

Indian teen prodigy becomes youngest world chess champ
 18-year-old Gukesh Dommaraju surpasses legends, wins world chess championship in Singapore final | **P 12**

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Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company launches 'Khazeena' Jeweller's protection plan

Visitors arrive for 'Celebrate Bahrain' festival

Manama

Bahrain International Airport (BIA), managed and operated by Bahrain Airport Company, welcomes visitors to the Kingdom of Bahrain arriving to attend the "Celebrate Bahrain" festival, organised by the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA).

The festival will feature a variety of events and entertainment activities throughout December, celebrating Bahrain National Day and the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

To mark this special occasion, arriving and departing passengers at BIA are greeted with the melodious tunes of a traditional Bahraini band, warm Arabic hospitality, and special giveaways, creating a festive and joyous atmosphere.

These celebrations showcase the airport's commitment to highlighting Bahrain's rich cultural heritage and inviting the world to experience the Kingdom's unique charm.

(Festival inaugurated at Heritage Village - Page 2)

Abbas at Vatican

AFP | Vatican City

Pope Francis yesterday received Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas.

They discussed peace efforts during a private half-hour audience, according to the Vatican, which released images of them smiling together.

Abbas then met the Holy See's Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin and the Vatican's equivalent of a foreign minister, Paul Richard Gallagher.

Syria pledges 'rule of law'

AFP | Damascus

Syria's interim government vowed yesterday to institute the "rule of law" after years of abuses under ousted president Bashar al-Assad, as G7 powers pushed for an inclusive transition.

Bahrain-Pakistan enduring partnership



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, highlighted the longstanding relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Pakistan, noting that this enduring partnership is based on close collaboration across sectors, particularly in the military and defence. HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he met yesterday with the Chief of the Naval Staff of the Pakistan Navy, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, at Gudaibiya Palace. His Royal Highness emphasised the mutual commitment to further bilateral relations and cooperation across various sectors, noting the importance of building on existing partnerships to benefit both countries and their people. He also commended the contributions of the Pakistani community to furthering the Kingdom's development. Ways to enhance bilateral relations, the latest regional and international developments, and issues of common interest were discussed.

HRH Prince Salman hails Saudi for hosting 2034 World Cup

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, congratulated the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, His Royal High-

ness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, on Saudi Arabia's successful bid to host the 2034 Fifa World Cup.

HRH Prince Salman praised the enduring relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, strengthened by the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin

Isa Al Khalifa and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Confidence

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister expressed his confidence that the 2034 World Cup will be a resounding success, given Saudi Arabia's proven excellence in hosting and

organising major international sporting events, as well as its ambitious vision and capabilities demonstrated through previous events.

He commended Saudi Arabia's prominent role in advancing sports development on the international stage, emphasising that this achievement reflects its efforts to elevate the region's

standing in the global sports arena.

His Royal Highness extended his best wishes for success to Saudi Arabia in its preparations to host this internationally acclaimed sporting event, which will further strengthen Saudi Arabia's global position in the field of sports.

Tech thieves beware!

Proposed law seeks tougher punishments for stealing digital devices and personal data

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Harsher penalties of up to two years in prison could await thieves who steal smartphones, laptops, or tablets in Bahrain if their crime involves personal data, under amendments backed by the Shura Council's Foreign Affairs, Defence, and National Security Committee.

The committee has supported changes to the Penal Code that would treat thefts of mobile phones, laptops, and other gadgets containing personal or financial details more seriously.

The proposed law, tied to Decree No. (7) of 2024, amends the Penal Code first issued under Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976.

Under the proposed rules, taking a phone, tablet, or laptop would be treated as aggravated theft, with a minimum sentence of three months behind bars.

Sentence

If the thief intends to access sensitive data such as banking records or private photos, the sentence would start at one year.

The law would also cover those who keep lost or wrongly



The Shura Council in session

delivered electronic devices.

Depending on how serious the crime is and whether personal data is misused, offenders could face up to two years in prison, a BD500 fine, or both.

The Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs, and Waqf, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications all supported the proposed amendments.

They stressed the pressing

need for legal shields in a world increasingly dependent on electronic devices.

International norms

Legal experts from the Shura Council's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee reviewed the proposed law and found it legally sound and in step with international norms.

Officials involved in drafting the amendments warned of the growing threat from tech-relat-

ed crimes, which have become common worldwide.

Committee members said the changes would close a legal gap by imposing targeted penalties for tech thefts, which are currently dealt with under general theft laws.

Private details

They stressed that stolen gadgets often hold private details that could jeopardise a victim's privacy, finances, and even

livelihood if misused.

The proposed changes, they added, are a direct response to today's growing reliance on technology for both work and personal life.

Current laws, they argued, must keep pace with modern realities.

The committee has now passed its recommendation to the Shura Council, which is expected to take a final vote on the amendments soon.

220 fils (includes VAT)



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'Celebrate Bahrain' Festival inaugurated at Heritage Village



HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa at the event
TDT | Manama



His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa inaugurated the "Celebrate Bahrain" Festival at the Heritage Village in Ras Hayyan, organised by the Ministry of Information.

The festival celebrates the Kingdom of Bahrain's National

Days, commemorating its founding as a modern Arab and Muslim state in 1783 by Ahmed Al Fateh, and marking the anniversary of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's Accession to the Throne.

Upon arrival, His Highness was welcomed by the Minister of Information, HE Dr. Ramzan bin Abdullah Al Noaimi, along with

several senior officials.

His Highness noted that the National Day celebrations reflect the values of citizenship, belonging, and national identity of the people of Bahrain.

The events also highlight Bahrain's achievements that contribute to the Kingdom's comprehensive development under the leadership of His Majesty

the King, with the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Congratulations

On this occasion, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman extended his congratulations to HM the King and HRH Prince

Salman, expressing his wishes for the Kingdom's continued progress and prosperity under the leadership of His Majesty.

HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman noted that the festival showcases authentic Bahraini folklore and heritage, embodying the rich cultural legacy of Bahrain, which continues to be

passed down to future generations.

He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all members of the Ministry of Information for organising the festival and extended his best wishes for their continued success in their endeavours during the Kingdom's National Day celebrations.

Bahraini retirees honoured for service and dedication



H.E. Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa with the retirees
TDT | Manama

His Excellency Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour, participated in the second honorary ceremony for retirees organised by the Free Center for Bahraini Retirees.

The event was attended by Yaqoub Yusuf Mohammed, Chairman of the Executive Council of the Free Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions, Saleh Ali, Chairman of the Center, along with a number of invited guests, yesterday at the Bapco Club.

Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman honoured the retirees at the second edition of this annual event, appreciating their efforts and dedication throughout their careers in serving the nation and contributing to its development and progress.

The honoring of this distinguished group of retirees, both male and female, comes as recognition of their valuable contributions and efforts in serving the country after a career in which they gave much with sincerity and dedication.

It also reflects the importance of maintaining a spirit of gratitude and loyalty to their rich history of giving.

Securing Bahrain

Interior Minister attends Bahrain Police Day celebration, ensures Kingdom's safety and stability

TDT | Manama

The Minister of Interior, His Excellency General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, emphasised ongoing efforts to enhance the police force's capabilities, ensuring security and stability for Bahrain's citizens while safeguarding the nation's achievements.

He highlighted the comprehensive development process led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, which has strengthened political openness, coexistence, and respect, fostering a secure and inclusive society.

The Minister made these remarks during his speech at the Ministry's Bahrain Police Day celebration.

The event coincided with Bahrain's National Day, marking the founding of modern Bahrain as an Arab Islamic state by Ahmed Al Fateh in 1783 and the anniversary of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's accession.

General Shaikh Rashid bin



H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa delivers a speech at the event

Abdullah noted the development of Bahrain's security framework, focusing on organisational restructuring, leadership development, and fostering trust with the community to create a collaborative approach to public safety.

He lauded the unwavering support from HM King Hamad and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Sacrifices

The Interior Minister paid tribute to the sacrifices of Bah-

rain's police officers and fallen servicemen, emphasising their dedication and professionalism.

Gen. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah extended his gratitude to the officers and their families, acknowledging their commitment to national service, and expressed appreciation to Bahrain's citizens for their loyalty and contribution to maintaining security.

The event included a parade showcasing the operational skills of various police units.

The Minister also honoured personnel who achieved excellence at the Arab, local, and in-



ternational levels, recognising their contributions to the nation and wishing them continued success.

Warm welcome

Gen. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah was received by Lieutenant General Adel bin Khalifa Al Fadhel, Deputy Minister of Interior, and Lieutenant General Tariq Hassan Al Hassan, Chief of Public Security, along with senior officials and officers from the Ministry.

The ceremony began with a ceremonial salute, followed by a review of the parade by the minister.

Honouring Mega Mart and Macro Mart retail employees



Retail Employees' Day, commonly referred to as RED, is a day to honour the backbone of the retail sector - the retail employees. At Mega Mart and Macro Mart, it recognises and acknowledges the vital role played by the retail team. This day is celebrated with the intent to "Connect," as office employees visit the outlets to meet and connect with the shop floor teams. They will also share their thoughts on significance of this day, present gifts to every team and express their gratitude on the Appreciation Board.

Motorcyclist wins BD8,500 compensation over red-light accident injury

TDT | Manama

A Bahraini motorcyclist has been awarded BD8,500 in compensation after a car, running a red light, collided with his motorcycle, leaving him with a 14% permanent disability.

The incident, which occurred while the motorcyclist was riding his bike, resulted in multiple injuries and six months of bed rest.

According to lawyer Abdulatheem Hubail, his client filed a lawsuit against the driver and her insurance company following the accident.

The lawsuit initially sought BD500 in temporary compensation while requesting a medical assessment to determine the extent of the permanent disability.

The insurance company, in its defense, argued that it was not responsible due to the driver's breach of contract by running the red light.

Medical examination

The court ordered a medical examination, which confirmed the motorcyclist sustained multiple injuries, some requiring surgery, resulting in a 14% permanent disability.

Following this assessment, the lawyer amended the claim to BD9,400 for medical expenses and BD6,600 for pain and suffering.

The court's decision cited Article 158 of the Civil Code, which states that anyone causing harm is liable for compensation.

Law

The court also referred to the Compulsory Insurance Law (No. 3 of 1987, amended by Law No. 7 of 1996), which allows victims of accidents involving insured vehicles to claim directly from the insurance company.

Considering the driver's criminal conviction for reckless driving and causing the accident, the court ruled in favour of the motorcyclist, awarding him BD8,500 in compensation, plus legal fees.

The insurance company and the driver are jointly liable for the payment.

Web of exploitation

MP exposes abuse of job seekers by Bahraini companies offering unpaid work without contracts or training

H Naser
TDT | Manama

MP Basma Mubarak has revealed the alarming practice of some Bahraini companies exploiting unemployed individuals by assigning them work without contracts, pay, or even training agreements.

The MP highlighted the issue, stating that she has observed a concerning trend of companies gathering job seekers into groups and tasking them with work, leaving them vulnerable and without legal recourse.

While acknowledging the spirit of volunteerism amongst Bahraini youth, Mubarak emphasised that many complainants are not volunteering willingly but are driven by necessity

“Many complainants confirm they are being exploited, not out of a desire to volunteer, but out of need and desperation. This necessitates increased awareness, accountability, and efforts to provide decent jobs.”

- MP BASMA MUBARAK

and desperation in the face of unemployment.

Volunteerism

She stated, “We commend



MP Basma Mubarak

the spirit of volunteerism in Bahraini youth, but many complainants confirm they are being exploited, not out of a desire to volunteer, but out of need and

desperation. This necessitates increased awareness, accountability, and efforts to provide decent jobs.”

Mubarak explained the legal

limitations in addressing this issue, noting that while the existing wage protection system can be utilised when employers fail to pay employees with contracts, there is currently limited recourse for those working without any formal agreement.

She attributed this to the pressing issue of unemployment and the hope that drives some young people to accept such arrangements.

The MP pledged to address this exploitation, stating, “Regarding employers who employ this exploitative method against the people of the Kingdom, we warn that this approach is contrary to ethics and professional standards. We will submit any complaints we receive to the relevant authorities, in addition to strengthening related laws.”

Bahraini women hold 48% of senior government positions

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahraini women have taken on more senior roles in government and business than ever before, holding 48 per cent of executive positions in the public sector and quadrupling their share of ministerial posts over the past two decades.

MP Maryam Saleh Al Dhaen, a member of the Foreign Affairs, Defence, and National Security Committee in Parliament, attributed this progress to policies backed by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the leadership of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Chairwoman of the Supreme Council for Women.

“Bahraini women have earned their place at every level of public life, driven by determination and bolstered by sound policies that ensure equal opportunities,” Al Dhaen said. “Their success is no accident but the result of years of effort and national will.”

Speaking at the Global Summit on Gender Equality in National Laws, held in Geneva on 10-11 December, Al Dhaen shared figures that point to this



MP Maryam Saleh Al Dhaen at the event

steady rise in women's participation.

Ministerial roles

She noted that women now make up 43 per cent of the national workforce, with 22 per cent holding ministerial roles — four times the number from two decades ago.

Women have also expanded their presence in diplomacy, where they account for 37 per cent of the foreign service, according to mid-2023 data from the Supreme Council for Women.

Their influence in the judiciary has grown too, with women

making up 11 per cent of the country's judges.

Legislature

Political representation has strengthened as well. Women's presence in the legislature has tripled in 20 years, rising from 8 per cent in 2002 to 23 per cent in 2022.

They now hold 25 per cent of seats in the Shura Council and 20 per cent in Parliament, while securing 18 per cent of municipal council seats after last year's elections.

“Bahraini women have been trailblazers in education, public service, and enterprise,” Al

“Bahraini women have been trailblazers in education, public service, and enterprise. Their story is one of continuous progress and growing influence in shaping the country's future.”

- MP MARYAM SALEH AL DHAEN

Dhaen said. “Their story is one of continuous progress and growing influence in shaping the country's future.”

Key players

The business world has not been left behind. Women now make up 35 per cent of Bahrain's entrepreneurs, proving themselves as key players in the economic arena.

Al Dhaen stressed that none of these achievements would have been possible without Bahrain's long-term policies aimed at opening doors and levelling the playing field.

100 Bahraini citizens evacuated from Syria

TDT | Manama

The Bahraini Embassy in Syria has coordinated the safe return of approximately 100 Bahraini citizens from Syria, following recent political upheaval in the country.

His Excellency Ambassador Waheed Mubarak Sayyar confirmed the plan, stating that the embassy worked closely with Syrian authorities and the Jordanian government to facilitate the repatriation process.

The return will take place in two phases, with citizens crossing the Nasib border crossing into Jordan at the Jaber border crossing.

Air travel

Ambassador Sayyar explained that air travel is currently unavailable due to the suspension of air navigation at Damascus International Airport in the aftermath of the recent political changes.

He emphasised that the embassy maintains constant contact with all Bahraini citizens remaining in Syria, assuring that their safety and well-being are being closely monitored.

He confirmed that those remaining in Damascus are safe and in good condition.

Pilgrimage

The repatriation effort comes after religious pilgrimage trips to Syria were suspended approximately 10 days ago due to the escalating situation.

The embassy played a key role in relocating Bahraini citizens from hotels near the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab to safer locations, as those hotels became overcrowded with internally displaced persons.

The embassy's swift action ensured the safe and orderly return of Bahraini citizens amidst the unfolding events.

MPs prioritise Bahrainis in pharmacy job proposal

TDT | Manama

A group of MPs has submitted a proposal to the Speaker of the Council, Ahmed Al Musallam, urging an increase in the number of pharmacy positions within the public health sector.

The proposal, spearheaded by MPs Jaleela Al Sayed Alawi, Dr Hisham Al Asheri, Mamdooh Al Saleh, Mohsin Al Asboul, and Mahmoud Fardan, aims to prioritise the employment of qualified Bahraini pharmacists.

The MPs argue that increasing the number of domestically-filled pharmacy roles will

reduce reliance on foreign workers, thereby boosting the national economy by redirecting investment towards training and developing Bahraini talent.

This, they contend, will lead to a deeper understanding of local community needs and culture, ultimately improving healthcare services and strengthening the relationship between citizens and the healthcare system.

The proposal highlights the growing number of qualified Bahraini pharmacy graduates struggling to find employment due to competition from foreign workers.



Image used for illustrative purposes only

The MPs believe that creating more opportunities in this field will significantly reduce unemployment among Bahraini youth.

The proposal emphasises the public interest benefits, including achieving a balance between human and economic development by supporting Bahraini citizens in securing pharmacy jobs.

The MPs argue that employing qualified Bahraini pharmacists is crucial for enhancing pharmaceutical security, encompassing manufacturing, distribution, and specialised medical consultations.

Bold green strategy

Bahrain quadruples mangroves and expands solar energy projects to cut emissions and ensure cleaner future

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain is planting four times more mangrove trees and expanding solar energy projects as part of its bold push to slash carbon emissions and secure a cleaner future.

Responding to formal question by Shura member Talal Al Mannai, the Ministry of Oil and Environment described its National Energy Strategy as “a comprehensive framework aimed at ensuring the optimal and sustainable use of energy resources in the Kingdom of Bahrain”.

Approved by the government, the strategy focuses on cutting carbon output, supporting renewable energy projects, and improving how the country manages its energy supply and demand.

Efforts to combat climate change stretch well beyond energy policy.

The Supreme Council for Environment has taken stock of



A large afforestation drive is aimed at expanding Bahrain's green spaces.

emissions across the board and drawn up a National Adaptation-Investment Plan (NAIP) to help the country weather the effects of a changing climate.

Long-term plan

It has also developed a long-term plan to manage water resources, ensuring Bahrain's reserves are protected.

The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture is leading a large afforestation



Image used for illustrative purposes only

drive aimed at expanding Bahrain's green spaces.

“Mangrove trees play a crucial environmental role due to their numerous benefits, including carbon storage, coastal protection, and support for marine biodiversity,” the ministry said, stressing the vital role of na-

ture-based solutions in the fight against climate change.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs has rolled out two key national schemes to improve energy efficiency and expand the use of renewable energy.

These efforts feed directly into



“Mangrove trees play a crucial environmental role due to their numerous benefits, including carbon storage, coastal protection, and support for marine biodiversity.”

- MINISTRY OF OIL AND ENVIRONMENT STATEMENT

Bahrain's wider environmental goals by reducing dependency on fossil fuels and embracing cleaner alternatives.

On the world stage, Bahrain has joined forces with global climate alliances, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, allowing the country to take part in international climate talks and tap into global support for its environmental plans.

Global alliance

The Kingdom is also part of the 30 by 30 Global Ocean Alliance, which aims to shield the world's oceans from mounting ecological threats, while backing the Green Government Initiative.

The ministry wrapped up by expressing its “continued productive and constructive cooperation” with the Shura Council, emphasising its resolve to meet shared environmental targets and keep Bahrain firmly on the path toward sustainability.

1,927 lawyers licensed to practise in Bahrain

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments released updated figures on December 2nd, 2024, revealing a total of 1,927 Bahraini lawyers licensed to practise in the Kingdom.

This includes 891 practicing lawyers, 512 lawyers authorised to appear before the Court of Cassation and Constitutional Courts, and 524 lawyers currently undergoing training.

Practicing lawyers are required to complete a two-year training period in established law firms, during which they must attend approximately 60 court hearings.

Offices

After this period, they are permitted to open their own offices to practice in lower and higher courts, and in the Court of Appeal.

After 10 years of continuous practice, practicing lawyers can apply for authorisation to appear before the Court of

Cassation and Constitutional Courts, or for a license to work as a specialised legal consultant.

Lawyers undergoing training work under the direct supervision of experienced lawyers in law firms and legal consultancies.

Authorisation

They are permitted to represent clients in first-instance courts (lower courts) and can act on behalf of their supervising law firms in higher courts, provided they have received authorisation from the supervising lawyer.

They are also allowed to represent clients in financial cases involving amounts not exceeding B 5,000.

The Ministry of Labour previously issued directives to increase the allowance for lawyers undergoing training from BD200 to BD300, aiming to incentivise training within established firms under the guidance of experienced professionals.

Bahrain cuts solar installation times from a month to four days

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain has trimmed solar installation wait times from nearly a month to just four days, introduced easier loans, and strengthened local industry backing.

This was according to a Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs (MEWA) statement issued in response to parliamentary questions from Shura Council member Talal Al Mannai.

The measures are part of Bahrain's push towards carbon neutrality by 2060, as laid out in the Government Action Plan 2023-2026.

MEWA, working with the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), has focused its public awareness efforts on schools, universities, and industry events.

Through workshops, seminars, and conferences, officials have explained the environmental and financial benefits of solar



Image used for illustrative purposes only

energy.

Interest

These efforts have spurred interest, pushing the country's total installed solar capacity to around 70 megawatts.

The introduction of the ‘Benayat’ system and full digitalisation of service requests has reduced installation wait times from nearly a month to just four

days, according to the Ministry.

Feasibility studies are also carried out to assist government bodies in assessing solar project potential and determining installation capacity.

Ministerial Decision No. (2) of 2017 allows households and businesses to set up solar energy systems, covering their electricity needs and sending any surplus back to the national grid.



Bahrain aims to generate 20 per cent of its electricity from renewable energy by 2035.

Excess electricity

Developers and investors can also take advantage of Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), which let them sell excess electricity while cutting energy bills and reducing carbon emissions.

To make solar energy more affordable, MEWA has teamed up with several local banks to offer low-interest loans for solar system installations.

‘Dead drop’ drug dealers arrested

H Naser
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's anti-narcotics Directorate has dismantled a four-person criminal network involved in the import, sale, and distribution of narcotics throughout the country.

The group utilised a sophisticated “dead drop” method, using WhatsApp to connect with buyers and leaving drugs in undisclosed locations.

Initial information from con-

fidential sources alerted authorities to the network's activities, which involved using several Asian phone numbers to advertise drugs and psychotropic substances on WhatsApp.

The group would photograph the hidden narcotics and send the location to buyers after receiving payment via money transfers.

Bank transfer

An undercover agent was offered drugs in return for BD10

by the network, and he settled the amount via bank transfer before receiving the location of the drugs.

The package contained psychotropic substances.

Investigations revealed that the main suspect, an Asian national currently residing outside Bahrain, received payments through his bank account and then transferred the funds to other accounts to conceal the source of the money.

Income

A warrant was issued for the main suspect's arrest, and a financial investigation, conducted with the Financial Intelligence National Centre, revealed numerous large sums of money transferred to his account in 2024, inconsistent with his income as a construction worker.

The pattern of transactions strongly indicated drug trafficking.

A Bahraini national, the sec-

ond suspect, was arrested at his home and found in possession of drug paraphernalia and narcotics.

Money

He was also found to have transferred money to the main suspect's account to purchase drugs.

Two other suspects, one Arab and one Asian national, were also arrested and found to be in possession of narcotics and involved in the money transfers.

The court has scheduled a hearing for December 23rd to consider their appeals.

Appeal

The main suspect is appealing a 10-year prison sentence, a BD5,000 fine, and deportation. The second suspect is appealing a six-month prison sentence and a BD500 fine.

The third and fourth suspects are appealing their six-month sentences and BD100 fines, along with deportation orders.

BisB holds celebratory event for employees

Bahrain's 53rd National Day Celebrations



TDI | Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB), the leading provider of innovative and simplified Islamic digital banking services in the Kingdom of Bahrain, organized a

celebratory event for its employees on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at the bank's headquarters in the Diplomatic Area - Manama.

The event featured traditional artistic performances, a special

corner for Bahraini traditional foods, another corner for Arabic and traditional beverages, and various entertainment activities such as taking commemorative photos for employees and opening oysters to search for

pearls.

This celebratory event contributed to instilling national concepts and visions among employees, as well as strengthening communication between the bank's employees at all levels.

Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company launches 'Khazeena' Jeweller's protection plan

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company held a Jeweller's Block insurance awareness event for local jewelers while launching their new jeweler's protection plan, Kha-zeena. Industry experts shared invaluable insight on the importance of comprehensive insurance coverage, emphasizing how it protects against theft, loss, and unforeseen events. Attendees gained practical knowledge on navigating insurance policies tailored specifically for the jewelry sector.

"We are thrilled with the turn-



Participants during Jeweler's Block insurance awareness event

out and engagement from the community," said Mr. Hassan Al Saegh, the Senior Manager of Sales and Marketing at Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company, and he further emphasized, "Our goal is to empower jewelers with the information they require to protect their precious assets."

The event not only offered educational content, but it also provided networking opportunities for numerous local jewelers. Participants connected with one another, shared best practices, and reinforced the strength of Bahrain's jewelry community, building a stronger, more informed network.



Mega Mart and Macro Mart



Retail Employees' Day, commonly referred to as RED, is a day to honour the backbone of the retail sector – retail employees. "At Mega Mart and Macro Mart, we recognize and acknowledge the vital role played by our Retail team." This day is celebrated with the intent to "Connect," as office employees visit the outlets to meet and connect with our shop floor teams. They will also share their thoughts on significance of this day, present gifts to every team and express their gratitude on the Appreciation Board. "If you visit our stores today, we urge you to take a moment to leave a shout-out on the Appreciation Board."

NBB set to bring exciting Yalla experience at Al Liwan during National Day celebrations



TDI | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) is set to bring its exciting Yalla Digital Family Banking Experience's activation to the main boulevard of Al Liwan from 15th to 17th December 2024. The initiative coincides with Bahrain's National Day celebrations, offering families and young clients a

fun, vibrant and interactive experience.

Visitors to the activation can participate in the special activities for the opportunity to win exclusive prizes. Parents and children are encouraged to open their Yalla Family Accounts to make the most of their experience at the activation.

The Yalla Digital Family Banking Experience is NBB's

latest digital development to promote financial awareness among the younger generation. Through the NBB Digital Banking App, parents can onboard their children easily, set allowances, and monitor their spending within a secure and intuitive digital environment. Clients will also benefit from special rewards through the Points by NBB App.

THREE CAN KEEP A SECRET, IF TWO OF THEM ARE DEAD. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

1577

Francis Drake sets sail from England on an epic three year circumnavigation of the world aboard the 'Pelican' (later renamed the 'Golden Hind')

1920

League of Nations establishes the International Court of Justice in The Hague



2002

The European Union announces that Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia will become members from May 1, 2004

2003

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is captured near his home town of Tikrit, during Operation Red Dawn by US forces

News in brief

Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic yesterday unveiled 685 million euros (\$720-million) worth of measures aimed at combating the country's ageing population, low birth rates and a worrying exodus. Experts repeatedly warn that the European Union member nation of 3.8 million people is facing a demographic collapse while the workforce is also shrinking. "Figures show that the situation requires decisive measures... that will boost birth rates and enable the return of our emigrants." Plenkovic said when presenting the measures. "The aim is that the issue becomes a strategic one." The large majority of the measures, to be implemented from March, is aimed at helping parents. "The family is a nucleus of Croatia's society and we want... to improve the position of mothers and fathers," the prime minister stressed. The measures notably include tripling the maximum maternity allowances from the current 998 euros.

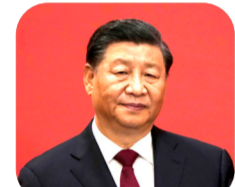


Croatia unveils 685 mn euro plan to boost birth rate

Outgoing President Joe Biden said yesterday he had commuted the sentences of nearly 1,500 criminals and pardoned 39 others convicted of non-violent crimes, in what the White House called the largest single-day act of clemency in US history. "I am pardoning 39 people who have shown successful rehabilitation," Biden said in a statement, adding that he was also "commuting the sentences of nearly 1,500 people who are serving long prison sentences." The White House said the nearly 1,500 people granted commuted sentences -- "the most ever in a single day" -- had been serving them at home for at least one year. "America was built on the promise of possibility and second chances," Biden said. "As President, I have the great privilege of extending mercy to people who have demonstrated remorse and rehabilitation."

Chinese leader Xi Jinping yesterday told former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev that Beijing was willing to strengthen ties with Moscow, state media said. Medvedev, who is now serving as deputy head of the Russian security council, is visiting China this week for talks with leaders of the key strategic partner. "China is willing to work with Russia to strengthen the alignment of development strategies," Xi told Medvedev, according to state broadcaster CCTV. The readout added China hoped to tap into the "driving force of cooperation between the two countries, and continuously benefit the two countries and their peoples". Since Russian President Vladimir Putin's February 2022 launch of a full-scale invasion of neighbouring Ukraine, China has sought to present itself as a neutral party, unlike the United States and other Western nations. But it remains a close political and economic partner of Russia, leading some NATO members to brand Beijing an "enabler" of the war, which Beijing has never condemned.

Xi tells Russia's Medvedev China 'is willing' to strengthen ties



SPOTLIGHT

Pope meets Palestinian leader Abbas at the Vatican



Pope Francis during his private audience with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in The Vatican

The discussions focused on the Church's assistance in "the very serious humanitarian situation in Gaza", the hoped-for ceasefire, release of all hostages, and "achieving the two-state solution only through dialogue and diplomacy", a Vatican statement said. The meeting comes a few days after the release of a photo showing Pope Francis praying in front of a nativity scene at the Vatican, where the baby Jesus's manger is covered with a black and white keffiyeh scarf, the symbol of Palestinian resistance. Abbas then met the Holy See's Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin and the Vatican's equivalent of a foreign minister, Paul Richard Gallagher.

Syria govt pledges 'rule of law'

Syria's new govt says to suspend constitution, parliament for three months

Thanks countries that reopened missions

AFP | Damascus, Syria

Syria's interim government vowed yesterday to institute the "rule of law" after years of abuses under ousted president Bashar al-Assad, as G7 powers pushed for an inclusive transition. Assad fled Syria after a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group and its allies, which brought a sudden end to five decades of iron-fisted rule by his clan. Syrians across the country and around the world erupted in celebration after enduring an era during which suspected dissidents were jailed or killed, and nearly 14 years of war that killed 500,000 people and displaced millions. "We were living in oppression, we were unable to speak," Ibtisam Kaab, a resident of Assad's hometown Qardaha, told AFP. "Whenever we wanted to speak, they threatened to harm us and our children."

The new government's spokesman told AFP on Thursday the country's constitution and parliament would be suspended for the duration of a three-month transition. "A judicial and human rights committee will be established to examine the constitution and then introduce amendments,"



Syrians living in Turkey wait in a queue to enter Syria at the Cilvegözü border crossing gate in Reyhanli



Syria is home to one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, Damascus. Known as the "City of Jasmine," Damascus has been a hub of culture, trade, and history for thousands of years, with archaeological evidence suggesting its occupation as far back as 10,000 BC.

Obaida Arnaout told AFP. Speaking at the state television headquarters, seized by the rebel authorities, Arnaout said they would institute the "rule of law". "All those who committed

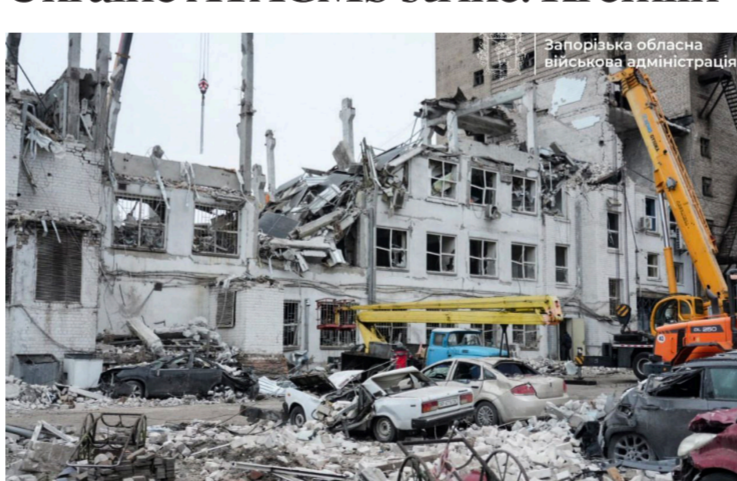
crimes against the Syrian people will be judged in accordance with the law," he added. Asked about religious and personal freedoms, he said "we respect religious and cultural diversity in Syria", adding that they would remain unchanged. Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) powers said Thursday they were ready to support the transition to an "inclusive and non-sectarian" government in Syria.

Israel says it seized Golan buffer zone in self-defence

Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel said yesterday it would "continue to act to defend itself" after France urged it to withdraw from the UN-patrolled buffer zone separating Israeli and Syrian forces in the Golan Heights. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Sunday he had ordered the army to "seize" the demilitarized zone in the Syrian-controlled part of the Golan Heights after rebels swept Syrian president Bashar al-Assad from power. On Thursday, Israel said the seizure was aimed at defending the country. "It was necessary for defensive reasons due to threats posed by jihadist groups operating near the border," foreign ministry spokesman Oren Marmorstein said on X. "Israel will continue to act to defend itself and ensure the security of its citizens as needed."

Russia will 'definitely' respond to Ukraine ATACMS strike: Kremlin



A damaged building after a strike in the city of Zaporizhzhia, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine

Russia will "definitely" respond to a Ukrainian attack on a southern airfield using US-supplied ATACMS missiles, the Kremlin said yesterday. President Vladimir Putin has previously threatened to launch its new hypersonic ballistic missile, named Oreshnik, at the centre of Kyiv if Ukraine does not halt its attacks on Russian territory using US-supplied ATACMS missiles. Russia's defence ministry on Wednesday accused Ukraine of firing the missiles in an overnight attack on an airfield in the port city of Taganrog in the southern Rostov region. A response "will follow when, and in a way that is deemed, appropriate. It will definitely follow," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. He did not provide details of how Russia might retaliate. Washington only recently gave Kyiv permission to fire ATACMS on Russian territory, following months of requests. The United States warned Wednesday that Russia could be preparing to fire Oreshnik missiles at Ukraine again.

Blinken and Jordan king agree on need for secure Syria



Jordan's King Abdullah II meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Aqaba along the Red Sea in southern Jordan

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Jordan's King Abdullah II called yesterday for a secure Syria as the top US diplomat opened a regional tour following the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad in Damascus. Blinken, who will head later Thursday to Turkey, has called for an "inclusive" process to form Syria's next government that includes protections for minorities after Islamist-led rebels ended the repressive rule of Assad, a member of the Alawite community. King Abdullah in his meeting with Blinken "reaffirmed Jordan's respect" for "the Syrian people's choices, stressing the need to safeguard Syria's security and the safety of its citizens", a palace statement said.

denied by the foreign ministry. "The minister is in Ankara. He did not go to Damascus," a spokesman told AFP, just hours before US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was to land in the Turkish capital for top level talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his chief diplomat.

Macron, Tusk discuss idea of foreign peacekeepers in Ukraine



Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk (R) and French President Emmanuel Macron (L) attend a press conference

Ukraine crisis would be his top priority when he takes office next month. Trump's election has raised fears in Kyiv that he could try to force big concessions on Ukraine in return for a ceasefire. Tusk said he wanted to "take this opportunity to end speculation about the potential presence of troops from one country or another in Ukraine once a ceasefire or peace has been agreed". "The (French) president knows this, we discussed it, any decision on Polish actions will be taken in Warsaw and only in Warsaw. For the moment, we are not planning any such actions," he added. Macron did not mention the possibility of foreign peacekeepers in his statement to journalists in Warsaw.

Time Magazine names Donald Trump person of the year for second time



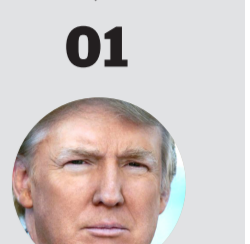
AFP | New York, United States

Time Magazine yesterday named US President-elect Donald Trump its "person of the year," marking the second time he has won the accolade in acknowledgement of the mogul's stunning political comeback. Trump, who defeated Vice President Kamala Harris in the November 5 election, adorns the magazine's title cover sporting his distinctive red tie and striking a pensive pose. "For marshaling a comeback of historic proportions, for driving a once-in-a-generation political realignment, for reshaping the American presidency and altering America's role in the world, Donald Trump is Time's 2024 - Person of the Year." The award, given out annually, is an acknowledgement of the year's most influential figure. Past winners include Taylor Swift and Volodymyr Zelensky -- and Trump himself, in 2016, after his shock defeat of Hillary Clinton.

UN nuclear watchdog head condemns 'direct' drone attack on agency car in Ukraine

UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi yesterday condemned a "direct" drone attack that destroyed a "clearly marked" agency car in Ukraine earlier this week, saying the strike had the "intention to harm". On Tuesday, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said a drone had hit and severely damaged one of its official vehicles on the road to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Nobody was injured in the attack, but Kyiv and Moscow have since traded blame over the strike. Grossi on Thursday addressed the governing board of the Vienna-based IAEA, which held an emergency meeting at Ukraine's request to discuss its "unstable" energy infrastructure.

TOP 4 TWEETS



01 The @UN is fully committed to supporting a smooth transition of power in Syria, with an inclusive political process in which the rights of all minorities will be fully respected, and paving the way towards a united country with its territorial integrity fully reestablished.



02 Happy to receive Deputy PM & Foreign Minister of the UAE, HH @ABZayed. India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is poised to achieve unprecedented heights. We are committed to working towards peace, stability and security in West Asia and the wider region.



03 Met with Jordanian Foreign Minister @AymanHsafadi to discuss U.S. support for Jordan during the transition in Syria. We also spoke about the strength of the U.S.-Jordan strategic partnership and our efforts to secure peace in the region.



04 Our civilization must pass the single planet extinction risk Great Filter

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

celebs

Nicole Kidman: Fear can be destructive to expression



Nicole Kidman
Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Nicole Kidman is happy to take "bold risks" in her career.

The Oscar-winning star has enjoyed huge successes in her acting career, but Nicole accepts that nothing is guaranteed in the movie business.

Asked if Hollywood has become more open to risks, Nicole told Vanity Fair's 2025 Hollywood Issue: "I suppose I don't think of that. I just go, 'This is the road I'm on, and whatever happens happens'."

"If it's seen as a risk, I'll take these risks. And if they're bold risks, then I'll take those risks, but I'm not going to hang too much on that because fear can set in. That's very, very destructive to the expression and the desire."

Nicole subsequently conceded that working in Hollywood can be a "rollercoaster" experience.

The 57-year-old actress - who is married to music star Keith Urban - explained: "Everything's hard now. Actually everything."

"I mean, maybe not 'Deadpool', but there's nothing that's, 'Oh my gosh, let's go.' Or maybe it's just the things that I do."

"I just think that's the nature of what we're dealing with now. Things are shrinking in terms of shows being done and films being made. I definitely feel it. I'm sure most people in the industry feel it. I know the crews feel it. I know writers feel it."

Paris Hilton reveals she is struggling to buy Christmas presents for her kids

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Paris Hilton is struggling to buy Christmas presents for her kids.

The 43-year-old heiress - who has son Phoenix, 23 months, and daughter London, 13 months, with her husband Carter Reum - is finding it "so hard" to find the perfect gift for her children because she is ultimately spoiled for choice.

She told E! News: "It's so hard because there's so many cool toys there. I'm like, 'I kind of want this, too'."

But the 'Paris in Love' star has decided on a Hello Kitty car and a Barbie Jeep as part of her children's presents and admitted that she has taken to driving them too because she is "obsessed" with the toy vehicles.

I'm driving it through the house with the kids—I'm obsessed."

Meanwhile, when it comes to traditions, the 'Stars Are Blind' hitmaker insisted that she

has "learned from the best" by taking inspiration from her mother Kathy Hilton.

She said: "I learned from the best! My mom is the

Queen of Christmas and just the decorations, the beautiful tablescapes, the trees. My house is so decked out and I thank Kathy Hilton because she is just the epitome of Christmas."

"I am who I am because of her."

Paris has also learned since becoming a mother that life is about "moving so fast" and is trying to take it all in as it unfolds in front of her.

She added: "I've really learned this year that life is going and moving so fast and there's so many incredible moments."

"I just want to soak it all in, be with my children as much as possible."

The former 'Simple Life' star has even learned to say no to various things because she wants to spend as much time as possible with her children.

She said: "I've been saying no a lot. You don't want to miss all those moments with the kids growing up."

Paris Hilton



Jamie Foxx suffered a stroke caused by a bleed on the brain

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Jamie Foxx suffered a stroke caused by a bleed on the brain.

The 'Django Unchained' actor was hospitalised in April last year after suffering a mystery "medical complication", which his family decided to keep private, and the comedian has now revealed exactly what happened to him and recalled losing his memory for 20 days amid his terrifying health battle.

He quipped on his Netflix special 'Jamie Foxx: What Had Happened Was...': "On April 11, I was having a bad headache, and I asked my boy for Aspirin. I realised quickly that when you're in a medical emergency, your boys don't know what the f*** to do."

He shockingly spilled: "I don't remember 20 days."

The teary-eyed star admitted to the audience after declaring he was "back": "You don't know how good this feels."

The 56-year-old star insists it's still "a mystery" what happened.

He said: "It is a mystery."

"We still don't know exactly what happened to me."

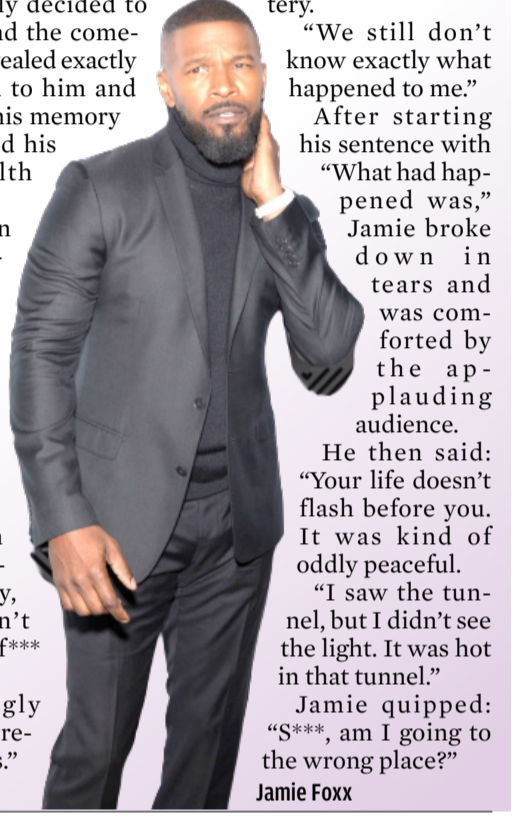
After starting his sentence with "What had happened was,"

Jamie broke down in tears and was comforted by the applauding audience.

He then said: "Your life doesn't flash before you. It was kind of oddly peaceful."

"I saw the tunnel, but I didn't see the light. It was hot in that tunnel."

Jamie quipped: "S***, am I going to the wrong place?"



Jamie Foxx

Jeremy Renner on 'final edit' of snowplough accident book

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Jeremy Renner is on the "final edit" of a tome about his near-death experience.

The 53-year-old Marvel star - who is known for playing Hawkeye in the MCU - has put pen to paper to document almost being killed in a terrifying snowplough accident last year and confirmed that he is making the final checks before it's reviewed by the editor and published.

Speaking at Saudi Arabia's Red Sea Film Festival, he said: "It will be two years in January, and I am very proud to overcome a great adversity in my life."

"I'm forever grateful for all the love and support I've gotten from the people all around the world, that I never knew existed that propel me to get better. It's the only thing that really defines me in my life at this point."

Renner - who jokingly gave himself the superhero name Titanium Man while referring to his 'Avengers: Endgame' co-star and pal Robert Downey Jr.'s Marvel character Iron Man - had his chest and legs pulverised by his tank-style, 14,300lb PistenBully Snowcat as he tried to stop it hurtling into his nephew on New Year's Day, 2023, in Reno, Nevada - leaving him with 38 broken bones, a collapsed lung and massive chest trauma that took him months to fight back from.

Jeremy Renner



Ben Affleck is not looking to date amid his divorce from Jennifer Lopez

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Ben Affleck has "no interest" in dating "at the moment".

The 52-year-old actor is said to be focused on work and is not looking to find love again just yet, four months after Jennifer Lopez, 55, filed for divorce in August after two years of marriage.

An insider told The New York Post's Page Six column: "Ben has no interest in jumping into another relationship at the moment."

They added: "Ben's divorce from Jennifer hasn't even been finalised, but even if it were, dating is just not where his head is at."

Meanwhile, Ben's ex-wife, Jennifer Garner, is



said to have "encouraged" Ben to work on his marriage with the 'On The Floor' hitmaker.

The '13 Going On 30' star, 52, was hitched to Ben from 2005 to 2018.

And a source recently told Page Six about Jennifer's apparent advice to Ben before he split from her: "When things started getting rocky between

Ben and Jennifer (Lopez), Jen was very supportive of their relationship and encouraged Ben to work on their marriage."

The insider added that Jennifer has "no problem" with J.Lo, adding: "At the end of the day, she just wants Ben to be happy."

The 'Argo' star spent Thanksgiving with Jennifer and their children.

The former couple reunited for the holiday with Violet, 18, Seraphina, 15, and Samuel, 12.

And a source told Page Six Ben was overjoyed to spend the holiday with his family as he feels as if he can "just be himself" around Jennifer and their children.

The pair not only enjoyed family time over Thanksgiving - they also partnered up with the Midnight Mission cause during the day to help feed 2,000 homeless and near-homeless people in downtown Los Angeles.

Ben Affleck

SUDOKU

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

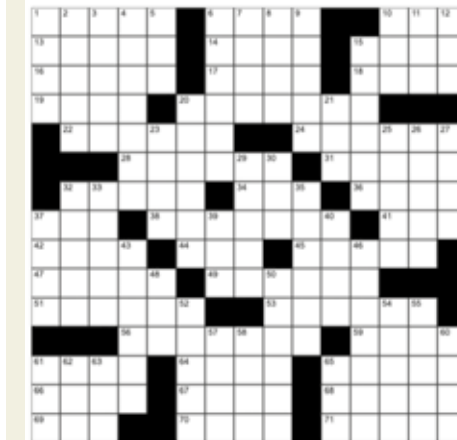
Yesterday's solution

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

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- 1980 Dom DeLuise film; 6- ___ well...; 10- Corrida cheer; 13- ___ Kick Out of You; 14- Hammer or sickle; 15- Bad day for Caesar; 16- Charged; 17- "Chicken of the sea"; 18- Golf pegs, northern English river; 19- Fog; 20- Legendary king of Thebes; 22- Equine sounds; 24- Shorthand pros; 28- Speaks publicly; 31- Put into office; 32- Pertaining to the moon; 34- "Michael Collins" actor; 36- Greek salad ingredient; 37- Put on; 38- Sorrow; 41- Lair; 42- Meat-grading org.; 44- ___ Lanka; 45- March honoree, briefly; 47- Considers; 49- More strange; 51- List of corrections; 53- Donny or Marie; 56- Village near the Matterhorn; 59- Read 'em and ___; 61- Female choir voice; 64- I could ___ horse!; 65- Olds model; 66- Bank transaction; 67- Wither; 68- Chest or closet material; 69- B and B; 70- Gen. Robt. ___; 71- Hackneyed;

Down

1- Stiff; 2- One more time; 3- Upright; 4- Stopping place; 5- Bran source; 6- Bear witness; 7- Noisy; 8- Anderson of "WKRP in Cincinnati"; 9- High-fives; 10- Yeats offering; 11- Majors in acting; 12- Double curve; 15- In and of ___; 20- Tara family; 21- Shoshone language member; 23- Mardi ___; 25- ___ lift?; 26- Eight singers; 27- Ollie's pal; 29- Bert's roomie; 30- Get the picture; 32- One in second, say; 33- Below; 35- Help; 37- Type of ranch; 39- Dr. of rap; 40- Wine glass feature; 43- River in N South America; 46- Thief; 48- Canonized Mlle.; 50- Revolve; 52- ___ having fun yet?; 54- ___ say more?; 55- Clear of vermin; 57- Letters, e.g.; 58- Salt tree; 60- Skin opening; 61- Boxing legend; 62- Chilling Chaney; 63- Convert into leather; 65- Do one's part?;

Yesterday's solution

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

Classifieds

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Juve deepen Man City crisis

Man City's struggles deepen, Barcelona clinches knockout spot in thrilling Champions League action

- **Barcelona secures crucial victory over Borussia Dortmund**
- **Arsenal, AC Milan, and Atletico Madrid also claim important wins**

AFP | Paris

Manchester City's crisis continued with a 2-0 defeat away to Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday, while Pep Guardiola's old club Barcelona beat Borussia Dortmund to clinch a spot in the knockout stage of Europe's elite club competition. Arsenal, AC Milan, Atletico Madrid, Lille, Feyenoord and Stuttgart were also victorious, but City's latest loss in a miserable run will dominate the headlines.

The 2023 European champions succumbed in Turin as Dusan Vlahovic put Juventus ahead early in the second half when goalkeeper Ederson was unable to keep out his header. Ilkay Gundogan was denied an equaliser by a fine Michele Di Gregorio save, before Weston McKennie made it 2-0 with a fine acrobatic finish in the 75th minute. The result leaves Juventus on 11 points with two games left, a tally that is expected to be enough to guarantee them at least a place in the knockout phase play-offs. City, meanwhile, have now won just once in 10 in all competitions, with seven defeats in that time. With just eight points, they currently sit 22nd in the standings, in which the top 24 advance to the knockouts. Their next game will be crucial, as



Juventus' US midfielder #16 Weston McKennie (2L) celebrates with teammates after scoring

they travel to a Paris Saint-Germain side who sit a point beneath Guardiola's men. "We have to get points, we'll go to Paris to try and do that and the same goes for the final match at home (to Club Brugge)," Guardiola told Amazon Prime in Italy. Barcelona are second in the standings with 15 points, behind only Liverpool, after beating Dortmund 3-2 in a thriller in Germany, with Ferran Torres their hero. Raphinha fired Barca ahead with his 17th goal of the season, early in a remarkable second half. Serhou Guirassy equalised with a penalty on the hour mark, but substitute Torres put Barca back in front on 75 minutes, converting the loose ball after Fermin Lopez's shot was saved. Guirassy scored again for a

quick equaliser, only for Torres to strike once more and win the game for Barca with five minutes left. Barcelona's tally leaves them, like Liverpool, ideally placed to finish in the top eight, which means direct progress to the last 16 without having to go through the play-offs. **Saka stars, Arsenal cruise** Arsenal are third in the standings on 13 points after easing to a 3-0 win over Monaco in London. Bukayo Saka scored twice, putting the Gunners ahead in the first half and making it 2-0 on 78 minutes as the hosts pounced on disastrous Monaco defending. Saka then turned provider for the late third, with substitute Kai Havertz credited with the final touch. Mikel Arteta's team are one of

six sides on 13 points, with Lille also on that tally after edging Sturm Graz 3-2 in France thanks to a fine late winner from Hakon Haraldsson. Lille were 2-0 up through Osame Sahraoui and Mitchel Bakker, only for goals by Otar Kiteishvili and Mika Biereth to bring the Austrian champions back level. However, Icelandic midfielder Haraldsson secured Lille's fourth win of the campaign. Atletico eased to a 3-1 victory over Slovan Bratislava, with Antoine Griezmann scoring twice after Julian Alvarez had opened the scoring with an excellent strike. David Strelec pulled one back for the Slovaks, who are one of three teams already eliminated having lost six games out of six. The others are RB Leipzig and Young Boys.

YOU KNOW WHAT

Manchester City's seven losses in 10 games mark their worst run since Pep Guardiola took charge in 2016

Milan grab late winner

Milan defeated Red Star Belgrade 2-1 at San Siro with Tammy Abraham grabbing the winner three minutes from time. Rafael Leao had put Milan ahead only for Nemanja Radonjic to equalise for the Serbian side, who have lost five of their six games and are surely heading out. Benfica edged closer to a play-off spot with a 0-0 draw at home to Bologna of Italy, who have scored just one goal in six games and will go no further. Feyenoord stayed on course to go through after beating Sparta Prague 4-2 in Rotterdam, with Gernot Trauner, Igor Paixao, Anis Hadj Moussa and Santiago Gimenez netting their goals. Stuttgart kept alive their hopes of progress by coming from behind to beat Young Boys 5-1. Lukasz Lakomy put Young Boys ahead but Angelo Stiller levelled before Enzo Millot, Chris Fuehrich, Josha Vagnoman and Yannik Keitel all scored in the second half. The next round of Champions League games is scheduled for January 21 and 22, with the league phase concluding the following week.

Dortmund fear 'worst-case scenario' after Schlotterbeck injury



Borussia Dortmund's Nico Schlotterbeck reacts after an injury

AFP | Barcelona

Borussia Dortmund coach Nuri Sahin said his side feared a "worst-case scenario" after Nico Schlotterbeck, the club's only fit centre-back, was stretchered off in Wednesday's home loss to Barcelona. With Dortmund trailing 3-2, Schlotterbeck leapt high to try and head in a free-kick in the last play of the game and landed awkwardly on his ankle and was stretchered from the pitch. "We don't know yet with Schlotti, but the pictures look ugly," Sahin said. "It would be a disaster if he was out too," Sahin added, with central defenders Niklas Suele and Waldemar Anton

also on the club's injury list, forcing midfielder Emre Can to fill in at centre-back. "Let's see. I'm waiting for the diagnosis," Sahin said, adding Schlotterbeck was "obviously upset". Dortmund came into Wednesday's match missing Anton and Suele, along with Julian Brandt and Maximilian Beier. Defender Julian Ryerson was also subbed off at half-time with an injury. At the pre-match press conference on Tuesday, Sahin blamed the crowded fixture schedule for the injury woes. "The strain is almost unbearable, especially for international players. I don't know when they are supposed to have a break."

'Incredible' Saka makes the difference for Arsenal: Arteta

AFP | London

Mikel Arteta praised Bukayo Saka's "incredible talent" after the Arsenal forward's double inspired a 3-0 win over Monaco that moved his side closer to the Champions League last 16 on Wednesday. The Gunners sit third in the table with two games remaining as they chase automatic qualification for the last 16 via a top-eight finish. With matches against Dinamo Zagreb and Girona to come in January that should be a simple task for Arsenal.

But if Arteta's team are to win the Champions League for the first time, they will need England star Saka to maintain his superb form. The 23-year-old has five goals in his last six games in all competitions and nine for the season, as well as a hatful of assists. Even those impressive statistics don't do justice to Saka's influence on Arsenal. Arteta knows better than anyone just how much Saka has developed since the Spaniard took charge in 2019. "He looks really mature. What he has already done in the game at his age is incredible. Very humble, a great guy to have around and an incredible talent."



Arsenal's English midfielder #07 Bukayo Saka scores the team's second goal

He looks really mature. What he has already done in the game at his age is incredible. Very humble, a great guy to have around and an incredible talent

MIKEL ARTETA

ing, with the seniors he is amazing. He is loved by everybody and he makes the difference on the pitch." Saka is a quiet, unassuming personality both on and off the pitch so there is little chance of him blowing his own trumpet. But pundits are starting to rank the winger as one of the world's best forwards and Ar-

ta agrees that he is on the right trajectory to be rated alongside the likes of Kylian Mbappe, Erling Haaland and Vinicius Junior. "That is what he wants to do. That is the ambition he has and the quality he has. He is preparing himself every day so I'm not surprised," he said. "You have to be able to do that consistently throughout many years to prove yourself in that position. "What he has done at that age, you can put him in those brackets. What he done in his six years in professional football is exceptional and that's it. "That has been an evolution. He wasn't able to do that at 18 or 19. A year or two ago, he developed in the right way, his condition, his preparation."

Indian teen prodigy becomes youngest world chess champ

18-year-old Gukesh Dommaraju surpasses legends, wins world chess championship in Singapore final

● Gukesh beats China's Ding Liren in final match

● Second Indian to hold title after Viswanathan Anand

AFP | Singapore

Indian teen prodigy Gukesh Dommaraju became the youngest undisputed world chess champion yesterday after beating China's Ding Liren in the final match of their series in Singapore.

The 18-year-old became "the YOUNGEST WORLD CHAMPION in history", said the International Chess Federation in a post on social media platform X, after Ding resigned in a thrilling endgame that had been expected to end in a draw.

The 32-year-old slumped on the table after he realised he had made an endgame blunder that gave his opponent an opportunity to pounce, while Gukesh burst into tears, burying his face in both hands.

Cheers from jubilant fans, many of them Indians who had flown in to watch the match and Singaporeans of Indian descent, erupted at the viewing rooms near the playing arena.

Fans were chanting Gukesh's



India's grandmaster Gukesh Dommaraju (L) competes against China's chess grandmaster Ding Liren

name as he walked in for the after-match press conference.

The game was going for a draw but with a one-pawn advantage -- supported by a rook and a bishop -- a tenacious Gukesh pressed on and was richly rewarded for it.

"My whole strategy for this match was to push as much as possible in every single game,"

Gukesh told reporters.

"It just takes one game for the strategy to pay off."

His victory in game 14 gave him a score of 7.5 against Ding's 6.5, cementing his remarkable rise to stardom after becoming the youngest ever challenger for the world championship.

At his age, Gukesh surpassed the achievement of Russia's Gar-

ry Kasparov who won the title at age 22.

He also became the second Indian after five-time world chess champion Viswanathan Anand to hold the title.

Magnanimous in victory, Gukesh praised Ding, saying he "fought like a true champion".

He had won in the Candidates Tournament held in Toronto,



Gukesh surpassed Russia's Garry Kasparov's record, becoming the youngest world chess champion at 18, and is only the second Indian to hold the title



My whole strategy for this match was to push as much as possible in every single game. It just takes one game for the strategy to pay off

GUKESH DOMMARAJU

the game to the homestretch.

Born to a doctor father and microbiologist mother, Gukesh started playing chess when he was seven, and became India's youngest grandmaster aged 12 years, seven months and 17 days.

Though he spends much of his time practising the game, Gukesh recently confessed to a love of the hit television sitcom "Friends".

When competing he usually wears a tilak -- a smattering of white ash on his forehead in deference to his Hindu faith -- to go with his suit.

In 2022, Gukesh beat US number one Fabiano Caruana at the Chess Olympiad and later that year triumphed over Magnus Carlsen, a five-time world champion.

He reached the world championship by becoming the youngest winner of the prestigious Candidates Tournament in April.

Guardiola 'questioning self' after latest City loss at Juve

AFP | Turin

Pep Guardiola admitted that he is questioning himself as his Manchester City team slumped to yet another defeat at Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Asked by reporters whether he was questioning his management, Guardiola replied: "Yeah, of course."



Manchester City's Spanish coach Pep Guardiola (C) acknowledges supporters

"Of course I question myself in the good moments and the bad moments," said Guardiola.

"I was stable in the good moments and I'm stable in the bad moments... My biggest challenge is when they give me the opportunity to be a manager and get results to continue to work.

"If I would miss the big challenge in the first season, the second season, I wouldn't be here."

'We want more', says Olmo with Barcelona bound for knock-outs

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona midfielder Dani Olmo said his team "want more" after locking up progress through the league phase with a 3-2 win at Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday.

Olmo, who laid on an assist in his return to Germany where he spent four years at RB Leipzig, called on his side to "keep this mentality, this focus".

"We want to win every game. Of course 15 points is a good amount but we want more," he said.

The 26-year-old said he and former Dortmund striker Robert Lewandowski and one-time



Barcelona's Ferran Torres (L hidden) shoots and scores the team's second goal

Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick spoke to the squad about what to expect at the Westfalenstadion, which he called "one of the temples of football".

"It was a really good atmosphere to play against so I enjoyed it to be back in Germany"

Flick told reporters the first half was "one of the best we've played" since he arrived in the summer.

"It's very special to win here. We knew that whoever wins here would take a massive step towards qualification. It was our goal and we pushed for that," the German said.

The coach put the brakes on expectations, saying there was "a long way to go" for the five-time Champions League winners in the new format.

"Our aim is to get into the top eight first. I think that if we manage that, then we will have achieved a lot, but the journey is still far from over.

Real confirm Mbappe left thigh injury

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid forward Kylian Mbappe suffered a thigh injury in this week's Champions League match at Atalanta, the Spanish club confirmed yesterday without giving details on his absence.

"Following tests carried out on Kylian Mbappe today by the Real Madrid medical department, the player has been diagnosed with a thigh injury in his left leg. His progress will be monitored," Real said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Mbappe opened the scoring in the 10th minute in a 3-2 win in Bergamo to revive the holders' flagging Champions League campaign.

But the 25-year-old pulled up with a muscle pain after 36 minutes and was replaced by Rodrygo.

"Mbappe has some discomfort in his hamstrings. It doesn't seem serious but we'll see tomorrow," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti after Kylian Mbappe

ter Tuesday's match.

"He couldn't sprint, it hurt him a bit and we thought it best to replace him."

Before pulling up Mbappe had one of his best outings in the Madrid jersey since joining last summer from Paris Saint-Germain with three clear scoring chances, including one in the second minute.

He scored the 50th goal of his career in the Champions League and his 12th since joining Real Madrid.

Real play Rayo Vallecano in La Liga on Saturday followed by the FIFA Intercontinental Cup final on December 18

and another Liga game at home against Sevilla four days later.

