

Unified national system for skill development soon

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) is working to centralise talent development efforts across the public and private sectors. The strategic move aims to bridge the gap between educational qualifications and labour market requirements, thereby fortifying the nation's human capital to meet the demands of an upcoming industrial shift.

Details of the initiative were unveiled at the two-day Capacity Building and Talent Management Conference, which commenced on Sunday at Grand Millennium Hotel. The conference, a collaborative venture between MoL and Al Assayel for Conferences Company, was inaugurated by Ibrahim bin Said al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam.

Featuring a panel of renowned experts and policy makers from diverse fields, including human resources, higher education and youth development, the conference will delve into the socio-economic ramifications of enhancing workforce skills and aptitude.

In his keynote address, H E Sayyid Salem bin Musallam al Busaidi, Undersecretary for



Effective talent management has a crucial role in charting any organisation's trajectory. Modern businesses rely heavily on robust talent management frameworks to steer growth

DR ZAMZAM BINT SAIF AL LAMKIYA

Human Resource Development in MoL, spoke of Oman's efforts in nurturing talent. "For nations vying for a place on the global stage, investing in talent isn't just desirable, it's a necessity," he asserted. Highlighting the timely nature of the conference, he further remarked on the increas-

ingly significant role of human capital in the modern era. Investing in human resources, he noted, brings benefits that far exceed initial expenses, paving the way for national and global progress.

Central to the Oman Vision 2040 objectives is the National

Capacity-Building and Talent Management System. This digital platform will function as a hub, providing aptitude assessments, skill enhancement programmes and training modules.

Dr Zamzam bint Saif al Lamkiya, Director of National Capacity-Building and Talent Management System, pointed to the fragmentation of existing capacity-building and talent development programmes. While these yield positive results, the lack of a cohesive approach affects the long-term viability of these. "The objectives of Oman Vision

2040," Zamzam elaborated, "include amalgamation of these diverse programmes, aiming for a unified national skill development system, aligning Oman's HR endeavours with international benchmarks and enhancing our global competitive position."

Emphasising the significance of effective talent management in today's volatile business landscape, Zamzam highlighted its crucial role in charting any organisation's trajectory. "Modern businesses rely heavily on robust talent management frameworks to steer their growth."

Tailored to cater to Oman's unique demands, the conference will shed light on global and regional benchmarks in talent nurturing. H E Busaidi expressed hope that the deliberations would set new standards, marrying educational qualifications with the needs of the labour sector and strengthening Oman's human resources framework.

The conference will address various aspects of talent management, from foundational criteria to the influence of pre-university education in skill identification, all geared towards augmenting Oman's global standing in talent and skill evolution in sync with the tenets of Oman Vision 2040.

Oman steps up efforts against human trafficking

Our Correspondent
Muscat



H E Khalifa al Harthy

The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT) unveiled the second edition of its national campaign - 'Insan' - on Sunday. The drive aims to raise awareness on human trafficking and international agreements linked to it. It further underscores Oman's ongoing commitment and efforts to counter and curb this phenomenon.

Spanning two months, the campaign will reach out to the entire spectrum of society, presenting multilingual awareness messages in Arabic, English, Urdu, Bengali and Filipino. Prominent displays of these messages can be seen on street billboards, digital screens at Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport, and across various online platforms, including websites and social media. Additionally, a series of events, workshops, lectures, newspaper articles and other media appearances are slated to amplify its reach.

At the launch event, H E Khalifa al Harthy, Undersecretary for Political Affairs in Foreign Ministry and Chairman of NCCHT, emphasised the shared responsibility - both nationally and globally - in mitigating this menace. "Tackling this issue requires a

unified international front, collaborating diligently with all stakeholders," he stated.

Reiterating NCCHT's commitment to international and regional treaties and agreements on combating human trafficking, H E Harthy said, "Our efforts, in alliance with national partners and international allies, aim to combat and deter human trafficking, reinforce the rule of law and preserve human values."

Highlighting the campaign's renewed focus, H E Harthy said, "This iteration will bolster societal awareness, equipping individuals with the tools to identify, report and understand the implications of trafficking activities. It seeks active participation of the community in addressing trafficking incidents."

According to the undersecretary, Oman remains deeply invested in enhancing societal consciousness regarding human trafficking.

Project for brown mussel farming begins in Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In an effort to increase fish production and advance food security, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has inaugurated a pioneering pilot project dedicated to farm brown mussels in Dhofar.

Salim Ahmed al Ghassani, Director of Dhofar Fisheries Research Centre, told Muscat Daily, "Our new endeavour, the Brown Mussels Culture Project, is centred around studying growing mussels in Taqah and Mirbat." The initiative, supported by the Agriculture and Fisheries Development Fund, kicked off in March 2022 and will continue till March 2024.

Elaborating on the project, Ghassani said, "Our research team has conducted experiments in four distinct areas of Taqah and Mirbat, utilising the long-line culture system, to gauge the growth rate of these cultured brown mussels."

Highlighting the natural presence of this species, he said, "Mussel habitats stretch from Dhalkut to Sharbithat in Dhofar. We've undertaken comprehensive field surveys to pinpoint the distribution and prevalence of these mussels."

Delving deeper into the species' significance, Ghassani said, "The brown mussel - *Perna perna* and locally known as 'fethik' or 'fathik' - are found on the shores of Oman, especially from South Sharqiyah to Dhofar. Considered a delicacy, particularly in Dhofar, these mussels not only satiate palates but also fortify diets with protein, vital vitamins and essential fatty acids like Omega-3."



Detailing the farming process, he said, "Typically, mussels and other bivalves are farmed using seeds or juveniles, either sourced from specialised hatcheries or extracted from natural habitats with spat collectors. Once collected, these seeds, measuring around 2.5-3cm, are fastened to ropes suspended from primary ropes buoyed by floats. The juvenile mussels are nurtured in the sea until they attain a marketable size of approximately 6-7cm."

The research project's objectives, he informed, include studying the distribution of mussel beds along Dhofar's coast, analysing monthly growth rates, determining the duration to attain market-ready size, and refining farming methods.

"As Oman positions itself at the forefront of sustainable fisheries, such ventures underscore its commitment to a thriving and self-sufficient seafood industry."

NATURE'S ALCHEMY: MESMERISING SALT POOLS OF KHOR AL MILH



The breathtaking Khor al Milh in Quriyat, Muscat governorate, is spread over 2,000sqm and renowned for traditional, natural salt extraction. With increased evaporation in summer, salt crystals shimmer in the lagoon while heaps await packaging for local markets (ONA)

317 from Oman register to send their names to Jupiter

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Are you interested in sending a personal message to Jupiter? The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of USA is giving the public an opportunity of a lifetime to send their names in a spacecraft some 2.8bn km away.

NASA's 'Message in a Bottle' campaign is inviting the public to add their names to a microchip that will accompany a poem by US Poet Laureate Ada Limón to Jupiter's moon Europa on the Europa Clipper mission in 2024.



The campaign, designed to spark global interest in space exploration, also allows participants to create personalised souvenirs and encourages social media engagement.

"Join the mission and have your name engraved on NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft as it

travels 1.8bn miles to explore Europa, an ocean world that may support life. Sign your name today..." NASA said in its message to the public.

By September 3, 499,542 individuals had already registered for the Message in a Bottle campaign, including 317 from Oman.

US is leading with 152,477 registrations, followed by India (66,270) and Iran (34,585).

The poem written by Ada connects the two water worlds - Earth, yearning to reach out and understand what makes a world habitable, and Europa, waiting with secrets yet to be explored.

The campaign is a special collaboration, uniting art and science, by NASA, the US Poet Laureate and the Library of Congress. The poem - *In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa* - will be engraved on NASA's robotic Europa Clipper spacecraft, along with participants' names that will

be etched onto microchips mounted on the spacecraft.

Europa Clipper is set to launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in October 2024, and by 2030, it will be in orbit around Jupiter. Over several years, it will conduct dozens of flybys of Jupiter's icy moon Europa, gathering detailed measurements to determine if the moon has conditions suitable for life.

Sensitive electronics for NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft will be enclosed in an aluminum-zinc alloy vault to protect the electronics from Jupiter's intense radiation belts.

MARKET WATCH

MSX304,774.54

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian	214.13
Pakistan	796.29
Bangladesh	284.08
Philippines	147.01
Sri Lanka	832.09

*Rates as on September 03

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

ECB close to 'rates peak'

The European Central Bank (ECB) is "close to the peak" of its inflation-fighting interest rate increases, Bank of France governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau said Friday.

While eurozone central bankers' "options are open" between further rate rises or holding steady at their next meeting on September 14, "we are close or very close to the peak of our interest rates," ECB Governing Council member Villeroy told journalists.

The Frankfurt institution began rate increases in July last year to tame soaring inflation in the 20-nation eurozone, with eight hikes so far bringing them to 3.75% - a level not seen since 2001.

Minutes from the governors' last meeting in July showed that they considered holding firm but ultimately decided on a 0.25% raise.

EU statistics agency Eurostat said Thursday that price growth held steady at 5.3 percent in August.

Oman LNG signs 14 new gas supply agreements in 2023

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its ongoing global marketing campaign, Oman LNG Company has signed as many as 14 new binding long-term gas supply agreements since the beginning of this year, according to the company's CEO.

Oman LNG has succeeded in marketing its LNG supplies beyond 2024 and was able to attract investors from new markets in the Middle East, East Asia, and Europe.

Under these 14 new term-sheet agreements signed with international energy companies from Japan, Thailand, China, Turkey, Germany, and Bangladesh, Oman LNG is committed to supplying a total of 10.4mn metric tonnes of LNG annually, starting from 2025, Hamed bin Mohammed al Naamany, CEO of Oman LNG, said in a statement to Oman News Agency.

The success of Oman LNG's marketing campaign is attributed to the production efficiency at the company's facilities in Sur and investors' confidence in the company's operations. Oman LNG operates three liquefaction trains at its site in Qalhat near Sur.

Naamany explained that the



Oman LNG operates three liquefaction trains at its site in Qalhat near Sur



These agreements come within the framework of Oman LNG's endeavour to consolidate the sultanate's position as a reliable source of energy

HAMED AL NAAMANY

new agreements come within the framework of the company's endeavour to consolidate Oman's position as a reliable source of energy, increase growth opportunities, benefit from the economic opportunities of global energy markets, and consolidate strategic partnerships with various energy companies.

"These agreements confirm

Oman LNG's commitment to supporting the national economy by finding new markets to supply liquefied natural gas from Oman, and it looks forward to strengthening its relations with the public and private sectors," he added.

Last week, Oman LNG signed two term-sheet agreements to supply over 1.5mn metric tonnes of LNG annually. The company signed binding term-sheet

agreements to supply 0.8mn metric tonnes per year of LNG to Shell International Trading Middle East FZE and 0.75mn metric tonnes per year to OQ Trading.

These new agreements strengthen the strategic partnership between Oman LNG and other international energy firms.the first five months of 2023.

Abu Dhabi airport to complete expansion in November

Dubai, UAE - An airport terminal able to handle up to 45mn passengers a year will open in Abu Dhabi in November, state media said, accelerating competition in the crowded Gulf market.

Terminal A in the oil-rich UAE capital, touted as one of the world's biggest, will be able to accommodate 11,000 travellers per hour and 79 aircraft at a time, according to WAM news agency.

The new facility, also known as Midfield Terminal Building, "is scheduled to begin operations in early November 2023", WAM said, as the UAE anticipates a surge in arrivals for the United Nations' COP28 climate talks in Dubai in November and December.

The terminal is opening at a time when neighbouring Saudi Arabia is rapidly expanding its airport capacity after announcing a giant new hub in Riyadh which will take up to 120mn travellers by 2030 and 185mn by 2050.

"Covering 742,000 square meters of built-up area, Terminal A is among the largest airport terminals in the world," WAM said.

Abu Dhabi's 10mn passengers in the first half of this year pales against the traffic in next-door emirate Dubai, a major aviation hub that welcomed 41.6mn over the same period.

AFF

MSX winning streak continues for third month

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) continued its winning streak for the third consecutive month during August. The MSX 30 Index witnessed a marginal gain of 0.5% during August 2023, closing the month at 4,799.0 points, recording its third consecutive monthly gain.

However, the MSX30 Index on Sunday dropped by 0.51% to close at 4774.54 points.

Four out of seven stock exchanges in the GCC reported declines during August. However, the MSX emerged as the second-best performing market after the Dubai Financial Market, which recorded a 0.6% gain during August, according to a report issued by Kuwait-based Kamco Investment.

In terms of sectoral performance, only one out of the three sector indices on the Omani exchange recorded a gain during August.

The Financial Index recorded the only monthly gain among the



indices, registering a 0.1% increase during the month, mainly driven by the share price growth of a bulk of the companies in the sector, such as Al Madina Investment Holding (up 7.3%), Bank Nizwa (up 5.3%), and Oman Arab Bank (up 3.6%). The monthly gain of these heavy-weight companies lifted the sector index as well as the general index into the green.

In comparison, the Industrial Index registered a 1.7% monthly

fall during August, while the Services Index witnessed a 0.6% dip during the month.

In terms of company performance, Oman Chromite topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 14.4%, followed by Renaissance Services and Takaful Oman Insurance with 10.5% and 10.0% monthly share gains, respectively. On the decliner's side, Dhofar Insurance led the league with a 15.5% share price fall, followed by Ahlibank and Al Anwar

Ceramic Tiles, which witnessed a share price drop of 12.5% and 11.8%, respectively.

Trading activity on the MSX was mixed during the month, in line with most of the markets in the GCC. The total volume of shares traded on the exchange declined by 6.0% to 217.2mn shares, compared to 231mn in July. On the other hand, the total value traded on the MSX increased by 15.1% to RO55.3mn against RO48mn.

Omantel topped the monthly value traded chart with trades at RO14.8mn, followed by Bank Muscat and Ooredoo Oman, with a total value traded at RO12.9mn and RO7.8mn, respectively.

GCC markets decline

GCC equity markets witnessed their first decline in three months, taking cues from the worst monthly performance in the global equity markets this year.

Despite a second-half recovery, the MSCI World index was down 3.6% during August after a hawkish US Fed led to fears of higher, longer rates. Weak data coming from China also affected sentiments across the board, exacerbated by the probability of a continued rate hike by the ECB in September.

According to Kamco Investment, the MSCI GCC Index witnessed a slightly steeper decline of 3.8% during the month, led by a fall in four out of seven exchanges, including in Saudi Arabia.

Renaissance awarded RO2.7mn contract by SQU Hospital

Muscat - Renaissance Services, the leading accommodation, services solutions and integrated facilities management (IFM) company in Oman, has been awarded a RO2.7mn contract by Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH).

The contract is for the provision of catering services to patients and their companions for a two-year period starting in January 2024, according to a press release.

Stephen R Thomas, CEO of Renaissance Services, said, "Meeting the nutrition and dietary needs of patients is an integral part of patient care and well-being. We are honoured and proud to be selected by SQUH for this prestigious contract at the nation's premier teaching hospital, with its reputation for adherence to highest interna-

tional standards."

Renaissance Services, which is ISO 22000 certified for its food safety management system, has more than 32 years of experience in food services and serves over 15mn meals annually at more than 50 hospitals across Oman.

Committed to delivering sustainable services with enhanced in-country value (ICV), the company is one of the largest employers of Omanis in the sultanate's private sector with around 2,500 Omani employees.

Renaissance expects the SQUH contract to further its objectives of generating employment opportunities for nationals and amplifying the use of locally-sourced goods and services within its supply chain, in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Sri Lanka records lowest inflation since crisis

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Inflation in crisis-hit Sri Lanka eased to 4.0% in August, the lowest since before last year's unprecedented financial crisis, official figures showed.

The island nation endured months of food, fuel and medicine shortages after a foreign exchange crunch that sparked widespread protests culminating in the ouster of its president.

But the crisis has since eased, with headline inflation down from 6.3% in July and 69.8% at its peak last September.

Sri Lanka's central bank has said it expects the figure to continue its downward trend in the

medium-term.

The country defaulted on its \$46bn foreign debt last year but secured a four-year, \$2.9bn bailout from the International Monetary Fund in March.

An IMF team is due in Colombo this month to review Sri Lanka's progress in repairing its ruined finances and to decide on releasing another \$330 million loan tranche.

The international lender of last resort has said Sri Lanka's economy showed "tentative signs of improvement" but warned Colombo still needed to pursue further painful reforms.

AFF

Iraq, IFC agree to modernise Baghdad airport

Baghdad, Iraq - Iraq signed an agreement Sunday with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation to modernise Baghdad's international airport after years of neglect in the war-scarred country.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani's government signed the agreement with the IFC, which pledged to "harness private sector capital and expertise" to upgrade Iraq's main airport.

The IFC will present "a comprehensive investment portfolio for the expansion, financing, operation and maintenance of Baghdad International Airport," said a statement from the office of Sudani, who attended the



signing ceremony.

The project aims to "enhance its facilities, safety measures and overall services, aligning with global airport standards, facilitated by a specialised international firm," the statement

added.

The IFC said that "upon the government's approval, the project will move to tender stage to attract private investors and operators".

Baghdad's airport has under-

gone no substantial renovations since it opened in the early 1980s when dictator Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq.

Its three terminals are outdated and equipped with only basic amenities, and the facility and its staff quickly become overwhelmed when travel peaks during Shiite religious pilgrimages.

In late 2022, two fires erupted at the airport just three days apart, without causing any casualties. Sudani dismissed three airport officials after the incidents.

Baghdad Airport was closed in the 1990s due to international sanctions, forcing travellers to take the road to Amman in neighbouring Jordan to catch their

flights.

Troops belonging to the international coalition against the Islamic State group are still stationed in a part of the airport and sporadically come under fire.

In January 2022, a rocket attack damaged two empty planes on the tarmac.

In April, the government allocated \$500,000 to the Civil Aviation Authority to negotiate a contract with the IFC, the leading international development institution focused on boosting the private sector in emerging countries. The IFC has committed \$1.2bn to supporting Iraq's private sector since 2005, added the statement.

AFF

EU imports of LNG from Russia hit record levels

Brussels, Belgium – The European Union's (EU) liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports from Russia reached record levels with a total of 13.2bn cubic meters from January to July this year, according to data compiled by Anadolu Agency.

EU countries, who collectively set a target to reduce dependence on Russian energy in the next few years, have also become Russia's biggest customer in LNG, according to the international non-governmental organisation Global Witness and the Energy and Clean Air Research Center (CREA).

The share of EU countries in Russia's LNG exports was 39% in the January-July period of 2021. It increased from 49% in 2022 to 52% in 2023.

Thus, EU countries bought more than half of Russian LNG exports despite the Russia-Ukraine war.

The EU imported 9bn cubic meters of LNG during the same period of 2021, before the Russia-Ukraine war, marking a 46.6% increase in 2023.

For its LNG imports in the 7 months of 2023, EU countries paid Russia about 5.3bn.

During the period, 18% of Russia's total LNG sales were made to Spain and 17% to Belgium.

The EU's annual LNG import



capacity is estimated at 157bn cubic meters. Although this capacity is sufficient to meet approximately 40% of the EU's total gas demand, infrastructure limitations in various parts of Europe prevent LNG from being transferred to all countries.

Before the war, the EU imported 40% of its natural gas from Russia. With the war, Russia's share in natural gas shipments to the EU fell to 8%.

Under the EU's new energy strategy, outlined last year, the

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EU plans to end its dependence on Russian fossil fuel sources by 2027. However, the increase in the EU's LNG imports from Russia revealed the inconsistency with the set target.

Russia's fossil fuel revenues total over 400bn

Since the beginning of the war on February 24, 2022, Russia has earned a total of 413bn from fossil fuel exports.

Of this revenue, 277bn came from oil sales, 101bn from natural gas and 35bn from coal sales.

EU countries have bought fossil fuels from Russia for around 162bn since the beginning of the war. Of this, 3.4bn was paid for coal, 64bn for natural gas and 94.6bn euros for oil.

Meanwhile, natural gas shipments from Russia to European countries through pipelines declined drastically. Before the war, Russia sold 150bn cubic meters of natural gas per year to Europe. Natural gas sales fell to around 60bn cubic meters last year.

Anadolu Agency



China's economy grew 6.3% in the second quarter

China factory activity drops in August

Beijing, China – China's factory activity contracted for a fifth straight month in August, official data showed, as pressure mounts on Beijing to offer more policy support to bolster its sluggish economy.

The reading is the latest to indicate the nation's post-Covid recovery is running off the tracks owing to a decline in overseas demand as well as a drop-off in consumption at home.

The official manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) – a key measure of factory output – came in at 49.7 in August, below the 50-point mark that separates expansion and contraction, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Still, the reading was slightly higher than the July reading and also beat forecasts.

The non-manufacturing PMI, which includes activity in the

construction and services sectors, fell to 51.0, from 51.5 in July, according to NBS data.

Lukewarm demand for exports, a slump in the property market and high rates of youth unemployment have raised concerns about the economic slowdown in China.

"The survey results show that insufficient market demand remains a major problem facing enterprises today," NBS analyst Zhao Qinghe said in a statement. "The foundations for the recovery and development of the manufacturing industry needs to be consolidated."

A string of weak indicators this year have ramped up pressure on authorities to introduce measures to kickstart growth in the world's number two economy as the initial burst of activity in the first few months after the lifting of Covid rules fades.

AFP

US revises down Q2 GDP growth to 2.1%

Washington, US – Economic growth in the United States was weaker than first estimated for the April to June period, the Commerce Department said, noting downward revisions in business investment.

GDP growth in the world's biggest economy came in at 2.1% for the second quarter, down from the initial estimate of 2.4% released in July.

The updated growth figure is still slightly above the pace in the first three months of 2023, but could be encouraging to policymakers who have been seeking to cool the economy.

Economists have been warning of a possible downturn as the US central bank rapidly lifted interest rates to tamp down demand and lower inflation.

But the economy has proven more resilient than anticipated, boosting hopes of a "soft landing" where inflation comes down without triggering a recession.

"The updated estimates primarily reflected downward revisions to private inventory investment and nonresidential fixed investment," the Commerce Department said.

This was "partly offset by an upward revision to state and local government spending."

While the acceleration in GDP growth from the first to second quarter this year was mainly driven by investment shifts, official data noted a downturn in exports and slowdown in consumer spending as well.

AFP

US inflation measure ticks up in July

Washington, US – A key US inflation measure used by the Federal Reserve to set interest rates rose in July, due largely to another jump in the cost of services, according to government data.

The figure maintains the pressure on the US central bank as it looks to bring inflation firmly back down to its long-term target of two per cent through a series of interest rate hikes.

Analysts and traders largely expect the Fed to hold its benchmark lending rate steady at its next meeting on September 19-20. Fed officials haven't ruled out raising rates again in future.

The annual personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index rose 3.3% in July, up from a two-year low of 3% a month earlier, the Commerce



The annual US personal consumption expenditures price index rose 3.3% in July

Department announced in a statement.

The move was fueled by an increase in the price of services, which recorded a 12-month rise of 5.2% - in stark contrast with the price of goods, which de-

creased 0.5%.

"Large items, such as vehicles, are more susceptible to rate hikes and are finally cooling in price in response to a surge in financing costs," KPMG US Chief Economist Diane Swonk wrote

in a public note.

Core PCE, excluding volatile food and energy costs, also ticked up in July to an annual rate of 4.2.

Month-over-month, PCE increased by 0.2%, as it did in

June. Personal income, meanwhile, increased at a monthly rate of 0.2%.

"The data bear watching for a reversal of progress on inflation although our estimates suggest prices pressures will ease over the remainder of the year," Rubeela Farooqi, High Frequency Economics' chief US economist, wrote in a note to clients.

While most analysts and traders expect the Fed to hold rates steady in September, the rise in July PCE data raises the risk of a rebound in inflation this year, which would put pressure on the Fed to hike rates again.

In June, Fed officials indicated they expected that two additional rate hikes would be needed this year to tame inflation.

AFP

US chip giant Nvidia rides AI wave as profits surge 843%

San Francisco, US – US chip giant Nvidia, whose products play a crucial role in artificial intelligence systems, crushed expectations last week, as the post-ChatGPT AI frenzy continues to lift the tech sector.

The Silicon Valley-based company said sales doubled year-on-year to \$13.5bn in the latest completed quarter, leaving a net profit of \$6.2bn – an eye-watering 843% higher than a year before.

Signaling that the boom in AI is still going strong, Nvidia said revenue in the current quarter would ramp up further to \$16bn.

"A new computing era has begun," Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said after the stellar earnings report.

"Together accelerated computing and generative AI are driving a broad based computer industry platform shift. Our demand is tremendous," he said on an analyst call.

This year, the company's share price has more than tripled.

Nvidia's quintessential position in delivering artificial intelligence has made it a bellwether on the generative AI frenzy that took hold of the tech world after the release of ChatGPT late last year.

As the wave began to build, the company already wowed Wall Street with spectacular earnings earlier in the year, helping transform Nvidia into a trillion dollar company based on market capitalisation, a rare perch shared only by a handful of giants.

"The entire tech sector and overall market was waiting for Nvidia with this being the purest and best barometer for AI demand," said Dan Ives of Wedbush Securities.

In the end, the earnings "were a 'drop the mic' moment that will have a ripple impact for the tech



Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang speaks during a press conference at the Computex 2023 in Taipei on May 30, 2023 (AFP)

space for the rest of the year," he said.

Riding high on his success, Huang, who is known for always wearing a black leather jacket, urged companies to shift their spending away from classic computing and embrace AI.

"AI provides a new way of

generating productivity, a new way of generating new services to offer to your customers and accelerated computing helps you save money and save power," Huang said.

Nvidia manufactures graphics processing units (GPUs), a powerful chip technology that is nec-

A new era has begun. Together accelerated computing and generative AI are driving a broad based computer industry platform shift. Our demand is tremendous

JENSEN HUANG

essary to build the generative AI that delivers ChatGPT as well as image, facial and speech recognition.

The company also offers AI-focused computers and services making it an unparalleled one-stop shop for AI.

Originally designed for video game graphics, each of Nvidia's GPU chips cost tens of thousands of dollars and companies are scrambling to stock up as the pressure to keep up with the AI revolution grows.

Customers have struggled to get their hands on Nvidia's AI

chips as startups, big companies, governments and cloud providers ramp up orders and hoard stock.

Elon Musk, who this year started his own AI company, has said that GPUs "are considerably harder to get than drugs" at the moment, with buyers even looking to buy components from struggling cryptocurrency companies that also use GPUs.

Some fear that Nvidia may eventually struggle to meet demand with crucial components from Taiwan's TSMC chip-making plants hard pressed to meet

Nvidia's needs.

Nvidia doesn't actually make its own chips, but rather designs them and then outsources the manufacturing to other companies. It is therefore vulnerable to chokepoints in its complex supply chain.

Nvidia's strategic role in AI saw the United States government last year place export restrictions on the company's highest performing chips, which forced the it to make slower versions for the Chinese market.

The White House is considering additional export curbs that could further limit Nvidia's access to the Chinese market. In an analyst call, Nvidia CFO Colette Kress warned against the US cracking down harder, saying it "will result in a permanent loss of an opportunity for the US industry to compete and lead in one of the world's largest markets."

AFP

Expo Centre Sharjah participates in ICCA Middle East Summit in Oman

Expo Centre Sharjah has participated in the ICCA Middle East Summit 2023, which took part from August 30-31 at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre under the theme ‘Forging a Collective Path to a Prosperous Future’.

Expo Centre Sharjah CEO Saif Mohammed al Midfa, also the chairman of the Arab Union for Exhibitions, and board member of the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, represented the centre in the summit to boost regional collaboration in the exhibitions and conferences sector and explore future opportunities and developments that solidify the sector’s contribution to economic expansion.

During the event, Midfa engaged in discussions with several CEO attendees, exploring avenues for strengthening strategic cooperation with association members to further the development and sustainability of the sector, initiate collaborative exhibitions and conferences, and broaden the prospects of the industry.

Midfa also introduced a working paper highlighting the significance of the exhibition and conference sector on both regional and global scales.

He emphasised its central role in bolstering economies, augmenting commercial activities, and widening the scope of economic and trade collaborations among individuals, businesses, and nations.

Midfa underscored that the global exhibition sector’s valuation, surpassing US\$151bn, underscores its relevance to the world economy.

In the Middle East and North Africa, the sector’s worth is projected to escalate from US\$53.63bn in 2022 to an impressive US\$76.67bn by 2028.

Midfa shed light on the exceptional development and growth seen in the exhibitions and conferences sector within the GCC countries, with the UAE standing out notably. The UAE ranks among the top nations in the global exhibition industry.

Highlighting the UAE’s leadership role in this domain, he referred to the country’s hosting of prominent global events such as Expo 2020 Dubai. Reinforcing its pivotal position, the UAE is set to host the Conference of the Parties (COP28) from November 30 to December 12 this year.

Midfa said Sharjah’s reputation as a premier global hub accentuated for staging significant regional and international events, a stature earned through its extensive experience and legacy in the sector.

Furthermore, he said that Expo Centre Sharjah draws over 2.5mn visitors each year from approximately 50 events and exhibitions, adding that the centre’s participation in the summit reaffirms its commitment to stay abreast of the latest trends and advancements in the global exhibition and conference industry.

The two-day regional assembly brought together over 120 local and regional experts, as well as specialised institutions in conference and exhibition management. The gathering touched on the role of economic studies and data in shaping future blueprints for conferences and exhibitions.

It also emphasised avenues for startups to gain insights from successful ventures and delved into key aspects that draw youth to this industry.



ABA Oman student launches SWIFT Connect for women entrepreneurs

Gaveesh Kapoor, a grade 12 student of ABA Oman International School recently launched SWIFT Connect, which is a pioneering initiative providing interest free loans and financial literacy programmes to make a tangible difference in the lives of thousands of women globally.

Gaveesh is the Founder & Director of SWIFT Connect, a vertical of SWIFT (Sustaining Women in Financial Turmoil), which is a microfinance NGO run by the high school students at ABA Oman.

Since its inception in 2019, SWIFT has scaled to become a benchmark in youth-led micro-finance institutions by offering funds and loans to female entrepreneurs from marginalised communities to help them establish a sustainable business and become financially independent.

Founded by Gobhanu Korisepati, an ABA alum, and along with the support of his peers, SWIFT has lent more than 3400 interest free loans, which has impacted the lives of more than 5,000 women across the globe.

SWIFT’s complimentary initiative, SWIFT Connect works to create a direct impact in domestic sectors across India and around the world. Realising that a large number of women in rural India needed support with financial planning, Gaveesh initiated a countrywide awareness drive this summer, organising seminars in various regions to impart foundational financial knowledge crucial for their economic security.

Today, SWIFT Connect proudly stands as a beacon for financial literacy among Indian women, with over 1,000 success stories and counting.

Gaveesh shared heartwarming examples of women who have benefited greatly through this initiative. One such story is Meela’s - a rural farmer who became a successful entrepreneur with the help of a SWIFT loan.

Using the funds provided,



Meela was able to procure good quality seeds and fertilizers, which amplified the agricultural output, and helped improve her family’s economic condition.

Similarly, Rasha, once constrained by her circumstances, dreamed of a running beauty salon. With SWIFT’s aid and a loan of US\$2125, she transformed her home venture into a flourishing Beauty Centre in the city.

Bank Muscat extends cashback offer on Credit Card usage abroad

In response to the positive feedback that Bank Muscat credit cards witnessed, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the sultanate, has decided to continue the special offer on its Credit Cards when used internationally.

‘The offer will continue until December 31’, the bank stated.

In line with its commitment to offer various services and benefits to meet customers’ aspirations, the bank is extending the offer, which ensures that the customers will get the chance to enter a monthly draw to get 100% cashback on their spends (capped at RO100) for every RO100 spent using Bank Muscat Credit Cards internationally on POS machines or online.

‘For every RO100 spent, customer get another 1 chance to win. The higher the spend, the higher the chances to win. There will be 100 winners every month with a total of 700 winners by the end of the campaign,’ the bank elaborated.

Bank Muscat credit card customers enjoy curated discount offers across a wide range of categories including, lifestyle, health and beauty, entertainment, travel and hotel stays.

This is in addition to card usage benefits such as free travel insurance and rewards on spends.

In line with its customer-centric vision ‘To serve you better, everyday’, Bank Muscat has

branches.

The new features enable customers to apply digitally for a variety of credit cards including Visa Gold credit card, Visa Classic credit card, Bank Muscat Oman Air Visa Platinum credit card, Bank Muscat Lulu Titanium Mastercard credit card, Al Jawhar Visa Platinum credit card, Asalah Visa Signature



Ooredoo increases home Internet speeds at no extra cost

Ofamilies are back from vacation and school is almost in session. Does this mean you and yours are always online at home and competing for connectivity?

Keeping in mind the need of its customers for more Internet at a better speed, Ooredoo has increased the home Internet speed without effecting any additional charges.

‘Ooredoo has upgraded everybody’s world and boosted its upload and download speeds on two of its existing Fibre Home Internet plans, giving a faster internet experience and an even more reliable internet connection than ever. At no extra cost, customers can now enjoy lightning speed and extra value,’ the company stated in

a press release. ‘Whether it’s homework, business work or entertainment, Ooredoo can meet your household’s need for ultrafast speed! Now everyone in the family can keep on browsing, gaming and streaming while staying connected to others and what’s happening in the world, without slowing down your connection’, it added.

Elaborating on the offer, Ooredoo stated that the customers can now enjoy 100Mbps instead of 80Mbps on the monthly RO24 Fibre Home Internet plan, and 150 Mbps instead of 120 Mbps on the monthly RO28 plan.

The other Fibre Home Internet plans remain as they were, with speeds of up to 1024 Mbps.

Nama training based on latest professional practices

Nama Water Services is considered to be one of the prominent companies that work on besides other institutions to develop and enhance the potential of Omani Youth including the graduates and students - who are still in school - and job seekers as well.

The aim of this effort is to provide the target students with training opportunities according to the strategies and plans developed to refine these youth with knowledge and skills that are expected to support them in their future careers.

Taqi bin Mohammed al Lawati, Chief Executive of the Human Resources and Culture Unit commented on this initiative: “Nama Water Services is committed to supporting the national trends for the youth development. We are proud of training young people and making use of the theoretical knowledge that they acquired during their academic careers.

“We provide them with the opportunity to engage in an innovative and stimulating work environment that encourages them to Intellectual creativity. In addition, it will assist them in mastering the required skills through practical that can gain from the expertise and competencies who work in this Company.”

During the first half of this year, more than 350 trainees benefited from the training opportunities provided by the company. Regarding this raise in the number of trainees, the Chief Executive of the Human Resources and Culture Unit stated that this is a result of the established training plan that aims to give young people the opportunities

they need for practical training.

In addition, it’s the continuous follow-up that takes place to ensure that the trainee receives the required doses of practical training, and the prepared programme is considered good nutrition for the students, as the training takes place under continuous guidance

from the company’s highly qualified expertise.

The trainee participates in practical and field projects and works alongside with various departments that he learns from them during this professional friction, latest technologies, and methods used in the business execution.



Iran: Two women journalists sentenced to jail time

Tehran, Iran - Two female Iranian journalists will spend around a month behind bars as part of a three-year partly suspended prison sentence for ‘conspiracy’ and ‘collusion’, local media reported on Sunday.

Under the sentence, Negin Bagheri and Elnaz Mohammadi will serve one-fortieth of the term, or less than a month, in prison, their lawyer Amir Raisian told the reformist *Ham Mihan* daily newspaper, where Mohammadi works.

‘The remaining period is suspended over five years’, during which time they will be required to take ‘a professional ethics training’ and ‘prohibited from leaving the country’, the lawyer added.

Raisian did not elaborate on whether the verdict can be appealed, and the report did not detail the allegations against the reporters.

Mohammadi’s sister, Elahe, who also works for Ham Mihan, has since September 2022 been in prison after reporting on the funeral of Mahsa Amini, 22, who died in police custody.

The death on September 16, 2022 of Amini, an Iranian Kurd, came after her arrest for an alleged breach of the Islamic republic’s dress code, triggering months-long nationwide protests.

Foreign-based rights groups have reported multiple arrests ahead of the anniversary of Amini’s death. Bagheri works for the unaffiliated *Haft-e Sobh* newspaper.

Elnaz Mohammadi was arrested and kept in Evin prison for a week in February. The reason for her detention was not clear.

Last year’s demonstrations saw hundreds of people killed.

AFP

Curfew lifted after deadly violence in Iraq city

Kirkuk, Iraq - A curfew was lifted in the multi-ethnic Iraqi city of Kirkuk on Sunday after protests turned violent and led to the deaths of four people.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani imposed the curfew on Saturday evening after rival protests - between Kurdish residents on one side and Turkmen and Arabs on the other - descended into deadly unrest despite a security presence.

Tensions had been brewing for nearly a week in Kirkuk, a northern city which has historically been disputed between the federal government in Baghdad and authorities in the autonomous Kurdistan region of the north.

The curfew ‘has been lifted’, General Kawa Gharib, the police chief in Kirkuk, told AFP. “The situation is now stable throughout the city.”

Sudani called for a commission of inquiry into the incident. Four Kurds were killed and 15 people wounded during Saturday’s violence, according to the latest toll issued on Sunday by Amer Shuani, the local police spokesman.

At least three of the four victims were shot dead, health officials said, but it was unclear who was responsible. Security forces had been deployed as a buffer to keep the rival groups apart, and an AFP correspondent said they had to fire warning shots to disperse the Kurds.



A member of the Iraqi security forces mans a checkpoint in the multi-ethnic Iraqi city of Kirkuk on Sunday, after curfew was lifted (AFP)

Arab and Turkmen demonstrators had staged a sit-in near the headquarters of the Iraqi security forces in Kirkuk province on August 28, after media reports that Sudani had ordered the site to be handed over to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP),

which used to occupy it. In response, Kurdish protesters tried to reach the headquarters on Saturday, and the situation degenerated.

On Sunday morning General Jabbar Naeema al-Taei, Kirkuk’s top security official, told AFP that the building at the centre of the tensions was ‘under the control of the army’ of Iraq and the sit-in was over. In 2014, the KDP and the peshmerga, the security forces of the Kurdistan region, took control of Kirkuk, an oil-producing region of northern Iraq.

AFP

Air strike in Khartoum kills 20 civilians: Sudan activists

Wad Madani, Sudan - Residents of Khartoum awoke on Sunday to artillery and rocket fire, hours after an air strike in the city’s south killed at least 20 civilians including two children, according to Sudanese activists.

‘The death toll from the aerial bombardment’ in southern Khartoum ‘has risen to 20 civilian fatalities’, according to a statement by the neighbourhood’s resistance committee.

They are among many volunteer groups that used to organise pro-democracy demonstrations and now provide assistance to families caught in the crossfire between the army and paramilitary fighters.

In an earlier statement, they said the victims included two children, and warned that more fatalities went unrecorded, as ‘their bodies could not be moved to the hospital because they were severely burned or torn to pieces in the bombing’.

Since war began between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces on April 15, around 5,000 people have been killed, according to estimates from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project.

The Sudanese Armed Forces



Sudanese queue outside a passport office in Gedaref on Sunday, following an announcement of the resumption of issuing passports in Sudan (AFP)

control the skies and have carried out regular air strikes while RSF fighters dominate the streets of the capital.

Western countries have accused the paramilitaries and allied militias of killings based on ethnicity in the western Darfur region, and the International Criminal Court has opened a new

probe into alleged war crimes. The army has also been accused of abuses, including a July 8 air strike that killed around two dozen civilians.

More than half of Sudan’s 48mn people now require humanitarian aid and protection, and six million are ‘one step away from famine’, according to the

United Nations. Despite insecurity, looting and bureaucratic obstacles, the world body says it has been able to get aid to millions of those in need.

The war has internally displaced around 3.8mn people, the UN says, while another million have crossed borders into neighbouring countries.

Among the displaced are nearly 2.8mn from Khartoum, according to the International Organization for Migration. That is more than half the capital’s pre-war population of around five million.

Those who remain shelter from the crossfire, rationing water and electricity.

In Khartoum, resistance committees have been some of the only sources of relief, helping dig survivors out of the rubble of bombed buildings, braving gunfire on the streets to deliver medicine and documenting atrocities committed by both sides.

Nearly five months in, the violence shows no signs of abating.

Witnesses on Sunday again reported the army targeting RSF positions in northern Khartoum with ‘artillery and rocket fire’.

AFP

Ivory Coast counts votes after local polls seen as test for presidential race

Abidjan, Ivory Coast - Counting has begun after Ivory Coast voted on Saturday in local and regional elections set to gauge support for the ruling party and the opposition two years ahead of a presidential poll.

The three leading political groups were vying for seats in 201 districts and 31 regions in the West African nation, a regional economic power and leading cocoa exporter.

The results ‘will allow you to see their strengths and weaknesses before the presidential battle in 2025’, political analyst Geoffroy Kouao told AFP.

Two big opposition parties teamed up in many areas to take on the governing RHDP party, which won control of 18 of the 31 regions five years ago.

The elections were the first since former president Laurent Gbagbo returned to Ivory Coast in June 2021 after being acquitted by the International Criminal Court on human rights charges linked to post-electoral violence in 2011.

Gbagbo was not able to vote on Saturday however, after being struck from the electoral roll due to a conviction in Ivory Coast



Two agents of the Independent Electoral Commission count ballot papers for the municipal and regional elections in Abidjan, on Saturday (AFP)

linked to the 2011 crisis.

The former president considers his removal ‘a political manoeuvre’ but that did not stop his party taking part.

Voting began at 8am (0800 GMT) and officially ended at 5pm, but continued in several polling stations so voters affected by delays could cast their ballots.

Long queues formed at polling stations in the economic hub Abidjan’s wealthy Plateau business district, where voting got underway several hours late.

A few altercations were reported by the Aube Nouvelle platform, which was tracking possible flashpoints, but voting was generally calm across the country.

Results are expected in dribs and drabs over the next few days, before the Independent Electoral Commission publishes the final tally at some point next week.

AFP

Libya lights up after years of conflict and power cuts

Tripoli, Libya - It’s midnight just before the weekend. Traffic snarls the corniche in Tripoli, where improved electricity service has brought renewed energy to Libya’s capital after years of conflict and power cuts.

Chronic electricity shortages had shaped the daily lives of Libyans since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in a NATO-backed 2011 uprising.

A decade of stop-start fighting between rival armed groups followed, adding combat damage and looting to an already dilapidated grid in the North African country.

Power ‘outages were a disaster for my business’, said Hanan al-Miladi, a 43-year-old baker who sells pastries online for weddings and other celebrations.

After 42 years in power, Gaddafi left behind obsolete infrastructure, an economy largely dependent on oil, and an under-skilled workforce.

To protect the network and prevent overloads, the General Electricity Company of Libya (Gecol) resorted to widespread power cuts over the past 10 years during the peak consumption periods of summer and winter.

Until last year, outages could last 10 or even 20 hours, turning



Cars are seen driving past Martyrs' Square in Tripoli on Saturday (AFP)

Chronic electricity shortages shaped the daily lives of Libyans since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in a NATO-backed 2011 uprising

the city’s streets dark and leaving residents sweltering in summer temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) without air conditioning.

The most ‘unbearable thing was never knowing when the power would go out or for how many hours’, said Miladi.

But with new management at

Gecol since last year, along with a relatively stable security situation, Libyans now receive a markedly improved electricity supply.

Manager sacked

Prime Minister Abdelhamid Dbeibah, who heads a United Nations-backed government in

Tripoli and is the Gecol chairman, in July 2022 sacked the previous manager.

He also made sure the power company’s new boss saw through projects, including a plan for maintenance of damaged infrastructure and tight control of funds to curb corruption.

Some foreign companies have now even revived projects they had suspended in Libya.

“The situation has improved, and customers notice it,” said 34-year-old butcher Moaed Zayani, who also sells frozen products.

AFP

N Korea fires missiles as part of mock 'nuke attack'

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea staged a 'simulated tactical nuclear attack' drill at the weekend with mock atomic warheads attached to two long-range cruise missiles that were test-fired into the ocean, state-controlled media reported on Sunday.

The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the operation early on Saturday was a 'counteraction drill' in response to joint military activity by US and South Korean forces that the agency said had escalated tensions in the region.

"A firing drill for simulated tactical nuclear attack was conducted at dawn of September 2 to warn the enemies of the actual nuclear war danger," KCNA reported.

'Two long-range strategic cruise missiles tipped with mock nuclear warheads were fired' from North Korea's west coast into the sea to the south, it said.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said on Saturday that an unspecified number of cruise missiles were launched at around 4am (1900 GMT) towards the Yellow Sea, adding that the specifications of the missiles were being evaluated.

A JCS official dismissed Pyongyang's claims, calling them 'exaggerated', the South Korean Yonhap news agency reported on Sunday.

KCNA said the United States and South Korea were pursuing 'confrontation hysteria' with their



This photo released from KCNA on Monday shows a firing drill for simulated tactical nuclear attack at an undisclosed location in North Korea (AFP)

latest joint military drills.

Analysts said the North's claims were aimed at deterrence.

North Korea's claims 'suggest the Kim regime is desperate to deter an increasingly capable South Korea, including its strengthened alliance with Washington', said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Seoul's Ewha University.

"Pyongyang's rhetoric actually goes far beyond the logic of deterrence, probably to shore up domestic political legitimacy, which is an ominous sign for inter-Korean relations," he told

Kim regime is desperate to deter an increasingly capable South Korea, including its strengthened alliance with Washington

LEIF-ERIC EASLEY

AFP.

Cho Han-bum, a senior research fellow at the Korea Insti-

tute for National Unification, said the weekend launches were aimed at proving North Korean capabilities to the South and its allies.

"North Korea is moving according to their own plan, which is to strike major military facilities on the Korean peninsula and strike US bases in Japan at the same time," he said, adding the two long-range cruise missiles fired at the weekend targeted Japan.

"The key point is that North Korea is countering South Korea and the United States with nu-

clear operation units rather than conventional weapons," Cho told AFP.

In a separate report, KCNA said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had inspected 'a major munitions factory', the latest in a string of visits to weapons plants in recent weeks.

Kim 'expressed satisfaction' and stressed the importance of the factory 'in bolstering up the armed forces of the DPRK', KCNA reported, using the acronym for North Korea's official name.

AFP

Bill Richardson, globe-trotting US diplomat, is dead

Washington, US - Bill Richardson, a veteran Democratic politician and former US ambassador to the United Nations who later spent decades negotiating the release of Americans detained around the world, has died at age 75, his associates said on Saturday.



Former US Ambassador to the UN Bill Richardson (AFP)

Richardson, who also served as governor of New Mexico and the US energy secretary, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Friday night, the Richardson Center for Global Engagement said in a statement.

Richardson was one of the highest-profile Latinos in the US political world.

He made his name as the 'Indiana Jones' of US diplomacy and was famed for daring head-to-head encounters with strongmen leaders on the US pariah list, including Iraq's late president Saddam Hussein, Cuba's late leader Fidel Castro, and Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro.

"He'd meet with anyone, fly anywhere, do whatever it took," President Joe Biden said in a statement, recalling Richardson's efforts 'to free Americans held in some of the most dangerous places on Earth'.

"American pilots captured by North Korea, American workers held by Saddam Hussein, Red Cross workers imprisoned by Sudanese rebels - these are just some of the

dozens of people that Bill helped bring home," Biden said.

Most recently Richardson was involved in efforts that led to the release of US basketball star Brittney Griner in December from a Russian prison after she was convicted of a drug offense. The statement from the Richardson Center said, "He lived his entire life in the service of others - including both his time in government and his subsequent career helping to free people held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad."

Gabe Vasquez, a Democratic member of Congress from New Mexico, was among those paying tribute to their late colleague and mentor.

"Governor Bill Richardson was a titan in New Mexico and abroad... one of the most powerful Hispanics in politics that this nation has seen," Vasquez said on platform now called X.

AFP

Australian icebreaker sails to rescue stricken Antarctic researcher

Sydney, Australia - An Australian icebreaker was sailing to Antarctica on Sunday in a rescue mission to evacuate a researcher with a 'developing medical condition' from a remote station.

Icebreaker RSV Nuyina departed from Tasmania last week to rescue an unnamed individual from Casey, a research base on the frozen continent 3,443km (2,139 miles) away, the Australian Antarctic Programme said.

The researcher 'requires specialist medical assessment and care in Australia for a developing medical condition', a programme spokesperson said. The name of the condition was not given.

The ship has a top speed of around 16 knots, meaning the rescue could take several days.

The Nuyina was equipped with helicopters on board to help the evacuation effort, the spokesperson said in a statement on Saturday.

The researcher's family is being kept informed of the situation, the statement said, adding that 'the wellbeing of our people is our highest priority.'

There is an aerodrome 70km (44 miles) from Casey, but it can only be used during the southern hemisphere summer months due to extreme weather, the Australian Antarctic Programme said.

Up to 160 researchers visit the base at Casey in summer, according to its website, but only around 20 people remain on the station during the winter months.

AFP

White House race overshadows Joe Biden visit to Florida hurricane zone

Live Oak, US - The 2024 election overshadowed President Joe Biden's trip to Florida on Saturday to survey hurricane relief efforts, as the state's governor and White House hopeful Ron DeSantis snubbed the visiting commander in chief.

"I don't know. He's not going to be there," Biden said when asked what happened to a meeting with DeSantis that the president had previously confirmed to reporters. DeSantis' office told US media on Friday the security requirements of a presidential visit would cause too much disruption to recovery efforts and there were no plans for the pair to meet.

"We want to make sure that the power restoration continues, that the relief efforts continue,"



US President Joe Biden and US First Lady Jill Biden speak to residents impacted by Hurricane Idalia, in Live Oak, Florida, on Saturday (AFP)

DeSantis told a news conference.

Biden visited the city of Live Oak on Saturday, surveying damage via helicopter before meeting first responders and local officials at an elementary school.

Large trees, broken limbs and tattered signs littered the side of the motorcade route, a testament to the power of the storm that hit the Florida coast on Wednesday as an 'extremely dangerous' hurricane, killing one person in Florida and one in Georgia. The president and first lady Jill Biden met with evacuated residents at the school, shaking hands and taking photos with the storm victims.

"As I told your governor, if there's anything your state needs, I'm ready to mobilise that support," Biden said at a news con-

ference afterward. "Your nation has your back, and we'll be with you until the job is done."

DeSantis is bidding for the Republican party's nomination to be its candidate in the 2024 White House race, though his campaign has struggled and polls show him lagging far behind frontrunner Donald Trump.

Biden, who himself has tepid approval ratings and is fighting an uphill battle against perceptions he's too old for a second term, did not delve into questions on DeSantis' rebuff.

"Well, no, I'm not disappointed," he said.

"He may have had other reasons, but he did help us plan this (visit). He sat with FEMA and decided where we should go."

AFP

Pope Francis hails power of interfaith dialogue for peace in Mongolia

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Pope Francis hailed religion's power to resolve conflict and promote peace on Sunday, on his final full day in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar for a visit that has seen him seek to build bridges with neighbouring China.

The morning address, which brought together leaders of major religions in Mongolia, took place in the intimate Hun Theatre, nestled in the low mountains surrounding the city and designed in the round shape of the nomadic 'ger' dwelling.

Christian leaders, as well as representatives of Buddhism and Shamanism, Islam and Judaism, Hinduism, the Russian Orthodox Church, Mormonism, Baha'i and others, attended.

"Religious traditions, for all their distinctiveness and diver-



Pope Francis attends an Ecumenical and interreligious meeting in Ulaanbaatar on Sunday (AFP)

sity, have impressive potential for the benefit of society as a whole," the 86-year-old pontiff

told them.

"If the leaders of nations were to choose the path of dialogue

with others," he said, it could make a 'decisive contribution to ending the conflicts continuing to

afflict so many of the world's people'.

The pope's visit to Mongolia -

a young democracy with a constitution protecting religious freedom - has seen him send a tacit message to the nation's neighbours, in particular officially atheist China, that spirituality is not a threat.

By venturing to the isolated Central Asian country, the Argentine Jesuit has hoped not only to encourage the tiny Catholic community of missionaries and the faithful, but use his presence at China's backdoor to improve the Vatican's relations with Beijing.

During a gathering of Catholic missionaries at the city's Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral on Saturday, Pope Francis said governments had 'nothing to fear' from the Catholic Church.

"Governments and secular institutions have nothing to fear

from the Church's work of evangelisation, for she has no political agenda to advance," said the pontiff, without specifically mentioning China. Beijing's Communist Party, which exercises strict control over religious institutions, is wary of the Catholic Church on its territory.

The Holy See renewed a deal last year with Beijing allowing both sides a say in appointing bishops in China.

Critics have called the move a dangerous concession in exchange for a presence in the country.

Asked about the pope's apparent overtures to Beijing, Hong Kong Bishop Stephen Chow told AFP in Ulaanbaatar that the pontiff's message was 'for the whole world'.

AFP

INDIA

‘One nation, one election’ idea is an attack on ‘Bharat’, says Rahul Gandhi

New Delhi - Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Central government for ‘toying’ with the idea of holding simultaneous Lok Sabha elections and state assembly elections in the country.

According to the Congress MP representing Wayanad in Kerala, the idea of ‘one nation, one election’ is an attack on the ‘Bharat’ which, as per him, is the ‘Union of States’.

In a message on his social media post, X, formerly known as Twitter, Rahul Gandhi said: “INDIA, that is Bharat, is a Union of States. The idea of ‘one nation, one election’ is an attack on the Union and all its States.”

The Centre on Saturday constituted an eight-member committee to examine and make recommendations for holding simultaneous elections in the



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses during party's Rajiv Yuva Mitan Sammelan, in Raipur on Saturday (ANI)

The Centre on Saturday constituted an eight-member committee to examine and make recommendations for holding simultaneous elections

country.

The members of the committee, apart from former President Ram Nath Kovind, include Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, former Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Finance Commission chairman N K Singh, former Lok Sabha secretary general Subhash C Kashyap, senior advocate Harish Salve and former chief vigilance commissioner Sanjay Kothari.

The notification of the high-

powered panel by the Centre came just days after it announced a special session of the Parliament from September 18 to 22, on the same day the two-day Mumbai conclave of the INDIA bloc was in progress.

However, the government remained tight-lipped on the issues to be taken up during the special session.

Opposition leaders slammed the BJP-led Centre for announcing a special session without holding prior consultations with them or informing the Business Advisory Committee.

According to the Centre, the

high-level committee shall start functioning immediately and make recommendations at the earliest.

Further, according to the official notification, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal will attend the meetings of the committee as a special invitee.

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, however, declined to serve on the panel, saying its ‘terms of reference have been prepared in a manner to guarantee its conclusions’.

Simultaneous elections for the state assemblies and the Lok Sabha were held till 1967. However, in 1968 and 1969 some legislative assemblies were dissolved prematurely followed by the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in 1970. This forced a change in electoral schedules for the states and the country.

ANI

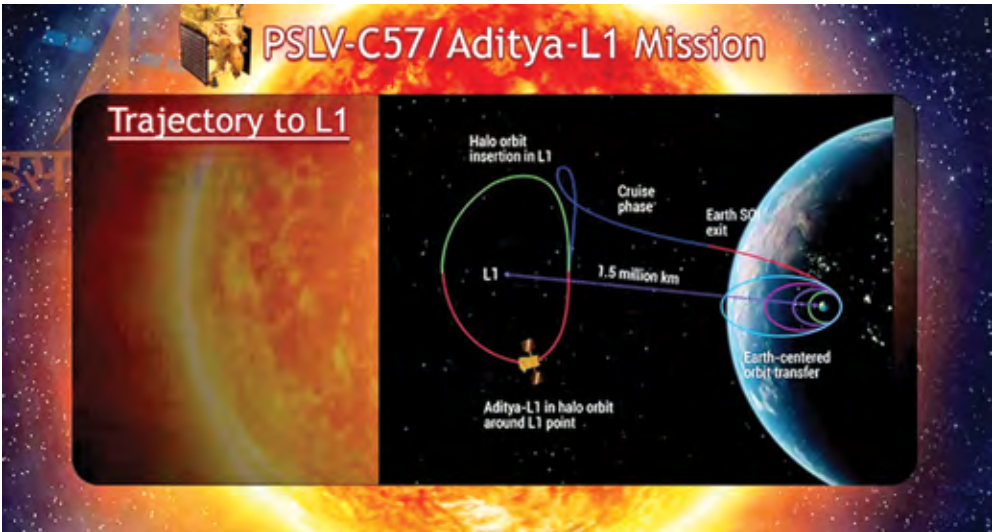
Aditya-L1 Sun mission: First Earth-bound manoeuvre successful, satellite healthy

New Delhi - Aditya-L1 spacecraft which was lifted successfully to study the Sun made its first Earth-bound manoeuvre on Sunday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in its latest update said the satellite is ‘healthy and operating nominally’ and the next manoeuvre is scheduled for 3am local time on Tuesday. Shifting the focus to its next space odyssey after successfully placing a lander on the moon’s uncharted South Pole region, the ISRO launched from Sriharikota on Saturday the country’s maiden solar mission - Aditya-L1.

It carried seven different payloads to have a detailed study of the Sun, four of which will observe the light from the sun and the other three will measure in-situ parameters of the plasma and magnetic fields.

Aditya-L1 will be placed in a halo orbit around Lagrangian Point 1 (or L1), which is 1.5mn kilometres away from the Earth



A depiction of Trajectory to L1, shared by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as it launched its solar mission, Aditya-L1, on Saturday (ANI)

Aditya-L1 carried seven different payloads to have a detailed study of the Sun, four of which will be observing the light from the Sun

atmosphere, solar wind distribution and temperature anisotropy, and origin of Coronal Mass Ejections (CME) and flares and near-earth space weather.

On August 23, India took a giant leap as the Chandrayaan-3 lander module successfully landed on the Moon’s South Pole, making it the first country to have achieved the historic feat and bringing to an end the disappointment over the crash landing of the Chandrayaan-2, four years ago.

ANI

in the direction of the sun, which is about 1 per cent of the Earth-Sun distance. It is expected to cover the distance in four months’ time.

Aditya-L1’s mission is to study the outer atmosphere of the Sun. The ISRO said the spacecraft will neither land on the Sun nor approach the Sun

any closer.

This strategic location will enable Aditya-L1 to continuously observe the Sun without being hindered by eclipses or occultation, allowing scientists to study solar activities and their impact on space weather in real-time. Also, the spacecraft’s data will help identify the sequence of processes that lead to solar eruptive events and contribute to a deeper understanding of space weather drivers.

Major objectives of India’s solar mission include the study of the physics of solar corona and its heating mechanism, the solar wind acceleration, coupling and dynamics of the solar



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot (ANI)

Rajasthan HC issues notice to CM Gehlot over corruption claim

Jaipur, Rajasthan - The Rajasthan High Court issued a notice to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in connection with his statement claiming corruption in the state judiciary.

The notice was issued in response to a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by former judicial officer and advocate Shivcharan Gupta. The high court asked CM Gehlot to clarify the basis of his statement that there was corruption in courts, with lawyers writing judgments.

The PIL was filed in the high court in the wake of Gehlot’s

statement alleging corrupt judicial practices.

The petition said the CM made an assault on the reputation of judges and legal practitioners. It added that action should be taken against the chief minister for ‘contempt of court’.

The petitioner’s advocate, Shivcharan Gupta, said a reply to the notice issued by the high court has been sought from Gehlot in the next three weeks.

The next hearing in the matter has been scheduled for October 3, he informed.

ANI

Haikui makes landfall in Taiwan

Taitung, Taiwan - Typhoon Haikui made landfall on eastern Taiwan on Sunday, unleashing torrential downpours, whipping winds and plunging thousands of households into darkness as the first major storm to directly hit the island in four years.

Nearly 4,000 people were evacuated from high-risk areas, hundreds of flights cancelled and businesses closed in preparation for the storm.

Taiwan’s Central Weather Bureau said in a press conference the typhoon was ‘at our doorstep’ and by 3:40pm (0740 GMT) confirmed to AFP it had made landfall in coastal Taitung, a mountainous county in lesser-populated eastern Taiwan. Residents hunkered down indoors in the dark, staying away from windows as strong gusts of wind sent toppled trees and dislodged water tanks flying in the air, according to an AFP reporter.

“I think this time it is serious,”



Huge waves are seen in Yilan as Typhoon Haikui makes landfall in eastern Taiwan on Sunday (AFP)

said retired mechanic Chang Jhi-ming, 58, in Taitung.

“This is just beginning, the wind is just coming in and you can see trees toppling already.”

The typhoon has gathered speed since yesterday, and at 3pm was packing sustained winds of about 154km (95 miles) per hour.

‘Rain and wind will be most intense and its impact will be

most obvious during this period’ after landfall, said a spokesperson with the weather bureau, adding that the typhoon will move into the Taiwan Strait by Monday evening.

Across the island, more than 21,000 households lost power, and while most resumed by mid-afternoon, about 9,000 were still without electricity when Haikui hit - including in

Taitung. Authorities have reported two minor injuries in Hualien county - a mountainous region which was issued a warning for flash floods - after a fallen tree hit a car.

The last major storm to hit Taiwan was Typhoon Bailu in 2019, which left one person dead. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said Haikui would be the first in four years to cross the Central Mountain Range running north to south of the island - a path that could lead to landslides in surrounding counties.

“I remind the people to make preparations for the typhoon and watch out for your safety, avoid going out or any dangerous activities,” President Tsai said. The streets in Hualien were deserted on Sunday, battered by unrelenting rain, while a fishing harbour in northeastern coastal Yilan county saw towering waves slam against the shore.

AFP

UK unveils plans for fitting tribute to Queen Elizabeth II

London, UK - The UK government announced on Sunday early stage plans to erect a permanent memorial to the late Queen Elizabeth II, alongside a national legacy programme in her honour, in 2026.

The ‘fitting tribute’ to Britain’s longest-reigning monarch, who died in September last year aged 96 after 70 years on the throne, will be unveiled to coincide with what would have been her 100th birthday. A newly-formed entity - the Queen Elizabeth memorial committee - will consider and recommend proposals for the memorial and legacy programme, government department the Cabinet Office said.

The independent body - to be headed by Robin Janvrin, the late sovereign’s former private secretary - will consider her life, decades of public service and the causes she supported, it added.

Janvrin, a member of parliament’s unelected House of Lords chamber, called his appointment



‘an honour’. “It will be a unique challenge to try to capture for future generations Her Late Majesty’s extraordinary contribution to our national life throughout her very long reign.”

Senior royal, political and other figures and experts are set to be appointed to the committee to develop ideas and bring their recommendations to her heir, King Charles III, and Prime

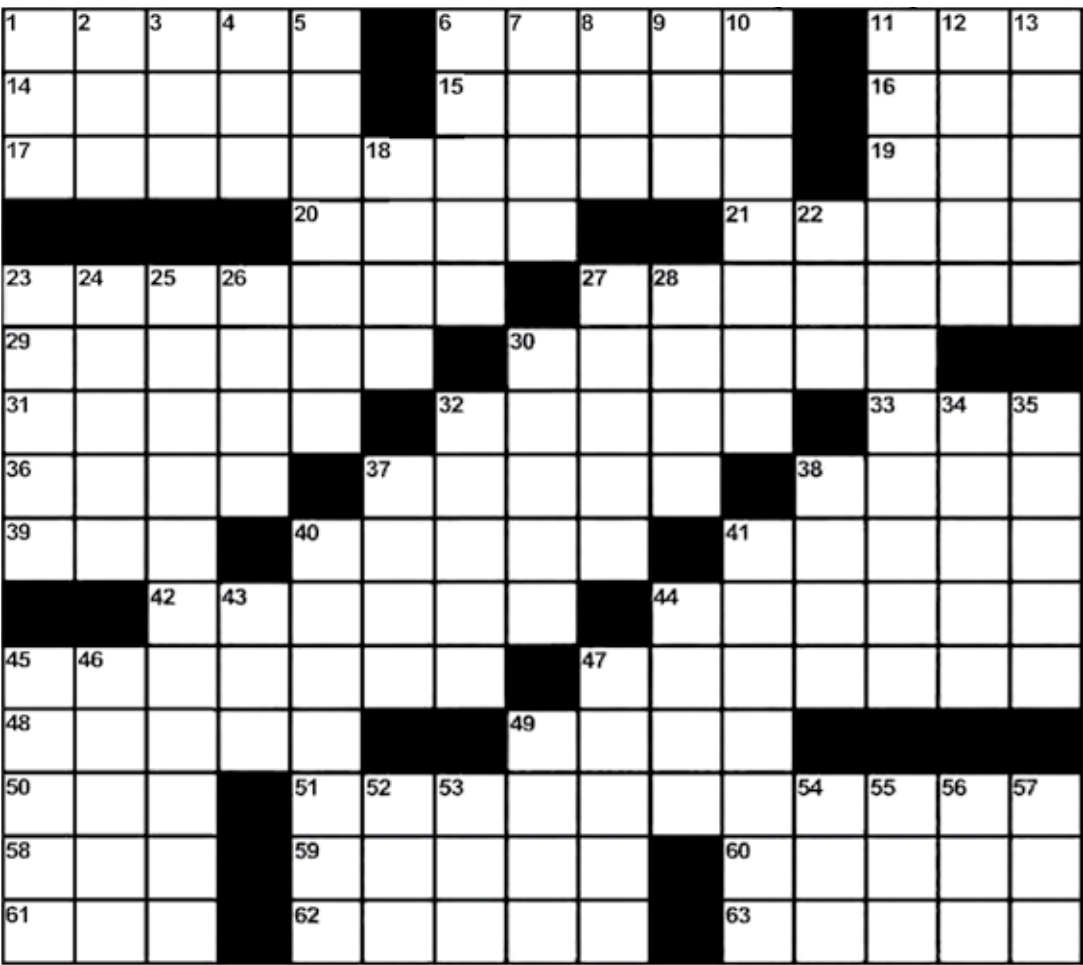
Minister Rishi Sunak.

The committee will also seek suggestions from the public during the preparatory process.

The government said it will support the proposals and consider funding options. “Queen Elizabeth II was our longest reigning monarch and greatest public servant,” Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden said.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Owned apartment, briefly
- 6) Ennead minus one
- 11) "A likely story!"
- 14) Live, as an interview
- 15) Still in existence
- 16) Stat for Zack Greinke
- 17) Free from party affiliation
- 19) Feel queasy
- 20) Salmon variety
- 21) In and of itself
- 23) Source of many unhappy returns
- 27) Tweet platform
- 29) Dental coating
- 30) Tree outgrowth
- 31) Public blights (with "eye")
- 32) Baffled person's attempt, sometimes
- 33) Work unit in physics
- 36) Plays a role
- 37) You live there
- 38) "Lion King" baddie
- 39) A question of identity
- 40) Reclines lazily
- 41) Ring-tailed animal
- 42) Sans secrecy
- 44) Rang slowly, as a bell

DOWN

- 1) Jailbird
- 2) Musician Yoko
- 3) Bert Bobbsey's sister
- 4) Slight depression
- 5) They offer divine insight?
- 6) Scouts take them
- 7) Muse of history
- 8) "... the season to ... "
- 9) Mrs. Peron
- 10) Strike victims?
- 11) Become a minister
- 12) Begin a revolt
- 13) Comparatively fit

- 18) Coin collection?
- 22) Catchall for omitted items
- 23) Make a board even smaller
- 24) Methuselah's father
- 25) Funny drawers?
- 26) Iowa State University locale
- 27) Allowable weights
- 28) Do a laundry chore
- 30) Beefy
- 32) Greatly irritates
- 34) Honey-loving badger
- 35) Crossword puzzle layouts
- 37) Billions of years
- 38) Things one sings?
- 40) Reins cats and dogs?
- 41) Like some cattle
- 43) Plastic pipe material
- 44) "Comin' _ the Rye"
- 45) Stop
- 46) Plant sap-sucker's genus
- 47) One in a class by himself?
- 49) Raised cattle
- 52) Ostrichlike bird
- 53) Valuable blackjack card

- 54) "...whiz!"
- 55) Mined rock
- 56) Jar cover
- 57) _Moines

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Do you think you're in need of some inspiration in your job or schoolwork? If your brain just doesn't seem to be able to concentrate on one thing for more than five minutes, you don't need inspiration. You need a vacation. You need to slow down. You need to take a walk, put things into perspective, and get a reality check about your place in the world. Trying so hard to keep busy could be a coping device. Are you trying to avoid dealing with something? Face up to it and move on.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Try not to postpone your big plans any longer. You could be starting a bad habit that will be very hard to break later. If you don't move forward with things now, some important people might get the idea that you aren't totally sure about what you're doing. And even if you aren't sure, they certainly don't need to know that! It's time to turn on your bravado and pretend that you have total conviction. If you have to fake your enthusiasm, then fake it.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You could be blessed with a chunk of free time today, so start thinking now about what you'll do with it. Or it might be easier for you to make a list of things to not do with it, like shopping, watching television, or aimlessly surfing online. Make sure you use this time for something productive. Read a book, call up a friend or family member. Do something that doesn't drain your wallet yet offers some concrete benefit you can feel proud of.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Your continued effort in a new relationship, either professional or personal, could pay off in a big way. Expect a phone call or email that connects all the dots and finalizes a new direction for both of you. This alliance signifies more than an opportunity for progress. This is a new opportunity to express a side of yourself that doesn't get a lot of exposure. You are growing, and right now it's the people in your life who are nurturing that growth.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

All the power is completely in your hands today, so if you see something you don't like too much, you should do something about it. This rule applies to emotional issues as well as aesthetic situations, so don't be too surprised if you need to pull someone aside for a quiet heart-to-heart talk in order to smooth over a sensitive topic. To counteract potential problems or conflicts, try to avoid whatever makes you uncomfortable or puts you in a negative state of mind.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

They say that friends are the family you choose for yourself, and today you'll be reminded yet again how well you've chosen. When someone backs you up in a potentially embarrassing situation, make sure to let them know how grateful you are to have them in your life. Let them gain the recognition that they've been working so hard to achieve in your eyes. People want to impress you, so you should let them know when they've succeeded. Someday they'll do the same for you.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Have faith that success is something you can achieve, and soon. It's true that not everything can be on your timetable, but that doesn't mean that things aren't going to happen. Right now, you're suffering from a bout of impatience, and you need to cure yourself of it. Get active with the lighter side of your life as soon as possible. If you can spend your time laughing, you won't worry so much about progress on the heavier stuff.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Just because someone from your past is suddenly back on the scene doesn't mean that you're going to have the same kind of relationship with them that you once had. People change for better or worse, so do yourself a favor and treat this person almost like a stranger. Give them the benefit of the doubt and make no assumptions about what they'll do or say next. Keep your mind open and you'll be rewarded with a pleasant surprise.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

If someone is telling you that you need to add more discipline and structure to your life, they're probably projecting their own needs onto you, so take what they say with a grain of salt. Even if they're in a position of authority over you, they have no right to tell you how to live your life. Perhaps you could suggest to them that they need to spend more energy on what they're doing and little less on what you're doing. You are just fine. Don't worry.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your inner type A personality might not feel like coming out today, but you could really use its help! There could be a certain amount of chaos in your day, and you're going to need to get a handle on it if you want to stay on task. It's time to get picky and be disciplined. Times are very important. Make sure everyone knows when and where to meet up. Confirm plans or reservations. Double-check with all involved. You can't take anything for granted today.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Your self-control is strong right now, but you need to make sure that you're using it at the right times. Resisting temptation isn't good to do just for its own sake. You can't say no to something unless you know it's the wrong thing to do. Give yourself permission to investigate your temptations a little bit today. Are they really as bad as you think they are? Having one cookie when you're trying to watch what you eat isn't necessarily going to throw you off track. Your judgment is wise, so use it.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You have friends in high places who are just itching to reach down and give you a hand up the ladder, whether it's corporate connections, a great stock tip, or just some "been there, done that" advice that could save you a lot of time and effort. The million-dollar question is why you're not letting them help you. This pride thing has gotten out of hand. It's one thing to not want to appear needy in front of people you admire, but it's quite another to sacrifice your progress for your ego.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. ho is the "moi" to whom the quote "Après moi, le déluge" is attributed?

- A. King Louis XV of France
- B. Maximilien Robespierre
- C. Charlemagne
- D. René Descartes

02. The sum of the internal angles of a pentagon are how many degrees more than that of a triangle?

- A. 180
- B. 540
- C. 360
- D. 270

03. At the end of March 1949, Newfoundland did what?

- A. Joined the United Nations
- B. Declared full independence from the UK
- C. Joined Canada as a province
- D. Declared itself nuclear-free

Answers: 1. A 2. C 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

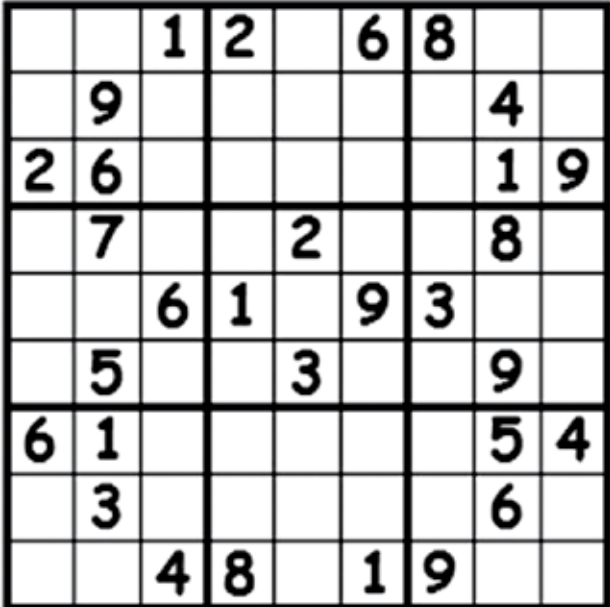


Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. 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



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





Ons Jabeur celebrates winning a point against Czech Republic's Marie Bouzkova during their US Open match on Saturday (AFP)

'WARRIOR' MODE

Jabeur into US Open last 16 as brave Bouzkova falls short

New York, United States - Ons Jabeur kept her dream of a first Grand Slam alive at the US Open on Saturday, reaching the last 16 after finally overcoming injured opponent Marie Bouzkova in three sets.

Tunisian fifth seed Jabeur, whose own US Open campaign has been disrupted by a flu virus, completed a 5-7, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 victory to subdue Bouzkova in 2hr 56min. A contest of high drama on the Arthur Ashe Stadium saw Bouzkova play virtually half of the match on one leg after suffering a thigh injury midway through the second set.

The 25-year-old Czech 31st seed left the court for a lengthy medical timeout after clutching her thigh in pain.

She appeared to be close to tears when she returned, but somehow managed to battle

bravely on despite severely limited mobility.

Bouzkova was often seen grimacing and wincing in pain whenever she needed to push off her injured leg, but remarkably

continued to complete the match.

At one point she consulted her coaching staff in the stands and said simply: "I have to."

"Man it was a very tough match," Jabeur said afterwards. "We both played really well. She didn't want to stop. She's a great

player.

"This is a tough sport. You always don't want to give up. I really respect her for that. I think we both had a great battle tonight, and hopefully I'll continue getting

this 'warrior' symbol with me during this great tournament."

Jabeur admitted she had been incredulous at times as Bouzkova soldiered on despite her injury.

"When I saw her struggling with her leg I tried to make her move as much as I can," Jabeur said. "I know that's not nice but I

was trying to win the match.

"At certain times I was like 'Is she really injured?' I wasn't sure."

Jabeur, who also needed three sets in round two after a difficult opening match earlier this week, once again found herself in trouble early on against Bouzkova.

But the injury changed the complexion of the match.

Jabeur grabbed an early break in the final set, and then served for the match in the ninth game.

There was another twist as Bouzkova saved two match points after trailing 15-40, but Jabeur finally clinched victory on her third match point.

Jabeur, who will now face China's Zheng Qinwen in the last 16 on Monday, said her punishing training regimen in Tunisia had helped prepare her for the demands of the tournament.

AFP

This is a tough sport. I think we both had a great battle tonight, and hopefully I'll continue getting this 'warrior' symbol with me during this great tournament

ONS JABEUR

Pegula moves into last 16

New York, United States - American third seed Jessica Pegula fought off Ukraine's Elina Svitolina in three sets to clinch her place in the last 16 on Saturday.

Pegula broke twice in the final set to brush the 26th-ranked Svitolina aside and seal a 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 victory.

"I knew no matter what she wasn't going to go away," said Pegula, a quarter-finalist at five of the past seven Grand Slams.

She beat Svitolina for the fourth time in a row, having also defeated her in three sets in Washington last month.

"I feel like every time I play her it's so close. She definitely picked up her level and forced me to come out strong in the third."

The 29-year-old Pegula will play compatriot and 17th seed Madison Keys for a place in the quarter-finals.

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus swatted aside France's Clara Burel to power into the last 16 on Saturday.

Sabalenka - who defeated



Jessica Pegula celebrates after defeating Elina Svitolina (AFP)

Burel in straight sets at the same stage of the tournament last year - once again had too much power for 62nd-ranked Burel, winning 6-1, 6-1 in a 60-minute master-class.

The Belarusian right-hander will now face either Russia's Daria Kasatkina or Belgium's Greet Minnen on Monday for a

place in the quarter-finals.

Sabalenka, who achieved a breakthrough maiden Grand Slam victory at the Australian Open earlier this year, could replace Poland's Iga Swiatek at the top of the world rankings if she betters her rival's performance in New York.

AFP

Medvedev halts Baez to reach US Open last 16

New York, United States - Daniil Medvedev progressed to the fourth round of the US Open with a 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) victory over Sebastian Baez which snapped the Argentine's 12-match winning streak.

Third seed and 2021 champion Medvedev is through to the second week in New York for the fifth year in a row and will play Australian 13th seed Alex de Minaur for a spot in the quarter-finals.

Medvedev closed out the victory with an ace on his fourth match point in the tie-break as he finished well past 1am for the second straight match.

"I just want to go to sleep, that's it. Nothing more," said Medvedev.

"When you go to play at 11pm it just feels tough. This time I decided not to sleep before and I ate, so I was feeling pretty bad on the court. That's why I was nervous all the match."

World number 32 Baez came into the US Open bristling with confidence after titles at Kitzbuehel and Winston-Salem, reaching the third round of a Grand Slam for the first time here.

However hard-court specialist Medvedev - winner of four titles on the surface this season - started quickly and rarely looked in trouble as he took the first two sets with minimal fuss.

Baez refused to meekly ac-

This time I decided not to sleep before and I ate, so I was feeling pretty bad on the court

DANIIL MEDVEDEV

cept his fate and threatened to force a fourth set.

He led 5-2 only for Medvedev to break back and then save a set point on serve, the Russian finally getting through in the tie-break in the early hours of Sunday morning.

"It was lucky and good play from me to stay in third set, and good not to finish at 4am."

Sinner advances

Italian sixth seed Jannik Sinner knocked off former champion Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland 6-3, 2-6, 6-4, 6-2 on Saturday to book his place in the US

Open fourth round.

The 22-year-old Sinner next faces either 2020 runner-up Alexander Zverev or 19th seed Grigor Dimitrov as he closes in on a potential quarter-final rematch with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz.

Sinner was beaten by Alcaraz in five sets last year in New York in a match which set a record for the latest ever finish at the tournament of 2:50 in the morning.

Britain's Jack Draper reached the last 16 of a Grand Slam for the first time with a 6-4, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 victory over American world No.89 Michael Mmoh.

Draper will face eighth-seeded Russian Andrey Rublev on Monday for a place in the quarter-finals.

Rublev, a quarter-finalist at last year's tournament, defeated France's Arthur Rinderknech 3-6, 6-3, 6-1, 7-5 to advance.

AFP



Jannik Sinner



Russia's Daniil Medvedev hits a return to Argentina's Sebastian Baez during their third-round match (AFP)

Alcaraz never doubted Djokovic fightback at US Open

New York, United States - Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz said he always believed Novak Djokovic would escape from his two-set deficit at the US Open as the pair remained on a collision course Saturday.

Djokovic came from two sets down to beat Serbian compatriot Laslo Djere on Friday to avoid his earliest exit in New York since he lost in the third round as a teenager in 2006.

Alcaraz, who joined Djokovic in the last 16 on Saturday, went to bed before the conclusion of his rival's late night match but insisted he'd had no doubt how it would finish.

"Well, I watched the first two sets, then I had to go to sleep," revealed Alcaraz. "But, you know, when I go to bed, I was thinking Novak is going to come back, that's for sure. He shows once again that he's one of the best in history."

It marked the eighth time Djokovic had recovered from an 0-2 hole to win a Grand Slam match, and the 38th five-set vic-



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz hits a return to Britain's Daniel Evans (AFP)

tory of his career.

"It's something crazy," said Alcaraz, who will surrender the number one ranking to Djokovic after the US Open.

"Stay 36 years old and doing the same things that when he was 20, it's incredible. We have to give credit about that, and it's something I admire."

Alcaraz himself certainly has his growing legion of admirers, turning in another eye-catching display in a four-set win over Evans, who gave the Spaniard his first real challenge of the week.

The world number one crashed 61 winners past the 26th-seeded Briton to prevail 6-2, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 and line up a

meeting with Italy's Matteo Arnaldi. "I'm really, really happy to get through," said Alcaraz, now unbeaten in three matches with Evans.

"He's a tricky opponent. I think when we play each other it's a show on the court. We made great points, great shots, a lot of different kinds of situations.

"We play to entertain, to make the match fun... and we feel the energy (of people) enjoying that."

Federer feat inspires Alcaraz

The Spanish star broke twice to start the match and looked on course for a routine victory when he retrieved an early break in the second set to sweep into a 2-0 lead on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

But Evans countered Alcaraz's brutal groundstrokes with some crafty shotmaking of his own to extend the encounter into a fourth set.

Alcaraz produced an outrageous forehand passing shot down the line to break for 4-2, leaving Evans in disbelief as his brave resistance finally came to an end after a 3hr 11min duel.

HEY JUDE!

Bellingham blows new roof off Madrid stadium with late derby winner

Barcelona, Spain - Jude Bellingham rescued Real Madrid with a 95th minute strike to secure a 2-1 win over Getafe on Saturday and maintain Los Blancos' perfect start to La Liga, as they played with a closed roof at the Santiago Bernabeu for the first time.

The England international netted his fifth goal in four games to snatch three points from the derby clash, Madrid's first game without injured forward Vinicius Junior.

Joselu, the Brazilian's replacement, had pulled Carlo Ancelotti's side level after former Madrid striker Borja Mayoral sent the visitors ahead in the first match under a roof at Madrid's remodelled stadium.

La Liga leaders Madrid started the season with their opening three games all away from home, while construction work continued.

It allowed for the retractable roof to be finished and it was closed on Saturday, with rain hitting the Spanish capital - but not the players.

"It's a spectacular atmosphere, there's something new," Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters.

"I think the fans pushed a lot today, it's a much more enclosed atmosphere.

"You can feel that the fans pushed - it's going to be a very

important help and it was today."

Madrid fans were in good voice and serenaded match-winner Bellingham with The Beatles' song 'Hey Jude'.

Getafe did not include on loan Manchester United striker Mason Greenwood in their squad, after his arrival on Friday.

The forward had been suspended by the Red Devils since January 2022 after facing allegations of abuse although prosecutors subsequently dropped the charges.

"Obviously we can only talk about football, about other issues, I think, that the people and the relevant systems did what they had to do, and everybody knows how it ended - without a condemnatory sentence," said Getafe coach Jose Bordalas.

"Therefore, (he's) a free person, a footballer of the highest level, who comes to Getafe with enormous hope. We are going to help him to recover his best level."

Mayoral started up front for the visitors and, looking to keep his place in the side, he quickly pounced to put the visitors ahead after a heavy Fran Garcia pass.

However Joselu netted his first Madrid goal from close range just after the break when Getafe could not clear Luka Modric's teasing cross.

The Spain international



Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham celebrates after scoring against Getafe on Saturday (AFP)

I think the fans pushed a lot today, it's a much more enclosed atmosphere. You can feel that the fans pushed - it's going to be a very important help and it was today

CARLO ANCELOTTI

started in place of Vinicius, who suffered a hamstring injury last week and is set to miss over a month.

"It's a shame to go behind on the scoreboard but the team worked and we came out with the mentality that we would turn

it around," said Joselu.

'Surprising'

Madrid turned the screw with Toni Kroos and Dani Carvajal hitting the woodwork, while Getafe goalkeeper Soria made a string of good saves.

However the goalkeeper's only mistake ended up costing his team, when he could only parry Lucas Vazquez's long-range drive and Bellingham reacted quickest

to turn the loose ball home.

The former Borussia Dortmund man has now scored five of Madrid's eight La Liga goals this season, helping to fill the void left by Ballon d'Or holder Karim Benzema's departure.

Bellingham joins a small group of players to have netted in each of their first four Liga matches, including Madrid's all-time record goalscorer Cristiano Ronaldo.

'My legs were shaking'

Barcelona, Spain - Jude Bellingham said his legs were left "shaking" as Real Madrid fans serenaded him with The Beatles song 'Hey Jude' on Saturday.

The England international hit a 95th-minute winner for Madrid against Getafe in a derby at the Santiago Bernabeu, securing a 2-1 win with his fifth La Liga goal in four games.

"It's the loudest moment I've heard in a stadium, happily it was for my goal," Bellingham told Real Madrid TV.

"When they were singing 'Hey Jude' at the end, I got goosebumps.

"I just wanted to stand still and listen to them. My legs were shaking. I know I was brought in for these kind of moments, they're the kind of moments I know I can deliver for this team."

Madrid spent over 100 million euros (\$108 million) in the summer to sign Bellingham from Borussia Dortmund, and he has scored in all four matches they have played in La Liga so far this season.

"He's out of the ordinary," said Madrid midfielder Brahim Diaz after the game. Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti praised Bellingham for his strong start to life in the Spanish capital.

"His quality isn't surprising anybody, but the number of goals he's got is surprising," said Ancelotti.

Late Tel goal takes Bayern past stubborn Gladbach

Berlin, Germany - A goal from French teenager Mathys Tel with three minutes remaining took Bayern Munich to a 2-1 win at Borussia Muenchengladbach on Saturday and back to top spot in the Bundesliga.

A first-half strike from Kou Itakura had Gladbach looking like keeping their recent hoodoo over Bayern alive, before Leroy Sane pulled one back midway through the second half.

With the clock winding down, Bayern's Joshua Kimmich curled in a corner and Tel found himself unmarked, with Gladbach's defence focusing their energies on Harry Kane.

Tel headed in, sending the visiting fans into raptures and grabbing the three points for the visitors. Bayern manager Thomas Tuchel said his side's "second half was maybe the best we've played this year" telling Sky "we fully deserved to win. We didn't lose our nerve and we showed our energy."

Gladbach have become Bayern's bogey side over the past decade, despite the Bavarians winning the last 11 Bundesliga titles.

Bayern had won only one of their past seven against Gladbach, a run which included a 5-0 German Cup thumping in 2021, their biggest loss since the



Bayern Munich's Mathys Tel (front) celebrates with Dayot Upamecano after scoring against Borussia Muenchengladbach on Saturday (AFP)

1970s.

Despite scoring seven goals in their first two league games, Bayern had few chances early, Gladbach marking striker Kane out of the game.

The home side broke the deadlock after 30 minutes,

Itakura heading in a rebound from a corner to give his side the lead.

After the match, Bayern veteran Thomas Mueller told Sky "when that goal went in, I thought 'oh no, not again, I'm in the wrong movie."

With Kane receiving Gladbach's attention, Sane found space and looked the most likely, rattling the crossbar five minutes from half-time.

The former Man City winger eventually got his side on the board in the second half, pivoting

after collecting a Kimmich chip and sliding the ball into goal with the studs of his boot.

Tel, 18, came off the bench in the 81st minute and scored just six minutes later to snare the three points for Bayern.

Boniface brace

Nigeria striker Victor Boniface scored in each half to help Bayer Leverkusen to a 5-1 victory over promoted Darmstadt.

Boniface, 22, who arrived from Belgian side Union Saint-Gilloise in the summer, opened the scoring with a superb solo effort, slicing through the Darmstadt defence before elegantly chipping the goalkeeper.

Yet to claim a point in two matches after returning to the top division this season, Darmstadt equalised shortly after, Oscar Vilhelmsson tapping in from close range.

Argentina World Cup winner Exequiel Palacios scored straight after half-time, his shot taking two fortunate deflections on the way to goal.

Leverkusen then put the game to bed with two goals in six minutes - another for Boniface and one for Germany winger Jonas Hofmann, his first for his new club since moving from Borussia Muenchengladbach.



Lazio's Daichi Kamada celebrates after scoring against Napoli

Kamada fires Lazio to shock win at champions Napoli

Naples, Italy - Daichi Kamada handed Napoli the first defeat of their Serie A title defence on Saturday with the winning goal in Lazio's eventful 2-1 win in Naples.

Japan midfielder Kamada lashed in his first goal for Lazio since signing from Eintracht Frankfurt this summer in the 52nd minute to give Lazio their first points of the season.

Luis Alberto netted Lazio's opener in a deserved win which lifted Maurizio Sarri's side from the relegation zone and into mid-table.

Lazio were unlucky not to win by more at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona as they had

two further goals from Mattia Zaccagni and debutant Matteo Guendouzi, who was excellent as a second half substitute, ruled out for offside.

"Everyone put themselves on the line... tonight we showed what we could do against the best team in Serie A," said Luis Alberto to DAZN.

"It wasn't an easy week for us or for me and this brilliant display helped us to shake off a few things."

Piotr Zielinski levelled for Napoli almost immediately after Luis Alberto's 30th minute opener but the hosts did very little once Kamada put Lazio in front.

Ahly, Wydad could meet in first African Football League final

Johannesburg, South Africa - Al Ahly of Egypt and Wydad Casablanca of Morocco, winners and runners-up respectively in the 2023 CAF Champions League, could clash again in the inaugural African Football League final.

Ahly are away to Simba of Tanzania in the opening match

on October 20 and, if successful in the two-leg quarter-final, will meet Petro Luanda of Angola or Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa in the semi-finals.

Should Wydad overcome Enyimba of Nigeria at the last-eight stage, they will face TP Mazembe from the Democratic Republic of Congo or Esperance

of Tunisia for a place in the final.

Matches between Ahly and Wydad are among the most anticipated in the continent with the Cairo outfit winning 2-1 and home and drawing 1-1 in the last Champions League final.

Each tie will be played over two legs with the final scheduled for November 5 and 11.

The competition was called the Africa Super League when launched in Tanzania last year, but CAF president Patrice Motsepe said the name was changed after advice from undisclosed Europeans.

"Our friends in Europe advised us not to use the expression 'super league'," said the

South African billionaire.

"This advice was based on negative associations with the failed attempt in 2021 to launch a super league in Europe."

A planned European Super League collapsed within 48 hours after a backlash from players, supporters and governments forced nine of the 12

clubs who signed up to pull out.

Launched as a 24-club, 197-fixture competition spanning nine months, the African Football League has been dramatically scaled down without an official explanation. CAF officials have said the original 24-club concept will be introduced for the 2024-2025 edition.

DRAW

QUARTER-FINALS

Simba (TAN) v Al Ahly (EGY)

TP Mazembe (COD) v Esperance (TUN)

Enyimba (NGR) v Wydad Casablanca (MAR)

Petro Luanda (ANG) v Mamelodi Sundowns (RSA)

PERFECT 10

Red Bull’s Max Verstappen claims record 10th straight Formula One win at Italian GP

Monza, Italy - Max Verstappen wrote his name in Formula One’s history books on Sunday after winning a record-breaking 10th straight race, coming out on top at the Italian Grand Prix in another show of force from Red Bull.

The reigning world champion dominated on a beautiful day in northern Italy which left Ferrari fans disappointed, with Verstappen’s teammate Sergio Perez finishing second ahead of home hope and pole-sitter Carlos Sainz.

Red Bull hailed a “stroll in the park” after a brilliant one-two which extended Verstappen’s lead on Perez at the top of the drivers’ standings to 145 points and also maintained a perfect team record of 14 wins from as many GPs this season.

“I never thought at the beginning of the season that something like this was possible. Very proud, but also just very happy with the race in general,” Verstappen told reporters.

“At one point Carlos had a little lock up which gave me a little run at turn two, and once I got into the lead I could just focus on my own pace.”

Spaniard Sainz crossed more than 11 seconds behind Verstappen despite a valiant performance in an exciting race.

The red sea of home fans loudly chanted “Carlos, Carlos” in appreciation of Sainz’s first podium finish of the year, just

ahead of fellow Ferrari man Charles Leclerc who was the last Scuderia driver to win at Monza in 2019.

“Very happy because P3 at Monza in front of the ‘tifosi’ is as good as it can get, at least for this weekend because Red Bull were in the end quite a bit quicker than us as we expected,” said Sainz.

“It was a day to try and I did everything I could to keep them behind.”

Verstappen has now won 12 of this season’s races and is all but certain to claim his third consecutive F1 title after breaking a

Sainz knew he had to keep Verstappen at bay in the opening two corners just after lights out and he drew a massive cheer from the stands once he was round the third Biassona turn and still ahead.

Verstappen was practically attached to Sainz’s rear with Leclerc pursuing close behind in support of his teammate.

But Sainz’s resistance ended at the start of lap 15 when Verstappen pounced on a slow exit from the first corner and surged into the lead. Verstappen was back in front 10 laps later after a

I never would have believed that it (the record) was possible but we had to work for it today, that definitely made it a little bit more tough. I was just trying to stay patient

MAX VERSTAPPEN

record he shared with Sebastian Vettel by winning in Zandvoort last weekend. He needs four more wins from the season’s remaining eight GPs to break his own record for victories in one year and is 90 points away from the all-time highest tally of 454 he accumulated in 2022.

The Dutch driver made it 10 in a row in a race which was delayed by 20 minutes and cut to 51 laps after Yuki Tsunoda’s AlphaTauri car suffered a power-unit failure during the pre-race formation lap.

round of pit stops, blowing past former title rival Lewis Hamilton and showing the rest of the field a clean pair of heels.

With first place all-but sewn up Ferrari battled to keep the two other podium spots but Perez slipped past Sainz at the start of lap 45 to demonstrate Red Bull’s dominance.

All that was left was for Ferrari’s pair to do battle for a spot on the podium, with Sainz just holding on after another race in which no-one could handle Red Bull’s power.



Red Bull Racing’s Max Verstappen celebrates with the trophy after winning the Italian Formula One Grand Prix in Monza on Sunday (AFP)

Aleix Espargaro devotes Catalunya MotoGP win to crash victim Bagnaia

Montmeló, Spain - Aleix Espargaro said “this one’s for Pecco” after winning a Catalunya MotoGP at Montmeló on Sunday marred by world champion Francesco Bagnaia’s horrific crash.

Espargaro’s Aprilia teammate Maverick Vinales took second with Jorge Martin completing the podium at the Montmeló circuit.

As Espargaro celebrated a dream double at his home race after also winning Saturday’s sprint, Bagnaia was receiving medical attention in a local hospital.

The Italian Ducati star had set off from pole. He avoided a multi-bike pile up at turn one but at the next corner lost control. Bagnaia was thrown violently into the air in front of the chasing pack.

Brad Binder’s KTM then ran over Bagnaia’s leg.

The series leader was conscious, and taken away to the



Aprilia’s Aleix Espargaro celebrates with his team members after winning the Catalunya GP on Sunday (AFP)

track’s medical centre in an ambulance, with the crowd clapping him.

He was later transferred to the local hospital.

MotoGP’s medical director

area,” he told Spanish broadcaster DAZN.

“We have taken x-rays of this area and have detected a small injury but we don’t know if it is current or old. We need to do an urgent CAT scan and that is why we have sent him to the general hospital,” he added.

“At cranial, thoracic and abdominal levels, he has been normal at all times. He was conscious and oriented.”

Espargaro’s thoughts were with the stricken world champion.

“This win is for Pecco, luckily we’ve just heard it’s nothing serious,” he said.

Turning to his finest weekend in MotoGP he added: “I’m speechless.

“Thankfully nothing happened to us on the first lap. It was difficult in the wind. I thought I would not catch him (Vinales), but I waited and I did it.”

AFP



Mauricio Pochettino

Pochettino wants young Chelsea team to learn from Forest shock

London, United Kingdom - Mauricio Pochettino admitted his youthful Chelsea side need to be more mature after their shock 1-0 defeat against Nottingham Forest on Saturday.

Anthony Elanga’s goal condemned Pochettino’s side to their second loss in the Argentine’s four Premier League games in charge.

Former Manchester United winger Elanga punished a mistake from Moises Caicedo, raced onto Taiwo Awoniyi’s pass and slotted home in the 48th minute at Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea have won just once in the league this season and are languishing in 11th place. Pochettino kept faith with the starting line-up that beat Luton 3-0 in the league last week, but his inexperienced team struggled to impose themselves against Forest.

England Under-21 forward Cole Palmer, signed from Manchester City on Friday, was one of several raw substitutes introduced by Pochettino to no avail in the second half.

AFP

Monaco go top in France as Lens plunge into ‘dire straits’

Paris, France - Monaco moved to the top of Ligue 1 on Saturday with a 3-0 win over last season’s runners-up Lens who sunk into the relegation zone with even their coach admitting they are in “dire straits”.

Ivory Coast striker Wilfried Singo headed in the opener for Monaco in the 23rd minute with Aleksandr Golovin stretching the lead 13 minutes later.

Guillermo Maripan added the third just before the hour mark as Monaco eased to a third victory in four matches this season.

Monaco have 10 points and are two points in front of Marseille who were held to a 1-1 draw by Nantes on Friday.

“After five minutes, we were



Monaco’s Takumi Minamino hurdles past Facundo Medina of Lens during their French L1 match on Saturday (AFP)

the bosses on the pitch,” said Monaco coach Adi Hutter.

“I’m happy because we played

tory.”

For Lens, it was their third defeat of the campaign and they are second from bottom.

It is a worrying start to the season for northerners Lens who were second last season, only missing out on the Ligue 1 title by a point to Paris Saint Germain.

They will also start their Champions League campaign in just under three weeks’ time against Sevilla.

Franck Haise’s team created very few chances on Saturday in a game where record 30-million-euro signing Elye Wahi struggled to make an impact.

“We’re a squad in dire straits,” said Haise.

AFP



Liverpool’s Mohamed Salah celebrates after scoring against Aston Villa on Sunday (AFP)

Liverpool hint at title challenge in Aston Villa cruise

Liverpool, United Kingdom - Liverpool looked like the dominant Jurgen Klopp side of old as a 3-0 win over Aston Villa at Anfield on Sunday maintained the Reds’ unbeaten start to the new season.

Dominik Szoboszlai, with his first goal for the club, and Mohamed Salah were on target either side of Matty Cash’s own goal.

Victory takes the Reds to within two points of Manchester City at the top of the Premier League. But it was the manner of victory and a return of 10 points from a tricky opening four games of the new season that will have Liverpool fans dreaming of a title challenge once more.

Either side of Liverpool’s first title in 30 years in 2020, Klopp’s men missed out on the title to City twice by a solitary point in 2019 and 2022.

However, last season they slumped to fifth in the Premier League to miss out on Champions League football for the first time in seven years.

A return to the top four

looked like it could be the limit of Liverpool’s ambitions for the new campaign after a difficult summer in the transfer market led them to miss out on a number of targets.

Klopp has had to completely rebuild his midfield, but new signings Szoboszlai and Alexis Mac Allister have slotted in with ease.

Arguably the Reds’ most important business of the window was turning down a huge offer from Saudi side Al-Ittihad for Mohamed Salah this week.

Salah was a constant threat and there is little doubting Liverpool’s firepower up front with Darwin Nunez now finding his feet after a difficult first season. Nunez was rewarded for his match-winning contribution off the bench with two goals away to Newcastle last weekend with his first start of the season.

The Uruguayan’s pace and power consistently exposed the Villa defence but it was from a set-piece that the home side broke the deadlock after just three minutes.

Bangladesh make 334-5 against Afghanistan

Lahore, Pakistan - All-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Najmul Hossain Shanto smashed cracking centuries to help Bangladesh to a solid 334-5 in their must-win Asia Cup match against Afghanistan in Lahore on Sunday.

Miraz hit a 119-ball 112 for his highest ODI score while Shanto scored a 105-ball 104 as Bangladesh - who won the toss and batted - put up their highest ODI total outside their own country.

The pair lifted their team from the loss of Mohammad Naim (28) and Towhid Hridoy (0) through a third-wicket stand of 194 off 190 balls.

'We had the result in our hands'

Shaheen says partnerships key after Pakistan pacers rattle India

Kandy, Sri Lanka - Pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi said bowling in partnerships was the key to rattling India's batting in the blockbuster Asia Cup clash abandoned because of rain.

The left-arm fast bowler took four wickets, including the prize top-order dismissals of India captain Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, as Pakistan gained a psychological edge over their great rivals, who had elected to bat first in Kandy on Saturday.

The two teams could potentially clash twice more in the Asia Cup if both reach the final, ahead



Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi (C) celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of India's Rohit Sharma

of a highly anticipated 50-over World Cup clash in Ahmedabad next month.

Shaheen, who finished with 4-35, and fellow quick Haris Rauf reduced India to 66-4 before a fightback by Ishan Kishan, who made 82, and Hardik Pandya (87) lifted India to 266 all out.

New-ball-partner Naseem Shah did not get his first wicket until the 45th over but then struck twice more to wrap up the India innings in 48.5 overs.

Rain meant Pakistan were unable to bat and the points shared.

It was enough to put Pakistan into the Super Four stage of the Asia Cup and India will join them if they avoid defeat to Nepal at the same ground on Monday.

"Mickey (Arthur) always says 'fast bowlers win you tournaments' and we always try to bowl in partnerships," said Shaheen of the national team director in a video chat on the Pakistan

Cricket Board's social media.

He said the role of Haris Rauf, the third member of a daunting pace attack, was "to instil fear in the opposition batsmen with pace and bouncers, while Naseem and I rely on swing".

Shaheen set up Rohit, on 11, with two outswingers and brought the next back in to smash the off stump of the Indian captain.

Kohli was the next to go on four as he chopped on a length delivery outside the off stump from Shaheen.

"Virat is the backbone of the Indian team and getting his wicket was crucial," said Shaheen, who was confident Pakistan could have won had the weather not intervened.

"We had the result in our hands. But overall the team performance in one innings was very good."

AFP

Zimbabwe cricket great Heath Streak dies aged 49

Johannesburg, South Africa - Heath Streak, one of Zimbabwe's greatest cricketers, died on Sunday aged 49, his wife said in a social media post. He had been battling colon and liver cancer.

"In the early hours of this morning, Sunday 3 September, the greatest love of my life and the father of my beautiful chil-

dren, was carried to be with the angels from his home where he wished to spend his last days surrounded by his family and closest loved ones," Nadine Streak wrote.

A family member told AFP Streak died on his cattle farm 55 kilometres (34 miles) north east of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second most populous city.

"Heath had travelled to South Africa several times each month for treatment. At home, he spent much of his time fishing and farming," said the member, who requested anonymity.

Streak was an outstanding fast bowler and capable batsman. He was a key member of Zimbabwe teams that were competitive against cricket's

bigger nations in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

His cricket career ended in ignominy, however, when he was banned for eight years for breaching the International Cricket Council (ICC) anti-corruption code.

It was announced in May this year that Streak was seriously ill -- and it was reported in August

that he had died, following a message on social media from former teammate Henry Olonga.

Streak himself was quick to assert that he was still alive, but not before numerous tributes by former teammates and opponents.

In a tribute on Sunday, Olonga wrote on Facebook: "RIP Streaky. You were a titan."



Heath Streak

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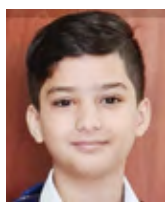
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CHINESE ETHICS

AI

REGULATING

CHINA
SETS NEW
RULES ON
AI-GENERATED
CONTENT TO
AVOID MISUSE
OF FALSE AND
HARMFUL
INFORMATION

China put into force last week its newest regulations on artificial intelligence-generated content, a watered-down version of stricter draft rules that seek to keep the country in the AI race while maintaining firm censorship on online content.

Rapid advancements in generative AI have stoked global alarm over the technology's potential for disinformation and misuse, with deepfake images showing people mouthing things they never said.

Chinese companies have rushed to develop artificial intelligence services that can mimic human speech since the release of San Francisco-based OpenAI's ChatGPT, which is banned in the country.

Experts say the 24 new rules appear to be diluted from strict draft regulations published earlier this year as Beijing seeks to encourage homegrown entrants to the US-dominated industry.

Here's what you need to know about Beijing's regulations, which target services for the general public:

AI ethics

Generative AI must 'adhere to the core values of socialism' and refrain from threatening national security and promoting terrorism, violence, or ethnic hatred, according to the guidelines.

Service providers must label AI-generated content as such, and take measures to prevent gender, age and racial discrimination when designing algorithms. Their software should not create content that contains 'false and harmful information'.

AI programmes must be trained on legally obtained data sources that do not infringe on others' intellectual property rights, and individuals must give consent before their personal information can be used in AI training.

Safety measures

Companies designing publicly available generative AI software must take effective measures to prevent underage users from excessive reliance on or addiction to generative AI services, according to the rules published in July by Beijing's cyberspace watchdog.

They must also establish mechanisms for the public to report inappropriate content, and promptly delete any illegal content.

Service providers must conduct security assessments and submit filings on their algorithms to the authorities if their software is judged to have an impact on public opinion, the rules say - a step back from a stipulation in earlier draft rules that required security assessments for all public-facing programmes.

Enforcement

The rules are technically 'provisional measures' subject to the conditions of pre-existing Chinese laws. They are the latest in a series of regulations targeting various aspects of AI technology, including guidelines on deep learning technology that came into effect earlier this year.

"From the outset and somewhat differently from the EU, China has taken a more vertical or narrow approach to creating relevant legislation, focusing more on specific issues," partners at international law firm Taylor Wessing said.

While an earlier draft of the rules suggested a fine of up to 100,000 yuan (US\$13,824) for violations, the latest version says anyone breaking the rules will be issued with a warning or face suspension, receiving more severe punishment only if they are found to be in breach of actual laws.

"Chinese legislation falls between the EU and the United States, with the EU taking the most stringent approach and the United States adopting the most lenient one," Angela Zhang, associate professor of law at Hong Kong University, said.

Supporting innovation

Jeremy Daum, Senior Fellow of the Yale Law School Paul Tsai China Center, noted that while an earlier draft of the rules was partly aimed at maintaining censors' strict control over online content, several restrictions on generative AI that had appeared in an earlier draft regulation had been softened.

"Many of the strictest controls now yield significantly to another factor: promoting development and innovation in the AI industry," Daum wrote on his China Law Translate blog.

The scope of the rules has been dramatically narrowed to apply only to generative AI programmes available to the public, excluding research and development uses.

"The shift might be viewed as indicating that Beijing subscribes to the idea of an AI race in which it must remain competitive," Daum said.

AFP

A man takes a picture of robots during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai. (Below) Two men look at a game character produced by AI during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC)



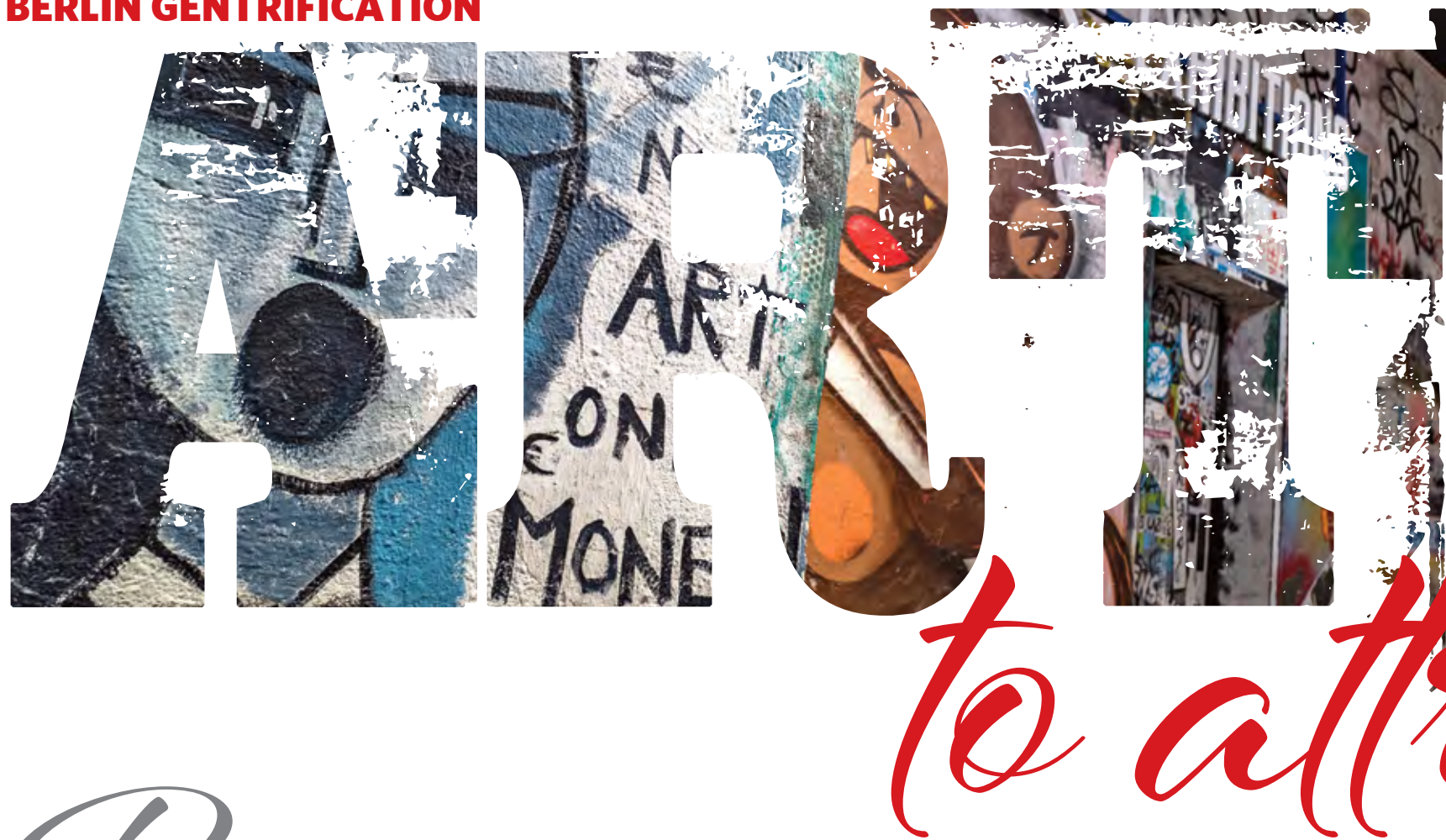
Chinese legislation falls between the EU and the United States, with the EU taking the most stringent approach and the United States adopting the most lenient one

ANGELA ZHANG



A child admires exhibits at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference

BERLIN GENTRIFICATION



Young artists flocked to east Berlin after the fall of the Wall in 1989, drawn by the low cost of living. With the turn of the millennium, many were forced to leave to make way for redevelopment

Berlin's Tacheles art squat, a symbol of the anything-goes vibe of the city after the fall of the Wall, is completing a disputed transformation into offices, shops and luxury flats.

An outlet of the Fotografiska museum chain is set to open inside the hulking, battle-scarred edifice on September 14 and the first residents of newly built homes will move in this autumn.

When it is completed, planned for the end of 2024, the complex will boast 265 apartments sized from 25 to 360sqm as well as new digs in the German capital for the likes of Netflix and Pfizer.

Of the 176 apartments available for purchase - with prices per square metre ranging from 9,500 to 30,000 euros (US\$10,300 to US\$32,600) - around 45 are still for sale, according to developer PWR. The remaining 89 apartments are reserved for rental.

Investment fund Perella Weinberg Real Estate bought the property encompassing 25,300sqm in 2014 for 150 million euros - a steal in the current market.

In addition to the historic building that will house Fotografiska Berlin, the site will include an ultramod-

"In East Berlin, many properties were returned to their former owners or their descendants, and this almost always resulted in resale to real estate speculators," Matthias Bernt, an urban planner at the Leibniz centre, said.

Property prices soared, touching off waves of displacement from the heart of the city that have gathered pace in recent years.

Playground

Bruno di Martino was among those impacted. When forced to leave Tacheles, he set up his studio in the Friedrichshain district on another disused site - RAW - previously owned by the German railways.

For him, the new Tacheles complex is 'a pure profit project aimed at the privileged few'.

"Berlin used to attract tourists for its artists, its underground, its alternative side,



Graffiti left over from its previous incarnation decorates a wall in the new Fotografiska museum



AB Yoram Roth (L), chairman, Fotografiska Holding, Yusef Hammoudah (R) director of Fotografiska Berlin, and Marina Paulenka (C) director of exhibitions in Fotografiska museum

People want to keep certain things for ever in a certain way. But, I think, it's also important to remember that whatever happened there was born out of serious tragedy

AB YORAM ROTH
Fotografiska executive chairman

ern open-air shopping plaza and glass-and-steel office compounds.

Tacheles, which means 'straight talk' in Yiddish, was a popular department store in the early part of the 20th century but suffered damage during World War II and was partially demolished by the East German communists.

Young artists flocked to east Berlin after the fall of the Wall in 1989, drawn by the low cost of living, and squatted disused buildings including the dilapidated five-storey complex on Oranienburger Street.

At its peak as a subculture hub, the graffiti-covered Tacheles housed a cinema, restaurant and bar, as well as art studios and galleries, drawing about 400,000 visitors a year. However in 2012, bailiffs and police evicted the artists to make way for construction work, signalling the end of an era.

"Between 2010 and 2012, we were threatened, offered money to leave and had our electricity cut off," Bruno di Martino, a 56-year-old Frenchman who had his studio at the Tacheles since 2006, said.

Waves of displacement

"After the downfall of the communist regime in the former GDR in 1990, it was no longer clear who owned the buildings," said Hanno Hochmuth, historian at the Leibniz research centre in Potsdam.

The chaotic conditions allowed for creative ferment, making the 'new' Berlin a unique attraction with countless blank slates for development.

but all that is in danger of disappearing," he said.

There is a certain irony that the Fotografiska photography museum is moving into the building where art was once made. A top-to-bottom renovation has nevertheless retained some of their graffiti and artwork.

"We think it's important to continue the spirit of the building," Fotografiska executive chairman Yoram Roth told AFP. "It was a creative hub. It inspired creativity."

Born in West Berlin and a descendant of Holocaust survivors, Roth rejects criticism of the city's rampant real estate development.

"There is this romantic view of what happened here after the Wall fell," he said. "People want to keep certain things for ever in a certain way. But I think it's also important to remember that whatever happened there was born out of serious tragedy," including two world wars and the Cold War.

Roth said Berlin was calling time on the city as a 'playground' of vacant lots and squatted property.

"It's normal to expect this space to fill back in with something."

AFP



The newly built 'Am Tacheles' urban complex which includes the new Fotografiska museum