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KISHKINDHA KAANDAM: A SLOW-BURN THRILLER



Israel, Hezbollah urged to avoid 'catastrophe'

UN CHIEF FEARS LEBANON MAY TURN INTO ANOTHER GAZA



Locals inspect damage to property following missile strikes from Lebanon, on a residential neighbourhood, in Moreshet, northern Israel, yesterday. Hezbollah yesterday launched about 115 rockets, missiles and drones towards vast areas of Israel's north.

PARIS

World powers yesterday implored Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement to refrain from escalating their conflict as the Gaza war threatened to spill over across the Middle East. The call came as hundreds of thousands of people sought shelter from Hezbollah rockets fired from Lebanon into northern Israel yesterday, as a UN official warned of regional "catastrophe" from the worsening violence.

United Nations

UN chief Antonio Guterres told broadcaster CNN that he feared "the possibility of transforming Lebanon (into) another Gaza". The UN special coordinator for Lebanon, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, warned on X that the Middle East was close to "an immi-

nent catastrophe" and that no side would be safer through military means.

"That is a tragedy, because this is a war that must stop," Guterres said.

United States

White House National Security spokesman John Kirby said escalating the conflict was not in key US ally Israel's "best interest".

The United States was saying this "directly to our Israeli counterparts" and believes "there can be time and space for a diplomatic solution here

and that's what we're working on", he told ABC.

European Union

The 27-nation bloc is "extremely concerned" about the escalating violence and is calling for an "urgent" ceasefire, its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. A full-blown war "must be averted, including by renewed intense diplomatic mediation efforts", he added.

Britain

Foreign Secretary David Lammy urged Israel and Hezbollah to reach an "immediate ceasefire" following a "worrying escalation". Addressing his Labour party's annual conference, Lammy said a ceasefire would facilitate "a political settlement, so that Israelis and Lebanese civilians can return to their homes and live in peace and security".

-AFP

SEE ALSO P9

50 people have been killed in Israel's strikes on Beirut since Friday

Over 50 killed in Iran coal mine blast

A methane gas leak led to explosion in two blocks of the mine

TEHRAN

A blast caused by a gas leak at an Iranian coal mine has killed at least 51 people, state media said yesterday, in one of the country's deadliest work accidents in years.

"The number of dead workers increased to 51" in the explosion at the Tabas mine in eastern Iran, the official IRNA news agency reported, revising an earlier death toll of 30. It added that 20 other people were injured.

The explosion occurred at

around 9pm (1730 GMT) on Saturday, when around 70 workers were present at the site in South Khorasan province, IRNA said.

According to the report, a leak of methane gas led to the blast in two blocks of the mine, which is owned by private Iranian firm Madanjoo.

State TV broadcast footage of ambulances and helicopters arriving at Tabas to transport the injured to hospital. South Khorasan governor Javad Ghe-naat told state TV that rescue teams were working to recover the remaining bodies.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, in remarks carried state TV before departing for the UN General Assembly

in New York, offered his condolences to the families of the victims and ordered a probe into the deadly incident.

Trapped

Iran's Red Crescent said search and rescue operations were underway in the mine, where some workers remained trapped.

According to IRNA, they were about 250 metres below the surface, cut off from rescuers by chambers that had filled up with concentrated methane gas. "Gas accumulation in the mine" has made the search operations difficult, local prosecutor Ali Nesaei was quoted by IRNA as saying.

-AFP

NATION

UAE President to meet Biden as he embarks on official visit to US today | P4

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UAE economy growth to touch 4.8% in 2025

Non-oil sectors like travel and tourism expected to continue robust expansion

"Investment activity is expected to be strong in the UAE as plans around 'We the UAE 2031', D33 in Dubai, and other strategies are implemented," he explained.

DUBAI

UAE's economy will experience accelerated growth and expand to 4.8 per cent in 2025, according to Scott Livermore, ICAEW Economic Advisor and Chief Economist and Managing Director of Oxford Economics Middle East. Livermore attributed the expansion of the non-oil economy, which is expected to grow by 4.6 per cent year-on-year in 2024. He added that non-oil sectors, mainly travel and tourism, will continue to grow strongly, with visitors to Dubai and traffic through DXB reaching record levels. "We expect visitors numbers to continue to expand strongly, growing by over 20 per cent this year and achieving double-digit growth again next," he said.

Livermore added that the country has faced some challenges, particularly significantly higher interest rates; its economy has weathered the challenge due to the significant government support as growth and diversification plans are implemented.

100% foreign ownership

He also emphasised that the UAE is increasing its attractiveness to foreign investors and talent through schemes such as allowing 100 per cent foreign ownership of onshore companies and lowering costs to establish businesses, which have contributed to population growth and bolstered the real estate market. He noted that policymakers also focus on innovative and emerging sectors across finance, creative industries, manufacturing, and other sectors.

Regarding US Federal Reserve interest rates, Livermore said, "We expect the Fed to cut interest rates in September, and it is shifting its focus to the labour market away from inflation, that the Fed is no longer laser-focused on inflation and the risks to the labour market are on its radar. "We expect the Fed to cut by 50bps by end-2024 and 150bps by end-2025 but the rates cuts could be more frontload if the labour market deteriorates more markedly than we are assuming." -WAM

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SPORT

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12 workplace violations you can report

OFFICIALS CALL ON THE COMMUNITY TO REACH OUT IF THEY FIND EMPLOYERS BREAKING RULES

ABU DHABI
 BY ALI AL HAMMADI
 Reporter

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE) has identified 12 types of complaints related to the workplace that community members can submit through its official channels.

The ministry said community members can report:

- False Emiratization.
- Failure to meet Emiratization requirements
- Harassment complaints.
- Non-payment of end-of-service benefits.
- Working overtime for more than two hours.
- Failure to grant annual leave or monetary compensation or postponing it.
- Violent co-workers.
- Worker accommodation violations.
- Health and occupational safety breaches.
- Violations of the midday break (when in effect).
- Forced labour.
- Human trafficking.

In an awareness drive shared on its social media pages, the ministry stated: "We provide various channels to report these practices, thereby enhancing oversight and raising the level of compliance with regulations. You can reach us via the ministry's [MoHRE] smart application, the website [mohre.gov.ae], or by contacting the call centre [600-590-000]."

Oversight mechanisms

The ministry's acceptance of community reports regarding negative practices is part of its



Virendra Saklani/Gulf News Archives

■ The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization provides multiple channels to report malpractices, thereby ensuring compliance.

Dh100,000
 fine on firms faking Emiratization by reducing the number of workers or altering their classification

efforts to strengthen oversight mechanisms and inspection operations on private sector establishments. This aims to educate them about the implementation of the Labour Relations Law in line with international agreements, to ensure balanced rights between both parties in labour relations and the stability and prosperity of the labour market.

MoHRE monitors the labour

market through all available approved oversight mechanisms, in addition to reports from the public, and takes action against violating establishments based on data and information, confirmed through field visits or electronic systems.

The Ministry added that it is committed to ensuring transparency and the "highest levels of impartiality" from its inspectors,

who have a "deep understanding" of the Labour Relations Law and its executive decisions.

Actions taken

Since mid 2022 till now, 1,818 private companies have been caught faking Emiratization, the Ministry revealed recently.

MoHRE said it has taken legal measures against individuals involved in false Emiratization. These measures included depriving or suspending their eligibility for benefits under the Nafis programme and reclaiming any financial benefits they had previously received. The work permits of Emiratis employed falsely were also cancelled.

Hefty fines

MoHRE has pledged to continue addressing negative practices aimed at evad-

ing Emiratization obligations. An immediate administrative fine ranging from Dh20,000 to Dh100,000 is imposed on establishments found to have engaged in false Emiratization.

Violating establishments are also required to pay any contributions due for the Emiratization targets they claimed to have met, along with achieving the Emiratization goals they bypassed.

Moreover, the Ministry imposes a fine of Dh100,000 on establishments proven to have attempted to circumvent Emiratization targets by reducing the number of workers or altering their classification, or through any other form of deception as confirmed by the Ministry. This fine increases to Dh300,000 for a second offence and Dh500,000 for a third and subsequent offences.

Motorist speeding at 220km/h arrested

DUBAI
 BY KHITAM AL AMIR
 Chief News Editor

Dubai Police arrested a motorist driving at 220km/h on Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Road. His vehicle has been impounded. The incident occurred on Wednesday.

Maj Gen Saif Muhair Al Mazrouei, Director of the General Department of Traffic at Dubai Police, stated that a patrol noticed a vehicle being driven at an extreme speed. "Despite efforts to signal the driver to stop using lights and verbal warnings, he accelerated further, surpassing 220km/h and creating a dangerous situation for himself and others on the road," he said.

Maj Gen Al Mazrouei explained that additional patrol units were deployed to secure the road and bring the vehicle to a halt. The driver was taken into custody and will face legal proceedings.

Decree No 30 of 2023 concerning vehicle impoundment slaps reckless drivers with a fine of Dh50,000 against the impounded vehicle's release.

Maj Gen Al Mazrouei assured the public that the police would not tolerate such violations. He urged people to report dangerous driving using the Police Eye feature on the Dubai Police app or by calling the We Are All Police hotline at 901.

Dubai Police seize 3,779 bikes in Naif for traffic violations

Crackdown between January and August aims to ensure safety rules are followed

DUBAI
 AGHADDIR ALI
 Senior Reporter

As many as 3,779 regular bicycles and electric bicycles and scooters were seized by Naif Police Station in its jurisdiction in Dubai from January to August for breaking traffic and safety rules, Dubai Police said on Saturday.

Brig Omar Musa Ashour, Acting Director of Naif Police Station, affirmed Dubai Police's focus on enhancing awareness among all road users — drivers, passengers, and pedestrians — about their rights and responsibilities to ensure maximum safety and adherence to traffic regulations, making the emirate's roads safer.

Awareness campaigns

He highlighted that riding scooters, electric scooters, and regular bicycles poses a significant danger to their users and other road-goers when used in non-designated areas or on public roads. This can confuse drivers, so Dubai Police prioritises the safety of these users and other road users through regular awareness campaigns.

Brig Ashour noted that the campaign launched by Naif Police Station for riders, in collaboration with the General Department of Traffic since the beginning of this year, led to the seizure of 3,779 vehicles in the past eight months. This in-



Courtesy: Dubai Police

■ Dubai Police said riding bicycles, e-scooters and scooters in non-designated areas or on public roads poses a traffic hazard as it confuses motorists and endangers pedestrians.

RULES FOR RIDERS

- Use designated lanes for riding, not those for jogging or walking.
- Don't carry passengers on e-scooters or items that could affect balance.
- Always ride in the correct direction of traffic.
- Avoid riding at night or during unstable weather conditions.
- Dismount at pedestrian crossings.
- Maintain a safe distance from vehicles and pedestrians.
- Use rear and side lights.
- Wear helmets and reflective jackets.

2,286 bicycles, **771 electric scooters,** **722 scooters** seized until August

cluded 2,286 bicycles, 771 electric scooters, and 722 scooters. He called on riders to strictly follow traffic rules and guide-

lines, stick to permitted roads and lanes, and comply with all security and safety requirements mentioned in designated areas to ensure public safety.

Brig Ashour urged the public to report negative behaviours or dangerous actions through the 'Police Eye' service available on the Dubai Police smartphone app or by calling the 'We Are All Police' service on 901.

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How visa violators can legally get a job

GDRFA DUBAI OUTLINES STEPS FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

DUBAI
BY ABDULLA RASHEED
Abu Dhabi Editor

The General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs in Dubai (GDRFA Dubai) has explained the process for amnesty seekers to regularise their status and work in the private sector.

There are different categories of visa violators and they each follow their own process for regularisation so they can stay and work legally in the UAE.

Residency violators

Individuals whose residency permits have expired and who do not have a valid work permit have two options: If they wish to join a new employer, the new employer submits a request for a new work permit through MoHRE or GDRFA Dubai.

If the individual wishes to continue with the current employer, the employer submits a request for residency renewal through the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs, and Port Security (ICP).

Visa violators

Individuals with expired visit, tourism, work, medical treatment, or business visa, are categorised as visa violators.

If a violating visitor wishes to join a new employer, the new employer submits a request for a new work permit to MoHRE or GDRFA Dubai. However, if a violating visitor wishes to leave, the visitor submits a request for an exit permit through GDRFA.

Expired work permit

Individuals whose residence permit and MoHRE-issued work permit have both expired, and who were employed in the corporate sector or as domestic workers, have these options:

If the violating worker wishes to stay with the current employer, the employer submits a request to renew the work permit through MoHRE.

Absconding complaint

In the event an employer filed an absconding complaint against a worker, but now wishes to continue the contractual agreement, the employer can apply for the work permit renewal service through MoHRE, without the need to first cancel the absconding complaint.

If the violating worker wishes to join a new employer, the new employer submits a re-



■ The amnesty allows people with expired residencies, visas and work permits to regularise their status or leave without fines.

5,040 VOLUNTEERING HOURS

Community members step up to help amnesty seekers

DUBAI
BY AGHADDIR ALI
Senior Reporter



As many as 40 volunteers in Dubai have spent 5,040 hours over the past three weeks assisting amnesty seekers thanks to Dubai's General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA Dubai) intensifying volunteer efforts within the amnesty programme.

Brig Abdul Samad Hussain Suleiman, Acting Assistant Director-General for the Institutional Support Sector, GDRFA Dubai, stressed that "volunteers are the backbone of the campaign's success through their vital role in organising and managing procedures and providing support to the beneficiaries".

Amer centres and GDRFA Dubai's main amnesty centre in Al Awir have become platforms for volunteer work. GDRFA Dubai staff also work with volunteers. So far, 40 volunteers have devoted six hours daily, helping organise the entry of amnesty seekers, guiding them to the appropriate departments and facilitating the procedures "effectively and smoothly".

100 volunteers targeted

The goal is to reach a count of 100 volunteers during the two-month amnesty. In light of the great turnout and positive interaction, and to open the door for volunteer work, cooperation was established with the Watani Al Emarat Foundation, which contributed by providing volunteers of various nationalities to support the goals of the campaign and contribute to its success.

Brig Suleiman added that the presence of volunteers reflects the administration's commitment to promoting volunteerism as a deeply rooted community practice, supporting Dubai Residency's vision of building a united and safe community.

quest to issue a work permit for the violating worker.

He or she also has the choice to leave the UAE, by submitting a request for an Exit Permit through GDRFA to complete the procedures for departing from the country.

The two-month amnesty began on September 1, allowing people with expired residencies, visas and work permits to reinstate or regularise their residency and apply for jobs, or leave the UAE without fines if they choose.



■ Participating musicians at Dubai's Museum of the Future. From string and percussion to wind instruments and creations made from everyday objects, the festival celebrates diversity.

Musicians turn Metro stations into vibrant concert venues

20 musicians performing across a range of instruments and genres this week

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

The fourth edition of the Dubai Metro Music Festival kicked off on Saturday, transforming Metro stations into concert venues.

The festival's opening day featured a diverse lineup of musicians. From soulful melodies to energetic beats, their performances resonated with metro commuters.

With 20 talented musicians performing across a range of instruments and genres, the

EXPERIENCE IT

The Dubai Metro Music Festival runs until September 27 with **daily performances from 5pm to 10pm** at metro stations, including Dubai Mall, Mall of the Emirates, BurJuman, Union and DMCC.



Watch: Dubai Metro stations turn into concert venues

festival offers a unique opportunity for passengers to enjoy an eclectic mix of sounds. From string and percussion to wind instruments

and even creations made from everyday objects, the festival's diverse lineup promises something special for every listener, even those within the metro compartments.

This year's festival continues to build on its reputation as a dynamic cultural celebration, reflecting Dubai's commitment to fostering creativity and providing exceptional experiences for its residents and visitors.

Attendees were treated to a blend of genres and styles, showcasing the rich array of musical talent from around the world. The festival's lively atmosphere and the enthusiastic participation of the audience underscored its status as a highlight in Dubai's cultural calendar.

105 students learn sign language

Dubai Police initiative marks International Day of Sign Languages

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

Private school students in Dubai were given a practical course in sign language, thanks to Dubai Police, ahead of the International Day of Sign Languages today.

The course for 105 students was organised by the People of Determination Empowerment Council and the Positive Spirit Council at Al Mawakeb School — Al Barsha.

Major Abdullah Al Shamsi, Chairman of the People of Determination Empowerment Council, emphasised the council's commitment to raising awareness about sign language and integrating the hearing-impaired into society. "It



also supports the national policy for empowering people of determination and contributes to Dubai's initiative, 'My Community ... A Place for Everyone,'" he added.

Fatima Bouhajeer, Chairperson of the Positive Spirit Council and

Member of the People of Determination Empowerment Council, noted that the council aims to educate young people about community values such as coexistence, tolerance, dialogue, development, and respect for others.

Mohammad Mussad Al Hajjaji, a certified sign language trainer who conducted the workshop, noted the importance of breaking down communication barriers with the hearing-impaired.

Sharjah rolls out intercity electric buses

To begin with, 10 buses will link Sharjah to Dubai, Ajman, and Al Hamriya

SHARJAH
BY AGHADDIR ALI
Senior Reporter

Sharjah's Roads and Transport Authority has announced the launch of the first phase of electric buses, as part of its efforts to support the 2050 Climate Neutrality initiative.

The first phase includes the operation of 10 buses on three intercity routes, aiming to achieve environmental sustainability.

The buses come with a range of standard specifications, measuring up to nine metres in



■ Each air-conditioned bus is nine metres long and can carry up to 41 passengers. The buses have a battery cooling system.

length. Each bus has a capacity of 41 passengers and features global safety standards. The air-conditioned buses operate with a battery cooling system, suitable for the country's climate.

Engineer Youssef Khamis Al Othmani, head of the authority, announced that the buses will link Sharjah to Dubai, Ajman, and Al Hamriya. These destinations were chosen based on

studies and statistics from relevant departments, in collaboration with the intercity transport department, focusing on passenger demand and density.

The authority has reaffirmed its commitment to high-quality standards in its environmentally supportive strategy by implementing comprehensive plans to meet green transport targets and reduce carbon emissions.

Next phase

It was previously announced that a contract was signed to purchase 10 electric buses in the first phase, following the trial of two buses to prove their efficiency. The selection was made after testing several different models, based on their compatibility with the country's climate.

Request for Proposal for the Automated People Mover system at Delhi Airport

Delhi International Airport Limited, a public private initiative between GMR group and Airports Authority of India (AAI) will be undertaking the implementation of Automated People Mover system at Delhi Airport on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer model. The interested and experienced bidders are invited to participate in RFP.

The details of this tender can be downloaded from the website www.newdelhairport.in

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President's US visit: Envoys hail 'enduring partnership'

AMBASSADORS OF THE TWO NATIONS REFLECT ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

ABU DHABI

The UAE and US share enduring security ties and a commitment to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Middle East region, said US Ambassador to UAE Martina Strong and UAE Ambassador to US Yousuf Al Otaiba in a joint Op-Ed ahead of the official visit of President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the US starting today.

Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed will visit Washington for a White House meeting with US President Joe Biden.

"In close partnership, we are working to advance multilateral diplomatic solutions and provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance in Gaza and Sudan. Our ongoing defence and counterterrorism cooperation makes our countries and the world more secure. US and UAE troops have stood shoulder to shoulder in six conflicts over the last 30 years; their valour and devotion to duty have forged the strongest of bonds between our countries," the ambassadors remarked.

"By continuing to partner together, exploring new opportunities and addressing shared challenges head-on, we are keeping our eyes firmly fixed on a better vision for the region and for the next 50 years of our cooperation," they added.

Bilateral trade

The benefits of five decades of bilateral trade and engagement have naturally flowed in both directions. The UAE has invested more than \$1 trillion across all sectors of the American economy. And the UAE is the biggest destination for US exports in the Middle East.

Bilateral trade exceeded \$31 billion in 2023 alone.

"By continuing to partner together, exploring new opportunities and addressing shared challenges head-on, we are keeping our eyes firmly fixed on a better vision for the region and for the next 50 years of our cooperation," the envoys said.

Regional stability

The ambassadors said: "The UAE and UAE share enduring security ties and a commitment to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Middle East. We are working to advance multilateral diplomatic solutions and provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance in Gaza and Sudan. Our ongoing de-



■ Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan begins a state visit to the US today.

In close partnership, we are working to advance multilateral diplomatic solutions and provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance in Gaza and Sudan. Our ongoing defence and counterterrorism cooperation makes our countries and the world more secure. US and UAE troops have stood shoulder to shoulder in six conflicts over the last 30 years; their valour and devotion to duty have forged the strongest of bonds between our countries."

Yousuf Al Otaiba | UAE Ambassador to US
Martina Strong | US Ambassador to UAE

GROWING SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

The ambassadors observed that the US Silicon Valley and the UAE's Silicon Oasis are driving AI research and innovation through partnerships that span labs, boardrooms, and advanced production facilities. The drive along Shaikh Zayed Road from Abu Dhabi to Dubai feels very familiar to any American tech executive, with Google, Meta, IBM, and Microsoft signs lighting the way.

"Our countries recognise the benefits of technology and scientific cooperation and are committed to expand our work on new initiatives, including enhanced standards for protecting data and sensitive technologies, greater collaboration in research and education, as well as programs to help narrow the digital divide by providing more accessible core technologies to all, while ensuring the highest standards of security and privacy," the envoys said.

- Last week, Abu Dhabi's technology investment firm MGX joined with Microsoft, US investment firm BlackRock, and others to launch a new technology infrastructure investment platform.
- Over the past year, Silicon Valley's Cerebras teamed up with the UAE's G42 to deploy several of the world's fastest supercomputers for AI training in California and Texas.
- Mubadala's transformational investment in NY-based Global-Foundries is helping to expand US semiconductor manufacturing and adding thousands of jobs to the region's innovation economy.
- G42 is also partnering with Microsoft's Azure on a new cloud computing platform in the UAE and working with other US tech leaders like Nvidia, AMD, VAST, and Qualcomm to scale up advanced technology infrastructure in the UAE.

— WAM

fence and counterterrorism cooperation makes our countries and the world more secure.

"US and UAE troops have stood shoulder to shoulder in six conflicts over the last 30 years; their valor and devotion to duty have forged the strongest of bonds between our countries."

Space exploration

The ambassadors said that in 1974, a delegation of Nasa astronauts and scientists visited Abu Dhabi to brief UAE's Founding Father, founder and first President Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan on the Apollo missions to the Moon.

"Few could have imagined

then that the UAE would become a key partner in the Nasa-led Artemis missions that will return humanity to the Moon by providing a vital contribution to the Gateway programme, which will establish the first ever lunar orbital station," the envoys said.

Nuclear cooperation

When it comes to advanced technologies, few countries are working as closely and moving as quickly together as the UAE and US, the ambassadors said.

"Like the UAE-US Agreement for Nuclear Cooperation, these collaborative efforts could become the new gold standard

\$31 billion
value of bilateral trade in 2023 alone

50,000
Americans work and live in the UAE

1,500
American companies and institutions operate in the UAE

Dr Anwar Gargash:
Focus on economic expansion and tech collaboration

for securing and propelling the next generation of technologies. The landmark 2009 123 Agreement enabled the UAE's development of civilian nuclear energy, which now delivers low-emission electricity to UAE data centres," they said,

Climate action

The visit also builds on the historic COP28 Climate Conference hosted by the UAE last December.

The UAE's position as a global crossroads for business, media, and culture has also made it a gateway to fast-growing markets across the Middle East, Africa, India, and Asia.

— WAM



■ Mona Ghanem Al Marri (left) and Mouza Al Suwaidi during the BRICS Ministerial Meeting on Women's Affairs in St Petersburg, Russia, on Friday.

BRICS meeting: UAE calls for global action on gender balance

Members exchange experiences, best practices in women empowerment

DUBAI

Gulf News Report

The UAE, represented by its Gender Balance Council, participated in the BRICS Ministerial Meeting on Women's Affairs held in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Friday.

The meeting, themed 'Women, Governance, and Leadership', provided a crucial platform for BRICS nations to exchange experiences and best practices in women's empowerment.

The UAE delegation, led by Mona Ghanem Al Marri, Vice-President of the UAE Gender Balance Council, highlighted achievements in advancing women's leadership.

Shaikha Manal Bint Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, President of the UAE Gender Balance Council, reiterated that gender equality is a core pillar of the UAE's national vision and an integral part of its development strategy, aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

Achievements

In her address at the BRICS meeting, Al Marri highlighted the strides the UAE has made in advancing women's role in leadership and governance.

"Nine women serve as ministers, making up almost one third of the UAE cabinet. Women now make up over 50 per cent of our Federal National Council, demonstrating the country's commitment to inclusive governance," she said.

"Today, 70 per cent of our university graduates and 57

Nine women serve as ministers, making up almost one-third of the UAE cabinet. Women now make up over 50 per cent of our Federal National Council. Over 34 per cent of key leadership roles in the private sector are held by women."

Mona Ghanem Al Marri
| Vice-President of the UAE Gender Balance Council

per cent of STEM graduates are women. Over 34 per cent of key leadership roles in the private sector are held by women."

Supportive laws

She outlined the laws enacted by the UAE to advance gender balance, including those mandating on-site child care centres in government institutions, equal pay for work of equal value, and women's representation on the boards of government entities and listed companies.

Mouza Al Suwaidi, Secretary-General of the UAE Gender Balance Council, emphasised the critical importance of sustained international cooperation in promoting widespread global adoption of gender balance.

"Platforms like the BRICS meeting play a key role in strengthening global cooperation, sharing best practices, and collectively advancing women's leadership. The UAE is keen to explore joint initiatives with other countries across the world to drive forward meaningful progress on gender equality," she said.

Louvre Abu Dhabi displays Mexican artefacts

Treasured objects include a ceremonial mask from Calakmul

ABU DHABI

Gulf News Report

Louvre Abu Dhabi has received five artefacts on loan from Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History. They were unveiled by Mohammad Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of Louvre Abu Dhabi, and María Teresa Mercado Pérez, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

These treasured objects, which include a ceremonial mask from Calakmul from the Maya civilisation — have journeyed to the region for the first time and will be showcased until at least April 2025.



■ The treasured objects have journeyed to the region for the first time and will be showcased until at least April 2025.

The five artefacts are:
■ **Colossal Head No 5** (1200-500 BCE): Colossal heads are believed to represent Olmec rulers who may have held both political and religious roles.

Colossal Head No 5 weighs 5,840kg and is made of a large block of basalt.

■ **Incense burner** (100 BCE-800 CE): Incense burners were produced between 1 and 100

CE, often containing coals and copal, both abundant in Mesoamerica.

■ **Anthropomorphic Mask** (100 BCE-800 CE): This stone mask depicts a conventionalised human-like face, a style associated with the city of Teotihuacan, linked to agriculture and fertility.

■ **Ceremonial mask** (600 BCE-1521 CE): Royal burial practices included such masks as part of elaborate offerings. This ceremonial mask from Calakmul, a recent discovery from the Maya civilisation, is being displayed publicly for the first time.

■ **Atlante from Chichen Itza** (600 BCE-1521 CE): The atlantes are anthropomorphic sculptures with raised arms, believed to support altars or the lintels of buildings, likely places of worship.

The Real Estate Regulatory Agency
Land Department
Government of Dubai

مؤسسة التنظيم العقاري
دائرة الأراضي والأبناء
مؤسسة التنظيم العقاري
حكومة دبي

Project Name Change Announcement

Dear clients,

If you have any claims on the developer (Marina Sky Villa Downtown) registered & approved under NO (1695) on the following project/s:

Sr	Project No.	Project Name(Old)	Project Name (new)	Location	Plot No.
1	2876	One Sankari	Regent Residences Dubai Sankari Place	Business Bay	3460666

We are (Marina Sky Villa Downtown) Registered and approved under number (1695) announce our name change Register in Dubai land (One Sankari) (2876) to (Regent Residences Dubai Sankari Place) after fulfilling all the requirements for a change.

UAE stock markets stand to benefit more from rate cuts

HIGH FINANCE COSTS HAVE DRAGGED DOWN PROFITS FOR MAJOR COMPANIES

DUBAI
BY MANOJ NAIR
Business Editor

UAE consumers and businesses have much to be pleased about from the Fed's 0.5 per cent interest rate cut on Wednesday. Investors in listed companies on DFM, ADX and other GCC stock markets also hope to cash in on the rate cut bounce.

Specifically, stock market investors will be looking at how the rate cuts show up on companies' finance costs, which increased significantly after the many rounds of rate increases.

In the UAE, the companies behind some of the blue-chip stocks on DFM and ADX had pointed to mounting finance costs as a major factor in their H1-2024 financials. Plus, these companies also had to start making provisions for corporate tax.



Afra Alnofeli/Gulf News

Leading stock markets have been pushing higher since Wednesday's Fed rate cut. ADX and DFM are seeing a similar trend as listed companies start benefitting from lower cost of operations.

Flexibility on cost side

Now, with the first rate cut happening, they will have some flexibility on the cost side. And that's a plus for their shareholders, eyeing better profits — and dividends — from the companies they have exposures in.

Investors on the DFM drove up the general index higher by 0.71 per cent (31.32 points up on September 19), while on ADX the gain were 0.82 per cent (68 points higher).

"For UAE's listed companies, higher finance costs and corporate tax have been the two macro forces that rippled through balance-sheets for the better part of this year," said Sameer Lakhani, Managing Director at Global Capital Partners. "Now, after the rate cut, lower borrowing costs will have some positive impact — provided the markets believe that inflation has been truly contained."

Other market watchers agree about the rate cuts being a positive for UAE listed companies. "You have the higher finance costs dragging down profitability for some major companies," said an analyst. "Now, the 9 per cent corporate tax is something they will have to live with — but if their cost of operations drop from a lower interest rate regime, that's a massive plus."

Higher dividends in store

What that means is the prospect for UAE companies to see better profitability and a chance for shareholders to get a share of higher dividends.

But Lakhani says investors could still do with some cau-

We believe investor sentiment in general is positive after the supersized cut by the Fed. Except for banks, we believe the news should be positive for the broader market."

Junaid Ansari | Director of Investment Strategy and Research at Kamco Invest

After the rate cut, lower borrowing costs will have some positive impact — provided the markets believe that inflation has been truly contained."

Sameer Lakhani | Managing Director at Global Capital Partners

tion, especially in managing expectations around more immediate rate cuts.

US corporate activity

"There has been some concern that the larger than expected 50 basis point cut suggests a slightly worse outlook for US corporate activity than previously thought. It is a factor that will both determine and affect Federal Reserve credibility in the months ahead."

The US stock markets closed on an upbeat mood on Friday, with the tech sector again driving a lot of investor inter-

est. When it comes to major Asian markets, the Nikkei and Hang Seng were up, while the Shanghai index was in the red.

As to which UAE and Gulf stocks and sectors could benefit, "We believe investor sentiment in general is positive after the supersized cut by the Fed," said Junaid Ansari, Director of Investment Strategy and Research at Kamco Invest.

"Except for banks, we believe the news should be positive for the broader market. And the reaction of markets in the Gulf was in line with most markets globally."



WHEN SHOULD UAE BUSINESSES START REFINANCING?

OK, the first rate cut of the new cycle has happened, itself a big positive for businesses on forecasting their short-term costs. For many businesses, this is also the time to start thinking of whether to refinance their existing loans or whether they are good as they are.

The likely scenario would be for CFOs to push for possible refinancing opportunities further down the road, when the US Fed can provide a clearer picture of what they plan to do on more rate cuts.

"Rates expected to drop to 4.4 per cent by the end of this year," said Bal Krishen, Chairman and CEO of Dubai-based Century Financial.

"While lower rates will ultimately help businesses to refinance their debt at cheaper rates, this process typically takes 6-12 months to see meaningful effects in the economy."

"A rough window for strategic refinancing might be within 12 to 18 months after rate cuts begin. However, this is not a strict rule, and businesses must assess their own capital needs and the broader market situation."

—M.N.

UAE retailers assure buybacks as iPhone 16 makes debut in stores

Major incentive for shoppers to buy now than wait for 'Apple Intelligence'

DUBAI
BY MANOJ NAIR
Business Editor

With sales of the iPhone 16 opening, retailers in the UAE are adding an extra layer of incentive for Apple's smartphone buyers through their assured buyback schemes.

Buying the 16 comes with the 'assurance of 70-75 per cent value when you upgrade to the next phone', said Rajat Asthana, Chief Operating Officer at Eros Group. "The assured buyback is new value-add retailers are offering, which can make quite a difference in deciding what and when to buy."

This is vital if the initial phase demand for the iPhone 16 has to go beyond Apple fans. Retailers have their eye on the vast pool of those potential buyers who had been holding back until they had a clear view of what the 16 can offer.

The range starts at Dh3,399 for a 128GB iPhone 16 to Dh6,799 for the 1TB Pro Max.

"We don't want a situation where many buyers want to wait until the 'Apple Intelligence' updates come for the iPhone 16 from next month," said a retailer. "The target is to get the iPhone 16 sales cracking from Day 1. "The buyback is essentially a guarantee that buyers' interests are taken care of from Day 1."

Focus on new models

In the resale market, older iPhone handset prices have typically held up well. So, in that regard, new and existing Apple users are more or less covered. What the assured buyback scheme sets up is for these buyers to go in for new models as and when they come out.

"In the last two years, there has been indications that smartphone users were taking longer to upgrade," said a tech analyst. "Apple did well to keep pricing consistent for the 16. Retailers will want to use that and their buyback offers to speed the sales process up."

Clear leader in UAE

Based on initial booking trends, the iPhone 16 Pro Max is the clear leader in the UAE. That's been the case ever since the 'Pro' series launched with the iPhone 11. There was earlier the 'Plus' range with the 2014 iPhone 6 series, which was the time Apple brought in a bigger screen.

BOOKINGS AND DAY 1 RESPONSE

Based on retailer and wholesaler feedback, iPhone sales in the initial hours are all going as per the script. "Most definitely, sales are going to be much bigger compared to the 15 due to the new features and better battery life specially in the higher tier models Pro and Pro Max," said Saleem Javed, CEO of Touchtel. "The initial reaction to the 16 has been overwhelming."

If anything, the 'Desert Titanium' version is a 'standout favourite'. "We have already sold out our pre-order stocks and, in fact, have been overbooked," said Chadha.

—M.N.

For the first time, we are offering iPhone 16 customers additional flexibility. They can enroll in the assured buyback programme and trade in their devices even after two or three years, with buyback values decreasing over time. This gives customers more control and the ability to upgrade when they are ready."

Vikas Chadha
| CEO of Jumbo Electronics

Dh **3,399**

cost of a 128GB iPhone 16. It goes all the way to Dh6,799 for the 1TB Pro Max

According to Vikas Chadha, CEO of Jumbo Electronics, "For the first time, we are offering iPhone 16 customers additional flexibility. They can enroll in the assured buyback programme and trade in their devices even after two or three years, with buyback values decreasing over time. This gives customers more control and the ability to upgrade when they are ready."

The Jumbo buyback extends to the new Apple Watch series too. Buyers have the option to receive up to 70 per cent of the iPhone value and up to 60 per cent for Apple Watches within 12 months.



Sales are on for the iPhone 16, and UAE retailers are going the extra mile with buyback schemes and more.

ON GULFNEWS.COM



Gold clears new highs in record-setting year

The gold price has crossed \$2,600 an ounce for the first time, another record in a year where the safe-haven asset has already surpassed multiple milestones. In the commodity markets, the yellow metal had put on over \$30 in trading on Friday, and had been on \$2,598-\$2,599 for an extended period before pushing through past \$2,600. —Manoj Nair, Business Editor

Gold finally clears \$2,600. Does this mean that a push all the way to \$3,000 is a strong possibility?



Gold prices clear \$2,600 an ounce, Dh294 per gram of 22-karat

VIRGINIA

Around Boeing Co.'s vast aircraft manufacturing hub in Seattle, the great belt tightening has begun as the planemaker and its factory workers settle in for a labour dispute that will test the resolve of both sides.

Striking employees received their final Boeing paycheck on Thursday, and the company stops paying for their health insurance on Sept. 30. Both measures will pinch household finances, typically ratcheting up the pressure and stakes for union negotiators in contract talks to reach an agreement.

But as workers stare down the embattled manufacturer for better pay and benefits, the 33,000 members of labour union 'International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 751' have the full benefit of a tight labour market and gig economy that provides a quick transition into jobs that help make ends meet. That gives the union bargaining leverage, potentially frustrating Boeing's effort to swiftly end a conflict that's costing it an estimated \$100 million each day.

While the battle between one of the world's largest exporters and its blue-collar workers may look like an uneven fight on its surface, Boeing finds itself in an increasingly untenable situation with its finances so dire that it can ill afford a drawn-out paralysis.

"I think everybody is ready for the long haul," said Christopher Dahl, 38, who has worked at Boeing for 10 years, now testing flight-control systems. "I've gone through every strike because my parents were Boeing employees, so I know the game. And before, there wasn't the options like we have to make money on the side."

Sustaining the strike

The delivery driver-fuelled gig economy wasn't around 16 years ago, when Boeing's largest union last walked off the job, shutting down its commercial airplane manufacturing for two months. Now, such companies, alongside a still-tight labour market, are providing possible options to sustain the strike.

Workers are once again digging in for a holdout after bucking their union leadership by voting overwhelmingly to reject a 25 per cent pay raise. On picket lines outside the Renton factory where Boeing builds 737 Max jets, employees said they've been saving for years to strike for as long as it takes — without pay, aside from \$250 weekly deposits from the IAM local.

Contract talks are at a stalemate, with no new sessions scheduled after two days of federal mediation. Updates from IAM District 751 earlier in the week showed union leaders drawing a hard line around 40

Boeing eyes long strike as talks stall; strikers take up side gigs

WORKERS AT SEATTLE MANUFACTURING HUB VOTE AGAINST 25% PAY RAISE



Workers with picket signs outside the Boeing Co. manufacturing facility during a strike in Everett, Washington, US, on Friday. Bloomberg



This isn't just a Boeing issue. Workers in this country have been left behind. There's a movement here. Workers have said enough is enough."

Brian Bryant | President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

per cent pay raises and reinstating pensions. "With a 96 per cent strike vote, we thought Boeing would finally understand that IAM 751 Machinists are demanding more," the union said in a scathing update posted after the initial day of talks on Sept. 17.

BOEING CEO: ENDING STRIKE 'A TOP PRIORITY'

Ending a strike involving more than 30,000 of Boeing's Seattle-area workers is "a top priority" for the aviation giant, chief executive Kelly Ortberg said in a message to staff Friday.



Kelly Ortberg

His note comes as the strike — which has shuttered assembly plants for the 737 MAX and 777 — enters its second week.

"Ending the strike is a top priority," said Ortberg.

"During mediation with the union this week, we continued our good faith efforts to engage the union's bargaining committee in meaningful negotiations," he added.

"We remain very committed to reaching an agreement as soon as possible that recognises the hard work of our employees and ends the work stoppage in the Pacific Northwest," Ortberg said.

But he noted the company was "disappointed the discussions didn't lead to more progress."

While both sides resumed talks tomorrow with the help of mediators, the IAM said late Wednesday that discussions ended without result.

—AFP

With Washington state's unemployment rate running at 4.9 per cent, it's easy to pick up temporary work in construction or driving for Amazon.com Inc. Across the street from the Boeing gate where union members were grilling hot dogs and waving at cars honking in support, Topgolf Callaway Brands Corp. prominently posted a sign saying "Now Hiring."

Boeing, meanwhile, is launching into a broad set of cost cuts to conserve cash. The austerity measures include unpaid leave

for tens of thousands of US workers, and a cutback in travel that requires senior executives to fly in economy cabin seats. The planemaker is even contemplating selling equity to supplement its rapidly dwindling cash and maintain its investment-grade credit rating.

The labour strife at Boeing is remarkable for themes that resonate across other US companies: lost pensions and frustration over stagnating wages that haven't kept pace with inflation, said Brian Bryant, international president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). "The entire labour movement is watching this closely," Bryant said in an interview. "This isn't just a Boeing issue. Workers in this country have been left behind. There's a movement here. Workers have said enough is enough."

The Biden Administration has been monitoring the strike as well, said Bryant, whose union represents almost 700,000 members across North America.

"They've reached out to see what the status is, what support they can give, anything they can do to get the parties back together," he added. — Bloomberg

SWEEPING CHANGES

Boeing defence chief exits as new CEO shakes up top ranks

VIRGINIA

Boeing Co. ousted the top executive for its defence and space division, in the first major shakeup by Kelly Ortberg since he took over as chief executive officer last month.

Ted Colbert, a 15-year veteran at Boeing, will leave the company with immediate effect and be succeeded on an interim basis by Steve Parker, the defence unit's chief operating officer, Ortberg said in a message to employees on Friday.

The new CEO is expected to make sweeping management changes as he works to turn around operations at the embattled aerospace and defence company. Ortberg said it's Boeing's priority "to restore the trust of our customers and meet the high standards they expect of us."

Once a steady financial performer, the defence division has amassed billions of dollars in cost overruns on fixed price contracts such as the KC-46 aerial tanker and replacements for the Air Force One jets that ferry the US president. Boeing was buffeted

by negative headlines for the Starliner space capsule after Nasa decided it was too risky to use it to bring two astronauts back from the International Space Station, leaving the pair in space until early next year, much longer than originally planned.



Earnings pain

The shake-up comes a week after Brian West, Boeing's chief financial officer, told an investor conference that the defence business would again drag on earnings in the third quarter, with results set to approach the \$1 billion operating loss it recorded the previous quarter.

Pentagon leaders have vented their frustration over the company's delays and performance shortfalls, Ortberg told employees last month, stressing that the company needs to start meeting its commitments.

— Bloomberg

Nike's new CEO spurs celebratory memes, high-fives and shakeup fears

Hill touted as 'right person to lead Nike's next stage of growth'

ORLANDO

Phil Knight and other parts of the Nike universe lauded the hiring of Elliott Hill as the sneaker giant's next chief executive officer, but good vibes alone won't be enough to fix a company in turmoil.

Hill, a Nike veteran, is coming out of retirement to replace CEO John Donahoe, who is retiring after Nike's robust growth disappeared. Mark Parker, Donahoe's predecessor and Nike executive chairman, called Hill the "right person to lead Nike's next stage of growth" and Knight, Nike's co-founder, said he's "exactly what's needed at this moment."

Nike has rarely experienced a

time like this. Over the past 20 years, the company distanced itself from competitors like Adidas. But in June, it said annual revenue would decline, leading to biggest stock drop in its history. Analysts attributed the struggles to the lack of hot new products, a pullback from retail partners and rising competition — all problems that Hill must remedy.

Major challenges

"Hill will face the challenge of adapting to significant changes in the market, including heightened competition," Randal Konik, an analyst at Jefferies, said in a note to clients, "and most critically, shifts in product innovation."

Investors are optimistic that Hill is the right person to lead Nike's revival efforts. Shares rose as much as 8.7 per cent in New York on Friday. The stock had fallen 25 per cent this year through



Bloomberg

■ Nike shares rose as much as 8.7% in New York on Friday. The stock had fallen 25% this year through Thursday's close.

Thursday's close. Hill will turn 61 before returning to Nike's headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon, on October 14. He'll live nearby in the Portland area.

Following the announcement on Thursday, some celebrations broke out on Nike's campus as staff high-fived and hugged each other, according to an em-



Elliott Hill (pictured), a Nike veteran, is coming out of retirement to replace CEO John Donahoe, who is retiring after Nike's robust growth disappeared.

ployee. A mocked-up meme of Hill's portrait as Barack Obama's "Hope" poster has been circulating around the Nike community, a former executive said.

Decades at Nike

Hill started at Nike as an intern in Memphis in 1988, rising to oversee the retail and e-commerce businesses across different regions in the 2000s. He also ran the global retail segment, launching Nike's franchised stores in China. In 2010, the executive took charge of Nike's North America operations, boosting sales in the region by 60 per cent over four years. Then he was promoted to president in a global role.

Company insiders expect a shakeup among senior leadership once Hill takes over. Other contenders for CEO were speculated to be Nike's two presidents: Heidi O'Neill and Craig Williams. Former Chief Operating Officer Eric Sprunk's name was also invoked, and many hoped Parker would retake his old job.

— Bloomberg



Worldly Wise

BY VERA MODENOVA
Special to Gulf News

Small is big for niche eCommerce firms

Since the launch of the UAE's first eCommerce platform, the souq, in 2005, marketplaces have shuffled the way people shop in the Middle East. They made it possible to fulfil all the needs in one place and with one click – from household products to fashion brands and furniture.

Yet, general or horizontal marketplaces like Amazon, Alibaba, or Noon overlooked something that customers urgently seek in e-shopping. Unlike all-encompassing platforms selling an array of products, niche or vertical marketplaces cater to a specific customer segment and product category. Airbnb, Etsy, Ounass or Namshi attract buyers who already know what they're looking for, leading to higher conversion rates and greater customer satisfaction from buying experience.

Purpose-built, niche marketplaces have the potential opportunity to capture market share from general eCommerce giants by offering customers an enhanced shopping experience tailored to specific consumer preferences and industries. In some cases, it's better to think small rather than big.

Managing expectations

Niche marketplaces tailor product features to those specific needs. For instance, a food marketplace prioritises information like ingredients, nutritional value, allergens, and calories, while a clothing platform emphasises factors like size, fabric, and virtual try-on options.

Although it's possible to combine various product categories on a single marketplace, creating a truly exceptional experience for each niche can be challenging. In our case, we've found that by focusing on a specific niche – gift-giving – we can better tailor offerings for buyers and sellers alike, taking into account the unique aspects of the blooms and gifts industry. This approach create a more efficient shopping experience in a niche that is driven by an emotional aspect and occasions throughout the year.

Tailored targeting

Niche marketplaces create a concentrated pool of sellers within a specific segment, fostering healthy competition and a wider variety of goods for customers. They let sellers avoid price wars and maintain their brand position within a niche. Effective communication of this internal segmentation through clear category labelling, filtering options, and product descriptions further benefits both sellers and buyers.

Loyal followers

Niche platforms often develop a strong community of like-minded individuals who are passionate about the products and services offered. This can lead to increased customer loyalty, repeat business, and positive word-of-mouth marketing. To support these goals we've created the sellers community – a space for local brands to network with fellow entrepreneurs, share insights and strategies, and grow together.

When a new market player emerges, they invest significantly in promoting their chosen product category. For instance, we faced a two-year journey to establish online flower ordering in the UAE. This has had a positive ripple effect. General marketplaces and other eCommerce players have taken notice, integrating similar offerings into their platforms.

By cultivating a niche marketplace, companies not only stimulate customer demand, but also foster supply – more sellers recognise the potential of entering this segment. This, in turn, contributes to broader economic growth. As more businesses are established and competition intensifies, we witness a positive impact on various fronts: More jobs, lower prices, enhanced service levels and innovative products and categories.

■ The writer is COO at Flowwow.

● Although it's possible to combine various product categories on a single marketplace, creating a truly exceptional experience for each niche can be challenging.



BRICS CAN CHANGE WORLD ORDER

UAE and Saudi Arabia's presence will enhance its influence in global economy



Expert View

BY MOHAMMED AL ASOOMI
Special to Gulf News

The BRICS summit scheduled for October in Kazan, Russia, will be held in a significantly altered context compared to previous editions. The bloc has been reinforced by the addition of five economically and geopolitically significant countries, including three Arab states, and thus expanding its membership to ten.

This follows Argentina's recent decision to withdraw its application after the recent elections held in that South American nation.

In addition to the new members, several others have applied for accession, and these are expected to be reviewed in future BRICS meetings. The activation of BRICS institutions, such as the BRICS Development Bank, which has already begun financing projects in member countries, will further amplify its growing influence.

The BRICS Development Bank is to emerge as a significant competitor to other global financial entities, potentially prompting changes to their operational conditions, which are often influenced by political considerations.

In its recent meeting in South Africa, the Bank approved a new financing mechanism that diverges from traditional approaches. This mechanism aims to address funding gaps that impede development efforts, support sustainable development, and enhance

The BRICS Development Bank has received mandates from countries outside the group, including Algeria, Bangladesh, and Uruguay, to join.

collaboration between public and private sectors. In addition to its current member states, the BRICS Development Bank has received mandates from countries outside the group, including Algeria, Bangladesh, and Uruguay, to join. This expansion will globalize the bank's operations and significantly enhance its financing capabilities.

The UAE's accession is particularly noteworthy due to its status as a major global trade and financial hub. Joining the BRICS Development Bank will bolster the group's position in global trade and finance.

Saudi Arabia's inclusion will also bring substantial weight to BRICS, thanks to its oil reserves and geopolitical influence, thereby strengthening the group's role in the global energy landscape. Egypt's presence will enhance the group's logistical and trade capabilities, while the accession of Iran and Ethiopia will contribute to the group's strategic and economic significance. The upcoming BRICS summit will be highly significant, positioning it on par with meetings of the G7 and other major organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

With the accession of new countries, the BRICS' contribution to global GDP, trade, and finance is set to increase significantly.

The BRICS Development Bank, headquartered in Shanghai, China – and the world's second-largest economy – will benefit from the economic significance of Russia, India, Brazil, and South Africa. This indicates that the world is on the brink of more significant changes, with the summit in its new composition set to shift power dynamics and introduce global development and financing organisations that will compete with existing ones.

Equal weight in new BRICS entities

While BRICS members are also part of current institutions, the newly created entities will differ in their structure, methods, and conditions. Unlike existing ones, which were established under different circumstances with fixed leadership requirements, the new BRICS institutions will offer equal opportunities for all member states.

This is expected to open new horizons for emerging and developing countries. They will benefit not only from the financing provided by the new bank but also from the technical expertise, technological capabilities, assistance, and facilities that BRICS countries can offer. Countries that begin to leverage these new opportunities will find many advantages to be had. As more countries join BRICS, the group's clout will grow, potentially establishing a new global centre. This shift will be influenced by technological progress and innovations, creating substantial opportunities for sustainable development.

Such opportunities can be maximized through increased pluralism and expansion in multilateral partnerships and cooperation.

■ The writer is a specialist in energy and Gulf economic affairs.

New-gen GCC communities thrive on live-work-play mantra

Urbanisation across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has relied heavily on car-based, spread cities and low-density developments comprised of villas, a small community centre and, possibly, a golf course if it was a higher-end project.

Today, this image is changing dramatically. The urban landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the rise of mixed-use communities. These developments are reshaping how people live, work, and interact with their surroundings. Here are some of the key drivers behind this trend.

Changing face of suburbia

The most obvious change in today's suburbs is the rise of medium-density develop-

ments. A new community today might include low-rise apartment buildings as well as villas, parks, neighbourhood malls and other amenities.

Financial considerations – the price and availability of land – are an obvious driver of the shift towards medium-density developments. So are changing demographics and a growing expectation for more sustainable lifestyles.

Mixed-use developments have spaces for essential services, jobs and recreational amenities just a few steps away. This reduces commuting time, encourages walking, cycling, and decreases traffic congestion.

This convenience is particularly appealing to younger people who prioritise lifestyle



Expert View

BY RAVI JAITLEY
Special to Gulf News

over ownership. A recent report shows that one-fifth of professionals across the GCC enjoy some form of remote or hybrid work arrangement in their companies. This demographic also values the emergence of co-working spaces and studios.

Sustainable lifestyle

These are residents who are also much more likely to demand a more sustainable lifestyle setting. Intelligently

designed buildings with solar panels, green roofs, and urban gardens atop buildings not only enhance energy efficiency but also create space for activities.

Take Athlon, for example. Dubai's first Active Living community integrates fitness and wellness into daily life, all within a sustainable design.

These trends are not unique to the UAE. We are seeing similar patterns in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar.

Riyadh is particularly interesting. It is developing medium-density, mixed-use communities to cater to its growing population and influx of expats.

Future-proofing

Using adaptable infrastructure, leveraging flexible use of spaces, and implementing innovative strategies with intelligent design, cities can unlock the full potential of suburban developments.

In the coming decade, we foresee the emergence of a new demographic – retirees – leading to demand for a greater abundance of health, medical and appropriate lifestyle facilities within easy reach.

The Dubai Quality of Life Strategy 2033, which is aligned

with the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan, is dedicated to fostering wellbeing through innovative projects. The city is also becoming a compelling choice for wealthy retirees in the aftermath of the waiver of minimum upfront investments for property purchases under the 10-year Golden Visa rule.

By planning for evolving needs, we can pave the way for a future where urban sustainability is integrated into the fabric of our cities. Our task is to be bold enough to challenge the norm, and willing to collaborate with all stakeholders in unique ways to create spaces for communities to thrive.

■ The writer is Project Director, Middle East, at AtkinsRéalis.



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CHINA REAFFIRMS ITS AFRICA COMMITMENT

DUBAI'S LEGACY OF TRADE IS OVER 3,000 YEARS OLD

Beijing's latest pledges demonstrate it remains engaged for a long haul as the largest provider of economic aid to Africa

Saruq Al Hadid was a beacon of innovation and international cooperation across the ages

BY SAJJAD ASHRAF | Special to Gulf News



BY HUSSAIN AL-AHMAD
Special to Gulf News



With much of the Western world consumed in military supplies to Ukraine and Israel, it was China again that stole the spotlight in economic engagement with one of the most deprived regions – Africa. Its latest, Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (Focac) which opened in the first week of September – the first in person meeting post Covid was attended by at least two dozen heads of state or government.

The event was seen as a barometer of China's state of relations with Africa.

The Focac is meant to demonstrate Beijing's growing global presence despite rising discomfort in the US over China's amassing clout especially among the 'global south.' This courtship is also a part of China's geopolitical competition with the US, which has intensified in the recent years.

This tri-annual forum therefore, remains the highlight of most African leaders' diplomatic engagements calendar for nearly quarter of century since its inaugural meeting in 2000, according to the Economist.

Leading into the Focac there was much scepticism over the volume of China's commitments. Much to the chagrin of detractors President Xi Jinping opened the forum with pledges of \$51 billion in financing for Africa for the next three years, which is substantially more than the last meeting held during Covid.

Xi also promised to exempt 33 least developed African states from import duties to "help turn China's big market into Africa's big opportunity". He pledged a billion yuan (approx \$140 million plus) in grants for military assistance. President Xi, striking a fraternal chord with Africa assured, "Our history will not go back to the old days of colonialism and cold war confrontation. Africa should not become a wrestling ground for major countries."

Economic partnership

Premier Li reaffirmed China's commitment to speed up negotiations and signing of framework agreements on economic partnership that would grant access to the Chinese market for African agricultural exports and "high-quality" goods.

The leaders released the 2025-2027 action plan pledging to "keep the global industrial and supply chains stable and smooth, oppose all forms of unilateralism, protectionism and maximum pressure, and oppose erecting walls and barriers, decoupling and supply disruption". The Chinese have got Africa on their side against everything America is doing now to stifle China's growth.

Analysts point out that China seems to be shifting emphasis away from funding large in-

frastructure projects and going for 'small and beautiful' projects. At the same time a closer study of the nature of Chinese assistance indicates that there is a diversification of the forms of the financial support. It is now more a mixture of grants, loans and investments both from the state and through the banks.

China's latest pledges demonstrate that China remains engaged for a long haul as the largest provider of economic aid to Africa. The continent too understands China's value as a partner in its growth after centuries of European exploitation.

South-South cooperation

Reciprocating to China's assistance and for further commitments, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, the president of Mauritania and chairman of the African Union, declared that China-Africa partnership is a leading model for South-South cooperation. The African continent he said was in dire need of China's assistance in establishing security and stability, promoting growth and strengthening its voice in international forums".

China strongly maintains its position as the largest trading partner of the continent. Surging demand for African minerals needed for tran-

sition to green energy the 2023 China-Africa trade volume reached record \$282 billion.

Over the years Beijing has cultivated an image of a partner with the developing countries – and much of it is Africa. China bills such gatherings as a "grand reunion of the China-Africa big family." China does not also carry any historic baggage of colonisation and its resultant excesses over the African continent.

The results of this filial outreach are evident in support China is able to draw in the international organisations and access to critical minerals necessary for renewable energy needs of the future. China's ability to sustain these tri-annual summits, attracting a significant portion of African leadership for over two decades, is a remarkable political accomplishment. The investments made now position China to reap benefits for generations to come.

With all its commitments to Africa and BRI, China hopes to send a message that Beijing offers a more robust alternative and has ample support outside the exclusive western dominated world.

■ Sajjad Ashraf was a member of Pakistan Foreign Service from 1973 to 2008 and served as an ambassador to several countries.

In the heart of the Dubai desert near Al Ain Mountains, lies a historical site that rewrites the narrative of the region's ancient industrial and commercial activities. The Saruq Al Hadid site, discovered by His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, during a helicopter flight across the desert, reveals an extraordinary story of industry, business, and export flourishing in Dubai 3500 years ago.

This archaeological site provides a glimpse into Dubai's rich Bronze Age history. Saruq Al Hadid, was a centre for bronze production. Its workshops and foundries created finely crafted artefacts, many of which have been found with intricate hieroglyphics and Sumerian stamps. These discoveries provide evidence that the goods were exported as far as Egypt and Mesopotamia, highlighting the site as a hub of international trade during the Bronze Age.

The artefacts unearthed at Saruq Al Hadid demonstrate that sophisticated industry existed in Dubai long before the rise of the modern city. Skilled people worked with bronze to create tools, weapons, and decorative items, suggesting the presence of organised manufacturing processes.

The discovery of seals from Egypt and Mesopotamia indicates that trade routes between Dubai and these ancient civilisations were well-established. Businessmen and traders must have navigated the harsh desert environment, using camels and ships to transport Dubai's bronze artefacts to distant lands. This early export business is a testament to Dubai's long-standing role as a global trading hub, a reputation it continues to hold today.

Centre of multicultural interaction

To conduct trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia, the people of Dubai would have needed to communicate across cultures and languages. The existence of hieroglyphics and Sumerian seals suggests that the traders of Dubai were well-versed in different languages, facilitating commercial exchanges and helping Dubai thrive as a centre of multicultural interaction.

Much like the Jebel Ali Free Zone of today, Saruq Al Hadid served as a Bronze Age industrial and export hub. Its industrialists produced goods that catered not only to the needs of the local population but also to the distant civilisations of the Egyptian Pharaohs and Mesopotamian civilisations. The economic activities at this site reflect the foundations of modern-day Dubai's focus on industry and global trade.

The legacy of Saruq Al Hadid highlights Dubai's deep-rooted history in industry, trade, and cultural exchange, proving that the city's role as a global business centre stretches back millennia. Just as Jebel Ali thrives today as a modern industrial zone, Saruq Al Hadid was a beacon of innovation and international cooperation in the Bronze Age.

■ Professor Hussain Al-Ahmad is the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Dubai.

Letters to the Editor

Combat plastic pollution

Plastic pollution poses a significant threat to the future of our planet ("From pollution to extinction: How plastic could erase earth's future", *Gulf News*, September 19). One of the most pressing issues related to plastic pollution is its detrimental effect on marine life. From entanglement in plastic debris to ingestion of microplastics, marine creatures are suffering as a result of our plastic consumption.

Addressing the plastic pollution crisis requires a multi-faceted approach encompassing reducing plastic production, improving waste management systems, and promoting sustainable alternatives. Urgent and concerted efforts are needed.

■ FROM SAMEER MUHAMMED
UAE

Indian hockey's rise

The Indian hockey team put on a flawless performance during the recent Asian Cham-

ionship. They managed to beat China, who had more penetration. Indian hockey was dominant since the 1928 Olympics, thanks to Major Dhyana Chand,

who led the team to eight gold medals until the 1960 Olympics. After that, the performance declined, with only two bronze and one gold in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, which was the last gold won by an Indian team.

However, in the past 10 years, the Indian team has been on the rise. Unfortunately, they could not go beyond the bronze medal in the 2020 and 2024 Olympics. India has struggled in the Hockey World Cup, winning the title only in 1975 and facing challenges in qualifying.

It's crucial for central and state governments to take significant steps to promote hockey from the school level to the college level, and select the best 25 to 30 players to represent our nation internationally. India should learn from China's progress over the past 10 years.

■ FROM N. MAHADEVAN
India

Working long hours

As the demands of the workplace increase, many employees find themselves working long hours ("Always on, always stressed: Why urgency culture is burning us out", *Gulf News*, May 13). While hard work and dedication are important, it's essential to recognise the negative impact overwork can have on an individual's physical and mental well-being.

Overwork can lead to a variety of health issues, including chronic stress, fatigue, and burnout. When employees consistently work long hours and take on excessive responsibilities, they may experience high levels of stress, which can contribute to a range of health problems such as anxiety, depression, and high blood pressure.

Encouraging employees to take regular breaks, use their

vacation time, and avoid working excessively long hours can help promote better health and well-being in the workplace. Additionally, providing resources for stress management, promoting a supportive work environment, and fostering open communication can also contribute to maintaining a healthy workplace culture.

Prioritising health and well-being can lead to increased productivity, higher job satisfaction, and overall improved quality of life for employees.

■ FROM NEETHU DAS
India

■ Editor's note: Is there a news report that you feel strongly about? Something that has to be addressed in the community and requires resolution? Email us on readers@gulfnews.com. You can also post a comment on our Facebook page or tweet to us @GNReaders

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Pollution to extinction: How plastic could erase earth's future



Kashmir votes: Wildcard candidate and a region's uncertain future



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Gaza City rescuers say Israeli strike on school shelter kills 7

MILITARY CLAIMS IT WAS TARGETING MILITANTS HOLED UP IN THE SCHOOL

GAZA STRIP

Civil defence rescuers in Gaza City said an Israeli strike yesterday on a school-turned-shelter killed at least seven people, with the Israeli military saying it had targeted Hamas militants.

The vast majority of the besieged Gaza Strip's 2.4 million people have been displaced at least once by the war, sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, with many seeking shelter in school buildings.

Civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal reported "seven martyrs and a number of wounded, including serious cases, as a result of Israeli shelling of Kafr Qasim School" in the Al Shati refugee camp.

He said hundreds of Gazans were sheltering there.

'Precise munitions'

The Israeli military said it was targeting Palestinian militants operating from the school, and that its forces had taken steps "to mitigate the risk of harm to uninvolved civilians" including by using "precise munitions" and surveillance.

It said the air force had "conducted a precise strike on Hamas terrorists in the northern Gaza Strip" who were "operating from a compound" at the school complex.

The military statement did not provide any information on the casualties.

Sunday's attack was the latest in a series of Israeli strikes on school buildings housing displaced people in Gaza, where fighting has raged on for nearly a year.

21 killed in Saturday's attack

On Saturday, the civil defence agency said an Israeli strike on another school-turned-shelter, also in Gaza City, had killed 21 people. The military said it was targeting militants.

A strike on the United Nations-run Al Jawni School in central Gaza on September 11 drew international outcry after the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said six of its staffers were among the 18 reported fatalities.

The Israeli military accuses Hamas of hiding in school buildings where thousands of Gazans have sought shelter — a charge denied by the Palestinian militant group.

At least 41,391 Palestinians, a majority of them civilians, have been killed in Israel's military



■ Palestinians inspect the damage at the site of an Israeli strike on a school housing displaced Palestinians in Gaza City's Zaytoun neighbourhood on Saturday.

ISRAELIS FEAR A WIDER, REGIONAL WAR

Almost a year after Hamas attacked southern Israel, triggering a punishing war in Gaza and upending regional geopolitics, concerns are growing that Palestinian fighters could stage a similar incursion from the West Bank and provoke an even broader conflict.

"That's a constant worry," Shimon Zaraf, 50, a landscaper who doubles as an armed guard in the Israeli farming collective of Nitzanei Oz north of Tel Aviv, said as he surveyed the fenced-off scrubland between his village and the West Bank town of Tulkarm 400 metres away. "If someone manages to infiltrate, the psychological effect on our sense of safety will be intolerable."

The heightened tensions in the West Bank are due to a confluence of factors: The Palestinian Authority is cash-strapped and struggling to assert its authority; militants are smuggling increasing numbers of weapons into the territory, according to Israeli officials; and the Israeli military, shamed by its failure to prevent the October 7 raid, has stepped up raids to deter further attacks.

Meanwhile, the risk of an all-out war between Israel and Lebanon-based Hezbollah has also sharply escalated this month. The Iran-backed group accused Israel of causing thousands of pagers and walkie-talkies to explode in Lebanon, attacks that killed more than 30 people and wounded over 3,000, an allegation Israel didn't confirm or deny.

Those events were followed by an Israeli air strike on Beirut that killed several senior Hezbollah commanders. Hezbollah has been firing barrages of missiles into Israel, which has broadened aerial bombardments of southern Lebanon.

— AFP

41,391

Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military campaign in Gaza

campaign in Gaza since the war began, according to data provided by the health ministry. The United Nations has acknowledged these figures as reliable.

The October 7 attack that triggered it resulted in the deaths of 1,205 people on the Israeli side, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures, which includes hostages killed in captivity.

Out of 251 people taken hostage that day, 97 are still being held inside the Gaza Strip, including 33 who, the Israeli military says, are dead. — AFP

Israel says it 'landed blows' on Hezbollah as violence intensifies

Months of near-daily exchanges have killed hundreds in Lebanon

HAIFA

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that Israel has dealt serious blows to Lebanese group Hezbollah, as rapidly escalating exchanges raised fears of an all-out war.

Netanyahu's remarks follow a night of intense rocket fire at northern Israel that had sent hundreds of thousands of people to bomb shelters, according to the military, and caused damage in the area of Haifa, a major city.

"No country can tolerate attacks on its citizens", Netanyahu said in a statement nearly a year into the Gaza war, which was sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel and has drawn in Iran-backed groups across the region, including Hezbollah.

'It will get the message'

In his first detailed remarks since a Friday air strike on Beirut that killed Hezbollah commanders, and deadly blasts of communication devices across Lebanon earlier in the week, the prime minister said: "In recent days, we have landed a series of blows on Hezbollah that it could have never imagined."

He did not directly mention the specific incidents.

"I assure you it will get the message", added Netanyahu, vowing to restore safety to the country's north and allow displaced residents to return to the border area.

The overnight rocket fire reached Kiryat Bialik on the edge of north Israel's biggest

● The overnight rocket fire reached Kiryat Bialik on the edge of north Israel's biggest city Haifa, leaving a building in flames, another pockmarked with shrapnel, and vehicles incinerated.

city Haifa, leaving a building in flames, another pockmarked with shrapnel, and vehicles incinerated.

"This is not pleasant. This is war," said Sharon Hacmishvili, a resident of the area.

Israel has signalled its intention to turn its focus to Iran-backed Hezbollah after nearly a year of cross-border fire.

'On the brink'

An Israeli air strike on Friday killed the head of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, Ibrahim Aqil, in a densely-populated Hezbollah stronghold in south Beirut, an attack that the Lebanese health ministry left 45 dead.

The Radwan Force has spearheaded Hezbollah's ground operations, and Israel has repeatedly called for its fighters to be pushed back from the border.

"With the region on the brink of an imminent catastrophe, it cannot be overstated enough: there is NO military solution that will make either side safer," United Nations special coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert said on social media platform X.

The Israeli army said more than 150 rockets, missiles and drones had been fired at its territory during the night and early Sunday morning, most from Lebanon. — AFP

45-DAY CLOSURE

Israel raids Al Jazeera's West Bank office

RAMALLAH

Global news channel Al Jazeera said armed and masked Israeli forces raided its office in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank yesterday and issued a 45-day closure order.

It was the latest salvo in a long-running feud between the broadcaster and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

Since the war began on October 7, Al Jazeera has aired continuous on-the-ground reporting on the effects of Israel's campaign.

The Israeli military has repeatedly accused journalists from the network of links to Hamas or its ally, Islamic Jihad.

Al Jazeera has fiercely denied Israel's accusations and said Israel systematically targets its employees in the Gaza Strip.

Four Al Jazeera journalists have been killed since the war in Gaza began, and the network's office in Gaza was bombed. — AFP



Bloomberg

■ Locals inspect damage to property following missile strikes from Lebanon, in northern Israel, yesterday.

Omani poet Zahir Al Ghafri dies

Al Ghafri is famous for developing Arabic free verse poem

MUSCAT

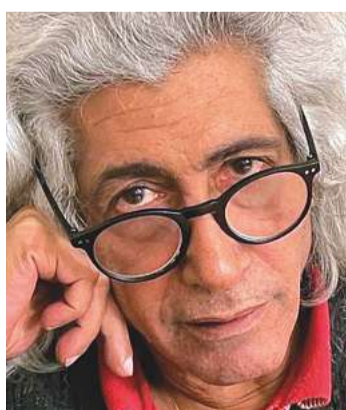
BY FAHAD AL MUKRASHI
Special to Gulf News

Well-known Omani poet Zahir Al Ghafri has died at the age of 68 in Sweden after a prolonged illness.

Al Ghafri was regarded as one of the most influential figures in the Sultanate of Oman's literary scene, particularly in shaping modern Omani poetry.

Al Ghafri passed away in a hospital in Malmo, Sweden, on Saturday after a long fight with liver cirrhosis.

Al Ghafri, who was born in 1956, spent his childhood in



■ Zahir Al Ghafri

Surur village in the wilayat of Samayil, northern Oman.

Despite his immersion in global modernity and interaction with great poets and thinkers from different cul-

tures, Al Ghafri did not lose connection to his Omani roots. His upbringing in the village of Surur and Nafa villages of Samayil were reflected in his poems and was a constant source of inspiration for him.

Al Ghafri is famous for developing the Arabic free verse poem, inspired by his rich experiences in life and travel, influenced by great poets such as Badr Shakir Al Sayyab and Mahmoud Al Buraikan during his stay in Iraq in the 1960s and 70s.

His body of work, including collections such as *White Hooves* (1982), *Silence Comes to Confess* (1991), *Flowers in a Well* (2000), *In Every Land a Well Dreams of a Garden* (2018), *The Bedroom* (2020), and *Makers of the Heights*, left a lasting impact on Arabic literature.



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MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO

British PM Starmer rules out austerity at Labour conference

PM will have to strike a balance between celebration and 'difficult decisions'

LIVERPOOL

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised to protect public services and ruled out austerity measures as Labour's annual conference kicked off yesterday, its first in 15 years as a government party.

The four-day gathering in Liverpool comes three months after Labour secured a runaway general election victory over the Conservatives.

Under pressure, Starmer will have to strike a balance between celebrating Labour's long-awaited victory, defending his record, and not letting up on reminders of "difficult decisions" to come.

"If you look at the list of what we have already done in 11 weeks, then I would argue strongly that we've done far more than the last government probably did in the last 11 years," Starmer told the *Observer* newspaper yesterday.

Starmer told the *Sunday Mirror* that while he had given the public a "raw and honest assessment" of the state of the country, he wanted to make clear the benefits voters could expect: "The hope, the changed Britain."

No tax rises

He also clarified that despite tempering expectations ahead of the budget due in October, the government would not go "down the road of austerity".

Promising to protect public services, Starmer told the *Observer* he would "make sure that our public services are functioning properly",

"If you look at the list of what we have already done in 11 weeks, then I would argue strongly that we've done far more than the last government probably did in the last 11 years."

Keir Starmer
| British Prime Minister

and vowed to shield working people from tax rises. "People have had a lot of tax rises and there's not much more room for tax rises," Starmer added.

Echoing his mantra of doing the "tough things first", he said "in years to come, people will look back and say: 'That Labour government in 2024 really got to grips with it.'"

Drop in approval rating

However, an *Opinion* poll for the *Observer* ahead of the conference showed that Starmer's approval rating had suffered a huge drop since July, with only 24 per cent approving of the job he was doing.

The conference comes after a week dominated by negative headlines over Starmer receiving more than £100,000 (\$132,000) in declared gifts and hospitality since December 2019 — the most of any MP.

While the gifts were declared and did not breach rules, the row broke as his government was pushing Britons to accept short-term "pain for long-term good" to help fill the £22-billion "black hole" in public finances that he says the Tories left behind.

The Conservatives will meet next week amid divisive battles for leadership and the direction of the party. — AFP



Sri Lanka's president-elect, Anura Kumara Dissanayaka, gestures upon his arrival at the Election Commission office in Colombo yesterday. AFP

Dissanayaka: Ready to rewrite Lankan history

55-YEAR-OLD MARXIST EMERGES PRESIDENT-ELECT IN POLL

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Marxist president-elect invited his compatriots yesterday to help him "rewrite" history in the cash-strapped island nation after winning a vote coloured by discontent over an unprecedented financial crisis.

Anura Kumara Dissanayaka, the 55-year-old leader of the People's Liberation Front, was declared the winner of the weekend's poll with nearly 1.3 million more votes than his nearest rival.

'Victory belongs to all'

The once-fringe leader, whose party won less than four per cent of the vote in parliamentary elections four years ago, saw a surge of support as the economic meltdown brought widespread hardships. "The dream we have nurtured for centuries is finally coming true," he said in a statement. "This victory belongs to all of us," he added. "Millions of eyes filled with hope and expectation push us forward, and together, we stand ready to rewrite Sri Lankan history."

Outgoing President Ranil Wickremesinghe — who took office at the peak of the 2022 economic collapse and imposed tough austerity policies per the terms of an IMF bailout — was a distant third in the contest with 17 per cent of the vote.

"History will judge my efforts, but I can confidently say that I did my best to stabilise the country during one of its darkest periods," Wickremesinghe said.

He congratulated Dissanayaka



Members of the People's Liberation Front party watch the presidential election results on a screen in Colombo yesterday. AFP

aka on the win and said he was "confident" the politician would "steer Sri Lanka on a path of continued growth and stability."

Dissanayaka will be sworn in this morning at the President Secretariat in Colombo, election commission officials said.

IMF deal

Economic issues dominated the eight-week campaign, with widespread public anger over the belt-tightening measures imposed by Wickremesinghe.

Dissanayaka would "not tear up" the IMF deal, but would seek to modify it, a party politburo member told AFP.

Bimal Ratnayake said Dissanayaka had pledged to reduce income taxes that were doubled by Wickremesinghe and slash sales taxes on food and medicines.

"We think we can get those reductions into the programme and continue with the four-year

bailout programme," he said.

Dissanayaka's once-marginal Marxist party led two failed uprisings in the 1970s and 1980s that left more than 80,000 people dead.

But Sri Lanka's crisis has proven an opportunity for Dissanayaka, who has seen a surge of support based on his pledge to change the island's "corrupt" political culture.

Reassurance for India

Around 76 per cent of Sri Lanka's 17.1 million voters exercised their franchise on Saturday.

Dissanayaka's party sought to reassure India that any administration he led would not be caught up in geopolitical rivalry between its northern neighbour and China, the country's largest lender.

"Sri Lankan territory will not be used against any other nation," Ratnayake said. — AFP

Four killed, dozens hurt in Alabama shooting

WASHINGTON

A mass shooting involving several assailants has left at least four people dead and dozens wounded in Alabama, police said on Saturday.

"We believe that multiple shooters fired multiple shots on a group of people" in the Five Points South district of Birmingham just after 11pm, police officer Truman Fitzgerald told media.

Officers found two adult males and one adult female who was unresponsive on the sidewalk, suffering from a gunshot wound, Fitzgerald said. All three were pronounced dead at the scene.

A fourth victim died at a local hospital, he added.

Dozens of people were wounded in the shooting with at least four sustaining life-threatening injuries, Fitzgerald said.

Police have not got anyone in custody, Fitzgerald said, urging the public to provide any information that could help the probe. — AFP

New French govt faces no-trust vote threat

PARIS

French Prime Minister Michel Barnier's hard-won new government faced pressure from day one yesterday as threats of a no-confidence motion in parliament multiplied.

The long wait for a functioning government, after President Emmanuel Macron called a snap general election, ended after 11 weeks late Saturday with his appointment of a cabinet marking a clear shift to the right.

Opposition politicians from the left have already said they will challenge Barnier's government with a no-confidence motion as early as next month, with far-right politicians also slamming its composition.

In the July election, a left-wing alliance called the New Popular Front (NFP) won the most parliamentary seats of any political bloc, but not enough for an overall majority. — AFP



Labour Party's top leaders — Rachel Reeves, Keir Starmer and Angela Rayner — at a party conference in Liverpool, UK. Bloomberg

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ON GULFNEWS.COM

Hundreds held in child abuse probe

Malaysian police said they have arrested hundreds of suspects as part of an investigation into child abuse at care homes run by a conglomerate. Police said they had arrested 355 people, including religious studies teachers and caregivers, and rescued more than 400 children. — AFP

Police arrest 355, including teachers and caregivers, and rescue more than 400 children from a care home, run by a conglomerate



LONDON

John Stones' 98th-minute equaliser salvaged a 2-2 draw for Manchester City against 10-man Arsenal in a bad-tempered clash between the two favourites for the Premier League title yesterday.

Arsenal played the entire second half a man down after Leandro Trossard was sent off but were seconds away from inflicting City's first home defeat since November 2022.

A draw is enough for City to retake top spot, two points clear of Arsenal in fourth. Erling Haaland's 100th City goal had given Pep Guardiola's men the perfect start.

Arsenal turned the game around thanks to Riccardo Calafiori's wonder strike and another set-piece header from Gabriel Magalhaes. The Gunners lost Trossard for a second booking just before half-time.

However, Mikel Arteta's men produced a stunning rearguard action to hold out until the final seconds when Stones bundled in after Arsenal failed to clear a corner. The powder keg for an explosive encounter was lit within the first few seconds when Kai Havertz charged into Rodri to leave the Spaniard needing treatment.

Guardiola said City had been handed an advantage by having an extra day's rest and not travelling for their Champions League draw with Inter Milan on Wednesday.

Arsenal, by contrast, were in Italy on Thursday for their 0-0 stalemate against Atalanta.

City burst out of the traps to try and make their fresher legs count and got an early reward.

Unstoppable form

Haaland had not even managed a single shot on target in the two league meetings between the sides last season as Arsenal kept two clean sheets against the champions.

But the Norwegian is in unstoppable form and took just nine minutes to score his 10th goal of the season and bring up his century in 105 games for City.

Savinho's through ball split the Arsenal defence and Haaland coolly prodded past the onrushing David Raya.

Ilkay Gundogan then curled a free-kick off the post.

But City's momentum was interrupted when Rodri was forced off in some distress with a knee injury. Just seconds after he was replaced by Mateo Kovacic, Arsenal levelled in stunning fashion.

Calafiori was picked out by Gabriel Martinelli at the edge of the box and the Italian defender curled a brilliant effort beyond Ederson for his first Gunners goal. Gabriel scored the winner in Arsenal's 1-0 win at Tottenham in the north London derby last weekend.

And City were also unable to cope with the Brazilian's power at set-pieces. Guardiola's men got away with a warning when Gabriel headed over his first

Stones comes to City's rescue against Arsenal

LATE GOAL EARNS TABLE TOPPERS A 2-2 DRAW AS SOSA ALSO RESCUES POINT FOR FOREST AGAINST BRIGHTON



Man City defender John Stones celebrates scoring during the Premier League match against Arsenal yesterday.

RESULTS

Yesterday's matches			
Brighton	2	Nottm Forest	2
Man City	2	Arsenal	2

13 points
Man City have to top Premier League table



Nottingham Forest's defender Ramon Sosa (left) celebrates with teammates after scoring the equaliser against Brighton.

big opportunity from a Bukayo Saka corner.

The Arsenal centre-back was not so forgiving with his second chance as he shrugged off Kyle Walker to nod in another inviting delivery from Saka.

Yet there was another huge momentum swing just before half-time when Trossard saw red. The Belgian was shown a second yellow for kicking the ball away after committing a foul.

Arsenal dropped two points in a 1-1 draw with Brighton after Declan Rice did likewise just three weeks ago and they suffered a similar fate in heart-breaking fashion.

Arteta responded by introducing an extra defender in Ben White for Saka as the visitors set up camp in their own box to repel wave upon wave of City attack. Raya was called upon to save a powerful downward header by

Haaland. But Arsenal largely restricted City to potshots from distance by their centre-backs as Raya denied twice denied Josko Gvardiol.

It was another City defender who finally got what could be a defining goal in the title race come May. Stones swept home the loose ball from Jack Grealish's cross to extend City's near two-year invincible streak on home soil.

Sosa strikes late

Nottingham Forest substitute Ramon Sosa scored his first Premier League goal to earn his side a 2-2 draw at Brighton as both managers were sent off.

The result means both sides remain unbeaten five games into the new season, with seventh-placed Brighton one place above Forest in the table.

Paraguay forward Sosa, who

joined Forest last month, capitalised on a defensive lapse from the Seagulls with 20 minutes remaining at the Amex Stadium.

Quick-fire goals from Jack Hinshelwood and Danny Welbeck at the end of the first half turned the contest in Albion's favour following an early penalty from Chris Wood.

Nottingham Forest assistant boss Rui Pedro Silva, speaking to Sky Sports about the red cards said: "I think in the moment we finished the game very emotional. In the moment fighting for the game to remain unbeaten."

Brighton coach Andrew Crofts said: "We are bitterly disappointed not to get three points. We created enough chances to win the game. We're frustrated and maybe tempers were frayed."

— AFP

Whatever I'm today is because of the game, Ashwin says

India register a huge 280-run win over Bangladesh in first Test at Chennai

CHENNAI

Indian all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin said yesterday he wanted to keep playing well beyond his 38 years, even as younger teammates scale back their own cricket careers.

Ashwin claimed six wickets and scored 113 with the bat in his hometown of Chennai as India humbled Bangladesh by 280 runs inside four days of the opening Test.

It was his 37th five-wicket haul to go equal with late Australian spin king Shane Warne, behind only Sri Lankan quick Muttiah Muralitharan's 67.

Ashwin spoke about the challenges of playing and performing at his age. "It's not the same like when you are 25, 26, 30 or even 35. Thirty-eight is different," he told reporters.

"Every bit of work that you put, you have to put doubly hard to earn the right to be there," he added. "I want to play as long as I can. Whatever I am today is because of the game and what it has given me. I am deeply indebted to that."

Ashwin said his age had compelled him to reduce his strength-training regime and find other ways to keep in shape. "I work differently on my mobility and other aspects of life," he said. "Do a bit of yoga. It's good."

Spin combo

India skipper Rohit Sharma, 35, and star batsman Virat Kohli are scaling back their careers despite being younger than Ashwin. Both announced their Twenty20 retirement after winning the World Cup.

Ashwin has claimed 522 wickets in 101 Tests.

He and fellow bowler Ravindra Jadeja — known as India's

BRIEF SCORES

India: 376 and 287/4 d (Shubman Gill 119 not out, Rishabh Pant 109, Nahid Rana 1/21) beat Bangladesh: 149 & 234 all out (Najmul Hossain Shanto 82, Zakir Hasan 32, Ravichandran Ashwin 6/88) by 280 runs.

spin twins — shared nine wickets between them to bundle out Bangladesh for 234 in the tourists' chase of 515.

The two also shared a 199-run seventh-wicket stand to pull India out of trouble from 144-6 to 376 in the first innings.

Ashwin said the left-handed Jadeja, 35, was an inspiration to him. "He is a rocket on the field. So I envy him. I am jealous of him but totally admire him," said Ashwin.

"I am comfortable in my skin but totally inspired by what he has done."

Ashwin entered the 500-wicket club in the 4-1 Test win over England this year and also reached the milestone of 100 Tests.

Jadeja is one away from 300 Test wickets in 73 matches.

"It was a great result looking at what lies ahead," Rohit Sharma said. "He's [Ashwin] always there for us over the years." Rohit said of the 38-year-old warhorse, who was named man of the match.

"I don't know if I speak here (that) it'll be enough to cover what he does for the team. He looks like he's never out of the game."

Shubman Gill and the left-handed Rishabh Pant, who was playing his first Test since a serious car crash in December 2022, put on 167 runs for the fourth wicket.

"I just enjoyed batting and got a little bit emotional," Pant said of his celebration after his sixth Test ton.

"But at the end of the day, being in the field gives me more pleasure than anything else."

— AFP



India's Ravichandran Ashwin celebrates with teammates after claiming a Bangladesh wicket in Chennai yesterday.

India win historic double gold in Chess Olympiad

India's previous best performances include two bronze

BUDAPEST

India displayed a stupendous performance at the ongoing International Chess Federation (Fide) Chess Olympiad in Budapest to claim two gold medals in both men's and women's events yesterday.

In the final round of the tournament, India's men team of D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi and Pentala Harikrishna prevailed over Slovenia to clinch

the gold medal. It was the wins from D Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi which gave India to a 2-0 lead and confirmed the gold medal. Later in the final round, Praggnanandhaa also won his game and Vidit ended his bout with a draw. India defeated Slovenia 3.5-0.5 to seal the gold medal.

Meanwhile, the Indian women's chess team of Harika Dronavalli, R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agarwal, and Tania Sachdev also won gold after beating Azerbaijan 3.5-0.5.

India's previous best performances in the Chess Olympiad include two bronze medals in 2014 and 2022. — ANI

Norris hails 'mega' McLaren after Singapore win

Englishman closes in on championship race with Verstappen

SINGAPORE

Lando Norris hailed his "mega" McLaren after a dominant victory at the Singapore Grand Prix yesterday closed the Formula One championship gap on Max Verstappen, who came a distant second.

It was the McLaren driver's third career GP win and his first from pole position as he finished almost 21 seconds clear of his rival's Red Bull.

Norris admitted to a couple of scary brushes with the walls on the notoriously tight Marina Bay



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates winning the Singapore Grand Prix night race yesterday.

Street Circuit as his tyres faded in the closing laps. "It was an amazing race," said Norris.

"A few too many close calls, I

had a couple of close moments. You have a little bit less grip, a little bit less downforce," added the Englishman. "Tyres are go-

ing away a little bit. It just caught me out. So it wasn't like a lack of concentration or anything. It was just a bit of a surprise to me."

But Norris avoided any damage and reduced the deficit to 52 points with Verstappen with six races and three sprints to go. "I think the car was all good and the car has been mega all weekend. So a big thanks to the team," he added.

Teammate Oscar Piastri was third to extend McLaren's lead over Red Bull in the constructors' championship to 41 points.

It was a uniquely incident-free 62 laps around the Marina Bay Street Circuit under lights, the first in its 15-race history not to see a safety car deployed.

— AFP

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Monday, September 23, 2024

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Required

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Required Crane Operator with valid UAE license for a Company in Sharjah. All candidates may submit their CV to escolprecast@gmail.com
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NOTICE OF CHANGE OF NAME OF A FREE ZONE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

To whom it may concern
We, Scale Technologies FZ-LLC, a Free Zone Limited Liability Company, License No. 105092, incorporated under the Dubai Development Authority Private Companies Regulations 2016, and its amendments (the "Private Companies Regulations") hereby give notice that under the terms of Article 17 of the Private Companies Regulations, we intend to change our name to:

NABUTO FZ-LLC
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Dubai Development Authority, P.O. Box 478844, Dubai, UAE | Email: info@dda.gov.ae
Scale Technologies FZ-LLC
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NOTICE

We, "PHOENIX DATA CENTERS FZCO" incorporated in Dubai under the jurisdictions of Dubai World Trade Center Authority with License no. L-1516 duly announce the Name Change from PHOENIX DATA CENTERS FZCO to Atria Solutions Arabia FZCO of our Company. If you have any objection to this or any financial claims or rights, you may reach out to the Company representative within 14 days of the publication.

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Email: muhammadali@b4bconsultancy.com
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LIQUIDATION NOTICE

LYON Consulting Services FZE, with registered office at Hot Desk SRT-FLR05-05.01-HD #16 - Sheikh Rashid Tower - Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) and holding Professional License number L-698, hereby gives notice to Dubai World Trade Center Authority (DWTC) that LYON Consulting Services FZE shall be deregistered on 10th September 2024. Any queries, claims or objections regarding the proposed deregistration and closure are requested to be forwarded to Mr. Jerome Lucien Joseph Carle, Manager, by telephone at +971569768329 and in writing to: jeromecarle@hotmail.com, within twenty-one (21) days from the date of publication of this notice.
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NOTICE

M/s. **Hongou Electronics**, License No.99351 locate at Building 20, Unite R02 & R03, Ground floor, Dubai Internet City, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, P.O.Box 371680, Dubai, UAE, licensed with the Dubai Development Authority wishes to announce its decision taken via board resolution passed at its Board meeting held regarding closing down and dissolution of "M/s. Hongou Electronics".
Accordingly, and interested party who has a claim against the Company is hereby requested to submit its outstanding claims within 45 days of notice by registered post or contact:
Mr. Xuefei Xu
Mobile No: 050-9868032
Email Address: Hongou@chcelectronics.ae
Claims received after expiry of the notice period of 45 days shall not be considered
3592835_1_1

NOTICE

Developer's name: ORRA REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT L.L.C
Purchaser's name: IGOR FALKO

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If you fail to pay the amount due within the specified period, DLD shall take the necessary legal proceeding pursuant to clause No (11) of the aforesaid.
3592847_7_7



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Land Department
GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI

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Purchaser's name: IGOR FALKO

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The film has strong performances from Asif Ali, Vijayaraghavan, and Aparna Balamurali

By **Manjusha Radhakrishnan**
Entertainment Editor

There's so much to unpack in Asif Ali and Aparna Balamurali's latest slow-burn thriller, *Kishkindha Kaandam*, a film that's as raw as it is gripping. Toward the climax, Aparna's character drops a Shakespearean nugget, reflecting on how "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." It couldn't get more fitting as she steps into a new chapter as a bride, alongside her husband and her iron-fisted father-in-law (Vijayaraghavan). The tension is palpable, and the performances even more intense.

The movie, in the most meditative and unhurried fashion, draws us into their troubled lives. Appu Pillai, played to perfection by the seasoned Vijayaraghavan, is the obstinate patriarch — an ex-military man whose rigid, almost cold demeanour sets his new daughter-in-law on a path to unravel their mysterious past.

TOUCHING PERFORMANCE

Asif Ali delivers one of the most controlled and touching performances of his career as a forest officer who's torn between being a dutiful son and a conflict-averse husband. It's his second marriage, and as the story progresses, we realise that his old wounds are yet to heal. A son from his first marriage who has gone missing sets the proverbial ball rolling.

Against the backdrop of a heavily forested, protected area in Kerala, the film parallels its old trees and solid sanctuary for monkeys with the homes and inhabitants that have witnessed untold tragedies and triumphs. The atmospherics are spot on, and the eerie, foreboding sense of doom is palpable. The film explores

KISHKINDHA KAANDAM

A THRILLING JOURNEY INTO FAMILY SECRETS



GN Rating

Film: Kishkindha Kaandam
Director: Dinjith Ayyathan
Cast: Asif Ali, Aparna Balamurali, Vijayaraghavan
Stars: ★ ★ ★ ★
Kishkindha Kaandam is now playing in UAE cinemas

family dynamics, familial duty, and generational guilt with a deft hand.

Aparna Balamurali is the outlier bride who enters the seemingly placid new

home, but soon realises that things are not as smooth as she thought. She digs and learns unsavoury details about her newfound family. But what makes this thriller work is that the flawed characters are explored through an empathetic lens. At no point do you judge any of these characters — the father for being stonily rigid, the son tasked with balancing his roles, or the bride for seeking an-

swers. The movie also does a neat job of exploring the tenuous relationship between a husband and wife. Without much noise, their dynamic as an understanding couple is brought to life by Asif and Aparna, who are in top form in this film. With great economy of emotions, they communicate a lot with their eyes and conversations.

This film, smartly written, is also a masterclass in taking its own time



Aparna Balamurali, Asif Ali and Vijayaraghavan in *Kishkindha Kaandam*.

to come into its own. The unhurried pace of storytelling packs a punch toward the end, is a testament to Dinjith Ayyathan's direction.

COMPELLINGLY CRAFTED

There are scenes where each character is engulfed by feelings of grief and remorse, and you can't help but be moved by their ethical and emotional dilemmas. Each character's emotional turmoil is rendered with impressive sensitivity. Ultimately, *Kishkindha Kaandam* is not just a thriller; it's a rich web of human experience, compellingly crafted and deeply affecting.



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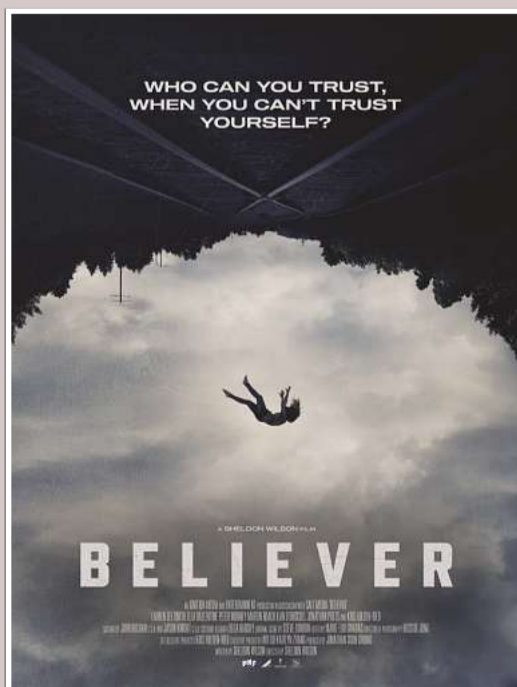
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