

Bahrain to host U21 world volleyball action

16 national teams from five confederations around the world to compete in July | P12

Trump 'ready to fight' indictment

THE DAILY tribune

Huge crowds in Jerusalem for second Friday of Ramadan

UAE revokes Russian bank's licence after US sanctions

Bahrain at low risk of Marburg Virus Infection, says Ministry of Health



TD | Manama

Bahrain has a low risk of being affected by the Marburg Virus, which has been reported in Tanzania and Equatorial Guinea, confirmed the Ministry of Health yesterday.

Since there are no direct flights between Bahrain, Tanzania and Equatorial Guinea, the chances of the virus reaching the Kingdom are low, the ministry said citing a risk assessment from the Gulf Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (GCDPC).

The ministry said it is closely monitoring regional and global development and is in constant coordination with the World Health Organisation and the GCDPC to monitor developments related to communicable diseases.

This is for maintaining preparedness and response plans as well as setting the necessary protocols for dealing with them.

The Ministry said it will keep the public informed about the latest developments through various official media channels.

Iran Guards officer killed in Israeli strike on Syria: website

Tehran, Iran

An officer from Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards was killed in Israeli air strikes on Syria early on Friday, a website affiliated with the Guards said.

Sepahnews, the website of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, said one of the force's officers was killed in the Israeli raid.

"Milad Heidari, one of the military officers and advisers of the Guards in Syria, was martyred at dawn on Friday in the Zionist regime's criminal attack on the outskirts of Damascus," it said.

Israel would "undoubtedly... receive a reply to this crime", the report added.

Mass "Iftar"



This aerial view shows locals affected by the February 6 earthquake attending a mass "Iftar" fast-breaking dinner in the town of Atareb in the rebel-held western countryside of Aleppo province, yesterday at the end of the fasting day during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Iran state TV apologises for airing kiss: media

Tehran, Iran

Iranian state television has issued an apology after broadcasting images of a couple sharing a brief kiss, local media said yesterday.

All displays of physical contact between men and women is forbidden on the Islamic republic's official TV networks.

In a Thursday broadcast, the Nasim entertainment channel showed a young couple kissing for a few seconds at a park, as they were passing in front of a hidden camera recording a prank show.

In a statement published by the ISNA news agency yesterday, Nasim apologised for an "error that resulted from the negligence of the production team".

It added the channel "will firmly handle those responsible for the negligence following an inquiry".

In 2021, two presenters on state television -- husband and wife -- apologised after hugging each other during a live broadcast, spurring controversy.

The two said they had been unaware they were on air.

End western 'Dominance'

Russia adopts new anti-West global strategy

TD | agencies

President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed off on a new Russian foreign policy strategy aimed at curtailing Western "dominance" and identifying China and India as key partners for the future.

The new document cements the deep Cold War-style rupture between Russia and the West over Moscow's offensive in Ukraine, according to AFP.

"The Russian Federation intends to give priority to the elimination of vestiges of the dominance of the United States and other unfriendly countries in world politics," the strategy document said.

The term "unfriendly countries" is used by Russia to refer to those countries, particularly in Europe and North America,

Russian President Vladimir Putin launches a number of pharmaceutical facilities in Russia via a video link at the Kremlin in Moscow



Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the document recognised "the existential nature of threats to the security and development of our country, driven by the actions of unfriendly states". "The United States of America is directly named as the main instigator and driver of anti-Russian sentiment," he said.

that have condemned Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine and adopted sanctions.

The 42-page document, which was published on the Kremlin's website, said that

Russia would aim to "create the conditions for any state to reject neo-colonialist and hegemonic aims".

Announcing the document at a security council meeting, Putin said that updates to Russia's strategy for engagement on the global stage were necessary due to "radical changes" in the world.

The strategy reflects the Russian leader's increasingly anti-Western stance in the face of sanctions and Western military aid to Ukraine, as was also seen in his state of the nation speech last month.

In the new strategy, Russia stressed the importance of "the deepening of ties and coordination with friendly sovereign global centres of power and development located on the Eurasian continent."

Tunisia imposes water rationing

Tunis, Tunisia

Tunisia announced tight restrictions on water usage, including rationing tap water, yesterday, as the drought-hit country braces for another baking summer.

The North African country's dams are at critical lows following years of drought, exacerbated by pipeline leaks in a decrepit distribution network.

The agriculture ministry announced a ban on the use of potable water for irrigating farmland or green spaces, or for cleaning public areas or cars.

Life is priceless

Latvian fined 50,000 euros for crushing 'golden' eggs

Riga, Latvia

Latvia came down hard on a man who squashed the eggs of a protected bird species, issuing a 50,000-euro fine that his lawyers said valued them as if they were pure gold.

A court in the Baltic state ordered the penalty after the man came across the nests of black-headed gulls -- a protected species -- and crushed several eggs.

"These 10 eggs are priced



Representative picture

higher than if they were made of pure gold," his lawyers protested, according to a report from the local paper Latvijas Avize.

Judge Lauris Shnepsts however remained unmoved, arguing that it was wrong "to compare



precious wildlife with a piece of shiny metal".

"I hope this case will set a legal precedent for wildlife protection in our country," he told reporters following Tuesday's verdict.

The incident dates back to the spring of 2021, when Artis Krumins rowed across a

northern lake to an island inhabited only by wild birds and smashed the eggs.

The crime may have gone unnoticed had it not been for a local scientist who happened to be doing field research there and whose footage helped crack the case.

"I tried to calm down the egg-crusher but he got even more aggressive, he started to use his oars to throw up eggs in the air and hit them," the professor later testified in the courtroom.





His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa accepting a written invitation from His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the United Arab Emirates, to attend the Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28). The conference will be hosted by the UAE in Dubai Expo City. The invitation was presented to His Majesty by Sheikh Sultan bin Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates.



Officials from the Northern Governorate, led by Governor Ali bin Sheikh Abdul Hussein Al-Asfour, distributed 400 meal packages during an Iftar event in coordination with the Bahrain Motivational Society for People with Disabilities. The event took place at the Al-Qadam Roundabout intersection on Budaiya Street. The governor expressed gratitude towards the participants and contributors involved in the distribution process, and emphasized the governorate's commitment to providing healthy meals with low calories. This event is being held for the third consecutive year as part of the Ramadan programs organized by the governorate.

Quick police action leads to arrest of car arsonist in record time

TDT | Manama

In a dramatic turn of events, the Criminal Investigation Police at the General Departments of Investigation and Criminal Evidence arrested a 21-year-old arsonist within an hour of him setting fire to a parked car in a residential neighbourhood.

Thanks to the swift action of the police, the suspect was caught red-handed and taken into custody without incident.

According to authorities, the suspect had a personal dispute



with the car owner and had deliberately set fire to the vehicle as an act of revenge.

The crime was reported immediately, and the police sprang into action, opening an investi-

gation and gathering evidence from the scene and nearby surveillance footage.

Police said they identified the suspect soon and were hot on his heels. Using a combination of intelligence, technology and teamwork, the police were able to apprehend the suspect within a record time of one hour.

During the interrogation, the suspect confessed to his crime and revealed the motive behind it. The police have taken the necessary legal measures to refer the case to Public Prosecution.



Under the patronage of Minister of Social Development, Osama bin Ahmed Khalaf Al Asfour, Al-Hekma Retired Society organised the 18th annual Ramadan celebration in cooperation with Abdullah bin Khalid Centre for Parental Care. The ceremony was attended by the society's Deputy Chairman Saeed Abbas Al Samak, board members, affiliates and prominent personalities. The Minister praised the efforts of the Al-Hekma Retired Society and its role in promoting social and voluntary work. A number of retirees and elderly as well as supporting institutions to the society were honoured in the ceremony.



Health Minister Dr Jaleela bint Al Sayeid Hasan yesterday received Al Malaki Specialist Hospital Chief Executive Officer Dr Rohit Srivastava. The meeting reviewed a number of issues of mutual interest spanning the medical, training and health tourism fields. Dr Srivastava also stressed joint cooperation and coordination in the health sector.



The Community Service Police Division of the Muharraq Governorate Police Directorate conducted an awareness campaign during the holy month of Ramadan to promote home and public safety measures. The campaign focused on fire prevention and the safe use of electrical appliances. It targeted shops and restaurants and also provided education and guidance to a group of citizens and residents.

CBB to regulate all digital security token offerings

TDT | Manama

All Digital Token offering that exhibits the characteristics of security will be subject to Bahrain's regulatory framework for crypto-assets activities, announced the Central Bank of Bahrain.

The CBB, in a statement, said, will assess the token's underlying economic purpose, structure, characteristics, and attached rights to determine whether it qualifies as a security.

The move follows amendments to the CBB's Crypto-assets ("CRA") Module in March 2023, which came after consultations with industry stakeholders.



The CBB said its objective is to enhance the protection of client

assets and ensure that investors receive high levels of safeguard-



We at the CBB are delighted to issue the new amendments to our regulatory framework for crypto-assets and to specifically introduce new regulatory requirements for the digital tokens offerings, in order to regulate the crypto-assets market in a fair and transparent manner. Therefore, the CBB has adopted a risk-based regulatory approach towards requirements, which are proportionate and commensurate to the regulated activity undertaken by a licensee

ABEER AL SAAD

ing. Additionally, the amendments



Similar to traditional securities, security tokens are financial instruments that represent ownership interest in an asset- only they've been created digitally (tokenized) to unlock the power of the blockchain. Entities like government and businesses can issue security tokens that serve the same purpose as stocks, bonds, and other equities.

permit crypto-asset licensees, subject to CBB approval, to engage in activities beyond the stipulated regulated crypto-asset services.

Director of the Capital Markets Supervision Directorate – Abeer Al Saad, stated: “We endeavour to provide adequate safeguards to investors without inhibiting innovation adop-

tion at the CBB, as we continue to monitor market trends and review the regulatory framework to keep up with the latest developments in the field, as well as maintain the competitiveness of the sector. This milestone is a reflection of the pioneering role the CBB continues to play in regulating crypto-assets.”

GCC nationals laundered millions to buy prime Real Estate, Court rejects appeal

Arab nationals, a man and a woman, received three years in jail and BD100,000 fine

TDt | Manama

Two Arab nationals, who robbed around \$5 million in public funds from a Gulf Cooperation Council country and used it to buy prime real estate in Bahrain have had their appeal rejected at a court here. The defendants, a man and a woman will now serve three years in jail here and will have to pay a BD100,000 fine each. The court also ordered to confiscate the laundered amount from them. Court files say the woman, who resided in a GCC nation, opened a bank account in Bahrain, to which she transferred



Representative picture the ill-gotten gains. a man, use the funds to buy prop- This way, the pair bought a BD1.8 million property in Juffair, She then had her accomplice, erties on her behalf.

According to court files, the woman opened a bank account in Bahrain, to which she transferred the ill-gotten gains, while her accomplice used the funds to buy properties on her behalf. The investigation revealed that the duo had embezzled the cash from a Gulf Cooperation Council country, leading to their conviction.

a BD950,000 property in Amwaj Islands, and a BD347,000 worth of land and a villa in Juffair. The woman also sent money to her father in her home country, and at the time of their arrest, she had BD90,000 in cash in her account. Investigators discovered the duo had embezzled the cash from the GCC country, leading to their conviction of money laundering and embezzlement. Yesterday, despite their appeal against their three-year jail term and BD100,000 fine, the court upheld their conviction and ordered the laundered amount be confiscated from the convicts.

Five men jailed for stealing pistols from deceased businessman’s home

TDt | Manama

Stealing pistols from the abandoned house of a deceased businessman have landed five men, all Asian nationals, in jail for terms ranging between four and one year. Police arrested the suspects following an investigation into a tip-off from an Asian labourer who witnessed their criminal activities. Based on this, police identified the suspects and obtained a warrant and discovered drugs and hidden pistols. During interrogation, the suspects confessed to their crimes, revealing that they had taken the pistols from a businessman’s



Representative picture home, who passed away in 2013. Three pistols were found in their possession, with one given to the third defendant and another hidden in an abandoned building.

The men confessed to taking the pistols from the businessman’s house, and their drug test results further incriminated them. “We found three pistols inside a bag, and we took them. We gave one to the third defendant,” the first suspect told prosecutors. “We hid one of them in an abandoned building, while the other one we kept with us,” he added. The case took another dramatic turn when the defendants also tested positive for various types of drugs, further incriminating them.

Unjust firing: Woman wins BD13,000 compensation from training institute

TDt | Manama

Firing a Bahraini woman from her job without prior notification has landed a private training establishment in hot water, with the court ordering compensation of BD13,000. The woman had approached the court seeking justice after being evicted just 40 days after the renewal of her contract, which offered a monthly salary of BD727. The petition also accused the organisation of non-payment of salaries and cancelling the contract without any valid reason. The woman’s lawyer argued that the organisation had renewed the contract appreciating her efforts but dismissed her without any valid reason. In its ruling, the High Labour Court stated that dismissal of work without notification is a breach of law, and it was

solely to end the tie without compensating the plaintiff. Therefore, the plaintiff deserves compensation for the remaining days of the contract and the unused vacation days, which amounted to BD13,000. Court files say the woman received termination after the organisation renewed her contract praising for her excellence at job. “However, to her surprise, she received a termination letter just 40 days into her new contract,” her lawyers told the court. “The organisation did so without giving any valid reason,” the woman’s lawyer told the court. The High Labour Court ruled that the dismissal without notification was a breach of the law and ordered the establishment to compensate the woman for the remaining contract period and the unused vacation days.

Ministry denies claims of school interfering with students’ prayer times

TDt | Manama

The Ministry of Education has dismissed rumours that a private school had prevented its students from performing noon prayers, calling the reports baseless. In a statement, the ministry revealed that its private education licensing directorates had conducted an investigation into the matter. The statement further explained that students could perform the noon prayers at their homes itself since school ends before that time. The ministry also confirmed that no prior violations had been reported against the school in question. The statement emphasised that the school has the right to file a complaint against the false accusations levelled against it.

Bahrain to receive 24 surplus attack helicopters from US for \$350 million

TDt | agencies

Bahrain is set to acquire 24 surplus Bell AH-1W SuperCobra attack helicopters for an estimated \$350 million, reports said citing the US Department of State. The former US Marine Corps platforms, along with spares, training, and other services, will be purchased by Bahrain to improve its ability to fulfil maritime patrol, close air support, and search-and-rescue missions. The sale is subject to approval by the US Congress, and if approved, The package also includes the delivery of spare T-700-GE-401 aircraft engines, M272A1 missile launchers, other spare parts, support, training, publications, and related logistics and programme support. “The proposed sale will improve Bahrain’s capability to meet current and future threats by improving its ability to fulfil maritime patrol, close air support, and search-and-rescue missions,” the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in



The US Marine Corps operated the AH-1W Super Cobra until late 2020 (Courtesy of flight global)

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Last month, Bell Textron completed the delivery of the last AH-1Z Viper production aircraft built for Bahrain.

its notification. The helicopters, which were retired by the USMC in 2020, were first to be equipped with a new ‘glass’ cockpit ahead of transfer to their new customer(s). Having entered service with the USMC in 1986, the AH-1W is a highly capable variant of the Vietnam War-era AH-1 Cobra that is still in global service with Bahrain (it also operates the AH-1E/F and the latest AH-1Z models), as well as Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey.

Police arrest three for selling drugs in Capital



TDt | Manama

Three men in their early thirties, identified as Asian nationals, were apprehended by the Capital Governorate Police Directorate for allegedly selling intoxicating substances within the Kingdom. The arrest was made following a tip-off received about the

suspects operating from an apartment in the Al-Naeem area. Subsequent searches and investigations were conducted, leading to the discovery and seizure of a quantity of the illegal substances. The case has been referred to the Public Prosecutor’s Office.

Khalifa Town Central Market: Ministry offers 35-year deal

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture has opened a tender seeking investors for the operation of a traditional central market as well as related services in Khalifa Town Madinat Khalifa in the Southern Governorate.

The plot identified for the market, numbered 12013079 (empty), is located between King Hamad Highway and Hawar Street in block 957 of the Southern Governorate.

A successful contract will receive a 35-year licence to operate the market.

According to the tender, the ministry seeks to run the market as a distant modern heritage concept, with sections for vegetables, fruits, fish, and meat, along with units for shops, restaurants, cafes, and market services such as



Representative picture

car parking for vendors and visitors.

Investors could also open supermarkets or hypermarkets in accordance with the project's concept and regulatory requirements for real estate with the concerned authorities, the tender reads.

Interested parties must bid for the project before June 18th, 2023, with a BD5,000 bond valid for 180 days.

The tender documents are available for download from the website of the tender boards

starting from March 26th, 2023, and the tender fee is BD100.

The initial bond should be in the form of a Certified Cheque, Bank Guarantee, Insurance Policy, or Cash, as specified in the tender documents, and valid for the duration.



Representative picture

The Primary Healthcare Centres hiring light vehicle drivers

TDT | Manama

The Primary Healthcare Centres have seven openings for light vehicle drivers, for which they have launched a tender.

According to the tender, only Bahrain nationals are eligible to apply. The responsibilities of the drivers will include transportation of medicines, supplies, devices, and medical samples for primary healthcare centres across the King-

dom. In addition, the drivers will be expected to transport staff members and carry out correspondence duties.

Interested parties must submit their bids for the tender before April 9th, 2023. Along with the bid, a BD500 bond with a 180-day validity should be included.

The tender fee is BD15, and the necessary documents are available for download from www.Tenderboard.bh.

Embassy for Bahrain in Muscat: Foreign Affairs attracts 10 bids

TDT | Manama

Ten companies are competing for a contract from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to build a diplomatic complex for the Kingdom of Bahrain in Muscat, Oman.

The complex will comprise an embassy building, residences for the ambassador, as well as cultural and military attachés. The project has received bids ranging from BHD 114,270.450 to BHD 788,641.350.

The companies that submitted bids are Dar Al Handasah Consultants Shair and Partners (BHD 592,256.780), Muscat Design centre and Partners (Corduff Oman) (BHD 114,270.450), Al Monarch Engineering Consultancy (BHD 152,854.065, BHD 122,868.585), F&M Middle East Engineering Consultancy (BHD 397,872.405), Al Hatmy Engineering consultancy (BHD 188,451.060), Consolidated Engineering Company Khatib & Alami Foreign Branch Company (BHD 788,641.350), Phoenix engineering Services (BHD 250,717.500), Arabtech Jardaneh



Picture courtesy of Sanad Engineering

and partners for Engineering Consultancy (BHD 274,203.020), Razeen Engineering consultancy (BHD 139,970.250) and Hoehler and Al Salmy Architectural and Engineering Consultancy (BHD 288,622.897).

The tender was for hiring a consultancy to provide pre and post-contract services, including site investigation, concept

design, obtaining approvals, creating designs for interior and other works, general bills and tender documents, process, and report and supervision for the Bahrain Diplomatic Complex.

Reports suggest that the embassy building will have consulate services on the ground floor and will be designed to merge domestic architecture

with the structural vocabulary of Muscat. The building will also feature a central reception area, reminiscent of traditional Bahraini residences that have a series of pavilions around a courtyard.

Currently, Bahrain's embassy in Oman operates from Way 3030 Villa 2421, Block 230, PC 115 Muscat.

Windows, doors maintenance: Bapco launches 3-year contract



Representative picture

TDT | Manama

Bapco has on offer a three-year contract to supply, install and maintain aluminium windows and doors at its facilities in the Kingdom.

The services are for Bapco's Housing and offices in Awali and surrounding areas, says a Tender launched by Bahrain Petroleum Company.

The tender seeks suppliers to submit their proposals before the 16th of April 2023.

According to Bapco's re-

quirements, the contractor must possess the Technal and Balexco jigs for the fabrication of units in their own factory, along with an adequate quantity of accessories and experience in repairing Technal windows.

Additionally, the contractor should comply with Bapco's minimum safety standards as outlined in the "Guide to Safety 2017 Edition," and submit their company's HSE policy and the details of their designated safety officer.

Ministry of Education seeks contractors for maintenance

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Education has initiated a tender for the maintenance of electrical installations in schools and administrative buildings.

The contract involves the replacement of lighting, ceiling and wall fans, ventilation, lighting switches, recesses, main and subsidiary electrical circuits. Additionally, the works entail the installation of electrical fittings for air conditioners, upgrading of electrical wiring, and connections to computer laboratories, domestic lap, and science laboratories.

Excavation works for electric cables in schools, institutes, and academic and administrative buildings are also part of the project.

The ministry intends to offer



a three-year contract for the works. Interested parties must submit their bids before April 26, 2023, with a BD4,000 bond that is valid for 180 days.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises are eligible for a 10% preference in the financial evaluation stage if they submit the "SMES Classification Certificate" during the bidding process for this tender.

Sitra Health Centre renovation progressing; New tender launched for medical equipment

TDT | Manama

The renovation of the Sitra Health Centre in the Capital Governorate is progressing smoothly, with the Primary Healthcare Centres launching a new tender to procure new medical equipment.

The tender specifies that the centre requires medical equipment and accessories as part of its renovation. Some of the required equipment includes Ray GP, Dental Unit, Dental X-Ray-Sensor Digital, Auto-



clave, Distillery Unit, Vital Sign Monitor, ECG Unit, and other machines.

Suppliers interested in pro-

viding this equipment should submit their bids before May 10, 2023, with a BD1,000 bond that is valid for 180 days. The tender

documents can be downloaded from www.tenderboard.bh.

Currently, the Sitra Health Centre provides general clinic, nursing, mother and child care, pharmacy, dental, laboratory, radiology, social services, diabetic, and NCD services.

The Health Ministry had earlier announced plans to demolish the existing nursing restrooms, expand the MCH, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Laboratory sections, construct a new isolation room, X-ray section, and modify the dental unit.

UAE revokes Russian bank’s licence after US sanctions

● **MTS gets six-month period to “wind down its operations”**

● **MTS Bank earned an Emirati licence last year**

AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

A Russian bank hit by US sanctions will be forced to cease operations in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates’ central bank said yesterday.

MTS Bank, which had earned an Emirati licence last year, was among more than 200 entities and individuals targeted by a wave of sanctions last month on the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The UAE central bank said in a statement that “it has been decided to cancel MTS Bank’s Abu



Representative picture showing a man coming of the MTS Bank

Dhabi licence... and close the branch” in the Emirati capital “within six months”.

“This decision comes after considering the available op-

tions regarding the new status of MTS Bank, and taking into account the sanctions risks associated with the bank after the designation.”

During the six-month period to “wind down its operations”, the Russian bank would be barred from opening new accounts and carrying out any

transactions apart from clearing prior obligations, the central bank said.

It had announced in late February it was “studying... the available options” after the US measures.

Senior US officials visited earlier this year for talks with UAE authorities, including the central bank, on evasion of sanctions on Russia and Iran as well as money laundering and financing of groups deemed “terrorist”.

The UAE has maintained a neutral stance towards Russia’s war.

The oil-rich Gulf monarchy and its financial hub Dubai have attracted Russian professionals and businesspeople fleeing the impact of Western sanctions since the invasion in February 2022.

Some 1.9 million passengers flew in from Russia last year, Dubai Airports CEO Paul Griffiths told AFP in February, more than twice as many as in 2021.

The Russian influx has been linked to a boom in property and rental prices. The real estate sector accounts for about a third of Dubai’s economy.

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MTS Bank, a fintech unit of Russia’s largest mobile operator Mobile TeleSystems (MTSS.MM), was part of a broader sanctions package against 200 entities and individuals announced in February on the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Russian conglomerate Sistema (AFKS.MM) holds a 42.09% stake in MTS. Russian billionaire Vladimir Yevtushenkov last year relinquished formal shareholder control of Sistema after Britain imposed sanctions on him, transferring a 10% stake to his son.

IMF board approves \$15.6 bn Ukraine loan package

Washington, United States

The International Monetary Fund has approved a \$15.6 billion support package for Ukraine to assist with the conflict-hit country’s economic recovery, the fund said in a statement yesterday.

The Russian invasion has devastated Ukraine’s economy, causing activity to contract by around 30 percent last year, destroying much of its capital stock and fueling poverty, according to the IMF.

The 48-month Extended Fund Facility programme approved by the fund’s board is worth roughly \$15.6 bn. It forms the IMF’s portion of a \$115 bn overall support package comprised of debt relief, grants and loans by multilateral and bilat-



A local resident carries shopping as she walks past a destroyed building following a C-300 missile strike on the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv

eral institutions, the organization confirmed in a press conference Friday.

The new four-year programme aims to “anchor macro-economic and financial stability

as well as to undertake critical structural reforms as the war continues,” IMF deputy managing director Gita Gopinath said in a statement.

Of the total amount approved

by the IMF, \$2.7 bn is being made available to Ukraine immediately, with the rest of the funds due to be released over the next four years.

The more “ambitious structural reforms” to support sustained growth and post-war reconstruction, as well as facilitate Ukraine’s path to EU accession among other goals, will be left until active combat ends, she added.

The programme also includes additional guarantees from some IMF members in the event that active combat continues beyond the current estimate of mid-2024.

If the current conflict were to continue into 2025, it would raise Ukraine’s financial needs from \$115 bn to around \$140 bn, said the IMF.

UK economy grows slightly in late 2022: official data

London, United Kingdom

The British economy performed slightly better than previously estimated in the final quarter of last year as it expanded by 0.1%, revised official data showed yesterday.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) initially said growth had been flat in the October-December period.

Either way, the UK narrowly avoided falling into recession at the end of 2022.

“The economy performed a little more strongly... than previously estimated, with later data showing telecommunications, construction and manufacturing all faring better than initially thought,” noted ONS

director of economic statistics, Darren Morgan.

He added that households saved more in the last quarter, with finances boosted by government support to pay sky-high energy bills.

“Meanwhile, the UK’s balance of payments deficit with the rest of the world narrowed, driven by increased foreign earnings by UK companies, particularly in the energy sector,” he added.

Oil and gas prices soared last year as supplies tightened following the invasion of Ukraine by key energy producer Russia.

Meng Wanzhou: Huawei’s ‘princess’ claims her crown

Beijing, China

The daughter of Huawei’s billionaire founder, Meng Wanzhou will take over as rotating chairwoman as the Chinese tech giant enters choppy waters, with profits plummeting under US sanctions.

The Washington-led pressure campaign has contributed to Huawei losing its top spot in the smartphone market and has throttled its supply chains.

After Huawei’s yesterday’s announcement that its 2022 net profits had plunged 69% compared to the previous year, Meng struck a defiant tone at a press conference.

“We might not be successful in the end, but being placed in a fatal impasse, we have no choice but to go all in and fight, with all hands on deck,” she said.

The 51-year-old is not new to being on the front line of the

US-China tech war.

In 2018, she was arrested in Canada at the behest of the United States on fraud charges relating to her alleged efforts to hide violations of US sanctions on Iran involving Huawei affiliate Skycom.

She remained under house arrest in Vancouver for almost three years while fighting extradition, with the case becoming a major thorn in relations between the three countries.

She was allowed to return to China in September 2021, and in December 2022, the US Justice Department dropped all charges against her.

‘Humble’ beginning

Despite being internally known as Huawei’s “princess”, Meng is said to be approachable and self-deprecating.

According to Chinese media,

she started off as a secretary at Huawei and kept her head down for years, to such an extent that few knew her father was founder Ren Zhengfei.

This may have been aided by the fact that she took her mother’s surname from a young age, for reasons that remain unclear.

Ren, a former army engineer, founded Huawei with a few thousand dollars in 1987, growing it into one of the world’s leading suppliers of hardware for telecommunications networks.

“He is a CEO at work, and a father at home,” Meng once said, to emphasise that competence, not connections, determined one’s path at Huawei.

Huawei credits Meng for reorganising the company’s financial and IT architecture, beginning in the early 2000s, so that the company could cope with its

rapid global growth.

Meng herself recounted how initially, she and other bookkeepers had to bind the company’s financial records by hand each month, according to a read-out of a speech she gave at her former high school last year.

Meng will lead the company for six months until September 30.

Huawei, which is not publicly listed, has two other rotating chairs -- Eric Xu and Ken Hu.

Meng said Friday that the company’s future, as it navigates one of its roughest patches yet, would depend on its “collective leader-

ship”.

“In times of pressure, we press on -- with confidence,” she said.

Huawei’s chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou



News in brief

Death toll in India temple collapse rises to 36



The death toll after a floor collapsed at a Hindu temple in India had risen to 36 yesterday after rescuers discovered the body of the last person still missing, police said. Dozens of worshippers celebrating a major religious holiday plunged into the stepwell -- a stair-lined communal water source -- on Thursday after the floor covering it collapsed in the central city of Indore. "Seventeen people were rescued yesterday. Thirty-six bodies have been recovered," senior police officer Manish Kapoor said. Women, children and an 18-month-old baby were among those standing on the grill covering the well when it buckled and gave way, plunging them into about 7.5 metres (25 feet) of water.

Six people from two families -- one of Romanian descent with Canadian passports, the other from India -- were found dead in a marsh near the Canada-US border after trying to cross illegally into the United States, police said yesterday. Their bodies were found Thursday near a capsized boat belonging to a missing man from the Akwesasne Mohawk community, local deputy police chief Lee-Ann O'Brien told a news conference. O'Brien added that a second infant whose passport was recovered from one of the bodies appears to also be missing and police dive teams were continuing to search.

Romanian, Indian families found dead crossing into US from Canada



Thai firefighters battle forest blaze



Hundreds of Thai firefighters and soldiers battled a forest blaze less than 100 kilometres (60 miles) from Bangkok as the kingdom grapples with air pollution that has made more than 1.7 million people ill already this year. The fire has affected at least 800,000 square metres (200 acres) of forest across three hills in Nakhon Nayok province, to the northeast of the Thai capital, with two districts declared emergency zones. The blaze comes as Thailand grapples with a spike in pollution caused in part by agricultural burning that has seen the air in some northern cities rank among the dirtiest and most hazardous in the world this week.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

James Bond's latest mission: to save King Charles III's coronation



Screen grab from a footage featured during the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games shows British actor Daniel Craig (L) playing James Bond escorting Britain's Queen Elizabeth II (2nd L) through the corridors of Buckingham Palace

AFP | London

Legendary spy James Bond faces a race against time to save King Charles III's upcoming coronation in a new story to be released ahead of the May 6 ceremony, it was revealed yesterday.

Author, actor and comedian Charlie Higson has been commissioned to write the book, in which Bond has to thwart plans to disrupt the coronation ceremony, according to Ian Fleming Publications.

Higson, 64, has already written five books in the "Young Bond" series, which follows the future secret agent during his school days.

"On His Majesty's Secret Service" is due for publication on May 4, and comes 60 years after the publication of Bond creator Ian Fleming's tenth novel, "On Her Majesty's Secret Service".

"When Ian Fleming Publications came to me with the idea of writing an adult Bond story a little more than a month ago I was thrilled -- until I realised it had to be ready for the cor-

Getting it written and turned around in such a short space of time was going to be as tense and heart-pounding as any Bond mission. Although, of course, nobody would actually be shooting at me

CHARLIE HIGSON

onation in May," said Higson.

"Getting it written and turned around in such a short space of time was going to be as tense and heart-pounding as any Bond mission. Although, of course, nobody would actually be shooting at me.

"Fleming famously wrote fast, and I channelled that energy. And now it's so exciting for me to finally enter the world of grown-up Bond."

Higson promised fans the usual cocktail of "sex, violence, cars, a colourful villain with a nasty henchman, and of course, Bond himself."

Trump 'ready to fight'

Trump, accused for role in hush-money payment before 2016 election, is the first form

Donald Trump expected to be arraigned next week

AFP | Washington

Following his historic indictment on criminal charges, Donald Trump was preparing yesterday to go where no former US president has gone before -- a prosecutor's office to be booked, fingerprinted and have his mugshot taken.

Trump's pending arrest, expected on Tuesday, throws a political grenade into the 2024 presidential race, in which the 76-year-old real estate tycoon is hoping to return to the White House.

Pressed by reporters yesterday, President Joe Biden repeatedly declined to address the fate of the Republican candidate he defeated in the 2020 election and could potentially face again in November of next year.

"I have no comment on Trump," Biden said.

A New York grand jury indicted Trump on Thursday over a



Former US President Donald Trump speaks during a 2024 election campaign rally in Waco, Texas

\$130,000 hush-money payment made to a porn star to buy her silence during his 2016 campaign.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing and accused the Manhattan district attorney who brought the charges, Alvin Bragg, a Democrat, of waging a "political witch-hunt" to derail his new White House bid.

Trump's lawyers said the former president, who is currently at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida, would surrender to New York authorities on Tuesday to

face the charges, which remain under seal.

Extra security has been deployed for days around the downtown Manhattan courthouse where Trump is expected to be booked and arraigned before a judge.

"The president will not be put in handcuffs," said Joe Tacopina, one of Trump's attorneys, but "I'm sure they'll try to make sure they get some joy out of this by parading him."

Trump would plead not guilty

YOU KNOW WHAT

Top Republicans have rallied around the former president who remains the favourite to win the party's 2024 presidential nomination despite potential legal troubles that extend beyond the New York indictment

At least 11 killed in Pakistan Ramadan donation stampede

AFP | Karachi

At least 11 people were killed in a crowd crush in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi Friday as a Ramadan alms donation sparked a stampede in the inflation-hit nation, police said.

Pakistan has been wracked by economic turmoil for months, with the rupee crumbling and staple food prices shooting up nearly 50 percent as the country battles a balance of payments crisis which has forced it into bail-out talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Fida Janwari, a senior police officer in western Karachi's Baldia Town neighbourhood, said the stampede happened



Police officers stands next to footwear of victims following a stampede that occurred during a Ramadan alms distribution for people in need

when needy women with children flocked to a factory distributing alms.

"Panic struck and people started running," he told AFP. A local administration official

said 600 to 700 people were coralled in a small industrial compound.

"When they opened the main gate, all the people rushed in," added 22-year-old Fatima Noor, whose sister died in the crush.

The bodies of six women and three children were brought to the Abbasi Shaheed state hospital, spokesman Muhammad Faraukh said.

An official for the Rescue NGO told AFP an additional two bodies were sent to another hospital, and police surgeon Sum-maiya Syed Tariq confirmed the total toll of 11 late Friday.

Asma Ahmed, 30, said her grandmother and niece were among the dead.

Pirates kidnap six crew from Danish ship off West Africa

AFP | Copenhagen

Pirates who seized a Danish oil tanker off Congo last week have kidnapped six crew and abandoned ship, the French navy said yesterday.

The Monjasa Reformer had 16 sailors when it was boarded by pirates on March 25.

The remaining crew were rescued by a French naval ship. They said "six crew members had been kidnapped by the pirates", the French navy said in a statement.

The Liberian-flagged tanker was found on Thursday off the coast of Sao Tome and Principe in the Gulf of Guinea.

It had been spotted by a drone from the French patrol boat Premier Maitre L'Her, deployed as part France's anti-piracy mis-



Liberian-flagged oil tanker, Monjasa Reformer, owned by Monjasa, and technically managed by Montec Ship Management

sion Corymbe, the French defence ministry said.

The pirates' boat, which was alongside the tanker during a first flyover, was not there later.

The French navy said three

of the remaining crew members had received "minor injuries" and had received treatment.

In an earlier statement, ship-owner Monjasa said "the pirates had abandoned the vessel

YOU KNOW WHAT

Pirates have long been a risk in the Gulf of Guinea -- a major shipping route stretching 5,700 kilometres from Senegal to Angola, with Nigerian gangs carrying out most attacks

and brought a part of the crew members with them," without specifying their number or nationalities.

527

Byzantine Emperor Justin I names his nephew Justinian I as co-ruler and successor to the throne

1748

Ruins of Pompeii re-discovered by Spaniard Rocque Joaquín de Alcubierre

1952

Big Bang theory proposed in Physical Review by Alpher, Bethe & George Gamow

1975

Ayatollah Khomeini calls for an Islamic Republic in Iran

1976

Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs found Apple Computer in the garage of Jobs' parents house in Cupertino, California



Indictment

er US president to be criminally prosecuted



They only brought this Fake, Corrupt, and Disgraceful Charge against me because I stand with the American People, and they know that I cannot get a fair trial in New York!

DONALD TRUMP

‘Disgraceful’

“They only brought this Fake, Corrupt, and Disgraceful Charge against me because I stand with the American People, and they know that I cannot get a fair trial in New York!” he wrote on his social media platform Truth Social. Trump survived two impeachments while in the White House and kept prosecutors at bay over everything from the US Capitol riot to missing classified files -- only to land in court over a sex scandal involving Stormy Daniels, a 44-year-old adult movie actress. Top Republicans have rallied around the former president who remains the favourite to win the party’s 2024 presidential nom-

ination despite potential legal troubles that extend beyond the New York indictment.

Trump faces felony investigations in Georgia relating to the 2020 election and in Washington over both the classified files and the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol by his supporters.

Kevin McCarthy, the top House Republican, said the indictment had “irreparably damaged” the country.

Trump’s former vice president and possible 2024 challenger Mike Pence called it an “outrage” that would only “further serve to divide” the United States.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, another likely 2024 Republican rival, slammed the indictment as “un-American.”

On the Democratic side, former House speaker Nancy Pelosi said “no one is above the law” and Representative Adam Schiff -- lead prosecutor of Trump’s first impeachment in 2019 -- called it “sobering.”

“The indictment and arrest of a former president is unique throughout all of American history,” Schiff said. “But so too is the unlawful conduct for which Trump has been charged.”

Zelensky, on Bucha anniversary, vows to defeat ‘Russian evil’



(L-R) Prime Minister of Slovenia Robert Golob, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Moldova Maia Sandu, Prime Minister of Croatia Andrej Plenkovic and Prime Minister of Slovakia Eduard Heger walk prior to a ceremony marking the first anniversary of the retreat of Russian troops from the Ukrainian town of Bucha, in Bucha, near Kyiv

AFP | Kyiv



The battle for the foundation of the free world is taking place on Ukrainian land. We will definitely win. Russian evil will fall, right here in Ukraine

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

and destruction in their wake.

Journalists on April 2 last year discovered the bodies of at least 20 people in civilian clothing, some with their hands tied behind their backs, lying in a street of the suburb.

“The battle for the foundation of the free world is taking place on Ukrainian land. We will definitely win. Russian evil will fall, right here in Ukraine,” Zelensky said.

He earlier called Bucha “a symbol of the atrocities” committed by Russia’s forces, who have been linked to the extra-judicial killings of unarmed civilians in Bucha.

After pizza and prayer, Pope set to leave hospital today

AFP | Vatican City

Pope Francis is expected to return home on Saturday after what will have been three nights in hospital with bronchitis, and will attend Palm Sunday services, the Vatican said.

The 86-year-old has responded well to antibiotics and on Thursday evening shared pizza with staff looking after him at Rome’s Gemelli hospital, spokesman Matteo Bruni said.

The Argentine pontiff, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, has suffered increasing health issues in recent years, and it was his second stay in hospital since 2021.

Yesterday morning, he had breakfast, read some newspapers and did some work in the private papal suite on hospital’s 10th floor where he was admitted on Wednesday after complaining of breathing problems.

“His Holiness’s return home to Santa Marta (his Vatican home) is expected tomorrow, in the wake of the results of the latest tests this morning,” Bruni said yesterday.

He said Pope Francis was set to preside over Palm Sunday mass in St Peter’s Square, which marks the beginning of Holy Week and Easter, Christianity’s most important holiday.

This means the pope will stay



A rack displaying postcards of Pope Francis is pictured at a souvenirs’ shop at Piazza Pope Pius XII in Rome



His Holiness’s return home to Santa Marta (his Vatican home) is expected tomorrow, in the wake of the results of the latest tests this morning

HOSPITAL SPOKESMAN MATTEO BRUNI

seated while someone else -- likely a senior cardinal -- performs the ceremony at the altar. The mass is due to be followed by the pope’s regular Sunday Angelus prayer.

Francis’ hospitalisation, just weeks after he marked 10

Rare delays at Singapore airport due to immigration system issues

AFP | Singapore

A disruption at automated immigration clearance counters yesterday led to rare delays at Singapore’s Changi airport, affecting hundreds of travellers.

The Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) said in a Facebook post it was “experiencing slowness at selected passenger clearance checkpoints”, leading to the delays.

It advised travellers to postpone all non-essential trips outside the country.

Long lines formed at Changi, often voted the world’s best air-

Long lines formed at Changi, often voted the world’s best airport where clearing immigration is normally a breeze



Travellers queue to check-in for their flight departure at Singapore Changi airport (file photo)

port where clearing immigration is normally a breeze.

“It’s very chaotic at T4 and very little communication,” wrote one person on Facebook. His comment was accompanied by a photo showing passengers packing the terminal lobby.

Passengers whose flights

were departing soon were being called to be cleared at the manual counters, one more traveller wrote.

There were also “super long” lines at the airport’s Terminal 1 but manual counters were clearing them up fast, another traveller said.

S. Korean dictator’s grandson offers apology for 1980 massacre

AFP | London

The grandson of former South Korean military dictator Chun Doo-hwan apologised yesterday for a massacre committed in the 1980s, a move hailed by victims and analysts as symbolic and significant.

Chun Woo-won, 27, became the first member of his family to visit the Gwangju cemetery and say sorry for the 1980 crackdown on a democracy uprising, which killed at least about 200 people, according to official estimates.

New York-based Chun has attracted widespread media coverage in South Korea for accusing his relatives of corruption in his Youtube and Instagram livestreams.

During one social media



Visitors listening to a guide as they walk between graves at the May 18 National Cemetery for victims of the Gwangju pro-democracy movement, in Gwangju

broadcast, he claimed to have taken illegal narcotics and was arrested when he landed in Seoul Tuesday, but released the next day.

Yesterday, Chun was seen in televised footage consoling



As a family member, I acknowledge that my grandfather Chun Doo-hwan was a sinner and slaughterer who committed such a great crime

CHUN WOO-WON

massacre victims’ relatives.

“I give my sincere apologies. I am sorry,” he said in South Korea’s Gwangju, looking visibly emotional.

“As a family member, I acknowledge that my grandfather Chun Doo-hwan was a sinner and slaughterer who committed such a great crime,” he said at a separate event.



TOP
4
TWEETS
01



Human rights are for all, including the 100 million people who have been #ForcedToFlee. Protecting refugees is a responsibility we all share.

@antonioguterres

02



To date, we have disbursed Euro 150 billion under #NextGenerationEU. This means hundreds of investments and reforms for a green, digital and just transition set in motion. And more will come, across the EU.

@vonderleyen

03



When Bucha was de-occupied, the heinous truth about what was happening in the temporarily occupied territories was revealed to the world. We will never forget the victims of this war, and we will certainly bring all Russian murderers to justice.

@ZelenskyyUa

04



Guns are the number one killer of children in America. It’s time for Congress to act -- so our kids can learn to read in school instead of learning to duck and cover.

@POTUS

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

Huge crowds in Jerusalem for second Friday of Ramadan

AFP | Jerusalem

Thousands of worshippers packed Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound on the second Friday of Ramadan, for peaceful prayers.

The Jordanian body which administers the mosque compound in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem said that 250,000 people prayed at Islam's third holiest site, built on what Jews call the Temple Mount, Judaism's holiest site.

Israeli police, who guard the entrances to the compound, said more than 100,000 worshippers attended -- "almost twice as many as on the second Friday of the month of Ramadan last year" -- and that some 2,000 officers were deployed in the city.

In past years, the Old City was the setting for violence during Ramadan, but no major incidents were reported on Friday.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict had seen an upsurge of violence since the beginning of the year, raising fears of a flare-up during Ramadan. But the past 10 days since the start of the holy fasting month have seen a relative lull in violence.

Israel has been allowing Pal-



Palestinians perform the second Friday prayer of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in front of the Dome of the Rock mosque at the al-Aqsa mosque complex in Jerusalem

estinians from the occupied West Bank to enter Jerusalem for Ramadan prayers, with COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry body responsible for civil affairs in the Palestinian territories, saying over 70,000 people crossed on Friday.

Posting images on Twitter of worshippers crowded at Israeli

checkpoints en route to Jerusalem, Palestinian civil affairs minister Hussein al-Sheikh blasted the "strict and humiliating measures".

The Israeli army meanwhile announced the crossings from Gaza and the West Bank would be closed from Wednesday evening to Saturday night due to

the Jewish festival of Passover.

Palestinians from the West Bank will be able to cross on Friday for Ramadan prayers.

The crossings will be closed again on April 11 and 12, the end of Passover, the army said, adding that exceptions may be allowed on humanitarian or medical grounds.



Worshippers stand around Maqam Ibrahim (Station of Abraham) as they pray around the Kaaba (not pictured), Islam's holiest shrine, at the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Mecca during the second Friday prayers in the holy month of Ramadan



Worshippers reach for a blessing to touch the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, at the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Mecca, yesterday

Ramadan Recipe

Fatima's Fingers (Tunisian Egg Rolls)

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 boneless, skinless chicken breast (about 8 ounces), cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/2 small yellow onion, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon ras el hanout
- 1/8 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 small white potatoes (about 6 ounces total), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella (about 4 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

For the Rolls

- 12 square spring roll wrappers
- 1 egg, beaten for egg wash
- About 2 cups vegetable or canola oil, for frying
- 1 fresh lemon, for garnish

Method

- Bring a pot of water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, prepare the filling: Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add the chicken and sauté until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until the onion is translucent, about 2 to 3 minutes.
- Add the ras el hanout, turmeric, salt and pepper to the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, for another 2 minutes. Transfer mixture

- to a large bowl and set aside to cool.
- Once the water comes to a boil, add the potatoes and cook until tender, 5 to 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer potatoes to another bowl to cool. Let the water continue to boil.
- Prepare the hard-boiled egg: Add 1 egg to the boiling water, reduce the heat to medium and let it cook for 10 minutes. Remove the hard-boiled egg from the water and let cool. Peel the egg and chop it



- into small pieces.
- To the chicken mixture in the large bowl, add the cooled potatoes, chopped egg, mozzarella, parsley and the remaining 1 uncooked egg. Stir to combine the filling.
- Prepare the rolls: Working with one at a time, place one spring roll wrapper on a flat surface. Add a scant 1/4 cup of the chicken filling in the wrapper in one corner, arranging the filling a 4- to 5-inch log. Starting from the same corner, roll the wrapper twice around the filling. Fold in the sides and continue rolling toward the fur-

thest corner. Brush egg wash on the last corner to seal, then roll until the parcel is fully sealed and forms a tight cylinder.

- Add the vegetable oil to a medium saucepan and heat over medium-high until the oil reaches about 350 degrees. Working in batches, add about 3 rolls to the oil and cook, rotating frequently until golden brown and cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes. (If you prefer to avoid deep frying, you can bake the rolls on a rack-lined sheet pan at 375 degrees until golden brown, about 25 minutes, turning them halfway through.) Place cooked rolls on a paper towel for a few minutes to absorb oil before transferring to a serving platter. Serve warm with fresh lemon wedges to squeeze on top.

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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- Crunch; 5- Reindeer herder; 9- Consumer; 13- Bhutan's continent; 14- Point in question; 16- Back of the neck; 17- Fly catcher; 18- Orgs; 19- Very, in Versailles; 20- Biblical birthright seller; 21- Cave dweller; 22- Aim; 24- Bank (on); 26- Mentor; 27- Tomb; 29- Indolent; 33- Pretty girl; 34- The closest one to us is the sun; 35- Rime; 36- "Wheel of Fortune" buy; 37- Bosomy; 38- Code-cracking org; 39- Bear in the sky; 41- Wheel parts; 42- Irish Rose; 44- Spiny shrubs; 46- Gillette razors; 47- Goad; 48- Brainchild; 49- Tropical fruit; 52- Acid; 53- Juniper; 57- Rhythm; 58- Wild Asian dog; 60- Ship stabilizer; 61- Actress Hatcher; 62- Enthusiastic; 63- Tu; 1974 hit; 64- Actor Stoltz; 65- Antiprobationists; 66- Asta's mistress;

Down

1- Arrived; 2- Sale sign; 3- Gyro bread; 4- Pure; 5- Legally responsible; 6- Analyze; 7- Attention-getting sound; 8- Groaner; 9- Lie; 10- Puppeteer Tony; 11- Blunted blade; 12- Take ten; 15- Tidal river; 23- Joan of; French heroine; 25- Time of anticipation; 26- No-see-ums; 27- Category; 28- Like non-oyster months; 29- "Who's there?" reply; 30- Ancient region of Asia Minor; 31- Urns; 32- Ages; 33- Oz creator; 34- Connected series of rooms; 37- Large body of troops; 40- Living in water; 42- Corroded; 43- Coarse fern; 45- Pot used to contain the ashes of a dead person; 46- Dangerous snakes; 48- Atoll unit; 49- Sever with the teeth; 50- Antiquing agent; 51- Me neither; 52- Expensive seating area; 54- Saab model; 55- Antlered animal; 56- Lohengrin's bride; 59- Hee _;

Yesterday's solution

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

Classifieds



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Rybakina beats Pegula to reach Miami final



Elena Rybakina serves to Jessica Pegula

AFP | Miami

Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina reached the final of the Miami Open by beating American world number three Jessica Pegula 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 at Hard Rock Stadium on Thursday.

Kazakhstan's Rybakina is on course to claim the 'Sunshine Double' after winning in Indian Wells earlier this month.

The 23-year-old, ranked seventh in the world, will face the winner of yesterday's semi-final between Petra Kvitova and Romanian Sorana Cirstea.

In a rain-disrupted match, neither player was able to settle into their serve with 11 breaks in total throughout the two sets.

Pegula had been 4-2 up in the second set but after she was broken again, the contest turned decisively in Rybakina's direction when the American, on her serve, found the net on a return to go 5-4 down to the Moscow-born Rybakina.

Rybakina then held her serve with ease to secure back-to-back WTA 1000 finals and she said the unwelcome prospect of a third set had pushed her to take a more positive approach.

"I think that I started being

"I think that I started being a bit more aggressive because I knew that if it's going to go to the third set, it's going to be much more difficult, so I maybe risked a bit more in the end of the second set"

ELENA RYBAKINA

a bit more aggressive because I knew that if it's going to go to the third set, it's going to be much more difficult, so I maybe risked a bit more in the end of the second set," she said, noting how tough it has been to go all the way in back-to-back tournaments.

"It's really difficult because of different conditions and these two weeks by the matches, you will see that it's been much more difficult for me here than in Indian Wells, but for the sunshine double, I am going to give it my best and hopefully I can make it," she added.

Pegula was left to regret not being able to hold after making breaks.

"I think she was playing better as in those moments, she was returning really well. I guess I could have served a little better, but sometimes I was hitting pretty good serves and she was still ripping returns," she said.

"But that's her game, she's pressuring you on your serve as well to come up with something big and I just wasn't able to really do that I guess," she said.

Medvedev and Alcaraz beat Americans to reach Miami semis

AFP | Miami

World number one Carlos Alcaraz and in-form Russian Daniil Medvedev booked their places in the Miami Open semi-finals with convincing victories over American opponents at Hard Rock Stadium on Thursday.

Alcaraz crushed ninth-seed Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-2, while Medvedev ended qualifier Christopher Eubanks' impressive run with a 6-3, 7-5 victory in their quarter-final.

Alcaraz needed just 78 minutes to dismiss Fritz with the Spaniard yet again dominating with his big serve and attacking the American from the out set.

The powerful Alcaraz set the tone by breaking Fritz's first service game and he did the same again at the start of the second set, winning the game to love.

The 19-year-old broke again to go 5-2 up and wrapped up the win without losing a point in the final game.

He will be up against Italian tenth-seed Jannik Sinner next as he seeks to complete the 'Sunshine Double' following his triumph over Medvedev at Indian Wells.



Daniil Medvedev of Russia returns a shot during the men's quarter-final match against Christopher Eubanks of the US

"I was disappointed at Indian Wells when my streak ended but the only thing you can do is begin a new streak and I am happy I was able to bring my form into Miami"

DANIIL MEDVEDEV

The 26-year-old Eubanks was playing in his first ATP Masters

1000 quarter-final after upsetting Frenchmen Adrian Panarin and Gregoire Barrere and Croatia's 17th-ranked Borna Coric.

The 6-foot-7 (2.01m), big-serving Eubanks showed no signs of nerves, holding his first two serves, but he was unable to take advantage of five break-points in a thrilling fourth game.

A half hour rain-break appeared to disrupt Eubanks' momentum, however, and he was broken on his first service game after the resumption of play, go-

BETTER
YOU
KNOW

Medvedev has now won 22 of his past 23 matches, capturing titles in Rotterdam, Doha and Dubai during that run and reaching the final in Indian Wells, where he lost to world number one Carlos Alcaraz

ing long and allowing Medvedev to take a 4-3 lead.

The Russian, who after the break noticeably stepped further into the second serve, broke again to take the first set, but Eubanks was not about to roll over against the world number five.

In the sixth game of the second set, Medvedev won a great rally at the net to go 4-2 up but Eubanks again showed his character to break back and keep his hopes alive.

Young hits 86 as New Zealand beat Sri Lanka 2-0 in ODI series

● **Sri Lanka miss out on qualifying for this year's World Cup directly**

AFP | Hamilton

Will Young hit 86 not out as hosts New Zealand beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in yesterday's third one-day international, ending the visitors' hopes of qualifying directly for the World Cup this year.

New Zealand replied with 159 for four after bowling Sri Lanka out for 157 in Hamilton.

The Black Caps won the ODI series 2-0, having also won both of the two Test matches. A three-match Twenty20 series between the teams starts Sunday.

The home win saw New Zealand top the Super League table in qualifying for the ODI World Cup in India this year.

Sri Lanka are ninth, outside the top eight who automatically



New Zealand's Will Young plays a shot

"We were one down when I came in. It was a bit more nerve-racking later on when we were three or four down"

WILL YOUNG

go to the World Cup, and now face a qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe starting in June.

Young's 86 runs off 113 balls dug New Zealand out of trouble, Sri Lanka's seamers having made life hard for the hosts early on.

His fifth-wicket partnership of 100 runs with Henry Nicholls sealed the result for New Zea-

YOU
KNOW WHAT

The home win saw New Zealand top the Super League table in qualifying for the ODI World Cup in India this year

land.

New Zealand made a terrible start after they were set a target of 158.

Openers Chad Bowes and Tom Blundell were both caught behind off Lahiru Kumara's bowling to leave the Black Caps on 6-2.

Sri Lanka wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis then took his third straight catch when Daryl Mitchell got a faint touch on Kasun Rajitha's delivery.

YOU
KNOW WHAT

Kvitova secured a place in the last four at her 13th attempt in Miami

Dar Kulaib capture thrilling finals opener

Mohammed Yaqoob, Juan Barrera spearhead victors in game one victory over Al Najma in Isa bin Rashid Volleyball League championship series

● **Dar Kulaib will look to close out finals in game two Tuesday next week**

● **Al Ahli, Muharraq to face off this evening for league's bronze medals**

TDT | Manama

Dar Kulaib took a high-intensity game one last night in their championship series against Al Najma for the 2022/2023 title in the Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League.

Dar Kulaib battled past their rivals 3-1 (25-21, 25-22, 25-27, 25-

20) to gain the early 1-0 advantage in the best-of-three finals.

The victors are playing to secure only their third title in the history of the league and will be hoping to close out this match-up in game two, scheduled for Tuesday next week. But Najma are a resilient team—one that has been top for a majority of the season—and will be looking to force a decisive third game, which would be held on April 12, if needed.

Najma are aiming for their sixth league championship. Three of their previous crowns came when they were known as Al Wehda Club.

Attending last night's finals opener were Bahrain Olympic Committee vice-president His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa and Bahrain



Dar Kulaib team members celebrate after their win

Volleyball Association (BVA) president Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa.

Fans of both clubs packed Isa bin Rashid Arena at the BVA headquarters at Isa Sports City in Riffa, making for a rocking atmosphere all through the con-

tinued.

In the opening set, Dar Kulaib were first to 10 points and back-to-back Mohammed Yaqoob spikes gave them a 14-9 advantage. Najma were able to fight back to within 15-17, but then Argentinian professional Juan Barrera scored to give Dar Kulaib back a three-point cushion. A brilliant dig from Ali Habib gave the victors a 21-17 advantage, and then another Barrera smash later closed out the first set.

In the second, Najma took a quick 4-1 edge but Dar Kulaib eventually tied it at 11-all. Things remained close and a Yaqoob spike gave Dar Kulaib a 21-19 advantage. A pair of errors from Najma proved costly, allowing Dar Kulaib to move to two points from securing the set, and they made the most of the opportunity with attacks from Habib and Abdulwahed.

In the third set, Najma were determined to get back into the match and three straight points helped them go up 19-13. But Dar Kulaib roared back and

successive points from Yaqoob, plus a double-block with returning Ayman Isa, helped them tie it at 23-all. But Najma would eventually prevail, aided by a Yaqoob service error and a fine spike from Estonian professional Kevin Saar to break the 25-25 deadlock and make it 1-2 in the match.

In set four, Dar Kulaib were in control from the start and went ahead 16-12. Najma tried valiantly to stay within striking distance behind strong play from Ali Ebrahim and Fadhel Abbas, but Dar Kulaib had all the answers, and a Barrera spike finally ended the match, which ran for over two hours.

Meanwhile, set to be held tonight will be the game for third place between losing semi-finalists Al Ahli and Muharraq.

Hamilton says no hope of challenging Red Bulls in Australia

AFP | Melbourne

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton admitted yesterday that Mercedes had little hope of keeping pace with the Red Bulls in Australia, and matching his fifth place in Saudi Arabia was a more realistic target.

The Briton came a surprise second in the opening practice at Albert Park behind Red Bull's Max Verstappen, before slumping to 13th in a rain-affected second session.

He blamed changes made to the car between the two hour-long runs for the gaping difference.

The car "felt a little bit better this morning, we made some changes, they didn't work, so we'll revise those tonight," he said.

"Then it rained obviously so it wasn't the best of sessions. You don't really learn a huge amount when it's between (conditions),



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton leaves pitlane during the first practice session

“**Felt a little bit better this morning, we made some changes, they didn't work, so we'll revise those tonight**”

LEWIS HAMILTON

so just keep the car safe.”

He learned enough to know that come race-day on Sunday, Mercedes will again be playing catch-up to Verstappen and his Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez.

On the high-speed, power-friendly Jeddah track a fortnight ago, Mercedes showed signs of life, with Hamilton fifth

YOU KNOW WHAT

Lewis Hamilton was a surprise second in the opening practice but could only manage a disappointing 13th in FP2

and his teammate George Russell fourth.

It was a clear improvement from the season-opening race in Bahrain and they bettered the Ferraris, but were still behind Fernando Alonso's Aston Martin and the victorious Red Bull team.

Hamilton said another fifth-placed finish would be a good result for him in Australia.

Gender equality inevitable in F1, says Red Bull chief Horner

AFP | Melbourne

Red Bull chief Christian Horner said yesterday it was inevitable that gender equality would reach Formula One amid reports that a team employing an equal split between men and women was looking to enter the sport.

Former British American Racing (BAR) founder Craig Pollock told CNN last week he wanted to debut "Formula Equal" from the 2025 or 2026 season onwards.

The aim was to have a 50



Christian Horner

“**I think it's fantastic to see the amount of girls, females, that are showing interest in Formula One now and we're seeing it at all levels**”

CHRISTIAN HORNER

percent split between males and females across the whole organisation, from the cockpit to the engineers and the boardroom.

He has reportedly submitted an expression of interest to racing's governing body, the FIA, which opened up the process for finding a potential 11th team earlier this year.

Horner, when asked about Pollock's plan, said he believed gender equality in the traditionally male-dominated sport would happen "naturally" anyway.

Ricciardo says 'signs pointing' to 2024 grid return

AFP | Melbourne

Daniel Ricciardo says he still has the hunger to compete in Formula One and the "signs are pointing" to him being back on the grid in 2024, with Red Bull boss Christian Horner saying the Australian was race ready.

The 33-year-old left McLaren at the end of last season, a year before his contract ran out, to make way for fellow Australian Oscar Piastri.

Ricciardo, who has eight career wins, had largely played second fiddle to teammate Lando Norris and opted to take time away from the sport's demanding schedule before signing on



Red Bull Racing's reserve driver Daniel Ricciardo signs autographs to fans

as Red Bull's reserve driver.

As part of the deal, Ricciardo will only attend a handful of

the 23 races this season and is at his first in Melbourne this weekend, where he was mobbed

“**I feel like that's currently where I'm tracking, at least in my head... I've even put myself in scenarios now where I'm like, if I got back on the grid tomorrow, what would I do differently?**”

DANIEL RICCIARDO

by fans yesterday.

Red Bull chief Christian Horner said Ricciardo had sat in on all their briefings and would do testing for the team later in the year.

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Alonso fastest in wet Australian second practice, Verstappen third



Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso drives during the second practice session
AFP | Melbourne

Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso went quickest ahead of Ferrari ace Charles Leclerc in a rain-interrupted second practice at the Australian Grand Prix yesterday, with defending world champion Max Verstappen third.

The Spanish veteran followed up his podium finishes at the first two races of the season in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia by topping the Melbourne timesheets.

He powered around the bumpy Albert Park circuit under darkening clouds and before rain fell in a best time of one minute 18.887 seconds among his 13 laps, bettering his fourth place in the first one-hour session.

Leclerc, who won in Australia last year, came an encouraging second after Ferrari's early season reliability and pace issues, nearly half a second

BETTER
YOU
KNOW

Virtually all the cars headed back to the pits with 40 minutes remaining after Norris ran onto the grass at Turn 1 when his grip failed and Lance Stroll tapped a wall in his Aston Martin

“I think the forecast is dry, so I think ideally we will prefer dry conditions because we’ve only driven this car in dry conditions in Jeddah and in Bahrain

FERNANDO ALONSO

adrift but ahead of Verstappen. The Red Bull pilot, the early championship leader, clocked a 1:18.790 in the first practice when he had an out-of-character spin, which was better than Alonso's second session best.

But the Dutchman had no decent opportunity to improve on it on a wet track.

Red Bull are attempting to score a third consecutive 1-2 finish for the first time in the team's history in Melbourne after their dominance in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Verstappen's teammate and Jeddah winner Sergio Perez came seventh.

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton was a surprise second in the opening practice but could only manage a disappointing 13th in FP2.

His teammate George Russell was fourth ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, with Alpine's Esteban Ocon sixth.

McLaren's Lando Norris, Haas driver Nico Hulkenberg and Pierre Gasly in the other Alpine rounded out the top 10.

Williams' Logan Sargeant, who had an electrical problem during the first practice, failed to complete a lap.

Bahrain to host U21 world volleyball action

16 national teams from five confederations around the world to compete in July

● Prestigious global volleyball tournament slated for 7 to 16 July

● Bahrainis in preliminary round Pool A with Iran, Thailand, Tunisia

TDI | Manama

Bahrain is set to host the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship this summer.

The tournament is set to be held from 7 to 16 July, and it will feature 16 teams from five confederations around the world.

Matches will be played at the Isa bin Rashid Arena at the Bahrain Volleyball Association headquarters at Isa Sports City in Riffa.

The competition is the premier tournament for junior national teams organised by the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport's global governing body.

This year will mark the fourth time the Kingdom is staging the prestigious event. Bahrain first hosted the under-21 worlds in 1987, and then did so again in 1997 and most recently in 2019.

Bahrain are also taking part in the world championship having qualified as hosts.

The competing field has been divided into four pools for the preliminary round. The draw to determine each group was conducted yesterday by the FIVB.

The Bahrainis are in Pool A along with Iran, Thailand and Tunisia. Pool B features defending champions Italy, Brazil, Egypt and Mexico. Pool C



Bahrain's junior national team during the 2019 under-21 worlds held in the Kingdom (File photo)

YOU
KNOW WHAT

This year will mark the fourth time the Kingdom is staging the prestigious FIVB event. Bahrain first hosted the under-21 worlds in 1987, and then did so again in 1997 and most recently in 2019

Draw results			
POOL A	POOL B	POOL C	POOL D
BRN	ITA	POL	ARG
IRI	BRA	BUL	BEL
THA	EGY	CAN	CZE
TUN	MEX	IND	USA

runners-up of Pools E and F will progress to the semi-finals and eventually determine the medallists.

Bahrain are set to compete for the sixth time in the history of the under-21 worlds. They have contested in both previous editions in 2019 at home and in 2021, while also playing in 1987, 1989 and 1997. Their best finish was eighth, twice in 1987 and 2019. In the last tournament, the nationals placed 14th.

Italy claimed the 2021 gold

medals after defeating Russia in three sets in the final. Poland captured the bronze medals after beating Argentina in the game for third place.

Bahrain have once again been selected as the venue for a top global or Asian competition.

Next month, the Kingdom will also be staging the 2023 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship from 14 to 21 May. Last year, Bahrain hosted the 21st Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship.

Gujarat win IPL opener in front of more than 100,000 fans

AFP | Ahmedabad

Opener Shubman Gill smashed 63 as holders Gujarat Titans beat Chennai Super Kings by five wickets in the Indian Premier League opener in front of more than 100,000 fans in Ahmedabad yesterday.

Chasing 179 for victory, Gujarat rode on Gill's 36-ball knock to achieve their target with four balls to spare at the world's biggest cricket stadium and their homeground.

The 16th edition of the money-spinning T20 tournament began with a glitzy opening ceremony and fireworks at a ground which has an official capacity of 132,000.

A roar erupted when home captain Hardik Pandya won the toss and elected to field first but it was Chennai opener Ruturaj



Shubman Gill of Gujarat Titans plays a shot

Gaikwad who soon silenced the home fans with a flurry of boundaries in his 92 off 50 balls.

Ruturaj lost partners Moeen Ali for 23 and then new signing Ben Stokes -- the England all-rounder brought for \$1.96 million in the auction -- for seven but kept up the attack against the opposition bowlers.

But Mohammed Shami, who reached 100 IPL wickets, Rashid Khan and Alzarri Joseph took two wickets each to check the opposition scoring.

Gujarat suffered a blow when new overseas player Kane Williamson jarred his knee while attempting a catch at the boundary and limped off the ground.

Sai Sudharsan replaced Williamson under the new "impact player" rule, which was also taken by Chennai, who replaced Ambati Rayudu with pace bowler Tushar Deshpande before they fielded.

Bahrain Club through to Khalifa bin Salman Cup quarters

● Bahrain Club oust Samaheej, set up clash with Manama in round of eight

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Club have advanced to the quarter-finals of the 2022/2023 Khalifa bin Salman Cup.

They booked their berth with a 79-68 win over Samaheej.

Ali Abbas had 25 points, including five three-pointers, to help spearhead his team while Tony Mitchell added 19 and Ali Asghar had 11 for Bahrain Club.

Ahmed Fateel scored 18 to pace Samaheej in the loss, while Basel Adel scored 16.

Bahrain Club now move on to face Manama in the round of eight. Elsewhere in the same stage, three-time defending cup champions Al Ahli are set for



Bahrain Club's Tony Mitchell goes for a lay-up against Samaheej in their game

an exciting clash against Al Ettihad tonight, scheduled for a 9.30pm tip-off. Also in the quarter-finals, Al Hala will be playing Muharraq.

Sitra are already through to the semi-finals, and await the winner of the Hala-Muharraq match-up.

This year's competition is the seventh edition of the Khalifa bin Salman Cup, which is held in honour of the late His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa. Ahli are looking to add to their triumphs in 2020, 2021 and 2022 with an historic "four-peat" this season.