

Maloney, Browning go quickest again
 Rodin Motorsport, Hitech Pulse-Eight drivers set pace for second straight day as Formula 2, Formula 3 pre-season testing concludes | P16

WORLD 10 Jordan's king takes part in Gaza aid airdrop

THE DAILY tribune

Nicole Kidman feels 'proud' of Expats

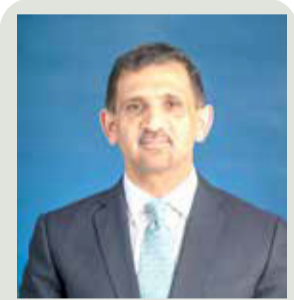
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BUSINESS

7

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 20th ANNIVERSARY



Bank ABC Islamic profits surge on robust core business, favourable market conditions P6

HM King, HRH Prince Salman exchange NAC anniversary greetings

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday received a cable of congratulations from His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, on the 23rd anniversary of the adoption of the National Action Charter (NAC).

HRH Prince Salman emphasised that the anniversary of the NAC is a significant milestone in the nation's history, embodying the one-family spirit adopted by Bahrain's loyal people.

The National Action Char-

ter played a significant role in advancing the nation towards a better present and brighter future, HRH said, adding that the kingdom looks forward to more achievements in line with His Majesty's aspirations of which everyone is proud.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister affirmed that Team Bahrain, led by His Majesty the King, has made significant achievements over the past 23 years, based on the principles of the National Action Charter, making it a qualitative addition to the kingdom's history.

He pledged that this glorious



HM the King anniversary would be an opportunity to renew resolve, drawing



HRH Prince Salman inspiration from the integrated national approach, spear-

headed by HM the King, to continue advancing the kingdom and its status for the benefit of everyone.

His Royal Highness prayed to Allah the Almighty to bless HM the King with abundant health, happiness, wellness, and long life.

HM the King sent a reply cable of thanks to HRH Prince Salman, hailing the anniversary of the National Action Charter, which represents a milestone in modern history, heralding a new chapter of political life, partnership, economic and social development, and vibrant democracy.

Eats and Treats

 P08-09

Military cooperation

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister, yesterday received the newly appointed Commander of the United States Naval Forces Central Command, Commander of the US Fifth Fleet, and Commander of Combined Maritime Forces, Vice Admiral George M. Wikoff, at Riffa Palace.

Forging stronger ties

HM King and HH Shaikh Mishal pledge to boost Bahrain-Kuwait economic partnership

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Shaikh Mishal Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, held talks to strengthen bilateral ties and strategic partnership across various fields.

HM the King welcomed HH Shaikh Mishal at Al Sakhir Palace, marking the official one-day visit of HH Shaikh Mishal to the Kingdom of Bahrain yesterday.

During the meeting, His Majesty presented HH Shaikh Mishal with the Order of Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa-Exceptional Class Collar, acknowledging the Kuwaiti Amir's contributions to strengthening bilateral relations.

They lauded the growth of trade and investment relations between the two nations, underscoring the significance of expanding cooperation and economic partnership. They affirmed their commitment to exploring new economic opportunities and welcomed efforts by Kuwaiti and Bahraini investors to capitalise on mega projects in various sectors.

Furthermore, they highlighted the success of the joint security committee meeting held in July 2023 and endorsed the formation of executive work teams between interior ministries to enhance strategic relations, con-



HM the King, in the presence of HRH Prince Salman, meets with HH Shaikh Mishal Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah



His Majesty welcomes the Amir of Kuwait upon arrival in the Kingdom

contributing to regional security and stability.

They lauded the growth of trade and investment relations between the two nations, underscoring the significance of



HM King bids farewell to HH Shaikh Mishal after wrapping up his visit

investors to capitalise on mega projects in various sectors.

HH Shaikh Mishal expressed well-wishes for the upcoming 33rd Arab Summit, hosted by Bahrain on May 16, aiming to

enhance joint Arab action and achieve peace and stability in the region.

He expressed thanks and appreciation to HM the King for the warm welcome and hospitality.



Bahrain Tennis Challenger opens with exhibition



Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Mubarak Al Khalifa and David Haggerty visit a variety of activities at the venue

Public invited to watch matches

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

An exhibition kicked off the Ministry of Interior Bahrain Tennis Challenger, attracting tennis fans and officials alike.

General Supervisor Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa opened the event, joined by International Tennis Federation

(ITF) President David Haggerty and Chairman of the Bahrain Tennis Federation (BTF), Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Mubarak Al Khalifa.

The exhibition features a variety of activities for visitors, including performance by the police band, displays of the latest sports equipment, traditional food corner and sports competitions and activities for the public.

Shaikh Rashid praised the event's success in attracting tennis enthusiasts and commended the organisers for

the smooth execution of both the exhibition and the main tournament. He extended a warm invitation to citizens and residents of Bahrain to come witness the exciting matches and enjoy the festive atmosphere surrounding the event.

The Ministry of Interior Bahrain Tennis Challenger is expected to draw crowds throughout the week until 17, offering a chance for spectators to witness top-level tennis competition and enjoy the accompanying festivities.

Jeddah to Manama on BD9!



One Tank Challenge organising team

Isuzu MU-X crushes 'One Tank Challenge' with 1,421 km on a single fill

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

The Isuzu MU-X successfully completed a grueling "One Tank Challenge" from Jeddah City in Saudi Arabia to Bahrain, covering an impressive 1,421 kilometers on a single tank of fuel. The journey, costing only around BD9 (SAR90), showcased the remarkable fuel efficiency and durability of the latest MU-X model.

Starting with a full 80-liter tank, the MU-X embarked on its remarkable journey on Sunday, defying doubts and exceeding expectations. Ahmad Alshehri, the Saudi driver behind the wheel, expressed his initial uncertainty and ultimate excitement.

"At first, we weren't sure it was possible, but we did it! We could have even gone another 100 kilometers with the remaining fuel. This was a fantastic challenge, with only two mountains to conquer throughout the nearly 2-day journey."

"We conducted a similar



Ahmad Alshehri

Arun Kumar Ganesh

Abdulrahman Alotaibi

challenge in 2019, but this year, we raised the bar with a new distance and goal. Our aim is to exceed customer expectations by providing them with the best possible vehicles." Abdulrahman Alotaibi, Research and Development Analyst at Mitsubishi Corporation Service Office told the Daily Tribune.

Arun Kumar Ganesh, General Manager, Commercial Vehicles at Motor City, highlighted the impact of this achievement. "This incredible feat, powered



by 30+ years of Isuzu technological advancements, solidifies our commitment to customer satisfaction. This step further cements our position as a top contender in the market, solidifying the brand's reputation for reliability."

Isuzu MU-X has a new engine, the 4JJ3-TCX, packs a powerful punch with 190 horsepower. That means it's even faster and smoother to drive, whether you're on the highway or exploring rough roads.



Isuzu MU-X 2023 Model

Matrix Celebrates One Year of Thrills



Cake-cutting ceremony

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's premier indoor family entertainment center, Matrix, celebrated its grand opening and first anniversary

yesterday at Juffair Mall, marking a year of fun and adventure for residents.

The event was graced by the presence of the Minister of Industry and Commerce, Abdulla Adel Fakhro, as the chief guest,

alongside prominent figures Dr. Varghese Kurian, Chairman of VKL Holdings and Al Namal Group of Companies, and Juzer Rupawala, Director of Lulu Group International.

Minister Fakhro toured the



Ribbon-cutting ceremony



Token of appreciation presented by Dr. Varghese Kurian to the Minister of Industry and Commerce

complex, experiencing the diverse range of over 17 adventure and sporting activities firsthand and engaging in conversations with excited visitors. As part of the grand opening ceremony, Matrix held special programs dedicated to children with special needs, demonstrating their commitment to inclusivity and community engagement.

The celebration marks a successful year for Matrix, solidifying its position as a leading destination for family entertainment. The announcement of a new complex currently in the planning stages hints at more exciting experiences to come.



The Minister with children

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Year End 2023 Financial Results

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position			Consolidated Statement of Income		
31 December 2023			Year ended 31 December 2023		
	All Figures in US\$ Thousand		All Figures in US\$ Thousand		
	2023	2022		2023	2022
ASSETS					
Bank balances	9,601	13,080	OPERATING INCOME		
Due from a financial institution	74,754	-	Income from a financial institution	169	68
Investments	808,819	882,235	Income from investments	65,481	31,000
Murabaha receivables	1,477,447	1,351,965	Income from Murabaha receivables	75,596	38,694
Ijarah	83,074	93,678	Ijarah income – net	7,283	5,719
Musharaka financing	5,178	5,087	Income from Musharaka financing	131	100
Equipment	259	132		148,660	75,581
Other assets	41,453	69,090	Profit on Murabaha and other payables	(9,206)	(4,372)
TOTAL ASSETS	2,500,585	2,415,267	Return on equity of investment account holders	(89,476)	(35,144)
LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS AND OWNERS' EQUITY					
Liabilities					
Murabaha and other payables	245,881	234,539		49,978	36,065
Other liabilities	12,643	15,912	Gain on sale of investments - net	4,495	4,456
	258,524	250,451	Fees and commission income - net	4,916	5,626
EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS					
Owners' equity	1,914,018	1,834,540	Total operating income	59,389	46,147
Share capital	132,500	132,500	(Charge for) / reversal of expected credit losses - net	(1,771)	1,675
Reserves	53,877	62,880	NET OPERATING INCOME	57,618	47,822
Retained earnings	141,666	134,896	OPERATING EXPENSES		
	328,043	330,276	Staff costs	6,335	6,330
TOTAL LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS AND OWNERS' EQUITY	2,500,585	2,415,267	Depreciation	90	66
			Other expenses	4,484	2,251
			Total operating expenses	10,909	8,647
			INCOME FOR THE YEAR BEFORE ZAKAH	46,709	39,175
			Zakah	(433)	(421)
			NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	46,276	38,754

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows			Consolidated Statement of Changes in Owners' Equity		
Year ended 31 December 2023			Year ended 31 December 2023		
	All Figures in US\$ Thousand		All Figures in US\$ Thousand		
	2023	2022		2023	2022
OPERATING ACTIVITIES					
Net income for the year	46,276	38,754	Reserves		
Adjustments for:			Share capital	Statutory reserve	Investment fair value reserve
Depreciation	90	66	Total reserves	Retained earnings	Total owner's equity
Gain on sale of investments - net	(4,495)	(4,456)	As at 1 January 2023	132,500	41,070
Charge for / (reversal of) expected credit losses - net	1,771	(1,675)	Net income for the year	-	-
Operating profit before changes in operating assets and liabilities	43,642	32,689	Cumulative changes in fair value of equity investments	-	(791)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:			Cumulative changes in fair value of debt type investments	-	(12,840)
Due from a financial institution	(75,000)	5,000	Total comprehensive income for the year	-	(13,631)
Murabaha receivables	(127,363)	(63,184)	Transfer to statutory reserve	-	4,628
Ijarah	10,355	36,417	Dividends paid*	-	-
Musharaka financing	(105)	(79)	At 31 December 2023	132,500	45,698
Other assets	(606)	(61,298)	As at 1 January 2022	132,500	37,195
Other liabilities	(2,503)	54,338	Net income for the year	-	-
Murabaha and other payables	11,342	(54,120)	Cumulative changes in fair value of equity investments	-	(115)
Equity of investment account holders	79,478	119,371	Cumulative changes in fair value of debt type investments	-	(1,556)
Net cash flow (used in) / from operating activities	(60,760)	69,134	Total comprehensive income for the year	-	(1,671)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES					
Purchase of investments	(289,070)	(211,500)	Transfer to statutory reserve	-	3,875
Proceeds from sale / redemption of investments	381,446	135,731	Dividends paid*	-	-
Purchase of equipment	(217)	3	At 31 December 2022	132,500	41,070
Net cash from / (used in) investing activities	92,159	(75,766)	*During the year, the Bank paid dividend of US\$ 26.323 (2022: US\$ 20.286) per share amounting to US\$ 34.878 million (2022: US\$ 26.878 million) upon approval by the shareholder at the Annual General Meeting.		
FINANCING ACTIVITY					
Dividend paid to the shareholder	(34,878)	(26,878)	The above Consolidated Statement of Financial Position, Consolidated Statement of Income, Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows and the Consolidated Statement of Changes in Owners' Equity have been extracted from the Consolidated Financial Statements of ABC Islamic Bank (E.C.) for the year ended 31 December 2023, which were approved by the Board of Directors and on which an unqualified audit opinion was issued by Ernst & Young, Kingdom of Bahrain, on 10 February 2024.		
Cash used in financing activity	(34,878)	(26,878)			
NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(3,479)	(33,510)			
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	13,080	46,590			
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR	9,601	13,080			

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HRH Prince Salman affirms strong Bahrain-UAE ties

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister, affirmed that the long-standing historic relationship between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the UAE has contributed to the cooperation and joint coordination between the two countries in various fields.

HRH Prince Salman yesterday received the UAE Minister of State for Defense Affairs and member of the UAE Cabinet, His Excellency Mohamed bin

Mubarak Fadhel Al-Mazrouei, at Riffa Palace.

His Royal Highness highlighted the depth of the ties between the two countries and their peoples, thanks to the support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and the President of the UAE and Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, His Highness Shaikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister thanked the leadership, government and people of the UAE for their sincere condolences and conveyed



HRH Prince Salman with H.E. Mohamed bin Mubarak Fadhel Al-Mazrouei

the greetings of HM the King and his greetings to HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and HH Shaikh Mohammed bin

Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Defense.

The Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces also conveyed the condolences of HM the King and his con-

dolences to HH Shaikh Mohamed bin Zayed and HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid for the fallen servicemen of the UAE and wished a speedy recovery for those who were injured.

H.E. Al-Mazrouei conveyed the greetings of HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid to HM the King and His Royal Highness. HE Al-Mazrouei also expressed their condolences for the loss of Major Abdullah Rashid Al Noaimi, who lost his life in a terrorist attack, along with several servicemen from the UAE, while carrying out training missions in Somalia.

Fission Fix?



MP Muneer Suroor

● **'Nuclear power will cut electricity costs and diversify energy supply'**

TDT | Manama

Forget solar panels and windmills, a Bahraini lawmaker has a bolder, and slightly radioactive, solution to the country's energy woes - uranium and nuclear reactors!

That's right, MP Muneer Suroor is proposing we go full-on Homer Simpson to tackle those pesky electricity bills.

Now, before you start picturing mushroom clouds blooming over Manama, hold your horses. The MP's vision is purely peaceful - think sustainable, eco-friendly nuclear power, not Cold War fallout.

He claims this atomic approach would not only slash electricity costs for citizens but also free the government from its energy subsidy burden. Plus, it would diversify the nation's energy mix, weaning us off those unreliable, expensive conventional methods.

Of course, the internet, ever the voice of reason, and sometimes sarcasm, wasn't exactly glowing with enthusiasm. Some folks worried about the hefty price tag of such a nuclear adventure, while others questioned where exactly we'd stick these glowing behemoths in the tiny island Kingdom. One social media wag even demanded nuclear weapons to complete the atomic arsenal (because why not, right?).

So, will Bahrain be trading flip-flops for Geiger counters anytime soon? The jury's still out. But one thing's for sure - MP Suroor's proposal has sparked a lively debate, proving that sometimes, the most outlandish ideas can get the conversation flowing, even if it's slightly radioactive!

No More Limits

Council of Representatives approves major upgrade to unemployment aid

TDT | Manama

The Council of Representatives yesterday passed a crucial amendment to the Kingdom's unemployment insurance laws, ushering in a new era of support for job seekers across the country.

During yesterday's session, lawmakers convened to address the pressing need for reform in Decree Law No. 78 of 2006 concerning unemployment insurance. The proposed changes mark a significant departure from the status quo, with sweeping alterations aimed at bolstering coverage and ensuring fair compensation entitlement for those in need.

Among the key revisions, the amendment abolishes the previous cap on compensation duration, providing a lifeline for individuals facing prolonged periods of unemployment. Additionally, the prescribed con-

It is important not to deprive individuals of their entitlement to compensation and the need for compassion and understanding in times of economic hardship."

- MP JALAL KADHEM

tributions for compensation entitlement have been extended, reflecting a commitment to safeguarding financial security for the jobless.

However, perhaps the most notable aspect of the amendment is its focus on addressing the plight of repeated claimants. Recognising the cyclical nature of unemployment for many individuals, lawmakers have crafted provisions aimed



at breaking this cycle and providing sustainable support for those in need.

The proposal received overwhelming support from several Members of Parliament, including MP Jalal Kadhem, a vocal advocate for the rights of the unemployed. Kadhem passionately argued for the importance of not depriving individuals of their entitlement to compensation, emphasising the need for

compassion and understanding in times of economic hardship.

Expanding coverage

In a bid to broaden the scope of beneficiaries, Kadhem proposed expanding coverage to include those who voluntarily leave their jobs for valid reasons. Highlighting the challenges faced by many workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, he stressed the importance of ensuring support for all individuals facing unemployment, regardless of the circumstances.

Furthermore, Kadhem called for the utilisation of unemployment funds to bolster insurance coverage, offering a potential solution to long-standing deficiencies in pension funds. By reallocating resources to support the unemployed, lawmakers aim to provide much-needed relief to those who have been waiting for employment opportunities for years.

Play Probe

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Ministry of Education ignited a whirlwind yesterday, announcing a probe into a private school and the immediate removal of its entire administration and board of directors. This unprecedented action followed a student play deemed inappropriate by the ministry.

According to the ministry, a group of students performed a theatrical scene containing 'inappropriate insinuations', violating Bahrain's educational values and regulations. Specialised teams deemed this performance a threat to the school's mission, prompting swift action.

The ministry removed the school's leadership to ensure accountability and prevent similar incidents.

"Providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for all students is paramount," said the ministry in a statement. It added that their focus extends beyond schools, urging parents to exercise stricter control over children's online content accessed through various digital platforms.

Valentine's Day brings busy times for florists

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

Love is in the air as Valentine's Day arrives, and the busiest people in town are the florists. With a surge in demand for red roses, flower shops are working tirelessly to fulfill pre-orders and meet the high expectations of customers.

According to Mr. N.K. Jayan, Manager of Bahrain Flowers, the demand for red roses is exceptionally high this year. Customers are not only interested in purchasing roses but also adding on extras like stuffed toys, gift items, and customised packaging. Pre-orders have been pouring in since last week, and the shop has even received online orders through their website.

"It's a quite busy week for us, and we see a lot of sales during this time," said Mr. Jayan. "We have also partnered with Talabat to cater to customers who prefer delivery. Prices for roses range from a minimum of BD5 and go up to BD50 depending on the quantity."

To avoid last-minute rushes, people have been reserving flowers in advance. Fortunately,



Flowers, stuffed toys and gift items are selling briskly during this time of the year



A staff of Rasha Flowers

Bahrain Flowers has managed to stock up enough to accommo-

date the high demand.

Another major player in the

market, Rolanda Flowers, is not only selling to customers but also acting as a wholesaler for other stores. Abdul Malik, HR of Rolanda Flowers, emphasised the significance of Valentine's Day for their business.

"For us, two days are very important: Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. Red roses are the classic choice for Valentine's Day," he stated. "In addition to roses, customers have been looking for lilies and sunflowers. Many are requesting custom packages that include roses, teddy bears, chocolates, and balloons."

The majority of flowers in the Kingdom are imported from

countries like Kenya, Holland, Colombia, Singapore, and others. Malik also mentioned that their business has seen a boost from customers ordering through Instagram.

Meanwhile, Rasha Flowers has been experiencing a hectic period, with their stores adorned in a red-themed ambiance. Josh from Rasha Flowers said, "We currently have over a thousand red roses available, and the majority of our products have already been sold. In addition to roses priced at 600 fils for one and it goes up to BD60 we have rose petals priced at BD5, chocolates starting from BD3.5, various decoration items, gift cards, and heart-shaped helium balloons, all of which have been in high demand."

As the oldest flower shop in Umm Al Hassam, Rasha Flowers has witnessed consistent demand year after year. By the end of the day, they are always sold out, and their staff members are busy taking orders.



A staff of Rolanda Flowers

Fake Fall, Real Theft

Mosque scam exposed as cunning thief exploits kindness, steals thousands

TDT| Manama

A brazen thief employed a devious ploy to target unsuspecting worshippers in a Manama mosque, leaving a trail of stolen dinars and shattered trust.

His scheme? A staged fall, strategically timed to exploit the compassion of fellow devotees. While concerned worshippers rushed to his aid, the cunning culprit made off with nearly BD2,000, swiped from a bank card belonging to one of his victims.

The elaborate act began innocently enough. As prayers concluded and worshippers exited the mosque, the thief orchestrated a dramatic tumble. Fooled by his theatrics, kind-hearted individuals rushed to his assistance, even seating him on a chair before departing. But their act of generosity came at a steep price.



Shortly after leaving the mosque, a victim received a jarring call from his employer: nearly BD1,900 had vanished from his work bank account. Panic set in as he realised his wallet, containing the stolen bank card and, crucially, the password scribbled on a piece of paper, was missing. The thief, it turned out, had struck twice, targeting another unsuspecting member of the congregation as well.

Footage

Security cameras at Bahrain Airport painted a clear picture of the culprit's movements. The footage captured him withdrawing the stolen funds from an ATM and making a series of purchases at nearby shops. Armed with this evidence, investigators identified the perpetrator and brought him to justice.

Facing charges of unauthorised electronic signature usage, theft, and seizing money through illicit means, the thief now stands to spend the next three years behind bars.

'Charter of Renaissance'

TDT| Manama

The National Action Charter is the catalyst for Bahrain's comprehensive development renaissance under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, said MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen yesterday.

Highlighting the charter's profound impact on human rights and civil liberties, the MP underscored its contribution to the establishment of vital civil institutions, cementing Bahrain's commitment to democratic governance and international



MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen

human rights standards. Dr. Al-Dhaen lauded the charter's foresight in charting a path towards prosperity, stability, and sustainability, aligning seamlessly with the nation's Vision 2030 goals.

She reiterated the charter's enduring legacy as a cornerstone of Bahrain's progress, fostering inclusive parliamentary engagement and bolstering democratic participation across society. Dr. Al-Dhaen concluded with optimism, affirming the charter's successful validation by the citizenry as a testament to Bahrain's promising future.

'Holy Heist': Couple Loses BD100,000

● 'Healer' jailed as couple loses fortune in sorcery scam

TDT| Manama

A court has slammed the final hammer on a cunning duo who exploited a couple's faith and trust, siphoning over BD100,000 through a web of lies and fabricated sorcery.

The mastermind, a self-proclaimed spiritual healer, played on their desperation, extracting jewellery, cars, land, and hefty



Image used for illustrative purposes only

sums of cash, leaving them emotionally and financially drained.

His elaborate ruse began with promises of healing - oil and

honey concoctions to soothe the husband's neck, 'cleansing' the daughter of supposed evil spirits, and even breaking 'magical curses' on their land. Blinded by hope, the couple surrendered their valuables and signed over legal ownership, believing they were securing their well-being.

But the 'treatment' came at a steep price. Gold jewellery vanished, replaced by tales of hidden witchcraft. Accusations flew against the wife's colleagues, with the duo extorting 'spell-breaking' payments. Fear and manipulation fuelled the cycle, pushing the total loot past BD100,000.

Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2023



Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023		
	31 December 2023 (Audited)	31 December 2022 (Audited)
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	5,831,809	4,688,861
Right-of-use assets	528,778	565,033
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	3,075,975	3,149,453
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	730,097	710,463
Investments at amortised cost	250,000	250,000
	10,416,659	9,363,810
Current assets :		
Inventories	2,057,705	2,972,473
Trade and other receivables	3,157,869	2,897,793
Cash and bank balances	1,119,298	1,284,813
	6,334,872	7,155,079
TOTAL ASSETS	16,751,531	16,518,889
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves		
Share capital	3,120,928	3,120,928
Statutory reserve	1,560,464	1,560,464
General reserve	3,993,000	3,993,000
Development and raw material reserve	1,000,000	1,000,000
Investment fair value reserve	2,359,160	2,432,071
Retained earnings	2,412,847	2,159,991
Treasury shares	(122,398)	(122,398)
Total shareholders' equity	14,324,001	14,144,056
Non-current liabilities		
Non-current portion of Lease Liabilities	607,950	629,686
Non-current portion of deferred income	111,059	155,782
Employees' terminal benefits	55,059	47,266
	774,068	832,734
Current liabilities		
Short-term borrowings	387,720	500,702
Current portion of lease liabilities	14,650	13,564
Trade and other payables	1,226,980	1,013,937
Current portion of deferred income	24,112	13,806
	1,653,462	1,542,009
Total liabilities	2,427,530	2,374,743
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	16,751,531	16,518,799

Statement of profit or loss for the year ended 31 December 2023		
	Year ended 31 December 2023 Audited	Year ended 31 December 2022 Audited
Sales	19,096,732	18,808,379
Cost of sales	(18,221,685)	(17,878,791)
Gross Profit	875,047	929,588
Other income	241,564	218,163
Other operating expenses	(853,315)	(839,301)
Profit from operation	263,296	308,450
Investment income	231,861	193,839
Loss on disposal of associate company	-	(401,884)
Unrealised fair value gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	4,461	20,918
Share of loss in an associate	-	(29,277)
Finance costs	(93,785)	(67,404)
Net profit for the period	405,833	24,642
Basic and diluted earnings per share (fills)	13.00	1.00

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2023		
	Year ended 31 December 2023 Audited	Year ended 31 December 2022 Audited
Net profit for the year	405,833	24,642
Other comprehensive income		
<i>Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:</i>		
Valuation (losses)/gains on financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	(72,911)	75,032
<i>Items that will or may be reclassified into profit or loss:</i>		
Company's share in associate's other comprehensive income	-	267
Reversal of reserve on disposal of associate company	-	30,178
Total Other comprehensive (loss)/income for the year	(72,911)	105,477
Total comprehensive income for the year	332,922	130,119

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 December 2023		
	Year ended 31 December 2023 Audited	Year ended 31 December 2022 Audited
Operating activities		
Net profit for the year	405,833	24,642
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	395,066	406,771
Amortisation of right-of-use assets	36,255	31,512
Finance costs	93,785	67,404
Gain on sale of property, plant and equipment	(92,683)	-
Gain on sale of financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	(1,917)	(982)
Unrealised fair value gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(4,461)	(20,918)
Loss on disposal of associate	-	401,884
Unrealised foreign exchange (gain)/loss	(15,173)	32,573
Share of loss of associate	-	29,277
Interest income	(73,513)	(54,994)
Dividends income	(158,348)	(138,845)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Inventories	914,768	(813,563)
Trade and other receivable	(260,076)	198,938
Trade and other payables	213,043	(60,192)
Employees' terminal benefits, net	7,793	7,332
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,460,372	110,839
Investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(1,538,014)	(1,180,333)
Proceeds from sale of financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	2,484	3,002
Proceed from sales of property, plant and equipment	92,683	-
Proceeds from disposal of associate company	-	942,760
Interest income received	73,513	54,994
Dividends income received	158,348	138,845
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,210,986)	(40,732)
Financing activities		
Principal repayment of lease liabilities	(20,740)	(8,193)
Net movement in deferred income	(34,417)	(13,804)
Net movement in short-term borrowing	(112,982)	332,657
Finance costs paid	(93,785)	(67,404)
Dividends paid	(152,977)	(152,977)
Net cash (used in)/provided by financing activities	(414,901)	90,279
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and bank balance	(165,515)	160,386
Cash and bank balance, beginning of the year	1,284,813	1,124,427
Cash and bank balance, end of the year	1,119,298	1,284,813

Statement of changes in shareholders' equity for the year ended 31 December 2023								
	Share capital	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Development and raw material reserve	Investment fair value reserve	Retained earnings	Treasury shares	Total
At 31 December 2021	3,120,928	1,560,464	3,993,000	1,000,000	2,326,594	2,288,326	(122,398)	14,166,914
Net profit for the year	-	-	-	-	-	24,642	-	24,642
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-	-	-	105,477	-	-	105,477
Dividends distributed for 2021	-	-	-	-	-	(152,977)	-	(152,977)
At 31 December 2022	3,120,928	1,560,464	3,993,000	1,000,000	2,432,071	2,159,991	(122,398)	14,144,056
Net profit for the year	-	-	-	-	-	405,833	-	405,833
Other comprehensive loss for the year	-	-	-	-	(72,911)	-	-	(72,911)
Dividends distributed for 2022	-	-	-	-	-	(152,977)	-	(152,977)
At 31 December 2023	3,120,928	1,560,464	3,993,000	1,000,000	2,359,160	2,412,847	(122,398)	14,324,001

* These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 13 February 2024. Full set of Financial Statements can be seen on Company website: www.dawajen.bh

Abdul Rahman Mohamed Jansheer
Chairman

Abdullhussain Khalil Dewani
Vice Chairman

Reviewed by
BDO

Bank ABC Islamic profits surge on robust core business, favourable market conditions

Full year 2023 profit rises 19.5% to US\$46.3 million

● Fourth quarter Net profit increase to US\$11.2m from US\$9.1m reported in same quarter a year ago

TDT | Manama

Riding on the back of better performance of its core business and improvements in the profit rate environment, Bank ABC reported profits that rose from a year ago.

The Bank closed the year with net profit of US\$46.3 million, representing 19.4% improvement year-on-year from US\$38.8m in 2022.

Total operating income before credit losses stood at US\$59.4m, 28.7% higher on a year-on-year basis. The balance sheet remained healthy, maintaining strong capital ratio.

Recognizing the Bank's performance, the Islamic International Rating Agency (IIRA) has reaffirmed ratings of Bank ABC Islamic at A+(bh)/A1(bh) on the national scale and A-/A2 on the



Key Performance

Net profit of US\$46.3m, 19.4% higher than last year.

Total operating income before credit losses of US\$59.4m, 28.7% higher than last year.

Operating expenses were US\$10.9m, 26.2% higher compared to US\$8.6m last year. Adjusting for a one-off, exceptional expense of \$1.8 MM, they were 6% higher on year-on-year basis.

The bank's capital base remains very strong with a capital adequacy ratio of 40.5%.



We have closed the year with sound profitability and a strong balance sheet. Our capital ratios remain robust and healthy. The full year performance is underpinned by stable performance from core client business, a tight control on credit cost, as well as favorable profit rate environment. Capital markets business outperformed during the year with the Bank leading several high profile Sukuk mandates for Sovereigns, GRES and private corporations. Of these, the AirLease Sukuk, where Bank ABC was the Sole Lead Arranger, Sukuk Structuring Bank and JLM won the Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East Awards 2023 for the "Global Corporate Sukuk Deal of the Year" and "Aircraft Finance Deal of the Year"

HAMMAD HASSAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BANK ABC ISLAMIC

international scale. Outlook on the assigned ratings is 'Stable'.

Commenting on the results, Hammad Hassan, Managing Di-

rector of Bank ABC Islamic said, "We have closed the year with sound profitability and a strong balance sheet. Our capital ratios

remain robust and healthy. The full year performance is underpinned by stable performance from core client business, a tight

control on credit cost, as well as favorable profit rate environment. Capital markets business outperformed during the year with the Bank leading several high profile Sukuk mandates for Sovereigns, GRES and private corporations. Of these, the AirLease Sukuk, where Bank ABC was the Sole Lead Arranger, Sukuk Structuring Bank and JLM won the Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East Awards 2023 for the "Global Corporate Sukuk Deal of the Year" and "Aircraft Finance Deal of the Year".

US\$59.4m, 28.7% higher than last year.

Allowances for credit losses for the year were a charge of US\$1.8m compared to a write back of US\$1.7m reported last year. Operating expenses were US\$10.9m, 26.2% higher compared to US\$8.6m last year. Adjusting for a one-off, exceptional expense of \$1.8 MM, they were 6% higher on year-on-year basis.

Balance Sheet

ABC Islamic Bank's total assets stood at US\$2.501 billion as of December 31, 2023, compared to US\$2.415 bn at 2022 year-end.

Investments were at US\$809 m, compared to US\$882 m at 2022 year-end.

Murabaha receivables, Ijarah and Musharaka financing were at US\$1,566 m, compared to US\$1,451 m at 2022 year-end.

Shareholders' equity on December 31, 2023, stood at US\$328 m, compared to US\$330 m at 2022 year-end.

The bank's capital base remains very strong with a capital adequacy ratio of 40.5%, predominantly Tier 1, which totalled 39.5%.

Q4 results

Fourth quarter net profit increased to US\$11.2m from US\$9.1m reported in same quarter a year ago. Total operating income before credit losses was US\$15.3m compared to US\$14.0m for the same period of last year.

Operating expenses were US\$2.5m, compared to US\$2.4m for the same period of last year.

Full year 2023 results

Full year 2023 net profit was US\$46.3m, 19.4 % higher than last year. Total operating income before credit losses was

Bahrain All Share Index closes higher

TDT | Manama

Bahrain All Share Index has closed at 2,079.07 points, marking an increase of 1.63 points above the previous closing.

This increase was due to the rise in the Financial Sector.

Bahrain Islamic Index has closed at 748.63 points, marking a decrease of 0.35 points below the previous closing.

Results indicated that 74 equity transactions took place



with a volume of 1,735,798 worth BD 434,945.

Investors traded mainly in

the Financial Sector, representing 63.37% of the total value of securities traded.

Tamkeen



Tamkeen's executive management met with Bahrain Network (BNET) to present the enhanced support programmes. Tamkeen provides to support employment and career development for Bahrainis, especially within the ICT sector, one of the key high potential sectors in the Kingdom.



شركة دلمون للدواجن
Delmon Poultry Company B.S.C

Recommendation of Declaration of Dividends

The Board of Directors of Delmon Poultry Company B.S.C. resolved, at its meeting held on 13 February 2024, to recommend the distribution of dividend for the year ended 31 December 2023 to the shareholders whose names are registered on the Company's register on the Record Date. This is subject to the approval of the Company's shareholders on the upcoming Annual General Meeting. The proposed distribution is as follows:

Cash Dividend: 8 % of share nominal value, equivalent to 8 Fils B.D per share amounting to 244,763 BD.

Below are the key dates to be taken note of:

Event	Date
General Meeting Date (Shareholders' approval date)	26 March 2024
Cum-Dividend Date (Last day of trading with entitlement to dividends)	27 March 2024
Ex-Dividend Date (First day of trading without entitlement to dividends)	28 March 2024
Record Date (The Day on which all shareholders whose names are on the share register will be entitled to dividends)	31 March 2024
Payment Date (The Day on which the dividends will be paid to the entitled shareholders)	08 April 2024

Abdul Rahman Mohamed Jamsheer
Chairman
13 February 2024

GFH profit rises 13.97% to US\$102.86m



“Our agility and ability to deliver growth year after year continues to be rewarded and we are proud of the strong investor and market confidence in the Group. Having ended the year with positive momentum, we look forward to continuing to achieve greater value for our investors and shareholders in 2024 and beyond. We will continue to prudently grow our portfolio of investments and strategic assets across our key markets of focus in the region and internationally

GHAZI AL HAJERI, CHAIRMAN, GFH FINANCIAL GROUP



“During the quarter, we successfully closed three new strategic transactions in the healthcare and logistics sectors in Saudi Arabia, where we see enormous potential for value creation, and the opportunity to leverage positive macroeconomic trends. Across all we do, we are working to increase our contributions to sustainable growth and development of the sectors and markets in which we invest and for the benefit of all our stakeholders

HISHAM ALRAYES, CEO AND BOARD MEMBER, GFH FINANCIAL GROUP

TDI | Manama

GFH Financial Group reported profits for its fourth quarter and full year 2023, thanks to contributions across the group's subsidiaries, associates, and investments. The group also recommended total cash dividend of 6.2% on par value (USD 0.0164 per share) for 2023, subject to approval by the General Assembly and regulators.

Q4 results

Quarterly net profit attributable to shareholders was US\$23.94 million versus US\$24.02m in the fourth quarter of 2022, a decrease of 0.32% resulting from lower contribution from the commercial banking subsidiary during the quarter. Earnings per share were US cents 0.69 compared with US cents 0.74 in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Highlights for Q4 and 12M 2023:

- Strong double-digit growth in income and enhanced profitability for 2023 supported by contributions across the Group's subsidiaries, associates, and investments.
- Continued momentum in investment banking throughout the year, including the successful close in Q4 of the Group's third US Medical Clinics portfolio, and new healthcare and logistics transactions in Saudi Arabia.
- Exits from several investments including the sale of the Group's first diversified US Student Portfolio acquired in 2021, delivering 10.4% ROI to GFH's investors.
- Partial exits from proprietary investments in Bahrain to strategic partners in AlAreen Park Hotel & Resort.
- Solid contributions from the Group's Treasury Investment Portfolio resulting in steady investment income (recurring and from mark-to-market gains).

Total income was US\$108.24m with sound contributions made from the Group's subsidiaries, and income from placements and fees of investment portfolios, and treasury activities. This is compared with US\$109.73m in the fourth quarter of 2022, a decrease of 1.36%.

Q4 consolidated net profit

was US\$24.18m compared with US\$26.23m in the fourth quarter of 2022, a decrease of 7.82%. Total expenses were US\$84.06m compared with US\$83.50m in the prior-year period, up 0.67%.

Full year results

Net profit attributable to shareholders was US\$102.86m

compared with US\$90.25m in 2022, an increase of 13.97%. The gain is attributed to growth in the investment banking business, contributions from the commercial banking subsidiary, proprietary income, as well as treasury activities. Earnings per share for the year was US cents 2.95 compared to US cents

2.65 for the full year 2022, an increase of 11.32%. Total income was US\$369.53m, up 24.10% from US\$297.76m for the previous year.

Consolidated net profit was US\$105.23m compared with US\$97.71m in 2022, an increase of 7.69%. Total expenses for the year were US\$264.30m com-

pared with US\$200.06m in 2022, an increase of 32.11%.

Total equity attributable to shareholders was US\$989.54m at 31 December 2023, down 0.71% from US\$996.60m at year-end 2022. Total assets of the Group increased by 13.93% to US\$11.12 billion at 31 December 2023 compared with US\$9.76 billion at 31 December 2022.

In line with the Group's strong results, the Board of Directors has recommended a total cash dividend of 6.2% on par value (US\$0.0164 per share), subject to approval by the General Assembly and regulators. Currently, GFH manages over US\$21 billion of assets and funds including a global portfolio of investments in logistics, healthcare, education and technology in the MENA region, Europe and North America.

For *seamless, quick & secure* online shopping

American Express Middle East expands online merchant acceptance network with Otu

TDI | Manama

American Express Middle East has announced an agreement with Otu, a leading fintech company in the Middle East. Through this collaboration, American Express Card Members will get a seamless, quick and secure online shopping experience when they use their cards at thousands of Otu's online merchants.

This agreement is aligned with American Express Middle East's commitment to increase the number of merchants that accept American Express and create opportunities for merchants to attract a broader customer base.

For merchants, this agreement will streamline the payment solution by facilitating the acceptance of American Express Cards without the need for additional hardware or complicated integration processes. Moreover, it will enable them to attract consumers and business from a global base of American Express Card Members – from Middle East and all around the world.

Graziela Martins, Vice President Merchant Business of



The deal signing

American Express Middle East, commented: “We are delighted to sign an agreement with Otu as part of our commitment to expand our merchant acceptance network and enable our Card Members to use their cards more and more for everyday spend. This agreement will

enable new merchants to attract American Express Card Members from all around the world while providing them with a seamless and secure online shopping experience.”

Talal Alawadhi, Otu's CEO, expressed satisfaction with the agreement, emphasizing the

value created for current and future American Express Card Members. He sees the agreement between Otu and American Express Middle East as a significant step in empowering businesses to innovate and create new opportunities.

OPEC sees strong oil demand growth in 2024

Vienna, Austria

The OPEC said yesterday it expects robust economic activity in China and air travel to drive strong global demand growth for oil this year.

Its outlook contrasts that of the International Energy Agency (IEA), which advises oil-consuming nations, which last month predicted that oil demand growth would halve on economic headwinds.

OPEC estimated global oil demand will grow by 2.2 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2024, whereas the IEA projected demand growth would decrease to 1.2 million bpd.

“This is reflecting the robust economic growth expected this year,” OPEC said in its monthly report.

“Continued robust economic

activity in China, global air travel recovery and expected healthy petrochemical feedstock requirements will be key for oil demand growth in 2024.” In terms of products, transport fuels are driving demand. Gasoline consumption is expected to “exceed” pre-pandemic levels, while jet fuel is projected to average “just below” the levels seen in 2019, according to OPEC.

Meanwhile, the IEA sees lacklustre global economy along with tighter fuel efficiency standards and growth in electric vehicles as limiting growth in demand for oil.

OPEC still cautioned that “inflation levels, monetary tightening measures and sovereign debt levels could weigh on global oil demand prospects in the current year.”

Bitcoin breaks \$50,000 for first time since 2021

Hong Kong, China

Bitcoin spiked above \$50,000 Tuesday for the first time in more than two years as investors grow optimistic that US approval of broader trading in the unit will ramp up demand.

The cryptocurrency has enjoyed a strong run in recent months, fuelled by expectations US lawmakers would allow the creation of exchange-traded funds (ETFs)

that track the price and let the public invest in crypto without directly purchasing it.

After initially dropping in reaction to last month's green light by Washington, bitcoin has rallied about 25 percent since January 22.

That advance saw it hit as much as \$50,328, according to Bloomberg data, its highest level since late 2021.

And observers were optimistic about the outlook.



Eats & Treats

BAHRAIN

to your heart's content



The Simple Joys of Love

The other evening, I indulged in a bowl of my favourite noodles. As I savoured the long strands of noodles coated in a luscious cheese-infused sauce, fond recollections of shared moments with my beloved husband flooded my mind. With each delectable mouthful, the essence of those cherished times enveloped me anew. The comforting embrace of nostalgia transcended the mere warmth of the dish, engulfing my senses in a tender wave of reminiscence.

Do you remember your first few dates with your special person? Do you remember what you ate or drank? A lot of people do. For me, it was a cup of mint chocolate chip ice cream, sometimes a tub. We shared it over conversations. Popcorn at the movies and chocolates after a meal are



a few more instances that I recollect and cherish.

Why do shared meals create memories? When we eat, our brain processes not just the taste and aroma of the food but also the circumstances and emotions associated with the experience. Therefore, certain foods can prompt memories of past events, people, and places and arouse emotions and feelings associated with

those memories. Sharing meals can create strong emotional connections. Taste, smell and certain dishes can transport us to cherished times spent with loved ones, triggering feelings of warmth and connection.

Love is in the small things - you can find joy in drinking coffee or tea with your partner or having a meal with your phone placed away from the dining table. Beautiful memories can be created by preparing a meal for your love. Love is in the thought. What are you doing to make them feel special? Rekindle the passion with thoughtful gestures. It could be a sandwich for their

morning cuppa. How about cooking together? The bonding experience is unmatched! Enjoying chocolate fondue with fresh fruits or a charcuterie board while watching a movie is a great bonding experience, too.

Document your favourite food memories through photos or a list of foods you enjoy together and places you like to dine at. They remain in our hearts, but when you revisit these memories, they will remind you of the good times.

Valentine's Day should be a way of living and not just a day to fancily celebrate love and put on a show for others to see. Make it about you and your loved one. Do you have a special food memory with your loved one? Tell us about it. I like the idea of this Valentine's Day platter. It is perfect for sharing; you can add the food items of choice, make it pretty and enjoy it at your own pace.



Valentine's Day Platter



You will need:

- 4 cooked chicken frankfurters or beef sausages
- 4 heart-shaped waffles
- 4 strips of turkey or beef bacon
- 6 strawberries, sliced
- 1 cup of blueberries
- 1 cup of raspberries
- 1 cup of chocolate chips
- Several mini chocolate donuts
- Garnishes in a small glass
- Maple syrup
- Nutella
- Powdered sugar
- Strawberry & white sprinkles

Directions :

Arrange all ingredients on the board. Top waffles with garnishes. Serve and enjoy!

Jumeirah
GULF OF BAHRAIN
RESORT & SPA

فيروز

Fayrouz Nights

Savor the exquisite flavors of Levantine cuisine at Fayrouz nights: a weekly delight of authentic gastronomy and live entertainment.

Every Thursday | 8pm - 11pm

BD 25 net per person

For reservations, please call +973 3366 3466

Avenue 63, Jazayer Beach
1067, Zallaq
Kingdom of Bahrain

زهرة الفيروز
ZAHRA ALFAYROUZ

A Harmonious Journey of Flavours

Melodious tunes and mouth-watering Levantine cuisine at Fayrouz Nights

As the clock strikes eight on a Thursday evening, anticipation mounts for a melodic weekend retreat at Zahrat Al Fayrouz. Nestled within the luxurious Jumeirah Gulf of Bahrain Resort & Spa, this exquisite restaurant presents Levantine delicacies in indoor opulence and alfresco splendour. True to its name, Fayrouz Nights pays tribute to the timeless allure of the legendary Lebanese songstress Fairuz, whose charming melodies have captured hearts for over seven decades.

Zahrat Al Fayrouz is a restaurant with a lot of character. The niceties are captivating! Fayrouz means 'turquoise', and as you walk into the restaurant, the dainty turquoise ceiling lamps and turquoise soft furnishings add meaningful detail to the décor. Decorative faux ceiling joists add a traditional touch. Muted gold and lead-coloured lattices divide the space into community and private seating spaces. Artefacts and original art raise a curious eye and a keen desire to experience the special menu that the chef Bashar has designed for Fayrouz Nights.

Seated close to the belly dancer, I watched her graceful moves as she swayed to the music. Fayrouz Night features a set of performers that take turns each



week. They have a Tanoura show, belly dancing, and a singer to perform Fairuz classics.

I unveiled the impressive menu shaped like a phonograph record to reveal a unique Levantine menu. For starters, they have a selection of hot and cold mezzes, followed by a choice of main course and a dessert platter for sharing.

Beginning with a refreshing welcome drink prepared from raspberries, sprite and pomegranate, I commenced my din-

ing experience with a selection of cold mezza- a colourful array of cool and fresh hummus, mutabbal and warek enab bil zaite (Stuffed grape leaves). The starters were delicious! Hummus and mutabbal were creamy and smooth with extra virgin olive oil. I scooped up these delicious dips with hot bread.

The vegetables in the fattoush were colourful and fresh with a zesty pop of colour from sumac, and the fried Lebanese bread strips added crunch to the salad. Hot mezza included cheese rakakat, shrimp fatteh, and chicken liver with pomegranate sauce. The cheese rakakat had delicate layers of crispy phyllo with a stuffing of herby and stringy cheese which was so good! Chicken liver with pomegranate was a lip-smacking preparation of fried chicken liver coated in a flavour-packed sweet and sour pomegranate

molasses sauce. The hot and cold mezza consisted of classics, and each dish was prepared with utmost care and attention to detail.

After a successful round of appetisers, it was time for the main course. The set menu allows you to select one of four dishes. I highly recommend these dishes from the main course options-

Salmon with rice and tarator sauce-Seasoned and seared chunks of salmon served over a bed of fragrant basmati rice with slivers of pistachio and a tarator sauce. Tarator is a non-dairy



blend of tahini, garlic, and lemon.

The sauce perfectly complimented the fish and rice, adding creaminess and a zesty tang to the fatty fish.

Chicken molokhia is a stew prepared with molokhia and t e n d e r



chicken thighs served with a side of rice and vermicelli. I believe that molokhiya is an acquired taste; you either love it or not. The herby taste is often compared to spinach; however, molokhia is more intense than other greens. I was not sure if I would enjoy it. However, I

loved it! Lemon broth cuts through the rich herby flavour to provide balance while the meat (In this case, chicken) adds a savoury note that makes this dish astonishingly addictive. Flakey almonds garnish added a nutty element and crunch.

” I believe that molokhia is an acquired taste; you either love it or not. The herby taste is often compared to spinach; however, molokhiya is more intense than other greens. I was not sure if I would enjoy it. However, I loved it!



Kibbeh bil laban is one dish that looks simple but involves a lot of work. The preparation of the kibbeh is a work of art. The beautiful torpedo-shaped kibbeh arrived in a savoury buttermilk broth with the goodness of garlic, mint, and other spices. The kibbeh had a stuffing made from minced meat, herbs and a perfect amount of seasoning. This dish is a comfort food that pampers your senses.

I concluded my meal with a dessert platter consisting of crunchy baklava, cheese-laden kunafa, fresh fruits and chilled vanilla ice cream, followed by a piping hot cup of green tea.

The meal was well-balanced, aptly portioned, healthy and tasty. I left feeling thoroughly satisfied.

Zahrat Al Fayrouz is an ideal location for a romantic Levantine dining escapade. Visit the restaurant for a memorable evening.

The set menu is priced at BD 25 net per person. For reservations, contact 33663466





WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2024

THE DAILY **tribune**

QUOTE OF THE DAY

LIFE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT AND HOW WE MAKE IT - WHETHER WE REALIZE IT OR NOT
NAPOLEON HILL



TOP 4 TWEETS

01



Had a productive discussion with Thai Deputy Prime Minister Parnpreet Bahadur-Nukara @MFATHai on advancing the U.S.-Thai alliance and a free and open Indo-Pacific region. We also discussed efforts with Thailand and ASEAN to address the worsening crisis in Burma.

@SecBlinken

02



The Best Minister Award 2024 World Government Summit celebrates its winner, H.E. Dr. Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Minister of Public Health of the State of Qatar, for transformative leadership in public health.

@DrTedros

03



Incredibly honoured by the warm welcome from the Indian Community in Abu Dhabi today. The vibrancy of our diaspora never ceases to amaze me.

@narendramodi

04



Today, King Abdullah II and I discussed how no major military operation in Rafah should proceed without a credible plan to ensure the safety and support for the more than one million people sheltering there.

@POTUS

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

News in brief

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC) said yesterday it has launched long-range ballistic missiles from a warship for the first time. The launch from the Shahid Mahdavi during naval manoeuvres involved firing two ballistic missiles capable of striking targets up to 1,700 kilometres (1,050 miles) away. "The IRGC for the first time has fired ballistic missiles in the Gulf of Oman," state television reported. "The firing of a long-range ballistic missile from the warship was successfully carried out," IRGC chief Hossein Salami said. Separately, in central Iran, the IRGC simulated a surface-to-surface ballistic missile attack on Israel's Palmachim airbase south of Tel Aviv, state television reported. It said Palmachim was the "main base for F-35 fighter jets" in Israel.



Iran fires first ship-based long-range ballistic missiles

Israel says UNRWA probe mandate too vague

the UN agency tasked with helping Palestinian refugees. The embattled agency had come under fire over accusations by Israel that 12 of its staff members were involved in the deadliest-ever attack inside Israel on October 7 last year. "We plan to cooperate with the investigation," Israeli ambassador Meirav Shahar told reporters in Geneva. But she warned that "the mandate as it stands right now is too wide".

Israel warned yesterday the mandate of an investigation into allegations that UN staff participated in Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attacks was too vague, but said it would cooperate. Earlier this month, United Nations chief Antonio Guterres announced the creation of an independent panel to assess UNRWA,

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said Tuesday there were "too many victims" in Gaza, saying Israel's assault on the Palestinian territory following the unprecedented Hamas attacks was "disproportionate". In an interview on RAI radio, Tajani -- whose country holds the rotating G7 presidency this year -- strongly condemned the "savage" October 7 attacks and said Israel had the right to defend itself. But he said that "at this point Israel's reaction against the Palestinian civilian population is disproportionate... there are too many victims who have nothing to do with Hamas". Tajani distanced himself from comments made last week by Francesca Albanese, an Italian who is United Nations special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, who denied the Hamas attacks were "anti-Semitic".

Italy says Israeli response to Hamas 'disproportionate'

SPOTLIGHT

Qatar frees eight former Indian Navy men, PM will go to Doha



Some of the former Indian Navy personnel after their arrival in New Delhi early Monday.

TDT | agencies

More than three months after they were sentenced to death, eight former Indian Navy personnel have been released from custody in Qatar and seven have returned to India.

This was announced by the Ministry of External Affairs in the early hours of Monday. Hours later, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Qatar on February 14 and meet Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, after completing his visit to the UAE that starts Tuesday. Relieved families hailed the efforts of the government and the personal intervention of the Prime Minister -- Modi met the Qatar Emir on the sidelines of the COP28 summit in Dubai on December 1 -- in securing the release of the eight men.

Kwatra too said, "Prime Minister has himself personally, constantly, supervised all the developments in this case and has never shied away from an initiative that would ensure the return of Indian nationals home."

The Indians had been working in their private capacity with Doha-based Dahr Global to oversee the induction of Italian small stealth submarines U2I2.

They have been identified as Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vasisht, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta and Sailor Ragesh.

Seven of them have returned to India and Commander Tiwari, the eighth person, sources said, will be brought back after some formalities are completed.

UNRWA funding freezes risk 'aiding' deaths in Gaza: Saudi official

AFP | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Freezing funds to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees risks "aiding" the deaths of civilians in Gaza, the head of Saudi Arabia's humanitarian agency told AFP on Tuesday.

Several countries -- including the United States, Britain, Germany and Japan -- have suspended funding to the UNRWA agency in response to Israeli allegations that some of its staff members participated in the October 7 attack by Hamas militants.

The UN has sacked the 12 UNRWA staff members accused by Israel of involvement in the October 7 attack and said the tunnel claim should be investigated once the conflict is over.

"We should not penalise the innocent people, millions of people who are living in Gaza,



The head of Saudi Arabia's King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), Abdullah al-Rabeeh

because of an accusation on a handful of people," Dr Abdullah al-Rabeeh, head of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, told AFP in an interview on Tuesday.

"If you have close to two million people living in a small place... and then the funding

for the food and for the health basics is stopped, basically you are calling for them to live in, actually, disaster and also aiding in their death."

Rabeeh, who is also an adviser to the Saudi Royal Court, spoke as Gaza braced for an expected Israeli incursion into the crowded southern city of Rafah where more than a million Palestinians are trapped.

He warned that such an operation would produce "chaos" and potentially trigger the "complete stoppage" of aid trucks.

"We will see thousands of people losing their lives. Now people talk about the threat of epidemics, the threat of famine, and you name it. So we don't want to see any civilian get lost because of things that can be avoided," he said.

Jordan's king takes part in Gaza aid airdrop

AFP | Amman, Jordan

Jordanian King Abdullah II recently took part in a humanitarian aid drop into war-torn Gaza, according to state TV footage showing him aboard an air force C-130 transport plane.

The king can be seen on board the flight in military uniform, in the 56-second video broadcast on Jordan's Al Mamlaka channel on Monday.

He was helping soldiers drop a crate said to contain humanitarian and medical aid bound for the Jordanian field hospital in northern Gaza, in a joint operation with the Netherlands.

In mid-December, King Abdullah's daughter, Princess Salma, a first lieutenant and pilot in the Royal Jordanian Air Force, also took part in an airdrop of medical supplies to the field hospital.

On November 20, Jordanian Crown Prince Hussein arrived in Egypt's El-Arish airport near Gaza to supervise delivery of the second Jordanian field hospital to the besieged Palestinian



Jordanian King Abdullah II

territory. US President Joe Biden thanked Jordan for providing humanitarian aid, during a White House meeting Monday where the king appealed for a full ceasefire to end the war in Gaza. Abdullah "personally got in a plane and helped conduct an air drop of urgently needed medical supplies into Gaza", Biden said.

"I understand that two of his children have also joined those air drops. They helped fly humanitarian supplies in."

Jordan has conducted 11 airdrop operations since the war broke out on October 7 between Israel and Hamas militants in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Amman has delivered a total of almost 720 tonnes of humanitarian aid from 49 aircraft, 11 of them via airdrops, according to the Jordanian Royal Charity Commission.

325 Jordanian trucks also delivered a total of 4,376 tonnes of aid by land, according to the Commission.

Jailed Khan rules out alliance with rivals to rule Pakistan

AFP | Islamabad, Pakistan

Jailed ex-prime minister Imran Khan ruled out an alliance with Pakistan's two largest political parties on Tuesday after his candidates took the most seats in last week's general election.

Candidates loyal to Khan defied a crackdown blocking them from campaigning and forcing them to run as independents,



Supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party block Peshawar to Islamabad highway

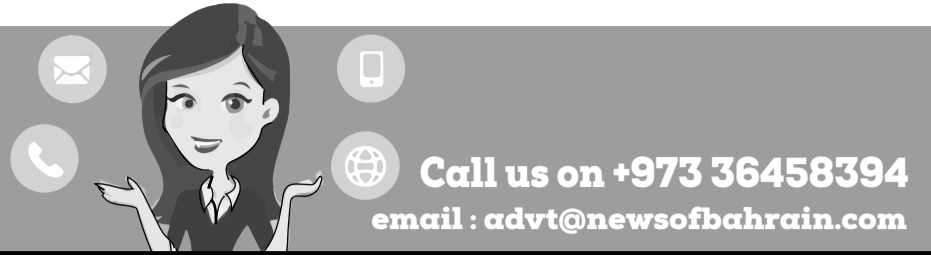
with a combined showing big-

ger than any party in Thursday's National Assembly polls.

The upset stopped the army-backed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) from securing a ruling majority.

Speaking in Adiala Jail -- where he has spent much of his time since his arrest in August -- Khan accused both the PML-N and second-placed Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) of corruption.

Classifieds



VACANCIES AVAILABLE CONTINUED

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FIVE STAR TAILORING BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39273180 or SHAMEER67@HOTMAIL.COM

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WALAA ELECTRIC WORKSHOP W L L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39456787 or WALLAWLL@BATELCO.COM.BH

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NASFAH FOR MEN SEWING AND ACCESSORIES has a vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37707719 or SADEQ9210@GMAIL.COM

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Indian PM in UAE to open temple, deepen trade links



Modi (front L) walks next to the President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a ceremonial welcome



Modi (2R) speaking with people of Indian origin residing in the United Arab Emirates during a gathering at a hotel in Abu Dhabi



Modi (L) during the launch of the RuPay/JAYWAN digital debit card at a reception at the Presidential Airport in Abu Dhabi

AFP | Dubai

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi started a visit to the United Arab Emirates yesterday to inaugurate the Middle East's largest Hindu temple and boost investment and trade links.

The two governments signed deals, including a framework agreement on a major trade and transport route, at the start of Modi's two-day visit, the third in the past eight months.

His trip comes ahead of India's national elections expected in April.

Modi was due to inaugurate the region's largest Hindu temple on Wednesday, a day after he addresses thousands of expatri-

ates in a community event in UAE capital Abu Dhabi.

The visit is largely focused on galvanising the diaspora, according to experts, even though Indians in the UAE can't vote from abroad.

The UAE is home to about 3.5 million Indian nationals -- the largest expatriate community in the Gulf country.

On Tuesday, Modi met UAE president Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, according to the Indian foreign ministry and local state media, their fifth meeting in eight months.

They signed several deals, including a bilateral investment treaty, building on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement signed in 2022, In-

dia's foreign ministry said.

They also signed an "inter-governmental framework agreement" on the India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor, a ship-to-rail transit network that will supplement existing sea and land routes.

The ministry did not elaborate on the deal which comes after an ambitious plan for a modern-day Spice Route was first announced on the sidelines of a G20 summit in New Delhi in September.

- 'Cultural bonds' -

Ties have gradually deepened since a landmark 2015 visit by Modi to the UAE, the first by an Indian prime minister in more than three decades.

The UAE is India's third largest trading partner, with a bilateral trade volume of around \$85 billion between 2022 and 2023.

Later on Tuesday, Modi was expected to address large crowds at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi, where organisers say some 60,000 Indian expatriates had registered to attend.

For Modi, "this visit will be focused on the diaspora", said Ian Hall, author of the book "Modi and the Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy".

Before flying out to

Qatar on Wednesday, Modi is due to deliver a keynote address at the World Government Summit, an annual gathering of political and business leaders in Dubai, the UAE's business hub.

But the highlight of his visit will be the inauguration of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swam-

inarayan Sanstha (BAPS) temple in Abu Dhabi, the region's largest.

It is the first Hindu temple in the UAE capital.

"The BAPS Temple is a celebration of UAE-India friendship, deep-rooted cultural bonds and an embodiment of the UAE's global commitment to harmony, tolerance and peaceful coexistence," India's foreign ministry said.



Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar (L) speaking with Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed al-Nahyan, Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi and UAE National Security Advisor



CELEBS

celebs

Nicole Kidman feels 'proud' of Expats

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Nicole Kidman feels "so proud" of 'Expats'.

The new Prime Video series - which is based on 'The Expatriates', a 2016 novel by Janice Y. K. Lee - focuses on a group of expats living in Hong Kong, and Nicole feels proud of the show's international feel.

She told 'Entertainment Tonight': "I read the book, my sister gave it to me to read, and I knew it would make an amazing film. But it was so dense I thought a mini series [would work better]. And it was the right cast."

The Oscar-winning actress stars alongside the likes of Ji-young Yoo, Jack Huston and Sarayu Rao on the show.

And despite her past success, Nicole feels particularly proud of her involvement with the new mini-series.

She shared: "I've obviously done so many rolls in my life, but this is so different. It takes place over six hours. So many layers. And then episode five, you [see] through the lens of the domestic workers.

"I read the book, my sister gave it to me to read, and I knew it would make an amazing film. But it was so dense I thought a mini series [would work better]. And it was the right cast"

NICOLE KIDMAN

"We get to introduce these actors to this large audience. There are six languages in this show! I'm so proud of [it]."

By contrast, Nicole recently revealed that she struggled to shoot 'Expats' amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The actress explained that she found it tough to deal with Hong Kong's strict COVID rules.

Nicole, 56 - who is married to musician Keith Urban - told the Radio Times: "When I was single and I would travel, a lot of it was lonely. Being slightly introverted, I would think, 'Should I call that person and see if they want to have dinner, or will I just

stay in my little room and not venture out?"

"Obviously, when you become part of a family and there's people to miss if they're not with you, that's not good. I've had many, many a night when I've been like, 'What am I doing? I want to be with my family, why am I not with them?'"

Nicole Kidman



Eva Mendes 'so proud' of Ryan Gosling's Barbie role after he received 'hate' and 'ridicule'



Ryan Gosling and Eva Mendes

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Eva Mendes is "so proud" of Ryan Gosling's Ken role in 'Barbie' after he earned an Oscars nomination for the part.

The 43-year-old actor received some online abuse after playing the male doll in the motion picture, which featured Margot Robbie in the titular role as the iconic Mattel doll, but earlier this week he earned a Best Supporting Actor Academy Award nod for the role.

Eva has praised her partner for creating a "completely original, hilarious, heartbreaking, and now iconic character". Sharing a picture of a Roll-

ing Stone magazine article called "Sorry to Be the One to Say It, but Ryan Gosling Is Giving Major Cringe as Ken in 'Barbie'", Eva responded on Instagram: "So proud of my man. So much hate when he took on this role. So many people trying to shame him for doing it. Despite all the #Notmyken ridicule and articles written about him, he created this completely original, hilarious, heartbreaking, now iconic character and took it all the way to Oscars. (sic)"

Eva - who has daughters Esmeralda, nine, and Amada, seven, with the actor - is "beyond proud" to be Barbie through Ryan's Ken.

Isla Fisher admits she loves 'not working'

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Isla Fisher loves "not working" as she's fixated on being a mum.

The 'Wedding Crashers' actress, 48, who has three children aged 16, 13 and eight with her husband Sacha Baron Cohen, 52, has been making the second series of the Peacock comedy drama 'Wolf Like Me', but said she loves staying at home.

She told People about her feelings about being able to get back to work after the SAG-AFTRA strikes that recently crippled Hollywood: "I'll be perfectly honest. It's been great to be able to talk

about the show again.

"But as much as I love working, I also love not working."

Isla plays a secretive, newly-pregnant werewolf in 'Wolf Like Me' alongside actor Josh Gad, 42, and she shot the show in her native Australia while her family lived nearby.

She added to People: "Motherhood is my favourite topic personally. But (my children) haven't chosen this (celebrity) life, so I don't talk about them.

"I think having kids is very transformative in every sense - physically, emotionally and psychologically - and it fills a very large space in my life.

"I love being a mom. So I feel very blessed to do both."

Isla Fisher



John Cena wants to be 'more understanding' with people wanting his time in public

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

John Cena is trying to be "more understanding" of people who want his time in public.

The 'Argylle' actor and WWE legend made headlines last year when he a fan interrupted his meal with a friend and started performing his signature 'You can't see me' hand wave taunt, and the 46-year-old actor managed to stay calm as he asked the stranger to let him "enjoy some time with his friends".

The fan apologised as Cena thanked him for respecting his wishes, and now the star has told the 'IMPAULSIVE' podcast: "I think everyone has their line, but I also am... each day I'm more and more understanding of this crazy life, and I try to be more and more understanding of anyone who asks for my time."

Cena - who admitted he has "a few" coffee shops he en-

joys frequenting where he gets some privacy - insisted he is "big on hard work, loyalty and respect".

He added to fellow WWE star Logan Paul: "It's tough when you get... when you get emotional about something, it's tough to make sense of it all.

"I'm not at all perfect but [I] try to be who you say you are. I also try to have more empathy now everyday.

"I understand, 'Hey, if this video makes it I'm on easy street.' Yeah but... what about me? I'm just trying to buy my coffee. But I dunno, I guess I just try to handle those things more in the time."

John Cena



Cena was praised for his response to the fan last summer, but he insisted he isn't interested in trying to get one up on anyone.

He explained: "To me, it's not about the win in the situation. It's... am I who I say I am?"

The Hollywood star admitted he tries to "keep a pretty small footprint" when it comes to going out and about.

He said: "I have a few places that I feel pretty safe at. I don't try to make a scene, we just enjoy company and food, and that's that!"

Owen Wilson becomes 'Chief Shampoo Officer' for California Naturals

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Owen Wilson has become the Chief Shampoo Officer for California Naturals.

The 'Loki' actor, 55, landed the role at the company that promotes hair health, and released a 'Get Ready With Me' trailer to announce becoming an ambassador.

Speaking to People, he said: "I'm excited to weigh in on everything from the product pipeline (happily lending myself as a guinea pig for new formulas) to campaigns and bigger decisions about the company's growth."

Owen Wilson



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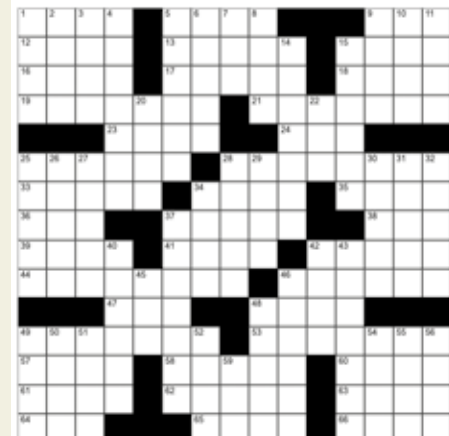
Yesterday's solution

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

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- Word of comparison; 5- Poultry enclosure; 9- ...canto; 12- The last Mrs. Chaplin; 13- Love, in Paris; 15- Painter of limp watches; 16- Wall St. debuts; 17- Pass into disuse; 18- Canadian gas brand; 19- 16th president of the U.S.; 21- Increase in unpleasantness; 23- Sewing case; 24- Agnus ...; 25- Root vegetable; 28- Companion of Daniel; 33- Single things; 34- Beat to a froth; 35- Book before Nehemiah; 36- Avg.; 37- Compassion; 38- Rocky peak; 39- Capital of the Ukraine; 41- Sommer of film; 42- Make one's case; 44- Sing for; 46- Crafty; 47- Occupational suffix; 48- Boxer Spinks; 49- Shut in; 53- Six legged creatures; 57- Uncovered; 58- Aggregate of qualities that make good character; 60- Handle roughly; 61- Among; 62- Cruising vessel; 63- Diarist Frank; 64- Kan. neighbor; 65- Some digits; 66- Require;

Down

1- Labor; 2- Snake dancers; 3- Bartlett's abbr.; 4- Beginning to exist; 5- Phone; 6- Muscat native; 7- Alley ...; 8- Thrust; 9- Wild party; 10- Different; 11- Hero; 14- Adjust again; 15- Long for; 20- Elevator man; 22- Roulette bet; 25- Elephant parts; 26- Free; 27- One in a cab, say; 28- Tremble; 29- Employ; 30- Early Mexican; 31- Frog sound; 32- Firm; 34- Unite; 37- Rumor; 40- Like some brides and threats; 42- Career golfers; 43- Person who repairs telephone wires; 45- Classical starter; 46- Principles; 48- Supple; 49- Abba of Israel; 50- Driver's license datum; 51- Child's bed; 52- Quod ... demonstrandum; 54- Walking stick; 55- Melody; 56- Husky burden; 59- Prefix with tourism;

Yesterday's solution

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

Harris upsets top-seeded O'Connell

● **Thrilling day of matches in first round of singles main draw held in Bahrain Ministry of Interior Tennis Challenger**

TDI | Manama

Billy Harris from Great Britain upset top seed Christopher O'Connell from Australia yesterday in the singles main draw first round of the Bahrain Ministry of Interior Tennis Challenger 2024, part of the ATP Challenger Tour.

Harris, currently ranked a career-high 191st in the world, won after O'Connell retired heading into the second set. Harris

had claimed the opening frame 7-6 (6) following a tight battle against the world number 67, and has moved on to the next stage.

There, he will play qualifier Gastao Elias of Portugal for a berth in the quarter-finals. Elias needed to go the maximum to oust Cem Ilkel of Turkey, also a qualifier, to make it through. He came back from a first-set defeat to take the match 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (6) in a thrilling finish.

Aside from O'Connell, other seeds to fall on the first full day of singles main draw action at the Public Security Officers Club courts in Gudaibiya were third seed Vit Kopriva of the Czech Republic, seventh seed Lukas Klein of Slovakia, and eighth seed Elias Ymer of Sweden.

French qualifier Laurent

Lokoli, ranked 322nd globally, stunned world number 115 Kopriva 6-1, 6-4 in their round-of-32 affair.

Tough

Marco Trungelliti of Argentina, 229th in the world, defeated 140th-ranked Klein in a tough three-setter 6-4, 3-6, 6-3; while 181st Alexander Ritschard from Switzerland was a 6-2, 6-4 victor against 158th-ranked Ymer.

Second seed Fabio Fognini (103rd) of Italy avoided an upset and advanced to round two, beating Bahraini wild card Yusuf Qaed 6-1, 6-1 in their match.

Fourth-seeded Czech Jakub Mensik (129th) beat Georgian wild card Nikoloz Basilashvili (766th) 6-3, 6-4; while seventh seed Damir Dzumhur (160th)



Jordan's Abdulla Shelbayh hits a backhand return during his match yesterday

of Bosnia-Herzegovina ousted Alessandro Giannessi (234th) of Italy 6-3, 6-1.

Elsewhere yesterday, last year's runner-up in Bahrain, Abdulla Shelbayh of Jordan, ranked 187th in the world, defeated Slovakian Jozef Kovalik 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Others to triumph in their opening stage clashes last night were qualifier Adrian Andreev of Bulgaria, Italian qualifier Peter Buldorini, Turkey's Aziz Dougaz, Bosnia-Herzegovina contender Neriman Fatic, Kazakh alternate Mikhail Kukushkin, and Spaniard Daniel Rincon, who won a marathon match that lasted over two hours against Viktor Durasovic.

Action continues today at the same venue. All are welcome to attend, but must register for tickets, free of charge, online.

Guardiola hails Haaland's 'special mentality' to seek out goals



Manchester City's Norwegian striker #09 Erling Haaland (R) scores the team's second goal past Everton's English goalkeeper #01 Jordan Pickford

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola believes Erling Haaland's strong mentality is the key to the Norwegian's scoring prowess despite trying to take pressure off the 23-year-old's shoulders.

Haaland scored his first goals since November in a 2-0 win over Everton on Saturday after spending two months on the sidelines due to a foot injury.

His return allied to Kevin De Bruyne's recent comeback from a five-month absence with a hamstring injury comes at the perfect time for City ahead of their Champions League last 16, first leg away to FC Copenhagen yesterday.

Haaland has scored 40 goals in just 35 Champions League appearances, including 17 in 16 for City as he fired the English champions to win the competition for the first time last season.

"We don't put pressure on him and say 'you have to score goals for us'. No, we said 'get involved with what we do and the rest will come naturally,'" said Guardiola at his pre-match press conference.

"He is so strong mentally af-

“We don't put pressure on him and say 'you have to score goals for us'. No, we said 'get involved with what we do and the rest will come naturally. He is so strong mentally after one goal, he wants a second one and then a third

PEP GUARDIOLA

ter one goal, he wants a second one and then a third.

"You see his numbers at his age - in the Champions League even (Lionel) Messi does not have these numbers at his age.

"It's unbelievable. He has scored goals everywhere all the time. He has a special mentality and attributes and skills.

"We are delighted he is back after two months out."

The holders are huge favourites to roll over the Danish champions, who will be playing for the first time in two months due to the winter break in their domestic league.

However, Guardiola warned his players against complacency after seeing Copenhagen dump out Manchester United in the group stages and run Bayern Munich close over two games.

"I have huge respect (for them). I said to the players this morning you have to prepare mentally and be ready to suffer," added Guardiola.

'Hard graft' from all-rounders leads South Africa fightback

AFP | Hamilton

All-rounders Ruan de Swardt and Shaun von Berg used "hard graft" to lead a South African rearguard yesterday as they reached 220-6 after New Zealand had dominated the start of the second Test.

De Swardt reached his maiden half-century and was 55 not out at stumps on day one. The 37-year-old Von Berg was 34 on his Test debut, with the pair having put on an unbroken 70 off 27 overs at Seddon Park in Hamilton.

South Africa won the toss but were 64-3 at lunch and tottering at 150-6 early in the final session after David Bedingham was dismissed in freakish fashion.

After losing in Mount Maunganui by 281 runs, an under-strength South Africa must win to avoid becoming the first team from their country to lose a Test



New Zealand debutant Will O'Rourke (left) celebrates a wicket

series to New Zealand.

De Swardt, who had been one of six Proteas debutants in the first Test, showed the specialist batsmen how to survive in a gritty 135-ball knock.

He received support from veteran leg-spinner von Berg, who was finally given an international opportunity after playing 135 first-class matches.

"It was quite hard graft out

there," de Swardt said.

"I thought the New Zealanders bowled pretty well but for me it was just about getting stuck into them, having that mental toughness and keeping going.

"There's still quite a bit in the wicket so if we can bat well tomorrow, get past 300, 350, we're definitely in with a chance."

The pair halted a mini-collapse either side of the tea break inspired by Rachin Ravindra, who took 3-33.

Ravindra, who scored 240 in the first Test, underlined his all-round talent by removing Zubayr Hamza for a painstaking 20 off 99 balls and Keegan Petersen for two.

His left-arm spin then accounted for the unfortunate Bedingham, on 39, whose leg-side flick struck the top of his shoe and flew to close-in fielder Will Young.

Record-setting West Indies beat Australia in third T20

AFP | London

Andre Russell and Sherfane Rutherford put on the biggest sixth-wicket partnership in a Twenty20 international to steer the West Indies past Australia by 37 runs in their third and final clash yesterday.

Both men crunched quick-fire half-centuries to propel the visitors to 220-6 in Perth with Australia managing just 183-5 in reply, David Warner top-scoring on 81 in his last appearance for Australia at home.

The hosts won the first match in Hobart by 11 runs and sealed the series with a 34-run victory at Adelaide.

The West Indies made a horror start after winning the toss and opting to bat, losing three wickets in the opening three overs.

But Russell (71 off 29 balls) and Rutherford (unbeaten 67 off 40) led the fightback, with both posting their highest T20 scores in a 139-run sixth-wicket partnership that set a new standard.

Spinner Adam Zampa went for 1-65 off four overs -- his most expensive in the format.

"I was just happy I could contribute tonight," said Russell. "I think it's just the nature of this team, we are never out of it. Five



West Indies' Andre Russell plays a shot

Scorecard

West Indies 220 for 6 (Russell 71, Rutherford 67*, Bartlett 2-37) beat Australia 183 for 5 (Warner 81, David 41*, Chase 2-19, Shepherd 2-31) by 37 runs

wickets down, but there wasn't any panic in the change rooms. "I'm happy we came together as a team and we were definitely playing as a unit tonight."

Australia started well with Warner and captain Mitchell Marsh reaching 61 without loss after the six-over powerplay.

Warner clocked his 3,000th

run as he brought up a 26th half-century off 25 balls before Marsh departed for 17, skying a catch to Jason Holder off Akeal Hosein.

They reached 98-1 at the half-way mark but were pegged back by tight bowling.

The match turned when Australia lost three wickets for three runs. Roston Chase bagged two of them, including Warner and Josh Inglis (one), while Romario Shepherd bowled Aaron Hardie (16).

Glenn Maxwell blasted an unbeaten 120 in Adelaide but, with 96 needed off the final five overs, it was a bridge too far

“I was just happy I could contribute tonight. I think it's just the nature of this team, we are never out of it. Five wickets down, but there wasn't any panic in the change rooms. I'm happy we came together as a team and we were definitely playing as a unit tonight

ANDRE RUSSELL

even for him and he fell for 12 as the chase fizzled despite Tim David cracking a lightning 41.

"We knew they'd come into this series, they're a really good team with some amazing cricketers, so fair play to the West Indies," Marsh said.

With Australian pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood rested, Xavier Bartlett earned a debut and Johnson Charles nicked to wicketkeeper Matthew Wade in his first over before he bowled Kyle Mayers in his second over.

In between, Nicholas Pooran was removed by Jason Behrendorff to leave the West Indies reeling at 17-3.

40

goals have been scored by Haaland in just 35 Champions League appearances, including 17 in 16 for City

Al Khaldiya power to top

Defending champions rout Sitra, Muharraq fight back in narrow win over Hidd

● **Lucas Spinola Salinas scores brace for Al Khaldiya**

● **Hussain Abdulkarim fires in hat-trick for Muharraq**

TDT | Manama

Defending champions Al Khaldiya and title contenders Muharraq came away with contrasting victories last night to kick off the 12th week of action in the 2023/2024 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League.

Khaldiya posted a 4-1 triumph against Sitra to rise to the top of the league standings—just a point ahead of former solo leaders Riffa, who have two matches in hand. Muharraq, meanwhile, battled back from a two-goal deficit in the first half to come away with all three-points in a 3-2 win against bottom side Hidd.

The two teams remained amongst the top three clubs on



Al Khaldiya's Badr Bashir Muhammad and Dominique Mendy battle for possession with Sitra's Hamza Attar

the table.

Khaldiya opened the scoring in their game with a 14th minute penalty converted by Samy Frioui. Lucas Spinola Salinas then supplied their next two goals. Salinas found the net in the 17th minute following a brilliant counterattack and a sensational through-pass from Frioui. He was then on target once again in the 32nd minute, to give his team the commanding lead heading

into the break.

Just eight minutes after the re-start, Gleison Wilson Da Silva Moreira made it 4-0 with a fine header, and then Sitra had their lone consolation in the 73rd through Songola Issa.

Khaldiya's Mahdi Abduljabbar missed an opportunity to make it five for Khaldiya after his penalty attempt in the first minute of second-half stoppage time was saved.

Standings

	P	W	D	L	+/-	Pts
Al Khaldiya	12	6	5	1	14	23
Riffa	10	7	1	2	8	22
Muharraq	12	6	4	2	5	22
Al Ahli	11	5	3	3	-1	18
Al Najma	11	4	3	4	4	15
East Riffa	11	4	3	4	0	15
Al Hala	11	5	0	6	-7	15
Manama	11	4	2	5	1	14
Sitra	11	3	4	4	-4	13
Al Shabab	11	2	4	5	-5	10
Busaiteen	11	1	5	5	-6	8
Hidd	12	2	2	8	-9	8

Khaldiya claimed their sixth win in 12 matches and improved to 23 points for first place, while Sitra suffered their fourth loss and stayed on 13 points.

Dream

Meanwhile, Hidd had a dream start in their clash with neighbours Muharraq, scoring after just 28 seconds after kick-off with Adnan Fawaz tapping the ball in from close range, off a cross from the left of the box. Jacques Medina Iemopele Elrefe then doubled their advantage in the 20th minute from close

range.

But any celebrations were short-lived, and Hussain Abdulkarim provided the heroics for Muharraq, spearheading their comeback with a fantastic hat-trick.

Abdulkarim first found the net in the 34th minute from inside the six-yard box after a mad scramble in the area. He then brought his team back on level terms just two minutes into the second half, when he headed home off a corner-kick.

Abdulkarim then fired Muharraq into the lead four minutes after the hour-mark, converting a spot kick and completely deflating their opponents' spirits.

Muharraq held on until the end to come away with the full three points, improving to 22—tied with Riffa—but in third on the standings due to goal difference. Hidd stayed in last place with just eight points following their eighth loss.

League action continues tonight with three matches on schedule, all kicking off simultaneously at 7pm. Al Hala face off with Busaiteen while Al Ahli



Following their victories last night, Al Khaldiya and Muharraq are now first and third, respectively, on the league standings. Between them are Riffa in second place, who have two games in hand due to their commitments in the 2023/2024 AFC Cup

go head-to-head to East Riffa. Manama then take on Al Shabab in the third game.

This evening's action wraps up the 12th week of play, in which Riffa are not playing due to their West Zonal semi-final commitments against Al Nahda of Oman in the 2023/2024 AFC Cup.



Manama's Mohammed Ameer goes for a jump shot against the tough defence of Shabab Al Ahli's Mohammad Abdulla Masood Juma

Manama complete sweep of FIBA West Asia Super League group

● **Ahmed Salman scores 15 points to lead balanced attack in win over Shabab Al Ahli Dubai**

● **Manama maintain pristine record after six games, now await Gulf semi-final opponents**

TDT | Manama

Title holders Manama completed a clean sweep of their preliminary round campaign last night in the Gulf sub-zone of the 2023/2024 FIBA West Asia Super League (WASL).

The first-ever winners of the regional competition

edged past Shabab Al Ahli Dubai of the UAE 78-74 in their concluding Group B fixture, played at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

The result earned the Bahrainis their sixth victory in as many outings as they sent out a stern warning to the rest of the FIBA WASL field.

Manama are already through to the Gulf semi-finals, having secured first place on their pool standings even before their game last night against the Emiratis.

The Bahrainis now await their opponents in the last four, where Kuwait SC of Kuwait have also already secured their spot as winners from Group A.

There are two Gulf groups in the FIBA WASL preliminaries, and the top teams of each advance directly to the zonal

semis, while the second and third seeds will face off for the other two spots in a pair of best-of-three play-off series.

Bahrain's other team in this year's FIBA WASL, Muharraq, are in the play-offs. They finished as Group A runners-up, and will play the third seeds from Group B, who will be either Shabab or Kazma of Kuwait.

The victors from the two play-offs will march on to the semi-finals.

In yesterday's contest, a Travin Thibodeaux three-point play with just over five minutes remaining broke a 60-all deadlock and put Manama in front for good. The Emiratis tried to stay close, and a Chavaughn Lewis steal and fast-break dunk, plus the foul, made it 74-75 with 19.3 seconds left.

But after Sir'Dominic Pointer made one of two free-throws, and then Lewis turned the ball over as he charged down the sideline. Ahmed Salman then pegged the final score with two charity shots and only seconds on the clock.

Salman spearheaded a balanced Manama attack that saw six of their players finish in double figures. Salman had 15 points, while Pointer contributed 13 and 12 rebounds. Cameron Clark scored 12, Thibodeaux 11 and both Mohammed Ameer and Hassan Nowrooz had 10 points.

For Shabab, Nicolas Minnerath scored 26 and Lewis finished with 22, as they wrapped up their Group B schedule with a 3-3 win-loss record.

Alcaraz puts Paris Olympic gold above French Open title

AFP | London

Carlos Alcaraz said if he had to choose between an Olympic gold at the 2024 Paris Olympics or the French Open title he would go for the gold.

The 20-year-old who won the US Open in 2022 and Wimbledon in 2023 was asked about his season goals ahead of the Argentina Open in Buenos Aires where he is defending champion.

"If I had to choose one target this year I'd choose the Olympic gold over Roland-Garros," the Spaniard said.



Carlos Alcaraz in action (file photo)

The French Open will be played from May 20 to June 9 with the Olympic tennis at the same Roland Garros venue from



"I'm on good form and I played well in Australia. And the tennis I've played in training on clay courts has been very good too"

CARLOS ALCAZAR

July 27 to August 4.

"I'm on good form and I played well in Australia. And the tennis I've played in training on clay courts has been very good too," Alcaraz said.

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F1 pre-season testing tickets now available

● Tickets can be purchased at BD5 per day for adults, half the price for children

● Free access for fans who purchased their grand prix tickets before 1 February

TD | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East", announced that tickets are still available for Formula 1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2024, scheduled to take place 21 to 23 February in Sakhir.

With adult ticket prices at BD5 and half price for children, it offers an incredible opportunity to witness F1 cars at a low price. Free entry to pre-season testing is available to all fans who purchased their tickets to the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2024 before 1 February.

BIC will be opening its gates to F1 fans on the tests' final two days on 22 and 23 February.

All those coming to BIC on testing's two open days will be able to watch the F1 teams and drivers in action from the Main Grandstand, which overlooks the F1 pit lane and team garages, as well as the circuit's main straight.

BIC is hosting F1 pre-season testing for the fourth year in a row and for the fifth time overall. Bahrain also staged in-season F1 testing in 2017 and 2019.

The upcoming tests will offer fans a sneak preview of what's to come in the new campaign, and it will be the F1 teams' only chance to get crucial information on their cars' performance on track ahead of the first race of the season.

F1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing will be followed only a few days later by the Kingdom's grand prix weekend from 29 February to 2 March, kicking off the 2024 FIA F1 World Championship.

The racing and entertainment extravaganza will be celebrating "20 Years of a Modern Classic", showcasing the Kingdom of Bahrain's 20th anniversary in F1. It will also be the first-ever Saturday night race in Sakhir, making for an additional spectacle.

Those who are eager to attend

the F1 weekend but have yet to purchase their tickets or hospitality packages must do so at the earliest to avoid missing out on the extra-special occasion.

Tickets are available on bahraingp.com, by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or at the BIC stands at City Centre Bahrain and the Beyon Money BIC Fan Village.

Fans must act quickly as BIC has already completely sold out its Main, Beyon, and Turn 1 Grandstands for race weekend, as well as its Corporate Lounges and F1 Paddock Club.

There is now only very limited availability on tickets to the University and Victory grandstands, with BIC's two other hospitality options, The Dome by F1 Experiences and The Champions Club, having some availability.



Action from last year's pre-season F1 tests at BIC

Maloney, Browning go quickest again

Rodin Motorsport, Hitech Pulse-Eight drivers set pace for second straight day as Formula 2, Formula 3 pre-season testing concludes

● Zane Maloney powers to top of F2 overall timesheet on final day with best lap under lights

● Luke Browning sets his fastest time during morning session, number one mark for three-day F3 test

TD | Manama

Zane Maloney of Barbados and Luke Browning from Great Britain set a blistering pace yesterday as Formula 2 and Formula 3 pre-season testing wrapped up in Bahrain.

Maloney and Browning were fastest for the second straight day at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC). Maloney topped the combined timesheet in F2 for Rodin Motorsport, while Browning steered his Hitech Pulse-Eight challenger to F3's best overall lap.

Both Formula 1 feeder series had three days of running in Sakhir as part of their final preparations for the start of their 2024 seasons, taking place in support of the Formula 1 Gulf



Isack Hadjar on his way to setting the fastest time of F2 morning session

Air Bahrain Grand Prix this 29 February to 2 March.

The tests this week gave the F2 and F3 fields some valuable track time in their new cars, with their future star drivers warming up for their season-long battles ahead.

Maloney had a lightning-quick lap of one minute 42.468 seconds during yesterday's F2 evening session, held under lights at night.

Maloney had a busy day out on track, completing 76 laps in total. His leading time was the second-best of the three-day sessions—beaten only by his pace-setting mark from the sec-

ond day's evening runs, which was the only time the F2 runners went sub-1:42.000 in testing.

Classified behind him on the overall day-three timesheet was American Jak Crawford of DAMS Lucas Oil, who was 0.193s slower, while Maloney's Japanese teammate Ritomo Miyata came third 0.216s behind.

Frenchman Isack Hadjar of Campos Racing, quickest in the morning, was fourth overall 0.244s from Maloney, while fifth was Brazilian Enzo Fittipaldi of Van Amersfoort Racing 0.340s back.

Spaniard Josep Maria Marti (+0.419s) of Campos Racing



**YOU
KNOW WHAT**

With the completion of F2 and F3 pre-season testing, the two Formula 1 feeder series now head for the start of their new seasons in support of the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2024 this February 29 to March 2



Luke Browning beats the heat to clock the overall best time amongst the F3 field

He had a mark of 1:46.566 while going for 66 laps of work in his Hitech contender. Browning's best yesterday was also the quickest lap from all three days of the F3 tests.

Bulgarian Nikola Tsolov of ART Grand Prix followed 0.259s behind, while American Max Esterson of Jenzer Motorsport was third-quickest 0.270s back.

Martinius Stenshorne from Norway in another Hitech car was fourth on the times 0.413s off his teammate's pace, while day one leader Noel Leon from Mexico competing for Van Amersfoort Racing was fifth 0.630s back, and Dutch driver Lau-

rens van Hoepen came sixth 0.732s adrift to make it two ART Grand Prix cars in the overall top 10.

Trident's three drivers, Frenchman Sami Meguetounif (+0.757s), Italian Leonardo Fornaroli (+0.761s) and Mexican Santiago Ramos (+0.777s), were sixth through ninth, respectively, and Irishman Alex Dunne of MP Motorsport completed the top 10, 0.815s from first, amongst the 30-car field.

Swede Dino Beganovic of defending F3 champions Prema Racing went quickest in F3's afternoon session with a best lap time of 1:48.285.

Ferrari's new F1 car unveiled for final season before Hamilton's arrival

AFP | Milan

Ferrari unveiled their new SF-24 car yesterday, ready for the upcoming Formula One season which will be the last before Lewis Hamilton joins the Italian team from rivals Mercedes.

The team head into their 2024 campaign, which has been overshadowed by seven-time F1 champion Hamilton agreeing to join next year, trying to recover ground on all-conquering Red Bull.

And Ferrari unveiled the SF-24 to their legion of fans with a short and low-key video, adding in a statement that "a small audience of guests" were giv-



Ferrari's new SF-24 for the 2024 F1 season

en a live viewing of the new car.

Among those present were

Ferrari's Team Principal Frederic Vasseur and drivers Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz, who

will race together for the last time this season.

Ferrari said that "the positive feeling the drivers had in the cockpit over the final few races of last season" was the starting point for the new car, with the aim being "a car that is easy to drive and that reacts predictably".

"This year, we must start off where we left off at the end of last season, when we were consistent front runners," said Vasseur.

"The longest ever F1 season awaits us and Charles, Carlos and I all agree, we must be more clinical and effective in how we manage the races."

Mbappe 'in good shape' for Real Sociedad tie

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique said yesterday that he expects Kylian Mbappe to be unhindered by a recent ankle knock when his side face Real Sociedad in their Champions League last-16 first leg.

Mbappe was rested for PSG's Ligue 1 win over Lille at the weekend to make sure he was fully fit for Wednesday's clash against La Real at the Parc des Princes.

"When a team has a player at the level of Kylian Mbappe, the more he plays, the better it is for the team," Luis Enrique



PSG's Marquinhos (L), Kylian Mbappe (C) and Achraf Hakimi (R) react as they look on from the bench

told a pre-match press conference.

"He could have played four days ago but it wasn't worth the risk."

PSG are bidding to avoid a third consecutive last-16 exit from the Champions League.