

Bahrain face Oman for Gulf title

Oman, Bahrain meet in the final at 7 PM today | P12

SATURDAY
JANUARY, 2025
220 FILS
ISSUE NO.10162

WORLD 6 EU diplomats urge peaceful Syrian transition

THE DAILY **tribune**



Leonardo DiCaprio 'doesn't see himself ever getting married'

8 CELEBS

BUSINESS 5 Wall Street stocks bounce higher, Europe retreats



White vs Red

Nation comes together for Gulf Cup Final

● The final is scheduled today at 7:30 PM local time in Kuwait

● The game will be held at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium in Kuwait City

● Final will be broadcast on beIN SPORTS, ESPN+

TDT | Manama

This isn't just a match; it's a national movement. Bahrain's dream of securing back-to-back Gulf Cup titles has united the country like never before.

Whether in the stands in Kuwait or at gatherings back home, Bahraini hearts beat as one today, ready to cheer their team to glory as the team take on Oman in the much-anticipated final of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup at Kuwait's Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Fans, draped in their iconic red and white, are ready to flood the stands with unwavering support, turning the stadium into a spectacle of national pride and unity.

In the days leading up to this historic match, the Kingdom has witnessed an extraordinary outpouring of passion and preparation. Thousands of fans have secured their spots in Kuwait, with Gulf Air doubling its capacity to

operate 18 round-trip flights, ensuring no loyal supporter is left behind. The Bahrain Olympic Committee confirmed that all allocated tickets for Bahraini fans were snapped up well ahead of the game, underscoring the nation's eagerness to rally behind its team.

The energy is infectious, with travel agencies reporting record-breaking bookings as fans opt for packages bundling match tickets, transportation, and accommodation. Social media buzzes with excitement, with fan groups organizing chants, creating banners, and planning synchronized displays to ignite the stadium.

Bahrain's Campaign for Glory

The defending champions, Bahrain, are chasing back-to-back titles, while Oman, inspired by their spirited performances, is eager to claim their first Gulf Cup victory since 2017. Both teams have shown exceptional resilience throughout the tournament. Bahrain edged out host nation Kuwait in a tense

semi-final, while Oman pulled off a stunning win over Saudi Arabia.

In a move to support the national team, the Bahraini government has announced a public holiday on Sunday, January 5. His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, made the declaration following directives from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The initiative ensures fans can travel and attend the match without concerns about returning to work.

MP Mohammed Janahi expressed enthusiasm for this unifying move, proposing that the holiday be extended across the private sector. "Many private sector employees have voiced their desire for a similar holiday, enabling them to support the national team alongside their families. A unified holiday boosts morale and fosters a sense of national pride," Janahi said.

Several private companies, including Benefit, Mazad, Naseej, and Nad Holding Company, have

joined the initiative, granting employees a paid day off on January 5.

Streamlined Travel

At Bahrain International Airport, the Bahrain Airport Company (BAC) has ramped up operations, anticipating a significant increase in passengers heading to Kuwait. Special measures include additional flights, upgraded services, and planned activities to engage fans. BAC employees will wear the national team's red shirts to show solidarity. "We encourage all passengers to arrive at least three hours before their flight to ensure a smooth travel experience," BAC advised in a statement.

Gulf Air, the national carrier, has doubled its capacity, scheduling 18 round-trip flights to Kuwait. This initiative, coordinated with the Bahrain Olympic Committee, allows fans to register for free flights sponsored by Gulf Air and private companies.

The National Bank of Bahrain and Al Zayani Investments Group had gone a step further,

sponsoring additional flights to ensure more fans can attend. Gulf Air CEO commented, "This initiative reflects our commitment to uniting the nation behind our team and making this historic event accessible to all."

Experience the Final at Home

For those unable to travel, the Ministry of Information has transformed the Heritage Village into a fan hub. A large screen will broadcast the match live, surrounded by comfortable seating and facilities, courtesy of Al Salam Bank.

The Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait, Salah Ali Al-Maliki, confirmed that Kuwaiti authorities have made special arrangements for Bahraini fans, including a temporary exemption from fingerprint procedures upon entry. "This step reflects the depth of fraternal relations between the two countries," Al-Maliki said, extending his gratitude to Kuwaiti officials for their cooperation.



Bahrain to wear white, Oman in red

TDT | Manama

Team Bahrain will don white kits for today's final match against Oman in the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji Zain 26). Oman, on the other hand, will wear red, as confirmed in a meeting of the Gulf Cup Competitions Committee, chaired by Hamad Al Mannai.

The match is scheduled to kick off at 7:30 pm today. The meeting, held at the



Grand Hyatt (Grand 360) Hotel, was attended by committee members, the final match commissioner, referee assessor, Gulf Cup Football Federation representatives, the final match organising team, and representatives from both teams.

The discussions focused on coordination details, including team arrivals, the trophy presentation ceremony, and other logistics.

220 fils (includes VAT)



6 084010 110021 >

Special needs, special care

Parliament takes stand against bullying of students with disabilities

● The initiative aims to involve the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, and specialists to create awareness and educational programs for students and parents.

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama



Proposed measures include workshops, awareness campaigns, and integrating inclusion lessons into school activities to foster a more respectful and supportive school environment.



A proposal to end bullying and mistreatment of students with autism and other disabilities has gained the backing of Parliament and is now set for government action.

The proposal aims to create inclusive programmes that foster respect and empathy, while addressing harmful behaviour towards students with special needs. It was put forward by

MPs Mohammed Mousa, Khalid Buanaq, Bader Al Tamimi, and Jaleela Alawi, with support from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development, and other relevant authorities.

The urgency behind the proposal arises from the increasing reports of bullying, which MPs argue negatively affect both the academic experience and emo-

tional well-being of vulnerable students. The initiative aims to promote an environment of understanding and mutual respect, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education for all children.

Key measures include incorporating lessons on inclusion into school activities, organising workshops for students and parents with expert guid-

ance, and launching community-wide awareness campaigns. MPs believe these steps will not only curb bullying but also promote greater integration of children with special needs into society.

This initiative responds to growing concerns over fairness and equality in schools, aiming to nurture kindness, cooperation, and a sense of belonging



Around 1 in 5 students worldwide experience bullying, according to UNESCO, with long-term effects on mental health, academic performance, and self-esteem.

for all students. By addressing these issues directly, Parliament seeks to build a more inclusive and empathetic society where diversity is embraced and every child is valued.

BD78 million student allowance plan sparks heated debate



H Naser
TDT | Manama

A proposal to provide students with a monthly allowance of BD30 and an additional BD80 at the start of the academic year has sparked debate in Parliament. Lawmakers have suggested that the allowance should cover both public and private sector students.

The initiative would benefit 137,969 public school students and 40,676 private school students, with an estimated annual cost of BD78.6 million.

Concerns Raised

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy have expressed strong reservations about the proposal, citing financial and strategic challenges:

1. Future Generations Reserve Fund Impact:

The Ministry of Education warned that the bill could limit the flexibility of the Future Generations Reserve Fund, a resource intended to secure investment returns for national development.

The ministry also questioned the sustainability of the proposed allowances, pointing out the potential strain on fund re-

turns.

2. Contradiction of Fund's Purpose:

The Ministry of Finance highlighted that the fund, supported by oil revenues, requires a flexible investment approach to manage risks and adapt to changing economic conditions.

Using the fund for recurring expenses, such as student allowances, contradicts its purpose and could lead to its depletion over time.

3. Economic Risks:

The ministry emphasised the importance of maintaining a cash reserve for economic crises and diversifying investments,

warning that the proposal could undermine these objectives.

Parliamentary Committee Rejection

The Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives has recommended rejecting the proposal. The committee cited the significant financial burden and the potential erosion of the Future Generations Reserve Fund as critical concerns.

While the proposal aims to ease financial pressures on families, its potential impact on Bahrain's long-term economic stability remains a contentious issue.

Parliament to vote on inquiry into housing policies and programmes

H Naser
TDT | Manama

Parliament will vote next Tuesday on a motion to establish an inquiry committee to evaluate the effectiveness of housing programmes and policies implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

The motion, submitted by eight MPs—Mohamed Moosa, Hesham Al Awadhi, Zainab Abdulameer, Khalid Buanaq, Bader Al Tamimi, Eman Showaiter, Mohammed Al Aliwi, and Mahmood Fardan—addresses widespread public concerns over housing challenges in Bahrain.

The accompanying memorandum highlights the urgency of assessing the ministry's efforts to meet housing demands, particularly in light of lengthy waiting lists for suitable housing, a constitutionally guaranteed right for low-income citizens.

The proposed inquiry will focus on six key areas:

1. Fairness in Allocation: Examining the criteria for distributing housing units and ensuring equitable access for citizens.

2. Programme Effectiveness: Evaluating the Mazaya and Tasheel programmes' ability to meet diverse housing needs and reduce waiting lists.



3. Operational Procedures: Scrutinising the ministry's processes, including housing plot allocations and the development of new housing cities.

4. Private Sector Engagement: Reviewing plans to increase investments and foster partnerships with private entities.

5. Financial Practices: Investigating the legality of interest rates charged to citizens for housing services, including loans.

6. Overall Performance: Conducting a comprehensive review of the ministry's effectiveness in addressing the housing needs of Bahrainis.

The committee's findings will play a crucial role in shaping the future of Bahrain's housing policies and addressing citizens' concerns about access to adequate housing.

Court rejects tourism firm's BD100,000 claim against former director

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A tourism company's attempt to recover over BD100,000 from its former director was dismissed by the court, which ruled the case as premature and

inadmissible.

The company claimed that its former director's failure to register with the Social Insurance Organisation (SIO) during his tenure had resulted in penalties and interest exceeding BD100,000. However, the court

held that employers bear ultimate responsibility for statutory contributions, regardless of internal agreements with employees.

Judges referenced the legal principle of res judicata, which prevents reopening cases involv-

ing the same parties and facts that have already been resolved. They noted that an earlier ruling had settled much of the dispute, barring further litigation on the matter.

The company argued that the penalties were solely due

to the director's negligence, but the court found no evidence to support this claim. Additionally, the court pointed out that the firm failed to prove it had settled the SIO dues or provided sufficient proof of the director's liability for the

penalties.

Represented by lawyer Taqi Hussain, the former director successfully defended the case. The court ordered the company to pay BD2,106,500 in court fees and cover all associated legal costs.

Ban visit visa to work permit conversion

The proposal faces strong opposition from the parliamentary committee

● Ministry of Interior and LMRA also raises concerns about negative impacts on citizens and domestic worker recruitment

● The National Institution for Human Rights supports the law's compatibility with international conventions

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A draft law prohibiting the conversion of visit visas into work permits for foreigners is set to spark a



The current legal framework, including the 2024 amendments, is sufficient to address the issues raised by the proposal. The existing system spares citizens the financial burden of travel costs for foreign workers in non-competitive roles, such as domestic jobs

MP HASSAN BU KHAMMAS

heated debate and vote in Bahrain's Parliament this Tuesday. The proposal has already faced strong opposition from a parliamentary committee.

If approved, the amendment will alter the Immigration and Residence Act of 1965, introducing a new clause: "It shall not, under any circumstances, be permissible to convert a foreigner's entry visa to Bahrain into a work residence permit."

Currently, foreigners can obtain residency permits if they can support themselves or intend to work in Bahrain. However, authorities retain full discretion over approvals, renewals, and conditions. Additionally, Ministerial Order No. 25 of 1976 mandates a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for work-related visas and prohibits granting visit visas to those suspected of seeking employment.

The parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and National Security, led by MP Hassan Bu Khammas, has rejected the proposed law, arguing that the existing legal framework, including 2024 amend-

ments, is adequate. Ministerial Order No. 16 of 2024 already bars the conversion of visit visas into work visas unless the sponsor remains unchanged. This has resulted in an 87 per cent drop in such conversions, according to the Ministry of Interior.

The ministry also warned that a total ban on visa conversions could negatively impact citizens, particularly by complicating the recruitment of domestic workers. Citizens would bear the additional costs of sending foreign visitors back to their home countries and reapplying for work permits, creating unnecessary financial burdens.

The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) supports this view, affirming that visa conversions are now tightly regulated. Critics, however, have pointed out potential conflicts

with existing laws, noting that residency decisions are within the state's sovereign powers and should remain free from legislative interference to ensure flexibility in managing public interest.

The government has stressed that strict penalties are in place for those who violate labour laws. Expat workers cannot take up employment without proper permits, and employers who fail to comply face hefty fines or criminal charges.

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) has weighed in, stating that the proposal does not violate foreign nationals' rights under international conventions. However, the NIHR cautioned that any changes to the wording of the draft law could affect its compatibility with human rights standards, leaving room for further review.

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) has weighed in, stating that the proposal does not violate foreign nationals' rights under international conventions. However, the NIHR cautioned that any changes to the wording of the draft law could affect its compatibility with human rights standards, leaving room for further review.

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) has weighed in, stating that the proposal does not violate foreign nationals' rights under international conventions. However, the NIHR cautioned that any changes to the wording of the draft law could affect its compatibility with human rights standards, leaving room for further review.

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) has weighed in, stating that the proposal does not violate foreign nationals' rights under international conventions. However, the NIHR cautioned that any changes to the wording of the draft law could affect its compatibility with human rights standards, leaving room for further review.

Prioritise Bahrainis for teaching and management roles in Private Schools

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Parliament is poised to vote on a proposal aimed at prioritising Bahrainis for teaching and management positions in private education, replacing expatriates. However, the proposal has already drawn criticism from the government, which argues that existing measures already favour Bahrainis in the private sector.

The proposal seeks amendments to Articles 11 and 12 of the 1998 Private Education Law, which currently does not man-



As of 2023, Bahrain's private education sector comprises 287 non-governmental institutions, including private schools, kindergartens, and nurseries.

date such hiring requirements. Filed with the Services Committee in May of last year, the proposal calls for the employment of Bahrainis who meet the necessary qualifications and experience for these roles.

While the idea has sparked debate, not all parties are in

favour. The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) has highlighted existing policies that incentivise the hiring of Bahrainis, including quotas for local hiring, expat worker fees, and job vacancy advertisements that give locals a first opportunity to apply. Tamkeen



MP Jaleela Alawi, Services committee chairwoman

also supports these efforts with wage subsidies and training programmes.

The Ministry of Education backs the government's position, emphasising that Bahraini candidates are already prioritised in private schools.



Dr Muneer Seroor, MP, committee rapporteur

Nevertheless, some stakeholders argue that the proposed law is still needed. Al Rawabi Private School, for example, expressed support for the idea, praising Bahraini teachers for their capability and creativity but noting challenges such

as long approval processes and gaps in practical experience among graduates. The school suggested faster hiring procedures, better alignment of university courses with private sector needs, improved pay packages, and government-backed benefits for private sector workers to boost job security and attract more Bahrainis into the sector.

The Services Committee has endorsed the draft proposal, asserting that private institutions must take greater responsibility in addressing Bahrain's unemployment challenges.

Labour Court orders company to pay BD5,500 in unpaid wages and compensation

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A Labour Court in Bahrain has ordered a company to pay BD5,500 in back pay and compensation to a salesman in a case regarding non-payment of wages.

The legal battle, which lasted six months, began after the salesman, employed by the company from May 2023 to August 2024, was not paid his wages. His monthly salary included a basic pay of BD800 and an additional BD150 for transport. Faced with no payment, he was forced



Lawyer Issa Jassim

to resign and take legal action.

The court ruled that the company must pay BD4,900 for unpaid salaries, BD617.867 for unused annual leave, and an end-of-service certificate. Additionally, interest on the unpaid wages was set at 6% annually for delays of up to six months, rising to 12% for delays beyond that period.

The salesman's lawyer, Jassim Al Essa, argued that his client had no option but to resign on 1 September 2024. Despite this, neither the company nor its representatives attended any hearings or presented a defense,

The court ruled that the company must pay BD4,900 for unpaid salaries, BD617.867 for unused annual leave, and an end-of-service certificate.

which the court interpreted as tacit acceptance of the claims.

Under Bahrain's Labour Law, the salesman was entitled to annual leave compensation due to his over a year of service, which led to the award of BD617.867 for unused leave, based on his

basic salary. An end-of-service certificate was also granted, as required by law.

However, the court rejected the salesman's claim for BD10,500 in commission, ruling that he failed to provide adequate evidence to support his

entitlement. Similarly, a claim against one of the company's partners was dismissed, with the court noting that individual employment disputes are within the jurisdiction of the Labour Court.

The court also ruled out the salesman's claim for compensation for unfair dismissal, as he had not followed the required procedure to address breaches before resigning, as outlined in Article 106 of the Labour Law.

In addition to the payout, the company was ordered to cover BD216,500 in court fees and a BD10 execution fee.

Imams and Muezzins may join Civil Service

H Naser
TDT | Manama

Should the roles of Imam and Muezzin be integrated into Bahrain's national civil service system?

This question will take centre stage during Tuesday's parliamentary session, as MPs resume their debate.

The bill, proposed by MPs Khalid Buanaq, Ahmed Al Salloom, Hanan Fardan, Basma Mubarak, and Maryam Al Saegh, advocates for bringing imams and muezzins under the same salary and benefits schemes enjoyed by other government employees.

Introduced on October 29, 2024, the proposal was initially referred to the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee for further scrutiny. After reviewing the bill, the committee agreed with the proposed amendments and updated wording, setting the stage for a vote in Parliament on Tuesday.

The bill, consisting of six articles, suggests that Bahraini imams and muezzins be employed by the Ministry of Jus-



tice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, and placed within the Civil Service Bureau's shift system. Under the proposal, a full-time Bahraini imam with a bachelor's degree or equivalent in Islamic studies would be assigned grade eight, while a

full-time muezzin with similar qualifications would be given grade seven.

The Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee has expressed support for the bill. While the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments has

yet to provide a formal opinion pending government feedback, the Civil Service Bureau has confirmed that existing civil service rules apply to full-time Bahraini religious personnel where specific provisions for imams and muezzins are not yet

established.

Proponents of the bill argue that it will strengthen the role of imams and muezzins, making these positions more appealing to young Bahrainis, despite current reluctance to pursue such roles, despite a significant pool

of graduates in Islamic studies. They believe that integrating these positions into the civil service system would offer better job security, benefits, and opportunities for professional growth, ultimately helping to reduce unemployment among Islamic studies graduates.



As of December 1, 2024, there are 407 mosques in Bahrain. RENTECH DIGITAL This number includes various mosques across the kingdom, such as the Al Fateh Grand Mosque in Manama, which is the largest mosque in Bahrain in terms of capacity.

Prostate cancer cases on the rise: Statistics reveal alarming trends

H Naser
TDT | Manama

A recent statistical report has highlighted a significant increase in prostate cancer cases among males in Bahrain, showing a staggering 70% rise since 2016. The data indicates a troubling upward trend in the number of diagnosed cases over the past several years.



Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is estimated that 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. Early detection through screening can greatly improve the chances of successful treatment.



Picture for representation only



Dr Mohammed Al Alawi

In 2015, the number of prostate cancer cases recorded was 26. This figure rose to 38 in 2016,

followed by a further increase to 48 cases in 2017. Although there was a slight decline to 46 cases in 2018, the numbers surged again, with 63 cases reported in 2019 and 62 in 2020. The year 2021 saw a notable leap to 72 cases, culminating in 79 cases in 2022. Overall, between 2015 and 2022, there has been an increase of around 53 cases, bringing the total to 434 registered cases during this period.

Commenting on the statistics, Dr Mohammed Al Alawi, Urology Consultant in Ibn Al Nasfees Hospital, told the Daily Tribune: "The noticeable rise in

prostate cancer in Bahrain due to multiple factors. Lifestyle significantly changed, and genetic factors started to be obvious. Having said that, however, the awareness of the public became better and they seek medical services more often. The most important factor is that modality of diagnosis became widely available, including MRI, and prostatic biopsy,"

He further added: "In my opinion there are a lot of cases not recorded in Bahrain cancer registry or Bahrain oncology cancer and may not be included in the statistics because they

will go individually abroad and receive treatment without passing in our national systems. In Bahrain all the treatments available now including the robotic assisted radical prostatectomy which are available in royal medical services from August 2024."

Colon Cancer Cases Also on the Rise

In addition to prostate cancer, the report noted a 15% increase in colon cancer cases among males over recent years. The figures show fluctuations, with 54 cases recorded in 2015, decreasing to 44 in 2016, then rising to

50 in 2017. The number declined again to 39 in 2018 but surged to 80 cases in 2019. In 2020, there were 68 cases, and 65 cases were reported in 2021. Overall, the total number of colon cancer cases registered during this timeframe is 400, reflecting an increase of 11 cases.

Rising Incidence Among Females

The statistics also reveal a 30% increase in colon cancer cases among females. In 2015, there were 36 cases, which rose to 47 in 2016. The number fell to 39 in 2017 but again increased to 36 in 2018. By 2019, it reached 58 cases, with 55 in 2020 and around 52 in 2021. The total registered cases among females during this period amount to 323, indicating an increase of 16 cases.

Prostate cancer originates in the prostate gland, part of the male reproductive system located below the bladder. Conversely, colon cancer begins in the colon (large intestine) and occurs when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably in the colon wall, leading to tumour formation.

These alarming statistics underscore the urgent need for increased awareness and early detection measures for cancer in Bahrain, particularly among males and females at risk.

Wall Street stocks bounce higher, Europe retreats

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Key figures around 1630 GMT

New York - Dow:	▲ 0.5% at 42,621.43 points
New York - S&P 500:	▲ 0.9% at 5,921.96
Nasdaq Composite:	▲ 1.3% at 19,521.22
London - FTSE 100:	▼ 0.4% at 8,223.98 (close)
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 1.5% at 7,282.22 (close)
Frankfurt - DAX:	▼ 0.6% at 19,906.08 (close)
Tokyo - Nikkei 225: closed	
Hang Seng Index:	▲ 0.7% at 19,760.27 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▼ 1.6% at 3,211.43 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.0295 from \$1.0269 on Thursday
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.2413 from \$1.2382
Dollar/yen:	▼ at 157.36 yen from 157.52 yen
Euro/pound:	▲ at 82.94 pence from 82.92 pence
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 1.0% at \$73.87 per barrel
Brent North Sea Crude:	▲ 0.6% at \$76.36 per barrel

Wall Street stocks bounced higher at the start of trading on Friday, but European stock markets retreated as traders booked profits from a positive start to 2025.

Asia's main equity indices closed mostly higher, Seoul jumping nearly 2% despite deepening political uncertainty in Asia's fourth-largest economy.

There were also gains for Hong Kong, Sydney and Taipei, although Shanghai slumped for a second session running.

Wall Street ended lower Thursday on the first US trading day of 2025 despite having started the day higher.

"People who wanted to take profits last year decided to wait until January to take profits so that they delay paying taxes on it by one year," LBBW's Karl Haeling told AFP.

"The big question now is: is there too much bullishness in the market?" he added, referring to optimism that Trump's election victory would be good for the stock markets given his promises of tax cuts and deregulation.

Instead of enjoying a so-called Santa Claus rally of rising prices during the year-end holiday period, Wall Street limped into 2025 as investors banked their healthy 2024 gains and worried about what the future holds.

"The post-Christmas malaise in US stocks continued as investors await the inauguration of president-elect Donald Trump who could prove a wildcard for markets this year," noted Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell, said of Thursday trad-



A pedestrian walks past an electronic board showing the closing numbers on the Tokyo Stock Exchange

ing. Departing President Joe Biden blocked early Friday the proposed \$14.9-billion purchase of US Steel by Japan's Nippon Steel, saying it would "create risk for our national security and our critical supply chains".

The companies disputed the deal presented national secu-

ity risks and called Biden's rejection a political decision that failed to properly review the transaction.

Nippon Steel has previously described the transaction as a lifeline to Pennsylvania's much-diminished steel industry.

US Steel's share price slumped

6.7% in late morning trading. Nippon Steel shares had closed higher in Asian trading ahead of Biden's announcement.

The dollar dipped Friday against the euro, pound and yen.

The US currency had Thursday reached multi-year highs against some of its main rivals, reflecting expectations that the world's biggest economy would outpace others in 2025.

The yuan on Friday hit the lowest dollar level since late 2023.

"The very negative performance of China equities provides a better indication of the weakening sentiment around China assets at the start of 2025, and ahead of Trump's return to the White House," said Alvin Tan, head of Asia FX strategy at RBC Capital Markets.

Investors are gearing up for Trump's inauguration on January 20, set to be followed by the formal announcement of deep tariffs, especially on Chinese goods, that could rattle international trade.

A monthslong US manufacturing slump lessened last month, according to better-than-expected survey data published Friday, as demand showed signs of improving.

The Institute for Supply Management's (ISM) manufacturing index was 49.3% last month, up 0.9 percentage points from November, it said in a statement.

US jobless claims released Thursday fell more than expected, highlighting a robust labour market and leaving the Federal Reserve with less reason to support fresh rate cuts.

Other significant economic releases ahead include data on inflation and retail sales during the holiday shopping season.

NBB supports fans with Transportation to the Gulf Cup 26 Final

TDT | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has supported Bahrain fans by arranging transportation to the Gulf Cup 26 final match, being held in Kuwait. By doing so, the Bank aims to foster a strong fan presence to cheer on the Bahrain national football team during this highly anticipated event.

NBB's support reflects its longstanding partnership with the Bahrain Football Association, demonstrating the Bank's commitment to providing ongoing support for the national team and showcasing its deep sense of national pride.

The uplifting fan presence at this significant match, will



undoubtedly contribute to motivating and inspiring the players, recognising the pivotal role fans have consistently had in supporting the team in the past.

Apple agrees to \$95 mn deal to settle Siri eavesdropping suit

San Francisco, United States

Apple has agreed to pay \$95 million to settle a lawsuit accusing its digital assistant Siri of listening in on users' private conversations.

The proposed settlement detailed in a court filing accessed on Thursday came with Apple holding firm that it did nothing wrong.

"Apple has at all times denied and continues to deny any and all alleged wrongdoing and liability," the tech titan said in the proposed settlement, which requires a judge's approval to be finalized.

A class action lawsuit filed five years ago accused Siri of listening in on private conversations of people with iPhones, iPads, HomePods or other Apple devices enhanced with the digital assistant.

The California-based tech giant has made user privacy a big part of its brand image, and one of the reasons it tightly controls its "ecosystem" of hardware and software.

Talk captured by "unintended Siri activation" were obtained by Apple and perhaps even shared with third parties, according to the suit.

A proposed settlement fund of \$95 million would be used to pay no more than \$20 per Siri

device to US owners who had private conversations captured without permission, the settlement indicated.

The agreement also requires Apple to confirm it has deleted any overheard talk and make user choices clear when it comes to voice data gathered to improve Siri.

Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In 2023, Amazon agreed to pay more than \$30 million to the US Federal Trade Commission to settle litigation accusing the company of violating privacy with its Ring doorbell cameras and Alexa digital assistant.



Siri, Apple's voice assistant, was originally developed by a company called Siri Inc., which was founded by former DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) scientists. Apple acquired Siri Inc. in 2010, and Siri was officially launched as part of the iPhone 4S in 2011.

Indian food delivery app rolls out ambulance service

AFP | Mumbai, India

A popular Indian food delivery app has started offering a private ambulance service, looking to use its logistics know-how to help bolster the country's patchy healthcare system.

Zomato's online shopping arm Blinkit said it was rolling out "reliable" ambulance services with essential life-saving equipment, medicine and trained paramedics.

The platform has pushed the limits of rapid mobile commerce in India over the last few years, with the help of a network of local warehouses and tens of thousands of delivery riders.

The tech firm, along with its rivals, has also expanded beyond traditional food delivery business into having everything from groceries to electronics dropped off at doorsteps in 10 minutes.

But its healthcare foray marks new territory for the company.

"We are taking our first step towards solving the problem of providing quick and reliable ambulance service in our cities," Blinkit CEO Albinder Dhindsa



An Indian delivery man working with the food delivery app Zomato sits on his bike in a business district in Mumbai.

said in a post on social media platform X.

Dhindsa said the first ambulances were deployed on Thursday.

"Profit is not a goal here," Dhindsa added. "We will operate this service at an affordable

cost for customers and invest in really solving this critical problem for the long term".

The app is starting small -- only five ambulances are currently available in Gurugram, a satellite city of India's capital New Delhi-- but the company

plans to expand to "all major cities over the next two years".

While the initial rollout may be limited, it will likely be welcomed in a country whose healthcare system is inadequately funded and understaffed.

In 2020, a study by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences --funded by a government-backed think-tank -- found that 88 percent of secondary-level district hospitals had in-house ambulances, but "trained paramedics needed to assist ambulance services were present only in three percent".

Indian social media users were left both amused and concerned by the ambulance service.

"What a genius move by Zomato's Blinkit! First, they deliver junk food and chips, and sooner or later, you'll need hospitalisation -- hence the ambulance!" said one user on X.

Another pointed out that citizens should ask why the Indian government was unable to "provide a basic, reliable ambulance service".

UK, Germany electricity cleanest on record in 2024

London, United Kingdom

Britain and Germany produced their cleanest electricity on record last year, with renewables reaching record highs, according to data released Thursday.

Renewable energy like wind and solar accounted for 59 percent of production in Germany, while in Britain it stood at 45 percent, the data showed.

In Germany, where 2024 marked the first year without nuclear energy, the share of renewables increased to 59 percent from 56 percent the previous year, the country's energy regulator said in a statement.

Wind power retained its place as the nation's main electricity producer at 31.9 percent of the total, while the share of coal continued to decrease to

less than 23 percent from 26 percent in 2023, it said.

The share of natural gas increased to 13.2 percent of the total, up from 8.6 percent.

Germany aims to have renewables make up 80 percent of its energy supplies by 2030 and to phase out coal by 2035.

Overall, Germany produced 431.7 TWh of electricity in 2024, a decrease of 4.2 percent compared with the previous year.

Imports increased to 13.8 percent, while exports declined to 10 percent.



QUOTE OF THE DAY
ONCE YOU BRING LIFE INTO THE WORLD, YOU MUST PROTECT IT. WE MUST PROTECT IT BY CHANGING THE WORLD
ELIE WIESEL

TODAY IN HISTORY

1847

Samuel Colt sells his first revolver pistol to the United States government



1865

New York Stock Exchange opens its first permanent headquarters at 10-12 Broad St. near Wall Street in New York City

1959

USSR's Luna 1 (Mechta) becomes the 1st spacecraft to leave Earth's gravity

1961

Longest recorded strike ends as the Danish barbers' assistants end a 33 year strike

News in brief

Ethiopia backs new peacekeeping force in Somalia



African Union force against Islamist Al-Shabaab insurgents in Somalia, which is set to deploy later this month. Mogadishu previously indicated that Ethiopian troops would not take part due to strained relations between the two countries, after the government in Addis Ababa signed a maritime agreement with the breakaway region of Somaliland. But after months of wrangling, the two countries last month agreed to end tensions in a compromise deal brokered by Turkey.

◆ Ethiopia yesterday announced that it will collaborate with a new peacekeeping force in Somalia, which is set to deploy later this month. Mogadishu previously indicated that Ethiopian troops would not take part due to strained relations between the two countries, after the government in Addis Ababa signed a maritime agreement with the breakaway region of Somaliland. But after months of wrangling, the two countries last month agreed to end tensions in a compromise deal brokered by Turkey.

Italy's Meloni rules out changes to her post-fascist party's logo



Italy's Meloni rules out changes to her post-fascist party's logo

◆ Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni yesterday ruled out removing the tricolour flame from the logo of her party, despite calls within her own camp to dispense with fascist symbols. "Removing the flame... has never been an issue on the agenda," Meloni said in an interview with leading newspaper Corriere della Sera. Her comments came after Luca Cirianni, a member of Meloni's ultraconservative Brothers of Italy (Fdi) party and minister for relations with parliament, said "the moment will come to extinguish the flame".

Three killed in latest Russian, Ukrainian attacks



Three killed in latest Russian, Ukrainian attacks

◆ Russian attacks in Ukraine killed two people yesterday, while a Ukrainian mortar strike on a Russian border village left one person dead, local officials in both countries said. Both sides have escalated their attacks through the first weeks of winter, including a Russian strike targeting central Kyiv in the early hours of New Year's Day that killed two. "One person killed and four wounded in enemy air attack on Kyiv region," Mykola Kalashnyk, the head of the region, which surrounds the capital, said on social media yesterday.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Lost boy survives five days in Zimbabwe park teeming with lions



Tourists watch a lion at a park (representative image)

AFP | Harare

A seven-year-old boy was found alive after being lost for five days in a reserve home to lions and other wild animals in northern Zimbabwe, the wildlife authority said. The boy wandered into the Matusadona National Park next to his village on December 27 and was found five days later and about 50 kilometres (about 30 miles) away, Zimbabwe's national parks spokesperson Tinashé Farawo said.

he was missing but their efforts were hindered by heavy rain. His footprints were spotted on December 30 and the boy, Tinotenda Pundu, was found early the following day, he said. The child was admitted to hospital and was frail but had no visible injuries, said lawmaker Mutsa Murumbidzi, who is from the area. "It was a miracle that he survived," she said. "He was clever enough to... sleep on perched rocks so that lions and other wildlife could not get to him," she said. "Villagers helped with the search, playing drums hoping that he would follow the sound," the MP said. But he was only found with the help of rangers who were able to go deeper into the wilderness to look for him. The Matusadona National Park, near Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba, is home to a range of wild animals including lions, leopards, elephants and buffalo, according to its website.

EU diplomats urge peaceful Syrian transition

French, German foreign ministers meet new Syrian leaders, emphasize inclusivity and reconciliation

● EU diplomats visit Damascus for talks with HTS leader Ahmed al-Sharaa

● French, German ministers tour notorious Saydnaya prison, symbol of Assad-era atrocities

AFP | Damascus



France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot (2-R) and his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock visit the Saydnaya prison north of Damascus

The European Union backs a peaceful, inclusive transition in Syria, top French and German diplomats said yesterday as they visited Damascus to meet with new leader Ahmed al-Sharaa.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot and his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock were in the Syrian capital for talks on behalf of the European Union, in the highest-level visit by major Western powers since forces toppled longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad last month.

One of their first stops was the notorious Saydnaya prison, not far from the capital, AFP journalists said.

Accompanied by White Helmet rescuers, Barrot and Baerbock toured the cells and underground dungeons of Saydnaya, the epit-

ome of atrocities committed against Assad's opponents. Saydnaya was the site of extrajudicial executions, torture and forced disappearances. An advocacy group said more than 4,000 people were freed from the detention facility when rebel forces took Damascus on December 8. Sharaa, head of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), led the offensive

that toppled Assad. The HTS-dominated interim authorities now face the daunting task of rebuilding state institutions, with growing calls to ensure an inclusive transition and guarantee minority rights. Barrot, in Damascus, expressed hope for a "sovereign, stable and peaceful" Syria. It was also a "hope that the

aspirations of all Syrians can be realised", he added, "but it is a fragile hope". In a statement, Baerbock said Germany wanted to help Syria become a "safe home" for all its people, and a "functioning state, with full control over its territory". She said the visit was a "clear signal" to Damascus of the pos-

YOU KNOW WHAT
Saydnaya prison, infamous for extrajudicial killings and torture under Assad, saw over 4,000 detainees freed when Damascus fell to rebel forces in December

sibility for a new relationship between Syria and Germany, and Europe more broadly. Earlier, in a post in X, Barrot said: "Together, France and Germany stand alongside the Syrian people, in all their diversity." He added that the two European powers wanted to promote a "peaceful transition".

'Important crossroads'

Despite "scepticism" about HTS -- which is rooted in the Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda -- Baerbock said that "we must not miss the opportunity to support the Syrian people at this important crossroads". Berlin was ready to support "an

inclusive and peaceful transfer of power" as well as social "reconciliation", Baerbock said.

She also asked the new regime to avoid "acts of vengeance against groups within the population", to avoid a long delay before elections, and to avert any attempts at the "Islamisation" of the judicial and education systems.

Since Assad's ousting, a bevy of foreign envoys have travelled to Damascus to meet with the country's new leaders.

France and Germany had both already sent lower-level delegations last month. At the start of his visit, Barrot met with representatives of Syria's Christian communities.

Diplomatic sources said Barrot told the Christian leaders that France was committed to a pluralistic Syria with equal rights for all, including minority groups.

Syria's civil war -- which started in 2011, sparked by the Assad government's brutal repression of democracy protests -- saw Germany, France and a host of other countries shutter their diplomatic missions in Damascus.

The conflict killed more than 500,000 people, displaced millions and left Syria fragmented and ravaged.

The new authorities have called for the lifting of sanctions imposed on Syria under Assad to allow for reconstruction.

South Korean investigators abandon arrest of President Yoon

AFP | Seoul

South Korean investigators abandoned their attempt to arrest impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol at his residence yesterday over a failed martial law bid, citing safety concerns after a standoff with his security team.

Yoon, who has already been suspended from duty by lawmakers, would become the first sitting president in South Korea's history to be arrested if the warrant is carried out.

The president, who issued a bungled declaration on December 3 that shook the vibrant East Asian democracy and briefly lurched it back to the dark days



Anti-corruption investigators leave the residence of South Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol in Seoul

of military rule, faces imprisonment or, at worst, the death penalty. "Regarding the execution of the arrest warrant today, it was determined that the execution

was effectively impossible due to the ongoing standoff," the Corruption Investigation Office (CIO), probing Yoon over his martial law decree, said in a statement.

"Concern for the safety of personnel on-site led to the decision to halt" the arrest attempt, the statement said of the confrontation with Yoon's presidential security service and its military unit.

Around 20 investigators and 80 police officers were heavily outnumbered by around 200 soldiers and security personnel linking arms to block their way after entering the presidential compound, a CIO official told a briefing.

Marcos removes VP Duterte from Philippines security council

AFP | Manila

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos has removed Vice President Sara Duterte from the National Security Council, according to an executive order released yesterday, a month after she allegedly plotted to kill him.

The order, signed Monday by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, removed the vice president and all former presidents from the council which advises the president on policies affecting national security.

Bersamin said the move was "to reorganise and streamline" its membership, which now comprises key legislative, defence, foreign and cabinet officials.



Effigies of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos (L) and Vice President Sara Duterte are seen as protesters march to congress (file photo)

"At the moment, the VP is not considered relevant to the responsibilities of membership in the NSC," Bersamin told reporters, adding that the president was free to add other members

or advisers as needed. The move comes as Duterte is facing an investigation over her alleged threat to kill Marcos and his family.

In late November, Sara -- the 46-year-old daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte -- delivered an expletive-laden online news conference in which she claimed to have told someone to kill Marcos if she was assassinated. She later said the comments were misinterpreted.

The vice president swept to power in 2022 in an alliance with Marcos that has unravelled spectacularly in recent months, with both sides trading allegations of drug addiction and extreme rhetoric ahead of this year's mid-term elections.

India to monitor China's mega Tibet dam plan



Water being released from the Three Gorges Dam, a hydropower project on the Yangtze river, in Yichang, central China's Hubei province

AFP | New Delhi

India said yesterday it had raised concerns with China about a planned mega hydropower dam construction upstream in Tibet, saying it will "monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests".

If built, the dam would dwarf the record-breaking Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River in central China -- with potential serious impact for millions of people downstream in India and Bangladesh.

A report from China's official Xinhua news agency last month announced the project on the river -- known as Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet and Brahmaputra in India -- linking it to Beijing's carbon neutrality targets and economic goals in the Tibet region.

China "has been urged to ensure that the interests of the downstream states of the Brahmaputra

are not harmed by activities in upstream areas", India's foreign ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said. Jaiswal told reporters that New Delhi "will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests".

India has established rights to river waters and "consistently expressed... our views and concerns... over mega projects on rivers in their (Chinese) territory," he added.

"These have been reiterated along with the need for transparency and consultations with the downstream countries following the latest report."

China's foreign ministry last month said Beijing "has always maintained a responsible attitude towards the development of cross-border rivers", and said the hydropower project "is aimed at speeding up the development of clean energy and addressing climate change".

Rockets fired from Gaza as Israeli strikes kill 12, rescuers say



Palestinians check the destruction in the aftermath of an Israeli strike in the al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip

AFP | Gaza

Israel said three rockets were fired toward its territory yesterday from the Gaza Strip, where rescuers reported at least 12 people killed in Israeli strikes.

The rockets were the latest in a spate of recent launches from the devastated Palestinian territory, with Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warning of even more intense retaliatory strikes if they continued.

The military said one of yesterday's rockets "fell adjacent to the community of Nir Am and the second projectile fell in an open area".

Earlier in the day, it said another rocket fired from Gaza had triggered sirens near Beerli. No injuries were reported from the launches.

In Gaza, meanwhile, first responders recovered the bodies of 12 Palestinians, "including several children", who were killed in air strikes on Gaza City, the central Maghazi refugee camp and the southern city of Rafah, said Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for Hamas's civil defence.

"Friday was a harsh day for the residents of Gaza, particu-

YOU KNOW WHAT
The Israeli military struck approximately 40 Hamas gathering points in Gaza, including some targets embedded in areas that previously served as schools

larly in Gaza City, due to the continuous Israeli bombardment," told AFP.

Bassal noted that 10 of the fatalities occurred in strikes on northern and central Gaza, and two were in the south, adding that dozens were injured across the territory.

The Israeli military said in a statement that during the past day, "the Israeli air force struck approximately 40 Hamas gathering points" throughout Gaza. Some of the targets "were embedded in areas that previously served as schools", it said. Bassal denied the military's

claims, accusing Israeli forces of "committing massacres under the pretext of the presence of armed men".

He also alleged that the forces were "preventing food and drinking water from reaching dozens of medical staff, patients, and the injured" at the Indonesian Hospital in the town of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

He said his agency had received distress calls from the hospital since Thursday, adding that the facility "is nearly destroyed".

"It's just a pile of rubble and walls; there's no hospital." The Israeli army has conducted intense raids in Gaza's north since October 6, claiming it aims to keep Hamas fighters from regrouping there.

Yesterday, the army reported that one of its brigades had been active in the northern town of Beit Hanoun over the past week, conducting raids and eliminating "armed cells".

Bassal estimated that 10,000 people remained in the northern towns of Jabalia, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun, down from between 150,000 and 200,000 before the war.

Thai PM declares millions in watches and bags among \$400 mn assets

AFP | Bangkok

Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra declared more than \$400 million in assets yesterday, her party said, including more than 200 designer handbags worth over \$2 million and at least 75 luxury watches valued at almost \$5 million.

Paetongtarn, the youngest daughter of telecom billionaire and ex-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, took office in September as the fourth member of the clan to lead a Thai government in 20 years.

Paetongtarn was obliged to declare her assets and liabilities to the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC).

She identified 13.8 billion baht (\$400 million) in assets, a document posted on media



Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra gestures during a group photo with members of the cabinet

websites showed. Her investments were worth 11 billion baht and she had another billion baht in deposits and cash, her declaration said. Her other assets included 75

watches valued at 162 million baht and 39 more timepieces, plus 217 handbags worth 76 million baht, as well as property in London and Japan among other holdings.

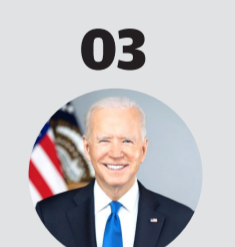
TOP 4 TWEETS



Starmer was complicit in the RAPE OF BRITAIN when he was head of Crown Prosecution for 6 years. Starmer must go and he must face charges for his complicity in the worst mass crime in the history of Britain. @elonmusk



Musk supporting jmailed far right agitator Tommy Robinson after the German AfD ... what's next?...denying the Holocaust? @guyverhofstadt



Today, we celebrate a group of Americans who've dedicated their careers to serving our democracy in essential ways. Our democracy begins and ends with exemplary deeds of service. That's our work for the ages and it's what these awardees embody. @POTUS



Cheering on Team Canada tonight in their quarterfinal match against Czechia. Let's get it done! #WorldJuniors @JustinTrudeau

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

Classifieds

VACANCIES AVAILABLE CONTINUED

FORCE POINT SECURITY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66767587 or Forceps17@gmail.com

ZOHAL CONSTRUCTION CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17877277 or zohalco@batelco.com.bh

AL HELLI SUPERMARKET B.S.C CLOSED has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33572333 or hanan@ALHELLO.COM

DHL INTERNATIONAL B.S.C. has a vacancy for the occupation of DIRECTOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17328393 or husain.almajed@dhl.com

SIYANA INDUSTRIAL SERVICES & SIAM SCARFOLDS- SIMPLE COMMANDITE COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of RIGGER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17552722 or SIAM7373@BATELCO.COM.BH

Bahrain Electromechanical Services Co. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17536275 or BEMCO@BATELCO.COM.BH

ALKOHEJI TECHNICAL SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17369993 or ABDULLA@KOHEJITECHNICAL.COM

DURRAT AL MUHARRAQ CLEANING & MAINTENANCE has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33335558 or bucheeri5@gmail.com

YOUSUF FOR REPID COOLING SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of REFRIGERATION MECHANIC, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39689891 or yousufms@gmail.com

LOOK SMART HAIR FIXING CENTER has a vacancy for the occupation of HAIR DRESSER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17252240 or ABUHATAM2001@HOTMAIL.COM

MONISH CONSTRUCTION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33664969 or ANANTHMONISH@GMAIL.COM

PROJECTS ACCESS SCAFFOLDING & FORMWORK CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SCAFFOLDER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33916679 or LEGAL@PROJECTSACCESS.COM

ERA CONSTRUCTION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17500331 or hr@eraprojects.net

Juffair Gate Hotel has a vacancy for the occupation of MASSEUR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17251444 or NAMALCO@BATELCO.COM.BH

ALTURATH TOWN FOR CARPENTRY AND ALUMINUM has a vacancy for the occupation of PAINTER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 34337737 or alturath.bh2@gmail.com

SCOOP Construction has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17600091 or scoopmec1@gmail.com

Basma Security has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY MAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 1772676 or aqeel@basma.com.bh

Al Helli Supermarket B.S.C Closed has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVISOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17877209 or hanan@ALHELLO.COM

SAIF VIEWS CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39297117 or SAIFVIEWS.CONT@GMAIL.COM

MTQ OILFIELD SERVICES W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of PRODUCTION MANAGER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17168827 or ahmed@mtqqs.com

ARCAL W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of ALUMINIUM TECHNICIAN (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17701900 or hrd@arcabiz

TECHNO GRAPHICS PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of DESIGNER(COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS), suitably qualified applicants can contact 13105673 or mshameer.ms@gmail.com

ALNESF ALAAKHER SALON has a vacancy for the occupation of BEAUTICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39617050 or ALNESF_ALAAKHER@HOTMAIL.COM

S N S S MARKETING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(SALES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33206212 or SUL.BH.PK@GMAIL.COM

FIORNTINA MENS SALOON CO WLL has a vacancy for the occupation of BARBER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66356021 or MADNAN6021@GMAIL.COM

Madan abbas hasan albanbil has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39991305 or MADANALBANBLI@GMAIL.COM

SEA LIGHT MARINE CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of PIPEFITTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39460331 or SEALIGHT@BATELCO.COM.BH

WADI ALSAIL GATE CONSTRUCTION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33367000 or WADYALSAIL@GMAIL.COM

IT Y BS BUILDING SERVICE has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39297380 or MARIARASOOL90@GMAIL.COM

Al Hilal Multi Specialty Medical Center -Manama has a vacancy for the occupation of MARKETING EXECUTIVE, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17824444 or HRD@ALHILALHEALTHCARE.COM

ZONE SECURITY W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36322266 or info@zonebh.net

UNITED ENTERPRISES TRADING CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(ROAD MAINTENANCE), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33939899 or admin@ue-trading.biz

AL MUNNAWAR BUILDING MATERIAL TRADING has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(SALES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 35518383 or CHISMAILBH@GMAIL.COM

KHAJULA SERVICES W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37350823 or HAIDRABADSERVICES@GMAIL.COM

JOKER MAN GENTS BARBER has a vacancy for the occupation of BARBER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33465437 or TAXIBURGER7@GMAIL.COM

BH FOR INSULATION SYSTEMS COMPANY W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17640744 or BHINSULATION21@GMAIL.COM

CHONG CHAN TING RESTAURANT W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of COOK(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39296004 or CHONGCHANTING@GMAIL.COM

SHAHIN SECOND HAND FURNITURE AND ELECTRONICS has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(SALES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 35301525 or USMAN-BAH887@GMAIL.COM

6 PENCE TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION SOLUTIONS W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35454007 or GUPTAREE-SHA31@GMAIL.COM

GHAMAMA CONSULTANCY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37515705 or MOIZSUI@GMAIL.COM

BOSPORUS RESTAURANT W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of DISH WASHER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36397666 or A.MASHHADI86@GMAIL.COM

LEENA FURNITURE & UPHOLSTERY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of UPHOLSTERER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33882876 or factoryleena@gmail.com

TUROOD LOGISTICS SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36355652 or TUROOD@HOTMAIL.COM

THINK TANK MARKETING SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33956288 or SABZADAK77@GMAIL.COM

B H J SERVICES BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of ACCOUNTANT(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 35498281 or HUS-SAINB865@GMAIL.COM

MUHAMMADI GULL 21 SAERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36484758 or MITTA-

HURREHMAN305@GMAIL.COM

DEEP WAY SERVICES CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAVY DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37539255 or USMAN.NEWNADIR@GMAIL.COM

MANGROVE W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39633019 or PASHA@KCBABRAIN.COM

SHOHAG HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND CONSULTANCY W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33285638 or M.SHOHAG9339@GMAIL.COM

SALMAN RADHI AL-HALAL & SONS WLL has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17263119 or halalms@hotmail.com

ALMOAYYED CONTRACTING GROUP W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17400407 or profprice@almoayyedcg.com

GULF HOTELS GROUP - GULF HOTEL has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17713000 or khalid.alawadi@gulfhotebahrain.com

ISSA ZEERA REAL ESTATE CO.W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of COORDINATOR(MATERIAL INVENTORY CONTROL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17501000 or ORIENTAL@ORIENTAL-PRESS.COM

RAMSIS ENGINEERING CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of COORDINATOR(MATERIAL INVENTORY CONTROL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17830801 or Abbas@ramsis.com.bh

FIRST CLASS S has a vacancy for the occupation of HAIR DRESSER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17690836 or first78class@gmail.com

ALMOAYYED CLEANING & MAINTENANCE W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17400407 or profprice@almoayyedcg.com

MARWA LAND CONSTRUCTION has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 36990616 or M1995-33@hotmail.com

MARWA LAND CONSTRUCTION has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 36990616 or M1995-33@hotmail.com

AL SDDAIS GENTS TAILORING has a vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39466332 or NAEEMA.MOHD@BTI.COM.BH

DUNUWILA REAL ESTATE W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33286823 or BUSINESSBAY05@GMAIL.COM

synergic facility services has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER(FOOD DISTRIBUTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 66637663 or HESSAHESSAHESSA@YAHOO.COM

AMAZING TOWER CONSTRUCTION has a vacancy for the occupation of CONSTRUCTION WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 3300206 or shawqifharhan@gmail.com

RABAB AHMED ISA ALI MADAN has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35306735 or HAN-IRASHEDBH@GMAIL.COM

Romaany Sale/Trade of clothing, footwear, apparel accessories, has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33332012 or CAPETA320@GMAIL.COM

M S F ARK INTERIOR DECORATION W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CARPENTER(DECOR), suitably qualified applicants can contact 34546396 or WAQARSANDHU121@GMAIL.COM

M K A MECHANICAL CONTRACTS has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39611612 or MKA.MC.BAH@GMAIL.COM

YOUR CHOICE COLD STORE has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33865051 or UM-ABDULRAHMAN20@GMAIL.COM

FORCE POINT SECURITY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66767587 or Forceps17@gmail.com

Cambridge Constructions has a vacancy for the occupation of ACCOUNTANTS, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17702561 or MALMABAD@GMAIL.COM

MOHAMMED AHMADI CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of PLUMBER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17268111 or hrd1@macbh.com

MAHMOUD@GMAIL.COM

NASS CONTRACTING COMPANY (W.L.L) has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAVY DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17725522 or yousif@aanass.net

inspector automotive services has a vacancy for the occupation of INSPECTOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39991696 or ALMOSAWI.NARJES@GMAIL.COM

S N COATING WORKSHOP W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVISOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33074488 or SICOATING@GMAIL.COM

HARRY MACHINERY INSTALLATION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36418308 or HARMINDERKAINTH93@GMAIL.COM

ARCAL W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of ALUMINIUM TECHNICIAN (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17701900 or hrd@arcabiz

DUNUWILA REAL ESTATE W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE WORKER HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33286823 or BUSINESSBAY05@GMAIL.COM

ISSAN LIGHT GENERAL TRADING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DATA ENTRY OPERATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17725522 or yousif@aanass.net

HI QUALITY PLASTIC W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of PLASTIC CUTTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33056624 or HIQUALITYPLASTIC@GMAIL.COM

ALWARDY SALOON - Bahraini Partnership Company has a vacancy for the occupation of BARBER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33111909 or ALJAMELDOCC@GMAIL.COM

ZAKI SSG W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33514410 or ZAKISSG99@GMAIL.COM

NO O M I MARKETING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33206212 or NOMI.67.BH@GMAIL.COM

F M BEST FLY BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of CONSTRUCTION WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33416255 or RANA-FAISALMANZOR@GMAIL.COM

ALNOOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL has a vacancy for the occupation of CLERK, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17736773 or roonlasc@batelco.com.bh

Karac Express Cafeteria has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36738888 or UMNAYAF.MOHAMED@GMAIL.COM

NAJMA JEWELLERY has a vacancy for the occupation of JEWELRY GOLDSMITH (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17227240 or nabeel.amr@gmail.com

ZAM ZAM PACKAGING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of PACKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34649636 or CHB17092@GMAIL.COM

LAFAH KITCHEN has a vacancy for the occupation of KITCHEN AIDE, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33377910 or LAFAHBH@GMAIL.COM

SUMMER VEGETABLE AND FRUITS has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 32220579 or Z1141@HOTMAIL.COM

ALMANAR ALSHAMIL PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER(HEAVY VEHICLE), suitably qualified applicants can contact 36470770 or AL.MANAR.CT@GMAIL.COM

POWERSOLIS W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CONSTRUCTION WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34041039 or IQBAL.MEHRU@YAHOO.COM

LA LAND MANPOWER has a vacancy for the occupation of SECRETARY, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34557070 or laland-manpower@gmail.com

LAVENDERY LAUNDRY has a vacancy for the occupation of LAUNDERER/PRESSER(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33845453 or LAVENDERYLAUNDRY@GMAIL.COM

PAK DIAMOND CONSTRUCTION has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33001485 or AWAINASIRAI0@GMAIL.COM

DECON EXPERT SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAVY DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33464410 or connect@decon.world

Hamilton 'excited for year ahead' after Ferrari switch



Lewis Hamilton waves to fans (file photo)

AFP | London

Lewis Hamilton said yesterday he “could not be more excited for the year ahead” as the seven-times world champion prepares for his first Formula One season with Ferrari.

Hamilton has joined the Italian giants from Mercedes, with whom he won six of his drivers’ world titles.

But the lure of racing for Ferrari, arguably the most celebrated team in Grand Prix history, proved too strong, with Hamilton hoping his move inspires others to seize new opportunities.

“I could not be more excited for the year ahead,” Hamilton wrote on LinkedIn. “Moving to Scuderia Ferrari, there’s a lot to reflect on.

The Englishman, who turns 40 on Tuesday, added: “To anyone considering their next move in 2025: embrace the change. Whether you’re switching industries, learning a new skill, or even just taking

on new challenges, remember that reinvention is powerful. Your next opportunity is always within reach.

“Here’s to 2025 -- a year of embracing new opportunities, staying hungry, and driving forward with purpose. Let’s make it one to remember. Andiamo (Let’s go).”

Hamilton ended his post with the hashtag, “new job”, alongside a picture of him karting in a red crash helmet as a child.

Hamilton, who made his name in Formula One with McLaren, has joined Ferrari after 12 seasons at Mercedes and his first race for his new team will be the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on March 16.

He is due to unveil his 2025 car at Ferrari’s season launch alongside team-mate Charles Leclerc on February 19 at the team’s Maranello headquarters in northern Italy, with testing in Bahrain the following week.

Liverpool’s Slot says Man Utd ‘much better’ than league table shows



Liverpool’s players celebrates a goal (file photo)

AFP | London

Arne Slot says crisis-hit Manchester United are “much, much better” than their shocking position in the Premier League suggests as he prepares his Liverpool team for a clash against their fierce rivals on Sunday.

Liverpool are six points clear at the top of the Premier League table -- and are hot favourites to land a 20th English top-flight crown, which would pull them level with record-holders United.

United, by contrast, are 14th in the table after five defeats in their past six league games under new manager Ruben Amorim.

But Slot, also in his first campaign in England, is adamant he will not take his opponents lightly at Anfield, when asked if he might rest players at yesterday’s pre-match press conference.

“No, of course I’m not going to plan to rest any player because it’s a big game and I think it’s for me I said it before the first fixture (a 3-0 win at

Old Trafford) and I can say it one more time, that they have much better players in my opinion than maybe the league table shows at the moment.

“I think it’s going to take a while maybe for Ruben Amorim to bring this out of the players... but they will definitely go up and they are much, much, much better than the league table shows at the moment

ARNE SLOT

Old Trafford) and I can say it one more time, that they have much better players in my opinion than maybe the league table shows at the moment.

Opelka upsets Djokovic in Brisbane

Towering American dominates Djokovic; Sabalenka and Andreeva advance in Brisbane

● **Djokovic's Australian Open preparations take hit**

● **Aryna Sabalenka overcomes Marie Bouzkova, setting up a clash with Mirra Andreeva**

AFP | Brisbane

Former world number one Novak Djokovic's Australian Open preparations suffered a blow yesterday as he was bundled out of the Brisbane International by towering American Reilly Opelka.

The 2.11 metre (six feet 11 inches) Opelka served magnificently and returned just as well to stun the 24-time Grand Slam winner 7-6 (8/6), 6-3.

Djokovic had gone into the tournament insisting that at 37 he still had the game to trouble the younger players.

But Opelka, 27, a former world number 17 who was out of the game for almost two years from 2022-24 following hip and wrist surgeries, dominated the Serb and wrapped up a comfortable win in an hour and 40 minutes.



Winner Reilly Opelka of the United States (R) and Serbia's Novak Djokovic shake hands

Opelka came back to the sport in July last year but showed his serve has lost none of its potency in his time away.

He served 16 aces and only faced one break point throughout the match.

"He's the greatest player ever," Opelka said of Djokovic.

"The reality is we have nothing to lose coming in against him. You end up playing more freely

and you take a lot more risks because it's your only chance of beating him.

"It's tough for him, because you get guys like me who are going to roll the dice, and on a day like this things go my way, and that's how it worked out."

Opelka now faces another huge server in the semi-finals, rising French star Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, who made

it 75 aces in three matches as he beat Czech player Jakub Mensik, 7-5, 7-6 (7/5).

Sabalenka through

The second semi-final will see defending champion and second seed Grigor Dimitrov up against another Czech, Jiri Lehecka.

In the women's semi-finals, world number one Aryna Sa-

“He's the greatest player ever. The reality is we have nothing to lose coming in against him. You end up playing more freely and you take a lot more risks because it's your only chance of beating him

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

balenka overpowered Marie Bouzkova in straight sets.

Sabalenka, who has won the last two titles at the Grand Slam in Melbourne, beat the Czech player 6-3, 6-4 in a tough match lasting 1hr 45mins.

She now plays Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva, who defeated Tunisia's Ons Jabeur 6-4, 7-6 (7/2).

The 17-year-old Andreeva showcased her rich potential by defeating former world number two Jabeur in a high-quality encounter.

Jabeur was runner-up at Wimbledon in 2022 and 2023 but has been out of action since August with a shoulder injury.

Andreeva was able to deal with the tricky shotmaking of Jabeur, breaking her once in the first set

YOU KNOW WHAT

Reilly Opelka, who returned to tennis in July 2024 after almost two years of surgeries, served 16 aces and faced only one break point against Novak Djokovic

and then recovering from two breaks of her own serve in the second set to force a tiebreak.

She raced through the tiebreak to wrap up the match in 90 minutes.

"It was mentally hard to keep pushing and playing aggressively because we all know that she's very good at playing games -- drop shots, slices," Andreeva said.

The second women's semi-final will be between Russian qualifier Polina Kudermetova and Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina.

The Australian Open starts on January 12.

Arsenal must 'flip coin' in Premier League title race, says Arteta

AFP | London

Mikel Arteta says Arsenal must "flip that coin" as they hunt down Premier League leaders Liverpool in a quest to be crowned champions of England after two agonising near-misses.

The second-placed Gunners, runners-up to Manchester City over the past two seasons, are six points behind Arne Slot's rampaging Liverpool, who have a game in hand, having played half their league fixtures.

Stumbles in October and early November left Arsenal playing catch-up and Arteta on Friday pleaded for consistency from his men, who travel to face mid-table Brighton on Saturday.

"We have to show the same level of consistency and a bit more, because the last year we have been the best team in the league, broken various records and still haven't won a major trophy, so something is missing," said the Spaniard.



Arsenal's manager Mikel Arteta (R) celebrates with his players (file photo)

"It's going to be very thin, small details, you can pick up certain games and situations. But at the end, we're so close and we just have to flip that coin to the other side to make it happen.

"That's only going to happen if we do what we have to do and what we can control. The rest is

out of our hands."

Arsenal are bidding to win their first Premier League title since 2004 but are set to be without Bukayo Saka until March after the England winger suffered a hamstring injury against Crystal Palace last month.

"There's not one player that's

“We have to show the same level of consistency and a bit more, because the last year we have been the best team in the league, broken various records and still haven't won a major trophy, so something is missing

MIKEL ARTETA

going to play nine games in a row in that position, it's impossible," said Arteta.

He added: "We need more threat, we need more players fit and rotation in that unit. In relation to that, we will make decisions and as well, players' performances, that's simple."

The Arsenal boss said he was unsure whether the club would strengthen in the January transfer window.

Rampant Czechs set up United Cup semi-final against US

AFP | Parth

Karolina Muchova dismantled Jasmine Paolini in straight sets to help the Czech Republic beat Italy on Friday and set up a United Cup semi-final against the United States.

Kazakhstan play last year's runners-up Poland, led by women's world number two Iga Swiatek, in Saturday's other semi-final in Sydney.

Muchova, who suffered a career-threatening wrist injury and missed 10 months of tennis before returning last summer, made her case to be taken seriously at the upcoming Australian Open.

The 28-year-old, ranked 22 in the world to Paolini's four, defeated the Italian 6-2, 6-2 to give the Czechs one foot in the last four.

A gripping fourth game of the second set lasted more



Karolina Muchova

than 10 minutes and was pivotal as Muchova finally held serve, before breaking her opponent to love for 4-1.

Muchova now boasts a 5-0 record over Paolini.

"I really wanted to bring a point to the team so I was trying to stay focused," Muchova said.

"Jasmine is an unbelievable player. It was a really tough match. I knew I had to go until the end."

Osaka into first semi-final since 2022 ahead of Australian Open

AFP | Auckland

Former world number one Naomi Osaka reached her first semi-final since 2022 after fighting back at the Auckland Classic yesterday.

The four-time Grand Slam champion beat unseeded American Hailey Baptiste 6-7 (2/7), 6-1, 6-2 in another confidence boost ahead of the Australian Open in Melbourne.

Osaka said her hard work was starting to pay off after booking a place in the final four of a WTA event for the first time since the Miami Open in April 2022.

The Japan star gave birth to

daughter Shai in July the following year, midway through a 15-month break, before returning to the tour 12 months ago.

"I put a lot of work in throughout last year and even though the results didn't show it, I'm just continuing to try as hard as I can to see where it gets me," the 57th-ranked Osaka said.

"The key focus again today was just to have a lot of belief and confidence in myself."

As with her first two matches in Auckland, the 27-year-old lacked rhythm in the opening set.

She unearthed a powerful



Naomi Osaka in action

servicing game over the next two sets, ending with nine aces to give her 21 for the tournament.

World number 92 Baptiste sought treatment for an ankle injury during the second set.

Osaka, a two-time Australian Open champion, admitted that helped her cause.

"She's an amazing player, it sucks that she was injured but I think we played a really high-quality match," said Osaka, who is seeded seventh in Auckland.

"In a weird way I'm glad to play a three-set match because I think that's the kind of experience that I need."

AQUA COOL
Ultra Pure Bottled Drinking Water

35 YEARS

Easy & Secure Online Ordering of your favourite Aqua Cool Products

Download the AQUA COOL App Now

Free Home Delivery

Call Us Now-1787 5098

www.aquacool.bh

Jalal Ionics Co. W.L.L. is ISO 22000 : 2005 certified

Jalal Ionics Co. W.L.L.
P.O. Box 1770, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
C.R. No. 14986, Public Health Registration No. 18/0006

Bahrain face Oman for Gulf title



Bahrain's players celebrate in the dressing room following their semi-final win against Kuwait



Players celebrate at the end of the semi-final match

● **Oman, Bahrain meet in the final at 7 PM today**

● **Both teams topped their respective groups**

TDI | Manama

In a clash of regional heavyweights, Oman and Bahrain will battle for the Arabian Gulf Cup title today at 7pm, with both nations hoping to add to their modest collection of Gulf Cup trophies.

The two teams arrive at the final with impressive credentials, having topped their respective groups and navigated challenging knockout stages. Bahrain,



Bahrain were four places above Oman in the FIFA rankings when the Gulf Cup Of Nations 2024-25 draw was conducted, 76th against 80th

ranked 76th in FIFA rankings, secured their spot with notable victories against Saudi Arabia and Iraq, before defeating hosts Kuwait 1-0 in the semifinals

Bahrain Predicted Line-Up:

Goalkeeper: Ebrahim Lutfalia

Defenders: Hamad Al Shamsan, Komail Al Aswad, Mohamed Benadi, Mohamed Al Hayam

Midfielders: Sayed Dhiya Saeed, Mohamed Marhoon, Ali Madan

Forwards: Mohamed Al Romaihi, Mohamed Al Humaidan, Ahmed Al Khalasi

Note: Forward Mahdi Abduljabbar is expected to miss the final due to a red card received in the semi-final against Kuwait.

Oman Predicted Line-Up:

Goalkeeper: Ali Al Busaidi

Defenders: Faiz Al Rusheidi, Thani Al Rushaidi, Ahmed Al Harthy, Mohamed Al Kindi

Midfielders: Khalid Al Hadhri, Ahmed Al Mukhaini, Mohamed Al Ghassani

Forwards: Jameel Al Yahmadi, Ahmed Al Muwallad, Khalid Al Hadhri

through Mohamed Marhoon's decisive goal.

Both teams will miss key players due to suspension, with Bahrain's Mahdi Abduljabbar and Oman's Rabia Al-Alawi ruled out

after receiving red cards in their semifinal matches. Qatari referee Abdul Rahman Al-Jassem will oversee the final, supported by assistants Saud Ahmed and Talib Salem, with Khamis Al Marri

manning the VAR.

Oman remains undefeated in their last six Gulf Cup meetings against Bahrain over 15 years, maintaining five clean sheets. Their previous two knockout

stage clashes both ended in 1-0 victories for Oman.

For Bahrain, who claimed their sole Gulf Cup triumph in 2019 after four final heartbreaks (1970, 1982, 1992, 2003-04), this represents a chance to secure a second title. Meanwhile, Oman, two-time champions (2009, 2017-18), aim to bounce back from their extra-time defeat to Iraq in last year's final.

The tournament, launched in 1970, has historically been dominated by Kuwait with ten titles, followed by Iraq with four. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have each won three times, while the UAE has lifted the trophy twice. Today's final promises another thrilling chapter in the competition's 55-year history.

Australia in charge as Boland rips through Rohit-less India

● **Australia seizes control in Sydney after India all out for 185**

● **Boland took 4 wickets for 31 runs**

AFP | Sydney

Relentless Scott Boland and Mitchell Starc sliced through an Indian batting line-up missing Rohit Sharma yesterday to put Australia in a commanding position after day one of the fifth and final Test.

The visitors were all out for 185 after Jasprit Bumrah -- captaining the side with Rohit "rested" -- sent his team in at a sold-out Sydney Cricket Ground.

Boland with the chief destroyer with 4-31 while Starc took 3-49.

In reply, Australia lost Usman Khawaja for two on the last ball before stumps with Bumrah doing the damage, leaving them at 9-1 with Sam Konstas on seven.

"It was disappointing losing a wicket on the last ball of the day but it's a pretty good position after they won the toss," said Boland.

"I felt like I bowled pretty good... a bit stiff still from Mel-



Australia's Scott Boland (C) celebrates with team mates after a wicket

It was disappointing losing a wicket on the last ball of the day but it's a pretty good position after they won the toss. I felt like I bowled pretty good... a bit stiff still from Melbourne but happy with the way the day went

SCOTT BOLAND

bourne but happy with the way the day went.

"Hopefully the sun's out and we can bat all day (on Saturday).

There's still a nice covering of grass on the wicket and hopefully another good day for us tomorrow."

None of the Indian batsmen fired, with kingpin Virat Kohli again falling cheaply while Nitish Kumar Reddy, who made a brilliant century in the previous Test at Melbourne, was out for a golden duck.

Kohli had a huge left-off on his first ball and finally departed for 17, following KL Rahul (4), Yashasvi Jaiswal (10) and Shubman Gill (20).

Rishabh Pant made a battling 40, but that was as good as it got for India.

Regular captain and opener Rohit was rested, India said, after failing to get past 10 runs in

any of his five innings during the series, which Australia lead 2-1.

It was a significant move and could spell the end of the 37-year-old's 67-match Test career.

Australia will regain the Border-Gavaskar trophy for the first time since 2014-15 if they win or draw.

Fellow veteran Kohli, 36, has similarly been under pressure since an unbeaten 100 in the first Test at Perth, with his inability to again build a big score set to intensify the scrutiny.

Rahul reverted to opener alongside Jaiswal, with Gill returning at three.

But the ploy backfired with Rahul out softly with Starc tempting him to clip a full delivery to Konstas at cover.



Nitish Kumar Reddy, who scored a century in the previous test, was dismissed for a golden duck in this match by Scott Boland

Ex-India coach Shastri expects Rohit to 'pull plug' on Test career



India's captain Rohit Sharma (L) chats with Jasprit Bumrah

AFP | New Delhi

Former India coach Ravi Shastri said yesterday he expected skipper Rohit Sharma to "pull the plug" on his red-ball career after being left out of the fifth Test against Australia in Sydney.

The 37-year-old opener has had a poor series and the writing was on the wall when he failed to show up for India's press conference.

Coach Gautam Gambhir instead fronted the media and declined to throw his support behind him.

Stand-in captain Jasprit Bumrah insisted at the coin toss yesterday that Rohit had

"opted to rest" for the good of the team rather than being forced out.

But Shastri suspects it is the end of Rohit's 67-Test career, predicting a retirement announcement after the game.

"It still is a brave call for a captain to own up and say, 'I'm prepared to take the bench in this game,'" Shastri said while commenting on Fox Sports.

"If there was a home season coming up he might've thought of carrying on, but I think he might just pull the plug at the end of this Test.

"It's not that India don't have youngsters. There are very, very good players in the wings and it's time to build.