

Loeb records stunning Dakar stage win to keep alive BRX victory hopes

Sebastien Loeb takes Dakar seventh stage to cut into Nasser Al-Attiyah's advantage | P12

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THE DAILY tribune



Leonardo DiCaprio gets a tree named after him 10 CELEBS

BUSINESS 5 Workforce & management synergy helped GPIC move forward amid COVID crisis: GPIC Chairman

Bahrain condolences with Egypt over road tragedy

Tdt | Manama

Bahrain expressed its sincere condolences to the government and people of Egypt over the victims of the traffic collision on the Suez-Tor Sinai road, which resulted in the death and injury of a number of people.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed the sympathy of Bahrain with the government and people of Egypt in this painful tragedy, praying to Allah the Almighty to have mercy on the victims of the accident, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

Protesters behind Lebanon blackout

Beirut

The Lebanese population was subjected to collective punishment on Saturday night after protesters stormed a key power station and tampered with the electrical equipment, inflicting power cuts on the whole country for hours.

Protesters stormed the main power station in the Aramoun area, 22 km from Beirut, and tampered with its contents to secure electricity for their neighborhoods, causing a problem that affected all power generation plants.

They claimed that that there is discrimination in the distribution of electricity.

They said that "the electric current is available to areas under the authority of the Free Patriotic Movement, while it is totally absent from areas that are considered an incubator environment for the movement's opponents."

HRH Prince Salman receives new Israel Ambassador



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday received the newly appointed Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Eitan Na'eh, at Riffa Palace. HRH Prince Salman extended his congratulations to Ambassador Na'eh on his appointment and wished him success in performing his duties which will contribute to strengthening cooperation and achieving regional and global peace, development, and stability. During the meeting, issues of common interest, as well as regional and international developments, were discussed. Finance and National Economy Minister Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa also attended the meeting.

New 'deltacron' COVID-19 strain detected in Cyprus

Nicosia

A new strain of COVID-19 that is a combination of the delta and omicron variants, dubbed "deltacron," has been discovered in Cyprus.

Leondios Kostrikis, professor of biological sciences at the University of Cyprus and head of the Laboratory of Biotechnology and Molecular Virology described his findings in an interview with Sigma TV.

"There are currently omicron and delta co-infections and we found this strain that is a combination of these two," he said.

The new discovery was named "deltacron" after omicron-like genetic signatures were found in the delta genomes, Kostrikis said.



Around 25 cases of the new strain have been discovered, he said, but it is too early to say how damaging the "deltacron" strain might be.

Researchers around the world are discovering new strains as the COVID-19 virus mutates and spreads.

A study by French scientists from the IHU Mediterranee Infection published a study in December outlining the discovery of a new "IHU" variant.

'Severe consequences'

US sends stern warning to Iran if it carries out attacks against Americans

● Washington to work with allies and partners to 'retaliate'

● US nationals include any 52 people sanctioned by Tehran

Washington

The US said yesterday that Iran will face "severe consequences" if it attacks any Americans, including the 52 people Tehran imposed sanctions on a day earlier.

"We will work with our allies and partners to deter and respond to any attacks carried out by Iran," the White House said

in a statement, quoting National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

Iran on Saturday imposed sanctions on dozens more Americans, many of them from the US military, over the 2020 killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike.

Sullivan said the US will protect and defend its citizens, including those currently serving the country and those who formerly served.

He added that the Iranian regime imposed the sanctions while its "proxy militias continue to attack American troops in the Middle East, and as Iranian officials threaten to carry out terror operations inside the United States and elsewhere around the world." Soleimani, the commander of



US National Security Adviser Sullivan

Iran's Quds Force, the overseas arm of the elite Revolutionary Guards, was killed in Iraq in a drone strike on Jan. 3, 2020, or-

dered by then President Donald Trump.

Those added to Iran's sanctions list included US General

“The US will protect and defend its citizens, including those currently serving the country and those who formerly served”
 JAKE SULLIVAN, US NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien.

Iran and the US are currently holding indirect talks in Vienna on salvaging a 2015 nuclear deal.

UN confidential report

Iran 'smuggling weapons' to Yemen and elsewhere

Washington

The United Nations found thousands of weapons recently seized in the Arabian Sea likely came from a single port in Iran, evidence Tehran is exporting arms to Yemen and elsewhere, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Yemen has been wracked by civil war since 2014, pitting Iran-backed Houthi militia against the internationally recognised government.

The UN imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis in 2015.



The Iranian ship where thousands of weapons were seized

Citing a confidential report by a UN Security Council panel of experts on Yemen, the Journal wrote that boats and land transport were used to smuggle weapons made in Russia, China and Iran into Yemen.

The arms included rocket launchers, machine guns and sniper rifles, which had been seized by the US Navy in recent months. Boats used to transport the weapons had left from the southeastern Iranian port of Jask, the UN report found, based on interviews with the boat crew and data from the on-

board navigational instruments, the Journal said.

The militia's deputy information minister denied Iran was smuggling weapons into Yemen, according to the Journal, and Tehran said the weapons were not sold or transported to the country.

The UN estimates Yemen's war will have directly or indirectly killed 377,000 people by the end of the year.

More than 80 percent of the population of around 30 million require humanitarian assistance.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL TESTED
 8233498

ACTIVE CASES
 11061

DEATHS
 1397

DISCHARGED
 280114

NEW CASES
 1694

CRITICAL
 0

220 fils (includes VAT)



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Labour growth in upswing: Humaidan

Creation of jobs and employment of more citizens part of Kingdom's economic recovery plan

TDT | Manama

Bahrain is witnessing an increasing growth in various sectors, particularly involving the national workforce.

Labour and Social Development Minister Jamil bin Muhammad Ali Humaidan attributed this to the implementation of the government's economic recovery plan, which is aimed at job creation, accelerating the pace of employment of citizens, and job stability.

This came as Humaidan, who is also Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) Board of Directors chairman, met the Secretary General of the General Federation of Bahrain Trade



Humaidan with Al Shehabi

Unions, Abdul Qader Abdul Karim Al Shehabi, in his office yesterday.

He noted that the most important ground on which the plan is based requires strengthening cooperation and coordination with various relevant authorities

to achieve the common national goals that the government, headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, aspires to.

During the meeting, they discussed the economic recovery

plan, the launch of the initiatives of the various sectors, particularly the industrial sector; and the investment of the sector's advancement plan to employ more citizens in this promising sector.

The prospects for cooperation

”
The implementation of the government's economic recovery plan is aimed at job creation, accelerating the pace of employment of citizens, and job stability

JAMIL BIN MUHAMMAD ALI HUMAIDAN,
LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER

and coordination between the ministry and the trade unions during the next phase were also discussed.

Humaidan underlined the Kingdom's achievements in maintaining the stability of national employment, as well as the success of the National Employment Programme second edition, stressing that this is a positive indicator despite the existence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Al Shehabi praised the success of the Labour Ministry in implementing the National Employment Programme in its second edition, as well as the success of training plans to qualify citizens and integrate them into the labour market.

He also stressed the importance of strengthening joint cooperation between the two parties.

Community partnership key to meet citizens' needs

TDT | Manama

Southern Governor His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa has stressed the importance of reaching out to citizens and bolstering community partnership in line with the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

He paid tribute to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for spearheading the digitalisation of all services and transactions.

HH Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali highlighted the prizes conferred on the Southern Governorate as part of the 2021 Electronic Government Excellence Award.

He noted the directives of the Minister of Interior General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa to follow up on



Southern Governor

citizens' needs and meet their aspirations.

The Southern Governor underlined the importance of the online platforms which were provided by the Southern Governorate for citizens to forward their demands, applications, queries and complaints.

He cited in this regard the weekly virtual majlis, hosted by the Southern Governorate as well as the email complaints@southern.gov.bh. and other online platforms.

Deputy Prime Minister receives AP Speaker, Education Minister



Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, received Speaker of the Arab Parliament (AP), Adel bin Abdulrahman Al Asoomi, and Education Minister, Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi. The Deputy Prime Minister was briefed on the conference that will be launched in Bahrain for education development in the Arab region under the theme "Bahrain is the gateway to education development in the Arab region." He expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by the AP Speaker and members in the service of Arab issues in general and education development in particular, which confirms their keenness to keep pace with global changes.

Industry Ministry and House of Representatives solidarity



Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister Zayed bin Rashid Al Zayani yesterday received Representatives Council member Dr Sawsan Mohammed Kamal. They discussed important issues related to public affairs, and aspects of cooperation, coordination and joint work between the ministry and the House of Representatives, as well as the mechanisms to enhance this. Al Zayani commended the efforts of Dr Sawsan for everything that would enhance the march of progress and development, achieve the aspirations of citizens and raise the status of the Kingdom of Bahrain. He stressed the ministry's constant keenness on cooperation and joint work with the legislative authority to enhance the gains and achievements of the country in all fields.

High-level Jordanian parliamentary delegation arrives in Bahrain



Representatives Council Speaker Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal received yesterday Jordanian Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abdul Karim Doghmi, on arrival in the Kingdom of Bahrain heading a high-level parliamentary delegation as part of an official visit to the kingdom. The visit reflects strong and growing fraternal relations between both countries thanks to the support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Jordanian Monarch King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussain. The Jordanian parliamentary delegation will hold an official discussion session tomorrow Monday at the Representatives Council premises to discuss ways of boosting bilateral parliamentary relations. The delegation will also hold meetings with senior officials in Bahrain.

SEA head honoured as CSR international ambassador



Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA) President Dr Abdulhussain bin Ali Mirza received a delegation from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), led by its Advisory Board Chairman Professor Yusuf Abdul-Ghaffar. Dr Mirza was honoured to be an international ambassador in the International Ambassadors Programme for CSR, which includes a group of Arab and international figures influential in the areas of social responsibility and sustainable development. The delegation affirmed that Dr Mirza was honoured due to his keenness and interest in all initiatives aimed at serving the community, and his appreciation of the role of community institutions and organisations in advancing the development wheel in the Kingdom and enhancing their contributions at the regional and global levels.

10th Constituent Judicial Session for Military Prosecution officers kicks off



Defence Affairs Ministry Undersecretary Major General Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa patronised the 10th Constituent Judicial Session for Military Prosecution officers with the participation of officers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the military and security bodies in the kingdom. The session is in line with the keenness of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) to cooperate with the military judicial entities of brotherly countries' armed forces, commending the efforts exerted by the military judiciary to hold regular judicial and legal courses. He expressed appreciation to the BDF Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, for his unlimited support for the military judiciary.

1,694 new COVID-19 cases and 853 additional recoveries

TDT | Manama

Bahrain yesterday recorded 1,694 new COVID-19 cases, the Ministry of Health announced.

There were zero deaths, while

853 additional recoveries were reported.

The death toll stands at 1,397, while there are 280,114 survivors from the respiratory ailment.

There were no critical patients and 29 are in stable condition.

Relaxed entry requirements

The Kingdom relaxed its entry requirements starting yesterday.

Travellers to Bahrain will only need to take one PCR test on arrival into the country.

Previously, vaccinated arrivals were required to take PCR tests on arrival, followed by the fifth and 10th days of their stay. The new changes came into effect yesterday and the cost of the PCR test has been reduced to BD12.

The non-vaccinated and those under 12 will still have to quarantine for 10 days on arrival.

It came as Bahrain received the highest score ever recorded on the Nikkei COVID-19 Recovery Index for its response to the pan-

demic in December 2021.

Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea said 94 per cent of those eligible had been double vaccinated and 83 per cent of those eligible for a booster had received one.

Outrage over 'unloading veggies at open ground'

Staff Reporter
TDT | Manama

Residents of Sehla have expressed their anger over an open ground being used by a group of wholesale traders to unload vegetables before they are packed and sent to retail shops and outlets.

They asked why the authorities are turning a blind eye to the issue despite being brought to their attention many times.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, a resident in the area said tonnes of vegetables are unloaded to the open ground, which is a grave violation of rules.

"Vegetables must be unloaded and stored in a warehouse. How can they do it in an open ground?"

Another resident said, every day, the ground has become slushy after rains and "mud soaked vegetables were being transported to retail stores from the open ground".



A trailer truck is parked at the open ground in Sehla to unload vegetables



Vegetables must be unloaded and stored in a warehouse. How can they do it in an open ground?

CONCERNED RESIDENT

He said at least 20 trailer trucks transport vegetables to the place, from where it is packed and carried in light trucks and other vehicles to retail stores.

Sources said generally trailer trucks carrying

vegetables from Saudi Arabia and Jordan directly unload them at the Bahrain Central Market, from where it goes to the retail market.

"This sounds like a mystery. We don't know who is buying these vegetables from these people?" they said.

Bahrain welcomes Sudan talks

TDT | Manama

Bahrain has welcomed the dialogue between the Sudanese parties and stressed its support for reviving the political process in Sudan, which would achieve its security, peace, unity and stability.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted the constructive role of the United

Nations in this regard and the efforts exerted by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), to hold political consultations among all components.

It affirmed Bahrain's solidarity and full support for Sudan to achieve the aspirations of its people for stability, peace and development.

Bahrain to host MENA forum on 'women of technology' on Jan. 25-26

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain will host the "Women of Technology in the Middle East and North Africa" forum on January 25 and 26.

The event is expected to attract more than 400 participants representing 20 countries from the Arab region, while more than 25 Arab women leaders and entrepreneurs will speak.

Ahmed Attia Al Hujairi, CEO of WorkSamat, the organiser of the event, said that the forum is being held with the participation of female leaders in the technology and business sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the entire Arab region.

They will discuss women's leadership and innovations in the various business and technology sectors. Participation in the forum is also open to men who support women and their successes in various fields.

Al Hujairi explained that female technology leaders from all over the Middle East and North Africa will present various

dialogue sessions during the forum, including a main session, panel discussions and technical talks, in addition to a mentoring session, and an innovative session for women entrepreneurs.

The forum also includes interactive activities to motivate participants during these sessions. It will also feature a virtual exhibition that will be held parallel to the virtual forum to give sponsors an opportunity to showcase their services through this platform.

The forum sheds light on how women are leading the labour market in the Middle East and North Africa, and takes a future look at the entrepreneurship landscape of Arab women in the region, as well as provides career guidance to build a successful career in the technology sector.

It is also an opportunity for women entrepreneurs to learn from women leaders in the technology and business sector, and present their ideas and innovative projects to speakers and participants.

Legislative employees are active despite pandemic

1,870 employees of Shura, Representatives Council and municipal councils participate in 74 specialised events during fifth legislative term

In line with royal directives to provide training programmes, studies and research related to constitutional and legal fields for different groups of people

TDT | Manama

A total of 1,870 employees of the Shura Council, Representatives Council and municipal councils have taken part in 74 specialised events – both in-person and virtual – during the fifth legislative term.

The Bahrain Institute for Political Development said that despite the existing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the fifth legislative term has witnessed a significant growth in the number, quality and volume of participation in specialised activities such as training courses and awareness programmes, as well as a series of discussions on various important topics.

The activities included 55



Representatives Councils ... democracy in motion

workshops, 10 lectures, five discussion sessions, three training sessions, and one special meeting for the legislative sector's employees.

In 2020, five specialised programmes were organised such as training courses, workshops and lectures.

They also included Parliamentary Support Programme for the employees of the General Secretariat of the Shura Council, the Municipal Support Programme for the employees of municipal councils and Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs

and Urban Planning, as well as a Municipal Skills Programme for municipal councils, and members of the Shura Council and the House of Representatives.

Last year, the institute implemented five programmes, which included Parliamentary Skills Programme for members of the House of Representatives, secondment programme for Their Excellencies the Representatives, Parliamentary Skills Programme for members of the Shura Council, Municipal Skills Programme for members of the Capital Municipality and municipal councils, and Parliamentary Support Programme for Parliament secretariat employees. The implementation of these activities comes from the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

The directives are in line with a royal decree providing training programmes, studies and research related to the constitutional and legal fields for different groups of people, particu-

larly to members of the Shura and Representatives Councils as well as members of municipal councils.

Cooperation

On this occasion, the institute affirmed the continuation of cooperation with the legislative authority and municipal councils during the coming period, as a commitment to implementing the plans and programmes approved by the Board of Trustees, while adapting their implementation in line with the precautionary measures against the COVID-19.

In 2018, the Parliamentary Support Programme was launched. It included crisis management workshop, parliamentary research preparation skills workshop, skills interpreting legal texts workshop, and how to deal with the internal regulations of the House of Representatives.

In 2019, the institute implemented six specialised programmes for members of the Shura and Representatives Councils, municipal councils and the Capital Municipality.

Despite the existing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the fifth legislative term has witnessed a significant growth in the number, quality and volume of participation in specialised activities such as training courses and awareness programmes, as well as a series of discussions on various important topics.

YOU
KNOW WHAT

Court Stories

Bahraini man in the dock for human trafficking

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court will be hearing today the defense of a 42-year-old man accused of holding an Asian woman and trafficking her.

The Bahraini man denied the accusations levelled against him, stating that the case file against him is malicious as the woman demands unpaid salaries from him, and she resort-

ed to suing him on different grounds.

Investigations discovered that the man was implicated in inciting maids to flee from their sponsors by offering them better salaries and lower working hours.

According to court files, the Bahraini man locked up the 22-year-old man in a flat and he physically assaulted her.



She was saved after she managed to contact a friend, who also happened to be a maid, and she informed her sponsor. The latter went to the police station and informed cops who rushed

to the victim and rescued her.

The man was discovered to be already implicated in cases of indecent acts. He, however, denied any wrongdoing stating that he had several women working for him as cleaners.

He revealed that he had to terminate their contracts after facing financial struggles, indicating that he kept the woman with him because he was in her debt.

Verdict set for Industry Ministry employee accused of corruption

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court will announce on Wednesday the verdict against a public employee accused of corruption.

The employee is serving at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism and his misconduct was exposed after his illegal services were offered to an imitated products

trader. According to court files, the trader found himself facing violation after he was caught selling counterfeit products.

A clearance agent approached him and offered to remove the violation with the help of the Industry Ministry employee in return for cash money. However, the trader informed the police who seized the phones of the pair and examined their

communications. It was established that they were receiving bribes to remove violations.

The Financial Crimes and Money Laundering Chief Prosecutor said earlier that the pair landed in the police net after a tip-off sent from the Anti-Corruption Department to the Public Prosecution revealing that business owners reported that the employee,

with the help of clearance agent, were demanding bribes in return for removing the violations.

The Public Prosecution investigated the case, hearing witnesses and examining text messages traded between the pair. It was established that the pair committed the wrongdoing, as a result of which they were detained.

Be aware of scammers' 'social engineering skills'

Cybersecurity expert attributes rise in online fund transfer scams to lack of alertness from users

● **BENEFIT and BenefitPay systems are very secure: Beshara**

● **Reminder, don't share secret information with strangers**

● **Beware of fake advertisements on buying and selling websites**

Staff Reporter
TDT | Manama

Scammers are deploying the best social engineering skills to commit cybercrime and everyone using a digital wallet must be aware of this, said Ali Beshara, the Head of Information Security and Risk Management at The BENEFIT Company.

In an exclusive conversation with The Daily Tribune, the cybersecurity expert said BENEFIT and BenefitPay systems are very secure.

"Our security system adheres to international standards and local security standards like PCI-DSS and PCI-TSP. In addition to that, BENEFIT has a team of ex-



perience and we are investing in knowledge updates and building the technical capacity of the team," Beshara said.

He attributed the rise in online fund transfer scams to lack of alertness from the part of users.

"The BENEFIT Company has been issuing frequent awareness campaigns on its own and in collaboration with the banking and financial sector, Bahrain TV, Radio Bahrain as well as the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption,

Economic and Electronic Security and participated in national awareness campaigns and collaborated with the Central Bank of Bahrain, the Ministry of Interior and Bahrain Association for Banks, in light of rising cases involving the hijacking of user accounts after sending fraudulent links randomly to people through SMS," he said.

Beshara also pointed out that this kind of cybercrime involves 'social engineering' – a term used by information security

“Our security system adheres to international standards and local security standards like PCI-DSS and PCI-TSP. In addition to that, BENEFIT has a team of expertise and we are investing in knowledge updates and building the technical capacity of the team

ALI BESHARA, HEAD OF INFORMATION SECURITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT AT THE BENEFIT COMPANY



professionals to describe the action from the part of hackers, who deploy their highest social engineering skills to get information, which is supposed to be kept secret, private and never shared, from their victims.

"It is in these situations, the hacker gets the password of the BenefitPay application and the OTP (One-Time Password), which is sent to the user in case of device change and money transfer."

Beshara stressed that users are almost totally protected if

they don't click on links sent by fraudsters or share passwords with strangers.

He added that "neither BENEFIT nor banks will call you and ask for password or OTP by phone".

"There are other types of frauds like calls claiming that the potential victim has won a prize from a bank and needs to update their CPR with BENEFIT or another company. There have been similar attempts to hijack money changers applications. Also, one should beware of fake

advertisements on buying and selling websites," he explained.

He said the bottom-line statement is "Don't share your secret information with strangers and think before you act".

Users of the BenefitPay app can find security tips on Instagram @alibeshara and on the BENEFIT Company account @benefit.bh.

Of late, more victims of online payment transfer scams have taken to the social media platforms to air their woes. And, it is learnt that fraudsters have been targeting victims by making calls or sending SMSS.

The Daily Tribune carried a report about fraudsters targeting the online banking and financial transaction network in the Kingdom.

The published article carried the plight of one Bangladeshi national, one Pakistani national and an Indian businessman, who together lost nearly BD1,500 to the scammers.

Most of the victims have launched a complaint with the police department, pleading for an intense probe into the matter.

The Central Bank of Bahrain, many a time, has carried out campaigns and circulated messages alerting over the possibility of falling victims to online fraudsters.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ignoring \$39 billion government debt!

Dear Sir,

I refer to the article of The Daily Tribune, "VAT increase will support Bahrain government welfare measures," 6th January, 2022, wherein Ms. Janahi believes increased taxes will help the poor. She is wrong and ignores the government debt of \$39 billion!

The interest on the debt is a massive burden for all in Bahrain, and the government shouldn't be involved in welfare which traditionally, for thousands of years is the realm of society, the mosque, the church, the temples.

We need to eliminate the debt which currently is over 100% of Gross National Product, but the Bahrain economy cannot sustain this debt without the annual aid from our Muslim brothers in the GCC. Also, we need to focus our borrowing on true Islamic finance, which does not permit "closure or negative action," against the borrower, which the current Western banking does in a very destructive manner.

It is strange that people work hard for their money, yet, know so little about it. If people understood what the US dollar is, and is not, there would be revolution in America.

Yours faithfully,
Karim Mansouri

Stop targeting us!

India Government has shocked all expatriates by announcing a seven-day home quarantine mandatory for all international arrivals. The government cites rise in Omicron numbers as the reason behind this move.

But I would like to ask whether the expatriates are behind the spread of Omicron across the country. Reports from India say that the country would immediately require 60,000 new beds to tackle this new wave of pandemic.

The government should first put an end to political gatherings if they want to control the spread of Omicron. I don't know why they are primarily targeting the expatriates, who only think of their home country's welfare. We are coming to our home country after receiving two vaccines and a booster dose. First vaccinate all school teachers. Many unvaccinated teachers across the State of Kerala, who are taking classes, are risking the innocent children with possibility of infection. All politicians in India hardly give any value to the expatriates as they don't have voting rights. Stop treating us as secondary citizens. It is because of us Indian states like Kerala have overcome an economic collapse. One more point: Who will be held accountable if a passenger suffers from nasal damage after being subjected to frequent Covid tests?

A desperate overseas Indian

Editorial Disclaimer. The views and comments expressed are those of the letter sender and not necessarily those of this newspaper. Asking the readers to email letter to mail@newsfbahrain.com



Crowd during the inauguration of a flyover in Kerala

December 2021 'fifth warmest' in Bahrain since 1902

TDT | Manama

Last month goes on record as the fifth warmest December ever experienced in Bahrain since 1902.

This was according to the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications' Meteorological Directorate's monthly weather summary.

It indicated that the mean temperature of the month was 21.3°C which is 1.6°C above the long-term normal for December and this goes on record as the fifth-highest mean temperature for December since 1902. The highest mean monthly temperature for December was 22.5°C recorded in 2001.

The mean maximum temperature of the month was 23.9°C which is 1.0°C above the long-term normal. Note that the highest mean monthly maximum



People still enjoyed the weather last month despite getting a little warmer

temperature for December was 26.3°C recorded in 2001.

The highest temperature recorded during the month was 27.9°C which occurred on the 2nd December at Bahrain International Airport (BIA) but recorded 28.8°C on the 21st December at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC).

The mean minimum temperature of the month was 18.7°C which is 1.9°C above the long-term normal and this goes on record as the fourth-highest mean minimum temperature for December since 1946. Note that the highest mean monthly minimum temperature for December was 19.6°C recorded

in 2001.

The lowest temperature recorded was 15.5°C on the 28th December at BIA but recorded 13.1°C on the 5th December at Durrat Al Bahrain.

The mean relative humidity for December was 66% whereas the mean maximum relative humidity was 80% and the mean minimum relative humidity was 51%. The maximum relative humidity was 93% recorded on the December 1 and the minimum relative humidity was 27% recorded on December 20.

A total of 10.9 mm of precipitation was reported in December 2021 at BIA. Note that the long-term mean total precipitation for December is 15.2 mm and the highest monthly rainfall recorded during December at BIA was 119.6 mm which occurred in 2006.

Ithmaar Bank announces Thimaar millionaire

TDT | Manama

Ithmaar Bank, a Bahrain-based Islamic retail bank, presented \$1 million grand prize to Bahraini mother of two, Fatema Al Alawi.

She won the Thimaar prize draw for the month of December.

The draw was held remotely at the bank's headquarters in the Seef Tower and supervised by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism (MOICT), as well as external auditors BDO Bahrain and the Bank's own internal auditors. "On behalf of all of us at Ithmaar Bank, we congratulate Fatema and her family," said Ithmaar Bank Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Abdul Hakeem Al Mutawa.



Abdul Hakeem Al Mutawa

"We are pleased to be able to bring so much joy to so many families in Bahrain. The Thimaar scheme is not only designed to encourage responsible financial behavior by making saving more rewarding, but the prizes also have the potential to change lives."

"The main reasons why I bank with Ithmaar Bank for the past 15 years is its courteous and friendly customer service. The branch staff are very kind,

helpful, attentive and are always available when I require any assistance," said Al Alawi.

"When I received the call from the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the bank, I felt so great with his welcoming and passing the wonderful news. This phone call came as a pleasant surprise to me as I didn't expect it at all," said Al Alawi.

"Alhamdulillah, this is one of the many blessings of Allah. I will invest the prize amount for the future of my daughters, and I thank Ithmaar Bank for giving me this great chance to win this prize of Thimaar."

Al Mutawa said: "At Ithmaar Bank, we remain committed to improving our services and rewarding our loyal customers. Ithmaar Bank offers the highest

number of prizes of any similar scheme in Bahrain, making Thimaar account one of the most rewarding saving schemes in the Kingdom.

"This helps provide additional incentives for savers. Additionally, these potentially life changing prizes can be won with a minimum of BD30 deposit only."

During 2021, a total of 2,271 prizes were awarded, the most offered by any bank in Bahrain. Customers were able to win \$1 million grand prize, six quarterly prizes worth \$100,000 each, along with many more cash prizes.

Customers can view the winners list by visiting the bank's website at: www.ithmaarbank.com/thimaar

Workforce & management synergy helped GPIC move forward amid COVID crisis: GPIC Chairman

TDT | Manama

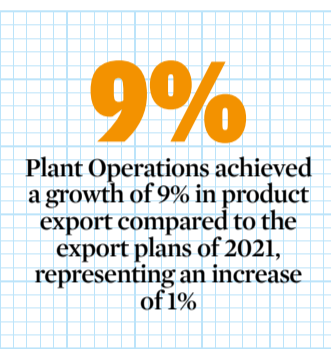
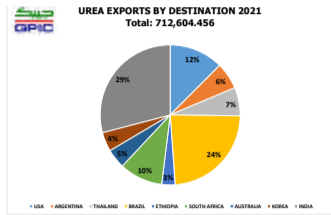
Close cooperation between the workforce and management proved significant in enabling GPIC to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis in 2021, said GPIC Chairman Dr Al Sharyan.

The pandemic, he said, failed to produce any significant challenges to GPIC, thanks to an effective response in mitigating the infections among the workforce.

“GPIC continued implementing flexible policies and procedures to ensure the sustainable operations, whilst putting the safety of its workforce as their number one priority.”

He also commended the awareness of the employees and Directors in enforcing strict measures to protect the employees and their families from Coronavirus.

“This ensured that the operations were unaffected, especially considering the importance of



the Petrochemical and Agri-Nutrient Industry and its connection to food security.”

The Chairman also said that despite the challenges, the company continued to win many prestigious awards, including the MRM Business Award and the MRM Business Innovation Award.

GPIC also maintained its record of no lost-time accidents since 2002 by achieving more than 35 million hours of no lost-time accidents.

Dr Al Sharyan thanked His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister and His Highness, Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Chairman of the National Oil & Gas Holding Company, for their support to the company and the entire industry.

Operational milestones

The President of GPIC, Yasser



GPIC board and Executive Management members during a photocall

Alabbasi, said GPIC witnessed a 7.7% increase in production compared to the production budget for 2021. “This represents an increase of 1.1% and excludes the expenditure saved due to postponing the Major Turnaround originally scheduled for 2021 into 2022.”

Plant Operations achieved a growth of 9% in product export compared to the export plans of 2021, representing an increase

of 1%, which excludes the Major Turnaround expenditure.

The Ammonia plant completed 1,068 days of continuous daily production on March 30, 2021, a new record surpassing the previous record of 950 production days achieved in 2012,

The Urea plant completed 1,070 days of continuous daily production on March 30, 2021, a new record surpassing the previous record of 941 production

days achieved in 2012.

On environmental care, Alabbasi said the company reduced the daily gas consumption by shutting down the Carbon Dioxide Recovery Unit (CDR) steam boiler and utilised the conserved natural gas to generate more power in 2021.

“This resulted in reducing the total cost of energy as well as GPIC’s carbon footprint,” he added.

Tamcon awards Architectural and Engineering Consultancy for Waterfront Villas

TDT | Manama

Tamcon Contracting Company, a leading Bahrain-based grade AA civil and building construction company, announced it had awarded an architectural and design consultancy agreement to Mohammed Al Gharib Architects and Engineers for works associated with 18 waterfront villas in Durrat Marina.

The design works are the first stage of the new development within the Durrat Marina masterplan, for a strip of 18 waterfront residential villas.

Mohammed Al Gharib will be delivering a range of architectural, structural, and electromechanical designs for the villas on plots of approximately 310 sqm.

CEO of Tamcon, Abdulla Al Alabbasi, said, “Durrat Mari-



Tamcon CEO with Mohammed Al Gharib Architects CEO

na already combines luxurious residential opportunities with a range of commercial, and leisure facilities. We are pleased to be a part of the new phase of residential units being designed and developed and are confident that these villas will be a highly sought-after investment

opportunity for both local and external investors.”

Mohammed Al Gharib, the Owner and CEO of Mohammed Al Gharib Architects and Engineers, said, “We are delighted to partner with Tamcon on this waterfront villa development project.”

Alba’s ESG Roadmap ... on Track, says Chairman Shaikh Daij



Shaikh Daij during the opening of Alba's Spent Pot Lining (SPL) Treatment Plant in December 2021.

TDT | Manama

Alba is getting closer to realise the full potential of ESG goals, said Chairman of Alba’s Board of Directors, Shaikh Daij Bin Salman Bin Daij Al Khalifa.

“Especially when it comes to Waste Management, with the Spent Pot Lining (SPL) Treatment Plant in full operational swing to produce HiCal,” added Shaikh Daij, during the opening of the Spent Pot Lining Treatment Plant in early December 2021.

Built over 26,000 square meters with an annual capacity to treat 30,000 to 35,000 tonnes of SPL, Alba’s SPL Treatment Plant is the first-of-its kind in the Region. Alba has relied on the Australian-based Regain



as the technology provider for this facility. Now that SPL Treatment Plant is in operations, Alba will ensure to fully destruct the hazardous waste present in SPL, generated from smelting operations, following which the final product could be used in the construction and cement industries.

Adding further, Shaikh Daij said: “This Project represents a tangible and a real progress, not only in addressing our commitment as well as stakeholders’

interests to reduce and recycle waste but also in transforming SPL into a value-added product and creating sustainable value in a circular economy. Our ESG roadmap, to be published in February 2022, will further address Alba’s needs and must-do-initiatives in its pursuit to embrace our nation’s Environmental & Carbon reduction’s objectives under the leadership of HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister to reach net zero by 2060.”

BCICAI Seminar on India’s Economic Performance vs. Market Performance



Participants during the virtual seminar

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of the Chartered Accountants of India (BCICAI) held a technical session on India’s Economic Performance vs Market Performance.

The event focused on the impact of the new Omicron COVID-19 variant on the market.

Ameya Prabhu, the Founder and Managing Director of NAFA Capital Advisors, spoke on the various elements of the market and the importance of

Foreign Remittances, citing the historical listing companies like as Nykaa, Zomato, etc.

The Chairperson of BCICAI, Santhosh Vargheese, welcomed the audience and stressed the need to understand the importance of changing times.



Export Bahrain, announced partnering with Ramez Hypermarkets, the retail division of Ramez International Group, to provide a platform for ‘Made in Bahrain’ products at local and international branches of Ramez Hypermarket. The partnership is in line with Export Bahrain’s vision to encourage exports and recognize Bahrain-based brands in markets across the GCC region and further across the world. Export Bahrain Acting Chief Executive, Safa Sharif AbdulKhalik, and Chief Executive Officer of Ramez International Group, Mohammed Ramez Alawadhi, were present.

News in brief

◆ **Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad, 96, successfully underwent an “elective medical procedure”** and is expected to be discharged in a few days, the National Heart Institute said yesterday. The procedure was uneventful and went as planned,” the institute said in a statement. Mahathir was admitted into the institute on Friday, the second time in as many months that he has been hospitalised. Mahathir, who has a history of heart problems, was admitted on Dec. 16 before being discharged a week later.



Mahathir successfully underwent medical procedure

◆ **Israeli foodtech startup Remilk has raised \$120 million to scale up production** of an animal-free protein that can be used in vegan dairy products like cheeses, yogurt and ice cream, the company said. Remilk developed a yeast-based fermentation process to generate proteins that it said taste and function the same as proteins in cow milk. They are free of lactose, cholesterol, and growth hormones, and the process reduces the environmental impact of dairy farming, it said. The funding round was led by NY-based Hanaco Ventures.

◆ **Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state and a key battleground for Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and opposition groups, will hold elections in seven phases starting from Feb. 10, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said on Saturday. The outcome of the election in the northern state, currently ruled by Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), will be seen a barometer for national elections due in 2024. Voting will be finalised on March 7, with results expected from March 10, the Commission said. It has announced polling dates for five states at a time when the country is facing a soaring number of coronavirus infections.

Elections in India’s most populous state to start in Feb. 10



◆ **The northern coastal city of Tianjin began testing its population of around 14 million yesterday** after at least two local cases of the highly-transmissible Omicron variant were detected, state media reported. Residents in four districts would be tested over the next 24 hours while other districts would be tested the next day, the Tianjin government said. Residents will only get the green health code necessary to travel once they receive a negative result, it said. The city advised residents not to leave town for unnecessary reasons, the government said late on Saturday. So far no full lockdown order has been given. The Tianjin outbreak poses risks to Beijing and the upcoming Winter Olympics, because of the large number of commuters working and living in the two cities, the state-owned Global Times said, citing an unnamed immunologist.



China’s Tianjin begins city-wide testing after at least two local Omicron cases detected

Kazakhstan says situation stable, president firmly in charge after

- 5,800 people had been arrested in connection with the unrest
- Internet remained heavily restricted, with access only available to the presidential website
- Magnum, the biggest supermarket chain, said of the 68 stores in Almaty, 15 had been completely looted



A Kazakh law enforcement officer stands guard near a burnt truck while checking vehicles in a street following mass protests triggered by fuel price increase in Almaty, Kazakhstan

Reuters | Almaty

Kazakhstan authorities said yesterday they had stabilised the situation across the country after the deadliest outbreak of violence in 30 years of independence, and troops from a Russian-led military alliance were guarding “strategic facilities.” Security and intelligence officials briefed President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev that they were continuing “clean-up” actions in what he has called a huge counter-terrorism operation across the oil-producing former Soviet republic that borders Russia and China. Dozens of people have been killed, thousands detained and public buildings torched over the past week, prompting Tokayev to issue shoot-to-kill orders to end unrest he has blamed on bandits

and terrorists. At Tokayev’s invitation, the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) sent troops to restore order, an intervention that comes at a time of high tension in Russia-US relations ahead of talks this week on the Ukraine crisis. “A number of strategic facilities have been transferred under the protection of the united peace-



A man walks past the office building of the Nur Otan ruling party, which was damaged during mass protests triggered by fuel price increase, in Almaty, Kazakhstan

keeping contingent of the CSTO member states,” the presidential office said in a statement detailing the security briefing chaired by Tokayev. It did not identify the facilities. Last week, Russia’s space agency said security had been strengthened around Kazakhstan’s Baikonur Cosmodrome, used by Russia for space launches. The protests disrupted production at the Chevron-operated Tengiz oil field. “The situation has been stabilised in all regions of the country,” it said, adding law enforcement agencies had seized back control of administrative buildings and vital services were being restored. What began a week ago with demonstrations against a fuel price rise exploded into a wider protest against Tokayev’s government and the man he replaced

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	60,954,028	859,046	306,304,874
2 India	35,528,004	483,790	
3 Brazil	22,499,525	619,981	Deaths
4 UK	14,333,794	150,057	5,504,015
5 France	11,815,121	125,348	Recovered:
6 Russia	10,650,849	316,163	259,111,400
7 Turkey	9,916,725	83,529	New cases
8 Germany	7,510,185	114,674	+382,263
9 Italy	7,281,297	138,881	New deaths
10 Spain	7,164,906	89,934	+1,609
11 Argentina	6,237,525	117,465	
12 Iran	6,206,405	131,878	
13 Colombia	5,300,032	130,288	
14 Indonesia	4,266,195	144,129	

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	391,945		21,938		326,265	43,742
Saudi Arabia	578,753	+3,460	8,893	+1	546,614	23,246
UAE	785,625	+2,759	2,174	+1	753,033	30,418
Kuwait	430,920		2,471		413,309	15,140
Oman	307,722	+373	4,118	+1	300,964	2,640
Qatar	266,962		618		247,553	18,791

Baby lost in chaos of Afghanistan airlift found, returned

Reuters | Kabul, Afghanistan

An infant boy handed in desperation to a soldier across an airport wall in the chaos of the American evacuation of Afghanistan has been found and was reunited with his relatives in Kabul on Saturday. The baby, Sohail Ahmadi, was just two months old when he went missing on Aug. 19 as thousands of people rushed to leave Afghanistan as it fell to the Taliban.

The baby was located in Kabul where a 29-year-old taxi driver named Hamid Safi had found him in the airport and took him home to raise as his own. After more than seven weeks of negotiations and pleas, and ultimately a brief detention by Taliban police, Safi finally handed the child back to his jubilant grandfather and other relatives still in Kabul. They said they would now seek to have him reunited with his par-



Hamid Safi, a 29-year-old taxi driver who had found baby Sohail Ahmadi in the airport, cries as he hands over Sohail to his grandfather Mohammad Qasem Razawi in Kabul, Afghanistan

ents and siblings who were evacuated months ago to the United States. During the tumultuous Afghan evacuation over the summer, Mirza Ali Ahmadi - the boy’s father who had worked as a security guard at the US embassy - and his wife Suraya feared their son would get crushed in the crowd as they neared the airport gates en route to a flight to the United States. Ahmadi told Reuters in early November in his desperation that day, he handed Sohail over the airport wall to a uniformed soldier who he believed to be an American, fully expecting he would soon make it the remaining 5 meters (15 feet) to the entrance to reclaim him. Just at that moment, Taliban forces pushed the crowd back and it would be another half an hour before Ahmadi, his wife and their four other children were able to get inside. During the tumultuous Afghan evacuation over the summer, Mirza Ali Ahmadi - the boy’s father who had worked as a security guard at the US embassy - and his wife Suraya feared their son would get crushed in the crowd as they neared the airport gates en route to a flight to the United States.

But by then the baby was nowhere to be found. Ahmadi said he searched desperately for his son inside the airport and was told by officials that he had likely been taken out of the country separately and could be reunited with them later. The rest of the family was evacuated - eventually ending up at a military base in Texas. For months they had no idea where their son was. On the same day Ahmadi and his family were separated from their baby, Safi had slipped through the Kabul airport gates after giving a ride to his brother’s family who were also set to evacuate. Safi said he found Sohail alone and crying on the ground. After he



Baby Sohail Ahmadi is carried by a relative

1430

Catholic Order of the Golden Fleece founded in Bruges in celebration of the prosperous and wealthy domains of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy

1475

Stephen III of Moldavia defeats the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Vaslui

1839

First tea from leaves of indigenous plants of Assam, India arrives in the United Kingdom



1946

UN General Assembly meets for 1st time in London

ilised, r unrest

as president of the resource-rich former Soviet republic, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

It has opened a rift in the ruling elite, with Tokayev fighting to consolidate his authority after sacking key officials and removing Nazarbayev from a powerful role as head of the Security Council.

The former intelligence chief and two-time prime minister Karim Massimov, seen as close to Nazarbayev, has been arrested on suspicion of treason but authorities have not disclosed any details of the allegations against him.

State television took the unusual step at the top of its hourly news bulletin of underlining that Tokayev was "the highest official of the state, the chairman of the Security Council. In this capacity he takes decisions independently."

New Dutch finance minister Kaag tests positive for COVID-19 day before inauguration



Sigrid Kaag, Dutch minister for foreign trade and development cooperation

Reuters | Amsterdam

The Netherlands' new finance minister Sigrid Kaag will miss the ceremonial inauguration of the new Dutch government on Monday as she has tested positive for the coronavirus.

"I have tested positive for corona. It will be a slightly different start than I had hoped for", Kaag tweeted on Sunday.

"My installation will take place digitally. Luckily I feel fine."

Prime Minister Mark Rutte's fourth consecutive government is set to be installed by Dutch King Willem-Alexander on Monday, almost 10 months after the last election and a year since his previous administration stepped down.

Although the government coalition consists of the same four parties that have been in charge since 2017, it took a record of almost 300 days to bring them back together after the inconclusive March 17 elections made parties more reluctant than ever to compromise.

Their installation comes amid a sharp rise in coronavirus infections due to the Omicron variant, despite a broad lockdown that has kept most public places closed since mid-December.

Former United Nations diplomat Kaag served as foreign minister in the previous government and is the leader of the second-largest party in the coalition, pro-EU D66.

Besides missing the meeting with the king, she will also be absent from the traditional photograph of the new cabinet taken on the steps of the royal palace.

Seven dead, 3 missing after rock face collapse at Brazilian waterfall

Reuters | Brasilia

At least seven people died and nine were seriously injured when a wall of rock collapsed on top of motor boats below a waterfall in southeastern Brazil on Saturday, the fire department said.

A tower of rocks suddenly broke away from the canyon wall and came crashing down on several leisure boats, sending out a huge wave over the lake at Capitolio, in Minas Gerais state.

Videos posted on social media showed tourists shouting as the column of rock crashed into the water, smashing two boats.

Authorities said three people were still missing after others feared lost were located by telephone. Divers searched the lake.

The people hurt in the ac-



Firefighters of Minas Gerais state search for victims after a wall of rock collapsed on top of motor boats below a waterfall in Capitolio, in Minas Gerais state, Brazil

cident had broken bones and one was in serious condition in hospital with head and facial injuries. Some 23 others were treated for light injuries, he said.

The region has been under

heavy rainfall for two weeks, which could have loosened the rock face. On Saturday, a dike overflowed at an iron ore mine 300 kilometers to the east, cutting off a major federal highway.

No concessions: Russia takes hard line before vital talks with US

● Minister says diplomacy could fail after one session

● US official says won't discuss limits on deployments

● West threatening sanctions if Russia invades Ukraine

Reuters | Moscow

Russia said yesterday it would not make any concessions under US pressure at talks this week on the Ukraine crisis and its demands for Western security guarantees, and that there was a risk they might end quickly.

The hard line from Moscow underscored the fragile prospects for negotiations that Washington hopes will avert the danger of a new Russian invasion of Ukraine, at the tensest point in US-Russia relations since the Cold War ended three decades ago.

Talks are due in Geneva, Brussels and Vienna but the state-owned RIA news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying it was entirely possible that diplomacy could end abruptly after a



Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov sits into a car after talks with U.S. Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland in Moscow, Russia

single meeting.

"I can't rule out anything, this is an entirely possible scenario and the Americans... should have no illusions about this," he was quoted as saying.

"Naturally, we will not make any concessions under pressure and in the course of threats that are constantly being formed by the Western participants of the upcoming talks."

Interfax news agency quoted Ryabkov, who will lead the Russian delegation in Geneva, as saying Moscow was not optimistic going into the negotiations.

The comments from Ryabkov,

who has compared the situation to the 1962 Cuban missile crisis when the world stood on the brink of nuclear war, were consistent with the uncompromising line that Russia has been signalling for weeks.

Tens of thousands of Russian troops are gathered within reach of the border with Ukraine in preparation for what Washington and Kyiv say could be an invasion, eight years after Russia seized the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine.

Russia denies invasion plans and says it is responding to what it calls aggressive and provocative behaviour from the NATO military alliance and Ukraine, its former Soviet neighbour which has tilted towards the West and aspires to join NATO.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has accused Russia of pushing a false narrative. "That's like the fox saying it had to attack the hen house because its occupants somehow pose a threat. We've seen this gaslighting before," he said last week.

Further complicating the picture, Russia sent troops into neighbouring Kazakhstan last week after the oil-producing former Soviet republic was hit by a wave of unrest. Its foreign ministry reacted furiously on Saturday to a jibe by Blinken that "once Russians are in your house, it's sometimes very difficult to get them to leave"

ned to family

said he unsuccessfully tried to locate the baby's parents inside, he decided to take the infant home to his wife and children. Safi has three daughters of his own and said his mother's greatest wish before she died was for him to have a son.

In that moment he decided: "I am keeping this baby. If his family is found, I will give him to them. If not, I will raise him myself," he told Reuters in an interview in late November.

Safi told Reuters that he took him to the doctor for a check-up after he was found and quickly incorporated the child into his family. They called the baby Mohammad Abed and posted pictures of all the children together on his Facebook page.



as they leave the house of Hamid Safi

Stay away in event of accident with Olympics vehicle, Beijing police warn

Reuters | China, Shenzhen

People should stay away from the special vehicles used to ferry people to and from the Winter Olympic venues in the event of a traffic incident, Beijing's traffic management authority warned on Sunday.

Personnel involved in the Winter Olympics will be kept



in a "closed loop" operation and should avoid contact with people outside it, the Beijing Traffic

Management Bureau said in a post on its Twitter-like Weibo account.

If there is an accident with one of the vehicles, people should maintain a safe distance, avoid contact with those inside and wait for professionals to arrive at the scene, the post said.

On Wednesday organisers said they had begun the "closed

loop" operation, in which participants can only leave if they are exiting the country or undergo quarantine, to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak among Games participants from leaking into China's general public.

The 2022 Games, which open on Feb. 4, are set to take place as the world grapples with the highly transmissible Omicron.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Greetings to everyone, especially the Indian diaspora on Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas. Our diaspora has distinguished itself all over the world and has excelled in different spheres. At the same time, they have remained connected to their roots. We are proud of their accomplishments.

@narendramodi

02



Our fragile planet is changing by a thread. Every fraction of a degree warming matters. We need maximum ambition - from all countries on all fronts - to keep the 1.5 degree warming goal of the #ParisAgreement alive. It's time to go into emergency mode.

@antonioguterres

03



We built the Museum of the Future as a global hub for scientists, thinkers and innovators - it is the ideal headquarters to develop the potential of our region's finest minds. We will act as an incubator and accelerator for fostering Arab and global talent.

@HShkMohd

04



Harry Reid and I grew up on different sides of the country, but we came from the same place where certain values run deep. Loyalty. Faith. Resolve. Service. He was a dear friend, a great American, and a giant of our history. May he rest in peace.

@JoeBiden

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

celebs

Tom Holland failed to pitch young James Bond film

ANI | Washington

The search for the next James Bond following Daniel Craig's exit after 'No Time to Die' would begin later this year, but it turns out actor Tom Holland already tried to pitch where 007 should go next.

According to Variety, while speaking to a magazine ahead of the release of Sony's video game adaptation of 'Uncharted', Holland revealed he pitched the studio on a James Bond origin story movie in which the world's most famous spy would be a young man just starting out in the world of high-stakes espionage.

"I had a meeting, after or during 'Spider-Man 2' ['Spider-Man: Far From Home'], with Sony to pitch this idea of a young Bond film that I'd come up with," Holland said.

He continued, "It was the origin story of James Bond. It didn't really make sense. It didn't work. It was

the dream of a young kid, and I don't think the Bond estate [was] particularly interested."

Holland's failed James Bond pitch did not entirely bomb. According to the actor, his interest in doing an origin story for a popular franchise character is part of what nudged Sony in the direction of adapting the blockbuster video game series 'Uncharted'.



Tom Holland

As Holland explained, "The idea of a young Bond film sparked this idea, in turn, that you could do a Nathan Drake story as an origin story, rather than as an addition to the games. And that opened a conversation.

Holland stars as Nathan Drake opposite Mark Wahlberg as Victor 'Sully' Sullivan in 'Uncharted', directed by Ruben Fleischer. The film also stars Sophia Ali, Tati Gabrielle, and Antonio Banderas.



Holland's failed James Bond pitch did not entirely bomb. According to the actor, his interest in doing an origin story for a popular franchise character is part of what nudged Sony in the direction of adapting the blockbuster video game series 'Uncharted'

With its February 18 release date in the US, the film marks Sony's first tentpole of the new year and a reunion with Holland after the record-breaking box office success of 'Spider-Man: No Way Home'.

Kristin Davis: Ageing in the public eye is extremely stressful

IANIS | Los Angeles

Actress Kristin Davis has insisted she has no problem getting older and embracing the changes that age



"If I was from a regular life, I would feel fine; I would feel great! I'm healthy, I'm strong, I've got this little three-year-old son, and I carry him around and it's all good - but, no, I'm on television, where every bit of my physical being is analysed"

KRISTIN DAVIS

brings, but finds it particularly tough to age while being a public figure, because she's constantly compared to her younger self.

She said: "It can be extremely stressful to be aging and to be compared to your much, much, much younger self.

"If I

was from a regular life, I would feel fine; I would feel great! I'm healthy, I'm strong, I've got this little three-year-old son, and I carry him around and it's all good - but, no, I'm on television, where every bit of my physical being is analysed.

"That part was always very stressful and difficult for me, because, as much as I can look back on my life and think, 'Oh, I looked great then', you never think that at the time. I guess no one does."

Davis has recently found herself at the centre of ageist commentary along with her 'Sex and the City' co-stars Sarah Jessica Parker and Cynthia Nixon following the reprisal of their

roles in the spin-off series, 'And Just Like That', reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The actress said paparazzi are constantly angling for unflattering shots of the trio during long days on set, and although she tries to ignore the comments she receives, she still has "bad days".

She said: "I have bad days; I have days where I literally want to put my face in a bowl of ice like Joan Crawford.

"There's going to be bad pictures, and they're going to talk about them, and they're going to discuss your hair, your face, your this and your that and that's just how it is I guess a at least in this industry."

The actress also acknowledged ageism isn't an isolated issue, as all women have long been held to impossible beauty standards.

Leonardo DiCaprio gets a tree named after him

ANI | Washington

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio now has his own type of tree.

According to People, scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew recently discovered a new type of tree, and decided to name it after Leonardo, who has been a long time advocate for environment-related problems.

"This threatened and spectacular tree is named for the American actor and conservationist Leonardo DiCaprio, who, through several months in 2020, lobbied extensively on social media to

draw attention to threats for the numerous rare Ebo species from the logging concession that had been announced at Ebo earlier that year," scientists wrote in journal PeerJ.

The Leo tree - with the official name of "Uvariopsis dicaprio" is a small and tropical, evergreen tree that showcases glossy yellow flowers growing from its trunk.

The official naming of Leonardo's tree comes at a time when the actor tried to address environmental problems with fiction drama 'Don't Look Up'.



Leonardo DiCaprio

Cher says she will never go grey

IANIS | Los Angeles

Singer Cher has opened up about her changing locks over the years, having switched up her signature black hair to go blonde and even red over the years, but she doesn't plan on ever stopping with the dye.

She told People magazine: "(Going grey) is fine for other girls. I'm just not doing it!"

The 'Believe' hit-maker reflected on her own outlook on makeup, and told critics to "get a life", reports femalefirst.com.

She added: "It's all about having fun. I just think that people who worry about the way someone puts on their makeup should get a life."

While she's spent decades being photographed by fans and the paparazzi, she admitted it's nice being able to look back at how her style has changed.

Cher said: "I can't believe I did so much, actually.

"It's all about having fun. I just think that people who worry about the way someone puts on their makeup should get a life"

CHER

There are few people that have had pictures taken their entire life... I don't think there was a moment that I stepped outside of my house where I didn't have a picture taken of me.

"It comes in handy now. But I liked all (my looks), really. And I made some (decisions) that were ridiculous, but I don't care."

Meanwhile, she noted how she was mocked when she first started pairing up with beauty and fragrance brands, but now she feels vindicated.

She said: "I paid a big price for doing (the infomercials). I took so much heat from that, really ... (now) things have changed completely. You keep going and that's the challenge.



Cher

SUDOKU

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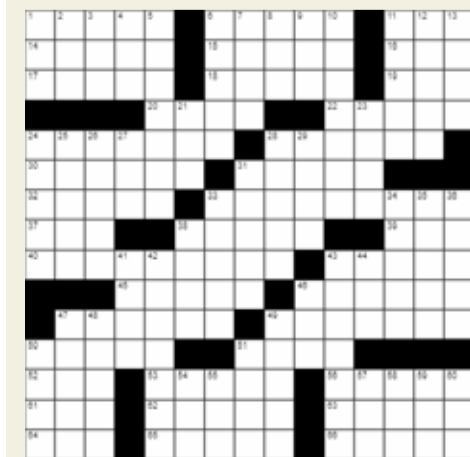
Yesterday's solution

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7	9	3	2	4	8	6	5	1

How to play

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

CROSSWORD



Across

1- Small canyon; 6- Seraglio; 11- Medicinal amt.; 14- Woodwind section members; 15- Last Greek letter; 16- "Tommy" band; 17- Eats to a plan; 18- Spanish Mister; 19- Electrically charged atom; 20- Tolkien tree creatures; 22- Melodies; 24- Semper Fi sayers; 28- Twinned; 30- Rough design; 31- Tropical plant used in cosmetics; 32- Slow on the uptake; 33- Enrich; 37- On in years; 38- Trousers; 39- Deface; 40- Bigfoot; 43- Church singers; 45- Make one; 46- Mother; 47- Justly; 49- Unit of magnetic intensity; 50- Accord maker; 51- Scored 100 on; 52- What Dorian Gray didn't do; 53- Piece of poetry; 56- Like helium; 61- Turkish honorific; 62- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 63- Broadcast; 64- Neighbor of Leb.; 65- Yellowish citrus fruit; 66- Category;

Down

1- Deity; 2- Kimono accessory; 3- Lobster eggs; 4- Pick up; 5- Spirit; 6- Emcees; 7- Singing brothers' surname; 8- Stimpny's pal; 9- Freudian topic; 10- Cocktail; 11- Strong string; 12- Did a blacksmith's job; 13- Soprano Lily; 21- O.T. book; 23- Caspian Sea feeder; 24- Windows predecessor; 25- Pack leader; 26- Tears; 27- T.G.I.F. part; 28- Western Australia's capital; 29- Farm dwellers; 31- Therefore; 33- Containing lard; 34- Folding words; 35- Congo, once; 36- Made a mistake; 38- Bucket; 41- One pound sterling; 42- Disentangle; 43- Pertaining to the heart; 44- Elevs; 46- Society page word; 47- Misty; 48- Lend; 49- Body of salt water; 50- Lukas of "Witness"; 51- About; 54- Woman created from the rib of Adam; 55- Canyon edge; 57- Zip; 58- Noteworthy period; 59- _ judicata; 60- NFL scores;

Yesterday's solution

G	A	R	B	S	N	A	P	A	D	A	R			
A	B	O	I	L	T	E	A	R	E	R	I	E		
L	I	M	B	O	R	A	R	E	T	A	M	E		
A	T	E	O	M	I	T	M	A	N	N	E	D		
S	U	P	R	E	M	E	W	E	E					
A	R	L	E	N		N	A	R	C	O	T	I	C	
A	G	E	E		G	O	A	P	E	S	O	S	O	
R	E	A	L	T	I	M	E			L	A	M	I	A
G	E	M	I	N	I		A	L	D	A				
G	A	L	L	I	O	T		I	D	O	L	A	B	E
A	S	I	S		E	S	T	O		E	B	B	E	D
P	S	S	T		S	O	I	L		D	A	L	L	Y
E	Y	E	S		S	I	N	E		G	E	L	S	

England dig in to salvage heart-pumping draw in 4th Ashes Test



James Anderson and Stuart Broad walk off after the match ended in a draw
AFP | London

Battle-weary England dug deep for a gripping draw with just one wicket left to deny dominant Australia a 4-0 series lead in the fourth Ashes Test in Sydney yesterday.

Number 11 batsman James Anderson doggedly played out a tense 102nd and final over from leg-spinner Steve Smith in deteriorating evening light as England ended on 270 for nine chasing a 388-run target in a heart-pumping finish.

It all came down to the last six balls at the Sydney Cricket Ground with eight fielders crowding around the bat as Anderson fended off Smith's part-time leg-spin.

Australia had looked set to win the day-long battle and pull off a thrilling victory when they claimed the ninth wicket of Jack Leach, caught in the slips by David Warner off Smith for 26 to mass team celebrations.

But Anderson and long-time pace partner Stuart Broad played out the remaining two nail-bitingly tense overs to give



It was the third time in the past 12 months that Australia's attack has failed to bowl out a team on the final day, having twice squandered winning positions against India last season, and again here in Sydney on Sunday

the beleaguered tourists a morale-boosting fighting draw after losing the Ashes series 3-0 inside 12 days.

Ben Stokes with a gutsy 60, his second half-century of the match, and first-innings centurion Jonny Bairstow's 41 held up the Australian victory charge.

But once both departed after tea, the Australians were relentless in taking the struggle down to the final over.

Tottenham and Liverpool survive FA Cup scares

Lucas Moura and Harry Kane help Tottenham rally and sink Morecambe

● **Liverpool survive early scare to cruise to FA Cup win over Shrewsbury**

AFP | London

Tottenham avoided an embarrassing FA Cup exit at the hands of third-tier Morecambe yesterday as Liverpool were forced to come from behind to beat lowly Shrewsbury.

West Ham beat Leeds 2-0 in the day's only third-round match featuring two Premier League teams while Wolves saw off Championship side Sheffield United 3-0.

Spurs needed a late flurry of goals from Harry Winks and substitutes Lucas Moura and Harry Kane to spare their blushes and beat League One club Morecambe 3-1.

Tottenham made eight changes from the side that lost to Chelsea in the first leg of their League Cup semi-final in mid-week, with Kane given his first rest under Antonio Conte.

Morecambe boss Stephen Robinson was absent for the game against the club where he began his playing career after testing positive for coronavirus.

Spurs -- 59 places higher than their opponents in the English



Liverpool's Roberto Firmino, center, scores his side's third goal

league system -- dominated the opening half an hour but the visitors went ahead in the 33rd minute when captain Anthony O'Connor converted from close range.

The home were level in the 74th minute but they needed a fluke -- midfielder Winks overhit a free-kick from the left-hand side but it caught goalkeeper Trevor Carson out and sailed into the far corner.

Moura put Spurs ahead in the 85th minute after rounding the goalkeeper and Kane made sure Spurs would progress.

Klopp returns

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp was back in the dugout at Anfield after finishing his isolation

period following a positive test for Covid-19.

Liverpool named five youth team players in their team to face League One side Shrewsbury at home after a Covid-affected build-up to the match, with more academy players on the bench.

The Merseyside club have also had to deal with injuries and are without Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane and Naby Keita, all of whom are at the Africa Cup of Nations.

Shrewsbury weathered almost half an hour of Liverpool possession but struck with their first real attack of any threat, when Daniel Udoh fired home from close range following a Nathanael Ogbeta cross.



Kaide Gordon, one of four teenagers handed a start in a youthful Liverpool lineup, became the second-youngest scorer in the club's history -- at 17 years and 96 days

Shrewsbury's lead just seven minutes before Kaide Gordon scored his first goal for the club at the Kop end.

The 17-year-old controlled Conor Bradley's low cross from the right with one foot in a crowded penalty area before slotting home with the other.

Just before half-time Liverpool were ahead when Ethan Ebanks-Landell handled in an aerial challenge with Virgil van Dijk and Fabinho scored the penalty.

Substitute Roberto Firmino increased Liverpool's lead 12 minutes from time with a close-range backheel and Fabinho scored his second to make it 4-1 with the last kick of the game.

Nadal beats Cressy to claim Melbourne title

● **Halep sends Australian Open warning with first title in 16 months**

Reuters | Melbourne

Top seed Rafael Nadal beat American qualifier Maxime Cressy 7-6(6) 6-3 to win the Melbourne Summer Set 1 ATP 250 event and build up momentum heading into the Australian Open.

The Spaniard, playing his first competitive tournament since August, was largely untroubled as he wrapped up the win in an hour 48 minutes.

Cressy was put under serious pressure by Nadal from the off, having to defend three break points in his first service game, but there was little to separate the two for the rest of the first set, which required a tiebreak.

Nadal stepped on the gas late in the tiebreak, saving a set point at 5-6 down and then earning a set point of his own with a forehand winner, which he converted to take the first set 7-6(6).

Cressy responded by breaking first in the second set to take a 2-1 lead, but Nadal immediately shut down a potential comeback with a break of his own to bring the set back on serve.

The Spaniard then broke again to lead 5-3 and held serve to claim the title.

"I'm coming back from some



Rafael Nadal of Spain celebrates with the trophy after his victory in Melbourne

Exactly where I would like to be is being 100 percent healthy from last year, playing until the end of the season, and with not having come back after five, six months away from competition

RAFAEL NADAL

challenging moments and injuries, so it means a lot to be here," the 20-times Grand Slam champion said, before praising his opponent.

"Congratulations Maxime, it's a great start to the season. I wish you all the very best for the rest of the season and your career."

Halep beats Kudrmetova

Earlier yesterday, former world number one Simona Halep stormed past Veronika Kudrmetova 6-2 6-3 at the

Melbourne Summer Set 1 final to claim her 23rd career title.

Kudrmetova began the contest strongly, breaking Halep's serve to take a 2-1 lead in the first set, but the two-times Grand Slam champion broke right back in the next game and then twice more to clinch the first set 6-2.

The second set unfolded in similar fashion, with Kudrmetova taking the lead and Halep rallying to level the set at 2-2. Halep broke a few games later to make it 5-3 and then held to love to secure the win.

American Amanda Anisimova battled through injury to beat Aliaksandra Sasnovich 7-5 1-6 6-4 and claim her second WTA title in the Melbourne Summer Set 2.

Anisimova, who took a medical timeout for treatment on her left thigh in the second set, showed great resolve to fight back from 3-0 down in the deciding set and break twice, before sealing the win with an emphatic ace.

Barty sends Australian Open warning with Rybakina demolition



Ashleigh Barty

AFP | Adelaide

World number one Ashleigh Barty showed why she is the Australian Open favourite when she demolished Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina in the final of the Adelaide International yesterday.

Barty took just 64 minutes to see off the seventh seeded Rybakina 6-3, 6-2 and claim the 14th singles title of her career.

The 25-year-old Australian has been in superb form this week and has had to beat a host of top players in a stacked top half of the draw.

She received a first round bye, but then faced Coco Gauff (world number 22), Sofia Kenin (12) and Iga Swiatek (9) on her way to the decider.

"We've obviously had a brilliant week, been able to work progressively through each match," Barty said.

BRAVE International Combat Week 2022 to be launched in special press conference



TDI | Manama

In association with IMMAF, LKHK Sports, BRAVE CF, and Bahrain MMA Federation, a new venture will be incorporated into the 2022 edition of BRAVE International Combat week.

The biggest combat sports festival in Asia will take place in the Kingdom of Bahrain, this March, with a brand new format that promises to bring in a new era for combat sports. It will be live streamed on BRAVE CF's YouTube channel starting at 4:00 PM AST.

The 2022 BICW will be officially launched today afternoon, in a special press conference to be held at the Wyndham Garden Manama Hotel, in the heart of Bahrain, with the presence of Kerrith Brown, IMMAF president, the CEO of LKHK Sports and president of BRAVE CF, Mohammed Shahid, and president of the Bahrain MMA Federation, Mohamed Qamber.

They will present the new format for the BRAVE International Combat Week and the upcoming BRAVE Combat Federation event that is a staple of the BICW in recent years, as well as details of the MMA Super Cup. The trio will also be available for questions that can be put forth by media through BRAVE CF's Twitter page @bravemmaf.

HH Shaikh Nasser hails '2 Seas Motorsport' team's victory



HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

TDT | Manama

HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, has expressed deep pride in the success of "2 Seas Motorsport" team, captained by His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa, in clinching the title of the Gulf 12 Hours, held at Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi.

"We are very proud of this achievement," HH Shaikh Nasser posted on his Instagram account.

HH Shaikh Nasser indicated that the victory adds to Bahrain's rich record of accomplishments at international sports gatherings, adding that it will be a catalyst for the team to continue its successes in the coming period.

Loeb records stunning Dakar stage win to keep alive BRX victory hopes

Sebastien Loeb takes Dakar seventh stage to cut into Nasser Al-Attiyah's advantage

● Loeb claimed his second stage victory of the 2022 Dakar Rally

TDT | Manama

Sebastien Loeb recorded a spectacular Dakar Rally stage win for Bahrain Raid Xtreme to keep alive his hopes of a first triumph in the event.

The nine-times World Rally Champion in the BRX Prodrive Hunter won the 402-km seventh stage from Riyadh to Al Dawadimi by a stunning 5 mins 26secs from Nasser Al Attiyah to reclaim second place overall.

The result reduced the Qatari's outright lead to 44 mins 59 secs, and while the gap is still considerable, Loeb and Fabian Lurquin have served a reminder that the battle for victory could go all the way to Friday's finish in Jeddah, which is five stages and 1,567 km away.

The French duo notched up the third BRX win in seven stages, and their second of the rally, on a day when team-mates Orlando Terranova and Dani Oliveras in another Prodrive Hunter set the 11th fastest time to rise again to sixth place in the standings.

Completing a rewarding day for BRX, Nani Roma and Alex Haro recorded the ninth best time on the stage as the 44th



Sebastien Loeb drives his BRX Prodrive Hunter during the seventh stage

Dakar resumed following the rest day in Riyadh.

Loeb, whose car's spare wheel hatch flew open on the stage, said: "Only half of the rally is done but we tried to push today even though we were a little unlucky towards the end of the stage with a problem when the car stopped. We were very slow at the end and could have gone even quicker."

Roma finished the stage to say: "Not a bad day at all, but what was difficult was passing one of the buggies, as then he passed us back and kicked up a load of

dust with stones, cutting corners, driving all over the road. So for us the navigation was not easy at all.

"However it's brilliant that there has been another victory for the team with Sebastien and Fabian to make win number three, so that's great to see in the eyes of everyone at BRX when we arrived at the bivouac."

Terranova, who started first after winning the previous stage, said: "I think that it was the hardest day for opening the stage. The piste and the tracks were not visible with stones and a lot of changes of



Sebastien Loeb



Only half of the rally is done but we tried to push today even though we were a little unlucky towards the end of the stage with a problem when the car stopped. We were very slow at the end and could have gone even quicker

SEBASTIEN LOEB

directions so in all I think we did a good job but we need to work on improving finding our way again when we make a mistake. That's a challenge for us."

Gus Beteli, the BRX Team Principal, said: "A great win for Seb and Fabian with another five minutes taken out of Nasser. It's still a long way to go, but we keep trying every kilometre to take a little bit, so not a bad day at all after the rest day."

Ettihad open Silver League with big win

● Brian Bridgeforth and Ahmed Ghanim combine for 52 points to spearhead Al Ettihad in 51-point victory over Isa Town

● Nuwaidrat eke out narrow seven-point win over Sitra for second straight triumph in this stage of competition

TDT | Manama

Al Ettihad opened their campaign in the Silver League of the 2021/2022 Zain Bahrain Basketball League with a lopsided 121-70 victory over Isa Town last night at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

Ettihad were in control of the game from the opening tip. They took a 27-16 lead at the end of the first period and extended their advantage to 61-36 at the break. They maintained their high scoring in the second half, scoring 30 points in each of the final two quarters, and enjoyed their biggest lead of 54 points late in the contest.

Brian Bridgeforth and Ahmed Ghanim combined for 52 points to spearhead the winners. Bridgeforth top scored with 27 markers and grabbed 16 rebounds while blocking four blocked shots. Ghanim added 25 with nine rebounds



Al Ettihad's Brian Bridgeforth goes for a two-handed slam dunk during their game against Isa Town

and five assists. Mohamed Ghazwan chipped in with 15 while Hashem Alwadaie came off the bench to score 13.

Hussain Mahdi led Isa Town with 24 points and 10 rebounds in the loss. Mansoor Jaber added 18.

Isa Town suffered their second successive loss of this stage.

Meanwhile, Nuwaidrat edged past Sitra 78-71 in yesterday's other Silver League game.

Hassan Abbas and Hussain Hasan buried four pressure-packed free-throws with just under a minute remaining to help stretch Nuwaidrat's lead after Sitra cut it down to three. Sitra tried valiantly to narrow

BETTER
YOU
KNOW

Husain Hasan finished with 21 points to lead Nuwaidrat against Sitra while Hasan Abbas added 20. They buried an impressive eight three-pointers between them, with Hasan alone firing in five

the gap but Nuwaidrat did well to keep it a multi-possession game.

Hasan finished with 21 points while Abbas scored 20. They buried eight three-pointers between them, with Hasan alone firing in five. Anthony Walker was held to just nine points before fouling out but he had 15 rebounds and four blocks.

Marcel Jones scored 35 for Sitra, which included five triples. Husain Safar was their only other player in double figures with 15. They suffered their first loss to go with a win in their opening game.

Action in the Silver League is scheduled to resume on Friday.

Canada sweep past Spain to win maiden ATP Cup title

AFP | Sydney

Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime stormed through a gripping clash with Spanish star Roberto Bautista Agut for a massive victory that earned his country a maiden ATP Cup title yesterday.

Their Sydney showdown followed Denis Shapovalov ending Pablo Carreno Busta's winning start to the season 6-4, 6-3 to set the scene for a crunch second singles rubber.

World number 11 Auger-Aliassime beat third-ranked Alexander Zverev during the tournament and again showed his class to down 19th-ranked Bautista Agut 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 and seal the tournament for Canada.

The Novak Djokovic-led Serbia won the inaugural edition of the teams event in 2020, when the Rafael Nadal-led Spain also had to settle for second, with Daniil Medvedev's Russia earning the title last year.

"The emotions are unbelievable, there is no better feeling than winning, we left everything out there," said Auger-Aliassime.

"We lost our first four matches in this competition, but never stopped believing.

"We trust each other, Denis and I and everyone on the team, and I think that is very important. I'm super thrilled for everyone on the team, and



Canada's Denis Shapovalov in action during his final singles match

YOU
KNOW WHAT

Canada, the first team in the ATP Cup's three-year history to have lost a tie en route to the final, were swept by the United States in their group opener and also lost their first match against Britain

of course myself. "Spain is always difficult, they've been the best nation in the world for some time."

Canada earned their place in the final after stunning defending champions Russia on Saturday.