

Bahrain fall to Palestine in friendly

Kingdom's senior men's national team concede two goals in 10-minute span in second half | P12

Tornado kills at least 23 in Mississippi

THE DAILY tribune

Libya revives cannon salute to break Ramadan fast

Middle East Medical Centers in Hidd, Salmabad get NHRA Diamond status

Mol wins Stevie Awards



TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Interior, represented by the Office of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, won the Gold Award for innovative management in government organisation, as part of the "International Stevie Awards".

Shaikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, affirmed that the award recognises the Ministry's dedication to enhancing its performance, leveraging advanced technology, and adopting best administrative practices.

Viral video of motorbike stunt: Police take legal action

TDT | Manama

A video clip that went viral on social media showing a group of people performing dangerous stunts on their motorbikes caught the attention of traffic authorities here.

The General Directorate of Traffic has issued a statement indicating that legal action will be taken against those involved in the clip.

The video shows individuals displaying their motorcycles in a manner that poses a threat to the safety of other road users.

The Traffic Directorate has made it clear that violators of traffic regulations and individuals who infringe on the rights of others will face justice.



220 fils (includes VAT)



Muslim devotees break their fast during the holy fasting month of Ramadan at the Jama Masjid mosque in the old quarters of New Delhi



Turkish City names avenue after His Majesty King Hamad

TDT | Manama

In honour of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's humanitarian efforts, the Turkish city of Elbistan in Kahramanmaraş has named an avenue there "King of Bahrain."

The "King of Bahrain Avenue" is located in Al Bustan City, which was hit hard by a devastating earthquake that left many residents in need of assistance.

Bahrain was quick to respond to the disaster, sending several shipments of relief materials and raising over \$3.7 million for urgent humanitarian relief for the victims of the quake in Syria and Turkey.

RHF Secretary-General, Dr Mustafa Al-Sayed, said the "King of Bahrain Avenue" is in a strategic location in Elbistan City, which suffered violent tremors and where Bahrain concentrated its relief efforts.

Under the directives of HM King, Dr Al Sayed said, the Bahraini relief team visited the affected areas to identify urgent needs, dispatched four shipments of relief aid containing medical supplies, tents, and food, in addition to sending a Search and Rescue Taskforce from the Royal Guard.

Bahrain also signed agreements with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Turkish Red Crescent, and the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK) to support quake-affected areas by establishing relief, educational, and health projects.

Russia says will 'deploy' tactical nuclear weapons

Moscow also threatens to deploy uranium ammo if West gives it to Kyiv

Moscow, Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday he would deploy tactical nuclear weapons in neighbour and ally Belarus, reviving Cold War-era fears.

He also said he would deploy depleted uranium ammunition if Kyiv received such munitions from the West following a British suggestion that it could supply Ukraine.

"There is nothing unusual here either: the United States has been doing this for decades. They have long placed their tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of their allies," Putin said.

Putin said he spoke to Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko and said "we agreed that we to do the same."

On the question of how Moscow would respond if the West supplied Ukraine with depleted uranium shells, following a suggestion by Britain it could supply Kyiv with the munitions, Putin said Russia had vast quantities of the weaponry.



"Russia of course has what it needs to answer. Without exaggeration, we have hundreds of thousands of such shells. We have not used them yet," Putin added in an interview on Russian television.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has warned nuclear threats were creating a dangerous sense of uncertainty around their possible use.

The longer Russia's operation in Ukraine grinds on, the greater the nuclear strike risk, ICAN warned last month ahead of the

offensive's first anniversary.

Putin announced last month that Moscow would suspend its participation in New START, the last remaining arms control treaty between the world's two main nuclear powers Russia and the United States.

Russia of course has what it needs to answer. Without exaggeration, we have hundreds of thousands of such shells. We have not used them yet

PUTIN

YOU KNOW WHAT

Russia, which inherited the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons, has the world's biggest store of nuclear warheads. Putin controls around 5,977 such warheads as of 2022, compared to 5,428 controlled by US President Joe Biden, according to the Federation of American Scientists.

Scam alert

Retiree loses BD29,000 in vishing scam; Police arrest six

TDT | Manama

A man, who is a retiree, lost BD29,000 from his life savings falling prey to a Central Population Registry (CPR) renewal vishing scam run by six Asian nationals, one of whom resides in Pakistan.

However, a quick police action helped the man retrieve BD13,000 from the stolen money, as the rest, police said, were wire transferred to an account



Representative picture

in Pakistan.

The incidents leading to the case started with the man receiving a phone call notifying him that his CPR was about to expire and was directed to follow renewal procedures. The scammers also convicted him of

revealing personal information.

The man said he provided personal and banking details to the scammers, unaware of their fraudulent intentions.

However, to the man's shock and dismay, he discovered that his account had been emptied

of BD29,000 by unknown individuals.

Despite being in a state of panic, the man said he notified the police of the incident, who then managed to freeze the accounts used to withdraw the stolen funds.

However, at that point, the suspects had already transferred a significant portion of the stolen funds to the account in Pakistan, leaving the police with only BD13,000 that they were

able to recover.

Further investigation revealed the involvement and identification of six men in the crime, with police subsequently arresting them.

During interrogation, the suspects told the Police that they were part of a network managed by a Pakistani national, who also instructed them open bank accounts to transfer the stolen money before ultimately sending it to his account.

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Monthly prizes do not occur in Dream prize months

The Capital Governorate Police Department's Community Service Police Division launched a fire safety campaign to educate citizens and residents on the safe use of electrical appliances. The campaign raised awareness of potential fire hazards and provide strategies for dealing with them to minimize risk. The division emphasised the importance of proper use of electrical appliances to reduce the risk of fire.



Under the patronage of Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Southern Governor, the "Majalat Al-Khair" (March of Good) program saw the participation of more than 35 volunteers from civil society organisations and the governorate's employees. The Southern Governorate distributed over 1,000 food boxes as part of the initiative. Al-Mabarrah Al-Khalifia Foundation, Basmat Khair Association, the Forsan Askar volunteer team, and a few private sector entities, such as Ibrahim Kanoo Company and Al-Osra Markets, were among the participants.



Looking beyond the Expat Index

The realities of life as a migrant in Bahrain: Experts speak to The Daily Tribune about the battle of low-income migrant workers who struggle to make ends meet. They say it might be easy to find housing, but for the majority, it’s not affordable

Julia Cassano
TDT | Manama

The latest Expat Essential Index 2023 by InterNations hails Bahrain as a place where placing feet “appears to be a breeze.” The report also ranks Bahrain first for being the ideal place for easy beginnings. However, many here told *The Daily Tribune* that this portrayal of life as an expat in the Kingdom is far from accurate! They say although Bahrain is the ideal place for easy beginnings, as the Index says, it’s not an accurate portrayal of life as an expat in the Kingdom. And when *The Daily Tribune* asked them why? They dropped the blame squarely on the absence of a minimum wage for non-nationals! Citing several examples, they explained this as the primary concern we need to address for low-income migrant workers to make Bahrain truly an ideal place for easy beginnings. To know better, read it alongside a report by the Bahrain’s Social Insurance Organisation. The report says that about 71% of expatriates employed in the private sector in Bahrain earn



Migrant workers dig into a field in Doha, Qatar (‘ILO)

less than BD200. Thus, experts point out that despite 82% of the expatriates say it is easy for them to find housing in Bahrain, “we should not ignore the fact that only 39% had found housing affordable in the Kingdom.” Expat Essential Index 2023 had said Bahrain is first among

the 52-nation ranking that identifies the best and worst destinations to get started in. Evone Bhaskaran, head of the Action Committee for the Migrant Protection Society, told *The Daily Tribune*, she too agrees to this, citing the availability of several unfurnished, semi-furnished, or fully furnished tow-

YOU

KNOW WHAT

Bahrain’s Social Insurance Organization’s report reveals that about 71% of expatriates employed in the private sector in Bahrain earn less than BD200.

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A significant number of labourers, service industry workers, and domestic workers earn only an average of BD150 to BD200 per month

EVONE BHASKARAN, HEAD OF THE ACTION COMMITTEE FOR THE MIGRANT PROTECTION SOCIETY

rises while their wages remain stagnant.” “For many labourer’s, domestic workers, and service workers, splurging on a nice or even decent place to live seems out of reach,” Evone confirms. “We are aware of situations where whole families are restricted to a single room and must make the most of it to create a comfortable living space,” she stated. Explaining she said, a single room does not necessarily refer to a one-bedroom apartment; rather, it often means that a family of four must occupy a single room that either has a private bathroom or is shared with other families occupying adjacent

rooms. “This is usually how the lower income and middle-class bracket make their ends meet.” “Blue-collar workers frequently express dissatisfaction with their living arrangements in camps and staff accommodations, which can be inhumane at times, with men and women crammed together with very little space to move,” Evone stated. In addition, she mentioned that a significant number of low-income workers in Bahrain send their salaries to their families to improve their standard of living. As the cost-of-living increases, low-income migrant workers in the Kingdom become even more susceptible to financial hardship. **Minimum wage crucial** In conclusion, they said while Bahrain may be considered an ideal place for easy beginnings, the reality is that life as an expat in the Kingdom is far from accurate. As the cost of living continues to rise, low-income migrant workers in the Kingdom become even more vulnerable to financial hardship. Therefore, addressing the issue of minimum wage is crucial to making Bahrain a truly ideal place for all.

Finding balance: Navigating health and faith during Ramadan

Health experts urges to maintain healthy eating habits during Ramadan and avoiding overeating to prevent health risks

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

The month long fasting during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is not just a religious obligation. It’s also an opportunity for Muslims around the globe to reflect on their faith and renew their commitment to their beliefs. However, the practice of overeating during non-fasting hours has become a common occurrence, especially during the month-long celebration of Ramadan. This can pose a significant health risk, particularly for those with conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. As such, healthcare professionals and nutritionists say it is critical to prioritize healthy eating habits and be mindful of their food choices during the holy month.



According to experts, consuming food that is fried, oily, and sweet during Ramadan fasting can increase blood sugar levels and pose serious health risks such as fatty liver, obesity, and hypertension. Dr Muhannad Jasim Isa, a General Practitioner interviewed by The Daily Tribune, emphasised the importance of

”

We must first be aware that between 50% and 70% of our bodies are made up of water. Since we consume one and a half to two liters of water per day on average throughout normal days, we shouldn’t disregard the significance of doing so during the holy month

DR MUHANNAD JASIM ISA, A GENERAL PRACTITIONER

consuming healthy foods that are suitable for the holy month to prevent dehydration and exhaustion while promoting body strength and health. “We must first be aware that between 50% and 70% of our bodies are made up of water. Since we consume one and a half to two litres of water per day on average throughout normal



Representative picture

days, we shouldn’t disregard the significance of doing so during the holy month.” Dr Isa advises to spread out the consumption of water during the time of breaking the fast, instead of drinking a large amount of water all at once during Iftar or Suhoor, as drinking too much water can lead to de-

hydration throughout the rest of the day due to excessive urine output. It is important not to forget about the time in between the two main meals. In addition, he advised individuals diagnosed with diabetes to exercise caution and avoid overindulging in sweets, particularly during Iftar, and to be

mindful of the possibility of a sudden drop in blood sugar by avoiding specific medications. To avoid a sudden drop in sugar levels, Dr Isa recommended adjusting the meal time from Suhoor to breakfast and taking medications a few minutes before breakfast. This helps to balance the decrease in food intake and avoid acute effects. Additionally, reducing the medication dose in proportion to the decrease in food intake is also advisable. Dr Isa further stressed the importance of moisturising the body during Ramadan to prevent dehydration. He stated, “There are other important factors besides water, which are vitamins such as vitamins A, E, C, and B, in addition to omega 3. They are very important for moisturising the body in addition to the other benefits, as each vitamin performs several functions for the body.”

Minister releases
30,000 mead, 1,000
grouper fish



TDT | Manama

Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, the Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, released over 30,000 mead and 1,000 large grouper fish during a visit to the National Aquaculture Centre in Ras Hayyan on Thursday. The centre, which includes hatcheries, aims to achieve a production capacity of 15 million fingerlings by 2025 and has successfully produced young mead fish through hatching and breeding.

During the visit, the minister also reviewed the process of establishing Gulf Aquaculture, which will soon contribute to the provision of marine products in local markets.

Dr Khaled Ahmed Hassan, the Acting Undersecretary for Agriculture and Marine Resources Affairs, and Hussein Jaafar Makki, the Director of the Fish Farming Department, were also present.

The ministry, Al-Mubarak said, is keen to utilise modern technology to overcome challenges and to prepare the necessary laboratories for the fish farming process.

Dr Fahd bin Khalifa Al
Khalifa named commander
of Royal Medical Services



TDT | Manama

Dr Shaikh Fahd bin Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa has been appointed as the Commander of the Royal Medical Services of Bahrain Defense Force Hospitals.

He has also been promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, reported Al Ayam our sister concern.

Shura to evaluate performance
of FY21 state’s general budget

TDT | Manama

Performance and accomplishment of the state’s general budget for the fiscal year 2021 will come up for approval today when shura council members will sit for their thirteenth session of the sixth legislative term.

This will be done through a discussion of a report on the state’s consolidated account, which includes estimates for ministries and government agencies provided by the Ministry of



Finance and National Economy.

The report contains detailed statistics and illustrative details on revenues, expenditures, and economic indicators. It also presents data on the principles and objectives of the budget, along with accomplishments achieved through programmes, activities, and projects across various government sectors.

Furthermore, the report includes separate annual financial statements for each ministry or government entity, or the consolidated annual financial statements for the entire country.

Additionally, during the session, the Council will address questions to the Minister of Oil and Environment regarding plans and measures to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions by Member Jalal Issa Bubshait, as well as to the Minister of Transport and Communications regarding private transport vehicles authorized to transport foreign tourists by Member Ali Hussein Al-Shihabi, and the Minister’s response to these questions will also be shared.

Indigo turns hours long Bahrain-Mangaluru
flight into two-day harrowing journey

Bahrain and Mangaluru is just hours away; But this flight took 2 days to land there from Bahrain

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

On any given day, it takes just a few hours for a flight from Bahrain to land in Mangaluru in India.

However, this Indigo Airlines flight, reportedly, took a whopping two days to reach its destination, media reports say quoting disgruntled passengers.

Passengers blame their harrowing experience on the multiple goofs the airline made starting while in Bahrain.

The ordeal began with the airline rescheduling the flight by 24 hours due to a bird hit, leaving passengers in the



Representative picture showing an A320 of India low cost compagny Indigo Airlines is pictured on October 19, 2017, after taking off from the Toulouse-Blagnac airport, near Toulouse (AFP)

lurch, with no accommodation offered.

The following day, the flight was again delayed by two hours by waiting for a missing passenger, causing 12 passengers to miss their connecting flight from Mumbai to Mangalore.

Reports suggest they had to wait for more than 12 hours to catch another flight.

“Disgusting isn’t the word but sadly we had to face all this and most of the time we were suppressed as we can’t raise our voices and didn’t know where the support

would come from,” said a passenger on the flight in a report by Time Now News.

“It was only in Mumbai we dared to raise our voice when we lost our connecting flights and were given the option to return home only after going with another connecting flight of 6 hours. The staff in the Kingdom as well as in Mumbai, kept them waiting.”

What does the airline say about it?

A statement by the airline published by local media reads: “IndiGo flight 6E1403 operating from Mumbai to Bahrain faced a bird-hit on arrival at Bahrain due to which the aircraft had to be grounded. Subsequently, flight 6E1404 to be operated from Bahrain to Mumbai was delayed.

“All the affected customers were provided with accommodation, meals and assistance. They were accommodated on the next available flight. The customers were also offered the option of a full refund for their tickets. The grounded aircraft was released back into service post a thorough inspection as per protocol. Customer safety is always of paramount importance to us.”

“We regret the inconvenience caused to our customers,” read a press release by IndiGo Airlines.

Women to ‘Run for Ramadan’ charity, fitness

Julia Cassano
TDT | Manama

Come Tuesday and women of all ages and backgrounds will lace up their shoes at Bahrain Harbour to “Run for Ramadan” in the spirit of charity and fitness.

The 4 pm charitable run/walk aims at collecting food donations for the less fortunate during the holy month of Ramadan.

The event, organised by ‘Lettuce Run and the charity A Box of Goodness’ further aims to encourage women to prioritise their health and well-being by getting some fresh air and exercise while



supporting a good cause. Agreeing that it could diffi-

“There are no fees for the run, but we encourage everyone joining us to bring an item of non-perishable food to donate to Muslim families who are in need.”

DANA ZUBARI, CO-FOUNDER OF LETTUCE RUN

cult for people to run during fasting hours, Dana Zubari,

co-founder of Lettuce Run, said it is why they have designed a run/walk event to make it easier for everyone to participate in the initiative.

“There are no fees for the run,” she said, adding, “but we encourage everyone joining us to bring an item of non-perishable food to donate to Muslim families who are in need.”

The goal is to collect non-perishable food items including rice, dates, flour, dhal, green gram chickpeas, oil, Haresh, Jereesh, Sago, spices, Pasta, Noodles, Sugar, Tea, Milk powder, Coffee, Ghee, Coconut milk powder, Vermicelli, and canned goods.

The initiative has also garnered support from various other establishments.

“Besides, we also have the Rugby Club (Saar), Costa (all locations), Nadeen School (Adliya), and St Christopher’s (Saar and Isa Town) creating the same type of food drive, so those who cannot join on the set day for the run, are still encouraged to donate at the designated boxes at the locations.”

“They are establishing the same type of food drive, making it easier for those who cannot participate in the run on the set day to still contribute to the cause.”

The Minister of Sustainable Development, Noor bint Ali AlKhulaif, held talks with UN officials on the sidelines of her participation at the UN 2023 Water Conference at the UN Headquarters in New York. Discussions focused on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’ (2018-2028). Separately, the ministry also held talks with the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Li Junhua and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Dr Rola Dashti. Ambassador Jamal Al Rowaiei, Bahrain’s Permanent Representative to the UN, was also in attendance. Talks focused primarily on the sustainable management of safe water resources and the Kingdom’s preparations for submitting its second Voluntary National Review on the implementation of global SDGs. The review is expected to be presented during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2023.



Middle East Medical Centers in Hidd, Salmabad get NHRA Diamond status



A cake-cutting ceremony on the occasion of the Middle East Medical Centers in Hidd and Salmabad receiving NHRA Diamond status

TDT | Manama

Middle East Medical Centers in Hidd and Salmabad have been awarded the Diamond status, the highest level of accreditation bestowed by the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA).

The Diamond status is the most coveted level of accreditation, and it is only awarded to healthcare providers that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to quality and safety.

This achievement, Middle East Medical Centers said, is a testament to the commitment to providing the highest level of healthcare services to patients.

The Diamond status is the most coveted level of accreditation, and it is only awarded to healthcare providers that demonstrate an exception-

al commitment to quality and safety.

Dr Jaise Joy, Medical Director at the Middle East Medical Center Hidd branch, stressed the importance of this award. "Out of 700+ registered Medical Centers (in various categories) in Bahrain, only eight centers were awarded the Diamond Sta-

tus.” The Executive Director of Middle East Healthcare Group, Jeeben Varghese, expressed his delight at the achievement, stating, “This achievement is a great addition to the Middle East Healthcare Group since Middle East Hospital was also awarded the Diamond Status in 2021. This is proof of the hard

work and dedication of our staff, who are committed to providing the best possible care to our patients.”

He also recognised the efforts of Vipin Kandathil, Group Quality Manager, for his leadership and for ensuring the centers' met the rigorous NHRA evaluation criteria.

Bahrain marks Youth Day; hails youth real asset, key contributors

TDT | Manama

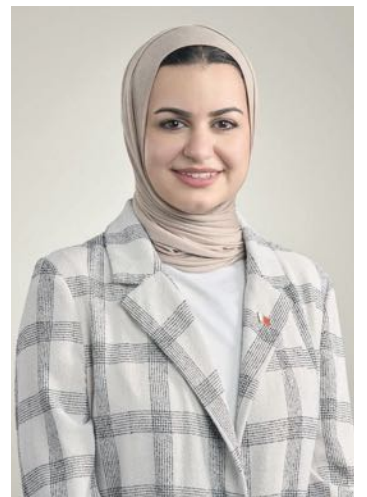
Bahrain yesterday marked Youth Day, observed annually on March 25th, with a range of activities honouring the contribution of Bahraini youths in the national development drive.

In a statement, Minister of Health, Dr Jalila bint Al-Sayed Jawad Hassan, took pride in the potential of young Bahrainis, hailing them as “real assets” and key contributors to a brighter future.

The Kingdom, she said, had developed comprehensive strategies to leverage the potential of its youth to accelerate development.

Dr Hassan also hailed the day as an opportunity to highlight the vital role of Bahraini youngsters play in the Kingdom's development and modernisation process.

The minister further thanked His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister and the Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sport,



Ibrahim bin Hassan Al-Hawaj

Rawan bint Najeed Tawfiqi

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa for the support to young people.

Separately, Ibrahim bin Hassan Al-Hawaj, Minister of Works, emphasised the important role that Bahraini youth play in infrastructure development projects. He stressed: "We are proud of the national cadres of engineers, technicians, and employees in the various divisions."

Minister of Youth Affairs
Rawan bint Najeeb Tawfiqi con-

gratulated Bahraini youth for their ideas and engagement with national initiatives and issues

She also discussed the “Bah-raini Young Ambassadors” initiative, which offers young men and women the chance to create 15-second video clips based on their ideas.

The winner of the initiative will have the opportunity to represent Bahrain in an official meeting outside the Kingdom alongside the Minister of Youth Affairs.



Lulwa Sami, the Director of Communications & Marketing at the Information & eGovernment Authority, participated in an awareness session hosted by the Bahrain Businesswomen Society to introduce the latest eServices and mobile apps that can assist the business sector. Attendees were given an overview of the Authority's business lines and its most notable eServices, including ID cards, Domestic Workers' Medical Examination appointments, and residency services. Additionally, the session highlighted the new features of the Al Tajir App and BeAware Bahrain App, including the ability to access digital personal government documents, known as "My Cards."



The Social Committee of the Information & eGovernment Authority arranged a celebration, in honour of Bahrain Youth Day, which takes place annually on March 25th. The Authority's Chief Executive, Mohammed Ali Al-Qaed, as well as various senior management members and employees from different directorates, took part. During the event, Al-Qaed encouraged everyone to continue developing their skills and to make the most of their talents.



News in brief

Two dead after 15 migrants found trapped in train in Texas



to halt a train that contained a group of “suffocating” migrants, two of whom were dead, police in Texas said. The US Border Patrol stopped the train east of Knippa, a small community in southern Texas near the city of San Antonio, police said. “Approximately 15 migrants were discovered to be in need

of immediate medical attention, five of the immigrants were flown out to San Antonio area hospitals, five were transported to area hospitals, and their conditions are unknown,” the statement by the Uvalde Police Department said.

Pope Francis yesterday updated rules on dealing with sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church, expanding their scope to include lay Catholic leaders and spelling out that both minors and adults can be victims. The pope issued a landmark decree in 2019 making it obligatory for all priests and members of religious orders to report any suspicions of abuse, and holding bishops directly accountable for any abuse they commit themselves or cover-up. The provisions were initially introduced on a temporary basis, but yesterday the Vatican said they would become definitive from April 30 and include additional elements aimed at strengthening the fight against abuse within the Church.

Pope extends sexual abuse law to include lay leaders

Niger’s army entered Mali in hunt for ‘terrorists’: ministry

Niger’s defence ministry said Friday its troops killed 79 “terrorists” in operations last week that involved a foray into neighbouring Mali. Troops from the army’s anti-jihadist Almahau operation began the search after they were attacked by an “armed terrorist group” in the western town of Tilaoa on March 10, the ministry said. It also came after at least 17 Nigerien soldiers were killed last month in Intagamey, another town in the vast western region of Tillaberi, one of several areas currently under a state of emergency due to jihadist attacks. The pursuit, carried out by air and land forces, led to the Hamakat area of Mali, the hideout of the alleged perpetrator of the February 10 attack, the ministry said..

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

‘Not the most attractive’: Underdog snail wins Mollusc of the Year



A Concholepas concholepas
AFP | London

In the end it was neither beauty, nor gymnastic mating rituals that won the public over.

In voting the Chilean abalone to victory in the international “Mollusc of the Year” contest, people seem to have voted with their stomachs.

The edible underdog -- known commonly as the “loco” -- pulled in 42 percent of the global votes, despite being up against some formidable opponents. Contenders included the psychedelic attractions of the Wavy Bubble Snail and the giant Methuselah oyster, which can live for 500 years.

If sporting acclaim and recognition wasn’t enough, the tough-shelled sea snail will now have its entire genome

Served simply with a dab of mayonnaise or added to soup, this snail is a traditional delicacy in its home countries of Peru and Chile

It feels great. As you can understand, the ‘loco’ is not the most attractive mollusc. Although I guess it must be way more tasty than a sea slug

RESEARCHER J. ANTONIO BAEZA

decoded by the LOEWE Centre for Translational Biodiversity Genomics, which runs the competition, in an effort to benefit science and humanity.

The loco’s nominating researchers basked in the victory.

“It feels great. As you can understand, the ‘loco’ is not the most attractive mollusc,” researcher J. Antonio Baeza of Clemson University in South Carolina said.

“Although I guess it must be way more tasty than a sea slug.”

Served simply with a dab of mayonnaise or added to soup, this snail is a traditional delicacy in its home countries of Peru and Chile.

Tornado kills at least 23 in Mississippi

The death toll is expected to rise as search and rescue efforts continue across storm-stricken areas

● Four people still missing after buildings wrecked and power lines downed by storm system

AFP | Washington

At least 23 people were killed as a devastating tornado ripped across the southern US state of Mississippi, tearing off roofs, smashing cars and flattening entire neighbourhoods.

The state’s emergency management agency said yesterday that at least four people were missing and dozens were injured, while tens of thousands of people in Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee were without power.

The powerful storm system that generated the tornado, accompanied by thunderstorms and driving rain, cut a long path across the state late Friday, slamming several towns along the way.

In the town of Rolling Fork, home to less than 2,000 people, an entire row of houses and buildings was demolished, leaving only scattered debris. Cars were overturned, fences were ripped up and trees uprooted, television footage showed.

“My city is gone,” Rolling Fork Mayor Eldridge Walker told CNN. “Devastation -- as I look from left to right, that’s all I



Emergency personnel on Highway 49 near Silver City, Mississippi

see.” Patricia Perkins, who works at a hardware store in the town, told AFP that “most everything is wiped away.”

Resident Shanta Howard told ABC affiliate WAPT that locals had to help remove the dead from the wreckage of their homes.

“It was like no notice. We didn’t know what was happening,” a tearful Tracy Harden, the owner of Chuck’s Dairy Bar in Rolling Fork, told CNN.

Search and rescue operations were also underway in Sharkey and Humphreys counties, about 70 miles (110 kilo-

metres north of the state capital Jackson.

The emergency management agency put the latest death toll at 23 but cautioned that it could rise.

“The loss will be felt in these towns forever,” state Governor Tate Reeves said on Twitter. “Please pray for God’s hand to be over all who lost family and friends.”

‘A very scary thing’

Woodrow Johnson, a local official in Humphreys County, told CNN his wife woke him up and they heard what sounded like a train. He said his home was destroyed.

At least 23 Mississippians were killed by last night’s violent tornadoes. We know that many more are injured. Search and rescue teams are still active

GOVERNOR TATE REEVES

“It was a very scary thing,” Johnson said, adding his neighbor’s house, a trailer, was “completely gone.”

The National Weather Service issued a rare tornado emergency for Rolling Fork and surrounding areas at 9:00pm, warning people to seek shelter from life-threatening conditions and forecasting golf ball-sized hail.

The tornado watch expired in the early hours of yesterday, meteorologists said. More thunderstorms were expected, but they were not forecast to be severe.

The NWS warned residents that as clean-up operations continue, “dangers remain even after the storms move on.”

Malary White, a spokeswoman for the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, said damage assessments would not be possible until officials could do a complete survey in the daylight.

“Our main priority right now, especially for the local first responders, it’s life safety and accounting for the people

YOU KNOW WHAT
Tornadoes, a weather phenomenon notoriously difficult to predict, are relatively common in the United States, especially in the central and southern parts of the country

and making sure they are safe,” she told CBS News affiliate WJTV.

In Rolling Fork, Walker said several people were taken to hospital for treatment.

“A lot of families are hurting. This community is in a situation that we never expected,” he told CNN.

“Houses that are torn up can be replaced but we can’t replace a life.”

Tornadoes, a weather phenomenon notoriously difficult to predict, are relatively common in the United States, especially in the central and southern parts of the country.

In January, a series of damaging tornadoes on one day left several people dead in Alabama and Georgia.

Large asteroid zoom between Earth and Moon



A graphical of the asteroid
AFP | London

A large asteroid safely zoomed between Earth and the Moon yesterday, a once-in-a-decade event that was used as a training exercise for planetary defence efforts, according to the European Space Agency.

The asteroid, named 2023 DZ2, is estimated to be 40 to 70 metres (130 to 230 feet) wide, roughly the size of the Parthenon, and big enough to wipe out a large city if it hit our planet.

At 19:49 GMT yesterday it came within a third of the distance from the Earth to the Moon, said Richard Moissl, the head of the ESA’s planetary defence office.

Though that is “very close”, there is nothing to worry about, he told AFP.

Small asteroids fly past every day, but one of this size coming so close to Earth only happens around once every 10 years, he added.

The asteroid passed 175,000 kilometres (109,000 miles) from Earth at a speed of 28,000

BETTER YOU KNOW
The asteroid will again swing past Earth in 2026, but poses no threat of impact for at least the next 100 years -- which is how far out its trajectory has been calculated

kilometres per hour (17,400 miles per hour). The moon is roughly 385,000 kilometres away.

An observatory in La Palma, one of Spain’s Canary Islands, first spotted the asteroid on February 27.

Astronomers around the world analysed the asteroid with a range of instruments such as spectrometers and radars.

Early wildfire in Spain rages out of control

AFP | Madrid

Some 700 firefighters were battling Spain’s first major forest fire of the year yesterday, which was raging out of control 48 hours after it began, forcing 1,500 people to flee.

In an update on Twitter, the regional emergency services said the fire in Villanueva de Vivier, some 90 kilometres (55 miles) north of Valencia, was a “highly-complex blaze taking place in weather conditions similar to those of the summer”.

“700 people have been mobilised for the operation (to fight the fire). It has affected 3,900 hectares and has a 35-kilometre perimeter,” they said, indicating the number of people forced out of their homes on Friday, some 1,500, had not changed.

They said the huge blaze remained “very voracious” with the work to put it out “very complicated”.

Firefighters tweeted that they had deployed some 20 aerial units to help tackle the fire.

“Clearly the fire has not stabilised because it is still burning with great ferocity given that the weather conditions are almost like summer,” Ximo Puig, leader of the Valencia region



A helicopter overflies a forest area near the village of Los Peiros

YOU KNOW WHAT
In 2022, which was a particularly bad year for wildfires in Europe, Spain was the worst-hit country with nearly 500 blazes that destroyed more than 300,000 hectares

told Spain’s RTVE public television. The fire began just after mid-

day (1200 GMT) on Thursday. Firefighters said the blaze was more typical of summer than of late March.

With the vegetation dried out by a lack of moisture in the atmosphere in recent months and large amounts of combustible biomass in the forests, conditions were “perfect” for such a blaze, Manolo Nicolas of the Castellon firefighters had told public radio on Friday.

In 2022, which was a particularly bad year for wildfires in Europe, Spain was the worst-hit country with nearly 500 blazes that destroyed more than 300,000 hectares, according to figures from the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS).

US chocolate factory explosion kills 2, leaves 9 missing

AFP | Washington

An explosion at a chocolate factory in the US state of Pennsylvania has killed two people and left nine others missing, according to local media.

The explosion at the RM Palmer Company plant in the West Reading borough of Pennsylvania occurred before 5 pm local time (2100 GMT) on Friday, local TV network WFMZ reported.

Besides the dead and missing, six people were transported to medical facilities, Pennsylvania’s Emergency Management Agency told WFMZ.

“The (factory) is pretty leveled, unfortunately. There’s not much they can salvage from the building,” said West Reading Mayor Samantha Kaag in a televised press conference.



Emergency workers at the site of the explosion

“In the front, with the church and the apartments, the explosion was so big it moved that building four feet forward,” she added.

TV footage showed a fire blazing in the debris after the explosion, with firefighters trying to extinguish it.

The cause of the blast was still under investigation, authorities said.

According to its website, RM Palmer has been producing seasonal chocolate novelties -- like Easter bunnies and heart-shaped Valentine’s Day sweets -- since 1948.

Brazil’s Lula, ill with pneumonia, postpones China trip

AFP | Brasilia

Brazil’s leftist leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who was due to head to China for key talks with President Xi Jinping, has indefinitely postponed his trip to recover from pneumonia, the government said yesterday.

Lula, who succeeded the far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro at the start of the year, had hoped to use the trip next week to reclaim his country’s role in global diplomacy, with discussions in Beijing expected to focus on reinforcing trade and the war in Ukraine.

No new date was given for the 77-year-old Lula’s trip, the government said, adding that Chinese authorities had already been told of the decision.

Lula had originally been



Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva

scheduled to leave yesterday but that was put back by a day due to what his office called a case of “mild pneumonia,” which was being treated with medication.

But doctors suggested he put off the trip after a new exam yesterday.

“Despite the improvement in his condition, the presi-

dent’s medical service recommends that the China trip be postponed” until Lula is no longer contagious, physician Ana Helena Germoglio said, according to the government statement.

Just three months into his latest term as president -- he has already visited Argentina and the United States -- the six-day trip to China, Brazil’s largest trading partner, was seen as key for Lula.

The official visit was set to begin on Tuesday with his meeting with Xi.

Lula’s health has been a source of concern in recent years.

In November, Lula -- who first governed Brazil from 2003 to 2010 -- had surgery to remove a lesion from his vocal cords.



TOP 4 TWEETS

01



After 8 years of conflict in Yemen, humanitarian needs remain enormous. Today, 11 million children are in need of assistance. There’s no time to lose. We must do all we can to ensure the people of Yemen can look to the future with hope.

@antonioiguterres

02



I joined the closing of the 6th Universal Health and Preparedness Review Technical Advisory Group meeting. Grateful for their expertise, dedication and leadership to ensure this initiative provides a strong emergency preparedness foundation for Member States.

@DrTedros

03



Canada and the United States can do big things -- because we do them together.

@POTUS

04

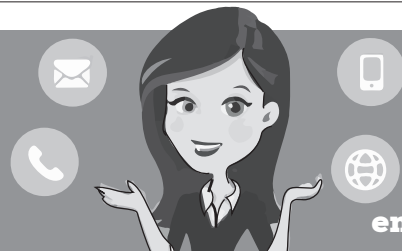


Welcome today’s release of Paul Rusesabagina. Thankful to know Paul will be re-joining his family soon. Grateful to the Rwandan Government for making reunion possible. Also appreciate assistance by Government of Qatar.

@SecBlinken

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

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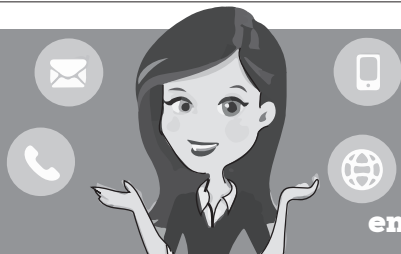
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Defending champion Alcaraz cruises into Miami third round



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain plays a forehand against Facundo Bagnis of Argentina

AFP | Miami

World number one Carlos Alcaraz made an emphatic start to his Miami Open title defence, defeating Argentina's Facundo Bagnis 6-0, 6-2 on Friday.

The 19-year-old Spaniard, the youngest ever player to top the rankings, is looking to complete the "Sunshine Double" after beating Daniil Medvedev in last week's Indian Wells final.

Alcaraz made a blistering start winning the first 11 points of the match, with the 33-year-old Bagnis having no answer at all to the teenager's powerful serve.

There was a loud cheer from the crowd at Hard Rock Stadium when Bagnis, who has never beaten a top 20 ranked player, held serve in the second

"To start a new tournament is never easy, different conditions. I have to be ready to get used to these new conditions, but I was really focused on the match from the beginning, and I'm happy with the way that I played"

CARLOS ALCARAZ

set and then broke Alcaraz to make it 2-2.

But that was a brief moment of respite for Bagnis rather than any shift in momentum and Alcaraz had no further problems as he blasted his way to victory in just 65 minutes.

"To start a new tournament is never easy, different conditions. I have to be ready to get used to these new conditions, but I was really focused on the match from the beginning, and I'm happy with the way that I played," said the Spaniard.

Alcaraz needs to win here to maintain his top spot in the rankings, will face either Serbian Dusan Lajovic or American Maxime Cressy in the third round.

After his win in Miami last year, Alcaraz boldly predicted he was ready to win a Grand Slam and he returns now having achieved that goal and, he concedes, as a different man.

Jabeur and Sakkari crash out in Miami, Sabelenka struggles through

AFP | Miami

Fourth seed Ons Jabeur crashed out of the Miami Open on Friday, losing her opening match to Russian qualifier Varvara Gracheva 6-2, 6-2.

In another surprise, Canadian Bianca Andreescu, the former US Open winner now ranked 31st, overcame seventh seed Maria Sakkari of Greece 5-7, 6-3,

"I felt like I was on my heels a lot of the time during the match, but I made every ball. I fought to the end, and I think I played the important points just a little bit better today. But it could have gone either way today"

BIANCA ANDREESCU

6-4, in a gruelling three-hour, three-minute battle in the early afternoon South Florida sun.

Romania's Sorana Cirstea upset world number four Caroline Garcia 6-2, 6-3 in a repeat of her Indian Wells win over the Frenchwoman last week.

But world number two Aryna Sabalenka got past American Shelby Rogers 6-4, 6-3, despite being hampered by what ap-



Bianca Andreescu of Canada shakes hands at the net after her three set victory against Maria Sakkari of Greece

peared to be a groin injury.

Tunisian Jabeur, beaten finalist at Wimbledon and the US Open last year, has been working her way back from injury and on her return earlier this month went out in the third round at Indian Wells.

Jabeur underwent surgery after suffering a knee injury at the Australian Open, and subsequently missed the WTA Tour's Middle East swing.

She looked well short of her best against the 22-year-old Gracheva and had two medical visits during the one-hour 11-minute match.

The win was the biggest scalp yet for Gracheva, who earlier this month reached her first

WTA final, losing in Austin to Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk.

"The plan was, of course like all matches, to be as stable as possible, to try to make her work as much points as possible, and of course wait for comfortable ones to attack," Gracheva said after her third career win over a top 10 opponent.

"I've just probably caught this wave where I'm stable, where I always have a chance to play my game, be aggressive, cause troubles for the others by the game style. I've just got to try to keep rolling on this way," she added.

Andreescu, the US Open winner in 2019, had eliminated Britain's Emma Raducanu in the previous round and after losing

Andreescu, the US Open winner in 2019, had eliminated Britain's Emma Raducanu in the previous round and after losing the first set to Sakkari's powerful stroke play, the Canadian settled into a solid pattern of steady returns, peppered with aggressive winners as she took control of the second set

the first set to Sakkari's powerful stroke play, the Canadian settled into a solid pattern of steady returns, peppered with aggressive winners as she took control of the second set.

She took advantage of some loose play from Sakkari but was unable to convert on two match-points at the end, offering a glimmer of hope to her opponent, but finally grabbed the win when the Greek found the net.

"I felt like I was on my heels a lot of the time during the match, but I made every ball," said Andreescu.

"I fought to the end, and I think I played the important points just a little bit better today. But it could have gone either way today," she added.

Ballance, Madhevere star as Zimbabwe win ODI series

AFP | Harare

Half-centuries from Gary Ballance and Wessly Madhevere helped Zimbabwe defeat the Netherlands by seven wickets and win a World Cup Super League one-day international series 2-1 yesterday.

After two midweek thrillers that were won in the final over, the home side were always ahead on run rate after restricting the tourists to 231 for nine.

Sikandar Raza hit the match-winning four, taking Zimbabwe to 235 for three with 50 balls remaining at Harare Sports Club.

"Winning the series is huge for us as a team, and for me as an individual," said Zimbabwe all-rounder and man of the series Sean Williams.

"Winning becomes a habit. We had got to a stage where losing had become a habit.



Zimbabwe's Gary Ballance (L) plays a shot while Ireland's Lorcan Tucker (R) looks on

We are learning to win again.

"Wessly is an extremely talented kid and a fantastic competitor. It is huge for us as a team because he is maturing."

Netherlands captain Scott Edwards was upbeat despite losing the series after winning the opening match.

"We played a lot of good cricket here and

Winning the series is huge for us as a team, and for me as an individual. Winning becomes a habit. We had got to a stage where losing had become a habit. We are learning to win again"

SEAN WILLIAMS

will be back in a few months (for a World Cup qualifying tournament) and hopefully be very competitive."

Zimbabwe have often battled in all three formats due to poor top-order batting, but openers Madhevere and captain Craig Ervine excelled by putting on 96 for the first wicket.



After his win in Miami last year, Alcaraz boldly predicted he was ready to win a Grand Slam and he returns now having achieved that goal and, he concedes, as a different man

Dar Kulaib storm into volleyball finals

Winners complete two-game sweep of Al Ahli to set up Al Najma clash in league championship series

● **Dar Kulaib defeat Al Ahli in three sets in second game of final four match-up**

TDT | Manama

Dar Kulaib stormed into the finals of the 2022/2023 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League last night. Dar Kulaib booked their place after a dominant 3-0 (25-22, 25-20, 25-17) victory over Al Ahli at a jam-packed and rocking Isa bin Rashid Arena at the Bahrain Volleyball Association (BVA) headquarters in Isa Sports City in Riffa. The result earned them a two-game sweep of their best-of-three semi-final series and thus their berth in the championship round. Dar Kulaib will now face the waiting Al Najma for this season's crown. The title-deciding



Dar Kulaib players and officials celebrate after their win

series will also be played in best-of-three format. The schedule has yet to be released by the BVA. Najma secured their spot following a win over Muharraq in their final-four contest, which was a single game as Najma owned a twice-to-beat advantage after finishing the league's round-of-six playoffs in first place.

It will be an exciting match-up, as Najma and Dar Kulaib were both amongst the top teams ranked in the preliminary round as well as the playoffs. In last night's clash, Ahli were the early aggressors and they held a slim lead in the first set. After Ahli built a 16-12 advantage, Dar Kulaib stormed back and tied the proceedings at 20-

all. A Mahmoud Abdulwahed spike then gave Dar Kulaib a 22-21 lead, and later a Mohammed Yaqoob attack off a perfect Hussain Sultan set-up closed out the set for their team. In set two, Dar Kulaib took a quick 5-0 lead which they later extended to 18-12. They never wavered from there, and although Ahli saved two set points

later on, Argentinian professional Juan Barrera made sure that they took the two-set advantage. In the third set, Dar Kulaib were determined to close things out and stretched their 15-13 advantage to 21-14. They finally sealed the win with a Barrera smash. Also playing key roles for Dar Kulaib were Ali Habib, Hassan

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Both Dar Kulaib and Al Najma were amongst the top teams all season in the Isa bin Rashid Volleyball League. They were the top two seeds, with Najma in first, at the end of the round-of-six playoffs

Abbas, Hassan Alaiwi and libero Hussain Sultan, among others. For Ahli, they relied heavily on Mohammed Anan, Abbas Al Khabbaz, Ali Alsairafi, Sayed Mohammed Alabbar and Mahmood Abdullhussain, among others.

Mbappe gets off to winning start as France captain

● **France hammer Dutch 4-0 in Paris**
● **New skipper Mbappe scores twice**

AFP | Paris

Kylian Mbappe marked his first game as France captain on Friday with two goals and an assist as the World Cup finalists romped to a 4-0 win against a depleted Netherlands side in a Euro 2024 qualifier in Paris. Mbappe has succeeded long-standing France skipper Hugo Lloris and the new era got off to a flying start as the Paris Saint-Germain superstar set up the pink-haired Antoine Griezmann to score inside two minutes. Dayot Upamecano bundled in the second goal in the eighth minute and Mbappe got his name on the scoresheet to make it 3-0 before the midway point in the first half. Mbappe wrapped up the victory in emphatic fashion with two minutes remaining, before the Netherlands' Memphis Depay had a stoppage-time penalty saved by goalkeeper Mike Maignan. It was a display of ruthless efficiency from Didier Deschamps' side against a Dutch team missing several key players after a virus swept through their squad. At least their toughest assignment in qualifying Group B is



France's Kylian Mbappe (C) fights for the ball with Netherlands' Jurrien Timber (L) Lutsharel Geertruida (R)

now out of the way and their next game is at home to Gibraltar on Monday. The French now visit the Republic of Ireland but it is going to take something remarkable for them to fail to qualify for next year's Euro given the top

38

international goals have been scored by Kylian Mbappe to rise above Karim Benzema into fifth place on France's all-time list

two teams in each group go through. "We didn't want to disappoint our fans. This was our first game back here after the World Cup

and we really wanted to pick up where we left off there, except for the final," Mbappe told broadcaster TFI. Of his own game, Mbappe added: "I try to do my job, be decisive and bring everyone else with me. It worked well today but this is just the beginning so let's not get carried away." Dutch coach Ronald Koeman referred to the virus that hit his squad as he reacted to the defeat. "You know the circumstances, but I don't want to make excuses for this mediocre performance," he said. "There is nothing very positive to take from today." There were four changes to the France team compared to the World Cup final, with Lloris and centre-back Raphael Varane having retired -- they were honoured on the Stade de France

“We didn’t want to disappoint our fans. This was our first game back here after the World Cup and we really wanted to pick up where we left off there, except for the final. I try to do my job, be decisive and bring everyone else with me. It worked well today but this is just the beginning so let’s not get carried away

KYLIAN MBAPPE

pitch before kick-off -- while Ousmane Dembele is injured and Olivier Giroud started on the bench. In came AC Milan's Maignan in goal and Liverpool's Ibrahim Konate in central defence, while there were starts for Kingsley Coman and Randal Kolo Muani too. The Netherlands, with Koeman back for a second spell in charge, were without Cody Gakpo, Matthijs de Ligt, Sven Botman, Denzel Dumfries and Frenkie de Jong for a variety of reasons. France simply blew them away. Mbappe has promised to play a unifying role after taking over the armband, although he also admitted that Griezmann was disappointed at being overlooked for the captaincy by Deschamps.

Ibrahimovic, 41, beaten by Gibraltar player as Euros' golden oldie



Sweden's forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic reacts after the match

AFP | Solna

Zlatan Ibrahimovic, the 41-year-old Swedish striker, on Friday became the second oldest player to feature in a European championship qualifier but his landmark night ended in a sobering 3-0 defeat to Belgium. Ibrahimovic came on as a 73rd-minute substitute in the Euro 2024 group game in Solna. The Swedish star, born on October 3, 1981, was initially hailed as the oldest man to take part in a European qualifier. However, it then emerged that Gibraltar striker Lee Casciaro, born on September 29, 1981, had taken the record in his team's match on Friday against Greece. At 41 years, five months and 21 days, Ibrahimovic is still ahead of former Italian goalkeeper Dino Zoff, who played against Sweden on May 29, 1983, at 41 years, three months and one day. AC Milan's Ibrahimovic last weekend became the oldest player to score a goal in Serie A history. Earlier this week, he insisted he wants to play at the Euro finals in Germany next year when he will be 42 and the oldest player to ever participate in the tournament. However, he faces a tough battle to satisfy that ambi-

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AC Milan's Ibrahimovic last weekend became the oldest player to score a goal in Serie A history

tion Romelu Lukaku bagged a hat-trick to give new Belgium coach Domenico Tedesco a winning start after succeeding Roberto Martinez. "Those are three very important points. Taking three points and scoring three goals in Sweden is never easy for any team," said Tedesco. "Winning is always the best thing to unite a group. As for my selection choices -- the boys have shown that I wasn't wrong." Inter Milan striker Lukaku opened the scoring just after the half-hour mark, glancing Dodi Lukebakio's cross into the far corner. Lukebakio also created Lukaku's second of the night. Substitute Johan Bakayoko turned provider for Lukaku's third with seven minutes remaining as Belgium recorded a 15th successive European qualifying win.

Groves at the double in Catalunya, Roglic retains lead

AFP | Barcelona

Australian sprinter Kaden Groves won a second stage at this year's Tour of Catalunya yesterday as he edged a mass bunch sprint for the line at Molins del Rei ahead of Frenchman Bryan Coquard. Groves achieved the win on a

teammate's bike after getting a flat tyre on the run in and even fighting his way back to the rest of the peloton. "(Stage win) number one was good and this was better," said the sprinter. "I felt the tyre go and wasn't sure

what to do, the team weren't near enough to replace it so they told me to swap," he added. On a largely flat 175km stage six, Remco Evenepoel did his best to take the overall lead by attacking Primož Roglic on the day's only real climb 20km from the finish.



Kaden Groves

Bahrain fall to Palestine in friendly

Kingdom’s senior men’s national team concede two goals in 10-minute span in second half

- Michel Milad, Islam Al Batran on target for Palestine in second half
- Sayed Dhiya Saeed nets lone consolation for Bahrainis late on

TDT | Manama

Bahrain narrowly bowed to Palestine 1-2 last night in an international friendly match played at Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium at Muharraq Club in Arad.

The nationals conceded two goals over a 10-minute span early in the second half, and then skipper Sayed Dhiya Saeed fired in their lone consolation in the 80th minute.

The game was the first of two tune-ups for the Bahrainis in a week. They also face off with Syria on Tuesday, which will be the final day of their latest local



Ali Madan splits his Palestine defenders as he looks to attack for Bahrain in last night's match

training gathering under head coach Helio Sousa.

The Portuguese tactician had a starting 11 last night that featured Ammar Abbas in goal, playing alongside Saeed, Amine Hasan, Mohammed Hardan, Ali Madan, Ahmed Nabeel, Ali Har- am, Jassim Al Shaikh, Moham-

med Adel, Mahdi Humaidan and Mahdi Abduljabbar.

In the 40th minute, Abduljabbar missed a key chance to put the Bahrainis ahead after failing to convert a penalty. Madan was taken down in the box, and Abduljabbar's shot, hit towards the bottom-left corner of goal, was saved by a diving Palestine goalkeeper Rami Hamadeh.

After the re-start, Bahrain's Abbas made his own fine save in the 50th minute off a shot from outside the box by Palestine's Islam Al Batran.

But then the Palestinians scored on the ensuing corner kick after Abbas fumbled the ball as he tried to collect the cross. Michel Milad was then first to the loose ball and he headed home from close range.

Just 10 minutes later, Palestine doubled their advantage. Al Batran struck from the right wing, and his shot was deflected as it swerved into the net.

Sousa tried to inject some life into the national team and in-

serted stars Komail Alaswad and Mohammed Jassim Marhoon.

Their impact was instant and Madan threatened with a shot in the face of goal that was parried away by Hamadeh.

Saeed later got one back for Bahrain in the 80th minute with a left-footed strike from inside the penalty area. He shot the ball into the top-left corner, far from the reach of Hamadeh.

Madan was denied once more in the 89th minute, with his shot from up close punched away. The nationals then should have equalised in the second minute of second-half stoppage time, but could not convert their chances.

This week's friendlies are the first international games for the senior men's national team since competing in the 25th Arab Gulf Cup in Iraq in January.

They are using the matches to prepare for their upcoming competitions, including the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, to be held in Doha in January of next year.

New Zealand's Shipley tears through Sri Lanka in ODI thrashing

- Henry Shipley leads rout of Sri Lanka with maiden five-for as New Zealand register huge win in 1st ODI

AFP | Auckland

Henry Shipley tore through Sri Lanka's batting line-up as New Zealand romped to a 198-run win in the first one-day international in Auckland yesterday.

Playing just his fourth match for the Black Caps, tall seamer Shipley took 5-31 as the tourists were skittled for 76 at Eden Park, their lowest ODI score against New Zealand and their fifth-lowest ever.

Sri Lanka's capitulation in 19.5 overs made it their second shortest innings.

The visitors never recovered after slumping to 31-5, with only three batters reaching double figures, including top scorer Angelo Mathews (18).



New Zealand's Henry Shipley (L) reacts whilst bowling

It comes just two months after Sri Lanka's world-record 317-run loss to India in Thiruvananthapuram -- when they were out for 73.

Captain Dasun Shanaka identified some glaring shortcomings that would need to be improved on for game two in Christchurch on Tuesday.

"Especially with the bat, we need to tighten up the tech-

niques," Shanaka said.

"The way Shipley bowled, the movement he got and the bounce, I think all sorts of things happened tonight.

"Credit should be given to Shipley, it's outstanding bowling."

Sri Lanka's batters succumbed to a series of loose shots, allowing Shipley to claim New Zealand's first five-wicket bag in the

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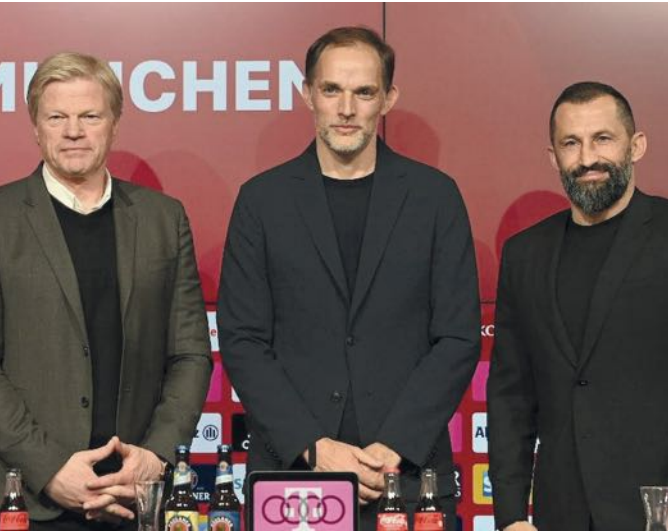
Sri Lanka needed a clean sweep of the three-match series to take an automatic World Cup berth. With that no longer a possibility, they are increasingly likely to be forced to play in a qualifying tournament in June-July

format for more than four years.

The 26-year-old worried his opponents with steep bounce and pace throughout his seven overs, beating the bat routinely and prompting a series of shots to be lofted aimlessly to waiting fielders.

Daryl Mitchell took 2-12 and Matt Henry 2-20 in an innings that lasted less than two hours.

Tuchel 'dumbstruck' by Bayern appointment



(L-R) Bayern Munich's CEO Oliver Kahn, Bayern Munich's new headcoach Thomas Tuchel and Bayern Munich's Bosnian sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic pose for medias after a press conference in Munich

AFP | Munich

Newly-appointed Bayern Munich coach Thomas Tuchel said yesterday he was stunned at being offered the position.

Tuchel, 49, has replaced the sacked Julien Nagelsmann in charge of the six-time Champions League winners.

Nagelsmann lost his job at the German champions on Friday with the Bavarians second in the table but he had guided them to next month's quarter-finals in Europe's top-tier competition.

Tuchel, was fired from Chelsea in September despite guiding them to the 2021 Champions League and spoke to Bayern bosses late on Tuesday.

"Believe me or not, I was a bit dumbstruck in the first 30 seconds of our first discussion," Tuchel told reporters.

"I didn't know what we were talking about. It became clear that it was for right now.

"I was completely sur-

“Believe me or not, I was a bit dumbstruck in the first 30 seconds of our first discussion. I didn't know what we were talking about. It became clear that it was for right now**”**

THOMAS TUCHEL

prised. The timing was surprising. There was no contact beforehand," the former Paris Saint-Germain boss added.

Tuchel's first match will come as soon as April 1 after the ongoing international break.

Bayern will meet league leaders Borussia Dortmund, the club that Tuchel led from 2015-2017 before he left for PSG.

"It's the (big) match in German football," he said.

"It has another level of importance," he added.

Bagnaia wins first ever sprint at Portugal MotoGP

AFP | Portimao

World champion Francesco Bagnaia won yesterday's Portuguese MotoGP sprint ahead of fellow Ducati rider Jorge Martin and Honda's Marc Marquez.

This was the inaugural sprint in an innovation that will see the riders contest a 12-lap race for half the points awarded for Sunday's showpiece event.

Marquez, a six-time MotoGP world champion, had surprisingly started from his 64th career pole position ahead of Bagnaia and Martin having struggled in Friday practice where he also crashed out.

"I spent a lot of energy. It was only 12 laps, but we did an extraordinary job today," said Marquez, whose career has stalled after undergoing four surgeries in recent seasons.



First-placed Ducati Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia (R) greets second-placed Ducati Spanish rider Jorge Martin

"Tomorrow is the most important race of the weekend, it will be more difficult."

Despite his reservations, Marquez will still start Sunday's race from pole position where he will seek his 60th premier class victory but first since the autumn of 2021.

This first sprint race in MotoGP history was marked by a shuddering collision between Italian riders Enea Bastianini of Ducati and Luca Marini of the satellite Ducati-VR46 team.

Bastianini was taken to the medical centre because of pain in his right arm.

The crash came a day after Spanish veteran Pol Espargaro was hospitalised with "severe spinal trauma" after a crash in practice.

The high-speed crash suffered by 31-year-old Espargaro on his KTM Tech3 GASGAS bike caused a long interruption to the session which eventually finished around two hours late.