

East Riffa, Hala stay in premier league

Twelve team line-up complete for next season's Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League | P12

WORLD 6 New truce, new battles in Sudan



Johnny Depp reschedules concerts after suffering ankle fracture

8 CELEBS

BUSINESS 5 Markets wobble as traders await US debt ceiling vote

Stage set for first Bahraini woman 'on the moon'

Zahra Ayaz
 TDT | Manama

The decision to join the Artemis Accords, which seeks to put a woman on the moon by 2024, has been accepted by Bahrain's Shura Council, and with this action, Bahrain is paving the way for the first Bahraini woman conquering space. The Artemis Accords, a non-binding multilateral agreement signed by the US and other states, were introduced by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 2020 with the goal of sending people back to the moon by 2025.

Saudi astronauts are earth-bound



Barnawi and Al Qarni onboard ISS
 Jeddah

Saudi astronauts Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali Al Qarni have departed from the International Space Station (ISS) yesterday, marking the end of a history-making mission. Shortly after 7pm UAE time, the two astronauts undocked from ISS and began a 12-hour ride back to Earth, with a splashdown off the coast of Florida expected today at 7.10am. The day previously, Barnawi - who became the first Arab woman to go on a space mission when she launched with her colleague Al Qarni on a trip to the orbital outpost last Monday - said "every story comes to an end."

'Time is now'
 Oslo

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday the "time is now" for Turkey to drop its objections to Sweden joining Nato, but said the Biden administration also believed that Turkey should be provided with upgraded F-16 fighters "as soon as possible."

HM King hails SCE role to protect environment

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa commended the role and programmes of the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) to protect the environment and wildlife in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

HM the King was speaking as he received yesterday at Safriya Palace his Personal Representative, President of the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE), His Highness Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

His Majesty also praised the efforts of the government bodies and their cooperation with SCE,



HM the King receives HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad

wishing them every success.

During the meeting, which was attended by a number of

senior officials, HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad presented a briefing to HM the King on the

kingdom's plan to handle the rise in sea level in the region.

He expressed utmost thanks

and appreciation to HM King Hamad for his directives and support to the efforts of SCE.

Bahrain to boost energy efficiency

HRH Prince Salman inaugurates Al-Dur 2 Phase 2 Independent Water and Power Project

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, affirmed the Kingdom's commitment to developing energy production projects in partnership with the private sector and in line with the Kingdom's comprehensive development, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he inaugurated yesterday the Al-Dur 2 Phase 2 Independent Water and Power Project (IWPP). A number of senior officials were also in attendance.

He toured the facility and was briefed on the operations of the Al-Dur 2 Phase 2 project, an extension of Al-Dur Phase 1, which was inaugurated by HM the King.

Al-Dur 2 Phase 2 Independent Water and Power Project (IWPP) is the first production station in the Kingdom connected to the high-voltage electricity transmission network of 400 KV. The station cost more than



HRH Prince Salman with senior officials at the event

\$1 billion and was established in partnership with companies from Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Japan.

The IWPP generates 1,500 MW of electricity and processes 50 million gallons of desalinated water daily. This increases the Kingdom's overall production capacity to 5,044 MW of electricity and 204 million gallons of desalinated water daily.

Development projects

His Royal Highness noted the



importance of development projects that provide quality services to Bahraini citizens and create world-class electricity and water infrastructure.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister emphasised the Kingdom's commitment to enhancing energy efficiency and expanding electricity and water production capacity in conjunction with programmes and priorities that consolidate

development.

He highlighted the Kingdom's dedication to ensuring development infrastructure projects align with the latest international standards that support climate change mitigation efforts.

His Royal Highness stressed the Kingdom's commitment to adopt innovative programmes that are high quality, meet efficiency standards, and contribute to the Kingdom's wide-ranging development goals and future energy-saving ambitions.

EWA role

HRH Prince Salman lauded EWA's significant role and efforts to bolster the electricity and water sector and ensure its sustainability to meet growing demand and achieve its far-reaching aspirations.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister commended the efforts of those leading the pro-

ject and wished them continued success in achieving their goals.

Commitment

The President of the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), HE Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, affirmed that the Authority and its workforce are committed to achieving the comprehensive development goals set by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and supported by His Royal Highness.

HE Kamal bin Ahmed also affirmed EWA's commitment to its partnership with the private sector, ensuring the continuation of energy programmes and plans that contribute to energy sustainability.

He highlighted the importance of meeting the growing demand for electricity and water consumption considering the Kingdom's industrial, commercial, and urban expansion.

"The Kingdom is committed to enhancing energy efficiency and expanding electricity and water production capacity in conjunction with programmes and priorities that consolidate development."

- HRH PRINCE SALMAN BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA, THE CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER



New chapter for future of energy in Bahrain



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, has inaugurated the Bapco Energies, the new brand identity of the Oil and Gas Holding Company (nogaholding). Under Bapco Energies, the existing operating companies, including Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco), Bahrain National Gas Company (Banagas), Bahrain National Gas Expansion Company (Tawseah), Bahrain Aviation Fueling Company (BAFCO), Tatweer Petroleum, and Bapco Retail Company (Tazweed) will be integrated and rebranded into seven businesses over the next three years. The seven businesses include three new ventures focused on maximising enterprise value through trading and investing in new technologies and renewables. The inauguration was attended by His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty's Representative for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs, Chairman of the Oil and Gas Holding Company (Bapco Energies), His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and a number of other senior officials. HRH Prince Salman affirmed the importance of investing in the oil and gas sector, as well as strengthening initiatives that ensure sustainability, create opportunities for Bahraini citizens, and impact the development of vital sectors.



Boosting ties with Kyrgyzstan



TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, highlighted the steady growth of relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Kyrgyzstan, noting the importance of strengthening cooperation and collaboration to benefit both countries and their people.

HRH Prince Salman yesterday met the Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Bahrain, HE Ulukbek Maripov, at Riffa Palace.

During the meeting, His Royal Highness received a written



HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister with the Kyrgyz Ambassador

letter from the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, HE Akylbek Japarov, delivered by the Ambassador.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister conveyed His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's and his greetings to the President of Kyrgyzstan, HE Sadyr Japarov. HRH Prince Salman conveyed his greetings to the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, HE Akylbek Japarov.

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HM King issues decree on Oil and Gas Holding Company

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday issued Royal Decree (49) of 2023, amending some provisions of Decree (77) of 2007 promulgating the establishment of the Oil and Gas Holding Company B.S.C. and authorising the amendment of the company's Article of Association and bylaw, based on a proposal by the Minister of Finance and

national Economy, and following the approval of the Cabinet.

Article (1): The decree stipulates that the phrase "Bapco Energies" shall replace the phrase "Oil and Gas Holding Company B.S.C." wherever it appears in Decree (77) of 2007 promulgating the establishment of the Oil and Gas Holding Company B.S.C., as well as in other related decrees and edicts.



HM the King



The decree authorises the amendment of the company's Article of Association and bylaw, based on a proposal by the Minister of Finance and National Economy.

Article (2): Subject to the provisions of Article (76) of the Commercial Companies Law promulgated

by Decree-Law (21) of 2001, an amendment to the Article of Association and bylaw of the Oil and Gas Holding Company is authorised in accordance with this decree.

The Prime Minister and ministers, each in their capacity, shall implement the provisions of this decree, which comes into force upon its publication in the Official Gazette.

Kingdom provides Bahraini youth 'quality education and knowledge'

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister meets with the 24th intake of the CPISP



TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, highlighted Bahrain's continued commitment to advance education and knowledge which will further help deliver the Kingdom's comprehensive development, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he met yesterday the 24th intake of the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Programme (CPISP), at Riffa Palace.

He highlighted the Kingdom's responsibility in providing Bahraini youth opportunities to further their knowledge and sharpen their skills.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister also noted the importance of developing the education sector as part of a wider strategy to actualise national progress.

His Royal Highness congratulated the students on their admission to the programme,



HRH Prince Salman with the CPISP 24th intake and senior officials

wishing them success in their future studies.

He lauded the efforts of the parents that led to their children's achievements.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister commended the achievements of CPISP staff and applauded educational institutions for their role in supporting participating students.

His Royal Highness emphasised CPISP offers students an opportunity to fulfil their ambitions, noting the programme's commitment to excellence since its establishment.

The recipients of the 2023

CPISP scholarships are as follows: Abdulrahman Faisal Rafeea - Ibn Khuldoon National School; Adam Jamal Mahmood Saeed - St. Christopher's School; Ahmed Ghasan Mohamed Al Saad - Al Taawon Secondary Boys School; Ali Mukhtar Mansoor Ali - Isa Town Secondary Boys School; Ali Abdulameer Al Jeshi - Bahrain Bayan School; Sh. Ebrahim bin Ahmed bin Isa Al -Khalifa - Ibn Khuldoon National School; Faisal Ramzi Ali Al Sewaidi - Bahrain School; Fatema Adel Ali Hasan - St. Christopher's School; Hayat Husain A. Karim Edhra-booh - Sitra Secondary Girls



"The Kingdom is responsible in providing Bahraini youth opportunities to further their knowledge and sharpen their skills."
- HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE SALMAN BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA, THE CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER

School; SH. Khalifa bin Khalid bin Khalifa Al -Khalifa - Bahrain Bayan School; Malak Basel

Ebrahim Maki - Saar Secondary Girls School; Mariam Mohamed Ahmed Ali - British School of Bahrain; Mohamed Jameel Ali Mohamed - Isa Town Secondary Boys School; Mohamed Osama A.Karim Majed - Abdulrahman Kanoo International School; Yousif Abouel Hassan Mariey - St. Christopher's School; Yusuf Zaher Alajjawi - British School of Bahrain; Zainab Ali Isa Mohamed Isa - Saar Secondary Girls School; and Zainab Hafedh Abdulhameed Al Qassab - British School of Bahrain.

The students of the CPISP 24th intake expressed their gratitude

and appreciation to His Royal Highness for his pledge to empower Bahraini youth.

Following a directive issued by HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the CPISP announced that the programme will include an additional 10 recipients.

Recipients will be selected from a pool of male and female students in public or private schools, scoring 90% or higher.

His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and a number of senior officials also attended the meeting.

Invalid visa holder for 20 years finally flies home

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

After receiving fraudulent travel documents and an invalid visa, an expatriate worker who had been stranded in Bahrain for 20 years was finally able to flee yesterday.

Since Mr. Murugesan was unable to go back to his homeland, he sought assistance from various social welfare organisations however was unsuccessful in his endeavours.

There have been many sce-



Mr. Murugesan leaves the Kingdom for home

narios like this where workers have not received their salaries for months. The Daily Tribune learned

that Annai Tamil Mandram intervened to provide assistance on all fronts. The social workers organised the necessary travel documents under the supervision of experts and with a lot of support from the Indian Embassy.

Social workers were following up with this case for the last six months with various departments and finally he flew back to India after 20 years.

Mr. Murugesan was overwhelmed by ATM's help and support.

Bahrain and India hold political talks

TDT | Manama

The Foreign Ministries of the Kingdom of Bahrain and India held the sixth round of political talks.

It was chaired by Dr Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs, and Dr Ausaf Sayeed, the Undersecretary for Consular Affairs, Passports, Visas and Overseas Expatriates Affairs of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

Both sides reviewed ways

of enhancing joint cooperation between the two friendly countries in political, commercial investment, scientific and security fields. They also discussed exchanging expertise in the security and space science domain and spotlighted regional and international topics of mutual concern.

Preparation for the fourth meeting of the Higher Joint Committee (HJC) between the two countries, which will be chaired by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, was also reviewed.

Bahrain, Israel must boost ties in 'innovation and technology'

Top Israeli official at Start-Up Nation Central visits Kingdom to promote long-term bilateral partnership

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

It is time for Israel and Bahrain to establish fruitful relationships in innovation and technology, tackling common challenges and creating shared opportunities, Yariv Becher, a prominent Israeli vice president of innovation diplomacy at Start-Up Nation Central, opined.

Bahrain has embarked on a journey to transform its economy from commodity-based to one driven by innovation and technology.

Becher discussed the importance of innovation and eco-

nomics cooperation in the Middle East during an exclusive interview with The Daily Tribune.

"The innovation activity in Israel can contribute to Bahrain's development into an innovation hub and, in turn, Bahrain can serve as a regional hub for Israeli tech companies," he said.

Becher emphasised that his visit to Bahrain is only one milestone in a long-term partnership.

First, he noted that Israel and the Israeli Ambassador in Bahrain have a close relationship that dates back more than a year.

"Second, we have made several trips here, and most recently, we addressed a conference in



Bahrain in March. These are all just significant turning points in a protracted process.



"The innovation activity in Israel can contribute to Bahrain's development into an innovation hub and, in turn, Bahrain can serve as a regional hub for Israeli tech companies."

- YARIV BECHER, ISRAELI VICE PRESIDENT OF INNOVATION DIPLOMACY AT START-UP NATION CENTRAL

"The primary objective of this visit is to promote some of the initiatives that we started in March."

He noted that Start-Up Nation Central aims to work with different countries with ecosystem building, to help and assist them in different areas.

Becher added: "Though Bahrain is not at the same stage as Israel is, it is still easier to collaborate since both nations are centers for innovation activities. Bahraini entrepreneurs have proven to be very inventive and industrious; both countries have small markets and must think

globally."

As soon as Israeli firms begin operating in Bahrain, job possibilities and economic expansion will both benefit and contribute to the creation of an ecosystem for innovation that will lead to prosperity

Highlighting the growing relations between Israel and Bahrain, he said: "In the meanwhile, we and Tamkeen will launch a program that will bring tech talent from Bahrain to Israel for six to twelve months of work in organisations that will open up more career or business options for organisations from both nations."

Clampdown on traffic violators

● Vehicles impounded

TDT | Manama

Drivers caught in flagrant breach of the traffic regulations will appear before the court to stand trial.

The violators have been caught and their cars impounded pending trial, said the Traffic Advocate General.

In a statement, he said that expatriate drivers caught in breach of the traffic regulations would face legal action, including deportation from Bahrain.

The Public Prosecution acted fast to clamp down on the traffic offenders amid an alarming rise in driving violations endangering road users' safety.

It vowed to enforce the law strictly to ensure people's safety, noting that the judicial measures it takes aim at correcting behavior in accordance with the provisions of the law.

A spate of serious traffic violations posted on social media have triggered the crackdown on unruly drivers, including excessive speeding, dangerous overtaking, encroachment on the emergency lanes which endangered road users' safety and caused serious damages.

Majority of Gulf CEOs expect increase in 'distressed businesses', says survey

Julia Cassano
TDT | Manama

About 89 per cent of Gulf CEOs expect an increase in businesses experiencing stress in 2023-2024 and see a need for specialist intervention in critical areas including liquidity management, cost reduction, capital efficiency, and margin optimisation.

This is as per the release of the first edition of its Middle East Turnaround and Restructuring Survey for Q1 2023 by leading global professional services firm Alvarez & Marsal (A&M).

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they anticipate an increase or decrease in businesses experiencing financial distress across the GCC, together with their views on the extent of

"While a number of economies in and sectors across the Middle East are bucking the trend, it is clear that respondents consider other sectors to experience further underperformance and liquidity pressure in the face of global economic headwinds."

- PAUL GILBERT, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CO-HEAD OF ALVAREZ & MARSAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

intervention by turnaround specialists.

The key findings detailed that 75 per cent of respondents expect economic growth to slow or reverse, with the greatest issues expected to face businesses including cost of capital, inflation, market volatility, weakening demand, and changes in tax and regulation.

The findings of the survey also revealed that businesses

across the GCC are expected to see an increasing need to transform or restructure in a volatile market.

A large majority (79 per cent) of respondents see many restructurings that deal only with debt without an accompanying operational fix. Seventy per cent of those same respondents consider that an operational restructuring should indeed accompany a financial restruc-

turing in most cases.

Paul Gilbert, Managing Director and Co-head of Alvarez & Marsal in the Middle East, commented: "While a number of economies in and sectors across the Middle East are bucking the trend, it is clear that respondents consider other sectors to experience further underperformance and liquidity pressure in the face of global economic headwinds."

He added that with rising interest rates and inflation, many struggling businesses are seeking short-term solutions to their debt burden. Respondents to the survey clearly agree that fixing a business's underlying performance issues at the same time as carrying out financial restructuring is the best way to deliver a longer-term sustainable turnaround.

Parliamentary Forum for People of Determination 2023 is set for launch today

TDT | Manama

The Parliamentary Forum for People of Determination 2023 will launch today with the slogan (Towards Empowerment and Engagement) under the patronage of Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives.

Several official bodies, the private sector, civil society and families of people of determination are participating in the forum.

The forum sheds light on the most important challenges facing this group, and provides solutions and ways to face them, as well as harnessing legislative and oversight tools to upgrade and empower people of determination.

The objectives of the forum are focused on the people of determination in their various categories. It aims to discuss the reality and conditions of their lives and their families, to adopt recommendations to develop the necessary community care, to harness the legislative and oversight tools to achieve them.

It also aims to study the condition of the civil society institutions concerned with people of determination, and ways to support them to continue to provide the best services.

Labour protesters receive food, medication

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

Following the protest that began last week, a small group of Indian businessmen gave groceries to the workers for two weeks.

More than 340 employees of a renowned construction company in Tubli staged a protest last week in response to the company's five-month wage arrears.

These employees, who have



The workers organise a protest to demand payment of their unpaid salaries

worked for the contract company for more than 20 years, urge the government to assist them in recouping their unpaid pay.

Due to The Daily Tribune's online advocacy on this issue, many donors contacted the newspaper to offer rations.

The workers were grateful to the people who came up to them and provided them with all the food and medication.

Humanitarian efforts as BRCS sends relief aid shipment to help Syria earthquake victims

TDT | Manama

A relief aid shipment was dispatched by the Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) to assist those impacted by the earthquake in Syria.

The shipment is a response to the ongoing humanitarian

and relief needs of the earthquake-affected individuals.

The earthquake had severe consequences in northwestern Syria, affecting cities and villages, and displacing tens of thousands of families, including vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women, and children.



BRCS officials and members with Syria representatives

Lieutenant General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH) and Chairman of the Board of Directors of BRCS, emphasised that this assistance is being provided in accordance with the royal directives.

BisB strategic partner of 4th Annual Islamic Finance Innovation Day Forum



Participants during the 4th annual Islamic Finance Innovation Day Forum held yesterday at the Gulf Hotel

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB) was the strategic partner of the 4th annual Islamic Finance Innovation Day Forum held yes-

terday at the Gulf Hotel on the theme 'Embedding ESG into Islamic Finance – Opportunities for Innovation and Growth'. Yaser Alsharifi, Chief Executive Officer of BisB, was the chair of the advisory committee

and a keynote speaker for one of the seminars.

Mohamed Kadhem, the Bank's Chief Strategy & Sustainability Officer, also participated in the closing remarks.

Addressing the seminar, Yaser

Alsharifi said; "Through embracing ESG practices Islamic financial institutions can lay the foundations for their own sustainable and socially responsible growth."

The Forum, organised by Fin-

Mark Communications, was attended by around 250 regional and international participants including industry leaders, and featured two main panel discussions and several side events.

The first panel was titled; 'Going Beyond Compliance – ESG as a Driver for Innovation and Sustainable Growth' and was followed by; 'The Essential Role of Fintechs in Accelerating ESG Adoption'.

Markets wobble as traders await US debt ceiling vote

AFP | London

Stock markets wavered yesterday as a deal to hike the US debt ceiling and avoid a painful default heads to a vote in Congress this week.

On its return from the three-day Memorial Day weekend, the Dow fell after opening in the green.

But the S&P 500 rose and the tech-rich Nasdaq jumped more than one percent, with chip company Nvidia, a key supplier to the artificial intelligence boom, seeing its market value top \$1 trillion as its shares surged four percent.

Oil prices fell more than three percent as traders await the Congress vote and digest conflicting messages from OPEC+ members about new output cuts, analysts said.

President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy hammered out an agreement at the weekend that saw both sides give ground, a week before a June 5 deadline when the government is expected to run out of cash to pay its bills.

While the deal provided some relief to markets, the two leaders must convince waverers on both sides to back the deal, with the House expected to vote Wednesday followed by the Senate.

Key figures around 1345 GMT

New York - Dow:	▼ 0.2% at 33,013.04 points
London - FTSE 100:	▼ 0.8% at 7,565.60
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 0.7% at 7,253.45
Frankfurt - DAX:	▲ 0.4 % at 16,012.07
EURO STOXX 50:	■ at 4,319.24
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ P 0.3% at 31,328.16 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▲ P 0.2% at 18,595.78 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 0.1 % at 3,224.21 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.0728 from \$1.0708 on Monday
Dollar/yen:	▼ at 139.88 yen from 140.45 yen
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.2374 from \$1.2355
Euro/pound:	▼ at 86.28 pence from 86.66 pence

"Presently, it feels like investors are confident that the US debt ceiling will be raised," said Ipek Ozkardeska, senior analyst at Swissquote Bank.

"The kneejerk reaction to a debt ceiling deal will be positive but gains could remain short-lived as most of the deal is already priced in," she said.

Ultra-conservative Republicans feel McCarthy should have secured far deeper spending cuts in exchange for raising the debt ceiling and allowing the government to keep borrowing.

The left wing of the Democratic Party is equally unhappy that Biden agreed to any spending limits at all.

"A deal may have been struck

on the debt ceiling, but it's not fully calmed nervousness on financial markets," noted Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown.

"Clamour from dissenting voices on both sides of the political divide are rising, ahead of a crucial Congressional vote. Nevertheless, the US does appear to be inching towards agreement," added Streeter.

Still, the US president and House speaker were optimistic.

"I never say I'm confident what the Congress is going to do. But I feel very good about it," Biden said Monday.

In Asian markets, Tokyo extended gains while Hong Kong

US consumer confidence slips

Washington, United States

US consumer confidence slipped again in May, dragged down by a decline in how people perceive the job market, says a survey released yesterday.

The slight fall in consumer confidence will provide the Federal Reserve with a useful data point on how consumers view the economy as it mulls raising interest rates again in order to control rising prices.

"Consumer confidence declined in May as consumers' view of current conditions became somewhat less upbeat while their expectations remained gloomy," the Conference Board's senior economics director Ataman Ozyildirim said in a statement.

The consumer confidence index fell in May to 102.3, down from a revised 103.7 in April, according to the Conference Board.

and Shanghai edged up after recent losses fuelled by worries about the Chinese economy as the post-lockdown recovery fades.



Hussain Makki Ali Meftah has been announced as the second AUB 2023 Millionaire of MyHassad. The deadline to deposit for the Third Million-Dollar Dream Prize is June 26th.



The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) recently partnered in the Innov8 Hackathon 2023, one of the biggest cloud-based innovation hackathons. Arif Janahi, the Head of Commercial and SMEs at NBB, was one of the judges of the competition and also had the honour of presenting NBB's awards for the high school category. The Innov8 Hackathon served as a platform to showcase innovation, with a particular emphasis on Sustainable Development Goal 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth.

News in brief

◆ **Beijing has declined a US invitation for a meeting in Singapore** between Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his Chinese counterpart Li Shangfu, the Pentagon said. "Overnight, the PRC informed the US that they have declined our early May invitation for Secretary Austin to meet with PRC Minister of National Defense Li Shangfu in Singapore this week," Pentagon spokesman Brigadier General Pat Ryder said Monday in a statement, referring to the People's Republic of China. "The PRC's concerning unwillingness to engage in meaningful military-to-military discussions will not diminish (the Defense Department's) commitment to seeking open lines of communication with the People's Liberation Army," he said. When asked about the meeting, the Chinese foreign ministry would not confirm that Beijing had declined the invitation. "The US knows clearly why there are currently difficulties in military communication between China and the US," spokeswoman Mao Ning told a regular press conference on Tuesday.



China declines meeting with US defense chief: Pentagon

◆ **Indigenous locals attacked a military outpost in the Amazon with bows and arrows,** Venezuela's military reported Sunday.

Indigenous attack army post in Venezuela with bows and arrows

The incident occurred on Friday, a source linked to indigenous rights defenders told AFP. No injuries were reported. The attack with traditional weapons was in retaliation for the armed forces confiscating "contraband materials" meant to be used in illegal mining, regional General Domingo Hernandez Larez posted on Twitter. The materials were being sent to illegal mining camps in the Yapacana National Park, in Amazonas state, on the border with Colombia and Brazil, he added. Some five tons of food and various supplies were seized by the armed forces in the previous days during military operations against illegal mining, he added.

NATO said on Tuesday it was deploying extra forces to Kosovo after clashes in the north of the country in which 30 soldiers from a NATO-led peacekeeping force were injured. The deployment of additional NATO forces to Kosovo is a prudent measure to ensure that KFOR (the Kosovo Force) has the capabilities it needs to maintain security in accordance with our UN Security Council mandate," said Admiral Stuart B. Munsch, commander of Allied Joint Force Command Naples. "I want to commend KFOR for taking swift, restrained and professional action to intervene to stop the unrest and to save lives. "The violence must stop and all sides must stop taking actions to undermine the peace in any and all communities of Kosovo." NATO said it was deploying the Operational Reserve Forces (ORF) for the Western Balkans, who would be ready to move within seven days.

NATO deploys additional forces to Kosovo

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Titanic gives up its forgotten treasures

Lost gold necklace made from the tooth of a megalodon shark is discovered in the shipwreck - 111 years after the doomed liner sank



Teeth of the extinct megalodon - one of the largest fish ever to exist - are known to reach over seven inches in length. The necklace is circled here in red

Daily Mail

A necklace 'made from the tooth of a megalodon shark' has been revealed in new images from the wreckage of the Titanic.

The stunning artefact was identified in footage taken last summer by Guernsey-based firm Magellan Ltd.

The footage was shot during efforts to capture the first digital scans of the shipwreck, which present it in detail - almost as if it's been retrieved

from the water.

Other objects surrounding the necklace have not been identified, although it appears to be near a collection of small ring-shaped beads.

Magellan Ltd, which is working with Atlantic Productions on a documentary about last year's expedition, is prohibited from retrieving them from the sea floor, however.

An estimated 1,517 of the 2,224 people on board Titanic were killed when the luxury ocean liner sank on April 15, 1912.

Russia says issued 1.5 million passports in occupied Ukraine

Moscow

Russia has handed out 1.5 million passports in territories it occupies in Ukraine, Moscow's Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said yesterday.

Kyiv has likened the passport handouts to efforts to suppress Ukrainian identity.

"From October last year, almost 1.5 million people received a Russian passport in the new regions," Mishustin told a government meeting.

He referred to the parts of Ukraine's Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions that are under Russian control.

"It is important that all their residents feel real changes taking place in cities and towns, see that streets and houses are gradually being restored," he said.

The EU has said it will not recognise Russian passports issued by Moscow in the "illegally-occupied" regions of Ukraine.

Elon Musk meets Chinese FM in Beijing



Beijing

Elon Musk met Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Beijing yesterday, the ministry said, as the Tesla CEO embarks on his first trip to China in more than three years.

China is the world's biggest electric vehicle market and Tesla announced in April it would build a second massive factory in Shanghai.

Qin told Musk China was "committed to creating a better market-oriented, rule-of-law-based and internationalised business environment" for foreign enterprises, his ministry said on its website.

Musk said in response "Tesla opposes 'decoupling and breaking chains', and is willing to continue to expand its business in China", according to the ministry's readout.

Musk's ties to China have raised eyebrows in Washington, with US President Joe Biden saying in November the executive's links to foreign countries were "worthy" of scrutiny.

On Tuesday, Qin and Musk discussed relations between China and the United States, according to Beijing, with the Chinese foreign minister saying the two countries should "apply the brakes in a timely manner to avoid dangerous driving".

New truce, no battles in Sudan

Burhan and Daglo again accused each other of violating truce

AFP | Khartoum

Fighting flared again in Sudan yesterday despite the latest ceasefire pledges of the two warring generals that are meant to allow desperately needed aid to reach besieged civilians.

Both the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces formally agreed late on Monday to extend by five days a US and Saudi-brokered humanitarian truce that was frequently violated over the past week.

Since the extension was announced, more fighting was reported by residents, including "clashes with various kinds of weapons in southern Khartoum" and fighting in Nyala in the state of South Darfur.

The army leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, paramilitary RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, again accused each other of violating the truce and claimed to only be responding to enemy aggression.

The war has killed at least 1,800 people, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. More than a million have been displaced and nearly 350,000 have fled



Tuk-tuks (motorised rickshaws) wait for passengers along al-Sittin (sixty) road in the Sudanese capital Khartoum

to other countries, the UN says. Residents have been hiding from street combat and roaming looters in the capital city of more than five million, nearly 700,000 of whom have fled, according to the United Nations. Since the fighting broke out on April 15, both generals have

committed to a series of truces. Although some Sudanese have used relative lulls in the fighting to escape, aid has only been allowed to trickle in. The United Nations warned on Monday that Sudan has become one of the highest alert areas for food insecurity

Chinese mission with first civilian reaches space station



Crew of the Shenzhou-15 spaceflight mission Fei Junlong (front L), Zhang Lu (back L) and Deng Qingming (back 2nd L) take photos with crew of the Shenzhou-16 spaceflight mission Jing Haipeng (front R), Gui Haichao (back R) and Zhu Yangzhu (back 2nd R) inside the Chinese space station core module Tianhe

Jiuquan

China sent three astronauts to its Tiangong space station yesterday, putting a civilian into orbit for the first time as it pursues plans to send a crewed mission to the Moon by 2030.

The Shenzhou-16 crew took off atop a Long March 2F rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China at 9:31 am (0131 GMT), AFP journalists saw.

They docked at the space station's Tianhe core module on Tuesday afternoon, more

than six hours after taking off, state broadcaster CCTV said.

The launch was a "complete success" and the "astronauts are in good condition", said Zou Lipeng, director of the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center.

Leading its crew is commander Jing Haipeng on his fourth mission, as well as engineer Zhu Yangzhu and Beihang University professor Gui Haichao, the first Chinese civilian in space.

China was the third country to put humans in orbit and Tiangong is the crown jewel of its space programme.

Iran 'resolves' one watchdog's concern

● **Iran said the enrichment of the sample to 83% was likely due to "unintended fluctuations" in the enrichment process as it had never set out to enrich uranium to more than 60%**

Tehran

Iran has "resolved" one of three cases raised by the UN watchdog as possible evidence it had not declared all its past nuclear activities, Iranian media reported yesterday.

The reports came just days before the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency is due to meet to review progress.

The IAEA had reported the discovery of traces of radioactive material at three sites not declared by Iran as having hosted past nuclear activity in a blow to efforts to restore a landmark 2015 deal between Tehran and major powers.

"With the improvement of interactions between Iran and



News

the truce



South of Khartoum

requiring "urgent" action from the international community. The rainy season is set to start in, threatening to make parts of the vast northeast African country inaccessible and raising risks of malaria, cholera and other-borne diseases.

of UN nuclear bans: media

IAEA... the case related to the agency's alleged lies -- Abadeh -- has been revived," Iran's Fars news agency reported. "This concludes the agency's inquiry into one of the three alleged locations used," it added.

The Marivan site in Abadeh county in the southern province of Fars is the first of the three sites to be addressed under a work plan agreed by Iran and the IAEA in March of last year.

The other two sites are Varanasi and Turqzabad.

The IAEA's concerns about the sites are one of the remaining obstacles to the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, which was left in tatters by the unilateral withdrawal of the United States in 2018.

Fars also reported that Iran had addressed IAEA concerns about the discovery of uranium enriched to close to the level required for a nuclear warhead. Iran said the enrichment of the sample to 83% is likely due to "unintended situations" in the enrichment process as it had never set out to enrich uranium more than 60%, still well short of the 90% needed for a warhead.

Drones hit Moscow high-rises as Kyiv struck for third day

● Eight drones were used in the attack

AFP | Moscow

A swarm of drones hit Moscow yesterday in an unprecedented attack, while Russian drones struck Kyiv for a third straight day as Ukraine gears up for a major offensive against Russian forces.

The Russian defence ministry blamed Kyiv for the attacks that saw three drones crash into residential buildings in Moscow.

Officials said no one was seriously injured and there was only "minor" damage to buildings.

The Russian defence ministry said that eight drones were used in the attack, adding that five of them were downed and three disabled.

Of the three that hit residential buildings, two crashed into high-rises located in Moscow's affluent southwest, while a third damaged a residential building in a suburb of the capital.

The other drones fell outside Moscow. Some of the debris was found around 15 kilometres from President Vladimir Putin's Novo-Ogaryovo residence.



A specialist inspects the damaged facade of a multi-storey apartment building after a reported drone attack in Moscow

One video shared on social media showed an explosion followed by a column of smoke rising into the sky.

Two drones were intercepted over the Kremlin earlier this month but Tuesday's attack was the first time that unmanned aerial vehicles hit residential areas of Moscow, hundreds of kilometres from the front lines in Ukraine.

The raids are likely to be seen as a psychological blow and a major

embarrassment for the Kremlin, which has gone to great lengths to say the protracted conflict in Ukraine does not pose a threat to Russians.

The Kremlin insisted that there was no "threat" to Russians, adding that Putin was being informed of the attacks in "real time".

US says does not back attacks inside Russia

Meanwhile, the United States said yesterday that it does not

back attacks inside Russia after drones hit Moscow high-rises, but said Russia bore responsibility for the war with Ukraine.

"As a general matter, we do not support attacks inside of Russia. We have been focused on providing Ukraine with the equipment and training they need to retake their own sovereign territory," a State Department spokesperson said as Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Sweden.

The spokesperson said that the United States was still assessing what happened in Moscow, where residential buildings were hit for the first time since Russia invaded Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin blamed Kyiv.



Ukraine said it had downed 29 out of 31 drones, mainly over Kyiv and the Kyiv region in the latest Russian barrage -- the third on the Ukrainian capital in 24 hours

Lebanon army frees kidnapped Saudi

Beirut

A Saudi national who had been kidnapped in Beirut has been freed in a "special operation" by the Lebanese army near the Syrian border, it said in a statement yesterday.

"An army intelligence patrol managed to free kidnapped Saudi national Mashari al-Mutairi during a special operation on the Syrian border," the army said.

"A number of those involved in the kidnapping were also arrested," it added.

A senior Lebanese security source had said on Monday that, based on preliminary informa-



The Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Beirut

tion, the Saudi was kidnapped by unidentified assailants dressed as security personnel in a four-wheel drive vehicle on the Beirut seafront, where he had been in a restaurant.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati congratulated the army on the "great effort deployed to release him and arrest those involved in the kidnapping".

According to Saudi government-owned television channel Al-Ekhbariya, the kidnappers had demanded a ransom.

Kidnappings of Arab or foreign nationals in Lebanon have been rare in recent years.

Malaysia searches Chinese ship suspected of looting WWII wrecks

Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's coast guard said yesterday authorities were questioning the crew of a Chinese vessel detained on suspicion of looting two British World War II shipwrecks.

Officers discovered unexploded shells upon boarding the Chinese-registered vessel, which was detained for illegal anchorage at the weekend, said Nurul Hizam Zakaria,

Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency chief in Johor state.

"Our investigation is now directed to where these cannon shells originated from. Right now, we have officers from multi-agencies searching the big ship," he told AFP.

Nurul Hizam said the vessel from the city of Fuzhou had a crew of 32 comprising 21 Chinese



a Chinese vessel after anchoring near Tanjung Siang on the waters of the Malaysia's Johor state

nationals, 10 Bangladeshis and one Malaysian, some of whom were in coast guard custody for questioning.

A senior Malaysian maritime

official told AFP on condition of anonymity that the pieces of metal and shells could have originated from two sunken British warships. More than 800 Brit-



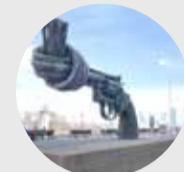
Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency shows an old cannon shell

ish sailors were killed when the HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse were torpedoed by Japanese aircraft in the South China Sea.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



The "Knotted Gun" sculpture is a universal symbol of non-violence on display at @UN Headquarters in NYC. It is a reminder that we all need to overcome divisions and to provide hope in place of turmoil. Peace is needed now more than ever.

@antonioguterres

02



Delighted to welcome King HM Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia. Our nations share deep historical and cultural ties, and we look forward to strengthening our friendship and cooperation even further. May his visit mark a new chapter in India-Cambodia relations.

@narendramodi

03



Scrolling through tweets while watching mini video (pic in pic) is great

@elonmusk

04



We're investing in America we can take pride in - one where working families have good-paying jobs and more breathing room.

@POTUS

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

celebs

Johnny Depp reschedules concerts after suffering ankle fracture

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Johnny Depp has rescheduled a series of concerts after suffering an ankle fracture.

The 59-year-old star has taken to social media to reveal news of his injury and to confirm rescheduled dates for the Hollywood Vampires' tour of the US.

Johnny - who stars in the band alongside Alice Cooper and Joe Perry - wrote on Instagram: "My dear friends, I am sorry to say that I have fractured my ankle, which is a drag!!! It began as a hairline break but somewhere

between Cannes and the Royal Albert Hall it got worse rather than better. Several medical professionals have strongly suggested I avoid any and all activity for the moment and so am sadly unable to travel at this time.

"To that end, the guys and I are very sorry to miss you in New Hampshire, Boston and New York but fear not, I promise we will bring an amazing show to all of you in Europe and bring our absolute best to the East Coast later this summer and make it up to those who have paid for those shows!!!



Johnny Depp

"Again, sincerest apologies. All my love and respect ... J.D. x (sic)"

Johnny subsequently confirmed the rescheduled tour dates for the end of July.

Meanwhile, the news has also been announced on the Hollywood Vampires' Instagram account.

The band said in a statement: "We are sad to share that the Hollywood Vampires will be rescheduling our three US tour dates this coming week. Johnny has sustained a painful injury to his ankle following his recent appearances and has been advised by his doctor not to travel. He is devastated by this turn of events, but looks forward to resting up so all four Vampires can bring their absolute best to the tour in Europe."

Knife-wielding chef threatens Benedict Cumberbatch

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Benedict Cumberbatch and his family have been threatened by a knife-wielding chef at the actor's home.

A court has heard that Jack Bissell - a former chef at a luxury hotel - made a series of threats against the actor, after breaking into the grounds of his home in north London.

Bissell, 35 - who hasn't offered any explanation for his behaviour - told the movie star: "I know you've moved here - I hope it burns down."

Benedict, his wife Sophie Hunter and their three children - Christopher, Hal and Finn - were all at home when Bissell broke into their property and ripped their intercom off the wall, before launching abuse at the film star.

Bissell eventually fled the scene of the crime, but was later tracked down by police, who were able to find him using DNA evidence.

He appeared at Wood Green Crown Court in London earlier this month, when he admitted to causing criminal damage. The former chef was fined £250 and a given a three-year restraining order.

A source told the Daily Mail: "Naturally all of the family were absolutely terrified and thought this guy was going to get in and hurt them."

"Luckily it never went that far."

Despite this, the actor and his wife are said to have suffered "many sleepless nights" since the incident occurred.

The court heard that Bissell told a local shopkeeper that he planned to break into Benedict's house and burn it to the ground.

The insider explained: "Benedict and Sophie have had many sleepless nights since worrying that they may be targeted again."

Benedict Cumberbatch

Billie Eilish brands trolls 'women hating weirdos' for attacking her new 'feminine' style

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Billie Eilish has branded trolls "women hating weirdos" for calling her a "sell-out" for dressing "feminine".

In now-deleted posts on her Instagram Stories over the weekend, the newly-single 'Bad Guy' singer - who has split from 31-year-old singer Jesse Rutherford - hit out at "true idiots" who commented on her changing style choices and begged them to "let women exist!"

The 21-year-old added: "I spent the first 5 years of my career getting absolutely OBLITERATED by you fools for

being boy ish and dressing how I did and constantly being told I'd be hotter if I acted like a woman.

"And now when I feel comfortable enough to wear anything remotely feminine or fitting, I CHANGED and am a sellout... and 'what happened to her' oMg iT's nOt thE sAmE biLLie she's just like the rest bla blah.

"FUN FACT! Did you know that women are multifaceted!!!!???? Shocking right?? Believe it or not women can be interested in multiple things."

Billie also ranted at her trolls.



Billie Eilish

Ed Sheeran serves pints and performs at Atlanta brewery

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Ed Sheeran poured pints and performed at Sweet Water Brewery in Atlanta, Georgia at the weekend.

The pop megastar had a special treat in store for patrons at the brewery as he served some drinks and offered to pay for some beers ahead of his concert at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Saturday (27.05.23).

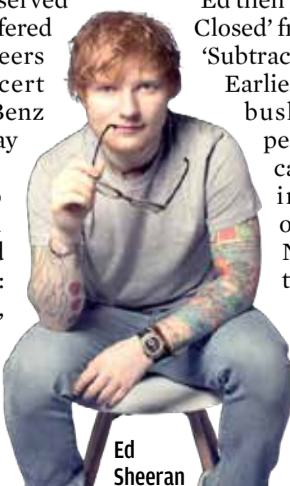
On the way to the brewery, Ed says in a clip shared on social media: "So I'm in Atlanta, and I've been told there are some breweries that are good in Atlanta so I'm going to go to this brew-

ery, serve some beers, play a gig and then buy everyone in the beer garden drinks. Beers on me."

He's then seen pouring the drinks and declaring that they he was having his own happy hour with all drinks on him.

Ed then performed 'Eyes Closed' from his latest LP 'Subtract'.

Earlier this month, the busker-turned-superstar stood on a car to perform an impromptu gig on the streets of New York and took to the top of a double-decker tourist bus in Los Angeles for another free concert the week prior.



Ed Sheeran

Arnold Schwarzenegger calls Bruce Willis 'a great, great star'

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Arnold Schwarzenegger says Bruce Willis is "a great, great star".

The 'Fubar' star praised the 'Die Hard' actor, 68, calling him a "kind man" after it was revealed his aphasia diagnosis - which is often a precursor to dementia - has developed into a more serious condition.

The 75-year-old actor told CinemaBlend: "I think that he will always be remembered as a great, great star, and a kind man."

"I understand that under his circumstances, health-wise, that he had to retire."

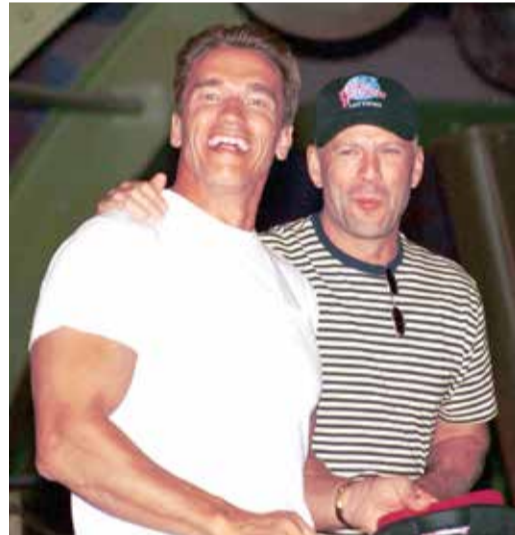
Arnold - whose career has gone through many phases like body builder, action flick star and politician when he was elected as Governor of California - admitted that unless they suffer with health issues like Bruce, "action heroes" never give up movies, "they reload".

He said: "In general, you know, we never really retire. Action heroes, they reload."

Bruce's wife, Emma Heming, 44, recently revealed that her husband - had been told he had frontotemporal dementia earlier this year.

She said: "Unfortunately, challenges with communication are just one symptom of the disease Bruce faces. While this is painful, it is a relief to finally have a clear diagnosis."

Recently, Emma spoke about the limited options that the 'Pulp Fiction' star and other pa-



Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Willis

tients with the condition had.

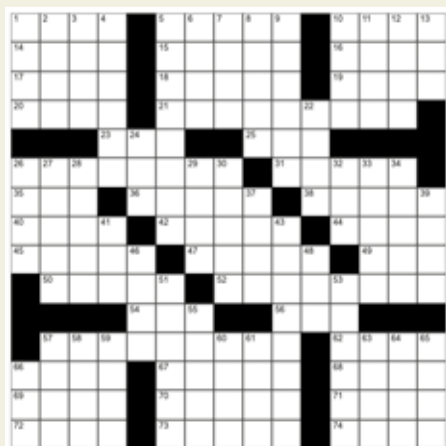
She said: "When you live in the world of dementia you know that options are slim. But some won't take that lying down which is how change is made, and I got to witness the beauty in that last night."

I think that he will always be remembered as a great, great star, and a kind man. I understand that under his circumstances, health-wise, that he had to retire

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER



CROSSWORD



Across

1- Tear apart; 5- "Crazy" singer Patsy; 10- One of a matching pair; 14- Black-and-white cookie; 15- Every sixty minutes; 16- River to the Seine; 17- Cab; 18- Wonderland girl; 19- Designer Cassini; 20- Env. notation; 21- Capital of Tennessee; 23- Choke; 25- the land of the free...; 26- Categorize; 31- Ark; 35- "You've got mail" co.; 36- Twisted expression; 38- foot oil; 40- Comic Rudner; 42- Where Columbus was born; 44- Ready for plucking; 45- Rare delight; 47- Hiding place; 49- At a great distance; 50- Clear the boards; 52- Cut off; 54- Colonial insect; 56- It's a moray; 57- Lab, for one; 62- Woe is me; 66- 9th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 67- Profits; 68- Gammy; 69- Ratio words; 70- 1957 hit for the Bobettes; 71- Corrida cries; 72- Celestial body; 73- Australia's Rock; 74- Metal containers;

Down

1- Church court; 2- Quod... demonstrandum; 3- Barber's call; 4- Activities; 5- Altering; 6- "Damn Yankees" role; 7- Coloured part of the eye; 8- Tortilla topped with cheese; 9- Craps natural; 10- Kit item; 11- Volition; 12- Of course; 13- Bit of film, to a photo; 22- Tiger's choice; 24- Mule's sire; 26- Wagon; 27- France's longest river; 28- Change; 29- Dues; 30- Gossipmonger; 32- Lingus; 33- Israeli seaport; 34- Mar. honoree; 37- Travel aimlessly; 39- Shrivelled, without moisture; 41- Car club; 43- Slanders; 46- Boris Godunov, for one; 48- Shade; 51- Riddle; 53- Aztec god of rain; 55- Weeping; 57- What's left; 58- Bluesy James; 59- Red-bearded god; 60- Objectionable; 61- Cabinet dept.; 63- In land; 64- Grace period; 65- Cong. meeting; 66- the season...;

Yesterday's solution



Classifieds



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Heat rout Celtics to book NBA Finals showdown with Denver



Jimmy Butler #22 of the Miami Heat shoots the ball against Robert Williams III #44 of the Boston Celtics

AFP | Los Angeles

The Miami Heat advanced to the NBA Finals on Monday by routing Boston 103-84 and denying the Celtics a historic comeback from down 3-0 in the series.

Jimmy Butler had 28 points, seven rebounds and six assists while Caleb Martin added 26 points and 10 rebounds to spark Miami, which will visit Denver on Thursday to begin the best-of-seven championship final.

Taking full advantage of an injury to Boston star Jayson Tatum in the opening seconds and a cold-shooting start by the host Celtics, the Heat avoided becoming the first team in NBA history to lose a playoff series after taking a 3-0 lead.

Miami recovered from a gut-punch of a game-six defeat, falling on a last-second tip-in, to win the Eastern Conference final 4-3, silencing a loud Boston crowd after the opening minutes.

"We stayed together as a

"We stayed together as a group and as a team. We talked about going to get a tough one on the road and we did just that. But we're not satisfied. We're happy. We're ecstatic. But we've got one more to get"

JIMMY BUTLER

group and as a team," Butler said. "We talked about going to get a tough one on the road and we did just that.

"But we're not satisfied. We're happy. We're ecstatic. But we've got one more to get."

The Heat, seeking a fourth NBA title and first since 2013, last reached the NBA Finals in 2020, losing to the Lakers.

The Nuggets, into the NBA Finals for the first time, swept the Los Angeles Lakers in the Western Conference final and have not played since May 22. Miami stretched the lead as high as 17 points in the second quarter -- a margin the Heat hadn't squandered to lose a game all season -- but Boston pulled within 52-41 at half-time.

With Tatum hurting, Derrick White scored eight straight points to lift the Celtics within 59-51.

But Caleb Martin sank a baseline jumper just before the third-quarter buzzer, giving him nine in the period, to put Miami ahead 76-66 entering the fourth.

'Amazing' Dhoni hailed as one of a kind after thrilling IPL win

● Dhoni eyes return next year

AFP | Ahmedabad

Mahendra Singh Dhoni was hailed as a superhero yesterday after the 41-year-old's tactical acumen, cool demeanour and a crucial stumping helped Chennai Super Kings win a record-equalling fifth IPL title.

Chennai edged out 2022 champions Gujarat Titans by five wickets in a last-ball thriller that started on Monday and ended past 1:30am yesterday.

Fans of Dhoni and his team celebrated on the streets all night.

The final in Ahmedabad was played on the reserve day after a washout on Sunday and, after more wet weather, Chennai chased down a rain-revised target of 171 in 15 overs.

Ravindra Jadeja scored 10 runs off the final two balls in front of 80,000 fans at the world's largest cricket stadium.

Former India skipper Dhoni, who looks set to play on despite earlier suggestions that this might be his last hurrah, was out first ball in Chennai's reply. But the wicketkeeper-batsman also pulled off a masterful stumping of Gujarat's dangerous Shubman Gill and his experience, calm and sheer presence helped see Chennai home.

He has now equalled Rohit Sharma's record of five titles



CSK's captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni adjusts the field during the match

"The way (fans have) shown their love and affection, I think that's something I need to do for them"

MS DHONI

as captain -- Rohit for Mumbai Indians -- but pundits believe Dhoni is in a league of his own.

"If you are comparing on titles you have to a discussion," former Australia batsman and ex-IPL coach Tom Moody said on ESPNcricinfo.

"But if you are talking about captaincy, there is no grand final."

Former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar agreed, saying: "This kind of leadership will rarely be seen."

Cool, calm, smart

Dhoni is India's most successful Test captain and has had a glittering career that included winning two World Cups.

He retired from international duty in 2020 but continued with the IPL, albeit with a bad knee and some lacklustre batting performances this term.

Having previously hinted this might be his last IPL, he suggested after the final that he will return for one more crack in 2024.

"The way (fans have) shown their love and affection, I think that's something I need to do for them," he said.

Rain halted play on Monday as a brief but torrential downpour left one of the side pitches soaked. Ground staff needed over two hours to get the game restarted after midnight.

Fans kept patient for the second straight day, with chants of

YOU KNOW WHAT

Dhoni retired from international duty in 2020 but continued with the IPL, albeit with a bad knee and some lacklustre batting performances this term

"Dhoni, Dhoni" reverberating through the night air, before Jadeja brought the house down with a six and four to seal victory.

Videos of "Captain Cool" during the nerve-jangling final moments showed him somehow keeping calm -- outwardly at least.

It appeared that he closed his eyes for the last ball when Jadeja needed a boundary to win.

Dhoni then hugged Jadeja and lifted him off his feet.

"As calm as he is and cool as he is, (still) it means a lot," Chennai coach Stephen Fleming told reporters.

"The franchise, as we know, is very dear to his heart and he gives a lot to it.

"This stage of his career to win another IPL and lead a team like he has, I think it is great credit to him," Fleming said.

Alcaraz says he felt 'invincible' in French Open win

AFP | Paris

World number one Carlos Alcaraz admitted he felt "invincible" at times during his straight-sets win over Italian qualifier Flavio Cobolli in the French Open first round on Monday.

The 20-year-old, the youngest top seed at Roland Garros since Bjorn Borg in 1976, swept to a 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 win over his 159th-ranked opponent.

US Open champion Alcaraz won the first eight games of Monday's match and was comfortably two sets up in just 52 minutes.

In the first set alone, he allowed his overwhelmed opponent a meagre 10 points.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz Garfia returns the ball to Italy's Flavio Cobolli

"I felt I couldn't lose a game. I thought that I was able to win easier than I did, but a match can turn around in each game. But at the start of the match, I felt invincible," he said.

Cobolli, making his Grand Slam debut, rallied briefly in the third set but was unable to take advantage of two break points in the sixth game.

Alcaraz then saw four match

"I felt I couldn't lose a game. I thought that I was able to win easier than I did, but a match can turn around in each game. But at the start of the match, I felt invincible"

CARLOS ALCARAZ

points slip away as the Italian hung on to level at 5-5.

However, the Spaniard wrapped up the tie on a fifth match point in the 12th game.

Next up for Alcaraz is a clash with Japan's Taro Daniel for a place in the last 32.

YOU KNOW WHAT

The Heat, seeking a fourth NBA title and first since 2013, last reached the NBA Finals in 2020, losing to the Lakers

Medvedev knocked out of French Open

World 172 Seyboth Wild stuns Medvedev at French Open as Djokovic fallout continues

● **Djokovic courts controversy with Kosovo 'heart of Serbia' message**

AFP | Paris

World number two Daniil Medvedev was knocked out of the French Open in the first round on Tuesday, losing in five sets to 172nd-ranked Thiago Seyboth Wild of Brazil as Roland Garros attempted to move on from Novak Djokovic's Kosovo controversy.

Seyboth Wild, who came through the qualifiers and had never previously won a Grand Slam match, triumphed 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

It was Medvedev's fifth loss in the opening round at Roland Garros in seven appearances.

"I have watched Daniil play in my junior years. It's a dream come true to beat these kinds of players on this court," said the 23-year-old Brazilian who unleashed 69 winners.

"I was cramping in the second set and couldn't really serve the way I wanted to but I tried to play my best tennis."

Seyboth Wild, without a win on the main tour since February 2022, held his nerve in the conclusion of the four-hour 15-minute match on Court Philippe Chatrier.

He twice saw breaks retrieved by Medvedev in the deciding set before finally backing up a third



Daniil Medvedev reacts during his match against Thiago Seyboth Wild



I was cramping in the second set and couldn't really serve the way I wanted to but I tried to play my best tennis

THIAGO SEYBOTH WILD

break with a hold for 5-3. Two giant forehands secured victory.

He will face either Guido Pella or Quentin Halys for a place in the last 32.

Medvedev arrived in Paris buoyed by winning his first ever clay court title at the prestigious Italian Open last week for his fifth trophy of 2023.

"Every time the clay court season finishes, I'm happy," said Medvedev.

'Vandals' destroy image

Djokovic will return to Court

5 out of Medvedev's 7 Roland Garros appearances, have ended with his defeat in the opening round

Philippe Chatrier on Wednesday night for his second round match with controversy over his "Kosovo is the heart of Serbia" message still raging.

The Belgrade-born superstar, chasing a record 23rd Grand Slam title in Paris, wrote the message in Serbian after his opening round victory over Aleksandar Kovacevic on Monday.

"Kosovo is our cradle, our stronghold, centre of the most important things for our coun-

try," 36-year-old Djokovic told Serb media.

His comments came amid heightened ethnic tensions in northern Kosovo where demonstrators and NATO soldiers have been injured.

Serb TV reported Tuesday that "vandals" had destroyed a mural bearing the image of Djokovic on a building in Orahovac, a small town in south-western Kosovo where a small number of Serbs live amongst the majority Albanians.

Defending champion Iga Swiatek overcame an early wobble to reach the second round with a straight sets win over Cristina Bucsa of Spain.

The world number one, bidding to become the first woman to successfully defend the title at Roland Garros since Justine Henin in 2007, came through 6-4, 6-0.

"I know this court pretty well and I am focusing on the future,"



Medvedev arrived in Paris buoyed by winning his first ever clay court title at the prestigious Italian Open last week for his fifth trophy of 2023



A screen shows the output from a camera on which Novak Djokovic writes a message



Kosovo is our cradle, our stronghold, centre of the most important things for our country... There are many reasons why I wrote that on the camera

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

said Swiatek, who could lose the top ranking to Aryna Sabalenka or Elena Rybakina at Roland Garros.

Wimbledon and US Open runner-up Ons Jabeur eased past Italy's Lucia Bronzetti, who won her maiden WTA title in Rabat on Saturday, 6-4, 6-1.

Five-hour marathon

Coco Gauff, the 2022 runner-up, battled to a 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 success over Rebecca Masarova of Spain but Barbora Krejickova, the 2021 champion, was knocked out in the first round

for a second successive year, losing 6-2, 6-4 to Lesia Tsurenko of Ukraine.

Wimbledon champion and fourth-ranked Elena Rybakina brushed off a slow start to dispatch Czech teenager Brenda Fruhvirtova 6-4, 6-2.

Fourth seed Casper Ruud, the runner-up to Rafael Nadal last year, eased past Swedish qualifier Elias Ymer 6-4, 6-3, 6-2.

Danish youngster Holger Rune, seeded six, came through a tough test against American Christopher Eubanks, winning 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2.

"It was super difficult. There are always nerves coming into the first round and Chris was playing very freely," said Rune who made the last-eight in 2022.

Italian qualifier Andrea Vavassori saved five match points to knock out Serb 31st seed Miomir Kecmanovic in a five-hour 10-minute epic.

Vavassori hit a colossal 106 winners in his 5-7, 2-6, 7-6 (10/8), 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (11/9) win.

Zverev wins first French Open match since ankle injury

AFP | Paris

Alexander Zverev made a winning return to Roland Garros yesterday with a straight-sets win over Lloyd Harris in the French Open first round, 12 months since suffering a serious ankle injury in the semi-finals.

The German had to retire injured from a dramatic last-four clash with Rafael Nadal last season after twisting his ankle and



It's nice to be back. I've marked this day in bold on my calendar since last year. I was obviously very disappointed with how that tournament ended for me (last year). That's why I think I appreciate even more when I play in a full stadium and the crowd is behind me

ALEXANDER ZVEREV



Germany's Alexander Zverev serves to South Africa's Lloyd Harris

did not play again in 2022.

That match had already reached three hours and was locked at 6-6 in the second set after Nadal won a first-set tie-break when Zverev suffered torn ankle ligaments and had to be taken off Court Philippe Chatrier in a wheelchair.

Zverev, who was the third seed last year, is only seeded 22nd this time around after struggling to recapture his best form since returning to the ATP Tour.

But the former US Open fi-

nalist had enough to beat South African Harris 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/0), 6-1.

"It's nice to be back. I've marked this day in bold on my calendar since last year," Zverev said.

"I was obviously very disappointed with how that tournament ended for me (last year).

"That's why I think I appreciate even more when I play in a full stadium and the crowd is behind me."

Zverev went out in the first round in 2017 and needed five

sets to win his opening tie at Roland Garros in both 2019 and 2021.

"No (not happy with his performance). But I'm happy that I won in three sets. Normally I start with five-set matches so I'm happy to win in three."

Zverev will next face Slovakia's Alex Molcan as he tries to reach the third round for a sixth straight year.

He came back to the Tour at the start of 2023 but has since slipped from 12th to 27th in the rankings.



Zverev, who was the third seed last year, is only seeded 22nd this time around after struggling to recapture his best form since returning to the ATP Tour

Andreeva, 16, says Murray 'maybe' helped her French Open breakthrough



Mirra Andreeva plays a forehand return Alison Riske

AFP | Paris

Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva said yesterday that a good luck message from Andy Murray "maybe" helped her win on her French Open debut.

The 16-year-old made headlines with a run to the fourth round at the Madrid Open last month and came through qualifying at Roland Garros to make her Grand Slam tournament debut, beating Alison Riske-Amritraj 6-2, 6-1 in the first round.

Andreeva also attracted attention in Madrid for comments about Murray being "beautiful" in real life, with the former men's world number one remarking about "how good she's going to be when she gets her eyes fixed". Murray is sitting out Roland Garros to prepare for the grass-court season, but he did

After he won a Challenger, I texted him. I said, 'Congratulations. He actually answered me, so I was really happy about it. He said, 'Thank you, and good luck in Roland Garros'. Maybe that's why I'm playing that good now

MIRRA ANDREEVA

wish Andreeva the best for her campaign.

"After he won a Challenger, I texted him. I said, 'Congratulations,'" said Andreeva.

"He actually answered me, so I was really happy about it. He said, 'Thank you, and good luck in Roland Garros'. Maybe that's why I'm playing that good now."

Schmidtke joins Liverpool as sporting director

AFP | London

Liverpool has appointed Jorg Schmidtke as its new sporting director, the Premier League club announced yesterday.

The 59-year-old German spent

over four years in the same role with Bundesliga side Wolfsburg before leaving at the start of 2023.

He will begin his new role on June 1, subject to work permit formalities as Liverpool look to bounce back from a trophy-less

season.

Schmidtke will take over from Julian Ward, who is leaving after more than a decade at Anfield that featured Premier League and Champions League titles.



Jorg Schmidtke

East Riffa, Hala stay in premier league

Twelve team line-up complete for next season's Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League

● **Stoppage-time goal from Hussain Al Khayyat salvages draw for East Riffa against Aali**

● **Yahya Ahmed Anfahi scores match's lone goal in Hala's victory against Al Ittifaq**

TDT | Manama

East Riffa and Al Hala last night retained their places in next season's Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League.

East Riffa kept their spot following a late 1-1 draw with A'ali in their match played at the Khalifa Sports City Stadium in Isa Town, while Hala maintained their position after defeating Al Ittifaq 1-0 at the Al Ahli Club Stadium in Mahoos.



East Riffa's Sami Al Hussaini looks to dribble past A'ali's Mauricio Osmar Rodrigues Britto during their match last night

The four squads faced one another in league format, with yesterday's games marking the end of these relegation play-offs.

As the top two on the standings, East Riffa and Hala stay in the top flight for the 2023/2024

campaign, while Ittifaq and A'ali will compete in the Kingdom's second division.

In East Riffa's draw with A'ali, the match had a dramatic ending when East Riffa's Hussain Al Khayyat scored in the third min-

YOU
KNOW WHAT

East Riffa, Al Hala, Al Ittifaq and A'ali all faced one another in league format, with last night's games marking the end of the relegation play-offs

ute of second-half stoppage time to salvage the share of the points. Al Khayyat fired in a rocket from the edge of the penalty area to the top-right corner of goal—a crucial strike that helped them keep their place in the premier division.

Earlier in the contest, Sunday Divine Abalo scored for A'ali in the 73rd minute. He stole pos-

Relegation Play-offs Standings

	P	W	D	L	+/-	Pts
East Riffa	3	1	2	0	2	5
Al Hala	3	1	2	0	1	5
Al Ittifaq	3	1	0	2	-2	3
A'ali	3	0	2	1	-1	2

session away from East Riffa's Obus Prince Aggeh, and then sent home a low effort from outside the penalty area, hitting the ball just well enough to beat goalkeeper Eyad Nasser Salem.

With the result, East Riffa went to five points on the relegation play-offs table for first place, while A'ali stayed last amongst the four teams with just two points.

Meanwhile, in Hala's win over Ittifaq, Yahya Ahmed Anfahi was on target in the 14th minute from the face of goal, and his effort was enough to separate the two sides after 90 minutes.

Anfahi received a long cross from the left flank by Hala skipper Ali Adnan, and after the ball went unclear, Anfahi made no mistake with his effort, shooting into the roof of the net.

Hala went to five points on the standings, level with East Riffa but with a lesser goal-difference.

Ittifaq stayed on three points and just missed out on promotion.

For next season, East Riffa, Hala and second division champions Al Najma along with runners-up Busaiteen are in the Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League. They join this season's champions Al Khaldiya, Manama, Muharraq, Riffa, Sitra, Al Ahli, Hidd and Al Shabab to complete the 12-club roster.

Bahrain Club and Budaiya were sent down to the lower tier as the bottom two clubs from this past season, joining Ittifaq and A'ali who stay in the second division.

Salwa claims double victory in Miami meeting

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's former world champion Salwa Eid Naser claimed an impressive double victory at the Tropical Park Meet #2 event held in Miami, Florida in the US early yesterday morning, Bahrain time.

Salwa competed in four races at the meeting, winning two of them. The elite sprinter triumphed in both the women's 200 metres and 400 metres, while finishing second and then fourth in a pair of 100 metre runs.

Salwa won her 200m race in



Salwa Eid Naser

a time of 22.90 seconds. She finished ahead of Fiordaliza Cofil

of the Dominican Republic in 23.20s, while Aiyanna Stiverne of Canada came third in 23.41s.

The 25-year-old Bahraini also won her 400m race, clocking a mark of 50.32s. She again finished ahead of Cofil, who finished in 51.13s, while Stephanie Davis of the US finished third in 52.83s.

Meanwhile, in the 100m, Salwa first finished second in her heat in 11.60s, narrowly behind Cofil who won in 11.44s.

Both runners advanced to the final, where Salwa was classified fourth in 11.54s. Maia Mc-

Coy of the US was the victor in 11.31s, followed by Cofil in 11.37s and Jasmine Abrams of Guyana in 11.47s.

Salwa was the lone Bahraini competing in the Miami event, which was a Challenger-level meeting on the World Athletics Continental Tour. It was only her fourth competition of the outdoor athletics season, in which Salwa is getting ready for the World Athletics Championships in Budapest this August, and the Hangzhou Asian Games in China this September and October.

Bahrain to host Asian futsal qualifying group



Bahrain in action at last year's AFC Futsal Asian Cup (File photo)

● **Matches scheduled to take place in October, with participation nations still to be determined**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain is set to host its group matches in qualification for the 2024 AFC Futsal Asian Cup.

This was announced yesterday by the Bahrain Football Association (BFA) after it received confirmation from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

The qualifiers are scheduled to be held from October 2 to 13.

The Kingdom is one of the host venues for the eight groups in qualifying. The teams in each group have yet to be determined. The draw is scheduled to take place on June 22 at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

The Bahrainis are one of 31 teams set to compete in the

qualifiers. The eight group winners will earn automatic berths in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup, along with the seven best-ranked runners-up and the host national team.

The BFA recently signed Brazilian Rafael Fogageiro as head coach of the national futsal team. The 42-year-old has about 20 years' experience in leading several futsal clubs in his home country and elsewhere.

Bahrain will be aiming to qualify for the AFC Asian Cup for only the fourth time in its history. The hosts of next year's event have yet to be determined.

The nationals previously also played in the 2002, 2018 and 2022 tournaments, with their best finish in the 2018 event in Taiwan where they reached the quarter-finals.

The competition also acts as the qualification for the FIFA Futsal World Cup, with five teams from the AFC booking a berth in the global competition, also to be held next year in September and October.

Muharraq face must-win in qualifier

● **Bahrainis down 0-2 on aggregate heading into second leg against Tunisia's Union Sportive Monastirienne (USM) in second qualification round for 2023 King Salman Club Cup**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Muharraq Club have named an 18-player squad for their return match against Tunisian outfit Union Sportive Monastirienne (USM) this evening in the second qualification round for a berth in the 2023 King Salman Club Cup—the region's top tournament organised by the Union of Arab Football Associations, also known as the Arab Club Champions Cup.

The Bahrainis face a tough challenge in the contest, being down 0-2 on aggregate following their loss in the first leg held in Tunis just over a week ago.

Tonight's clash will be held at



Muharraq players during training this week

the Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium in Arad. It is scheduled for a 7pm kick-off.

Muharraq's squad for the clash includes goalkeepers Sayed Mohammed Jaafar, Ashraf Waheed and Mohammed

Suleiman.

The rest of the team features Mohammed Al Banna, Ahmed Rabea, Waleed Al Hayyam, Amine Hasan, Hamza Al Jib, Abdulla Al Khalasi, Abdulwahab Ali, Moses Atede, Omar

Saber, Mubarak Mohammed, Abdulwahab Al Malood, Sufyan Mahrouq, Ahmed Al Sherooqi, Abdulla Al Haiki and Muhammad Sulumba.

Muharraq have been preparing for the game over the past few weeks. A loss in the match-up would make them the second Bahraini team to be booted out of the tournament, following in the footsteps of Manama, who lost in the first qualifying phase against Al Hilal Omdurman of Sudan.

Twelve teams remain in this second phase of qualification, which will determine the six teams that will move on to the group stage. Ten squads have already entered the King Salman Club Cup directly, including champion clubs from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia.

The tournament carries a huge prize purse, with the champions pocketing a cool US\$6million. The runners-up get \$2.5million, while the semi-finalists each take home \$200,000 and the quarter-finalists \$150,000 each.