



Palestinians react as they gather at the site of an explosion

**Israeli strikes kill 9 in Gaza**

Reuters | Gaza

Israeli airstrikes hit targets across Gaza yesterday, killing a senior commander of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement and prompting vows of retaliation from the group, which said it could hit Tel Aviv in response.

Local health officials said at least nine people, including a five-year-old child, had been killed and 44 wounded in the strikes, which came after days of escalating tensions following the arrest of a Palestinian leader during the week.

An Israeli spokesperson said the military estimated it had killed around 15 "terrorists" but said it did not have a final casualty total.

**Exercise extreme caution**

TDT | Manama

The Embassy of Bahrain in Tel Aviv, Israel, yesterday called on Bahraini citizens residing in Israel to exercise extreme caution.

The Embassy asked citizens to abide strictly to security measures announced.

Contact numbers: +972 54 900 1144, +972 50 857 1275, +972 54 292 5050, +973 1722 7555

**Always @ service**



The Community Police officers in Bahrain yesterday held awareness campaigns and offered their services to mourners and visitors at the mourning areas during the Ashura commemoration. Officers worked to ensure security and community services to contribute to the success of the Ashura Commemoration and promote general safety.

**HM King, HRH Prince Salman condole with Philippines President**

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday sent condolences to the President of the Republic of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on the demise of former President Fidel Valdez Ramos.

HM King Hamad and His Royal Highness Prince Salman wished President Marcos and the people of the Philippines fortitude to bear the loss.

**China sanctions Pelosi**

Beijing halts climate, military ties with US over Taiwan visit

● China staging unprecedented military drills around Taiwan

● 68 planes and 13 warships crossed Taiwan's median line yesterday

● China says it will sanction Pelosi over 'vicious' actions

● Pelosi, in Japan, joins PM Kishida in condemning China

● More than 100 warplanes and 10 warships took part in live-fire military drills



China has decided to sanction US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her immediate family in response to her "vicious" and "provocative" actions. Despite China's serious concerns and firm opposition, Pelosi insisted on visiting Taiwan, seriously interfering in China's internal affairs, undermining China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, trampling on the one-China policy, and threatening the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY

TDT | Manama

Tensions over Taiwan with the US found new highs yesterday, with China declaring sanctions on House of

Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi for visiting the island.

Diplomatic relations spiralled further downward, as China's foreign ministry followed up by saying it would cancel dialogues

between the US and Chinese military leaders and suspend bilateral talks on climate and maritime safety.

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington

has made it repeatedly clear to Beijing that it does not seek a crisis.

"There is no justification for this extreme, disproportionate and escalatory military response," Blinken said, speaking at a news conference on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Cambodia. He added, "now, they've taken dangerous acts to a new level".

China launched its largest ever military drills in the

seas and skies around Taiwan on Thursday, a day after Pelosi enraged Beijing by making a solidarity trip to the island, the highest-level US visitor to Taiwan in 25 years. The live-fire drills are to continue until noon on Sunday.

On Friday, China's military conducted air and sea drills to the north, southwest and east of Taiwan "to test the troops' joint combat capabilities", the Eastern Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) said in a statement on its official Weibo account.

Blinken emphasised that the United States would not take action to provoke a crisis, but it would continue to support regional allies and conduct standard air and the maritime transit through the Taiwan Strait. "We will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," he said. The White House summoned Chinese ambassador Qin Gang on Thursday to condemn escalating actions against Taiwan, the Washington Post reported.



**Scam alert**

**UAE police arrest 5 over knifepoint robberies, fake massage parlours**

TDT | Manama

UAE police arrested a gang of five Asians for allegedly running a fake massage parlour, luring and robbing unwitting customers at knifepoint.

Officers of the Sharjah emirate said the gang advertised the salon as a spa for massages and natural therapy sessions.

However, victims who went to the location advertised on massage cards distributed across the



city fell prey to men armed with knives and lost all valuables.

Colonel Omar Al Zoud, the Director of Criminal Investigation at Sharjah Police, said officers opened an investigation based on a tip-off, saying men are distributing massage cards in the Rolla area.

Police in the Sharjah emirate of the UAE have arrested a gang of five Asians who allegedly ran a fake massage parlor to lure unwitting customers and rob them at knifepoint.

Police then arrested the suspect and raided his accommodation to find boxes of massage cards and multiple types of knives.

Police also arrested the rest of the gang members during the investigation.

The suspects, police said, admitted to threatening and robbing victims. Police also released an image of the suspects standing in front of boxes filled with fake massage cards.

**BAHRAIN COVID-19**

TOTAL TESTED  
**10188954**

ACTIVE CASES  
**3780**

DEATHS  
**1511**

DISCHARGED  
**656683**

NEW CASES  
**404**

CRITICAL  
**3**

220 fils (includes VAT)





Dr Jalila bint Sayed Jawad Hassan, the Minister of Health, yesterday inaugurated the Imam Al-Hussain Medical Clinic in the Capital Governorate for the Ashura season. Capital Governor Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa and Jafari Endowment Chairman Yousef Saleh Al Saleh were present. The Minister of Health praised the role of the coordination committee for the Ashura season and its tireless work in preparing the clinic. The Minister was briefed on the medical equipment and health preparations of the clinic.



Jameel Humaidan, the Minister of Labour, yesterday received a copy of the doctoral thesis by Dr Samar Adel Al-Abyuki on "Social Media in Innovative Performance: A Field Study on Workers in the Media Sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain". Humaidan praised the efforts of Dr Al-Abyuki in preparing her academic research, noting the importance of Social media in transmitting information and benefiting from it.

# Mourners flock to commemorate Ashura

TDI | Manama

Mourners from all over Bahrain flocked together yesterday to commemorate Ashura, which falls on the tenth day of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic lunar calendar.

Husseini's funerals, an Alayam report said, commemorated the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and held mourning processions in several regions of the Kingdom.

The Ministry of Interior had taken care of security and traffic arrangements during processions to ensure smooth traffic and the safety of all road users.

Brigadier Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Abdulwahab Al Khalifa, the Director-General of Traffic, had said traffic officers are stationed on all roads leading to ma'atams (community centres) that mark Ashura's anniversary.

He said that the traffic arrangements were part of the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to provide a secure environment and the



Northern Governor visits community centres

requirements for the success of the Ashura season.

Community Service Police were also working to ensure a safe atmosphere during the Ashura season. Officials said they are working to provide facilities and services to make the event successful and enhance public safety.

"We are working to provide services to mourners and carry out awareness campaigns."

Northern Governor visits Ma'atams

Meanwhile, the Northern Governor, Ali Abdhussain Al-Asfoor, continued inspection visits to determine the security, service and health needs of ma'atams (community centres), in line with the directives of Interior Minister, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

Deputy Governor, Brigadier Khalid Rabia Sinan, Chairman of Ashura Committee at the Northern Governorate, Al-Sayed Shareef Abdulla, and other officials

visited the North Sehla, Jannusan, Jid Al-Haj and the southern Karana community centres, accompanied Al-Asfoor.

The governor commended the efforts of community centres' managements and sub-committees to ensure trouble-free organisation of Ashura rituals, praising their cooperation and coordination with security and service authorities.

The governor indicated that in light of the high temperatures, the Northern Governorate had

provided a number of volunteer paramedics with the support of a medical team for emergency cases and distributed 45,000 water bottles in cooperation with the Taj Medical Centre.

He also stressed ensuring food safety at community centres during the Commemoration.

He also called on the management of community centres to register in the pilot programme, "Choose Your Doctor", in coordination with the Supreme Council for Health.

Heads of community centres expressed thanks and appreciation to the Northern Governor and his deputy for their visit, wishing them many happy returns of the religious occasion.



Ashura is observed on the 10th of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar. The term is derived from the Arabic word for the number ten. The word Muharram itself derives from the Arabic root h-r-m, one of whose meanings is "forbidden" (haram). Traditionally, Muharram was one of the four sacred months when fighting was not allowed.



# 'In-person' attendance must for vocational training: new circular

TDT | Manama

Classes at vocational training institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Labour will be strictly in-person as the number of COVID-19 cases declines and the government eases pandemic-related restrictions.

The announcement also follows a recent order by the Higher Education Council making it mandatory for students to attend classes in person in the 2022-'23 academic year in all higher education institutions in the Kingdom.

In the circular released yesterday, Jameel Humaidan, the Minister of Labour, orders all licenced institutions in the Kingdom to conduct training activities in person.

In-person attendance, the



Representative picture

circular says, is necessary for strengthening training and achieving its objectives.

The members of the administrative and training bodies in the institutions are obliged to be present at the institution during official working hours, the

circular says. The circular also urges trainees to ensure their presence during theoretical and practical classes, which include assessments, examinations and on-the-job training.

The order requires training institutions to stick to the spec-

ified absorptive capacity and not to exceed it, considering the availability of health facilities and rest areas for trainees and their compatibility with specific health standards.

The circular also warns of penalties for non-compliance

with any training institutions.

The circular, however, excludes training programmes that have basic requirements for remote training.

The minister also confirms that the new circular is for programmes shifted to online plat-



Jameel Humaidan, Labour Minister



Vocational education and training allows students to gain practical experience in their chosen career path before they even graduate. Students who finish those rigorous programmes, have the credentials and training they need to get started right-away in their chosen career path.

forms amid the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Thursday, Bahrain reported zero COVID-19 deaths, with 454 new cases and 4,014 active cases. Total COVID-19 deaths, on Friday, stand at 1,511.

## Fire breaks out in a company in Aker, no injuries

TDT | Manama

A fire that broke out in a company in the eastern Aker region yesterday was brought quickly under control by the Civil Defence Forces.

According to people familiar with the matter, Civil Defence forces dispatched fire tenders to the spot shortly after the incident.

No injuries or casualties were reported in the incident so far.

No clarification is available on what caused the accident or the extent of the damage caused. Interior Ministry, in a



tweet, confirmed the incident later. The tweet reads: "The Civil Defence managed to put out a fire that broke out in a company in the eastern Aker region without causing any injuries, and investigations are underway to find out the cause of the fire."

## Arson attack in Buhair: Police catch suspect in less than 24 hrs

TDT | Manama

Setting a vehicle on fire in the Buhair area has landed a man in the dock in less than 24 hours of reporting the crime.

The Criminal Investigation police at the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation & Forensic Science was instrumental in arresting the 49-year-old suspect behind the arson attack.

The man, whose nationality or name stays undisclosed, allegedly set the vehicle on fire over a personal dispute with its owner.

The man, however, landed in custody, thanks to quick police action.

Police said they opened an in-



Representative pictures

vestigation soon after receiving a report.

Crime scene evidence, including CCTV footage, led the

police to identify the suspect.

Police then went on with a

search operation to arrest the suspect and managed to do that within 24 hours of registering the complaint.

The General Directorate said they took all legal measures to refer the suspect to Public Prosecution.



Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Kingdom, yesterday visited the members of the Dawoodi Bohra community in London on the occasion of Muharram at the invitation of Sultan Al-Bohra Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, the spiritual leader and 53rd Da'i al-Mutlaq of one million Dawoodi Bohras. Sultan Al-Bohra Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin started the meeting by thanking His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for their tremendous support to the Bohra Community in the Kingdom. He also thanked Ambassador Shaikh Fawaz for participating in the rituals for Muharram.



Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, the Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, yesterday affirmed his keenness to enhance the quality of public services during an inspection visit to the customer service centre in the Muharraq municipality building. Undersecretary of Municipal Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, accompanied the minister. The minister met employees there and listened to their observations and opinions on services provided by the centre. The minister stressed that the ministry is always keen to develop services to the highest standards by incorporating the latest technologies in line with the needs of the citizens.

# Election bells are ringing again

TDT | Manama

Preparations are well on the way for the 2022 general elections expected to be held in November this year in Bahrain.

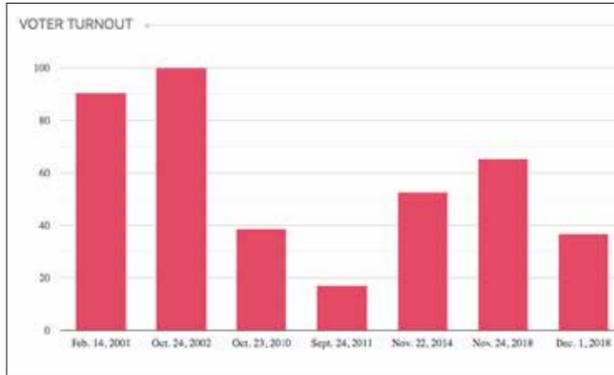
The largest democratic exercise, which will see the election of 40 members of the Council of Representatives, is going on to be an enormous task amid threats of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of monkeypox.

Bahrain, however, seems to be well up to the task with systematic and well-thought-out preventive measures, including against the new monkeypox scare.

The latest news on the upcoming election is that the Ministry of Information has got the ball rolling for ensuring extensive media coverage for the mega referendum.

For which, the ministry has launched a tender for providing advertising breaks for the upcoming "election for Kingdom".

It reads, "The purpose of this



tender is to provide the technical requirements to cover the event of Kingdom of Bahrain Election 2022."

Election coverage, the tender says, will be through television, creativity and eMedia, for which the board seeks bids from interested service providers. Bids should reach the tender board before the 31st of August 2022, with a BD500 bond and BD15 tender fees.

Thus, the election, which polled over 134,000 votes when

held last time, is also expected to bring revenues to the state coffers.

### The election

Bahrain has a bicameral National Assembly (al-Jamiyah al-Watani) consisting of the Shura Council (Majlis Al-Shura) with 40 seats and the Council of Representatives (Majlis Al-Nuwab) with 40 seats.

In the Shura Council (Majlis Al-Shura), HM King appoints the 40 members. In the Council

of Representatives (Majlis Al-Nuwab), a majority vote determines the 40 members from constituencies to serve 4-year terms. The Council of Representatives (Majlis an-nuwab), are also sometimes translated as the "Chamber of Deputies".

However, if no candidate receives an absolute majority in the first round, the election will go for a runoff.

The last election for the council was on the 24th of November 2018, with the runoff on the

1st of December. People elected ten members each from the Capital and Southern governorate, eight from the Muharraq Governorate and 12 from the Northern Governorate.

In the 2014 elections, independents won 37 of 40 seats.

According to the 2018 data, there were 365,467 registered voters in the Kingdom.

### Runoff voting

The two-round system, also known as runoff voting, second

ballot, or ballotage, is a voting method used to elect a single candidate, where voters cast a single vote for their preferred candidate.

The election moves to a second round only if no candidate received a simple majority (more than 50%) in the first round.

Only the two candidates who received the most votes in the first round, or only those candidates who received above a prescribed proportion of the votes, are candidates in the second round. Others are excluded.



The 2018 data says Bahrain has about 318,000 registered voters out of a population of around 1.3 million.

Only Bahraini nationals are entitled to stand for and to vote in elections.

In 2018, nine out of 40 constituencies were decided in the first round, with the other 31 going to a runoff. According to the government, voter turnout in the first round was 67%, an increase from 53% in the 2014 elections.



## Focus on ensuring safety of road users

TDT | Manama

Works are on the way to enhancing and upgrading Bahrain's road safety measures in line with international standards.

The move is part of the Bahrain Road Safety Assessment programme (BAHRAINRAP) to set future strategies, plans and safety interventions, for

which the ministry has also launched a tender.

The tender invites engineering consultancy firms registered with CRPEP, Bahrain, under Grade A, B and C, on or before the Tender issue date.

The contract duration as per the tender is 12 months.

Interested parties should enter their bids before the 7th of September 2022, with a BD100 bond and

BD100 tender fees.

The project will follow the parameters of the International road assessment programme (IRAP), which will provide the ministry with an evidence-based approach to road risk assessment.

IRAP is a registered charity dedicated to saving lives by eliminating high-risk roads around the globe. The agen-

cy works with governments, road authorities, mobility clubs, development banks, NGOs and research organisations.

The tender is for assessing and producing a risk mapping and the star rating of the 400 kilometres of major road networks in the Kingdom. The project also calls for conducting a star rating of five projects at the design stage and ten schools.



The network of roads and highways in Bahrain has a total length of 4,122 km, according to world data. For each of the country's 1.75 million inhabitants, this corresponds to 2.36 meters. This puts Bahrain in 165th place in the global ranking.

## Experienced Diesel supplier needed

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Real Estate Investment (Edamah) is looking forward to hiring a supplier of Diesel for electricity generators at Al-Jazayer Public Beach.

A tender launched says

those interested should bid before the 21st of August 2022, with a BD500 bond and BD15 tender fees.

Eligible suppliers should have a minimum of 2 years of experience in Petroleum supply.

## SIO offers maintenance contract

TDT | Manama

The Social Insurance Organisation is offering a one-year contract for maintaining its offices for a year.

A tender launched says the contract starts from the 1st of February 2023 to the 31st of

January 2024. Works include electrical, air condition, plumbing and emergency generator.

Interested parties should bid before the 31st of August 2022, with a BD500 bond and BD15 tender fees.

## MoFNE wants external glass cleaners



TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Finance & National Economy has launched a tender for hiring glass cleaners.

The services are for cleaning the external glasses of its headquarters.

The tender says those interested should

clean the outer glasses of the building once in two months, except the 11th and 12 floor, which needs monthly cleaning.

The headquarter building is in the Diplomatic area in Manama. In all, the building has 12 floors, including a ground floor. Make bids before the 23rd of August 2022, with a BD500 bond and BD15 tender fees.

## Dawajin tender for poultry vaccines

TDT | Manama



The General Poultry Company (Dawajin) has launched a tender for hiring a supplier of poultry vaccines.

The tender says the company is looking for a supplier who provides quality products at competitive pricing.

Make bids before the 24th of August 2022, with a BD500 bond and BD15 tender fees.

## Stray dog menace in your locality? Dog hunters are on way

TDT | Manama

Troubled by stray dog menace in your locality?

Some say they are chased by aggressive strays the moment they step out of the house.

Others say they have lost their sleep to incessant barking at night.

But, don't worry.

The works ministry is rolling out a plan to ease the canine trouble in the Kingdom.

They are now appointing dog hunters to remove aggressive stray from residential localities

in the Kingdom.

Once the ministry gets a complaint in this regard, the hunters will get launched into action.

This is according to the latest tender by the ministry that offers a two-year contract for hunting and catching stray dogs.

Interested parties should "trap stray dogs from all areas of the Kingdom in response to complaints."

The tender also adds that a contractor should transport dogs to a designated clinic and

then transport them from the clinic to non-residential areas as directed by Animal Wealth.

So, if anyone out there is willing to play a part in this, make bids to grab the job.

Bids should reach the tender board before the 24th of August 2022, with a BD500 bond and BD30 tender fees.



### Snickers maker apologises for advert suggesting Taiwan is a country



Reuters | Beijing

Mars Wrigley, makers of the Snickers candy bar, apologised yesterday for a Snickers product launch which Chinese social media users said suggested that Taiwan was a country.

Videos and pictures of an event promoting a limited edition Snickers bar that was said to be only available in the "countries" of South Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan went viral on Chinese microblogging platform Weibo on Friday.

Mars Wrigley on its Snickers China Weibo account published an apology and said the relevant content had been amended.

# LuLu among Forbes list of top GCC exchange houses going digital

Exchange houses in the UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait have bagged the top honours

TDT | Manama

In a major acknowledgement of the GCC region's move towards digitization of financial services, Forbes Middle East yesterday unveiled its list of 'Top 5 GCC Exchange Houses Going Digital'.

The list shines the spotlight on remittance companies in the GCC region that have been driving the digitization of their services, in line with the efforts of their respective nations.

UAE-based LuLu Exchange and Al Ansari Exchange, Kuwait-based Al Mulla Exchange, Qatar-based Alfardan Exchange, and Oman-based Purshottam Kanji Exchange are the top five



UAE-based LuLu Exchange and Al Ansari Exchange, Kuwait-based Al Mulla Exchange, Qatar-based Alfardan Exchange, and Oman-based Purshottam Kanji Exchange are the top five companies on this list.

companies on this list.

These companies are well-established institutions, having provided high-quality services to both retail consumers and businesses over several years. They have been in news recently for their aggressive digital push and digital infrastructure investments. Between them, these companies serve millions of customers in GCC and have invested heavily in building state-of-the-art digital infrastructure to drive their next stage of growth.

The companies were evaluated by Forbes on the number of app downloads, a number of users and the annual volume of digitally conducted transactions.

## Sri Lanka considering restructure of local and sovereign debt - president

Reuters | Colombo

Sri Lanka is considering a restructure of local and sovereign debt, President Ranil Wickremesinghe said yesterday, as the island nation battles its worst financial crisis in its independent history.

The country is due to restart bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in August in the hope of securing \$3 billion in funding.

The government is working with its financial and legal advisers Lazard and Clifford Chance to finalise a plan to restructure overseas debt, including about \$12 billion owed to bondholders.

"Have we got to look at local debt? That has far-reaching consequences," Wickremesing-



Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena

he told a conference in Colombo. "The financial advisors are looking at both things."

Sri Lanka's central bank governor said on July 7 the country would not seek to restructure local debt.

The IMF has also previously warned countries of issues restructuring local debt, point-

ing to the impact on domestic banks.

"Restructuring domestic debt is like surgery - you only do it if you must, and you avoid it if it might do more harm than good," officials at the IMF said in a blog post in December.

Sajith Premadasa, leader of Sri Lanka's main opposition party, on Friday met with Wickremesinghe, who earlier this week reiterated a call for the formation of a unity government to help the country out of its crisis.

"Held far reaching discussions with the president together with my team," Premadasa wrote on Twitter.

"Positive about joining forces for the sake of the country. Shall do so without ministerial positions, perks and privileges."

## India bids to sell fighter jets to Malaysia, says six other countries interested

Reuters | New Delhi

India has offered to sell 18 light-combat aircraft (LCA) "Tejas" to Malaysia, the defence ministry said yesterday, adding that Argentina, Australia, Egypt, the United States, Indonesia, and the Philippines were also interested in the single-engine jet.

The Indian government last year gave a \$6 billion contract to state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HIAL) for 83 of the locally produced Tejas jets for delivery starting around 2023 - four decades after it was first approved

in 1983.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, keen to reduce India's reliance on foreign defence equipment, has also been making diplomatic efforts to export the jets. The Tejas has been beset by design and other challenges, and was once rejected by the Indian Navy as too heavy.

The defence ministry told parliament that Hindustan Aeronautics in October last year responded to a request for proposal from the Royal Malaysian Air Force for 18 jets, offering to sell the two-seat

er variant of Tejas.

"Other countries which have evinced interest in the LCA aircraft are: Argentina, Australia, Egypt, USA, Indonesia, and Philippines," India's junior defence minister, Ajay Bhatt, told members of parliament in a written reply.

He said the country was also working on manufacturing a stealth fighter jet, but declined to give a timeline citing national security concerns.

Britain said in April it would support India's goal of building its own fighter jets. India currently has a mix of Russian, British and French fighter jets.

India is looking to ground all its Soviet-era Russian fighter jets, the MiG-21, by 2025, following a number of fatal crashes, the Times of India daily reported last month.



# Amazon buys robot vacuum maker for \$1.7 billion

Reuters

Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) will acquire iRobot Corp (IRBT.O), maker of robotic vacuum cleaner Roomba, in an all-cash deal for about \$1.7 billion, in the latest push by the world's largest online retailer to expand its stable of smart home devices.

Amazon will pay \$61 per share, valuing iRobot at a premium of 22% to the stock's last closing price of \$49.99.

iRobot's shares rose 19% in early Friday trading to \$59.56. At its peak during pandemic lockdowns, iRobot was trading at more than twice that price as hygiene-conscious consumers invested in premium vacuum cleaners.

Amazon already owns virtual assistant Alexa, Ring, which monitors homes, and a smart thermostat, giving it a range of products in the "internet of things" category, said Ethan Glass, an antitrust expert with law firm Cooley LLP.

He said the US Federal Trade Commission, which is already investigating Amazon, would likely review the transaction.



Prompts on how to use Amazon's Alexa personal assistant are seen as a wifi-equipped Roomba begins cleaning a room in an Amazon 'experience center' in Vallejo, California

"I would say there is a three out of four chance of a deep investigation and a one out of four chance of a challenge," he

said. "The political appointees have made clear that they would rather go to court and lose than let a deal through that later is

criticized as anti-competitive, especially as they seek to change the laws."

Charlotte Slaiman of Public

Knowledge added that antitrust enforcers now saw the risk of under-enforcement as an issue rather than just over-enforcement. "The costs of inaction are much higher than antitrust experts used to think," she said.

Besides sweeping up dirt, Roomba vacuums that cost as much as \$1,000 collect spatial data on households that could prove valuable to companies developing smart home technology.

But iRobot's fortunes took a hit as consumers started rethinking how they spend their money amid rising inflation. Its second-quarter revenue fell 30% on weak demand from retailers in North America and Europe, Middle East and Africa.

The deal comes at a time analysts expect cash-rich technology companies to go on an M&A spree to take advantage of low valuations due to growth pressures. Amazon currently has cash and cash-equivalents of more than \$37 billion.

Devices make up a fraction of overall sales at Amazon, but include smart thermostats, se-

curity devices and it has recently launched a canine-like robot called Astro.

"It seems like (CEO) Andy Jassy is going to employ M&A more than (predecessor) Jeff Bezos and it makes more sense to me now that Amazon is bigger and has more cash," said D.A. Davidson analyst Thomas Forte.



If the deal falls through, Amazon would be required to pay iRobot a \$94 million termination fee. On completion of the deal, Colin Angle would remain as the chief executive of iRobot.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

WHEN AMBITION ENDS, HAPPINESS BEGINS  
THOMAS MERTON

News in brief

Sri Lanka considering restructure of local and sovereign debt

Sri Lanka is considering a restructure of

local and sovereign debt, President Ranil Wickremesinghe said yesterday, as the island nation battles its worst financial crisis in its independent history. The country is due to restart bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in August in the hope of securing \$3 billion in funding. The government is working with



its financial and legal advisers Lazard and Clifford Chance to finalise a plan to restructure overseas debt, including about \$12 billion owed to bondholders.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said yesterday

Japan remains open to dialogue with China, foreign minister says

that Japan remains open to dialogue with China as keeping communications intact is all the more important when ties are strained. Hayashi's comment to reporters came after China on Thursday canceled a meeting between Hayashi and his Chinese counterpart, set to take place on the sidelines of an ASEAN meeting in Cambodia, due to its displeasure with a G7 statement urging Beijing to resolve the tension over Taiwan peacefully.



Taiwan woman gets life sentence over blaze that killed 46

A Taiwanese woman who set off the island's deadliest fire in decades

to get back at her boyfriend escaped the death penalty yesterday as the court handed down a life sentence. Last October's inferno in the southern city of Kaohsiung raged through multiple floors of a dilapidated 13-storey apartment block for hours, killing 46 people and injuring 41. Authorities had said the blaze started when



the defendant Huang Ke-ke, 51, left unextinguished incense ashes on a sofa before leaving the building. Huang was indicted on murder and arson charges in January, with prosecutors seeking her execution.

The Malian army and "white-skinned soldiers"

Malian and 'white' soldiers involved in 33 civilian deaths: UN experts

were involved in the deaths of 33 civilians, according to an expert report to the UN. The bodies of 29 Mauritians and four Malians were found near the village of Robinet El Ataye in the Segou region, where 33 civilians had been beaten and taken away on March 5, a Panel of Experts on Mali said in a report to the UN Security Council late last month. A diplomatic source in New York told AFP that the white soldiers were paramilitaries of Russia's Wagner group.

Greek intelligence service boss quits amid wiretapping scandal

The head of Greece's intelligence service has stepped down, the prime

minister's office said, following growing pressure on the government to shed light on the use of surveillance malware. EYP chief Panagiotis Kontoleon had submitted his resignation "following mistaken actions found during lawful wiretapping procedures," the prime minister's office said in a statement.

Thai nightclub fire kills 14, PM orders probe

AFP | Bangkok

Thailand's prime minister yesterday ordered an investigation into a massive blaze that tore through a nightclub, killing at least 14 people.

The fire broke out around 1:00 am (1800 GMT Thursday) at the Mountain B nightclub in Chonburi province's Sattahip district, about 150 kilometres (90 miles) southeast of Bangkok.

Video footage posted by a rescue service showed desperate revellers fleeing the club screaming, their clothes ablaze, as a huge fire raged in the background.

Chalit Chotisupakarn, who escaped with burns to his arms and torso, described scenes of panic and desperation as people struggled to get out of the building.

"I couldn't see anything, everything was dark. Everybody was shouting 'Get out! Get out!' We all had to try to get out," he told reporters.

"I just pushed and pushed. There were people with fire all over their bodies."

The Sawang Rojanathammasathan Rescue Foundation said 14 people were killed and around 40 injured.

The service said the blaze was accelerated by flammable acoustic foam on the walls of the club, and it took firefighters more than three hours to bring it under control.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha offered condolences to the victims' families and said he had ordered a probe into the fire.

The dead -- four women and 10 men -- were found mostly crowded by the entrance and in the bathroom, their bodies severely burned, the service said.

They were aged between 17 and 49 and all are believed to have been Thai.

"There is not death related to foreigners," police lieutenant



Major fire damage fills the interior at the Mountain B pub in the Sattahip district of Chonburi province

BETTER YOU KNOW

Concerns have long been raised about Thailand's lax approach to health and safety regulations, particularly in its countless bars and nightclubs

Images of the aftermath showed how the fire had turned the inside of the club into a blackened wreck, with the charred metal frames of furniture scattered among ashes.

Police are investigating if fire escapes were present in the one-storey building and engineers are inspecting the structure amid fears it could collapse.

Interior minister Anupong Paochinda told reporters it appeared the Mountain B was operating "without permission" to run as an entertainment venue.

Sompong Chingduang, assistant commissioner of the Royal Thai Police, said the owner was under investigation for apparently changing the venue from a restaurant to a nightclub without permission.

Concerns have long been raised about Thailand's lax approach to health and safety regulations, particularly in its countless bars and nightclubs.

A massive inferno erupted at a New Year's Eve party at Bangkok's swanky Santika club in 2009, killing 67 people and injuring more than 200. The owner of Santika was jailed for three years over the blaze, which began when fireworks were set off as a rock band called Burn played on stage.

Charred wreck

One of the victims was the singer of the band playing at the club, his mother told local media.

"I don't know what to say. The death came all of a sudden," Premjai Sae-Oung told reporters.

She said a musician friend who managed to escape had told her the fire broke out in front of the band and spread rapidly.

After ready

Kremlin says swap must be discussed without publicity

AFP | Washington

Russia said yesterday it was ready to discuss a prisoner swap with Washington at the presidential level, a day after the drug conviction of US basketball star Brittney Griner.

Despite tensions soaring between Russia and the US since the launch of Moscow's military intervention in Ukraine, the former Cold War rivals appeared to be edging closer to a new prisoner exchange.

The White House has urged Russia to accept its offer of a deal for the release of Griner and former US Marine Paul Whelan, who was sentenced to 16 years in prison on espionage charges.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday said Moscow was willing to discuss the matter. "We are ready to discuss this subject, but only within the framework of the (communication) channel established by presidents Putin and Biden," Lavrov told a press conference on a visit to Cambodia.

"There is a special channel established by the presidents and despite certain public declarations, it is still functional," he added.

US Secretary of State Antony

COVID-19: Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	93,739,666	1,057,811
2 India	44,107,588	526,600
3 France	33,993,930	152,457
4 Brazil	33,964,494	679,594
5 Germany	31,178,705	144,717
6 UK	23,368,899	185,052
7 Italy	21,251,774	172,904
8 S. Korea	20,273,011	25,191
9 Russia	18,672,422	382,651
10 Turkey	15,889,495	99,341
11 Japan	13,598,290	33,159
12 Spain	13,245,996	110,719
13 Vietnam	11,192,043	43,094
14 Australia	9,586,984	12,201

Global tally: 587,123,699

Deaths: 6,431,586

Recovered: 557,233,131

New cases: +594,116

New deaths: +1,003

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	515,645		24,613		442,182	48,850
Saudi Arabia	810,583	+189	9,257	+2	796,701	4,625
UAE	996,775	+998	2,337	+2	975,590	18,848
Kuwait	653,730		2,559		647,555	3,616
Oman	395,737		4,260		384,669	6,808
Qatar	412,897	+760	681		405,519	6,697

Banksy painting sprayed in West Bank resurfaces in Tel Aviv

AP | Tel Aviv

A long-lost painting by the British graffiti artist Banksy has resurfaced in a swank art gallery in downtown Tel Aviv, an hour's drive and a world away from the concrete wall in the occupied West Bank where it was initially sprayed.

The relocation of the painting -- which depicts a sling-shot-toting rat and was likely intended to protest the Israel occupation -- raises ethical questions about the removal of artwork from occupied territory and the display of such



An Israeli art dealer reveals the painting by Banksy in Urban Gallery in Tel Aviv

politically-charged pieces in radically different settings from where they were created.

The painting initially appeared near Israel's separation barrier in the occupied West Bank city of Bethlehem and was one of several works created in secret around 2007. They employed Banksy's trademark absurdist and dystopian imagery to protest Israel's decades-long occupation of territories the Palestinians want for a future state.

Now it resides at the Urban Gallery in the heart of Tel Aviv's financial district, surrounded

Hundreds of thousands

AP | Baghdad

Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis heeded the call of an influential cleric to gather in a show of strength for a mass prayer in the heart of Baghdad's government zone yesterday. The gathering took place amid an escalating political crisis that has put the country's capital on edge.

The powerful cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, had called on his followers from across Iraq to come to pray inside Baghdad's Green Zone -- a heavily fortified area in the heart of the city that houses government buildings and foreign embassies. They arrived and stood outside in the scorching summer heat, with temperatures reaching 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit).

Meanwhile, in the holy southern city of Najaf, the head of Iraq's UN mission, Jeannine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with al-Sadr yesterday. She told reporters afterward that they discussed the importance of finding a solution to the political crisis.

Yesterday's mass prayer was the latest display of strength by the cleric, whose political power derives from his strong grassroots support base. The crowds

YOU KNOW WHAT

The graffiti artwork was spray-painted on a concrete block that was part of an abandoned Israeli army position in Bethlehem, next to a soaring concrete section of the separation barrier

1661

The Treaty of The Hague is signed whereby the Dutch Republic sells New Holland (Brazil) for 63 tonnes of gold to Portugal

1890

At Auburn Prison in New York, murderer William Kemmler becomes the 1st person to be executed by electric chair

1945

Atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima by the US B-29 Superfortress "Enola Gay"



1991

Tim Berners-Lee releases files describing his idea for the World Wide Web. www debuts as a publicly available service on the Internet

# Griner gets jail, Russia to discuss swap with US

White House will 'pursue' Kremlin offer to discuss prisoner swap



WNBA star and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner is escorted from a court room after a hearing

Blinken, who spoke to Lavrov about the exchange last Friday, said Washington will be "pursuing" discussions with Russia.

He also said Griner's conviction put a spotlight on the "Russian government's use of wrongful detentions to advance its own agenda using individuals as political pawns".

WNBA player Griner was on Thursday sentenced to nine years in a Russian penal colony and ordered to pay a fine of one million rubles (\$16,590) for possessing and smuggling narcotics.

The two-time Olympic basketball gold medalist and Women's NBA champion was detained at a Moscow airport in February after she was found carrying vape cartridges with cannabis oil in her

luggage.

The Phoenix Mercury player was coming to Russia to play club basketball with UMMC Ekaterinburg during the US off-season -- a common path for American stars seeking additional income.

Griner pleaded guilty to the charges, but said she did not intend to break the law or use the banned substance in Russia.

## 'Honest mistake'

"I want the court to understand it was an honest mistake that I made while rushing, under stress, trying to recover from post-Covid and just trying to get back to my team," Griner said in her final statement before the verdict.

Griner had testified that she had permission from a US doctor

**"We are ready to discuss this topic, but within the framework of the channel that was agreed upon by presidents Putin and Biden. If the Americans decide to once again resort to public diplomacy ... that is their business and I would even say that it is their problem"**

RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV

to use medicinal cannabis to relieve pain from her many injuries, and had never failed a drug test.

The use of medical marijuana is not allowed in Russia.

Griner's legal team said they plan to appeal the "unreasonable" verdict.

US President Joe Biden called Griner's conviction "unacceptable" and said Washington would "work tirelessly" to secure her release.

Blinken has said Washington put forward a "substantial proposal" for the exchange of Griner and Whelan.

The highest-profile Russian prisoner in the United States is Victor Bout, a 55-year-old arms trafficker, dubbed the "Merchant of Death", who is serving 25 years in jail.

There is no official confirma-

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

Lavrov and Blinken were both in Cambodia yesterday for a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Blinken did not even glance at his Russian counterpart as they took their seats at an East Asia Summit

tion that Washington has offered to exchange him.

Bout's wife Alla yesterday expressed her sympathies to Griner's family, saying she hoped her husband and the US athlete will be able to return home.

"Sympathy has no citizenship and nationality, it is a universal human emotion," she told Russian news agency RIA Novosti, expressing hope that Russia and the US would "come to an agreement".

Russia and the United States have already conducted one prisoner swap since the start of Moscow's Ukraine offensive.

In April, Washington exchanged former US Marine Trevor Reed for convicted drug smuggler Konstantin Yaroshenko.

## Blast in Kabul, Afghanistan kills 8; Islamic State claims responsibility



A general view of Kabul Reuters | Kabul

The Islamic State (IS) militant group claimed responsibility for a deadly blast yesterday in a residential area in Afghanistan's capital Kabul.

Police said at least eight people were killed and 18 wounded in the blast. The militant group said in a statement that 20 people were killed and injured in the attack in western Kabul. "The explosion happened in a crowded place," police spokesman Khalid Zadran said.

Video posted on social media purportedly of the blast site showed men rushing to help the injured after the incident.

A senior Taliban security official, who declined to be named, said primary investigations revealed that explosives were placed in a vegetable cart and the blast resulted in the wounding and killing of more than 50 people, including women and children.

"There is a possibility that the death toll will increase because most of the wounded people had critical wounds," he said.

## Thousands gather for mass prayer in Baghdad



Followers of cleric Muqtada al-Sadr gather during an open-air Friday prayers at Grand Festivities Square

Several people fainted after waiting for hours for the prayer to start and were taken to hospital in ambulances.

Al-Sadr has used his large grassroots following as a pressure tactic against his rivals after his party was unable to form a government despite having won the largest number of seats in federal elections last October. He abandoned efforts to form the next government in June.

His followers gathered facing the Victory Arch, a monument erected during Saddam Hussein's regime to commemorate the Iran-Iraq war and for holding military parades.

## Erdogan says Turkey-Russia delegation meetings fruitful

Reuters | Istanbul

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said he would discuss developments in Syria with Russian leader Vladimir Putin during his visit to Russia yesterday.

Sitting opposite Putin ahead of their talks in the Black Sea city of Sochi, Erdogan said earlier meetings between Turkish and Russian delegations on politics, economic and trade issues had been fruitful.

Their meeting, less than three weeks since they held talks in Tehran, comes after Turkey helped broker a deal to resume Ukraine's Black Sea grain exports which were blocked by Russia's invasion.

"Our meeting will be completed and open a very different page in Turkey-Russia relations," Erdogan said in comments broadcast on Turkish television.

He did not mention Ukraine. But he said he believed their talks on Syria "will bring further relief to the region".



Russian President Vladimir Putin listens to Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan during a meeting in Sochi

**"Our meeting will be completed and open a very different page in Turkey-Russia relations"**

TAYYIP ERDOGAN

Erdogan has threatened to order new military operations in Syria to extend 30-km (20-mile) deep "safe zones" on the

border.

Turkey backs fighters in Syria who have fought against President Bashar al-Assad, who is in turn supported by Russia. Ankara's operations in northern Syria have largely targeted a Kurdish militia which it views as a terrorist group.

Earlier, Erdogan's communications director Fahrettin Altun said the international community could not end the war in Ukraine by ignoring Moscow.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



As I depart Cambodia, I'm reflecting on the meetings I had with ASEAN Foreign Ministers and other regional leaders. We made progress toward our shared goals, and I leave with optimism about the progress we still can make together toward our vision for the Indo-Pacific region.

@SecBlinken

02



Earlier today, I announced the deployment of up to 225 Canadian Forces personnel to train new Ukrainian Armed Forces recruits. Training is the most valuable contribution we can make to support Ukraine as it fights for its sovereignty and stability.

@AnitaAnandMP

03



Today's jobs report shows that the economy added 528,000 jobs in July. More people are working than at any point in American history. That's no accident, it's results.

@POTUS

04



While the problems we face today are unprecedented, they are not insurmountable. Today I briefed the #UNGA on our work for Our Common Agenda - our plan to unite the international community around solutions for a safer, more resilient & inclusive world.

@antonioguterres

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

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

Yesterday's mass prayer was the latest display of strength by the cleric, whose political power derives from his strong grassroots support base

stretched for miles, spilling into the streets outside the square.

# Classifieds



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# CELEBS



## Brad Pitt admits he cries about time moving fast as he calls daughter Zahara smart

**Celebretainment | Los Angeles**

Brad Pitt mused he cries about time moving fast as he called his daughter Zahara smart. The 'Bullet Train' actor, 58, made the admission after he also talked about his daughter Shiloh, in a rare move of talking about the child.

dren he shares with ex-wife Angelina Jolie, from whom he split six years ago. He told Vanity Fair about 17-year-old Zahara: "I'm so proud of her. She's so smart. She's going to flourish even more at college." The singleton, who split from Angelina, 47, in 2016, added: "It's an exciting and beautiful time to find her own way and pursue her interests. I'm so proud. "Where does the time go,

right? They grow up too fast. It brings a tear to the eye." It comes after he told Entertainment Tonight Shiloh, 16, is so "beautiful" it makes him well up. He said her dancing is so good "it brings a tear to the eye, yeah". The 'Fight Club' star has three biological children with Angelina - Shiloh and 13-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne - plus three adopted kids, Maddox, 20, Pax, 18 and Zahara.

Angelina said Zahara had landed a place at the historically black liberal arts college for women and will be relocating to Atlanta, Georgia, in the coming months. The 'Maleficent' actress shared a photo of daughter and some of her fellow students, some of whom were wearing Spelman shirts, and wrote on Instagram: "Zahara with her Spelman sisters! Congratulations to all new students starting this year. A

**Where does the time go, right? They grow up too fast. It brings a tear to the eye**  
BRAD PITT

very special place and an honor to have a family member as a new Spelman girl. #spelmann #spelmanncollege #spelmannsisters #HBCU."

She has said about juggling the demands of parenting a large family: "I want to give them a bit of structure. I try to make schedules at home. "My daughter Zahara is better at organising things than I am." Brad and Angelina's eldest son Maddox studied at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea, though his classes moved online and he returned to the US during the Covid pandemic.

## Jason Momoa surprises passengers, serves water on flight

**FIANS | Los Angeles**

Hollywood star Jason Momoa made a very special trip this week from Los Angeles to Hawaii. He also made it a never-to-forget trip for the passengers on the flight. The actor was travelling to Hawaiian Airlines to celebrate the airline's partnership with his water company Mananalu. The 42-year-old actor surprised unsuspecting passengers by personally handing out aluminum bottles filled with the purified water, reports people.com.



Jason Momoa

posted a video their aunt sent of Momoa handing out the bottles. The video had the caption, "When Jason Momoa is your flight attendant." The 'Aquaman' actor also documented the special occasion on his Instagram page with his own video footage. "Bright and early. It should be a good day. I'm going home to Hawaii with the babies, and we're doing something really cool, very cool, something like how it all started," he said. The "babies" Momoa was referring to are his daughter Lola

Iolani, 14, and son Nakoa-Wolf, 13. Of his inspiration for the activation, he explained that he questioned why he would always see plastic single-use water bottles on flights. "It's a dream come true... why can't we have aluminum? There's sparkling water, there's sparkling beer, there's soda, soft drinks. Why do I have to have this little single tiny water? So this is my first time being able to do this. So I'm going to make the announcement on Hawaiian Airlines...I'm excited I'm going home."

## Britney Spears slams church for refusing to host her wedding

**ANI | Los Angeles**

Singer Britney Spears has called out a church in Los Angeles for refusing to host her wedding. Britney shared a since-deleted Instagram of an unidentified couple getting married in the church, with a caption claiming her original plans were to get married there, Fox News reported. "I wanted to go every Sunday... it's beautiful and they said it was temporarily shut down due to COVID!!! Then 2 years later when I wanted to get married there they said I had to be catholic and go through TEST," she wrote.

According to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, there is a required preparation course engaged couples must take before

getting married in the Catholic church. And according to the Archdiocese of New York, one person in the couple must be a baptized Catholic to get married in the church. Britney and Sam Asghari got married at the former's home in June. On June 11, Britney took to Twitter and shared pictures from her wedding. "Wow !!! Holy holy crap !!! WE DID IT !!! WE GOT MARRIED !!! Ggggggggggggggggggggg !!! It was the most spectacular day !!! I was so nervous all morning but then at 2:00 pm it really hit me ... WE'RE GETTING MARRIED !!! I had a panic attack and then got it together," she had tweeted. The wedding was attended by a bevy of stars, including Selena Gomez, Paris Hilton, and Donatella Versace, who also designed the bride's wedding dress. Britney and Asghari met on the set of the 'Slumber Party' music video in 2016 and got engaged in September last year. Spears also became pregnant earlier this year but experienced a miscarriage in May.

**According to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, there is a required preparation course engaged couples must take before getting married in the Catholic church. And according to the Archdiocese of New York, one person in the couple must be a baptized Catholic to get married in the church**



Britney Spears

## Kim Kardashian undergoes stomach tightening treatment

**ANI | Washington**

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian recently underwent tightening treatment on her stomach. Taking to Instagram, Kim shared a glimpse of her treatment session. She posted a photo of her red abdomen after applying the Morpheus laser treatment to her stomach. "This is a game changer. I think this is my fave laser but it's painful lol but worth it," she captioned the

post. In June, the reality star spoke with PEOPLE about her skincare line SKKN BY KIM, as she reflected on her life so far. "There is nothing I would trade to go back to who I once was," Kim shared. "The wisdom that I have now, I don't care how young I looked. I am so much happier in my skin now." Recently, Kim also made headlines after she revealed that she lost 26 pounds in order to fit into Marilyn Monroe's iconic "Happy Birthday" dress for the 2022 Met Gala. The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star admitted that she had to make an appointment with "a rheumatologist" for her "psoriasis", adding that she was on "steroids".



Kim Kardashian

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### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

**How to play**  
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

### CROSSWORD



**Across**

1- Former Russian rulers; 6- Slow throw; 9- Bridge positions; 14- World-weariness; 15- Actress Alicia; 16- Sleep disorder; 17- Motherhood; 19- Spacious; 20- Links org; 21- Love deity; 22- Failures; 23- Goes wrong; 25- Run away with a lover; 26- "I, Robot" author; 29- Raines of film; 31- Navy builder; 32- Enticed; 36- Leaf of a book; 37- Caught ya!; 38- Peek follower; 40- Underwater missile; 43- Blazing; 45- Helps; 46- Complicated; 47- Rings; 50- The eyes have it; 51- Fuming; 52- Lady's escort; 54- Transcript fig; 57- More tender; 58- Extremely funny; 61- Religion of the Muslims; 62- 100 square meters; 63- Loses heat; 64- Take care of; 65- Asian holiday; 66- Examine account books;

**Down**

1- Office fill-in; 2- Hitch; 3- Organization to promote theater; 4- Feel bad about; 5- Highly respectful way of addressing a man; 6- Retreats; 7- Aware of; 8- Inlets; 9- Side covering on a hat; 10- Speed skater - Anton Ohno; 11- Pny; 12- City near Phoenix; 13- Simon ; 18- Impertinence; 23- Cinder; 24- Fish eggs; 25- Colonnade tree; 26- Horned viper; 27- Chair; 28- Othello villain; 29- Group character; 30- Actress Thompson; 33- Stories; 34- Auction site; 35- Cupola; 37- Say further; 39- Brit. lexicon; 41- Capital of Sicily; 42- Frozen Wasser; 43- Trunk line; 44- U.S. law enforcement agency; 47- Plain writing; 48- Steve of country music; 49- Bothered; 50- Bay; 51- Egyptian goddess of fertility; 52- Steps down to an Indian river; 53- Land of shamrocks; 54- Well-behaved; 55- Hungarian sheepdog; 56- Kind of prof.; 59- Nipper's co.; 60- Marker;

Yesterday's solution

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

## Medvedev races into Los Cabos semi-finals



Daniil Medvedev in action during his match

AFP | Los Cabos

World number one Daniil Medvedev powered into the semi-finals of the ATP hardcourt tournament in Los Cabos, Mexico, on Thursday with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Ricardas Berankis.

Medvedev, playing his first tournament since bowing out of the quarter-finals at Mallorca in June, had launched his return with his 250th career match win over Australian qualifier Rinky Hijikata on Wednesday.

He said the victory over Lithuania's Berankis felt "very different" but the outcome was the same and never looked in doubt as Medvedev reeled off eight straight games to go from 2-2 in the opening set to 6-2, 4-0 and fully in control.

"My opponent played very different, much more aggressive," Medvedev said, adding that it actually worked to his advantage.

"To be honest, against that type of player sometimes you

don't have much to do. Just try to serve well, bringing the balls back in the court.

"That's what I managed to do. He missed a little but too much today and that was enough."

Medvedev, who last year ended Novak Djokovic's bid for a calendar Grand Slam with his triumph over the Serb in the US Open final, dropped just three points on first serve, despite putting less than half in play.



**Last year Medvedev ended Novak Djokovic's bid for a calendar Grand Slam with his triumph over the Serb in the US Open final**

# Gauff thwarts Osaka fight-back in San Jose

Coco Gauff stays calm to stave off Osaka fight-back to reach quarter-finals

● Osaka was originally down 6-4, 5-1 and fought off seven match points before Gauff ultimately closed it out, 6-4, 6-4

AFP | San Jose

American teenager Coco Gauff built a big lead early then had to dig deep late for a 6-4, 6-4 victory over four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka Thursday at the WTA hardcourt tournament in San Jose, California.

The 18-year-old, who reached her first Grand Slam final at the French Open in June, needed just one break of serve to seize the first set 6-4 in the blockbuster encounter.

With booming serves and matching ground strokes, she then roared to a 5-1 lead in the second set.

But the Japanese superstar, unseeded in her first tournament since an opening-round exit at Roland Garros, didn't go down without a fight.

She saved match points -- all on her own serve, before Gauff was finally able to serve it out.

Down 5-1 and 0-40, Osaka uncorked a string of big serves that kept Gauff at bay. Gauff

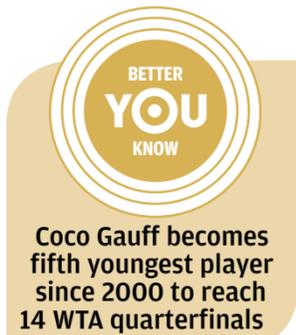


Coco Gauff (L) and Naomi Osaka meet at the net after the match

”When you play Naomi she can play lights out tennis. I wasn't too mad. I was just like, eventually it'll calm down and if it doesn't calm down then it's probably not my day

COCO GAUFF

would get one more chance in that game but hit a backhand service return into the net before Osaka fired her first ace of the match for a game point on the way to a hold of serve.



**Coco Gauff becomes fifth youngest player since 2000 to reach 14 WTA quarterfinals**

"Other than that, ace, ace, unreturnable, winner," Gauff said with a laugh.

"So, I wasn't, like, too mad," Gauff said. "I was just like, eventually it will calm down and if it doesn't calm down then it's probably not my day."

It was, and sixth-seeded Gauff advanced to a quarter-final clash with second-seed Paula Badosa of Spain.

In other second-round action, unseeded American Shelby Rogers topped top-seed Maria Sakkari of Greece 6-1, 6-3.

Fourth-seeded Aryna Sabalenka and ninth-seed Veronika Kudermetova made it through to the quarters. Sabalenka beat American Caroline Dolehide 4-7, 6-1, 7-5 and Kudermetova topped American Claire Liu 6-2, 7-5.

## Raducanu wins marathon to reach Washington quarter-finals

AFP | Washington

Reigning US Open champion Emma Raducanu of Britain advanced to the quarter-finals of the ATP and WTA Washington Open, refusing to wilt Thursday after a marathon match in sweltering heat.

The English 19-year-old outlasted Colombia's Camila Osorio 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/4) after two hours and 50 minutes for a gritty victory in the WTA's longest two-set main draw match of the year.

"It has got to be one of the most physical matches I've ever played," Raducanu said. "It was a pretty monumental effort to really get through that."

"I'm just really pleased and proud of how I dug in when it really mattered. It just gives you a lot of confidence coming through a match like that."

"Physically, I'm pretty pleased with how I held up in that match. Looking forward to going again."

Raducanu advanced to quarter-final against Liudmila Samsonova, who rallied past Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 at the US Open tuneup.

It will be only Raducanu's third quarter-final since her amazing Grand Slam title run last year at New York, having reached the last eight at Cluj-Napoca last October and Stuttgart in April.

She has yet to reach a semi-final since taking the trophy last September at Flushing Meadows.

"Sometimes in your career you feel like everything is automatic, you can go for whatever shot you want and it's going to land," Raducanu said.



Emma Raducanu returns during a match against Camila Osorio

"Those weeks don't come by very often. I've just accepted I'm not going to feel like that every week."

Osorio trailed Raducanu 3-0

”I'm just really pleased and proud of how I dug in when it really mattered. It just gives you a lot of confidence coming through a match like that

EMMA RADUCANU

but broke back in a 13-minute seventh game and broke again to lead 5-4, then had three double faults serving for the first set, one on set point, and Raducanu broke back.

In the first tie-breaker, Osorio won five of six points, the last when Raducanu double faulted, to seize a 5-3 edge. But Raducanu won the next four points, the last three on forehand winners, to capture the set.

## Liverpool manager Klopp wary of short-term solutions to injury problems

AFP | Liverpool

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said yesterday he was reluctant to dip into the transfer market in order to solve "four-week" injury problems.

Reds centre-back Ibrahima Konate suffered a knee injury in the friendly against Strasbourg on Sunday which Klopp said will see the defender out "for a while".

Konate has joined a list of sidelined Liverpool players that already includes Kostas Tsimi-



Jurgen Klopp

kas, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Diogo Jota, Curtis Jones and reserve goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher, with Naby Keita set to resume training yesterday after nearly a week out with illness.

”In a few weeks' time they will be back, but they've missed pre-season and that's not cool

JURGEN KLOPP

None of the absentees are understood to be suffering with long-term injuries, however.

Liverpool have made three major pre-season signings in Darwin Nunez, a £63 million

(\$77 million) from Benfica, with Fulham teenager Fabio Carvalho (£5 million) and Aberdeen defender Calvin Ramsey (£6.5 million) also arriving at Anfield.

"We have too many injuries, that's true," said Klopp speaking yesterday on the eve of Liverpool's Premier League opener away to Fulham.

"But in the moment nothing has changed (in terms of new signings). A lot of unlucky situations. Started with Caoimh and Diogo, pretty much one was injured and one had a re-injury.

## Ten Hag happy to have unsettled Ronaldo at Man Utd

AFP | London

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag reiterated his stance that Cristiano Ronaldo will remain at Old Trafford despite the five-time Ballon d'Or winner's desire to leave for Champions League football.

Ronaldo missed the majority of United's pre-season preparations with the club excusing him from a tour of Asia and Australia for family reasons.

The 37-year-old did return for a 1-1 friendly draw against Rayo Vallecano last weekend. However, he made headlines again for leaving Old Trafford before the end of the game.



Ten Hag

Ten Hag described that act as "unacceptable", but also rounded on the media for focusing on Ronaldo when other players also left the stadium before full-time.

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## Bahrain Olympic team rout Saudi club in friendly



Bahrain players celebrate during their match against Al Faisaly

● **Hussain Abdulkarim scores brace, Ahmed Abdulhameed and Bashir Fouad supply other goals in 4-1 win over Al Faisaly Club**

● **Match was fifth and final exhibition game for Bahrainis at Turkey camp, finishing with four wins while drawing the other**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's under-23 Olympic football team defeated Al Faisaly Club of Saudi Arabia 4-1 in a friendly match played at their overseas training camp in Turkey.

Hussain Abdulkarim scored a brace for the Bahrainis while Ahmed Abdulhameed and Bashir Fouad supplied the two other goals.

The contest was the fifth and final exhibition game for the nationals at their camp. They had won four of those tune-ups while drawing the other.

At the end of the friendly, Olympic team manager Mohammed Salman presented a memorial shield to Al Faisaly management as a token of appreciation for the match.

Bahrain's training camp in Turkey is scheduled to wrap up today.

The nationals have a 26-player squad practising under the supervision of head coach Dario Basic.

Aside from Abdulkarim, Abdulhamid and Fouad, the other talents include Ammar Mirza, Khalifa Al Kous, Ahmed Rabia, Omar Saber, Nasser Ibrahim, Sayed Mahdi Sharaf, Sayed Jawad Haider, Salem Hussain, Ahmed Musalam, Ali Mohammed, Hussain Haroona, Adel Al Rumaihi, Mustafa Salem, Saleh Al Zubaidi, Mohammed Faris, Vincent Emmanuel, Hassan Issa, Hussain Al Ekri, Hassan Abdunabi, Abdulrahman Al Kooheji, Hassan Taha, Salman Adel and Khalil Ibrahim.

The Olympic football are using the camp to prepare for their upcoming competitions, including the qualifiers for the AFC U23 Asian Cup 2024, which will be held from September 4 to 12 next year.

The qualifiers will determine the teams that will compete in the tournament finals, which will take place in January of 2024.

The AFC U23 Asian Cup is one of the premier continental events for Olympic teams.

Bahrain have qualified for the event just once in the past, in 2020 when they did not make it past the group stage

# Abbas bags World Athletics U20 bronze

Nineteen-year-old Bahraini sprinter captures men's 400m bronze medal at World Athletics U20 Championships in Cali, Colombia

● **Yusuf Ali Abbas clinches third place with blistering new personal best time of 45.80 seconds**

● **Bronze is the first medal for Bahrain in Cali, 13th overall in history of under-20 worlds**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's Yusuf Ali Abbas captured the men's 400 metres bronze medal early yesterday morning at the World Athletics U20 Championships being held in Cali, Colombia.

Abbas was in the lead midway through the race but fell marginally behind as the field of seven made it down the final straight. The 19-year-old still managed to do enough to the finish to claim third place and his place on the podium.

Abbas had additional reason to celebrate at the end of the run, as he had also clocked a new personal best.

Abbas's bronze was the first and only medal won so far by Bahrain at this year's world under-20s.

It was the 13th medal won by Bahrain at the meeting, which was previously known as the IAAF World Junior Championships in Athletics and the IAAF World U20 Championships,



Bahrain's Yusuf Ali Abbas, right, takes a bite of his bronze medal on the men's 400m podium alongside gold-medallist Lythe Pillay, centre, and Steven McElroy

before the current name was adopted in 2019.

The national team had previously won two gold, three silver and seven bronze medals in past editions.

The golds were claimed by Edidiong Odiong in the women's 200m at the 2016 meeting in Bydgoszcz, Poland, and Ruth Jebet in the women's 3,000m steeplechase in 2014 in Eugene, Oregon in the US.

Bahrain is one of 145 nations participating in this year's under-20 worlds, which features more than 1,500 of the best up-and-coming young athletes from across the globe.

Running on the inside lane, Abbas came charging out of the blocks and could quickly be seen gaining on his rivals to his right.

**Determined**

He continued to make a strong

push but appeared to fade a bit as the competitors went round the final bend. Abbas was determined, however, and he put in a strong finishing stride to complete the race in 45.80 seconds—the fastest mark of his young career so far.

The bronze medal was also his first major international accolade.

Winning the gold was Lythe Pillay of South Africa in 45.28s, while marginally in front of Abbas was Steven McElroy of the US in 45.65s.

Tyler Floyd of Canada finished fourth in 46.01s, while Joshua Atkinson of Thailand was fifth in 46.31s and Shaemar Uter of Jamaica sixth in 46.36s.

Busang Collen Kebinatshipi of Botswana and Delano Kennedy of Jamaica were both disqualified from the final classification, with Kennedy being shown a



Bahrain have one last chance to win another medal at this year's under-20 worlds, when Hamse Dhabar competes in the men's 3,000m steeplechase final early tomorrow morning at 1am, Bahrain time

red card after a false start and not being able to compete in the race.

Meanwhile, Bahrain have one last chance to go for another medal at this year's under-20 worlds, when Hamse Dhabar competed in the men's 3,000m steeplechase final early tomorrow morning at 1am, Bahrain time.

The 18-year-old secured an automatic berth in the medal round after finishing third in the first of three first round heats on Wednesday. To add to his ticket to the next stage, Dhabar posted a new personal best of eight minutes 51.25 seconds in the race.

Dhabar's time was the 10th fastest of the first round. He will be one of 15 athletes competing for the podium places in tomorrow's final.

## Bahrain bow out of Gulf junior basketball title contention

● **Nationals suffer heavy defeat to Qatar 48-85 in semi-finals of FIBA Asia U18 Championship-Gulf Basketball Association Qualifier in Dubai**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain bowed out of title contention yesterday in the FIBA Asia U18 Championship-Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) Qualifier in Dubai following a 48-85 loss to Qatar in their semi-final clash at the Al Wasl Club arena.

The nationals fell behind 0-14 to start the game and needed nearly five minutes to get their first basket. They trailed 7-27 at the end of the first quarter and never recovered, facing deficits as big as 39 points the rest of the way.

With the result, the Bahrainis will have to settle for playing



Bahrain's Ali Khaled Alajmi and Abdulrazaq Saif Almalki try to stop Qatar's Moustapha Ndao during their game yesterday

in the game for third place today, where they will take on the losers of the other final four contest between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Omran Abdulla Akbar was their lone player in double figures against the Qataris last night. He finished with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Mahdi Ali Al-

musalli chipped in with eight, while Abbas Albasri and Ali Jawad Hasan had five points apiece.

Mohammed Hashim Abbasher led five Qataris with 10 points or more after pouring in 28. He also had 14 rebounds in their big win.

The game marked the fourth straight loss for Bahrain in the competition. They had opened with resounding back-to-back victories over hosts UAE and Oman, but could not keep up their winning ways and lost to the Qataris, Kuwait and Saudi to end their preliminary round campaign. That set the stage for their semis match-up with Qatar yesterday.

The regional tournament is also being played to determine the GBA teams that will compete in the FIBA U18 Asian Championship 2022, which will take place in Tehran from August 21 to 28. Qatar have qualified as only the two finalists will book their tickets to the continental showcase.

## Nadal withdraws from Montreal hardcourt event

Reuters | Montreal

Rafael Nadal has withdrawn from next week's U.S. Open tune-up event in Montreal, Canada due to the same abdominal strain which forced him to miss his Wimbledon semi-final last month, he said yesterday.

World number three Nadal's quest for a calendar Grand Slam ended after he pulled out of his highly anticipated showdown against Australia's Nick Kyrgios less than 24 hours before the match.

The 26-year-old Nadal, who has won 22 major titles, is a five-time champion at the ATP 1000 event in Montreal, which begins on Monday.



Rafael Nadal

**Novak Djokovic also withdrew from the event on Thursday as he cannot enter the country without being fully vaccinated against COVID-19**

nal and today it was still there," Nadal said in a statement.

"After speaking with my doctor we prefer to take things in a conservative way and give a few more days before starting to compete.