

Talks were 'very good'
 Are US-Iran tensions moving closer to real diplomatic progress, or are both sides still too far apart for direct negotiations to begin? | P6-7

WHO highlights crises across Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan and Somalia

THE DAILY tribune



Strong final performance secures Bahrain junior handball championship in Dubai

11 SPORT

BUSINESS 5

BENEFIT launches the 5th edition of "MASAR" Fintech Summer Internship

July fuel prices

Jayyid (91)	: 0.222 BD
Mumtaz (95)	: 0.247 BD
Super (98)	: 0.362 BD
Diesel	: 0.229 BD

New U-Turn Opens



The Ministry of Works has opened a new two-lane U-turn at the Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Highway and Zallaq Highway junction to improve traffic movement and reduce congestion.

The 1.3-kilometre route provides easier access to nearby communities, including Al Raffa, while reducing travel distances and improving road efficiency. The project also included expanding the right-turn connection from Zallaq Highway and upgrading related infrastructure works.

Faster Water Connection Service



The Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) has introduced a fully electronic inspection service for new water connection requests, reducing processing time from five working days to two.

The digital service allows citizens, residents, businesses and institutions to apply for new water connections and meter installations without traditional inspections in eligible cases. The upgrade has reduced service procedures, lowered documentation requirements by 50 percent and improved processing efficiency.

220 fils (includes VAT)



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Fight Against Drugs

Interior Minister highlights community role in combating drug threats and protecting future generations

Minister of Interior and Chairman of the National Anti-Drug Committee, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, stressed that combating drugs is a shared national responsibility requiring collective efforts across society.

Speaking during a ceremony marking the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the minister reaffirmed Bahrain's commitment to international cooperation and regional coordination in tackling drug-related crimes.

He said the Kingdom continues to enhance efforts against illegal drug trafficking and psychotropic substances by improving security capabilities, strengthening coordination between authorities, and expanding community partnerships.

General Shaikh Rashid high-



lighted the importance of cooperation between security, education, health, media and religious institutions to address evolving smuggling methods and protect society.

The minister revealed that 2,006 drug cases were recorded in 2025, while 475 cases were registered during the first quarter of 2026, stressing the importance of awareness campaigns in safeguarding future gen-

erations.

The ceremony featured a documentary showcasing national anti-drug efforts, recognition of outstanding personnel and supporting organisations, and the presentation of the Stevie Award received by the "Ta'afi" (Recovery) programme for supporting drug recovery initiatives.

The minister also visited an exhibition displaying artworks by students who participated in an anti-drug awareness competition organised by the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.



Infrastructure Progress



Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa chaired the 309th meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Development Projects and Infrastructure, where members reviewed key national projects and infrastructure initiatives.

The committee praised cooperation between government service entities and municipal councils, while highlighting progress in the Bahrain Smart Cities Conference 2026 and the development of roads leading to Bahrain International Airport. It also reviewed the operation of 42 new smart parking meters in the Diplomatic Area and directed an assessment to expand the initiative to other areas across the Kingdom.

12 Nations, One Shield

CENTCOM Leads Landmark Regional Security Dialogue in Bahrain

The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), in coordination with the Bahrain Defense Force, led a regional security dialogue in Bahrain, bringing together senior defense leaders from 12 nations to discuss evolving security challenges in the Middle East.

The meeting, chaired by CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper, included military officials from Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Discussions focused on the current regional security environment and ways to strengthen defense cooperation across participating countries. Lead-



ers also reaffirmed their shared commitment to ensuring the free flow of commerce through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global shipping route.

"We continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our regional partners," Admiral Cooper said, noting that the discussions highlighted a collective commitment

to regional stability and security.

Officials also reviewed ongoing security frameworks, including a multinational air and missile defense coordination system operating across the Middle East. CENTCOM and partner nations previously established a regional coordination cell to enhance information sharing,

threat warnings, and response readiness.

The dialogue was particularly significant as it marked the first participation of military representatives from Syria and Lebanon in a U.S.-led regional defense conference, underscoring expanded engagement in regional security cooperation.

A Nation of Achievers

Education Minister Honors Exceptional Students

The Minister of Education, Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, met additional batches of top-performing students who scored 99% and above, bringing the total number of honorees to 300 students across Bahrain.

The latest sessions were held at

the Ministry of Education Bahrain headquarters in Isa Town, with 120 students participating over the second and third days of scheduled meetings.

The recognition program grouped students based on academic performance ranges,



from 100% down to 99% categories. A separate session for private school students is also planned in the coming days. The

initiative highlights the country's emphasis on celebrating academic excellence across all education streams.

Youth City 2030 to Launch Largest Edition



The Ministry of Youth Affairs announced that the 15th edition of Youth City 2030 will begin on July 12, featuring 256 training programmes and 10,650 opportunities – the largest edition since its launch.

The programme is expected to attract more than 6,000 young participants and will focus on future skills through five key areas: entrepreneurship, arts and culture, science and technology, media and digital innovation, and sports. The initiative is organised in partnership with Tamkeen and more than 105 public, private and civil sector partners.

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For the Fifth Consecutive Year NBB Named Bahrain's Best Retail Bank by MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has been named Best Retail Bank – Bahrain at the MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2026, marking its fifth consecutive win in the category. The award acknowledges the Bank's continued progress in delivering customer-focused banking solutions, advancing digital service capabilities, and supporting key national priorities across housing finance, family banking, and SME growth.

The award builds on NBB's established retail banking track record and recognises the Bank's ability to translate customer needs into practical and accessible financial solutions. During the year, NBB continued to serve its mandate as a national banking partner through initiatives that improved access to social housing finance, accelerated digital adoption, and enhanced support for entrepreneurs and growing businesses across the Kingdom.

A key area of recognition was NBB's digital banking

advancements, which also played a major role in the award win. The Bank enhanced its Yalla Family Banking proposition with Saving Pockets and parental control features, encouraging responsible spending and saving habits among younger customers. It also introduced end-to-end Straight-Through Processing for Digital Loan Origination, same-day loan top-ups, integrated digital signatures, gamified reward experiences, and eKey 2.0 integration, creating more convenient and secure digital journeys across key retail services.

NBB's contribution to Bahrain's social housing ecosystem through Tas'heel+, launched in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, was also a notable contributor to the award. As the first bank in Bahrain to introduce the enhanced government-subsidised housing



Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani, Chief Executive - Retail Banking at NBB



Usman Ahmed, Group Chief Executive Officer of NBB

finance solution, NBB expanded access to affordable home ownership for eligible citizens while supporting the Kingdom's long-term social development priorities.

Commenting on the achievement, Usman Ahmed, Group Chief Executive Officer of NBB, said, "Being named Best Retail Bank in Bahrain for the

fifth year in a row is a proud reflection of the purpose behind our institutional progress. Retail banking has a direct bearing on how individuals, families, and businesses manage their finances, and our responsibility is to make that experience more accessible, reliable, and relevant to their needs. This recognition belongs to

our teams, whose work continues to show how banking innovation can support customers while contributing to sustainable national growth outcomes."

For his part, Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani, Chief Executive - Retail Banking at NBB, added, "This accolade signifies the collective work we have done to build a retail banking proposition that proactively responds to how our customers choose to bank today. Our focus has always been on strengthening access across key touchpoints and ensuring that every enhancement to our banking experience brings clear value to the people and businesses we serve. It echoes the continued efforts of our Retail Banking teams in keeping the customer journey simpler, more seamless, and better aligned with evolving preferences."

The award also recognises NBB for its enhanced SME

Banking proposition, following the establishment of six dedicated SME business centres across Bahrain. The re-engineered service model improved geographic coverage, strengthened relationship management, and reduced onboarding friction for business customers, helping drive a 230% increase in monthly SME account openings. The initiative reflects NBB's ongoing commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and enabling the growth of Bahrain's SME sector through specialised banking services.

NBB's recognition at the MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2026 reaffirms its position as a leading retail bank in the Kingdom and underscores the impact of its integrated approach to customer service, digital transformation, and responsible banking. The Bank remains steadfast towards developing solutions that respond to evolving customer expectations while helping achieve Bahrain's broader economic and social development ambitions.



“Robot Ahmed” and “Evoha” Crowned as Winners in the 26th Edition of StartUp Bahrain Pitch

TDT | Manama

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the Kingdom of Bahrain and support the growth of startups, StartUp Bahrain, the Kingdom's leading national platform for supporting startups, powered by Tamkeen, hosted the 26th edition of StartUp Bahrain Pitch.

The event was held in the presence of H.E. Noor bint Ali Al Khulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of the Bahrain Development Board, H.E. Maha Abdulhameed Mofeez, Chief Executive of the Labour Fund “Tamkeen”, Ms. Dalal Al Ghais, Chief Executive of the Bahrain Development Bank Group, as well as Members of the SME Development Board, and Tamkeen Board of Directors members.

The Startup Pitch series is held in collaboration with the SMEs Development Board and provides an



Noor bint Ali Al Khulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of the Bahrain Economic Development Board, with the award winners during the recognition ceremony

interactive platform for entrepreneurs to showcase their ventures before a group of experts and investors, and gain the mentorship and guidance needed to further develop their ideas and enhance their growth and expansion.

The event featured the participation of a group of leading speakers, experts, and investors from the entrepreneurship ecosystem,

including Husain Haji, Chief Operating Officer at DDO and keynote speaker at the event; Mashael Fairooz, Founding Partner of JEO Capital Management; Noorhan AlZann from Noor Consultancy & Coaching; and Laith Al Khalili, Associate Partner at Mumtalakat.

The event also showcased a group of innovative startups offering digital and technology-driven

solutions across various sectors, including Evoha, an AI-powered energy management platform, Jumruk, that automates custom clearance, Robot Ahmed, an Arabic-speaking educational robot, and As-humi, a trading platform.

After the participating startups presented their projects and were evaluated by the judging panel, the winners were announced, with

“Robot Ahmed” awarded first place and “Evoha” awarded second place.

On this occasion, Hanadi Al Onazi from “Robot Ahmed” expressed her pride in winning first place, saying: “This win marks an important milestone in our journey and reflects the efforts made by the team to develop an innovative business model capable of meeting market needs. Our participation in StartUp Bahrain Pitch provided us with a valuable opportunity to showcase our idea before a group of experts and investors, and benefit from their valuable feedback in a way that supports our growth and expansion plans. Our journey began with the Mashroo3i program under Tamkeen, which laid the foundation for our project and we are deeply proud of the journey that has culminated in this success at StartUp Bahrain Pitch.”

Second place winner, Nawaf Hamadi from “Evoha”, affirmed that this achievement serves as a

strong motivation to continue developing the business model, noting that participating in StartUp Bahrain Pitch provided an important platform to introduce the project, connect with entrepreneurs, investors, and specialists within the startup ecosystem, and open new horizons for its development and sustainability.

Tamkeen's support for StartUp Bahrain aligns with its strategic priorities for 2026, which focus on supporting initiatives with high economic impact, enhancing the competitiveness of the private sector, connecting skills with the needs of the labor market, and adopting innovative approaches to stimulate the growth and expansion of startups, contributing to the Kingdom's sustainable economic development.

For more information about StartUp Bahrain and to participate in future editions of StartUp Bahrain Pitch, follow @startubahrain on social media.

Events Sector Drives Tourism Growth

Ministry works with event companies to attract regional and international events

TDT | Manama

Bahrain is focusing on developing its events sector as a key contributor to tourism growth and attracting more regional and international events.

Tourism Minister Fatima bint Jaafar Al Sairafi highlighted the importance of cooperation with private event management companies during a meeting to discuss ways to strengthen the sector.

She said partnerships with the private sector are essential to delivering high-quality events that

enhance Bahrain's position as a leading destination, while supporting industries including hospitality, retail, transport, logistics and creative sectors.

The meeting also reviewed plans to expand the events industry by leveraging Bahrain's modern venues, infrastructure and local expertise, while improving coordination among stakeholders.

The initiatives align with the Kingdom's Tourism Strategy 2022–2026, aimed at increasing tourism opportunities and attracting major events.

Event management represent-



atives welcomed the ministry's continued support and reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing

Bahrain's competitiveness in the regional and international events market.

Mismanaged Donation Boxes Removed

Campaign Targets Unregulated and Poorly Placed Boxes

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

Authorities in Bahrain's Northern Governorate have launched a large-scale removal campaign targeting around 5,000 charity donation boxes following inspections that found many were poorly managed, illegally placed, or not properly monitored by the organisations whose names they carried.

The move comes as part of efforts to regulate public spaces and ensure donation activities are carried out through properly supervised channels.

Three-Month Deadline for Owners

The Northern Municipality has given box owners three months to reclaim the removed containers, after this period, they will lose the right to claim them. The issue was discussed during the final meeting of the Northern Municipal Council's term in Budaiya, where officials highlighted the scale of the problem.

Northern Municipality Director-General Mohammed Al Sehli said some charitable organisations lacked accurate



records of where their boxes were placed, while others relied on private companies to manage collections in exchange for a share of proceeds. He said the lack of oversight raised concerns about transparency and accountability in how donation boxes operated in public areas.

Public Complaints

Councillor Abdulla Al Qobaisi said residents had long complained about donation boxes placed in unsafe locations. He noted that some motorists stop on busy roads to use them, creating traffic risks, while others obstruct visibility at intersections and affect neighbourhood appearance.

He also warned that poorly maintained boxes had, in some cases, become shelter for animals, leading to safety concerns.

ISB Launches BD 400,000 Smart Classroom Initiative

TDT | Manama
Pradeep Puravankara

The Indian School Bahrain (ISB) has officially inaugurated its highly anticipated Smart Classroom Project, marking a major milestone in the school's digital transformation strategy across its campuses. The landmark launch event at the Jashanmal Auditorium in the Isa Town Campus was attended by senior education officials, telecom partners, and community dignitaries.

The ambitious project represents a total investment of approximately BD 400,000, modernizing traditional learning spaces across both the Isa Town and Riffa campuses to directly benefit nearly 11,500 students. This technology-driven initiative overhauls classroom infrastructure, featuring the installation of state-of-the-art

interactive digital smartboards in classrooms, libraries, and laboratories to enhance academic engagement. Alongside the educational tools, a comprehensive, campus-wide CCTV network has been integrated to significantly boost campus safety.

The project was formally inaugurated by the Chief Guest, H.E. Dr. Sana Saeed Abdulla Al Haddad, Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Educational Licensing at the Ministry of Education. Following the ribbon-cutting, attendees were given a live demonstration of a smart classroom session utilizing the new digital display technology. Dr. Al Haddad praised the initiative as an outstanding model for integrating modern technologies into the learning process and reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to supporting private school initiatives that align with Bahrain's sustainable development goals.

Opposition Panels Merge to Challenge ISB Governing Body Over Mismanagement

TDT | Manama
Pradeep Puravankara

Opposition panels at the Indian School Bahrain (ISB) have formed a unified front to challenge what they term as “severe mismanagement” by the current school administration. In a joint press conference, leaders announced that the Indian School Parents Forum (ISPF) and Index have merged into the United Parents Panel (UPP) to address ongoing administrative and financial failures. The move comes as the school prepares for the next Management Committee election, expected between October and December.

The UPP strongly criticized the school's handling of a recent Special General Body meeting called to discuss tuition fee arrears. The opposition pointed out that parents

with outstanding dues were barred from attending and stripped of voting rights, while only those who had cleared their fees were allowed in. The UPP questioned if the administration is keeping families in debt to exploit them as an election “vote bank,” stressing that resolving the school's financial issues requires open dialogue, not selective exclusion.

Financial mismanagement has also severely impacted staff welfare. While previous committees paid salaries on time alongside summer leave allowances, the current body has been distributing monthly pay in installments, though June salaries were recently cleared following intense parent pressure. The UPP clarified that parents must pay their fees but blamed the massive accumulation of arrears on the administration's systemic failure.

Two Expats Jailed Over Fake Degrees

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

The Lower Criminal Court has sentenced two foreign defendants to six months in prison in separate cases involving the use of forged university degrees to secure employment in private schools. The court also ordered the confiscation of the fake documents and the permanent deportation of both individuals after serving their sentences.

According to the Deputy Chief of the Cybercrime Prosecution, the defendants submitted falsi-

fied academic certificates to private educational institutions and to relevant authorities responsible for verifying and accrediting qualifications. They intended to use these documents to secure approval for teaching positions.

The case came to light after the Ministry of Education flagged suspicious certificates through routine inspection and verification procedures conducted in coordination with a specialised company. The process is designed to ensure the authenticity of academic qualifications required for teaching roles.

eKey 2.0 Wins Digital Identity Innovation Award

iGA highlights secure digital access and Bahrain's continued digital transformation efforts

Bahrain's eKey 2.0 system won the Digital Identity Innovation Award at the Bahrain Smart Cities Summit 2026, recognising its contribution to enhancing secure digital services and improving user experience.

The Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) Chief Executive Mohammed Ali Al-Qaed said the achievement reflects Bahrain's commitment to developing advanced digital solutions and delivering integrated government services aligned with the Kingdom's digital transformation goals.

Al-Qaed highlighted that eKey 2.0 has reached a high level of technological maturity, providing users with



secure and privacy-focused access to government and private sector services through enhanced features and capabilities.

The system, developed by the iGA

in partnership with Beyon Connect, supports Bahrain's efforts to provide seamless digital services for individuals, businesses and government entities in line with international best practices.



FROM THE COURT
TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

Courts Reject Legal Claims Award Compensation in Inheritance Dispute

A legal dispute involving an inheritance representation complaint ended with the rejection of allegations against two lawyers and a BD1,000 compensation award for moral damages. The Lawyers Disciplinary Council dismissed the request to disbar lawyers Abduladheem Abbas Hubail and Sayed Ali Mahfoodh after the complainant's mother confirmed she had not authorised him to file the complaint on her behalf.

The complaint accused the lawyers of forgery, misuse of legal representation and harming an elderly person after they represented the mother in an inheritance-related civil case. However, the Lower Civil Court found that the lawyers had acted with proper authority and legally represented the parties involved.

The court ruled that while individuals have the right to file complaints, they must act in good faith. It concluded that the complaint had harmed the lawyers' professional reputation and ordered the complainant to pay BD1,000 in compensation.



Lawyer Abduladheem Abbas Hubail



Lawyer Sayed Ali Mahfoodh

Municipal Councils Start 60-Day Summer Break

Service follow-ups and public projects to continue despite suspension of formal meetings

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Municipal councils have started their annual 60-day summer recess following the conclusion of the fourth sitting round of the sixth legislative term. Officials confirmed that public services and project follow-ups will continue.

While regular council sessions and committee meetings will pause during the break, munic-



Abdulaziz Al Naar, Chairman of Muharraq Municipal Council



Dr Shubber Al Wadaei, Chairman of Northern Municipal Council

ipal officials said work on residents' requests, service issues and coordination with government entities will remain ongoing.

Muharraq Municipal Council Chairman Abdulaziz Al Naar said the council would continue monitoring ongoing projects and addressing service matters across the governorate.

He highlighted recent efforts covering road improvements, infrastructure upgrades and follow-up on the Muharraq development scheme aimed at pre-

serving the area's historic identity and enhancing its urban environment.

Al Naar added that road and sewage projects would continue, while a redevelopment project to add parking spaces along Shaikh Hamad Street is expected to begin next month.

Northern Municipal Council Chairman Dr Shubber Al Wadaei said the council would continue tracking residents' needs and coordinating with relevant authorities during the recess.

Public Prosecution Launches Student Training Programme



The Public Prosecution has launched a specialised training programme for university students aimed at providing practical experience in the legal field and strengthening national competencies.

Running from July 1 to August 30, 2026, the programme allows students to gain insight into judicial work, enhance their legal knowledge, and connect academic learning with real-world practice.

First Attorney General and Head of the Judicial Inspection Department, Counsellor Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Al Hamadi, said the programme provides students with field experience through placements across various general and specialised



prosecution offices.

Students will learn about the responsibilities of different departments, legal procedures, and the work carried out by Public Prosecution members under the supervision of the Judicial Inspection Department.

The programme also includes field visits to criminal courts, the Physical Evidence Department, the Minors' Funds Administration, and the State Lawsuits Authority to provide students with a wider understanding of Bahrain's justice system.

Summer Skin Risks

How to Protect Against Heat, Sweat and Sun Damage?

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

As temperatures and humidity levels rise, skin problems become more common during the summer months, with heat, sweating and sun exposure increasing the risk of irritation and damage.

Dermatology, Laser and Aesthetic Specialist Dr. Ranya Kayed says common seasonal concerns include heat rashes, fungal infections and sunburns, many of which can be prevented through simple daily skincare routines.

She explained that excessive sweating can clog pores, weaken the skin barrier and cause itching and irritation.

Heat Rash and Infections

Dr. Ranya identified heat rash, also known as prickly heat, as one of the most frequent summer conditions. The issue appears as small red bumps and itching, often caused by trapped sweat.

She recommends wearing loose cotton clothing, reducing prolonged heat exposure and keeping the skin dry to lower the risk.

High humidity can also encourage fungal and bacterial growth, leading to conditions such as ringworm, athlete's foot and sweat-related follicle inflammation.

"Drying the body properly after showering is one of the most important prevention steps," she said, highlighting that moisture creates an environment where infections can develop.



"Dry skin properly after showering – moisture can create the perfect environment for irritation."

– DR. RANYA KAYED, DERMATOLOGY SPECIALIST

Sun Protection

Dr. Ranya warned that ultraviolet (UV) rays are among the biggest threats to skin health, contributing to sunburn, pigmentation, dark spots and premature skin aging.

She advised using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, applying it regularly, and using additional protection such as hats and sunglasses.

She also cautioned against prolonged sun exposure for tanning, noting that it can increase long-term skin damage.

MP Office Forgery Appeal Rejected

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

The Fifth High Criminal Appeals Court upheld a one-year suspended jail sentence against a woman accused of forging an MP's signature on a secondment cancellation document. The court also ordered the confiscation of the forged document.

Prosecutors said the woman helped create and use a forged House of Representatives document in 2025 by submitting a form that falsely appeared to carry the MP's approval. The MP later reported that the signature was not his and that he had not authorised her to sign on his behalf.

A forgery expert confirmed that the disputed signature was not written by the MP, while the court found that the evidence supported the conviction. The appeal was rejected and the original sentence was maintained.

Accountant Cleared in Missing Funds Case

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

A company accountant has been acquitted of allegations that he stole company funds after the court found insufficient evidence linking him to the missing money. The Public Prosecution had accused him of taking company cash in 2025 through his work duties.

The defence argued there was no direct proof that the funds had ever been in the account-

Company Ordered to Pay BD40,239 Debt

A commercial dispute between two companies over unpaid contracting services ended with the High Commercial Court ordering a company to pay more than BD40,000 in outstanding dues. The case involved payments for supplied materials, equipment rental and labour services provided under a credit agreement.

The claimant company filed a lawsuit seeking BD40,239,940, stating that the defendant had acknowledged the debt but failed to settle the amount. The court reviewed documents submitted in the case and found the evidence sufficient to prove the outstanding obligation.

As the defendant company failed to appear in court or provide evidence of payment, the court ruled in favour of the claimant and ordered payment of the debt, along with legal costs and attorney fees.

ant's possession and challenged documents and signatures presented in the case. The court also noted that the company's cash handling procedures were unclear.

After reviewing expert reports and financial records, the court found that other employees had handled some deposits and that no documents proved the accountant received or misused the funds. The court ruled that doubts remained and acquitted the defendant.

NOTICE

With regard to license cancellation

of "SICO Funds Services Company B.S.C. (Closed)"

With reference to the Resolution of the Governor of the Central Bank of Bahrain No. (19) of 2026 pertaining to the cancellation of the Investment Business Firm - Category 2 license of "SICO Funds Services Company B.S.C. (Closed)" issued on 6 Muharram 1448H, corresponding to 21st June 2026, the Central Bank of Bahrain hereby provides notice that the Investment Business Firm - Category 2 license of "SICO Funds Services Company B.S.C. (Closed)" issued on 14th of October 2004, registered under commercial registration No. 55423 has been cancelled, with effect from the date of issuing and publication of the above resolution in the Official Gazette.

BENEFIT Launches Fifth Edition of “MASAR” Fintech Summer Internship Program



BENEFIT, the Kingdom's innovator and leading company in Fintech and electronic financial transactions service, has launched the fifth edition of its annual “MASAR” Fintech Summer Internship Program, Program for third and fourth-year university students. The two-month program offers participants hands-on exposure to the fintech sector through practical experience across several departments at BENEFIT. It is designed to help students understand real workplace dynamics, build professional confidence, and develop the skills needed to support their transition from university to the labor market.

This year's edition focuses on providing a well-rounded internship experience that combines daily workplace learning with cross-functional collaboration and professional development opportunities. Participants will have the opportunity to work closely with different teams, gain insight into BENEFIT's operations, and learn more about the compa-

ny's role in supporting Bahrain's digital payments infrastructure and electronic financial services ecosystem. Mr. Salah Al Awadhi, Chief Human Resources Officer at BENEFIT, commented: “We are proud to launch the fifth edition of MASAR, a program that reflects BENEFIT's continued commitment to investing in Bahraini youth and preparing them for the future of the fintech sector.”

Our aim is to give students a real opportunity to learn from the workplace, build confidence, and develop practical skills that will help them take their first steps into their professional careers.” Mr. Al Awadhi added: “This year's program has been tailored to offer a more comprehensive experience by combining hands-on training across our departments with enrichment activities outside the workplace that focus on communication, teamwork, and career readiness.”

These activities broaden the overall internship experience and give students additional opportunities to learn, engage, and grow beyond their day-to-day training.



Salah Al Awadhi, Chief Human Resources Officer at BENEFIT

We look forward to seeing the participants make the most of this opportunity and carry the experience forward into their future careers.” Through “MASAR,” BENEFIT continues to strengthen the connection between higher education and the labor market by providing young talent with direct exposure to professional environments and practical learning opportunities in one of the Kingdom's most dynamic sectors.

The program also supports Bahrain's broader ambition to further develop its position as a regional financial hub by helping prepare a new generation of talent equipped to contribute to the continued growth and innovation of the financial services ecosystem.

Eskan Bank Participates as Platinum Sponsor at Bahrain Smart Cities Summit 2026 and Receives “Innovation” Award for Baity Platform

Eskan Bank announced its participation as a Platinum Sponsor at the Bahrain Smart Cities Summit 2026, held under the patronage of His Excellency Shaikh Khalid Bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister, and organized by the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, from 30 June to 1 July 2026. The Bank's participation reflects its continued commitment to advancing Bahrain's smart city agenda through innovative digital housing solutions and supporting the Kingdom's vision for sustainable urban development.

During the summit, Eskan Bank received the “Innovation Award in Digital Real Estate Services” for its pioneering Baity platform, Bahrain's digital real estate advisor, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. The award highlights the platform's role in transforming the homeownership journey through an integrated digital ecosystem that enhances accessibility, transparency, and efficiency across the Kingdom's housing sector.

Baity provides citizens with a comprehensive digital experience, enabling users to search for properties, explore residential developments, take virtual tours, access housing finance services, track their financing applications with real-time status updates, complete digital reservations, make electronic payments, obtain online property valuations from certified valuers across the Kingdom, and securely verify their identity through integration with the Electronic Key 2.0 platform. The plat-



form also delivers valuable analytical insights and data-driven tools that support real estate developers, financial institutions, and government entities in enhancing services and enabling informed decision-making.

Her Excellency Mrs. Amna bint Ahmed Al Rumaihi, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning and Chairperson of Eskan Bank's Board of Directors, stated:

“This recognition reflects the Kingdom of Bahrain's steadfast commitment to leveraging digital innovation to transform the housing sector and enhance the quality of services provided to citizens. The Baity platform stands as a flagship national initiative, demonstrating how strategic collaboration between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and Eskan Bank can deliver integrated, citizen-centric digital services that simplify the homeownership journey, strengthen transparency, and improve accessibility. As we continue advancing Bahrain's vision for sustainable urban development, we remain committed to developing innovative solutions that elevate the customer experience, em-

power informed decision-making, and contribute to building more sustainable, connected, and citizen-centric communities.”

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Abdulla Taleb, General Manager of Eskan Bank, said:

“Our participation in the Bahrain Smart Cities Summit as Platinum Sponsor, alongside receiving this prestigious recognition for the Baity platform, reflects Eskan Bank's ongoing commitment to delivering innovative digital solutions that simplify the homeownership journey and enhance the overall customer experience. We remain dedicated to supporting Bahrain's smart city ambitions by driving digital transformation across the housing sector and developing services that create lasting value for citizens and stakeholders alike.”

Through its participation in the Bahrain Smart Cities Summit 2026, Eskan Bank continues to demonstrate its leadership in digital housing innovation while reinforcing its commitment to supporting Bahrain's vision for smart, sustainable, and citizen-centric communities.

Providing University Students with Comprehensive Professional Experience for Two Months Seef Properties Launches Second Edition of “Taasis” Program to Train Young National Cadres

As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting national talent and enhancing the readiness of Bahraini youth for the labour market, Seef Properties announced the launch of the second edition of its “Taasis” training program. This program aims to provide university students with comprehensive professional experience, allowing them to gain firsthand knowledge of the corporate work environment while acquiring the skills necessary for their future careers.

The program builds on the company's investment in human capital and development of promising national talent by providing high-quality training opportunities that bridge academic knowledge with practical application. It empowers participants to explore various career paths within the real estate, asset management, and shopping mall sectors.

The new edition was launched on the first of July and will run for the duration of two months. Par-



Ahmed Yusuf, CEO of Seef Properties

Participants will engage in hands-on training within different company departments, gaining insights into operational and administrative functions. They will furthermore benefit from interactive workshops led by company officials, mentorship and career guidance sessions, and direct meetings with executive management, in addition to field visits to Seef Properties' projects.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Ahmed Yusuf, CEO of Seef Properties, stated, “We are proud to continue the Taasis program for the second consecutive year, following the success of its first



Abeer Al Shaikh, Human Resources and Administrative Manager at Seef Properties

edition, which reflected the importance of providing qualitative training opportunities for Bahraini youth. The program embodies our commitment to granting national talent practical understanding of the business environment, enhancing their career-readiness and contributing to the Kingdom's economic development.”

He added, “Investing in youth is central to our vision for corporate sustainability. We continue to develop initiatives that provide them with opportunities to learn,



experiment, and gain practical experience, enabling them to better build career paths and develop a deeper understanding of the modern business environment.”

For her part, Ms. Abeer Al Shaikh, Human Resources and Administrative Manager at Seef Properties, commented, “Taasis focuses on broadening participants' experiences by allowing them to explore various roles within the company and comprehend how these roles contribute

to achieving corporate goals. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the real estate sector and the competencies required in today's workplace.”

She added, “We are keen to ensure that participants benefit from practical learning experiences and interactions with specialists in various fields. This enriches their professional knowledge, expands their career prospects, and maximises the value of their training.”

The program will conclude in a final project where participants will apply their acquired knowledge to address a practical business challenge and present their project to a panel of company experts. Outstanding participants will be recognised, demonstrating their professional and personal development, while reinforcing the

role of Taasis as an effective platform for nurturing national talent.

Seef Properties is a leading real estate developer in Bahrain, with a diverse portfolio of commercial, leisure, and residential projects that contribute to economic growth and enhance the quality of life in the Kingdom. The company remains committed to supporting community, educational, sports, and cultural initiatives as part of its dedication to the welfare of Bahraini society.

Zain awarded 25-year Syria telecom license following USD 747 million bid

Zain Group, a leading regional technology company, has been awarded a 25-year licence to operate a mobile telecom network in the Syrian Arab Republic following a competitive tender process conducted by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

The licence, valued at USD 747 million, will allow Zain to operate Syria's existing MTN network. The agreement includes a 20-year term with the option of a five-year extension.

- Zain Syria will invest USD 800 million over next decade in roll-out of 5G and digital technologies
- Commercial launch under Zain Syria brand expected in Q1 2027
- Zain involved in six-month transition period to ensure continuity of services for 6.3m customers
- Bader Al-Kharafi: “Zain's expansion to Syria reflects our confidence in the country's future prosperity and reinforces Kuwaiti Syrian socio-economic relations”



Zain will establish a new operating company in Syria, holding a 75% stake, while a Syrian government entity will own the remaining 25%. The commercial launch of the “Zain Syria” brand is expected in the first quarter of 2027, subject to regulatory approvals.

A six-month transition period will see Zain working closely with Syrian authorities and the current operator to ensure service continuity for around 6.3 million customers.

As part of the agreement, Zain plans to invest more than USD 800 million over the next decade to modernize and expand the network, including the rollout of 5G and AI-powered digital technologies.

Zain Group said the expansion reflects confidence in Syria's telecom market and long-term economic prospects, and aligns with its regional strategy to grow in high-potential markets and strengthen digital connectivity across the Levant.

Trump defends earning more than \$1bn on crypto

AFP | Joint Base Andrews, United States

US President Donald Trump yesterday defended earning around \$1.2 billion from his family's cryptocurrency activities last year, saying "everybody's profiting" from his time in power.

"You know why I'm profiting, because the stock market's going up, everybody's profiting," Trump told reporters as he prepared to take his first flight on a new Air Force One plane gifted by Qatar.

"I don't get involved in my personal (finances), we have funds that run

my money," Trump said. "I've made a lot of money before I became president, and they invest my money, and I don't talk to them."

"I don't know if I've had a better career in politics or business, but I had a great career in business, and you know, you saw the cash, and you report the different things," he said.

"So we're all profiting. I'm profiting because I have a lot of money and a lot of cash."

According to financial disclosures released by the US

Office of Government Ethics on Tuesday, Trump received nearly

\$550 million from his ties to the startup World Liberty Financial in 2025.



'Excited' Trump takes first flight on Qatar-gifted Air Force One

AFP | Aboard Air Force One, Undefined

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he was thrilled to make his first flight aboard his new Air Force One plane, thanking Qatar for the controversial gift of the luxury jet. Trump said the United States "couldn't build a plane like this" -- despite the fact that the heavily modified Boeing 747-8 aircraft was originally made there.

"To be honest with you, I'm excited about the first flight. Nobody's ever seen anything like it," Trump told journalists traveling with him, including an AFP photographer, ahead of a trip to North Dakota.

The 80-year-old president is due to attend an event at the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library as part of celebrations for the 250th anniversary of American independence.

"They just completed it. They made it appropriate for a pres-



US President Donald Trump speaks to the press before he boards Air Force One for his first flight aboard the Boeing 747-8 that Qatar gifted the United States to use for executive travel, at Joint Base Andrews, in Maryland

ident, that means the security and all of the different bells and whistles they put on. Very complex stuff, but it's really quite something," Trump said at Joint Base Andrews near Washington.

"Frankly, we couldn't build a plane like this because we

wouldn't be willing to spend the kind of money necessary. They spent top dollars," Trump told reporters.

Trump said he had asked the Emir of Qatar if he could use the plane but "he said 'no, no, I'd like to make a contribution to

the country, so it was very nice."

The plane will serve as a stop-gap until Boeing delivers two new purpose-built Air Force Ones, which are expected to be delivered in two years after a series of delays and cost overruns.

The MoU, brokered by Qatar and Pakistan, culminated in a summit last month in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Trump says talks were 'very good'

The technical discussions were held at a lower level and focused on the implementation details of the memorandum.

Iran rejected Trump's earlier suggestion that direct talks would take place in Doha.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the Iranian delegation would be led by Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, but added the officials "have no plans for negotiations with the American side at any level over the coming days".



US envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff were not taking part in the technical talks

As far as things are going, the denuclearization of Iran is moving along well. They've had very good meetings, and we'll see. We hit them very hard... but we're getting along very well

TRUMP

TDI | agencies

US President Donald Trump yesterday welcomed progress in indirect talks between Washington and Tehran, describing recent meetings in Doha as "very good" and expressing optimism over efforts to curb tensions and advance discussions on Iran's nuclear programme.

"As far as things are going, the denuclearization of Iran is moving along well. They've had very good meetings, and we'll see," Trump told reporters as he prepared to board his new Qatar-gifted Air Force One aircraft for a trip to North Dakota.

"We hit them very hard... but we're getting along very well," he said, referring to the negotiations aimed at easing tensions following recent exchanges of fire between the two sides.

The latest round of talks be-

gan in Doha on Wednesday with Iran and the United States engaging in indirect negotiations through mediators in an effort to advance a memorandum of understanding designed to end the conflict and stabilise the

region.

Although both sides had indicated that officials would attend discussions on implementing the agreement, Tehran reiterated that direct negotiations with Washington would not

Iran was unable to export 'single barrel of oil' during US blockade

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on Tuesday said Iran was unable to export any oil during the US blockade on its ports, noting that exports have since surged.

"From the day the blockade was lifted until today, we have exported more than 40 million barrels of oil," he said in an interview on state televi-

sion. "By contrast, during the previous 50 to nearly 60 days, we were genuinely unable to export even a single barrel of oil."

"We are pursuing dialogue, but if the dialogue is not implemented, we are also prepared for war and will respond accordingly," Ghalibaf said in an interview on state television, as Iranian and US delegations were due to hold separate discussions in Doha.

take place.

A diplomat familiar with the talks, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the discussions, confirmed that negotiations were under way through Qatari and Pakistani mediators.

The technical discussions, held at a lower level and focused on the implementation details of the memorandum, are intended to build on progress achieved during last month's Lake Lucerne Summit in Switzerland.

The memorandum of understanding, brokered by Qatar and Pakistan, established a 60-day ceasefire that halted hostilities following US-Israeli strikes in late February. The agreement also provides for the reopening of the blockaded Strait of Hormuz and outlines a roadmap towards a permanent settlement and a long-term agreement on Iran's nuclear programme.

Iran rejected Trump's earlier suggestion that direct talks would take place in Doha. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the Iranian delegation would be headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi but stressed that officials had "no plans for negotiations with the American side at any level over the coming days".

US envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff were not participating in the technical discussions, according to the diplomat, although both met with Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Doha on Tuesday.



According to Qatar's foreign ministry, the meeting focused on the ongoing US-Iran talks under the memorandum of understanding framework as well as regional developments, including the situation in Lebanon.

Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said implementation challenges were inevitable following a conflict of such scale and noted that the Doha talks would focus particularly on provisions relating to the Strait of Hormuz and developments in Lebanon.

1823

Bahia Independence Day: End of Portuguese rule in Brazil, with the final defeat of the Portuguese crown loyalists in the province of Bahia

1865

One-time Methodist Reform Church minister William Booth and his wife Catherine Booth found the East London Christian Mission, now known as The Salvation Army



1964

US President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act into law

1990

1,426 pilgrims are trampled to death after a panic in a tunnel in Mecca, Saudi Arabia

US signs agreement to build permanent embassy in Jerusalem

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

The United States yesterday signed an agreement to build a new embassy compound in Jerusalem, in a move that Israel said reflected the "unbreakable alliance" between the countries.

During his first term, US President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 and ordered the relocation of Washington's diplomatic mission from Tel Aviv. But the services were

spread across several locations in Jerusalem until a single permanent site could be found.

"The United States not only recognises Jerusalem as the eternal, indigenous, and forever capital of the Jewish people, but also that the United States says that we're going to do something about it," US ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said during a signing ceremony at Israel's foreign ministry.

"We are going to plant our flag, our American flag, on

the soil of Jerusalem for a permanent and a brand new embassy compound that will serve as our mothership of diplomatic activities here in Israel.

"I would say God made that decision 3,800 years ago, and we finally got around to acknowledging what had been determined long before the United States of America came along," he added.

The embassy will be built at the Allenby compound in southern Jerusalem

Sony to stop releasing PlayStation games on discs

AFP | Paris, France

Sony said yesterday that it would stop releasing new video games for the PlayStation on disc in January 2028 following a shift in consumer preferences.

"Following this date, new games will be available on PlayStation Store and at retailers in digital formats only," the company said on its official PlayStation blog.

In practice that means gamers will have to download directly from Sony's PlayStation store or will obtain a download code when purchasing a title from a retailer.

The announcement comes as the upcoming exclusively digital release of "Grand Theft Auto VI", which is predicted to become the biggest-selling cultural product of all time, has caused some consternation among gamers.



Sony began its move towards digital downloads in 2020 with the release of the latest console, PlayStation 5, that had a version without a disk drive.

There was grumbling on social media that the lack of a physical disc would eliminate any second-hand market for the title.

Sony said the upcoming shift "has no impact on games that already released, or will be releasing, prior to January 2028 in disc format."

120 dead in latest Sudan cholera outbreak: WHO

AFP | Cairo, Egypt

A cholera outbreak in Sudan has killed 120 people, with another 1,102 suspected cases since May in isolated

war zones, the World Health Organization said Wednesday.

More than three years of war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have

decimated the country's healthcare system. This is Sudan's third wave of cholera in as many years, and began only two months after the last outbreak was declared over.

Israeli troops to stay in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza

'Until further notice'



Israeli army tanks positioned along the Israel-Lebanon border

AFP | Undefined

Israel's defence minister said yesterday that Israeli forces would remain in so-called security zones established in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza "until further notice".

"The IDF will remain in the security zones in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza until further notice, in order to protect Israel's residents and communities from jihadist terrorists," Israel Katz said, according to the defence

ministry.

"We will not withdraw from the security zones," Katz said at a function held in honour of Israeli soldiers killed during the 2006 war in Lebanon.

Katz also reiterated an earlier warning to Iran, saying the Islamic republic would be struck with "full force" if it attacked Israel over its operations in Lebanon.

Israel and Lebanon signed a US-sponsored framework agreement on Friday to pave

the way for peace between the two countries and disarm Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah.

Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have repeatedly ruled out withdrawing troops from southern Lebanon, where Israeli forces continue to clash with Hezbollah fighters.

They maintain that any troop withdrawal would happen only after Hezbollah has been disarmed across Lebanon.

US envoy warns some NATO allies 'lagging' on Trump spending vow

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The US ambassador to NATO warned yesterday that some European countries were not doing enough to fulfil a defence spending pledge, ahead of a summit in Ankara with President Donald Trump.

Under pressure from Trump, NATO leaders agreed at a gathering last year in The Hague to boost defence-related spending to five percent of GDP by 2035.

"Some allies are doing more than others -- and we have countries like Poland, the Nordic countries, the Baltics, and Germany leading the way," US envoy Matthew Whitaker told

journalists.

"But we have some that are lagging behind, that either are not spending enough right now or don't have a credible path to get to the Hague defence commitment."

Whitaker said Trump "fully expects that all allies will step up immediately and get on the path to five percent and do it with urgency."

The NATO summit in Turkey comes after Trump lashed out at European allies over their response to his war in Iran.

Whitaker said he believed the bad blood was behind the alliance, claiming that "those days are past us".

England breaks record for warmest June: Met Office



This combination of aerial pictures created on June 30, 2026 shows the high water level (L) at Woodhead Reservoir in Glossop, northern England on June 30, 2026, in contrast to the low levels (R), on June 10, in 2025.

AFP | London, United Kingdom

England chalked up its warmest June since records began in 1884, the United Kingdom's weather agency said yesterday, after a month that saw temperatures soar to new highs.

Rare extreme heat warnings were issued for several days last month, which was also the second-warmest June on record for the UK as a whole, with "exceptionally warm overnight temperatures", the Met Office said.

England registered an average temperature of 17.1C last

month compared to 16.9C in June 2025.

"The exceptional warmth was driven by an intense and record-breaking heatwave at the end of the month," the Met Office said in its press release.

Scientists warn that extreme weather events such as heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense as a result of human-induced climate change.

The temperature record for June was broken multiple times last week during a heatwave which disrupted Britain's transport network, schools and hospitals, and also scorched parts of Europe.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



The Independent Scientific Panel on AI has just released its first assessment on the promises & risks of artificial intelligence. The message is clear: The more AI advances without shared rules, the less say governments & people will have in the outcome. I urge countries not to wait.

@antonio gutierrez

02



A very warm welcome to India, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. We are delighted to host you on your first visit to India and I look forward to our wide-ranging discussions tomorrow that will further deepen the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. Through our joint efforts, we will continue to advance peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

@narendramodi

03



I have arrived in Delhi, the capital of India. As Prime Minister of Japan, this will be my first visit to India in about three years, and personally, my very first time visiting the country.

@takaichi_sanae

04



Digital spaces bring opportunities, but also risks for children's health and development. With President @EmmanuelMacron, we call for collective action to better protect young users while harnessing what technology can offer.

@DrTedros

Japan plans sovereign AI model, 10 million AI robots

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

Japan plans to develop a homegrown artificial intelligence model and have 10 million AI-equipped robots operating in more than a dozen

sectors by 2040, the government said.

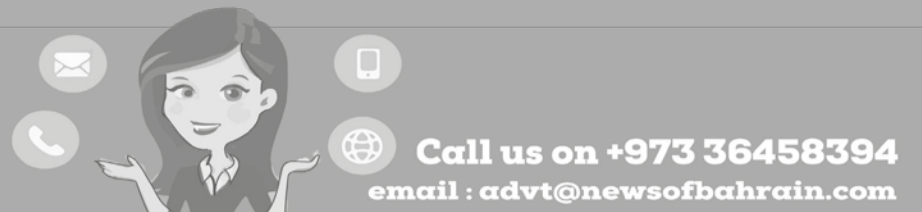
The country will reportedly invest around \$6 billion in the homemade AI model, which will be developed by Noetra, a consortium of firms including

SoftBank and Sony.

Countries around the world are seeking to develop sovereign AI models to reduce a potentially dangerous over-reliance on technology from the United States and China.

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

Classifieds



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region

Qatar PM Meets U.S. Envoys to Review Iran Talks

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Qatar's Minister of Foreign Affairs, met U.S. envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to discuss ongoing regional diplomatic efforts, including negotiations between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran.



During the meeting, both sides reviewed the latest developments in the Iran talks, conducted within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between the parties. The discussions emphasized the importance of continued dialogue and diplomatic engagement as a pathway toward enhancing regional security and stability.

The talks also addressed recent developments across the region, with particular focus

on the ceasefire in Lebanon. Both sides underlined the need to strengthen and sustain the ceasefire agreement in a manner that preserves Lebanon's unity, sovereignty, and long-term stability.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani reaffirmed Qatar's ongoing commitment to mediation efforts and its support for all diplomatic tracks stemming from the memorandum of understanding. He stressed Qatar's goal of achieving a comprehensive and sus-

tainable settlement that promotes regional security, protects the interests of peoples in the region, and strengthens international peace and security.

The U.S. envoys expressed appreciation for Qatar's diplomatic role, working in partnership with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in facilitating dialogue between relevant parties. They also reiterated Washington's commitment to continuing negotiations and supporting diplomatic initiatives aimed at reaching a comprehensive agreement.

WHO Warns of Growing Health Crisis Across Eastern Mediterranean

Region Faces Half of Global Humanitarian Burden Amid Funding Shortfalls

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the Eastern Mediterranean Region is facing unprecedented humanitarian and health challenges, with nearly half of the world's humanitarian burden concentrated in the region.

WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr Hanan Balkhy, said the region accounts for less than 10% of the global population but represents almost 50% of people affected by humanitarian crises worldwide.

She said WHO requires \$1.12 billion for emergency operations in 2026, with more than half needed for the Eastern Mediterranean, but over 40% of the required funding remains unavailable.

Dr Balkhy highlighted ongoing crises in Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia, along with drought impacts in the Horn of Africa and wider regional tensions affecting multiple countries.



She warned that funding shortages are affecting access to essential services, including maternal care, vaccinations, medicines, and outbreak prevention.

Gaza Health System Under Severe Pressure

WHO said Gaza's healthcare system remains devastated, with hospitals facing critical shortages of medicines, fuel and specialised medical staff.

More than 214,000 communicable disease cases were reported in May, while at least 43,000 people require long-term rehabilitation due to serious injuries.

WHO continues supporting trauma care, medical evacuations, rehabilitation, disease

monitoring and emergency supplies, but warned that the health crisis could become a long-term public health challenge.

Lebanon Crisis Deepens

In Lebanon, WHO reported that more than 4,200 people have been killed and over 12,000 injured since the escalation of hostilities.

The organisation said attacks on healthcare facilities have killed health workers and disrupted medical services, while displacement continues to limit access to care.

WHO and partners have provided more than 410,000 health consultations and trained over 1,000 healthcare workers to support emergency response.

UAE reviews preparations for 46th ICMM World Congress in Abu Dhabi



The Organizing Committee of the 46th World Congress of the International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM),

scheduled to take place in Abu Dhabi from November 9 to 13, 2026, held a coordination meeting to review the latest preparations for the event.

The meeting was chaired by Major General Issaq Saleh Al Bloushi, Assistant Chief of Staff for Joint Capabilities and Chairman of the Conference Steering Committee. It focused on monitoring progress across various organizational and technical tracks ahead of the global gathering at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC).

Committee members reviewed updates on logisti-

cal arrangements, operational planning, and coordination between different working groups involved in the congress. Discussions also covered mechanisms to enhance cooperation among committees to ensure efficient execution of tasks.

Officials emphasized the importance of integrated efforts and strict adherence to the established timeline. The review aims to ensure the congress is delivered at the highest standards of organization and professionalism, reflecting positively on the host nation and its capabilities in organizing major international events.

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German Ambassador Hosts Reception to Mark Assumption of Local EU Presidency



The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Henning Simon, hosted a reception to mark Germany's assumption of the local Presidency of the European Union in Bahrain, during an official ceremony held at his residence. The event witnessed the official handover of the local EU Presidency from the Republic of Cyprus to the Federal Republic of Germany, as the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Andreas Eliades, handed over the presidency to the German Ambassador, signaling the start of the German term.

ICRF Launches and Holds Second Week of 'Thirst Quenchers 2026' Campaign



The Indian Community Relief Fund (ICRF) Bahrain officials, dignitaries from the Ministry of Labour, LMRA, and IOM, alongside volunteers and students, distribute refreshments to workers during the launch of 'Thirst Quenchers 2026' at Cebarco in Zallaq, and the second weekly drive at Mohammed Jalal Contracting in Galali. The 11th edition of the annual summer awareness initiative benefits hundreds of workers across the Kingdom, promoting health and safety during the summer months.

Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam Inducts New Executive Committee for 2026-2028 Term



Indian Ambassador H.E. Vinod K. Jacob, chief guest at the event, pins official portfolios on the newly elected Executive Committee and Ladies' Wing members of the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS) during a grand induction ceremony at the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Presided over by BKS President P.V. Radhakrishna Pillai and welcomed by General Secretary Varghese Karakkal, the milestone event honored outgoing members and concluded with a vibrant cultural performance by renowned playback singers.

SYMS Organizers Gear Up for Onam Mahotsavam



Members of the newly formed 51-member SYMS (Syro Malabar Society) Onam organizing committee, led by General Convenor Paul K. Antony, during a planning meeting at SYMS Goodwin Hall. The grand celebrations will feature an Onam Mahasadya at Adhari Park Hall on September 4, followed by a series of cultural and sports competitions for members running from September 5 to October 30.



The Ladies' Team of the Bahrain Odia Samaj celebrated Odisha's iconic festival of womanhood, 'Raja', with immense joy and cultural enthusiasm at a special gathering. Attired in traditional garments, the participants honored Mother Earth and welcomed the monsoon season through vibrant cultural activities and shared festive delicacies, beautifully showcasing togetherness and cultural preservation far from home.

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Bahrain juniors beat Qatar to win UAE handball title

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

National junior handball team won the UAE International Youth Friendly Championship on Wednesday after beating Qatar 32-24 in the final in Dubai.

The victory at Shabab Al Ahli Club's hall in Al Mamzar gave Bahrain the title after a sharp response to their narrow defeat by the same side in the preliminary round. It came as part of their build-up to next month's Asian Championship in China.

Bahrain had lost 31-30 to Qatar on Monday after leading 16-15 at half-time, but turned the tables in the final with a far firmer display to end the tournament on top.

The national team reached the final by finishing second in the preliminary round on goal difference ahead of hosts the UAE. Qatar topped the four-team table before the two sides met again for the championship.

Bahrain ended the round-robin stage with one win, one draw



Action from the match

and one defeat. They opened with a 35-35 draw against the UAE, beat Oman 40-33, then lost by one goal to Qatar.

The tournament, organised by the UAE Handball Federation in co-operation with Shabab Al Ahli Club, brought together Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Oman. The teams played each other once in the preliminary round, with the top two advancing to the final.

Bahrain are using the Dubai event as part of their preparations for the 19th Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship, which will be held in Chuzhou, China, from July 15.

The national team, led by Bahraini coach Hussam Madan, are seeking to sharpen their technical and physical readiness, improve understanding between the players and gain high-level match practice before the Asian contest.

Bahrain have been drawn in Group A with China, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong-China. They will open their campaign on July 15 against hosts China.

Unstoppable U18s storm into Arab championship final



Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-18 basketball team secured a place in the Arab Championship final after beating Morocco 73-46 in Tunisia on Wednesday to claim their fourth straight win. The young national side produced another strong display, pairing sharp attacking play with a fighting spirit throughout the match to keep their perfect run alive and move within one step of the title.

Bahrain had opened their campaign with a 60-51 win over Algeria before beating

hosts Tunisia 78-66. They then defeated Libya 73-58, before Wednesday's 27-point victory over Morocco sealed their place in the final.

The team still have one preliminary-round match left, against Egypt tomorrow, which will decide the final order of the group before the title match.

The Arab under-18 championship is being played in a single round-robin format, with the six teams facing each other once. The top two sides advance to the final, while the third- and fourth-placed teams meet in the third-place play-off.

Mbappe scores twice as France breeze past Sweden into last 16

● Olise provides key assists for goals

● Mbappe levels Messi on six goals

● Next face Paraguay in last 16

AFP | East Rutherford

Kylian Mbappe scored twice and Michael Olise was in scintillating form as France beat Sweden 3-0 at the World Cup and set up a last-16 clash with Paraguay.

Mbappe finished a superb move to break the deadlock just before half-time in the last-32 tie watched by 80,663 at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, after France had already hit the woodwork twice -- once through Mbappe and once through Olise.

The French were on top throughout against a limited Swedish side, utterly dominating in terms of possession and shots on goal.

Olise set up Paris Saint-Germain winger Bradley Barcola for the second on 53 minutes, and then delivered a delightful pass for Mbappe to complete a convincing victory.

Mbappe's strikes saw him move level with Lionel Messi on six goals in the all-star golden boot race at this World Cup.

The France captain now has 18 World Cup goals in total, meaning he is just one behind Messi's overall record of 19 -- a mark which 27-year-old Mbappe will keep chasing.



Kylian Mbappe #10 of France scores his team's first goal

He celebrated his first goal by running across to embrace coach Didier Deschamps, who missed France's final group game against Norway to travel home for his mother's funeral.

Deschamps will step down at the end of the competition after 14 highly successful years in charge.

Going out in the last 32 would have been such an anti-climactic way to depart for Deschamps, who captained the first France team to win the World Cup in 1998 and coached them to glory in 2018.

In 1998, France's run to victory on home soil included a 1-0 last-16 win over Paraguay, when Laurent Blanc scored a golden

goal in extra time.

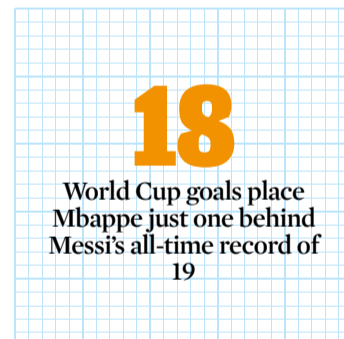
Les Bleus will face the South Americans in the last 16 again this time, on Saturday in Philadelphia.

France will be fully expected to win and march on.

Olise on another planet

Mbappe and Olise were again central figures, with Ousmane Dembele also showing flashes of his brilliance while Barcola was preferred to Desire Doue as the fourth forward.

Sweden have quality in attack too, with the Premier League trio of Viktor Gyokeres, Alexander Isak and Anthony Elanga. But they couldn't get enough of the ball to create chances and



Graham Potter's team now go home.

Getting this far should really be seen as a success for them, however, after they only made it to North America through the back door of the play-offs.

Intense pressure

Olise released Mbappe through the middle to put the ball in the net in the 20th minute, only for a tight offside call to cut short the celebrations.

However, that sparked an intense spell of French pressure which eventually resulted in the opening goal.

Some of their football was mesmerising, as Mbappe hit the post from a Jules Kounde ball across the face of goal and Adrien Rabiot fired narrowly over.

Olise then struck an upright with a breathtaking overhead bicycle kick before Dembele put the rebound wide.

The opener came right on half-time, after an Olise effort was tipped behind by Swedish 'keeper Jacob Widell Zetterstrom.

Dembele and Olise combined at the resulting corner before finding Mbappe, and he did the rest.

Haaland hailed as 'greatest' after more World Cup heroics



Erling Haaland #9 of Norway celebrates scoring his team's second goal

AFP | Arlington

Erling Haaland was described as "devastating" and "the greatest goalscorer in the world" after pouncing for a dramatic late winner for Norway at the World Cup.

The Manchester City predator had a quiet afternoon at the home of the Dallas Cowboys before prodding home in the 86th minute for a thrilling 2-1 victory over the Ivory Coast.

It was Haaland's fifth goal in three games in North America, having been rested for the 4-1 loss to France in the group phase.

Only Lionel Messi, with six, has more goals so far at the tournament.

Haaland led the Norway squad on a rendition of their

now-famous "Viking Row" celebration on the pitch and told broadcasters: "This is unbelievable."

"I can't swear, but it is unbelievable. This is history."

Haaland's goal gave Norway their first win in a World Cup knockout match and sent them into a last-16 showdown with Brazil.

He has scored in each of his last 13 competitive internationals, scoring 25 goals in that run.

Norway will be underdogs against Brazil but captain Martin Odegaard said with Haaland up front they always had a chance.

"It's amazing to have him in the team, we're lucky to have him and it's just about giving him as many opportunities as possible," he said.

Kane saves England after DR Congo scare

AFP | Los Angeles, United States

Harry Kane scored twice to rescue England from the brink of a humiliating World Cup last-32 exit on Wednesday with a come-from-behind 2-1 victory over the Democratic Republic of Congo in Atlanta.

DR Congo had threatened to pull off one of the greatest upsets in World Cup history after winger Brian Cipenga fired the lowly-ranked African qualifiers into a shock lead on seven minutes at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

But Kane finally equalised with a 75th-minute header and then lashed home a superb winner 11 minutes later to secure a win that sends England into a dream last-16 clash with co-hosts Mexico at the Estadio Azteca in Mexico City on Monday. "We spoke about people having hero moments, it could be anyone in the team. A save from (goalkeeper Jordan) Pickford, a block from a defender, whoever it is. We have hero moments, and for me it was the day," said a beaming Kane.

England had entered Wednesday's game with doubts swirling around their makeshift defence.



England's forward #09 Harry Kane celebrates after winning the match.

And those fears came to fruition after just seven minutes, with Cipenga finding himself in acres of space on England's vulnerable right flank before beating Pickford at the near post with a vicious strike.

England looked utterly discombobulated by the goal and although they dominated possession thereafter, they were unable to find a breakthrough.

Congo goalkeeper Lionel Mpsi pulled off a string of remarkable saves to frustrate England, who also had a strong penalty claim just before half-

time when Kane was upended in the area by Mpsi after being put through on goal.

With desperation rising, England manager Thomas Tuchel made a flurry of changes, and the introduction of new Barcelona signing Anthony Gordon on 60 minutes proved decisive.

The former Newcastle winger provided the cross that allowed Kane to nod England level in the 75th minute and then supplied the pass for Kane's 86th-minute winner.

"This team today did not accept a defeat as an outcome," England boss Tuchel said. "It makes me very proud, because they did what was necessary.

"The going got tough, and they showed up, and we got a deserved win, even if it was a late one."

World Cup Schedule (Round of 32)

Today

Time	Match	Venue
10:00 PM	Spain vs Austria	Los Angeles Stadium

Tomorrow

02:00 AM	Portugal vs Croatia	Toronto Stadium
06:00 AM	Switzerland vs Algeria	Vancouver Stadium
09:00 PM	Australia vs Egypt	Dallas Stadium

(All games in Bahrain time)



Mexico see off Ecuador to break 40-year World Cup curse

● Quinones scores and sets up goal

AFP | Mexico City

Mexico turned on the style at their iconic Azteca Stadium, brushing Ecuador aside 2-0 to break their World Cup knockout curse dating back 40 years.

The round-of-32 match was delayed for an hour due to stormy weather and when it started the co-hosts flew out of the blocks, mounting wave after wave of attacks.

In a supercharged atmosphere, Julian Quinones gave Mexico a deserved lead midway through the first half with a thunderous strike and then turned provider for Raul Jimenez.

Ecuador desperately needed to wrest back the momentum after the break but struggled to shift through the gears, with the home side largely in control.

Mexico had not won a World Cup knockout game since 1986, when they last hosted the tournament.

The win means they are now unbeaten in 10 World Cup games at the Azteca and will fancy their chances against England or the Democratic Republic of Congo in the round of 16.

Mexico were one of only three teams in the group phase to win all three of their matches, alongside France and Argentina, and did not concede a single goal.



Mexico's forward #09 Raul Jimenez celebrates scoring his team's second goal with forward #16 Julian Quinones

Ecuador finished third in their group, scoring just two goals.

Gilberto Mora, 17, was named in the starting line-up for Mexico, becoming the second-youngest player to start a knockout match at the World Cup finals behind Pele in 1958.

The home team started on the front foot, refusing to allow a shell-shocked Ecuador to settle.

Jimenez wasted a glorious headed chance in the seventh minute and Mora flashed just wide.

At the other end, John Yeboah muscled his way into the penalty area in a rare foray forward for the visitors, clipping the out-

side of the near post.

Mexico took the lead in the 22nd minute when Saudi-based Quinones received the ball from Roberto Alvarado and tore down the left before driving into the box and unleashing an unstoppable shot past goalkeeper Hernan Galindez, raising the roof.

The first hydration break failed to change the script and Mexico doubled their lead after half an hour when Quinones fed Fulham striker Jimenez, who fired a rocket into the top corner.

Raul Rangel produced a fine save to keep out another Yeboah effort as Ecuador got a foothold

in the match but chances kept flowing at the other end.

Ecuador coach Sebastian Beccacece made a number of changes after the break in an effort to find a way back into the match.

But Mexico, largely content to sit back, still looked the more threatening team, with Cesar Montest twice going close.

Ecuador substitute Kevin Rodriguez poked just wide with just over a quarter of an hour but their chances ran out.

Piero Hincapie was sent off in stoppage time after covering his mouth during a confrontation with an opposition player to cap a miserable night for Ecuador.

Mexico will hope the Azteca, which hosted the World Cup final in 1970 and 1986, works its magic again in the last 16 on Sunday.

From the quarter-finals onwards, all the matches at the World Cup will be taking place in the United States.



Seventeen-year-old Gilberto Mora became the second-youngest player ever to start a World Cup knockout match, behind only Pele in 1958

Sinner sinks Borges to step up Wimbledon title defence



Italy's Jannik Sinner in action

AFP | London

Jannik Sinner moved into the Wimbledon third round as the defending champion held his nerve in a pair of tie-breaks to beat Portugal's Nuno Borges yesterday.

Once again, Sinner wasn't at his best but the world number one did just enough to advance 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 on Centre Court.

The 24-year-old Italian had narrowly avoided an embarrassing first-round exit when he fought back from two sets to one down to beat Serbian Miomir Kecmanovic on Monday.

Sinner was left bloodied against Kecmanovic by an awkward fall that injured his right foot.

The four-time Grand Slam champion did not appear impeded by that blow on his return to action in the second round, but he struggled to impose himself against the spirited world number 48.

"The second set was very tough. First couple of sets we

were serving very well. These matches, where you don't have a lot of control, I'm happy to win," Sinner said.

"I didn't do a lot of practice because the first match was very long.

"There's a couple of things I need to improve. I felt some moments where I still need to get back to this rhythm."

Sinner ended Carlos Alcaraz's two-year reign as Wimbledon champion with a brilliant final victory over the Spaniard last year.

He is still some way from those lofty heights heading into his third-round tie against American world number 81 Jensen Brooksby.

Having opted not to play a Wimbledon warm-up event for the first time in his career, Sinner has looked a little underprepared at the start of his title defence.

Sinner hasn't reached a Grand Slam final this year and blew a two-set lead in a shock French Open second-round defeat against Juan Manuel Cerundolo in June.

Sabalenka sets up third-round clash with Ostapenko



Aryna Sabalenka in action

AFP | London

World number one Aryna Sabalenka battled through a tough second set against American McCartney Kessler to reach the Wimbledon third round.

The four-time Grand Slam champion, who has reached 14 successive major quarter-finals, won 6-1, 7-6 (11/9) on Court One to secure a last-32 meeting with former French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko.

"That was a true battle and I'm super happy that I was

able to stay in that second set to get into that tie-break," said Sabalenka.

"She really tested me and I'm super happy to pass the test."

Sabalenka has never won Wimbledon, losing in the semi-finals on each of her past three visits.

Kessler missed two set points when serving for the second set at 5-3 ahead, before Sabalenka fought back and took a tie-break, in which her 57th-ranked opponent saw another two set points come and go.