

Tougher Iran Framework

Trump sent a tougher revised Iran framework back to Tehran, insisting on stricter nuclear limits and the full reopening of the Strait of Hormuz as talks intensify.” P6

Saudi authorities enhance crowd management at Prophet's Mosque

THE DAILY tribune



Fernando Santos confirms departure from Muharraq after trophy-laden spell

12 SPORT

BUSINESS

5

Direct Line to Decision-Makers for Members Facing Business Challenges

Armed Carjacker Jailed

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

A 26-year-old man has been sentenced to five years in prison and fined BD 50 by the First High Criminal Court after being convicted of armed carjacking and related offences.

The court heard that the defendant carried out the attack in October 2025. He approached a vehicle near a money exchange office, threatened the occupants with a knife, stabbed the driver in the shoulder, forced him out, and then stole the car and fled the scene.

The victim sustained injuries during the assault, while a witness reported the incident to authorities. The injured driver later identified the accused, and investigators confirmed that the recovered knife was the same weapon used in the attack.

The defendant denied the charges in court, claiming he was with others at the time and was later found sleeping in the back seat of the stolen vehicle. He also admitted he had been under the influence of alcohol during the incident.

Prosecutors said he used the weapon to overpower the victim and seize the vehicle, he also faced an additional charge of public intoxication.

Police later recovered the stolen car in the defendant's possession, with the knife inside. Investigations further revealed that he allegedly used the vehicle to commit additional offences, including assault, theft of a wallet and mobile phone, and a traffic collision.

Bahrain's economy "well placed"

Lawmaker highlights opportunities for investment and economic diversification

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Bahrain's banks, finance firms and service companies could be among the main gainers from the free trade deal between the GCC and the United Kingdom, Redha Faraj has said.

Faraj, deputy head of the Shura Council's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee, said the deal would give Bahrain wider room for trade, joint work and investment with Britain, helped by long-standing ties and similar business systems.

'Relations between Bahrain and Britain are historic and strong, and there is a high level of understanding between the two sides, which makes co-operation easier,' he said. 'I expect this agreement to bring important gains, especially in finance, banking and services, given the closeness of the systems and foundations on both sides.'

Faraj said Bahrain was part of the world economy and could not be cut off from external shocks, but he argued that the kingdom had shown enough room to adapt through the Covid years, recent economic strain and the latest regional crisis.

He said the fourth session of



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'The crisis proved Bahrain's readiness and its ability to deal with challenges efficiently. The balanced diplomatic moves also strengthened the kingdom's standing and reputation regionally and internationally.'

REDHA FARAJ, SHURA COUNCIL MEMBER

the Shura Council had shown a change in the thrust of lawmaking, with work now leaning more towards growth, sound finances and long-term planning, after earlier years had aimed mainly at stirring the economy.

Bahrain, he said, had reached a more mature economic stage, with much of the legal base for



growth already in place. The next task was to pass laws that widen non-oil income, add to state revenue and make public spending work better, while keeping citizens' rights intact.

'Most of the economic laws discussed were concerned with moving the economy through partnership between the government, the private sector and residents,' he said. 'The two main aims are to create suitable jobs for citizens and to deal seriously with public debt, because the lower the debt, the better able the state is to

provide more services and gains for citizens.'

Faraj said the recent crisis linked to Iranian attacks had shown Bahrain's readiness to deal with sudden shocks. He praised the work between the Bahrain Defence Force, the Interior Ministry and security bodies, saying they had acted as one team.

Faraj said the banking and finance field remained one of Bahrain's main strengths, and that the state had worked to protect it as far as possible through calm and measured steps.

"Prosecutors Freeze Assets in Iran-Linked Network Case"

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Public Prosecution has opened a major investigation into the dismantling of an organisation allegedly linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The group is accused of promoting the doctrine of Wilayat al-Faqih – which demands loyalty to Iran's Supreme Leader above loyalty to one's home country – and was reportedly formed by former members of the dissolved Islamic Scholars Council.

Prosecutors allege the network sought to extend Iranian influence inside Bahrain by taking control of mosques, mourning halls, and religious seminaries, using them to spread extremist ideology and deliver inflammatory sermons against national interests. Members were also recruited and sent to Iran to study and promote the doctrine.

The organisation targeted religious scholars who rejected its ideology – issuing rulings against them, applying ideological pressure, and in some cases threatening violence.

Assets Frozen

The Public Prosecution has ordered the detention of all 41 arrested suspects and authorised the freezing of their bank accounts and assets. Investigations revealed funds were collected to finance the network, with money allegedly transferred to terrorist organisations in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon. Some suspects also personally misused funds for gold, real estate, vehicles, and children's school fees.

Prosecutors confirmed the inquiry is continuing and a full statement will be issued upon its completion. All suspects were afforded legal safeguards, with some represented by legal counsel.

"Deliberate strategies" behind rising teen vaping, WHO

● 5.5 million children in the region are already using tobacco

● Teen e-cigarette use is up to nine times higher than adults

● Digital platforms seen as key driver

TDT | Manama
Ghadeer Abdulla

The tobacco industry is deliberately engineering products and market-

ing strategies to attract and addict children and adolescents, the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned, as it marks World No Tobacco Day 2026.

The WHO's Eastern Mediterranean office says flavours, branding and digital advertising are being used to normalise nicotine use among young people while masking its health risks. Officials say these tactics are creating a new generation of addiction at a time when enforcement of tobacco control laws remains inconsistent.

On World No Tobacco Day, the WHO called for urgent global action under the theme "Unmasking the appeal", urging governments to confront what it describes as a coordinated effort to hook young users.

"This is not accidental. It is the result

of deliberate strategies – flavours that mask harshness, packaging that attracts and digital marketing that normalises use," said Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

She added that weak regulation and gaps in enforcement, combined with ongoing industry interference, were allowing harmful practices to continue. "These tactics are driving a growing and evolving epidemic," she said.

The region, according to the WHO, carries one of the highest burdens of youth tobacco use globally, with an estimated 5.5 million children aged 13 to 15 already using tobacco products.

"As a paediatrician and a mother, I find this deeply concerning," Dr



Balkhy said. "These products are designed to create addiction early, targeting young people at a stage of life when their bodies and brains are still developing."

The WHO also highlighted the rapid rise of newer nicotine products, including e-cigarettes, among adolescents. It said young people are, on average, nine times more likely to use e-cigarettes than adults, with usage

rates among adolescents reaching as high as 30% in some countries in the region.

Smoking "silently destroys" lungs

Smoking causes irreversible damage to the lungs at a microscopic level and can steadily reduce a person's ability to breathe, a Bahraini doctor warned while marking World No Tobacco Day.

Dr Jalal Abdulla Kamal, Consultant in Family Medicine at Dr Abdulla Kamal Medical Center, said cigarettes contain around 7,000 chemicals, including about 70 known carcinogens, which gradually damage the respiratory system and reduce oxygen intake over time.

He said the harm often develops silently. "Many smokers do not feel symptoms early on,



Dr. Jalal Kamal

but continuous exposure leads to irreversible lung damage and serious diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)," he explained.

The lungs contain around 500 million tiny air sacs, known as alveoli, which are responsible for exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide between the lungs and the bloodstream. According to Dr Kamal, cigarette smoke coats these structures with tar and toxic chemicals, disrupting normal breathing function.

Over time, this leads to inflammation, loss of lung elasticity and the gradual destruction of these air sacs. As a result, breathing becomes increasingly difficult and oxygen levels in the body decline, often causing shortness of breath during everyday activities such as walking or climbing stairs.



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Outdoor work ban begins June 15

Workers barred from outdoor duties between 12pm and 4pm

The Ministry of Labour has announced the implementation of Decision No. (5) of 2026, introducing a summer midday work ban from June 15 to August 31, 2026.

Under the regulation, employers must prohibit workers from performing duties in open outdoor areas under direct sunlight between 12pm and 4pm.

The ministry said the measure is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen workplace safety standards and protect workers from heat exhaustion, sunstroke and other summer-related illnesses.

Authorities added that the ban is intended to reduce occupational accidents during the summer months, when Bahrain experiences significantly higher temperatures and humidity levels.

Report Violations

To support enforcement of the regulation, the ministry allocated a dedicated hotline, 17873921,



for members of the public to report complaints or suspected violations during the midday ban period.

The hotline will operate daily from 7am until 4pm, while reports can also be submitted through WhatsApp using the same number.

Violators face fines

The ministry warned that employers found violating the decision could face penalties under

Article 192 of Bahrain's Labour Law for the Private Sector, issued under Law No. (36) of 2012.

The law states that offenders may face imprisonment for up to three months, fines ranging from BD500 to BD1,000, or either penalty.

Authorities said penalties may increase depending on the number of workers affected by the violation, while repeat offences could result in doubled punishments.



Violators could face fines, jail terms and tougher repeat penalties

Five jailed over BD75,000 bank fraud in Bahrain

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

The First High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld a lower court ruling sentencing an Egyptian defendant and two others to five years in prison after convicting them of fraudulently obtaining more than BD 75,000 from a bank using forged documents.

According to case details, the defendants posed as government employees and submitted forged salary certificates and bank statements to obtain vehicle loans, taking advantage of the bank's reliance on unverified applicant information.

The court stated that the first defendant falsely claimed to be a doctor with a monthly salary of BD 2,000, while the other two claimed to be engineers in government entities with salaries of BD 1,700 each, supported by forged documents and seals attributed to the Ministries of Health and



Works.

Based on these documents, the first defendant obtained a vehicle worth BD 29,500, the second a vehicle worth BD 16,700, and the third two vehicles worth BD 29,700. The defendants later defaulted on repayments, and it was discovered that the vehicles had been taken out of Bahrain.

The court found them guilty of forging official and private documents and using them to defraud the bank and unlawfully obtain funds.

The court also ordered the confiscation of the forged documents and the permanent deportation of the defendants after serving their sentences.

Extreme heat dangers under spotlight

TDT | Manama
Neethu V

Extreme heat is back in focus as World Heat Response Day approaches on June 2, with health experts warning of the growing risks posed by rising temperatures. The message comes as Bahrain experiences some of its highest recorded temperatures, with recent highs reaching 49.6°C.

The annual observance highlights the health impacts of extreme heat, which is a growing worldwide concern. According to World Health Organization estimates for 2000–2019, 489,000 people die from heat-related causes globally each year. This year's theme, "The Particular Risks of Indoor

dangers of prolonged heat exposure are far from theoretical. Recalling a case from her nursing career, she described treating a fisherman rescued after spending three days lost at sea.

Awadhalla reiterated that prevention remains the best defence. Regular hydration, avoiding outdoor activities during peak heat hours, seeking shaded or air-conditioned spaces, wearing light clothing and taking frequent breaks can significantly reduce the risk of heat exhaustion and heat



"Severe dehydration and prolonged exposure to extreme heat left him critically ill with heat stroke, highlighting the potentially serious consequences of heat exposure." Muysar Awadhalla, Head of the Health Awareness Committee at the Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS)



A recent heat-awareness session organised by the BRCS at Al-Malkiya Sports Club



Heat," draws attention to the dangers posed by excessive heat exposure not only outdoors but also inside homes, schools, workplaces and care facilities.

"Climate change is increasing temperatures worldwide, making heat-related illnesses an increasingly important public health concern," said Muysar Awadhalla, Head of the Health Awareness Committee at the Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) and a retired faculty member at the University of Bahrain.

In an interview with The Daily Tribune, Awadhalla said the

stroke.

Children, older adults and people living with chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease are among those most vulnerable. Early warning signs include excessive sweating, fatigue, dizziness, headaches, nausea and muscle cramps.

As part of its awareness efforts, BRCS recently organised a heat-safety session for under-12 and under-14 players from Al-Malkiyah Sports Club Academy. Led by Dr Nilover Jahromi, a member of the society's Board of Directors and Head of its Ag-

ricultural Environment Team, the session focused on recognising heat-related illnesses and adopting safe practices during sports activities.

Participants received practical guidance on hydration, rest breaks, appropriate sportswear and avoiding direct sun exposure during peak heat hours.

With temperatures expected to remain high throughout the summer, organizations like BRCS continue to promote prevention, safety and health awareness, especially among children and young athletes in outdoor sports.

Navigating Inheritance in Bahrain

Lawyer Manal Dhahi explains how heirs can secure their rights and navigate inheritance procedures

TDT | Manama
Ghadeer Alkumaish

What happens to a family home, a bank account, or a vehicle when its owner passes away? For many expatriate families in Bahrain, grief is often followed by uncertainty as they attempt to understand the legal steps required to access and transfer a deceased relative's assets.

As Bahrain continues to attract foreign investors and residents who own properties, vehicles, businesses and bank accounts, questions surrounding inheritance have become increasingly common. To clarify the process, The Daily Tribune spoke exclusively to lawyer Manal Dhahi, Founder of Manal Dhahi Legal Consultations & Attorney.

Dhahi explained that the law governing an expatriate's estate depends on the type of asset involved. "Movable assets such as savings and cash deposits are generally distributed according to the law of the deceased's nationality at the time of death," she said.

"Real estate located in Bahrain requires the completion of transfer procedures in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable in Bahrain, with the submission of officially authenticated heirship documents issued by the deceased's home country. The shares of each heir are then determined in accordance with the applicable law governing inheritance, which is generally the law of the deceased's nationality."

According to Dhahi, the first and most critical step is obtaining a death certificate and an official heirship certificate. If the death occurs outside Bahrain, the death

certificate must be properly authenticated through the relevant authorities or bear an Apostille stamp where applicable.

Once the heirs are legally recognised, the process of transferring ownership begins. For real estate, heirs must submit the authenticated documents to the Survey and Land Registration Bureau, after which ownership can be transferred according to each heir's legal

share and the applicable inheritance law. In some cases, legal proceedings may be required to obtain a court order obligating the Survey and Land Registration Bureau to transfer ownership to the heirs according to each heir's entitlement under the law of the deceased's nationality.

Vehicles require a separate process through the General Directorate of Traffic. "The heirs must either agree on the transfer of ownership to a specific person or attend personally to complete the transaction," Dhahi explained.

Bank accounts often present the greatest challenge. Financial institutions immediately freeze accounts once notified of a customer's death. To access the funds, heirs must obtain court orders allowing banks to disclose balances and release the amounts for distribution.

"Banks in Bahrain apply strict procedures to protect depositors' funds and ensure that distributions are carried out legally and fairly," Dhahi said.

The same principle applies to company shares and commercial registrations. Heirs may be added as partners through amendments to company documents, or they may jointly decide to sell or liquidate the business.

Dhahi stressed that appointing one representative through a power of attorney can significantly simplify procedures, particularly when heirs live abroad. "Proper documentation and early legal guidance help families avoid delays and ensure that inheritance rights are protected," she said.

With the correct legal steps, Bahrain's inheritance framework provides a clear pathway for heirs to secure ownership of assets and settle estates in accordance with the law.



"Without proving the death and identifying the legal heirs, no authority in Bahrain can proceed with transferring ownership or releasing assets"

Lawyer Manal Dhahi

New park offers safe recreational space

Modern facilities aim to enhance the quality of life in the Northern Governorate



The inauguration was attended by Member of Parliament Dr. Munir Ibrahim Sarour, Northern Municipal Council Chairman Dr. Sayed Shubbar Ibrahim Al Wadaei, Deputy Council Chairperson Zeina Jasim Ali (representing the Seventh District), and Northern Municipality Director General Engineer Mohammed Saad Al Sahli, alongside officials and civil society representatives.

TDT | Manama

Minister of Municipalities and Agriculture, Engineer Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, officially opened the Village Park at Complex 551 in the Northern Governorate.

At the opening, the Minister reaffirmed the Ministry's ongoing

commitment to developing parks, public facilities, and expanding green spaces across the Kingdom—efforts he described as central to achieving environmental sustainability and meeting the growing expectations of both citizens and residents.

What the Park Offers

Spanning a total area of 3,400 square metres, the park has been designed to the highest technical and engineering standards. It features a children's play area fully compliant with safety requirements, a football pitch, a smart irrigation system, security cameras, service facilities, and dedicated car parking. Green

spaces cover approximately 752 square metres — around 22% of the total project area — planted with a diverse mix of trees and plants selected in line with the national afforestation plan.

A Project for Every Generation

The Minister described the park as a significant addition

to the Northern Governorate's service and recreational infrastructure, built to serve communities across all age groups. MP Dr. Sarour praised the Ministry's efforts, saying the park reflects a genuine commitment to providing integrated public amenities for residents.

Municipal Council Chairman

Dr. Al Wadaei called the park a landmark project that strengthens local infrastructure and raises service standards. Deputy Chairperson Zeina Jasim Ali highlighted the park's prime location close to residential homes in the Seventh District, making it easily accessible to families and community members alike.

Warrior of Hope

Young leukemia survivor launches initiative to support patients and promote positivity

Ghadeer Alkumaisih
TDT | Manama

At just 15 years old, Bahraini leukemia survivor Ruqaya Abdulraouf has transformed her personal battle with cancer into a mission to support fellow patients through her initiative, "Together We Create a Warrior's Joy," which focuses on improving the mental well-being of cancer fighters across the Kingdom.

Having experienced the physical and emotional challenges of cancer treatment firsthand, she believes that psychological support is just as important as medical care. Her initiative aims to encourage patients, particularly children, by creating moments of happiness and reminding them that cancer is not the end of their journey.

Before her diagnosis, she lived what she describes as a normal life filled with school, friends, and family gatherings. "My life was just like any other girl my age," she said. "I went to school, spent time with my friends, and enjoyed being with my family."

Her life changed after being diagnosed with leukemia. The treatment journey was demanding, but she credits her faith, family, and healthcare team for helping her persevere. "The medical staff played a major role in my treatment journey. Without God, my mother, and



From left, Fatima, a brave young cancer warrior, taking part in the first activity of Together We Create a Warrior's Joy, and Ruqaya, a cancer survivor

the healthcare team, I would not have had the strength I have today," she said.

During difficult treatment periods, she developed a mindset focused on resilience. "Before every treatment that I knew would make me feel sick, I reminded myself that it would only last a few days and then pass," she said.

Initiative

Following her recovery, she launched her initiative using her personal allowance to provide support and small gifts to young cancer patients. "The main goal of the initiative is to support fighters and improve their mental health because emotional well-being is a vital part of recovery," she said.

The initiative was inspired by her own experience as a patient and the positive impact that simple acts of kindness had on her during treatment. Since its launch, the project has expanded through collaborations with various organisations and community partners.

She hopes to raise awareness that cancer can be treated and overcome with the right support system. "Cancer does not mean death," she said. "With the right treatment and support, it can be overcome."

Today, Ruqaya continues to advocate for cancer patients across Bahrain, encouraging

them to remain hopeful throughout their treatment journey. "It is difficult, but it will pass," she said. "You are stronger than you think. The real challenge is facing the challenge itself."

Through her initiative, she is proving that survival is not only about overcoming illness it is about creating a lasting impact and inspiring others to keep fighting.



Nooh a young cancer warrior meeting his favorite football player Mustafa Hussain as part of Together We Create a Warrior's Joy

Know your rights

When ads don't match reality

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

Online advertising can cross into commercial fraud when it misleads consumers with false images, incorrect specifications, or deceptive product descriptions, according to legal expert Lawyer Manal Yousif of Manal Dhahi Law Firm and Legal Consultancy.

As e-commerce and social media shopping continue to expand, complaints about products not matching their advertised appearance or features have become more common, raising questions over consumer protection and seller accountability under Bahraini law.

Yousif explained that advertising becomes unlawful when it creates a false impression about a product's quality, origin, authenticity, or specifications, and influences a buyer's decision based on inaccurate information.

She advised consumers to verify a seller's commercial registration, check return policies, request authentic product images where needed, and keep all receipts and communications as evidence in case of disputes.

Under Bahrain's regulatory framework, including rules governing online sales and consumer protection laws, sellers are required to clearly



Lawyer Manal Yousif

display licensing details, contact information, and return policies to ensure transparency.

She added that misleading product images or descriptions may amount to commercial fraud, which can carry penalties including fines or imprisonment under relevant GCC unified commercial fraud laws, depending on the severity of the violation.

Consumers are legally entitled to refunds or replacements if a product does not match its advertised description or is defective, while "no return or exchange" clauses cannot override statutory consumer rights.

Electronic records, including chats, invoices, and digital receipts, are also recognised as valid legal evidence in disputes between buyers and sellers.

Yousif stressed that while Bahrain's legal system provides strong protections, consumer awareness and careful verification remain essential in preventing online fraud.

Track Disc Rule Sought for Freight Lorries

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Freight lorries sent into Bahrain through border crossings would be fitted with Track Disc devices, or similar tachograph-style systems, under a parliamentary proposal by MP Maryam Al Dhaen.

The Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee has recommended that Parliament approve the proposal,



MP Maryam Al Dhaen

would look at fitting lorries with systems that record speed, driving time, rest breaks and vehi-

cle movement, as well as speed limiters or other tracking tools able to give traffic authorities accurate live data.

The proposal says the devices would help the Interior Ministry, through the General Directorate of Traffic, and the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications, keep a closer watch over heavy goods transport, road conduct and freight checks.

It argues that recording driving hours and rest periods in a form that cannot easily be al-

tered would cut the risk of tired drivers spending too long on the road.

The system would also record speed, acceleration and braking, giving inspectors and traffic officers a clearer basis for reading driving patterns and stepping in before serious crashes occur.

Weight checks would also be strengthened, according to the proposal, through a single data platform shared by the bodies overseeing traffic and land transport.



Ms Al Dhaen's explanatory note says many legal systems abroad treat devices that monitor driving and rest time as part of road and workplace safety rules.

Chamber opens door to business feedback

Direct Line to Decision-Makers for Members Facing Business Challenges

TDI | Manama

The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry has created a dedicated new position within its Board of Directors to strengthen direct communication with its members. Under its 31st session, chaired by Mr. Nabil Khalid Kanoo, the Board established the role of "Board Representative for Member Affairs and Complaints", appointing Mr. Abdulwahab Yousuf Al-Hawaj and Mr. Rashad Ibrahim Zeinal to fill the position.



connected with the realities of the private sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Board Member and newly appointed Representative Mr. Rashad Zeinal said the move reflects the Board's commitment to staying closely con-

necting with the realities of the private sector. "Complaints and observations from business owners are an important source for understanding the needs of economic sectors," he said. "We do not treat them as isolated individ-

ual cases — we treat them as indicators that help us identify shared issues and areas that require attention and action."

From Feedback to Policy Zeinal stressed that the real value of this initiative goes beyond handling complaints. Recurring issues raised by business owners will be converted into working files, concrete initiatives, and policy recommendations aimed at improving legislation, procedures, and the overall business environment.

To complement this approach, the Chamber has simultaneously established a dedicated SME Support Department, tasked with following up on issues submitted by business owners, studying them, and coordinating with relevant government bodies —

with dedicated contact points to accelerate resolution.

Rooted in Reality Zeinal emphasised that the Board's initiatives and recommendations during this session will be driven by the actual needs of economic sectors, not top-down directives. The Representatives will review periodic reports, follow up on outstanding matters, and submit recommendations directly to the Board.

He concluded by affirming that the Bahrain Chamber will continue developing its institutional tools to better anticipate private sector needs — turning challenges into practical recommendations that support Bahrain's economic competitiveness and development journey.

Drone hits captured nuclear plant in Ukraine: IAEA

AFP | Vienna, Austria

A drone hit the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Russian-occupied southern Ukraine, the UN nuclear agency confirmed yesterday.

"The IAEA team at the ZNPP (Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant) observed damage to the exterior of a turbine building which the plant said was hit by a drone strike yesterday," the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency posted on social media.

"The team's observations are consistent with the impact of a drone," it added, noting that "radiation levels at the site remain normal".

The plant lies close to the frontline in southern Ukraine. Moscow and Kyiv have repeatedly accused each other of risking a nuclear catastrophe with attacks.

Moscow's troops captured

the plant — Europe's largest — in the first days of their 2022 invasion.

IAEA inspectors on Saturday had to shelter after hearing the sound of drones nearby and repelling gunfire, the agency said, adding that it had requested access to the inside of the building.

Russian media earlier carried a statement from state-owned nuclear power firm Rosatom accusing Ukraine of a deliberate attack — a claim strongly denied by Kyiv.

"There should be no attack of any kind from or against the plant," IAEA chief Rafael Grossi was quoted as saying in an X post by the agency late on Saturday.

"Attacking nuclear sites is like playing with fire."

Rosatom alleged the drone was controlled via a fibre-optic cable, which ruled out "the possibility of an accidental strike".

Sri Lanka raise fuel prices after IMF loan instalment



AFP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka raised fuel prices by up to six percent yesterday, in line with IMF plans to recover energy costs and phase out subsidies to stabilise the economy.

Petrol was raised to 434 rupees (\$1.33), up from 410, while diesel increased to 407 rupees a litre from 392, the state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation said.

The price hike came days after the International Monetary Fund released a \$695 mil-

lion instalment of a \$2.9 billion bailout loan, agreed in early 2023 to stabilise the cash-strapped South Asian nation.

The IMF wants Sri Lanka to ensure cost recovery for both fuel and electricity tariffs, which have been subsidised by the government since the start of the conflict in the Middle East in February.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, in a letter to the IMF made public by the Washington-based international lender, said fuel subsidies will be phased out by September.

Energy crunch fuels carpool growth

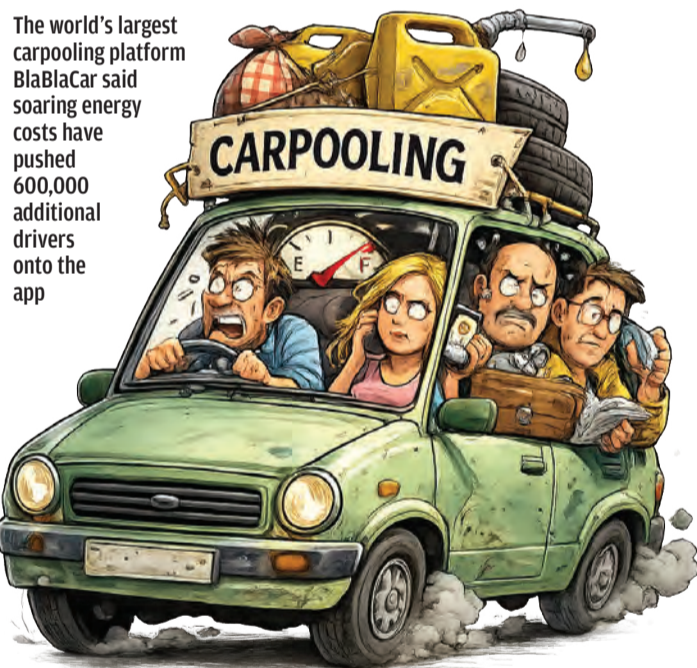
AFP | New Delhi, India

Rising fuel prices triggered by the Middle East war are driving a sharp increase in carpooling, with a ride-sharing platform reporting a surge in new users seeking cheaper ways to travel.

The world's largest carpooling platform BlaBlaCar said soaring energy costs have pushed 600,000 additional drivers onto the app this year -- 20 percent more than initially projected -- as commuters look to offset the rising cost of fuel.

In India, its single biggest market with more than 20 million users in 2025, the number of passengers has increased by 40 percent since the start of the US-Israeli airstrikes against Iran

The world's largest carpooling platform BlaBlaCar said soaring energy costs have pushed 600,000 additional drivers onto the app



on February 28. Last year, the global carpooling leader posted record-breaking figures in the world's most populous country India -- outpacing Brazil with 19 million users and France with seven million, according to Benjamin Retourne, the platform's product director.

This trend has been more pronounced in countries where fuel price increases driven by the war have been sudden and significant, combined with limited government support, such as in France.

The platform works by connecting drivers and passengers willing to travel together between cities to share costs, with the app in most of its 21 operating nations taking a 20 percent commission.

Australian researchers teach brain cells to play 'Doom'

AFP | Melbourne, Australia

Australian researchers have trained lab-grown brain cells on a silicon computer chip to play the nineties shooter game "Doom" and say they are just scratching the surface of what the neurons could be capable of doing.

It's the science-fiction work of biotech boffins at Cortical Labs, who researched and developed the technology that harnesses the workings of the brain's networking system.

Each so-called "biological computer" contains around 200,000 living human brain cells, grown from stem cells that were harvested from blood donations.

Having mastered the simple computer game "Pong", where a paddle is moved up and down to send a ball across a screen, the brain cells have moved on to bigger things.

Initially, the neurons were at the "level of a beginner who's

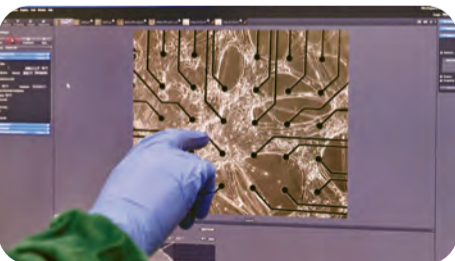


Image from a microscope of cortical and hippocampal cells on a cell culture plate at Cortical Labs' Physical Containment Level 2 (PC2) laboratory in Melbourne.



Research scientist Daria Kornienko places cortical and hippocampal cells on a cell culture plate



Micro Electrode Array (MEA) chips with nutrients placed on neurons

never played a video game before," Alon Loeffler, Cortical Labs' senior application scientist, told AFP.

"Doom" involves a chaotic 3D game-world where the user is required to explore its surroundings and dispatch enemies - no easy task for a clump of cells.

"They were walking into walls a lot, shooting the walls, turning around, doing funny things like that," Mr Loeffler said.

"And then eventually they started targeting the enemies more regularly and correctly."

It's not the cleanest execution, however. One demon takes several attempts to slaughter, with shots fired in multiple directions before the target is hit.

But the mind-bending research proves the neurons can adapt to stimuli in real time and complete goal-directed learning, Cortical Labs say.

'Scratching the surface'

The researchers converted the digital environment in "Doom" into patterns of electrical signals the neurons on the chip could

understand.

When an enemy appears, specific electrodes stimulate the neurons on the special chip called a CLL, causing them to react.

Different patterns of neuron activity produce specific responses, such as firing the gun or moving left or right.

Researchers monitor the electrical activity of the neurons from a computer screen connected to the CLL, represented by thousands of tiny dots.

From this data, the team ad-

justs their input to influence and train the neuron's activity.

The CLL isn't limited to computer games -- the chip can be coded to perform a range of applications, from drug screening to AI-like machine learning.

"We are just scratching the surface of what these neural cultures can achieve when integrated in systems like our CLL," said chief scientific and operations officer Brett Kagan.

"Our neural cultures have been explored for a variety of tasks," he said -- everything from "ro-

botics, real-time learning tasks that are similar to AI, as well as healthcare, medicine, disease modelling, drug screening and even personalised medicine".

Not 'wacky science'

Mr Kagan describes the CLL chip as "a more sustainable and more powerful form of intelligence".

The human brain runs on an estimated 20 watts of power, a level of efficiency that silicon computing and artificial intelligence have not yet been able to replicate.

While it's "not aimed to replace what AI is doing" it's intended to "give us abilities that we've never had before", Mr Kagan said.

The cells have a six-month lifespan and aren't yet capable of producing consistent, programmable results.

But analysts say the project's value could lie in its more sustainable power consumption compared to regular chips.

Kyiv says struck Russian pipeline and oil depot



A firefighter extinguishing a fire at the site of a Russian air attack in Dnipro, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukrainian drones yesterday struck an oil depot in southern Russia and a pumping station hundreds of kilometres from the front, Kyiv said, with Russian officials confirming strikes in the areas. Its army said drones hit a "dispatch station of a major oil pipeline" in Russia's Kirov region and an oil depot in the Rostov region, near occupied Ukraine.

The town's head Dina Alborova said the fire spread over

3,600 square meters (39,000 square feet), publishing images of plumes of black smoke. She said residential houses and several shops were affected.

In Ukraine, authorities were clearing the aftermath of a Russian strike on a warehouse in Dnipro, belonging to popular postal company Nova Poshta.

Nova Poshta, a private courier company widely used in and outside Ukraine, said its Dnipro branch was hit by a drone and that "the building burned down completely".

It added that no employees were injured.

"All these attacks must be stopped," President Volodymyr Zelensky said online, posting images of the blaze.

"All that's needed is sufficient support for our defence and continued pressure on Russia," he said.

Israeli military captures medieval castle of Beaufort

AFP | Qlayaa, Lebanon

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to push deeper into Lebanon after his military took over the medieval castle of Beaufort on Sunday, calling it a "dramatic shift" in the campaign against Hezbollah.

As fighting escalated in Lebanon, France said yesterday it requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, alarmed by Israel's "ever-deeper occupation of Lebanese territory".

Israeli forces used the Beaufort castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, as a base during their previous two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon that ended in 2000.

In a video statement released hours after the military took Beaufort, Netanyahu said "we have returned united, determined and stronger than ever".

"Now my directive is to deepen and expand our hold in plac-

es that were under Hezbollah's control. The capture of Beaufort is a dramatic stage and a dramatic shift in the policy we are leading."

Shelling was audible and smoke rose from the surrounding area as AFP saw the Israeli flag above the castle.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said troops had captured the historic stronghold, which commands sweeping views of south Lebanon, as they expanded their ground operations.

"Forty-four years after the heroic Battle of Beaufort, and on this day commemorating the soldiers who fell in the First Lebanon War (1982), our troops have re-secured the summit of Beaufort and once again raised the Israeli flag there," Katz said in a social media post.



An Israeli flag flies over the medieval Beaufort Castle, known locally as Qalaat al-Shaqif or Shaqif Arnoun, as seen from the Marjayoun area of southern Lebanon

Romania identifies drone behind strike on apartment block as Russian

AFP | Bucharest, Romania

Further analysis of a drone that smashed into a Romanian apartment building, sparking furious condemnation of Russia, has shown that it undoubtedly came from Mos-

RUSSIA'S GERAN-2 DRONE
Long-range loitering munition

Also known as Geran-2, it is a Russian version of the Iranian Shahed 136 drone.

TYPE	Loitering munition (kamikaze drone)
RANGE	Up to 2,000 km
WARHEAD	30-50 kg explosive payload
SPEED	150-185 km/h
LENGTH	About 3.5 m
WINGSPAN	About 2.5 m
LAUNCH	Rail launch from trucks or racks
NAVIGATION	GPS/GLONASS with preset route

USED FOR: Mass attacks on military targets and infrastructure to overwhelm air defences.



The apartment block that was struck by a drone wounding two people in Galati.

cow's forces, Bucharest said yesterday.

"The drone that crashed Thursday night in Galati is a Geran-2, of Russian origin," Romania's President Nicusor Dan said in a post on X Sunday.

"This is the unequivocal conclusion of the technical report finalized by experts of the Romanian state," he added.

A 14-year-old boy and a 53-year-old woman were hospitalised on Friday after the drone hit a block of flats in Galati, close to the border with Ukraine.

That marked the first drone hit on a residential building

outside Ukraine since Russia started its full-scale invasion in 2022.

Russia's embassy in Romania has accused Ukraine of staging a provocation with the incident, and President Vladimir Putin said Friday that "no one" could determine the aircraft's origin with any authority until a thorough examination was carried out.

In his post Sunday, which carried four images said to show the device, Romania's Dan said comprehensive technical analysis had been carried out and showed that Russia was "solely responsible".

UN Sec. Council to hold emergency meeting on Lebanon today

United Nations, United States

The UN Security Council will hold an emergency meeting Monday over Israel's expansion of its offensive in Lebanon, following the capture of the medieval castle of Beaufort, diplomatic sources told AFP.

The meeting was requested by France and will take place immediately after an emergency meeting over the crash of a Russian drone into a Romanian apartment building, which is scheduled for 3:00 pm (1900 GMT), the sources said.



Smoke rises following Israeli bombardment in southern Lebanon

Iran state TV says draft deal with US includes releasing \$12 bn in assets

Trump turns tougher in talks

Agencies



US President Donald Trump has reportedly sent a tougher proposal to Iran as negotiations continue over Tehran's nuclear programme and the future of the Strait of Hormuz.

Reports by The New York Times and Axios said the

revised framework had been returned to Tehran for consideration, although details have not been disclosed.

Trump has said his priorities are preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons and ensuring the reopening of the strategic shipping lane, over which Tehran has sought greater control since the conflict began. Speaking in an interview with Fox News, Trump said any agreement must guarantee that Iran would not acquire nuclear weapons, adding that Tehran had

agreed to that principle.

The tougher proposal comes after months of negotiations that followed US and Israeli air and missile strikes on Iran in February, which reportedly wiped out much of the country's senior leadership. While Iran insists its nuclear programme is intended solely for civilian purposes, the United States and its Western allies have long suspected it seeks the capability to build a nuclear weapon.

An F/A-18E Super Hornet, attached to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 14, preparing to make an arrested landing on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln

Trump has said his priorities for any deal included Iran agreeing to never develop nuclear weapons and the re-opening of the blockaded Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly 20 percent of the world's oil supply transits.

4000 BC

Approximate domestication of the horse in the Eurasian steppes near Dereivka, central Ukraine (hypothesis only)

1215

Peking, then a city of over one million under the control of the Jurchen ruler Emperor Xuanzong of Jin, falls to the Mongols under Genghis Khan and is looted for a month



Battle of Öland: Allied Danish-Dutch forces defeat the Swedish navy in the Baltic Sea during the Scanian War (1675–79)

1676

1774

Boston Port Act: Following the passage of the act, the British government orders the Port of Boston closed to punish the colonists for the Boston Tea Party

US chemical spill death toll rises to 11



AFP | Los Angeles, United States

The death toll from a chemical spill at a paper manufacturing plant in Washington state has risen to 11, after rescue teams recovered the bodies of all nine employees who had been reported missing, US authorities said on Saturday.

A massive storage tank containing tens of thousands of gallons of a highly corrosive substance collapsed inward on Tuesday at the facility in Longview, Washington, prompting a large-scale search and rescue

operation.

"We have recovered the ninth and final missing employee of this incident," Brad Hannig, Chief of the Longview Fire Department, told a news conference.

Rescue officials had announced on Wednesday that two workers had died, while nine others were still unaccounted for.

The incident at Nippon Dynawave Packaging occurred during an early morning shift change when a 900,000-gallon (3.4-million-litre) tank carrying a substantial volume of white liquor ruptured.

French police arrest 416 people in clashes after Champions League final

Paris, France

French police arrested 416 people during violent clashes that erupted when thousands poured onto the streets during Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League final victory on Saturday night, the country's interior minister said.

Just over 280 of the arrests took place in Paris, Minister of Interior Laurent Nunez announced, calling the unrest in which seven police officers were wounded "absolutely unacceptable".



Differences remain over Iran's nuclear programme

Stalemate continues

Agencies

Iran signalled fresh resistance to Washington's latest proposal, underscoring how a deal remains elusive despite US efforts to push negotiations forward.

Iran's chief negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said Tehran would not approve any agreement unless it fully protected Iranian rights, warning that the United States could not be trusted.

"We will not approve any agreement until we are certain that the rights of the Iranian people have been upheld,"

Ghalibaf said in remarks broadcast on state television.

His comments came as Iranian media reported that discussions on a possible memorandum of understanding were continuing, with both sides proposing amendments to the draft text. According to the Tasnim news agency, no agreement has been finalised and any eventual deal could still be rejected.

Key differences remain over Iran's nuclear programme and wider regional issues. Tehran has demanded the release of \$12 billion in frozen assets before engaging in substantive nuclear talks and has

dismissed Trump's claim that its stockpile of enriched uranium would be destroyed as "baseless".

The two sides also appear divided over the future of the Strait of Hormuz. After Trump suggested Iran would charge no tolls on vessels using the strategic waterway under any agreement, Iranian media denied that such a provision existed. Lawmaker Alireza Salimi said parliament would soon consider a proposal to strengthen Iran's sovereignty over the strait, including the imposition of administrative navigation fees.

US to send only used nuclear subs to Australia in amended defence deal

Agencies

Australia will only receive used nuclear-powered submarines from the United States as part of an agreement to "streamline" the AUKUS deal, with the move branded on Sunday as a "cost-effective" measure by Defence Minister Richard Marles.

The two nations – together with the third partner in

their security pact, Britain – met at Singapore's Shangri-La Dialogue, which brings together top defence officials and experts from about 45 countries.

Under the 2021 AUKUS deal, Australia is expected to receive at least three so-called "Virginia-class" nuclear-powered submarines from the United States within 15 years. Australia had been expect-

ing to receive two used submarines and one new one, but the countries announced Saturday that all three will now be in-service vessels from the US Navy stock.

When asked why Canberra was now receiving only used equipment, Marles, who is also deputy prime minister, told reporters on Sunday it would be more cost-effective.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



800 million people still live in extreme poverty. Their plight is made worse by conflicts, the climate crisis, deepening inequalities & heavy debt burdens. We need to shape economies that put people first, and continue our fight to reduce & #EndPoverty.

@antonioguterres

02



We're on a good direction of travel on fundamental rights. Notably on academic freedom. It is so important that young Hungarians can benefit from the wonderful experience of Erasmus. As early as the next academic year. This is our shared ambition.

@vonderleyen

03



EBOLA: another piece of good news, #Ituri celebrates this Sunday the recovery of 4 patients afflicted with Ebola at #CEM Hospital, all healthcare personnel. A concrete proof: yes, Ebola can be defeated!

@DrTedros

04



A dolphin rescue ambulance in Uttar Pradesh is doing commendable work and giving an important message of caring for those we share our planet with.

@narendramodi

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

The Evolution of Dignity: Redefining Elderly Care



CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

Bahrain stands at a demographic crossroads. With life expectancy reaching 79 years, and a rapidly growing senior population, our traditional social fabric is reshaping.

For generations, multi-generational households guaranteed that senior citizens were cared for by their children. Today, changing socio-economic realities—characterized by dual-income households, urbanization, and a shift toward nuclear families—are straining this informal care model. Working families face intense emotional and financial pressure to provide complex medical care at home.

Old age can no longer be treated simply as a private family matter; it demands an evolved, institutional response.

Recognizing this shift, Social Development Minister Osama Al Alawi recently enacted landmark executive regulations for Law No. 58 of 2009. These rules introduce a strict licensing framework for private care homes and day clubs, mandating qualified management and robust oversight to eliminate substandard care.

Crucially, the regulations protect an individual's independence by stipulating that institutional admission must be entirely voluntary and based on the senior's personal wish—preventing families from abandoning their relatives. This balance of rigorous commercial standards and human rights safeguards lays a solid foundation for modern geriatric care.

However, regulatory oversight is just the beginning. To truly support our seniors, Bahrain must transition from a model of reactive medical treatment to proactive, community-integrated care.

First, the Kingdom must expand specialized mobile healthcare units. Broadening the reach of existing Ministry of Health mobile teams will provide regular, specialized geriatric check-ups and advanced nursing directly in the patient's home, ensuring dignity without displacement.

Furthermore, we must subsidize private home-nursing options. Creating financial subsidies and formal training programs for home caregivers will ease the financial and emotional burden on dual-income nuclear families who want to keep their elderly relatives at home but lack the clinical expertise.

Finally, Bahrain needs to boost community partnership clubs. Increasing public-private funding for parental day-care centers allows mobile seniors to engage in voluntary work, share knowledge, and combat isolation while remaining deeply integrated within their local neighborhoods.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

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

Egypt pushes plan to become regional hub for higher education



- 129 universities highlighted as Egypt expands higher education sector

- Focus on digital transformation, research commercialisation and skills Over 40 panel discussions

- Plans to boost international partnerships and export Egyptian education

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reviewed an ambitious government plan to transform the country into a regional and international hub for higher education, research and innovation.

The discussions took place

during a meeting with Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly and Higher Education Minister Dr Abdel Aziz Konsowa.

According to a presidential spokesperson, the meeting focused on the Ministry of Higher Education's strategy for the coming phase, which aims to position Egypt as a destination for students and researchers from around the world while supporting a shift toward a knowledge-based economy.

Officials said Egypt now has 129 universities, including public, private, national, technological and international branch campuses.

President el-Sisi stressed the importance of continuing to develop the higher education and research system, describing it as a key pillar in building human capital and achieving sustainable development. He also emphasised the role of universities in strengthening training programmes and skills development

to meet labour market needs.

The meeting also reviewed efforts to improve academic and administrative performance, including initiatives to develop faculty capabilities and enhance quality standards. The minister said an executive committee has been formed to oversee the digitisation of the enterprise resource management system, as part of a wider push towards full digital transformation in university administration.

Plans are also underway to modernise faculty training centres to align with international standards and evolving academic requirements.

President el-Sisi called for greater cooperation with leading international universities and institutions to benefit from global expertise and improve the quality of Egypt's higher education system.

A key focus of the discussions was also linking scientific research with industry. Officials

outlined plans to turn academic research into marketable products and services, support innovation and entrepreneurship, and establish "technology valleys" to strengthen collaboration between universities and industry.

The meeting further reviewed ongoing healthcare-related projects within universities, including upgrades to hospitals in Alexandria University, improvements at El-Mowasat Hospital, and modernisation of operating rooms and endoscopy units at Shatby Maternity and Children's Hospital. Plans for an Egypt branch of Cairo University in Eritrea were also highlighted.

The government also discussed efforts to "export Egyptian education" by expanding partnerships with high-ranking international universities, offering joint programmes, and targeting strategically important regions to attract foreign students.

Saudi Arabia boosts readiness at Prophet's Mosque after Hajj



Saudi Arabia's General Authority for the Care of the Two Holy Mosques has increased its operational readiness at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina to serve worshippers and pilgrims arriving after completing the Hajj pilgrimage.

The enhanced preparations aim to ensure visitors can perform their prayers and rituals in comfort and ease, supported by an integrated system of field and organisational services.

Expanded entry and crowd management

Authorities have prepared 141 gates across the mosque to regulate the flow of entry and exit for both men and women. Additionally, the authorities set up 100 organised walkways inside the mosque and its courtyards to help maintain smooth movement and reduce congestion.

To accommodate large numbers of worshippers, 25,000 prayer carpets have been laid out across the mosque and surrounding courtyards.

Mobility support has also been strengthened with 194 escalators and lifts made available to assist visitors in moving between different sections of the complex.

Water and essential services Around 10,000 Zamzam water containers have been deployed across the mosque and its courtyards to ensure easy access to drinking water.

Additionally, 2,782 toilets have been prepared in service areas beneath the mosque to support visitors' needs.

The authority has also activated 6,060 loudspeakers across the site, ensuring that prayers, sermons, and religious lectures are clearly transmitted throughout the mosque and its surrounding areas.

Officials said the measures are part of broader efforts to enhance the experience of worshippers during the post-Hajj period, ensuring smooth operations and comfort for all visitors to Islam's second holiest site.

UAE welcomes returning Hajj pilgrims with special passport stamp

Dubai's General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA Dubai) welcomed returning Hajj pilgrims arriving through Dubai Airports with a special commemorative passport stamp marking their homecoming.

The stamp carries the message "The UAE Welcomes the Return of Pilgrims," reflecting the country's gesture of appreciation and hospitality toward citizens and



residents completing the annual pilgrimage.

Authorities said the initiative is part of ongoing efforts to enhance



the arrival experience at Dubai's entry points while recognising the spiritual journey pilgrims undertook to the holy sites.

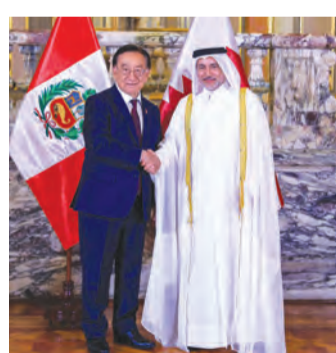
Passengers arriving at Dubai Airports were greeted with streamlined procedures and the symbolic stamp, which officials described as a message of pride and national welcome.

The gesture underscores the UAE's broader commitment to providing seamless travel services and honouring significant religious occasions with community-focused initiatives.

Peru and Qatar Reaffirm Bilateral Ties

The Interim President of Peru, José María Ballcázar, received the credentials of Qatar's new ambassador to the South American nation during an official ceremony in Lima.

Abdullah bin Jassim Al Zayera presented his letters of credence to the Peruvian leader, formally beginning his role as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar to Peru.



During the meeting, the Qatari envoy conveyed greetings from the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, along with his wishes for the interim president's good health and for continued progress and prosperity for the people of Peru.

President Ballcázar, in turn, asked the ambassador to relay

his greetings to the Amir of Qatar. He wished the Qatari leader good health and happiness, and expressed hopes for the continued development and growth of the State of Qatar.

The ceremony underscores ongoing diplomatic engagement between Doha and Lima, as both countries seek to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields.

Kuwait approves defence cooperation agreement with Italy

Kuwait has issued a decree-law approving a defence cooperation agreement with Italy, formalising expanded military and technical collaboration between the two countries.

The agreement, published in the official gazette yesterday, was signed in Rome on 13 January 2026 and consists of 14 articles outlining areas of cooperation in defence training, knowledge exchange and technical support.

According to the explanatory memorandum accompanying the

decree, the agreement aims to strengthen defence ties through the exchange of military expertise and education programmes, in ways that serve the mutual interests of both nations.

It includes provisions for organising military courses and training programmes, as well as exchanging official visits between civilian and military delegations. It also covers cooperation in meeting technical requirements for defence equipment needed by either side.



The agreement further sets out frameworks for exchanging and potentially procuring military equipment, including tanks, military vehicles and training materials. These transactions may take place directly between the two governments or through licensed private companies approved by both parties. Financial arrange-

ments stipulate that the sending side will generally cover the costs of training and accommodation unless otherwise agreed. Other expenses not directly related to training may be borne by the sending party or individuals themselves. Personnel are also subject to the host country's financial and customs regulations.

Qatar-Singapore Officials Explore Defence Cooperation



His Excellency Mr Lawrence Wong, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Singapore, met with His Excellency Shaikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al Thani, Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, in Singapore.

The meeting took place at the Istana, Singapore's presidential palace, on the sidelines of the 2026 Shangri-La Dialogue, a major regional security forum bringing together defence and policy leaders from across the world.

Security developments in focus According to officials, the two sides reviewed the latest security developments in the region and exchanged views on evolving geopolitical challenges. Discussions also cov-

ered areas of cooperation and joint coordination, reflecting shared interests in regional stability amid current international conditions.

The talks underscored the importance of continued dialogue between Gulf and Southeast Asian partners, particularly on defence and strategic issues.

Diplomatic attendance The meeting was attended by His Excellency Mr Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Al-Mallik Al-Juhani, Qatar's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Singapore, alongside senior officers and officials from both delegations.

The discussions form part of broader diplomatic engagements held during the Shangri-La Dialogue, which serves as a key platform for security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Classifieds



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Back-to-back-to back? Luis Enrique's PSG have dynasty mentality

Luis Enrique's vision has transformed PSG into Europe's dominant force

● **PSG retain Champions League crown**

● **Arsenal push holders to penalties**

● **Luis Enrique praise team mentality**

● **Young PSG squad aims for three-peat**

AFP | Budapest

If a rock-solid Arsenal could not stop Luis Enrique and Paris Saint-Germain, one steward clutching a rope stood no chance.

The Spanish manager hurdled the obstacle and sprinted onto the pitch to celebrate the "back-to-back" that cemented the French side in football history, only the second team to retain the trophy in the Champions League era.

This time, PSG truly earned it. Last season they cruised to a 5-0 win against an underwhelming Inter Milan, but in Budapest they battled over 120 minutes in a 1-1 draw and edged Arsenal on penalties.

That followed the semi-final classic 6-5 win over Bayern, highlighting all the qualities of PSG's game over the two legs.

"The coach said it's even harder to win twice," said PSG captain Marquinhos. "We had the whole team (fighting) and the mental strength."



It did not take long for the Brazilian defender to set the next target.

"We have a very young squad -- we can win it a third time in a row," said the skipper.

At 32, Marquinhos is an elder statesman of the team. His centre-back partner Willian Pacho is 24, Nuno Mendes 23, Joao Neves 21, Vitinha 26, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia 25, Bradley Barcola 23, many still to hit their peak.

French winger Desire Doue, only 20, also had his eyes on the next prize, before he had even lifted this one.

"The first one was incredible, but more than anything we had that desire to get the second, to make history once again and become legends," he told broadcaster M6.

"I love this club so much, and it's not over! We've got the second, we'll keep working and go get the third."

Record 15-time winners Real Madrid won the Champions League three times between 2016-2018. Before that the last teams to complete a hat-trick were Bayern Munich and Ajax in the 1970s. Real Ma-



Paris Saint-Germain's Spanish head coach Luis Enrique lifts the trophy

drid also won it five years running back at the competition's inception.

"We can talk about the back-to-back-to-back. We can talk about these type of objectives, our club is worthy of it, our supporters," said Luis Enrique.

Although the coach was reticent to proclaim his side would clinch the trophy again, it was clear he enjoyed the sound of the phrase.

Lucho's fingerprints

In many ways Luis Enrique is the defining figure of this PSG project, with the commercial superstars departed, Lionel Messi, Neymar, Kylian Mbappe and many more.

After Mbappe left in 2024, Lucho, as he is nicknamed, said his team would become even stronger.

"Having a player who moved wherever he wanted meant there were parts of the game I couldn't control... next year, I'll control everything. Everything," he said. And he did. And it made PSG stronger.

The club still invested heavily in players, but player tailored to Luis Enrique's plans, willing to run endlessly for the collective, and keep egos in check.

Doue, Kvaratskhelia, Pacho, Neves, arrived, among others. Luis Enrique converted Ousmane Dembele into a brilliant central attacker, who presses

impressively, after several flaky seasons at Barcelona beset by injuries.

Dembele won the Ballon d'Or last season. The coach said the team would strengthen to help achieve a potential three-peat, but it was tricky to find ones who would not upset the balance and culture he has created.

"It's very difficult to find the right ones to play in our team," Luis Enrique told reporters.

"We do need new players to refresh certain positions, but we've been champions of Europe for two years... piano piano (slowly, slowly)."

The coach said he was "not interested" in whether he was becoming a legend or not, after



PSG are only the second team in the modern Champions League era to retain the trophy, after Real Madrid's 2016-18 treble

winning the competition for a third time, a feat achieved by just four other managers.

Yet it is clear from inside and outside, the effect the Asturian has had on a club built in his image, capable of creating a modern football dynasty.

"His fingerprints are all over this team," said Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta, admitting he was inspired by Luis Enrique.

Dembele, who netted PSG's goal from the penalty spot, summed up Luis Enrique's status by posting a photo of the coach on his Instagram feed after the triumph, along with the phrase "You can't understand it," the name of a documentary about the coach.

Everyone does understand it now. Two straight Champions League trophies are explanation enough.

Luis Enrique is an endurance racer, who ran an ultra-marathon in the Sahara desert. So this might just be the beginning.

Spurs dethrone Thunder to reach NBA Finals against Knicks

AFP | Los Angeles

The San Antonio Spurs, sparked by superstar Victor Wembanyama, advanced to the NBA Finals by dethroning defending champion Oklahoma City 111-103 on Saturday, booking a championship showdown against New York.

The Spurs captured the best-of-seven Western Conference finals 4-3 to reach the NBA Finals, which begin on Wednesday against the Knicks in San Antonio.

"Though we're still hungry for one more, this feeling is, I can't explain it, it's so powerful," Wembanyama said. "We want four more. We're not done. Go Spurs go."

French 7-foot-4 (2.24m) center Wembanyama scored 22 points and grabbed seven rebounds, Julian Champagnie added 20 points including six three-pointers and Stephon Castle had 16 points for the Spurs, who led the winner-take-all contest almost the entire way.

"We had a good team, a great team," Champagnie said. "We



Victor Wembanyama, left, celebrates with San Antonio Spurs teammates Stephon Castle and De'Aaron Fox

had to stay the course and play a good game.

"We were passing the ball. We were playing as a team. We come out here and play together.

"We never knew if we were going to get this far but when you've got the greatest player in the world things happen."

That was a nod to Wembanyama, the Most Valuable Player of the Western Conference

finals and the NBA Defensive Player of the Year.

"It doesn't mean anything for me other than the fact we are a team," Wembanyama said of his series MVP award. "I got this for all of us and all the fans right here."

Of his teammates, Wembanyama added, "They don't even know how much I love them. They are just incredible. Everybody stepped up tonight."

Barcelona sign winger Gordon from Newcastle

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona confirmed the signing of Anthony Gordon from Newcastle United, for a fee that could rise to 80 million euros (\$93 million).

Gordon will sign for "the next five seasons, until June 30, 2031," Barcelona said in a brief statement.

The 25-year-old left winger netted 17 goals for Newcastle this season, 10 of those in the Champions League, and was the club's top scorer.

"As a kid, to play for Barcelona is the biggest dream possible, it's the biggest club on the planet," Gordon told reporters.

"I know it comes with a lot of responsibility, but like I said, I'm ready for this kind of challenge, ready for that responsibility.

"I know everybody, the players in the past who've worn the shirt, it holds a lot of weight, but I'm ready. I'm excited for the challenge."

Gordon, part of England's World Cup squad, bolsters a



English player Anthony Gordon poses during his official presentation

Barcelona attack losing Polish veteran striker Robert Lewandowski at the end of his contract, and possibly Marcus Rashford after his loan spell from Manchester United.

La Liga champions Barcelona still hope to strengthen further in the coming weeks, with Atletico Madrid striker Julian Alvarez linked with a switch to Catalonia, while the club have not ruled out a new move to keep Rashford.

After three years of reduced expenditure and with their partially rebuilt Camp Nou stadium reopened, Barca have more economic breathing room within La Liga's strict financial fair play rules than previously.

Lewandowski's departure and the end of Rashford's loan give Barca margin to spend, while other players including Rooney Bardghji, Ansu Fati and Marc-Andre ter Stegen may also leave.

Bahrain national team prepare for friendlies



Croatian head coach Dragan Talajic oversees training preparations

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national team continued their preparations for the upcoming international friendlies with Georgia and Syria, re-summing training yesterday at the Bahrain Football Association pitches in Riffa.

The session was held under the supervision of head coach Dragan Talajic and his technical staff, with a focus on ball work and tactical drills as the squad builds towards the final phase of their preparation programme.

Several players joined the camp after completing club



Sayed Hashim Isa in action during training session

duties, including Mahdi Abduljabbar, Mohammed Abdulqayoom, Ali Al Doseri, and goalkeeper Abdulla Alahmed, further strengthening the group ahead of the upcoming fixtures.

Bahrain will continue their preparations before travelling to Europe, where they are set to

face Georgia on Friday in Tbilisi before taking on Syria next Tuesday in Antalya, Türkiye.

The friendlies form part of the team's broader preparation plan for upcoming regional and continental competitions, including the Gulf Cup later this year and the AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifiers.

Sitra Crowned U21 Basketball Champions



Sitra's players and club officials celebrate after securing the inaugural championship title

TDT | Manama

Sitra Club were crowned Champions of the Under-21 Basketball League in its inaugural 2025-2026 season following an 84-60 victory over Al Najma in the final at Um Al Hassam Sports Hall last night.

Sitra set the tone early, dominating the opening half with quarter scores of 24-8 and 20-11. Al Najma fought back in the third quarter, edging it 26-20 to briefly narrow the gap, but Sitra quickly reasserted control, closing the game with a dominant 20-15 final period.

Ali Mohsen led Sitra's scoring with 24 points, supported by Ebrahim Murad with 15 and Ali Salman with 13.

For Al Najma, Jock James finished with 18 points, Mohammed Sami added 14, and Montahar Hasan Khalifa contributed 12.

Sitra's victory was built on disciplined defense and efficient offensive execution, as they extended their lead to 28 points in the second quarter,



Sitra's Ali Mohsen goes for a tough layup under pressure from Al Najma's Omran Najaf

weathered a brief Al Najma resurgence, and then surged away in the final frame to seal a deserved championship title in the first edition of the competition.

Arteta's Arsenal realise evolution needed after PSG final loss

● **Gunners suffer a fifth consecutive European final loss**

● **Only one shot on target**

● **25 percent possession vs PSG**

● **Arteta calls for attacking reinforcements**

AFP | Budapest

The last time Arsenal reached a Champions League final they lost it, and then it took 20 long years to claw their way back to that stage again.

After Saturday's agonising penalty shoot-out defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in Budapest, their goal is not only to return as soon as possible, but to finally claim the trophy for themselves.

After winning the Premier League for the first time in 22 years Mikel Arteta and his team have proven they are back among the elite, but the battle against the new back-to-back European champions also exposed clear areas to improve on.

Gunners coach Arteta insisted his team can end their pain, after a fifth consecutive defeat in a European final, if they evolve both wisely and quickly.

"We want to reach another level and we're going to have



Arsenal's Spanish manager Mikel Arteta gives instructions to his players at the first half cooling break

to show that ambition because we are more than capable of doing it, but it's going to demand to be very, very ambitious, very fast and very smart," said the Spaniard.

Arteta and his players had to trudge bitterly past the trophy their club is yet to claim, as they collected their runner-up medals at the Puskas Arena.

Penalty misses from Eberechi Eze and Gabriel after a 1-1 draw over 120 minutes ended their dream of writing a new chapter in the team's history.

Their celebratory parade for the English title in London will doubtless be joyful, but takes

place under the shadow of what might have been -- and what one day might still be.

Arteta highlighted the calibre and quality of PSG's attackers, a way of signalling the two sides are not evenly matched in that department.

"What they are able to do with the ball, with individual actions, I haven't seen it," said the coach, hinting his own side should reinforce in the summer if they want to overcome Europe's dominant force.

Arteta said many of his side were not in the right "condition", after a gruelling season, in which he often relied on a small

core of players.

Last year Arsenal brought in Eberechi Eze, Viktor Gyokeres, Martin Zubimendi and Noni Madueke among others, but Arteta began with all four on the bench in the final.

Mostly, through his six-and-a-half seasons at the helm, Arsenal have worked with limited investment and developed youth players like Buyako Saka.

Kai Havertz started up front and scored, for the second time of his career in a Champions League final, but Arsenal could still use stronger options alongside England international Saka.



Despite signing Eberechi Eze, Viktor Gyokeres, Martin Zubimendi and Noni Madueke last summer, Arteta left all four on the bench for the Champions League final

Especially when compared to PSG's forward line, featuring Balon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele, this season's best attacker in the Champions League, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and French firecracker Desire Doue.

PSG hit 45 goals in the competition, matching the all-time record set by Barcelona in 1999-00.

Course correction

The underlying feeling is that Arsenal's approach has to evolve and improve too.

This season they have been remarkably strong defensively, not losing a single match in the competition before the final, and conceding just seven goals including Ousmane Dembele's penalty that forced extra-time.

However Arsenal also managed only 25 percent possession

against PSG and a single shot on target in 120 minutes.

Arsenal know that playing like they did this season, it is possible to win the Champions League, especially given how close they got to it, but it is not probable.

"PSG was the only one who wanted to play," Joao Neves told M6.

Arsenal were fortunate to end up facing Atletico Madrid and Sporting Lisbon on the road to the final, compared to PSG's trickier side of the draw.

In the future opponents will find ways to defend better against their set-pieces, they will emulate their tactics. Football rarely stands still.

"Maybe it will not last a lot of time, football is like this - 'today it's true, tomorrow it's a lie', but today we can say we are the best in Europe," observed PSG midfielder Vitorinha, highlighting that even his triumphant side must keep progressing.

The positive thing is that Arteta understands this, and despite his complaint that Arsenal did not get the rub of the green in the final in terms of refereeing decisions, will not hide behind that.

"We need to do better, we'll have to improve and find different margins to get the outcome that we want," said Arteta.

They do not need a drastic overhaul but a course correction of a few degrees, to become more of a threat from open play, in addition to maintaining their defensive strength.

Santos confirms Muharraq departure after trophy-laden spell

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Portuguese coach Fernando Santos has confirmed he will leave Muharraq following the expiry of his contract, ending a highly successful 16-month spell with the Bahraini giants.

The 53-year-old announced his departure yesterday via an emotional message on Instagram, describing his time at the club as “a very special chapter” in his career and thanking players, staff, management, and supporters for their trust and support.

Santos departs after overseeing one of the most successful modern periods in Muharraq’s recent history, having arrived in January 2025 to replace Bahraini coach Mohammed Al Shamlan, who later took charge of Al Najma.

During his tenure, Santos led Muharraq to sustained domestic dominance across two seasons. In his first campaign, he guided the club to the Nasser bin Ham-



Coach Santos with Muharraq’s league-and-cup trophies

ad Premier League title, which was clinched with four games to spare. In his second season, he ended Muharraq’s long wait for the King’s Cup, delivering their 20th triumph in the competition, before retaining the league title and extending the club’s national title tally to 35.

In his farewell message, Santos reflected on the challenges faced during his time in Bahrain, crediting the unity of the squad and the support of fans for the team’s success.

“We built more than a team. We built a family,” he wrote, adding that he leaves the Kingdom with “a profound sense of accomplishment” and hopes to return in the future.

Before joining Muharraq, Santos had already enjoyed success in Bahrain with Al Ahli, where he led the club to the 2023–24 King’s Cup title.

His departure closes one of the most successful coaching spells in recent Bahraini football history, with “The Red Wolves” set to begin the search for a successor ahead of the new season.



Muharraq players celebrate their coach after their latest league triumph

Mohamed leaves Al Najma after nine-month spell



Goalkeeper Ammar Mohamed, 27

● **Al Najma recorded 7 clean sheets in 22 matches**

TDT | Manama

Goalkeeper Ammar Mohamed has confirmed his departure from Al Najma following the conclusion of the season, bringing an end to a nine-month spell with the club after joining last August.

Mohamed announced his exit via a personal message on social media, thanking the club’s management, coaching staff, teammates, and supporters for their backing during his time with the side.

The goalkeeper described

his experience at Najma as demanding and full of lessons, saying the season felt “as if it lasted years” due to the intensity of events and circumstances faced during the campaign.

His departure follows a campaign in which he featured regularly for Al Najma, contributing to their efforts to retain their place in the Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier League after a successful relegation play-off campaign.

Mohamed’s career path includes a long spell at Manama Club, where he developed between 2018 and 2023 before earning a move to Al Khaldiya, where he spent two seasons from 2023 to 2025. He then joined Al Najma in August 2025 ahead of the latest season.

Ahli and Barbar set for final showdown



Al Fardan scores the match-winner in the semi-final against Al Najma

TDT | Manama

The 2025–26 Khalid Bin Hamad Bahrain Handball League reaches its conclusion this week, with Al Ahli and Barbar set to contest the final tomorrow at 7pm at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town.

Both teams secured their places in the title decider after

completing two-game sweeps in the Golden Square semi-finals, setting up a showdown between two sides that emerged strongly from tightly contested last-four encounters.

Barbar booked their place in the final with a dramatic 25–24 victory over defending champions Al Najma, sealed by a late winner from Hassan Al Fardan.



Al Ahli coach Predrag Petljanski directs his team from the sidelines

Meanwhile, Al Ahli advanced after overcoming Al Shabab in a penalty shootout following a 31–31 draw in regulation time, with goalkeeper Hussain Mahfoudh playing a key role in the victory.

The final will see Barbar, coached by Bahraini tactician Hussam Madan, face Al Ahli under Serbian coach Predrag

Petljanski in what is expected to be a closely fought title clash.

The third-place classification match, which had been scheduled for today between Al Najma and Al Shabab, will not take place after Najma forfeited the fixture. As a result, the Bahrain Handball Federation awarded Al Shabab third place.

Bezzecchi wins Italian MotoGP, extends championship lead

AFP | Mugello

Marco Bezzecchi won the Italian MotoGP yesterday to strengthen his bid for a first world title, as Marc Marquez finished seventh on his comeback from injury.

Starting from pole, the Aprilia rider won his battle with fellow Italian Francesco Bagnaia who ended up third behind Bezzecchi’s teammate and closest title challenger Jorge Martin.

Bezzecchi leads Martin by 17 points in the championship

standings after winning his fourth grand prix from the seven raced so far this season. The 27-year-old crossed the line over three seconds ahead of Martin.

“It’s incredible. Winning at Mugello is something I’ve dreamed of since I was a child,

so to achieve it is truly amazing,” said Bezzecchi. Bezzecchi was overtaken by Bagnaia, who started sixth on the grid, at the start of the third lap, but stayed on his countryman’s tail and took charge on lap 14 with a daring move to the front.