

NEWS BRIEF

ICV OF ENTERPRISES EXCEEDS RO9BN IN Q2 2023

Muscat - The total in-country value (ICV) of active enterprises in the sultanate during the second quarter of 2023 reached RO9.09bn, according to the monthly bulletin issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The contribution of active enterprises to the gross domestic product at current prices in the second quarter of 2023 reached 90.1% compared to 86.1% in the second quarter of 2022.

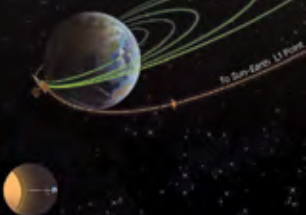
The ICV of large enterprises amounted to RO6.42bn, constituting 63.7% of the total, down 12.7% compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

04



Oman, US sign agreements bolstering trade, investment

09



India's Aditya-L1 heads for centre of the solar system



Proposal to integrate health services in GCC

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Sultanate of Oman has proposed the integration of specialised health services and launch of telemedicine clinics for rare diseases in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

These proposals were made at the ninth meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Health of GCC and the 86th General Conference of GCC and Yemen, aiming to enhance the complementarity in specialised services among the GCC nations.

By doing so, all GCC countries can afford to access any Gulf specialised centre's services while assuring quality. The spe-

Integration of specialised health services has the potential of strengthening health systems and elevating the quality of services for the Gulf community

H E DR HILAL ALI AL SABTI

ciality of these centres include corneal and organ transplantation, toxicology, joint replacement, diagnostics and therapeutic intervention.

The proposed integration aims to send eligible patients to centres of excellence within the GCC, facilitating the exchange of expertise and multi-centre studies in the region.

Additionally, the meeting

broached Oman's proposal to activate telemedicine clinics for rare diseases. This initiative seeks to establish a joint electronic platform for all GCC countries, enabling physicians to discuss and monitor various rare or unresponsive medical cases, enhancing regional medical collaboration.

H E Dr Hilal Ali al Sabti, Oman's Minister of Health, em-

phasised the importance of this integration, noting its potential to strengthen health systems and elevate the quality of services for the Gulf community.

This unified approach could positively impact the rapidly growing health sector in the GCC, as indicated by the growth in the number of government health centres, private pharmacies and hospital beds in the region between 2016 and 2021.

The meeting highlighted the shared commitment among GCC countries to bolster cooperation, promote technological advancements and enhance the healthcare sector's overall efficiency and effectiveness in the region.

SAYYID FAHD RECEIVES GCC MINISTERS OF HEALTH



H H Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, received GCC ministers of health participating in the ninth meeting of GCC Health Ministers hosted by the sultanate on Sunday. H H Sayyid Fahd expressed Oman's appreciation for the efforts exerted in the field of health to push the march of GCC action forward (ONA)

GCC underscores commitment to SDGs, inclusivity at UN General Assembly

Muscat - In a statement at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries underscored their commitment to sustainable development in accordance with international principles.

H E Dr Mohammed bin Awad



H E Dr Mohammed al Hassan

al Hassan, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman at the UN, emphasised the importance of avoiding actions that could hinder developing nations in achieving sustainable development goals.

The GCC countries high-

lighted the significance of intensifying efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. These include prioritising investment in Sustainable Development Goals and bolstering sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth.

The bloc also advocated reforms in the international financial structure and emphasised the need to explore transparent ways to measure progress in sustainable development.

H E Hassan's statement outlined the GCC countries' dedica-

tion to their national plans and strategies, aspiring for prosperity, peace and partnership in alignment with the 2030 plan.

He reiterated the global nature of the 2030 Agenda, affirming it is based on the noble principles of the Charter of the UN.

JINAN ISLAND: A CAPTIVATING OASIS OF LUXURY

In a new era of luxury, Al Mouj Muscat's Jinan Island villas stand apart as exquisite masterpieces that merge opulence with nature's serenity. Tucked away amidst lush parkland surrounding a tranquil lake in the heart of Ghadeer District, the exclusive collection brings an unparalleled luxury lakeside living to the heart of the capital.

The residents-only neighbourhood is an oasis of calm with three different villa styles each a balance of contemporary amenities, style and comfort, indoors and outdoors. The Alaya Villas, boasting approximately 906 sqm set over three floors, offer mesmerizing views of the lake with every detailed carefully designed to inspire an unmatched lifestyle from its stunning top floor penthouse suite to its private Zen Garden. Overlooking the central park, the five-bedroom Amara Villas provide over 455 sqm of exquisite luxury living.

Curated with discerning taste, these villas redefine grandeur with awe-inspiring entrances,

towering windows, walk-in wardrobes, spa-like ensuite bathrooms, and exclusive private pools. Seamlessly marrying interior and exterior spaces, each villa is bathed in natural light, fostering a connection to lush gardens and terraces - a sanctuary for everyday living and unforgettable celebrations.

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Home to over 8000 residents from 85 nationalities, Al Mouj Muscat redefines urban living in Oman, offering authentic hospitality coupled with an unbeatable modern-day offering. From its best-in-class business park, championship golf course, and luxurious accommodations to its culinary delights and high-end shopping on the country's largest marina, it is 'the' destination to savour life's most exquisite moments.

Al Mouj Muscat's striking oceanside views, beautiful beach, landscaped parks and promenade, in addition to its award-winning architecture, are the perfect setting to live your best life, inspire the best version of you, and discover endless possibilities.



Elegance and Exclusivity

Jinan Island villa is an investment in luxury lakeside living, privacy, and exclusivity. It's a place where you can truly relax, rejuvenate and lose yourself. A place of peace and tranquility, immersed in beauty and serenity





Save energy, save rials!

Skyrocketing electricity and water bills are a growing concern among citizens and expatriates alike. This issue weighs heavily on the people. As temperatures soar, so do the concerns about paying high electricity bills. Considering these high bills in summers, what steps should people adopt to ration consumption and what measures should authorities take to streamline billing? Here's what readers of *Muscat Daily* said -



Majid Khalfan
Salesman

I think the best way to cut costs is to always switch off the air conditioner when there is no one at home. Many people prefer to keep ACs on when they go out. This is unnecessary consumption of electricity. Also, one must keep windows open for some time in the morning.

Sijo Jose
Finance professional

Following Earth Hour once a month is wise - turn off everything for an hour. But on other days, make sure to turn off all appliances when not in use,

even if it's just for a few seconds. Explore nature and the scenic beauty of Oman in the evening, limiting the usage of electricity. Do not charge phone batteries unless they go below 30 per cent. Read from printed books rather than Kindle. Monitor electricity consumption, and when possible, switch to hand fans, hand mixers and whisks. Unplug refrigerators and uninterruptible power supply when you travel outstation. Install automatic turning-off systems for air conditioners. Save energy, save rials!

Vophelyea Has Sun
Digital creator

Improve education on how each child

and family member can help conserve water and electricity. This effort should start at home and continue in academic institutions and offices. Also, initiate planting greens in spaces within the family grounds. These initiatives should be a cooperative effort among citizens, residents and authorities. Billing should be done regularly on a monthly basis by the office in charge. There should be a graph showing the household consumption for each month so that usage can be tracked.

Srikanth Ayyagari
Project sales manager

Individuals can effectively manage energy consumption by using energy-efficient appliances, adopting eco-friendly lighting solutions and addressing energy leaks. Authorities should prioritise transparent data collection and billing, invest in smart me-

tering for accuracy and actively educate consumers on conservation. Collaboration between citizens and the government is essential for sustainable utility management.

Shareen Firdosia
Private sector employee

Reduce wastage. Unplug electrical appliances when not in use. Use lights and fans only when necessary. Set air conditioning at 24°C. Use kitchen water to water plants. Use water cautiously by opening taps only as much as needed.

Muhammed Rafi
Businessman

This increase in electricity bills is a problem for common people like us. We believe that there will be a concerted intervention from the government to resolve this.

? NEXT ON YOUR SAY

The authorities have launched a mandatory insurance policy for organisers of adventure tourism activities. How will this decision support adventure tourism and what else is needed to develop the sector?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by *Muscat Daily*. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om You can also log on to our Facebook page or tweet us your comments on the issue.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram

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Awareness campaign launched for Aber app

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has launched a marketing and awareness campaign for the Aber app, under the slogan 'Know your fare', with the objective of regulating taxis in Oman.

In a statement, MTCIT said, 'The campaign aims to regulate taxi activities in Oman as well as protect the rights of users and drivers, while maximising benefits for taxi owners by taking advantage of the features available in the app.'

The campaign is expected to improve operations of taxis in Oman in three phases.

The first phase began on Sunday, targeting taxis operating at airports. Phase II will begin on



November 1, targeting taxis operating at hotels, commercial centres and ports, and Phase III will begin on January 1, 2024 targeting taxis operating in public places.

The Aber app is a single window that includes all licensed taxis in Oman, offering easy ac-

cess and registration in one place. Earlier, MTCIT granted two licences - to the Otaxi app and Oman Taxi app - to manage taxi services at Muscat International Airport, after they met the requirements and provisions of the regulations of the Land Transport Law.

Over 80% construction work of Ain al Kasfa project complete

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The development project at Ain al Kasfa is rapidly approaching completion with 80% of the construction work over and projected completion set for the end of 2023.

This announcement was made by Badr Mohammed al Saidi, Director General of South Batinah Municipality, on Sunday.

The development, costing RO400,000, encompasses 14

diverse projects to enhance the site's appeal to tourists and provide amenities.

The development will include swimming pools, restaurants and cafes, expanded parking facilities and a heritage market, among other attractions. "These upgrades are poised to make the Ain al Kasfa hot water spring, renowned for its therapeutic sulphur content, even more appealing to tourists," Saidi said.

He also underscored an extensive collaboration with the

Office of Governor of South Batinah and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for the project.

Saidi said an influx of tourists is anticipated following completion, attracted by the enhanced facilities and the site's natural beauty. "The additional services and facilities included in the project will ensure an enjoyable and convenient experience for all visitors, further bolstering the location's status as a prime tourist destination and promoting economic growth."

MUSCAT DAILY celebrating 14th ANNIVERSARY

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The 'Top Three' most interesting entries will be published in Muscat Daily, on October 10, and will win a One-night Stay for two persons each at Barceló Mussanah Resort

عالي البروتين و قليل السكر

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Celebrating the elderly: Special event on Oct 7

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To celebrate International Day of Older Persons observed on October 1, Ihsaan Association and the Ministry of Health will host a special day of entertainment for the elderly in the Sur al Hadeed area of Seeb on October 7.

Jokha Mohammed Khamis al Farsi, head and founder of Ihsaan Association, told *Muscat Daily* that the event will be held from 4pm to 10pm. Over 300 people are expected to participate.



We hold awareness seminars – in schools and Omani women’s associations – and talks on the assistance required by the elderly. We have provided access to 5,000 elderly persons to hospitals in Oman so far

JOKHA MOHAMMED KHAMIS AL FARSI

“The event will feature a variety of activities, including a 1km seaside walk for the elderly and their children, a theatrical performance highlighting the significance of parental care, and screening of short awareness films,” she said.

The venue will also have a dedicated section to showcase items of productive families, including handicrafts, Omani clothes and traditional Omani food.

The aim of this gathering is to underscore the importance of elderly care and support within the community, encourage physical activity among the elderly, and endorse the products of productive families, Jokha informed and urged people to join the event and extend their support to the elderly.

Outlining the association’s ongoing efforts, Jokha said that it provides an ambulance service

to help the elderly and the disabled reach hospitals for routine check-ups and other healthcare needs. The association started services of its sixth ambulance recently.

“We hold awareness seminars – in schools and Omani women’s associations – and talks on the assistance required by the elderly. We have provided ac-

cess to 5,000 elderly persons to hospitals in Oman so far,” Jokha added.

The association also provides medical aid for the elderly at low prices, including prosthetic limbs for individuals with limited income. “We will continue our awareness campaign to cover all wilayats of the sultanate,” Jokha informed.

Discussing the association’s future, Jokha revealed plans to establish a permanent headquarters and expressed her hope that the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning allocate land for the same so that Ihsaan’s valuable services to the elderly community continues.

Dhakhliyah receives over 290 investment applications

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has stated that Dhakhliyah received 296 applications in the first half of 2023 to establish various kinds of foreign investment projects in the governorate.

According to Hilal bin Badr al Rashidi, Director of Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Dhakhliyah, there are ten investment opportunities available in different sectors in Dhakhliyah.

The volume of investment in the governorate reached RO29.2mn in the first half of this year.



Hilal bin Badr al Rashidi

Rashidi informed that the total number of commercial records submitted in H1 2023 was 26,507, compared to 25,847 in 2022, which was 7.7 per cent more than the 2021 annual figure of 23,994.

He added that 23 permits have been approved to hold exhibitions in various wilayats of

the governorate this year, including specialised exhibitions, expos for national industries, consumer shows and entertainment festivals, compared to 14 exhibitions in 2022.

There were 321 applications for promotional offers and discounts this year.

“The Directorate of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion registered two Omani companies as closed joint stock companies with a capital of RO8mn,” Rashidi said.

The total number of projects in Nizwa Industrial City, with an investment volume of RO471mn, has reached 166, while Samail Industrial City has 156 projects with an investment of about RO155mn.

MHT project monitors meteorite entry, landing site in real-time

Our correspondent
Muscat

In a first-of-its-kind project in the region, Oman has succeeded in monitoring and documenting the entry of meteorites into its airspace in real time and pinpointing the exact location of fall.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has announced the real-time documentation of the first meteorite samples entering Oman’s airspace via its Meteorite Monitoring Project.

In collaboration with the Natural History Museum of Bern, Switzerland and with technical assistance of Curtin University of Australia, MHT has established meteorite tracking devices in desert locations.

These devices are now pro-



(Supplied image)

ducing accurate data on meteorite activity in the sultanate. In a statement, the ministry said that the precise geographical location of where a meteorite fell was calculated, making it easier for the Omani-Swiss scientific team to swiftly reach the site. The meteorite samples weighed 8.2gm

and 13.8gm.

Chemical analyses and correlation studies between monitoring data and meteorite isotope analysis have been completed in a laboratory in the University of Freiburg, Germany.

Classified as Breccia H5-6, the meteorite was officially named ‘Al Khadhaf’, having fallen in the Al Khadhaf area of the wilayat of Thumrait. Analysis indicates the meteorite originated from the inner part of an asteroid belt located between Mars and Jupiter.

‘This significant achievement highlights the advanced technological capabilities for searching and finding observed meteorites in Oman. The Al Khadhaf meteorite is the first found by monitoring devices in the sultanate.’



(Supplied photo)

Oman to host NASA Space Apps Hackathon on Oct 7

Muscat - Oman, represented by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences Ibra, will host the NASA Space Apps Hackathon on October 7 and 8. As many as 185 countries are expected to take part in the event.

The event will be held in the wilayat of Bidiya, North Sharqiyah, in cooperation with NASA.

The hackathon will see participation of public and private establishments, as well as universities and colleges in Oman.

The hackathon targets in-

novators who are interested in space science and exploration. Participants will get a chance to develop creative solutions for different challenges that face the Earth and space, in order to qualify for participation in the NASA Space App International Hackathon.

By hosting of this event, Oman aims to enhance its position as a centre for technological innovation and research, and encourage cooperation between academic and industrial establishments locally and internationally.

MoSD launches campaign to combat social evil of begging

Muscat - The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), in collaboration with several government agencies, has launched an awareness campaign - titled ‘Are You Satisfied’ - aiming to highlight and curb the menace of begging.

The campaign seeks to inform the public about the perils of begging, urging them to report any identified instances promptly.

An official of MoSD informed that the campaign focuses on diverse aspects of begging, including the underlying causes and various manifestations of the social evil.

The campaign communicates the social and personal consequences of begging, like the potential for addiction and the breakdown of family structures.

It underscores the detrimental social impact, citing increased scope of fraud, child exploitation and potential escalation in other criminal activities such as drug trafficking.

The different modes and methods of begging, including



electronic and seasonal begging, as well as individual and organised begging, are also being highlighted in the campaign. “It brings to light exploitative practices such as forcing children or people with disabilities into begging,” the official added. “Begging leads to donations, zakat funds and alms not reaching those who deserve them, and increase in cases of fraud and theft.”

Emphasising the ripple effects of this social menace, the official added, “It also leads to an escalation in criminal activities, disrupt-

ing society’s productivity and affecting the country’s reputation in terms of tourism.”

With the aim of curbing this evil practice, MoSD is seeking public cooperation, urging individuals to report begging incidents via dedicated hotlines - 1555 or 9999.

MoSD’s consistent efforts in this direction are evident in the arrest of hundreds of beggars in the past few years, showing the government’s unyielding resolve to eradicate begging from society.

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Oman, US sign agreements bolstering trade, investment

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Omani trade delegation concluded its visit to the United States, culminating in the signing of multiple strategic partnerships with American firms. These collaborations aim to bolster sustainable economic development in line with Oman Vision 2040's objectives.

An agreement was signed between Oman's ARDIC and America's STUP, focusing on enhancing agricultural trade. This partnership promises improved access to diverse, high-quality agricultural products and services, furthering agricultural sustainability in both nations.

Another partnership was established between Asas Majan

Development and Investment Company and Molycop, marking the inception of the first factory in the GCC for manufacturing grinding balls, a critical resource for global copper, gold, and iron ore producers.

Additionally, Creative Thinking, a communications and technology company in Oman, partnered with Netceed, a global leader in value-added distribution to the communications network and digital infrastructure industry.

H E Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Farujiah, Undersecretary for Investment Promotion in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, affirmed that these agreements come as a result of persistent

efforts to enhance commercial and industrial cooperation and explore investment partnerships in various promising sectors.

She emphasised the favourable opportunities for both nations to expand investment volumes, diversify import and export sources, and ensure the seamless movement of goods and products.

H E Ibtisam highlighted the continued commitment of both countries to align common objectives, increase Omani-American investments, and leverage the unique advantages and incentives available in both nations to foster integration in various targeted sectors.

This visit also aimed to augment intra-trade between the two nations, strengthen their

commercial, industrial, and investment relations, and diversify sources of import and export. It facilitated bilateral meetings between Omani and American businessmen and investors, showcasing investment opportunities and engaging interested investors in Oman in various sectors.

Moreover, the delegation explored investment prospects in the information technology, communications technology, health, tourism, energy, logistics, and banking sectors. Meetings with the US EXIM Bank were held to activate a previously signed memorandum of understanding, further enhancing trade and investment cooperation between the two nations.

GCC stock markets drop for second month in row

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The GCC stock markets declined for the second consecutive month in September, taking cues from the decline in global equity markets.

The global decline was led by investor fears that interest rates would remain higher for longer as inflation and the economy remain too strong for central banks to cut rates. All key global indices i.e., the MSCI World Index, the S&P 500 and the MSCI GCC index were down during September and during Q3 2023.

The MSCI GCC Index witnessed a 2.7% decline in September 2023, that wiped off gains since the start of the year, according to a report released by Kuwait-based Kamco Investment Company. The index's year-to-date decline now stands at 3.0%.

'The decline in the GCC was broad-based with only Dubai and Qatari markets seeing gains last month while the rest of the markets declined', Kamco Investment said.

Saudi Arabia's main index was the biggest monthly decliner with a fall of 3.8% followed by Oman and Kuwait with declines of 2.5% and 1.7%, respectively, according to Kamco Investment.

However, in terms of year-to-date performance, Dubai contin-



Saudi Arabia's main index was the biggest monthly decliner with a fall of 3.8% followed by Oman and Kuwait with declines of 2.5% and 1.7%, respectively

ues to boast healthy gains of 24.8% followed by Saudi Arabia and Bahrain with gains of 5.5% and 2.3%, respectively. The rest of the markets in the GCC were in the red.

In terms of sector performance, most of the GCC indices were in the red during September 2023, including banks that dropped by 3.8%. On the other hand, gainers were few but included real estate and energy with gains of 2.4% and 1.6%, respectively.

According to Kamco Investment report, regional perform-

ance also showed declines in almost all key global markets during September 2023 barring the UK which clocked a gain of 2.3%.

The MSCI World index witnessed the biggest decline in 12 months while the US gauge witnessed the biggest decline this year led by a sharp fall in Technology stocks mainly due to higher interest rates.

Meanwhile, crude oil witnessed a gain of almost 10% during the month of September 2023 mainly backed by production cuts.

Russia says fuel export ban to continue until market stabilises

Moscow, Russia - The ban that Russia imposed on gasoline and diesel fuel exports will remain in place until fuel supplies and prices stabilise on the domestic market, Russia's TASS news agency quoted Russian Energy Minister Nikolay Shulginov as saying.

The Russian government decided on September 21 to limit the export of gasoline and diesel fuel to balance the local market.

According to Shulginov, the government, institutions, and pertinent enterprises will continue to closely monitor the fuel oil market in order to maintain a balance between producers and consumers on the Russian fuel market.

To this end, the Russian Ministry of Energy is monitor-



Russian government, institutions, and pertinent enterprises will continue to closely monitor fuel oil market in order to maintain a balance between producers and consumers

NIKOLAY SHULGINOV

ing fuel supply to agricultural producers for cost and volume control.

The minister noted that they expect further stabilisation of the market and a reduction in prices in the small wholesale and retail segments.

'Oil companies have been given appropriate recommendations to accelerate the transfer of the fall in wholesale to small wholesale,' he said.

Russia, one of the largest global oil producers, exports nearly 900,000 barrels per day (bpd) of diesel fuel and 100,000 bpd of gasoline. Last year, the country's diesel exports totaled 35mn tonnes and gasoline exports amounted to 4.8mn tonnes.

Anadolu Agency

Europe urged to invest massively and move faster on energy transition

Paris, France - Europe must invest more quickly and massively in its energy transition if it wants to remain a global industrial power, top policymakers warned.

The plea was made at a conference on Friday on the clean energy transition hosted by the International Energy Agency (IEA), the European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank in Paris.

The leaders said private sector investment faces barriers including policy uncertainty, bureaucratic red tape that delays projects, and higher energy costs. At the same time, the United States, China, India, Japan and South Korea are deploying ambitious industrial programmes, they warned.

Friday's conference focused on the financial and public policy tools that could unleash the investments needed for the clean energy transition.

"Despite its large internal market, skilled workforce and world-beating research and de-



velopment, we're yet to see how Europe will put its ambitions into practice," said IEA executive director Fatih Birol.

"Policymakers must take bold action, and soon, for the region to remain a global industrial power," Birol said.

ECB president Christine Lagarde called on Europe to "avoid procrastination".

"While it is tempting to think that we can smooth out the cost of the transition by pushing back climate targets, the evidence suggests that this will not be the

case," she said. "Procrastinating is likely to increase the bill we will end up having to pay. Pushing back targets will not buy us more time for the investment required," Christine added.

Werner Hoyer, president of the European Investment Bank, said industries "must be prompt and embrace change, or risk being left behind".

"Only massive and swift investment in net zero technologies will make sure that Europe remains an attractive place to do business, a place where innova-

tion thrives, where new ideas flourish, and wealth and jobs are created," Hoyer said.

Earlier this week, the IEA said wealthy countries should move their net-zero target to 2045 -- five years earlier than planned, -- to keep to the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

It urged China, the world's largest polluter, to speed up its carbon neutrality goal by a decade to 2050.

AFP

Germany bets on hydrogen to help cut trucking emissions

Berlin, Germany - Applause rings out as Daimler Truck's hydrogen-powered, zero-emission lorry crosses the finish line in Berlin after completing a record-breaking 1,047km journey on a single tank. But in the race to decarbonise long-haul trucking, the niche technology is still stuck in the slow lane.

The Mercedes-Benz GenH2 truck started its demonstration run at the group's factory in Wuerth am Rhein on Monday afternoon, near the border with France, and arrived in the German capital on Tuesday morning.

The prototype truck made the trip fully loaded on only one fill of liquid hydrogen, similar to what a diesel-powered truck can do.

Unlike planet-warming diesel

however, the hydrogen fuel cell technology used in the truck emits only water vapour.

"You're showing that a heavy load can be transported over a long distance in a sustainable manner," Petra Dick-Walther, state secretary for economic affairs in Germany's Rhineland-Palatinate region, said at the departure ceremony.

Germany's Daimler Truck, one of the world's biggest truck-makers, said the feat of cracking the 1000-kilometre range marked "another milestone" for hydrogen-powered driving.

But the technology has plenty of hurdles to overcome before going mainstream.

Hydrogen fuel is produced through water electrolysis but is



A Hydrogen prototype GenH2 truck of the Daimler Truck Holding AG arrives in Berlin, on September 26, after completing 1047kms with one liquid hydrogen full tank (AFP)

only considered "green" if the electricity required for the process is obtained from renew-

ables such as wind or solar power. Hydrogen produced using coal or natural gas is more

widely available but less environmentally friendly.

Technical challenges, high

costs and a lack of infrastructure have all slowed the advance of clean hydrogen.

German firms such as Daimler Truck and engineering giant Bosch are nevertheless betting that hydrogen has a role to play in slashing road transport emissions, alongside battery-powered electric vehicles.

"To decarbonise transport, we need both," said Andreas Gorbach, head of technology at Daimler Truck who drove the GenH2 across the finish line himself.

The "sweet spot" for hydrogen trucks lies in particularly demanding long-distance haulage, he said, whereas battery-electric trucks do well on plannable routes with plenty of charging

options. Daimler Truck is aiming for series production of hydrogen trucks in "the second half of the decade", Gorbach added.

But he said the hydrogen breakthrough will depend on two major factors: the rollout of refuelling stations, and "the availability of green energy at a competitive cost".

Lagging behind

Under current European Union rules, truckmakers have to cut emissions of new trucks by 30% by 2030 compared with 2019 levels.

But European Commission said earlier this year it was eying tougher cuts of 45% by 2030 and 90% by 2040.

AFP



OHRC shares goals at Palace of Nations

Within the role and international relations of Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC), to convey a realistic picture of the renewed care and interest in human rights in the Sultanate of Oman, OHRC held a number of human rights events at the Palace of Nations in Geneva.

The activities included a working paper on OHRC and its work mechanism, OHRC achievements in the field of human rights over the past years. The event also comprised a direct discussion and response to questions from the audience.

OHRC also held an exhibition on its journey during the 15 years since its foundation and screened some movies on human rights publications on screens that were distributed to



selected places in the Palace in Geneva. It distributed books and printed publications which included the OHRC's annual reports and specialised books about some of the sectors the most deserving to the care in society.

In addition, the OHRC delegation met with a number of UN human rights officials concerned with human rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

During these activities, OHRC clarified the efforts made in the Sultanate of Oman to guarantee more workers' rights and protection and the mechanisms and means taken to combat human trafficking and protect the groups most deserving of care in society.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Shuwain al Hosni, chairman of Oman Human Rights Commission, said that the aim of these events is to celebrate 15 years of achievements and continued efforts in the field of human rights since the establishment of the Commission in 2008 AD. These events coincide with the United Nations' celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Principles.

He pointed out that the Sultanate of Oman has recently issued the Social Protection Law, which strengthens the efforts made at the social level. The new Labour Law was also issued, which included new articles aimed at providing more protection for workers. These and other steps taken by the government in Oman would enhance efforts to secure a better life and greater protection of human rights.

The OHRC Chairman also pointed out that OHRC shares the great responsibilities and challenges related to human rights. There is no substitute for sincere cooperation and joint work, with the need to exert more efforts to promote peace, security, justice and equality, he said.

Director of the OHRC's Organisations and International Relations Department, Shatha bint Abdul Majeed al Zadjali, also gave a video presentation, in which she explained that the OHRC's new system stipulates that its formation be made up of those with experience and those interested in human rights, and representatives of a number of relevant government agencies, which achieves the principle of equality in formation according to the Paris Principles.



Sharakah support instrumental in La Chinata success

For many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), franchising presents an ideal business model, with its inherent support systems often being a cornerstone to its success. Salma Saif al Sulimani, a motivated businesswoman, stood at the crossroads of such a venture.

Drawn to the appeal of the renowned Spanish brand, La Chinata, Salma faced the quintessential challenge of every entrepreneur - how to navigate this promising yet demanding path. In her quest for guidance, she turned to Oman's leading SME development firm Sharakah, an institution celebrated for its dedication to fostering entrepreneurial spirit and uplifting the aspirations of emerging business leaders, a press release said.

Building on business management graduate Salma's initial efforts, Sharakah stepped in with its tailored solutions. They employed their distinctive 360-degree Business Performance Monitoring Tool (BPMT), a recognised industry-standard tool, complemented by other

resources, to further refine and enhance the business trajectory set by Salma for La Chinata. In addition to their strategic tools and resources, Sharakah bolstered Salma's venture with essential funding and loan provisions.

With Sharakah's support, Salma embarked on her journey with La Chinata which is celebrated for its premium products rooted in the essence of extra virgin olive oil.

Reflecting on her entrepreneurial journey, Salma said, "Introducing the La Chinata brand to Oman was a source of immense pride for me. Beyond their renowned olive oils, the brand unfolds a tapestry of gourmet foods, cosmetics, baby products and skincare essentials—all echoing the richness of olive oil.

"The skincare range, in particular, captures the nourishing essence of olive oil's antioxidants and moisturisers. Their gourmet spread further tantalises with a mix from traditional olive oils to specialties like pates, vinegars, and varied spices."

Global Prize for desalination presented

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Eng Abdulrahman al Fadhli honoured winners of the Global Prize for Innovation in Desalination on Saturday. The minister presented the grand prize to Syed Shah from Aqua Membranes, USA, for the project titled 'Changing reverse osmosis through 3D printed spacers'.

Five other winners were also given away prizes. All six winners made their presentations before the announcement of the grand prize. Special prizes were also distributed on the occasion, a press release said.

The award ceremony was held in the presence of the governor of the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC), Eng Abdullah bin Ibrahim al Abdul Karim, and a number of senior officials and other distinguished dignitaries. It was held



on the sidelines of the second edition of the Innovation in the Desalination Industry Conference that is taking place at the Jeddah Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Other winners of the Global Prize for Innovation in Desalination include Arian Edalat (Active Membranes, USA) for the project titled 'Next Generation of Desalination Membranes', Quantum Wei (Harmony Desalting, USA) for its entry 'Batch Reverse Osmosis', and Hany Said (Mega Vessels Water Inc, USA) for the 'Mega Vessel' initiative.

Winning entries from other countries include Nick Heineman (Desolenator, the Netherlands) for the project 'Desolenator: Transforming the Industry through a World-First Solar-Thermal Desalination Solution

that works at Scale' and Mohamed Anwar (Schneider Electric, France) for the 'Desalination Plant Digital Twin Powered by Dynamic Process Simulation' project.

The winners were chosen from among a total of 105 competitors, who represented 27 countries. They included innovators from research centers and universities, as well as entrepreneurs and employees of companies operating in the water desalination industry from around the world.

The minister said that the desalination awards were initiated by Saudi as part of its comprehensive water strategy that seeks to foster innovation, enhance policies and legislation as well as adopt international best practices in the water sector. He stressed the pioneering role of Saudi Arabia in this regard.

Bank Muscat celebrates Sinaw branch relocation

Bank Muscat celebrated the relocation of its Sinaw branch, under the patronage of H E Khalid bin al Sayed al Mahri, Wali of Sinaw.

The new branch features a number of unique facilities including dedicated financing desks for Baituna and Najahi products, in addition to a desk for insurance services and a special centre for Asalah Priority Banking customers. It is also designed to facilitate access of persons with disabilities to various banking services, a press release said.

This comes as part of the bank's strategy to provide a comfortable environment for customers to complete their



transactions with ease and enjoy a unique banking experience. The development and growth witnessed by Sharqiyah North Governorate, in general, and

willayat Sinaw, in particular, obliges the bank to create a more convenient, accessible, and comfortable environment to its customers.

Featured with its distinctive location and spacious area, the relocated branch is designed to meet the needs of different groups of society, and thus, align

with the financial inclusion concept. The new branch is staffed with experienced Omani cadres, who are willing to provide the best services for customers.

Abdulnasir N al Raisi, general manager, Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "We are pleased with the relocation of Sinaw branch. This will undoubtedly contribute to provide a variety of banking services and facilities to our customers in an efficient and a comfortable environment. The bank's branches represent an important channel and a direct link with customers where we successfully engage in fruitful discussions and happily listen to their feedback and suggestions."



Shell Oman, Precision Tune Auto Care sign agreement

Strengthening their 24-year partnership in Oman, Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) and Opal Marketing and Industry's Precision Tune Auto Care (PTAC) have signed a strategic agreement to supply Shell Oman's premium lubricants through PTAC's extensive service center network across the sultanate.

This includes the cutting-edge Shell Helix Ultra-premium oil and Shell Helix ultra OW carbon-

neutral range of products which are made from natural gas using Shell's patented PurePlus Technology, a press release said.

Emphasising sustainability, these premium products offer enhanced protection against engine stress and wear, ultimate power, and performance even in extreme temperatures, along with superior piston cleanliness.

Shell Oman and PTAC have fostered a strong partnership built on innovation, customer-

centricity, and service excellence. The new agreement brings together Shell Oman's world-class lubricants technology and PTAC's expertise in automotive services, which includes everything from car repairs to routine maintenance, offering customers an unrivalled driving experience and easy accessibility to high-quality lubricants for their vehicles.

Mohamed El Fataty, general manager - Lubricants, Supply

Chain and Customer Operations at Shell Oman, said, "We deeply value this enduring collaboration with Precision Tune Auto Care, consistently surpassing customer expectations and delivering unparalleled value. By offering our high-quality, premium lubricants including the carbon-neutral range through Precision Tune Auto Care's expanding network, we have taken a significant step towards minimizing environmental impact

and supporting the country's energy transition goals".

Sandeep Ghai, CEO, Opal Marketing, and Industry, added, "Precision Tune Auto Care network (PTAC) ensures value to their esteemed customers by offering Quality, Time bound Cost-effective service solutions across Oman. The PTAC partnership with Shell Oman for the supply of lubricants fosters our commitment of Quality offerings to customers.

AC3D launched in GCC for green construction

A 3D construction printing company AC3D has launched its operations in the UAE. Focusing on low-rise housing, commercial real estate and infrastructure, AC3D is setting the stage for a greener era of construction, pledging to make it up to 1.5 times more cost-effective, and far less labour-intensive.

The company aims to accelerate the construction processes, achieving up to four times increase in speed while using sustainable printing materials, a press release said. The 3D construction printing market is expected to reach US\$2.5bn in 2025, up from US\$500mn in 2023.

Boris Kozlov, founder and CEO of AC3D, said, "In addition to reducing CO2 emissions and minimising waste, our vertically integrated technology paves the way for energy-efficient homes, enabling the creation of free-form architectural designs, reducing the amount of construction waste, and ensuring resistance to natural disasters."

Assembled in the UAE, the



Boris Kozlov

next-generation 3D printers offer various environmental benefits in line with global sustainability efforts such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The construction industry is currently the world's number one waste producer, and also one of the key contributors to the global carbon footprint. Cement production alone accounts for 10% of CO2 emissions.

In addition to sustainability, the economic and humanitarian implications of 3D construction printing are substantial. A single 3D printer has the potential to build more than 50 houses per year - a significant step towards addressing the global housing shortage.

MoE trains sports managers

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Training and Rehabilitation, in cooperation with the Omani School Sports Association, is implementing a training programme titled 'Managing Events and Sports Championships'.

The programme targets 26 teachers and supervisors in the field of physical education and sports activities management from various educational directorates in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, a press release said.

The activities of the training programme began on Sunday and continues for five consecutive days wherein a number of training sessions will be presented by Dr Sulaiman al Balushi, a prominent expert in the field of sports and event management.

The programme includes comprehensive planning for tournaments, formation of teams, and mechanisms for managing financial matters related to tournaments. Funding issues and sources of income available for sports tournaments



are also addressed, in addition to developing programmes accompanying tournaments, and exploring their added value.

The programme also addresses the legal aspects related to sports tournaments, focusing on sports marketing strategies, means of reaching target groups, how to attract sports sponsorships, and evaluation strategies for sporting events.

Sheikha al Maamriya, School Activities specialist at Al Buraimi Governorate, and participant in the programme, said, "The training programme is a wonderful opportunity to learn about sev-

eral foundations that help the teacher to form knowledge that will benefit the learner to organise sports events according to organised frameworks. The importance of these programmes lies in the fact that they establish in the minds of teachers a set of effective foundations in an organised manner."

Abdullah al Dhahli, School Sports teacher in the South Batinah Governorate, said, "The importance of this programme comes because it is one of the basics that athletes need, whether sports teachers, or school activities specialists."

Green Schools first edition begins

The Ministry of Education launched a new phase of the Green Schools Project and honoured participating schools in the first edition of the project.

The ceremony took place at the Royal Academy of Management under the auspices of H E Mohsen bin Hamad al Hadrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, a press release said.

The ceremony kicked-off with the Ministry of Education's speech delivered by H E Prof Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education. He said, "In its second edition for the year 2023/2024, the project aims to significantly increase the number of targeted schools from all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, to reach 53 schools. This year, the project is funded by Be'ah, Shell Oman, Nama Group, Daleel Oil, Omani Liquefied Natural Gas Company, and Vodafone Oman."

The Green Schools Project comes as one of the initiatives concerned with green education



implemented by the Ministry of Education in order to achieve an encouraging educational environment that supports the transition to a sustainable society. The implementation of the project began in the selected schools in September 2023 and will continue until April 2024.

The project includes two important aspects - the Sustainability curriculum, which is a guide, one for the student and the other for the teacher, that includes six important environmental topics

(waste management, climate change, renewable energy, afforestation, water consumption, and zero carbon neutrality), and the second aspect is the school project, which is for each school to implement a project in the school building that is among the six topics included in the sustainability curriculum.

Eng Muhannad al Jumaa, director general of Be'ah Academy, stated, "The Green Schools Project aims to create living models of a sustainable society in the

school environment, through which students, teachers, and the local community can be comprehensively educated about environmental and economic issues, circular and sustainability and carrying out projects that address the themes supporting sustainability through the Green School Project Guide. Teachers and students are supported with the activities and scientific content necessary to change thinking about important global issues."

ahlibank urges its customers to use banking app to subscribe to QQGN IPO

In line with its efforts to provide the best for its growing customer base, Ahlibank has recently announced its participation as the Collecting Bank for OQ Gas Networks (OQGN) Initial Public Offering (IPO). This is in line with the bank's strategic objectives to collaborate with key institutions across the Sultanate of Oman, in order to bring the latest propositions to its customers.

Customers can use the mobile banking app to subscribe to the IPO at their own convenience. The bank will provide the 1:1 financing option service digitally at competitive rates. In addition, Ahli Islamic, Ahlibank's Islamic banking window, will also offer 1:1 IPO financing through its mobile banking app, a press release said.

Individuals (Category II) willing to subscribe to the IPO can do so starting 26 September until 5 October, 2023 whereas institutions (Category I) who wish to



subscribe can apply starting from 26 September until 9 October, 2023.

Ahlibank research division initiated OQ Gas Network report with a target price of 160 Baizas, implying an upside of 14.1% on the high end of the IPO price range (for Category I investors)

and 26.8% upside on the IPO price (for Category II investors).

In regards to making this year's most talked about IPO subscription accessible to a broader populace, Hana al Kharusi, senior general manager - Wholesale Banking, Ahlibank, said, "We are thrilled to be a fa-

cilitator of the biggest IPO in the sultanate, as it is a testament to our commitment to providing excellent services. This reinforces our dedication to empowering businesses and investors with innovative solutions. We look forward to helping our customers seize this opportunity."

OCEC plans world-class events

Building on the momentum of this year's successful events, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) is set to host a series of world-class regional and international events in the final quarter of 2023.

The premier event destination will welcome more than 10 exhibitions and conferences through to the beginning of 2024 - strengthening its position as a world-leading venue, a press release said.

The OCEC is closing its 2023 successful season with a range of impactful events including the Middle East Africa Council of Ophthalmology Congress (November 29-December 2) and the Green Hydrogen Summit (December 12-15), the largest Green Hydrogen event in the MENA region, among other standout events. Preparing for the year ahead, the venue has already secured high-level international conferences in 2024

The 2023 calendar is set to surpass achievements of 2022 as it already hosted more than 170 events including exhibitions, conferences and live shows attracting thousands

such as the Royal College of Obstetrics & Gynaecology World Congress (October 2024), attracting thousands of health professionals to share insights and best practice in this field of significant importance.

The 2023 calendar is set to surpass 2022's achievements as the OCEC already hosted more than 170 events including exhibitions, conferences and

live shows attracting thousands of visitors and exhibitors to Oman's premier venue. Highlights from the 2023 schedule include the 27th Muscat International Book Fair with more than 385,000 book lovers discovering thousands of titles including Arabic and non-Arabic books. The OCEC also welcomed the Oman Sustainability Week in March 2023, a leading event across the MENA region bringing together policy makers, sustainability experts and industry leaders to share best practice and further Oman's energy transition.

Eng Said al Shanfari, CEO, OCEC, stated, "The OCEC has established itself as a world-leading destination for conferences and exhibitions across the Middle East and internationally. I am proud to see the value that the OCEC brings to the country, particularly to our economy."

Turkey says ‘terrorist attack’ took place near parliament in Ankara

Ankara, Turkey - A ‘terrorist attack’ took place near Turkey’s parliament in Ankara on Sunday leaving two police officers injured, the interior ministry said.

The powerful explosion, which was followed by large flames, was heard for several kilometres from the site of the attack.

The ministry said two attackers arrived in a commercial vehicle around 9:30am (0630 GMT) ‘in front of the entrance gate of the General Directorate of Security of our Ministry of the Interior, and carried out a bomb attack’.

“One of the terrorists blew himself up and the other was neutralised,” the ministry added on social media, saying two officers received ‘minor injuries’.

The targeted district is home to several other ministries and the Turkish parliament, which was due to reopen today with an address from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, according to Turkish media.

Media said the president was due to speak to deputies during the day’s session.

TV channel NTV reported gunfire in the cordoned-off area after the explosion, where many police vehicles and ambulances were seen.



Members of Turkish Police Special Forces secure the area near the Interior Ministry in Ankara, on Sunday (AFP)

The Ankara police headquarters said on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that it was carrying out ‘controlled explosions’ of ‘suspicious packages’ to prevent other explosions.

The Ankara prosecutor’s office said it was opening an investigation and banned access to the area.

Local media was asked to stop broadcasting images from the scene of the attack.

Nobody immediately claimed responsibility for the blast.

Erdogan was set to speak during the opening of this parliamentary session, which must validate Sweden’s entry into the NATO alliance.

Hungary and Turkey in July lifted their vetoes against Sweden’s entry into the Atlantic alliance, but have been slow to ratify its membership.

Erdogan indicated in July that ratification by the Turkish parliament would not take place before October, but it is expected to be approved during this parliamentary year. For months, Erdogan has been putting pressure on Sweden to take action against Quran desecrations that have strained relations between the two countries.

AFP

UN mission arrives in deserted Karabakh, first visit in 30 years

Lachin, Azerbaijan - A United Nations mission arrived in Nagorno-Karabakh on Sunday, Azerbaijan said, after almost the entire ethnic-Armenian population fled since Baku recaptured the breakaway enclave.

An Azerbaijani presidency spokesman told AFP that a ‘UN mission arrived in Karabakh on Sunday morning’ - mainly to assess humanitarian needs.

It marks the first time in about 30 years that the international body has gained access to the region.

Armenian separatists, who had controlled the region for three decades, agreed to disarm, dissolve their government and reintegrate with Baku following a one-day Azerbaijani offensive last week.

France has lashed out at Azerbaijan for only allowing the UN mission in after most residents had already fled.



A Russian peacekeeper opening the gate to an Armenian refugee car, leaving Karabakh for Armenia, at the Lachin checkpoint on Sunday (AFP)

I have no idea of where to go, maybe Europe. I’ve talked to Azerbaijani police and they said there would be no problems if we want to return, that we can live in our homes

SERGEI ASTSARYAN

“I’ve talked to Azerbaijani police and they said there would be no problems if we want to return, that we can live in our homes.”

Nazeli Baghdasaryan, spokeswoman of the Armenian prime minister, said ‘100,483 forcefully displaced persons arrived in Armenia’ by Sunday morning. She said 45,516 refugees were now in temporary accommodation.

‘Sacred land’

On Sunday, Armenia observed a national day of prayer for the region. Bells tolled in churches

across the country, and the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Karekin II, lead a service in the nation’s main cathedral Echmiadzin, close to the capital Yerevan.

Clergymen in ornate robes sang ancient chants at an open-air altar outside the imposing cathedral built in a pale pink limestone. “As our sacred land of Karabakh is deserted, we pray for our sisters and brother of Karabakh who are going through terrible suffering,” said the pontiff.

Hundreds attended the religious service in the church of Saint Sarkis, in Yerevan.

“One of the most tragic pages of Armenian history is being written today,” 28-year-old Mariam Vartanyan told AFP, standing in the crowd of worshippers wrapped in the smoke of burning incense.

Ethnic hatred

Yerevan has accused Baku of ‘ethnic cleansing’ - an allegation that Baku rejected - calling on Armenians not to leave their homes and reintegrate with Azerbaijan where their rights would be respected. Armenia, a country of 2.8mn, faces a major challenge housing the sudden influx of refugees.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on Friday announced an emergency appeal for 20mn Swiss Francs (US\$22mn) to help those fleeing.

Azerbaijan is now holding ‘re-integration’ talks with separatist leaders while, at the same time detaining some senior figures from its former government and military command.

Azerbaijan’s Prosecutor General Kamran Aliyev said criminal investigations had been initiated into war crimes committed by 300 separatist officials.

“I urge on those persons to surrender voluntarily,” he told journalists on Sunday.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan are set to meet on Thursday in the Spanish city of Granada for Western-mediated talks aimed at ending their historic enmity.

AFP



Water flows through the ruins at the site of the ancient Greco-Roman city of Cyrene (Shahhat) in eastern Libya, about 60km west of Derna (AFP)

Libya: Derna reconstruction meet postponed

Benghazi, Libya - Libya’s eastern authorities on Sunday announced the postponement of a reconstruction conference for the flood-hit city of Derna that had been planned for October 10 but was met with international scepticism.

The event was put off until November 1-2 to ‘offer time for the submission of effective studies and projects’ for the reconstruction effort, the committee charged with planning the meeting said in a statement.

The divided country’s eastern administration last month invited the ‘international community’ to attend the conference in Derna, the coastal city where a September 10 flash flood devastated large areas and killed thousands.

The authorities later said that the conference would draw in international companies, and on Sunday the committee said the postponed event would be held in both Derna and the eastern city of Benghazi. The North African country has been wracked by fighting and chaos since 2011. Libya is now divided between an internationally recognised Tripoli-based administration in the west, and the one in the disaster-stricken east backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

The United States on Friday called on Libyans to set aside their political differences and agree on a framework to channel aid to eastern towns.

“We urge Libyan authorities now to form such unified structures - rather than launching separate efforts - that represent the Libyan people without delay,” US special envoy Richard Norland said. Despite a wave of nationwide solidarity since the flood, there has been no show of support for the proposed conference from the Tripoli-based government of interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah.

Jalel Harchaoui, a Libya specialist at the Royal United Services Institute, on Sunday said the eastern authorities were facing a ‘largely predictable setback’, adding that ‘they will have no choice but to somehow work with the Tripoli authorities’.

AFP

Egypt’s 1973 war ‘victory’ shaped nation but now a fading memory

Cairo, Egypt - Fifty years after what Egypt celebrated as its ‘October victory’, the memory of the 1973 war against Israel that has shaped the Arab nation’s politics and diplomacy is fading.

Successive Egyptian presidents over the course of decades drew legitimacy from their military past fighting Israel.

Egypt’s current leader, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, is a rare exception. Having only enlisted in a military academy the year the war took place, he did not take up arms against neighbouring Israel.

Yet, he has still capitalised on this chapter in national history.

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack, pushing Israeli forces seemingly to the verge of defeat before they recovered, sup-



People attend a presentation of a recreated war scene while visiting the ‘6th of October War Panorama’ museum and memorial of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war in Cairo on Sunday (AFP)

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack, pushing Israeli forces seemingly to the verge of defeat

ported by a United States airlift.

Within three weeks, a United Nations-validated ceasefire had taken effect.

On the war’s 49th anniversary last year, Sisi hailed a ‘day of pride and dignity’ which showed ‘the capability of the Egyptian and his superiority during the most difficult moments’.

His remarks may resonate with Egyptians living through

more than a year of painful currency devaluations and inflation which has surged to record levels. Sisi now leads a nation where young people are the majority, with official figures showing that about 85 per cent of Egypt’s 105mn people were not alive to experience the 1973 war and its immediate aftermath.

Decades of war have made the Egyptian military a powerful actor in the country’s economic and business affairs, as well as security matters.

Only one president did not come from its ranks, the late Islamist leader Mohamed Morsi who was elected but deposed in 2013 by then-army general Sisi.

Anwar Sadat, Egypt’s president during the 1973 war, went on to sign a peace agreement with Israel in 1979, setting a precedent for the Arab world.

His leadership in war earned Sadat ‘legitimacy that could substitute for that of his predecessor’ Gamal Abdel Nasser, hero of the 1952 revolution which overthrew the monarchy, said historian Tewfik Aclimandos of the Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies.

After Sadat’s assassination by members of an Egyptian militant group in 1981, Hosni Mubarak ruled for three decades and also benefited from the October war’s legacy.

Mubarak - Sadat’s air force commander in 1973 - presented himself as a ‘hero of the aerial campaign’, Aclimandos told AFP.

Today ‘all that seems quite far for the new generation’, he said.

AFP

Slovakia: Pro-Russian party wins election

The Smer-SD party led by Robert Fico is a populist party that wants to stop military aid to Ukraine

Bratislava, Slovakia - A populist party that wants to stop military aid to Ukraine and is critical of the EU and NATO has won Slovakia's election, results showed on Sunday.

The Smer-SD party led by former prime minister Robert Fico scored 23.3 per cent, beating the centrist Progressive Slovakia on 17 per cent, with almost all votes counted. Analysts predict a Fico government could radically change Slovakia's foreign policy to resemble that of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

The 59-year-old Fico has vowed that Slovakia will not send 'a single round of ammunition' to Ukraine and has called for better relations with Russia.

"Slovakia will now be closer to the Hungarian approach than that of the majority of Europe," Slovakia analyst Tomas Koziak from the University of Political Sciences in the Czech city Kutna Hora told AFP. "In Robert Fico, Orban will get a new ally."

Smer is set to clinch 42 seats in the 150-member parliament and so will need coalition partners for a majority.

The leftwing Hlas-SD, which emerged in 2020 when a group of Smer lawmakers quit Fico's party, is one potential partner, with an expected 27 seats.

Hlas is led by Peter Pellegrini, who became Slovakia's premier in 2018 after Fico had to step down amid nationwide protests following the murder of journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée.

Kuciak uncovered links be-



Smer-SSD party leader and Slovakia's former Primer Minister Robert Fico celebrates his victory in the general elections at the party's headquarters in Bratislava on Sunday (AFP)

tween the Italian mafia and Fico's government in his last article, published posthumously.

Ukraine aid

Pellegrini told reporters it was not a good idea to have two former prime ministers in a single government, but 'that doesn't mean such a coalition is impossible'. Analyst Branislav Kovacik from Matej Bel University told AFP he expected Pellegrini to join

The 59-year-old Fico has vowed that Slovakia will not send a single round of ammunition to Ukraine and has called for better relations with Russia

a coalition.

"He may not sit in the cabinet. He may become the parliament speaker, he already did that in the past and did a good job," he said.

The two parties could team up with the nationalist Slovak National Party (SNS), which is expected to win 10 seats, for a parliamentary majority of 79 seats. Fico already formed a government with the SNS, which is

also opposed to military aid for Ukraine, twice in the past.

Slovakia has been one of Europe's biggest donors to Ukraine as a share of its GDP.

Slovak Defence Minister Martin Sklenar visited Kyiv just ahead of the vote, and on election day Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky thanked Slovakia for 'standing with Ukraine'.

'Closer to Hungary'

"We must carefully listen to what Fico is very openly saying," independent analyst Grigorij Meseznikov told AFP.

"He is spreading pro-Russian narratives and... that's a serious thing. It won't be so easy to make good on the threat, but... he will try, and we'll be closer to Hungary then," he added.

Hungary is seen as a troublemaker in the EU, frequently criticised over rule-of-law issues and

hampering EU and NATO efforts to help Ukraine.

Slovakia's next parliament will also include the centrist OLaNO party of maverick former premier Igor Matovic, who got involved in a fistfight with a Smer member during the heated campaign.

OLaNO led a three-party coalition that is set to win 16 seats.

The centrist Christian Democrats and the right-wing SaS also garnered enough votes to have seats in parliament.

Voting for Smer in Bratislava, Eliska Spisakova said the party was 'the natural choice for the working poor, people like me'. "I have a high opinion of (Fico), he focuses mainly on the needs of us Slovaks," she told AFP.

The election campaign was marked by particularly high rates of online disinformation, often targeting Progressive Slovakia chairman Michal Simecka, a European Parliament vice-speaker.

A study by the Globsec think tank last year showed a majority of Slovaks believe popular conspiracy theories.

Slovakia emerged as an independent country in 1993, following a peaceful split with the Czech Republic after Czechoslovakia shed four decades of totalitarian communist rule in 1989.

Although many Slovaks have experience with the Moscow-steered communist regime, many have voted for populists who share Kremlin views.

AFP

Eswatini rights lawyer lives in fear after mentor's murder

Mbabane, Eswatini - Working as a human rights lawyer is not for the faint of heart in Eswatini, Africa's last absolute monarchy.

If Sibusiso Nhlabatsi is now one of the leading rights lawyers in the small southern African nation, it is in part because his friend and mentor was murdered. Thulani Maseko was shot dead in front of his family earlier this year and no one has been arrested for the murder.

So now Nhlabatsi, 38, has taken over his mantle.

"Each day we are living in fear because you don't know what is going to happen next," he said.

Maseko, 52, was a political activist and fierce critic of the authorities in the landlocked kingdom, where shows of dissent are as rare as they are dangerous.

He was gunned down through the window of his home in January, after a life spent fighting state repression and representing opposition activists in court.



Human rights lawyer Sibusiso Nhlabatsi (AFP)

"He was my brother, he was my mentor," said Nhlabatsi.

Tall and impeccably dressed in a light suit and ironed white shirt, Nhlabatsi preferred to talk away from his office and prying ears.

So, during election week in Eswatini, he met with AFP outside the capital, Mbabane, in a field strewn with cow dung.

'Two shots'

The night Maseko was killed,

Nhlabatsi was feeling tired and craving some rest. It took several unanswered calls for him to finally pick up the phone.

"Maseko's wife wants to contact you, it's urgent," he recalled the voice at the other end as saying. He jumped in his car and drove to Maseko's house, expecting to find him wounded but alive. Instead, he found lots of police officers.

"He was just lying there. He was no more," he said slowly, close to tears.

Maseko had been watching football with his two sons while his wife cooked dinner when he was shot dead.

"She saw a shadow and when she looked, she realised there was a gun pointing and aiming at her husband," he said.

"Two shots just went in and that was it."

The killer did not run away: he walked, Nhlabatsi added.

Just hours before his murder,

King Mswati III, who has ruled the country since 1986, had warned activists who defied him not to 'shed tears' about 'mercenaries killing them'. Local detectives have yet to announce any breakthrough in the case.

The United Nations has called for an independent investigation.

At the time of his death, Maseko led a broad coalition of political and civic rights and religious groups created to foster dialogue with the king.

In 2021 Eswatini was shaken by pro-democracy protests, and dozens of people were killed in the subsequent crackdown by the security forces, triggering a political crisis.

As a senior member of a banned opposition party, Maseko also had a pending court battle with King Mswati over the monarch's decision to rename the country, previously known as Swaziland.

AFP

China-funded high-speed rail to be launched in Indonesia

Jakarta, Indonesia - Indonesia is set to launch Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway on Monday, a delayed multibillion-dollar project backed by China that will cut travel between capital Jakarta and another major city by hours.

The Chinese-made bullet train named 'Whoosh' is built to take more than 600 people to and from Jakarta and the Javan city of Bandung in 45 minutes and is part of China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

President Joko Widodo has lauded the project for the fast ride it will provide between the two cities on Indonesia's most populous island Java, and he will inaugurate it on Monday, according to local media reports, citing officials.

"We will launch it on October 2, because on October 1, the president is busy," Transport Minister Budi Karya Sumadi told reporters on Friday.

The train can reach speeds up to 350km per hour (220 miles



Indonesia's President Joko Widodo attends a trial of the new Bandung-Jakarta high-speed train in Jakarta on September 13 (AFP)

per hour) and has cost a joint Chinese-Indonesian venture more than US\$7bn to build.

It was built by PT KCIC, which is made up of four Indonesian state companies and Beijing's China Railway International Co.

It was set to cost less than

US\$5bn and be built by 2019 but delays due to construction issues and the COVID-19 pandemic saw costs spike. Authorities have been running public trials of the new high-speed journey of 142km before its opening.

AFP

'No more dreams': Ukraine war widows begin adult life in mourning

Kyiv, Ukraine - Twenty-year-old Erika Martyniuk only had five days together with her newlywed husband before he was killed fighting Russian forces in southern Ukraine.

She identified the remains of 21-year-old Saveliy Fedan, whose face was disfigured by fatal wounds, through his tattoos.

"When I saw photos of his body in the morgue, it felt like I was dead too," Erika told AFP at a park in Kyiv.

Erika's story is not uncommon in Ukraine, where young people widowed by the war begin their adult life in mourning.

Erika and Saveliy met in summer camp when they were still



Erika Martyniuk attends an interview with AFP in Kyiv on September 14 (AFP)

teenagers. After drifting apart, they reconnected a few years later and began a relationship in March 2022, shortly after the war began.

The invasion pushed them to make things official.

Scared of losing each other, Erika said she got married to Saveliy one day before he was deployed in February 2023.

"Our main dream," she said, "was to have at least one quiet day when we could not think about the war, about the fact that we'll wake up tomorrow and he'll have to leave again."

He survived the brutal battle of Bakhmut but was killed at the end of August in the southern region

of Zaporizhzhia.

Since then, Erika said she had 'no more goals, no more dreams'.

Wearing Saveliy's old army bag over her shoulder, she gently places a Ukrainian flag at the foot of a memorial wall adorned with the faces of fallen soldiers.

On her T-shirt reads the words: 'Be a warrior, live forever'.

Erika said she couldn't stand the relative normality of Ukraine's capital Kyiv, where residents have adapted to frequent air raids.

"People walk around, laugh, plan parties. And I go to the cemetery," she said. She could only relate to other women who had also lost their partners.

"They tell it like it is: 'it won't be

easy, you'll be in pain for a very long time and you won't know what to do'," she said.

The number of young widows is hard to estimate.

Ukraine has not disclosed how many soldiers have died at the front.

Oksana Borkun, who created an online community for women who lost their partners or husbands, calculated that 18 to 24-year-olds make up 7 per cent of the 2,000 members of her Facebook group.

She told AFP the relatives of young widows often diminish their grief when trying to console them.

AFP



The Trans-Lagrangean Point 1 Insertion (TL1) manoeuvre of Aditya-L1 Mission is being performed successfully on September 19 (ANI)

Indian spacecraft Aditya-L1 heads towards centre of solar system

New Delhi, India - India's Sun-monitoring spacecraft has crossed a landmark point on its journey to escape 'the sphere of Earth's influence', its space agency said, days after the disappointment of its Moon rover failing to awaken.

The Aditya-L1 mission, which started its four-month journey towards the centre of the solar system on September 2, carries instruments to observe the Sun's outermost layers.

"The spacecraft has escaped the sphere of Earth's influence," the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a statement late on Saturday.

Aditya, named after the Hindu Sun deity, has travelled 920,000km (570,000 miles), just over half the journey's total distance.

At that point, the gravitational forces of both astronomical bodies cancel out, allowing the mission to remain in a stable halo orbit around our nearest star.

"This is the second time in succession that ISRO could send a spacecraft outside the sphere of influence of the Earth, the first time being the Mars Orbiter Mission," the agency added.

In August, India became the first country to land a craft near the largely unexplored lunar south pole, and just the fourth nation to land on the Moon.

Rover Pragyan surveyed the vicinity of its landing site but was powered down before the start of lunar night, which lasts roughly two weeks on Earth.

India had hoped to prolong the mission by reactivating the solar-powered vehicle once daylight returned to the lunar surface, but so far has been greeted by radio silence. "It is OK if it does not wake up because the rover has done what it was expected to do," ISRO chief S. Somnath said on Wednesday.

AFP

Afghan embassy in India suspends its operations

The closure follows reports that the ambassador and senior diplomats had left India in recent months

New Delhi, India - Afghanistan's embassy in India suspended operations on Sunday, more than two years after the Taliban's return to power in Kabul following the collapse of the Western-backed government.

Most foreign nations - including India - do not officially recognise Afghanistan's Taliban government, but acknowledge them as the de facto ruling authority. This has left many Afghan embassies and consulates in limbo, with diplomats appointed by the former government refusing to cede control of embassy buildings and property to representatives chosen by the Taliban authorities. "It is with profound sadness, regret, and disappointment that the Embassy of Afghanistan in New Delhi announces this decision to cease its operations," said an embassy statement posted on X.

India will take control of the embassy in a caretaker capacity, it said. The unsigned statement said it had been 'increasingly challenging' to continue operations due to cuts in staff and resources, including a 'lack of timely and sufficient support from visa renewal for diplomats'.

The closure follows reports



An Afghan national stands outside the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in New Delhi on September 29 (AFP)

It is with profound sadness, regret, and disappointment that the Embassy of Afghanistan in New Delhi announces this decision to cease its operations

EMBASSY OF AFGHANISTAN

that the ambassador and other senior diplomats had left India in recent months, with infighting among those remaining in New Delhi. But the embassy said in its statement that it 'categorically refutes any baseless claims regarding internal strife' among staff, and denied any diplomats were 'using the crisis to seek asylum in a third country'.

New Delhi evacuated its entire

mission from Kabul as the Taliban closed in on the Afghan capital in August 2021, but last year sent back a small team to reopen its sprawling embassy.

Most foreign nations similarly withdrew diplomatic staff at the time and have not returned, although a handful of embassies - including Pakistan, China and Russia - never closed, and still have ambassadors in Kabul.

Tens of thousands stranded

The change of power in Kabul stranded tens of thousands of Afghan students, businesspeople and medical tourists across the world. Most chose not to return, including dozens of Afghan army cadet officers training at Indian war colleges who feared persecution if they went back.

Some have gone back, however, with the Taliban authorities keen to publicise any returns as a sign of faith in their leadership.

The Taliban authorities have full control of around a dozen Afghan embassies abroad - including in Pakistan, China, Turkey and Iran.

Others operate on a hybrid

system, with the ambassador gone but embassy staff still carrying out routine consular work such as issuing visas and other documents.

In January last year, Italian police were called to Afghanistan's Rome embassy after scuffles broke out when a junior diplomat claimed he had been appointed by the Taliban's leaders to take over from an ambassador loyal to the former government.

Most senior Afghan foreign ministry officials are currently in the Russian city of Kazan attending a conference on the country, and were not available to comment on the closure of the embassy in New Delhi.

AFP

At least 13 people killed in fire at Spanish nightclub

Madrid, Spain - At least 13 people were killed in a fire in a Spanish nightclub on Sunday morning, authorities said, with fears the toll could still rise as rescue workers sift through the debris.

The fire broke out in the two-storey 'Teatre' nightclub, also called 'Fonda Milagros', in the city of Murcia in southeastern Spain in early hours of the morning. Emergency services said on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, that firefighters were continuing to work at the scene and had not ruled out 'the possibility of finding more victims'.

Jose Ballesta, mayor of Murcia, said the fire had broken out at around 6am local time (0400 GMT) and was 'extremely serious'. Ballesta told press at the scene that 'there are still bodies



Firefighters spraying the facade of the Teatre nightclub, in Murcia on Sunday (AFP)

to be pulled out' from the rubble, which he said was a complicated task given the 'risk of collapse'.

Firefighters dispatched to the scene at 7am were able to extinguish the fire by 8am, he said.

Photos released by the emergency services show water hoses from fire trucks spraying the blackened facade of the club.

Thick smoke could be seen billowing from the roof of the building. Authorities said four people were injured, two women aged 22 and 25 years old and two men in their forties, all suffering with smoke inhalation.

Birthday party

A police spokesperson said that a birthday party was being held at the club on Saturday night.

"According to initial informa-

tion, the fire broke out on the first floor of the nightclub, which has a ground floor and a first floor," Diego Seral, the national police spokesman told radio Onda Regional de Murcia.

Forensic and judicial police experts 'have been deployed to the Murcia nightclub where the fire broke out this morning to investigate the cause', the national police service said on X.

Video footage released by the city's firefighting brigade shows the firefighters holding a long hose approaching bright orange flames inside the venue, passing bar tables that still have drinks placed on top of them. More than 40 firefighters and 12 emergency vehicles were attending the scene, authorities said.

AFP

India says complained to UK over incident at Sikh temple

London, UK - India's High Commission in London said on Saturday it had reported a 'disgraceful incident' involving a top diplomat being confronted by protesters at a Sikh temple in Glasgow to police and Britain's Foreign Office.

The incident comes as India's relations with Sikh communities overseas are under the spotlight due to criticism of New Delhi's arrest and alleged torture of a Sikh blogger from Scotland, as well as accusations of its involvement in the fatal shooting of a Sikh separatist in Canada.

India's diplomatic mission in London said that Vikram Doraiswami, its High Commissioner to the UK, had been invited to the Sikh temple, or gurdwara, in Scotland's biggest city on Friday to discuss community and consular issues.

But it said he was confronted on arrival by three people described as 'non-local extremist elements' who tried to 'violently force open' the vehicle he was travelling in.

The diplomat left the scene without going ahead with the visit, according to the commission.

AFP

Bangladesh bars ill opposition leader from healthcare abroad

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Bangladesh on Sunday blocked ailing key opposition leader and two-time former premier Khaleda Zia from travelling abroad for life-saving medical treatment, an official and supporters said.

Kayser Kamal, legal chief for Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), slammed the government's decision to bar the wheelchair-bound 78-year-old from leaving - due to the terms of her effective house arrest - as an act of 'political vengeance'.

Bangladesh is gearing up for general elections due before the

end of January, and several Western governments and rights groups have expressed concern over the political climate in a country where the ruling party dominates the legislature and runs it virtually as a rubber stamp.

Zia and her bitter rival, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, have dominated the politics of the South Asian nation of 170mn people for over four decades.

In 2008, Zia was sentenced to 17 years in prison for graft, and jailed for two years before being released under house arrest. She has rejected the



Khaleda Zia

charges as politically motivated.

Zia has been hospitalised since early August with advanced liver cirrhosis, breathing difficulties and diabetes, and she suffers from a heart condition, rheumatoid arthritis and knee problems, her doctor has said.

Her family last month wrote to the government pleading to let her fly abroad for treatment.

But Minister for Law Anisul Huq told reporters on Sunday they had rejected the plea, saying the executive order for her release from prison barred her from both taking part in politics

and going abroad for medical care.

"The application can't be reconsidered," he said.

The existing executive order would have to be cancelled before the government could reconsider a new directive allowing her to go abroad, meaning Zia would have to return to prison first and then apply, Huq said.

Kamal, the BNP legal chief, condemned the decision.

"She was granted a conditional release under a provision, and the same provision can be used to allow her to get treat-

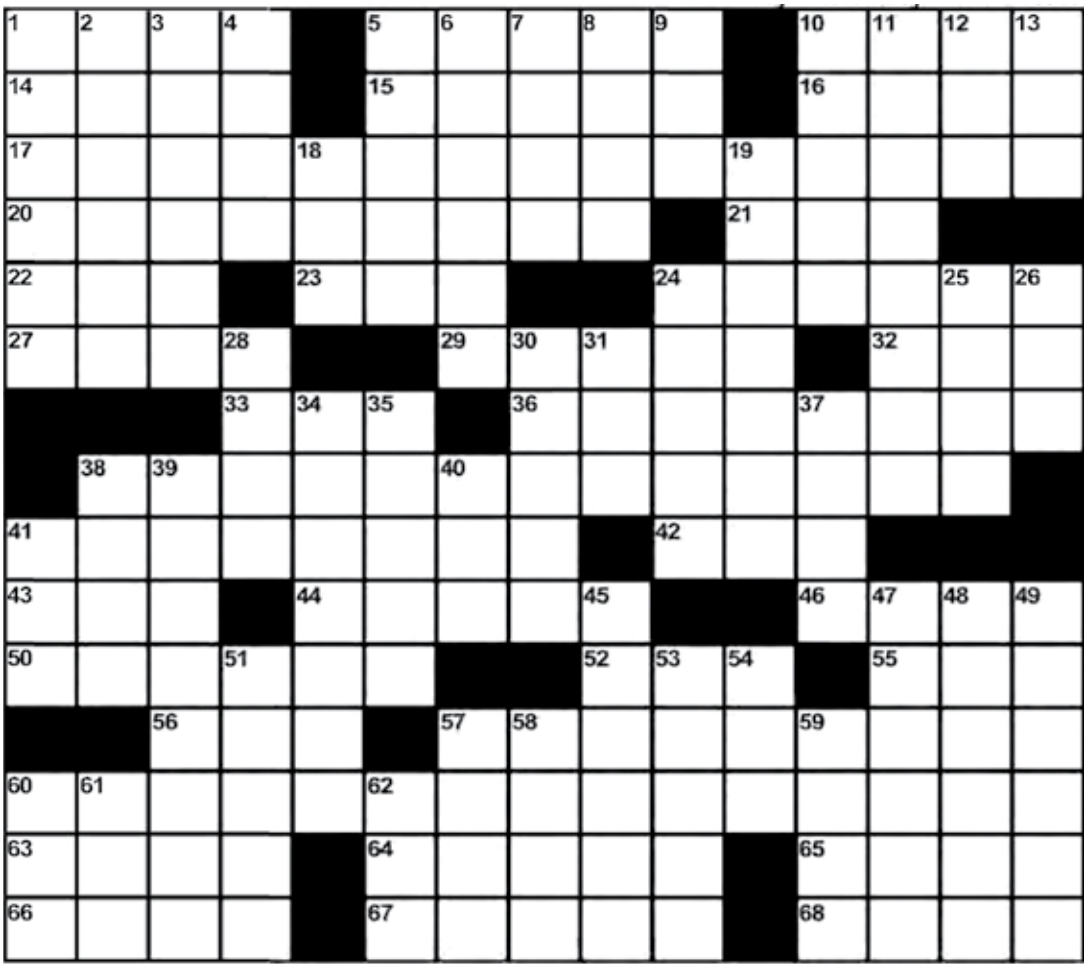
ment abroad," he said.

Tens of thousands of BNP supporters protested last week against the government's actions towards Zia. The BNP and its allies have staged a series of protests since last year demanding Hasina step down and allow a caretaker government to oversee the elections.

Yousuf Ali, a supporter of Zia and British-trained barrister who practices in Dhaka and London, said Huq's order had been issued 'in support of the political vendetta' of Hasina against Zia.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**

 - 1) Shower alternative
 - 5) Identify a caller
 - 10) "Clueless" catchphrase
 - 14) Largest continent
 - 15) Refute with evidence
 - 16) Nevada gambling mecca
 - 17) Kit and caboodle
 - 20) Keyboard neighbors
 - 21) Jersey reply
 - 22) Dada artist Jean
 - 23) Had a conference
 - 24) Main arteries
 - 27) Fledgling's place
 - 29) Make legislation
 - 32) _ Maria (coffee liqueur)
 - 33) Volcanic emission
 - 36) To the full extent
 - 38) They may let out some steam
 - 41) Became overcast
 - 42) Color that makes one stop
 - 43) Yodeler's perch
 - 44) Slightest amount
 - 46) Big event for baby
 - 50) Way to be jealous or
- interested

 - 52) Org. for attorneys
 - 55) Dir. opposite WSW
 - 56) _ step further
 - 57) It's blank for a bluff
 - 60) Reason to watch what one eats
 - 63) Hodgepodge
 - 64) Not yet used, as a match
 - 65) "I'd be happy to!"
 - 66) Beam with pride
 - 67) Lima and green
 - 68) Drove 90 instead of 55

DOWN

 - 1) The Caped Crusader
 - 2) On terra firma
 - 3) Traffic jams
 - 4) Hems' partners
 - 5) Overused theme
 - 6) Make a meaningful connection
 - 7) Slumbering
 - 8) Utter a few choice words
 - 9) Ordinal suffix
 - 10) Shady retreat
 - 11) Abalone eater
 - 12) Hotel relative
- 13) Poor visibility cause
 - 18) Skirt bottom
 - 19) Expressive
 - 24) Person in a cast
 - 25) Is sick
 - 26) Make a statement
 - 28) Fish holder
 - 30) Requirements
 - 31) Nelson Mandela's org.
 - 34) Thin varnish
 - 35) Treat for a bear
 - 37) Wines for beef
 - 38) Masculine one
 - 39) Pianist's challenge
 - 40) Place for sheep
 - 41) North or South state abbr.
 - 45) Provide lodging for
 - 47) Rip to shreds
 - 48) Concert hall cry
 - 49) Deprived of coats?
 - 51) Opposite of "in every way"
 - 53) Surpasses
 - 54) Museum display
 - 57) Type of cornbread
 - 58) Highly spiced stew
 - 59) Come clean (with "up")
- 60) Take the lion's share

61) Beastie Boys album "

Communication"

62) Wheel center

NOTE PAD

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

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

 **ARIES** MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Someone you don't know very well could propose an idea that other people might balk at, but you see some sort of brilliance in it. To you, it's just so crazy that it might work! Put your energy behind making it happen, and let this person know you're behind them all the way. Now you can't do anything halfway. You've got to put your energy into things completely. Risk is the only way to give yourself the excitement and success you're craving right now.

 **LEO** JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your enthusiasm for what you believe in is more powerful than ever. Use this energy to turn other people to your cause. If you want to make things happen, today is the day to do it. You can easily persuade others to see things your way. Jump into things headfirst and you stand a greater chance of making your mark and impressing people with what you say. Don't hesitate or worry about being too impulsive. It's just not possible today.

 **SAGITTARIUS** NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

When it comes to investing your money for the long haul, being conservative and cautious is totally appropriate. But when it comes to sharing your feelings, you need to start taking more risks. The more you show your vulnerability to the people you want to be closer to, the faster you'll strengthen your relationship. Once you're aware of people's boundaries, you can talk to them without worrying you're sharing too much or too little.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

 **TAURUS** APRIL 20-MAY 20

It's a good time for you to move forward with any travel plans you're considering, but you shouldn't sign any legal documents or invest any large sums of money in the trip yet. Ride things out for a few more days and wait to see if prices go down or a better option comes along. Keeping your options open is a smart thing to do as a rule right now. Committing yourself too early will only get you involved in something you might want to get out of later.

 **VIRGO** AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Today is a good day to throw yourself into something that could really shake up your life. Sure, it might be a little bit scary, but it's also going to be exhilarating. It's time to discover a new hobby, food, sport, or hot spot, anything that will inject some new energy into your daily routine. There's a world of exploration in your own backyard, so get out there and start poking around. You're sure to meet at least one fascinating person along the way.

 **CAPRICORN** DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Getting a little time to yourself could be extremely difficult today. You're the most popular person in the room for one of many possible reasons. Since ignoring the external world will be nearly impossible, you'd be better off giving in and socializing with the people who are clamoring for your attention. There will be plenty of time in coming days to find the alone time you so desperately want. For now, enjoy the shared laughter of your old friends.

 **GEMINI** MAY 21-JUNE 21

You can read other people like a book today. What were once the vague undercurrents of their true feelings will be blatant and obvious to you. This insight on what motivates people is extremely useful for you, especially if you're working through a negotiation. You're going to understand exactly what you need to say to get what you want. But don't feel guilty. This isn't some kind of evil manipulation. You'll create a win/win situation for everyone.

 **LIBRA** SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Things are going to be unpredictable today, so watch out for last-minutes changes, cancellations, and metaphorical wrenches getting tossed into things. Nothing is certain, and nothing is written in stone. But, in a way, not knowing what's going on could be kind of fun. There has been so much predictability in your life lately that this day of shake-ups could be exactly what you've been waiting for. There's no pressure to fulfill plans effectively when plans will change.

 **AQUARIUS** JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

One or two things could change with little or no notice today, but this fluctuation will do you some good. Sure, you could choose to flail around and try to put things back into the boxes you want them to live in, but what's the point? You'll only tire yourself out. Don't deprive yourself of surprises and spontaneous adventures. Go along with what the crowd wants to do and you'll have more fun than you thought possible.

 **CANCER** JUNE 22-JULY 22

Today, you could reach a turning point in one of your relationships, though you might be the only one who's aware of it. If this person doesn't see the same thing you see, wait until they do before bringing it up. Let them broach the subject. Otherwise, you could put them on the defensive and make them feel like you're making a power play of some sort. It's not a good place from which to start a heart-to-heart talk.

 **SCORPIO** OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Right now, it's more important than ever that you connect well with others. The energy of other people will inspire you and keep you feeling satisfied with where you're going. Even if you're feeling like you'd like to stay somewhat detached from other people, you need to find a way to get better connected with them. Talk to people and find out what you have in common. There are many ways to create stronger connections. You just have to find your favorite one.

 **PISCES** FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

When you're in charge, you have to be in charge! Letting your group of coworkers just do whatever they want might make you think you're winning their hearts and minds, but you sure aren't winning their respect. People need discipline, and they need to get it from you. By giving orders, you might be helping them be better at their jobs or even in life. Discipline is more important than ever for everyone in the group today, including you.

02. The legendary Hercules was said to have what quality?

A. Strength
B. Mischief
C. Eloquence
D. Musicianship

03. The white fumes that form when hydrogen chloride dissolves in water consist of what?

A. Methane
B. Hydrochloric acid
C. Arsenic
D. Helium

Answers: 1. D 2. A 3. B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

R	I	I	P
O	K	O	Y
I	N	L	L
B	A	S	L

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

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

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

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

MARTINEZ MAGIC

Milan, Italy - Lautaro Martinez scored all four goals as Inter Milan thrashed Salernitana 4-0 on Saturday to stay top in Serie A, while AC Milan kept pace with their city rivals after overcoming Lazio.

Inter rebounded from their first loss of the season midweek against Sassuolo thanks to a sensational second-half display from Martinez.

The Argentina striker dinked Marcus Thuram's superb ball over home goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa to break the deadlock just past the hour.

Salernitana's Mateusz Legowski had a goal disallowed for offside before Martinez drilled in his second from a cross from Nicolo Barella.

Martinez completed his hat-trick on 85 minutes after from the penalty spot Thuram was bundled to the ground. He added another with a first-time finish from Carlos Augusto's pass.

"I'm happy because I helped the team, it's all that counts. It was important to win after all the criticism aimed at us after our defeat on Wednesday," said Martinez, who tops the Serie A scoring charts with nine goals.

"I'm not thinking about the title for top scorer, I just want to help the team."

Inter are level on 18 points with Milan, who had briefly gone top earlier in the day after they

Argentina striker hits four in Inter rout of Salernitana as Milan see off Lazio

overcame a struggling Lazio 2-0.

Christian Pulisic gave Milan the lead on the hour at the San Siro when he slammed in a bobbling pass from Rafael Leao for his third goal since joining from Chelsea.

Leao was again involved as Milan made sure of the points in

gel well. I am really enjoying my time with the team."

France goalkeeper Mike Maignan returned for Milan after missing the past two games with a thigh injury he sustained in a goalless draw against Newcastle in the Champions League.

Lazio suffered their fourth de-

I'm happy because I helped the team, it's all that counts. It was important to win after all the criticism aimed at us after defeat on Wednesday. I just want to help the team

LAUTARO MARTINEZ

the 88th minute, the Portugal winger bursting into the area before cutting the ball back for Noah Okafor to slide home.

"I thought we put a lot of pressure on, it was just a matter of time, we finally opened it up and from there it was a really strong performance," Pulisic told DAZN.

"I haven't been here a long time, there are a lot of new players, but we are really starting to

feat of the season and dropped to 14th place, with just seven points from as many matches.

Osimhen on target

Napoli secured their second victory in four days as Victor Osimhen came off the bench and scored in a 4-0 win at Lecce, bumping the Italian champions up to third.

After a run of three games without a win, Rudi Garcia's side

have rediscovered some form heading into next week's Champions League clash at home to Real Madrid.

Centre-back Leo Ostigard headed Napoli ahead early on with his first league goal for the club, but it wasn't until the half-time introduction of Osimhen that the visitors took control of the game.

The Nigerian nodded in a cross from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia on 51 minutes before late goals from Gianluca Gaetano and Matteo Politano sealed the rout.

Politano struck from the spot as Osimhen left penalty duties to a team-mate for the second game running after the club posted a video online mocking him for a missed attempt.

After the player's agent threatened legal action this week, Napoli said they never meant to offend Osimhen.

Napoli remain four points adrift of Inter and Milan.

"It was a well-managed match from start to finish, we wanted to hit hard and score in the first 15 minutes," said Garcia.

"I'm happy for Ostigard who is really a player who's constantly thinking about the team."

"We drew lessons from what happened in Genoa (a 2-2 draw on September 16), it's something that really pleases me," added Garcia.



Lautaro Martinez celebrates his goal fest on Saturday

Dutch game abandoned as goalkeeper collapses in horrific collision

The Hague, Netherlands - A Dutch league match between RKC Waalwijk and Ajax was abandoned on Saturday after home goalkeeper Etienne Vaessen collapsed to the ground after being knocked unconscious, the ANP agency reported.

With just a few minutes remaining in the game, and with Ajax leading 3-2, Vaessen collided with Ajax striker Brian Brobbey.

TV images showed several players in shock as ground

staff quickly draped blankets around the stricken goalkeeper while doctors from both clubs treated him.

Some players were in tears and formed a cordon around Vaessen.

The 28-year-old goalkeeper was then stretchered off the pitch before the game was called off.

On Sunday, RKC Waalwijk reported that Vaessen, has "passed a good night" in hospital.

AFP

Monaco go top of Ligue 1 as PSG held by Clermont

Paris, France - Monaco went top of Ligue 1 with a 3-2 win over Gennaro Gattuso's Marseille on Saturday after Paris Saint-Germain were held to a 0-0 draw by struggling Clermont.

Marseille were playing their first game since former Italy star Gattuso was appointed coach and twice led in the principality through goals by Iliman Ndiaye and Samuel Gigot.

Ndiaye opened the scoring after just 32 seconds and Gigot volleyed them back in front on 18 minutes after Maghnes Akliouche equalised.

However, Monaco's USA striker Folarin Balogun - who had two penalties saved in last



Monaco's Maghnes Akliouche (L) scores against Marseille in their French Ligue 1 match on Saturday (AFP)

week's defeat by Nice - made it 2-2 midway through the first half, completing a remarkable opening to the game at the Stade Louis II. Balogun then set up Akliouche to make it 3-2 seven minutes after the restart and the youngster's second goal of the night proved to be the winner.

Monaco end the night a point clear at the top of the table from surprise package Brest, who visit fourth-placed Nice on Sunday - whoever wins that contest will seize first place.

Meanwhile, Marseille have now gone three games without a win, and conceded 10 goals, since previous coach Marcelino Garcia Toral resigned.

Gattuso will hope for his first victory when OM entertain Brighton and Hove Albion in the Europa League on Thursday.

PSG were warming up for a Champions League trip to Newcastle United as they went to Clermont, where Kylian Mbappe started having recovered from the ankle injury which forced him off in the first half of last week's 4-0 win over Marseille.

The reigning champions had been hoping to build on impressive wins against Borussia Dortmund and Marseille in their last two outings, but a goalless stalemate with a struggling Clermont side confirms they are far from the finished article.

Stunning Zamalek comeback keeps CAF Cup hopes alive

Johannesburg, South Africa - Egyptian club Zamalek staged a stunning comeback to defeat Djibouti visitors Arta Solar 4-1 on Saturday and secure a CAF Confederation Cup group stage place.

The 'White Knights' began the second leg of the final round qualifier trailing 2-0 after a shock loss in east Africa two weeks ago.

That deficit stretched to three goals on aggregate after 17 minutes when Warsama Houssein scored to give Arta the lead on the night.

With no further goals in the first half, Zamalek had to score at least four times in the second half to avoid a shock exit from the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League.

The comeback began on 49 minutes when Youssef 'Obama' Ibrahim netted and four minutes later veteran Mahmoud 'Shikabala' Abdelrazek scored a second Zamalek goal.



Zamalek's Hamza Mathlouthi celebrates with teammates after scoring against Arta Solar

Ahmed 'Zizo' Sayed struck for the Egyptian outfit on 74 minutes to give Zamalek a 3-1 second-leg lead and level the aggregate score, but Solar were still ahead on away goals. Tunisian defender Hamza Mathlouthi completed the remarkable recovery by scoring one minute from the end of regular time.

Zamalek squeezed through 4-3 on aggregate and Arta's hopes of becoming the first Djibouti club to qualify for the group stage were dashed.

Winners of 11 titles, Zamalek are the joint second most successful club in CAF competitions behind fellow Cairo club Al Ahly, who have 24 titles.

Bellingham delivers as Madrid punish Girona, Sociedad win Basque derby

Girona, Spain - Inspired by Jude Bellingham, Real Madrid showed both steel and class to beat high-flying Girona 3-0 on Saturday and move back top of La Liga.

Real Sociedad thrashed Athletic Bilbao by the same scoreline to win the Basque derby later on and rise to fourth.

Girona headed into the weekend as unlikely leaders but champions Barcelona usurped them by beating Sevilla on Friday, with Madrid then deposing their rivals at the league's summit with a solid triumph on Catalan soil.

Joselu and Aurelien Tchouameni's first-half goals were enough to burst Girona's bubble and after that the record 35-time La Liga winners kept the plucky upstarts at arm's length.

The stylish Bellingham netted with 20 minutes remaining to seal Madrid's victory and continue his own sparkling run of goalscoring form.

Madrid defender Nacho was



Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham scores against Girona in their Spanish league match on Saturday (AFP)

sent off late in the match for an ugly high tackle on Portu, who went off injured.

"Nacho wasn't thinking clearly, he's usually a player who does things right, he has said sorry," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who praised his team's

display.

Michel's side beat Real Madrid at home last season and their fans believed they could repeat the trick, but they found a determined side in their path.

In only their fourth season in the Spanish top flight and un-

beaten in their first seven games, the City Football Group-owned team are flourishing, but their illustrious visitors arrived with a point to prove about the natural order of things, and snapped that run.

AFP

LIVERPOOL SEE RED

Own goal seals Spurs' win over Liverpool as refs admit 'significant human error'

London, United Kingdom - Tottenham snatched a controversial 2-1 win against nine-man Liverpool as Joel Matip's last-gasp own-goal ended the Reds' resistance and the visitors had a goal disallowed that the referees' body admitted should have stood.

Liverpool had Curtis Jones and Diogo Jota sent off as Ange Postecoglou's side shattered Liverpool's unbeaten start to the Premier League season and extended their own thanks to the gripping climax in north London.

Jones was dismissed in the first half before Luis Diaz's goal for Liverpool was incorrectly disallowed for offside by VAR.

Referees' body PGMOL later admitted "a significant human error".

It said in a statement: "This was a clear and obvious factual error and should have resulted in the goal being awarded through VAR intervention, however, the VAR failed to intervene."

Tottenham took the lead through Son Heung-min's opener and Cody Gakpo equalised just before half-time, but Liverpool were reduced to nine when Jota saw red after the interval.

It seemed Liverpool would hold out against the odds until Matip accidentally diverted Pedro Porro's cross into his own net with just seconds left.

Furious Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp said: "I never saw a game like this with the most unfair circumstances, crazy decisions.

"The offside goal. That is not



Liverpool's Joel Matip (2R) is crestfallen after scoring an own goal in their English Premier League match against Tottenham Hotspur in London on Saturday (AFP)

This was a clear and obvious factual error and should have resulted in the goal being awarded through VAR intervention, however, the VAR failed to intervene

PGMOL

offside when you see it, they drew their lines wrong.

"The first red card, Curtis steps on the ball and goes over. Not a bad tackle. For Jota, first

yellow was not a yellow."

After a dismal run of one win in their previous 23 meetings with Liverpool in all competitions, Tottenham could finally savour a

rare success against the Anfield outfit. It was Tottenham's first win against Liverpool since 2017 when Spurs were using Wembley as their temporary home.

Postecoglou's men moved above Liverpool into second place, just one point behind Manchester City after the champions' surprise loss at Wolves earlier on Saturday.

Liverpool, beaten for the first time in nine games in all competitions, are one point behind Tot-

tenham in fourth place.

For Postecoglou, it was an especially sweet success after he grew up in Australia idolising legendary Liverpool boss Bill Shankly as a childhood fan of the Reds' great 1970s teams.

The former Celtic boss has done a remarkable job reviving Tottenham following their woeful campaign under his predecessor Antonio Conte.

While it is too early to label Tottenham as title contenders,

they have already beaten Liverpool and Manchester United, as well as drawing with Arsenal, to underline Postecoglou's impressive impact.

"We're still a team in its infancy in terms of the way we want to play, the age and experience of the group," Postecoglou said. "Particularly the manner in which it happened, it leaves the real impact and impression on everyone involved."

AFP



Jurgen Klopp

Klopp slams 'crazy decisions' after nine-man Liverpool's Spurs loss

London, United Kingdom - Jurgen Klopp blasted the "crazy decisions" that led to nine-man Liverpool's 2-1 defeat against Tottenham as referees' chiefs admitted the Reds were denied a legitimate goal in Saturday's dramatic clash.

Klopp's side had Curtis Jones and Diogo Jota sent off in north London, while Liverpool forward Luis Diaz had a goal wrongly disallowed by VAR.

Refereeing body PGMOL issued a statement less than an hour after the final whistle conceding Diaz's first-half goal should have stood.

"PGMOL acknowledge a significant human error occurred during the first half of Tottenham Hotspur v Liverpool," the statement read.

"PGMOL will conduct a full review into the circumstances which led to the error."

The match officials at fault for a botched VAR call have been removed from duty for the rest of the Premier League weekend

The match officials at fault for a botched VAR call have been removed from duty for the rest of the Premier League weekend.

VAR official Darren England was due to be fourth official at Sunday's Premier League match between Nottingham Forest and Brentford.

And his assistant VAR Dan Cook was to be assistant referee for Monday's west London derby between Fulham and Chelsea.

Liverpool paid the price for the controversial calls as Joel Matip's last-gasp own-goal condemned them to a first Premier League loss this term.

Klopp was incensed by the decisions, with Jones dismissed after his crunching challenge into Yves Bissouma's ankle.

It was initially ruled a booking by referee Simon Hooper, only for the official to upgrade it to a red card when he reviewed the foul on the pitchside monitor.

AFP



Bayern Munich's Alphonso Davies (R) and Leipzig's Xaver Schlager vie for the ball (AFP)

Kane penalty helps Bayern snatch draw at Leipzig

Leipzig, Germany - Bayern Munich came back from two goals down to draw 2-2 at RB Leipzig on Saturday as Harry Kane kick-started a second-half revival to prevent a first league loss of the season.

Leipzig were 2-0 up and cruising at half-time thanks to goals from Lois Openda and Castello Lukeba, but Kane converted a penalty early in the second half to give his side hope.

The goal, Kane's eighth in six league appearances since moving from Tottenham, had the desired effect, spurring Bayern on and Leroy Sane equalised shortly afterwards.

Bayern slipped to third, two points behind unbeaten Bayer Leverkusen, and captain Joshua Kimmich lamented his side conceding "dumb goals" while coach Thomas Tuchel said: "In the first half, we weren't even here."

"The reaction in the second half was good," Tuchel said, "and it was necessary."

Leipzig boss Marco Rose said his side had he better chances to

score and said the win "showed we belong" among the top teams in the league.

Just a day before the match, Leipzig fired sporting director Max Eberl, who had been heavily linked to a move to Munich, saying the former Bayern defender had shown a "lack of commitment" to the Saxony club.

Bayern invited the hosts into the game early, goalkeeper Sven Ulreich roaming well out of his box and scuffing a pass to Emil Forsberg, but the Sweden international's long-range shot drifted just wide.

The home side did not have to wait long however, Openda latching onto a superb long pass from Xaver Schlager to score his fourth league goal of the season.

Leipzig extended their lead shortly after through Lukeba, who slammed in a rebound from a corner for his first goal since moving from France in the summer.

Tuchel made two changes at half-time to ignite his lethargic squad, who pulled one back from the penalty spot through Kane

after VAR detected a Leipzig handball. Bayern drew level shortly after, Musiala carrying the ball up the middle of the park and laying off to Sane, who stroked the ball into the bottom corner.

Bayern's Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting had a chance deep in injury time but headed directly at the goalkeeper, meaning the sides split the points.

Leverkusen roll on

Earlier on Saturday, Leverkusen continued their blistering start to the season, winning 3-0 at struggling Mainz to go top of the table.

Leverkusen, who dropped their only points in the league this season in a 2-2 draw at Bayern, took the lead after 18 minutes as wing-back Jeremie Frimpong forced Mainz defender Sepp van den Berg into an own goal.

Dead-ball specialist Alejandro Grimaldo doubled Leverkusen's lead with a pinpoint free-kick before Germany winger Jonas Hofmann scored a third to round out another win.

AFP

Miami playoff hopes hit, Cincinnati secure top seed

Fort Lauderdale, United States- Inter Miami's MLS playoff hopes suffered a blow on Saturday as, without the injured Lionel Messi, they drew 1-1 at home to New York City FC, while FC Cincinnati secured the top seed in the Eastern Conference with a win at Toronto and Nashville grabbed a play-off place.

Messi, who had missed Wednesday's US Open Cup final defeat to Houston and last week's draw in the league at Orlando, was again missing with the injury which has troubled him since mid-September.

Without the Argentine and his former Barcelona team-mate Jordi Alba Miami looked short of ideas. After a lacklustre game, New York struck in the 77th minute with a fine individual goal from Santiago Rodriguez.

The Uruguayan brought down a long ball from Tayvon Gray and



Lionel Messi watches the match from the stands

held off two Miami defenders as he turned before blasting into Drake Callender's near post.

Miami had not managed an effort on target in the entire 90 minutes but then in the fifth minute of stoppage time defender Tomas Aviles rose to

head in a Robert Taylor corner.

The home side were desperately close to grabbing a dramatic late winner when David Ruiz burst into the box, but his drive from close range bounced out of the underside of the bar.

AFP

Starc takes hat-trick as rain spoils warm-up match between Australia and Netherlands

Thiruvananthapuram, India - Rain on Saturday forced the World Cup warm-up match between Australia and the Netherlands to be called off after Mitchell Starc claimed a hat-trick in a stellar all-round show.

Chasing 167 in a reduced 23-overs-a-side match, the Netherlands were 84-6 in 14.2 overs when rain had the final say in Thiruvananthapuram.

Steve Smith top-scored with a 42-ball 55 in Australia's 166-7 after the match started five hours late. None of the World Cup warm-ups are official ODIs.

Starc rattled the Dutch with his left-arm pace as he struck



Mitchell Starc

with the final two balls of the opening over and then got an-

other wicket on his first ball of the second over.

The fast bowler trapped Max O'Dowd lbw for a duck and then bowled Wesley Barresi and Bas de Leede, and the Dutch kept slipping away despite Colin Ackermann's 31 not out.

Australia won the toss and batted first but former captain Smith lost opening partner Josh Inglis for a duck. However he hit back with four fours and three sixes despite the opposition bowlers picking up regular wickets.

Alex Carey made 28, Cameron Green hit 34 and then Starc finished off the innings with his unbeaten 22-ball 24.

AFP

Aditi settles for silver

Indian golfer blows seven-shot lead as Thailand sweep women's gold

Hangzhou, China - Thailand's Arpichaya Yubol snatched Asian Games women's gold on Sunday after India's Aditi Ashok blew a seven-shot overnight lead, while rising star Taichi Kho made history for Hong Kong golf in the men's event.

Kho kept his nerve despite a charge by PGA Tour star Im Sung-jae for a one-stroke victory at 27-under par and Hong Kong's first golf medal ever at the Asian Games.

Im still secured team gold, a feat that will exempt him and his three teammates - Kim Si-woo, Jang Yu-bin and Cho Woo-young - from compulsory military service back home.

Thailand won men's team silver and Hong Kong took a second medal with the bronze.

Ashok, who shot an incredible 11-under-par 61 on Saturday, slumped to a final-round 77 on the par-72 West Lake International Golf Course in Hangzhou but still secured silver.

LPGA Tour rookie Arpichaya's final-round 68 took her to 19-under par and victory over Ashok by two strokes.

"When I hit the second shot on 18 I felt it was straight, but when I saw it land on the green, I



Silver medallist India's Aditi Ashok, gold medallist Thailand's Arpichaya Yubol and bronze medallist South Korea's Yoo Hyunjo at the medal ceremony for the women's individual golf (AFP)

I still felt I was in it at 16, but that one shot threw me out of it because when you hit the water it's just a penalty shot. There's no way of coming back from that

ADITI ASHOK

cried a little bit," said the world number 206, who was mobbed by her equally emotional Thai teammates after holing the final

putt. The 21-year-old's four-under round also sealed the women's team gold for Thailand on a 34-under aggregate, six

clear of South Korea, with China taking bronze.

South Korea's Yoo Hyun-jo, who plays on the domestic KLPGA Tour, won the individual bronze after China's world number 13 Lin Xiyu tumbled off the podium with a one-over 73.

Yoo shot the round of the day, a seven-under 65, to finish three clear of Lin.

The top-ranked player in the field, China's world number two

Yin Ruoning, finished in a tie for eighth after a disastrous triple-bogey seven at the first hole.

Ashok struggled all round and finally caved in after her fourth bogey of the day at 15.

"It wasn't a good day and I played bad," Ashok said.

Her next tee shot on the short 16th found water. It led to a double-bogey five, her seven-shot overnight lead was now a one-stroke deficit.

"I still felt I was in it at 16, but that one shot threw me out of it because when you hit the water it's just a penalty shot.

"There's no way of coming back from that."

Arpichaya birdied the next and coolly closed out with a par.

Kho, a 22-year-old Asian Tour rookie who won this year on just his fourth professional start, held a three-shot overnight lead in the men's event.

Asian Games official suffers leg fracture after being hit by hammer

Hangzhou, China - An athletics official suffered a broken leg at the Asian Games in Hangzhou after being hit by a hammer hurled during competition by Kuwait's Ali Zankawi.

The official, named as Huang Qinghua, was sitting on a chair outside the throwing circle when Zankawi aborted his attempt on Saturday evening, with his hammer hitting the protective netting.

But rather than stopping, the metal ball that weighs over 7kg (15 pounds) slammed into the technical official's right leg.

Pictures showed Huang in agony, blood pouring from his shin, as Zankawi rushed to help him.

He was carried out of the arena on a stretcher and received emergency treatment on site, before being taken to hospital for surgery.

The 62-year-old was in a stable condition after suffering a fractured tibiofibular joint, Chinese state media said. Zankawi, a silver medallist at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, told AFP he visited Huang in his hospital bed on Sunday and apologised.

Describing the accident, the 39-year-old said: "I raised my head and discovered that the hammer had bounced from the ground to the official's leg."

China thrill in track and field but footballers flop again

Hangzhou, China - China swept four gold medals in track and field at the Asian Games on Sunday to celebrate national day, but their men's football team failed to read the script and were dumped out by South Korea.

The hosts are running away at the top of the overall medals table in Hangzhou with 132 golds and still seven days of competition to go.

China is enjoying a long holiday for national day and patriotic fervour filled the 80,000-seater Olympic stadium in the eastern city for the evening's athletics.

Waving mini flags and roaring on the home competitors, they were not to be disappointed.

Wang Jianan, nicknamed Eddie, leapt an impressive 8.22m on his first attempt in the long jump. It proved enough to defend his title.

Discus thrower Feng Bin, who like Wang was dethroned as world champion in August, also bounced back in style to claim gold with a throw of 67.93m, a Games record.

"I'm really happy. After all,



South Korea's An Se-young hits a return against China's Chen Yufei

today is national day, a very special day for every Chinese person," the 29-year-old Feng said.

"To win my first Asian Games medal on this day makes me extremely happy and excited."

There was more home suc-

cess through Lin Yuwei in the 100m hurdles and Zheng Ninali in the women's heptathlon.

South Korea's badminton squad raced onto the court and some players were in tears after steamrolling hosts China 3-0 to win women's team gold Sunday for the first time in nearly 30 years.

World number one An Se-young got the party started in Hangzhou in rampant fashion when she defeated Chen Yufei 21-12, 21-13 in double-quick time.

Next, Lee So-hee and Baek Hana beat Jia Yifan and Chen Qingchen 21-18, 21-14 in the doubles, before Kim Ga-eun sealed the deal with a hard-fought 23-21, 21-17 victory over He Bingjiao.

That sparked wild celebrations from the South Korean players on the sidelines, who sprinted onto the court. At least two were in tears.

South Korea's coach Kim Hak-kyun called the gold "precious" and said they were already targeting more success at next summer's Paris Olympics.

AFP

Alcaraz, Sabalenka sail through in China

Beijing, China - Top seeds Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka both breezed into the next round of the China Open with routine victories on Sunday.

Alcaraz sealed a place in the men's quarter-finals with a smooth 6-2, 6-2 victory over Italy's Lorenzo Musetti in Beijing.

The world number two overpowered his opponent and seized the first set when Musetti whacked a baseline backhand into the net.

The Spaniard then broke serve twice in the second set and saw out a comfortable match with an unreturned serve.

He will next face Casper Ruud after the world number nine came back to beat Argentina's Tomas Etcheverry 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (9-7). "I feel great, honestly. It was a good performance against a really tough opponent," Alcaraz said at a post-match press briefing.

"(My level) didn't (go) up and down. I stayed at a high level, high quality, during the whole match," the 20-year-old said.

A sticking point in the tournament's early rounds has been the match balls, which Alcaraz's main challenger Daniil Medvedev



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz hits a return against Italy's Lorenzo Musetti

described on Saturday as "like a grapefruit".

Alcaraz said Sunday he had also felt the distinct quality of the balls - allegedly quick to fluff up - "since day one". "It's something tough, but tennis players have to get used to the balls in every tournament," he said.

"Here, in just one or two games, the balls become really

different from (when they're) new. It's a kind of different (style of) play," he said.

Also on Sunday, world number seven Jannik Sinner obliterated Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-2, 6-0.

Earlier, world number one Aryna Sabalenka sailed into the second round of the women's draw with an imperious 6-1, 6-2

defeat of American Sofia Kenin.

The Belarusian pummelled Kenin with a succession of mighty serves and groundstrokes and wrapped up the opening set with an ace after just 23 minutes.

The 25-year-old broke serve twice more in the second set as Kenin - playing with heavy strapping on her left thigh - failed to muster a response.

Europe regain Ryder Cup to extend USA 30-year wait

Rome, Italy - Tommy Fleetwood enjoyed the winning moment as Europe regained the Ryder Cup from a battling United States on Sunday, wrapping up a 16.5-11.5 victory despite a blistering American singles charge.

The USA remain without a win on European soil since 1993 while neither team have lifted the trophy away from home in 11 years.

With Europe needing half a point to get over the line, Fleetwood moved 2-up against Rickie Fowler with two holes to play after the American dumped his

tee shot on the short par-four 16th into the water.

Fleetwood struck his drive into the heart of the green and calmly stroked his eagle putt to the hole-side to ensure Europe a seventh consecutive home victory, before going on to win 3 and 1.

"I think relief, pride, joy," said the Englishman. "Proud of everybody that's been involved this week and just proud that I'm one of the people that gets to play a role in what we came here to do."

US captain Zach Johnson took responsibility for the loss. "The

defeat is on me, I made some poor decisions and I will reflect. Those 12 guys played so hard and fought for our country," he said.

Rory McIlroy and Viktor Hovland led the way with early victories in the Rome sunshine and Jon Rahm also snatched half a point from Scottie Scheffler on the 18th green.

Luke Donald's Europe started the day four points from lifting the trophy they lost in a record-breaking 19-9 thrashing at Whistling Straits two years ago. "It was stressful as the US put

up a fight today so hats off to them. But I am so proud of my 12 guys. We formed a bond from day one and they gave me everything," said Donald.

Europe raced out of the blocks in the Rome sunshine before the USA enjoyed a surge to quieten the huge home crowds, at one point leading in seven matches and tied in the other.

But Europe gathered themselves and ended up halving the singles session 6-6. The Americans were attempting to pull off the biggest Sunday Ryder Cup

comeback, having trailed 10.5-5.5 at the start of the day.

But they never recovered from being swept 4-0 in the opening foursomes on Friday, squashing American hopes that their crushing win in 2021 was the start of a period of dominance.

There were jubilant scenes on the 18th green as the final match on the course between Shane Lowry and Jordan Spieth, which was halved, came to an end, with the Irishman hugging several teammates on his way down the fairway.



Europe's Tommy Fleetwood celebrates the winning putt on the 17th green during his singles match against Rickie Fowler of the US (AFP)

MARTIN REIGNS IN JAPAN RAIN

Spaniard just three points off championship leader Francesco Bagnaia with six races left

Motegi, Japan - Jorge Martin narrowed the gap on championship leader Francesco Bagnaia to just three points with six races left on Sunday after winning a Japan MotoGP cut short by rain.

Starting from pole, the Spaniard had already cut the difference to Italy's Bagnaia to only eight points on Saturday with his third straight sprint victory and fifth of the season.

Ducati's Bagnaia came second in the race, giving the defending world champion 319 points compared to 316 for Martin from Ducati satellite team Pramac. Marc Marquez took third.

The 24-lap race began under overcast skies and light rain quickly intensified once the race started in mountainous Motegi.

This made for treacherous conditions with slippery turns and a sea of spray, and most riders came into the pits early on to

change tyres.

Martin and Bagnaia worked their way back to the top of the field before organisers suspended the race with 12 laps to go.

They attempted a restart but the red flags quickly came out again and the riders were awarded full points according to their positions at the stoppage.

"I was committed to do a great result today," Martin said afterwards.

"I felt really good with the rear grip and I was able to overtake all of them (after the pit stop) and make this gap to win today," he added.

"I'm so so happy. Luckily everybody's away but it was too dangerous to keep going," he added.

Bagnaia said he was happy with the result but said he thought he could have overtaken

Martin.

"I was hoping to do more laps to catch Jorge because I was trying to gain (on him) lap by lap without pushing too much," he said.

"Unluckily, we didn't have time to finish the race... I think, with the time management, I was quite competitive in the last part of the race," he said.

Looking ahead, Bagnaia said competition was turning more "difficult" and "intense" as he duelled with Martin for the championship.

I was committed to do a great result today. I felt really good with the rear grip and I was able to overtake all of them (after the pit stop) and make this gap to win

JORGE MARTIN



Prima Pramac Racing rider Jorge Martin celebrates his victory at the Japanese Grand Prix on Sunday

onship. "I think it will be interesting. Could be a great fight. For sure, it's more intense right now. It's more difficult," he said.

Six-time world champion Marquez on Honda made his first podium finish of the year at the home circuit of the Japanese brand.

He started from the third row, but as rain caused other riders to go wide or even into gravel, the Spaniard saw an opening to race to the podium.

"I enjoyed (it). In the beginning of the race I was very calm, just tried to understand the tyres," Marquez said.

"When I saw that there was water on the track, I started to attack and I was increasing the speed step by step," he said.

South African Brad Binder on KTM crashed out early in the race. He set a lap record on Friday, before Martin renewed it on Saturday.

Johann Zarco also crashed and was not allowed to return to the race after he took a shortcut to get back into the pit lane.

Townsend's Scotland on song before Ireland Rugby World Cup 'shoot-out'

Lille, France - Scotland cruised to an 84-0 victory over Romania on Saturday but the focus was always on next weekend's crucial game against Ireland in Paris, with their hopes of reaching the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals on the line.

Gregor Townsend's side need another victory in the French capital next Saturday, against much tougher opposition in the world's number one side, if they want to reach the knock-out stage for the first time in eight years.

Scotland have reacted well to defeat in the opening round to South Africa by scoring 129 points and conceding just 17

against Tonga and then Romania.

World Cup holders the Springboks are on course to be other team to advance from Pool B.

"The players trained really well this week," Townsend said after beating the Oaks.

"They are putting in the hard yards that is required to score the amount of tries we've scored in the last two games.

"We've been able to set-up this shoot-out game with Ireland," he added.

Despite their very good recent form under Andy Farrell, Ireland's record in the World Cup has been poor, failing to ever reach further than the last eight.

Townsend refused to be



Scotland's Johnny Matthews runs with the ball to score a try during their Rugby World Cup Pool B match against Romania on Saturday (AFP)

drawn on Ireland's historic results in the competition especially after their impressive win over the Springboks last Saturday.

"I'm not going to answer that question," former Scotland fly-half Townsend said with a smile.

"Ireland are the number one team in the world, on the back of 16 wins so they're not going to think about what has happened in previous tournaments.

"They will take a huge amount of confidence from the last game," the 50-year-old added.

Scotland are considered outsiders for a spot in the last eight and last beat Ireland in 2017.

"The games that we've played better in we've put pressure on

Ireland on the scoreboard," Townsend said.

"In any Test match, when you play a team ranked in the top three or four, you have to take your opportunities.

"The encouraging thing is that we've created opportunities and taken them playing at a level of intensity and accuracy until the final whistle is important.

"That's always challenging against the top teams but we believe in our team, that we're capable of doing that," he added.

Former British and Irish Lions playmaker Townsend made 13 changes for the Romania win giving gametime to some fringe players.

Former captain and flanker Hamish Watson, scrum-half Ali Price and No. 8 Matt Fagerson would have given him food for thought with their performances before selecting his side for the showdown at a sold-out Stade de France next weekend.

"To be given the opportunity you could see how much they wanted to grab it," Townsend said.

"It's been a tough time for a lot of these players to not play.

"I'm really pleased with the level of competition we have. Whoever goes out next week, we'll be confident that they have the ability to get the job done," he added.

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CHINA HOLIDAY



Passengers wait for trains at Hongqiao Railway Station in Shanghai

COMING HOME

MILLIONS TRAVEL ACROSS CHINA, CARRYING LUGGAGE, LIVE CRABS, AND LOVE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS, AS THE EIGHT-DAY NATIONAL HOLIDAY KICKS OFF

Chinese travellers thronged transport networks Friday as an eight-day national holiday kicked off, the first October break since the end of the strict zero-Covid policies that separated families and hammered the tourism industry.

Pre-booked international trips were 20 times higher than in the same period last year, and domestic trips over four times, according to data from Trip.com, China's largest online travel provider.

Last year, a slew of measures including mass coronavirus testing, health codes, quarantines between different provinces and restrictions on movement made travelling anywhere a daunting proposition. But Friday morning saw the Beijing South railway station inundated by passengers dragging luggage as they hurried to their trains.

In Shanghai's cavernous Hongqiao train station, thousands of travellers bustled around buying food and last-minute presents for relatives -- including live crabs from a stand by the main ticket counter.

At the international airport next door, a steady stream of passengers passed through security, with a transport worker saying the day before had been even busier.

Beijing's two international airports are expected to handle around 2.3 million people over the holiday, state media reported, with airlines operating larger planes and adding more flights to meet demand.

Almost 13 million people were predicted to visit the capital over the holiday, a 21.9% increase from the 2019 pre-Covid figure, state media said.

On Friday, people flocked to Beijing's Forbidden City to take advantage of the sunny autumn morning, many of them families.

Clear skies ahead

Overall, China will see 1.58 million daily inbound and outbound passenger trips over the vacation period, according to a National Immigration Administration (NIA) forecast on Wednesday.

Notwithstanding the holiday surge, the country's travel and tourism sector has yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels, industry insiders told AFP. But

they are confident it is only a matter of time.

"Originally, we thought it could all happen by the end of this year or beginning of next. But, I think, we're probably talking about the next two to three years for it to be completely back," World Travel and Tourism Council chief Julia Simpson told AFP in an interview this week.

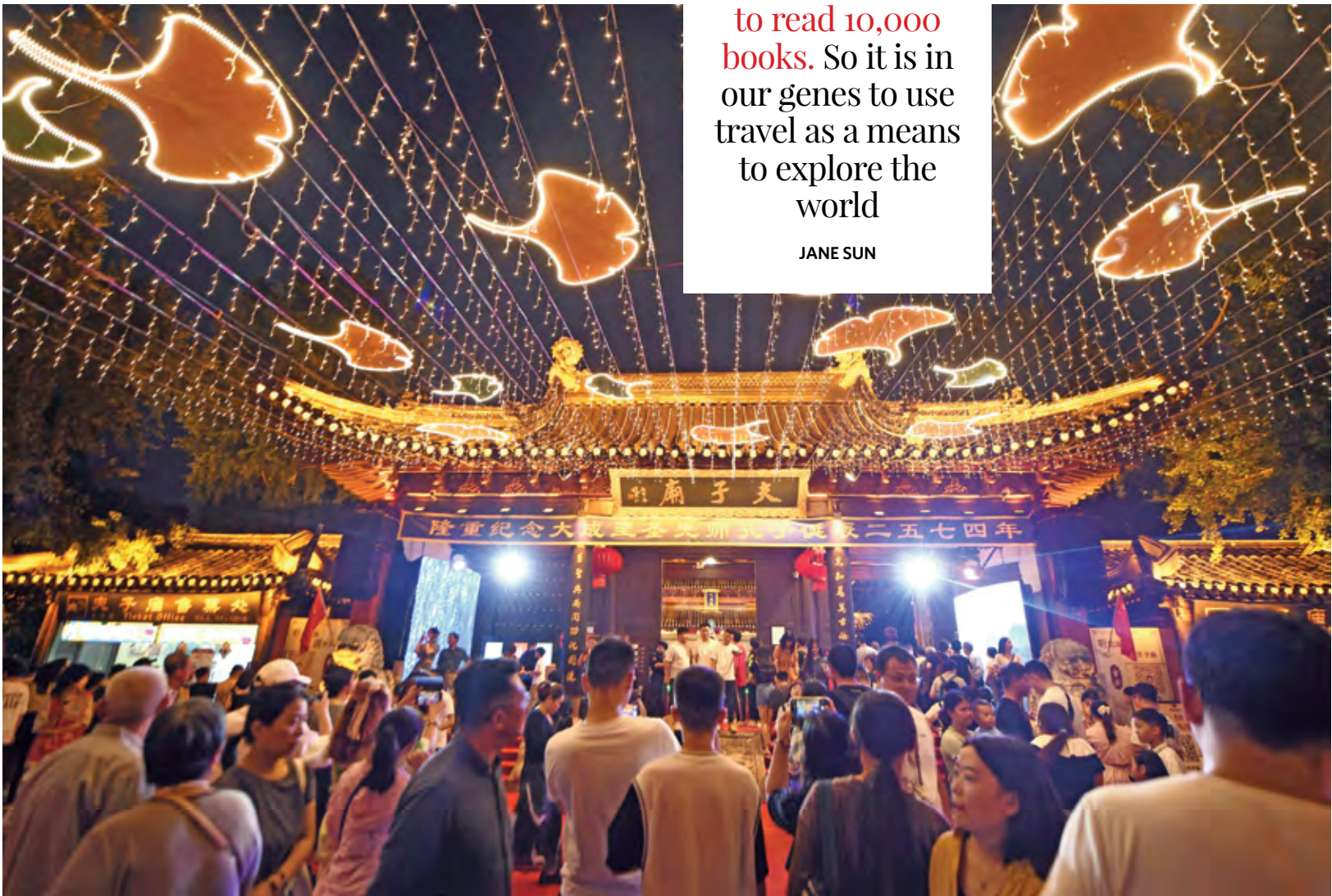
Simpson pointed to visa delays for Chinese nationals and fewer flights available as key reasons why travel out of China had not rebounded as quickly as expected. Still, the WTTC has predicted that within the next 10 years, China will overtake the United States as the largest global travel market.

Simpson said there was strong political will from the Chinese govern-



Chinese people are taught by Confucius that it is better to travel 10,000 miles than to read 10,000 books. So it is in our genes to use travel as a means to explore the world

JANE SUN



People visit the Confucius Temple Scenic Area in Nanjing, in China's eastern Jiangsu province

HUNGARY

Culturally vibrant

With easy access to Europe due to its convenient location, as well as growth as an economic powerhouse in the region, visitors to Hungary enjoy the ability to experience a vivid culture that showcases its worthiness as one of the top 15 global destinations.

According to official information, Hungary can be divided into 5 regions, with the most visited one being Central Hungary including the city (capital) of Budapest. Lake Balaton offers beautiful wine regions and rural life, while Transdanubia offers a more historic region and is actually the most economically developed region within the country. Northern Hungary includes a variety of historic towns and cave baths, while the Great Hungarian Plain is a large region with flat rolling hills that remains somewhat isolated from the rest of the country.

Hungary's capital city of Budapest is considered one of Europe's most enjoyable cities, featuring green parks, amazing museums and even a thriving

nightlife scene. The country's second largest city, Debrecen, offers a more cultural and ecclesiastical feel. A member of the Schengen Agreement, Hungary has no border controls between countries within the agreement.

Access to the country is easy and convenient, with several international airports, train stations (Budapest is a hub for Central Europe), private car and bus. Domestic transport is also very convenient with train hubs, bus stations and private car being easily accessible.

Hungary is a very safe country, however, visitors should take normal precautions they would in any country. Compared to other countries, most Hungarian cities are relatively quiet at night.

Be sure to keep your passport on you at all times as this is a legal requirement for visitors and often enforced by the police. Those who look to drive in Hungary should note that many drivers do not observe the speed limits. There is a zero tolerance policy for drunk driving, with heavy fines or even jail time being the penalty for those that do not adhere to this rule.

Key sites to visit:

Located in central Europe, Hungary offers a wide range of unique destinations, low mountain ranges, lakes and rivers, plains and small, quaint villages, stunning heritage sites as well as modern avenues for entertainment

Hungarian Parliament Building

Known as the Parliament of Budapest, this building is the seat of the National Assembly of Hungary and is a very popular tourist destination for those visiting Budapest. Opened in 1902, it is the largest building in Hungary. The building itself was developed in Gothic Revival style and includes a large central dome which showcases Renaissance Revival Culture.

Debrecen Botanical Garden



Located at the University of Debrecen, the Botanical Garden was established in 1928. It houses nearly 6,000 plant species, including 1,300 types of cactus - one of the largest in Central and Eastern Europe. The original garden previously belonged to the Reformed College.

Architecture & landmarks



Buda Castle



Commonly referred to as the Royal Palace, this castle is the palace complex of the Hungarian kings in Budapest. First completed in 1265, the majority of the modern day castle dates back to between 1749 and 1769. It now houses the Hungarian National Gallery as well as the Budapest History Museum. The surrounded area known as the Castle Quarter is very popular with tourists, while the castle itself is a World Heritage Site as of 1987.

Budapest History Museum



Located at the Buda Castle, this museum focuses on the history of the city over a 2,000 period. Items on display include various photos, furniture, tools, clothes, books, graphics and more. The exhibits display the unique life of both Buda and Pest pre-unification of the cities. Admission is free of charge during public holidays and the museum is open year-round with special operating hours during the Christmas Season.

Miskolc is divided into several key areas, each offering its own unique landmarks and architecture. Avas is considered the heart of Miskolc and including the Avas tower lookout, a symbol of the city. Belvaros is the official city centre and includes a wide range of monuments and well-preserved 19th-century buildings of historical significance.

Diosgyor is famous for its medieval castle, while the University Town is one of the newer areas of Miskolc having been founded in the 1950's and including more modern buildings, sports facilities and parks. The area of Miskolctapolca is one of the most well-known areas and holiday resorts in all of Hungary and is home to the unique Cave Bath, a natural cave full of thermal water.

Ethnographic Museum



This national museum was founded in 1872 by the Ethnographic Department of the Hungarian National Museum. The museum houses a collection of Hungarian folk objects from the 19th century and includes a variety of pieces from everyday life. This includes pottery, costumes, boats and furniture, as well as a model of a kitchen and a church from 1900. Most items are from Upper Hungary as well as Transylvania.

St Stephen's Basilica



This is a Roman Catholic basilica named in honour of Stephen, the first King of Hungary. It was the sixth largest church in Hungary prior to 1920 and today is the third largest church in the country. The site of the basilica was earlier used as a theatre in the 18th century. It is now one of the most popular tourist attractions in Hungary and is also the third tallest church in the country.