

A royal victory!

HH Shaikh Nasser races to first place in the 160-kilometre main event of HM the King's Endurance Cup Festival | P12

THE DAILY tribune



Emma Roberts was 'almost best friends' with Diane Keaton

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5 Debt-laden African countries charged 'extortionate' rates: UN



Royal Guard's rescue mission continues in Turkey

P4



We will never forget Bahrain's help, says Turkish ambassador

TDT | Manama

Esen Cakil, Turkish ambassador, yesterday expressed "thanks and gratitude to the leaders and people of Bahrain for their support and solidarity with Turkiye amid the devastating earthquake."

Cakil said the immediate response of Bahrain in the aftermath of the quake on February 6 was a clear demonstration of the strong friendship and close cooperation between Turkiye and Bahrain.

Bahrain's humanitarian approach, Cakil said, has won the hearts and minds of the Turkish nation.

"I would like to express our gratitude to the Royal Guards for leading the search and rescue operation Sawaed Al-Gaith," she said.

The ambassador also paid tribute to BDF heroes for saving a survivor from under the rubble 176 hours after the earthquake in Hatay.

She also praised the Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) for raising more than \$ 3.7 million in funds for Turkiye through "The Day of Solidarity" telethon on Friday evening.

Hungarian president concludes Bahrain visit

TDT | Manama

Katalin Novak, the President of Hungary, yesterday left Bahrain after a successful three-day official visit that witnessed Novak holding wide-ranging discussions with Bahraini leaders on boosting energy and economic cooperation.

Yesterday, she was seen off at the airport by the Foreign Minister, head of Mission of Honour, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, the Muharraq Governor, ambassadors and other officials.

During her stay in the Kingdom, Novak held talks with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Discussions also led to Hungary's oil and gas company MOL signing deals with two Bahraini



Novak bids farewell to Bahrain. Inset, Novak with HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, during her stay in the Kingdom. The picture was published by Novak on her Instagram account.

companies. Attila Steiner, the State Secretary for Energy and Climate Policy, had said the

deals aimed at extracting more hydrocarbons from an already depleting natural gas or oil field

and making traffic quieter by using materials and additives in road construction.



Bahrain national team crowned MMA world champions

P12

It's raining jobs!

Labour Ministry said private sector hiring exceeded 2022 target by 150%

● Nearly 30,000 citizens landed jobs in private sector last year

● 29,000 beneficiaries for job insurance

● Trained 10,281 citizens in 2022

● Conducted 2,587 inspection visits

● Last year's target was to employ 20,000 Bahrainis and train 10,000 citizens

TDT | Manama

Job growth in Bahrain accelerated sharply last year, with citizens landing



Jameel Humaidan, the Labour Minister, interacting with citizens (file)

nearly 30,000 jobs in the private sector.

The strength in hiring, which also exceeded set targets by 150%, Labour Ministry said, occurred as the number of Bahrainis eligible for unemployment insurance also touched 29,000.

The strong job creation in the past year than previously estimated, experts said, shows that

zens annually until 2024 as part of the recovery plan.

Labour Ministry attributes this success mostly to the online job fair launched through its website.

The fair, the Ministry said, allowed employers to pick employees of their choice from the national workforce pool while also allowing citizens to choose a position that suits their qualifications and capabilities.

Further, the platform also allowed job seekers to communicate directly with the establishments they wished to work.

The report came as the Ministry outlined its achievements for the year 2022.

Labour Ministry report further said it reaped similar success in the unemployment insurance system, training programmes, and curbing illegal employment to ensure healthy market competition.

(Continued on page 2)

Europe is already indirectly at war with Russia: Hungary PM Orban



Bloomberg

Europe is indirectly at war with Russia because of its military support for Ukraine, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Saturday in a speech addressing his refusal to send arms to Kyiv.

"Europe is getting immersed in war, in reality, they're already indirectly at war with Russia," Orban said in his annual state of the nation speech, predicting fighting in Ukraine may continue for years.

Orban, who is the European Union leader with the closest ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, reiterated that Hungary won't supply weapons to its eastern neighbour and that Budapest doesn't view Moscow as a security threat.

Aftershocks continue

Ghana winger Atsu's body found under rubble in Turkey

Reuters | Ankara

Ghana winger Christian Atsu has been found dead under the building where he lived in southern Turkey after last week's massive earthquake, his Turkish agent said yesterday.

Atsu had been missing since the Feb. 6 earthquake following the collapse of an apartment building in Hatay. He was 31.

"Atsu's lifeless body was found under the rubble," Murat Uzun-



mehmet told reporters in Hatay. Atsu had been scheduled to fly out of southern Turkey hours before the quake, but Hatayspor's manager said on Friday



More than 46,000 people have been killed in the earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria and the toll is expected to soar, with some 264,000 apartments in Turkey destroyed and many still missing as rescuers listen for signs of life under the rubble.

the Ghanaian opted to stay with the club after scoring the winning goal in a Feb. 5 Super Lig match.

Atsu joined Hatayspor in Sep-

tember last year after spells with English Premier League clubs Everton, Chelsea and Newcastle United.

"We will not forget you, Atsu.

Peace be upon you, beautiful person. There are no words to describe our sadness," Hatayspor said on Twitter.

Newcastle also paid tribute, saying: "A talented player and a special person, he will always be fondly remembered by our players, staff and supporters."

Atsu won 65 caps for Ghana and helped them reach the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations final, where they lost to Ivory Coast on penalties.



29,000 covered by job insurance

(Continued from page 1)

The unemployment insurance system, the Labour Ministry said, also proved highly successful last year in supporting the Bahraini workforce in times of adversity.

The system now has over 29,000 eligible Bahrainis covered to receive compensation and aid for losing jobs for reasons beyond their control.

Unemployment Insurance Scheme

The Unemployment Insurance Scheme (UIS), which is funded through a 3% contribution from employees, employers, and the government, offers two types of benefits: Unemployment aid and compensation.

The Unemployment aid provides a monthly payment of BHD 150 to new university graduates and BHD 120 to other first-time jobseekers for a maximum of six months. On the other hand, the Compensation Benefit is available to unemployed individuals and provides a monthly benefit calculated at 60% of the insured salary (with a minimum of BHD 150 and a maximum of BHD 500) for up to 6 months. Additionally, the UIS provides job-matching, career guidance, and training services to its beneficiaries.

Services related to compensation and unemployment support is on www.mlsd.gov.bh.



Trained 10,281 jobseekers

Moving on, the Ministry said it also exceeded its training programme target by serving 10,281 job seekers.

Tamheed Career Training Programme for recent Bahraini graduate engineers and the Damman employment assurance programme are some of them. The Ministry also had on-the-job training initiatives.

The Ministry used offline, online and in-person training services.

82 licenced training institutions



As with the beneficiaries, the number of licenced private training centres also grew, and now have on the list 82 institutions, which include 13 vocational and technical centres and 69 administrative and commercial centres and institutes.

Last year, the Ministry said it also cancelled the licences of 10 institutions.

Labour Ministry also confirmed rolling out 491 training programmes, which include 262

local programmes and 229 by international bodies.

The Ministry also granted 289 licences to administrative, training and technical staff in various institutions.

Held 2,587 inspection visits

Labour inspection was another area where the Ministry focused on boosting job growth.

Last year, Labour Ministry inspectors held 2,587 inspection visits to establishments that housed 168,386 workers, of which 401,135 were expatriates and 84,845 citizens.

The campaigns resulted in recording 61 warnings.

Through a virtual inspection programme, the Ministry said it reached 602 establishments.

Labour Ministry also held six workshops to enhance awareness of Labour laws last year.

Outdoor work ban hits 99.87% compliance

The Ministry said it conducted 820 inspection visits to worksites and workers' accommodations to ensure safety and compliance with preventive measures.

"Our inspectors also made 19,481 worksite visits during the summer work ban to ensure compliance with Resolution No. (3) of 2013.

The ban, the Ministry said, achieved 99.87% compliance, with only 27 establishments and 52 workers breaching set rules.

LMRA, Northern Police Directorate hold joint inspection campaign

TDT | Manama

The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) yesterday referred several workers to legal action for breaching labour and residency laws in the Kingdom.

The move followed a joint campaign with the Nationality, Passports, and Residence Affairs (NPRA) of the Ministry of Interior and the Northern Governorate Police Directorate.

The LMRA emphasised its commitment to identifying and reporting any violations through continuous and rigorous inspections in cooperation with relevant government agencies.

Officials further urged the public to support the government's efforts to combat illegal labour practices by reporting violations using the electronic form on the LMRA website www.lmra.bh or by calling the authority's call centre at 17506055.



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Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak bin Daina, the Oil and Environment Minister and Special Envoy for Climate Affairs, urged for shared responsibility in achieving zero neutrality during talks yesterday with the representative of APM Terminals Bahrain. Farooq Zaheer Zuberi, the Acting CEO of APM Terminals Bahrain, Shaikh Ahmed bin Isa bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary for Ports and Maritime Affairs at the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications, and other top officials were in attendance. The ministry emphasised the need to redouble efforts and align with global initiatives in order to achieve zero neutrality. The minister also received a briefing on APM Terminals Bahrain's strategic plan to achieve sustainable development goals and protect the environment, including their efforts to reduce carbon emissions and reach zero neutrality.



The 3rd national symposium on sickle cell anaemia opened in Bahrain yesterday under the patronage of the President of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH), Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa. The event, organised by government hospitals in collaboration with Education Plus Company, and sponsored by Novartis, was attended by Dr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Ansari, Chief Executive of the government hospitals, as well as senior officials from SCH, the Ministry of Health, and government hospitals. Medical professionals from Bahrain and abroad also participated in the seminar. Dr Shaikh Mohammed emphasized the importance of developing the health system in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in line with the comprehensive development initiatives led by HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.



The Chief of Public Security and Chairman of the National Disaster Management Committee, Lieutenant General Tariq Hasan Al Hasan, yesterday attended a graduation ceremony for the officers of the committee's Executive Office who attended a workshop on civil emergency management from February 12 to 16. The course was part of capabilities building and the national strategy for civil protection to enhance the workforce's skills.

Farmers' Market customers' first choice: official



In pictures, Bahrain Farmers' Market at Budaiya Botanical Gardens

TDT | Manama

Bahraini Farmers' market, now in its 11th week at Budaiya Botanical Gardens, has succeeded in fulfilling its goal of making Bahraini agricultural products the customers' first choice, said a top official.

Dr Khaled Ahmed Hassan, the Acting Undersecretary of Agriculture and Marine Resources, said the market had gained a high reputation since its opening as it allows customers to buy fresh, locally grown produce di-

rectly from farmers, reducing the distance that food travels from farm to table.

On offer at the market are a range of seasonal fruits and vegetables, as well as other locally sourced products such as honey, spices, and handmade crafts.

Officials also confirm that the market has, so far, attracted over 10,000 children through various activities.

Visitors to Bahraini Farmers' markets can experience the diversity and richness of the local food culture while supporting



sustainable and ethical food practices.

This year, the market has the participation of 32 farmers, four agricultural companies, five nurseries, four apiaries, four

date producers and 20 productive families.

"The remarkable turnout of visitors from neighbouring GCC countries speaks volumes about the popularity of the market that

has gone beyond the borders of the Kingdom," added Dr Hassan.

The government, Dr Hassan said, is committed to further developing the market by giving space to more Bahraini farmers

and making their products the first and best choice for consumers.

First introduced in 2012, the Farmer's Market was an initiative to develop the agriculture sector in Bahrain to support more sustainable food production and promote the sale of products produced sustainably.

The market, held annually from December to April and is open every Saturday, is organised by the Agriculture and Marine Resources directorate at the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning.

Culture, creativity take centrestage as art goes live



Ali Al Hawaj with his work



Maha Ghazal with her painting



Najma Earaji with her work

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

Live artworks by international and Bahraini artists were on display for the first time at Swiss Belresidences yesterday as part of a special event to showcase Bahrain's culture to a wider audience.

Titled 'Art of Athens and Bahrain', the exhibition was a collaboration of interactive art by the Unesco Club of Greek, featuring paintings and calligraphy of 34 Greek artists who sent their work as prints.

Artists from Bahrain at the expo told *The Daily Tribune* that the event is giving a much-needed boost to the art scene in Bahrain, which is slowly gaining international recognition.

"We are using our artworks to communicate emotions and to learn from our peers, their works and inspirations."

For simple things that we never notice: Al Hawaj

While talking to *The Daily Tribune*, Bahraini artist Ali Al Hawaj emphasised the im-



Bana AlBsar with her work

portance of presenting "what is beautiful in our nation's environment" and "how simple things that we never notice can be seen in different aspects of the painting."

"The purpose of art is to introduce these small things into people's lives.

Al Hawaj further said it is "crucial for us as artists to pro-

mote art as a culture in Bahrain" as "we are oblivious to many wonderful things around us."

"While I don't have any time restrictions for my paintings," Al Hawaj said, "I do know that every artist strives to complete their work as quickly as possible."

My paintings are my emotions:



Works by Greek artists on display at the venue

Ghazal

Another Bahraini artist, Maha Ghazal, shared that each time she paints, she puts her emotions into it, and it typically takes two to three days to finish the art.

Recalling her younger days, Ghazal said that she developed an early interest in painting from

her school days and used to draw using pencils in school books.

"Now, I have a major in arts."

I am too realistic: AlBsar

Bana AlBsar, who is too realistic, stated that it takes her a long time to complete her paintings, but she never stops painting "even when I tell myself to."

"I always admired the beau-

ty, the landscape of Bahrain, its palm trees and historic buildings. "One of my most renowned art pieces, dating back to 1997, was created during my tenure as an art teacher before I ventured into entrepreneurship. Although I discontinued painting for nearly 15 years, the desire to resume my passion lingered, and I eventually achieved my goal."

My roots are my motivation: Earaji

Najma Earaji's artwork, which symbolises women's hair like an abaya, was motivated by her roots and the traditional theatre and the music she grew up with. "I always had a liking for Bahraini women and traditions.

Earaji, however, said she is not stressing herself with any time-frame. "Depending on how I'm feeling, I can complete artwork in two days, but other times it takes me two months.

When asked about her motivation, she said, "I come from a traditional household, and after watching traditional theatre and music, my roots served as my motivation."

CAPTAINS CORNER

Refashioning
our food
relations

CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

If you were to choose one word that defines our lifestyle in 2023, what would it be? For me, that word is “sustainable”. Everywhere we turn, this much-used word pops up, promising everything from zero carbon growth to better development for nations. If a plan is not “sustainable”, it is dumped immediately, while other blueprints that merely whisper the word at least get their report onto the table.

The latest to jump onto the sustainability bandwagon is the habit of ‘snacking’. From having been shunned as a practice that led to obesity, snacking is now being carefully positioned as a social practice that encourages positive connections such as networking, friendship and even healthy eating through ‘grazing’.

A recent poll suggests that consumers are increasingly replacing meals with snacks, with 55 percent reporting a higher likelihood to eat a snack across all three standard mealtimes.

What’s more, this is being seen in light of how sustainable the snacking choices are – for instance, does the snack use palm oil, which is seen as a predominant cause of deforestation? Apparently seven in 10 consumers say they prioritize snacks that have less packaging and 72 percent saying they typically recycle it.

In all humility, as a lay person, may I suggest that such reports send out the wrong signals? After all, we must be aware that it is supported by one of the world’s largest snack manufacturers and take the findings with the proverbial pinch of salt.

By all means, eat sustainably and enjoy your snacks. However, there is no need to glorify snacks as a meal substitute or a great social construct. Moreover, it is as important to check the ingredients on a snack as it is to find out if the can or carton is recyclable.

We shall soon be approaching the Holy Month of Ramadan – let us use this sacred month of fasting and spiritual revival to refashion a healthy relationship with food.

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

Shura Council to discuss draft law
modernising sports legislation

TDT | Manama

Shura Council members will today discuss a decree that aims at modernising the Kingdom’s sports legislation and expanding the authority of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sport to better facilitate its work.

The amendments proposed by Decree-Law (42) of 2022 also aim to ensure Bahrain’s compliance with international requirements and the Olympic Charter.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued the Decree in November last year, as proposed by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister and approved by the Cabinet.

It aims at eliminating any conflict between local laws and the approved regulations of the International Olympic Committee.

Accordingly, the Decree calls for appointing a Chairman, one or more deputy chairmen and at least eight members for a renewable four-year



term.

Besides, all state departments are duty-bound to provide the council with data, statistics and studies and cooperate with it to facilitate the performance of its duties and tasks.

The Decree also states that the decisions of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports shall be enforce-

able and binding on all authorities in the Kingdom, including ministries, authorities, institutions and others.

The discussions on this will come up during the ninth meeting of the Shura members in the first session of the sixth legislative term.

In the same session, councillors will also consider a report of the Commit-

tee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and National Security regarding a draft law ratifying the agreement between Bahrain and the United Kingdom on air services, attached to Decree No. (79) of 2022. The Committee has approved the bill in principle.

The draft law replaces the existing agreement signed in London on the 29th of April 1998 with an updated version agreed upon on the 10th of November 2022 in Manama.

The amendment brings in articles ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, fair competition, establishing common-code and strengthening safety and security.

The deal also calls for increasing the number of flights for international passengers and freight and boosting economic and tourism exchange between the two countries.

The move also aims at strengthening the role of Bahrain International Airport at the regional and international levels and the national carrier’s role in the civil aviation sector.

New park opens in Zallaq



The Southern Region Municipality inaugurated Al Zallaq Park yesterday in the presence of Asim Abdullatif Abdullah, the Director General of the Municipality of the Southern Region. The park is located on a 565.2 square meter area within the Zallaq housing area and features a well-lit walking path, a resting area, and other amenities.



Bahrain’s Ambassador to Belgium, Abdulla bin Faisal bin Jabr Al Dosary, yesterday presented his credentials as a non-resident Ambassador Plenipotentiary Extraordinary to King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands. During the ceremony, the ambassador conveyed greetings from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain. King Willem-Alexander also extended his greetings to HM the King and HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister and emphasized the importance of developing joint cooperation between the two countries.

RHF plans ‘Bahrain’ hospital in Syria

TDT | Manama

The Royal Humanitarian Federation will open a hospital in Syria named “Bahrain” as part of the ongoing relief and rescue operations led by the Kingdom in the quake-hit areas of Syria and Turkey.

The announcement by Dr Mustafa Al-Sayed, RHF Secretary-General, late night on Friday was during the Solidarity Day national fundraiser telethon organised in cooperation with Bahrain TV that raised over 3.7 million dollars within three hours.

Latest reports say more than 46,000 people have been killed in the earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria, and the toll is expected to soar

BDF Royal Guards are currently participating in the search and rescue operation Arms of Relief in Turkey, extending much needed to people affected by the quake.

Yesterday, Royal Guard commandos in Turkey said they recovered seven victims buried under the rubble in the Hatay province of southern Turkey.

The team said they are pushing ahead with their mission to assist and search for survivors by harnessing all efforts, despite inclement weather and other adverse conditions.

Friday’s fundraising campaign followed the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to



Royal Guards in action at quake hit areas

support the people devastated by the deadly quake in Syria and Turkey.

Yesterday, in a statement, Information Minister, Dr Ramzan bin Abdulla Alnoaimi, said the telethon re-

flects the dedicated efforts led by HM King’s Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

The Oil and Gas Holding Company,

on behalf of its group of companies, donated BD150,000 to the telethon to become the largest donor. Alba closely followed by donating BD100,000.

WFP Director David Beasley had said their operation is about \$50 million a month for quake response alone, “so unless Europe wants a new wave of refugees, we need to get the support we need.”

The head of Turkey’s Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), Yunus Sezer, said the search and rescue efforts will largely be terminated on Sunday night.



The death toll in Turkey stands at 40,642 from the quake while neighbouring Syria has reported more than 5,800 deaths, a toll that has not changed for days.

Debt-laden African countries charged 'extortionate' rates: UN

Public debt ratios in sub-Saharan Africa are highest in more than two decades

● The UN will spend \$250 million from its emergency fund

● Somalia is on the verge of famine

Reuters | Addis Ababa

African countries are getting a raw deal from the international financial system which charges them "extortionate" interest rates, the UN chief said on Saturday, as he announced \$250 million in crisis funding, including for famine risk on the continent.

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres wants far-reaching reforms to the structure of international finance to serve the needs of developing countries more efficiently, he told the opening ceremony of the annual African Union summit in Ethiopia.

"The global financial system routinely denies (developing countries) debt relief and con-

The global financial system routinely denies (developing countries) debt relief and concessional financing while charging extortionate interest rates

THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES

cessional financing while charging extortionate interest rates," he said.

The UN will spend \$250 million from its emergency fund, the largest ever allocation, to respond to several crises around the world, including helping communities at risk of famine in Africa, Guterres later told a news briefing.

The coronavirus pandemic pushed many poor countries into debt distress as they were expected to continue servicing their obligations in spite of the massive shock to their finances.

Public debt ratios in sub-Saharan Africa are at their highest



in more than two decades, the International Monetary Fund said last year.

Governments on the continent, including Ethiopia, sought debt restructuring deals under an IMF programme to help them navigate the crisis, but conclusion of the process has been delayed.

Others, which have not sought to restructure their debt, like Kenya, have seen their debt sustainability indicators worsen after the pandemic hit their finances.

"African countries cannot... climb the development ladder with one hand tied behind their

backs," Guterres said.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed echoed the call.

"Nearly all of us want to put our economies back on a growth trajectory but this will not happen without sufficient restructuring to make our external debt sustainable," he said.

The summit, which brings together leaders from the 55 African nations, is also focusing on deepening food and security crises on the continent.

Armed conflict from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa and the impacts of droughts and floods have driven ever more Africans from their homes.

Hunger, driven by the impact of the armed conflicts and also extreme weather that scientists have linked to climate change, has also worsened in several nations. Somalia is on the verge of famine after five failed rainy seasons, with hundreds of thousands of people suffering catastrophic food shortages.

"We need to critically assess why one third of the hungry people in the world are in our continent," Abiy said.

Saudi and UAE top economic diversification index in GCC

Julia Cassano
TDT | Manama

The UAE and Saudi Arabia enjoy top ranks in the second edition of the global economic diversification index in the Gulf Cooperation Council nations launched by the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government.

MENA region, the report said, improved significantly over the past decade, as many oil-reliant countries have shifted their focus towards advancing their economies.

The index highlights the UAE's and Saudi Arabia's efforts to diversify economies, particularly in non-oil sectors such as tourism, infrastructure, and logistics, which were impacted negatively by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saudi Arabia, ranked among the bottom 10 nations in the 2000s, has implemented new policies that have accelerated its economic diversification.

"Economic diversification provides multiple benefits, including macroeconomic sta-



bility, economic growth, job creation, and development alongside promoting greater private sector activity, more sustainable public finances, as well as greater skill diversity in the labour force", the index said.

On the 2023 EDI, the top 10 most diversified economies remained the same, with the United States, China, and Germany holding the top positions.

Additionally, the index said nations ranking in 4th to 10th place only contain a 6-point difference, again highlighting the strength of diversification among the highest-ranked countries.

Amazon asks employees to be in office at least three days a week

Reuters

Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) would require employees to be in office at least three days a week from May 1, the e-commerce giant said on Friday.

The COVID-19 pandemic had altered the workplace, with companies sending employees home to work remotely. Even as lockdowns eased around the world, a large population of employees remains remote or in a hybrid environment.

In a message that was posted on Amazon's blog, chief executive Andy Jassy wrote the decision was taken at a meeting earlier this week and the move would make it easier to learn and collaborate.

"This shift will provide a boost for the thousands of businesses located around our



urban headquarter locations in the Puget Sound, Virginia, Nashville, and the dozens of cities around the world where our employees go to the office," Jassy wrote.

The company added there would be some exceptions to the rule - customer support roles and salespeople would have the option of working remotely.

Amazon had said in October 2021 it would let individual teams decide how many days corporate employees would be expected to work from office in a week.

Twitter to charge users to secure accounts via text message

Reuters

Twitter said on Friday it will allow only paid subscribers to use text messages as a two-factor authentication (2FA) method to secure their accounts.

After March 20, "only Twitter Blue subscribers will be able to use text messages as their two-factor authentication method," the company tweeted.

Two-factor authentication, meant to make accounts more secure, requires an account holder to use a second authentication method in addition to a password. Twitter allows 2FA by text message, authentication app and a security key.

The company believes phone-number-based 2FA is being abused by "bad actors," according to a Wednesday blog post that the company's tweet linked to.

Twitter owner Elon Musk tweeted "Yup" in reply to a user tweet that the company



Elon Musk

was changing policy "because Telcos Used Bot Accounts to Pump 2FA SMS," and that the company was losing \$60 million a year "on scam SMS."

The blue check mark, previously free for verified accounts of politicians, famous personalities, journalists and other public figures, is now open to anyone prepared to pay.

Last month, Twitter said it would price Twitter Blue subscription for Android at \$11 per month, the same as for iOS subscribers.

Microsoft's Bing plans AI ads in early pitch to advertisers

Reuters

Microsoft (MSFT.O) has started discussing with ad agencies how it plans to make money from its revamped Bing search engine powered by generative artificial intelligence as the tech company seeks to battle Google's dominance.

In a meeting with a major ad agency this week, Microsoft showed off a demo of the new Bing and said it plans to allow paid links within responses to search results, said an ad executive, who spoke about the private meeting on the condition of anonymity.

Generative AI, which can produce original answers in a human voice in response to open-ended questions or requests, has recently captivated the world. Last week, Microsoft and Alphabet's (GOOGL.O)



Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella speaks at the company's headquarters to introduce a presentation on the software maker's new AI-powered search engine, in Redmond, Washington

Google announced new generative AI chatbots a day apart from the other. Those bots, which have not yet rolled out widely to users, will be able to synthesize material on the web for complex search queries.

Early search results and conversations with Microsoft's Bing and Google's chatbot called Bard have shown they can be unpredictable. Alphabet lost \$100 billion in market value on the day when it released a promotional video for Bard that showed the chatbot sharing inaccurate information.

Microsoft expects the more human responses from the Bing AI chatbot will generate more users for its search function and therefore more advertisers. Advertisements within the Bing chatbot may also enjoy more prominence on the page compared to traditional search ads.

Microsoft is already testing ads in its early version of the Bing chatbot, which is available to a limited number of users, ac-

ording to the ad executive and ads seen by Reuters this week.

The company said it is taking traditional search ads, in which brands pay to have their websites or products appear on search results for keywords related to their business, and inserting them into responses generated by the Bing chatbot, the ad executive said.

Microsoft declined to comment on the specifics of its plans.

Microsoft is also planning another ad format within the chatbot that will be geared toward advertisers in specific industries. For example, when a user asks the new AI-powered Bing "what are the best hotels in Mexico?", hotel ads could pop up, according to the ad executive.

Integrating ads into the Bing chatbot, which can be expanded to fill the top of the search page, could help ensure that ads are not pushed further down the page below the chatbot.



Raiffeisen Bank in Moscow

US sanctions authority probes Raiffeisen on Russia

Reuters | Frankfurt/Vienna

The United States' sanctions authority has launched an inquiry into Raiffeisen Bank International (RBIV.VI) over its business related to Russia, increasing scrutiny of the Austrian lender that plays a critical role in the Russian economy.

Responding to questions from Reuters, the bank said it had received a request from the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) in January to "clarify payments business and related processes maintained by RBI in light of the recent developments related to Russia and Ukraine."

OFAC had asked Raiffeisen for details of its exposure in Russia, the partially occupied Donbas, Ukraine and Syria, including about the transactions and activity of certain clients, a source told Reuters.

The US agency had requested a reply by February, said that person, adding that Raiffeisen's lawyers negotiated an extension, pledging to answer the questions in three tranches of information to be sent to in early April, May and June.

A spokesperson for US Treasury Department declined to comment.



The new Bing, which has a waitlist of millions of people for access, is a potentially lucrative opportunity for Microsoft. The company said during an investor and press presentation last week that every percentage point of market share it gains in the search advertising market could bring in another \$2 billion of ad revenue.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A FOX SHOULD NOT BE ON THE JURY AT A GOOSE'S TRIAL
THOMAS FULLER

News in brief

Power, water return to cyclone-hit New Zealand cities



to cyclone-struck New Zealand cities yesterday, as the death toll from the disaster rose to nine. Almost a week after Cyclone Gabrielle brought scouring winds and torrential rains to the country's North Island -- causing landslides and widespread flooding -- recovery efforts have begun

in earnest. Roger Ball, acting director of the National Emergency Management Agency, said water had been restored to the east-coast city of Gisborne and that some residents in the neighbouring city of Napier now had power.

◆ Water and electricity supplies slowly returned

Media titan Rupert Murdoch described Donald Trump's claims that the 2020 election was stolen as "crazy," according to court documents that also threaten to embarrass Fox News's top stars.

The 91-year-old billionaire made the comments in emails to senior Fox executives even as anchors on his conservative network continued to give credence to Trump's false allegations, Thursday's filing showed. The document also says some of Fox News's most popular hosts, including Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingraham, privately ridiculed top Trump advisors who were saying Joe Biden had lost the election.

Fox's Murdoch called Trump stolen vote claims 'crazy': court docs



FBI investigates hack of its own computer network



briefed on the matter, said FBI officials believe it involved computers at its New York office which were used to investigate child sexual exploitation.

◆ The FBI is investigating a hack of its computer network, in an isolated incident that was now contained, the agency said. "The FBI is aware of the incident and is working to gain additional information," the agency said in an emailed statement to Reuters, without providing further details. CNN, which first reported the incident citing people

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Astronomers marvel at 'perfect explosion,' a spherical cosmic fireball



An illustration shows a perfectly spherical explosion, called a kilonova

Reuters | Washington

Astronomers have observed what might be the "perfect explosion," a colossal and utterly spherical blast triggered by the merger of two very dense stellar remnants called neutron stars shortly before the combined entity collapsed to form a black hole.

Researchers described for the first time the contours of the type of explosion, called a kilonova, that occurs when neutron stars merge. The rapidly expanding fireball of luminous matter they detailed defied their expectations.

The two neutron stars, with a combined mass about 2.7 times that of our sun, had orbited each other for billions of years before colliding at high speeds and exploding. This unfolded in a galaxy called NGC 4993, about 140-150 million light years away from Earth in the direction of the constellation Hydra. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km).

The existence of kilonova explosions was proposed in 1974 and confirmed in 2013, but what they looked like was unknown until this one was detected in 2017 and studied

The existence of kilonova explosions was proposed in 1974 and confirmed in 2013, but what they looked like was unknown until this one was detected in 2017 and studied intensively.

"It is a perfect explosion in several ways. It is beautiful, both aesthetically, in the simplicity of the shape, and in its physical significance," said astrophysicist Albert Snieppen of the Cosmic Dawn Center in Copenhagen, lead author of the research published in the journal Nature.

"Aesthetically, the colors the kilonova emits quite literally look like a sun - except, of course, being a few hundred million times larger in surface area. Physically, this spherical explosion contains the extraordinary physics at the heart of this merger," Snieppen added.

The researchers had expected the explosion to perhaps look like a flattened disk - a colossal luminous cosmic pancake, possibly with a jet of material streaming out of it.

North Korea fires long-range missile after warning over military drills

Reuters | London

North Korea launched a long-range ballistic missile into the sea off Japan's west coast yesterday after warning of a strong response to upcoming military drills by South Korea and the United States.

Japanese authorities said the missile plunged into waters inside Japan's exclusive economic zone more than an hour after it was launched, suggesting the weapon was one of Pyongyang's largest missiles.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the missile appeared to have been ICBM-class, referring to an intercontinental ballistic missile. He told a briefing Japan strongly condemned the launch, calling it a threat to the international community.

Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada said the missile appeared to have a range of more than 14,000 km (8,700 miles) - sufficient to reach the U.S. mainland.

Tokyo said there were no immediate reports of damage to ships or aircraft.

In South Korea, which denounced the launch as a "clear breach of U.N. Security Council resolutions", the joint chiefs of staff said the missile had flown about 900 km (560 miles) before splashing into the sea.

North Korea's first missile firing since Jan. 1 came after Pyongyang threatened on Friday an "unprecedentedly persistent, strong" response



A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea's missile launch during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea

YOU KNOW WHAT

North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programmes are banned under UN Security Council resolutions, but Pyongyang says its weapons development is necessary to counter "hostile policies" by Washington and its allies

as South Korea and the United States gear up for annual military exercises as part of efforts

to fend off the North's growing nuclear and missile threats.

Following yesterday's launch, South Korea's National Security Council convened a meeting and agreed to increase cooperation on security with Washington and Japan.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement that U.S. commitments to the defence of Japan and South Korea "remain ironclad".

"While we have assessed that this event does not pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel, or territory, or to our allies, we will continue to monitor the situation," the statement added.

Nuclear-armed North Korea fired an unprecedented number of missiles last year, including ICBMs that are capable of striking anywhere in the United States, while resuming preparations for its first nuclear test since 2017.

US cancer patient developed 'uncontrollable' Irish accent

BBC

A US man developed an "uncontrollable Irish accent" after being diagnosed with prostate cancer, despite having never visited Ireland, researchers say.

The North Carolina man, who was in his 50s, was presumably afflicted with foreign accent syndrome (FAS), the British Medical Journal reports.

The rare syndrome gave the man, who had no immediate family from Ireland, a "brogue" that remained until his death.



Stock image of a man being examined by a doctor

Several similar cases have been recorded globally in recent years.

The case was jointly studied and reported by Duke University in North Carolina and the Carolina Urologic Research

Center in South Carolina.

"To our knowledge, this is the first case of FAS described in a patient with prostate cancer and the third described in a patient with malignancy," said the report's authors.

Much of the man's identifying characteristics, including his name and nationality, were not included in the report.

It says he lived in England in his 20s and had friends and distant family members from Ireland. But they add he had never previously spoken with the foreign accent.

North Korean leader Kim's daughter appears at sports event, state media reports

Reuters | Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong and his daughter watched a sports event attended by government officials on Friday, according to state media, the first time the girl has been seen at a non-military event.

The daughter, often described by state media as Kim's "beloved child" or "respected child" has been seen along-



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reacts as he watches sport games in Pyongyang, North Korea

side her father Kim at military events including earlier this month.

Little is known about the girl and she has not been named in state media. South Korean in-

telligence officials believe she is the daughter identified as Ju Ae by former American basketball player Dennis Rodman, who spent time with Kim's family in 2013.

The event took place in celebration of a major holiday called the Day of the Shining Star in North Korea

Ea
46,00

345,000 apartments destroyed in Turkey

Reuters | Antakya

More than 46,000 people have been killed in the earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria and the toll is expected to soar, with some 345,000 apartments in Turkey now known to have been destroyed, and many still missing.

As Turkey attempts to manage its worst modern disaster, concerns were growing over the victims of the tragedy in Syria, with the World Food Programme (WFP) pressuring authorities in the northwest to stop blocking access to the area as it seeks to help hundreds of thousands of people ravaged by earthquakes.

Thirteen days after the quake hit, workers from Kyrgyzstan tried to save a Syrian family of five from the rubble of a building in

Six dead as gunman rampage in small town



A man stands next to the vehicle of the victim convenience store in Arkabutla, Mississippi

Reuters | Arkabutla

A gunman went on a rampage in a small Mississippi town on Friday, killing his ex-wife and five other people in three locations before sheriff's deputies arrested him, the county sheriff and witnesses said.

The bloodshed occurred in Arkabutla, a rural hamlet of fewer than 300 people in Tate County in northern Mississippi, about 40 miles (60 km) south of Memphis, Tennessee.

The gunman, identified as Richard Dale Crum, 51, was charged with first-degree murder, Tate County Sheriff Brad Lance told reporters.

President Joe Biden condemned the shooting and urged Congress to enact gun control including background checks, an assault weapons ban and requiring the safe storage of guns.

"Jill and I are mourning for the six killed in today's violence in Tate County, Mississippi - as we have for far too many Americans," Biden said in a statement, referring to his wife.

Investigators had yet to ascertain a motive, but Lance said

356

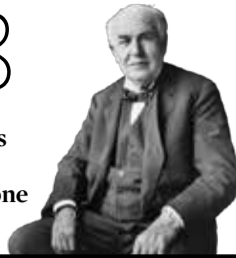
Emperor Constantius II shuts all heathen temples

1600

Peruvian stratovolcano Huaynaputina explodes in the most violent eruption in South American recorded history

1878

Thomas Edison is granted a patent for his gramophone (phonograph)



1942

About 150 Japanese warplanes attack the Australian city of Darwin

1945

US 5th Fleet launches invasion of Iwo Jima against the Japanese with 30,000 US Marines

Earthquake death toll passes 40,000; desperation for signs of life

Three rescued in Turkey 13 days after earthquakes



People look at damaged buildings and piles of rubble in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake in Kahramanmaraş

Antakya city in southern Turkey. Three people, including a child, were rescued alive. The mother and father survived but the child died later of dehydration, the rescue team said. One older sister and a twin did not make it.

“We heard shouts when we were digging today an hour ago. When we find people who are alive we are always happy,” Atay Osmanov, a member of the rescue team, told Reuters. Ten ambulances waited on a

YOU KNOW WHAT

While many international rescue teams have left the vast quake zone, domestic teams continued to search through flattened buildings yesterday hoping to find more survivors who defied the odds

nearby street that was blocked to traffic to allow the rescue work. Workers asked for complete silence and for everybody to crouch or sit as the teams climbed further up to the top of the rubble of the building where the family was found to listen for any more

sounds using an electronic detector.

As rescue efforts continued one worker yelled into the rubble: “Take a deep breath if you can hear my voice.”

The head of Turkey’s Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), Yunus Sezer, said the search and rescue efforts will largely be terminated on Sunday night.

The death toll in Turkey stands at 40,642 from the quake while neighbouring Syria has reported more than 5,800 deaths, a toll that has not changed for days.

WFP Director David Beasley said the Syrian and Turkish governments had been cooperating very well, but that its operations were being hampered in northwestern Syria.

The agency last week said it was running out of stocks there and called for more border crossings to be opened from Turkey.

“The problems we are running into [are with] the cross-line

operations into northwest Syria where the northwestern Syrian authorities are not giving us the access we need,” said Beasley.

“That is bottlenecking our operations. That has to get fixed straight away.”

“Time is running out and we are running out of money. Our operation is about \$50 million a month for our earthquake response alone so unless Europe wants a new wave of refugees, we need get the support we need,” Beasley added.

In Syria, already shattered by more than a decade of civil war, the bulk of fatalities have been in the northwest.

The area is controlled by insurgents at war with forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad which has complicated efforts to get aid to people.

Thousands of Syrians who had sought refuge in Turkey from the civil war have returned to their homes in the war zone - at least for now.

Man goes on Mississippi town



View of a shooting outside a gas station



Jill and I are mourning for the six killed in today’s violence in Tate County, Mississippi - as we have for far too many Americans

JOE BIDEN

they would start by examining the suspect’s relationship with his ex-wife.

Authorities first received a call about a shooting at a gas station convenience store, and before deputies arrived they received another call about a second shooting at a nearby home, Lance said.

One man was shot dead at the store. A woman, later determined to be Crum’s ex-wife, was found dead at the home, Lance said.

Deputies tracked down the suspect in the driveway of another home and arrested him without a struggle, Lance said. That turned out to be Crum’s home, and deputies found four more bodies: two were behind the home and two in the roadway, Lance said.

India welcomes 12 cheetahs from South Africa

AFP | New Delhi

India welcomed 12 cheetahs from South Africa yesterday that will join eight others it received from Namibia last year as part of an ambitious drive to reintroduce the big cats in the country after 70 years.

An aircraft carrying the cheetahs landed at Gwalior Air Force base, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. The cats will then be flown in helicopters to Kuno National Park in India’s Madhya Pradesh state, where they will be released into quarantine enclosures.

In January, India said it planned to import 12 cats annually for the next eight to 10 years as part of an agreement signed by the two African countries.



A cheetah lies inside a transport cage before traveling to India (file photo)

Cheetah populations in most countries are declining. South Africa, where the cats are running out of space, is an exception.

The eight cheetahs flown from Namibia were released

into the sprawling Kuno National Park in central India in September.

Cheetahs were once widespread in India but became extinct in 1952 from hunting and loss of habitat. They remain the

YOU KNOW WHAT

Cheetah populations in most countries are declining. South Africa, where the cats are running out of space, is an exception

first and only predator to die out since India’s independence in 1947. India hopes that importing African cheetahs will aid efforts to conserve the country’s threatened and largely neglected grasslands.

Warm water melts weak spots on Antarctica’s ‘Doomsday Glacier,’ say scientists

Reuters | Mexico City

Scientists studying Antarctica’s vast Thwaites Glacier - nicknamed the Doomsday Glacier - say warm water is seeping into its weak spots, worsening melting caused by rising temperatures, two papers published in Nature journal showed.

Thwaites, which is roughly the size of Florida, represents more than half a meter (1.6 feet) of global sea level rise potential, and could destabilize neighbouring glaciers that have the potential to cause a further three-meter (9.8-foot) rise.

As part of the International Thwaites Glacier collaboration - the biggest field campaign ever attempted in Antarctica - a team



The Thwaites Glacier in Antarctica is seen in this undated NASA image

of 13 U.S. and British scientists spent about six weeks on the glacier in late 2019 and early 2020. Using an underwater robot vehicle known as Icefin,

mooring data and sensors, they monitored the glacier’s grounding line, where ice slides off the glacier and meets the ocean for the first time.

Warm water is getting into the weakest parts of the glacier and making it worse. That is the kind of thing we should all be very concerned about

RESEARCHER BRITNEY SCHMIDT

In one of the papers, led by Cornell University-based scientist Britney Schmidt, researchers found that warmer water was making its way into crevasses and other openings known as terraces, causing sideways melt of 30 meters (98 feet) or more per year.



TOP
4
TWEETS
01



The earthquakes in #Türkiye affected many hospitals and other health facilities. Amid the destruction, @WHO is supporting international Emergency Medical Teams and local health workers to set up mobile clinics and provide health care, incl. complex surgeries, for people in need.

@DrTedros

02



Based on the law and available facts, I have determined that members of Russia’s forces and other Russian officials have committed crimes against humanity in Ukraine. All those responsible for these atrocities must be held accountable.

@SecBlinken

03



I took part in a G7 ministerial meeting at the invitation of Japanese FM Hayashi Yoshimasa. We focused on everything needed for Ukraine’s victory in 2023. There will be rapid deliveries of weapons and new sanctions. Russia must realise we won’t tire of countering its aggression.

@DmytroKuleba

04



Kenya’s leadership and efforts to promote stability in the Horn of Africa and in the Great Lakes region are essential. I assured President @WilliamsRuto of the EU’s support. We are moving forward with our strategic dialogue, notably the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

@eucopresident

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

celebs

Selena Gomez says she is no longer haunted by her Disney past

ANI | Washington

American actor and singer Selena Gomez, who rose to global fame as the star of Disney Channel's 'Wizards of Waverly Place' but was restricted from expressing her views publicly, has stated that she no longer feels haunted by her Disney past.

According to Variety, an American media company, the 'Only Murders in the Building' actor has told Vanity Fair as part of its 2023 Hollywood Issue that she is feeling more liberated after the release of her 2022 Apple documentary 'My Mind and Me'.

"I definitely feel free of it... Sometimes I get triggered. It's not that I'm ashamed of my past, it's just that I've worked so hard to find my own way. I don't want



Selena Gomez

to be who I was. I want to be who I am," Gomez said about her Disney past.

On being questioned whether she was prevented from speaking her mind during her child acting career, "Of course. I wasn't a wild child by any means, but I was on Disney, so

I had to make sure not to say 'What the hell?' in front of anyone."

"It's stuff that I was also putting on myself to be the best role model I could be. Now I think being the best role model is being honest, even with the ugly and complicated parts of

yourself," she added, reported Variety.

In 'Selena Gomez: My Mind and Me', the singer discusses her mental health challenges in greater depth than ever before.

While Gomez was concerned about exposing such vulnerability to the public, she claimed the response to the documentary's premiere has been nothing but liberating.

"Now I don't feel like I'm lying to people... It's not that I was lying... I was scared of what people would think or that people wouldn't hire me. Now I don't think that way. I understand that if it doesn't feel good to me, then I need to step back and evaluate. Is this friendship giving me something? Is this project a really good one?" Gomez said, as per Variety.

Emma Roberts was 'almost best friends' with Diane Keaton

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Emma Roberts was "almost best friends" with Diane Keaton.

The 31-year-old actress stars alongside Academy Award-winner Diane in the new romcom 'Maybe I Do' and revealed that her on-screen mother had written down her phone number for her while they were on set but she has now lost the piece of paper and joked that it "keeps her up at night."

Speaking on 'The Late Late Show With James Corden', she said: "She is my queen and I love her and we DM sometimes. We were almost best friends in the whole wide world but I lost her phone number because she wrote it down for me on a piece of paper and gave it to me. I treasured it so much that I put it in my pocket and it fell out. And I was too embarrassed to ask her for it again. I don't know, maybe she thinks I just never texted her or may-

"her and we DM sometimes. We were almost best friends in the whole wide world but I lost her phone number because she wrote it down for me on a piece of paper and gave it to me"

EMMA ROBERTS

be she wrote something else on the piece of paper. I don't know, but it keeps me up at night! Diane?"

The former 'Unfabulous' actress also stars alongside 'Pretty Woman' actor Richard Gere, Susan Sarandon and William H. Macy in the new comedy about two sets of in-laws who are all having affairs with each other and her comments come just days after 'Rocky Horror' star Susan explained that the whole cast had a "connection" with each other.



Emma Roberts

Idris Elba rules out James Bond as a future character for himself: 'I'm not going to be that guy'

Fox | Los Angeles



Idris Elba has made it clear that he will not be playing James Bond.

Elba brought up the persistent discussions about him taking over as Ian Fleming's famed British spy, while he spoke Tuesday to the World Government Summit in Dubai.

When he was asked about his upcoming film based on the British series "Luther," Elba took himself out of the running to play 007.

"It's very dark," Elba said of the series. "We've been working on the television show for about 10 years, and so the natural ambition is to take

"You know, a lot of people talk about another character that begins with 'J' and ends with 'B,' but I'm not going to be that guy"

IDRIS ELBA

going to be that guy. I'm going

to be John Luther. That's who I am."

James Bond was most recently played by Daniel Craig. However, the actor's character died in the last installment of the franchise, "No Time To Die." A producer for the film claimed that the next 007 could be "non-binary" during a podcast episode. "Non-binary" is defined as someone who doesn't identify as being male or female, usually choosing to go by "they" or "them" pronouns.

Hilary Duff 'embarrassed' herself at Harry Styles' concert

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Hilary Duff is a "massive fan" of Harry Styles.

The 35-year-old actress - who has son Luca, 10, with ex Mike Comrie and four-year-old daughter Banks and 19-month-old daughter Mae with husband Matthew Koma - bought her eldest daughter tickets to the concert to the 'As It Was' hitmaker's concert but is such a huge fan herself ended up

"embarrassing" her husband and family during the show.

She said: "She got a lot of cool presents but I think the most exciting one for her is that she's a massive Harry Styles fan. And so am I! So when we bought the tickets I was like 'This is for me!' And I have to tell you, Matt, my husband watched the show and I'm like 'Are you having good time? Are you enjoying it?' and he's having the time of his life because he's just

absorbing it and staring and I'm over here like 'Yeah! We're partying!' and I'm singing along and he's like 'I can't hear because you're singing so loud and embarrassing all of us!' And Banks did the same thing."

Hilary Duff



Christine Taylor says Ben Stiller was a 'rebound' romance

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Ben Stiller and Christine Taylor's relationship started off as a "rebound" romance.

The couple first met while working on the 1999 pilot episode of TV show 'Heat Vision and Jack' which Ben directed and Christine starred in - and 'The Craft' star has admitted it was very casual at first



Ben Stiller and Christine Taylor

because they had both just gone through break-ups.

Speaking on her podcast 'Hey Dude... The 90s Called!', Chris-

tine explained: "We were both each other's, I would say, like, sort of rebound relationship a little bit."

Ben made a guest appearance on his wife's show and he also opened up about the beginning of their relationship, saying: "We weren't taking it seriously... We had a fun time making the show and then Christine and I connected and then I went off to do a movie in New York and I invited her to come hang out."

SUDOKU

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7	4		1					
	5		6	8		7		
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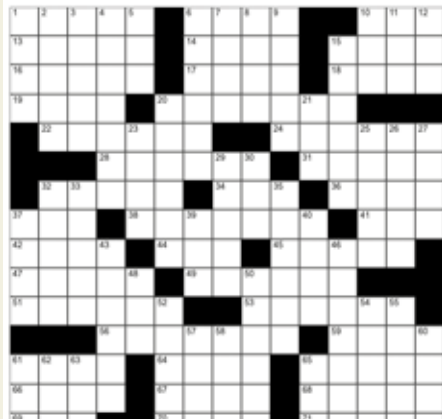
Yesterday's solution

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

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- Scarpia's killer; 6- Deli side; 10- Make haste; 13- Expected; 14- Actress Hatcher; 15- Like a mix; 16- Cross the goal line; 17- Kitchen addition; 18- More than one female sheep; 19- Animistic god or spirit; 20- Kneecap; 22- Vulgar person; 24- Make a contribution; 28- Complied; 31- Deadens; 32- Past tense of will; 34- Regulus's constellation; 36- New Mexico art colony; 37- Ingot; 38- Boastful person; 41- -Cat; 42- Make-up artist; 44- Comedian Philips; 45- Facet; 47- Collection of maps; 49- Caught; 51- Semitic language; 53- Indicate; 56- Thrifty management; 59- Voting-pattern predictor; 61- Distribute cards; 64- Royal Indian; 65- Wander; 67- Covetousness; 67- Knot in wood; 68- Chairs; 69- Nabokov novel; 70- All there; 71- Titter;


Down

1- Protruding tooth; 2- Academy award; 3- Finnish name of Finland; 4- Reindeer of North America; 5- Schooner fill; 6- Stable; 7- Riga resident; 8- Commedia dell'arte; 9- Brandish; 10- Fell; 11- Rage; 12- Aliens, briefly; 15- Goober; 20- Promise; 21- First name in horror films; 23- Skilled; 25- Collect; 26- Steak order; 27- Canadian gas brand; 29- John of England; 30- Agnus Dei; 32- Ralph of 'The Waltons'; 33- Toothbrush brand; 35- Feathered fisher; 37- Drab; 39- Mantric syllables; 40- At that time; 43- Seldom; 46- Person with new parents; 48- Fairly dry, when describing champagne; 50- Regard with approval; 52- Factory; 54- Law of Moses; 55- Overjoy; 57- 'Peter Pan' dog; 58- Son of Judah; 60- Dissolve, as cells; 61- Narc's org.; 62- Conclusion; 63- Humphrey's costar in 'The Barefoot Contessa'; 65- Fast flier;

Yesterday's solution

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

Classifieds



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BAHRAIN SERVICES & MAINTENANCE COMPANY B.S.C. (CLOSED) has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39468574 or aqeel@basma.com.bh

ALMANHAL BAHRAIN WATER FACTORY W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAVY DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17404435 or khalid.bitar@bh.nestle-waters.com

AL REEM GATE CONSTRUCTION has a vacancy for the occupation of FIRE & SAFETY SPECIALIST, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39771192 or inter.island.bh@gmail.com

Ashaya trading co w l l has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17556555 or ayman.jafar@ashaya.com

KRONOS ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of ELECTRICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17564981 or ashokma@gmail.com

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Shelbayh-Kokkinakis set up singles final clash in ATP Challenger



Thanasi Kokkinakis looks to hit a backhand return during his semi-final

● **Patrik Niklas-Salminen from Finland and Bart Stevens from the Netherlands win doubles title after beating Ruben Gonzales from the Philippines and Fernando Romboli of Brazil**



Abdellah Shelbayh celebrates following his win yesterday

TDT | Manama

Jordan's Abdellah Shelbayh made history yesterday after reaching the singles final of the Bahrain Ministry of Interior Tennis Challenger, part of the prestigious ATP Challenger Tour—the second-highest tier of international men's professional competitions behind only the ATP Tour.

Nineteen-year-old Shelbayh, a tournament wild card, became the youngest Arab and first-ever Jordanian to reach an ATP Challenger final.

He secured his seat after defeating Italian Salvatore Caruso 7-5, 6-2 in their semi-final clash yesterday.

Shelbayh is now set to take on Australian Thanasi Kokkinakis for the title. Eight-seeded Kokkinakis earned his spot after beating German Jan-Lennard Struff 6-4, 6-7 (3), 6-1.

Shelbayh and Kokkinakis

are scheduled to battle in the singles final today starting at 3pm. It will be the first meeting between the two players in their professional careers.

Meanwhile, also yesterday, the tandem of Finn Patrik Niklas-Salminen and Dutchman Bart Stevens were crowned champions of the doubles category.

They secured their crown after defeating the pair of Ruben Gonzales from the Philippines and Fernando Romboli of Brazil 6-3, 6-4 in the doubles final.

The Bahrain Ministry of Interior Tennis Challenger is scheduled to conclude today.

The event featured a 32-player singles draw and a 16-team doubles draw, with matches taking place on a hardcourt. The total prize money in the competition is \$160,000.

East Riffa claim last-gasp win over Budaiya

● **Mohammed Duaij scores in the eighth minute of injury time to lift East Riffa to 2-1 victory over Budaiya**

TDT | Manama

East Riffa eked out a last-gasp, come-from-behind 2-1 victory over Budaiya last night to kick off week 13 in the 2022/2023 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League.

Mohammed Duaij scored in the eighth minute of injury time to lift his side to a dramatic finish.

The linesman had originally raised his flag for an offside leading up to the winner, but after the speaking with the match referee, the goal stood, signalling the start of East Riffa's celebrations.

Earlier in the contest, Budaiya skipper Al Tayyib bin Lutfi opened their account with a fine



East Riffa's Ogenyi Eddy Onazi battles for possession with Budaiya's Sultan Mansour during their match yesterday

header off a corner kick in the 58th minute.

But East Riffa were quick to reply after Obus Prince Aggreh was taken down in the penalty box. Saleh Ratib stepped up to take the spot kick but his shot was saved. Ratib was first to rebound, however, and he headed it home to level the proceedings.

The match appeared to be

headed to a deadlock until Duaij's late-game heroics. A Hussain Al Khayyat shot was stopped by the Budaiya defence, and the ball went directly into the path of Duaij, who slotted home with a low, left-footed effort.

The win was only the third for East Riffa in the league and they improved to 14 points on the standings, but remained in

Standings	P	W	D	L	+/-	Pts
Manama	12	7	3	2	15	24
Muharraq	12	6	5	1	11	23
Riffa	12	7	1	4	7	22
Al Khaldiya	12	6	3	3	8	21
Sitra	12	5	5	2	4	20
Al Hala	12	4	6	2	2	18
Al Ahli	12	5	3	4	0	18
Hidd	12	5	2	5	-6	17
East Riffa	13	3	5	5	-4	14
Bahrain Club	12	2	4	6	-5	10
Al Shabab	12	3	1	8	-5	10
Budaiya	13	0	2	11	-27	2

the bottom half.

Budaiya were unlucky in the end as they suffered their 11th loss in 13 games, and stayed in last place on the table with just two points.

League action continues today with a busy schedule of four games at separate stadiums. At 5.50pm, Al Ahli take on Hidd and leaders Manama face off with Sitra, followed at 8.50pm by defending champions Riffa taking on Al Shabab and Muharraq locking horns with Al Khaldiya.

Bahrain set for final FIBA world cup qualifiers

● **Bahrain name 11-player squad for concluding Group F fixtures**

● **Nationals set to take on Australia on February 23, Japan on February 26**

TDT | Manama



Bahrain's senior men's national basketball team at the airport for their departure

then against Japan in Takasaki on February 26.

The national team players include Maytham Jameel, Subah Hussain, Mohammed Ameer, Ali Hussain, Ahmed Salman, Mohammed Ghazi Qambar, Ali Jaber, Ahmed bin Daena, Ali Shukrallah, Alwethaq Ali and Wayne Chism.

The nationals left yesterday for Melbourne on a journey

that will take them around 20 hours.

The Bahraini delegation is being headed by Bahrain Basketball Association national teams director Nooh Najaf and includes head coach Rasem Al Marzooqi.

Bahrain have already been eliminated from qualification for the worlds.

The Bahrainis are in Group

F in this stage of the qualifiers. In the 10 games they have played, they have won two and lost eight.

In the last window of qualifiers held in November of last year, the nationals lost both games at home against Japan and China.

Bahrain are still looking to qualify for their first-ever FIBA Basketball World Cup.

Broad fires England to verge of first Test win over New Zealand

Stuart Broad runs riot through the night to leave New Zealand in tatters

● **England on course for tenth win in 11 Tests after another remarkable day at Bay Oval**

AFP | Mount Maunganui

Stuart Broad razed New Zealand's top order with a destructive opening spell yesterday to put England on the verge of winning the first Test at Mount Maunganui.

Broad claimed four wickets under lights -- all clean bowled -- to reduce the Black Caps' second innings to 63-5 at stumps on day three, with hopes of reaching their winning target of 394 all but extinguished.

England have two full days to claim the remaining five wickets at the Bay Oval and go one-up



England's Stuart Broad (L) bowls New Zealand's Tom Blundell

in the two-match series -- completing a 10th win in their last 11 Tests in the process.

In a match largely dominated by aggressive batting, Broad got

the pink ball to zip sideways to devastating effect, removing arguably New Zealand's four best batsmen to take 4-21 off 10 unrelenting overs.



It's just a different pitch to bowl on in the lights. You go into a rhythm of not over-complicating, not thinking too much. I was looking to bowl the same ball, whoever I was bowling against and getting a wicket early just settles me

STUART BROAD

Openers Devon Conway (2) and Tom Latham (15) both had their off-stumps disturbed while a scoreless Kane Williamson couldn't defend his middle stump.

Ollie Robinson had Henry Nicholls (7) caught behind be-



Stuart Broad and long-time new-ball partner James Anderson became the most prolific bowling partnership in Test cricket after taking 1,004 scalps between them in 133 Tests played together

fore first-innings centurion Tom Blundell was also cleaned out by Broad, for one.

The 36-year-old Broad ad-

109

sixes have been struck by England captain Ben Stokes overtake his coach Brendon McCullum as the outright record holder for the most sixes in Test cricket

mitted conditions were set up perfectly.

"It's just a different pitch to bowl on in the lights," he said.

"You go into a rhythm of not over-complicating, not thinking too much.

"I was looking to bowl the same ball, whoever I was bowling against and getting a wicket early just settles me.

"Once I got Conway, I felt like it could be my day."

Al Nasser all set for Arab clubs volleyball

● **Bahrain representatives depart for Cairo with 16-player squad**

● **Nasser sign national team star Ali Ebrahim from Al Najma for event**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Al Nasser have finalised their 16-player line-up that will be flying the Kingdom's flag in the 38th Arab Clubs Volleyball Championship for Men.

The tournament is scheduled to take place in Cairo, with 12 teams taking part from across the region.

Nasser have been drawn in a tough Group D for the preliminary round. They are alongside Kazma SC of Kuwait and Egyptian sides Al Mina and Al Ahly SC.

Nasser's squad are spearheaded by team captain Younes



Al Nasser's delegation at the airport prior to their departure

Abdulkarim, and the roster includes Ebrahim Mohammed, Mohammed Jassim, Jassim Hamza, Ahmed Issa, Jassim Al Turki, Ali Sultan, Mohammed Mirza, Hussain Al Haiki, Hussain Al Jashi, Mohammed Omar, Yousef Khaled, Hussain Mohammed, Mohammed Jafar, Yousef Mohammed Tahir and Ali Ebrahim, who Nasser signed from Al Najma for the tournament.

The club's delegation departed last night for the tournament.

Nasser have been preparing for the championship over the past few weeks under the supervision of Brazilian head coach Sergio Luis Cunha.

Group A in the tournament features Al Ahly Tripoli of Libya, Masafi Alshemal of Iraq, Al Ahly SC of Qatar and Al Sadaqa VC of Palestine. Group B com-

prises Baniyas VC of the UAE, Kuwait SC of Kuwait, Al Wakrah SC of Qatar and Asswehly SC of Libya. Group C is composed of Kibel of Yemen, Al Seeb of Oman, Zamalek SC of Egypt and Alquaaf of Palestine.

Aside from their Arab clubs bid, Nasser are also set to compete in the Golden Square semi-finals of the 2022/2023 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League.

Axar hits 74 but Australia race ahead after Lyon five-for



India's Axar Patel plays a shot

AFP | New Delhi

Axar Patel hammered a counter-attacking 74 yesterday to help India close the gap on Australia's total after Nathan Lyon bagged five wickets on an intense day two of the second Test.

India were all out for 262 after a key 114-run eighth-wicket fightback by Axar and Ravichandran Ashwin, leaving the tourists a lead of one run in New Delhi.

Australia raced to 61 for one at stumps after Ravindra Jadeja dismissed Usman Khawaja for six after a reverse sweep flew straight to leg slip.

Travis Head, on 39, and Marcus Labuschagne, on 16, were batting at the close of play with Australia leading by 62 runs in their second innings.

Number eight Axar stood out for India with his second successive Test half-century as he took on the opposition bowlers with nine fours and three sixes.

Ashwin played the anchor in his 37 before he fell to Pat Cummins, who struck with the second new ball to get the batsman caught at square leg by Matt Renshaw, a concussion substitute for David Warner.

Cummins took a stunner at



Number eight Axar stood out for India with his second successive Test half-century as he took on the opposition bowlers with nine fours and three sixes

mid on to end Axar's brave knock off Todd Murphy and fellow spinner Matthew Kuhnemann ended the Indian innings in the final session.

Lyon led Australia's charge with four wickets to rattle India in the morning and then claimed his 22nd Test five-for in an afternoon session that saw a controversial dismissal of Virat Kohli on 44.

Kohli was given out lbw by the on-field umpire off debutant Kuhnemann and a review declared it too close to judge whether the ball hit the bat or pad first, before tracking suggested it was hitting leg stump.

Arsenal revive title bid with last-gasp 4-2 win at Villa

Reuters | London

Arsenal reinvigorated their push for a first Premier League title in two decades and retook top spot yesterday with a thrilling 4-2 win at Aston Villa thanks to two late goals.

With a high-quality attacking game going into added time at 2-2, Arsenal midfielder Jorginho saw a looping shot come off the bar and bounce off the head of Villa's Argentina World Cup-winning goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez for a cruel own goal.

Minutes later, with the final whistle about to go and Villa



Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli celebrates scoring their fourth goal with Fabio Vieira

piling forward - Martinez included - Arsenal broke forward

again for Gabriel Martinelli to stroke into an empty net for the Londoners' fourth in front of their delirious fans.

It was Arsenal's first win in four Premier League games and followed a dispiriting midweek loss at home to Manchester City who had pared back an eight-point gap from a month ago.

"From this game, we took an unbelievable lesson for all of us. We just need to believe until the very end that we can achieve everything," said Oleksandr Zinchenko, who had made it 2-2 with his first ever Premier League goal earlier in the game.

A royal victory!

HH Shaikh Nasser races to first place in the 160-kilometre main event of HM the King's Endurance Cup Festival

● Deputised by HM the King, HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Personal Representative of HM the King, awarded the winners

● Finishing behind HH Shaikh Nasser in the 160km ride were Nasser Al Qahtani of KHK team and Mohammed Abdulsamad of Al Ruood team

TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs and Honourary President of Bahrain Royal Equestrian and



HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa celebrates with the Bahrain flag as he wins the 160km ride



HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa is awarded the prize for first place by HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, third from right, in the presence of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, right



HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa with his children

Endurance Federation (BREEF), was yesterday crowned champion of the 160-kilometre ride that headlined the His Majesty the

King's Endurance Cup Festival, held at Bahrain International Endurance Village in Zallaq.

Deputised by HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Personal Representative of HM

the King, attended the event, which took place in the presence of HH Shaikh Nasser and HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, President of the General Sports Authority and President of Bahrain

Olympic Committee, as well as a number of Their Highnesses and Excellencies.

The festival, organised by BREEF, featured several races, and the main event covered 160km, and HH Shaikh Abdullah crowned HH Shaikh Nasser as the champion of this prestigious competition following an incredible performance that allowed him to comfortably win the race.

HH Shaikh Nasser had a triumphant race time of six hours, 34 minutes and 29 seconds; almost 14 minutes ahead of Nasser Al Qahtani of KHK team, who came second. Mohammed Abdulsamad of Al Ruood team finished third in 6:52:33.

On this occasion, HH Shai-

kh Nasser escalated his utmost thanks and appreciation to HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for sponsoring the festival, adding that His Majesty's backing and support represent the backbone of the constant elevation of this important sport which is among the historic sports.

"The endurance sport has accomplished multiple achievements generation after generation," HH Shaikh Nasser said. "This reflects His Majesty's keenness to provide all support in order for this sport to continue on the same path."

Moreover, HH Shaikh Nasser congratulated the runner-up and the third place winners on their accomplishments.



The endurance sport has accomplished multiple achievements generation after generation. This reflects His Majesty's keenness to provide all support in order for this sport to continue on the same path

HH SHAIKH NASSER BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA



HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa celebrates with Bahrain Royal Endurance Team members

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Bahrain national team crowned MMA world champions

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain has made a historical achievement in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) sport after the national team won the world championship for the first time in its history.

The championship was organized by Serbian MMA Federation under the supervision of the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation (IMMAF) from February 11 to 18 in the Serbian capital, Belgrade.



Winners celebrate on the podium