

Unity Over Outside Threats

Cabinet meeting highlights resilience and national solidarity

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa chaired the weekly Cabinet meeting held at Al Sakhir Palace, in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

His Majesty the King delivered an address expressing deep gratitude and appreciation to all those who have demonstrated, in word and deed, their patriotism and support for the Kingdom of Bahrain, including their responsible backing of the recent measures taken to safeguard the kingdom's unity and stability against any threat to national unity and the process of achieving further development and prosperity. His Majesty



esty thanked members of state institutions, community figures, writers, authors and poets for their valued support.

His Majesty praised the sincere expression of unity and loyalty shown by Bahraini citizens and families, describing them as a powerful reflection of national cohesion. His Majesty said it was an honour to reaffirm the Kingdom's commitment to its people and renew the

pledge to defend the homeland and preserve the values that unite the nation. His Majesty expressed appreciation, respect and gratitude for the steadfast positions demonstrated by the people of Bahrain, noting that their support strengthens confidence in the future and reinforces the nation's determination to move forward with optimism and purpose.

Addressing the Iranian ag-

gression, His Majesty the King said it has sought to harm the efforts of development in the region, disregarding international conventions and laws, and the principles of good neighbourliness. His Majesty said that Bahrain's resilience and restraint during an unprecedented war of defence reflected a longstanding national commitment to consolidating regional stability and supporting international peace, security and prosperity.

Royal Gratitude Document

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa signed a document of thanks and loyalty in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and senior members of the Royal Family. The document expressed pride in the people of Bahrain, highlighting their unity, patriotism, and enduring commitment to the Kingdom.



Strategic Partnership Talks Advance



The Minister of Finance and National Economy, H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, met with France's Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot, on the sidelines of the "Choose France" investment conference in Paris on June 2.

The minister highlighted the steady progress in Bahrain-France relations across all sectors, underpinned by a distinguished partnership that enjoys the personal support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Bahrain Expands Investment Cooperation with France

Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, participated in the "Choose France" investment summit held at the Palace of Versailles in Paris, highlighting the Kingdom's efforts to expand international investment partnerships and attract strategic economic opportunities.

The summit, inaugurated by French President Emmanuel Macron, brought together global leaders, senior officials and major investors to discuss investment opportunities and international economic cooperation.



During a gala dinner hosted by President Macron, Shaikh Salman conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to the French President. Macron extended his wishes for Bahrain's continued progress and prosperity. Shaikh Salman underscored the strength of Bahrain-France relations and the growing cooperation between the two

countries in economic and investment sectors. He said Bahrain's participation in the summit reflects the Kingdom's commitment to building strong global partnerships that support sustainable economic growth and national development objectives.

He added that the visit builds on recent high-level exchanges between Bahrain and France

and reflects Bahrain's drive to deepen bilateral cooperation and unlock new investment opportunities of mutual interest.

The Bahraini delegation included Ambassador Essam Al Jasim, Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) Chairman Khalid Al Rumaihi, and Mumtalakat Chief Executive Officer Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Khalifa.

TRAIL to Open Manama Office as Mumtalakat Deal Unlocks



Bahrain's sovereign wealth fund, Mumtalakat, has announced a strategic partnership with French investment firm TRAIL, investing in the SLAM Fund — the world's first private equity fund dedicated exclusively to Sports, Luxury, Arts, and Music.

The agreement was signed in Paris, on the sidelines of the prestigious "Choose France" investment summit.

The signing was witnessed by H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy and Chairman of Mumtalakat, alongside H.E. Nicolas Foresier, France's Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness.

The partnership combines TRAIL's deep sector expertise with Mumtalakat's regional reach and long-term investment strategy. It aims to expand SLAM's portfolio across Bahrain and the wider GCC, through direct investments and supporting regional growth of fund companies.

As part of the deal, TRAIL will open a Manama office — its GCC hub for capital raising and business development.

Prices are effective from today

- Jayyid (91): BD 0.233 per litre
- Mumtaz (95): BD 0.269 per litre
- Super (98): BD 0.362 per litre
- Diesel: BD 0.229 per litre
- Continued diesel subsidy for Bahraini fishermen, supporting the fishing sector and national economy

220 fils (includes VAT)



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ALBA's €2.2 Billion European Power Move

Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), the world's largest single-site aluminium smelter, has agreed to acquire Aluminium Dunkerque — the European Union's biggest aluminium smelter — in a deal valued at \$2.2 billion. The agreement was announced on June 2 at the prestigious "Choose France" investment summit in Paris.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in the presence of Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, H.E. Shaikh Salman bin

Khalifa Al Khalifa, and French Minister of Foreign Trade Nicolas Forissier. The MOU was formally executed by Alba's Chairman Khalid Amro Al-Rumaihi, alongside partners from American Industrial Partners and French public investment bank BPI France.

Alba will acquire 100% of Aluminium Dunkerque, fully financed through a consortium of partner banks. BPI France will also inject €100 million in equity, securing a 6% stake and a board seat — pending regulatory approvals.



Bahrain, Cyprus Discuss Trade Ties

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His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, met the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Bahrain, Dr Andreas Eliades, at Riffa Palace.

During the meeting, HRH the Crown Prince stressed the importance of further strengthening bilateral cooperation, particularly in economic and trade sectors, to create new opportunities that support mutual goals and aspirations.

The two sides also discussed regional and international developments and issues of common concern.

The Cypriot Ambassador expressed his appreciation for the meeting and for Bahrain's efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation between the two countries. He also wished the Kingdom continued progress and prosperity.



European investment promotion tour

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A delegation from Bahrain's Economic Development Board has begun a five-day strategic visit to Spain and Switzerland as part of efforts to promote the kingdom as a leading destination for international investment.

The delegation is led by Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of the Economic Development Board. The tour includes stops in Barcelona, Zurich, and Geneva, where officials will engage with senior executives and strategic partners across key global industries.

The visit forms part of a wider, ongoing strategy to highlight Bahrain's flexible investment environment and strengthen its presence in major international markets.



Parliament voices strong backing for royal address

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Bahraini MPs voiced support for His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's address during Monday's Cabinet meeting, praising its focus on national unity, security and regional stability.

MPs said the speech reflected Bahrain's commitment to peace, restraint and protecting the home front amid regional tensions.

MP Maryam Al Saigh said the King's remarks highlighted the strong bond between the leadership and the people, while praising citizens for their unity and



"His Majesty's speech reflected the strong bond between the leadership and the Bahraini people during a critical time for the region."

- MARYAM AL SAIGH, MP



"The speech showed that Bahrain's strength begins with the awareness and cohesion of its people."

- DR MARYAM AL DHAEN, MP



"Parliament fully supports the steps taken to preserve Bahrain's security, sovereignty and regional peace."

- MOHSEN AL ASBOOL, MP



"His Majesty's address reflects a national vision grounded in unity, social cohesion, and Bahrain's continued growth."

- ZAINAB ABDULAMEER, MP

support for national security measures.

Dr Maryam Al Dhaen described the royal address as a message of loyalty and reassurance, saying it reinforced trust between the leadership and the public while stressing the importance of peace, dialogue and national cohesion.

MP Mohsen Al Asbool said the speech outlined a clear path for safeguarding Bahrain's stability and protecting the country's achievements, adding that Parliament fully supported the steps taken to preserve national security and regional peace.

Bahrain Puts Its Land Management Model on the World Stage

Kingdom shares urban growth expertise at major international forum in Russia

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Bahrain's Survey and Land Registration Bureau took its land management expertise to Moscow this week, participating in the Global Land Forum (MASTOR) at the invitation of the Republic of Mordovia. The forum brought together government officials, experts, and international organisations focused on land administration, investment, and geospatial technologies.

During the session "Territory of Growth: Integrating Construction, Investment and International Practices", the Bureau presented how Bahrain uses land administration as a tool for sustainable development and investment.

Abdulrahman Ali Showaiter, Director of the Cadastral Survey Directorate, delivered the keynote presentation titled "Land Administration as Driver



of Growth" — making the case that smart land governance is not just a technical matter, but an economic one.

What Bahrain Told the World

Showaiter stressed that sustainable development goes beyond buildings and infrastructure. Accurate, transparent, and reliable property data is what

makes government services function and development planning possible.

He outlined Bahrain's approach to managing the pressures of rapid urban growth — particularly in complex multi-use and multi-ownership developments — using advanced geospatial and property information systems. These systems

sharpen decision-making, streamline land management, and balance development with long-term resource sustainability.

Bahrain's presence at a forum of this scale signals its growing role as a regional reference point for modern land governance — a model other nations are now looking to learn from.

Roadmap for Stability

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The chairman of Bahrain's Shura Council described a speech by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa as a comprehensive national roadmap aimed at strengthening unity, safeguarding sovereignty and sustaining the kingdom's development.

He said the speech carried "deep national messages" that reinforced values of loyalty and belonging while highlighting the role of Bahraini citizens as key partners in the country's development journey.

Al Saleh praised the patriotic positions shown by Bahraini citizens, institutions and community figures during recent regional developments, saying they demonstrated the strength of national unity and the



close ties between the leadership and the people.

He added that the King's recognition of Bahraini families and citizens was a source of pride and reflected mutual loyalty and solidarity, which he described as one of the kingdom's main sources of resilience in facing challenges.

Loyalty Strengthens Nation

Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, expressed deep pride and gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for signing the "Document of Gratitude and Loyalty" and delivering the Royal Address during today's Cabinet meeting.

Al Musallam described the speech as a comprehensive national charter outlining the features of the next phase for the Kingdom of Bahrain. He said the address reaffirmed Bahrain's steady path of unity between the



leadership of His Majesty the King and the people, built on a long-standing legacy of cohesion and national belonging.

A'ali Disability Complex Upgraded

Engineer Shaikh Mishal bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Works, and Ziyad Adel Darwish, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development, conducted an inspection visit to the Comprehensive Disability Complex maintenance project in the A'ali area.

During the visit, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Works affirmed that the Comprehensive

Disability Complex serves as an integrated centre housing several specialised facilities catering to different disabilities.

He stated that the maintenance project reached 100 percent completion. The works included a comprehensive package of civil, structural, electrical and mechanical upgrades carried out according to the highest approved technical standards and specifications.



Exclusive

Hope After Medical Breakthrough

Bahrain's first CRISPR bone marrow transplant patient shares recovery journey

TDT | Manama
Ghadeer Alkumaish

Amjad Kazem Ahmed, the first Bahraini to undergo bone marrow transplantation using CRISPR gene-editing technology for sickle cell disease, is now navigating a new phase of life—one that lies between illness and full recovery, shaped by gradual progress, physical limitations, and renewed hope.

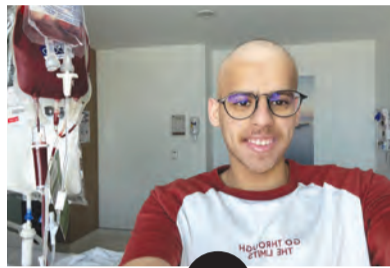
While much attention has been given to the medical milestone itself, Amjad's story extends beyond treatment. It highlights the often-overlooked phase of transition, where recovery is not immediate, and rebuilding life takes time, patience, and resilience.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, Amjad described his experience as physically and emotionally demanding. "The illness was extremely exhausting, and it had no specific timing... even the treatment period was difficult, but hope and positivity were stronger than the fatigue," he said.

Living with sickle cell disease since childhood, a hereditary condition, meant that daily life was shaped by limitations. Simple activities such as swimming, running, or playing football were often out of reach due to the risk of triggering complications. "I was deprived of many things,



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, met with Amjad Kazem Ahmed.



"This accomplishment belongs to Bahrain before it belongs to me personally."

- AMJAD KAZEM AHMED

This phase is marked by a strong sense of enthusiasm to reclaim what was once lost, but also by moments of realization. "Sometimes I get excited to do things, but then I'm surprised that my energy doesn't allow it," he explained.

Determined to move forward, Amjad has begun focusing on rebuilding his physical strength.

"Right now, I'm training and strengthening my body so I can do the things that sickle cell once prevented me from doing."

The illness's impact extended beyond physical health, affecting his academic journey as well. "Even in my studies, I've become more ambitious... the illness affected me and delayed me significantly," he said.

Throughout his treatment journey, Amjad expressed deep

appreciation for the medical team, emphasizing their continuous care and dedication. He noted that their support played a significant role in helping him navigate the most challenging stages.

He also received personal support from HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, who visited him before treatment and continued to follow up on his condition. After a year, Amjad met him again under improved circumstances. "The last meeting was even better than the first... I visited him when I was in good health," he said.

Amjad's journey is not defined by a single medical breakthrough, but by the ongoing process of rebuilding a life once limited by illness. As he continues through this transitional phase, his story reflects resilience, patience, and the quiet determination to move forward step by step.

Bahrain and France review financial and industrial partnership



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Bahrain and France reaffirmed their economic partnership during high-level talks in the French capital, focusing on expanding cooperation across finance, industry, energy and digital sectors.

H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy and Chairman of Muntalakat Holding Com-

pany, met Roland Lescure, who also oversees industrial, energy and digital policy portfolios, during a visit linked to the "Choose France" summit hosted by France.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed current areas of financial and economic cooperation and discussed ways to further strengthen them. They also exchanged views on regional and international economic developments, along with other issues of mutual interest.

Robotic surgery success strengthens Bahrain's medical standing

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Royal Medical Services has strengthened its position as a regional and international leader in advanced healthcare, highlighting major achievements in organ transplantation, robotic surgery, and cardiac care.

The Commander of the Royal Medical Services, Brigadier General Doctor Shaikh Fahad bin Khalifa, said hospitals and medical centres under the organisation continue to deliver "qualitative medical achievements" that reflect the growing sophistication of Bahrain's military health system.

He said the system has reinforced its status as a leading regional hub for specialised healthcare, operating in line with the highest international medical standards.

According to the statement, the military hospital has recorded significant progress in robotic surgery, carrying out around 200 advanced procedures across several specialties. These included orthopaedic operations, urology procedures, and tumour removals using cutting-edge robotic technologies.

Officials said the use of robotic systems has improved surgical precision, increased success



"We are proud that the Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa Specialist Heart Centre has surpassed 100,000 successful cardiac catheterisation procedures since its establishment."

- BRIGADIER GENERAL DOCTOR SHAIKH FAHAD BIN KHALIFA

rates, reduced complications, and shortened patient recovery times.

In another major development, King Hamad University Hospital has continued to expand its specialised services and organ transplant programme. Around 100 trans-

plant operations have been performed, including kidney and liver transplants.

The Royal Medical Services said this reflects strong national medical expertise and the growing capability of Bahrain-based specialists in complex surgical fields.



"Riaya" initiative supports 32 vulnerable cases in early 2026

Multi-agency approach strengthens welfare and rehabilitation efforts

TDT | Manama
Neethu V

The Public Prosecution's Social Care Initiative, known as "Riaya", reported supporting 32 cases involving women, men, children and families between January and April 2026, as part of its ongoing welfare and protection programme.

Launched in December 2021, the initiative aims to ensure that while courts deal with offenders, victims and vulnerable groups receive coordinated social, psychological and legal support.

Fahad Al-Ramihi, Deputy President and Director of the initiative, said the latest figures reflect its expanding reach and growing impact across different segments of society. He noted that the programme assisted 409 cases in 2025 alone, underlining its broader community footprint.

"Riaya" focuses on protecting children, women and families through an integrated approach that addresses social, economic and psychological factors linked to crime. Support services include legal aid, healthcare, education assistance, financial support, and rehabilitation programmes.

Among the highlighted cases, the initiative supported a child who had suffered abuse by a relative, providing a tailored recovery plan in coordination with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, alongside continuous psychological



"The figures reflect its expanding reach and growing impact across vulnerable groups"

- FAHAD AL-RAMIHI, DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF THE INITIATIVE

care.

In another case, a 14-year-old girl living in unstable conditions and forced into begging received a structured intervention involving financial support, legal protection, and improved educational access through relevant government bodies.

The programme also assisted

a woman and her children who had faced abuse and threats of eviction, securing temporary housing and legal representation while improving their safety and stability.

In a separate case, a family dealing with financial hardship alongside a child's cancer diagnosis received coordinated medical, legal and financial support to stabilise their situation.

Other cases included a young man suffering severe psychological trauma following a family tragedy and fire incident, who later received rehabilitation, financial assistance and safe housing arrangements for his family.

Another individual, left homeless due to inheritance disputes, received temporary housing, financial aid, healthcare follow-up and employment assistance.

The initiative said these cases reflect its holistic model, combining legal, social, psychological and financial interventions to protect vulnerable individuals and support long-term recovery and reintegration into society.

Diving for Destiny

One pearl could change a family's future. One dive could cost a life

TDT | Manama
Neethu V

Long before oil transformed Bahrain's economy in 1932, the kingdom's fortunes were tied to the sea. Pearl diving served as the main source of income for generations of Bahrainis, as the country's natural pearls earned a reputation among the finest in the world.

This rich maritime legacy was brought to life during a recent guided tour at the Bahrain National Museum as part of International Museum Day celebrations.

Guide Yusuf Alsaeed described the remarkable skill required of traditional pearl divers, who would descend as deep as 12 metres on a single breath in search of oyster beds. More experienced divers could go even deeper, while others used weighted stones tied to ropes to help them sink quickly to the seabed before beginning the painstaking search for pearls.

"It is a very hard profession," he explained, noting that a single necklace could take decades or even generations to complete as families searched for pearls with the perfect shape, size and colour.

For centuries, Bahrain's natural pearls were among the most

sought-after treasures in the world. Their exceptional quality was attributed to a unique environmental phenomenon found in Bahraini waters, where freshwater springs emerge beneath the sea and mix with saltwater. Divers referred to these underwater freshwater sources as "Chocheb," believing they contributed to the formation of the finest pearls.

Among the most prized finds was the perfectly round white pearl known as "Dana" - a rare gem regarded as the pinnacle of natural pearl quality. Finding one could transform a family's fortunes overnight.

Pearling was once the backbone of Bahrain's economy. Historical accounts show that around 2,500 pearling vessels would head out during diving seasons each year. Every boat carried a full crew, including divers, rope pullers, assistants and even singers whose traditional songs helped sustain morale during months spent away from home.

Yet the rewards came with enormous risks.

The Gulf waters presented



Inside Bahrain's remarkable pearling heritage at the Bahrain International Museum



constant dangers, from powerful currents and storms to marine life. Divers faced encounters with sharks, swordfish and other hazards while spending long hours underwater with minimal equipment. According to stories passed down through generations, fatalities were common, and some pearling expeditions never returned.

The guide recounted tales of large vessels disappearing at sea, taking hundreds of crew members with them - tragedies that became part of Bahrain's collective memory.

Today, the dangers of the profession are minimal, but its legacy remains deeply woven into Bahrain's national identity. Museums, heritage sites and cultural programmes continue to preserve the stories of the men who ventured into the Gulf's depths in search of nature's most valuable treasures.

For visitors, the experience offers more than a history lesson. It serves as a reminder of the resilience, sacrifice and determination that helped shape modern Bahrain - one pearl at a time.

Move to Regulate Animal Pens

Authorities aim to improve public health and environmental safety in residential areas

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

The Capital Trustees Board welcomed government support for a proposal aimed at regulating the spread of animal and poultry pens in residential areas to protect public health and the environment.

Eng. Eng. Mohammed Tawfiq Al Abbas, Chairman of the Services and Public Utilities Committee at the Capital Trustees Board, said the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture backed the proposal, which the Board unanimously approved.

He said the ministry's response reflected a shared commitment among authorities to regulate animal breeding activities in residential neighbourhoods and strengthen environmental and health safety standards.

Al Abbas noted that the response from the Undersecretary for Agriculture and Animal Wealth Affairs, Eng. Asim Abdulatif Abdullah, supported efforts to enhance biosecurity measures and reduce the environmental and health impacts linked to livestock and poultry



breeding in populated areas.

The ministry also confirmed that the Animal Wealth Affairs sector operates under Resolution No. 141 of 2024, which sets licensing and technical requirements for livestock production facilities.

Under the regulations, livestock facilities must operate with official licences and comply with approved veterinary, environmental and health standards.

The rules also require regular veterinary inspections and monitoring to ensure compliance, improve public health protection and reduce practices that may negatively affect the quality of life in residential communities.

NMS Bahrain Donates BD500 to Migrant Workers Protection Society



Students of New Millennium School Bahrain donated BD500 to the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) as part of a charity initiative aimed at supporting community welfare.

The funds were raised through a Charity Book Sale organised by the school's Student Council, with participation from students, parents and staff members.

The amount was handed over to MWPS representatives during a ceremony held at the school campus. The organisa-

tion thanked the school community for its support towards the welfare of migrant workers in Bahrain.

Principal Dr. Arun Kumar Sharma praised the students for promoting humanitarian values and social responsibility through the initiative.

Chairman Dr. Ravi Pillai and Managing Director Mrs. Geetha Pillai also commended the students, parents and teachers for encouraging compassion, generosity and community engagement among young learners.

New Volunteers Join Bahrain Red Crescent Initiative



The Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) organised a two-day orientation event titled "Volunteer with Impact" for newly joined volunteers as part of efforts to promote humanitarian and volunteer work in Bahrain.

The programme introduced participants to the principles of humanitarian action, the history of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the importance of volunteering in supporting communities.

Heatstroke Warning Ahead of Summer Ban

TDT | Manama
Ghadeer Alkumaish

The dangers of working under direct sunlight during the summer months should not be underestimated, a Bahraini doctor has warned ahead of the start of this year's midday work ban.

Speaking exclusively to The Daily Tribune, Dr Iman Cheffi said the health risks associated with working under direct sunlight during the summer months should not be underestimated, warning that extreme heat can quickly escalate into a medical emergency.

Dr Cheffi warned that prolonged exposure to high temperatures can lead to severe dehydration, heat exhaustion and potentially life-threatening heat stroke, particularly among outdoor workers.

According to Dr Cheffi, workers exposed to excessive heat are also at risk of developing skin conditions such as severe sunburn and heat rash. In addition, dizziness and reduced concentration caused by high temperatures can increase the likelihood of workplace accidents and injuries.

She further noted that repeated exposure to extreme heat may have long-term effects on health, including chronic strain on kidney function.

The warning comes as the Labour Ministry announced the implementation of its annual midday work ban from June 15 until August 31. Under the regulation, outdoor work under direct sunlight will be prohibited between 12pm and 4pm.

Explaining the difference between heat exhaustion and



"Many people underestimate the dangers of working in extreme heat. The body loses significant amounts of fluids and salts through sweating, which can quickly lead to dehydration if these are not adequately replaced."

- DR IMAN CHEFFI

heat stroke, Dr Cheffi said heat exhaustion is a serious condition that occurs when the body struggles to cool itself.

Symptoms include excessive sweating, headaches, dizziness, muscle cramps and fatigue, while body temperature generally remains below 40°C.

Heat stroke, however, is a medical emergency that requires immediate treatment.

"When body temperature exceeds 40 degrees Celsius, the body's cooling system can fail completely," she explained. "This can lead to confusion, delirium, seizures and loss of consciousness. Without urgent medical intervention, the condition can become life-threatening."

Dr Cheffi urged workers and employers to pay close attention to early warning signs, including intense thirst, dry mouth, headaches, sudden fatigue and dark-coloured urine.

To reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses, she advised workers to drink water regularly throughout the day with-

BETTER YOU KNOW

How to Stay Safe in the Heat

- Drink plenty of water.
- Wear light-coloured clothing.
- Take breaks in shaded areas.
- Avoid direct sun exposure.
- Watch for signs of heat exhaustion.
- Seek medical help if symptoms worsen.

out waiting to feel thirsty, take frequent breaks in shaded and well-ventilated areas, and wear light-coloured clothing that helps reduce heat absorption.

Bahrain Tourism Sees Surge

Bahrain's tourism sector continued to record growth following the launch of a recent tourism campaign targeting the GCC, which saw a resumption in entertainment programmes and attractions, Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaafar Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism, said. These activities contributed to an increase in visitor arrivals during the Eid Al Adha holiday, particularly from Gulf countries.

Al Sairafi highlighted Bahrain's readiness for the summer season amid growing interest from local and GCC visitors. "The Kingdom offers a diverse range of experiences that cater to different interests and age groups, supported by the launch of tourism packages in collaboration with travel agencies across the region. Recent indicators reflect the strong momentum of Bahrain's tourism sector, reinforcing the Kingdom's position as a preferred destination for families."

She added that the resumption of tourism programmes in partnership with the private sector has helped stimulate tourism activity and enhance the visitor experience. "These achievements



'Bahrain's tourism sector records significant growth during Eid Al Adha as GCC arrivals rise'

FATIMA BINT JAAFAR AL SAIRAFI
MINISTER OF TOURISM

reflect the continued collaboration between the public and private sectors, supported by joint efforts to develop tourism products, enhance service quality, and attract events and investments

that contribute to the sector's growth and competitiveness."

Al Sairafi underscored the role of Bahrain's advanced tourism infrastructure, ease of access, and diverse tourism and enter-

tainment offerings, reaffirming the Ministry's commitment to working with sector partners to further strengthen the Kingdom's position as a leading tourism destination.

She added that Bahrain continues to host a diverse calendar of cultural, entertainment, and sports events, as well as exhibitions and conferences, which sustain tourism activity year-round, support the objectives of Bahrain's Tourism Strategy 2022-2026, and increase the sector's contribution to the national economy.

DAMANA MIG Saudi Arabian Insurance Company B.S.C. (c) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

	Audited 2025 BD	Audited 2024 BD
Insurance revenue	28,184,575	23,985,484
Insurance service expenses	(27,687,167)	(31,021,963)
Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held	497,408	(7,036,479)
Allocation of reinsurance premiums paid	(6,079,196)	(6,840,520)
Amount recovered from reinsurers	3,986,484	10,612,122
Net income/(expense) from reinsurance contracts held	(2,092,712)	3,771,602
Insurance service result	(1,595,304)	(3,264,877)
Insurance finance expenses for insurance contracts issued	(632,552)	(539,572)
Reinsurance finance income for reinsurance contracts held	349,287	203,168
Net financial results	(283,265)	(336,404)
Net financial results from insurance operations	(1,878,569)	(3,601,281)
Share of profit from associate	668,837	1,487,381
Investment income	2,717,333	2,421,894
Income from investment	3,386,170	3,909,275
General and administrative expenses	(1,712,628)	(1,298,931)
Other income	490,132	411,246
Profit/(loss) before tax for the year	285,105	(579,691)
Taxation	(9,142)	(98,468)
Net profit/(loss) for the year	275,963	(678,159)
Other comprehensive income/(loss) to be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Change in fair value of financial assets at FVOCI	621,273	(3,089,029)
Share of other comprehensive income from associate	338,022	570,367
Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	959,295	(2,518,662)
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	1,235,258	(3,196,821)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2025

	31 December 2025 BD	31 December 2024 BD
Assets		
Property and equipment	220,458	318,754
Right-of-use assets	893,525	1,141,955
Investment properties	4,526,523	4,540,026
Investment in associates	12,797,531	11,790,672
Financial assets at FVOCI	744,808	119,347
Guarantee deposits	4,811,201	4,801,585
Other receivables and prepayments	1,486,947	1,675,647
Insurance contract assets	332,060	139,872
Reinsurance contract assets	6,146,802	13,026,057
Amounts due from related parties	1,333	5,512
Cash and bank balances	48,072,228	47,883,945
Total assets	80,033,416	85,443,372
Equity and liabilities		
Equity		
Share capital	20,000,000	20,000,000
Statutory reserve	5,554,637	5,527,041
Fair value reserve	646,700	25,427
Share in Fair value reserve of investment in associate	2,300,369	1,962,347
Reinsurance reserve	55,106	38,513
Retained earnings	20,833,728	20,601,954
Total equity	49,390,540	48,155,282
Liabilities		
Employees' terminal benefits	912,753	872,206
Accounts and other payables	1,615,430	1,953,903
Amounts due to related parties	266,138	324,628
Zakat and income tax payable	22,466	120,616
Insurance contract liabilities	25,425,374	30,529,962
Reinsurance contract liabilities	1,485,933	2,347,783
Lease liabilities	914,782	1,138,992
Total liabilities	30,642,876	37,288,090
Total equity and liabilities	80,033,416	85,443,372

This summary of financial information has been extracted from the audited financial statements on which the auditors M/S Grant Thornton - Abdulla has issued an unqualified audit opinion. Interested parties may obtain a copy of the full annual reports at the office of the company at P.O. Box 60139, Building 852, Road 3618, Al Seef District, Manama 436, Kingdom of Bahrain.

Bahrain Court Jails Man 10 Years in Drug Parcel Case

First High Criminal Court of Appeal sentenced a defendant to 10 years in prison and fined him BD5,000 in a drug trafficking case linked to a postal parcel containing marijuana shipped from the United States.

The court also ordered the third defendant's permanent deportation after completion

of his sentence, while upholding the acquittal of two other defendants in the case.

Authorities said the case began after customs officers at Bahrain International Airport intercepted a parcel containing 560.27 grams of marijuana concealed inside layers of clothing.

According to court proceedings, customs officials

became suspicious of the shipment after it was scanned through an X-ray machine, leading to the discovery of the hidden narcotics.

Investigators said the first defendant arrived to collect the parcel and was arrested at the scene, while the second defendant was detained outside the collection area.

Poet Convicted for Offensive Snapchat Posts Targeting Singer

Bahrain's Court of Cassation upheld a ruling convicting a poet of harassing a well-known Bahraini singer through a series of offensive Snapchat posts.

The court confirmed that the defendant intentionally caused distress to the singer by publishing insulting and derogatory remarks on her Snapchat account during 2024.

The Public Prosecution

charged the defendant with misusing communication devices to cause annoyance and emotional harm to the complainant.

A lower court initially acquitted the defendant and dismissed the related civil case. However, the High Criminal Court of Appeal later overturned the ruling and sentenced the defendant to six months in prison.

The custodial sentence was replaced with a formal undertaking preventing the defendant from approaching, contacting, or harassing the complainant in any form.

In its judgment, the Court of Cassation said the appellate court relied on sufficient evidence proving the singer was the intended target of the posts, despite her name not being directly mentioned.

Drunk Driver Fined BD2,000 After Crash on Zallaq Highway

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

A driver was fined BD2,000 after crashing into a pavement, road sign and tree while driving under the influence of alcohol on Zallaq Highway.

The court found the defendant guilty of drink-driving, damaging public property and failing to drive with due care and attention.

According to court proceedings, the driver lost control of his vehicle before colliding with the pavement, an advisory traffic sign and a tree, causing significant damage.

The vehicle suffered damage to its front, rear and left side, while the pavement, road sign and tree were also damaged in the crash.

The defendant appeared in court through his lawyer, who requested leniency.

The Public Prosecution charged him under Bahrain's Traffic Law No. 23 of 2014, as amended.

The court said the charges were supported by the defendant's confession, the traffic accident report and the results of an alcohol test.



Taqi Hussain, lawyer

Shura Committee Reviews Key Laws in Busy Legislative Session

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

The Shura Council's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee held 38 meetings in the fourth session of the sixth legislative term, studying three decree-laws and eight bills and filing 11 reports.

The committee, chaired by lawyer Dalal Jassim Al Zayed, also gave 79 constitutional and legal opinions to other Shura Council committees on draft laws, final accounts and financial statements.

Its work falls under Article 21



Dalal Al Zayed, Head of Shura Council's Legislative and Legal

affairs, checking them against the Constitution and helping the council and its committees with the wording of draft laws.

Representatives of the concerned bodies, along with spe-

cialists, attended the meetings to answer questions and give their views on the texts before the committee.

The committee completed reports on Decree-Law No. 8 of 2024, which ratifies and approves Bahrain's accession to several international treaties and agreements linked to judicial affairs.

It also reported on Decree-Law No. 9 of 2024 on the Bahrain International Commercial Court, and Decree-Law No. 13 of 2024 amending Article 7 of the Judicial Authority Law issued by Decree-Law No. 42 of 2002.

Among the bills before the committee were Parliament's decision on the Shura Council's decision regarding a draft law amending Article 2 of Law No. 60 of 2006 on the reorganisation of the Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission.

It also studied Parliament's decision on the Shura Council's decision over a draft law amending Article 11 of the Civil Service Law issued by Decree-Law No. 48 of 2010.

The committee reviewed a draft law amending Article 219 of Decree-Law No. 54 of 2002 on Parliament's internal regulations, as well as another draft

law amending parts of the Civil Service Law.

Other texts before it included a draft law amending parts of the Evidence Law in Civil and Commercial Matters, issued by Decree-Law No. 14 of 1996.

Two further bills dealt with Article 40 of the Civil and Implementation of Commercial Law issued by Decree-Law No. 22 of 2021.

The committee also studied the draft Legal Profession Law, attached to Decree No. 16 of 2025, and a draft law amending parts of Decree-Law No. 54 of 2002 on Parliament's internal regulations.

Al Baraka Group Sponsors the 3rd Global Islamic Economy Summit in Istanbul as a Global Partner

TDT | Manama

Al Baraka Group B.S.C (C) "Group" announced its Sponsorship as a Global Partner in the 3rd Global Islamic Economy Summit in Istanbul, which will be held under the theme: "Capital in the Islamic Economy: Structuring Wealth for Sustainable Development", from 3rd to 6th June 2026 at the Istanbul Financial Center in the Republic of Türkiye.

This sponsorship comes as an extension of the Group's role for



nearly five decades in supporting and advancing the global Islamic economy, ecosystem, and in

strengthening the position of Islamic Banking as a model that combines economic efficiency

with sustainable development.

The Summit will witness broad participation from government leaders, central bank governors, international financial institutions, leading economists, and decision-makers.

The Summit's program includes strategic sessions and specialized workshops discussing the future of the Islamic economy and capital, in addition to the "Islamic Banking CEOs Panel Discussion", and a high-level "Central Banks and Ministers Level Panel" on re-engineering

capital flows and enhancing economic integration. The agenda also features specialized sessions on sustainability, fintech innovation, and artificial intelligence, as well as the signing of a number of strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs).

On this occasion, Mr. Houssein Ben Haj Amor, Board Member and Group Chief Executive Officer, stated:

"Our sponsorship of this Summit stems from Al Baraka Group's firm commitment to supporting the advancement of

the global Islamic economy and strengthening its role as a key driver for achieving sustainable development and financial inclusion."

He further emphasized that the Summit represents an important global platform for enhancing dialogue and cooperation among financial institutions, regulatory authorities, and academic circles, thereby contributing to the development of a more sustainable economic ecosystem that remains closely linked to the real economy.

Connecting Government, Powering the Future

Zain Bahrain and Ministry Renew Partnership to Power Government Digital Services

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications and Zain Bahrain have renewed their strategic partnership to upgrade internet services across Bahrain Post branches and the Small Vessel Registration Office, reinforcing the Kingdom's push toward seamless digital government services.

The renewed agreement aims to deliver faster, more reliable connectivity across key government service points, improving the experience for citizens and residents. It reflects both parties' shared commitment to advancing Bahrain's digital infrastructure—with an eye

toward integrating emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence.

Dr. Khalid Al-Haydan, Assistant Undersecretary for Postal Affairs, described the renewal as a natural extension of a successful collaboration. "This partnership supports our vision of expanding digital transformation," he said, adding that the Ministry is actively exploring broader cooperation with Zain Bahrain to adopt the latest technologies.

Captain Mohammed Al-Murbati, Assistant Undersecretary for Maritime Affairs, highlighted the direct impact on the Small Vessel Registration Office, where the upgraded infrastructure will enable faster electronic transactions — mak-

ing maritime services more accessible and flexible for users.

Zain's Digital Commitment

Ali Mustafa, CEO of Business and Wholesale at Zain Bahrain, said the partnership reflects the company's firm commitment to supporting government entities with advanced, reliable connectivity solutions. He added that the collaboration aligns with Zain Group's 4 WARD – Advancing with Purpose strategy, which focuses on accelerating innovation and strengthening the digital economy. He noted that Zain Bahrain holds its position as the Kingdom's most award-winning network, as independently ranked by



OpenSignal.

This agreement positions Zain Bahrain as a trusted dig-

ital partner to the public sector — delivering integrated ICT solutions that boost operational

efficiency and bring Bahrain closer to its national digital transformation goals.

Chery Bahrain Celebrates Eid with Family-Friendly Hiya Biya Activation



TDT | Manama

Chery Bahrain, operating under The Bahraini Asian Motors W.L.L by Motorcity, welcomed families and children to its showroom for a special Eid activation centered around the traditional Bahraini Hiya Biya. The initiative reflected the brand's commitment to celebrating local traditions and creating meaningful experiences that bring people together in a family-friendly environment.

During the event, children were invited to paint and plant their own Hiya Biya, creating an interactive experience filled with creativity and celebration. The activation gave families the opportunity to enjoy the Eid festivities together while creating lasting memories and



strengthening Chery Bahrain's connection with the community.

Abdullah Burashed, Dealer Principal of Chery Bahrain, commented: "We were delighted to welcome families and children to our showroom for this special Eid activation. Our aim is to create enjoyable and meaningful experiences that celebrate Bahraini traditions while bringing people together. These moments reflect the importance we place on culture, connection, and building lasting relationships with our customers and the community"

Ebrahim K. Kanoo Supports Bahrain Polytechnic Apprenticeship Programmes



TDT | Manama

As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting education and developing local talent, Ebrahim K. Kanoo contributed training equipment to Bahrain Polytechnic in support of the Automotive Technology and Body & Paint Apprenticeship programmes.

The contribution was marked during a handover ceremony held at Ebrahim K. Kanoo's Training Center in Tubli, attended by representatives from both the company and Bahrain Polytechnic.

The equipment will help enhance the students' hands-on learning experience and further strengthen the apprenticeship programmes by supporting

practical training aligned with current industry requirements and technical standards.

This initiative reflects the strong partnership between Ebrahim K. Kanoo and Bahrain Polytechnic in preparing the next generation of automotive professionals and equipping students with the skills and experience needed to succeed in the industry.

"Supporting education and talent development remains a key priority for us. By providing industry-relevant training equipment to Bahrain Polytechnic, we aim to help students gain the practical skills and experience needed to meet the evolving demands of the automotive industry."

Nvidia launches Windows laptop chip for AI era

RTX Spark-powered laptops and desktops will be available this autumn

AFP | Taipei, Taiwan

Nvidia unveiled a powerful laptop chip for Windows machines yesterday, staking its claim in the market for next-generation consumer PCs integrated with artificial intelligence.

The US hardware titan's move challenges the likes of Apple, Intel and AMD in the PC domain, although the new devices will likely carry a hefty price tag.

It also represents an attempt by Nvidia -- which the AI boom has made the world's most valuable company -- to diversify into the consumer market, even as it reaps record profits from selling data centre processors to global tech giants.

"Microsoft and Nvidia are going to reinvent the PC," Nvidia's chief executive Jensen Huang said in Taipei as he launched the RTX Spark chip ahead of Computex, a major technology show.

"If you want to run digital biology, no problem. If you want to do seismic processing, no problem. You want astrophysics, no problem," Huang added, calling it "an incredible computer".

It is "as big of a deal as the reinvention of the phone into what we now know as the smartphone", he said.

RTX Spark-powered laptops and desktops, made by the likes of Dell and Lenovo, will be available this autumn, Nvidia said.

It is not the first time Nvidia chips have powered Windows devices -- a range of tablets did so in the early 2010s.

But the new PCs are positioned as tools that can easily run AI services such as agents, which can carry out tasks for users.

'Existential threat'

Nvidia is best known for its GPUs, specialised chips originally designed to render gaming graphics at high speed, which have more recently become the engine for chatbots and other AI tools.

As governments and companies pour hundreds of billions of dollars into AI infrastructure, the company's value has topped \$5 trillion, more than the gross domestic product of Japan or India.



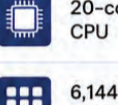
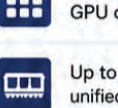





NVIDIA

RTX SPARK

THE AI SUPERCHIP FOR WINDOWS PCs

NVIDIA's new RTX Spark brings the power of AI supercomputing to laptops and desktops—delivering groundbreaking performance, efficiency and intelligence in a single chip.



WHAT IS RTX SPARK?	AI POWER	KEY SPECS	ECOSYSTEM & PARTNERS
 <p>NVIDIA's first full PC chip built for the AI era.</p> <p>Combines CPU, GPU and AI engines on a single system-on-chip (SoC) for laptops and desktops.</p> <p>Challenges Intel, AMD and Qualcomm in the mainstream PC market.</p>	 <p>Up to 1 PETAFL0P of AI performance</p> <p>Built for personal AI agents</p> <p>Run AI locally for greater privacy</p> <p>Faster response, no cloud needed</p>	 <p>20-core CPU</p>  <p>6,144 GPU cores</p>  <p>Up to 128GB unified memory</p>  <p>NVIDIA Blackwell architecture</p>  <p>Arm-based platform</p>  <p>Most efficient PC chip ever built*</p>	 <p>Powering a new generation of AI PCs from leading OEM partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microsoft Dell HP Lenovo ASUS MSI <p>30+ laptops & 10 desktops expected from partners</p>

BUILT FOR WHAT MATTERS

 <p>CREATORS Accelerate video editing, 3D rendering and generative AI workflows.</p>	 <p>GAMERS RTX-class graphics and support for the latest AAA games.</p>	 <p>EVERYDAY USERS Smoother multitasking, productivity and content creation.</p>	 <p>DEVELOPERS Optimized for AI frameworks and local model training.</p>	 <p>MOBILITY All-day battery life in ultra-thin laptops.</p>
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“FROM TOOL TO TEAMMATE

RTX Spark is the heart of the AI PC—bringing intelligence, performance and efficiency together to transform how we work, create and play.

 <p>One chip. Infinite possibilities.</p>	 <p>AI supercomputing power in your PC.</p>	 <p>Built for Windows. Made for the future.</p>
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Monday's announcement instead focuses on a new CPU, or central processing unit, which acts like the brain of a personal computer.

"Nvidia is bypassing the traditional PC supply chain to build an end-to-end hardware monopoly," said Stephen Wu, a former AI software engineer and founder of the Carthage Capital

investment fund.

Wu told AFP that the development, long awaited in the industry, represents an "existential threat" to current laptop chip designs, with Intel and AMD "the immediate casualties".

It is also a strategic attempt by Nvidia to get programmers to build new tech products on their hardware, which will

boost demand for data centre GPUs, he said.

But with a memory chip shortage pushing up the cost of consumer electronics, "the biggest question... may not be how powerful the next wave of PC hardware is, but whether buyers can still afford it," PC World magazine senior editor Alaina Yee wrote last week.

Bangladesh raises fuel prices second time in six weeks

AFP | Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh raised fuel prices yesterday, six weeks after the previous increase, as the government seeks to ease pressure on state finances affected by the conflict in the Middle East.

The country imports about 95% of its fuel requirements, with most coming from the Middle East.

Kerosene was raised to 135

taka (\$1.09) per litre, up from 130, while petrol raised to 140 taka (\$1.14) from 135. Diesel was unchanged.

Authorities are also considering another increase in electricity tariffs.

After a slight decline, inflation stood at 9.04% in April.

Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant at Ruppur is nearing operational readiness, with the first phase of uranium fuel loading already completed.

SoftBank overtakes Toyota as Japan's most valuable company

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

Japan's tech investor SoftBank Group overtook Toyota on Monday to become the country's most valuable company, as the benchmark Nikkei index briefly reached a new high amid the AI boom.

SoftBank, a major backer of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, soared more than 11% in the afternoon trade, after its founder announced a 75-billion-euro (\$87.5 billion) investment in AI infrastructure in France.

Masayoshi Son told La Tribune Dimanche weekly on Saturday that it "will be the

largest investment in Europe in infrastructure related to artificial intelligence".

SoftBank said last month its annual net profit quadrupled to more than \$30 billion, mainly thanks to its investment in OpenAI.

The company's market capitalisation swelled on Monday to more than 47 trillion yen, while that of Toyota fell to just under 46 trillion yen after its shares dropped nearly five percent.

The third largest is chipmaker Kioxia, formerly the semiconductor unit of engineering giant Toshiba. It jumped more than 8%.

Oil prices jump

Key figures at around 1100 GMT

Brent North Sea Crude:	▲ 3.2% at \$94.03 a barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 3.7% at \$90.60 a barrel
London - FTSE 100:	▼ 0.2% at 10,391.07 points
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 0.1% at 8,194.02
Frankfurt - DAX:	▲ 0.4% at 25,209.30
Hang Seng Index:	▲ 1.1% at 25,452.47
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 1.0% at 67,020.75
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 0.4% at 4,084.46
New York - DOW:	▲ 0.7% at 51,032.46 points (close)
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1650 from \$1.1663 on Friday
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.3463 from \$1.3464
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 159.46 yen from 159.27 yen
Euro/pound:	▼ at 86.52 pence from 86.63 pence

London, United Kingdom

Oil prices jumped and equity markets diverged Monday as Middle East peace talks stalled and investors continued to pour into AI-linked stocks.

Crude futures won more than 3% after the United States

and Iran traded strikes and Tehran again insisted that any deal must cover Israel's escalating offensive into Lebanon.

European stock markets traded mixed after gains for main equity indices in Asia.

The dollar firmed against main rivals as focus fixed on the US-Iran conflict.

Outgoing chair Powell delivers defense of Fed independence

AFP | Washington, United States

Outgoing US Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell on Sunday delivered a staunch defense of the need for the central bank to maintain independence and credibility, as it comes under assault from President Donald Trump.

"Like many other institutions, the Fed has been undergoing a stress test," he said as he accepted an award from the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation.

"If any administration finds a way to remove Fed officials over policy differences, then future administrations will do so as well," Powell said, in a barely



veiled reference to the Trump administration's attempt to fire Fed Governor Lisa Cook.

"The public would lose faith that the central bank will make decisions based only on what's best for all Americans."

In his second term in power, Trump has frequently criticized and insulted Powell, alleging he was too slow to lower interest rates.

Trump's Justice Department went so far as to pursue criminal charges against the Fed chair over a building renovation project. The probe was eventually dropped to smooth the path towards Powell's successor

being confirmed by the Senate.

Separately, Trump also sought to remove Cook over mortgage fraud allegations. The Supreme Court is due to rule on the legality of the move.

"Our credibility has been built and sustained over many decades, and we have a duty to safeguard that priceless asset for our fellow citizens and for generations to come," said Powell.

The former Fed chair received the John F. Kennedy Profile In Courage Award "for protecting the independence of the Federal Reserve," the foundation said. Powell stepped

down as chair at the end of his term earlier this month, and has been succeeded by Trump nominee Kevin Warsh.

In an unusual move for outgoing Fed chiefs, Powell chose to remain on the board for the remainder of his term as a governor, which ends in 2028. He did so citing threats to the Fed's independence, and promised to keep a "low profile."

Trump has welcomed Warsh's taking over the Fed -- after a protracted and divisive Senate confirmation process -- and hosted a lavish ceremony at the White House for his swearing-in.

BY INVITATION

Innovation holds the key to a prosperous future



H.E. MR. VINOD K JACOB, AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

India is ranked third globally in AI competitiveness according to Stanford University's 2025 Global AI Vibrancy Tool. Further, India is also among the world's largest start-up ecosystems with more than 200,000 recognized startups and more than 120 unicorns. Frontier capability is rising across healthcare, energy/climate, biotech, space, defence, advanced computing, semiconductors, agritech, mobility, materials and other areas. The national initiatives include Atal Incubation Centres which have established support centres in more than 100 institutes and Atal Tinkering Labs in more than 10,000 schools which engage more than 11 million students.

India's innovation ecosystem has been fortified by the annual Smart India Hackathons which bring in 800,000 students in each edition and yield technology intensive solutions to real world and real world problems. Also worth mentioning is KAPILA through which IP creation in universities has been mainstreamed with over 2000 registrations every year. The key enablers over the past decade include the Start-up India Initiative, Start-up India Fund of Funds 2.0, the India AI Mission, a strengthened national research architecture, the Research, Development and Innovation Fund, sector specific pathways focused on DeepTech in defence, biotech, space, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Building on this strong and decades long foundation, an ambitious programme called "Bharat Innovates 2026" was announced by Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi on 17 February this year at the inauguration of the India-France Year of Innovation. The programme is designed as a global accelerator for innovations from Indian Higher Education Ecosystem (HEI), thereby, building a long-term collaboration bridge between the country's innovation ecosystem (startups, HEIs, labs and research parks) and global stakeholders (corporates, investors, incubators/accelerators, universities, research institutes, governments and overseas research parks and deeper industry linkages).

The first edition of "Bharat Innovates" is scheduled to be held in Nice, France from 14 to 16 June 2026. All our friends in the Kingdom of Bahrain are invited to participate in this global event which will showcase India's top 100 Deep Tech startups across 13 critical technology themes, namely, advanced computing, advanced materials, agriculture and food technologies, biotech, blue economy, disaster management and resilient infrastructure, energy, sustainability and climate change, healthcare and medtech, manufacturing and industry 4.0, next-gen communications, semiconductors, smart cities and mobility as well as space and defence. The event will also be attended by more than 15 of India's premier educational institutions including the Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institute of Science at Bengaluru which are enabling IP backed venture creation. More details on the programme can be obtained from: <https://bharatinnovates.in/>

The benefits of participation in "Bharat Innovates 2026" for global stakeholders are expected to include investor grade deal flow, problems to solution access, fast track partnerships with market ready ventures, global soft-landing routes through incubators/accelerators, a steady stream of R&D opportunities as well as privileged access to a continuous pipeline of industry specific development through India's research parks and technology labs at top institutions

(The author is Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain since August 2023.)

The first edition of "Bharat Innovates" is scheduled to be held in Nice, France from 14 to 16 June 2026. All our friends in the Kingdom of Bahrain are invited to participate in this global event which will showcase India's top 100 Deep Tech startups across 13 critical technology themes,

Russia bans aviation fuel exports

Moscow, Russia

Russia yesterday banned the export of aviation fuel until the end of November as Ukraine escalates its strikes on Russian refineries, depots and pipelines.

Kyiv has increased attacks on Russian energy facilities in recent weeks, hitting targets as far as the Urals.

The attacks often cause major fires but their impact has been difficult to assess.

But in a sign of tension in the sector, the Russian government announced a "temporary ban on the export of jet fuel from Russia."

"The purpose of this decision is to ensure stability in the domestic fuel market," it said.

It clarified that the ban does not apply to shipments made under intergovernmental agreements.

Russia, one of the world's oil and gas giants, had already restricted the export of car fuel, as pressures on the market mount during the Ukraine war.

Ukraine -- facing daily Russian barrages of missiles and drones -- has increased its campaign on Russian energy infrastructure in recent weeks.



Suspected WWII ordnance explodes in Indonesia, five dead

AFP | Jakarta, Indonesia

A suspected shell left over from World War II exploded under a stilt house in an Indonesian fishing village, killing five people and wounding nearly 20, police said yesterday.

The blast in Indonesia's restive eastern Papua region startled locals with a thunderous boom on Sunday afternoon, emitting a ball of flames followed by a thick smoke column, according to footage broadcast on Kompas TV.

Nine homes were destroyed. "The source of the explosion is strongly suspected to have been a bomb or mortar left over from World War II," Papua police spokesman Cahyo Sukarnito told AFP.

Three people are still recorded as missing, but Cahyo said several body parts have yet to be identified.

At least 19 people were treated



Residents inspect the debris of houses that collapsed after a World War II bomb accidentally exploded in Biaf Numfor Regency, Papua,

for minor injuries, he added.

"We will provide further updates once the search for victims and the investigation have been completed," said Cahyo.

Last year, nine civilians were among 13 people killed in West Java province when an explosion occurred as Indonesian

troops attempted to dispose of rejected munitions by detonating them in a pit.

Indonesia was a major battle zone during WWII when Japanese forces occupied what was then the Dutch East Indies, and Allied forces fought to retake control.

UK government bans two US political commentators

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Britain's interior ministry on Monday said it had blocked two US-based political commentators from entering the country.

Left-wing Israel critics Cenk Uygur, 56, and his nephew Hasan Piker, 34, had been due to speak at the SXSW London festival this week.

"These individuals' Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) has been cancelled on the grounds that their presence in the UK may not be conducive to the public good," the ministry said in a statement.



Hasan Piker (left) and his uncle, Cenk Uygur

Piker, 34, described by the festival's website as a streamer and creator, had been expected to speak at an event entitled "How The American Left Learned To Speak The Internet".

Turkish-American Cenk Uygur, 56, the founder and host of The Young Turks, a left-wing YouTube channel, meanwhile,

had been scheduled to take part in a discussion called "Techno-Feudalism Is Here. Who Are The Lords?" on Wednesday.

In a livestream in 2019, Piker sparked controversy when he reportedly said "America deserved 9/11", a comment he later called "inappropriate".

Uygur condemned the government's decision to refuse him entry. Piker added in his post: "the uk has revoked my visa as well. Last month, the British government also blocked US rapper Kanye West from entering the country for another festival due to his past antisemitic outbursts."

Conflict flares anew

US military said it had carried out "self-defence strikes"

● Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had targeted an airbase used by US forces

● Washington is seeking an agreement with Tehran to end the conflict that began in late February

Agencies

The United States and Iran traded strikes on Monday as weeks of indirect talks failed to secure an end to the war or the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the vital shipping route for Gulf oil and gas.

The latest exchange came after the US military said it had carried out "self-defence strikes" on Iranian radar and drone-control sites over the weekend, its third

STICKING POINTS IN US-IRAN TALKS

<p>1 NUCLEAR DISPUTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran says its nuclear programme is for civilian purposes. The US and its Western allies suspect Tehran wants to develop an atomic weapon. 	<p>2 WAR'S ORIGIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran was in nuclear talks with the US in February. US and Israel launched air and missile strikes on Iran. The strikes wiped out much of Iran's senior leadership and plunged the Middle East into war. 	<p>3 US POSITION</p> <p>"The deal under discussion states, very clearly, that Iran will not have a Nuclear Weapon." — Donald Trump (Post on social media)</p>	<p>4 IRAN'S DEMANDS AND DISPUTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran wants the release of \$12 billion in frozen assets. Says substantive nuclear negotiations cannot proceed without it. Iran dismissed Trump's comments on destroying its stockpile of enriched uranium.
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KEY OBSTACLES

- Nuclear weapons concerns
- Release of frozen assets
- Fate of enriched uranium stockpile
- Conditions for restarting full negotiations

such operation in just over a week, in response to the downing of a US MQ-1 drone.

Shortly afterwards, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had targeted an airbase used by US forces from where the attack had originated. While the Guards

did not identify the host country, Kuwait's military said its air defences had intercepted hostile missile and drone attacks.

Washington is seeking an agreement with Tehran to end the war launched in late February, reopen Hormuz and impose

controls on Iran's nuclear programme. However, negotiations have remained deadlocked despite several rounds of indirect talks marked by threats and repeated air strikes.

455

King Gaiseric and the Vandals sack Rome, looting continues for 14 days

1862

Robert E. Lee takes command of Confederate armies of North Virginia during the American Civil War



1896 1953

Italian engineer and inventor Guglielmo Marconi applies for the first ever patent for a system of wireless telegraphy in the United Kingdom

Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey, London, England

France seizes Russia-linked oil tanker with ties to Iranian magnate

● The *Tagor* was detained on Sunday morning in international waters with the help of Britain and other partners

AFP | Brest, France

France said on Monday it had detained a Russia-linked oil tanker in the Atlantic, with the Kremlin comparing the latest seizure aimed at tackling Moscow's sanctions-busting shadow fleet to "international piracy".

Since September, France has boarded three other ships believed to belong to the shadow fleet, used by Russia to circumvent Western sanctions on its fossil fuel exports imposed over



Military personnel hovering in a helicopter above the *Tagor*, a sanctioned Russian oil tanker, some 400 nautical miles west of France's Brittany coast.

the Kremlin's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The *Tagor* was detained on Sunday morning in international waters with the help of Britain and other partners, after its Rus-

sian captain refused to comply with orders, prosecutors said. President Emmanuel Macron posted a video of the seizure, which showed commandos rappelling from a helicopter onto the ship.

"We consider these acts illegal. They border on international piracy," said President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov.

"Russia is taking measures to ensure the safety of its cargo". Suspected of carrying Russian or Iranian oil despite international sanctions, the *Tagor* is linked to petroleum shipping magnate Mohammad Hossein Shamkhani, according to open-source database Opensanctions.org.

According to French authorities, the *Tagor* was on its way from Murmansk in northwest-

600
Nearly 600 ships suspected of belonging to Russia's shadow fleet are subject to European Union sanctions.

Russia summons Lithuania envoy over 'desecration' of Soviet soldiers

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Russia yesterday summoned Lithuania's charge d'affaires in Moscow to condemn the "barbaric" exhumation of the bodies of Soviet soldiers buried in the Baltic country as a "desecration".

Jolanta Tubaitė was issued "a vigorous protest regarding the new barbaric projects of the Lithuanian authorities aimed at destroying, in the town of Vievis, the cemetery of Soviet soldiers and officers who fell in



Russian troops in Vilnius in 1992 battle for the liberation of Lithuania from the fascist yoke", Moscow's foreign ministry said.

"It was pointed out... that the

destruction, damage, or desecration of military graves, including those located abroad, is a criminal offence in Russia," it added.

Tubaitė had already been summoned on April 30 following the exhumation of Red Army graves in the city of Siauliai.

According to Lithuanian media, the exhumations are linked to a law, which came into force in 2023, on the "de-Sovietisation" of the EU and NATO member.

German, Norwegian ministers in abortive Beirut trip

Berlin, Germany

Ministers from Germany and Norway had to call off a trip to Beirut on Monday as Israel continued its assault on the city, the pair's press services said.

German minister for international development Reem Alabali Radovan and Norwegian counterpart Asmund Aukrust had to abort and head back to Berlin "for military reasons" as they approached Beirut airport owing to a "rapidly worsening situation," a spokes-

person for Alabali Radovan told AFP.

The ministers had hoped to make the visit to show solidarity with the Lebanese people, but their German military aircraft finally had to land in Cyprus ahead of a return to Berlin, Norwegian daily VG reported.

A Norwegian government spokesman confirmed to AFP the trip had been scrapped.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier had called on the Israeli army to hit southern Beirut.

Deal stalls on Lebanon

Agencies

The renewed hostilities coincided with Israel expanding its offensive in Lebanon. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to push deeper into the country and ordered strikes on what he described as "terror targets" in a southern district of Beirut.

The United States has backed Israel's operations against the Iran-backed Hezbollah group, but Iran insists that any wider agreement to end the conflict must also address the situation in Lebanon.

Tehran said no nuclear negotiations had resumed and stressed that ending the war remains its priority. Foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said a ceasefire in Lebanon was an "essential condition" for any deal, adding that the United States was also violating the ceasefire.

Iran's chief negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, ac-

Iranian media says Tehran suspends negotiations via mediators with US

Tehran, Iran

Iran was suspending all exchanges with the United States via mediators yes-

terday, Iranian news agency Tasnim reported, as the two sides remained apart on a deal to end the Middle East war.

Iran Guards threaten 'new fronts' over Israel's Lebanon offensive: state TV

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran's Revolutionary Guards threatened to open "new fronts" and keep the Strait of Hormuz closed over Israel's offensive in Lebanon, state media reported on Monday.

"Iran considers crossing the red lines in Lebanon and Gaza to mean direct war," state TV

quoted the Guards' intelligence organisation as saying, adding: "in return, it is determined to carry out defensive operations by taking meaningful actions and opening new fronts, in addition to preserving the Strait of Hormuz equation".

caused Washington of non-compliance, citing the US naval blockade of Iranian ports and the escalation in Lebanon as evidence that the ceasefire was not being respected.

UN alarmed over Lebanon, calls for ceasefire to be respected

AFP | United Nations, United States

The United Nations yesterday expressed its alarm and called for all sides to respect the ceasefire as Israel expanded its offensive into Lebanon, while negotiations to end the US-Iran war appeared in peril.

"We are deeply alarmed by the escalation in military activities across southern Lebanon and beyond," Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said.

"We urge all actors to respect the cessation of hostilities and avoid further escalation."



First responders inspect the damage at the site of an Israeli strike

Israel military issues evacuation warning for Beirut's southern suburbs



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Water is life. Yet, lack of investment & gaps in governance are keeping millions of Africans from safely managed water & sanitation services. If we work together, we can put this basic human right within reach for all & ensure Africa's water wealth is developed, managed & protected.

@antonioGuterres

02



Even without vaccines or specific therapeutics, people can survive #Ebola disease caused by the Bundibugyo virus if they receive timely healthcare and seek treatment as soon as symptoms appear. @WHO and many partners are supporting the establishment of Ebola treatment centres in #DRC. Yesterday, I witnessed the opening of one such centre in Bunia, which will ensure that patients in the community can access lifesaving care. Together, we will stop this outbreak.

@DrTedros

03



Had a productive meeting with President U Min Aung Hlaing of Myanmar. We in India are honoured that he has chosen India for his first foreign visit as President. Equally gladdening is the fact that he began the visit from Bodh Gaya, with the blessings of Lord Buddha. We reviewed the full range of India-Myanmar relations. Myanmar is vital to India's policies of 'Neighbourhood First', 'Act East' and Indo-Pacific.

@narendramodi

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

Survey finds generational split over AI companions

● Rapid advances in artificial intelligence have led more people to interact with chatbots for companionship

● Among respondents aged 18-24, 48% said AI companions could improve human happiness

● Older generations were consistently less optimistic about AI's role in personal relationships.

AFP | Shanghai, China

Almost half of young adults in six major economies believe AI-powered companions could improve human happiness through emotional support over the next decade, according to a large international survey released on Monday.

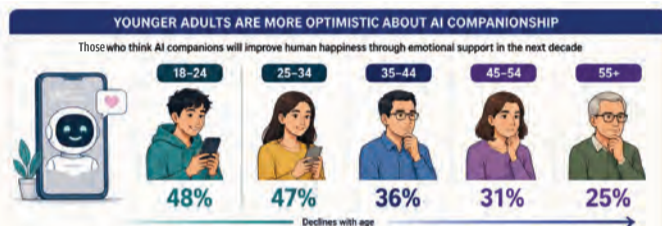
The percentage declined steadily among older age groups, falling to around a quarter among respondents aged 55 and above, the research shared exclusively with AFP showed.

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence have led more people to interact with chatbots for companionship, advice and emotional support, raising questions about the future role of technology in human relationships.

The survey of nearly 10,000



Representative image



people across the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, Indonesia and Hong Kong offers a snapshot of what pollster YouGov described as a "rapidly changing moral landscape".

It also revealed a significant divide between Western and Asian markets, with Asian respondents generally showing greater acceptance of AI-enabled companionship.

Among respondents aged 18-24, 48% said AI companions could improve human happiness through emotional support during the next decade. The figure was 47% among those aged 25-34.

When asked whether AI companions could enhance deeper personal connections and overall wellbeing, support was lower, at 32% among younger respondents aged 18-24 and 38% among those aged 25-34.

Older generations were consistently less optimistic about AI's role in personal relationships.

The psychological effects of AI chatbots have also attracted increasing attention, particularly regarding their impact on vulnerable individuals and young people.

Geographic divide

YouGov and Tokyo-based media company Star X Gen, which commissioned the research, said they were surprised by the scale of regional differences.

In Indonesia, 50% of respondents said AI companions could improve personal connection and wellbeing. The figure was 34% in Hong Kong and 24% in Japan.

The percentages were lower in Western countries, including 20% in the United States, 15% in Germany and just 9% in Britain.

"While Western audiences largely view AI-enabled companionship as a threat to authentic human closeness, Asian audiences appear increasingly ready to integrate AI into their personal lives," said YouGov's Philippe Chan.

Across all 9,912 respondents, only 17% said they would consider using advanced AI-powered companion devices, while 59% said they would not.

Younger adults were generally more open to emerging forms of AI companionship than older generations. In Japan and Germany, the proportion of younger respondents willing to try such technologies was nearly double the national average.

"While the global population remains cautious, younger generations are actively redefining the boundaries of companionship," the report said.

In Japan, more than a third of younger adults said AI-powered companion devices could provide a sense of affection and emotional connection, outnumbering those who disagreed.

AI giant Anthropic confidentially files for IPO

● The IPOs would likely follow Elon Musk's SpaceX to Wall Street.

● Anthropic's near-trillion-dollar valuation puts it ahead of ChatGPT maker OpenAI

AFP | San Francisco, United States

AI giant Anthropic, the maker of the Claude chatbot, announced yesterday that it had filed confidentially for an initial public offering (IPO), as Silicon Valley AI companies look to raise the enormous sums needed to fuel the sector's rapid expansion.

A confidential filing lets a company submit its IPO paperwork to the Securities and Exchange Commission for review without making its financials and business details public until much later in the process.

"This gives us the option to go public after the Securities and Exchange Commission completes its review," the company said in a statement. "The proposed initial public offering will depend on market conditions and other factors."

The filing came just days after the company said it raised \$65 billion in a new funding round that valued the Claude maker at \$965 billion, putting it on the cusp of a trillion-dollar valuation.

The latest fundraising round confirmed Anthropic's place as one of the most significant players in AI, having built its reputation by focusing on de-



Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei

65

The filing came just days after the company said it raised \$65 billion in a new funding round

living generative AI to enterprise clients.

Anthropic's near-trillion-dollar valuation puts it ahead of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, which was valued at \$852 billion in March and is also aiming to go public as early as this year, with a filing expected imminently.

The IPOs would likely follow Elon Musk's SpaceX to Wall Street.

SpaceX, which absorbed his AI company, xAI, in February, could see shares begin trading as early as June 12, targeting a valuation of approximately \$1.75 trillion in what would be the largest IPO in history.

The IPO filing comes as Anthropic navigates a high-profile legal dispute with the Pentagon, having sued the Defense Department after the agency designated the company a supply chain risk.

France bans Israeli offensive weapons at trade show

AFP | Paris, France

France has banned the display of Israeli offensive weapons at the 2026 edition of the Eurosatory international defence and security exhibi-

tion, the organisers told AFP on Monday.

"Only Israeli exhibitors presenting anti-ballistic and anti-air defence systems are authorised," said the president of COGES Events, Charles

Beaudouin, responding to an Israeli defence ministry statement that protested the restrictions. "This is a decision by the French government, by the Defence Council," Beaudouin added. "There is no room for

ambiguity: if an exhibitor is also a rocket manufacturer, they will not be allowed to display them. This ensures that no offensive weapons are present," he said.

The Israeli ministry denounced the move, saying it

would "be unable to participate in the exhibition or establish a national pavilion".

"This is a disgraceful decision, one that reeks of political and commercial calculation, and regrettably, it comes as no sur-

prise. It fits a deeply troubling pattern in French conduct in recent years," it added.

Paris has repeatedly condemned since late February Israel's attacks on Lebanese territory.

China issues new rules to bust 'ghost' takeout deliveries

● Fierce competition among food delivery apps has led to the spread of "ghost" merchants that lack dine-in premises and are accused of unsanitary conditions

● Some merchants, labelled "transparent kitchens" on the platforms, have begun offering live broadcasts from their premises

● Platforms will now also face fines of between one and 10 times their annual revenue

AFP | Beijing, China

Food sellers on Chinese delivery platforms must have physical shopfronts and indicate if they do not offer dine-in services under new rules unveiled on Monday to stamp out "ghost" takeout merchants.

Fierce competition among food delivery apps has led to the spread of "ghost" merchants that lack dine-in premises and are accused of unsanitary conditions and bypassing food safety regulations while posing as regular restaurants online.

They often operate out of residential buildings and use rented business licenses or fake details to get listed on the

delivery platforms.

The State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) fined seven major e-commerce platforms a total of 3.6 billion yuan

(\$532 million) in April for violations mostly related to ghost deliveries.



The new regulations compel delivery platforms to review their listed merchants at least once every six months to ensure they are legitimate and have the correct business licenses, shifting more onus for food safety onto the apps.

Merchants on food delivery platforms must now have physical shopfronts and label themselves if they do not offer dine-in services, according to the SAMR's new rules.

Platforms will now also face fines of between one and 10 times their annual revenue for violations if they involve the platform's leadership, were deliberate, and are judged to be serious.

Merchants, on the other hand, face maximum penalties of 200,000 yuan if they flout the rules.

Some merchants, labelled "transparent kitchens" on the platforms, have begun offering live broadcasts from their premises to allay consumer fears about food preparation conditions.

Taobao, which operates one of China's largest food delivery platforms, will boost the in-app visibility of merchants that implement "transparent kitchens", a representative for the platform told communist party media outlet Guangming Daily on Monday.

"Food delivery platforms... cannot simply collect commission without taking responsibility, and cannot only focus on traffic while neglecting quality," the SAMR's Director of Food Safety, Sun Huichuan, was quoted Monday as saying by state news agency Xinhua.

"Food delivery platforms must truly assume the primary responsibility of being 'gatekeepers' of food safety in the food delivery industry," Sun said.

'We need to act now'

Race to develop Ebola vaccine heats up

● The escalating nature of the outbreak has sparked a race to find a vaccine

● CEPI also said it had committed \$50 million to a vaccine candidate being developed by US pharma giant Moderna which uses the mRNA technology pioneered in its Covid vaccine.

AFP | Paris, France

Several non-profit organisations announced Monday they are ramping up efforts to rapidly develop a vaccine for the rare strain of Ebola driving a deadly outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nearly 250 people are suspected to have died and more than 1,100 infected with the strain in the DRC and neighbouring Uganda, though the true spread of the virus is feared to be much wider.

While it marks the 17th Ebola

250

Nearly 250 people are suspected to have died and more than 1,100 infected with the strain in the DRC and neighbouring Uganda



Workers from the Uganda Red Cross Society don protective suits as they prepare to evacuate the body of a suspected Ebola victim in Kampala

outbreak in the DRC, it is just the third caused by the Bundibugyo strain, for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments.

The escalating nature of the outbreak has sparked a race to find a vaccine that can be quickly developed, manufactured then tested in humans during clinical trials in the affected region.

The World Health Organization said on Saturday that its experts had determined "the most promising candidate vaccine" was a single-dose shot using the rVSV platform.

The only licensed Ebola vaccine, which targets the more common Zaire strain, uses the same platform.

The non-profit International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) announced Monday it had reached a deal with the University of Texas Medical Branch to develop the rVSV candidate.

The university's Thomas Geisbert led work on both the Bundibugyo candidate and the licensed Zaire jab.

Geisbert told AFP last month that 2013 research demonstrated his jab provided very strong protection against Bundibugyo in monkeys.

However the vaccine "just sat there" for more than a decade because of a lack of interest, in particular from pharmaceutical firms, the virologist added.

The WHO estimated it would take seven to nine months be-

fore the rVSV vaccine is ready to be tested in humans.

'Fast-track'

Also on Monday, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) announced funding to "fast-track" development of three Bundibugyo vaccine candidates, including \$3.2 million towards the rVSV jab.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who visited the epicentre of the outbreak in the DRC on the weekend, said in a statement the funding was "an important step forward".

Another vaccine candidate receiving CEPI funding was developed on the University of Oxford's ChAdOx1 platform, which also underpinned Astra-

Zeneca's Covid vaccine.

This viral vector jab -- which will be manufactured by the huge Serum Institute of India -- could become available for clinical trials within two to three months, the WHO said.

CEPI also said it had committed \$50 million to a vaccine candidate being developed by US pharma giant Moderna which uses the mRNA technology pioneered in its Covid vaccine.

In a preprint paper published online last week, researchers at France's INSERM institute called for trials to see if the licenced Zaire vaccine could also help fight Bundibugyo.

\$50 million pledge

Also on Monday, the Gavi vaccine alliance announced it would make up to \$50 million available for Bundibugyo vaccine efforts.

"We need to act now to ensure that, once one or more vaccine candidates are ready, manufacturers are in a position to start producing doses at scale," Gavi CEO Sania Nishtar said in a statement.

IAVI president Mark Feinberg told a press conference on Monday that Gavi's new commitment could fund the production of roughly 500,000 doses.

It also provided a "signal to manufacturers they can make this investment and not carry excessive risk," he added.

Even once doses for a trial are ready, there will be challenges in deploying them in a vast, remote area of the DRC that is already suffering crises including hunger, malaria and

conflict.

Gaining the trust of communities where vaccines will be trialled will be crucial, the WHO emphasised.

And once a trial is finally carried out, there is no guarantee it will demonstrate the vaccine works.

"We have reasons to believe that we can generate effective vaccines, but we don't want to downplay at all that we have to treat them as investigational products," CEPI CEO Richard Hatchett said last week.

There are also several efforts to quickly trial several Bundibugyo treatments, including antivirals called remdesivir and obeldesivir, and the monoclonal antibody MBP134.

WHO Identifies Most Promising Vaccine Candidate

The World Health Organization said on Saturday that its experts had determined "the most promising candidate vaccine" was a single-dose shot using the rVSV platform.

KEY ANNOUNCEMENT

- WHO experts have identified the single-dose rVSV vaccine as the most promising candidate for further development.

WHAT IS rVSV?

- rVSV stands for recombinant Vesicular Stomatitis Virus.
- It is a vaccine platform that uses a weakened virus to trigger a strong immune response.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Single-Dose Advantage:** Eases the delivery, storage, handling and more convenient for communities.
- High Potential:** Early data suggests strong protective and neutralising effects.
- Global Impact:** Facilitates a critical role in combating outbreaks and saving lives worldwide.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Further clinical trials and evaluations will continue.
- WHO will work with partners to coordinate development, manufacturing and equitable access.

Science. Collaboration. Protection. Together, we can build a healthier, safer world. #EbolaVaccine #EbolaVaccine

AI gains must benefit workers, says UN

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The gains generated by artificial intelligence must benefit workers and do so in a fair manner, the United Nations' labour agency said Monday.

AI is transforming the world of work, changing how value is created and how decisions are made, at speed and at scale, said Gilbert Hougbo, the head

of the UN's International Labour Organization.

"Workers everywhere must be able to share the productivity gains generated by AI. Those gains must be distributed fairly through better wages, stronger labour protections, and more inclusive growth," he told the annual International Labour Conference, which sets the ILO's broad policies.

SAIC to build first European EV plant in Spain

AFP | Madrid, Spain

Chinese automaker SAIC Motor will build its first electric vehicle factory in Europe in the northwestern Spanish region of Galicia, regional authorities said yesterday.

The plant is expected to begin construction in the port of A Coruna in 2027 and start operation at the end of the following year, with a yearly production target of 120,000 vehicles, said the head of the regional government of Galicia, Alfonso Rueda.

The project will involve an initial investment of around 200 million euros (\$215 million) and is expected to create 2,300 jobs, he told a news conference.

Spain is particularly attractive to Chinese investors because its economy is growing at one of the fastest rates in Europe and energy costs remain relatively low due to the country's bet on renewable power.

Bilateral ties have strengthened in recent years, with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez visiting China four

times over in the past three years.

The closer times some as relations between Europe and the United States have strained under President Donald Trump.

Chinese carmakers have quickly built up their presence in the lucrative European auto market, buoyed by technological advances and EU rules that call for 90 percent of all cars sold in the bloc to be electric by 2035.

SAIC has been selling hybrid and EVs in Eu-

rope under the MG brand for several years.

In recent weeks, several Chinese car brands have said they plan to manufacture in Europe, a move that would allow them to avoid EU customs duties and reduce transport issues.



Chinese relive 'wonderful' youth in viral sneak-eating contest

AFP | Beijing, China

Sitting in a fake classroom smocked-up in a Beijing mall, hundreds of Chinese adults spent the weekend reliving their rebellious childhoods as they took part in a "school sneak-eating" contest.

Using everything from textbooks and water bottles to pieces of paper as cover, participants competed to see if they could scoff a variety of snacks right under the teacher-referee's nose.

Sunday's competition, organised by the mall and publicised online, is just one iteration of a



nostalgia-driven craze that has taken Chinese social media by storm in recent weeks.

"I used to sneak-eat snacks during class when I was a kid too, though not very often," admitted contestant An Dahua, 22.

"It really brought back childhood memories... I just kept my eyes glued to the teacher the whole time."

For An, seeing adults in their 40s and 50s act as sneakily snacking youths "really stirred something".

"I couldn't help but think about how wonderful our childhood was," she told AFP.

Peckish participants sat in pairs at classroom desks, avoiding the watchful eye of the referee, who organisers said was a teacher in real life.

A sign above the chalkboard urged students to "study hard and make progress every day" -- a common slogan in Chinese classrooms.

As the mock class progressed, participants used various items to hide their chewing.

Those who managed to finish all their snacks within 10 minutes without being caught were declared victors and progressed to the next round.

Outside a perimeter marked with red ropes, onlookers snapped pictures and chuckled to each other while other shoppers at the mall simply walked by. "Everyone is usually so busy with their everyday life, and having activities like this on weekends or holidays can really help people unwind," said An.

For 24-year-old Kang Weijing, another contestant interviewed by AFP, the event offered a chance to experience the more simple pleasures of being a kid.

"This event allowed us to relive that same childhood joy all over again," he said.

Classifieds



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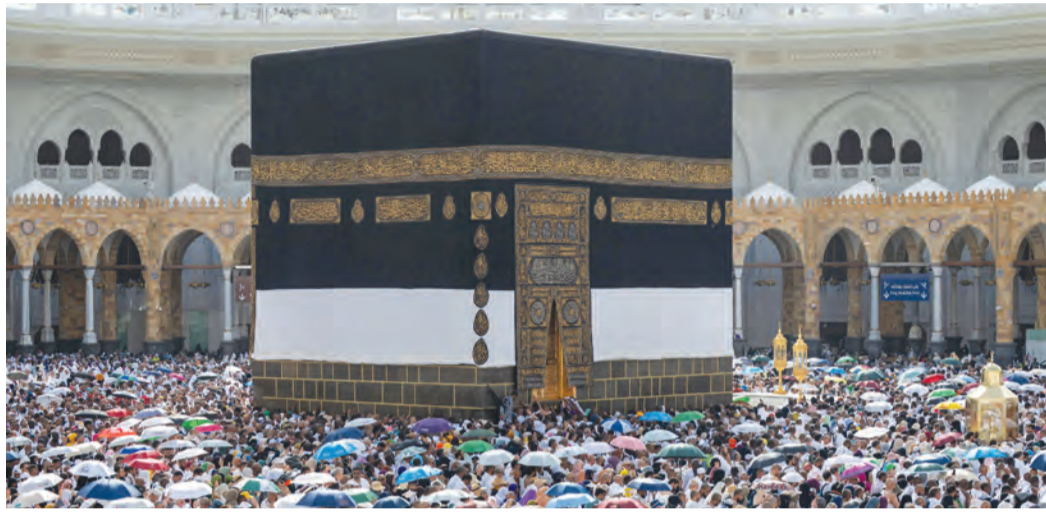
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WHO Praises Saudi Arabia for **Safe 2026 Hajj**



Global health leaders have praised Saudi Arabia's management of the 2026 Hajj season after the pilgrimage concluded without any confirmed or suspected cases of epidemic disease, despite ongoing international health threats.

Saudi Health Minister Fahad bin Abdulrahman Al-Jalal said the Kingdom's efforts to protect pilgrims also contributed to wider global health security.

"Health security for the Hajj is global health security," he said, noting that the protection of millions of pilgrims from around the world depended on prevention, preparedness, rapid response and international cooperation.

The World Health Organization's Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,

congratulated Saudi Arabia on delivering a safe pilgrimage and praised the work of the Kingdom's healthcare teams.

Saudi authorities said the remarks reflected growing international confidence in the country's ability to safely manage one of the world's largest annual gatherings.

Dr. Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, also commended Saudi Arabia's use of advanced technology during the season, including robotics, drones and health-monitoring systems used to track pilgrims throughout their journey.

She said WHO teams monitored disease risks throughout the Hajj period and described the outcome as evidence of a strong system capable of handling the health risks linked to

mass gatherings.

The praise followed the Ministry of Health's announcement that the Hajj season passed without any epidemic outbreak, which resulted from one of the Kingdom's largest-ever healthcare operations.

Authorities strengthened health entry requirements before the pilgrimage and expanded disease surveillance across ports and holy sites. Rapid-response teams, field epidemiology units and advanced laboratory systems were also activated throughout the season.

Multilingual awareness campaigns and heat-stress prevention initiatives were launched to support pilgrims during the summer pilgrimage period.

Saudi officials confirmed that no cases of Ebola, Hantavirus or

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- 2026 Hajj Health Operation
- 52,000+ healthcare workers deployed during Hajj
- 7,700 paramedics stationed across pilgrimage sites.
- 20,000+ hospital beds prepared for pilgrims
- 3,800 beds dedicated to the holy sites
- 2.46 million medical services delivered during the season
- 1 million+ hotline calls handled through the Ministry's "937" service
- No epidemic disease cases detected among pilgrims

any other epidemic disease were detected among pilgrims.

The Ministry of Health said the successful season highlighted Saudi Arabia's growing leadership in mass gathering medicine and reaffirmed its commitment to protecting pilgrims and global public health.

Kuwait, IAEA discuss nuclear safety



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has held talks with the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, during an official visit to the country on Monday.

The meeting in Kuwait City highlighted cooperation between the Gulf state and the UN nuclear watchdog, with discussions focused on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as strengthening international standards for nuclear safety and security.

During the talks, Sheikh Jarrah praised the IAEA's technical and professional role in supporting global efforts to promote safe and peaceful nuclear applications. He also reaffirmed Kuwait's support for international frameworks aimed at preventing nuclear risks.

Both sides reviewed areas of existing cooperation and explored ways to further strengthen ties between Kuwait and the agency. Regional developments were also discussed during the meeting, according to officials.

Following the discussions, the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister hosted a luncheon in honour of Mr Grossi and his accompanying delegation.

The visit comes amid ongoing international focus on nuclear governance and regional stability in the Middle East.

Explosion Hits Cargo Ship Near Iraq Waters



A cargo vessel transiting in the Arabian Gulf was struck by an unknown projectile near Iraqi waters, prompting an investigation by maritime authorities, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO).

UKMTO received a report of an incident approximately 40 nautical miles southeast of Umm Qasr, Iraq, where a large explosion occurred after the vessel was hit on its starboard side.

The nature of the projectile has not yet been confirmed, and authorities have not attributed responsibility for the incident.

No environmental impact has been reported at this stage, UKMTO added.

Investigations are currently under way to determine the circumstances surrounding the explosion.

Maritime authorities have advised all vessels operating in the area to proceed with caution and to report any suspicious activity to UKMTO as monitoring continues.

GCC condemns 'Iranian attacks' on Kuwait

Secretary-General calls incidents a "serious escalation" and violation of sovereignty

The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi, strongly condemned what he described as continued Iranian hostile attacks targeting Kuwait, calling them a dangerous escalation and a violation of international law.

In a statement issued by the GCC General Secretariat in Riyadh, Al-Budaiwi said the incidents represented "a serious



and irresponsible escalation" and a "blatant breach" of Ku-

wait's sovereignty, as well as international laws and norms. He warned that such actions pose a direct threat to regional security and stability.

The GCC chief said the continuation of these attacks reflects a rejected pattern of behaviour that undermines ongoing regional and international efforts to maintain peace and security.

He urged the international community and the UN Security Council to assume their respon-

sibilities and take a firm and deterrent stance against what he described as serious violations that threaten both regional and global peace.

Al-Budaiwi also stressed that Kuwait's security is an integral part of the security of all GCC member states. He added that the Gulf states stand united in full solidarity with Kuwait and support all measures it takes to safeguard its security and sovereignty.

Bahrain Condemns Iranian Missile and Drone Attacks Targeting Kuwait

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the Kingdom of Bahrain's strong condemnation and denunciation of the targeting of the State of Kuwait by hostile Iranian missile and drone attacks. Bahrain considers this a dangerous escalation that threatens regional security and stability, a blatant violation of the sovereignty of the State of Kuwait, a clear violation of the rules of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of good neighborliness, and a serious breach of Security



Council Resolution No. (2817). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed Bahrain's full solidarity with Kuwait and its complete support for the legitimate measures it is taking to preserve its sovereignty, security and the safety of its citizens and residents on its territory, commending in this regard the capabilities of the Kuwaiti air defenses and armed forces in confronting the repeated and heinous Iranian attacks, wishing Kuwait and its brotherly people continued security, peace, stability and prosperity.

Kuwait airport resumes flights after upgrade works

Kuwait has resumed receiving and operating flights from Arab and international carriers at its main airport following the completion of repair and upgrade works, according to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

The reopening marks the start of a phased return to full operations at Kuwait International Airport, with passenger services restarting at Terminal 1. Authorities said the move is part of a structured plan to restore full capacity while maintaining operational efficiency.

A series of measures have been introduced to streamline air traffic flow and improve passenger procedures, as airport operators prepare for an increase in flight

activity in the coming weeks. Officials said these steps are intended to ensure smooth operations across all services during the transition period.

The phased reopening follows the completion of infrastructure improvements and readiness upgrades designed to enhance overall airport performance. Authorities emphasised that the gradual return of operations aims to balance efficiency with safety standards for both travellers and airlines.

Officials added that the reopening is also intended to strengthen Kuwait's air transport sector and improve the airport's ability to meet rising demand from passengers and international carriers.



Bahrain name 27-player squad for Georgia and Türkiye training camp

TDT | Manama

National team head coach Dragan Talajic has named a 27-player squad for the team's upcoming overseas training camp in Georgia and Türkiye as preparations continue for a busy international calendar.

The camp will run from today until June 10 and forms part of Bahrain's preparations for the 27th Gulf Cup, scheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia from September 23 to October 6, as well as the AFC Asian Cup 2027.

The squad includes goalkeepers Omar Salem, Mohammed Al Gharabli, Abdulla Al Ahmed and Godwill Chia, alongside Abbas Al Asfoor, Abdulla Al Khalasi, Ahmed Bughamar, Ali Al Doseri, Ali Madan, Ebrahim Al Khattal, Hassan Al Karani, Hashim Sayed Isa, Hussain Abdulkarim, Komail Al Aswad, Mahdi Abduljabbar, Mahdi Humaidan, Mohammed Marhoon, Mohammed Abdulqayoom, Omar Saber, Saleh Al Zubaidi, Sayed Dhiya Saeed, Sayed Mahdi Sharaf, Vincent Emmanuel,



Dragan Talajic leads a training session

Waleed Al Hayyam, Mohammed Ahmed Rabeea. The national team delegation

departed yesterday evening for the Georgian capital, Tbilisi,

where Bahrain will begin the first phase of their preparations with a series of training sessions before taking on Georgia in an international friendly on June 5 during the FIFA international window.

Following that match, the squad will travel to Antalya, Türkiye, to continue their training camp ahead of a second friendly against Syria on June 9.

The two matches will provide Talajic and his staff with an opportunity to assess players and further develop the squad's tactical and physical readiness ahead of their upcoming competitive commitments.

Bahrain will enter the Gulf Cup later this year as defending champions after lifting the regional title in the previous edition. They have been drawn in Group B alongside the UAE, Qatar and Yemen.

The nationals are also continuing their preparations for the AFC Asian Cup 2027, which will be held from January 7 to February 5. Bahrain have been drawn in Group B alongside Jordan, Uzbekistan and North Korea.

Sooryavanshi sweeps IPL awards, but is too young to drive prize



Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is awarded the "Orange Cap" in the IPL

AFP | Ahmedabad

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi swept the end-of-season IPL awards and in doing so won an SUV, but the 15-year-old cricket prodigy will have to wait three years to drive it.

The Indian batting sensation plundered 776 runs at an average of 48.50 and a punishing strike-rate of 237.30 in 16 matches.

On Sunday he was named most valuable player, despite his team Rajasthan Royals narrowly failing to reach the final, and he also scooped the Orange Cap for leading the batting charts.

He was also named emerging player of the season, among other prizes.

Kohli dubbed 'heartbeat' of IPL champions in coach Flower tribute

AFP | New Delhi

Virat Kohli was hailed as the "heartbeat" of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru dressing room after his unbeaten 75 secured a second straight IPL championship.

The 37-year-old Kohli was there at the end as Bengaluru chased 156 to beat Gujarat Titans by five wickets in Sunday's final in Ahmedabad.

Dubbed the "chase master", Kohli finished with a six and a total of 675 runs in the T20 tournament.

"Virat, I know you get a lot of attention and quite rightly," head coach Andy Flower said in a Royal Challengers Bengaluru video tribute released yesterday.

"But I don't want to downplay that, because you are a heartbeat in this dressing room."

Kohli got the team off to a flying start in a 62-run opening



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Indian cricket player Virat Kohli (C) and team head coach Zimbabwe's Andy Flower (L) celebrate with the trophy

stand with Venkatesh Iyer and later anchored the chase.

He hammered Gujarat pace bowler Kagiso Rabada for two fours and a six to set the tone for his team's domination at the 130,000-capacity Narendra Modi Stadium, which was

packed with Kohli fans.

"He relishes these situations, he looks forward to these situations where he can show how good a player he is," former India captain Sunil Gavaskar told Sports Today.

"What kind of a temperament

he has, the winning mindset that he has."

IPL chairman Arun Dhimal said: "Virat doesn't need any trophies. He is a trophy himself."

Bengaluru and Kohli have been on a roll in the T20 tournament since winning their first IPL crown at the 18th attempt last year.

Bengaluru finished top of the 10-team table after the league stage and hammered Gujarat in the first play-off for a direct entry into the final.

A majority of the 90,000 crowd seemed to be wearing Kohli's number 18 shirt, with chants of "Kohli, Kohli" filling the air.

"I always say we don't have seven home games, we probably have 14," Kohli said after being named player of the match.

"Everywhere we go, we have fans cheering the team and really getting behind us.

Slot says he is leaving Liverpool 'among Europe's elite'



Arne Slot reacts during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Arne Slot says he is leaving Liverpool "exactly where it belongs: amongst Europe's elite", in an emotional letter to fans after his sacking as head coach.

The Dutchman was fired on Saturday, 12 months after winning the Premier League, following a miserable title defence which ended in a fifth-placed finish, 25 points behind champions Arsenal.

Despite suffering 20 defeats in all competitions, Liverpool secured a place in next season's Champions League.

The club are reportedly set to open formal talks with former Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola over the Anfield vacancy this week.

In an open letter to fans published in the Liverpool Echo yesterday, Slot, who replaced Jurgen Klopp in 2024, said winning the Premier League title in his first season was "beyond special".

"Liverpool's 20th league title belongs to all of us and it will remain an important chapter in its history," said Slot. "For that we should all be proud.

Liverpool's 20th league title belongs to all of us and it will remain an important chapter in its history. For that, we should all be proud.

ARNE SLOT

"This club will always judge itself by the biggest honours. That is how it should be.

"But I also leave knowing the club is exactly where it belongs: amongst Europe's elite. Securing Champions League football was an important responsibility."

Slot, 47, said he was "privileged to witness first-hand your spirit of compassion and unity" after Paul Doyle drove his car through crowds in the city centre during last year's title celebrations, injuring scores of supporters.

Doyle was jailed for more than 21 years after he pleaded guilty to 31 offences.

Slot also paid tribute to Portuguese forward Diogo Jota, who died in a car crash in Spain just weeks after Liverpool's title triumph.

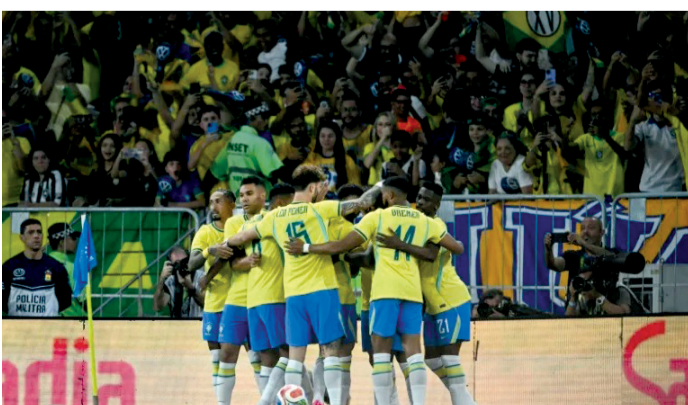
Brazil thrash Panama 6-2 in World Cup send-off

AFP | Rio de Janeiro

Brazil turned on the style with a 6-2 drubbing of Panama on Sunday in a lopsided World Cup send-off at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

Real Madrid star Vinicius Jr fired the Brazilians into the lead inside the opening minute, collecting a pass from veteran midfielder Casemiro before lashing in a thunderous strike from 25 yards.

The five-time World Cup winners were jolted though in the 14th minute when



Brazil's players celebrate Vinicius Jr's opening goal

Panama grabbed a freak equaliser, Michael Murillo's free-

kick taking a wicked deflection off Matheus Cunha and sailing

past Brazil keeper Alisson.

The combination of Vinicius and Casemiro restored Brazil's advantage six minutes before half-time.

Vinicius jinked into space on the left hand side of the penalty area, and what looked like a curling shot destined for the far corner was helped into the net by a glancing header from Casemiro.

Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti rang the changes at half-time, replacing his entire starting line-up with the exception of Leo Pereira as the second half got under way.

Ahli and Barbar battle for handball crown



Al Fardan scores Barbar's match-winner in the semi-final



Mohammed Mirza during Al Ahli training session

TDT | Manama

Al Ahli and Barbar will go head-to-head tonight for the 2025-26 Khalid bin Hamad Bahrain Handball League title, with the championship match scheduled for 7pm at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town.

Both teams booked their places in the final after completing two-game sweeps in the Golden Square semi-finals, setting up a clash between two sides aiming to end lengthy waits for league glory.

Barbar are chasing their seventh league title and first since the 2018-19 season, while Al

Ahli are seeking a record-extending 20th championship and their first league crown since 2015-16.

Barbar secured their place in the title decider with a 25-24 victory over defending champions Al Najma, sealed by Hassan Al Fardan's winner in the dying seconds. Goalkeeper Isa Khalaf was instrumental in the triumph, producing several key saves in the closing stages.

Al Ahli, meanwhile, progressed after edging Al Shabab 35-33 on penalties following a 31-31 draw in regulation time. Goalkeeper Hussain Mahfoudh starred for Ahli, making a series of crucial saves both late in the

match and during the shootout. The final pits Bahraini coach Hussam Madan's Barbar against an Ahli side led by Serbian tactician Predrag Petljanski in what is expected to be a closely contested encounter between two in-form teams.

Ahli will look to key performers including Ali Eid, Sayed Ahmed Faeg, Abdulla Ali, Jassim Al Salatna, Ali Mirza, and Qassim Qambar, along with goalkeepers Hussain Mahfoudh and Salah Abduljaleel.

Barbar, meanwhile, will be spearheaded by Salman Al Showaikh, Hasan Alfardan, Maitham Mahdi, Ali Madan, Ali Abdulqader, Mohamed

Abdulla, and goalkeeper Isa Khalaf.

Al Shabab have officially secured third place after the Bahrain Handball Federation awarded them the position following Al Najma's forfeiture of the classification match. Najma opted not to play the fixture as they continue preparations for the Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship, which will be held in Kuwait from June 6 to 15.

With the domestic season set to conclude tonight, either Ahli will celebrate a long-awaited return to the summit or Barbar will end a seven-year wait to reclaim the league title.

Bahrain confirm participation in West Asian Championship



Bahrain celebrate West Asian Championship triumph in 2019

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Football Association has confirmed that the national team will take part in the West Asian Championship, scheduled to be held in Oman next November.

The tournament falls within the FIFA international match window, ensuring full availability of national team players for the competition.

The 2026 West Asian Football Federation (WAFF) Championship will mark the 10th edition of the regional tournament, bringing together all 12 member associations for the first time.

The competition has undergone several scheduling changes in recent years, originally planned for 2021 before

being postponed multiple times and later rescheduled, with Oman ultimately confirmed as hosts.

Bahrain will be making their fifth appearance in the competition, having last featured in 2019.

The national team's best performance remains their most recent triumph, when they clinched the ninth edition title last August in Iraq after a 1-0 win over the hosts in the final, courtesy of Isa Musa's goal.

The expanded format will feature a strong field including Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, setting up a highly competitive edition of the tournament.

Kalinskaya and Cobolli reach French Open quarters



Italy's Flavio Cobolli plays a forehand return to US Zachary Svajda

AFP | Paris

Anna Kalinskaya and Flavio Cobolli booked their places in the French Open quarter-finals on Sunday, while Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League heroes received a warm reception from the Roland Garros crowd.

Russian Kalinskaya advanced after a dramatic 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (10/7) victory over 28th seed Anastasia Potapova, who was unable to capitalise after stunning defending champion Coco Gauff in the previous round.

Potapova twice served for the match in the deciding set but failed to close it out as Kalinskaya fought back to prevail in a tense match tie-break.

Polish qualifier Maja Chwalinska also continued her impressive run in Paris, defeating France's Diane Parry 6-3, 6-2 to end home hopes in the women's singles draw.

Parry's exit left the French crowd disappointed, but fans were later treated to a cele-

bratory appearance by Paris Saint-Germain stars Ousmane Dembele, Desire Doue, Warren Zaire-Emery and Bradley Barcola.

The quartet paraded the club's two Champions League trophies on Court Philippe Chatrier after PSG secured a second consecutive European title on Saturday.

In the men's draw, Italian 10th seed Flavio Cobolli survived a late wobble to defeat American Zachary Svajda 6-2, 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/5).

Cobolli appeared to be cruising to victory when he opened a 4-0 lead in the fourth set and later moved 5-1 ahead, only for Svajda to stage a remarkable fightback and force a tie-break.

The Italian eventually regained his composure to seal victory and reach the second Grand Slam quarter-final of his career after last year's Wimbledon Championships.

"The match is never done and today I almost shit in my pants," Cobolli said. "I'm happy but I'm still nervous."

Serena Williams announces return to tennis at Queen's Club

AFP | London

Serena Williams confirmed her return to tennis after an absence of nearly four years yesterday, with the American great set to play women's doubles at Queen's club later this month.

The 44-year-old, a 23-time Grand Slam singles champion, has not played since a third-round loss at the 2022 US Open.

The former world number one posted the message, "Good news travels fast" along with a video of her on court in an all-white Nike tennis dress and with her phone buzzing rapidly in the background.

Her imminent return has been touted since it was revealed in December she had re-entered the anti-doping programme -- a prerequisite to play on the tour again.

At the time she denied she was planning a return to com-



Serena Williams reacts during a match (file photo)

petitive tennis by posting on social media: "Omg yall, I'm NOT coming back. This wildfire is crazy."

But the American has been given a wild card for the women's doubles at Queen's in London, reportedly alongside young

Canadian Victoria Mboko.

"Queen's Club feels like the perfect place to begin this next chapter," said Williams, who won the Wimbledon singles title seven times.

"Grass has given me some of the most meaningful moments

of my career, and I'm excited to be back competing on one of the sport's most iconic stages."

The women's event at Queen's starts on June 8.

"Serena Williams is one of the greatest athletes the world has ever seen, and we're delighted that she will be making her return to tennis at the LTA's HSBC Championships," said WTA tournament director Laura Robson.

"Women's tennis made a historic return to the Queen's Club last year, and now we have an icon of the game stepping back on to court."

Williams said in 2022 she did not want to use the word "retiring" but instead explained she was "evolving" away from tennis. The American's 23 Grand Slam singles titles are the most by a woman in the Open era and put her second on all the all-time list in the women's behind Australian Margaret Court's tally of 24.

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