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# IRAN ATTACKS ISRAEL

**DUBAI**  
**BY SARAT SINGH**  
Night Editor

In the biggest escalation of tensions in the region since the start of war in Gaza on October 7, Iran yesterday launched a barrage of missiles targeting Israel.

"Missiles were launched from Iran towards the State of Israel," the Israeli military said as sirens sounded across the country, with AFP journalists reporting hearing explosions over Jerusalem. Iran's official news agency IRNA said it had launched "a missile attack on Tel Aviv".

The Revolutionary Guards Corps said the attack was in response to Israel's killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah last week as well as the death of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in a Tehran bombing widely blamed on Israel.

#### White House steps in

President Joe Biden ordered the US military yesterday to "aid Israel's defence" and shoot

down Iranian missiles targeting Israel, the White House said.

Meanwhile dozens of explosions boomed across Jerusalem on Tuesday night as air raid sirens rang out, AFP journalists reported. The explosions came shortly after the military said that Iran had launched a missile attack targeting Israel.

#### Oil prices surge

Following Iran's missile attack on Israel, oil prices surged, potentially increasing the chance of supply disruptions in a region that pumps a third of the world's crude.

West Texas Intermediate rose more than 5 per cent to top \$71 a barrel, reversing earlier losses. Global benchmark Brent climbed near \$75 a barrel.

Early yesterday, the Israeli military said troops had started "targeted ground raids" in south Lebanon, across Israel's northern border, though officials have provided few details of the scale of the operation or its timeframe.

**SEE ALSO P9**



Israel intercepts missiles launched by Iran above Tel Aviv yesterday. Air raid sirens sounded in central Israel, the military said, as it launched ground operations into southern Lebanon targeting Hezbollah positions yesterday.

AFP

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■ The illegal animal traps were found in Fujairah's mountainous areas.

## Illegal traps for animals seized in Fujairah

**FUJAIRAH**  
Gulf News Report

The Biodiversity Team at the Fujairah Environment Authority said on Monday that it took immediate action after a video was circulated on social media about the use of prohibited trapping equipment for wild animals in the emirate's mountainous areas.

The site was located by the team, which immediately moved to check the safety of the animal traps shown in the video and seized all the equipment found on site.

### Legal action

The Authority is currently working to determine the identity of those behind the "irresponsible act", to take legal action against them.

It appealed to the community and adventurers to take precaution and report any similar or other environmental violations through its toll-free number 800368.

"We express our gratitude to the heroes of nature who reported this," it said.

## Indian consulate relocates document attestation centre

Service provider moves to bigger premises, home services offered

**DUBAI**  
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN  
Chief Reporter

From October 7, Indian expats seeking document attestation services from the Indian Consulate in Dubai will have to visit a new location.

The offices of SG IVS Global Attestation Centre will move to office No 302 and 104 in Al Nasr Central, Oud Metha. The building is located at the end of the Nasr Club, on the left side of the roundabout. The offices will be closed on October 5 as part of the relocation process.

Consul General of India Satish Kumar Sivan confirmed to Gulf News that SG IVS Global Attestation Centre "will operate from a bigger premises".

A spokesperson of the consulate's Press Wing said: "The current space they have is roughly 4,000 square feet, and the new premises would be 6,400 square feet. Applicants

will have sufficient space to sit down, go through the papers, and wait for their turn."

The consulate processes on an average 250 attestation services per day. "This can go up to 400 on some days. We try to process everything within a maximum of 48 hours," he said.

The services offered at the centre include attestation, affidavit, power of attorney, will, company document and certificate genuineness verification.

### Booking appointments

The appointment booking system through the SGIVS website remains the same, with provisions for regular appointment and premium appointment, which is provided for a higher charge to get the documents attested on the same day.

Home services are provided for medical cases and aged applicants. Such applicants can email their request to [vcppt.dubai@mea.gov.in](mailto:vcppt.dubai@mea.gov.in) with a copy to [attestation.dubai@mea.gov](mailto:attestation.dubai@mea.gov).

If applicants have any grievance or suggestions, they can use the feedback forms available at the centre.



■ The offices of SG IVS Global Attestation Centre will move to office No 302 and 104 in Al Nasr Central, Oud Metha.

## Dh13b Abu Dhabi plan to improve traffic flow

SULTAN BIN ZAYED THE FIRST STREET GETS MORE LANES

**ABU DHABI**  
BY ALI AL HAMMADI  
Reporter

Major traffic and road projects worth Dh13.1 billion have started in Abu Dhabi, it was announced yesterday.

AD Mobility revealed that new lanes and pathways have been added to the intersection of Sultan Bin Zayed the First Street to accommodate 3,500 more vehicles and enhance pedestrian movement.

Upon completion of these projects, the efficiency of vehicle movement and traffic flow will improve by 40 per cent. Dedicated bike lanes are currently being developed.

### Median islands

Speaking about the major projects worth Dh13.1 billion, Abdullah Hamad Al Aryani, director of the Studies and Designs Department at AD Mobility, explained that the first project involves median islands in Abu Dhabi, extending from Al Raha Beach Road to Saadiyat Island, spanning 25km.

This road, ranging from four to five lanes, connects the mainland with Abu Dhabi Island through the median islands, providing entry and exit points to several islands, including Al Samaliya, Umm Yifenhah, Saadiyat, and Al Reem, with a capacity of 8,000 to 10,000 vehicles per hour in both directions.

### Two phases

Al Aryani added that the project is divided into two phases, with the first phase connecting Saadiyat Island to the Umm Yifenhah interchange, while the second phase targets Umm Yifenhah Island, leading to Al Raha Beach Road, which will serve residents of Al Raha Beach and nearby developments.

He stated that the first phase is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2027 at a cost of Dh3 billion, while the second phase is expected to be



■ New lanes and pathways have been added to the Sultan Bin Zayed the First Street intersection to accommodate 3,500 more vehicles and enhance pedestrian movement.

Upon completion of these projects, the efficiency of vehicle movement and traffic flow will improve by 40 per cent. Dedicated bike lanes are currently being developed.

finished by the fourth quarter of 2029, with an estimated cost of Dh7 billion.

### Al Khaleej Al Arabi Street

The second project involves traffic improvements along Al Khaleej Al Arabi Street between the Airport Interchange and the Bridges Complex Interchange, aimed at enhancing connectivity between Khalifa City and Zayed City and reducing traffic congestion at the entrances and exits of Khalifa City.

This will be achieved by upgrading the current interchange (IC3) and providing a new entrance to Khalifa City and Zayed City through the new interchange (IC5), along with increasing road capacity by expanding the number of lanes from three to five. The

project is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2026, at a cost of Dh1.1 billion.

### Musaffah Road

The third project involves traffic improvements on Musaffah Road (E30). Al Aryani stated that the project seeks to address several challenges, notably eliminating traffic conflicts on the road in both directions and reducing congestion at the existing overpasses (four intersections) on the E30 Road and at several internal intersections in the Musaffah area and Mohammad Bin Zayed City.

Additionally, two new bridges will be built to improve connectivity between Mohammad Bin Zayed City and Musaffah.

Al Aryani said that the project is in the final stages of design and is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026, with an estimated cost of Dh2 billion.

The project aims to increase road capacity, improve traffic flow, enhance safety, and strengthen connectivity with economic zones through new bridges and improvements to overpasses and internal intersections.

## Roads widened around Dubai schools to reduce congestion

Additional parking spaces, improved entry/exit and pick-up points among changes

**DUBAI**  
BY ASHFAQ AHMED  
Senior Assistant Editor

Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) has completed eight traffic improvements in educational zones, benefiting 37 schools.

The works targeted several key areas, including Kings' School Dubai on Umm Suqeim Street, The International School of Choueifat and Dubai College on Hessa Street, Al Safa Schools Complex, School of Research Science in Al Warqa'a 4, Al Ghusais Schools Complex, Al Mizhar Schools Complex, Nad Al Sheba Schools Complex and Al Twar Schools Complex 2.

Key improvements involved widening streets leading to the schools, creating additional parking spaces, improving entrances and exits, and implementing traffic diversions in



■ The RTA has implemented traffic diversions in surrounding areas and paved parking spaces in front of schools.

15-20% reduction in school arrival times after the traffic improvements

surrounding areas. Other upgrades included paving parking spaces in front of schools and designating specific areas to facilitate the safe pick-up and drop-off of students.

Hussain Al Banna, CEO of the Traffic and Roads Agency at RTA said: "RTA worked

closely with Dubai Police, developers and school authorities to study traffic impacts, identify solutions, and implement improvements."

He pointed out that the improvements have led to a 15-20 per cent reduction in school arrival times.

Al Banna added that in early 2025, these efforts will expand to include over 13 schools in key areas such as Al Garhoud, Al Barsha 1, Al Warqa'a and Al Barsha South. Additionally, an operational plan will be developed to manage traffic flow in these areas.

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# Dubai sets ambitious growth targets for 2033

HAMDAN APPROVES STRATEGIES AIMED AT BOOSTING EMIRATE'S LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION, REAL ESTATE AND TRANSPORT

**DUBAI**  
Gulf News Report

**S**haikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, yesterday approved a series of new plans aimed at boosting Dubai's leadership in several sectors over the next decade.

The plans were approved at a meeting of the Dubai Executive Council chaired by Shaikh Hamdan. Shaikh Ahmad Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Second Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Deputy Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, attended.

The plans include the Education Strategy 2033 and the Real Estate Strategy 2033, which aims to increase the value of Dubai's real estate transactions to Dh1 trillion by 2033. Additionally, three plans focused on modernising Dubai's transport infrastructure, transforming the city into a cashless city, and preserving the emirate's heritage were also approved.

## Education Strategy 2033

It focuses on providing world-class education from early childhood through to higher education.

The strategy aims to build a student-centric system that nurtures talent and creativity and equips students with essential life skills. It also emphasises early career guidance and aims to ensure UAE students are among the most competitive, able to secure places at top local and global universities.



Courtesy: Dubai Media Office

Shaikh Hamdan chairs a Dubai Executive Council yesterday in the presence of Shaikh Ahmad. Dubai aims to become the world's leading destination for living, investment and learning, he said.

**Our strategy for a world-leading education system will foster lifelong learning and equip the next generation of national leaders, grounded in Emirati values and identity, to shape the future.**

**Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

Shaikh Hamdan said: "Our strategy for a world-leading education system will foster lifelong learning and equip the next generation of national leaders, grounded in Emirati values and identity, to shape the future."

Shaikh Hamdan added that His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has championed the values of quality education and dedicated zones for academic, university, and knowledge institutions.

"Now, we are building an education system based on the principle of lifelong learning — a system that can adapt to change and nurtures national talents. It will be a future-focused education system that involves both teachers and learners in a continuous journey of creativity and growth," he said.

The Knowledge and Human Development Authority has been directed to place students at the heart of the new system to equip them with skills to lead and shape the future.

The strategy was developed

**Dh1 trillion**  
value of real estate transactions targeted by Dubai's Real Estate Strategy by 2033

through extensive consultation with over 700 stakeholders, including educators, school principals, parents, and university leaders, across more than 50 sessions involving 290 institutions.

## Real Estate Strategy 2033

He continued: "We approved the Real Estate Strategy 2033 to help achieve the Dubai Economic Agenda D33, raising real estate transactions to Dh1 trillion by 2033 and doubling the sector's contribution to economic diversification. The strategy also boosts Emirati

## THREE TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS

■ **Dubai Cashless Strategy:** It aims to position Dubai as one of the top five cashless cities globally by 2033. The strategy will increase digital transactions across all sectors, contributing Dh8 billion to the economy and ensuring that 100 per cent of businesses in Dubai accept digital payments.

■ **Suspended transport systems:** By 2030, Dubai aims to automate 25 per cent of all trips through the implementation of a newly approved 65km system connecting Umm Suqeim Street, Al Khor and Zabeel. The new system will help increase the share of public transport journeys in Dubai to 26 per cent of all trips by 2030. In addition, it will be integrated with other modes of transportation.

■ **Dubai National Archives:** Overseen by the the Mohammad Bin Rashid Library, it aims to document and archive Dubai's government records, achievements, history and cultural heritage, ensuring that Dubai's story is passed down to future generations. By documenting success stories designed to position Dubai as one of the world's top economic cities by 2033, the project directly contributes to the Dubai 2033 Plan.

**Dh73 billion**  
real estate's targeted contribution to Dubai GDP by 2033 through a 70% jump in deals

competitiveness and promotes home ownership to enhance family stability."

By increasing real estate transactions by 70 per cent and multiplying the value of Dubai's real estate portfolios by 20 times to Dh20 billion, the Real Estate Strategy 2033 aims to contribute Dh73 billion to the emirate's GDP.

The strategy represents a key pillar in the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 and will help elevate Dubai's investment attractiveness, positioning the city as a diverse global economic hub.

The strategy will involve rolling out a series of programmes over the next decade to raise the quality of developments, enhance transparency, leverage data for better market forecasting, integrate AI within the sector, centralise data and offer high-grade assets.

The aim is to attract investment as well as improve the buying and selling experience. In addition, the strategy prioritises sustainability and the development of balanced, cohesive communities, aiming to raise homeownership rates to 33 per cent.

Shaikh Hamdan said that Dubai places people at the core of development and continues its journey to becoming the world's leading destination for living, investment, and lifelong learning, committed to upholding family values and enhancing the quality of life for all.

## Fresh season of Dubai Miracle Garden offers new attractions

Explore floral-themed mini golf course, with 40% discount on tickets for residents

**DUBAI**  
BY ZAINAB HUSAIN  
Features Writer

**D**ubai Miracle Garden, the world's largest natural flower garden, is blooming again for its 13th season, and visitors can look forward to some brand-new features.

"We are thrilled to introduce our latest attractions this season. Our floral-themed miniature golf course adds a fun, interactive element for families to enjoy, while our revamped shopping and dining experiences showcase a fresh, local touch," CEO Mohammad Zaher Hammadih told *Gulf News* at the opening ceremony yesterday.

Spanning over 72,000 square metres, the garden has over 150 million flowers arranged in unique floral designs, with this year's theme being 'A world of imagination'.

## Must-see attractions

At the park you can see a life-size Emirates A380, which is the world's largest floral installation of an Airbus A380, covered in millions of flowers.

The floral castle, on the other hand, offers panoramic views and remains a centrepiece of the garden's attractions. The floral clock, updated with fresh blooms, now features a digital display. The Smurfs Village has also returned with its life-sized mushroom houses.

At night, Dubai Miracle Gar-



Virendra Saklani/Gulf News

■ Spread over 72,000 square metres, Dubai Miracle Garden showcases 150 million flowers arranged in floral sculptures.

## BIG CHANGES

■ **Shopping:** The garden's retail area has been redesigned, offering a wide range of souvenirs, handicrafts, and local products.

■ **Dining:** The garden now offers an expanded array of dining options, featuring local and international cuisines.

■ **Amenities:** The garden now offers additional restrooms, more seating areas and shaded rest spots.

den has an interactive light show blending flowers, lights, and music.

## Special offers

The attraction is offering a 40 per cent discount on tickets for UAE residents. Tickets must be purchased at the garden's ticket counters, and a valid Emirates

ID is required. The ticket cost is Dh60 for adults and children over 3 years old. Adult tourists pay Dh100 and children 3 to 12 years old pay Dh85. Children under three enter for free.

## How to book tickets

You can purchase tickets at the garden's entrance gates (Gate 1 and Gate 2) or online at [dubaimiraclegarden.com](http://dubaimiraclegarden.com)

The garden is open from 9am to 9pm on weekdays and 9am to 11pm on weekends and public holidays.

The garden has installed advanced irrigation systems to reduce water consumption, while ensuring that the flowers remain lush. It has also implemented solar-powered lighting throughout the park, reducing the garden's carbon footprint.

The garden has also launched a recycling programme to repurpose organic waste into compost, which will be used to nourish the flowers.

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Courtesy: UAE Presidential Court

### PRESIDENT RECEIVES PARTICIPANTS OF UN POLICE WORKSHOP

President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan received participants of the third UN Police Performance Workshop, hosted by the Ministry of Interior, at Qasr Al Bahr in Abu Dhabi yesterday. Shaikh Mohammad reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to enhancing international cooperation for safer societies. He praised the vital role played by international police forces in maintaining peace and security, particularly in areas affected by conflict.



### ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE MEETS EMIR OF QATAR

Shaikh Khalid Bin Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, yesterday met Qatar's Emir Shaikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani during an official visit to Doha. Shaikh Khalid reaffirmed the UAE's leadership and people's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Qatar. He also met Shaikh Mohammad Bin Abdul Rahman Bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, as part of his official visit.

## Pink Caravan: Free breast cancer screening across UAE this month

Eight fixed and more than 100 mobile clinics to be deployed from October 11 to 30

**SHARJAH**  
Gulf News Report

Friends of Cancer Patients (FoCP) has launched its annual Pink Caravan campaign, marking Breast Cancer Awareness Month with a wide range of activities.

The Pink Caravan is deploying eight fixed and more than 100 mobile clinics across the seven emirates to offer free breast cancer screenings. The monthlong campaign includes awareness workshops and community activities.

The Pink Caravan's fixed clinics will be available from October 11 until October 30, from 4pm to 11pm.

#### Corporate involvement

Various options are available for corporate involvement, such as booking a mobile clinic to offer free screenings for female employees or organising a Pink Caravan Corporate Wellness Day, which includes mammograms and lectures.

Mobile clinics offer mammograms to 20 female employees over the age of 40, while clinical exams are available for 60 employees over the age of 20.

The Corporate Wellness Day package includes virtual semi-



Courtesy: FoCP

Mobile clinics will offer mammograms to 20 female staff over the age of 40 under the corporate programme, while clinical exams are available for 60 employees over the age of 20.

#### LOCATIONS

Pink Caravan's fixed clinics will be deployed at Al Majaz Waterfront in Sharjah, Mushrif Mall in Abu Dhabi, City Walk in Dubai, two clinics at the Chinese Market in Ajman (one for women and one for men), Al Manar Mall in Ras Al Khaimah, LuLu Mall in Fujairah, and Umm Al Quwain Mall in Umm Al Quwain.

nars and vouchers for mammograms and clinical exams for 60 employees over 20. The mini-clinic offers clinical exams for 60 employees and vouchers for mammograms. Companies can also book awareness lectures.

On October 4-6, Pink Caravan will organise a community awareness event in Al Jada, Sharjah, from 4pm to 10pm. It will feature sports, games, workshops, and a petting zoo. The Manbat Market will showcase healthy products, with a portion of sales supporting FoCP's mission to assist cancer patients.

#### Volunteering opportunities

FoCP invites medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, and medical students, to volunteer for the Pink Caravan campaign. Those interested can apply via email at [info@pinkcaravan.ae](mailto:info@pinkcaravan.ae).

The Pink Shop ([www.focp.ae/shop](http://www.focp.ae/shop)) offers individuals the opportunity to purchase Pink Caravan-themed merchandise.

## Green mobility takes centre stage at Wetex

TESLA RAFFLE, MOBILE EV CHARGING STATION TOP DRAWS

**DUBAI**  
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN  
Chief Reporter

From a raffle draw for two Tesla cars to the launch of a mobile EV charging station and a dedicated Green Mobility Hall, Dubai is making a strong push for electric vehicles (EVs) at the 26th edition of Wetex, the region's largest sustainability and clean energy technology exhibition.

Organised by Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (Dewa), the Water, Energy, Technology, and Environment Exhibition (Wetex) was inaugurated by Shaikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, in the presence of Saeed Mohammad Al Tayer, MD and CEO of Dewa, yesterday.

With 2,800 companies and 21 national pavilions, this year's Wetex is showcasing Dubai's role as a leader in sustainable energy solutions.

#### Experts from 65 nations

Dr Yousuf Al Akraf, Executive Vice-President of Business Support and Human Resources at Dewa, and Chairperson of the Sales, Logistics, and Sponsorships Committee for Wetex, said: "We have experts from 65 countries here, showcasing the increasing interest in Dubai and the UAE's emerging role in driving sustainability."

Al Tayer pointed out that at the end of April this year, Dubai had over 30,000 electric vehicles, with customers registered in Dewa's EV Green Charger initiative surpassing 15,000 by the end of March.

#### Mobile EV charging station

The inaugural day of Wetex saw the launch of Charger, UAE's mobile EV charging station. A start-up, co-founded by Bosnian expat Ena Berbic and Jordanian American expat Farouq Khader, Charger aims to address the growing demand for flexible and accessible EV charging solutions.

The duo was inspired by a mobile fuel delivery company and came up with a prototype for a mobile EV charging truck.

The mobile station offers fast charging with a capacity



WAM

Shaikh Ahmad Bin Saeed tours the pavilions after opening the 26th edition of Wetex in Dubai yesterday.

### A CHANCE TO WIN TWO TESLA CARS

Wetex 2024 is running a raffle draw, offering two Tesla cars to lucky visitors. To be eligible to enter the raffle organised by Dewa, visitors must be over 18 years of age and attend all three days of the exhibition. **The electronic draw will be held at 5.30pm tomorrow at Dewa's main stand at Wetex.** Winners selected from the visitor entrance database will be announced at the venue and notified via phone and email.

**2,800**  
companies and 21  
national pavilions at  
Wetex this year

**30,000**  
electric vehicles in  
Dubai at the end of  
April this year



All you need to know about the 26th edition of Wetex in Dubai

"Currently, customers can call our Call Centre 800 Charger' and avail of the free charging service until we roll out the service with 12 trucks next year," said Berbic.

In May, Dewa signed an MoU with Parkin, the largest supplier of paid public parking facilities in Dubai, to expand the number of the EV Green Charger stations in its prime locations.

#### Monitoring EV stations

At Wetex, Dewa also unveiled its advanced Distribution Network Smart Centre, which leverages Artificial Intelligence, real-time monitoring, and data analytics to optimise the performance and efficiency of its systems, including the city's electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

The centre integrates data from three key Dewa initiatives: Advanced Meter Infrastructure, Green Charger for EVs, and Shams Dubai, a Dewa initiative allowing customers to install solar panels and connect to the grid, enabling them to generate and offset their electricity consumption.

Wetex will run till tomorrow at Dubai World Trade Centre.

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Tenderers shall arrange Tender Bond for **AED 90,000.00 (Dirhams Ninty Thousand Only)** strictly in the format specified in the Tender Document and submit the Bond by authenticated SWIFT message to **ENBD Bank, Main Branch, Post Box 2923, Dubai, UAE, not later than 3 (three) banking working days before the closing date for receipt of completed Tender.** A copy of the SWIFT message duly signed and stamped by the issuing Bank, must accompany the offer.

The Tender Bond shall be valid for 150 calendar days following the last date fixed for receipt of Tender.

**The closing date for receipt of completed Tender online is 11.00 Hrs of Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024.**

**For any further queries, the office of the Vice President - Contracts may be contacted.**

Participants in the Tender should submit the names of their Local Partners/Sponsors, having a valid Dubai Trade License along with a photocopy of their current license.

This advertisement is a complementary part of the Tender Documents

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# Adnoc to buy Germany's Covestro for \$13b

PLASTICS-MAKER CONFIRMS €62 PER SHARE TAKEOVER OFFER, WHICH REAFFIRMS ADNOC'S EXPANSION BEYOND OIL

**ABU DHABI**  
**BY JUSTIN GEORGE VARGHESE**  
 Your Money Editor

**A**dnoc sealed an investment agreement with Covestro after launching a cash takeover offer of Dh254 (€62) per share for remaining shares in the plastics maker, which separately confirmed it had accepted a takeover bid that values one of the world's leading chemical players at €12 billion (\$13.3 billion).

This landmark agreement marks a step-change in Adnoc's international growth strategy as it seeks to expand its operations beyond oil, and if completed, would mark the first takeover of a company in Germany's blue-chip DAX index by a Gulf state-owned firm.

Adnoc will also inject around €1.2 billion into the chemicals firm through the issuance of new shares, once the deal is completed.

## Gunning for spot in top 5

Subject to successful completion of the transaction, this acquisition will support Adnoc's goal to become a top five global chemicals player. Covestro's speciality chemicals business complements Adnoc's chemicals growth strategy.

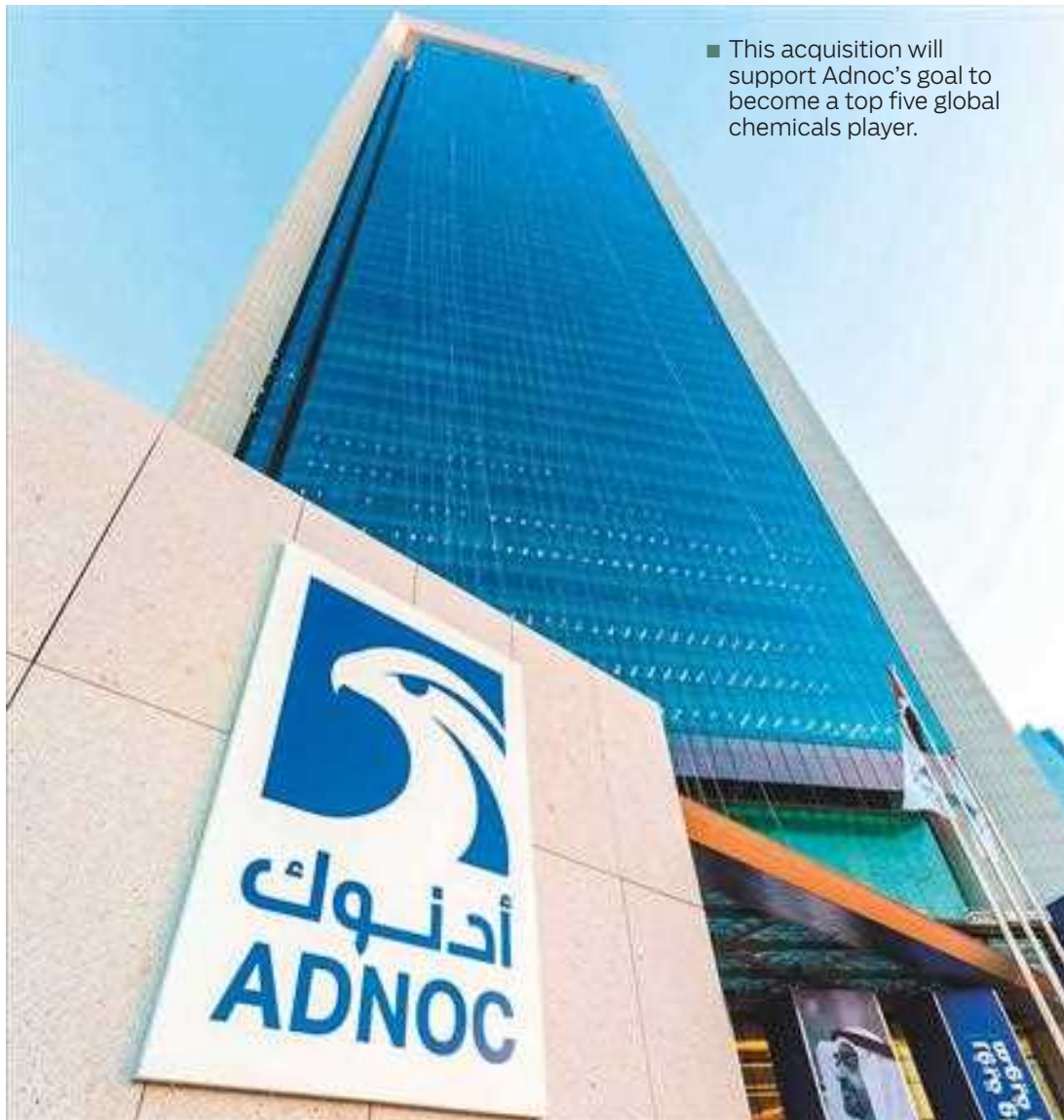
Covestro would become the foundational platform for Adnoc's performance materials and speciality chemicals business and will further drive diversification of Adnoc's chemical portfolio.

## 'Natural fit'

Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Adnoc Managing Director and Group CEO, said, "As a global leader and industrial pioneer in chemicals, Covestro brings unmatched expertise in high-tech speciality chemicals and materials, using advanced technologies including AI.

"This strategic partnership is a natural fit and aligns seamlessly with Adnoc's ongoing smart growth and future proofing strategy and our vision to become a top five global chemicals company. It represents a pivotal step for both organisations and embodies our disciplined approach to investing in strategic assets that drive long-term value and unlock new growth opportunities, while reinforcing our commitment to diversifying Adnoc's portfolio."

Adnoc's bid for Covestro



■ This acquisition will support Adnoc's goal to become a top five global chemicals player.



## UBIQUITOUS

Covestro logo seen at its headquarters in Leverkusen. From iPhones cases to car parts, Covestro materials are present all around us.

€12b total valuation of Covestro as part of Adnoc's takeover bid

€1.2b injection by Adnoc into Covestro through new shares

comes while the challenges facing the Germany's energy-intensive chemicals industry show no signs of abating. BASF, the world's largest chemicals group, said last month it would cut costs and refocus on its "core businesses", while some

of its German plants lacked competitiveness.

For its part, Covestro said it was "making significant progress in its strategic transformation".

The group, which makes chemicals used in everything

from building insulation to electric vehicles, unveiled savings plan in June amid ongoing takeover talks with Adnoc. Leverkusen-based Covestro, which was spun off from chemicals giant Bayer in 2015, said it would cut material and person-

al costs in the hopes of saving some €400 million annually.

The takeover offer will be subject to a minimum acceptance threshold of 50 per cent plus one share of Covestro's issued share capital, and customary regulatory approvals.

## Growing demand

Petrochemical demand is expected to increase by a compound 2 per cent between 2024 and 2050. It is expected that the chemicals market will double by 2050, yielding attractive economic returns. The positive long-term outlook for chemicals makes Covestro an attractive investment for Adnoc.

Dr Markus Steilemann, CEO of Covestro, said, "We are convinced that the agreement reached today with Adnoc International is in the best interest of Covestro, our employees, our shareholders, and all other stakeholders. With Adnoc International's support, we will have an even stronger foundation for sustainable growth in highly attractive sectors and can make an even greater contribution to the green transformation.

"We regard Adnoc International as a financially strong and long-term oriented partner with whom we will further drive our successful sustainable future strategy in all market conditions. Our complementary growth strategies, shared commitment to advanced technologies, innovation and sustainability are key cornerstones of our partnership."

## Products all around

The company has industry-leading facilities and technologies and is led by an outstanding management team. Covestro products will accelerate the integration of AI into daily lives, for example by developing films for head mounted displays and virtual reality (VR) devices and leveraging digital technologies like data science, machine learning, deep learning and AI to accelerate and broaden its research and development activities and projects.

From iPhones cases to the lighter weight materials used in cars, Covestro materials are present all around us.

Covestro originates from the industrial heartland of Germany and is a major producer of polyurethanes, polycarbonates and performance materials required for critical industrial applications. It operates globally and generates more than half of its revenues from the Asia-Pacific and North America.

— with inputs from agencies

## HI BONANZA

Adnoc's Fertigllobe confirms Dh551m payout

**DUBAI**  
 Gulf News Report

**A**dnoc entity Fertigllobe will be paying \$150 million (Dh551 million) or 6.6 fils a share — as its interim dividend for first-half of 2024. Shareholders have been set a record date of October 10.

This makes Fertigllobe's offering the highest dividend yield among UAE-listed companies for H1-24. Based on the H1-24 payout, the annualised dividend yield exceeds 5 per cent. In second place would be another Adnoc entity, Adnoc Drilling, according to market analysts.

With the latest payout, Fertigllobe would have paid \$2.42 billion in dividends since the October 2021 IPO.

The company, which is into fertilisers, had revenues of just over \$1 billion in H1-24, delivering \$378 million in EBITDA. The Abu Dhabi entity is the world's largest seaborne exporter of urea and ammonia combined.

## Robust balance sheet

"Fertigllobe's robust balance sheet and effective cash flow management continue to enable the company to pursue selective value accretive growth opportunities balanced with shareholder returns," said a statement.

The \$2.42 billion since October 2021 represents one of the highest dividend yields and total return metrics in its sector.

Ahmed El Hoshy, CEO of Fertigllobe, said: "This dividend is supported by active value creation initiatives launched in 2024, as we continue to make significant progress on our key strategic objectives. Fertigllobe is entering a pivotal phase of growth, accelerating the development of a sustainable hydrogen value chain and expanding its global platform for ammonia and clean hydrogen solutions."

# UAE non-basmati rice expected to drop by 20% as India resumes exports

'It'll take a few weeks for shipments from India to flow through'

**DUBAI**  
**BY MANOJ NAIR**  
 Business Editor

**I**ndia's decision to resume exports of non-basmati rice is expected to have an immediate positive impact on UAE retail prices for the staple, according to market sources. India had placed restrictions on non-basmati rice shipments in mid-2023.

"Now that competitive pricing options on rice from India are again available, this is likely to influence pricing in the UAE," said Dr Dhananjay Datar, managing director at Dubai headquartered Al Adil Trading. "We even foresee price drops of



Bloomberg

■ Workers at a rice market in Haryana, India, one of the largest exporters, holds a dominant share of the UAE market.

up to 20 per cent for the food commodity in the UAE once Indian shipments return in full force."

Food commodity traders in

the UAE broadly agree on the likelihood of a price reduction, especially by early to mid-November. "It will take a few weeks for the shipments from

India to flow through in volumes that will have a bearing on local retail prices," said a trader. India, one of the world's largest rice exporters, holds a dominant share of the UAE market.

## Exports at a set price

Under the new directive, India has allowed non-basmati rice exports, provided the shipments are priced at \$490 per tonne or higher, and these exports will be exempt from duties. India originally imposed the export ban due to concerns over domestic supply shortages.

"India's rice harvests in the last two years have been robust, contributing to the overall stability and availability of rice for both domestic and export markets," explained Datar, noting this as a key reason for lifting the ban now.

## RIVAL EXPORTING NATIONS SLASH PRICES

Global rice prices fell after India, the world's No.1 exporter of the grain, gave the go-ahead for exports to resume, boosting global supply and helping poor Asian and African buyers secure more affordable supplies.

"Suppliers from Thailand, Vietnam, and Pakistan are responding to India's move by lowering their export prices," said Himanshu Agarwal, executive director at Satyam Balajee, a leading rice exporter. "Everyone's trying to stay competitive to hold their spot in the market."

Global rice prices soared to their highest level in over 15 years following India's decision last year to ban the export of white rice and impose a 20 per cent duty on parboiled rice exports.

Last year's export curbs imposed by India allowed competing suppliers like Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan, and Myanmar to increase their market share and command higher prices in the global market.

The Philippines, Nigeria, Iraq, Senegal, Indonesia, and Malaysia are among the key importers of Asian rice.

Buyers and sellers are evaluating the potential impact of increased Indian rice supplies and accordingly, prices would settle this week, said Nitin Gupta, senior vice president of Olam Agri India.

—Agencies



# Masdar grabs a bigger US pie with 50% stake in Terra-Gen

ABU DHABI COMPANY IS SET TO POWER US RENEWABLE ENERGY GROWTH

ABU DHABI

**A**bu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) yesterday announced the closing of its acquisition of a 50 per cent stake in Terra-Gen Power Holdings II, LLC, one of the largest independent renewable energy producers in the United States, from Energy Capital Partners (ECP).

ECP has fully exited its position in Terra-Gen in connection with the closing of the transaction. Igneo Infrastructure Partners, a global infrastructure investment manager, retains its existing 50 per cent stake in Terra-Gen.

Representing one of Masdar's largest transactions, the deal further cements Masdar's position in the US. Masdar first entered the market in 2019 and has a proven history of funding, developing, owning and operating clean energy projects in the country.

Before the Terra-Gen acquisition, Masdar's US portfolio of utility scale wind, solar and storage assets had a generating capacity of more than 1.4GW.

## Masdar's 2030 goal

The US market and Terra-Gen's scalable platform will play important roles as Masdar executes its plan to build 100GW of capacity in its global renewable energy portfolio by 2030.

Terra-Gen's gross operating portfolio currently comprises 3.8GW of wind, solar and battery storage projects, including 5.1GWh of energy storage facilities across 30 renewable power sites throughout the US, predominantly in California and Texas.

Terra-Gen is currently developing more than 12GW of wind, solar and battery storage projects in the US. Its development activities include projects in California, Texas and New York. The project pipeline includes 386MW of Texas wind and California solar, and 512MWh of California energy storage facilities, with commercial operations anticipated in 2025.

Dr Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, COP28 President and Chairman of Masdar, said, "The UAE and US have long been partners in efforts to advance

## MAJOR PRODUCER

Terra-Gen Power Holdings II, LLC is one of the largest independent renewable energy producers in the United States.

**10GW**

Masdar's target of renewable generation capacity in US by 2030

**1.4GW**

generation capacity of Masdar's US portfolio before Terra-Gen buy



**Masdar has a strong track record of supporting US renewable energy projects, and the acquisition of Terra-Gen reaffirms this long-standing commitment.**

**Dr Sultan Al Jaber** | Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, COP28 President and Chairman of Masdar

clean energy, a collaboration culminating in the Partnership for Accelerating Clean Energy (PACE) agreement. Masdar has a strong track record of supporting US renewable energy projects, and the acquisition of Terra-Gen reaffirms this long-standing commitment.

## Pushing green growth

"We are now on target to surpass our goal of having 10GW of integrated renewable generation capacity in the US by 2030. This transaction unlocks further economic opportunities from green growth, and aligns with the global ambition to triple renewable energy capacity, in line with the historic UAE Consensus reached at COP28."

Mohammad Jameel Al Ramahi, chief executive officer of Masdar, said, "Terra-Gen's experienced management team and scalable platform make it the ideal partner, as we work to increase our presence and investment in the US as part

of Masdar's commitment to a long-term strategy in this important market."

## 'A great partner'

Jim Pagano, CEO of Terra-Gen, said, "The finalisation of this deal cements a strong relationship between Masdar and Terra-Gen. Masdar is a great partner for Terra-Gen because of our shared focus on developing clean energy projects and our commitment to decarbonisation. We look forward to working with them to expand and build on our pipeline of US projects."

Niall Mills, managing partner and global head of Igneo, said, "Terra-Gen has been a strong platform for Igneo in the US since our investment in 2020. We see tremendous potential to continue driving growth and creating long-term value in the US renewable power sector through the capable and experienced team at Terra-Gen, and we look forward to partnering

with Masdar on this exciting next phase of expansion."

## Masdar's milestone

Established in 2006, Masdar has a long-standing commitment to advancing renewable energy projects across the globe. The purchase of a 50 per cent share in Terra-Gen represents another significant milestone as the company works to support the target set in the historic UAE Consensus to triple global renewables capacity by the end of this decade.

Masdar's commitment to the US market reflects the UAE's strong ties to the country.

In January 2023, UAE and US officials announced that \$20 billion will be allocated to fund 15GW of clean energy projects in the US before 2035, led by Masdar and a consortium of US private investors, under the Partnership for Accelerating Clean Energy (PACE) between the two countries.

Lazard and Guggenheim Securities are serving as financial advisers, and Latham & Watkins LLP is serving as legal adviser to Terra-Gen. BMO Capital Markets and JP Morgan are serving as financial advisers, and White & Case LLP and Covington & Burling LLP are serving as legal advisers to Masdar. Mayer Brown is serving as legal adviser to Igneo Infrastructure Partners. — WAM

## Short stories



### Azizi to invest Dh1b for 12 building material factories in Abu Dhabi's Kezad A cluster

The Azizi group, known more for its property development, is adding construction capacity to its portfolio, with a Dh1 billion investment in Abu Dhabi's Kezad A cluster.

It has signed a 50-year land lease agreement with AD Ports Group to set up 12 factories, including a reinforcement steel cut and bend facility, timber joinery and duct fabrication workshops.

There will also be an aluminium and glass fabrication unit, as well as an aluminium extrusion factory.

AD Ports Group owns and operates the Khalifa Economic Zones Abu Dhabi (Kezad) Group.

The Azizi facilities will span 220,000 square metres. The construction of the proposed facilities will ensure speed of build for materials required for the region's burgeoning housing sector, and meet their demands with cost-effective, faster and greener methods for production.



### Tecom Group buys 'Office Park' at Dubai Internet City in new investment spree

The Tecom Group is buying a commercial property in Dubai Internet City for Dh720 million, as the DFM-listed entity embarks on a massive investment programme.

The 'Office Park' is a multi-let asset with five interconnected blocks and a gross leasable area of 370,761 square feet. It already has leading international entities as tenants, including Coca-Cola, Uber, Red Hat, and Ticketmaster.

As for Dubai Internet City, this is the second major transaction it has seen recently, with Abu Dhabi mega-developer Aldar buying an office building.

The Tecom deal was signed by Tecom Investments Emirates REIT, which was the owner of the asset.

Tecom had in May confirmed plans to spend up to Dh1.7 billion on adding to its office and commercial real estate assets in Internet City, Industrial City and Dubai Design District, among others.



### Alef launches Dh2.5b project featuring Sharjah's largest private community park

Alef Group, the leading real estate development company in the Emirate of Sharjah, has announced the launch of its latest residential project, Olfah. Positioned as the development with Sharjah's largest private community park, the Dh2.5 billion project offers a genuine and immersive living experience combining luxury, comfort, and expansive natural landscapes.

The project spans 84,814.40 square metres and comprises 12 buildings, each rising between 9 and 11 storeys, set upon a unified platform. Designed with the well-being of residents in mind, Olfah seamlessly integrates residential and commercial spaces, offering 2,787 residential units in one-, two-, and three-bedroom configurations, alongside 1,500 square metres dedicated to commercial, service, and dining facilities.

Commenting on the launch, Issa Ataya, CEO of Alef Group, said, "Olfah represents a new benchmark in creating communities around nature, offering residents an unparalleled lifestyle experience in Sharjah."

— Gulf News Reports & WAM

# ADQ buys 49% in Alpha Dhabi Construction

Zayed National Museum, Guggenheim among ADCH projects

ABU DHABI

**A**lpha Dhabi Holding (ADH) PJSC has successfully completed its divestment of 49 per cent of its subsidiary Alpha Dhabi Construction Holding (ADCH) to Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company (ADQ). ADH will retain a 51 per cent shareholding in ADCH.

## Iconic works

Led by ADH subsidiary Trojan Construction, ADCH is recognised for its commitment to national development. Its track record includes work on iconic UAE projects such as Zayed National Museum and the Guggenheim Museum, and supporting critical infrastructure such as the national rail-



Afra Mubarak Alnofelli/Gulf News

■ The new ADCH-ADQ partnership comes amid significant large-scale investments in construction across Abu Dhabi.

way network. ADCH also successfully executes large-scale residential community projects for domestic real estate developers, including Aldar, Modon Properties, and Emaar. The new partnership combines

the expertise and capabilities of ADCH and ADQ, solidifying ADCH's position as an industry leader and an engine of the Emirate's growth.

Hamad Al Ameri, CEO and MD of ADH, commented, "We

are thrilled to finalise this partnership with ADQ, marking a milestone in strategic growth and transformation for ADCH. With a shared vision for excellence, this collaboration allows us to deepen our commitment to national development and will expand our capabilities to tackle complex, large-scale projects with a keen focus on safety, quality, and timely delivery."

## Deal amid housing boom

This deal signals a new era of innovation in the construction industry, combining the strengths of both entities to reinforce Alpha Dhabi Construction Holding's leadership.

The agreement arrives during significant large-scale investments in construction across Abu Dhabi to provide new housing opportunities, create new employment, and contribute to the diversification of the emirate's economy. — WAM





Boeing Co. signage outside the company's manufacturing facility in Renton, Washington, US, last month.  
Bloomberg

# US planemaker weighs raising at least \$10 billion selling stock

BOEING SEEKS TO REPLENISH CASH RESERVES DEPLETED BY ONGOING STRIKE

VIRGINIA

**B**oeing Co. is considering raising at least \$10 billion by selling new stock, as the planemaker seeks to replenish cash reserves depleted further by an ongoing strike, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The company is working with advisers to explore its options, said the people, asking not to be identified discussing confidential matters. Raising equity isn't likely to happen for at least a month, assuming the planemaker can resolve the strike, because Boeing wants a firm grasp of the financial toll from the walkout by 33,000 workers, the people said.

A spokesman for the company declined to comment. No final decision on timing and the amount has been made, and Boeing could end up deciding against the move, the people said.

The US planemaker has seen its financial reserves dwindle in the wake of a near-catastrophic accident in January that forced Boeing to slow production of its cash-cow 737 Max airliner. Should Boeing proceed, a sale of that magnitude would stand to be the biggest by a public company since Saudi Arabian Oil Co.'s \$12.3 billion sale in June.

The strained situation has been exacerbated by the strike now in its third week that has



Workers picket outside a Boeing Co. facility during a strike in Everett, Washington, US, on September 16.  
Bloomberg

shut down output of Boeing's single-aisle airliner, putting the company's credit rating at risk as each day of work stoppage further dents reserves.

## Suspended Talks

Workers have turned down two offers from the company for higher pay, and the two sides have engaged a mediator to help overcome the impasse.

Boeing faces a liquidity squeeze after burning through \$8.25 billion in free cash during the first half. The US planemaker slowed work on its cash-cow 737 Max and other jets to address quality lapses brought to light by the accident on an aircraft on Jan 5.

Analysts expect Boeing to suffer a \$3.36 billion cash out-

flow in the third quarter, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The strike stands to cost the company about \$1.5 billion for each month that workers stay off the job, according to estimates by JP Morgan Chase & Co.

The outflows risk lowering Boeing's cash balance to the point where the three major ratings agencies would be compelled to act. Boeing's credit rating is one step above speculative grade, and Fitch Ratings has warned that an extended strike could have a "meaningful operational and financial impact, increasing the risk of a downgrade."

Shares of the planemaker have lost 42 per cent in value this year. That puts Boeing on

course for its worst annual return since the financial crisis in 2008.

## 'Perfectly Comfortable'

Chief Financial Officer Brian West told analysts at a Morgan Stanley conference last month that Boeing "will take any necessary actions" to preserve its investment grade rating and repair a balance sheet burdened by its \$58 billion debt load.

"We are perfectly comfortable to supplement our liquidity position to support those two objectives," West said when asked if the company might need to raise debt or equity.

Boeing has already initiated a savings plan that includes furloughs for workers, a hiring freeze as well as a pay cut for executives.

The planemaker has a history of tapping markets shortly after it releases quarterly earnings, and the next such report is slated for late October. The company most recently issued \$10 billion at the end of April, about a week after it published its first-quarter results.

The company has also said it wants to buy back Spirit AeroSystems Inc., the troubled supplier at the heart of some of its current manufacturing woes. While Boeing plans to pay for the \$4.7 billion transaction in stock, the reintegration of its most important supplier will require additional investments to turn the business around.

— Bloomberg

# Thai Airways plans share sale of \$1.3b to exit debt revamp

Carrier will offer about 6.81b new shares to creditors under a debt-to-equity swap

116

aircraft will be the size of Thai Airways fleet by 2027

BANGKOK

**T**hai Airways International Pcl plans to issue new shares worth at least 42 billion baht (\$1.3 billion) to creditors and other investors by December, a major step toward exiting a court-monitored debt restructuring and resumption of trading in its shares.

The carrier will offer about 6.81 billion new shares to creditors under a debt-to-equity swap, according to its regulatory filing Monday. These stocks are priced at 2,5452 baht each, valuing the offering at 17.3 billion baht, it said.

Another 9.82 billion new shares will be for existing shareholders, employees and other investors in a private offering. While the company didn't specify the share price for this offering in the regulator filing, it said in a separate statement that the stocks will not be priced lower than 2,5452 baht each. The company expects to complete both the share sales by Dec 31.

## Bankruptcy protection

The airline has also reserved 14.9 billion new shares for the mandatory debt-to-equity swap by its main creditors including Thailand's Finance Ministry, the carrier said. The ministry will convert about 12.8 billion baht of its debt into new shares, while the remainder will go to other creditors, Thai Airways said in the statement.

The Thai flag carrier aims to emerge from its court-mon-

tored debt-restructuring plan in 2025, five years after it filed for bankruptcy protection. The state-controlled airline had posted losses from operations every year from 2013, which were worsened by the Covid pandemic that forced it to seek bankruptcy protection.

The airline has benefited from a post-pandemic travel boom, helping boost its earnings and cash flows since 2023. The turnaround has prompted Thai Airways to order a new fleet of Boeing and Airbus jets to expand its services to newer routes and locally.

Thai Airways aims to expand its fleet to 116 aircraft by 2027, Chai said, bigger than its pre-Covid size of 103, Chief Executive Officer Chai Eamsiri has said. It expects to operate 79 jets by the end of 2024.

"The debt-to-equity swap and new share offering will help Thai Air achieve its debt restructuring process by turning shareholders' capital into a surplus," Piyasvasti Amranand, a court-appointed debt administrator, said in the statement. The shareholders equity had a deficit of about 40 billion baht as of June 30, he said.

The improving finances and capital-raising plan will accelerate the resumption of trading in the airline's shares in 2025, which have been suspended since May 2021, according to Piyasvasti.

— Bloomberg



The Thai flag carrier aims to emerge from its court-monitored debt-restructuring plan in 2025.

ON GULFNEWS.COM

## Philippines ramps up renewables

*The Philippines is making strides in promoting renewable energy and attracting FDI. The Board of Investments (BOI) has so far granted "green lane certificates" to 114 renewable energy projects valued at 3.74tr pesos (\$66.56b).*

— Jay Hilotin, Senior Assistant Editor



Philippines ramps up renewables: \$73.5 billion projects get green light

# Pfizer offloads \$3.2b stake in Haleon

US pharmaceutical firm increased the number of shares to 640m from 540m

NEW YORK

**P**fizer Inc. has raised about £2.4 billion (\$3.2 billion) from the sale of Haleon Plc shares, as it further reduces its stake in the UK consumer health company.

The US pharmaceutical firm increased the number of shares to 640 million after the sale had begun, according to terms of the deal seen by Bloomberg News. The oversubscribed offering was priced at £3.80 per share, a discount of about 3.3 per cent to Monday's close, according to a

£3.80

per share was the price of the oversubscribed offering

statement Tuesday. Separately, Pfizer said it plans to sell 540 million shares in Haleon Plc, as it pares back its holding in the UK consumer health giant. The latest transactions reduce Pfizer's stake in the maker of Panadol pain relief tablets and Centrum vitamins to 16.2 per cent from 22.6 per cent.

## Trading lower

Shares of Haleon, which was formed from a combination of GSK Plc and Pfizer's consumer-health units, traded 0.5 per cent lower yesterday morning

in London, at £3.91 each. The deal adds to more than \$50 billion in sales of new and existing shares in European listed companies this year, a 2.3 per cent increase on the corresponding period in 2023, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

In March, Pfizer began trimming its ownership of Haleon, selling more than £2.8 billion worth of shares and American depository shares in the company. The US firm is not selling any ADS in the current offering, the statement shows.

GSK has also sold down its holdings of Haleon, completing its separation from the consumer health company in May with share sales raising nearly £4 billion in total. Haleon also said it will buyback £230 million of shares.

— Bloomberg





# ISRAEL MUST RESPECT MULTILATERALISM

*Nentanyahu should realise that lasting peace comes through diplomacy, not military action*

BY ASHOK SWAIN | Special to Gulf News

The Israeli-Lebanese conflict has once again brought the world to a critical juncture, reminding us of the fragility of peace and the importance of collective diplomacy. As violence escalates along the Israel-Lebanon border and in Gaza, Israel continues its military strikes on Hezbollah strongholds, even after assassinating Hassan Nasrallah, and indiscriminately bombards civilian areas while planning a land incursion. This approach, far from guaranteeing security, exacerbates regional tensions and undermines global efforts to restore peace. In this volatile moment, it is imperative that Israel rethinks its unilateral actions and embraces multilateralism.

For decades, the Israeli-Lebanese conflict has been marked by sporadic violence, deeply rooted political instability, and the involvement of Hezbollah, a powerful non-state actor backed by Iran. Israel regards Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation. The conflict is emblematic of the broader instability in the Middle East.

The recent 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) placed the Israeli-Lebanese conflict squarely on the global diplomatic agenda. In a rare moment of unity, countries such as the United States, France, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Japan, and Germany called for an immediate 21-day ceasefire. This collective demand highlights the urgent need for diplomacy to curb escalating violence, yet Israel remains unwilling to compromise.

## Israel's refusal to heed global calls

Israel's reluctance to engage meaningfully with international efforts for peace is dangerous. Unilateral actions, such as continued military strikes on civilian areas and targeted killing of Hamas and Hezbollah leadership, deepen divisions rather than bridge them.

The consequences of ignoring multilateralism extend beyond immediate security concerns. Secretary-General António Guterres warned that "hell is breaking loose in Lebanon," and his statement underscores the severity of the humanitarian crisis exacerbated by Israel's military actions. The destruction of civilian infrastructure, the loss of homes, and the decimation of public utilities only fuel further desperation and anger.

In this context, multilateral frameworks, particularly through the UN, offer the best path forward. The UN, despite its imperfections, remains the most effective platform for resolving complex conflicts that involve multiple state and non-state actors.

The international community has long pursued a two-state solution as a cornerstone of peace in the region, and this remains a viable path forward. However, such a solution will remain elusive unless Israel commits to col-



lective dialogue and mutual compromise.

The recently adopted "Pact for the Future" at the UNGA is a step towards restoring faith in multilateralism. The pact aims to reinvigorate the UN's capacity to address interconnected global crises — ranging from geopolitical tensions to climate change and health threats. Its underlying message is clear: no one nation can tackle these challenges alone. Multilateralism, which emphasises collective responsibility and decision-making, is the only way forward in an increasingly polarised world. Yet, the success of this framework depends on nations like Israel recognising its value.

## A threat to global security

Israel's continued defiance of international calls for a ceasefire risks triggering a larger regional conflict that could draw in more global powers. This not only threatens regional stability but also global security.

Many argue that multilateral institutions like the UN have lost their relevance, often paralysed by the vetoes of major powers or bogged down in bureaucratic processes. While these criticisms are not unfounded, abandoning multilateralism in favour of unilateral actions would be a grave mistake. The solution to the Israeli-Lebanese conflict — and the broad-

er Israeli-Palestinian issue — lies in reforming, not discarding, multilateral diplomacy.

The international community, particularly Israel's allies, must take a more active role in promoting peace. Nations like the United States and key European powers, which have long provided diplomatic cover for Israel, must now leverage their influence to push for compliance with international law. Continued political and military support without accountability risks enabling further atrocities and eroding the legitimacy of international governance.

Tel Aviv must recognise that multilateral diplomacy, not unilateral military action, offers the best path to lasting peace. The calls for a ceasefire from leading nations cannot be ignored, and Israel's failure to engage constructively risks not only further violence but also global isolation. The world is at a crossroads: we can either allow the cycle of violence to continue, destabilising both the Middle East and global peace efforts, or we can recommit to multilateralism as a means to achieve enduring peace.

Israel, like its adversaries, must choose the latter. The stakes are simply too high for anything less.

■ Ashok Swain is a professor of peace and conflict research at Uppsala University, Sweden.

# NASA MISSION: BOEING FAILURE, SPACEX'S GAIN

*US space agency turns to Elon Musk's SpaceX to rescue astronauts stranded by Boeing's faulty Starliner capsule*

BY AHMAD NAZIR | Special to Gulf News

It's been a tough few months for Boeing, and their latest failure in space has left Nasa scrambling for alternatives. Two astronauts, Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams, have been stuck aboard the International Space Station (ISS) since June, waiting for a way home. They were supposed to return in Boeing's much-hyped Starliner capsule, but a series of technical mishaps forced Nasa to rethink.

Originally, the plan was simple: Wilmore and Williams would take Boeing's Starliner on a short trip home after completing their mission. But things quickly went awry. During the Starliner's first crewed test flight, issues cropped up. Thruster failures and helium leaks meant the spacecraft wasn't safe to bring the astronauts back. Faced with serious risks, Nasa made the tough call to abandon the Starliner for the time being.

With their original ride back to Earth grounded, Wilmore and Williams have had to sit tight, extending what should've been a week-long mission to a gruelling eight months. Meanwhile, Boeing's capsule returned to Earth earlier this month — empty.

Enter SpaceX. Nasa turned to Elon Musk's space venture to save the day. On Saturday, SpaceX launched its Dragon capsule with a crew of two astronauts, leaving two empty seats reserved for Wilmore and Williams. The capsule docked smoothly with the ISS on Sunday, soaring 265 miles above Botswana. For the stranded astronauts, this was surely a welcome sight after months of uncertainty. SpaceX's Dragon capsule will now stay docked at the ISS until next year, at which point it will ferry Wilmore and Williams back to Earth. It's not an ideal situation, but it's a far better option than risking their lives in Boeing's troubled Starliner.

## Boeing's string of disappointments

In an ironic twist, two Nasa astronauts had to be pulled from their mission to make room for Wilmore and Williams on the Dragon's return flight. Their seats, originally planned for a different crew, were reassigned in light of the Boeing mishap.

For Boeing, this is just the latest in a string of disappointments. The Starliner programme has seen delay after delay, and now, safety issues have thrown yet another wrench into the works. The company has been trying to establish itself as a major player in Nasa's commercial crew programme, but SpaceX has been consistently outshining them. While Boeing stumbles, SpaceX continues to deliver reliable solutions, proving to Nasa that it's the go-to partner for space missions.

This whole episode raises some uncomfortable questions about Boeing's future in space exploration. Can they bounce back from this? Or is Nasa's trust in the aerospace giant beginning to wane?

For now, SpaceX is the one saving the day. But as Boeing struggles to get its act together, it's clear that Nasa's reliance on Elon Musk's company is only set to grow.

■ Ahmad Nazir is a UAE based freelance writer, with a degree in education from the Université de Montpellier in Southern France.

# INACTION FUELS CRIME IN INDIA'S CAPITAL

*The murder of a policeman and a string of shootings highlight the worsening law and order situation in Delhi*

BY MAKARAND R. PARANJAPÉ | Special to Gulf News

Delhi, besides being the capital of India, the most populous nation in the world, is a city with a grand and glorious history. As the seat of great empires since ancient, prehistoric times, it is older than Rome and boasts as many surviving monuments. It has beautiful gardens, broad boulevards, and a densely inhabited medieval Mughal city, Shahjahanabad, nestling right in its midst.

Delhi is home to over 20 million inhabitants. It is also a city I love, having come of age here, arriving as a 17-year-old freshman at St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, over four decades ago.

That is why, like many Delhiites, I am deeply concerned and distressed by the steady rise of crime in the capital.

On September 29, just a couple of days ago, Sandeep, a 30-year-old Delhi Police constable on a motorcycle, was killed in the North-Western district of Nangloi. CCTV footage shows a speeding WagonR smashing into him, dragging him for 10 metres, before it collided with another car.

The car is now in police custody, but both the driver and co-passenger are missing. Sandeep is survived by a wife, a five-year-old son, and a mother.

On September 28, in the same Nangloi area, there was a

shooting at the Roshan Halwai sweet shop. Two motorcycle-borne criminals fired several rounds from a semi-automatic pistol at the shop's counter. Fortunately, no one was killed or injured. Acting swiftly, the Special Cell of the National Capital Region apprehended the suspects.

## Extortion attempts

After the shooting, police recovered an extortion note from the assailants signed in the names of Ankesh Lakra and Deepak Boxer. Boxer, who has been extradited to India, is currently in jail, as is Lakra. If so, how are they masterminding operations from behind bars?

Hours earlier, near New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, gangsters opened fire on the Impress Hotel in Mahipalpur. It is alleged that the Lawrence Bishnoi-Goldy Brar crime syndicate is behind the attack. The motive? Clearly, extortion and protection money. It was reported that last year, Brar had allegedly demanded 20 million rupees from the hotel owner.

Just a day earlier, a luxury car showroom, "Car Street Mini," was attacked in Naraina, West Delhi. The note the attackers left behind read, "Bhau Gang, Since 2020," referring to the Portugal-based Himanshu Bhau, a fugitive from India since 2022.

The Delhi Police is a huge force of close to 100,000 uniformed personnel, directly under the control of the central Home Ministry, led by Minister Amit Shah. If so, why is the law and order situation so deplorable? Could it be due to the political rivalry between the ruling BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which governs the state?

I certainly hope not. Delhi's citizens deserve better. The authorities must act swiftly to secure our national capital from the clutches of criminal elements and lawlessness.

■ Makarand R. Paranjape is a noted academic, author and columnist.

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## JERUSALEM

President Joe Biden ordered the US military yesterday to “aid Israel’s defence” and shoot down Iranian missiles targeting Israel, the White House said.

Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee in next month’s US presidential election, are both monitoring Iran’s attack on Israel from the White House situation room, it said in a statement.

Biden’s directive came after Israel faced a barrage of missiles from Iran, the Israeli military and Iranian state media said, the latest escalation after Israeli raids against Iran-backed militants in Lebanon.

Iran’s official news agency IRNA said it had launched “a missile attack on Tel Aviv”, Israel’s commercial hub.

## 4 shot dead in Tel Aviv

Just before the missile strikes began, at least four people were shot dead in a suspected attack in Tel Aviv, police said, adding that the two assailants had been “neutralised”.

“Four civilians were killed by gunfire from two terrorists. Additionally, there are seven injured individuals in varying degrees of severity according to medical sources. Both terrorists have been neutralised on site,” police said in a statement.

Israel vowed to retaliate following the missile attack, with an army spokesman saying it would respond at the time and place of its choosing.

“This attack will have consequences. We have plans, and we will operate at the place and time we decide,” said Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari.

In response, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards threatened to carry out “crushing attacks” against its arch-foe if it retaliates for the missile strikes.

“If the Zionist regime reacts to Iranian operations, it will face crushing attacks,” the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said in a statement carried by the Fars news agency.

## Celebrations in Lebanon

Celebratory gunfire erupted from Beirut’s southern suburbs, Lebanese state media said, after Iran’s attack on Israel.

“Heavy gunfire heard from automatic weapons from areas of the southern suburbs, rejoicing in the missile launch from Iran towards Israel,” Lebanon’s National News Agency said. An AFP correspondent also reported the sound of gunfire from the Hezbollah bastion.

Earlier yesterday, the Israeli military said troops had started “targeted ground raids” in south Lebanon, across Israel’s northern border, though officials have provided few details

ISRAEL VOWS TO RESPOND FOLLOWING THE MISSILE STRIKES, EVEN AS IRAN THREATENS TO CARRY OUT MORE ‘CRUSHING ATTACKS’ IF ISRAEL RETALIATES

# IRAN ATTACK ON ISRAEL ESCALATES THREAT OF WIDER REGIONAL WAR



■ Israeli border guards deploy at the scene of a shooting attack outside Al Nuzha mosque along Jerusalem Boulevard in Jaffa, south of Tel Aviv yesterday. AFP



■ People take cover behind vehicles under a bridge along the side of a highway in Tel Aviv yesterday.



■ This picture taken from the West Bank city of Hebron shows projectiles above the Israeli city of Ashdod yesterday.

of the scale of the operation or its time frame.

The Israeli ground offensive came despite growing calls for de-escalation after a week of air strikes that killed hundreds in Lebanon, including Hassan Nasrallah, the powerful leader of Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah.

In Lebanon, the UN peace-keeping mission said the Israeli offensive did not amount to a “ground incursion” and Hez-

bollah denied any troops had crossed the border.

A Lebanese army source told AFP the force had “not observed any penetration by Israeli enemy forces”.

## Calls for restraint

There was no way to immediately verify the claims, which came as Israel struck south Beirut, Damascus and Gaza, despite international calls for restraint to avoid a regional conflagra-

tion. “We fear a large-scale ground invasion by Israel into Lebanon would only result in greater suffering,” said UN human rights office spokeswoman Liz Throssell.

Israel’s defence minister warned the fight was far from over, even after a massive strike on Beirut killed Nasrallah on Friday.

Israel seeks to dismantle Hezbollah’s military capabilities and restore security to the

north, where tens of thousands have been displaced by nearly a year of cross-border fire.

The Israeli military said its forces, backed by air strikes and shelling, carried out “limited, localised, targeted operations” in Lebanon.

To “enable the continuation of operational activity” against Hezbollah, the military later announced it was calling up four additional brigades to the border. — AFP

## SORROW IN SYRIA

3 civilians among 6 dead as Israel strikes Damascus

## BEIRUT

A Syria war monitor said six people, including three civilians, were killed in Israeli strikes early yesterday, targeting Damascus and its vicinity, amid fears of broader Israeli raids on the country.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the strikes targeted two vehicles in Damascus’s upscale Mazzeh district, as well as “air defence batteries at the (city’s) airport, and the vicinity of the Kisweh area”, south of the capital.

“Three civilians including a media worker” were killed, as well as three pro-Iran fighters, said the Britain-based Observatory, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria.

Syrian state media had earlier reported that three civilians were killed in Israeli air strikes and nine others wounded, citing a military source.

“The Israeli enemy launched an air aggression with warplanes and drones from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan, targeting several points in Damascus,” the official news agency Sana said.

State television said one of its anchors, Safaa Ahmad, was “martyred in the Israeli aggression”, it said.

## Destruction all around

AFP correspondents heard four rounds of bombardment over around half an hour, resonating across the Syrian capital.

In the Mazzeh neighbourhood, home to Syrian security headquarters and embassies, an AFP correspondent saw two minibuses burnt to cinders.

A resident of a building that was hit, a 57-year-old who gave his name as Abu Mohammad, told AFP: “We heard the sound of a strong blast that threw me onto the floor, and seconds later, we heard people scream.”

“From our balcony, we saw fire everywhere,” he said of himself and his family.

“We found a dead lady on the first floor with her children screaming beside her, but we couldn’t do anything for her.” — AFP

## Evacuations from Lebanon: What countries are doing for their citizens

Govts are doing all they can to help nationals to safety

## PARIS

Israel launched a ground offensive in Lebanon yesterday, escalating a conflict against Hezbollah after a week of air strikes that killed hundreds. Several countries have begun evacuating their nationals from Lebanon or are planning to do so.

## Britain

Britain has chartered a commercial flight for its nationals that will depart from Beirut today. The UK government has said further flights may be arranged, depending on demand.

It said it would prioritise “vulnerable British nationals” for today’s flight. Last week,

London announced the deployment of 700 soldiers to Cyprus to prepare for a possible evacuation of its citizens.

## Canada

Canada has reserved 800 seats on commercial planes for its citizens. About 45,000 Canadians are in Lebanon. The Canadian military has set up emergency resources in Cyprus if commercial flights are interrupted.

## Germany

On Monday, Germany flew out its Beirut embassy’s non-essential staff, their dependants and some of its citizens in Lebanon with medical conditions. About 110 passengers boarded the German air force A321 plane, which landed in Berlin late in the evening.

The Beirut embassy remained operational to help the



■ Passengers disembark a Bulgarian government evacuation flight from Lebanon, at Sofia airport on Monday.

estimated 1,800 German citizens in Lebanon.

## Japan

Japan is urging its citizens to

leave Lebanon on commercial flights and is preparing military flights for their possible return, the government said on Friday. C-2 military transport planes

have been ordered to go to Jordan and Greece to be on standby in case Japanese nationals — numbering around 50 — need to be transported out.

## Philippines

The Philippines vowed last week to evacuate 11,000 citizens from Lebanon the moment Israeli forces crossed the border to launch a ground offensive.

“A ground invasion will lead to mandatory repatriation,” Foreign Undersecretary Eduardo de Vega said on Friday, adding the plan was to move thousands out via the sea.

Around 90 per cent of nationals in Lebanon are female domestic workers.

## Portugal

Portugal evacuated 44 people from Lebanon — 28 nationals and their families — by military

plane via Cyprus on Saturday evening.

## Bulgaria

A total of 89 Bulgarians evacuated from Lebanon — mostly families with children — arrived in Sofia late Monday. A government plane was expected to make a second flight yesterday.

Around 400 Bulgarians live in Lebanon, and 160 of them said they want to be evacuated.

## Refugees

The United Nations Refugee agency said around 100,000 people had fled to Syria from Lebanon due to the air strikes. The UNHCR representative in Syria said most evacuees were women and children. Around 80 per cent were Syrians and 20 per cent Lebanese. Some 210,000 Palestinians live in informal settlements in Lebanon. — AFP





Vehicles damaged from flooding and debris are seen in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene in Old Fort, North Carolina. AFP

# Storm politics: Biden, Trump trade barbs as Helene kills 130

TRUMP SAYS BIDEN SLEEPING, HARRIS RAISING POLL FUND; PRESIDENT HITS BACK

**VALDOSTA**  
**T**he death toll from a devastating storm that battered the southeastern United States climbed to at least 130 on Monday, as the disaster became a hot topic in an already bitter election campaign, with the White House angrily refuting claims it had been slow to respond.



Houses partially destroyed by flooding following Hurricane John in Acapulco, Guerrero State, Mexico, on Monday. AFP

With hundreds still unaccounted for across several southeastern US states and the death toll climbing, President Joe Biden announced he would travel to storm-ravaged North Carolina today to monitor rescue efforts.

### Trump 'lying'

Biden also accused former president Donald Trump of spreading lies, after the Republican presidential candidate charged, without evidence, that the federal government was ignoring the disaster brought on by Hurricane Helene and denying help to his supporters.

"He's lying," Biden told reporters in the Oval Office, adding that he had spoken to North Carolina governor Roy Cooper "and he told him he's lying. I don't know why he does it... that's simply not true, and it's irresponsible."

At least 130 people were killed by the storm and associated flooding — 57 in North Carolina, 29 in South Carolina, 25 in Georgia, 14 in Florida,

## IS SEPTEMBER WETTER THAN USUAL?

With typhoon Yagi battering Asia, storm Boris drenching parts of Europe, extreme flooding in the Sahel and hurricane Helene wreaking havoc in the US, September so far has been a very wet month.

But while scientists can link some extreme weather events directly to human-caused global warming, it remains too early to draw clear conclusions about this sodden month.

"You will always have some sort of extreme weather events, but their intensity has been magnified by global warming, especially in the context of rainfall," Paulo Ceppi from Imperial College London's Grantham Institute has told AFP. "That's probably one of the common drivers of these different events in very different parts of the world." Early indications from monthly data show some record-breaking precipitation levels in the regions affected. — AFP

four in Tennessee and one in Virginia, according to tallies from local authorities and media reports compiled by AFP.

Emergency workers continued a grim search for hun-

dreds of people still unaccounted for across the affected states, where torrential rains brought widespread havoc.

With Biden preparing to head to North Carolina, Trump

on Monday visited Georgia, another epicentre of the destruction — and both are among the key swing states where the US election will be decided in just five weeks' time.

"The federal government is not being responsive," Trump told reporters. "The vice-president, she's out someplace, campaigning, looking for money," he said, referring to his election rival, Kamala Harris.

Harris cancelled campaign events to return to Washington Monday for a briefing on the federal response.

Responding to Trump's criticism that he was "sleeping" instead of dealing with the storm damage, Biden defended his decision to spend the weekend at his home in Delaware, saying he was working "the whole time."

### Drowned in their homes

The sheriff's office in Pinellas County, Florida published a grim litany of the nine people left dead there so far, almost all of whom were found in their homes.

Nearly all appeared to have drowned, it said, while the others were buried under debris.

In Georgia, residents faced power cuts, supply shortages, blocked roads and broken communication lines in often mountainous terrain. More than 1.6 million households and businesses remained without power on Monday, according to poweroutage.us. — AFP

## 23 feared dead in Thai school bus fire

'Some of the bodies we rescued were very, very small'

### BANGKOK

**R**escuers worked to recover children's bodies from the charred wreckage of a Thai school bus yesterday after an accident turned the vehicle into an inferno, with more than 20 feared dead.

A devastating blaze tore through the coach on a highway in a northern Bangkok suburb as it carried 38 children — ranging from kindergarten age to young teenagers — and six teachers on a school trip.

The victims' bodies were so badly burnt that officials are unable to give a precise death toll yet. Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said 21 people escaped from the blaze, but 23 are still unaccounted for and likely to be dead.

"Some of the bodies we rescued were very, very small. They must have been very

young," Piyalak Thinkaew, who is leading the search, told reporters, adding that the fire started at the front of the bus.

"The kids' instinct was to escape to the back so the bodies were there," he said.

### Horrific burns

Some of the children who survived suffered horrific burns to their faces, mouths and eyes, doctors treating them told local media.

The bus was one of three carrying children from Wat Khao Phraya Sangkharam school in the northern province of Uthai Thani on a field trip to a science museum in northern Bangkok.

The disaster began when one of the bus tyres burst on the highway around 12.30pm, sending it crashing into a barrier and triggering the inferno, rescuers said.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said the government would pay for the survivors' medical treatment and compensate the victims' families. — AFP



Rescuers carry a victim's body after a fire on a school bus on the outskirts of Bangkok yesterday. AFP

## Former US President Jimmy Carter turns 100

He will celebrate at his 1960s Plains home

### PLAINS

**T**he military flyover is ready, the songs have been rehearsed: Plains, Georgia was waiting to celebrate Jimmy Carter's 100th birthday later yesterday, when its hometown hero becomes the only ever US president to reach the centennial mark.

Carter's longevity — he announced he was going into hospice care more than 19 months ago — has defied all expectations. The former peanut farmer and onetime Georgia governor, known for a strong sense of modest decency, returned post-pres-

idency to the rural hamlet — with a population of approximately 600 — and has remained a steady and celebrated presence here since.

No longer regularly appearing in public, the Democratic ex-president will spend his birthday in the home he and his late wife Rosalynn had built in Plains in the 1960s. — AFP



## Defence 'geek' Ishiba becomes Japan PM

Ex-defence chief intends to call general election for Oct 27

### TOKYO

**J**apan got a new prime minister yesterday, with Shigeru Ishiba setting out to jumpstart a lacklustre economy, defuse a demographic crisis and build an Asian Nato to face down China.

Ishiba, 67, says he intends to call a general election for October 27. He won a tight race on Friday to lead the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has governed almost continuously for decades.

The former defence minister outlined his policies at a news conference late yesterday, warning that "the security environment surrounding our country is the most severe since the end of World War II". "With the Japan-US alliance as a foundation, we will expand the circle of friendly and like-minded countries, using diplomacy and defence to realise the peace of Japan and the region," he said.

### Just two women

Ishiba's new cabinet of 19 ministers was announced after the LDP-dominated parliament approved his appointment. Just two were women, who have historically been poorly repre-



Shigeru Ishiba

sented in politics and business in Japan.

Foreign minister Yoko Kamikawa, one of five women in the outgoing cabinet, was replaced

by Takeshi Iwaya. Katsunobu Kato, who was health minister during the Covid pandemic, was named finance minister, while Gen Nakatani took defence.

Ishiba, who has held at least three previous ministerial posts, tried and failed four times before to become LDP leader.

He finally succeeded this time because, while a divisive figure within the party, he is relatively popular among voters, analysts said, unlike his predecessor Fumio Kishida.

Markets reacted negatively to his selection, with the Nikkei plunging almost 5 per cent on Monday. The benchmark index recovered yesterday, closing up 1.9 per cent. — AFP

### ON GULFNEWS.COM

## S Korea warns North of 'regime end' if it uses nukes

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would face the end of his regime if he ever used his isolated country's nuclear weapons against the South, Seoul's president said yesterday. — AFP



S. Korean president warns North of 'regime end' if it uses nukes



**DUBAI**  
BY THOMAS WRAGG  
Associate Editor

**D**ubai-born prodigy Rayhan Thomas has urged UAE golfers Rayan Ahmed and Abdulla Kalbat to not be overawed by the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship, as the duo prepare for their debut in the prestigious event.

Created in 2009, the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship was established by the Asia-Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC), The R&A and the Masters Tournament to further develop amateur golf in the Asia-Pacific region.

Six years ago in Singapore, Thomas, then an 18-year-old, finished in a share of second at the elite amateur event, just two shots behind champion Takumi Kanaya of Japan.

It was a remarkable comeback for the 2014 Emirates Golf Federation Order of Merit champion, who started the tournament in disastrous fashion with a four-over par 74 and was well outside the cutline.

But over the next 54 holes, Thomas made just two bogeys and 17 birdies to surge up the leaderboard with rounds of 64, 65 and 66. His share of second was, and remains, the best-ever finish by an Indian player in the tournament's history.

Fast forward to 2024, Thomas, who turned professional earlier this season, has passed on some words of wisdom to the UAE contingent taking on Taiheiyo Club Gotemba in Japan this week for the 2024 edition.

"I would just tell them to treat it like any other tournament," Thomas told *Gulf News*. "It's a very prestigious event, but at the same time, you just have to look at it like a regular event."

Kalbat is currently the highest ranked player from the UAE on the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) in 515th.

He became the youngest Emirati to earn ranking, when just 16 years old, with victory at the Junior Masters Golf Tour at The Track, Medyan earlier this year.

**Standout star**

Meanwhile, Ahmed has been one of the standout stars for the UAE since representing the country last year.

The 17-year-old secured both the Individual Gold and Team Gold at the GCC Golf Championship in Qatar in March, before narrowly missing the cut at the Abu Dhabi Challenge on his Challenge Tour debut after carding an impressive first round four under par 66.

**Chance to prove their mettle**

**DUBAI**  
BY A.K.S. SATISH  
Sports Editor

**T**he second edition of the DP World International League T20 Development Tournament provides another opportunity to the UAE future stars to showcase their talents and impress the ILT20 franchises ahead of Season 3. Six teams will compete in the 18-match tournament that will be played on a single-league basis and begins at the ICC Academy Oval 1 on October 6.

The teams were selected via a draft last week — each of the six sides comprises 15 players and includes UAE's star national players and DP World ILT20 participants.

At the end of the tournament, another round of the Player Selection Draft will take place for the Season 3 of the DP World ILT20.

# Thomas urges UAE golfers to stay composed

**24-YEAR-OLD FINISHED RUNNER-UP AT PRESTIGIOUS AMATEUR EVENT IN 2018**



UAE golfer Rayhan Thomas, then an 18-year-old, finished in a share of second at the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship in 2018, just two shots behind champion Takumi Kanaya of Japan.



Rayan Ahmed



Abdulla Kalbat

Since then, he has won the inaugural GCC Youth Games and featured in both the US Junior Amateur Championship and US Amateur Championship, becoming the first player from the UAE to play in the latter two events.

They will join in the field by a host of star names, including defending champion Jasper Stubbs of Australia and four

players representing China inside the top 100 of the World Amateur Golf Ranking: Wenyi Ding, Xihuan Chang, Xiangyun Bai and Paul Chang.

The champion this week will receive an invitation to compete in the 2025 Masters Tournament and The 153rd Open, while the runner(s)-up will gain a place in Final Qualifying for The Open.

It was a remarkable comeback for Rayhan Thomas, who started the tournament in disastrous fashion with a four-over par 74 and was well outside the cutline.

**515**

Abdulla Kalbat's spot in World Amateur Golf Rankings

# India use T20-style strategy in Tests

Hosts clinch 2nd Test by 7 wickets against Bangladesh despite just two days of play

**DUBAI**  
BY A.K.S. SATISH  
Sports Editor

**I**ndia won the second Test against Bangladesh in under two days, thanks largely to their aggressive Twenty20-style approach. The Men in Blue chased down their target of 95 in just 17.2 overs, having faced a total of 312 deliveries — the fourth lowest in Test history. Starting the day at 26 for two, Bangladesh's innings folded by lunch for 146, leaving India with a modest target to secure the win.

India reached their goal with opener Yashasvi Jaiswal scoring his second half-century of the match. The current Twenty20 world champions played the Test like the shortest format, scoring at a remarkable run-rate of 8.22. This aggressive approach put Bangladesh's bowlers under immense pressure.

After three rain-interrupted days, India's bowlers also capitalised on the situation, adopting an attacking line and maintaining relentless pressure on their opponents.

Bangladesh's all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz acknowledged India's strategy, saying: "In Test cricket, we see different scenarios and today, it was like a T20. India came with a plan and mindset of winning, the way they scored runs from top to bot-

**FEWEST BALLS FACED BY TEAM TO WIN TEST**

- 276 — Eng vs West Indies, 1935
- 281 — Ind vs South Africa, 2024
- 300 — South Africa vs Zimbabwe, 2005
- 312 — India vs Bangladesh, 2024
- 327 — Australia vs South Africa, 1932

tom. We tried to restrict them, but credit goes to them and they are also a top team with experienced and world-class players."

**Aggressive approach**

India's aggressive approach is not new, as they used a similar strategy to defeat South Africa earlier this year under coach Rahul Dravid. However, the new partnership between skipper Rohit Sharma and Gautam Gambhir appears to have further enhanced this tactic.

"When Rahul [Dravid] bhai said he was done, we had a fantastic time together. Then life moves on ... With Gautam Gambhir, I've played with him and I know what sort of mindset he has. It's still early days, but it's been very fruitful," Rohit Sharma told the broadcasters after the win. "The batters were willing to take the risk, and we were ready to give ourselves a chance at a result."



India's Jasprit Bumrah celebrates with teammates after their victory over Bangladesh in the second Test yesterday.

# Sutton: Ten Hag must go for United to reach the top

United's defeat on Sunday was their 8th loss at Old Trafford in their last 20 matches

**DUBAI**  
BY THOMAS WRAGG  
Associate Editor

**F**ormer Premier League striker Chris Sutton insists Manchester United must act quickly to part ways with manager Erik ten Hag, claiming the club won't reach top quality status until the Dutchman is replaced.

The Red Devils' 3-0 loss to Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday marked their second consecutive home defeat by that scoreline and their eighth loss at Old Trafford in their last 20 matches.

Beyond the humiliating scoreline, it was the manner of the defeat that has intensified the pressure on ten Hag's future. United were completely outplayed and, once again, showed little evidence of progress since ten Hag took charge in 2022.

Although United's hierarchy is standing by their manager for

now, Sutton believes it's only a matter of time before they're forced to part ways with him.

"I think the owners are going to get egg on their face, so they might as well get on with it," Sutton told BBC Radio 5 Live.

"They had faith in ten Hag and in a short space of time it's unravelled. It's not going to happen under ten Hag, I think that's pretty evident. It's who is out there at this moment in time, who is better?"

**'Utter dross'**

"Gareth Southgate's name has popped up, Graham Potter, Thomas Tuchel. I think he's had his time in fairness. You can't spend 600 million and still play utter dross which is what Manchester United are doing.

"This is just going to rumble on, Manchester United are not a top quality team and until they get a top quality coach in they are not going to improve."

One of the main criticisms of ten Hag is his failure to get United fully committed to his footballing philosophy.

In contrast, managers like Arne Slot, Enzo Maresca, and Ange Postecoglou — who have all



Manchester United's manager Erik ten Hag reacts during the League Cup match against Barnsley at Old Trafford.

taken charge of Premier League clubs since ten Hag's appointment — have already instilled their distinct playing styles.

For Slot and Maresca, in their debut Premier League seasons with Liverpool and Chelsea, it took just a few games to establish their teams' identities.

While ten Hag is ultimately to blame for this, Sutton also called out Ineos, who took control of the sporting side of the club earlier this year, for sticking with him in at the end of the

2023/24 season, despite widespread reports they planned to replace the 54-year-old.

Instead, they handed him a new contract shortly after United's surprise FA Cup final victory over Manchester City, a result credited with extending ten Hag's tenure. "This is his [ten Hag's] third season," he added.

"Six hundred million odd pounds later. I actually don't think it was the 3-0 score line, it was how the whole game panned out. "At the start of this season

**13th**  
place is United's position in the Premier League table

you could put Tottenham and United into a similar category. But Ange Postecoglou has been there a season less and you can see what they are trying to do.

"Whether you agree with everything Postecoglou does, in terms of the way he sets his team up, but they so have an identity.

"I don't think this is on ten Hag though, I think this is on Ineos. They all must be talking to each other at the top of the club. In the summer, they were actively looking for someone else. It's not that they rated ten Hag, but he won the FA Cup.

"At this moment in time, if we look forward three months, can we honestly say that this Manchester United team are going to improve under ten Hag, based on what he has spent and what he has achieved?"





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**Branch closure and DE - Registration**

StarME (Branch), (License No: 50188) located at Dubai CommerCity, Dubai, UAE, licensed with the Dubai CommerCity wishes to announce its decision taken via board resolution passed at its Board meeting held on August 22, 2024 regarding closing down and DE - Registration of "StarME (Branch)" Accordingly, any 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:

Company Name (StarME (Branch))  
Dubai, U.A.E  
Tel No. 971502929758 | Email: ralph.joudet@etoilegroup.com  
Claims received after expiry of the notice period of 45 days shall not be considered

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC - DASAPHARM EAST FZCO**

M/s ADAM GLOBAL AUDITING AND ACCOUNTING, being the voluntary liquidator for Dasapharm East - FZCO, an International Free Zone Authority (IFZA) Company, incorporated on 21 August 2023, at Dubai Integrated Economics Zone, United Arab Emirates, pursuant to DIEZA Implementing Regulations, 2023, with registration number 34042, do hereby notify that Dasapharm East - FZCO is under the process of Liquidation. Creditors may take the necessary actions to settle / protect their interests immediately hereof within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice by contacting the voluntary liquidator at:

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By **Manjusha Radhakrishnan**  
Entertainment Editor

Labeling South Indian actor Arvind Swami, known for his roles in *Roja* and *Bombay*, merely as the epic discovery of seminal director Mani Ratnam feels reductive.

However, that's precisely what happened when we sat down to interview the actor in Dubai. Swami's chequered film career is marked by a series of cinematic gems, many of which were crafted by Ratnam. His decision to make his acting comeback in the Ratnam film, *Kadal*, following a near-fatal automobile accident that threatened his mobility, further cements this association. Given such a profound history, it's challenging not to link him to a creative juggernaut like Ratnam.

Yet, while in the UAE promoting his new film, *Meiyazhagan*, alongside actor Karthi, Swami chooses not to dwell on these labels.

"I never took it [Mani Ratnam's discovery tag] seriously in the first place," he remarked in an interview with *Gulf News*.

"How I am perceived is not within my control. So when people said those kinds of things, I never took it too hard. I didn't have to move away from such labels because I didn't move in there in the first place," he added.

**RELUCTANT ACTOR**

Swami, clad in a muted lime green jean and a basic white T-shirt, is what you call the "reluctant actor." In it for the joy of working in great films and compelling narratives, but not there to court fame, adulation, or glory, Swami claims he doesn't enjoy the attention and fanfare that comes with being a public figure. The only validation he seeks, perhaps, is the approval from his viewers when he is appreciated for his performance. He claims he often introduces himself by his name in public and doesn't expect everyone to know him.

"I enjoy the process of working in the film, but I don't really enjoy the stardom. I'm still uncomfortable. I don't think of myself as a star. I just want to focus on my work, move forward, and do the next interesting thing — be it acting or something else. I want to pick and choose what I want to do in life."

**SELF-IMPOSED SABBATICAL**

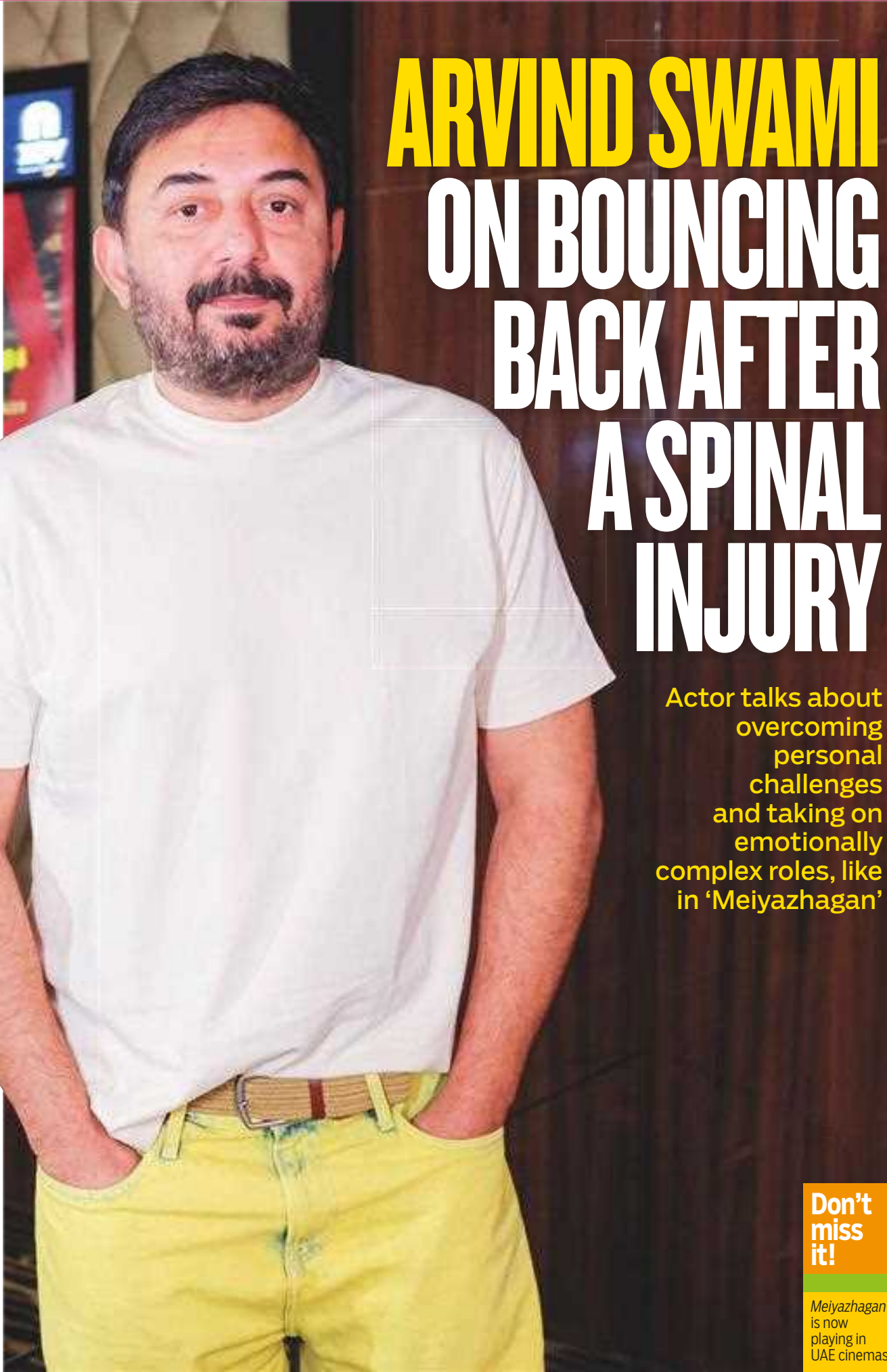
He didn't limit himself to being an actor alone. In 2000, he went on a self-imposed sabbatical from movies and chose to focus on his entrepreneurial ambitions. He began managing his father's company, V D Swamy and Company, and followed it up with his own hit start-up. In 2005, he founded Talent Maximus, a company focused on payroll processing and temporary staffing in India, and reportedly transformed it into a \$400-million-plus company.

"I don't think of my business as just a job. I don't start out saying: 'How do I make money?' I start out by saying: 'How do I solve a problem?' The rest can be figured out later," he said.

The actor, who made his Tamil cinema debut in 1991 with *Thalapathi* and followed it up with web series like *Navarasa*, believes he marches to his own tune. "I didn't do a film for 13 years, and I wasn't planning to make a comeback with *Kadal*. It was just an option provided by Mr Mani Ratnam, and when you think you can't do it, you tend to challenge yourself. My comeback was a challenge that I took up for myself."

**INJURY, AND A PURPOSE**

"Between my cameo in *Alai Payuthy* [2000] and *Kadal* [2013], a lot happened. The most relevant thing was that I had a spinal injury in 2005. I was in bed for a couple of years. I had a partial paralysis of my leg, among other injuries. So when *Kadal* came my way, it was more a challenge internally on whether I could get back into shape, get back my mobility," said Swami. He claims *Kadal*, which opened to mixed reviews, instilled a sense of purpose during this time.



# ARVIND SWAMI ON BOUNCING BACK AFTER A SPINAL INJURY

Actor talks about overcoming personal challenges and taking on emotionally complex roles, like in 'Meiyazhagan'



Arvind Swami and Karthi play cousins in *Meiyazhagan*, a simple film with a rare script about two people finding each other.

Don't miss it!

Meiyazhagan is now playing in UAE cinemas

Photos: Virendra Saklani/Gulf News, IMDB

The easiest thing to do is mount a movie on a large canvas with 20 characters and multiple fights ... But to write a movie that expands a thin line about two cousins meeting and make it interesting for two or more hours, is all about the writing and execution."

ARVIND SWAMI ★ Actor



Scan the QR code to watch Arvind Swami in conversation with *Gulf News*

**ARVIND SWAMI ADVOCATES FOR SAFE, SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACES AND COMMON SPACES FOR OPEN DIALOGUE**

Arvind Swami called for the urgent need for safe and comfortable environments within the film industry.

"You need to provide an environment where people are comfortable. Whatever the situation is, ensure that help is available, and that everyone on your set feels at ease and has access to information on where to seek assistance."

As discussions around safety and accountability in the film industry gain momentum in India, following the damning revelations of sexual misconduct on film sets and gender discrimination by the Hema Committee in Kerala, this actor has emerged as a crucial voice advocating for the establishment of safe and supportive workplaces.

The actor stressed on the importance of establishing clear guidelines and educating all individuals about the necessity of common spaces for open dialogue.

"It's always better to meet in public places. This helps avoid situations that could lead to discomfort," he explains.

Swami is clear that these guidelines are not just for women, but are relevant for everyone involved. "Ultimately, it's about ensuring everyone understands what's acceptable behaviour and what's not," he asserts.

And what's a good start? "Recognise when someone is uncomfortable, and educate people on how to cultivate spaces where everyone can feel safe and respected."

"So that way, *Kadal* is more special than some of my other hits. It helped me get to another stage in my life."

Just like Hollywood actor Christopher Reeve, who suffered a spinal injury during a horse-riding accident in 1995, or icon Jeff Bridges, who faced a serious fall while filming, Swami also made a remarkable comeback. His struggle almost mirrored American rapper Jason Derulo, who sustained spinal injuries during a dance rehearsal, and bounced back on stage through grit and resilience.

Swami says he isn't familiar with Derulo, but he relates to that struggle where even getting out of bed to take a shower meant "excruciating" pain.

"I would have to sit down, like three or four times before I got from my bed to the shower. Here's when you realise you take a lot of things for granted. When you're in that kind of excruciating pain, or when you don't have full control of your limbs, you get a different perspective on life," said Swami.

**TWO HALF-MARATHONS**

He remembers how he chose to run two half-marathons after *Kadal*.

"I was in bed for two years, right ... It was not about training for a marathon; it was more mental. Those last three or four kilometres that you had to run were done is when you reminded yourself of the time when you couldn't get

out of bed and walk 10 metres," said Swami. He went out on a limb, no training or coach, to prove that his mind could be stronger than his tired body. "I am sure there were better ways to do it [run a half-marathon], but I needed to do it for my satisfaction."

Every choice that he makes today, including taking on *Meiyazhagan* with Karthi, is a fully thought-out move.

"It's a very rare script. You don't get stories like this, nor do you get opportunities to work in films like this."

The film, directed and written by C. Prem Kumar, is about two cousins who bond as adults. In the film, Karthi plays the good-hearted cousin, while Swami plays his relative who returns

to his childhood home. Swami's character carries emotional baggage, and his troubled past shapes his present. There's no huge conflict or supervillains in this film, but it's not often that you get to work in a simple film about two people finding each other.

**ALL IN THE WRITING**

"The story will touch you on different levels. No sensible actor will think twice about taking on this film ... The easiest thing to do is mount a movie on a large canvas with 20 characters and multiple fights ... But to write a movie that expands a thin line about two cousins meeting and make it interesting for two or more hours, is about writing and execution," he said.

According to the actor, the testament to a riveting film is all in the writing. His pet peeve? Directors who act out the scenes for the actors to ape. His other pet-peeve: He's not one to embrace 'wokeness' for its own sake; he finds the concept of "72 gender pronouns" perplexing and questions the extensive classifications.

But none of this comes from a mean space.

This actor gives off this infectious 'live-and-let-live' vibe. In no mood to leave any lasting legacy as an actor, all he hopes is to play roles, in all its glorious complexities.

His pragmatism extends to his philosophy on the fleeting nature of fame. "Just forget about me. Move on to the next person who's entertaining you ... I don't want to be remembered. I know that it doesn't make a difference even if I am not here or whether anyone remembers me."



Rock legends will perform in Dubai on January 27, marking their first concert in the Middle East

By **Manjusha Radhakrishnan**  
Entertainment Editor

**C**alling all Green Day fans. The five-time Grammy Award-winning American rock band will perform in Dubai on January 27, 2025, marking their first concert in the Middle East and fans can now enter a contest to win two VIP tickets, *Gulf News* can exclusively reveal.

All you need to do is purchase two Golden Circle or Regular Standing tickets as part of the promotion, 'When September Ends!'

Purchases made from October 1 to 14 will be automatically entered into the draw for the VIP upgrade. The concert will also feature a performance from The Offspring.

Green Day's performance celebrates the 20th anniversary of their hit, *Wake Me Up When September Ends*, part of the *American Idiot* album. Concertgoers can expect a setlist that includes classic songs and tracks from their latest album, *Saviors*.

**LONG OVERDUE**

"A Green Day concert in the region has been a long time coming, and to have them finally performing in Dubai is going to be a memorable moment for so many people. We're hugely excited to give fans this special VIP opportunity where the lucky winners, admittedly in the least punk fashion, will enjoy one of the best and most authentic concert experiences out on global tour and in the coolest fan enclosure," said organiser Thomas Ovesen, CEO, All Things Live Middle East, in a statement.

The concert will take place in an open-air venue at Expo City Dubai, accommodating 30,000 fans.

It's no secret that the iconic band has shaped the landscape of punk rock since their formation in 1986. Their breakout album, *Dookie*, introduced mainstream audiences to the genre, featuring hits like *Basket Case* and *When I Come Around*. Green Day's ability to blend catchy melodies with poignant lyrics has made them one of the most influential bands of their generation, inspiring countless artists and maintaining a dedicated fan base worldwide.

For ticket purchases and details, visit [greendaydx.com](http://greendaydx.com).



Photos: Supplied, ANI

**Actor Rajinikanth hospitalised**

Actor Rajinikanth, 74, has been admitted to a private hospital in Chennai after experiencing abdominal pain. Reports said, the actor was to have undergone an elective procedure following clearance from a cardiologist due to a heart-related concern.



Rajinikanth is expected to return home soon after the completion of his medical treatment. The actor initially visited the hospital for digestive discomfort and was under observation for further tests.

Rajinikanth is a cultural icon and one of the most beloved actors in Indian cinema. On the professional front, Rajinikanth has been filming his upcoming movie, *Coolie*, with director Lokesh Kanagaraj. A day before his hospitalisation, the superstar had met veteran filmmakers S.P. Muthuraman and A.V.M. Saravanan. — M.R.

**Govinda hurt in freak firing accident**

Actor and Shiv Sena leader Govinda underwent an emergency surgery for a bullet injury sustained when he accidentally shot himself in the leg at his home in Mumbai after his licensed gun misfired early Tuesday morning.



In an audio message shared by Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction) member Krishna Hegde, Govinda updated his fans on his condition, saying, "With the blessings of you all and my parents, the bullet has been removed. I thank the doctors and you for keeping me in your prayers."

The incident took place around 4:45 am when Govinda's licensed revolver accidentally discharged while he was putting it back in the cupboard, according to Mumbai Police. He was preparing to leave for Kolkata at the time.

A Mumbai Police official also confirmed that Govinda's injury was not serious. — ANI

**Hollywood & Bollywood at cinemas in UAE & GCC**



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