

EX-UK PM CAMERON RETURNS TO GOVERNMENT
London, United Kingdom - Former UK leader David Cameron sensationally returned to the British government as foreign secretary on Monday, as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak shook up his top team with a general election looming next year.
Cameron's comeback from political wilderness came as Sunak sacked right-wing firebrand Suella Braverman as interior minister after critics accused her of heightening tensions during weeks of contentious pro-Palestinian demonstrations. James Cleverly moved from the foreign ministry to succeed Braverman.
See also [Page 09](#)

04
H₂
US\$20bn investment expected in H₂ auctions

15
World Diabetes Day - Catch them young

AMAN-1, OMAN'S FIRST SATELLITE LAUNCHED

California, US - Oman's ETCO SPACE launched its first satellite - Aman-1 - on Saturday from Space Launch Complex 4E in Vandenberg, California. The satellite set off on a historic mission aboard Falcon 9, the first orbital class rocket capable of reflight.
The sultanate, represented by ETCO SPACE, an emerging technology innovator; SpaceX, a US aerospace manufacturer and space transport services company; SatRev, Polish nanosatellite manufacturer and operator; and TUATARA, specialists in advanced artificial intelligence, data analytics and cognitive technology solutions, have collaborated to launch nanosatellite into space. This project started in October 2021 when a document on strategic cooperation was initially signed, establishing this groundbreaking Middle East space programme.
The successful launch of Aman-1 by SpaceX, included CubeSats and MicroSats for a variety of commercial and government customers. Transporter 9 lifted off from the Vandenberg space base to place the satellites into a 500km orbit.
"We are honoured to have played a role in the success of this remarkable mission. Today marks an extraordinary day, not only for Oman but for all the companies involved in this historic endeavour. We firmly believe that the valuable scientific



We are not only excited about the data and images that Aman-1 will provide, but also committed to pushing the boundaries of our space programme in the coming months and years
ABDULAZIZ JAAFAR

Oman's long-term growth, enhancing social and economic well-being, driving progress and fostering confidence in all aspects of economic, social and developmental matters.
"The launch of ETCO SPACE's first satellite into space is a novel step, but hopefully one of many. We are not only excited about the data and images that Aman-1 will provide, but also committed to pushing the boundaries of our

space programme in the coming months and years," said Abdulaziz Jaafar, CEO of ETCO SPACE.
Through its space programme, ETCO SPACE will be able to conduct groundbreaking research, collecting high-resolution satellite photos and images which will be further digitally evaluated using Computer Vision, Machine Learning and AI technologies.
The launch of Aman-1 into orbit is the beginning of ETCO SPACE's ambitious space programme. As outlined in the agreement signed by all participating companies in 2021, ETCO SPACE's space journey is set to expand with the launch of more satellites, including the prospect of embarking on deep space missions.
ETCO SPACE's expanding space programme represents a strategic investment in technology and innovation that holds the potential to benefit multiple sectors of the economy.

UN warns fuel shortage to halt Gaza aid work in '48 hours'

Amman, Jordan - The UN agency for Palestinian refugees on Monday warned its operations in war-torn Gaza would shut down within two days due to fuel shortages as fighting rages between Israel and Hamas.
"The humanitarian operation

in Gaza will grind to a halt in the next 48 hours as no fuel is allowed to enter Gaza," UNRWA's Gaza chief Thomas White wrote on 'X'. "No fuel has entered Gaza since October 7," he wrote, referring to the date when Hamas stormed across the border.

Israel hit back with a fierce bombing campaign that has killed more than 11,000 people, mostly civilians, and cut off supplies to the territory of 2.4mn people.
Aid agencies have repeatedly raised the alarm about the lack of fuel - used to power vital services

such as hospitals, which rely on generators, and for pumping drinking water. "This morning two of our main water distribution contractors ceased working - they simply ran out of fuel - which will deny 200,000 people potable water," White said.

On Monday, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said all hospitals in the northern Gaza Strip had stopped functioning as a result of fuel shortages and intense ongoing fighting.
AFP
See also [Page 07](#)

H M Issues Royal Decree

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq issued **Royal Decree No 82/2023** on Monday appointing a secretary-general for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, reading as follows:
Article 1 appoints Sheikh Khalifa Hamad Salim al Badi as secretary-general for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, with his current grade and financial allocations.
Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.
ONA

53rd National Day holiday from Nov 22

Muscat - As per Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, it has been decided that Wednesday and Thursday, November 22 and 23, will be an official holiday for employees of units of the state's Administrative Apparatus, other legal entities and private sector establishments on the occasion of the 53rd National Day.
The Ministry of Labour stated that employers may agree with their employees to engage their services on the two days, if deemed necessary, provided the workers are compensated for it.

Drive Geely with Unbeatable Price Offer

All New 2024 **COOLRAY**

Starting from ***RO 5999 ONLY**

EMI Starting from **@RO 69/-**

FREE

*Service
3 Years / 30000 kms
(Whichever comes earlier.
Applicable for Azkarra & Okavango only)

*AAA
3 Years Roadside Assistance

*Manufacturer's Warranty
5 Years / 150,000 kms
(Whichever comes earlier)

Starting from ***RO 4599 ONLY**

EMI Starting from **@RO 53/-**

ALL-NEW EMGRAND

THE ALL-NEW **OKAVANGO**

Starting from ***RO 7899 ONLY**

EMI Starting from **@RO 91/-**

Starting from ***RO 7649 ONLY**

EMI Starting from **@RO 88/-**

All New AZKARRA

• Barka • Sohar • Nizwa • Sur • Salalah

Offer valid from 25th September to 24th December 2023. *EMI: Subject to 20% down payment & EMI calculated @3.5% from Bank Muscat for a tenure of 10 years for Omani nationals & subject to Finance Company Approval. *Price: Prices mentioned are of the base models after cash gift & the pictures shown above are of top models. VAT Extra. Vehicle shown are for illustrative purposes. Specifications subjected to change without notice. *Service: Service package covering 3 service @ 10000 km Service interval within 3 years for Azkarra, Okavango. *AAA roadside assistance is valid for the first three years from the date of retail purchase. For more details please visit your nearest showroom. Offer valid only for private vehicles. Not available on fleet, Ministry & Taxi / Rental / commercial car purchases. *Conditions apply.

9444 0666

/geelyoman

Oman-Saudi relations enter new phase

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The first meeting of the Omani-Saudi Coordination Council was convened in Muscat on Monday, marking a significant step in strengthening bilateral relations.

The meeting, co-chaired by H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and Prince Faisal bin Farhan al Saud, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, reviewed the robust and

longstanding relationship between the two nations.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with the constructive outcomes achieved in recent years and emphasised the need for ongoing bilateral coordination. They agreed on the importance of adopting unified stances on regional and international matters of mutual interest.

H E Sayyid Badr noted the significant progress in Omani-Saudi relations, citing enhanced investment initiatives and



steady commercial growth.

He highlighted the pivotal role of the Rub al Khali land port, opened in 2022, in boosting

land transport and development between the two countries.

Key areas of mutual interest, such as alternative energy proj-

ects, hydrogen production and cooperation in energy, logistics, maritime transport and infrastructure were discussed.

Confident of the future of this partnership, H E Sayyid Badr expressed trust in the capabilities of the Omani-Saudi Coordination Council, its subcommittees, general secretariat and governance mechanisms to implement joint cooperation initiatives effectively.

Prince Faisal reiterated a commitment to deepening Saudi-Omani relations under the guidance of both countries' leadership. He emphasised the council's role in capitalising on

the combined capabilities of both nations to enhance mutual benefits and interests. Their consensus on various issues underscored the need for continued collaboration on bilateral, regional and international levels, as well as in political consultations.

He described the council and its various subcommittees as vital instruments for advancing cooperation, including efforts to combat terrorism and protect vital waterways.



Head Q Muttrah / Muscat Governorate P.O Box: 798 Postal Code: 117 Telephone: 91436272 Fax: 24795222
Email: natlife@nlicgulf.com CR number: 1487876 website: livainsurance.om

Directors' Report for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2023



Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Liva Group SAOG and its subsidiaries (the "Group" or "Company"), it is my pleasure to present the unaudited consolidated results of the Group for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2023.

Rebranding & Integration

We are pleased to inform our shareholders of the successful introduction of our new brand name "Liva". Upon obtaining the required regulatory and shareholder approvals, the Group has amended its commercial name from "National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG," to "Liva Group SAOG" ("Liva Group"), and its wholly owned subsidiary in the Sultanate of Oman "Al Ahlia Insurance SAOC," has changed its name to "Liva Insurance SAOC" ("Liva Insurance Oman") as well as its wholly owned subsidiary in the Kingdom of Bahrain "Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance (Middle East)" to "Liva Insurance BSC (c)" ("Liva Insurance Bahrain").

Following our earlier communication and the Group's strategy, effective 1 October 2023, Liva Insurance Oman will oversee all of the Group's historic insurance operations in Oman, consolidating them into a single Liva entity. We will be amending commercial names for all other group entities within the GCC during the upcoming months, subject to obtaining the necessary regulatory approvals.

Marking the completion of the rebranding process in Oman, National Life and General Insurance, listed on Muscat Stock Exchange earlier as NLIF, celebrated a bell-ringing ceremony and ticker change which saw the ticker changed from NLIF to LIVA, representing Liva Group. The successful launch of the brand in Oman and the United Arab Emirates was well received and cements the outlook of Liva Group.

Performance Highlights for the Nine-month Period Ended 30 September 2023

Our financial results for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2023 reflect the consolidated financial position and performance of Liva Group following the acquisition of Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance (Middle East) on 7th July 2022.

Adoption of IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts

The Group has now adopted and applied IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts which replaces IFRS 4. The overall objective of IFRS 17 is to provide an accounting model for insurance contracts that is more useful and consistent for insurers. The new standard introduces a new way of accounting and presenting income and expenses relating to insurance contracts that moves away from a premium-based presentation approach in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Accordingly, financial statements for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2023, are prepared and the corresponding period of the previous year have been restated in accordance with IFRS 17.

Insurance Revenue

The Group's Insurance revenue is RO 229.7 million during the nine months ended September 2023 as compared to RO 146.1 million in the corresponding period of the previous year representing an increase of 57%. This is primarily driven by the acquisition of Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance (Middle East), currently known as Liva Insurance

Bahrain as well as the successful renewal of key partnerships during the nine months. Significant growth was also observed across key segments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ("KSA") as well as noticeable growth of our medical portfolio in the United Arab Emirates ("UAE").

Investment Income

The Group's investment income increased

by 101% to RO 8.6 million as compared to RO 4.2 million in the corresponding period of the previous year, mainly due to optimization by changing the portfolio mix and supported by a favorable interest rate environment. Our investment strategy is designed to deliver a well-balanced and diversified portfolio encompassing debt and equity instruments to achieve an effective balance of risk and superior returns while maintaining adequate liquidity to meet statutory and other financial obligations.

Net Performance After Tax

e Group posted a consolidated Profit After Tax (attributable to shareholders of Liva Group) of RO 0.1 million during the nine-month period ended 30 September 2023 as compared to Profit After Tax of RO 3.1 million in the corresponding period of 2022.

Despite the challenges faced by reduced profitability in motor and medical insurance segments in the first quarter of 2023, the Group has achieved a profit of RO 1.6 million during the third quarter of 2023. The primary factors driving the turnaround are disciplined underwriting with a focus on good quality risk selection, supported by enhanced processes and monitoring tools. Further as per IFRS 17, profits are recognized over the life of an insurance contract, which will result in a more gradual recognition of revenue and profit as compared to the previous accounting standards.

In response to the increased frequency and pricing across the Life and Health segments, we introduced advanced claims adjudication technology, promoting ongoing cost control, efficient case management, and streamlined supply chain operations. Our expertise, combined with these initiatives, will allow us to maintain a positive technical result by year-end despite the challenging environment.

Within the Property and Casualty sector, the Omani market is contending with challenges related to bodily injury claims. We have implemented remedial measures to address these challenges. However, the Saudi market stands to benefit from a regulatory change in personal motor insurance, offering a prime opportunity to expand our volume and market share.

Our current investment strategy aligns with our expectations, and this optimized approach will support our year-end performance goals.

Outlook

Liva Group are encouraged by a strong year to date performance delivered through our integration efforts and financial turnaround, and our outlook for the future remains optimistic. The synergies and investments achieved over the past year are beginning to yield results, particularly since the second quarter. This significant achievement will bolster our position as a leading insurer in the GCC region.

Our aim to streamline operations and implement best practices has allowed us to focus on expanding our product and service offerings across critical markets and business segments. We continue to drive cost-effective scalability, thereby enhancing our competitive advantage.

Training and Skill Development

We continue to invest in our people and have held several training and development initiatives in the period.

Our employees actively participated in and attended trainings conducted by the Capital Market Authority of Oman such as the 'Associate in Risk Management – ARM program'. This program focuses on enabling participants in the field of risk management by learning and mastering how to apply a comprehensive strategic approach to risk assessment and treatment by focusing on improving the risks inherent to organizations.

Also, Combating Insurance Fraud Program was targeting employees from underwriting, claims and customer service teams to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of fraud, its different types and indicators, and the set of tools available for verification and detection in various types on insurance.

E-Learning module on AML/CTF Awareness (Global) was assigned to all staff as a mandatory training to be completed for 2023.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Our corporate sustainability goal aims to create long-term stakeholder value through our corporate social responsibility efforts for our community with projects centered around health, safety, innovation, community and environment. These included campaigns on health awareness and safety, blood donation camp, clothes and books recycling and paradigm shift to e-medical cards and digital insurance and documentation. We also collaborated with Injaz Oman empowering the youth of Oman and over one thousand students to support their development to become future entrepreneurs.

In addition, we continue to invest in our ESG agenda, with further capability strengthening and ongoing efforts aligned with our Group Strategy.

Recent Awards

I am happy to share with you the following recognition received during the quarter, which

are a testimony to the Group's quest for customer trust and service excellence.

- "Most Innovative Insurer - Oman" by International Business Magazine (IntIBM) Annual Awards
- "Most Innovative Insurer of the Year" Award at OER Business Summit 2023

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Group, I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his wise and progressive leadership. Under His Majesty's visionary leadership, we pray for the continued growth, stability, and enduring prosperity of our great country.

I would like to thank our esteemed shareholders, partners and regulators for their continued support and trust. I would also like to express my appreciation to the management and staff of Liva Group for their professionalism, dedication and commitment.

Khalid Muhammad AlZubair
Chairman

Unaudited interim condensed separate and consolidated statement of financial position as at 30th september 2023				
	Group		Parent Company	
	30 Sept 2023 RO	31 Dec 2022 RO	30 Sept 2023 RO	31 Dec 2022 RO
ASSETS				
Cash and bank balances	55,392,387	47,925,842	13,615,866	19,631,657
Bank deposits	123,054,564	147,389,140	44,421,848	42,143,517
Investment in securities	110,331,710	100,858,292	62,173,909	56,376,006
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	123,852,887	121,830,580
Insurance contract assets	592,944	457,105	66,118	278,426
Reinsurance contract assets	26,722,752	24,205,690	8,050,091	9,107,758
Other receivables and prepayments	24,193,503	20,310,219	9,234,300	8,124,870
Loans to policyholders	41,297	47,587	41,297	47,587
Property and equipment	8,805,723	9,131,126	6,220,253	6,280,651
Deferred tax asset	3,611,910	3,018,266	3,172,911	2,588,841
Intangible assets (including goodwill)	28,276,169	28,899,037	407,758	425,455
Total assets	381,022,959	382,242,304	271,257,238	266,835,348
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
EQUITY				
Share capital	39,837,434	39,837,434	39,837,434	39,837,434
Legal reserve	9,199,031	9,199,031	9,199,031	9,199,031
Contingency reserve	17,588,935	17,531,397	17,588,935	17,531,397
Revaluation reserve	352,345	352,345	352,345	352,345
Share premium	29,176,468	29,176,468	29,176,468	29,176,468
Fair value reserve	(455,152)	(627,007)	(455,143)	(627,007)
Foreign exchange translation reserve	(49,876)	(45,460)	(49,876)	(45,460)
Retained earnings	5,324,420	1,017,400	8,099,695	3,792,675
Total equity attributable to shareholders of the Parent	100,973,605	96,441,608	103,748,889	99,216,883
Non-controlling interests	17,006,669	14,615,225	-	-
Total equity	117,980,274	111,056,833	103,748,889	99,216,883
Liabilities				
Insurance contract liabilities	139,203,851	152,478,493	70,429,462	77,180,848
Reinsurance contract liabilities	10,564,692	5,923,425	2,633,672	500,145
Other liabilities	31,062,934	28,772,856	19,010,123	12,524,209
Term Loan & Overdraft from Bank	75,313,109	77,093,974	75,313,109	77,093,974
Income tax payable	6,898,099	6,916,723	121,983	319,289
Total liabilities	263,042,685	271,185,471	167,508,349	167,618,465
Total equity and liabilities	381,022,959	382,242,304	271,257,238	266,835,348
Net assets per share	0.253	0.242	0.260	0.249

Unaudited interim condensed separate and consolidated statement of Comprehensive Income for the nine months ended 30th September 2023				
	Group		Parent Company	
	30 Sept 2023 RO	30 Sep 2022 RO	30 Sept 2023 RO	30 Sep 2022 RO
Statement of profit or loss				
Insurance revenue	229,667,264	146,036,415	130,684,867	117,003,083
Insurance service expense	(208,655,718)	(134,854,928)	(128,239,797)	(112,544,845)
Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held	21,011,546	11,181,487	2,445,070	4,458,238
Allocation of reinsurance premiums	(38,810,422)	(19,868,974)	(21,061,619)	(15,655,923)
Amounts recoverable from reinsurers	22,611,714	17,366,319	18,893,531	15,109,174
Net expense from reinsurance contracts held	(16,198,708)	(2,502,655)	(2,168,088)	(546,749)
Insurance service result	4,812,838	8,678,832	276,982	3,911,489
Investment income - net	8,594,563	4,277,669	4,247,369	3,356,011
Share of Profit from Subsidiaries	-	-	3,258,900	684,361
Expected credit losses on financial assets	(8,593)	(4,070)	(12,591)	(4,070)
Total investment income	8,585,970	4,273,599	7,493,678	4,036,392
Insurance finance expenses for insurance contracts issued	(2,553,319)	(902,775)	(1,383,389)	(735,485)
Reinsurance finance income for reinsurance contracts held	952,276	289,425	365,740	202,056
Net insurance financial result	(1,601,043)	(613,350)	(1,017,649)	(533,429)
Other operating income - net	1,742,042	36,013	56,450	43,833
Finance Cost	(3,256,302)	-	(3,256,302)	-
Non Attributable Expenses	(10,044,693)	(8,518,020)	(4,012,619)	(3,835,873)
Profit / (loss) before tax	238,812	3,857,074	(459,460)	3,622,412
Income tax expense	105,625	(976,028)	555,704	(483,993)
Profit / (loss) for the period	344,437	2,881,046	96,244	3,138,419
Profit for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	96,244	3,138,419	96,244	3,138,419
Non-controlling interests	248,193	(257,373)	-	-
	344,437	2,881,046	96,244	3,138,419
Other comprehensive income (Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss):				
Exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	(4,416)	(18,988)	(4,416)	(18,988)
Changes in fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income - net	(170,607)	(2,517,092)	(168,372)	(2,880,887)
Share of (P OCI) from Subsidiaries - (Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss):	-	-	2,238	-
Change in value of investments carried at fair value through other comprehensive income (unrealized gain/(loss)) - Equity investments	617,691	(156,231)	613,227	398,900
Other comprehensive income	442,668	(2,692,311)	442,677	(2,500,975)
Total comprehensive (loss) / income for the period	787,105	188,735	538,921	637,444
Total comprehensive income for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	538,921	637,444	538,921	637,444
Non-controlling interests	248,184	(448,709)	-	-
	787,105	188,735	538,921	637,444
Earnings per share - basic and diluted	0.0002	0.012	0.0002	0.012

Oman gears up for Expo 2025 Osaka with unique pavilion

Our Correspondent
Muscat



H E Sayyid Said al Busaidi

Oman officially unveiled plans for its participation in Expo 2025 Osaka, Japan set to take place from April 13 to October 13, 2025. The announcement was made at a special event hosted on Monday at the Omani Embassy in Tokyo.

The event was graced by H E Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Culture in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and Commissioner General of Oman's pavilion at Expo 2025. H E Dr Mohammed bin Saeed al Busaidi, Oman's Ambassador to Japan, and several other ambassadors of friendly countries, attended the event in which Oman's vision for the expo was highlighted.

Under the theme 'Designing the Future Society for Our Lives', Oman's participation reflects its dedication to global engagement, cultural exchange and commitment to showcasing its rich heritage and sustainable development journey.

In his address, H E Sayyid Said emphasised Oman's focus on sustainable development goals. "Through its participation in Expo 2025 Osaka, Oman aims to collaborate with nations worldwide in achieving these goals, encapsulated in the expo's three sub-themes: ensuring sustainability of life, improving life and enhancing life through communication."

Oman's pavilion, boasting a distinctive architectural design, will symbolise the country's rich environmental landscape, histor-

ical depth and forward-looking aspirations, he added.

The design is the result of a competition conducted by the Office of Bilal bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design, reflecting Oman's ongoing commitment to incorporating the traditional architecture of the sultanate in its global engagements.

The design team, comprising Ammar bin Abdulhamid al Kiyumi, Bayan bint Musallam al Ramadhaniyah and Nayyara bint Khamis al Hinaiyah, were announced winners on February 28 and received a prize of RO10,000 for the innovative concept.

Ambassador H E Busaidi said he was optimistic that Oman's participation in the expo would strengthen bilateral relations and provide a platform to showcase the sultanate's vision for the future in various sectors.

The event included a visual presentation of the pavilion's design and symbolism. Bayan, one of the designers, explained the pavilion's architectural concept which draws inspiration from Oman's diverse natural terrain and its people's harmonious co-existence with their environment.



(Supplied photo)

Campaign launched to combat drug abuse, spread awareness

Our Correspondent
Muscat

tackle the drug menace.

The Ministry of Health, through the National Committee for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, launched the National Campaign to Combat Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances organised by the Ministry of Health. It aims to engage the community actively in awareness and prevention efforts.

The campaign launch featured a comprehensive visual presentation outlining the competition's objectives. The presentation detailed various activities, events and community initiatives of the campaign. These efforts are directed towards elevating community awareness and mitigating the risks associated with drugs and psychotropic substances.

The campaign is part of a biennial community competition associated with the National Campaign to Combat Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances organised by the Ministry of Health. It aims to engage the community actively in awareness and prevention efforts.

The campaign launch featured a comprehensive visual presentation outlining the competition's objectives. The presentation detailed various activities, events and community initiatives of the campaign. These efforts are directed towards elevating community awareness and mitigating the risks associated with drugs and psychotropic substances.

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,564.82
Sensex	64,933.87
FOREX RATES	
(RO1 equals)	
India	216.33
Pakistan	737.74
Bangladesh	287.94
Philippines	145.70
Sri Lanka	850.21
*Rates as on November 13 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS

Oil prices fall on demand fears

Oil prices backed off on Monday, reversing their Friday rally, as renewed concerns over waning demand in the United States and China dented market sentiment.

Brent crude futures for January were down 71 cents, or 0.87%, at \$80.72 a barrel. While the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures for December were at \$76.49, down 68 cents, or 0.88%, according to Reuters.

Both benchmarks were well below the 100-day moving average of \$86.61 a barrel for WTI and \$82.31 a barrel for Brent.

Prices gained nearly 2% last Friday as Iraq voiced support for oil cuts by OPEC+, but lost about 4% for the week, notching their third weekly losses for the first time since May.

Oil production in the United States this year will rise by slightly less than previously expected while demand will fall.

Oman eyes at least \$20bn investment from 2nd round of hydrogen auctions

Our Correspondent
Muscat

After the successful first round of auctions, which resulted in a total of five project awards worth more than \$30bn, Hydrom Oman (Hydrom) is now expecting to attract between \$20bn-\$30bn worth of investments through the second round of auctions for large-scale green hydrogen projects in the sultanate.

The first round of public auctions was launched late last year, and the agreements were signed in June 2023 with major international consortia and companies that will establish large-scale green hydrogen and ammonia projects in the sultanate.

In the second round of public auctions, which has already been launched, Hydrom plans to award three land blocks in the Dhofar region by the end of the first quarter of 2024.

"The expected investments in the green hydrogen sector in Oman until 2050 are estimated at \$140bn. In the first round of public auctions, the presupposed cost of investments amounted to about \$30bn. And in the second round, we look up for investments at a volume of \$20bn-\$30bn," said Eng Abdulaziz al Shidhani, managing director of Hydrom, in an interview published in the latest edition of Duqm Economist magazine.

"The public auctions help



In the second round of public auctions, Hydrom plans to award three land blocks in the Dhofar region by the end of Q1 2024

achieve transparency on the one hand and attract serious investors who have the financial solvency to implement such projects on the other hand," he added.

Hydrom focused on the Duqm region in the first round of public auctions and is now concentrating on Dhofar in the second round, through three opportunities offered to compa-

nies specialising in the green hydrogen sector.

Commenting on the success of the first round of public auctions, Shidhani said that the level of turnout was good, with clear competition between international companies. He added that as many as 60 companies had purchased the Request for Proposal (RFP) documents in the first round of auctions.

"The first round witnessed many consortiums between major international companies, reflecting the level of interest in this sector and the huge demand for investment in it. The preliminary data for the second round are also good," Shidhani said.

He further said, "Our goal is not to sign with any company, but with companies that can implement the project and have financial solvency, technical expertise, and clarity in the idea of the project. We have closed the first round by signing agreements and not MoUs, which is a success for the efforts exerted and reflects the level of global in-

Oman Green Hydrogen Summit to start from December 14

Muscat - The Oman Green Hydrogen Summit is scheduled to take place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC) from December 12 to December 14, 2023, as announced by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals on Monday.

The summit aims to raise awareness about the importance of green hydrogen as a clean and sustainable energy source while emphasising Oman's role in the green energy sector.

Providing a platform for co-operation and exchange of ex-

periences among participating countries, the Oman Green Hydrogen Summit offers an opportunity to share insights on the latest developments and challenges in the field of green hydrogen, according to a statement from the Ministry of Energy and Minerals posted on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Additionally, the summit will delve into discussions on strategies, policies, the latest technologies, and innovations to attract both local and international investments in green hydrogen projects.

CBO issues govt treasury bills worth RO36mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday announced the issuance of two treasury bill tenders with a total value of RO36mn.

In the first tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO10mn, for a maturity period of 28 days.

The average accepted price reached RO99.595 for every RO100 treasury bill, while the minimum accepted price also arrived at RO99.595. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.2794% and 5.3009%, respectively.

In the second tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO26mn, for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached RO98.665 for every RO100 treasury bill, while the minimum accepted price also arrived at RO98.665. The average



discount rate and the average yield reached 5.3546% and 5.4271%, respectively.

The interest rate on the repo operations with CBO is 6.00% while the discount rate on the treasury bills discounting facility with the central bank is 6.50%.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance. These instruments provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their

surplus funds. The CBO acts as the issue manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (repo).

Treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures.

Growth in m-commerce drives new business opportunities in Oman

Muscat - Oman Business Forum, together with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) is hosting a Tejarah Talks session on the impact of m-commerce.

The event, M-commerce: Your Gateway to Global Markets is scheduled for December 6, 2023 at Zain Auditorium, Omantel headquarters in Airport Heights.

Industry leaders will explore the explosive growth of m-commerce and its role in reshaping travel, manufacturing, retail and more.

Moderated by Shabib al Maamari, managing director, Visit Oman, the panelists Sheikh Khalid al Hosni, CEO and chief data scientist, KA Consultants; Majid al Amri, CEO, Thawani Technologies; and Hamood al Hamdan, director of tech ecosystem development department, Ministry of Transport, Communications & Information Technology will provide insight into the global m-commerce



Maymuna al Adawi

landscape. The panel will discuss how the digital commerce revolution is reshaping industries, highlighting specific trends and data across key sectors.

Maymuna al Adawi, director of public private partnerships (PPP) at MoCIIP and organiser of Tejarah Talks said, "The global m-commerce market is not just thriving it's fundamentally altering how industries operate. For example, in travel and tourism we are seeing a surge in mobile bookings and on-the-go travel

services. In manufacturing, mobile solutions are streamlining operations and sales processes. While in retail, the shift towards mobile shopping is undeniable. For Omani businesses, understanding and embracing m-commerce is key to their future success."

Supported by Jindal Shadeed, Sustainable City Yiti, Nortal, Omantel and Oman FM the December 6 panel will examine the integration of social media with m-commerce, the growing impact of social media influencers and the critical role of user-generated content in shaping consumer preferences.

The advancements in mobile payment options and security measures, enhancing consumer trust and facilitating seamless transactions will also be discussed.

An additional focus of the session will be on how SMEs are utilising m-commerce to broaden their consumer base. Recent data shows SMEs lever-

aging mobile platforms have seen an average increase of 30% in sales, with some sectors reporting even higher growth. Omani craft businesses have expanded their reach to international markets, while local food producers are connecting with a wider regional audience through mobile platforms. These examples underscore the effectiveness of m-commerce in providing local SMEs with the tools to move beyond Oman's borders and tap into new markets.

Adawi said, "With worldwide m-commerce sales set to exceed \$700bn by 2025, December's Tejarah Talks is more than just a discussion session - it is a strategic workshop for local SMEs poised to capitalise on this digital revolution. We are offering the keys to unlock the potential of m-commerce, enabling Omani businesses to not only participate but thrive and lead in the digital economy."

OPEC's oil supply rises in October, demand forecasts revised down

Vienna, Austria - Total crude oil production from the 13 members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), increased by 80,000 barrels per day (bpd) month-on-month in October.

According to OPEC's monthly oil market report released on Monday, total OPEC crude oil production averaged 27.9mn bpd in October.

Crude oil output increased mainly in Angola, Iran and Nigeria, while production in Libya, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait decreased.

Angola increased its output by 51,000 barrels per day last

month, while Iran and Nigeria saw increases of 46,000 and 17,000 barrels per day, respectively. In contrast, Saudi Arabia and Libya saw decreases of 26,000 bpd each, while Kuwait saw a drop of 24,000 bpd.

The share of OPEC crude oil in total global production stood at 27.5% in October.

Global oil production rose by 300,000 bpd during the same month, averaging 101.6mn bpd compared to September.

Non-OPEC production in October, including OPEC natural gas liquids, increased by around 200,000 bpd to an average of 73.9mn bpd.



'Preliminary estimated production increases in October were mainly driven by Norway and the OECD Americas and were partially offset by drops in Russia and Brazil,' the report said.

Meanwhile, the global rig count totalled 1,848 in October, an increase of 18 from September, with OPEC countries accounting for 436 rigs.

A total of eight drilling rigs were decommissioned in non-OPEC countries and 18 rigs in OPEC countries.

The OPEC group revised up its global oil demand forecast for 2023 to reflect a rise of 2.5mn bpd. Global oil demand is now

predicted to average 102.1mn bpd this year.

In 2024, global oil demand is expected to rise by 2.2mn bpd year on year to reach 104.3mn bpd, as solid global economic growth amid continued improvements in China is expected to support oil consumption.

Demand in the OECD region is expected to increase by around 26,000 bpd to average 46.1mn bpd next year, while demand in the non-OECD region is anticipated to expand by almost 2mn bpd year on year to average 58.3mn bpd.

Anadolu Agency

Emirates, flydubai lay big orders at airshow

Dubai, UAE - Emirates announced a bumper order of 95 planes and flydubai snapped up 30 wide-bodied aircraft as home-grown airlines unveiled big orders on day one of the Dubai Airshow on Monday.

Dubai-based Emirates, the Middle East's biggest airline, made the biggest purchase so far with its \$52bn order for 55 Boeing 777-9s, 35 777-8s and five 787 Dreamliners.

"This order represents a significant investment that demonstrates Dubai's commitment to the future of aviation," Emirates' chief executive Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al Maktoum told a press conference.

The 777-9s are expected for delivery in 2025 and the 777-8s scheduled for 2030.

The Emirates order was chief among a number of purchases that underlined the industry's post-pandemic recovery.

Earlier, Turkish-German budget carrier SunExpress signed a firm order for 45 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft at a list price of more than \$5bn, though large orders normally come at a discount.

SunExpress's order for 28 737-8s and 17 737-10s includes options that could extend to 90 aircraft, potentially more than doubling its fleet of 66.

"It's the largest order in the history of SunExpress," Max Kownatzki, chief executive of the low-cost joint venture of Turkish



Turkey starts talks with Airbus for 355 jets

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkish Airlines, the country's flag carrier, confirmed Monday that it was in talks with Airbus to buy up to 355 jets in a huge push to expand its fleet.

"Negotiations are held with Airbus regarding the purchase of a total of 355 aircraft - 240

of which are firm and 115 of which are optional - to be delivered between 2026-2036," the airline said in a statement.

It did not disclose any financial details for the deal announced as the Dubai Air Show opens on Monday, where a number of major pur-

Airlines and Lufthansa, said at the signing ceremony.

"We're very happy to have the MAX aircraft for fuel efficiency reasons, for sustainability reasons."

Meanwhile Latvia's airBaltic said it was buying 30 A220-300 planes from Airbus, Boeing's European rival, with purchase rights for another 20. It said it intends to operate 100 of the planes by

2030.

"This day marks a significant milestone in the history of airBaltic," airBaltic's president and CEO Martin Gauss said, highlighting the airline's "plans for the

first time ever to operate a fleet of 100 aircraft by 2030".

Record profits

However, rumours of a major order by Turkish Airlines, said to

be for about 350 aircraft, did not materialise on the first day, and there were no purchases by Saudi airlines including newcomer Riyadh Air, which hopes to compete with Emirates as a

This order represents a significant investment that demonstrates Dubai's commitment to the future of aviation

SHEIKH AHMED BIN SAEED AL MAKTOUM

leading regional carrier.

With the latest deal, Emirates' order book rises to 295 planes, including 205 777X aircraft. The airline also ordered 202 GE9X engines to power its 777X fleet.

Separately, French tech group Thales said it had signed a contract to provide in-flight entertainment systems for the 777xs.

Demonstrating its recovery, last week Emirates Group announced record half-year net profits of AED10.1bn (\$2.7bn), up 138% from a year earlier.

The company also unveiled record annual profits of \$3bn in May.

Emirates posted a \$5.5bn loss in Covid-ravaged 2020-2021, its first in more than three decades, after grounding its fleet and making heavy lay-offs.

Its losses shrank to \$1.1bn in 2021-2022. This week is the first edition of the biennial Dubai Airshow since Emirates bounced back into the black.

AFP

US infra law funding over 40,000 projects

Washington, US - The White House hailed "historic progress" on rebuilding US infrastructure since President Joe Biden - who is ramping up his 2024 reelection campaign - signed a major funding package into law two years ago.

Nearly \$400bn for over 40,000 projects has been announced so far under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that Biden signed in November 2021, White House coordinator Mitch Landrieu told reporters.

The former New Orleans mayor said 21mn low-income households have also gained access to free or discounted high-speed internet under the law.

He also highlighted renovations either launched or planned to repair more than 135,000 miles (217,000 kilometers) of road, over 7,800 bridges, 445 ports and waterway projects, as well as 190

airport terminals.

In the rail sector alone, the law provides for \$66bn of funding.

A statement outlining the "historic progress by the numbers" also mentioned thousands of projects to build resilience against climate and cybersecurity threats as well as several clean energy initiatives.

"This has never happened in the history of this country," Landrieu said. He estimated however that it would take a number of years for projects to reach completion, many not until after the November 2024 presidential election.

The US president nonetheless hopes that by beginning construction -- and erecting signs bearing his name to projects financed by the law - that he will be able to sway American voters, many of whom face issues with crumbling infrastructure.

AFP

Climate campaign groups demand COP28 aims for formal energy transition deal

Paris, France - Around 100 climate campaign groups warned COP28 organisers Monday that success of critical upcoming talks in Dubai rests on whether countries can negotiate a formal agreement to replace polluting fossil fuels with clean power.

Published two weeks before the conference in oil-rich United Arab Emirates, the open letter from groups led by Oil Change International and 350.org expressed alarm that the hosts of the UN talks could be positioning to accept a watered-down outcome.

The letter to COP28 incoming president Sultan al Jaber said the success of the conference will ultimately "be judged by whether it secures an agreement on a comprehensive energy package".

The centrepiece of the November 30 to December 12 climate meeting will be a "stocktake" of the world's progress so far on meeting the Paris Agreement's ambitious



goal of curbing global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era.

The world is currently far off track and now faces the daunting challenge of cutting carbon emissions almost in half this decade while also coping with increasingly ferocious and costly climate disasters.

The organisations said failure to agree to slash energy sector emissions in line with scientific advice and to negotiate a "phase

out of fossil fuels would have a major impact both on the world's most vulnerable populations and ecosystems and on the credibility of this process".

Signatory climate groups, which also included Greenpeace, Climate Action Network and the Union of Concerned Scientists, called for formal agreement on a set of energy priorities.

These include "an immediate end to fossil fuel expansion and an urgent decline in fossil fuel

production and use this decade" and ultimately a phase out of the oil, gas and coal responsible for most of the planet-heating greenhouse gas pollution.

It also echoed the COP28 priorities of tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency, while calling for a "monumental scaling up" of finance from rich countries to support those in the developing world.

"If this is the COP to 'correct

course' and 'keep 1.5C alive' as you have declared is your priority, all of these elements will need to be part of its formal decision," said the letter to Jaber.

The climate groups said they were "gravely concerned" that Jaber's recent letter to the nearly 200 parties to the UN climate process "signals a shift in tone and a noticeable lowering of ambition on the energy package".

Observers have raised concerns that the UAE climate envoy might be planning to shunt more contentious issues out of the formally negotiated text -- agreed by hard-fought consensus -- and into flimsy voluntary pledges.

Jaber wrote that he was planning to push for a "high ambition outcome" in his letter to parties, inviting countries to join a pledge endorsing the global tripling of renewables and doubling of energy efficiency "and to come to COP with tangible commitments to realize this goal".

AFP

Tight job market rebalances power between US business and labour

New York, US - The US economy is contending with a wave of union activism unseen in decades as organised labour seizes a rare opportunity to play hardball in a tight employment market.

Sectors experiencing unrest include automobiles, health care, restaurants, defense, airlines, technology and the performing arts.

In some cases, employees have threatened to walk out, but didn't actually strike.

"Workers haven't had much leverage for decades, and certainly not in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 recession," said Susan Schurman, professor of labor relations at Rutgers University.

Schurman considers the current dynamic the most advanta-

geous for unions since the 1930s, a rupture from a long period in which employers had the upper hand.

"Wages have been stagnant for decades," Schurman said. "The pandemic changed all that," with the low unemployment bolstering worker leverage.

Such a backdrop has given momentum to organizing campaigns at more companies, although establishing a union shop remains difficult.

In some cases such as Starbucks and Amazon, workers have voted in favor of representation, but struggled to seal a contract with the employer.

The activism can feed on itself as workers in different sectors observe each other fighting for more, sometime spurring



Sectors experiencing strikes include automobiles, health care, restaurants, and airlines (AFP)

concessions from employers who are trying to stay union-free, said Schurman.

This can mean higher wages, better working conditions, increased job security or other

conditions.

Higher consumer prices have been another catalyst for work-

ers, adding credibility to workers claims that they need higher pay just to break even.

Data released this week showed a 3.7% increase over September 2022, down from the 9.1% surge in June 2022.

The Federal Reserve has raised interest rates 11 times since March 2022 in an effort to return inflation to a two percent target.

In August the United States lost 4.1mn days of work due to strikes, the highest level in 23 years, according to the Labor Department.

One of the most prominent strikes has been the United Auto Workers' unprecedented stoppage of Detroit's "Big Three," Ford, Stellantis and General Motors, the first time the union has walked out of all three compa-

nies at once.

Pointing to soaring CEO pay at the companies, UAW President Shawn Fain has called out the automakers to boost pay and restore benefits following union concessions after the 2008 financial crisis and ensuing auto industry bankruptcies.

"Another record quarter, another record year. As we've said for months: record profits equal record contracts," Fain said Tuesday as he announced the latest expansion of the strike at GM.

"It's time GM workers, and the whole working class, get their fair share," said Fain, who has seen gradually improved company offers as evidence the "stand up" strike is working.

AFP

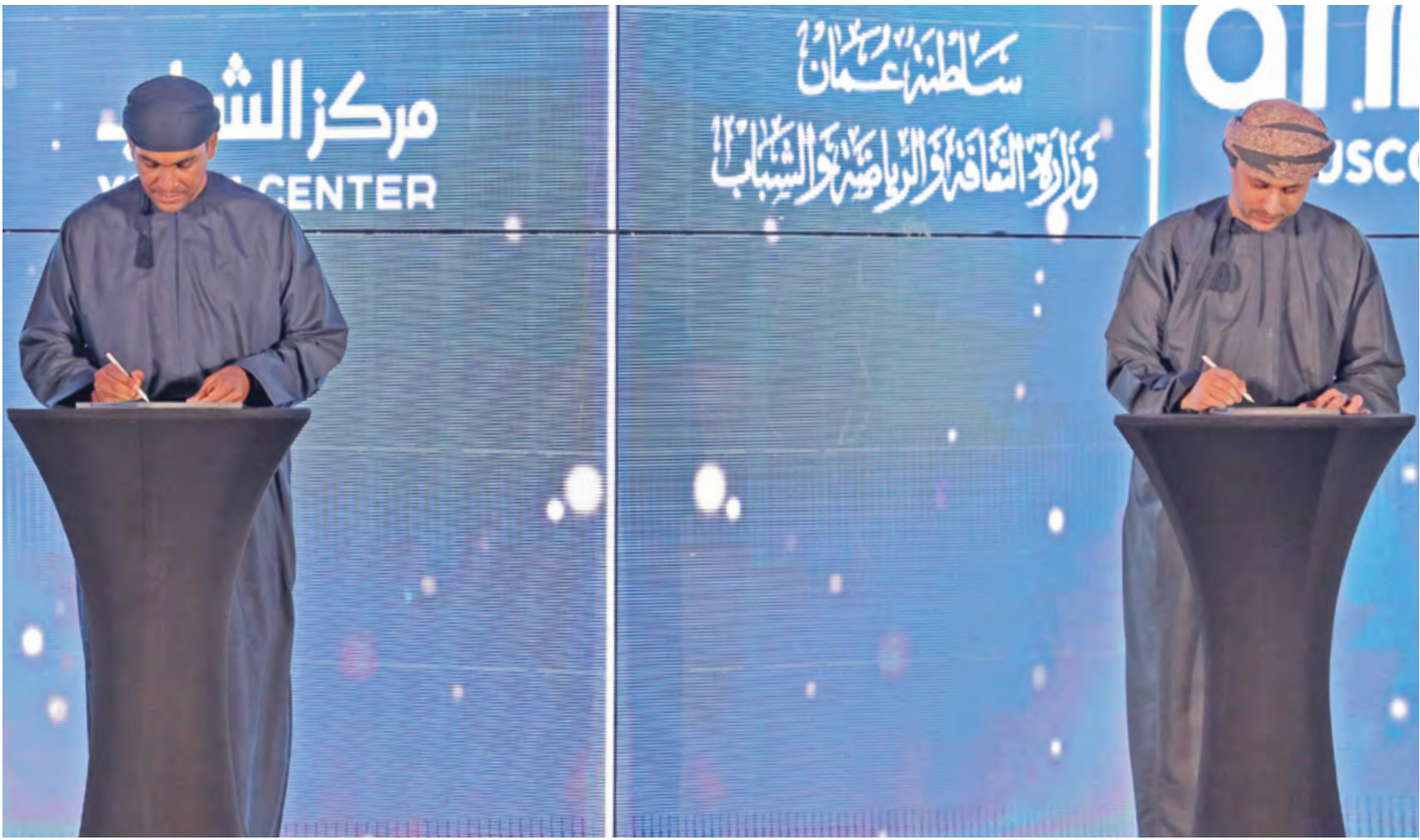
Al Mouj Muscat signs MoU with MCSY

H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, oversaw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Al Mouj Muscat and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth (MCSY) to provide development and on-the-job training opportunities to Omani youths.

Under the agreement, young talents of Oman will gain invaluable hands-on experience in a variety of fields.

Commemorating the partnership, Al Mouj Muscat also hosted a memorable showcase that brought together the nation's brightest talents to mark this year's Omani Youth Day. Under the theme 'Horizon', the activities featured art, culture and creative performances, designed in four different zones for all ages to explore and enjoy.

"Our youth are our future and the driving force behind our nation's vision. At Al Mouj Muscat we are proud to provide a platform that fosters their growth and empowerment," said Nasser al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, adding that their partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth for this year's Omani Youth Day programme has enabled them "to not only shed-light on the



tremendous talent and potential we have locally but also provide youth with the right tools and skills to succeed in today's competitive job market".

The four main zones encompassed, 'Energies', a blend of innovations, ideas, artistic initiatives and live youth performances, and 'Reflections', an im-

mersive experience that encouraged youth to continue pursuing their dreams and aspirations through digital displays. Visitors were also invited to take a stroll

through 'Span or length', a creative path of digital arts curated by youth, while the Stage Area hosted various activations and performances in addition to the

official opening event.

Al Mouj Muscat continues to identify opportunities that will further develop Oman's budding talents. Whether by providing

space, training or support, it remains committed to help propel the nation forward, working towards a shared goal of growth and prosperity for Oman and its people. Al Mouj Muscat is a destination without an equal. It has redefined urban living in the region with an impressive portfolio of oceanfront residential properties, luxury and authentic hospitality, elegant Business Parks, award-winning architecture and well-designed landscapes.

A warm and diverse community at the heart of Oman's capital, Al Mouj Muscat created a sense of belonging for 8,000 residents from 85 nationalities who now call it home. With a vibrant dining and retail district, residents and visitors alike are able to enjoy a wide range of culinary experiences in a lively oceanfront setting.

Al Mouj Muscat provides an exclusive lifestyle that urges families and individuals to live life to the fullest, do better, see more and live richer. For work or leisure, residents and visitors can stay, dine or relax at seven luxury hotels, including Kempinski and The St Regis; experience boating in Oman's largest Marina; or awaken their sporting skills at an 18-hole golf course that's listed in the world's top 100.

Mercedes-Benz GLA: Sporty compact SUV with numerous innovations

Mercedes-Benz is significantly upgrading the compact GLA SUV with numerous innovations and more extensive standard equipment. The new radiator grille with vertical louvres and horizontal fin enhances the powerful character.

In addition, the bonnet with discreetly suggested power domes underlines the self-confident appearance. The redesigned front bumper with visual underride protection points to the GLA's off-road genes.

Added to this is the modernised light signature in the standard LED High Performance front headlights and the LED rear lights. Mercedes-Benz is expanding the range of options with the new Spectral Blue paint colour and four additional wheel designs. In the basic trim, the new GLA stands on 17-inch five-twin-spoke alloy wheels in high-gloss black with high-gloss turned surfaces. Optional 18- to 20-inch wheels are also available.

The free-standing double screen is one of the highlights of the significantly upgraded interior. Its two 10.25-inch wide-screen displays offer a holistic high-tech experience and enhance the open-plan architecture. The steering wheel of the current generation is upholstered in leather as standard; ARTICO imitation leather is available as an alternative.



The new GLA is equipped with comfort seats as standard. They are upholstered in ARTICO man-made leather and three-dimensionally embossed fabric in black. They are also optionally available in the trendy sage grey colour. The Progressive equipment variant offers three interior colours: black, macchiato beige and sagegrey. In the AMG Line, the standard seat cover in ARTICO man-made leather/microfibre MICROCUT is now also available in bahia brown.

A total of four upholstery colours are available in the AMG Line: black, bahia brown, sage grey and the new shade red pepper combined with black. The fabric covering of the comfort

seat is made of 100% recycled materials. In the case of the ARTICO/MICROCUT seat cover, this proportion is 65% in the seat mirror and 85% in the bottom fabric.

Mercedes-Benz has significantly upgraded the standard equipment of the GLA and tailored the offer logic even more precisely to specific customer wishes. For example, in addition to the leather steering wheel and LED front headlights, the basic equipment already includes Highbeam Assist, a backup camera and the USB package. From the Progressive equipment variant onwards, customers also receive the Parking Package and the Mirror Package. Further

functional equipment is bundled into packages based on real customer behaviour. In terms of design features such as colours, upholstery, trim and wheels, those interested can configure the vehicles individually.

The GLA now also features the latest generation of MBUX - with newly designed display styles: while 'Classic' provides all relevant driver information, 'Sporty' impresses with the dynamic rev counter. 'Discreet' reduces the displays to the essential content. In combination with the three Navigation, Assistance and Services modes plus the 10 colour worlds of Ambient Light, there are numerous individualisation options.

Oman Textile introduces new corporate wear line

NaseejOman, the flagship brand of Oman Textile Mills, has been at the forefront revolutionising safety and functionality of customised workwear and institutional uniforms that form an integral part of various sectors and industries across Oman.

With 35 years of expertise, NaseejOman has gained the trust of companies from oil and gas sector to military and beyond, in Oman and the GCC. The company boasts of high In-Country-Value and Omanisation.

As industries continue to prioritise the well-being of their workforce even more in a post pandemic world, the importance of customised workwear and uniforms has also increased exponentially.

NaseejOman recognises this need and has positioned itself as the trustworthy partner for companies across sectors, offering them bespoke solutions without compromising on safety, functionality, and industry-specific requirements.

Faseem P P, the Chief Marketing Officer of Oman Textile Mills, said, "We have always strived to ensure that we deliver exceptional products that surpass industry standards and cater to safety and wellbeing of workers in every sector. We firmly believe that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not work when it comes to workwear and institutional uniforms and hence our team of ex-



perts works closely with clients to understand their specific needs and deliver products accordingly."

NaseejOman's workwear range includes overalls, pants, shirts, jackets, T-shirts, polos, vests, smelter socks, arc flash shirts, disposable coveralls, and more.

Explaining the stringent manufacturing process, Devraj Mehta, Factory Manager, Oman Textile Mills, says, "Our workwear garments are crafted from basic to technical fabrics, including inherent flame-retardant varieties, taking into consideration the challenging climatic conditions in the region."

The mill is well-equipped with production lines from Europe and Japan, having Shuttle less Projectile Looms in Weaving Department, Dyeing and Finishing machines, Screen and Digital Printing in Process House. With a processing capacity of 6 Mil-

lion meters per annum, OTM can dye and print multi-fibre fabrics including Cotton, Polyester, Silk and Viscose.

Adherence to international standards of manufacturing and safety means that protective clothing is offered in pre-shrunk, sanforised fabrics with specialty treatments or with in-built performance fibres. The clothing solutions strike a balance between comfort and durability. Customized styles are available for corporate and institutional needs."

All workwear and uniforms are manufactured in-house in state-of-the-art Oman Textile Mills factory, which is committed to maintaining international manufacturing standards and sustainable practices. The company implements Quality Management standard of ISO 9001: 2015 and Environmental Management System (EMS) of ISO 14001: 2015 standard.

Jumeirah Muscat Bay brings Lebanese flavour to Al Nafoorah with Chef Ali

Serving up the finest tastes of Lebanon, the multi-award-winning Dubai dining destination, Al Nafoorah, is opening in an exclusive pop-up at Zuka, the beachfront restaurant at Jumeirah Muscat Bay, bringing the authentic flavours of the Levant to the shores of Oman.

Running for a mong, from November 15 to December 15, multi award-winning Chef Ali Fouad will serve a specially curated menu designed to take



guests on an authentic culinary journey.

Meaning 'The Fountain' and taking inspiration from the



Berdawni Riviera, known as the 'city of wine and poetry', diners are invited to experience rich Lebanese heritage, as they are welcomed with an innovative menu to transport them to the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Beirut, while taking in spectacular sunset vistas.

With over 20 years of experience, Chef Ali has been recognised with several regional culinary awards including being a three-time winner of the 'Mid-

dle East Speciality Chef' title by ProChef ME.

His menus are inspired by his Lebanese heritage and are dedicated to creating local authenticity, a commitment that is supported by quarterly visits to Lebanon for inspiration to constantly improve the offering and range of ingredients.

The bespoke pop-up menu will feature signature dishes including Chef Ali's Tata's Salad, inspired by his grandmother's

recipe that has been passed on for generations, served alongside well-loved cold and hot Mezzeh, freshly baked manakish and a selection of mouth-watering grills including lobster, tiger prawns and Black Angus tenderloin.

For the perfect sweet ending, guests can delight in heavenly Cheesecake Baklawa, all served with an array of tantalising cocktails and mocktails inspired by Lebanese heritage.

North Gaza hospitals no longer functioning

Death toll inside Al-Shifa hopital rose to 27 adult intensive care patients and 7 babies since weekend

Jerusalem - The hospitals in northern Gaza were no longer functioning amid fuel shortages and intense combat, with the death toll inside the territory's largest facility rising, the Hamas-run health ministry said on Monday.

Israel argues its Hamas enemies built their military headquarters under the Al-Shifa hospital complex, while UN agencies and doctors in the facility warned a lack of generator fuel was claiming lives, including infants.

Witnesses reported intense overnight air strikes, with tanks and armoured vehicles just meters from the gate of the sprawling Al-Shifa compound at the heart of Gaza City, now an urban war zone.

The Hamas government's deputy health minister Youssef Abu Rish said the death toll inside Al-Shifa rose to 27 adult intensive care patients and seven babies since the weekend as the facility suffered fuel shortages.

Gaza has been reliant on generators for over a month after Israel cut off power supplies following the October 7 attack and the besieged territory's only power plant ran out of fuel.

Abu Rish told AFP all hospitals were 'out of service' in the territory's north, where black smoke rose from a bombed mosque and a rare person on the street carried a white flag.

The World Health Organization in the Palestinian Territories said early on Monday that at least 2,300 people - patients, health workers and people fleeing fighting - were inside the crippled Al-Shifa facility.

"There are dozens of dead and hundreds of wounded that no one can get to. Ambulances are at a standstill because they



A wounded Palestinian child and other members of the family arrive at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, following Israeli air strikes that hit their building in the southern Gaza Strip city on Monday (AFP)

There are dozens of dead and hundreds of wounded that no one can get to. Ambulances are at a standstill because they get shot at when they go out

MOHAMMAD ABU SALMIYA

get shot at when they go out," hospital director Mohammad Abu Salmiya told AFP.

The Israeli army pushed on with their campaign, determined

to destroy the Islamist movement whose gunmen it says killed at least 1,200 people, and took about 240 hostages in the country's worst ever attack.

But Israel is facing intense international pressure to minimise civilian suffering amid its massive air and ground operations that Hamas authorities say have killed 11,180 people, including 4,609 children.

Israel said 44 of its troops have been killed in the Gaza offensive.

A lack of fuel was also hitting the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA, with the group's Gaza chief Thomas

White saying operations 'will grind to a halt in the next 48 hours as no fuel is allowed to enter' the territory.

- Fear of regional conflict - The Israel Defense Forces on Monday reported more heavy fighting and again stressed its claim that Hamas was hiding in civilian infrastructure.

"IDF troops are continuing to conduct raids... targeting infrastructure located in central governmental institutions in the

heart of the civilian population, including schools, universities, mosques and residences of fighters," it said.

In another operation, 'IDF ground troops entered the residence of a senior Islamic Jihad fighter and located a large number of weapons inside the kids' room of the residence'.

Teams of Israeli troops ran between jagged ruins in Gaza while air strikes shown on grainy military-released video shattered

buildings.

Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Shtayyeh on Monday urged the European Union and the United Nations to 'parachute aid' into Gaza, especially the hard-hit northern areas.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Hamas must first release the hostages before any ceasefire would be considered, but he told US media on Sunday that 'there could be' a deal in works.

Israelis are stunned by the October 7 attack and worried for the fate of the captives, with families planning to deliver a letter at the UN headquarters in Jerusalem seeking action.

The war in Gaza has also spurred concerns of a wider regional conflict.

International attention has focused on the plight of Palestinians, and protests have been held worldwide in solidarity with the 2.4mn under bombardment and siege for more than five weeks.

Among those fleeing northern Gaza on Sunday was Adel Shamallakh, who was pushing a stretcher with four young children, some crying and shoeing flies from their faces.

"The road is so bumpy, more than expected. Destruction is everywhere, even birds there have no more life."

About 980 trucks carrying humanitarian aid have been let into Gaza since October 21, according to the UN humanitarian agency.

Fuel has been a key need, especially for hospital generators, but Israel has been concerned that any fuel deliveries could be diverted to Hamas fighters.

Palestinians in Gaza's south have been forced to adapt to the lack of basic resources.

AFP

Iran hangs three men over 2019 bombing attacks

Tehran, Iran - Iran hanged on Monday three men who were convicted of carrying out 2019 bombing attacks in the restive southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, the judiciary said.

The three men were sentenced to death after they were found guilty of bombing attacks targeting a police station in Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchistan province, in 2019. "The sentences against the perpetrators of bombings in Zahedan were carried out today," the Mizan Online said.

Mostafavinia said the defendants were also convicted over 'receiving military training, transferring and hiding bomb-making materials'.

AFP

US presidential race: Republican candidate Tim Scott withdraws

Washington, US - US Senator Tim Scott announced on Sunday that he is withdrawing from the US presidential race, saying voters had given him a clear message of 'not now.'

The South Carolina lawmaker, who was running to become the first Black Republican president, had been struggling to rise above the pack in the party's crowded field.

Polling in sixth place among Republican primary candidates, the 58-year-old had only 2.5 per cent of the vote, according to the RealClearPolitics average of recent major opinion polls.

"I am suspending my campaign. I think the voters who are the most remarkable people on



US Senator from South Carolina Tim Scott (AFP)

the planet have been really clear that they're telling me: "Not now Tim," he told the Fox News programme *Sunday Night in America*.

Scott officially announced he was running for the Republican

nomination in May after spending months visiting the states considered crucial to gaining early momentum in the contest.

During his campaign he frequently underlined his Christian faith and the conservative values he learned growing up in a poor, single-parent household.

Scott was one of five Republicans appearing in the third televised Republican debate last Wednesday as challengers for the party's nomination sparred over Ukraine, China, abortion and the future path of the party.

Notably absent from the stage was former president Donald Trump, who is leading the field by leaps and bounds with 58.5 per cent of the vote, according to

RealClearPolitics.

Scott said he had no interest in becoming a running mate to any of the remaining candidates.

"Being vice president has never been on my to-do list for this campaign, and it's certainly not there now."

He also stopped short of throwing his support behind any of the remaining contenders.

"I'm going to recommend that the voters study each candidate and their candidacies and frankly their past and make the best decision for the future of their country," he said.

"The best way for me to be helpful is not weigh in on who they should endorse."

AFP

Eight pro-Iran fighters dead in US strikes in Syria, says monitor

Beirut, Lebanon - At least eight pro-Iran fighters were killed in US strikes on eastern Syria, a war monitor said on Monday, a day after Washington carried out raids in response to attacks on American forces.

The toll is 'eight pro-Iran fighters dead, including at least one Syrian, and Iraqi nationals', the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, following the strikes late on Sunday on the Mayadeen and Albu Kamal areas of Syria's eastern Deir Ezzor province near the Iraqi border.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Sunday the United States had carried out strikes against two Iran-linked sites in Syria in response to attacks on American forces.

It was the third time in less than three weeks that the US military has targeted locations in Syria it said were tied to Iran, which supports various armed groups that Washington blames for a spike in attacks on its forces in the Middle East.

The surge is linked to the war between Israel and Hamas, which began when the Palestinian group carried out a shock cross-border attack on Gaza on October 7.

Israel's retaliatory military campaign in Gaza since has killed more than 11,000 people, also mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run

health ministry.

"US military forces conducted precision strikes today on facilities in eastern Syria used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iran-affiliated groups in response to continued attacks against US personnel in Iraq and Syria," Austin said in a statement.

The strikes were conducted against a training facility and a safe house near the cities of Albu Kamal and Mayadeen

LLOYD AUSTIN

"The strikes were conducted against a training facility and a safe house near the cities of Albu Kamal and Mayadeen, respectively," he said.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said on Monday that 'the Americans make unproven claims such as resistance forces taking orders from Iran'.

"We have stated many times that the resistance groups do not take orders from Iran, nor do we give them instructions," he said.

AFP

New Polish parliament opens as balance of power shifts

Warsaw, Poland - Poland's new parliament opened on Monday for its first session after elections, as both the ruling populists and the liberal opposition bid to form the next government.

The ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party won the largest number of seats in October's vote, though short of a majority. Even so, President Andrzej Duda has given it first crack at forming a new government, which the analysts say it has no chance of doing.

In his opening speech before the parliament, Duda declared 'readiness' to cooperate with the new lawmakers but praised the PiS allies for 'eight good years'



Polish President Andrzej Duda addresses the parliament in the Polish parliament in Warsaw on Monday (AFP)

they had spent in power.

Three pro-EU parties led by former prime minister and Euro-

pean Council president Donald Tusk won enough to form a majority and are gearing up to form

a government, though they first will have to wait for PiS's efforts to fail. "This is an unprecedented situation in more than 30 years of the history of democratic Poland," said Stanislaw Mocek, a sociologist and president of the Collegium Civitas university in Warsaw.

"The first votes on Monday will show the real balance of power in the new legislature," he said. PiS holds 194 out of 460 seats in the lower chamber, compared to 248 seats for the pro-EU opposition. At the inaugural parliamentary session at 12pm (1100 GMT), Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki will dissolve the government, which will

stay on in an interim capacity. The newly-elected MPs will also select the leadership of the lower house - a first test of strength for the current opposition.

PiS has said it will 'do everything' to be able to form a new government within the constitutionally allocated 14 days and then for that government to pass a vote of confidence within 14 days after that.

"This mission is seen as destined to fail," Mocek said.

He said PiS was just 'playing for time' to receive additional financing, put their people in key posts and 'ensure a soft landing' when it goes into opposition.

AFP

APEC SUMMIT

China's Xi to meet Biden on US soil

Biden will welcome to San Francisco the 20 other members of APEC forum

San Francisco, US - President Joe Biden, eager to showcase US leadership in the face of Beijing and Moscow, this week leads another major summit, but this time the guests will include not only allies but Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Biden will welcome to San Francisco the 20 other members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, conceived three decades ago in an era when US policymakers were convinced that robust trade would bring the Pacific Rim together.

That sanguine vision is over, with the Biden administration at APEC pushing only a limited economic pact and in recent months ramping up sanctions against China, seen as the main challenger to US global primacy.

But both the United States and China have voiced hope for greater stability and - with a visit to Washington politically unfeasible, and US elections one year away - APEC marks a unique chance for Xi to see Biden on US soil.

The Biden-Xi meeting on



US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen delivers remarks at a bilateral meeting with Australian Treasurer Jim Chalmers at the APEC summit at Moscone Center in San Francisco on Monday (AFP)

Even countries in the region who are extraordinarily worried about China's increasing aggression still have deep economic inter-linkages with China and would vastly prefer a stable US-China relationship

JUDE BLANCHETTE

Wednesday - their first since a year ago at a G20 summit in Bali - is expected to take up a broad gamut of disagreements including Taiwan, whose elections in two months could trigger fresh tensions with Beijing, which claims the self-ruling democracy and has not ruled out seizing it by force.

One US official voiced hope Xi and Biden would 'open up new lines of communication', amid US desire to restore contact between the two militaries, seen as especially vital to managing a Taiwan crisis.

China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said the two leaders 'will have in-

depth communication on strategic, general and directional issues concerning China-US relations, as well as major issues concerning global peace and development'.

Beijing opposes 'defining the China-US relationship in terms of competition', she added.

For other leaders in San Fran-

cisco, APEC risks 'feeling like a sideshow' to Biden and Xi, but they are also likely relieved by the meeting, said Jude Blanchette, a China specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Even countries in the region who are extraordinarily worried about China's increasing aggression still have deep economic inter-linkages with China and at the margin would vastly prefer a stable US-China relationship to an unstable one," he said.

Allies gather again

Meanwhile, Biden, drawing an implicit contrast to his predecessor and rival Donald Trump, has focused on highlighting alliances, including through new formats such as a three-way military pact with Australia and Britain. Despite China's presence, the United States will still work with allies in APEC on 'pushing back against any sort of efforts to undermine international rules and norms', Matt Murray, the senior US official for APEC, told AFP.

He said the organisation was well-placed as the venue for the Biden-Xi summit as APEC is non-binding, allowing countries with disagreements to talk.

US allies attending APEC will include Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese as well as Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol.

AFP

Demand to put people and planet above business

San Francisco, US - Hundreds of demonstrators, from anti-capitalists to pro-Palestinian advocates, gathered in San Francisco on Sunday on the eve of an APEC summit to protest against the world bloc.

The protesters marched through the US city demanding participants in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum put people and planet above business.

"APEC is a form of neoliberal colonial government," Nik Evasco told AFP.

"We're here to make sure they put people and planet front and centre of the issues they are negotiating."

President Joe Biden this week plays host to 20 other members of APEC, a trade-focused body whose summit will be dominated by the US leader's meeting with Chinese Premier Xi Jinping, as well as Israel's war with Hamas.



A demonstrator waves a Palestinian flag during the 'No on APEC' protest in San Francisco on Sunday (AFP)

"They are framing negotiations around trying to build a green economy, but what actually happens is exploiting... pre-

cious resources essential to develop clean solutions in order to make profits for corporate CEOs here in the US," said

Evasco.

The gathering also attracted a number of pro-Palestinian protesters, who called for an end to

'genocide' in the Gaza Strip.

"I'm here to protest in solidarity with Palestinians who have been undergoing 75 years of occupation and genocide and ethnic cleansing," said Eleonore Collet, 28.

"It's truly a genocide, and we are funding it in the US and that feels deeply wrong."

Hamas fighters launched a bloody assault in Israel on October 7, killing around 1,200 people. Israel's response has since killed more than 11,000 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, over 4,600 of them children, according to the Hamas government's media office.

Collet said even though Israel was not part of APEC, she felt it made sense to demonstrate here. "The cause of the liberation of peoples is international, all these causes are interconnected," she said.

AFP

US says to be 'good hosts' to Russia

San Francisco, US - The United States will treat Russia as a full participant in this week's Asia-Pacific summit in San Francisco, despite US efforts to isolate Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine, a senior official said on Sunday.

With a visit by President Vladimir Putin politically unthinkable, Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk will represent Russia at the summit.

"He's being treated as the head of delegation, and he'll have the opportunity to participate fully in the week's events," Matt Murray, the US State Department official in charge of APEC, told AFP.

Overchuk is under a variety of Western sanctions

including from the European Union but not specifically under US sanctions, unlike much of Russia's top brass.

"We've been consistently saying all year long that we wanted to be good hosts of APEC," Murray said of the 21-member organisation.

"But we were going to do so within the laws and regulations of the United States. And Russia's participation, obviously, has been shaped by that, because of the sanctions," he said.

He acknowledged that Overchuk 'clearly won't be on the same level' in diplomatic protocol as heads of state and government who are coming to APEC.

AFP

South Asia worst in world for water scarcity: UN

New Delhi, India - More children in South Asia are struggling due to severe water scarcity made worse by the impacts of climate change than anywhere else worldwide, the United Nations said on Monday.

"A staggering 347mn children under 18 are exposed to high or extremely high water scarcity in South Asia, the highest number among all regions in the world," the UN children's agency said in a report. The eight-nation region, comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, is home to more than one-quarter of the

world's children.

"Climate change is disrupting weather patterns and rainfall, leading to unpredictable water availability," the UN said in its report. The report cites poor water quality, lack of water and mismanagement such as over-pumping of aquifers, while climate change decreases the amount of water replenishing them.

"When village wells go dry, homes, health centres and schools are all affected," UNICEF added. "With an increasingly unpredictable climate, water scarcity is expected to become worse for children in South Asia."

AFP

South Korea, US revise agreement to counter North

Seoul, South Korea - US and South Korean defence chiefs on Monday updated a key military agreement against nuclear-armed North Korea for the first time in a decade as they hailed their 'stronger than ever' alliance.

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin is in Seoul for an annual security meeting with his South Korean counterpart Shin Won-sik, as the allies ramp up their defence cooperation in the face of growing missile and nuclear threats from Pyongyang.

At the Security Consultative Meeting, the defence chiefs revised the Tailored Deterrence Strategy (TDS), a deal on joint deterrence strategies to counter North Korea's nuclear weapons and other arms, according to a joint statement.

The revisions mean the deal



US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and South Korean Defence Minister Shin Won-sik attend a welcome ceremony in Seoul on Monday (AFP)

will allow the allies to more effectively 'deter and respond to advancing DPRK nuclear and other WMD and non-nuclear capabilities with strategic impacts', it said, using the North's formal

name.

First adopted in 2013, the allies had been working to update the document to better reflect Pyongyang's rapidly advancing nuclear and missile threats, ac-

If North Korea provokes war, what will be eliminated will be the Kim Jong Un regime, and... (there) will be unification based on the liberal democratic order

SHIN WON-SIK

cording to the Yonhap news agency. This year, Seoul and Washington have staged joint military exercises involving advanced stealth jets and US strategic assets.

An American nuclear-armed submarine made a South Korean port call in July - the first in four

decades - while a US B-52 heavy bomber landed on the Korean peninsula 'for the first time this century', Austin noted during a joint press conference after the meeting.

"I'm proud to say our alliance is stronger than ever," he said.

Despite many conflicts around the world, Seoul's defence minister Shin said that Seoul and Washington maintained 'the most powerful alliance in history and the world'.

"If North Korea provokes war, as confirmed by the leaders of both countries, what will be eliminated will be the Kim Jong Un regime, and what will be achieved will be unification based on the liberal democratic order led by the Republic of Korea," he said.

AFP

Indian rescuers battle to save 40 trapped in collapsed tunnel

Dehradun, India - Rescuers in northern India battled for a second day on Monday to save 40 workers trapped underground after the road tunnel they were building collapsed, bringing down tonnes of debris.

Teams using heavy excavators have been working nonstop since the collapse early on Sunday morning to clear piles of concrete and earth, but with more debris falling as workers tried to clear a passage, a giant steel pipe was being prepared as an escape route.

"All the 40 workers trapped

inside the tunnel are safe," Karamveer Singh Bhandari, a senior commander in the National Disaster Response Force, told AFP from the site in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, adding that water and food had been sent.

Oxygen was being pumped into the blocked portion of the tunnel, with food sent through a water pipe.

Rathodi said excavators had removed about 20 metres (65 feet) of heavy debris, but the men were 40 metres beyond that point.



Rescue workers are seen at the site after a tunnel collapsed in the Uttarkashi district of India's Uttarakhand state, on Monday (AFP)

"Due to excess debris in the tunnel, we are facing some difficulty in the rescue, but our team is leaving no stone unturned," Bhandari added.

Teams plan to use a heavy machine to drive a steel pipe with a width of 90cm (nearly three feet), wide enough for the trapped men to squeeze through, the government's highway and infrastructure company said.

"Water, food, oxygen, electricity all are available with the work force trapped inside the tunnel... All the stranded work-

ers are safe as communicated by them," the statement added.

Initial contact was made via a note on a scrap of paper, but later rescuers managed to connect using radio handsets.

"Some small food packets were sent in through a pipe which is also taking oxygen inside," rescue official Durgesh Rathodi told AFP from the site.

Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who on Monday flew to the site of the accident, said on X, formerly Twitter, that the work to remove the tumbled concrete debris

was 'being made continuously to bring them out safely'.

"Contact has been made with the workers trapped in the tunnel through a walkie-talkie," he said. "Efforts are being made to get them out safely soon."

One rescue worker, quoted by the Press Trust of India news agency, said the men were contacted shortly after midnight on Monday. Disaster response official Devendra Patwal said that while the men were trapped, they had space in the tunnel area where they were.

AFP

Former leader David Cameron returns to British government

British PM Sunak sacked right-wing firebrand Suella Braverman as interior minister

London, UK - Former UK leader David Cameron sensationally returned to the British government as foreign secretary on Monday, as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak shook up his top team ahead of a general election expected next year.

Sunak sacked right-wing firebrand Suella Braverman as interior minister, after critics accused her of heightening tensions during weeks of contentious pro-Palestinian demonstrations and counter-protests in Britain.

He replaced her with James Cleverly, who had been foreign secretary, before announcing Cameron as Cleverly's surprise replacement.

Cameron, 57, quit as prime minister in 2016 after losing the Brexit referendum. He stood down as an MP the same year.

He became mired in scandal in 2021, after lobbying the UK government for finance group Greensill Capital, which later collapsed and the episode was seen as badly tarnishing his reputation.

Cameron will be made a life peer in the House of Lords, Britain's upper chamber of parliament, Downing Street announced, meaning that he can sit in government.

The former leader said he 'gladly accepted' the role as Britain faced 'a daunting set of international challenges'.

"While I have been out of



This file photo shows David Cameron arriving at the Houses of Parliament in London on September 5, 2016 (AFP)

front-line politics for the last seven years, I hope that my experience - as Conservative leader for 11 years and prime minister for six - will assist me in helping the prime minister to meet these vital challenges," Cameron added.

'Desperate'

Following her dismissal, Braverman said 'it has been the greatest privilege of my life to serve as home secretary'.

"I will have more to say in due course," she added. The changes are part of Sunak's first major

reshuffle of his top ministers since becoming the country's leader in October last year.

The Conservatives, in power for nearly 14 years, said the changes 'strengthen his team in government to deliver long-term decisions for a brighter future'.

Set to be announced throughout the day, they are also expected to reward loyalists and younger emerging MPs, as the party struggles for popularity.

Cameron's unexpected return surprised even those who comment daily on British politics, and was viewed as having been made with the next general election firmly in mind. The Tories have trailed the main Labour opposition by double-digit margins throughout Sunak's time in power, and are widely tipped to lose the contest due next year.

Although he has a high profile and contacts around the world, Cameron's appointment may not prove a vote winner. Polling in September showed 45 per cent of UK adults felt unfavourably towards him, while only around a quarter held a favourable view.

Tim Bale, politics professor at London's Queen Mary University, said Sunak was likely drawn to Cameron's 'clout on the international stage' and hoped to appeal to increasingly dissatisfied centrist and centre-right voters.

"I'm very sceptical that it'll make much difference on that or any other score," he noted. "It looks desperate - because that is what it is!"

Braverman had stoked controversy throughout her tenure, taking a hardline stance on immigration in particular and regularly wading into so-called culture wars issues which are seen as dividing the electorate.

But her position became increasingly untenable after she last week wrote an explosive newspaper article, without Sunak's approval, accusing police of bias towards left-wing causes.

The article was blamed for stoking tensions ahead of a weekend of protests calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, which coincided with Armistice Day events, and prompted calls for her to be sacked.

AFP



Baby Indi with her parents Claire Staniforth and Dean Gregory in the Queen's Medical Centre (QMC) in Nottingham, in September (AFP)

Critically ill girl dies after court battle

London, UK - A terminally-ill British girl at the centre of a legal battle over her treatment died on Monday, less than 24 hours after specialists withdrew life support, her parents announced.

Indi Gregory passed away in the early hours of Monday after the 8-month-old's parents lost a bid to transfer her to Italy for treatment, despite the government in Rome awarding her citizenship. Her emotive case became the latest in Britain to pit parents against the country's legal and healthcare systems.

Indi was diagnosed with mitochondrial disease, a genetic condition that prevents cells in the body producing energy.

There is no cure for mitochondrial disease and her parents - Claire Staniforth and Dean Gregory - had wanted her to be treated at the Vatican-owned Bambino Gesù hospital.

But Britain's National Health Service (NHS) and multiple UK courts ruled against transferring her, arguing it was not in the 8-month-old's best interests.

The Court of Appeal on Friday also rejected a plea to have her life support removed at home instead of in a hospital.

Her parents have decried the decisions, and said they were

'angry, heartbroken and ashamed' as they announced their daughter's death via the Christian Concern group that has been supporting the couple.

"The NHS and the courts not only took away her chance to live a longer life, but they also took away Indi's dignity to pass away in the family home where she belonged," Gregory said in a statement. "They did succeed in taking Indi's body and dignity, but they can never take her soul."

The NHS and the courts not only took away her chance to live a longer life, but they also took away Indi's dignity to pass away in the family home where she belonged

GREGORY

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose Brothers of Italy party promotes traditional Catholic family values, announced last week that Indi Gregory had been granted Italian citizenship.

AFP

Philippine rights campaigner de Lima 'triumphant' after winning bail

Manila, Philippines - Jailed Philippine human rights campaigner Leila de Lima was 'triumphant' on Monday after a judge granted her bail, putting her a step closer to freedom after nearly seven years behind bars.

De Lima, one of the most outspoken critics of former president Rodrigo Duterte and his deadly anti-drug war, was jailed on narcotics-related charges she says were fabricated to silence her. The former senator, justice minister and human rights commissioner waved to supporters as she exited the Manila court, surrounded by police officers and journalists.

"This is a moment of tri-

umphant joy and also thanksgiving," de Lima said before boarding a minibus to be taken back to prison. "I've been praying so hard for this day to come. It's very painful to be jailed despite being innocent."

Her lawyer, Filibon Tacardon, said de Lima 'cried' when the decision was announced in the court.

"We expected the bail solely because of the merits of the case," Tacardon told reporters.

"We believe that she's innocent - we all believe that she's innocent and all these charges are trumped up."

De Lima, 64, is accused of taking money from inmates in-



Former Philippine senator and human rights campaigner Leila de Lima speaks to members of the media in Muntinlupa on Monday (AFP)

side the largest prison in the Philippines to allow them to sell drugs while she was justice minister from 2010 to 2015.

Multiple witnesses, including prison gang bosses, died or re-

canted their testimonies, resulting in the dismissal of two of the three charges against de Lima.

She still faces life in prison if convicted on the remaining charge.

In a decision dated November 10, Judge Gener Gito allowed de Lima and her four surviving co-accused to post bail of 300,000 pesos (US\$5,350) each.

It was not immediately clear when de Lima would walk free from the national police headquarters where she has been held in a compound for high-profile detainees, rather than one of the country's overcrowded prisons. Tacardon said he hoped it would be later on Monday.

'Unjustly prosecuted and detained'

Since President Ferdinand Marcos came into office in June 2022 there have been renewed calls from human rights groups, foreign diplomats and politicians for de Lima's release.

Rights groups welcomed the bail decision.

"She never should have been unjustly prosecuted and detained by former President Rodrigo Duterte," Human Rights Watch deputy Asia director Bryony Lau said.

Lau said Duterte's administration 'concocted evidence and used the machinery of an abusive state to punish her for per-

forming her duties as a senator and speaking out against the war on drugs'.

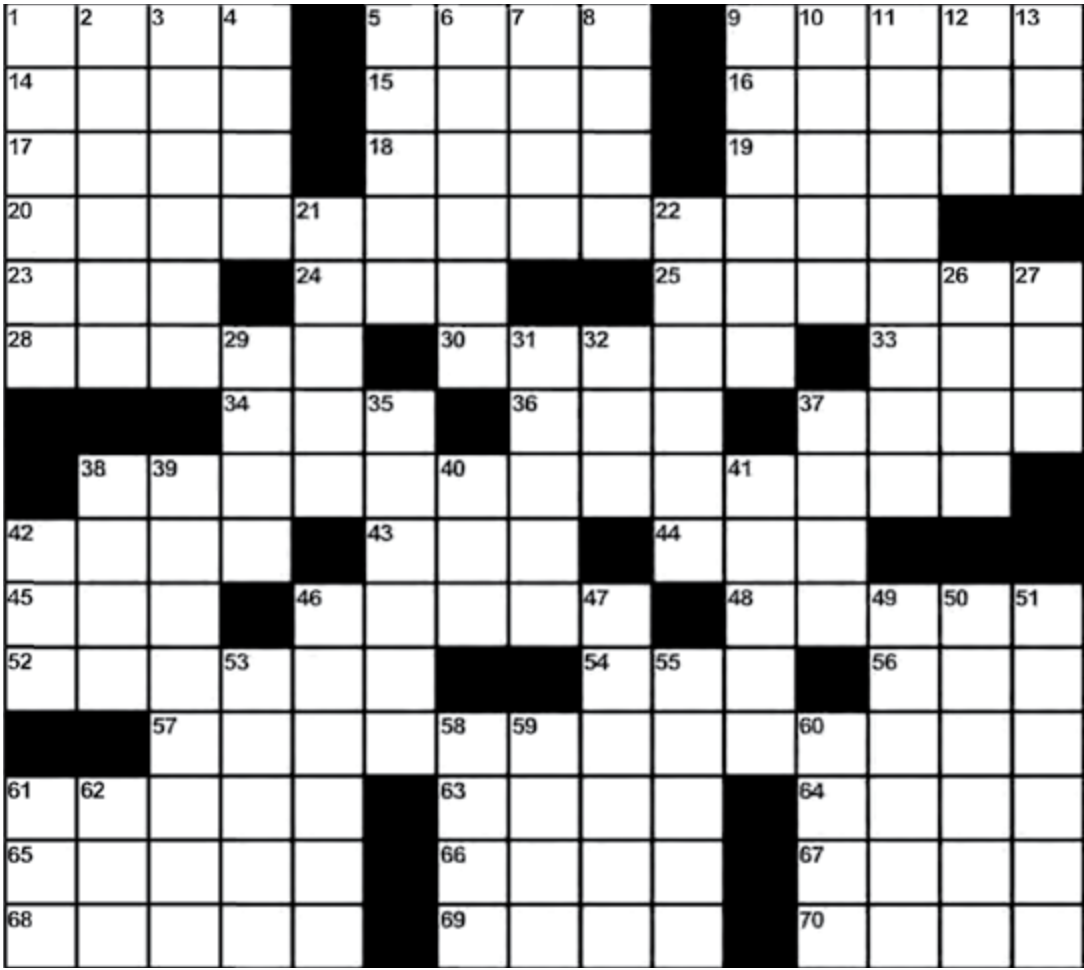
Amnesty International called for the last remaining drug charge to be 'dismissed expeditiously' and those behind her detention 'be brought to justice'.

Before her arrest on February 24, 2017, de Lima had spent a decade investigating 'death squad' killings allegedly orchestrated by Duterte during his time as Davao City mayor and in the early days of his presidency.

She conducted the probes while serving as the nation's human rights commissioner, and then as justice minister.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) Sore feet, in slang
5) Bygone Russian ruler
9) Familiar places of comfort
14) Almond-shaped
15) Tingle that irritates
16) A Muse
17) Proofreader's instruction
18) Pasture female
19) Correct
20) Sprout up
23) Former Japanese capital
24) Keats work
25) Gilligan's stranding place
28) Brief expression of a guiding principle
30) Ramshackle, as a watermelon?
33) Deception
34) Hinky's kin
36) "Long_ and far away ..."
37) Composes
38) Place to go when hacked
WHO GIVES A HOOT?
42) Face-to-face exam
43) River rodent
44) Tentative taste
45) Last half of a cocktail?
46) Hebrew letters
48) Word with "human" or

"alien"
52) Treeless plain
54) Shed tool
56) Negative link
57) What nerds have
61) Low, dull impact sound
63) Subordinate of a marquis
64) Capital of Latvia
65) Insect-catching bird
66) Liver spread
67) It gives the eye its color
68) Ascended, as from a grave
69) Technical school (abbr.)
70) Talking stick

DOWN

1) Old bumper car trademark
2) Bite off too much?
3) Awkward bloke
4) Killed, as a dragon
5) Hardly outgoing
6) Tent securers
7) Farm measure
8) Ostrich look-alike
9) Joan of Arc's offense
10) College at Oxford
11) Another college at Oxford
12) Suffix for some ordinal numbers

13) Drunkard
21) Fit to be tied?
22) Wives of avid sports fans, facetiously
26) Last digit in a price, often
27) "Plaines" leader
29) Asian weight unit
31) "Planet of the Apes" setting
32) Bad attribute of many a prima donna
35) DiMaggio's 56 games, e.g.
37) Prop for Sherlock Holmes
38) German "Mrs."
39) Beautiful arcs
40) It's passed for funds
41) Slander relative
42) Legendary Giant Mel
46) In need of a good fixing
47) Some summer attire
49) A Gandhi
50) Something to knock some sense into?
51) Bribe, in slang
53) Gifted one?
55) Forest fledgling
58) Foreign Legion head-wear

59) Palindromic Indian bread
60) Clapton of "Layla" fame
61) EMT's skill
62) Flowery gift

NOTE PAD

BOIL SOAP USED
ULNA HUSH APTLY
LESS RISE CHOSE
BOTTLE JAW SHOWER
FEASTS AWAY EEL
ALLAH ULAN DUM
CEILING EYEHOUSE
EGG OLIO EXCEL
DYNASTY SAYEST
LEE PELT
BLOWERY LILES JARS
LUNAR BALE AGUE
OBEYS SNIP PAIR
TESS POSY ERNE

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

 **ARIES** MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your creativity has a mind of its own today, leading you to make different choices than you usually do. Friends who are expecting you to act one way might have a hard time believing it when you want to act in another, but they're definitely going to like what they see. Today should be all about letting the deepest side of your personality out into the world in all its unique and kooky glory. You will be loved, celebrated, and empowered.

 **LEO** JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Today, a friend's emotional turmoil could really get in your way. You need to value the relationship you have with them by supporting them through tough times, but you also need to be honest if their drama is getting to be too much for you. Get to the heart of the matter and be direct in what you say. You need to make an impact. While your announcement might make them more upset initially, they will eventually be thankful for your honesty.

 **SAGITTARIUS** NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You're getting awfully sick of the scenery around you, which means that it's time for a change! This attitude combined with a little bit of free time in the afternoon makes today an ideal day to start making some new travel plans. And you get bonus points if they involve a destination outside the country. Do some research on far-flung places and find out what the best times of year are to visit. Let your imagination go. Reach for the most elaborate journey you can imagine and afford.

 **TAURUS** APRIL 20-MAY 20

People aren't listening very carefully today. There is a lot of distraction in the air, so be warned that what you say might be misinterpreted. When you speak the truth in a direct manner, some folks might think you're coming off as pushy or pompous. It isn't ideal that you have to exert extra energy to make sure they don't read you wrong, but you do. The good news is that by putting forth the effort to make things clear with them, you'll reap a big reward.

 **VIRGO** AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Let your sense of humor guide you through any sticky situations that might pop up today. Celebrate the fact that you have a sharper wit than most people by using it every chance you get! With one quick quip, you'll be able to get the upper hand without anyone even realizing you took it, and this will enable you to win any argument without breaking a sweat. The key is to be flexible and patient. You'll have to wait for your perfect moment to strike.

 **CAPRICORN** DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You've been flattered by someone who's been making bold plays for your attention, but there is also something about them that bugs you. Listen to that nagging voice in your head and try to avoid giving this person what they're asking for just yet. You don't want them to think that they've got your trust before they actually do. Others might appear as they are not, and while it's their right to put on an act, it's not in your best interests to help them do that.

 **GEMINI** MAY 21-JUNE 21

It won't feel like a risky endeavor to reach out to others for help today. You will find like-minded people everywhere you go, and they'll know what you need almost before you know it yourself. Wearing your heart on your sleeve can usually leave you feeling vulnerable, but right now it is a wonderful way to connect with people who want what you want. Don't be shy about your feelings today, because you never know who might share them. Go out there and find out.

 **LIBRA** SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Let your sense of humor guide you through any sticky situations that might pop up today. Celebrate the fact that you have a sharper wit than most people by using it every chance you get! With one quick quip, you'll be able to get the upper hand without anyone even realizing you took it, and this will enable you to win any argument without breaking a sweat. The key is to be flexible and patient. You'll have to wait for your perfect moment to strike.

 **AQUARIUS** JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

If you're looking for some inspiration to feed your creativity and energy, you can certainly go to your usual sources of music, movies, and nature. But you will probably get everything you need even more quickly by seeking it from another person. Observe one of the newer people in your life and watch how they treat others today. Integrate some of their techniques into your own way of interacting and you'll soon feel like a whole new door has opened.

 **CANCER** JUNE 22-JULY 22

Try not to edit your words or censor your impulses today. Let yourself be as outrageous as you want to be. When you let loose and get a little crazy, you knock down a few mental walls and let new inspiration shine in. And if anyone is watching, they won't laugh at you. They will want to get in on the good time you're so obviously having! Your irreverent behavior will set the tone and help everyone else shake loose the mental cobwebs. It's a great day for brainstorming.

 **SCORPIO** OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

If you're still preoccupied by a career issue, you need to have a conversation with someone you trust before it turns into a career crisis. These concerns aren't going to go away unless you share your woes. Keeping it all bottled up inside will only increase your stress and make the problem seem bigger than it really is. Get a fresh perspective from someone who has been there before. They'll have some sound advice that can help you relax and see a new way to handle things.

 **PISCES** FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Great days like today don't come around very often, so try to enjoy every minute of it! Reach out into the world with both hands and find out what adventure or mischief you can become a part of. If you feel like taking a nice long hike or catching a movie matinee, do it. This is a great day to indulge yourself and ignore whatever chores or tasks are waiting for you at home, if you can get away with it without leaving anyone in the lurch, of course!

Answers: 1.A 2.D 3.C



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Where are the Tasaday people indigenous?
- A. The highlands of Mindanao in the Philippines
B. Central Australia
C. The Darién Gap
D. Southern Mongolia
02. Between 1696 and 1851, the British government imposed a tax on what part of a house?
- A. Number of chimneys
B. Roof area
C. Front door area
D. Number of windows
03. Which fermented liquid condiment used for flavouring, especially of grilled meats (and also used as an ingredient in cocktails and drinks) was first made by two dispensing chemists, John Wheeley Lea and William Henry Perrins?
- A. Tomato sauce
B. Tabasco sauce
C. Worcestershire sauce
D. Mayonnaise

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

S	L	D	A
L	I	E	S
V	V	E	E
U	A	Qu	E

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



Thrills, upsets and controversies

New Delhi, India - After almost six weeks of huge totals, shock wins, heartbreaking losses, records and controversies, the group stage of the Cricket World Cup ended on Sunday.

Ahead of the semi-finals, which get underway on Wednesday, AFP Sport looks at 10 highlights from the opening round:

South Africa in fast lane

The tournament was just two days old when South Africa's Aiden Markram smashed the fastest World Cup century off 49 balls against Sri Lanka in New Delhi.

His team also entered the record books with the highest ever tournament total of 428 in a 102-run win.

Markram's blitz bettered the 50 balls Ireland's Kevin O'Brien needed to hit a 100 against England in Bengaluru in 2011.

Pakistan's record chase

Mohammad Rizwan and Abdulah Shafique made centuries as Pakistan chased down the highest target in World Cup history to beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in Hyderabad.

Rizwan overcame leg cramps

to score 131 not out while Shafique hit 113 as Pakistan overhauled their 345-run target.

Sri Lanka's imposing total of 344-9 was built around brilliant hundreds from Kusal Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama.

Afghanistan make mark

Afghanistan pulled off one of the greatest World Cup shocks when they defeated defending champions England by 69 runs in New Delhi.

Chasing 285 to win, after opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz had hit a blistering 80, England were bowled out for 215 with spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Rashid Khan claiming three wickets each.

Eight days later in Chennai, Afghanistan chased down 283 to shock neighbours Pakistan with Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmat Shah and Gurbaz all scoring fifties.

In between, the Netherlands exploited South Africa's dislike of chasing by stunning the Proteas by 38 runs in what Dutch media described as "the miracle of Dharamsala".



Glenn Maxwell celebrates after Australia's victory against Afghanistan

Ten first round highlights of the World Cup

Maxwell part 1

Maxwell took Markram's fastest World Cup century record by hitting a 41-ball hundred in Australia's 309-run rout of the Netherlands at New Delhi.

Australia made 399-8 before the Dutch were dismissed for just 90 in 21 overs.

Maxwell's ton was also the fourth fastest century in all ODIs. South Africa's AB de Villiers leads the way with his 31-ball century against the West Indies in Johannesburg in 2015.

Run festival

Australia edged out New Zealand by just five runs in the highest-scoring World Cup game in history in Dharamsala.

Australia scored 388 as Travis Head scored 109. New Zealand battled hard with Rachin Ravindra making 116.

With a total of 771 runs, it was the highest scoring game at a World Cup, beating the 754 scored in South Africa's win against Sri Lanka earlier in the tournament.

India thrash Sri Lanka

Mohammed Shami took five wickets as Sri Lanka were bowled out for just 55 as India secured a semi-final place with

a colossal 302-run win in Mumbai. Sri Lanka's woeful innings featured five noughts, with both their openers falling for golden ducks.

Fakhar's fireworks

Fakhar Zaman cracked a blistering century in a rain-affected and dramatic 21-run victory for Pakistan over New Zealand at Bengaluru.

The left-hander smashed 11 sixes and eight boundaries in his unbeaten 81-ball 126 as rain forced a premature end to the match with Pakistan 200-1 after 25.3 overs. Rachin Ravindra hit his third century of the tournament while Kane Williamson scored 95 to help New Zealand pile up 401-6 in their 50 overs.

King Kohli

Virat Kohli equalled Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 one-day international hundreds as India bowled out South Africa for just 83 in a 243-run rout with the superstar hailing his achievement as "the stuff of dreams".

Kohli, on his 35th birthday, got to the landmark in 119 balls, including 10 fours, at Kolkata's iconic Eden Gardens which was packed with around 70,000 fans.

It had taken him 277 innings

to score 49 hundreds at this level compared to the more than 450 required by fellow India 2011 World Cup-winner Tendulkar.

Timed-out controversy

Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews branded Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan as "disgraceful" after he became the first player in 146 years of international cricket to be given "timed out".

Mathews was adjudged to be out after failing to take strike within the two-minute time limit when he came out to bat in New Delhi. Shakib refused to withdraw the appeal.

Maxwell part 2

Australia captain Pat Cummins described it as "the greatest one-day innings ever played" as Glenn Maxwell's stunning 201 not out guided Australia into the semi-finals in a sensational three-wicket victory over Afghanistan in Mumbai.

At 91-7, chasing 292, Australia were staring at defeat before Maxwell's 128-ball innings which featured 21 fours and 10 sixes as he became just the third batsman to score a World Cup double century.

AFP

Australia 'peaking at right time' at World Cup, says key bowler Starc

Kolkata, India - Mitchell Starc on Monday said Australia have lived up to their reputation of "peaking at the right time" after overcoming a shaky start to win seven straight World Cup matches.

The five-time champions take on South Africa in the second semi-final in Kolkata on Thursday after the two teams ended on 14 points each in the group stage.

Australia lost a one-day series in South Africa followed by a series defeat to India ahead of the World Cup.

They then suffered opening defeats at the tournament to the hosts by six wickets and the Proteas by a huge 134 runs.

"It's been quite busy, the guys who were in Africa as well, I think we counted it's like our 15th flight since we've been in India," Starc said on the gruelling schedule.

"For the guys who were in Africa as well, it's been a jam-packed 10 or 11 weeks. It's a World Cup, it's what we play for. We seem to be peaking at the



right time which Australia tend to do in tournament play."

The left arm-quick added: "Whilst we didn't start the way we wanted to, we've certainly had good contributions from individuals along the way and we find ourselves in another World Cup semi-final."

Australia have been the most successful team in the World Cup with title wins in the 1987 (India), 1999 (England), 2003 (South Africa), 2007 (West In-

dies) and 2015 (Australia and New Zealand) editions.

They were runners-up in the inaugural edition in 1975 and then again in 1996, reached the quarter-finals in 2011 and lost to eventual winners England in the 2019 semi-finals.

Starc, who was part of Australia's 2015 ODI and 2021 T20 World Cup triumphs, said the experienced team will not be overawed by Thursday's occasion at Kolkata's iconic Eden Gardens.

"Whether it's goosebumps or not, it's just another game," he said. "I've played a lot of one-day cricket... (performing in big matches) is not something that's really spoken about."

"It's a very calm group, this one, and fairly experienced with a couple of younger, less experienced guys gelling in really nicely."

Australia have beaten South Africa twice in World Cup semi-finals in 1999 and 2007. Both times they went on to win the title.

Starc, 33, and a veteran of 119 one-day internationals, was the leading bowler in the World Cups of 2015 and 2019 with 22 and 27 wickets respectively.

In all, he has 230 wickets in the format.

He and fellow quick Pat Cummins have 10 wickets each in the tournament so far with teammate and leg-spinner Adam Zampa leading the bowling charts with 22.



India's Coach Rahul Dravid (L) during a practice session in Bengaluru on Saturday (AFP)

India set for New Zealand clash at 'pointy end' of World Cup

Mumbai, India - India may be the outstanding team at the World Cup but coach Rahul Dravid has warned Wednesday's semi-final against New Zealand in Mumbai represents the "pointy end in a tournament".

Sunday's 160-run defeat of the Netherlands left hosts India with a perfect played nine, won nine record - the first time any side had achieved such a feat at a World Cup featuring a round-robin format.

India are well-stocked in all departments, with star man Virat Kohli the tournament's leading batsman with 594 runs and captain Rohit Sharma not far behind on 503.

The experienced duo have scored three hundreds between them, while the likes of Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul both appear to be coming into form at the right time following their centuries against the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, India boast a formidable fast-bowling line-up in Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami.

If successful teams are fortunate as well as good, then India certainly had a lucky break when an injury to all-rounder Hardik Pandya paved the way for Shami's return, with the experienced seamer having since taken 16 wickets in five matches at a stunningly low average of under 10.

In addition spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav are also capable of taking wickets without being flogged for runs.

And yet the fact remains India have been waiting since a 2011 triumph over Sri Lanka in Mumbai to win a third World Cup title, while their last major piece of silverware was the 2013 Champions Trophy.

Four years ago, New Zealand defeated India by just 18 runs in a rain-affected World Cup semi-final in Manchester that spanned two days, with the Black Caps also beating India in the inaugural 2021 World Test Championship final.

Five of the India side who featured in the 2019 semi-final -

Rohit, Kohli, Rahul, Bumrah and Jadeja - are set to be involved again on Wednesday.

"You're at a pointy end in a tournament now," said Dravid.

"There is going to be certain amount of pressure but I think the way we have responded to the pressure so far gives us a lot of belief."

Dravid's argument is supported by the manner of India's four-wicket win against New Zealand in the group stage at Dharamsala last month.

Despite Daryl Mitchell's 130, India held New Zealand to 273, with Shami taking 5-54 before Kohli made 95 and Jadeja, demonstrating his big-match temperament, a valuable 39 not out.

Wednesday's match takes place at Rohit's Wankhede Stadium home ground, where India bowled out Sri Lanka for just 55 to win by 302 runs in the group stage, with the aggressive 36-year-old opener leading from the front at what could be his last World Cup.

Pakistan bowling coach Morkel quits after flop show

Lahore, Pakistan - Bowling coach Morne Morkel on Monday became the first man to quit Pakistan's backroom staff following the team's exit from the World Cup in India.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said the 39-year-old has tendered his resignation.

"Morkel has resigned as the bowling coach of the Pakistan men's team," said a PCB release. "He was given a six-month contract in June this year."

PCB said his replacement will be announced before the team's three-Test tour of Australia starting next month. Pakistan's team director Mickey Arthur told AFP



Morne Morkel

that Morkel had enjoyed his brief stay in the job.

"Morne was only contracted until January 2024 but his work with other leagues does not allow

any more time unfortunately," said Arthur.

"He loved his time with us and is very sad that he can't continue." Pakistan crashed out of

the World Cup following a 93-run defeat against England in Kolkata on Saturday, failing to reach the semi-finals with five defeats and four wins.

Skipper Babar Azam and Arthur are also under fire for the poor show of a team which was ranked as the world's top ODI side before the tournament.

This is the fifth time in the last six World Cups that Pakistan failed to reach the semi-finals.

Arthur's contract as head coach was not renewed after Pakistan's failed campaign in 2019. He is back in a second spell, this time as team director.

AFP

Sundowns champions

South African side defeat Wydad to win first African Football League title

Johannesburg, South Africa - Peter Shalulile and Aubrey Modiba scored as Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa beat Wydad Casablanca of Morocco 2-0 in Pretoria on Sunday to win the inaugural African Football League.

Sundowns won the two-leg final 3-2 on aggregate to claim their first African trophy since lifting the CAF Super Cup six years ago.

It was their first success against Wydad in a knockout tie having lost twice to them in the semi-finals and once in the quarter-finals of the CAF Champions League from 2017.

This was also the first time more than one goal separated the clubs, with eight of the previous 13 meetings won by a one-goal margin and the other five drawn.

Success was worth four million dollars to Sundowns - the equivalent of winning the South African league five times.

"I am so lucky to be in charge of this magnificent group of players," said Sundowns coach Rulani Mokwena.

"My thanks to the yellow nation (Sundowns supporters) for their wonderful support from the first minute to the last.



Mamelodi Sundowns players celebrate with the trophy after winning the African Football League title on Sunday (AFP)

I am so lucky to be in charge of this magnificent group of players. My thanks to the yellow nation (supporters) for their wonderful support from the first minute to the last

RULANI MOKWENA

"It is difficult to talk now. This is a very emotional time for me. There has been so much heartbreak after some previous matches against Wydad. Now there is joy."

Recalled after missing Sundowns' previous five matches in

the competition, Namibia captain Shalulile broke the deadlock three minutes into first-half added time.

Wydad goalkeeper Youssef el Motie parried a Teboho Mokoena shot from the edge of the box and Shalulile reacted

quickest to slam the ball into the roof of the net.

The goal finally gave the capacity 50,000 crowd, which included the presidents of FIFA and CAF, Gianni Infantino and Patrice Motsepe, something to cheer. Numerous stoppages for injuries, overly physical challenges, and time wasting by the Casablanca outfit combined to deliver an opening half far below what was anticipated.

A wayward Wydad pass in their own half led to Sundowns' scoring again eight minutes into the second half.

The ball was intercepted by

Modiba, who eluded the challenges of two Moroccans before lifting the ball over El Motie and into the net.

Needing to score at least once to force extra time, Wydad became more adventurous and captain Ayoub el Amloud had a powerful header off a corner saved by goalkeeper Ronwen Williams.

Defender El Amloud, deputising as skipper for suspended midfielder Yahya Jabrane, proved the biggest threat to Sundowns with another header not far off target.

AFP



Fred VanVleet of Houston Rockets dribbles the ball during the game against Denver Nuggets on Sunday

Rockets shoot down Jokic's Nuggets, Maxey's 50-point show fuel 76ers

Los Angeles, United States - The resurgent Houston Rockets powered to a sixth straight NBA victory on Sunday, withstanding a 36-point triple-double from Denver's Nikola Jokic in a 107-104 win over the Nuggets.

Fred VanVleet scored 26 points and Turkish center Alperen Sengun added 23 for the Rockets, who improved to 6-3 in the young campaign after amassing just 22 victories last season.

Jokic's fourth triple-double of the season included 21 rebounds and 11 assists and Denver led 76-74 going into the final period, which featured three lead changes.

Jokic drained a three-pointer with 19.5 seconds left to cut the Rockets' lead to 103-102, but VanVleet made a pair of free throws and Jae'Sean Tate came up with a steal as Denver attempted to inbound

the ball and Houston held on.

Elsewhere Philadelphia's Tyrese Maxey exploded for a career-high 50 points in a 137-126 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

Dallas star Kyrie Irving made seven of 10 three-pointers on the way to 35 points in the Mavericks' dominant 136-124 victory over New Orleans while Miami's Duncan Robinson and Bam Adebayo combined for 50 points as the Heat rallied to beat the San Antonio Spurs 118-113.

In Philadelphia, Maxey keyed a victory for a Sixers team rattled by the road accident that left forward Kelly Oubre nursing a broken rib and other injuries after he was hit by a vehicle while walking near his home on Saturday.

Oubre was treated in hospital and released, but was on the minds of his teammates.

AFP

Inter romp clear with Dimarco stunner

Rome, Italy - A magnificent long-range strike from Federico Dimarco set up Inter Milan for a 2-0 win over Frosinone on Sunday that sent them back top of Serie A ahead of the international break.

Among Inter's title rivals, only Juventus won over the weekend. The pair meet in the next round of matches in Turin.

A gap is opening below the two traditional giants, after AC Milan and Napoli continued to lose ground.

Simone Inzaghi's joyful Inter side have won ten of 12 games and have 31 points, with Massimiliano Allegri's Juventus on 29. AC Milan are third on 23 after letting slip a 2-0 lead over Lecce. Defending champions Napoli have 21 after losing to Empoli.

Such is the confidence at Inter, that Dimarco shot shortly after crossing the halfway-line from the left touchline, his arcing shot dropping under the crossbar and into the Frosinone goal with 'keeper Stefano Turati clutching at air.

Hakan Calhanoglu doubled the lead, converting a spot-kick just after the break.

Earlier, Napoli fell to a shock 1-0 home defeat to Empoli, leaving the defending champions on the



Inter Milan's Federico Dimarco celebrates after scoring against Frosinone on Sunday (AFP)

verge of sacking new coach Rudi Garcia. Lazio and Roma slugged out a goalless stalemate in the Rome derby.

Napoli were booed off after Viktor Kovalenko's superb last-minute strike snatched the win for Empoli, leaving the hosts eight points behind leaders Juventus and looking over their shoulder.

No-one from Napoli spoke to the media after yet another poor display on home turf. The club have not won a fixture in Naples since the end of September.

The Gazzetta Dello Sport and Naples-based daily Il Mattino both reported that Napoli owner Aurelio De Laurentiis had already decided to sack Garcia and that the Frenchman will not take

training on Wednesday.

De Laurentiis has also called a summit in Rome on Monday to decide on the successor, with Igor Tudor and Fabio Cannavaro among the names cited.

Garcia took over from title-winning coach Luciano Spalletti in the summer but his days already look numbered after a poor performance against Empoli who

lifted themselves out of the relegation zone.

The 59-year-old Garcia won Ligue 1 with Lille in 2011 but his stock has fallen dramatically since being sacked by Roma in early 2016.

He was fired from Al Nassr in April, after the Saudi Arabian club signed Cristiano Ronaldo.

Napoli's home record is the 15th-best in the league while on the road where they are unbeaten in all competitions and have won six from eight fixtures.

Three defeats in six league home matches is already more than last season's total but didn't lead to them losing their place in Italy's top four.

Lazio and Roma meanwhile played out a goalless draw in a Rome derby which was full of needle between fans, players and coaches.

Roma would have drawn level on 20 points with Atalanta and Fiorentina if they had won the first Rome derby of the season but offered little at the Stadio Olimpico.

Jose Mourinho's team move up one place to seventh, ahead of Bologna on goal difference, while Lazio stay a point behind their local rivals in 10th.

AFP

Kento Momota wins Korea Masters for first title in two years

Seoul, South Korea - Fallen former world number one Kento Momota won his first badminton title in two years on Sunday with a victory over Japanese compatriot Koki Watanabe at the Korea Masters.

Now ranked a lowly 52 in the world, Momota won 21-16, 21-15 against the world number 26 in the final in Gwangju.

Watanabe won their last meeting at July's Japan Open,



Kento Momota

but Momota's superior touch at the net saw him take an 11-7 lead into the first mid-game interval.

The left-hander was able to stay clear and won a superb rally to convert his first game point after 23 minutes on court.

The Korea Masters did not boast the very top players in the world but the title will be a huge boost to the 29-year-old Momota after a difficult few years.

Momota is a two-time world champion but his once brilliant career has been in freefall ever since a car crash in January 2020 in Malaysia.

The badminton ace was badly hurt and the driver of the vehicle he was travelling in killed. He had won a record-breaking 11 titles in 2019, losing just six of the 73 matches he played and looking every inch a legend in the making.

Vu surges to victory at LPGA's The Annika, back to No. 1 in world

Miami, United States - Lilia Vu grabbed her fourth LPGA title of the year on Sunday, firing a four-under par 66 to win The Annika by three strokes to return to the top of the world rankings.

Vu had five birdies and one bogey at Pelican Golf Club in Belleair, Florida, more than enough to overhaul overnight leader Emily Kristine Pedersen of Denmark.

Pedersen's bid for a first US LPGA title stalled, the Dane finishing with two bogeys and a closing double-bogey that left her tied for fifth.

With the season-ending Tour Championship coming up next week, Vu has joined France's Celine Boutier as the only players with at least four wins this season.

The 26-year-old Californian notched her first career win in Thailand before adding major titles at the Chevron Championship and the Women's Open.

Despite those successes, which will see her replace China's Yin Ruoning atop the rankings and which have her neck and neck with Boutier in the race for Player of the Year, Vu said winning didn't seem to be getting any easier.

"It doesn't," she said. "I



Lilia Vu poses with the trophy after winning The Annika

think each win of mine has had its own battle and I think today (it) was, again, myself. The wheels were kind of falling off a little bit on the back nine, early on the back nine."

She took heart from her caddie, who told her "we can make a putt from anywhere," and after her lone bogey of the day at the 12th added birdies at the 15th and 16th that proved decisive.

Vu said the biggest lesson of her breakthrough season had been "to not give up."

"I know I tend to be really hard on myself," she said.

COLE AS YOU LIKE!

Palmer makes his point as Chelsea hold Man City in eight-goal thriller

London, United Kingdom - Cole Palmer returned to haunt Manchester City as the Chelsea forward's last-gasp penalty rescued an incredible 4-4 draw against the Premier League leaders in one of the games of the season.

Palmer struck in the final seconds after Rodri's 86th minute strike looked set to send City home from Stamford Bridge with all three points.

It was a sweet moment for Palmer after City boss Pep Guardiola opted to sell the rising star to Chelsea in a surprise £42 million (\$51 million) deal in September.

Guardiola said Manchester-born Palmer, who joined City aged six, rejected his offer of more playing time this season in a bid to keep him.

The youngster made his old boss pay in the most dramatic fashion, having the final say in an astonishing encounter that provided countless plot twists.

City blew the lead three times and also had to come from behind themselves before finally being forced to settle for a draw that leaves them one point clear of second-placed Liverpool and

third-placed Arsenal.

Erling Haaland's controversial penalty had put City ahead before Thiago Silva equalised.

Raheem Sterling netted against his old club to give Chelsea the lead, only for Manuel Akanji to level at the end of a breathless first half.

Haaland bagged his 17th goal of the season after the break, before Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson equalised.

Haaland appeared to tug at Cucurella's shirt before the Chelsea defender's contract.

Blues boss Mauricio Pochettino was furious that play was not stopped prior to the cross for a potential foul by Jeremy Doku on Reece James and Moises Caicedo as the Chelsea players tried to head clear.

Haaland blocked out the bubbling Chelsea frustration as he calmly sent Sanchez the wrong

Josko Gvardiol made a hash of clearing Gallagher's pass, getting his feet in a tangle as James pounced with a low cross that gave Sterling the simple task of tapping in to reward his man of the match display.

City remained a menace and they left Pochettino raging at his players in first-half stoppage-time when slack marking allowed Akanji to head home from Bernardo Silva's cross.

Two minutes after the interval, City went in front when Haaland finished off an incisive counter. Sliding in to meet Julian Alvarez's cross, Haaland bundled the ball over the line via an accidental deflection off his arm that survived a VAR check.

Alvarez's blast was held by Sanchez, the end-to-end drama showing no let-up as Palmer's superb run was thwarted by Ederson's save.

Ederson needed treatment for an injury moments later and the Brazilian was at fault for Chelsea's 67th-minute equaliser.

Instead of pushing away Gallagher's 20-yard effort, Ederson parried it straight back to Jackson, who gratefully slotted home for his fourth goal in his last two games.

AFP



Chelsea's Cole Palmer scores against Manchester City in London on Sunday (AFP)

City blew the lead three times and also had to come from behind themselves before finally being forced to settle for a draw that leaves them one point clear of second-placed Liverpool and third-placed Arsenal



Rodri appeared to have landed the knockout blow with four minutes left, but there was a sting in the tale thanks to Palmer's penalty.

City lit the fuse on an explosive contest when they snatched the lead after 25 minutes.

Marc Cucurella pulled down Haaland as the City striker tried to reach Bernardo Silva's cross inside the six-yard box.

It was a debatable decision as

way from the spot. Chelsea channelled their angst into a spirited response, and they were level four minutes later.

Ederson sprang to his left to make a superb tip-over from James' free-kick.

But from Gallagher's resulting corner, Silva glanced his header into the far corner from six yards after Palmer blocked Haaland's attempt to mark the Chelsea defender. Pochettino's men took the lead in the 37th minute when

Israel lose to Kosovo in Euro qualifying

Pristina, Kosovo - Israel's football team took the field for the first time since the October 7 Hamas massacres and the start of the war in Gaza, losing 1-0 in Kosovo in a delayed Euro 2024 qualifier on Sunday.

The game in Pristina, originally scheduled for October 15, was played under heavy security. Kosovo is predominantly Muslim but also a close ally of the United States and has good diplomatic relations with Israel.

The match, which drew a small crowd on a rainy night, went off without a hitch.

Impressive security measures were in place around the stadium before and during the match, including the deployment of special police units.

The Israeli team's convoy to the stadium was also particularly closely watched as it travelled through the city.

"We see scenes with children, and we have experienced war ourselves," Driton Ajeti, a 37-year-old lawyer, told AFP.

"We are opposed to the events we are witnessing, but today we have come for the sport, and everything else is decided elsewhere."

Gezim Hasi, a 45-year-old barman, agreed: "We shouldn't be getting involved in politics, just sport."

Kosovo won thanks to a 41st-minute goal by Milot Rashica, who plays for Besiktas in Turkey.



Bayer Leverkusen's Nathan Tella celebrates after scoring against Union Berlin on Sunday (AFP)

Leverkusen beat Union to go top and equal best-ever Bundesliga start

Leverkusen, Germany - Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen equalled the best start to a Bundesliga season in history as they returned to the top of the table with a dominant 4-0 home win over Union Berlin on Sunday.

The victory means Leverkusen have collected 31 of a possible 33 points after 11 matches, equal to the record set by Pep Guardiola's Bayern Munich in 2015-16.

Bayern's 4-2 victory over Hei-

denheim saw the Bavarians spend Saturday night atop the standings but Alonso's men were dominant on Sunday, winning with goals from Alex Grimaldo, Odilon Kossounou, Jonathan Tah and Nathan Tella.

Alonso praised his "patient" team, saying "we're very satisfied with what we've done from the previous international break to this one... a lot of away games and every game a win."

"That was clear - a clear differ-

ence in class," Union manager Urs Fischer said to DAZN, saying his side were in a "relegation battle."

Leverkusen defender Florian Wirtz cut holes in the Union defence early but striker Victor Boniface was off target, blasting wide twice in the opening minutes.

The home side hit the lead after 24 minutes, Grimaldo stopping on the edge of the box before chipping a dipping shot over Union goalie Frederik Ronnow.

Lewandowski rescues Barca and ends drought with Alaves double

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski ended his barren goalscoring spell with a brace to rescue the Spanish champions a 2-1 win over visiting Alaves in La Liga on Sunday.

Samu Omorodion sent the visitors ahead in the first minute against a dire Barcelona but Lewandowski's second half double rescued the hosts three points.

The victory keeps Barcelona in touching distance of shock leaders Girona, who are four points ahead, and second place Real Madrid, who have a two-point advantage, after both won Saturday.

Veteran forward Lewandowski scored a brilliant header early in the second half and thrashed home a penalty in the 77th minute to reach seven league goals.

Catalonia is in drought and Lewandowski was enduring one too, with the striker on his worst stretch of form for over a decade, having failed to score in six appearances prior. Barcelona are also on their own miserable run of performances.

Xavi said the team were not in crisis despite the recent Clasico



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski celebrates with Jules Kounde after scoring against Deportivo Alaves on Sunday (AFP)

defeat and a stumble against Shakhtar Donetsk in midweek, and that it was up to him to bring the team out of their slump.

The coach handed Pedri his first start after injury, deployed Joao Cancelo at left-back for the first time and brought 16-year-old starlet Lamine Yamal back into the side. It took just 18 seconds for Alaves to strike.

Ilkay Gundogan lost the ball in midfield to Jon Guridi and with Barcelona's defence in total dis-

array, he fed Javi Lopez to cross for Omorodion, who slotted through Marc-Andre ter Stegen's legs. Barcelona were easily pulled apart on multiple occasions on the first half, with Alaves target man Omorodion, only 19, bettering Jules Kounde on several occasions.

Xavi switched the French centre-back to right back midway through the first half, after the striker barged past Kounde and hit the crossbar.

Lyon claim first win of the season away to Rennes

Rennes, France - Seven-times French champions Lyon ended their wait for a first Ligue 1 victory of the season by beating 10-man Rennes on Sunday as fellow strugglers Clermont and Metz also won.

Irishman Jake O'Brien rose highest to nod in the goal that gave Lyon their first win this term on 67 minutes, after Rennes had Guela Doue sent off for a dangerous tackle just five minutes into the tie. Faced with ten men, Lyon

struggled to break down the 12th-placed side and a tetchy first half ended on a sour note with an altercation between Rennes coach Bruno Genesio and a member of the Lyon staff.

The second half was closely contested but offered up few big chances, until the decisive moment of the match arrived 22 minutes after the break.

Sael Kumbedi crossed into the box following a corner for the away side and he found the head

of O'Brien who finally gave Lyon the breakthrough for which they had been searching.

Despite some nervy moments at the end, when keeper Anthony Lopes came to his side's rescue, Fabio Grosso's men managed to cling on and see out their very first win of the Ligue 1 season.

Lyon remain bottom of the pile, but the result pushes them to seven points and will doubtless be a great weight off the mind of Grosso and his charges.

Earlier on Sunday, Lille moved up into fourth place after a 1-1 draw at home to Toulouse. Leny Yoro opened the scoring for the hosts after half an hour, only for the 2021 league champions to be pegged back by Thijs Dallinga, who got his third in three matches after netting against Le Havre and Liverpool.

Lyon's fellow bottom-of-the-table strugglers Clermont also got an important win at home versus Lorient.



Lyon's Jake O'Brien heads the ball during their French Ligue 1 match against Rennes on Sunday (AFP)

REIGN OF NOVAK

Djokovic top of the world after sinking Rune at ATP Finals

Turin, Italy - Novak Djokovic will finish the year as world number one for a record-extending eighth time after beating Holger Rune 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (1/7), 6-3 in his opening match at the ATP Finals on Sunday.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion needed just one win or a defeat for young rival Carlos Alcaraz in order to secure top spot in the ATP rankings for 2023 and prevailed in a three-hour Green Group clash with spirited debutant Rune.

Djokovic, on a run of 19 straight wins, has had an age-defying year, winning three Slams to become the all-time record winner of major titles.

The 36-year-old came into the Finals in Turin off the back of his seventh triumph at the Paris Masters, his 40th victory at a Masters 100 event.

Those are two more records to add to a long and growing list for Djokovic, who is hunting a seventh Finals title which would take him one ahead of retired great Roger Federer.

"It means a lot. You could see that there were a lot of emotions on the court," said Djokovic.

"I could feel it, I was very eager to win the match and get that monkey off my back... Obviously a big objective, a big goal has been achieved, everything else now is a bonus."



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates a point against Denmark's Holger Rune at the ATP Finals on Sunday (AFP)

I could feel it, I was very eager to win the match and get that monkey off my back... Obviously a big objective, a big goal has been achieved, everything else now is a bonus

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Djokovic looked on course for victory when he took a brutal opening set in decisive fashion, prevailing in the tie-break with a stunning cross-court return winner.

And the match looked to have turned decisively in the third

game of the second set, when after Rune won the first two Djokovic broke back in a brilliant 11-point game eventually won at the third attempt.

Rune kept plugging away, however, and after the pair slugged each other with bigger

and bigger hits Djokovic slipped in the tie-break, missing a simple volley to draw level on the second point and then collapsing to concede the set.

But after briefly losing it for allowing Rune to break back in game three of the third set, kicking his rackets in a rage, Djokovic composed himself and saw out a historic win.

"I found a way to win today against an opponent who played brilliantly... he had a lot of courage today," added Djokovic in Italian. "If I want to keep up with these youngsters I'm going to have to work even harder!"

Home hope Jannik Sinner got off to a near-perfect start by beating Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets, 6-4, 6-4, delighting the crowd in Italy's northwest.

Sinner has had the best season of his career to date, winning four tournaments and is set to become the first Italian ever to finish a season in the ATP top five.

The 22-year-old comfortably dealt with 2019 champion Tsitsipas in front of an enthusiastic crowd, not dropping a service game nor facing a break point in the whole match.

AFP



Canada's Leylah Fernandez (L) celebrates with team captain Heidi El Tabakh after beating Italy's Jasmine Paolini on Sunday (AFP)

Canada take first Billie Jean King Cup to complete double

Seville, Spain - Canada completed a team-tennis double on Sunday as their women took the Billie Jean King Cup for the first time, winning both singles rubbers to build an unassailable lead over Italy.

Canada's men are the reigning Davis Cup champions after winning their first title in Malaga last November.

Marina Stakusic, an 18-year-old, opened the final in Seville with a 7-5 6-3 victory over Martina Trevisan, capping a stunning week for the rookie.

"We took a risk by selecting a young player, and it paid off," said Canada's coach Nathalie Tauziat.

Leylah Fernandez then beat Jasmine Paolini 6-2, 6-3, to spark jubilation from the Canadian team.

"I'm extremely happy, ecstatic," said Fernandez.

Canada, captained by Heidi El Tabakh, became the 13th nation to win the Billie Jean King Cup and the second consecutive new champion after Switzerland won in Glasgow 12 months ago.

Stakusic, ranked 258th in the world, beat three top 100 players this week, including Trevisan.

Fernandez defeated Czech Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova in the singles semi-finals rubber on Saturday before playing again in the decisive doubles, as she too shone in the south of Spain.

"Leylah played her role as leader and that made all the difference," said Tauziat. "She prepares like a boxer, ready to enter

the ring, to receive blows and to give them."

Fernandez said the victory had taken time.

"You know, it's the first time that Canada has ever won the Billie Jean King Cup. I can finally say this - we're world champions, and we rightfully deserve it," she said.

"We worked really hard the past years, and, you know, I think every year, as I said before, we

Leylah played her role as leader and that made all the difference

HEIDI EL TABAKH

just keep improving." "It's showing on the tennis court. It's showing in competition, individual competitions. Now it has shown on the biggest stage in the world."

Italy continued their 10-year drought in the competition, known as the Fed Cup until 2020, having won the last of their four titles in 2013.

"It's been a very tough week for me, mentally and of course physically," said Trevisan.

"We spent a lot of energy on court and of course out of the court. Maybe today my physical energy was, well, a little bit low.

"I'm a player that need to be very fast on court, and today I wasn't too much - it wasn't enough."

AFP

Star Czech tennis pair Krejcikova, Siniakova splits: report

Prague, Czech Republic - Seventime Grand Slam women's doubles champions and reigning Olympic champions Barbora Krejcikova and Katerina Siniakova have split, Czech media reported on Sunday.

Siniakova initiated the split after an injury-marred 2023, according to media reports, but did

not rule out a potential reunion.

"We have agreed not to play together from next season. I wanted a little bit of change," the Tennisovsnet.cz website quoted Siniakova as saying.

"I think a break could do us good. I don't rule out we may play together again and maybe we'll be even stronger," she said

after the Czechs crashed out of the Billie Jean King Cup finals in Seville.

The two 27-year-olds have won two titles at the Australian and French Open and at Wimbledon together, and one at the US Open.

They also won Olympic gold at Tokyo 2020 and the WTA Fi-

nals in 2021. On Saturday, they lost to Canada's Leylah Fernandez and Gabriela Dabrowski in straight sets as the Czechs bowed out of the Billie Jean King Cup in the semi-finals.

Hours later, they announced they had parted ways.

"It was my initiative. I would like to make progress, improve

and try a different atmosphere," said Siniakova, adding they were both "OK with the split".

But Krejcikova, the French Open singles champion from 2021, told reporters the move was a surprise for her.

"We talked about it a lot, discussed it a lot. It's her decision and I respect it," she added.

CLASSIFIEDS

JOB VACANCY

Inviting applications for the post of production and factory in charge - steel fabrication from those specialised in steel pipes fabrication, structural steel, tanks, vessels, skid packages; with 5 years of experience and having a driving licence email: najma@alrouba.com

Urgently required SCADA Engineer, Planning Engineer and Electrical Engineer for a water network project (PAEW /OWWSC-approved). Kindly send CVs to www.consult2021@gmail.com

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

SEND YOUR REQUEST FOR
Birthday/Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om
with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

عيادة فصول السنة للطب الهندي التقليدي
ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Yoga, Kalari, Panchakarma, Massage, Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Beauty therapy & post Delivery Care

Zaher Building ,1st Floor, Flat 8A,
Al Khuwair Service Road, near Al Zawawi
Mosque & Burger-king Tel:24475280,
GSM: 95371664 , 92504980 ,
Website:www.siddhayur.com





mai alkaline
pH 9.1 to 9.5
Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water

Hydrate Smartly

- ✓ Ultra-hydrating
- ✓ Revitalizing
- ✓ Energizing
- ✓ Electrolytes

800 71 222
9275 5522

© OmanOasis Official

Catch them young

On the occasion of World Diabetes Day (November 14), it is important for parents in Oman, as in other parts of the Middle East, to keep a watch on what their children eat so that they don't end up with juvenile obesity a definite pointer for developing diabetes early in life.

The mantra for good health, therefore, could be avoidance of fast foods, fried foods, processed foods, colas, etc, during childhood in a bid to keep dreaded diseases like diabetes at bay. Sadly, these are the very foods that children are lured towards currently at all food courts/restaurants in town these days.

In Oman, a seminar has been planned at Radisson Blu Sohar on December 7 to mark this occasion. The topics to be discussed include Treatment of T2DM based on recent international guidelines, Diabetic neuropathy - approach and management, Clinical evaluation and treatment of obesity in a diabetic clinic, technology and challenges in management of DM, among others. Specialists and experts from Khoula Hospital, SQUH, Sohar Hospital, and NDEC (National Diabetes and Endocrine Center) will take part in the panel discussions and workshops. Recent trends have indicated that

The alarming increase in the incidence of obesity in children and adolescents worldwide has determined the increased risk for the occurrence of comorbidities like cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), etc. It's time to curb the precursors for diabetes among children so that they avoid its scourge in adulthood



the incidence of diabetes is increasing rapidly worldwide, with a dramatic increase in prevalence in the Middle Eastern countries, among adults and in children alike. This trend is evidenced and emphasised by a 3% increase in the occurrence of this disease in children, in whom it manifests itself in many debilitating ways.

According to the IDF Diabetes Atlas—Seventh Edition, the number of children (0-14 years) with T1DM in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region is 60,700 and the number of newly diagnosed children each year is 10,200.

Data from the World Health Organ-

ization (WHO) shows that diabetes rose 80% in prevalence between 1980 and 2014, and the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimates that in 2019, 9.3% of the global adult population age 20-79 years suffered from diabetes.

Compared to high income countries (HIC), this increase disproportionately affects low- and middle-income countries and adds a burden of excess morbidity, mortality, and health care costs. Specifically, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) carried the highest prevalence of diabetes in 2019 at 12.2% and is expected to witness a 96% increase in diabetes prevalence between 2019 and 2045, research indicates.

What was termed 'juvenile diabetes' is now referred to as type 1 diabetes with the recognition that the disease can occur at any age. The American Diabetes Association aetiologic classification distinguishes type 1A (autoimmune) from type 1B (non-autoimmune).

The characteristic of type 1A diabetes is the presence of one or more islet autoantibodies reacting with GAD65 (glutamate decarboxylase), insulin, IA-2 (insulinoma antigen-2) and/or ZnT8 (zinc transporter 8).

The most common form of childhood onset diabetes in Western societies is type 1A but as many as one half of Hispanic, African American and Asian children developing diabetes in the US, have other forms of diabetes (lacking islet autoantibodies) including a ketosis prone form with intermittent remissions (type 1.5).

There is a 3% increase in the occurrence of this disease in children, in whom it manifests itself in many debilitating ways

Amongst children developing diabetes who lack anti-islet autoantibodies, approximately 10% have defined monogenic diabetes disorders.

From risk to resilience



Dr Atma S Raj
Specialist Internist
Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Ruwi

World Diabetes Day is marked every year on 14 November, the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who co-discovered insulin along with Charles Best in 1922. Around 100 years after the discovery of insulin, millions of people with diabetes around the world cannot access the care they need. The 2021 - 2023 theme is 'Access to Diabetes Care'.

Understanding Diabetes

There are three main types of Diabetes: Type 1 Diabetes, Type 2 Diabetes and Gestational Diabetes and Gestational Diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes: Thought to be an autoimmune condition where the immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas. This is typically diagnosed in children and young adults. Individuals with Type 1 diabetes require insulin therapy for survival. Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes include increased thirst, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, fatigue, and blurred vision.

Type 2 Diabetes: Often associated with insulin resistance, where the body's cells do not respond effectively to insulin and the pancreas may not produce enough insulin. Type 2 Diabetes is commonly diagnosed in adults, but it can also occur in children and adolescents. While

some people with Type 2 diabetes may require insulin, many can manage the condition through lifestyle changes, oral medications, or other injectable medications. Symptoms are more similar to Type 1 diabetes but may develop more gradually. In some cases, individuals may not experience noticeable symptoms.

Gestational Diabetes: It develops during pregnancy when the body cannot produce enough insulin to meet the increased needs, leading to elevated blood sugar levels. It occurs during pregnancy and usually resolves after childbirth. Some women may need insulin therapy during pregnancy to manage blood

DIABETES MANAGEMENT

sugar levels. The main risk factors include Increased age, family history of diabetes, overweight or obesity, and certain ethnic backgrounds. If not properly managed, gestational diabetes can increase the risk of complications for both the mother and the baby. It also increases the risk for Type 2 diabetes later in life.

World Diabetes Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness of diabetes as a global public health issue. On the lines of WHO, let's highlight the need for equitable access to essential care, including increasing awareness of diabetes.

Protect yourself

- **Maintain a Healthy Diet:** Focus on a well-balanced diet. Limit intake of processed foods, sugary beverages, and high-fat, high-sugar snacks.
- **Regular Physical Activity:** Engage in regular exercise, aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week.
- **Maintain a Body Mass Index (BMI)** within the recommended range.
- **Monitor Blood Sugar Levels:** If you have risk factors for diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels regularly.
- **Limit Alcohol Consumption:** If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
- **Quit Smoking:** Smoking is associated with an increased risk of diabetes and complications.
- **Manage Stress:** Practice stress-reducing activities such as meditation, deep breathing, yoga, or mindfulness.
- **Regular Health Check-ups:** Schedule regular check-ups with your healthcare provider to monitor your overall health.
- **Know Your Family History:** Understand your family's medical history, as genetics can play a role in diabetes risk.

By incorporating these lifestyle changes, you can significantly reduce your risk of diabetes.

World Diabetes Day

November 14

No matter your size, age, or lifestyle, diabetes can affect anyone

Package Inclusive

- ✓ Consultation with Internist
- ✓ Blood Sugar (Fasting)
- ✓ HbA1C
- ✓ Cholesterol - LDL

OMR 7

Valid across all branches of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals
Validity: Nov 14 to Nov 20, 2023

مجموعة مستشفيات ومستوصفات بدر الساماء

BADR AL SAMAA

GROUP OF HOSPITALS AND POLYCLINICS

More Than Healthcare... Human Care

93932255 | 24799760

www.badralsamaahospitals.com

wecare@badralsamaahospitals.com

taste the

NEW GOODNESS

طبيعي أطيبي

CRANBERRY Drink
NO SUGAR ADDED
VITAMIN C

NATURAL IMMUNITY BOOST

DISTRIBUTED BY CATERING SOLUTIONS TRADING LLC

CONTACT NO.: +968 22060236 / 237



Let's celebrate the success stories

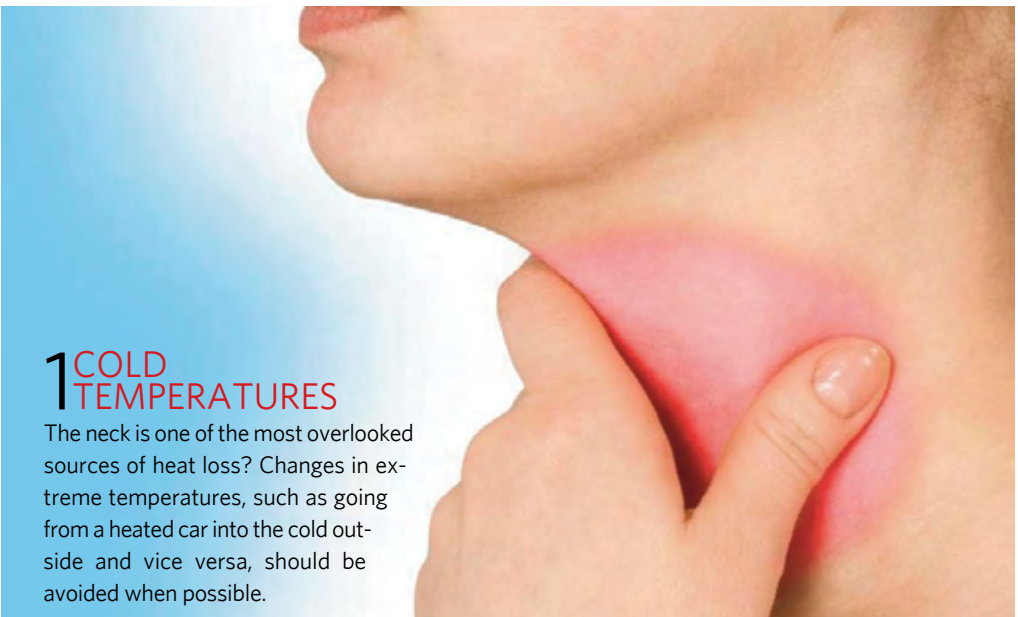
Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards 2023, one of the most prestigious brand award events in the sultanate, will soon turn the arc-lights on a variety of top brands in Oman which have consistently scored high in delivering quality products and services.

And the most important element in their elevation to the top is – You! Get set to join scores of consumers in Oman to handpick those brands which have upheld consumer interests the most and made a mark for themselves. Your vote is paramount in the final verdict.

YOUR OPINION MATTERS



5 tips for a healthy throat



1 COLD TEMPERATURES

The neck is one of the most overlooked sources of heat loss? Changes in extreme temperatures, such as going from a heated car into the cold outside and vice versa, should be avoided when possible.

2 DON'T SHARE UTENSILS

Don't ever drink from the same glass, cup, or bottle that someone else is using, as you may be at risk of cross-contamination. The same is true for sharing napkins and face towels.

3 CLEAN YOUR TOOTHBRUSH

Left overnight, your toothbrush can be a potential source of a problem for the throat and mouth. Before brushing every morning, soak your toothbrush in a glass of hot salt water as a disinfectant.

4 SALT WATER GARGLE

Gargle every night with a mixture of warm water and salt. Just a pinch of salt will do. During cold and flu season, this is a habit that will help to disinfect the mouth and throat.

5 HONEY AND GINGER

One of the very best ways to protect the throat is by consuming ginger juice and honey. It is a good insurance policy for protecting your throat all day.

Food buzzwords



and cuts one's exposure to antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

All-natural

This term on the food package indicates that the food is made from ingredients produced by nature, which is a grey area. Always remember, 'natural' does not always mean 'healthy'. Hence, have a look at the ingredient list to know if the food is made of ingredients that are truly coming from nature.

No artificial additives

This term is often seen on food packs, which indicates that there is no use of any artificial ingredients. To understand this further, artificial ingredients are not found in nature but are synthetically produced or most economically produced synthetic compounds. Most of these additives are approved by the FDA as not harmful to health. Hence, its presence or absence is not a big deal.

No added sugar or Sugar-free

This term on the pack means that no sugar has been added during the processing but



powered words are seen on bread, cereals, juices, soda drinks and many more.

These buzzwords as such are not bad but are often used to attract customers' attention or to take away the attention from some dietary evils. Instead of writing off these words or phrases, let's understand them, to know, if they can be taken at face value. Some of the commonly used terms have been taken up here which are as follows:

Organic

The term 'Organic' refers to the method of production and not nutritional value. In simpler words, the produce is considered organic if plants are treated with herbicide or fungicide that are considered safe, with no use of any synthetic chemicals, sewage sludge or radiation. In the same way, for organic dairy or meat, the animal is not injected with any hormones or chemicals and their feed is devoid of chemical fertilisers or pesticides.

No doubt, they are more expensive, but research indicates, that eating organic produce and meat reduces the intake of chemicals

may contain natural sugar like fructose coming from fruits. On the contrary, sugar-free means the absence of refined cane sugar only and not the absence of natural sweeteners like agave or sugar alcohols. Hence, a 'No added sugar' smoothie may contain more sugar than a soda drink. So, check for the label to find the total sugar present.

Gluten-free

These products are over-flooded in the markets and often sold more than the latest mobile phones. Gluten is a protein found in wheat or wheat products that gives bread a lighter porous texture. But is Gluten so bad and do we all really need gluten-free products? To put it simply, only if one is diagnosed with gluten sensitivity or celiac disease, that one should avoid gluten. Hence, blindly going for gluten-free and consuming such products on long-term, may end up making one gluten sensitive.

(Vandana Chawla is an Online Nutrition Expert and a Registered Nutritionist-UKVRN)