

H M REACHES BELGIUM

The visit is in response to an invitation from the King of the Belgians, highlighting the strong bilateral relations



Brussels, Belgium - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik arrived in the Kingdom of Belgium on Monday evening. During his three-day state visit, His Majesty the Sultan will meet King Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians.

Upon His Majesty's arrival at Brussels Military Airport, a welcoming musical piece was played

as he descended the ramp. His Majesty was received by Tinne Van der Straeten, Minister of Energy, along with several Belgian officials and members of the Embassy of Oman in Belgium.

His Majesty the Sultan then proceeded to the main car, passing between two rows of the Belgian Royal Guard of Honour.

The motorcade carrying His



Majesty departed Brussels Military Airport and headed to the Palace of Laeken, the official residence of the King of the Belgians and the Belgian royal family.

The visit is being undertaken in response to an invitation from the King of the Belgians, highlighting the strong and growing relations between Oman and Belgium.

On Tuesday, the programme

will commence with a welcoming ceremony at Place des Palais in Brussels. This will be followed by a lunch hosted by King Philippe and Queen Mathilde for His Majesty Sultan Haitham. The day will also include a visit to Brussels Town Hall and conclude with a state banquet at Palace of Laeken.

On the morning of December

4, His Majesty Sultan Haitham and King Philippe will visit the Port House in Antwerp for discussions on the existing energy and port cooperation between the Port of Antwerp-Bruges and the Port of Duqm, as well as future prospects.

The Port of Antwerp-Bruges is a global leader in the hydrogen sector and aims to establish itself

as a European hub for importing green energy from countries with abundant wind and solar resources, such as Oman.

In February 2022, King Philippe and Queen Mathilde made an official visit to Oman to strengthen Belgian-Omani cooperation on green hydrogen.

His Majesty the Sultan is accompanied by a high-ranking del-

His Majesty sends message to Kuwait Emir

Kuwait City - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to Sheikh Meshal al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, dealing with bilateral relations and means of enhancing them. The message was handed over by Dr Saleh Amer al Kharousi, Ambassador of Oman to Kuwait when he was received on Monday by Sheikh Sabah Khalid al Ahmad al Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait at Bayan Palace.

egation comprising H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr Hamad bin Said al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam al Murshidi, President of Oman Investment Authority, Eng Salim bin Nassir al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Rua Issa al Zadjali, Ambassador of Oman to Belgium.

Landmark school evaluation system set to transform education in Oman

Our Correspondent Muscat

H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, officially launched the National School Performance Evaluation System on Monday.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), aims to enhance the quality of education as part of Oman Vision 2040 strategy.

Dr Jokha bint Abdullah al Shukailli, CEO of OAAAQA, described the launch as a significant milestone. "This system reflects Oman's commitment to building a high-quality education framework aligned with national priorities. It is a major step towards improving educational



outcomes for students and society," she said.

Since its establishment in 2010, OAAAQA has focused on improving higher education. In 2021, its scope was extended to include both public and private school education. The newly developed evaluation system, based on global and regional best practices, provides a transparent and objective framework for as-

sessing school performance.

H E Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Undersecretary for Education in the Ministry of Education, emphasised the collaborative efforts behind the initiative. "An independent external body will evaluate schools, offering clear insights into strengths and areas needing improvement in both government and private institutions. This will

help raise educational standards and enrich the learning experience for students and teachers," he said.

Dr Thuraya bint Saif al Hosni, Director General of the Centre for School Education Quality Assurance, presented details of the system, describing it as student-focused and outcome-driven. The framework evaluates how inputs and processes affect learning outcomes, with a focus on accountability, continuous improvement, and transparency.

The system will involve external reviewers selected from the National Register of External Reviewers. These experts will follow strict guidelines to ensure consistent and reliable evaluations. Dr Thuraya noted that over 500 individuals from Oman and abroad have applied to join the register.

Majlis Al Jinn Cave set to be adventure tourist hotspot

Our Correspondent Muscat

Efforts to transform Majlis Al Jinn Cave into a global adventure tourism destination are gaining momentum, with the Omran Group opening tenders for the development of abseiling activities.

The cave, among the ten largest chambers in the world, is

located on the Selma Plateau near Fins village in Quriyat and holds significant cultural and natural value.

Majlis Al Jinn, meaning 'the meeting place of the spirits', spans an extraordinary 310m in length and 225m in width, with a floor area of 58,000sqm. The latest initiative aims to turn the site into a hub for adventurers while ensuring its delicate fea-

tures are preserved.

The Omran Group has called for bids to operate and manage abseiling activities under a two-year contract. The responsibilities include removing outdated bolts, installing safety and informational signage, and providing transport equipped with safety measures. Plans also involve building a monitoring station, introducing hiking and mountain biking trails, and constructing an elevated boardwalk to safeguard the cave's fragile environment.

The project underscores Oman's commitment to ecotourism and adventure tourism. The initiative aligns with a July 2024 agreement between the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Omran Group to develop Majlis Al Jinn as a premier eco-tourism destination.

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SCAN TO VOTE

First two phases of Salalah Master Plan complete

Our Correspondent
Salalah

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning is advancing the Salalah Master Plan, a comprehensive development initiative designed to harness the economic, environmental, and social potential of the Dhofar region. Covering over 427mn sqm between Salalah and the wilayat of Taqah, the plan aims to accommodate more than 480,000 residents, marking an important milestone in Dhofar’s urban evolution.

Sultan bin Hamad al Ghafri, Director General of Housing and Urban Planning in Dhofar, stated, “The first and second phases, which involved data collection and analysis, have been completed. Work is now underway on the general structural plan and detailed regional plans.



Data collection and analysis have been completed. Work is now underway on the general structural plan and detailed regional plans

SULTAN AL GHAFRI

to secure funding and ensure sustainable implementation.”

A key feature of the initiative is the ‘Future City’ of Salalah, spanning 7sqkm and designed to house 60,000 residents in approximately 12,000 housing units. The city will incorporate modern urban design with sustainable practices, green spaces



spanning 2.5mn sqm, recreational parks, cultural facilities, and a seafront. Advanced technologies and climate-resilient infrastructure are central to its vision, ensuring long-term appeal and adaptability.

In 2024, the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in Dhofar intensified efforts to accelerate the project, conducting over 150 meetings in collaboration with public and private stakeholders and civil society organisations.

To promote family and social stability, the ministry allocated RO2.9mn for housing assistance in Dhofar, facilitating the purchase of 39 housing units, the reconstruction or maintenance of 52 units on Al Halianiyat Island. The total investment exceeded RO4mn.

The governorate also witnessed strong economic momentum, with real estate trading reaching RO65mn in Q3 2024 - a remarkable 80% increase from the previous quarter.

Sinkhole in Quriyat to become major tourist hotspot with zip line, camps

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality has announced plans to transform Hawiyat Najm Park, also known as Bimmah Sinkhole, into a sustainable and multi-faceted tourist destination. The initiative, part of the Muscat Governorate Development Programme, aims to enhance the natural site while preserving its unique geological features.

The 489,758sqm development in Quriyat will include expanded green spaces, walking paths, public facilities, and designated camping areas at various levels, catering to outdoor and camping enthusiasts.

Speaking on the project, Ahmed bin Mohammed al Hamidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, stated, “This initiative aligns with the governorate’s commitment to creating high-quality projects that provide a natural retreat for residents and tourists. The goal is to accom-



modate more visitors and offer a comprehensive experience that exceeds expectations.”

The project includes developing three interconnected zones. The first zone, centred around the sinkhole, will feature a panoramic bridge, a zip line, and walking and cycling tracks. Accessible facilities, including an el-

evator for people with disabilities and the elderly, will ensure inclusivity. The zone will also host a children’s play area, retail shops, a theatre with an exhibition hall, food trucks, and an administrative office.

The second and third zones will focus on camping. These areas will include 191 tents and caravans of varying sizes, some perched along the cliff edge overlooking the Sea of Oman. The camping zones are expected to accommodate over 400 visitors daily, offering a range of options for families and adventure seekers.

Sustainability is a key aspect of the project. An integrated waste management unit will be established, and solar panels installed in parking lot shelters will provide clean energy to power the park’s facilities.

The project is expected to create over 300 job opportunities for local talent and attract more than 5,000 visitors daily during peak periods.



Health screening for newborns, couples to be offered from 2025

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Health (MoH) has announced the rollout of an enhanced health screening programme for newborns and individuals preparing for marriage, scheduled to begin in January 2025.

This initiative aims to improve early detection of metabolic disorders in newborns and identify hereditary blood diseases and infectious conditions among couples

planning to marry.

Speaking during a recent meeting, H E Dr Saeed bin Hareb al Lamki, Undersecretary for Health Affairs in MoH, highlighted the critical role of these screenings in fostering healthier families and a resilient society.

By identifying potential health risks early, the programme empowers individuals and couples to make informed decisions about their health and family planning, ensuring a healthier future.

Recall

2020-2023 Defender, Range Rover Evoque, Range Rover Velar and Range Rover

Recall Date: 03 December 2024

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
Defender, Range Rover Evoque, Range Rover Velar and Range Rover	2020-2023	37

Problem Statement

A potential concern has been identified on certain 2020 model year to 2023 model year Defender, Range Rover Evoque, Range Rover Velar and Range Rover vehicles where Software Over the Air (SOTA) updates are failing to complete. Specifically, Vehicle Domain Controller (VDC) PIVI and Gateway Module A (GWM). These vehicles have now been stopped from further SOTA attempts and require a wired intervention.

Remedy Action

Telematic Control Unit Module (TCU) - Update

To check the serial numbers of the affected commodities, please visit the website for Recalls & Warnings historical program

800 779008

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800 22 000

Omani-Russian documentary showcases timeless elegance of Omani khanjar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Museum launched the premiere of *Al Khanjar*, a documentary produced by RT Arabic in collaboration with Ministry of Information. The event, held on Monday under the patronage of H E Abdullah bin Nasser al Harasi, Minister of Information, highlighted the significance of the Omani khanjar as a national emblem.

Jamal bin Hassan al Moosawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, described the film as “a significant step in showcasing one of the most prominent Omani cultural symbols, which forms an integral part of Oman’s identity and rich heritage”. He noted that the Omani khanjar was added to Unesco’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2022.

The film explores the history and craftsmanship of the khanjar, tracing its evolution from the 17th century during the Imamate of the Al Yarubi Dynasty to the modern-day Saidi khanjar. It underscores the exceptional skill of



Omani artisans in preserving this enduring symbol of prestige and dignity, which has remained untouched by the waves of globalisation.

Highlighting the partnership between the National Museum and the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, the documentary features the journey of a unique khanjar belonging to Sultan Hamoud bin Mohammed al Busaidi, the Sultan of Zanzibar (1896-1902). Loaned to the Hermitage Museum, this artefact now features in the Oman Gallery, reinforcing cultural ties between Oman and Russia.

“At the National Museum, we are committed to conveying

Oman’s cultural message to the world and enhancing international partnerships in culture and museology,” said Moosawi. “This documentary exemplifies the importance of cultural collaboration in bringing Omani heritage to a wider audience and reinforcing Oman’s status as a global cultural destination.”

Anisa Murad, Director of the Programmes Department at RT Arabic and the film’s producer, said, “Working on this project was more than documenting the history of the khanjar. It was an opportunity to discover Oman’s traditions and its resilience in preserving its cultural identity amidst globalisation. This spirit mirrors Russia’s own efforts to

maintain its cultural imprint in a rapidly changing world.”

The 28-minute film takes viewers on a visual journey across Oman’s diverse landscapes showcasing regional variations of the khanjar. It also features interviews with khanjar makers, restorers, and National Museum staff, offering insights into the craftsmanship behind this cultural artefact.

Filmed at prominent locations such as the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, Royal Opera House Muscat, Oman Across Ages Museum, and the historic cities of Nizwa and Sur, the documentary extends to St. Petersburg, blending Omani and Russian narratives.

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EA launches initiative to tackle plastic waste

Our Correspondent Muscat

In its ongoing efforts to reduce plastic waste, the Environment Authority (EA) launched the first phase of a recycling bin distribution campaign aimed at plastic reuse in the wilayat of Suhar on Monday.

An EA official explained to *Muscat Daily* that the initiative focuses on recycling plastic waste, particularly plastic cans and bottles. The first phase involves the distribution of 15 recycling bins in Suhar, with plans for expansion to other wlayats across the North Batinah governorate in the next phase.

The initiative aims to preserve the environment and natural re-



sources, improve cleanliness, and adopt international best practices and modern technologies in waste management. It also seeks to develop legislative frameworks for waste disposal, encourage in-

vestment in plastic waste recycling, and promote environmental sustainability.

This project addresses the risks of plastic waste accumulation by promoting safe recycling

practices, supporting the local economy, and reducing pollution. The goal is to achieve environmental sustainability while balancing economic, social, and environmental needs through

By encouraging responsible actions to combat pollution and address climate change, the project aims to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources while promoting social responsibility

sustainable development.

EA added that the initiative aims to foster positive environmental behaviour within society, local communities, and businesses. "By encouraging respon-

sible actions to combat pollution, protect biodiversity, and address climate change, the project aims to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources while promoting environmental and social responsibility."

The official also explained that plastic waste poses significant risks to both the environment and marine life, with harmful effects on the Omani ecosystem. Due to its non-biodegradable nature, plastic waste can remain for hundreds of years, causing lasting environmental and health damage.

Plastic is ranked among the 20 most hazardous products, particularly during its manufacturing process. Its lightweight nature, excessive consumption, and re-

sistance to decomposition contribute to widespread pollution, which affects urban areas and degrades their appearance. Furthermore, plastic waste on beaches endangers marine life, including turtles, dolphins, and other organisms.

In addition to tackling plastic waste, the EA, in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality, is running a campaign to distribute 15,000 wild tree seedlings from December 1-5.

The distribution will take place at the Directorate General of Environment's nursery in Dhofar, as well as through the Dhofar Municipality offices in the wilayats of Taqah, Mirbat, Sadah, Thumrait, and Al Mazyouna during official working hours.



Oman karate team shines at West Asian Championship

Our Correspondent Muscat

National karate team delivered an impressive performance at the fifth West Asian Karate Championship, held at the Sharjah Sports Council in the UAE on November 29 and 30. Competing against athletes from ten countries, including GCC states, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan, the team secured six medals: four silver and two bronze.

Coach Ali al Shabibi commended the team's determination, particularly the U-21 athletes who overcame inexperience to perform admirably on an international stage. "The championship featured around 500

participants, and our athletes showed great resolve and skill," he told *Muscat Daily*.

The silver medal winners included Sherifa al Shabibiya, Idris al Batrani, Laith al Barwani, and Al Yaqzan al Abdali, while Mukhtar al Amri and Mohammed al Shabibi earned bronze. The team's success followed months of rigorous training, with sessions held three times a week to ensure physical and mental readiness for the competition.

Shabibi highlighted the efforts of the Oman Karate Committee in developing both athletes and referees. He expressed optimism about the future of karate in Oman, advocating for more in-

ternational training camps and competitions to further enhance the team's skills.

The championship also hosted an Asian referees course from November 26 to 28, focusing on Kata and Kumite regulations and offering promotion tests for the Judge Badge (B). Several Omani referees, including Mundhir Bilal Hassan, Adel bin Salem al Hinai, and Samira Najafi, successfully passed the course, further demonstrating Oman's commitment to advancing its presence in the sport.

This strong performance reinforces Oman's growing stature in the regional karate scene and sets the stage for continued success on international platforms.

Art heals: Juvenile delinquents showcase skills

Our Correspondent Muscat

Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat, inaugurated the 'Juvenile Art Exhibition' under the theme 'Story of a Juvenile' on Monday evening. Organised by the Ministry of Social Development in collaboration with Bait Al Zubair Museum, the exhibition will run from Decem-

ber 2 to 11.

The exhibition aims to raise awareness about the rehabilitation, reintegration, and empowerment of juvenile delinquents in society. By showcasing the creative talents of juveniles, the event encourages their development and motivates the community to support rehabilitation efforts. It also focuses on the importance of collaboration be-

tween government and private institutions to address social issues.

The exhibition seeks to challenge the conventional perception of juvenile delinquents by demonstrating their potential for change and growth. It aligns with the efforts of civil society organisations to improve and rehabilitate individuals. Moreover, the event promotes the values of co-operation between sectors and

enriches the cultural landscape with innovative works carrying meaningful social messages.

The exhibition highlights MoSD's dedication to nurturing the talents of juvenile delinquents, featuring a diverse collection of artworks, including paintings, sculptures, and handicrafts created by juveniles enrolled in guidance and rehabilitation centres.



OMAN CELEBRATES UAE'S 53RD UNION DAY

The Sultanate of Oman joined the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in celebrating the 53rd anniversary of the establishment of the union of the six emirates. A ceremony was organised at Al Wajajah border crossing by the Secretariat General for National Celebrations on Monday (ONA)

Oman tees off golf tourism with 40 international travel companies

Our Correspondent Muscat

Oman is making strides in promoting itself as a global destination for golf tourism. The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT), in collaboration with the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO), Oman Air, and private-

sector tourism partners, is hosting a specialised workshop to boost this niche tourism segment.

The event has brought together 40 international tourism companies from Asia and Europe specialising in golf tour packages, alongside 20 local companies. These local participants represent golf courses in Muscat and

tourism companies operating in this sector. The workshop aims to foster partnerships, highlight Oman's golf offerings, and strengthen collaboration between international and local stakeholders.

Khalid Mohammed al Azri, Director of Tourism Patterns at MHT, emphasised the significance of the initiative. "This

workshop is a major step in advancing golf tourism, one of Oman's promising sectors. With its unique natural attributes, the sultanate is an ideal destination for golf enthusiasts," he said.

Oman boasts several world-class golf courses, including Al Mouj Golf, La Vie Golf, Ras Al Hamra Golf Club, Ghala Golf Club, and Jebel Sifah Golf. These

venues combine state-of-the-art designs with scenic landscapes, offering visitors a blend of sport and leisure. "Oman's moderate climate for most of the year further enhances its appeal for athletes and tourists," Azri noted.

In addition to the workshop, participants will embark on familiarisation tours of key attractions in Muscat, North

Sharqiyah, and Dakhliyah.

Azri highlighted Oman's strategic location and accessibility, with a robust airline network that connects the country to Europe, Asia, and beyond. He also pointed out that Oman's rich cultural heritage allows visitors to enjoy golf while exploring the nation's history and traditions.

"Investing in golf tourism sup-

ports sports tourism, diversifies the national economy, and creates job opportunities for Omani youth," he stated. "We are committed to promoting this sector in collaboration with partners, including travel companies, international organisations like IAGTO, and hospitality establishments, to ensure an exceptional experience for all visitors."

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,569.604
Sensex	80,248.08
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
India	220.03
Pakistan	724.59
Bangladesh	310.18
Philippines	152.45
Sri Lanka	754.64
*Rates as on December 02 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS

Global arms sales rise driven by escalating conflicts

Sales revenue for the world's largest 100 arms makers rose 4.2% year-on-year to \$632bn in 2023, an international think tank report showed on Monday.

While arms revenue hikes were reported across all regions, companies based in Russia and the Middle East saw particularly sharp increases, reflecting heightened demand fueled by ongoing conflicts and geopolitical tensions, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in its report.

Smaller producers have been more agile in meeting the surge in demand driven by the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, rising tensions in East Asia, and global rearmament initiatives, it explained.

GPCA Forum opens in Muscat with 2,600 participants from 43 countries

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The 18th Annual Forum of the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) commenced on Monday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center in Muscat. Hosted by Oman's global integrated energy group OQ, the GPCA Forum was inaugurated under the auspices of H E Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

The four-day event brings together ministers, GCC energy leaders, corporate executives, and over 2,600 attendees from 43 countries. As a vital platform for collaboration and innovation in the petrochemicals and chemicals sectors, the forum underscores the region's commitment to advancing global industry standards.

Hosting the GPCA Forum reflects OQ Group's dedication to driving progress in the petrochemical industry both locally, regionally, and internationally. Leveraging Oman's natural resources, OQ has strategically invested in downstream and petrochemical industries, serving over 3,000 customers in more than 80 countries, positioning



Discussions at Annual GPCA Forum focus on growth, efficiency, and sustainability in the petrochemical sector, with CEOs from leading companies sharing their visions for the next decade

OQ as a leader in energy sector. Opening the forum, H E Sunaidy said, "We are delighted to inaugurate the 18th edition of the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association Forum in Oman. Hosting this event is a significant milestone that reflects Oman's ongoing efforts to advance the energy sector, enhance its contribution to GDP, and leverage national resources by expanding manufacturing, petro-

chemical, and chemical industries in support of sustainable economic development." H E Sunaidy emphasised the need for greater collaboration among GCC nations to tackle the challenges of a volatile global economy and foster dialogue with international partners. He highlighted the region's efforts to transition to clean and alternative energy sources, embrace digitalisation, and implement stringent

measures to reduce carbon emissions, while preserving natural ecosystems and ensuring sustainable growth. The forum's exhibition, featuring over 110 companies, is showcasing groundbreaking petrochemical innovations and advancements. OQ's participation highlights its digital transformation journey, reflecting the group's focus on increasing efficiency and sustainability.

On the first day of the forum, attendees were introduced to OQ's strategic initiatives aimed at achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, including investments in alternative energy, energy intensity reduction programs, and an integrated energy management system. The forum's discussions will focus on growth, efficiency, and sustainability in the petrochemical sector, with CEOs from leading companies sharing their visions for the next decade. Keynote sessions will explore themes such as resilience, sustainability, and innovation, addressing global challenges like food security and energy security

amidst shifting geopolitical dynamics. A major highlight of the forum is the SolutionXchange programme, returning for its second edition. The programme focuses on energy management, the circular economy, and digital transformation, providing attendees with unique opportunities to engage with industry leaders. OQ's petrochemical sector plays a pivotal role in empowering Oman's manufacturing and chemical industries. By producing essential raw materials and creating investment opportunities, OQ attracts foreign direct investment and fosters industrial development.

Oil prices rise on China demand optimism

Muscat - Oil prices increased on Monday over demand optimism in China, the world's second-largest oil consumer, and heightened Middle East tensions as Israel continued to attack Lebanon despite a ceasefire deal. The international oil benchmark of Brent crude increased 0.11% to \$72.42 per barrel, up from the previous session's close of \$72.34. The US benchmark

West Texas Intermediate also rose by 0.06% to \$68.51 per barrel, compared to \$68.47 at the prior session's close. China's Caixin manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) on Monday came in over expectations at 51.5 for November. The National Bureau of Statistics PMI on Saturday also rose to 50.3, from 50.1 in October. The data raised expectations that

economic activity in the country will improve amid continued support from Beijing. Tension increased in the Middle East as the Israeli army continued to violate the ceasefire agreement that came into effect on November 27. The US dollar index, which measures the US dollar's value against other currencies, rose 0.5% to 106.350. Agencies

Muscat Stock Exchange posts biggest monthly decline in GCC in November

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) saw GCC markets' steepest monthly decline in November, as global emerging market sell-offs weighed on the region's equity performance. The MSCI GCC Index dropped 1.2% last month, following a broader regional downturn. Of the seven GCC exchanges, three posted losses in November. The MSX led the declines, with its benchmark MSX30 Index falling 3.9%. Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi's indices also recorded losses, down 3.2% and 1.0%, respectively, according to a research note from Kamco Investment. On the positive side, the Dubai Financial Market bucked the trend, posting a 5.7% gain, while other GCC indices saw only modest advances. 'November marked the sec-



ond consecutive month of declines for GCC equity markets, driven by a global rout in emerging markets,' Kamco Investment noted. 'Stronger-than-expected economic growth in the US and October's higher-than-forecast inflation data fueled speculation that the US Federal Reserve would keep interest rates elevated for longer.' Oman's MSX30 Index closed November at 4,563.05 points, down 3.9% for the month, after posting a modest 0.8% gain in October. All three sectors on the MSX

saw declines in November. The Services Index took the biggest hit, falling 4.6%, followed by the Industrial Index, which lost 3.8%. The Financial Index dropped 2.9%, contributing to the overall decline in the MSX30 Index. According to Kamco's report, heavy losses among key banking stocks weighed on the financial sector, with Bank Muscat dropping 2.3% and the National Bank of Oman falling 7.3%. In the services sector, double-digit declines in stocks like Sembcorp Salalah (-12.7%) and Ooredoo Oman (-11.7%) were pivotal to

MSX30 Index closed November at 4,563.05 points, down 3.9% for the month, after posting a modest 0.8% gain in October

the Services Index's downturn. Oman Education and Investment Training led the gains with a 64.4% rise, followed by Dhofar Cattle Feed (+19.1%) and Oman Fisheries (+6.1%). On the downside, Majan Glass Company plunged 83.9%, while Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles and Galfar Engineering posted declines of 23.4% and 14.8%, respectively. Overall trading activity on the MSX showed a significant slowdown in November. Total share volume traded fell to 441.7mn shares, down from 653.8mn in October.

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MAJAN GLASS COMPANY S.A.O.G.

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Tel: +968 26751654/5/6, Fax: +968 26751658, E-mail: info@majanglass.com

ANNOUNCEMENT

Further to the announcement of Majan Glass Company S.A.O.G (Company), dated 10 Nov 2024, where it was announced that the purchase of shares from shareholders wishing to sell it to the Company's shareholder Oman Investment Authority, has commenced for the purpose of converting the legal form of the Company from a public joint stock company S.A.O.G. to a closed joint stock company S.A.O.C. The specified date for the commencement of the purchase of shares was the date 21/11/2024 and ends on 27/11/2024.

Based on the request of the company's shareholder, Oman Investment Authority, the share purchase period end date has been extended from 27/11/2024 to 15/12/2024 after due approval from FSA.

It is worth noting the sale of the shares would be carried out by the same broker United Securities LLC, appointed for this purpose and the interested selling shareholder may contact the mentioned broker at its authorized representative Mr. Ayman Al Lawati, phone number: 24763337/ Mobile 96662368, address: P.O. Box 2566, PC 112, Ruwi – Sultanate of Oman.

MSX launches investor relations guide

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance transparency and improve communication between companies and investors, the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Monday celebrated the launch of its Best Practices Guide for Investor Relations under the patronage of H E Ibtesam bint Ahmed bin Saeed al Faroojiyah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion. This guide marks a strategic step toward strengthening investor confidence and improving communication channels between companies and stakeholders, in line with international best



practices in the field. The Best Practices Guide for Investor Relations emphasises the importance of building strong relationships between companies and investors by providing clear policies and established procedures that attract new investors and increase the confidence of existing ones. It also aims to ensure compliance with regulations and laws related to

investor relations, and enhance the reputation of companies in both local and global markets. This initiative is part of MSX's broader commitment to developing the capital market in the sultanate and enhancing its competitiveness both regionally and internationally. The market emphasises the importance of investor relations as an integral component of the broader finan-

cial system, which works to attract capital, respond to the growing needs of the investment community, and bolster the sultanate's position as a regional and international financial hub. Majda bint Shikhan al Mamari, Director of the Sustainable Investment Center, said, "The Best Practices Guide for Investor Relations offers practical guidance for companies, including methods for communicating with investors, determining disclosure mechanisms, and managing investor expectations to foster greater satisfaction." She added that the launch of this guide reflects ongoing efforts to promote transparency and professionalism, especially in light of the changes occurring in Gulf markets.

ChatGPT turns 2: What's next for OpenAI chatbot?

Anna Desmarais

There have been some predictions that OpenAI will be releasing a whole new model sometime before end of the year. OpenAI's founder Sam Altman told in October that there are 'very good releases' coming later in the year

On November 30, 2022, OpenAI launched its first model of ChatGPT into the world. What was supposed to start as a test for OpenAI's models quickly became a chatbot that became synonymous with the development of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI).

In 2024, OpenAI saw the launch of several new versions, including GPT-4 which came with faster intelligence across text, voice, and vision, and o1, a new series of models that can reason through complex tasks in science, coding, and maths.

Just a few weeks ago, OpenAI released SearchGPT, a browser extension that gives "fast, timely answers" to user queries with relevant web sources, bypassing search engines altogether.

The company's been dealing with a fair share of internal issues in the background, with the resignation of co-founder Ilya Sutskever, the dissolving of the company's team researching super intelligence, and a slew of lawsuits from US-based news companies for alleged copyright infringement.

So, what's next for OpenAI's ChatGPT as it tries to up the ante



There have been some predictions that OpenAI will be releasing a whole new model sometime before end of the year. OpenAI's founder Sam Altman told in October that there are 'very good releases' coming later in the year

in its third year? Euronews Next breaks it down.

Next 'giant breakthrough'

In a Reddit Ask Me Anything (AMA) last month, OpenAI founder Sam Altman and his colleagues gave a little insight into their priorities for their third year. Kevin Weil, chief product officer at OpenAI, told the AMA that a "big theme" for 2025 will be whether ChatGPT can perform tasks independently.

Altman suggested that it could look like an autonomous agent, which he would consider the company's next "giant breakthrough".

"AI agents," referred to as agentic AI, will let companies design the large language models (LLMs) that run their systems to automate workplace tasks.

That's a feat that's already being worked on by some of OpenAI's rivals, like Google Cloud's Vertex AI agents, LinkedIn and Microsoft. Media

reports say the next update of Google's Gemini, Project Jarvis, could also include autonomous agents.

Kate Devlin, professor of Artificial Intelligence & Society at King's College London, said there's been mixed reactions to the AI agents OpenAI's competitors have already launched.

"Some people are really positive about this and see it as being a complete game changer because it allows a lot more of a personal assistant type situation

where you can outsource a lot of your tasks to the AI," she said.

"There are some people who are wary of that and don't like the idea of that much input or control being given to the model".

ChatGPT's next model

There have been some predictions that OpenAI will be releasing a whole new model sometime before the end of the year.

Altman told the Reddit AMA in October that there are "very good releases" coming later in the year but there are "none that we will be calling ChatGPT-5 though". The priority, according to Altman, is to "prioritise the shipping" of the other models, like GPT4.0 and O.1 which were

launched this year.

Reporting from the Verge a few weeks later puts the release of Orion, widely believed to be the successor to both GPT-4o and o1, to December for select companies that work closely with OpenAI so they can build their own products and features.

Tadao Nagasaki, the CEO of OpenAI Japan, teased in September a future model of ChatGPT that will be "100 times more powerful" than GPT-4, local media reports say.

Devlin said it's possible that AI agent activity could be included in any future release of Orion.

Other updates to look for could be to Sora, an AI text-to-video model, that has so far been delayed. The software, still being "perfected" according to Weil, was leaked this week.

Altman said the next version of DALL-E, the picture-generating software from OpenAI, is "worth the wait" but does not have a release plan yet.

Should OpenAI consider specialising or scaling down?

One of the things that OpenAI and other companies will have to watch out for in 2025 are some of the overall shortages taking over the industry, Devlin continued.

"[AI companies] need more compute, they need more energy, they need more data," Devlin said. "So, just how much can they do with the limitations on

those things?"

One option that OpenAI could consider is to scale down to small or medium-sized LLMs that are less resource-intensive.

These smaller models would be able to "curate data" to be more specific or helpful in specific domains, like law or health, Devlin said.

"Instead of just scaling up and up and up, it's time to reflect on what we've got so far because there are definite benefits... but we know there are risks and maybe we should take some time to evaluate those risks," Devlin said.

Abdul Sadka, director of the Sir Peter Rigby Digital Futures Institute at Aston University, said OpenAI should keep ChatGPT "generic" so that individual companies or sectors could refine it to the specific data sets they want it to be used for.

However, Sadka said he could see OpenAI expand to give ChatGPT more "modalities," like the ability to recognise medical images to "potentially give you diagnostic reports about any underlying condition" a patient might have.

To help ChatGPT become more specialised, Sadka said companies using the software could build an external knowledge base that the AI hasn't seen before to "reduce the probability of... hallucinations," the term used to explain AI's best-guess responses to questions it doesn't recognise.

(Source: Euronews.com)



'Every attack has made us stronger', Adani responds to charges by US prosecutors

Jaipur, India - Adani Group Chairman, Gautam Adani, on Saturday spoke out on the recent allegations faced by him and other executives after being linked to an alleged bribery case in the US, saying that every attack has made the group stronger, and every obstacle becomes a stepping stone for a more resilient Adani Group.

Speaking at the 51st India Gem and Jewellery Awards in Jaipur, the Adani Group Chairman said, "Less than two weeks back, we faced a set of allegations from the US about compliance practices at Adani Green Energy. This is not the first time we have faced such challenges. What I can tell you is that every attack makes us stronger, and every obstacle becomes a stepping stone for a more resilient Adani Group."

"The fact is that despite a lot of the vested reporting, no one from the Adani side has been charged with any violation of the FCPA or any conspiracy to obstruct justice," the Adani Group Chairman added.

Adani reflected on the consistent allegations made against his companies, including the attempt made by US short seller Hindenburg. "January last year, just as we were getting ready to launch our Follow-on Public Offering (FPO). We faced a short-selling attack initiated from abroad. This was not a typical financial strike;

it was a double hit--targeting our financial stability and pulling us into a political controversy," he said.

"But even in the face of such adversity, our commitment to our principles remained strong. After successfully raising 200bn rupees from India's largest-ever FPO, we made the extraordinary decision to return the proceeds. We then further demonstrated our resilience by raising capital

Our all-time record financial results showcased our commitment to operational excellence. Not a single Indian or foreign credit rating agency downgraded us

GAUTAM ADANI

from several international sources and proactively reducing our Debt to EBITDA ratio to below 2.5 times, an unmatched metric in the global infrastructure space," he added.

Adani stated that the company's all-time record financial results in the same year showcased its commitment to operational excellence. "Our all-time

record financial results in the same year showcased our commitment to operational excellence. Not a single Indian or foreign credit rating agency downgraded us. Finally, the Supreme Court of India's affirmation of our actions validated our approach," he said.

He also mentioned the 2010 controversy when the company made a move to invest in a coal mine in Australia.

"The resistance from NGOs was huge and lasted almost a decade. In fact, it was so intense that we ended up funding the entire project of \$10bn with our own equity. While we now have a world class operating mine in Australia and it could be seen as a great sign of our resilience, the fact is that 100% equity funding took away over \$30bn of debt financing from our green energy projects," he recollected.

Adani further added that he had come to accept that the roadblocks were the price of pioneering. "The more bold your dreams, the more the world will scrutinise you. But it is precisely in that scrutiny that you must find the courage to rise, to challenge the status quo, and to build a path where none exists. To pioneer is to embrace the unknown, to break limits, and to believe in your vision even when the world cannot yet see it."

ANI

BRICS currencies weaken after Trump threatens tariffs

Ambar Warrick

Currencies of countries under the BRICS bloc weakened on Monday, while the dollar firmed after US President-elect Donald Trump threatened to impose steep tariffs on the bloc over its attempts to pivot away from the greenback.

The Chinese yuan, South African rand and Indian rupee all weakened between 0.1% and 0.5% in Asian trade, while trading in other currencies was still closed for the weekend. In con-



US President-elect Donald Trump

trast, the dollar index shot up 0.5%.

Trump on Sunday said he will impose "100% tariffs" on imports from the BRICS bloc, effectively

blocking them from US trading if they proceeded with plans to introduce their own currency and shift away from the dollar.

Trump said in a social media post that the U.S. will seek commitments to the dollar from the bloc that they will not create a new BRICS currency, nor back any other currencies to replace the dollar.

"There is no chance that the BRICS will replace the US Dollar in International Trade, and any Country that tries should wave goodbye to

America," Trump said.

The BRICS bloc consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. It has consistently called for a new global reserve currency, and had recently outlined plans for a common currency for trade between member states.

Markets fear that Trump's tariffs will draw retaliatory measures, sparking a renewed trade war between the world's largest economies.

(Source: Investing.com)



شركة مسندم للطاقة ش.م.ع ع
Musandam Power Company SAOG
ص.ب ٢٢٨ الرمز البريدي ١٣٤، القرم، جوهرة الشاطئ، مسقط، سلطنة عمان.
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INVITATION TO EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF MUSANDAM POWER COMPANY SAOG

The Board of Directors of **Musandam Power Company SAOG (the "Company")** is pleased to invite its respected shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") to be held on Sunday, at 3 p.m., 29th December 2024, on the e-portal for convening general meetings through Muscat Clearing and Depository (SAOC) ("MCD") website (**www.mcd.gov.om**).

Failing quorum of the EGM, a second EGM shall be convened on Tuesday, at 3 p.m., 31st December 2024, on the e-portal for convening general meetings through Muscat Clearing and Depository (SAOC) ("MCD") website (**www.mcd.gov.om**). The agenda include the following:

1. To consider and approve amendments to Article 2 of the Articles of Association of the Company (as per annexure 1 hereto)

(b) voting on any item of the agenda shall commence prior to the convention of the EGM at a maximum of three (3) days and ends on the day of the EGM. If a shareholder's balance is changed either by increase or decrease, the voting process shall stand canceled and must re-vote at the EGM.

Please attend at the e-portal at least 30 minutes prior to the EGM.

For more information, please contact **Mr. Abdulhameed Al Jabri of Musandam Power Company (SAOG) on telephone No. 24063555.**

Chairman

Legal Advisor



Toyota starts ‘Festival of Joy’ campaign

Now is a good time to own a Toyota and benefits with exclusive ‘Festival of Joy’ benefits.

The Saud Bahwan Automotive (SBA) has declared services from three years/30,000km up to six years/60,000km (whichever is earlier), insurance one year and chance to win one out of 16 units of iPhone 16 Pro Max.

It reminded that the benefits, which will be available until January 23, will vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year as per the company’s terms and conditions. ‘Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details,’ SBA stated.

In Oman, Toyota offers an exciting line-up of vehicles, including the all-new Camry, Land Cruiser Prado, Corolla, Hilux, RAV4, and Yaris, each one packed with performance, style and reliability.

Since 1982, the Camry has won over drivers worldwide with its refined design, superb performance, and top-notch quality. The new Camry is available with a choice of two engines: A powerful 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine delivering 201hp and 240Nm of torque with an eight-speed direct-shift automatic transmission and an efficient hybrid version that combines a petrol engine with two electric motors for 226hp, connected to a smooth ECVT transmission for an elevated driving experience.

The Saud Bahwan Automotive declared services from three years/30,000km up to six years/60,000km (whichever is earlier), insurance one year and chance to win one out of 16 units of iPhone 16 Pro Max. These benefits will be available until January 23

The new Prado fuses its renowned Land Cruiser heritage with modern tech to tackle off-road challenges and daily drives with ease. The latest model introduces electric power steering for greater control and less road impact. Drivers can choose between a 2.4-litre turbo petrol or a 2.8-litre turbo diesel engine, both paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission.

A trusted companion for every journey, the Corolla balances power, fuel efficiency, and advanced safety features. It’s powered by a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine producing 168hp and 20.39kg-m of torque, paired with a Direct Shift

CVT for a responsive drive. For those who prioritise fuel efficiency, a 1.6-litre version offers 121hp and 15.7kg-m of torque with a CVT.

Built for adventure, the Toyota Hilux offers impressive power with its 4.0-litre V6 engine producing 235hp and 38.3kg-m of torque. The 4X4 variant, powered by a 2.7-litre petrol engine, is available in both a 5-speed manual and a 6-speed automatic transmission.

With comfort features like an auto air conditioner with rear vents, an 8” navigation screen and a multi-information display, the Hilux is ready for any journey.

The RAV4 combines sporty styling with impressive fuel efficiency and handling. Drivers can opt for a 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine with 204hp and 243Nm of torque, matched with a new eight-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission for smooth acceleration. Alternatively, the hybrid variant delivers 219hp, powered by a petrol engine and two electric motors with an impressive fuel efficiency of 22.2km per litre, all paired with a Direct Shift CVT for an enjoyable, eco-friendly drive.

The Toyota Yaris is a compact yet dynamic choice. Powered by a 1.5-litre engine that delivers 105hp and 138Nm of torque, the Yaris achieves a remarkable 20.5km per litre, thanks to its Continuously Variable Transmis-

sion (CVT) which provides smooth and responsive performance at any speed.

With a Toyota for every kind of driver, Oman’s Toyota line-up combines reliability, efficiency and innovation to create a driving experience you can count on.

Specifications of vehicle imported from Toyota Motor Corporation are as per the GSO Conformity Certificate applicable to the model/grade.

Parameters such as vehicle weight, dimensions & fuel economy could vary from the GSO Conformity Certificate due to fitment of dealer installed accessories. Pictures and colours shown may differ from actual specifications.

OOC attends meeting of Arab Olympic committees

Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) participated in the 22nd General Assembly meeting of the Union of Arab National Olympic Committees, held in Amman, Jordan. The committee was represented by Abdullah Mohammed Bamakhalif, OOC Treasurer; and Mohsen Hamad al Masroori, Board Member.

During the meeting, it was announced that Bahrain would host the 17th Arab Games in 2031, while Jordan was granted the right to host the 18th edition in 2035.



2035. The meeting also approved the final report of the 15th Arab Games held in Algeria last year, as well as the upcoming Arab Women’s Club Games (Sharjah 2024). The 2023 annual report of the Union, the financial statements, and the audit report for the fiscal year ending in December 2023 were ratified.

Forum on Internet services begins

The Middle East Network Operators’ Group and Peering Forum (MENOG 24) began at the Grand Millennium Hotel in Muscat, on Sunday, a release stated.

The five-day forum, which will continue until December 5, is being hosted by AWASR, a leading Omani telecommunications provider specialising in high-speed fibre-optic broadband services.

This event brings together leading experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss advancements in Internet infrastructure, exchange insights, and foster collaboration across the Middle East.

Adnan al Alawi, CEO of AWASR, states: “We are honoured to host MENOG 24 in Muscat.

This event provides an important platform for addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the Internet in the Middle East.

By fostering collaboration between experts, policymakers, and stakeholders, we can build a future-proof internet that supports the region’s digital transformation journey.”

Organised by the RIPE NCC, the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia, MENOG 24 serves as a vital platform to explore the latest developments in Internet technology and best practices.

The agenda includes sessions focused on IPv6 adoption, routing security, network innovation and measurements, and emerging challenges in the region’s Internet landscape.



ADC launches Wyman Chan whitening in GCC

The American Dental Center (ADC) is revolutionising the world of dental aesthetics in Oman with the exclusive introduction of Dr Wyman Chan’s groundbreaking teeth whitening system. As the first clinic in the GCC to offer this advanced technology, ADC is setting a new standard for radiant smiles.

Renowned globally for his innovative and enamel-safe whitening techniques, Dr Wyman Chan has developed a system that delivers dramatic results with minimal sensitivity. ADC’s highly skilled dentist, Dr Sara Ezzati, has undergone specialised training from Dr Chan himself, ensuring that patients receive the highest level of care and expertise.

This exclusive partnership

with Dr Chan allows ADC to offer a superior whitening solution that is both effective and gentle. The system’s unique formula protects enamel while brightening teeth, making it ideal for even the most sensitive individuals. By bringing this cutting-edge technology to Oman, ADC is reaffirming its commitment to providing world-class dental care and helping patients achieve their dream smiles.

ADC is a leading dental clinic in Muscat, offering a comprehensive range of dental services, including cosmetic dentistry, restorative dentistry, and preventive care. With a team of highly qualified dentists and state-of-the-art technology, ADC is dedicated to providing exceptional dental care to its patients.

Study in India Expo connecting Indian diaspora with world-class education

Are you an Indian parent in Oman, eager to explore top-tier educational opportunities for your child? The Study in India Expo is your gateway to accessing world-class education in India, designed specifically for the Indian diaspora in Oman.

Set to take place in Muscat on December 6 and 7 at Al Falaj Hotel; and on December 9 at Radisson Blu Resort in Suhar.

This event is a must-visit for families looking to make informed decisions about their children’s future.

This year’s Study in India Expo brings together over 40 distinguished institutions, many holding prestigious NAAC accreditation and NIRF rankings, providing confidence in the quality of education and excellence in academic infrastructure.

‘You’ll find representatives from top-ranked universities such as VIT-Vellore, Manipal, Jain University, KIIT University, LPU, BMS Group of Institutions Bangalore, Thapar Institute, Sharda University, Kumaraguru Institutions Coimbatore, Pandit Deendayal Energy University, and many more,’ the organisers said. These universities, recognised for their global standards and future-ready programs, pre-



sent an unparalleled opportunity for students to interact, ask questions, and explore their potential academic pathways.

Whether your child’s aspirations lie in engineering, medicine, business, or emerging fields like AI, Robotics, and Aeronautics, the Study in India Expo offers a chance to explore all these avenues in one place. Engage directly with university representatives, admissions teams, and career counsellors to understand the best courses and pathways suited to your child’s aspirations and the demands of tomorrow’s workforce.

Top boarding schools

In addition to universities, the Expo brings together over India’s leading Boarding Schools, including Woodstock School, The Aga Khan Academy, Mayo College, Mayo College Girls’ School, Mussoorie International School, Jain International Residential School, SSVN World School, MIT Vishwashanti Gurukul World school, Indian Public School Dehradun, and many more. From hill stations to metropolitan campuses, these schools offer top-notch facilities at accessible fees and follow various esteemed boards like IB, Cambridge, CBSE,

and ICSE. The Expo is a unique platform for families to explore boarding schools that not only emphasize academic rigor but also nurture essential 21st-century skills, preparing students for global success.

One of the expo’s highlights will be a series of seminars, panel discussions, and counselling sessions with leading educationists and career counsellors, focusing on futuristic careers and emerging fields. For students aiming for high-impact careers in a rapidly evolving job market, these sessions provide a rare opportunity to gain insights.

Youth National Sailing Squad places decided at Oman Sail's Suhar Festival

Oman Sail's youth ranking race wrapped up at the Suhar Festival with young sailors in Optimist, ILCA 4 and ILCA 6 categories treating visitors to a stunning display of sailing. Prizes were awarded for the top three in each race, as well as the best performing girls and juniors in the Optimist event.

Saud Talib al Shaqsi won the Optimist overall with three wins from four races to finish four points ahead of Firas Haitham al Nabhani in second. Abdulrahman al Hadi was third, one point further back. The Optimist Girl's category was won Hadeel Yousuf al Mushaifri in 8th overall, ahead of Tarteel Zaid al Hasani and Abeer Khalil al Zakwani in third.

Mohammed Ziyad al Qasmi finished 6th overall to win the Junior competition ahead of Habib Abdulaziz al Hasani in 12th overall and Harib Mohsin al Busaidi in 13th overall.

Abdulatif Ziyad al Qasmi won the ILCA 4 category by posting four wins from six races. Faisal Hamed al Adwi finished second with one win and two second places, just ahead of Saleh Ali al



Balushi who secured one win, one second place and two third placed finishes.

The ILCA 6 category was won by Al Mutasim Hamood al Farsi with three wins from six races

and never finishing outside of the top three. Ali al Saadi finished second with two race wins and

Elyas Bader al Fadhli finished third after winning the final race of the event.

Hashim al Rashdi, Head Coach Performance at Oman Sail and Team Leader, said, "This

It is clear from the performances this weekend that we have great depth of talent and several highly promising sailors at all age groups

HASHIM AL RASHDI

was a memorable event for our young sailors who put their training into practice and performed very well across all categories, while also sharing the sport with a new audience.

"The rankings from this event will help decide future places in the national sailing squad for regional and international regattas and it is clear from the performances this weekend that we have great depth of talent and several highly promising sailors at all age groups."

The Suhar Festival ranking race was organised by Oman Sail under the authority of the Oman Maritime Sports Committee as part of the annual Suhar Festival.

ISC, Rangrez present special art exhibition

The Indian Social Club, with its diverse linguistic wings, serves as a hub for cultural, social, and artistic activities, fostering unity and community engagement.

Rangrez, the Club's dedicated art platform, showcases artistic talent through exhibitions and events that celebrate creativity and cultural connections.

In honour of Oman's 54th National Day, Rangrez is hosting a special art exhibition celebrating the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of Oman. Featuring 35 remarkable works, including digital art and photography the exhibition brings together the talents of Rangrez's artists alongside contributors from across the Indian Social Club. Each piece offers a unique perspective on Oman's rich culture, stunning landscapes, and vibrant people.



Al Rusayl Industrial City Football Cup 2024 held

Al Rusayl Industrial City Football Cup 2024 - one of the longest-standing institutional tournaments in the Sultanate of Oman - has kicked off, bringing together 12 teams in a thrilling competition.

Held at Oman Cement football field, the tournament is designed to strengthen connections among the cadres within Al Rusayl Industrial City, and promote a competitive and

entertaining atmosphere in Madayn's industrial cities.

This year's teams include the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates 'Madayn', National Aluminium Products Company (NAPCO), Nuhas Oman, Nafith Logistics Services, Reem Batteries, Oasis Water, Muscat Steel, Oman Cement, A'Saffa Foods, Oman Cables, Federal Transformers and Switchgears, and United Engineering Services.

Bank Muscat's efforts to support youth bring more opportunities

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, works relentlessly to empower youth by continually organizing training programmes to help them develop their professional skills and grant them access to career opportunities across the bank's different departments and branches.

"Omani youth are active partners in the current development plans and they are the leaders of tomorrow. In the bank, we take pride in our young employees who work across the various departments and branches," said Said Salim al Aufi, General Manager - Human Resources & Administration at Bank Muscat.

"Considering their pivotal role, we are keen to provide various training and learning opportunities to help them enhance their performance and achieve their goals. I would like to take this glorious occasion to extend my appreciation to our employees for their ongoing efforts to strengthen the Bank's leadership position," he added.

Sharing her view on the opportunities provided by Bank



L-R: Najla al Hasani, Mohammed al Mukhaini, Isra al Araimi and Mazin al Farsi

Muscat for growth and development, Isra Talal al Araimi, Acting Unit Head Family Accounts 1, said that the bank's culture strongly encourages professional development through training programmes and workshops.

"I participated in many of these courses, including finance and financial analysis, as well as courses that focus on soft skills such as negotiation and how to deal with different personalities. These courses added significant value to my work."

Mohammed al Mukhaini, Branch Manager - Sur al Sharia, said that young people should be

adaptable and open to new challenges. "In terms of training opportunities, I benefitted from specialised management workshops as well as leadership programmes such as the Jadarah programme for branch managers, all of which helped me improve my financial knowledge and develop my skills, preparing me for higher-level leadership roles."

Najla Ali al Hasani, Senior Specialist - Technology Innovation, explained that it is normal to face challenges at first, but the most important thing is to learn from them and continue to grow.

"We should embrace new prospects, as everything is an opportunity for learning, maturity and self-discovery. Change may be difficult, but by time we will find ourselves surrounded by a support network and experienced people to learn from."

Similarly, Mazin Moosa al Farsi, Personal Banker at Burj al Sahwa branch, said, "I am really pleased with the results I achieved as a result of the training workshops I attended, which focused on various subjects such as customer services and how to communicate with people with disabilities."

BankDhofar organises camel race celebrating tradition of sultanate

BankDhofar organised its first camel races events as part of the bank's commitment to support heritage activities and preserve Oman's folklore.

The first event was held in Al Kamel Wal Wafi in Shariqah governorate, the second race was held at Maydan al Mushrif in Mudhaibi, while the third race was held at Bashayer Square in Adam, and the last round of camel races concluded in Barka.

The races were attended by some of the best camel racers in the provinces, celebrating camel owners and those interested in this authentic heritage, honouring a tradition that has been an integral part of the cultural identity of Oman for centuries.

The races were attended by a number of invitees, including sheikhs and officials from differ-

ent governorates, a number of the bank's executive team members, as well as fans of this authentic Omani heritage. The festival included camel races that reflect the richness of Oman's cultural heritage. The races consisted of several runs for the participating camels, and the race activities witnessed a great response from the public and camel racing enthusiasts from residents of the neighbouring states and regions.

Camel racing, a sport that embodies the spirit of endurance and teamwork, aligns with BankDhofar's core values of collaboration, performance driven and building relationships within the community. The camel race event attracted active participation from across Oman and the region.



Talib bin Mohamed al Hajri, AGM - Interior Branches at BankDhofar, said, "We at BankDhofar realise the importance of organising and participating in events that are of interest to the community, and since traditional camel racing is very popular in Oman and attracts a large number of people who love this popular sport. It also promotes basic heritage values as well as the spirit of competition between racers, and celebrates Omani history and traditions. Therefore, BankDhofar's organisation of such events confirm the bank's interest to revive Oman's traditional heritage, as these events serve to promote the cultural heritage of Oman."

The initiative comes within the bank's framework of community support and involvement

in various activities that aim to promote the Omani culture and heritage. BankDhofar remains committed to supporting initiatives that celebrate the Omani traditions and contribute to the communities it serves.

The combination of the thorough vision of the bank, the comprehensive strategy that revolves around following best international banking practices and providing best customer experience, as well as commitment to community development and contribution to the growth of the national economy, placed BankDhofar on top of the list of best banks in the region.

With a branch network of 129 branches and over 360 ATMs, CDMs, FFMs and MFKs across Oman, BankDhofar is one of the fastest growing banks in Oman.



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

EU chief: Door remains open for Georgia’s aspirations

Istanbul, Turkey - European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen expressed disappointment on Sunday over Georgia’s leadership moving away from European Union values while reaffirming the EU’s support for the Georgian people and their European aspirations.

“We regret the Georgian leadership’s shift away from the EU and its values,” she said in a statement on X, voicing concern over Georgia’s recent political direction.

Despite this, Von der Leyen emphasised the EU’s unwavering support for the Georgian people, saying ‘the EU stands with the people of Georgia and their choice for a European future’.

The European leader reassured that the EU’s invitation remains intact, adding ‘the door to the EU remains open’.

However, she stressed that the next steps depend on Georgia’s leaders.

“The return of Georgia on the EU path is in the hands of the Georgian leadership,” she said.

The statement followed escalating tensions between Georgia and the EU.

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze recently accused European politicians of meddling in the country’s internal

affairs and using EU funds as leverage.

“Considering all this, we have decided not to put the start of EU accession negotiations on the agenda until the end of 2028,” Kobakhidze said last week.

The European Parliament

The European Commission president emphasised the EU’s unwavering support for the Georgian people, saying ‘the EU stands with the people of Georgia and their choice for a European future’

has also called for a rerun of Georgia’s October 26 parliamentary elections, citing democratic concerns.

The announcement sparked mass protests by opposition groups and pro-EU activists, who have since taken to the streets demanding reforms and greater alignment with European values.

Anadolu Agency

US: Biden pardons son Hunter

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden on Sunday signed a pardon for his son, Robert Hunter Biden, who had been convicted on charges related to gun crimes and tax violations. The pardon ensures that Hunter Biden will not face sentencing for these offences and removes the possibility of prison time.

In a statement, President Biden addressed the charges against his son, arguing that individuals in similar situations - such as those with tax payment issues due to addiction - typically receive non-criminal resolutions. He contended that Hunter’s case was treated differently, leading to felony charges despite the absence of aggravating factors.

Biden also stressed his commitment to not interfere with the Justice Department’s decision-making, despite his belief that his son had been ‘selectively and unfairly prosecuted’.

“Today, I signed a pardon for my son Hunter. From the day I took office, I said I would not interfere with the Justice Department’s decision-making, and I kept my word even as I have watched my son being selectively and unfairly prosecuted. Without aggravating factors like use in a crime, multiple purchases, or buying a weapon as a straw purchaser, people are almost never brought to trial on felony charges solely for how they filled out a gun form. Those who were late paying their taxes because of serious addictions but paid them back subsequently with interest and penalties are typically given non-criminal resolutions. It is clear that Hunter was treated differently,” the



US President Joe Biden said his son had been ‘selectively and unfairly prosecuted’

statement read.

Biden explained that the charges against his son were initiated after political opponents in Congress pushed for the case to be brought forward. He added that a plea deal, which had been negotiated with the Department of Justice, unravelled in court due to political pressure.

“The charges in his cases came about only after several of my political opponents in Congress instigated them to attack me and oppose my election. Then, a carefully negotiated plea deal, agreed to by the Department of Justice, unravelled in the courtroom - with a number of my

political opponents in Congress taking credit for bringing political pressure on the process. Had the plea deal held, it would have been a fair, reasonable resolution of Hunter’s cases,” the statement added.

The President maintained that the charges were politically motivated, asserting that Hunter was targeted because of his relationship with him. Biden concluded his statement by expressing his belief that, while he had faith in the justice system, the legal process had been influenced by politics, leading to a ‘miscarriage of justice’.

“No reasonable person who

looks at the facts of Hunter’s cases can reach any other conclusion than Hunter was singled out only because he is my son - and that is wrong. There has been an effort to break Hunter, who has been five and a half years sober, even in the face of unrelenting attacks and selective prosecution. In trying to break Hunter, they’ve tried to break me - and there’s no reason to believe it will stop here. Enough is enough,” Biden said.

“For my entire career I have followed a simple principle: just tell the American people the truth. They’ll be fair-minded. Here’s the truth: I believe in the

The charges in his cases came about only after several of my political opponents instigated them to attack me and oppose my election

JOE BIDEN

justice system, but as I have wrestled with this, I also believe raw politics has infected this process, and it led to a miscarriage of justice - and once I made this decision this weekend, there was no sense in delaying it further. I hope Americans will understand why a father and a President would come to this decision.”

ANI

Ireland election: Fianna Fail party leads tight race

London, UK - The majority of seats in Ireland’s parliamentary election have been filled, with the Fianna Fail (FF) party continuing to lead a tight three-way battle in the country’s general election.

So far, 162 of 174 seats have been filled as counting continued to determine the winner of the election battle.

Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Micheal Martin’s FF party is leading with 43 seats, while a neck-and-neck race continues between Prime Minister Simon Harris’ Fine Gael (FG) and Mary Lou McDonald’s



Sinn Fein (SF) as both have so far gained 36 seats each.

Social Democrats have 11 seats, followed by Labour with 9 in Friday’s snap elections which recorded a voter turnout of 59.7%.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Stephen Donnelly lost his seat in Dail, Irish parliament, after being eliminated in Wicklow in the early hours of Monday, according to *Irish Times*. The remaining seats are expected to be filled later on Monday.

A new coalition between FF and FG parties is expected to

emerge, according to predictions as both centre-right parties may need a small group of independent lawmakers to form a coalition as 88 seats are needed for a majority.

Both FF and FG have again ruled out Irish republican Sinn Fein as a potential coalition partner in the next government.

The election came following the dissolution of the 33rd Dail on November 8 by President Michael Higgins at the request of Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Simon Harris.

Anadolu Agency

SURVIVING SNOW IN NORTH MACEDONIA



Sheep search for feed after snowfall in Gostivar, North Macedonia, on Sunday (Xinhua)

‘Ukraine’s NATO membership must include entire territory’

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday that if Ukraine is invited to join NATO, it should apply to the entire territory of the country, not just certain regions.

“If this is an invitation, it must apply to all of our territory. It is unacceptable for NATO to invite only part of Ukraine’s land,” said Zelensky during a meeting with European Council President Antonio Costa, who was in Kyiv for talks.

Following the meeting, the two men held a joint press conference to address the media.

During the meeting, Zelensky highlighted Ukraine’s need for air defence systems, pointing out that Russia continues to carry out attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure and civilians.

“Unfortunately, the attacks continue. Last month, the Russian army launched 347 ballistic missiles and over 2,000 Iranian-made Shahed drones at Ukraine.

“No country can withstand such terror for an entire month. We are grateful to those who



Ukrainian President Zelensky was speaking to European Council President Antonio Costa, who was in Kyiv for talks

have helped us with air defence systems,” he added.

Zelensky also discussed the situation on the front lines and the provision of artillery shells to the Ukrainian military.

“It is not possible for NATO to invite only part of Ukraine’s territory. This would mean not only that other parts of our land are in danger but that the remaining part of Ukraine is automatically endangered as well,” Zelensky noted.

“Ukraine has never intended to involve NATO members’ armies in this war,” he added, recalling NATO’s Article 5, which specifies that an attack on any of the member countries of the al-

liance is effectively an attack against them.

Zelensky warned that if NATO countries send troops to Ukraine, ‘half of the allies would reduce their support’.

Costa also noted that the European Union plans to increase its financial support to Ukraine.

“This month, we decided to provide an additional 4.2bn (US\$4.4bn) in aid to support Ukraine’s budget. From next month onward, we plan to provide 1.5bn in assistance every month throughout the year,” he said. Costa also said that the EU is preparing its 15th package of sanctions against Russia.

Anadolu Agency

Iraqi militias provide Assad support

Approximately 200 Iranian-backed militias from Iraq traveling in pickups crossed into Syria overnight

Damascus, Syria - Iranian-backed militias from Iraq have entered Syria to assist the government's counteroffensive against rebels who have taken control of Aleppo, the largest city.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, based in Britain, approximately 200 Iraqi militiamen traveling in pickups crossed into Syria overnight.

"These are fresh reinforcements being sent to aid our comrades on the front lines in the north," a senior military official told the Reuters news agency.

Fighting continues around Aleppo, Idlib

Led by militant group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, insurgents launched a two-pronged attack on the city last week and moved into the countryside around Idlib and the neighbouring Hama province.

Syrian and Russian airstrikes on rebel positions continued mostly in the two provinces.

Civil defence organisation the White Helmets said at least 25 people were killed in airstrikes carried out by Syria and Russia in the region. A spokesperson for the Russian government said 'we of course continue to support Bashar Assad and we continue contacts at the appropriate levels'.

Iran reiterates support for Syria

On Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said advisors from



Tehran would remain in Syria 'in accordance with the wishes' of Damascus.

"We entered Syria many years ago at the official invitation of the Syrian government, when the Syrian people faced the threat of terrorism," he said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with Syrian President Bashar Assad in Damascus on Sunday and announced Tehran's full support

for his government.

"I clearly announce full-fledged support to President Assad, government, army and people of Syria by the Islamic Republic of Iran," Araghchi said.

The Iranian foreign minister later arrived in Turkey, one of the rebels' main backers.

Syrian Kurds were fleeing the fighting in large numbers after Turkish-backed rebels seized tal Rifaat from US-backed Kurdish

authorities.

Western governments have issued a call for de-escalation in the Syrian conflict.

Meanwhile, the UK has reiterated its 'call for a Syrian-led political solution' in Syria.

"Following recent developments in Syria, we urge all parties to protect civilian lives and infrastructure to prevent further suffering, the displacement of vulnerable people, and disruption

to essential humanitarian aid," a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday.

"We reiterate our call for a Syrian-led political solution to the conflict," the spokesperson said, adding that the Bashar al-Assad regime created the 'conditions for the current escalation through its ongoing refusal to engage in a political process and its

reliance on Russia and Iran'.

"The regime and all actors in Syria's conflict must support and engage with negotiations as called for in UNSCR (UN Security Council Resolution) 2254," the statement stressed.

After opposition armed groups launched an operation against the regime forces in Aleppo on November 27, the Syrian regime forces allied with the PKK/YPG and ceded certain

I clearly announce full-fledged support to President Assad, government, army and people of Syria by the Islamic Republic of Iran

ABBAS ARAGHCHI

areas to the terrorist group.

The PKK/YPG, reinforced by additional forces from eastern Syria, began fortifying these areas.

To counter the PKK/YPG's move to establish a terrorist corridor between Tel Rifaat and Manbij, the Syrian National Army (SNA) initiated Operation Dawn of Freedom.

Following the siege of Tel Rifaat district, the district centre was liberated from terrorist control.

Syria has been embroiled in a vicious civil war since early 2011 when the Assad Syrian regime cracked down on pro-democracy protests with unexpected ferocity.

Besides, the number of civilians killed in airstrikes carried out by forces of Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime in Idlib province rose to 16 on Sunday.

Regime warplanes targeted many neighbourhoods in the city of Idlib.

Sources from the Syrian Civil Defence said that 59 civilians were also injured, including 21 children and 19 women.

Agencies

Sudanese army claims killing 30 RSF men

Ankara, Turkey - The Sudanese army claimed on Monday that it killed some 30 paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) gunmen as a result of fierce clashes that erupted between the warring parties in the North African country.

Sudanese army and its rival RSF clashed in the capital Khartoum, and Al-Fasher city in the North Darfur state, western Sudan.

According to a local committee in Al-Fasher, the RSF's intensified shelling on the city left at least five people killed and others injured as a shell hit a livestock market in the city.

A statement by the Sudanese army claimed to have thwarted an attempt by the RSF to bring 'lethal weapons', including drones into Al-Fasher from the nearby Nyala city. The Sudanese army said it killed some 30 RSF gunmen, arrested others, and seized quantities of weapons



The Sudanese army said it killed some 30 RSF gunmen, arrested others, and seized quantities of weapons

during the attack.

The RSF is yet to comment on the Sudanese army statement.

Meanwhile, local sources reported that both the Sudanese

army and RSF exchanged heavy artillery shelling on the neighbourhoods of Omdurman city, western Khartoum.

The Sudanese army attacked

the RSF positions in Bahri city, northern Khartoum, the sources added.

Yet, no figures about casualties have been reported from the

Sudanese army and its rival RSF clashed in the capital Khartoum, and Al-Fasher city in the North Darfur state

attacks in Khartoum.

Since mid-April last year, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF have been engaged in a conflict that has resulted in more than 20,000 deaths and displaced nearly 10mn people, according to the UN.

There have been growing calls from the UN and international bodies to end the conflict, as the war has pushed millions of Sudanese to the brink of famine and death due to food shortages, with the fighting spreading to 13 of Sudan's 18 states.

Anadolu Agency



Israeli attacks kill 37 more Gazans

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 37 more Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, pushing up the overall death toll since last year to 44,466, the Health Ministry in the enclave said on Monday.

A ministry statement added that some 105,358 others were injured in the ongoing assault.

"Israeli forces killed 37 people and injured 108 others in four massacres of families in the last 24 hours," the ministry said.

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

At least 25 people were killed when Israeli warplanes hit and levelled an inhabited home in Beit Lahia in northern Gaza, a local source said on Monday.

Witnesses said that efforts were still ongoing to search for survivors under the rubble of the building in Beit Lahia Project area, where women and children had sheltered.

Since October 7, Israel has launched a large-scale ground

operation in northern Gaza to allegedly prevent the Palestinian resistance group Hamas from regrouping. Palestinians, however, accuse Israel of seeking to occupy the area and forcibly displace its residents.

Since then, almost no humanitarian aid, including food, medicine, and fuel, has been allowed into the area, leaving most of the population there - currently estimated at 80,000 - on the verge of famine.

More than 2,700 people have since been killed in northern Gaza, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Meanwhile, a ministerial conference opened in the Egyptian capital Cairo on Monday to enhance humanitarian response in the war-torn Gaza Strip.

The conference is held under the auspices of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed.

According to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry statement, the meeting is attended by 103 delegations representing countries and organisations.

Anadolu Agency

Global arms sales rise driven by escalating conflicts

Ankara, Turkey - Sales revenue for the world's largest 100 arms makers rose 4.2% year-on-year to US\$632bn in 2023, an international think tank report showed on Monday.

While arms revenue hikes were reported across all regions, companies based in Russia and the Middle East saw particularly sharp increases, reflecting heightened demand fuelled by ongoing conflicts and geopolitical tensions, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in its report.

Smaller producers have been more agile in meeting the surge in demand driven by the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, rising tensions in East Asia, and global rearmament initiatives, it explained.



The total arms revenues of the world's top 100 companies rebounded last year after a decline in 2022, with nearly three-quarters reporting year-on-year growth. "There was a marked rise in arms revenues in 2023, and this is likely to continue in 2024," said Lorenzo Scarazzato, a re-

searcher with the SIPRI Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme.

"The arms revenues of the top 100 arms producers still did not fully reflect the scale of demand, and many companies have launched recruitment drives, suggesting they are optimistic about

future sales," Scarazzato added.

Dominating the top 100 with a 50% share, the arms revenues of the 41 US-based companies generated US\$317bn, rising 2.5% from a year ago.

On the other hand, Lockheed Martin and RTX, the world's two largest arms producers, saw a decline in arms revenues.

Nan Tian, director of SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme, stated that major companies like Lockheed Martin and RTX often depend on complex, multi-layered supply chains, which left them vulnerable to supply chain disruptions in 2023.

"This was particularly the case in the aeronautics and missile sectors," Tian added.

The arms revenues of the 27 Top 100 companies based in Europe (excluding Russia) amounted to US\$133bn in 2023, marginally up by 0.2% at an annualised pace.

The report highlighted that European companies produce advanced weapon systems and were primarily focused on fulfilling older contracts in 2023, meaning their revenues did not capture the recent surge in new orders. "Complex weapon systems have longer lead times," explained Scarazzato, adding that companies that manufacture them are slower to adapt to shifts in demand, which is why their revenues remained relatively low in 2023.

Anadolu Agency

Guinea: Dozens killed after stampede over soccer penalty

Nzerekore, Guinea - At least 56 people, including children, were killed when chaos broke out at a soccer game in Guinea, authorities said on Monday.

The incident occurred on Sunday in Guinea's second-largest city, Nzerekore.

"The government deplors the incidents that marred the football match between the Labe and Nzerekore teams this afternoon in Nzerekore," Guinea's Prime Minister Amadou Oury Bah wrote on social media.

"During the stampede, vic-

tims were recorded."

Match attendees said that a dispute broke out between fans of the local Nzerekore squad and supporters of the team from the city of Labe following a controversial decision by the referee.

"This (the disputed penalty) angered supporters who threw stones. This is how the security services used tear gas," local outlet Media Guinea reported.

The use of tear gas reportedly sparked panic.

A police station in Nzerekore was also vandalised as the



The incident occurred on Sunday in Guinea's second-largest city, Nzerekore

clashes moved through the streets of the city. According to city officials who spoke with journalists on condition of anonymity, many of the victims were minors who got caught a stampede out of the stadium that followed police officers releasing tear gas.

Hospitals overwhelmed

Unverified footage showed bodies in the street outside the stadium. Other videos showed people clambering up the walls

of the stadium to escape the violence. "There are bodies lined up as far as the eye can see in the hospital. Others are lying on the floor in the hallways. The morgue is full," a doctor told French news agency AFP.

PM Bah appealed for calm as the details of the incident emerged. According to local media, the match was held in honour of Guinea's military leader Mamadi Doumbouya, who has been in power since a September 2021 coup.

DW

Myanmar: Call for course correction

UN experts called for a 'course correction' in international response to the escalating crisis in Myanmar

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN experts on Monday called for a 'course correction' in the international response to the escalating crisis in Myanmar as the civilian death toll exceeded 6,000.

"There are now 6,000 reminders that the international community is failing the people of Myanmar," the experts said in a statement. "It is time for a change, starting with moving this disaster out of the shadows of international attention."

Nothing that international action, so far, has reduced the junta's access to weapons that it uses to attack civilians, the experts said: "As welcome as these



actions have been, they remain grossly inadequate and lack the coordination and strategic targeting necessary to deliver the support the people of Myanmar

need and deserve. We can and must do better."

They said 'unlawful killings' by junta forces are 'common and are characterised by their brutal-

ity and inhumanity' as nearly 2,000 individuals have been killed in the custody of junta forces, 365 have been shot in the head, and 215 burned alive, ac-

cording to credible reports cited by the experts.

They also voiced alarm about the 'ongoing use of arbitrary detention and acts tantamount to

enforced disappearance to silence those opposing the military junta'.

"Over 21,000 of those arrested since the February 2021

military coup remain in detention, many held incommunicado, and in many instances with their families and lawyers having no information on their fates or whereabouts," the statement said.

Besides denying the junta access to weapons, the experts called on UN member states to deny it the legitimacy it seeks.

"This includes publicly rejecting the junta's plans to hold what they are trying to define as 'elections' next year," the press release said. "You cannot hold an election when you deposed a democratically elected Government in an unconstitutional coup, and continue to arbitrarily arrest, detain, disappear, torture and execute opposition leaders, nor when it is illegal for journalists to report the truth."

"We urge UN Member States to call this exercise what it is, a fraud," they added.

They also called on states and donors to step up assistance to civil society organisations documenting human rights abuses, protecting civilian populations, and delivering life-saving humanitarian aid.

Anadolu Agency

Joe Biden makes Angola his last stop

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden's first Africa trip next week will be among his final international engagements before leaving office.

Biden postponed a planned visit to Angola in October as Hurricane Milton approached the state of Florida to oversee preparations for and the response to the storm.

After Air Force One lands in Luanda, Angola's capital, on Monday, Biden faces a packed agenda.

Military, political and economic agreements are set to be signed, signalling strengthened ties between the United States and Angola.

"This trip is the result of years of diplomatic efforts from Angola's president," Angolan political analyst Claudio Silva told DW. "This is a win for (Angolan) President Joao Lourenco, who for years has been striving for more international recognition. It's time to reap what he sowed."

The timing of the visit, shortly after the US Presidential election, is no coincidence and rubberstamping economic cooperation projects seems a priority.

Ambitious economic plans

Angola hosts a number of significant current and future projects with American involvement. These include the



Angola will host Joe Biden between December 2 and 4 on his first Africa trip as president

Angola hosts a number of significant current and future projects with American involvement. These include the construction and running of an oil refinery in Soyo, northern Angola

construction and running of an oil refinery in Soyo, northern Angola.

But the development of the so-called Lobito Corridor is the biggest. It involves the development of a rail link between Lobito on Angola's Atlantic coast, the Copperbelt in Zambia, and the cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), connecting the resource rich central Africa with an Atlantic port.

The Lobito Corridor is part of the American Partnership for

Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGI), which many see this as a reaction to China's famed Belt and Road infrastructure programme, ultimately aimed at securing links to resources and markets.

The Lobito Corridor would use the 1,344km (835-mile) Benguela Railway, which transects Angola from west to east and connects to Congolese tracks.

Due to Angola's three-decade civil war, in 2001, only 34km of track remained in ser-

vice. The plan is to build 550km of railway in Zambia and 260km of roads, with support from the US, European Union, and the African Development Bank, which will contribute US\$500mn to the US\$1.6bn project.

"The Americans don't want to give up the region's valuable (resources) to the Chinese. But the question is if they can even match the Chinese, who have invested in the region for decades and have a massive advantage," said Silva.

In the 1970s, China began pouring money into southern and central Africa, with a focus on raw materials: Angolan oil, Zambian copper, and Congolese cobalt.

Angola owes China around US\$25bn, the most of any African country. Contractually,

Angola must settle its debts with China, preferable in oil deliveries.

US-China tug of war spans Africa

With the Lobito Corridor seeking to connect central Africa to the Atlantic, China is already building a new line to the Indian Ocean. In March 2024, Beijing announced the expansion of the Tanzania Zambia Railway (TAZARA) at a cost of US\$1bn.

Started in the 1970s, this 1,860km-long stretch was fully financed by China, and opened in 1975. It links Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to New Kapiri Mposhi south of the Zambian-Congolese copper belt.

In future, there would be two alternatives of roughly equal length for transporting mining products: to the Atlantic (Lobito Corridor) or to the Indian Ocean (TAZARA). However, the Chinese-financed railroad has been in operation much longer, and is currently being extensively modernised.

"The Angolan president wants to work with both economic superpowers and wants to profit from the competition. Russia also has skin in the game," said Silva. He added that while Angola is aware of its geopolitical importance, it has not always been easy negotiating between the various partners.

DW



German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock

Germany's FM warns China over support to Russia

Berlin, Germany - German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that Russian President Vladimir Putin is dragging Asia into the country's war with Ukraine during her visit to China on Monday.

Baerbock met with her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing, where she discussed allegations that China is supplying drones or drone components to support Moscow's war.

She said that Beijing's support would 'impact' the ties between the countries, according to a foreign office statement.

"Drones from Chinese factories and North Korean troops attacking peace in the centre of Europe violate our core European security interests," Baerbock said.

While regularly calling for de-escalation, Beijing is considered to be Russia's most important source of support and has not

condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine.

EV tariffs on the agenda

Another issue on the agenda during the meeting was trade.

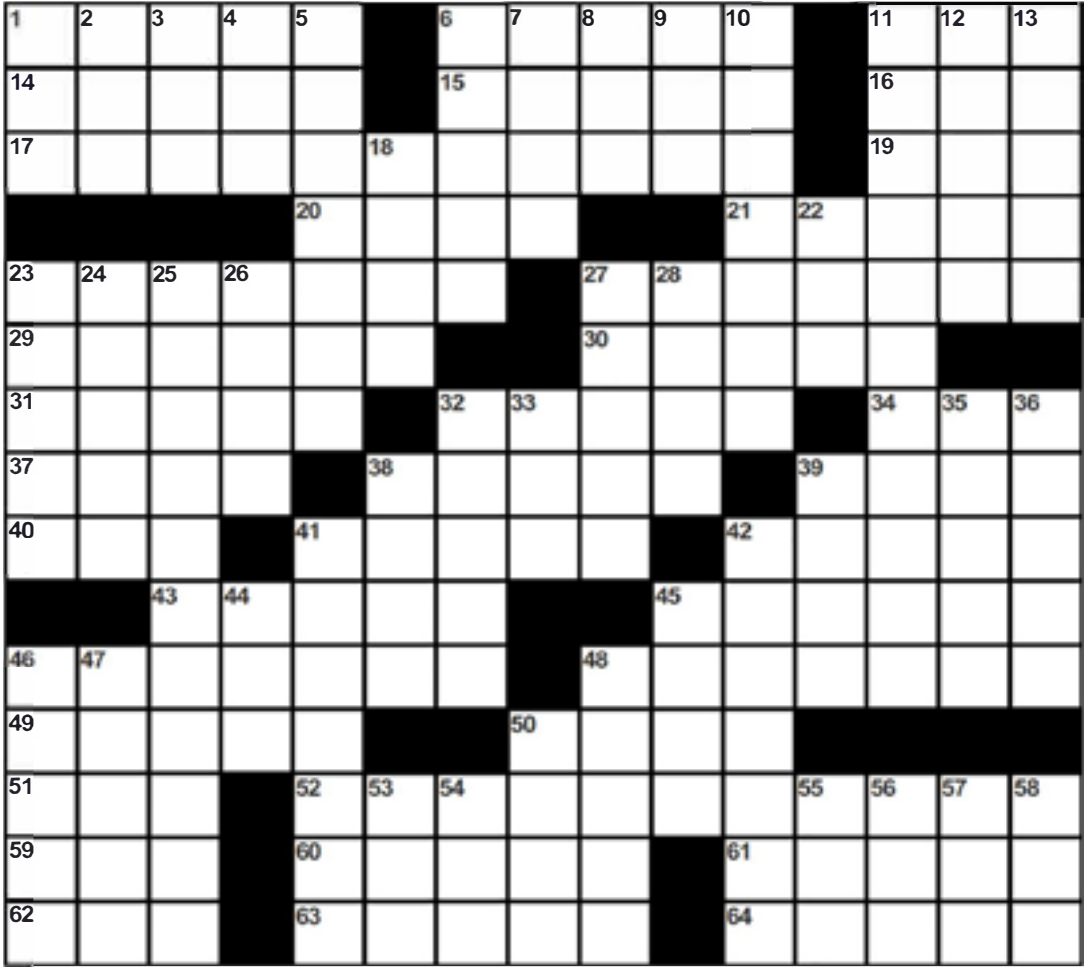
The German foreign minister urged Chinese authorities to 'engage constructively' with the European Union over tariffs levied on Chinese electric vehicles.

Germany is one of few European countries to oppose the European Union's tariffs on Chinese EVs, fearing that it could impact the market for German cars in China. "A level playing field, fair competition and reciprocal market conditions are essential," Baerbock said, according to her spokesperson.

Beijing is considering retaliatory measures, which could impact German carmakers.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Dixie drink
 - 6) Furrier John Jacob
 - 11) Mac
 - 14) Willow rod
 - 15) Cathedral topper
 - 16) Kansas-to-Ohio dir.
 - 17) Eccentrics
 - 19) Long-eared mount
 - 20) Academic, as a point
 - 21) Be silent, in music
 - 23) Toilet tissue superlative
 - 27) Deliberate discourtesies
 - 29) Abstains from
 - 30) Devastation
 - 31) Maned animals
 - 32) Discontinue
 - 34) Photo_ (camera sessions)
 - 37) Some colonists
 - 38) Artful move
 - 39) Pass over
 - 40) Society newcomer, briefly
 - 41) Missile holders
 - 42) Moscow monetary unit
 - 43) Found a new tenant for
 - 45) Transfer for a price, as

- a used car
- 46) They run hot and cold
 - 48) Not all alike
 - 49) Bushes forming a fence
 - 50) Indian queen
 - 51) Web address ending
 - 52) Surge of popular support
 - 59) Quarterback Montana
 - 60) Style of column
 - 61) Overhangs
 - 62)_ and outs (intricacies)
 - 63) Who might be to blame
 - 64) Apprehension
- DOWN**
- 1) Nine-to-five activity
 - 2) An Olympics chant
 - 3) Fleur-de_
 - 4) "A rat!"
 - 5) Docs in training
 - 6) English race place
 - 7) Minor fight
 - 8) "... the season ... "
 - 9) Smelter input
 - 10) Itching for action
 - 11) Metal detector user, sometimes
 - 12) Not mounted, as some gems
 - 13) Conquers

- 18) Chuck
- 22) "Give it_!"
- 23) Light lunch
- 24) Like mutton or sheep
- 25) Spans for pedestrians
- 26) Pie holders
- 27) Carpet types
- 28) Emit coherent light
- 32) Stable babes
- 33) Tokyo, formerly
- 35) Disagreeable sorts, in slang
- 36) Commemorative marker
- 38) Losing proposition?
- 39) Yorkshire river
- 41)_ fizz (bar drink)
- 42) Brought up to date
- 44) Word with "roll" or "white"
- 45) Lemon cover
- 46) Japanese room divider
- 47) Eva of Argentina
- 48) School function
- 50) Archaeological site
- 53) "Winnie-the-Pooh" baby
- 54) Lennon's bride
- 55) "This means_!"
- 56) Time of anticipation
- 57) Grassland
- 58) "Acid" used in some trips

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Making a good first impression is extremely important right now. Appearances can swing a situation in your favor. Content is important, but first you need to take care of the style. Be sure to wear your best outfit if you want to get that new account or promotion. You'll be doubly impressive when you get around to showing off your brainpower, but you have to get your foot in the door first.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Whatever wild, impulsive thing you were about to do can probably wait. You're feeling a different kind of energy now, and you wouldn't mind simply sitting at your desk and taking care of less exciting business. This is your moment to balance the accounts and make sure you're not spending more than you have. Maybe you could pay those outstanding bills and take that weight off your mind. If this moment of fiscal sanity is happening within a job or organization.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You have a bit of an attitude these days. Used judiciously, this could help move some old obstacles out of the way. Just make sure you don't step on any toes you might need later. Walk away from anyone who tells you your free spirit is shaking things up too dramatically. It's not worth arguing about. The world is wide and your talents are many. Before too much longer you'll find a place that fits you.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You're the master of ceremonies. You're a fountain of cheerfulness. You're slated to have big fun no matter what you end up doing with yourself. Since you probably went over all the possibilities in your last slow moment, you're ready to move as soon as the mood hits you. Maybe you're up for a fresh attack on a project that once defeated you. Maybe you'll paint bright colors all over something that usually bores you to tears. Whatever you do, do it with gusto.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Stand up from your hiding place and walk into the heart of the game. Throw away the mask that so often hides your feelings. Even if everyone here isn't an old friend, you can certainly call them your equals. Maybe you'll take this proud moment to work on that project of all projects: yourself. This might make you unavailable for now, but there's always later. Anyone could track you down and ask what you're doing, and you'd respond openly.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You're interested in the ethics of this situation. The question may be obvious at first, but the answer is deep. Even if you're not a scholar or an attorney, you feel equipped to dissect this matter down to the bones. A new decision pushes some familiar old buttons although you might never have been here before. You learn something all over again once you revisit the beliefs instilled in you from early childhood.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

None of the usual strategies seem to work in a family argument. Everyone here knows each other too well. Ultimatums ring hollow when you can never completely turn your back and walk away. It doesn't help that those who love you the most may also be the quickest to find fault. Since everything is personal, your best hope is to communicate clearly without raising your voice. You score big points with your visible effort to be reasonable.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

If you're looking for an emotional connection, you could miss it unless you keep your eyes peeled. The more people are gathered in any one place, the more likely signals will cross in this dense, confusing environment. What can you do? Be as present as you possibly can be during this time of great opportunity. The odds are in your favor, especially if you're clear about what you want.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

For someone who usually likes to go with the flow or delegate the course of events, it's not like you to be so fixated on the details. Others are confused by your reactions. You might not even be aware that anything is different. Listen to what they're telling you instead of laughing it off. Although you weren't planning for a day of self-examination, this may be the time for looking at the whole picture instead of all its parts.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Technophobes take heart. Your dark ages are coming to an end in an era of user-friendliness. Meanwhile, technophiles get an open budget or find amazing sale prices. The equipment you coveted for so long can finally be yours. As your arsenal grows, increased computing power connects you to a whole new world. Even if you're not wired up and jacked in by this time tomorrow, you'll gain extra mileage with your sudden ability to make sense of unintelligible manuals.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Be open and prompt. Whether you're among friends or in a roomful of strangers, your wishes are relevant. Your hopes might line up perfectly with someone else's possibilities. Emotional candor is part of your cosmic profile, even if you sometimes think of yourself as guarded or evasive. A bold gambit is worth the risk. You might be surprised when you see all the people who appreciate your forthcoming style.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Membership comes with responsibilities. If you're part of a team or half of a relationship, your time may not be entirely your own, at least right now. In fact, the other half of your partnership may be asking for your help at the moment. Dig deep. You really do have the resources, both inner and outer, to deal with this. Later, you can attend to your personal to-do list. There's room for everything if you time it right.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In 2004 Sri Lanka deprived what people of the right to have an identity card?

- A. Bhikkhus
- B. Bike couriers
- C. Buddhists
- D. Bhikkhuni

02. When was the first international championship, the World Cup, of One Day International (ODI) cricket held?

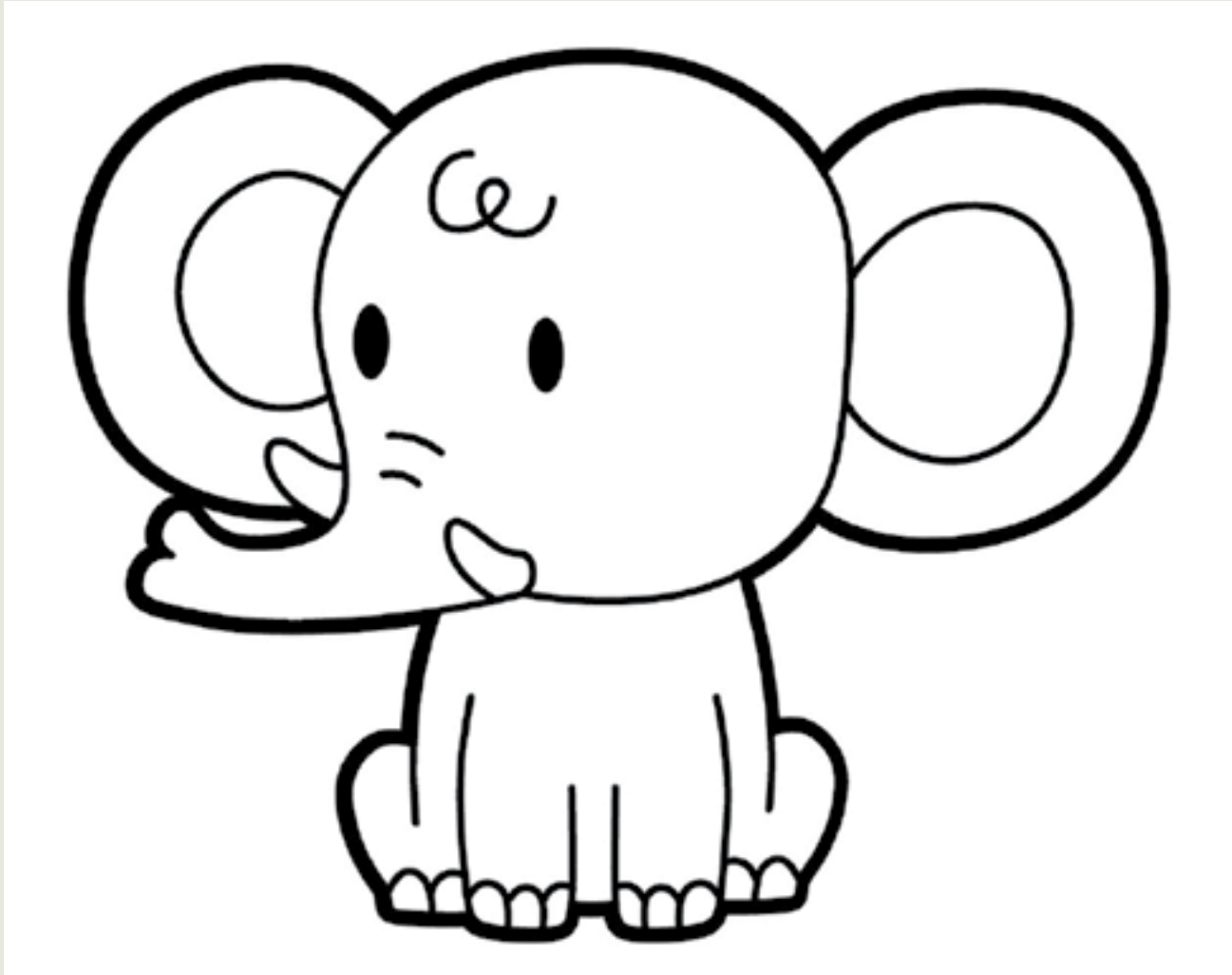
- A. 1981
- B. 2021
- C. 1975
- D. 1973

03. In 1660 Robert Hooke developed what?

- A. The law of elasticity
- B. A method to determine the absolute value of pi
- C. A code system that could be used by telegraphy
- D. A 15 note musical scale

Answers: 1.D 2.D 3.A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

C	P	A	R
K	N	E	S
G	S	L	A
O	P	I	P

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.

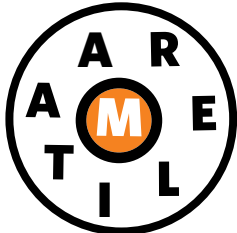
SOLUTION
20-25 words: Excellent,
15-20 words: Very good,
10-15 words: Good,
5-10 words: Average

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

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

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

OUTMANOEUVRED

Liverpool blank Man City to go nine points clear at top of Premier League

Liverpool, England - Liverpool overawed Manchester City in a 2-0 win on Sunday with goals from Cody Gakpo and Mohamed Salah to take a commanding nine-point lead at the top of the Premier League and extend their arch-rivals' slump to seven games without a win.

The result was City's first four-game losing streak in the Premier League since 2008 and pushed Pep Guardiola's struggling side down to an unfamiliar fifth in the table, 11 points behind their greatest rivals of recent years.

Buoyed by a midweek Champions League win over Real Madrid, Liverpool came out flying and could have wrapped the game up by halftime with a hatful of chances including two thundering Virgil van Dijk headers, one of which hit the woodwork.

The first goal came in the 12th minute after a sumptuous long pass from Trent Alexander-Arnold to Salah on the right wing. His low ball eluded Manchester City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega for Gakpo to nudge in at the back post.



Mohamed Salah provided the assist for Cody Gakpo's opening goal before converting a penalty

Salah scored Liverpool's second with a 78th-minute penalty, after fellow striker Luis Diaz was brought down by Ortega in the box, sending the Anfield crowd into delirium.

"It's very special and I don't take it for granted. It's always special to score at Anfield and win games," said Salah, acknowledging, however, that it could be his last game at home

to City amid speculation over his contract renewal.

The result was manager Arne Slot's 18th win in 20 games in a wonderful start at Liverpool where he has managed to add defensive steel and midfield control to the furious attacking style of predecessor Jurgen Klopp.

Slot's team are top of the Champions League after a flawless start in Europe and have

now taken an intimidating lead in the Premier League on 34 points after 13 games, nine points above both Arsenal and Chelsea.

Pressing relentlessly from the off on Sunday, Liverpool had 18 shots including seven on target throughout the game, compared to City's eight with only two on target.

Dominik Szoboszlai, Alexan-

Liverpool came out flying and could have wrapped the game up by halftime with a hatful of chances including two thundering Virgil van Dijk headers, one of which hit the woodwork

der-Arnold, Gakpo and Salah all peppered Ortega's goal, as City looked shellshocked in the first half, even struggling to pass the ball out of defence where they have been masterful in recent years.

Rico Lewis' stab wide was City's closest chance, with Erling Haaland barely having a sniff.

Slot said he wished his team had scored a second goal earlier to put the game to bed, but acknowledged the magnitude of their achievement against the reigning league champions.

It was the first time in Guardiola's illustrious coaching career that he has lost four successive league games.

Probably last home game against City, says Salah

Liverpool, England - Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah produced another inspirational display as his side beat Premier League champions Manchester City 2-0 to open a nine-point lead at the top but raised further doubt about his Anfield future on Sunday.

Salah, whose contract expires at the end of the current season, told Sky Sports: "Honestly that's what was in my head [it possibly being his last home match v Man City]."

"Probably until now this is the last City game I will play for Liverpool so I was just going to enjoy it. The atmosphere was incredible so I will enjoy every second here. Hopefully we just win the league and will see what will happen.

The Egyptian talisman skilfully created Liverpool's opener for Cody Gakpo and sealed City's fate by converting a penalty after the break meaning he has now scored and assisted in 36 Premier League games, equalling Wayne Rooney's record. Salah, 32, is out of contract at the end of the season and recently stated the club had yet to offer him a new deal.

Salah has bagged 224 goals for Liverpool from 369 matches and despite the uncertainty around his future, he continues to deliver the goods for the club he joined in 2017.

We are not ready to compete for title, says Chelsea's Maresca

London, England - Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca is not getting carried away with his young side's strong run of form, saying their 3-0 win over Aston Villa on Sunday does nothing to change his view that the Blues are not contenders for the Premier League title this season.

Chelsea overwhelmed Villa from start to finish as Nicolas Jackson, Enzo Fernandez and Cole Palmer all scored fine goals that sent the Blues third in the league, level on 25 points with second-placed Arsenal before Manchester City's visit to Liverpool.

But Maresca said his side were still behind the north Londoners, Liverpool and Manchester City in terms of experience of big matches and the pressure of title campaigns. "This kind of players, some of them, in their life, in their experience, they have played probably one final," the Italian said, recalling how Chelsea last season reached the League Cup final at Wembley.



Chelsea's Cole Palmer celebrates with teammates after scoring against Aston Villa on Sunday

"So you need to live moments to get better and when we start to get those moments, we will get better and we can compete," he said. "We are going to be there soon, but this is one of the reasons that we are still far and not ready to compete with those clubs."

For the Stamford Bridge faithful, Chelsea's progress so far under Maresca, in his first season

in charge, has been hugely encouraging after two years spent largely marooned in mid-table.

Jackson's goal was his eighth in 13 Premier League games this campaign. Palmer also took his tally to eight and claimed his customary assist when he set up Fernandez who with Moises Caicedo was dominant in midfield as Villa appeared fatigued after a 0-0 midweek Champions

League draw against Juventus.

Pedro Neto was a constant danger on the wing while Chelsea's defence and goalkeeper Robert Sanchez delivered the Blues' first home clean sheet in the league this season.

"(In) today's game it was very difficult to find one of them that was not good. I think we were all good and this is important," Maresca said.

There was some bad news for Chelsea however - central defender Wesley Fofana limped off after an hour and Maresca said he could be missing for the busy Christmas period with a hamstring injury. "It's a big loss for us because he is doing fantastic," the coach said.

His Aston Villa counterpart Unai Emery paid tribute to the turnaround at Stamford Bridge under Maresca.

"Chelsea today showed ... this year is different," the Spaniard said. "They are feeling stronger. They don't have doubts like last year, for example."



Pep Guardiola reminds the taunting Liverpool fans the number of titles he has won

I didn't expect them to chant 'getting sacked in the morning', says Guardiola

Liverpool, England - Taunted by the Kop with chants of "getting sacked in the morning", Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola afforded himself a wry smile and held up six fingers to remind the ecstatic Liverpool fans of how many Premier League titles he has won.

It was an unforgettable moment on a Sunday evening on Merseyside which could spell the end of Manchester City's domination of the English top flight.

Liverpool cruised to a 2-0 victory with goals from Cody Gakpo and Mohamed Salah against a struggling City to move 11 points clear of the champions from the past four seasons and nine ahead of second-placed Arsenal.

City looked bereft of energy and ideas as they were comprehensively outplayed by Arne Slot's side, managing only two shots on target. It was their fourth successive Premier League defeat and sixth in seven in all competitions and they are

now sitting fifth in the table.

Guardiola, the Spaniard who has ripped up the record books since arriving at City, is now reaching unwanted milestones.

He has never lost four league games in a row during a glittering coaching career and whereas he

I'm not depressed. When I think I cannot do it, we'll talk with the club, but I feel that I want to do it. Life is not always perfect.

PEP GUARDIOLA

has always found solutions to every problem, his magic touch has temporarily deserted him.

There is zero chance City's owners would dispense with one of the greatest coaches in history, especially as he recently

agreed a two-year extension to his contract.

But he does find himself in uncharted territory.

"I didn't expect them to chant that, maybe I deserve to be sacked," he told reporters. "I didn't expect that, but it's fine. When you win, you laugh. When you lose, they laugh, and you have to accept it."

"But I'm practical. I'm not depressed. When I think I cannot do it, we'll talk with the club, but I feel that I want to do it. Life is not always perfect. Now we are not as strong as we were, that is a reality."

While City are clearly missing influential midfielder Rodri, amongst others, no one could have predicted quite how one player's serious injury could have completely de-railed Guardiola's winning machine.

It took them 39 minutes to even have a goal attempt on Sunday with striker Erling Haaland a virtual spectator.

We came close to perfection, says Slot

Liverpool, England - Liverpool had to put in a near-flawless performance to defeat old rivals Manchester City who have so often thwarted their league title ambitions, manager Arne Slot said on Sunday.

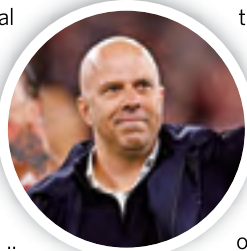
The Reds thoroughly deserved to beat Pep Guardiola's side 2-0 to take a nine-point lead in the Premier League in what was Slot's 18th win of 20 games in charge of Liverpool.

"If you want to win against City you have to be perfect in every part of the game. We came close to perfection," he said, as

jubilant fans chanted his name around Anfield as they did midweek after beating Real Madrid in the Champions League.

"Playing against Real Madrid, against Manchester City, teams that are so good and have won so many trophies, coming out and winning against them ... We're really happy with these two wins but we also understand we want to achieve more than this."

Emphasizing his injury worries



Arne Slot

in defence, with only five senior players available, Slot said there was still a long way to go before Liverpool had a trophy in their hands.

"If you want to win anything, it's all about consistency. These teams, like Real Madrid, like City, are all capable of getting the same winning streak that we have, so let's not get carried away by a few wins," he said.

Ahead of a busy December

and New Year's fixture list, Slot said defenders Ibrahima Konate and Conor Bradley would remain out for a few weeks, while Kostas Tsimikas was unlikely to be available for another week.

Having taken over from the enormously popular Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool's new manager was feted by the crowd throughout Sunday's game and thanked them for giving energy to his team.

He lamented that Liverpool did not seal the game earlier, with chance-after-chance going begging.



Carlo Ancelotti (R) with Kylian Mbappe

Mbappe was dangerous and scored a great goal: Ancelotti

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti was delighted with Kylian Mbappe's performance in their 2-0 victory over Getafe in LaLiga at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday after the Frenchman found the net but spurned a few second-half chances.

The 25-year-old France captain, who moved to the Bernabeu from French champions Paris St Germain on a free transfer in June, became Real's joint-top scorer in the league this season alongside Vinicius Jr. with eight goals after his first-half strike.

Having had a subdued performance in Real's 2-0 loss at Liverpool in the Champions League on Wednesday when he failed to trouble their defence and missed a second-half penalty, Mbappe put on a spirited display against Getafe to score his 10th goal of the season across all competitions.

"He was active, dangerous and scored a great goal which was important to control the rest of the game. He was active and that's what we want from him," Ancelotti told reporters. "The fans understand better than anyone the moment of the team and the players. They supported Mbappe after Anfield because it was the right thing to do."

Real climbed to second place in the table with 33 points from 14 matches, one point behind rivals Barcelona, who have played a game more.

"Yes, a relief for everyone because it was a spectacular goal with fantastic execution,"

Ancelotti said when asked if it was a relief for Mbappe to score against Getafe. "Apart from that, his game was very good," the Italian added.

Real have been hit by an injury-crisis with defenders David Alaba, Eder Militao and Dani Carvajal all out with anterior cruciate ligament injuries, while forward Vinicius Jr and midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni are sidelined due to a muscle and ankle problem, respectively.

Despite the difficulties, which are many because of all the injuries we are having, we are fighting and struggling

CARLO ANCELOTTI

Midfielder Eduardo Camavinga joined that list after sustaining a hamstring injury during their loss to Liverpool.

Against Getafe, Bellingham was replaced at halftime but Ancelotti believed he England midfielder would be ready in a couple of days.

"Despite the difficulties, which are many because of all the injuries we are having, we are fighting and struggling," Ancelotti said. "We have returned to playing with concentration, spirit and attitude and that reassures me and gives me confidence. Little by little we will solve the problems, in the meantime we are fighting."

REAL BREATHE DOWN BARCELONA'S NECK

Jude Bellingham, Kylian Mbappe on target as LaLiga champions beat Getafe

Madrid, Spain - Jude Bellingham converted a penalty and Kylian Mbappe added another goal before halftime to spur Real Madrid to a 2-0 victory over Getafe at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday as they moved within touching distance of LaLiga leaders Barcelona.

Real climbed to second place in the table with 33 points from 14 matches, one point behind rivals Barcelona, who have played a game more. Getafe sit in 17th place after collecting 13 points from 15 matches.

Real were awarded a penalty in the 30th minute after Getafe right back Allan Nyom brought down Antonio Ruediger in the box as the ball was being delivered from a corner.

Bellingham stepped up to take the penalty instead of Frenchman Mbappe, who had missed a spot kick in Real's 2-0 defeat at Liverpool in the Champions League on Wednesday, and made no mistake as he knocked the ball straight down the middle to easily beat goalkeeper David Soria.

The 21-year-old England midfielder has now netted in three straight league matches.

It did not take Mbappe long to double the lead as he struck in the 38th minute, taking a brilliant ball from Bellingham and whipping it in from outside the box to score his 10th goal of the season across all competitions for Real.

The France captain, who moved to the Bernabeu from French champions Paris St Germain on a free transfer in June, is now also Real's joint-top scorer in the league alongside the injured



Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham converts a penalty against Getafe

Vinicius Jr. with eight goals.

Mbappe looked lively, especially in the second half, and nearly made it 3-0 on three occasions. The 25-year-old came closest when he made a superb run through on goal and went around Soria but his effort went just wide.

Real, who spurned a couple of other chances to extend their lead, were thoroughly dominant and held 70% of the possession against Getafe.

Getafe rattled the woodwork twice, including when midfielder

Real climbed to second place in the table with 33 points from 14 matches, one point behind rivals Barcelona, who have played a game more

John Patrick's shot beat Real goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois in the closing minutes of the game.

"They dominated, but realistically we had two (shots against the) posts. With the result we had, it would have been a draw if they had gone in," Getafe defender Juan Berrocal told DAZN.

The reigning champions visit Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday.

"We reacted well after the defeat the other day. They're an intense team that tries to make plays short. We were able to score two goals," Courtois told Real Madrid TV.

Fiorentina's Bove in intensive care after collapsing on field

Florence, Italy - Fiorentina midfielder Edoardo Bove is in intensive care after collapsing during their Serie A match against Inter Milan on Sunday.

Fiorentina said in a statement that Bove was under sedation at the Careggi University Hospital in Florence having lost consciousness during the match. The club added that early tests had ruled out serious damage to his nervous system, heart and lungs.

Sky Sport Italia reported earlier that Bove was breathing on his own and had regained consciousness.



Edoardo Bove

Play was halted at the stadium with the score 0-0 for a VAR check on a disallowed Lautaro Martinez goal when the 22-year-old suddenly collapsed in the 17th minute after bending down to adjust his boot seconds before.

Medical personnel rushed onto the pitch, with the Fiorentina players forming a ring around Bove, who arrived at the club on loan from AS Roma in August.

After Bove was taken away in an ambulance, the referee asked the visibly shaken players to return to dressing room. A Serie A spokesperson said later that the

match was suspended and would be postponed to a later date.

Bove has made several appearances for Italy's Under-21 team and has four assists and one goal in his 14 appearances for Fiorentina this season.

Inter chairman Giuseppe Marotta stated that postponing the match was an easy decision.

"Football is a community, so naturally when these situations happen, all the players and the referee worked together to help and it was a spontaneous decision to abandon the game," he told Sky Sport Italia.

Rebic hits last-gasp equaliser to help Lecce stun Juventus

Lecce, Italy - Lecce's Ante Rebic netted deep into stoppage time to secure a 1-1 draw with visitors Juventus, who opened the scoring through a fortuitous strike from Andrea Cambiaso in a high-drama Serie A clash on Sunday.

Juve are sixth in the table, with 26 points, six points adrift of leaders Napoli, while Lecce are 16th with 13 points.

Juve broke the deadlock after 68 minutes when Cambiaso fired a long shot from outside the box, which deflected off the leg of Lecce defender Kialonda Gaspar and wrongfooted keeper Wladimiro Falcone on its way into the net.

Yet three minutes into stoppage time, Lecce launched an attack with the lively crowd behind them and Rebic was left unmarked to receive a cross and tap the ball in from close range.



Lecce's Ante Rebic scores against Juventus

The match took place hours after Fiorentina's Edoardo Bove had collapsed during their Serie A clash with Inter Milan and messages of support for the midfielder were displayed on the screens at Stadio Via del Mare.

The first half was filled with missed opportunities for the visitors. Khephren Thuram had a golden chance early on, finding himself unmarked in front of goal as a cross came towards him, only for it to hit his shin and go just outside the post.

Francisco Conceicao later went close with a powerful shot following a counter-attack, but his effort clipped the far post and went wide.

Timothy Weah thought he had scored for Juve before the half-hour mark, but his effort was disallowed for an offside during the build-up as the first half ended goalless.

McTominay strike hands Napoli win against Torino

Turin, Italy - A first-half goal by Scott McTominay earned leaders Napoli a 1-0 win at Torino in Serie A on Sunday to keep them clear at the top of the standings.

The Scotland midfielder found the net around the half-hour mark when he struck a shot powerfully inside the near post after receiving a precise pass from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

Napoli remained top with 32 points, four clear of Atalanta, Inter Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio.

Torino, who went unbeaten in their two games against Napoli last season, caused problems for the visitors throughout the game.

But they lacked scoring opportunities, with their only attempt on target coming after halftime through a weak shot from Mergim Vojvoda. Torino defended well and goalkeeper Vanja Milinkovic-Savic repeatedly thwarted Napoli's attack.

The Serb dived to keep out a



Napoli's Scott McTominay celebrates his goal against Torino

low back-heel shot by Romelu Lukaku in the 23rd minute before showing off his reflexes again when he stretched to deny Kvaratskhelia's header.

McTominay found a way past the keeper in the 31st minute to score his third Serie A goal of the season.

Torino should have levelled in the 37th minute through Saul

Coco, who had an excellent chance from point-blank range but slipped and failed to take the shot. Milinkovic-Savic continued his stellar form after the restart when he saved a dangerous header from Mathias Olivera.

He was beaten by forward David Neres in stoppage time but the effort from the Napoli substitute was ruled out for offside.

NO STOPPING VERSTAPPEN

Dutch driver wins ninth race of the season at Qatar GP

Doha, Qatar - Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday, a day after being stripped of pole position, as McLaren and Ferrari took their constructors' title duel down to next weekend's last race of the season in Abu Dhabi.

The win was the Dutch driver's ninth of the Formula One season, second in a row in Qatar and the first since he wrapped up his fourth successive title in Las Vegas a week earlier.

"Karma is a wonderful thing. You definitely did not drive unnecessarily slowly today. Great job," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner over the radio after Verstappen took the chequered flag.

Stewards had handed the champion a one-place grid drop on Saturday for driving too slowly, with Mercedes' George Russell the beneficiary but making a poor start from the top slot and finishing fourth.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finished runner-up, 6.031 seconds behind, after McLaren's Lando Norris was handed a surprisingly tough 10 second stop/go penalty for speeding during yellow warning flags.

That dropped the Briton from second, a position seized at the start, and challenging for the lead to 10th at the chequered flag with the consolation of fastest lap for a bonus point to double his meagre score.



Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates after winning the Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday

Lando (Norris) and I were within 1.8s of each other the whole time, pushing each other and honestly, it was a lot of fun out there

MAX VERSTAPPEN

Saturday sprint winner Oscar Piastri finished third for McLaren in a race punctuated by crashes and three safety car periods.

McLaren's lead was trimmed to 21 points with 44 remaining to be won, and a first constructors' title since 1998 beckoning, while reigning champions Red Bull were mathematically out of contention.

"Lando and I were within 1.8s

of each other the whole time, pushing each other and honestly, it was a lot of fun out there," said Verstappen.

Norris, now only eight points clear of Leclerc, saw a missed opportunity as others questioned the harshness of the penalty.

"I don't know if I've missed it or just been dumb, but the rule is, if you don't slow down under the yellow that's the penalty, so it's

fair penalty," he said.

"I've made the job of the team much harder than it needs to be. The team are doing a great job but I've let them down."

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was also slowed by a puncture and long pitstop, finishing sixth with Alpine's Pierre Gasly an impressive fifth to send the Renault-owned team back up to sixth overall.

Fernando Alonso was seventh for Aston Martin and China's Zhou Guanyu scored Sauber's first points of the season with eighth. Kevin Magnussen was ninth for Haas, who dropped back behind Alpine.

Seven times world champion

Lewis Hamilton collected a five second penalty for a false start, then a puncture and finished only 12th in his penultimate race for Mercedes before moving to Ferrari. As a final blow of the night, he was also handed a drive-through penalty for speeding in the pit lane.

"The car and I don't get along really that well," said the Briton, who at one point asked to retire.

"We were very far off at the beginning. We didn't have enough wing to start with, the cars were quite different and it wasn't really great to drive. But it's my fault so apologies to the team for the false start and the pit lane incident."

Verstappen says he lost all respect for George Russell

Doha, Qatar - Max Verstappen said he had "lost all respect" for Mercedes rival George Russell after being stripped of pole position at the Qatar Grand Prix.

Verstappen won Sunday's race from second place but Red Bull's quadruple

world champion was still fired up by what had gone on when they were together in the stewards' room a day earlier.

"I couldn't believe that I got it,"



Max Verstappen (R) with George Russell

he said of the rarely applied one-place grid drop for driving unnecessarily slowly in the final phase of qualifying and impeding Russell.

"But in a way, I was also like, yeah, I'm not surprised anymore in the world that I live in."

Verstappen, whose victory on Sunday was his first since clinching the title in Las Vegas a week earlier, said he had been trying to be nice and not wanting to mess up anyone else's lap with his championship already won.

"I didn't want to screw anyone over to prepare their lap. And by doing that, you know, being nice, basically you get a

penalty.

"And that's what I tried to explain as well. But I just felt like I was talking to a brick wall... I was quite surprised when sitting there in the stewards' room, what was all going on," he added.

"I've been in that meeting room many times in my life, in my career, with people that have raced and I've never seen someone trying to screw someone over that hard. And that for me...I lost all respect."

The Dutch driver also told Viaplay television that Russell "always does it very nicely here in front of the camera, but then when you're inside with him in person, it's just a different person."

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner told Sky Sports television on the grid before the start that Verstappen was "wound up".

Verstappen passed Russell at the first corner and then battled Lando Norris until the McLaren driver was given a harsh 10 second stop and go penalty for excessive speed while yellow flags were waved.



Sufiyan Muqeem

Muqeem stars as Pakistan beat Zimbabwe in first T20

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe - Left-arm spinner Sufiyan Muqeem took a career best 3-20 as Pakistan defeated hosts Zimbabwe by 57 runs in the first Twenty20 International in Bulawayo on Sunday.

Pakistan posted 165 for four in their 20 overs after electing to bat first as Usman Khan struck 39 from 30 balls and Tayyab Tahir provided a late boost with 39 not out from 25 deliveries.

How F1 is run is 'none of their business', says Ben Sulayem

Doha, Qatar - FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem has told Formula One drivers to mind their own business after they asked where money from race fines was going and why senior figures had left the governing body.

In an interview ahead of Sunday's Qatar Grand Prix, the Emirati suggested the drivers should stick to what they know best.

"Do we have to tell them? When something in the teams changes, do they tell us?," Ben Sulayem said when asked about the surprise departure of race director Niels Wittich before last weekend's title-deciding Las Vegas Grand Prix.

"We have the rules, we follow our rules. We don't follow someone else's rule. Simple as this."

Wittich, a German, has said he



The drivers are getting over 100 million. Do I ask where they spend it? No. It's up to them. It's their right... we do whatever we do with the money. It's our business.

MOHAMMED BEN SULAYEM

did not resign and the FIA have given no public explanation as to why he suddenly left beyond saying it was to pursue new oppor-

tunities. Media reports have said he was sacked.

Leading steward Tim Mayer, the son of former McLaren boss Teddy, and Formula Two race director Janette Tan have also gone in recent days.

Mercedes driver George Russell, a director of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), said on Thursday drivers wanted clarity and understanding "of what's going on and who's getting fired next".

Ben Sulayem, a former rally driver who was elected as FIA head in 2021, responded by saying: "Do we tell them how to drive? Do we tell them what to have as their strategy?"

"It's none of their business. Sorry...I am a driver. I respect the drivers. Let them go and concentrate on what they do best, which

is race."

The GPDA issued a remarkable statement last month, in response to an FIA clampdown on swearing, in which they asked Ben Sulayem to treat them like adults and mind his own language towards them. They also requested financial transparency and said all stakeholders, including drivers and teams, should jointly determine how and where the money from fines was spent -- with some suggesting it could help fund professional stewards.

"They talk and then they say, where are you putting the money? Why we don't do this? I don't say 'Oh, sorry, what about you?'," answered Ben Sulayem.

"The drivers are getting over 100 million. Do I ask where they spend it? No. It's up to them. It's their right...we do whatever we

do with the money. It's our business. It's also with them and their money. It's their business."

Ben Sulayem said the drivers had his mobile number and he had nothing to hide.

He said he "lived free of charge" in the brains of critics in the media and did not need them or care what people said. He also rejected any suggestion that the FIA was in crisis and suffering a staff exodus under his leadership.

Despite his "none of your business" stance, the Emirati said later that 10.3 million euros had been invested in grassroots single-seater racing last year.

"You really think I would waste the money? This is not commercial. This is the money of the members, and I have been elected to safeguard that," he said.

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WORLD AIDS DAY

Saima Wazed
WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia

Today, December 1st, we gather with a purpose and passion to observe World AIDS Day 2024. The World Health Organization (WHO) stands shoulder to shoulder with partners and communities around the globe, calling on leaders and citizens to champion the fundamental right to health.

Together, we must confront the inequalities that hinder our journey toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals year's theme, 'Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right!' is a rallying cry for accessible, rights-based healthcare that empowers those affected by HIV/AIDS to live vibrant and fulfilling lives.

A rights-based approach is not just a strategy; it is a commitment to uphold the dignity, health, and autonomy of every individual, especially those with vulnerabilities and are most at-risk. We must boldly tackle the stigma and discrimination that stand as formidable barriers to accessing prevention, treatment, and care.

WHO is dedicated to creating environments where everyone - regardless of their HIV status or social identity - can access the services they need without fear or exclusion. Empowering communities and civil society are essential in amplifying the voices of those at heightened risk, fostering a supportive framework that intertwines human rights with health outcomes.

Marginalised populations continue to bear the brunt of this epidemic, facing disproportionate impacts due to stigma, discrimination, and in some cases, criminalisation. HIV rates are particularly high among key populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, people who inject drugs, trans and gender diverse individuals, and prisoners. It is crucial that we address the social, economic, legal, and cultural inequalities that hinder access to HIV services for all. Prioritizing those left behind and dismantling discriminatory laws are essential steps toward achieving our global HIV targets and realizing the universal right to health.

As we reflect on the current landscape, we recognise that 39.9mn people globally live with HIV, and 1.3mn new infections were reported in 2023. Far exceeding the 2025 target of fewer than 370 000. In the WHO South-East Asia Region alone, there are approximately 3.9mn people living with HIV (PLHIV), representing 10% of the global burden. In 2023, 78% of PLHIV in the region knew their status, 66% had received lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, and 64% had suppressed viral load among people living with HIV. While we have made significant strides in reducing HIV/AIDS rates through strong national commitments, we must acknowledge the ongoing challenges that persist.

There are 80 000 children and adolescents aged 0-14 estimated to be living with HIV, comprising 2% of total HIV cases in the region, predominantly due to vertical transmission (mother-to-child). Approx-

mately 53 000 infants are born with congenital syphilis. These children are one too many as there are effective interventions to eliminate mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy, labour, and childbirth. They face a multitude of complex issues while growing up, living with the HIV virus. WHO's 'triple elimination' initiative of vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus is a critical public health priority to prevent the next generation of young from these infectious diseases. Three champion countries - Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand - have already achieved elimination of HIV and syphilis vertical transmission.

Furthermore, while new infections among young people have generally declined, some countries are witnessing troubling increases where nearly half of new infections occur particularly among young key populations aged between 15 to 24 years.

For many young people who contract

The WHO South-East Asia Region is steadfast in its commitment to achieving the 2030 target of ending AIDS and realizing the '95-95-95' goals: ensuring that 95% of people with HIV are diagnosed, 95% of those diagnosed receive sustained treatment, and 95% of those on treatment achieve viral suppression

SAIMA WAZED

and live with HIV, the journey is fraught with challenges that extend beyond the medical aspects of the virus. The emotional impact of an HIV diagnosis can be profound for them and their families. Young individuals often grapple with feelings of isolation, fear, and stigma. Many report experiencing emotional shock, which can lead to social withdrawal and a reluctance to seek necessary medical care. Most face stigma and discrimination, and this makes it difficult to stay safe and healthy.

Moreover, young key populations face unique hurdles in accessing healthcare. Many lack comprehensive sexual education, which is crucial for understanding their health needs and preventing further transmission. Less than a quarter of young people in the region know how HIV is transmitted and acquired, and even fewer know about sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This gap in knowledge can lead to increased vulnerability, as young people

may not seek testing or treatment due to misinformation or fear of stigma.

The recent adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on Adolescent-Responsive Health Systems on October 8 this year by countries in the WHO South-East Asia region, marks a significant commitment to building inclusive health systems that cater to the needs of young people. This aligns with our World AIDS Day theme, reinforcing the rights of every young person affected by HIV.

Empowering youth through rights-based approaches involves ensuring access to youth-friendly services, comprehensive sexual education, social and legal protections, and meaningful involvement in decision-making processes. In line with this, we must ensure the inclusion of young people, especially those who are most at-risk, in setting policies and services, so that delivery of services and interventions are tailored to their needs.

In this age of technological advancement, innovative solutions such as mobile health apps, online counselling, telemedicine, and virtual support groups offer promising avenues to reach youth and key populations with essential HIV and other services. By scaling up these innovations, we can bridge gaps for those who are often hard to reach through traditional healthcare systems.

Moreover, new biomedical tools like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and long acting antiretrovirals provide hope in reducing HIV transmission. It is imperative that governments, donors, and partners collaborate to ensure these tools are available, accessible, and affordable to all across the region.

We must also intensify our efforts to combat HIV-related stigma, which continues to obstruct access to vital services. This includes training healthcare providers to deliver compassionate, non-judgmental care, and launching public awareness campaigns that celebrate the rights and resilience of people living with HIV. Sharing accurate information and positive narratives is crucial in fostering an enabling environment.

The WHO South-East Asia Region is steadfast in its commitment to achieving the 2030 target of ending AIDS and realizing the '95-95-95' goals: ensuring that 95% of people with HIV are diagnosed, 95% of those diagnosed receive sustained treatment, and 95% of those on treatment achieve viral suppression. Achieving this requires collaboration among governments, international organizations, donors and partners, healthcare providers, civil society, and most importantly, those most affected.

On this World AIDS Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to the health and rights of all individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. By 'taking the rights path', we not only advocate for health equity but also empower communities to stand up for their rights. Let us unite in our efforts to ensure that every young person and every individual living with HIV/AIDS can proudly declare, 'My Health, My Right!'





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