



His Majesty reviews Royal Army operations in Dhofar

Sarfait - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, visited several military units of Royal Army of Oman in Sarfait, Dhofar, on Monday.

Upon his arrival at Sarfait Camp, His Majesty the Sultan was welcomed by senior officials of Royal Army of Oman. His Majesty received a briefing on the military sites, the units responsible for these, the equipment and devices in use, and the roles and tasks undertaken by respective units. During a field tour, His Majesty the Sultan also inspected various pieces of equipment and supplies at several military locations.



HM issues Royal Decree

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 37/2024 on Monday ratifying the Kigali Amendment of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Article 1 ratifies the aforementioned Kigali Amendment, in accordance with the version attached to this decree. Article 2 states that competent departments will deposit the endorsement document as per the aforesaid amendment's provisions. Article 3 states that this Royal Decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.



Export financing programme for SMEs launched

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) has launched a new financing programme for exports, designed to support SMEs looking to export their products to regional and global markets.

The initiative aims to enhance exports and add value to the national economy, thereby promoting economic diversification and increasing international competitiveness of SMEs.

The programme targets all existing SMEs that have received purchase orders or export contracts from outside the sultanate. It is open to those with insurance coverage from Credit Oman, regardless of previous export record, who wish to expand operations or export for the first time.

The new programme aims to provide financial support for production costs related to invoices, contracts or purchase orders issued by foreign companies. The initiative enhances the capacity of SMEs to export their products, thereby increasing the volume of national exports and broadening their geographical reach. It also aims to develop competitiveness of these enterprises on an international stage by offering necessary financial resources to improve product quality.

By boosting exports of local products to regional and global markets, the programme will contribute to strengthening the sultanate's commercial position internationally. It will enable SMEs enter new markets, increase sales opportunities and expand their customer base.

To apply for the programme, entrepreneurs must complete training programmes approved by ASMED which will prepare them to establish and manage projects. Additionally, they must obtain approval from Credit Oman for insurance coverage of



The funding is open to SMEs with insurance coverage from Credit Oman, regardless of previous export record, who wish to expand operations or export for the first time

the contract and demonstrate that their financial and credit status qualifies them for financing.

The authority has published a comprehensive guide outlining the procedures for loan disbursement available on its website and social media accounts. This guide includes a detailed list of documents required for various categories, including building and construction, machinery, equipment and furniture, vehicles and forklifts.

The guide aims to simplify and clarify the steps involved in obtaining loans, enhancing the transparency of the process. It will help beneficiaries prepare the necessary documents, raise awareness on disbursement requirements, ensure compliance with standards, and facilitate effective communication with ASMED.

Oman urges shift in global thinking, away from Cold War-era mentality

New York, US - Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, addressed the Summit of the Future at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Sunday.

In his speech, Sayyid Badr stressed the urgent need for a just and lasting resolution to the Palestine issue, warning that the ongoing war in Gaza reflects the fragility of the situation.

He highlighted the suffering of civilians and the failure of peace efforts, noting that this violence undermines the very principles of multilateralism and the rule of law. "We are facing a chronic failure to learn from the past or to understand the present, particularly regarding Palestine," he said.



Sayyid Badr called for a shift in global thinking, away from Cold War-era mentalities that divide the world into binary categories of friends and enemies. "The issues in the Middle East will not be resolved unless we are willing to

speaking to, and listen to, those we have branded as enemies," he stated. "And they will not be resolved unless we address their underlying cause."

Since the inception of the Zionist project, he said, all people in the region have become less safe,

Peace, pragmatism and mutual respect are at the core of Oman's foreign policy, and are needed in facing today's complex challenges

SAYYID BADR AL BUSAIDI

with violations of international law continuing at unprecedented levels. He emphasised the need for a two-state solution that upholds the dignity and rights of all.

The Foreign Minister also stressed the importance of reforming global institutions to bet-

ter reflect today's realities. He called for greater representation of diverse voices and a stronger emphasis on justice.

Sayyid Badr reaffirmed Oman's commitment to multilateralism as means to achieve common goals. "Peace, pragmatism and mutual respect are at the core of Oman's foreign policy, and are needed in facing today's complex challenges."

He underlined the importance of platforms like the United Nations in fostering dialogue and mutual respect to address global crises. "The Sultanate of Oman looks forward to continuing its support for efforts that promote collaboration, trust, understanding, and justice," he concluded.

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MCSY focuses on investment options in youth encyclopedia

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth (MCSY) launched a two-day symposium on Monday, focusing on the 'Oman Youth Encyclopedia' and the investment opportunities it presents. The event aims to promote this important cultural project while fostering national and cultural identity among Omani children.

The opening ceremony was attended by H E Mohammed bin Said al Balushi, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Information, and H E Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Culture in MCSY.

Fatima Khalifa al Hosni, Director of the Oman Youth Encyclopedia Department, explained that the youth encyclopedia is a unique extension of the main Omani Encyclopedia. She described it as a major scientific achievement that documents Oman's rich history, culture, and heritage. The symposium seeks to highlight the encyclopedia's potential for cultural, educational, and economic investment, with discussions covering a wide range of topics, from education



An exhibition showcasing the Oman Youth Encyclopedia was held on the sidelines of a two-day symposium launched on Monday

and media to art and technology.

Dr Obaid bin Saeed al Shaqsi, CEO of the Media Training Centre, delivered a presentation during the first session, focusing on the role of media in preserving and promoting local culture. He

discussed the challenges and opportunities faced in transmitting Oman's tangible and intangible heritage to younger generations, emphasising the importance of communication media in raising cultural awareness.

The symposium also called for collaboration between MCSY and educational stakeholders to integrate the encyclopedia's knowledge into school curricula. It recommended creative approaches, including the use of digital platforms, to engage students and promote the encyclopedia among the youth.

An exhibition showcasing the Oman Youth Encyclopedia was held on the sidelines of the event. It displayed the six volumes of

the encyclopedia, which include entries on Omani scholars, history, geography, and cultural heritage.

Highlights include sections on governance, law, the environment, and Oman's flora and fauna, as well as traditional customs, cuisine, fashion, and folklore. The exhibition offers visitors an opportunity to explore Oman's rich cultural legacy and the value of the encyclopedia as an educational tool.

Oman to host summit on transforming education in Islamic World

Our Correspondent Muscat

Oman will host the ICESCO Conference of Ministers of Education in the Islamic World on October 2-3, focusing on the theme 'Beyond the Summit: Transforming Education from Commitments to Applications'.

The event, organised by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), will bring together education ministers from 53 member states and leading experts in the field.

The conference aims to promote dialogue among decision-makers, academics, and specialists in education, with a focus on advancing the transformation of education across the Islamic world.

One of the key highlights will be the presentation of a scientific report detailing the progress made in turning educational commitments into

actionable reforms.

Key topics on the agenda include strategies for transforming education, the role of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in reform, the importance of sustainability and 'greening' education, and approaches to managing education during crises and emergencies.

The event will also encourage member states to share successful practices and collaborate on future initiatives.

ICESCO, together with its partners, has been actively working to accelerate educational reform and promote lifelong learning for economic development.

As part of the lead-up to the conference, a High-Level Ministerial Dialogue was held in London on May 22 this year.

Ministers from Asia, Africa, and the Gulf attended the event, engaging in discussions aimed at fast-tracking educational transformation in the region.



Pact inked to finance UTAS in Musandam

Our Correspondent Muscat

H E Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, met on Monday with Bader al Saad, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, to discuss mechanisms for enhancing cooperation between Oman and the Fund.

During the meeting, a loan agreement was signed to finance the first phase of the project to establish a branch of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Musandam governorate.

This agreement represents a continuation of the collaborative efforts between the two parties to support and develop economic, social, and developmen-



tal projects in Oman.

The establishment of the university branch aligns with broader development initiatives aimed at achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The university seeks to enhance the capabilities of graduates by preparing and qualifying national talent to meet the labour market's demands, while also offering a variety of high-quality

study programmes in fields such as economics, business administration, information technology, engineering, and education for both undergraduate and post-graduate studies.

South Sharqiyah Municipal Council reviews health projects, social development efforts

Muscat - The Municipal Council in South Sharqiyah governorate, under the chairmanship of Dr Yahya bin Badr al Maawali, governor of South Sharqiyah, held a meeting on Monday to discuss the ongoing and future health projects, as well as social development efforts related to child protection and enhancing municipal work in the region.

During the session, council members were presented with a visual overview of the therapeutic and diagnostic services available in the governorate, including chemotherapy for cancer patients, a cardiac catheterisation unit, and services for mothers and children. The presentation highlighted key future health projects, such as the Al Falah



Hospital initiative and various infrastructure enhancements at Sur Hospital, which include the establishment of a new intensive care unit, a kidney dialysis unit, and expanded cardiology and endoscopy services.

Additionally, the council discussed the municipal work competition, outlining its objectives, areas of focus, and evaluation criteria, as well as the upcoming marine fishing competition in the Wilayat of Sur.



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EA addresses complaints of foul odour in Muscat

Muscat - Environment Authority (EA) has issued a clarification regarding complaints from residents about unpleasant odour in the Mina Al Fahal area and its surroundings in the governorate of Muscat.

EA said it coordinated with the Ministry of Health and the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority to identify the source of the emissions. Following the investigation, the authority issued a report against the responsible party for failing to report the malfunctions that led to the emissions. The EA is actively working with relevant agencies to implement necessary measures to resolve the issue.

The authority expressed gratitude for the vigilance of citizens and residents concerning environmental safety and cleanliness. It reaffirmed its commitment to taking decisive action against those harming or polluting the environment.

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MoCIIP cancels over 3,400 expired commercial licences

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has announced the cancellation of commercial registrations that have ceased business operations or whose licences have expired.

The ministry informed that the number of cancelled commercial registrations is 3,415. The action is part of efforts to regulate the market and ensure that all active commercial registrations represent operational institutions that comply with existing laws.

Mubarak bin Mohammed al Dohani, Director General of Commerce at MoCIIP, stated that the cancelled registrations



These measures are important for market regulation, ensuring the accuracy of data, figures and statistics related to businesses operating in Oman. A second phase of reviews will cover firms from 2000 to 2018

MUBARAK BIN MOHAMMED AL DOHANI

are the first phase of a review of companies that have ceased operations or whose licences have expired, covering the period from 1970 to 1999.

He added that the cancelled companies do not include joint-stock companies or individual traders. Dohani informed that these measures are important for market regulation, ensuring the accuracy of data, figures and statistics related to businesses

operating in Oman. He also said that there will be a second phase of reviews covering companies from 2000 to 2018.

According to Dohani, the decision to cancel registrations is based on Commercial Register Law No 3/74, which stipulates in Article 15: 'If a trader dies, ceases to conduct business, or a company is liquidated or if a branch or agency is closed, the registration of the trader, com-

pany, branch or agency must be cancelled from the commercial register.'

The article further states: 'The trader, their heirs, liquidator or company must submit a request to cancel the registration within one month from the occurrence of the event requiring the cancellation. The Registrar of the Commercial Register also has the right to cancel the registration on his own accord.'

Oman joins in celebrating 94th Saudi National Day



Muscat - Oman joined Saudi Arabia in celebrating the kingdom's 94th National Day on Monday with a special event at the Rub' al Khali border crossing which connects the two nations.

Organised by Secretariat General for National Celebrations in collaboration with Royal Oman Police, the event underscored the deep fraternal ties between Oman and Saudi Arabia.

The celebrations reflected the strong historical and cooperative relations shared by the two countries. The ceremony featured various artistic performances, beginning with a musical presen-

tation by the ROP Music Band. This was followed by traditional songs and dances by folk groups from Dhahirah, as well as a paragliding presentation.

Dr Mohammed al Farih al Sharari, Advisor at the Saudi Embassy in Muscat, expressed gratitude to Oman for hosting the event, saying, "The interaction we witnessed today in national forums like this is a clear testament to the depth of relations

between our two nations."

The Rub' al Khali border crossing plays a key role in enhancing economic and social ties between Oman and Saudi Arabia, facilitating trade, logistics, tourism and access to the holy sites.

The event was attended by officials from both Oman and Saudi Arabia, further strengthening the bond between the two nations.

Oman hosts 3-day global meet on oral traditions in historical documentation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Records and Archives Authority inaugurated the International Conference on Oral History in Muscat on Monday in collaboration with Wathiqat Wattan Foundation from Syria.

The event was held under the patronage of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat.

The three-day conference brings together experts from across the Arab world and beyond to address the challenges specific to oral history in Arab societies.

It aims to highlight the significance of oral traditions in historical documentation, explore how oral history can be incorporated into educational curriculum, and discuss ways to further develop



the Arab experience in preserving this cultural heritage.

Academics, specialists and officials who have played key roles in preserving oral history are participating with representatives from Oman, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Tunisia, Palestine and Syria, be-

sides China, Russia and Iran.

The conference will see countries presenting their efforts in collecting oral testimonies to document political, economic, social and cultural developments.

Oman's commitment to its rich cultural and historical her-

itage is central to this event. By hosting such a gathering, the sultanate not only reaffirms its dedication to documenting its own history and civilisation but also promotes cultural dialogue and the exchange of experiences between nations.

Masar al Amerat, hub for food trucks launched

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality has announced the opening of Masar al Amerat, a dedicated food truck site, in collaboration with Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development. In a statement, Muscat Municipality described the project in Amerat as a fully integrated site equipped with essential services. It features 20 modern food trucks that adhere to health standards, along with recreational areas designed to meet public expectations and create diverse job opportunities.

The project aims to support



small business owners and organise street vending activities in a cohesive environment. In 2023, Muscat Municipality re-

organised the controls and requirements for mobile vending, streamlining rules to ensure compliance with regulations

that preserve urban spaces.

The municipality said that these measures are intended to establish a legal and healthy framework for mobile vendors, ensuring public safety. According to the regulations, only Omani nationals are permitted to engage in mobile vending businesses. Vendors must apply for initial approval for their activities and must not operate without final approval from the municipality in the relevant wilayat.

All licensed vendors are required to adhere to specified health standards while conducting their business, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for the public.

Recall

2022
Dodge Durango (WD)
Ram 2500 Pickup (DJ)

Recall Date: 24 September 2024

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
Dodge Durango (WD)	2022	5
Ram 2500 Pickup (DJ)	2022	1




Recall consequence

About 5,023 of the above vehicles may experience an Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS) module software malfunction that can disable the Electronic Stability Control (ESC) system. During vehicle start-up an active watchdog failure will illuminate the malfunction indicator light. Failure of the ESC system can, in certain driving conditions, cause a vehicle crash without prior warning.

Recall Action

Reprogram the Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) Control Module with updated software.

To check the serial Numbers of the affected commodities, please visit the website for Recalls & Warnings: <http://recall.paa.gov.om>

MARKET WATCH

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India	217.05
Pakistan	721.41
Bangladesh	310.20
Philippines	145.75
Sri Lanka	784.95

*Rates as on September 23
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Gold price hits record high in spot deals

Gold prices rose to record highs on Monday, amid signs in the market that more interest rate cuts are on the horizon, in addition to traders exploiting the momentum generated by the Federal Reserve's decision to cut US interest rates.

Spot gold rose to \$2,625.71 per ounce, while US gold futures fell 0.1% to \$2,643.90.

The US Fed began easing monetary policy with a half-percentage-point rate cut on Wednesday, forecasting a further half-point reduction by year-end, a full point next year (2025), and an additional half-point in 2026.

Spot silver was down 0.2% to \$31.06 per ounce, platinum fell 0.8% to \$967.81 and palladium shed 1.3% to \$1,053.67.

Nama PWP shortlists 12 companies for 5 wind projects worth RO500mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP), the exclusive procurer of power and water capacity in Oman, announced the list of qualified companies for the development of five large-scale wind energy projects worth around RO500mn.

These wind energy projects, located across key governorates in the sultanate, represent a significant milestone in Oman's journey toward achieving its renewable energy goals and transitioning to a low-carbon future. The proposed wind independent power projects (IPPs) will contribute to the sultanate's broader strategy to generate 30% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2030.

Three of the proposed wind IPPs will be connected to the Main Interconnection System (MIS), and two projects will be connected to the Dhofar Power System (DPS).

In the Main Interconnection System, the Jalan Bani Bu Ali Wind IPP will be located at Jalan Bani Bu Ali in South Sharqiyah Governorate. The commercial operation for this project is tar-



Shortlisted companies for five wind IPPs are ACWA Power, Sembcorp, Sumitomo, TotalEnergies, Masdar, Al Fanar, EDF Renouvelables, Elecnor, Goldwind, GED and Marafiq, Hero Asia Investment, and ITOCHU

geted for Q1 2027, with a capacity of 91-105 MW.

The Duqm Wind IPP will be situated at Ras Madrasah in Duqm, aiming for commercial operation in Q4 2027, with an expected capacity in the range of 234-270 MW. The Mahoot Wind I IPP will be developed in Mahoot in Al Wusta Govern-

orate for commercial operation in Q4 2027, with a capacity of 342-400 MW.

In the Dhofar Power System, the Dhofar Wind II IPP will be adjacent to the existing Dhofar Wind I IPP in Shaleem and Al Hallaniyat Islands in Dhofar Governorate, with a capacity of 114-132 MW and targeted to be

operational in Q2 2027. The Sadah Wind IPP will be developed at a site in Sadah in Dhofar Governorate, with a capacity of 81-99 MW, aiming for commercial operation in Q4 2027.

Nama PWP reported a strong response to the tenders for these five wind energy projects. A total of 16 Statements of Qualification

were submitted for the Jalan Bani Bu Ali Wind IPP, 15 for the Dhofar II Wind IPP, 15 for the Duqm and Sadah Wind IPPs, and 15 for the Mahoot I Wind IPP.

Following a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation process, 12 companies were qualified for each of the five projects. The shortlisted companies are: ACWA Power, Sembcorp, Sumitomo, TotalEnergies, Masdar, Al Fanar, EDF Renouvelables, Elecnor, Goldwind, GED, Marafiq, Hero Asia Investment, and ITOCHU.

Nama PWP noted that the high level of participation by international companies highlights the growing interest and confidence in Oman's renewable energy sector and the transparency of the procurement process facilitated by Nama PWP.

Ahmed bin Salim al Abri, Acting CEO of Nama PWP, said, "The announcement of these wind projects is a pivotal moment for Oman's energy sector. These projects are not only critical in our mission to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also play a fundamental role in advancing our national goals for renewable energy generation. By harnessing the sultanate's vast

wind resources, we are making significant strides toward a clean energy future, ensuring energy security, and contributing to our national net-zero target."

He added, "These renewable energy projects proposed by the company this year have witnessed significant interest from both international and local developers. This reflects the confidence of international developers and financiers in investing in Oman, as well as the success of Nama PWP's experience in procuring and developing renewable energy projects. We reaffirm our commitment to achieving the targets of Oman Vision 2040 and ensuring a structured transition toward net zero by 2050."

Nama PWP has been at the forefront of Oman's clean energy transformation, having successfully launched multiple solar and wind energy projects to complement the country's energy mix. By enabling private sector participation through a transparent and competitive procurement process, Nama PWP is ensuring the efficient development of renewable energy infrastructure that meets international standards.

CBO issues RO30mn T-bills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman announced on Tuesday the issuance of government treasury bills worth RO30mn through two tenders.

For the first tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO4.3mn, with a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached RO99.650 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price was also RO99.650. The average discount rate and average yield were 4.5594% and 4.5754%, respectively.

For the second tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO25.7mn, with a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached RO98.817 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price was RO98.790. The average discount rate and average yield were 4.7463% and 4.8032%, respectively.

The interest rate on repo



operations with the CBO is 5.50%, while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with the central bank is 6.00%.

Treasury bills are short-term, highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, providing licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the issue manager and offers the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (repo).

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

Middle East on course to reach \$75bn in renewable energy projects by 2030

London, UK - The Middle East region is on track to attract \$75.63bn in investments for renewable energy projects by 2030, according to a new report released by the Energy Industries Council (EIC), one of the world's largest energy trade associations for companies supplying goods and services to the energy sector globally.

These investments involve 116 renewable energy projects, tracked by the EICDataStream database, and are forecasted to come online between 2025 and 2030. The projects span solar power, onshore wind, hydro, hydrogen production, carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS), geothermal energy, and battery and energy storage systems.

While the region's clean energy investments have increased significantly, the International Energy Agency estimates that only 20% of allocated energy investments in the Middle East will be channeled into renewables, with the majority still directed toward the oil and gas sector.



The Middle East projects span solar power, onshore wind, hydro, hydrogen production, carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS), geothermal energy, and battery and energy storage systems

role as transitional energy sources.

The dual approach of investing in renewable energy projects while also improving traditional energy infrastructure reflects the complexity of the region's transition, according to Aqilah Shahrudin, the report's author.

"Most spending is understandably going to oil and gas, but we are seeing cleantech projects in hydrogen, solar, wind, and carbon capture. It's a balancing act between producing clean energy and maintaining the region's dominance in the global hydrocarbon market."

Forecast data from the EIC suggests that while renewables are being steadily added to the energy mix, oil and gas will continue to dominate for many years to come.

"The Middle East is a key focus for the EIC, and the number of cleantech projects in the pipeline makes it increasingly relevant for years to come," said Ryan McPherson, EIC's Regional Director for the Middle East and Africa.

"We are actively engaged in supporting the region's energy transition with our project data, reports, and industry events." WAM

OABC participates in Omani trade delegation to US

Muscat - The Oman American Business Council (OABC) participated in a recent trade delegation led by H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, aimed at expanding commercial partnerships between Oman and the United States.

During the visit to the United States, Rebecca Olson, CEO of OABC, attended key meetings with institutions such as the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM Bank), the US Chamber of Commerce, Arizona Commerce Authority, Arizona State University (ASU), and numerous private sector companies. OABC played a role in facilitating introductions in the



aviation and aerospace sectors, while also engaging with companies from other industries to explore broader opportunities for collaboration.

The delegation, which engaged with a wide range of US entities, focused on promoting strategic partnerships and exploring new opportunities for

trade and investment between Oman and the US.

"We are seeing more momentum now than ever before in utilizing the US-Oman Free

Trade Agreement. The connections made during this delegation highlight the immense potential that remains to be unlocked, and OABC is one of the entities actively driving these conversations forward. With a strong foundation built over the years, we are now entering a phase where opportunities for growth and collaboration are expanding rapidly, and we're excited to explore the full scope of what's possible," said Rebecca Olson.

OABC remains committed to supporting its members by enhancing trade and investment opportunities, ensuring businesses on both sides benefit from the growing US-Oman relationship.

Egypt's central bank plans IPO for United Bank

Cairo, Egypt - The Central Bank of Egypt has decided to offer a stake of United Bank's shares on the Egyptian Stock Exchange, and is currently working on obtaining the required approvals related to the offering. Completion of the offering is expected to take place before the end of the first quarter of 2025, subject to market conditions and the timely receipt of the relevant regulatory approvals.

The United Bank occupies a distinguished position among Egyptian banks backed by its diverse range of products and its customer base, which in-

cludes retail, institutions, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in addition to Islamic banking services, and other banking products supported by its highly qualified calibers.

United Bank adheres to sound governance rules and international best practices, in line with the applicable rules and laws.

United Bank and its non-banking arm operate through a broad network that includes 68 branches, 225 ATMs, advanced digital channels, and thrive through 1800 employees.

WAM

Gaza's economy shrunk to one-sixth of pre-war value, UN report says

By mid-2024 Gaza's economy had shrunk to less than one-sixth of its 2022 level and two-thirds of pre-war jobs, about 201,000 positions, were lost by January 2024, worsening the already critical economic and humanitarian crisis in the enclave

Geneva, Switzerland - The economy in the Gaza Strip had shrunk to less than one-sixth of pre-war levels by the middle of 2024, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said in its latest report.

The report underlined the "staggering scale of economic devastation and unprecedented decline in economic activity, far surpassing the impact of all previous military confrontations in 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2021."

By early 2024, between 80%-96% of Gaza's agricultural assets had been decimated, it said, resulting in a significant decline in food production capacity and an exacerbation of the already high levels of food insecurity.

The destruction also significantly affected the private sector, according to the report, with 82% of businesses, a crucial driver of Gaza's economy, damaged or destroyed. It stressed that damage to the productive base is expected to worsen as the military operation continues.

Regarding Gaza's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the report found it plummeted 81% in the last quarter of 2023, leading to a 22% contraction for the entire year.

"By mid-2024 Gaza's economy had shrunk to less than one-sixth of its 2022 level," it said, adding that two-thirds of pre-war jobs, about 201,000 positions, were lost by January 2024, worsening the "already critical" economic and humanitarian crisis in the enclave.

West Bank undergoing 'rapid, alarming' economic decline

The report said the West Bank has been undergoing a "rapid



Gaza's GDP plummeted 81% in the last quarter of 2023, leading to a 22% contraction for the entire year

and alarming" economic decline due to factors such as settlement expansion, land confiscations, demolition of Palestinian structures and increased settler violence throughout 2023-2024, which has displaced communities and severely affected economic activities.

"These disruptions have affected various sectors across the

West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where commerce, tourism and transportation have suffered a considerable downturn," the report said. "As a result, 80% of businesses in the East Jerusalem Old City have either partially or completely ceased operations."

It noted the initial optimism of a 4% GDP growth in the West

Bank during the first three quarters of 2023 was abruptly reversed by an unprecedented 19% contraction in the fourth quarter, resulting in an overall annual GDP decline of 1.9%.

UNCTAD said per capita GDP decreased 4.5%, indicating a substantial drop in living standards and household incomes. Labour market conditions in

the West Bank, meanwhile, have significantly deteriorated, with 96% of businesses reporting decreased activity and 42.1% reducing their workforce.

It said 306,000 jobs have been lost, pushing the West Bank's unemployment rate from 12.9% before the conflict to 32%. Trade activities have also been "severely disrupted" due to

increased restrictions on the movement of people and goods, as the number of checkpoints across the occupied West Bank rose from 567 in early October 2023 to 700 by February.

Regarding poverty, the report said it has been "widespread and growing" in recent years.

"By 2022, one-third of the Palestinian population (1.84mn people) was food insecure, or severely food insecure, and 31.1% lived in poverty," it said. "Before October 2023, 80% of Gaza's population depended on international assistance. Currently, poverty affects nearly the entire population of Gaza and is rising rapidly in the West Bank."

It added that revenue cuts and reduced aid are crippling the Palestinian government's ability to function.

The report echoed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' demand for urgent measures to support and strengthen Palestinian institutions, highlighting the need to enhance peace-building efforts.

"Prolonged occupation is a primary economic obstacle to sustainable development due to ongoing restrictions on investment, labor mobility, and trade," said the report.

Anadolu Agency

Oil prices increase over growing supply concerns in Middle East

London, UK - Oil prices rose on Monday amid concerns that increased conflict in the Middle East could disrupt regional supply and hopes that last week's US interest rate cut will support demand.

International benchmark Brent crude increased by 0.16% to \$73.81 per barrel in morning trade in London, down from the previous session's close of \$73.69.

US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose by 0.17% to \$71.12 per barrel after closing at \$71 in the prior session.

The market players are closely watching the events in the Middle East, where most of the world's oil reserves are located.

Renewed tensions in the key producing region increased concern for a possible output disruption and supported upward price movements.

The situation on the Israeli-Lebanese front with escalation between the Israeli army and the Lebanese Hezbollah group has reached a dangerous level that could ignite an all-out war.

Friday's Israeli airstrike on Beirut's southern suburb claimed the lives of 45 people, with 68



others injured, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry.

Lebanese Hezbollah said on Sunday that it bombed Israeli military-industrial complexes north of Haifa, with Israel saying five people were injured in the attack.

Hezbollah and Israel have been engaged in cross-border warfare since the start of the Israeli war on Gaza, which has killed over 41,400 people, mostly women and children, following a cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7 last year.

Oil prices were also buoyed by

the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) recent rate cut.

Last week, the Fed lowered its interest rate by 50 basis points to a range of 4.75%-5.0%, starting its monetary easing aggressively.

The move marked the first rate cut by the central bank in more than four years, since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It pushed up hopes that lower rates would boost economic activity, in turn helping spur increased oil demand.

Anadolu Agency

Modi assures US tech CEOs of India's focus on technology and innovation

New York, US - As a part of his three-day visit to the United States, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with industry leaders to discuss the potential and opportunities India has to offer to the world.

Modi assured US business leaders of India's deep commitment to protection of intellectual property and to fostering tech-innovation during his engagement with the top CEOs of the technology industry at a roundtable in New York.

The roundtable hosted by Modi comprised several prominent figures from leading companies including, Chairman President and CEO of Adobe Shantanu Narayen, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, IBM COE Arvind Krishna, Lisa Su CEO of AMD, and Jensen Huang of NVIDIA and among others.

During the meeting on the second day of his US visit, the prime minister discussed ways to foster greater collaboration between the US and India when it comes to the cutting-edge areas of Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors and biotechnology.



Modi invited US tech companies to explore co-development, co-design, and co-production opportunities in India

As per an official statement by Prime Minister's Office, the discussions revolved around the global technology landscape and the impact of innovations on human development and the world economy. The CEOs shared insights into how their

companies are leveraging technology for innovation and expressed keen interest in collaborating with India.

Modi also emphasised the importance of initiatives such as the India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) as central to the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. He highlighted that technology cooperation between India and the United States could drive mutual benefits and growth.

In a social media post on 'X' Modi said: "Had a fruitful roundtable with tech CEOs in New York, discussing aspects re-

lating to technology, innovation and more. Also highlighted the strides made by India in this field. I am glad to see immense optimism towards India".

Modi also invited the participating companies to explore co-development, co-design, and co-production opportunities in India, pointing to India's rapid economic and technological transformation. He emphasised India's strategic efforts in electronics and IT manufacturing, semiconductor production, biotech advancements, and green development.

ANI

Powell faces many challenges as US Fed tries to nail a soft landing

Jennifer Schonberger

Jerome Powell argued this week that the Fed is not "behind" as it starts a cycle of interest rate cuts. His main challenge in the coming months is to keep that narrative intact if the job market keeps cooling and the economy deteriorates.

"We don't think we're behind," the Federal Reserve chairman said during a Wednesday press conference following a decision to cut rates for the first time since 2020. "We think this is timely, but I think you can take this as a sign of our commitment not to get behind."

Some on Wall Street still have their doubts, arguing the jumbo 50 basis point move announced last week is an attempt to play catch-up and that the path ahead for rate cuts may be too shallow.

The central bank is being "reactionary" instead of proactive, said EY chief economist Gregory Daco, who pointed to the fact that Powell acknowledged the Fed might have cut rates in July if its policymakers had seen July's employment figures first.

Those figures, released just two days after the Fed's July 31 meeting, showed that the unemployment rate had risen to 4.3%, stoking concerns the Fed had



Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell

waited too long. The rate dropped to 4.2% in August, but another rise in the coming months could bring back those same fears.

"It's essential for Fed policymakers to adopt a robust forward-looking framework and abandon data dependency," Daco said. "Unfortunately, that's

not the case so far."

There remain "real risks" that a soft landing for the US economy may not be achieved especially if the labor market deteriorates, Nationwide chief economist Kathy Bostjancic told Yahoo Finance Thursday.

"Chair Powell is trying to get ahead of that ... but there is always the risk they have been a little too slow in doing this."

Fed officials this week predicted the unemployment rate would tick up to 4.4% this year and hold at that level through next year.

Another hurdle for Powell is that Wall Street expects more

future cuts than predicted by central bank policymakers, who this week estimated two more small cuts of 25 basis points through the rest of 2024, followed by four small cuts in 2025.

Signs of division

But the Fed expects the economy to continue to show strength, aligning with its shallower rate cut predictions. Officials see the economy expanding at 2% this year, roughly in line with the 2.1% previously forecast, and coasting at that level for the next few years.

And the goal is to preserve that economic growth without

restocking inflation. Officials predict inflation will end the year at 2.6%, down from 2.8% previously, before falling to 2.2% next year.

No matter what happens, Powell will also have to manage signs of internal division over the path ahead.

The Fed's rate-setting committee is almost evenly split on the number of additional rate cuts expected this year, with seven policymakers favoring one additional 25 basis point rate cut before year-end and nine members favoring 50 basis points of additional easing.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

Dubai hosts workshop on business succession strategies

The Dubai Centre for Family Businesses, operating under the umbrella of Dubai Chambers, has successfully concluded the latest session of its 'Governance Series' with an interactive workshop focused on effective succession planning strategies and attracted 40 family business representatives.

The session explored methods to enhance the continuity of family businesses, ensuring a smooth transition of management and ownership across generations.

The Governance Series, one of the key initiatives launched by the Dubai Centre for Family Businesses, consists of educational workshops on issues critical to family businesses.

Topics covered include laws and governance frameworks essential for successful succession planning, promoting long-term success, and enhancing compliance with regulations.

The series enables participants to learn from other family businesses, contributing to the improvement of the local ecosystem.

13th Oman Health Exhibition and Conference opened in Muscat

The 13th edition of the Oman Health Exhibition and Conference has been inaugurated on Monday by H H Sayyid Mohammed bin Thuwaini bin Shihab al Said, in the presence of dignitaries and diplomatic representatives in Oman.

This prestigious event brings together over 120 international and local hospitals, clinics, pharmaceutical, and medical organisations.

The inauguration ceremony featured welcome speeches by Dr Said al Mughairy, Director of Quality Control and Patient Safety at the Ministry of Health in Oman, and Mohamad Ali Abu Bakar, Chief Executive Officer of the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council. Both speakers emphasised the significance of such events in building a robust medical sector that prioritises patient needs and satisfaction.

Dr Said al Mughairy highlighted the remarkable growth of the event, stating that the event this year grew by 38% compared to the 2023 edition, with new international participations from 11 countries including India, Thailand, Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan, the UK, Germany, besides the host country Oman.

He also praised the collaboration between the private and government sectors in showcasing Oman's healthcare capabilities through the new 'Treat in



Oman' pavilion, which features 12 local private establishments such as Aster Hospitals, Gulf Specialized Hospital, Bella Nova, Future Health, and Oman Rehabilitation Center, among others.

This year's event has seen increased participation from Thailand and Iran, as well as the introduction of a new pavilion from Turkey, hosting six organisations. The Indian pavilion re-

mains a highlight of the event, with more than 250sqm of display space representing 30 hospitals and medical entities.

In parallel with the exhibition, a CPD-certified conference is

being held, featuring 62 speakers, six panel discussions, and 40 keynote presentations.

The conference will cover a range of topics including medical tourism, insurance and finance,

quality control, education and talent development, and medical technologies and innovations.

The event is expected to welcome more than 10,000 visitors and delegates.

MHD's Stellantis facility introducing full digitalisation, green initiatives

MHD Automobiles is the first distributor in Oman to launch a fully digital process through Keyloop Docs, transforming its Stellantis facility in Al Hail.

This bold move marks a significant milestone as MHD Automobiles celebrates its first anniversary as the official distributor of Jeep, Dodge, RAM, Alfa Romeo, and the after-sales brand Mopar.

Launched as the first Stellantis Brand House showroom and service center in the Middle East, the facility is now setting a new standard for sustainability, efficiency, and customer convenience. By fully digitalising its sales and after sales processes through Keyloop's Sales and Service Docs, MHD Automobiles offers a seamless and environmentally friendly experience.

The adoption of Keyloop's Sales Docs and Service Docs streamlines operations, reduces errors, saves time, and cuts costs. This paperless initiative not only enhances environmental credentials but also ensures



By fully digitalising its sales and after sales processes, MHD Automobiles offers a seamless and environmentally friendly experience

quicker vehicle handovers, improved service delivery, and secure, remote access to all customer documentation. It reflects the company's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint by eliminating paper waste.

"Our innovative and forward-thinking approach is setting new standards in Oman's automotive industry," said Mohsin Hani al

Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles. "By going digital and embracing a greener approach, we are ensuring that our customers enjoy a best-in-class experience with unmatched convenience and transparency, all while reducing our environmental impact."

MHD Automobiles LLC is the exclusive distributor of Jeep, Dodge, RAM, Alfa Romeo, and

Mopar in Oman.

MHD Automobiles is committed to offering innovative solutions, high-performance vehicles, and top-notch customer service through its state-of-the-art facilities across the Sultanate.

The Stellantis facility in Al Hail stands as a testament to their commitment to quality, innovation, and sustainability.



Mercedes-Benz EQS models' arrival in Oman supports country's EV uptake

Mercedes-Benz Oman is announcing the arrival of the new EQS Sedan and EQS SUV, two groundbreaking all-electric models that set new benchmarks in technology, performance, and sustainable mobility.

Mercedes-Benz's commitment to zero CO emission driving and its Ambition 2039 aligns with the increasing availability of electric vehicles (EV) in Oman to meet the growing demand. The electric vehicle (EV) market in Oman is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 12.2% between 2023 and 2028.

According to 6Wresearch, this growth is driven by government initiatives aimed at reducing fossil fuel dependency and promoting sustainability, in line with Oman's Vision 2040.

The government has set a target for 10% of the country's vehicles to be electric by 2030. MarkNtel Advisors reported that public EV charging stations in Oman saw a 30% increase in 2023, with further infrastructure developments planned to facilitate EV adoption across the country.

In addition to infrastructure expansion, the EV market has seen a 15% year-on-year rise in

imports, with more luxury and mainstream brands introducing electric models into the Omani market. According to a 2023 survey by Mordor Intelligence, 60% of Omani consumers are now considering an electric vehicle for their next purchase, reflecting a significant shift toward sustainable and eco-friendly transportation.

Oman will now enjoy the arrival of two groundbreaking EQS electric vehicle models from Mercedes-Benz, continuing the brand's push for innovation and sustainable mobility.

The EQS Sedan is the first all-electric vehicle in its class, built on a state-of-the-art modular architecture designed specifically for electric vehicles. Combining cutting-edge technology and innovative design, the EQS Sedan offers a futuristic driving experience. The EQS SUV brings the same level of innovation and technological prowess to a new, versatile format.

The EQS brings the next-generation battery technology, with a high-energy-density battery offering 118 kWh of usable energy. The EQS supports fast charging and over-the-air updates to keep its systems optimised throughout its lifecycle.

NBO RECEIVES ICD TEAM

The National Bank of Oman received a delegation from the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD), led by Bahaudin Karimli - Chief Investment Officer. Considered to be the first of its kind to Oman, the visit aims to develop strategic partnership while gaining insight into the bank's role in providing financial services. It also highlights the bank's commitment to promote Islamic banking and support the sustainable development of Oman's private sector.



MoE begins programme on competencies needed for adapting to curriculum for deaf

The Ministry of Education (MoE), represented by the Directorate General of Special Education and Continuous Learning, began a training programme on 'Required Competencies to Train Specialists to Adapt Curricula for Hearing Impairment', at Radisson Hotel Muscat Panorama.

The five-day training targets a number of thirty of educational specialists, curricula specialists, teachers at Al Amal School for the Deaf, and teachers of the Hearing Integration Programme.

Dr Majid Abdul-Rahman al Salim, Professor from the King Saud University of Saudi Arabia is presenting the training programme, a release stated.

The training includes foundations and mechanisms for implementing curriculum adaptation, standards of successful interventions for curriculum adaptation, study plans, and designing a supportive educational environment for students with different abilities and needs.

The programme also includes applications of comprehensive



design for learning in the educational environment, levels of adaptation and harmonisation in

the educational environment, as well as educational strategies supporting curriculum adapta-

tion by creating educational content and academic stage. It also covers basic compo-

ponents for students to access the general education curriculum, adaptation of assessment and

evaluation tools, use of assistive technology in curriculum adaptation, models of adaptations

and modifications based on evidence and proof, in addition to group and individual activities, practical applications on study units, and technical activities.

The programme aims to enable participants to master the selection of appropriate adaptation levels according to the nature and needs of each learner in the classroom, and to provide them with the necessary techniques to know the mechanism of implementation for adapting the curriculum at the 'partial, comprehensive, individual, and group' levels, and to employ assistive technologies to support the process of adapting the curriculum.

It also seeks to achieve the necessary competencies in the adaptation process according to the curriculum and the academic stage.

The programme also aims to train participants on an actual study unit, and to provide comprehensive adaptation that includes (teaching strategies, the mechanism for presenting content, and evaluation), and to present the best international practices in adapting curricula.

NSS card holders get chance to win free fuel until end of year

Oman Oil Marketing Company (Oman Oil) has launched an exciting new campaign, offering National Subsidy System (NSS) cardholders an exclusive opportunity to win free fuel until end of 2024.

Running through to September 30, the promotion encourages NSS cardholders to refuel at any Oman Oil service station, with a minimum spend of RO6 per transaction.

Each qualifying transaction guarantees automatic entry into a draw, where 20 winners will be awarded complimentary fuel, allowing them to enjoy substantial savings and customer loyalty through valuable benefits.

The NSS card, allows eligible Omani citizens to benefit from reduced fuel prices, ensuring essential travel remains accessible. This campaign provides a valuable incentive for cardholders to take full advantage of their NSS



membership.

The campaign reflects the company's dedication to supporting the community and actively promoting the National Subsidy Card's benefits, encouraging its broader adoption across the Sultanate.

By aligning with national objectives, Oman Oil continues to deliver added value and convenience to its customers across the sultanate.

Omantel partners with Dhofar Insurance to introduce 'Gadget Insurance Programme'

Omantel, Software World and Dhofar Insurance have teamed up to introduce a simple and convenient Gadget Insurance Programme, offering Omantel's customers peace of mind with comprehensive protection for their devices.

Available through Omantel Application and at Omantel outlets, the programme provides easy and flexible payment options using Direct Carrier Billing (DCB) for Baqati subscribers.

The programme is designed to offer affordable protection, with two plans available for 12 months or 24 months. Platinum and Al-Ufuq subscribers enjoy free coverage, while other customers can subscribe with easy-payment plans, making device insurance accessible to all.

"We're thrilled to partner with Dhofar Insurance and Software World to bring our customers a hassle-free way to protect their devices. With just a tap through Omantel App or in-store, cus-



tomers can secure their gadgets against damage or theft, enjoying flexible payment options and total peace of mind," said Al-addin Baitfadhil, Chief Commercial Officer at Omantel.

"This initiative is perfectly aligned with Omantel's vision of being a customer-centric com-

pany, focused on enhancing the customer experience through innovative and convenient solutions that simplify their everyday lives. Looking ahead, we plan to expand the suite of personal insurance offerings in 2024, adding more lifestyle-enhancing services to our portfolio."

Sayyid Badr bin Abdullah al Busaidi, Co-Founder of Software World, expressed his excitement at the development.

"We're thrilled to leverage technology to streamline and enhance the customer experience, making insurance more accessible and user-friendly."

Available through Omantel app and in Omantel outlets, the programme provides easy and flexible payment options using Direct Carrier Billing

Omar Ahmed al Shaikh, Deputy CEO of Dhofar Insurance, emphasised that this partnership "enhances our ability to offer cutting-edge insurance solutions and supports our goal of delivering exceptional value to our customers".

"We aim to redefine personal insurance by introducing innovative products like Cyber Insurance and Bill Protection, in addition to our existing offerings such as Motor, Domestic Worker, Health, Life, Travel, and Home Insurance," he added.

'Robotics in Africa' Forum at IROS 2024

Khalifa University of Science and Technology today announced that the 36th edition of the IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS 2024), to be held in Abu Dhabi, will feature the 'Robotics in Africa' Forum.

This forum will highlight the continent's remarkable progress in research and innovation, and release a status report on the robotics sector in Africa.

IROS is being hosted in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region for the first time, under the theme 'Robotics for Sustainable Development'.

The conference will take place from October 14 to 18 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), bringing together researchers, academics, leading corporate figures, and industry professionals from around the world.

The 'Robotics in Africa' Forum, scheduled for October 16, will explore opportunities for robotics



and Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications, foster networking, and highlight the impact of research and development in Africa. In total, 13 forums will be organised during IROS 2024.

"IROS 2024 gathers participants from academia, government, and industry stakeholders, and the 'Robotics in Africa' Forum will provide an ideal platform to showcase the state of robotics in the continent, from cutting-edge research to practical industrial applications, education, and training," said Dr Jorge Dias, General Chair of IROS 2024 and Director of the Khalifa University Center for Autonomous Robotics Systems (KU-CARS).

It will also offer robotics enthusiasts in Africa an opportunity to engage with the global robotics community. The status report on robotics in Africa will outline the major achievements across various segments within robotics.

ADFD launches UAE's first live radio programme on sustainability

The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) has launched the first live radio programme about sustainability in the UAE, titled 'Sustainable Awareness', coinciding with the country's initiative to continue making 2024 a "Year of Sustainability".

The programme aims to raise awareness about environmental, social, and economic sustainability issues and highlights the UAE's strong track record of quality sustainable practices.

The programme also sheds light on the efforts of national institutions and their active role in fostering strategic partnerships with countries worldwide to address sustainability challenges and seek innovative solutions to support sustainable development goals, and accelerate the global transition to a

green economy for a better future for all.

Mohammed Saif al Suwaidi, Director-General of ADFD, said, "We express our happiness about launching the first live radio programme on sustainability in the UAE, aligning with the country's efforts to preserve its development legacy and in line with the Fund's strategic objectives in building a prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come." He added that 'Sustainable Awareness' programme is aimed at raising the local community's understanding of sustainability concepts and requirements while highlighting the UAE's heritage in this field.

"The educational programme aims to present best practices, quality initiatives,

and developmental projects that support sustainable development goals, enriching Arabic studies and research with relevant information and knowledge about sustainability."

The programme will be broadcast on Noor Dubai Radio, featuring a series of 13 episodes.

Each episode will cover various topics related to sustainability through inspiring dialogues and constructive discussions with officials, experts, and speakers in the field. The programme will also include a variety of cultural competitions related to sustainability, with valuable prizes provided by the Fund.

Through the programme, discussions will encompass the concept of sustainability across all sectors.



Former US President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris

US election: Harris holding slim lead over Donald Trump

Washington, D.C., US - Recent polls showed US Vice President and Democratic candidate Kamala Harris holding a slim lead over former President Donald Trump ahead of the November 5 presidential election.

A CBS News/YouGov survey, conducted on September 18-20, showed Harris narrowly leading Trump nationally with 52% to 48% among 3,129 respondents.

In battleground states, which are crucial in the US 'winner takes all' system, Harris holds a slim 51-49 lead, up from last month's 50-50 tie. The poll noted improved economic sentiment and Harris's debate performance as potential factors.

An NBC poll of 1,000 voters from September 13-17 showed Harris leading 49-44, a significant shift from July when Trump led by 2 points 'before President Joe Biden's exit'. NBC also reported Harris' favourability jumped 16 points since July, the largest increase for any politician in their polling since 9/11.

Fox News, traditionally known as a Trump supporter, poll of 1,102 registered voters from September 13-16 showed a narrow race, with Harris at 50% and Trump at 48%. The poll highlighted a significant shift from

A survey, conducted on September 18-20, showed Harris narrowly leading Trump nationally with 52% to 48% among 3,129 respondents

August when Trump led 50-49. Napolitan News Service, Mainstreet Research and Economist/YouGov polls all gave Harris lead with the Democratic candidate scoring 50-47, 49-45 and 49-45 respectively.

Other polls showed mixed results. A Rasmussen survey of 1,855 likely voters had Trump ahead with 49-47. The New York Times/Siena College poll of 2,437 likely voters showed a 47-47 tie. Analysts note that an apparent assassination attempt on Trump may have galvanised some supporters, while economic improvements could be benefiting Harris.

With most polls showing results within the margin of error, both Harris's and Trump's leads remain uncertain.

Anadolu Agency

World leaders to meet in NY for 79th UN General Assembly

At least 133 heads of state and three vice presidents, 80 deputy prime ministers and 45 ministers are expected to attend

New York, US - The 79th UN General Assembly, deemed one of the largest global diplomatic events, will kick off on Tuesday in New York.

The General Assembly is held annually at UN headquarters in New York, bringing together the heads of state and government of member states. It is to take place from September 24-30.

The 79th session will be opened by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and will be chaired by Cameroonian President Philemon Yong. At least 133 heads of state and government, three vice presidents, 80 deputy prime ministers and 45 ministers are expected to attend.

In a tradition that has been maintained since 1955, Brazil will give the first speech after the presidents. After Brazil, the host country, the US, will take the floor.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will represent Turkey and deliver his speech in the third row on the first day, following the US.

Erdogan, who will address the General Assembly for the 14th time, is expected to draw attention to the situation in the Gaza



The General Assembly is held annually at UN headquarters in New York, bringing together the heads of state and government of member states

Strip.

He is also expected to urge member states to stand against Israel's attacks.

Crises from Gaza to Haiti

UN leaders are meeting at a time when the number of crises, conflicts and wars is increasing.

Thus, the number of crises from Gaza to Ukraine, and from Sudan to Haiti, are expected to be on the agenda.

It is expected that leaders will focus on Gaza, which the UN has previously described as 'hell on earth'. In Gaza, along with emphasising a ceasefire, member states are expected to highlight Israel's violations of international law and UN resolutions, as well as the difficulties in delivering humanitarian aid to the region.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to

speak the morning of September 26, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is scheduled for the afternoon.

This year, the main theme of the UN General Assembly discussions is 'Leaving no one behind: acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for present and future generations'.

"Today's global order simply does not work for everyone. In fact, I would go further and say: it's not working for anyone," said Guterres.

Therefore, it is expected that leaders will address the reform of the Security Council and the international financial architecture.

In addition to the high-level week, the 'Summit of the Future' is to be held from September 22-23, before the General Assembly. It will focus on adapting

current international institutions to present-day challenges, while a high-level meeting on rising sea levels will discuss the fight against climate change.

Leaders are also expected to hold consultations on various issues such as sustainable development goals, antimicrobial resistance and nuclear disarmament. General Assembly meetings have been held since 1946 since its establishment with 51 members.

Leaders are expected to limit speeches to 15 minutes and touch on the main theme.

Many leaders' disregard for time limits, however, has led to memorable moments.

One was Cuban President Fidel Castro's 296-minute speech in 1960, followed by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's 100-minute address in 2009, where he tore up a page

from the UN Charter.

Another notable moment from the General Assembly's history is when former Soviet Union President Nikita Khrushchev banged the table with his fist and hit it with his shoe after becoming furious during a speech by the Philippines in 1960.

Former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's 2006 speech is also frequently referenced, where he called former US President George W Bush, who had spoken a day earlier, 'the devil'.

In 2018, then-New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern attended the General Assembly with her 3-month-old baby, a moment that remains memorable. Similarly, former US President Donald Trump's statement in 2017 that he would 'destroy North Korea', if necessary, also stands out.

Anadolu Agency



Six people die after rainfall in Japan's quake-hit Noto

Tokyo, Japan - Six people were killed and 10 remained unaccounted for Sunday as search efforts continued a day after heavy rain hit Noto, a region in Ishikawa Prefecture already devastated by an earthquake.

Rescue operations and restoration work were also ongoing in the area, as record rainfall caused flooding at nearly two dozen rivers and triggered landslides, cutting off roads and isolating more than 100 communities. Two of the six fatalities were found near a landslide-hit tunnel in Wajima that suffered significant damage from the January 1 earthquake and was under repair, according to the

land ministry. Some workers at the site were rescued.

Elsewhere in the prefecture, two people remained missing after being swept away by swollen rivers and eight others were reported as unaccounted for. In the 48 hours through Sunday afternoon, Wajima recorded almost 500mm of rainfall and Suzu received nearly 400mm. Both cities on the Noto Peninsula had been under heavy rain warnings since the previous day.

The amount of rainfall in the two cities reached twice the levels for September in an average year. As the heavy rain abated, the weather agency down-

graded its 'special warnings' for the cities and the town of Noto to simply 'warnings' in the morning. Yet the Japan Meteorological Agency urged people in Ishikawa and Niigata, another prefecture along the Sea of Japan to maintain strict vigilance against further disasters resulting from heavy rain until noon on Monday.

As the ground in some areas of the two prefectures has loosened due to the magnitude-7.6 quake that struck on January 1, compounded by the rain, even a small amount of further rain could increase the risk of landslides, the agency warned.

WAM

War-torn Sudan confronts cultural ruin

Khartoum, Sudan - With their Kalashnikovs at the ready and their fingers forming a 'V' for victory, soldiers from Sudanese militia forces pose in front of the ancient ruins of Naga in a social media video.

Naga lies 200km (124 miles) northeast of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, and not far from the banks of the Nile in an area once regarded as the cradle of civilisation. The city was founded around 250 BC as a royal residence of the Kingdom of Meroe, and featured numerous temple and palace buildings.

Three temples have been excavated and restored since the 1990s by archaeologists, including a German team from the Munich Museum of Egyptian Art. Fifty more temples, palaces and administrative buildings are still hidden under the ruins, as well as necropolises with hundreds of graves. But now Naga, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, has been caught up in yet another Sudanese civil war. Since April 2023, rival generals have again been fighting for power in the resource-rich yet desperately poor country. The de facto ruler Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan and the army he controls are opposed by the Rapid Support Forces militia of his former deputy, Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo - who now control Naga.

The likes of US President Joe Biden have repeatedly - and so far unsuccessfully - called on the parties to the conflict to negotiate an end to the war.

'Threat to culture'

"The situation is really bad," says



A Sudanese militia member stands amid the restored ruins of the ancient city of Naga

Most of the excavation workers have fled, the excavation house has been broken into and the tires of the vehicles have been stolen. The antiquities site lies defenceless

ARNULF SCHLÜTER

Munich Museum of Egyptian Art director, Arnulf Schlüter.

He does not know whether the archaeological project will ever be resumed. "Most of the excavation workers have fled, the excavation house has been broken into and the tires of the vehicles have been stolen. The antiquities site lies defenceless."

Museums and artifacts are being destroyed and looted across the country amid a severe humanitarian crisis - more than 10mn Sudanese people are displaced and half of the country's 50mn inhabitants are experiencing hunger. "This threat to culture appears to have reached an un-

precedented level, with reports of looting of museums, heritage and archaeological sites and private collections," said UNESCO, the United Nations' cultural organisation, on September 12.

Archaeology site is unprotected

Despite the historical significance of the city's three temples that were restored over decades, and plans drafted by British star architect Sir David Chipperfield to build a museum at the site, Schlüter is very worried about its future in light of the war.

"We don't know how they are doing," he said of the people

managing Naga. "There is a lack of reliable information."

He noted that Sudan's antiquities service, which is responsible for looking after the world heritage sites, has lost many documents as a result of the conflict.

"Its offices in Khartoum were looted," he explained, noting that a centralised register of antiquities had only just been set up.

Schlüter fears that the nation's history is being bombed out of existence. "Even if peace were to return immediately, we would have to start from scratch."

Amid the immense destruction of civilian infrastructure, soldiers have robbed and destroyed museums across Sudan, often before trying to sell antiquities on the overseas art market.

For example, Khartoum's National Museum of Sudan, whose important antique, statue and archaeological collections were recently restored by UNESCO and the Italian government, was also looted.

DW

180 killed in airstrikes in Lebanon

Israeli army said that it launched more than 300 airstrikes in Lebanon since early morning on Monday

Beirut, Lebanon - The Israeli army said that it launched more than 300 airstrikes in Lebanon since early morning, marking the heaviest bombardment since the onset of hostilities last October 8.

Fighter jets struck regions and valleys between the towns of Ansar and Zrariyeh in Nabatieh in southern Lebanon, the state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported.

Attacks targeted several other areas, including Wa'ba, Jibchit, Sharqia, Al-Namiriyeh, the edges of Kfar Tebnit, Nabatiyeh El Faouqa and Deir El Zahrani.

Additionally, areas surrounding the Kfar Roummah-Midneh highway, the outskirts of Yohmor Al-Shaqif, Arnoun, Jabal Al-Tuffah, Jabal Al-Rihan, the outskirts of Sejoud, and the former Kfar Tebnit crossing point were also hit.

Heavy airstrikes were also reported in areas east of Tyre and the Litani River at the southern edge of Dlafy in southern Lebanon.

The Israel attacks have forced hundreds of people to flee their homes in Tyre and other areas in southern Lebanon towards the city of Sidon, according to an Anadolu correspondent.

"The Israeli aggression is a scheme aimed at destroying Lebanese villages, towns and eradicating all green spaces," caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said.

Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said the army may target numerous Lebanese vil-



Heavy airstrikes were also reported in areas east of Tyre and the Litani River at the southern edge of Dlafy in southern Lebanon

lages located up to 80 kilometers from the border.

"In recent hours, we have identified Hezbollah's plans to attack Israeli citizens. In the near future, we will strike hostile targets in Lebanon to eliminate this threat," he added at a press conference. The army warned civilians in villages in southern Lebanon to leave buildings where Hezbollah weapons are stored.

In recent hours, we have identified Hezbollah's plans to attack Israeli citizens. In the near future, we will strike hostile targets in Lebanon

DANIEL HAGARI

"We advise civilians from Lebanese villages located in and next to buildings and areas used by Hezbollah for military pur-

poses, such as those used to store weapons, to immediately move out of harm's way for their own safety," the army said in a

statement.

Tension has mounted between Hezbollah and Israel following a deadly airstrike on Friday that killed at least 45 people, including children and women, and injured dozens in Beirut's southern suburb.

Hezbollah confirmed that at least 16 of its members, including senior leader Ibrahim Aqil and top commander Ahmed Wahbi,

were killed in the Israeli strike.

The attack came two days after at least 37 people were killed and over 3,000 others injured in two waves of wireless communication device explosions across Lebanon.

While the Lebanese government and Hezbollah blame Israel for the explosions, Tel Aviv has not denied or confirmed its involvement.

Hezbollah and Israel have been engaged in cross-border warfare since the start of the Israeli war on Gaza.

Hezbollah fires rockets

Meanwhile, Hezbollah fired rockets at an Israeli military industrial complex in Haifa on Monday, marking the second attack on the northern city since the current conflict began last October 8.

The group said dozens of rockets were launched at Rafael Electronics Company north of Haifa, as well as the reserve headquarters of the Northern Corps and logistics base of the Galilee Formation in the Am'ad camp.

Israeli Channel 13 reported that five illegal settlers sustained minor injuries from shrapnel after rockets were fired from Lebanon toward northern Israel.

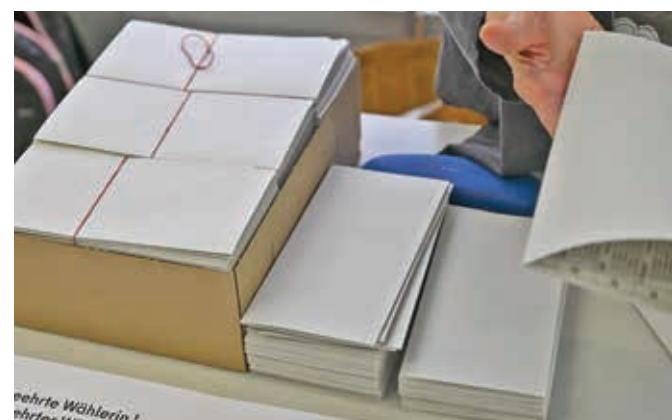
This was the second time Hezbollah targeted military sites in Haifa, having previously fired missiles at the city on Sunday.

US President Joe Biden, meanwhile, said on Sunday that he is worried about the rising tensions between Israel and the Lebanese group Hezbollah in recent days.

"Yes, I am," Biden told reporters when asked whether he was worried about rising tensions in the Middle East

"We're going to do everything we can to keep a wider war from breaking out. And we're still pushing hard," Biden said in his home state of Delaware.

Anadolu Agency



Germany: SPD seeks coalition after win in Brandenburg

Berlin, Germany - The Social Democrats (SPD) came in first with 30.9% in the Brandenburg state elections, just ahead of the far-right AfD's 29.2%.

The election was a comeback for Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party, which polls predicted for weeks to come second with 20%. As all parties have ruled out forming a coalition with the AfD, the SPD will seek talks with the left-wing Sahra Wagenknecht alliance (BSW), which came in third.

The Brandenburg election followed the state elections in Thuringia, where the AfD came first, and Saxony, where they placed second.

SPD state premier Dietmar Woidke defended his campaign's efforts, saying it had been a 'hard fight' that had begun more than 12 months ago to win the regional election in Brandenburg.

"From the very beginning we were the only political force in Brandenburg that wanted to win against the AfD," Woidke said, adding that this determination was likely what helped them celebrate a win on Sunday night.

The veteran Social Democrat politician pointed out that his campaign was mocked for taking on the fight to the AfD.

"Others did not trust this, instead tried to fight for second

place, but I think that what this election result also shows is that the people of Brandenburg do not want to have anything to do with those who are extremists, who have no solutions for our country, who instead want to divide our society," Woidke said in allusion to the far-right AfD.

Woidke also attributed his win to his government's work and the good results it had produced for the people of Brandenburg, particularly in the economy.

As all parties have ruled out forming a coalition with the AfD, the SPD will seek talks with the left-wing Sahra Wagenknecht alliance (BSW)

Going forward, Woidke said the next step was to explore how to build a government, mentioning both the BSW and the CDU as potential partners. "My goal is clear. It is to have a stable government that continues to ensure that in the future Brandenburg can make good progress and that its people can live better."

DW

Israeli army raids school in West Bank

Salfit, Palestine - Israeli army forces raided a Palestinian school in the West Bank town of Hares early on Monday and held students and teachers inside, according to witnesses.

The raid was part of an Israeli military operation in the town since Sunday where dozens of people were detained and several houses searched.

"Lessons were disrupted at the school after the Israeli raid," a witness told Anadolu.

He said several teachers and students were held by Israeli soldiers inside the premises, without giving an exact figure.

Tension has been running high across the occupied West Bank amid a brutal Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip since October 7 last year.

At least 716 Palestinians have



since been killed, nearly 5,750 others injured and over 10,800 arrested in the occupied territory, according to Palestinian figures.

The escalation follows a landmark opinion last July by the International Court of Justice that declared Israel's decades-long

occupation of Palestinian land unlawful and demanded the evacuation of all settlements in the West Bank and East

Jerusalem.

Gaza death toll rises to 41,455

Meanwhile in the Gaza Strip, Israeli army attacks killed 24 more Palestinians, pushing up the overall death toll since last October 7 to 41,455, the Health Ministry in the enclave said on Monday.

A ministry statement added that a total of 95,878 people have been injured in Israeli attacks since last October.

"Israeli forces killed 24 people and injured 60 others in three 'massacres' of families in the last 24 hours," the ministry said.

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

Anadolu Agency

Tanzania detains opposition leaders ahead of protests

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania - Tanzanian police detained two of the country's top opposition leaders on Monday, according to their party Chadema.

Freeman Mbowe, the party's chairman, was arrested on the street, while former presidential candidate Tundu Lissu was taken from his home.

"A convoy of 11 vehicles picked up Tundu Lissu without stating which police station they were headed to," Chadema said on the social media platform X.

The arrests happened before a protest in Dar es Salaam against alleged killings and abductions of government critics.

Riot police had been deployed to key points in the city to prevent the protests, claiming they would turn violent.

"Demonstration is our consti-



Riot police had been deployed to key points in the city to prevent the protests, claiming they would turn violent

tutional right and we are surprised by the magnitude of force being used by the police to threaten people and suppress our freedom," Mbowe said before being arrested, according to a video shared by Chadema on social media.

Why were they protesting?

Chadema called for the protest after party leader Ali Mohamed Kibao was found dead on September 7. He had been abducted the day before.

Tanzanian President Samia

Suluhu Hassan has ordered security forces to speed up investigations into his murder. However, the opposition party accuses security agents of being behind his death.

Police said they would prohibit the protest and take 'legal

action' against anyone who joined the demonstration.

"In case some of us will be arrested, hurt or even killed, pray for us and never turn back. We are doing this to make our country a peaceful place to live," Mbowe said in a speech broadcast on X on Sunday.

Tanzanian government has arrested opposition leaders multiple times

Lissu and Mbowe have been detained on several occasions in the past.

The most recent incident was on August 11, when police blocked a Youth Day rally organised by the party.

Hundreds of people, including Lissu and Mbowe, were detained and released two days later.

In September 2017, Lissu survived an assassination attempt in which he was shot multiple times.

DW

Leftist Anura Dissanayake sworn in as new president of Sri Lanka

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Dissanayake was sworn in on Monday as the president of Sri Lanka, a day after the island country's election commission announced his victory in presidential elections.

Dissanayake defeated incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who had been appointed by parliament to take over as president during the height of Sri Lanka's 2022 economic collapse, and had imposed tough austerity policies.

Speaking after his oath ceremony in Colombo, Dissanayake said that he will 'understand the complex task ahead and will work to meet the aspirations of people'.

"I will work to inspire confidence of the people who did not vote for me," he added.

The 55-year-old leader of a once-marginal Marxist party beat 38 other candidates in the presidential elections.

He defeated opposition leader Sajith Premadasa by 1.27mn votes and became the ninth person to hold Sri Lanka's powerful executive presidency.

Premadasa is the son of former President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who was assassinated in office. Incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe finished third in the race for the presidential post.

Challenges ahead for Dissanayake

The presidential election holds significance, coming as Sri Lanka



Anura Kumara Dissanayake is sworn in as the ninth executive president of Sri Lanka at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Monday (Xinhua)

We have deeply understood that we are going to get a challenging country. We don't believe that a government, a single party or an individual would be able to resolve this deep crisis

ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE

tries to stabilise after the massive 2022 economic crisis.

"We have deeply understood that we are going to get a challenging country," Dissanayake

said after his oath ceremony.

"We don't believe that a government, a single party or an individual would be able to resolve this deep crisis."

"I am not a magician, I am a common citizen," he added.

"I have strengths and limitations, things I know and things I don't ... my responsibility is to be part of a collective effort to end this crisis."

Following Dissanayake's swearing in ceremony, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena resigned, clearing the way for Dissanayake to appoint a new prime minister and a cabinet.

One of the major challenges for Dissanayake will be to hold his promise of easing the auster-

ity measures implemented by his predecessor Wickremesinghe under a relief agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

However, Wickremesinghe has cautioned changes made to the basics of the agreement could delay the release of a fourth tranche of nearly US\$3bn.

New ministers to take oath

Meanwhile, Bimal Rathnayake, a senior aide to the president, said that the newly elected president will pick his Cabinet on Monday

and the new ministers will take oath on Tuesday.

The number of the minister will be around 15 until a new parliament is elected, he said.

"The first target of President AKD was peaceful elections which we have achieved and now he wants a peaceful transition of power," said Rathnayake, who remained a parliamentarian for 15 years until 2020.

The president wants to 'establish a good political culture with no big shouting, no big gatherings', Rathnayake said. "It is a quite normal day here in Sri Lanka today." After his Cabinet took oath, he said: "The president will dissolve the parliament for fresh elections."

The 225-member parliament was elected in 2020 and new elections are due by August next year. If the parliament is dissolved, the fresh polls are due by November.

The president will appoint heads of institutions, including defence and finance departments. "The priority is the welfare of the people of Sri Lanka where over 50% of the population, some 12mn, live under economic vulnerability," Rathnayake said.

"The president is expected to reduce prices of goods by reducing some indirect taxes and he is planning to reduce oil and electricity prices to give some sort of boost to the economy and then only the business and entrepreneurs will think to start new businesses," he explained.

Agencies

SpaceX plans to send uncrewed Starships to Mars in 2 years

Washington, D.C., US - SpaceX aims to launch five uncrewed Starship missions to Mars in two years, CEO Elon Musk announced on X on Sunday.

Musk previously indicated that the first launches would occur when the next Earth-Mars transfer window opens in two years.

He noted that the timeline for crewed missions will depend on the success of these uncrewed flights, with potential crewed launches in four years if the uncrewed missions are successful. Otherwise, delays could push them back an additional two years.

Earlier this year, Musk projected that the first uncrewed Starship would land on Mars in five years, with the first crewed landing within seven years.

In June, a Starship successfully completed a full test mission, landing in the Indian Ocean after a hypersonic return from space. Musk envisions the Starship as a versatile spacecraft for lunar and Martian missions.

NASA has postponed the Artemis 3 mission, which relies on SpaceX's Starship, to September 2026, moving it from its original schedule in late 2025.

Anadolu Agency

Indian PM holds meeting with Kuwait Crown Prince in the US

New York, US - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with Kuwait Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Al-Sabah, in New York on Sunday (local time).

Prior to this, Modi also held a bilateral meeting with Nepali Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

"The meeting was very good," Oli told ANI after his meeting with Modi.

Earlier this month, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya and discussed strengthening India-Kuwait bilateral relations.

India and Kuwait enjoy traditionally friendly relations, which are rooted in history and have stood the test of time. India has been a natural trading partner of Kuwait and until 1961, Indian Rupee was a legal tender in Kuwait.

The year 2021-22 marked the



Indian PM Narendra Modi holds a bilateral meeting with Crown Prince of Kuwait Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah, in New York on Sunday (ANI)

60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Kuwait following its independence from British Protectorate in 1961. Prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations, India was represented by a

Trade Commissioner.

India's trade with Kuwait has seen a surge, with Indian exports to the Gulf nation reaching US\$2.10bn in the fiscal year 2023-24, as per the official data by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Modi arrived in New York in the second leg of his three-day

visit to the United States. On Saturday, Modi took part in the Quad Summit and held bilateral meetings with US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Quad has emerged as a key group of like-minded countries to work for peace, progress and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Indian PM Modi and US President Biden reviewed and identified new pathways to further deepen the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.

Modi interacted with important American business leaders, who are the key stakeholders, and provide vibrancy to the unique partnership between the largest and the oldest democracies of the world. He will also address the Summit of the Future at the UN General Assembly in New York.

ANI

US: Four dead, 17 injured in shooting in Birmingham

Birmingham, US - Four people were killed and 17 others injured late on Saturday evening after multiple shooters opened fire in Birmingham, the US state of Alabama. Police now believe the incident was a targeted 'hit', leaving several victims unintentionally caught in the crossfire.

The attack in the bustling Five Points South entertainment district occurred around midnight when multiple individuals arrived in the area, exited their vehicle, and began firing before fleeing the scene, Birmingham Times cited Police Chief Scott Thurmond as saying during a Sunday briefing.

The Birmingham Police Department, in collaboration with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies, is investigating the shooting. Authorities have yet to identify or arrest any suspects and are urging anyone with information to come forward.

A police news release indi-



Police now believe the incident was a targeted 'hit'

cated that the shooters likely used illegal machine gun conversion devices, which modify semi-automatic firearms to function as fully automatic weapons, allowing continuous fire with a single trigger pull. The use of such devices, which are classified as illegal machine guns by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), has been a growing concern in the region.

Birmingham Mayor Randall

Woodfin condemned the escalating gun violence, calling it an 'epidemic'. Police believe the shooters were hired to kill a specific target, with other victims caught in the crossfire. "Someone was willing to pay money to have that person killed," Chief Thurmond said.

Authorities are still working to identify the intended target and have called on the community to assist in the investigation.

Anadolu Agency

Macron calls for new international order in response to war in Ukraine

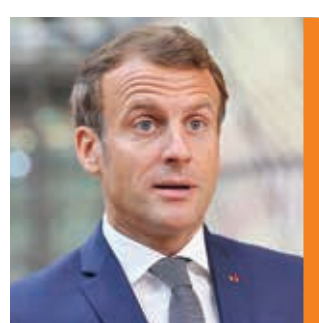
Paris, France - French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday called for 'a new international order' in the wake of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Speaking at the 'Meeting for Peace' organised by the Catholic Sant'Egidio community in Paris, he urged European leaders to prepare for a post-war reality that rethinks the continent's organisation.

"We must be imaginative enough to think about the peace of tomorrow, a peace in Europe in a new form," Macron stated, advocating for an inclusive vision that extends beyond the current

structures of the EU and NATO. He emphasised the need for a broader approach to cooperation and peacebuilding, particularly concerning the Balkans and the geographical realities of Europe.

Macron criticised existing institutions like the UN, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for failing to adequately reflect the modern world.

"Our order today is incomplete and unjust. Many of the most populated countries did not exist when the seats were distributed," he said.



Addressing past criticisms regarding his approach to Russia, Macron reiterated his belief in the necessity of reconciling relations with the nation, albeit in a new organisational framework.

French President Emmanuel Macron criticised existing institutions like the UN, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for failing to adequately reflect the modern world. He emphasised the need for a broader approach to cooperation

He emphasised that Europe needs to 'rethink' its interactions with Russia in light of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

In May 2022, shortly after the ongoing war began, he was criti-

cised for stating that Russia should not be 'humiliated'.

His more recent hesitation to rule out sending French troops to Ukraine has also drawn Western criticism.

Looking ahead, Macron said he would raise his concerns to the UN General Assembly, where he said would advocate for global reforms to create 'fairer' and more inclusive international institutions. "I will come back to this this week at the UN," he announced, highlighting the urgency of these reforms.

In addition to addressing European security, Macron commented on the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, particularly in Gaza. He stressed that peace must be rooted in 'coexistence' and recognition of the rights of all

individuals to live peacefully.

As the situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, Israel's brutal offensive has resulted in over 41,400 deaths, mostly among women and children, with more than 95,800 injured, according to local health authorities. The conflict has displaced nearly the entire population of the territory, exacerbated by a blockade that has led to severe shortages of essential supplies.

Israel faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its actions in Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

TOP DRAWER SHOW

How ten-man Arsenal came close to a stunning victory against Man City before Stones broke their resistance

Manchester, England - The Arsenal players who had collapsed, distraught, onto the turf, looked like they had just lost the title. They know just how big that goal could prove to be.

For neutrals, it was the high-drama ending this furious, fiery, and breathless Premier League encounter deserved, and after last season's 0-0 draw appeared to signal the beginning of a new era of chess-match title clashes, it was a match to really kick-start this emerging rivalry.

Arsenal came devastatingly close to a priceless win at the Etihad Stadium.

Instead, John Stones' equaliser in the eighth minute of second-half stoppage time forced a three-point swing between the two sides and put Manchester City back on top of the Premier League table.

The tactical story of this match hinged on a Leandro Trossard red card, which transformed a bold Arsenal performance into one of Jose Mourinho-esque retreat.

For the first 45 minutes, this was not at all the match we expected to witness.

Drama, controversy, a red card, three goals, and some frantic football were the polar opposite of some pre-match predictions.

The chaos unfolded because both managers decided to play a more assertive attacking game than anticipated.

Pep Guardiola played direct wingers on both flanks in re-



Arsenal's Riccardo Calafiori celebrates with teammates after scoring against Manchester City

sponse to the near-success City had with wing-play in the final stretch of the 0-0 back in March. That was an understandable tweak.

Arsenal's approach was a big surprise.

From the outset Arteta's side pressed aggressively in a man-

to-man system, happily rushing out of their base positions to track individuals.

It had its pros and its cons. The tactic led directly to Man City's opener, but it also indirectly explains how they scored twice.

Savinho's trickery and pass

through to Erling Haaland were sensational (as was Haaland's finish), but Riccardo Calafiori's difficulty in that moment resulted from Arteta's instructions to press man-for-man.

It risks direct wingers like City's skinning defenders, with the knock-on effect of a wide-

open shape once the first man is beaten.

Arsenal's players were so pre-occupied with their marking jobs that once Savinho turned Calafiori, the pitch opened up.

Guardiola, then, deserves credit for his team selection and for his willingness to play in

straight lines, something he had hinted at before the match.

"We talked a little bit about quick transitions and attacking spaces; last season we didn't do that, so we'll see," Guardiola said.

"Today is a new opportunity to do it better."

Eventually the match settled into a more predictable pattern and Arsenal's man-to-man pressing eased off, and yet they managed to turn the game on its head with two goals all about their own urgency in possession.

The quick free-kick that led to Calafiori's goal was a prime example of Arteta opening up, although it had as much to do with Rodri's absence creating space for the left-back to shoot.

Then, the build-up to the corner from which Gabriel Magalhaes scored the second, was an attack down the right in which Arsenal poured numbers forward, putting the hosts under pressure.

Again a big surprise, given the conservatism we have come to expect from Arteta in these matches.

The red card changed everything - and the second half was

The red card changed everything - and the second half was a surreal spectacle. Arsenal were like a caricature of a defensive team, camping inside their own penalty area and aimlessly hoofing clearances.

a surreal spectacle.

Arsenal were like a caricature of a defensive team, camping inside their own penalty area and aimlessly hoofing clearances.

And until the last minute, it was the perfect strategy to stump City.



Manchester City's John Stones celebrates with teammates after scoring against Arsenal

Call it clever or dirty: Stones takes swipe at Arsenal

Manchester, England - Manchester City's saviour John Stones said Arsenal have become one of the hardest teams to face because Mikel Arteta's side are so adept at using the darker arts of the game.

Arsenal used every trick in the book as they hung on to a 2-1 lead for virtually the entire second half with 10 men after Leandro Trossard was sent off for kicking the ball away. But substitute Stones popped up in the eighth minute of stoppage time to

equalise and preserve City's near two-year unbeaten run at home in the Premier League.

It was a huge relief for City who returned to the top of the table, two points ahead of rivals Arsenal who slipped to fourth.

In truth, City looked woefully short of ideas as Arsenal played with 10 men behind the ball, their usual slick passing game bogged down by Arsenal's red wall.

"They've done it for a few years, and we know to expect that," defender Stones, who

played more like a centre forward when he came on, told Sky Sports. "You can call it clever or dirty, whichever way you want to put it, they break up the game and obviously upset the rhythm for everyone. They use it to their advantage.

"I thought we dealt with it really well. It's not easy. When those things are happening, you're trying to gain momentum. You're trying to get a foot into the game and get above them.

"Those little stoppages stop

that. We controlled our emotions really well."

Arsenal have become a street-wise unit under Arteta who has twice taken them toe-to-toe with City in title races and for all their attractive football, they have become masters at disrupting the rhythm of opposing teams.

"We played the game in a difficult context. Playing against the best team in the world," he said.

"Obviously, it is already a miracle we played 56 minutes at the Etihad with 10 men."

'Arsenal have made another big step today as a team'

Manchester, England - Arsenal took another step forward despite conceding a 98th-minute equaliser in a full-blooded 2-2 draw away to champions Manchester City in the Premier League on Sunday, according to manager Mikel Arteta.

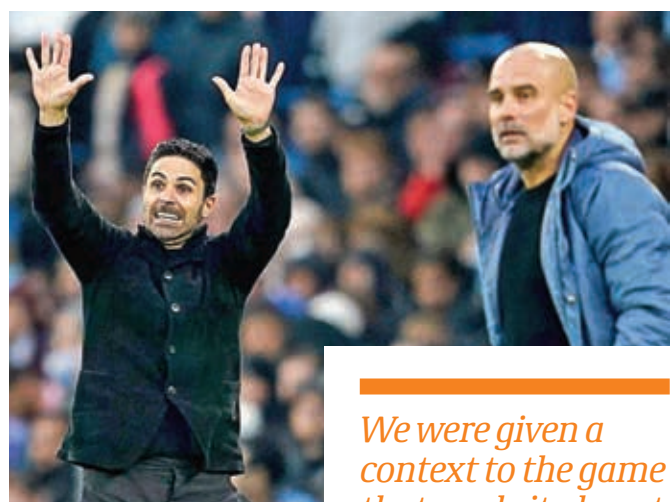
The London club played the entire second half with 10 men after Leandro Trossard was sent off in first-half stoppage time.

They came agonisingly close to holding on to the 2-1 lead given to them by first-half goals from Riccardo Calafiori and Gabriel but John Stones levelled at the death for City.

Arsenal would have gone top of the table with a first league win at The Etihad since 2015 and it would have been a huge statement in this year's title race.

Arteta said he was proud of his team's resilience in the face of adversity. "They put their heart and soul into every single action and at the end to be punished in the last minute, it was the 99th, they are gutted," Arteta said.

"But as well, they know that they have made another big step



Mikel Arteta (L) and Pep Guardiola

today as a team and individuals to be able to do what they've done today here.

"We were given a context to the game that made it almost impossible for 56 minutes, but we adapted to that context in the best possible way.

"The way the team competed was unbelievable."

His opposite number Pep Guardiola said his players had been smart as they laid siege to the Arsenal goal - refusing to

We were given a context to the game that made it almost impossible for 56 minutes, but we adapted to that context in the best possible way.

MIKEL ARTETA

cross long balls into Arsenal's dominant centre backs.

"We were so brilliant, to interpret these kind of things and afterwards it was a question of patience, a question of talent, question of luck," Guardiola said.



VfB Stuttgart's Deniz Undav celebrates after scoring against Borussia Dortmund

Undav double helps Stuttgart thrash Dortmund

Stuttgart, Germany - Deniz Undav scored a brace as a rampant VfB Stuttgart put on a spectacular display to shock Borussia Dortmund 5-1 at home on Sunday, handing Nuri Sahin's side their first loss of the Bundesliga season.

Eighth-placed Dortmund are level on seven points with Stuttgart, who sit one place higher thanks to a better goal difference.

Undav got Stuttgart off to a flying start inside five minutes at the MHP Arena when the forward found left back Maximilian Mittelstadt's pass, stormed into the box and fired the ball into the far bottom corner.

Boniface goal hands Leverkusen last-gasp win over Wolfsburg

Leverkusen, Germany - Bayer Leverkusen pulled off a stunning Bundesliga comeback when they twice fought back from a goal down as Victor Boniface netted a 93rd-minute winner in a 4-3 home victory over VfL Wolfsburg on Sunday.

Second-placed Leverkusen have nine points from four games, level with SC Freiburg and Eintracht Frankfurt and two ahead of Borussia Dortmund and RB Leipzig, who play later on Sunday.

Despite taking home the three points, it was far from a convincing performance from the champions, with midfielder Granit Xhaka criticising his side's defending.

"This is a huge wake-up call for all of us. We can't continue with this performance," Xhaka told DAZN. "We can't defend so naively. That's not good enough and shouldn't happen at this level."

Coach Xabi Alonso opted to shuffle his pack, making five changes to the team that beat Feyenoord 4-0 in the Champions League, and Leverkusen suffered a nightmare start as they con-



Bayer Leverkusen's Victor Boniface celebrates with Jeremie Frimpong after scoring the winner against VfL Wolfsburg on Sunday

ceded from a Nordi Mukiele own goal in the fourth minute.

Leverkusen levelled nine minutes later when Florian Wirtz found space on the edge of the box and swept his shot into the bottom corner, before an unmarked Jonathan Tah scored their second with a cool header at the back post.

The lead was short-lived as the visitors equalised from a Sebastian Bornauw header before

Mattias Svanberg went on a driving run in Leverkusen's half and curled the ball past goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky on the stroke of halftime.

Leverkusen substitute Piero Hincapie headed home a corner in the 49th minute.

Alonso brought on attackers Boniface and Martin Terrier with Leverkusen desperately seeking a winner and Wolfsburg quickly faded under the pressure.

BARCA BACK TO THEIR BEST

Lewandowski and Raphinha hit doubles in 5-1 thrashing of Villarreal

Villarreal, Spain - Barcelona maintained their perfect start in LaLiga as forwards Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha both scored twice to help them thrash hosts Villarreal 5-1 in a highly entertaining clash on Sunday.

Lewandowski found the net twice inside 35 minutes before Villarreal pulled a quick one back through Ayoze Perez but Pablo Torre made it 3-1 after the break and Raphinha completed the rout for Barca with two goals late in the second half.

Hansi Flick's side extended their winning streak in the league to six games as they bounced back from their 2-1 loss against Monaco in the Champions League on Thursday.

Barcelona remain top of the standings on 18 points as they preserved a four-point lead over defending champions Real Madrid in second.

Villarreal, who were handed their first LaLiga loss of the season, are fifth with 11 points.

The visitors lost goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen just before halftime after the German keeper fell and was visibly in pain as he was carried off the pitch on a stretcher.

Barcelona later confirmed that Ter Stegen will undergo surgery after suffering a complete rupture of the patella tendon in his right



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha celebrate after a goal against Villarreal

knee.

Depleted Barca were already without new signing Dani Olmo, sidelined with a right hamstring injury, and fellow midfielders Gavi, Frenkie de Jong, Marc Bernal and Fermin Lopez, as well as defenders Ronald Araujo and Andreas Christensen.

Villarreal proved to be challenging opponents, dangerous on

counter-attack and had three goals disallowed throughout the game for minimal offside.

First of them took place in the eighth minute when Yerey Pino thought he gave the hosts a shock lead after the midfielder lobbed Ter Stegen just to see the flag go up.

Lewandowski then opened the scoring after 20 minutes with a

simple first-time finish and added a second in the 35th with an overhead kick from close range after the ball bounced off goalkeeper Diego Conde.

The Polish striker, who on this day nine years ago scored a world record-setting five goals in the space of nine minutes for Bayern Munich, moved top of the scorers' standings on six goals in

Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen who was injured and carried off the pitch on a stretcher, will undergo surgery after suffering a complete rupture of the patella tendon in his right knee

six games.

Villarreal were far from giving up and Perez pulled a goal back in the 38th minute before brilliant Ter Stegen denied Nicolas Pepe from levelling just before the

break. Barca, however, yet again proved unstoppable and Torre added a third with a shot from outside the box in the 58th minute before Raphinha netted his fourth and fifth goals of the

campaign to seal the win.

Lewandowski could have scored his only second LaLiga hat-trick since he joined in 2022 when he executed a penalty after a foul on Lamine Yamal but he hit the post instead.

Barcelona have won their first six games of the campaign for the first time since 2017-18, and only for the eighth time in total.

Rayo hold Atletico to 1-1 draw

Madrid, Spain - Atletico Madrid were held to a 1-1 draw at city rivals Rayo Vallecano in LaLiga on Sunday after Conor Gallagher cancelled out Isi Palazon's opener for the hosts.

Palazon put Rayo ahead in the 35th minute off a fine pass from Andrei Ratiu after a quick break-away, with the goal initially disallowed for offside but awarded after a VAR review.

The visitors suffered a further setback when they lost defender Cesar Azpilicueta to injury.

Atletico coach Diego Simeone tried to bolster his side's attack after the break with the introduction of Antoine Griezmann and Angel Correa, and it paid off quickly.

Gallagher equalised four minutes after the break, following a Correa build-up and brilliant play from Alexander Sorloth for his second league goal of the season.

However, Atletico could not



Atletico Madrid's Conor Gallagher celebrates after scoring against Rayo Vallecano on Sunday

keep up the pace to find a winner, dropping two points at the Vallecas Stadium.

"It is a very difficult pitch to play on, we didn't start well, we were bad, we lacked everything and in the second half we changed our attitude," Atletico captain Koke told Movistar Plus.

"We're dropping points in games like this and we have to continue as we did in the second half. We even had chances to come back but it wasn't possible.

"Gallagher comes from a different league, at a different pace, and we need people like him who can run," the midfielder added on the former Chelsea player.

Atletico Madrid, who are fourth on 12 points, six behind leaders Barcelona, next play at Celta Vigo on Thursday before next Sunday's derby against Real Madrid.

Rayo Vallecano are ninth with eight points.



AS Roma's Tommaso Baldanzi celebrates his goal against Udinese

Winning start for Juric as Roma beat Udinese

Rome, Italy - AS Roma secured their first win of the Serie A season with a 3-0 triumph over Udinese on Sunday, with goals from Artem Dovbyk, Paulo Dybala, and Tommaso Baldanzi handing new coach Ivan Juric a promising start.

It has been a turbulent period at Roma recently, with the surprise sacking of Daniele De Rossi last Wednesday and the appointment of Juric just a few hours later.

The backlash from fans over De Rossi's sacking led to chief executive Lina Souloukou stepping down on Sunday.

The team, however, put all the internal discord behind them on Sunday as they displayed unity and focus to dominate proceedings at Stadio Olimpico.

Roma took the lead in the 19th minute when Dovbyk fired a shot into the bottom corner.

Dybala extended the advantage four minutes into the second half, calmly converting a penalty following a foul by Jaka Bijol.



AC Milan's Matteo Gabbia celebrates after the match

Gabbia's late goal earns Milan win against Inter

Milan, Italy - Matteo Gabbia headed home the winner in the closing minutes as AC Milan secured a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Inter Milan in Serie A on Sunday.

Defender Gabbia evaded his marker and found the top corner with a perfectly timed header from a free kick into the box in the 89th minute.

The victory lifted some of the pressure on Milan coach Paulo Fonseca following a disappointing start to the campaign, as Milan earned their first win in the Derby della Madonnina since 2022 following six consecutive defeats to Inter.

Milan had won just once in five games in all competitions to spark talk of a crisis, but Sunday's victory moved them to eight points in Serie A from five games, level with Inter.

"I am so happy for us, for the

fans. It was a pretty difficult moment where things weren't going well, but I am sure this game will give us a real energy boost," Gabbia told DAZN.

"It is our duty to give our all. There are negative moments in life and in careers, we must make sure that we don't have regrets at the final whistle and that's what happened today.

Christian Pulisic opened the scoring for Milan in the 10th minute with a solo effort. The American forward skillfully navigated through Inter's defence, surged into the box, and fired a precise shot past goalkeeper Yann Sommer.

Inter levelled in the 27th minute when captain Lautaro Martinez set up Federico Dimarco, who found space on the edge of the box and unleashed a powerful strike into the back of the net.

Alcaraz helps Team Europe win Laver Cup

Berlin, Germany - Carlos Alcaraz beat Taylor Fritz 6-2 7-5 to hand Team Europe a 13-11 victory over Team World in the Laver Cup in the last session of the tournament on Sunday.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz romped through a one-sided first set before finishing off U.S. Open finalist Fritz as Team Europe clinched their fifth Laver Cup title.

Team World looked in a commanding position on Saturday when Ben Shelton and Alejandro Tabilo defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas and Casper Ruud to put them 8-4 up.

However, captain Bjorn Borg's Team Europe came into the final day of competition full of fight and Alcaraz teamed up with



Team Europe players celebrate with the Laver Cup trophy

Ruud to defeat Americans Shelton and Frances Tiafoe 6-2 7-6(6) in the early doubles match to take three points and reduce the deficit to 8-7. Team World extended their lead when Shelton beat Daniil Medvedev 6-

7(6) 7-5 10-7 putting the team captained by John McEnroe within touching distance of a third consecutive title.

However, Alexander Zverev gave Team Europe hope when he overcame Tiafoe 6-7(5) 7-5

10-5 to send the competition into a thrilling final session where French Open and Wimbledon champion Alcaraz wrapped up victory. Next year's Laver Cup takes place in San Francisco.

Haddad Maia triumphs

Third-seeded Beatriz Haddad Maia rebounded from a first-set hiccup to record a 1-6, 6-4, 6-1 win over top-seeded Daria Kasatkina of Russia on Sunday in the final of the Korea Open in Seoul.

The WTA 500 singles title was the first of the season and fourth overall for Haddad Maia, who bounced back from a 26-minute loss in the first set to top-ple Kasatkina.



Max Verstappen

'Super-silly' swearing penalty could hasten Verstappen's exit from Formula One

Singapore - Max Verstappen suggested he could turn his back on Formula One sooner than expected if the sport's governing body stopped him having fun and being himself.

Red Bull's triple world champion was ordered by stewards to do "work of public interest" with the FIA after he used a swear word in a press conference at the Singapore Grand Prix last Thursday.

But once you have accomplished all that, winning championships and races, then you want to just have a good time as well."

Verstappen has spoken previously about retiring from Formula One while still comparatively young, emphasising that he would not go on as long as the likes of Lewis Hamilton, 39, and Fernando Alonso, 43.

"If you have to deal with all these kind of silly things, for me,

For me, of course, at one point, when it's enough, it's enough. And we'll see. I mean, like I said, racing will go on. F1 will go on also without me. It's not a problem.

MAX VERSTAPPEN

The penalty, which he described as 'super-silly' on Sunday, led the Dutch driver to give only terse replies in FIA press conferences and meet reporters elsewhere in a paddock media huddle.

He did the same after finishing second in the race behind McLaren rival Lando Norris, using the opportunity to explain further why he felt so strongly about the penalty.

"These kind of things definitely decide my future as well," he said. "When you can't be yourself or you have to deal with these kind of silly things.

"I think now I'm at the stage of my career that you don't want to be dealing with this all the time.

"It's really tiring. Of course, it's great to have success and win

that is not a way of continuing in the sport, that's for sure," said the 26-year-old.

Asked if the FIA might relent if they were told they risked pushing a multiple world champion out of the sport, Verstappen doubted they would take it very seriously.

"For me, of course, at one point, when it's enough, it's enough. And we'll see. I mean, like I said, racing will go on," he added.

"F1 will go on also without me. It's not a problem. But it's also not a problem for me."

Verstappen said he felt he was being prevented from being authentic.

"If you can't really be yourself, like to the fullest, then it's better not to speak," he said.

MAGICAL AT MONZA

Inspired strategy from Team WRT sets up glory for Ahmad Al Harthy and OQ by Oman Racing

Muscat - OQ by Oman Racing achieved an incredible outright victory in round four of the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Endurance Cup at Monza in Italy on Sunday - one of the proudest moments of Ahmad al Harthy's glittering motorsport career.

When a chaotic opening lap with a series of multi-car incidents resulted in the No.30 BMW M4 having to pit with damage, hopes of a Bronze class podium, let alone a challenge for outright victory in the three-hour race, looked unthinkable.

But inspired strategy from Team WRT, the squad which prepares and runs the OQ by Oman Racing entry, meant the car - in the hands of Sam De Haan for the first stint - made no fewer than three pit visits while the Safety Car was circulating following the lap one dramas.

Enabling the BMW to have repairs facilitated, while vitally remaining on the lead lap, importantly it also meant they had begun to clear the three mandatory timed pit stops that each entry had to serve during the race. Pain at the beginning led to sheer joy at the chequered



OQ by Oman Racing's Ahmad al Harthy (C) celebrates with teammates Sam De Haan (L) and Jens Klingmann

flag thanks to steely focus, determination, faultless driving and nothing short of genius from Team WRT.

In addition to the stunning overall result, it is also the first Bronze class win for Al Harthy, De Haan and Jens Klingmann and the trio have become the first non-Pro class line-up, and maiden Bronze line-up to claim an Endurance Cup win outright. For Team WRT, it marks the outfit's first race win in the Endurance Cup with BMW.

"Unbelievable, unbelievable - I can't actually believe what happened! History, absolute history. It's amazing to take this win, I am over the moon," said Al Harthy.

"This means so much to everybody in the team, to Oman, to our incredible sponsors and I would like to dedicate this remarkable win to His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik al-Said of the Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

"We actually had this plan drawn up, we said if it works it works and if it doesn't we'll look like we've done something wrong! It worked, it worked perfectly well, this was a team effort. Our engineer Will came up with the plan, he did an amazing job as well. This what racing is about, you know, you have to really work together as a team and today we proved that, like nobody else could have.

"We out-performed everybody, a huge grid of the most professional teams and drivers. To win it with OQ by Oman Racing, our first win with BMW, and to win our class and the race overall really is unbelievable."

Jayasuriya five-for takes Sri Lanka to victory against NZ

Galle, Colombo - Left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya took two overs to polish off the New Zealand tail and complete a five-wicket haul as Sri Lanka sealed a 63-run victory in the opening Test at Galle International Stadium on Monday.

Chasing 275 for victory, New Zealand were all out for 211 despite Rachin Ravindra's gallant 92, their batters unable to negotiate the sharp turn and low bounce at the venue.

Jayasuriya (5-68) claimed his eighth five-wicket haul, seven of them coming at his happy hunting ground in Galle alone.

"The win in England boosted our morale," home captain Dhananjaya de Silva said referring to their Test match victory at



Prabath Jayasuriya

The Oval earlier this month.

"We've the ability to win tests and the boys are delivering now."

New Zealand began the final day needing 68 runs for a memorable win with two wickets in hand but Sri Lanka took only four overs to wrap up victory.

New Zealand's slim chances of pulling off a win evaporated in the second over of the day when Jayasuriya ended Ravindra's stellar knock, which included nine fours and a six.

The batter reviewed the lbw decision more in desperation than anything else and replays confirmed Ravindra was plumb in front.

Jayasuriya bowled William O'Rourke in his next over to seal Sri Lanka's victory, beating the

batter's defensive prod at an arm ball.

"Tough place to come but a good Test match throughout," New Zealand captain Tim Southee said.

"There's plenty of positives for us to take away from it but obviously disappointing to come out on the wrong side."

Jayasuriya's match haul of nine wickets earned him the player of the match award, while Ramesh Mendis claimed three second-innings wickets.

"I like this Galle pitch," Jayasuriya said.

"I just concentrate on bowling a consistent line and length, focus on that and get the results." The second Test, also in Galle, begins on Thursday.

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TEENAGE WORKOUT

Washboard abs



Are you a teenager who suddenly wishes to develop washboard abs resembling your screen/sports idols? Developing an ab routine at home is extremely important for teens to grow their core strength and maintain fitness routines with ease. Here is an easy ab workout for teenage guys at home.

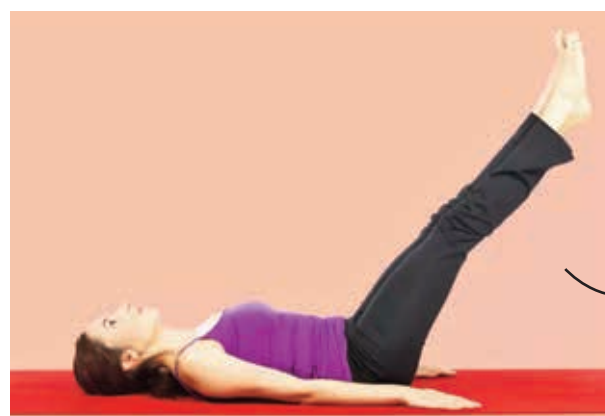
But, before you start, you should note that abs are not fully achieved through working out. A healthy diet contributes to the majority of your progress while working out is simply to build your abdominal muscles. Both dieting and working out combined is what will give you those abdominal muscles that you're looking to achieve.

Flutter Kicks

Flutter kicks are a simple ab exercise for teens to do at home. If flutter kicks are hard for you, put your hands under your butt, it actually helps relieve some of the tension on your abs.

Steps

- Lay down
- Lift both your back and legs slightly (your body should look like a very wide V-shape)
- Keep your hands to your side
- Alternate flapping your legs up and down (about 1 foot off the ground)



Leg Raises

Leg raises are one of the best ab workouts for teenage guys because of how effective they are. They can be slightly complex to understand, but the results are great.

Steps

- Lay down with your hands by your side
- Bring your legs all the way in so your knees are close to your chest
- From this position, bring your legs straight up into the air
- You will most likely need to roll on your back slightly
- Bring your legs back down to your chest
- Then bring them back to the start position

Planks

Planks are great to hone bracing, an important core function. But you need to make sure that you're doing them right.

Steps

- Get down on the ground. Stack your elbows directly beneath your shoulders and extend your legs
- Squeeze your glutes and core to create full-body tension
- Contract your low back, lats, and rhomboids
- Face your gaze face down, which keeps your neck in a neutral position.



Side Planks

Flip your plank to change your focus to the obliques, the muscles that run along the sides of your core.

Steps

- Lie on one side with your legs straight and prop up your upper body on your forearm. Raise your hips so your body forms a straight line from your head to your heels.
- Brace your abs and squeeze your glutes to hold the position.
- If you want to make it harder elevate your feet or add a torso rotation.

Mountain Climbers

Mountain climbers challenge you to brace your core, but also adds movement and an extra athletic component.

Steps

- Set up in a high plank (pushup) position, with your hands stacked directly below your shoulders, elbows turned out, and feet just wider than hip-width apart. Your shoulders should be higher than your hips.



- Squeeze your shoulders, core, and glutes to create full-body tension. Look down at the floor, keeping your head in a neutral position.
- Drive one knee up high to your chest, as if you were running. Return your leg to a straight position. Repeat with the other leg.
- Continue alternating reps, working to keep your torso in position with your shoulders higher than your hips.

VANDANA CHAWLA



NUTRITION & YOU



Bananas – most healthy fruit

Banana is such a popular fruit that no one can say they have never tasted a banana. It is one such fruit which is not only recommended as one of the first foods for a baby but is liked by all, be it young kids, adults or the elderly.

It is so much versatile that it can be used in multiple ways. Whether in desserts or savouries, bananas find their entry into multiple cuisines. Some people do have allergic reactions to bananas, but otherwise, it is one such fruit which is enjoyed by all.

Not only taste-wise, but health-wise too, bananas, have incredible benefits that it is often recommended for various conditions. Bananas are usually grown in warmer climates, native to Southeast Asia.

Nutritionally, bananas are packed with soluble fibre, potassium, vitamin B6, C, and magnesium, along with many antioxidants and phytonutrients.

Health benefits

Bananas help in maintaining blood sugar levels - bananas are rich in soluble fibre which forms a gel in the stomach thereby resulting in slow release of sugar. In addition, green banana contains resistant starch that also slows down the release of sugar in the blood. Both these help in regulating blood sugar levels after meals.

Owing to its high carbohydrate content it is believed to be a fruit which should not be

given to diabetics. However, presence of carbs as fibre and resistant starch, makes it a healthy snack for diabetics, if it is taken in moderation - that is once a day and preferably along with other fruit to further reduce the spike in blood sugar.

Good for digestive health

The resistant starch present in slightly green or unripe bananas acts as a prebiotic that is food for healthy bacteria present in the gut. Also,

Green or yellow bananas

With so many benefits, let's focus on which banana to go for, ripe or slightly unripe - that is yellow or green. In this competition, the green banana wins the race. High fibre and high resistant starch content make green bananas a better choice for controlling appetite.

Green banana not only keeps the gut healthy but also helps in maintaining the blood sugar much better. But there is a slight twist, green bananas may cause indigestion or bloating issues for some.

Good for heart health

Rich in potassium, banana is a wonder fruit that helps in managing blood pressure, thereby keeping the heart in good health. Also, the presence of a good amount of magnesium decreases the risk of heart disease and helps in lowering blood pressure.

Packed with antioxidants

These are substances that

prevent oxidative damage caused by free radicals. Bananas are packed with antioxidants like flavonoids and amines that decrease the risk of many degenerative diseases.

Controls appetite and sweet cravings

Owing to the presence of both soluble fibre and resistant starch, bananas, remain in the stomach for a longer time, thereby controlling appetite, hunger pangs and sugar cravings. All these are beneficial in weight control.

Great food for exercise

With the presence of potassium and magnesium, along with soluble fibre, banana helps in giving the needed calories and electrolytes. This helps not only in improving exercise performance, but also in post-exercise recovery. Magnesium, in particular, helps in treating muscle cramps, particularly observed during or after an exercise session.

Green or yellow bananas

With so many benefits, let's focus on which banana to go for, ripe or slightly unripe - that is yellow or green. In this competition, the green banana wins the race. High fibre and high resistant starch content make green bananas a better choice for controlling appetite.

Green banana not only keeps the gut healthy but also helps in maintaining the blood sugar much better. But there is a slight twist, green bananas may cause indigestion or bloating issues for some.

Green bananas may show better health benefits, but taste-wise, yellow is better. So a banana which is yellow, but with a slight green tinge to it, will taste good plus give health benefits of green ones.

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





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TURBO-CHARGED DEAL

Kia expands the Sportage line-up with the Sportage L. It's now bigger and comes in two new turbo-charged engines



Sportage L - variant or new model?

The Sportage L is an expansion of our line-up; it's not a new model. It has two new engines and it's a longer body. In terms of pricing, it sits within the current Sportage line-up. This now slots into where the gaps are. In the current line-up, we have a 2ltr normal aspirated engine and a 1.6 turbo engine. The Sportage L now sits within that and slots above the 2ltr engine. So, it just expands our line-up. And because the space is different and the power is different - it's class-leading - we think, it will just expand the traction of the Sportage. Some people really like the 1.6 turbo right now, while others, especially fleets, want to buy the 2ltr normally aspirated engine because of its pricing. The Sportage L expands the range and gives more power, space and technology.

Yaser Shabsogh

Vice President, Commercial Operations
Kia Middle East and Africa

Tridwip K Das

Launched in 1993 and spanning five generations since, the Kia Sportage pioneered the concept of the urban SUV and achieved milestones in quick succession. Evolving into a compact SUV in its second generation, each iteration of the Sportage built upon the success of its predecessor. The second generation Sportage catapulted the brand to a regular fixture in the top-seller charts. In 2016 and 2017, the fourth generation Sportage surpassed the Rio as the brand's global best-selling model. In 2018 - the 25th anniversary of the Sportage - Kia celebrated 5mn cumulative sales of the model. In 30 years, the Sportage has sold over 7mn units and become one of the most desired family SUVs in many markets, counted among the top ten not just in the Middle East but globally.

The recipe for the Sportage's success is really no secret. Kia figured what customers really want - a family-friendly space in an SUV body at bargain price. Every new generation didn't just satisfy but often exceeded buyers' expectations, and in the process, outsold its predecessor. Besides offering practicality and a wide array of comfort, convenience, and safety features, its engine and transmission line-up caters to a broad range of customer needs.

Kia is now expanding the line-up with the Sportage L. With overall length of 4,670mm and wheel base of 2,755mm, it is the longest Sportage, hence the L. It is equipped with several features you'd expect in high-end cars as standard in all trims of the Sportage L, including a central console with a dual 12.3-inch curved display and shift-by-wire rotary dial shifter in place of a stick gear selector.

These and more features show just how far the once rugged, no-frills budget model available in only a few markets has come to be a global product with up-market flavour knocking on the door of premium brands.



The (1) dual 12.3-inch curved display - one for instruments and the other for the central touchscreen panel - and (2) shift-by-wire rotary dial are now standard across all trims

SPECS SHEET

Engine	1.5T - 2.0T
Power	197hp - 233hp
Transmission	8-speed automatic for both
Fuel efficiency (km/ltr, combined)	15.1 (2WD) - 13.5 (AWD)
Acceleration	8.3 (2WD) - 8.1 (AWD)

However, the highlight of the L is its powertrain. Already a daunting task to keep track of the many powertrains, the Sportage is available in the GCC and other markets, the L is equipped with the most powerful engines in its segment - turbo-charged 1.5 and 2.0 - where earlier there was a 1.6T.

With the Sportage L launching across the MENA region this month, Saud Bahwan Group organised a test drive for Muscat Daily in Salalah last week. The route from Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara to Wadi Darbat - still a riot of green in the final stretch of khareef 2024 - and The Club by Fanar, before returning to the starting point, went through countryside, steep inclines and hairpin bends,

besides highways allowing a good feel of the Sportage L's handling.

Looks

It's bold and stands out from the crowd. Kia has standardised an X-Line package for the Sportage L's exterior, featuring a blacked-out grille with a star-chain design. Chrome in no longer in vogue, remember? Other features of this package include sleek LED lights, fluid side-lines and an attractive rear design adding to its presence on the road.

The rear bumper and sill have been designed to add stability and a grounded stance. LED turning lights, also standard across all grades, maximise visibility and safety at night. And while there are sev-



(Muscat Daily)

Under the hood

Kia offers the Sportage with one of the widest range of powertrains in the segment. In the new line, the 1.5T produces 197hp while the 2.0T is capable of 233hp, ensuring robust power output while optimising fuel consumption. Both engines are paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission for smooth and efficient performance. The 2.0T AWD engine accelerated eagerly on winding mountain roads making our drive back from Wadi Darbat a sheer pleasure. The brakes bite in effectively adding to driver confidence.

The ride

The Sportage L gives its driver a sense of complete command on the road, riding well and offering confidence around corners. It strikes a balance between ride comfort and handling, coping effortlessly with urban traffic as with single-lane mountainous roads. The D steering wheel enhances that sense of command with precise feedback on road conditions.

Safety

Kia is giving premium brands a run for their money in this department. It offers an exhaustive list of driver assists - Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist, Smart Cruise Control, Lane Keeping Assist, Lane Following Assist, Driver Attention Warning, High Beam Assist etc, the most useful being the Blind-Spot Collision-Avoidance Assist which prevents the vehicle from veering off a lane without a turn signal switch operation, and Rear Cross-Traffic Collision-Avoidance Assist which alerts if it detects a collision risk with an approaching vehicle from left/right when reversing. This could soon become an indispensable feature in all cars.

If you're in the market for a five-seat family crossover, the Sportage L has a lot to like about. It's safe, has all the practicality you can expect from an SUV, and features high-end equipment and tech. Add to that the fact that it has the longest wheelbase and the most powerful engine among all Sportage models, and you have the strongest all-rounder family SUV.

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