

Bahrain to host 2024 WEC season-finale

BIC to showcase Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain as the ultimate event of 2024 WEC season | P12

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Amber Heard considering writing autobiography

UK to scrap energy windfall tax if prices drop further

GCC-Iraq power interconnection project launched



TDT | Manama

Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs, Yaser bin Ibrahim Humaidan, yesterday joined a ceremony in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, to inaugurate power interconnection project between GCC countries and Iraq.

The minister said the project will enhance cooperation and address a portion of the electricity demand, particularly in southern Iraq, while supplying the Iraqi electrical grid with a minimum of 500 Megawatts.

He further stressed that the connection with Iraq will boost the economic functionality of the regional network, paving the way for future expansion at the Arab and international levels. Additionally, it will enhance reliability and improve energy efficiency within the Gulf network.

China says Palestinian president to visit next week

AFP | Beijing

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will make a state visit to China next week, Beijing said yesterday, after China said it was ready to help facilitate Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

"At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, President of the state of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas will pay a state visit to China from June 13 to 16," foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang in April told his Israeli and Palestinian counterparts that his country was willing to aid peace negotiations.

Qin encouraged "steps to resume peace talks" and said that "China is ready to provide convenience for this", in a phone call with Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, Xinhua reported.

Brunei Sultan arrives in Bahrain

TDT | Manama

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei arrived in Bahrain yesterday on an official trip accompanied by Prince Abdul Mateen and other top delegates.

Upon landing in the Kingdom, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa welcomed Sultan Bolkiah to the Kingdom.

Also present were HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Personal Representative of HM the King HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Royal Court Minister, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, the Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Information, the Chief of Staff of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) and Muharraq Governor.

Shortly after, HM King and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah received a Guard of Honour as students from the Ministry of Education welcomed the leaders.

The Bruneian delegation



His Majesty King Hamad welcomes Sultan Bolkiah yesterday

comprises Dr Awang Haji Mohd Amin Liew Abdullah, the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II, Erywan Pehin Yusof, the Minister of Foreign Affairs II, Dr Hajah Romaizah binti Haji Md Salleh, the Minister of Education, Nazmi Mohamad, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and Major general Haji Muhammad Haszaim, the

Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

Later, the Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments formed a Mission of Honour.

Digital learning platforms from China, Ireland win UNESCO King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Award



TDT | Manama

The 2022 edition of the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education will be awarded to "Smart Education of China", implemented by the National Centre for Educational Technology of China, and "The National Resource Hub", ran by the National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education of Ireland.

The two laureates will each receive US\$ 25,000 for their work in making public digital learning platforms and digital content universally accessible, developing digital competencies for all teachers and learners, and promoting universal connectivity in education.

The Award Ceremony will take place on 7th September 2023 during UNESCO's flagship Digital Learning Week at its Paris headquarters. Discussions during the week will focus on digital learning platforms and the role of artificial intelligence - especially generative AI - to steer the human-centered digital transformation of education.

The winning projects were selected from 98 nominations submitted by 58 UNESCO Member States and seven NGOs in official relations with UNESCO.

The 2022 edition of the Prize had the theme "The use of public platforms to ensure inclusive access to digital education content".

Established in 2005 and supported by Bahrain, the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education rewards every year individuals and organizations that enhance teaching, learning and overall educational performance.

An international Jury selects two best projects annually.

New Sudan truce in force with warning to generals

Mediators warn will abandon talks if ceasefire violated

● Talks in the Saudi have been suspended since late last month

● Multiple ceasefires have been agreed and broken

● Sudan declares UN envoy "persona non grata"

TDT | agencies

Sudan's warring generals have agreed to a 24-hour ceasefire from yesterday, US and Saudi mediators said, acknowledging that previous attempts to pause a conflict now nearing its third month had proved abortive.

"Representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) agreed to a 24-hour country-wide ceasefire beginning on June 10 at 6:00 am (0400 GMT)," said a joint statement from the



Black smoke billows behind buildings amid ongoing fighting in Khartoum



Entire districts of Khartoum no longer have running water, mains electricity is only available for a few hours a week and three-quarters of the hospitals in combat zones are not functioning.

mediators released by the Saudi foreign ministry on Friday.

Multiple ceasefires have been agreed and broken, and Washington slapped sanctions on both the warring generals after the last attempt collapsed at the end of May, blaming them for the "appalling" bloodshed.

"Should the parties fail to observe the 24-hour ceasefire, facilitators will be compelled to consider adjourning" talks in the Saudi city of Jeddah which have been suspended since late last month, the mediators said.

Since April, fighting between the regular army and the para-

military RSF has gripped Khartoum and the flashpoint western region of Darfur, defying a series of truces.

Upwards of 1,800 people have been killed, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, and the UN says nearly two million people have been displaced, including 476,000 who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

The Saudi and US mediators said they "share the frustration of the Sudanese people about the uneven implementation of previous ceasefires".

"If observed, the 24-hour ceasefire will provide an important opportunity... for the parties to undertake confidence-building measures which could permit resumption of the Jeddah talks," the statement said.

Friday's announcement comes a day after Sudanese authorities loyal to the regular army declared UN envoy Volker Perthes "persona non grata", accusing him of taking sides.

The fighting has sidelined the envoy's efforts to revive Sudan's transition to civilian rule.



HM King welcomes Sultan of Brunei



In pictures, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa welcomes Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Mateen and top delegates, to Bahrain. His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, was present.

Interior Minister highlights drones, cyber-attacks, organised crime as regional security challenges



Interior Minister meets US Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence



Interior Minister following talks at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy

TDT | Manama

Drones, cyber-attacks and organised crime have been highlighted as the most pressing security challenges facing the region by Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa during a visit to the United States.

The minister further stressed the need to enhance Bahrain-US collaboration to address various security threats in the region to promote regional stability and protect international peace and security. General Shaikh Rashid

Bahrain is dedicated to fostering an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence and promoting peace in line with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa

INTERIOR MINISTER GENERAL SHAIKH RASHID BIN ABDULLAH AL KHALIFA

made these remarks yesterday during discussions held at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a highly influential research institution in US deci-

sion-making circles. In this regard, the ministry underscored the importance of leveraging modern technology, fostering cooperation, and



exchanging expertise and information, acknowledging the strategic partnership between Bahrain and the United States.

The talks were in the presence

of Bahraini Ambassador to the United States, Shaikh Abdullah bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Executive Director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Robert Satlof and other top-ranking officials.

Earlier yesterday, the minister also engaged in discussions with Dr Stacey A. Dixon, the US Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, to further strengthen the longstanding ties between the two countries and explore avenues for expanded cooperation. General Shaikh Rashid reiterated Bahrain's commitment to creating

an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence and promoting peace in alignment with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The minister also noted the importance of exchanging expertise as the foundation for enhancing cooperation and addressing challenges that serve the interests of both friendly nations.

The leaders reviewed various strategic topics, security challenges, and the necessary promotion of security cooperation and coordination to tackle them efficiently.

For-sale cars, abandoned scrap vehicles: Municipalities register over 1,000 cases

TDT | Manama

A total of 1053 cases have been booked this year until May for illegally displaying cars for sale or abandoning scrap vehicles on public roads and streets, according to a top official from the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture.

Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary of Municipal Affairs, said they are moving ahead with a campaign to remove abandoned cars with "for sale" signs from the roadside.

Owners have been served notices to remove their vehicles within 48 hours of receiving intimation, or they will face legal action.

From January to May this year, the Capital recorded 228 violations, Muharraq 407, the Northern governorate 273, and



Some of the abandoned vehicles

the Southern municipality 145.

Saleh Tarada, the head of the Capital Municipality Council, emphasised the significant environmental damage caused by these rusty vehicles. "They are disrupting the overall appearance and aesthetics of residential neighbourhoods, also leading to complaints from citizens about blocked roads and traffic issues."

He pointed out that abandoned vehicles are found on the outskirts of streets, internal roads, and even in the middle of residential areas.

To address this issue effectively, he stressed, a genuine community partnership is essential.

As part of the campaign, the municipality places stickers on these cars three days prior to their removal, aiming to address the problem and restore the cleanliness and orderliness of the areas affected.

High Appeals Court rejects divorce, orders woman to return to husband's house

TDT | Manama

The High Appeals Court has dismissed the appeal of a woman who contested a court decision denying her divorce petition.

Additionally, the court has ruled in favour of her husband's petition, instructing the woman to return to their marital home.

The woman had approached the court, alleging that her husband had married another woman and failed to provide her with suitable housing. However, after conducting an investigation, the court dismissed her claims, stating that the apartment she resided in was independent and adequate.

Simultaneously, the husband had filed a counter-lawsuit requesting the woman's return to



their marital home.

In the trial held at the Court of First Instance, the wife's lawsuit was rejected, with the court advising her to reconcile with her husband. In response, the woman challenged this decision in the appeals court.

During the trial, the husband maintained that he had not harmed or disrespected his wife. He expressed his will-

ingness to welcome her back, extend forgiveness, and open the doors of their house to her.

The appeals court ultimately denied the woman's appeal citing lack of evidence supporting her claims. As a result, the previous court's decision stands, and the woman is obligated to return to her marital home as ordered by the High Appeals Court.

Men get five years in jail for running text-message scam

TDT | Manama

The High Appeals Court has affirmed the verdict to imprison two Asian men for five years each for finding guilty of defrauding a 60-year-old man out of BD500 through a deceptive text message scam.

The court also slapped them with a fine of BD5,000 on each, and upon completion of their jail term, they will be deported from the country.

The incident leading to the case unfolded when the victim received a text message containing a fraudulent link,

prompting him to provide personal information, including his bank card details.

Unbeknownst to the victim, this act facilitated the unauthorised withdrawal of BD500 from his bank account.

However, after realising that he had fallen victim to a scam, the man promptly filed a complaint with the Anti-Cyber Crime Department, seeking the recovery of his funds.

Through investigations, authorities were able to trace the misappropriated funds to its final recipient, who had subse-

quently transferred the money overseas.

The individual responsible for receiving the funds was apprehended based on security footage.

Further investigations revealed that the arrested individual, along with a partner, were operating a network of fraudulent activities.

The defendants have been charged by the Public Prosecution with wire fraud, identity theft and money laundering, leading to their conviction and sentencing by the High Appeals Court.



Be cautious of messages that prompt you to disclose personal information such as your income, debts, bank account details, credit card information, or Social Security number under the pretext of claiming a gift or pursuing an offer. These messages may also include links that purportedly provide more information. However, some of these links may direct you to deceptive websites that appear genuine but are not. If you enter your login credentials, scammers can potentially steal your username and password, compromising your security. Stay alert and safeguard your personal information from fraudulent schemes.

Stress knows no nationality: Top expert shares strategies to reduce its impact, self-development @ Bahrain Mediation Centre

Zahra Ayaz

TDT | Manama

Over a hundred citizens and residents recently participated in a two-day stress management course organised by the Bahrain Mediation Centre on the benefits of meditation and self-development.

During sessions, Prakash Chugani, an executive coach, corporate trainer, and mediator, shared insights on ways to combat harmful influences, cultivate confidence in managing challenging relationships, and enhance decision-making capabilities in high-pressure situations through meditation.

While meditation has its roots in Asian traditions, Chugani em-



Participants during the seminar

phasised that stress knows no nationality and underscored the importance of identifying the

sources of stress as a key step towards finding solutions.

"Having a different nationality

has no bearing on how stressed out one is," he said, adding, "stress can manifest in various



Prakash Chugani

ways, such as anger, annoyance, irritability, and the development of unhealthy habits triggered by

activities we don't recognise as stressors."

Chugani acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated stress levels, leading to an increase in panic attacks and anxiety. In such cases, he stressed: "We cannot rely on meditation; instead, a person would need a lot more support and mechanisms."

Chugani encouraged participants to exercise caution while maintaining a carefree mindset, enabling them to remain unaffected by external stressors. "By accepting that certain stress-inducing factors are beyond their control, individuals can choose to remain calm, take responsibility for their actions, and focus on what truly matters."

Bahrain accelerates towards electric future, leaving fossil fuels behind

Deloitte & Touche Middle East awarded contract to develop Bahrain's Electric Vehicle Strategy

● **EWA says shifting to greener transport is crucial for meeting climate targets**

● **On the way is EV charging policies, regulations and infrastructure**

● **Bahrain aims to achieve Net Zero by 2060**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain has set the wheels rolling for plugging in vehicles and cutting down on its dependency on fossil fuels to complete its Net Zero journey by 2060.

For this, the Kingdom needs an appropriate Electric Vehicle Strategy that would help increase the uptake of EVs, reduce emissions and improve the quality of life for all.

Helping authorities achieve this electric dream will be Deloitte & Touche Middle East.

According to Tender Board, the Electricity and Water Affairs has awarded Deloitte & Touche a BD112,722,000 contract to set a suitable strategy in three months.

The strategy should help Bahrain drive its EV penetration journey in a controlled and sustainable way, for this is also crucial for Bahrain to meet climate targets.

It's worth knowing that Bahrain targets the reduction of carbon emissions by 30% through decarbonisation and energy efficiency initiatives, in addition to reaching Net Zero by 2060.

Deloitte & Touche LLP (DME) is the affiliate of the Middle East and Cyprus of Deloitte NSE LLP (NSE), a UK limited liability partnership and a member firm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, a

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private company limited by guarantee (DTTL).

As per tender board documents, the plan is to increase the usage of renewable energy sources, including solar power as an upstream source of electricity, reducing overall dependency on fossil fuels and lower pollution levels.

The strategy will also focus on reducing the overall EV ownership costs for all stakeholders, including the government, industries, and private citizens.

A nationwide EV charging infrastructure is also crucial, as the availability of charging points can still be a limiting factor for some EV owners.

Electric cars

Reportedly, Bahrain has already started works for developing electric cars, for which Marson Group, a Bahraini business and project development company has formed a partnership with Gauss Auto, an

American manufacturing corporation.

The new plant in Salman Industrial City in the American Trade Zone will operate under the name Gauss Auto Bahrain.

The plan is to produce a range of electric vehicles (EVs), including two-wheelers, three-wheel electric tricycles, and passenger vehicles.

Six bidders

The tender requesting proposals opened by EWA in February this year had disclosed bids from six players around the globe.

McKinsey & Company (BHD 562,800), Egis International (BHD 174,685,720), PriceWaterhouseCoopers Bahrain (BHD 159,500,000), Arthur D Little (Bahrain) (BHD 435,158,000), Oliver Wyman FZ-LLC (BHD 517,000,000) and Deloitte & Touche (BHD 112,772,000) were the bidding companies.

Reduction of fossil fuel

use 'inevitable': Emirati COP28 chief

Meanwhile, in a related development, the head of the upcoming COP28 climate summit, who also is the chief executive of the UAE's national oil company, acknowledged yesterday that a reduction in the use of fossil fuels is inescapable.

"The phase down of fossil fuels is inevitable," Sultan al-Jaber said on the sidelines of technical climate talks six months ahead of the summit.

"The speed at which this happens depends on how quickly we can phase up zero carbon alternatives, while ensuring energy security, accessibility and affordability," added Al Jaber, who runs the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc).

Al-Jaber defended a COP28 roadmap that includes a "global goal to triple renew-

able energy, double energy efficiency, and double clean hydrogen, all by 2030."

His comments came as numerous participants and observers in the UN climate negotiations have called on al-Jaber to explicitly acknowledge the importance of ending the use of fossil fuels, an objective no COP summit to date has been able to put down in writing.

On Wednesday, al-Jaber signed a statement with European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen calling for "a transition towards energy systems free of unabated fossil fuels," meaning fossil fuels without carbon capture systems, hinting at a possible compromise in the coming months between different camps in the negotiations.

"We must be laser-focused on phasing out fossil fuel emissions, while phasing up viable, affordable zero carbon alternatives," al-Jaber said at an event in Germany last month.



A General Motors Hummer EV chassis sits outside of an event where General Motors CEO Mary Barra announced that GM is making a \$7 billion investment, the largest in the company's history, in electric vehicle and battery production in Michigan on January 25, 2022 in Lansing, Michigan.



The network of roads and highways in Bahrain has a total length of 4,122 km, according to world data. For each of the country's 1.75 million inhabitants, this corresponds to 2.36 meters. This puts Bahrain in 165th place in the global ranking.

- The first electric vehicle was developed in the 1830s by Robert Anderson, a Scottish inventor.
- In the early 20th century, electric vehicles were more popular than gasoline vehicles, especially in urban areas.
- The introduction of the Ford Model T in 1908 led to a decline in the popularity of electric vehicles.
- Interest in electric vehicles began to grow again in the 1990s and 2000s due to concerns about climate change and air pollution.

As of July 2019, a new EU regulation made it a legal requirement for all new electric and hybrid automobiles to make an artificial noise so that bicycles and pedestrians may more easily hear them. At speeds of 13 mph or below, the noise becomes audible.

Poullaides Construction awarded BD2.3m deal for Reef Mall renovation

TDT | Manama

Renovation works of Reef Mall in Malkiya has been awarded to Poullaides Construction for BD2,305,000,000.

The tender, initiated by Bahrain Real Estate Investment (Edamah), attracted the interest of seven companies, with bids ranging from BHD 1,777,000,000 to BHD 2,527,877,160.

The project involves a comprehensive refurbishment of the mall, including the upgrade of MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) systems and civil works.

According to an earlier report, the Arab Architects had secured a contract to provide



Representative picture

consultancy services, as well as technical and design assessments for the project.

Reef Mall primarily caters to residents of Hamad Town, Sadad, and the Lawzi area.

Why passengers prefer travelling via BIA?

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Airport Company has launched a tender for initiating a passenger Market Research Survey, seeking to understand why travellers choose Bahrain International Airport (BIA) as their preferred airport for travel.

This inquiry aims to gain insights into the factors and considerations that influence passengers' decision-making process, says the tender seeking request for proposals launched by Bahrain Airport Company.

The tender specifically targets bidders who can uncover the reasons why passengers, including both Saudis and non-Saudis from the BIA catchment area, prefer traveling via



Representative picture

BIA. Among the requirements, bidders must present a proposal consisting of a minimum of 50% primary research and 50% secondary research.

Interested parties can purchase the Tender Documents online through the e-tendering platform at <https://e-tendering.tenderboard.gov.bh>, with availability starting from June 7, 2023. Bidders should submit their proposals with a BD500 bond, valid for 180 days, before the deadline of July 11, 2023.

MOIC seeks guard force for headquarters, BIIP

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce is looking forward to hiring security personnel to safeguard its headquarters in Bahrain Financial Harbour and Bahrain International Investment Park (BIIP) in Hidd Area.

In a tender released for request for proposals, the ministry is seeking a reputable security company to provide a qualified, well-equipped, and experienced registered guard force.

The selected security personnel will be responsible for implementing necessary security measures in accordance with the laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain to ensure the safety and protection of the minis-



Representative picture

try's headquarters and BIIP.

The ministry plans to enter into a 24-month contract with the successful bidder who meets the requirements.

Interested companies are invited to submit their bids before the deadline of June 14, 2023, along with a BD1,000 bond that will remain valid for 180 days.

UK to scrap energy windfall tax if prices drop further

● 40% tax when oil fall to, or below, \$71.40 per barrel

● Brent traded at \$76.22 per barrel

AFP | London

The UK government yesterday said it would scrap a windfall tax on



Equipment at a fracking well is pictured at Capitan Energy on May 7, 2020 in Culberson County, Texas.

the energy sector should oil and gas prices drop to historically-normal levels for a sustained period.

The Energy Profits Levy, introduced after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent oil and gas prices surging, increased tax on profits from North Sea oil and gas production to 75 percent from 40 percent.

The government said it would return to 40% should average Brent North Sea oil fall to, or below, \$71.40 per barrel for two

quarters in a row.

UK gas futures would also need to drop to, or under, 54 pence (68 US cents) per therm over the same period.

It added in a statement that such levels were based on 20-year historical averages.

Yesterday, Brent traded at \$76.22 per barrel and UK gas at 68 pence, with both having fallen sharply in recent months as the supply situation improves.

Should prices remain above historical norms, the wind-

fall tax would remain until October 2028 as previously announced.

The higher tax has helped the state to reduce energy bills for millions of Britons after they soared on tight supplies caused by major oil and gas producer Russia invading Ukraine.

Fossil fuel companies have argued that the windfall tax harms investment in greener energy, a necessary transition as the UK seeks to achieve a net carbon zero economy by 2050.

Turkey's Erdogan appoints new central bank governor

Istanbul

Turkey's newly re-elected President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday appointed former Wall Street executive Hafize Gaye Erkan as central bank governor to deal with one of the world's highest inflation rates.

Erkan, a former co-CEO First Republic Bank and managing director at Goldman Sachs, will be the first woman to head the central bank.

Erdogan, who is starting a third term in office, unveiled a new cabinet on Saturday appointing Mehmet Simsek, a former Merrill Lynch economist, as finance minister.

Simsek -- who worked as finance minister and deputy prime minister in the past ruling AKP governments -- is known to oppose Erdogan's unconventional policies of lowering interest rates in order to fight inflation.

Erkan -- whose appointment was published in the official



Hafize Gaye Erkan

gazette on Friday -- has taken over the post from Sahap Kavcioglu.

Under Kavcioglu's watch, the bank's policy rate was decreased to 8.5 percent. It had been at 19 percent in 2021.

Turkey's inflation rate dropped below 40 percent in May for the first time in 16 months.

China central bank's ex-deputy governor found guilty of corruption

AFP | Beijing

China said yesterday a former deputy governor of its central bank has been found guilty of corruption, becoming the latest high-ranking official to face punishment in President Xi Jinping's years-long graft crackdown.

Fan Yifei came under investigation last November for "suspected violations of discipline and law", a byword for alleged corruption.

In a statement on Friday, the ruling Communist Party's internal anti-graft agency said Fan had "severely violated professional duties" and was suspected of having taken bribes. The Central Commission for

Discipline Inspection (CCDI) said Fan had been dismissed from public office, had his illegal income confiscated and had been referred for criminal prosecution "in accordance with the law".

His transgressions included attending and participating in banquets, tours, and golf "in violation of rules", visiting private clubs, accepting gifts and money, and "trading power for sex", according to the statement.

It said Fan "lost his ideals and beliefs... became politically indifferent, tried to disrupt the investigation, and engaged deeply in superstitious activities".

Most nations get low marks on 'net-zero' climate plans

● Most nations have set targets to eliminate their carbon footprint around mid-century

● A third of the 35 nations have net zero policies enshrined in law

AFP | Paris

Nearly all of 35 countries accounting for more than four-fifths of global greenhouse gas emissions got low marks for their net zero plans in a peer-reviewed assessment published Thursday.

Of the four biggest carbon polluters, only the European Union's plan was deemed credible, while those of China, the United States and India were found lacking.

Most nations have set targets to eliminate their carbon footprint around mid-century, with commitments from China and India for 2060 and 2070, respectively.

The extent to which Earth remains hospitable in a warming world depends in large measure on whether these pledges are kept, but assessing their credibility has proven difficult.

Many net-zero goals lack details, and some do not even specify if they cover just CO2 or other important planet-warming gases as well, such as methane and nitrous oxide.

These uncertainties, in turn, have unfounded attempts to project global temperature increases, and whether the Paris climate treaty goals of capping global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius, and at 1.5C if possible, remains within



Energy Observer Productions on February 5, 2022, shows a 3D model of the vessel Energy Observer 2, a zero-emission multipurpose cargo ship powered by light liquid hydrogen. The new vessel is planned to be launched in 2025.



Most of the world's major emerging economies -- Brazil, India, South Africa and Indonesia, for example -- got the lowest ratings, as did Gulf states Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, hosts respectively of last year's COP27 climate summit and COP28 in Dubai in December.

reach.

If both short-term and long-term plans from all countries are accepted at face value, global warming could stabilise in that critical range between 1.5C and 2C.

But if only policies already in place are taken into account and more-or-less vague promises are set aside, temperatures are more likely to settle between 2.5C and 3C.

"The two outcomes could not contrast more," Joeri Rogelj, director of research at Imperial College's Grantham Institute, and a team of international

scientists wrote in the journal Science.

'A high-risk track'

One scenario sees climate damages capped a "potentially manageable levels," and the other "a world where climate change continues toward levels that undermine sustainable development."

Every country in the world whose greenhouse gas emissions comprise at least 0.1 percent of the global total was then given a "credibility rating" of higher, lower or much lower.

A handful of countries be-

sides the European Union got top marks, including Britain and New Zealand.

But around 90% inspired lower or much lower confidence, including the US and China, which together account for more than a third of global emissions.

Most of the world's major emerging economies -- Brazil, India, South Africa and Indonesia, for example -- got the lowest ratings, as did Gulf states Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, hosts respectively of last year's COP27 climate summit and COP28 in Dubai in December.

Among wealthy nations, only Australia was in the least credible tier. Today, a third of the 35 nations have net zero policies enshrined in law.

"Making targets legally binding is crucial to ensure long-term plans are adopted," said co-author Robin Lamboll, from Imperial College's Centre for Environmental Policy.

"We need to see concrete legislation in order to trust that action will follow promises."

Detailed, step-by-step plans showing how emissions cuts will be distributed over time across all economic and social sectors is key, the authors said.

The researchers applied the new credibility ratings to model different scenarios for future emissions and the temperatures they will yield.

When only net-zero plans that inspired high confidence were added to policies already under way, global warming was projected to top out at 2.4C by 2100 -- still far above the Paris targets.

"The world is still on a high-risk climate track, and we are far from delivering a safe climate future," Rogelj said in a statement.

Australia's Qantas lets female cabin crew ditch high heels

Sydney

Australia's national airline announced on Friday that it will scrap its gender-based uniform guidelines, allowing male cabin crew to wear make-up and giving women the option to ditch high heels.

Qantas said it had overhauled its guidelines to better reflect modern expectations, and to make uniforms more comfortable for staff from "diverse cultural backgrounds".

The airline has drawn atten-



Representative picture

tion for its fastidious style guide in the past, which banned handlebar moustaches, policed the length of sideburns, and specified the ideal shades of eyeliner.

The changes came at the insistence of labour unions, who urged Qantas to scrap rules such as the requirement that female staff wear make-up.

"Fashions change and so have our style guidelines over the years," the airline said in a statement.

"Our uniform standards have



Now cabin crew can choose whether to wear make-up, can opt for flat shoes, and can have long hair as long as it is in a ponytail or bun.

always been reflective of the times."

Qantas said the new "style and grooming guidelines" would ditch the previous "male" and "female" uniform categories.

Now cabin crew can choose whether to wear make-up, can opt for flat shoes, and can have long hair as long as it is in a ponytail or bun.

Diamond earrings are also allowed, while strict rules governing the size and style of watches have been dumped.

News in brief

◆ **Public trust in police in England and Wales is "hanging by a thread"**

following a series of "dreadful" scandals, the head of a law enforcement watchdog warned yesterday. Andy Cooke, head of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), said the police service was at a "historic turning point" as he demanded "definitive action" to restore public faith. In his annual assessment, Cooke called for legal powers so failing police forces can be ordered to improve when there are serious concerns for public safety.

Trust in England police 'hanging by a thread': watchdog



◆ **Dutch top court says Crimean gold must go to Kyiv**



◆ **The Netherlands' highest court ruled yesterday that a priceless collection of Crimean gold must be handed over to Ukraine, the latest move in a legal tug-of-war spanning almost a decade.**

The treasures, dubbed the "Scythian Gold," were loaned to the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam just before Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014. Both Ukraine and four museums in the occupied peninsula have demanded that the treasures be returned to them, but the Allard Pierson Museum said it would not do so until a judge ruled to which party it should go.

◆ **Myanmar's junta has suspended travel authorisations for aid workers trying to reach hundreds of thousands of people in the cyclone-ravaged Rakhine state, the UN's humanitarian affairs office said yesterday.** Cyclone Mocha brought lashing rain and winds of 195 kilometres per hour (120 miles per hour) to Myanmar and neighbouring Bangladesh last month, killing at least 148 people in Myanmar. The cyclone destroyed homes and brought a storm surge to Rakhine state, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya minority refugees live in displacement camps following decades of ethnic conflict.

UN says Myanmar junta halts humanitarian access to cyclone survivors



CURIOSER & CURIOSER

A decade on, giant duck brings a friend home to roost in Hong Kong



People take photos of two large inflatable yellow ducks called "Double Ducks" by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman in Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour

AFP | Hong Kong

Ten years after a giant inflatable yellow duck captivated crowds in Hong Kong, the art installation returned to the city's Victoria Harbour yesterday as a double-bill exhibition.

The twin 18-metre-tall (59-foot) sculptures by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman are part of the Rubber Duck series that has made appearances in major cities since its 2007 debut. The faddish artwork previously made headlines in Hong Kong for drawing huge audiences and for accidental deflations, including when it shrank to a flat disk next to a ferry pier in 2013.

Following stormy weather early yesterday before they were released onto the water, Hofman joked that the two ducks "took a bath this morning".

"In a world where we suffered from a pandemic, wars and political situations, I think it is the moment to bring back the double luck," he said.

Setting sail in front of Hong Kong's landmark Convention and Exhibition Centre, the mighty ducks moved through the harbour before stopping

In a world where we suffered from a pandemic, wars and political situations, I think it is the moment to bring back the double luck

DUTCH ARTIST FLORENTIJN HOFMAN

to nest near the city government's headquarters.

Office workers strolled by during lunch breaks to snap selfies, while others carried yellow duck balloons to celebrate the sunny duo's new perch.

"I think it's very good to have the duck back after 10 years because it is simple happiness, especially after the pandemic," one admirer named Vivian said.

"It's a form of flashback," said 32-year-old bank employee Zenj. "I think it brings luck." During its 2013 visit to Hong Kong, the solo lemon-hued bird ruffled feathers in Beijing after internet users edited the famous "Tank Man" photo from the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown by replacing the tanks with ducks.

UK jets scrambled to escort Russian planes near NATO airspace: govt



Two British Royal Air Force Typhoon FGR4 aircraft fly over RAF Waddington near Lincoln, England

AFP | London

British Royal Air Force fighter jets were twice scrambled over the course of 24 hours to intercept Russian aircraft flying close to NATO airspace, the Ministry of Defence in London said yesterday.

RAF Typhoons based in Estonia and Swedish Gripen fighters were on Thursday evening scrambled to "intercept" a Russian Il-20 reconnaissance aircraft and a Su-27 fighter jet "flying close to NATO and Swedish airspace", the ministry said.

The Russian aircraft "were not complying with international norms by failing to communicate with the relevant Flight Information Regions (FIRs)" but "remained in international airspace and flew in a professional manner", it added.

Fighting in southern Ukraine as offensive expected

Intense fighting erupts in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region

● **Russian official reports ongoing combat in Zaporizhzhia, potentially marking Kyiv's anticipated counter-offensive**

● **Ukraine remains silent, but expectations rise for Western-backed forces to reclaim occupied territories**

● **Russia claims Ukrainian offensive involved 1,500 soldiers and 150 armored vehicles but was repelled**

AFP | Washington

Fighting raged yesterday in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, a Russian official said, with observers seeing the combat as the possible start of Kyiv's long-expected of-



A dog walks on the debris of a destroyed building in the town of Orikhiv, in the Zaporizhzhia region (file photo)

fensive.

Ukraine has not offered any confirmation but expectations have built for months over when its forces, bolstered with Western weapons and training, would launch a counter-offensive in a bid to reclaim land occupied by Russian forces.

The fighting comes as the humanitarian and environmental cost climbed after the destruction

of the Kakhovka dam unleashed destructive flooding in a different part of Ukraine's south.

"At the moment, active combat is ongoing in the region between Orekhovo and Tokmak," Vladimir Rogov, an official with Russian occupation authorities, wrote on the Telegram messaging service, referring to a locality known in Ukrainian as Orikhiv.

Alexander Sladkov, a corre-

China slams US over reported 'spy base' in Cuba

AFP | Beijing

China warned the United States yesterday against "interfering in Cuba's internal affairs," in response to reports that Beijing was planning to set up a spy base on the island just off American shores.

The media reports, based on comments by anonymous US officials to The Wall Street Journal and CNN, were dismissed by Cuba's deputy foreign minister as "mendacious and unfounded," while the White House called them inaccurate.

When asked about the alleged

spying base at a regular press briefing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said he was "unaware of the situation" before criticizing US policy on Cuba.

"As we all know, spreading rumors and slander is a common tactic of the United States, and wantonly interfering in the internal affairs of other countries is its patent," said Wang.

"The United States should reflect on itself and stop interfering in Cuba's internal affairs under the banner of freedom and democracy, and immediately cancel the economic, com-



A staff prepares a table before a meeting between Cuban foreign minister Bruno Rodriguez and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing (file photo)

mercial and financial embargo against Cuba."

The reports suggested that the Chinese spying base would

be capable of eavesdropping on communications across broad swathes of the southeastern United States.

The developments come as Chinese leader Xi Jinping has pushed a rapid expansion of the country's security presence around the world.

A base in Cuba, which lies 150 kilometers off Florida's southern tip, would present the most direct challenge yet to the continental United States.

The Soviet Union had electronic spying facilities in communist Cuba to monitor the United States.

Greta Thunberg marks last 'school' strike as she graduates

AFP | London

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg said yesterday she was marking her last "school strike" as she was graduating high school, but said she would continue partaking in weekly protests.

"Today, I graduate from school, which means I'll no longer be able to school strike for the climate. This is then the last school strike for me," Thunberg said in a post on social media.

Greta Thunberg was only 15 when she began her "School strike for climate" in front of Sweden parliament in Stockholm



Sweden's Greta Thunberg and other young climate activists stage a demonstration (file photo)

Thunberg, who spearheaded the global Fridays for Future movement, also said she didn't plan on giving up the protests completely.

"I'll continue to protest on Fridays, even though it's not

technically 'school striking'. We simply have no other option than to do everything we possibly can," said the 20-year-old, adding "the fight has only just begun."

Greta Thunberg was only 15

I'll continue to protest on Fridays, even though it's not technically 'school striking'. We simply have no other option than to do everything we possibly can," said the 20-year-old, adding "the fight has only just begun

GRETA THUNBERG

when she began her "School strike for climate" in front of Sweden parliament in Stockholm.

"When I started striking in 2018 I could never have expected that it would lead to anything," she said in a statement.

1190

Third Crusade: Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa drowns while crossing the Saleph River (modern Turkey) leading an army to Jerusalem

1786

A landslide dam on the Dadu River caused by earthquake ten days earlier collapses, killing 100,000 in the Sichuan province of China

1977

Apple Computer ships its first Apple II computers



2003

The Spirit Rover is launched, beginning NASA's Mars Exploration Rover mission



ern Ukraine tations build

on, amidst destructive flooding



The enemy is undertaking incredible efforts, attacks. In vain. Our forces are holding on. The front line is stable

ALEXANDER SLADKOV, A CORRESPONDENT FOR RUSSIAN MEDIA

pendent for Russian media, wrote on Telegram of "intense fighting" in the area.

"The enemy is undertaking incredible efforts, attacks. In vain. Our forces are holding on. The front line is stable," he wrote.

The information could not be independently verified.

Ukraine's army said only that "the adversary remains on the defensive" in Zaporizhzhia, in a Facebook post.

It said it destroyed four missiles and 10 drones, out of some 20 that Russia had fired at "military installations and critical infrastructure".

Russia said on Thursday that its forces had fought a two-hour bat-

tle with Ukrainian troops in the early hours in the Zaporizhzhia region, which neighbours the flood-hit areas.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said the Ukrainian offensive involved 1,500 soldiers and 150 armoured vehicles.

"The enemy was stopped and retreated after heavy losses," he said.

Ukrainian officials have said their forces are ready for a long-expected counteroffensive but that there would be no formal announcement when it begins.

Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Ganna Maliar said only that Russia was conducting "defensive actions" near the town of Orikhiv in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Parallel to the fresh fighting, the destruction of the major Russian-held dam on the Dnipro River on Tuesday left 600 square kilometres of the region under water.

Emergency services were racing to rescue people stranded by the flood-swollen waters of the Dnipro, which have forced thousands to flee.

Smoke from Canadian wildfires detected in Norway

AFP | Washington

Smoke from Canadian wildfires has been detected thousands of kilometres away in Norway this week, the Scandinavian country's Climate and Environmental Research Institute NILU said yesterday.

"Very weak" concentrations of smoke particles have been detected since Monday, in particular at the Birkenes observatory in southern Norway, researcher Nikolaos Evangelou told AFP.

Measurements have varied depending on the fires' intensity, wind direction and precipitation.

"We don't see serious peaks or large increases... so we don't see any environmental issue (in Norway) nor serious health hazards either," he added.

Larger and more powerful wildfires than ever have scorched some 3.8 million hectares of Canadian forests and displaced tens of thousands of residents in recent weeks.



Smoke from the West Kiskatinaw River and Peavine Creek wildfires in the Dawson Creek Zone, British Columbia, Canada

Larger and more powerful wildfires than ever have scorched some 3.8 million hectares of Canadian forests and displaced tens of thousands of residents in recent weeks

The scale is unprecedented, with some 2,300 fires registered so far this year.

Southern Norway, like much of northern Europe, has also experienced an unusually dry spring and early summer so far.

In southern Norway, no rain has fallen for 16 days and none is forecast for the coming days.

A three-week ban on fires in open spaces was introduced on Thursday.

UK former PM Johnson rewards Brexit allies with honours

AFP | London

Boris Johnson's long-awaited resignation honours list was published yesterday, with the British former leader rewarding his key Brexit allies and a hairdresser -- but not his father.

Rumours earlier this year that Stanley Johnson was in line for a knighthood, to make him "Sir Stanley", sparked outrage, and fresh claims of cronyism.



Boris Johnson

But Johnson senior's name was conspicuously left off the list.

British prime ministers routinely name close political as-

sociates and aides for honours when they leave office, and make appointments to the unelected upper chamber House of Lords.

Johnson's delayed list comes after he was forced out last July by a series of scandals, including Covid lockdown-breaking parties at Downing Street, and finally left in September.

The highest award was to Bill Cash, who will become a companion of honour.

Macron says 'positive' news on children hurt in France knife attack



French President Emmanuel Macron (L) shakes hands Henri (2nd R), the 24-year-old known as the 'backpack hero', who suffered minor stab wounds as he tried to stop the fleeing suspect

AFP | Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday said the health of the preschool children badly wounded in a mass knife attack by a Syrian refugee was "heading in the right direction", as police questioned the attacker.

Four children -- aged between 22 months and three years old -- were stabbed Thursday in a playground in the Alpine town of Annecy, a normally idyllic lakeside spot popular with tourists.

While France was in shock over the blood-curdling attack, there was a deluge of praise on social media for rescue workers and a man hailed as a hero for chasing the attacker out of the area.

Prosecutors insisted they did not see a terror motive, but the rampage intensified tensions in France over immigration, with right-wing politicians seizing on the suspect's origins.



Attacking children is the most barbaric act there is

EMMANUEL MACRON

Macron and his wife Brigitte arrived in the southeastern city of Grenoble, where three of the children are being treated, and are to visit those who have "contributed in helping and supporting them", the presidency said.

"Everything that I was told is heading in the right direction," he said in Annecy after visiting the wounded toddlers in hospital, adding that news on their condition was positive.

He added after the visit: "Attacking children is the most barbaric act there is" but also made clear his "pride" over the work of rescuers.

Trump indicted in classified documents probe

AFP | Washington

Donald Trump said Thursday he has been indicted over his handling of classified documents after leaving office, the US ex-president's most serious legal threat yet as a firestorm of criminal investigations imperil his bid for a second White House term.

"The corrupt Biden Administration has informed my attorneys that I have been Indicted, seemingly over the Boxes Hoax," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform as he broke the bombshell news of a historic moment for the United States: the first time a sitting or former commander-in-chief has ever faced federal charges.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Justice Department regarding Trump's assertion.

A Trump attorney, Jim Trusty, told CNN his client has been indicted on seven charges including the willful retention of documents in violation of the Espionage Act, making false statements, obstruction of justice and a count of conspiracy.

Though the precise details of the charges were not immediately clear, people familiar with the matter told The New York Times the conspiracy charge was related to obstruction of justice.

In his post, Trump, who is running for president again, said he has been summoned to a federal courthouse in Miami next Tuesday -- the day before



Former US President arrives to a Team Trump Volunteer Leadership Training in Grimes, Iowa



In a defiant video released after he shared the news, Trump repeatedly declared his innocence and framed the indictment as a form of election interference by a Justice Department "weaponized" by Joe Biden's administration

his 77th birthday.

"I never thought it possible that such a thing could happen to a former President of the United States," he wrote.

His announcement came a day after US media said federal prosecutors had informed the



The corrupt Biden Administration has informed my attorneys that I have been Indicted, seemingly over the Boxes Hoax. I never thought it possible that such a thing could happen to a former President of the United States

DONALD TRUMP

former president's lawyers that he is the target of the probe into his handling of classified documents.

He was already the first former or sitting president to be charged with a crime -- in his case over election-eve hush money payments to a porn star who said she had an affair with him. That indictment was handed down by Manhattan's district attorney in March.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



2.3 billion people -- over 1 in 4 -- use polluting fuels for cooking, leading to millions of deaths each year. This puts women and children particularly at greater risk of chronic diseases, while also contributing to climate change and perpetuating gender inequity. #AirPollution

@DrTedros

02



Amazing to see our @Europarl_EN full of young people today in Strasbourg at the #EYE2023. 10,000 change-makers ready to regenerate our project. This is Europe @EuroparlEYE

@EP_President

03



The people-to-people ties between The Bahamas and the United States are longstanding and as strong as ever.

@VP

04



We must keep telling the horrors of the Holocaust and never forget. Europe wouldn't be what it is today without Jewish culture, values and contributions to science. We will co-finance a new section at @yadvashem on Jewish life in Europe before the Shoah.

@vonderleyen

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

CELEBS

Katie Holmes fears rebooting 'Dawson's Creek' into modern world could 'tarnish' show

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Katie Holmes fears rebooting 'Dawson's Creek' into "today's world" could "tarnish" the show.

The actress, 44, who starred as Joey Potter in the Massachusetts-set teen romance drama from 1998 to 2003 alongside James Van Der Beek, 46, Joshua Jackson, 44, and Michelle Williams, 42, added there had been many talks about bringing back the popular series.

Speaking as part of the Kering Women in Motion talk series at

Cannes Film Festival, Katie said: "There have been many discussions over the years. We all loved the experience."

"There's a protection that comes along with the discussion. The show was a time capsule. To put it into today's world might tarnish it a little bit."

"It was right before everyone had a phone and social media and all of that, so there was an innocence that was between the characters that was one of the things I think people liked about the show."

"To put it into the setting of today's world, I'm not sure."

Katie added about how the show cast had "often" held discussions about a 'Dawson's' reboot: "For now, we kind of just keep saying that until there is a real reason to do it, it hasn't been something where people have said, 'This is the take on it.'"

Katie Holmes



Katie recently spoke about how she has been on a mission to "protect" her daughter Suri, 16, who she had with her ex-husband Tom Cruise, 60, from the spotlight.

She added to Glamour magazine: "What has been really important for me with my daughter, because she

” There's a protection that comes along with the discussion. The show was a time capsule. To put it into today's world might tarnish it a little bit

KATIE HOLMES

was so visible at a young age, is I really like to protect her.

"I'm very grateful to be a parent, to be her parent. She's an

incredible person."

But Katie added even though she likes to keep her daughter's life private, she asks her to be involved in every project she works on.

Katie, who recruited Suri to sing 'Blue Moon' over the opening credits of her 2022 film 'Alone Together' said: "I hope she always does something on my films. I always ask her... you have these projects and you become a family with people. And it's this safe, beautiful, creative space."

Jamie Foxx rep says hospitalization not caused by COVID vaccine: report

Fox | Los Angeles

A representative for Jamie Foxx has addressed an independent journalist's claim that a COVID vaccine booster led to the "medical complication" that landed the actor in the hospital.

The rep said the report is "completely inaccurate" in a statement to NBC News. Representatives for Foxx did not immediately respond to Fox News Digital's request for comment.

A.J. Benza, a celebrity reporter once famous on the New York tabloid scene, first made the assertion during his May 30 appearance on "Ask Dr. Drew."

Benza told Dr. Drew that he had a source "inside" the room with Foxx who told him the "Django Unchained" actor was left "partially paralyzed and blind" after being "pressured" into

getting the COVID booster shot ahead of filming a new movie.

According to Benza's unnamed source, Foxx developed a clot "in his brain after he got the shot."

Foxx, whose condition was first announced by his daughter Corinne in early April, broke his silence in May, but has yet to directly discuss any details of his health or recovery.

"Appreciate all the love!!! Feeling blessed," Foxx wrote in the May 3 post. He included the prayer hands emoji, a red heart and a fox emoji.

After several unsubstantiated rumors surfaced about his condition, Foxx's daughter updated fans on the actor's health in mid-May, saying he had been home for weeks and had even played pickleball during his recovery.

"Update from the family: Sad to see how the media runs wild. My Dad has been out of the hospital for weeks, recuperating," Corinne wrote at the time.



Jamie Foxx

Amber Heard considering writing autobiography

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Amber Heard is considering writing her autobiography.

The 'Danish Girl' actress is reportedly ready to start "sharing her truth" with an explosive tell-all memoir, in which she would lay bare the details of her turbulent two-year marriage to Johnny Depp and their bitter court battle after he successfully sued her for defamation over an op-ed she wrote about being a victim of domestic abuse.

Sources told RadarOnline.com the 37-year-old actress—who is currently living in Madrid, Spain, with her two-year-old daughter Oonagh—would be looking for around \$15 million for her story

but is ready to speak out after being harassed online during last year's trial.

The insider said: "She won't be silenced. She feels she was treated very badly during the trial."

"She feels like

she's the victim here."

Meanwhile, Camille Vasquez, one of the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' actor's lawyers for the trial, recently admitted she has thought about writing a book, in part about the legal battle, but stressed there's "nothing in the works at the moment".

She told People magazine: "We've thought about that. Ben [Chew, co-counsel] and I have joked that we should write a book together, maybe about the trial."

I feel like my story is maybe half written. I feel like there's still a lot left to do.

Amber Heard



Rebel Wilson to make directorial debut with musical comedy 'The Deb'

ANI | Los Angeles

Actor-comedian Rebel Wilson is all set to go behind the lens and start her directorial journey.

As per Variety, Rebel is currently busy directing her first feature film with musical comedy 'The Deb', a big-screen adaptation of an Australian musical set in the outback.

The film is produced by Amanda Ghost, Len Blavatnik, and Gregor Cam-

eron via their company Unigram, which recently produced Apple TV+ movie 'Tetris', and sister outfit AI Film ("I, Tonya"). The project was launched around the Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday, at a private event aboard billionaire investor Blavatnik's yacht, where cast members from the Aussie mu-

sical performed a number of songs on the vessel's upper deck.

Blavatnik, sporting a baseball cap with branding for the movie, introduced the singers, making it clear to the intimate gathering aboard his three-floor yacht that he was an enthusiastic backer of the project and, indeed, Wilson.



Rebel Wilson



Chris Hemsworth

Chris Hemsworth opens up about 'Thor 4', says "It became too silly"

ANI | Washington

'Thor: Love and Thunder' was a box office success, grossing USD760 million worldwide, but writer-director Taika Waititi's silly humour and the film's unappealing visual effects turned off many Marvel fans.

Chris Hemsworth, the actor who plays Thor, is aware of the backlash surrounding his fourth "Thor" film, and he even admitted that "Love and Thunder" was "too silly" for its own good, as per Variety.

Hemsworth said about the movie, "I think we just had too much fun. It just became too silly. It's always hard being in the center of it and having any real perspective...I love the process, it's always a ride. But you just don't know how people are going to respond."

Hemsworth said his biggest critics were his son's friends. "It's a bunch of eight-year-olds critiquing my film. 'We thought this one had too much humor, the action was cool but the VFX weren't as good. I cringe and laugh equally at it.'"

SUDOKU

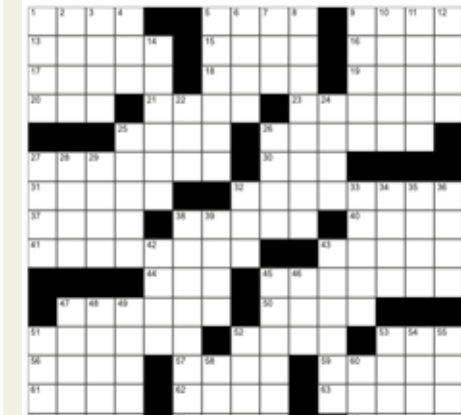
	3		2					
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			6			9		

Yesterday's solution

8	4	7	1	2	9	3	5	6
3	2	5	6	4	8	7	9	1
6	1	9	7	3	5	8	2	4
7	3	1	8	6	2	9	4	5
9	8	2	5	1	4	6	7	3
4	5	6	9	7	3	2	1	8
2	9	4	3	8	1	5	6	7
1	6	8	2	5	7	4	3	9
5	7	3	4	9	6	1	8	2

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- Web locale; 5- Balm; 9- Cairo cobras; 13- Hackneyed; 15- Brainchild; 16- Calamitous; 17- Cruising vessel; 18- PlayStation maker; 19- Hip bones; 20- Crosses (out); 21- Red or white, in the blood; 23- Visions; 25- Earthbound bird; 26- Stir up; 27- Acrimonious; 30- Stutz contemporary; 31- Lucid; 32- Distance across a circle; 37- ... She Sweet; 38- Twilight; 40- Patches things up; 41- Like chrome, nickel, or steel; 43- It's a good thing; 44- Abu Dhabi's fed.; 45- Japanese massage technique; 47- Recompense; 50- Greasy; 51- Coarse sieve; 52- That's ... haven't heard; 53- Frozen Wasser; 56- Audacity; 57- Paradise; 59- Scandinavian; 61- It transforms carbon dioxide into oxygen; 62- Having a sound mind; 63- Type of ray; 64- Clairvoyant; 65- Token taker; 66- Speedy;

Down

1- Charon's river; 2- Dies ...; 3- Nervous twitches; 4- Biblical verb ending; 5- Lose; 6- Image of a deity; 7- Sportscaster Berman; 8- Reverie; 9- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 10- Eliot's Marner; 11- Of first importance; 12- Wet septet; 14- One engraving; 22- Dusk, to Donne; 24- Chamber; 25- Gaucho's rope; 26- Met highlight; 27- Swindle; 28- Ballet bend; 29- Fast time; 32- ER VIP; 33- Short literary composition; 34- Student's hurdle; 35- Flock members; 36- Queue after Q; 38- Joyance; 39- Falsehoods; 42- Crescent-shaped figure; 43- Sick; 45- Poem of 14 lines; 46- Go quickly; 47- Without ... in the world; 48- 1957 hit for the Bobbettes; 49- Conger catcher; 51- Cpls.' superiors; 52- Vintner's prefix; 53- Writer Bombeck; 54- Doctrines; 55- Chair; 58- Indian dish; 60- Lout;

Yesterday's solution

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

Classifieds



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VACANCIES AVAILABLE CONTINUED

BODY & MIND LADIES SPA W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of MASSEUR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39093333 or INFO@BM-BAHRAIN.COM
EduCom Management Company W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of LIBRARIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36655456 or hr@suhainvestments.com
JERMAN CARPENTRY WORKSHOP Co.W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36585040 or JERMANCARPENTRYWORKS@GMAIL.COM
BUSHANAB BAKERY has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34176204 or AMINSULAIMAN6204@GMAIL.COM
KNOOZ LADIES SALON has a vacancy for the occupation of MASSEUR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17644383 or KONOZBEAUTYLOUNGE@GMAIL.COM
Logicom Bahrain WLL has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES EXECUTIVE, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39458624 or A.PAPACHRISTOFOROU@GMAIL.COM
BOMBO SHAWARMA CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of COOK(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 16161122 or INFO@SOLE-CORP.COM
ABDUL KARIM FADL TRADING W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably

qualified applicants can contact 77092018 or AMJADH@AKTCORP.COM
OUTSIDE & INSIDE CO W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17245546 or ABEYKURUVILA@HOTMAIL.COM
SEPCOIII BAHRAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66331128 or fatima@sepc03.com
ALRAHA FRESH JUICE CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SANDWICHES MAKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33444843 or accessbah01@gmail.com
Tonu Construction Bahraini partnership company has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34062995 or IBRAHIM.SOLIM95@GMAIL.COM
Seven Energy W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17500791 or hr@seven-energy.com
Quest School W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of ADMINISTRATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 77814404 or eman.dessouki@questschoolbh.com
Point To Point for trade w.l.l has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES AGENT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35383878 or IBRAHIM.ABOGHALY@GMAIL.COM
ALMANAR TYERS CENTRE W.L.L. has a

vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39967747 or HIRA74491@GMAIL.COM
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'Doctors told me I'd never play again', says French Open finalist Muchova



Czech Republic's Karolina Muchova (L) comforts Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka after her victory

AFP | Paris

Karolina Muchova saved a match point and battled back from 2-5 down in the final set to shock world number two Aryna Sabalenka and reach her maiden Grand Slam final at the French Open on Thursday inspired by being told by doctors "not to do sport anymore".

Muchova, ranked at 43, defeated the Australian Open winner 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 7-5 in a thrilling three-hour 13-minute match and will face defending champion Iga Swiatek in Saturday's final.

Unheralded Czech player Muchova, a former top 20 player, has been plagued by a succession of injuries in her career.

An abdominal problem sidelined her for seven months in 2021 while she ended last year's French Open in a wheelchair after suffering an ankle injury.

Only last September, her ranking was outside the top 200.

"I missed the Australian Open last year, and I was in a pretty bad state health-wise, I was working out a lot to try to get back," said Muchova who had been a semi-finalist in Melbourne in 2021.

"Some doctors told me, maybe you'll not do sport anymore. But I always kept it kind of positive in my mind and tried to work and do all the exercises to be able to come back.

Some doctors told me, maybe you'll not do sport anymore. But I always kept it kind of positive in my mind and tried to work and do all the exercises to be able to come back

KAROLINA MUCHOVA

"Last year, when my ranking dropped, I wanted to feel motivated to play to get back, but I couldn't somehow."

However, her confidence was restored by quarter-final runs in Auckland, Dubai and Indian Wells.

"I was feeling pretty fine health-wise. It's up-and-downs in life all the time. Now I'm enjoying that I'm on the upper part now."

The 26-year-old Muchova added Sabalenka to an impressive list of victims in Paris which included eighth seed Maria Sakkari in the first round and 2021 runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in the quarter-final.

For Sabalenka, defeat ended her run of 12 successive match wins at the Slams as she paid a heavy price for 53 unforced errors while the versatile Muchova saved nine of 13 break points.

Muchova dug deep to save two break points in the fourth game of the opening set.

After missing out on Messi, Saudis give Benzema gala welcome

AFP | Jeddah

Former Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema was unveiled as an Al-Ittihad player in front of thousands of fans in Saudi Arabia on Thursday, a day after the oil-rich kingdom just failed to reel in Lionel Messi.

Fireworks and flame-throwers greeted Benzema, wearing their black and yellow kit with the number nine, at Al-Ittihad's 60,000-seater stadium in Jeddah, where a giant 'KB9' was emblazoned on the pitch in bright lights.

"Assalam o aleikum!" (Hello), the 35-year-old said to the crowd, before hoisting the Ballon d'Or -- the trophy he won last year -- above his head.

Benzema joins Portugal idol Cristiano Ronaldo as the latest superstar to join the Saudi Pro League, which has a hit-list of high-profile targets, according to a source close to the negotiations.

The Frenchman's appearance in Jeddah follows a strenuous Saudi courtship of Messi before the Argentina World Cup-winner opted for Inter Miami on Wednesday as his final club before retiring.

It also comes after Saudi-funded LIV Golf pulled off a shock merger with the PGA Tour and DP World Tour following more than a year of acrimony and legal disputes that divided



Former Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema, plays with a ball at King Abdullah Sports City stadium in Jeddah

Supporters, many wearing Al-Ittihad colours, created a festive atmosphere at the unveiling, waving yellow flags and placards saying "Benzema 9" and "Je t'aime Benzema" (I love you, Benzema - in French)

the sport.

Benzema, who won five Champions Leagues, four La Liga titles and three Copas del Rey with Madrid, said he was hoping for more silverware with the Saudi champions.

"I'm hungry, I want to play

and show what I can still do on the pitch, and especially to put the club where it should be, which is right at the top," he told a brief press conference.

'Je t'aime Benzema'

In January, Ronaldo, 37, joined Riyadh club Al-Nassr in a two-and-a-half-year deal said to total more than 400 million euros. No figure has been released for Benzema.

The Public Investment Fund sovereign wealth vehicle which is behind the purchases also took controlling stakes in four clubs including Al-Ittihad and Al-Nassr this week.

Supporters, many wearing Al-Ittihad colours, created a

"I'm hungry, I want to play and show what I can still do on the pitch, and especially to put the club where it should be, which is right at the top"

KARIM BENZEMA

festive atmosphere at the unveiling, waving yellow flags and placards saying "Benzema 9" and "Je t'aime Benzema" (I love you, Benzema - in French).

A drone image of the player's face hovered above the venue in the Red Sea city, the gateway to the holy city of Mecca where Benzema, a Muslim, has performed two "umra" pilgrimages.

Banners welcoming Benzema adorned the city, and according to press reports, 60,000 tickets at the symbolic price of nine riyals (\$2.50) sold out within five hours.

After joining Madrid in 2009 from Lyon, Benzema made 648 appearances and is second on Real's all-time goalscoring list with 354 -- only Ronaldo has more.

But after a stellar 2021-22 season when he led Real to Champions League glory and was rewarded with the Ballon d'Or, he was troubled by injuries in 2022-23 and missed France's World Cup campaign in Qatar.

Postecoglou promises exciting ride at Spurs

AFP | London

Ange Postecoglou has promised "a team to get excited by" as he plots Tottenham's revival after being appointed as the Premier League club's new manager.

The Australian has signed a four-year deal after taking Celtic to the Scottish domestic treble this season.

The 57-year-old will officially join the London club, who finished a disappointing eighth in the Premier League, on July 1.

Antonio Conte left Spurs by "mutual agreement" in late



Ange Postecoglou

March, with Cristian Stellini and then Ryan Mason taking

"I'm really looking forward to our task ahead. I think it's an exciting opportunity for us to now set off on a new direction, play football and create an environment that embodies the values and traditions of this fantastic football club"

ANGE POSTEOGLOU

temporary charge of the struggling club.

Postecoglou said he was relishing the task of turning around the club's fortunes.

"It's great to finally get started as manager of this great football club," he said in a video message posted on the club's social media accounts yesterday.

"I'm really looking forward to our task ahead. I think it's an exciting opportunity for us to now set off on a new direction, play football and create an environment that embodies the values and traditions of this fantastic football club.

"Hopefully a team that you can all be proud of, and more importantly get excited by."

Haaland 'not stressed' by goal drought ahead of Champions League final



Manchester City's Erling Haaland (C) and Kalvin Phillips (R) take part in a team training session

AFP | London

Erling Haaland says he is "not stressed" about his mini goal drought ahead of Saturday's Champions League final against Inter Milan after already scoring 52 in his first season at Manchester City.

The Norwegian smashed the Premier League record for goals in a single campaign, with 36, and has helped take City to within one game of a historic treble after also lifting the FA Cup.

But a four-game scoreless streak is the longest of Haaland's City career to date and he has netted just once in his past seven matches.

"You can think of it as one goal in seven games or 52 goals in 52 games and eight assists, I think (he has nine)," said Haaland. "You can think of it in both ways. I'm not stressed. I feel really good."

"I didn't expect to score this many goals but, again, I could have scored more. I've been missing a lot of chances, so I could have scored more. That's the truth."

City were already the dominant domestic force in English

A four-game scoreless streak is the longest of Haaland's City career to date and he has netted just once in his past seven matches

You can think of it as one goal in seven games or 52 goals in 52 games and eight assists, I think. You can think of it in both ways. I'm not stressed. I feel really good

ERLING HAALAND

football before Haaland's arrival from Borussia Dortmund last year.

However, the English champions are still to conquer Europe and his signing was seen as the final piece in the jigsaw to deliver Champions League glory.

"Of course I feel pressure. I would lie if I said I didn't," the 22-year-old said.

"You say it yourself and it's true -- they won the Premier League without me, they won every trophy without me. "So I'm here to try to do a thing that the club has never done before and I'll do my best."

City are huge favourites to get the better of the Italian giants in Istanbul and become just the second side to do the treble of Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League in the same season.

Pep Guardiola's men became the first team to win the English domestic treble of Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup four years ago.

Bahrain squad set for junior handball worlds

Final team roster announced for 2023 IHF Men's Junior World Championship

● Bahrainis to travel to Athens today for final lead-up to under-21 worlds

● Nationals to face Greek counterparts in two friendlies, Morocco in another

TDT | Manama

Bahrain announced yesterday the final 18-player line-up that will be competing at the 2023 IHF Men's Junior World Championship, set to be held in Germany and Greece from June 20 to July 2.

The Bahrainis have been training over the past several weeks with a squad of 22 players, and the Bahrain Handball Association (BHA) revealed yesterday the last cuts for the official roster that will be flying the Kingdom's flag at the under-21 tournament.

The team features Abdulla Abdulkarim and Komail Fouad from Al Najma; Sadiq Jaafar and Hussain Ali from Tubli; Mahmood Al Khunaizi from



Bahrain's junior national handball team at a previous tournament (File photo)



HH Shaikh Isa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa greets a player during his visit to their training session

Al Ettihad; Mustafa Al Hayki, Ahmed Al Zain and Hassan Khalil from Al Ahli; Yasser Qambar and Ali Madan from Barbar; Ali Redha from Tadhamun; Ali Al Asheeri and Hesham Ahmed from Al Dair; Mohammed Hameed, Ali Jameel and Ali Mahmood from Al Ettifaq; and Ahmed Redha and Jassim Khamis from Al Shabab.

The Bahrainis are scheduled to travel to Athens today morning for their final lead-up to the competition. There, they will hold a training camp and be play-

ing two warm-up games against their counterparts from Greece and one against Morocco, with the possibility of another friendly against a European team taking part in the worlds.

The travelling Bahraini delegation is being headed by BHA board member Abdulrazzaq Khalil. It also includes head coach Essam Abdulla and his assistant Raed Al Marzouq, team manager Hussain Al Fardan and other administrative and support staff.

Meanwhile, Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) vice-president His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa paid a visit to the junior national team at one of their local training sessions this week. HH Shaikh Isa was accompanied by BOC secretary general Faris Al Kooheji and a number of BOC and BHA officials.

HH Shaikh Isa gave words of encouragement to the team's up-and-coming young players and wished them the best in the tournament.

The junior nationals are in Group F for the worlds, along-

BETTER YOU KNOW

Bahrain will be competing in the junior handball world championship for only the third time in the tournament's history. They previously also took part in the 1995 and 2019 editions, both times finishing 17th overall

side Sweden, Slovenia and Greenland. There are 32 teams in all competing, divided into eight pools of four for the preliminary round.

Group A features France, Poland, Croatia and the US. Group B comprises Algeria, Germany, Tunisia and Libya. Group C consists of Portugal, Brazil, Kuwait and Costa Rica; while Group D includes Spain, Faroe Islands, Japan and Angola. Group E features Hungary, Denmark, Argentina and Norway; while Group G comprises Serbia, Morocco, Chile and Iceland. The field is completed by Egypt, Greece, Cuba and Saudi Arabia in Group H.

At the end of a single round-robin in the preliminary stage, the top two teams from each group move on to the tournament's main round.

This year's event will be only the third time Bahrain's juniors are competing. They previously also took part in the 1995 and 2019 editions, both times finishing 17th overall.

Sloppy Australia stay on top in WTC final after Jadeja's double strike

AFP | London

India's Ravindra Jadeja took two prize wickets but Australia remained in command of the World Test Championship final despite an error-strewn display at The Oval yesterday.

Jadeja removed first-innings century-makers Steve Smith and Travis Head but a third day of dropped catches, wickets off no-balls and rash shots still ended with Australia 296 runs ahead at 123-4 in their second innings.

Marnus Labuschagne, the world's top-ranked Test batsman, survived several painful blows on a pitch of variable bounce to be 41 not out at stumps.

When Scott Boland knocked over Srikanth Bharat's stumps with just the second ball of the day, India were 317 runs behind with only four first-innings wickets standing.

But Ajinkya Rahane (89) and Shardul Thakur (51) then made the most of Australia's mistakes a week before the first Ashes Test against England during a



India's Mohammed Shami and Shardul Thakur chat during the match

seventh-wicket stand of 109.

India surged past the follow-on total before they were eventually dismissed for 296.

Australia captain Pat Cummins took 3-83 in his 20 overs but his figures would have been better but for six no-balls.

And Australia were 2-1 when under-pressure opener David Warner, who had managed just one century in his previous 33 Test innings, was caught behind

off Mohammed Siraj.

Usman Khawaja, Warner's opening partner, fell cheaply for the second time this match when, on 13, he followed a first-innings duck by carelessly edging a wide ball from Umesh Yadav to wicketkeeper Bharat as the pacer took his first wicket of the final.

Left-arm spinner Jadeja then removed Smith and Head, al-

Scorecard

Australia 123 for 4 (Labuschagne 41*, Jadeja 2-25) and 469 lead
India 296 (Rahane 89, Shardul 51, Cummins 3-83) by 296 runs

though both batsmen played a part in their own downfall.

Star batsman Smith had spent just over five-and-a-half hours at the crease for 121 in Australia's first-innings 469.

But on Friday he gave his wicket away for 34 when he skied a drive off Jadeja to cover.

Head's dynamic 163 had established Australia's strong position in the final. He continued to attack Friday only for a quick-fire 18 to end when, attempting a booming drive against the turn out of the rough, his miscued shot gave Jadeja a simple return catch.

Australia were now 111-4, still a lead of 284 against an India side missing Ravichandran Ashwin after the star off-spinner, the world's top-ranked Test bowler, was omitted in favour of an extra seamer.

Neville joins Canada coaching staff

AFP | Miami

Former Manchester United defender has joined the coaching staff of Canada's national team ahead of next week's CONCACAF Nations League Final Four.

Neville was sacked as Inter

Miami coach last week, just days before Lionel Messi announced he would be joining the Major League Soccer club.

The former England women's national team coach will work under John Herdman, the English head coach of the Canadian national side.

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Bahrain to host 2024 WEC season-finale

BIC to showcase Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain as the ultimate event of 2024 WEC season

● Kingdom's endurance racing spectacle to take place 1-2 November, 2024, in Sakhir

● Next year's expanded WEC campaign set to feature eight rounds from March to November

TDT | Manama

The FIA World Endurance Championship's (WEC) 2024 calendar was unveiled yesterday, with the Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain scheduled to take place on 1st and 2nd November, 2024, at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East".

The new championship calendar features eight rounds in all—an expanded schedule from this year's seven events—taking place from March to November next year, and Bahrain has once again been given the honour of hosting the season-finale for the eighth time in WEC history.

The Kingdom has been a part of the WEC campaign ever since



Action from a previous WEC event at BIC

its inaugural season in 2012, and BIC's relationship with the WEC has been growing from strength to strength each year.

In 2022, BIC proudly the extension of this partnership until at least 2027, further cementing Bahrain's standing at the highest levels of international motor racing and continuing the rapid growth of the Kingdom's motorsport culture.

Tickets to this year's Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain, taking place 3 and 4 November, 2023, at BIC, are already on sale. The meeting will be the first

major international event of the Kingdom's 2023/2024 racing calendar, which will be highlighted by celebrations marking BIC's landmark 20th anniversary.

Tickets cost just BD5 for adults and BD2.5 for kids for the two-day WEC weekend, which will feature plenty of support race action with the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East as well as off-track family entertainment for all to enjoy. Tickets can be purchased online at bahraingp.com or by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

For next year, leading up to the



The 2024 Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain will be the 13th WEC race at BIC and sixth in the eight-hour format

2024 Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain, the WEC will be making stops in Qatar, Italy, Belgium, France, Brazil, the US and Japan.

The Doha round will be one of four new venues next WEC season, as Qatar joins Bahrain as the WEC's only destinations in the Middle East.

The all-new event, entitled the Qatar 1812km, is scheduled to take place as the championship-opener on 2 March, 2024. The official prologue will also be held at Doha's Lusail International Circuit on 24 and 25 February.

The WEC will then make its first European stop for the inaugural 6 Hours of Imola on 21 April, replacing the 6 Hours of

2024 FIA World Endurance Championship Calendar

24-25 February: Official Prologue at Lusail International Circuit
2 March: Qatar 1812km at Lusail International Circuit
21 April: 6 Hours of Imola at Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari
11 May: 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps
15-16 June: 24 Hours of Le Mans at Circuit de la Sarthe
14 July: 6 Hours of Sao Paulo at Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace
1 September: Lone Star Le Mans at Circuit of the Americas
15 September: 6 Hours of Fuji at Fuji Speedway
1-2 November: Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain at BIC

Monza which is to be held this year in July as part of the 2023 campaign.

That will be followed by the 2024 season's third round in Belgium for the TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps on 11 May, which will pave the way for the WEC's annual crown jewel, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, scheduled for 15 and 16 June in France.

The WEC will then be making a return to Brazil for the first time since 2014 for the 6 Hours of Sao Paulo on 14 July, 2024, and then travel to the US for the Lone Star Le Mans on 1 September, the first time the series will be racing again at the Circuit of the Americas since 2020.

The season's seventh and penultimate round will then take the WEC far east for the 6 Hours of Fuji on 15 September, 2024,

and that will set the stage for the Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain to wrap up another thrilling year.

Global motorsport's leading endurance racing series will once again be bringing the Spirit of Le Mans to Sakhir and its packed grid of highly competitive Hypercars, Le Mans Prototype 2 (LMP2) challengers and Le Mans Grand Touring Endurance Am (LMGTE Am) contenders.

The 2024 Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain will be the 13th WEC race at BIC and sixth in the eight-hour format, following the six-hour races which took place since the WEC's inaugural season in 2012.

For any information on the WEC or other BIC events and activities, visit bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

Djokovic into seventh French Open final as Alcaraz hit by injury

AFP | Paris

Novak Djokovic reached his seventh French Open final in dramatic and controversial circumstances yesterday when world number one Carlos Alcaraz suffered serious cramping which torpedoed his challenge.

Djokovic, 36, triumphed 6-3, 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 to become the oldest man in 93 years to reach the championship match where he will be bidding for a third Roland Garros title and record-setting 23rd men's Grand Slam crown.

The drama yesterday unfolded just as Djokovic had levelled the third set at 1-1 with the first two sets split but with Alcaraz seemingly in the ascendancy in the sweltering 33-degree Paris heat.

Alcaraz, 16 years Djokovic's junior, pulled up clutching his right calf.

He conceded his next service game because he sought treatment courtside before a scheduled change of ends and could not receive a medical timeout for cramping.

As boos and jeers rained down, Djokovic, playing in his



Novak Djokovic (R) shakes hands with Carlos Alcaraz Garfia after his victory

45th Grand Slam semi-final, swept the next five games to open a two sets to one lead.

Alcaraz left the court for a five-minute bathroom break but his physical limitations easily opened the door for Djokovic to coast into his 34th Grand Slam final, having wrapped up 10 of the last 11 games of the semi-final.

"Tough luck for Carlos, the last thing you want is cramping. I feel for him and hope he recovers and comes back very soon," said Djokovic.

"Respect for him in fighting until the end. I told him at the

net that he is very young and he will win this many times."

He added: "He was the better player in the second set. I knew I had to be more aggressive and then match and better his intensity."

Djokovic will face either 2022 runner-up Casper Ruud or Alexander Zverev for a place in Sunday's championship match where he will have the opportunity to become the first man to win all four Slam titles at least three times.

In just their second career meeting, and first at a Grand Slam, Djokovic made light of

"Tough luck for Carlos, the last thing you want is cramping. I feel for him and hope he recovers and comes back very soon. Respect for him in fighting until the end. I told him at the net that he is very young and he will win this many times

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

the age gap by breaking for a 3-1 lead, drawing Alcaraz out of position before topping off a rally with a cool backhand.

Alcaraz let slip three break points in the seventh game as his flamboyant all-court game collided head-on with Djokovic's storied defensive wall.

In a see-saw conclusion to the first set, Alcaraz saved a set point in the eighth game, Djokovic thwarted another break point in the ninth before he pocketed the opener when the Spaniard pushed a service return wide.

BRAVE CF partners with Indian streaming platform MX Player



TDT | Manama

Brave Combat Federation, the fastest-growing MMA organization in the world and Bahrain's own sports jewel, and MX Player, a major OTT platform in India, have announced a landmark, multi-year agreement that will see content from the martial arts organization distributed across the continental nation as interest in MMA continues to rise.

The organization, founded under the vision of His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the fifth son of the King of Bahrain, has become the most global MMA organization, having travelled to 28 countries in six years of operations.

Brave Combat Federation is the only global mixed martial arts company to have hosted events in India, more specifically in Mumbai and Hyderabad. BRAVE CF is also home to some of the best Indian fighters in MMA today, including the number one Indian Bantamweight Mohammed Farhad.

He will be among the hundreds of fighters featured in the content to be distributed by MX Player in India, as one of the biggest OTT platforms in Asia and the fastest-growing mixed martial arts organization in the world partner,

through BRAVE CF's official distribution partner KHK Media Group, to educate Indian fans on the sport as well as continue to expand the brand and the sport in the country.

Brave Combat Federation president Mohammed Shahid celebrated the deal as a momentous occasion for Indian MMA and shared his hopes of continuing BRAVE Combat Federation's mission in India: to find the next superstars of the sport and to build a new sports economy for mixed martial arts in the country. Shahid believes the partnership with MX Player is key in the pursuit of these goals.

"As the most global and fastest-growing mixed martial arts organization in the world, BRAVE Combat Federation has the vision to bring the world of MMA to India and take India to the world of MMA as well. We want to build a sports economy for martial arts that can have a similar impact that cricket has in Indian sports. Our partnership with MX Player is key in achieving our goals. MX Player is the number one content distribution company in the country. Their reach and storytelling strengths will help us tell some of the best stories in sports today and bring them to the biggest audience in India and together we will change the landscape of mixed martial arts in the country".

German Zimmermann wins Criterium sixth stage

AFP | Crest-Voland, France

Germany's Georg Zimmermann powered to victory in the sixth stage of the Criterium du Dauphine yesterday, as Jonas Vingegaard maintained his overall lead.

Intermarche rider Zimmermann pulled away from

fellow escapees Mathieu Burgaudeau and Spaniard Jonathan Castroviejo on the summit finish of a mountainous 170.5km ride to Crest-Voland.

Reigning Tour de France champion Vingegaard crossed in the main group of race favourites.

The Dane holds a 70-sec-

ond lead over Ben O'Connor, with Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe 13 seconds further back in third overall.

There are two more mountain stages to close out the race this weekend.

Vingegaard finished second in the 2022 Criterium behind Primoz Roglic before going on to win the Tour.



Georg Zimmermann crosses the finish line