

Buttler ton powers Rajasthan to record IPL chase of 224

Buttler smashes second ton of the season in 55 balls | P12

WORLD 6 Jordan says won't become 'theatre of war'

THE DAILY **tribune**



Jessica Chastain hails 'beautiful' Anne Hathaway

8 CELEBS

BUSINESS 5 MF ups global growth forecast

Edict to enhance competitiveness for businesses



HRH Prince Salman
TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday issued Edict (22) of 2024, which regulates trade concerning authorised distributors in a way that strengthens and promotes competitiveness for the benefit of consumers and empowers Bahraini business owners to provide products and services and develop the national economy, based on a proposal by the Minister of Industry and Commerce, and following the approval of the Cabinet.

Education Ministry extends classes suspension for students' safety

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Education yesterday announced the extension of the suspension of classes in all educational institutions, including public and private schools, to ensure the readiness of facilities and safety of students.

The Ministry's specialised teams surveyed buildings and facilities to ensure safety standards are met for students' return on April 21. Initially, the resumption of classes had been set for today.

Minister of Education, His Excellency Dr. Muhammad bin Mubarak Juma, said the safety of the students is a top priority and therefore a comprehensive inspection programme has been put in place in line with the best international practice in operating and regulating educational institutions.

HM King hails Al-Quds humanitarian efforts

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa commended the noble humanitarian role played by the Board of Trustees of the Al-Quds Empowerment Fund, citing its efforts to support the Palestinians and alleviate their suffering by launching development projects, programmes and basic services in Jerusalem.

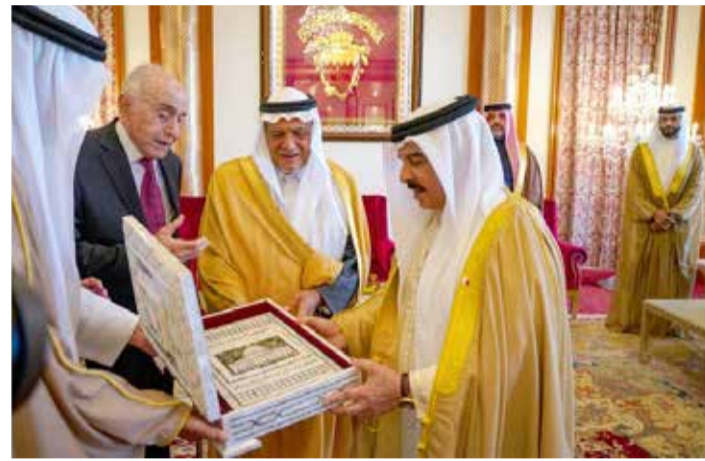
HM the King affirmed the kingdom's support for the Al-Quds Empowerment Fund's endeavours, based on its firm stance towards the Palestinian people and their just cause.

This came as HM King Hamad

received at the Al-Safriya Palace yesterday His Royal Highness Prince Turki bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Board of Trustees Chairman of the Al-Quds Empowerment Fund, and his accompanying delegation, who are on a visit to the kingdom.

HRH Prince Turki bin Faisal briefed His Majesty about the Al-Quds Empowerment Fund's goals and efforts to empower the Palestinians in Jerusalem to support them economically and socially, as well as provide them with basic needs across all vital sectors.

His Royal Highness valued highly HM the King's benevolent humanitarian initiatives in supporting the Palestinian



HM the King receives a memento

people in various humanitarian circumstances, praising Bahrain's efforts in this regard. In this regard, His Majes-

ty highlighted the major role played by the Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF), led by His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, in implementing many development and humanitarian projects and providing relief aid to the Palestinian people, in addition to those of other countries.

HM the King expressed pride in the distinguished robust fraternal relations between the kingdoms of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and their peoples, affirming their shared keenness to bolster bilateral ties in various fields.

Regional threat

Israel's 'response' vow to Iran attack intensifies tensions in Middle East

AFP | Jerusalem

Israel and Iran traded threats yesterday after Tehran's first ever direct attack on its arch foe sharply heightened regional tensions as the Gaza war ground on with no truce in sight.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Iran would not get off "scot-free" after Iran and its allies launched a barrage of over 300 missiles, drones and rockets at Israel at the weekend.

"We cannot stand still from this kind of aggression," Hagari said, a day after Israel's military chief vowed there would "a response" to Iran's offensive.

Iran said its attack was an act of self-defence following a deadly Israeli air strike on its consulate in Syria, and that it would consider the matter "concluded" unless Israel retaliated.

Iran's President Ebrahim Rai-



A plume of smoke billows during Israeli bombardment at Al-Daraj neighbourhood in Gaza City. (AFP)

si warned that "the slightest action against Iran's interests will definitely be met with a severe, extensive and painful response".

US President Joe Biden stressed on Monday that "the United States is committed to Israel's security" and wants to prevent the conflict from spreading.

Washington, Israel's top ally and arms supplier, has made clear it will not join Israel in any attack on their common adversary Iran, a senior US official said.

Restraint and de-escalation

World leaders have urged restraint and de-escalation.

During a phone call with Iran's Raisi, Russian President Vladimir Putin called on both sides to "prevent a new round of confrontation fraught with catastrophic consequences for the entire region", the Kremlin said.

Rainfall rampage

Storms wreak havoc in Gulf as Oman toll rises to 18

AFP | Dubai

Torrential rains and high winds lashed parts of the Gulf yesterday as the death toll from storms in Oman rose to 18, many of them children.

Flights were cancelled in Dubai, the region's financial hub, while schools were shut in the UAE and Bahrain.

Flooding hit many areas of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the UAE capital, and cut off major roads, snarling traffic and leaving cars stranded.

Dubai's skies, usually electric



A car stranded in flood amid heavy rain in Bahrain

blue and cloudless, darkened to night-like conditions in mid-afternoon as a second storm front blew in.

The storms were expected to continue on Wednesday, UAE's Na-

tional Center of Meteorology said.

Some inland areas of the desert country recorded more than 80 millimetres (3.2 inches) of rain, approaching the annual average of about 100 mm.

The weather board "urged residents to take all the precautions... and to stay away from areas of flooding and water accumulation" in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

A total of 17 inbound and outbound flights were cancelled during the morning and three were diverted, Dubai Airports said in a statement.



A game changer

Comprehensive health insurance pledged to national athletes

TDI | Manama

A bill designed to offer extensive health insurance coverage for the national athletes representing Bahrain internationally was passed unanimously by the Council of Representatives yesterday.

This initiative primarily aims to secure the athletes' social welfare, which in turn strengthens their allegiance to the country.

The provision of comprehensive health insurance, coupled with handsome compensation in the event of injury, is intended to encourage athletes to engage more actively in international competitions, thereby boosting their morale.

MP Hasan Ebrahim remarked, "His Majesty the King is the foremost patron of sports in Bahrain."

He added, "Participation in sports is a powerful means to deter the spread of negative habits in society."

Additionally, MP Mohammed Al Alaiwi raised a critical issue: "Tens of young athletes are forced to prematurely end their careers each month due to severe injuries, often caused



"His Majesty the King is the foremost patron of sports in Bahrain."

- MP HASAN EBRAHIM



"Tens of young athletes are forced to prematurely end their careers each month due to severe injuries, often caused by our outdated sports infrastructure."

- MP MOHAMMED AL ALAIWI



"There is a pressing need to enhance sports medicine in Bahrain and establish well-equipped clinics within sports clubs."

- MP MARYAM AL-DHAEN

by our outdated sports infrastructure, such as the artificial turf (Tartan) that remains in use for more than 15 years, despite its recommended replacement every four years."

Al Alaiwi's remarks shed light on the urgent need for modernising sports facilities to ensure athlete safety and well-being.

MP Maryam Al-Dhaen, drawing from her experience as a physician for the national team,

highlighted a concerning aspect: only a small percentage of athletes receive full insurance coverage. She emphasised that athletes are often treated as amateurs with no stable income, underscoring the need for eq-

uitable treatment and support for all athletes.

In addition, AlDhaen stressed the pressing need to enhance sports medicine in Bahrain and establish well-equipped clinics within sports clubs.

Swamiji set to visit Bahrain for spiritual discourse program

● From April 28 to 30

TDI | Manama

Mata Amritanandamayi Seva Samiti Bahrain (MASS Bahrain) has announced the exclusive visit of Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri, the esteemed disciple of the renowned humanitarian and spiritual guru, Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (AMMA), to Bahrain.

Swamiji will visit Bahrain from April 28 to April 30. During his visit, Swamiji will conduct a spiritual discourse and bhajan on April 30 from 7pm to 9:30pm at the BMC Auditorium, Segaya.

In addition, MASS Bahrain is organizing a FREE meditation learning program in association with IMAC Bahrain. This program will introduce participants to the transformative I AM meditation technique, pioneered by AMMA and renowned for its proven efficacy in stress management.

The meditation learning program is scheduled for April 29, from 7pm to 9:30pm at the BMC Auditorium. Preregistration is mandatory for this program.

The international commu-





Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri

nity has increasingly recognised Mata Amritanandamai as a treasured repository of practical spiritual wisdom that can guide the world towards a better, brighter future. Since 1993, she has been invited by international organisations to address various global issues, including religious differences, environmental concerns, education, and peacemaking.

Mr. Sudheer Thirunilath, the Bahrain Coordinator of MASS, invited all interested individuals to attend both events and experience the profound teachings and practices of Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri and the I AM meditation technique.

For further details and registration, please contact Sreeja (3929 3112), Sajina (3322 275), and Chinna Swamy (3913 8025).

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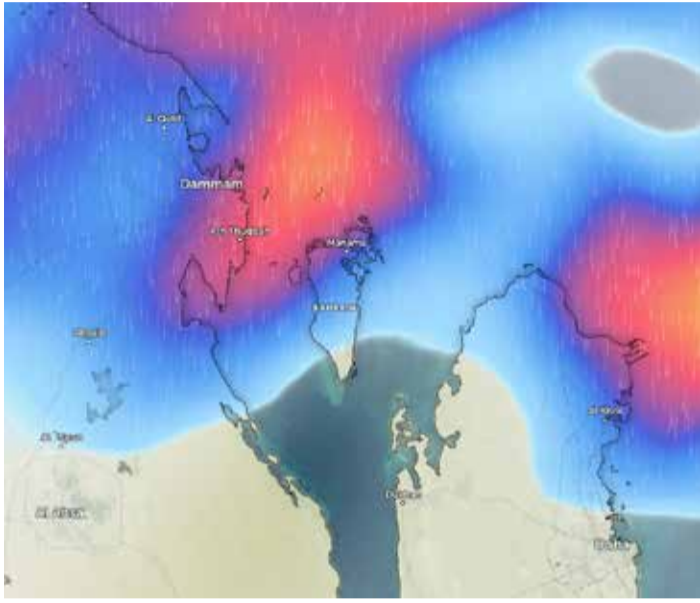
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Soaked and stranded

Residents struggle to cope with severe flooding amidst heavy rainfall



A weather satellite image shows the impact of the heavy rain



Scenes in Juffair (Pictures by Ashen Tharaka)



Interior Ministry tackles heavy rain aftermath

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

The entire nation is currently in the throes of a severe flooding crisis following relentless downpours that commenced yesterday.

The torrential rains have transformed roads into waterways, leaving vehicles stranded and causing chaotic traffic con-

ditions. In light of safety concerns, a significant number of individuals have opted to remain at home.

Yesterday, the Ministry of Education swiftly responded to the adverse weather conditions by announcing the closure of both private and public schools.

This proactive measure was taken to ensure the well-being



The Ministry of Municipalities and its supporting teams are working on sucking rainwater from the region and its streets and pumping it to Lake Al-Luzi

of students and staff members. The alarming situation has prompted widespread fear among residents, discouraging them from venturing out in their vehicles.

Relief

However, the Ministry of Work has deployed a dedicated team to address the crisis head-on. The team is tirelessly

working to drain rainwater from affected households and roadways, offering much-needed relief to the beleaguered populace.

The flooding has brought about unprecedented challenges for the people of Bahrain. With roads submerged and cars immobilized, the nation finds itself grappling with the immediate consequences of the heavy rainfall.

Intensive rain response efforts

TDT | Manama

The concerned departments of the Ministry of Interior have initiated intensive efforts to address the repercussions of the heavy rains sweeping across the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Operations Department, in collaboration with police directorates in all four governorates, civil defense, and traffic authorities, has implemented on-ground measures to assist citizens and residents in managing their affairs amidst the rainfall.

These measures include professionally and urgently addressing rainwater accumulation issues and responding to reports concerning falling trees, lighting poles, umbrellas, and electrical short circuits. Pumps have been deployed to withdraw rainwater in coordination with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture and the Ministry of Works.

Simultaneously, the General



The General Traffic Department directs traffic and tow vehicles stranded in flood

Traffic Department has been handling various reports, including directing traffic accidents, towing vehicles stranded in rain pools, organizing traffic flow at intersections and main streets, implementing diversions, monitoring traffic movements, and ensuring smooth traffic flow.



Under the instructions of His Excellency Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the Northern Governor Ali bin Shaikh Abdulhussain Al Asfoor made an inspection visits to the affected areas to determine the damage resulted from the heavy rainfall. During the visit, the Governor praised the efforts of the Ministry of Interior for their assistance provided to citizens and residents in regulating the traffic, handling cases and for raising awareness to achieve public safety. The Governor stressed the importance of teamwork between all concerned authorities with the aim of providing the necessary services and protecting the local community from the impacts of unstable weather conditions.

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Economic empowerment

Council of Representatives passes proposal to establish national fund to support SMEs

TDT | Manama

A proposal was passed by the Council of Representatives to establish a national fund aimed at spurring economic growth by providing support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) during yesterday's session.

It was tabled by the Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs and spearheaded by MP Ahmed Alsallloom.

The proposal received 17 votes in favor and six votes against, and four abstentions.

The proposal aims to achieve several overarching objectives.

Firstly, it seeks to diversify income sources by alleviating

the financial burden on the national budget. Additionally, the proposal aims to empower local SMEs, thereby reducing dependency on outside sources and countering foreign domination.

It addresses the issue of unemployment by creating job opportunities through support for SMEs.

Moreover, the proposal aims to promote entrepreneurship awareness by highlighting the advantages of individual business ventures and fostering a climate of entrepreneurship.

It also aims to attract innovations and opportunities, thereby opening new horizons for SMEs.

Lastly, supporting SMEs aligns Bahrain with neighboring coun-



MP Ahmed Alsallloom tries' economic initiatives.

Enthusiasm

MP Mohammed Al Marrafi expressed enthusiasm for the proposal, emphasizing that it would



MP Mohammed Al Marrafi strengthen Bahraini SMEs, enhancing their competitiveness.

However, the proposal faced rejection from the Ministry of Finance and National Economy as well as the Labour Market

Regulatory Authority (LMRA), citing intersecting goals with existing institutions like the Labour Fund (Tamkeen) and the Ministry of Social Development.

Umbrella

In response, MP Alsallloom clarified that establishing this fund would serve as an umbrella under which other funds could operate, allowing philanthropic contributions and strictly supporting Bahraini businesses.

Despite reservations from some members about the proposal's clarity and operational aspects, the passage signifies a significant step toward bolstering Bahrain's SME sector amidst ongoing economic challenges.

Asian man's jail term for drugs upheld

● Five years in prison

TDT | Manama

The High Appeals Court has upheld a five-year prison sentence for an Asian man who attempted to smuggle over 100 drug capsules inside his body upon arriving at Bahrain International Airport.

The incident unfolded when the accused arrived at Bahrain International Airport on a flight from his home country. He was directed by a customs officer to proceed to the red channel and questioned about his condition and possessions.

The accused claimed he did not possess any prohibited items, raising suspicion among the customs officer who referred him to a doctor after noticing his unsettled state.

Subsequent medical tests and scans revealed foreign objects in the accused's intestines. Under mounting pressure, the accused confessed to having swallowed drug capsules and necessary medical procedures were undertaken to extract them.

Admission

Over 100 compressed narcotic tablets were recovered, and the accused admitted to preparing the cannabis substance in his home country and encapsulating it in an attempt to smuggle it into Bahrain.

Further security investigations revealed that the accused operated within a drug trafficking network.

Consequently, he was referred to the Public Prosecution, which charged him with intentionally bringing drugs, specifically cannabis and psychotropic substances, into Bahrain's airport security zone. He was also charged with possessing and acquiring the drugs for personal consumption.

Bill for social insurance parliamentary oversight under review



H.E. Ghanim Al Buainain

TDT | Manama

The Council of Representatives reviewed a bill returned by the Shura Council, aimed at establishing parliamentary oversight of the Social Insurance Organisation's reports.

A naming issue arose in the Shura Council, leading to the bill's referral back to the Council for additional review.

The dispute over the bill's name stems from the various changes the social insurance funds have experienced. The Council unanimously agreed



MP Eman Showaiter

to maintain its original name to prevent ambiguity when enacted.

This bill proposes amendments to Law (3) of 2008 concerning social insurance. Its foremost goal is to ensure the SIO's ongoing operations are strictly in line with relevant laws and regulations.

It underscores the criticality of safeguarding public funds, fostering efficient and effective administration, driving progress, and engaging in judicious investments with minimal risk exposure. Additionally, the bill introduces a parliamentary oversight mechanism for the



MP Mahdi Al Showaikh

SIO's final account.

Law's passage

H.E. Ghanim Al Buainain, Minister for Shura Council and House of Representatives Affairs, proposed that the law's wording be entrusted to the council's legal consultants.

This move aims to hasten the law's passage, which has been stalled over wording despite consensus on its substance among legislative and executive bodies.

A unanimous sentiment within the Council of Representatives was echoed for the imperative need for oversight.



MP Basma Mubarak

A measure deemed essential to prevent additional losses for pensioners and to secure their financial stability for the future.

MP Eman Showaiter highlighted the necessity for the public release of actuarial reports in addition to the final reports, which the SIO has shown reluctance in providing these documents, according to Showaiter.

Weaknesses

"Continuous scrutiny is crucial to pinpoint weaknesses and steer proper investments, especially given the vital role of these retirement funds in protecting



MP Hanan Fardan

the rights of pensioners who have dedicated themselves to the country's progress," stressed MP Mahdi Al Showaikh.

MP Basma Mubarak emphasized that the ongoing worry among pensioners, ever since the discontinuation of the annual 3 percent increase, revolves around their future financial security.

MP Hanan Fardan pointed out that the challenges of poor investment choices, voluntary early retirement, and the outdated administrative structure have contributed to the failures of the Social Insurance Organisation.

Digital deception

TDT | Manama

A young man in his twenties is facing charges of stealing over BD24,000 from his two aunts through online transfers using the "Benefit" application.

The defendant, who is pleading not guilty, claims he was managing their finances at their request.

The case came to light after the defendant's uncle, acting on behalf of his sisters, filed a complaint with the authorities. According to the complaint, the defendant was entrusted with managing the financial affairs of his aunts due to their health conditions.

In 2020, the defendant allegedly took one of the aunts to the bank and had her sign documents without knowing the purpose of this move. Later, in February 2023, when the aunts attempted to withdraw money, they were informed

that the first aunt's account was empty.

The second aunt contacted the defendant, who apologised and requested that she not file a complaint for the sake of his future. The bank also filed a complaint against the defendant, who initially promised to return the stolen funds but later failed to do so.

The defendant then claimed that the transfers were made with the first aunt's consent through the "Benefit" application. However, the first aunt denies ever creating an account on the platform or having the ability to use online banking.

The second aunt, 61, and retired, testified that she was shocked to discover the missing funds in her sister's account and that the money had been transferred to the defendant's account. She checked her bank account and found that it contained BD20,000.

Court acquits mother of child abuse charges

● Child reunited with mother after 13 years

TDT | Manama

In a heart-wrenching case that unfolded at the lower criminal court, a child under the age of 15 found himself at the center of a custody battle that had deprived him of his mother since he was just five months old.

The child's father, who had custody, attempted to return him to his mother after 13 long years, but the reunion proved challenging as both the child and his mother felt alienated from each other due to their prolonged separation. The court, in a surprising turn of events, acquitted the mother of charges of child abuse and mistreatment.

The incident came to light when the child repeatedly ran away from school, prompting the authorities to intervene. A

police report was filed, and on one occasion, the child could not be found until he was eventually discovered and placed in a child care center.

When given the choice to return home with his mother, the child refused, citing his psychological and social reports as evidence against her.

According to the court records, the child's father had taken him away from his mother when he was only five months old to live with him and his wife. Throughout

the 13-year period, the mother saw her son only twice.

Stranger

On both occasions, the child's father either left him with his mother for a short time before taking him back forcefully, or his stepmother dropped him off at the mother's house and then promptly retrieved him. On each occasion, the child expressed his unwillingness to live with his mother and her children, feeling like a stranger among them.

During the two weeks the child spent with his mother, he repeatedly attempted to escape and expressed his desire to live with his stepmother, who had raised him since he was young. Eventually, he managed to escape, leaving his mother in distress.

The mother reported the incident to the police, leading to

the child's transfer to a Child Protection Center. The center's reports confirmed that the child was a victim and suffered from psychological problems due to his past experiences.

The prosecution charged the mother with harming the child and subjecting him to mistreatment, based on reports from the Child Protection Center. These reports indicated that the child refused to return to his mother because he felt a difference in treatment compared to his siblings.

The mother denied abusing or harming her son but admitted to lacking feelings for him. She acknowledged that she knew she was not only guilty toward the child but also toward his stepmother, as she could not bear the child's behaviors and did not have an emotional bond with him.

The court ruled that there was no evidence of negligence or abuse on the part of the accused mother.

The child's father had taken him away from his mother when he was only five months old to live with him and his wife.

Starbucks Foundation, Alshaya Starbucks committed to Gaza aid

Donates \$3 million to World Central Kitchen for food aid; partners (employees) in the region are offering further support



The Starbucks Foundation and Alshaya Starbucks are supporting World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit whose work focuses on feeding crisis-impacted communities

TDT | Manama

Starbucks has always been about more than coffee. We're committed to contributing positively and supporting others who do so. In response to the great need for humanitarian aid in Gaza, we are donating to help provide food to people who are suffering.

"We are heartbroken for all the people impacted by the situation in Gaza, and the many people at risk of hunger," said

Duncan Moir, president of Starbucks Europe, Middle East and Africa.

The Starbucks Foundation and Alshaya Starbucks are supporting World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit whose work focuses on feeding crisis-impacted communities. World Central Kitchen has been a primary disaster relief partner of The Starbucks Foundation since 2019 and, with the support of The Starbucks Foundation, has spearheaded dozens of hunger relief opera-

tions, delivering aid to impacted communities in all corners of the globe, such as Lebanon and Morocco.

As a result of ongoing conversations, The Starbucks Foundation and Alshaya Starbucks committed to providing the equivalent of 1 million meals to people in need in Gaza through a joint donation of \$3 million to World Central Kitchen in March. To expand our support from the region, Alshaya Group and Starbucks EMEA have also launched

a partner (employee) donation matching initiative aimed at raising additional funds for food aid in Gaza through World Central Kitchen.

We grieve with World Central Kitchen's team in Gaza and their families around the world. As the organization takes the time to reevaluate when its operations will resume in the region, our commitment remains unwavering. We will continue to stay close to World Central Kitchen to ensure they have the

resources for their humanitarian mission to proceed.

Mohammed Alshaya, Executive Chairman, Alshaya Group, said, "We are deeply saddened by the mass tragedy that is unfolding in Gaza, and our hearts are with all the people affected. We are committed to supporting our local communities and our partners and, inshallah, through these donations we will provide aid and relief to the people of Gaza."

The Starbucks Foundation is

the company's charitable giving arm that strives to positively impact people and communities by supporting nonprofit organizations in partnership with Starbucks partners, licensee partners and others.

As one of Starbucks biggest and longest standing licensed partners across the world, Alshaya Group has operated Starbucks in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region since the opening of its first store in Kuwait in 1999.

Tamkeen launches second phase of CIC programme with Bahrain Polytechnic

● The second phase supports participants in establishing startups, expanding the scope of their businesses, and enhancing their competitiveness in local, regional, and international markets

TDT | Manama

The Labour Fund (Tamkeen), in partnership with Bahrain Polytechnic, announced the launch of the second phase of its Cloud Innovation Center (CIC) programme. The initiative aims to enhance the cloud computing skills of Bahraini talent and bolster the Kingdom's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems. The second phase builds on the success of the first, and was designed to support its promising graduates by providing them with a platform to develop and accelerate their concepts in the market.

Based on the first phase outputs, the second phase supports participants in establishing startups, expanding the scope of their businesses, and enhancing their competitiveness in local, regional, and international markets. The programme aims to expand the use of cloud computing technologies, facilitate the delivery of services, generate innovative solutions to a range of challenges, and encourage qualified Bahraini professionals to embark on entrepreneurial journeys. Moreover, it contributes to the growth of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, a key contributor to the nation-



al economy, which accounted for 6.8% of the Kingdom's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2022 and serves as a primary driver for its digital transformation.

"This collaboration with Bahrain Polytechnic is aimed at developing the cloud computing

skills of Bahraini professionals and helping to transform their innovative concepts into successful businesses," said Tamkeen Executive Director of Program Development and Partnerships Ali Hassan.

In addition to the Cloud Innovation Center at Bahrain Polytechnic, Tamkeen also provides support to a similar program at the University of Bahrain. Since their inception, these Cloud Innovation Centers have together supported 106 students, encouraging them to innovate solutions through intensive hands-on training facilitated by experts from Amazon Web Services (AWS). This has resulted in 34 innovative models, which have been proposed as solutions to challenges faced by the public sector.

"We are committed to nurturing the next generation of leaders in innovation and establishing a new standard for supporting startups and fostering their growth," added Bahrain Polytechnic Dean of Applied Research and Enterprise Dr. Philippe Pringuet.

MF ups global growth forecast

AFP | Washington

The IMF has raised its outlook for the global economy this year, while maintaining a gloomy forecast over the medium term, according to fresh data published yesterday.

The International Monetary Fund now expects the world economy to grow by 3.2% this year, up 0.1%age point from its previous forecast in January, and by a further 3.2% in 2025, according to the latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) report.

Global headline inflation is expected to ease from 5.9% this year to 4.5% in 2025, supported by elevated interest rates in many countries.

The IMF now expects growth in the United States to hit 2.7% this year -- up 0.6%age points from the January forecast -- marking an acceleration from the 2.5% growth recorded in 2023.

Growth in the world's largest economy is then expected to slow to 1.9% in 2025, slightly higher than previously expected.

In contrast, the euro area is now expected to grow by just 0.8% in 2024 -- down 0.1%age point from January and only slightly above last year's tepid



(L-R) International Monetary Fund (IMF) Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, IMF Research Department Deputy Director Petya Koeva Brooks and IMF Research Department Division Chief Daniel Leigh hold a press briefing

0.4% expansion -- before picking up to 1.5% in 2025.

The outlook for the United Kingdom and Canada this year has also been revised lower, while Japan's 2024 growth forecast was unchanged.

China unchanged

China, the world's second-largest economy, is still expected to grow by 4.6% this year, and by 4.1% in 2025 -- unchanged from January.

The growth slowdown is largely down to the easing of a "postpandemic boost to consumption and fiscal stimulus," and ongoing weakness in the property sector, the WEO said.

One of the bright spots this

year is India, which the IMF now expects to grow by 6.8% -- up 0.3 points from January's forecast -- and by 6.5% in 2025.

Russia outlook improved, again

The Russian economy is now expected to expand by 3.2% this year, and by 1.8% in 2025, well above January's forecast.

Such unexpected strength is down to four key factors, including Russia's steady oil export volumes, strong corporate investment, "robustness" in private consumption, and impact from government spending, IMF Research Department deputy director Petya Koeva Brooks told reporters.

celebs

Ryan Coogler and Michael B. Jordan start filming supernatural thriller



Ryan Coogler and Michael B. Jordan
Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Ryan Coogler and Michael B. Jordan started filming their top secret new movie project over the weekend. The pair - who worked together on films including Coogler's 2013 directorial debut 'Fruitvale Station', 2015 'Rocky' spin-off 'Creed' and 'Black Panther' - have re-teamed for third time and details about their new project have been kept tightly under wraps but it's now been revealed as a supernatural thriller involving vampires.

Cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw confirmed filming is now underway by posting a picture of a clapper board from the set, but he redacted the film's title from the post on Instagram.

Deadline.com reports the film is a "supernatural thriller" due for release in March 2025 and also stars Jack O'Connell, Delroy Lindo, Jayme Lawson, Omar Benson Miller, and

Wunmi Mosaku. Comicbookmovie.com reports the film was kept so secret, studio bosses who were interested had to "make the pilgrimage" to the offices of Coogler's agents just to take a look at the script.

The website reports the film will be set in the Jim Crow-era South and possibly involve "vampires and Southern supernatural traditions" and Jordan may be playing twin brothers, but the details are unconfirmed. Production is believed to be taking place in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Meanwhile, Jordan is set to continue his story as heavyweight champion boxer Adonis Creed - the son of Apollo Creed, Rocky's most famous opponent - in a fourth 'Creed' film.

The Hollywood star made his directorial debut on 2023's 'Creed III', which was the first film in the 'Rocky' series not to feature creator Sylvester Stallone as heroic fighter Rocky Balboa.

Jessica Chastain hails 'beautiful' Anne Hathaway

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Jessica Chastain thinks Anne Hathaway is a "beautiful person". The 47-year-old actress admits that it's a "dream" to work with her long-time showbiz pal in 'Mother's Instinct', their new psychological thriller film.

Speaking to 'Extra', Jessica explained: "She's a dream come true."

The Hollywood star feels fortunate that she's been given the opportunity to appear alongside Anne,

41, in the new Benoit Delhomme-directed movie. Jessica - who previously worked with Anne on 'Interstellar', the 2014 sci-fi film - said: "I mean, we should all be so lucky to dream up projects with our friends."

"She's just ... lovely. What a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful person."

Despite this, Jessica previously admitted that it was difficult to have an on-screen conflict with Anne in 'Mother's Instinct'.

During an appearance on BBC Radio 4's 'Woman's Hour', Jessica shared: "It was more difficult to play friends who have conflict in the story, especially when you care about the person so much."

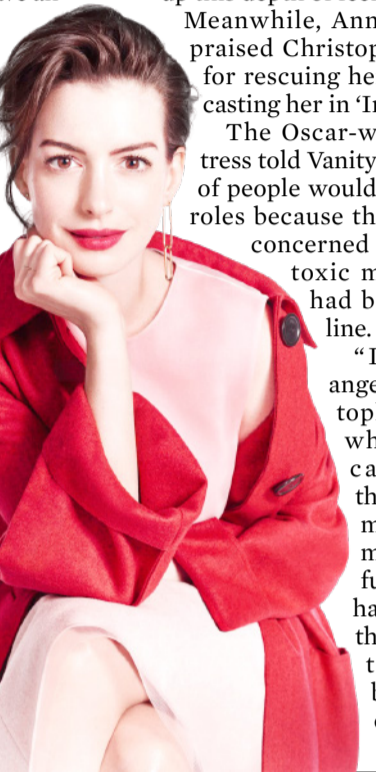
Jessica explained that

she'd prefer to work with Anne when "we don't have an extreme conflict".

On the other hand, Jessica admitted to being wowed by Anne's performance in the film.

The actress said: "She's really incredible and can just switch on a dime."

"You see actresses who have to rev it up for a long time, but she's not like that. She's professional, and once she can't



eras roll she is able to conjure up this depth of feeling."

Meanwhile, Anne recently praised Christopher Nolan for rescuing her career by casting her in 'Interstellar'.

The Oscar-winning actress told Vanity Fair: "A lot of people wouldn't give me roles because they were so concerned about how toxic my identity had become online."

"I had an angel in Christopher Nolan, who did not care about that and gave me one of the most beautiful roles I've had in one of the best films that I've been a part of."

Nicole Kidman remembers 'emotional' wedding day to Keith Urban

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Nicole Kidman's wedding day was one of the most "emotional things" that has ever happened to her.

The 56-year-old actress - who was initially married to fellow Hollywood star Tom Cruise from 1990 until 2001 and has Isabella, 31, and 29-year-old Connor with him - tied the knot with musician Keith Urban in 2005 and reflected that the day was "extraordinary", especially as she was in the company of her late father.

She told PEOPLE: "I remember being in Sydney and driving down the street and



Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban

I was with my dad, who's obviously not around now, and he was in the car with me... We were driving to the church and there were so many people on the street, sort of celebrating us."

"It was just one of the most emotional things in my life... It really was an extraordinary day."

At the time, a wedding guest said: "Nicole cried all the way to the church in the car."

Another said: "When Nicole and Keith looked at each other it was like they were the only two people in the room... It was the most incredible wedding."

Jaden Smith feels 'grounded' by nature

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Jaden Smith feels "grounded" when he surrounds himself with nature.

The 25-year-old star - who is the son of Jada Pinkett-Smith and Will Smith - has revealed that he's looking forward to the Coachella music festival in California.

He told PEOPLE: "I just love the desert. I love Coachella. I love being out there and watching the sunset, swimming inside of the ocean, climbing a tree, climbing a mountain. These things really force me to not be on my phone or looking at certain things or caring about what's going on in the world



Jaden Smith

reserve and be ready to handle certain things."

Jaden generally considers himself to be a "summer person" - but he's currently really enjoying the spring time.

He shared: "I was born in the summer, and I'm more of a summer person. But this year I think the biggest surprise that has happened to me is spring."

"It's come super hot. The sun's beaming. Last year was all about summer for me. This year, bringing the spring in has been amazing."

Meanwhile, Jaden previously claimed that psychedelic drugs have helped him to form a better relationship with his siblings.



Reese Witherspoon: AI is here to stay

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Reese Witherspoon has warned Hollywood to "get used to" AI because it is "here to stay".

The 'Morning Show' actress doesn't believe it is artificial intelligence "coming for your job", but the people who know how to use it successfully, so urged those in the industry to learn more about the technology and how it can be used to boost creativity.

Reese Witherspoon

Speaking at PaleyFest at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, she said: "It's here to stay, so just get used to it. And I think AI is not coming for your job; people who know how to use AI are coming for your job. So learn about it."

"It should be a tool upon which we lay our own creativity, our own humanity and our own ethics."

"That's a whole conversation - for women and people of colour and people who are othered sometimes in those developmental spaces really need to get in there... let's not be scared of it, let's

divine."

The 48-year-old star also has a hugely successful production company, Hello Sunshine, and she believes there has been a huge change with streaming services in the wake of the Hollywood strikes, which will ultimately make it "a little bit harder" to sell new shows.

She said: "Streaming was like the biggest thing for three to four years, and there was a never-ending constant smash for content, and like literally we could sell anything."

SUDOKU

		7	8	9				
6	9		4					8
5	8		3			4	6	
	5	9			8			6
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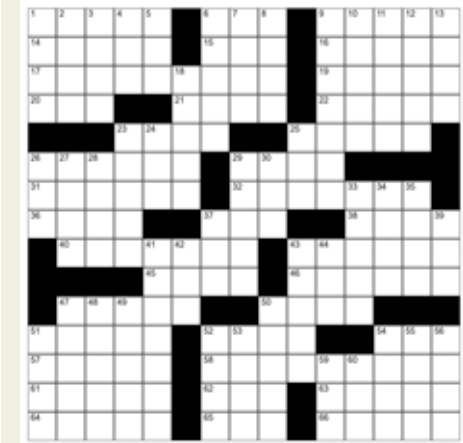
Yesterday's solution

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

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- Bellowing; 6- Bro or sis; 9- Yoga posture; 14- Tending to droop; 15- Get thee ___ nunney; 16- Frame; 17- Mutual arrangement; 19- Snow conveyances; 20- Bridal bio word; 21- Cong. meeting; 22- Icon; 23- Comic Fox; 25- Glass marble; 26- To a greater extent; 29- Stitched; 31- Biases; 32- Gift; 36- Human bone, located in the arm; 37- Blemish; 38- Poor grades; 40- Books of maps; 43- Takes by theft; 45- Junk e-mail; 46- Ziti; 47- Tortilla chip dip; 50- District; 51- Red Sea peninsula; 52- Prefix with dexterity; 54- Spring mo.; 57- Single things; 58- Ridiculous; 61- Do-over button; 62- Spots on TV; 63- Composer Berg; 64- Pitchers; 65- Shoe width; 66- Peachy;

Down

1- Strong ___ ox; 2- Fury; 3- Fiend; 4- Word that can succeed old, ice and bronze; 5- The Catcher in the ___; 6- Warhorse; 7- They're charged; 8- Cave dwellers; 9- Apportions; 10- Alabama city; 11- Bothered; 12- Elbow; 13- Church nook; 18- Windows predecessor; 23- Pertaining to the kidneys; 24- Body shop fig.; 25- Wonder; 26- East Lansing sch.; 27- Casa cookware; 28- ___ and rave; 29- Muscle contraction; 30- Drift, make a mistake; 33- Abnormal plant swelling; 34- Low high tide; 35- Narrate; 37- Oh, give ___ home...; 39- Opposite of NNW; 41- Aids; 42- Relaxing resort; 43- Parsley piece; 44- Reason for overtime; 47- Tendon; 48- Liqueur herb; 49- "See ya!"; 50- Mistreat; 51- Free from doubt; 52- Wings; 53- Created; 54- "Dancing Queen" group; 55- Land map; 56- Gambling mecca; 59- Solo of "Star Wars"; 60- Bar order;

Yesterday's solution

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

Babar back as captain as Pakistan face New Zealand in World Cup build-up

● Pakistan hopes team bonding aids performance

● Hosts hope army camp boosted team spirit

● New Zealand missing key players due to IPL

AFP | Karachi

Babar Azam makes his return as Pakistan captain in a five-match Twenty20 series starting Thursday against an understrength New Zealand with the World Cup weeks away. Azam regained the captaincy last month in a shock U-turn that ended the short-lived reign of Shaheen Shah Afridi, raising fears of a rift between the players.



Babar Azam plays a shot for Pakistan at Eden Park in Auckland

The hosts hope that spending time together at a fitness camp at an army base will have been good for bonding.

Head coach Azhar Mahmood said yesterday that the T20 World Cup in June in the United States and West Indies is very much on their minds.

"I have full faith in the selected squad and the morale is very high in the team, so we will overcome all the shortcomings so that we can do our best in the

World Cup," he told AFP.

"You cannot take any team lightly in the T20 format and if New Zealand is missing their key players then there is an opportunity for their young players."

Pakistan suffered major upheaval following their first-round exit from the one-day World Cup last year. Azam stepped down as captain

in all three formats and head coach Mickey Arthur left along with Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Zaka Ashraf.

Mohsin Naqvi, the country's interior minister, took up the board's top post and reorganised the selection committee, paving the way for batsman Azam's return.

Fast bowler Mohammad Amir and spinning all-rounder Imad Wasim also return to international cricket in this series after coming out of retirement.

Youthful New Zealand

New Zealand arrived in the country at the weekend, having sent a security team last month. In 2021 the Black Caps pulled out of a tour of Pakistan at the 11th hour over security fears, but returned twice in 2023.

New Zealand are missing nine top players including skipper Kane Williamson because of the Indian Premier League.

Stand-in skipper Michael Bracewell says it is a chance for the younger players.

"I think the group of young players have come through and have played a lot of T20 cricket growing up," said Bracewell, who has returned after a year-long injury lay-off.

"They have fresh ideas on how the game should be played and as a group we will just try to play our game."

Ace pacer Tim Southee, the world's top wicket-taker in Twenty20 internationals with 157, is rested.

The experienced duo of Adam Milne and Finn Allen suffered injuries a day before the team's departure.

All-rounder Zac Foulkes, hard-hitting batsman Tim Robinson and seamer Will O'Rourke are uncapped in T20s.

The first three games of the series are in Rawalpindi, with Lahore hosting the last two.



New Zealand's stand-in captain, Michael Bracewell, is returning after a year-long injury layoff

Exciting finish to day two of 9th Inter-Hotel Charity Tournament



Ali Saqlain (Four Seasons Bahrain) receive "Man of the Match" certificate from Awais Rafiq (Financial Controller, The Ritz-Carlton Bahrain)

TDT | Manama

The 9th Inter-Hotel Charity Tournament continued on April 15, 2024, with intense cricket action and competitive spirit on display across multiple matches.

In the first match of the day, Four Seasons faced off against Swiss Belhotel Seef. Four Seasons' Ali Saqlain was named the man of the match as his team emerged victorious by 15 runs.

The second match saw Grand Swiss Belhotel take on Address Beach Resort. Grand Swiss Belhotel's Srinivas Bingi was the star of the show, helping his team secure a 59-run victory and earning himself the man of the match title.

Wyndham Grand Manama faced off against Royal Ambassador (Onyx by Rotana) in the third match. Wyndham Grand's Uzaal Nasar was named man of the match as his team won by 3 wickets.

In the fourth match, Jumeirah Bahrain defeated Intercontinental Regency by 4 wickets. Jumeirah Bahrain's Inzham Gul was the man of the match.

The final match of the day saw Trader Vic's Bahrain take on Gulf Hotel. Trader Vic's Bahrain's Abdul Salam was named man of the match as his team emerged victorious by 10 runs.

The tournament will continue for another week, with plenty more exciting matches to come.



Uzzaal Nasar (Wyndham Grand Manama) receive "Man of the Match" certificate from Ashish Prasad (Director of Human Resources, Wyndham Grand Manama)

'Shame' of penalty pantomime overshadows big Chelsea win for Pochettino

AFP | London

Mauricio Pochettino said on Monday he will not accept seeing his players squabble over penalty duties after his biggest win as Chelsea boss was marred by teammates fighting to take a spot-kick.

Cole Palmer eventually took responsibility to score his fourth goal in a 6-0 rout of Everton on to move the Blues to within three points of the Premier League's top six.

However, a night to savour for Pochettino was soured by Noni Madueke and Nicolas Jackson having to be forcibly removed by captain Conor Gallagher to allow Palmer to continue his perfect record from the spot this season with the score at 4-0. "It's a shame," said Pochettino. "I was telling the players. We had a meeting with all the staff, I think we cannot behave in this way.

"I told them this is the last



Nicolas Jackson (left) tries to take a penalty off Cole Palmer (centre)

time I accept this type of behaviour. It's impossible after a performance like this to show this kind of behaviour.

"If we want to be a big team fighting for big things we have to think more of the collective... I won't accept that this happens again."

Palmer's ninth successful penalty of the campaign took him level with Manchester City striker Erling Haaland on 20 Premier League goals in the battle to win the Golden Boot.

Raheem Sterling pulled rank on his former City teammate when he missed a penalty in



I told them this is the last time I accept this type of behaviour. It's impossible after a performance like this to show this kind of behaviour

MAURICIO POCHETTINO

Chelsea's FA Cup quarter-final win over Leicester last month.

Palmer was adamant he will remain on spot-kicks but tried to play down the significance of the incident.

"Other players wanted to take it, but I am the penalty taker and I wanted to take it," said Palmer.

"I think we are showing everyone is wanting to take responsibility. It may be a bit over the top, but everyone wants to win - we are laughing and joking about it."

LeBron's Lakers take on Pelicans as NBA play-in tips off

AFP | London

LeBron James will be out to extend his 21st NBA campaign yesterday when his Los Angeles Lakers open the NBA play-in tournament against the New Orleans Pelicans, the winner booking a playoff meeting with the defending champion Denver Nuggets.

The Lakers closed the regular season with a dominant victory over the Pelicans on Sunday.

James said the Lakers can't afford a let-down against a Pelicans team eager to turn the tables.

"They're going to be extremely ready for us, and we have to come in with the same sense of urgency," said James, who at 39 remains a formidable force in the league.

The losing team will get one more chance to reach the playoffs, taking on the winning team from yesterday's game between



LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers warms up prior to a game against the New Orleans Pelicans

the ninth-seeded Sacramento Kings and 10th-placed Golden State Warriors for a first-round meeting with Western Conference top seeds Oklahoma City.

Last season the Lakers came through the play-in to reach

the Western Conference finals, where they were swept by Nikola Jokic and the Nuggets.

The Miami Heat did even better out of the play-in, earning the eighth seed in the East and reaching the NBA Finals where

they also succumbed to Denver.

The Heat will be trying to retrace that path when they travel to Philadelphia on Wednesday to play the 76ers -- the winner booking a first-round meeting with Eastern Conference second seeds the New York Knicks.

"We've had some great battles with (Miami)," 76ers coach Nick Nurse said. "I always expect that versus them."

Nurse was confident that reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid, who sat out the final game of the regular season to rest his surgically repaired knee, would be "ready to go" against Miami.

The Sixers are 31-8 with Embiid playing this season.

The loser of that game will play the winner of Wednesday's Atlanta-Chicago contest for the eighth and final playoff berth in the East -- and a first-round meeting with the top-seeded Boston Celtics.

Nadal wins on injury comeback

Rafael Nadal breezes past Flavio Cobolli at Barcelona Open in first ATP Tour match since January

● Nadal faces 11th-ranked Alex de Minaur in the second round

AFP | Barcelona

Rafael Nadal made light work of Flavio Cobolli on a triumphant return from injury at the Barcelona Open yesterday.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion had not played an ATP Tour match since January but dispatched the Italian 6-2, 6-3 in one hour and 25 minutes to reach the second round.

Nadal, 37, was able to play on clay for the first time since winning the French Open in 2022 and showed flashes of his usual brilliance in a solid display.

"It was a good start -- when you return you can't get rid of the doubts in one day, above all, on a physical level," Nadal told TVE.

"Within what it could be, it was a good first round. He made



Rafael Nadal returns the ball to Flavio Cobolli

mistakes and I think I played the game that I had to play."

Nadal who has triumphed at Roland Garros a record 14 times,



Nadal played on clay for the first time since 2022 and is using the Barcelona Open as a stepping stone to prepare for the French Open, which he plans to be his final tournament

is hoping to play there in May in what he expects to be the final year of his professional career.

The clay court king, who missed most of 2023 injured, will face Alex de Minaur on Wednesday after breezing past Cobolli.

"It will be at a speed that I don't know if I will be able to keep up with, but I'll try," Nadal



I've gone months without being able to serve, (and) although I've got a lot of excitement to play here and do the best I can, I'm not going to go crazy with the serve. I have to serve with caution that the moment I'm in dictates... there are moments in which I feel more liberated and others in which I'm more careful

RAFAEL NADAL

said of facing the 11th-ranked De Minaur.

After a double fault to fall 30-0 behind Nadal found his rhythm, with Cobolli intimidated by the fervent support for the Spaniard on the court named after him. Nadal converted his third

break point in the fourth game for a 3-1 lead, with Cobolli surviving four more to hold at 4-2 down.

The 12-time Barcelona Open winner broke again to claim the set in 43 minutes, clenching his fist in celebration.

Cobolli handed Nadal a break for 2-0 in the second set with two more unforced errors but finally put some pressure on Nadal's serve in the third game to break back.

However Nadal broke again for 3-1 after Cobolli's third double fault and served it out to triumph.

The Spaniard did not produce any aces and his serve was effective but not explosive.

"I've gone months without being able to serve, (and) although I've got a lot of excitement to play here and do the best I can, I'm not going to go crazy with the serve," added Nadal.

"I have to serve with caution that the moment I'm in dictates... there are moments in which I feel more liberated and others in which I'm more careful."

Maxwell takes indefinite 'mental and physical break' from IPL

AFP | Bengaluru

Australia's Glenn Maxwell will take an indefinite "mental and physical break" from the IPL after struggling for form with Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

The big-hitting all-rounder has scored just 32 with the bat in six games and skipped the defeat on Monday in a record run-fest against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

It was Bengaluru's sixth defeat in seven matches and Faf du Plessis's side are bottom of the 10-team table.

"I think now is actually a good time for me to give myself a bit of a mental and physical break, get my body right," the 35-year-old Maxwell said after playing no part in his side's 25-run defeat.

"If I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can hopefully get back into a really solid mental and physical space where I can still have an impact."

Maxwell, who will be key for Australia at the T20 World Cup in June, was one of the first



Glenn Maxwell in action in the IPL earlier this month

cricketers to recognise mental health issues and took a break from international cricket in 2019.

He said on Monday it was "a pretty easy decision" to step aside for the time being.

"I went to Faf and the coaches after the last game and said I felt it was probably time we tried someone else," he said.

"I have been in this situation in the past where you can keep playing and get yourself deeper into a hole."

Known as "Mad Max" and "The Big Show" for his attacking batting and unconventional strokeplay, Maxwell added: "I take a lot of pride in my performance, and I put in a lot of hard work behind the scenes to get

my body right for every game. "And it has been a pretty tough struggle, given my body is on the wrong side of 30. I think that physical and mental toll probably just wore me down a little bit."

Hyderabad amassed 287-3 at the M.Chinnaswamy Stadium on Monday, the highest-ever Indian Premier League total.

They also smashed the most sixes in an IPL innings, with 22 shots flying over the fence.



I think now is actually a good time for me to give myself a bit of a mental and physical break, get my body right. If I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can hopefully get back into a really solid mental and physical space where I can still have an impact

GLENN MAXWELL

Bangladesh name Pakistan's Mushtaq as new spin coach

AFP | Dhaka

Bangladesh named former Pakistan leg-spinner and World Cup winner Mushtaq Ahmed yesterday as the spin-bowling coach for the men's national cricket team.

Mushtaq will join the side before a preparation camp for next month's five-match Twenty20 international series against Zimbabwe and will work with the Bangladesh team until the end of the T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the United States.

Bangladesh has been in the hunt for a spin-bowling coach since Sri Lankan Rangana Herath left in November. Local coach Sohail Islam filled in during the recent series against Sri Lanka.

Mushtaq was spin coach with England from 2008-14, the West Indies in 2018-19 and Pakistan from 2020-2022.

He was also Pakistan's bowling consultant between 2014 and 2016.



Mushtaq Ahmed

"It is a great honor for me to be a part of the Bangladesh cricket team as a spin-bowling coach," 53-year-old Mushtaq said.

"I am looking forward to the role and want to pass my experience to the players because they are very coachable and I always believe that they are one of the most dangerous teams around.

"They can beat anyone because they have the capability, the resources and the talent. I will try to instill that belief into them," he said.



Alejandro Garnacho reacts during a match (file photo)

Man Utd speak to Garnacho over social media activity

AFP | Manchester

Manchester United have spoken to Alejandro Garnacho after the winger liked social media posts criticising manager Erik ten Hag over his handling of the player.

The Argentina international, taken off at half-time in their 2-2 draw at Bournemouth on Saturday, liked two messages on X, by United fan and YouTuber Mark Goldbridge.

One post accused Ten Hag of "throwing (Garnacho) under the bus" because of comments the United boss made about the 19-year-old's performance. The other said Garnacho "had



Alejandro Garnacho has become a key player for United this season, scoring nine goals and providing four assists in 42 games

a poor first half but taking him off at half time and holding him

up as the problem is a joke".

Garnacho swiftly "unliked" both messages, an action the club believes shows contrition, and a United source told the PA news agency the matter had been dealt with internally.

The teenager has become a key player for United this season, scoring nine goals and providing four assists in 42 games.

The incident follows one in September when Jadon Sancho said on X that he had been made a "scapegoat" after being left out of the squad for the Arsenal match, with Ten Hag saying he had trained poorly.

Sancho said he would "not allow people saying things

that (are) completely untrue", interpreted as accusing Ten Hag of misrepresenting reasons why he was not in the side.

The 24-year-old was banished from the first team before being loaned to Borussia Dortmund in January.

Ten Hag's position has come under renewed pressure after the draw against Bournemouth, which left United seventh in the Premier League table, 13 points off the top four.

The FA Cup is the only silverware that United can win this season -- they take on second-tier side Coventry in the semi-final at Wembley on Sunday.

Buttler ton powers Rajasthan to record IPL chase of 224

● **Buttler smashes second ton of the season in 55 balls**

● **Buttler surpasses Gayle's IPL centuries**

AFP | Kolkata

Jos Buttler smashed an unbeaten 107 to trump Sunil Narine's first T20 century as Rajasthan Royals pulled off a joint record IPL chase against Kolkata Knight Riders off the final ball yesterday.

Chasing 224 for victory, Rajasthan looked in trouble at 121-6 in the 13th over but Buttler moved through the gears in his



Jos Buttler plays a shot

60-ball blitz to achieve the target with two wickets to spare at

Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

Rajasthan equalled their own

record from 2020 when they chased down 224 against Kings XI Punjab in Sharjah.

Buttler, who came in as an impact substitute, reached his second ton of the season in 55 balls with a six off Varun Chakravathy at the start of the last over.

Buttler, struggling with cramp, then played out three dot balls before a two and a single on the final delivery ensured Rajasthan held on to top spot in the table with six wins in seven matches.

England's Buttler, who hit nine fours and six sixes, moved ahead of Chris Gayle with seven IPL tons and is only behind Virat Kohli's eight in the T20 tournament.

Buttler built key partnerships including 50 runs with Riyan Parag (34), 57 with Rovman



Rajasthan Royals equal their own record for joint record IPL chase

Powell (26) and then an unbeaten 38-run stand with Avesh Khan (0 not out).

Spinners Narine, Chakravathy and fast bowler Harshit Rana took two wickets each for KKR.

Narine hammered 109 off 56 balls to guide Kolkata, who stay second in the 10-team standings,

to 223-6.

Narine put on 85 runs for the second wicket with Angkrish Raghuvanshi, who hit 30, and got together for a 51-run stand with Andre Russell.

Narine, playing his 504th T20 match, reached his ton from 49 balls with a six and a four off Yuzvendra Chahal for Kolkata's third hundred in the IPL as he jumped for joy.

He was finally bowled by a Trent Boult yorker before he returned to a standing ovation.

Narine moved into the top three in the batting charts led by Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Kohli (361) with 276 runs.

Rinku Singh finished off the innings on a high with his unbeaten nine-ball 20 including a four and two sixes.

Bellingham 'used to' racist abuse in Spain as calls for action fall on deaf ears

AFP | Madrid

Jude Bellingham said he and his Real Madrid teammates have become accustomed to dealing with racist abuse at away grounds in Spain, but the England international does not believe the authorities will do enough to quell the problem.

A racist gesture was made towards France's Aurelien



Jude Bellingham

Tchouameni after he scored the only goal in a 1-0 win at Real Mallorca on Saturday.

Brazilian star Vinicius Junior has been a repeated target of racial abuse and Bellingham said he and his teammates were "used to" have to deal with "horrible" treatment.

"I think in the games where we go away in La Liga especially, you almost get so used

to it," said Bellingham at a pre-match press conference ahead of Madrid's Champions League quarter-final, second leg away to Manchester City.

"I think it's a horrible way for a player to have to prepare for a game knowing that they're probably going to get racially abused. It's disgusting. It shouldn't happen. The people in power need to do more."

All systems go for Saudi Open Golf Championship

TDT | Manama

The Saudi Open, presented by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), is poised to commence today at the esteemed Riyadh Golf Club.

This four-day event, representing the Asian Tour, will witness the participation of a diverse array of international golf stars from both the DP World Tour and the local Arab and Saudi Arabian golfing elites. Notably, reigning Saudi Open champion, Thai player Dinwit Boiponsop, will be among the luminaries competing for the title. Joining him are prominent figures such as Henrik Stenson, Peter Olyan, and Haotong Li, all of whom harbor hopes of hoisting the coveted trophy. Additionally, a contingent of 144 players from 33 countries around the world will be vying for glory.

The tournament will feature the involvement of seven players representing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including three professionals, as well as thirteen Arab players who received invitations to compete alongside the world's best, thus fortifying the sport's growth in the region. In addition to the fierce competition on the course, the tournament encompasses a wide range of accompanying events and festivities throughout its



Top stars with the trophy

duration.

These include various golf-related activities and a diverse array of segments, most notably live music sessions at sunset. By offering such attractions, the organizers aim to provide fans and attendees with an opportunity to experience the seamless integration of sports, culture, and entertainment through the Bazaar and the dedicated Fan Zone, which are both tailored to accommodate families and their children.

In a related context, Peter Ohlin, a member of the Leaf golf team, is making his inaugural visit to Riyadh. Expressing his delight at competing in the Saudi capital, the American

player anticipates an exhilarating tournament characterized by low scores over the course of its four days.

Reflecting on his participation, Ohlin remarked, "I watched the Saudi Open 2023 on TV in December and followed the recent Aramco International Women's Championship. I observed many impressive performances, but the outcome hinges on weather conditions and the influence of the wind. This is my first time in Riyadh, having previously visited Jeddah multiple times. I am eagerly looking forward to this experience, especially after conversing with Saudi player Othman Al-Mulla about the upcoming

ing tournaments taking place throughout the kingdom. Such discussions underscore Saudi Arabia's pivotal role in fostering the development of this sport."

Li Haotong, a four-time winner of the DP World Tour, has decided to participate in the Saudi Open, courtesy of the Public Investment Fund. The Chinese player's decision stems from the burgeoning growth of golf in Saudi Arabia. Haotong stated, "I desire to explore new golf courses and visit uncharted territories. Therefore, I am tremendously excited about the launch of this tournament and deeply honored to contribute to the game's development to the fullest extent possible."

The tournament's inauguration was preceded by a press conference featuring CEO Noah Alireza, who addressed the media and emphasized the significance of providing opportunities for Saudi and Arab players to showcase their talents in the Saudi Open.

Alireza expressed his satisfaction in welcoming all participants to the tournament, which originated as one of the Asian Tour events last year and now continues to flourish. He confidently predicted that the tournament's duration would witness abundant triumphs, further elevating golf's prestige at the Riyadh Golf Club.

Silva says double treble an 'inspiration' for Man City



Manchester City's Portuguese midfielder #20 Bernardo Silva punches a ball away during a training session (file photo)

AFP | Manchester

Bernardo Silva says an unprecedented double treble is an "inspiration and motivation" as Manchester City prepare to host Real Madrid on Wednesday with a place in the Champions League semi-finals at stake.

Last season, Pep Guardiola's men became just the second club in English history to win the treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup -- 24 years after neighbours Manchester United achieved the feat.

City drew the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final with 14-time European champions Real 3-3 at the Bernabeu last week.

As the finishing line of the 2023/24 season approaches, they are two points clear at the top of the Premier League with six games to go and face Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-finals this weekend.

Silva told reporters yesterday he was not surprised by City's relentless success but said there was still a long way to go.

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has done since I've been here -- this is my seventh season," he said. "We want to create that legacy."

The Portugal attacking midfielder added: "We want to win another Premier League to do six in seven years and to do four Premier Leagues in a row. "We want the Champions League twice in a row... and if we can do that and two trebles in a row that no one did, that would be a legacy so that's definitely motivation, knowing that it's very, very difficult."

"Because in one week we could be out of all the competitions but we're fighting for it and we're going to do everything to be a step closer to that goal."