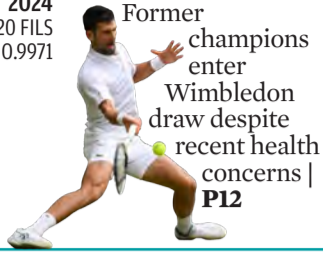


Murray, Djokovic cleared for Wimbledon



Former champions enter Wimbledon draw despite recent health concerns | P12

WORLD **6** Biden falters in fiery debate with Trump

THE DAILY tribune



8 CELEBS

Kristen Bell created 'most brilliant card game ever'

BUSINESS **5** EU imposes sanctions on Hamas financiers

Zelensky says preparing 'plan' to end war with Russia

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday said he was drawing up a "comprehensive plan" for how Kyiv believes the war with Russia should end.

There are no public talks ongoing between Ukraine and Russia and based on public statements by Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the two sides appear as far apart as ever when it comes to the terms of a potential peace settlement.

Zelensky hosted a major international summit in Switzerland earlier this month -- to which Russia was not invited -- to rally support for Ukraine's position.

"It is very important for us to show a plan to end the war that will be supported by the majority of the world," Zelensky said on Friday

Police arrest suspects in 35,000 Bahraini Dinar electrical cable theft

TDT | Manama

Several individuals suspected of stealing electrical cables valued at approximately 35,000 Bahraini dinars were arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the General Department of Criminal Investigations and Forensic Evidence in separate operations.

The suspects, originating from different nations, were apprehended red-handed with stolen cables following a tip-off received by the CID.

Further investigations revealed that another group had purchased these stolen materials without verifying their origin or obtaining receipts for the transactions.

The seized items have been documented as evidence, and legal proceedings are now underway. The case will be referred to the Public Prosecution for further action.



220 fils (includes VAT)



UAE cuts Friday sermons at mosques over sizzling heat

● Sermons usually last for 20 minutes or more

● Decision valid from June to October

TDT | agencies

Not more than 10 minutes. The United Arab Emirates ordered preachers there to conclude sermons in 10 minutes during the months of June, July, August, September and October.

The extraordinary decision stems from the rising summer temperatures linked to climate change.



Worshippers listen to the Eid al-Fitr morning prayer sermon at Dubai's Eid Musalla in the Gulf emirate's old port area

Announcing the decision, the General Authority of Islamic Affairs said things will be back to normal when temperatures cool again.

The sermons usually last for 20 minutes for the main weekly prayers on Fridays but can run even longer, with large crowds gathering outside mosques at midday.

The decision was aimed at ensuring "the safety of worshippers... especially during the summer months", the statement said.

It coincides with UAE authorities' efforts to avoid heat strokes and other complications as temperatures approach 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) in parts of the country.

From June until September, the UAE prohibits work under direct sunlight and in open-air areas between noon and 3:00 pm as part of a longstanding "midday break" policy widely adopted across the Gulf.

The desert region, already one of the world's hottest, faces rising threats from high temperatures attributed to climate change.

"Rising temperatures in the region, combined with high humidity, create dangerous conditions," said Karim Elgendy, as associate fellow at the Chatham House think-tank.

"This presents a serious threat to human health in outdoor environments," the climate expert told AFP.

Gazans living in 'unbearable' conditions: UNRWA

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

Gazans are forced to live in bombed-out buildings or camp next to giant piles of trash, a United Nations spokeswoman said Friday, denouncing the "unbearable" conditions in the besieged territory.

Louise Wateridge from UNRWA, the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, described the "extremely dire" living conditions in the Gaza Strip.

"It's really unbearable," she told reporters in Geneva, via video-link from central Gaza.

Wateridge, who returned Wednesday after four weeks outside the territory, said that even in that time the situation had "significantly deteriorated".

"Today, it has to be the worst it's ever been. I don't doubt that tomorrow again will be the worst it's ever been," she said.

Nearly nine months into the war between Israel and Hamas, Wateridge said the Gaza Strip had been "destroyed".

She said she had been "shocked" on returning to Khan Yunis in central Gaza. "The buildings are skeletons, if at all. Everything is rubble," she said.

"And yet people are living there again.

"There's no water there, there's no sanitation, there's no food. And now, people are living back in these buildings that are empty shells," with sheets covering the gaps left by blown-out walls.

With no bathrooms, "people are relieving themselves anywhere they can".

Charity Uptick

Kingdom of Bahrain sees surge in fundraising licences

● Grants 70% more fundraising licences in 2024 first four months

● 24 licences for receiving funds abroad, 75 for sending funds overseas granted to NGOs

TDT | Manama

Charitable fundraising activities are experiencing a notable uptick in the Kingdom, with authorities issuing multiple licences for receiving and sending funds abroad in the first four months of 2024 alone.

According to new data from the Ministry of Social Development, approximately 85 new permits were granted during this period, marking a substantial 70% increase compared to the same timeframe last year.



Representative picture

In 2022, a total of 178 licences were issued, averaging 59 every four months.

These licences are primarily allocated to charitable associations, centers, foundations, and private non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Ministry also reported issuing 24 licences for receiving funds from abroad and granting 75 for NGOs to send funds overseas.

Under the Law Regulating Fundraising for Public Pur-

poses, charitable organisations are permitted to collect funds through diverse methods such as charity markets, events, donation boxes, and online platforms, among others approved by the ministry on a case-by-case basis.

Obtaining a fundraising licence involves submitting an application to the Ministry of Social Development, which evaluates the organisation's objectives and verifies its legal status and board legitimacy within 30 days, as stipulated by Decree-Law 21 of 2013. The ministry collaborates with relevant government agencies to ensure transparency in fund collection.

Additionally, the Ministry provided 328 consultations in the first quarter of 2024, including legal, financial, and technical advice, benefiting numerous NGOs. Ten training courses were also conducted, benefiting 221 organisations and 378 participants, with extensive follow-up visits for institutional evaluation.



The surge in fundraising licences underscores a growing commitment to philanthropy and community support initiatives across the Kingdom.

Fighting pollution

EU to enforce fixed plastic bottle tops

AFP | Paris, France

Plastic bottle-tops on drinks sold in the European Union from next Wednesday will have to be attached to their container under new rules aiming to stem harmful pollution.

A range of products from bottles of water and fizzy drinks to cartons of milk and juice must have a cap that stays attached to the vessel once part of a 2019 EU directive comes into force



Representative picture

on July 3. Bottle caps and lids are "among the single-use plastic products that are found the most on beaches" in Europe, the directive said.

Now, disposable plastic products can only be sold "if they fulfil specific product design requirements that significantly reduce the dispersal into the environment of beverage container caps and lids made of plastic".

The rule is part of a broad-

er effort to curb production of single-use plastics, and has been transcribed into law in EU member states.

It also applies to tops on "composite packaging" such as milk or juice cartons that contain cardboard, plastic or aluminium.

The regulation excludes tops on glass and metal containers, as well as containers used for "medical purposes".



To wash or not to wash

Car wash licence controversy sparks debate in Muharraq

● They debated whether to allow new car washes or reject recent applications and called for an inventory of car washes operating from 2009 to December 2023

● Mohamed Yusuf, from the First Constituency, questioned why a July 2023 car wash permit request was denied while six others were approved

● Engineer Hussain Gargour broadened the licence suspension to include car polishing, upholstery, and tailoring

TD | Manama

Issuing car wash licences has never been this controversial, especially in Muharraq. Discrepancies in the licensing process led councillors to hold



Councillors during a meeting

an extraordinary debate spanning two sessions.

Finally, members recommended either allowing new car washes or rejecting all recent proposals and applications. They are also calling for a comprehensive inventory of car washes operating between 2009 and early December 2023.

The controversy stems from a submission by Mohamed Yusuf, a member representing the First Constituency, over a permit for a car wash since July 2023. He pointed out that the relevant authorities did not approved

the request while approving six others.

Hussain Gargour, the engineer responsible for municipal licences, stated that in the extraordinary meeting, the suspension of licences was not limited to car polishing but extended to three activities: car washing and polishing, car upholstery, and curtain upholstery and tailoring. This decision, he explained, was based on an internal circular from the Committee for Unifying Procedures.

Mr. Gargour highlighted that upon reviewing past licences

in commercial areas, it became evident that these activities had contributed to various problems, including traffic congestion and environmental damage. He noted that more than 50% of these establishments were not operating within their designated commercial spaces.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, there are 87 licensed car wash establishments in Muharraq, with over 50% located in service areas or administrative offices.



Representative picture

Home for homeless woman

During the same meeting, Dalaal Al Maqhawhi, a member of the Muharraq Municipal Council representing the Second Constituency, raised the issue of an elderly widow whose house was demolished 15 years ago as part of a project to rebuild dilapidated homes, but has yet to see any action.

Al Maqhawhi explained that the house was demolished under the project in 2009 but was never rebuilt. The woman, who is also suffering from health

issues, is now living with her children.

Al Maqhawhi pointed out that the Ministry of Municipalities has failed to act despite having funds for the dilapidated houses project. The member also noted that rebuilding the house would not require significant expenses due to its small size.

The Muharraq Municipal Council issued a recommendation calling for the reconstruction of the house, with all council members unanimously approving the recommendation.

Breathing life into *fading souls*

A Lawyer-Turned-Writer Breaks Preconceptions About Bahrain, One Story at a Time

Mohammed Darwish
TD | Manama

Following the success of her debut book, "100 Bahrain Stories," Australian writer Tanzeel Jabbar-Khadir has re-released the book with expanded author notes and high-quality printed portraits, now gracing the shelves of major bookstores. This collection narrates the stories of Bahraini citizens and expatriates, capturing their varied desires, aspirations, and lived experiences.

Tanzeel offers readers intimate insights into the lives of Bahrain's vibrant and multicultural population. Academically trained as a lawyer with a passion for writing, she recognises the power of a well-crafted narrative to challenge preconceptions and illuminate the universal threads that bind us all.

We were afforded the opportunity to explore the journey of the chronicler herself, uncovering the personal experiences that culminated in this deeply moving and thought-provoking book.

In an interview at her home with The Daily Tribune, Tanzeel shared her initial inspiration:

"When I moved from Australia to Bahrain in 2008, I began to notice how different the people here are from many preconceived ideas about Bahrain and the Gulf. I decided to turn stereotypes on their heads. I felt inspired by the notion that writing is a way to break the ice and get closer to people as they begin to speak more openly."

"Born in Australia, and grow-



ing up to Pakistani parents as a minority in Australia heightened my sense of identity from a young age. This experience was further enriched by reading the works of scholars like Edward Said. Later, when I came to Bahrain, I developed a dual perspective."

"On one hand, I felt a cultural affinity with the Islamic art and rituals in Bahrain. I was often not treated like an outsider, which gave me a sense of belonging. On the other hand, my position as an observer allowed me to see Bahrain's cultural landscape more vividly."

"This dual vision - of being both an insider and an outsider - gave me a nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics in Bahrain. I could appreciate the traditions and practices, while also maintaining an objective distance that enabled me to perceive the landscape more clearly."

"I found Bahrainis to be welcoming and kind in their treatment of expatriates, forming a lively and dynamic society," she said on her experience living in Bahrain.

Tanzeel believes that "each individual in society has a multi-faceted identity, which crystallises in such a varied and dynamic way, creating a rich character. This couldn't be more evident than it is in Bahrain."

"During my interviews, I found that every individual is an extension of a larger community, and the feeling and reflection on identity are more evident in immigrants," she added.

"This becomes clear when



TANZEEL JABBAR-KHADIR

reading the book, especially in the stories of elderly Bahrainis who experienced forms of cultural diversity. You get bits of history about friendship between religions and communities, between churches, synagogues, and mosques in Bahrain, which reflects the high level of tolerance among Bahrainis for decades and more."

"One of the bittersweet moments that stood out for me during my documentation work was when I met an elderly English

woman who spent her young years in Bahrain and shared a capsule of her memories the day before her departure," Tanzeel stated.

"My daughter, who was a toddler when we moved to Bahrain, is now seventeen years old. I am fascinated by her growing sense of identity as she comes of age in a third culture. The experience of her upbringing, blending her home culture with the culture of Bahrain, has shaped her in profound ways." She added

The profits from the sale of the first release of the book were donated to local charitable organisations, allowing Tanzeel and her team to "Give back to the community in a meaningful way."

In her concluding remarks, Tanzeel emphasises the book's message of unity and understanding in a world increasingly divided:

"One thing I want the readers of my book to take home, especially in recent years, where people have become entrenched and polarised, is that, in the end, we are similar more than we are different, even if our cultures and values differ. We all carry deepest dreams, hidden sorrows, and quests for meaning."

In this wondrous collection, Tanzeel has rendered a clear portrayal of the lives of Bahrain's citizens and expatriates. Her work rises above mere documentation, weaving a rich narrative of shared humanity and common aspirations that echo profoundly, capturing the essence of our collective journey in an ever-evolving world.

Bakeries ask: Price or Quality

- What matters most to you?

TDT | Manama

What matters most to you? Price or product quality?

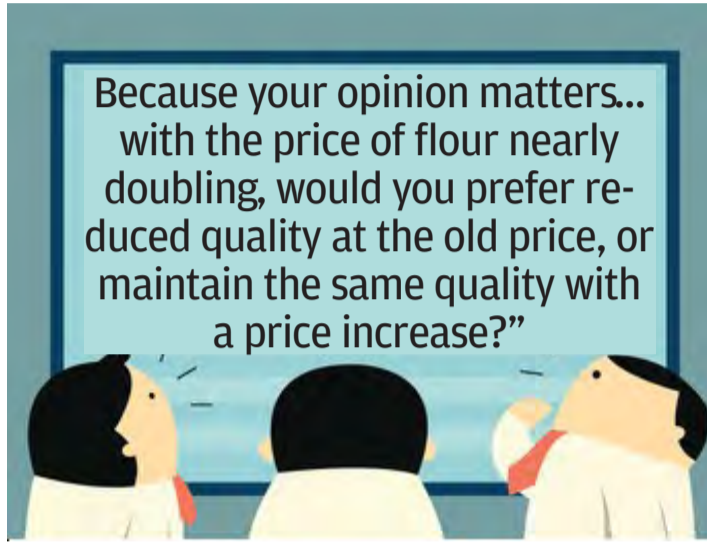
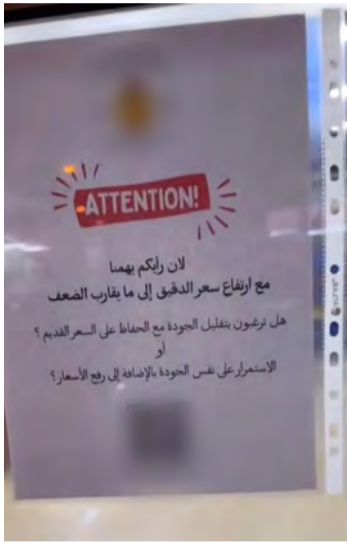
It's an intriguing question, isn't it?

Well, this is being asked by a well-known bakery in the Kingdom.

Social media posts on the notice that went viral say that this notice is hard to miss when entering the bakery.

This discussion comes amid controversy surrounding recent flour price hikes by the Bahrain Flour Mills Company, with parliamentary intervention and a moratorium adding to the mix.

The bakery poses the question:



"Because your opinion matters... doubling, would you prefer reduced quality at the old price, or maintain the same quality with a price increase?"

Experts point out that this highlights the dilemma facing local bakeries following significant price increases by the country's primary flour supplier. Initially proposed price hikes reached up to 100% for some products, prompting public outcry and subsequent government intervention that temporarily halted the increases.

Local bakeries say they now face the challenge of preparing for the decision that will come at the end of the three-month moratorium period.

Many bakeries are actively seeking customer feedback through surveys that ask customers to choose between accepting a price increase or accepting reduced product

Local bakeries say they now face the challenge of preparing for the decision that will come at the end of the three-month moratorium period.

quality. The outcome of this three-month postponement will be crucial in assessing the long-term impacts of the price hikes and in finding solutions that address the concerns of both consumers and businesses.

Livestock farmers warn of higher chicken and meat prices amid flour price hike

Flour price increases are to push us out of business, Farmers say



Officials during the meeting

TDT | Manama

Livestock farmers have raised concerns over the new price increases by Bahrain Flour Mills, which they say will force many of them out of business, leading to higher meat and poultry prices.

This is going to negatively impact Bahrain's food security, farmers warn, saying livestock sector cannot withstand a price increase of 100% in one go.

Bran flour prices of Bahrain Flour Mills Company, farmers say, hiked 100% from BD 2.2 to BD 4.4 for 50kg bag.

It's worth noting that a meeting last week between the government, the Shura Council and the Council of Representative members, had postponed price increases for unsubsidised products to three months for further study and discussions.

Sources confirm that on Thursday farmers told a Parliamentary Services Committee on the

need to regulate bran flour sales at previous prices, ensuring no waste of government subsidies.

Bahrain Flour Mills had told the Daily Tribune that their price increases will have zero impact on subsidised products. The company said it has maintained subsidised prices for accredited popular bakeries.

Farmers, sources say, are also concerned about black marketers who are trying to make the most out of the situation.

Some individuals are buying

large quantities of bran flour, known locally as "shwar" and hoarding it, then reselling it at inflated prices, they claim, calling for increased oversight and stringent actions.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Al Awadhi, Chairman of the Parliamentary Services and Environment Committee, confirmed that the committee listened to livestock farmers and traders on Thursday on ways to overcome the price hikes, particularly bran flour.



Representative picture

It earlier reported that the three month deferment, based on a proposal by the Council of Representatives speaker Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, faced

opposition from some members, who wanted to cancel the price increases ranging from 35% to 100% across most of its flour products.

Four-year COVID event dispute: Woman wins court battle for refund

TDT | Manama

After a four-year dispute stemming from a cancelled event during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Civil Court has ordered an event management company to reimburse a Bahraini woman BD460.

The woman had engaged the company to organise a reception for her mother in 2020, which was subsequently cancelled due to the pandemic. Despite a pre-



Representative picture

vious court order, the company had only refunded BD160.

According to the woman's

lawyer, the event, including a reception and buffet totalling BD460, was cancelled due to

According to the woman's lawyer, the event, including a reception and buffet totalling BD460, was cancelled due to pandemic-related circumstances. The company, however, returned only BD160 despite repeated requests.

The defendant argued they had fulfilled their obligations and pointed to a Consumer Protection Department ruling in their favour, which they claimed exonerated them. They stated they had refunded BD160 and promised to credit the remaining BD300 for a future event.

When questioned about in-

voicing discrepancies, the defendant acknowledged handwritten notes made by their employee. The court recognised that while contracts typically require mutual consent for termination, both parties' actions implicitly terminated the agreement, evident from the cancelled event and partial refund.

As a result, the court ruled in favour of the claimant, granting her entitlement to the remaining balance of the payment.



Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Consort of His Majesty the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW), the Royal University for Women (RUW) held its graduation ceremony for bachelor's and master's degree students. Her Highness Shaikha Nayla bint Hamad bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Khalifa, President of the Royal Rescue and Safety Foundation of Bahrain, and Dr. Diana Abdulkarim Al Jahrami, Secretary General of the Higher Education Council (HEC), were present. During the ceremony, Shaikha Nayla bint Hamad presented the certificates to 112 students, including 66 graduates from the Bachelor's programme at the College of Business and Law, 4 graduates from Master's programmes, 28 female graduates from the Bachelor's programme at the College of Arts and Design, 3 female graduates from postgraduate Master's programmes, and 11 graduates from the Bachelor's programme at the College of Engineering and Technology.

Multi-vehicle crash disrupts traffic, injures drivers in Manama



Representative picture

TDT | Manama

A major accident involving several vehicles on Sheikh Isa bin Salman Street heading towards Manama caused a significant traffic jam and resulted in injuries among the drivers.

The crash, which occurred during rush hour, brought traffic to a standstill and required immediate attention from emergency services.

Witnesses reported a chaotic scene with damaged vehicles across the road. Several drivers sustained injuries and were quickly attended to by

paramedics on site.

Authorities swiftly responded to the accident, deploying traffic police to manage the congestion and ensure the safety of those affected. They worked to clear the wreckage and restore normal traffic flow as soon as possible.

Police have launched an investigation into the incident, aiming to determine the cause of the collision and hold responsible parties accountable.

In the meantime, motorists were advised to seek alternative routes and remain patient as the cleanup and investigation proceed.

Court cancels BD4m 'Sale and Redemption' deal as usurious loan under Islamic Law

TDT | Manama

In a significant court decision, a property transaction valued at 4 million dinars has been annulled after being deemed a disguised loan with excessive interest by the High Appeals Court.

The court ordered the buyer to return the property to the seller, who must refund the 4.5 million dinars received. Initially denied in lower courts, the ruling can be appealed to Bahrain's Cassation Court.

This verdict is expected to



Representative image

impact real estate transactions across the Kingdom, as the contract, labelled a "Sale and Redemption" agreement, involved settling bank debts through property sale.

The sequence of events leading to the ground-breaking verdict started when a man, burdened by financial challenges and a bank loan, decided to sell his property to another individual. As part of the agreement, the seller retained the option to repurchase the property within four years by paying a substantially higher amount than the

original sale price. The contract, which was classified as a "Sale and Redemption" agreement, involved the sale of a property by a debtor to settle his debts with a bank.

The court found the agreed-upon repurchase price of over 6 million dinars to violate Islamic Sharia law, citing it as "riba" (interest), which is prohibited. The court declared that a "Sale and Redemption" arrangement is forbidden under Islamic law, as it viewed it as a disguised loan with usurious interest, thus declaring it void.

Bahrain joins Interpol in combatting online child abuse



Officials during a photocall

TDT | Manama

Bahrain has intensified its efforts against online sexual exploitation of children by joining Interpol's international database. This database will enhance the Kingdom's ability to effectively address cases of sexual and digital exploitation of children, enabling sharing of information and expertise among member states.

The Cyberspace Child Protection Unit of the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security will utilise the international database. Brigadier General Bassam Mohammed Al Miraj, Director-General of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security, empha-

sised that this initiative follows directives from General Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior, aimed at leveraging regional and international expertise in safeguarding children in digital environments. Oversight for this effort is provided by Chief of Public Security, Lieutenant-General Tariq Al Hassan. Furthermore, the Director-General highlighted that several unit members recently completed a comprehensive training course at Interpol's headquarters in Lyon, France. This 14-day course covered techniques such as reconnaissance, data downloading, and result analysis specific to combatting online sexual exploitation of children.

BCICAI explores corporate tax landscape

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Chapter of the Institution of Chartered Accountants of India (BCICAI) conducted an enriching session on Corporate Tax introduction in Bahrain at Diplomat Radisson Blu, Manama.

The session, earlier this week, which saw 100+ members in attendance, was aimed at providing the audience an overview of the Corporate Tax landscape in the Kingdom, which is expected to be introduced soon.

The session was inaugurated by Sthanumurthy Viswanathan Meera, Chairperson of BCICAI,



Sthanumurthy Viswanathan Meera, Chairperson BCICAI

who welcomed the speaker for the evening Mr. Naveen Jedly, Corporate Tax expert from Key

The session covered a wide gamut of topics ranging from reviewing entity's corporate structure, advising the board of governance on tax liabilities and tax planning, likelihood introduction of corporate tax timelines in the kingdom, identifying the high risk transactions, setting up risk mitigation strategies.

The key note speech was followed by an interactive Q&A session, where the participants raised various queries for which the speaker shared his thoughts and insights.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Arunkumar

Rajagopalan, Excom member of BCICAI, who expressed his gratitude to all the distinguished speakers for their enlightening and engaging speech. He also thanked the sponsors, the hospitality partner (Diplomat Radisson Blu), the media partners, and the members for their support and participation.

The Bahrain Chapter of ICAI is the largest body of professionals in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with over 450 members. It provides a forum for the members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to develop professionally and personally.

Indian School plans new girls' toilet block in infrastructural upgrade

TDT | Manama

The Indian School is gearing up for significant infrastructural improvements following the approval of a proposed budget to create a new girls' toilet block and the relocation of existing facilities.

The new toilet block, posi-

tioned between the RP block and Netaji block, will feature approximately 80 toilets across two levels.

This initiative necessitates the relocation of current porta cabin facilities, including rooms for Arabic and art and craft activities, to a new site between

the old admin block and Nehru Block.

Chairman Adv. Binu Mannil Varughese highlighted that these developments are made possible through community philanthropy. Additionally, the Extraordinary General Body Meeting (EGM), held at the Jash-

anmal Auditorium, unanimously approved financial measures for waterproofing at the Riffa campus.

This repair work, overseen by an authorised consultant and backed by a 10-year warranty, precedes plans for a ballast-type solar panel installation aimed

at harnessing renewable energy without compromising roof integrity.

The proposals, approved by attending parents and school officials, will undergo open tender processes via the school's website.

Key attendees included ISB

Chairman Adv. Binu Mannil Varughese, Secretary V. Rajapandian, Assistant Secretary Ranjini Mohan, and Executive Committee members Mithun Mohan (Projects & Maintenance) and Mohammed Nayaz Ullah (Transport), alongside Principal VR Palaniswamy.

EU imposes sanctions on Hamas financiers

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The European Union yesterday imposed asset freezes and visa bans on several firms and individuals accused of helping to finance Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, Brussels said.

The sanctions were the second round to be imposed by the EU on the Hamas and Palestinian groups after their attack on Israel on October 7.

Overall the bloc has so far blacklisted 12 individuals and three entities linked to the militants. Among the latest targets were three front companies



Representative picture

used by key financier Hamza Abdelbasit to funnel funds to the group, including Spanish real estate firm Al Zawaya Group, and two others based in Sudan, an EU statement said.

Also hit were the head of Hamas' "foreign investment activities", a money changer enabling transfers from backer Iran and the official in charge of the groups "Charitable Institutions Association", it said.

The EU said in addition it was imposing sanctions on Ali Morshed Shirazi, a senior Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp official overseeing Tehran's links to Palestinian groups

from Lebanon.

Top Hamas official Maher Rebhi Obeid "responsible for directing Hamas' terrorist operations in the West Bank" was also put on the list.

EU diplomats said that following the latest sanctions on Hamas the bloc should now impose a second round of measures targeting violent Israeli extremists in the West Bank.

The 27-nation EU -- which has struggled for a united position on the Gaza war -- in April imposed sanctions on four "extremist" Israeli settlers and two groups over violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

IMF downgrades Ukraine's growth outlook

Washington, United States

The IMF executive board voted yesterday to approve a \$2.2 billion payout for Ukraine under an existing loan program, and lowered its growth outlook following "devastating" Russian attacks against the country's energy infrastructure.

The much-needed funds will be used for "budget support," and bring the total amount disbursed under the 48-month loan agreement to around \$7.6 billion, the International Monetary Fund said in a statement announcing the decision.

"Despite the war, macroeconomic and financial stability has been preserved through skillful policymaking by the Ukrainian authorities as well as substantial external support," IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said in the statement.

"The economy remains resilient, reflecting the contin-



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky

ued adaptability of households and firms," she added.

The IMF said all quantitative performance criteria had been met through the end of March, and that all the structural benchmarks had been met more or less on time.

The IMF said that the Ukrainian economy had been more resilient than expected in the first quarter of this year, but warned that the future was less positive than it had previously predicted.

Jassim Al-Shirawi elected 6th Secretary-General of IEF



Executive Council meeting of the International Energy Forum

TDT | Manama

The Executive Council of the International Energy Forum (IEF) has elected Bahraini national Jassim Al-Shirawi as the organisation's sixth Secretary-General. The meeting, presided over by Mohammed Kurdi of Saudi Arabia, took place in Rome.

Al-Shirawi is set to begin his tenure on 1 January 2025, succeeding the incumbent, Joseph McMonigle, whose term will draw to a close at the end of this year.

In his acceptance speech, Al-Shirawi expressed his gratitude for the Executive Council's confidence, saying, "I am honoured by the trust placed in me to serve as the next Secretary-General of this esteemed organisation."

Upon assuming office, Al-Shirawi will make history as the first Secretary-General of the IEF from the Middle East and North Africa region.

IEF is the world's largest gathering of energy ministers from producing, consuming, and transit countries, representing 90% of global oil and

gas supply and demand.

In his new role, Al-Shirawi will serve as the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Mission for the organisation, headquartered in the Diplomatic Quarter of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The US Department of Energy congratulated Al-Shirawi on his election, expressing enthusiasm for the opportunity to work with him "to encourage meaningful dialogue between energy consumers and producers and help achieve our collective goals of energy security, access, and transition."

UK exits recession with stronger-than-expected growth



Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader, Rishi Sunak delivers a speech in Leeds, northern England

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Britain's economy emerged from a short-lived recession in the first quarter with stronger-than-anticipated growth, upwardly revised data showed Friday, lifting embattled Prime Minister Rishi Sunak before next week's general election.

Gross domestic product grew 0.7 percent in the first three months of this year, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said, upgrading the prior growth estimate of 0.6 percent. Market expectations had been for no change.

The surprise modest improvement was driven by the services sector, with slightly

stronger activity in the professional services, transport and storage.

The upbeat news comes as Sunak's Conservatives are badly trailing the main opposition Labour Party, led by Keir Starmer, ahead of nationwide polls due next Thursday.

The economy contracted slightly for two quarters in a row in the second half of 2023, meeting the technical definition of a recession that was caused by elevated inflation that has prolonged a cost-of-living crisis.

Britain votes on July 4 in an election widely expected to be won by Labour, a victory that would end 14 years of rule by Conservatives, who have been led by Sunak since 2022.

Tata threatens to shut steelworks early ahead of strike

London, United Kingdom

Tata Steel UK has threatened to close its two blast furnaces in Port Talbot in south Wales earlier than planned due to an upcoming strike, sparking concern among politicians before next week's general election.

The Indian-owned giant had planned to start shutting the first furnace in late June and the second by September as part of an overhaul as it transitions to greener production of steel.

However, the Unite trade union announced one week ago that Tata staff will begin an indefinite strike from July 8 in protest over the company's job-slashing plans.

Britain's main opposition Labour party, widely expected to beat the governing Conservatives in a general election on July 4, has meanwhile urged Tata to avoid action before the vote outcome.

Empowering women entrepreneurs: ILA hosts inaugural event on entrepreneurship

TDT | Manama

The Empowering Women Entrepreneurs (EWE) sub-committee of the Indian Ladies Association (ILA) held its inaugural event, 'An Introduction to Entrepreneurship - 2024,' at the ILA premises on Thursday.

Spearheaded by co-coordinators Smitha Jensen, Usha Asher, and Vani Chandran, the event aimed to equip aspiring women entrepreneurs with essential skills and knowledge, focusing on skill enhancement, financial literacy, networking, mentorship, and various government support services available in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Faculty members from the University of Technology Bahrain, including Dr. Nidhi



Participants during a group photo opportunity

Menon, Dr. Surjith Victor, Dr. Stephen Chellakan, Dr. Reem Abbas, and Dr. Saubhagyalaxmi

Misra, addressed several crucial topics:

- Basic understanding of

launching a business

- Unique challenges faced by women in business

- Fostering a supportive ecosystem for female leaders
- Bridging the gender gap in

entrepreneurship

- Government support for women entrepreneurs

A standout session on consumer engagement by Dr. Saubhagyalaxmi Misra offered innovative strategies and expert advice, which were highly appreciated by the attendees.

President Kiran Mangle expressed her excitement about the event, stating, "Our commitment to empowering women in business is at the heart of ILA's mission. This event marks a significant step towards achieving that goal, and we are thrilled with the positive response."

Dr. Tejender Kaur Sarna, Vice President of ILA, remarked, "We look forward to hosting more impactful sessions and continuing to empower our community."

India, South Africa chase T20 glory

Unbeaten teams clash in T20 World Cup final, seeking to end trophy droughts

● **First senior men's final for South Africa since 1998**

● **India aims to overcome recent World Cup disappointment**

AFP | Bridgetown

Unbeaten throughout almost a month of cricket across the USA and the Caribbean, India and South Africa will face off at the Kensington Oval on Saturday in the T20 World Cup final both looking to end long waits for glory.

A tournament which has been a mixed bag in terms

of quality, entertainment and attendances, has certainly succeeded in setting up a final between the two best teams in the shortest format.

India crushed defending champions England by 68 runs in Guyana on Thursday, the day after South Africa thrashed Afghanistan by nine wickets in Trinidad to end a long and agonising wait for a title game.

This will be South Africa's first senior men's final since the inaugural Champions Trophy in Bangladesh in 1998 when the Proteas beat the West Indies in the title match.

Over the years they have been labelled 'chokers' by their critics and had many question how a nation that has produced so many talented players, hasn't been able to make a final for 26 years.

Skipper Aiden Markram was part of the team which were beaten by Australia in the ODI World Cup last year but says the players haven't reflected



Despite being cricket's epicenter with the IPL, India has only won this T20 competition once, 17 years ago, and hasn't secured any major trophy since the 2013 Champions Trophy

much on the years of near-misses and disappointments.

"We haven't spoken about it to be honest. I think it's a personal and individual motivation that you get to a final; to earn the opportunity to hopefully lift the trophy," he said after the win over the Afghans.

"So you reflect back to five

"We haven't spoken about it to be honest. I think it's a personal and individual motivation that you get to a final; to earn the opportunity to hopefully lift the trophy"

SOUTH AFRICA SKIPPER AIDEN MARKRAM

months ago we couldn't get over the line in that semi-final and you look at (here) a few things went our way. We managed to win the game and we found ourselves in the final."

Certainly there has been no hint that South Africa have lacked belief in this tournament -- they topped group D with a 100% record including wins over Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Then in the Super Eights, they won all three games with victories over England and co-hosts West Indies and the USA.

Belief

"This team's been together for a long time now as a white ball group, both formats. We feel and we believe that we can compete with the best in the world and we can win trophies. And it's nice for us to now have that opportunity," Markram said.

"You do get belief though from winning close games and potentially winning games that you thought you weren't going to win. It does a lot for your changing room and the vibe in the changing room.

So, we'll take a little bit of confidence from that and see if we can put it to any use in the fi-

India's Jasprit Bumrah celebrates with teammate Rohit Sharma

nal," he added.

India have the chance to banish the memory of their loss to Australia in the final of the 50-over World Cup on home soil last year.

Despite India being the epicentre of the T20 game, through the hugely successful Indian Premier League competition, their only triumph in this competition came 17 years ago.

India's last trophy of any kind was the Champions Trophy in 2013.

But the team have taken care of their business with little drama, beating arch-rivals Pakistan in New York and going on to win their group before a key

win over Australia in the Super Eights.

"We've been very calm," said captain Rohit Sharma.

"We understand the occasion of the final. It's important we stay composed, because that helps you make good decisions. We have been very steady, calm, and that has been the key for us," he added.

It was India's spinners who were the heroes against England with left-armers Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel taking three wickets each.

But they also possess one of the most effective quick bowlers in the format in Jasprit Bumrah.

Rohit, 37, and fellow opener Virat Kohli, 35, came into

this tournament looking for glory in what could well be their final tournament.

While Rohit has made more runs, 248, than any player in the final, Kohli has disappointed with just 75 runs in seven innings but has the perfect stage on which to make that form irrelevant.

The historic home of West Indies cricket, should produce the right atmosphere with a large contingent of Indian supporters, as always, expected at the game.

South Africa's captain Aiden Markram plays a shot

Rohit says struggling Kohli 'saving it for the final'

AFP | Providence

India captain Rohit Sharma suggested fellow star batsman Virat Kohli's run-drought could well end in the T20 World Cup final against South Africa after his opening partner fell cheaply once again on Thursday.

Kohli's run of low scores at the tournament continued when he was dismissed for just nine in a semi-final win against defending champions England in Guyana.

He pulled Reece Topley for six but two balls later the left-arm paceman bowled Kohli as he knocked over the leg stump.

Former captain Kohli, 35, has now scored just 75 runs in seven innings this tournament at an average of 10.71.

But Rohit was convinced it would not be long before Kohli, one of the outstanding batsmen of his generation, was back to his best.

"Virat is a quality player," he said. "Any

player can go through that. We understand his class. When

"Virat is a quality player. Any player can go through that. We understand his class. When you have played for 15 years, form is never a problem. He's probably saving it for the final"

ROHIT SHARMA

you have played for 15 years, form is never a problem. He's probably saving it for the final."

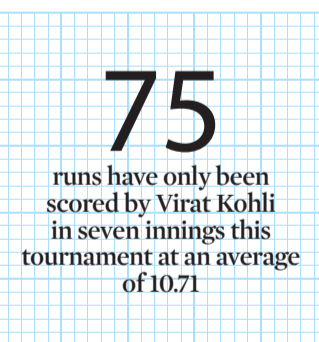
Rohit, by contrast, has scored 248 runs, including three fifties, at an average of over 41 at the tournament.

And on Thursday his 57 -- which followed a blistering 92 against Australia last time out -- was the cornerstone of

India's 171-7.

That total proved far too many for England as India won by 68 runs after the title-holders collapsed to 103 all out, with spinners Kuldeep Yadav (3-19) and Axar Patel (3-23) doing the bulk of the damage.

India will now face South Africa in Saturday's final in Barbados, with the match at the



Kensington Oval a clash of the tournament's two unbeaten teams.

"We've been very calm," said Rohit, also the skipper when India suffered an agonising loss on home soil to Australia in last year's 50-over World Cup final.

"We understand the occasion of the final. It's important we stay composed, because that helps you make good decisions. We have been very steady, calm, and that has been the key for us.

"We'll try our best. All I can hope is to put in another good show come the final."



India's Virat Kohli during training

Malaysia to redesign 'ugly' Olympic kit after fan backlash

AFP | London

Malaysian officials agreed Friday to redesign some of the country's kit for next month's Paris Olympics after fans derided the outfits as "ugly" and "cheap looking".

Controversy erupted when the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) unveiled the gold-themed outfits featuring a tiger-stripe design last weekend. Touted as symbolising Malaysia's "relentless pursuit for gold medals", the garments including tracksuits, polo shirts and T-shirts quickly became a target of public derision.



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Verstappen on pole for Austrian sprint race

AFP | Spielberg

Three-time world champion Max Verstappen delighted hordes of his vociferous supporters yesterday when he secured pole for Saturday's sprint race at the Austrian Grand Prix.

The Red Bull driver clocked a best lap in one minute and 4.686 seconds to outpace nearest rival Lando Norris of McLaren by 0.093 seconds in hot conditions at the Red Bull Ring circuit, owned by Verstappen's team.

Oscar Piastri was third in the second McLaren ahead of George Russell of Mercedes, Carlos Sainz of Ferrari and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, a disappointing sixth for Mercedes.

Sergio Perez was seventh for Red Bull ahead of

Esteban Ocon and his Alpine team-mate Pierre Gasly.

"It's good to be first here in front of all my home fans and in our home Grand Prix," said the 26-year-old Dutchman.

"It's been a good day so far and it's nice to drive the car. It feels well balanced and we only needed a few adjustments so all is going well.

"I'm not concerned about things and feel relaxed. Let's see what happens tomorrow."

In a frantic, final few minutes, luckless Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc had a problem in the pit lane and was unable to cross the start line for his flying lap in time for

it to count, leaving him down in 10th place.

"I don't know what happened and the anti-stall switched off," said Leclerc. "I haven't spoken to the team yet so I just don't know."

On a hot afternoon in the Styrian Alps, with temperatures touching 28 degrees Celsius and rain threatening, Hamilton was first out on track ahead of Yuki Tsunoda and Valtteri Bottas, the Briton surviving a lurid slide at Turn One and an 'off' at Turn Six on his opening lap.

His time was disqualified for exceeding track limits before he resumed on his me-



It's been a good day so far and it's nice to drive the car. It feels well balanced and we only needed a few adjustments so all is going well

MAX VERSTAPPEN

dium tyres after falling to 19th without a lap while Verstappen soared to the top ahead of Russell, the Dutchman clocking 1:05.690 to stay ahead of Russell by 0.074 seconds.

On his second run, Hamilton was 12th, barely

comfortable, and he slipped to 13th as others improved, but enough to avoid joining both Saubers, Alex Albon of Williams, Nico Hulkenberg of Haas and Daniel Ricciardo of RB in taking an early exit.

The SQ2 session saw Verstappen stay on top ahead of Russell and Hamilton taking sixth behind Piastri, Sainz, and Leclerc with Norris and Perez seventh and eighth.

Out this time went Kevin Magnussen in the second Haas ahead of Lance Stroll and two-time world champion Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin together with Yuki Tsunoda of RB and Logan Sargeant of Williams.

The top ten shootout began with Hamilton leading Russell down the pit-lane while late drama saw Leclerc halt before recovering in a race to join the fray within the time limit.

Max Verstappen in action



Bagnaia sets new lap record in Dutch MotoGP qualifying at the 'Cathedral'



Francesco Bagnaia in action

AFP | Assen

Double world champion Francesco Bagnaia stuck his marker in the sand at the start of the Dutch MotoGP weekend, setting a new track record in qualifying yesterday.

Looking for a hat-trick win after claiming top podium spots at Catalunya and Mugello, Bagnaia broke the lap record clocked by fellow Italian rider Marco Bezzecchi in Assen last year.

With his best time of 1min 31.340sec, Bagnaia on a factory Ducati, led the way from veteran rider Maverick Vinales (Aprilia) and Marc Marquez (Gresini Racing Ducati).

Alex Espargaro (Aprilia), suffered a heavy crash in the latter stages of yesterday's qualifying race, but was still fourth-fastest in his last-ever outing at Assen.

HH Shaikh Khalid congratulates HM King, HRH CP, PM on Bahrain's victory in GCC Esports League, qualification

TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), Chairman of the General Sports Authority (GSA), and President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, congratulated His Majesty King Hamad

bin Isa Al Khalifa, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, on the victory of Bahrain's national esports player, Hashim Khalil, in the Tekken 8 competition of the inaugural GCC Esports League Championship, held in Riyadh on June 27-28. This victory has qualified him for the Esports World

Championship in Riyadh.

His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad also congratulated His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs.

His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad attributed this achievement to the exceptional support provided by His Majesty

the King and the backing of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, as well as the follow up of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad. This support for youth and sports has created the ideal environment for achieving such a milestone.

Player Hashim Ahmed Khalil won the final matches against competitors from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab

Emirates, defeating the UAE 3-0 in the final. Nine players from nine Gulf clubs and national teams participated in the competition.

With this victory, the Bahrain national esports team secures its place in the Esports World Championship in Riyadh, with a total prize pool exceeding 60 million USD.

Murray, Djokovic cleared for Wimbledon

Former champions enter Wimbledon draw despite recent health concerns

● **Murray faces Machac, who beat him twice this year**

● **Djokovic aims to "fight for the title" despite knee injury**

● **Top seeds Sinner and Swiatek face challenging draws**

AFP | London

Former champions Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic shrugged off lingering injury concerns yesterday to take their places in the draw for Wimbledon.

Murray, the 2013 and 2016 champion, had ap-

peared certain to miss out on what will be his farewell appearance at the All England Club after undergoing a back operation last weekend.

Fellow former number one Djokovic, the seven-time champion, also needed surgery earlier this month after suffering a serious knee injury at the French Open.

However, yesterday, the two 37-year-olds, career-long rivals, took their places in the draw for the third Grand Slam tournament of the year which starts on Monday.

Murray will face 38th-ranked Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic who has defeated the British star twice this year.

Djokovic, seeded two, will take on 123rd-ranked Vit Kopriv, also of the Czech Republic, who will be making his Wimbledon debut.

Novak Djokovic

Murray, now at 115 in the world, underwent an operation on a spinal cyst and said Thursday he was unlikely to be fit enough to play in the singles.

The Scot, who plays with a metal hip, went under the knife after experiencing weakness and a loss of coordination in his right leg while playing at Queen's, forcing him to pull out of that tournament.

On Thursday Murray and brother Jamie were awarded the final wildcard for the Wimbledon men's doubles.

Murray is planning for the Olympics in Paris next month to be the final event of his career.

Machac defeated Murray in Marseille and Miami this year.

The 23-year-old also stunned Djokovic in the semi-finals in Geneva on the eve of the French Open.

Djokovic will play Wimbledon despite concerns over his fitness.

'Fight for title'

The Serbian star was forced to pull out ahead of his quarter-final at the French Open against Casper Ruud after tearing the medial meniscus in his right knee.

He said earlier this week he would only play at Wimbledon if he was fit enough to "fight for the title".



This Wimbledon marks Murray's farewell appearance at the All England Club, with the British star planning to end his career at the Paris Olympics next month

"I didn't come here to play a few rounds," he told the BBC.

"If I know I can play close to my maximum or at maximum, then I'll play. If not, then I'll give somebody else a chance to play.

"I really will only play if I know I am in a state which is good enough to go far in the tournament and fight for the title, so that's the condition.

Djokovic, who has won 24 Grand Slams, has reached the Wimbledon final for the past five years, losing a thrilling five-setter last year to Carlos Alcaraz.

He will attempt to win an elusive Olympic gold medal at the Paris Games, which start on

July 26.

Jannik Sinner, who succeeded Djokovic as Australian Open champion in January, is top seed for Wimbledon and starts his campaign against Germany's Yannick Hanfmann.

If he gets through that, Sinner could face Italian compatriot and 2021 runner-up Matteo Berrettini in the second round.

Alcaraz, seeded three, is in the same half of the draw as Sinner.

The Spaniard tackles 262nd-ranked Mark Lajal of Estonia on Centre Court on Monday.

Swiatek v Kenin

In the women's draw, world number one Iga Swiatek, who recently won a fourth French Open title, meets 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin in her opener.

Swiatek, who has never made it past the quarter-finals at Wimbledon, has former All England Club champion Angelique Kerber and 2017 Roland Garros winner Jelena Ostapenko in her section of the draw.

Riding high on a 19-match win streak, Swiatek is slated to face defending Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova in the last-eight.

US Open champion Coco Gauff, the second seed, starts

against compatriot Caroline Dolehide, ranked at 52.

Four-time major winner Naomi Osaka looms in Gauff's section of the draw.

The Japanese former world number one, who faces Diane Parry in her opener, is playing the tournament for the first time since 2019.

Third seed and Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka, a two-time semi-finalist, starts against 106th-ranked Emiina Bektas of the United States.

A potential last-16 opponent is Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva who defeated

Sabalenka in the French Open quarter-finals this year.



Andy Murray