



Sayyid Fahd to lead Oman’s delegation at 44th GCC Summit

Muscat - On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, will leave for the State of Qatar on Tuesday, heading the Sultanate of Oman’s delegation at the 44th GCC Summit to be held in Doha.

Qatar has taken over the presidency of the GCC from Oman. In its capacity as chair of the 43rd GCC session, Oman communicated and cooperated with member states to enhance the GCC march and realise the aspirations for progress and prosperity of the bloc’s people.

Sayyid Fahd will be accompanied by an official delegation comprising ministers and senior government officials.

MoH includes rotavirus vaccine in National Immunisation Programme

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has included the rotavirus vaccine in the National Immunisation Programme schedule in response to a pressing health issue. Announced during the launch of the fourth edition of the National Immunisation Programme and Omani Immunisation Manual at W Muscat Hotel on Monday, the move aims to combat the high incidence of rotavirus infections in the country.

A leading cause of severe diarrhoeal diseases among infants and young children, rotavirus is a significant health burden on Oman, with annual cases estimated at 60,000, including around 6,000 hospitalisations. Symptoms include fever, watery diarrhoea, vomiting and dehydration, significantly impacting young children’s health.



The vaccine’s inclusion in the immunisation schedule is expected to drastically reduce hospital admissions due to rotavirus

H E DR SAEED AL LAMKI

The vaccine will be administered in two doses orally to children born after November 1, 2023 - the first dose at two months and the second at four months of age.



H E Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, emphasised MoH’s commitment to advancing health initiatives and ensuring equality and accessibility in vaccination. He highlighted the

crucial role of vaccines in building a healthy community that meets international standards.

Underlining the national and global impact of rotavirus, H E Dr Saeed bin Harib al Lamki, Undersecretary for Health Affairs in MoH, pointed out the significant burden of rotavirus-related diarrhoeal diseases. He stressed that the vaccine’s inclusion in the immunisation schedule is

expected to drastically reduce hospital admissions due to rotavirus.

The Omani Immunisation Manual, issued via Ministerial Decision No 274/2023, outlines the role and responsibilities of medical staff and technical directorates with the aim of enhancing the immunisation programme’s efficiency.

Oman has achieved significant milestones in immunisation, including being declared free of measles and rubella by World Health Organization in 2019 and achieving the highest global rates in Effective Vaccine Management in 2016. The National Immunisation Programme currently includes 14 approved vaccines, with coverage rate exceeding 99%, leading to a marked decrease in morbidity and mortality from communicable diseases among children, particularly infants and children under five.



Three-day Muscat Dialogue Sessions 2023 open

No security without establishment of Palestinian state: Sayyid Badr

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, met Dr Hossein Amirabdollahian, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Tehran on Monday.

The ministers discussed the

painful developments in Gaza and the humanitarian and political efforts being made to get relief material into the strip. They reiterated their support to the Palestinian cause and called on Israel to end its brutal attacks and to lift the siege.

“We discussed the tragic situation in the Gaza Strip and the continued military operations by the Israeli occupation forces targeting civilians, public facilities, hospitals and schools,” H E Sayyid Badr said.

He called on the international community to stop the war and restore peace and security.

H E Sayyid Badr informed that Oman will continue to work closely with Iran and other countries to contain the crisis and direct the world’s attention to Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands. He emphasised the fact that there can be no security and stability without the

establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Amirabdollahian described the meeting as an opportunity to continue constructive talks between the foreign ministries of the two countries on various bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest, especially to exchange views on ways to put an end to Israel’s brutal attacks on Gaza.

Amirabdollahian called the martyrdom of over 16,000 Palestinian citizens by Israel during 50 days of savage strikes against Gaza “a clear example of genocide and war crimes”.

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Sayyid Bilarab opens Promising Omani Startups Forum at OCEC

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Promising Omani Startups Forum commenced at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) on Monday under the patronage of H H Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said, Honorary Chairman of the Promising Omani Startups Programme.

The event drew 1,500 participants, including entrepreneurs, students, experts and academics, and aimed at spotlighting the accomplishments of the Promising Omani Startups Programme while nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit.

The forum focused on three core aspects of the startup ecosystem: capacity building, financing and investment, and legislative support for startups. It featured insightful discussions on each aspect, enlightening atten-



(Supplied photo)

dees about the future of the startup sector, the impact of education in encouraging innovation, and the significance of acceleration and incubation programmes such as those run by Omantel Innovation Labs.

A key part of the forum was the exploration of policies that bolster startup and SME growth,

legislative and financial frameworks tailored for startups, and an overview of the Omani startups ecosystem and venture capitals in emerging sectors.

The event also showcased the programme's key initiatives of 2023, including a startups podcast, an educational game in collaboration with Alizz Islamic

Bank, the launch of six guidebooks, an entrepreneurship card for startups, virtual courses for startups on the Riyadh Academy platform, training camps, and the Startup Weekend event for universities.

One notable initiative was the allocation of 10% of the Oman Future Fund's capital to SMEs

and startups, alongside the launch of an investment page for emerging Omani companies on the Dealroom platform. The forum also celebrated the winning ideas in an entrepreneurial ideas race, seeking innovative solutions in tourism, energy and water resources, conducted in partnership with Oman Investment Authority companies.

On the sidelines of the forum, an exhibition showcased 50 emerging tech-driven companies from diverse sectors and the projects that triumphed in the entrepreneurial ideas race.

In her address, Halima bint Rashid al Zaria, Chairperson of Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, highlighted the programme's alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and its emphasis on economic diversification and financial sustainability.



National Research Award announced

Muscat - The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) hosted its Tenth Annual Research Forum on Monday, showcasing the pinnacle of Omani academic and research achievements.

The event, held under the patronage of H E Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, celebrated the winners of the National Research Award in the presence of esteemed officials and academics.

H E Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Hiddabi, Undersecretary for Research and Innovation in MoHERI, emphasised the forum's role in aligning with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's vision for a knowledge-based economy.

He lauded the National Research Award for encouraging Omani researchers, innovators and scientists, driving research that address global and national challenges.

The event also put the spotlight on success stories from MoHERI's various programmes and featured discussions on the impact of research on both the industrial and academic sectors. Additionally, research contracts were signed for the Strategic Research Projects Programme worth RO800,000 and Block Funding Programme worth RO2mn.

The forum honoured outstanding researchers in two categories - PhD holders or equivalent, and young researchers.

(Full list of winners on muscatdaily.com)

Exhibition showcases global innovations, advances in agri, fisheries sectors

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman AgroFood 2023, the Fifth International Exhibition for Agriculture, Food and Aquaculture, commenced on Monday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre and will continue till Wednesday.

Inaugurated by H E Dr Saud Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR), the event

is a collaborative effort between International Fairs & Promotions and Al Nimr Expo.

The exhibition serves as a business platform, bringing together over 100 companies from across the globe, including China, Poland, Spain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, Egypt, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Afghanistan, Mauritania and Indonesia. It spans diverse sectors like food, agriculture and fisheries, presenting an opportunity for visitors to



(Supplied photo)

explore the latest innovations and solutions.

Dr Masoud bin Sulaiman al Azri, Director General of Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing and official MAFWR spokesman, emphasised the significance of the exhibition in fostering communication and connections between Omani companies and their international counterparts.

He highlighted its role in introducing modern technology in machinery and equipment, cru-

cial for the development and sustainability of these sectors.

Key highlights of the exhibition include a wide array of agricultural products and equipment, poultry farm supplies, organic produce, animal feed, fertilisers, soil improvers, bee and livestock products, modern irrigation methods, greenhouse equipment, and laboratory solutions.

Sharing insights into Oman's wheat cultivation programme, Majida al Habsia from the Mar-

keting and Communications Department of Oman Flour Mills Company informed that 2,203 Omani farmers are involved in it. A total of 7,119,403 tonnes of wheat was harvested in the sultanate in the 2022/2023 season.

Ali bin Mahmoud al Tamami from Bahwan Services and Trading introduced the innovative Homeland Plants (Smart Farm) project, a pioneering initiative in the world, particularly in the Gulf countries.



الشركة العمانية المتحدة للتأمين ش.م.ع.ع Oman United Insurance Co. S.A.O.G

COMPANY REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Oman United Insurance Company SAOG, I have the pleasure to present to you the Un-Audited Financial Statements of the company for the Nine months' period ended on 30th September 2023.

Operation Performance Highlights:

Particulars	30th September 2023	30th September 2022	Change %
Insurance revenue	24,314,284	23,755,831	+2.35
Net insurance and investment result	2,260,460	2,546,686	-11.24
Profit before tax	1,390,304	1,573,021	-11.62
Net Profit for the period (after tax)	1,322,522	1,358,506	-2.65

Insurance revenue & Insurance service result:

The un-audited financials are prepared based on newly adopted IFRS 17 & IFRS 9 for the insurance companies. Accordingly, the terminologies are changed.

Gross written premium of all lines of business amounted to RO.27.17 Million which represents 4% growth over previous year premiums of RO.26.12 Million. The total insurance revenue of all lines of business amounted to RO.24.31 Million compared to RO.23.76 Million in the same corresponding period of the year 2022 depicting an increase of 2.35%. The insurance service result of all lines of business amounted to RO. -141K compared to insurance service result of RO.452K in the corresponding period of last year depicting a decrease of (131%) this adverse result is mainly because of increased motor losses along with increased frequency and severity has reduced the insurance service result's margin. In addition, the increased competition continues to keep the price under pressure. The management is taking adequate measures to mitigate the adverse results.

Investment and other income Results:

We expect Muscat Stock Exchange to perform well throwing more Investment opportunities. We will

accordingly realign our investment portfolio, swapping from fixed income instruments to equity investments in a phased manner in line with the Regulations of the Investment of the Assets of Insurance Companies.

The company achieved a total investment income of RO. 3.30 Million, compared to RO. 2.37 Million in the corresponding period last year depicting an increase of 39%.

Net profit:

The company's net profit after tax amounted to RO. 1.32 Million as against net profit after tax of RO. 1.35 Million in the corresponding period of last year, depicting a decrease of (2.65%), accordingly the earnings per share amounted to 13 Bzs against 14 Bzs in the corresponding period of last year.

Business risks:

Honorable shareholders: As you know, insurance business is exposed to natural calamities, which are likely to influence the reinsurance costs. Additionally, the performance of the investment portfolio is very much influenced by the prevailing economic and political conditions.

However, the management has been exerting its utmost efforts by adopting a conservative risk management mechanism that mitigates the effects of the risks related to the activity.

Acknowledgement:

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the shareholders, our loyal customers, reinsurers and employees. Our sincere thanks and appreciation also extended to Capital Market Authority for their tremendous support in regulating and developing the local insurance sector and for their assistance, which has led to the smooth functioning of operations.

Finally, our sincere thanks and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq. We all pray to Almighty Allah to shower His Majesty with blessings, keep him in good health and give him long

life. Our sincere thanks and appreciation extended to His Majesty's rational government and we wish to the Omani people always Progress and prosperity.

Thank You and Kindest Regards
Salim Bin Nassir Al Busaidi
Chairman
November 2023

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE NINE MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

	3 months ended 30 September 2023 RO	3 months ended 30 September 2022 RO	9 months ended 30 September 2023 RO	9 months ended 30 September 2022 RO
Insurance revenue	8,646,871	7,745,671	24,314,284	23,755,831
Insurance service expense	(2,447,706)	(8,932,802)	(10,945,762)	(21,243,480)
Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held	6,199,165	(1,187,131)	13,368,522	2,512,351
Allocation of reinsurance premium	(4,361,085)	(3,566,722)	(10,984,734)	(11,511,012)
Amounts recoverable from reinsurers for incurred claims	(1,314,815)	5,284,736	(2,524,933)	9,450,532
Net expense from reinsurance contract held	(5,675,900)	1,718,014	(13,509,667)	(2,060,480)
Insurance service result	523,265	530,883	(141,145)	451,871
Interest income from financial investment at amortised cost	566,038	637,451	1,743,342	1,952,014
Other investment income - net	83,363	169,240	1,251,665	158,281
Other investment income/expense	649,401	806,691	2,995,007	2,110,295
Net investment income/expense	649,401	806,691	2,995,007	2,110,295
Insurance finance expenses for insurance contracts issued	(502,311)	(47,805)	(1,545,058)	(122,398)
Reinsurance finance income for reinsurance contracts held	360,517	76,525	951,656	106,918
Net insurance finance expense	(141,794)	28,720	(593,402)	(15,480)
Net insurance and investment result	1,030,872	1,366,294	2,260,460	2,546,686
Other income	80,739	86,091	426,005	398,648
General and administrative expenses / other operating expenses	(287,226)	(450,830)	(1,296,161)	(1,372,313)
Finance costs				
Profit before tax	824,385	1,001,555	1,390,304	1,573,021
Income tax expense	(77,577)	(66,943)	(67,782)	(214,515)
Profit for the period	746,808	934,612	1,322,522	1,358,506
Other comprehensive income				
Potentially re-classifiable to statement of income				
Fair value changes in fair value of available-for-sale investments	-	4,825	-	18,586
Not re-classifiable to statement of income				
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	(26,945)	-	203,087	-
Total comprehensive income for the period	719,863	939,437	1,525,609	1,377,092
Earnings per share	0.007	0.009	0.013	0.014

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

	Unaudited 30 September 2023 RO	Unaudited 30 September 2022 RO	Unaudited 31 December 2022 RO	Unaudited 1 January 2022 RO
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property and equipment	968,583	1,084,319	1,047,113	1,188,933
Right-of-use asset	275,083	241,244	299,354	305,544
Investment property	1,980,981	2,034,699	2,020,658	2,076,364
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	962,662	-	759,575	-
Available-for-sale investments	-	706,702	-	734,800
Deposits	24,629,843	33,580,000	27,714,784	35,150,000
	28,817,152	37,646,964	31,841,484	39,455,641
Current assets				
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	13,980,562	5,722,235	7,781,983	3,640,082
Insurance contract assets	7,054,504	10,294,593	4,804,634	7,753,969
Reinsurance contract assets	31,055,569	37,249,487	35,559,443	33,038,996
Prepayments and other receivables	1,464,775	1,272,100	1,184,787	1,322,963
Deposits	19,663,939	14,738,738	25,031,897	21,438,822
Bank balances and cash	243,859	3,471,081	519,077	773,410
	73,463,208	72,748,234	74,881,821	67,968,242
Total assets	102,280,360	110,395,198	106,723,305	107,423,883
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
EQUITY				
Share capital	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
Share Premium	871,519	871,519	871,519	871,519
General reserve	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Legal reserve	3,333,334	3,333,334	3,333,334	3,333,334
Contingency reserve	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
Fair value reserve	(1,922,661)	184,513	(2,125,748)	165,927
Retained earnings	5,536,708	4,505,886	7,714,186	6,647,381
Total equity	27,918,900	28,995,252	29,893,291	31,118,161
LIABILITIES				
Non-current liabilities				
Employees' end of service benefits	930,070	784,633	797,300	764,632
Deferred tax liability	107,406	97,181	59,940	128,692
Lease liability	220,806	224,492	243,960	276,610
	1,258,282	1,106,306	1,101,200	1,169,934
Current liabilities				
Lease liabilities	80,142	33,847	78,354	46,077
Bank overdraft	-	910,338	181,071	-
Insurance contract liabilities	54,452,385	60,845,369	58,705,297	57,528,402
Reinsurance contract liabilities	9,172,429	9,240,863	9,640,260	10,448,045
Other payables and accruals	9,318,842	8,962,706	6,675,654	6,360,257
Taxation	79,380	300,517	448,178	753,007
	73,103,178	80,293,640	75,728,814	75,135,788
Total liabilities	74,361,460	81,399,946	76,830,014	76,305,722
Total equity and liabilities	102,280,360	110,395,198	106,723,305	107,423,883
Net assets per share	0.279	0.290	0.299	0.311
NOTE:				
The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who request them in either Arabic or English within 7 days of receipt				

ADVENTURE TEAM HIKES FOR NATIONAL PRIDE

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To celebrate the sultanate's 53rd National Day and in a show of loyalty and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Nakhl Adventure and Hiking Team - a group of 80 adventure enthusiasts - embarked on a 15km hike called 'Haitham al Majd' (Glory to Haitham) on December 1. The hike, which began at 6.30am, was a testament to the group's commitment to health, adventure and domestic tourism.

Team leader Ahmed al Jabri informed that the group, formed in March this year, aims to explore new tourist sites and honour Oman's rich heritage.

The hike, starting from Al Khadra village in Wadi Mistal and concluding in Al Qura village in Nakhl in South Batinah, drew over 45 participants from various governorates. The hikers proudly carried portraits of His Majesty the Sultan.

According to Jabri, the event was meticulous planned - like all the team's other activities - from studying the location and weather conditions to ensuring the safety and suitability of the number of participants. This attention to detail makes for a fulfilling and safe experience for participants.

Nakhl Adventure and Hiking Team's annual plan includes six events to bolster domestic tourism and promote the spirit of adventure.

However, its commitment extends beyond adventure. The team engages in community activities, including blood donation drives across various wilayats, demonstrating its dedication to voluntarism.

Its next activity is a collaborative beach cleaning drive at Masirah Island on December 8 and 9, in association with Envi-



'Haitham al Majd' on December 1 started from Al Khadra village in Wadi Mistal and concluded in Al Qura village in Nakhl

AHMED AL JABRI

ronment Authority. This initiative underscores the team's dedication to preserving Oman's natural beauty and promoting environmental consciousness.

Jabri invited citizens and residents to participate in the group's upcoming activities which foster a collective spirit of adventure and environmental stewardship.



(Supplied photos)

Muscat governorate sparks youth-led civic development with dialogue sessions

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Dialogue Sessions 2023 - a three-day event themed 'Towards a Sustainable and Prosperous Future' - kicked off on Monday focusing on youth participation in civic development in Muscat governorate.

Inaugurated by Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat, the sessions aim to incorporate diverse social groups in determining and implementing priority projects.

In his opening remarks, Busaidi emphasised the crucial role of the youth as the nation's developmental cornerstone. "Youth are the wealth of the nation and its primary engine towards development and prosperity."

He highlighted the governorate's commitment to engaging young voices in development plans, and recognising their needs, interests and aspirations. "These sessions mark a continuation of previous initiatives to empower Omani youth, encouraging their innovative ideas and proposals."

The agenda of these sessions covers a variety of topics, including the humanisation of cities, the potential of transforming entertainment into an industry, exploring investment opportunities in Muscat governorate, and the significance of environmental volunteerism, innovation and technology.

The first session, led by Dr Hanan bint Amer al Jabriya from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, and moderated by Shabib al Mamari, Director General of National Travel Operator - Visit Oman, delved into urban planning, public spaces and the 'Vibrant Public Spaces' initiative.

Hanan discussed the initia-



Muscat is committed to engaging young voices in development plans, and recognising their needs, interests and aspirations

SAYYID SAUD AL BUSAIDI

tive's focus on creating lively, sustainable public spaces in residential areas, contributing to economic diversification and enhancing quality of city life.

The second session, themed 'Environmental Volunteering', featuring Manar bint Abdullah al Riyami, Quality Specialist at Environment Authority, was moderated by Ibrahim al Salmi, Assistant Vice-President of Corporate Communications, Ominvest Group.

Manar presented an overview of national environmental volunteering goals, analysing the current status and outlining successful national and regional experiences in this field.

Muscat Dialogue Sessions 2023 will continue to explore investment opportunities, technology and innovation on its second day, while the final day will be dedicated to reviewing key outcomes and recommendations.

This initiative demonstrates Muscat governorate's forward-thinking approach, leveraging the dynamism and creativity of its youth to shape a brighter, sustainable future.

Rare Iron Age cemetery unearthed in Mudhaibi

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a significant archaeological find, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, collaborating with Germany's Heidelberg University, has unearthed a rare cemetery at Al Sulaili in Mudhaibi, North Sharqiyah.

Spread over an area of about 250sqm, the cemetery includes 45 graves, offering a glimpse into life during the Iron Age.

A settlement dating back to the early Iron Age, the Al Sulaili site is believed to have been inhabited by copper miners. Its proximity to an ancient mine, situated merely 700m eastwards, suggests a connection to this era.

The site's historical importance is underlined by its role as a predominant copper extraction and mining location, with usage extending into the early Islamic era.

Remarkably preserved, the site's stone structures and tomb-like graves have withstood the test of time, existing for over 3,000 years.



Construction of the graves varied based on the marital status of the deceased, as indicated by the grave's length and accompanying artefacts.

The discovery of pottery items indicates the site's continued relevance during the early Islamic period. Additionally, stone grinding tools were found, further emphasising the site's historical significance.

Dr McKayla Godillo, leader of the excavation team, presented these extraordinary findings to Mahmoud bin Yahya al Dahli, Governor of North Sharqiyah, and other officials, who visited the site on Sunday. She highlighted the site's archaeological significance and historical relevance, particularly in understanding the ancient practice of copper production in the region.

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Bangladesh	285.97
Philippines	143.73
Sri Lanka	853.18

*Rates as on December 04

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

UAE and Kazakhstan sign renewable energy deal

The UAE and Kazakhstan signed an agreement outlining a commitment to cooperation in the development of Kazakhstan's renewables sector, including through the development of a large-scale wind power project with a 1GW capacity.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, oversaw the signing of the agreement between the Kazakhstan Ministry of Energy and the UAE Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure.

The signing took place at COP28 in Dubai, Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported.

This project will play an important role in strengthening cooperation between the two countries as well as in accelerating Kazakhstan's energy transition. The project aims to increase renewable capacity to 15% of its energy supply by 2030.

Oman's oil exports decline 5% in 2023 as production decreases

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's oil exports saw a nearly five per cent year-on-year decline in the first 10 months of 2023, primarily due to a significant drop in shipments to India and South Korea.

The sultanate's total oil exports decreased 4.9% to 256.3mn barrels during the first 10 months of 2023, compared to 269.4mn barrels recorded in the corresponding period last year, as per data released by the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Oman's oil exports to India, which was the second-largest buyer of Omani crude last year, plummeted by 90.9% to 2.7mn barrels in the January - October period of 2023, compared to 29.9mn barrels during the same period in 2022, the NCSI data showed.

India's crude oil imports from traditional Middle Eastern suppliers have significantly declined this year, largely due to increased imports of Russian oil.

Oman's oil exports to South Korea fell 74.9% to 2.8mn barrels in 2023 against 11.3mn barrels recorded in the first 10 months of 2022. Exports to Japan also decreased by 22.8% to 7.9mn barrels.

By contrast, the sultanate's oil exports to China, the largest buyer of Oman's crude, increased 9.4% in the first 10 months of this year, reaching



Oman's daily average oil output decreased 1.4% to 1.05mn barrels per day during the January–October period this year, compared to 1.06mn barrels per day for the same period in 2022

235.4mn barrels compared to 215.3mn barrels in the corresponding period last year.

China accounted for approximately 92% of Oman's total oil shipments from January to October 2023.

Output decreases 1.4%

Oman's total oil output decreased 1.4% to 319.3mn barrels during the first 10 months of

2023, in comparison to the same period last year, according to NCSI data.

The daily average output also decreased 1.4% this year to 1.05mn barrels per day during the January–October period, compared to 1.06mn barrels per day for the same period in 2022.

Of the sultanate's total oil production during the first 10 months of 2023, crude output

decreased by 3.8% year-on-year to 248.4mn barrels, while condensate production grew by 8.4% year-on-year to 70.9mn barrels.

The average price at which Oman sold its crude during the first 10 months of 2023 remained 16% lower at \$80.5 per barrel, compared to \$96.3 per barrel achieved in the same period in 2022.

Oman crude price falls 4% amid demand concerns

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman crude oil prices sharply fell on Monday amid supply uncertainties following the OPEC+ production cut decision and demand fears in the world's largest oil consumers, the US and China.

According to the Dubai Mercantile Exchange data, Oman crude dropped by \$3.28, or 4.03%, at \$77.96 per barrel on Monday from \$81.24 per barrel recorded on Friday.

International benchmark Brent crude was down \$1.10, or 1.4%, at \$77.78 a barrel in morning trade in London. US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures also fell \$1.09, or 1.5%, to \$72.98, according to a Reuters report.

During the OPEC+ ministerial meeting held on Thursday, oil producers endorsed their previous output cut decisions, which had been agreed to extend until the end of next year. Soon after the meeting, several members of the group introduced some voluntary cuts individually, most of which were ex-



tensions of current output cuts.

The OPEC+ cuts were voluntary in nature, raising doubts about whether or not producers would fully implement them. Investors were also unsure about how the cuts would be measured.

Concerns about an estimated demand weakness in the world's largest oil consumers, the US and China, also supported downward price movements. According to official data released on Thursday, China's manufacturing activity declined for a second straight month in November.

(With inputs from agencies)

MENA region has potential to boost GDP growth to 7.2% by 2050: ILO

Dubai, UAE - Peter Rademaker, International Labour Organisation (ILO) Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States, has confirmed that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region could create 10mn new jobs and accelerate GDP growth to 7.2% by 2050 via taking a serious approach to climate action.

In a statement to the Emirates News Agency (WAM) on the sidelines of COP28, Rademaker said that the trend towards new energy has helped to create 13.7mn jobs in the renewable energy sector worldwide.

He revealed that the report "Social and Employment Impacts of Carbon Removal and Green Industrial Growth: Scenarios for the MENA Region" will be launched during COP28. He explained that the report is the first of its kind conducted by the ILO and the Islamic Development Bank on the MENA region.

The ILO Deputy Regional Director for Arab States stressed the need for countries to follow enhanced energy policies, link

According to our assessments in the MENA region, there will be a total of 6.6mn jobs created thanks to a just transition approach to climate change

PETER RADEMAKER

climate to development policies and investment.

He confirmed that the ILO is participating in COP28 to ensure that climate change efforts include all people worldwide, to ensure their commitment to addressing this phenomenon, and to monitor the consequences of its impact on jobs in many regions, including MENA.

He added, "According to our assessments in the MENA region, there'll be a total of 6.6mn

jobs created thanks to a just transition approach to climate change."

He praised the UAE's efforts in operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund, as it was the first country to support the Fund. He described the step as crucial in pushing climate action and "taking care of people affected by climate change", especially those who will lose their jobs, as well as providing some alternative livelihoods.

He added, "It's important that this cop really takes on board all the views, all of society. So it's important that governments are negotiated, but it's important also that around the blue and Green Zone, delegates listen to what people have to say. NGOs, trade union, the private sector, and indeed, this just transition approach really becomes the cornerstone of what comes out of this cop in the UAE."

WAM

Abu Dhabi to host Global Climate Finance Centre

Dubai, UAE - Abu Dhabi will host a pioneering Global Climate Finance Centre (GCFC), that will accelerate the development of climate finance frameworks and skills, and champion best practices in the UAE and globally.

The GCFC aims to address key barriers linked to financial frameworks that hinder investment flows, to help make climate finance available, affordable, and accessible.

As an independent think-tank and research hub, the GCFC aims to address the root causes currently preventing investment, bringing together cutting-edge research and leading experts to develop fit-for-purpose financial frameworks that are increasingly aligned internationally. By working with stakeholders across sectors, the GCFC will help to create the enabling environment for investment into low-carbon, sustainable and resilient projects.

The GCFC, headquartered in Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), was first announced by Dr Sultan bin Ahmed al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Ad-



vanced Technology and COP28 President, during the Finance Session panel on December 1.

As an independent and private-sector-focused global climate finance think-tank, the GCFC will conduct cutting-edge research and share best practices, principles and solutions to align frameworks and build financial markets, enabling greater investment to flow into low-carbon and sustainable investments.

Commenting on the creation of the GCFC, Jaber said, "The scale of the climate crisis demands urgent and game-changing solutions from every industry.

Finance plays a critical role in turning our ambitions into action and is essential to eliminating emissions and keeping 1.5C within reach. COP28 must be an inflection point as we unite the world on how we bridge the gaps to 2030 identified in the Global Stocktake."

In addition to ADGM, the other Founding Members of the GCFC are ADQ, BlackRock, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ), HSBC, Masdar, Ninety One, and the World Bank Group.

WAM

Majid Al Futtaim calls for collaboration to unlock sustainable finance in region

Dubai, UAE - Majid Al Futtaim, the leading shopping mall, communities, retail and leisure pioneer across the Middle East, Africa and Asia, on Monday published a Sustainable Finance paper, which examines the significant increase in sustainable finance in the MENA region and the ways it can act as a catalyst for positive change.

Entitled 'Aligning Growth

with Purpose', the paper looks at the global and regional sustainable finance landscape and calls on a collaboration between the private and public sector to unlock the \$30tn of new investment needed to achieve the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Majid Al Futtaim is recognised as a pioneer in sustainable financing for the region.



Ahmed Galal Ismail

The group is the first privately-owned Dubai corporation to incorporate Green Islamic Financing into its funding structure, most recently raising \$500mn through its fourth green capital markets issuance. Majid Al Futtaim also introduced innovative sustainability-linked loan financing with a 'penalty-only' loan structure.

In a press release, Ahmed

Galal Ismail, Chief Executive Officer at Majid Al Futtaim - Holding, said, "The Middle East and North Africa region is currently witnessing a surge in interest from investors actively seeking opportunities to allocate capital to projects with a strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) focus. Finance is a critical enabler of climate action, and by doubling down on developing the

right structure and mechanisms, the MENA region is positioned to become a thriving hub for sustainable finance, leading the way toward a low-carbon and resilient future."

He said that sustainable finance will play a fundamental role as we transition to a net zero carbon economy and collectively strive to meet the aims of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

"This progress, however, is only achievable if we work collectively to take action.

"We are advocating for collaboration between both the public and private sectors, with governments taking responsibility for enabling favourable conditions and incentives for investment, and private sector leadership and finance to drive transformation."

COP28 declares support for tripling nuclear capacity to reach net zero

Dubai, UAE - In an unprecedented gathering in the midst of COP28, leaders from around the world joined in committing to tripling global nuclear capacity by 2050 as part of the transition to net zero.

The Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy Capacity by 2050 has been endorsed by the Heads of State of nine countries at the ceremony, with declaration endorsement from 21 countries in total, comprising Canada, Czechia, Ghana, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

and the imperative for accelerating the development of nuclear energy in order to meet energy needs, including clean electrons and clean molecules such as steam and hydrogen, as well as process heat, to meet climate goals.

Global energy systems account for around 70% of total carbon emissions, with power production generating almost 30% of total emissions. Decarbonising electricity, heating, industrial processes and transportation is therefore a crucial driver to reduce emissions.

The Declaration recognises the importance of nuclear energy in achieving global net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, emphasising that nuclear is already



The COP28 Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy Capacity by 2050 has been endorsed by 21 countries in total

COP28 Declaration lays out the importance of nuclear energy as a clean, reliable energy source

the second-largest source of clean, dispatchable baseload power globally, and the largest source of clean electricity for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations.

Suhail al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure of the UAE, said, "Nuclear energy offers

a clean, stable baseload energy source. The UAE took the decision back in 2009 to pursue this important energy source and today, it is decarbonising energy-intensive and heavy industry across the country. We see nuclear as part of a balanced portfolio of energy, and we are committed to working with other

countries to show how we have delivered this in a safe and sustainable way. The UAE supports this important declaration, which is crucial for reaching Net Zero."

Mohamed al Hammadi, Managing Director and CEO, Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation, said, "This declaration symbolises nuclear's importance to achieving Net Zero by 2050. More importantly, this declaration brings a message of hope to young people. They are counting on us to make the right decisions today as we work to

accelerate the decarbonisation of our energy systems.

"The fact that 22 nations have gathered here in the UAE to launch this declaration is remarkable. It is a clear and crisp message that nuclear is a big part of the solution and needs to be as supported as other clean sources. The nuclear energy industry is surging ahead through innovation in clean electron and molecule generation. By decarbonising our grid, we accelerate the decarbonisation of hard-to-abate sectors." WAM



COP28 mobilises over \$57bn in first four days

Dubai, UAE - In a powerful demonstration of global solidarity, governments, businesses, investors and philanthropies have announced over \$57bn across the climate agenda in just the first four days of COP28.

After a historic agreement to operationalise a fund for climate impact response on day one, announcements have poured in across the entire climate agenda, including on finance, health, food, nature, and energy.

On climate finance, the UAE has launched a \$30bn catalytic fund, ALTERRA, with an emphasis on unlocking private finance across the Global South. The country has also announced \$200mn for SDRs and \$150mn for water security.

In addition, the World Bank has announced an increase of \$9bn annually to finance climate-related projects. And, in the first 48 hours of COP28, after a historic response to loss and damage was operationalised,

\$725mn has already been pledged.

In addition, \$3.5bn has been announced to replenish the Green Climate Fund, \$2.7bn has been pledged for health, \$2.6bn has been committed for food systems transformation, \$2.6bn has been pledged to protect nature, \$467mn has been announced for urban climate action, and \$1.2bn has been committed for relief, recovery and peace.

On energy, \$2.5bn was mobilised for renewables and \$1.2bn for methane emission reduction. In addition, \$568mn was pledged to drive investments in clean energy manufacturing.

In total, over \$57bn has so far been announced in the first four days. In addition, new pledges and declarations made at COP28 have received historic support.

Eight new declarations have been announced that will help transform every major system of the global economy. WAM

Germany's trade surplus increases in October

Berlin, Germany - Germany's foreign trade surplus amounted to 17.8bn (\$19.4bn) in October, its highest level since June, according to official data released on Monday.

The figure improved from a four-month low of 16.7bn in September and 7.8bn in October 2022, Destatis data showed.

German exports dropped 8.1% year-on-year to 126.4bn in October, the lowest since March 2022.

Its imports also plunged 16.3% to nearly a two-year low of 108.6bn. Compared to a month ago, exports and imports ticked down 0.2% and

1.2%, respectively.

Germany's shipments to non-EU countries amounted to 58.5bn, while its imports were 51.8bn.

Most German exports in September went to the US, worth 13.5bn, a hike of 5.7% from September. Exports to China increased by 1.5% to 7.9 billion and to the UK up by 5.6% to 6.6bn.

Germany's main source of imports was China with 12.7bn, a decline of 2.4% from a month ago.

Its purchases from the US rose by 2.2% month-on-month to 7.7bn in November.

Anadolu Agency

Annual GPCA Forum gets underway in Doha

Doha - The 17th Annual Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) Forum, hosted by QatarEnergy, gets underway in Qatar National Convention Centre, Doha, this week from December 3-6, 2023.

Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President and CEO of QatarEnergy, and Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman al-Saud, Minister of Energy of Saudi Arabia, delivered a ministerial address on Sunday, and inaugurated the exhibition.

In his ministerial address to the forum, Kaabi welcomed holding the GPCA Forum in Qatar for the first time and said, "Since its establishment in 2006, the GPCA has worked diligently to build a strong GCC chemical industry. Today, with more than



Saad Sherida al-Kaabi

250 member companies from the chemical and allied industries, GPCA is focused on dealing with the most important challenges and trends impacting the use of petrochemical products."

Kaabi also welcomed the event's focus on energy transition issues saying, "This year's

event provides a valuable platform to discuss strategic priorities such as driving operational excellence, advancing new technologies, and enhancing production efficiency.

Salim bin Nasser al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals of Oman, delivered an incoming

host address on Sunday, announcing Oman as the official host of the 18th Annual GPCA Forum, set to take place in December 2024. He vowed to take the actions and learnings from this year's forum edition as well as previous ones and address them at next year's edition, which is going to be held for the first time in Muscat, Oman.

"This industry has transformed the way we live and is going to contribute positively going forward towards the energy transition as we produce renewable energy from turbines, solar and other forms of renewables. The petrochemical industry is there to contribute and is going to be an extremely important pillar. The next forum should continue that journey and make the voice of the industry even

stronger," Afi told delegates.

Dr Abdulwahab al-Sadoun, Secretary General of GPCA, said, "At this year's Annual GPCA Forum we've continued our focus on delivering unrivalled quality of networking, thought leadership and content for our delegates and members, and so far, attendees' response has been overwhelmingly positive. I would like to thank our host QatarEnergy for their hospitality and support to make this happen."

"As the chemical industry continues to be faced with new challenges and opportunities, our aim has been to facilitate the partnerships and collaboration needed to mobilise the industry around alignment and concrete action on issues such as sustainability, trade, and circular economy," he added.

WB launches climate initiative to avert 21mn deaths

New Delhi, India - In an initiative announced at COP28, the World Bank unveiled its Climate and Health Program to combat the escalating health risks triggered by climate change in low- and middle-income countries.

According to a press release by the World Bank, with projections indicating at least 21mn additional deaths by 2050 due to climate-related health hazards, the program aims to fortify health systems, particularly in vulnerable regions of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The initiative involves comprehensive strategies, including assessing climate and health vulnerabilities, bolstering investments in resilient health systems, and mobilizing funds for immediate action. The World Bank emphasises the urgency of addressing five key health risks - extreme heat, stunting, diarrhoea, malaria, and dengue - that could claim millions of lives within the next three decades.



Mamta Murthi, Vice President for Human Development at the World Bank, highlighted the program's significance in breaking the cycle of ill health and poverty caused by climate change.

Murthi said, "Climate change amplifies health risks, creating a cycle of ill health and poverty with far-reaching consequences

for human capital development. Through the Climate and Health Program, the World Bank will use its knowledge and financing to help countries address health risks stemming from climate change, work across related sectors, and bring together partners to maximize financing and harmonize investments and ac-

tions."

The Climate and Health Program seeks to generate evidence, increase financing for tailored solutions, and forge strong partnerships with entities such as the World Health Organization, Gavi, The Global Fund, and foundations.

Notably, the World Bank will co-convene a Development Bank Working Group for Climate-Health Finance to align and maximise investments. The \$34bn health portfolio, active in over 100 countries, will focus on enhancing surveillance and early warning systems, climate-proofing health facilities, and strengthening the capacity of health workers.

As the climate crisis continues to impact the well-being of global populations, the World Bank's commitment to addressing this paramount health challenge underscores the need for immediate, collective action.

ANI

بنك بارودا
Bank of Baroda

Post Box - 1610, Ruwi, Postal Code - 112, Sultanate of Oman

Inviting Application

Bank of Baroda, Oman Operations invites applications for the appointment of Statutory Auditor for the year ended Dec 2024 (January 2024 to December 2024) & FY 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) for the statutory audit of its branches / offices in Sultanate of Oman.

Last date of submission of application is 25.12.2023 up to 3:00 p.m.

For detailed advertisement, log on to the tender section of the Bank's website www.bankofbarodaoman.com

Date: 04.12.2023
Place: Sultanate of Oman

Country Head, Oman Operations

MoE signs deal with Vale Oman to extend support to 15 schools

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Education in North Batinah governorate, and Vale Oman Iron Ore Pelletizing Company LLC signed a support agreement on Monday to provide some educational tools for fifteen schools.

The agreement was signed by H E Majid bin Said al Bahri, Undersecretary for Financial and Administrative Affairs in the Ministry of Education, and Nasser bin Sulaiman al Azri, CEO of the company, in the presence of Saif al Ghafri, Assistant Director-General of the Directorate; Ahmed al Sanani, Director of Information Technology Department at the Directorate; Abdullah al Saadi, General Manager of Administrative and Institutional Affairs at the company; and Wael al Dhahli, Government Relations Expert at the company.

The signing of the agreement, which took place at the Ministry's General Diwan, comes with the aim of enhancing the use of technology in the school environment, and supporting the governorate's schools with educational materials that contribute to raising students' academic



achievement.

H E Bahri said, "Within the framework of the Ministry's interest in employing technology in the educational process for its positive role in supporting and developing education, and pro-

viding students with a lot of information, knowledge, and skills in a short time, through modern technical methods, and based on the principle of partnership between the ministry and the private sector institutions, comes

the signing of this agreement with the company to provide a number of technical devices, represented by interactive screens, tablets, robot bags, etc."

"It is hoped that they will contribute to creating a developed

and more interactive educational environment between the teacher and the learners, by activating the role of participation between the teacher and the learners, diversifying the experiences provided to the learners, and helping them to practice solving the systematic thinking process, developing their linguistic wealth, positive trends, and inclinations, and building concepts, in addition to its role in developing teachers' skills in using technical devices and tools in the education process. We extend our sincere thanks to the company for its kind and capable efforts and support to the Ministry in this field, because of its great impact in improving the quality of education service."

The Vale Oman CEO explained, saying, "Our partnership with the ministry came out of our responsibility to support our emerging youth, and to contribute to developing their talents by providing them with the necessary means to learn, excel, and expand their horizons, by integrating technology into the classroom and enabling it to be an integral part of the education system."



Workshop on clinical trials starts in Oman

A two-day workshop on Randomised Control Trials, Clinical Trials, and Research Ethics, organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) office in the Sultanate of Oman in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, began on Monday at Avani hotel.

The workshop brought together over 70 members of the Ethical Committee representing MoH, Sultan Qaboos University, Armed Force Hospital, Pharmacovigilance, Oman Medical Specialties Board (OMSB) to deliberate on this vital issue.

The workshop is being carried out to support national researchers and ethical committee members in identifying advanced critical aspects relevant to research ethics generally and to CTs (Phases: I, II, III, and IV) specifically. It involves applying and reviewing informed consent forms for all phases of clinical trials and understanding the methodology for monitoring enrolment and reporting, including

data safety and monitoring boards. The workshop is discussing study designs, including randomised control trials (RCTs), double-blind trials, and cohort studies, in addition to statistical analysis of data, data ownership issues, and data safety monitoring board (DSMB). Ethical issues related to the recruitment of trial participants, informed consent procedures, and submitting the application for ethical clearance will also be addressed.

Participants will be able to understand the methodology for monitoring clinical trials, including the Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) role, recruitment of trial participants, data collection, and data safety and monitoring boards, as well as recognise the regulatory issues and liaise with the funder and reporting mechanism.

It will also touch on the ethical issues of submitting the application to the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) or Institutional Review Boards (IRBs).

Ooredoo, Trend Micro unite forces to offer cybersecurity

Trend Micro, a global leader in cybersecurity, recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ooredoo Oman, a leading international communications company, with operations spanning North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Through this partnership, Trend Micro will offer its advanced cybersecurity services to Ooredoo customers in Oman. These services can be seamlessly integrated into Ooredoo's core offerings, ensuring that customers have access to top-tier security solutions. Ooredoo's customers can opt for these services as bundled add-ons to its core services or as standalone offerings through flexible pricing models.

According to the recent Trend Micro's mid-year cybersecurity report, its solutions successfully identified and blocked more than 6 million threats in Oman during the first half of this year alone. This partnership stands as a testament to Trend Micro's unwavering commitment, extending beyond delivering outstanding



security services; its goal is to elevate the Ooredoo's overall customer experience. Additionally, both companies have outlined plans to initiate awareness campaigns for cybersecurity, further cementing their position as industry leaders.

"In today's ever-evolving digital landscape, we've come to understand that true digital resilience is not merely about standing firm against challenges. It's about combating them and emerging from those challenges stronger, more agile, and better prepared to drive innovation," said Assad Arabi, Managing Director, Gulf and Emerging Mar-

kets, Trend Micro.

"In this spirit of innovation and resilience, Trend Micro is thrilled to embark on a strategic partnership with Ooredoo. This is not just a collaboration; it's a testament to our shared commitment to empower Ooredoo's customers with best-in-class cybersecurity."

Saied al Lawati, Director of Business Marketing, and ICT Solutions at Ooredoo, said, "Ooredoo's customers are at the heart of our alliance with Trend Micro. As they navigate the digital landscape, they deserve more than protection; they deserve digital empowerment."

Meethaq Islamic Banking opens special booths in Sur, Sohar, Nizwa

Aligning with its strategy to broaden its services to encompass all segments of society, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat is launching special booths across key commercial centres in various regions of the sultanate, aiming to bring Meethaq's suite of services and products closer to customers, ensuring seamless, convenient and fast transactions.

As a start, Meethaq will set up a booth at Sur City Centre in Sharqiyah South, for three days, from December 7 to 9. Meethaq Team will be available in the counter in two shifts, morning and evening, to provide customers with the best banking experiences.

The second station will be Sohar City Centre in Batinah North from December 14 to 16 and it will end at Nizwa Grand Mall in Dakhliyah governorate from December 21 to 23.

These booths will offer visitors access to a range of sharia'a-compliant products and services including opening children and



saving accounts, subscribing in Meethaq saving plan, applying for salary transfer, and various financing products. Meethaq employees will ensure swift and hassle-free transactions, committed to delivering unparalleled banking services.

On the occasion, Sami Arfah Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager - Meethaq Personal Banking, said: "Despite of our wide network encompassing 27 branches distributed across all governorates, offering various banking services and facilities, we have launched this initiative with the aim of providing opportunities for customers to explore

our diverse range of products and services, including the opening of bank accounts, in a convenient environment in these renowned commercial centers.

"I urge everyone to take this opportunity and benefit from these exceptional services. I would like to extend my gratitude all our customers for their trust in the banking services, products and facilities provided by Meethaq."

Meethaq Islamic Banking endeavours to provide a full suite of sharia'a-compliant Islamic banking products and services including deposit products, consumer financing, credit cards, corporate

banking, Internet banking, mobile banking and 24/7 Contact Center for both customers and corporate sector. Every Meethaq product undergoes through sharia'a compliance certification by the bank's Sharia'a Supervisory Board and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman.

Demonstrating its leadership in the Islamic banking sector, Meethaq has been awarded globally and regionally. It recently won multiple awards from Global Islamic Finance, most prominent of which is The 2023 Market Leadership Bank Award and The Best Digital Islamic Bank.

Toyota Gazoo Racing team shines at FIA World Rally Championship in Japan

Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR) World Rally Team (WRT) has scored a flawless 1-2-3 podium finish on home roads at the FIA World Rally Championship's (WRC) Rally Japan to complete a season of success in style. Elfyn Evans, followed by Sébastien Ogier and Kalle Rovanperä, all claimed victory in their No. 33, No. 17, and No. 69 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 Hybrid Electric Vehicles respectively.

The triumph, for Evans and co-driver Scott Martin, is their third of the season and the ninth in 13 rallies this year for TGR. Toyota, meanwhile, had already sealed its manufacturers' title during round 11 of Rally Chile before Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen secured their second drivers' and co-drivers' titles on the penultimate event, the Central European Rally.

Akio Toyoda, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Toyota

Motor Corporation and TGR-WRT Chairman, commented: "To foster the culture of rallying through continuous improvement in a Japanese way and to make the rally an essential autumn tradition in Japan - Rally Japan this year made all of these things come true."

"The most impressive thing was that we were able to use Toyota Stadium as one of the special stages allowing us to watch the top drivers driving up close and in front of that many spectators. It was a rally full of exciting and amazing experiences for both fans and drivers. If we continue this kind of rally events, I am sure that motorsport will become a culture in Japan and be more popular. I would like to thank everyone who worked so hard to make Rally Japan 2023 a great success."

This was the WRC's second visit to the technical and de-



manding asphalt roads in the mountains of the Aichi and Gifu prefectures around Toyota City. Heavy rain added significantly to day one's challenges, and this was where Evans built the founda-

tions of his victory. Two stage wins in the most extreme wet morning weather helped him to open up a lead of almost one minute and 50 seconds over his team-mates. Day two and three

brought further changeable and slippery weather conditions, but Evans managed both days expertly to seal the win. Meanwhile, Ogier and Rovanperä focused on maximising the

team's result rather than their own positions in tricky weather conditions to finally emerge in second and third place.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in different

forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race.

Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established TGR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand.

Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' TGR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars.

Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, TGR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

'Gaza Strip an integral part of Palestine'

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas rejects Israel’s plans to ‘occupy or isolate’ any part of Gaza Strip

Ramallah, Palestine - Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas stressed on Monday that he rejects Israel’s plans to ‘separate, occupy, cut off or isolate any part of the Gaza Strip’, which is ‘an integral part of the Palestinian state’, according to a statement by the official Palestinian News Agency (WAFA).

“It’s necessary to immediately stop the aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, and spare civilians from the scourge of bombing and destruction carried out by Israel,” Abbas said in a phone call with US Vice President Kamala Harris.

He also urged to increase the entry of relief, including medical and food supplies, drinking water, electricity and fuel immediately, and provide necessary aid so that hospitals and basic facilities can resume treatment and operation.

Moreover, he called for US intervention to ‘prevent the attacks, murders, house demolitions, and expulsion of Palestinian residents in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Jordan Valley areas that are witnessing silent and planned annexation by Israel.’

In the phone talk, Abbas also expressed his readiness to work for the implementation of the two-state solution based on international legitimacy resolutions, which should start with Palestine’s gaining of full membership in the UN, and the convention of the International Peace Conference.



People conduct rescue work after an Israeli strike in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah, on Sunday (Xinhua)

Death toll soars to over 15,500

The death toll from Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip has surged to 15,523 since the start of the conflict on October 7, the Health

Ministry in the Palestinian enclave announced on Sunday.

“The toll of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip reached 15,523 martyrs’ since October 7,” ministry spokesperson Ashraf al-

Qedra said in a news conference.

The number of wounded through the same period has risen to 41,316, Al-Qedra added.

Al-Qedra confirmed that a total of 281 healthcare personnel

were killed and hundreds injured.

Additionally, 56 ambulances and the same number of health facilities have been completely destroyed, while 20 hospitals are out of service, along with 46 pri-

mary care centres, he added.

Israel still holds 35 healthcare professionals from the Gaza Strip, including Mohammed Abu Selmiya, the general director of the Al-Shifa Medical Complex,

‘under harsh conditions and interrogation under torture, hunger, and thirst’, said the official. He also confirmed that since October 7, a total of 403 wounded and sick have left the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border crossing with Egypt to receive treatment abroad.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army killed two Palestinian young men during clashes in northwestern West Bank city of Qalqilya, said the Palestinian Health Ministry on Monday.

“We were informed by the Palestinian Civil Affairs Authority that the Israeli forces took away the bodies of the two young men,” the ministry said in a press statement.

Sam Abu Hamda, charge d’affaires of Qalqilya, condemned the killing of the two Palestinians and the arrest of a young man during an Israeli army operation.

He added that one of the men was killed while he was passing by on the road.

“This behaviour is not rare to Israel, which carries out attacks against Palestinians with no reason and logic,” said Abu Hamda.

Palestinian security sources said that Israeli special forces raided Qalqilya and targeted a vehicle near the Palestinian police station.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, the death toll of Palestinians killed by the Israeli army in the West Bank this year has risen to 464.

Agencies

US Muslims launch campaign against Biden’s presidential bid

Ankara, Turkey - Muslims in the US have launched a campaign against President Joe Biden’s bid for re-election in 2024 over his support for Israel in its war against the Palestinian group Hamas.

A group of Muslim leaders from Michigan, Minnesota, Arizona, Wisconsin, Florida, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania gathered over the weekend in Dearborn, Michigan to launch the campaign. The campaign aims to encourage voters to withdraw their support for Biden due to his ‘unwillingness to call for a cease-fire and protect innocents in Palestine and Israel’, it said in a statement.



US President Joe Biden

Axios said that Arab American and Muslim American outrage could hurt Biden’s re-election prospects in most of the 2024 swing states he won in

2020. The organisers said that Muslim community leaders would collaborate to ensure Biden’s defeat in these states.

Jaylani Hussein, one of the organisers, said the #Abandon-Biden campaign would primarily focus on social media for now.

Hussein acknowledged the potential challenges of not supporting Biden.

“We recognise that in the next four years, our decision may cause us to have an even more difficult time. But we believe that this will give us a chance to recalibrate, and the Democrats will have to consider whether they want our votes or not,” he said.

Anadolu Agency

Israel PM should face trial: Erdogan

Istanbul, Turkey - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should face trial for being a ‘war criminal’, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday, slamming him as the ‘butcher of Gaza’.

“We are not going to let the issue of Israel having nuclear weapons be forgotten,” Erdogan said in his opening remarks at an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting in Istanbul.

Those who try to ignore deaths in Gaza by keeping silent, even to legitimise it under the pretext of Hamas, have no longer any words for humanity, he said at the 39th ministerial session of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation.

“Israel is not only a murderer



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Anadolu Agency)

Erdogan slammed Netanyahu as ‘butcher of Gaza’ and said Islamophobia was spreading like an epidemic in the West

but also a thief,” said Erdogan, adding: “We cannot let Israel occupy Gaza once again.”

“There is a global structure that acts with will of a few countries. UN’s corrupt structure needs to change.”

The Turkish president said Islamophobia is spreading like an epidemic in the West.

Turkey is ready to be a guarantor country for the peace talks between Israel and Palestine, he added. “Gaza is a Palestinian territory. Gaza belongs to Palestinians and it will remain so forever,” said the Turkish leader.

“Those who invade Gaza will seek other places tomorrow. Gaza butcher Netanyahu revealed he has expansionist ideals,” Erdogan said.

Anadolu Agency

UNSC to hold meeting on Afghanistan this month

Kabul, Afghanistan - The UN Security Council (UNSC) has said that it will convene for its quarterly open briefing on Afghanistan in December, TOLO News reported.

TOLO News is an Afghan news channel broadcasting from Kabul.

As per the UN statement, the special representative of the UN Secretary-General and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Roza Otunbayeva; Ambassador Jose de la Gasca (Ecuador), the Chair of the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee; and a representative of civil society are expected to brief.

Head of the National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan Sayed Ishaq Gailani said: “They should take fundamental action to benefit Afghanistan in the fu-

ture, not to addict them (Taliban) with food assistance,” as per TOLO News.

A political analyst Sayed Muqdam Amin said: “The meeting could be beneficial in case it brings a mechanism for stability in Afghanistan and recognition of Afghanistan and specifying the status of Afghanistan.”

This comes as the Taliban said that meetings without the presence of its envoys would be meaningless.

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said that the international community is trying to put political pressure on it. “Unfortunately, the world has politicised all humanitarian, climate change and economic issues and they want to use all of the issues as a political tool, which is not right,” he said.

ANI

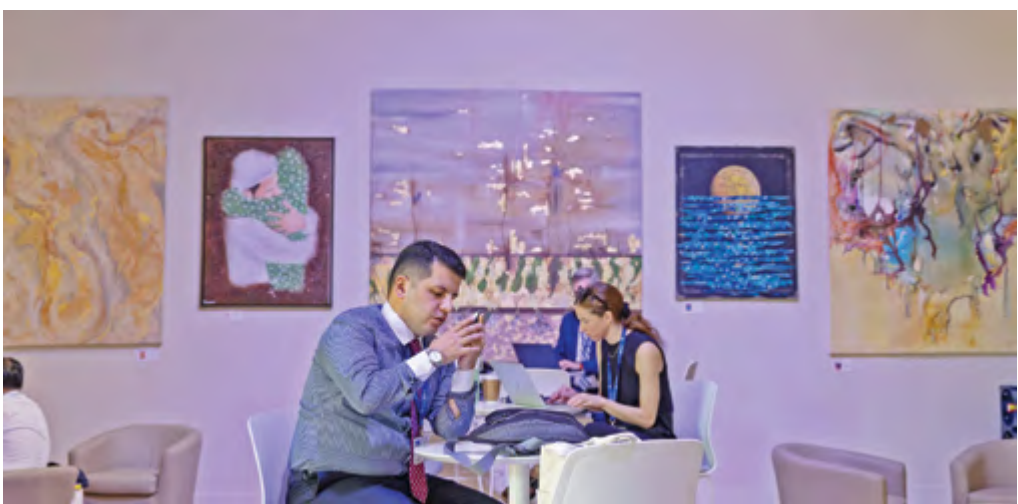
COP28: A canvas for climate action through art

Dubai, UAE - The walls and corridors of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai have transformed into an unexpected art gallery, showcasing powerful works by visual artists from around the globe. These artistic voices collectively amplify the urgency of addressing climate change, sparking critical conversations and inspiring hope for a sustainable future.

More than mere decorations, these artworks serve as potent visual narratives. Sculptures and paintings capture the stark realities of climate change’s impact on people and ecosystems, while simultaneously igniting a sense of optimism about the conference’s potential to deliver transformative solutions.

From China, a ‘bloom of hope’

Qi Zhihu, a Chinese artist, presents ‘Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom’, a ceramic statue that embodies resilience and renewal. This intricate replica of the milk



thistle, coloured with ash from the firing process, symbolises the significance of climate action from a Chinese perspective. The milk thistle, known for its toughness and ability to thrive in harsh conditions, becomes a potent symbol of hope amidst adversity.

Oceans of life and memory

South African artist Stephanie Neville’s ‘Goal 14’ delves into the

depths of the ocean, exploring themes of environmental sustainability, memory, and female identity. This painting, inspired by the 14th Sustainable Development Goal, celebrates the fragile beauty of the oceans while acknowledging their vulnerability. Neville incorporates shells and coral into her transparent fabric canvas, echoing the fluidity of water while prompting reflection on the textile industry’s environ-

mental footprint.

Tolerance, mercy, and love

Nora al-Ali, an Emirati artist, employs vibrant colours and shapes in her mixed-media piece titled ‘Goal 16 - Peace and Justice’. This artwork draws attention to the 16th Sustainable Development Goal, promoting tolerance, compassion, and love as cornerstones of a sustainable future. Al

Ali’s creation serves as a powerful reminder that climate action thrives in a world where empathy and understanding prevail.

Nature’s harmony: A Swedish perspective

Madeleine Kurtsdotter, a Swedish artist, pushes the boundaries of colour, harmony, and form in her experimental piece. Her painting juxtaposes natural landscapes, human figures, and travel motifs, creating a hyper-realistic portrayal of our environment. Kurtsdotter’s work connects to the 13th Sustainable Development Goal, urging viewers to acknowledge the Earth’s interconnectedness and the immediate consequences of climate change on our planet and ourselves.

These are just a few of the many artistic voices resonating throughout COP28. As the conference unfolds, these artworks are expected to inspire dialogue and fuel collective action.

WAM

INDIA

ZPM set to form government in Mizoram

The Zoram People's Movement has won 27 seats, in the 40-seat assembly

Aizawl, Mizoram - The Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) has won 27 seats, surpassing the mandatory halfway mark in the 40-seat assembly required to constitute the upcoming government in Mizoram.

Mizoram CM Zoramthanga tendered his resignation to Governor Dr Hari Babu Kambhampati at Raj Bhavan on Monday and accepted the verdict of the people.

"Because of the anti-incumbency effect and the people not being satisfied with my performance I lost... I accept the verdict of the people and I hope that the next government will perform well... It (the reason) is the anti-incumbency and COVID onslaught," the outgoing chief



ZPM chief and party's chief ministerial candidate Lalduhoma being greeted by party members after party's victory in Mizoram on Monday (ANI)

minister told reporters on Monday.

According to the Election Commission of India, the ZPM secured victory in 27 seats while Mizo National Front - MNF won 10 seats.

In a big blow for the ruling

Because of the anti-incumbency effect and the people not being satisfied with my performance I lost... I hope that the next government will perform well

ZORAMTHANGA

Mizo National Front, a constituent of the BJP-helmed NDA, Chief Minister Zoramthanga lost Aizawl East-I seat to Lalthansanga of ZPM by 2,101 votes.

Mizoram's political landscape has been dominated by

the Congress and the MNF since it attained full statehood in 1987.

The President of the MNF and the CM Zoramthanga has stood out as one of the most prominent figures in this election. He became Chief Minister after the 1998 Assembly polls, ending Congress's 10-year rule. The MNF governed for a decade until Congress won in 2008 and 2013.

Deputy CM Tawnluia lost to ZPM candidate W Chhuanawma in the Tuichang seat by a margin of 909 votes. Health Minister R Lalthangliana was trailing in the South Tuipui seat, and ZPM candidate Jeje Lalpekhluia was leading.

Lalduhoma, ZPM's Chief Ministerial candidate, has secured a clear victory in the Serchhip constituency.

Lalduhoma has registered a decisive win in the Serchhip constituency, defeating MNF candidate J Malsawmzuala Vanchhawng by 2982 votes.

Lalngthinglova Hmar of ZPM emerged victorious in the Aizawl West-II constituency, defeating state cabinet minister Lalruatkima. In Tuichang, ZPM's

W Chhuanawma prevailed over the incumbent Deputy Chief Minister Tawnluia.

The incumbent MNF registered a win in seven assembly constituencies: Mamit, Serlui, Tuirial, Tuivawl, East Tuipui, West Tuipui and Thorang.

However, the BJP swept Siaha district bordering Myanmar with K Beichhua winning the Saiha seat by defeating H C Lalmalsawma Zasai of MNF by 616 votes after K Hrahmo won the Palak seat. This is the BJP's best-ever performance in Mizoram. Speaking about the performance of the BJP, state party chief Vanlalhmuka said that the result is 'little unexpected' for the party.

"...Earlier I said that people expected a hung assembly but after seeing the results, it is a little unexpected but we accept it and we respect the people's mandate..."

Four major contenders were in fray in the northeastern state, which voted to elect its 40-member legislative assembly on November 7. These include the ruling MNF, the ZPM, the Congress and the BJP. ANI

Cyclone 'Michaung' causes severe flooding in Chennai

New Delhi - The deep depression over the South Bay of Bengal, which has intensified into a cyclonic storm 'Michaung', is likely to intensify further and make landfall between Nellore and Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh by tomorrow morning, according to the Indian Meteorological Department.

"SCS MICHAUNG over WC & adj SW BoB lay centered about 100km NE of Chennai and 120km SE of Nellore at 1430IST of today. To intensify gradually and move nearly northwards and cross south AP coast between Nellore and Machilipatnam close to Bapatla during forenoon of 5 Dec as SCS," said the weather department in a post on X.

Meanwhile, cyclonic storm 'Michaung' intensified to a severe cyclonic storm at 8:30am on Monday, about 90km east-northeast of Chennai.

The IMD has warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall on December 4 and 5 in north-coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Light to moderate rainfall at most places and



The Madras Unit of the Indian Army rescues people from the waterlogged areas following heavy rainfall, in Chennai on Monday (ANI)

heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places, with extremely heavy falls at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, is expected on December 4 and 5.

Public life is severely affected in Chennai due to heavy rains lashing several parts of the city. Several areas, including Wallajah Road, Mount Road, Anna Salai, Chepauk, outside Omandur government multispecialty hospital and other low-lying areas, were left inundated due to the persistent heavy rainfall.

Chennai's popular Marina Beach was flooded due to heavy downpours, and the roads from Mount Road to Marina Beach were blocked due to severe waterlogging. The Tamil Nadu government has declared a public holiday in Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts on Tuesday.

All schools, colleges, educational institutions, and government offices in the four districts of Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu, will remain closed.

ANI

Congress party entrusts Kharge to choose leader in Telangana

Hyderabad, Telangana - After a mega win in Telangana, Congress legislature party (CLP) meeting of the newly elected MLAs was conducted in Hyderabad's Gandhi Bhawan on Monday.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, State Congress Chief Revanth Reddy, Karnataka Minister K J George, Congress Leader Deepa Das Munshi and other AICC observers were part of the meeting. Post the meeting, Shivakumar stated that all the newly elected MLAs have authorised Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge to appoint the Congress legislature party leader.

"All the members of the newly elected Congress party unanimously resolved to authorise Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to appoint the Congress legislature party leader. All have decided that whatever the high command decides, we will go by that," said Shivakumar.

Shivakumar also thanked the people of Telangana for voting



Telangana Congress President Revanth Reddy addresses the media in Hyderabad on Sunday (ANI)

in large number in the favour of Congress. "We thank the people of the state for allowing us to form our government here," he said.

Meanwhile, Congress leader and former member of Rajya Sabha V Hanumantha Rao predicted that Revanth redy could be the next chief minister of Telangana.

When asked about the potential chief ministerial face in Telangana, Hanumantha Rao said: "We will have to see what

is decided in the CLP meeting. Most probably, Revanth Reddy has chances to become the chief minister going by all the work he did."

Former state minister Konda Surekha also battled for the state Congress chief Revanth Reddy as the chief minister. "Congress party is going to form the government in the state and the TPCC president A Revanth Reddy is going to take the chief minister post with the high command blessing," Konda

Surekha told ANI.

Whereas, Congress leader Komatireddy Venkat Reddy revealed that the party would rely on the high command for choosing the CM.

After a sweeping victory in Karnataka, Congress' guarantees in Telangana have proved to be a game changer for the party in Telangana. The Congress scored a massive victory by bagging 64 seats in the 119-member Assembly state. ANI

11 dead after Indonesia's Mt Marapi erupts

Jakarta, Indonesia - Eleven climbers were killed and more than 12 are reported missing after Indonesia's Mount Marapi erupted, local officials have said, according to an Al Jazeera report on Monday.

When the volcano in West Sumatra erupted on Sunday, as many as 75 people were in the area, as per the authorities.

Head of the Padang Search and Rescue Agency, Abdul Malik said: "There are 26 people who have not been evacuated, we have found 14 of them, three were found alive and 11 were found dead."

ANI

Chinese, Belarusian presidents pledge to enhance relations

Beijing, China - Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Beijing on Monday. Xi pointed out that he and Lukashenko reached important consensus on promoting the high-level development of China-Belarus relations during Lukashenko's state visit to China earlier this year. The two countries have strengthened political mutual trust and international coordination since then.

China always views its relations with Belarus from a strategic and long-term perspective, firmly supports Belarus in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions, and opposes external interference in Belarus' internal affairs, Xi said.

"China is willing to continue to strengthen strategic coordination with Belarus, firmly support each other, promote practical

cooperation and deepen bilateral relations," Xi said.

Xi stressed that more than 150 countries have signed Belt and Road Initiative cooperation documents a decade after he proposed the initiative, adding that he announced not long ago eight major steps China would take to support the joint pursuit of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. "China welcomes Belarus to continue its active participation and gain more tangible development opportunities from it."

Xi called on the two sides to implement projects such as the China-Belarus Industrial Park, push for more results in industrial cooperation, and further facilitate cross-border transport to promote trade and personnel exchanges. He said both sides should expand cooperation in education, health, sports and



Xi Jinping meets with Alexander Lukashenko in Beijing, on Monday (Xinhua)

China is willing to continue to strengthen coordination with Belarus... and deepen bilateral relations

XI JINPING

tourism, support exchanges and cooperation between the youth, and enhance understanding and friendship between the two peoples.

Noting that China and Belarus are important forces in the reform and development of the global governance system, Xi said China is willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Belarus within multilateral mechanisms such as

the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, promote the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, and advance the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

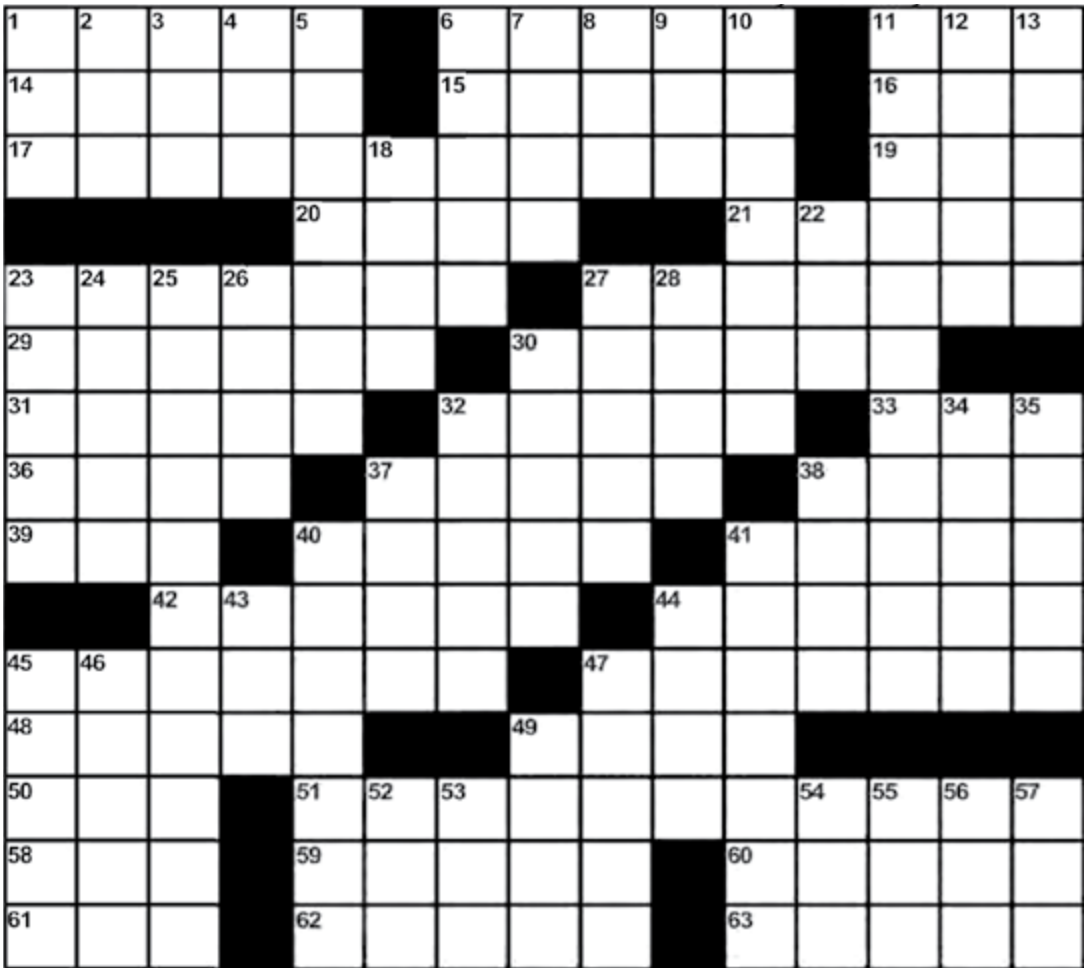
Lukashenko said under the leadership of President Xi, China has made great achievements in its development and over 1.4bn Chinese people live a happy life, making an important contribution to the world.

Belarus sincerely hopes that China will grow stronger, which is conducive to peace and progress in the world, Lukashenko added.

Belarus is committed to developing friendly relations with China and is willing to keep close high-level exchanges with China, Lukashenko said.

Xinhua

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Make pigtails
- 6) Trendy place to go downhill
- 11) Agent for trips?
- 14) Wavelike design
- 15) Brahman, for one
- 16) Ring bearer, often
- 17) Busy bodies?
- 19) Card to keep
- 20) Apple leftover
- 21) "Four" at the fore
- 23) Movie theater purchase
- 27) Knight to remember
- 29) Many have chapters
- 30) Erase
- 31) Claims on homes, e.g.
- 32) Chops finely
- 33) Nipper's co.
- 36) Damed thing
- 37) This makes five in this puzzle
- 38) Broadway star Verdon
- 39) Hurricane heading, sometimes
- 40) Popular game
- 41) Beside
- 42) California county

- 44) Far from eager
- 45) Opens a map
- 4 7) More expressionless, as a stare
- 48) Hauled away
- 49) Exec, in slang
- 50) "How was _ know?"
- 51) Computer user's locale
- 58) Dog that's far from a purebred
- 59) Arctic inhabitant
- 60) Event with cowboys and lassos
- 61) Inquire
- 62) Requires
- 63) Brenda who was drawn out
- DOWN**
- 1) Mercedes competitor
- 2) "Winnie-the-Pooh" baby
- 3) Requirement for a useful balloon
- 4) Aggravate
- 5) Some church officers
- 6) Squash type
- 7) Ad headline, often
- 8) Letters on tires
- 9) "Yadda, yadda, yadda"
- 10) Snuggles down
- 11) It's done in some

- tanneries
- 12) Pelvic bones
- 13) Apprehension
- 18) _ d'oeuvre (appetizer)
- 22) "Dig in!"
- 23) Sign of life
- 24) Bermuda vegetable
- 25) Complicated, eccentric person
- 26) Bop on the head
- 27) Little leapin' lizard
- 28) Pub offerings
- 30) Funeral hymn
- 32) Ding- _ (doorbell sounds)
- 34) Perfume by burning
- 35) Rage
- 37) Breeze component
- 38) Hidden valley
- 40) Variety of apple
- 41) Images representing posters
- 43) Lobster eggs
- 44) Came down to earth
- 45) Central New York town
- 46) "We didn't do it!"
- 47) Some sculptures
- 49) Prepare to crash
- 52) Half and half
- 53) Have regrets
- 54) "Sesame Street" viewer

- 55) Potato state (abbr.)
- 56) " _ the ramparts ... "

- 57) Word partnered with "neither"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

There have been some positive changes in your earning ability, and your pocketbook should be heaving a nice sigh of relief right about now. Just make sure that you stay ahead of the curve! Now is not the time to spend all your money just because having some to spend is such a nice sensation. Stick to your budget and whatever savings accrue will seemingly come from out of nowhere! And then in a little bit of time you will have a nice big chunk to blow on something impressive.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You are learning to appreciate the fact that when a goal is too easy to attain, it is not as valuable as something that takes your sweat and toil to reach. So don't hesitate to take a more difficult route than everyone else is taking. They might get there faster or more easily, but they are not going to learn as much from the experience. And in the end, your journey will reward you. Your newfound pride will feed your ego and get you noticed by the people who matter.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Your mind is sharply tuned into small details and you are extremely work focused today, but unfortunately that is not the case for everyone else. Most folks today just want to have fun, a fact you will have to accept if you don't want to have a very frustrating day. Let people do what they want to do while you take care of the work you need to do. Trying to force people to do what you want them to do is a lost cause. Don't waste your energy on it.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You are feeling awfully good this morning, which bodes well for your entire day! Add a little bit more flirtation and flattery to a few serious conversations and watch what happens. There will be a lot of fun-loving people hanging around you today, and they like your style so much that they want in to your social circle. This might cause a few growing pains, but any stretching to accommodate new people will be worth the energy and vibrancy that they bring to your life.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Your social energy is slower today, and you might find it difficult to communicate with people who don't already know you inside and out. In conversations with newer acquaintances, you might start to feel like you are waist-deep in mud, immobile and incapable of making any forward progress. But if you adjust your expectations and just try to be okay with little or no progress today, you will still be able to enjoy all the interactions you have. Just don't expect much.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

The best way to ramp up the level of romance in your life right now is to put yourself in more challenging situations! When you make yourself feel a little bit uncomfortable, you force yourself to rely on your wit and your bravado to get you through the experience, and that is when you positively shine like a lightning bolt! People won't be able to resist the energy you bring to the table, and they won't be shy about wanting to know more about what makes you tick.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

There are some big obstacles that you need to overcome before you can get closer to someone you've had your eye on for a while, but those walls are going to start tumbling down today. This means that it's a great time to make your big move and dive right into something new! There is a social net there to catch you when you take that leap, so don't worry about it. The last thing on your mind should be doubt. It's time to make a stronger connection.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Despite the fact that you always try to seek equality in your life, you know that the world can be an unfair place. So if someone you care about gets the short end of the stick today, you should focus more on consoling them than on getting righteously indignant about their situation. You'll be a better friend for helping them get over the slight than getting them all riled up about it. Everything cannot be completely equitable all the time, and they need to accept this.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

At first it might look like one of your past mistakes is coming back to haunt you today, but don't worry! This close call will pass you by, and you should feel free to keep smiling all day without worry. You can't let your imagination run wild with fears about something that doesn't really exist, especially when you have so many wonderful things in your reality right now. So whatever happens today, you need to stay positive. These storm clouds are passing over you.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your wonderful generosity is legendary, and it's going to come into play in a big way today. You are going to utilize it to help lots of people before you even get to your lunch break! But putting smiles on faces will make your day. Just be careful how you go about giving the gifts of your wisdom. You need to make sure you're not making people believe that they need to do exactly what you tell them to do. Otherwise, your idea will seem less like help and more like rules to obey.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Some of the people you will be dealing with today do not have the same priorities that you do, so you need to double-check their work and make sure they do not have too much authority over group issues. While you want to get things done, they just want to goof off and have fun. So be prepared to deal with interruptions from them today. You will have to take the heat if work isn't done, so any extra effort you put in is in your own best interests.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Your creativity is itching for a new way to express itself, and you might just find that new way in the kitchen. Cooking is a wonderful blend of order (measuring, temperatures) and chaos (a little bit of this, a little bit of that), and it lets you really express yourself. Plus, it gives you a great opportunity to do something nice for someone you care about: feed them delicious food! So start going through some of your favorite recipes. You've got a good dinner to prepare!



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In which country is the city of Kandahar?

- A. Iran
- B. Turkey
- C. Afghanistan
- D. India

02. What is the main material out of which a pool cue is usually made?

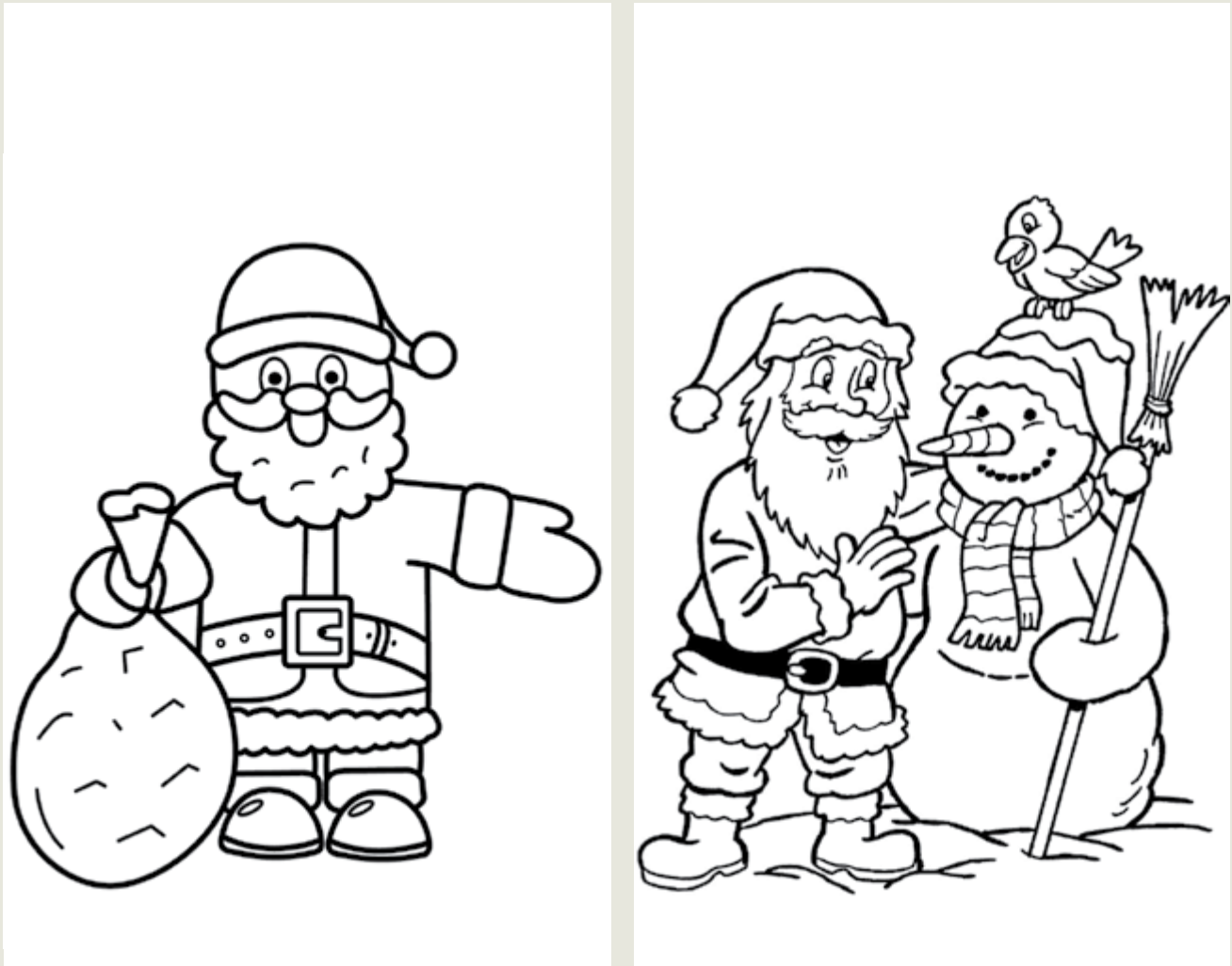
- A. Bone
- B. Ivory
- C. Gutta-percha
- D. Wood

03. Which of these is an award-winning film about a literary critic, author and Oxford professor, the celebrated author to whom he was married, and their last years together as her dementia takes her?

- A. Iris (2001)
- B. The Notebook (2004)
- C. A Song For Martin (2001)
- D. Away From Her (2007)

Answers: 1. C 2. D 3. A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

I	M	N	L
G	R	I	D
F	U	A	P
U	N	N	A

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

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

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



Al Faisal al Zubair of Al Manar Racing by Getspeed in action in Sepang

Al Zubair, Konrad and Schiller finish fourth in both races in Malaysia

Sepang, Malaysia - The Al Manar Racing by Getspeed trio of Al Faisal al Zubair, Martin Konrad and Fabian Schiller finished fourth in the GT class in both four-hour races at the opening round of the 2023-2024 Asian Le Mans Series at the Sepang International Circuit.

The Omani, the Austrian and the German entered a Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo and visited the rain-soaked Malaysian circuit for the first time.

The second of the weekend's races on Sunday afternoon finished under a yellow flag with victory going to the Pure RACING trio of Klaus Bachler, Joel Sturm and Alex Malykhin in a Porsche 911 GT3 R. Schiller brought the Al Manar Racing by Getspeed car home in fourth in the final stint behind a Sainteloc Racing Audi and the Optimum Motorsport McLaren 720S GT3.

Al Zubair said: "Fourth place

today but, to sum it up, it was a very positive result after everything that happened. Martin had contact with two cars and we got a drive-through penalty and a stop-and-go penalty. Bringing that into account, it was a very good result. We got a bit lucky with the safety car timing but we had a great pit stop in the end to jump five cars and be in P4.

"But, unfortunately, with the damage we had on the car, it was difficult to go up to P3. Nonetheless, after being last with a drive-through we should be very happy with the results. We leave here third in the championship going on to our strong tracks in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Overall, I think we should be happy."

The trio overcame appalling track conditions and late heavy rain to finish fourth in race one when the heavens opened and a deluge ruined racing in the last 30 minutes.

MAIDEN VICTORY

Oman's Al Harthy takes LMP2 win in ALMS season-opener in Malaysia

Sepang, Malaysia - Ahmad al Harthy added another superb achievement to his string of successes in endurance racing at Sepang in Malaysia over the weekend by taking his maiden race victory in an LMP2 prototype car during the season-opening event of the Asian Le Mans Series.

The Omani, who is currently assessing his options for next year following an excellent first campaign in the FIA World Endurance Championship this season in GTE Am, was invited to join the 99 Racing squad's LMP2 outfit for the first two rounds of the new ALMS campaign.

After qualifying an impressive fourth fastest for the opening four-hour race on Saturday, just seven thousandths of a second shy of the front row, Al Harthy put together a very competitive start to the encounter - his first ever race at Sepang.

"It's fantastic to have taken my first ever LMP2 victory, I'm very proud to have achieved that and especially on my first visit to Sepang," said Al Harthy. "It was a great first race, qualifying was very, very close and my stint was really difficult but I was very happy with my performance having not driven an LMP2 car for a long time - and also adapting to the circuit as well."

While not Al Harthy's first taste of LMP2 prototype machinery, the Omani still lacked mileage in LMP2 compared to the majority of his rivals, further underscoring his performance. Maintaining



Oman's Ahmad al Harthy celebrates with teammates on the podium

It's fantastic to have taken my first ever LMP2 victory, I'm very proud to have achieved that and especially on my first visit to Sepang. It was a great first race

AHMAD AL HARTHY

a top four placing throughout the first hour, he moved up into third before slipping to fourth again through the pit-stop strategies.

Following great stints by Mazepin and Deletraz, the latter

the reigning FIA WEC LMP2 Champion, the No.99 Oreca 07-Gibson moved through into the lead of the race in the hands of Deletraz with just under 40 minutes to go. As rain started to fall,

and then worsened into a full-blown storm, Deletraz and his chief rival pitted for treaded wet-weather Michelin tyres. With a huge amount of rain on track, the Safety Car was then deployed before red flags were shown with 10 minutes to go - Deletraz winning and taking away the fastest race lap with a time of 1m52.991 seconds (176.6 km/h).

For the second four-hour race on Sunday, Al Harthy again took the start - this time from fifth on the grid - and delivered an outstanding stint. While edged back

to sixth initially, the Omani regained fifth soon after and then climbed into the top four before moving into the podium placings.

Then seizing second position during the second half-hour of action, Al Harthy ended hour one well within contention before pitting to hand the car over to Mazepin. Running in second when racing resumed after a Safety Car period, Mazepin swiftly took the lead of the race and pulled clear before then being reeled in later in the stint.

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

A Male with 18 years of Oman experience in Marketing, BD, RCM, looking for a suitable placement.
Contact: +968-72410222

JOB VACANCY

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MORE THAN A POINT

Kulusevski’s late strike earns Tottenham draw against Manchester City in six-goal epic

Manchester, United Kingdom - Dejan Kulusevski’s 90th-minute header ended Tottenham Hotspur’s three-match losing streak as they drew 3-3 against Manchester City in an absorbing contest at the Etihad Stadium.

A third consecutive draw for City leaves them in third following Liverpool’s dramatic 4-3 victory over Fulham, three points behind leaders Arsenal. Spurs remain three points behind City in fifth but climb into the top five, above Newcastle United.

Pep Guardiola made three changes to the side that beat RB Leipzig 3-2 in the UEFA Champions League on Tuesday, with Ederson, Jeremy Doku and Julian Alvarez coming in for Stefan Ortega, Rico Lewis and Jack Grealish.

As for Spurs, Ange Postecoglou only made one change from the team that lost 2-1 to Aston Villa, with Yves Bissouma returning from suspension in place of the injured Rodrigo Bentancur.

The match started at a breathless pace, and Spurs opened the scoring after only six minutes through Son Heung-min.

The visitors produced a lightning counter-attack, Son breaking from inside his own half, latching on to Kulusevski’s long pass and outmuscling Doku before firing a low shot that Ederson was unable to keep out.

Son became the first player in history to score away Premier League goals versus four reigning champions, doing so against Leicester City, Chelsea, Liverpool



Tottenham Hotspur’s Dejan Kulusevski celebrates with teammates after scoring against Manchester City on Sunday

and Man City when they had won the league in the previous campaign. But Spurs’ lead only lasted 137 seconds, as Alvarez’s free-kick was flicked on by Erling Haaland before Son inadvertently turned the ball into his own net.

It made Son only the second player in Premier League history to score a goal and own goal in the opening 10 minutes of a match, after Gareth Barry for Aston Villa v Charlton in May 1999.

The chances continued to flow, with Haaland dragging a shot wide with the goal at his

by Vicario.

Doku’s afternoon came to a premature end when he limped off early in the second half, with the winger an early doubt for Wednesday night’s trip to Aston Villa. The champions will be without the suspended Rodri and Grealish at Villa Park after both were booked against Spurs.

The chances temporarily dried up for City, and it was Spurs who struck next on 69 minutes as Giovanni Lo Celso collected Son’s layoff before sweeping a low strike in off the inside of the post for his second goal in as many

A third consecutive draw for City leaves them in third following Liverpool’s dramatic 4-3 victory over Fulham, three points behind leaders Arsenal. Spurs remain three points behind City in fifth.

mercy before Doku crashed a strike against the underside of the crossbar. But City did go in front on 31 minutes, Phil Foden collecting Alvarez’s clever pass before slotting past Guglielmo Vicario from close range.

City were denied by the woodwork for a second time as Alvarez’s effort hit a post and bounced clear as it remained 2-1 at the break.

Guardiola’s side came out of the blocks quickly in the second half, with Bernardo Silva’s sublime strike with the outside of his left foot tipped over spectacularly

matches.

City came again, with Rodri blazing a shot over the crossbar before Grealish put the home side 3-2 up with nine minutes remaining.

Rodri dispossessed Bissouma and City broke quickly down the right, with Haaland cutting the ball back for Grealish to slot low past Vicario. But the drama wasn’t over as Brennan Johnson advanced down the left and crossed for Kulusevski, who guided a header into the top-left corner to level in dramatic fashion.



Inter Milan’s Francesco Acerbi battles for the ball with Napoli’s Victor Osimhen in during their Serie A match on Sunday

Inter blank Napoli to reclaim top spot

Naples, Italy - Inter Milan showed their clinical edge to secure a convincing 3-0 victory against reigning champions Napoli in a Sunday Serie A showdown.

Despite Napoli’s persistent challenges, Inter capitalised on their opportunities, with Hakan Calhanoglu, Nicolo Barella, and Marcus Thuram finding the target.

The win propelled Inter back to the Serie A summit, with 35 points, two ahead of second-placed Juventus after 14 matches.

Manager Simone Inzaghi said he was happy with the result. “Coming to Naples you have to expect some difficulties. Inter manager Simone Inzaghi told DAZN.

“We had prepared in a certain way to push our wings

backs against their full-backs because the further away you keep Napoli from the penalty area the better. The only time we really struggled was when we were defending too deep.

“Winning like this in Naples is satisfying, but we also know it is only Week 14 and there is a very long way to go.”

Napoli exhibited early vigour, with Eljif Elmas testing Inter’s goalkeeper Yann Sommer with a powerful long-range shot. Inter struggled to find rhythm initially, while Napoli exploited opportunities down the flanks. Matteo Politano’s long-range attempt struck the crossbar around the half-hour mark.

However, against the flow, Inter broke the deadlock just before halftime, courtesy of Calhanoglu’s precise low shot.

Felix on target as Barcelona edge Atletico

Barcelona, Spain - Joao Felix scored against his parent club, Atletico Madrid, to help Barcelona secure a hard-fought 1-0 win in an intense La Liga clash.

The Portuguese, on loan at Barcelona following a contentious split with Diego Simeone’s side, scored with a deft finish over goalkeeper Jan Oblak in the 28th minute, celebrating fervently amidst the roaring home crowd.

“It was spontaneous. I was in the heat of the game and it was like a relief for everything I’ve been through this summer,” Felix told Movistar Plus.

“Only the people closest to me, my family mainly, know what I’ve been through. So the goal was dedicated to them.

“I couldn’t believe (when the fans chanted his name). I know how great this club is and to have your name chanted is not something that happens to many. I’m delighted.”

The win propelled Barcelona



Barcelona’s Joao Felix celebrates after scoring against Atletico Madrid

to third place with 34 points, surpassing Atletico Madrid, now fourth on 31 points but with a game in hand. Real Madrid and Girona lead the league with 38 and 35 points, respectively.

Under the weight of recent scrutiny over their form, Xavi Hernandez’s Barcelona displayed a dominant first-half performance, pressing high and creating numerous opportunities. Despite

early misses, they found the breakthrough through Felix’s well-executed chip following a swift attacking move orchestrated by Jules Kounde and Raphinha.

Liverpool have the last laugh in seven-goal thriller

Liverpool, United Kingdom - Liverpool scored in the 87th and 88th minutes to produce a sensational late turnaround to beat Fulham in a seven-goal thriller.

The Reds had fallen 3-2 behind in the 80th minute to Bobby De Cordova-Reid’s header, but Wataru Endo and Trent Alexander-Arnold struck to move Liverpool two points behind leaders Arsenal.

Liverpool dominated the early exchanges and went in front in the 20th minute through an own goal from Bernd Leno.

Dominik Szoboszlai drew a foul from Joao Palhinha and Alexander-Arnold, 25 yards out from goal, produced a superb



Liverpool’s Trent Alexander-Arnold scores against Fulham on Sunday

free-kick into the top-right corner that hit the crossbar before striking the back of Leno and going in.

However, Fulham drew level four minutes later through former Liverpool player Harry Wilson.

The Welshman received a pass from Antonee Robinson on the left wing and prodded the ball past Caoimhin Kelleher, who started in place of the injured Alisson.

With the contest finely balanced in the 38th minute, Alexis Mac Allister produced an incredible strike to restore Liverpool’s lead and net his first Premier League goal for the club.

Ten-man PSG beat Le Havre to extend lead

Le Havre - Paris St Germain defeated Le Havre 2-0 for their seventh consecutive Ligue 1 victory despite an early red card to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma. The Italian had come out of his area to deal with a goal kick which sent Josue Casimir through on goal, but his mistimed attempt at a clearance caught the Nantes player in the head.

The exit of Donnarumma summoned substitute keeper Arnau Tenas, who stepped into his first appearance for PSG. The



Paris Saint-Germain’s Kylian Mbappe celebrates with teammates

replacement came at a cost as forward Bradley Barcola was substituted due to an injury to Fabian Ruiz minutes before Donnarumma’s red card.

Despite the setback, PSG regained composure, with Kylian Mbappe opening the scoring in the 23rd minute. Receiving a pass from Ousmane Dembele at the edge of the box, Mbappe showcased his prowess by controlling the ball and curving a shot into the net off the post.

The second half saw Tenas making a series of crucial saves.

