

**Smart cameras record violations**

**TDT** | Manama

The Ministry of Interior announced that the smart camera system operated by the General Directorate of Traffic has officially commenced operations.

It has documented various traffic violations.

These include using a mobile phone while driving and failing to wear a seat belt, following the announcement of the launch of the first phase of the system, after ensuring the technical infrastructure is ready and can operate efficiently under different conditions.

**Details**

The General Directorate of Traffic noted that, in order to ensure the timely delivery of traffic notifications, including those related to vehicle registration dates, driving licence renewals, as well as recorded violations, all motorists are required to regularly update their personal details via the "MyGov" application, to avoid the accumulation of violations without their knowledge.

The General Directorate of Traffic also stressed the importance of adhering to traffic laws and regulations, avoiding incorrect driving behaviours, and exercising responsibility and traffic awareness.

**Iran president orders nuclear talks with us**

**AFP** | Paris

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has ordered the start of nuclear talks with the US, local media said yesterday, after US leader Donald Trump said he was hopeful of a deal to avert military action against the Islamic republic.

Following the Iranian authorities' deadly response to anti-government protests that peaked last month, President Trump has threatened military action and ordered the dispatch of an aircraft carrier group to the Middle East.

Trump has maintained he is hopeful of making an agreement and Tehran has also insisted it wants diplomacy, while vowing an unbridled response to any aggression.



HM the King receives French President Emmanuel Macron's letter through H.E. Ambassador Eric Giraud-Telme

President Macron's efforts to enhance relations and develop constructive cooperation with the Kingdom, noting France's active role and contributions to security, stability and regional and global peace.

## HM King affirms strong Bahrain-France partnership

**TDT** | Manama

HM the King emphasised the outstanding partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and France and the ongoing commitment to further develop it in all domains that serve their mutual interests.

HM the King was speaking as he received a letter from French President Emmanuel Macron regarding the longstanding ties and means to develop bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The letter was delivered by His Excellency Eric Giraud-Telme, Ambassador of France to Bahrain, during a meeting with HM King Hamad.

His Majesty commended



# Household relief

Cabinet approves electricity tariff cuts for citizens, increases social support ahead of Ramadan



HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting

**TDT** | Manama

The Cabinet has approved a reduction in the electricity consumption tariff for citizens' primary residences consuming between 5,000 and 7,000 units, lowering it from 32 fils per unit to 16 fils per unit.

The decision was made in coordination with the legislative authorities to support households and ease the cost of living. His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, chaired yesterday's weekly Cabinet meeting at Gudaibiya Palace.

During the session, HRH Prince Salman also directed the doubling of financial support for eligible recipients of social security and disability allowances in preparation for the holy month of Ramadan.

The Ministry of Social Development has been instructed to distribute the support prior to Ramadan to ensure adequate living standards, particularly for citizens in low-income groups.

**Speech**

The Cabinet commended the speech delivered by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa

during his patronage of the Bahrain First Festival 2026.

The Cabinet also commended the organisational efforts of the Ministry of Education, as well as the contributions of students and parents to the success of the festival.

On the 58th anniversary of the establishment of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), the Cabinet commended the BDF's continued advancements in enhancing combat readiness, attributing these achievements to the unwavering support of HM King Hamad, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

**SUCCESS**

The Cabinet noted the success of the recent Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship, hosted by the Kingdom under the patronage of HM the King.

The Cabinet congratulated His Majesty on the Kingdom's national handball team for winning the Asian Handball Championship for the first time in its history, and extended its congratulations to the players, as well as the technical and administrative staff.

It commended the success of the Crown Prince's Cup

Festival, highlighting the role of the Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) High Committee, under the leadership of His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Minister of the Prime Minister's Court and Chairman of the REHC High Committee, for its contributions to the success of the event.

The Cabinet also congratulated the winners of the Crown Prince's Cup Festival.

The Cabinet commended the outcomes of the 36th Autumn Fair, noting significant growth compared to 2025.

**Executive-legislative cooperation**



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, highlighted the importance of cooperation between the executive and legislative branches in implementing government plans and programmes to serve the Kingdom and its citizens. HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he met yesterday with His Excellency Ahmed bin Salman Al-Musallam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives, and H.E. Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh, Chairman of the Shura Council, who were accompanied by deputies and members of both councils, at Gudaibiya Palace. (Detailed report on Page 3)

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# Sector growth

HRH Prince Salman emphasises development initiatives that prioritise Bahrainis' welfare



HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister meets with H.E. Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh and H.E. Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh

TDT | Manama

**H**is Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, affirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to advancing measures across diverse development sectors, while enhancing services and programmes that place citizens at the core of development.

HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he met yesterday with His Excellency Ahmed bin Salman Al-Musallam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives, and H.E. Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh, Chairman of the Shura Council, who were accompanied by deputies and members of both councils, at Gudaibiya Palace.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister noted the Kingdom's commitment to adopting policies and implementing plans and programmes to advance the national economy for the benefit of all.

## 17 illegal workers arrested and 146 violators deported

TDT | Manama

Seventeen violating and irregular workers were arrested and 146 violators deported during inspection campaigns carried out by the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) between January 25 and 31, 2026.

A total of 1,549 inspection campaigns and field visits were conducted during the same period.

The inspection campaigns and visits also led to the detection of a number of violations related to several regulating laws, in particular the Labour Market Regulatory Authority Law and the Residency Law in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Legal measures were taken against the recorded violations.

The LMRA explained that 1,513 inspection visits were conducted at various commercial establishments across all governorates, in addition to 36 joint inspection campaigns.

These included 14 campaigns in the Capital Governorate, 11 in



the Muharraq Governorate, six in the Northern Governorate, and five in the Southern Governorate.

The campaigns were carried out with the participation of the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs, the security directorates in the governorates, the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and

Forensic Science, and the General Directorate of Verdict Enforcement and Alternative Sentencing, as well as the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Social Insurance Organisation, and the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority.

The Authority underlined the continuation of joint coordination with government entities to intensify inspection campaigns across all governorates of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

## Husband causes wife death due to negligence

Rehab Mohammad  
TDT | Manama

wife—in a traffic accident on November 1, 2025, while he was intoxicated.

The First High Criminal Court has set March 17, 2026, as the date to issue its verdict in the case of a Gulf national in his fifties, accused of causing the death of his wife while driving under the influence of alcohol.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with causing, through negligence, the death of the victim—his

He was also charged with being in a clear state of drunkenness in a public place, damaging public property, driving in a manner that endangered lives and property, failing to exercise due care and caution, and driving under the influence of alcohol to a degree that caused him to lose control of the vehicle, resulting in traffic violations and damage to public assets.

## Capital Governor visits AMH



The Capital Governor, His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Hamoud Al Khalifa, visited the American Mission Hospital in Manama, where he was received by the Chief Executive Officer, Dr George Cherian, along with several hospital officials and physicians. During the visit, the Capital Governor expressed his pride in the hospital's distinguished historical standing as one of the oldest and most established leading medical institutions in the region, and in its professional reputation spanning more than 120 years since its establishment. He commended the hospital's continued contributions to supporting and developing the healthcare system through the provision of advanced medical services to citizens and residents.

## Condolences

With Great Sorrow  
The CEO & all staff members of  
Al Baraka Islamic Bank B.S.C. (c)  
convey faithful condolences to

**Mr. Joby Joseph**  
Assistant Manager  
Administration Department

And to all his family members  
on the death of his "Mother"

May ALLAH remedy the misfortune of his  
family and give them a good return and give  
his family the courage and strength  
to face this moment of trial and pain.

**alBaraka**   
Bank

# Trafficking claims

Witness footage captures suspect hiding heroin and methamphetamine beneath stone

**Rehab Mohammad**  
TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has scheduled March 17 to deliver its verdict in a case involving a man in his twenties accused of trafficking heroin and a psychotropic substance, after a witness managed to film him placing narcotic materials beneath a stone.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with possessing, storing, and selling heroin and the psychotropic substance methamphetamine with intent to traffic, in violation of the law.

He was also charged with possessing methamphetamine for personal use outside legally permitted circumstances.

## Evidence

During the hearing, defense

lawyer Zahra Ali submitted a pleading requesting her client's acquittal, arguing that the arrest and search were invalid due to the absence of sufficient evidence linking the defendant to the alleged crimes.

She stated that the legality of arrest and search—whether the suspect is present or not—requires the existence of adequate indications of criminal conduct, whether a misdemeanor or felony.

In the absence of such indications, arrest and search procedures are unlawful.

## Report

Ali also challenged the validity of the preliminary investigation report for failing to appoint a translator, denied the trafficking charge while acknowledging drug use, and emphasized that the defendant is presumed in-



Zahra Ali, defense lawyer

nocent and maintains his denial.

According to testimony by an undersecretary at the Ministry of Interior, at approximately 9:30 a.m. he received a phone call from a confidential and reliable source reporting that an Asian individual had placed an item beneath a group of stones in a passageway, suspected to be

part of a drug handover using the "dead drop" system.

The source also provided a video recording of the individual.

After reviewing the footage, the official coordinated with the relevant authority and proceeded to the location with a police patrol.

## Narcotics

Upon arrival at the site, officers found a small transparent bag containing a white powder suspected to be narcotics.

The crime scene team was then summoned to carry out the necessary forensic procedures.

During this time, the individual shown in the video was spotted near the location and attempted to flee. He was chased and apprehended by the police patrol and identified as the same person appearing in the footage.

# New fees set for Halal auditors

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama



**H.E. Wael Al Mubarak**  
Assessor

The charge is 125 dinars per working day for each assessor.

Licences to use the national halal mark will be issued for three years, with a 100-dinar fee set for issuing the licence approval.

The Minister, His Excellency Engineer Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, issued the decision after reviewing Decision No. 61 of 2024 on halal products in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with reference to Articles 4 and 11.

It was based on a submission from the undersecretary for agriculture and animal resources affairs and followed Cabinet approval.

The decision will take effect from the day after its publication in the Official Gazette, with implementation assigned to the undersecretary for agriculture and animal resources affairs.

## Autumn Fair 2026 concludes with resounding success

**TDT | Manama**

The 2026 Autumn Fair concluded its activities at Exhibition World Bahrain, attracting a large public turnout and dis-

tinguished international participation, which enhanced its position as one of the Kingdom of Bahrain's most prominent commercial and entertainment events.

The 36th edition of the fair achieved notable results, with more than 200,000 visitors during its ten-day run.

Dana Osama Al Saad, Deputy CEO for Resources and Projects

at the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, said the success of Autumn Fair 2026 reflects the effectiveness of the integrated partnership between the public and private sectors.

## Bahrain-India ties



Lieutenant General Theyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi, Chief of Staff, received Capitan Sandeep Singh, Defence Attaché at the Indian Embassy. The Chief of Staff commended the distinguished relations between the two countries, particularly in the military field.

## RHF-UNHCR agreement



The Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) has signed a grant agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Syria, valued at \$2 million, to support the rehabilitation of damaged homes for returning families in Al-Zarbah district in the rural Aleppo governorate and the city of Harasta in Rural Damascus. The agreement comes as part of ongoing efforts to improve living conditions and enhance stability in areas affected by the crisis. The agreement was signed on behalf of the Royal Humanitarian Foundation by the Acting Secretary-General, Ibrahim Dalhan Al Dosari, while it was signed on behalf of UNHCR in Syria by the Representative of the High Commissioner, Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, in the presence of the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Damascus and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Ambassador Waheed Mubarak Sayyar.



## TENDER INVITATION

Delmon Poultry Company B.S.C. invites qualified & specialized companies to submit their bids for the following tender:

Tender Ref.	Tender Title	Tender Document Fee
ADM /01/2026	Appointment of a Customs Clearance Agent	BHD 50 (Non-refundable)
	Tender Publish Date	03 FEB 2026
	Last date for purchasing tender documents	09 FEB,2026 (By 01:00PM)
	<b>Tender Closing Date</b>	<b>12 FEB 2026 (By 01:00PM)</b>
	Bid opening Date	To be advised

### Brief Description:

Delmon Poultry Company B.S.C intends to appoint a customs clearance agent to handle import and export shipments via airport, seaport and King Fahad causeway, along with transportation services, labour and unloading.

### Guidelines for submission of bids:

1. Tender documents may be collected from the Purchasing Department at Delmon Poultry Company's Head office in Hamala (Building 701 – Road 101 – Block 1012) from **Tuesday, 03 February 2026, to Monday, 09 February 2026, during office hours (8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.)**. Tender documents may be purchased by bank transfer to the Company's IBAN. Upon sending the payment confirmation to the Purchasing Department, an electronic copy of the tender documents will be issued.
2. Documents to be enclosed with the bids:
  - a. A valid copy of the Commercial Registration (CR)
  - b. A copy of the certificate of the compliance with the Bahrainisation / manpower employment percentage, issued by the Ministry of Labour.
  - c. All documents submitted with the bid must be stamped with the company's official seal.
  - d. Proposal envelopes must include both the technical and commercial offers together with all required documents. Envelopes must be sealed, clearly labeled with the tender title, and addressed to the Manager of Purchasing Department and deposited in the tender box at the Head Office address stated above.
  - e. This Tender Invitation is supplementary to the tender documents. In event of any discrepancy between this Invitation and the tender document, the tender document shall prevail.
3. For more information, please contact us at 17 608 260 or 17 608 282 (ext. 250), or email us at tenders@dawajen.bh

## Push for urban regulation and key proposals

Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

The Muharraq Municipal Council approved the passage of a series of proposals related to urban regulation, infrastructure, and municipal services during the ordinary meeting of the Muharraq Municipal Council No. (11), held as part of the sixth municipal term and the fourth session of the 2025-2026 convening period.

The proposals, submitted by members of the Muharraq Municipal Council, addressed a broad range of municipal and planning matters, including traffic direction adjustments, road rehabilitation works, regulation of commercial activities, building access and exit arrangements, and measures aimed at enhancing order within residential neighbourhoods.

During the meeting, council members underscored that the approved proposals respond to persistent organisational challenges arising from increased urban density and pressure on infrastructure.

Emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen planning discipline while ensuring that regulatory measures remain practical and responsive to local conditions.

# Shoreline strategy

**Muharraq Council endorses comprehensive package of coastal development proposals**

Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

The Muharraq Municipal Council approved the passage of a comprehensive package of coastal development proposals during its session, underscoring a unified institutional stance on reshaping the future use of the governorate's shoreline.

The proposals, submitted by members of the Muharraq Municipal Council, cover several prominent coastal locations, including Al Sayah, Bu Maher, Dair, Samaheej, and the Riya waterfront.

Their approval reflects a clear policy direction aimed at safeguarding the public character of the coastline while enabling structured and regulated development.

### Priority

Council members stressed



**Coastal areas represent a strategic public asset that must be managed with long term social and environmental considerations in mind.**

During the session that coastal areas represent a strategic public asset that must be managed with long term social and environmental considerations in mind.

The approved proposals seek to address longstanding community expectations by advancing

development frameworks that prioritise accessibility, service provision, and organised use of the shoreline.

The discussions highlighted the need to move beyond fragmented or temporary solutions, calling instead for coordinated planning that ensures coastal sites are developed in a manner consistent with urban planning standards and public interest.

### Deliberations

Throughout the session, the council reaffirmed that the passage of the proposals does not constitute final execution, but rather authorises the relevant executive bodies to proceed with the necessary technical, administrative, and regulatory procedures.

Members emphasised that oversight will remain in place at every stage to preserve the intended objectives of the proposals.

## Park investment file stalls amid Council, Municipality dispute



Khalid Al Qallaf  
Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama



Saleh Buhazzaa  
Al Qallaf to ask about the municipality's reply to the under-secretary's correspondence.

Plans to develop Hatim Al Tai Park went before Muharraq Municipal Council yesterday, with deputy chairman Saleh Bu Hazzaa and Muharraq Municipality director general engineer Khalid Al Qallaf giving different accounts of why the project file has stalled.

Bu Hazzaa told councillors that an earlier meeting, held on the instruction of Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Wael Al Mubarak and attended by ministry undersecretary Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the municipality's director general and the investor, had ended with a clear direction to complete the procedures and allocate the investment.

He said the meeting took place around three to four months ago.

After some time had passed, Bu Hazzaa said he contacted

According to Bu Hazzaa, the response did not match what Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa later reaffirmed, which led him to question how the process was moving.

He added that the investor had met most of the required steps for the project, but that one precautionary measure had resulted in the transaction being stopped in the electronic system.

Bu Hazzaa said the council is keen to preserve investors' rights and to encourage them to work with the municipality.

He called on the Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture to form an independent legal committee to review the Hatim Al Tai Park investment file, so that the procedures are clear, fair and protective of the investor's position.

## Muharraq Council seeks new access roads for Block 262

**Facing traffic problem and public safety worries**

Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama



Muharraq Municipal Council has asked for extra access points to Block 262 in Diyar Al Muharraq, saying the area cannot keep running on a single entrance and exit without traffic trouble and public safety worries.

Fadhil Al Oud, the representative for the Sixth Constituency, said the situation was unsettling for residents.



**“People are worried, especially if there is a crash or an emergency.”**

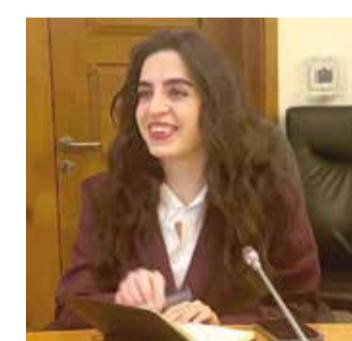
— FADHIL AL OUD, SIXTH CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATIVE

way in and out leaves the block exposed when a crash, breakdown or emergency blocks the road.

“People are worried, especially if there is a crash or an emergency,” he told the meeting. “One incident can throw the whole block into confusion.”

### Sense

He said it made no sense for a full residential block to depend



on one access point.

“It is not reasonable for an entire neighbourhood to rely on a single entrance,” he said, warning that queues build up and that ambulances and Civil Defence teams could be held back.

Noor Afooni, head of urban

**“The main entrances and exits are the responsibility of the Ministry of Works.”**

— NOOR AFOONI, HEAD OF URBAN PLANNING PROJECTS AT THE URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

planning projects at the Urban Planning and Development Authority, attended at the council's request to explain which bodies handle the planning and delivery of entrances and exits, after the council said it had already contacted the Ministry of Works and sent recommendations.

### Designs

Afooni said the main entrances and exits fall under the Ministry of Works and need defined engineering designs.

“The main entrances and exits are the responsibility of the Ministry of Works,” she said, adding that coordination would take place to agree how the block's access should be handled.

The council agreed to write to the Urban Planning and Development Authority to confirm that main access points fall under the Ministry of Works, before sending a further letter to the ministry with the authority's reply attached, as it presses for steps to fix the problem.

## Manama: A vibrant city where cultural diversity and religious practices meet

Ghadeer Alkuamish  
TDT | Manama



Sacred Heart Church, the first church in Bahrain



The oldest Matam Al Bada back to 1275 AH



Shrinathji Shri Krishna Temple, over 200 years old

Manama, the capital of Bahrain, is a vibrant city that welcomes visitors and tourists from all over the world.

What makes it truly special is its rich religious and cultural diversity.

In Manama, mosques, temples, and churches stand side by side, reflecting a long tradition of peaceful coexistence.

One of the city's most historic landmarks is the Shrinathji Shri Krishna Temple.

Over 200 years old and dedicated to the Hindu deity Lord Krishna, it is one of the oldest Hindu temples in the GCC.

Founded in 1817 by the Thattai Hindu Community (THC), who

migrated from Sindh before the partition of India, it remains one of the oldest Hindu temples in the region.

Manama is also home to the Sacred Heart Church in Bahrain.

It is the first church to be built in the region, with its bells ringing for the first time on Christmas Eve, 24 December 1939.

Since its establishment, it has been guided by dedicated leaders and became the first Christian community in Bahrain in 1938.

Tourists are drawn to its beautiful interior, filled with religious murals, icons, and artworks, creating a truly spiritual experience.

The city's diversity extends to Shia matams, with around 84 for men and 48 for women, the oldest Matam Al Bada back to 1275 AH.

# GFH acquires majority stake in Byrne equipment rental

Manama

**G**FH Financial Group BSC announced it has completed the acquisition of a majority stake in Byrne Equipment Rental LLC, one of the GCC's leading industrial services and equipment rental providers with an investment and capex program valued at approximately US\$ 400 million, strategically positioned to support the region's rapidly growing project and infrastructure landscape.

Founded in 1992 in Dubai, UAE, Byrne has evolved into a major regional operator offering a comprehensive "one-stop-shop" rental model with a fleet of approximately 16,000 units. The company operates through 14 offices and a network of depots across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain, spanning more than 153,000 sqm.

Mr. Hammad Younas, the Group Chief Investment Officer at GFH

This includes its flagship Jubail depot, one of the largest logistics and operations hubs of its kind in Saudi Arabia. The company has consistently delivered steady growth in profitability, having achieved approximately 20% growth last year and is strongly positioned to continue this growth trajectory.

Byrne serves a diversified client base of more than 1,100 blue-chip customers across the GCC, delivering sector-agnostic equip-

ment and integrated services that support key industries including oil and gas, construction, utilities, and events. Its core capabilities cover temporary power, modular buildings, compressors, material handling equipment, mobile lighting solutions, and other mission-critical assets required for large-scale operations.

The GCC equipment rental market continues expanding at double digit growth rates, driven by the oil & gas sector, national development programs, industrial growth, and major events, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Byrne is well positioned to capitalize on this momentum, backed by a long-standing management team with deep industry expertise and a proven operational track re-

cord.

With GFH's support, Byrne will focus on entering new verticals, enhancing its product range, and deepening its presence in priority markets. The partnership will also leverage the technical strength of Byrne's operating partners to further reinforce the company's competitive advantage.

Commenting on the acquisition, Mr. Hammad Younas, the Group Chief Investment Officer at GFH, said: "Byrne is a resilient, market-leading platform operating at the center of the region's most dynamic sectors. Its operational scale, strong customer relationships, and technical abilities make it exceptionally well placed to benefit from the substantial pipeline of regional megaprojects. Through this acquisition of a 60% stake, we aim to accelerate Byrne's growth trajectory and expand its

Mr. Patrick Fallon, the Deputy CEO of Byrne Equipment Rental

footprint across strategic GCC markets, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where demand for high-quality industrial and rental solutions continues to rise."

Mr. Patrick Fallon, the Deputy CEO of Byrne Equipment Rental, said: "Partnering with GFH opens significant new opportunities for

Byrne. Their regional scale, investment experience, and long-term commitment will enable us to strengthen our service offerings, de-

ploy more advanced solutions, and continue delivering the reliability and operational excellence our clients expect. This next phase of growth allows us to support national development programs across the GCC even more effectively, including major projects underway in the UAE and Saudi Arabia."

The acquisition aligns with GFH's strategy of investing in mission-critical businesses that contribute to regional economies and support the ambitions of programs such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's "We the UAE 2031" Vision. This transaction further underscores the Group's commitment to building strong, sector-leading platforms across high-growth markets.



## US to launch \$12-bn critical minerals stockpile to ease China reliance

AFP | Washington, United States

**T**he United States is expected to launch a critical minerals stockpile with \$12 billion in initial funding, a White House official confirmed Monday, as Washington seeks to lower reliance on China for rare earths and other resources.

The project, which was first reported on by Bloomberg, is anticipated to bring together some \$1.7 billion in private capital and a \$10 billion loan from the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM).

This would go towards securing and storing the key minerals for businesses like automakers and tech companies -- forming a stockpile for the US private sector -- the White House official confirmed on condition of anonymity.

Rare-earth metals, which

are crucial in the production of everything from smartphones to fighter jets and electric cars, have become a strategic bargaining chip since major producer China introduced restrictions on exports last year.

China's dominance in the rare earths industry, from natural reserves and mining through processing and innovation, is the result of a decades-long drive.

This has now provided Bei-

jing with important leverage in trade talks with President Donald Trump's administration.

The stockpile that Trump is set to announce is aimed at blunting this effect over time.

It is expected to cover both rare earths and critical minerals, alongside other important elements that might see price volatility, Bloomberg reported.

The report added that more

than a dozen companies including automakers General Motors and Stellantis, aviation behemoth Boeing and tech giant Alphabet's Google, are taking part in the initiative dubbed "Project Vault."

China's export restrictions have raised alarm bells in the United States as the world's two biggest economies again crossed swords with escalating tariffs after Trump returned to the presi-

dency last year.

Washington and its allies are now racing to develop alternative mining and processing supply chains.

But experts warn that this process will likely take years to complete.

The EXIM Bank is expected to vote Monday to authorize the 15-year loan, Bloomberg reported, noting that this would be a record-setting deal.

## EWA launches direct debit service for bill payments through BenefitPay

### In Collaboration with BENEFIT

Manama

**A**s part of its continued drive to expand and enhance its digital services, the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), in collaboration with BENEFIT, has announced the launch of a new bill payment service through the BenefitPay app. The new service offers customers a more streamlined and convenient way to manage and settle their EWA bills.

The service al-

lows customers to activate a monthly direct debit facility via the BenefitPay app. To subscribe, customers submit a request through EWA's approved channels, after which a notification is issued

through the BenefitPay app. Customers can then select the preferred bank account to be used for the monthly bill deduction, delivering a secure and seamless payment experience in accordance with the highest standards of quality and reliability.

The Authority provides a range of approved service channels for submitting requests, including Customer Service Centres, electronic services through the Authority's online platform, the Virtual Centre, the home-visit service, as well as its 24/7 Call Centre.

Mrs. Kawther Al Mosawi, Director of Collection and Billing at the Electricity and Water Authority, underscored the Authority's commitment to enhancing the customer experience through the intro-

duction of innovative digital solutions that simplify procedures and improve the efficiency of bill management. This approach supports the continuous development of

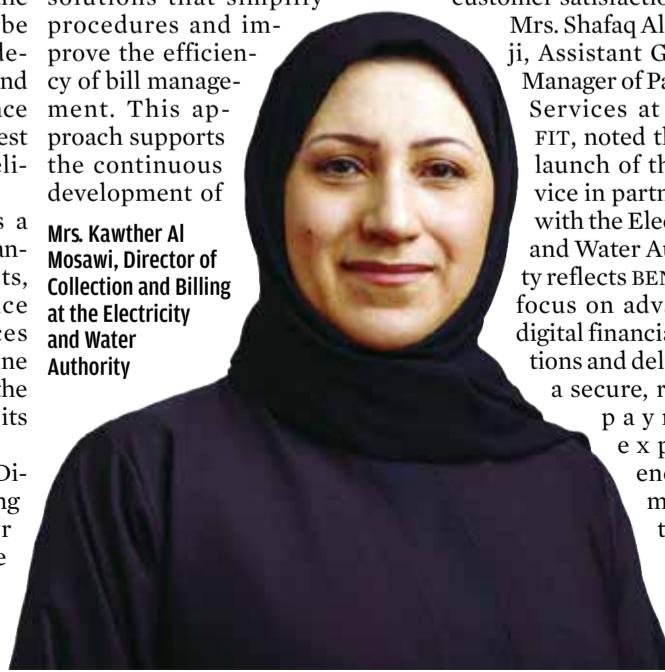
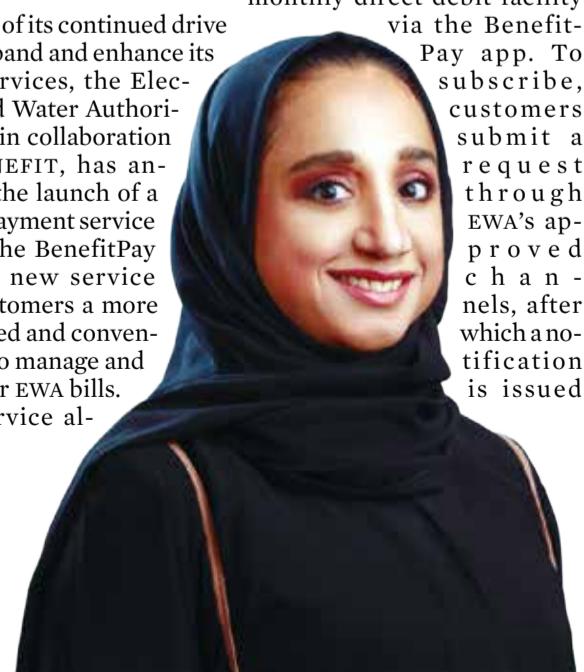
Mrs. Kawther Al Mosawi, Director of Collection and Billing at the Electricity and Water Authority

service quality and reinforces customer satisfaction.

Mrs. Shafaq Alkoohaji, Assistant General Manager of Payment Services at BENEFIT, noted that the launch of this service in partnership with the Electricity and Water Authority reflects BENEFIT's focus on advancing digital financial solutions and delivering a secure, reliable

payment experience that meets the highest standards. Such initiatives further contribute to enhancing the Kingdom of Bahrain's position as a regional leader in digital innovation.

The Electricity and Water Authority continues to provide a broad range of services and solutions aimed at enabling customers to manage their bills more effectively. These include the fixed monthly deduction service, which supports the organisation of recurring financial obligations, alongside ongoing efforts to raise awareness around the importance of rationalising consumption and promoting the use of energy efficient appliances. Collectively, these initiatives help reduce monthly bill values while supporting the Kingdom's sustainability objectives.



# Mojawhraty by Malabar expands retail presence in the GCC

Launches 8th Showroom at Zahia City Centre, Sharjah

Manama

Mojawhraty by Malabar, the exclusive Arabic jewellery retail concept from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, has expanded its presence in the UAE with the launch of its third showroom at Zahia City Centre, Sharjah. With this opening, Mojawhraty by Malabar now operates eight showrooms across the GCC, reinforcing its growing acceptance among Arabic jewellery connoisseurs in the region.

The new showroom was inaugurated by Chairman of Ajman Ruler's Court and Ajman Royal Family Member, His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Majid bin Saeed Al Nuaimi, in the presence of Mr. Abdul Salam K.P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group; Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Sherif Abdelmonem Meligy Hassanin, Business Head of Arabic Value Chain; Mr. Mayankutty C, Senior Director of Malabar Group; Mr. Nishad AK, Malabar Group Executive Director; Mr. Abdul Majeed, Director of Malabar Group; Mr. Faisal AK, Head of Manufacturing at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Amer CMC, Director of Finance & Admin at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Shaji Kakkodi, Malabar Group Chief Digital Officer; Dr. Keree, Venkitangu, other senior management team members, valued customers, and well-wishers.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Abdul Salam K.P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group, said:

"The response to Mojawhraty by Malabar in the UAE has been extremely encouraging, reflecting the growing appreciation for a retail concept dedicated exclusively to Arabic jewellery. With the launch of our third showroom in the country and eight in the GCC, we are taking another important step



Mojawhraty by Malabar, the exclusive Arabic jewellery retail concept from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, has launched its 8th showroom in the GCC at Zahia City Centre, Sharjah. The showroom was inaugurated by Chairman of Ajman Ruler's Court and Ajman Royal Family Member, His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Majid bin Saeed Al Nuaimi, in the presence of Mr. Abdul Salam K.P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group; Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Sherif Abdelmonem Meligy Hassanin, Business Head of Arabic Value Chain; Mr. Mayankutty C, Senior Director of Malabar Group; Mr. Nishad AK, Malabar Group Executive Director; Mr. Abdul Majeed, Director of Malabar Group; Mr. Faisal AK, Head of Manufacturing at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Amer CMC, Director of Finance & Admin at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Shaji Kakkodi, Malabar Group Chief Digital Officer; Dr. Keree, Venkitangu, other senior management team members, valued customers, and well-wishers.

in bringing authentic Arabic craftsmanship closer to our customers, presented through a contemporary, world-class retail environment. Each creation is designed to honour the rich traditions of Arabic jewellery while thoughtfully resonating with the tastes and lifestyles of today's customers."

Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director – International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, added: "Mojawhraty by Malabar represents our long-term vision of building a distinctive Arabic jewellery destination rooted in heritage, quality, and trust. Backed by Malabar's decades-old legacy

and uncompromising standards, we are focused on creating exceptional experiences for jewellery lovers across the region. With the strong acceptance the brand continues to receive, we are confident that Mojawhraty will emerge as the number one destination for Arabic jewellery in the region in the years to come."

The Zahia City Centre showroom marks another important milestone in Mojawhraty by Malabar's regional expansion, with 8 showrooms operating across the GCC. The brand now has three showrooms in the UAE, located at Dalma Mall, Ajman City Centre, and Zahia City Centre; two showrooms

in Oman at Mall of Oman and Muttrah Souq; two showrooms in Bahrain at Bahrain City Centre and Bab Al Bahrain; and one showroom in Nakheel Mall, Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Commenting on the brand's growth, Mr. Sherif Abdelmonem Meligy Hassanin, Business Head – Arabic Value Chain said,

"At Mojawhraty by Malabar, every detail reflects our unwavering commitment to the standards and values that define Malabar Gold & Diamonds. From design and craftsmanship to retail experience and customer trust, we have been meticulous in building an Arabic jewellery concept that upholds

the highest benchmarks of quality. Our vision extends beyond participation – we aspire to set new standards and lead the Arabic jewellery market by offering creations that honour heritage while meeting the expectations of today's discerning customers."

At Mojawhraty by Malabar, every piece of jewellery is meticulously crafted by master artisans, using responsibly sourced 18K, 21K, and 22K gold, alongside an exclusive selection of ornaments set with certified natural diamonds. The curated portfolio features distinctive in-house collections inspired by Arabic artistry and designed to resonate with the evolving

tastes of the modern Arab consumer.

Every purchase is protected by the Mojawhraty Promise, offering 100% value on diamond exchange, the exclusive use of tested and certified natural diamonds, assured lifetime maintenance, guaranteed buyback, and more. Rooted in the enduring legacy of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mojawhraty creations uphold decades of trust, craftsmanship, and uncompromising quality. Each piece is backed by the same rigorous quality standards, service assurances, and precision manufacturing, crafted in Malabar Gold & Diamonds' own state-of-the-art facilities.

## Japan says rare earth found in sediment retrieved on deep-sea mission

Tokyo, Japan

Sediment containing rare earth was retrieved from ocean depths of 6,000 metres (about 20,000 feet) on a Japanese test mission, the government said Monday, as it seeks to curb dependence on China for the valuable minerals.

Japan says the mission was the world's first bid to tap deep sea rare earths at such a depth.

"Details will be analysed, including exactly how much rare earth is contained" in the sample, government spokesman Kei Sato said, calling it "a meaningful achievement both in terms of economic security and comprehensive maritime development".

The sample was collected by a deep-sea scientific drilling boat called the Chikyu that set sail last month for the remote



Japan's deep-sea drilling vessel Chikyu is anchored at a pier of the Shimizu port in Shizuoka prefecture

island of Minami Torishima in the Pacific, where surrounding waters are believed to contain a rich trove of valuable minerals.

It comes as China -- by far the world's biggest supplier of rare

earths -- ramps up pressure on its neighbour after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggested in

November that Tokyo may react militarily to an attack on Taiwan, which Beijing has vowed to seize control of by force if necessary.

Beijing has blocked exports to

Japan of "dual-use" items with

potential military uses, fuelling

worries in Japan that it could

choke supplies of rare earths,

some of which are included in

China's list of such goods.

Rare earths -- 17 metals difficult to extract from the Earth's crust -- are used in everything from electric vehicles to hard drives, wind turbines and missiles. The area around Minami Torishima, which is in Japan's economic waters, is estimated to contain more than 16 million tons of rare earths, which the Nikkei business daily says is the third-largest reserve globally.

These rich deposits contain

an estimated 730 years' worth of dysprosium, used in high-strength magnets in phones and electric cars, and 780 years' worth of yttrium, used in lasers, the Nikkei said.

YOU  
KNOW WHAT

China accounts for almost two-thirds of rare earth mining production and 92 percent of global refined output, according to the International Energy Agency.

## News in brief

◆ **The UK has revoked a Russian diplomat's accreditation in a tit-for-tat move after Moscow expelled a British envoy last month, the foreign ministry in London said yesterday. "We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified decision to expel a British diplomat last month and its baseless accusations against our staff," a spokesperson said. A senior official "made it clear" to the Russian ambassador, who was summoned by the ministry, that the UK "will not stand" for the intimidation of British embassy staff. "It is deeply disappointing that Russia continually seeks to disrupt the work of the UK's diplomatic missions and deter our support for Ukraine," the spokesperson added. "Any further action taken by Russia will be considered an escalation and responded to accordingly."**



**UK revokes Russian diplomat's papers in tit-for-tat move**

**China's top general probe to 'remove obstacles' in military: state media**

a sweeping drive to root out graft at all levels of the Chinese Communist Party and state since President Xi Jinping came to power more than a decade ago. The ministry did not say why the probe into Zhang and Liu had been opened. However, the PLA Daily - the Chinese military's mouthpiece - said they were "corrupt elements" in a front-page editorial published yesterday.

◆ **Russia has confirmed** that a new round of talks with Ukraine and the United States in Abu Dhabi on ending the four-year-war will start Wednesday, after they were postponed from this weekend. Moscow blamed a scheduling issue for the delay, a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also said the negotiations would take place in the UAE capital on Wednesday and Thursday. "They were indeed originally planned for this past Sunday. But additional coordination of the schedules of the three parties was needed," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "Now, on Wednesday-Thursday, the second round will indeed take place. It will be held in Abu Dhabi. We can confirm that," he added. The talks will take place less than two weeks before the fourth anniversary of Moscow launching its full-scale offensive against Ukraine.

**Kremlin confirms Ukraine war talks this week in Abu Dhabi**



## SPOTLIGHT

### Airline sector falling behind on clean fuel switch: IATA

AFP | Singapore, Singapore

The airline industry's green transition is stalling as high costs and limited output choke the rollout of cleaner jet fuel, the head of the industry's trade association said on Monday.

"Unfortunately, we're not making sufficient progress on sustainable aviation fuel," International Air Transport Association (IATA) director-general Willie Walsh told the Changi Aviation Summit in Singapore.

Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) is billed as a key tool to curb carbon emissions from planes, and took centre stage at the conference ahead of the Singapore Airshow.

"SAF output reached 1.9 million tonnes in 2025, representing just 0.6 percent of total jet fuel consumption, and this is a downward revision from our earlier estimates," Walsh said.

Mandatory rules requiring airlines to include a certain percentage of SAF in their fuel mix "have pushed prices higher" and "discouraged voluntary demand," he added.

European Union rules, for example, require carriers to include two percent of SAF in their fuel mix starting this year, rising to six percent in 2030 and 20 percent in 2035, before soaring to 70 percent from 2050.

Walsh said that SAF prices exceeded fossil-based jet fuel



**A Republic of Singapore Air Force F-16C fighter jet and AH-64D Apache attack helicopter participate during a media preview aerial display**

"by a factor of more than two, while the evidence shows that in markets with mandates, that factor can increase to four times".

To bolster take-up, Singapore's civil aviation authority signed an agreement on Monday with nine companies for a "voluntary trial" to buy SAF through a central procurement firm set up by the regulator.

The trial, which includes Google, state investment firm Temasek and Singapore Airlines, will support Singapore's aim to increasingly favour green jet fuel.

From October 1, Singapore will require all flights departing from the city-state to use one percent of the more expensive SAF in their fuel mix, and will collect a levy to finance that, likely raising ticket prices.

Singapore said it will increase the ratio of SAF in the blend to three to five percent by 2030 in line with targets set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

# Rafah crossing makes limited reopening after two-year war

Border crossing with Egypt is Gaza's only gateway to the outside world

● **Israeli forces seized control of the crossing in May 2024**

● **150 Palestinians were allowed into Egypt on Monday**

● **Another 50 Palestinians would be allowed to enter Gaza**

AFP | Rafah, Palestinian Territories

Gaza's Rafah border crossing has reopened to Palestinians, an Israeli security official said, with 150 people due to leave the territory yesterday and 50 allowed to enter, according to Egyptian authorities.

The resumption of operations comes after Gaza's civil defence reported dozens killed in a wave of Israeli strikes over the weekend, in what the military said was retaliation for Palestinian fighters exiting a tunnel in Rafah city.

The border crossing with Egypt is Gaza's only gateway to the outside world that does not lead to Israel and is a key access point for both people and goods.

Mahmud, a 38-year-old leukaemia patient from Gaza City, told AFP he felt lucky to be able to travel to Egypt for treatment, after receiving approval from Israel to go with his sister.

"In Gaza, (there is) no treatment and no life... of course, I am lucky, but I am still sad because my father and mother are still in Gaza," he said.

Ali Shaath, the head of a Palestinian technocratic committee established to oversee the day-to-day governance of Gaza, said Monday that Rafah's reopening offered a "window of hope" for people in the territory.

Israeli forces seized control of the crossing in May 2024 during the war with Hamas, and it has remained largely closed since.

A partial resumption of operations began on Sunday in a tightly restricted pilot phase that did not involve travel of people, following months of appeals from



Ambulances wait on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip in northeastern Egypt

aid groups.

"The Rafah crossing has now opened to the movement of residents, for both entry and exit," the Israeli official said.

Three Egyptian border officials told AFP that 150 Palestinians would be allowed into Egypt on Monday, composed of 50 patients

each accompanied by two companions.

Another 50 Palestinians would be allowed to enter Gaza, the officials said.

Khaled Mogawer, governor of North Sinai -- which includes the Egyptian side of Rafah -- said on Egyptian state-linked AlQahera News that 50 Palestinian patients and 84 companions were expected to enter Egypt on Monday.

Israeli state broadcaster Kan reported that the crossing would be open for about six hours daily, while AlQahera News said the Egyptian side would remain open "round the clock".

**'I will hug my mother'**

Abdul Rahim Mohamed, 30, said he was eagerly awaiting the return to Gaza of his mother who had left for cancer treatment in Egypt in March 2024.

"Two days ago, she was informed she could return to Gaza and told me on the phone, 'Come and wait for me at the crossing,'" he told AFP.

"I am very happy today... I will hug my mother," he added.

Rafah lies in an area held by Israeli forces following their withdrawal behind a so-called "Yellow Line" under the terms of a US-brokered ceasefire in effect since October 10.

Israeli troops still control more than half of Gaza, while the rest remains under Hamas authority.

The EU's top diplomat Kaja Kallas said the opening of the crossing "marks a concrete and positive step in the peace plan" for the territory, where humanitarian conditions remain dire after two years of war.

Despite the ceasefire, violence continued over the weekend. Gaza's civil defence agency, which operates as a rescue force under Hamas authority, said Israeli bombings killed 32 people including children on Saturday.

Israel's military said the strikes were retaliation for an incident on Friday in which eight Palestinian fighters exited a tunnel in Rafah, which it said was a truce violation.

The Rafah crossing had been briefly opened in early 2025 but has been largely shut since it was seized by Israeli forces.

**No aid entry**

The director of Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital, Mohammed Abu Salim, said there were 20,000 patients in the territory in urgent need of treatment, including 4,500 children.

AlQahera News, citing Egypt's health ministry, reported that 150 hospitals and 300 ambulances had been prepared to receive Palestinian patients.

It said 12,000 doctors and 30 rapid deployment teams had been allocated to work with those transferred.

COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry body coordinating Palestinian civilian affairs, made no mention of allowing in a long-hoped-for surge of aid for Gaza.

Israel had previously tied Rafah's reopening to the return of the remains of Ran Gvili, the last Israeli hostage held in the territory. His body was recovered and buried last week, prompting Israel to announce the phased reopening.



**The Rafah Border Crossing is the only crossing point between the Gaza Strip and Egypt that does not directly involve Israel – making it Gaza's sole non-Israeli border exit and entry point for people and goods**

### Trump says US talking deal with 'highest people' in Cuba

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said Sunday that Washington was negotiating with Havana's leadership to strike a deal, days after he threatened Cuba's reeling economy with a virtual oil blockade.

Trump's second administration has ratcheted up pressure on the communist-run island nation since the January 3 US ouster of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, whose country was a close ally of Havana and a crucial source for oil exports to Cuba.

Cuba is a failing nation. It has



Tourists traveling in vintage American cars drive past vehicles waiting in line to refuel at a gas station in Havana

been for a long time, but now it doesn't have Venezuela to prop it up," Trump told reporters at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

"So we're talking to the people from Cuba, the highest people in Cuba, to see what happens.

I think we're going to make a

deal with Cuba," he added, giving no indication what such a deal would look like.

Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not confirm the US president's remarks in a statement released on its website on Sunday, but took the opportunity to once again reject that the island is a "threat to the security of the United States."

It specifically asserted that Cuba does not "host any foreign military or intelligence bases", but added that it is willing to "maintain a respectful and reciprocal dialogue," with the United States.

1451

Sultan Mehmed II,  
the Conqueror in-  
herits the throne of  
the Ottoman Empire

1870

Iowa ratifies the 15th Amend-  
ment to the United States  
Constitution, allowing suffrage  
for all races and colors

1931

New Zealand's worst natural disaster, the  
Hawke's Bay earthquake, kills 256 and  
injures thousands, devastating Napier  
and the Hawke's Bay region

1966

First soft landing  
on the Moon,  
by the Soviet  
spacecraft Luna 9

X

TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



Peace agreements cannot hold when the root causes of conflict are left to fester. That is why prevention & peacebuilding are not optional extras -- they are the first line of defence; And they are among the smartest investments we can make in lives saved & futures protected.

@antonio\_guterres

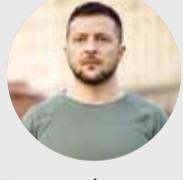
02



I spoke with President @ZelenskyyUa this afternoon, ahead of this week's peace talks. As we approach the fourth year of the brutal war against Ukraine, Russia continues to double down on war crimes, striking civilian infrastructure and homes.

@vonderleyen

03



We continue to synchronize our sanctions with the European Union. I signed a decree imposing sanctions against companies that service the Russian tanker fleet and transport sanctioned oil.

@ZelenskyyUa

04



Nobody has fought harder for full release of the Epstein files and prosecutions of those who abused children more than I did, knowing full well that the legacy media, far-left propagandists and those who are actually guilty would:

1. Admit nothing  
2. Deny everything  
3. Make counter-accusations against me

@elonmusk

1451

1870

Iowa ratifies the 15th Amend-  
ment to the United States  
Constitution, allowing suffrage  
for all races and colors

1931

New Zealand's worst natural disaster, the  
Hawke's Bay earthquake, kills 256 and  
injures thousands, devastating Napier  
and the Hawke's Bay region

1966

First soft landing  
on the Moon,  
by the Soviet  
spacecraft Luna 9

# Bad Bunny makes Grammys history with Album of the Year win

AFP | Los Angeles, United States

Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny made history Sunday at the Grammys, winning Album of the Year for his "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos" -- the first Spanish-language work to take the top honor in music.

Rapper Kendrick Lamar added five more gramophones to his trophy cabinet, including another Record of the Year award, while Billie Eilish and her brother Finneas took the Song of the Year prize.

Britain's Olivia Dean was named best new artist, on a night that featured electric performances from a constellation of stars including Lady Gaga, who won two prizes including best pop vocal album.

But the night belonged to Bad Bunny, who earned cheers as he delivered a powerful political message, ripping the nationwide immigration raids that have polarized America.

"Before I say thanks to God, I'm gonna say 'ICE out,'" Bad Bunny said as he accepted the award for best musica urbana album.

"We're not savages, we're not animals, we're not aliens; we are humans and we are Americans," the 31-year-old said, one week before he takes one of the world's biggest stages, headlining the Super Bowl halftime show.

Later, when he won the night's top prize, he appeared overcome with emotion at his seat, before getting up on stage and delivering most of his speech in Spanish, honoring the people of Puerto Rico, a US territory in the Caribbean.

"I want to dedicate this award to all the people that had to leave their homeland, their country, to follow their dreams," he said in English.

Bad Bunny's third award of the night was for best global music performance.

Lamar's five Grammys equaled his haul from last year, when he swept up prizes for "Not Like Us," his viral diss track targeting rival Drake.

This time, he was honored for a variety of songs, from the Record of the Year-winning melodic "Luther" featuring SZA, which contains a sample

Bad Bunny poses with the Album of the Year, Best Musical Urbana Album, and Best Global Music Performance Awards during the 68th GRAMMY Awards at Crypto.com Arena on February 01, 2026 in Los Angeles, California

## Key winners

Bad Bunny won Album of the Year, the first time a Spanish-language work has been so honored, and two other prizes.

Rapper Kendrick Lamar won five Grammys including Record of the Year.

Album of the Year: "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos" - Bad Bunny

Record of the Year, recognizing overall performance on a song: "luther" - Kendrick Lamar with SZA

Song of the Year, recognizing songwriting: "Wildflower" - Billie Eilish O'Connell & Finneas O'Connell, songwriters (Billie Eilish)

Best New Artist: Olivia Dean

Best Pop Solo Performance: "Messy" - Lola Young

Best Pop Duo/Group Performance: "Defying Gravity" - Cynthia Erivo & Ariana Grande

Best Pop Vocal Album: "Mayhem" - Lady Gaga

Best Rap Album: "GNX" - Kendrick Lamar

Best Rap Performance: "Chains & Whips" - Clipse (Pusha T & Malice), featuring Kendrick Lamar & Pharrell Williams

Best Music Video: "Anxiety" - DoeChii

Best Musical Urbana Album: Bad Bunny - "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos"

Best Global Music Performance: Bad Bunny - "Eeo"

Best Global Music Album: "Caetano e Bethania Ao Vivo" - Caetano Veloso and Maria Bethania

Best Song Written for Visual Media: "Golden" from "KPop Demon Hunters"

## Steven Spielberg earns coveted EGOT status with Grammy win

Los Angeles, United States

Legendary director Steven Spielberg on Sunday completed the grand slam of showbiz awards, earning so-called EGOT status by winning a Grammy in the best music film category for the documentary "Music by John Williams."

Spielberg, 79, has now won Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards throughout his storied career -- a feat only accomplished by 21 other

people.

That list reads like a who's who of showbiz, from composers Richard Rodgers and Alan Menken to actresses Audrey Hepburn and Whoopi Goldberg to singers John Legend and Jennifer Hudson.

"Music by John Williams" celebrates the work of the 93-year-old composer, who collaborated with Spielberg on a host of movies including classics "Jaws" and "Schindler's List."



Winner of Best Melodic Rap Performance and Record of the Year for "Luther" (with Kendrick Lamar)



Kendrick Lamar accepts the Best Rap Album award for "GNX" onstage



Sounwave accepts the Best Melodic Rap Performance award for "Luther" on behalf of Kendrick Lamar with SZA onstage

from a hit by late crooner Luther Vandross, to the more classic hip-hop song "tv off."

"I'm not good at talking about myself, but I express it through the music. It's an honor to be here," said Lamar, a Pulitzer Prize winner.

## History

Bad Bunny is in the middle of a world tour, just months after a hugely successful residency in San Juan.

His "Un verano sin ti" (2022) was the first Spanish-language album nominated for Album of the Year honors. But he made good on his second attempt with "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos" ("I Should Have Taken More Photos").

The album is an exploration of what it is to be Puerto Rican in the context of persistent colonialism -- all set to folkloric sounds, infectious salsa and reggaeton rhythms.

Host Trevor Noah repeatedly joked with the Latin megastar, born Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, about not performing due to Super Bowl contractual restrictions -- and even sang a few bars in Spanish himself before Bad Bunny indulged with a short verse.

## Big performances

K-pop singer Rose and Bruno Mars kicked off the televised gala with a high-octane performance of "APT."

Lady Gaga offered an energetic version of "Abracadabra" and Justin Bieber stripped to his boxers -- and socks -- for a rendition of "Yukon."

Pop princess Sabrina Carpenter belted out her hit "Man-child."

Reba McEntire and Laury Hill sang in honor of those who died over the last year in the world of music.

Late rocker Ozzy Osbourne's wife Sharon and children Kelly, Jack and Aimee looked on as Post



Dalai Lama's 'gratitude' at first Grammy win

New Delhi, India

Buddhist spiritual leader the Dalai Lama said Monday he was grateful for his first Grammy, after bagging the top music industry award for audio book, narration and storytelling.

The charismatic 90-year-old, who lives in exile in India, is lauded worldwide for his tireless campaign for greater autonomy for his Tibetan homeland, which Beijing says is an integral part of China.

He was announced as the winner at the Grammys ceremony in Los Angeles for his book "Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama".

"I receive this recognition with gratitude and humility," he said on social media.

"I don't see it as something personal, but as a recognition of our shared universal responsibility."

Malone fronted an all-star band including guitarist Slash for Black Sabbath's "War Pigs."

The majority of the 95 awards were handed out at a pre-gala ceremony before the televised broadcast.

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

# WHO chief says turmoil creates chance for reset

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The head of the World Health Organization said Monday that the dramatic cuts of 2025 as the United States headed for the exit created the chance to forge a leaner, re-focused WHO.

Washington, traditionally the UN health agency's biggest donor, has slashed foreign aid spending under President Donald Trump, who on his first day back in office in January 2025 handed the WHO his country's one-year withdrawal notice.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the agency's annual executive board meeting that 2025 was "undeniably one of the most difficult years



US President Donald Trump

in our organisation's history", with many donors tightening their belts.

"Significant cuts to our funding left us with no choice but to reduce the size of our work-

force," he said. Last week, he said 1,241 posts had gone, while 1,162 staff had left or would be leaving through retirement, voluntary early retirement or moving elsewhere.

Tedros said the WHO's remodelling was all but finalised.

"We have now largely completed the prioritisation and realignment. We have reached a position of stability and we are moving forward," he insisted.

"Although we have faced a significant crisis in the past year, we have also viewed it as an opportunity. It's an opportunity for a leaner WHO to become more focused on its core mission."

He urged member states to keep gradually increasing their membership fees, to reduce the

WHO's reliance on voluntary contributions.

The aim is for membership fees to eventually cover half of the agency's budget, to secure its "long-term stability, sustainability and independence".

"I don't mean independence from member states. Of course, WHO belongs to you and always will," Tedros stressed.

"I mean non-dependence on a handful of donors; I mean non-dependence on inflexible, unpredictable funding; I mean a WHO that's no longer a contractor to the biggest donors."

"I mean an impartial, science-based organisation that's free to say what the evidence says, without fear or favour."



**The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations, founded in 1948, and is responsible for directing and coordinating international public health efforts across 194 member states.**

## Air India says fuel switch 'defect' grounds Boeing 787 jet

AFP | New Delhi, India

Air India grounded a Boeing 787 aircraft on Monday after a pilot reported a "possible defect" in its fuel control switch, the airline said, a similar issue to that involved in a deadly crash last year.

"We are aware that one of our pilots has reported a possible defect on the fuel control switch of a Boeing 787-8 aircraft," an Air India spokesperson said in a statement.

"We have grounded the aircraft and are involving the OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) to examine the pilot's concerns on a priority basis," the spokesperson said.

Air India did not specify where the aircraft was grounded. Some Indian media reports said it had been scheduled to fly from London to the city of Bengaluru in India's south.

A London-bound Boeing 787



An Air India aircraft stands on the tarmac at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi

Dreamliner operated by Air India crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad in June last year, killing all but one of the 242 people on board and 19 on the ground.

However, it said fuel supply

to the jet's engines was cut off moments before impact, raising questions about possible pilot error.

According to the AAIB, one pilot was heard asking the other why fuel had been cut off, to which the second pilot replied that he had not done so.

Two major Indian commercial pilots' associations, as well as the father of one of the dead pilots, have rejected suggestions that human error caused the crash.

Air India has said it informed the civil aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, about the reported fuel switch issue.

It also said it had checked fuel control switches across its Boeing 787 fleet after the June crash and found no problems.

Indian authorities have yet to release a final report into the crash.

## Iran arrests four foreigners for 'participation in riots': state TV

Tehran, Iran

riots and unrest in the area, were discovered," it added.

Iranian authorities accuse Israel and the United States of having had a hand in "riots".

NGOs based abroad have accused the security forces of intentionally targeting protesters in a movement that rocked the Islamic republic in January.

On January 24, the official IRNA news agency reported that two foreigners had been arrested in western Iran.

## Russian captain found guilty in fatal North Sea crash



Smoke rises from the MV Solong cargo ship in the North Sea, off the coast of Withernsea, east of England, on March 11, 2025, after it collided with the MV Stena Immaculate tanker. Right, Vladimir Motin



AFP | London, United Kingdom

The Russian captain of a cargo ship that hit an anchored oil tanker in the North Sea last year was on Monday found guilty by a UK court of killing a crew member.

After eight hours of deliberation, the jury convicted Vladimir Motin of the manslaughter by gross negligence of Filipino sailor Mark Angelo Pernia.

The seaman, 38, who was married with a young child, was lost at sea following the crash in which Motin's cargo ship, the Solong, collided with the oil-laden Stena Immaculate, triggering a fiery blaze off the eastern UK coast.

Pernia's body has never been recovered.

Motin, from Saint Petersburg, showed no emotion as he was convicted by a jury at

London's Old Bailey court. He was remanded in custody and will be sentenced on Thursday.

Speaking after the verdict, investigating officer Craig Nicholson described the crash as a "senseless tragedy".

"It's a miracle that there weren't more fatalities or serious injuries," he said.

Prosecutor Tom Little told the court Pernia's wife -- who was seven months pregnant with their second child at the time of his death -- lived in a remote area of the Philippines.

She would need to make arrangements to travel somewhere with good internet access to watch the sentencing remotely. "This was a tragic, and entirely avoidable death of a member of crew caused by truly, exceptionally bad negligence," said prosecutor Michael Gregory.

## Europe must overcome divisions to become 'genuine power': Draghi

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

Europe needs to bridge "old divisions" to become a "genuine power" -- or risk remaining "subordinated" to the United States and China, former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi warned Monday.

Draghi, who authored a landmark 2024 report on the EU economy, warned that the 27-nation European Union had to get its act together to survive under a "now defunct global order".

"Of all those now caught between the US and China, Europeans alone have the option to become a genuine power themselves," the ex-Italian prime minister said in a speech at a university in Leuven, Belgium.

"So we must decide: do we remain merely a large market, subject to the priorities of others? Or do we take the steps necessary to become one power?" he asked.

Draghi is invited to join an informal gathering of European leaders focusing on strengthening Europe's competitiveness on February 12 in Alden, Belgium.

The meeting is supposed to steer Brussels' reform agenda over the coming months. Part of



Italian economist and former European Central Bank (ECB) president Mario Draghi (L) and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (R)

this will involve implementing more of the hundreds of recommendations from Draghi's 400-page report -- few of which have become reality nearly 18 months on.

On Monday the 78-year-old Italian, who received an honorary doctorate from the KU Leuven university, did not go into details but pointed the way.

Europe was caught between

preserve its values for long," he said, warning US President Donald Trump's administration had made "clear" it sees "European political fragmentation as serving its interests".

To avoid that, he said the EU had to diversify trade relations by concluding deals with like-minded countries and move from a loose confederation to a European federation.

"Where Europe has federated -- on trade, on competition, on the single market, on monetary policy -- we are respected as a power and negotiate as one," he said.

"Where we have not -- on defence, on industrial policy, on foreign affairs -- we are treated as a loose assembly of middle-sized states, to be divided and dealt with accordingly."

Integration could proceed at different speeds, with only some countries initially signing up to some initiatives, but was necessary, he argued.

"We are all in the same position of vulnerability, whether we see it yet or not," Draghi said. "The old divisions that paralysed us have been overtaken by a common threat."

**Minister of Works Receives German Ambassador to Discuss Infrastructure Ties**

His Excellency Engineer Ibrahim bin Hassan Al Hawaj, Minister of Works, recently received the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Kingdom of Bahrain, His Excellency Mr. Henning Georg Simon. During their meeting, Minister Al Hawaj affirmed Bahrain's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Germany, particularly within the infrastructure sector. He emphasized that such collaboration is essential for achieving the shared interests and development goals of both nations. Ambassador Simon expressed his appreciation for the warm reception and underscored the importance of the distinguished ties between the two friendly countries.

**Minister of Tourism Highlights Success of "Night at Bahrain Bay"**

Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaafer Al-Serafi, Minister of Tourism, recently visited the "Night at Bahrain Bay" event, where she was welcomed by CEOs and co-founders Mr. Abdullah Ahmadi and Mr. Bader Al-Mudaifa. During her tour, the Minister was briefed on the event's various facilities and diverse programming. She received an overview of the key activities and unique experiences curated for visitors this season. Her Excellency praised the event's high organizational standards and its scenic location, commending the team's dedication to creating a premium entertainment experience.

**Northern Governor Welcomes Students for Community Service Initiative**

His Excellency Mr. Hassan Abdullah Al Madani, Governor of the Northern Governorate, recently received a group of high school students participating in a community service course. The initiative aims to strengthen community partnership and instill the values of positive citizenship among the youth. During the meeting, the Governor emphasized the importance of engaging students in activities that foster national awareness and a sense of belonging. The program provided students with an in-depth look at the Northern Governorate's administrative functions. The itinerary also included an educational visit to the King Fahd Causeway and a tour of the Northern Governorate Police Directorate.

**Bahrain Chamber Empowers 400 Educators via Leadership Workshops**

Professor Yousef Abdulghaffar, Chairman of the Education and Training Committee at the Bahrain Chamber, affirmed that investing in educators is the cornerstone of developing innovative, competitive generations. Nearly 400 educators from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia attended specialized workshops organized in collaboration with Bayt Al Jawda Consulting, FranklinCovey Education, and the "Leader in Me" program. Dr. Ahmed Al-Kufi, Vice Chairman, noted that the high turnout reflects the sector's commitment to modernizing educational practices. The program featured two tracks: one for school leaders focusing on advanced leadership roles and practical application, and a hands-on workshop for teachers centered on interactive tools and character building.

**International Mushaira in Bahrain Pays Rich Tribute to Ajmal Siraj**

The Golden Tulip Hotel in Manama hosted a prestigious International Mushaira organized by Urdu Markaz Bahrain to honor the late poet Ajmal Siraj. Under the patronage of the Embassy of Pakistan, the event was presided over by Dr. Pirzada Qasim with Ambassador Saqib Rauf attending as Chief Guest. Moderated by the late poet's son, Syed Abdul Rehman Momin, the evening featured prominent voices including Tehzeeb Hafi, Dr. Junaid Azar, and Almas Shabi, alongside local talents like Ahmed Adil and Iqbal Tariq. The gathering of 300 guests, including community leaders like Afzal Bhatti and Adil Waseem, celebrated the depth of Urdu literature in the Kingdom.



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## Djokovic hints at retirement as time seeps away on history bid

Alcaraz defeat leaves Djokovic short of record 25th Grand Slam and wrestling with the future

## ● Farewell tone in post-match speech

## ● Younger rivals tightening grip

## ● Retirement talk still resisted

AFP | Melbourne

**N**ovak Djokovic leaves the Australian Open still stuck on 24 Grand Slam titles and with fresh doubts about how many more tries he will have at winning an outright-record 25th.

The 38-year-old has consistently dismissed talk of retirement and said he is eyeing the defence of his Olympic gold at the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

But after losing to Carlos Alcaraz in four sets in the final on Sunday, the Serb suggested he may not be back in Melbourne.

"God knows what happens tomorrow, let alone in six months or 12 months," he told the crowd at Rod Laver Arena.

"So it has been a great ride. I love you guys."

Djokovic has won a record 10 Australian Opens and until Sunday had never lost a final there.

But for all his success, Djokovic has not always had an easy relationship with the Melbourne fans.

"I want to just say in the end that you guys, particularly the last couple of matches, gave me something that I have never experienced in Australia," he said.

"That much love, support, positivity. I tried to give you back with good tennis over the years."

Serbia's Novak Djokovic speaks next to the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup

It had the ring of a farewell speech and did not appear to have been just an emotional response to defeat.

He said he had prepared two speeches, one for winning and the other for losing.

## Faltering record

Djokovic won his 24th Grand Slam title at the US Open in 2023, drawing him level with the Australian Margaret Court at the top of the all-time list.

But age and injuries, plus the emergence of world number one Alcaraz and number two Jannik Sinner, have left him unable to win another.

Before Sunday, his previous Grand Slam final had been in 2024, when he lost the Wimbledon decider, again to Alcaraz.

Last year he reached the

semi-finals of all four majors but got no further, with Alcaraz and Sinner sharing the spoils.

He rolled back the years to defeat Sinner -- 14 years his junior -- in a five-set semi-final marathon in Melbourne.

But after Djokovic won the first set, the 22-year-old Alcaraz took a stranglehold on the final to sweep to victory 2-6, 6-2, 6-3,

7-5.

Underlining where Djokovic is now in the pecking order of men's tennis, he admitted he had not expected to reach another major final.

## I always believe'

If the former world number one was going to win that elusive 25th, he may reflect that he has seen his best remaining chance come and go.

He is the undisputed king of Melbourne Park and Rod Laver Arena is the court where he has had the most success.

The fourth seed enjoyed two big pieces of luck in reaching the semi-finals.

Djokovic enjoyed free passage through the fourth round when Jakub Mensik pulled out with injury.

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After the match, Djokovic revealed he had written both a victory and a defeat speech -- a rare admission suggesting he knew this might be his final Australian Open appearance

He was then facing defeat at two sets down to Lorenzo Musetti, only for the Italian fifth seed to retire injured.

He rolled back the years to beat Sinner and make the final, but a repeat success so soon after playing five sets was beyond him.

"Overall, for sure it's been a fantastic tournament," he said.

"I knew that I'd probably have to beat two of them (Alcaraz and Sinner) on the way to the title.

"I beat one, which is great, so it's a step more further than I have gone in Grand Slams than last year.

"Very nice, encouraging. But, you know, not enough for me."

So what next for one of the all-time greats?

For whatever time is left, he won't give up on that 25th Grand Slam crown, even if the odds are now stacked against him.

"I always believe I can," Djokovic said about finally eclipsing Court.

"Otherwise, I wouldn't be competing."

## Man City won't surrender in title race: Guardiola

## ● Manchester City draw 2-2 with Tottenham

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola insisted Manchester City will keep fighting for the Premier League title despite blowing a two-goal lead in a damaging 2-2 draw at Tottenham on Sunday.

Guardiola's side raced ahead in north London thanks to first half goals from Rayan Cherki and Antoine Semenyo.

But City collapsed after the interval.

Dominic Solanke bundled home to reduce the deficit kicking the back of City defender Marc Guehi's leg in the act of scoring, but VAR reviewed the incident and the goal was allowed to stand.

City were unable to stem the tide of Tottenham pressure and Solanke produced a sensational scorpion kick equaliser from Conor Gallagher's cross.

Solanke's audacious back-flicked goal was a hammer blow to second-placed City, who now trail leaders Arsenal by six points.

Guardiola was left to bemoan

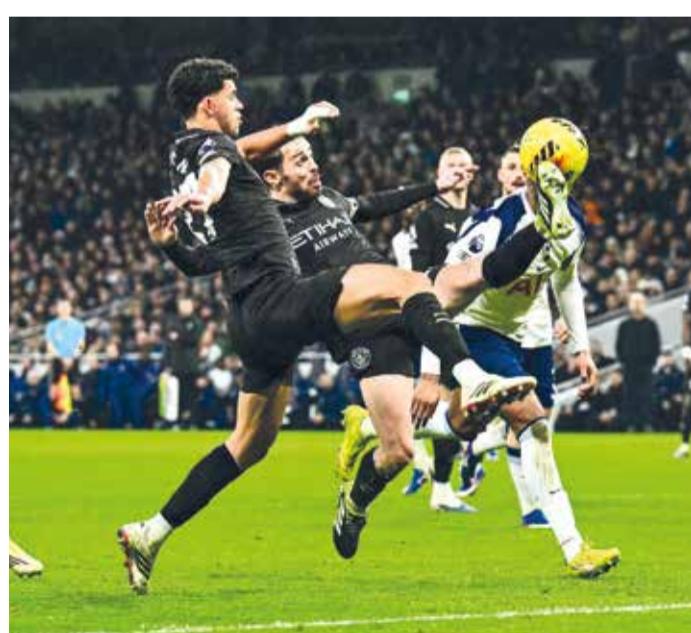
Tottenham's first goal survived a VAR check despite Solanke kicking City defender Marc Guehi's leg in the act of scoring, a decision Guardiola argued would have been a penalty had it been the other way

Tottenham's first goal, saying: "If a central defender does it to a striker, it's a penalty."

"The game was well played and sometimes for long balls and second balls you miss it."

"We would prefer not to have the transition but an emotional issue for the first goal that the referee conceded to Spurs and after that the momentum is difficult to control."

Guardiola was booked for his protests and looked in disbelief when the incident was played



Manchester City's Portuguese midfielder #27 Matheus Nunes (2nd L) and Manchester City's Portuguese midfielder #20 Bernardo Silva (C) both go for the ball in front of goal

I saw incredibly good spirit and many things.

"We had the injuries, one month ago we had a lot with nine or 10 players out but at the same time we are there and all the calendar is what it is."

Injury-hit Tottenham's spirited escape act was a welcome boost for under-fire boss Thomas Frank.

The Dane had faced calls for his sacking in recent weeks, but leading Tottenham into the Champions League last 16 has infused his side with renewed belief.

With 11 players unavailable and Solanke and Archie Gray limping towards the end, Frank hailed the spirit of his depleted group.

"I'm extremely happy that we finally got a point out of a big second half," he said.

"I said it before, this team's ability to respond to setbacks and show resilience, I think we are growing it bit by bit."

"And we are, by the way, building it with, I don't know, players dropping left, right and centre to injury."

"I think that shows everything about the team and what they are building. Very proud of the players."

catch Mikel Arteta's men.

"With 14 games to play? As much the chance is there, the hopes will always be there," he said.

"I know that these types of games always in the past you had to capitalise and win but yeah, the difficulties for many things, but players are coming back and

# Muharraq Hammer Isa Town, Riffa Survive Shootout

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Round two of the King's Cup round-of-16 served up both dominance and drama yesterday, with the last eight starting to come into view.

At Khalifa Sports City, Muharraq confirmed their status as one of the favourites with a 6-0 demolition over second-division Isa Town. The scoring opened almost immediately, with Bahrain international Abdulla Al Khalasi unleashing a spectacular long-range strike in the fifth minute that left goalkeeper Hasan Taha with no chance.

From there, the "Red Wolves" dominated possession and territory. Abdulwahab Al Malood doubled the lead in the 28th minute after clever wing play from Elliot Simoes, who beat his marker before squaring the ball for an unmarked finish. Just before halftime, Hasan Al Khalasi made it 3-0, rising to meet a corner-kick and guiding his header into the far corner, following a near-miss from Mohammed Al Hardan who struck the crossbar.

The scoring continued after the break. A penalty in the 74th minute, awarded when Mohammed Sulaiman brought down Al



Ali Madan celebrates Riffa's 2nd goal

Khalasi in the box, was calmly converted by Samy Frioui. Substitute Sofufiane Mahrouk then struck twice late on, the first following more clever wing play from Al Khalasi, and the second in the 88th minute when he reacted quickest to a rebound after Simoes' spectacular free-kick rattled the crossbar. Mahrouk's double completed a resounding win for Nandinho's side.

Meanwhile, at Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Stadium, Riffa were pushed all the way by second-tier Manama in a match that went down to penalties after a 2-2 draw. Riffa took an early lead in the 10th minute as Sayed Mahmood Al Moosawi rose highest to head in Rodrigo Yuri's pinpoint corner. Manama responded in the 29th minute when Nemanja Nikolic latched

onto a ball played from deep, chipped the onrushing goalkeeper, and finished into an empty net.

Mohammed Mashaan's side regained the lead five minutes into the second half through substitute Ali Madan, who finished low into the corner after being slipped in by Sayed Hashim Isa. The game swung again in the 68th minute when Manama's goalkeeper Mohammed Hasan was sent off for a foul on Yacoub Diarra. Despite being reduced to ten men, Manama forced extra time deep into stoppage time, when Ali Meftah raced through to slot home after Mohammed Ahmed's long ball caught the Riffa defence out. Riffa almost won it at the death when Madan blazed over from close range, but the forward made amends in the shootout, converting the decisive penalty to seal qualification.

With these results, Muharraq and Riffa join Bahrain Club and Al Shabab in the King's Cup last eight. Two more quarter-finalists will be decided tonight, with holders Al Khalidiya facing Al Hala at Khalifa Sports City and Al Ittifaq taking on Sitra at Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Stadium, both matches kicking off at 7pm. The final two spots will be settled in tomorrow's fixtures.



Abdulla Al Khalasi (R) and Elliot Simoes (L) celebrate Muharraq's opener



Riffa's Abdulkarim AlFardan saves a spot-kick

## Kuwait Club Weather Muharraq Storm

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Muharraq nearly stole a road victory last night in the FIBA WASL-Gulf League Qualification to Semi-Finals, mounting a furious late comeback against Kuwait Club before ultimately falling 107-101 at the Shaikh Saad Alabdullah Sport Hall Complex.

Trailing by 17 points early in the fourth quarter, 95-78, Peter Schomers' side staged a stunning 17-0 run to tie the score at 95-all. Kris Clyburn was at the heart of the surge, finishing with 27 points, 11 rebounds, and six assists. He also gave the "Red Wolves" a 99-96 lead with 2:40 remaining following a tough layup inside, putting the visitors on the verge of a road upset.

Michael Warren, one of Muharraq's two new signings brought in to cover for injured Kerwin Roach and Timmy Bond, played a key role in the comeback. He tallied 24 points,



Muharraq's Kris Clyburn navigates pressure as Coach Schomers looks on

four rebounds, and six assists, helping to ignite the late-quarter charge. Nick West added 23 points and 11 rebounds, while Mohammed Ameer contributed 12 points during the furious rally.

Despite their fight, Kuwait Club held their nerve in the clos-

cive three-pointer with 23.7 seconds left to seal the 107-101 win and take a 1-0 lead in the best-of-three series.

Charlie Moore top-scored for Kuwait Club with 24 points, seven rebounds, and ten assists, while Joffrey Lauvergne contributed a double-double of 23 points and 14 rebounds, earning Capelli Sport Player of the Game honors. Hamad Hasan, despite a head injury early in the match, chipped in 18 points, including four three-pointers.

"It shows that we're a good team when we put in the effort and play together," said Muharraq's Clyburn. "We ran, got stops, and competed with a top team. That's a momentum builder going into the next game, knowing that we can compete with this team."

Muharraq will now host Game 2 next Monday, February 9, at the BBA Arena in Bahrain. A win there will force a deciding third game and keep their hopes of a semi-finals return alive.

## Mercedes ready to win F1 world title, says Russell



Mercedes' George Russell is interviewed in the pit lane before the start of the Abu Dhabi F1 Grand Prix (file photo)

### ● Mercedes favoured under new 2026 regulations

### ● Russell topping bookmaker title odds

**AFP** | London

speed and reliability, with the bookmakers making Russell favourite for his first world title.

"I feel ready to fight for a world championship, and whether we have that tag as favourites above us or not, it doesn't change my approach one single bit," said the British driver at Mercedes' digital launch yesterday.

"There are a lot of things we need to learn very quickly, but I feel I can take advantage of that and I feel confident in myself and in the team."

Four-time world champion Max Verstappen will lead Red Bull's challenge, aiming to regain the title after losing out to Lando Norris last season.

Russell and Verstappen have clashed on and off the track in recent years and the former is relishing the prospect of a title battle to add to the feud between the pair.

"I would love that. He is very much going to be in the fight this year," added Russell.

"You obviously wish you had a slightly easier time of it, but it should never be easy, and if you are going to win, you want to have fought for it and won it fair and square on track."

## Liverpool beat Chelsea to Rennes defender Jacquet - reports

**AFP** | London

Liverpool have beaten off competition from Chelsea to sign Rennes defender Jeremy Jacquet for a fee of up to £60 million (\$82 million), according to British media reports yesterday.

However, the 20-year-old is not set to move to Anfield until the end of the season despite Liverpool's need for defensive reinforcements.

Jacquet had been linked with a transfer to Chelsea



earlier this month but was reportedly put off the move by the competition for places at centre-back in the Blues' bloated squad.

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## Bahrain Open Challenger honoured as world's best ATP 125 event



The chairman of the Supreme Committee of the Bahrain Open Challenger Tennis Championship, Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa, received the award for the world's best ATP Challenger 125 tournament for 2025, praising senior Bahraini leaders for their backing of the event. Speaking after accepting the prize from Yulia Boyadjieva, vice-president of the ATP Challenger Tour, Shaikh Khalid thanked HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa for attending the closing ceremony of the fifth edition of the tournament, saying the presence underscored strong institutional support for sport and athletes.

## Batelco Fitness on Track offers unique Tuesday night workout at BIC



TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), 'The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East', hosts tonight the widely popular Batelco Fitness on Track, offering participants the chance to get a workout in at a world-class Formula 1 host facility.

This highly sought-after activity is to be held within the circuit's safe and controlled

setting.

It is scheduled to take place from 6pm to 10pm under BIC's bright state-of-the-art floodlights, and it will be the last Batelco Fitness on Track until mid-April, so those interested in taking part are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity.

Participants will be able to exercise either individually or with family and friends. The ac-



tivity can be done on foot or on a bicycle, giving participants the chance to select their preferred workout programme.

Runners and walkers will be utilising BIC's 2.550-kilometre Inner Circuit, while cyclists will get to ride their bikes along the 3.543-kilometre Outer Circuit, with another dedicated area for children's cycling.

The cost to take part is BD2 for cyclists and BD1 for runners.

Payment must be made upon booking. Children under the age of 12 can participate for free if accompanied by a paying adult.

For more information on today's Batelco Fitness on Track or other events and experiences at BIC, visit [bahrainpg.com](http://bahrainpg.com), call the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or follow the circuit's official social media channels.

# Hatred of losing drives relentless Alcaraz to tennis history

Spaniard becomes youngest man to complete career Grand Slam at age twenty-two

● Alcaraz beats Djokovic in final

● Surpasses Nadal's age record

● Credits his "hate of losing" as motivation

AFP | Melbourne

Carlos Alcaraz says that his absolute hatred of losing drives him to keep making landmarks after becoming the youngest man to win all four Grand Slam tournaments.

The Spaniard beat Serbian great Novak Djokovic in four sets in Sunday's Australian Open final, adding his first Melbourne crown to his Wimbledon, US Open and French Open titles.

In doing it at the age of 22 he surpassed legendary compatriot Rafael Nadal, who was 24 when he completed a career Grand Slam of all four majors.

The now-retired Nadal was at Rod Laver Arena to see the world number one beat Djokovic 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, 7-5, and Alcaraz said his presence helped inspire him to victory.

It was Alcaraz's seventh major title and he will head to the other three Grand Slams in 2026 as the man to beat once more, with world number two Jannik



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz kisses the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup at the Royal Exhibition Building

Sinner his closest rival.

"I hate losing, so that's my motivation," said Alcaraz, who plans to have a tattoo of a kangaroo to mark his achievement.

He declined to say if a rare

all four majors in the same year -- was next on his hit-list.

"Well, it's going to be a big challenge. Those are big words, to be honest. You know, I just want it to be one at a time," he said.

But Alcaraz does want to win the season-ending ATP Finals, having been defeated by the Italian Sinner last year in the title decider.

And a Davis Cup crown with Spain is also on his radar.

Right now I'm just trying to have time to realise what I've been doing. I know I'm making history with some trophies, some tournaments, some achievements that I've been getting. For me it's an honour to put my name in the history books

CARLOS ALCARAZ

Alcaraz surprisingly split with coach Juan Carlos Ferrero in December after seven hugely successful years together, with assistant coach Samuel Lopez taking over.

He has not divulged the reasons behind the change in any depth, but took satisfaction from triumphing in Melbourne given all the speculation beforehand.

"Just happy to prove all the people were wrong," he said.

**'Honour to make history'**

Among Alcaraz's milestones, his maiden Slam, at the US Open in 2022, made him the youngest champion of a men's major since Nadal at the 2005 French Open.

He was also the youngest man to ascend to the world number one ranking.

His Roland Garros corona-



To celebrate his Australian Open win, Alcaraz plans to get a tattoo of a kangaroo. He also noted the inspiration of having retired legend Rafael Nadal watching his historic victory from the stands

tion in 2024 ensured he was the youngest to win Grand Slam titles on clay, grass and hard courts.

At this rate, Alcaraz is well on course to go down as one of the best in the history of tennis.

But for now, he just wants to enjoy the moment and take in what he has done over the past fortnight and in his young career so far.

"Right now I'm just trying to have time to realise what I've been doing," he said.

"I know I'm making history with some trophies, some tournaments, some achievements that I've been getting."

"For me it's an honour to put my name in the history books."