



Djokovic survives rookie test
 Djokovic overcomes British wild card Fearnley as Pegula suffers shock exit to Wang Xinyu | P12

THE DAILY tribune



Emma Roberts thinks fame is 'really scary' **8 CELEBS**

BUSINESS 5 Beyon partners with LigaData for data lakehouse platform

Kaaba's Kiswa to be changed on Muharram 1st



Makkah

Every year on the 1st of Muharram, the Kaaba's covering (Kiswa) is replaced through a meticulous process involving 159 technicians.

The old Kiswa is removed and replaced with a new one, consisting of four sides and a door curtain, which is raised piece-by-piece to the top, unfolded, and secured in place, after which the ropes of the previous covering are loosened - an important annual Islamic tradition. The King Abdulaziz Complex for Holy Kaaba Kiswa employs over 200 skilled workers, including craftsmen and administrators. The complex houses several specialized departments, such as those responsible for dyeing, automatic weaving, hand-weaving, printing, belts, gold-plating, and the sewing and assembling of the Kaaba's covering, according to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

Labour steals the show in UK exit polls, after 14 yrs; Starmer set to be PM

AFP | London

Keir Starmer will be Britain's next prime minister with his Labour Party set to win a massive majority in a parliamentary election, an exit poll yesterday indicated, while Rishi Sunak's Conservatives are forecast to suffer historic losses.

The poll showed Labour would win 410 seats in the 650-seat parliament, ending 14 years of Conservative-led government. Sunak's party was forecast to only take 131 seats, down from 346 when parliament was dissolved.

Sunak's party was forecast to only take 131 seats, down from 346 when parliament was dissolved, as voters punish the Conservatives for a cost-of-living crisis and years of instability and in-fighting which has seen five different prime ministers since 2016.

Bahrain Property Market Booms



Transactions up 6%, market exceeds 1 billion dinars



The continued efforts to support the real estate sector and foster an attractive investment environment are key to achieving more investments in this vital sector, which contributes to the diversification of the national economy

H.E. SHAIKH MOHAMMED BIN KHALIFA AL KHALIFA, CEO OF THE REAL ESTATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY (RERA)

Mohammed Darwish
 TDT | Manama

Bahrain's property market is thriving, according to figures released by the Survey and Land Registration Bureau (SLRB).

The total value of transactions in the first half of 2024 reached approximately 576 million Bahraini dinars, a healthy 6% increase compared to 542.3 million dinars recorded for the same period in 2023.

This growth is backed by a rise in the number of transactions as well, with 11,559 deals recorded in the first six months

of 2024.

March emerged as the busiest month for real estate activity, with 2,086 transactions.

The market remained steady throughout the first half, with April seeing the lowest number of transactions at 1,770.

This positive trend aligns with the strong performance of the Bahraini real estate sector in 2023.

The SLRB's annual report revealed a total trading value exceeding one billion dinars (1,074,057,408 dinars) for the entire year, solidifying Bahrain's position as a dynamic market for property investment.

H.E. Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the CEO of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), highlighted the continued efforts to support the real estate sector and foster an attractive investment environment as key to achieving further investments in this vital sector, which contributes significantly to the diversification of the national economy.

Firm confidence

The increased transactions reflect the firm confidence that developers have in this vital sector and it is contributing to the sector's continued growth and

sustainability while solidifying the Kingdom's position as a leading real estate investment hub in the region, the official said.

Further, the RERA CEO said the growth in transactions reflect the close cooperation between the public and private sectors in the Kingdom and that it is committed to continue providing real estate services by simplifying procedures so as to meet the needs of investors and entrepreneurs in the sector and to achieve the developmental goals by providing a safe and sustainable real estate environment.

Government-business partnership

Bahrain Ups Consumer Protection with Service Pacts

TDT | Manama

The Consumer Protection Directorate at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has signed three service level agreements between the ministry and the commercial sector to address consumer complaints from citizens and residents in Bahrain.

Shaikh Hamad bin Salman Al Khalifa, Assistant Undersecretary for Domestic and Foreign Trade at the ministry, said that the signing of these agreements is part of the operational and development plan of the directorate, following the signing of the three Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) last year with Lulu Hypermarket, Talabat, and Extra, which expanded this year to include Ramez, Jahez and Just Clean Internet Services.

The directorate is committed to enhancing the quality and efficiency of services by harnessing modern technologies and utilising partnerships with the commercial sector.

Shaikh Hamad bin Salman underscored the directorate's commitment to enhancing the quality and efficiency of services by harnessing modern technologies and utilising partnerships with the commercial sector.



The agreement also includes terms and conditions under which the two signatory parties will provide services to consumers, by setting the foundations and framework for providing high quality services, following Law (935) of 2012 on consumer protection and its executive regulations.

He emphasised that this step aims to obtain a mutual agreement between the government sector and the commercial sector to ensure the provision of distinguished services to consumers by directing, resolving, and addressing complaints received before the expiry of the period specified in the service level agreement, while defining responsibilities, duties, and obligations of both parties and achieving common goals and enhancing mutual trust.



RHF directs Silver Jubilee budgets to charity projects

TDT | Manama

In compliance with the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) has started the process of redirecting budgets allocated by official authorities for the Silver Jubilee celebrations of His Maj-

esty's ascension, to charitable associations and funds.

He also commended His Majesty's commitment to enhancing principles of community partnership, which reflects his appreciation and support for the continuous humanitarian efforts undertaken by charitable associations, funds, and the contribu-



HM the King

tions made by official authorities in community development.

The Secretary General also praised the generous support extended by the esteemed government, under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, towards the RHF and its charitable

and humanitarian work in the Kingdom. He also acknowledged the significant efforts of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, in leading the philanthropic and humanitarian work undertaken by the Foundation.

The RHF has coordinated with the Ministry of Finance and the relevant official authorities responsible for allocating budgets for the Silver Jubilee celebrations to facilitate the official procedures for transferring all these budgets to the charitable associations and funds under the umbrella of the RHF.

Bahraini youth urged to embrace fitness



H.E. Rawan bint Najib Tawfiqi receives Mohammed Al Aradi

TDT | Manama

The Minister of Youth Affairs, Her Excellency Rawan bint Najib Tawfiqi, has emphasised the importance of encouraging Bahraini

youth to participate in physical activities.

This initiative aligns with the vision of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Representative of HM the King for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs, and Chair-

man of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS).

Minister Tawfiqi was speaking as she met with Mohammed Al Aradi, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al Haraka Baraka authority.

During the meeting, the min-

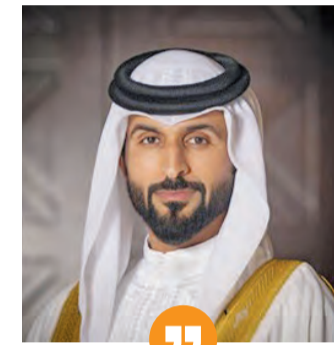
Programmes and challenges must be organised to promote a healthy lifestyle among Bahraini youth

H.E. RAWAN BINT NAJIB TAWFIQI, YOUTH AFFAIRS MINISTER

ister urged the authority to further organise programmes and challenges to promote a healthy lifestyle among Bahraini youth. She was briefed on the authority's future goals for promoting non-competitive physical activities that support the youth sector.

Al Aradi underscored the authority's commitment to promoting physical and health awareness in the community through various sports programmes.

HH Shaikh Nasser: Youth key to Bahrain's progress



HH Shaikh Khalid

Bahrain has a clear, long-term vision for the future, relying on a unique methodology that involves youth in its realisation. This approach encourages the youth to envision and shape the future with their ideas and projects

HH SHAIKH NASSER BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA, REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING FOR HUMANITARIAN WORK AND YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL FOR YOUTH AND SPORTS (SCYS)

sion of Arab Youth Day, celebrated annually on 5 July, HH Shaikh Nasser commended the government's efforts, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, in prioritising youth in the government's agenda.

He noted the launch and execution of national programmes aimed at equipping the youth with the necessary skills and expertise to actively contribute to sustainable development across all domains.

His Highness elaborated that Bahrain has a clear, long-term vision for the future, relying on a unique methodology that involves youth in its realisation. This approach encourages the youth to envision and shape the future with their ideas and projects.

TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), emphasised Bahrain's belief in the vital role of its youth.

He stressed their significance in advancing progress and achieving future development goals under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

In a statement on the occa-

Aspirations

His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports First Deputy Chairman, General Sports Authority (GSA) and Bahrain Olympic Committee President (BOC), affirmed that Bahrain is committed to supporting its youth and providing them with the conducive environment to achieve their aspirations.

Bahrain hails security cooperation with UAE

TDT | Manama

The Minister of Interior, His Excellency General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, commended ongoing security cooperation and coordination between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the UAE.

He also highlighted the joint commitment to exchange expertise within the framework of maintaining collective security and the interests of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah was speaking as he received a delegation from the Ministry of Interior of the UAE yesterday. The meeting with the delegation, led by Colonel Dr. Ali Mubarak Al Zaabi, was attended by Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa, the Director



H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa with Colonel Dr. Ali Mubarak Al Zaabi and other UAE delegation

General of Verdict Enforcement and Alternative Sentencing.

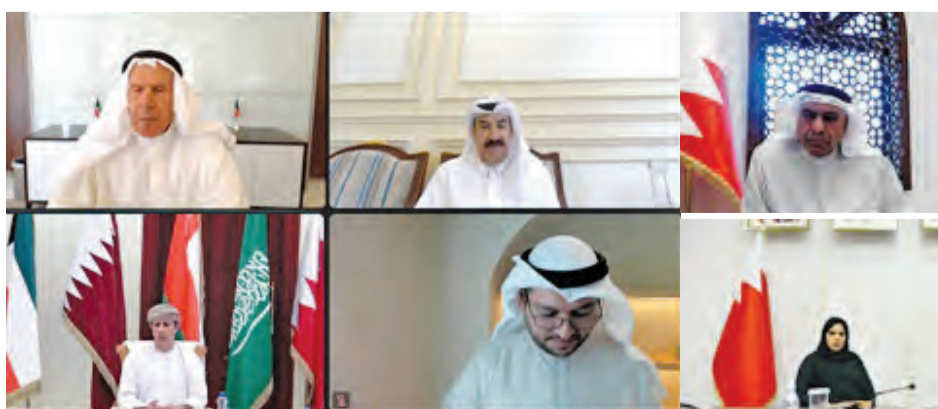
At the outset of the meeting, the Minister welcomed the delegation's visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain, aimed at learning about Bahrain's experience in

implementing the alternative sentencing project and the open prisons programme, which aim at contributing to enhancing societal security and stability.

During the meeting, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah

lauded the deep-rooted relations between the two countries, supported by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the UAE.

Protecting youth from drugs



MP Hassan Eid BuKhammas, representing Bahrain on the Advisory Board of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), took part in the fifth meeting of the Committee for the study of a strategy to protect youth from the dangers of drug use and addiction in the GCC (via video conference). The meeting discussed the necessity of strengthening Gulf cooperation, keeping up with regional and global developments in the field of drug crime, enhancing the GCC strategy to combat the illicit use of drugs and psychotropic substances, and exploring ways to bolster the Council's efforts in drug prevention and control. It also emphasised the importance of immediate information exchange regarding drugs and psychotropic substances.

Campaign for places of worship



The General Directorate of Civil Defence launched a campaign for places of worship in coordination with Sunni and Jaffary Endowments. The campaign covers such places in all governorates. The Director-General of Civil Defence, Brigadier Ali Mohammed Al Kubaisi, said the campaign is part of efforts to enhance awareness of those managing and supervising religious places. He said the campaign's team will visit those places to promote general safety.

Travel agency fraudster held



TDT | Manama

The Capital Governorate Police Directorate has arrested a 39-year-old Asian national accused of defrauding multiple individuals under the guise of a travel agency operator.

The suspect allegedly advertised discounted flight tickets on social media platforms, only to cancel the bookings later and pocket the refunded amounts.

Following numerous complaints, law enforcement initiated a thorough investigation, gathering evidence that led to the identification and subsequent arrest of the perpetrator.

Legal proceedings have been initiated, with the case now forwarded to the Public Prosecution for further action.

Authorities urge the public to exercise caution and transact only with authorised travel agencies to avoid falling victim to similar scams in the future.

Three Africans arrested for drug trafficking



TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has commenced the trial of three African nationals accused of importing and trafficking drugs.

The defendants are alleged to have smuggled narcotics into the country concealed within food tins.

The prosecution has charged two of the defendants, both in their 30s, with importing and possessing marijuana with intent to traffic.

The first defendant is also accused of possessing and selling marijuana and the stimulant methamphetamine.

The second defendant, in his

20s, is charged with possessing marijuana with intent to use. The third defendant is charged with possessing methamphetamine with intent to use.

The case stems from a tip received by the Anti-Narcotics Directorate from Bahrain International Airport customs officials.

They suspected a package arriving from an African country, addressed to the first defendant, contained illicit substances.

An investigation revealed the defendant was part of a criminal network that imported drugs from abroad using sophisticated methods, then distributed them within Bahrain.

Three teenagers arrested for robbery and assault in Zallaq

TDT | Manama

The Southern Governorate Police Directorate has arrested three individuals, aged between 16 and 18, for assaulting a driver and robbing him of cash in the Zallaq area, a statement from the Ministry of Interior revealed.

The incident, as per the statement, occurred when the victim was driving his vehicle.

The suspects, who were identified through a swift

investigation, allegedly approached the victim and assaulted him, forcing him to hand over a sum of money.

The police, upon receiving the report, immediately initiated an investigation, gathering evidence and identifying the suspects. Within 24 hours of the report, the suspects were nabbed. The necessary legal procedures have been initiated, and the case has been referred to the Public Prosecution.

Bahrain joins GCC-European forum

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's parliamentary delegation, represented by Sabeeka Khalifa Al-Fadhala, Chairperson of the Youth Af-

fairs Committee at the Shura Council, participated in the online eighth meeting of the GCC-European Parliamentary Committee.

No Payout for 'Lover' in Adultery Claim

Court rules against man seeking compensation for adultery accusation



The court found no evidence that the defendant had abused his right to file a police report with malicious intent or recklessness.

TDT | Manama

A man has lost a lawsuit seeking compensation for psychological and moral damages after the defendant filed a police report accusing him of adultery.

The plaintiff claimed that the defendant's accusations, which

were later dropped due to insufficient evidence, caused him significant emotional distress and damages to his reputation.

The plaintiff, who was accused of having an affair with the defendant's wife, sought BD950 in compensation.

He argued that the defendant's false accusations led to an investigation by the Public Prosecution, which ultimately dismissed the case.

The plaintiff claimed that the investigation and subsequent accusations caused him emotional distress and negatively impacted his work and personal life.

However, the defendant's lawyer, Eman Hassan, presented a strong defense, arguing that her client had a legitimate reason to file the report.

Growing distance

She stated that the defendant had been married to his wife for 21 years and noticed changes in their relationship, including her growing distance and apparent attraction to another man.

The defendant discovered that his wife was communicating with another man on her phone, using a nickname, and

engaging in romantic conversations.

The defendant's lawyer further argued that the defendant's wife subsequently filed for divorce, admitting in court that she had grown to dislike her husband and feared temptation.

The court granted her divorce, ordering the defendant to return her dowry.

Insufficient evidence

The defense also highlighted that the plaintiff was never cleared of the adultery accusations due to insufficient evidence and that his lawsuit was an attempt to gain financial advantage at the defendant's expense.

The court ultimately ruled in favor of the defendant, dismissing the plaintiff's claim for compensation.

The court found no evidence that the defendant had abused his right to file a police report with malicious intent or recklessness.

The court concluded that the defendant's actions were justified based on the evidence presented, and the plaintiff failed to prove that the defendant's report was false or without merit.

Safety inspection campaign in Isa Town market

TDT | Manama

The Southern Municipality, as part of its ongoing safety awareness campaigns, conducted a comprehensive inspection campaign in Isa Town's popular market.

The campaign, carried out in collaboration with the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), Civil Defence, and the municipality's inspection and market departments, aimed to ensure compliance with safety and security regulations in commercial establishments.

The inspection team, comprising representatives from all participating entities, meticulously examined electrical wiring in each shop, ensuring adherence to the EWA's safety standards.



Fire extinguishers are checked for safety and effectiveness

They also verified the presence of fire extinguishers and alarm systems, crucial for fire prevention and response.

The campaign focused on identifying compliant business-

ness establishments and issuing warnings to those in violation of safety regulations.

The municipality, in line with its established procedures, has already installed fire sensors in the market as part of its proactive

safety plan for all markets and commercial establishments.

These efforts aim to curb violations that detract from the aesthetic appeal of the area and ensure the safety of both vendors and market patrons.

Safety regulations

The campaign aims to educate shop owners about the importance of adhering to safety regulations and laws to prevent electrical hazards and fires, especially during the summer months when temperatures rise.

The Southern Municipality regularly conducts awareness and guidance campaigns as part of its comprehensive plan to emphasise the importance of adhering to municipal standards and regulations.

These efforts aim to curb violations that detract from the aesthetic appeal of the area and ensure the safety of both vendors and market patrons.

Businessman on trial for forgery appeal in vehicle transfer scandal

Businessman faces court for forgery appeal

TDT | Manama

The High Appeals Court is set to hear the appeal of a businessman convicted of forging car transfer documents and fraudulently transferring a vehicle to his ex-wife on August 4, 2024.

The prosecution accused the 50-year-old businessman of collaborating with a "good faith" employee in forging an official document, specifically a vehicle

transfer form.

The businessman allegedly presented the form with a forged signature of his ex-wife as the buyer to the employee, who unknowingly processed the transfer.

The businessman then used the forged document to transfer the vehicle's ownership to his ex-wife's name, despite knowing it was a forgery.

The case stems from a dispute involving a foreign woman



who had agreed to sell her car through the businessman.

He was supposed to sell the car and return the proceeds to

her, but he delayed returning the car or transferring its ownership. When it was discovered that the car had been registered in his ex-wife's name, she denied any involvement.

A witness from the General Directorate of Traffic testified that the businessman had presented the transfer form with all the necessary information during his shift. The employee then processed the transfer according to standard procedures.

Contractor sought for key sewage treatment plants operation and maintenance

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Works in Bahrain has announced a tender for the operation and maintenance of three key sewage treatment plants (STP): South Alba, Hamala, and Danaat Al Lawzi.

This initiative aims to maintain the efficiency of these facilities, thereby safeguarding public health and environmental protection.

The Ministry specifies that the chosen contractor will be required to supply the necessary manpower, spare parts, chemicals, equipment, and all other consumables essential for the operation and maintenance of these plants over a two-year period.

The contractor must adhere to all protocols and standards set by the Ministry throughout the management, operation, and maintenance of the facilities.

The project seeks to secure

the uninterrupted and effective operation of these STP's in accordance with the specified requirements. This is vital for preserving public health and protecting the environment.

Network

Bahrain currently operates a network of 16 sewage treatment plants spread across the kingdom.

These facilities collectively produce an average of more than 240,000 cubic metres of treated water per day.

The pumping stations, transportation, and distribution networks for this treated water are subject to a thorough preventive maintenance programme overseen by the Ministry's engineers.

In particular, the South Alba station produces approximately 1,136 cubic metres of treated water per day, while the Hamala station has an average daily output of around 1,107 cubic metres.

Governorate organises career preparation program for youth

TDT | Manama

The Northern Governor, Ali bin Shaikh Abdul Hussein Al-Asfoor, has emphasised that the summer program "Our Homeland and Our King Unite Us" aims to guide participants towards future careers and help them choose suitable academic paths for the job market.

As part of this initiative, the governorate organised a visit to the Ministry of Labor, providing students firsthand experience of the work environment and labor market dynamics in Bahrain.

During their visit, students received a motivational address from Ahmed Al-Haiki, the Undersecretary of the

Ministry of Labour, focusing on enhancing students' awareness in selecting academic specialisations aligned with future career opportunities.

The itinerary included a tour of the Training and Employment Department, where students learned about services catering to job seekers, efforts to overcome employment challenges, and tools for identifying career inclinations among participants.

These initiatives aim to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed career choices that align with their aspirations and ensure future success.

Meat processing training for Filipinos

TDT | Manama

More than 30 Filipinos attended a meat processing training session sponsored by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) in collaboration with Pinay Ikaw Na (PIN) held at the Philippine Embassy Manama.

Dinah Sta Ana, president of Pinay Ikaw Na (PIN), emphasised that the third batch training of the meat processing

is not only about enhancing the technical skills but also about improving the economic capability of the participants.

During the training, Jeffrey Kerr Fredeluces, the trainer, and Nicomedes Cordero, Jr., his assistant, extended their knowledge to the participants of transforming raw meat into food products through various techniques and processes of making nuggets, siomai, tocino and longganisa.

Road Rage Riot

Reckless young driver faces charges for brutally attacking two elders

TDT | Manama

A 22-year-old man is facing charges for a violent attack on two elders after a road rage incident.

The incident occurred when the young man, driving recklessly and ignoring traffic rules, was honked at by the couple's driver.

According to court documents, the incident took place on a public road when the victims, aged 57 and 62, were driving their vehicle.

The accused, who was driving his own car, was driving recklessly and disregarded traffic laws. The victims' driver honked to warn him about his dangerous driving.

"We were just trying to get home safely," said the 62-year-old victim. "He was driving so erratically, I had to honk to get his attention. I never expected him to react with such violence."

Obscene gesture

When they reached a traffic light, both vehicles stopped. The accused then got out of his car and made an obscene gesture towards the couple.

The victims decided to leave the scene to avoid any confrontation.



tation.

However, the accused followed them and stopped their vehicle. All three individuals got out of the car, and the accused allegedly attacked them.

He kicked the 57-year-old man, causing him to fall and break his left leg. He also kicked the 62-year-old man, injuring him in various parts of his body.

Screaming and kicking

"He just came at us, screaming and kicking," said the 57-year-old victim. "I fell to the ground and couldn't get up. I'm still in pain and have to use a cane to walk."

The accused confessed to the

”

We were just trying to get home safely. He was driving so erratically, I had to honk to get his attention. I never expected him to react with such violence

62-YEAR-OLD VICTIM

assault during the prosecution's investigation.

A medical report confirmed that the 57-year-old victim sustained a permanent disability of 12%. The 62-year-old victim also suffered injuries consistent with the incident.

The court has scheduled a hearing for July 8th to present his defense and for the court to deliver its verdict.



Four foreigners face trial for BD3.3mln financial scam

TDT | Manama

The Public Prosecution has ordered the referral of four foreign nationals to the High Criminal Court for charges related to financial crimes, including illegal investment solicitation, forgery, and money laundering.

The trial is scheduled for July 14th.

The charges were announced by the Head of the Financial Crimes and Money Laundering Prosecution.



The investigation, initiated by the National Centre for Financial Investigations, revealed

that one of the defendants, a known international criminal, had entered Bahrain under a false name and established a company specialising in trading collectibles and souvenirs.

The defendant allegedly collected and received funds from the public for investment in this business without obtaining the necessary license, violating Bahraini law.

Moreover, he is accused of collaborating with the other defendants in setting up the

company, forging data on a private company's IT system, and manipulating and using private documents.

Investigation

The Financial Crimes and Money Laundering Prosecution conducted an investigation that uncovered the main defendant's collection of over BD3.3 million from the public for investment in collectibles and souvenirs. He is also accused of issuing bounced checks.

The investigation also identified the roles of the other defendants in the forgery crimes, which were allegedly committed to facilitate the seizure of funds from the public and escape justice.

The Public Prosecution reviewed documents and records related to the alleged crimes and ordered the disclosure of bank account information for the defendants and the company.

Summer camp



A host of activities were provided during the second week of the 15 summer camp of the Royal Academy of Police (RAP), which is part of the National Plan to Promote the Spirit of Belonging to the Nation and Reinforce the Values of Nationalism. The camp is being organised in cooperation with Tamkeen. Female students participated in psychological health and talking skills classes, while male students played football at Khalifa Sports City.

Traffic light operation



The Ministry of Works, in collaboration with the General Traffic Department of the Ministry of Interior, has unveiled plans for the first phase of development on Janabiya Street. Commencing with the activation of a new traffic light at the intersection of Janabiya Street and Street 57 in the Northern Governorate, this initiative aims to enhance traffic management in the area. Effective from yesterday, the newly installed traffic light will regulate traffic flow to improve safety for all road users. Citizens and residents are urged to observe traffic regulations diligently to ensure a smooth transition and safeguard public well-being during this phase of development.

Beyon partners with LigaData for data lakehouse platform

Future proofing data infrastructure through leveraging cloud native capabilities



The deal signing

TD | Manama

Beyon has entered into a partnership with LigaData, a pioneering data analytics and cloud company based in Silicon Valley, California, to develop a cutting-edge Data Lakehouse which will serve as a centralised repository for all of Beyon Group's data.

The partnership was signed by Beyon Chief Technology Officer Saurabh Gupta and LigaData CEO Bassel Ojeh at Beyon's Headquarters in Hamala, Bahrain. Beyon CEO Mikkel Vinter, Batelco Chief Technology Officer Rashed Mohamed,

LigaData COO Khaled Jaouni and other senior executives from both parties were also in attendance at the signing event.

The Data Lakehouse, powered by LigaData, will bring together structured and unstructured data, from various sources across the company into a single platform, enabling Beyon to create a holistic view of the business. The hybrid Data Lakehouse technology combines the flexibility of a data lake with the structure of a data warehouse enabling organisations to develop data & AI applications faster while enhancing

data governance. In addition to the core deployment, LigaData will also develop a number of AI-powered applications focused on key business use cases to support Beyon's efforts to deliver personalised services to its customers.

Beyon Chief Technology Officer Saurabh Gupta said, "We selected LigaData for our Data Lakehouse platform because of their cloud-native capabilities, proven Data Fabric product and their high-quality enterprise support."

"The future proof product will ensure scalability and adaptability to meet our evolving

data needs. The cloud native service will support Beyon's Data and AI plans by boosting agility and innovation across the group of companies."

"Furthermore, the insights generated from the platform will enable us to develop enhanced and relevant services for our customers based on their preferences," Mr. Gupta added.

LigaData CEO Bassel Ojeh said, "Our Lakehouse Hybrid Cloud will not only enhance Beyon's data capabilities but also drive innovation and operational excellence across their diverse group of operating companies."

Threads hits 175 mn users on first anniversary

San Francisco, United States

Threads, Meta's alternative to X (formerly Twitter), has hit 175 million monthly users a year after its out-of-the-blue launch.

"What a year," Meta CEO and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said Wednesday on Threads in announcing the platform had reached the threshold.

Threads, which hit app stores on July 5 last year, is a spin-off of Instagram and is intended to be a rival to X, formerly known as Twitter, after that platform alienated many users and advertisers following Elon Musk's purchase in 2022.

Threads was rushed out after Musk threatened to limit the amount of posts on X for non-subscribers.

This was the latest in a long line of chaotic announcements by the mercurial Tesla founder



and Zuckerberg tried to seize the moment.

Promoted through their Instagram accounts, more than 100 million people downloaded Threads within a week of its launch in 100 countries, though the EU had to wait until December over regulatory concerns.

The push from Instagram helped Threads become the fastest downloaded app ever, crushing the previous record held by AI sensation ChatGPT.

The initial enthusiasm waned however, and Threads has more gradually grown usage, with a big help from the Instagram crossover and exiles turned off by Musk-owned X.

Oil drops on worries about demand, slowing US economy

TD | agencies

Oil prices fell on Thursday, with investors turning cautious on expectations of lower demand as U.S. employment and business data came in weaker than forecast, signalling the economy of the world's top oil consumer may be cooling.

Brent crude futures were down 60 cents, or 0.69%, at

\$86.74 a barrel, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures fell 63 cents, or 0.75%, to \$83.25 by 0651 GMT, Reuters reported.

US crude shipments bound for Europe fell to a two-year low in June as European buyers bought cheaper regional and West African oil, though some rebound in July and August volumes could still happen.

Chinese premier calls for international AI cooperation

AFP | Shanghai, China

Chinese Premier Li Qiang yesterday called for global cooperation and a more open mindset in artificial intelligence, as a rivalry between Beijing and Washington heats up in the nascent tech field.

China has raced to catch up with US tech companies in generative AI in particular, with the UN saying on Wednesday that Beijing was the top filer of generative AI patents globally.

The US and other countries have reacted with alarm to Chinese technology that they

claim can be used for espionage operations, with Washington revoking licenses for some chip exports in April after China's Huawei unveiled a computer powered by Intel AI technology.

Chinese Premier Li on Thursday urged countries to adopt "more open mindsets" and promote international cooperation

on AI. "Each country has its own advantages in its AI technology, data and market, so we should engage in mutual cooperation and join forces," Li said in a speech at the opening of the World AI Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai.

Bird flu curbs McDonald's breakfast in Australia

Sydney, Australia

McDonald's fast-food outlets in Australia have cut breakfast service hours as bird flu outbreaks around the country hit egg supplies.

"We are carefully managing (the) supply of eggs due to the

current industry challenges," McDonald's Australia said. As a result, breakfast orders will stop at 10:30 am instead of midday, it said.

"We are working hard with our suppliers to return this back to normal as soon as possible," it said.

EU slaps Chinese electric cars with tariffs of up to 38%

● A European Commission probe launched last year concluded that state subsidies for Chinese EV manufacturers were unfairly undercutting European rivals

● Other producers in China that cooperated with the EU will face a tariff of 20.8%

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The European Union yesterday slapped extra provisional duties of up to 38% on Chinese electric car imports because of "unfair" state subsidies, despite Beijing's warnings the move would unleash a trade war.

A European Commission probe launched last year concluded that state subsidies for Chinese EV manufacturers were unfairly undercutting European



Representative picture

rivals -- which Brussels wants to shield as they make the transition from thermal to electric power.

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce to the EU slammed the tariffs, coming on top of current import duties of 10 percent, as "politically-motivated" and "protectionist", while voicing hope the dispute could yet be resolved through dialogue.

Europeans themselves are

split on the move, with Germany and its homegrown auto champions, who do significant trade with China, fearing it will do more harm than good if it leads to a clampdown on EU exports as Beijing has already threatened.

German auto giant Volkswagen slammed the move as "detrimental" while the head of BMW said the tariff battle "leads to a dead end".

France and Italy have pushed

for tariffs on Chinese EVs -- whose market share in the EU has skyrocketed -- but Sweden like Germany has expressed reservations, while Hungary is outright opposed.

The provisional tariffs will kick in from Friday, with definitive duties to take effect in November for a period of five years, pending a vote by the EU's 27 member states.

"Our investigation... concluded

ed that the battery electric vehicles produced in China benefit from unfair subsidisation, which is causing a threat of economic injury to the EU's own electric car makers," the EU's trade chief Valdis Dombrovskis said.

In response, the commission imposed provisional duties on major Chinese manufacturers including 17.4% for market major BYD, 19.9% for Geely and 37.6 percent for SAIC.

Other producers in China that cooperated with the EU will face a tariff of 20.8%, while those that did not cooperate would be subject to the maximum 37.6 percent duty.

US tech billionaire Elon Musk's Tesla -- which manufactures in China -- is the only electric automaker that has asked Brussels for its own duty rate, to be calculated based on evidence it has submitted.

Expected cut to imports

The United States has already hiked customs duties on Chinese electric cars to 100 percent, while Canada is considering

similar action.

But Brussels faces a delicate balancing act as it seeks to defend Europe's auto industry -- the jewel in its industrial crown -- while both avoiding a damaging showdown with China and meeting its targets for slashing carbon emissions.

The EU aims for Europeans to switch massively to electric vehicles as it plans to outlaw the sale of new fossil fuel-powered cars from 2035.



Chinese-made EVs' market share in the EU climbed from around three percent to more than 20% in the past three years, according to the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association. Chinese brands account for around eight percent of that share, it said.

QUOTE OF THE DAY
IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULTY LIES OPPORTUNITY
 ALBERT EINSTEIN

TODAY IN HISTORY

1687

Isaac Newton's great work Principia is published by the Royal Society in England, outlining his laws of motion and universal gravitation



1811

Venezuelan Declaration of Independence: Seven provinces declare themselves independent of Spain

1865

US Secret Service begins operating under the Treasury Department

1994

Amazon.com is founded by Jeff Bezos in Bellevue, Washington

News in brief

◆ **A gas leak Thursday** at an engineering section of Kuala Lumpur's international airport saw 39 people fall ill, a Malaysian emergency services official said. "A total of 39 victims suffered from dizziness and nausea," local rescue officer Muhammad Nur Khairi Samsumin said in a statement. He added that 24 victims were discharged, 14 others were at the Air Disaster Unit receiving care and one was hospitalised. All of those affected work for three companies operating at the facility. The incident did not disrupt air travel at the country's top airport. Muhammad Nur said the leaked gas was identified as methyl mercaptan, and the source was an "unused tank" at the facility. "Work to cover the leak was being done by the emergency crew," he said, adding that the tank would be dismantled and disposed of. Muhammad Nur said methyl mercaptan is added to liquefied petroleum gas to give it a smell, alerting people to any leaks. The gas has a strong odour akin to rotten cabbages.



39 fall ill in gas leak at Malaysia airport facility

◆ **Russia says it destroyed Ukrainian fighter jet, vehicles**



be stationed is a key challenge for Ukraine and its partners.

◆ **Russia's defence ministry** yesterday said its troops had destroyed a Mig-29 fighter jet during a strike on an airbase in central Ukraine. The jet and other equipment and vehicles were destroyed in the base at Dolgintsevo, which was hit by an Iskander ballistic missile, it said. The ministry published images of the attack on messaging service Telegram. On Tuesday, Russia said it had destroyed five Ukrainian Su-27 fighter jets at a base near Myrgorod, about 150 kilometres (about 90 miles) from the Russian border. Kyiv is waiting for the delivery of long-awaited F-16 fighter jets from its Western allies. The protection of bases where they will be stationed is a key challenge for Ukraine and its partners.

◆ **Top-secret Australian military intelligence** will be stored on a custom cloud server built by US tech giant Amazon, Canberra said yesterday as it unveiled the US\$1.3 billion deal. The Australian government said Amazon Web Services would design a "top secret" cloud for the country's military and intelligence agencies. It would lead to "greater interoperability and deeper collaboration with the United States", one of Australia's most steadfast military allies, a government statement said. Australian spy boss Rachel Noble said the cloud would also support the country's "Redspice" intelligence program, which aims to counter the growing risk of cyber attacks. Amazon would build three data centres across Australia.

◆ **Amazon to build 'top secret' cloud for Australia's spies**



CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Japan deploys humanoid robot for railway maintenance



For now, the robot's primary task will focus on trimming tree branches along rails and painting metal frames that hold cables above trains

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

It resembles a malevolent Robot from 1980s sci-fi but West Japan Railway's new humanoid employee was designed with nothing more sinister than a spot of painting and gardening in mind. Starting this month, the machine with a crude head and coke-bottle eyes mounted on a truck -- which can drive on rails -- will be put to use for maintenance work on the firm's network. Its operator sits in a cockpit on the truck, "seeing" through the robot's eyes via cameras and operating its powerful limbs and hands remotely. With a vertical reach of 12 metres (40 feet), the machine can use various attachments for its arms to carry objects as heavy as 40 kilograms (88 pounds), hold a brush to paint or use a chainsaw. For now, the robot's primary task will focus on trimming tree branches along rails and painting metal frames that hold cables above trains, the company said. The technology will help fill worker shortages in ageing Japan as well as reduce accidents such as workers falling from high places or suffering electric shocks, the company says. "In the future, we hope to use machines for all kinds of maintenance operations of our infrastructure," and this should provide a case study for how to deal with the labour shortage, company president Kazuaki Hasegawa told a recent press conference.

Pakistan blocks 210,000 SIM cards to encourage tax payment

AFP | Karachi, Pakistan

Pakistan's tax authority said yesterday it has blocked 210,000 SIM cards of users who have not filed tax returns in a bid to widen the revenue bracket. Only 5.2 million people of the more than 240 million population filed income tax returns in 2022. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) passed the edict in April and has since sent orders to the telecommunications authority to block the connections of 210,000 SIM cards, with 62,000 of them later restored, according to the board's data. "We have unblocked the SIMs of those who have paid their taxes," FBR public relations official Bakhtiar Muhammad said.

"Nobody voluntarily comes up and pays taxes. We have to make ways for the people to pay their taxes."

Pakistan has more than 192 million cellphone subscribers and four telecommunications service providers, according to the telecommunication authority. Pakistanis must register a SIM card with their national identity number, which is often used for multiple connections.

'Indian preacher not hiding after stampede'

AFP | Mainpuri, India

The self-styled Indian preacher whose latest sermon ended in a deadly stampede is not hiding from police, his lawyer told AFP yesterday, without disclosing the guru's whereabouts. Bhole Baba's prayer meeting near the northern city of Hathras saw the deaths of 121 people, the vast majority women, after a rush to the exits among the 250,000 devotees who came to watch him preach. The former police officer-turned-spiritual leader has not been seen in public since, while six others involved in staging the event have been arrested. Local media reports suggested he had retreated to his nearby monastery, the gates of which have been chained shut by supporters inside to bar public access. Baba's lawyer A.P. Singh told AFP that his client was not to blame for Tuesday's disaster and was not on the run. "There is no reason for him to hide. He has never hidden in his life," Singh said. "He believes in the law. He is following the lawyer said that "anti-social elements" in the crowd were responsible for the stampede and that Baba would participate in a police investigation into the disaster. wing police directions."

Nine in 10 Gazans displaced since war began: UN

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

Around nine in every 10 people in the Gaza Strip have been displaced at least once since the war between Israel and Hamas began, the UN humanitarian agency said Wednesday. Andrea De Domenico, head of the United Nations' OCHA agency in the Palestinian territories, said that around 1.9 million people are thought to be displaced in Gaza. "We estimate that nine in every 10 people in the Gaza Strip have been internally displaced at least once, if not up to 10 times, unfortunately, since October," he told reporters in New York and Geneva, speaking from Jerusalem. "Before we were estimating 1.7 (million) but since that number, we had the operation in Rafah, and we had additional displacement from Rafah," he said, explaining the increase. "Then we had also operations in the north that has also moved people," he added. He said such military operations had forced people to reset their lives, over and over again. "Behind these numbers, there are fears and grievances. And they had probably dreams and hopes; the less and less, I fear today, unfortunately," De Domenico said. "People who in the last nine months have been moved around like pawns in a board game."

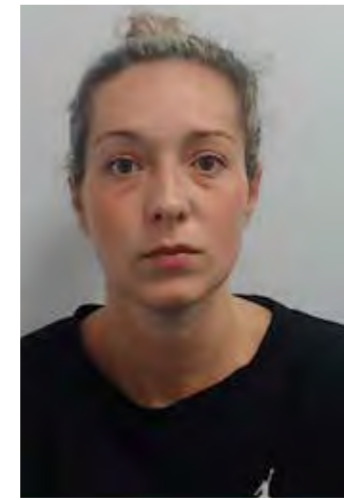


Displaced Palestinians leave an area in east Khan Yunis after the Israeli army issued a new evacuation order for parts of the city and Rafah

British teacher jailed for sex with schoolboys

AFP | London, United Kingdom

A British teacher who had sex with two teenage students and had a baby with one of them was sentenced Thursday to six and a half years in jail. Rebecca Joynes, 30, was on police bail for sexual activity with one victim, identified as Boy A, when she began having sex with the second, Boy B, by whom she became pregnant. Sentencing Joynes, a judge said she had been a "high achiever" who had thrown her career away from her through her own actions. Joynes groomed the school-



Rebecca Joynes, 30, was on police bail for sexual activity with one victim, identified as Boy A, when she began having sex with the second, Boy B, by whom she became pregnant.

boys from the age of 15, exchanging messages on social media before engaging in sexual activity, prosecutors told the court. She was found guilty by a jury of six counts of engaging in sexual activity with a child, including two while being in a position of trust. Neither of the boys can be identified by name. Passing sentence at Manchester Crown Court in northwestern England, Judge Kate Cornell told the former teacher she had behaved with "breathtaking arrogance." "You were the person in control, the person who should have known better," she said. "Instead, you abused that position of trust and exploited the privileged role for your own sexual gratification." In a statement to the court, Boy B said he had been "coerced and controlled, manipulated, sexually abused, and mentally abused" by Joynes. The court previously heard that when police opened an investigation into her relationship with Boy A, she was warned not to have unsupervised contact with anyone under 18. But she then began a relationship with Boy B and later gave birth to his child. The baby was removed from her care within 24 hours. Outside court, Detective Constable Beth Alexander said there was still a lack of understanding about men and boys being the victims of sexual offences.

Labour tipped for historic win as UK voters go to the polls

● **If the predictions are accurate, Sunak will on Friday visit head of state King Charles III to tender his resignation as prime minister**

● **Sunak, 44, is widely seen as having run a dismal campaign**

AFP | London, United Kingdom



A London double-decker red bus goes past a polling station sign opposite Westminster Abbey in London

Britain voted yesterday in a general election widely expected to hand the opposition Labour party a landslide win and end nearly a decade-and-a-half of Conservative rule. The first national ballot since Boris Johnson won the Tories a decisive victory in 2019 follows Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's surprise call to hold it six months earlier than required. His gamble looks set to backfire spectacularly, with polls throughout the six-week campaign -- and for the last two years -- pointing to a heavy defeat for his right-wing party. That would almost certainly put Labour leader Keir Starmer, 61, in Downing Street, as leader of the largest party in parliament. Centre-left Labour is projected to win its first general election since 2005 by historic proportions, with a flurry of election-eve polls all forecasting its biggest-ever victory. But Starmer was taking nothing for granted as he urged voters not to stay at home. "Britain's future is on the ballot," he said. "But change will only happen if you vote for it." Voting began at 7:00 am (0600 GMT) in more than 40,000 polling stations across the country, from church halls, community centres and schools to more unusual venues such as pubs and even a ship. Sunak was among the early birds, casting his ballot at his Richmond and Northallerton constituency in Yorkshire, northern England. Starmer voted around two hours later in his north London seat. Voting closes at 10:00 pm (2100 GMT). Broadcasters then announce exit polls, which typically provide an accurate picture of how the main parties have performed. Results from the UK's 650 constituencies trickle in overnight, with the winning party expected to hit 326 seats -- the threshold for a parliamentary majority -- as dawn breaks Friday. Meanwhile, three large-scale surveys indicated Labour was on the brink of a record victory, with the Tories set for their worst-ever result and the centrist Liberal Democrats resurgent in third. YouGov, Focaldata and More in Common all projected Labour would secure at least 430 seats, topping the 418 under Tony Blair in 1997. The Conservatives could plunge to a record low of less than 127, the trio predicted.



Reform UK leader Nigel Farage (C) walks in Clacton-on-Sea, eastern England

Putin says takes Trump's comments on ending Ukraine conflict 'seriously'

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that he took seriously US presidential candidate Donald Trump's comments that he could bring about a quick end to the fighting in Ukraine. Trump had said during a debate with President Joe Biden last week that if elected, he would have the conflict "settled" before he took office in January 2025. "The fact that Mr. Trump as a presidential candidate is saying that he is ready and wants to stop the war in Ukraine, we take that quite seriously," Putin said at a press conference in Astana. Russia usually refers to its military offensive on Ukraine as a "special military operation." Putin added that he was "not familiar" with Trump's specific proposals to end the fighting, now in its third year. "That, of course, is the key question," Putin said. "But I have no doubt that he says it sincerely, and we support it," he added. Putin has always claimed to be open to talks on ending the conflict, though last month demanded Ukraine effectively capitulate as a precondition of a ceasefire.

Putin and Xi advance anti-West alliance at Central Asian summit

AFP | Astana, Kazakhstan

The leaders of China and Russia yesterday urged their allies and partners to resist malign external influence, advancing their shared anti-Western agenda at a regional summit in Central Asia. Russia's President Vladimir Putin meets with China's President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states leaders' summit in Astana. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping were in the Kazakh capital of Astana for a gathering of leaders from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a regional bloc that Moscow and Beijing see as a counterweight to US "hegemony" on the world stage. Xi called on the countries to "resist external interference" while Putin claimed "new centres" of political and economic might were on the rise. "We should join hands to resist external interference, firmly support each other, take care of each other's concerns... and firmly control the future and destiny of our countries and regional peace and development in our own hands," Xi told the summit. "It is of vital importance to the world that the SCO be on the right side of history and on the side of fairness and justice," he added.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping were in the Kazakh capital of Astana for a gathering of leaders from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a regional bloc that Moscow and Beijing see as a counterweight to

Modi to visit Russia next week



Modi and Putin during talks (File)

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Russia on July 8 and 9, the Kremlin said yesterday, in his first trip to the country since Moscow launched its military offensive in Ukraine. Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin will discuss "prospects for further development of traditionally friendly Russian-Indian relations, as well as relevant issues on the international and regional agenda," the Kremlin said in a statement. Putin sees Modi as a key potential diplomatic and economic ally, with Russia isolated in the West. But Ukraine has complicated ties. In a September 2022 meeting between Putin and Modi at a regional summit in Uzbekistan, the Russian president told Modi he understood he had "concerns" about the conflict and that Modi wanted it to end "as soon as possible."

Israel approves three wildcat settlements in West Bank: watchdog

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel approved three wildcat settlement outposts in the occupied West Bank Thursday, the Peace Now watchdog said, calling it a new stage in the "annexation" of the territory. The Israeli agency which organises West Bank construction recognised outposts in Mahane Gadi, Givat Han and Kedem Arava on the edge of existing settlements, Peace Now said. It also approved 5,295 extra homes in dozens of existing settlements. All of Israel's settlements in the West Bank, occupied since 1967, are considered illegal under international law, regardless of whether they have Israeli planning permission. Dozens of unauthorised settlements have sprung up in the territories -- ranging from a few tents grouped together to prefabricated huts that have been linked to public electricity and water supplies.

White House says zero chance Biden will withdraw

AFP | Washington, United States

Joe Biden is "absolutely not" pulling out of the US presidential race, his spokeswoman said Wednesday, as pressure mounted following his disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump. Panic has gripped his Democratic Party in the wake of last week's TV debate, and internal rumblings about finding a replacement candidate before November's election have been amplified by polls showing Trump extending his lead. The New York Times and CNN reported that Biden, 81, had acknowledged to a key ally that his reelection bid was on the line if he failed to quickly reassure the public that he was still up to the job. White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre rejected those reports outright, insisting Biden has no intention of withdrawing. "The president is clear-eyed and he is staying in the race," she told reporters. Biden told a call with campaign and party staffers that he is going nowhere. "I'm in this race to the end and we're going to win because when Democrats unite, we will always win. Just as we beat Donald Trump in 2020, we're going to beat him again in 2024," he said, according to a source close to the campaign.



TOP 4 TWEETS

01



Our climate is breaking down, threatening water and food security, driving displacement, and fueling political instability. We need far greater ambition to slash emissions and deliver climate justice, starting with the biggest emitters.

@antoniogetherres

02



Thinking about the people on Union Island, St Vincent and the Grenadines, who lost their homes due to #HurricaneBeryl. @WHO stands ready to support the authorities and communities to meet immediate health needs.

@DrTedros

03



Interacted with our contingent heading to Paris for the @Olympics. I am confident our athletes will give their best and make India proud. Their life journeys and success give hope to 140 crore Indians.

@narendramodi

04



If Labour are handed a blank cheque, they will use their supermajority to tax you more for the rest of your life.

@RishiSunak

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

Classifieds

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Khalil Nadoum honoured at Bahrain Sports Media Workshop



Mohammed Abdul Latif bin Jalal, Chairman of Tumooch Sports Management Company awards a certificate to Khalil Nadoum

TDI | Manama

Khalil Nadoum represented Kuwait at the “Introduction to Sports Media” workshop held at Bahrain National Stadium, where 50 participants gathered to improve their sports media skills.

On the workshop’s closing day, Mohammed Abdul Latif bin Jalal, Chairman of Tumooch Sports Management Company, awarded certificates of appreciation

to all participants, with special recognition for lecturer Khalil Nadoum.

Nadoum praised Bahrain for hosting the workshop and acknowledged the efforts of all officials involved. He stressed the importance of such seminars in advancing general and sports media.

The workshop received extensive media coverage, underlining its significance for the future of sports media.

All Saudi top-tier football clubs to go private: ministry



Al Hilal supporters cheer for their team for winning their 68th official trophy after collecting their 19th Saudi Pro League title

AFP | Riyadh

The Saudi Pro League’s remaining 14 football clubs are up for privatisation, the sports ministry said, after the sale of four top teams sparked a billion-dollar spending spree on foreign stars.

Six more clubs from the 18-strong league are available for privatisation next month, followed by the other eight “at a later stage”, a statement said late on Wednesday.

Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund (PIF), the top oil exporter’s sovereign wealth vehicle, took a majority stake in Al Hilal, Al Nassr, Al Ahli and Al Ittihad last year.

The four clubs have

signed superstars including Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Neymar on eye-watering contracts.

Saudi clubs, led by the four owned by PIF, spent \$957 million in last year’s summer transfer window, second only to the English Premier League.

However, it resulted in a lopsided season highlighted by Al Hilal’s top-flight world record of 34 straight wins in all competitions.

Al Zulfi, Al Nahda, Al Okhdood, Al Ansar, Al Orouba and Al Kholoud were selected for the next round in August based on their “operational readiness, financial health, administrative capabilities, and athletic facilities”, the ministry said.

Bahraini Ambassador visits team at Children of Asia International Sports Games

TDI | Manama

Ahmed Abdul-Arahman Al Saati, Bahraini Ambassador to Russia, visited the Bahraini sports team participating in the 8th edition of the Children of Asia International Sports Games, held from June 26 to July 4. He was accompanied by Yegor Borisov, the Prime Minister of Yakutia.

Ambassador Al Saati commended the Bahraini



team’s participation in this international event and highlighted the Kingdom’s commitment to nurturing young talent. He emphasized Bahrain’s dedication to organizing youth-focused sports events, such as the Children’s Olympics, and its plans to host the International School Games in October, which contribute to the nation’s development.

Puerto Rico beat Bahrain in FIBA Pre-Olympic Tournament

TDT | Manama

Fueled by the energy of a lively home crowd, Puerto Rico beat Bahrain with a final score of 99-56 in the FIBA 2024 San Juan Pre-Olympic Tournament. This win sends Puerto Rico to the semi-finals, while Bahrain faces elimination.

A passionate crowd of over 10,000 fans at Coliseo Jose Miguel Agrelot cheered as Puerto Rico delivered a well-rounded performance, ensuring both Puerto Rico and Italy advance to the Semi-Finals. The host nation established dominance early, conceding just one basket in the first quarter and leading 19-4 by the end.

Puerto Rico's stifling defense set the tone, forcing Bahrain to miss 18 of their first 19 shots. Despite a brief Bahrain rally in



Action from the game

the third quarter, George Condit IV and Davon Reed's pivotal plays reignited Puerto Rico's momentum.

Condit IV earned the title of TCL Player of the Game with 17 points and 8 rebounds. Stephen

Thompson Jr. contributed 20 points off the bench, supported by strong performances from Jordan Howard, Christopher Ortiz, and Aleem Ford.

Bahrain's Zee Hamoda led with 15 points and 4 rebounds.

“We tried to adjust a bit to minimize the mistakes that happened yesterday. We know there is a big difference in size and physical things, and these points we need to work on for the future”

JAD EL HAJJ, BAHRAIN HEAD COACH

Ahmed Haji and Wayne Chism also contributed, but the team struggled against Puerto Rico's relentless offense. Unexpected crowd favorite Ali Hasan thrilled fans with his performance, earning 'MVP' chants.

Stones hoping Bellingham escapes ban for England's Euros clash with Swiss



Jude Bellingham in action

AFP | Berlin

John Stones said yesterday that he hopes Jude Bellingham will be available for England's Euro 2024 showdown with Switzerland as the Real Madrid star awaits a verdict on his controversial goal celebration.

Governing body UEFA could ban Bellingham after he was filmed mimicking a crotch grab while apparently looking towards Slovakia's bench after his last-gasp equaliser which kept England in the tournament.

England take on the Swiss on Saturday thanks to Bellingham, who lashed in a stunning 95th-minute bicycle kick to

draw his team level at 1-1 with Slovakia before Harry Kane won the last-16 tie early in extra-time.

“He's done it all season, come up with some massive goals for Madrid and he has done here as well,” Manchester City defender Stones told reporters.

“I hope he's there, I'm not sure what's going on with everything around that, all we can focus on is hopefully scoring a bit earlier this time.”

England take on Switzerland with a great chance to finally break a 58-year major tournament duck as they sit on the other side of the knockout bracket to all of the other tournament favourites.

Erik ten Hag signs new deal at Manchester United

AFP | London

Erik ten Hag has signed a contract extension that keeps him at Old Trafford until 2026, the Premier League club announced yesterday.

There had been intense speculation over the Dutchman's future after a terrible 2023/24 Premier League campaign but United ended the season with shock 2-1 victory against Man-



Erik ten Hag

chester City in the FA Cup final.

British media last month said Ten Hag, who has won two trophies in his two seasons at Old

Trafford, would remain in his post following a performance review by club chiefs.

“Erik ten Hag has extended his contract as Manchester United men's first-team manager until June 2026,” United said.

The former Ajax manager, whose deal had been due to expire in 2025, admitted there was work to be done to close the gap on United's Premier League rivals.

“Looking back at the past two years, we can reflect with pride on two trophies and many examples of progression from where we were when I joined,” he said.

“However, we must also be clear that there is still lots of hard work ahead to reach the levels expected of Manchester United, which means challenging for English and European titles.

Mbappe vs Ronaldo: Euro showdown

France and Portugal clash in Euro 2024 quarter-finals, with focus on star captains' performances

● France reaches quarter-finals despite scoring struggles

● Portugal relies on penalty shootout to advance

● Mbappe hindered by broken nose and mask

● Ronaldo seeks redemption after penalty miss

AFP | Hamburg

France and Portugal renew their European Championship rivalry on Friday in a quarter-final showdown in which almost all of the focus will be on the two captains, Kylian Mbappe and Cristiano Ronaldo.

The last-eight encounter in Hamburg brings together two of the most-fancied nations coming into Euro 2024, but two teams who have not completely



Kylian Mbappe

“I don't think any of us have made enough of the fact he broke his nose. It is not an excuse, but he was traumatised by the collision.”

FRANCE ASSISTANT COACH GUY STEPHAN

convinced so far in Germany.

France have reached a sixth quarter-

final in the last seven major tournaments despite not one of their players scoring a goal in open play.

Les Bleus have netted only three times in four games, with one a penalty by Mbappe and the other two coming from own goals, including Jan Vertonghen's which allowed them to beat Belgium 1-0 in the last 16.

Mbappe has been hindered by the broken nose he suffered in France's first match against Austria which forced him to miss the goalless draw with the Netherlands.

He has not been at his sharpest since returning and the spot-kick he converted against Poland is the only goal he has scored in seven appearances at the Euros.

“I don't think any of us have made enough of the fact he broke his nose. It is not an excuse, but he was traumatised by the collision,” France assistant coach Guy Stephan said on Wednesday.

“It is not easy to play with a mask on, as he said. He had a bit of an exhausting end to the season. But Kylian is still Kylian. He has scored almost a goal a game for us since 2021.”

The other side of the coin for France is that they have only let in one goal, which was a penalty by Poland's Robert Lewandowski.

Meanwhile Portugal reached this stage having needed a shootout to beat Slovenia following a goalless 120 minutes.

Goalkeeper Diogo Costa ended up being their hero by saving all three of Slovenia's efforts from the spot, but the game will

also be remembered for Ronaldo's tears after he had a penalty saved in extra time.

Goals not going in

The 39-year-old's quest to become the oldest ever goal-scorer at the tournament also led to him missing numerous attempts during the game.

It has all added fuel to the fire for those who feel Ronaldo is holding back a supremely talented Portuguese side, but coach Roberto Martinez continues to defend the veteran forward.

“Those emotions are incredible for someone who has won and experienced everything,” Martinez said.

“He doesn't need to care that much. That is why I thank



Cristiano Ronaldo

BETTER YOU KNOW

The France-Portugal quarter-final falls exactly 18 years after their 2006

World Cup semi-final, with Cristiano Ronaldo being one of only two players from that match still involved in Euro

him for being the way he is.”

“We are a united group of players and that gave us more strength, so much so that Diogo went on to save the three penalties,” Portugal defender Nuno Mendes said of Ronaldo's tears.

Portugal came from behind to beat the Czech Republic 2-1 in their first match and then outclassed

Turkey in a 3-0 victory, so they have had fewer problems scoring goals than France.

However, they lost 2-0 to Georgia with a much-changed team in their last group outing.

That came after top spot in their group had already been secured, but it means they have now gone more than four hours without finding the net.

Rabiot suspended

Portugal must now try to find a way through a watertight French defence, while Didier Deschamps, the coach of the 2022 World Cup runners-up, needs to find a replacement in his midfield for the suspended Adrien Rabiot.

These sides met in the group phase of the last Euros three years ago, when Ronaldo netted two penalties for Portugal in a 2-2 draw.

When they have clashed in the knockout rounds, the winner has always gone on to lift the trophy.

Portugal won the Euro 2016 final against France in extra time in Paris, while the French were grateful for Michel Platini's extra-time strike as they won the semi-final at Euro 84, and Zinedine Zidane's golden-goal penalty in the semis in 2000.

There was also the 2006 World Cup semi-final in Munich, exactly 18 years before Friday's game, when Zidane again gave France the victory.

Ronaldo, who has said this will be his last Euros, is one of only two players to feature that day who have also been involved at Euro 2024. The other was Willy Sagnol, who coached Georgia to the last 16.

Djokovic survives rookie test

Djokovic overcomes British wild card Fearnley as Pegula suffers shock exit to Wang Xinyu

● **Djokovic defeats Fearnley in four sets**

● **Fearnley challenges Djokovic in third and fourth sets**

● **Iga Swiatek, Ons Jabeur progress smoothly**

AFP | London

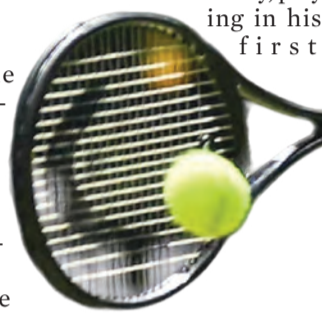
Novak Djokovic came through a testing Wimbledon workout to stay on course for a record-equaling eighth men's title yesterday as Andy Murray prepared to launch his emotional farewell.

Jessica Pegula became the highest-ranked player to exit the tournament so far, dumped out by China's Wang Xinyu in the second round.

Seven-time champion Djokovic did not have it all his own way against British wild card Jacob Fearnley but came through 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 7-5 in a second-round match lasting three hours.

It appeared to be business as usual for the Serbian as he coasted into a two-set lead on Centre Court but the 277th-ranked Fearnley broke his illustrious opponent twice in the third set to reduce the deficit.

Fearnley, playing in his first



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Britain's Jacob Fearnley

Grand Slam, carved out two break points in the sixth game of the fourth set but missed his chance and Djokovic broke in the 11th game before serving out for the win.

"I didn't have a

chance to see him play," said Djokovic, 37. "Actually two days ago, I saw him for the first time

"Obviously there's always an element of surprise and with him having nothing to lose." "Most of the British players grow up being exposed to grass courts, quick surfaces, so they know exactly how to play. It's a very windy day, very challenging conditions and I thought he served very well."

Djokovic, who is playing with protection after a recent knee operation, is seeking to equal Roger Federer's record of eight Wimbledon men's titles and is aiming for a record 25th Grand Slam title.

Pegula ousted

Fifth-ranked Pegula went down 6-4, 6-7 (7/9), 6-1 to China's Wang Xinyu, who celebrat-

Most of the British players grow up being exposed to grass courts, quick surfaces, so they know exactly how to play. It's a very windy day, very challenging conditions and I thought he served very well

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

ed her first win against a top-10 player.

The American battled back after losing the first set, saving a match point in the second-set tie-break, before levelling the match.

But China's 42nd-ranked Wang raced into a 5-0 lead in the decider.

Wang, 22, said: "Couple of days ago I was asking my coach, 'When will this happen?'"

"Jessica was really tough to play on grass. Her ball was super low and I'm just really happy I won in the end."

Wang will face Britain's Harriet Dart, who defeated Nottingham champion Katie Boulter, for a spot in the last 16.

Women's world number one Iga Swiatek, who has never been beyond the quarter-finals at the All England Club, faces Croatia's Petra Martic, searching for a 21st win on the bounce.

Two-time finalist Ons Jabeur beat US qualifier Robin Montgomery in straight sets while Elena Rybakina, the 2022 women's champion, faces Germany's Laura Siegemund.

On the men's side, 10th seed Grigor Dimitrov came back from two sets down to beat China's Shang Juncheng while Swiss veteran Stan Wawrinka exited at the hands of Gael Monfils.

French Open runner-up Alexander Zverev, the Wimbledon fourth seed, is last on the list on Court One.

India's T20 champs return triumphant

● **Cricket heroes return home to jubilant crowds, meet Prime Minister Modi amid nationwide festivities**

● **Team greeted by frenzied fans at Delhi airport**

● **Victory parade in Mumbai with open-topped bus**

AFP | New Delhi

India's T20 World Cup winners returned home to a heroes' welcome yesterday, greeted by huge crowds of euphoric fans and praised by a grinning Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a private reception.

Frenzied crowds shouted "India, India" after the team landed at Delhi airport from the Caribbean, having been delayed for days by Hurricane Beryl.

The team waved to the crowds and



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2L) talks with Indian cricket team

danced to drums and live music at their hotel before heading off to meet Modi at his residence.

Rohit and his team wore Indian jerseys emblazoned with "Champions", as broadcasters showed images of them posing with their trophy and the premier.

"An excellent meeting with our Champions!" Modi wrote on social media platform X afterwards.

Evening

saw the team paraded in an open-topped bus through the financial capital Mumbai, the birthplace of India's cricket obsession, along a seafront route thronging with jubilant crowds.

They took a victory lap in front of thousands more fans at Wankhede Stadium, the site of India's last World Cup win for the 50-over edition of the tournament in 2011.



Indian cricketers gesture during an open bus roadshow

YOU KNOW WHAT

The team's return flight from the Caribbean was the most tracked on Flightradar24 for nearly 15 hours, as excited fans followed their journey home after the World Cup victory

"This is surreal, watching my team with the World Cup," emotional fan Rohit Khanna told AFP before the team landed.

"I saw the 2011 triumph, but this is a moment I will never forget."

'Dream'

Despite monsoon rain, crowds gathered outside New Delhi's airport long before dawn, waiting for a glimpse of their idols, who had beaten South Africa on Saturday in a thrilling final in Barbados.

Whistles and wild cheers greeted the players as they walked out from the arrivals area with gold medals around their necks, some giving a thumbs-up to their fans.

It was vice-captain Hardik Pandya who emerged first, wearing a Caribbean hat, and the crowd erupted when captain Rohit came out carrying the glittering trophy, which he hoisted into the air.

Star batsman Virat Kohli, whose hometown is Delhi, was given some of the loudest cheers as he waved to hundreds of fans.

Groenewegen sprints to Tour de France sixth stage win



Team Jayco AlUla team's Dutch rider Dylan Groenewegen celebrates after winning the 6th stage

AFP | Dijon

Dutch sprinter Dylan Groenewegen won stage six of the Tour de France yesterday after an eye-catching run though Burgundy ended in a mass dash for the finish line in Dijon.

Overnight leader Tadej Pogacar retains the yellow jersey by 45sec from Belgian Remco Evenepoel while defending champion Jonas Vingegaard is third.

Rounding out the top five are Spaniard Juan Ayuso and Pogacar's Slovenian compatriot Primoz Roglic.

Jasper Philipsen was second in Dijon after being well set up by Mathieu van der Poel while green sprinters' jersey wearer Biniam Girmay was third.

The two previous sprints on the Tour were record breakers with the 39-year-old Mark Cavendish winning his 35th career stage on the Grand Boucle on Wednesday.

On stage three Eritrean Girmay became the first black African to win a stage on the race.

In 2020, Groenewegen, 31, was banned for nine months for his role in a near-fatal crash

that sent Fabio Jakobsen over a safety barrier and into a metal post at the Tour of Poland.

Jayco-AlUla's Groenewegen claimed his sixth Tour victory less than three weeks after winning the Dutch national road race title.

Intermittent showers with temperatures of around 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit) spared the extreme heat of the opening days but Vingegaard's team Visma frequently upped the tempo when the roads narrowed, causing stressful gaps in the peloton.

There was also a single hill on the 163km route, just outside of Macon, in a category four climb taken by polka dot climbers' jersey wearer Jonas Abrahamson.

Friday's seventh stage is a 25km individual time-trial from Nuits-Saint-Georges to Gevrey Chambertin through open countryside and vineyards just to the south of Dijon.

Although those 25.3km are raced on largely flat terrain the nature of the exercise guarantees a shake up of the overall standings.