

Man City stumble, Chelsea shocked

Troubled Manchester City held by lowly Everton, Chelsea title bid rocked after defeat to Fulham | P12

Israeli minister's Al-Aqsa mosque visit sparks condemnation

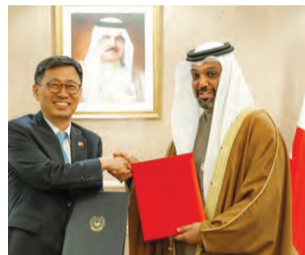
THE DAILY **tribune**

Acting is an unusual job, says Anne Hathaway



EV giant BYD contractor denies 'slavery-like conditions' in Brazil

Bahrain, Korea sign investment promotion and protection deal



H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa and H.E. Dr. HeonSang Koo at the agreement-signing ceremony

TDT | Manama

An Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement was signed by His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance and National Economy, on behalf of the Government of Bahrain, and H.E. Dr. HeonSang Koo, Ambassador of Korea to Bahrain, during a ceremony held in Manama.

Shaikh Salman emphasised the strong relations between Bahrain and Korea, particularly in finance and economy, and underscored the importance of further expanding bilateral cooperation for the benefit of both nations.

He noted that the agreement would serve as a key driver for enhancing economic, trade, and investment ties while fostering shared interests and aspirations.

The ambassador highlighted Bahrain's strategic position as a gateway to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets and its attractive investment climate.

He expressed optimism that the agreement would encourage greater participation of Korean businesses in Bahrain, supporting their broader regional presence and advancing mutual economic goals.

The agreement will enhance economic and trade opportunities, and promote mutual investments.

Brace for cold days with high humidity

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The Meteorology Department at the Ministry of Transport and Communications has announced that humidity levels are expected to reach 100% today, coinciding with persistently low temperatures that may drop to 15 degrees Celsius.

Solar future

Bahrain aims for 20% renewable energy by 2035 with sun-powered solutions

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Solar panels gleaming atop rooftops and shading car parks are at the heart of Bahrain's push to generate 20 per cent of its power from renewable sources by 2035.

The issue was championed by MP Maryam Al Dhaen, who raised questions about the kingdom's efforts to expand green energy and tackle the hurdles it faces.

The Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs revealed that renewable energy projects in Bahrain currently generate around 70 megawatts, with new ventures, such as the expansion of the Al Dur Renewable Energy Plant, set to add over 100 megawatts once complete.

Wider goal

These efforts are part of Bahrain's wider goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060, aligning with its Economic Vision 2030.

"These projects are essential in reducing the country's reliance on natural gas and supporting sustainable economic



growth," the ministry stated in an explanatory note.

Artificial intelligence is already playing a role in improving the efficiency of these energy systems, with the ministry adopting advanced technologies to enhance their performance.

However, the kingdom faces a challenging obstacle: a shortage of available land for large-scale solar farms and wind facilities.

Suitable locations

Efforts are underway to identify suitable locations, with the aim of establishing utility-scale photovoltaic installations to

meet rising energy needs.

To ensure renewable energy systems meet the required standards, the ministry has issued clear guidelines, including technical specifications for solar systems and a list of approved materials and contractors.

Ministerial Resolution No. (2) of 2017 allows homes and businesses to install solar panels, using the energy produced to power their own properties while exporting surplus electricity to the national grid.

This policy has sparked a wave of installations on rooftops and car parks across Bahrain.



MP Maryam Al Dhaen

Benefits

Private businesses, too, are reaping the benefits of solar energy, cutting electricity bills while reducing their carbon footprint.

The ministry described these measures as vital for creating a sustainable energy future and addressing the pressing challenges of climate change.

Safety remains a priority. The ministry has published detailed guidance on installation practices and fire prevention measures, while also training workers to manage the intermittent nature of solar and wind

YOU KNOW WHAT

Bahrain faces a challenging obstacle: a shortage of available land for large-scale solar farms and wind facilities.

power.

New sources

Bahrain is exploring new sources of energy, including small modular nuclear reactors.

Studies are being carried out to assess their potential, with an eye on incorporating them into the country's energy mix.

While challenges remain, Bahrain's focus on renewable energy reflects a steady effort to reduce environmental harm and pave the way for a cleaner, greener future.

Foreign Ministers' meeting

GCC affirms support for Syrian sovereignty and stability

Kuwait City

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Foreign Ministers underscored the critical importance of respecting the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In an emergency meeting held in Kuwait, the council firmly rejected any foreign interference in Syria's internal affairs and reiterated their commitment to combating terrorism, chaos, extremism, and incitement.

The meeting was chaired by Abdullah Ali Al Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait and current President of the Ministerial Council.

Bahrain delegation

Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, participated in the discussions alongside a delegation that included Shaikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Khalifa, Director-General of Bilateral Relations; Salah Ali Al Maliki, the Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait; and H.E. Mohammed Abdulrahman Al Haidan, Chief of Legal Affairs and Acting Head of the GCC Affairs. Jassim Mohammed Albudai-



H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani at the event

wi, Secretary General of the GCC, was also present.

During the meeting, the council issued a statement empha-

sizing the need to respect the diversity of the Syrian people and to put an end to bloodshed.

They expressed strong sup-

port for all efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive and inclusive transitional process that aligns with the aspirations

of the Syrian people for stability, development, and a dignified life.

Regional security

The Ministerial Council highlighted that the security and stability of Syria are essential pillars of regional security.

They welcomed proactive measures aimed at ensuring the safety of civilians, halting bloodshed, achieving national reconciliation, and preserving Syrian state institutions and resources.

They also called for the resolution of militias and armed factions, advocating for the limitation of arms possession to state authorities.

Steps

These steps are viewed as critical to maintaining security and stability in Syria while restoring its regional role and international standing. The council urged all parties and components of the Syrian populace to unite in their efforts, prioritise national interests, uphold national unity, and engage in an inclusive national dialogue to fulfill the aspirations of the Syrian people for security, stability, development, and prosperity.



New year, new tax

Bahrain to implement Multinational Corporation Tax Law on January 1, 2025

H Naser
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's new tax law targeting multinational corporations (MNCs) will come into effect on January 1, 2025, following the issuance of its executive regulations.

The announcement was made after the Minister of Finance and National Economy, His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, issued a decision outlining the executive regulations governing the tax on multinational enterprises.

The law, as per Royal Decree Law No. (11) of 2024, will impose a 15% tax on the profits of large MNCs operating in Bahrain with global annual revenues exceeding €50 million (\$830 million).

This aligns with the requirements of Pillar Two of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) framework.

Commitment

The National Bureau for Revenue (NBR) previously stated that the implementation of this tax demonstrates Bahrain's commitment to international tax standards and ensuring fair



The annual revenue expected from the law is estimated to reach BD100 million in its first year

MP AHMED AL SALLOOM, HEAD OF THE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN THE COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

competition among companies.

Companies covered by the law will pay a minimum tax rate of 15% on profits generated within Bahrain.

Ahmed Al Salloom, head of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee in the Council of Representatives, stated that the annual revenue expected from the law is estimated to reach BD100 million in its first year.

He cited information provided by the Ministry of Finance to the Council's finance committee, indicating that the law will encompass approximately 300 foreign companies and seven national companies.

Regulations

Details of the Executive Regulations:

A 93-page document outlining the executive regulations

has been released. Key provisions include:

Tax Payments: The regulations mandate quarterly advance tax payments during the fiscal year, except for fiscal years shorter than three months. These payments are due within 60 days of the end of each quarter. Companies can choose between calculating advance payments based on the previous year's tax or the current year's projected tax. This choice must be made by the due date of the first advance payment and is irreversible for that fiscal year. The regulations detail the calculation methods, including formulas and considerations for transitional years.

Tax Refunds: The regulations outline procedures for tax refunds, including situations where advance payments exceed the tax due, adjustments

are made following amended tax returns, or the revenue threshold is no longer met.

The National Bureau for Revenue has 90 days (extendable) to process refund requests, with the right to postpone decisions if audits are necessary. Approved refunds must be issued within 30 days and can be applied as credit for future years. The agency can offset overpaid taxes against other outstanding tax liabilities or penalties.

Currency for Calculation and Payment: The tax will be calculated in Bahraini dinars if all related entities within the MNC group use the Bahraini dinar as their reporting currency. Otherwise, the MNC can choose to calculate the tax in either Bahraini dinars or the reporting currency of the ultimate parent entity's consolidated financial statements.

Merit-based recruitment for government positions

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The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) has reaffirmed its commitment to a merit-based recruitment system for all government positions in Bahrain.

In response to a parliamentary inquiry by MP Mohammad Jassim Al Aliwi, the CSB clarified that all civil service jobs are subject to a rigorous job evaluation system, with clearly defined qualifications, experience requirements, and job descriptions.

These criteria are strictly adhered to during the recruitment process for all government vacancies.

The CSB highlighted Civil Service Instruction No. 3 of 2016, which mandates the Bureau's responsibility for verifying the accuracy of job evaluations and classifications, ensuring they align with established standards.

"The Bureau collaborates with government entities to maintain accurate and up-to-date job descriptions," CSB stressed.

Job descriptions

Government agencies, the CSB stated, are responsible for developing detailed job descriptions for all positions, specifying required knowledge, skills, abilities, and other essential characteristics.

This includes outlining the necessary qualifications for



MP Mohammad Jassim Al Aliwi

effectively performing job duties.

Regarding employment procedures, the CSB explained that the Civil Service Law (Decree-Law No. 48 of 2010, and its amendments) comprehensively regulates recruitment.

"Article 7 of the law stipulates that government vacancies may be filled through permanent, temporary, part-time, or contract appointments, with specific rules and regulations for each type of employment detailed in the executive regulations," the CSB pointed out.

Rules

The CSB further elaborated on the rules governing different employment types, referencing Article 6 of the executive regulations.

This article specifies that contract employment for non-Bahrainis involves working according to the hours stipulated in the contract, with compensation based on the position's salary and benefits or a fixed salary agreed upon between the government entity and the candidate, subject to CSB approval.

Tender rules treat all sectors 'equally'

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Tender rules in Bahrain apply equally across all sectors, the Tender Board has confirmed, ensuring suppliers and contractors meet common standards for participation, including financial strength and technical ability.

The board explained that Bahrain's systems and regulations make no distinction between sectors when setting the requirements for government tenders.

This approach, it said, ensures fairness and consistency, in line with the law governing public procurement and its implementing regulations.

Answering a question from MP Hisham Ahmed Al Ashiri, the board stated that bids must satisfy the conditions laid out in tender documents, including all necessary paperwork.

Qualifications

Applicants must show they have the right qualifications, technical and professional expertise, and enough financial resources to fulfil contracts.

They must also meet other conditions, such as being legally able to enter into agreements, being free from bankruptcy, and adhering to the Kingdom's laws.

The board highlighted the role of trained teams, accredited by the Tender Board, who

oversee the contracting process.

Standards

In cases of direct contracting, these teams are responsible for ensuring that goods, services, or construction projects meet the required standards and serve their intended purpose.

They also check that prices are in line with market rates, based on the offers received.

This approach, the board added, is designed to ensure transparency and consistency in government tenders, while making sure suppliers and contractors are well-prepared to deliver what is required.

Tourism Minister hails Muharraq Nights festival

TDT | Manama

The Minister of Tourism, Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaafar Al Sairafi, highlighted the role of Muharraq Nights festival in showcasing Bahrain's cultural identity.

She noted that this year's edition featured the opening of all houses along the UNESCO-listed Pearling Path, positioning it as a key cultural tourism destination in line with the 2022-2026 Tourism Strategy.

During a tour of the festival, the minister emphasised its unique blend of authenticity and innovation, commending the strong turnout from citizens, residents, and visitors.

His Majesty's Advisor passes away

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The Royal Court of Bahrain has announced with deep sorrow the passing of Dr Mohammad Jaber Al Ansari, His Majesty the King's Advisor for Cultural and Scientific Affairs.

The Royal Court expressed its sincere condolences, stating that the news was received with faith in Allah's will and decree.

They offered prayers for Dr Al Ansari's soul, wishing him peace in paradise, and extended





Dr Mohammad Jaber Al Ansari

their deepest sympathies and comfort to his family and loved ones.

Further details regarding funeral arrangements are expected to be released by the Royal Court in due course.


Dr Al Ansari's contributions to Bahraini culture and science will be remembered and celebrated.

His legacy of service and dedication will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the Kingdom.

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Renaming of Bapco under review by Shura Council

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Plans to rename Bahrain Petroleum Company as 'Bapco Refining Closed Bahraini Shareholding Company (BSC Closed)' have been discussed by the Shura Council's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee.

The meeting, held yesterday and chaired by Khalid Hussain Al Maskati, focused on Decree-Law No. 19 of 2023, which amends parts of Decree-Law No. 42 of 1999, the legislation that originally established the company.

The session was attended by His Excellency Dr Mohamed bin Mubarak bin Daina, Minister of Oil and Environment.

The proposal seeks to align the company's name with wider changes to state-owned enterprises, following Decree No. 49 of 2023, which renamed the 'Oil and Gas Holding Company' as 'Bapco Energies.'

As part of this rebranding initiative, other companies under its umbrella, including Bahrain Petroleum Company, are also expected to adopt updated trade names.

Plan

The committee also examined a plan to replace the company's original charter with a revised incorporation document and articles of association for the new entity, 'Bapco Refining Closed Bahraini Shareholding Company (BSC Closed).'

Members of the committee reviewed input from financial and economic experts, a legal memorandum prepared by the committee's legal advisor, and feedback from the Shura Council's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee.

The Council of Representatives' report on the decree-law was also taken into account during the discussions.

Sharia Court confirms paternity of three children

● Eldest child's claim rejected

TDT | Manama

Three children have been officially recognised as legitimate by a Sharia Court, following a dispute over paternity that also saw a claim for the eldest child rejected due to legal limitations.

The ruling, delivered yesterday, addressed a case brought by a woman against her estranged husband, represented by lawyer Jassim Al Issa.

Two government bodies — Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) and the Information and eGovernment Authority — were named in the proceedings, with the State Cases Authority acting on their behalf.

The court ruled that the three younger children were born within a valid marriage, established by a contract dated 10 February 2018.

However, the eldest child was found not to meet the legal conditions for paternity, as she was born less than six lunar months after the marriage.

Legal recourse

The woman claimed her



Lawyer Jassim Al Issa

husband had failed to apply for official documents for the children, forcing her to seek legal recourse.

She submitted evidence, including a copy of the marriage contract, four birth notifications, and other supporting documents.

The court based its decision on Islamic principles and provisions of Bahraini family law.

Article 68 of the Family Code permits the establishment of paternity through a valid marriage, acknowledgment, or clear evidence, while Article 71 requires a minimum gestation period of six lunar months. Article 72 outlines additional legal grounds for confirming paternity.

Unemployment rate rises '102%'

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MP Mohsen Al-Asboul has revealed that the unemployment rate in Bahrain has surged by 102% over the past five years.

The number of unemployed individuals rose from 8,000 in 2018 to 17,000 by the end of 2023, reflecting an increase of 3.66% and 6.33%, respectively.

During a session of the Council of Representatives, Al-Asboul emphasised that these findings, detailed in the Administrative and Financial Control Report 2023-2024, necessitate urgent action and the implementation of effective programs to tackle the esca-

lating crisis.

He described the situation as a real crisis with significant economic, social, and security implications, underscoring the need for serious measures to address the issue.

The MP pointed to the Financial Audit Bureau report, which highlighted violations related to the employment of foreign workers over Bahrainis.

He expressed concern over the failure to replace Bahrainis in various positions, noting that some foreigners have occupied roles for over 15 years without being replaced, further complicating the unemployment crisis.

Fishing for solutions

Council of Representatives set to debate decline in fish stocks and rising prices

H Naser

TDT | Manama

The Council of Representatives is set to hold a general debate on the concerning decline in fish stocks and the subsequent sharp rise in fish prices in local markets on Tuesday during its weekly session.

Ten MPs, led by MP Muneer Suroor, have requested this debate to seek clarification and action from the government.

Joining MP Suroor are MPs Dr Hisham Al Asheri, Najeeb Al Kawari, Jaleela Al Sayed, Mohammed Al Aliwi, Mohsen Al Asboul, Jalal Kazim, Bader Al Tamimi, Khalid Buanq, and Hanan Al Fardan.

Factors

Their request highlights a number of factors contributing to the problem.

They point to a shortage of fish and inflated prices in local markets, noting the increasing dominance of frozen and im-



The increasing dominance of frozen and imported fish is displacing local catches.

ported fish, which they say is displacing local catches.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the significant, and seemingly undocumented, export of Bahraini fish.

The MPs suggest that the involvement of foreign workers in the fishing and sales process may be impacting the quantity of fish available in local markets. Furthermore, they are con-



MP Muneer Suroor

cerned about the unauthorised export of fish and other marine resources, occurring without official permits and outside the knowledge of border control authorities.

Finally, the disappearance of certain fish species from local markets, despite the presence of numerous fishermen, is another key issue raised in their request for the debate.

'Patient continues to receive treatment'

TDT | Manama

The Government hospitals have issued a statement addressing a video circulating on social media alleging a patient at the Hematological Diseases Centre at Salmaniya Medical Complex was dismissed by their doctor and refused treatment.

The statement clarifies that the patient's prescribed medication dosages were determined according to established Bahraini treatment protocols and a thorough assessment of the patient's health condition.

However, the patient is currently refusing this treatment plan and requesting alternative methods with a shorter timeframe.



Salmaniya Medical Complex

The statement emphasised that all medications are subject to strict control and dispensed according to established medical procedures.

"Dosage determination is the sole responsibility of the treating physician based on an accu-

rate diagnosis, and no external party is permitted to interfere with these decisions, which are designed to ensure patient safety and well-being," the statement explained, adding: "In a commitment to transparency, the hospital administration and

medical staff visited the patient to explain the procedures involved and outline the official channels for complaints and suggestions.

"These channels are available to all patients to ensure any concerns are addressed appropriately, safeguarding their rights and interests."

The statement confirms that the patient continues to receive treatment at the Hematological Diseases Centre.

"The video, filmed while the patient was receiving care, contradicts claims of dismissal from the hospital. Furthermore, at the patient's request, they have been referred to another consultant," the statement pointed out.

Fishermen jailed, deported over 850kg crab haul

TDT | Manama

Ten Bangladeshi fishermen caught hauling 850 kilograms of crabs in a protected area have been jailed for 10 days and will be deported after serving their sentences, as authorities crack down on illegal fishing.

The Chief of the Ministries

and Public Bodies Prosecution said that the Sixth Minor Criminal Court handed down the sentences and ordered the confiscation of the proceeds from the illegal catch.

The case came to light after the Coast Guard submitted five reports to the Public Prosecution about the activities of the

group.

Traps

The 10 men were caught fishing commercially in a protected marine zone using 'gargoor' traps.

They were found in possession of an enormous haul of crabs weighing approximately 850 kilograms.

Investigators acted swiftly, detaining the suspects and ques-

tioning them.

Evidence

They were confronted with the evidence, including the seized traps and the crab haul.

While the case was being investigated, the catch was sold at a public auction, with the proceeds deposited accordingly.

The deportation orders will be enforced after the sentences have been served.

Two Asian men charged in mail-order drug smuggling case

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court is hearing a case against two Asian nationals accused of smuggling hashish through the mail.

The case hinges on the testimony of two customs officers.

The first witness, a customs officer, testified that they became suspicious of a package addressed to the first defendant.

Inside, they found five transparent nylon bags containing a

greenish herbal substance, later identified as narcotics weighing a total of 704 grams.

Package

The first defendant was apprehended upon attempting to claim the package.

Testimony suggests the second defendant was involved in the importation of the prohibited narcotics.

A search warrant was subsequently issued for the defend-

ants' residence, where over 1600 grams of narcotics were discovered.

Investigations revealed that the defendants allegedly operated a smuggling ring, importing drugs via air freight and employing sophisticated concealment techniques within parcels to evade detection.

The first defendant allegedly imported the drugs, while the second defendant allegedly received them.

Findings

A second customs officer corroborated the initial findings, adding that the shipment also contained new clothing from Thailand.

While the first defendant is in custody, the second defendant remains at large.

The court adjourned the case until December 31st to allow for notification of the second defendant and subsequent legal arguments.

Gravel woes easing

Bahrain's construction industry set to rebuild gradually starting next month

H Naser
TDT | Manama

The recent gravel shortage affecting Bahrain's construction industry is expected to end gradually next month, according to industry sources.

They attributed the shortage, which began in October, to several Bahraini companies securing contracts for a major project in the UAE.

This led to the temporary diversion of barges typically used for gravel transport to the UAE, creating a supply bottleneck in the Bahraini market.

These barges are expected to begin returning to Bahrain in January 2025, with a complete return anticipated by April, coinciding with the completion of the six-month UAE project.

Lengthy waiting lists

The Daily Tribune quoted an industry expert early, Riyadh Al Barmi, as saying that the price of gravel has soared to over BD110 per ton, resulting in lengthy waiting lists for the essential building material and the creation of a black market.

In the preceding months, gravel prices had fallen to unsustainable levels (BD5.5-BD6 per ton), below the cost of production, due to a period of low demand and surplus supply.

As per industry sources, companies were forced to operate



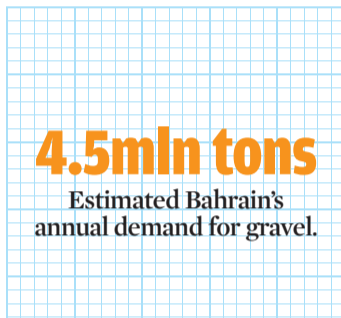
at a loss to keep their vessels in operation.

Financial strain

This, coupled with extended payment terms from construction companies (up to 12 months), created significant financial strain on gravel importers.

Industry sources pointed out that previous gravel prices were unrealistic and below production costs.

"Currently, importing companies are demanding cash payments from concrete and construction firms to settle outstanding dues before delivering new gravel supplies. This has contributed to heightened discussions about a severe shortage in the market," a source explained to the Daily Tribune,



adding that: "Clients often request payment terms ranging from 70 to 90 days, while suppliers in Ras Al Khaimah require payment within just 15 days. This situation, along with other costs such as diesel fuel, vessel maintenance, and crew salaries, has forced local suppliers to bear these upfront expenses, making the continuity of supply a significant challenge.

New policies

"The gravel prices were around 6 dinars a few months ago but have recently increased to approximately 7 dinars. Companies must now adopt new policies, providing gravel only to customers who pay immediately. Credit transactions are no longer feasible due to their negative impact on the market," he said. Bahrain's annual demand for gravel is estimated at around 4.5 million tons.

Concrete companies have increased ready-mixed concrete prices from approximately BD28 per cubic meter to BD34, while the price for masonry blocks has risen from BD22 to BD26 per hundred blocks over the past two months, in conjunction with changes in gravel prices.

Employee cleared of theft and forgery charges in gym case

TDT | Manama

The Lower Criminal Court has acquitted a 40-something Asian woman of misappropriating BD418 from a well-known gym.

The court found the employee not guilty of the charges, which included embezzlement and forgery related to membership fees.

Lawyer Zahida Sayed Ahmed, representing the defendant, argued that the charges were unfounded.

She presented evidence from a forensic accountant's report demonstrating the absence of forgery and the lack of a material element for the forgery crime.

Accusation

She also argued that the accusation was malicious and that the defendant did not use any forged documents.

The Public Prosecution had accused the employee of embezzling funds entrusted to her during her employment at the gym during 2024 in the Northern Governorate.

The charges also included forging membership records and using the forged documents, knowing they were fraudulent.

Report

The case stemmed from a report alleging that the defendant and another employee, both employed at the gym for a year, had embezzled funds, with the defendant allegedly misappropriating BD418 and the other employee BD627.

The alleged method involved directly receiving payments from clients without recording them in the gym's accounts



Zahida Sayed Ahmed, defendant's lawyer

and falsifying invoice numbers to conceal their actions.

The court noted that the other employee had been convicted of embezzlement by the High Appeals Court, a fact confirmed by reviewing the case file electronically.

The court stated that the alteration of subscriber data to embezzle funds by the other employee was unrelated to the acquitted defendant.

Actions

The court further clarified that the other employee's actions of embezzling funds and recording false data in the membership records, even for clients whose transactions the acquitted defendant had handled, did not implicate the defendant in forgery.

The court reasoned that the defendant's entries in the membership register could have been accurate, while the other employee's entries were fraudulent, especially given the other employee's proven embezzlement. The court concluded by acquitting the defendant, citing Article 255 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Divine Bliss at Bhagwat Katha



The Bhagwat Katha, a week-long spiritual celebration, took place at the THMC Auditorium, Manama Temple, from 18th to 24th December 2024, drawing enthusiastic participation from devotees across Bahrain. The event featured enlightening discourses by Sri Sri 1008 Mahamandleshwar Awadesh Shastri (Awadh Sarkar) Ji, who captivated the audience with the timeless teachings of the Shrimad Bhagwat, emphasizing spiritual wisdom and devotion. A key highlight of the event was the focus on Gau Mata Seva, underscoring the sacred duty of serving and protecting cows as an essential part of dharma. Through his teachings, Awadh Sarkar Ji inspired attendees to embrace a life of compassion, humility, and selfless service, fostering unity and spiritual growth within the community. The week was further elevated by enthralling cultural performances, including classical Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dances, which added a vibrant and artistic dimension to the proceedings. The culmination of the Katha witnessed the offering of 56 Bhogas to Lord Krishna, followed by aarti and prasadam distribution, creating a spiritually charged atmosphere. This spiritual retreat was lovingly organized by Alok Mishra & Family and Rathinam & Family, whose dedication ensured the event's resounding success.

Filipino workers' group spreads holiday cheer

TDT | Manama

The Samahang Overseas Filipino Workers sa Bahrain (SOS BAH) celebrated its traditional festive Christmas party at the Swiss International Hotel.

It's an annual event which brings together overseas workers from different parts of Bahrain with their families to celebrate the true spirit of Christmas and fellowship among overseas Filipinos.

It was a night full of entertainment, scrumptious food, and



real conversations.

Everyone was treated to a variety of entertainment that ranged from spirited singing and dancing that captured everyone in the mood of celebration.

The dance floor was teeming with people of all ages whose faces were aglow with smiles

and a sense of togetherness. Interactive games encouraged friendly atmosphere that allowed participants to connect and create an inclusive and joyful atmosphere.

"We are incredibly proud to host this celebration each year," said Bhong Dacullo, President of SOS BAH.

Three young Bahrainis charged with arson

Targeting electricity EWA light poles

TDT | Manama

Three young Bahrainis, aged 20, 21, and 16, are facing charges for allegedly setting fire to several electricity light poles owned by the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) in October 2024.

The act, which could have endangered the public, occurred near the Country Mall on Budaiya Highway.

A police officer from Budaiya Police Station testified that an investigation was launched following a report of arson.

Investigation

"Upon receiving the report, we immediately initiated a thorough investigation.

The evidence pointed to-

wards the involvement of these three teenagers," the officer stated to prosecutors.

The officer further explained, "A forensic examination of the first defendant's phone revealed his membership in a group called 'Changing the Youth of Karrana.

Reckless behaviour

"This group appears to have been involved in promoting reckless behaviour among its members."

A Civil Defence report confirmed that the fire was indeed arson, stating that gasoline was used in the act. "The use of gasoline indicates a premeditated effort to cause damage, which is alarming," the officer added.

The case has been adjourned until December 31st to allow for the review of social and psychological reports concerning the 16-year-old defendant.

Bahraini police parade

TDT | Manama

To celebrate the National Day, the Ministry of Interior organised the Bahrain Police Parade at Abu Saiba beach in the Northern Governorate and was attended by Northern Governor Ali bin Al Shaikh Abdulhussain Al Asfour.

The Northern Governor praised the parade's high standard and while reflecting loyalty to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister.

TENDER NOTICE

Embassy of India, Bahrain invites companies to submit bids to provide husbanding services to Indian Navy/ Coast Guard Ships visiting Bahrain. Details of 'Notice Inviting Tender' has been uploaded on our website <https://www.eoibahrain.gov.in/tender-mission-bahrain.php> Interested bidders may please refer the same.

EV giant BYD contractor denies 'slavery-like conditions' in Brazil



Picture released by Brazil's Workers Public Ministry (MPT) shows an operation that rescued 163 workers from "slave-like conditions" in Brazil where they had been building an electric car factory for Chinese giant BYD, officials said in Camacari, Bahia state, Brazil

AFP | Beijing, China

A contractor for Chinese EV giant BYD denied on Thursday there were "slave-like conditions" in a Brazil factory, where local officials said they found evidence of forced labour.

Local officials in Brazil's northeast Bahia state, where the BYD factory was being built, said this week they found more than 160 Chinese workers contracted by Jinjiang Construction Brazil

Ltd. in "degrading" conditions, some presenting visible signs of skin damage.

Jinjiang denied its employees had been illegally enslaved, saying on Thursday that the accusations had "seriously damaged the dignity of Chinese people".

"Being inexplicably labelled as 'enslaved' has made our staff feel seriously insulted and that their human rights have been violated," it said on Weibo.

The contracting company shared images of a letter denying the poor working con-

ditions and citing translation issues, which appeared to be signed by its local Chinese staff.

BYD's Brazilian subsidiary said on Monday it had "broken with immediate effect" its contract with the Jinjiang branch responsible for work on the site in Camacari.

Work on part of the site was also suspended by order of Bahia's public ministry for works (MPT).

Bahia's state ministry and other authorities have been

conducting inspections since November that the MPT said identified "163 workers who appeared to be in slave-like conditions with the Jinjiang company providing services for BYD".

The MPT also described in a statement "an alarming situation of precariousness".

"In one of the accommodations, workers slept on beds without mattresses and had no wardrobes for their personal effects, which were mixed together with food supplies," it said.



BYD (Build Your Dreams), the Chinese automotive giant, is the world's largest electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer by sales volume. In 2022, the company surpassed Tesla in global EV sales, driven by its extensive lineup of affordable electric cars and hybrids. Interestingly, BYD also started as a battery manufacturer in 1995 and is now one of the largest producers of lithium-iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, which power many of its EVs. This vertical integration gives BYD a competitive edge in both cost and supply chain stability.



Japan Airlines says systems restored after cyberattack



People wait to check-in at counters for Japan Airlines at the departures hall of Haneda Airport in Tokyo

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

Japan Airlines said its systems were up and running again after a cyberattack yesterday caused delays to domestic and international flights.

"We have identified the cause and scope of the malfunction, and the system has been restored," said the airline, Japan's second biggest after All Nippon Airways (ANA).

The "large data attack" did not leak any customer information and safety was unaffected, Japan Airlines (JAL) said in a post on social media platform X.

Japanese media said it may have been a so-called DDoS attack aimed at overwhelming and disrupting a website or server.

Ticket sales for domestic and international flights departing on Thursday were suspended during the incident but have now resumed, JAL said.

Although the cyberattack did not cause major disruption, the airline earlier said that 24 domestic flights had been delayed by more than half an hour.

Problems with the carrier's baggage check-in system caused delays at several Japanese airports, local media said.

JAL shares fell as much as 2.5 percent in morning trade after the news emerged, before recovering. Its stocks were down 0.2 percent in the afternoon.

"Human error"

Separately, a transport ministry committee tasked with probing a fatal January 2024 collision involving a JAL passenger jet released an interim

report on Wednesday blaming human error for the incident that killed five people.

The collision at Tokyo's Haneda Airport was with a coast guard plane carrying six crew members -- of whom five were killed -- that was on a mission to deliver relief supplies to a quake-hit central region of Japan.

According to the report, the smaller plane's pilot mistook an air traffic control officer's instructions to mean authorization had been given to enter the runway.

The captain was also "in a hurry" at the time because the coast guard plane's departure was 40 minutes behind schedule, the report said.

The traffic controller failed to notice the plane had intruded onto the runway, oblivious even to an alarm system warning against its presence.

All 379 people on board the JAL Airbus escaped just before the aircraft was engulfed in flames. Japan Airlines is just the latest Japanese firm to be hit by a cyberattack.

The country's space agency JAXA was targeted in 2023, although no sensitive information about rockets or satellites was accessed.

The same year one of Japan's busiest ports was hit by a ransomware attack blamed on the Russia-based Lockbit group.

In 2022, a cyberattack at a Toyota supplier forced the top-selling automaker to halt operations at domestic plants.

And more recently, the popular Japanese video-sharing website Niconico came under a large cyberattack in June.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain concludes a successful holiday silent auction

● Event held in Partnership with Saks Fifth Avenue and RIA RAC Center

TDT | Manama

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain celebrated the spirit of giving this holiday season by hosting a highly successful Holiday Silent Auction, in collaboration with Saks Fifth Avenue and RIA RAC Center. The auction, which ran from December 17 to December 26, 2024, raised significant funds to benefit the RIA RAC Center, a leading institution dedicated to supporting individuals with developmental needs.

Guests and patrons were invited to participate in the Silent Auction, featuring an exquisite array of curated items and experiences generously donated



by Saks Fifth Avenue and The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain. Bidding closed on December 26, and the event culminated in a heartwarming unsealing ceremony attended by representatives from the partnering organizations and esteemed guests.

Present at the unsealing were:

- Dr. Naglaa Elhosseney, representing RIA RAC Center
- Mr. Sayed Mohamed

Kadhim, Store Manager, Men's Department, Saks Fifth Avenue

- Ms. Rochelle Ramilla, Learning & Development Manager, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain
- Ms. Pamela Panduric, Director of Public Relations and Marketing, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain

- Ms. Ekaterina Akatcevic, Director of Operations, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain



- Mr. Bernard de Villèle, General Manager, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain

The unsealing ceremony was a joyous occasion that highlighted the importance of collaboration and community engagement. The funds raised through this initiative will be fully donated to RIA RAC Center to support their vital programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing the lives of

children and individuals with developmental challenges.

"This partnership embodies the true meaning of the holiday season – giving back to the community and creating opportunities to make a difference," said Mr. Bernard de Villèle, General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain. "We are grateful to our partners, Saks Fifth Avenue and RIA RAC Center, as well as

the generosity of our guests, for making this event an outstanding success."

Dr. Naglaa Elhosseney, representing RIA RAC Center, expressed heartfelt gratitude, stating, "We deeply appreciate this initiative, which will greatly support our mission to make a positive impact in the community." Mr. Sayed Mohamed Kadhim, Store Manager, Men's Department, Saks Fifth Avenue, added, "Collaborating on this auction was an incredible experience. We are delighted to support such a meaningful cause."

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain remains committed to fostering meaningful partnerships and creating initiatives that give back to the community. This Holiday Silent Auction exemplifies the hotel's ongoing dedication to both corporate social responsibility and enriching the experiences of its guests.

CELEBS

celebs

Denzel Washington gets baptised and obtains minister licence



Denzel Washington
Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Denzel Washington has been baptised and taken his first step towards becoming a minister.

The Hollywood actor took part in a special ceremony at the Kelly Temple Church of God in Christ, in New York City's Harlem neighbourhood, on Saturday during which he addressed the congregation to make a speech about his faith and was immersed in water.

According to New York Post column PageSix, Archbishop Christopher Bryant revealed Denzel said: "In one week I turn 70. It took a while but I'm here. If [God] can do this for me, there's nothing He can't do for you. The sky literally is the limit."

The actor's wife Pauletta Washington also spoke of her pride in her husband's spiritual achievements, saying: "Forty-six years later, here I'm still standing next to him as only God will have it."

Acting is an unusual job, says Anne Hathaway

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Anne Hathaway considers acting to be an "unusual" job.

The 42-year-old actress loves being able to "go back and forth" between big-budget Hollywood movies and independent films.

The Oscar-winning star told WWD: "It's such an unusual job that you sign up for, and I've never felt like I've - perhaps some people who only make billion-grossing movies can feel this way, but if you love independent cinema as much as I do, you're always grateful for the jobs that keep the lights on and being able to go back and forth between the two of them."

Anne admits that she "didn't have any confidence" in her

20s. But the brunette beauty has experienced "so much growth" over the last 20 years.

She reflected: "I just didn't have any confidence. And I think that there's been so much growth. There's



Anne Hathaway

been so much character development that's happened since then for me in all aspects of my life."

In November, Anne took to social media to thank her followers for giving her "the help and space to grow".

The acclaimed actress turned 42 on November 12, and Anne took to social media to celebrate the landmark occasion.

The Hollywood star wrote on Instagram at the time: "[cake emoji] To every mindful, demure person here (all of you of course): thank you for the gift that was 41!!!!"

"And to everyone who has ever shown me grace: thank you so much for the help and space to grow [stars emojis] "Hope to see you on a dance floor soon! [heart emoji] (sic)"

Anne's caption was accompanied by a video that showed the actress waving from her bed. The video also featured some highlight moments from the previous 12 months, including her appearance on Drew Barrymore's TV talk-show, as well as throwback clips from film festivals and movie premieres.

Hilary Duff cherishes her 'connection' to her 'mom friends'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Hilary Duff has a "big connection" to her mom friends.

The 37-year-old star is close to the likes of Ashley Tisdale, Meghan Trainor and Mandy Moore, and Hilary has admitted that she appreciates being able to lean on them for support "all the time".

Hilary - who has Banks, six, Mae, three, and Townes, six months, with husband Matthew Koma, as well as Luca, 12, with Mike Comrie - told PEOPLE: "I feel like our big connection to one another, even though we're pop stars or on TV, is we love our kids."

"They were little baby worms when we all first got together and started music class at my house. Now, we're in art class together, and we're in gymnastics class together, and we're just, like, moms."

Hilary loves having the support of her showbiz pals.

The 'Lizzie McGuire' star shared: "Everybody's super hardworking."

"Sometimes we're all show-

ing up with hair and make-up rushing from a job, and sometimes we look like literal trash, so it's just nice to be in the trenches with them."

What's more, Hilary believes her kids are benefiting from growing up alongside the children of her celebrity friends.

The actress explained: "I actually really wonder if, when the kids are older, they're all still going to be friends, and if

it's going to be helpful having friends [whose] parents are somewhat in the public eye."



Ariana Grande breaks silence on bizarre 'holding space' interview: 'I didn't know what it meant..'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Ariana Grande "didn't understand" any part of her viral "holding space" interview.

The 31-year-old pop singer stars as Glinda in the film version of the musical 'Wicked' opposite Cynthia Erivo, and the pair were presented with the mysterious phrase in an interview with journalist Tracy Gilchrist when she tried to describe a fan reaction to the number 'Defying Gravity' and it has gone on to become a social media

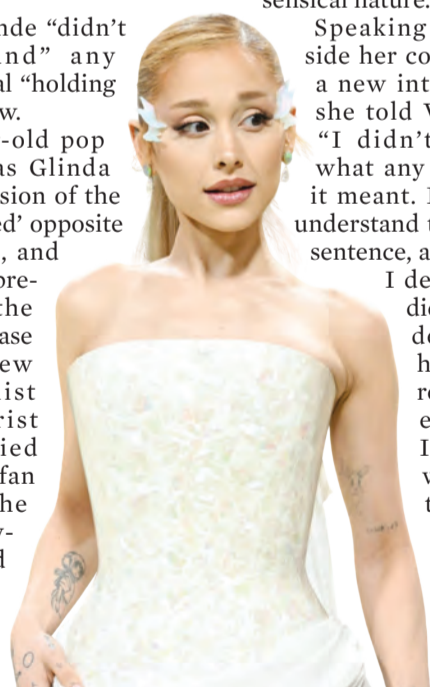
sensation because of its nonsensical nature.

Speaking alongside her co-star in a new interview, she told Variety: "I didn't know what any part of it meant. I didn't understand the first sentence, and then I definitely didn't understand how you responded. And I just wanted to be there. Because I knew

something big was happening, and I didn't know how to be there."

In the original clip, Gilchrist remarked that "people are taking the lyrics of 'Defying Gravity' and really holding space with that and feeling power in that" and Cynthia - who plays the role of Elphaba in the unofficial prequel to 'The Wizard of Oz' - admitted that she was "surprised" at the comment, and was further confused when the journalist tried to justify her remarks by claiming that she would know because she works in "queer media".

She said: "I was surprised, because I had no idea. I hadn't been looking that much. I honestly didn't know what that meant - am I also in queer media, maybe? Work it, let's be there!"



Ariana Grande

Daniel Craig: All men are vulnerable

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Daniel Craig finds male vulnerability to be "really interesting".

The 56-year-old actor feels that all men are "vulnerable" - even though it's not always obvious from the outside.

He told The Sunday Times newspaper: "Male vulnerability is really interesting because, as tough as men appear to be, they're all vulnerable."

"We all hide - from our kids, spouses, colleagues. The armour of masculinity is there for a



reason and what is that reason? I'm always exploring it."

Daniel stars in the film adaptation of William S. Burroughs' 1985 novel 'Queer', and he would love to receive an Oscar nomination for his performance in the movie.

Asked if he cares about receiving recognition, Daniel replied: "Of course! Don't be stupid, I'd be over the moon to get a nomination."

Well, it's scary. Awards go the way of the wind, but I cannot say, 'I don't give a s***!'

"Still, years ago I learnt how arbitrary this is. It was soul-destroying, rejection after rejection. Because you think, 'Can I act?' But there's nothing you can do about it. It's a coin toss in many ways, so you have to let it go. And it's all gravy for me now."

Daniel also explained that he feels "proud" to be an actor, insisting that it's an "important" job.

Daniel - who has enjoyed significant success on stage and screen - explained: "I'm always looking for a pragmatic solution to the problem of dressing up and showing off, which is what acting is."

SUDOKU

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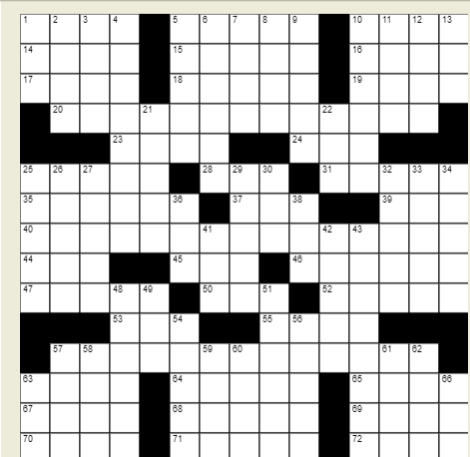
Yesterday's solution

8	9	7	3	6	5	4	1	2
6	4	2	8	9	1	7	3	5
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4	2	1	6	7	9	5	8	3
7	5	8	2	1	3	6	9	4
9	3	6	5	4	8	1	2	7
2	6	9	7	3	4	8	5	1
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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- Blueprint detail, for short; 5- Low point; 10- Camera; 14- Clockmaker Thomas; 15- Make up (for); 16- Like some vaccines; 17- Good example; 18- Crazy as; 19- Bar; 20- Rebirth of the soul in a new body; 23- Sleeps briefly; 24- Designer Claiborne; 25- Cow catcher; 28- Paving material; 31- and desist; 35- Construction pieces; 37- Religious sch.; 39- JFK watchdog; 40- In spite of; 44- URL ending; 45- Craving; 46- Yes; 47- Bob; 47- Beat back; 50- They appear before U; 52- is human...; 53- Kapital; 55- British nobleman; 57- Lead poisoning; 63- and rave; 64- Aristotle's teacher; 65- Perfect place; 67- A big fan of; 68- Ed of 'Lou Grant'; 69- Depend (on); 70- Doe or fawn; 71- Spoken for; 72- Bush alma mater;

Down

1- Puncture sound; 2- Jury member; 3- Novel conclusion; 4- Woodcutter power tool; 5- Civil rights org.; 6- Finally; 7- Entrance; 8- Party to; 9- Of the kidneys; 10- Remove an electron, say; 11- Suffix with buck; 12- Jazz flutist Herbie; 13- Beer; 21- Wynonna's mother; 22- Little spasm; 25- Cruise ship; 26- Home; 27- Frame; 29- Orgs; 30- Emeritus. Abbr.; 32- In flames; 33- Less loony; 34- Enthusiastic; 36- Pig's digs; 38- Bell and Barker; 41- That girl; 42- Part of TNT; 43- Whimsical humor; 48- Magazine VIP; 49- PC linkup; 51- Exam taker; 54- Mar. honoree; 56- Nut of an oak; 57- Window section; 58- Poker payment; 59- Joy Adamson's lioness; 60- Social standing; 61- Think tank product; 62- Red or white, in the blood; 63- Relieve (of); 66- Comedian Louis;

Yesterday's solution

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

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Bahrain secure Gulf Cup semi-final spot with win over Iraq

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's national football team advanced to the semi-finals of the Gulf Cup 26, currently being held in Kuwait, following a 2-0 victory over Iraq on Wednesday in the second round of Group B matches at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Bahrain opened the scoring in the 39th minute when Ali Madan netted a superb goal after a pre-

cise cross from teammate Mohamed Marhoon, giving Bahrain a 1-0 lead at halftime.

Early in the second half, Madan doubled Bahrain's advantage, capitalizing on a significant defensive error by Iraq. Despite Iraq's efforts to reduce the deficit, Bahrain maintained their lead, securing a vital 2-0 win.

The victory places Bahrain at the top of Group B with six points, marking their second

consecutive win. Iraq remains on three points, tied with Saudi Arabia, while Yemen sits at the bottom of the group with no points.

Bahrain will face Yemen in their final group stage match on Saturday at 5:30 PM at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium. Simultaneously, Iraq will take on Saudi Arabia in a crucial match to determine the second semifinalist from the group.



Ali Madan shoots to score a goal

Man City stumble, Chelsea shocked

Troubled Manchester City held by lowly Everton, Chelsea title bid rocked after defeat to Fulham

● City's dismal run continues with 1-1 draw against Everton

● Chelsea suffer first home defeat to Fulham since 1979

● Nottingham Forest defeated Tottenham 1-0

● Newcastle beat 10-man Aston Villa 3-0

AFP | London

Erling Haaland had a second-half penalty saved as crisis-torn Manchester City failed to end their dismal run with a 1-1 draw against lowly Everton, while title contenders Chelsea suffered a first home defeat against Fulham since 1979 on Thursday.

Champions City have just one victory in their last 13 games in all competitions as their Christmas schedule started in disappointing fashion.

Bernardo Silva put City in front early on before Iliman Ndiaye salvaged a point for Everton.

City are languishing in seventh place and sit five points adrift of the top four, with their astonishing decline showing no sign of ending.

City boss Pep Guardiola con-



Manchester City's Erling Haaland (C) reacts after having his penalty saved by Everton's goalkeeper Jordan Pickford (R)

ceded ahead of the game that his troubled side are at risk of failing to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in 15 years and their latest setback was another blow to that target.

"Of course we need results and we didn't get it. The team played really good again in all departments and unfortunately could not win," Guardiola said.

"We accept it. It is life. We did not expect it to not win games many times. But what do you have to do? Continue."

Everton had kept five clean sheets in their last six games but were breached after just 14 minutes. Jeremy Doku fed Silva and his effort across goal deflected off Jarrad Branthwaite and looped beyond the helpless Jordan Pickford.

Everton levelled when Manuel Akanji sliced an attempted clearance into the path of Ndiaye, who fired into the top corner for Everton's first away goal in over two months.

Seven minutes into the second

half, Haaland had the chance to end his longest goal drought at the Etihad but Pickford dived low to his right to make the save.

At Stamford Bridge, second-placed Chelsea were stunned by Fulham's late fight-back for a 2-1 win in a dramatic west London derby.

Cole Palmer put Chelsea ahead after 16 minutes, the England forward drilling home from the edge of the area after weaving through the Fulham defence in dazzling style.

Forest on the rise

But Fulham levelled with eight minutes left when Antonee Robinson's cross was headed down by Timothy Castagne and Harry Wilson nodded in from close range.

Chelsea were furious, claiming Alex Iwobi had fouled Pedro Neto in the build-up to the goal.

But there was worse to come for the Blues in stoppage-time when Rodrigo Muniz converted Sasa Lukic's pass with a clinical strike. Chelsea are four points behind leaders Liverpool, who have two games in hand and host Leicester later on Thursday.

Nottingham Forest climbed to third place after a 1-0 win against spluttering Tottenham at the City Ground.

Forest went ahead in the 28th minute when Anthony Elanga raced onto Morgan Gibbs-White's pass and stroke a composed finish past Fraser Forster.

Forest boss Nuno Espirito Santo had just 17 games in charge of Tottenham before being sacked in 2021.

Newcastle swatted aside 10-man Aston Villa 3-0, moving up to fifth place after winning three consecutive league games for the first time since 2023.

Anthony Gordon struck with a superb curling strike after just two minutes at St James' Park.

Villa's Jhon Duran was sent off in the 32nd minute for violent conduct after stamping on Newcastle's Fabian Schar.

Australia's top order fires to take charge of 4th Test against India

AFP | Melbourne

Australia's top four all slammed 50 or better on Thursday to take a firm grip on day one of the fourth Test against India, with fearless teenage opener Sam Konstas stealing the show.

Batting after captain Pat Cummins won the toss on a steamy day, the hosts reached 311-6 by the close in front of more than 87,000 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

They were aided by some inconsistent early bowling and a flying start from Konstas.

The 19-year-old blasted a hugely entertaining 60 off 65 balls in a debut to remember, pounding 18 off one Jasprit Bumrah over and having a run-



Australia's Sam Konstas raises his bat after passing 50

in with superstar Virat Kohli.

At the close, Steve Smith was not out 68 and Pat Cummins

was eight. Marnus Labuschagne made 72 and Usman Khawaja 57.

All the bowlers were punished

but they rallied with four wickets in the final session, including dangerman Travis Head for a duck, to haul themselves back into the contest.

Bumrah led the charge, ending with 3-75.

"It was quite surreal with the big crowd, the biggest crowd I've ever played before," said Konstas. "I just played with freedom and backed myself. Lucky to get a few runs. A bit disappointed with the way I got out but hopefully we have got a bit of momentum for tomorrow."

The five-match series is locked at 1-1 after India won by 295 runs in Perth before being crushed by 10 wickets in Adelaide. The rain-affected third Test in Brisbane was drawn.

"A lot of credit to the way Sam

played. The intent he showed sort of put us on the back foot," said Indian batting coach Abhishek Nayar.

"But it took a lot of character for our bowlers to stick in there. It wasn't the easiest conditions to bowl. At times like that it is important to stick to your plans and post-lunch we came back really strong."

With Konstas in for the axed Nathan McSweeney, he and Khawaja shared an 89-run opening partnership -- the hosts' best of the series -- before the teenager was undone by the spin of Ravindra Jadeja.

Australia's youngest-ever opener faced the first over from a menacing Bumrah and survived despite the Indian spearhead repeatedly beating his bat.

Thara'a
Prize Account

NBB 

5

days left to deposit

\$2 Million
in total, for 2 Winners

Grand Villa
for 1 Winner



17214433
Closer to you

Deposit before
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