

Breath of Air wins feature race

Jockey Lee Newman saddles seven-year-old gelding to Late Abdulla Ahmed Nass Cup victory for Al Adiyat Racing and AM Smith | **P12**

WORLD 6 Blinken ends marathon tour warning 'more needs to be done' for Gazans

THE DAILY tribune



Dwayne Johnson says political parties approached him to run for president

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BUSINESS 5 Stocks diverge after Powell says rate hike possible

Russian army determined to seize strategic Ukrainian town

AFP | Kyiv

Russian forces are fighting to surround the war-battered frontline town of Avdiivka and capture a strategically-located factory nearby, a Ukrainian military spokesman said yesterday.

Moscow's forces in the southern region of Kherson meanwhile carried out fatal shelling of a village retaken by Ukrainian forces one year ago.

Avdiivka, an industrial hub in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, has long been a symbol of Ukrainian resistance after it was briefly captured by pro-Russian forces in 2014.

Jailed Iranian Nobel winner Mohammadi ends hunger strike

AFP | Paris

The family of imprisoned Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi says she has ended a hunger strike after she received medical treatment without wearing the obligatory head covering.

In a message posted on her Instagram account, the activist's family said she was transferred to a hospital for exams on Wednesday. She suffers from heart and lung conditions.

France to build 'ice-packed' vessel for polar research

AFP | Paris

President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday France will build an ice-capable vessel as part of a billion-euro plan to boost polar research.

Addressing a conference on the polar regions and glaciers, he urged world powers to act in the face of the climate emergency despite raging geopolitical tensions.

He said mankind faced a "civilisational" challenge and called for "an unprecedented level of cooperation" despite the "resurgence of geopolitical tensions".

HRH Prince Salman to take part in Arab-Islamic summits today



HRH Prince Salman arrives in Riyadh Riyadh

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday arrived in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to lead Bahrain's delegation at the Extraordinary Session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the Summit Level, and the Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, both held in Riyadh.

The summits will be held today.

HRH Prince Salman is taking part in the two summits on behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and in response to the invitation extended to His Majesty by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

His Royal Highness was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, HE Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, HE Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Min-

ister of Labour, HE Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan, the Minister of Legal Affairs, HE Yousif bin Abdullhussain Khalaf, and the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, HE Hamad bin Faisal Al Malki, along with other senior officials.

Upon arrival, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister was received by the Governor of Riyadh Province, HRH Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Deputy Governor of the Riyadh Province, HRH Prince Mohammed bin Ab-

dulrahman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Director General of the General Administration for the European Countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, HRH Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Ambassador of Bahrain to Saudi Arabia, HE Shaikh Ali bin Abdulrahman bin Ali Al Khalifa, and a number of senior officials.

His Royal Highness made a statement in which he extended his gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

and to the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, for hosting the meeting.

Unified efforts

The conferences are being held amid developments in the Gaza Strip, which have unprecedented repercussions for the region and require intensified and unified Arab and Islamic efforts.

'There is no safe place left in Gaza'

Palestinian civilians flee as hospital and school are targeted in deadly Israeli strikes

AFP | Gaza

Palestinians said deadly strikes yesterday hit hospitals and a school where desperate civilians in Gaza City have sought refuge from intense combat that has sent thousands of others fleeing.

"There is no safe place left. The army hit Al-Shifa. I don't know what to do," said 32-year-old Abu Mohammad, who was among those seeking refuge at the hospital. "There is shooting... at the hospital. We are afraid to go out."

Al-Shifa's director and Gaza's government, which reported a death toll of 13, blamed Israeli forces for a strike on the hospital.

The hospital received the bodies of another 50 people killed in a strike on Gaza City's Al-Buraq school, the Al-Shifa director said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said Israeli snipers had also shot at Al-Quds hospital, killing at least one person.

Heavy fighting was raging near Al-Shifa hospital, with Israel saying it had killed dozens of Palestinian fighters and destroyed tunnels that are key to



The bodies of people killed in bombardment that hit a school housing displaced Palestinians, as they lie on the ground in the yard of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City yesterday. (AFP)

Hamas' capacity to fight.

Bombing and gunfire

"Last night, I wasn't optimistic that any of my children or I would come out unharmed, given the intensity of the bombing and gunfire," said Jawad Haruda, who was among thousands walking south in an exodus away from Gaza City.

"We couldn't wait for the morning, and everyone in

Al-Shifa hospital left," he added.

Witnesses told AFP that hundreds of people sheltering at Gaza City's Al-Rantisi hospital fled on instruction from the Israeli military, which was surrounding it with armoured vehicles.

Amid the fighting, the International Committee of the Red Cross warned the health system in the Gaza Strip had "reached a point of no return".

In Israel, medical services re-

"We condemn the military aggression witnessed in the Gaza Strip, the targeting of civilians, and the continued violations of international humanitarian law by the Israeli occupation forces."

- HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN BIN ABDULAZIZ AL SAUD, SAUDI CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER OF SAUDI ARABIA

of Israeli forces in Gaza, ahead of weekend summits that will focus on the unfolding violence in the Palestinian territory.

"We condemn the military aggression witnessed in the Gaza Strip, the targeting of civilians, and the continued violations of international humanitarian law by the Israeli occupation forces," HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told a summit with African leaders.

"We stress the necessity of stopping this war and forced displacement and creating conditions for the return of stability and achieving peace."

The war has derailed progress towards a normalisation deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in September was drawing "closer" every day.

His comments at the Saudi-Africa summit came one day before the Gulf kingdom hosts two emergency meetings of the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation today.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairman of the African Union Commission, also condemned the "obscene violence" afflicting Palestinians.



Spiritual reflection and unity

His Eminence Dr. Shaikh Bandar bin Abdulaziz Balila, imam and preacher in Mecca and member of the Council of Senior Scholars, led Friday prayers yesterday at the Ahmed Al Fateh Islamic Center Mosque in Manama. The gathering included a number of officials, scholars, and a large congregation of worshippers. During the Friday sermon, His Eminence emphasised the elevated status of benevolence in Islam, highlighting its deep connection to its noble faith. He also said that Islamic religion is a source of generosity and benevolence, representing one of the most perfect and sublime forms of worship. This event brought together the community in an atmosphere of spiritual reflection and unity, underscoring the significance of benevolence within the Islamic faith.



'Bahrain supports Palestinian cause'

TDT | Manama

His Excellency MP Ahmed Sabah Al Salloum, head of the Parliamentary Division delegation, has affirmed Bahrain's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

MP Al Salloum made the statement as he took part in the Permanent Committee for Political Affairs of the Asian Parliamentary Association meetings held in Baghdad from November 9 to 12.

He emphasised the kingdom's commitment to calling for a ceasefire and a political solution in line with the two-state solu-



MP Al Salloum heads Bahrain's delegation

tion, international legitimacy resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

MP Al Salloum highlighted His

Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's stance on the Palestinian issue as a national priority, supporting comprehensive

peace efforts for a just solution.

He commended the royal directives to provide urgent aid to Palestinians through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and launch the "Rescue Gaza" campaign via the Royal Humanitarian Foundation.

Denouncing the Israeli bombing of Gaza, MP Al Salloum condemned the violation of international humanitarian law and the unjust siege imposed on Palestinians, resulting in a humanitarian catastrophe. He expressed concern over the dangerous turning point faced by Palestinians and the international community's silence.

Large turnout marks start of 'wilderness season' in Sakhir camping site



The start of camping season in Bahrain brings excitement as families eagerly set up tents and welcome the cold season

TDT | Manama

The Sakhir camping site witnessed a surge in visitors as the wilderness season kicked off yesterday with thousands of citizens setting up tents and reserving spaces.

Al-Ayyam's lens captured the bustling activity as families flocked to the area since early morning.

The event, which com-

menced yesterday, will run until February 29, 2024, following a three-year hiatus.

The Southern Governorate facilitated registration through the "Electronic Camps" initiative via the "Al Janubiyah" app, offering a fully electronic registration and transaction service for approximately 3,387 camps. Registration closed early due to overwhelming demand, filling the designated camping spaces.

Labour sector cooperation

HE Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan, Minister of Labour and Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA)'s Chairman of the Board of Directors received HE Alastair Long, the newly appointed UK Ambassador to Bahrain. The meeting reviewed the historic Bahrain-UK relations and means to enhance them, including in the labour sector and human resources development. The minister highlighted projects and initiatives to maintain the stability and growth of the labour sector, including procedures to maintain a healthy work environment; in addition to Bahrain's efforts in introducing legislations that protect workers' rights in accordance with international labour standards, and combatting human trafficking. The ambassador commended Bahrain's efforts in consolidating workers' rights and combatting human trafficking, as well as its advanced ranking in this area. He also noted the role of laws and legislation which enhance Bahrain's position as an attractive investment destination.

Bahrain-UK relations

HE Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, Minister of Affairs and Agriculture received HE Alastair Long, the newly appointed UK Ambassador to Bahrain. The minister commended the historic Bahrain-UK relations and the advanced cooperation between the two countries in various sectors, wishing him success in his duties. Ambassador Long affirmed his country's keenness to further enhance cooperation, wishing Bahrain further progress and prosperity.

Bureau report reveals 'safety concerns' in government buildings



Some government buildings have already initiated steps to address the problems about security and safety

TDT | Manama

The Financial and Administrative Control Bureau report has brought to light alarming safety lapses in various government buildings.

The report highlights the absence of fire alarm devices in several key locations, including government hospital buildings, health centres, the University of Bahrain, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, the Capital Secretariat, and the three municipalities. Additionally, it notes the lack of fire extinguishing equipment in certain government agency buildings falling under its purview.

In response, governmental hospitals have acknowledged the need for safety improvements, particularly at the

Salmaniya Medical Complex. They have secured initial approval from the Ministry of Finance and National Economy to address these concerns and are collaborating with the Ministry of Public Works to implement a comprehensive maintenance plan, encompassing security and safety matters.

Furthermore, primary healthcare centres are actively assessing safety requirements related to fire prevention and control, with plans to complete this inventory by the end of July 2023.

The University of Bahrain and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, the Capital Secretariat, along with the three municipalities, have also initiated steps to address the identified safety needs by procuring necessary equipment.

Education Ministry takes part in Unesco conference

Bahrain supports global body's noble initiatives

Paris

Nawal Ibrahim Al Khater, Assistant Undersecretary for Policies, Strategies and Performance at the Education Ministry, has led the Kingdom of Bahrain's delegation participating in the 42nd session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) General Conference, held at Unesco headquarters in Paris from November 7 to 22, with the participation of 194-member states.

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, and Audrey Azoulay, Unesco Director-General, in addition to a number of international figures, ministers, senior officials, specialists and experts in the fields of education, science and culture, were present.

While addressing the conference, Al Khater expressed the kingdom's pride in its long-standing constructive and fruitful partnership with Unesco, especially in the field of education, which consolidated the role of the Unesco-King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize



Ms Al Khater speaks at the event

for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education.

She added that Bahrain commends Unesco's efforts aimed at improving the educational system, affirming the commitment of the kingdom, along with other member states, to supporting such endeavours to make education available to all peoples of the world and ensure its sustainability.

Al Khater reviewed the efforts made by the kingdom over the past period to develop education, including the restructuring of the Ministry of Education, the establishment of a unit to follow up on and develop the performance of schools, in addition to the implementation of the necessary plans and strategies to enhance teachers' professional development and teaching methods, as well as develop school curricula to keep pace with global trends.

Five-year jail term for Asian drug smuggler

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court penalised an Asian man with five years of imprisonment after he was apprehended at Bahrain Airport with a belt carrying over a kilogram of narcotic substances wrapped in a manner that is difficult to detect.

The court also ordered his permanent deportation from the country at the end of his sentence, in addition to fining him BD3,000 and confiscating the seized items.

The incident began with the defendant's arrival at Bahrain Airport from an Asian country. He was searched on suspicion while passing through customs but nothing was found on his person and he denied possessing any prohibited items. However, his features appeared suspicious.

Circular shapes

The customs officer transferred him to the X-ray room, where circular shapes were detected inside the folds of his clothes, suspected of being drug capsules. He was transferred to the Anti-Narcotics Directorate office.

Upon questioning, the defendant admitted to hiding capsules containing narcotic substances in pockets of his belt, intending to smuggle them to the Kingdom of Bah-



The defendant will be deported from the country at the end of his sentence.

rain.

The defendant took out approximately one kilogram of the narcotic substance. Investigations conducted by the Anti-Narcotics Directorate found that the defendant works for a network that smuggles drugs into Bahrain with intent of trafficking.

A lab test proved that the capsules contained methamphetamine and the defendant's urine sample contained hashish and diazepam.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with unauthorized procurement and possession of tramadol and methamphetamine with the intent of trafficking as well as unauthorized procurement of hashish and diazepam with the intent of using.

Bahraini family's request to add surname granted after long legal battle

TDT | Manama

A local Bahraini family had repeatedly sought to add a surname to their official records over six years, but their requests were rejected multiple times by the court.

Their lawyer stated that her client, brother and nephews belong to a family with a surname traditionally at the end of their names, they wished to officially add this surname as they identify with this family.

Although they met all legal requirements to add the surname in 2017, the court rejected their lawsuit and ordered them to pay expenses. A second lawsuit was thus filed through another law firm.

To prove their case, the plaintiffs presented testimony from three family witnesses as well as other evidence. The defendant also responded.

While the court initially did not accept the case due to a prior ruling, memorandums submitted by the lawyer responded to this. The court



Image used for illustrative purposes only

then deliberated and found the competent committee's report to be satisfactory.

Ruling

The report concluded by accepting the plaintiffs' request to add the surname, fulfilling all conditions stipulated by law. The court subsequently ruled for the relevant authorities to officially register the surname addition for the plaintiffs.

After a long legal battle spanning six years and multiple rejected requests, the family's wish to formally recognise their traditional surname was finally granted.

'Lucky draw' turns into nightmare for shoppers

Scamming agencies exploit customer details for fraudulent tour packages

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

In a shocking turn of events, what was supposed to be an exciting lucky draw for shoppers in Bahrain's popular malls has transformed into a nightmare for some unfortunate individuals.

Saurabh, a 34-year-old man, recently came forward to share his harrowing experience, shedding light on a scam that has affected numerous unsuspecting victims.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, Saurabh said, the modus operandi of this scam involved sales agents collecting personal details, including CPR numbers and contact information, from individuals visiting malls and other prominent shopping centers in Bahrain.

"These agents enticed customers with promises of winning gold coins through lucky draws. Many expats, lured by the prospect of winning valuable prizes, willingly shared their personal information to participate in the draws.

"Soon after providing their details, participants received calls from purported company representatives, notifying them of their supposed winnings and instructing them to collect their prizes from various locations."



Image used for illustrative purposes only



"These agents enticed customers with promises of winning gold coins through lucky draws. Many expats, lured by the prospect of winning valuable prizes, willingly shared their personal information to participate in the draws."

- SAURABH

He continued saying, "However, upon arrival, individuals were coerced into purchasing holiday packages ranging from BD250 to BD2,000. The packages allegedly included accommodations at luxurious 3 to 5-star hotels, tailored to the customers' preferences."

Saurabh himself fell victim to this scam. After winning a gift in the lucky draw, he received a call from a company, offering him an enticing tour package. Cautious of potential fraud, Sau-

rabh refrained from availing the offer.

However, a few months later, he received another call from a different company, offering a similar tour package. This time, Saurabh's excitement got the better of him, and he paid BD450 for the promised vacation.

Scam

Unfortunately, after making the payment, Saurabh never received any further communica-

tion from the company. It soon became apparent that he had fallen prey to the scam.

Determined to raise awareness and prevent others from similar ordeals, Saurabh filed a complaint with the authorities. Although both agencies involved have ceased operations and their owners have left Bahrain, Saurabh hopes that by speaking out, he can protect others from becoming victims.

Upon investigation, The Daily Tribune discovered that multiple individuals had fallen victim to the scam. The official website of the company revealed several Google reviews from disgruntled customers, further highlighting the fraudulent practices employed by the company.

Simarjeet Kaur expressed frustration at the lack of response to emails and phone calls, and Alan Pankaj urged fellow victims to explore legal recourse.

The Daily Tribune made several attempts to contact the company for comment, but there was no response from their end.

This alarming case serves as a reminder for shoppers to exercise caution when sharing personal information and participating in such lucky draws.

Court demands paternal proof of lineage for 10-year-old girl

TDT | Manama

The Higher Sharia Court ordered to prove the lineage of a 10-year-old girl to her father after accepting her grandfather's lawsuit.

In his lawsuit, the child's guardian explained that his daughter had an undocumented marriage which resulted in having a baby girl. After delivery, he added, she left her baby with him and left the kingdom and never returned.

The grandfather indicated that his daughter's marriage took place with witnesses and a dowry, but it was not documented. In the hearing, the father acknowledged the girl's lineage to him.

The plaintiff's lawyer said that her client is the child's grandfather. She assured that



Image used for illustrative purposes only

her client's daughter got an undocumented marriage to the child's father in the presence of witnesses and a dowry of two thousand dinars (BD2,000), which was received by his daughter.

She added that the marriage resulted in his "granddaughter." In light of that common-law marriage - which was not doc-

umented and her lineage was not proven - he filed his lawsuit.

The "grandfather" and the girl's father appeared before the court, and the father acknowledged the girl's lineage to him based on the court's decision. A letter received from the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) directorate stated that the child's mother had

left Bahrain for several years and she has not returned.

Custom

The court said in the merits of its ruling that the "grandfather" filed his lawsuit by requesting to prove his granddaughter's lineage to the first defendant (her father), based on the fact that he married his daughter by custom, as he was her guardian, in the presence of witnesses, and a specified dowry amounted BD2,000 received by his daughter.

The court added that the two conditions of the marriage contract are the two spouses, the man - the first defendant, and the woman - the second defendant, and the offer and acceptance were available in the contract intended to prove the girl's lineage.

Asian gang on trial for assault and robbery

TDT | Manama

Three Asian men were stopped by police after assaulting and robbing others in the Central Market under threats of violence.

Details indicate the incident began when one victim was in the Manama central market and

suddenly felt someone grab his shirt from behind. He turned around to see three Asian men.

Moments later, they started beating him with their hands and kicking him with their shoes while one stole his phone from his pants pocket. During this, a nearby worker and his friend noticed the situation and

tried to intervene.

However, the thieves resisted briefly before fleeing. Suddenly, the three Asians caught up to the worker and his friend, demanding to see their identification cards. Out of fear, the worker complied and one of the men stole BD20 from his wallet before returning it.

Young man sets cars ablaze and flees on bike

TDT | Manama

A young man burned two vehicles parked in a company lot, but his means of escape also exposed his crime.

Details show the 20-year-old man rode his bike to the parking area at around 1am. There, he spotted two cars near the company and opened their fuel tank

covers before lighting them on fire.

He then fled the scene, but a security guard on duty reviewing CCTV cameras witnessed the burning vehicles and person riding off on a bicycle. Rushing outside, the guard extinguished the flames with a water bucket before calling police.

Investigators analysed secu-

rity footage showing the suspect on his bike opening the fuel covers before igniting the arson. Using confidential sources, they identified the perpetrator and located him the next day in a nearby region, still riding the same bicycle.

Upon being stopped, the man resisted arrest but was detained by security personnel.

Nurse cleared of manslaughter charges in Asian patient's death

● **Second defendant imprisoned for a year**

TD | Manama

The High Appeals Court upheld the acquittal of a nurse on charges of manslaughter of an Asian patient who fell while being moved from her bed to wheelchair, causing complications that led to her death.

The court confirmed from the case papers that the appellant was not present at the time of the victim's fall. Meanwhile, it unanimously overturned the second defendant's acquittal, ruling to convict and imprison her for one year.

The prosecution had referred the two nurses to trial on charges of manslaughter as a result of their violation of professional procedure.

The incident began with the reported death of an Asian patient who suffered from a fever. She was diagnosed with a CT scan which revealed a brain haemorrhage and was admitted to critical care. However, she passed away.

Negligence

By referring to the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) for expert opinion, the court concluded that there was negligence on the part of the two nurses supervising the victim.



Image used for illustrative purposes only

Malpractice had occurred in transferring the patient from her bed to the wheelchair, which led to the patient falling to the

ground and hitting her head. The second defendant failed to inform the doctors who treated the victim of what had hap-



Malpractice had occurred in transferring the patient from her bed to the wheelchair, which led to the patient falling and hitting her head. The second defendant failed to inform the doctors who treated the victim of what had happened.

pened.

Among the merits of its ruling, the court stated that the second defendant's guilt was established, whereas the first defendant was not present when the victim fell, as proven by the disciplinary committee in addition to witness statements that corroborated the absence of the first appellant at the time of the incident. Furthermore, the first appellant denied all charges laid against her by the NHRA in the investigation records.

The court added that criminal rulings are based on certain proof rather than speculation. The case papers were null of evidence to condemn the appellant; thereby, it deemed it necessary to judge her innocence.

Al Fateh Street development work set to begin

TD | Manama

The Ministry of Works, in collaboration with the General Traffic Department of the Ministry of Interior, has announced the start of development work on Al Fateh Street.

This will involve the closure of one lane and the provision of two lanes for traffic in both directions.

The development work will take place between Tarfa Bin Al Abd Street and Shaikh Daij Street. The closure will be effective from tomorrow at 5am to Monday, at 5pm. Citizens and residents are urged to adhere to traffic rules during this period to ensure everyone's safety.

Ways to boost Bahrain, Canada ties discussed

Paris

HE Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Political Affairs Undersecretary at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, held a meeting with Ahmed Hussen, the Canadian Minister of International Development, on the sidelines of their participation in the sixth session of the Paris Peace Forum devoted to discussing challenges related to protecting the planet and people, digital security, accelerating the achievement of sustainable development goals, establishing peace and building a safer world.

The two sides reviewed the Bahraini-Canadian political and economic cooperation relations, as well as ways to enhance them in a way that achieves the common interests of both countries and their peoples.

They also discussed regional issues.

Lawyer appointed for convicted African man

● **Defendant sentenced to 15 years in prison for circulating counterfeit dollars**

TD | Manama

The High Appeals Court ordered the appointment of a lawyer for an African man sentenced to 15 years in prison for his membership in a criminal network which attempted to circulate over \$2,500 counterfeit

The court decided to postpone the next session to November 13.

The General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic & Electronic Security was able to arrest the defendant for counterfeiting and circulating paper currencies. The network had defrauded citizens and residents by misleading them into believing they could double their money.

The directorate's research and investigation team was able to monitor their movements and track their headquarters and they were arrested with a quan-

tity of counterfeit banknotes, equipment and tools used in the counterfeiting process.

Investigation

Following the report, the Public Prosecution initiated investigation procedures where it interrogated the defendants and charged them with counterfeiting currency notes with the intention of circulating them in the Kingdom of Bahrain. They were also charged with possessing tools intended for counterfeiting currencies and



Image used for illustrative purposes only

attempting fraud. The tools and banknotes were seized.

The Public Prosecution ordered the defendants to be de-

tained pending investigation, and the seized items were presented to the forensic lab for examination.

The defendants were referred to criminal trial. They were charged with participation by way of agreement and assistance with another unknown person in counterfeiting \$100 banknotes with the intention of circulating them in Bahrain as well as possession and smuggling of the counterfeit US banknotes into the country with the intent of circulating and dealing with them.

Cooperation with private sector to boost development projects

TD | Manama

HE Maryam Adnan Al Ansari, Assistant Undersecretary for Projects in the Prime Minister's Office and Chairman of the Government Land Investment Committee, has highlighted the government's commitment to bolstering cooperation with the private sector.

This aims to foster development across various sectors by creating new and high-quality opportunities for investors and real estate developers. The focus is on providing the necessary support to stimulate vital sectors and sustain economic growth.

Following the Ministry of



Ms Al Ansari

Housing and Urban Planning's agreement with Delmon Gate Company to construct 131 new housing units in Salman City, covering a total area of 23,000 square metres, Al Ansari stressed the significance of leveraging investment opportu-

nities through the government land investment platform.

This serves as a channel for private sector involvement in government projects, she noted.

The signed agreement aligns with efforts to fortify partnerships with the private sector, encouraging investment and land development for diverse purposes such as residential, commercial, entertainment, educational, and healthcare. Moreover, it accelerates the implementation of development projects in Bahrain, in line with the principles of Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, focusing on competitiveness, sustainability, and equity.

Seminar on embassy services for Filipinos successful



Philippine Embassy officials with participants at the event
TD | Manama

The United Citizen Crime Watch Incorporated Bahrain Chapter and the Kaisahan ng mga Filipino Balik Islam sa Bahrain in collaboration with the Philippine Embassy, has organised a seminar-lecture at the embassy.

The "Seminar on Embassy

Services", attended by around 30 participants, was aimed at providing information in rendering consular, passport and visa services, labour and welfare, Social Security System (SSS) from the embassy's attached agencies.

Vice Consul Laser Blitz B. Sumagaysay was among the speakers.

Civil society groups praised for key role in youth development

TD | Manama

The Minister of Social Development, HE Osama bin Ahmed Khalaf Al Asfour, has praised the efforts of civil society organisations and their distinguished role in pursuing the aspirations and priorities of society, especially the youth group, by strengthening effective partnerships with various sectors.



Mr. Al Asfour honours the graduates and trainers of the program

Al Asfour was speaking at a ceremony marking the successful end of the fifth Personal

Financial Awareness Program (Dinari).

The event, organised by the

Youth Leadership Association, was held in a strategic partnership with the Labour Fund,

Tamkeen, Zain Bahrain, and the Abdul Rahim Al-Kooheji Charitable Foundation. Present in the ceremony were representatives of government and private agencies in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The minister pointed out that the Youth Leadership Association is considered one of the most prominent youth associations that constantly seeks to develop the performance of its volunteer and humanitarian work.

Stocks diverge after Powell says rate hike possible

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Wall Street indices bounced but European stock markets fell yesterday as investors digested warnings by central bank chiefs that the battle against inflation was not over.

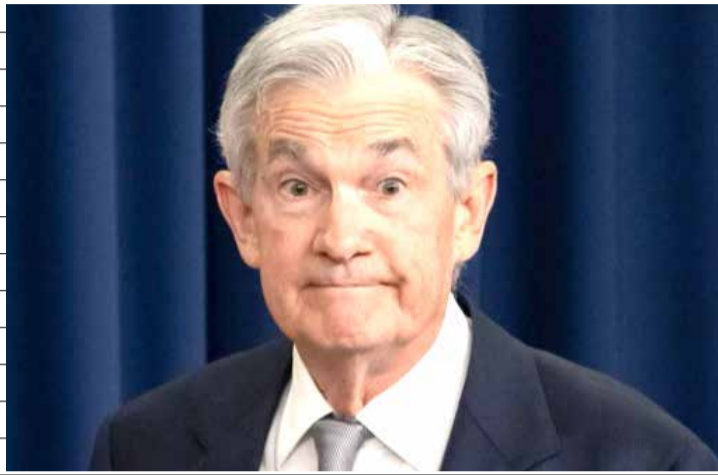
US stocks opened higher after falling the previous day on the back of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell saying that the US central bank "will not hesitate" to raise interest rates again if necessary. European markets remained down in afternoon deals, however, as European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde said there will probably be a "resurgence" of inflation after it slowed sharply last month.

Speaking at a Financial Times event, Lagarde also said that the ECB will not start cutting rates for at least "the next couple of quarters".

Data showing the UK economy stalled in the third quar-

Key figures around 1345 GMT

New York - Dow:	▲ 0.3% at 33,998.98 points
London - FTSE 100:	▼ 1.4% at 7,352.21
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 0.9% at 7,050.64
Frankfurt - DAX:	▼ 0.7% at 15,242.63
EURO STOXX 50:	▼ 0.7% at 4,199.35
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▼ 0.2% at 32,568.11 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index:	▼ 1.8% at 17,203.26 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▼ 0.5% at 3,038.97 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.0676 from \$1.0671 on Thursday
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.2212 from \$1.2223
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 151.45 yen from 151.35 yen
Euro/pound:	▲ at 87.46 pence from 87.28 pence
Brent North Sea crude:	▲ 1.3% at \$81.05 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 1.3% at \$76.75 per barrel



Jerome Powell

ter also weighed on London's FTSE 100 index. Both the Fed and ECB paused their rate-hike campaigns at their last meetings as consumer price rises have slowed, but they have suggested they would stay higher for longer as inflation remains above their

two-percent targets. Equities had been rallying since last week after Fed officials hinted that their long-running tightening cycle may be at an end.

But Powell told an International Monetary Fund conference Thursday that progress

toward reaching two-percent inflation was "not assured".

"If it becomes appropriate to tighten policy further, we will not hesitate to do so," he said.

He added that officials were aware of the need not to over-tighten, which many fear could

tip the world's top economy into recession.

The Fed decision last week to hold rates came as they acknowledged soaring Treasuries -- 10-year yields hit a 16-year high recently -- were acting as a substitute for rate hikes.

"I don't believe what Powell said was a shock but I do feel the general consensus amongst investors is that interest rates are at or close to their peaks, and their focus is turning to the timing of rate cuts," said Walid Koudmani, chief market analyst at XTB online trading.

"The fact the Fed has sent a clear signal that the conversation for rate cuts is far too premature, this has given some investors a bit of a reality check today," Koudmani said.

US government bond yields rose on Thursday but traders said it may have been linked to a ransomware attack on the US arm of China's largest bank, the ICBC, which disrupted the US Treasury market. "Some commentators argue that that, rather than weak demand, was behind the relatively poor US government bond auction (that took place Thursday)," said Richard Flax, chief investment officer at Moneyfarm.

Bangladesh PM rejects further pay hike after garment worker protests



Garment workers clash with police personnel during a rally in Gazipur

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has rejected any further pay hikes for protesting garment workers demanding a nearly tripled wage increase, after violent clashes with police and factories were ransacked.

A government-appointed panel raised wages on Tuesday by 56.25 percent to 12,500 taka (\$113) for the South Asian nation's garment factory workers, who were demanding a 23,000 taka minimum wage in all plants.

Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of its \$55 billion in annual exports, supplying many of the world's top brands including Levi's, Zara and H&M.

Remain on guard despite falling inflation: ECB's Lagarde

AFP | Frankfurt, Germany

European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde warned Friday recent steep falls in eurozone inflation should not be "taken for granted" and there will probably be a "resurgence" in price rises.

Inflation slowed to 2.9 percent in October, the lowest rate since July 2021 and faster than expected, after more than a year of aggressive interest rate hikes by the ECB aimed at taming runaway prices.

Consumer price rises in the 20 countries that use the euro had peaked at 10.6 percent in October last year, driven mainly by surging energy costs after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Speaking at an event organ-



Lagarde

ised by the Financial Times, Lagarde acknowledged that "inflation has come down massively".

The latest figure is "a huge, huge change and one could argue that... monetary policy has done its job", she said.

But she added that a "bit of humility helps as well", adding

that everybody "recognises that a lot of that downside has to do with... the price of energy".

Energy prices in particular have fallen sharply since a year ago, contributing to the fast slowdown in price rises.

"We should not assume that this respectable 2.9 headline number is something that should be taken for granted," she said.

"There will be a resurgence of probably (a) higher number going forwards and we should be expecting that."

The ECB's inflation target is two percent.

The central bank embarked on an unprecedented campaign of rate increases in July last year, hiking borrowing costs at 10 consecutive meetings.

EU seeking to 'reengage' with China ahead of Beijing summit

AFP | Beijing, China

The European Union is seeking to "reengage" with China ahead of a major summit on December 7 and 8, a top official said yesterday, following high-level meetings in Beijing that touched on a range of thorny topics.

European commissioner for the internal market Thierry Breton described his meetings with Chinese counterparts as



Thierry Breton

"constructive" and "tense on some issues", but added that "it was very good to reengage" after the challenging pandemic period.

Breton said that the world's largest single market, which

he represents, was preparing to participate in a summit with the world's second-largest economy, China, in Beijing next month.

"In all my meetings... I have been very frank and very direct because if we want to create reciprocity, new opportunities... and an open market for companies, trade and investment, we should not shy away from difficult discussions," Breton told a press conference.

British economy stalls in third quarter

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Britain's economy stagnated in the third quarter, official data showed yesterday, weighed down by elevated inflation and interest-rate hikes.

Gross domestic product showed no growth in the July-September period, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

That beat market expectations for a contraction of 0.2%, but followed 0.2-percent expansion in the second quarter.

The data comes one week after the Bank of England froze interest rates at a 15-year high of 5.25% to tackle high inflation, and forecast the economy



Jeremy Hunt

would flatline next year.

Reacting to Friday's data, UK finance minister Jeremy Hunt warned that "high inflation was the single greatest barrier to economic growth".

Hunt added that his budget statement on November 22, would "focus on how we get the economy growing healthily again".

Canada police probe video warning not to fly Air India

AFP | Ottawa, Canada

Canada's federal police are investigating a warning in videos circulating online not to fly Air India starting November 19, the transportation minister said Thursday.

"We take every threat seriously, especially when it concerns airlines," Transportation Minister Pablo Rodriguez told reporters in Ottawa.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, he added, "is doing an investigation."

The videos, posted online in the last week, feature Gur-

patwant Singh Pannun, the general counsel for the US-based Sikhs for Justice.

He warns Sikhs in the video: "Don't fly Air India after November 19, your lives may be in danger."

He told Canadian media this was not a threat, but rather a call to boycott Indian businesses.

India dismissed as "absurd" the bombshell accusation.

Relations between India and Canada have plunged over the unsolved slaying, and Indian unhappiness over how Ottawa has handled Sikh separatists.

US arm of China mega-lender ICBC hit by ransomware attack

AFP | Washington, United States

The US arm of China's largest bank said Thursday that it was hit by a ransomware attack, forcing clients to reroute trades and disrupting the US Treasury market.

Ransomware attacks typically access vulnerable computer systems and encrypt or steal data, before sending a ransom note demanding payment in exchange for decrypting the data or not releasing it publicly.

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Financial Ser-



Last year, LockBit was "the most deployed ransomware variant across the world and continues to be prolific in 2023," according to the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

vices (ICBC FS) said Thursday it "experienced a ransomware attack that resulted in disruption to certain (financial services) systems."

"Immediately upon discovering the incident, ICBC FS discon-

nected and isolated impacted systems to contain the incident," the New York-based bank said, adding that it was investigating the attack and working on recovery.

ICBC FS said it had success-

fully cleared US Treasury trades executed Wednesday and repurchasing (repo) financing trades Thursday.

Bloomberg reported that some trades handled by ICBC FS on Thursday were transported across Manhattan on a USB stick as messengers manually relayed required settlement details.

China's foreign ministry said Friday that "the business systems and office systems of the head office of ICBC and other domestic and foreign branches and subsidiaries within the

group are normal."

"As far as we know, ICBC has paid close attention to this matter, and has done a good job in emergency handling and supervision and communication, striving to minimize the impact of risks and losses," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a regular news briefing.

"At present, the business systems and office systems of the head office of ICBC and other domestic and foreign branches and subsidiaries within the group are normal."

US media reported that the hack was executed using software created by Lockbit, the Russian-speaking hacking group known for scrambling files on a host's computer and flashing up messages demanding cryptocurrency payment to resolve the issue.

US aircraft manufacturer Boeing was hit with an attack from Lockbit last week.

The US Justice Department said in May that LockBit ransomware had been used in more than 1,400 attacks globally.

News in brief

◆ **US President Joe Biden** and Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet on November 15 in the San Francisco area to try to "stabilize" relations after recent tensions between the two superpowers, US officials said. The meeting, which had not previously been confirmed, is not expected to produce major outcomes but is aimed at avoiding conflict between China and the United States, said senior administration officials. Biden and Xi will also discuss pressing global crises such as the Israel-Hamas war and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as tensions over the flashpoint island of Taiwan. The two leaders have not met for a year since their last encounter in Bali in November 2022, and relations between Beijing and Washington have plunged into the deep freeze since then. "President Biden will indeed meet with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China in the San Francisco Bay area of California on November 15," a senior US official told reporters Thursday in embargoed comments.



Xi, Biden to meet next week to 'stabilize' ties, US says

Russia says sent 25 tonnes of aid for Gaza



Russian city of Kazan, saying the shipment contained food and hygiene products, as well as clothing and portable cookers.

◆ **Russia said yesterday** it had sent 25 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Egypt to be delivered to the Gaza Strip, which has been under near-total siege and relentless bombardment. About 500 aid trucks have been allowed into the territory from Egypt over the past month, a number that had been the daily average before the war. "A special aircraft of the Russian Emergencies Ministry delivered 25 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the Arab Republic of Egypt," Russia's emergency services said on social media. It published images of staff loading cargo onto an Il-76 plane in an airport in the central

◆ **Five Bulgarian nationals** in custody in the UK will face a four-month trial next year on charges that they spied for Russia, a judge ruled on Friday. Orlin Roussev, Bizer Dzhambazov, Katrin Ivanova, Ivan Stoyanov and Vanya Gaberova are alleged to have been part of a "network" conducting surveillance for Russia "with another person known as Jan Marsalek and others unknown". Marsalek is the Austrian former chief operating officer of payments firm Wirecard, who became a wanted man in Germany over fraud allegations. He has not been charged in the British case. Roussev, 45, Dzhambazov, 42, Ivanova, 32, Stoyanov, 31, and Gaberova, 29, appeared at the Old Bailey court in central London via video link.

Five Bulgarians face Russia spy plot trial in UK



Indonesian clerics issue fatwa boycotting Israel-linked firms

Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesia's top Islamic clerical body issued a fatwa on Friday calling for a boycott of goods and services from companies that support Israel in a show of solidarity with the Palestinians.

The religious edict by the Indonesian Ulema Council, or MUI, said Muslims in the country must support the Palestinians' struggle against "Israeli aggression", while also declaring that support for Israel or its supporters is "haram", or against Islamic law.

"MUI call on every Muslim to avoid as much as possible transactions and use of Israel products and those that affiliated with Israel, as well as those who support colonialism and Zionism," Asrorun Niam Sholeh, an executive of the council, told reporters Friday.

"We cannot support the party that is at war with Palestine, including using products whose proceeds actually support acts of murder of the Palestinians."

Fatwas have no legal force and are aimed at encouraging the devout in world's most populous Muslim-majority country against taking a certain course of action.

Blinken ends marathon 'more needs to be

Gaza health system has reached 'point of no return': Red Cross

Lebanon's Hezbollah says Israeli fire kills 7 fighters

AFP | New Delhi, India

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken wrapped up a marathon diplomatic push yesterday in India after a whirlwind Middle East trip and G7 talks, saying Israel's pauses in its Gaza offensive would "save lives" but more was needed.

"Far too many Palestinians have been killed," Blinken said in New Delhi, his last stop before heading home, where he repeated US support for ally Israel but was firm that more aid had to reach civilians in Gaza.

Blinken's trip has included South Korea, a G7 foreign min-



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh arrive for a family photo ahead of their bilateral meetings, at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan in New Delhi

isters' meeting in Japan -- which sought to find common ground on the Gaza conflict -- and the Middle East, where he visited Israel and the occupied West Bank.

Israel announced on Thursday pauses in its battle against Hamas to formalise an arrangement that

has already seen tens of thousands of Palestinians flee devastation in northern Gaza, steps Blinken said "will save lives".

"I think some progress has been made," Blinken said. "But I was also very clear that much more needs to be done in terms

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Prince Harry wins latest round in legal battle with UK newspapers



Britain's Meghan, Duchess of Sussex and Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, attend a children's event

London, United Kingdom

The publishers of two UK newspapers on Friday lost a bid to have a case for unlawful information gathering brought against them by Prince Harry and others thrown out of court, opening the way for a possible trial.

King Charles III's younger son made headlines earlier this year when he flew in from California to make an unexpected in-person appearance at the High Court in London for the case.

The prince and six other high profile figures including pop star Elton John launched the legal action last year after becoming aware of "compelling and highly distressing evidence that they have been the victims of abhorrent criminal activity and gross breaches of privacy" by Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

Other claimants are John's husband David Furnish, the actors Liz Hurley and Sadie Frost, politician Simon Hughes, and Doreen Lawrence, whose son Stephen was killed in a racist murder in 1993.

Lawyers for ANL -- publishers of the Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday -- had argued the claims against them had been brought too late.

But in a written ruling, judge Matthew Nicklin disagreed and said the case could go ahead.

The ruling is the latest chapter in Harry's turbulent relationship with the press, whom he holds responsible for the death of his mother Princess Diana in a 1997 Paris car crash as she fled paparazzi.

ANL had "not been able to deliver a 'knockout blow' to the claims of any of these claimants", the judge said in his 95-page ruling.

Israel must not lose chance for peace with Arab world: Germany

Berlin, Germany

Israel must not lose a "historic opportunity" for peace with Arab states due to its war against Hamas, Germany's foreign minister said Friday as she embarked on a trip to the region.

Annalena Baerbock is making her third visit to the Middle East since Hamas launched its October 7 attack from the Gaza Strip, which sparked a conflict with Israel.

One of her stops will be the United Arab Emirates, which was among countries that normalised relations with Israel in 2020.

She will also visit Saudi Arabia, which had been in talks over a potential normalisation with Israel, until they were paused when the current war broke out.

In addition, Baerbock will visit Israel. "In this almost unresolvable turmoil, it is crucial not to lose sight of the big picture," she said.

"Israel's historic opportunity for peace with its Arab neighbours must not be lost -- because that is precisely the goal of the terrorists."

"And even in our efforts to secure the release of the hostages, humanitarian access to Gaza or the prevention of a regional spillover of violence -- we only have a chance of success if we pull together with the Arab Gulf states."



Palestinians families fleeing Gaza City and other parts of northern Gaza towards the southern areas, walk along a road

UN's Palestinian refugee agency says over 100 staff killed in Gaza

Geneva, Switzerland

The head of the United Nations agency supporting Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said yesterday that more than 100 of its staff had been killed

in the war in Gaza. "Devastated. Over 100 UNRWA colleagues confirmed killed in one month. Parents, teachers, nurses, doctors, support staff," UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini said on X, formerly Twitter.

"UNRWA is mourning, Palestinians mourning, Israelis mourning. Ending this tragedy needs (a) humanitarian ceasefire now", he added.

The UN agency said in a video message that 101 of its employees had been killed since the war between Israel and Hamas erupted on October 7.

"They were teachers, school principals, engineers, doctors, a psychologist, support staff, sanitation and tech workers," it said.

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said he was "heartbroken by this deeply tragic news".

"These colleagues were flames of hope and humanity," he said on X, formerly Twitter. "Our thoughts remain with their families and all our brave UNRWA colleagues."

BETTER YOU KNOW

More than 1,400 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the attack, according to Israeli officials. Vowing to destroy Hamas, Israel has retaliated with relentless bombardment and a ground campaign that the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says has killed more than 11,000 people, mostly civilians and many of them children.

Iran says

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said yesterday that expansion of the Israel-Hamas war has become "inevitable", amid widespread concern in the region and beyond that the conflict could spread.

"Due to the increasing intensity of the war against the civilian

International media

AFP | Paris, France

Major international media outlets have strongly denied that their Gaza photographers had prior knowledge of the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, following allegations taken up by the Israeli government.

Denials have been published by US media outlets *The New York Times* and *CNN*, as well as global news agencies *AP*, *Reuters* and *AFP*.

The controversy started with an online post by *HonestReporting*, an organisation that highlights media coverage considered unfavourable to Israel.

HonestReporting said the speed with which certain Palestinian photojournalists in Gaza responded to the attack, and their degree of access to the violence, raised "ethical questions".

Its claims were taken up by the Israeli government.

"These journalists were accomplices in crimes against humanity; their actions were contrary to professional ethics," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Thursday on X (formerly Twitter).

Danny Danon, a former Israeli

German mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz demonstrates integral calculus for the first time to find the area under the graph of $y = f(x)$ function



WWI armistice signed by the Allies and Germany comes into effect and World War I hostilities end at 11am, "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month"

The Church of England approves the ordination of female priests

Yasser Arafat's death through unidentified causes confirmed by Palestine Liberation Organization, Mahmoud Abbas elected PLO chairman minutes later.

Marathon tour warning 'done' for Gazans

of protecting civilians and getting humanitarian assistance to them." "Free and open" Blinken and US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin joined foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and defence minister Rajnath Singh for annual "two-plus-two" talks, which India said would focus on "defence and security cooperation".

The conflict in Gaza poses a major challenge to hopes of a key trade and transport route linking Europe, the Middle East and India, unveiled during the G20 talks in September.

"In the face of urgent global challenges, it's more important than ever that the world's two largest democracies exchange views, find common goals, and deliver for our people," Austin said.

Delhi is part of the Quad alliance alongside the United States, Australia and Japan, a grouping that positions itself as a bulwark against China's growing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific

Gaza 'carnage simply must stop': top UN aid official

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

The United Nations has called for an end to the carnage afflicting war-torn Gaza during Israel's military campaign, according to a top UN aid official's comments released yesterday.

"The present course chosen by the Israeli authorities will not bring the peace and stability that both Israelis and Palestinians want and deserve," Philippe Lazzarini, head of the United Nations' agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), wrote in a media opinion piece. "Razing entire neighbour-



Philippe Lazzarini

hoods to the ground is not an answer for the egregious crimes committed by Hamas. "To the contrary, it is creating a new generation of aggrieved Palestinians who are likely to continue the cycle of violence. The carnage simply must stop."

region.

"We are promoting a free and open, prosperous, secure and resilient Indo-Pacific," Blinken said, whose final engagement was to meet Indian Prime Minister Nar-

endra Modi.

Blinken's Indian counterpart Jaishankar said they discussed "advancing our strategic partnership, including elevating our defence ties".

Expansion of war 'inevitable'

residents of Gaza, the expansion of the scope of the war has now become inevitable", Amir-Abdollahian said to his Qatari counterpart, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in a phone call. His comments were cited on the ministry's website.

President Ebrahim Raisi has said Iran sees it as "its duty to support the resistance groups"

but insisted that they act independently.

A series of rocket and drone attacks have also targeted military bases hosting US and other forces in an anti-jihadist coalition in Iraq and Syria.

A group known as "Islamic Resistance in Iraq" has claimed most of those attacks, which Washington has linked back to Iran.

The United States has sent two aircraft carrier groups to the eastern Mediterranean as part of efforts it says aim to deter a wider war.

Raisi will join Arab leaders in the Saudi capital today for summits expected to underscore demands that Israel's attacks on Gaza end before the violence draws in other countries.

Media deny allegations against Gaza photographers



An aerial view shows Palestinian families fleeing to the southern part of the Gaza Strip along the Salah Al-Din road in the Wadi Gaza district

ambassador to the UN and senior lawmaker for Netanyahu's Likud party, went further.

"Israel's internal security agency announced that they will eliminate all participants of the October 7 massacre. The 'photojournalists' who took part in recording the assault will be added to that list," he wrote on X.

HonestReporting's claims were strongly denied by the Western media mentioned in the article.

"The Associated Press had no knowledge of the Oct. 7 attacks

before they happened," AP said in a statement.

The *New York Times* called the allegations against its freelance photographer "untrue and outrageous", and accused *HonestReporting* of recklessly "putting our journalists on the ground in Israel and Gaza at risk."

Reuters said it "categorically denies" having prior knowledge or embedding journalists with Hamas.

CNN suspended ties with the freelance photographer implicat-

ed by *HonestReporting*, but said "we have not at this time found reason to doubt the journalistic accuracy of the work he has done for us."

AFP was not among the media organisations accused by *HonestReporting*, but faced similar accusations on social media in France.

AFP said its journalists in Gaza were woken by the sound of artillery and rocket fire and headed towards the fence with Israel, with the first photos taken more than an hour after the attack started.

"By the time the first photos arrived, it was clear a major news story was already under way. We covered it as we would cover any major news story," said Phil Chetwynd, AFP's global news director.

"They were simply following the breaking news story as it unfolded on the ground.

"Any suggestion of collusion between our journalists in Gaza and Hamas during the 7 October attack is disgraceful and defamatory and we reserve the right to take any action, including legal action, as a result," Chetwynd added.

Egypt's Sisi hosts Qatar leader for Gaza ceasefire talks



Al-Sisi (R) meeting with Qatar's Sheikh Tamim at the Ittihadia Palace in Cairo

AFP | Cairo, Egypt

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani met yesterday to review "intensive efforts" towards a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, Cairo said.

In Cairo, Sisi and Sheikh Tamim "discussed the Israeli military escalation in the Gaza Strip, and the subsequent regional challenges that push the region in dangerous and uncalculated directions", the Egyptian presidency said in a statement.

"The two leaders discussed the best ways to protect innocent civilians in Gaza and to stop the bloodshed," it added. "They reviewed the inten-

sive efforts aimed at achieving a ceasefire and sustaining the delivery of humanitarian aid in quantities that meet the needs of the Palestinian people in Gaza." The high-level meeting in Cairo comes ahead of Saturday's summits in Saudi Arabia, where Arab and Muslim leaders are expected to press for an end to more than a month of fighting.

Both Egypt and Qatar had been involved in previous talks which led to the release, at the end of October, of two women kidnapped by Hamas during its attack on Israeli territory on October 7.

With the Rafah crossing, Egypt is historically a key mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



An injured Palestinian girl receives treatment at the Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip

Toxic smog chokes Pakistan and shuts cities



Commuters make their way through a busy street amid smoggy conditions in Lahore

TDT | Agencies

Toxic smog in eastern Pakistan has made thousands of people sick, forcing authorities to shut some cities for the rest of the week.

Smog in the country's second-largest city Lahore has risen to dangerous levels.

The Punjab provincial government has ordered that schools, offices, malls and parks in three cities, including Lahore, be closed until Sunday.

Pakistan's Punjab province borders the Indian state of the same name.

Over the past few days,

Lahore's Air Quality Index - which measures the level of fine particulate matter in the air - have hovered around the 400 mark. AQI levels at or below 100 are generally thought of as satisfactory. Lahore borders the Indian city of Amritsar.

North India is also suffering from the impact of toxic smog.

Air pollution in the Indian capital Delhi has risen to alarming levels. On Tuesday, the air quality index for the Indian capital hit 300 on 7 November, nearly reaching the hazardous levels of 301-500.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



In New Delhi with @SecDef Austin for #USIndia 2+2 consultations. So much of what we do to advance America's national security hinges on our defense and diplomacy working hand-in-hand. A strong partnership with India is a vital part of that discussion.

@SecBlinken

02



For weeks, I've been speaking with Israel's leaders about the importance of humanitarian pauses in the fighting to get civilians to safety, support the freeing of hostages, and increase the flow of food, water, and medicine into Gaza.

@POTUS

03



Glad to receive @SecBlinken and @SecDef. The "2+2" Format is a key enabler for further strengthening the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. Our shared belief in democracy, pluralism and the rule of law underpins our mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse sectors. The India-US partnership is truly a force for global good.

@narendramodi

04



We have to protect Ukraine. And we will—I have no doubt about it. Believing in Ukraine means knowing that Ukraine and Ukrainians can preserve their independence, will preserve it, and will regain what is theirs.

@ZelenskyyUa

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

CELEBS

celebs

Dwayne Johnson says political parties approached him to run for president

Fox | Los Angeles

Political parties are seriously interested in Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson and are eyeing him for the Oval Office. The professional wrestler-turned-movie star says he's been approached by political parties to run for President of the United States after a survey from the New York Daily News cited that 46% of Americans would vote for him. "That was an interesting poll that happened, and I was really moved by that. And I was really uh, blown away. I was really honoured," he told Trevor Noah

on his "What Now?" podcast. "At the end of the year . . . in 2022 I got a visit from the parties, asking me if I was going to run and if I could run," Johnson spilled. "It was a big deal. And it came out of the blue. And it was one after the other." "They brought up that poll. They also brought up their own deep dive research that would prove, should I ever decide to go down that road. . . ." "That you'd be a real contender?" Trevor asked. "Yeah . . . It was all very surreal. Because that's never been my goal. My goal has never been to be in politics. Matter of fact, there's a lot of things about pol-

itics that I hate," he admitted. When the poll initially came out in 2021, he told USA Today he was open to the challenge. "I would consider a presidential run in the future if that's what the people wanted," he shared. "Truly I mean that, and I'm not flippant in any way with my answer. . . . That would be up to the people. . . . So I would wait, and



Dwayne Johnson

I would listen. I would have my finger on the pulse and my ear to the ground." Johnson says it was after he made those comments that the parties pounced. "But then I really had to double down on this idea, and this is the truth: I've got little ones. I have three daughters." His daughter, Ava, with first

” At the end of the year . . . in 2022 I got a visit from the parties, asking me if I was going to run and if I could run. It was a big deal. And it came out of the blue. And it was one after the other. They brought up that poll. They also brought up their own deep dive research that would prove, should I ever decide to go down that road. . .

DWAYNE JOHNSON

wife Dany Garcia is now 22, but he has a seven-year-old and five-year-old with wife Lauren Hashian. "I have a lot of estrogen in my house. And I love it," stressing the importance of being a present father. "I know what it's like to be in an occupation that took me away...I don't want that for my little ones now. And so, that was my - one of my primary discussions with the parties, who ultimately were like, 'Yeah but, the other ones have done it like this!'" "Of course I would consider it," Johnson said of running for president, if people were really passionate about his candidacy.

Kim Kardashian plans to remain single for another year

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Kim Kardashian has vowed to remain single for another year. The 43-year-old star has revealed that she's "not looking" for love for the time being, and plans to stick to her previously-expressed desire to remain out of a relationship for at least two years.

The brunette beauty - who split from comedian Pete Davidson in August 2022 - said on the latest episode of 'The Kardashians': "I've got a year to go. I think that will be really good for me. [I'm] not looking - they seem to find me, but I'm not looking!"

Kim has already been married three times - to Damon Thomas, Kris Humphries and Kanye West - and she's admitted being undecided about the possibility of walking down the aisle one last time.

Kim Kardashian



"That was a dream": Greta Gerwig on success of 'Barbie'

ANI | California

American actor and writer Greta Gerwig and her 'Barbie' co-writer and real-life partner Noah Baumbach recently appeared at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York City for a Q&A moderated by writer Tony Kushner, reported People.

"This definitely feels like a moment that I could potentially wake up from and think, 'No, that was a dream,'" Gerwig said after Kushner began the discussion by calling Barbie a "masterpiece."

"This is incredible and I can't tell you how much it means that you did this," she added,



Greta Gerwig

noting that Kushner recently sent her and Baumbach, 54, an email praising their efforts on the Margot Robbie film that dominated the box office this summer, as per People.

"Noah read [the email] to me out loud and I was like, 'frame it,

frame the computer," she added of the note from Kushner, the writer behind Angels in America, Lincoln and The Fabelmans.

While Baumbach stated in another recent Q&A that he was initially hesitant to take on the project, he later lobbied for Gerwig to direct the film herself when they finished work on Barbie's screenplay.

"There was a point where I was like, 'You have to direct it,' because we have to protect it. Because as we started to really enjoy [writing the movie], and really it was like we're totally mad, we were totally mad," Baumbach said. "We were, as many of us [were] in the pandemic, there was that isolation,

so it kind of gave us this way of connection to a kind of future world where we hoped movies would be back and we'd all be back in a theatre."

Gerwig and Baumbach crafted 'Barbie's' script during the first year of the pandemic; Gerwig was eventually named the movie's director in July 2021. The pair said writing the movie during an uncertain period in the film industry helped them create the film's bold approach to Mattel's iconic toy brand, according to People.

"We were writing it when no one was going to movies and there were no movies and no one was making movies," Gerwig recalled.

Jennifer Garner: 'There's trauma in poverty!'

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

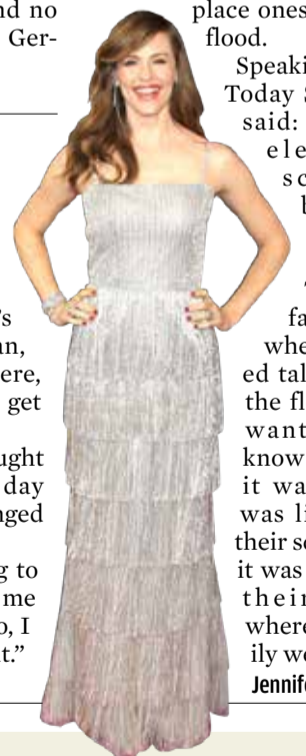
Jennifer Garner thinks there is "a lot of trauma" for children growing up in poverty.

The 51-year-old actress returned to the state of Kentucky one year on from mass floods that destroyed the Robinson Elementary School building and various other locations in the area and has donated 500 books to the new building to replace ones lost in the flood.

Speaking on 'The Today Show', she said: "My little elementary school library totally shaped my life. The kids' faces turned

when we started talking about the floods. They wanted me to know how scary it was, what it was like to lose their school, what it was like to lose their homes, where their family went."

Jennifer Garner



Zac Efron details 'shocking' transformation for The Iron Claw

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Zac Efron underwent a "shocking" transformation for 'The Iron Claw'.

The 36-year-old actor plays real life wrestling legend Kevin Von Erich in a new biopic about his family's rollercoaster dynasty, and he threw himself into the role from getting in ridiculous shape to rocking a bowl cut in revealing attire.

He told Entertainment To-

night: "It was shocking at every point of the transformation.

"I remember Harris [Dickinson] and I were walking out of hair and make-up and it was like the first time we had to wear the full kit, and we were both thinking, 'What the hell are we doing here, man? How did we get into this?'"

"But I think it ended up looking really good and we had a great crew helping us out with that. The hair and make-up team was epic."



Zac Efron

Efron took inspiration from Von Erich himself as it came to

making sure he did him and his family proud.

He added: "This movie's a true story, and that man, Kevin Von Erich right there, he really motivated me to get in shape for this movie.

"The physicality he brought to the ring every single day was really unique. It changed wrestling.

"I knew that was going to be the hardest [thing] for me to master and get right. So, I put everything I had into it."

SUDOKU

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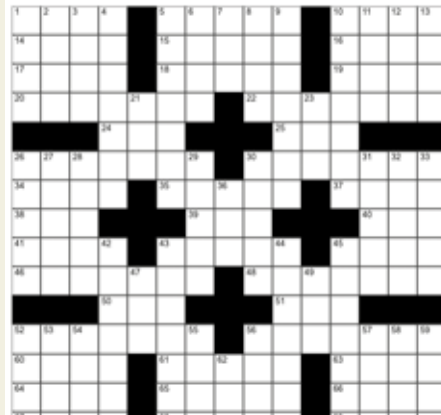
Yesterday's solution

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

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- Yard tunneler; 5- Finely ground meal of grain; 10- Mah-jongg piece; 14- Getting ___ years; 15- Utah's ___ Mountains; 16- Russian river; 17- Leave in, to an editor; 18- Satisfied; 19- Financial institution; 20- Hawaii's largest industry; 22- Nasal cavities; 24- Ref's counterpart; 25- Feel unwell; 26- Sawbuck; 30- Theoretically; 34- Put a lid ___; 35- Spoil; 37- Capital of Italy; 38- Balderdash; 39- Sandwich initials; 40- Sprechen ___ Deutsch?; 41- "Hard ___" (sailor's yell); 43- Girder; 45- Factory; 46- Accord; 48- Roman household gods; 50- ASCAP rival; 51- Calendar abbr.; 52- Parched; 56- Most strange; 60- Vintner's prefix; 61- Herbert Hoover, for one; 63- "Twittering Machine" artist; 64- Painter of limp watches; 65- Give it ___; 66- Troubles; 67- Like some history; 68- Brought on; 69- Tidy, without fault;

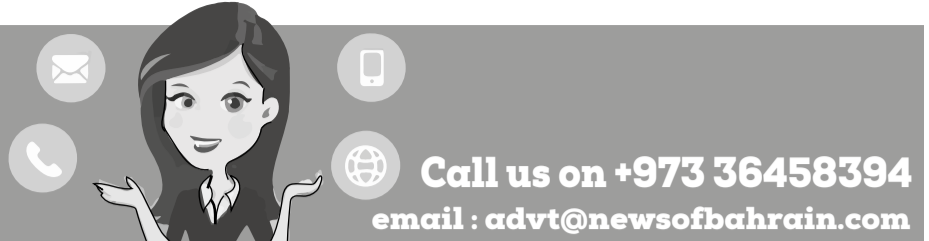
Down

1- The majority of; 2- Aware of; 3- Stead; 4- Confide; 5- Idealist; 6- Actor Neeson; 7- Mich. neighbor; 8- Western Native Americans; 9- Shining; 10- Like penne or ziti; 11- Nest eggs, briefly; 12- Alley; 13- Lodge members; 21- Little devil; 23- Pinch; 26- Law of Moses; 27- ___ Gay; 28- Gunpowder ingredient; 29- Domestic cat; 30- Available; 31- Put forth; 32- "South Pacific" hero; 33- Stagers; 36- ___ de France; 42- Embrangle; 43- First; 44- Souvenir; 45- Little man; 47- Mantric syllables; 49- And not; 52- List heading; 53- Listen to; 54- To Live and Die ___; 55- Long ago; 56- 3:00; 57- Fashion mag; 58- Actress Ward; 59- Dry run; 62- Marry;

Yesterday's solution

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

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Moyes says Premier League managers wary of speaking out on VAR

AFP | London

West Ham boss David Moyes believes managers do not want to speak out about VAR controversies because they are either ignored, fined or both.

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta launched a furious tirade against the decision to allow Anthony Gordon's winning goal for Newcastle last weekend.

But West Ham chief Moyes feels managers of clubs outside the elite group usually do not get listened to, and when they are noticed they get hit in the pocket.

"We're all pretty disappointed with lots of aspects but we're also all very much in favour of trying to make it work," said Moyes.

"I just think we've all been disappointed with some of the officiating this season. My single opinion wouldn't matter a jot. They'll do what they need to do.

"When we're putting it over it's not getting much clout at the other end. You can ask us but we feel that we're not get-



West Ham manager David Moyes

ting an awful lot back when we're giving it back to the officials or whoever."

Moyes, whose side host Nottingham Forest in the Premier League on Sunday, said the focus tended to be on incidents at the top clubs.

"It's as if people don't think that some other clubs have the same problems, the same VAR problems, the same decision-making," he said. "It doesn't get the same highlight. We're all pretty disappointed by what we've been getting back.

"We don't want to do it because managers will be fined for speaking out of turn. Most managers don't want to say anything about it because we know we're locked down."

Ariana-Adiya, Bora-Cagan pairs crowned ITF champions

● Ariana Gogulina, Adiya Omarbek win girls' doubles title, Ariana to contend for singles crown

● Bora Bakici, Cagan Ege Tufekci triumph in boys' doubles, Bora to also play for singles title

TDI | Manama

Ariana Gogulina and Adiya Omarbek of Kazakhstan and Bora Bakici and Cagan Ege Tufekci of Turkey were yesterday crowned champions of their respective doubles categories in the Bahrain ITF Juniors 2023 tournament, being played at the Bahrain Tennis Federation (BTF) hard courts in Isa Town.

Ariana and Adiya captured the girls' doubles title after defeating Luisa Fusil of Slovenia and Pallavi Patel of India 6-4, 6-1 in their final match. Ariana and Adiya lived up to their bill-



Turkey's Bora Bakici in action during his singles semi-final match yesterday

ing as fourth seeds against their unseeded rivals in the win.

On the distaff, Bora and Cagan claimed the boys' doubles crown as third seeds after upsetting top seeds Venkat Rishi Batlanki of the US and Dev Kanbargimath of Romania 6-3, 7-5.

With the doubles results, both Ariana and Bora are on track to come away with a championship double from the tournament.

Ariana also qualified yesterday for the girls' singles final after beating Sosanne Malak of

Egypt in their last four clash. Top-seeded Ariana won the first set and was leading 4-0 in the second, when third-seeded Sosanne retired from the match.

Ariana will face seventh seed Alina Sogomonyan in the title contest. Alina beat Arina Malygina 6-4, 6-3 in their semi-final.

Bora, meanwhile, made it through to the boys' singles final. He took down top-seeded Venkat 6-4, 5-7, 6-3 in a hotly contested fixture. Bora now moves on to face Andres Pereiro Lopez in the gold medal match. Andres outplayed fifth seed Josh Hinton from Great Britain 6-2, 6-3 in their semi-final.

Both the girls' and boys' singles finals are scheduled to be held today at the BTF as part of the concluding day's events in the tournament.

The competition is the second of three straight ITF events being hosted by the Kingdom. It is a J30 event that is part of the 2023 International Tennis Federation (ITF) World Tennis Tour Juniors, which features the world's top tennis talents aged 13 to 18.

Naomi Osaka to make eagerly awaited comeback in Brisbane



Naomi Osaka reacts during a match (file photo)

AFP | Brisbane

Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka will make her eagerly anticipated return to tennis at the Brisbane International in Australia, organisers said yesterday.

Starting on the last day of December, the Brisbane tournament is a warm-up for the Australian Open Grand Slam starting in mid-January.

The 26-year-old former world number one Osaka gave birth to daughter Shai in July and has not played on tour since September 2022, having also struggled with her mental health and the pressures of tennis.

"I always love starting my season in Brisbane and can't wait to return," Japan's Osaka said.

"The Brisbane International is such a great tournament and will set me up for a brilliant comeback this summer."

Osaka has won four major titles, triumphing in the 2019 and 2021 Australian Opens, and winning the US Open in 2018 and 2020.

Osaka earlier this year said her break from the sport had "really fuelled a fire in me".

Osaka will be joined in Brisbane by Grand Slam winners Andy Murray and Victoria Azarenka, as well as Grigor Dimitrov and Holger Rune.

Malan says 'poor kid' Brook can play '100 games for England'

AFP | Kolkata

England batsman Dawid Malan said yesterday young teammate Harry Brook has been placed "under so much pressure" at the World Cup but backed him to play "100 games across all formats".

Brook's struggles have mirrored those of the reigning champions whose woeful title defence will officially end on Saturday when they face Pakistan at the iconic Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

Brook has made just one fifty at a tournament where England have lost six out of eight games, including a first defeat to Afghanistan.

"I really feel for him. I feel like there's been so much pressure put on his shoulders, almost as if he was the saviour of English cricket," said Malan.

"The poor kid is still learning his way and he's still trying to find his feet in international cricket."

He added: "Hopefully he learns from this and from all the pressure that's been put on his shoulders and he can find a way to keep getting better because I think he's an exceptional talent and I can see him playing 100 games for England across all formats."

Opening batsman Malan has been a rare bright spot for England over the last five weeks in India.

He has 373 runs at an average of over 46 and made a ca-



England's Dawid Malan plays a shot (file photo)

"I really feel for him. I feel like there's been so much pressure put on his shoulders, almost as if he was the saviour of English cricket. The poor kid is still learning his way and he's still trying to find his feet in international cricket"

DAVID MALAN

reer best 140 against Bangladesh with two more fifties in the games with Australia and Netherlands.

However, at 36, he appreciates that his brief ODI career, which has only seen him play 30 games, may come to an end on Saturday if England's cricket

rulers decide to cull the senior stars.

"I'm the second oldest in this team. I don't know what my future holds whether that be my choice or the team's choice," he said.

"Tomorrow could be the last game of cricket for England for me and it could still be the start of another journey. Who knows? We'll only find out when the dust settles."

Like his teammates, Malan is stumped as to why England have performed so badly just four years after their memorable win over New Zealand in the final at Lord's.

It was also only last November that England cemented their white-ball supremacy by capturing the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia.

"The sport changes quickly.



Malan has 373 runs at an average of over 46 and made a career best 140 against Bangladesh with two more fifties in the games with Australia and Netherlands

It has a way of biting you in the backside," said Malan.

"It creeps up on you quite quickly. We're so disappointed in the fact that we are here playing against Pakistan at Eden Gardens and we're not in the race for it."

Despite that, Malan said that qualifying for the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan was still a target.

The International Cricket Council last week announced that seven top teams from this World Cup along with hosts Pakistan will qualify.

"We're seventh on the log, which isn't where we'd like to be at this stage of the tournament. We'd have hoped to come here pushing for a semi-final spot and preparing for that, but we just haven't been good enough," added Malan.

Van der Dussen steers South Africa to victory as Afghanistan exit

Proteas secure a comfortable World Cup win as Afghanistan's semi-final hopes dashed in final group game

● **Rassie van der Dussen hit an unbeaten 76 to lead the Proteas home with 15 balls to spare**

AFP | Ahmedabad

Rassie van der Dussen hit an unbeaten 76 to lead South Africa to a comfortable five-wicket win over Afghanistan in their last World Cup group game yesterday as their opponents were eliminated from the semi-final race.

Chasing 245 for victory, Van der Dussen steered the Proteas home with 15 balls to spare in a tune-up for their semi-final against Australia next week.

Azmatullah Omarzai hit an unbeaten 97 to guide Afghanistan to 244 all out in a match where they needed an unlikely 438-run win to make the last four.



Rassie van der Dussen

New Zealand look all set to meet hosts India in the other semi-final unless Pakistan pull off a huge win against England on Saturday.

Playing for pride, Afghanistan's spinners checked South Africa's strong start of 64-0 after Mujeeb Ur Rahman dismissed skipper Temba Bavuma for 23

and fellow spinner Mohammad Nabi trapped Quinton de Kock lbw on 41.

Bavuma's hamstring troubled him throughout the match while fielding and batting in a worrying sign ahead of their semi-final.

De Kock, who will quit one-day internationals when this

Scorecard

South Africa 247 for 5 (van der Dussen 76*, de Kock 41, Nabi 2-35, Rashid 2-37) **beat Afghanistan 244** (Omarzai 97*, Coetzee 4-44, Maharaj 2-25) by five wickets

World Cup is over, overtook New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra (565) to reclaim his top spot in the tournament batting chart with 591 runs including four centuries.

The Proteas put their chase back on track in a third-wicket stand of 50 but leg-spinner Rashid Khan broke through with the wicket of Aiden Markram for 25.

South Africa looked in trouble when Rashid bowled Heinrich Klaasen for 10 but Van der Dussen stood firm to build partnerships including an unbeaten 65-run stand with Andile Phehlukwayo, who hit the winning six in an unbeaten 39.



Quinton de Kock surpasses Rachin Ravindra to reclaim the top spot in the tournament batting chart with 591 runs

Earlier Afghanistan slipped to 116-6 before Azmatullah hit his ODI best to lift the team to a competitive total.

South Africa fast bowler Gerald Coetzee took four wickets while spinner Keshav Maharaj returned impressive figures of 2-25.

De Kock played a key part with his six wicketkeeping dismissals to equal a World Cup record

of Australia's Adam Gilchrist (v Namibia - Potchefstroom, 2003) and Pakistan's Sarfaraz Ahmed (v South Africa - Auckland, 2015).

Openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran started aggressively before Maharaj struck with his first ball to have Gurbaz caught for 25.

Coetzee sent back Ibrahim in the next over to check the batting surge and Afghanistan slipped from 41-0 to 45-3 when Maharaj had skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi caught behind for two.

Afghanistan lost three more wickets to be in danger of getting bowled out in less than their quota of 50 overs but Azmatullah stood firm to play out the innings.

Afghanistan, led by Hashmatullah Shahidi, ended a strong campaign after they beat defending champions England, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands.

'No pressure' Azam blasts critics as World Cup dream slips away

AFP | Kolkata

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam blasted his critics yesterday, telling them "it's easy to give advice on TV" as he refused to surrender his World Cup dreams.

Pakistan have to defeat defending champions England by at least 287 runs on Saturday to oust New Zealand as the fourth and last semi-finalist on net run rate.

Failure to do so will spark more questions over Azam's captaincy, a position he has held for three years.

"I have not performed the way I should have in the World Cup, that's why people are saying that I am under pressure. I am under no pressure," insisted the 29-year-old.

"Everyone has their own point of view, their own way of thinking. Everyone is saying something different. He should be like this, or like that.

"If someone has to give me advice, everyone has my number. It is easy to give advice on



Pakistan captain Babar Azam during a practice session in Kolkata

TV. If you want to give me some advice, you can message me."

Azam has made 282 runs at the tournament with an average of just over 40 and four fifties.

However, as captain, he has overseen four defeats in eight games including a shock loss to Afghanistan and a shattering one-wicket defeat to South Africa.

They stayed alive in the tournament last weekend when Fakhar Zaman's unbeaten

81-ball 126 not out inspired a rain-hit win over New Zealand despite the Black Caps having piled up 401-6.

Azam insisted his team has not given up hope of pulling off victory over England despite the huge margin required.

"It's not like this matter is not in the back of the mind. It's in our mind and we will try to do it," said Azam.

"But we can't just go in and start firing blindly - we want

that but with proper planning, how we want to play the first 10 overs, then the next 20 - how we have to achieve that target.

"There are a lot of things in this, like partnerships, which player will stay in the pitch for how long. I would say if Fakhar is in the match for 20 or 30 overs, we can achieve that. We can do this and we have planned for this."

Maxwell doubtful for Bangladesh after double-century heroics

AFP | Pune

Glenn Maxwell is still feeling the effects of his stunning World Cup double century and could now miss Australia's final group match against Bangladesh in Pune on Saturday.

Australia will also look at calling up fast bowler Sean Abbott in a bid to rest one of their front-line pace trio, given captain Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood have featured in all eight matches so far in the tournament.

The Bangladesh game is a 'dead' fixture for Australia, given they have already qualified for the semi-finals after Maxwell's astounding innings ensured they defeated Afghan-



Australia's Glenn Maxwell celebrates after his double century against Afghanistan (file photo)

istan by three wickets, having collapsed to 91-7 chasing 292, in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Five-time champions Aus-

tralia are now set to play South Africa in a Kolkata semi-final on Thursday, having won six games in a row after starting the

tournament with two defeats.

"He's definitely been in full recovery mode the last few days," Australia assistant coach Daniel Vettori said of Maxwell.

"We all saw the effects of the innings and in particular the heat, so I think today (Friday) is a big day," the former New Zealand captain added.

"Obviously, we've had a couple of days off, so there's been no training. He's not here today but we'll just see how he feels as the day continues."

Maxwell, while completing his 147th run, suffered severe cramp in both legs and then underwent a back spasm as he collapsed to the turf at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

Title-chasing Martin second-fastest in Malaysian MotoGP practice



Jorge Martin leaves the pit lane during the second practice in Sepang

AFP | Sepang

Title-chasing Jorge Martin was second in Malaysian grand prix practice yesterday at Sepang behind Alex Marquez, with MotoGP championship leader Francesco Bagnaia eighth.

Spain's Martin, who is just 13 points behind the Italian Bagnaia with three races to go in the season, clocked a lap of one minute and 57.997 seconds

on his Ducati.

But the Prima Pramac rider, who topped the timesheets in free practice in the morning, was outshone by compatriot Marquez after the Gresini racer finished 0.174 seconds faster.

Bagnaia is chasing a second world title in a row but he has made an unspectacular start in Malaysia, ending 15th in the morning on a cloudy but dry day outside Kuala Lumpur.

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Breath of Air wins feature race

Jockey Lee Newman saddles seven-year-old gelding to Late Abdulla Ahmed Nass Cup victory for Al Adiyat Racing and AM Smith



Winners from yesterday's races

● **Mayaas claims second Late Abdulla Ahmed Nass Cup of the day for Al Hassanain Racing, Ali Jan and Ebrahim Nader at REHC**

● **Arctic Emperor, The Parent and Carina win the three other cups up for the taking on yesterday's racecard**

TDI | Manama

Breath of Air triumphed in the feature race yesterday to headline an exciting nine-race card at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Sakhir.

The seven-year-old gelding powered to the finish in the seven-furlong, BD5,000 event to triumph for owners Al Adiyat Racing and trainer AM Smith, while saddled by Lee Newman.

Breath of Air's connections thus lifted the Late Abdulla Ahmed Nass Cup (sponsored by AA Nass and Sons Co WLL and Sarens Nass Middle East).

Taking second place was Gumais for Al Mohamediya Racing and Fawzi Nass, while ridden by Anas Al Siyabi; and in third was Mehmento for Al Afoo Racing, Mohammed Hasan and Nathan Crosse.

Another Late Abdulla Ahmed Nass Cup (sponsored by AA Nass and Sons Co WLL) was up for the taking in yesterday's third race, held over a six-furlong straight with a BD3,000 total prize fund. Mayaas took the win for Al



Other winners from yesterday's packed nine-race programme were Sahara Spear for Al Remah Stable, Jbarah for Al Afoo Racing, Ghaarah for Al Bastaki Racing and Al Hamdany 1810 for Victorious

Hassanain Racing, Ali Jan and Ebrahim Nader; while Talha was second for Al Mohamediya Racing, Osama Hashim and Anas Al



Action from the nine-race programme

Siyabi. Rosa Mystica came third for Al Afoo Racing, Jaber Ramadhan and Nathan Crosse.

Three other trophies were claimed during the day's action.

In race eight, held over nine furlongs with a BD4,000 prize, Arctic Emperor was the winner for Al Mohamediya Racing, Fawzi Nass and Anas Al Siyabi as they lifted the Nass Corporation BSC Cup.

West Suffolk followed for HH Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Isa Al Khalifa, Abdulla Kuwaiti and Abdulrahim Jasim; and Malakye was third for Al Jasmi Stable, Bader Al Abed and Ebrahim Nader.

The seventh race for the Gulf City Cleaning Company Cup was

won by The Parent, competing for Al Adiyat Racing and AM Smith while saddled by Gerald Mosse. The three-year-old colt took the eight-furlong event with a BD3,000 prize ahead of Al Mukhtar Star, racing for Al Afoo Racing, Jaber Ramadhan and Nathan Crosse. Kinks was third for Isa Mahmood Al Seddiqi, Osama Hashim and Anas Al Siyabi.

Carina lifted the Applied Science University (ASU) Cup in race six. The four-year-old filly took the eight-furlong race, carrying a BD2,000 total prize, for Fateel Brothers Syndicate, Basem Mahdi and Carlos Henrique. Sharid was the runner-up for HH Shaikh Hamad bin Ab-

dulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, Haider Ebrahim and Abdulla Faisal; while Rider on the Storm was third for M and E Racing and AM Smith, while saddled by Andrew Elliott.

Elsewhere yesterday, Sahara Spear won race five for owners Al Remah Stable and trainer Abdulla Kuwaiti, while ridden by jockey Abdulrajim Jasim; Jbarah took race four for Al Afoo Racing, Mohammed Hasan and Nathan Crosse; Ghaarah won the second race for Al Bastaki Racing, Salahuddin Albastaki, and Carlos Henrique; and Al Hamdany 1810 triumphed in race one for Victorious and Yousif Taher, while saddled by Adam Al Balushi.

Bahrain get tough group for Asian handball event

● **Kingdom's senior men's national team drawn in Group D with UAE, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan**

● **Bahrain to host tournament, which acts as a qualifier for world championship, from 11 to 22 January**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national handball team were last night drawn in a tough Group D for the 21st Asian Men's Handball Championship.

The Bahrainis are in the same pool as the UAE, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan for the preliminary round of the continental competition, which is scheduled to be held 11 to 22 January in the Kingdom.

The event is not only a tournament to determine Asia's best, but it also acts as a qualifying competition for the 2025 IHF World Men's Handball Championship.

A total of 16 nations are competing in the championship, with the top five securing places in the worlds.

Group A features defend-



Bahrain skipper Hussain Al Sayyad in action for the national team in the recent continental qualifiers for the Paris Olympics 2024

ing champions Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Chinese Taipei. Group B includes Iran, South Korea, China and New Zealand; and Group C is composed of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, India and Japan.

The draw was held yesterday. A number of Bahrain's greatest handball players took part in the ceremonies, some of whom were Dr Nabeel Taha, Saeed Johar, Jaffar Abdulqader, and current national team captain Hussain Al Sayyad.

Also present was Bahrain Handball Association president Ali Issa.

Bahrain is hosting the con-

tinental competition for the fourth time in its history. It previously also staged the event in 2016, 2014 and 1993.

The Bahrainis have never won the Asian men's title, but have claimed the silver medals five times in the past and also won the bronze medal once.

The nationals claimed their silver in 2010, 2014, 2016, 2018 and in last year's championship. Their bronze medal was won in 1995.

Qatar are the reigning champions. They have won the gold medal the last five editions of the tournament.

Etame goal gives East Riffa derby win

● **Abbas Jaafar Sabt scores in 98th minute to lift Al Ahli to last-gasp 3-2 victory over Manama**

TDI | Manama

Jerome Mpacko Etame fired in a sensational winner to help lift East Riffa to a 1-0 victory over Riffa last night in a hotly contested derby in the 2023/2024 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League.

Etame scored the match's lone goal with a brilliant solo effort in the 26th minute. He outprinted five Riffa defenders in his charge towards goal and then slotted home past Riffa goalkeeper Abdulkarim Al Fardan.

It proved to be enough to be the difference between the two sides after more than 100 minutes of open play, and East Riffa propelled themselves to the top of the league standings after improving to 12 points with their fourth win in six games.

Riffa tried valiantly to find an equaliser in the contest but could not finish. They suffered just their first loss in five outings and stayed on 10 points.

In another match yesterday, Al Ahli pulled off a dramatic,



East Riffa's Jerome Mpacko Etame, left, and Riffa's Sayed Redha Issa vie for possession during their derby last night

Riffa tried valiantly to find an equaliser in the contest but could not finish. They suffered just their first loss in five outings and stayed on 10 points

last-gasp 3-2 win over Manama.

Mohammed Amin opened the scoring for Ahli with a header off a cross in the 14th minute. But Manama equalised in the 21st through Facundo Agustin Tobares, who scored on a one-on-one with Ahli's

Ebrahim Luthfallah.

Ebrahim Al Khattal then put Manama ahead with an effort in the face of goal in the 32nd minute off a great pass from teammate Elvis Marley Aparecido Bittncourt. But Abdulla Al Hashash was able to level the scores in the 67th minute, and then Abbas Jaafar Sabt scored the winner for Ahli in the eighth minute of second-half stoppage time to come away with the win.

Ahli went to eight points following only their second win in six matches, while Manama suffered their third loss in six games and stayed on five.