

Bahrain's Al Ahli win thriller in Gulf handball

Anwar bin Abdulla scores decisive goal against Al Safa of Saudi Arabia in tight Group B contest | P12

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Reese Witherspoon admits she bombed an audition with Robert De Niro

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BUSINESS 5 Biden, EU chief signal thaw on trade tensions

HM King, HRH CP, PM congratulate Nepal's new president



TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister congratulated Ram Chandra Poudel, following his election as President of Nepal.

HM King and HRH CP, PM wished Poudel all success in carrying out his duties to achieve the aspirations of the friendly Nepalese people for more progress and prosperity.

Iran says deal reached to buy Russian fighter jets



Sukhoi Su-35 jet fighter drives along the airfield during International military-technical forum

Tehran, Iran

Iran has finalised a deal to buy Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets from Russia, state media reported, as defence co-operation between the two countries deepens.

In a statement to the United Nations, Tehran said it began approaching "countries to buy fighter jets" to replenish its fleet in the wake of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

"Russia announced it was ready to sell them" after the expiry in October 2020 of restrictions on Iran purchasing conventional weapons under UN Resolution 2231, said the statement carried late Friday by the official IRNA news agency.

"The Sukhoi 35 fighter jets were technically acceptable for Iran," it added.



Participants of the Inter-Parliamentary Union during a family photo yesterday

Global meeting of minds

Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid opens the 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

HM the King patronised the event

146th Assembly General Debate will focus on "Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance"

Meetings to continue until Wednesday

TDT | Manama

Over 1,700 parliamentarians from around the globe witnessed yesterday as the Kingdom kick-started proceeding of the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at the Exhibition World Bahrain (EWB) in Sakhir.

The event began with a welcoming speech on behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa by Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the Deputy Prime Minister.

In the inaugural address, Shaikh Khalid reaffirmed Bahrain's commitment to join efforts and improve global security, stability and peace, terming the 146th IPU



We look forward to your Assembly and related meetings in Bahrain to reach a consensus on decisions that enhance the spirit of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, deepen international partnerships in achieving security and peace, ending wars and crises

SHAIKH KHALID BIN ABDULLAH AL KHALIFA



as a "global meeting of minds". The event, he said, reflects the confidence of the international community in Bahrain's ability to host high-profile diplomatic events.

Drawing attention towards the "exceptional circumstance" the world is enduring, Shaikh Khalid urged joint actions and

diplomacy to settle disputes for just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

The Deputy Prime Minister further stressed the need to encourage international humanitarian action and reiterated call to criminalise religious, sectarian and racist hate speech in all its forms.

The opening ceremony was in the presence of IPU President Duarte Pacheco, IPU Secretary-General Martin Chungong, Speaker of the Council of Representatives Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam and Chairman of the Shura Council Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh.

Ahmed Al Musallam, Speaker, in his address, reviewed the democratic experience of Bahrain, which extends over 100 years since the first municipal elections in 1912.

He also reviewed the Kingdom's experience of tolerance and coexistence, which has its roots dating back thousands of years.

Shaikha Haya Al Khalifa, a

member of the Council of Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly, told the participants that the world needs people like you to help raise voices on tolerance, coexistence and peace.

She stressed the need for resolving disputes through negotiation and helping people to live freely and equally with security.

Shaikha Haya further expressed concern about the increasing amount of hatred in society, particularly in the context of social media. She emphasized the importance of fostering a new culture that promotes tolerance and modern scientific knowledge and provides hope for future generations.

Numerous speeches were delivered during the ceremony, including a significant one by United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, which was recorded in a video format.

Parliamentary committees had started their meetings early morning yesterday ahead of the official opening ceremony held in the evening.

This year, the IPU membership is expected to increase to 179 with the readmission of Liberia, a founding member of the IPU in 1889 whose membership lapsed in 2011.



Held in Bahrain for the first time since the IPU was founded more than 133 years ago, the meeting will run until Wednesday on the theme "Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance".

For global peace

Bahrain positive example to emulate, says Pacheco

TDT | Manama

Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has called on the global community to prioritise peaceful co-existence and used Bahrain as a positive example to emulate.

"We are in a country that shows to the world that people from different cultures, and religions, can live together in a peaceful society and in perfect coexistence. What we find here is what we should have in other countries of our world - Peaceful coexistence," Pacheco said at a press conference following the opening of the IPU 146th



The opening press conference of the 146th IPU Assembly

Assembly and related meetings in Bahrain.

Jamal Fakhro, First Vice-Chairman of the Bahrain Shura Council, and other top officials were also present.

Pacheco expressed his delight in being present at the IPU 146th Assembly in Manama, stating, "As the President of IPU, I am

thrilled to be here."

He noted that global problems require global solutions, as no single country can solve them alone, citing examples such as terrorism and poverty.

"That's why 1,000 parliamentarians from so many countries are here with all the staff and experts who come with them."

According to Pacheco, the world united to combat the recent pandemic, with scientists from various cultures and countries collaborating and successfully developing vaccines in record time.

However, he lamented that the world failed to learn from this experience, as numerous

conflicts continue to persist globally.

Expressing his gratitude towards Bahrain for organising the event, Pacheco stated that he was at a loss for words to convey his appreciation.

Pacheco mentioned that Bahrain is the most progressive nation in the region regarding gender equality.

The Secretary-General future made an official request to Bahraini officials to host the "2024 E-Parliamentary Meeting" in Manama.

In response, Fakhro expressed his commitment to fulfilling the IPU's request.



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla praises Indian diaspora, growing cooperation with Bahrain



Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla participating in various meetings yesterday in Manama on the sidelines of 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union

TDI | Manama

Indian Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla, has praised the strong ties between Bahrain and India, saying that they have gained new dimensions in recent years. Birla also expressed his gratitude for the hard work, loyalty, diligence, and dedication of the Indian diaspora, during a meeting held on the sidelines of his visit to Bahrain for the 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Conference.

Speaking to prominent members of the Indian diaspora, including businessmen, professionals, doctors, educationalists, and heads of the Indian community and cultural organisations, Birla noted that cooperation between the two countries has



Speaker Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam with Indian Speaker Om Birla

increased in areas such as IT, Fintech, and Renewable Energy. He emphasised that the Indian diaspora would add more strength to the relationship as a strong link.

Birla highlighted the growing India-Bahrain ties as a relationship based on human sensibilities and cultural values.

Separately, he participated in a holi celebration organised in

Manama and held several bilateral meetings with his counterparts from across the world on the sidelines of the conference.

Accompanying Birla are Bhartruhari Mahtab, Aparajita Sa-

rangi, and Dr Agrawal RMD. Yesterday, the Member IPU Executive Committee apprised Asia Pacific Group Members about the work done by the Committee in previous meetings.

Later in the evening, Om Birla also held discussions with Council of Representatives Speaker Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam on the strong bilateral relations between Bahrain and India.

Al Musallam emphasised the importance of continuing to develop joint ties between the two countries and praised India's vital role in supporting regional security and stability, as well as its upcoming presidency of the G20 and Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2023.

Om Birla expressed pride and appreciation for the close historical ties between India and Bahrain, and their mutual commitment to further strengthen them in all fields for the benefit of both nations.

Women Parliamentarians Forum highlights importance of global collaboration and gender equity

Julia Cassano
TDI | Manama

Giving women parliamentarians a unique opportunity and a global platform for international decision-making, Women Parliamentarians Forum opened yesterday in Bahrain alongside the 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly.

The first of its kind and a trailblazer on the issue of women's political participation, the forum meets at every IPU Assembly. It provides an opportunity for women MPs to learn about how other countries are addressing gender inequality.

IPU President Duarte Pacheco opened the forum, in the presence of the participating parliamentary delegations which are attending the 146th IPU Assembly.

Representing Bahrain, Shura Council First Deputy Chairman Jamal Mohammed Fakhro stressed Bahrain's strides in promoting gender equity through constitutional and legislative provisions.

He noted Bahrain's ranking on international indicators measuring women's progress, paying tribute to Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, wife of His Majesty the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women.



Andrei Savinykh, Belarus



Dr Ravza Kavacki Kan, Turkey



Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Bangladesh



Oguzhan Hasipoglu, Cyprus



Jamal Mohammed Fakhro

Cyber-attacks affect women: Dr Ravza

In an interview with *The Daily Tribune*, Dr Ravza Kavacki Kan, president of the Turkish IPU Group, emphasised the importance of increasing wom-

en's participation in parliament and exchanging resolutions to address common issues. She proudly noted that all parliaments in the world now have women representatives, which was once non-existent, and stated that the IPU sheds light on important issues faced by both men and women in societies.

During the Women's Forum IPU, a special discussion was held on cyber-attacks, where Dr Ravza highlighted the impact of such attacks on women, especially those in the public eye. She stated, "Cyber-attacks pose threats to everyone of all ages and gender; however, we wanted to centre the discussion around how cyber-attacks affect women." She further added that any type of cyber-attack has significant effects on women, whether it is economic or social.

The issue of social media and cyberbullying towards women

was also discussed, and it was recognised as a global issue. Dr Ravza highlighted women members of parliament as potential targets for such attacks, as they are more visible in the public eye.

Human rights were also a significant topic of discussion, and Dr Ravza emphasised the need for resolutions that address issues faced by all genders, nationalities, and races. She stated, "If we advocate for democracy and human rights, it should be a right for all people."

Be fair and equal to all: Savinykh

According to Andrei Savinykh, ambassador and chairman of The Standing Commission on International Affairs, the IPU is an essential organisation that allows parliaments to discuss critical issues. He highlighted that the world is currently un-

dergoing a transformative time in international history, and it is crucial to ensure that the principles of this new world are fair and equal to all.

Savinykh asked, "How will we provide possibilities for different countries to develop?" and emphasized that through the IPU forum, honest recommendations can be freely shared, and views can be changed. He believes that the IPU's special and unique platform can create opportunities to exchange ideas and expectations.

Climate change needs global collaboration: Hasipoglu

MP and General Secretary of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Oguzhan Hasipoglu, emphasised the significance of countries working together to address global issues. He stated that climate change has become a pressing concern that requires

global collaboration and partnership to solve.

Hasipoglu acknowledged that Bahrain is starting to play a crucial role in national affairs and expressed hope for further discussions between Cyprus and Bahrain.

Working together and share knowledge: Dr Chaudhury

Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP of Bangladesh Parliament, considers the assembly as an excellent platform to discuss and deliberate on essential issues and emerging challenges that affect the welfare of the people. She believes that sharing best practices among nations is crucial to draw upon different solutions to common problems, including climate change, strengthening women's empowerment and participation, and gender equality.

Chaudhury emphasised that many countries face the same issues and interconnectedness, making global cooperation urgently needed. She stated, "When countries can unite and come together as one, we can solve some of the most frightful of issues threatening societies all over the world." The MP believes that by working together and sharing knowledge, countries can tackle the most significant challenges affecting societies globally.

Bahrain gears up to meet surge in demand for meat during Ramadan

TDT | Manama

As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, preparations are in full swing in Bahrain to meet the increased demand for meat products during this period.

According to a top Municipality affair official, the Kingdom is set to receive over 16,000 heads of livestock in the coming days. Dr Khaled Ahmed Hassan added that the market has already imported 11,611 heads of livestock, including 10,500 heads of sheep, 1077 head of cattle, and 40 heads of camels to ensure sufficient stock, bringing the total availability to 27,000 heads of livestock.

In addition to the availability of 2569 tons of red meat (both refrigerated and frozen) and 5770 tons of poultry (both chilled and frozen) in the market, the Acting Undersecretary of Agriculture and Marine Resources has announced that the capacity of the veterinary quarantine facility in Buri has been increased by 3,000 heads of sheep to 9,500



Representative pictures shows people buy sheeps at an outdoor livestock market in Tokmak, some 60 kilometres from Bishkek

heads of sheep. This, according to Dr Hassan, will ensure that the market demand and supply will be in tandem during the month of Ramadan.

To facilitate the importation of meat products, the Ministry has distributed 330 import permits ahead of Ramadan. Shipments are coming to Bahrain

from multiple countries, and the animal production department has doubled its working hours to ensure timely clearance of consignments arriving in the Kingdom.

Dr Hassan reminded livestock traders to consult with concerned agencies before signing contracts to import animals and

meat to ensure the epidemiological situation of the exporting country and the correctness of documents.

"We are keen to ensure that all animal consignments meet the import requirements according to the Unified Veterinary Quarantine Law No. 8 of 2003 and its Executive Regulations No. 7

”
The market has already imported 11,611 heads of livestock, including 10,500 heads of sheep, 1077 head of cattle, and 40 heads of camels to ensure sufficient stock, bringing the total availability to 27,000 heads of livestock.

DR KHALED AHMED HASSAN



meat by taking samples and ensuring their safety through various processes.

He also called on citizens and residents to buy meat only through approved slaughterhouses, one in Hamala and another in Sitra, and to avoid approaching random slaughterhouses considering the health hazards they pose to health and the environment.

of 2004 in addition to the Gulf Guidelines for Veterinary Quarantine, which was approved by the Agricultural Cooperation Committee at its meeting No. 28 held in Manama," said Dr Khaled Ahmed Hassan.

The quarantine facility is Bahrain's first line of defence, and officials examine shipments of

Dates to the fore as Ramadan is around the corner

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

Breaking the fast with dates has been a tradition since the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

This blessed fruit is also mentioned in the Quran, Islam's holy book, highlighting its significance in Islamic culture.

Besides, dates are also known for their nutrients, fibre, potassium, and iron, and are an excellent source of energy.

They are also a symbol of generosity and hospitality and are often shared with family, friends, and the less fortunate.

Consequently, when the month of Ramadan approaches, dates become a popular commodity in markets, where they arrive in different types and flavours. Vendors in Bahrain say they have noticed a significant increase in demand for the past two weeks, which is expected to continue to surge in the coming days.

They said over the past three years, there has been a decline in demand for dates. However, this year, there is a high demand as people are purchasing them as gifts along with dry fruits, as well as for the occasion of Ramadan.

Statistics also show that Ramadan accounts for nearly 40% of the annual sales of dates in Bahrain, which are imported in tonnes from countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, and Algeria.

Maria, a seller at Palace of Dates, told The Daily Tribune:



Various types of dates on display

"With Ramadan approaching, many of our regular customers are buying, and some will even purchase in bulk, two to three days before Ramadan begins to ensure that they don't run out of stock."

"Generally, demand has increased throughout the year, not solely during Ramadan, and during this holy month, many date shops also offer deals such

as buy two get one free or discounts.

She also confirmed that prices are the same in almost every shop, where the most expensive and in-demand date is Ajwa, which costs around 3-5 BD.

There are several other popular types of dates available, including Sari priced at 1 BD, Salaj priced at 900 fils per kg, Sagai priced at 1.5 to 3 BD, Sa-

fawai priced at BD 2-5, Sukkari priced at BD 1-5, and Medjool and Hudry priced at approximately 5 BD.

Danish Mohammed, the owner of Danesh Food Stuff, one of the oldest shops in Manama souq, stated that their business has been operating for a significant period, with his father starting with one shop and now having seven shops in different



An Egyptian worker harvests dates from a date palm tree on September 14, 2014 in Tajura, a coastal suburb of the Libyan capital Tripoli

locations.

"Ramadan provides a significant advantage for our business, as many people visit the shop to purchase dates. While some dates are imported from other countries, others are freshly cultivated by farmers within the Kingdom.

Our customer base is diverse, with both expats and Bahrainis

showing a love for purchasing dates. We are well-prepared for the upcoming week, as the demand during Ramadan typically causes items to sell out rapidly.

"Obviously we will offer discounts and in addition to dates, many consumers purchase dried fruits and chocolates throughout Ramadan."



The word 'date' comes from the Greek word daktylos, meaning finger, because a date looks like the tip of a finger.

One cup of dates has about 380 calories, 27% of the recommended daily requirement of potassium and 48% of daily fibre needs. They also provide calcium, zinc, iron, copper, magnesium, calcium and other minerals that may help lower blood pressure, stroke risk and labour complications

Date palm trees need at least 100 days of 100°F heat and plenty of water to produce the best quality fruit.

There are so many different types of date fruit. The UAE has more than 199 different types, with around 44 million palm trees. The TOP date producing country is Egypt.

CAPTAINS CORNER

Women MPs hold key to future reforms



CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

India's 82 women MPs represent just 15% of the total of 542 members of the Lower House and the world's most populous democracy comes 141 in the global ranking of women in national parliaments. Bahrain's eight women MPs out of 40 seats in the lower house have put the Kingdom at 114 in the rankings. Topping the list is Rwanda whose 49 women MPs make up 61% of the elected parliamentarians. But for sheer numbers China (749 out of 2975 MPs), Cuba (313 women out of 586 MPs) and Mexico (250 out of 500 MPs) are leaders.

These numbers and stats come from the website of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), a global body that unites the Parliaments of the world. The IPU facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development around the world.

This year, the annual meeting of the IPU has brought the elected representatives of over 143 nations to Bahrain in a valuable summit that will help to build a platform of friendship and cooperation among these influential representatives of the people. Truth be told, democracy is a shape-shifting and messy model of governance – but it is, in the final analysis, the most representational one we have and we must continue to build on it, strengthen it and take its potential further afield from the confines of the national boundaries and onto the international stage.

Women are relatively new entrants in the field of parliamentary rule. In many nations, they even received the power to vote and elect their representatives only recently. In Bahrain, women have always been considered equal partners in nation-building and always received every right to participate in governance that was accorded to men. When parliament was reawakened in 2002 with the reforms of HM the King, the New Age Bahraini woman stepped up to the plate and sought a place alongside her male colleagues in parliament. We have even had the very first female Speaker of the Lower House (H.E. Fawzia Zainal, elected 2018).

There are many women Members of Parliament in the IPU meet this year and they will network and turn the spotlight on their specific concerns in the Forum of Women Parliamentarians within the IPU meeting. We need more such platforms to encourage and amplify the voices of our Parliamentarian sisters.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

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Deceived by job provider, expat family with ailing child faces uncertain future

TDT | Manama

Trapped in a web of deceit spun by a job provider's false promise, an expatriate family and their 4-year-old son, who suffer from Type 1 Diabetes, are fighting for survival.

His employer had promised him a family visa, but now, he is left with a BD2,700 fine for overstaying visit visa, for he is also jobless.

The family says they are struggling to pay for their son's medicine.

Fasil, an Indian expatriate, and his wife, say food, rent and medicine expenses are frightening them.

The ordeal started in August 2019 with Fasil arriving in Bahrain on a visit visa after accepting a job from a

The ordeal started in August 2019 with Fasil arriving in Bahrain on a visit visa after accepting a job from a swimming pool company.

The offer was that the company would give him a family visa, encouraging him to bring his wife and son along. "But, that never happened," Fasil says, "and I started collecting fines for overstaying my visit visa."

swimming pool company.

The offer was that the company would give him a family visa, encouraging him to bring his wife and son along.

"But, that never happened," Fasil says, "and I started collecting fines for overstaying my visit visa."

"As the pressure mounted, I even tried to pay of the fines by leaving the

job to collect the indemnity.

"However, that too failed to work.

By this time, Fasil also missed the opportunity to apply for amnesty offered by the government, which expired in January 2021.

The government announced an amnesty for visa overstays amid the pandemic. "But, I, unfortunately, waited for flights to reopen to send my family

back."

"That decision backfired, and I missed the opportunity, attracting more fines.

"Since I had also left the job, even my son's medication was in trouble.

The four-year-old was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in November 2022.

But, thanks to the Migrant Workers Protection Society, Fasil says, "we are managing rent and insulin."

"For how long is the question now?"

"Life has become a struggle with us not knowing how to make ends meet."

Fasil pleads for assistance to return his family to India to continue his son's treatment, as another job here will only allow him to pay the dues and fine.

After 18 years of being stranded, 60-year-old woman returns home

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

After being stranded in the Kingdom for over 18 years, Donga Kannamma, a 60-year-old expatriate woman from Andhra Pradesh, India, can finally breathe a sigh of relief.

With the help of social workers and the Indian embassy, she was able to fly back home on Thursday.

Although the embassy had issued her an Emigration Certificate in September, the lack of sufficient documents had hindered her departure.

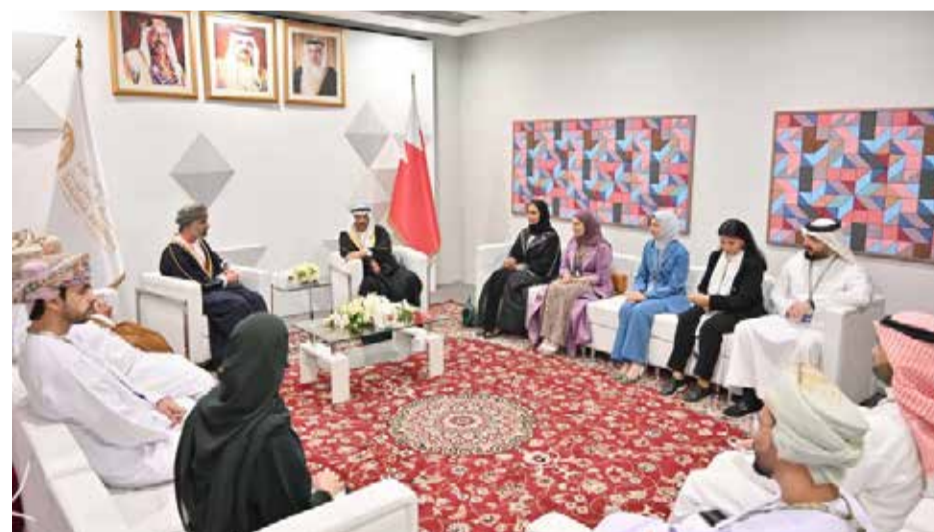


Donga Kannamma, a 60-year-old expatriate woman from Andhra Pradesh, at the airport

With the help of social workers and the Indian embassy, she was able to fly back home on Thursday.

Fortunately, social worker Sudher Thirunilath was able to communicate her situation to immigration officials, who promptly resolved the issue within two weeks.

Thirunilath expressed gratitude to Sanipaul, the Vice President of The Indian Club, for facilitating Kannamma's procedures and providing accommodation during her stay.



Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh had a meeting with Oman's Shura Council Chairman Shaikh Khalid bin Hilal Al-Mawali on the sidelines of the 146th IPU Assembly. Al Saleh stressed the collaborative efforts to promote peace, brotherhood, and harmonious coexistence among nations and peoples around the world. Meanwhile, Shaikh Khalid bin Hilal Al-Mawali acknowledged Bahrain's excellent organization of the IPU meetings and highlighted the significance of the theme that centres on peaceful coexistence. The meeting was attended by Shura Council Second Deputy Chairperson Dr Jehad Abdulla Al Fadel and Secretary General Kareema Al Abbassi.



Council of Representatives Speaker Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam held a meeting with Mojtaba Rezakhah, head of the delegation representing the Iran Islamic Consultative Assembly. The Iranian parliamentary delegation expressed gratitude towards Bahrain for hosting and organising the 146th IPU Assembly, and the two sides discussed ways of cooperation and joint coordination in international parliamentary forums. Also present at the meeting were Council of Representatives First Deputy Speaker Abdulnabi Salman, as well as MPs Mamdooh Abbas Al Saleh and Hassan Ibrahim Hassan, along with Secretary General Rashid Mohammed Bounejma.

Over 200 delivery motorcycles seized in a month

TDT | Manama

Traffic authorities have seized over 200 motorcycles belonging to restaurant delivery services within a month for violating traffic laws.

The General Traffic Department cited the drivers' noncompliance with regulations, which endangered the lives of other road users, as the reason for the measures.



Motorcycles seized by traffic authorities

These motorcycles have been confiscated for a period of 30 days. The department stressed that it will continue to monitor all violations that negatively impact the rights of others and disrupt traffic flow. In light of these incidents, the department has called on all drivers to comply with traffic regulations and rules to ensure the safety and well-being of all road users.

Biden, EU chief signal thaw on trade tensions

● Negotiations will begin on giving EU producers of critical minerals access to the US market

● Biden told von der Leyen that the alliance to support Ukraine marked "a new era."

● both sides will take steps to avoid any disruptions in transatlantic trade and investment flows

Washington, United States

President Joe Biden and top EU official Ursula von der Leyen announced progress in defusing a transatlantic trade dispute Friday and renewed their commitment to back Ukraine against Russia.

In a limited, but concrete step, the two leaders announced after Oval Office talks that negotiations will begin on giving EU producers of critical minerals access to the US market under Biden's signature program to encourage climate friendly industries.

They also pledged to coordinate generally as both US and EU economies pivot to the booming electric vehicle and other green sectors.

Von der Leyen, president of the European Union Commission, has worked closely with Biden in forging an unprecedented response to the Russian



US President Joe Biden meets with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC

invasion of Ukraine over the last year.

Biden told von der Leyen that the alliance to support Ukraine marked "a new era."

And in their joint statement later, they said that Russian President Vladimir Putin "thought that he would divide us, and yet we are more united than ever. We stand together in our unwavering support for Ukraine for as long as it takes."

Electric vehicle tensions

However, tensions are swirling in Europe over the Biden administration's landmark Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a government spending spree championing US manufacturing in climate-friendly technologies.

Amid EU alarm that the subsidies' "made in America" requirement will hurt European-based energy and auto sectors, the EU is working on its

own sets of incentives, such as the Green Deal Industrial Plan, to promote the emerging sector.

The joint statement indicated that Biden and von der Leyen made progress with a deal to start talks on an exemption for European producers seeking to export critical minerals for electric vehicle batteries.

"Today we agreed that we will work on critical raw materials that have been sourced or processed in the European Union and to give them access to the American market as if they were sourced in the American market. We will work on an agreement," von der Leyen told reporters after meeting Biden.

Their statement said more broadly that "both sides will take steps to avoid any disruptions in transatlantic trade and investment flows that could arise from their respective incentives. We are working against zero-sum competition

so that our incentives maximize clean energy deployment and jobs."

China differences

Another difficult area is how to respond to China's increasingly muscular foreign and trade policies.

The White House said that "challenges posed by the People's Republic of China" featured prominently in the talks.

Washington has been urging European capitals to take a firmer stand against Beijing -- not just diplomatically, but also economically. However, the EU is keen to avoid rupture with China, leaving the transatlantic allies somewhat divided on how to move forward.

Elvire Fabry, an analyst at the Institut Jacques Delors, a Paris-based think tank, told AFP that the White House session was a chance for von der Leyen to show EU desire to work with Washington, "but not in the position of follower, especially when it comes to China."

"The European position is based on wanting to maintain its own line concerning Beijing." However, the US official stressed the cohesion between Brussels and Washington on the overall view of the China challenge.

"There is unprecedented alignment between the US and Europe," he said, predicting the two leaders will express "a focus on the need to strengthen our economic security, to respond to concrete threats to economic security" from China.

In their joint statement, Biden and von der Leyen made only fleeting mention of China.

SVB failure rattles USDC and other cryptocurrencies

New York, United States

The supposedly "stable" cryptocurrency USDC fell sharply after the firm that created it, Circle, announced it holds \$3.3 billion in failed Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and has dropped its peg to the dollar.

Circle said late Friday it had been unable to withdraw its reserves from SVB, whose sudden collapse rattled financial markets.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation on Friday took over SVB, a major lender to the tech world, in the second-largest bank failure in US history.

SVB is expected to reopen on Monday under a new name, with billions in customer deposits now under FDIC control.

The FDIC guarantees deposits -- but only up to \$250,000 per client and per bank.

The agency said Friday it would provide certificates to customers with uninsured funds -- those above the \$250,000 limit -- so that they would be the first to receive funds eventually recovered while the bank is in receivership.

But the process of liquidating the bank's assets can be long, with no certainty of just how much will be recovered.

The USD Coin, or USDC, was launched in 2018 as a "stablecoin," meaning it was indexed to a currency backed by a central bank, in this case the US dollar.

It is listed as the second largest "stable" currency worldwide, based on its volume in circulation (around \$40 billion), behind Tether.

Stablecoins are supposed to be backed by equivalent reserves in immediately available assets, either cash or readily convertible financial securities.

Overnight Friday to Saturday, the USDC fell to its lowest level ever, dropping to 87 cents before recovering to around 94 cents.

Other stablecoins have also suffered.

The Dai, the fourth-largest stablecoin by volume in circulation, fell to 95 cents, while the Frax (sixth largest) fell to 94 cents, its lowest ever.

The Coinbase cryptocurrency exchange platform said it was suspending USDC-dollar conversions until Monday, given its exceptionally high activity.

More than \$25 billion in USDC had been exchanged on the Coinbase platform in 24 hours, an enormous volume compared to overall holdings.



A Brinks armored truck sits parked in front of the shuttered Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) headquarters

Lost Paradise of Dilmun Water Park reopens, marks start of season 2023

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

The Lost Paradise of Dilmun (LPOD) Water Park held its reopening ceremony yesterday under the patronage of Dr Nasser Qaedi, CEO of Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority.

The event offered a range of fun activities for visitors of all ages and marked the start of Season 2023 at LPOD.

Dr Nasser Qaedi and Dr Essa Faqeeh, CEO of Al Areen Hospitality and Elie Asmar, Executive Director of The Lost Paradise of Dilmun Water Park, attended the ceremony. Talking to the Daily Tribune, Dr Qaedi highlighted the importance of LPOD in attracting more tourists and residents to Bahrain. He praised the private sector partnership development, stating that this marked a new stage in Bahrain's growth as a tourist destination.

Dr Faqeeh explained that LPOD is not just a water park but a destination that caters to people of all ages. He praised the entertainment crew for their



Reopening ceremony of Season 2023 of The Lost Paradise of Dilmun

outstanding performances and activities for guests.

The Lost Paradise of Dilmun Water Park's Executive Director, Elie Asmar, announced that a new food court had been implemented, offering visitors five

new culinary concepts to enjoy.

The park is open to visitors daily from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm and offers a range of entertainment and water activities.

During Ramadan, LPOD will offer sumptuous Iftar and Gaab-

ka inside the Paradise Tent and Outdoor Garden Venue. The park will also feature Ramadan entertainment shows from sunset until closing, family-friendly activities and exciting spin-win prizes.



News in brief

Japan mourns 2011 disaster as nuclear support grows



◆ Japanese offered tearful prayers yesterday on the anniversary of the deadly tsunami that triggered the Fukushima disaster, but public support for nuclear power is growing as memories of the 2011 meltdown fade. The 9.0-magnitude quake -- the fourth strongest in Earth's recorded history -- devastated northeastern Japan 12 years ago. The undersea quake unleashed a tsunami that left around 18,500 people dead or missing and overwhelmed cooling systems at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, leading to the worst nuclear catastrophe since Chernobyl. All of Japan's nuclear reactors were taken offline after the disaster and the majority remain out of action today.

◆ Moroccan authorities have seized more than three tonnes of cannabis resin in two speed boats off the northeastern coast bordering the Spanish enclave of Melilla, state media reported yesterday. "The operation resulted in the seizing of two go-fast boats... with 85 bales of chira (cannabis resin) weighing a total of more than three tonnes," a military source was quoted as saying by the official MAP news agency. The cargo was seized on Friday off the town of Nador after the boats did not respond to naval orders, sparking a chase, it added.

Over three tonnes of cannabis seized off Morocco coast



Ecuador to release sterile mosquitoes in Galapagos



◆ Ecuador will release 100,000 sterile Aedes aegypti mosquitoes on its Galapagos Islands to curb dengue, Zika and chikungunya transmission, authorities said. The first such effort with sterile mosquitoes there, it should help lower local residents' and tourists' rates of infection from those diseases, the National Institute for Health Research (Inspi) said. The plan should "improve health conditions of the population, avoiding the transmission of diseases to tourists... and reducing the use of chemical products used in fumigation," an Inspi statement said. The Galapagos, a World Heritage Site whose fragile ecosystem is home to unique flora and fauna species, were made famous by British geologist and naturalist Charles Darwin's observations on evolution there.

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CURIOSER & CURIOSER

World's first 3D printed rocket set for inaugural flight



The Terran 1 rocket on the launch pad at Launch Complex 16 in Cape Canaveral, Florida

AFP | Washington

The world's first 3D printed rocket was scheduled to blast off from Florida late yesterday on the maiden flight of an innovative spacecraft billed as being less costly to produce and fly.

Liftoff of the rocket, Terran 1, had been scheduled for Wednesday at Cape Canaveral but was postponed at the last minute because of propellant temperature issues.

The new launch window for the rocket built by California aerospace startup Relativity Space to put satellites into orbit was from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm (1800 GMT to 2100 GMT) yesterday.

Terran 1 is set to reach low Earth orbit eight minutes after blastoff on a voyage intended to gather data and demonstrate that it can withstand the rigors of liftoff and space flight.

If the rocket manages to attain low Earth orbit, it will be the first privately-funded vehicle using methane fuel to



It is the largest ever 3D printed object according to the Long Beach-based company whose goal is to produce a rocket that is 95 percent 3D printed

do so on its first try, according to Relativity.

Terran 1 is not carrying a payload for its first flight but the rocket will eventually be capable of putting up to 2,755 pounds (1,250 kilograms) into low Earth orbit.

The rocket is 110-feet (33.5 meters) tall with a diameter of 7.5 feet (2.2 meters) and 85 percent of its mass is 3D printed with metal alloys, including the engines.

'Pineapple express' storm wallops California

AFP | Los Angeles

Dozens of evacuation orders were in place as a powerful atmospheric river, known as a "Pineapple express," surged into an already-sodden California, sparking warnings of widespread flash flooding.

Up to nine inches (23 centimetres) of rain were expected in some parts of the state, with several feet of heavy, wet snow falling over mountains where a huge snowpack has built up over months of near-record storms.

Forecasters said the Pineapple Express -- so called because it is bringing warm, subtropical moisture from Hawaii -- could cause some of that monster snowpack to melt, overwhelming river systems.

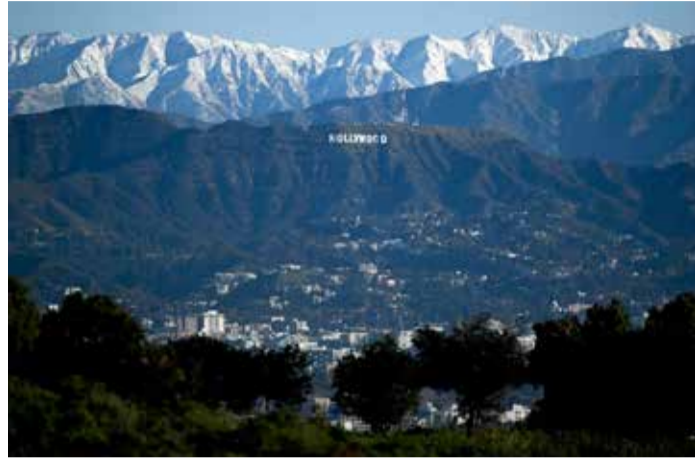
"Rainfall totals of 4-9 inches, atop areas with saturated soil and deep snowpack will cause widespread and severe flooding impacts," the National Weather Service (NWS) warned.

"Higher elevations in northern California and the Sierras will receive a heavy, wet snow leading to difficult travel."

US President Joe Biden on Friday approved an emergency declaration for the state, clearing the way for federal assistance to help local agencies.

The move came after a request from California Governor Gavin Newsom, who said he was mobilizing resources to help anyone in need.

"California is deploying every tool we have to protect communities from the relentless and deadly storms battering our



Snow capped mountains stand on the skyline behind a view of the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles

YOU KNOW WHAT

Pineapple Express -- so called because it is bringing warm, subtropical moisture from Hawaii -- could cause some of that monster snowpack to melt, overwhelming river systems

state," Newsom said.

The bulk of evacuation orders affect northern California, with seven rivers expected to burst their banks.

Many of them flooded at the start of the year as a daisy chain of atmospheric rivers dumped massive rain on the state.

California is deploying every tool we have to protect communities from the relentless and deadly storms battering our state

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

More than 20 people died as back-to-back storms washed out communities, bringing down trees and causing landslides -- and emergency services now are worried the fresh storms could cause more problems.

San Mateo County Sheriff said two people whose car was crushed by a falling tree in Redwood City were expected to be okay.

"Stay home tonight if you can, folks," the sheriff's office tweeted, alongside a photo of the mangled car.

Russia denounces Georgia protests as coup attempt

AFP | Tbilisi

Moscow accused foreign countries of fomenting mass protests in Georgia, likening them to an attempted coup designed to sow tension on Russia's borders.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that several days of demonstrations in the Georgian capital Tbilisi reminded him of a Ukrainian uprising that ousted a Kremlin-friendly government in 2014.

Hundreds of Georgians rallied for a fourth day outside parliament, keeping up their calls for a pro-European future, as lawmakers dropped the controversial "foreign agent"



Georgian anti-government protesters rally outside the parliament

legislation that triggered violent clashes between police and protesters this week.

The demonstrations point to turmoil over the future of Georgia, which aims to join the EU and NATO, much to the frustration of Moscow.

There is no doubt that the law on the registration of non-governmental organisations was used as an excuse to start, generally speaking, an attempt to change the government by force

RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV

Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and recognised two separatist territories in the north of the country as independent, stationing military bases there after the war.

Indonesia's Merapi volcano erupts, covers villages in ash

AFP | Yogyakarta

Indonesia's Mount Merapi, one of the world's most active volcanoes, erupted yesterday, spewing out smoke and ash that blanketed villages near the crater.

There were no immediate reports of casualties, the country's disaster mitigation agency said.

Images broadcast on local outlet Kompas TV showed ash-covered houses and roads at a village near the volcano, located on Java Island, near Indonesia's cultural capital Yogyakarta.

The Merapi Volcano Observatory estimated the ash cloud reached 9,600 feet (3,000 me-



Thick smoke rises during an eruption from Mount Merapi

tres) above the summit.

Authorities established a restricted zone of seven kilometres from the crater after the eruption, which was recorded at 12:12 pm (0512 GMT).

"To anticipate potential danger from Mount Merapi eruption, the public is advised to stop any activities in the potential danger area," agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement yesterday.

Blast

Bomb attack kills guard

● The explosion happened in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of the Balkh province, during an award event for journalists

AFP | Kabul

A bomb blast in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday killed a security guard and wounded a group of journalists, as well as several children, police and a witness said.

The blast came two days after a suicide bomber killed the Taliban governor of northern Balkh province in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group.

The attack on Mohammad

Rescuers airlift from remote A



An aerial view of the flooded northern Queensland town of Burketown

AFP | Sydney

Rescuers flew residents out of a remote Australian town by helicopter yesterday as record-high floods rose rapidly and authorities issued a "final alert" to evacuate.

Police said helicopters and other aircraft had already flown out 53 vulnerable people over the past few days from the small community of Burketown in northeastern Australia.

Murky water lapped at the sides of buildings in the town, which lies 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles) northwest of the Queensland capital Brisbane and is usually home to about 200 people.

The swollen Albert River had transformed wide areas of land around the town into lakes, with only the tops of trees visible, aerial images provided by emergency services showed.

Police said about half of the town's houses had been flooded.

Only about 100 people remained in the Queensland town by yesterday morning and helicopters were ferrying more people to safety, state police said.

"At the moment the water movements are unpredictable and are rising at a rapid pace," the local Burke Shire Council said in a "final alert" to residents.

"We strongly encourage residents to evacuate," it said, telling them to pack a bag and warning

538

Witiges, King of the Ostrogoths, ends his siege of Rome, retreats to Ravenna, leaving the city in the hands of victorious Byzantine General Belisarius

1455

First record of Johannes Gutenberg's Bible, letter dated this day by Enea Silvio Piccolomini refers to the bible printed a year before

1642

Abel Tasman is the 1st European to sight New Zealand, viewing the north-west coast of the South Island



1930

Mahatma Gandhi begins his famous 200 mile (300km) protest march against the widely hated British salt tax

targets Afghan journalists

rd, wounds journalists in Afghan north



Wounded journalists are shifted on a vehicle to a hospital, in Mazar-i-Sharif

Dawood Muzammil in the Balkh provincial capital Mazar-i-Sharif on Thursday marked the killing of one of the highest-ranking officials since the Taliban stormed back to power in 2021.

Yesterday's blast took place during an event honouring Afghanistan's media at a cultural centre in Mazar-i-Sharif. Police said a security guard was killed and that five journalists were

”
I heard a big bang... then there was chaos as everyone was trying to find a way to escape. Some journalists are seriously wounded

AFGHAN JOURNALIST ATIF ARIAN

among the wounded. "I heard a big bang... then there was chaos as everyone was trying to find a way to escape," Afghan journalist Atif Arian, who was wounded in the blast, said. "Some journalists are seriously wounded."

Balkh police spokesman Mohammad Asif Waziri said three children were also among the wounded.

Arian said the explosion hap-

YOU
KNOW WHAT
Violence across Afghanistan has fallen since the Taliban seized control but security has deteriorated again, with Islamic State claiming several deadly attacks

pened when a group of children were singing an anthem, minutes after a Taliban official had delivered a speech.

Afghan journalists were regu-

larly targeted before the Taliban reclaimed power, with several attacks claimed by Islamic State.

Muzammil, the Balkh governor, was killed by an IS suicide bomber minutes after he arrived at his office in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Violence across Afghanistan has fallen since the Taliban seized control but security has deteriorated again, with Islamic State claiming several deadly attacks.

The jihadist group has emerged as the biggest security challenge to the Taliban government since last year, carrying out attacks against Afghan civilians as well as foreigners and foreign interests.

The Taliban and IS share an austere Sunni Islamist ideology, but the latter are fighting to establish a global "caliphate" instead of the Taliban's more inward-looking aim of ruling an independent Afghanistan.

t residents Australia floods



Queensland town of Burketown

YOU
KNOW WHAT
The swollen Albert River had transformed wide areas of land around the town into lakes, with only the tops of trees visible, aerial images provided by emergency services showed

there would be no evacuation flights after yesterday. Evacuated resident Shannon Moren told public broadcaster ABC she was worried about the impact of the flooding on livestock. "I checked on my parents' cattle property the other day and you can see cattle up to their necks in the water, literally swimming for their lives," she said. Police also urged all remaining residents to get out. The elderly and young children were a priority for evacuation, Queensland police said in a statement, adding that sewerage systems had been "compromised" and power would also be cut off. "It is not safe for people to remain," police said.

Li Qiang appointed Chinese premier as Xi asserts influence

AFP | Beijing

Li Qiang, one of Chinese President Xi Jinping's most trusted allies, was confirmed as premier yesterday, as Xi cements his influence on the country's top leadership.

Li, the former Shanghai party chief who oversaw the city's gruelling two-month lockdown last spring, was named the successor of outgoing premier Li Keqiang at a meeting of the country's rubber-stamp parliament.

The 63-year-old received nearly every vote from the more than 2,900 delegates at the National People's Congress, a day after Xi was unanimously selected by deputies for a norm-breaking third term as president.

Xi's motion nominating Li Qiang as premier was read out to the chamber yesterday morning.



China's President Xi Jinping (R) shakes hands with newly-elected Premier Li Qiang (L)

Journalists were asked to leave the chamber as deputies, mostly dressed in dark suits, marked their ballots.

Delegates later applauded as Xi ceremoniously deposit-

ed his votes in the ballot box while cheerful traditional music played from speakers.

An electronic screen in the hall displayed 2,936 votes for Li, with only three delegates

Li, who started his career as an irrigation pump station worker near his hometown, rose steadily through local government ranks and was promoted to affluent Zhejiang province's top job in 2012

voting against his appointment and eight abstaining.

Li later took an oath, swearing to be loyal to China's constitution and to "work hard to build a prosperous, strong, democratic, civilized, harmonious and great modern socialist country".

His ascension had once seemed in doubt after his handling of the Shanghai lockdown, in which residents struggled to access food and medical care.

Biden scraps Trump's paint scheme for Air Force One

AFP | Washington

The US Air Force unveiled a new color scheme for Air Force One, discarding the palette chosen by Donald Trump for the presidential aircraft.

President Joe Biden is sticking with a classic blue-and-white colour scheme for the jets, which are under construction, retaining a design that dates to John F. Kennedy's administration six decades ago.

Former president Trump, who left office in January 2021, wanted a bolder red, white and blue design, and kept a scale model bearing those colours on a coffee table in the Oval Office.

Trump's design called for a deep red stripe down the middle of the aircraft and a dark blue underbelly.

The colours presented challenges to engineers, however, and a Friday statement from the secretary of the Air Force cited



A rendering of the livery design for the "Next Air Force One," VC-25B, selected by US President Joe Biden

possible delays and tests to deal with "the added heat" from the darker shade of blue.

The new Air Force One aircraft will instead closely resemble the aging current one, although the light blue will be a "more modern tone" than the existing robin's egg blue, and there will be no polished metal

on the fuselage "because modern commercial aircraft skin alloys don't allow for it," it said.

The replacement aircraft are projected to be delivered in 2027 and 2028, so the winner of the 2024 elections will be the first to take off in the new jets.

The Boeing aircraft are not like commercial airliners. Each

YOU
KNOW WHAT
The replacement aircraft are projected to be delivered in 2027 and 2028, so the winner of the 2024 elections will be the first to take off in the new jets

includes high-tech communication facilities, a medical bay and a self-defence system.

The current Air Force One planes face rising maintenance costs and use parts that are increasingly obsolete, but will have to suffice until the newer aircraft are delivered, the statement said.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Sexual violence in conflict reverberates down generations and threatens both human & international security. Women and girls must be protected. Abuse must be investigated. Justice must be served to survivors.

@antonioguterres

02



On April 7 this year, @WHO will turn 75. Join us on a journey to celebrate #WHO75 anniversary and the work being done globally to deliver #HealthForAll people, everywhere.

@DrTredos

03



The American Rescue Plan laid the foundation for our historic recovery and helped us to regain all of the jobs lost during the pandemic. We've added a record 12 million altogether.

@POTUS

04



The sum of a cult should be greater than the parts/prophets/profits

@elonmusk

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

CELEBS

Oscars host Jimmy Kimmel jokes he'll 'run' if anyone tries to slap him

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Oscars host Jimmy Kimmel has joked he will run away if anyone tries to slap him on stage.

The comedian is presenting the 95th Academy Awards at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on Sunday night (12.03.23) a year after 2022 host Chris Rock was belted by Will Smith after making a joke about the actor's wife Jada Pinkett Smith and Kimmel is adamant he won't let himself get slapped in the same way - especially if he's approached by someone bigger than him.

In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, he joked: "If somebody comes up on the stage and slaps me? Well, I size them up, and, if I'm bigger than they are, I beat the s*** out of them on television. And if it's the Rock, I run."

Jimmy went on to talk about his own previous Oscars controversy at the 2017 ceremony when 'La La Land' was accidentally announced as the Best Picture winner by presenters Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty only for the award to then



Jimmy Kimmel

be given to the rightful winner 'Moonlight' instead.

The funnyman joked the moment is no longer the most controversial in Oscars history thanks to Will Smith.

He said: "Yeah, we got knocked down the list. It's disappointing in a lot of ways. If

you're gonna be part of a f***-up, it might as well be the biggest f***-up ever. Being part of the second-biggest f***-up doesn't carry as much cachet."

After the monumental mix-up was revealed, Jimmy tried to lighten the awkward moment onstage by yelling to Beatty: "Warren! What did you do?"

He then went on to add: "Well I don't know what happened. I blame myself for this. Let's remember its just an awards show, I mean ... I knew I would screw this show up, I really did."

He finished off by saying: "Tomorrow I'm back to work on my regular show. I promise I'll never come back."

Kimmel returned to host the show again in 2018.

Jimmy went on to talk about his own previous Oscars controversy at the 2017 ceremony when 'La La Land' was accidentally announced as the Best Picture winner

Taylor Swift to have US city renamed in her honour

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

The city of Glendale, Arizona will be renamed in Taylor Swift's honour to celebrate the launch of her US tour.

The singer is kicking off 'The Eras' tour at Glendale's State Farm Stadium with a pair of shows on March 17 and March 18 before heading to Las Vegas on March 24 and officials have decided to celebrate Taylor by temporarily changing the city's name.

A statement from city officials namechecked a number of the pop star's songs in a statement which read:

"There is no need to calm down, we're fearless and doing something highly unusual to celebrate the fact that Taylor's concerts start right here!



Taylor Swift

Reese Witherspoon admits she bombed an audition with Robert De Niro

Fox | Los Angeles

Reese Witherspoon can't seem to shake a major mistake she made while auditioning for Robert De Niro.

"I remember one of the very first auditions I ever had was with Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese," the actress shared on "Jimmy Kimmel Live."

It was for the movie "Cape Fear," and she clearly did not get the part.

"I'm not in that movie, because I got so scared when I walked in the room," she explained. "I didn't know who Robert De Niro was, so I was standing outside talking to the receptionist. She was like, 'You know he's the most important actor of our time, right?'" Witherspoon then re-enacted her look of terror at the woman's comment.

"I was 14 like ... I'd never seen 'Goodfellas.' I'd never seen 'The Godfather.' So it totally got my nerves, and I went in there, and I couldn't remem-

ber, there was like one word I couldn't say, and he had to say the word for me ... he had to finish the lines for me," the "Big Little Lies" actress confessed.

While the Oscar winner couldn't remember what the exact word was, she likened it to "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" from the film "Mary Poppins."

Witherspoon's story didn't end there. She then remembered auditioning for De Niro 10 years after the embarrassing incident occurred.

"I thought, 'He's never gonna remember that I bricked that audition,'" she told the talk show host.

"And he was like, 'I remember you,'" she said mimicking De Niro pointing at her. "I was like, 'Me?' He's like, 'Oh yeah. You're the one who couldn't say the word.'"

"Oh, my God! This is so bad," Witherspoon said, expressing her embarrassment by covering her face with her hands.

Turns out, the "Legally Blonde" star has had more Reese Witherspoon



Priyanka Chopra uses ice on her face

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Priyanka Chopra uses ice on her face to benefit her skin.

The 40-year-old actress explained that when she is preparing to step in front of the camera, she will often try to wear an eye mask and stick her face into a bowl of ice



Priyanka Chopra

cubes because of how it benefits her complexion. She told Harper's Bazaar UK: "I try to do an eye mask whenever I'm going in front of the camera. Any eye mask that you wanna use, keep it in your fridge overnight and put it on first thing in the morning - it really makes a big difference. If I'm on camera then I will also ice my face. I will use hot tools to make sure that I get good circulation to sculpt my face too. If I don't have tools, I just use my fingers. This is an old Hollywood-slash-Bollywood trick, one actress told me. If you don't have ice, just stick your face in a bowl of cold water. Sticking your face in a bowl of ice. It really compacts your face. There have been times that I have done that and it really works! Or at least it has woken me up!"

Pamela Anderson still hoping to find husband number six

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Pamela Anderson is still hoping to get married again despite going through six divorces.

The 'Baywatch' star has been married six times - including two trips down the aisle with poker player Rick Salomon - but she still believes in love and has confirmed she remains open to the idea of getting hitched again if she eventually finds the right man.

During an appearance on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!', the host asked: "Do you think you'll ever get married again?" and Pamela replied: "God, what a crazy question. I don't know, I hope

so."

Jimmy then pressed her, saying: "You hope so? Oh, you want to get married again?" and the 55-year-old star added: "I hope so. I don't know. I still have a lot of life left."

Pamela's most recent marriage was to her former bodyguard Dan Hayhurst who was helping her renovate her home in Canada but the union lasted less than a year.

Their relationship was seen playing out in the star's new Netflix documentary 'Pamela: A Love Story' and Jimmy joked of the film: "You got your house remodelled, the contractor came, you divorced him by the end of the documentary ... At least



Pamela Anderson

you know he's not going to like gouge you when he's your husband for a while, I guess."

you know he's not going to like gouge you when he's your husband for a while, I guess."

Pamela was also able to laugh about the joke, adding: "I needed like a storyline. I needed a beginning, a middle and an end."

The actress has laid bare her life in the new documentary and she's also written a book about her experiences called 'Love, Pamela'.

Her other husbands included Motley Crue star Tommy Lee - the father of her two sons - as well as Kid Rock and movie producer Jon Peters, but Pamela later claimed her 12-day marriage to Jon was never legally binding.

SUDOKU

		2		9	3			
5		3		9				
	7		6	4				
	6	1			2			
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		7				3	6	
			5	7		1		
				6	4		9	
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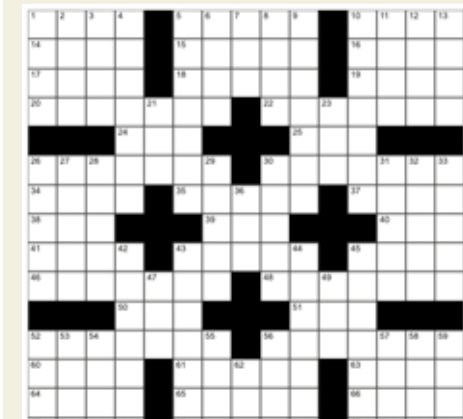
Yesterday's solution

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

How to play

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

CROSSWORD



Across

1- Pack of cards; 5- Heat home; 10- Calf-length skirt; 14- Airline to Tel Aviv; 15- Frosting; 16- Not a dup.; 17- Green land; 18- Fiend; 19- Melville tale; 20- Mother and father; 22- Long tapering flag; 24- Dundee denial; 25- Lubricate; 26- Branch of mathematics; 30- Waxlike, fatty substance in bark; 34- German economist and socialist; 35- Ships' officers; 37- Currency unit in Western Samoa; 38- Nabokov novel; 39- Deserter; 40- ... Moines; 41- Corn powder; 43- Counterfeit; 45- Fishing vessel, perhaps; 46- Animate; 48- Modesty; 50- Sluggish Williams; 51- Stephen of "The Crying Game"; 52- Appeared; 56- Tomb inscription; 60- Pasternak heroine; 61- Prospect; 63- Country singer McCann; 64- Petty quarrel; 65- Golf clubs; 66- Garden spot; 67- Being to Brutus; 68- Home and Olin; 69- Mariners can sail on seven of these;

Down

1- Thought-provoking; 2- "On the Waterfront" director Kazan; 3- Singer Vikki; 4- Brand of facial tissue; 5- Partway through period; 6- Frozen treats; 7- Goal, intention; 8- Queue before Q; 9- Pertaining to fire; 10- Small satellite; 11- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 12- "My Heart Will Go On" singer; 13- ... Rhythm; 21- Apprehend; 23- Pen point; 26- Astonish; 27- Weighted down; 28- Chalice; 29- Biblical brother; 30- Organization; 31- Radioactive gas; 32- Pertaining to the small intestine; 33- Beastly; 36- Graffiti; 42- Potassium (saltpetre); 43- Torment; 44- Exceed; 45- British rock group; 47- ... out (relax); 49- Agnus ...; 52- Additional; 53- Charts; 54- Important times; 55- Calamitous; 56- Sicilian smoker; 57- Adjutant; 58- This can be guilty or not guilty; 59- Author ... Christian Andersen; 62- Mama's boy;

Yesterday's solution

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

Classifieds



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ALGHANAH WOOD DESIGN W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CARPENTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17722333 or JOSE@ALGHANAH.COM

KL 60 FOOTWEARS has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34042266 or UMAL17UBAIL@GMAIL.COM

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Unreal! Thompson topples Tsitsipas at Indian Wells



Jordan Thompson plays a backhand in his victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas
AFP | Indian Wells

Unseeded Australian Jordan Thompson grabbed one of the biggest wins of his career on Friday, ousting third-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (7/0), 4-6, 7-6 (7/5) to reach the third round of the Indian Wells WTA and ATP Masters.

"It's unreal at a Masters 1000 ... to have a win like that is incredible," said Thompson, the world number 87 whose only prior victory over a top-10 player came back in 2017 against Andy Murray at Queen's Club.

He admitted he felt a little

Playing his first tournament since a second-round exit at Rotterdam, Tsitsipas admitted earlier this week that his shoulder was still troubling him and he didn't have high hopes of a third Masters 1000 win

lucky when a stinging forehead from Tsitsipas on match point was ruled a hair wide.

"I'm thankful that last ball was out -- I thought it was in," Thompson told fans on court.

While Tsitsipas led the third-set tiebreaker 2-1 and 4-3, Thompson's coolness under pressure paid off as Tsitsipas belted a forehand into the net to give the Aussie a match point before succumbing with the near miss.

Thompson next faces Chilean qualifier Alejandro Tabilo, who hung on to beat American Maxime Cressy 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (15/13).

For Tsitsipas it was another setback in the wake of his sparkling run to the Australian Open final in January.

"I'm thankful that last ball was out -- I thought it was in"
JORDAN THOMPSON

'Even' game as Gill ton powers India's reply but Australia still ahead

● Virat Kohli scored his first fifty since the Cape town Test at the start of last year

AFP | Ahmedabad

Shubman Gill's sparkling century and an unbeaten 59 by Virat Kohli kept India strong in their first innings reply against a persistent Australian spin attack in the fourth Test yesterday.

India were 289-3 at stumps and still trailing Australia's 480 by 191 runs on day three at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

Gill stood out with his 128 -- the opener's second Test ton and first in India -- as he built key partnerships including a 113-run stand for the second wicket with Cheteshwar Pujara, who made 42.



India's Shubman Gill plays a shot

"It feels great to be able to get a hundred in India. The pitch was pretty good to bat on. Anything that was happening off the pitch was off the rough area"

SHUBMAN GILL

"It feels great to be able to get a hundred in India," Gill, 23, told broadcaster Star Sports.

"The pitch was pretty good to bat on. Anything that was happening off the pitch was off the rough area."

Spinners kept coming back with wickets as Nathan Lyon, Matthew Kuhnemann and Todd Murphy took one each on a pitch favouring the



Gill, who replaced a struggling KL Rahul in the third Test, hit 12 fours and one big six in a good show of batting to surpass his previous Test best of 110 despite cramping towards the end of his knock

batsmen.

Gill, who replaced a struggling KL Rahul in the third Test, hit 12 fours and one big six in a good show of batting to surpass his previous Test best of 110 despite cramping towards the end of his knock.

Pavard double sends Bayern three points clear

AFP | Munich

Two goals from Benjamin Pavard and a first in Bayern Munich colours for Joao Cancelo saw the Bundesliga leaders romp to a 5-3 home victory over Augsburg, placing the onus back on challengers Borussia Dortmund who play later yesterday.

Four of Bayern's five goals came from defenders, calming fears the side may be toothless up front after the pre-game scratching of striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting.

Augsburg hit the lead after just two minutes through



Benjamin Pavard

Mergim Berisha, who scored the only goal in his team's surprise 1-0 win over Bayern in Septem-

Cancelo, who scored his first goal for Bayern since joining them on loan from Manchester City at the end of January.

Pavard then struck twice to swing the match in Bayern's favour, the first a poacher's finish in the box and the second an elegant chip over Augsburg's keeper Rafal Gikiewicz.

Leroy Sane scored his team's fourth in the shadows of half-time and the home side remained in control, despite Berisha -- who now has five goals in four matches against Bayern -- converting a second half penalty.



Bayern have won eight of their past nine in all competitions

Bournemouth shock Liverpool

Liverpool revival ended by Bournemouth, Kane double lifts Tottenham

● Salah misses penalty for Liverpool

● Kai Havertz' exquisite goal helped Chelsea to a third straight win

● Tottenham sink Nottingham Forest to boost Conte and tighten grip on fourth

AFP | London



Liverpool's Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah hits this penalty kick

Liverpool's resurgence proved short-lived after a 1-0 defeat at Bournemouth yesterday as Tottenham took advantage in the race for a top-four finish by beating Nottingham Forest 3-1.

Jürgen Klopp's men inflicted a historic 7-0 thrashing on Manchester United last weekend to equal the Red Devils record defeat.

But Liverpool suffered another setback in a frustrating season as Mohamed Salah fired a second half penalty wide.

Philip Billing scored the only goal on 28 minutes as Bournemouth's first home win since

November lifted the Cherries out of the bottom three.

"The game was pretty much the opposite of what we wanted to show and to do today. I think we played for pretty much 95 minutes the game Bournemouth wanted to play," said Klopp.

"This game was a massive knock and how it is with knocks, you have to take them, you have to have a look how big the scars are and then you go from there."

Fifth-placed Liverpool are now six points adrift of the

Champions League places after Harry Kane ensured a tough week for Spurs ended on a high.

The England captain's future has been a source of speculation after Tottenham crashed out of both the FA Cup and Champions League in the space a week.

Antonio Conte's men had failed to score in their previous three games, but Kane ended that drought by rising highest to head in Pedro Porro's cross.

Kane then coolly slotted home his first penalty since missing a crucial spot-kick in England's

"The game was pretty much the opposite of what we wanted to show and to do today. I think we played for pretty much 95 minutes the game Bournemouth wanted to play

JURGEN KLOPP

World Cup quarter-final exit to France.

Conte named Richarlison in the starting line-up despite the Brazilian's criticism of his coach after exiting Europe to AC Milan in midweek.

Richarlison made amends by teeing up Son Heung-min to fire in Spurs' third.

Joe Worrall pulled a goal back for Forest, who then also had a stoppage time penalty from Andre Ayew saved by Fraser Forster.

Lineker sees Leicester lose

Gary Lineker made the most of his absence from the BBC's flagship football highlights programme Match of the Day to

YOU KNOW WHAT
Antonio Conte's men had failed to score in their previous three games, but Kane ended that drought by rising highest to head in Pedro Porro's cross

watch his beloved Leicester lose 3-1 against Chelsea.

Lineker was forced to "step back" from his presenting duties after comparing the UK government's rhetoric towards refugees this week to Nazi-era Germany.

Leicester remain rooted in the relegation battle, just one point above the drop zone after a fifth consecutive defeat.

Ben Chilwell put Chelsea ahead early on against his former club before Patson Daka levelled.

But a sensational pass from

Enzo Fernandez and finish from Kai Havertz put Chelsea back in front and Mateo Kovacic's strike secured a third consecutive win for the Blues, who continue to lift the pressure on Graham Potter.

Everton moved out of the bottom three and up to 15th thanks to a third 1-0 win in four home games under Sean Dyche.

Dwight McNeil smashed in the only goal inside the first minute to end Brentford's 12-game unbeaten run in the Premier League.

Leeds remain second from bottom but closed to within a point of safety after twice coming from behind to draw 2-2 at home to high-flying Brighton.

Alexis Mac Allister put the Seagulls in front before Patrick Bamford levelled before the break.

Jack Harrison then scored at both ends in the second half to leave Brighton still nine points off the top four, albeit with three games in hand.

Manchester City can close to within two points of leaders Arsenal later when they travel to Crystal Palace.

Arsenal are not in action until Sunday when they face Fulham.

Muharraq escape with narrow win over Al Hala

● Hassan Albossta registers 43-point triple-double to spearhead Al Ettihad in rout of Sitra

TDT | Manama

Muharraq escaped with a hard-earned 66-64 victory over Al Hala last night in their week 21 game of the 2022/2023 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

Bader Abdulla Malabes buried two free-throws with 38.9 seconds remaining to give Muharraq a four-point cushion, and then Tony Farmer quickly replied with a lay-up to bring Hala back to within a single possession.

But after Malabes missed a three-point attempt on the other end, Farmer could not bury a potential game-winner as time expired.

Malik Wineglass finished with 22 points to lead Muharraq in the win, while Malabes had



Ettihad's Hassan Albossta appears to be fouled as he drives to the basket against Sitra last night

16. Farmer scored 31 for Hala, while Alwatheq Ali chipped in with 12. Muharraq improved to a 15-4

win-loss record to tie defending champions Manama at the top of the standings. Hala dropped to a 9-10 mark.

Standings

	P	W	L	Pts
Manama	19	15	4	34
Muharraq	19	15	4	34
Al Ahli	18	14	4	32
Al Ettihad	19	13	6	32
Al Najma	18	12	6	30
Bahrain Club	19	9	10	28
Al Hala	19	9	10	28
Nuwaidrat	19	8	11	27
Sitra	18	4	14	22
Isa Town	19	2	17	21
Samahajj	19	2	17	21

Meanwhile, in yesterday's other game, Hassan Albossta poured in 43 points while registering a triple-double to help lift Al Ettihad to a 136-83 romp of Sitra.

Albossta also took down 16 rebounds and dished out 12 assists in the big win, in which Ettihad led by as many as 56 points. All 12 of their players scored at least four points in the game.

Abbas Fadhel Jassim had 17 to pace Sitra in the loss.

Ettihad improved to a 13-6 record while Sitra dropped to a 4-14 mark.

Mitchell and Tickner lead New Zealand fightback against Sri Lanka



Daryl Mitchell gestures after bringing up his century

AFP | Christchurch

A stubborn century from Daryl Mitchell, a blazing 72 from Matt Henry and three wickets to Blair Tickner swung the momentum New Zealand's way in the first Test against Sri Lanka yesterday.

Sri Lanka had claimed the initiative on the first two days of the Christchurch Test but were 83 for three in their second innings at stumps on day three, a lead of 65 runs.

Angelo Mathews was not out 20, with Prabath Jayasuriya also at the crease on two.

New Zealand had recovered from 151 for five to be all out for 373, an 18-run lead, after a dogged 102 from Mitchell. Henry's swashbuckling performance included 58 runs from

Mitchell continued to play the steadying hand with a half century in three hours and a century – his fifth and first against Sri Lanka – from 187 balls

It's always nice to get a hundred for your country and to do it in a situation in which we needed it was cool. It was nice to put a team score on the board and for the boys to bowl the way they did tonight was awesome

DARYL MITCHELL

boundaries.

Tickner claimed the wickets of captain Dimuth Karunaratne for 17, Oshada Fernando for 28 and Kusal Mendis for 14 in the 38 overs before stumps to finish with three wickets for 28 runs off 10 overs.

Sri Lanka, who need to sweep the two-Test series to keep their hopes of making the World Test Championship final alive, had ripped through the New Zealand top order.

But Mitchell, who has so often been New Zealand's saviour in his 17-Test career, refused to give in as he toiled through 193 deliveries for his eighth century.

Madrid cut Liga gap on Barca with Espanyol comeback

AFP | Madrid

Vinicius Junior scored a fine solo goal as Real Madrid came from behind to beat Espanyol 3-1 and cut Barcelona's lead to six points at the top of La Liga yesterday.

Joselu had sent the visitors ahead early on at the Santiago Bernabeu but Vinicius produced a surging run and lethal finish to pull the champions level.

Eder Militao's header completed the turnaround and Madrid could have added more goals in the second half, with Rodrygo hitting the crossbar



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior (C) vies with Espanyol's Ruben Sanchez (L)

from a free-kick. Eventually Marco Asensio tucked away the third in stoppage time after a fine run and pass from defender Nacho Fernandez.

Barcelona visit Athletic Bilbao on Sunday night to try and restore their advantage, ahead of the Clasico at Camp Nou on March 19.

With Karim Benzema out with an ankle issue, although poised to return for the Champions League last 16 second leg clash with Liverpool on Wednesday, Carlo Ancelotti selected Rodrygo up front in his place.

Sultan Al Rumaihi on the double at Nasser bin Hamad showjumping championship

TDT | Manama

Sultan Al Rumaihi emerged as the star of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Showjumping Championship after dominating two junior races and bagging first place in both of them.

The event was held at the arena of the Military Sports Federation at the Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club under the patronage of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, who instructed the allocation of cash prizes worth BD10,000.

The first competition featured 100/105cm hurdles, and Al Rumaihi clocked 40.86 seconds in a comfortable victory, almost five seconds ahead of second-placed Inmar Ali. Pearl Carter secured the third spot with a time of 52.12 seconds.

In the second contest, which includ-



Sultan Al Rumaihi celebrates with the trophy



Pearl Carter celebrates with her trophy

ed 105/115cm hurdles, Al Rumaihi delivered a faultless performance, winning his second trophy of the day with a time of 55.31 seconds.

Pearl Carter secured the runner-up spot, seven seconds behind the winner, while Titon Roger took third place despite having four faults that overshadowed his better time of 49.78 seconds.

The junior competitions of the HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Showjumping Championship witnessed intense competition among all participants, and Al Rumaihi's stellar performance in both races was the highlight of the event.

The championship attracted a large audience turnout, with participants showcasing their desire to top the podium. The victory adds another feather to Al Rumaihi's cap, who belongs to the Ministry of Interior team.

Bahrain's Al Ahli win thriller in Gulf handball

Anwar bin Abdulla scores decisive goal against Al Safa of Saudi Arabia in tight Group B contest

● Ahli claim first win in two games and must win final preliminary round assignment tomorrow against Sharjah Club of the UAE

● Defending Gulf champions and Bahrain's other participant Najma to determine Group A ranking today against Al Arabi of Qatar at 7pm

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Al Ahli Club bounced back from an opening-game setback with a last-gasp 22-21 victory over Al Safa of Saudi Arabia last night in the 39th Gulf Clubs Men's Handball Championship, currently being held in the Kingdom.

Anwar bin Abdulla fired in the winning goal for the Bahrainis with just two seconds remaining on the game clock to break the deadlock. Safa had roared back in the late stages of the second half after Ahli led for much of the contest.



Al Ahli's Anwar bin Abdulla looks to score against Al Safa during their game

Ahli opened their tournament campaign with a disheartening 20-27 loss to Kuwait SC in their first Group B assignment, but then did well yesterday to keep their hopes alive of making it through to the semi-finals.

Egyptian national team goalkeeper Karim Hamdawy, who Ahli signed for this competition, played a key role for the Bahraini representatives, making a number of key saves throughout the match to keep his team afloat. He was later named the Player

of the Match.

Ahli led 10-7 at the half and then did well to keep their advantage over the final 30 minutes, during which Safa tied the game at 20-all with three minutes to play. Things remained close and that set the stage for bin Abdulla's winner.

Also making important contributions for Ahli were Mahdi Al Qallaf, Ali Mirza, Hassan Shehab, Jassim Al Salatna and Sadiq Ali, to name a few.

Ahli, coached by Ali Anzour,

have one game remaining in the preliminary round. It will be tomorrow against Sharjah Club of the UAE. The contest is scheduled for a 7pm start at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town. Sharjah were dealt a narrow 28-29 loss to Kuwait SC of Kuwait in yesterday's other Group B game. Kuwait came away with their second successive victory and are virtually assured of a place in the final four. They face off with Safa in tomorrow's early game, starting at 5pm.

Meanwhile, defending Gulf champions Al Najma, who are



Following tomorrow's conclusion to the preliminaries, the semi-finals will take place with the top two clubs from each of the two groups advancing in the 39th Gulf Clubs Men's Handball Championship



Action from Kuwait SC's win over Sharjah last night

Bahrain's other team competing in the event, return to the court today for their final assignment in the preliminaries against Al Arabi of Qatar.

The game is scheduled for 7pm at the same venue, and it will determine the final rankings in Group A.

Najma will be looking to maintain their pristine record in the tournament, having won 27-22 against Al Salmiya of Kuwait in their first match and then defeating Al Ahli Sidab of Oman 33-25 in their follow-up game.

Arabi also head into the clash with an undefeated record, hav-

ing ousted Ahli Sidab 30-23 and then narrowly beating Salmiya 24-23.

Following tomorrow's conclusion to the preliminaries, the semi-finals will take place with the top two clubs from each of the two groups advancing.

Najma won last year's Gulf handball title after defeating Saudi outfit Mudhar in the tournament final in Kuwait City.

It was the sixth time the Bahraini side claimed the coveted championship. Their triumph also ended a two-decade title drought, as their previous victories came in 2001, 1998, 1990, 1985 and 1984.

Benzema disputes 'liar' Deschamps' claim over World Cup fitness

AFP | Paris

Karim Benzema has responded to Didier Deschamps' claim that the striker told him "he wouldn't have been ready" to play at the World Cup because of an injury by implying the France coach

was a "liar".

The Real Madrid forward pulled out of the France squad with an injured left thigh on the eve of the tournament and departed their team hotel in Qatar soon afterwards.

Benzema returned to training with his club on Decem-

ber 10, four days before France played Morocco in the World Cup semi-finals.

"Karim told me himself that he wouldn't have been ready," Deschamps told the Parisien newspaper in an interview published yesterday.

"When Karim got injured,

our doctor accompanied him to the Aspetar clinic to undergo an MRI," said Deschamps.

"Karim passed on the results to someone who follows him in Madrid and who also gave him an opinion. When he came back to the hotel, it was already gone midnight.

"I met Karim in his room with our doctor who had come to give me the report from the scan... Karim was hurt because this World Cup meant a lot to him. He told me, 'It's over'."

"We stayed together for about 20 minutes," added Deschamps.



Didier Deschamps (C) reacts with Karim Benzema (L) (file photo)