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THE DAILY tribune



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HM King: Open humanitarian corridors for Gaza aid

Rome

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa stressed the need to urgently open humanitarian corridors for the entry of medical and relief aid, food, water and the provision of electricity to Gaza.

HM the King reaffirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's full support for the coordination of all efforts aimed at achieving just peace, stability and security for all the peoples of the region.

His Majesty was speaking as he met yesterday with Italian President Sergio Mattarella at the Presidential Palace in Rome, on the occasion of his visit to Italy. Upon the arrival of HM King Hamad, President Mattarella welcomed him and his visit, which provides strong impetus for the development of

Bahraini-Italian relations.

During the meeting, they reviewed all aspects of their close bilateral relations and ways to develop and strengthen them to achieve common goals, as well as the latest regional and international developments, and the situation in the Gaza Strip.

HM the King reaffirmed Bahrain's approach, which calls for strengthening security, stability and consolidating peace which would be achieved by giving the Palestinian people their legitimate rights and finding a just solution to the Palestinian issue, to reach a two-state solution in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, that guarantees the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.



HM the King is welcomed by President Mattarella during his Italian visit

He affirmed the need to prevent any worsening of the situation, to work for the release of detained civilians, and to protect all civilians who - under international humanitarian law - must not be the target of any conflict.

His Majesty expressed his appreciation for the important role played by the Italian Republic at the international level and its contributions to international peace and security.



HM the King with Pope Francis
His Majesty, Pope discuss Bahrain, Vatican close ties and Mideast events

Rome

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, met yesterday with His Holiness Pope Francis, Pope of the Catholic Church, at His Holiness' office in the papal headquarters, on the occasion of His Majesty's visit to the Vatican City.

His Majesty and His Holiness discussed the close bilateral relations between Bahrain and the Vatican, joint cooperation, and efforts to promote tolerance, coexistence, brotherhood, dialogue, and cooperation among peoples.

They also discussed Middle East events. HM the King praised Pope Francis' support for stability, peace, and protection of civilians, rejecting violence and targeting innocent people, while adhering to international laws and conventions.

HM the King underscored the significance of ensuring regional security and stability to attain the development and prosperity goals of its countries and peoples.

Peace and justice for Palestinians

Bahrain stands firm in support of 'just solution' for Palestine and calls for end to conflict

Cabinet hails HM King directives to provide urgent humanitarian aid to Palestinians

TDT | Manama

The Cabinet affirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's full support for all efforts towards achieving a just solution on the Palestinian issue to ensure regional security and stability.

It highlighted the Kingdom's support for a two-state solution in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, noting that peace and adherence to the Initiative are the only way to ensure the Palestinian people's rights to



Deputy Prime Minister

an independent state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Deputy Prime Minister, HE Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, yesterday chaired the weekly Cabinet meeting at Gudaibiya Palace.

The Cabinet commended His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's directives to provide urgent humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Ref-



The Cabinet highlighted the importance of de-escalation, providing humanitarian relief, food, water, electricity, and medical aid into the Gaza Strip.

ugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as part of the Kingdom's commitment to supporting those in need and helping to relieve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people.

It highlighted the importance of de-escalation, providing humanitarian relief, food, water, electricity, and medical aid into the Gaza Strip. The Cabinet also emphasised the need to uphold international humanitarian law by protecting civilians and releasing any civilian hostages.

Procedures

The Cabinet followed up on the procedures taken by ministries and government agencies regarding HM the King's Royal Order to preserve the historical and cultural identity of Bahrain's buildings and cities, the Isa Al Kabeer Palace, and Muharrarq during their renovation and development plans.

In this regard, the Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime

Minister, visited Muharrarq and directed the immediate implementation of the Muharrarq Development Plan's procedures to accelerate the completion of the Pearling Path project.

Digital transformation

The Cabinet highlighted the digital transformation of public services, which facilitates their use, and commended the vital role of the Ministerial Committee for Information and Communication Technology, headed by the Interior Minister.

The Cabinet congratulated the winners of the eGovernment Excellence Award during the 10th Bahrain International eGovernment Forum, which received wide participation from the Kingdom's ministries, government agencies, and private sector. (Continued on Page 4)

Death toll rises to 2,750

Aid agencies call for 'urgent intervention' to save lives

TDT | Manama

As the humanitarian crisis in Gaza from the Israeli 'seige' and bombardments entered the second week, aid agencies yesterday called for urgent intervention to allow vital supplies

in, as water supplies to the 2.3 million people in the Palestinian enclave dried up and food and fuel stocks dwindled.

Death toll from the continuing Israeli air strikes since last Saturday reached 2,750 yesterday, with most of them being ordi-

nary Palestinians.

As thousands massed on the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, following the Israeli order to evacuate the northern part of Gaza, Israel on Monday ruled out a temporary ceasefire to allow aid supplies in or for-

eigners out. Yesterday evening, there was also a news report of an air strike near the border crossing point.

In an effort of frantic diplomacy to prevent the crisis from worsening, UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths is heading

to the Middle East today, seeking access for aid.

The regional director of World Health Organization, Ahmed Al-Mandhari, issued a stark warning about the situation yesterday and said it was barreling towards a real catastrophe.

220 fils (includes VAT)



Growing together

Ambassador emphasises mutually beneficial ties between Bahrain and India on innovation and entrepreneurship

● Hopes high for more collaboration in financial technology

Mahir Haneef
TDT| Manama

There is a substantial opportunity for a collaboration between the Kingdom of Bahrain and India in fintech services, given the Kingdom's notable role in the sector, His Excellency Vinod K Jacob, the Ambassador of India to Bahrain, said. Speaking at an exclusive interview with The Daily Tribune, the Ambassador was addressing a question on ways to advance the ties between

the two nations on innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Ambassador stated, "There is a high degree of acknowledgement of the role that the Kingdom of Bahrain has played in financial technology, its historical position as a financial hub, its growing prowess in technology, and the innovation in the last few years under the leadership of His Majesty the King and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. So I think there is substantial opportunity that is available for both sides to collaborate in this area."

These comments were made by the Ambassador at a time when the trade between the two countries has reached an all-time high of USD1.6 billion in 2022.

Speaking about areas in which the two countries can cooperate to further increase the trade volume, the Ambassador said, "The endeavour on both sides will be to increase two-way investments, especially investment from India to Bahrain, people-to-people exchanges, tourism inflows, etc. and also look at

opportunities in areas such as health, pharmaceuticals, information technology, financial technology, and services."

The Ambassador also said he believes that the ongoing talks about establishing a free trade agreement (FTA) between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and India would gather momentum soon.

"At this point of time, when you look at the consideration of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in India, they have been engaging in free trade agreements with different parts of the world. There has been discussion on a free trade area between the GCC and India. We are hopeful that these talks will pick up steam. As you are aware, the development of a free trade area is a long process. It requires the careful study of the various factors and various actors. So I am hopeful that there will be some progress. All of these depend on many factors, some of which are within the control of the government and some of which are beyond the control of either



The endeavour on both sides will be to increase two-way investments, especially investment from India to Bahrain, people-to-people exchanges, tourism inflows, etc. and also look at opportunities in areas such as health, pharmaceuticals, information technology, financial technology, and services

HIS EXCELLENCY VINOD K JACOB, THE AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO BAHRAIN

government, such as international developments, pandemics, etc. But I am hopeful that there will be progress towards FTA between India and the GCC," the Ambassador stated.



Mahir Haneef

TDT| Manama

Touched by 'warmth, generosity and hospitality'

In the two months of serving as the Ambassador of India to the Kingdom, he has been moved by the warmth and generosity of the people of Bahrain, His Excellency Vinod K Jacob said.

The new Ambassador shared his experience during an interview with The Daily Tribune in response to a query as to what his most favourite thing about Bahrain is.

His Excellency said, "This is the first time I am serving in this region. I have previously served in China, in New York - at the permanent mission of India to the United Nations - and in Sri Lanka. So this is a new region. But what struck me the most in this region was the high degree of commonalities that is there between India and Bahrain. These are all the result of historical contacts. But historical

contacts don't necessarily have to make a people warm towards another foreign country or foreign people. I have been most touched by the warmth and generosity of the people of Bahrain - whether it is high officials, the lower-level officials, or the Indian community - and I can say that the Indian community has imbibed some of the qualities of the Bahraini people and their traditions of hospitality. I am very proud and happy in this regard. I really feel proud to be the Ambassador of India to Bahrain, mainly because of this friendship between the two sides."

Warm welcome

Further, His Excellency said he received a very warm welcome from the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

"In the two months that I have

been here, I must say that I have been very warmly welcomed by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Foreign Ministry in particular, as its protocol has been excellent. The support I have received from them and the support that I have received from all the various ministries of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Royal Court has been exceptional. I couldn't have asked for a better start to my stint here," the Ambassador said.

The hospitality of the people of Bahrain also played a role in feeling welcome in the Kingdom, the Ambassador said. "People in Bahrain are equally friendly towards India. They know India quite well, they are aware of the long history between the two countries, and they have immediately put me at ease in this posting," His Excellency said.

'India is always on the side of peace'

Mahir Haneef

TDT| Manama

India has a robust foreign policy that enables it to speak to both or multiple sides of a conflict, His Excellency Vinod K Jacob, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain, said.

Responding to a question about the change in Indian foreign diplomacy in the past two decades, the Ambassador said, "India has a consistent position with respect to dealing with conflict anywhere in the world. We believe in peaceful settlement of disputes, through dialogue and negotiation. If you take any issue anywhere in the world, you will see that India is always on the side of peace, always on the side of dialogue, and always calling for the end of hostilities. At the same time, we are very clear that terrorism is not acceptable in the contemporary international relations. It cannot be a means of resolving disputes or conflicts. In any conflict throughout the

decades that you see, India is the one party which is able to speak to both sides or multiple sides to a conflict. That I think speaks to the robustness of Indian diplomacy." Explaining further about the change in India's foreign policy and diplomatic service, the Ambassador said the fundamentals remain the same but the diplomatic practice has changed.

Foreign policy

"The fundamentals of Indian foreign policy, enshrined in the Constitution of India, obliges the Government of India to aim for friendly relations with all peoples and all countries, close cooperation with international organizations, respect for international law, and the concept of friendship and comity among nations. Those fundamentals remain. It is mainly in the practice of diplomacy that substantial changes have taken place, in areas like dealing with transnational challenges and the efforts to align together on the basis of values and interest groups.

For example, India is a part of the BRICS group of countries of major emerging economies and a part of the G20, BASIC group of countries which used to be an important force to reckon with in climate change negotiations till about eight or nine years back. We have joined in those sorts of groupings in order to promote our interests on the basis of common understandings," the Ambassador explained. The Ambassador also pointed out that India is a founding member of the United Nations, had signed the Charter of the United Nations even before India became independent, has been participating in UN Security Council as non-permanent member for many years, and has been the largest contributor to UN peacekeeping forces in the world until recently.

"The greatest number of martyrdoms in the service of world peace has been by Indian peacekeepers and I would salute those sacrifices," His Excellency stated.

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Palestinian and Kufiya flags: Bahrain's trending symbol of support



Bahrain embraces Palestinian and Kufiya flags

● A guide on where to find flags of solidarity in Kingdom and online

Zahra Ayaz

TDT | Manama

Displaying Palestinian and Kufiya flags in cars and at homes to show solidarity with the people of Gaza has become a trend in Bahrain, with many enquiring online how to get hold of such a flag.

Many netizens have come forward to help fellow compatriots searching online for ways to get a Palestinian or Kufiya flag in the Kingdom, with online forums indicating that such flags are not readily available everywhere in Bahrain.

As per the recent online discussions, mainly on anonymous platforms, Palestinian flags can be purchased from the bustling souqs of Manama and Muharraq. Netizens suggest thoroughly exploring these traditional markets to locate vendors selling the flags as it is often the small, obscure shops where they are available.

For those seeking a more

personalised touch, tailors in Bahrain offer an alternative solution. By visiting a tailor and providing them with the fabric, which can be purchased from any clothing shop in Manama, individuals can have a custom-made Palestinian flag created in no time, a netizen suggested.

Simply show the tailor a picture of the Palestinian flag and specify the desired size, and they will be able to bring your vision to life, a user said.

Along with the traditional shops and tailors, people are getting the flags from online retailers too. In addition to Amazon and eBay, online marketplaces such as Fruggo.bh are selling flags, banners, and scarves. Flags cost BD2.9 each, banners are priced at BD3.9 each, and custom scarves can be had for 950 fils from the online shops, netizens said.

Information on where to get flags and banners are also being shared through the social media platforms of organisations supporting the Palestinian cause, a user pointed out.

By displaying Palestinian and Kufiya flags, Bahrainis are contributing to a global movement of support and empathy for the Palestinian cause in addition to expressing their solidarity.

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Bahrain and Egypt discuss efforts for regional peace



Dr. Al Zayani

TDT | Manama

Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, yesterday held a phone call with his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukry.

The two ministers discussed Bahraini-Egyptian relations and exchanged views on the ongoing events in the Gaza Strip and efforts at deescalat-



Sameh Shoukry

ing the situation, protecting civilians, and opening safe corridors to deliver humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

They also discussed supporting efforts aimed at achieving permanent peace in the region and establishing a Palestinian state based on the two-state solution and international legitimacy resolutions.

Support Palestinians in Gaza through 'telethon'

HH Shaikh Nasser initiates urgent humanitarian campaign to raise funds

● RHF to accept donations from organisations, companies and people

TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, will launch a telethon organised by the National Committee to Support the Palestinians in Gaza in cooperation with Bahrain TV on Friday.

This comes following His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's directives to organise a campaign to provide relief aid to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to alleviate their suffering due to the dire situation they are



undergoing.

In line with the royal directives to offer urgent humanitarian relief aid, HH Shaikh Nasser, who is also Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) board of trustees chairman, kickstarted the campaign with a donation of BD100,000.

Dr. Mustafa Al Sayed, Secretary-General of RHF and Chairman of the Bahraini National

Committee to Support Palestinian People in Gaza, said that donations and contributions will be accepted during the telethon to support the Palestinian people during the national campaign.

National figures

He said the telethon will host national figures, including scholars, intellectuals, and businessmen.

Al Sayed said the campaign reflected Bahrain's commitment to supporting the fair Palestinian cause, urging all organisations, companies, citizens and residents to contribute to this humanitarian initiative to sup-

port the Palestinians in these difficult times.

Dr. Mustafa said the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has been contacted to assess Gaza's needs for relief and development aid.

Coordination is underway with all official entities, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He pointed out that the Ministry of Health was ready to provide assistance to the people of Gaza, adding that the Social Development Ministry has urged all associations to collect donations in coordination with the RHF.



A telethon, short for "television" and "marathon", is a televised fundraising event that lasts many hours or even days, the purpose of which is to raise money for a charitable or other purportedly worthy cause.

University student sentenced to rehabilitation for hacking

● Fined BD1,000

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced a university student to three months in prison and a BD1,000 fine for hacking a local university's electronic systems.

The court, however, court ordered the prison sentence to be substituted with mandatory attendance in rehabilitation and training programmes.

In its ruling, the court said it took a "compassionate view" of the circumstances of the case. It considered the issued punishment appropriate for the defendant's actions.

"The court aims to benefit from the defendant's skills and experience by keeping hope for his reintegration into society. Mandating rehabilitation programmes is expected to contribute to reforming his behaviour and allowing him to gain knowledge, instead of limiting his freedom under the conviction," the court stated in its ruling.



This substitution aligns with Article 18 of Law 18 of 2017, which allows alternative penalties to imprisonment.

Defence lawyer Salman Aldousari argued earlier that his client should be "utilised as a prodigy", noting the cybersecurity student hacked systems out of curiosity to test his technical abilities.

However, he neglected that the action nearly implicated a second-year female student in legal trouble and expulsion, as occurred in the defendant's case for installing malicious programmes on a university

computer. Aldousari said the university benefited by learning of system vulnerabilities from the National Cybersecurity Centre's report.

While inexcusable, the court could consider the defendant's scientific talents, the lawyer added. "There was also no internal policy forbidding cybersecurity students' actions. Therefore, I plea to the court to acquit him or use leniency if convicted," he stressed.

Arrest

The student was arrested after the National Cyber Security

Center received a report from a senior network specialist at the university, indicating that the university's security software had successfully prevented an attempt to download malicious software onto one of the computers in the information technology lab.

Based on the report, it was revealed that the programme the accused student attempted to download was designed to crack secret codes stored in computer systems and bypass its security programmes.

Further investigation traced the attempted download to the personal data of a student in one of the departments unrelated to the computer science department.

The student denied involvement, stating that she was not knowledgeable in using such technologies.

Through the investigation, it was discovered that the accused student, who was studying cybersecurity, obtained her personal login credentials through the university's systems and computers. He was subsequently apprehended.

Two fugitives on murder, armed robbery charges extradited

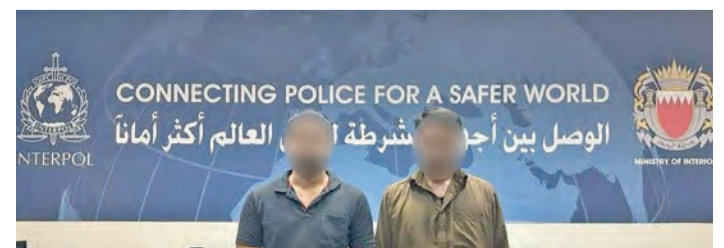
TDT | Manama

The International Affairs and Interpol Department of Bahrain's Ministry of Interior has announced the extradition of two fugitives to a friendly state to face charges of murder and armed robbery.

In a statement, the Department said the men were wanted

by authorities in an unspecified country for their involvement in a violent crime resulting in loss of life.

After coordinating with counterparts, Bahraini police apprehended the suspects and processed their repatriation according to legal extradition protocols.



Accused of involvement in a violent crime resulting in loss of life

Streamlined business procedures 'essential'

Industry Minister pushes for more attractive and flexible commercial environment



Mr. Fakhro with the Rotary Club of Manama

TDT | Manama

Industry and Commerce Minister Abdullah bin Adel Fakhro has emphasised the importance of facilitating business and commercial activities in Bahrain through regulatory development and streamlined procedures.

He said that this will enhance the quality and efficiency of government services, making the commercial environment more attractive and flexible for companies. It will also encourage investment, ultimately improving the competitiveness of the national economy, he added.

The Minister was speaking as

he participated in a luncheon organised by the Rotary Club of Manama, attended by prominent figures and businessmen dedicated to strengthening the economic and industrial environment in Bahrain.

Fakhro highlighted the Ministry's efforts to advance economic development in Bahrain and achieve growth and prosperity in line with the industrial sector strategy (2022-2026).

He emphasised the importance of supporting small and medium-sized companies, which constitute the majority of the economic sector. The Ministry aims to provide a favorable environment for their growth

This will enhance the quality and efficiency of government services, making the commercial environment more attractive and flexible for companies. It will also encourage investment, ultimately improving the competitiveness of the national economy

ABDULLAH BIN ADEL FAKHRO, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE MINISTER

and development, thereby supporting the industrial and commercial sectors in the country.

Renuka Ravindan, President of the Rotary Club of Manama, expressed gratitude to the Minister and the Ministry for their continuous efforts in strength-

ening Bahrain's economic environment. She emphasized the club's commitment to supporting the initiatives of the industrial sector strategy (2022-2026) to achieve the desired goals for the benefit of all.

Cabinet approves key memorandums

(Continuation from Page 1)

TDT | Manama

The Cabinet yesterday discussed several memorandums during the meeting, approving the following:

1. A memorandum submitted by the Minister of Interior regarding the National Strategy for Cyberspace Child Protection (2023-2026) to promote safe Internet use and prevent child exploitation.

2. A memorandum submitted by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs to join the Djibouti Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

3. A memorandum submitted by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs regarding an MoU on the Patent Prosecution Highway Pilot Program between the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Bahrain and the China National Intellectual Property Administration.

4. A memorandum submitted by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs on the government's response to two proposals submitted by the Council of Representatives.

The Cabinet reviewed the following:

1. A memorandum submitted by the Minister of Legal Affairs regarding the latest develop-

ments in the annual legislative plan.

2. A memorandum submitted by the Minister of Housing and Urban Planning regarding the latest developments in housing projects and programmes, urban planning, and progress in housing, financing, and urban planning services. In this regard, the Cabinet emphasised the importance of implementing new solutions that support citizens' aspirations in promptly fulfilling their housing needs and providing necessary services.

Ministerial reports

In addition, the Cabinet noted the following ministerial reports:

1. Participation in the 27th GCC-EU Joint Council

2. Outcomes of the participation in the emergency meeting of the extraordinary session of the Arab League Council at the level of Foreign Ministers

3. Outcomes of the 120th meeting of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries

4. Outcomes of the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group

5. Participation in the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean

6. Schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain awarded the "Technology Incubator Schools" status from Microsoft for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Focus on stress and mental health

TDT | Manama

The Occupational Health and Safety Committee of the Free Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions, in collaboration with the Al Hur Center for Bahraini Retirees and the Silwan Psychiatric Hospital, organised a lecture entitled "Life Stress and Mental Health."

The event was part of the World Mental Health Day celebration.

Dr. Mai Medhat Ramzi, Psychological and Behavioral Therapist Specialist and Head of the Clinical Psychology Department at Silwan Psychiatric Hospital, presented the lecture.

Dr. Ramzi discussed mental health as a state of balance between the environment, body, and self, leading to physical, psychological, and social comfort.

She also explained the causes that lead to mental health problems and divided people into five categories based on their levels of mental health.

Dr. Ramzi emphasised the importance of early intervention and seeking professional help for mental health issues and the need for a comprehensive approach that includes awareness, education, prevention, and access to quality mental health services.



Dr. Ramzi speaks at the event

The lecture aimed to raise awareness about the impact of life stress on mental health and promote a better understanding of mental health as a crucial aspect of overall well-being.

Works on interchange upper bridge underway

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Works has started the construction of an upper bridge at Al Jasra Interchange.

This was confirmed by Engineer Shaikh Meshal bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, the undersecretary at the ministry.

The purpose of this project is to facilitate left turns for drivers coming from Al Janabiyah Street towards Shaikh Isa bin

Salman Street.

The development work at Al Jasra Interchange is part of a larger effort to enhance traffic flow in Mina Salman, Budaiya, Janabiyah, and neighbouring areas. The construction of this bridge is expected to alleviate congestion and improve the capacity of the interchange to accommodate 57,000 vehicles per day.

The goal is to create a smooth

traffic flow without interruptions, keeping up with the region's urban development. The completion of the project is anticipated to reduce the average crossing time at Al Jasra Interchange by 70%.

The Ministry of Public Works is committed to establishing an integrated road network across all governorates to ensure safe and convenient movement for drivers across the Kingdom.

Financial and banking



Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance and National Economy, met with Hassan Khalifa Al Jahama, the Chairman of the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB). The minister highlighted CBB's role in implementing financial and banking sector laws, promoting sector development, and enhancing Bahrain's financial and banking services position. The meeting discussed financial and banking topics as well as the latest developments in the global economy.

Bahrain-Oman relations



Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Ministry Undersecretary met with Ahmed Mohammed Al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality. The meeting discussed the importance of urban development in sustainable cities and reviewed topics of common interest and reviewed Muscat Municipality's experience in afforestation, road aesthetics, public parks and initiatives to improve services offered to the local community. The visit aimed at exchanging expertise in municipal work, and investing in development-related opportunities, Shaikh Mohammed said. He emphasised the need for further development of environmental preservation initiatives, policies, and programmes to contribute to Bahrain's sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Bahrain-UK ties



Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa received yesterday the newly appointed British Ambassador, Alastair Long. The minister welcomed the envoy, hailing the distinguished ties and partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Kingdom, especially in police work and criminal justice. He highlighted the significance of reinforcing cooperation in exchanging expertise and building capabilities. The Interior Minister hailed the security coordination between the two countries. He wished the ambassador every success in carrying out his diplomatic duties.

Britain and South Korea extend tariff-free trade

● **Low or zero tariffs on bilateral trade of products with parts from the European Union**

TDT | London

Britain and South Korea have agreed to extend a period of low or zero tariffs on bilateral trade of products with parts from the European Union, the British government said yesterday, in a boost for the car industry.

Without the two-year extension, British businesses would have faced high tariffs from Jan. 1 on exports of products made using EU components, under so-called rules of origin, and on products shipped via the EU.

Any tariffs could have hurt businesses such as food and drink manufacturers and automakers, potentially leading



Representative picture

to higher prices for products such as electric cars, Reuters reported.

The two sides will begin talks later this year on a new trade deal. Their current agreement was rolled over from Britain's membership of the EU.

Britain's minister for international trade, Nigel Huddleston, said extending the tariff-free period would provide welcome

certainty for businesses.

"This is fantastic news for UK businesses who can continue selling their fantastic goods with confidence to South Korea," Huddleston said.

South Korea is the seventh-biggest export market for British-made cars and the third-largest supplier of new cars for Britain, meaning any new tariffs "would have been

bad for both sides," said Mike Hawes, the head of the British car industry trade body.

"We look forward to the start of negotiations and swift conclusion of a modernised trade deal that delivers more benefits to our respective automotive sectors, in particular boosting trade in EVs and related technologies," Hawes, the Chief Executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, said.



Annual trade between Britain and South Korea is worth 18 billion pounds (\$21.9 bn)

Ebrahim Ashoor Khalil wins NBB Al Watani Savings Scheme Sept. prize

TDT | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has announced Ebrahim Ashoor Khalil as the winner of USD 100,000 in the Al Watani Savings Scheme September draw.

NBB said its customers will have a chance to win Al Watani Savings Scheme prizes with

every deposit BHD 50 into their SaveWave, Express Saver or Al Mumayaz accounts.

For the Al Watani Savings Scheme draw in December, two winners will be randomly selected from participating NBB customers, and each will be awarded the grand prize of USD 1,000,000.

World Investment Forum kicks off in Abu Dhabi

TDT | Abu Dhabi

The eighth edition of the World Investment Forum (WIF) kicked off in Abu Dhabi, with the participation of over 7,000 investment stakeholders from 160 countries.

The forum brings together a distinguished group of leaders, heads of state, decision-makers, business leaders, senior executives of multinational companies, and representatives of civil society from around the world, Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported.

The forum is organised by the UNCTAD Investment and Enterprise Division, with the support of the Ministry of



Economy and the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development, the main partner.

This year's forum is focused on "Investing in Sustainable Development." Through its sessions and lectures, it addresses pressing issues such as food security, sustainable energy, health infrastructure, and the challenges and solutions of global supply chains.

GITEX Global, Expand North Star expos kick-off

● **Over 30 Bahraini companies participating**

TDT | Manama

The GITEX Global and Expand North Star exhibitions began this week with the participation of more than 32 micro, small, and medium-sized Bahraini technology companies, in addition to the participation of strategic partners, including the Economic Development Board, Export Bahrain, and ila Bank.

Bahrain's pavilion includes 12 Bahraini SME's displaying their work at GITEX Global, which is considered the largest technology exhibition in the world. In addition, 20 emerging Bahraini startups participated at the Expand North Star exhibition, one of the largest global start-up events hosted by the Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy as part of "GITEX Technology Week" events. This year, "GITEX Technology Week" is being held



Participants during a photocall

at a separate venue from GITEX Global for the first time, in order to welcome more global tech entrepreneurs.

For the ninth consecutive year, Tamkeen is proudly sponsoring the Bahrain Pavilion, building on the remarkable achievements of Bahraini com-

panies in previous editions.

In this year's edition, the exhibition places particular emphasis on cutting-edge technological innovations focusing on artificial intelligence. It also explores contemporary areas such as the impact of sixth-generation (6G) networks, expan-

sive virtual business systems within metaverse technology, and more.

The GITEX Global exhibition will continue until Friday and will be held at the Dubai World Trade Center, while the "Expand North Star" exhibition will conclude on Wednesday.

Former Bank of China chairman arrested for corruption

Beijing, China

The former chairman of the Bank of China has been formally arrested for suspected corruption, state media reported Monday, citing the country's top prosecutor.

The state-owned bank said in February that Liu Lian'ge, 62, had stepped down as chairman and been removed from

his position as Communist Party chief. China's top anti-corruption watchdog announced the following month that Liu was under investigation for alleged "severe violations of discipline and law".

Since coming to power in 2012, Chinese President Xi Jinping has waged a sweeping campaign on deep-seated official corruption.

US pharmacy chain Rite Aid files for bankruptcy

New York, United States

US pharmacy chain Rite Aid filed for bankruptcy Sunday, the company said, after suffering declining sales and legal threats over its alleged involvement in the opioid crisis.

Rite Aid has one of the largest pharmacy networks in

the United States, with 2,100 outlets selling medicines and health products as well as food and hygiene items.

The Philadelphia-based group said it had already reached agreements with several major creditors to restructure its debt, according to a press release.

Stock markets rise, oil prices slide

AFP | London, United Kingdom

The main stock markets in Europe and the United States rose yesterday but oil prices fell as markets tracked the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Asian equity markets sank having caught up with losses in Europe and the United States on Friday as oil prices soared nearly six percent.

The safe haven dollar lost some strength on Monday.

Markets had taken fright on Friday at the possibility that a ground invasion by Israeli troops into northern Gaza, after a warning to civilians to evacuate, could spark a wider conflict.

"The worry was that the Isra-

Bahrain All Share Index closes higher

TDT | Manama

Bahrain All Share Index has closed at 1,943.53 points marking an increase of 0.30 points above the previous closing.

This increase was due to the rise in the Industrial Sector. Bahrain Islamic Index has closed at 724.24 points

marking a decrease of 0.69 points below the previous closing. Results indicated that 43 equity transactions took place with a volume of 1,874,987 worth BD 245,347.

Investors traded mainly in the Financial Sector representing 68.47% of the total value of securities traded.

el-Hamas War would escalate and potentially turn into a wider conflict over the weekend when the stock market was closed for trading," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

"That did not happen, so there

is a measure of relief this morning," he added.

This sense of relief also saw oil prices slide after reaching nearly one-week highs.

"The lack of further escalation over the weekend has helped

Key figures around 1530 GMT

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| New York - Dow: | ▲ 1.1% at 34,052.15 points |
| London - FTSE 100: | ▲ 0.4% at 7,630.63 (close) |
| Frankfurt - DAX: | ▲ 0.3% at 15,237.99 (close) |
| Paris - CAC 40: | ▲ 0.3% at 7,022.19 (close) |
| EURO STOXX 50: | ▲ 0.3% at 4,149.86 (close) |
| Tokyo - Nikkei 225: | ▼ 2.0% at 31,659.03 (close) |
| Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: | ▼ 1.0% at 17,640.36 (close) |
| Shanghai - Composite: | ▼ 0.5% at 3,073.81 (close) |
| Brent North Sea crude: | ▼ 0.6% at \$90.31 per barrel |
| West Texas Intermediate: | ▼ 0.3 at \$87.40 per barrel |

to cap the gains thus far, while reports that the US is easing restrictions on Venezuelan oil is helping to limit the upside," said Robert Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets.

Investors are also turning their attention to corporate earnings as companies begin to report third quarter results.

"The earnings season will be at full speed this week... (but) will

likely remain under the shadow of mounting geopolitical tensions in the Middle East," said Ipek Ozkardeska, senior analyst at Swissquote Bank.

Traders will be keeping a close eye on speeches this week by several Federal Reserve decision-makers, including boss Jerome Powell, hoping for some idea about their plans for interest rates.

The talks come after a number of officials in recent weeks indicated they were happy to keep US borrowing costs on hold, soothing concerns about more tightening that some observers fear could flip the world's biggest economy into recession.



News in brief

The UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said he would be heading to the Middle East today to try to help negotiate aid access to the Gaza Strip. Griffiths said he was hoping to hear some "good news" later Monday on aid access into the blockaded and besieged Palestinian enclave via the Rafah border crossing with Egypt. Israel said Monday there was no temporary truce to allow aid in or foreigners out of the Gaza Strip, as fears grew over the dire humanitarian situation faced by millions of Palestinians trapped in the heavily bombed territory. "We need access for aid. We are in deep discussions with the Israelis, with the Egyptians and with others," Griffiths said in a video statement, adding that the process had been "hugely helped" by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to countries in the Middle East. "I shall be going myself tomorrow to the region to try to help in the negotiations, to try to bear witness and to express solidarity with the extraordinary courage of the many thousands of aid workers who have stayed the course," he said. The United Nations emergency relief coordinator is expected in Cairo on Tuesday and his trip to the region, including Israel, will last for "several days", a spokesman told AFP.



UN humanitarian chief heading to Mideast for Gaza aid negotiations

Israel unveils images of Hamas attacks. Film of a gunman beheading a body and other victims being riddled with bullets in cars are among hundreds of hours of footage Israel says it has collected since Hamas attacks unleashed a devastating war. In one scene said to have been shot with a mobile phone, a gunman is seen hacking at the head of a dead victim with a garden tool in Beer, a kibbutz community near the Gaza border where more than 100 people died. Others can be seen standing nearby, shouting encouragement. Shots are then fired into the body. The film shown by Hagari has been taken from the body cameras and mobile phones of some of the hundreds of Hamas fighters killed or taken prisoner, Hamas social media, as well as the phones of victims and emergency responders, military officials said.

Iran warns 'time running out' for political solution in Gaza war. Iran on Monday said time was running short to reach a political solution in the Israel-Gaza conflict, warning of the "possibility of expanding the scope of war and conflict to other fronts". During his phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned of a "possibility of expanding the scope of war and conflict to other fronts". "If this happens, it will be more difficult to control the situation," Raisi said, according to state news agency IRNA. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian meanwhile "stressed that time is running out for political solutions" to the conflict, according to a post on X.

Iran warns 'time running out' for political solution in Gaza war



French footballer sorry for 'nervous laugh' during minute's silence

AFP | Lille, France



Jean-Clair Todibo

France international Jean-Clair Todibo yesterday apologised for laughing during a minute's silence in memory of the victims of the Israel-Hamas conflict and a murdered French teacher before a Euro 2024 qualifier last week. "I had a nervous laugh in relation to this minute of silence but in no case did I make fun of the current situation," the 23-year-old Nice defender told journalists. Cameras caught Todibo laughing during the tribute, which took before France's 2-1 win over the Netherlands in Amsterdam on Friday, to the victims of the conflict between Hamas and Israel. The minute's silence also remembered a teacher killed last week in the northern French city of Arras in what the government called an Islamist terrorist attack.

I had this nervous laugh that came out. "I wanted to apologise to all the people who I could have offended, that's the least I can do. Let there be no mistake about that."

"I'm hurt because it taints the education that my mother gave me," he continued. "Some said that I laughed during this minute of silence because I was making fun of the death of a teacher, you should know that my mother has worked in National Education for 20 years and I have enormous respect for these people."

"This could have happened to my mother. It bothers me because it reflects an image which is not mine. "I think I'm a boy with a very good education and with respect for people."

Before Todibo's apology, the national ethics council of the French Football Federation had sent a letter to the player to ask him to explain himself, reserving the right to refer the matter to the FFF disciplinary committee.

"The context was unusual, we were among rival fans who had made certain jokes and

Gaza strip occupation would be 'big mistake', says Biden

US President says to CBS news Hamas "don't represent all Palestinian people"

Price will be high, but we are going to win: Israel defence minister to Blinken

AFP | Washington, United States

Any move by Israel to occupy the Gaza Strip again would be a "big mistake," US President Joe Biden said in an interview released on Sunday, as Israeli troops prepared for a ground invasion. Israel, seeking vengeance for

24 hours for aid to enter Gaza before 'catastrophe': WHO

Cairo, Egypt

The Gaza Strip has only "24 hours of water, electricity and fuel left", the regional head of the United Nations' World Health Organization said yesterday, as pressure mounts for assistance to arrive. If aid is not allowed into the besieged territory, doctors will have to "prepare death certificates for their patients," WHO regional director for the eastern Mediterranean, Ahmed al-Mandhari, said in an interview with AFP. Monday marked 10 days of relentless Israeli air strikes on targets in the Palestinian enclave, in retaliation for an October 7 attack by Gaza-based Hamas who killed 1,400 people in southern Israel. Gaza is now barreling towards "a real catastrophe", Mandhari said. Hamas "don't represent all the Palestinian people," he continued. But invading and "taking out the extremists" is a "necessary requirement", he added. Israel has faced grave warn-

ings about the implications of putting boots on the ground in Gaza, with aid groups warning of a humanitarian disaster, fears of the conflict escalating, and the challenges of separating civilians in the impoverished, densely occupied territory. Israel first occupied Gaza during the 1967 Six-Day War, and it was only fully returned to Palestinians in 2005. A year later, Israel imposed an air, land and sea blockade on the 140 square mile (362 square kilometer) strip of land, which is also bordered by Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea.

In 2007 Israel tightened the blockade after Hamas took control of Gaza from the secular Fatah movement of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. When asked if Hamas -- whom Biden described as "a bunch of cowards" -- must be eliminated entirely, he replied: "Yes I do."



Iran has repeatedly warned that a ground invasion of Gaza would be met with a response from other fronts, prompting fears of a wider conflict that could draw in other countries.



Israeli army Puma armoured personnel carriers (APCs) move in a column near the Gaza border in southern Israel

Ship evacuating US nationals leaves Israel for Cyprus

AFP | Haifa, Israel



The 'Rhapsody of the Seas' cruise liner carrying US citizens leaves the Israeli port of Haifa

A ship evacuating US nationals from Israel left for Cyprus from the Israeli port of Haifa yesterday, an AFP correspondent reported. The US embassy had on Sunday urged its "citizens and their immediate family members with a valid travel document" to depart from Haifa on Monday.

The cruise ship is expected to reach the southern port city of Limassol today morning, Cyprus. Gotsis said although the sea route was organised for American citizens by the US embassy in Nicosia in cooperation with Cypriot authorities, there could be other foreign nationals on board. It was not immediately clear how many passengers had boarded the ship at Haifa. Cypriot government spokesperson Konstantinos Letymbotis said Monday that "Cyprus has received 26 requests from 26 different countries to act as an evacuation hub, and the government is responding to the best of its ability".



A damaged UNRWA food aid warehouse and distribution center due to Israeli strikes in Tall al-Hawa neighbourhood in southern Gaza City



F/A-18C Hornets assigned to the Wildcats of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 131 fly over the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69)



Medics tend to a Palestinian child injured during Israeli air strikes in a hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern of Gaza Strip

Israel military confirms 199 hostages abducted

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined



A Palestinian man looks at a building destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in the Rafah refugee camp in the southern of Gaza Strip

The Israeli military yesterday raised the figure to 199 people confirmed to have been abducted by Hamas to the Gaza Strip in the militants' cross-border attacks which sparked a devastating war. "We have updated the families of 199 hostages," military spokesman Daniel Hagari told a media briefing, revising up an earlier figure of 155 captives. Israelis and foreigners are among those abducted in the Hamas assault on October 7. "The efforts on the hostage-

rael are working around the clock to bring them back."

Actions of Hamas 'do not represent Palestinian people': Abbas

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas said Sunday that the policies and actions of Hamas "do not represent the Palestinian people", the news agency Wafa reported. The Palestinian Liberation Organisations (PLO) was the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, he added, during talks with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Wafa added. According to a Venezuelan Foreign Ministry statement, Maduro and Abbas discussed "the terrible situation" in the Gaza Strip following "indiscriminate attacks" by Israel. Maduro reaffirmed "Venezuela's unconditional support for the Palestinian cause and its Authority", and offered 30 tonnes of humanitarian aid "for the Palestinian people" to be sent in the next few days, according to the statement. It added that both leaders agreed to "demand an immediate ceasefire and the establishment of a humanitarian assistance corridor" as well as the return to "international legality".

China prepares for summit under shadow of war

AFP | Beijing, China



UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, Sheikh Saqr Al Qasimi arrives at the Beijing Capital International Airport

China began welcoming yesterday representatives of 130 countries for a conference that will be overshadowed by the Israel-Hamas war, as an increasingly assertive Beijing is asked to help de-escalate the violence. At the top of the invitation list to China's Belt and Road Initiative forum is Russia's President Vladimir Putin, on his first trip to a major global power since the Ukraine invasion threw his regime into international isolation. Leaders have begun to pour into the Chinese capital for a gala event marking a decade of the BRI, a key project of President Xi Jinping to extend China's global reach. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi condemned Israel's actions for going "beyond the scope of self-defence" and called for it to "cease its collective punishment of the people of Gaza". "(Israel) should listen earnestly to the calls of the international community...and cease its collective punishment of the people of Gaza," Wang said Sunday, in China's strongest response to the conflict so far.

Blinken says expelling Gazans 'non-starter'

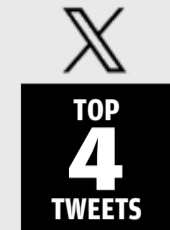


AFP | Cairo, Egypt

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has categorically rejected the idea floated of expelling Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, saying they should be able to stay as Israel battles Hamas. "I've heard directly from Palestinian Authority President (Mahmud) Abbas and from virtually every other leader that I've talked to in the region that that idea is a nonstarter, and so we do not support it," Blinken said in an interview in Cairo with the Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya television network. "We believe that people should be able to stay in Gaza, their home. But we also want to make sure that they're out of harm's way and that they're getting the assistance they need," he said.

Israel's former deputy foreign minister Daniel Ayalon has called for Egypt to cooperate and set up tent cities for Palestinians, saying there was "almost endless space" in Sinai, a vast desert region formerly occupied by Israel. Egypt has rejected the idea and Blinken on his visit instead focused on ways to bring humanitarian aid into Gaza, the densely populated and impoverished enclave run by Hamas.

Israel's former deputy foreign minister Daniel Ayalon has called for Egypt to cooperate and set up tent cities for Palestinians, saying there was "almost endless space" in Sinai, a vast desert region formerly occupied by Israel. Egypt has rejected the idea and Blinken on his visit instead focused on ways to bring humanitarian aid into Gaza, the densely populated and impoverished enclave run by Hamas.



01



The @UN has stocks available of food, water, medical supplies & fuel in Egypt, Jordan, the West Bank & Israel. They can be dispatched within hours. To ensure delivery, our staff need to be able to bring these supplies into and throughout Gaza safely, and without impediment. @antoniooguterres

02



We need to bring our economies even closer together. And speed up the reforms needed for accession. We need to move forward, faster. Let's seize the moment. @vonderleyen

03



President Biden told you in English: 'Don't do it.' I tell you in Hebrew: Be careful. We have gone to war. We will win. We will not stop until victory. @IsraeliPM

04



Looking forward to addressing the Global Maritime India Summit 2023 at 10:30 AM tomorrow, 17th October, via video conferencing. @narendramodi

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

CELEBS celebs

Taylor Swift conquers N.America box office with concert film

AFP | Los Angeles

After her sold-out stadium tour, pop superstar Taylor Swift filled movie theaters with screaming fans as her concert film took in an estimated \$96 million in its opening weekend in North America, smashing records in the category. "This is a sensational domestic opening," said analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research. While ticket sales for "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" -- which features scenes from three concerts --

were below some estimates for the Friday-through-Sunday period, they were still "giant numbers" that dwarfed other concert films, Gross said. Up to now, he noted, the biggest domestic concert films were 2011's "Justin Bieber: Never Say Never," which finished its run with total earnings of \$73 million, and 2009's "Michael Jackson's This Is It," at \$72.1 million. Swift surpassed those titles in three days, making this the biggest box office weekend since this summer's simultaneous releases of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer."

The movie, produced with unusual speed, was released with some special Swiftian touches. AMC Theaters, which is distributing it, broke with standard practice and encouraged filmgoers to dance, sing, whip out cell phones and generally act like they were at a real concert, making for what one critic called a "delirious, dizzying celebration of Swift-mania." Far, far, far behind in second place for the weekend was Blumhouse and Universal's scary sequel "Exorcist: Believer," with estimated ticket sales of \$11 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations

The movie, produced with unusual speed, was released with some special Swiftian touches

million in ticket sales. The latest in the "Saw" series, with Tobin Bell as the frightening Jigsaw, has received positive reviews. And in fifth was 20th Century's sci-fi film "The Creator," at \$4.3 million. It has John David Washington, Gemma Chan, Ken Watanabe and Allison Janney fighting a war against artificial intelligence. Fourth place went to Lionsgate's blood-soaked "Saw X," with \$5.7



Taylor Swift

After health scare, Madonna launches tour celebrating 40 years as 'Queen of Pop'

AFP | Los Angeles

Three-and-a-half months after she was hospitalized with a bacterial infection that forced the cancellation of her 40th anniversary "Celebration" tour, Madonna returns on Saturday with the start of a 78-date tour. At 65, the singer looks set to put her health woes behind her with a six-month-long tour of Europe and North America starting at London's O2 Arena. The tour will also take in the Accor Arena in Paris on November 12, 13, 19 and 20 and the Bell Center in Montreal on January 18 and 20, before winding up at the Palacio de los Deportes in Mexico on April 24. The show promises to be a "documentary through her vast career" drawing on archive footage and studio recordings from the four decades since her breakthrough single "Holiday"

in 1983, according to her musical director Stuart Price. "A greatest hit doesn't have to be a song. It can be a wardrobe, it can be a video, or a statement," Price told the BBC in an interview. Madonna spent several days in intensive care in New York after being found unconscious in her New York apartment in June. But the singer was back and fighting fit after her health scare, Price said. "The person that is going to take the stage looks incredible, sounds incredible, performs incredible," he said.



Madonna's hospital stay meant that the North American leg of the tour -- originally due to begin on July 15 in Vancouver -- had to be rescheduled with the European leg opening as planned

The star's hospital stay meant that the North American leg of the tour -- originally due to begin on July 15 in Vancouver -- had to be rescheduled with the European leg opening as planned on Saturday. "My first thought when I woke up in the hospital was my children," Madonna said in July in a social media post. "My second thought was that I did not want to disappoint anyone who bought tickets for my tour. "My focus now is my health and getting stronger and I assure you, I'll be back with you as soon as I can!" she added. The Grammy-winning icon behind classics including "Like A Virgin" and "Material Girl" has asserted incalculable influence as one of music's top stars. Her decades-long career, which has also taken in acting, film directing and business ventures, has made her one of the wealthiest artists on the planet.



Pete Davidson

Pete Davidson wants to find mom a boyfriend

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Pete Davidson wants to find his mom a boyfriend. The 29-year-old comedian - whose firefighter father - Scott tragically lost his life during the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York - is returning to "Saturday Night Live" to host the show at the weekend, and he's bringing his mother Amy with him in the hope of finding her a date. Speaking on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon", he said: "She's very

excited. She actually has been on the show almost as many times as I have! Like, she's always ready to go up. "And I'm really excited, just because, like, I'm trying to find my mom someone to date. "She hasn't been with anybody in like 23 years. So, like, yeah! And she's a good catch." He then jokingly added: "And it's like, you know, brand new down there so..." Pete went on to explain he was "trying to find someone nice" for his mom, both to make her happy to and to help him out. He quipped: "I really just want someone to take care of her, and to get her off my hands." Pete left "SNL" as a series regular towards the end of season 47 and he's hopeful his hosting gig finally happens after having previous appearances cancelled due to reasons outside of his control.

Paris Hilton reveals her family plans

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Paris Hilton would love to have a baby girl. The 42-year-old star already has son Phoenix, eight months, with her husband Carter Reum, and Paris has now revealed that she'd love to have a daughter, too. The blonde beauty told E! News: "I can't wait to have my own little princess one day and that's something that we talk about and think about all the time." Paris loves the challenge of motherhood. The reality star also revealed that she's "never felt so happy". Paris - who married Carter in 2021 - shared: "It's been such a special time. "My little baby boy is my world and he's made my life feel so complete. My husband is just the sweetest, kindest, most loyal and loving partner - just my everything. "It's been amazing being a mom, being a wife and this new phase of my life. I just never felt so happy."



Paris Hilton

all the time."



Daniel Radcliffe

Fatherhood is awesome, says Daniel Radcliffe

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Daniel Radcliffe's experience of fatherhood has been "awesome". The 34-year-old actor and his partner Erin Darke welcomed their son earlier this year, and Daniel admits that he's relished the challenge. Speaking about his baby boy, Daniel told E! News: "He's great, it's amazing." "There's a short answer and a long answer to that. And the short answer is it's awesome and he's the best thing that's ever happened." On the other hand, Daniel also acknowledged that parenthood can be "intimidating". The London-born star said: "It's frankly terrifying to have a human being in the world that I care this much about, and that everything he does is going to affect how I feel about my life for the rest of my life. So, you know, that's intimidating."

Daniel's lifestyle has changed markedly since he became a father for the first time. He shared: "There's no relation to what we need for sleep. "The less I sleep, the more I sleep at night. But the less they sleep, the less they sleep! And the more they sleep, the better they sleep! It makes no sense, but it is apparently how they work." Daniel and Erin, 39, met for the first time on the set of 'Kill Your Darlings', the 2013 biographical drama film.

SUDOKU

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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- Ticks off; 5- Addict; 9- Mil. officers; 12- Shrivelled, without moisture; 13- Party; 15- Woman's dress; 16- Not pro; 17- Brawny; 18- Horne solo; 19- Potemkin setting; 21- Young bird; 23- Aromatic herb; 25- Churn; 26- Former nuclear agcy.; 29- Yarn spinner; 31- Rough shelter; 35- Cold call; 36- None of the above; 38- Scoff; 39- It's got you covered; 41- Red fluorescent dye; 43- Cab; 44- With respect to; 46- Duck with soft down; 48- Chinese "way"; 49- Like grams and liters; 51- Verne captain; 52- Nine-digit ID; 53- Repeat; 55- Enervates; 57- Blue gem; 61- Shaped like the Big Top; 65- Neighborhood; 66- Keep an ___ the ground; 68- "Judith" composer; 69- Chilly powder?; 70- Deluge; 71- Lock openers; 72- Part of the Holy Trinity; 73- Mother Hubbard's quest; 74- Morales of "NYPD Blue";

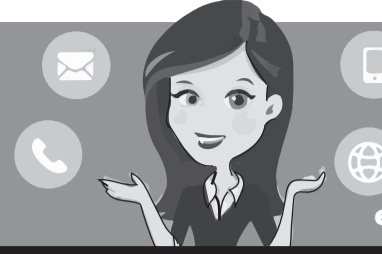
Down

1- Golfer Aoki; 2- Tear apart; 3- Art Deco artist; 4- Quake; 5- Resident of a city; 6- Catch on; 7- Uniform; 8- Allude; 9- Actress Singer; 10- One of a matching pair; 11- Hitch; 14- Disinfectant brand; 15- Chivalrous; 20- Silage storage tower; 22- Connections; 24- Lake in the Sierra Nevada; 26- President Garfield's middle name; 27- Uneven; 28- Lara of "Tomb Raider"; 30- Gum; 32- ___foot oil; 33- State not to "mess with"; 34- The Hunter; 37- Travels on; 40- Cat's front foot; 42- Roundworm; 45- Loaded; 47- Weapon in Clue; 50- Tribe ruler; 54- Toothbrush brand; 56- Plumber's tool; 57- Lip; 58- The Ponte Vecchio crosses it; 59- Lowly worker; 60- Switch back?; 62- Very, in Versailles; 63- "Only Time" singer; 64- Lucie's father; 67- Bunch;

Yesterday's solution

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Classifieds



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Loeb keeps BRX on the rise in Morocco

● French star gives Bahrain Raid Xtreme another stage podium in classic battle, as Swede edges out Al Attiyah

TDT | Manama

Sebastien Loeb gave Bahrain Raid Xtreme another podium boost in the Rallye du Maroc today as the final round of the World Rally-Raid Championship once again delivered an epic desert battle.

Partnered by Fabian Lurquin in his BRX Prodrive Hunter, Loeb set the third fastest stage time for the third leg running, and climbed two places to second overall on another dramatic day when just 14 seconds separated the top three.

Swede Mattias Ekström in an Audi won the 336km third stage, which started and finished at the bivouac in Zagora, but he



Sebastien Loeb steers his BRX Prodrive Hunter in the Rallye du Maroc

did it with only six seconds to spare from the Toyota of Qatar's Nasser Al Attiyah, who edged out Loeb by just eight seconds on the day.

At the end of another huge tussle between the world's elite drivers, Loeb was 6 mins 16 secs away from rally leader Al At-

tiyah, and within reach of the third outright podium place in the championship.

Sebastien Loeb said, "It was a good day for us. A clean stage. We had no problems, no punctures. We pushed very hard indeed, and for three cars to be within 14 seconds after 336 kilo-

metres, that proves it was really a sprint. We now have second place in this rally at the moment. The stage was technical in some places, but it was fast in others, very fast."

Orly Terranova said, "A very nice day with the car working very well indeed. I enjoyed it a

“ We pushed very hard indeed, and for three cars to be within 14 seconds after 336 kilometres, that proves it was really a sprint. We now have second place in this rally at the moment. The stage was technical in some places, but it was fast in others, very fast

SEBASTIEN LOEB

lot, but we've been driving behind Nani (Roma) for nearly the whole stage, as maybe the sentinel isn't working."

The pace of the nine-time World Rally Champion in the BRX Prodrive Hunter saw him move ahead of Saudi Arabia's Yazeed Al Rajhi, who dropped to third overall, and also climb above Carlos Sainz after the

Spaniard's Audi had mechanical issues.

Orly Terranova and Bernardo Graue were unable to complete yesterday's stage in their BRX Prodrive Hunter after damaging the suspension in hitting a big rock at speed. But the Argentine duo bounced back from that setback to set the seventh fastest time today.

Loeb had produced a remarkable performance in the Hunter to finish third fastest on the previous leg, despite losing power for a large part of the stage through an exhaust problem.

He will now be aiming to close the gap on Al Attiyah over the two remaining stages, knowing that, with just under 500km of competitive action ahead, the rally is far from over.

Today's stage was another fast, long and demanding test, with only a handful of dunes to negotiate, but a variety of terrain to cover, including new sections added to the rally route for the first time.

Zverev exits Japan Open after 'horrible' first round

AFP | Tokyo

Number three seed Alexander Zverev said he "played horrible" after crashing out in the first round of the Japan Open yesterday, losing to world number 60 Jordan Thompson.

Germany's Zverev, ranked ninth in the world, lost 6-3, 6-4 in Tokyo, one week after falling at the first hurdle at the Shanghai Masters.

Zverev, who won the Chengdu Open in China last month, said there was "nothing that I did well" after having his serve broken three times by Thompson.

"Today, I played horrible," said Zverev.

"He played quite good, he served quite good but it's just a very, very bad match for me. I don't know what to say."

Zverev had said that illness contributed to his loss to Ro-



Alexander Zverev

man Safiullin in Shanghai, but Thompson had "made it tricky" for him.

The Australian lost in straight sets to Novak Djokovic at this year's Wimbledon but did not back down against Zverev.

"I haven't done anywhere near as much as he has but when I get on the court with these guys, I've got to believe that I can beat them," said the 29-year-old.

"If you don't believe it, you may as well not be out here, so I'm just really enjoying the challenge."

BRAVE CF adds two huge events to historic International Combat Week at Khalifa Sports City

TDT | Manama

The most global MMA organisation in the world, born in the Kingdom of Bahrain, is going all out to end the legendary 2023 with a blast.

After announcing shows in Spain, Indonesia, and Brazil, Bahrain's own BRAVE Combat Federation has added two shows to the third edition of the BRAVE International Combat Week (BICW) this year alone.

BRAVE CF 77 and BRAVE CF 79 will take place December 5 and December 8, respectively, sandwiched in between will be BRAVE CF 78, which takes place in Fortaleza, Brazil, on December 7.

They are going to be followed by BRAVE CF 80, the final event of the year, and the main attraction of the BRAVE International Combat Week.

The biggest combat sports festival in the world, the BICW



BRAVE CF's End of Year Calendar

- 18 November BRAVE CF 75 - Tenerife, Spain
- 25 November BRAVE CF 76 - Jakarta, Indonesia
- 5 December BRAVE CF 77 - Isa Town, Bahrain
- 7 December BRAVE CF 78: Victorious - Fortaleza, Brazil
- 8 December BRAVE CF 79 - Isa Town, Bahrain
- 15 December BRAVE CF 80 - Isa Town, Bahrain

has travelled the world this year, being hosted for the first time in Europe (in Serbia) and South America (in Colombia). Now the BRAVE International Combat Week returns home to the Kingdom of Bahrain for three professional BRAVE CF events, as well as the IMMAF Asian Championships, hosted in association with the AMMAF (Asian MMA Federation) and the IMMAF (International MMA Federation).

2023 has been a record-breaking year for BRAVE Combat Federation, with the company hosting its first editions of the BICW outside of Bahrain, as well as becoming the only MMA organization in the industry to be hosted in 29 countries - a number that will be increased to 30 when BRAVE CF lands in Spain for the first time on November 18 for BRAVE CF 75.

A week later, BRAVE CF 76 takes place in Jakarta, Indonesia, before the organization hosts four incredible shows in December, including its first event in Brazil in four years, and the three shows that will be hosted under the BRAVE International Combat Week.

Zampa pain gain as Australia clinch victory at storm-hit World Cup

Adam Zampa's 4-wicket haul and fifties from Marsh and Inglis secure Australia's first win in the 2023 Cricket World Cup

● Australia put World Cup campaign on track after dire Sri Lankan batting collapse

AFP | Lucknow

Leg-spinner Adam Zampa played through pain to return figures of 4-47 and help Australia down Sri Lanka by five wickets for their first win at the 2023 Cricket World Cup yesterday.

Five-time winners Australia bundled out Sri Lanka for 209, a total they overhauled in 35.2 overs at a windswept Ekana Stadium.

Zampa was named man of the match in Australia's first win in three matches, but the 31-year-old said it had been tough coming into the match.

"To be honest, I wasn't feeling great because I had a bit of a back spasm," said Zampa.

"I was playing through it the last couple of days. Today I felt better, bowled better."

Former champions Sri Lanka slipped to a third loss in as many games.

The drama on the field may



Josh Inglis plays a shot

have been limited but that was not the case in the stands.

After rain interrupted Sri Lanka's batting, strong winds brought scaffolding and hoardings crashing down onto the seats below.

With only around 3,000 people inside the 50,000-capacity ground, spectators managed to escape injury.

However, Australia's reply was delayed when the umpires felt it unsafe to restart the match with high winds still a danger.

Once the game resumed, opener Mitchell Marsh smashed

52 and wicketkeeper-batsman Josh Inglis made 58.

Marsh led the chase after Australia lost two early wickets of David Warner, for 11, and Steve Smith, for a duck, to slip to 24-2.

Marsh reached his first fifty in a World Cup off 39 balls but was soon run out after attempting a second run with Marnus Labuschagne, who hit 40.

Labuschagne and Inglis put on a key stand of 77 to deny the thin crowd of any late drama.

Left-arm quick Dilshan Madushanka broke the partnership to send back Labuschagne for

”
To be honest, I wasn't feeling great because I had a bit of a back spasm. I was playing through it the last couple of days. Today I felt better, bowled better

ADAM ZAMPA

his third wicket and spinner Dunith Wellalage got Inglis.

But Glenn Maxwell, who hit a 21-ball 31, took the team home with Marcus Stoinis, who made 20, for company.

'Outside noise'

Pat Cummins was under attack for his captaincy in the opening two losses.

"Outside noise doesn't bother us too much," said Cummins.

"All parts of the game came together at the end. We're under way in the tournament and hope we keep it up."

Scorecard

Australia 215 for 5 (Inglis 58, Marsh 52, Labuschagne 40, Maxwell 31*, Stoinis 20*, Madushanka 3-38) beat Sri Lanka 209 (Perera 78, Nissanka 61, Zampa 4-47, Cummins 2-32, Starc 2-43) by five wickets

tween Pathum Nissanka (61) and Kusal Perera (78) before the opposition bowlers hit back to end the innings in 43.3 overs.

Perera reached his fifty with a boundary off Stoinis amid applause from the dressing room and a few Sri Lankan fans.

Nissanka soon claimed his second successive half-century as Sri Lanka charged ahead.

Cummins dismissed Nissanka through a good outfield catch by Warner and then bowled Perera.

Zampa sent back skipper Kusal Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama on consecutive balls between overs to be on hat-trick avoided by Dhananjaya de Silva.

Rain interrupted play for about 25 minutes and the break only gave Australia more power to return with wickets as left-arm quick Mitchell Starc bowled De Silva.

Sri Lanka kept losing wickets and Zampa grabbed two more including Chamika Karunaratne, who was only called up to replace injured captain Dasun Shanaka at the weekend.

But Mendis remained confident of his batting line-up and said they "have six more matches to perform better".



Adam Zampa

Waqar tells Shaheen to copy Bumrah World Cup blueprint

AFP | Bengaluru

Pakistan legend Waqar Younis yesterday advised misfiring strike bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi to learn from India seamer Jasprit Bumrah if he wants to make an impact at the World Cup.

Shaheen is struggling with his pace and fitness and has been unimpressive in all three games at the World Cup where his four wickets have come at a cost of 139 runs.

"I don't know if there is a problem with his fitness," Waqar, who is India as a commentator, told AFP.

"The missing link in his bowling is discipline and he is over trying to get wickets.

"When you do the same thing again and again, like Shaheen is bowling to get his yorker going, then batsmen know that and they are ready for it."

Waqar suggested Shaheen should follow the example set by Bumrah who he described as a "top bowler."

The Indian spearhead is joint



India's Jasprit Bumrah (R) shakes hands with Pakistan's Haris Rauf (C) and Shaheen Shah Afridi before a match

top wicket-taker in the World Cup with eight wickets at just 11.52.

New Zealand spinner Mitchell Santner and fast bowler Matt Henry also have eight victims each.

India thumped Pakistan by seven wickets in Ahmedabad on Saturday, with Shaheen unable to help Pakistan defend a meagre 192-run target.

In contrast, Bumrah dismissed Mohammad Rizwan and

Shadab Khan with two well-executed deliveries to finish with 2-19 in seven overs.

"Bumrah is creating pressure and his line is top of the off stump. He bowled so well against Pakistan and created pressure to get wickets," said Waqar.

Shaheen, 23, has been leading Pakistan's new-ball attack since taking 16 wickets in five World Cup games in the United Kingdom four years ago.

”
Bumrah is creating pressure and his line is top of the off stump. He bowled so well against Pakistan and created pressure to get wickets

WAQAR YOUNIS

He has been likened to former great Wasim Akram who with 414 Test and 502 ODI wickets was regarded as one of the best left-arm pacers to have played cricket.

But former India allrounder Ravi Shastri blasted the comparison during the Pakistan-India match, saying: "Shaheen is no Wasim Akram", claiming that the Pakistan star is "not special."

Waqar believes that the absence of regular new-ball partner Naseem Shah -- ruled out of the World Cup with a shoulder injury -- may have had a detrimental effect on Shaheen's performances so far.

Bangladesh's Liton apologises after evicting media

AFP | Dhaka

Bangladesh opener Liton Das apologised yesterday after he called security to force journalists covering the Cricket World Cup away from the team's hotel in India, earning him a sharp rebuke.

Bangladesh are one of the most followed cricket teams in the world despite their modest performances, and Liton's move was slammed as "unprecedented" by the popular daily Prothom Alo daily.

Several Bangladeshi journalists had gathered outside the team hotel in Pune, irking Liton.

"I cannot recall if any such thing happened in the history of Bangladesh cricket," veteran



Liton Das

sports journalist Utpal Shuvro wrote in Prothom Alo.

Liton has scored 89 runs in three matches at the World Cup, 76 of those in one innings in a defeat to England.

He made a first-ball duck in the match against New Zealand in Chennai.

South Africa cricket captain salutes 'inspirational' Springboks

AFP | London

South Africa cricket captain Temba Bavuma yesterday hailed his country's Springboks rugby stars as "inspirational" after their nail-biting World Cup win over France.

The Springboks edged the hosts 29-28 in an epic quarter-final in Paris on Sunday night to move closer to a fourth world



Temba Bavuma

title.

The game ended around 02:30 yesterday morning in Dharmsala where Bavuma's team are based ahead of their Cricket World Cup clash with the Netherlands on Tuesday.

"I'm still trying to wake up from the late night," admitted Bavuma.

"Incredible game. Inspira-

tional the way the guys went about their business. I think the intensity that the game was played at from the first minute till the last, I think that's one thing that the guys kept speaking about.

"Obviously happy, as they were able to get over the line. But yeah, incredible, inspirational game."

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HM King's Cup match-ups set

Holders Al Hala set to take on Al Tadamun in first round of eliminations in Bahrain's richest annual football tournament

● **Glittering, all-new His Majesty the King's Cup champions' trophy unveiled in last night's draw ceremony**

● **Eight teams automatically in round of 16: Al Khaldiya, Riffa, Muharraq, Al Shabab, Sitra, Al Ahli, Manama and Hidd**

TDT | Manama

Holders Al Hala were last night drawn against Al Tadamun for the first round of the 2023/2024 His Majesty the King's Cup football tournament.

The draw for the single-elimination competition was conducted yesterday by the Bahrain



Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, left, with the Hidd Club president at last night's draw ceremony

Football Association (BFA) in a ceremony that took place at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel.

A total of 24 teams are in this year's event, with eight already through to the round of 16 based on their rankings last season in the Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain

Premier Football League.

BFA president Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa was on hand at the ceremony along with other BFA officials and representatives from the participating clubs.

Also at the event, the glittering



YOU KNOW WHAT
The His Majesty the King's Cup is the richest football competition in the Kingdom, with the winners taking home BD100,000 in prize money and BD50,000 going to the runners-up

new edition of the prestigious trophy was unveiled.

The HM the King's Cup is the richest football competition in the Kingdom, with the winners taking home BD100,000 in prize money and BD50,000 going to the runners-up.

Last night's draw set the pairings for the opening elimination round, which will determine the winners who will move on to the round of 16.

Hala were drawn against Tadamun, with the victor advancing to the next phase where they will take on reigning league champions Al Khaldiya.

The other teams joining Khaldiya that are also awaiting their opponents in the round of 16 are Riffa, Muharraq, Al Shabab, Sitra, Al Ahli, Manama and Hidd.

The remaining first round eliminations pit Busaiteen against Bouri, Um Al Hassam against Budaiya, East Riffa against Isa Town, Al Ettifaq against Ettihad Al Reef, A'ali against Al Malkiya, Bahrain Club with Galali, and Al Ettihad against Al Najma.

In the round of 16, Riffa face the winners of A'ali-Malkiya match, Muharraq play the winners of Bahrain Club-Galali, Shabab take on the winners of Ettihad-Najma, Sitra play the winners of Bouri-Busaiteen, Ahli face the winners of Um Al Hassam-Budaiya, Manama take on the winners of East Riffa-Isa Town and Hidd face the winners of Ettifaq-Ettihad Al Reef.

In the 2022/2023 His Majesty the King's Cup, Hala and Hidd were crowned champions after a heart-stopping 6-5 victory over Al Ahli in a hugely thrilling penalty shootout in the final.

The decider extended to an amazing 10 spot kicks per squad. The match had ended goalless after 90 minutes and the score remained nil-nil after 30 minutes of extra-time.



Bahrain set for Philippines friendly



Bahrain's Ahmed Bughammar participates in drills during practice

● **Match scheduled for 7pm kick-off, with free entrance for spectators**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain take on the Philippines tonight in an international friendly match at Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium at Muharraq Club in Arad.

The game is scheduled for a 7pm kick-off and entrance is free for spectators.

It is the second tune-up contest for the Kingdom's senior men's national team in a week. They had previously claimed

a 2-0 victory Thursday night against Kyrgyzstan.

The friendlies are part of the Bahrainis' preparations for next month's start to their continental qualification campaign for the FIFA World Cup 2026. They will also be competing in the next edition of the AFC Asian Cup in Doha in January of next year.

Bahrain Football Association president Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa visited the national team's training session on Sunday night and met with the coaching staff and players. He was received by head coach Juan Antonio Pizzi, amongst other officials.

Bahrain have a 34-player squad for this international



Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa is greeted by Bahrain head coach Juan Antonio Pizzi at the national team's training session

period including Mohammed Abdulwahab, Abdulla Al Hashash, Sayed Mohammed Jaafar, Mohammed Adel, Waleed Al Hayyam, Amine Hasan, Abdulla Al Khalasi, Mohammed Al Hardan, Komail Al Aswad, Ali Madan, Mahdi Humaidan, Abdulla Yusuf, Mohammed Marhoon, Moses Atede, Ahmed Bughammar, Sayed Mahdi Baqer, Sayed Dhiya Saeed, Hussain Al Ekri, Hazza Ali, Mohammed Abdulqayoom, Jassim Al Shaikh, Ali Hassan Saeed, Abdulaziz Khaled, Salem Omar, Hamza Al Juban, Mubarak Mohammed, Ahmed Al Sherooqi, Ebrahim Al Khattal, Ebrahim Luthfallah, Hussain Abdulkareem, Hamad Al Doseri, Salem Hussain,

Ebrahim Al Wali and Jassim Khelaif.

The visiting Philippines team comprises Neil Etheridge, Julian Schwarzer, Kevin Ray Mendoza, Jesse Curran, Daisuke Sato, Audie Menzi, Santiago Rublico, Jefferson Tabina, Simone Rota, Enrique Linares, Joshua Grommen, Dennis Villanueva, Kevin Ingreso, Justin Baas, Jhanjhan Melliza, Manuel Ott, Mike Ott, Sandro Reyes, Marwin Angeles, Jose Elmer Porteria, Patrick Reichelt, Bi-venido Maranon, Pocholo Bugas, Jarvey Gayoso and Kenshiro Daniels.

The Filipinos also played a friendly game against Kyrgyzstan on Sunday morning.

Bahraini women's team named for Billie Jean King Cup tennis



Bahrain's women's national team players with officials at the BTF hardcourts

● **Hajar Zidane, Haneen Al Najjar, Salma Faraj and Maryam Yasser to fly Kingdom's flag in 14-nation tournament starting tomorrow**

TDT | Manama

A four-player women's national tennis team will be flying the Bahrain flag when the Kingdom hosts this week the 2023 Billie Jean King Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group III.

The prestigious competition is set to be held at the Bahrain Tennis Federation (BTF) courts in Isa Town, with 14 countries from across the continent taking part.

Play begins tomorrow and continues until Saturday.

The BTF announced yesterday the Bahraini players who are set to compete. They include Hajar Zidane, Haneen Al Najjar, Salma Faraj and Maryam Yasser. The nationals have been training over the past several weeks under the supervision of coaches Safa Safar and Ariel Baldivino.

The draw for the tournament's preliminary round is scheduled to be held at 12noon today at the BTF headquarters. It will divide the participating teams into four groups for the preliminary round—two with

four teams and another two with three.

Following a single round-robin, the top team from each group will advance to the next stage. There, they will play for two qualifying cards while the remaining sides will compete for their best final classification.

The participating nations are Bhutan, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Macau, Maldives, Nepal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Vietnam and hosts Bahrain. They will be competing for two qualifying berths for Group II in next year's competition.

The Billie Jean King Cup is a leading global tournament between national teams in women's tennis. The competition in the Kingdom, which is being held for the second time, is a zonal event, with teams playing for promotion to the higher-tier group.

Following this competition, the BTF will continue to remain busy with the 2023 Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group V matches from 23 to 30 October, and then three ITF junior competitions over three straight weeks. Two of the championships will be J30 events, with the first being held from 30 October to 4 November, followed by a second from 6 November to 11 November. The third, a J60 tournament, will then take place from 13 November to 18 November.

England selection not 'a popularity contest' as Southgate backs Henderson

AFP | London

England manager Gareth Southgate has vowed to keep selecting Jordan Henderson despite the midfielder being targeted by fans for joining Saudi side Al-Ettifaq.

The former Liverpool captain was booed by sections of the Wembley crowd when he was



Gareth Southgate and Jordan Henderson

substituted during Friday's 1-0 friendly win over Australia.

Henderson has been criticised for his move to the Gulf kingdom, where homosexuality is illegal, after being a vocal supporter of gay rights during his 12 years at Anfield.

Southgate slammed the supporters' actions as "defying logic" after the Australia match and

said it will have no impact on his team selection for Tuesday's Euro 2024 qualifier at home to Italy.

"I will always pick the players who I think are the best players to represent the team, that gives us the best chance of winning - unless I think there is something that is not appropriate," Southgate told reporters.