UAE and Costa Rican Presidents witness signing of landmark CEPA agreement
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UAE President, Saudi Crown Prince call for intensified efforts towards immediate ceasefire
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Aletihad

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UAE President: Safety of residents and citizens top priority

His Highness appreciates level of awareness and responsibility demonstrated by people

His Highness also directs that necessary support be provided to all families impacted by the severe weather

ABU DHABI (WAM)

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has reaffirmed that the safety and security of citizens and residents is the top priority of the UAE government.

His Highness appreciated the level of awareness and responsibility demonstrated by people during the adverse weather conditions witnessed recently across the country.

His Highness directed concerned authorities to quickly work on studying the condition of infrastructure throughout the UAE and to limit the damage caused after the heaviest rainfall on record.

His Highness also directed that necessary support be provided to all families impacted by the severe weather, ordering the transfer of affected families to safe locations in cooperation with local authorities.

His Highness expressed his appreciation to members of the national and local emergency and crisis teams and various authorities in managing rescue and evacuation operations during the unprecedented conditions, which had a positive impact on preserving lives and property.

His Highness appreciated the spirit of solidarity of the UAE community during the weather conditions, noting it to be a true essence of the UAE identity.

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UAE President receives phone call from Turkish President
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UAE President receives letter from President of Azerbaijan
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His Highness attends World Future Energy Summit 2024

Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed praises UAE efforts to develop clean technology

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Court for Development and Fallen Heroes' Affairs, has attended the World Future Energy Summit 2024 at ADNEC Abu Dhabi.

The summit gathers industry leaders, innovators and policymakers to discuss clean energy solutions and sustainable initiatives.

His Highness praised the efforts of the UAE to support the development of clean energy technologies to ensure a green future for all.

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Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed visits a pavilion at the summit (WAM)

App developed by MBZUAI helps diagnose Malaria

MAYS IBRAHIM (ABU DHABI)

A team of researchers at the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) has unveiled a real-time autonomous malaria diagnosis app to combat the mosquito-borne disease. This cutting-edge application, developed by experts including Dr. Mohammad Yaqub, an associate professor specialising in computer vision at MBZUAI, promises to revolutionise healthcare access, particularly in regions with limited resources.

At the World Future Energy Summit 2024, Yaqub emphasised its impact on countries like Indonesia and India, where malaria remains a pressing issue.

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UAE pledges $100 million in aid to Sudan

PARIS (WAM)

H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan Al Nahyan, Minister of State, participated in meetings during the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan, held in Paris, which was co-organised by France, Germany, and the European Union.

The conference was attended by several countries as well as international and regional organisations aiming to further advance peace initiatives in Sudan.

During the conference, Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan affirmed the UAE's commitment to supporting international endeavours aimed at achieving a permanent and immediate ceasefire, finding a peaceful solution to the crisis, and continuing to provide aid to the Sudanese people.

In this regard, the UAE pledged $100 million to support humanitarian efforts in Sudan and its neighbouring countries.

The high-level meetings addressed initiatives aiming to establish peace in Sudan and ways to strengthen them. The meetings culminated in the adoption of a document outlining the principles that support resolving the conflict, and reinforcing humanitarian and diplomatic efforts.

Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan commended the extensive efforts of the UAE to put an end to the crisis that has inflicted suffering on the Sudanese people.

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Etihad Water and Electricity on mission to strengthen infrastructure
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Is love of live music wrecking your hearing? Don't let it
PAGE 17 | PERSPECTIVES



Al Ain readies to soak in Challenge Tour action
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UAE

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His Highness welcomes the agreement as a new chapter in UAE-Costa Rica economic relations

UAE and Costa Rican Presidents witness signing of CEPA





His Highness noted that the UAE is committed to the establishment of strategic partnerships with nations that prioritise forward-thinking economic development



The UAE President witnesses the signing of the Comprehensive Partnership Agreement with Costa Rica (Photos by Abdulla Al Bedwawi and Ryan Carter)

ABU DHABI (WAM)

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and His Excellency Rodrigo Chaves Robles, President of Costa Rica, have witnessed the signing of the UAE-Costa Rica Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) during a virtual ceremony.

The agreement, which was signed by Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, and Manuel Tovar, Minister of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica, heralds a new era of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. It will also enhance trade flows, increase private-sector collaboration, and provide new opportunities for investment, particularly in priority sectors such as logistics, energy, aviation, tourism, and infrastructure development.



The UAE President and the President of Costa Rica witness the signing of the agreement

It is the latest agreement to be signed under the UAE's new foreign trade agenda, which seeks to expand the nation's network of trade partners around the world, establish new markets for exports, and further secure the UAE's status as a trade facilitator and global gateway for goods and services.

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan welcomed the agreement as a new chapter in UAE-Costa Rica economic relations, which saw non-oil trade exceed $65 million in 2023, up 7% increase over 2022 and 31% over 2021. His Highness also highlighted the importance of trade to international cooperation, particularly in the pursuit of secure, resilient supply chains and solutions to pressing global issues such as climate change and food security.

The agreement will enhance trade flows, increase private-sector collaboration, and provide new opportunities for investment, particularly in priority sectors

His Highness remarked that the UAE is committed to the establishment of strategic partnerships with nations that prioritise forward-thinking economic development for the betterment of the global population.

The UAE-Costa Rica Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, His Highness noted, exemplifies this vision by deepening ties and fostering collaboration with a nation that, like the UAE, places innovation, sustainability, and diversification at the forefront of its economic roadmap.

Upon implementation, His Highness continued, the UAE anticipates that the UAE-Costa Rica CEPA will catalyse trade and investment into priority sectors, propelling both nations towards shared economic success and prosperity for their respective businesses and peoples.

For his part, His Excellency Rodrigo Chaves Robles said: "I am delighted about the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Costa Rica and the United Arab Emirates. This is the first agreement of its kind between Costa Rica and a country of the Middle East, aligning with our administration's strategic objective of expanding into new markets. I firmly believe this economic partnership will unlock a myriad of trade and investment opportunities leading to increased prosperity for our people."

UAE

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Their Highnesses discuss regional developments

UAE President, Saudi Crown Prince call for intensified efforts towards immediate ceasefire

ABU DHABI (WAM)

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, have discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties and boost collaboration for the mutual benefit of the two nations. They also addressed key regional and international issues of common interest.

Their Highnesses reviewed the situation in the Middle East and the grave threats it poses to regional security and stability. They urged all parties to exercise maximum restraint and prevent the region and its people from suffering the consequences of a wider conflict.

The phone call also addressed efforts being made to enhance the response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, stressing the importance of intensifying endeavours to bring about an immediate ceasefire, provide full protection to civilians in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law, and ensure the sustainable and unimpeded flow of sufficient humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.



Their Highnesses stressed the need for determined international action to prevent further regional escalation of the conflict

Their Highnesses stressed the need for determined international action to prevent further regional escalation of the conflict. They also highlighted the importance of establishing a clear political pathway towards achieving a just and comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution, to ensure the security and stability of the region's countries and people.

Abu Dhabi Ports Group establishes Youth Council

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

Abu Dhabi Ports Group (AD Ports) has announced the formation of its Youth Council, in coordination with the Federal Youth Authority, as part of its continuous efforts to implement the directives of the wise UAE leadership to empower youth.

The Youth Council will work to provide a nurturing environment for youth creativity, as well as to develop initiatives and projects related to AD Port's business interests, alongside empowering and nurturing their talents and instilling values that align with the group's objectives.

Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Managing Director and Group CEO, AD Ports Group, said: "Our youth are our greatest asset. They are the foundation on which we can build our plans for the advancement of our society. Their energy and talent are essential for AD Ports Group, as we constantly work to raise awareness among this segment and enhance their role in serving the UAE, in line with our wise leadership's vision.

"The newly launched council will seek to actively involve youth in decision-making so that they have a fundamental role in shaping the future of our Group and driving UAE's prosperity."

"The council will be the focal point with our youth, listening to their opinions and developing their talents. I call upon the council's members to use their talents to develop practices that enhance operations and ensure performance excellence," Al Shamisi added.

Hamad Mohammed Al Hosani, Director of Human Capital and Emiratisation, will chair the council, which includes members representing all sectors of the group, including: Zayed Hashem Musaed, Rawdha Abdulla Al Mheiri, Mohamed Khaled Al Rashdi, Sultan Saleh Al Marri, Abdulrahman Abdulla Al Maskari, Shamma Awad Al Ghaithi, Shamsa Abdelwahab Al Najjar, Abdulrahman Mohammed Al Nuaimi, Shamma Mohamed Al Khoori, Mariam Ismaeil Al Hammadi, and Saif Ali Al Maskari.

The Youth Council's responsibilities will include providing a unified and sustainable platform for engagement with decision-makers at AD Ports, implementing approved initiatives, coordinating with federal entities, the private sector, and any entity wishing to implement a youth-specific initiative and overseeing youth events, initiatives, and activities.

'Our youth are our greatest asset,' said the AD Ports Group CEO

The council will also work on compiling and keeping track of available statistics and data about youth and ensuring that a special category for youth is included in all of AD Ports' surveys and studies. The group will also submit performance measurement reports to senior management, setting the national youth agenda and proposing the necessary budget for implementing all of the council's objectives.

Arabic Language Centre receives submissions for third Kanz Al Jeel Award

ABU DHABI (WAM)

The Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC), continues to receive submissions for the third edition of the Kanz Al Jeel Award until May 31, 2024, to provide creative individuals with the opportunity to showcase their creative works.

Dr. Ali bin Tamim, Chairman of the ALC, said: "The Kanz Al Jeel Award has become a notable and prestigious milestone in the cultural and literary sphere at the regional level, due to its ability to attract high-quality submissions from literature enthusiasts and writers with creative projects that elevate the stature of this authentic literary genre."

"We aim for the Award to continue as a catalyst for creativity in the field of poetry and literature, as well as a platform that aligns with the Centre's strategic objectives to promote the Arabic language and strengthen its significance," Bin Tamim added. "Furthermore, we aspire for it to serve as a notable cultural event that highlights the beauty and excellence of Poetry Matching, and its essential role in enriching the intellectual and cultural movement with its authentic content and values."

The ALC launched the Kanz Al Jeel Award to acknowledge unique poetic compositions, folklore research, and studies into Nabati poetry; it is given to researchers and artists who have presented works that focus on the heritage associated with Nabati poetry and its authentic values. The Award's name is inspired by a poem of the Founding Father of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and it aims to promote poetry and its role as a mirror of society and an embodiment of Emirati and Arab creativity.

The conditions for participating in the Award, which offers a total prize pool of Dh1.5 million, are designed to enhance competitiveness. A set of strict criteria and standards are used to evaluate submitted entries and studies, in a bid to ensure fairness and credibility. Under these, the nomination of candidates for the Creative Personality category is done through academic, research, or cultural institutions, or by the Award's Higher Committee. Nomination for the remaining five categories is open to individual creators, literary and cultural institutions, universities, and publishing houses.

Candidates must have actively contributed to enriching and developing the local and Arab poetic, critical, or artistic movements. Submitted works must demonstrate a high degree of authenticity and innovation, representing a significant addition to human culture and knowledge. Additionally, submitted works must have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) to protect intellectual property rights.

One work may be submitted for one Award category, and entries should not have participated in any other competition or received another award in the same year. Winners of the Kanz Al Jeel Award can apply for the award again five years after winning. Works must be written in Arabic, except for the Translation, Studies and Research, and Creative Personality categories. The Kanz Al Jeel Award reserves the right to publish submitted works.

UAE leaders congratulate President of Syria on Evacuation Day

ABU DHABI (WAM)

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has sent a message of congratulations to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on the occasion of Evacuation Day.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Presidential Court, also dispatched similar messages to the Syrian President and to Prime Minister Hussein Arnous.







The two sides review details of Azerbaijan's hosting of COP29

UAE President receives letter from President of Azerbaijan

ABU DHABI (WAM)

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has received a written letter from Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, discussing bilateral relations and ways to enhance ties.

Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, received the letter during his reception of Azerbaijan's Minister of Energy Parviz Shahbazov in Abu Dhabi.

During their meeting, the two sides reviewed joint cooperation ties between the UAE and Azerbaijan, as well as opportunities to strengthen them to serve their mutual interests across various domains, especially energy and renewables, in addition to issues related to Azerbaijan's hosting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29).

During their meeting, the two sides reviewed joint cooperation ties between the UAE and Azerbaijan



Suhail Al Mazrouei during the meeting with the Azeri Minister of Energy

Discussions covered means of furthering mutual interests across various domains, especially energy and renewables

UAE to host second Gulf Metrology Forum in Dubai with focus on sustainability

DUBAI (ALETIHAD)

The UAE is set to host the second Gulf Metrology Forum in Dubai April 22-23, where industry leaders will discuss the critical role of Metrology in achieving net-zero targets and enhancing economic growth.

The forum is jointly organised by the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT) and GULF Association for Metrology (GULFMET) with sponsorship from the Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council, which is represented by the Emirates Metrology Institute, with its responsibility for overseeing national measurement standards.

Under the theme "Metrology for Sustainability" the forum will raise awareness of the importance of accurate and reliable measurements in boosting the quality of products and services in key sectors. By bringing stakeholders together, the forum aims to foster innovation, spur the creation of more competitive products, analyse the latest trends in meteorology, and highlight the pivotal role of accurate measurements in sectors such as industry, healthcare, energy,



The forum underlines the leadership of the UAE and GCC states in the field of standards and sustainable development

and the environment. Promoting cooperation between experts in the field of meteorology will be a central part of the event.

Hosting the forum in the UAE underlines the country's robust quality infrastructure, reflected by its ranking in the Quality Infrastructure for Sustainable Development Index (QI4SD) issued by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the International Network for Quality Infrastructure (INet QI), in which it is ranked first in MENA and 11th globally.

The forum takes place a month before World Metrology Day, which falls on May 20, 2024 under the same theme, "Metrology for Sustainability". The forum underlines the leadership of the UAE and GCC states in the field of standards and sustainable development.

Enhanced Environmental Monitoring

The Second Gulf Metrology Forum will focus on improving the quality of products and services through accurate and reliable measurements, supporting sustainability by enabling accurate monitoring, and promoting innovation through providing a platform for exchanging knowledge, developing new measurement techniques, and lowering trade barriers.

The forum will focus on improving the quality of products and services through reliable measurements, supporting sustainability through accurate monitoring, and promoting innovation

The agenda covers meteorology, quality infrastructure and the UAE's and GCC's strategic direction in meterology and sustainability. Participants, including experts and representatives from leading meteorology organisations, will exchange knowledge and exhibit innovations during demonstrations.

International Participation

The forum is supported by international and regional meteorology organisations with participation from senior representatives from the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), the International Organisation for Legal Metrology (OIML), the International Metrology Confederation (IMEKO), the Gulf Standardisation Organisation (GSO), and the European Union Laboratory Association (EUROLAB). Directors of the national standardisation agencies of GCC states will also attend in addition to representatives from UNIDO.

Given the pivotal role of the young generation in driving innovation and shaping the future of meteorology, a dedicated session will allow emerging meteorology professionals to share their views and experiences. This discussion takes place in line with BIPM's Young Metrologist 2050+ initiative.

Training Workshops

The forum will hold three workshops to provide participants with critical skills and knowledge. These include a workshop on "Calibration of Non-Automatic Weighing Instruments and Devices" with the support of the GSO, a workshop on "Chemical and Biological Metrology" with the support of BIPM, and a workshop on the "Verification of Pre-Packaged Products" supported by OIML.

His Highness directs a study on the condition of infrastructure throughout the UAE

UAE President:

Safety and security of citizens and residents is UAE government's top priority

His Highness directed that the necessary support be provided to all families impacted by the severe weather, ordering the transfer of affected families to safe locations



ABU DHABI (WAM)

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has reaffirmed that the safety and security of citizens and residents is the top priority of the UAE government. His Highness also expressed his appreciation for the level of awareness and responsibility demonstrated by people during the adverse weather conditions witnessed recently across the country.

His Highness has directed the concerned authorities to quickly work on studying the condition of infrastructure throughout the UAE and to limit the damage caused after the country witnessed its heaviest rainfall on record.

The UAE President also directed that the necessary support be provided to all families impacted by the severe weather, ordering the transfer of affected families to safe locations in cooperation with local authorities.

His Highness expressed his appreciation to members of the national and local emergency and crisis teams and various authorities in managing rescue and evacuation operations during the unprecedented conditions, which had a positive impact on preserving lives and property.

His Highness also highlighted deep appreciation for the spirit of solidarity portrayed by the UAE community during the weather conditions, noting it to be a true essence of the UAE identity.

UAE President receives phone call from Turkish President

ABU DHABI (WAM)

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Wednesday received a phone call from Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, during which he expressed his well-wishes for the safety of the UAE and its people following the heavy rains and the adverse weather conditions witnessed recently across the country.

President Erdoğan expressed his heartfelt wishes for the UAE and its people for continued wellbeing, praying to God to protect them from all harm.

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan thanked the Turkish President, expressing his appreciation for his wishes, highlighting the strong UAE-Türkiye relations and the two countries' mutual commitment to their enhancement.

Masdar to establish dedicated green hydrogen unit

ABU DHABI (WAM)

Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company - Masdar is ramping up its investments in green hydrogen by establishing a dedicated unit to develop specialised projects in this sector locally, regionally, and globally.

This move will reinforce Masdar's leading position in developing renewable and clean energy projects worldwide and consolidate Abu Dhabi's pioneering role as a key player in the green hydrogen sector.

Mohammad Abdelqader El Ramahi, Chief Green Hydrogen Officer, said in statements to Emirates News Agency (WAM) on the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi, that this period is the best time to implement these projects in the UAE, aiming to allocate half of the targeted production capacity according to Masdar's announced strategy by 2030-2033, which is one million tonnes per year of green hydrogen and its derivatives.

The green hydrogen sector is an emerging sector with a promising future, with investments reaching $11 trillion by 2050

El Ramahi explained that half of this quantity has been allocated for development in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, equivalent to 500,000 tonnes of green hydrogen annually, which will enhance Abu Dhabi's leading role as one of the world's main hubs for green hydrogen production. He pointed out that the development of these projects has already begun in early January 2023.

He noted that Masdar has a pilot project with a production capacity of over 2 megawatts of electrolysers that will be dedicated to producing green iron in cooperation with Emirates Steel Arkan. He added that the purpose of this project is to experiment with hydrogen and ensure its effectiveness and economic feasibility.

El Ramahi continued: "We are working to expand this project in the second phase, where we aim to raise efficiency to reach approximately 100 megawatts, but this figure is still under study and development."

He pointed out that Masdar's other green hydrogen projects in the Arab Republic of Egypt reach 4,000 megawatts of electrolysers, and the same in Morocco, in addition to ambitions to expand in Europe, America, and Balkan countries, and to utilise the company's effective presence in more than 40 countries around the world with an investment portfolio of over $30 billion and a production capacity of 20 gigawatts.

He indicated that Masdar is also trying to look for investment opportunities in regional countries, including the Sultanate of Oman, in light of its efforts through the development of these projects to prove the economic feasibility of green hydrogen projects as the fuel of the future.

Masdar's Chief Green Hydrogen Officer said that the green hydrogen sector is an emerging sector with a promising future, with investments reaching $11 trillion by 2050, according to World Bank estimates.

Emirates NBD launches 2nd edition of National Digital Talent Incubator programme

DUBAI (ALETIHAD)

Emirates NBD announced the launch of the second edition of the National Digital Talent Incubator programme, which aims to support the next generation of global entrepreneurs from the UAE's citizens and provide them with opportunities for success and prosperity within and outside the country.

With the support of the Dubai International Financial Centre's (DIFC) Innovation Hub, the six-week programme will be held at the newly opened Innovation One building at the DIFC.

The new batch will include four FinTech startups, led by founders or co-founders who are citizens of the UAE. Participants will have the opportunity to join the comprehensive programme and gain valuable insights focusing on project building and innovation, provided by experts from Emirates NBD and its partners from global companies, including Visa, Microsoft, and Dell Technologies.

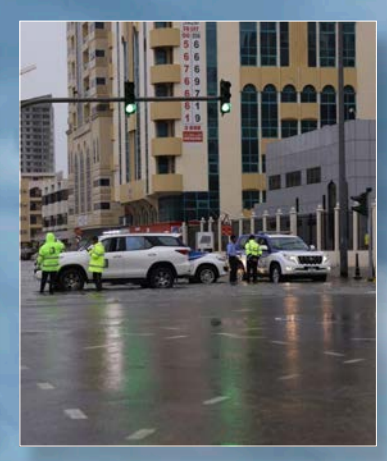
The FinTech market in the UAE is expected to reach $3.16 billion by end of 2024, and grow at a compound annual growth rate of 12.56%

According to market research company Mordor Intelligence, the FinTech market in the UAE is expected to reach $3.16 billion by end of 2024, and grow at a compound annual growth rate of 12.56% to reach $5.71 billion by 2029.



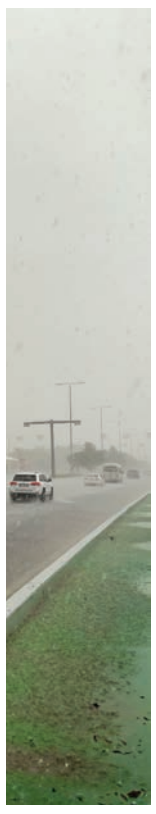
No cloud seeding operations were conducted during Tuesday's extreme weather: NCM







A National Center of Meteorology official told Aletihad that the record-breaking rains, the heaviest in the country in 75 years, were caused by natural weather phenomenon



ALLAN JACOB (ABU DHABI)

The UAE is a pioneer in cloud seeding to induce rainfall, but the winds and thunderstorms that affected the country on Tuesday were not the result of these operations, weather officials told Aletihad on Wednesday.

The National Center of Meteorology (NCM) said the record-breaking rains, the heaviest in the country in 75 years, were caused by a natural weather phenomenon that stretched from Oman, which also experienced a storm last week.

"No, NCM didn't conduct any seeding operations during this event," said Adel Kamal, an NCM official, who added that the centre does not conduct cloud-seeding operations during "extreme weather events".

This clarification by the NCM has quelled speculation on social media that the rainfall was made worse or triggered by cloud seeding operations.

Kamal explained that one of the basic principles of cloud seeding is that clouds are targeted in their early stages before it rains.

"If you have a severe thunderstorm situation then it is too late to conduct any seeding operation moreover," he said.

The NCM official added that the centre takes the safety of its people, pilots and aircraft very seriously.

The centre is a leader in "precipitation enhancement" science, and part of its research involves taking measurements and cloud samples to better understand the dynamics and micro-physical processes that happens in clouds.

The NCM, on Monday, first released an orange weather alert, which was raised to red on Tuesday afternoon when rains and winds lashed the country. It lowered the alert later in the evening as the storm passed.

Based on the NCM forecast, schools and government staff moved online, working and learning remotely during the adverse weather conditions.

Early on Wednesday morning, NCM said the highest rainfall of around 254mm was recorded in Khatm Al Shiklah, Al Ain.

Normal life across the emirates was affected during the worst spell of rains and winds that struck in three waves. Water-logged roads, along with flight delays and cancellations, were reported from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and other major cities.

Dubai Metro operations were also impacted, as police and emergency services personnel worked tirelessly through the night to assist motorists on the roads to reach their homes after their vehicles broke down in the rising waters.

The UAE launched its cloud seeding and rain enhancement programme in the 1990s.

In the early 2000s, it partnered with the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Colorado, USA, along with the Witwatersrand University in South Africa and the US Space Agency, NASA.

The centre takes the safety of its people, pilots, and aircraft very seriously

Remote operations extended for many government offices, schools

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

As the UAE starts to return to normal after experiencing record-breaking severe rainfall, many government offices and schools are extending remote operations through the end of the work week.

The UAE Government announced the continuation of remote work for federal employees through the rest of the week, and the Emirates School Establishment on Wednesday announced the same for all public schools.

The Abu Dhabi Government announced that students would continue to use the remote learning system on Thursday and Friday.

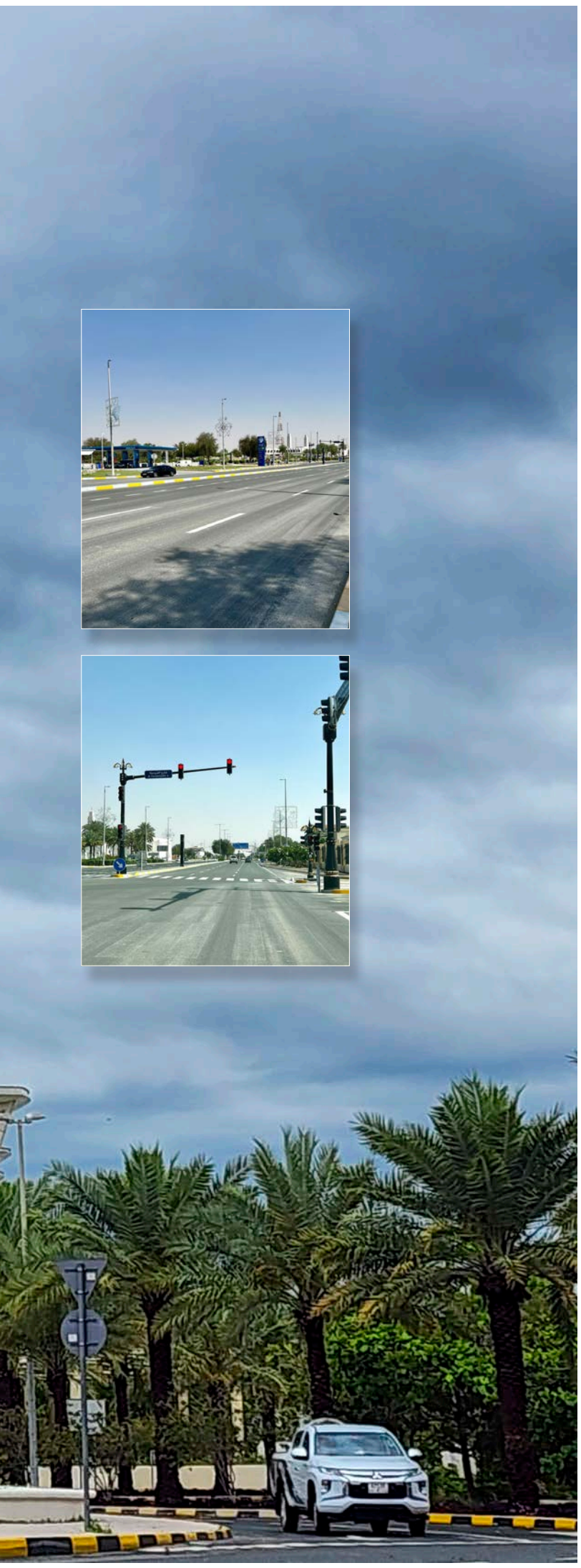
The Khatm Al Shiklah area of Abu Dhabi's Al Ain region witnessed 254.8 mm of rain in under 24 hours

The Government of Dubai also announced that the emirate's private schools would operate through distance learning April 18-19. Dubai Government employees will also work remotely.

Sharjah Government also announced the extension of remote work for government employees for Thursday, April 18. The emirate's private education authority has also decided to implement distance learning on Thursday.

The Abu Dhabi Media Office on Tuesday posted a message of appreciation for the efforts of emergency response teams, who helped a number of stranded vehicles, directed traffic through flooded roadways, and restored power to buildings. The message thanked the Abu Dhabi Police, the Abu Dhabi Civil Defense, the Abu Dhabi Department of Energy, Tadweer, and the Abu Dhabi Department of Municipalities and Transport for their tireless efforts.

The UAE on Tuesday experienced the highest amount of rain recorded in 75 years, with the Khatm Al Shiklah area of Abu Dhabi's Al Ain region wit-



The country now has 60 weather stations, with six aircraft for cloud seeding operations that are mostly conducted in mountainous areas in the Northeast. These operations are often conducted during the summer season when cumulus clouds tend to gather over the region. Only natural salts and no harmful chemicals are used for these operations, according to the NCM.

nessing 254.8mm of rain in under 24 hours, according to the UAE Government Media Office.

In a post on Wednesday, the UAE Government Media Office termed the storms an "exceptional event recorded in [the country's] climatic history".

The National Center of Meteorology said that the volume of rain on Tuesday was the highest since official records began in 1949.

The clouds gradually receded on Wednesday afternoon, with the NCM weather bulletin predicting fair to partly cloudy weather for the rest of the week.

MoI announces end of weather fluctuations, efforts continue to complete recovery phase

ABU DHABI (WAM)



The Ministry of Interior (MoI), in collaboration with the National Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Management Authority, the National Center of Meteorology, and strategic partners, has announced the end of the weather fluctuations, with rainfall stopping and weather conditions gradually improving.

MoI highlighted the efforts of the field teams that worked in a preventive manner and will continue to work diligently until full recovery. The Supreme Committee for Internal Security remained in constant session during the weather conditions to ensure rapid response and guarantee business continuity. All emergency response teams, including the civil defence, ambulance, rescue and Police patrol will continue to work to secure roads and areas with fast-moving streams, valleys and dam exits. The teams are working to manage traffic and clear the rainwater until full restoration of normal life in all civil facilities.

The Ministry expressed deep appreciation to the role of the concerned authorities in dealing with the weather fluctuations, highlighting their contribution in reducing the repercussions of the unusual weather conditions through a proactive and professional integrated response that ensured the protection of lives and properties and enhanced society's stability and safety.

The Ministry praised the positive role of social responsibility reflected in the public's awareness during the weather fluctuations as they put their trust in government bodies to deal with emergency weather conditions and received updates through official state channels. Emphasis was made on the importance of continuing to adhere to the instructions issued by the official authorities and staying clear from stream valleys and water accumulations.

All emergency response teams will continue to work to secure roads and areas with fast-moving streams, valleys and dam exits

Rain-delayed transport gets back on track



ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

The UAE's transport system has rebounded quickly from the record-breaking rains that hit the country on Tuesday.

Zayed International Airport reported being fully operational on Wednesday despite the recent adverse weather, a statement from Abu Dhabi Airports said. From Tuesday through Wednesday, 21 flights, including one freighter and 20 passenger flights, had been diverted from Dubai International Airport (DXB) to Zayed International Airport (AUH).

The statement advised passengers to check their respective airlines' websites, and social media feeds, ahead of arriving at the airport.

Zayed International Airport reported being fully operational on Wednesday despite the recent adverse weather

flydubai had resumed partial operations from DXB starting at 10:00am on Wednesday morning.

In a statement, a flydubai spokesperson said that due to the impact of the severe weather conditions in the UAE on operations and the ongoing challenging road conditions, there have been further flight cancellations on Wednesday.

"We are working very hard to restore our operating schedule and minimise the disruption to our passengers' travel itineraries to get them to their final destination safely. We apologise for the inconvenience caused due to the adverse weather," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson also said that passengers whose bookings have been cancelled will be contacted and offered a full refund, and advised passengers that booked through a Travel Agent to contact them directly for refund or rebooking.

Emirates Airlines, on its official social media accounts, advised its Dubai customers with flights scheduled for Wednesday to not travel to the airport, as check-ins had been suspended for all of its flights.

Air Arabia likewise reported cancelled or rescheduled Wednesday flights, and suspended check-in for flights to and from Sharjah International Airport (SHJ) until 2:00am on Thursday, April 18.

Dubai Metro on Wednesday also came back into service after maintenance work restored the disrupted Red and Green lines, with several stations being reopened. The Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) said that the remainder of the stations would reopen gradually. The RTA also announced that the Dubai Tram was running along its normal route on Wednesday.



Under the patronage of Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed

AVPN Global Conference 2024 to unite social investment efforts to drive humanitarian action in Asia

The event will gather more than 1,500 social investment leaders from across the globe

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

The AVPN Global Conference 2024 will take place in Abu Dhabi from April 23-25, bringing the flagship event of Asia's largest network of social investors to the region for the first time.

Hosted under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Court for Development and Fallen Heroes' Affairs and Chairman of the International Humanitarian and Philanthropic Council, the event will gather more than 1,500 social investment leaders from across the globe to mobilise new partnerships, innovations, and capital towards sustainable social impact in Asia.

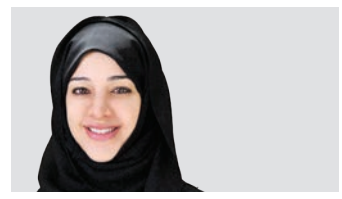
Under the theme "One Asia, One Future", the three-day conference represents an opportunity for diverse funders to learn, connect, and unite in action for Asia, and to help address the region's most pressing social, economic and environmental challenges.

Her Excellency Reem bint Ebrahim Al Hashimy, Minister of State for International Cooperation and member of the International Humanitarian and Philanthropic Council, said: "The UAE knows first-hand that shared challenges require shared solutions. In hosting the AVPN Global Conference 2024, we further our commitment to building a better future for all through combined action, innovation, and sustainable investment. Harnessing Abu Dhabi's convening power, and its ability to unite diverse actors, we look forward to driving new progress and partnerships towards our joint development goals."

The three-day conference represents an opportunity for diverse funders to learn, connect, and unite in action for Asia

This year's conference will be the most inclusive to date, bridging North, South, East, and West Asia through Abu Dhabi's convening capabilities and the AVPN network. Attendees will include investors, philanthropists, corporations, policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and impact organisations from around the world, working within the GCC and all territories eastward as far as Australia and New Zealand.

Naina Subberwal Batra, CEO of AVPN, said: "As the deadline for achieving the SDGs draws near, a $1.5 trillion financing gap in Asia remains a stark reality, exacerbated by the complex challenges the region faces. Amidst this, the landscape of giving continues to shift in Asia, and many new stakeholders have risen to the challenge to address the region's most pressing issues. Against this backdrop, the Global Conference is the leading platform that unites the social investor ecosystem, as newer and seasoned social investors come together under a shared commitment towards social impact. The UAE embodies a rich tradition of philanthropy, and hosting the global conference will allow us to widen our horizon and rally the power of collective action to drive meaningful action across Asia."



Reem bint Ebrahim Al Hashimy

The conference agenda will explore a wide range of topics, including the role of impact investors in driving the net zero agenda

The conference agenda will explore a wide range of topics, including the role of impact investors in driving the net zero agenda, catalysing the clean energy transition with blended finance, leveraging artificial intelligence for philanthropic impact and impact through youth empowerment.

Among the most compelling aspects of the AVPN Global Conference 2024 is its roster of expert speakers. Spanning investors and philanthropists to entrepreneurs, policymakers, and government leaders, it represents those who have made significant contributions to the fields of global development, social impact, and strategic philanthropy.

Confirmed speakers include Her Excellency Shamma bint Suhail Al Mazrui, Minister of Community Development, UAE; His Excellency Dr. Hamdan Musallam Al Mazrouei, Chairman of the Emirates Red Crescent; Her Highness Princess Nouf Mohammad Al Saud, CEO of King Khalid Foundation; Robert Rosen, Director of Philanthropic Partnerships from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and Dato' Amirul Feisal Wan Zahir, Managing Director at Khazanah Nasional Berhad.

The conference builds on the success of the 2023 edition, which saw more than 1,300 attendees from more than 44 markets engage in the global discourse, and the launch of various frameworks, papers and initiatives, including a $3 million fund focused on youth mental wellbeing.





Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed is briefed on Masdar's projects. Also pictured are Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi and senior attendees (WAM)

His Highness praises UAE's efforts towards global clean energy technologies

Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed attends World Future Energy Summit 2024

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Court for Development and Fallen Heroes' Affairs, has attended the World Future Energy Summit 2024 at ADNEC Abu Dhabi.

The summit gathers industry leaders, innovators and policymakers to discuss clean energy solutions and sustainable initiatives.

His Highness praised the efforts of the UAE to support the development of clean energy technologies globally to ensure a green future for all.



Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed in a group photo with a number of young people at the Masdar pavilion during the World Future Energy Summit



Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed during his tour of the exhibition. Also pictured is Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi



Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed during his visit to the World Future Energy Summit. Also pictured is Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi



Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed is briefed by one of the exhibitors



Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed during the visit to the Tadweer pavilion at the World Future Energy Summit



Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed is briefed on the projects of the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority. Also pictured is Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi

On the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit 2024

Researchers at MBZUAI revolutionise malaria diagnosis through AI-powered app



MAYS IBRAHIM (ABU DHBAI)

In an endeavour to combat malaria, a team of researchers at the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) has unveiled a real-time autonomous malaria diagnosis app. This cutting-edge application, developed by experts including Dr. Mohammad Yaqub, an associate professor specialising in computer vision at MBZUAI, promises to revolutionise healthcare access, particularly in regions with limited resources.

On the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit 2024, hosted by Masdar at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), Yaqub shared insights into the project, emphasising its potential impact on countries like Indonesia and India, where malaria remains a pressing issue amid resource constraints.

The app provides not only accurate diagnosis but also detailed insights into the type and severity of malaria detected

He outlined the challenges faced by individuals in remote areas who lack access to prompt diagnosis and treatment, who often endure lengthy travels to urban centres for medical assistance. The newly developed app offers a game-changing solution, leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to facilitate on-the-spot malaria diagnosis, according to Yaqub.



Dr. Mohammad Yaqub

"Through a simple process involving microscopic examination of blood samples, followed by image capture and analysis using the app, patients can swiftly determine their malaria status and receive tailored treatment guidance. This streamlined approach eliminates the need for extensive travel and enables timely intervention, crucial for containing the spread of the disease," he told Aletihad.

This AI-driven innovation aims to 'bridge the gap' between remote communities and specialised healthcare services

Yaqub noted that the app provides not only accurate diagnosis but also detailed insights into the type and severity of malaria detected. It also offers treatment recommendations, empowering individuals to initiate appropriate measures promptly.

This AI-driven innovation aims to "bridge the gap" between remote communities and specialised healthcare services, potentially saving countless lives, he noted.

The app, which is currently undergoing testing and refinement, is the result of a collaborative effort between MBZUAI and teams in Indonesia, with the aim of enhancing its accuracy and effectiveness. Yaqub highlighted the ongoing progress and outlined the ambitious goal of achieving proficiency equivalent to "experienced pathologists" within the next two years.

The project also includes facilitating predictive analysis to identify potential malaria hotspots. By introducing diverse datasets, including satellite imagery and climate data, the team aims to forecast outbreaks, enabling proactive measures to mitigate the disease's spread, Yaqub said.

He noted that this proactive approach holds significant promise for healthcare authorities, empowering them to allocate resources efficiently and preemptively address emerging malaria threats.

UAE recycling powerhouse BEEAH looks to expand its presence and scope at WFES

KHALED AL KHAWALDEH

(ABU DHABI)

Since 2007, BEEAH Group has emerged to become the UAE's premiere waste management company. Headquartered just outside Sharjah, in a unique dune-inspired building designed by the late Zaha Hadid, the public-private partnership company, has grown to a team of over 13,000 employees, and over 200 clients, and boasts an impressive portfolio of green assets, including waste to energy and recycling plants.

Now, as the company closes in on two decades of operation, its leadership is keen to see it expand into broader spaces, and new markets. This was highlighted by Chief Brand Officer Firas Wahbeh when he sat down with Aletihad on the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi (WFES).

"We're the largest waste management company in the region, especially in the UAE. We also have waste management contracts in Saudi and Egypt, in Medina and the new administrative capital. So now we're looking at expanding beyond that into Riyadh and other parts of Egypt," Wahbeh told Aletihad at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre on Tuesday.



Firas Wahbeh

'The main mission for BEEAH was to divert waste away from landfills'

"We have already achieved a leadership position in the UAE so that's where we're looking at diversifying into other areas like technology, healthcare and real estate, away from waste management."

Wahbeh said the summit provided the perfect catalyst for the company's ambitions, allowing them to meet vendors, partners and potential customers from all around the world and show them what BEEAH has to offer.



The headquarters of BEEAH Group in Sharjah

"The main mission for BEEAH was to divert waste away from landfills. So we have 11 different recycling facilities that are responsible for diverting waste away from landfills to facilities dedicated to a specific type of waste, through these we have achieved the best diversion rate in the region," he said.

"We participated in the summit every year I believe, for the last 10 years. We already have a very good relationship with Masdar, the host of this summit. Finding new partners through partnerships and collaborations is part of our DNA. We look for partners everywhere, every project that we do."

'... We're looking at diversifying into other areas like technology, healthcare and real estate...'

Wahbeh explained that one of the major initiatives that was being discussed at the conference was the plans for a waste-to-hydrogen plant. He said the summit had provided a platform to discuss the brand-new technology with top experts from around the world.

"We attended the green hydrogen summit today, which our group CEO was a speaker at. It was just an opportunity to also share with the public what BEEAH is doing," he said.

"This new technology for producing hydrogen from waste will be part of the way we're contributing beyond the UAE's strategy of reaching 100% renewables by 2050."

Company plans to invest between Dh1.5 to Dh2 billion annually over next five years

Etihad Water and Electricity on mission to further strengthen infrastructure resilience and efficiency



The investments aim to meet the growing demand in the Northern Emirates, mainly driven by population increase along with industrial and commercial growth

MAYS IBRAHIM (ABU DHABI)

Etihad Water and Electricity (EtihadWE) has allocated substantial funds to bolstering water distribution and transmission networks, with investments totalling approximately Dh5 billion over the past five years, said Youssef Souissi, Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer at EtihadWE.

Looking ahead, the company plans to invest between Dh1.5 to Dh2 billion annually over the next five years to further strengthen infrastructure resilience and efficiency, Souissi told Aletihad on Wednesday during an interview on the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit 2024, hosted by Masdar at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC).

He noted that these investments aim to meet the growing demand in the Northern Emirates, mainly driven by population increase along with industrial and commercial growth.

Water, Energy Efficiency Projects

Souissi highlighted EtihadWE's investments in the water infrastructure in the UAE, marked by significant expansions in its storage capacity, network length, and production capacity. Notably, EtihadWE stands as the sole utility in the UAE employing reverse osmosis (RO) for all water production operations, a technology known for its cost efficiency and reduced CO_2 emissions, according to Souissi.

Key among EtihadWE's investments in water is the "NAQA'A" project, one of the world's largest RO desalination plants with a capacity of 150 MIGD (million imperial gallons per day). It was inaugurated in March in the Emirate of Umm Al Quwain by His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Presidential Court. Souissi underscored the collaborative efforts with partners, such as ACWA Power and Mubadala, in realising this monumental undertaking.

Boosting Efficiency through Tech Investments

Technology plays a crucial role in the strategy of EtihadWE, with projects such as the water SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system aimed at optimising operational reliability and energy efficiency, noted Souissi.

He explained that this centralised command and control centre for water operations allows the company to monitor, control, and operate the entire network from a single location. This enhances the reliability of its services, ensuring continuous water availability, while also improving energy efficiency through optimising pumping and electricity usage.

Addressing Non-revenue Water Loss

Souissi noted that EtihadWE is actively tackling issues related to non-revenue water loss through an integrated plan that involves a



Youssef Souissi

combination of rehabilitation programmes and innovative technologies, such as acoustic inspection.

Rehabilitation efforts focus on replacing outdated network segments, following strategic inspections to pinpoint areas of loss for cost-effective correction. The approach aims to avoid unnecessary overhauls, which can be very expensive, he said.

Souissi added that a pilot programme employing smart ball technology is also underway. This involves deploying a specialised ball which traverses the transmission pipes, detecting and logging sounds indicative of leaks. This data is then used to precisely locate the source of the loss, allowing for targeted corrective action.

In alignment with UAE's net-zero goals, EtihadWE is spearheading initiatives in the energy sector. Souissi discussed a forthcoming announcement of a major electric vehicle (EV) charging project, in partnership with the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure (MoEI), to deploy high-speed EV charging stations across the Northern Emirates.

EtihadWE is also working with the MoEI on regulations concerning distributed solar energy, particularly focusing on the installation of solar panels on rooftops in the Northern Emirates, he said.

During the WFES, EtihadWE leaders engaged in panel discussions and workshops to share crucial insights and forge partnerships within the industry.

Under its new status as a semi-government entity under the Emirates Investment Authority (EIA), Souissi stressed that EtihadWE remains committed to supporting the growth of the Northern Emirates through sustained power and water infrastructure development.

The 'NAQA'A' project is one of the world's largest RO desalination plants with a capacity of 150 million imperial gallons per day

During the World Future Energy Summit 2024

MoEI, Japan Cooperation Centre for Middle East explore water desalination

ABU DHABI (WAM)

On the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit (WFES) 2024, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure (MoEI), in collaboration with Japan Cooperation Centre for the Middle East organised a joint session to explore the latest developments in the field and share best practices.

The session brought together companies specialised in water desalination from both sides, local and federal departments, electricity and water companies, the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, Khalifa University, Sharjah University, New York University Abu Dhabi, and several Japanese companies and universities.

'The water projects in the UAE aim to meet the needs of various areas given the continuous increase of the population'

They explored ways to enhance cooperation on energy efficiency, deploying renewable energy, and leveraging the latest desalination technologies. Moreover, they highlighted the UAE's leading desalination projects and smart management technologies that support the UAE Water Security Strategy 2036.

Ahmed Al Kaabi, Assistant Under-Secretary for the Electricity, Water, and Future Energy Sector at MoEI, attended the session, and commended the deep-rooted relations between the UAE and Japan.

Al Kaabi said: "The water projects in the UAE aim to meet the needs of various areas given the continuous increase of the population. Such meetings reflect the joint desire of both countries to expand the scope of cooperation between them."

ADNEC Group, Tadweer Group join forces on sustainable waste practices

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

ADNEC Group has announced on Wednesday that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tadweer Group to strengthen collaboration in waste management and sustainability practices.

The MoU will cover a range of activities including the introduction of expanded waste management systems and solutions. Furthermore, ADNEC Group and Tadweer Group will advocate for sustainable practices and seek to leverage the value of waste by encouraging responsible behaviour through awareness campaigns and initiatives.



Ali Al Dhaheri and Humaid Matar Al Dhaheri during the MoU signing

The agreement also includes provisions for the design and implementation of recycling stations to encourage practising segregation at source. This involves the deployment of newly designed Recycling Vending Machines (RVM) and the implementation of the Tadweer Rewards system. The agreement was signed by Humaid Matar Al Dhaheri, Managing Director and Group CEO of ADNEC Group and Ali Al Dhaheri, Managing Director and CEO of Tadweer Group.

WFES panel session gauges progress in tripling installed renewable energy capacity by 2030

SARA ALZAABI (ABU DHABI)



The UAE has launched an updated energy strategy aimed at increasing the proportion of renewable energy sources by 2030

Investments, addressing financing gaps, grid preparedness, and overcoming obstacles such as satisfying supply chain demand were among topics that came to the fore during a panel discussion on the second day of the World Future Energy Summit (WFES) at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre on Wednesday.

Titled "Energy decarbonization: Tripling installed renewables by 2030", the session explored the feasibility of achieving the ambitious goal of tripling installed renewable energy capacity within a decade.

Abdelmuti Murad, Head of the Energy Strategies and Policies Division at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, discussed how the UAE has launched an updated energy strategy aimed at increasing the proportion of renewable energy sources by 2030. This ambitious goal necessitates an investment of Dh150-200 billion from 2023 to 2030, he said.

According to Murad, this investment "creates a plethora of economic opportunities, redirecting funds from natural gas or fossil fuel usage elsewhere and opening doors for investment in the energy sector. Additionally, the establishment of these enabled energy plants would generate significant employment opportunities, with an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 jobs expected to be created. Furthermore, it also paves the way for enhanced economic growth and industry both domestically and internationally."

International collaboration and stakeholder coordination are crucial for savings and renewable energy deployment, where improved coordination is needed, he noted.

"One of the key aspects of international collaboration is the potential for significant impact through leveraging connections to drive down costs and increase savings in renewable energy deployment," Murad said.



International collaboration and stakeholder coordination are crucial for savings and renewable energy deployment

'The real challenge is, having built it, can we operate the grid securely?'

Bruce Smith, Executive Director of Strategy and Planning at Emirates Water and Electricity Company, discussed the challenge of running a solar and nuclear grid, emphasising the team's focus on building a grid security system for safe operation. "The real challenge is, having built it, can we operate the grid securely?" Smith said.

The most important aspect of ensuring reliability is securing a steady supply of dependable energy, currently the most economical option, according to Smith.

"The cheapest energy that we can integrate into the grid is not necessarily clean solar energy. Solar energy may be the cheapest option, but it poses real operational challenges for maximising its incorporation," Smith noted.

Smith further highlighted the importance of building capacity and maintaining grid reliability for the economy.

He also emphasised that internationally, increasing interconnection with countries, such as Egypt and India, is essential for achieving high levels of decarbonisation.

Carlos Gasco Travesedo, Executive Director, Energy Policy Sector, and Energy Policy Advisor, Abu Dhabi Department of Energy, highlighted the need for a 100% renewable energy system.

He held the view that the future will see challenges in reducing clean energy and renewable energy, but also opportunities for improvement.

Travesedo further examined operational challenges, such as maintaining quality electricity supply, emphasising the importance of sound regulation and investment.

"We are going to face challenges in reducing the amount of clean and renewable energy required by the system over a long period of time. We have visibility to triple renewables clean energy in just a few years. While we will continue to face difficulties, we must also recognise the opportunities and improvements ahead," Travesedo said.

He highlighted that institutional arrangements, market incentives, and international collaboration are crucial for managing renewable penetration and ensuring a smooth transition.

The development of efficient technologies and market tools is essential for meeting targets and ensuring the success of storage approaches and technologies, he said.

"It is essential that the habitat becomes mainstream and competitive for all potential technologies in the semi zone open to get those inputs to ensure that we meet the targets in the best possible way," Travesedo added.

InSinkErator boosts sustainability efforts in UAE with focus on renewable energy

InSinkErator continues to support local renewable energy initiatives and participate in projects to generate energy from waste-generated gases

ABU DHABI (WAM)

Mohamed Karam, Regional Manager at InSinkErator, affirmed that the company is working to enhance its efforts in the field of sustainability and renewable energy in the UAE, in addition to developing strategic partnerships with local institutions to promote innovation and exchange expertise.

Karam added in statements to the Emirates News Agency (WAM) on the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit held in Abu Dhabi that "InSinkErator", since opening its regional headquarters in the UAE in 2011, has been taking important steps towards promoting the use of advanced technology in waste treatment in environmentally friendly ways, and investing in this field to contribute to the conversion of organic waste into energy, which contributes to reducing harmful carbon emissions.


Mohamed Karam

The UAE is a global model for sustainability and clean energy

Karam pointed out that InSinkErator continues to support local renewable energy initiatives and participate in projects to generate energy from waste-generated gases, which enhances its strategy to reduce carbon emissions and support the use of renewable energy in the UAE.

Karam said that the UAE has made great strides in the field of sustainability and clean and renewable energy as part of the country's vision to achieve a balance that emphasises air quality, water purity and conservation of natural resources, noting that the country, thanks to the large investments in clean energy technology and renewable energy projects, is moving steadily towards reducing dependence on oil and increasing the use of renewable energy sources in energy production in line with the National Energy Strategy 2050, which aims to increase the share of clean energy in the total energy mix to 50% by 2050 and reduce the carbon footprint of energy generation by 70%.

Karam noted the UAE's pioneering initiatives like Masdar City, designed to be environmentally friendly. UAE leads in solar energy with one of the world's largest solar power plants in Abu Dhabi.

He added that the UAE is a global model for sustainability and clean energy, working on projects like Dubai Metro to reduce carbon emissions.

He highlighted the significance of the World Future Energy Summit 2024 for sustainable energy and renewables, uniting global experts, innovators, and investors to present latest innovations. Karam emphasised the summit as a key platform for sharing modern energy-efficient technologies, reducing dependence on traditional sources, and promoting clean energy trends for global sustainability.

The UAE has made great strides in the field of sustainability and clean and renewable energy

Aletihad

Index signals group's decline

TRENDS unveils world's first index measuring Brotherhood's global influence

The group's decline can be attributed to various factors, including weakened media influence and mobilisation capacity, internal discord leading to fragmentation, and shifting geopolitical dynamics

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

As part of its engagement at the Paris International Book Fair, TRENDS Research and Advisory debuted the French iteration of the "Muslim Brotherhood Global Influence Index", the world's first metric to gauge the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood across different geographic regions and scopes.

TV presenter Saoud Alkaabi moderated the symposium where the index was introduced, explaining that the index gauges the group's influence across five primary indicators: the influence of the international organisation, political sway, economic impact, media reach, and social imprint.



Mohammed Al-Ali and participants during the symposium



Participants speak during the introduction of the index



A view of the audience during the unveiling of the index

A Sharp Decline in Power

The group has experienced a significant downturn in its power and influence, as revealed by the index, which was developed in collaboration with the University of Montreal in Canada and the University Platform for the Study of Islam (Pluriel). The findings indicate a marked decrease in the group's overall strength, plummeting from 64% (strong) to 48% (medium) between 2021 and 2023. This decline can be attributed to various factors, including weakened media influence and mobilisation capacity, internal discord leading to fragmentation, and shifting geopolitical dynamics, such as the reconciliation between the Arab Quartet countries, Qatar, and Türkiye, which have undermined the group's interests. Additionally, increased security measures, legal prosecution, exposure of hidden aspects through media productions, and heightened public awareness of the group's agenda have contributed to its diminishing influence.

He pointed out that previous setbacks resulted in a decline in the group's overall comprehensive strength from 64% in 2021 to 49.3% in 2022, and further to 48% in 2023. The index results indicated a decrease in the group's strength across all major indicators: political power dropped from 67.7% to 47.5%, economic influence decreased from 66.6% to 60.4%, media presence dwindled from 89.2% to 46.6%, and social impact declined from 77.5% to 61.8%.

Shifts in Power and Influence

Under the supervision of Dr. Wael Saleh, an expert in political Islam at TRENDS, alongside Dr. Patrice Brodeur, associate professor at the University of Montreal, and Hamad Al Hosani, a researcher in political Islam at TRENDS, the index revealed alterations in the distribution of power across geographic regions. Notably, Asia emerged as the foremost contributor to the Muslim Brotherhood's global influence in 2023, relegating North and South America to second place. Additionally, the group's influence witnessed an uptick in Africa, but experienced a decline in both the Arab world and in Europe.

The "Muslim Brotherhood Global Influence Index" (2022-2023) indicates a trajectory towards decline and eventual disappearance. This trend can be attributed to various factors, including internal vulnerabilities within the group, shifts in regional and international dynamics, and evolving perceptions of Arab public opinion towards it.

Asia emerged as the foremost contributor to the Muslim Brotherhood's global influence in 2023

The group's influence witnessed an uptick in Africa, but experienced a decline in both the Arab world and in Europe

'The index serves as a vital tool for understanding the evolving landscape surrounding the Muslim Brotherhood on a global scale'

Dr. Mohammed Abdullah Al-Ali, CEO of TRENDS, said: "The index serves as a vital tool for understanding the evolving landscape surrounding the Muslim Brotherhood on a global scale, offering objective insights into the group's influence across various domains."

He emphasised that the release of the French version of the "Muslim Brotherhood Global Influence Index" reflects TRENDS' dedication to raising international awareness about the dangers posed by the group and promoting collaborative efforts to combat its extremist ideology.



He remarked that TRENDS has given special importance to its Political Islam Studies Program, recognising the threat posed by the movement and its corrosive ideology. The centre has emerged as a prominent global reference in this domain, and has produced a dedicated encyclopaedia on the Muslim Brotherhood comprising 35 published volumes to date, 11 of which have been translated into 15 languages. TRENDS also continuously releases studies addressing various aspects of the subject.

Dr. Saleh elaborated that the index introduces a pioneering model, the first of its kind, with which to assess the power and influence of religious groups. This model combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, utilising main and sub-indicators to gauge various facets of the group's influence across 50 countries spanning five continents.

Additionally, the index addresses the escalating demand for timely and insightful indicators regarding the present and future trajectories of the group's global influence, which are crucial for policymakers to formulate swift and effective responses. The index aims to offer impartial and objective evaluations concerning the group's capabilities and its potential future endeavours.

Professor Brodeur noted that the index is part of the ongoing endeavours by researchers at TRENDS to establish principles for an Arab cognitive framework in examining the phenomenon of political Islam. Additionally, it aims to identify new areas of research, with a particular focus on adopting applied methodologies like the index. Such approaches are instrumental in comprehensively understanding the phenomenon of Brotherhood Islamism, monitoring its dynamics, and tracking its transformations across various dimensions.

Professor Michel Younis, General Coordinator of the University Platform for the Study of Islam, highlighted the significance of the index, noting that it offers a comprehensive roadmap of the group's global influence using rigorous scientific methods.

The index's geographic analysis offers valuable insights into the group's strengths and weaknesses across social, economic, political, and media domains, filling a notable gap in the literature in the French language.

Al Hosani highlighted that the group's influence peaked during the "Arab Spring," emphasising that the index provides valuable insights into how the group has since experienced a decline in influence and power. The index offers a scientific and measurable assessment of this decline across all levels and geographical regions under scrutiny.

Fahd Al Mahri, Head of TRENDS' Dubai Office, provided insights into the centre's recent launch of a measurement tool to examine how social media influencers worldwide perceive the group. This tool, introduced earlier this month, scrutinises social media discussions throughout 2023 to assess the group's popularity and public opinion trends. Al Mahri underscored that the measurement employs an analytical model named "SWOT", evaluating strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities pertaining to the group's influence.

Notably, the analysis revealed that 68.8% of the sample exhibited a negative orientation towards the group, with discussions often portraying the group as distorting Islam and holding extremist views.

The analysis revealed that 68.8% of the sample exhibited a negative orientation towards the group

Economy

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Standardised and global regulatory frameworks are needed to unlock green finance, says WFES panel

KHALED AL KHAWALDEH
(ABU DHABI)

With the global push towards energy transition intensifying following last year's COP28 agreement, so too has the demand for capital to finance these projects. According to experts speaking at the World Future Energy Summit (WFES) on Wednesday, the problem lies in a lack of standards and global frameworks, rather than shortages in capital.

"If you look at figures from the UN, they say that before 2030 we need to invest $30 billion a year, and the world bank says something like 80% of that needs to come from the private sector. If we are to succeed, we really need to bridge this gap", Dusko Stjepanovic, the Head of Green Banking at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, told attendees at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC)

"The problem is that regulations are locally tailored and implemented, this means for global companies we have to start from scratch in each new financing operation we start in a new country."

Stjepanovic explained how this had meant that much of the work that had been done to create mechanisms that could leverage risk from green energy projects that utilise new technologies, or those in developing economies could not be transferred. This meant that banks and financiers had to forego substantial manhours and capital just to see the transactions through each time.

"There is no global framework or incentives that would move this from a voluntary market to something more permanent and concrete," he said.

"This global framework of collaboration and standardisation is what is needed to move the green finance industry into a more sophisticated one. A great example is the cooperation between the UAE government, Brookfield and Blackrock on the new climate fund – that is how you take a pragmatic approach to collaboration, we need more of that."

His comments were echoed by Aymen Koubaa, the Regional Head of Energy and Infrastructure at Societe Generale Middle East, who said creating better regulatory standards for financiers would be crucial in allowing developing economies to capture more investments and catch up to developed ones. He also said that the more straightforward regulations would have a similar impact on the adoption of new technologies.

"When it comes to liquidity, I think it's fair to say it is available. The reality check arrives when you realise that commercial banks that green finance today mostly invest in renewable projects that use well-known technologies in well-known markets", he said.

"If you want to move beyond to new technologies and new markets, including those in less developed countries, there is all sorts of new challenges, including with jurisdictions and technical risks."

"What happens is commercial banks will need to utilise a lot of assets to just make the transactions. We need to think about globally changing the rule, giving them the tools and the means to make those investments."

'This global framework of collaboration and standardisation is what is needed to move the green finance industry into a more sophisticated one'



'If you look at figures from the UN, they say that before 2030 we need to invest $30 billion a year'

UAE Ministry of Finance completes participation in second round of Finance Track Working Group Meetings



ABU DHABI (WAM)

The UAE Ministry of Finance has completed its participation in the second round of working group meetings under the Finance Track of the 2024 G20 in Brasília, Brazil, held between March and April 2024.

The Ministry participated in working group meetings that included the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Task Force (TF-Alliance), the International Financial Architecture Working Group (IFA), the Framework Working Group (FWG), the Infrastructure Working Group (IWG), the Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG), and the Taskforce on a Global Mobilization against Climate Change (TF-CLIMA).

The UAE reaffirmed its commitment to promoting equality both within and among countries, demonstrated through initiatives such as cross-border infrastructure development and financial inclusion. The UAE also actively contributed to the FWG's agenda on measuring and assessing inequality. In this context, the UAE discussed its ongoing efforts to advance financial wellbeing through regulatory reform and the Financial Infrastructure Transformation Programme launched in 2023.

In its pursuit of supporting strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth, the UAE emphasised its focus on multilateral cooperation and sustainable and inclusive trade, including the UAE's $10 million grant to support several key World Trade Organisation initiatives aimed at developing and least-developed countries. The UAE also promoted sustainable development and energy transitions and underscored the importance of scaling up finance for vulnerable countries to invest in development priorities.

The UAE delegation showcased the country's tangible efforts, including the $200 million pledge to the Resilience Sustainability Trust to support climate resilience in vulnerable countries and advance sustainable finance efforts. They also emphasised the importance of international cooperation in addressing the macroeconomic and social impacts of climate change and the need for affordable, predictable, and long-term finance for developing countries.

The UAE discussed its ongoing efforts to advance financial wellbeing through regulatory reform and the Financial Infrastructure Transformation Programme launched in 2023

Virgin Mobile UAE and UAE PASS launch the UAEs first digital eSIM

DUBAI (ALETIHAD)

Virgin Mobile UAE has announced on Wednesday the integration of the UAE PASS into their App-based eSIM, eliminating the need for customers to visit a physical store or order a physical SIM for delivery.

This digital approach offers a more convenient and sustainable way for residents in the UAE to get connected directly from the Virgin Mobile UAE App.

'This new feature allows us to reduce our carbon footprint'

Rob Beswick, Virgin Mobile UAE's Managing Director commented: "By enabling UAE Pass verification on our app, customers can now download the app, choose their plan, verify their identity and download an eSIM in minutes. This new feature simplifies the user journey and, equally important, allows us to reduce our carbon footprint."

The UAE PASS is a secure national digital identity for citizens and residents of the UAE. The app enables all registered residents to access more than 12,000 government, semi-government and private sector entities' services through their respective websites and apps and allows them to digitally sign documents.

CBI, Al Firdous lead gainers at ADX, DFM, Gold holds steady on Wednesday

LAMEES OBEIDAT (ABU DHABI)

The Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) closed Wednesday's session at 9165.19 points and a 0.317% decline.

Seventy-four companies were involved in the trading session. Share prices of 22 companies went up, 39 went down and 13 remained unchanged.

Commercial Bank International recorded the highest gains closing at Dh0.724 and a 14.92% increase. Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, on the other hand recorded the largest losses closing at Dh10.92 and a 5.7% decline.



The Dubai Financial Market (DFM) also closed on a negative note at 4,172.93 points, down by 0.27%. Share prices of the 20 companies of the 41 companies involved went up, 16 went down and five remained unchanged.

Al Firdous Holdings recorded the highest gains closing at Dh0.333 and a 6.05% increase. Conversely, AL SALAM Sudan recorded the biggest price drop closing at Dh0.650 and a 9.344% decline.

Gold prices were steady on Wednesday after rallying to record highs last week. Spot gold held its ground at $2,381.68 per ounce, as of 0337 GMT, after hitting an all-time high of $2,431.29 on Friday.

US gold futures fell 0.4% to $2,397.70.

Masdar, EGA form alliance to work together on aluminium decarbonisation

Masdar and EGA will explore the joint development of renewable energy projects, with potential battery storage and green hydrogen production and storage

ABU DHABI (WAM)

Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company 'Masdar', one of the world's largest clean energy companies, and Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA), the largest 'premium aluminium' producer in the world, agreed an alliance to work together on aluminium decarbonisation and low-carbon aluminium growth opportunities.

The signing was witnessed by Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Chairman of Masdar.

Masdar and EGA will explore the joint development of renewable energy projects, with potential battery storage and green hydrogen production and storage, to support the decarbonisation of EGA's existing operations in the UAE, and any future operations in the country.

Mohamed Al Ramahi, Chief Executive Officer of Masdar, said: "Masdar is proud to be collaborating with EGA to help decarbonise the aluminium production process. Strong partnerships such as this are exactly what the world needs to accelerate our path to Net Zero.

He added: "When organisations combine their knowledge and resources to help decarbonise vital industries, we not only protect the environment but we also boost the economy. This is core to our mission at Masdar. We look forward to developing further compelling propositions for international markets to maximise the economic benefits of using renewable energy."

Abdulnasser bin Kalban, Chief Executive Officer of EGA, said: "Aluminium plays an essential role in decarbonisation economy-wide, which is why demand for this metal has the potential to grow by as much as 80% by 2050. Fulfilling this potential depends on how sustainably aluminium is made.



The signing was witnessed by Sultan Al Jaber, Mohamed Al Ramahi and Abdulnasser bin Kalban (WAM)

'Aluminium plays an essential role in decarbonisation economy-wide. Demand for this metal has the potential to grow by as much as 80% by 2050'

'Masdar is proud to be collaborating with EGA to help decarbonise the aluminium production process'

UAE sees surge in trademarks with 4,610 new filings in Q1 2024



RASHA TUBEILEH (ABU DHABI)

Trademarks registered in the UAE in the first quarter (Q1) of this year witnessed a record growth of 63.8%, compared to the same period last year, according to data from the Ministry of Economy.

The data indicated an increase in the total number of new trademarks registered for Q1 of this year to 4,610 trademarks, compared to 2,813 trademarks in Q1 2023. The trademarks registered during March alone amounted to around 2,018 new trademarks, while January and February recorded a total of 2,592 brands combined.

The growth of brands confirms the UAE's position as a regional and global centre for major companies based in the country to manufacture and export to countries around the world.

A wide range of industries saw new brand activity in March, including technology, sports, healthcare, automotive, finance, real estate, and education.

In recent years, the UAE has implemented strategic initiatives to cultivate a business-friendly environment. This includes developing world-class infrastructure that rivals that of leading developed nations. These efforts have demonstrably bolstered the UAE's competitiveness, as evidenced by its positive rankings in reports published by various reputable international institutions.

The Trademarks Department at the Ministry of Economy is responsible for implementing procedures related to receiving and examining trademark registration applications, taking procedures for following up on advertising and objection to the mark and registration, issuing registration certificates, and other procedures related to the work of the sector.

The growth of brands confirms the UAE's position as a regional and global centre for major companies based in the country

Etihad Cargo sees 37% increase in pharmaceutical, healthcare shipments

ABU DHABI (WAM)



Etihad Cargo, the cargo and logistics arm of Etihad Airways, announced its celebration of its ten-year strategic partnership with Envirotainer, a global market leader in secure cold chain solutions for air transport of pharmaceuticals.

This milestone marks a decade of excellence in transporting temperature-sensitive pharmaceuticals across the globe, combining Etihad Cargo's comprehensive global network and expertise with Envirotainer's innovative container solutions.

Since the partnership took flight in 2013, Etihad Cargo has utilised Envirotainer's unit load devices (ULDs) to enhance the safety and quality of pharmaceutical shipments via the carrier's International Air Transport Association (IATA) Centre of Excellence for Independent Validators (CEIV)-certified PharmaLife product.

In 2023, Etihad Cargo utilised Envirotainer's active containers on 134% more trips than the previous year. The carrier also achieved a 37% increase in pharmaceutical and healthcare shipments, marking the highest volumes in Etihad Cargo's history. This growth demonstrates Etihad Cargo's continued investment in its infrastructure, product features and partnerships, which have enabled the carrier to contribute to creating a healthcare ecosystem in Abu Dhabi and a robust global pharma supply chain.

Underscoring the carrier's commitment to maintaining quality across its cool chain operations, Etihad Cargo has been awarded the prestigious Qualified Envirotainer Providers (QEP) accreditation for its Abu Dhabi hub and an additional 29 stations across its extensive network. This accreditation is a testament to Etihad Cargo's strong commitment and adherence to the highest standards of reliability and quality in the temperature-controlled freight industry.

The collaboration between Etihad Cargo and Envirotainer extends beyond container provision, emphasising excellence in training and standards elevation. To date, 16 of Etihad Cargo's Pharma Champions have undergone specialised training at the Envirotainer Academy, ensuring Etihad Cargo's customers benefit from the most knowledgeable and skilled professionals in the pharmaceutical logistics sector.

Furthermore, this partnership has embodied a shared vision for innovation, particularly in leveraging technology to streamline processes and enhance transparency within the global pharmaceutical supply chain. Etihad Cargo and Envirotainer are currently developing a unified booking platform. This initiative promises to simplify the container booking process and provide customers with more transparent and efficient tracking capabilities.

Thomas Schürmann, Head of Cargo Operations and Delivery at Etihad Cargo, said: "Etihad Cargo's decade-long partnership with Envirotainer reflects the shared ongoing commitment to creating a more robust, resilient and transparent global healthcare ecosystem."

In 2023, Etihad Cargo utilised Envirotainer's active containers on 134% more trips than the previous year

The event scheduled from May 7 to 9

Abu Dhabi gears up to host AIM 2024

This annual gathering will bring together industry leaders, policymakers, investors, entrepreneurs, and experts from around the world



The speakers at a previous edition of the AIM

900 speakers, 450 dialogue sessions, seven high-level roundtable meetings, and 27 side events are the some of the highlights of the event

ABU DHABI (WAM)

The AIM (Annual Investment Meeting) Congress 2024, the premier global investment platform, is set to convene in Abu Dhabi from May 7 to 9, under the theme "Adapting to a Shifting Investment Landscape: Harnessing New Potential for Global Economic Development".

This annual gathering, organised by the AIM Global Foundation, will bring together industry leaders, policymakers, investors, entrepreneurs, and experts from around the world to explore innovative strategies and opportunities for economic growth and prosperity, with the participation of more than 900 speakers and the organisation of over 450 dialogue sessions, seven high-level roundtable meetings, and 27 side events.

AIM Congress 2024 will shine a spotlight on two important themes at the 13th edition: the SMEs Track and the Regional Focus Forums Track. These tracks are designed to address critical issues facing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and promote regional cooperation and synergy for sustainable progress and development.

The SMEs Track at AIM Congress 2024 will focus on empowering SMEs to thrive in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

Key sessions at AIM Congress 2024's SMEs Track offer a comprehensive exploration of critical challenges and opportunities. The Leaders' Panel delves into the nuances of Outward Foreign Direct Investments (OFDI) for SMEs, highlighting emerging trends and strategies. Customer-centric innovation takes centre stage in the Panel on AI's role in enhancing loyalty and retention. Additionally, AIM Talks 2024 celebrates Women Led SMEs, showcasing inspiring models of success.

The Regional Focus Forums Track will explore the importance of regional cooperation and synergy in addressing common challenges and unlocking new opportunities for economic advancement.

With dedicated forums covering regions such as Europe, Asia, Africa, BRICS, the Arab Region, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Region, this track will facilitate cross-border collaboration, knowledge sharing, and partnership building to drive sustainable progress and development.

Key forums at AIM Congress 2024's Regional Focus Track promise insightful discussions on regional cooperation and progress. The European Regional Forum aims to empower Europe's future through strategic investments driving growth and competitiveness. Meanwhile, the Asia Regional Forum seeks to unlock the continent's potential by harmonising sustainability efforts and advancing technology for economic development.

In Africa, the spotlight is on the continent's economic growth outpacing global forecasts at the Africa Regional Forum. The BRICS Business Forum discusses the shift in the world's economic centre towards BRICS nations, reshaping the global landscape. Other forums include the Arab Regional Forum and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Forum, focusing on innovation-driven sustainability and global transitions, respectively.

These forums will provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss regional challenges, explore collaborative solutions, and identify opportunities for mutual growth and prosperity.

Musk may unveil $2-$3b investment during his visit to India

NEW DELHI (REUTERS)

Tesla chief Elon Musk is set to announce an investment in India of $2-$3 billion, mainly for building a new factory, when he visits New Delhi next week to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, two sources familiar with the discussions said.

Musk will meet Modi during his India trip, when the billionaire is expected to unveil his plans to enter the world's third-largest auto market where electric car adoption is still in its infancy.

India's EV market is small but growing and dominated by local carmaker Tata Motors. EVs made up just 2% of total car sales in 2023, but the government is targeting 30% of new cars to be EVs starting 2030.

Musk's visit comes as Tesla battles slowing sales in the major markets of the United States and China, and has this week announced layoffs affecting 10% of its workforce.



Elon Musk

Details of Musk's India visit are closely-guarded, with the CEO only publicly confirming on his social media platform X that he will meet Modi in India.

The two sources said Musk will likely give an investment figure for India without sharing details such as a timeline or an Indian state where the plant will be built.

Tesla did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

For years, Musk opposed India's high import taxes for EVs and lobbied for a change. India's government in March unveiled a new EV policy lowering import taxes to 15% from as high as 100%

Tesla has already started scouting for showroom space in New Delhi and Mumbai, and its Berlin factory is producing right-hand drive cars it aims to export to India

on some models if a carmaker invests at least $500 million and sets up a factory.

Tesla has already started scouting for showroom space in New Delhi and Mumbai, and its Berlin factory is producing right-hand drive cars it aims to export to India starting later this year, Reuters has reported.

Musk is also likely to attend an event organised by the Indian government in New Delhi with space startups, the two sources said.

Musk owns US space company SpaceX.

Apple CEO says it is considering a manufacturing facility in Indonesia


Apple CEO Tim Cook reacts as he leaves the Apple Developers Academy during his visit to Indonesia in Tangeran (AFP)

JAKARTA (REUTERS)

Apple Inc will look into building a manufacturing facility in Indonesia, its CEO said on Wednesday after meeting President Joko Widodo, who hoped the tech giant would increase its local content by partnering with domestic firms.

'We talked about the president's desire to see manufacturing in the country, and it is something that we will look at'

Apple chief executive Tim Cook arrived in Jakarta on Tuesday after visiting Vietnam. He met with Jokowi, as the president is popularly known, and will inaugurate its fourth developer academy on the island of Bali.

"We talked about the president's desire to see manufacturing in the country, and it is something that we will look at," Cook told reporters after the meeting.

Apple has no manufacturing facilities in Indonesia, but since 2018 it has been setting up app developer academies.

Indonesia's industry minister, Agus Gumiwang Kartasasmita, who also attended the meeting, told reporters that if Apple decided to build manufacturing facility in Indonesia, it would have the capacity to produce for export.

"We will discuss how Apple's facility in Indonesia could become a global supply chain," he said, adding that the government said that even if Apple didn't build a factory, it could partner with Indonesian companies to obtain components.

Apple has met Indonesia's 35% local content requirement to sell its products by investing in developer academies, Agus said, but the government hoped that number could be pushed higher with a manufacturing facility.

Apple has based much of its key manufacturing of iPads, AirPods and Apple Watches in Vietnam; suppliers for MacBooks are also investing in the country.

Indonesia has a huge, tech-savvy population, making the Southeast Asian nation a key target market for tech-related investment.

Ryanair expects to receive 40 Boeing planes by mid-July

ROME (REUTERS)

Ryanair expects Boeing to deliver 40 new jets by mid-July, Chief Executive Michael O'Leary said on Wednesday, broadly in line with a revised schedule it has previously announced.

The company was initially due to receive 57 Boeing MAX 8200 planes by the end of April, but a deepening crisis at Boeing had meant it would deliver just 40 jets

Speaking at a news conference in Rome, O'Leary said Ryanair plans to receive 35 plans from Boeing by the end of June and a further five in first two weeks of July.

The company was initially due to receive 57 Boeing MAX 8200 planes by the end of April, but a deepening crisis at Boeing had meant it would deliver just 40 jets before the end of June, Ryanair said in March.

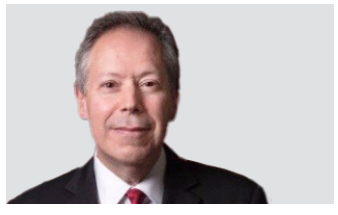
O'Leary also said he thought a plan for Lufthansa to take a 41% stake in Italian carrier ITA should go ahead but with stronger competition remedies.

Ryanair is also sticking with its plan to resume flights to Tel Aviv on June 3 but will reconsider if the situation is not safe, he added.



A Ryanair aircraft lands at Ciampino Airport in Rome (REUTERS)

Is a love of live music wrecking your hearing? Don't let it



Data Revelations

The writer is the founder of the data visualisation consultancy Data Revelations

One night not long ago, I went to hear a good band at a local bar. I couldn't stay past five songs.

The volume was deafening, and I mean that literally - as in "if I stay here for more than 15 minutes without earplugs, I might cause permanent damage to my hearing". I know this because the sound meter on my phone showed sustained levels of 100 decibels, with a peak of 110. That's enough to damage the delicate hair cells in the inner ear. And this was not an especially loud band. It was typical of a local bar band with a singer, keyboard, drums, bass, and guitar.



As for many people, live music is one of the pleasures of my life. My training in college and graduate school was in music; I've played in dozens of groups and arranged for big bands and Broadway shows. But unlike many of my music-loving friends, I don't have hearing loss or tinnitus.

Why am I so "lucky"? I've taken measures to protect myself. And I hope after reading this, you will, too.

Suppose you're sitting in a noisy restaurant. The sound pressure level (or volume) could be around 85 decibels (dB). That band I heard was consistently clocking in at 100 dB. So what's the big deal? One hundred dB is only about 20% more, isn't it?

No. Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale, so going from 85 dB to 100 dB is a 3,100% jump.

Let's see what happens when we use micropascals, which use a linear scale, to measure sound. For most humans, comparing such small and large numbers is difficult.

It's not just the volume level itself that can lead to permanent hearing loss, however. Other factors include the exposure on a given day, the cumulative exposure over years and the frequency (pitch) of the noise.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), it's safe to be exposed to 85 dBA, or 85 decibels in a standard range of pitches, for up to eight hours over a 24-hour period, but for 100 dBA, the time limit plummets to 15 minutes. Indeed, for every 3 dBA increase, the safe exposure time falls by half.

So, should loud music be banned? I don't think that's a good idea at all. If people want to enjoy what I think is "too loud" music, that's their choice.

But how about requiring every venue to have a large, easy-to-read decibel meter? This would be akin to requiring nutritional information to be printed on food packages. At least the audience would know that the music is at a level that can damage their hearing.

And in addition to pretzels and beer nuts, venues could put out bowls of cheap earplugs, which can attenuate the decibel level by 20 dB. That can be the difference between listening for a few minutes and a few hours.

Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale, so going from 85 dB to 100 dB is a 3,100% jump

Limit your exposure time. Not sure if a band or DJ is "too loud"? You can download an app for your phone that will help you gauge the sounds you are hearing. I use Decibel X, but you can download a free app from NIOSH.

Buy a good set of earplugs. I use plugs from Earpeace, which decrease the sound pressure level while maintaining sound quality. But any plug is better than no plug, so by all means use those inexpensive squishy ones. Think of plugs as being sunscreen for your hearing.

Or simply ask the band or the venue to turn down the volume (though you might have to shout to be heard).

I'm in my 60s, but even after so much live music, I have the hearing of someone half my age. Some of this is "good genes," but a lot comes from my using earplugs as soon as the music gets loud.

And every now and then, I'm delighted to encounter a band that is playing at a reasonable volume level. The music just sounds so much better that way. A good band or DJ shouldn't need to damage your hearing to make you want to dance.

In California, the mudslide has the last word



Jennifer Allen

The writer is the author of multiple books

It's coastal California landslide season, and our rain-soaked earth has expanded, sliding mud, rock and roots down canyons, dislodging homes, blurring property lines, and draining cliffs into the Pacific. In February, Los Angeles had more than 12 inches of rain, nearing our typical total rainfall for an entire year. On its southern peninsula, three slide zones that once moved independently are now flowing together toward the ocean. This landslide complex creeps year-round as it has for 250,000 years, but never have I seen these hills so fluid.

To get a sense of where we are, come stand near the head of the landslide in Rancho Palos Verdes, above the Portuguese Bend Reserve, an expanse of canyons, meadows, mustard, anise, eucalyptus, and sage overlooking the ocean. You might wonder, as I have lately, if even taking one step closer to its edge could trigger another major land collapse.

This is what happened in 1956, when Los Angeles County workers, in an attempt to extend nearby Crenshaw Boulevard to Palos Verdes Drive below, dumped some 186,300 tonnes of fill directly onto the landslide head, activating a stream of earth that coursed through the Portuguese Bend Beach Club and ended at Portuguese Bend Cove. Along the way, 145 homes were destroyed.

There have been other slides between that one and today, but none as vigorous as the current one, now moving at four times its usual rate. Since January 2023, the private neighbourhood of Portuguese Bend has tallied 37 water breaks or leaks; 18 gas leaks; nine sewer leaks or failures; and one fallen utility pole.

There have been other slides between that one and today, but none as vigorous as the current one

The current answer has earned the city of Rancho Palos Verdes a $23.33 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for its proposed Portuguese Bend Landslide Remediation Project, an estimated $33 million plan that has been in the works since 2017. Last October, when the city declared a state of emergency, and then in February, when the governor declared a countywide state of emergency, the city applied emergency measures to fend off the slide, including relaxing the permits and environmental review requirements to commence the project.

The proposed remediation involves filling fissures, drilling to install five horizontal dewatering systems with multiple 1,200-foot drains, and constructing one main 4,500-foot-long, 14- to 26-foot-wide drainage swale running from the emergency access road through the reserve to Palos Verdes Drive. Three additional swales will divert canyon waters directly into the main drain to unite in a 10-acre "detention basin", slowing the stormwater surge into a single culvert before discharging it to the ocean. This drainage system will be surfaced to prevent water from entering the soil. Can you see it? One engineered water highway, with three merging channels, all lined with an impermeable, geosynthetic plastic membrane.

"If we don't execute our plan, the one that we have in place for the Portuguese Bend landslide, there's not going to be a reserve to protect anymore," a city council member stated during a February meeting. Hearing this, I was confused. Was this remediation plan intended to protect the reserve or to tame it?

Fault, Failure, Fissures. The land isn't falling apart. We are. A few weeks ago, after heavy rains, a ledge of Big Sur's scenic highway collapsed, slipping off the cliffs into the ocean. In time, the slip will be analysed, the hill propped up, the highway paved. Every season, we try to creatively control the terrain, yet each effort seems only to provoke its eventual path.

"The toe is gone", a local shows me at the Portuguese Bend Beach Club. The toe, the mound of land that once theoretically kept the hill from entirely slipping, seems to have dissolved into the ocean. A dislodged rusty pipe, concrete slabs, a barnacled brick - middens of our industrialised lives are spewed on the tidal rocks. You can't swim or surf here. Too shallow. Who knows what may lie just beneath the water's surface.

On this springtime day, the tide is exceptionally low, the sky clear, and I pause to take in its beauty. The wind is blowing offshore, the ocean pumping out perfect hollow swells, inviting and unforgiving.



World News

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The two sides reviewed cooperation across multiple fields

Abdullah bin Zayed, Bosnian counterpart discuss bilateral relations

ABU DHABI (WAM)

His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Elmedin Konaković, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, discussed over the phone bilateral relations and explored ways to enhance them to achieve the mutual interests of the two countries.

The two sides also reviewed cooperation in the fields of development, economy, trade, and climate.

H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed emphasised the UAE's keenness to strengthen its relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and to invest in all available opportunities to promote cooperation for further growth and development in various areas.

The two top diplomats explored ways to achieve the interests of their countries



Security Council to vote Friday on Palestinian state UN membership

UNITED NATIONS (AFP)

The United Nations Security Council will vote on Friday on the Palestinians' application to become a full UN member state, several diplomatic sources have told AFP.

Amid Israel's military offensive in Gaza, the Palestinians in early April revived a membership application first made to the world body in 2011, though the veto-wielding United States has repeatedly expressed opposition to the proposal.

The General Assembly can admit a new member state with a two-thirds majority vote, but only after the Security Council gives its recommendation.

Regional bloc the Arab Group issued a statement on Tuesday affirming its "unwavering support" for the Palestinians' application.

"Membership in the United Nations is a crucial step in the right direction towards a just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question in line with international law and relevant UN resolutions", the statement said.

Algeria, a non-permanent Security Council member, has drafted the resolution that "recommends" to the General Assembly "the State of Palestine be admitted to membership of the United Nations".

The vote on Thursday will coincide with a Security Council meeting scheduled several weeks ago to discuss the situation in Gaza, which ministers from several Arab countries are expected to attend.

The Palestinians - who have had observer status at the United Nations since 2012 - have lobbied for years to gain full membership.

"We are seeking admission. That is our natural and legal right," Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, said in April.

According to the Palestinian side, 137 of the 193 UN member states already recognise a Palestinian state, raising hope that their request would be supported in the General Assembly.

But the Palestinian push for UN membership faces a major hurdle, as the United States could use its veto power to block the Security Council recommendation.

"We call on all members of the Security Council to vote in favour of the draft resolution... At the very least, we implore Council members not to obstruct this critical initiative," the Arab Group said on Tuesday.

The United States has voiced its opposition to full Palestinian membership, saying it backed statehood but only after negotiations with Israel, while pointing to US laws that would require cuts to UN funding if such a move took place without a bilateral agreement.



The UN General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters in New York, US (REUTERS)

UN appeals for $2.8b for Gaza, West Bank aid

GENEVA (REUTERS)

The United Nations appealed on Wednesday for $2.8 billion in funding to assist more than three million people in Gaza and the West Bank until the end of the year, to help ease food shortages and prevent looming famine in Gaza.

A flash appeal published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that sum was needed to help 3.1 million people and "reduce human suffering and prevent further loss of life".

A major chunk of funding - $782.1 million - will be destined for food aid for 2.2 million people in Gaza and 400,000 people in the West Bank, the appeal said.

More than six months of war have created critical food shortages among Gaza's Palestinians that in some areas now exceed famine levels, according to the United Nations.

A senior UN aid official said on Tuesday that the United Nations was struggling to prevent famine in the Gaza Strip and while there had been some improvement in coordination with Israel, aid deliveries in the enclave still faced obstacles.

$782.1
million will be destined for food aid for 2.2 million people in Gaza and 400,000 people in the West Bank



Children carry water as they walk past buildings destroyed during Israeli bombardment in Khan Younis on April 16 (AFP)

UN agency says staff, other Gaza detainees subjected to ill-treatment

GENEVA (REUTERS)

The UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) said that some of its staff members and other people detained by Israeli forces in Gaza were subjected to ill-treatment, including severe beatings and being forced to strip naked.

In a report published on Tuesday, UNRWA said that staff that were detained, in some cases while performing official duties, were "held incommunicado and subjected to the same conditions and ill-treatment as other detainees", which it said included several different forms of abuse.

The agency said staff members had said they were subjected to beatings and treatment akin to waterboarding, threats of electrocution, and were forced to strip naked, among other forms of ill-treatment.

"UNRWA has made official protests to the Israeli authorities about the reported treatment of Agency staff members while they were in Israeli detention centres," it said. "UNRWA has not received any response to these protests to date."



A cloud of smoke erupts down the road from an explosion as a man drives a loaded with jerrycans in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip on April 17 (AFP)

The Palestinian Prisoners Society has said Israel refuses to disclose information on the number of people from Gaza it has detained over the past six months, or on where they are being held.

UNRWA has documented the release of 1,506 detainees from Gaza, including 43 children and 84 women, by the Israeli authorities through the Kerem Shalom Crossing as of April 4.

The freed detainees were subjected to insults and humiliation such as being made to act like animals, use of loud music and noise, deprivation of water, food, sleep and toilets, denial of the right to pray and prolonged use of tightly locked handcuffs causing open wounds and friction injuries," according to UNRWA.

UAE pledges $100 million to support Sudanese people

PARIS (WAM)







Shakhboot bin Nahyan during the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan (WAM)

H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan Al Nahyan, Minister of State, participated in meetings during the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan, held in Paris, which was co-organised by France, Germany, and the European Union.

The conference was attended by several countries as well as international and regional organisations aiming to further advance peace initiatives in Sudan.

During the conference, H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan affirmed the UAE's commitment to supporting international endeavours aimed at achieving a permanent and immediate ceasefire, finding a peaceful solution to the crisis, and continuing to provide aid to the Sudanese people. In this regard, the UAE pledged $100 million to support humanitarian efforts in Sudan and its neighbouring countries.

The high-level meetings addressed initiatives aiming to establish peace in Sudan and ways to strengthen them. The meetings culminated in the adoption of a document outlining the principles that support resolving the conflict, which has been ongoing since April 2023, in addition to reinforcing humanitarian and diplomatic efforts to address the challenges faced by the Sudanese people.

In a speech, H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan commended the extensive efforts of the UAE which aim to put an end to the crisis that has inflicted severe suffering on the Sudanese people.

The UAE also called for a return to the political process in Sudan and affirmed the importance of international and regional collaboration to advance endeavours towards achieving an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and ensuring the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid.

H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan emphasised the UAE's efforts and the tangible initiatives the country has provided to mitigate the severity of the humanitarian conditions in Sudan and neighbouring countries, as the total amount of relief aid provided to those affected by the conflict has reached $150 million, including medical, food, and relief supplies.

Additionally, the UAE has established a comprehensive field hospital in Abéché, in the Republic of Chad, with a cost of $20 million, the second hospital opened by the UAE to support Sudanese refugees.

He emphasised that the UAE's aid to Sudan and neighbouring countries reflects the unwavering commitment of the wise leadership to provide humanitarian and relief support to the brotherly Sudanese people, and keenness to address humanitarian challenges and continuously extend assistance and humanitarian support to Sudan.

H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan additionally reaffirmed the UAE's position calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and the reaching of a peaceful solution for the crisis by returning to the political process, stressing that this requires prioritising wisdom and reason.

The UAE also called for joint efforts and collaboration to facilitate the ending of the conflict and a resolution to the crisis, to enhance the security and stability of Sudan and prevent further loss of life, while meeting the aspirations of the brotherly Sudanese people for development and prosperity.

Italy PM Meloni visits Tunisia for migration talks



Tunisian President Kais Saied meeting Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in Tunisia on April 17 (Italian Presidency/AFP)

TUNIS (AFP)

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni met with officials in Tunis on Wednesday to discuss what she called a "new approach" to irregular migration and economic cooperation with Tunisia.

The hard-right leader's visit, the fourth in less than a year to the north African country, came as her government pledged to curb irregular migrant arrivals in Italy.

"Cooperation on migration remains a central aspect of the relationship between Italy and Tunisia," Italian officials told AFP ahead of the visit.

"It remains essential that Tunisian authorities continue their action to combat human trafficking and contain illegal departures," they added.

Meloni also said Italy would encourage regular migration by granting 12,000 residence permits to Tunisians trained in specific fields

Meloni met with Tunisian President Kais Saied, who vowed in a national security meeting the day before that Tunisia "will be neither a centre nor a crossing point" for sub-Saharan migrants.

Meloni's latest visit to Tunisia came as part of her so-called Mattei Plan, a programme aiming to posit Italy as a key bridge between Africa and Europe.

She said the fight against irregular migration required development for African countries and investments.

"Italy will continue to try to advance this new approach which it is promoting at a European level," she said.

Three agreements were signed Wednesday - a 50-million-euro aid for energy projects, credit for small- and medium-sized businesses, and a university cooperation agreement.

Meloni also said Italy would encourage regular migration by granting 12,000 residence permits to Tunisians trained in specific fields.

Tunisia is a major transit point for thousands of sub-Saharan migrants hoping to reach Europe every year, with Italy as a frontline for their arrivals.

Almost 70,000 migrants were intercepted trying to cross the Mediterranean from Tunisia to Italy last year, according to Tunisian authorities.

Russian peacekeepers start withdrawing from Azerbaijan's Karabakh region

MOSCOW (REUTERS)

Russian peacekeepers have begun withdrawing from Azerbaijan's Karabakh and other regions, ending a multi-year deployment which gave Moscow a military foothold in the strategic South Caucasus region.

The step was confirmed by the Kremlin and Azerbaijan on Wednesday.

Nearly 2,000 Russian peacekeeping troops deployed to the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in November 2020 under a Moscow-brokered deal that halted six weeks of fighting between Azerbaijani and ethnic Armenian forces.

When asked about Azerbaijani media reports of a Russian withdrawal from Karabakh and areas nearby, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said:

"Yes, it really is the case." He did not elaborate.

Azerbaijani news agency APA reported late on Tuesday that Azerbaijani police officers had replaced the Russians at the site.

Hikmet Hajiyev, foreign policy adviser to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, was cited by state news agency Azertac as confirming a withdrawal deal had been struck.

"The early withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers, temporarily stationed in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in accordance with the trilateral Statement signed on November 10, 2020, has been decided by the leaders of both countries," it cited him as saying.

"The process has already begun, with the ministries of defence of Azerbaijan and Russia implementing appropriate measures for the execution of that decision."

Climate change damage could cost $38 trillion per year by 2050, study finds

BERLIN (REUTERS)

Damage to farming, infrastructure, productivity, and health from climate change will cost an estimated $38 trillion per year by 2050, German government-backed research finds, a figure almost certain to rise as human activity emits more greenhouse gases.

The economic impact of climate change is not fully understood, and economists often disagree on its extent.

Wednesday's study from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), which is backed by the German government, stands out for the severity of its findings.

It calculates climate change will shave 17% off the global economy's GDP by the middle of the century.

"The world population is poorer than it would be without climate change," Potsdam climate data researcher Leonie Wenz, a co-author on the study, said. "It costs us much less to protect the climate than not to."

At an estimated $6 trillion, the cost of measures to limit global warming to within 2 degrees Celsius (3.6F) of pre-industrial temperatures by 2050 would be less than a sixth of the cost of the estimated damage caused by allowing warming to exceed that level, the report said.

While previous studies have concluded climate change could benefit some countries' economies, PIK's research found almost all would suffer - with poor, developing nations the hardest hit.

It calculates climate change will shave 17% off the global economy's GDP by the middle of the century



Entertainment

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Cirque du Soleil's CRYSTAL: a mesmerising fusion of ice and acrobatics

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)



This unique show pushes the boundaries of performance art, seamlessly blending the elegance of figure skating with the daring feats that have become synonymous with Cirque du Soleil

The show takes place entirely on ice, transforming the frozen surface into an unconventional playground for world-class ice skaters and acrobats

In a departure from its traditional circus acts, Cirque du Soleil has unveiled CRYSTAL, a captivating production that marries the beauty of ice skating with gravity-defying acrobatics. This unique show pushes the boundaries of performance art, seamlessly blending the elegance of figure skating with the daring feats that have become synonymous with Cirque du Soleil.

CRYSTAL marks Cirque du Soleil's 42nd creation, and it's unlike anything they've attempted before. The show takes place entirely on ice, transforming the frozen surface into an unconventional playground for world-class ice skaters and acrobats. As the performers glide across the stage, they challenge the laws of gravity, leaving audiences in awe.

The show is a testament to human creativity and resilience. As Cirque du Soleil meets the ice, we witness the magic of transformation. Crystal's journey reminds us that empowerment lies within our imagination, waiting to be unleashed. So, suspend reality, glide into this enchanting world, and let the show take you on an unforgettable ride.

At the heart of CRYSTAL is the character of Crystal herself. The show invites us to follow her on a journey of empowerment. Crystal, an outcast from her family and classmates, escapes her reality and plunges into a dreamlike world fuelled by her imagination. Here, creativity knows no bounds, and the everyday becomes extraordinary.

The visual and auditory elements of the show are equally mesmerising. Astounding visual projections transport the audience to a colourful realm, while an original score seamlessly blends popular music with Cirque du Soleil's signature sound. The result is a symphony of senses, where every movement on the ice resonates with emotion.

CRYSTAL marks Cirque du Soleil's 42nd creation

The performers in CRYSTAL defy expectations. Synchronised skating, freestyle figures, and extreme skating share the stage with traditional circus acts. Imagine trapeze artists soaring through the air, ribbon dancers twirling, and jugglers balancing on ice - all while wearing skates. The combination of these disciplines creates a truly awe-inspiring experience.

Beyond its artistic achievements, the show has a tangible impact on local economies. When Cirque du Soleil returned to Vancouver after a three-year hiatus, it injected vitality into the city. Local businesses benefitted from increased spending by ticket buyers, and the circus industry itself received a boost. In Santa Monica, a 2010 economic study revealed that Cirque's presence netted $16.7 million in economic impact.

Dubai Culture's School of Life project: Building Bridges through education and creativity

DUBAI (ALETIHAD)

Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) has unveiled a rich programme for the project, through four clubs: Books, Languages, Painting, and Chess, all aimed at stimulating community members to discover the aesthetics of languages, musical expressions, and narrative arts, in line with the Authority's commitments to fostering a sustainable creative ecosystem at Dubai's public libraries.

The School of Life project celebrates languages with a diverse array of workshops offered in Arabic, English, and French.

Visitors to Al Safa Art and Design Library will have the opportunity to participate in the "Languages in Poetry" workshop, wherein attendees will delve into the experience of Emirati poet Afra Atiq at the Sikka Art and Design Festival, meanwhile, at Hor Al Anz Library, Sachin Sanjay's "An Introduction to Writing Your First Short Film" workshop sheds light on the craft of screenwriting.

Al Mankhool Public Library will host "Exploring Calligraphy Across Languages". In this class, Yubran David will guide attendees to explore calligraphy's diverse expressions across languages.

As part of the activities of the "Book Club", Al Safa Art and Design Library will host a women's only "Pages of Connection" session, where participants will look at Jacqueline Harman's evocative post-apocalyptic story of female companionship and intimacy in the desolate world.

As part of the "Languages Club" activities, the library presents a session titled "Discover French For Kids" on the basics of the French language, covering self-introduction.

Meanwhile, participants in the "Painting Club" will have a "Masterpiece Art Gallery" session at the library for children to unleash their creativity through painting and exhibit their masterpieces, while Levi Dano Mercado will host the chess tournament.



Throughout March, the Dubai Public Library branches opened their doors to visitors of School of Life who attended a series of discussion sessions and interactive workshops. Al Safa Art and Design Library hosted a "Celebrating Traditions and Cultures" session presented by Naoul Chaoui, highlighting the importance of literature within diverse traditions and cultures. Latifa Mohammed presented two exciting sessions; a captivating literary adventure through the "Stories Between Pages: Book Swap" session, while in the second fostered connections and facilitated engaging conversations about literature and beyond at Al Shindagha Historic Neighbourhood as part of Sikka Art and Design Festival.

Dubai Culture's 2nd season, theme is "Building Bridges", aimed to empower the community by fostering cultural awareness, creativity, and essential life skills. Whether you're a youth, an adult, or a person of determination, the "School of Life" offers a diverse range of interactive activities and workshops at various Dubai Public Library branches.

The project reflects Dubai Culture's commitment to creating a dynamic cultural and educational environment. By providing accessible and innovative programmes, the project bridges gaps and enriches the lives of citizens and residents alike.

Margot Robbie to make new Monopoly movie

Last month, Robbie's production arm announced a movie based on The Sims, a popular video game where players lead simulated people through simulated lives

SAMANTHA CHERY AND HERB SCRIBNER (WASHINGTON POST)

Margot Robbie isn't done playing games.

Fresh off her success as a producer and star of "Barbie", Robbie is creating a Monopoly movie through her production company, LuckyChap. They'll be joining forces with the game's parent company, Hasbro Entertainment, and Lionsgate, which owns the rights, to bring the classic board game to film. The companies announced the news at the CinemaCon conference in Las Vegas.

"I could not imagine a better production team for this beloved and iconic brand than LuckyChap," Lionsgate Motion Picture Group Chair Adam Fogelson said in a news release. "They are exceptional producers who choose their projects with great thought and care and join Monopoly with a clear point of view."

LuckyChap, which Robbie leads along with her husband, Tom Ackerley, and Josey McNamara, was instrumental in the success of "Barbie". After the company joined the production team, Robbie convinced Mattel and Warner Bros. of the movie's massive potential and the need for Greta Gerwig to be its director.

The film grossed more than $1 billion at the box office last summer and became a pop culture hit. Fans flocked to movie theatres dressed in pink costumes and glitter to celebrate the film. "Barbie" snagged one Oscar award in March when Billie Eilish's "What Was I Made For?" won best original song.



Margot Robbie (REUTERS)

"Monopoly is a top property - pun fully intended," said LuckyChap in a news release. "Like all of the best IP, this game has resonated worldwide for generations, and we are so excited to bring this game to life alongside the wonderful teams involved at Lionsgate and Hasbro."

Robbie and LuckyChap are on a roll with toy- and game-themed projects. Last month, Robbie's production arm announced a movie based on The Sims, a popular video game where players lead simulated people through simulated lives. The game had a massive following in the early 2000s and is still around today with various new renditions.

A film about the capitalistic board game Monopoly will be another attempt by Hasbro to turn its intellectual property into a box office success

Despite some speculation online that Robbie might be carving out a niche as an auteur of game and toy films, her company has worked on many productions unrelated to games since "Barbie", including "Saltburn".

A film about the capitalistic board game Monopoly will be another attempt by Hasbro to turn its intellectual property into a box office success. So far, it has seen mixed results. Though Transformers movies keep coming in droves and snag millions, only one (a spinoff, mind you) has had critical praise. Similarly, the toy company's movies "Battleship" (2012) and "Power Rangers" (2017), as well as movies based on the Ouija board game and G.I. Joe, have been critically panned with middling box office returns.

Hollywood has shifted its gaze toward toy-based movies following the success of "Barbie" and the animated "Lego Movie" before it. There's already an "emotional and grounded and gritty" story about Hot Wheels cars by J.J. Abrams (cue the lens flare) in development, as well as a "Polly Pocket" film by Lena Dunham. And Vin Diesel has already punched his ticket to make a Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots movie. Mattel has also teased movies about - deep breath - American Girl dolls, Barney, the Magic 8 Ball, action figure Major Matt Mason, the Masters of the Universe, Thomas the Tank Engine, the card game Uno and the ocular toy View-Master.

It's unclear what a Monopoly movie will look like. The more-than-a-century-old board game is a largely luck-based competition to acquire real estate, whose only recognisable character is the top-hat-wearing Monopoly man (or Rich Uncle Milburn Pennybags). Hasbro Entertainment's head of film, Zev Foreman, said the game "provides an incredible platform for storytelling opportunities".

Director Ridley Scott told Vulture back in 2010 that he had an idea for a Monopoly movie "with the large houses and funny top hats and that sort of thing". Hasbro nixed the idea, so he reimagined it as something about a Donald Trump-like character having to work with real estate tycoons. "It's about greed," he told Vulture. "... Greed becomes, hopefully, hysterically funny."

Some people have already theorised that the movie will mimic the game itself: "It's going to go on way too long and the ending will be really obvious an hour out," wrote Robert Colvile on X.

Hollywood has shifted its gaze toward toy-based movies following the success of 'Barbie' and the animated 'Lego Movie' before it

'Rust' armourer sentenced to 18 months in fatal shooting by Alec Baldwin

SANTA FE (REUTERS)

Hannah Gutierrez, the chief weapons handler for the Western movie "Rust", was sentenced to 18 months in prison on Monday in the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins, who was shot when actor Alec Baldwin was handling a gun during the film's production in 2021.

In March, Gutierrez, 27, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter for mistakenly loading a live round into a revolver Baldwin was using on a Santa Fe, New Mexico, movie set.

"You alone turned a safe weapon into a lethal weapon," Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer told Gutierrez as she handed down the sentence.

In video calls and the courtroom during the hearing, Hutchins' friends from the film industry paid tribute to her creativity and kindness. They also lambasted Gutierrez's breaches in firearms safety protocol.

"I struggle to deal with this repeatedly being called an accident, because it was not an accident, it was negligence," said Jen White, a film industry colleague.

The shooting, which stunned Hollywood, is believed to be the first time in modern times that a member of a film crew or cast was killed by a live round accidentally loaded into a gun.

Baldwin's trial is set for July 10 after a grand jury indicted him on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in January.



Hannah Gutierrez-Reed (centre) stands during her sentencing hearing (REUTERS)

Gutierrez's lawyer Jason Bowles had requested she be given probation, but prosecutors argued for a full 18 months due to lack of contrition.

"I beg you please don't give me more time," Gutierrez told the court, adding that her "heart ached" for Hutchins' family. "The jury has found me at fault for this tragedy but that doesn't make me a monster that makes me human."

In a video call from Kiev the Ukraine-born cinematographer's mother mourned her daughter's death and her young grandson Andros being left without a mother.

"It's the hardest thing to lose a child," said Olga Solovey, whose comments were translated into English in subtitles.

Prosecutor Kari Morrissey pointed to phone calls by Gutierrez from jail in which she said the jurors were "idiots", the judge had been "paid off", and she continued to blame Baldwin and others for the shooting.

Gutierrez had already spent a month in Santa Fe county jail following her conviction.

On March 6, a Santa Fe jury took less than two hours to find her guilty. One juror afterwards said Gutierrez had not done her job to ensure weapons safety on set.

In March, Gutierrez, 27, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter for mistakenly loading a live round into a revolver Baldwin was using on a Santa Fe, New Mexico, movie set

Hutchins' death initially prompted US film and television productions to stop using real firearms and blank ammunition. Two and a half years later, many are using them again because of the realistic effects they produce, according to armourers.

Hutchins was fatally shot when Baldwin pointed his gun at the cinematographer and cocked the weapon as she set up a scene.

During Gutierrez's three-week trial, prosecutors accused her of unknowingly bringing live Colt .45 rounds onto the set of the low-budget movie, something that has been strictly forbidden for nearly a century under Screen Actors Guild safety guidelines.

Bowles said Gutierrez was the scapegoat for a chaotic production where she was not given time to check weapons. He blamed Hutchins' death on reckless use of firearms by Baldwin and his efforts to rush and control the filming. Baldwin was also a producer and writer on the movie.

'I struggle to deal with this repeatedly being called an accident, because it was not an accident, it was negligence'

'Sunset Boulevard' and Scherzinger shine at UK's Olivier awards

LONDON (REUTERS)

A revived version of "Sunset Boulevard", the musical based on the 1950s film, and its leading actress Nicole Scherzinger were among the big winners at the Olivier Awards on Sunday, picking up seven prizes at Britain's top theatre ceremony.

The show's lead duo of US singer Scherzinger, who rose to fame with pop band The Pussycat Dolls, and Britain's Tom Francis were named best actress and actor in a musical, while Jamie Lloyd won the award for best director.

The Broadway-bound show, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, also clinched the musical revival category, along with the best lighting design, musical contribution and sound design awards at the ceremony at London's Royal Albert Hall.

Scherzinger, who was born in Hawaii and raised in Kentucky, portrays Norma Desmond, a one-time film star who longs for a comeback, in the 1993 reinvention of the 1950 film, which featured Gloria Swanson.

Australia's Sarah Snook followed up on her recent success starring in the television series "Succession" by winning the award for best actress for her role in "The Picture Of Dorian Gray", which also claimed best costume design.

London's National Theatre won three awards, including best new play for "Dear England", a portrayal of the English national soccer team's perennial heartbreak, and best actor for Mark Gatiss in "The Motive And The Cue", as director John Gielgud in a difficult professional relationship with actor Richard Burton.



Nicole Scherzinger at the after party for 'Sunset Boulevard' in London (GETTY)

Scherzinger, who was born in Hawaii and raised in Kentucky, portrays Norma Desmond, a one-time film star who longs for a comeback

"Stranger Things, The First Shadow", a stage adaptation of part of the hit Netflix series "Stranger Things", won the best new entertainment or comedy play and set design categories.

The best new musical prize went to "Operation Mincemeat", which tells the story of British military subterfuge during World War Two.

Sports

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Hosts expect strong boost from jiu-jitsu events in Abu Dhabi

Gulf Youth Games: UAE get flying start with taekwondo medals

DUBAI (ALETIHAD)

The inaugural Gulf Youth Games has kicked off with the UAE clinching a remarkable haul of 18 medals, including four golds, in taekwondo, competitions of which were held at the Zayed Sports Complex in Fujairah.

It marked a good start for the hosts, who are hosting the first-ever Gulf Youth Games, where more than 3,500 athletes are competing across 24 sports disciplines under the theme "Our Gulf is One... Our Youth is Promising".

The taekwondo competitions have drawn 124 male and female contestants. Dr. Ahmed Hamdan Al Zeyoudi, the President of the UAE Taekwondo Federation graced the occasion in the presence of heads of other Gulf federations. A total of 70 gripping matches unfolded on the inaugural day, spanning across 10 weight categories for both genders.

Stamping authority on home turf, the UAE grabbed an impressive count with four gold medals, 11 silver, and three bronze on the opening day to top the medal table. Kuwait secured 16 medals, with seven gold, two silver, and seven bronze, while Saudi Arabia took nine medals (three gold, four silver, and two bronze), and Oman sealed five medals (four gold and one silver).

Among the standout performances for the UAE, Maitha Rashid triumphed in the junior women's under-44 kg category, while Marwa Zuhair showcased her prowess in the under-47 kg division. Sharifa Ismail demonstrated remarkable skill in the under-55 kg weight category, while Nasser Ahmed Al Muhairi excelled in the junior men's under-49 kg division, further adding to the nation's glory.



The Taekwondo girls did well for the UAE

UAE's haul of 18 medals – four gold medals, 11 silver, and three bronze – on the opening day took them to top the medal table

Competitions in five sports disciplines will get underway on Thursday. Chess competitions will begin at Sharjah Cultural and Chess Club. Mubadala Arena hall in Abu Dhabi hosts the dynamic jiu-jitsu bouts.

The spirit of athleticism continues to soar as events for people of determination athletes will continue for the second day at the Dubai Police Club. Adding to the excitement, sailing competitions are set to commence at the Abu Dhabi Marine Sports Club.

Six teams including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman are taking part in the chess competitions. The morning session is dedicated to the technical meeting of the players and the draw of matches. In the evening, the competitions kick off with the rapid chess team event spanning two days, culminating in the crowning of champions.

Following this, the individual blitz chess competition is scheduled for the upcoming Saturday, concluding on the same day. Subsequently, the individual blitz chess tournament will take place on Sunday, followed by another round of blitz competition on Monday and Tuesday.

The competitions encompass both under-14 and under-18 categories for both male and female participants. Each team is allowed to field three players at the team level.

The UAE national team for the U-18 tournament feature Abdul Rahman Muhammad Al Taher, Zayed Sultan Al Taher, Saud Jaber Al Zarouni, and Ghaith Al Nuaimi. In the U-14 category, the team comprises Salem Jassim, Muhammad Youssef, and Amer Saeed. For the girls' U-18 squad, notable players include Ahlam Rashid, Fatima Saif, Shamma Khalfan, while the girls under 14 years old category is represented by Rawda Al Sarkal, Anoud Issa, and Ohood Issa.

In sailing, the open race will be held on Thursday, after the competitions began on Wednesday in the team event.

The jiu-jitsu competitions take centre stage, as hosts the UAE, a global and Asian powerhouse in the sport, will try to live up to the billing.

Five Gulf nations, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait, are vying for supremacy in the intense battles unfolding at the Mubadala Arena hall in Zayed Sports City, Abu Dhabi. The competitions, spanning a single day, feature 11 weight categories for youths under 16 and 18 years old.

The UAE's national team, comprised of 22 athletes, divided across 11 weight categories. While the UAE competes in all divisions with two players each, the participation of other nations varies. Bahrain and Kuwait field teams in two weights, while Saudi Arabia and Qatar extend their presence in Under-16 and U-18 categories.

The athletics events for people of determination commence with the hammer throw competition at the Dubai Police Officers Club on Thursday afternoon. A total of 85 participants from five countries, namely the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman, will engage in the two-day competitions.



Athletes in action at Taekwondo competitions for youth (UAE NOC)

Hosts hopeful of medals in athletics, sailing, and chess

Hazza bin Hamdan awards Dhafra Kingfish event winners



The fifth Al Dhafra Grand Kingfish Championship was held in Al Mugheirah City

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

Sheikh Hazza bin Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan has awarded the winners of the final stage of the fifth Al Dhafra Grand Kingfish Championship and praised organisers for their continued efforts to preserve and promote the UAE's cultural heritage.

The event, which took place at Al Mugheirah City in Al Dhafra Region, featured heritage competitions to preserve and promote the UAE's maritime traditions.

It precedes the Abu Dhabi Grand Kingfish Championship which will be held from April 19-21 at the Abu Dhabi Marine Sports Club. The tournament will have a Dh1 million prize fund and will award prizes from first to 60th place.

Ulsan take slender lead over Yokohama

ULSAN (REUTERS)

South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai will take a 1-0 lead into the second leg of their Asian Champions League semi-final against Yokohama F Marinos in Japan next week after Hong Myung-bo's hosts carved out a slender advantage on Wednesday.

Lee Dong-gyeong struck in the 19th minute against the Harry Kewell-coached J-League outfit, who are appearing in the semi-finals of the continental championship for the first time.

The result means Ulsan have booked a spot at next year's Club World Cup as one of Asia's representatives due to their ranking points.

Marinos defender Shinnosuke Hatanaka went close to opening the scoring in the 12th minute when he steered wide of the Ulsan goal while Marinos goalkeeper William Popp denied Um Won-sang from close range moments later.

However, Ulsan took the lead when Lee slid the ball low to Popp's right from just inside the penalty area after Joo Min-kyu's deft lay-off.

Jo Hyeon-woo saved from Yan Matheus in the 26th minute to maintain Ulsan's advantage and Jun Amano's effort soon after the restart was deflected wide for a corner as the visitors increased the pressure.

Ulsan then hit the post twice in the space of a minute, Joo striking the woodwork with a low left foot strike before Lee saw his on-target attempt pushed onto the frame of the goal by the diving Popp.

Matheus thumped Amano's teasing cross over the bar from two yards out with less than 10 minutes remaining to leave Marinos behind at the halfway point in the tie.



Yokohama's Keigo Sakakibara tries to stop Um Won-sang of Ulsan (AFP)



Golf club 'in fine shape' despite truant weather

Al Ain readies to soak in Challenge Tour action

The EGF has received 60 invitations across the two Challenge Tour events to help create playing opportunities

ABU DHABI (ALETIHAD)

Despite the UAE witnessing its heaviest rainfall on record this week, Al Ain Equestrian, Shooting & Golf Club has pulled out all the stops to ensure the second edition of the Abu Dhabi Challenge goes ahead as scheduled from April 18-21.

The game's rising stars and DP World Tour winners will compete in the seventh event on the Challenge Tour's 2024 Road to Mallorca schedule, including 2023 Ryder Cup vice captain Nicolas Colsaerts, five-time DP World Tour winner Alex Levy, UAE's No.1 professional Joshua Grenville-Wood and Craig Howie, who is an ambassador for this week's host venue and has been a regular at the course for over a decade.

"It's great to get away from the hustle and bustle of cities like Dubai," said Howie, who has made the cut in all six of his Challenge Tour starts this season.

"Al Ain is a little bit quieter, so it's a perfect place to come and work away from distractions. The course is always in great condition, and the team do a great job of keeping it like that."

Howie and Co will be joined by several of the UAE's homegrown talents thanks to the Emirates Golf Federation's (EGF) long-term partnership with the European Tour, which aims to develop golf in the UAE for at least the next decade.

As part of that agreement, the EGF has received 60 invitations across the Abu Dhabi Challenge and next week's UAE Challenge at Saadiyat Beach Golf Club to help create playing opportunities and provide a pathway for UAE golfers.

Nine of those invitations have gone to UAE national team players, including the country's No.1 amateur golfer Ahmad Skaik, his brother Mohammad and Khalifa Al Masaood.

Rayan Ahmed will also be flying the flag for the UAE, one month after securing both the individual and team golds at last month's GCC Golf Championship in Qatar. "I can't wait to rub shoulders with the highest quality players on the Tour and represent the UAE," said Ahmed. "My first target is to make the cut, but at the same time, my focus will be on my planning and execution, and I will take it each shot at a time."

Nicolas Colsaerts, the 2023 Ryder Cup vice captain, makes his first Challenge Tour start of the season

Adding to the challenge, 10 new tee boxes have been added to lengthen the course

As well as giving local amateurs a taste of elite-level tournaments, two club professionals in the UAE are also set to rub shoulders with the stars of tomorrow.

Dubai Hills PGA professional Louis Gaughan, who made the cut at this event last season, secured an invite from the EGF after topping the Emirates PGA Order of Merit, while Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club's Thomas Ogilvie banked an invite after winning the Emirates PGA play-offs.

Adding to the challenge, the team at the host venue has introduced 10 new tee boxes to lengthen the course from 6,700 yards to 7,117.

While the course-in-charge ensured plenty of time in the lead-up to the changes making a debut, a new challenge was sent the way of Thomas Love, Director of Agronomy, with the UAE experiencing the most severe rainfall in its recorded history of 75 years.

The Khatm Al Shakla area, just 36km away from this week's host venue, saw the worst of the weather with 254mm of rainfall in less than 24 hours. Yet, Love's team have ensured the course is in prime shape.

"We knew rain was forecasted," Love said, "so we were already semi-prepared for it. The agronomy team came in at 3am and I think the last storm was around 1:30am. Most turf areas are playable and allowed us to let the practice day go ahead.

"The main goal is to get the bunkers back in play for the first round tomorrow [Thursday]. Multiple pumps and big 4500-gallon tankers have been working non-stop all day. I'm still very confident we will have the course in fine shape for the event."

Barca find pride despite seeing red against PSG

BARCELONA (AFP)

Barcelona woke up with a familiar sinking feeling on Wednesday, another Champions League hangover, after Paris Saint-Germain thrashed them 4-1 at home to eliminate them in the quarter-finals.

After a string of painful European exits the five-time champions extended the list, meaning their wait to lift the trophy again will stretch to at least a decade, although this time around Barcelona can find shards of hope and pride among the wreckage.

Leading by two goals in the tie after their 3-2 win in Paris and Raphinha's early strike, the outcome hinged on Barcelona defender Ronald Araujo's red card after 29 minutes that left his team unable to cope with the quality of PSG's attackers.

Ousmane Dembele, Vitinha and then Kylian Mbappe's brace helped PSG rout Barcelona and progress 6-4 on aggregate, cutting short the Catalans' revival, snapping their 13-match unbeaten run.

Madrid-based media were gleeful, celebrating Mbappe's role in the knock-out, ahead of his expected move to the Spanish capital in the summer.

"Mbappe kills Barca," ran the headline in AS. In Catalonia the focus was instead on Araujo's red card after 29 minutes which turned the tide in PSG's favour. "Dismissed from Europe," wrote Diario Sport, while Mundo Deportivo said it was a "lethal red".

The only embarrassment came from Xavi's fit of pique which saw him sent off

Beyond the taste of defeat from being dusted up by Mbappe on home soil, and despite the ugly-looking scoreline, there were differences.

When Barcelona threw away huge leads against Roma and Liverpool in 2018 and 2019, mentally they had caved. That same fragility was on show in 2020 when Bayern Munich hammered them 8-2, and the years since have somehow been more ignominious.

PSG thrashed them 4-1 in the last 16 first leg in 2021 in a match which was barely a contest, while in the subsequent two seasons they failed to escape their group.

In this campaign Barcelona battled well against Europe's best sides and were it not for Araujo's dismissal, might have progressed. "We are a club, a team in construction, constructing something that could be fruitful and beautiful," Xavi said.

"We've competed against top-level teams, Porto, Napoli, PSG, and we've been better - at least until certain decisions, or circumstances that we cannot control. From these situations is when you learn most, unfortunately, in life, and in football too."

Although PSG had more of the ball and were pressing Barca well, with the brilliant Bradley Barcola making inroads down the left, the hosts had defended solidly until Araujo's red card. "Today playing with 10 against 11 is practically impossible," said Xavi.



Paris Saint-Germain's Bradley Barcola goes down at the edge of the box for which Ronald Araujo, right, was shown the red card (AFP)

"I'm very proud of the fans, we've got a bit of the excitement and hope back in the Champions League - the club will be back, stronger still."

Xavi will not be, he says, having decided in January to leave at the end of the season. Despite rumblings that he might change his mind following the team's dramatic improvement, so far he has not.

Although Mbappe's 89th minute strike turned PSG's triumph into a rout, this was not a night on which Barcelona were exposed.

Araujo's red card after 29 minutes left his team unable to cope with the quality of PSG's attackers

Araujo's mistake in bringing down Barcola and Joao Cancelo's defensive errors cost them, while young defender Pau Cubarsi, 17, did his best to hold the fort after that.

Lamine Yamal, 16, helped set up Raphinha brilliantly for the first goal but was sacrificed after Araujo's red card, leaving Barcelona without oxygen in attack.

In those two young talents, along with Pedri and injured duo Gavi and Alejandro Balde, Barcelona have the potential to come back strongly. The only embarrassment came from Xavi's fit of pique which saw him sent off, and his insistence on criticising a referee he described as "very bad".

And a handful of Barca supporters who threw stones at the team's own bus upon arrival, mistaking it for PSG's. Otherwise, as they dust themselves down, Barcelona will consider this season's Champions League campaign evidence they are returning to Europe's elite.

Whether they can establish themselves there permanently is another matter, given their financial woes and no clear plan for Xavi's replacement next season.

Brazil football legend Romario announces comeback at 58



Romario is a senator in Brazil and president of his home club America (REUTERS)

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP)

At 58, Brazilian football legend Romario has quite a resume: World Cup winner, senator, president of his favorite club, America of Rio de Janeiro.

Now, 15 years after hanging up his boots, the iconic striker has decided to add another entry to his CV, coming out of retirement to rejoin America as a player.

The 1994 World Cup winner announced Wednesday he has officially registered to play again for struggling America, who are currently playing in the second division of the Rio state championship and fighting to return to the top-flight.

"I'm ready to try to give my beloved America a little help," Romario wrote on Instagram. "Thank you everyone for your support!"

It will be a family affair: Romario's son Romarinho, 30, also plays as a forward for the club. "It will be dream come true to share the pitch with my son," Romario wrote.

In an earlier post on Tuesday, Romario said he did not plan to play the entire state championship. "I just want to play some matches with my beloved team and realise the dream of playing alongside my son," he wrote.

Romario grew up cheering for America, his late father's favourite club. But he started his professional career with their local rivals, Vasco, and soon transferred to Europe, where he shone with PSV Eindhoven and Barcelona.

Along the way, he was an integral member of the Brazil side that won the 1994 World Cup in the United States, winning the FIFA World Player of the Year award the same year.

He retired in 2008, but made a first come-back the following year to play a brief stint at America. Elected to the Senate in 2015 and re-elected in 2022, Romario has been president at America since January, tasked with patching up the club's tattered finances and returning it to top-flight play.

Aletihad الاتحاد

Clean-up begins after historic rains



Dubai Civil Defence has launched a big effort to clean up flooded areas in the Emirate after record rains in 75 years in the UAE (Dubai Media Office)





Last Word

Strong evidence of falling UK inflation



Andrew Bailey

Bank of England Governor

Different inflation paths for the US and Europe this year could lead to different paths for interest rates

WASHINGTON (REUTERS)

There is strong evidence that British inflation was falling, Bank of England (BoE) Governor Andrew Bailey said.

"In the UK we're disinflating at what I call full employment. I see, you know, strong evidence now that that process is working its way through," Bailey said at an event organised by the International Monetary Fund in Washington.

"Our judgement with interest rates is 'how much do we need to see now to be confident of the (disinflation) process'," he added.

After the BoE's last rate-setting meeting in March, Bailey said inflation was "moving in the right direction" for a cut.

The BoE has forecast inflation will fall below its 2% target in the second quarter before rising back towards 3%.

Financial markets price in two rate cuts by the BoE this year, with a first move in August or September, a slightly earlier and faster pace of rate cuts than expected from the US Federal Reserve.

Bailey said different inflation paths for the US and Europe this year could lead to somewhat different paths for interest rates.

"The dynamics for inflation are rather different now, between Europe and the US. I think there's more demand-led inflation in the US than we're seeing," he said.

Clark Kent lookalike turns accidental superhero

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP)

Leonardo Muylaert was just another mild-mannered professional on vacation with his girlfriend when the 36-year-old Brazilian went viral on social media thanks to an unexpected superpower that has changed his life: his uncanny resemblance to Superman.

Muylaert – a strapping, bespectacled civil rights lawyer from Brasilia – was in line at the 2022 Comic-Con convention in Sao Paulo when a stranger surreptitiously shot a cell phone video of him, amazed at his resemblance to "Superman" film star Christopher Reeve.

"Am I seeing Clark Kent?" asked the star-struck comic book fan, in a clip that soon racked up thousands of views on TikTok – unbeknownst to Muylaert, who did not even have a social media account at the time.



Muylaert takes a selfie with patients at a hospital in Rio de Janeiro (AFP)

Weeks later, Muylaert learned through friends that he had become an online sensation, dubbed "The Brazilian Superman". "It was funny and crazy to read that so many people think I look like Superman," he told AFP.

That's when an idea took root in the back of his mind, he said: get a Superman suit and try the alter ego on for size.

He ordered an old-fashioned costume online, and started traveling around Brazil as Superman.

Muylaert visits hospitals, schools and charities, poses for pictures with commuters on random street corners, and generally tries to be what he calls a symbol of kindness and hope – all free of charge.

He put his new persona on social media and soon became an Internet star, his videos reposted by the likes of "Guardians of the Galaxy" filmmaker James Gunn, director of the upcoming "Superman" movie.

On a recent trip to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics (INTO), a public hospital in Rio de Janeiro, Muylaert visited patients and posed for selfies with staff thrilled to see a 2.03-metre (nearly six-foot-seven-inch) superhero in the office.

'It was funny and crazy to read that so many people think I look like Superman'

Snake on a train delays Japanese bullet service

TOKYO (AFP)

Even small delays in Japan's much-vaunted bullet trains are rare, and more unusual still are snakes on board holding up the speedy "shinkansen" services.

On Tuesday evening, a passenger alerted security to a 40-centimetre serpent lurking on a train between Nagoya and Tokyo, resulting in a 17-minute hold-up.



Delays are rare on Japan's 'shinkansen' bullet train service (AFP)

It was unclear whether the cold-blooded commuter was venomous or how it ended up on the train, and there was no injury or panic among passengers, a spokesman for Central Japan Railway Company told AFP. "It's difficult to imagine wild snakes climbing onto the train at one of the stations. We have rules against bringing snakes into the shinkansen," the spokesman told AFP.

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