand

Abu Dhabi, UAE – Lulu Retail Holdings, the largest and fastest growing pan-GCC full-line retailer, on Monday announced an increase in the size of its initial public offering (IPO) on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) to 30% of the company's issued shares.

The total offering size has been increased to 3,098,671,605 ordinary shares from the previously announced 2,582,226,338 ordinary shares. The IPO size now represents 30% (previously 25%) of the total issued shares in the company, which are to be sold by the company's sole shareholder, Lulu International Holdings Limited.

The additional 516,445,267 offer shares have been wholly allocated to the Qualified Investor Offering (Tranche Two), accessible to professional investors only, as defined in the IPO prospectus.

The offer price range is unchanged at between AED1.94 and AED2.04 per share. Assuming all the shares offered are sold, the total size of the offering has been revised to between \$1.64bn and \$1.72bn

Admission of Lulu Retail shares to trading on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange under ticker symbol "LULU" is expected to take place on November 14.

Saifee Rupawala, Chief Exec-



The offer price range is unchanged between AED1.94 and AED2.04 per share. Assuming all the shares offered are sold, the total size of the IPO has been revised to between \$1.64bn and \$1.72bn

utive Officer of Lulu Retail, said, "The established pan-GCC presence of Lulu Retail and our clear

strategy for growth has attracted a highly diverse investor base, and we're pleased to increase the total size of the Offering to cater to the significant level of demand received from international, regional and local investors, and the inclusion of additional cornerstone investors to the IPO."

Lulu Retail on Monday also announced the addition of Masarrah Investment Company as a Cornerstone Investor, joining the previously announced Cornerstone Investors (i) Abu Dhabi Pension Fund (ii) Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company (iii) Emirates International In-

vestment Company and (iv) Oman Investment Authority.

The Lulu Retail IPO subscription period opened on October 28 and closes on Tuesday for the UAE Retail Offering (including Eligible Employees of the Group), Eligible Senior Executives, and for Professional Investors.

The completion of the offering and admission is currently expected to take place on or around November 14, subject to market conditions and obtaining relevant regulatory approvals in the UAE, including approval of admission to listing and trading on the ADX.

Oil prices surge as OPEC+ delays output increase

London, UK – Oil prices increased on Monday following a decision by OPEC+ countries to extend production cuts and delay output increases, with additional support from anticipation around the upcoming US presidential elections.

The international oil benchmark, Brent crude, jumped 2.2% to \$74.42 per barrel at 0828GMT on Monday, up from the previous session's close of \$72.84.

The US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate, also rose by 2.4% to \$70.77 per barrel, compared to \$69.10 at the prior session's close.

The OPEC+ group, which includes the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other major producers, announced on Sunday a decision to continue production cuts of 2.2mn barrels per day through December.

The group was expected to increase production by 180,000 barrels daily from December. The reduction in oil supply by major producers supported prices upwards.

Moreover, the dollar index declined ahead of the November 5 presidential elections in the US, the world's largest oil-consuming country. The weakening of the US dollar against other major currencies contributed to higher oil prices.

The weaker dollar is likely to drive up demand by making oil



OPEC+ group, which includes the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other major producers, announced on Sunday a decision to continue production cuts of 2.2mn barrels per day through December

more affordable for buyers using other currencies. The US dollar index, which tracks the dollar's value against a basket of other currencies, dropped 0.54% to 103.637.

According to the latest polls, former US President and Republican candidate Donald Trump and Democratic candidate Kamala Harris are in a tight race.

Meanwhile, market players are also monitoring the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) interest rate decision scheduled on Thursday.

According to the analysts, the expectations for the Fed's inter-

est rate cuts remain strong, while pricing in the money markets is certain that the bank will cut the policy rate by 25 basis points at next week's meeting. A December Fed rate cut is heavily implied, with a 78% probability priced into the market.

Reports that Iran is preparing to retaliate for the October 26 Israeli attack continue to fuel oil prices. Israeli media reported that Iran was "preparing for a major retaliation from Iraq within a few days" in response to Tel Aviv's latest attack.

Anadolu Agency

Investors are counting on Fed chief to keep rate cut plans on track

Jennifer Schonberger

Fed watchers expect Powell to forge a consensus around the small cut, following a jumbo-sized reduction in September

Investors are counting on US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell to keep rate-cutting plans on track this week with a 25 basis point reduction, despite some signs of stubborn inflation and mixed signals about the job market.

"[This] week's FOMC meeting is a refreshingly easy call," JP-Morgan Chase (JPM) chief economist Michael Feroli said in a note. "The reasoning for a cut is still valid," he added.

That doesn't mean the discussion among members of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) on Wednesday and Thursday will necessarily be a smooth one. Fed policymakers will have to make sense of recent data indicating a strong economy, persistent inflation and a muddled jobs market disrupted by weather and worker strikes.

There could be a debate between those who want to cut, those who could support a pause, or those who would support a cut combined with language designed to communicate a more gradual approach to future reductions.

Fed watchers expect Powell to forge a consensus around the small cut, following a jumbo-sized reduction in September.

"We look for Powell to once again be the voice of reason corralling the FOMC to prudently ease monetary policy," said EY Chief Economist Gregory Daco.

"I don't think that there's very much that has changed people's opinions," added Wilmington Trust chief economist Luke Tilley, who also expects a 25 basis point cut this week.

Traders agree. They are pric-



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell

ing in a near 100% chance of a 25 basis point cut. The Fed in September predicted two more small cuts for the remainder of 2024.

Former Kansas City Fed president Esther George said a pause in November would be a hard sell. "If they skip this meeting, what would be the explanation," George said in an interview.

Fed watchers expect Powell to forge a consensus around the small cut, following a jumbo-sized reduction in September

"Given that they made such a hard turn for September with a 50 basis points cut, you really have to have a story to tell about why you'd either skip a meeting or explain why you want to slow down."

George expects to see the 25 basis point cut this week and

predicts Powell will then explain at his post-meeting press conference that the Fed decided to cut in the face of a strong economy to sustain that performance, echoing comments the chairman made on September 30.

"I think what we're going to hear is: 'and we want to keep it that way,'" George said. "We are not looking to see softening."

What could be a divisive topic for some policymakers this week is the latest reading from the central bank's preferred inflation gauge. The good news was that the gauge, the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) index, showed inflation rose 2.1% during the month of September, which is within shouting distance of the Fed's 2% goal.

But the complicating factor is that the Fed favors instead looking at inflation on a "core" basis, which excludes volatile food and energy prices. On that metric, inflation clocked in at 2.7%, holding the same level as August. Core PCE has now held at 2.7% for three months in a row, instead of dropping.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

Reliance Jio IPO likely to hit Indian stock market in 2025: Report

New Delhi, India – Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani is targeting to list the group's telecom business, Jio, next year, Reuters reported on Monday citing two people in the know.

According to the news report, Jio is valued by analysts at over \$100bn.

The report asserted that the conglomerate plans to launch its retail unit's IPO "much later".

The report added that Reliance Industries' chief Ambani hasn't updated his IPO timelines after saying in 2019 that Reliance Jio and Reliance Retail would "move towards" a listing within five years.

The two sources told Reuters that Reliance has now firmed up plans to launch the Reliance Jio IPO in 2025 as it internally believes it has achieved a stable business and revenue stream in becoming



India's No. 1 telecom player.

But the retail business IPO is not expected until after 2025, Reuters reported, quoting one of the sources.

As per the report, Reliance Industries did not respond to a request for comment. Quoting

Jefferies' July report, Reuters reported that the company's estimated IPO valuation was at \$112bn.

Taking opportunities in India's booming stock market, many companies intended to list their shares, and a sizable

number of them have made handsome gains.

Initial public offering (IPO) refers to the process where companies sell their shares to the public to raise equity capital from the investors.

ANI

S&P raises Turkey's rating to BB- from B+

Istanbul, Turkey – Standard & Poor's (S&P) announced that it raised Türkiye's long-term sovereign credit rating to BB- from B+ with a stable outlook.

"The Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye's (CBRT's) tight monetary stance has enabled Turkish authorities to stabilise the lira, bring down inflation, rebuild reserves, and de-dollarize the financial system," it said in a statement.

"Türkiye's savings gap with the rest of the world has narrowed, which is visible in the approximately 4 percentage points of GDP decline in the current account deficit since 2022," it added.

The rating agency said the stable outlook reflects Türkiye's



balanced risks over the next 12 months to authorities' plans to bring down still elevated inflation, manage workers' wage expectations and rebalance the Turkish economy.

The stable outlook also reflects the rating agency's expectation that the current economic team will persevere with tight monetary policy against the im-

plementation risks associated with the government's medium-term program.

S&P warned that it could lower the ratings if pressures on Türkiye's financial stability, or wider public finances were to intensify.

The agency said it could raise the ratings, on the other hand, if there would be further progress

on bringing inflation down closer to single-digit levels and restoring long-term confidence in the Turkish lira and domestic capital markets.

"Evidence of this would include further de-dollarization of the share of foreign currency deposits in the Turkish banking system, and increased liquidity and depth of domestic capital markets, particularly for foreign exchange operations," it said.

S&P said it projects real GDP growth easing to 2.3% in 2025, down from 3.1% this year, amid tighter credit conditions and lower labor demand.

Those are expected to be partly offset by stronger exports of goods and services.

Anadolu Agency

Muzn Islamic Banking reinforces Shari'a commitment for 2024

NBO Muzn Islamic Banking recently held its third Shari'a Supervisory Board (SSB) Meeting of 2024, reaffirming Muzn's commitment to uphold Shari'a principles across its financial offerings, while reflecting its dedication to ethical and compliant Islamic banking practices.

The meeting was chaired by Mufti Dr Muhammad Zubair Usmani, Shari'a Supervisory Board chairman, and included members H H Dr Adham al Said, Sheikh Dr Abdulrahman Abdullah al Saadi, and Sheikh Dr Saleh Nasser al Kharusi, who shared their insights to guide Muzn's operations in alignment with Shari'a standards, a press release said.

Commenting on the meeting, Salima al Marzouqi, assistant general manager and chief Islamic Banking officer, said, "The Shari'a Supervisory Board Meeting reinforces our unwavering



commitment to expand Islamic finance in Oman, by working closely with our esteemed Shari'a Board members. We spare no effort to ensure that our products and services strictly follow Shari'a guidelines, meeting both regulatory standards and the values of our customers."

Furthermore, the board focused on innovative Shari'a-compliant solutions to cater to customers' needs, covering key items like reviewing the concept of Istisna financing and developing Islamic financing models exclusive for Initial Public Offerings (IPOs). The Shari'a Supervisory Board also reviewed Shari'a Compliance Reports for the designated period and expressed satisfaction with Muzn's adherence to Shari'a standards across its product portfolio.

Middle East Hunting Expo from Nov 7

The Middle East Hunting Expo 2024 is the most anticipated event for hunting enthusiasts and industry professionals alike from November 7 to 10 at Dubai Marina.

This premier expo promises an unparalleled experience for all attendees, showcasing the latest in hunting and shooting equipment within the hunting industry, a press release said.

The Middle East Hunting Expo 2024 will bring together 100 Exhibitors, 10,000 hunting enthusiasts from 53 countries coming together on 16,000sqm of floor space. Visitors can expect dazzling displays and product demonstrations, artisan knives, airguns and archery technology.

Maysoon Abulhoul, COO of Domus Group, the organisers of the Middle East Hunting Expo 2024, expressed her excitement about the event, stating, "Dubai has always been at the forefront of hosting world-class events, and the Middle East Hunting Expo 2024 will be no exception. We are thrilled to bring together the global hunting community to showcase the latest innovations."

"Hamad al Ameri, CEO of Caracal International, added, "I am thrilled to be part of an event that not only showcases the finest in hunting and outdoor gear but also invites the public to experience.

BankDhofar opens its new branch in Suwaiq

BankDhofar opened a new branch in Bidaya in the Wilayat of Suwaiq, under patronage of H E Sheikh Issa bin Ahmed al Maashani, Wali of Suwaiq, as part of its efforts to build long-term relationships with customers and provide them with the best products and services.

The Bidaya branch provides its services to individuals and visitors from all over the Sultanate of Oman due to the presence of some tourist and heritage sites such as forts. It is strategically located to support SMEs and help

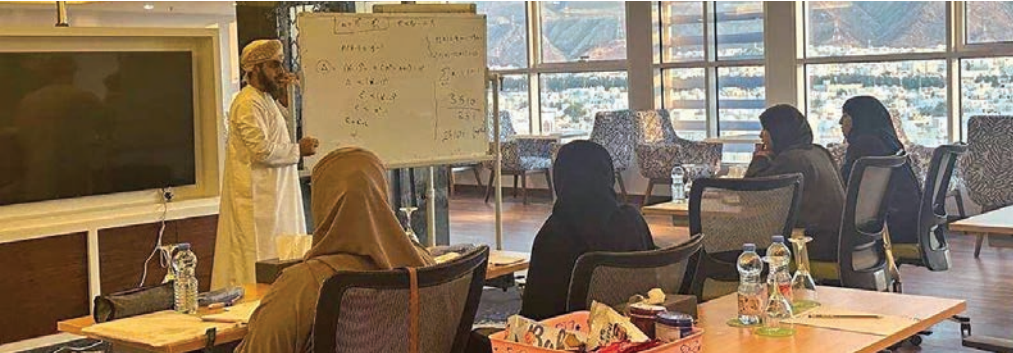
them grow their businesses due to the presence of many projects such as silver, palm fronds, handicrafts and Omani halwa that are spread in the traditional markets of the Wilayat of Suwaiq, a press release said.

Most of the branches are equipped with the latest modern technologies and means of comfort and privacy for the customers, and the branch employees are fully prepared to serve the customers and respond to their various requests within 10 minutes.



BankDhofar also offers a wide range of banking solutions for all segments of society, including women, youth, children, minors, priority banking, and private banking for wealthy individuals and their families, to manage their wealth in a safe, prudent and confidential manner.

BankDhofar is committed to keeping up with the various digital developments by investing in technology on a massive scale, adopting innovative strategies to improve the customer experience and simplify operations.



MoE holds training camp for Arab Mathematics Olympiad

The Ministry of Education (MoE), represented by the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympiad, implemented a four-day training camp for students who qualified for the fourth session of the Arab Mathematics Olympiad.

The training camp comes in preparation for participation in the Arab Mathematics Olympiad, which will be held in Qatar from November 10-14, organised by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific

Organization (ALECSO), a press release said.

During the camp days, the participating students acquired many skills and gained more knowledge that would help them to compete, as they were trained on how to solve Olympiad questions in various topics including algebra, number theory, geometry, and combinations.

The importance of the Arab Mathematics Olympiad competition lies in the fact that it is a periodic competition for students

from member countries of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO).

It seeks to create the appropriate environment to raise scientific competition among students from participating countries and contribute to enriching curricula and developing education. It aims to enhance areas of communication between students and discover their creativity in mathematics, and enhance their confidence in themselves.

Al Sharqiya Aviation completes 12 evacuation Flights for Masirah Oil

Al Sharqiya Aviation (ASA) has announced the successful completion of 12 flights for Masirah Oil Ltd (MOL) conducting medical evacuation drills for employees working on offshore drilling platforms.

These operations are part of ASA's commitment to supporting the evolution of safety in the energy sector, a press release said.

Engineer Ahlam al Jahdhami, CEO of ASA, said, "As the only private helicopter services operator in this vital sector, we hope to continually enhance our cooperation with the oil and gas industry to support safety in onshore and offshore rigs. Every life is priceless, and we strive to ensure the safety of all employees in this critical industry."

Captain Tamer Gendy stated, "We are proud of the success of these operations, which reflect



our commitment to providing the highest levels of service and safety, especially on the heels of our success in providing emergency medical services in cooperation with the health industry."

As the only private helicopter services operator in this vital sector, we hope to continually enhance our cooperation with the oil and gas industry to support safety

Eng Ahlam al Jahdhami

These operations come after ASA recently hosted Airbus' Safety Roadshow in Oman, where Airbus presented the latest in safety for all helicopter operators and with the presence of government stakeholders, reflecting the company's commitment to collaborating with different stakeholders.

ISG students shine at CBSE National Sports Competitions in Odisha

Students of Indian School Al Ghubra showcased an impressive performance at the CBSE National Sports Competitions in Swimming and Badminton.

Competing against the top talents across India, the swimmers from ISG secured 12 medals at the National Swimming Meet held at Bhubaneswar in Odisha, India, between October 11-14, a press release said.

Nitish Sai Harinath, a talented swimmer from class 10, captivated the spectators with his performance, winning 2 gold medals in the 50m freestyle and



50m butterfly stroke, besides a silver in the 100m freestyle. Nitish also contributed to the team's success by securing 2 bronze medals in the 100m butterfly stroke and the 4x100m freestyle relay in the Under 17 boys category. Apart from Nitish, the relay team comprised Jayin Sharma, Satvik Kumar, Grishnesh Reddy Eluru, and Janak Sagar Patil.

In the Under 17 Girls category, Avighna Chinthala also shone brightly, clinching 2 silver medals in the 50m freestyle and 50m backstroke, as well as 3 bronze

medals in the 100m freestyle, 100m backstroke, and 200m backstroke.

The ISG Girls Under 17 Relay Team further increased the medal tally by securing 2 silver medals in the 4x100m freestyle relay and the 4x100m medley relay. The team comprised Avighna Chinthala, N Haripriya Satish, Jia Parijat Singh, and Aditi Bhakat. In Badminton, Aarushi Manikandan, a class 11 student secured a silver medal in the CBSE National Badminton Championship held at Sendhwa in Madhya Pradesh, India.

16th Abu Dhabi Art from Nov 20

Under the patronage of Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, the 16th Abu Dhabi Art will take place from November 20-24 at Ma-narat Al Saadiyat.

Organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), Abu Dhabi Art will feature Emirati artist Mohammed Kazem as this year's Visual Campaign Artist, acknowledging his role in shaping the UAE's art scene, a press release said.

The 16th edition of Art Abu Dhabi features over 100 local and international galleries, offering a rich cultural and artistic experience. This year's event introduces new sections featuring modern regional artists and showcasing works from Central Asia and the Caucasus, to foster cross-cultural exchange. The event also presents unique collections of historical artifacts and collectibles, appealing to art and collectibles enthusiasts worldwide.

The Abu Dhabi Art fair is a



Mohammed Kazem

catalyst for the burgeoning UAE art market, which is increasingly culturally networked throughout the Global South. The annual fair is the culmination of Abu Dhabi Art's year-long programme, which includes artist residencies, artist commissions and exhibitions, and a strong educational outreach.

The Visual Campaign Artist creates the visual identity for the fair each year. The appointment of Mohammed Kazem as the Visual Campaign Artist for 2024 is testament to the role he has played as a pioneering artist who has supported the art community for more than two decades.

Lincoln Corsair SUV offers a luxurious, impressive drive

Step into a world of elegance and sophistication with the Lincoln Corsair SUV, designed to make every drive a serene experience.

The Lincoln Corsair Reserve all-wheel drive enhances the luxury SUV experience, offering an impressive array of features, advanced technology and meticulous attention to detail, a press release said.

The two-row Corsair blends refined power with innovative technologies, staying true to Lincoln's Quiet Flight ethos. With a turbocharged four-cylinder engine - including a 2ltr option delivering 250hp and 380Nm of torque - paired with an advanced 8-speed automatic transmission and SelectShift capability, the Corsair promises a smooth, powerful and responsive ride. Lincoln's Co-Pilot360™ driver-assist suite adds to the ease, making every journey as effortless as it is luxurious.

Beyond performance, the Corsair brings thoughtful design touches for an enhanced ownership experience, such as Lincoln's signature illuminated entry features, dynamic LED lighting and premium ambient lighting.



Inside, the horizontal layout offers a calming aesthetic, while hand-selected materials add elegance and comfort. With a 10-speaker Lincoln premium audio system, dual-zone climate control and intelligent access, the

cabin offers an experience of true luxury.

At the heart of its tech suite, SYNC 4 delivers advanced voice control, a vibrant 13.3-inch touchscreen and navigation for seamless connectivity. The Lincoln Co-Pilot360 2.1 Vision further enhances safety with cutting-edge features like blind-spot detection, lane-keeping assist, a 360-degree camera and intelligent adaptive cruise control.

The Lincoln Corsair is designed for those who seek an exceptional driving experience, combining luxury, performance and advanced technology to elevate every journey. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought by Arabian Car Marketing Co.



Omantel partners with Musalih for maintenance

In a strategic move to support promising digital startups, Omantel has signed a partnership agreement with the Musalih platform to provide maintenance services for over 67 Omantel retail outlets across various regions of Oman, employing skilled Omani talent through the platform.

The selection of Musalih, a locally established company with a strong national workforce, stems from its proven ability to deliver high-quality maintenance services at competitive rates, a press release said.

Musalih is Oman's first digital platform in the maintenance sector, offering a range

of services including plumbing, electrical and electronic repairs, and inspections - all carried out by highly trained Omani technicians throughout the sultanate.

Through this partnership, Musalih will provide routine and urgent maintenance services for Omantel's outlets, ensuring uninterrupted operations in line with high standards of quality and efficiency. This collaboration also aims to enhance Omantel's proactive maintenance strategy, supporting its commitment to sustainable operations.

Commenting on the collaboration, Eng Aladdin Bait Fadhil, chief commercial officer at

Omantel, said, "We are pleased to partner with Musalih as part of our ongoing efforts to support the Omani community and local startups. This partnership not only ensures high-quality, sustainable maintenance solutions for Omantel's outlets but also creates job opportunities for skilled Omanis in the regions where we operate."

Eng Sultan al Zadjali, CEO of Musalih, added, "This partnership is a key milestone in realising our vision of providing comprehensive, reliable maintenance services across Oman while empowering Omani youth with employment opportunities in the technical maintenance sector."

1st Global, 2nd National Forum on Patient Safety concludes

The 1st Global and 2nd National Forum on Patient Safety, Incident Reporting, and Learning concluded on Monday at the Inter-city Hotel Al Khuwair under the auspices of H E Dr Ahmed Salim al Mandhari, Undersecretary of Ministry of Health for Planning and Health Regulation.

The two-day forum was organised by the Collaborating Centre for Quality and Patient Safety in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, represented by the Quality Assurance Centre in the Sultanate of Oman, a press release said.

During the two days of the Forum, several specialised lectures on patient safety and incident reporting were presented by speakers from Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Tunisia. The Forum attracted many participants from within and outside



Oman.

In addition, the Forum discussed experiences and projects aimed at improving patient safety and learning from incidents. Outstanding healthcare institutions and medical

professionals were honoured for their achievements in incident reporting and learning from them.

Furthermore, the Undersecretary for Planning and Health Regulation honoured the distin-

guished participants in the following categories - highest category for optimal use of the Aman System, best project for improving patient safety, and highest category for reporting within the Aman System.

Modern Exchange spreads Diwali joy at labour camps in Wadi Kabir



In a heartfelt Diwali gesture, staff members from Modern Exchange, a leading Remittance and Money Exchange company in Oman, visited labour camps in Wadi Kabir to distribute sweets. This act of kindness resonated with the spirit of Diwali, emphasising the festival's themes of unity, compassion, and sharing joy with the community.

Diwali, known as the 'festival of lights', is celebrated globally as a time to come together with family and friends, exchange sweets, and reflect on values of

love and generosity. For the labourers at the camp, Modern Exchange's gesture was a meaningful reminder of the festival's message of inclusion and togetherness, a press release said.

Reflecting on the initiative, a spokesperson for Modern Ex-

change, said, "Diwali is a festival of lights and joy, but it is also about giving and spreading happiness. Sharing sweets during Diwali symbolises the spirit of togetherness and our collective responsibility toward society's most vulnerable members."

Milipol Qatar 2024 concludes

Milipol Qatar 2024, the 15th edition of the Global Event for Homeland Security and Safety, concluded yesterday after a three-day run at the Doha Exhibition & Convention Centre (DECC), under the theme 'The technology at the service of security'.

Held under the patronage of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, the exhibition and conference achieved record visitor turnout of over 14,500 and a total of QAR 842mn in declared sales.

The show was inaugurated by

the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Forces, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, who was accompanied by a number of ministers and senior officials from the country, as well as guests including ministers, police chiefs from various sisterly and friendly countries, ambassadors, experts, specialists from around the world and leading international companies specialising in internal security, besides representatives of exhibiting companies.

The show also attracted 360

official delegates from 42 nations who toured the exhibition. Major General Nasser bin Fahad Al Thani, chairman of the Milipol Qatar Committee stated during the closing ceremony that the delegations' programme had a key influence in attracting 255 exhibitors from 26 nations across Europe, Middle East, Asia and North America of which 70 companies are from Qatar.

International participation accounted for 70% of exhibitors, with six pavilions from France, North America, Germany, Italy, Czech Republic and China.

US presidential election: Trump claims lead in 7 swing states

Washington, D.C., US - Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has said the winner will be known on the night of Tuesday's election, claiming that he has 'a substantial lead'.

On the phone with ABC News on Sunday, Trump responded to a question about whether he thought he could lose: "I guess you could lose, can lose. I mean, that happens, right? But I think I have a pretty substantial lead, but, you could

say, yeah, yeah, you could lose. Bad things could happen. You know, things happen, but it's going to be interesting."

When asked when he would address the country about the election results, Trump replied: "I'll be out there at the right time." Regarding his campaign rallies leading up to election day, Trump said: "Nobody's ever done what I've done, and they're big rallies and tremendous enthusiasm."

In the final days of the cam-



Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump

paign, Trump launched a blitz of battleground states. After a swing through the western states last week, he spoke at rallies in Michigan and Wisconsin on Friday, and twice in North Carolina on Saturday, with a side trip to Virginia, where he believes he can win, according to the broadcaster.

Following his interview with ABC News, Trump continued his campaign with rallies in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia on Sunday.

Citing Brazil-based polling firm AtlasIntel, which Trump claims to be the 'most accurate' pollster in 2020, he claimed to be ahead in all seven battleground states.

Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin are the seven key battlegrounds or swing states in this election.

Harris and Trump have each spent significant time campaigning in the states with the understanding that anyone could

potentially decide the election.

The election is scheduled for Tuesday, with Americans voting not only for the future of the American presidency, but also for Congress, a number of states, and local governments.

More than 78mn Americans have cast early ballots, including about 700,000 more Democrats than Republicans, according to data published by the University of Florida Election Lab.

Anadolu Agency

Kamala Harris pledges to end war in Gaza if elected as US president

The US Democratic nominee pledged to do everything in her power to end Israel's war on Gaza

Washington, D.C., US - US Democratic nominee Kamala Harris pledged on Sunday to do everything in her power to end Israel's war on the besieged Gaza Strip if she is elected president in remarks delivered just two days ahead of Election Day.

"This year has been difficult given the scale of death and destruction in Gaza and given the civilian casualties and displacement in Lebanon. It is devastating, and as president, I will do everything in my power to end the war in Gaza, to bring home the hostages, end the suffering in Gaza, ensure Israel is secure, and ensure the Palestinian people can realise their right to dignity, freedom, security and self-determination," she said to raucous applause during a campaign rally in the pivotal battleground state of Michigan.

Harris badly needs to secure a majority in the seven pivotal battleground states in this year's election cycle amid a virtual dead heat with former President and Republican candidate Donald Trump nationally. A compilation of polling compiled by the RealClearPolitics website has Trump ahead by just 0.1% nationally, with five polls indicating they are locked in a tie.

Michigan, with a vibrant Arab



Kamala Harris badly needs to secure a majority in the seven pivotal battleground states in this year's election cycle

and Muslim community and 15 Electoral College votes at stake, is crucial to her election prospects. It along with Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are considered this year's swing states.

Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin - once considered re-

liably Democratic - are again crucial battlegrounds. Known as the 'blue wall', these states fell to Trump in 2016, only to be secured by President Joe Biden in 2020.

Harris and Trump have each spent significant time campaigning in the states with the understanding that anyone could potentially decide the election.

Record early voting

Meanwhile, early voting in the US state of North Carolina surged to a record high ahead of the presidential election, with more than 4.2mn residents casting ballots in person as of Sunday. North Carolina, one of the battleground states crucial to the election's

outcome, has seen particularly high turnout in its western regions, which were recently hit by Hurricane Helene.

In total, 57% of registered voters across the state have already cast their ballots at polling stations. According to official data from the North Carolina State Board of Elections, current in-per-

It is devastating, and as president, I will do everything in my power to end the war in Gaza, to bring home the hostages, end the suffering in Gaza, ensure Israel is secure, and ensure the Palestinian people can realise their right to dignity, freedom

KAMALA HARRIS

son early voting numbers have surpassed the record set during the 2020 presidential election, when 3.63mn residents voted early.

Officials also said that processing delays might mean actual voter participation could be even higher than reported. The University of Florida's Election Laboratory has reported that over 75mn votes have been cast nationwide ahead of the election, with more than 40mn of these cast in person and approximately 34mn through mail-in ballots.

Anadolu Agency



Quincy Jones

'Thriller' producer dies at 91

Los Angeles, US - Legendary US music producer Quincy Jones passed away on Sunday night at the age of 91, his publicist announced. "Tonight, with full but broken hearts, we must share the news of our father and brother Quincy Jones' passing," the family said in a statement.

Born in 1933 in Chicago, Jones started out making his own music, backing the likes of Billie Holiday and later fronting his own band. It was then that he met Ray Charles, who would become a lifelong friend and collaborator.

Jones later became one of first Black executives to thrive in the entertainment industry and amassed a music catalogue that included Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' album, work from jazz legends like Duke Ellington, as well as crooners like Frank Sinatra. DW

Moldova: Sandu wins presidential runoff

Chisinau, Moldova - Incumbent Moldovan President Maia Sandu on Sunday claimed victory in an election runoff.

The result of the vote could play a crucial role in the country's European future and was marked by fears of meddling from Russia.

Pro-European Union incumbent Sandu faced off with former prosecutor general Alexandr Stoianoglo, who was backed by the pro-Russian Socialist Party, in a tight second-round.

With nearly 99% of the votes counted in the second round of the presidential election, Sandu had 54.7% of the vote, according to Moldova's electoral authority.

Stoianoglo received 45.3% of the vote.

When polls closed at 9pm local time (1900 GMT), turnout stood at around 54% of eligible voters.

Moldovan citizens living outside the country voted heavily in favour of Sandu in the runoff.

"Moldova, you are victorious! Today, dear Moldovans, you have given a lesson in democracy, worthy of being written in history books. Today, you have saved Moldova! In our choice for a dignified future, no one lost," Sandu said after claiming victory.

She alleged that the election had faced an 'unprecedented attack' by 'hostile forces from out-



With nearly 99% of the votes counted in the second round of the presidential election, Maia Sandu had 54.7% of the vote

Pro-European Union incumbent Maia Sandu faced off with Alexandr Stoianoglo, who was backed by the pro-Russian Socialist Party, in a tight second-round

side the country'.

Push for EU membership

Sandu bagged 42.5% of the vote in the first round of the presidential ballot.

Stoianoglo - who was fired as prosecutor general by Sandu last year - got 26% of the vote.

Analysts forecasted a close battle as Stoianoglo had garnered the support of other defeated candidates after the first round.

A former World Bank economist, Sandu is looking to chart a new pro-European course for the country.

"Joining the European Union is Moldova's Marshall Plan," she has said referring to the economic recovery proposal to rebuild Europe after World War II.

But her plan for Moldova to join the EU received a setback after a referendum on the issue, held last month, was passed by a razor-thin 'yes'.

Sandu blamed 'foreign interference' for the narrow vote, which saw 50.35% backing a membership.

The first round of the presidential ballot and the referendum on EU membership were both held on the same day.

Sandu also alleges that Stoianoglo is the Kremlin's man and a 'Trojan horse'.

Stoianoglo, who is praised by his supporters for keeping his distance from the EU, says that his opponent's claims are untrue. He has accused Sandu of indulging in divisive politics in a nation that has a considerable Russian-speaking minority.

Russian interference

Police in Moldova have tightened their watch in an attempt to avoid a repeat of what they say was an extensive vast vote-buying scheme in the first round last month. It is believed to have been brought into play by Russian-backed fugitive oligarch Ilan Shor.

Shor resides in Russia and has used social media to urge people to vote against Sandu, promising a payout for following his instructions.

However, he has denied wrongdoing. Russia has also denied the allegations of vote meddling. DW



The Shenzhou-18 spacecraft, carrying Ye Guangfu, Li Cong and Li Guangsu, landed at the Dongfeng landing site

Chinese astronauts return with 34.6kg space samples

Beijing, China - Three Chinese astronauts brought home 34.6kg (76 pounds) of space samples, state media reported on Monday.

The arrival of the samples in Beijing marks the 7th batch of scientific experimental samples from China's Tiangong space station. The samples include 28 experiments on space life sciences and space material sciences.

The Shenzhou-18 spacecraft, carrying Ye Guangfu, Li Cong and Li Guangsu, landed at around 1.24am local time (1724GMT Sunday) at the Dongfeng landing site in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region early on Monday. The crew spent 192 days in

space since April 25. Before holding a media briefing, they will undergo quarantine and extensive medical check-ups, which could take months.

The trio handed over space station operations to the three-member crew of Shenzhou-19, which was launched on October 30.

Conducting two spacewalks, they also utilised the scientific experiment cabinets and extravehicular payloads to carry out dozens of experiments in the fields of basic physics in micro-gravity, space material science, space life science, space medicine and space technology.

According to the China Manned Space Agency, their first spacewalk in May set a new record for the longest single spacewalk by Chinese astronauts. They also replaced burner for the gas experiment in the combustion experiment cabinet and test samples in the fluid physics experiment cabinet as planned.

Shenzhou-18 Commander Ye became the first Chinese astronaut, locally known as taikonaut, to spend over 365 days in space, having previously been part of the Shenzhou-13 mission from October 2021 to April 2022.

Anadolu Agency

33 more Gazans killed in Israeli attacks

The overall death toll since last year surged to 43,374, said the health ministry in the Gaza Strip

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 33 more Palestinians were killed in relentless Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, bringing the overall death toll since last year to 43,374, the health ministry in the enclave said on Monday.

A ministry statement added that some 102,261 others were injured in the ongoing assault.

"The Israeli occupation has committed three massacres of families in the last 24 hours, resulting in 33 deaths and 156 injuries," the ministry said.

"Many people are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added.

Meanwhile, illegal Israeli settlers attacked the Palestinian village of Burqa in the central West Bank on Monday and burnt olive fields, according to witnesses.

A group of illegal settlers set fire to olive fields in the area and hurled rocks at Palestinian homes there, triggering clashes with local villagers, the witnesses said.

It came hours after some 20



The Israeli occupation committed three massacres of families in the last 24 hours, resulting in 33 deaths and 156 injuries, according to the health ministry in the Gaza Strip

Illegal Israeli settlers attacked the Palestinian village of Burqa in central West Bank on Monday and burnt olive fields, according to witnesses

Palestinian vehicles were burned in a settler attack early on Monday near Al-Bireh city in the central West Bank.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned the settler attacks as 'an extension of the (Israeli) genocide and expulsion

taking place against Palestinians in Gaza'.

According to Palestinian figures, illegal Israeli settlers carried out some 1,490 attacks on Palestinians, lands, and properties last month across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Data from the Israeli anti-settlement group Peace Now shows that there are half a million illegal settlers in 146 settlements and 224 outposts in the West Bank.

Tensions have been running high across the occupied West Bank due to Israel's brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip.

At least 768 Palestinians have since been killed and nearly 6,300 others injured by Israeli army fire in the occupied West Bank, according to the Health Ministry.

The escalation follows a land-

mark opinion in July by the International Court of Justice that declared Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian land 'illegal' and demanded the evacuation of all existing settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Germany laments high death toll

Germany on Monday lamented

the high death toll in Gaza amid intensified Israeli military attacks.

"We see that the number of female civilians and male civilians being killed has been very high, especially in the last few weeks. The humanitarian situation in northern Gaza is desperate. It is unbearable in the entire Gaza Strip," Foreign Ministry spokesman Sebastian Fischer told media in Berlin.

Berlin calls on Israel 'to comply with its obligations under international law and also to follow the decisions of the ICJ (International Court of Justice) and allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza,' he added.

Fischer expressed his country's 'utmost concern' over the dramatic drop in humanitarian aid to Gaza.

"The occupation army used starvation as a weapon against civilians, prevented 3,800 aid trucks from going into northern Gaza, and deliberately starved nearly 400,000 people there, including more than 100,000 children," the Gaza-based Government Media Office said.

"It also destroyed dozens of displacement and shelter centres that house tens of thousands of displaced people who fled their homes in search of safety and security," it added.

The media office appealed to the international community and UN agencies to assume their responsibilities and pressure Israel 'to stop the brutal crimes being committed against civilians in Gaza'.

Anadolu Agency



Israel informs UN of decision to withdraw from agreement on UNRWA operations

Istanbul, Turkey - Israel officially informed the UN on Sunday of its decision to withdraw from an agreement with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), citing 'security concerns'.

In a letter addressed to UN General Assembly President Philémon Yang, Israel's Foreign Ministry stated that the withdrawal relates to the 1967 agreement concerning UNRWA's operations in support of Palestinian refugees.

The withdrawal will take effect after a three-month transition period. Israel emphasised that it would still collaborate with international partners, including other UN agencies, to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches civilians in Gaza.

However, the ministry highlighted the importance of safeguarding Israel's security, signalling that aid facilitation should not compromise its safety.

The statement added that Israel expects the United Nations to contribute to these efforts, aligning humanitarian support with regional security needs.

Danny Danon, Israel's Ambassador to the UN, also wrote

on X: "Despite the overwhelming evidence we submitted to the UN that substantiate Hamas' infiltration of UNRWA, the UN did nothing to rectify the situation."

"The State of Israel will continue to cooperate with humanitarian organisations but not with organisations that promote terrorism against us," he added.

UNRWA, headquartered in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhoods, denies the accusations and asserts that it remains neutral, solely focusing on supporting refugees.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa urged the European Parliament on Sunday to confront Israel's decision to ban UNRWA from operating in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Mustafa met with a delegation from the parliament at his office in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, according to a statement from his office.

He urged the delegation to 'confront Israel's decision to ban UNRWA's work, which politically aims to erase the right of Palestinian refugees to return and contributes to the deterioration of humanitarian conditions in the Palestinian territories'.

Anadolu Agency

Indonesia: Volcano eruption kills several

Jakarta, Indonesia - At least six people died after a volcano erupted several times in eastern Indonesia, officials said.

The eruptions occurred at Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki which is located on the island of Flores.

"According to our coordination with the local authorities, six fatalities have confirmed," Abdul Muhari, the spokesman for Indonesia's disaster mitigation agency, said in an interview for the Kompas TV broadcaster.

Avi Mangota Hallan, the head of emergency response and logistics for East Flores district, told Germany's DPA news agency that rescue teams were still searching for potential victims trapped under the rubble of collapsed homes.

The crater erupted just before midnight and again at 1:27am (1727 UTC Sunday) and 2:48am local time.

The volcano has been spewing ash up to 2,000 metres (6,500 feet) into the air every day since Thursday.



The volcano has been spewing ash up to 2,000 metres (6,500 feet) into the air every day since Thursday

Firman Yosef, an official at the volcano's monitoring post, said that several houses were burned down, including a convent of Catholic nuns.

Government declares state of emergency

Hallan said that the government

had declared a state of emergency in affected areas until December 31.

Indonesia's volcanology agency raised the alert level to its highest mark.

It told locals and tourists not to carry out activities within a seven-kilometre (4.3-mile) radius of the crater.

"There has been a significant increase in volcanic activity on Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki," it said in a press release.

It warned there was a potential for rain-induced lava floods and told locals to wear masks to avoid the effects of volcanic ash.

The mountain on Indonesia's Flores island had several major eruptions in January, prompting authorities to raise the alert status to its highest level and evacuate at least 2,000 residents

The mountain on Indonesia's Flores island had several major eruptions in January, prompting authorities to raise the alert status to its highest level and evacuate at least 2,000 residents.

Indonesia experiences frequent eruptions and is part of the Pacific 'Ring of Fire' area, which sees intense volcanic and seismic activity.

In May, thousands were evacuated on the Sangihe Islands in North Sulawesi after the Ruang volcano erupted.

DW

Israel: Security scandal involving Netanyahu exposed

Jerusalem - The Israeli newspaper Haaretz published details of a security scandal involving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu related to the appointment of a spokesperson who took part in 'sensitive security sessions'.

The scandal involved appointing Netanyahu's spokesperson 'although he had not passed the security clearance'.

It said the spokesperson, whose name was not disclosed, took part in 'sensitive security sessions'.

Additionally, it reported on Friday that Netanyahu's spokesperson leaked information and documents, some of which were just 'lies' about the former head of the Palestinian group Hamas's political bureau, Yahya Sinwar, to foreign news-



papers, while other documents contained 'serious and sensitive security materials'.

The newspaper noted that it is certain that this employee participated in closed and sensitive security consultations and 'continued to receive classified information, including transcripts of cabinet meetings'.

Israel's Channel 7 said that 'military censorship has imposed

The Israeli PM was reported to be involved in the appointment of a spokesperson who attended 'sensitive security sessions'

a ban on publishing regarding this issue or scandal', while Netanyahu is demanding the lifting of the publication ban, claiming a desire for transparency.

The channel confirmed that Netanyahu's spokesperson 'did not have any security clearance'.

The Israeli Hebrew-language newspaper Israel Hayom reported on Friday that an Interior Ministry directive includes halt-

ing cooperation with Haaretz due to remarks by its publisher, Amos Schocken.

The ministry has demanded an apology from Schocken for his description of Palestinians.

At a subsequent press conference, Schocken expressed regret for his comments.

"I have reconsidered my words...As for Hamas, they are not freedom fighters," he said.

In his remarks, Schocken criticised Netanyahu's government, saying it 'doesn't care about imposing a cruel apartheid regime on the Palestinian population. It dismisses the costs of both sides for defending the settlements while fighting the Palestinian freedom fighters, which Israel calls terrorists'.

He referred to the situation in

Gaza as a 'second Nakba' or 'Catastrophe', alluding to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians in 1948, when Israel was founded, and called for sanctions on Israel, saying that this is the only way to achieve a Palestinian state.

Following Schocken's remarks, Israel's Ministry of Culture and Sports announced that it would immediately cease all advertising and collaborations with Haaretz.

Meanwhile, the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence service, David Barnea, told families of Israeli captives held in Gaza that the chances to reach a prisoner swap deal with Hamas were diminishing, according to Israeli media on Monday.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

By-polls rescheduled in Kerala, UP, Punjab

New Delhi - The Election Commission has postponed by-elections in Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Punjab to November 20 from November 13.

The decision comes after requests from national and state parties, including INC, BJP, BSP, and RLD, to avoid low voter turnout. National and state parties had requested the EC to shift the dates in these states due to various festivities.

A significant portion of the electorate in Palakkad AC in Kerala will be engaged in the 'Kalpathi Rastholsavam' festival to be celebrated from November 13 to 15.

In Uttar Pradesh, people travel three to four days ahead to celebrate Kartik Purnima, while in Punjab, the 555th Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji is to be celebrated on November 15, and an Akhand Path is to be organised from November 13, onwards.

ANI

Uproar on day 1 of J&K Assembly

Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir - A resolution seeking the restoration of political autonomy for Indian-administered Kashmir, which was scrapped by the Hindu-nationalist Indian government in 2019, fell through in the first session of the region's newly elected Assembly.

The resolution tabled by Waheed Parra, a member of the People's Democratic Party, evoked uproar from the 29 members of the Bharatiya Janata Party, India's ruling party that abrogated Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution on August 5, 2019.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, whose ruling National Conference is the largest party in the house with 42 members of its own and the support of seven others, dismissed the resolution as something 'introduced for the cameras and carries no real significance'.

Abdullah said if there had been a genuine intention behind the resolution, it should have been discussed with the National Conference, the ruling party in the Union Territory.

"The reality is that the people of Jammu and Kashmir do not approve of the decision taken on August 5, 2019. If they had approved, then the results today would have been different. How the House will reflect and discuss this will not be de-



Ruckus breaks out on the first day of the J&K Assembly session, in Srinagar on Monday (ANI)

A resolution seeking restoration of political autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir, which was scrapped by the Indian government in 2019, fell through in the first session of the newly elected Assembly

cided by any one member," Omar said.

However, the PDP chief and former Chief Minister

Mehbooba Mufti wrote on X: "Proud of Waheed Parra for introducing a resolution in JK Assembly opposing the

revocation of Article 370 and resolve to restore the special status."

With three seats of PDP and 49 of the ruling coalition, the resolution could have been passed with a majority in the 90-member assembly. Although the mere passing of the resolution could not change anything, it carries symbolic significance as both PDP and National Conference made the

restoration of autonomy of the disputed territory as key election plank.

Before August 5, 2019, the region had its own constitution, flag, and bicameral legislature that could pass laws independently of the Indian parliament. Today, most of governmental powers are vested with a Lt Governor and New Delhi still virtually rules the region remotely. India and Pakistan rule the

Jammu and Kashmir region in parts but claim it in full. The territories are recognised as Indian-administered Kashmir, and Pakistan-administered Kashmir (also known as Azad Kashmir).

Uprising in violent incidents

The formation of the new government, after a gap of six years, coincided with an increase in violent incidents, in which nearly a dozen civilians were killed and more than a dozen injured. These incidents also saw the killing of three soldiers and three suspected militants.

Omar's father and two-time former chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, hinted at sabotage and called for an independent investigation into these incidents.

"Violence is taking place. There should be an investigation into it. Those involved should be arrested alive. We will get to know who is doing it because there are attempts to defame us," Farooq said on Saturday after a militant commander was killed and four armed personnel were injured in a gunfight in the capital Srinagar.

While the new government has powers over a few administrative departments, New Delhi is responsible for security.

Anadolu Agency

More than 35 dead as bus falls into gorge

Almora, Uttarakhand - More than 35 people were killed and several others injured after a bus carrying around 50 passengers fell into a deep gorge near Marchula in Uttarakhand's Almora district on Monday morning, said the police.

The Police headquarters spokesperson IG Nilesh Anand Bharne told ANI that more than 45 people were travelling in the bus at the time of the accident.

The bus was coming from Golikhal area to Ramnagar when the accident took place.

Upon receiving the information, relief and rescue operations have been started immediately and orders have been given to investigate the accident, said officials.

The police, fire and SDRF teams are working rapidly to evacuate the injured and take them to the nearest health centre for treatment.

The Commissioner and DIG



Police personnel and people gather near the bus that fell into a gorge near Marchula, in Almora on Monday (ANI)

Kumaon have left for the spot to coordinate the rescue effort while Superintendent of Police Almora is present on the spot.

Meanwhile, Uttarakhand

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami spoke to Secretary Disaster Management, Commissioner Kumaon Division and DM Almora over the phone on

the bus accident. He gave instructions to speed up the rescue and relief work.

"Very sad news has been received about the casualties of

The ill-fated bus was coming from Golikhal area to Ramnagar in Uttarakhand when the accident took place

passengers in the unfortunate bus accident that took place in Marchula of Almora district. The district administration has been instructed to carry out relief and rescue operations swiftly," Dhami posted on X.

"The local administration and SDRF teams at the accident site are working rapidly to evacuate the injured and take them to the nearest health centre for treatment. Instructions have also been given to airlift seriously injured passengers if required," he added.

ANI

Violence at temple in Canada condemned

New Delhi - India strongly condemned the violent disruption at the Hindu Sabha Temple in Brampton, Ontario, Canada, where an Indian consular camp was attacked on Sunday.

An Indian consular camp at the Hindu Sabha Temple in Canada's Brampton witnessed a 'violent disruption' on Sunday (local time) in Brampton, near Toronto.

In response to media queries regarding violence, the official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said: "We condemn the acts of violence perpetrated by extremists and separatists at the Hindu Sabha Temple in Brampton, Ontario yesterday."

"We call on the Government of Canada to ensure

that all places of worship are protected from such attacks. We also expect that those indulging in violence will be prosecuted. We remain deeply concerned about the safety and security of Indian nationals in Canada," the statement added.

According to MEA, 'the outreach of our Consular officers to provide services to Indians and Canadian citizens alike will not be deterred by intimidation, harassment and violence'.

The incident sparked widespread criticism in and outside Canada. Canadian opposition leader Pierre Poilievre condemned the attack, calling it 'completely unacceptable'.

ANI

Consulate opened in Brisbane

Brisbane, Australia - External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar underscored the deepening bilateral relationship between India and Australia during his visit to Australia, marked by the inauguration of a new Indian consulate in Brisbane.

Highlighting the significance of this development, Jaishankar stated: "Today is a landmark moment and certainly a milestone in our increasingly strong bilateral relationship."

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Jaishankar also expressed appreciation for Australia's support in delivering humanitarian aid, specifically to Papua New Guinea, which he noted as part of the emerging disaster relief collaboration in the Indo-Pacific. He emphasised that 'HADR has also been an important element of QUAD endeavours', reflecting a com-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar addresses the inauguration of new Consulate General of India, in Brisbane on Monday (ANI)

mitment to regional cooperation and mutual assistance.

The new consulate is seen as pivotal for facilitating the needs of the growing Indian community in Queensland, where a substantial number of Indian students are pursuing higher education. Jaishankar praised

the Indian diaspora, referring to them as a 'living bridge' between the two nations, and remarked: "We have a million-strong Indian diaspora, and certainly, they are making their contribution to the vibrant and multicultural society here."

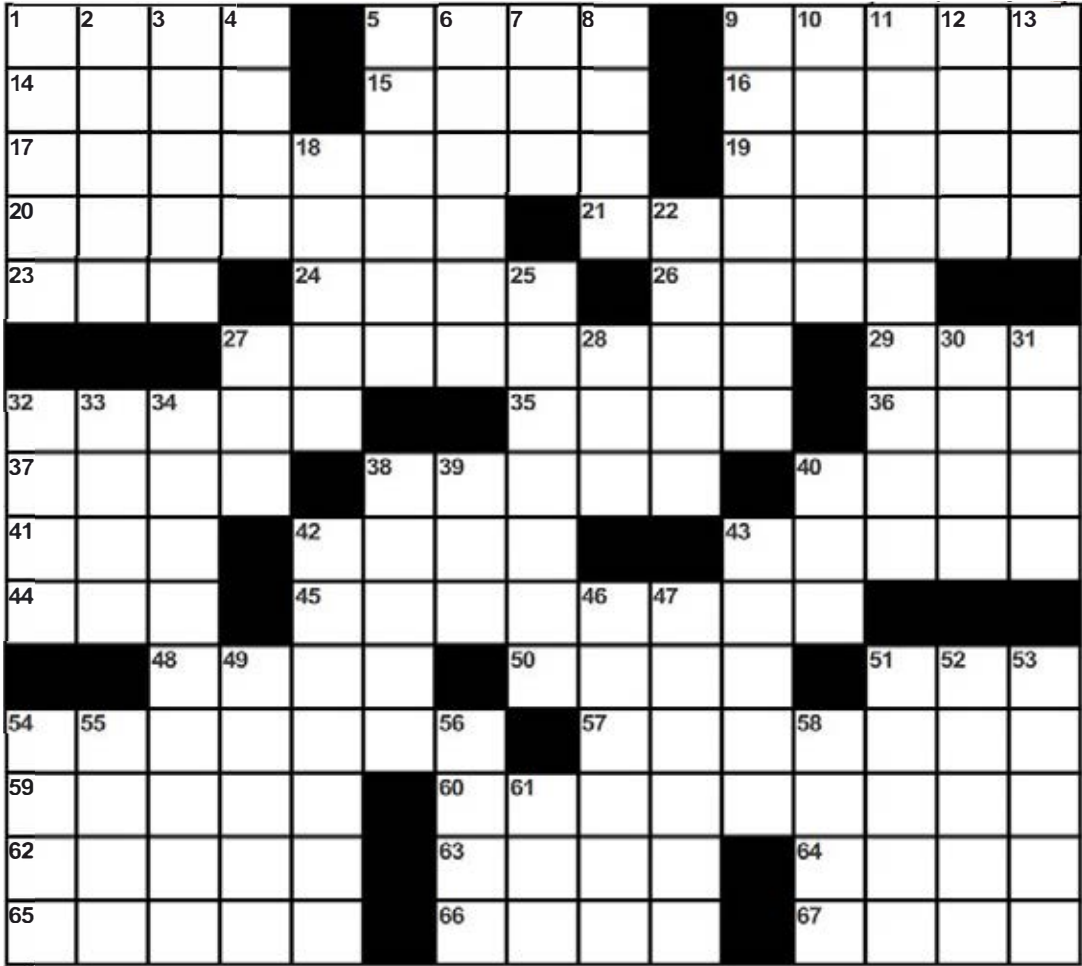
ANI

WAITING FOR PUSHKAR CAMEL FAIR



Camel traders with their herd of camels are seen ahead of the upcoming Pushkar Camel Fair, in Pushkar on Monday (ANI)

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Jazzman's lick
 - 5) "Hamlet" quintet
 - 9) Put back to zero, say
 - 14) Plane measure
 - 15) React to a bad pun, maybe
 - 16) Island off Venezuela
 - 17) December-letter opener
 - 19) Humidor item
 - 20) "Rabbit ears" on an old TV
 - 21) Pal, slangily
 - 23) Hi-_ graphics
 - 24) Pal of Garfield
 - 26) Brandy flavoring
 - 27) Gnats, e.g.
 - 29) Junkyard dog
 - 32) Closing bars
 - 35) Black mark
 - 36) Letters on a forever stamp
 - 37) Mary Kay competitor
 - 38) Deck application
 - 40) Assist in shady doings
 - 41) Kilmer of "Batman Forever"
 - 42) Silverstein who wrote "A Boy Named Sue"
 - 43) Lock of hair
 - 44) House add-on
 - 45) Date source
 - 48) Not easily solved
 - 50) Storage area
 - 51) _ about (wander)
 - 54) Candy, cookies, etc.
 - 57) Slowly, on a score
 - 59) Slip away from
 - 60) President's initial days in office
 - 62) Greets the day
 - 63) Awkward boats
 - 64) Luxury hotel chain
 - 65) Like helium
 - 66) Greeley's direction
 - 67) Gets the gist of
- DOWN**
- 1) JUGS gun technology
 - 2) Papas of "Zorba the Greek"
 - 3) Daring deeds
 - 4) What you eat
 - 5) Bynes of "Easy A"
 - 6) 1997 Nicolas Cage thriller
 - 7) Bit of body art, briefly
 - 8) Lose one's cool
 - 9) Most risque
 - 10) IRA-establishing law
 - 11) Diner "lump"
 - 12) Abba ofIsrael
 - 13) Source of poi
 - 18) Does a con job on
 - 22) Grillmaster's wear
 - 25) Preserves, in a way
 - 27) _ Luis Bispo
 - 28) "The Book of_" (Washington movie)
 - 30) Swiss Army knife's many
 - 31) Charlie Brown's expletive
 - 32) Give in, informally
 - 33) Mirror shape, maybe
 - 34) Miniature home
 - 38) Parasol's offering
 - 39) No. on a business card
 - 40) "Odds_..."
 - 42) Most nimble
 - 43) Stuffed bear's nickname
 - 46) "Much obliged!"
 - 47) Build a new home, in a way
 - 49) Snake that bears live young
 - 51) Travelocity pitchman
 - 52) Do penance
 - 53) Leary of "Rescue Me"
 - 54)_ Halliwell, AKA Ginger Spice
 - 55) Lena or Ken of Hollywood
 - 56) "Begin the Beguine" bandleader
 - Artie
 - 58) "Famous" cook-iemaker
 - 61) "-ite" compound, often

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You might get backed into a corner by a boss or coworker today, but don't panic. When you panic, you start to make stupid decisions, and your tendency to exaggerate grows. So if someone asks for something you haven't done yet, don't run around like a chicken with its head cut off. Ask for the time you need and get things done correctly. The timetable you're being asked to adhere to might simply be unrealistic, and that's not your fault.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You've been procrastinating too often recently, and while it hasn't created any problems, it could. So if you're dealing with a nagging issue at work or at school, it deserves all your attention today. This problem involves some time-sensitive elements that could create more drama if they are left unchecked, so don't put it off until tomorrow. Get the job done and then you can treat yourself to all the stress-free play you can handle.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER21

You are always prepared to hear the truth, but the truth might not come in such a diplomatic package this time. Someone whose opinion you value will give you feedback that leaves you feeling confused. They may react too critically for your taste, although their intent is to help you. Try not to take it personally. Accept it at face value and don't blame them for speaking candidly. It's really a compliment. They just care about you.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

The big issues are totally under control, and you're on a positive path, but things are getting a bit weird. Public information is suddenly going private and secrets abound. Everyone is shutting doors and talking in whispers. Put a lid on your paranoia. This is not a development you should worry about just yet. In fact, it could signal some good news for you soon, so just wait things out and keep your mind busy with trifles in the meantime.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

There's no question that a group effort is the best way to go today. Other people will have suggestions you hadn't considered before, and that's huge. You can't possibly be expected to come up with every fantastic idea. Getting a consensus about vital information will give everyone a stake in this project, make you look like a great leader, and set a much more positive tone for the days ahead.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Whatever you're trying to distract yourself from isn't going away any time soon. Until you face the person, place, or thing you are trying to avoid, you will never find the peace of mind you deserve. Buying things to make yourself feel better might provide temporary fulfillment, but sacrificing your financial security will just make matters worse. Instead, focus on being grounded in reality. Ask for help if it gets to be too much.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You're underestimating your ability to juggle, so push yourself to take on a little bit more than you normally would. After all, time is on your side. No matter how many errands you have to run today, you'll have lots more flexibility than you think. So don't limit yourself. Don't cut off any new opportunities because you're afraid of falling short on time. If you rearrange your schedule a bit, you'll be golden.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Whichever direction you move in, take it slowly until you get comfortable. The pendulum swings in the other direction of your life today. You may be confronted with information that makes you rethink your most ardent beliefs. If you are usually quiet and shy, you'll find yourself at the center of attention. If you're normally loud and gregarious, you'll be communing with the wallflowers. The change of perspective will work wonders.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Be careful about the people you deal with today, and trust only those who have proven their trustworthiness. Try not to get too paranoid, but just remember that it's wiser to be safe than sorry. Your keen observational skills are on fire today, so pay attention when others tell you what you're seeing isn't quite reality. After all, everyone else might have a different agenda, one that doesn't match yours.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

It's not about the destination this time; it's all about the journey. Don't rush ahead when you really want to take your time. You'll not only end up creating a sub-par product, but you won't enjoy the process. So if you feel like slowing down today, then do it! You'll be amazed by how much extra time you can buy yourself simply by asking for it. People want to help you out more than they want you to comply.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You can't be responsible for the behavior of other people, so don't let yourself get caught up in the drama. Mutual respect may feel like a lost cause today when you are forced to deal with someone who bullies you to get their way. Luckily, the encounter will be fairly brief. You can try to teach them a lesson if you really want to, but it might be much more amusing if you just laugh in their face and walk away.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Give everything your full effort and attention or it will only come back to bite you. What you need are thorough solutions to the problems that arise. Putting temporary bandages on something that requires open-heart surgery won't save you any time. Today, any drama that pops up should be fairly insignificant, although annoying. Take this turmoil seriously. If you ignore it, it will just keep coming back to drive you crazy.

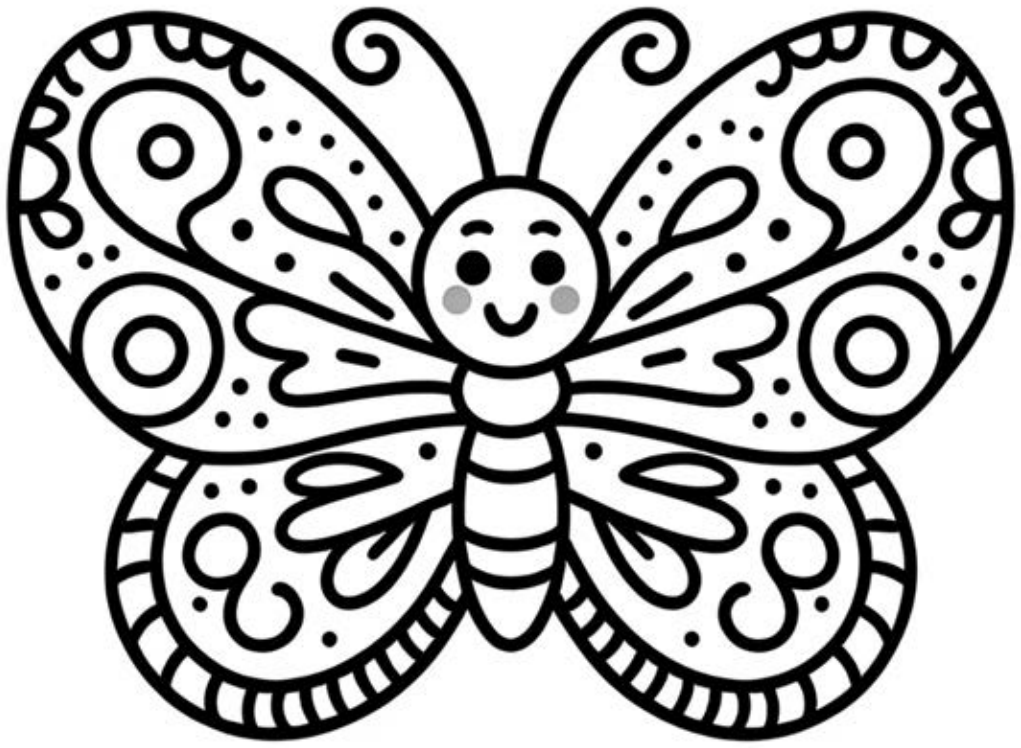


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 01. The warrant for the first Astronomer Royal appointed in England, 4 March 1675, stated what as the purpose of the office?**
- A. To prepare a catalogue of at least 10,000 stars
 - B. To maintain the Royal Navy's marine chronometers
 - C. To find "the longitude of places" in order to perfect navigation
 - D. To co-ordinate the work of English astronomers, and liaise with others of the world's astronomers
- 02. In rugby union, which position wears the number 2 jersey?**
- A. Hooker
 - B. Full back
 - C. Right wing
 - D. Half back
- 03. What function do egg yolks serve in making hollandaise sauce?**
- A. Give a rich flavour
 - B. Emulsifier
 - C. Thickener
 - D. Balance the flavours of the other ingredients

Answers: 1.C 2.A 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

U	I	S	O
D	E	D	E
T	L	N	S
W	K	O	S

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

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

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

Manchester United's fighting spirit delights Van Nistelrooy

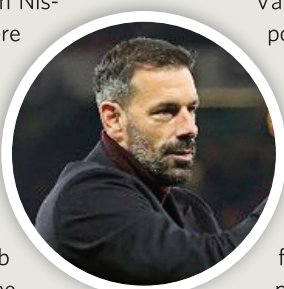
Manchester, England - Manchester United's interim boss Ruud van Nistelrooy believes the team can turn around their torrid season based on the "spirit" he saw in their two games since the sacking of manager Erik ten Hag.

Moises Caicedo's second-half strike for Chelsea cancelled a penalty from United captain Bruno Fernandes in a 1-1 Premier League draw on Sunday to spoil United's celebrations, but Van Nistelrooy said there were positives to be gleaned from their performance after a difficult few days. The draw saw United climb one spot in the table to 13th after 10 games.

"We're early in and the performances, with the spirit the players showed, is a foundation to build on... then football qualities will come out," Van Nistelrooy said. "That's the foundation to build on, and then there's time to improve a lot in the ranking."

Van Nistelrooy said the days since Ten Hag was shown the door have been "very difficult" for the team.

"Six days, the roller-coaster of emotions, obviously very sad seeing Erik leave, the next day you have to start to focus



Ruud van Nistelrooy

on getting the lads ready for a performance against Leicester (a 5-2 League Cup win on Wednesday), because 75,000 people are going to show up at Old Trafford, so we have the obligation, and the players feel that they have the obligation to do better.

"They looked also in the mirror, and their reactions Wednesday and today showed that they thought about things as well themselves."

Van Nistelrooy's positive view of Sunday's performance was not shared by everyone. Former United midfielder turned pundit Roy Keane said Ruben Amorim - Ten Hag's permanent replacement who will take the reins as of Nov. 11 - should have signed a longer contract, because "There's a long way back for this team."

"This is an average United team," Keane said on Sky Sports.

"We don't know what we are going to get from them, it's hit and miss. At the end it was a bit more open, but really disappointed."

"It was so flat. From the manager's point of view, this team is way off it."

MOISES SILENCES OLD TRAFFORD

Ecuadorian midfielder's goal helps Chelsea hold Manchester United



Chelsea's Moises Caicedo celebrates his goal against Manchester United on Sunday

Manchester, England - Moises Caicedo's blistering second-half strike cancelled out a Bruno Fernandes penalty as Chelsea salvaged a 1-1 draw with Manchester United on Sunday, spoiling United's celebrations in their first Premier League game since manager Erik ten Hag was sacked.

Chelsea are fourth in the table on 18 points while United, who had interim manager Ruud van Nistelrooy in the dugout, are 13th on 12 points after 10 games.

"It was a lot of disappointment in the dressing room. We could have won the game," Fernandes

said. "We know that Erik has gone, it is not good for anyone at the club when the manager goes. The team is not the best, the results are not the best and he is the one who pays for it. Whenever you see a manager go you have to take some of the blame on yourself, it is because the team is not doing so well."

The United captain scored from the spot in the 70th minute after Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez caught Rasmus Hojlund's foot when diving for the ball. Fernandes sent Sanchez the wrong way, prompting a delighted Van Nistelrooy to leap in

We knew if we waited for a long time (to equalise) it was going to be complicated. I'm so happy to equalise.

MOISES CAICEDO



the air in celebration.

United briefly looked poised for their second league win in six outings but the mood in Old Trafford swiftly shifted four minutes later when Casemiro failed to

fully clear Chelsea's corner, leaving Caicedo to fire a low volley that Andre Onana managed to just get a hand on, though he could not stop it sailing into the bottom corner.

"It was the chance to score a goal. I did it. I'm so happy," Caicedo told BBC Sport.

"We knew if we waited for a long time (to equalise) it was going to be complicated. I'm so happy to equalise. We deserved to win. We knew it would be a tough game but we were prepared for it. I'm so happy for the team. It was a great fight."

Ten Hag was sacked on Mon-

day with United languishing in 14th in the Premier League. Ruben Amorim was named as his replacement on Friday and will arrive at the club on Nov. 11.

A common refrain from Ten Hag was United's inability to score goals -- only Crystal Palace and lowly Southampton have fewer than United's nine -- and it was more of the same on Sunday.

Alejandro Garnacho nearly broke the deadlock in added time, firing a long shot that glanced just over the crossbar before Fernandes missed a sitter seconds later, lashing a shot from the centre of the box well over the net.

Martinez scores as Inter edge Venezia

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan clinched a hard-fought 1-0 home victory over Venezia when a second-half header from Lautaro Martinez proved enough to seal the Serie A clash on Sunday.

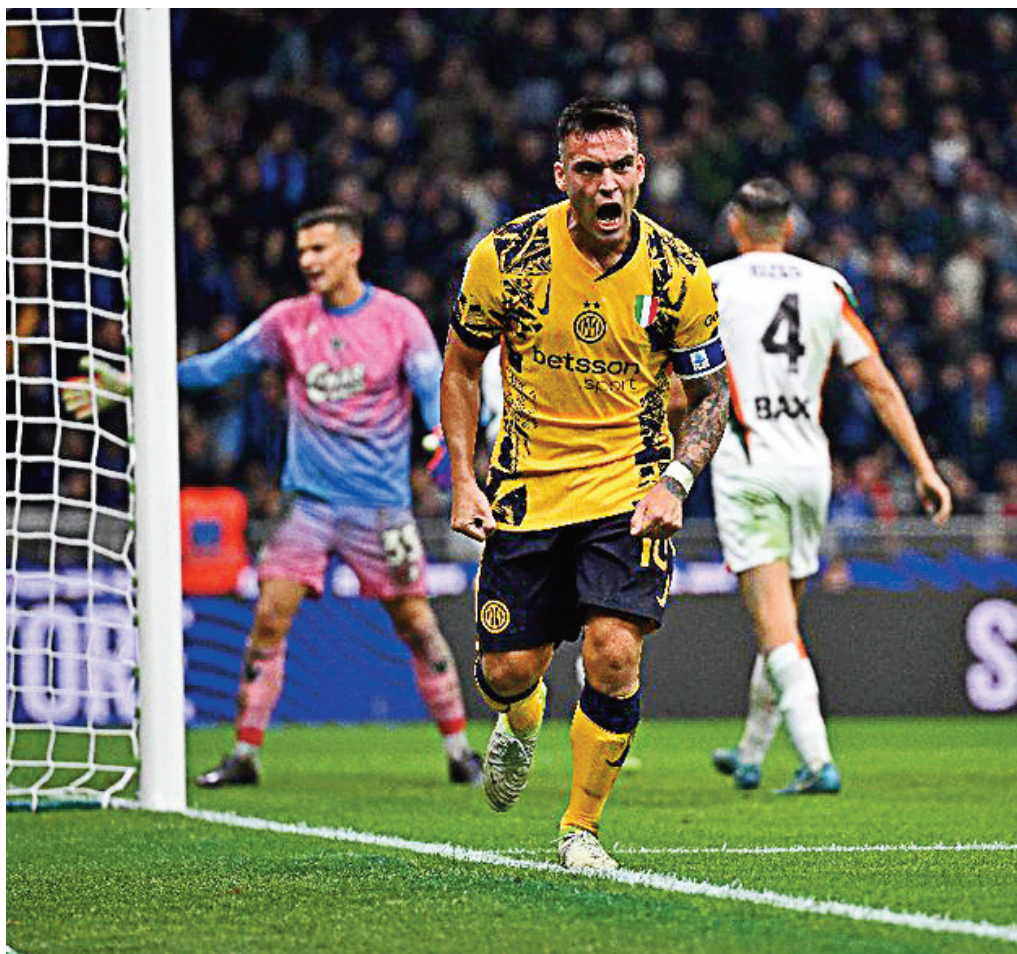
Inter are now in second place in the table with 24 points, one behind leaders Napoli, while Venezia are 18th.

Inter narrowed the gap with the leaders after Napoli suffered a 3-0 home defeat to Atalanta earlier on Sunday.

Captain Martinez broke Venezia's defence after 65 minutes, expertly heading in Federico Dimarco's cross for the breakthrough after a match full of missed chances.

The Argentine striker appeared visibly relieved after scoring his first Serie A goal at home in eight months, with Inter registering 20 shots on goal throughout the match.

"It was about time! I always say that I work for the team, I got two goals wrong in the first half, but I am glad because we took the points home," Martinez told



Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez celebrates after scoring against Venezia

DAZN. After a slow start, both teams raised the tempo before halftime but headed into the break goalless.

Just minutes after the break, Henrikh Mkhitaryan thought he had scored for Inter, only for the goal to be overturned due to an offside.

Inter had opportunities to extend their lead but narrow margins and impressive saves from Venezia's keeper Filip Stankovic kept the scoreline intact.

Fans in San Siro held their breath as Marin Sverko headed in an equaliser for the visitors in the dying seconds of stoppage time but a VAR review revealed a handball and the goal was disallowed, preserving Inter's victory.

"There were zero minutes of added time in the first half, but seven after the break. I think football needs to move forward and we are not doing that," Martinez said.

"Of course, we also have our own blame to take for not killing the game off earlier..."



Simone Inzaghi

My focus right now is on Arsenal, says Inter's Inzaghi

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan manager Simone Inzaghi acknowledged that his side needs to be more effective in front of goal following their narrow Serie A win against Venezia, with the coach expecting more difficult challenges against Arsenal and Napoli.

"We should've been more clinical, but to be honest I congratulated the team because the first half was excellent"

We should've been more clinical, but to be honest I congratulated the team because the first half was excellent

SIMONE INZAGHI



with huge quality, so clearly my focus right now is on Arsenal," Inzaghi said.

The 48-year-old expressed concern about the challenging schedule ahead but felt relieved with the return of key players.

"This is our fifth game in two weeks, there are another two to come against Arsenal and Napoli, but we've got (Hakan) Calhanoglu back and (Francesco) Acerbi will be available on Wednesday too. Carlos Augusto is the only one still out and as a coach I will need everyone."

Inter will next turn their attention to hosting Arsenal in the Champions League on Wednesday, followed by a Serie A home clash against Napoli, who sit one point ahead at the top of the table.

"In two days we are up against one of the best teams in Europe

Mourinho lambasts 'man of the match' VAR

Istanbul, Turkey - Fenerbahce coach Jose Mourinho said the Video Assistant Referee went from being the invisible man to the most important man on the pitch after several controversial decisions went against his side in their 3-2 Super Lig win at Trabzonspor on Sunday.

Trabzonspor were awarded two penalties in the second half following VAR interventions, and with the score tied a 2-2 late in the game Mourinho was incensed when a challenge on Bright Osayi-Samuel went unpunished.

The Portuguese coach suggested the VAR, Atilla

Karaoglan, had missed the incident as he was drinking coffee.

Despite having late penalty claims waved away, the visitors got the win when Sofyan Amrabat scored deep into stoppage time, prompting the former Chelsea, Real Madrid and Manchester United manager to race onto the pitch to celebrate with a knee slide.

"The referee was just a little boy that was there on the pitch, but the referee was Atilla Karaoglan, so man of the match," Mourinho told beIN Sports Turkiye.

"He goes from the invisible man to the most important man



Jose Mourinho

in the match."

Mourinho said Karaoglan should never be involved in officiating another Fenerbahce game.

"Isn't a red card on Bright, Karaoglan was what, drinking coffee at that time, didn't see that red card for that player?" he said.

"He was alert to give the two penalty decisions (to Trabzonspor) when the referee didn't give, then was having Turkish tea when it was a clear penalty for us and didn't give it."

"I think I am speaking on behalf of every Fenerbahce fan, we don't want him again."



Jibril Rajoub

Palestine fighting against all odds in quest for World Cup

Seoul, South Korea - Palestine's quest to qualify for the World Cup finals for the first time underlines the determination to overcome the devastation caused by the Gaza conflict, the president of the Palestinian Football Association (PFA) said.

The PFA faced obstacles to on-field success few other national teams have come up against even before Israel launched its military offensive on Gaza last year in response to an attack by Hamas.

Coach Makram Daboub and his squad, however, have confounded the odds and retain a chance of representing Palestine at the 2026 finals in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"The restrictions on our movement, the suffocating policies by the Israelis have paralysed everything," Jibril Rajoub, the PFA president, said last week. "We suspended everything, including the national league, but in spite of this we have insisted on continuing our participation in competitions, and that includes the World Cup qualification.

"We have a real problem because we could not bring any athletes from Gaza, and tens of them have lost their lives. In Gaza all sport facilities have been destroyed, including most of the clubs, the stadiums and everything are destroyed. In the West Bank, they are suffocating us, we cannot do anything. But this is our determination, our commitment."

Violence has surged in the West Bank since the start of the war in Gaza, with almost daily sweeps by Israeli forces that have involved thousands of arrests and regular gunbattles between security forces and Palestinian fighters.

OLMO PROPELS BARCA

Flick's men ease past Espanyol in derby to extend lead

Barcelona, Spain - LaLiga leaders Barcelona beat Espanyol 3-1 in the Catalan derby on Sunday thanks to a first-half double from Dani Olmo and a goal from Raphinha to extend their unbeaten run over their local rivals to 27 games.

The victory moved Barcelona nine points clear of Real Madrid, who did not play at Valencia this weekend after their match was postponed due to the devastating floods in the region. Espanyol are 17th, a point above the relegation zone.

Barcelona, who thrashed Real Madrid 4-0 last weekend, could have kept another clean sheet but Javi Puado scored for Espanyol, who were unlucky to have two goals chalked off by VAR for marginal offside.

"We're going little by little, it's very important to keep winning. We've come off a good week. Espanyol weren't going to come here and give us anything but we got the three points, so it's mission accomplished," Olmo said.

"We're a side that have a lot of goals, up top and from players in midfield. We decided to play directly and we create a lot of chances in every game."

Barcelona dominated possession from the outset and nearly scored an early goal with a neat



Barcelona's Dani Olmo celebrates his goal against Espanyol

passing move but Olmo's header from the centre of the box went over to give Espanyol a reprieve. Moments later 17-year-old

Lamine Yamal played him through with a sumptuous pass using the outside of his left boot and Olmo fired it home first time

to open the scoring.

Barca's second goal came from another sublime assist from near the centre circle when Marc

Casado's lob over the defence found Raphinha who chipped his shot over the onrushing keeper to make it 2-0.

It's very important to keep winning. Espanyol weren't going to come here and give us anything but we got the three points, so mission accomplished

DANI OLMO

Espanyol thought they had halved the lead when Jofre Carreras found the net from a counter-attack but his strike was ruled out by VAR as right back Omar El Hilali had strayed offside.

Barca then rubbed salt into the wound when an unmarked Olmo found space outside the box and he pulled the trigger, beating the outstretched arm of keeper Joan Garcia to find the back of the net for his fifth LaLiga goal in five games this season.

Olmo had no opportunity to grab a hat-trick when Hansi Flick

withdrew him 10 minutes into the second half, while Espanyol had yet another goal ruled out as Barca's well-oiled offside trap came to their rescue once again.

But Espanyol finally beat the trap and Carlos Romero found Puado, who managed to beat Inaki Pena in Barca's goal.

Barcelona were not as effective in attack in the second half, especially after Olmo's withdrawal, but Flick's side did enough to claim the three points.

"In the first half they were finding each other easily in the middle and they had a shot from outside the box, we changed that and rectified it in the second half," Puado said.

For sure he has what it takes: Simeone praises son Giuliano

Madrid, Spain - Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone praised his son Giuliano's effort to improve himself after the 21-year-old scored his first goal for the club in Sunday's 2-0 LaLiga win over Las Palmas.

Simeone said he was happy to be back to winning ways in the league after a loss at Real Betis last weekend, as third-placed Atletico look to regain momentum in their campaign.

"He's working well, he's training well... it's important for his growth. As long as there is humility, the heart always responds," Simeone told Movistar, while giving credit to Nahuel Molina's pass that led to Giuliano's goal.



Atletico Madrid's Giuliano Simeone celebrates his goal against Las Palmas

He did what he had to do, that's why he is at Atletico. He has a responsibility that has no name, they are footballers

DIEGO SIMEONE

"We are happy, we needed a match that would give us a good feeling. We were able to take the game where we wanted and we were able to win a necessary and important match."

Simeone, however, said he

did not see Giuliano any differently from other players in his squad.

"He did what he had to do, that's why he is at Atletico. He has a responsibility that has no name, they are footballers... those who run play and those who run less, play less," he told a press conference.

"The club didn't spend money to buy a son, he is a boy who was in the youth academy... we believe he can help. He will have good games and bad games, but for sure he has what it takes."

Atletico midfielder Koke also praised Giuliano Simeone, who suffered a broken leg last year.

Gauff, Swiatek win in Riyadh

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - World No. 3 Coco Gauff and No. 2 Iga Swiatek of Poland won their respective opening matches of the Orange Group at the WTA Finals Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

Gauff posted a 6-3, 6-2 victory over No. 6 Jessica Pegula, while Swiatek rallied from a first-set misstep to notch a 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 victory over Wimbledon champion Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic.

Gauff and Swiatek will square off on Tuesday, with the winner taking control of the Orange Group. Swiatek holds a commanding 11-1 head-to-head record against Gauff.

Gauff held a 16-8 edge in winners and converted five of her eight break points to end the match in 75 minutes.

"I thought we both were playing high level," Gauff said. "I just think I was able to break through on the more important



Iga Swiatek

points." Swiatek, in turn, struggled in her first match in two months, falling in the first set and trailing 3-0 in the second before she flipped the switch.

"Even though I played a lot of those (practice) matches," Swiatek said. "I kind of forgot for a while how it is to feel all those things, a bit different

stress and emotions. For sure, I needed some time to adapt. The most important thing was that even though it happened, I managed to fight through that. And was patient enough to wait to get better."

Swiatek broke Krejickova early in the third set and seized a 5-0 lead en route to winning the match.

Zverev bags Paris Masters title

Paris, France - Alexander Zverev of Germany needed just 76 minutes to crush Ugo Humbert 6-2, 6-2 in the final of the Rolex Paris Masters, disappointing the Frenchman on his home turf.

The third seed, Zverev produced 15 winners and nine unforced errors, compared to 12 and 25, respectively, for Humbert.

Zverev also won 91 percent of points on his first serve, 79 percent on his second as he achieved his seventh ATP Masters 1000 title. He lost only five points on his serve and never faced a break.

"I knew I had to play like this to win today," said Zverev, who got his 23rd career win in an ATP Tour final. "Ugo is an incredible player, but here in Paris, he plays even better than he usually does and I knew that. Once the crowd gets involved, it's going to be difficult. So, I had to take that away early, and I did, so I'm happy about that."

"It was not 100 percent guar-



Alexander Zverev celebrates with the Paris Masters title

anteed that I would be back at this level after Roland Garros two years ago, when I basically broke everything possible in my ankle. So, to win this title here in Paris means the world to me, and I'm sure it means everything to those

in my box, because they have done so much for me."

He also has won ATP Masters titles in Rome (twice), Madrid (twice), Cincinnati and Montreal.

Humbert was the first Frenchman since Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in

2011 to reach the Paris final at the Accor Arena in Paris. He did so by defeating Russian Karen Khachanov in a tough three-set semifinal on Saturday.

"It was a beautiful week, despite my defeat today," Humbert said. "My feeling is that I gave it my all. I have no regrets."

"He was stronger than me in every aspect of tennis. I couldn't recover from yesterday's match enough, but congrats to him."

With the win, Zverev will be the second seed at the Nitto ATP Finals, which begin Nov. 10.

Meanwhile, eighth-seeded Alex Michelsen captured a 6-3, 6-1 first-round win over Frenchman Harold Mayot at the Moselle Open in Metz, France.

Michelsen, a 20-year-old native Southern California, recorded seven aces and saved all nine break points against him.

Corentin Motet advanced to the second round when Sumit Nagal of India retired in the second set. Motet was up 7-5, 4-0 at the time.

MAX UNMATCHED

Verstappen blazes to victory from 17th on the grid in Brazil

Sao Paulo, Brazil - Red Bull's Max Verstappen had his fourth Formula One title within reach after a stunning drive to victory from 17th on the grid in Brazil on Sunday dealt a shattering blow to Lando Norris's hopes.

Norris, who started the wet and chaotic Sao Paulo race on pole position and 44 points behind Verstappen, finished sixth for McLaren.

The title gap blew out to 62 points with three rounds remaining and 86 points still to be won.

If results go his way, Verstappen could hit the championship jackpot in the next race down the floodlit Las Vegas Strip on November. 23.

In a crash-strewn race shortened to 69 laps, halted after 33 and re-started, Verstappen took his eighth win of the season -- and one of the best of his career -- by 19.477 seconds and with a bonus point for fastest lap.

"We stayed out of trouble, we made the right calls and stayed calm and we were flying so all of these things together made that result possible," said Verstappen.

"But I mean unbelievable, to win here from so far back on the

grid."

Team boss Christian Horner acclaimed a masterclass of a drive from one of the greats, the win stopping the rot at Red Bull and ending a 10-race losing streak for their Dutch driver dating back to Spain in June.

Amid the mayhem at Interlagos, Alpine took an astonishing

eighth after a 10-second penalty, Liam Lawson ninth for RB and Mercedes's seven-times champion Lewis Hamilton 10th.

Verstappen now has 393 points to Norris's 331, with Leclerc on 307.

McLaren lead the constructors' standings with 593 points to Ferrari's 557.

total of 10,000 euros for tyre pressure breaches.

The day started early, with qualifying held at 0730 local after rain forced a postponement on Saturday.

Verstappen was caught out by red flags in that session, his 12th place on the grid becoming 17th after an engine penalty was applied.

The first race start was aborted when Aston Martin's Lance Stroll went off on the formation lap in treacherous conditions, with Norris then leading some of the cars away before the overhead lights had changed to signal permission to move.

With only two cars behind him on the grid, and Ferrari's Carlos Sainz starting from the pitlane, Verstappen scythed through the field and was 10th after two laps while Norris lost out to Russell at the start.

The virtual safety car was deployed on lap 28, after Haas's Nico Hulkenberg had spun off, with Russell and Norris pitting in increasing rain.

That turned out to be an unfortunate call as Verstappen, Ocon and Gasly stayed out.



Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates with the trophy

We made the right calls and stayed calm and we were flying so all of these things together made that result possible. But I mean unbelievable, to win here from so far back.

MAX VERSTAPPEN

points bonanza with Esteban Ocon second and Pierre Gasly third -- rocketing the Renault-owned team from ninth to sixth in the standings.

"I don't think anyone would have got that on their bingo card, it's just fantastic," said Gasly.

George Russell finished fourth for Mercedes with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc fifth.

Yuki Tsunoda was seventh for RB with McLaren's Oscar Piastri

"It was a tough day, I did my best. I've had a lot of good races, it was about time that something didn't go right," said Norris, who won the Saturday sprint.

He ended the race under investigation for a procedural breach at the start but kept the position after stewards imposed a reprimand and 5,000 euros (\$5,438) fine. Russell received the same punishment.

Mercedes were also fined a

Oman aim for more success after impressive victory against UAE

Muscat - Oman's revamped cricket team, featuring a mix of experienced players and fresh talent, opened its home tri-series in the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 (WCL 2) with a commanding six-wicket victory over UAE.

The win on Friday has set an encouraging tone for Oman, who will now look to secure a second successive win when they face The Netherlands on Tuesday at the Oman Cricket Academy ground.

With head coach Duleep Mendis at the helm, Oman fielded a 'new-look' squad that included four ODI debutants - Muzahir Raza, Ashish Odedara, Hammad Mirza, and Samay Shrivastav.

Though not all debutants are fresh-faced youngsters, their presence has injected a renewed energy and approach to the side. This blend of new and seasoned players proved effective against a more experienced UAE lineup, as Oman clinched an important victory in their ongoing WCL 2 campaign. Oman captain Jatinder Singh's decision to bowl first paid



Man of the match Ashish Odedara receives the award from Madhu Jesrani, Secretary of Oman Cricket

off, as UAE faltered early, finding themselves at 18/2 within the first eight overs. Leg-spinner Shrivastav then turned the screws on UAE's middle order with an impressive spell, taking 4/25, including two wickets in an over that sparked a rapid collapse.

UAE were eventually bundled out for 128 runs in 41.3 overs. Supporting Shrivastav, Shakeel Ahmed picked up 2/22, while Raza, Aamir Kaleem, Jay Odedara, and Karan Sonavale claimed a

wicket each, underscoring Oman's collective strength in bowling.

Oman's chase, however, had its moments of tension. Losing Jatinder Singh early, they found themselves under pressure at 21/3 by the 12th over. But Ashish Odedara's unbeaten 54 off 127 balls anchored the innings. He was ably supported by Hammad Mirza, who contributed a crucial 28, and Mohammad Nadeem, who finished unbeaten on 19.

Oman defeat England in Hong Kong Sixes Bowl Final

Muscat - In a spectacular display of power hitting, Oman cemented their status as one of the premier teams at the 2024 Hong Kong Sixes cricket tournament, defeating England in the 'Bowl Final' held at Mong Kok on Sunday.

Led by Vinayak Shukla, Oman posted their second successive victory over the formidable English side in this year's edition.

Sri Lanka emerged as the tournament champions, defeating Pakistan to secure the coveted 'Cup' title, while Oman claimed an unexpected title in the 'Bowl' competition, which featured teams finishing third in the group stage of the 12-nation tournament.

In the 'Bowl Final', England aimed to avenge a previous defeat to Oman in the group stage of 'Bowl' competition.

Batting first, England posted a score of 123 runs for the loss of just one wicket. Jordan Thompson led the charge with a blistering 55 runs off 18 balls, which included six sixes, while Ravi



Oman players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Hong Kong Sixes Bowl Final

Bopara contributed a rapid 51 runs off just 12 deliveries. Mujibur Ali was the lone wicket-taker for Oman, finishing with figures of 1/7.

In response, Oman's Asif Khan and Vinayak Shukla formed a match-winning partnership, guiding the team to victory with a ball to spare. Asif, named the player of the match, remained unbeaten on 47 runs off 17 balls, while Shukla dazzled with a swift 38 runs off just 12 balls.

It was a memorable event for

Shukla, who emerged as the tournament's top scorer, amassing 275 runs at an impressive average of 137.50 over six innings, while teammate Hassnain Ali boasted the highest strike rate at 415.38. Shukla also won player of the match awards on two occasions. Oman's earlier encounter against England was a highlight of the tournament, where they exhibited a remarkable display of batting packed with punch and power as they smashed 20 sixes in their quota of six overs.

Winning the toss, England opted to send Oman in to bat - a decision that would soon backfire. After a first-ball single, Oman batters launched into action, belting three sixes and a four in the first over, bowled by Ed Barnard.

Shukla was the destroyer-in-chief, launching Jordan Thompson for four consecutive sixes and a boundary off the first five balls of the second over, reaching a remarkable 51 runs off just 10 balls before retiring, as per tournament rules.

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Happy Birthday Akhilesh!



ARTHRITIS DIET

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT



IF YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM ARTHRITIS, HERE'S HOW TO REDUCE YOUR DISCOMFORT BY AVOIDING SOME FOODS AND CONSUMING THE APPROPRIATE ONES

Arthritis, a condition characterised by joint inflammation, can be debilitating. It's not just about managing pain with medication. Diet, too, plays an integral role in the management of this condition.

Some foods can exacerbate arthritis symptoms, whilst others can actually help alleviate them. Let's see why diet is so important if you have arthritis.

The age-old saying, 'You are what you eat', rings especially true for individuals with arthritis. The foods you consume can either be a balm or a bane for your inflamed joints. By understanding what are the arthritis trigger foods that can worsen symptoms and inflammation, you can make strides in managing arthritis more effectively.

Your body needs the right fuel to function optimally. When it comes to arthritis, certain foods can cause inflammation or increase pain, while others can reduce inflammation and provide relief.

Processed foods/sugary treats

A study in 2020 found that people who regularly consumed sweetened drinks had an increased risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis. Soft drinks and processed foods often contain refined sugars, which may trigger inflammation by the release of cytokines and proteins.

As we know, inflammation can worsen arthritis symptoms. Not only that, but they also contribute to weight gain. Obesity and excess body weight are strongly linked to developing osteoarthritis.

Processed and red meats

Studies have found that processed and red

meat intake can cause increased levels of inflammation, worsening joint swelling and symptoms of arthritis.

In comparison, plant-based or vegan diets are full of anti-inflammatory foods and have been found to reduce arthritis symptoms and chronic inflammation.

Foods high in purines

For those people diagnosed with gout, your doctor or rheumatologist may recommend you avoid foods that contain purines. Purines are transformed into uric acid once consumed, and an accumulation of uric acid can lead to a gout flare-up. Foods rich in purine include organ meats, beer and other alcoholic beverages, preserved meats like ham, bacon or deli slices, and some seafood such

as mussels and scallops.

Fats and fried foods

Not all fats are created equal. Whilst you do need some good fats, such as avocados, olive oil and nuts, a diet high in Omega-6 fatty acids, saturated fat and trans fats can actually worsen inflammation and your overall health. These 'bad' fats are often found in butter, cheese, meat, fried foods and processed foods.

Alcohol

Alcohol and arthritis can be a hot debate. Some say it protects against developing arthritis, others say it makes symptoms worse. It has been found that moderate alcohol consumption may reduce inflammation, and,

therefore, your risk of arthritis.

However, once diagnosed with arthritis, you should limit your intake. Alcohol could interact with your medications, cause a gout attack or make your pain worse.

Beneficial foods

It's not all about eliminating foods you may love though, there are some delicious (and nutritious) foods that have anti-inflammatory properties and can help alleviate arthritis symptoms. These include fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, trout), green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, Swiss chard), nuts and seeds (almonds, walnuts, and flaxseeds), berries (blueberries, strawberries, and cherries), and olive oil

(Courtesy: arthritiscare.com.au)



NUTRITION & YOU



Holistic approach to boost immunity

In today's world, where environmental pollution, adulteration, use of ultra processed foods is so common that maintaining a strong immune system becomes a priority. Here, only one approach will not work, it is the holistic approach which is needed to boost our immune health.

Let's first understand, what do we mean by Holistic health approach. This not only focuses on use of medicines and food supplements, but in addition, considers the overall well-being, which includes body and mind, and emphasises prevention through lifestyle and natural therapies.

Let's consider some key strategies to support immune function:

Balanced Nutrition

A diet rich in whole foods, particularly fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, is the foundation of a strong immune system. Key nutrients that support immune health are:

- **Vitamin C** - Found in citrus fruits,

- bell peppers, and berries, this nutrient helps boost the immune response. As a powerful antioxidant, it strengthens the body's defence system. By supporting various immune mechanisms, like antimicrobial activities of WBC, vitamin C is a key player in the immune system. In addition, it also helps in reducing the risk of chronic diseases. A great friend of iron, helping in its absorption, vitamin C, along with iron, keeps the immune system strong.
- **Vitamin D** - Found in fatty fish, fortified foods, and from sunlight exposure, this vitamin functions as an immune booster and its deficiency is linked to immune disorders and increased risk of infections. Vitamin D not only helps the body to fight infection but also helps in early recovery.
- **Zinc** - Found in seeds, nuts, and legumes, this nutrient is essential for immune cell function. It is crucial in the prevention and management of viral infections. It exhibits antiviral activity and its supplementation has shown positive impact on the immune system.
- **Antioxidants** - Antioxidants are molecules that can help the body fight off harmful free radicals, which have been linked to many diseases, by providing resistance

against infectious microbes such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Many vitamins, like A, C, E, are powerful antioxidants that keep the immune system strong. Polyphenols in green tea, berries, and dark chocolate help reduce oxidative stress and inflammation.

- **Probiotics** - Fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, kimchi, etc support gut health, which is crucial for immune function, as a large portion of the immune system resides in the gut.

Adequate Sleep

Sleep is essential for immune health. During sleep, the body repairs and regenerates, and immune cells are more active. Chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to increased inflammation and reduced immunity. Try getting 7-8 hours good sleep for better immune health.

Stress Management

Chronic stress suppresses the immune system by increasing the release of cortisol, a stress hormone that inhibits immune function. Stress

management techniques like meditation, yoga, deep breathing exercises, and mindfulness can significantly reduce stress and improve immune health. Also, indulging in a hobby of one's choice is another way of keeping stress at bay.

Physical Activity

Regular moderate exercise enhances the immune system function by promoting circulation, which helps immune cells move more effectively throughout the body. Health experts recommend minimum 150 minutes of active exercise per week to keep one in good health. Activities like walking, swimming, jogging, cycling or yoga are great options for boosting immune health, without causing excessive stress on the body.

Hydration

Staying well-hydrated is key to overall health, including immune function. Water not only helps eliminate toxins from the body but also supports the circulation of immune cells. Try taking at least 8-10 glasses of water per day, which can be in the form of infused water, soups, vegetable juices, laban, chaas, or even herbal teas like ginger or turmeric, which have anti-inflammatory properties.

Herbal and natural supplements

Several herbs and natural supplements are known to support the immune system. This includes, echinacea, turmeric, honey, ginger, and garlic. All these have some powerful phytochemicals that help in both, preventing and fighting, infection.

Minimising toxins

Avoiding environmental toxins, such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, is crucial for immune health. These habits can weaken the immune system and increase susceptibility to infections.

Positive social connections

Maintaining sense of community, working for higher goals and ideals has been shown to keep one happy and calm. This, in-turn, can positively affect immune function.

To conclude, it's not just one approach that will help, but it is the combination of all the approaches mentioned above that work towards building a strong immune system. The focus is on balancing the body and mind. By prioritising nutrition, sleep, stress management, physical activity, and incorporating natural remedies, one can boost immunity and promote overall well-being.



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

INTENSE WORKOUTS

WEEKEND WARRIORS

TAKING UP INTENSE WORKOUTS ON WEEKENDS MAY BE AS GOOD AS WORKING OUT THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, AS PER A NEW STUDY. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS DEVOTE 150 MINUTES OF EXERCISE OVER TWO DAYS

No time to even think about a workout on weekdays? So what is your excuse on weekends? While some people stay physically inactive all year round, others take at least 30-40 minutes to sweat it out but if you only get time on weekends, try to make the most of it. Turns out, cramming adequate exercise into your weekend can still reduce disease risk. If you can compensate for the lost workout during the weekends on two days you get off, you can still be healthy. Weekend warrior workout is easy to incorporate into your life, and you get the same health benefits as people who are regularly active, as per a new study.

Who is a weekend warrior?

A weekend warrior is someone who engages in physical activities, like exercising



or sports, mainly on the weekends, rather than spreading them throughout the week. They usually have busy schedules during weekdays (e.g., work or family responsibilities), making it difficult to exercise regularly. "Weekend warriors often engage in intense, longer sessions of physical activities to compensate for the lack of exercise during the weekdays," says fitness expert Yash Agarwal. Also, a new study points out that doing weekend warrior workout can lower disease risk. The study, published in the Circulation journal in September 2024, found that weekend warriors had a lower risk of developing over 200 diseases compared to inactive people. The list of diseases included hypertension, diabetes, kidney disease, and mood disorders. Those who managed to do at least 150 minutes of exercise were labelled as regular exercisers if their workout routine was spread out. Weekend warriors came under the category of people who crammed their 150 minutes of exercises into just one or two days in a week. Participants who did less than 150 minutes of exercises a week came under the inactive group. The study, which had nearly 90,000 participants, showed that the total amount of exercise people got was more important than how frequently they worked out. Another study, published in August 2024 in 'Nature Aging', showed that the weekend warrior workout pattern was associated with lower risks of stroke, dementia, Parkinson's disease, and depressive disorders. So, if you are a weekend warrior, make sure that at least 150 minutes of exercises are well spread over the weekend. You would need to exercise for about one to two hours on Saturdays and Sundays, that's all. (Courtesy: healthshots.com)

WHAT TO DO

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| RUNNING | PUSH-UPS |
| JUMPING | LUNGES |
| JACKS | BURPEES |
| SQUATS | JUMP ROPE |
| PLANKS | DEADLIFTS |
| MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS | |

Positive Vision Association

Breaking the silence on substance abuse in Oman

Substance abuse is an escalating issue in Oman, especially among youth aged 21 to 40. Drugs like heroin and amphetamines are becoming increasingly accessible, with social media playing a significant role in this change. Platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram have transformed how drugs are distributed, allowing transactions to be made discreetly and anonymously, often without the need for direct interactions.

One individual struggling with addiction shared, "Ten years ago, we had to physically meet the dealer, which was risky and time-consuming. Now, through apps like WhatsApp, it's as simple as sending a message, getting a location pin, and picking up the drugs. It's quick and secretive, with fewer risks of being caught."

While online platforms have created new challenges in tackling substance abuse, authorities are employing more advanced methods to monitor these digital spaces. According to sources, law enforcement agencies continue to closely watch social media networks, often posing as dealers to intercept illegal transactions. However, the secrecy and technological features provided by these platforms, such as message deletion and location sharing, make it more difficult for officials to detect and stop such activities.



Recent statistics show the growing severity of the problem. In 2022, over 2,994 drug-related offences were recorded, with the majority of cases occurring in Muscat, accounting for 62% of reported incidents. Oman's Ministry of Health reports that the age group most affected is between 21 and 40, with the majority of cases involving individuals with low educational backgrounds or those unemployed.

Efforts are being made on the healthcare front as well. A new detoxification centre, funded by PDO, will soon provide 130 beds for both men and women - an essential step forward, as current

facilities only have 20 beds dedicated to detox. This development will significantly enhance the capacity to treat individuals seeking recovery.

If you or someone you know is impacted by substance abuse, Positive Vision Oman (PVA) offers support. PVA provides peer-led education programmes, guidance, and community outreach to help individuals and families navigate the journey toward recovery.

(Watch out for this monthly column on the first Tuesday of every month for an inspirational read on the subject.)

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