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FRIDAY JANUARY, 2026 ISSUE NO.110521

Maresca Italian leaves with Chelsea fifth in the league after a poor run of form

SPORTS

Chelsea part

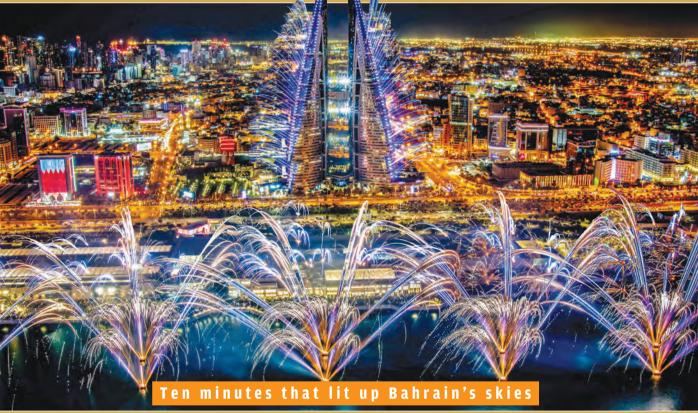
ways with Enzo

#### Russia blames Ukraine for deadly New Year drone strike

Justin Bieber wants music industry to be 'made safer'

Trump delays higher tariffs on imported furniture









Seen above are snapshots of the ten minutes of colour, precision and scale that transformed Manama's horizon as Celebrate Bahrain Season 2025 drew to a dazzling close, bidding farewell to 2025 and ushering in 2026. It was also the Kingdom's largest-ever drone show, spanning eight iconic locations across Bahrain and featuring 2,500 drones – including 1,100 pyrotechnic units soaring up to 400 metres – moving in perfect harmony, while fireworks burst between 250 and 300 metres above the skyline. Immersive three-dimensional light projections on the façade of the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay further enhanced the spectacle — a fitting finale that turned the Kingdom's skies into a living canvas of celebration.

#### **Bahrain leadership** mourns death of former Bangladesh PM Khaleda Zia



TDT | Manama

 $\mathbf{H}$ is Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, sent cables of condolences to His Excellency Mohammed Shahabuddin, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, following the passing of former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

#### Iran's Fars agency reports 3 more killed in fresh clashes

Tehran, Iran

Fresh clashes between demonstrators and security forces killed three people in western Iran on Thursday, according to the Fars news agency, on the fifth day of cost-of-living protests.

220 fils (includes VAT)



## Tug of war over solar duty cuts

Shura divisions emerge over customs exemptions for renewable energy

**Proposal seeks** customs duty exemptions for renewable and energysaving systems

Supporters cite investment boost and reduced pressure on the power grid

Finance committee warns of potential impact on public revenues

**Mohammed Darwish** TDT | Manama

hura Council members and the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee are set for a policy face-off this Sunday as they meet to debate customs exemptions for renewable energy equipment.

Supporters argue that easenergy and help reduce pres- Aradi. sure on the national power grid,

tential hit to state revenues. revised form, seeks to attract public income. investment into renewable energy projects and forms part of es exempting all systems, de-

revised supplementary report energy-saving measures — along from the Public Utilities and En- with their production inputs vironment Committee, submit- from customs duties. ted by Shura Council members Talal Al Mannai, Dalal Al

Talal Al Mannai. Shura Council member

ing customs duties would en- Zayed, Mohammed Ali Hascourage investment in clean san, Jumaa Al Kaabi and Ali Al

However, the Financial and while opponents warn of a po- Economic Affairs Committee has cautioned that the proposal The draft law, presented in could have a direct impact on

The draft legislation propos-Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. vices and equipment linked to The Council will examine a renewable energy sources and

The committee noted that Article 1 defines renewable energy to include solar, wind, geothermal and biogas, extending the exemption to systems using any of those sources. It warned the wide scope could affect public revenues, as the exemption is not limited to industrial inputs.

Amendments also revise the definition of "the Authority" to one designated by decree, avoiding conflict with a separate draft law regulating

> ter sector before the Council of Reprecree estab-

the electricity and wa-



Solar capacity in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region grew to about 24 GW in 2024 – a 25 per cent increase - and is expected to exceed 180 GW by 2030 as countries expand renewable power generation.

Electricity and Water Authority. A second paragraph has been added to Article 13, reaffirming the customs exemption while requiring the competent minister to set the terms for its application.

The Public Utilities and Environment Committee, chaired sentatives, which by Dr Mohammed Ali Hassan, would repeal has recommended the proposal the 2007 de- proceed for consideration after discussions on the revised text.

**Bahrain's UN Security Council** membership conveys a message of peace and cooperation: **Foreign Minister** 



#### Dozens believed killed in fire at Swiss ski resort **New Year party**

AFP | Crans-Montana, Swit-

Dozens are presumed dead after a fire ripped through a crowded bar in the luxury Swiss ski resort of Crans-Montana as young revellers rang in the new year Thursday, with witnesses describing scenes of "panic".

Horrified bystanders told of people trying to break through the windows of the bar to escape, as others, covered in burns, poured into the street.



## Historic UN Security Council membership

UN Security Council membership conveys a message of peace and cooperation: Foreign Minister

- Assumes UN Security Council seat (2026–2027)
- Marks second term in nearly three decades
- Key priorities include: supporting the Palestinian cause, promoting peace and stability, combating terrorism, enhancing cybersecurity and maritime security, and advancing sustainable development goals

TDT | Manama



Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani Prince and Prime Minister. He including supporting the Pales-securing maritime navigation, said.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr ahrain has officially as- Al Zayani said the membership sumed its non-permanent reflects Bahrain's diplomatic and seat on the United Nations humanitarian approach under Security Council for 2026–2027, the leadership of His Majesty a move signalling the Kingdom's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa commitment to peace, coex- and the directives of His Royistence, solidarity, and shared al Highness Prince Salman bin prosperity, Foreign Minister Dr Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown rain's priorities on the Council, emphasised Bahrain's role in inclusiveness, ensuring broader world.

highlighting growing interna- ism, advancing an international destruction. tional confidence in the King- treaty criminalising hate speech, dom's diplomacy.

#### **Palestinian cause**

noted that this marks Bahrain's tinian cause, promoting multi- protecting global energy trade, second Security Council mem- lateral cooperation, combating and advocating for a Middle bership in nearly three decades, terrorism and violent extrem- East free of weapons of mass

representation of developing countries in decision-making, and strengthening global governance. He highlighted initiatives proposed by the Crown Prince to advance international cooperation, including calls for an international treaty to govern artificial intelligence, promote fairness in global financial and economic institutions, and deepen cooperation to tackle environmental, climate, health, and economic challenges, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and the Pact for the Future.

Dr Al Zayani stressed that, under the guidance of His Majesty the King, the Crown Prince, and the collective efforts of Team Bahrain, the Kingdom will continue its longstanding diplomatic engagement of more than five decades as an active international partner, committed The minister also said Bah- to peace and stability, dialogue and addressing global challenges rain seeks to contribute to the and coexistence, solidarity, husuch as climate change, food development of the United Na- man rights, and sustainable desecurity, cybersecurity, and tions system, enhancing its ef-velopment, in pursuit of a more Dr Al Zayani outlined Bah- sustainable development. He fectiveness, transparency, and peaceful, just, and prosperous



The UN Security Council has 15 members: 5 permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the UN General Assembly.

Non-permanent members cannot be immediately re-elected after serving a term, and seats are allocated by regional groups to ensure geographical representation.

Non-permanent members participate in decision-making on international peace and security, including sanctions, peacekeeping missions, and resolutions, giving smaller nations a voice in global security affairs.



#### Woman dies in two-vehicle collision on Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Street



The Ministry of Interior confirmed the death in an official statement, noting that the victim died at the scene

TDT | Manama

Alife yesterday in a colli- disclosed. sion between two vehicles on Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Street, near the Nu- in the accident. waidrat area, heading towards

ficial statement, noting that at the site.

the victim died at the scene. The name and nationality woman tragically lost her of the woman have not been

It remains unclear whether anyone else sustained injuries

Authorities have launched the necessary field and legal The Ministry of Interior procedures to investigate the confirmed the death in an of- incident and manage traffic

### Civil Defence tames Manama house fire in **record** '

No injuries reported, investigation ongoing

- Civil Defence officials suspect an electrical short circuit may have triggered the blaze.
- The full extent of the damage is still being assessed

**TDT** | Manama

fire that broke out in a house Ain Manama yesterday was quickly brought under control thanks to the swift action of the Civil Defence team. Miraculously, no one was injured.

Onlookers praised the team for preventing the flames from spreading to neighbouring homes. Residents reported seeing thick black smoke billowing arrived shortly after the emer-safety procedures were followed into the sky as parts of the house gency alert, braving intense heat and the area secured in line with were engulfed in flames.



Officials suspect an electrical short circuit may have sparked age is still being assessed, with the fire. Responding officers authorities confirming that all and smoke to contain the blaze. regulations.

The full extent of the dam-

#### **Quick Fire Safety Dos and**

Dos:

• Do keep a fire extinguisher in easily accessible areas of your

• Do have an emergency evacuation plan and practice it regularly.

• Do call Civil Defence immediately at the first sign of

 Do ensure electrical wiring and appliances are regularly checked.

• Don't try to fight a large fire alone; evacuate and wait for

professionals. Don't block exits or fire escape

 Don't overload electrical outlets or use damaged wiring.

• Don't re-enter a burning building under any circumstances.

## Expat limits hit a wall: Shura Council says 'No' again'

Committee says existing laws already protect Bahrainis' priority

- Existing safeguards for Bahrainis in publicsector jobs make the draft redundant, officials say.
- Expat contract rules already covered by law, committee stresses in fresh review.
- Draft law faces pushback as authorities highlight successful localisation measures.

**Mohammed Darwish TDT** | Manama

to work in Bahrain's public sec- non-Bahrainis. tor is facing another rejection The Council is scheduled to Citing Article 16 of the Consti- conditions—prov-Service regulations.

members to reject the draft, noting that the Civil Service Law already prioritises Bahraini nationals and sets clear rules for employing non-Bahrainis.

The Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee of the Shura Council has urged



by the Shura Council. Critics vote on the draft for a second tution, the committee highlight- ing the absence of say the proposed rules are re-time on Sunday, following its ed that public office is reserved a Bahraini candundant, as similar safeguards return by the Council of Rep- for Bahrainis, with non-Bah- didate, setting already exist under current Civil resentatives. MPs had support- rainis allowed only under spe- education and The Legislative and Legal Af- cludes limiting expat contracts law already permits exceptions requirements, and fairs Committee of the Shura to two years with one possible only when no suitable Bahraini reassessing the need

Council has urged members to renewal and requiring contrac- candidate is available, controversial draft law reject the draft, noting that the tors to train Bahraini staff. How- with implementation requiring expatriates to Civil Service Law already pri- ever, the Shura Council previ- details handled by hold a master's degree oritises Bahraini nationals and ously rejected it in principle and the Civil Service. and at least 10 years' experience sets clear rules for employing referred it back—a stance the Bureau. committee has repeated.

ed the proposal, which also in- cific legal conditions. Current work-experience

The draft's main

at contract renewal-are already cluding its review, the commitaddressed by existing rules. tee reaffirmed its recommen-The committee dation that the Shura Counalso pointed to the cil reject the draft in Civil Service Bureau's national plan to local-

ise jobs, which

led to a 23 per

cent drop in

contracts for

non-Bahrainis between

2019 and

2024.

principle, stating that current legislation is sufficient to achieve the draft's intended objectives.

> Dalal Al Zayed, Head of Shura's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee



# **Weather Forecast** توقعات الطقس

TDT | Manama

■ ment at the Ministry of country. The coldest condi-Transportation and Commutions are forecast for Monday, nications has forecast the re- when the chill is expected to turn of northerly winds start- peak. ing Saturday, following a brief easing in wind intensity on public to follow daily weath-Thursday and Friday.

pected to gradually decline the coming days.

again as northwesterly winds become more active, increas-The Meteorology Depart- ing the wind chill across the

The department urged the er bulletins and take neces-According to the depart- sary precautions as colder and ment, temperatures are ex- windier conditions return in

### Shura to vote on hosting international arbitration court

The Council's **Committee on Foreign** Affairs, Defence and **National Security has** recommended approval of the draft law

The agreement would make Bahrain the first country in the Middle East to sign a host country agreement with the Permanent **Court of Arbitration** 

**Mohammed Darwish** TDT | Manama

The Shura Council will vote at its next meeting on a draft law to approve an agreement that would allow Bahrain to host the Permanent Court of Arbitration, an international body that settles disputes between states, companies and organisations.

The Council's Committee on Foreign Af-



fairs, Defence and National helping it conduct arbitration support justice, not personal Security has recommended aphearings in the Kingdom. benefit, and can be lifted if they The agreement also sets out are misused or interfere with

The agreement also makes independently. These it easier for non-Bahrainis inapply to arbitrators, volved in cases to enter and stav court staff and in Bahrain, including visa facilpeople involved itation and freedom of movein cases, such as ment, subject to security rules.

It further clarifies that Bahand experts. Bah- rain would not be held responraini nationals in- sible for decisions or actions volved would re- taken by the court while carceive limited pro-rying out its work. Any dispute tections, strictly between Bahrain and the court linked to their would be settled through consultations or arbitration.

In its report, the committee stressed that noted that similar host counthese protec- try agreements already exist tions are in- between the court and several tended to countries, including Argentina, Chile, China (for Hong Kong), Costa Rica, Djibouti, India, Ireland, Malaysia, Mauritius, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Uruguay and Vietnam, as well as an office in Austria.

Rumaihi.

Head of

Shura's

Committee

on Foreign

Defence

National

Security

Affairs.

and

It said the agreement would make Bahrain the first country in the Middle East to sign a host country agreement with the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

The committee recommended that the draft law be approved as presented.

### news of bahrain

## Eight million and rising

Record passenger numbers at Bahrain International Airport



A view of Gulf Air Airbus A320 (R) and A321 (C. L) aircraft at Bahrain International Airport. (file)

- Airport soars to new heights as passenger numbers climb and traffic peaks
- Busiest month: August led the year, with 951,795 passengers and 9,029 aircraft movements
- Cargo growth: Over 360,000 tonnes of cargo and airmail were processed, with transit freight accounting for up to 40% of total volumes

**Mohammed Darwish** TDT | Manama



Bahrain International Airport is the main gateway to the Kingdom of Bahrain and has been in operation since 1932, making it one of the oldest international airports in the Gulf

passengers pass through movements. its terminals between January to the latest monthly figures reportation and Telecommunications. During the same period, the airport recorded over 97,000 aircraft movements.

of the year, with 951,795 passengers and 9,029 arriving and

ahrain International Air- witnessed heavy traffic, with port saw eight million 865,753 passengers and 8,748

The year opened strongly in and November 2025, according January with 812,527 passengers, followed by 736,625 in to 766,394 passengers and leased by the Ministry of Trans- February, with arrivals and departures almost evenly split at tober climbed again to 851,981 374,027 and 358,313 respectively. Aircraft movements in February reached 7,661, while over 48,000

departing flights. July also to their lowest in March, at 11 months of 2025-averaging handled at the airport exceed-

594,824, alongside 7,395 aircraft movements. Numbers then rose steadily: April recorded 808,793 passengers and 8,533 movements, May had 744,625 passengers and 8,568 movements, and June saw 780,771 passengers with 8,011 movements.

After the summer peak, September eased 8,377 movements, before Ocpassengers and 8,532 move-

Overflights continued to be roughly 500,000 aircraft transiting Bah- in February, July, and August. Passenger numbers dipped raini airspace during the first Cargo and airmail volumes

August was the busiest month flights crossed Bahraini airspace significant, with more than 45,000 per month, with peaks

and October were particularly strong months, with transit cargo typically accounting for onethird to 40 per cent of total volumes, and inbound cargo surpassing outbound shipments

ed 360,000

tonnes

between

Janu-

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sit freight.

March, July,



#### Youth initiatives reflect Bahrain's national ambitions, says undersecretary

TDT | Manama

 $\mathbf{M}$ arwan Fouad Kamal, Undersecretary for Youth Affairs, stressed the importance of continued support for Bahraini youth and their empowerment across development sectors, noting that the achievements of youth initiatives reflect the Kingdom's promising young talents and national aspirations.

Speaking at the annual cer-



emony organised by the Mul- and strengthen their competi- work and innovation. hemoon Association to mark tiveness at both local and interits achievements, he said the national levels. He added that member of the Mulhemoon Asresults align with the Ministry these successes highlight the sociation, highlighted the orof Youth Affairs' strategy to capabilities of Bahraini youth in ganisation's role in empowering tion also works to build part-documentary showcasing the ners and outstanding young

develop young people's skills leadership, creativity, volunteer young people, enhancing their nerships and foster an envi- association's journey from achievers.



Ministry's strategy.

She noted that the associa-



skills and promoting initiative ronment that encourages inno- a youth-led team to an es-Iman Faisal Al Salem, a board and leadership, in line with the vation and active community tablished institutional entity, participation.

along with the recognition of The ceremony included a supporting organisations, part-

## Trump delays higher tariffs on imported furniture

Planned under an earlier tranche of sector-specific tariffs

- Trump's tariffs in 2025 affected goods ranging from steel to autos
- The higher rates originally set to take effect Thursday
- In October, a 10 percent duty on imported softwood timber and lumber came into effect

**AFP** | Washington, United States

resident Donald Trump has delayed steeper US tariffs on some imported furniture items for a year, ordering the postponement shortly



U.S. President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump arrive for a New Year's Eve event at his Mar-a-Lago home on December 31, 2025 in Palm Beach, Florida

before they were due to take ed goods ranging from steel to

under an earlier tranche of sec- -- are underway. tor-specific tariffs imposed by Trump, part of a slate of duties on imported softwood timber he has rolled out since returning and lumber came into effect, to the White House.

feeling the pinch from elevat- and kitchen cabinets. ed costs of living, Trump late These tariffs were justified Wednesday pushed the planned by the Trump administration tariffs -- 30 percent on certain as a means to boost US inupholstered furniture and 50 dustries and protect national percent on kitchen cabinets security. and vanities -- to January 1,

tive negotiations regarding the countries like Vietnam and Chiimports of wood products, the na, which have been key suppli-President is delaying the tariff ers of imported furniture to the increase to allow for further ne- United States. gotiations to occur with other countries," the White House said rule on the legality of countryin a statement announcing the wide tariffs, imposed under the

Trump's tariffs in 2025 affect- nomic Powers Act.

autos, and more investigations The increase had been planned -- that could lead to new levies

In October, a 10 percent duty along with a 25-percent duty on But with US households certain upholstered furniture

The higher rates originally set to take effect Thursday would "Given the ongoing produc- have impacted imports from

> The Supreme Court is due to International Emergency Eco-

#### Bulgaria adopts the euro, nearly 20 years after joining the EU

AFP | Sofia, Bulgaria

 ${
m B}^{
m ulgaria}$  yesterday became the 21st country to switch to the euro, a milestone met with both cheers and fears, nearly 20 years after the Balkan nation joined the European Union.

At midnight (2200 GMT Wednesday), Bulgaria gave up the lev, in use since the late 19th coins were projected onto the strength". central bank's building.

European Central Bank, calling ly after midnight. the euro a "powerful symbol"

tine Lagarde, president of the automated teller machine short-

Successive governments in

century, and Bulgarian euro of "shared values and collective the country of 6.4 million peo- divided over the switch, with "Great! It works!" exclaimed euro, hoping that it will boost could usher in higher prices and "I warmly welcome Bulgaria Dimitar, a 43-year-old man after the economy of the European add to the political instability to the euro family," said Chris- withdrawing 100 euros from an Union's poorest member, rein- rattling the country. force ties to the West and protect

against Russia's influence. But Bulgarians have long been Rumen Radev hailed it as the ernment from office in mid-De- AFP.

ple have advocated joining the many worrying the introduction

In a speech broadcast shortly before midnight, President swept a conservative-led gov- manage too," retiree Vlad told

the capital Sofia to celebrate the five years.

that Bulgarians had not been main the same," a woman in her consulted by referendum on the 40s who declined to give her

"This refusal was one of the dramatic symptoms of the deep markets, stalls displayed prices divide between the political class and the people, confirmed New Year's Eve essentials like by mass demonstrations across sparklers in both levs and euros. the country."

"final step" in Bulgaria's EU in- cember, leaving a country tegration, as thousands of people anxious about inflation on the braved sub-zero temperatures in verge of its eighth election in

"People are afraid that prices Radev however voiced regret will rise, while salaries will rename told AFP in Sofia.

At one of the city's largest of everything from groceries to

"The whole of Europe has Anti-corruption protests managed with the euro, we'll

### China's BYD logs record EV sales in 2025

The figure puts BYD in pole position to outstrip Elon Musk's Tesla

AFP | Beijing, China

↑hinese auto giant BYD sold 2.26 million electric vehicles last year, a company statement showed Thursday, setting a new record for any firm globally.

The figure puts BYD in pole position to outstrip Elon Musk's Tesla in the annual category for the first time, with the lagging Texas-based firm having previously announced 1.22 million in 2025 EV sales by the end of September.

its total EV sales for last year on at Singapore Motorshow in Singapore



Tesla is expected to announce Practitioners perform martial art next to a BYD Sealion 7 electric vehicle (EV) by Chinese car manufacturer BYD on display

also produces hybrid cars, an- Stock Exchange, where it is list- "Build Your Dreams" -- BYD facturing. nounced the data in a statement ed. Known as "Biyadi" in Chi- was founded in 1995, originally

Shenzhen-based BYD, which published to the Hong Kong nese -- or by the English slogan specialising in battery manu-

The automotive juggernaut from European giants.

has come to dominate China's highly competitive new energy vehicle market -- the world's largest. Now it is seeking to expand its presence overseas, as increasingly price-wary consumption patterns in China weigh on profitability.BYD and its Chinese competitors face hefty tariffs in the United States.

But its success is growing in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and even Europe -- to the consternation of traditional industry heavyweights from the continent.

Tesla narrowly beat BYD in annual EV sales in 2024, with US company's 1.79 million just outpacing the latter's 1.76 million.

This year, Musk's firm has seen sales struggle in key markets over the CEO's political support of US President Donald Trump and far-right politicians.

Tesla has also faced rising EV competition from BYD and other Chinese companies, as well as



**BYD (Build Your** Dreams) was founded in 1995 as a battery maker and has grown into one of the world's leading electric vehicle and new energy technology companies. Its automotive arm, BYD Auto, is now the world's largest manufacturer of plugin electric vehicles, producing millions of electric and hybrid

cars and operating in

more than 70 coun-

tries worldwide.

**QUOTE OF THE**  THE JOB OF THE ARTIST IS ALWAYS **TO DEEPEN THE MYSTERY** 

FRANCIS BACON

#### **News in brief**

N. Korea's Kim hails 'invincible alliance' with Russia in New Year's letter

leader Kim Jong Un has praised his



troops fighting abroad as forging an "invincible alliance" with Russia in a new year's message, state media said **yesterday.** Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops to support Russia's nearly fouryear invasion of Ukraine, according to South Korean and Western intelligence agencies. At least 600 have died and thousands more

have sustained injuries, according to South Korean estimates.

**US President Donald Trump** hosted Israeli

Israel's Netanyahu among partygoers at Trump's New Year's Eve fete

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a glittering New Year's Eve party at his lavish Mar-a-Lago resort on Wednesday, according to social media. Netanyahu, who arrived at the US president's Palm Beach residence on Monday, was spotted alongside tuxedo-clad Trump Wednesday night in a social media post from conservative

influencer Michael Solakiewicz. Trump had joked that the Israeli leader could attend the party during meetings Monday to discuss the fragile Gaza ceasefire and other regional geopolitical concerns in the Middle East.

Taiwan's president vows to defend sovereignty after China drills

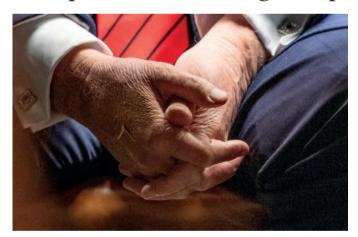
**♦** Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te vowed yesterday to



defend the democratic island's sovereignty in a New Year's speech, after China carried out military drills. Beijing launched missiles and deployed dozens of fighter jets, navy ships and coastguard vessels this week to encircle Taiwan's main island, in exercises condemned by Taipei as "highly provocative". China claims democratic Taiwan is part of its territory and has threatened to use force to annex it.

#### CURIOSER & CURIOSER

#### Trump blames bruised hand on aspirin, denies falling asleep



An adhesive bandage is seen on US President Donald Trump's hand (file

**AFP** | Washington

bruises on his hand and denied falling asleep while at- November -- a politically sentending public meetings in an sitive issue for someone who interview with The Wall Street constantly frames his Demo-Journal published yesterday.

In the interview defending his health, Trump also ment about receiving an MRI scan in October, saying it was instead a quicker CT scan.

Trump, who at 79 is the oldest person to assume the US presidency, told the Journal "my health is perfect" and expressed frustration with scrutiny of his well-being.

Trump has based much of his political image on project- the result of aspirin that he ing vigor -- whether through takes daily to thin his blood. "I his frequent interactions with journalists, constant social media posting, or AI memes depicting him as a superhero.

However, the first year of his second term in office has raised growing questions.

at times a bandage, and his a high-five. ankles have appeared swollen.

On occasion, Trump has clearly struggled to keep his -s President Donald Trump eyes open, including during a blamed aspirin for large televised Oval Office meeting with health representatives in cratic predecessor Joe Biden as "sleepy."

Biden left office a year ago changed his previous state- at 82, making him the oldest president in history -- a record Trump is set to surpass during his current term.

> Trump rarely exercises beyond outings at his golf courses and for years has made no secret of his love for high-fat, high-sodium fast food.

The Republican explained the bruising on his hand as don't want thick blood pouring through my heart," he told the Journal.

He said he applies makeup or bandages when his hand is "whacked."

One cut, he said, was caused His right hand shows per- when his attorney general Pam sistent bruising, often cov- Bondi hit the back of his hand ered with thick makeup and with her ring while giving him

Explanations of his health

### Russia blames Ukraine for deadly New Year drone strike

Moscow says a Ukrainian strike killed at least 20 civilians celebrating New Year's Eve

- Kyiv yet to comment on allegations
- Zelensky says Ukraine near peace deal
- Russia fired 200 drones at Ukraine overnight

**AFP** | Kyiv

ussia yesterday said Kyiv was behind a deadly drone strike on a hotel in the Moscow-held part of Ukraine's southern Kherson region that killed at least 20 people celebrating the New Year.

The accusations come at a crunch moment after weeks of diplomacy aimed at brokering an end to the near four-year war, and as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country peace deal.

According to a Russia-appointed governor of the Kher- civilian population. son region, Vladimir Saldo, "the "civilians were celebrating the energy facilities." New Year".

the allegations.

into the attack which had "killed damaged in the latest barrage. more than 20 people and injured many more."

A building gutted by fire, piles of smouldering rubble and pressure in 2025, both from Ruscharred bodies were seen in pic-sian bombardment and on the tures that Saldo posted on Tel-

Russian foreign ministry army.



Flames rise from the site of a drone attack on a hotel in Khroly

was "10 percent" away from a spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accused Ukraine of carrying out a "terrorist" attack against the

Zelensky said Russia was enemy" fired three drones that carrying the war "into the New "struck a cafe and hotel on the Year" with more than 200 drones Black Sea coast in Khorly" where fired overnight, mainly targeting

"A significant number of Kyiv has not commented on consumers" were cut off from power, Ukraine's power oper-Russia's Investigative Commitator Ukrenergo said. Railway tee said it had opened a probe and port infrastructure was also

#### New talks in sight

Ukraine came under intense battlefield, where it has steadily ceded ground to the Russian



**Despite the ongoing** violence, President Zelensky claims a peace deal is "10 percent" away, following intensified diplomatic efforts led by U.S. President **Donald Trump and** other global allies

An AFP analysis based on Ukrainian air force data showed a slight fall in overnight Russian drone and missile attacks on Ukraine in December. Russia fired at least 5,134

drones in overnight attacks in

the final month of 2025, six percent less than the month before, while the number of missiles fell by 18 percent in the same period, according to the data. However, the same data

showed Ukraine destroyed a smaller share of the total sum of missiles and drones in December -- 80 percent, compared with 82 percent in November.

US President Donald Trump, who regularly complains he does not receive credit as a peacemaker, has engaged in talks with both sides in a bid to end the fighting.

#### Fresh clashes kill three in Iran cost-of-living protests

AFP | Tehran

Protesters and security forces clashed in western Iran yesterday, with three people reported killed, the first deaths since the cost-of-living demonstrations broke out.

The protests began on Sunday in Tehran, where shopkeepers went on strike over high prices and economic stagnation, and have since spread to other parts of the country.

Yesterday, the Fars news agency reported two civilians were killed in fresh clashes between security forces and protesters in the city of Lordegan.

"Some protesters began throwtrative buildings, including the provincial governor's office, the onstrators as rioters during premosque, the Martyrs' Foundation, the town hall and banks," Fars said, adding that police responded with tear gas.

Fars added that the buildings were "severely damaged" and western city of Kouhdasht. police arrested several people described as "ringleaders".



Shopkeepers and traders walk over a bridge during a protest against the economic ing stones at the city's adminis-

vious protest movements.

Earlier yesterday, state television reported that a member of Iran's security forces was killed overnight during protests in the

Basij from the city of Kouhdasht public.

State media has labelled dem- was killed last night by rioters while defending public order," the channel said, citing Said Pourali, the deputy governor of Lorestan Province.

The Basij are a volunteer paramilitary force linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the ide-"A 21-year-old member of the ological arm of the Islamic re-

Pourali said that "during the demonstrations in Kouhdasht, 13 police officers and Basij members were injured by stone throwing".

#### 'End up in hell'

The demonstrations are smaller than the last major outbreak of unrest in 2022, triggered by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, who was arrested for allegedly violating Iran's strict dress code for women.

Her death sparked a nationwide wave of anger that left several hundred people dead, including dozens of members of the security forces.

The latest protests began peacefully in the capital and spread after students from at least 10 universities joined in on Tuesday.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has sought to calm tensions, acknowledging protesters' "legitimate demands", and called on the government yesterday to take action to improve the economic situation.

The Alamanni cross the frozen Rhine River in large numbers and invade the Roman Empire

Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible begins his march to Novgorod



World War II: The 28 nations at war with the Axis powers pledge to make no separate peace deals

Mahatma Gandhi begins a march for peace in East Bengal

## Dozens believed killed in Swiss New Year fire

Fire at crowded Crans-Montana bar leaves multiple dead and 100 injured

- Blaze breaks out just after midnight
- Victims include multiple nationalities, say police
- Authorities rule out terror or planned attack
- Birthday candles may have sparked ceiling fire

AFP | Crans-Montana

ozens are presumed dead after a fire ripped through a crowded bar in the luxury Swiss ski resort of Crans-Montana as young revellers rang in the new year yesterday, with witnesses describing scenes of "panic".

people trying to break through the windows of the bar to espoured into the street.

Police, firefighters and rescu-Cup from January 30, after the fire broke out in the early hours of New Year's Day.

"I am in shock," Alexbroadcaster RTS.

The 18-year-old had been smoke and flames emerging from mainly aged between 15 and 20. the venue and called the police.

"People were running through the flames... People were using

mander in the Wallis canton in ing.



Rescuers and fire-fighters work at the site of an explosion that ripped through the bar Le Constellation in Crans-Montana

southwestern Switzerland, told Horrified bystanders told of reporters that "several dozen people are presumed to have died", while around 100 peocape, as others, covered in burns, ple had been wounded, many of them seriously.

Two young French women, ers rushed to the popular resort, Emma and Albane, told French which is set to host the Ski World broadcaster BFMTV that they had been able to escape the "panic" in the bar shortly after the fire broke out.

They said "birthday candles" ie Laguerre told Swiss public placed on champagne bottles had got too close to the ceiling.

"Seconds later, the entire ceilwalking with a group of friends ing was burning," one of them past the Le Constellation bar, a told the broadcaster, estimatpopular spot with young people ing that there were around 200 and tourists, when they noticed people in the venue at the time, stone-ATS news agency reported. to the Crans-Montana website. people fleeing the bar with

A tourist from New York, who chairs to try to break the win-filmed bright orange flames ment of joy has turned the first trice Pilloud said that significant of stairs up from a large basepouring from the bar, told AFP he Frederic Gisler, police com- saw people running and scream-

Authorities said they were still he said on X. investigating the causes of the fire, which erupted shortly before 1:30 am (0030 GMT), but said they did not believe it had been caused by an "attack".

The emergency unit at the main hospital in the Wallis was full, with the injured being transported to various hospitals across Switzerland.

More than a dozen victims had been transported to the Zurich University Hospital in northern Switzerland, while at least 22 people suffering from serious burns had been taken to main hospital in Lausanne, and six had been taken to Geneva, the Key-

Guy Parmelin, who took over the Swiss presidency yesterday, outside the bar hours later, and help". decried a "terrible tragedy".

"What was meant to be a mo-

Swiss authorities told reporters that it was too early to provide an exact number of victims.

#### Rush to identify victims

They however acknowledged that given Crans-Montana's popularity with tourists around the of the fire". world, they expected a number of foreign nationals to be among the dead.

At least two French citizens were among the injured, according to initial reports from the French foreign ministry.

Le Constellation has a capacity of 300 people, plus another 40 of gas mixed with the smell of people on its terrace, according melted plastic, he said he saw

Ambulances were still parked burns and "people screaming for broken windows could be seen.

day of the year in Crans-Montana resources were being mobilised ment locale in the building, and into a day of mourning affecting "to identify the victims and re- worried dozens might remain the entire country and beyond," turn their bodies as quickly as trapped.



Two French teenagers told local media the fire began when "birthday candles" on champagne bottles ignited the ceiling-moments before the bar became an inferno that trapped scores of young revellers inside

possible to the families".

#### 'Screaming for help'

Early reports had suggested a large explosion might have caused the fire.

But Stephane Ganzer, head of Wallis's security department, however said that "the initial investigation shows... the explosion was in fact a consequence

"There is absolutely no question of a terrorist attack," stressed Pilloud, the prosecutor.

Alex, 21, meanwhile told RTS that he had arrived at the scene shortly after a loud explosion sounded.

Enveloped in a strong smell

Then he said he remembered Wallis's chief prosecutor Beathat there was only a narrow set



2025 was tough. But 2026 is going to be a year of ambition and solidarity. Our plan? Laser-focused, stripped back, costed, reformed, efficient - a plan to save 87m lives in 2026. Let's go.

@UNReliefChief



n case you ever won-**⊥**dered, New Years Day on the Gregorian Calendar is cosmically arbitrary, carrying no Astronomical significance whatsoever. Meanwhile, Chinese New Year, Lent, Easter, Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Saturnalia, Christmas, & Ramadan, all index to Astronomical events.

@neiltyson

#### 03



appy New Year from Hall of us at the IMF! May 2026 bring hope, joy, and peace to you and your loved ones

@KGeorgieva



Noday I begin my tenure as High Commissioner for @Refugees Guided by our shared humanity and legal mandate, we will work with our partners and host nations, to protect refugees, deliver durable solutions, and confront the displacement crises affecting millions of people.

@BarhamSalih

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

#### Trump says pulling National Guard from three cities -- for now

AFP | Washington

President Donald Trump said Wednesday he was withdrawing National Guard troops from Chicago, Los Angeles and Portland, following a series of legal setbacks over his military deployments in US cities.

The Republican had sent troops into several cities run by Democrats during his first year back in power, in what he called a crackdown on illegal immigration and crime.

blocking the Chicago deploy-



National Guard troops arrive at an immigration processing and detention facility in Broadview, Illinois

"We are removing the Nation-Local leaders slammed the al Guard from Chicago, Los Anmoves as authoritarian over- geles, and Portland, despite the reach and launched a string of fact that CRIME has been greatly successful legal challenges, with reduced by having these great the US Supreme Court last week Patriots in those cities, and ONLY by that fact," Trump said on his Truth Social network.

#### Leftist Mamdani takes over as New York mayor under Trump shadow

**AFP** | New York

**7** ohran Mamdani, the young Lupstart of the US left, was sworn in yesterday to take over as New York mayor for a term sure to see him cross swords with President Donald Trump.

After the clocks struck midnight, bringing in 2026, Mamdani took his oath of office at an abandoned subway stop to begin managing the United States' largest city. He is New York's first Muslim mayor.

His office said the understated venue beneath City



New York mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani (C) is sworn in as New York Attorney General Letitia James (L) and his wife Rama Duwaii look on

Hall reflected his commitment 34-year-old Democrat camto working people, after the paigned on promises to address a decisive factor.

the soaring cost of living. "This is truly the honor and the privilege of a lifetime," Mamdani told reporters after

taking his oath. But it remains to be seen if Mamdani -- virtually unknown a year ago -- can deliver on his ambitious agenda, which envisions rent freezes, universal childcare and free public

Once an election is over, "symbolism only goes so far with voters. Results begin to matter a whole lot more," New York University lecturer John Kane said.

How Trump behaves could be

### Justin Bieber wants music industry to be 'made safer'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Justin Bieber wants the music industry to be made "safer" and "more honest".

The 31-year-old singer was catspent his formative years in the always protect my soul. spotlight but he suffered numerin 2014, and Bieber is now adamant anger, I've asked God why.

he wasn't properly protected as he was growing up.

In a series of posts on Instagram, Bieber credited his Christian faith with helping him through his pain. He wrote: "I grew up in a system apulted to fame as a child star and that rewarded my gift but didn't

ous troubles including an arrest on used, rushed, shaped into somesuspicion of driving under the in- thing I didn't fully choose. That fluence that led to him being con- kind of pressure leaves wounds victed of a reckless driving charge you don't see on stage. I've carried

the middle of the pain - not excus- I want it transformed. ing what hurt me but teaching me how not to become bitter."

healed, I can forgive. Not to pre- manded. I'm a son. "There were moments I felt tend injustice didn't happen, but so

> wants to see real changes in the ducing itself through me. music industry, adding: "I don't want revenge. I want redemption. I sic industry down. I want to see young son Jack.

"But Jesus keeps meeting me in don't want to destroy the industry. it made new - safer,

"What happened to me was real human." but it doesn't get the final word. He added: "I'm not speaking as a Jesus didn't help me cope, he revictim still bleeding - I'm speaking stored my identity. I'm not a prod-releasing his albums as someone restored. Because I'm uct. I'm not what the industry de-

"Because I'm healed, I can for- mitted he's reluctant it doesn't keep living through me." give - not to excuse injustice, but to tour again because Bieber went on to declare he to make sure it doesn't keep repro- he doesn't want to spend

"I don't want to burn the mu- his wife Hailey and their

more honest, more

Bieber returned to music this year Swag and Swag II but he has since adtoo much time away from

Justin Bieber



### Trump joins criticism of Clooney's French passport

**AFP** | Washington

Us President Donald Trump piled on criticism Wednesday of a decision to grant Hollywood superstar George Clooney French passports after a junior government official in Paris labelled the move a "double standard"

An official decree seen by AFP on Monday showed that 64-year-old Oscar winner Clooney, his wife Amal Alamuddin Clooney and their two children had become French citizens.

Trump, whose administration has backed anti-immigration parties in Europe, said that Paris was welcome to the "Ocean's Eleven" star, a longterm Democratic supporter, fundraiser and a vocal critic of his Truth Social network. the president.

in the midst of a major crime from January 1.



**Actor George Clooney and wife Amal Clooney** 

problem because of their absolutely horrendous handling of dent Emmanuel Macron's govimmigration," Trump said on

"Good News! George and his family becoming French French. Amal Clooney, two of the worst comes ahead of language repolitical prognosticators of all quirements for citizenship be- the feeling of some French could get them into a French time, have officially become cit- ing toughened for everyone else people of a double stand- university. They will also have izens of France which is, sadly, under new immigration rules ard," Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, to pass a civic knowledge

A junior member of Presiernment had also criticised the decision to award passports The news of Clooney and despite Clooney speaking poor

a junior interior minister, test.

told the France Info radio

"We need to be careful about the message we're sending."

Her boss, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez, and the foreign ministry however defended the decision.

The civil code states that "French nationality may be conferred by naturalization, upon the proposal of the minister of foreign affairs, to any French-speaking foreigner who applies for it and who contributes through their distinguished service to France's influence and the prosperity of its international economic relations."

But Clooney has admitted that his French remains poor despite hundreds of lessons.

Under the new immigration rules from Thursday, applicants will need a certificate showing "Personally, I understand they have a level of French that

#### **Britney Spears sends** sarcastic message to family

**Bang Showbiz** | Los Angeles

 ${f B}$ ritney Spears has sent a sarcastic Christmas message to her family.

The 44-year-old pop star has previously been open about her turbulent relationship with her family, and Britney has taken to social media to pen a belated, sarcastic Christmas message to them.

Alongside a photo of a Christmas tree, Britney wrote on Instagram: "Merry late Christmas to my beautiful family who have never disrespected me, harmed me, ever done anything completely un-

acceptable or caused unbelievable trauma, the kind you can't fix ... to my dear sweet innocent family ... so so sorry I was busy this Christmas

but I will definitely show up and surprise you soon ... I can't wait .... hello, beautiful Ivv ... I just want to hold you, my love ... God-speed, friends (sic)"

Several members of Britney's family - including her mom Lynne spent Christmas Day with her sister Jamie Lynn Spears. The pop star, on the other hand, celebrated the holidays with her son Jayden, 19. **Britney Spears** 

### Khloe Kardashian: My kids will always come first

**Bang Showbiz** | Los Angeles

 $K^{
m hloe}$  Kardashian's children will always "come

The 41-year-old reality star has True, seven, and Tatum, three, with her ex-partner Tristan Thompson, and Khloe has rubbished suggestions that she might reunite with the sports star, explaining

top priority.

gerbread House,

However, Khloe slammed the suggestion, insisting the first. that Tristan will always be a funda-

was caught-up in a cheating ed me to talk about."



Khloe Kardashian

scandal - said: "Hey baby. He's After Tristan's name my children's father and forevappeared on a Kar- er apart of our family. Thank dashian gingerbread you though [winking emoji] house, one fan wrote trust me. My kids come first on Instagram: "I see forever and always [heart emo-Tristan is on the Gin- ji] Merry Christmas (sic)"

Meanwhile, Khloe previousgirl, he ain't gonna ly revealed that her podcast is change. Be careful! set to become "a little looser".

The TV star explained how the second season of her podcast series would differ from

Khloe - who was previously married to former NBA star mental part of her Lamar Odom - told People: family, regardless of "What I am definitely doing whether she's with more of this season is more solo episodes. Those did really, The TV star - who really well, where people sort split from Tristan after he of submitted topics they want-

Miley Cyrus reveals unique technique for landing movie songwriting jobs

**Bang Showbiz** | Los Angeles

Miley Cyrus pitches her song-And Miley's technique proved a Miley said: "I don't success when she wrote the song know what I would write at events to get involved in movies.

making the credit song - Dream As year old Jamie Lee Curtis. One - for Avatar: Fire and Ash after August 2024.

Miley - who was honored as a Disit out there as I always do. I already knew the answer to, 'So what have you been up to?'

a very long time."

of making the third Avatar movie: music, I'm around." "Just lemme know if you ever need

"It just kind of organically hap- even offered music to the creators bedded."

ends in law."

filmmakers and Hollywood stars Beautiful That Way - which received for Baby Reindeer season a Golden Globe nomination - for the two, but I threw that out The 33-year-old singer-song- 2024 film, The Last Showgirl, which there!" writer scored the responsibility of starred Pamela Anderson, 58, and 67

Laughing, Miley said: "I did the lication, she shared her she told the film's director, James same thing to Jamie Lee Curtis. love for music and Cameron, 71, that she was up for That's how I ended up doing The movies, being able doing it at Disney's D23 Expo in Last Showgirl and now being a part to "become emof Avatar."

And the Flowers hitmakney Legend alongside James at the er only rocked up to the Oscars "I really feel myself event - told People: "I kind of throw back in March to get involved in attached to songs.

is her "tried and true method" of they were writ-"I know he's been up to Avatar for landing gigs on the big screen, Miley ten for the film said: "No, literally, that's why I went or just a song The Hannah Montana actress to the Oscars this year. Everybody used in the film, then recalled what she told James - that came up and introduced them- like I Will Alwho, at the time, was in the middle selves, I said, 'Well, if you need any ways Love You, you

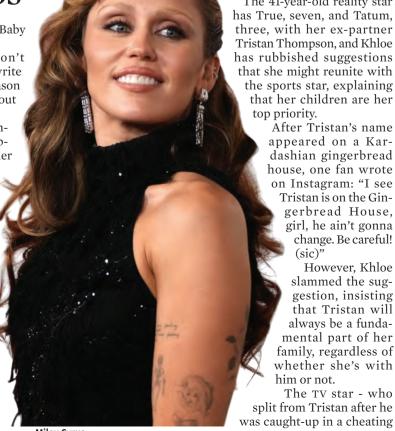
> The star - who landed a cameo of the movie itself, role in 2024's Drive-Away Dolls - and they become em-

pened. James actually calls us 'Leg- of the Netflix series, Baby Reindeer.

Miley said: "I don't

Elsewhere in her interview with the pubbedded".

Miley explained: There's certain Asked if offering original music songs that even if immediately think



Miley Cyrus

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ABDUL WAJID FASHION DESIGN W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DESIGNER(FASH-ION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 38011687 or TABFAROOQ101@GMAIL.COM

Al amoor Middle East Cleaning Co.W.I.I. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER (GEN-ERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 36410050 or SAMEER.SAYED4U@GMAIL.COM

BILAL GOLDSMITH W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE WORKER HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37400773 or HAMZA.SHABBIR3321@GMAIL.COM

Modern Global Cleaning Co.W.I.I has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17211008 or AW-ALSERV@BATELCO.COM.BH

BEN EID TOWERS CLEANING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTE-NANCEW) GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17250078 or KEHF-2011@ HOTMAIL.COM

BATSCO CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17783886 or hr@batsco.

PESHAWAR KPK INTERNATIONAL W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CON-STRUCTION), suitably qualified applicant's can contact 17009091 or LSTARBH@GMAIL.COM

DYAR QALALI GRILL has a vacancy for the occupation of KITCHEN WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39698408 or BAKNEY-AN1991@GMAIL.COM

NOWAIR SANDWICHES has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17714147 or CARAWANAL-SAAD@HOTMAIL.COM

CUCINA ITALIAN RESTAURANT B.S.C has a vacancy for the occupation of COOK(GENER-AL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17292973 or reem.ali@gulfhotelsgroup.com

HAROON AIR CONDITIONING WORKSHOP has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNI-CIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34079287 or JAHANZEHALI245@GMAIL.COM MAMA BUNZ W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CHEF, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35032727 or SAMEERSAGGA@YAHOO.

NORDIC RESORT W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of RECEPTIONIST, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17111015 or govt@nor-

dicbh.com NATIONAL EXCAVATING EST, W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAIN-TENANCEW).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17621168 or NEEWLL@

BATELCO.COM.BH Desert Landscape Co S P C has a vacancy for the occupation of MACHINE OPERATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33152222 or AHMAD.JUMA@DESERTGROUP.AE

MOTOZONE SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(PAINT FINISH-ER), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33458884 or ABOOBAKRAHMAD56@GMAIL.

FUTURE DESTINATION CONSULTANCY SER-VICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36326464 or MEPRIYANKA123123@ GMAIL.COM

FUTURE DESTINATION CONSULTANCY SER-VICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of RECEPTIONIST, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36326464 or MEPRI-YANKA123123@GMAIL.COM

FUTURE DESTINATION CONSULTANCY SER-VICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SERVICES HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36326464 or MEPRIYAN-

KA123123@GMAIL.COM G L S DEVELOPMENT COMPANY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD. suitably qualified applicants can contact 17532010 or m.vishal@exibah.com

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proffice@almoayyedcg.com Abdul Rahman Ali Al Saad Power Projects Co WII has a vacancy for the occupation of STEEL FABRICATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17273330 or BEENA.B@ALSAADPROJ-

ECTS.COM SAMI SALMAN EBRAHIM EJWAIR has a vacancy for the occupation of BAKER(GENERAL). suitably qualified applicants can contact 34457323 or SAMICAP8@GMAIL.COM

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MOHAMMED AHMADI CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17268111 or hrd1@macW.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of ELEC-TRICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35475276 or UMAIRALI36@GMAIL.COM

has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(-SALES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39820273 or HARJITKUMAR605@GMAIL.

Javed Airconditioners Parts WLL has a vacancy SARDAR248@YAHOO.COM

TITANUIM LINE GARGE has a vacancy for the occupation of AUTOMOBILE SERVICEMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17530012 or TITANIUMGARAGE2017@GMAIL.COM

RED N GOLD DECOR W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DECORATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37948899 or NA-DEEM176GUJJAR@GMAIL.COM

JAMES GEORGE SERVICES CO W.L.L has a

JANEB ALTOOR GENERAL CLEANING OF BUILDINGS has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36354449 or JANEBALTOORCLEAR-

WADI ALQAMAR FOOD TRANSPORTATION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIV-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33223734 or CH.MUHAMMADMUNAWAR22@ GMAIL.COM

ICE DAY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34199329 or MR.KOOTALIDA@GMAIL.

JAMES GEORGE SERVICES CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVISOR, suit-

qualified applicants can contact 32105406 or MOHAMMEDFORHAD640@GMAIL.COM

HAWA BEAUTY SALON has a vacancy for the

occupation of HAIR DRESSER, suitably qualified

ÁLSILKMETÁLS@GMAIL.COM FIVE MAGIC MOBILE & ACCESSORIES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CASHIER, suit-

BENI ATTA FOR REPAIR OF FABRICATED MET-AL PRODUCTS has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNICIAN WORKER, suitably qualified

MAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 32116899 or QENA.BH1@GMAIL.COM

JANAT TORINO BOUTIQUE has a vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39077644 or ALIALSA-RI000@GMAIL.COM

applicants can contact 39123120 or KHALIL-JASSIM964@GMAIL.COM

KINGDOM ASPHALT COMPANY W L L has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAVY DRIV-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17466776 or ABDULLA@KINGDOM.BH

ES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39929669 or HHASSANALASSY@GMAIL.COM MADURA cafeteria W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of COOK(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33212336 or

RED-X7@HOTMAIL.COM Danival and Haniah Service activities related to printing has a vacancy for the occupation of PRINTING SETTER, suitably qualified applicants

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POWER FRAME COMBINES FACILITIES SER-VICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAVY DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66306568 or MOONLANDBAH-RAIN@GMAIL.COM

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has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVI-SOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33336142 or JOHNSON@TWOSEASEMS.COM ALMUHARRAQ PICKLES AND SPICES FACTO-RY WLL has a vacancy for the occupation of ACCOUNTANTS, suitably qualified applicants

can contact 17333664 or almuharraq.pickle@ gmail.com GUJJAR SAB TRADING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33736882 or RELIANCE-

CPR@GMAIL.COM ALNEMRAN CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION). GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39456488 or info@alnemranbh.com

AHMED MOHAMMED JASSIM CONSTRUC-TION CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupa-tion of ESTIMATOR(COST), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17784584 or HR@AM-JASSIM.COM

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vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN. suitably qualified applicants can contact 39653165 or ISMAILKAVERY2003@YAHOO.COM JATHOL SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the

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occupation of CLEANER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33307170 or WAJIDGHALAM@YAHOO.COM AHMED ISA CONTRACTING CONSTRUCTION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of LAND

SURVEYOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17552234 or AECONT@HOTMAIL.COM DETAILING EXPERTS TRADING has a vacancy for the occupation of POLISHER(METAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39738333 or MRSHINE\_BAHRAIN@YAHOO.COM

SERENITY HAVEN W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MASSEUR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 38012243 or SERENIT-YHAVEN.BH@GMAIL.COM

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vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39669442 or ZAHRAHASAN620@GMAIL.COM GLOBAL ARATCO BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of CARPENTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17660141 or BNCONSTRUCTION.BH@

CRAVE FOOD TRANSPORTATION CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER(MO-TOR VEHICLE), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33249430 or KIANIBRAZILIAN@GMAIL.

TARIQ INTERNATIONAL TRADING CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES OFFI-CER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33222953 or MOHAMMEDALITARIQ@GMAIL.

GREEN CITY SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33313639 or info@gcs.bh

ESHAAL BUSINESS SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of ACCOUNTANTS, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33057289 or CH7935405@GMAIL.COM

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for the occupation of OFFICE HELPER, suitably

qualified applicants can contact 33849815 or TAAIMURALAM631@GMAIL.COM ALDALEEM MARINE SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MECHANICAL FIT-TER, suitably qualified applicants can contact

17262256 or aldaleem@hotmail.com FRESH LIFE INTERIOR DECORATION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE WORK-ER HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33647620 or FRESHLIFEENTERPRIS-

ES@GMAIL.COM VARY BUILDING MATERIAL TRADING has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17162540

or info@varybuildingmaterial.com Muhammad Aazan Fabrication Co W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CHIEF COMMER-CIAL OFFICER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 13350303 or aazanfabrication.bh@

BAHRAIN@GMAIL.COM HOPE CITY BUSINESS CONSULTANCY W.L.L

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BAL@HOTMAIL.COM

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MAHAMCO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES MANAGER, suitably qualified ap-

la@gmail.com RESTAURANT(MEXICO

cants can contact 17448936 or regal@rmswll. EMRAN FOOD DELIVERY has a vacancy for the

17720617 or CONTACT@WATECHMENA.COM

or ŔAJA\_ASIM2005@YAHOO.COMJ

RAJIB990066@GMAIL.COM

SAINUL@GMAIL.COM

AM1739@GMAIL.COM

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for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17002839 or JAVED-

vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CON-STRUCTION).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35900842 or NAVEED-KHAAAAN7@GMAIL.COM

ANCE@GMAIL.COM

ably qualified applicants can contact 35900842 or NAVEEDKHAAAAN7@GMAIL.COM MF AIR SYSTEM W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of PROJECTS COORDINATOR, suitably

AL HAFAZ FOR DECORATION COMPANY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVI-SOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39930364 or NOORNEWS31@GMAIL.COM

applicants can contact 33189255 or EMANIZA-DV@GMAIL.COM AL SILK METALS SCRAP W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MECHANIC, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33167122 or

ably qualified applicants can contact 66987814 or FIVEMAGICMOBILES@GMAIL.COM

applicants can contact 33222381 or HASANAB-DALLH714@GMAIL.COM MAYOR OF QENA FOR ICE COMPANY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES-

RIYADH AL TAYBEEN TAILORING has a vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified

LIAOAT ALI MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE WORK-ER HELPÉR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33956288 or SABZADAK77@GMAIL.COM

ICE MAGIC LAB W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(JUICE & SANDWICH-

can contact 66611330 or Oujbutt@gmail.com RAANTHAL RESTAURANT W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34028106 or BU-HAIRDC@GMAIL.COM

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ABU NOOR CONTRACTING TRADING & ADVER-TISEMENTS W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CONSTRUCTION WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34509910 or IMFAISAL1987@GMAIL.COM

QUICK ZEBRA SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17700211 or hrd@ dreamgroup.bh

ZENON BOUTIQUE has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33100058 or BOB\_200420@ HOTMAIL.COM

Security Solutions Co. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 77996666 or GOVERNMENT@MRE.CO

LONG TERM GENERAL TRADING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33592927 or ALRAMINO-RAMINO@GMAIL.COM

QUICK ZEBRA SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17700211 or hrd@ dreamgroup.bh

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ALYAMAMA HOUSE FOR CLEANING CON-TRACTING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SERVICEMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17345569 or YAMAMA-HÖUSE1@GMAIL.COM

QUICK ZEBRA SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17700211 or hrd@ dreamgroup.bh

FIRE FIGHTER CO SECURITY AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT TRADING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33337287 or AZIZ65211@GMAIL.COM

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Joseph Gallagher Limited- foreign branch has a vacancy for the occupation of PIPEFITTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17211188 or LAYLA.HAJI@JOSEPHGALLAGHER.CO.UK

KINGDOM ASPHALT COMPANY W L L has a vacancy for the occupation of HEAVY DRIV-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17466776 or ABDULLA@KINGDOM.BH

.AL KARAZ LAUNDRY has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(LAUNDRY), suitably qualified applicants can contact 34449226 or ÁLADRAJ40@GMAIL.COM

Mechanical Contracting & Services Company W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36937988 or MCSC@MCSCWLL.COM

KW ELEVATORS has a vacancy for the occupation of ASSISTANT TECHNÍCIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39613661 or kw.elevators@gmail.com

GOLDEN BOOR CHIMNEY CLEANING SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEAN-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39950399 or MAHMOOD.BOOR1986@GMAIL.COM

AREENA CONTRACTOR GROUP CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17245222 or HR@AREENAGROUP.COM

CAR BATH WASHI SHINE RIDE has a vacancy for the occupation of CAR WASHER/CLEAN-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37554404 or CARSHOWER00@GMAIL.COM

SEVENTIES KARAK has a vacancy for the occupation of SANDWICHES MAKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39664667 or KARAK1977.BAHRAIN@GMAIL.COM

MODERN MECHANICAL ELECTRICAL & TRANS-PORT CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENER-AL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17708888 or lmra@mmetc.com

BURGER ZOOM W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of FOOD SERVICE WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17000435 or BURGERZOOMBH@GMAIL.COM

AWAL DREAM SALON W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of BARBER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33864237 or MUSTA-FADIP92@GMAIL.COM

TRITON BUILDING CONSTRUCTION CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(-CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33142429 or AFSAN125HOSSEN@ GMAIL.COM

INTERLOCK MAINTENANCE CONSTRUCTION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17296175 or ramraj007@ hotmail.com

EMCO COMPANY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of ESTIMATOR(COST), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17821988 or emco@ emco.com.bh

INTEGRATED BUSINESS GATE W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of BUSINESS DE-VELOPMENT MANAGER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34006681 or FAHDEL-NAGAR@YAHOO.COM

SAPPHIRE INDUSTRIES COMPANY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WELDER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39394948 or LAICY@SAPPHIREBH.COM

clean and green services has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39922434 or cleangreenbh@ amail.com

SHUHDI MARKETING has a vacancy for the occupation of CONTRACTS CLERK, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33020130 or DAYAN-FASHİÖNBH@GMAIL.COM

NAFITHA CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of ADMINISTRATIVE MANAG-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33992233 or a39668466@gmail.com

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3 C'S W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SERVICES SUPPORT MANAGER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17295455 or BAS-SEM@3CSBAHRAIN.COM

NATIONAL EXCAVATING EST. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUC-TION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17621168 or NEEWLL@BATELCO.COM.BH

OFFSHORE SHIP BUILDING AND MAINTE-NANCE has a vacancy for the occupation of MECHANICAL ENGINEER(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17731779 or JABER@SULAITIMARINE.COM

TWO SEAS MEP SERVICES COMPANY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVI-SOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33336142 or JOHNSON@TWOSEASEMS.COM

ALHASSANAIN B.S.C CLOSED has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVISOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17559999 or JAA-FAR@ALHASSANAINCO.COM

ON POINT CONSTRUCTION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of PLUMBER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36390606 or INFO@ ONPOINTBH.COM

EUROTURBINE W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17761502 or khursheed-

Al fateh cleaning and Maintenance Company w.l.l has a vacancy for the occupation of CARPENTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17830078 or kanakaraj.pk@horizonintlgroup.com

CUTS LEVEL SALON W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of BARBER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39886550 or ALKARAM. SERVICES@GMAIL.COM

MOFIZE AHMED CARGO HANDLING CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES-MAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35665237 or MOFIZE811@GMAIL.COM

Ramee Grand Hotel & Spa has a vacancy for the occupation of RECEPTIONIST, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17111999 or hrs.bh@rameehotels.com

HASAN ASGHAR CONSTRUCTION OF BUILD-INGS has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33555166 or S2N2N259HERBH12@GMAIL.COM

CHANDPUR INTERIOR DECOR W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE BOY / FAR-RASH, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33993590 or EMONCHATRODOL@GMAIL.COM

LIBERAL CONSTRUCTION, LLC BRANCH OF A FOREIGN COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNICIAN(MECHANICAL EN-GINEERING).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17000574 or BAHRAIN@

EM SQUARE BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPA-NY has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES-MAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66911799 or emsquare.bh@gmail.com

AL ABRAJ RESTAURENT BSC has a vacancy for the occupation of COOK(ASSISTANT), suitably

qualified applicants can contact 38700027 or SALWA@AL-ABRAAJ.COM

SHUTTLE MECHNICAL CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CON-STRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33689921 or muhammedshah338@

FAQIR CARGO HANDLING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of PAINTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 38357941 or rahatali9671@gmail.com

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KHUBZI SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 34191352 or ZAHI-DRASHID\_333@HOTMAIL.COM

RUZAIN COLD STORE BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17000371 or YOUNISKBZ@HOTMAIL.COM

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ABU EBRAHIM SPORTS has a vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33726378 or HASSANA-LI4591@GMAIL.COM

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cupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33448868 or MHMD.ALARADI.94@ GMAIL.COM

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SEA OF GULF NOOR FOOD STUFF W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE WORKER HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33116292 or PALACE.GULF@GMAIL.COM

NK BULDING CONSTRUCTION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES WORK-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35181613 or freezelinkbah@gmail.com

M I CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(MAINTENANCEW).GENER-AL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 32184242 or M.I.75@HOTMAIL.COM

PROJECTS ACCESS SCAFFOLDING & FORM-WORK CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SCAFFOLDER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17737891 or jose@projectsaccess.net

Dar TARADA Alabaya has a vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33256669 or BORJ-ALASAD@HOT-

multi tech contracting has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION).GEN-ERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39444165 or NADIA-ALKHALED@HOTMAIL.COM

ARAIB FACTORY FOR INDUSTRY WLL has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER/PACK-ER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33777623 or ayman.gaber52@gmail.com

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BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SUPERVI-SOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33500974 or RILWAN25@GMAIL.COM

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## 'Sincaraz' set to dominate as 2026 tennis season kicks off

After a dominant 2025, Alcaraz and Sinner headline the new tennis season's launch

United Cup begins season today

Sabalenka favourite for women's title

Djokovic chases elusive 25th major

**AFP** | Sydney

arlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner are set for more world domination in 2026, starting at the Australian Open, while Aryna Sabalenka is bubbling with confidence as she chases further Grand Slam

The new season gets under way on Friday with the mixedteams United Cup in Perth and Sydney, headlined by women's world number two Iga Swiatek and men's world number three Alexander Zverev.

Top-ranked Sabalenka, who Park trophy, starts at the Brisbane International from January 4-11 in a stellar field also pion Madison Keys and fourthranked Amanda Anisimova.

Alcaraz and Sinner, or "Sincaraz" as they have been dubbed, losses. And in the losses I had, ing on January 12, still chasing de Minaur, ranked five, six and play an exhibition in South Ko- I tried to see the positive thing an elusive record 25th major rea on January 10 in their only and tried to use it to evolve me warm-up before the Australian as a player." Open eight days later.

While Spanish sensation Alcaraz bumped his Italian rival cord with eight titles including and Alcaraz took control of the from the season-ending world the French Open and US Open. men's tour, making the semis at number one, having collected number one spot, Sinner had the last laugh by edging him to re-

It capped a stellar year in in the last eight in 2025. which Sinner retained his Australian Open crown and added from his resume and the 22-year-



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz (L) greets Italy's Jannik Sinner during the trophy ceremony at the end of their men's single final match at the ATP Finals tennis tournament, in Turin

doping ban.

"I feel like a better player than boasting Australian Open cham- last year," said Sinner after completing his 2025 campaign with 58 wins and just six defeats.

Alcaraz was similarly dominant, clocking a 71-9 win-loss re-

quarter-finals at the Australian tain his ATP Finals title in Turin. Open, losing to Novak Djokovic

It is the only Slam missing the US Open. a landmark triumph at Wim- old will start afresh with a new in the future to overcome the the likes of Swiatek, Coco Gauff first time, representing Japan.

is pursuing a third Melbourne bledon among six titles, despite coach after his shock split from hurdle of Sinner or Alcaraz in missing three months over a Juan Carlos Ferrero, who men- a best-of-five in a Grand Slam." tored him since he was 15.

#### Djokovic last hurrah?

Djokovic begins what could be his last year on tour at the "A lot of wins and not many Adelaide International start- assime, Taylor Fritz and Alex crown and 11th Australian Open

Now 38, he has had to settle for a secondary role since Sinner But he is yet to go beyond the all four majors in 2025 but not going further.

> "I can do only as much as I can Madrid and Miami. do," he admitted after defeat at

Since his last Slam title, in or Sinner have shared all eight cited to return and see what I

A resurgent Felix Auger-Aliseven respectively, all feature at the United Cup, while Daniil Medvedev and a returning Nick Kyrgios play in Brisbane.

Sabalenka heads into the new season as undoubted world also winning events at Brisbane,

a third Australian Open crown four-time major winner Naomi "It will be very difficult for me and fifth Slam title, although Osaka plays the event for the



**Carlos Alcaraz recently** split with coach Juan Carlos Ferrero, who mentored him since age 15, just as he attempts to win the Australian Open-the only Grand Slam currently missing from his resume

and Elena Rybakina will have something to say.

"The Australian Open is very special to me," said Sabalenka, who lost a three-set thriller to Keys in the 2025 decider and heads to Australia after losing the controversial "Battle of the Sexes" clash to Kyrgios in Dubai.

"Winning it twice gives me confidence, but every year 2023 at the US Open, Alcaraz brings a new challenge. I'm excan achieve."

Challenging her on Pat Rafter Arena in Brisbane will be Keys, along with fellow top-10 stars Rybakina, Anisimova, Jessica Pegula and Mirra Andreeva.

Swiatek leads Poland in Sydnev at the United Cup, again teaming up with Hubert Hurkacz in their quest for revenge after being beaten by Team USA a second US Open title while in the final in 2025 and Germany a year earlier.

The United States are spear-The Belarusian is favourite for headed by Gauff and Fritz, while

#### Ivory Coast top AFCON group ahead of Cameroon, Algeria win again

AFP | Rabat

Reigning champions Ivory Coast pipped Cameroon to top spot in their group after Algeria maintained their perfect record as the first round of the Africa Cup of Nations concluded on Wednesday.

The Ivorians and the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon came into their last Group F matches with identical records, leaving open the possibility that a drawing of lots would be required to determine their final positions.

But in the end the Ivorians finished in first place in Group F on goals scored after coming from two goals down to beat already-eliminated Gabon 3-2 while Cameroon defeated Mozambique 2-1.

Both sides finished on seven points with Mozambique on three points and Gabon on one. Mozambique go through as one of the four best third-placed

Ivory Coast found themselves two goals behind after just 21 minutes in Marrakesh, with Guelor Kanga pouncing on a handling error by goalkeeper Alban the interval and Aston Villa's retain the AFCON title, they will ball into his own net after ini- laid, Fares Chaibi and Ibrahim Lafont to put Gabon in front.



Cameroon's forward #26 Christian Kofane (L) shoots and scores his team second goal past Mozambique's midfielder #20 Kevns Ahdala (R

Los Angeles FC marksman 84th-minute equaliser. Denis Bouanga then fired in Ga-Fae's team up against it.

However, Wilfried Zaha in injury time. squared for Jean-Philippe Kras-

The stage was then set for bon's second, leaving Emerse youngster Bazoumana Toure to Geny Catamo gave Mozambique get the winner for the Elephants

Looking to become the first so to pull one back just before nation since Egypt in 2010 to

16 in Marrakesh next Tuesday.

In Agadir, a great strike by the lead midway through the capital. first half but Cameroon were level before the half-hour mark.

Evann Guessand headed in an now play Burkina Faso in the last tially managing to deflect Frank Maza all on target.

Magri's shot onto the post.

A superb 55th-minute strike by the young Bayer Leverkusen forward Christian Kofane then gave Cameroon the win.

Finishing second in the section means five-time champions Cameroon will play South Africa in the last 16 in Rabat on Sunday.

Hosts Morocco or outsiders Tanzania will face the winners of that tie in the quarter-finals.

Meanwhile Mozambique, who are through to the knockout stage for the first time, will take on Nigeria next.

#### Sudan beaten by Burkina Faso

Two-time former champions Algeria completed the group stage with a perfect record as they beat Equatorial Guinea 3-1 in Rabat to finish with nine points from three games in Group E.

With Algeria already through as group winners and Equatorial Guinea eliminated, nothing was riding on the game in Morocco's

A much-changed Algeria team were three goals to the good by Nene somehow turned the half-time, with Zineddine Be-

## orts of bahrain

## Chelsea part ways with Enzo Maresca

Italian leaves with Chelsea fifth in the league after a poor run of form

Maresca leaves Chelsea after 18 months in charge

One win in last seven **Premier League matches** 

Relationship with board reportedly deteriorated in recent

AFP | London

nzo Maresca has left his role as Chelsea head coach after 18 months in charge, the Premier League club announced yesterday.

"Chelsea Football Club and head coach Enzo Maresca have parted company," said a club statement.

The Italian's exit from Stam--- 15 points adrift of leaders and uted to illness. London rivals Arsenal -- with one win in their last seven topflight games.

position increased during Chelsea's poor run of recent results and the club's hierarchy.

play for across four competichange gives the team the best ple at Chelsea "didn't support chance of getting the season me and the team". back on track," said the club

post-match press conference on the club's supporters.



Chelsea's Italian head coach Enzo Maresca reacts on the pitch (file photo)

following a frantic 2-2 draw with ford Bridge comes with the club Bournemouth on Tuesday, alfifth in the Premier League table though his absence was attrib-

Maresca's decision to substitute Cole Palmer just after the hour mark during the Bourne-Speculation about Maresca's mouth game was booed by Chelsea fans.

The draw meant Chelsea had amid reports of a worsening re- dropped 13 points at home from lationship between the coach winning positions this season -- the bulk of the 15-point deficit "With key objectives still to between the Blues and Arsenal.

Maresca has stood by comtions including qualification ments made on December 13 for Champions League football, after a league win at home to Enzo and the club believe a Evertonwhen he said many peo-

He repeatedly refused to clarify the comments, although he Maresca did not attend the insisted they were not an attack YOU

**Despite his recent** struggles, Maresca guided Chelsea to significant silverware in 2025, winning both the **UEFA Europa Confer**ence League and the FIFA Club World Cup during his tenure

The 45-year-old said the days leading up to the 2-0 victory placed finish in the Premier over Everton were "the worst League.

48 hours" of his time at Chelsea.

Maresca's stock at Chelsea was high after the Blues beat Barcelona 3-0 in the Champions League in November.

But damaging defeats by Leeds, Atalanta and Villa increased the pressure on the Blues boss.

Maresca's contract had been due to run until the summer of 2029, with a club option of a further year.

The former Leicester manager was appointed as successor to Mauricio Pochettino in June

Chelsea won the Europa Conference League and the Club World Cup in 2025 and Maresca also led them back into the Champions League via a fourth-

#### Tsitsipas considered quitting tennis during injury-hit 2025



Stefanos Tsitsipas in action (file photo) AFP | Perth

Stefanos Tsitsipas said yesterday he seriously considered retiring from tennis in the depths of a struggle with serious back pain during much of the 2025 season.

But the former world number three, now ranked 36th after playing just two Davis Cup matches since a second-round exit at the US Open, said his ongoing medical treatment appeared to be paying dividends.

"I'm most excited to see how my actual training responds with regard to my back," the 27-year-old said as he prepared to open his 2026 campaign for Greece at the mixed-teams United Cup in Perth, Australia. ing without pain.

"My biggest concern was if I could finish a match," added the 2023 Australian Open finalist, who said the injury that way. I want to deliver for haunted him "for the last six 2026 and the United Cup. or eight months".

other match without pain?""

US Open loss (to Germany's do that." Daniel Altmaier). I could not walk for two days. That's when lars in the four-year history you reconsider the future of your career."

ious medical consultations he Sakkari, also a former world was now satisfied with his cur- number three, joining Tsitsirent care plan.

"My biggest win for 2026 would be to not have to worry good team and great spirit. We about finishing matches," he are prepared for war -- we are said, adding that he completed Greek. We're going big," Tsitfive weeks of off-season train- sipas said.

My biggest concern was if I could finish a match. I would ask: 'Can I play another match without pain?' I got really scared after the US Open loss (to Germany's Daniel Altmaier). I could not walk for two days. That's when you reconsider the future of your career

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS

"It makes great feedback knowing you had a pre-season without pain -- I hope it stays

"I put in the work. The most "I would ask: 'Can I play an- important thing is full belief that I can come back to where "I got really scared after the I was. I will try everything to

Greece have become reguof the United Cup, played in Perth and Sydney, with fel-Tsitsipas said that after var- low comeback hopeful Maria pas in the team.

"We are here again, with a

#### Neymar extending Santos deal: reports

 $N_{
m new}^{
m eymar}$  has agreed to renew his contract with Santos until the end of 2026, a source close to the negotiations told AFP. On Wednesday, Santos,

Pele's former club, posted a cryptic video on social media showing an aerial view of their Vila Belmiro stadium with the date December 31, 2026, accompanied by the text: "The Neymar time is coming", without mentioning Neymar, whose initial contract expired at midnight on December 31.

Neymar's first season back at his first club was interrupted by injuries, but the 33-yearold scored four times as Santos won their last three games is the top scorer for the Brazil to move out of the relegation with 79 goals, two more than places on the final day of the season in December.

damaged meniscus in his left injury against Uruguay.



knee. Santos said on December 22 that the operation was performed by Brazil's national team doctor and was succesful.

Neymar, who played for Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain and Al-Hilal in Saudi Arabia

He has not played for the After the season, he undernational team since October went an operation to repair a 2023, when he suffered a knee

#### Cummins, Hazlewood in spin-heavy Australia squad for T20 World Cup AFP | Sydney

 $P^{\text{at Cummins and Josh Hazle-}}_{\text{wood were yesterday named}}$ in a spin-heavy provisional Australian squad for this year's Twenty20 World Cup after their Ashes campaign was ruined by

Test skipper Cummins only played one of the five Ashes Tests against England, in Adelaide, as he slowly recovers from a lower back issue, while Hazlewood (Achilles) missed the entire series.

Cummins will have another scan on his back later this month to determine whether he will be fit for the tournament in India and Sri Lanka beginning on February 7.

on the comeback trail, but are expected to be ready.

ing well and we are confident port period."



Pat Cummins (L) and Josh Hazlewood (R) talk during a match (file photo)

Hazlewood and big-hitter they will be available for the George Bailey said.

wood and Tim David are track- made they will ahead of the sup- part-timer Glenn Maxwell.

Left-arm spinners Matt Kuh-Tim David (hamstring) are also World Cup," chief selector nemann and Cooper Connolly were additions to a largely set-"This is a preliminary squad tled 15-man squad, alongside "Pat Cummins, Josh Hazle- so should changes need to be chief tweaker Adam Zampa and

Australia's group-stage

matches are all being played in Sri Lanka with the expectation of spin-friendly surfaces.

In a surprise, Australia opted against a back-up wicketkeeper for Josh Inglis and no left-arm pace replacement for Mitchell Starc, who has retired from the 20-over game.

The fast-bowling attack is led by Cummins and Hazlewood, along with Nathan Ellis and Xavier Bartlett, plus all-rounders Cameron Green and Marcus Stoinis. All are right-handers.

"The T20 side has enjoyed a long run of recent success which enabled the panel to choose a balance of players across the variety of conditions Sri Lanka and India may present." Bailey added.

Australia open their account on February 11 in Colombo against Ireland.

They will name a separate squad for a T20 series against Pakistan that precedes the World Cup.