

H M reviews bilateral relations with Brunei



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Princess Hajah Masna Bolkiah at Al Barakah Palace on Monday

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik met Princess Hajah Masna Bolkiah, Ambassador-at-Large in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, at Al Barakah Palace on Monday.

During the meeting, the princess conveyed greetings and best wishes of Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people.

On his turn, His Majesty the Sultan asked Princess Masna to convey his greetings to the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam and his people.

The meeting reviewed the political and historical relations between Oman and Brunei Darussalam, in addition to exploring available opportunities to enhance partnership and co-operation to serve joint interests.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and Noralizan Abdul Momin, Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to Oman.

ONA

Royal Cars Museum to open to public at Al Barakah Palace

Muscat - Royal Cars Museum at Al Barakah Palace will officially open to the public on Tuesday. The opening ceremony will be presided over by H H Sayyid Bilal bin Haitham al Said on behalf of His



H H Sayyid Bilal bin Haitham al Said

Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. Established under the directives of His Majesty the Sultan, the museum aims to showcase the luxury, diversity and historical significance of the vehicles associated with Omani royalty. It seeks to serve as a source of inspiration and a key attraction for car enthusiasts and history lovers alike.

The collection features an array of classic, rare and sports cars, including personal vehicles of His Majesty Sultan Haitham. Visitors will also have the opportunity to view cars once used by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the late Sultan Said bin Taimour and the late Sayyid Tarik bin Taimour.

Origins of the museum trace back to the early 1970s, when the late Sultan Qaboos, a known car enthusiast, began collecting classic and rare vehicles. His passion for automobiles started with two cars that had belonged to the late Sultan Said bin Taimour. Over time, additional vehicles linked to Omani royalty were collected, including modern and rare acquisitions.

In 2012, a dedicated museum building was established to house this collection, though access was limited to guests of His Majesty. With its opening to the public, the museum is expected to become a major cultural and historical landmark, offering a glimpse into the unique automotive legacy of Oman's Royal family.

600 global experts discuss aviation security in Muscat

Muscat- Represented by Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Oman is hosting the eighth edition of ICAO Security Week which opened on Monday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event, held for the first time outside International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) headquarters in Montreal, will run for four days and aims to strengthen global aviation security.

The opening ceremony was attended by H E Sultan bin Salem al Habsi, Minister of Finance, along with more than 600 officials and specialists from ICAO member states, international organisations and civil aviation stakeholders.

The event seeks to address key issues impacting aviation security, enhance protective measures at aviation facilities, and ensure the safety of passengers and crew. It aims to develop recommendations to tackle international aviation security challenges, while emphasising the need for member states to adopt a unified approach to counter terrorism and safeguard vital civil aviation infrastructure.

Highlighting the significance of hosting the event in Oman, Naif bin Ali al Abri, Chairman of CAA, said, "This is a global recognition reflecting the sultanate's commitment to advancing the aviation sector and strengthening air safety and security standards."

Oman seeks tourism boost from Southeast Asia

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) is looking to establish a representative office in Singapore to promote Oman as a premier travel destination in key Southeast Asian markets, including Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.

The move aims to enhance Oman's visibility as a must-visit location, strengthen trade relations and attract more visitors from the region. The appointed representative will play a crucial role in implementing Oman's marketing strategy. This includes developing business relations, increasing awareness of Oman's diverse offerings, and promoting the country as a top choice for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE).

MHT has issued a tender in this effect, with the selected firm



A key aspect of the exercise involves leveraging media relations to position Oman as a compelling travel destination

to focus on fostering co-marketing agreements with international trade partners, educating industry stakeholders about Oman's unique attractions and improving its presence in trade programmes.

MHT envisions a strong collaboration between Omani and Southeast Asian tourism sectors

to expand product offerings and reach new market segments.

A key aspect of the exercise involves leveraging media relations to position Oman as a compelling travel destination. This includes engaging journalists, influencers, bloggers and vloggers for coverage across digital, print and broadcast platforms. The

firm will also highlight Oman's potential as a destination for MICE tourism and address any crises affecting its tourism image in these markets.

The tender emphasises close cooperation with MHT's global communication agency to ensure cohesive brand messaging and marketing campaigns. The appointed firm will also report regularly on its activities and results to align with the ministry's annual tourism strategy.

Interested companies are invited to submit proposals detailing their plans for business development, trade marketing and media relations. Proposals will be evaluated based on their ability to deliver impactful outcomes and expand Oman's presence in the competitive Southeast Asian tourism market.

Tender document sale ended on December 8, while bids close on December 31.

Oman, US celebrate 15 years of Free Trade Agreement

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) organised an event on Monday to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States of America.

The celebration, in collaboration with the US Embassy in Oman, US State Department, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), and Oman American Business Council (OABC), marked a significant milestone in bilateral relations.

The ceremony was attended by H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yusef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas,

Chairman of OCCI, and several government officials, diplomats and businessmen from both nations.

Pankaj Khimji, Advisor for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation at MoCIIP, highlighted the key achievements of the Oman-US FTA, which was signed in 2006 and came into effect on January 1, 2009. The agreement eliminated tariffs on most goods, significantly boosting trade and transforming Oman's trade balance with the US from a deficit of RO108mn in 2009 to a surplus of RO487mn in 2022. "The agreement also fostered US investment in Oman's energy, logistics and infrastructure sectors, while contributing to Vision 2040 goals. It has led to substantial growth in non-oil sectors and provided SMEs better access to



H E Ana Escrogima

US markets."

The FTA also enhanced Oman's trade laws, aligning these with international standards and promoting transparency and innovation. Additionally, it has contributed to job creation, enhanced workforce skills, and positioned Oman as a regional lo-



Pankaj Khimji

gistics hub, particularly through its strategic ports like Duqm and Salalah. It facilitated greater collaboration in education and science, with exchange programmes such as Fulbright supporting academic research and cultural exchange. The agreement has helped foster

partnerships in fields like aquaculture and advanced science and technology.

US Ambassador H E Ana Escrogima spoke about the significance of the FTA, noting how it has deepened trade relations and provided a strong foundation for future economic collaboration. She acknowledged the contributions of H E Hunainah al Mughairy - Oman's ambassador to the US from 2005 to 2020 - who played a crucial role in the FTA. H E Ana added that US FDI in Oman increased 36.3% last year, positioning the US as Oman's second-largest foreign investor. She expressed optimism for the future of US-Oman relations, particularly in sectors such as space exploration, education and business.

According to Jose W Fernan-

dez, US Undersecretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment, US-Oman bilateral trade has consistently exceeded US\$3bn annually since 2021. US companies have contributed significantly to job creation and skill development in Oman's oil and energy sectors. The US has invested US\$13bn in Oman's infrastructure, energy and technology sectors as of Q2 2024.

While reflecting on the success of the FTA and the invaluable insights shared during the anniversary celebration, Rebecca Olson, CEO of OABC, expressed her pride in the continued partnership between the US and Oman, which has not only benefited both economies but also strengthened the ties between their people.



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Oman's economic growth to pick up to 3% in 2025-26: World Bank



09
Russia confirms giving asylum to Syria's Bashar al Assad and family

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EA tracks rare wildlife, plant species in Jabal Samhan

Our Correspondent
Salalah

To promote environmental awareness and document biodiversity, a team from Environment Authority (EA) undertook a three-day expedition to explore and record wildlife in Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve in Dhofar from December 6 to 8.

Saeed bin Mohammed al Shahri, environmental systems specialist at Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve and a member of the team, informed that the expedition began on the summit of Jabal Samhan in the southern part of

the wilayat of Mirbat and extended to Wadi Andur in the Fatkhit area of the wilayat of Shalim and Hallaniyat Islands in the north, covering a distance of approximately 110km.

He added that the exploratory mission was the first of its kind undertaken by EA in the area due to its challenging terrain. The exercise aimed to document the area's wildlife and native plant species while assessing the environmental challenges it faces.

The team employed a combination of four-wheel-drive vehicles and hiking to navigate the rugged and difficult terrain. It

The reserve is home to 17 species of wild mammals, including the Arabian leopard, Nubian ibex, Arabian wolf, gazelle and lynx, as well as a diverse range of plants, reptiles and birds

managed to reach unique vantage points and document a variety of migratory birds and local

plant species.

On the second day, the team trekked 15km through Wadi Andur, passing through Wadi Fadfyad. It documented the valley's diverse features, including flowing streams and unique plant species - frankincense, sidr, palm and other native flora.

Additionally, it observed traces of Arabian leopards, Nubian ibex and gazelles, as well as sighted Egyptian vultures, steppe eagles and water ducks.

Shahri informed that on the third day, the EA team continued the exploration northwards, travelling approximately 38km on vehicles along the valley to reach the palm oasis in Andur. Along the way, the team passed numerous ponds and springs, recording details of the area's biodiversity. The journey concluded at Fatkhit.

Established in 1997, Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve is spread over 4,500sqkm. It is classified as a nature reserve for habitat management and is renowned for its unique biodiversity. The reserve is home to 17 species of wild mammals, including the Arabian leopard, Nubian ibex, Arabian wolf, gazelle and lynx, as well as a diverse range of plants, reptiles and birds.

Muscat to welcome global education leaders at ICEF Middle East forum

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman will host the ICEF Middle East Scholarship Forum in February 2025, marking the second consecutive time the sultanate will organise the event. The forum is being arranged in collaboration with International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) and Gulf Conferences.

An agreement to host the forum was signed virtually at the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) headquarters on Monday. H.E Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrooqiya, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, signed on behalf of the ministry, while Markus Badde, CEO of ICEF, and Dr Abdul Khaliq Muhammad, CEO of Gulf Conferences, represented their respective organisations.

MoHERI stated that the forum aims to build lasting professional relationships and partnerships between government bodies and academic institutions across the region and the world. It seeks to attract international students, promote collaboration between universities and governments, and encourage academic institutions to achieve global recognition and accreditation.

According to H E Rahma, hosting the forum reflects

Oman's vision of enhancing the quality of higher education, supporting Omani youth and advancing sustainable development. "The forum highlights our commitment to strengthening national capacities through scholarships and fostering an environment of global academic cooperation," she said.

The event will also serve as a platform to address challenges in higher education and explore strategies for sustainability. Discussions will focus on increasing enrolment in higher education institutions, developing clear policies for external scholarships, and ensuring alignment with national development plans and labour market needs.

Through the forum, Oman aims to position itself as a key player in global education initiatives, strengthen ties with international academic institutions, and provide more opportunities for Omani students to access quality education abroad.



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Oman hosts regional workshop to attract FDI in digital economy

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT), in collaboration with Riyadh-based Digital Cooperation Organization, the World Economic Forum, and Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, hosted a workshop on Monday aimed at enhancing policies to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in the digital economy of Oman.

The workshop focused on framing investment policies to facilitate foreign investments in emerging technologies and

adoption of digital technologies across government, private and academic sectors. Discussions also revolved around the role of foreign investment in digital infrastructure and how Omani companies can expand their presence in international markets by increasing exports of digital services. This aligns with the National Digital Economy Programme and supports the broader goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Mohsen bin Salem al Araimi, Acting Director of Technology Industry Department at MTCIT, highlighted the crucial role of ongoing support from Digital Cooperation Organization and World

Economic Forum in attracting digital investments. He added that enhancing digital investments would create new job opportunities and increase the knowledge base, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Throughout 2024, MTCIT, in partnership with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, has worked on several initiatives to attract foreign investments. It has also participated in local and international events to promote emerging technology companies and showcase Oman's digital economy, aiming to attract high-quality digital investments.

Building collapse in Salalah leaves one dead, three injured

Salalah - Collapse of a building under construction in Salalah led to the death of a worker and injuries to three others on Monday.

The incident occurred early morning. Rescue teams from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Department responded immediately to the collapse of the building.

Conditions of the injured ranged from moderate to critical. Emergency responders provided immediate medical care on-site before transferring the injured to hospital for further treatment.

Authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the collapse to determine its cause.



13 scientists feted at 11th National Research Award

Muscat – Thirteen scientific research papers were recognised at the 11th edition of Oman’s National Research Award. The ceremony, held at Oman Across Ages Museum in Manah, Dakhliyah on Monday, was part of the 11th Annual Researchers Forum themed ‘Innovation and Entrepreneurship’.

The event was attended by Dr Khamis bin Saif al Jabri, head of Oman Vision 2024 Implementation Follow-up Unit, and officials of the higher education and research community. The award, organised by Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, received 274 submissions this year, with 167 entries in the category of PhD holders and 107 in the emerging researchers category. A total of 207 papers advanced to the final evaluation stage.

H E Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrooqiya, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, underscored the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in building a knowledge-based economy. She highlighted the ministry’s efforts under the 10th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), which include 13 strategic initiatives aimed at supporting research and fostering innovation.

Seven researchers in the PhD and equivalent category were awarded for their contributions across six research sectors.

In the Communications and Information Systems sector, Dr Muhammad bin Abdullah al Husaini from Arab Open University was honoured for his research on the impact of tissue properties and cooling techniques on breast cancer detection. Dr Aruna Devi Karupasamy from Gulf College was recognised for her work on the use of neural networks and machine learning techniques in classifying breast cancer pathology images.

In the Culture, Social and Basic Sciences sector, Dr Ali al Rustamy from University of Nizwa was awarded for his research on developing cyclic carbonates from epoxides and carbon dioxide using natural hydrogen bond donors.

In the Environment and Biore-

sources sector, Dr Muhammad Redha from Sultan Qaboos University received recognition for his study on improving water quality in reservoirs using selective withdrawal strategies.

The Energy and Industry sector award went to Dr Mingji Chen from SQU for his research on a novel method of carbon dioxide storage and heat recovery using closed tanks and brine extraction.

In the Education and Human Resources sector, Dr Abdullah bin Humaid al Abri from University of Technology and Applied Sciences was honoured for his study on using mobile-supported language learning to enhance students’ lexical fluency through learning-oriented assessment.

In the Health and Community Service sector, a research team was recognised for its work on genomic and geospatial epidemiology.

Six researchers were awarded in the Emerging Researchers Category for their contributions in six key sectors.

For full article go to www.muscatdaily.com



Tender Invitation

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG invites Bidders to submit their proposal for the below detailed tenders:

Tender No.	Description	Tender Fee (Nonrefundable) OMR	Tender Purchase deadline	Clarification deadline	Tender Submission Date
TENDER/2024/12/ENG/019	Revamping of Sohar Harbour Filling Station in North Al Batinah Governorate	50/-	16.12.2024	19.12.2024	24.12.2024
TENDER/2024/12/ENG/020	Construction of New Filling Station at Shaleem in Dhofar Governorate	50/-			
TENDER/2024/12/ENG/021	Construction of New Filling Station at Madinat Al Haq in Dhofar Governorate	100/-			

Bank Name & Account Number

Bank Muscat (0423005687760617)

The Conditions:

1- **Collection of Tenders:** Interested, specialized companies and establishments registered under grade 3 and above (in C.R) with minimum of 3 years' experience in the same field. Bidders can collect the tender documents from the procurement department by sending a copy of the payment slip to procurement@almaha.com.om The tender may be collected on any working day between 08:00 AM – 03:00 PM.

2- **Bank Guarantee:** The bidder should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value, with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG.

3- **Offer Submission:** Tender bid should be submitted a sealed envelope and addressed to the Chairman of Tender Committee, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG marked with tender number and subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelope. The exterior of the envelope containing the tender document must not reveal the identity of the bidder.

4- **Submission Location:** The bid should be deposited in the tender box at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG head office located in Ghala before 01:00 PM on the submission date.

5- Any bid received after the specified date or if it does not meet the conditions will not be considered.

6- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.

7- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to accept, reject or cancel the tender without giving any reasons.

8- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to add or cancel some of the works mentioned in the tender if necessary.

9- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without giving any reasons.

10- For any enquiry email us at (procurement@almaha.com.om) or by calling 24610289/24610287/24610355

Send your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om



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Port of Duqm Company S.A.O.C is pleased to invite all specialized and interested companies to Pre-Qualify for:

Reference No.	Project Subject
ITC/T/019/2024	Offshore geotechnical investigation on the proposed outer channel extension project

Local and International companies that are specialized in providing Offshore Geotechnical Investigation projects can participate in the Pre-Qualification Process as per the following timeline:

Milestone	Deadline
Issue of Prequalification documents	10th December 2024
Expression of Interest on or before	12th December 2024
Deadline for submission of Prequalification Clarifications	15th December 2024
Submission of Prequalification	18th December 2024

The interested Companies could ask for the pre-qualification document by sending a request containing the project reference number and subject along with copy of the Commercial Registration Certificate and the contact details of the authorized individual (business card) to the following e-mail address: tenders@portofduqm.om

Port of Duqm Company S.A.O.C.
PO Box: 2409, PC: 111, Sultanate of Oman,
Almashreq Building, 18 November Street, N. Azaiba
T: (+968) 24342800 | F: (+968) 24587343 | www.portofduqm.om

يسر شركة ميناء الدقم أن تدعو كل الشركات المتخصصة للمشاركة في التأهيل المسبق للمشروع الموضح في الجدول أدناه

موضوع المشروع	الرقم المرجعي
تنفيذ المسح الجغرافي الثقلي لمشروع تمديد القناة الخارجية للميناء	ITC/T/019/2024

يمكن للشركات المتخصصة والراغبة في تنفيذ المسوحات الجغرافية التقنية التقديم للمشاركة في التأهيل المسبق للمشروع عن طريق تقديم طلب الى البريد الالكتروني في التواريخ والالية الموضحة أدناه

المرحلة	التاريخ
إصدار الدعوة للتأهيل المسبق	10 ديسمبر 2024
إبداء الرغبة في المشاركة	12 ديسمبر 2024
آخر موعد لإستلام الاسئلة وضاحات	15 ديسمبر 2024
تسليم مستندات التأهيل المسبق	18 ديسمبر 2024

يرجى من الشركات الراغبة في المشاركة في التأهيل المسبق للمشروع إرسال طلب عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني التالي tenders@portofduqm.om معنون برقم وعنوان المشروع الموضح مع إرفاق نسخة من السجل التجاري ومعلومات التواصل للشخص المخول



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MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,553.14
SENSEX	81,508.46
FOREX RATES (ROI equals)	
India	220.45
Pakistan	721.84
Bangladesh	310.50
Philippines	150.63
Sri Lanka	754.48
*Rates as on December 09 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS

Panama joins South American trade bloc

Panama on Saturday was officially made an associate member state of the South American trade bloc Mercosur.

Panama was formally admitted into the group after a meeting held in Uruguay's capital Montevideo with the leaders of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay also in attendance.

Jose Raul Mulino, Panama's president, stressed that they are the first Central American country to join the trade bloc. "Today, we made history. This is not just an agreement; it is a commitment to our people and to a future filled with opportunities," he said.

As an associate member of the bloc, however, Panama does not currently have the right to vote or take part in decision-making processes.

Oman's economic growth to pick up to 3% in 2025-26, World Bank says

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's economic growth is expected to gain momentum in 2025-2026, with a projected average expansion of 3%, driven by ongoing government reforms and growing investment in non-oil sectors, according to the World Bank.

In its latest Gulf Economic Update, the World Bank revised its outlook for the sultanate, noting that GDP growth is likely to slow in 2024, largely due to the continued extension of voluntary oil output cuts by OPEC+. Despite this, the bank forecasts that Oman's economic performance will improve in the subsequent years, buoyed by higher oil production and sustained progress in diversifying the economy away from hydrocarbons.

'Oman's overall GDP growth is projected to pick up over 2025-2026, averaging 3.0%, underpinned by increasing oil output alongside structural reforms and investments in non-oil sectors,' the World Bank said. 'This sets the stage for higher non-oil growth in the medium term.'

For the broader GCC region, the World Bank anticipates subdued growth of 1.6% in 2024. However, the region is forecast



For the broader GCC region, the World Bank anticipates subdued growth of 1.6% in 2024. However, the region is forecast to expand at a more robust pace of 4.2% in 2025-2026, with non-oil sector leading the charge

to expand at a more robust pace of 4.2% in 2025-2026, with the non-oil sector leading the charge. Non-oil activities in the GCC are projected to grow by 3.7%, re-

several countries, and fiscal balances continue to be strained by rising government spending amid reduced oil revenues, with notable variation across the region.

"The region has shown remarkable resilience in the face of global disruptions, moving steadily on their diversification agenda. It will be important to continue to exercise prudent economic policies to secure a

sustainable future of growth", said Safaa el Tayeb el-Kogali, the World Bank GCC Country Director.

Saudi Arabia is expected to see modest GDP growth of 1.1% in 2024, driven primarily by a robust 4.6% expansion in the non-oil sector, which will partially offset a 6.1% contraction in oil GDP due to the extension of voluntary production cuts. However, the kingdom's economic growth is forecast to accelerate to an average of 4.7% in 2025-2026, supported by rising oil output and continued diversification efforts. The non-oil sector's growth is expected to stabilise at 4.5% in 2025-26.

In the UAE, GDP growth is estimated at 3.3% in 2024, driven by a sustained 4.1% expansion in the non-oil sector. Strong performance across tourism, real estate, construction, transport, and manufacturing has bolstered the UAE's economic resilience. The country's growth outlook is projected to further strengthen to 4.1% in 2025-2026, supported by a recovery in oil production.

Qatar's economy is expected to grow modestly by an average of 2.4% in 2024-2025, before accelerating to 4.1% in 2025-2026, driven largely by an expansion in gas production.

OPEC chief visits Oman Oil rises over uncertainty in Middle East

Muscat - H H Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, received on Sunday Haitham Faisal al Ghais, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and his accompanying delegation, who are currently visiting Oman.

During the meeting, H H Sayyid Fahd affirmed that Oman appreciates the significant role of OPEC in coordinating and unifying the petroleum policies of its member states and determining ways to protect their interests.

He highlighted Oman's ongoing cooperation with the organisation to ensure the success of its efforts to achieve stability in global oil markets, noting that Oman has contributed effectively to the establishment of the joint alliance between OPEC and



non-member states (OPEC+) since 2016.

The meeting reviewed various aspects of cooperation between Oman's government and OPEC, including the efforts made to ensure a balance in energy supplies to serve the global economy, as well as identifying appropriate measures to protect the organisation's interests.

For his part, the Secretary-General of OPEC emphasised that the Sultanate of Oman,

under its wise leadership, contributes to supporting OPEC's efforts. He noted that Oman actively participates in the organisation's meetings as an observer and works to coordinate policies related to oil markets, commending the achievements made by the sultanate in many fields. The OPEC chief also underscored the importance of this visit, which aims to discuss ways of supporting their goals.

ONA

London, UK - Oil prices rose on Monday as traders weighed an increased risk premium on political uncertainty in the Middle East, while demand outlook concerns limited the gains.

The international oil benchmark of Brent crude increased by 0.97% to \$71.57 per barrel in morning trade in London, up from the previous session's close of \$70.88. The US benchmark West Texas Intermediate also rose by 1.03% to \$67.65 per barrel, compared to \$66.96 at the close of the prior session.

On Sunday, 61 years of Baath Party rule in Syria collapsed after the capital Damascus fell out of the hands of regime control. Deposed President Bashar al-Assad, fled to Russia, where he was offered asylum.

However, the Israeli army early Sunday deployed additional



forces along the buffer zone separating Syria and the occupied Golan Heights, citing concerns about the potential infiltration of armed groups into the region.

The developments in Syria have introduced uncertainty in the Middle East, lending some support to the oil market.

Moreover, Israel's genocidal war continues unabated against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, despite calls by the international community to halt attacks. The Israeli army also continued to strike Lebanon, undeterred by a cease-fire agreement that came into effect on November 27.

However, Saudi Arabia's price cuts and the decision by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, known as OPEC+, to extend production cuts limited further price increases, highlighting demand concerns, especially from China.

Saudi Arabian oil company Aramco on Sunday cut its official prices for Asian customers to the lowest level since early 2021.

On December 5, with the prospects of a slowdown in global demand and rising supply in non-OPEC+ producers, OPEC+ group pushed back the start of oil output increases by three months until April and extended the full unwinding of production cuts by a year until September 2026.

Anadolu Agency

FORESIGHT

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into workplace operations is transforming how organisations function, driving both efficiency and innovation. Earlier this year, Unilever reported significant success in utilising AI for recruitment, saving 70,000 hours globally while improving the quality of applicant feedback and automating tasks such as reading and sorting resumes. These advancements not only enhance productivity but also redefine operational standards - a development that holds significant potential for Oman's workforce and economy.

Enhancing recruitment processes

As Oman works towards achieving the goals set out in Vision 2040, AI can serve as a pivotal tool in modernising industries and optimising human resource functions. By streamlining recruitment processes, AI solutions can reduce administrative



SYED ADIL ABBAS

Abbas, an MBA graduate from Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK), is currently based in Muscat, and has over 20 years of international experience working with the public and private sectors in the Middle East, Far East, Africa and India.

burdens while ensuring that candidates receive a superior and personalised experience.

Global studies reinforce AI's transformative impact. A study published in Science demonstrated that AI tools reduce task completion times by 40% on average, while simultaneously improving the quality of outputs by 18%. This dual benefit of efficiency and quality aligns with Oman's commitment to fostering innovative, knowledge-driven sectors.

Redefining nature of work

The implications of AI extend far be-

yond operational improvements. A 2024 Microsoft survey revealed that up to 75% of users of AI tools, such as GitHub Copilot, reported enhanced job satisfaction, reduced frustration, and

AI TIME DIVIDEND: WHAT WILL YOU SPEND IT ON?

an increased ability to focus on meaningful tasks. By adopting these technologies, organisations in Oman can create more engaging work environments, fostering higher levels of employee satisfaction and productivity.

However, the integration of AI into the workplace requires careful consideration. Merely allocating the time saved by AI to additional tasks risks perpetuating a cycle of relentless workload without addressing employee well-being. Oman's business leaders are presented with an opportunity to leverage AI not merely as a tool for efficiency but as a means to promote innovation, creativity, and employee development.

A shift toward human-centric workplaces

AI's potential lies in its ability to automate routine and repetitive tasks,

allowing employees to focus on strategic and creative endeavours. This transition can lead to a more balanced and fulfilling professional environment. At a time when global surveys, such as Gallup's annual State of the Global Workplace, reveal that 77% of employees feel disengaged at work, Oman can take proactive measures to avoid similar trends by prioritising workplace engagement and well-being.

Managers should deliberate on how AI-generated time and productivity gains can be strategically employed to foster innovation and enhance the quality of work-life balance. By creating environments that prioritise quality over quantity, Omani organisations can position themselves as leaders in workplace transformation, attracting top talent and setting new benchmarks in employee satisfaction.

Strategic opportunity for Oman

The integration of AI into Omani

workplaces represents a significant opportunity to redefine the country's approach to work and productivity. Beyond enhancing operational efficiency, AI can catalyse a broader shift toward a more human-centric working culture. This aligns with Oman's economic and social aspirations under Vision 2040, contributing to the development of a resilient and forward-thinking workforce.

As AI continues to reshape the global professional landscape, Oman stands at a pivotal juncture. By harnessing these advancements responsibly and strategically, the nation can set a precedent for how technology can be used to enhance - not overshadow - the human elements of the workplace, paving the way for a more innovative and sustainable future.

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

US Fed officials cautiously optimistic about labour market and rate cuts

Terry Lane

With jobs bouncing back in the latest US employment report, Federal Reserve officials said that the labour market was in a good place. But that doesn't necessarily mean that it's time to cut rates, officials said.

"The labour market remains in a good position. Jobs are expanding, there's about one vacancy for every unemployed worker. So that's a balanced labour market. That's a good thing," San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank President Mary Daly said at an economic forum.

Chicago Federal Reserve Bank President Austan Goolsbee cautioned that jobs reports should be looked at in context with prior months but said the November results appeared promising. The report showed that employers added 227,000 jobs in the month, coming after strikes and storm disruptions suppressed hiring in the prior month.

"The job market was cooling for a while from the hottest that we've ever seen to something like sustainable full employment," Goolsbee told an economic conference in Chicago. "And the last several months feel like it's hovered around in that space."

The labour market is one of



Labour market is one of the data points that Fed officials examine when determining where to set interest rates. However, officials said there may not be much room to cut interest rates from their current levels when Fed officials meet this month

the data points that Fed officials examine when determining where to set interest rates. However, with the economy performing well, Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank President Beth Hammack said there may not be much room to cut interest rates from their current levels when

Fed officials meet in December. "As I take into account strong economic growth, the low unemployment rate, still-elevated inflation, and signals from financial markets, among other factors, my overall view is that monetary policy is only somewhat restrictive today," Hammack said.

While Goolsbee didn't comment on whether the Fed should cut at its next meeting, he did see economic conditions giving way to more interest rate reductions in the future.

"Over the next year, if conditions evolve the way they have been at—the way that I expect them to – rates are going to be a fair bit lower than where they are today," Goolsbee said. Friday is the last day for Federal Reserve officials to make remarks before the start of the blackout period ahead of the December 17-18 Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting.

(Source: Investopedia.com)

India's IPO fundraising set for landmark year: S&P

New Delhi, India - Fundraising via initial public offerings (IPO) in India is set for another landmark year in 2024, asserted S&P Global Market Intelligence in a report.

Economic growth, favourable market conditions and improvements in the regulatory framework helped companies raise record amounts in 2024, the financial information and analytics firm said in its analysis earlier this week.

As of December 3, as many as 298 companies have gone public on the exchanges – NSE and BSE. Notably, Hyundai Motor India's 278.59bn rupees public issue, which was completed in October, is the country's largest IPO ever.

The listed companies raised a combined 1.4tn rupees, according to data compiled by S&P Global Market Intelligence. The IPO count this year grew over 22% from 243 in 2023, while fundraising volumes jumped about 140% from 588.27bn rupees, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence data.

The NSE's benchmark index, the NIFTY 50, reached an all-time high of 26,216 points on September 27, while the BSE Sensex peaked at 85,836 points on September 26. The stock market gains have been underpinned by India's robust economic



As many as 298 companies have gone public on the Indian exchanges this year, raising around 1.4tn rupees

growth prospects, the report said.

Sensex and Nifty rose about 13%-14% so far this year, with three more weeks to go.

Separately, as of November 29, 85 companies were at various stages of the NSE and

BSE listing process, of which 40 had already received approval to kick off their offerings, data compiled by S&P Global Market Intelligence showed. They include 21 companies whose IPOs were under process at the stock exchanges.

Taking opportunities in India's booming stock market, many companies intended to list their shares, and a sizable number of them have made handsome gains.

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

ANI

China's consumer prices hold steady in November

Beijing, China - China's consumer prices steadied in November due to stronger consumer confidence, official data showed on Monday.

The consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, was up 0.2% year on year in November, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The figure was down from the 0.3% increase registered in October, largely due to slower food price rises, said NBS chief statistician Dong Lijuan.

The price of pork, a staple meat in China, jumped 13.7% from a year earlier in November, down from a 14.2% rise in October.

Prices of fresh vegetables rose 10% year on year in November, compared with a 21.6% increase in October.

The core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, rose 0.3% from a year ago in November, up from 0.2% in October.

On a monthly basis, the CPI slipped 0.6% in November, following a 0.3% decrease in October.

From January to November, the average CPI increased by



0.3% compared to the same period last year.

Looking forward, China's CPI is projected to experience a year-on-year increase as meat demand will be likely to rise and cold winter weather may disrupt vegetable supplies, pushing up food prices, said Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank. China has implemented a series of heavyweight growth-boosting measures, including massive consumer goods trade-ins, to bolster the economy this year.

A suite of incremental policies will continue to be utilized to improve domestic demand and boost consumer confidence, which will likely also drive up the core CPI, Wen added.

Xinhua

UAE startups jalebi.io, Olive Gaea partner to tackle \$1tn global food waste crisis

Dubai, UAE - With 2024 declared the hottest year on record and COP16 discussions in Riyadh highlighting the critical need for accelerated climate action, UAE-based startups jalebi.io and Olive Gaea have announced a strategic partnership to combat the global food waste crisis. Valued at \$1tn annually, food waste is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for nearly 8-10% of global totals.

As the F&B sector continues its rapid growth, it grapples with the stark reality that the environmental and economic consequences of food waste have become increasingly urgent. Inefficient supply chains and operational blindspots cost businesses up to \$100bn annually while exacerbating climate change. Recognizing the opportunity to address this dual challenge, jalebi.io, an AI-enabled F&B SaaS platform to optimise operations, and Olive Gaea, a climate-tech company leveraging AI to drive decarbonisation, have joined forces to provide sustainable, scalable solutions.

The partnership, signed at Hub71 – Abu Dhabi's global tech ecosystem – brings together



Zohare Haider (left) and Jessica Scopacasa sign partnership agreement at Hub71 in Abu Dhabi

jalebi.io's purpose-built technology, designed with seasoned operators to integrate and optimise their in-house supply-chain and inventory management, and Olive Gaea's expertise in measuring and reducing environmental impact. By combining their strengths, the two companies are determined to eliminate inefficiencies in F&B operations while enabling businesses to quantify and mitigate their carbon footprint and monetize their decarbonization efforts.

"This partnership exemplifies how climate-tech and industry-vetted software can effectively

By combining their strengths, two companies are determined to eliminate inefficiencies in F&B operations while enabling businesses to quantify and mitigate their carbon footprint

tackle one of the fastest growing and most pressing challenges of our time," said Vivek Tripathi, Co-Founder and CEO of Olive Gaea.

"Food waste isn't just an economic strain on businesses; it's a critical environmental crisis. By working with jalebi.io, we're able to provide actionable tools to turn waste into opportunity, creating measurable impact for the F&B sector that unlocks capital and pays back dividends."

For jalebi.io, the collaboration reinforces its commitment to aligning business growth with its Government endorsed sustainability goals.

"At jalebi.io, our mission has always been to create smarter, more profitable F&B operations while meaningfully contributing

to a healthier planet," said Zohare Haider, Co-founder & CEO of jalebi.io. "This unique partnership with Olive Gaea strengthens our ability to deliver real economic and environmental value to the industry, leveraging fit-for-purpose technology to tackle food waste at scale."

Through their collaboration, businesses using jalebi.io's platform will now gain access to advanced tools for tracking and reducing their carbon footprints. This added capability empowers F&B operators to adopt more sustainable practices while positioning themselves competitively in markets where environmental accountability is increasingly valued.

Both startups, rooted in the UAE's thriving startup ecosystem, highlight the region's role as a hub for impactful innovation. "The UAE's emphasis on sustainability and its support for emerging technologies provide the perfect environment for partnerships like this to thrive," said Haider. "We're proud to represent this ecosystem by addressing global challenges with scalable, impact-driven solutions."

Russian oil flows to China via Kazakhstan remain flat in 2024

Charles Kennedy

Russia's oil deliveries to China via Kazakhstan have stayed essentially flat this year, according to data by Kazakhstan's pipeline operator KazTransOil.

Between January and November this year, oil transit from Russia to China on KazTransOil's network stood at 9,117,000 tons of oil, the company said in an overview of its export and transit oil deliveries

for the first 11 months of the year.

The volume is slightly down, by 0.25%, compared to the 9,140,000 tonnes of Russian oil transit along this route in the same period of 2023, KazTransOil said.

In December 2024, KazTransOil is shipping a planned volume of 862,000 tonnes of oil from Russia to China, the company added.

Russia and Kazakhstan have



discussed increasing Russian oil and gas flows to China via Kazakhstan, Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a state visit to Astana last week.

"We have discussed the possibility of creating new routes for pumping our products – petroleum and gas alike – to third countries, primarily the People's Republic of China, through the territory of Kazakhstan among other optional routes," Putin said, as carried in

the English translation of the Kremlin's transcript of the briefing.

"These are very lucrative, exciting, and promising routes and projects. Without a doubt, they will help stabilise the global economy, primarily, in the Asia-Pacific region, and we will thus gain an extra opportunity to engage in market operations," Putin was quoted as saying.

Russia's gas giant Gazprom sees China as its key export

market, now that it has shut off deliveries to most European countries.

Earlier this week, Gazprom said that its natural gas flows via the Power of Siberia pipeline to China had reached full capacity of 38bn cubic meters annually.

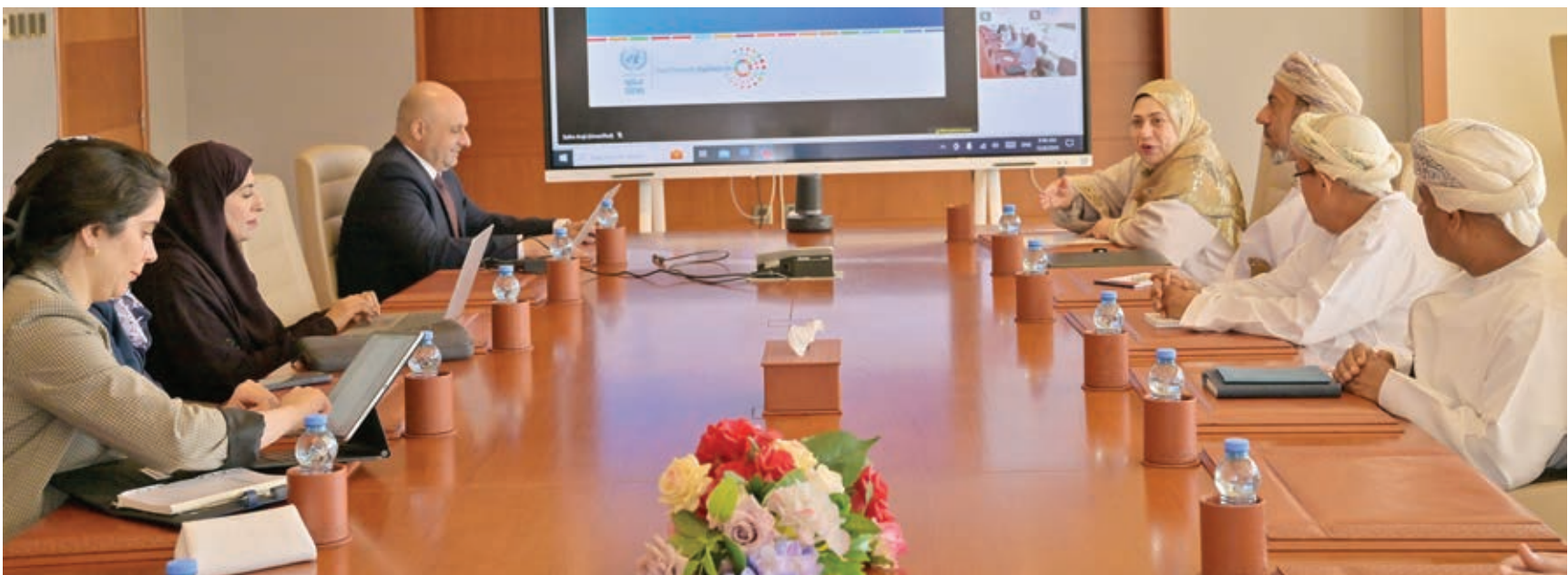
Gazprom started sending gas to China via the Power of Siberia pipeline at the end of 2019, and flows have now reached the maximum design capacity.

(Source: Oilprice.com)

H E Prof Rahma discusses Oman's Higher Education Announcement with UN official

H E Prof Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, received Dr Salim Araj, the regional director of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), at her office at the ministry's headquarters, in the presence of several representatives of private higher education institutions in the Sultanate.

During the meeting, they reviewed the existing areas of co-operation between the Ministry and ESCWA, focusing on future partnership opportunities between the two sides, as represented by the project for the Conference on the Announcement of Oman in Higher Education, set to be held in October 2025 at Sohar University, in collaboration with several international organizations such as UNESCO, the American University of Beirut, and a number of



Arab and international universities. The conference aims to enhance practical strategies for aligning higher education with the dynamic demands of the labor market in light of the Fourth

and Fifth Industrial Revolutions. It will showcase the latest technological tools that contribute to enabling educational institutions to cope with the rapid changes in the labor market, as well as pro-

vide a roadmap for reviewing higher education policies in the Arab region, in addition to launching a skills observatory at several Omani universities. The Minister emphasized the

importance of focusing on various educational patterns that provide multiple options to meet labor market requirements. This conference is considered one of the projects that formalizes the

partnership between Omani universities and colleges with higher education institutions in both Arab and foreign countries, as well as international organizations. Her Excellency mentioned

that the year 2025 will see the launch of Oman's announcement in the field of scientific research next January, along with Oman's higher education announcement in October, God willing.

Dr. Salim Araj presented an initial vision for the conference, which included proposed topics to be discussed in the field of higher education and the role of artificial intelligence in supporting it, the reality of higher education in the Arab world while highlighting the skills of the private sector and linking them to educational institutions, and re-evaluating higher education policies in the region. He also addressed the roles assigned to the parties organizing the conference.

Dr Salim Araj expressed the organisation's readiness to build a fruitful partnership with the ministry and educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

National Finance reaffirms support for 'The Village of Happiness' carnival

Demonstrating its ongoing commitment to inclusivity and the empowerment of individuals, National Finance, Oman's leading finance company, extended its support to the Village of Happiness Carnival, a two-day event held on December 6 and 7 at the Civil Aviation Club.

The carnival celebrated individuals with disabilities as well as their families, creating a welcoming space enriched with educational, interactive, and entertaining activities.

Hosted by H H Sayyida Hujaia bint Jaifer al Said, Founder of Links Oman, and held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Dr Fahad al Said, Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University, the festival stood as a strong testa-



ment to unity and societal progress. Commenting on the initiative, Tariq al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer of National Finance, stated, "At National Finance, we believe in the power of inclusivity to

transform lives and communities. The Village of Happiness Carnival is a celebration of the unique talents and boundless potential of individuals with disabilities - a powerful reminder that their contributions motivate and

inspire us all. "Supporting initiatives like these is not only a reflection of our core values but a step toward fostering a more equitable society, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive." By empowering individuals

with disabilities, he said, "we aim to change the narrative from one of limitation to one of possibility and value. A healthy, inclusive society is the foundation for sustainable development, and we are proud to play a proactive role in creating a future that embraces diversity."

"At National Finance, we will continue to strive to build a community where individuals with disabilities are empowered to excel, achieve, and lead, contributing to the nation's development while living lives of dignity and purpose."

Through its partnership with the Village of Happiness, National Finance aims to amplify the voices and talents of individuals with disabilities.



Indian School Sur celebrates 33rd annual athletic meet

Indian School Sur hosted its 33rd annual athletic meet for the primary section with great enthusiasm on December 5. The vibrant celebration was of sportsmanship, teamwork, and resilience, showcasing the school's dedication to fostering holistic growth among its young learners.

The chief guest for the occasion was Sami Said Rashid Salim al Hatrushi al Uraimi, Head of Scouts and Guides Department, Ministry of Education, South Sharqiya. He was welcomed with a grand Guard of Honour by the Scouts, Guides, and members of the Student Council, followed by a bouquet presentation by Jami Srinivasa Rao, president of the School Management Committee, as a gesture of gratitude.

Other esteemed dignitaries present were Dr Ramkumar Lakshmi Narayanan, Convenor, School Management Committee; Nishreen Basheer, Treasurer; and members Pradeep Kumar A

V, advocate Saeed T P and Shabeeb Mohammed, along with the principal, Dr S Srinivasan.

The event began with a soulful prayer song performed by the school choir, followed by a warm welcome address delivered by advocate Saeed T P, a member of the School Management Committee. This set a positive tone for the day's proceedings.

The flag hoisting ceremony, led by the chief guest, symbolised the unity and spirit of the school community. Following this, the chief guest officially declared the sports meet open, igniting a wave of excitement among the participants.

A ceremonial torch relay symbolising passion and perseverance was conducted with great fervour. The torchbearers, Harshini Mahendran and Sidharth Pradeep were introduced as exemplary athletes for their outstanding achievements in various sports disciplines.

Friends of Shuttle concludes badminton championship

The badminton tournament organised by the Friends of Shuttle Badminton Darsayt concluded in elegance at the Falcon Badminton Academy on December 6, organisers informed.

The organising team comprises of Krishnan Kutty Nair, Dr Rajesh Rajendran, Lijo Antony, Moncy Francis and Shanavas Nasar took all initiatives to conduct the event in a systematic and professional manner. Total 20 teams participated in the tournament in 4 pools and the event started with league matches on December 4.

Eight teams qualified for the



quarter finals including Aman and Rian aged 10 and 12. In the league matches Dijesh and Said, Dr Rajesh and Praveen Pinto, Moncy Francis and Lijo Antony, Krishnan Kutty and Shanavas

won all the matches and moved in to the quarter finals. In the Quarter finals, Kutty and Shanavas faced rigid resistance from the ISM students Aman and Rian but the favourite

team Kutty and Shanavas showed good teamwork to overcome the resistance from the students in the decider game. In another match Dr Rajesh and Praveen Pinto also booked

their place in semifinal slot downing second seed Jyothilal and Sabir. Moncy and Lijo faced some resistance from Udayan and Sumesh before booking their berth in semifinals.

Vodafone Oman unveils first-of-its-kind concept store in Seeb

Under the patronage of H H Sayyid Malik bin Shihab al Said, Vodafone Oman inaugurated first-of-its-kind concept store in Seeb.

Designed to celebrate its partnership with Al Seeb Football Club as the 'Official Sponsor' of its first football team, the new store offers a unique retail experience that merges telecommunications services with a vibrant space inspired by the passion and legacy of 'The Emperor' of Omani football.

The store pays homage to Al Seeb Football Club's legacy through football-inspired décor,

interactive displays, and a showcase of team memorabilia, ensuring customers can immerse themselves in the spirit of the club while enjoying Vodafone's services and latest technologies.

Commemorating the opening, the digital operator hosted a series of fun-filled, fan-centric activities, offering guests a unique chance to meet and engage with the Al Seeb Football Club stars.

"Our new store is a reflection of Vodafone Oman's dedication to bringing technology and community closer together," said Bader al Zidi, Vodafone Oman CEO.



"This isn't just about offering services - it's about creating a space where customers can experience the best of Vodafone while connecting with the passion and pride that defines Al Seeb Football Club."

"This partnership with Vodafone Oman has allowed Al Seeb Football Club to deepen our connection with the community," said Youssef al Wahaibi, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al Seeb Football Club.

"The new concept store is a testament to the power of collaboration in creating something truly unique for the community,

and we're excited about how this store brings our club closer to its supporters in innovative and meaningful ways."

Today, Vodafone's retail network in Oman includes 75 Stores and eStores - all of which are self-service and digital spaces where customers can complete tasks such as obtaining their SIM, subscribing to new packages, paying bills or managing plans - in addition to more than 4,000 sales channels across Oman.

Established through a strategic partnership between Oman Future Telecommunications Company and Vodafone Group,

Vodafone Oman is at the forefront of Oman's digital revolution. Since launching its operations in March 2022, the company is the only fully digital-first operator in Oman, supported by a 100% cloud-based 5G network infrastructure that has ushered in a new era of telecommunications.

The company offers a diverse range of prepaid, postpaid, and enterprise solutions, designed to cater to the varying needs of its customers. Its competitive advantage lies in its award-winning My Vodafone App, which provides a seamless, fully digital experience.

Bank Muscat takes part in career fair

Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, recently participated in the annual career fair hosted by the College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS).

This event brought together over 20 institutions from various sectors, highlighting the collaborative spirit within the sultanate's business community.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the auspices of by H E Mahmoud bin Abdullah bin Ahmed al Owaini, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance, in the presence of Said Salim al Aufer, General Manager of Human Resources & Administration at Bank Muscat, along with esteemed officials from the College and representatives from participating organisations.

At its dedicated stall, Bank Muscat's team showcased a range of career and training opportunities available at the bank. They provided insights into the bank's human resources development initiatives, emphasising the diverse specialities offered to students and recent graduates.

Attendees received detailed



information on job openings, training programmes, and the application processes. Bank Muscat remains committed to participating in career and training fairs organised by higher education institutions.

These events represent a vital opportunity to share the bank's employment and training policies, as well as to guide prospective candidates on how to apply for the various vacancies and

training opportunities available annually, particularly in financial disciplines.

Such exhibitions serve as essential platforms for interaction between government and private institutions and aspiring students, allowing for the dissemination of information regarding employment and training policies.

Bank Muscat takes pride in being a leading financial institution in the sultanate, emphasising

its dedication to the development of national human resources through specialised policies and programmes.

In its pursuit of fostering innovative initiatives, Bank Muscat continuously seeks to provide learning and skill development opportunities. The bank's programmes are designed to cultivate a nurturing environment for creative ideas and leverage the experiences of others. With a

strategic focus on human resources development, Bank Muscat identifies departmental needs annually, ensuring alignment with the latest developments and manpower requirements across all banking specialities.

Since the beginning of this year, Bank Muscat has facilitated over 573 training opportunities for students in banking specialities. This initiative aims to equip students with practical skills rel-

evant to the banking and financial sectors. The Jadara Academy at Bank Muscat then allocates the selected students to various departments and branches throughout the sultanate, with performance reports generated daily throughout the training period.

Last year, the bank provided 580 training opportunities for students from numerous educational institutions across the sultanate.

Bank Muscat is also dedicated to creating a conducive environment for its employees, enabling them to perform their duties effectively while fostering motivation through diverse programs.

The bank proudly reports an Omanisation rate of approximately 94% among its workforce of over 4,000 employees across various departments and branches.

Al Daud Restaurants takes educational initiatives for blind

As part of its ongoing dedication to corporate social responsibility, Al Daud Restaurants (McDonald's Oman) announces its sponsorship of a specialised training course for visually impaired students. This initiative reflects the company's solid commitment to empowering education within the community. This year's support builds on Al Daud Restaurants' contributions in the past.

Last year, the company donated 14 specialised laptops designed for visually impaired students, enabling them to pursue their academic aspirations with greater ease and efficiency.

This year, the focus shifts to skill enhancement, with the training program aimed at equipping blind students with essential tools for personal and professional success. Al Daud Restaurants has also reaffirmed its long-term vision to continuously support the blind community in Oman through educational ini-



tiatives that align with its corporate responsibility values.

Al Daud Restaurants (McDonald's Oman) expressed the company's pride in backing such impactful initiatives, emphasising that investing in education and technology for the blind community is a crucial step toward creating a more empow-

ered society.

Al Daud Restaurants is the 100% owner of all 35 McDonald's outlets across Oman. Since the opening of first outlet in 1994, these outlets have contributed in creating hundreds of direct and indirect job opportunities for Omani youth while supporting the local economy by

facilitating collaborations with suppliers and opening opportunities for local companies to connect with clients outside Oman. Al Daud Restaurants actively collaborates with various charitable organisations as part of its commitment to social responsibility and dedication to the community.

Sohar Aluminium receives ISO certification for BCMS

Sohar Aluminium Company L.L.C (SA) has received the ISO 22301:2019 certification for its Business Continuity Management System (BCMS). This international standard demonstrates the company's commitment to maintaining operational resilience and ensuring the continued delivery of its products.

This certificate has been awarded to SA by DNV Business Assurance, which is an independent assurance and risk management provider, headquartered in the UK and operating in more than 100 countries around the world. This ISO Certificate is recognised globally as the benchmark for organisations seeking to implement effective business continuity plans. By achieving this certification, Sohar Aluminium underscores its dedication to protecting its stakeholders, clients, and employees, as well as its ability to respond swiftly and effectively to unexpected events.



Sohar Aluminium received this certificate for 'Smelting of Primary Aluminium Including Power Generation, Treatment and Supply of Water'.

The certification process involved a thorough assessment of Sohar Aluminium's existing business continuity processes and practices, as well as extensive training and development for employees. This achievement signifies that the company has implemented a robust framework for identifying, managing, and mitigating risks associated with business crisis.

Receiving the ISO 22301:2019 certification reflects Sohar Aluminium's firm commitment to excellence and resilience. This certification not only enhances the company's operational capabilities, but also reassures its clients that it is well prepared to manage potential risks, ensuring continuity in the products delivery. With this certification, Sohar Aluminium will continue to enhance its business strategies, ensuring that it can maintain operations and customer satisfaction at all circumstance.



Sea Traditions Committee discusses illegal fishing problem

The Sea Traditions Committee in Seeb held its fourth meeting of this year on Monday under the chairmanship of Ahmed bin Ali al Shehhi, wali of Seeb.

Several latest issues that would facilitate the fishermen's work and enhance the sustainability of fisheries, and the efforts to reduce illegal fishing practices and marine wastes that harm the marine environment and have a negative influence on the national economy were discussed at the meeting. The committee confirmed that coordination of efforts between the various rele-

vant entities is important to achieve a balance between the requirements of supporting fishermen and preserve marine resources. It was also highlighted that it is important to promote awareness of policies and procedures that ensure the sustainability of fisheries and protect it for upcoming generations. The Sea Traditions Committee plays a remarkable role in developing regulations and disciplines that organise marine fishing activities, to achieve a balance between economic development and marine environment protection.

ISM organises blood donation camp for Golden Jubilee

As an exclusive tribute to its momentous Golden Jubilee Celebrations-ISM @ 50, Indian School Muscat organised a highly successful Blood Donation Camp on December 7, 2024, which proclaimed the school's communal solidarity. This impactful event, organised in collaboration with Blood Services Oman, witnessed an overwhelming response from the parents, school's staff and well-wishers. As the institution commemorates five decades of educational excellence, the Blood Donation Camp emerged as a powerful symbol of ISM's resolute commitment to the welfare of society.

Teachers, staff, parents, and members of the wider community united in a demonstration of the ISM family's strength and its deep-rooted sense of social responsibility. Volunteers from Blood Services Oman expertly guided the donors throughout the process, ensuring the event proceeded with seamless efficiency. Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman, and Syed Salman, Vice Chairman



of the Board, visited the camp and expressed their appreciation for the school's initiative in support of this noble cause, while also commending on its continued commitment to the community. Sherry Johnny, Vice President of Indian School Muscat Management Committee, also congratulated the organis-

ers, emphasising the importance of such initiatives in promoting social responsibility. The camp saw an impressive turnout of donors including the distinguished members of the School Management Committee, who expressed their support through both words and action by donating blood. In his message, Rakesh

Joshi, the Principal, eloquently highlighted the life-saving importance of blood donation and emphasised the school's crucial role in fostering empathy and selflessness in its students.

This initiative stands as a poignant reminder of the school's enduring dedication to making a positive impact beyond

the classroom, while also underscoring the strong and lasting bond ISM shares with the broader community.

The resounding success of the event solidifies ISM as a beacon of how educational institutions can serve as vital catalysts for fostering a more compassionate society.

South Korea bans President Yoon Suk Yeol from foreign travel

Seoul, South Korea - South Korean authorities on Monday imposed an overseas travel ban on the country's President Yoon Suk Yeol as they carry out an investigation into his short-lived martial law decree.

A lawmaker asked during a parliamentary hearing whether Yoon had been banned from leaving the country. "Yes, that's right," said Bae Sang-up, an immigration services commissioner at the Ministry of Justice.

The head of South Korea's high-ranking official corruption

investigation agency had earlier said that he had instructed investigators to seek a travel ban on Yoon.

Why the ban?

Yoon declared martial law last week saying that he wanted to rid the country of 'pro-North Korean forces', without providing details. But the move plunged the country into political turmoil.

Scenes of armed soldiers on the streets of the capital Seoul and surrounding the parliament shocked the nation.



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol

Amid massive political pressure, the president was forced to reverse the contentious decree within hours. Yoon later apologised for his actions, but offered no resignation.

Opposition parties vowed to impeach the embattled president but failed to do so over the weekend after most ruling party lawmakers boycotted a floor vote. The People Power Party (PPP) claimed that it had blocked the motion to avoid 'severe division and chaos'. The party added that it would 're-

solve this crisis in a more orderly and responsible manner'.

But the opposition vowed to submit a new impeachment motion against the president this week.

Can the president be detained?

On Monday, a senior National Police Agency officer said that, in addition to the overseas travel ban, police can also detain Yoon if conditions are met, the Associated Press news agency reported.

A sitting South Korean president generally has immunity from prosecution while in office.

But that does not extend to allegations of rebellion or treason. This means that theoretically Yoon can be questioned and detained by police over his martial law decree. But many view it as unlikely as long as the president remains in office.

On Sunday, police arrested ex-Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun for his alleged role in the attempt to impose martial law. DW

Ukraine urges for 'enduring peace'

President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country needed 'effective guarantees'

Paris, France - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has responded to a call by US President-elect Donald Trump for an 'immediate ceasefire' and peace talks in Ukraine by saying that his country needed 'effective guarantees' for a peace that was secured from further Russian aggression.

Both Trump and Zelensky made their comments after three-way talks hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris that came as Moscow's invasion of its neighbour draws close to the three-year mark.

Likely huge losses

"I stated that we need a just and enduring peace - one that the Russians will not be able to destroy in a few years, as they have done repeatedly in the past," Zelensky said.

"Ukrainians want peace more than anyone else," he added.



French President Emmanuel Macron, US President-elect Donald Trump and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky met before the opening ceremony of Notre-Dame, in Paris, France

Ukrainians want peace more than anyone else... A ceasefire without guarantees can be reignited at any moment, as Putin has already done before. War cannot be endless - only peace mut be permanent

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

"Russia brought war to our land, and it is Russia that most seeks to disrupt the possibility of

peace."

But the Ukrainian leader said his country needed 'effective

guarantees for peace', a remark likely reflecting Kyiv's long-standing calls for NATO to provide such guarantees.

"A ceasefire without guarantees can be reignited at any moment, as Putin has already done before," he said, adding: "War cannot be endless - only peace mut be permanent and reliable."

Zelensky also said that 43,000 Ukrainian soldiers had been killed and that 370,000

had been wounded in the course of the Russian invasion. Kyiv, like Moscow, has rarely given any indications of casualty figures among its armed forces, and observers say they are likely to be far higher than admitted on both sides.

'Ukraine would like to make a deal'

Trump, who has promised to put a rapid stop to the conflict in

Ukraine after he takes office in the White House in January, without giving any details on the method he plans to use, claimed on Sunday that 'Zelensky and Ukraine would like to make a deal and stop the madness'.

"There should be an immediate ceasefire and negotiations should begin. Too many lives are being so needlessly wasted, too many families destroyed, and if it keeps going, it can turn into

something much bigger, and far worse," he wrote on his social media platform Truth Social.

Trump also wrote that Russia had not intervened effectively to aid Syrian President Bashar Assad in the face of the current successful rebel offensive because it 'had lost all interest in Syria because of Ukraine, where close to 600,000 Russian soldiers lay wounded or dead'.

Trump has been in the French capital to attend the reopening of the Notre Dame Cathedral, which has been restored after being badly damaged in a 2019 fire.

Kremlin says it is open to talks

The Kremlin on Sunday questioned the casualty figure given by Trump, saying it reflected Ukraine's interpretation.

It also said it was open to talks on Ukraine, though it put several conditions on them that Kyiv has previously called unacceptable.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said any peace negotiations had to be based on agreements reached in Istanbul in 2022 and on current battlefield realities. With the latter remark, he was likely referring to previous Russian demands that Moscow retain the territories in the east of Ukraine that it seized during its invasion.

DW

'Polarization' picked as the word of 2024

Istanbul, Turkey - The US' oldest dictionary, Merriam-Webster, a direct descendant of the pioneering 1806 dictionary by Noah Webster, has picked 'polarization' as the word of 2024.

The dictionary said on its website that the term was widely used in US media during the presidential election to highlight divisions in society.

It also reflected global social issues, drawing attention to fractures that emerged throughout the year.

Merriam-Webster defines 'polarization' as the division of a group or society into two sharply opposing sides, where opinions or beliefs cluster at extremes instead of spreading across a spectrum.

According to CNN, Merriam-Webster is among the last major English-language dictionaries to announce its word of the year.

Earlier, Oxford chose 'brain rot' and Cambridge selected 'manifest'.

Anadolu Agency

103 people killed in Mozambique violence



Besides, 350 others were injured since post-election violence which broke out in Mozambique on October 21

Lilongwe, Malawi - At least 103 people have been killed while 350 others injured since post-election violence broke out in Mozambique on October 21, following disputed results of the presidential elections, an election monitoring group said on Monday.

Wilker Dias, Executive Director of Civil Society Platform for Election Monitoring (DECIDE) told reporters in the capital Maputo that the country has recorded more deaths in major provinces of Gaza, Nampula, and Cabo Delgado.

"In these places, there have been deadly clashes between armed police and protesters who have been at loggerheads. These

clashes have resulted in a number of people dying and getting injured. The situation is very sad-dening and worrisome," Dias said.

"Unless there are continued interventions of foreign institutions, there are no signs that things would get better anytime soon in this country. More people are likely to die," he said.

On October 9, about 17mn Mozambicans went to polls to elect provincial governors, president, and members of parliament.

Demonstrations began on October 24 when the country's electoral authority declared ruling party Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) candidate

Daniel Chapo the winner with 70% of the votes cast, while Mondlane came in second with 20%, prompting him to challenge the vote and call for protests.

Last week, Momdlane called for another phase of weeklong protests to 'shut down Maputo and other neighbourhoods'. So far, according to Dias, 27 people have been killed, bringing the death toll to 103 since October 21 and about 10 of them are children, said Human Rights Watch.

According to human rights organisations, this is the 'worst crackdown' on protests in so many years.

According to Adriano Nuvunga, executive director for the

Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) in Mozambique, since the protests broke out authorities in the country have been using force to clamp down on the protesters leading to the arrests of hundreds of citizens across the country.

All attempts from both local and international organisations to end the escalating violence have proved futile. About two weeks ago, President Filipe Nyusi invited all four presidential candidates who took part in the elections to a meeting 'to cobble long-lasting solutions' to the impasse, but Mondlane, who fled the country for 'safety concerns' declined to attend.

Anadolu Agency

US: Alina Habba is counsellor to new president

Washington, D.C., US - US President-elect Donald Trump announced on Truth Social on Sunday evening that Alina Habba, his senior adviser and attorney, will serve as counsellor to the president in his upcoming administration.

In his post on the platform, Trump praised Habba as 'a tireless advocate for Justice, a fierce Defender of the Rule of Law, and an invaluable Advisor', ABC News reported.

He also highlighted her heritage and recognition, noting: "As a first-generation American of Middle Eastern Heritage, she has become a role model for women in Law and Politics, most recently being named Chaldean Woman of the Year."

The position, held by Kellyanne Conway in Trump's former administration, is separate from the White House counsel's office.

Trump also announced three significant State Department appointments.

Michael Anton was named director of policy planning, with Trump commending his loyalty and work in defining an 'America First foreign policy'.



Donald Trump announced that his senior adviser and attorney, will serve as counsellor to the president in his upcoming administration

Michael Needham will serve as a counsellor for the State Department, with Trump lauding his role as 'a key leader in the America First Movement'.

Christopher Landau was appointed deputy secretary of state, set to work closely with Secretary of State nominee Marco Rubio.

Anadolu Agency

Assad given asylum, confirms Russia

Istanbul, Turkey - The Kremlin on Monday confirmed that deposed head of the Syrian regime Bashar al-Assad and his family were given asylum by Russia.

‘Of course, such decisions cannot be made without the head of state. It is his (Russian President Vladimir Putin) decision,’ Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in Moscow.

Noting that Putin’s official schedule does not include a meeting with Assad, Peskov said there is also ‘nothing to tell’ about his current whereabouts.

Peskov said that Moscow is working to contact those who can ensure the security of Russian military bases in Syria, while the Russian military is also taking ‘all necessary precautions’.

He further said that it is too early to talk about the status of Russian military bases in Tartus and Khmeimim.

“This is all a subject for discussion with those who will be in power in Syria. Now we see a period of transformation and extreme instability. Therefore, it will take time. And then a serious conversation will be required with those who will be vested with power,” he went on to say.

He argued the Astana format talks on Syria have lost their original purpose, but they are still relevant as a mechanism for exchanging opinions and for political consultations among its participants.



Syrians are celebrating the fall of Assad, but the future of the country remains uncertain as fears grow about how Syria will be governed

He added that Russia is in dialogue with Turkey and other countries in the region on the topic of Syria.

Earlier, Russian state news agency Tass, citing a Kremlin source, reported that Assad and his family arrived in Moscow and were granted asylum ‘guided by humanitarian considerations’.

After a period of relative calm,

Arab League’s call on Syrian people

Ankara, Turkey - The Arab League has called on the Syrian people to uphold tolerance and safeguard the rights of all Syrians following the downfall of the Bashar al-Assad regime.

In a statement issued late

on Sunday, the Cairo-based league said it is following with great interest the rapid developments in Syria.

“The current critical stage requires all Syrians to uphold the concepts of tolerance and

dialogue, protect the rights of all components of Syrian society and place the interests of the homeland above all considerations,” the statement said.

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clashes between Assad regime forces and anti-regime groups reignited on November 27 in rural areas west of Aleppo, a major city in northern Syria.

Over 10 days, opposition forces launched a lightning offensive, capturing key cities and then, on Sunday, the capital, Damascus. The rapid advance, supported by defecting military

This is all a subject for discussion with those who will be in power in Syria. Now we see a period of transformation and extreme instability

DMITRY PESKOV

units, led to the collapse of the Assad regime after 13 years of civil war.

‘Peaceful transition’

The US strongly supports a peaceful transition of power to an ‘accountable’ government in Syria through an inclusive Syrian-led process, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Sunday.

“During this transitional period, the Syrian people have every right to demand the preservation of state institutions, the resumption of key services, and the protection of vulnerable communities,” Blinken said in a statement.

He said the Syrian people ‘finally have reason for hope’ after 14 years, adding that the Assad regime’s refusal to engage in a credible political process and its reliance on Russia and Iran led to its collapse.

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UN rights chief appeals for Syria’s sovereignty

Geneva, Switzerland - UN human rights chief Volker Turk said that whoever engages in any military activity in the Golan Heights, civilians must be spared, and that Syria’s sovereignty must be restored.

Turk was responding to a question by Anadolu after Israel’s occupation of Syria’s Golan Heights drew renewed scrutiny as tensions in the region escalated, following the fall of the Assad regime in Syria.

“It is key that before there is any escalation again in the Golan Heights there are political negotiations to find a way to meet the various security concerns that have been raised in this regard,” said Turk at a press conference.

Turk noted that the matter would need to be dealt with by Geir Pedersen, the UN Special Envoy for Syria.

“It is very important to whoever engages in any military activity that civilians are spared, and that, indeed, we go back to the negotiating table,” said Turk. “But it’s, it’s something that



UN human rights chief Volker Turk

clearly has to be dealt with because we need the restoration of Syria’s sovereignty.”

Disregard for international law

Turk went on to say: “The disregard for international law and apparent indifference to civilian lives and infrastructure have been starkly in focus in the conflict in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Lebanon, as well as in Ukraine, Sudan, and Myanmar, to name a few very stark examples.”

He said that in Syria on Sunday, the world witnessed a ‘regime driven from power’ following ‘decades of brutal repression’, and after nearly 14 years of relentless conflict.

Turk also said hundreds of thousands of lives were lost during this time, more than 100,000 people disappeared, and some 14mn were driven from their homes, often in the most atrocious circumstances.

“I’ve met many of them over the years, witnessed their despair and trauma as they bore testimony to the most serious human rights violations committed against them, including torture and the use of chemical weapons,” Turk noted.

“Yesterday, Syrians took to the streets with much hope and much anxiety for the future. Hope that this would be an opportunity for the country to build a future grounded in human rights, freedom, and justice. And anxiety, because so much is uncertain.”

Anadolu Agency

Israel tightens grip on Golan Heights

Istanbul/Cairo - Israel’s occupation of Syria’s Golan Heights has drawn renewed scrutiny as tensions in the region escalate.

Israel, which has occupied the Golan Heights since 1967, has expanded its presence in the area following recent developments in Syria. The Golan, a region of strategic importance and abundant water resources, has long been a contentious issue.

Following directives from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yisrael Katz, Israeli forces entered the buffer zone in the Golan, an area under Israeli occupation for decades.

Netanyahu characterised the occupation as temporary.

Images released by the Israeli military showed soldiers and armoured vehicles in the buffer zone, further consolidating Israel’s hold on the region.

Meanwhile, Egypt on Monday strongly condemned Israel’s seizure of a demilitarised buffer zone in Syria’s Golan Heights.

A Foreign Ministry statement described the Israeli grab of the Syrian land as ‘an occupation of Syrian territories and a flagrant



The Golan, a region of strategic importance and abundant water resources, has long been a contentious issue

violation to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement’.

The 1974 Disengagement Agreement led to Israel’s withdrawal from some Syrian territories but left the Golan Heights under Israeli control. Egypt called the Israeli practices a breach of international law and a violation of Syria’s territorial integrity.

It called on the UN Security Council and world powers to assume their responsibilities and take ‘a firm position’ against Is-

rael’s assault on Syria.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered his army on Sunday to capture the buffer zone in the Golan Heights, an area under Tel Aviv’s occupation for decades.

Images released by the Israeli military showed soldiers and armoured vehicles in the buffer zone, further consolidating Israel’s hold on the region.

The Golan Heights holds critical value for Israel, both strategi-

cally and for its water resources.

Located 60km from Damascus, the region provides Israel with a significant military advantage. It also supplies Israel with a substantial portion of its water through the Jordan River and other sources.

While the Golan Heights is internationally recognised as Syrian territory, its location bordering Lebanon and Jordan amplifies its geostrategic importance.

Anadolu Agency

White Helmets working to uncover hidden chambers at notorious Syrian jail

Damascus/Ankara - Claims of secret chambers at Sednaya Prison, infamous for torture under the toppled Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, are being investigated.

Anadolu reporters in Damascus documented efforts of the Syrian Civil Defence, known as the White Helmets, as they worked to uncover the hidden chambers at the prison.

Located 30km (18.6 miles) north of Damascus, the prison, notorious for the use of torture and excessive force, is believed to have multiple underground levels.

Electronic doors to underground levels

The Syrian Civil Defence said

that it has mobilised efforts to investigate testimonies from survivors about holding prisoners in underground cells at Sednaya Prison.

White Helmets Director Raed Al Saleh said on X that five specialised emergency response teams had been dispatched to Sednaya, with two guides familiar with the prison’s layout assisting them.

According to witnesses, efforts are ongoing to rescue prisoners who nearly suffocated due to poor ventilation at the prison.

To free prisoners visible in the security footage, the electronic doors to the underground levels need to be unlocked.

Local authorities called on former soldiers and prison staff



Efforts are ongoing to rescue prisoners who nearly suffocated due to poor ventilation at the prison

from the fallen regime to provide codes to open the doors.

Social media users and media

outlets shared images of protesters storming Sednaya Prison and freeing prisoners.

Among those freed were young children held with their mothers. In some footage, for-

mer detainees are seen unable to walk due to torture, crawling their way out of the prison.

A video shared by the Sednaya Prison Detainees and Missing Persons Association (ADMSP) shows women freed from the notorious prison.

In the footage, they are told: “Assad is gone, don’t be afraid!”

Another video circulated on social media shows people waiting near the prison, hoping to find out if their relatives are among those freed.

A separate recording, said to be filmed on the streets of Damascus, shows freed prisoners running joyfully.

In the video, one former detainee asks a passerby what happened and reacts with Assad’s

fall with chants: “We’ve overthrown the regime.”

Another video circulating on social media features a Syrian prisoner, hours away from execution, describing his freedom following the regime’s collapse.

“Our execution was scheduled for half an hour ago. 54 people... Our execution was today,” he says.

According to reports by international organisations, Sednaya Military Prison became a base for detaining anti-regime peaceful protesters and military opponents following the March 2011 uprising. The prison, under the Assad regime’s defence ministry, was transformed into a site for torture.

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INDIA

India raises concerns over safety, welfare of minorities in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh - India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Monday raised the issue of attacks on minorities, including Hindus, with Bangladesh leaders and officials in Dhaka.

"...I emphasised that India desires a positive, constructive and mutually beneficial relationship with Bangladesh. I have underlined today India's desire to work closely with the interim government of Bangladesh Authority..." Misri told reporters here. "We also discussed recent developments and I conveyed our concerns including those related to the safety and welfare of minorities. We also discussed regrettable incidents of attacks on cultural and religious properties," he added.

Misri said the discussions have given both India and Bangladesh the opportunity to take stock of bilateral ties. "I appreciate the opportunity today to have had a frank, candid and constructive exchange of views with all my interlocutors..." he said.

Misri was in the neighbouring country to participate in the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) between him and his counterpart Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin which were held at the State guest house Padma.

Misri earlier in the day met with Foreign Adviser Md.



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri holds a delegation-level talk with Bangladeshi counterpart Md Jashim Uddin, in Dhaka on Monday (ANI)

Misri was in the neighbouring county to participate in the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) between him and his counterpart Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin which were held at the State guest house Padma

Touhid Hossain of Bangladesh. This is the first high level visit from India to Bangladesh since Sheikh Hasina was deposed as Prime Minister in August this

year and since the interim government, led by Muhammad Yunus, assumed office. There have been multiple attacks on Hindus and other mi-

norities by extremist elements in Bangladesh. There also have been cases of arson and looting of minorities' homes and vandalism and desecration of

deities and temples. Arrest of priest Chinmoy Krishna Das in Chittagong on October 25 led to protests. India had on November 26 noted with deep concern the arrest and denial of bail to Shri Chinmoy Krishna Das, who is also the spokesperson of the Bangladesh Sammilit Sanatan Jagran Jote. "This incident follows the

multiple attacks on Hindus and other minorities by extremist elements in Bangladesh. There are several documented cases of arson and looting of minorities' homes and business establishments, as well as theft and vandalism and desecration of deities and temples," Ministry of External Affairs had said. "It is unfortunate that while

the perpetrators of these incidents remain at large, charges should be pressed against a religious leader presenting legitimate demands through peaceful gatherings. We also note with concern the attacks on minorities protesting peacefully against the arrest of Shri Das," it added. ANI

PM Modi launches LIC's initiative to empower women

Panipat, Haryana - Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday formally unveiled the LIC Bima Sakhi Yojana, aimed at empowering women with financial awareness and making them insurance agents.

This initiative of the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is designed to empower women aged 18-70 years, who are Class X pass.

The women will receive specialised training and a stipend for the first three years to promote financial literacy and insurance aware-

ness. After training, they can serve as LIC agents and the graduate Bima Sakhis would have the opportunity to qualify for being considered for Development Officer roles in LIC.

Prime Minister also ceremonially distributed appointment Certificates to prospective Bima Sakhis.

He linked PM Jan Dhan Yojana to the last-mile delivery of services directly to the bank accounts of all, including the women, cutting across multiple windows. ANI

Opposition protest outside Parliament

New Delhi - Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on Monday, criticised PM Modi for his silence on the Manipur crisis. He emphasised that all parties within the INDIA alliance are demanding the PM's attention, criticising him for travelling the world while ignoring the situation in Manipur.

"All the parties within the INDIA alliance of Manipur are gathered here at Jantar Mantar and they are demanding that the PM who goes around the world but hasn't visited Manipur and it has been 18 months since all started there. The CM (of Manipur) has failed to bring peace there, we want his resignation... The PM should break his silence, he should go and stay there (in Manipur) and it's not us who are demanding us but the people..." he said.



Opposition MPs stage a protest at Parliament in New Delhi on Monday (ANI)

CPI leader D Raja, who also joined the protest called out the BJP for its silence on the Manipur issue, despite their 'nation

first' claims. He also criticises the government for refusing to debate the issue in parliament. "PM Modi and the BJP al-

ways claim - nation first. Our simple question is, whether Manipur is part of the nation or not. Why the PM is not uttering a

word about Manipur? Why is the government not agreeing to a debate in the parliament on the Manipur issue? Manipur continues to be in turmoil, people are suffering, but no political solution. We demand that the CM (of Manipur) should resign..." he said.

Earlier today, Opposition MPs including Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi held a protest at the Parliament premises on Monday over the Adani matter. Members of Trinamool Congress Party (TMC) and Samajwadi Party were not a part of the protest. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-SP) MP Supriya Sule was also not present in the protest.

The first session of the winter Parliament commenced on November 25. ANI

Alexandrine parrots disappearing from Pakistan's skies: Wildlife experts

Karachi, Pakistan - Pakistan is in danger of losing one of its famed birds, the Alexandrine parrot, which is already on a global list of near-endangered species due to multiple factors, most of them human-made.

Wildlife experts cite habitat alteration, pollution, poaching and illegal trade as major factors behind the decline in the bird's population, which is still the largest among the three parrot species found in the South Asian country.

Once abundant in the country's plains, mainly along canals and foothills, and even in mega cities like Karachi, its population is currently restricted to the upper parts of northeastern Punjab and southern Sindh provinces and the border areas of Pakistan and India, including Jammu and Kashmir. The tree-

filled foothills of scenic Murree Hill Station is another home to Alexandrine parrots.

"Apart from the systematic destruction of their habitat, they have become a source of income for a sizeable number of people across the country, resulting in increasing poaching and subsequently illegal trade," said Sakhawat Ali, an Islamabad-based wildlife expert.

Speaking to Anadolu, Ali observed that a huge number of Indian rosewood (Shisham or Tali) and Banyan (Ficus benghalensis) trees, the parrots' favourite nesting places, have been systematically cut down in the agriculture belt of Punjab and Sindh over the past three decades because of their precious wood.

Agriculture authorities, he added, have replaced Indian



In Karachi alone, the parrots' numbers have plummeted by 60% over the past five to eight years

rosewood with eucalyptus, which is useless for parrots and other human friendly birds.

Eucalyptus in Pakistan was exported from Australia to feed the country's matchstick industry, and according to some envi-

ronmentalists, it is environmentally hazardous.

Fast disappearing in big cities

Endorsing Ali's view, Abdur Razzak Khan, a Karachi-based

environmentalist, said that the use of agrochemicals, increasing human influence and pollution are other key factors behind the decline in the parrots' population in the country, including mega cities like

Karachi and Lahore.

In Karachi alone, the parrots' numbers have plummeted by 60% over the past five to eight years, he told Anadolu.

The alteration of habitats - a direct result of unplanned urbanisation and pollution - has badly affected the population of urban birds in major Pakistani cities in the past two decades, mainly house sparrows and parrots, said Khan.

In addition to Karachi and Lahore, the northwestern city of Peshawar, garrison city of Rawalpindi and textile hub of Faisalabad are among the most polluted cities in the region.

Instead of human friendly birds like sparrows and parrots, which also serve as indicators of air quality, bird species such as kites, crows and mynas have occupied the skies of these cities,

he added.

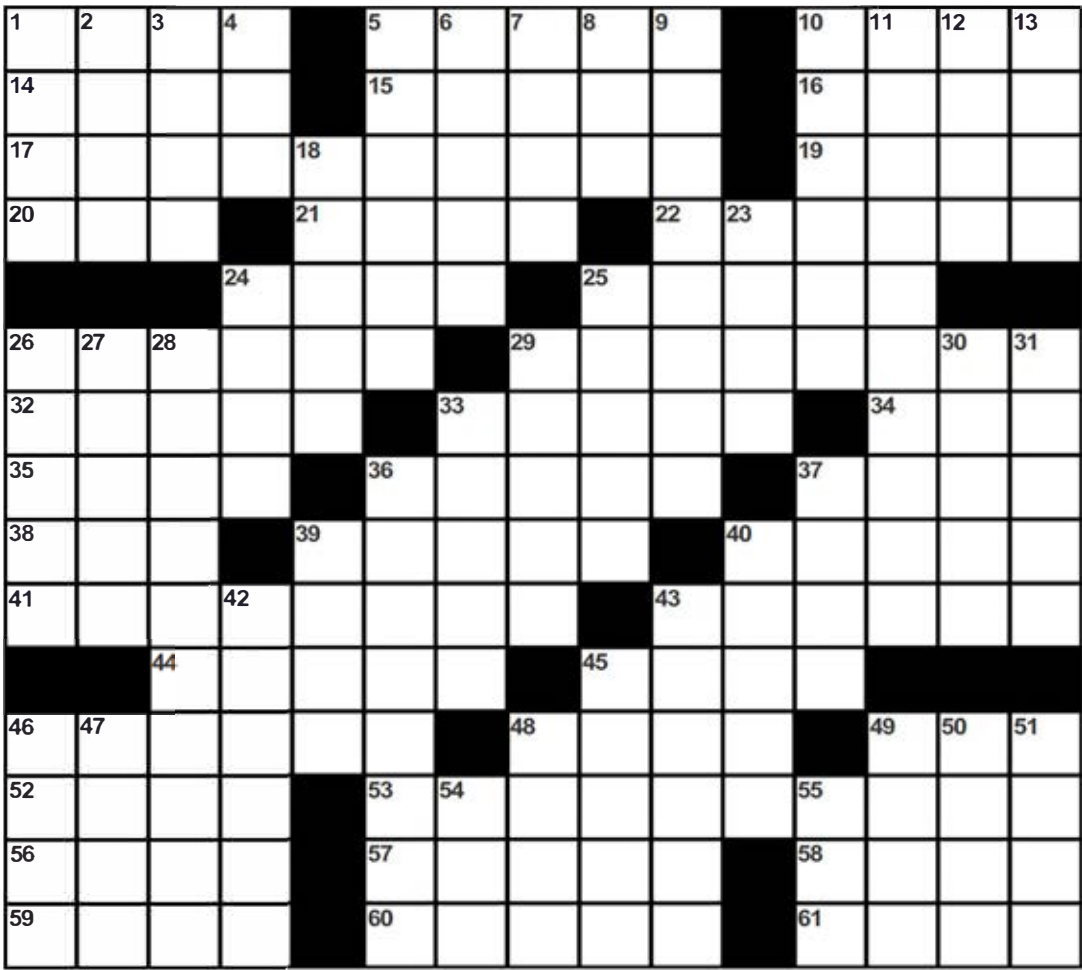
Predatory birds, mainly kites, often target parrots and sparrows, adding to the decline in the population of human friendly birds, he said.

Recently, the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), a state-run body dedicated to wildlife conservation, conducted a survey in Islamabad. To its surprise, no Alexandrine parrots were spotted in the capital's skies, indicating the gravity of the threats facing the bird.

If the situation persists, Khan warned, these birds may hardly be seen in the metropolises. The Alexandrine parrot is the largest parrot species found in Pakistan. They have red patches on their wings and are green in colour, with mutations also occurring.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) "Brian's Song" star James
 - 5) Comes out of one's skin
 - 10) Self-congratulatory
 - 14) Radius' comrade-in-arms?
 - 15) Youngest-ever Oscar winner
 - 16) Folkestone farewell
 - 17) "B 5!" "C 11!"?
 - 19) Took_ (snoozed)
 - 20) Downed
 - 21) Typing type
 - 22) Considers carefully
 - 24) "Emma" author Austen
 - 25) Hershey's bell town
 - 26) Place or site
 - 29) Transverse beam
 - 32) Itsy-bitsy bits
 - 33) "In_ tnist"
 - 34) Recipe word
 - 35) Cravings
 - 36) Emulate "Old Blue Eyes"
 - 37) Kid's "seat" on Santa
 - 38) Alternative to .net
 - 39) Less extroverted
 - 40) TV's "Cosmos" creator
 - 41) Author's explanation
 - 43) Yuletide songs

- 44) Backup sounds
 - 45) Random sampling
 - 46) "Monkey Trial" teacher
 - 48) Seafood choice
 - 49) Josh
 - 52) Door section
 - 53) John Wayne character, larger-than-life?
 - 56) More than suggest
 - 57) Recording studio alert
 - 58) Water sport
 - 59) Some antique autos
 - 60) Family men
 - 61) Bud holder
- ACROSS**
- 1) Island south of Florida
 - 2) Dismounted
 - 3) Archer or Heche
 - 4) Endless faultfinder
 - 5) Home of the John Deere headquarters
 - 6) Like beverages at barbecues
 - 7) A 1 Capp character
 - 8) Fielder's choice?
 - 9) Trooper's warning
 - 10) Wood-surface applications
 - 11) Tropical fruit dance?
 - 12) Great Salt Lake state

- 13) Adjusts, as a spark plug
- 18) Multicolored gems
- 23) "_ on Down the Road"
- 24) Traffic tangles
- 25) Eagerness
- 26)_ the land (how things stand)
- 27) Alamogordo's county
- 28) Kinshasa drum?
- 29) Australian bush call
- 30) Just right
- 31) Wonderlands
- 33) Southern breakfast dish
- 36) Auto despair site?
- 37) Marx or Benz
- 39) Pirate's knife
- 40) Town of many trials and hunts
- 42) Plains homes
- 43) Plays with crayons
- 45) Lecterns
- 46) Tim Duncan, for one
- 47) Kind of package
- 48) Cold spell
- 49) Nautical mile
- 50) Not going anywhere
- 51) Condemn
- 54) "Put_ Happy Face"
- 55) Photo_ (media events)

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Excessive? Unwilling to stop at just one of anything? You bet. The sky's the limit for you. You won't be short on company, however. Your personal fire persuades others to come and bask in your glow. Add the stars' charming input, and you'll be downright impossible to refuse...even to a certain person who's recently tried to put some distance between you two.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
This may be just the start of the fun, but you're ready to dive in, and that feeling probably started late last night. If you made it through the day and managed to knock a few items off your to-do list, you definitely deserve congratulations. And once it's time to call it a day, no one should have the nerve to ask you for anything more challenging than your phone number.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
If your temper is rising today, just ride it out. A lot of tumultuous energy is in the air now, likely caused by some transitions or adaptations you made a long time ago that are still having repercussions in all areas of your life. Don't ignore the problems that are going on, but do not let them control your day. These are not fires you need to extinguish. They are merely facts you need to deal with.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Do some investigating into your recent financial ventures, and you may find that someone hasn't been entirely on the up-and-up in the accounts payable department. Does this mean you should cut them out of your life completely? Well, that certainly depends on the gravity of the offense and whether or not they're a repeat offender. But you still might want to cut back their privileges. No TV, no gummy bears, and so on.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Big, messy emotions are on the agenda today, most unlike your meticulous, detail-oriented, and choosy self. This could well leave you feeling a bit on the deranged side, but only if you try to fight it. So don't. Right now, anything goes. Let yourself feel what you're feeling. Your only responsibility is to be as nice as possible while you're letting it all hang out. Deal?



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You might want to slide on over to the slow lane today. You've been racing along faster than the speed limit for far too long. Tons of interesting stuff is going on now, and if you don't ease up on the gas, you may miss out. It's nice to have a lot going on in your life, but sometimes it's just as nice to hit the brakes and take a more leisurely route to where you're going. The landscape is lovely.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
An intense situation that comes up at work could lead you to wonder if you should say what you know or just keep quiet, and isn't that always a dilemma? In this case, since you may be feeling you've kept this particular secret for far too long, think about what might happen once the truth is revealed. The good news is that in the end, the truth always comes out anyway. Your mission is to decide whether you want to be the instrument now.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
It's not easy to get you down. In fact, you're better at seeing the bright side of things than almost every other sign. That trait will be running on high now, and there's definitely someone who'll be able to benefit from it. So when the world seems too dark and full of unhappiness for them to bear, it's up to you to inform them that the glass is definitely half full and ready for you to top it off.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
That higher-up who seems to have it in for you? The one who seems to have you constantly under a microscope? You might be right about them watching you carefully, but their reasons are probably a lot less devious than you imagine. You have a knack for dealing with people, and that's one of the things they've been paying attention to. Why? You'll find out soon.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Work has probably been less than easy to concentrate on lately. The stars are encouraging you to think of far more interesting topics. But now you can't think of anything you'd rather do than apply the pants to the chair and the nose to the grindstone. Should your family voice their complaints, let them know this is temporary and that you have faith in their ability to boil water.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Excessive when it comes to shopping? Well, not usually. But every now and then you do tend to have your days. This may be one of them. If you're not financially up for it, consider channeling this energy in another direction. After all, if you have to be excessive about something, why not choose your own specialty? Sensuality and closeness, that is. See? Not such a bad choice, is it?



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Giving up on your dreams isn't an option, especially now. No matter what has happened recently, it doesn't mean you should abandon your goals and ambitions. It signifies that your path has a few more unexpected twists and turns in it. No matter what, hang on to those high hopes. They haven't been dashed. They're just waiting in the wings for the next big scene to come.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- FFC stands for**
 - A. Foreign Finance Corporation
 - B. Film Finance Corporation
 - C. Federation of Football Council
 - D. None of the above
- Fastest shorthand writer was**
 - A. Dr. G. D. Bist
 - B. J.R.D. Tata
 - C. J.M. Tagore
 - D. Khudada Khan
- Epsom (England) is the place associated with**
 - A. Horse racing
 - B. Polo
 - C. Shooting
 - D. Snooker

Answers: 1.B 2.A 3.A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

R	L	L	S
A	I	U	I
I	M	G	M
A	T	Y	M

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



Chelsea's Enzo Fernández scores against Tottenham Hotspur in their Premier League match on Sunday

THE PERFECT RESPONSE

Sancho, Palmer and Fernandez on target as Chelsea bounce back from two goals down to beat Tottenham

London, England - Cole Palmer scored twice from the penalty spot as Chelsea roared back from being two goals down after 11 minutes to beat Tottenham Hotspur 4-3 away in a frenzied London derby and close the gap with Premier League leaders Liverpool on Sunday.

Two comical slips by Chelsea full back Marc Cucurella led to Dominic Solanke and Dejan Kulusevski giving the hosts a dream start but their joy turned to despair as the visitors showed why they should be considered title contenders.

Jadon Sancho rifled in a shot after 17 minutes to give Chelsea momentum and Palmer equalised from the spot just past the hour mark as Chelsea dominated the second period.

Enzo Fernandez powered home a shot to put Chelsea ahead and Palmer effectively wrapped it up with his second penalty late on before Son Heung-min scored a stoppage-time consolation goal.

Chelsea are in second place with 31 points from 15 games, four points behind Liverpool whose game at Everton was postponed because of high winds on Saturday.

Tottenham's second defeat of the week left them in 11th place with 20 points and the pressure mounting on Ange Postecoglou whose cause was not helped by losing centre back Cristian Romero to injury early on.

"It's a sore one for sure, it's painful. We started the game really well and then we lose Cristian Romero and we had to reshuffle," the Australian, whose side have twice lost having led 2-0 this season, told Sky Sports. "The momentum shifted pretty quickly."

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca has played down the title chances of his expensively-assembled squad who are now unbeaten in seven games and have won their last four Premier League matches. They are also top scorers in the division with 35 goals and in Palmer have a player at the peak of his powers.

He now has 50 goal involvements (33 goals and 17 assists) in 48 Premier League games for the London club since joining from Manchester City.

"The first 10 or 15 minutes we conceded two easy goals but overall we were in control of the game," Italian Maresca said. "The reaction of the players was mentally strong both on and off the ball."

Things looked bleak for the visitors early on as a tumbling Cucurella was twice left red-faced.

He lost his footing in the fifth minute and Brennan Johnson played the ball into the area when Solanke produced a poacher's finish to give his side the lead.

Minutes later the exact same thing happened, this time the Spaniard slipping over and looking on in horror as the ball was eventually played to Kulusevski who cut across the area before threading a precise shot past Emiliano Sanchez.

Cucurella went off to change his footwear and his side's fortunes quickly changed too, Sancho striking a wonderful shot in off the post after a surging diagonal run.

Chelsea were perhaps lucky not to be down to 10 men when Moises Caicedo followed through on Pape Matar Sarr and soon afterwards Sarr headed a cross against the woodwork.



Son Heung-min

'We got to stick together in such difficult moments'

London, England - Tottenham Hotspur captain Son Heung-min called on his teammates to raise their game after Sunday's 4-3 loss to visitors Chelsea dropped them to 11th in the Premier League and heaped more pressure on manager Ange Postecoglou.

Son scored a stoppage-time consolation goal for Spurs, who lost centre back Cristian Romero to injury early on and his fellow defender Micky van de Ven near the end.

Spurs have won only once in their last seven matches in all competitions and Son said the team had to remain unified.

"We got to stick together in such difficult moments, it's very important and it's why we need big support," he told Sky Sports.

"The players are very young and they need support more than we have had before. The fans were always supporting amazingly but I think it's time the players also need to step up."

Australian Postecoglou is in his second season at Spurs and Romero said he was a "great coach".

"We saw it in the first season. In this second one we've suffered a lot of injuries," he told Telemundo.

"Players are the first one to be criticised, then if we lose 10 games, the staff can be changed, but nobody talks about what is actually happening."

We are not ready: Maresca plays down title ambitions yet again

London, England - Enzo Maresca hailed the perfect win as his Chelsea side roared back from two goals down after 11 minutes to beat Tottenham Hotspur 4-3 on Sunday.

The visitors were in big trouble after two slips by Marc Cucurella led to goals for Dominic Solanke and Dejan Kulusevski but they responded in powerful fashion.

Cole Palmer slotted two penalties, the second an audacious Panenka dink, while Jadon Sancho and Enzo Fernandez were also on target as Chelsea cut Liverpool's lead to four points.

It was Chelsea's fourth win in a row in the league and while Maresca continues to dismiss his side's title ambitions, few now are taking that opinion seriously.

"To come to this stadium and think you are going to win and not suffer, it's impossible. It's the perfect win probably because of this," the Italian told reporters.

"After the game, my message to the players is to be focused in the day by day, our sessions, the next game on Thursday and then Sunday. The main focus has to be to enjoy the day off and when we come back, 100%, train well, go for the game.

"The fans can dream because



Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca celebrates with Jadon Sancho after the match

from the outside, it is quite clear and inside, the reality is we are not ready but the important thing is we improve day by day."

Cucurella was left red-faced after his choice of footwear proved his undoing, twice falling over and being punished as Tottenham took advantage to surge ahead. It was all smiles between the Spaniard and Maresca at the end, however.

"He said to me after the game that he was trying to bring emotion to the game!" Maresca told Sky Sports.

"No, being serious, to come to this stadium against this team and be 2-0 down, but continue then with the same plan on and off the ball and then second half we changed things tactically. I think overall we deserved to win.

"It's more a question for Marc.

They are mature enough to decide what boots they need for the game. The most important thing is that we were 2-0 but we continued the same way to create chances."

Palmer has now been involved in 50 Premier League goals in 48 games for Chelsea since signing from Manchester City - 33 goals and 17 assists.

'My love for French team hasn't changed'

Paris, France - Kylian Mbappe said he remained committed to the French national team despite not being called up for recent games, and that he respected the decisions made by coach Didier Deschamps.

"The French team has always been the highest rank in football, it's the national team. I've always said there's nothing more important. My love for the French team hasn't changed," Mbappe said in an interview with Canal+ on Sunday.

"I've always given my all," added the France captain, who has not featured for the Les Bleus since two Nations League games in early September.

"You serve your country and that's it... I always held the French national team to the highest level. I did everything possible to represent it as best as possible."

The 25-year-old striker has been hailed as one of the world's best players and moved to Spanish giants Real Madrid in July.

He has 86 caps for France but was not included in the squads for their more recent Nations League fixtures in October and November.

Arsenal deserved to win, says Arteta after disappointing draw

London, England - Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said his side did everything they could have done to win on Sunday at Fulham, but he praised the home side for their early goal and dogged defending.

"Gutted that we didn't win it because I think we deserved to win from the beginning to the end," Arteta told reporters.

Fulham's Raul Jimenez scored early at Craven Cottage, and William Saliba equalised for the Gunners at the start of the second half.



This is the quality of the opposition and the league so you cannot cry about it. For millimetres we could have been here with a really dominant win

MIKEL ARTETA

Fulham held on for the draw despite Arsenal having 70% possession and peppering Fulham with six corners. Arsenal have now scored 23 league goals from corners since the start of last season, more than any other team in the league.

"We did almost everything that we had to do to win it," Arteta said.

"This is the quality of the opposition and the league so you cannot cry about it. For millimetres we could have been

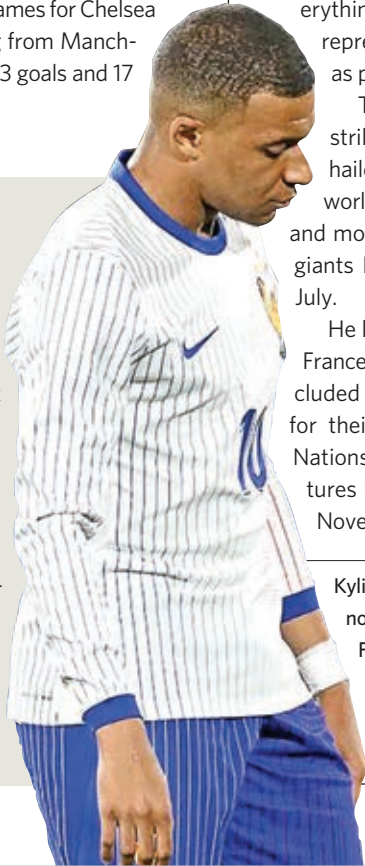
here with a really dominant win," he said. "It's never enough if you don't score three, four or five. If they (opposition sides) play 11 direct balls I want to win 11. We want to win 100%," he said.

Fulham have been a thorn in Arsenal's side, getting the better of them last season with a win at home and a draw at the Emirates.

But Arteta defended his makeshift back line on Sunday when asked if they would have conceded the early goal to Jimenez had injured defender Gabriel Magalhães been available.

"I cannot promise you with different personnel it wouldn't happen. Sometimes you have to praise the opposition," he said.

"We had to change the whole unit. That's it, they (injured players) are not available. We have to respond to that, and I'm very happy with the way they did," he said.



Kylian Mbappe has not featured for France since two Nations League games in early September

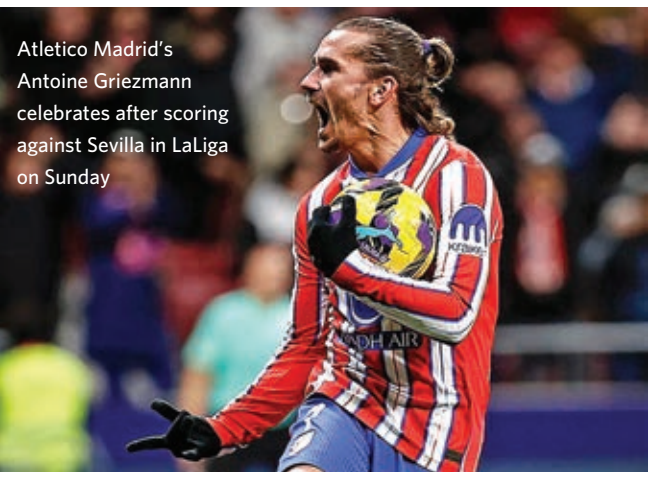
Griezmann double powers Atletico to win against Sevilla

Madrid, Spain - A second-half double from Antoine Griezmann earned Atletico Madrid a stunning 4-3 comeback home win over Sevilla in LaLiga on Sunday, as the hosts claimed their ninth straight win in all competitions.

Atletico made a dominant start at home, with Griezmann hitting the crossbar before Rodrigo De Paul opened the scoring in the 10th minute, hammering a rocket from the edge of the box and into the top corner.

Sevilla's Dodi Lukebakio equalised just two minutes later with a powerful low strike following a corner before Isaac Romero put them ahead after a quick counter-attack in the 32nd minute, shooting across goal-keeper Jan Oblak, who could only get a finger to the ball.

Atletico thought they had levelled the score just before halftime when Julian Alvarez put the ball in the net from a De Paul pass, but the VAR disallowed the Argentine striker's



Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann celebrates after scoring against Sevilla in LaLiga on Sunday

goal for an offside in the build-up.

Juanlu Sanchez then extended the visitors' advantage in the 57th minute with a close-range finish off Kike Salas's second assist of the game before Griezmann pulled one back for Atletico five minutes later.

Substitute Samuel Lino struck from long range to beat Sevilla keeper Alvaro Fernandez, who had pulled off some key saves but could not prevent the Brazilian's first goal of the season.

Griezmann found the net again four minutes into stoppage time to seal the victory that left Atletico third in the standings with 35 points, one behind Real Madrid and three shy of leaders Barcelona.

"We are doing well. We struggled to get back into the game. Sevilla had two chances and scored two goals," Griezmann told Movistar.

"We are a united group, we all are on the same path. It's the way forward to dream big. We will try to win everything. There will be difficult moments but we have to keep fighting."

Sevilla, who came close to their first win away to Atletico since 2008, remain 13th on 19 points.

"We conceded too much. It slipped away from us. The draw wasn't even bad. It is painful," Sevilla's Fernandez said.

"But we know that Atletico are the fittest team in LaLiga, so we are very proud."

LAZIO STUN NAPOLI AGAIN



Lazio's Gustav Isaksen (L) celebrates with Tijjani Noslin after scoring against Napoli on Sunday

Conte's men fail to take top spot after defeat at home

Naples, Italy - Lazio denied Napoli the chance to return to the top of the Serie A standings with a 1-0 away win on Sunday, their second victory this week over Napoli, following their midweek Coppa Italia success.

Napoli remain second on 32 points, two behind leaders Atalanta and while Lazio stay fifth, the win moved them level on 31 points with Inter Milan and Fiorentina, who have both played a game less.

Lazio advanced at the expense of Napoli in a 3-1 win at the Stadio Olimpico on Thursday, and while two much-changed sides took to the pitch in Naples, the league meeting finished with the same outcome thanks to Gustav Isaksen's 79th-minute goal.

Only two of the 22 who started the cup tie were on the pitch at kickoff for this game, with Lazio's Fisayo Dele-Bashiru and Mattia Zaccagni the only players to keep their places.

Heavy rain poured down at kickoff at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona and Napoli poured forward in the opening minutes.

Scott McTominay had an early chance to score for the second successive league game but Lazio

I am not disappointed with the performance, the boys gave everything, playing a good match against an excellent team

ANTONIO CONTE

keeper Ivan Provedel pulled off a reflex save after Matteo Politano laid the ball back from the byline.

After a frantic start by the home side, Lazio began to get a foothold in the game and it was the turn of Napoli keeper Alex

Meret to keep the match scoreless after Isaksen cut inside from the wing before getting a strike away.

The last action of the half almost broke the deadlock but Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's free kick whizzed just wide of the upright.

Lazio went close shortly after the break with Dele-Bashiru's shot from distance rattling the crossbar, and later Napoli's Andre Anguissa's header from a corner hit the upright, in what was a scrappier affair in the second half.

Tijjani Noslin's entrance from the bench must have struck fear into Napoli fans after the Lazio forward's hat-trick sent them crashing out of the cup just days previously, but his first effort from a counter attack was blasted high and wide. Minutes later, however, it was Noslin's pass which set Isaksen on his way and he twisted and turned to go past Mathias Olivera before striking a stunning curling effort into the far corner to put Lazio back into contention in what is turning out to be a close title race.

Napoli manager Antonio

Conte said he was happy with his side's display and commitment despite the defeat.

"Today's match also tells us that the path we are taking is the right one, our idea is to attack the opponent, to not let them control the game and create situations to hurt," Conte told DAZN. "There is room for improvement from this point of view, we get there but the last step is missing.

"We are working on it, I am not disappointed with the performance, the boys gave everything, playing a good match against an excellent team."

Lazio are now just one point off Napoli, in what is turning out to be an excitingly close title race, and after their two wins over his side, Conte is not surprised with their position in the standings.

"Lazio are not a meteorite, they are doing very well," Conte said.

"I'm not disappointed or unhappy, during this journey there are some stumbles, there will probably be others, this is the team I want to see but we need to have more quality in the final metres."

Portugal's Nani hangs up his boots

Lisbon, Portugal - Former Portugal and Manchester United winger Nani announced his retirement on Sunday at the age of 38.

Nani joined United in 2007 and went on to make 230 appearances for the club, scoring 41 goals. He won the Champions League in his first season and went on to win four Premier League titles and two League Cups in eight seasons.

"The time has come to say goodbye, I have decided to finish my career as a professional player," Nani wrote on social media.

"It's been an amazing ride and I wanted to thank every single person who has helped me and supported me through the highs and lows during a career which lasted over 20 years and gave me so many unforgettable memories. Time to turn a new leaf and focus on new goals and dreams. See you soon!"

Nani, who has been playing in the Portuguese top flight this season for his hometown club Estrela Amadora, played his last game against his former club Sporting last month.

He also played for Valencia,



Nani celebrates with the Euro 2016 trophy

Lazio, Orlando City, Venezia, Melbourne Victory and Adana Demirspor.

Nani scored 24 goals in 112 caps for Portugal, winning the European Championship in 2016.

South Africa beat Sri Lanka in second Test to sweep series

Gqeberha, South Africa - Spinner Keshav Maharaj took five wickets as South Africa secured a 109-run victory over Sri Lanka on the last day of the second Test at St George's Park on Monday and a 2-0 sweep of the series.

Maharaj finished with figures of 5-76 as South Africa took 70 minutes to dismiss Sri Lanka for 238 in a game that had been set up for a thrilling finale as both teams required a win to keep them in contention for a place in next June's World Test Championship final.

Sri Lanka resumed on 205-5 needing 143 for victory and the home side required five wickets but it proved an anticlimax as the hosts ran through the batting line-up to add to their 233-



Keshav Maharaj was the star of the show for South Africa in the second innings with five wickets

run victory in the first Test in Durban.

It took South Africa seven overs to make a breakthrough on Monday, ending a 97-run partnership for the sixth wicket with Kusal Mendes caught by Aiden Markram off Maharaj.

It was sharp catch for

Markram and only given out after a check by the television umpire to see whether it was cleanly taken.

Mendes made 46 and was followed shortly after by captain Dhananajaya de Silva, who got a healthy edge to a quick delivery from Kagiso Rabada to depart for 50.

That left the tail exposed and South Africa wasted no time with Maharaj grabbing the wickets of Prabath Jayasuriya, caught at extra cover by Temba Bavuma, and Vishwa Fernando, who slogged it up into the sky to be caught by Marco Jansen.

Jansen took the last wicket of Lahiru Kumara to ensure South Africa moved to the top of the WTC standings.

ICC punish Siraj and Head for Adelaide spat

Duba, UAE i- Mohammed Siraj and Travis Head have been slapped with demerit points for their bust-up in the second Test between India and Australia while the Indian fast bowler was also fined 20 per cent of his match fee, the International Cricket Council said on Monday.

The duo had a fiery exchange after Siraj dismissed Australia batter Head in the pink ball Test in Adelaide, which Australia won by 10 wickets to level the five-match series 1-1 at the Adelaide Oval on Sunday.

"Siraj has been penalised 20 per cent of his match fee after being found guilty of breaching article 2.5 of the ICC Code of Conduct...," the ICC said in a

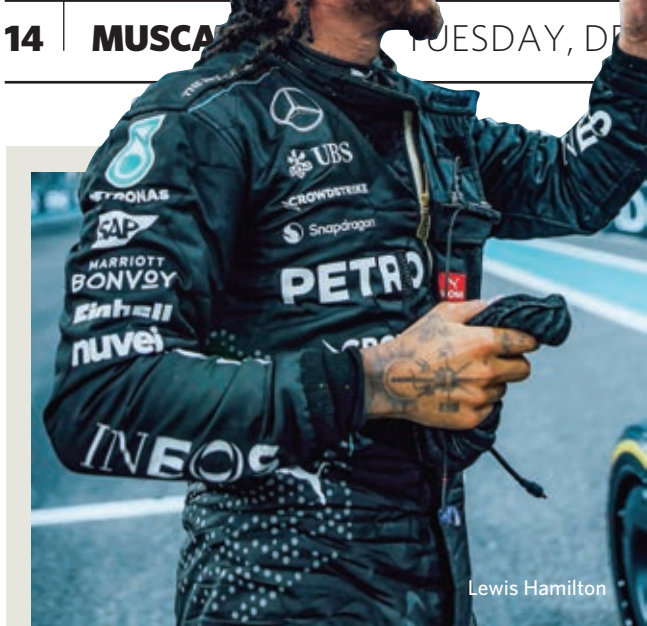


Mohammed Siraj and Travis Head had a fiery exchange in Adelaide

statement.

"Head too was sanctioned for breaching Article 2.13 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to the 'abuse of a player, player support personnel, umpire or match referee during an international match'.

"Siraj and Head received one demerit point each on their disciplinary records, marking their first offence within the last 24 months."



Lewis Hamilton

'NEXT YEAR IS MY YEAR'

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Lewis Hamilton raced one last time for Mercedes on Sunday, Formula One's most successful driver and team partnership ending in a cloud of tyre smoke, a radio love-in and a performance worthy of a seven times world champion.

The 39-year-old Briton, who will be driving for Ferrari next season, arrived at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina circuit on race day dressed in red and bowed out with emotional farewells flooding the airwaves.

"We dreamed a lot but together we believed," Hamilton said, after finishing fourth in a season-ender he started 16th thanks to a plastic bollard becoming wedged under his car in qualifying.

"Thank you for all the courage, the determination, the passion and everything in supporting me.

"What started out as a leap of faith turned into a journey into the history books. We did everything together and I'm so, so grateful to everyone."

Hamilton performed some smoking 'doughnut' spins for the crowd on the finish straight and then got out, huddled by the car and kissed it.

He embraced race winner Lando Norris who secured a first constructors' title in 26 years for his former team McLaren.

Hamilton's 12 years at Mercedes brought them together six drivers' titles, eight constructors' championships, 84 wins, 78 poles and 153 podium finishes.

Hamilton's own records extend well beyond that, with a first title for McLaren in 2008 - the team also powered by Mercedes - and his personal tally of wins now at 105.

Every lap the most successful driver in the sport's history has done has been powered by the three-pointed star of a Mercedes engine.

Fourteen seconds behind teammate George Russell with 15 laps to go, Hamilton reeled in his compatriot and passed him on the last lap.

As so often in the past, the call came from race engineer Peter Bonnington telling him it was 'Hammer time'.

"I think when he said it was 'hammer time' I was like, 'that's the last time I'm going to hear that'. It really clicked for me in that moment," Hamilton told Sky Sports television.

Norris promises more after winning Abu Dhabi GP to lead McLaren to constructors' title

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Lando Norris delivered McLaren a first Formula One constructors' title since 1998 on Sunday and said next year was going to be his turn at the top.

The Briton won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix from pole position, racing untroubled from start to finish as McLaren chief executive Zak Brown endured 58 laps of nervous agony on the pitwall.

"You all deserve this. Thank you so much. It's been a special year," said Norris over the team radio after taking the chequered flag.

"Next year is going to be my year too."

The 25-year-old expanded on that later in pre-podium comments -- once he had told everyone that he and Brown were going to celebrate by getting "absolutely hammered" with the team.

"We want to win the constructors', we want to win the drivers' next year," he said.

"I made my mistakes this year, but I've learned a lot, and I've learned a lot from (Red Bull's



Lando Norris of McLaren celebrates after winning the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday

with Verstappen at the first corner. That left the Australian at the back of the field before fighting back to 10th.

"For a minute, my heart was like, 'Oh God, it's not looking as likely'," said Norris. "But if I just kept my head down and kept focused, I knew I could deliver and do what I got to do.

"But the bigger picture of us winning a championship for the first time in 26 years, you wouldn't have thought that when you say the name McLaren.

"For me to be part of that, for Oscar to be part of it, is something we're incredibly proud of. And delivering that for the team has put the biggest smile as possible on everyone's face."

Brown, who has steered the team through the lows of the

I made my mistakes this year, but I've learned a lot, and I've learned a lot from (Red Bull's) Max (Verstappen) and my competitors around me

LANDO NORRIS



Ferrari's Carlos Sainz celebrates on the podium after finishing second in the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday

Bittersweet Ferrari farewell for Sainz

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Carlos Sainz bowed out of Ferrari with bittersweet feelings after one final appearance on the podium at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday.

The Spaniard, second to former McLaren teammate Lando Norris with Ferrari teammate Charles Leclerc third, will be testing with Williams on Tuesday as he starts a new chapter of his career.

"It hasn't been an easy weekend for me, obviously, knowing it was the last one," he told reporters, admitting to hiding his emotions. "I did the best I could

to stay focused and to do the maximum that the car could do today, I think. Maybe it was in the helmet. Maybe it was in the 10 minutes prior to a race when I was in the car. Maybe it was the in-lap. Maybe you'll never know," he said of where he really felt emotional.

Sainz leaves after four seasons as a four times race winner, two of them this year, to make way for seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton.

When he joined from McLaren he had two podiums. He leaves Ferrari with 27.

"I knew that was obviously

going to be my last race with a group of people that I've enjoyed these last four years. The last time that I would jump in a Ferrari car, probably," he said.

"I tried to remind myself to try and enjoy the race as much as possible and to give the absolute maximum for this team. Jumping out of the car, I already had the bittersweet feeling."

Sainz said he had proven to himself and the world that he could fight for victories given the right car, and his target now was to help former champions Williams get back to where they once were. He recognised how-

ever that it might take time to adjust to his new surroundings, even if he was highly motivated by the challenge.

"I'm not going to lie, my last laps, as much as I was pushing like hell for this team... I was already starting to feel things in the car and trying to say 'remember how this feels.

"Because tomorrow and Tuesday I need to remember why is this car quick in this corner and why does it feel good? I know probably what I'm going to find tomorrow and Tuesday needs some margin of improvement in the corners."

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EMISSIONS GAP

AS CLIMATE IMPACTS INTENSIFY GLOBALLY, THE LATEST REPORT OF THE UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME FINDS THAT NATIONS MUST DELIVER DRAMATICALLY STRONGER AMBITION AND ACTION IN THE NEXT ROUND OF NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS OR THE PARIS AGREEMENT'S 1.5°C GOAL WILL BE GONE WITHIN A FEW YEARS

proach, measures that maximize socioeconomic and environmental co-benefits, enhanced international collaboration that includes reform of the global financial architecture, strong private sector action and a minimum six-fold increase in mitigation investment. G20 nations, particularly the largest-emitting members, would need to do the heavy lifting.

Nations must close huge emissions gap

Nations must collectively commit to cutting 42% off annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 57% by 2035 in the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – and back this up with rapid action – or the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal will be gone within a few years, according to the new UN Environment Programme (UNEP) report.

Updated NDCs are to be submitted early next year ahead of the COP30 climate talks in Brazil. UNEP's 'Emissions Gap Report 2024: No more hot air ... please!' finds that a failure to increase ambition in these new NDCs and start delivering immediately would put the world on course for a temperature increase of 2.6-3.1°C over the course of this century. This would bring debilitating impacts to people, planet and economies.

The 2.6°C scenario is based on the full implementation of current unconditional and conditional NDCs. Implementing only current unconditional NDCs would lead to 2.8°C of warming. Continuing with current policies only would lead to 3.1°C of warming. Under these scenarios – which all operate on a probability of over 66 per cent – temperatures would continue to rise into the next century. Adding additional net-zero pledges to full implementation of unconditional and conditional NDCs could limit global warming to 1.9°C, but there is currently low confidence in the implementation of these net-zero pledges.

"The emissions gap is not an abstract notion," said António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, in a video message on the report.

"There is a direct link between increasing emissions and increasingly frequent and intense climate disasters. Around the world, people are paying a terrible price. Record emissions mean record sea temperatures supercharging monster hurricanes; record heat is turning forests into tinder boxes and cities into saunas; record rains are resulting in biblical floods.

"Today's Emissions Gap report is clear: we're playing with fire; but there can be no more playing for time. We're out of time. Closing the emissions gap means closing the ambition gap, the implementation gap, and the finance gap. Starting at COP29."

The report also looks at what it would take to get on track to limiting

but greenhouse gas emissions have since grown to a record high of 57.1 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2023. While this makes a marginal difference to the overall cuts required from 2019-2030, the delay in action means that 7.5% must be shaved off emissions every year until 2035 for 1.5°C, and 4% for 2°C. The size of the annual cuts required will increase with every year's delay.

1.5°C still technically possible, but massive effort needed

The report shows that there is technical potential for emissions cuts in 2030 up to 31 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent – which is around 52% of emissions in 2023 – and 41 gigatons in 2035. This would bridge the gap to 1.5°C in both years, at a cost below US\$200 per ton of CO₂ equivalent.

Increased deployment of solar photovoltaic technologies and wind energy could deliver 27% of the total reduction potential in 2030 and 38% in 2035.

Action on forests could deliver around 20% of the potential in both years. Other strong options include efficiency measures, electrification and fuel switching in the buildings, transport and industry sectors.

This potential illustrates it is possible to meet the COP28 targets of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030, doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030, transitioning away from fossil fuels, and conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems.

However, delivering on even some of this potential will require unprecedented international mobilization and a whole-of-government approach, focusing on measures that maximize socioeconomic and environmental co-benefits and minimize trade-offs.

A minimum six-fold increase in mitigation investment is needed for net-zero – backed by reform of the global financial architecture, strong private sector action and international cooperation. This is affordable: The estimated incremental investment for net-zero is US\$0.9-2.1 trillion per year from 2021 to 2050 – investments that would bring returns in avoided costs from climate change, air pollution, damage to nature and human health impacts. For context, the global economy and financial markets are worth US\$110tn per year.

The G20 members, responsible for the bulk of total emissions, must do the heavy lifting. However, this group is still off track to meet even current NDCs. The largest-emitting members will need to take the lead by dramatically increasing action and ambition now and in the new pledges.

G20 members, minus the African Union, accounted for 77% of emissions in 2023. The addition of the African Union as a permanent G20 member, which more than doubles the number of countries represented from 44 to 99,



brings the share up by only 5% to 82% – highlighting the need for differentiated responsibilities between nations. Stronger international support and enhanced climate finance will be essential to ensure that climate and development goals can be realized fairly across G20 members and globally.

Good NDC design crucial

The report also lays out how to ensure the updated NDCs are well-designed, specific and transparent so they can meet any new targets put in place. NDCs must include all gases listed in the Kyoto Protocol, cover all sectors, set specific targets, be explicit about conditional and unconditional elements and provide transparency around how the submission reflects a fair share of effort and the highest possible ambition.

They must also detail how national sustainable development goals can be achieved at the same time as efforts to reduce emissions, and include detailed implementation plans with mechanisms for review and accountability. For emerging market and developing economies, NDCs should include details on the international support and finance they need.

UNEP

Undercurrents examines the complex relationship between war, increasing climate-related hazards and environmental degradation in Yemen that are undermining security and driving further conflict, particularly at the local level. Undertaken in collaboration with the European Institute of Peace, the assessment highlights why climate and environmental action must be part of Yemen's conflict mitigation and peace-building processes at different levels.

In 2024, Yemen entered its tenth year of civil war. Fought primarily between the Yemeni government, Houthis forces and international proxies, the war has caused one of the largest global humanitarian disasters since 1945. In addition to the violent power struggles of national and regional actors, an array of local conflicts results in significant casualties and destruction each year. Many of Yemen's local conflicts revolve around access to dwindling natural resources, particularly water and land – a problem that has plagued the country and its people for decades.

How conflict, climate change and the environment intersect in Yemen

Now, climate change and the environmental impacts of the war are critically reducing the availability of natural resources, undermining social cohesion and fuelling conflict. This assessment aims to highlight the deep environmental and climate crises that are unfolding amidst Yemen's civil war, perpetuating conflict among Yemenis today and undermining long-term peace efforts.



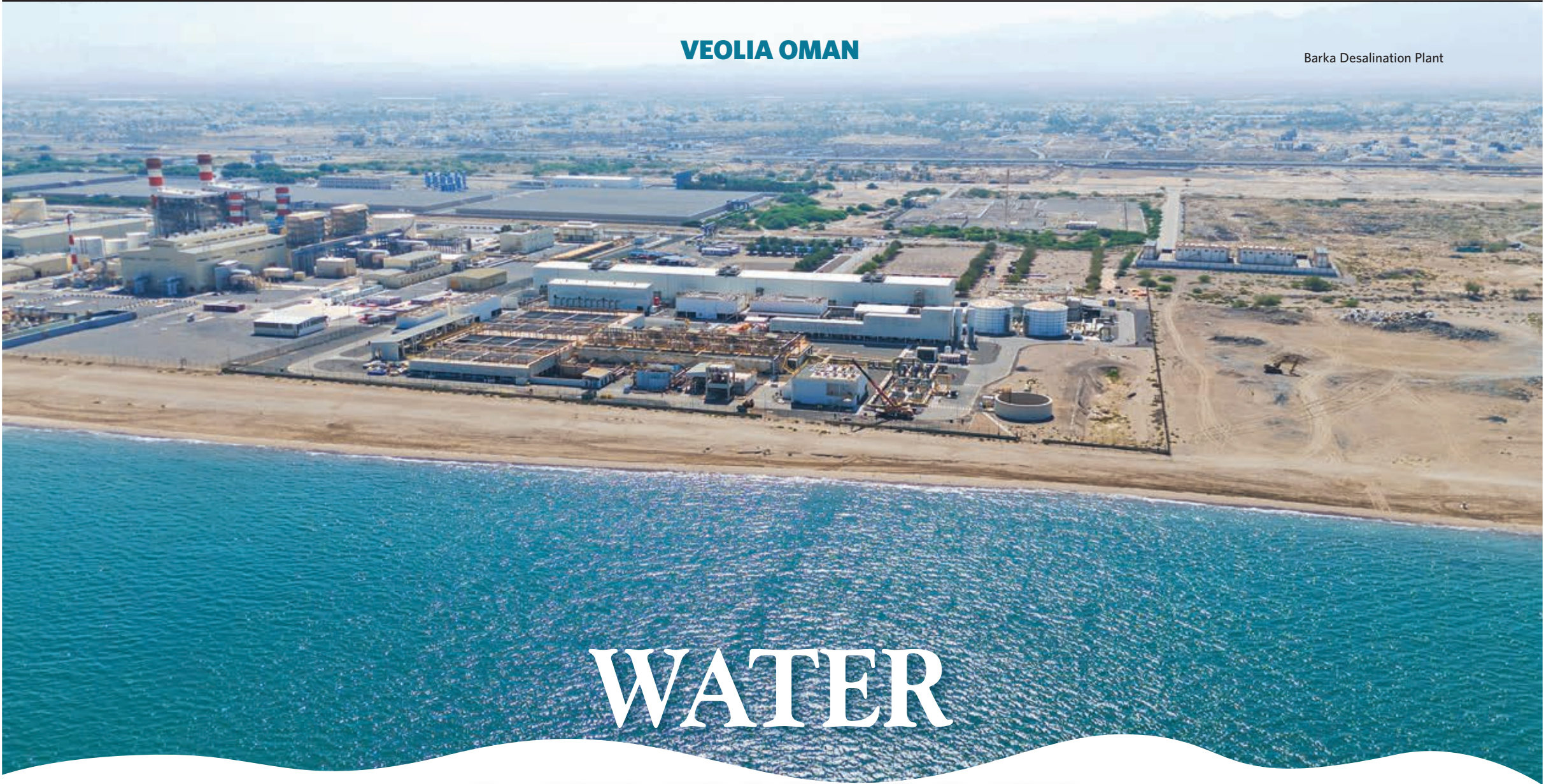
FINDINGS

- Climate change is likely to exacerbate long-standing water scarcity, while the civil war is reducing water access. Women and girls are bearing the brunt of these impacts.
- Civil war actors on both sides are weaponising water resources, aggravating insecurity and conflict dynamics. Conflicts over water resources lead to thousands of deaths every year.
- Climate-induced desertification and flooding are reducing arable land, leading to competition and conflict between farmers.
- Insufficient management of the interconnected issues of extreme weather events, war and displacement is causing these issues to grow.
- War and land seizures exac-

erbate the scarcity of arable land, which in turn fuels conflict.

Faced with some of the most hostile environmental and security conditions on the planet, Yemenis and supporting international organisations are undertaking a variety of efforts to address these challenges. However, their efforts face significant challenges, including:

- Tribal and community structures lack the reach to address the root causes of environmental problems and have been weakened by the civil war, even though they remain the most effective and accepted means of conflict resolution.
- Yemeni administrations face a lack of authority, capacity shortfalls and critically low funding, which limits their ability to develop and implement policy.



WATER MILESTONE

Hubert Vaz

In your opinion, what are the key factors that Oman's water resilience depends on, and how significant is Veolia Oman's contribution in this regard?

Oman's water resilience depends on sustainable desalination practices, efficient water management systems, and leveraging advanced technologies to mitigate scarcity. Veolia Oman has been a key contributor by delivering one billion cubic metres of potable water through its desalination projects while providing state-of-the-art standards and innovative solutions.

Could you briefly touch upon the merits of Veolia's projects in Salalah, Sur, Barka, Dakhliyah and Sharqiyah? And are any more new projects currently on the anvil?

Each of Veolia's projects is a testament to cutting-edge engineering and operational excellence.

Barka Desalination Plant stands as Oman's largest desalination plant, reinforcing our mission to ensure water security in the capital city and surroundings. It is one of the most energy-efficient desalination plants in the world, consuming only 2.8 kWh/m³ of energy while providing high-quality drinking water and facing regularly adverse sea water quality.

The Sur Desalination Plant continues to supply safe drinking water being the first of its kind fully powered with renewable energy during daylight hours. This initiative is part of the group's ongoing drive to decarbonise its activities and support its clients in their carbon neutrality objectives.

Salalah's project reflects our strong commitment to local talent promotion, supplying potable water to the Dhofar region in the extreme south of the country.

In Addition, Dakhliyah, Veolia operates several small RO plants, each tailored to meet local needs, ensuring reliable access to water in remote areas to serve rural communities

Were there any hurdles in the path of achieving this milestone (1 billion m³ of potable water) and how did you overcome them?

Reaching this milestone wasn't without challenges, such as scaling operations to meet increasing demand and optimising processes and asset management. These were addressed through innovation, rigorous safety standards, and collaboration with local authorities and partners. Our unwavering commitment to operational excellence and local talents identification and training helped us overcome these challenges successfully.

Has Oman's potable water consumption shot up by leaps and bounds over the past decade and are you fully geared towards meeting the increasing demand

Veolia Oman has reached a new milestone in providing one billion cubic metres of clean, potable water produced by various projects in the sultanate. This achievement represents a major contribution to Oman's water resilience and highlights the country's progress in utilising advanced desalination technologies to secure water for its citizens. 'The celebration of this milestone today (December 10) underscores the ongoing commitment to supporting Oman's Vision 2040 goals of sustainability and securing access to vital resources, particularly in a region where water is scarce,' says **Erwan Rouxel**, CEO, Veolia Oman



Veolia's projects are deeply integrated with Oman Vision 2040 through **their focus on decarbonisation, resource regeneration, and sustainable practices**

ERWAN ROUXEL



in the years ahead?

Yes, Oman's water consumption has grown due to population and industrial expansion. Veolia is fully prepared to meet this demand, backed by state-of-the-art desalination technology and strategic planning. Our continuous commitment in infrastructure and sustainability ensures readiness for future growth.

To be in line with Oman's Vision 2040 sustainability goals, how 'green' are your various projects and are efforts on to make them more eco-friendly in the near future?

Veolia's projects are deeply integrated with Oman Vision 2040 through their focus on decarbonisation, resource regeneration, and sustainable practices. Initiatives like renewable energy integration at desalination plants exemplify this commitment. Moving forward, we aim to incorporate more solutions in our operation to reduce and optimise the energy consumption of the assets. We also constantly monitor the impact of our activities on the resources which need to be protected and regenerated.

How much credit do you give to the concerned authorities/ministries which have facilitated/supported Veolia's initiatives and efforts over the years?

The role of Omani authorities and ministries has been invaluable in facilitating Veolia's operations. Their regulatory guidance, support in local partnerships, and alignment with national goals have been instrumental in achieving milestones such as the delivery of one billion cubic metres of potable water.

In a region where surface water sources and ground water sources are absent, does not an overdependence on desalination and recycling of waste water have certain consequences in the long run? Can you clarify some HSE factors in this regard?

Desalination and wastewater reuse are essential in water-scarce regions, but they require careful management to minimize environmental impacts. Veolia prioritises HSE factors through stringent controls, energy-efficient technologies, and responsible brine discharge practices, ensuring these solutions remain sustainable in the long term.

What is your immediate next goal?

Our next goal is to expand into water network management for reducing the losses in the distribution networks, complementing our desalination expertise by ensuring that more potable water is reaching the end-users taps. Beside, we also aim to expand our footprint in the wastewater sector to contribute even more to the reuse and regeneration of the resource. Veolia is committed to supporting Oman's water sector to further contribute to its resilience and development in line with Vision 2040.